

READ THIS WEEK'S AMAZING ACCOUNT OF DR. KARNAK!

The Nelson Lee

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Magazine



A Tense Moment from This Week's Story :—

THE SPELL OF THE MYSTIC!



The dog snapped at the scarf and touched it, and the sudden jerk, so unexpected, upset my equilibrium.



A thrilling story of the adventures of Dr. Karnak, the mysterious Egyptian curator of the St. Frank's museum, and how by hypnotic influence he uses De Valerie as an instrument of revenge against Nelson Lee, who has been watching the wily Egyptian and obtaining certain incriminating facts against him. The story includes some exciting skating incidents, introducing the laughable attempts of Handforth to perform fancy skating before Irene Manners and Co.

THE EDITOR.

The Narrative Related Throughout by Nipper

CHAPTER I.

IN THE POWER OF THE MYSTIC!

"SKATING soon!" said Reginald Pitt happily.

"Yes, if the frost lasts," added Jack Grey. "But it generally happens that a thaw sets in just at the critical moment. We don't get frosts here like they have in Switzerland."

"All the same, this one looks like being fairly solid for a bit," declared Cecil de Valerie. "It's been freezing now for two days and nights, and the barometer is set fair. I think we're in for a spell of real winter."

The juniors were standing in a little group, under one of the old chestnut trees in the Triangle at St. Frank's. Afternoon lessons were over, and evening was drawing on, the sky being gloomy and overcast.

But the clouds were full of snow, and only the coldness of the temperature prevented a heavy fall. Now and again a few tiny flakes would whisk down, carried by the stiff breeze.

And the ground was frozen hard, and the water in the fountain had turned to ice. The River Stowe was already thickly coated, and it was reckoned that the ice would be safe for skating after another twenty-four hours.

"There's nothing like some good, brisk outdoor sport to make a fellow feel bucked up," said Reggie Pitt. "It's bad for anybody to remain stewed up indoors, reading heavy books and going in for intensive study."

"That's meant for me, I suppose?" said De Valerie quietly.

"If you like."

"I don't think it's quite sporting of you," said De Valerie. "I can spend my time in study, if I like, can't I?"

"Of course you can—but that makes no difference to the fact that some healthy outdoor exercise would do you a world of good," replied Pitt. "It's not my place to criticise, or to give advice. But the sooner you take up sports, and get back to your old form, the better."

"Hear, hear," said Grey, nodding.

Cecil de Valerie shrugged his shoulders.

"If you think you can choke me off my new hobby, you've made a mistake," he said. "I'm deeply interested in this psychic science, and I'm convinced there's a lot of truth in the whole subject."

"And you really think that Dr. Karnak is genuine?" inquired Reggie. "You absolutely believe him to be capable of sorcery and occult manifestation? My dear fellow, it's very unhealthy to—"

"I don't want to discuss the matter," interrupted De Valerie gruffly. "It's nothing to do with anybody else what opinions I hold. But I'll tell you this much—Dr. Karnak is misunderstood at St. Frank's. He possesses powers that nobody ever dreams of."

"Rats!"

"But if we want to keep friendly, we'd better not refer to him at all," went on De Valerie. "Still, now we're on the subject, I'd just like to tell you this. I'm not

influenced by Dr. Karnak in the slightest degree. You think I am. But that's sheer nonsense."

"Nonsense, is it?" asked Pitt grimly. "Then how do you account for the fact that you've been a changed being ever since Dr. Karnak arrived?"

"Changed?" growled the junior. "What rot!"

"My dear Val, if you could only picture yourself as you were last term, you'd have a bit of a shock," said Pitt. "Why, before the Christmas holidays you were always cheery and bright, you put in regular footer practice, you spent hours a week in the gymnasium, and you were an absolute beggar for work in the class-room."

"Oh!—And am I different now?" asked De Valerie.

"Ye gods and little gold fish!" ejaculated Pitt. "Hearken to the words of folly that drop from his ruby lips! Is he any different now? Listen, O youth of changing habits! This term you haven't put in a single hour in the gym. Have you?" he added abruptly.

"Well, I—I suppose not," confessed De Valerie.

"And you suppose right, too," went on Pitt. "In the Form-room, you've descended over half-way to the bottom, instead of being near the top. Mr. Crowell's always complaining about your work, and giving you lines for inattention. As for football, you've never once touched your top form since the term began."

De Valerie looked rather unpleasant.

"Well?" he asked sourly. "Is the lecture finished yet?"

"Hang it all, Val, I'm not lecturing you," said Pitt, flushing. "I'm just pointing out how Dr. Karnak's rubbish has changed you."

"It's nothing to do with Dr. Karnak," broke in De Valerie.

And they changed the subject by tacit consent. Archie Glenthorne strolled up at that moment, heavily muffled up in a big coat, and with his monocle jammed firmly into his eye.

"This," he observed, "is reminiscent of Labrador, Alaska and all those sort of jolly old places. I mean, a few hundred degrees below zero, and all that. Dash it all, a chappie's breath freezes in the good old air!"

"There'll be skating soon, Archie," said Pitt.

"What-ho!" agreed Archie. "Skating, by gad! Absolutely the snake's hips, as Ulysses might remark. Oddslife! That reminds me that I shall have to instruct Phipps to rally round with sundry quid notes, and purchase the young master a supply of skates."

"Better wait until the ice is ready," said Pitt cautiously. "These frosts have a habit of petering out at the last minute."

"Absolutely!" agreed Archie. "Words of wisdom, dear old soul, flow from the vocal aperture. But allow me to remark,"—he went on, gazing at De Valerie—"allow

me to remark, old companion, that you're looking somewhat ghastly."

"What do you mean?" asked De Valerie.

"Why, gadzooks, the good old colour has taken a trip elsewhere," said Archie, with concern. "The roses, as it were, have whizzed into the offing, and left the old countenance pretty frightful, if you know what I mean. Haggard, and drawn, and all that. Bags under the eyes, and I'm dashed if they're not bloodshot!"

De Valerie glared.

"Look here!" he snorted. "I'm getting fed up with this talk about me! Why the dickens can't you chaps leave me alone? Mind your own infernal business."

Archie tottered slightly under the blast. "I mean, dash it!" he protested. "Dash it! In other words, and to be quite frank, dash it twice! Why the good old outhurst, laddie? Here am I, anxious and concerned about your health and welfare, and all you can do is to turn on me, and let off a bally charge of gunpowder!"

"Then don't talk about my face!" said De Valerie.

"Absolutely not," agreed Archie. "But I'll tell you what, old dear. What you need—what you absolutely must have—is a course of those jolly old Kruschen salts."

"Idiot!"

"A foul insult, but we'll let it pass," said Archie. "Let me give you a few pointers regarding these ripping Kruschen things. All you've got to do, old tulip, is to take a tablespoonful in your tea every morning. You won't taste the bally stuff—I've seen it in adverts! And in the morning, by gad, you'll simply leap down the stairs in one bound, whizz like anything into the Triangle, and then you'll proceed to jump over the bally school, and push a few 'buses over, and so forth."

Pitt and Grey grinned, but De Valerie scowled.

"Are you a salesman for these salts?" he asked sourly.

"I'm afraid he'd get into trouble if he was," chuckled Pitt. "Personally, I shouldn't advise anybody to take a tablespoonful at once. The result might be too painful for words. But Archie's advice, although remarkable, is sound in the main."

Pitt suddenly broke off, staring.

For, without warning, Cecil de Valerie had gone as pale as a sheet. His cheeks had been wan before, but now every vestige of colour fled from them, and he looked quite ghastly. He swayed as he stood, and his limbs trembled violently.

"Val!" muttered Pitt. "I say, old man—Hold him!"

Jack Grey grasped at De Valerie, but at that moment the strangely affected junior seemed to grow suddenly rigid. And turning sharply, he walked away. His expression had become mask-like.

Pitt ran after him, and grasped his arm.

"I say, Val, you're not feeling well—" he began.

"Don't bother me! I want to be alone," said De Valerie dully.

And he walked on. Pitt stared after him, wondering at the mechanical tone in De Valerie's strained, low voice. What was the meaning of this lightning change which had come over him? And it wasn't the first time it had happened, too. On one famous occasion, De Valerie had pulled up short in the very act of kicking a goal for St. Frank's in an important match. And his failure at that crucial moment had spelled defeat.

"You chaps wait here!" said Pitt quickly. "I'm just going to see what he does. I don't like the look of this at all."

De Valerie had already reached the Ancient House doorway. He walked into the lobby, taking no notice of Handforth and Co., who addressed some cheery remarks to him. It seemed that he did not even hear.

And he made his way along the passage until he came to the school library. For a moment he paused here, but did not enter. As though uncertain, he walked on with faltering steps.

But then they grew firmer, and in a few minutes he arrived at the door of Dr. Karnak's private room. He turned the handle, and went in. The Egyptian science lecturer was seated within, in a big arm-chair. Upon his shoulder was perched his pet, the quaintly spotted Serval cat.

"I have come!" said De Valerie mechanically.

Dr. Karnak's dark face broke into a quiet smile.

"Good!" he purred. "Sit down, boy, and listen to me. There are many things that I must tell you of. I have work to be done—important work that must be accomplished in secrecy and silence."

"I am here to do your bidding," said De Valerie. "You have but to command, and I shall obey."

There was something almost horrible in his servility—which, somehow, did not seem to come from his own being. He was in a kind of trance-like condition, and his words and his movements were semi-automatic.

And, outside, Reginald Pitt was biting his lip with vexation.

"I knew it!" he muttered. "Straight to Karnak's room! It's fishy!"

For some moments he stood there, wondering if he should make an entry into Dr. Karnak's room, on some pretext. He was really anxious about De Valerie, and wanted to find out the full truth.

"No," he decided, at length. "I'd better not butt in just yet. It'll be wiser to give old Karnak no inkling that we suspect him. All the same, something's got to be done."

Pitt walked away, and he ran across me after he had turned a bend in the passage. In fact, he almost bumped into me, and

locked up with an absent expression in his eyes.

"Day-dreaming?" I asked, smiling.

"Oh, just the chap I wanted to see," said Reggie, glancing up and down the corridor. "Look here, old man," he went on, lowering his voice. "There's something jolly queer about De Valerie."

"Tell me some news," I remarked. "My dear ass, I've known that Val is a changed person for weeks past. In fact, he hasn't been right since the Christmas holidays. And I know the reason, too. Karnak!"

Pitt nodded grimly.

"Not long ago we were out in the Triangle," he said, "and without the least warning De Valerie went as pale as a sheet."

Pitt told me exactly what had happened, and then related how he had followed Cecil de Valerie to Dr. Karnak's private room. I listened with compressed lips, and with growing uneasiness.

"What do you think it is—auto-suggestion, or something?" asked Reggie.

"Mind-suggestion—hypnotism—mesmerism—you can call it what you like," I replied. "In plain, straightforward language, there's not the shadow of a doubt that Dr. Karnak is able to control De Valerie from a distance. It's a horrible business, when you come to think of it."

"Ghastly," agreed Pitt. "Can't we break this spell, or whatever it is?"

"We'll try to," I replied. "But we're up against a difficult proposition, old man. Our will-power is nothing like so strong as Karnak's, and all the talk in the world will make practically no difference to De Valerie. I don't quite know what to do."

"Hush!" breathed Reggie. "He's coming."

I glanced down the passage, and saw that De Valerie was approaching us. He had recovered his colour now, and his face was not quite so haggard. He paused as he came abreast of us, and smiled.

"What's this—a secret confab?" he asked.

"Where have you just sprung from?" inquired Pitt, without replying to the question. "You've been with Dr. Karnak, I suppose?"

De Valerie looked puzzled for a moment.

"With Dr. Karnak?" he repeated slowly.

"No, I haven't—and yet I seem to remember—I don't know. I think I've just been having a stroll round. I haven't seen Dr. Karnak since dinner-time."

He walked on, and I gave Pitt a significant glance.

"Trying to fool us!" whispered Reggie. "He doesn't know that I saw him go into Karnak's room—"

"No, he wasn't trying to fool us," I interrupted quietly. "He doesn't remember. In my opinion, the chap is so deeply in Karnak's power that his own mind is completely overshadowed by Karnak's. At times he actually doesn't know where he is,

or what he is doing. This hypnotism is a terrible thing if it is used in the wrong way. But I don't think we need have any fears for Val. He's only a tool just to help Dr. Karnak's cause."

"His cause?"

"Yes. Karnak likes to pose as a mystic, and a worker of marvels," I replied. "And De Valerie is his lieutenant, so to speak. But something will have to be done—there's no question about that."

Exactly what the something was, however, we had no idea.

Cecil de Valerie was in the power of the Mystic, and it seemed that as the days went on he was falling more and more under the spell of Dr. Karnak's powerful will.

But the climax, had we only known it, was not far distant.

CHAPTER II.

PERIL ON THE ICE.



"**W**HAT-HO!" said Archie Glenthorne, adjusting his monocle. "This appears to be a good old snake's hips, as Ulysses would remark. I mean to

say, it makes a chappie feel dashed braced!"

"You said a mouthful," grinned Ulysses Spencer Adams. "Attaboy! Gee! I'm sure anxious for the afternoon to come."

Archie and Ulysses were not the only juniors crowding round the baize-covered notice-board in the lobby. There was only a small piece of paper pinned on the board, but it was very satisfactory to all. For it bore these words:

"SKATING.

"As the ice on the River Stowe is now considered to be safe for skating purposes, all boys properly equipped with skates will be allowed to use the ice between Bellon Bridge and Judkin's Corner, but the river beyond these points is strictly out of bounds

"MALCOLM STAFFORD, Headmaster."

"Jolly good!" declared Pitt. "Of course, the ice is safe right up as far as Pilling, but I suppose the Head likes to keep us near at hand."

"Oh we needn't grumble!" said Jack Grey. "It's practically three miles from the the bridge to Judkin's Corner, taking all the bends into consideration. We'll have all the skating we can wish for."

There was a great deal of enthusiasm, particularly among the juniors. They had been longing for this announcement to be made. In their opinion, the ice had been safe enough on the previous day, but the Head was cautious. He wouldn't allow any skating until there was practically no possibility of danger.

And this, of course, was wise. Left to themselves, the juniors would have taken all sorts of reckless risks. There was only one way in which the Head had failed. Most

of the fellows considered that he ought to have pronounced the day to be a whole holiday.

"We don't often get frosts like this nowadays," grumbled Armstrong. "So when it does come, we ought to take full advantage of it. And yet we've got to stick in the giddy classroom all the morning, swatting away at lessons. Sickening, that's what it is!"

I grinned.

"Be thankful for small mercies," I said. "The skating will seem all the better if we have to wait for it. And mind your p's and q's during lessons, too. It would be tragic if Mr. Crowell detained you for the afternoon."

Everything was hustle and bustle. Seniors and juniors alike were getting their skates ready and making sure that they were in perfect condition to be donned at a moment's notice. Many fellows, of course, had their skates already fitted to their boots, so that a change of footgear was all that was necessary.

The day was clear and sunny, and the frost still held firm. In fact, there was every indication of the present conditions prevailing for several days. And cheeriness abounded.

As soon as morning lessons were over, a number of fellows dashed off to the river to try the ice, but the majority waited until dinner was over.

I was a bit late in getting down to the river, because Tregellis-West had insisted upon donning a clean collar and a new tie, and generally making himself spick and span. I noticed that Archie Glenthorne, too, went forth like an immaculate tailor's model.

"Blessed if I can see the reason for all this rot," said Tommy Watson bluntly. "What does it matter how a chap's dressed when he goes skating? I've put on my oldest overcoat, and my bags are all creased. Who cares?"

"Begad!" said Sir Montie. "Dear old fellow, you seem to overlook the fact that some young ladies will be present. I understand that Irene Manners and her friends will be on the spot."

Watson sniffed.

"I'm jiggered if I'm going to get all donned up just because a few girls are going to be on the ice," I said. "Blow the girls! I expect they'll only be in the way!"

I grinned.

"I'm afraid you'll never be a lady's man," I said with a chuckle. "Personally, I think the afternoon will be more interesting if a few of the girls are present. And, by Jove, there they are!"

We had just come within sight of the River Stowe, and we saw Irene Manners & Co. laughing and chatting with a group of juniors. Edward Oswald Handforth was in great evidence.

He, too, had made himself much tidier than usual. There was no doubt that the

girls of the Moor View School had caused a general smartening up among a big proportion of the fellows. In the old days a junior would venture forth with a crumpled or dirty collar without a qualm. But now even Somerton himself was a bit more careful.

Irene & Co. were looking very fresh and dainty in their skating costumes and woollen mufflers. The girls were rosy-cheeked, and their eyes sparkled and danced with the joy of the keen winter's day.

"Oh, bother this skate of mine!" said Doris Berkeley, as we came up. "The beastly thing keeps slipping, or something. I say, somebody, lend a hand here, like a brick!"

"That's your job, Handy," grinned Pitt. "Your fist's like a brick!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, I didn't mean that!" said Doris. "All right, Ted, don't bother. Nipper's come to the rescue. I don't know what's wrong," she added to me, "but the catch seems to be wonky. I'll bet you'll wangle it O.K.!"

I sat down on the hard ground and was soon fixing the skate on Doris' boot. Irene had frowned a trifle, and I knew why. She didn't like Doris' slangy way of talking. But Doris was a dark-eyed little terror, and purposely used slang to provoke her chum.

Handforth was dancing attendance on Irene—not that she needed it. Archie, full of enthusiasm, was chatting with Marjorie Temple, for Archie had quite a soft spot for Marjorie. All three girls were exceedingly pretty, and their presence would greatly add to the pleasure of the afternoon's sport.

Of course, there were other Moor View girls, too; but Irene & Co. were the pick of the bunch, so to speak. And in a very short time the juniors were ready for the ice.

"Going to do any figure skating, Handy?" asked Pitt casually.

"Oh, I don't know," said Handforth with a careless air. "I might. Only it looks a bit swanky, and I'm a modest chap——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handforth turned red.

"Did I say something funny?" he asked, glaring round.

"Suffering cats! You sure did!" grinned Ulysses. "Say! You split a whole joke that time! I'll tell the world you're modest all right!"

"He's so modest that he doesn't want to show off," said Fullwood, with a sneer. "Rats! He can't skate in a straight line, let alone do any figure skatin' or fancy work!"

Handforth gulped, and took a swift determined step towards Fullwood. Unfortunately, he overlooked the fact that he had got his skates on. He touched the ground, gave one howl of surprise, and almost turned a somersault. He crashed down with a fearful thud.



And then I found myself at the surface, gulping in a breath of air. Doris was like a dead weight in my arms. She had fainted.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handforth sat up, to find everybody roaring.

"Oh, it's too bad!" said Irene indignantly. "I believe he's hurt."

"Not—not at all!" gasped Handforth. "As a matter of fact, I—I was just testing the ice——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And, what's more," roared Handforth, "I'll show you some real fancy skating!"

He seemed to have the impression that a loud voice would hide his confusion.

He scrambled to his feet and glared round.

"Just watch this!" he said thickly. "Can't do fancy skating, eh? Huh!"

"Hot dog!" grinned Ulysses. "That's the dope! Attaboy!"

Handforth would never have attempted the thing under ordinary circumstances. But his prowess had been held in doubt, and in front of Irene, too. He absolutely had to disprove these jeers.

And with easy grace he sped over the shimmering sheet of smooth ice. He could skate well, and it was the consciousness of this that aroused his ire. But he wasn't quite so sure about doing fancy work.

Reaching the other side of the river, he turned smartly, gliding round with skill and confidence. The crowd watched him, hoping for some misfortune that would give them a laugh. Somehow, Handforth was always looked upon as a kind of comic relief.

"Why, he can skate beautifully!" said Irene stoutly.

"Absolutely!" agreed Archie Glenthorne. "I mean to say, I never thought the dear old sou! had it in him. Oddslife! He's positively waltzing now! He's a bit of a dashed marvel, dash it!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Go it, Handy!" sang out Church and McClure.

Handy was going it, gaining confidence with every moment. He found that it wasn't so very difficult, after all, to perform all sorts of trick stunts. He came whizzing along, intending to shoot round in a sharp curve on one leg. This ought to impress the doubting ones.

It certainly did.

For Handforth got halfway through the manoeuvre, when, in some extraordinary way, he got into a spin. He was, in fact, like an aeroplane out of control. With one skate on the ice and the other whirling in the air, he shot round in the most remarkable fashion.

"Bravo!"

"Good for you, Handy!"

"Gee! He's sure some stunter!"

Unfortunately Handforth was performing his trick unintentionally. Having got into that spin he couldn't get out again, and he went round and round like a top. And then abruptly the end came.

Handforth collapsed with tremendous violence, struck the ice with his back, and shot forward towards the onlookers with his legs whirling. He came to a halt in a confused heap, somewhat tangled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is that what you call figure skating, old man?"

Handforth picked himself up in a state of dire confusion. He knew that he had made an awful mess of it, and for Irene to be looking on made the whole affair doubly deplorable.

But the girl was very diplomatic. She congratulated Handforth heartily, and seemed to entirely overlook the fact that he had come a cropper. And I thought it would be rather a good idea to come to the rescue, for Handforth was still mightily confused.

"I'll tell you what," I said briskly. "Why shouldn't we organise a race? We'll have mixed doubles."

"My hat! We're not playing tennis!" said Pitt.

"Just a little term, that's all," I grinned. "Now I suggest we have a race from here as far as Judkin's Corner. Handforth and Miss Irene, Glenthorne and Miss Marjorie, and Miss Doris and myself. We'll see which pair can do the best skating."

"Hear, hear!"

"Go it!"

"Absolutely!" said Archie with enthusiasm. "It's a sound scheme, laddie. I'm frightfully sorry for Miss Marjorie, because I'm a dashed frightful duffer, and we're

bound to be last. Still, we'll brace the old tissues and have a stab at it, what?"

"Yes, and we stand a good chance of winning," said Marjorie firmly. "Don't be silly, Archie—you can skate beautifully."

"Oh, really! I—I mean you absolutely flatter me, old gal!" said Archie.

The proposed race was very popular, and the crowd got ready to send us off. Reginald Pitt produced a handkerchief, and appointed himself official starter.

"Now then, ready!" he said briskly. "Any other entrants? What about you, Miss Edith?" he asked, turning to one of the other girls. "How about you and Fatty?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm game!" said Fatty Little promptly.

"Thanks all the same, but I'm ever so poor at skating," said Edith. "It wouldn't be fair. Besides, the ice might give way," she added, amid a roar of laughter.

Fatty Little snorted; and as there were no more entrants, the race began. Handforth and Irene stood ready, holding one another in the approved fashion. Handforth was secretly delighted. He had been hoping that he might skate with Irene, but here was a chance to cover himself with glory—to do something that would blot out the unfortunate catastrophe of a few minutes ago. For at straight skating Handforth was an expert.

Archie and Marjorie were standing alongside, and then came Doris and myself. We waited there, lined up, with the crowd near the bank watching.

Reginald Pitt dropped his handkerchief.

"Go!" he said smartly. "And may the best pair win!"

"Hurrah!"

We shot off from the mark, and the next second we were gathering speed over the smooth ice. There was something invigorating in the very joy of it. The sparkling wintry sun, the crisp air, and the glorious sport all contributed to put us on our mettle.

Almost from the very first Doris and I lead the way. Just in the rear came Handforth and Irene, with Archie and Marjorie nearly level. Obviously it was going to be a close finish.

In the rear came a whole crowd of fellows, speeding along to witness the finish of the race.

Doris was a fairly good skater, and we maintained our lead.

"Oh, dear!" she said abruptly. "I believe that wretched skate is coming loose again. What a shame! Still, let's carry on—it may be all right. We'll keep in the race until we collapse, anyhow."

It was certainly disappointing. For if that skate had remained firm, there's hardly any doubt that Doris and I would have won. As it was, we had hardly got round the curve beyond Willard's Island when the climax arrived. My partner certainly gave a lurch, and it was only by swift action

on my part that she was saved from falling. The skate had doubled up beneath her foot, and as our speed was considerable, we were lucky to escape a tumble. Even as Doris was falling, I caught her up and literally dragged her round towards the bank, where we both collapsed in a heap amid the snow.

"Sorry!" I gasped. "Not hurt much, are you?"

"Oh, what a shame!" said Doris with exasperation. "Of course I'm not hurt. But look! They've all gone by, and we're out of it. And we were winning, too. Just my blessed luck!"

"Never mind," I said. "We'll have another race presently, and then we'll show what we can do. Let's have a look at that skate of yours."

The other competitors in the race had forged straight ahead, the contest resolving itself into a battle between Handforth and Archie. The rest of the juniors, finding that Doris and I were unhurt, hurried on to witness the finish. Thus we were practically alone.

It seemed a trifling circumstance at the time, but it was to lead to something rather startling in a very few seconds.

"The best thing we can do with this skate is to take it right off," I said briskly. "There's something wrong with the front fastening. We'll soon have it right."

I removed the skate and subjected it to a thorough examination. And it was just at this moment that we heard a warning shout in the distance.

I was busy with the skate, and Doris was watching me, her expression one of vexed impatience. She was very disappointed that this should have happened. And neither of us took any notice of that shout. For we took it to be just one of the ordinary excited cries of the ice revellers.

Then the shout came again, much more urgent. I looked up, and saw a farm labourer on the opposite bank—which, at that point, was raised high above the ice level.

"The dog!" shouted the man excitedly. "Get ye gone, young gent! Take the young leddy away! Holy Mike! He's arter me now!"

I stood up, so that I could get a better view, wondering why on earth the man should be so excited. I glanced down the clear stretch of frozen river, which, at the time, was bare of skaters. In the other direction, towards Judkin's Corner, a few figures could be seen.

"Great Scott!" I ejaculated abruptly.

For I had seen something which startled me considerably. Bounding over the ice, and making for the direction of the farm labourer on the high bank, was an enormous dog—a mastiff.

But just that one glance was sufficient to tell me the truth.

There was something absolutely terrifying about the dog's appearance. It looked as

ferocious as a wolf. The teeth were bared, the eyes were glaring and horrible. And the brute's jaws were flecked with foam.

In short, the dog was mad!

CHAPTER III.

THE STRANGE RESCUER!



FOR just two seconds, I stood there transfixed. The danger, as I knew, was appalling. Even a terrier is a formidable beast to meet if it is mad. But this enormous animal was

ten times more dangerous than a forest wolf. If it should attack, there was practically no method of defending ourselves.

And the peril was all the more acute because it had come so suddenly—so unexpectedly. If a ferocious tiger had appeared it would not have caused my heart to throb so violently. For, indeed, this rabid mastiff was ten times more dangerous than any tiger.

For it was capable of dealing death in more ways than one. Even a scratch from its infected fangs might result in hydrophobia, and a horrible end. And the savage beast was larger than any wolf, and more ferocious.

Those people who have been unfortunate enough to meet a mad dog will realise the horror of the position in which Doris and I found ourselves. My first emotion was one of complete helplessness. Once, in the African jungle with Nelson Lee, we had come face to face with a wild elephant. But then I had felt only a thrill of excitement. Now I was aghast with absolute fear. For we had no weapons, and this frightful monster was the absolute master of the situation.

Heaven alone knew what human destruction it had already caused. It was obviously a roamer from some distant village—for I had certainly never seen the animal in the neighbourhood of St. Frank's.

And everybody knows that a mad dog wanders away from its home days before it becomes absolutely uncontrollable. A dog of this kind has been known to kill a dozen people before being shot, or otherwise killed.

I stood perfectly still, and recovered a measure of my wits. Doris had half started up, surprised by my attitude. But I made a swift motion for her to remain still, and she understood.

I had one hope. If we remained perfectly still, the dog, in its maddened condition, might pass by. But even this thought filled me with dread, for I remembered all the other fellows higher up the river.

All this, of course, had happened in a flash. The thoughts had passed through my mind in a twinkling. And I saw that the farm labourer was rushing like mad away from the bank, and towards a neighbouring tree. His object, of course, was to climb into safety.

But I had already noticed that there were no trees on our side of the river, and thus it was impossible for us to seek such a haven of refuge—even if there had been time.

The man had believed himself to be safe, owing to the cliff-like bank at that point. But the dog had swerved in its course, slithering clumsily on the ice, and had dashed towards the bank.

This was what relieved me, for it seemed that danger to Doris and myself might be avoided. And then, at that precise moment, the mastiff swung round, paused, and glared balefully across at me.

of course, I could have escaped with ease. With skates on my feet, I could have whizzed away beyond all reach of this mad horror.

But the thought was impossible. To run away, and leave Doris to the mercy of that brute was unthinkable. I didn't speak to her—I didn't utter a sound. The girl was on her feet now, pale and frightened. For she, too, understood the peril—although, perhaps, she did not fully realise its horrible nature.

She had one skate on, and one off—as unfortunate a predicament as could be imagined. Had she been soundly equipped, we might

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For a second my heart nearly stopped beating. The ghastly brute was not more than a hundred yards distant, and if it decided to attack, it seemed that nothing could save us. For such an onslaught would be indescribably savage and ferocious. Against that maddened creature we should be helpless.

Then the climax came.

The dog suddenly gave vent to a savage howling snarl—a cry that was awful to hear. And it came straight for me! The foam dripped from its mouth, and the situation was horrifying.

Even the loss of one second would be fatal. I don't know what made me decide so quickly, but thank Heaven I did! Alone,

both have skated away at top speed. But it was impossible for Doris to skate at all.

And so, in one rush, I grabbed her.

Not expecting the onslaught, the girl was freshly startled. But I didn't care. There wasn't time to care. She was swept off her feet by that rush, and by a miracle I gathered her in my arms, and maintained my balance. Even now, I don't know how I did it.

She was quite small, and slim. The burden was not an overwhelming one, although she handicapped my movements to a far greater extent than I had supposed. I shot away into mid-river, and gathered speed.

"Don't struggle!" I gasped curtly. "It's a matter of life or death!"

"Oh!" she sobbed. "Faster—faster!"

There was a note of sheer terror in her voice. For she had her head over my shoulder, and was able to see in the rear. And the dog, now snarling and muttering in the most unnerving way, was pounding on our track.

With Doris in my arms, it was impossible for me to gather full speed. And, consequently, our fiendish pursuer was gaining. It was little wonder that Doris nearly fainted in my arms.

For she could see the baleful eyes of that demoniacal monster; she could see the foam dripping from its bared, horrible fangs. And the sight was enough to make the stoutest heart quake.

"Oh, he's gaining!" she screamed. "Quicker, he's gaining!"

But her injunction was futile. Already I was using every ounce of speed possible. I had a faint impression that one or two figures in the distance were looking on, horrified.

And then Doris gave a shriek of alarm. For the great mastiff, getting nearer, had made one flying leap into mid-air. And the girl's scarf was waving in our rear.

The dog snapped at the scarf, and touched it. And the sudden jerk, so unexpected, upset my equilibrium. In vain I attempted to avert the disaster. Even in that fleeting second, I pictured what the horrible result would be.

But my efforts were in vain, and we crashed down on the ice. We fell in such a way that I was in a sitting position, with Doris still in my arms—so that jarring fall had hurt neither of us.

But our speed had been so tremendous that an immediate stoppage did not result. We simply slithered over the ice at a great pace, twirling, twisting, but still clutching at one another.

And the dog was immediately behind—also sprawling on the slippery ice. He was just as much in confusion as we were.

I caught a fleeting glimpse of a post that rose out of the ice itself. My heart jumped, for I knew that a board was fixed to the top of that post, bearing the word, "danger."

We were skidding towards the northern bank of the river, where a heavy clump of trees overhung the ice. As a consequence, this small piece of ice was generally weak, and skaters always used the other part of the river. It was a recognised custom to avoid this particular spot.

And beyond all control, we were slithering on to the danger zone!

Even if we had wanted to change our course, we could not do so. We skidded on wildly, and I heard one or two ominous splintering cracks. And the next moment the ice crumpled beneath our weight, and we plunged through into the icy cold water.

For a second I was too numbed with the sudden immersion to know what had happened. Instinctively, I still clutched at the

girl. And then I found myself at the surface, gulping in a breath of air. Doris was like a dead weight in my arms. She had fainted.

In spite of this new peril, I gazed round wildly, for some sign of the dog. But there was no evidence of it whatever. I remembered a fleeting glimpse of the animal plunging into the water with us.

The current was strong beneath the ice—the black-looking water tugging at my legs, and trying to pull me underneath—to certain death. Never would I have believed that the undercurrent could be so strong.

But the dog had vanished—utterly, completely.

And a possible solution to the mystery came to me. The dog had plunged down with us—and, being smaller, had been caught in that current, and dragged beneath the ice. The wretched animal was now in the throes of its death struggles beyond all hope of recovery.

It was a merciful end—both for itself and for us. For, although the creature had been so appallingly dangerous, there was no doubt that it had suffered untold agonies. And a swift death was the best way out of its misery.

But Doris and I were beset by a peril that was nearly as grave. Had the girl retained consciousness, it might have been easier. But she was like a dead thing in my arms—her face pale and drawn, her usually curly hair all wet and matted, and straggling over her face.

Even then I couldn't recall how I had managed to retain my grip. But I was doing so, and with despair in my heart, I clutched at the edge of the ice, knowing full well that I could do nothing unaided.

The water was deep—seven or eight feet, at least. For me to touch the bottom was out of the question. And the ice at the edges of the hole, was brittle and thin. As I pulled upon it with my full weight, great splinters cracked off, and again and again we sank back into the icy river.

And I was becoming numbed—my brain was reeling. The clump of trees on the river bank were now blurred to my vision. I tried to cry for help, but only a hoarse, cracked whisper left my throat.

My limbs were ceasing to function. Even my fingers, when I clutched again at the ice, refused to gain a hold. The sensation of helplessness was maddening—and would have been trebly so if my wits had been fully acute.

But now I was getting indifferent—I didn't seem to care what happened. My one desire was to give up the struggle, and to sink back. Queer, flashing lights seemed to dance and flicker across my eyes.

And at this moment a great, ungainly figure plunged into the water beside me. My distorted vision seemed to mock at me, for this thing that plunged in was almost

double the size of an ordinary man—a great shaggy monster that was terrifying to look upon.

I caught a glimpse of a black face—an appalling face that was covered with coarse, matted hair. I saw a flash of teeth, and a gleam of the eyes. And then I felt a grip—an iron grip—upon my shoulders.

Others who had seen the incident from a distance—and who were even then speeding up to the rescue—told of that remarkable affair with awed voices. They explained how an extraordinary creature had leapt from amid the trees—a shape that looked like nothing earthly. Without hesitation, it had leapt upon the ice, and had plunged straight into the gaping rent.

Our strange rescuer was eight feet in height, if he was an inch. And he actually stood there—on the river bed! His head was just above water, and in his enormous arms, he held the two of us—upraised, so that we were clear of the water.

And thus he stood, holding us in security until help should arrive. He knew well enough that he could not do more. For all his height and strength, he had his limitations.

Although still numb and chilled, I began to recover somewhat. And I recognised our queer rescuer. He was that remarkable monstrosity—a freak of nature—whom Reginald Pitt and I had once encountered in Bellton Wood. We had washed and bandaged a wound in the black giant's foot, and although he had expressed no gratitude at the time, it was fairly clear that he had recognised me now.

And, seeing the peril that I was in, he had dared to come out into the open, in order to repay his debt. Ordinarily, the man had remained hidden by daylight, only to venture forth like some ghoul in the hours of darkness. He was, as I well knew, Dr. Karnak's instrument—although there was no evidence of this, and no visible connection between the two.

But it must not be supposed that all these thoughts passed through my mind during that intense period. I was merely thankful that rescue had come. For, without question, the black giant had plunged in only in the nick of time.

Another five seconds, and I should have loosed my already slipping hold. And, once tugged away by that fierce undercurrent, no power on earth could have saved Doris and I from a death that was too awful to contemplate. For, under the ice, we could have done nothing.

As through a mist, I caught sight of figures speeding across the ice. I recognised Handforth and Pitt and Archie among the vanguard of the crowd. They had got wind of the disaster, and were rushing up to help.

But, even now, the danger was not over.

CHAPTER IV.

A SURPRISE FOR DR. KARNAK!



"THEY'VE fallen through the ice!" "Good heavens!" "Quick! We've got to rush, or we'll be too late!"

The juniors shouted anxiously and urgently as they raced to the spot. Irene Manners was pale and agitated. And, indeed, so were the other girls. Even the juniors were half scared.

"Doris!" cried Irene. "Oh, where's Doris?"

"She's drowned—she's fallen in!" sobbed one of the other girls.

"It's all right—don't worry!" exclaimed Jack Grey. "Doris was with Nipper—and you can trust him to see that she's all right. But somebody said there was a mad dog—"

"Yes, it fell in the gap, when they all went through," put in Armstrong. "I shouldn't be surprised if they've been bitten. We'd better be careful, you know. People who've been bitten by mad dogs go dotty themselves!"

Nobody took any notice of Armstrong—although quite a number of fellows believed that the mad dog had got in some bites. And any further discussion was impossible, for the spot had been reached.

Handforth and Pitt and Watson approached as near as possible. And they stared blankly. For never in their wildest moments had they expected to see that black-faced, shaggy creature. Only the man's head and shoulders were visible, but these were startling enough in appearance.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Handforth breathlessly.

"It's no good being jiggered—we've got to get busy!" broke in Pitt. "I know! We'll tear down a part of the fence, and lay it on the ice! It's no good trying to get near without some support, or we shall all fall in!"

"You said a mouthful!" exclaimed Ulysses Spencer Adams. "We'll sure find a fence around here some place. Gee! The very doggone dope!" he added, glancing at the flimsy fence which divided off a neighbouring meadow. "Say, boys, let's get to it."

The juniors didn't hesitate. They knew that every second was of value, and they fairly rushed at the fence, floundering clumsily over the snow-covered ground in their skates.

There was strength in numbers, and by a combined heave the crowd of juniors succeeded in wrenching down a big portion of fence. If the situation had not been so desperate, they might not have succeeded, but urgency lent them strength.

"Oh, be quick! Be quick!" exclaimed Irene, in a fever of anxiety.

"All right! Come in!"

"Hold on, Nipper! Only a minute now!"

The big piece of fence was rushed down to the river, and slid bodily across the ice. In fact, the juniors were so eager that they nearly caused a fresh disaster, for the fence skidded dangerously and nearly crashed into us all as we lay in the water. The black giant was compelled to let me go while he thrust off the fence with his hand.

I went under the water, came up again, and clutched at the welcome support. And now I found that Handforth and Archie and Tregellis-West and others were crawling over the woodwork.

Their first thought was for Doris.

The black man knew that this was so, and he raised the girl up in his mighty arm as though she was a mere doll. And Doris was gently lifted clear, and carried back until she was lying on the bank. The girl was still unconscious, and her face was almost waxen.

his eyes keen, and he grabbed hold of Willy Handforth, who was near.

"Got your skates on?" he rapped out. "Good! Shoot off like lightning!"

"Where to?" gasped Willy.

"Dr. Brett," said Pitt. "Bring him back at all costs—not here, but to the school. Rush as you've never rushed before!"

"Right!" shouted the fag.

He was off like the wind, streaking down the river at top speed. He was an excellent skater, and could be trusted to reach the village in a few minutes, and the river ran close by Dr. Brett's house.

Pitt, having done everything possible for a moment—and, indeed, having done wonderfully well—turned back to the river. By this time I had been hauled out, and was fairly smothered in more overcoats, but, unlike Doris, I was fully conscious.



I went under the water, came up again, and clutched at the welcome support.

"She's dead! She's dead!" whispered Irene, aghast.

"She's not! She'll be all right after she's come to!" declared Pitt sharply. "Quick! Don't stand here, you chaps! Overcoats—scarves! What's the matter with you? Can't you move yourselves?" he shouted.

Half a dozen fellows wrenched off their overcoats, electrified by Reggie's tone, and the unconscious girl was wrapped in the warm coats until she was practically buried.

"Now four of you rush her straight to the school!" commanded Pitt, who had apparently taken command. "Don't stop a second for anything! A minute's delay may mean all the difference between life and death."

Four juniors instantly grasped the girl and hurried off at the double, fully conscious of the need for haste. Pitt looked round,

"No need for all this fuss," I muttered with chattering teeth. "How's Doris?"

"Don't know. She's unconscious," answered Watson bluntly.

"She's dead! Oh, I know she's dead!" said Marjorie, in tears.

"I don't think so," I said. "She's only fainted."

"Look here! What about that dog?" demanded Handforth. "Didn't the rotten thing bite you? Somebody said——"

"Thank Heaven the brute was swept away by the current," I muttered. "I can't explain how it happened, but neither Doris nor I were touched."

"Don't stand talking here, you idiots!" said Pitt sharply, coming up. "Carry him off to the school, and see that he's shoved between warm blankets! Nipper, old man,

you're a brick! If Doris gets over this, she'll know well enough that she owes her life to you!"

"Rats!" I growled. "Don't be an ass!"

"Pitt's right," said Watson stoutly. "We saw it all. The way you grabbed hold of Doris and whizzed off when that dog made for you was marvellous. Any other chap would have gone dotty."

"Never mind that," I said, shivering. "What about that black fellow? But for him we should both have been swept away long before this. Where is he? Can't you do something instead of jawing at me?"

I couldn't get any reply to my questions, and although I insisted upon walking back to St. Frank's, I was not allowed to do so. Half a dozen juniors grasped me, and I was swiftly carried away. Now that I come to think of it, I very much doubt if I should have been able to walk, for I was still numbed, and the most acute sensation of pins and needles was beginning to beset me. And I felt strangely languid.

In the meantime, the grotesque black man was pulled out of the river. He made a vain attempt to escape, but could not do so. He had stood there, immersed in the icy water, until all sensation had left his limbs and his body, and his enormous legs refused to perform their duties. Upon reaching the bank, the strange creature quite collapsed. His enormous strength counted for nothing now that the icy coldness had seized him in its grip. Giant though he was, Dame Nature had laid him low.

All the remaining available overcoats were commandeered, and the third victim of the affair was carried up to St. Frank's, but he required a dozen fellows to perform this service.

Only a few minutes after I had arrived, Dr. Brett put in an appearance. Willy, it seemed, had arrived at the practitioner's house at a very favourable moment, for Dr. Brett had just driven up in his two-seater. And, with only a brief delay to grab some medical accessories, he raced for the school at a speed that had made the village constable grunt with indignation.

St. Frank's was in an uproar.

The story spread like wildfire; indeed, it became enormously exaggerated. All sorts of extraordinary rumours were going about during the first fifteen minutes. Some fellows believed that Doris and I had been drowned. Others thought that I alone was the unhappy victim, and still more were informed that both of us had been bitten to death by the mad dog.

But after half an hour the truth leaped out, and it was welcome enough to all, for it was reported that both Doris Berkeley and myself were in no danger, and that we should soon be ourselves.

But without question it was Reggie Pitt's rapid grasping of the situation that had saved serious consequences.

Miss Charlotte Bond, the principal of the Moor View School, came over to St. Frank's

in a fine fluster, accompanied by Mrs. Tracey, the housekeeper, a kindly buxom soul, who was nearly exhausted with running and with anxiety. Both were intensely relieved when they heard the truth.

Of course Mrs. Poulter, the matron of the Ancient House, came out very strong. She it was who sent the maids hustling to the cupboards to bring forth endless blankets; she it was who caused the fire in her own cosy room to be banked up until it was nearly fit to roast an ox.

And there Doris was tended by willing, eager kitchen-maids and Mrs. Poulter herself. In next to no time the girl's wet clothing was removed, and she was rolled in the grateful blankets. And even before Dr. Brett arrived Doris was showing signs of returning consciousness.

As for me, I was bundled headlong into Nelson Lee's study, and submitted to similar treatment, being wrapped in blankets before the fire, and by the time all this was accomplished I had practically recovered.

The black man was accommodated in Josh Cuttle's lodge, and Dr. Brett pronounced that he was only temporarily incapacitated.

An hour later St. Frank's was practically normal again. The first feverish excitement had died down, and although the affair was talked of to the exclusion of all else, there was now more calmness.

"How are we feeling now, eh?" asked Dr. Brett breezily as he came into Nelson Lee's study. "Upon my soul, Nipper, you're looking fine!"

"I'm feeling fine, too," I growled. "Look here, doctor, you're not going to keep me muffled up like this, I suppose? The gov'nor's forbidden me to get dressed, but you'll settle that, won't you?"

"Why, of course!" said Brett, smiling.

"Oh, thanks awfully!"

"I'll settle it, but not in the way you require!" went on the doctor grimly. "No, my lad! If you think you're going to get dressed straight away, you'd better forget it. You're going straight to bed—now, at once! In the sanatorium, too, between blankets, and——"

"Oh, help!" I groaned. "I'm all right, I tell you."

"I believe you are, but we're not taking any chances," said Brett. "It's the easiest thing in the world to contract a chill, and that might lead to pneumonia. So, young man, it's bed for you!"

"It's all rot, but I suppose I can't get out of it," I grunted. "How's Miss Doris?"

"Fine! A wonderful recovery," replied the doctor. "It was more shock than anything else that caused her to faint. She's strong and wiry, and in my opinion she'll be out and about by Saturday. Mrs. Poulter will look after her until then."

"Thank goodness," I said with relief. "And the black chap?"

"Oh, he's as strong as a horse! It was only numbness with him," said Brett. "Upon my word, I got a bit of a shock when

I first examined that specimen! The queerest piece of humanity I've ever set eyes on! What do you make of it, Lee?" he added, turning to the gov'nor.

"The man is obviously an African," replied Nelson Lee. "He seems to be a mixture of Moorish and Nubian blood, and is obviously one of Nature's freaks. But I think he is quite harmless in himself—a simple-minded, helpless sort of creature. I shall have to see what can be done about him."

"But do you think he escaped from a menagerie or something?"

"No; his presence near St. Frank's was quite different, in my opinion," replied Lee vaguely. "Without a doubt he was brought here by another. But we will leave the matter for the time being, doctor."

A sound of much disturbance came from outside, in the Triangle. Dr. Brett went to the window and then chuckled.

"They're cheering you, Nipper," he said, grinning. "Quite an ovation! You appear to be the hero of the hour."

"The fatheads!" I growled. "They ought to have more sense!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Nipper!"

"Three cheers for our captain!"

"Hip! Hip! Hurrah!"

The fellows were certainly making as much noise as they could, and it seemed quite ridiculous to me that they should kick up all this fuss. In my opinion, the black chap was the real hero of the occasion.

And while all this was going on Dr. Karnak was in his own room, pacing grimly up and down, like a caged tiger. His fists were clenched and his eyes were gleaming with alarm and anger.

"The fool! The cursed fool!" he muttered thickly.

His thoughts were upon that black giant who now lay in the porter's lodge, for, of course, the deformed man was Dr. Karnak's own creature, his tool. He had been a kind of bodyguard for the science lecturer, a slave, to be used in any way that his master desired. For Karnak had that same mysterious hypnotic power over the black that he had over De Valerie. It seemed that this power was cut now that the man was in our hands.

But although Dr. Karnak was startled, due reflection brought relief to him, for there was nothing to connect that strange negro with himself. His only hope was that the man would be allowed to go free, but somehow he had a feeling that this would not happen.

And Dr. Karnak's surmise was correct, for that very afternoon Nelson Lee was talking for quite a time on the telephone, and in the evening a big, closed private car arrived, and quietly, without the school knowing anything about it, the black man was taken away into the night.

It was not until the next day that I knew anything about it, and then I heard that the gov'nor had made arrangements with a

big sanatorium in Helmford to take care of the black until further inquiries could be made, and until affairs could be arranged so that the queer creature could be sent back to his native Africa.

Nelson Lee had taken this matter on his own shoulders, and the expense was his. He did so because he was convinced that the unfortunate monstrosity was an entirely innocent tool.

And by taking this action he had rescued the man from the sinister power of Dr. Karnak. And Dr. Karnak himself could make no objection, for he was not outwardly connected with that strange black man.

As the gov'nor had anticipated, the Egyptian remained discreetly silent, and did not even refer to the subject. He went on with his usual occupation at St. Frank's, and it really seemed that the matter would blow over.

But in the privacy of his own room Dr. Karnak cursed Nelson Lee with all the venom of his strange nature. Karnak did not know how much of the truth Lee was aware of, and this caused him to be uneasy and unsettled.

And he grimly told himself that something would have to be done. The detective's interference, whether intentional or unintentional, was galling. A suspicion lurked in Dr. Karnak's mind that Lee was fully aware of the position.

I was impatient at being kept in bed, for I felt perfectly well and fit. But I was glad that the black man had gone. He was one problem solved, one difficulty out of the way.

And as I lay in bed, while all the rest of the fellows were at lessons, I had plenty of time to think over the strange events which had been recently taking place in and about the school.

I wondered if we should see any more of those strange enemies of Dr. Karnak's, those Arabs or Egyptians who had captured Nelson Lee in mistake for Dr. Karnak. I could not believe that they had gone. I felt that they still lurked somewhere near, ready to pounce when the opportunity presented itself.

We had no definite knowledge on the subject, but Nelson Lee had formulated a theory. He believed that Dr. Karnak was a renegade from some secret Egyptian cult. The sacred moon god was their deity, for, according to the actions of these mysterious individuals, they could only touch Dr. Karnak while the moon was shining upon the land.

He was safe to go out in the daylight or in the blackest darkness—as, indeed, he had proved. He went forth fearless on such occasions as these. But never once during the past few weeks had Dr. Karnak ventured beyond the doors of the Ancient House while the moon was in the sky.

It was a queer puzzle, but I had a conviction that it would soon be solved, and

I was equally certain that dramatic events were in store.

I wasn't far wrong.

CHAPTER V.

NELSON LEE PUTS HIS FOOT DOWN!



"GOOD news to-day!" remarked Tommy Watson as he helped himself to a sandwich.

"You mean about Doris?" I asked.

"Rather!" replied Tommy. "She's as right as ninepence again, and looking healthier than ever. Not so bad for a girl, you know. It's only three days since she had that ducking, and she might have got horribly ill. You know what girls are," he added vaguely.

Sir Montie Tregellis-West adjusted his pince-nez.

"Dear old boy, kindly explain that remark," he said firmly. "Begad, it was an insult to the fair sex—it was, really!"

"Rats!" grinned Tommy. "I simply meant that girls are generally so jolly delicate. If they get a ducking through the ice they catch pneumonia, and lay ill for weeks. But Doris is different. She must be as strong as the dickens, you know. She's not only herself again, but looking better than ever."

It was tea-time in Study C, and the news from the Moor View School was indeed good. Personally, I was none the worse for my adventure, and had been up and about since the previous morning. But it was good to know that Doris had suffered no ill effects.

Perhaps I had better mention that the mad dog had been traced from Caistowe. He had wandered through several hamlets, then into Bellton, and so on to the frozen river. Fortunately, he had bitten nobody, although several people had had narrow escapes. The countryside was thankful that the dangerous creature had gone to its death.

"I think, dear fellows, that everythin' has turned out rippin'ly," remarked Sir Montie, as he stirred his tea. "Both Nipper an' Doris are all serene, an' that queer black chap has been taken away. I don't suppose we shall see him again."

"No," I said thoughtfully. "I suppose not. I can't help feeling pretty grateful to the chap—ugly and awful though he is. If it hadn't been for him, we should have drowned."

"Oh, I don't know," said Watson. "Handy and a lot of the other fellows were dashing

up at top speed, you know. They would have lugged you out—"

"It's rather decent of you to put it that way, Tommy, but I don't agree with you," I broke in. "When that black fellow jumped in, I was on the very point of slipping under. I don't think I could have clutched to the ice for another two seconds. And with my limbs all numb, we should simply have been swept away by the current."

Tommy Watson shivered.

"Ugh!" he muttered. "That's awful to think about!"

"It is—and that's why I'm so grateful to that African freak," I replied. "I'm jolly glad that the guv'nor is taking care of him, and making arrangements to send him back. But we needn't continue the subject. Let's go down to the common-room for a bit."

Tea was just over, and so a few minutes later we went down and joined the crowd in the Junior common-room. Handforth was talking in a somewhat indignant voice, and for once his listeners were approving his

"Quite right, Handy!"

"Something ought to be done about it!"

"Hear, hear!"

words.

"Yes, by George, and something is going to be done about it!" said Handforth grimly. "It's a disgrace to the school! It's an insult to the Remove! It's a blot on the famous record of St. Frank's!"

"Begad!" said Sir Montie. "What's all the excitement about, dear old boy?"

Handforth glared across at us.

"Oh!" he said, a mocking note creeping into his voice. "Here comes the skipper—our wonderful captain! The chap who lets this horrible state of affairs continue without moving a finger."

"I stand reproved," I said humbly. "What is it this time, Handy?"

"You know jolly well what it is!" snorted Handforth. "Those blithering idiots have just gone off to another of their rotten meetings! And you, the skipper, stand by and see these things being done!"

"Light breaks upon me," I said. "You mean De Valerie and Skelton and Tucker and that crowd? The delightful members of our tame Sorcery Club?"

"Of course that's what I mean!" retorted Handforth tartly. "But you look upon it as a joke—you stand there grinning! But it isn't a joke! It's a terribly serious menace to the morale of the Form!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Handy—he's getting quite eloquent!"

"His words, indeed, we'll surely heed," said Clarence Fellowe, the tall, lanky poet of the Remove. "For this situation may lead to ruination. These chaps are mad—'tis awfully sad."

"Good old Shakespeare!" said Reggie Pitt, strolling in. "What words of wisdom now flow from thy fount of knowledge?"

ANSWERS

EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

"At me you jeer, but never fear, my words are truly ones of wisdom," replied Fellowe. "But all the same I think this game is rotten for the system!"

"Help!" murmured Pitt. "Wisdom—system! Oh, Clarence!" he added, shocked. "You'll ruin your reputation if you spring any more on us like that! I'm surprised at you!"

Clarence looked penitent.

"The rhyme was bad, and although I'm sad, I crave your humble pardon," he said. "But you'll fain confess I could do no less, for the rhyme it was a hard 'un."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's getting worse!" said Pitt desperately. "Go it, Handy! Say something, and quick, so that he doesn't have another chance."

Handforth was already glaring round.

"I was trying to speak, when you butted in," he said tartly. "As for this—this alleged poet, he can go and eat coke! I want to know what Nipper's going to do about the Sorcery Club."

"Nothing!" I said sweetly.

"Nothing?"

"Nothing!" I repeated calmly.

"That's three nothings," observed Pitt. "Add them all together, subtract one nothing from the other nothings, and you get the answer—which is nothing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why didn't somebody put this fat-head in a bag when he was a baby, and chuck him over the Thames Embankment?" asked Handforth thickly. "He comes here, trying to be funny, and messes up my speech!"

"Sorry, old man," grinned Pitt. "Now I come to think of it, I'm on your side. I agree with you that the Sorcery Club ought to be abolished. And I herewith second the motion that our worthy skipper should exercise his right leg in order to get the muscles developed. He ought to give these fatheads the kick-out!"

I shook my head.

"I don't see why you fellows should get so excited," I remarked. "You know human nature as well as I do—or you ought to. The more we try to urge that gang to chuck up their rot, the more they'll practise it. That's just the perverseness of humanity."

"Can't we use force?" sneered Handforth.

"Certainly—we can go along and smash up one of their meetings," I replied. "But do you think that would put a stop to the game? Not a bit of it! They'd be more determined than ever. On the other hand, left to themselves, they'll soon get fed up with the whole game, and it will die a natural death. Or perhaps a master will butt in and settle the matter out of hand."

"Why not ask Mr. Lee to get busy?" asked Armstrong.

"Because it wouldn't be quite the thing," I replied. "If the gov'nor gets wind of these meetings on his own account, all

well and good. But I don't think it's up to us to inform."

"Hear, hear!"

"Nipper's right!"

"Chuck it up, Handy—spouting doesn't do any good!"

Handforth turned red, appeared to be on the point of explosion, and then he abruptly shrugged his shoulders with exaggerated indifference and carelessness.

"Oh, all right!" he said bitterly. "I'm not surprised—I expected it! Whenever I make a good suggestion, Nipper comes along and hypnotises you! Five minutes ago you were supporting me, and now you support him! Go and eat coke! Go and fry your giddy faces!"

And Handforth stalked out of the common-room, bubbling over with indignation.

"Poor old Handy!" grinned Pitt. "He means well, but he's a bit too impetuous. And he's right, too. This sorcery business is absolutely rotten. But I'll admit that the position is a difficult one to handle."

In the meantime, the meeting that Handforth had referred to was just getting into its swing.

It was being held in the museum, and Dr. Karnak himself presided over the gathering. Among those present were Cecil De Valerie—the prime mover in the club—Timothy Tucker, Skelton, Ellmore, and Simmons.

There was an air of solemnity and almost religious fervour in the atmosphere of the meeting. This was Dr. Karnak's doing, who impressed upon the boys that these occult gatherings were scientific in the extreme, and a necessary part of their education. And the Egyptian had such a powerful personality that his disciples believed in him with a confidence that was astonishing.

The juniors were sitting in a circle, all holding hands. They were, in fact, squatting on the floor, on cushions. And Dr. Karnak was talking in a low, droning voice that was in itself impressive. His dark face was immobile, his eyes dreamy and lack-lustre.

Only a dim light was glowing, and this was so shaded that the whole place had a dim, ghostly appearance. Dr. Karnak was a skilful showman when it came to staging his little tricks for the benefit of the boys.

In the centre of the circle lay a small casket which was standing upon a stone slab. This casket and slab had been used in other experiments, and if the juniors had not been so gripped by Dr. Karnak's plausible impressiveness, they might have suspected that all was not as it should be. True, they had examined the casket, and they had examined the slab. And both had been found solid and above board.

But then, if it comes to that, an acknowledged conjurer—a professed trickster in magic—will frequently hand his apparatus round for inspection. And the audience, knowing well enough that a trick lies somewhere, cannot detect it. It was hardly sur-

prising that Dr. Karnak had no trouble with his gullible pupils.

And the experiment this evening was to see what could be done with a small, dead snake—one of the specimens from a showcase in the museum. The boys were told to fix their attention upon the snake unswervingly.

"Our attempt at communication with the spirits of my long-departed countrymen will be difficult," purred Dr. Karnak softly. "We have met with some measure of success on other occasions, but I fear that this evening we have set ourselves too severe a task. However, we can but try."

"What—what's the snake for?" asked Skelton huskily.

"Our aim is to communicate with the spirit of the deathless snake of Ancient Egyptian mythology," said Dr. Karnak. "By acute concentration—by listening to my solemn and impressive words—we may possibly achieve our end. For in the dim, distant past, thousands of years ago, a famous sorcerer of Babylon was the incarnation of the deathless snake. It is his spirit that we shall try to bring to us. If we succeed, the evidence will be visible to our eyes."

"You—you mean he'll appear before us, sir?" asked Skelton fearfully.

"Not so," replied Dr. Karnak. "This snake—this dead, dried specimen of reptilian fauna—will come to life in plain view of us. For it will be invested with that ancient spirit. 'Tis an interesting test."

Dr. Karnak went on, talking dreamily, and telling the fellows of wondrous things that happened in ancient times—and wondrous things that had never happened at all.

For when he was dealing with these juniors he paid no great attention to the authenticity of his statements. He told of sorcerers who never existed, of mighty gods who had been invented by his own fertile brain. And for the purposes of his lectures he would turn and twist things about to suit his own ends.

When lecturing before the Sixth, or when engaged upon a serious discourse with the Head, Dr. Karnak was another being. Then he was faultlessly accurate in his facts.

But these deluded Removites drank it all in, and regarded Dr. Karnak as a veritable mystic.

Any onlooker at that gathering who was not swayed by Dr. Karnak's personality would have found it interesting. Cecil De Valerie sat in his place, intent and keen, and obviously concentrating upon the subject. For he was entirely in the sway of Dr. Karnak's will.

Timothy Tucker was very much as usual. He was a queer sort of fellow, and even this spiritualistic nonsense entertained him greatly. He had an idea that he was what he termed "an intellectual."

But one or two of the others, particularly Skelton, showed obvious signs of the heavy

strain. These meetings meant intensive mental stress. And the weaker fellows, naturally, showed the effects.

Skelton was a thin, weakly sort of fellow at the best of times. He was a bit of a dunce, and occupied a lowly position in the class-room. He was rather eccentric, too—which was one reason why he had joined this preposterous club. And although he was fascinated by it, he was frightened, too.

During the last week or so his face had become more than usually pale; his cheeks drawn, and his eyes rather wild. And now, on this particular night, he sat gazing at that dead reptile with an intensity that was painful to see. But the others were not regarding Skelton, and they did not observe his condition.

He was in a highly nervous state. His whole being was at a high tension, and at any moment he was liable to show some sign of this condition.

The mock seance went on—for it could hardly be doubted that Dr. Karnak was deliberately playing upon the credulity of his audience. If any manifestation occurred, it would certainly be no occult phenomenon.

Dr. Karnak went on in his soft, purring voice—which, in itself, was lulling and mysterious. And his strange pet, the Serva cat, sat near him, in a crouching attitude. The greenish, glinting eyes of the animal were upon that snake. It seemed that Dr. Karnak had trained the cat to assist him.

"Ah!" breathed Dr. Karnak suddenly. "Watch—watch! Already there is movement! Make no sound, my young friends—but watch!"

The juniors, catching their breath in, stared with a kind of awful fascination at that snake—which they knew to be dead—a mere dried relic. And yet the coils slowly began to move—writhingly, uncannily.

"The spirit of the Babylonian is within!" breathed Dr. Karnak.

"Oh!" sobbed Skelton abruptly. "I—I can't stand it! It's horrible—it's too awful—"

He broke off, his voice sobbing.

And then he shrank back from the circle, with Dr. Karnak's frowning eyes fixed upon him. Skelton stood there, cringing, cowering—terror in his eyes, his lips a-tremble.

"Foolish boy!" snapped Dr. Karnak. "What ails you?"

Skelton made no reply—except, indeed, that he sobbed and laughed hysterically in turn. All movement of the snake had ceased. The spell, in fact, seemed to be broken.

"Go!" said Dr. Karnak softly. "You are not yourself to-night, Skelton. Leave us—go outside into the fresh air, and you will recover your composure. But tell nobody of these doings. They are our secrets."

Skelton turned towards the door eagerly—almost precipitately. He felt, just then, that his one desire was to flee—to get away from this place as quickly as he could. It gave him the horrors.

He went out, after unlocking the door, and closed the latter after him. And Dr. Karnak sat down in his place again.

"A pity—a great pity," he murmured. "I fear the interruption will have ruined everything for to-night. But we will continue. Perhaps the wretched boy's influence was a deterrent rather than a help. Who knows?"

In consequence of Skelton's departure, the circle was slightly diminished in size, but this made very little difference. The meeting went on as though nothing had happened.

In the meantime Skelton had passed through the library, and was now in the passage, beyond. He felt sick and faint, and it was quite impossible for him to control the trembling of his limbs. His nerves were unstrung. Slowly he walked along the passage.

And it so happened that Willy Handforth, of the Third, turned a corner at the end of the passage at that moment. The hero of the Third gave Skelton one glance, and then dodged into a handy alcove.

"One of those Sorcery Club fatheads," he murmured to himself. "By gum! I'll bet I'll give him a jump!"

Willy considered that he would be doing Skelton a good service by acting thus. Skelton was quite unconscious of the fag's proximity, for his eyes had been downcast, and he had heard nothing.

He drew opposite the recess, and just as he was passing, a form suddenly leapt out—clutching at him, and giving a wild whoop.

The effect upon Skelton was startling.

He staggered back, his already pale face turning to the colour of putty, and his expression was one of extreme terror. It gave Willy about the biggest turn of his life.

And Skelton screamed—a wild, terrified cry. He sank to the floor in a shuddering, moaning heap. And the Third Former stood there, trembling himself with alarm.

"Skelton!" he gasped. "I—I say! What did you yell like that for? Skelton! Pull yourself together, you ass——"

He broke off, for Skelton gave no response. He lay on the floor, nearly swooning with shock. And Willy Handforth was rather relieved when Nelson Lee turned the corner a second later. The House master took in the situation at a glance.

"Who made that outcry just now?" he asked sharply. "Why, what is this? Handforth minor! What have you done——"

"Nothing, sir!" gasped Willy desperately. "At least, nothing much. I saw Skelton coming along, and dodged into this recess. And when I jumped out at him, he seemed to have a fit."

"It was wrong of you, Handforth minor, to play such a trick," snapped Lee. "I shall report you to your Form master. Skelton!" he added, taking the Removite



Dr. Karnak was kneeling before a little pedestal, on which stood an image of Baal, the sacred moon god.

by the shoulder. "Come, my boy! This won't do!"

But at that first touch, Nelson Lee could feel the trembling, quaking form beneath him. He held up Skelton's face, and was startled to see the deadly pallor of that countenance.

"Good Heavens!" he muttered. "Come, Skelton! There's nothing to fear——"

"The snake," muttered Skelton. "Oh! I—I——"

Nelson Lee caught the boy up, and talked to him softly and soothingly. His influence was almost immediately apparent, for Skelton was soon talking coherently. And the colour was beginning to creep back into his cheeks.

At first he was reluctant to explain what he meant by that reference to a snake. But Nelson Lee was skilled in the art of loosening tongues. And in less than five minutes he had persuaded Skelton to tell him of the meeting in the museum. And as Nelson Lee listened to the details, his brow grew black.

By this time Skelton was greatly recovered, and Lee told him to go straight up to bed, and to say nothing to any of the other juniors. Skelton was only too eager to obey. And after he had gone, Lee went through the library, and strode

swiftly into the museum—breaking in upon the seance with dramatic effect.

For once again this snake was moving, and all the members in the circle with the exception of Dr. Karnak, were in a state of high nervous excitement.

The Egyptian looked up with a swift intake of breath. He had guarded against such an interruption by locking the door at first—but he had neglected to re-lock it after Skelton's departure—a slip he now regretted.

Nelson Lee strode forward until he was on the very edge of the circle. His eyes were grim as he gazed at Dr. Karnak—who had risen majestically and with dignity to his feet.

"Be good enough to explain, Dr. Karnak, what this means," said Nelson Lee, his voice cold and curt.

The Egyptian shrugged his shoulders.

"Your tone is needlessly sharp, Mr. Lee," he purred. "A little meeting—nothing more. I have been instructing the boys in natural science, using the specimen you see as my example."

Lee became even more grim—for Dr. Karnak had told a deliberate lie. The detective ignored it, however. It was not his custom to tax a fellow master in the presence of juniors.

He turned to De Valerie and Tucker and the rest—who by this time had risen to their feet.

"Boys, you will leave this room at once!" he said curtly. "Go to your own quarters, and find a more healthy amusement there. I strongly disapprove of this meeting."

"Indeed!" rapped out Dr. Karnak. "You disapprove?"

"Not only do I disapprove, but I absolutely forbid any repetition of such a gathering," said Nelson Lee coldly. "I regret, Dr. Karnak, that I should be compelled to speak in this manner, but I have no alternative. It is my wish that these boys shall leave this museum at once."

Dr. Karnak's eyes glittered, and he turned to his disciples.

"You will not leave until I permit you to do so," he said, with suppressed fury. "I command you."

The juniors, thoroughly scared, hardly knew what to do. Nelson Lee kept his temper, and pointed to the door.

"My boys, you had better go," he said. "I am your Housemaster, and if you defy me to my face the consequences will be serious. And if any boy attends such a meeting as this again he will be flogged."

The juniors hesitated no longer. In spite of Dr. Karnak's strong, compelling personality, he could not command in the same manner as Nelson Lee. Even De Valerie obeyed with the rest.

And, looking scared, they passed out of the museum, and vanished. Dr. Karnak turned a look of utter hatred upon Nelson Lee.

"So!" he snarled. "You have humiliated

me in front of these junior boys! By Heaven, sir, you shall pay for this!"

Without giving Nelson Lee a chance to reply, Dr. Karnak strode away.

CHAPTER VI.

EASTERN HATRED!



DR. STAFFORD looked up in astonishment as the door of his study burst open. Dr.

Karnak fairly precipitated himself into the room, and his face was black and forbidding.

"Dr. Karnak!" exclaimed the Head. "What on earth—Is anything the matter, sir? What is the meaning of this—"

"I have come to you, Dr. Stafford, because I have been grossly insulted by Mr. Lee!" exclaimed the Egyptian furiously. "Insulted in front of a number of boys—junior boys! My patience is great, but such humiliation I cannot suffer! I appeal to you for redress!"

Dr. Stafford was rather dismayed for a moment. He hated any commotion of any kind, and for one of his scholastic staff to complain of Nelson Lee was unprecedented.

"Really, Dr. Karnak, I fail to understand you," he said, in distress. "Surely you must have made some unfortunate mistake? Mr. Lee is not the gentleman to deliberately humiliate you—"

"Wait!" broke in Dr. Karnak passionately, and with a vehemence that was not usually used to the Headmaster. "I will tell you all, Dr. Stafford! And then, perhaps, you may judge!"

"I urge you to calm yourself, sir," said the Head uncomfortably. "Please be seated, and regain your self control. I feel certain that there must be some unhappy error."

Dr. Karnak seated himself impatiently. "There has been no error, sir," he said thickly. "I regret that Mr. Lee has interfered with me in the most unwarrantable fashion. I have come to you to protest against this atrocious behaviour on his part. I have long suspected that he disapproves of my presence in the school, and this evening he has found a way to emit his venom."

"My dear sir—my dear sir!" protested the Head, more distressed than ever. "Please moderate your words! You are unduly excited, I fear. Under no circumstances can I associate such conduct as you describe with Mr. Lee. A little calmness, I feel sure, will ease matters greatly."

Dr. Stafford was pained beyond measure. He had enormous faith in Nelson Lee—indeed, the famous schoolmaster-detective was the Head's chief lieutenant in all matters. Upon any question of importance, the Head called Nelson Lee into consultation with him, and scarcely ever moved without Lee's approval.

On the other hand, he also had faith in Dr. Karnak. The Head lives in a world apart from the juniors, and he knew nothing whatever of Karnak's real personality. He judged him only from the standpoint of a scholar. And in this respect Dr. Karnak was unimpeachable. His knowledge on all subjects of archæology was profound.

One of the Head's chief reasons for desiring Karnak's presence in the school was a bit of a selfish one. For the Head was engaged upon a very learned book on the subject of ancient relics. And he had found Dr. Karnak's knowledge of great assistance to him—in fact, invaluable.

He had not even heard a rumour concerning the Sorcery Club, and the manner in which Dr. Karnak had been influencing the boys. Certainly, the Head had heard a stray remark, here and there, about Dr. Karnak's rather peculiar behaviour of late. But he waved this aside as scarcely worthy of notice. A great scholar such as Dr. Karnak would naturally be eccentric at times.

So it will be seen that the Head respected Dr. Karnak almost as much as he respected Nelson Lee. And for the Egyptian to come to him in this way was indeed upsetting.

"Rest assured, Dr. Stafford, that I am quite calm," exclaimed Karnak, his voice nevertheless quivering slightly. "But this indignity has been put upon me, and I must protest in the strongest possible terms."

"Perhaps you will be good enough to tell me the exact nature—" began the Head.

"I was in the museum," interrupted Dr. Karnak. "With me were a number of junior boys, to whom I was discoursing upon various subjects connected with ancient Egypt."

"A commendable occupation, indeed," observed the Head, nodding.

"I felt sure, sir, that it would meet with your approval," continued Dr. Karnak, his voice becoming softer. "And then, without the slightest warning, Mr. Lee burst in upon our meeting, and commanded the boys to leave the museum at once."

"Indeed! It seems hardly creditable!"

"Do you doubt me, sir?" demanded the Egyptian proudly.

"No, no—assuredly not!" the Head made haste to exclaim.

"But this was not the only reason for my displeasure," continued Dr. Karnak. "I protested, and rightly, but Mr. Lee not only persisted in sending the boys away, but he slighted me cruelly by informing the juniors that should they dare to attend a further meeting under my control, a flogging would be the punishment. I protest, sir—indeed, I demand that this ban of Mr. Lee's shall be removed. I do

not acknowledge that he has the authority to act in such a way."

The Head was quite alarmed. The position was a delicate one. In the position of Housemaster, Nelson Lee naturally had complete control. It was not Dr. Stafford's custom to interfere with his Housemasters, for in that way lay the road to discontent and ill-feeling.

But he certainly felt that Dr. Karnak had just cause for righteous anger. This action on Nelson Lee's part appeared to be one of sheer, petty interference.

And the Head, who was ever straightforward, resolved to thrash it out at once. No good would come of delay. With pursed lips, he touched his bell button, and in a very short time Tubbs put in an appearance.

"Kindly inform Mr. Lee that I desire his presence in my study at his earliest convenience," said the Head curtly. "Oh, and Tubbs! Tell Mr. Lee that the matter is urgent."

"Yessir," said Tubbs promptly.

After he had gone, the Head sat back in his chair, but offered no comment. Dr. Karnak had risen, and was pacing up and down with some uneasiness. He was, in fact, just beginning to realise that his complaint to the Head was rather ill-advised. In the heat of his anger he had come. But perhaps it had been a tactical blunder.

"Perhaps, Dr. Stafford, it would be as well to overlook this affair," he began, magnanimously. "It would pain me exceedingly if an unpleasant scene followed this interview—"

The Egyptian paused, for at that moment Nelson Lee had entered. In any case, it was too late now. Lee, who had already guessed what this sudden call concerned, was certain of it the instant he glanced at the faces of his companions.

"Er—ahem! Thank you, Mr. Lee," said the Head awkwardly. "It was good of you to come so promptly."

"I was informed, Dr. Stafford, that the matter was urgent."

"Yes, to be sure," agreed the Head. "Dear me! I find myself in a most difficult position, Mr. Lee. I regret that Dr. Karnak has felt it necessary to protest against a rather high-handed action on your part. It is all the more distressing to me because I know that such behaviour is quite foreign to your nature. Indeed, I feel sure there will be some simple explanation."

Nelson Lee smiled grimly.

"Does Dr. Karnak tell you that I acted in a high-handed manner?" he asked.

"He—er—states that you slighted him before a number of junior boys."

"And I persist in that declaration," said Karnak, glaring. "It pains me to cause any trouble, but I must protect myself. I deemed it necessary, Mr. Lee, to inform the Headmaster of your unwarrantable

action in the museum, when you deliberately belittled me to no purpose."

Nelson Lee returned Dr. Karnak's look with cold scorn.

"Very well, Dr. Karnak," he said. "Since you have come to the Headmaster in this way, I have no alternative but to relate the full facts."

"Dr. Karnak has already done so, sir," said the Head stiffly.

And, very obligingly, he briefly repeated to Nelson Lee what Dr. Karnak had told him. The Egyptian was not particularly pleased. And he now realised to the full that his temper had led him to blunder badly. He should never have come to Dr. Stafford in this way.

"It grieves me to correct Dr. Karnak's version of the affair, but I am compelled to do so," said Nelson Lee firmly. "And I need hardly tell you, Dr. Stafford, that there are many witnesses to this incident. If Dr. Karnak is anxious for an inquiry—"

"No, no—certainly not!" put in Dr. Karnak quickly.

"I am not surprised at your attitude, sir," said Nelson Lee scathingly. "I put a stop to that meeting because it was utterly and absolutely harmful to the boys themselves. And, please let me repeat, in the Headmaster's presence, that I positively put my foot down upon any further meeting of a like nature. I am responsible for the boys in the Ancient House, and under no circumstances can I countenance this unhealthy business."

"How dare you, sir?" stormed Dr. Karnak.

"Gentlemen! Gentlemen!" gasped the Head.

"Your conduct, sir, has been reprehensible," went on Nelson Lee, bitingly, addressing himself to Dr. Karnak as though the Head were not present. "You have given me this opportunity to speak, and I am not reluctant to avail myself of it. It is full time that you were pulled up."

Lee, to tell the truth, was heartily enjoying the situation. He would not have complained to the Head under ordinary circumstances, but Dr. Karnak had precipitated this scene himself. And he would have to take the consequences. Moreover, the juniors had to be protected.

"I do not understand you!" blustered the Egyptian.

"Really, Dr. Karnak, I find it difficult to credit that your wits are so sluggish this evening," replied Nelson Lee. "Let me remind you of these sinister activities—"

"Sinister!" thundered Dr. Karnak.

"Let me repeat the word—sinister!" said the detective, his calmness in striking contrast to the other's rising wrath. "It was you who instigated this Sorcery Club in the Remove—this society for juniors which

holds meetings for the investigation of occult phenomena."

"Good gracious me!" ejaculated the Head, startled. "Is—is this an absolute fact, Dr. Karnak?"

"Mr. Lee is mistaken—the meetings were harmless—"

"Allow me to contradict you, sir," flashed Lee. "The very opposite is the case. These sorcery meetings have not only been harmful to the boys, but their very health is being undermined—their morals shattered. To take one instance—Skelton—I found him nearly fainting from sheer terror in the corridor. The poor boy was utterly overwrought, and I could do nothing but send him straight to bed. The other juniors have also been harmed—both in body and mind."

"Nonsense, sir—nonsense!" said Dr. Karnak thickly.

"I am not accustomed to having my statements characterised as nonsense," said Nelson Lee icily. "You will therefore oblige me, Dr. Karnak, by moderating your language. I will have no more of these Sorcery Club meetings, and if you are not satisfied with my decision, you are at liberty to appeal to the headmaster. In any case, it is now out of my hands."

Dr. Stafford turned to the Egyptian grimly.

"Is it a fact, Dr. Karnak, that these meetings were organised for the purpose of spiritualistic research?" he inquired. "I am not doubting Mr. Lee's word, but I have a faint hope that he may be mistaken."

"He certainly is mistaken," said the Egyptian brazenly. "My meetings were quite harmless, and I do not admit for one moment that there is any necessity to bring this club to an end."

"Very well, Dr. Karnak. Since you have asked for this test, we will have it," said Nelson Lee, his voice cold and steady. "Will you be good enough, Dr. Stafford, to send for Tucker and Clifton and Ellmore—"

"No, no! I protest against that!" shouted Dr. Karnak.

"Indeed, sir, and why?" asked the Head. "These are the boys, I understand, of whom Mr. Lee complains. If these meetings have indeed been harmless, you have nothing to fear from their evidence."

"I prefer to have this matter kept quiet," said Dr. Karnak in confusion. "There is no reason why it should be bandied about the school, upon every tattling tongue that wags."

"I am sorry, Dr. Karnak, but I can only conclude that you fear such an investigation," said the Head. "Under the circumstances, I must conclude that Mr. Lee's decision is just and warranted. I add my word to his own, and must request you to cease these harmful meetings forthwith. I absolutely refuse to countenance such practices. Indeed, if there is any indication that you persist in your preposterous teach-

ings, I shall be compelled to ask for your resignation. I can say no more."

Dr. Karnak stood there, his eyes gleaming, his whole face alight with suppressed fury. But by a big effort of will he controlled himself and bowed.

"Very well, sir, I will let the matter rest at that," he said suavely.

He turned on his heel and strode out.

For the first time since he had arrived at St. Frank's, he had been soundly rebuffed by the Headmaster. And Nelson Lee was the cause of it. But for his intervention no trouble would have arisen.

And Dr. Karnak, not trusting himself to speak to anyone, went straight upstairs to his own room. Such was his concentration that he even failed to see De Valerie. The junior had been hanging about, anxious to know the result of the interview.

Not daring to speak to Dr. Karnak, De Valerie followed the Egyptian up to his room. He entered, and stood there, silent, and rather in awe. For Dr. Karnak had gone to one wall of the room and was now kneeling before a little pedestal, on which stood an image of Baal, the sacred moon god.

He muttered to himself, and even after he had risen to his feet, he seemed almost oblivious of De Valerie's presence. His eyes were burning, and his dark face was still flushed.

"The hound! The son of a dog!" he raved to himself. "By the gods of my ancient faith, I will have vengeance! May the curses of all evil be upon him, the interfering fool!"

Dr. Karnak's rage was fearful to witness. He looked dangerous in the extreme, and he paced up and down like a caged tiger, until gradually his anger worked itself out.

And then at last he came to a halt in front of De Valerie. An added gleam had come into his eyes-- a gleam of infernal character. He looked at De Valerie, but did not seem to see him.

"There is a way!" he muttered, his voice containing a demoniacal note. "For weeks that cursed pig has been in my way--has interfered with me at every turn! But he has overstepped the mark! He has thrust himself in my path for the last time! To-night I strike!"

De Valerie looked at him in awe.

"Perhaps I'd better go, sir," he said hesitatingly.

"No--no! Go?" said Dr. Karnak. "Assuredly not! I want you, De Valerie--you are necessary. Yes, quite necessary. For to you will be entrusted the fulfilment of my plan."

The gaze he bent upon De Valerie was one of intense, fierce concentration. The junior, already under the Egyptian's influence, was now a literal slave to his will.

For some little time Dr. Karnak talked. And while doing so, he brought to bear the full strength of his will-power on the boy.

And he lowered his voice, and it now had a gloating mocking note.

"You understand?" he asked at last. "You will obey?"

"I will obey!" said De Valerie mechanically. "You have but to command, Dr. Karnak, and I will serve."

"Yes, you are mine--mine!"

"I am yours!" said Cecil De Valerie dully.

CHAPTER VII.

DR. KARNAK'S CUNNING.



HANDFORTH looked round the dormitory with satisfaction.

"Of course, I'm not claiming any credit, but I'll bet it was due to my giddy speech that Mr. Lee took action," he said. "Those rotten meetings are forbidden, and the Sorcery Club is as dead as Tut-ankh-amen!"

"And a good thing, too!" said Armstrong. "I'm agreeing with you; but I'm blessed if I can see how Handy did the trick," remarked Reggie Pitt. "Why, Mr. Lee wasn't there when Handforth made his speech. So how can it be possible--"

"Perhaps Mr. Lee heard a few words as he was passing the door," said Handforth carelessly.

"You fathead! Mr. Lee doesn't listen at doors!" said Church.

"Who said he does?" roared Handforth. "And you dry up, my lord! Nobody asked you to chime in!"

"I can speak if I want to!" said Church, turning red. "Have I got to ask your permission before I open my mouth?"

"Yes!" roared Handforth.

"Please, Handy, may we look at you?" asked Pitt timidly. "Have we your permission to gaze upon your handsome countenance? O Flower of Youth, may we bask in the sunshine of your presence?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You--you funny ass!" howled Handforth.

"Nay, I beseech thee!" said Pitt. "For what are we but doormats upon which you may wipe thy ample feet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Somebody's going to get one of my ample feet where he doesn't want it in a minute," said Handforth quickly. "What's the idea of going for me like this? I tell you that Mr. Lee acted because I made that speech. Do any of you chaps deny it?"

"Yes," said the dormitory, with one voice.

Handforth staggered, and stared round blankly.

"Why, you--you rotters!" he gasped. "Although I'm not surprised," he added, his tone becoming scornful. "I can't expect anything else but jealousy. I never get any credit in this blessed place! You can go and boil yourselves!"

And Handforth got undressed, tumbled into bed, and refused to say another word.

At least, that's what he intended. But it only lasted about three minutes, and then he sat up and commenced "chewing the rag," as Pitt elegantly described it. However, as nobody took any notice, it didn't matter much.

"About time that club was squashed," said Jack Grey. "Just look at De Valerie over there. I've never seen him looking so queer before. The chap seems to be half dazed, and he's as jumpy as a cat on hot bricks."

Jack Grey was not the only fellow to notice De Valerie's condition. He was pale and drawn; and if any questions were addressed to him, he started abruptly, as though half frightened. But to all inquiries he gruffly declared that he was quite fit.

Perhaps some of the juniors would have persisted in their efforts to question him. But I thought it inadvisable to let this go on. No good could possibly come of it, and it seemed to me that De Valerie wanted rest more than anything else. So I tactfully drew the attention of the juniors into other channels, until lights-out.

"And after that, of course, the hum of conversation in the dormitory dwindled rapidly until it finally died away. And the Remove slept. Even De Valerie appeared to be deep in slumber.

And so for two or three hours the dormitory was undisturbed.

The booming notes of midnight chimed out. And as they did so, Cecil De Valerie sat up in his bed, staring straight before him in a queer, strained manner. There was an expression on his face that would have given many a fellow a turn, for it was so unnatural.

Two spots of colour were showing in De Valerie's cheeks—spots that were in sharp contrast to the remaining pallor of his face. There was every indication that he was inclined to be feverish.

"I come!" he breathed softly. "I obey!" As silently as a shadow he crept out of bed and put his clothes on. And then he walked stealthily and noiselessly from the dormitory. His movements were all regular and deliberate.

Yet it seemed that he was acting in a trance. Certainly he was not his old self. On this particular night, De Valerie was more completely in Dr. Karnak's sway than he had ever been before. But he was coming near to the breaking point, and something would have to go.

Softly he made his way round the dark corridors until he came to that wing of the Ancient House where Dr. Karnak's bedroom was situated. The Egyptian, in fact, was waiting outside his door, attired in a long flowing gown.

He nodded to himself with satisfaction as he saw De Valerie turn the corner. And a moment later the pair were face to face.

"It is well!" whispered Karnak. "You have come!"

"I have obeyed your commands!" murmured De Valerie.

"I have already instructed you. Repeat those instructions to me," said Dr. Karnak. "But first of all, take this!"

He held out his hand. De Valerie gingerly took from him a kind of long needle, almost invisible in the gloom. And the junior handled it with extreme care, although he had never seen it before. He instinctively knew that this needle was deadly. Moreover, Dr. Karnak had previously warned him.

"I am to go to Mr. Nelson Lee's bedroom," said De Valerie tonelessly. "I am to creep in, and I am to bend over him as he lies asleep and to prick him with the point of this needle."

"Just that!" murmured Karnak. "A prick—nothing more. It must be so small that scarce a drop of blood will be drawn. And, if possible, make the puncture on the side of the neck."

"It shall be done!" said De Valerie.

Without another word, he walked along the corridor, leaving Dr. Karnak standing there. It was all so calm, so peaceful, and so perfectly quiet that it seemed impossible that any sinister work could be on hand. And yet, as a matter of fact, there was murder in Dr. Karnak's heart, and he was making De Valerie his unconscious instrument.

The junior went along without hesitation until he arrived outside Nelson Lee's door. Here he paused, and now went about his task with even greater caution than before. For, without doubt, it was a delicate task to catch such a man as Nelson Lee asleep, and to enter his bedroom without arousing the detective.

But De Valerie accomplished this.

Never before had he been so mysteriously quiet in his actions. Never before had he displayed such stealthiness. It was not his own brain that was driving him, but Dr. Karnak's. For there, right at the end of the other corridor, the Egyptian was concentrating upon his task.

He sat in a chair, gripping the arms, and he was concentrating every ounce of his will-power upon De Valerie. It was a supreme mental effort, and the very strained expression on Dr. Karnak's face was eloquent enough.

And De Valerie was completely controlled. Even if his own will-power was fighting against this thing that he was doing, he was rendered helpless. For Dr. Karnak's will absolutely eclipsed his own.

De Valerie got inside Nelson Lee's bedroom, and then paused for a moment, watching. The blind was up, and the moonlight streamed through the window and fell athwart the bed, clearly showing Nelson Lee there, lying asleep.

And with no more noise than a shadow, Cecil De Valerie crept to the bedside. And there, for a brief second or two, he stood looking down upon his intended victim. He was to give one prick—one tiny puncture.

But this puncture, however small, would be sufficient. For the tip of that needle—which Karnak had warned De Valerie to avoid as he would avoid the plague—was coated with one of the deadliest poisons known. It was an Eastern horror, which Dr. Karnak had brought from his own country. He had used this poison on occasion to strike small animals dead on the spot, such as mice, rats, or guinea pigs. In more than one instance he had been credited with magic powers for striking an animal dead with one touch of a wand.

And what this poison would accomplish in animals it could accomplish in human beings. For it was just as deadly to the human blood as it was to any other blood. Death, indeed, was practically instantaneous.

And it was De Valerie's task to deliver the fatal dose.

It was so diabolically cunning—so murderously simple. A touch, a mere prick, and all would be over. And in the morning the famous detective would be found dead in bed, and the most careful post-mortem would reveal practically nothing. For, as Dr. Karnak well knew, all trace of the poison was eliminated from the system within three hours after death.

It would be assumed, in all probability, that Lee had died of heart failure. And this was the only conclusion that the doctors could reach, for there would be absolutely no trace of foul play. Should an insignificant spot be observed on the victim's neck it would occasion no comment. The tiny wound would be taken for a shaving cut, or something of that nature.

And the dread moment was now at hand.

Seated in his room, Dr. Karnak was concentrating with even greater intensity. He calculated that De Valerie had now reached the housemaster's bed-room. And this, as we know, was the case.

De Valerie raised his hand, in order to snap the thread of Nelson Lee's life. The needle in his hand was invisible—a mere part of the darkness. And Lee slept. Light though his slumbers always were, De Valerie had crept up so ghost-like that even Lee was not aroused.

By his one action Dr. Karnak would be rid of the man he most feared, and although a sensation would follow, there would be no hint of murder—no suspicion of foul play. And should there arise some mischance, Dr. Karnak himself could not be associated with De Valerie's actions. The wily Egyptian was safe all along the line. It was his tool who took the risk.

Karnak still sat in his chair, attired in that flowing robe of his, and his sheer concentration of mind was tremendous. And it was then, at this crucial moment, that an interruption occurred. The sound was very slight, but it was sufficient to change everything in a flash. It was sufficient to save Nelson Lee from swift, deadly annihilation.



And he saw that there was a face pressed against the glass—a dark, swarthy face, with a tur-banned head.

It seemed that Providence had taken a hand in this grim game.

The sound came from the window—a curious scraping, as though something had passed over the face of the glass. Insignificant though the sound was, it was like the bursting of a cannon to Dr. Karnak's acutely sensitive mind. And, coming at this moment, it took him unawares.

For a flash, his mind left De Valerie, and he gave a sharp, keen glance at the window. And he saw there a face pressed against the glass—a dark, swarthy face, with a turbanned head. Two gleaming eyes gazed at Dr. Karnak balefully.

And in that instant the spell was broken. For not only did the Egyptian's mind wander from De Valerie, but it entirely left the boy. He leapt to his feet, alarmed and agitated. For he knew only too well that his enemies were outside. Hitherto they had not dared to make any bold attempt at breaking into the school.

Dr. Karnak's first movement was to get beyond the range of the window. For if he knew of poisons, so did his enemies! And it was safer to be out of range. His thoughts were now entirely for himself. He had forgotten De Valerie and the task that had been set for him.

In the meantime, the effect upon the junior was instantaneous.

Even as he had been about to plunge the point of that needle into Nelson Lee's throat, he seemed to shrivel as he stood, and his whole frame shuddered. It was at that

moment that Dr. Karnak's will-power ceased to order his movements.

De Valerie started back, apparently coming out of his trance.

He looked round dazedly. He stared at the needle, and a gasp of sheer horror arose to his lips. For although it was his own mind that now directed him, he knew exactly what he had been about to do. He knew that the needle contained a coating of deadly poison.

With a gasp of utter horror, De Valerie flung the thing into the heart of the dying fire, and he reeled back and uttered a long, piercing scream of horror that brought Nelson Lee leaping up in bed.

He was just in time to see Cecil De Valerie writhing on the floor in a kind of fit.

CHAPTER VIII.

THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW!



NELSON LEE leapt to the floor in one movement.

For a second he stood looking down upon the boy. De Valerie was writhing still, and his face was almost purple. Without any question, he was in a serious way. This was no mere faint.

Lee had not been feeling quite well that evening, and he had slept with unusual heaviness. It surprised him to find the junior in his room, and to realise that De Valerie must have entered without arousing him.

But he wasted no time on such thoughts now.

Picking the boy up, he quickly laid him on his own bed—for the junior was in nothing but his pyjamas. De Valerie clutched at Lee with an awful, feverish strength—as though he were bereft of his senses. His eyes glared, and there was a light of unnatural fire in them.

"He forced me!" he said, his voice cracked and strained. "The needle—the needle! Drive it in—but lightly! A tiny puncture—Oh! I can't do it! Where am I? Why are you holding me like this? Let me go!"

And so he raved on, struggling continuously against Nelson Lee's ministrations. But the detective had heard quite sufficient to give him full particulars. He knew, in fact, that De Valerie had been sent by Dr. Karnak, and that the object of that mission was to commit a foul and horrible crime.

The only point he was puzzled about just then was the weapon—and he was anxious about it, too. A poisoned needle! If such a deadly object as that lay about, it might mean the death of somebody!

Knowing full well that De Valerie's condition was serious, Nelson Lee was nevertheless aware that this other matter was even more so.

He grasped the junior by the shoulders, and held him firmly.

"The needle!" he said, his voice quite steady. "What did you do with the needle?"

"In the fire!" panted De Valerie. "In the fire! I tell you I threw it in the fire! Can't you leave me alone? Can't you—Dr. Karnak! Yes! I'm coming! I obey in all things! I am your slave, to do as you will! Go away from me! I came here to kill you!"

And so he continued to rave, sometimes incoherent, sometimes almost lucid. And Lee's efforts to calm him were in vain.

But Nature had been overtaxed too long, and there soon came a solution to Nelson Lee's problem.

For Cecil De Valerie suddenly uttered a sobbing moan, and he fell back upon the cushions of the disordered bed, and he looked deathlike. Lee, if anything, was rather relieved. He knew that the boy was not dead. He had passed into a state of unconsciousness.

But the detective was under no misapprehension regarding De Valerie's condition. An examination was not even necessary, but Lee subjected the boy to a quick one. De Valerie was showing all the symptoms of dangerous brain fever, and he needed medical attention at once.

Nelson Lee came to a swift decision.

He felt that it would be safe to leave the boy alone for a few minutes, but he took the precaution to lock his door before going down the corridor. And his first task was to arouse Mrs. Poulter and to urge her to come with all rapidity. Then the Head was awakened, and finally Nelson Lee telephoned to Dr. Brett, who promised to come at once.

And thus, half an hour later, while St. Frank's slept, four grave and anxious people were gathered round the bedside of Cecil De Valerie. Otherwise, the school slumbered in ignorance.

Even Dr. Karnak had crept off to bed. The sound of movements, and the Headmaster's anxious voice told him that all was not right. And he instinctively knew that his deadly plot had failed.

The sudden switching on of lights in various parts of the house had probably scared Karnak's enemies away, too, for there was no further sign of them. But they had all unconsciously served an excellent purpose, for it was owing to them that Nelson Lee now lived.

"This is terrible—appalling!" Dr. Stafford was saying, as he stood by Nelson Lee's side. "What can have happened to the boy? Why should he have been attacked in this extraordinary way?"

"I fear he has been studying deeply these last few weeks," said Nelson Lee.

"Foolish—foolish!" said the Head. "Well, Brett—well?"

Dr. Brett made no reply for a few minutes. De Valerie was now half-conscious again—delirious. He raved incoherently at

times, and he was flushed with a colour that looked worse than his former paleness.

Lee had not enlightened the Head as to the exact nature of the affair, for he had no certain proof of Dr. Karnak's guilt, and it was not the detective's way to accuse unless he could substantiate his charges.

Dr. Brett looked up at last.

"I fear there is no hope," he said gravely.

"Oh, poor dear—poor dear!" sighed Mrs. Poulter, in acute distress.

"No hope?" echoed the Head huskily. "Good heavens, Brett, you can't mean that! You're wrong, man—you must be wrong!"

The doctor shook his head.

"I wish to Heaven I could tell you differently," he said. "There may possibly be a thin thread of hope, but it is almost too slim to count upon. The boy's had a terrible shock—and his fever at the present moment is dangerous in the extreme, and may prove fatal. His temperature is appallingly high."

The Head looked at Nelson Lee appealingly.

"I am very much afraid that my own conclusion agrees with Dr. Brett's," said the detective. "My only hope is that De Valerie's strong constitution may prevail. If the end comes, it will come quickly—before morning, I fear. His present condition is one of the utmost gravity. He may expire at any moment, or he may linger on for hours."

"Can you do nothing?" asked the Head desperately. "Man alive, why do you stand there idle?" he went on, turning fiercely to Dr. Brett. "Is there nothing you can administer? Surely, surely there is some—"

"I am sorry, Dr. Stafford; but I have done the utmost within my power," interrupted the village practitioner. "I would suggest sending for a brain specialist without delay. I am a medical man, but I do not claim to have the skill of a specialist."

"We must get on the telephone at once—a trunk call to London!" panted the Head. "And, good heavens!" he added abruptly. "What about the boy's parents? They must be told! They must come without delay!"

"I will ease your mind somewhat, sir," put in Nelson Lee quietly. "While awaiting Dr. Brett's arrival, I got through to London."

"You—you mean—"

"I requested De Valerie's parents to come to St. Frank's in the swiftest car that could be obtained," replied Nelson Lee. "Furthermore, I advised them to bring, if possible, one of the most eminent brain specialists of the day—Sir Rodney Whitworth, of Wimpole Street."

Dr. Brett looked round and nodded.

"I might have known it," he said. "You think of everything, Lee."

Dawn had come, and the cold February day was already brightening when a powerful motor-car turned into the Triangle of St.

Frank's. De Valerie's people had answered that urgent call promptly.

They arrived with grave faces and heavy hearts. And the quiet, dignified gentleman with them was Sir Rodney Whitworth, the brain specialist.

Dr. Stafford and Nelson Lee had not once left De Valerie's bedside during those anxious hours. And it was a relief to the Head that the father and mother had arrived before the boy passed away.

And Sir Rodney, after his examination, held out a shred of hope.

"A grave case—a very serious case indeed," he said. "But there is just a slim possibility that we may pull him through. With Heaven's consent, we shall win this fight."

The junior was now quite unconscious, the delirium having left him. He lay as one already dead, except for high spots of colour in his cheeks. But Sir Rodney had more hope than he openly admitted.

That morning the Remove got a surprise. No rising-bell sounded; but, instead, a prefect went round to every bed, shaking the juniors into wakefulness. This was the first information the fellows received that anything was wrong.

"What's the idea?" grumbled Handforth, as he was pulled over. "Hi, steady! What's wrong, Morrow?"

Handforth blinked up and down the dormitory sleepily.

"Don't make any noise—Head's orders," said Morrow. "If any fellow here even lifts his voice above a whisper, he'll probably be flogged!"

"You—you—I suppose this is a joke?" shouted Handforth. "It isn't time for rising-bell yet—you're just spoofing us!"

"Keep your voice down, confound you!" broke in Morrow. "De Valerie is dying."

"What!"

"De Valerie's dying!"

"Oh, I say, Morrow—"

"Do you think we should come and call you singly, like this, if everything was as usual?" asked Morrow tensely. "I don't know what's happened—we've heard no details—but De Valerie's now in Mr. Lee's bedroom, hovering between life and death. Dr. Brett and a famous specialist from London are in consultation."

Morrow's tone was so impressive and convincing that the juniors could not doubt the truth of his words. But it seemed altogether incredible. Certainly, De Valerie had looked a bit queer at bedtime the previous night, but the juniors had no reason to suppose that he was in a serious condition.

It was not long before the news had spread throughout St. Frank's. And the Headmaster had given very strict orders that no noise of any kind was to be made. The usual bells were silenced—the clock in the old tower was stopped. For with De Valerie practically passing through the Valley of the Shadow, absolute silence was necessary.

Lessons that morning were strange and eerie.

The school lay like a place of the dead, and by this time even the fags had forgotten how to talk normally. They spoke in hushed whispers. And the morning's work went on mechanically. Hardly anything was done—for nobody had his thoughts on the work.

It was not as though De Valerie had been lying ill for weeks, and had at last reached the crisis in his illness. The thing had come so unexpectedly that the whole school was taken by surprise.

The hours passed slowly. But at last dinner-time arrived, and many anxious inquiries were made concerning the patient. But there was no cheerful news. At the same time, there was no ill news. For De Valerie's condition remained unchanged.

"Poor old Val!" muttered Tommy Watson, as we stood in the lobby of the Ancient House. "I wonder why the dickens he went off like that? What happened? What caused him to have brain-fever?"

"Can't you guess?" I asked quietly.

"My hat! You mean Dr. Karnak?"

"Who else?" I asked grimly. "I'm not saying that Karnak did it, but he's the prime cause of it. This is what comes of going in for that horrible sorcery stuff!"

It was only natural that we should all assume that this was the real explanation of De Valerie's collapse. Not a fellow in the school had the faintest suspicion that the junior had received a shock that had well-nigh bereft him of his senses. It was fortunate, perhaps, that De Valerie had been attacked by brain-fever. For even this—providing he recovered—was better than insanity.

During afternoon lessons in the Remove the door softly opened, and Nelson Lee appeared. His face was so grave that a number of the juniors gazed at him with quick apprehension. Was it possible that the crisis was already over—De Valerie was dead? That was the thought that leapt from mind to mind.

All work stopped on the instant, and Handforth could not contain himself.

"Is—is he dead, sir?" he asked huskily.

"I am glad to inform you, boys, that De Valerie has passed the crisis successfully," said Nelson Lee. "The danger is now over, and with care and attention it is hoped that he will make a good recovery."

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Val!"

"Oh, thank goodness!"

The relief of the Remove was so great that the Form-room became a babble of voices. But the cheering had been very subdued. Somehow, the fellows couldn't bring themselves to make much noise.

But it was soon made clear to everyone that weeks would pass before De Valerie would recover—and it was very doubtful if he would be seen at St. Frank's during the remainder of this term.

But the very fact that he was over the danger-point was cause for much rejoicing. Somerton and Adams, his own study-mates, were particularly delighted. They had spent some harrowing hours of anxiety.

And two days later a great, luxurious ambulance arrived—for it was considered safe to remove the patient. The noise and bustle of St. Frank's was not calculated to speed his recovery.

And so he was taken away. And thus Cecil De Valerie found himself, weak and gravely ill, in Sir Rodney Whitworth's nursing-home.

Nearly all memory of that fateful night had passed from his mind. It merely remained as a kind of nightmare. But there was one thankful feature about this whole affair.

De Valerie had escaped from the evil influence of Dr. Karnak. And Nelson Lee still lived. Furthermore, he knew that Dr. Karnak was not merely a crank and an enthusiast on the occult, but a cold-blooded, calculating scoundrel—indeed, a murderer at heart.

And so Nelson Lee was better prepared. He knew how to guard himself in future. He had not suspected Dr. Karnak of such utter devilry. And now that he had discovered the Egyptian's true mettle, his mind was made up.

He would continue his present course; he would maintain a vigilant watch upon Dr. Karnak, and that rascal would soon be brought to his knees, and then he would pay the penalty.

To be quite frank, Nelson Lee had very high hopes of obtaining all the evidence he desired against Dr. Karnak within the next week. And, somehow, he had an idea that it would be a week fraught with peril and startling adventure.

THE END.

More Exciting Adventures with Dr. KARNAK will be described in next week's story:—

THE TEMPLE OF SILENCE!

Look out for the Sports Master's Pow-wow on Footer in the coming number of the ST. FRANK'S MAGAZINE.



MY AMERICAN NOTE-BOOK

By the Author of our St. Frank's Stories.



NO. 9. NEW YORK'S GREAT APARTMENT HOUSES

THE word "apartment" has quite a different significance in America to what it has in England. If we hear of a man looking for an apartment in London, we picture to ourselves a rather impecunious fellow who cannot afford better accommodation than a single room in a boarding house. But in America an apartment is not merely one room, but a whole dwelling—to be exact, a flat.

This is just an example of how commonplace terms in both countries can be applied to different meanings. A flat in London is generally looked upon as something high-class. The word "flat" in New York means rooms in a common tenement house.

But we are talking about apartments. And over on the other side of the "herring pond" an apartment is from two or three rooms, to a palatial dwelling costing tens of thousands of dollars a year.

Some of the newer apartment houses on Fifth Avenue and Park Avenue are mainly occupied by millionaires. These are sumptuous in every way, immense, imposing structures of the skyscraper class. Their entrance halls are gorgeous almost to a point of ostentation. Glorious polished marble, wonderful furniture and appointments, beautiful carpets and superbly decorated walls. Grand staircases, wonderful elevators are a mere matter of course. And the apartments themselves in these buildings are in keeping with the rest. Vast rooms, with peerless decorations and lighting arrangements—in fact, perfect in every detail.

Not being a millionaire, however, and not numbering millionaires among my friends, I did not visit many of these super apartment houses. However, I saw quite enough of them to realise one needs a king's ransom before one can enter into occupation of such a dwelling.

But the lesser apartment houses are even more interesting. For the majority of people in New York live in this way. The suburbs of the great American Metropolis are not filled with square miles of villas, as we are accustomed to in London. Instead, New York has her thousands of apartment houses, stretching right out through Harlem and the Bronx,

far into Westchester County—to Bronxville, Tuckahoe, and similar spots which a few years ago were almost open country. These apartment houses are being built in hundreds.

And it must be admitted that the ordinary middle class apartment is exceedingly comfortable. While I was in New York—and my visit was extended over many months—I lived in quite a nice apartment on Riverside Drive. From the front windows one gained a fine view of the stately Hudson River, with the shores of New Jersey beyond. And in the immediate foreground Grant's Tomb arose majestically and in sombre stateliness.

The apartment itself was on the fourth floor, and unless the elevator was used, the stairs were somewhat tiresome. But there is always an elevator. It is a very poor apartment house, indeed, that does not boast its lift and its coloured elevator boy. These darkies are always called boys, although frequently they are quite elderly men.

These apartments have dining-room, drawing-room, two bed-rooms, maid's-room, bath-room, kitchen, etc. There is, of course, electric light and gas—and, most important of all in these New York apartments, steam heat.

There are no fireplaces as we know them here. True, some of the rooms are supplied with ornamental fireplaces, but they are practically useless from a utilitarian point of view. They are, in fact, just for looks.

The heat is supplied to every room by means of radiators. And this method is so satisfactory that I found the heat most uncomfortable—even when the temperature outside was somewhere approaching zero, and when snow lay thick over the whole city.

At first I absolutely hated this steam heat, but one gets used to everything in time, and before I left New York I had almost grown to like it—providing that the radiators were turned off until the heat was moderated. It is certainly a boon to have every portion of one's dwelling evenly heated. And there are no draughts. There is no shivering when one undresses to get into a chilly bed. And chilblains are practically unheard of in New York, in spite of the excessive cold that frequently prevails.

The kitchen arrangements in the average New York Apartment are quite ideal, when judged from the average British standpoint. As a general rule, these kitchens are absurdly small. But what they lack in size they easily make up for in convenience and daintiness.

I am talking, of course, of the better class apartment houses, and of the modern ones. And these kitchens really are dainty. They are decorated with white tiles, the dresser is closed in with glass doors, and there is, of course, a continuous supply of hot water—day or night.

It is just the same with the bathroom. This, generally, is a perfect model of hygienic comfort. There is everything that one could desire—hot water in sufficient quantities to have a bath every fifteen minutes of the day or night—tiled floors and walls, beautiful brass fittings, and, of course, a shower.

So, although the rents are very high for these places, you really do get something for your money. And they are quite strict, too. There must be no piano playing after the hour of eleven o'clock at night, or there will be complaints from your neighbours above, below, or from some other quarter.

As a matter of course, every apartment is fitted with a telephone. The only drawback to this telephone is that it is not a direct line, but connected with the main switchboard in the entrance hall. And on many an occasion have I been exasperated to a point of exhaustion.

For the coloured elevator boy is by no means an assiduous worker. Taking the average apartment house, the coloured boy goes about his duties in a nonchalant, easy-going manner. If the telephone buzzer buzzes, well, it can buzz. You'll never find a New York elevator boy hurrying himself.

Sometimes the boy will be absent from

his post for five or ten minutes on end. And then the helpless would-be telephonist simply raves into the transmitter of his instrument. For, without the switch-boy he cannot possibly communicate with the Exchange.

There is no dust in America—and no dustbin. All waste matter is universally referred to by the high-toned word, "garbage." And dustbins naturally become "garbage cans."

The arrangements regarding waste matter in these apartment-houses are quite effective. The housewife, or maid, waits until the janitor sounds the buzzer in the kitchen. Here there is a dumb waiter, the shaft leading down into the nethermost regions of the great building. Up comes the little lift, the garbage can and waste-paper are deposited thereon, and the housewife then touches her bell. Down goes her rubbish, and in a short time the can comes up again, clean, paper-lined, and ready for another day's filling.

All groceries, etc., are delivered to the apartments by means of these dumb waiters, for tradesmen are not allowed to come to the front door.

As regards your daily mail, it seems to me that the procedure could be improved upon. The postman simply delivers a vast batch to the elevator boy, who then takes his leisure in sorting out the letters. And, by degrees, he drops them outside the doors on the various floors. There are no letter-boxes, and so you will find your mail kicking about on the outer mat.

But, taking these middle-class apartment houses on the whole, they are very comfortable to live in, and the householder is practically free from all kinds of responsibility. So it is hardly surprising that this type of dwelling is extremely popular, and even growing in popularity every day.

The Next Article in This Interesting Series, from Mr. Brook's American Note-book, will be :—

AMERICAN SHOPS THAT ARE DIFFERENT

Here, the author will describe his impressions of various shops which the traveller would not expect to find anywhere else but in U.S.A.

The Greatest Footer Story of the Century APPEARS WITHIN!

No. 10. Vol. 1.

Edited by Nipper.

February 2, 1924.



St. Frank's Magazine



CONTENTS

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.
Grand Full-page Sketch of
CITY OF LONDON SCHOOL.

By Mr. E. E. Briscoe.

SCISSORS AND PASTE.

By the Editor.

ANYTHING AND EVERY-
THING.

By Hubert Jarrow.

THE LUCK OF THE TEAM.

A Football Travesty.

By Reginald Pitt.

E. SOPP'S FABLES.

By E. Sopp of the Fifth.

JOLLY OLD CAVALIERS &
FRIGHTFUL ROUNDHEADS.

By Archie Glenthorne.

SPUFING MI MAJOR.

By Willy Handforth.

PAINFUL PARODIES.

By Clarence Fellowe.

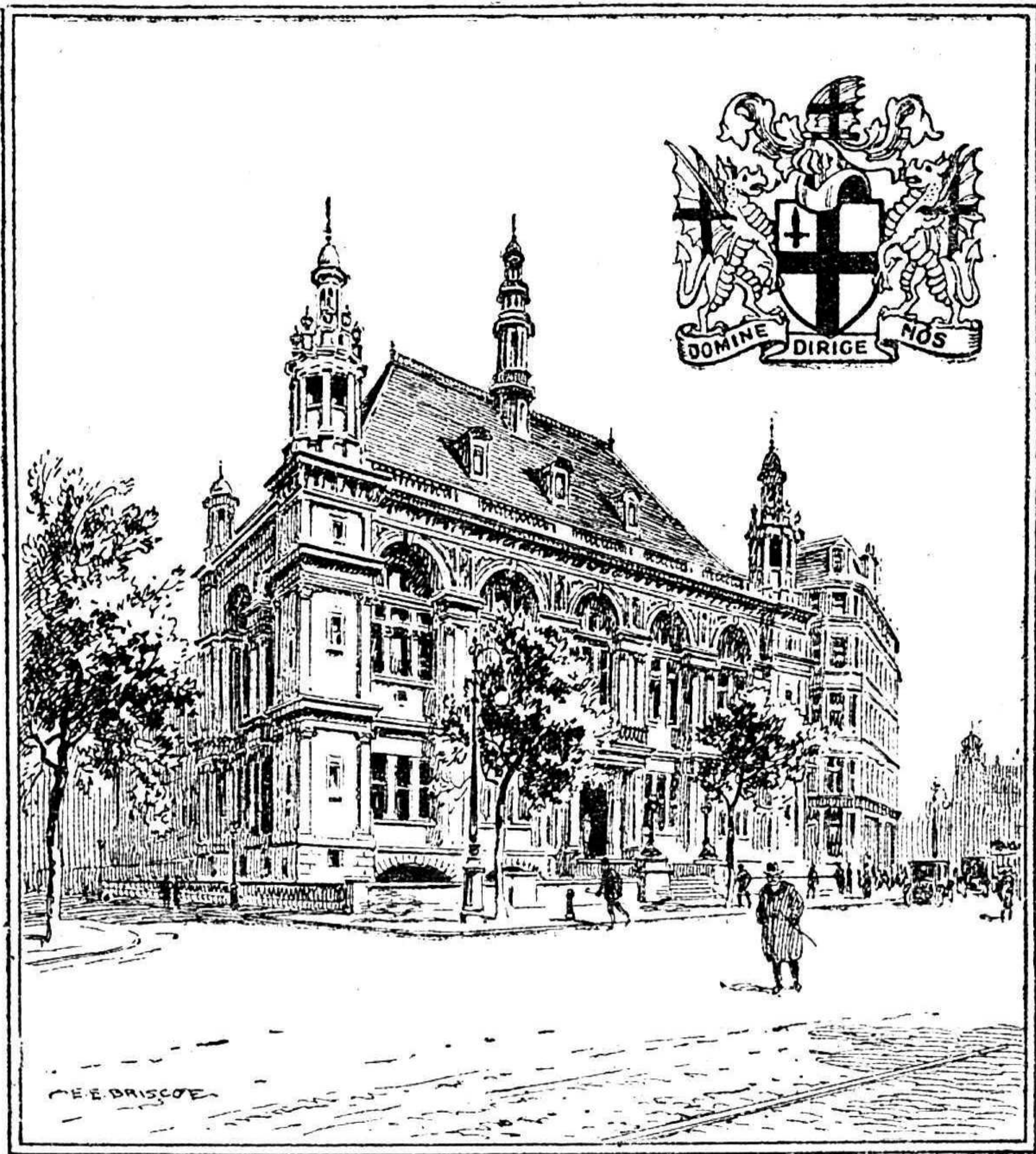
CHEERIO, OLD SON!

HERE'S TO THE MAG.!

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

SPECIAL SERIES OF ART SKETCHES BY MR. E. E. BRISCOE.

No. 12. CITY OF LONDON.



CITY OF LONDON SCHOOL.

Established by the Corporation of London in 1834, under the authority of an Act of Parliament, this well-known London school was erected by the Corporation on a site of ground at one time occupied by the Honey Lane Market, Cheapside. In 1883 the school was removed to the Victoria Embankment, near Blackfriars Bridge,

where it now stands. It is maintained by an endowment derived from the estates of John Carpenter, town clerk of the City, who left property for educational purposes in 1442. The school is governed by a committee selected by the corporation. It may be noted that the Hon. H. H. Asquith was a scholar of this school.



Editorial Office,
Study C,
St. Frank's.

My dear Chums,

I am sorry that it has been impossible to obtain Mr. Clifford's first "pow-wow" on sport in time for publication in this week's Mag. Our Sports Master has had a very busy week, attending one or two boxing matches, arranging footer fixtures, and getting the gym. ready for a special display. All these things take up time, with the result that the article has only just come to hand, and will have to be held over until next week.

PITT'S FOOTER YARN.

Reginald tells me that he has read so many football stories that he could write one himself with his eyes shut, so to speak. "The Luck of the Team," which I have published this week, is a potted version, or rather a travesty, of a typical footer yarn. Personally, I don't think Pitt could write anything serious if he tried.

BUSTER BOOTS AND THE MAG.

Frankly, I would much rather have Buster Boots on my side than against me. At the beginning of last term, as most of you remember, he had me whacked, and relieved me of the Remove Captaincy for a while. Buster then was new to the school, and new to the ways of St. Frank's. In short, he made some bad indiscretions, and paid the penalty for them. Since then he has quietened down considerably; but the same old spirit is there, only it is wiser and saner, and is to be used to good purpose. In other words, Buster has decided to join the coalition—to give me and the Mag. his valuable support. I do not believe in wasting talent when I can get it, and so

I am appointing Buster as our publicity man. His job will be to push the paper, and to make it known to the big outside world. He has also promised to contribute a weekly article, entitled, "Getting on Top," the first of which I have been able, thanks to Buster's promptness, to include in this issue.

A TIME FOR EVERYTHING.

There have been several complaints made by the masters lately of boys who read the Mag. in class, and I have it on good authority that if this habit continues our paper will be stopped. Now the Mag. was never intended to relieve these kind of dull moments, any more than playing games were invented to take the place of work. I wonder what would happen to a goalie who spent his time reading a magazine during a match, and then let a ball through? There is a time for everything, and the best time for enjoying the Mag. is when you are in your study and peace and quietude reign supreme. Of course, I know it is not always possible to get such ideal conditions, especially in the case of Church and McClure. I cannot imagine when these poor fellows get a chance to read the Mag., but they manage to read it somehow or somewhere.

ORIGINAL SKETCHES FOR PHOTOS.

If your school has not yet appeared in the magnificent series of pen drawings by Mr. Briscoe, send along without delay a photo of it with badge and motto, and a few facts concerning the school's history. All photos will be returned, and the original sketch signed by the artist, will be sent to the owner of the photo used.

Your old friend,

NIPPER.

ON ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING

A Chatty Contribution

:: By Hubert Jarrow

GOSSIP, of course, can mean all sorts of things. And when it comes to gossip of the Remove for this week, there's very little to write about. What I mean is, practically nothing has happened. But as I am the Gossip Editor, I suppose I've got to put pen to paper.

And I think it is my duty to register a protest at this point concerning the paper which is supplied to us for letter-writing. A big school like this ought to be able to provide paper of better quality. I hope this will be seen by those responsible, and that an improvement will result. I mean, we ought to have something good—something pretty decent. A linen paper would be the thing.

Which reminds me of Somerton. On Monday his linen was really disgraceful. How on earth the fellow can go about in such a crumpled collar surprises me. And linen is so cheap nowadays, too. I mean, collars and sheets, and all sorts of other things. I saw a circular yesterday from a Bannington firm that offered tea-cloths of pure linen for nine-three, or some such preposterous figure.

Now, when you come to think of it, something ought to be done about this. If tea-cloths can be purchased so cheaply, why do the fellows persist in washing-up their tea things with a duster? I happened to go into Study D the other day, and there was Church washing the teacups with a tooth-brush, and McClure was wiping them with a piece of cotton-waste that had previously been used for cleaning a bike lamp. I mean, even the best tea must taste funny after this.

And now, about tea. It's all very well to have this meal in our own studies, but it's a pity a different arrangement can't be arrived at. I think that the school authorities ought to send servants round to set the tables, put the kettles on, and clear up and wash up after the meal is over. Think what a lot of saving this would mean.

It wouldn't matter so much for the seniors, because they have fags to perform these duties. But the Remove is obliged to fend for itself, which doesn't seem quite fair. I think it's time somebody made a move.

Handforth was talking about making a move on Wednesday. I think he must have had a row with Church and McClure, and

he threatened to shift into another study. That was all right as far as it went, but it appears, by the facts I can pick up, that the other studies were not quite agreeable. I mean, having Handforth as an additional member is a pretty tall order. Of course, the thing fell to the ground.

That young ass, Willy Handforth, fell to the ground, too. He climbed one of the chestnut-trees in the Triangle to dislodge a football that had been kicked up there. And the young fathead fell almost from the top, and hardly hurt himself. I think some of these fags must be made of rubber. In future he'll avoid those chestnuts.

As a food, chestnuts are very nutritious, and nobody will deny that they taste extra good when you've roasted them in front of your own fire. And chestnuts are not always eatable, either.

Take Pitt's, for example. Some of his chestnuts in the mag. are almost pitiful. I think he must rake these old jokes out of some obsolete volume of "Punch."

Now, Buster Boots' punch is formidable. I saw him land an uppercut on Friday that nearly knocked Fullwood into the River Stowe. Not that Fullwood didn't deserve it. He was actually sticking pins into a frog, and Buster didn't approve. You'd have thought that Fullwood was a frog, the way he hopped off. I'd like to express my appreciation of this action by Boots.

During the slushy weather even the best boots are liable to leak. And it is quite a good idea to adopt the American custom of wearing goloshes. I'll admit they don't look very nice, but they're a fine protection for the feet. Quite apart from that, boots last much longer, and your feet don't get so cold.

I'm sorry that Mr. Crowell has had such a bad cold recently. The whole Editorial staff wishes me to say a word of sympathy, and to hope that Mr. Crowell will soon be his hale and hearty self again. Health is the main point.

And I really do think that the Form-room pencils ought to have better points. The fellow whose duty it is to look after this matter is very neglectful. And neglect, as everybody knows, is one of the main causes of delay.

And that, I think, as the broadcasting chap says, concludes our news bulletin. I'll admit there hasn't been much news, but you know what I mean.

THE LUCK OF THE TEAM

A Football Travesty

:: By REGINALD PITT ::

LED by their able skipper, Jim Moreton, the Blackside Rovers had won every match of the season, and looked like topping the League in the Cup Final at the Assembly Park Stadium, where they were to meet their deadly rivals, the Darlington Dare-devils. This team had never known a defeat, and, in consequence, Blackside Rovers knew that they would have to fight a stiff battle to lick their coming opponents. But they were confident in their leader, Jim Moreton, for he knew how to handle men, whether they were his own or those of the opposing side.

Jim Moreton had worked his way up to his present exalted position from the humblest beginning. It was as a messenger-boy that he came under the notice of Lord Eaglebrook, the president of the Blackside Rovers. The sporting peer had observed the skill with which the lad kicked about a paper ball in the street just outside his house, where young Moreton had been sent to deliver a message. After watching the youthful footballer for an hour or so, Lord Eaglebrook sent for the youngster and questioned him on how he had learned to use his feet so cleverly. Young Moreton replied that he had kicked things about for so long that he could not remember.

"With a little training, my lad, I could make a First League man of you," said Lord Eaglebrook, who was immensely rich. The kindly peer then offered to take the young Moreton in hand and mould him into a first class footballer. From that day onwards Jim Moreton never looked back, unless it was at the Hon. Lady Marjory, Lord Eaglebrook's pretty daughter. She followed his career with admiring eyes, for whenever he led his mud-stained, victorious men back to the dressing-rooms, after an important match, Lady Marjory, who always contrived to be present on such occasions, would smile a sweet smile at him as he passed the pavilion.

On the day preceding the great match, considerable excitement prevailed over all England. Many thousands of spectators were anticipated to be present to witness the titanic struggle for the Cup. Although

most people wanted to see Blackside win, the general opinion among experts was in favour of Darlington. There was one man in particular who expected the Dare-devils to pull off the Cup, and he was Norman Sleek, the unscrupulous bookmaker, who made it his business only to back a cert. He had staked ten thousand pounds on Darlington winning. Hence, after a practice game of the Blackside Rovers, Silas Hooke, the disgruntled forward and ex-captain of the team received a message from Sleek making an appointment at the King's Head to talk business. Hooke secretly hated Jim Moreton, for the rising young footballer had ousted him from the captaincy.

"Get that kid Moreton out of the way," said Sleek, "and you will then take over the captaincy. After that it will be dead easy for you to mess up the game and lose the match."

Silas Hooke clenched his fists and ground his teeth.

"I shall be chucked out of the team," he muttered.

"What if you are. You will be a thousand pounds the richer," said Sleek.

"Sure! You're right, guv'nor."

The two men shook hands on the deal and parted.

That evening a motor-car arrived at the humble lodgings of Jim Moreton. It had been sent, so the chauffeur said, by Lord Eaglebrook, to convey the young footballer to the station, where he would meet his team and accompany them to London by the same train. As Moreton had no reason to doubt the chauffeur's story, he jumped into the car. After about the tenth mile, Jim noticed that they were not going in the right direction for the station. Instead, they were getting deeper and deeper into the country, which was now black and lonely. Just as Jim was beginning to get suspicious, the car pulled up before an old disused barn.

The chauffeur sounded the horn. Immediately, two figures rushed out of the barn and attacked the hapless footballer. Jim put up a good fight before he was knocked out senseless by a life-preserver from the

rear. When he came to, he found himself tied securely to an iron ring fixed to the wall of the barn.

He knew now that he had been the victim of foul play, and that some scoundrel had planned to get him kidnapped, so as to prevent him from taking part in the match on the morrow and so cause the Blackside Rovers to lose the Cup. But he was not beaten yet. There might still be time to escape and catch the milk train up to London. He struggled valiantly with his fetters. Suddenly he paused in great alarm, for he heard the sounds of a cock crowing, and observed that daylight was faintly illuminating his darkened prison.

"I must have been senseless for several hours," he told himself. "I suppose it is nearly seven, and the match starts at two. I've got seven hours to do it in."

He was so tightly bound that three precious hours went by before he worked himself free.

In the meantime, the Blackside Rovers turned up at the Assembly Park Stadium without their skipper, whom they expected to find waiting to greet them on the ground. They were thunderstruck when they discovered he had not arrived. Lord Eaglebrook, accompanied by his pretty daughter, was equally astonished to find that Jim Moreton was missing. The Hon. Lady Marjory showed deep consternation at the news.

Ten minutes before the match was due to start, a telegraph-boy handed Lord Eagle-

brook a telegram. The peer tore open the orange envelope and scanned the flimsy paper. It was from Jim Moreton, and said, "Unable to play to-day. Broken leg in bad motor-car smash. Play Carter Reserve and advise Hooke to take over captaincy. Jim Moreton."

The sad news was read by megaphone to the vast crowd, numbering three hundred thousand people, and was received in silence, except for a few Darlington supporters who were unsporting enough to cheer. They were instantly subdued by angry boos. The Hon. Lady Marjory swooned when she heard of the accident to Jim, and had to be removed.

Mr. Norman Sleek rubbed his hands and smiled to himself as he sat in the grandstand watching the disappointment of the crowd. He was evidently satisfied at the way his rascally scheme was working.

Loud cheering went up when at two o'clock the two teams trooped out and took up their positions on the field.

The Rovers won the toss, and as the whistle blew for the game to begin, Silas Hooke passed the ball to the opposing left wing, who, before the Rovers had time to recover from the shock of this fearful faux pas, had dashed past their defence and scored the first goal.

Loud, derisive boos from the crowd followed this calamity. Lord Eaglebrook was furious. For a time Hooke dared not repeat such brazen treachery. But whenever the leather came to him, it was noticeable that his shooting and passing were lamentably inaccurate. Whenever he could, he broke up the combination of his men, abusing them in forceful language for his own deliberate mistakes. In this way two more goals were scored by the Darlington Dare-devils.

So far the Blackside Rovers' score was nil. Their morale was visibly affected, and nothing but a miracle could save them from ignoble defeat. The Dare-devils were all over the Rovers' goal. Silas Hooke was always in the thick of the scuffle. At last he got hold of the ball, and could have kicked it out of danger. Instead of that, he slipped, and, in falling, cleverly pushed the ball back into his own goal. Another goal was scored by the Dare-devils from a penalty-kick, due to Hooke handling the ball.

The crowd was getting angry, and yelled not very choice epithets at the Blackside captain, calling upon Silas Hooke to hook it.

At half-time the score stood at 6-0 against Blackside.

There was little chance of the Rovers recovering, and Hooke



Jim put up a good fight before he was knocked out senseless by a life-preserver from the rear.

was doubtful whether they would play him in the second half. He had done his foul work too thoroughly.

Suddenly loud and tumultuous cheering burst like a thunderclap from the Stadium. A small figure, that of Jim Moreton, was pelting across the oval ground towards the grand-stand. Lord Eaglebrook could scarcely believe his eyes, and the Hon. Marjory, who had sat in a kind of trance during the match, clapped her hands with delight.

"My good fellow, what does all this mean?" began Lord Eaglebrook, as soon as Jim came up to him. "I heard you had broken your leg in a motor-car smash."

"That is false," said Jim Moreton. "I was kidnapped, and have only just managed to get here. I hope the team has pulled through without me."

"No, my boy, we are six goals down," said the peer. "It's that scoundrel Hooke. He skippered the team and let us down purposely, because I had this season superseded him by you as captain."

"More than that," said Jim. "He was paid something by Norman Sleek, the notorious bookie, to kidnap me and lose the match."

"How do you know that Sleek is at the bottom of all this?" asked Lord Eaglebrook.

"I recognised his chauffeur," replied Moreton. "I saw him as I arrived here driving Sleek away."

In a few words Jim told the whole story of his adventures, and Scotland Yard was immediately informed. While the police were on the track of Norman Sleek and Silas Hooke, who had also hurriedly departed, the game was resumed, this time with Jim Moreton as captain and centre-forward.

Cheers upon cheers re-echoed from the Stadium as Moreton dashed down the field with the leather between his legs. Back after back tackled him, but time after time he tricked them, finishing up with a brilliant shot past the opposing custodian.

Having scored four goals in rapid succession, Jim had now reduced the lead to two. He felt he could now indulge in some exhibition of the wonderful combination game, for which the Blackside team was noted. The backs fed the wings, and the wings, with amazing dash, carried the leather right down the field, concluding with a beautifully judged centre on to the boot of the waiting centre-forward, who merely tapped the ball into the net. But the Darlington Dare-devils put up a great defence, and scoring became slow. Only



Jim headed the ball back into the left-hand corner of the goal, out of reach of the custodian.

two goals were added, and with two minutes before time, both sides stood at six goals each.

The spectators rocked with excitement, shouting to Jim to score the winning goal. At last Jim could not resist the impulse. Securing the ball, he dribbled it down the field in magnificent style, amid the cheers of the spectators. The backs succumbed to his wonderful footwork, and now there was only the goalie between him and the Cup.

"Shoot, man—shoot!" yelled a hundred thousand voices.

Jim steadied himself and shot. The goalie punched the leather out.

"Saved!" yelled another hundred thousand voices.

Then a remarkable thing happened. Jim headed the ball back into the left-hand corner of the goal, out of reach of the custodian.

"Goal! Bravo!"

"Time!"

The whistle blew.

It was all over, and Blackside Rovers had beaten the Darlington Dare-devils by seven to six.

Jim Moreton was the hero of the day. Lord Eaglebrook was immensely pleased with his protégé, and willingly consented to the marriage of his daughter to the eminent footballer, who eventually rose to a very high position in the State, becoming M.P. for Blackside.

As for Norman Sleek and Silas Hooke, they were both duly arrested, convicted, and each sentenced to a long term of penal servitude, a sentence they richly deserved.

THE END.



E. Sopp's Fables

By
Edgar Sopp of the Fifth

No. 10.—The Fable of the Three Nuts and the One Master.

IT chanced one Evil Day that three reckless and foolish youths were partaking of that forbidden Weed which is known throughout the land as Tobacco, but which, according to the Flavour of some Brands, is Goodness Knows What. And not only were these Foolish Youths indulging in a Smoke, but they were Dotty Enough to perform the Deed in their own Study.

Now, it came to pass that a Certain Master wandered forth into the Junior Passages, and being possessed of a Keen Nose, he paused suspiciously at a closed door and sniffed. Thereupon, he opened the door and entered.

And, behold, Fullwood and Gulliver and Bell were discovered in the very act of Having a Puff. And Mr. Crowell's wrath was great, and the dismay of Fullwood and Co. was Greater.

And so it came about that these Reckless Youths were soundly thrashed by the Indignant Master, and for the rest of the day they displayed a Great Reluctance to sit down, unless a cushion were available. And far from being duly chastened by their punishment, they proceeded to Plot.

And, between them, they hatched a Scheme of Revenge. For they were determined that the Master should suffer even as they had suffered—although not exactly in the Same Way. Fullwood and Co., forsooth, had evolved a Riper Method.

And thus it came to pass that Fullwood and Co. arose from their couches after the multitude had retired to rest. And, lo, they descended into the Dark Recesses of the school, and even penetrated into the Fastnesses of the classroom.

And here, with but the light of an electric torch to guide them, they performed a Piece of Work that was little short of Diabolical in its cunning and Wickedness.

And yet its secret lay in its Simplicity. A coating of glue was placed upon the polished seat of Mr. Crowell's chair, and as the chair had looked before the work Commenced, so it looked when the work was Finished. For the coating of glue was invisible, and, verily, hardened ere long.

And it came to pass that when Mr. Crowell presided over the Unruly Mob which was called the Remove, he had no Suspensions of what lay In Store. 'Twas morning, and the sun did shine. And Fullwood and Co. watched with gloating Expectancy.

And, lo, Mr. Crowell sat himself down upon the chair, which, in itself, was a Picture of Innocence. For the glue was even hard to the touch. But it chanced that Mr. Crowell was somewhat warm, being but Human, after all. And as he thus sat, so did he become Greatly Attached to his chair.

And, behold, when he arose anon, it filled the Multitude with amaze to see that his chair arose with him. And thereupon a Titter sounded, which rapidly swelled into a roar of Ribald Merriment.

And Mr. Crowell, much confused, and with anger gleaming from his Eyes, swung round. And it chanced that the chair was Heavy, and it also chanced that Mr. Crowell's trousers were light. And, forsooth, the chair did become Detached, carrying with it a large portion of Mr. Crowell's Nether Garments.

And it came to pass that Mr. Crowell fled, as well he Might. It were fortunate that he had tucked his gown up before seating himself, and that this gown was of Ample Length. For it has been wisely said that a Long Cloak hideth a multitude of Rags.

And his Brow was Black, and his eyes were Grim, when he returned, thirsting for Blood. But his inquiries came to Nought—until, perchance, he happened to look within Gulliver's desk. And there he found the remains of glue, and forthwith did he tax the Wretched Youth. And Gulliver, being of Weak Stamina, blurted out the truth, thereby accusing his Guilty Comrades.

And the three Reckless Ones were hailed unto the Head—He who Reigned Supreme. And it were as well, haply, that a Veil be drawn over the painful happenings which immediately followed.

MORAL:—THERE IS ENOUGH TROUBLE IN THIS WORLD WITHOUT ASKING FOR IT!

GETTING ON TOP!

A Series of Helpful Articles for the Boy
Who Wants to Get On.

By BUSTER BOOTS.

No. 1.—THE THREE P's.

LIVE-WIRE METHODS.

I have been asked to write a series of articles for the Mag. They are for the use of those juniors who wish to make a name for themselves. They will be no use for slackers and loafers. They are meant to show the lines along which those who are AMBITIOUS should go.

To begin with, the methods I advocate are those which I will call Live-Wire. Everything in the world is done by Live-Wires. No has-beens and wash-outs need apply for jobs in this world.

Force is Matter. Likewise Matter is Force. With this difference. If you are a Live-Wire you can force matters to a head. And Force always Matters!

THE THREE P's

That brings me to my second point. In school life, as in Business, there are three cardinal factors. They are Push, Punch and Pep.

You all know what Punch is. It is Force with a capital P. It means you get there all the time! It means you jump on top with both feet!

Push is slightly different. It means shoving. You must shove with all your might, or you will be left behind. You must put your head down and shove. You must get your shoulder to the wheel.

And Pep is much the same, except that it is spelt differently. It is short for the word peppermint, and means ginger. That is Hot Stuff. So you must put pep into it. You must do it with Pep.

THE LADDER OF SUCCESS.

Now we come to something more difficult. Time is Money. If you doubt it, look at all the great organisers, the men of genius. To mention but a few—Carnegie, Rothschild and myself. Did we ever slack? No. We started to climb the Ladder of Success.

The first thing we did was to Eliminate Waste. Then we began to Conserve Energy. Energy is Power. Power is Money. Money is Time. That should be enough to show you how vital it is to Use your Brains!

Some people think Brains are little white things growing inside your head. That is a common mistake. They are not. Brains are Power. They Eliminate Waste.

And if you Eliminate Waste you are on the first rung of the Ladder of Success.

(In my next article I shall deal with some aspects of Getting on Top as they affect certain Juniors at St. Frank's.)



PAINFUL PARODIES

PERPETRATED

By

Clarence Fellowes.

The Village Blacksmith

(Of Bellton.)

Under a sloping iron roof
The Bellton smithy stands.
The smith, a clever chap is he,
With much grime on his hands.
And the things he does to earn his bread
Are many as the sands.

When fellows want their bikes repaired
They take 'em to the smith,
Who gets his hammer in his hand
And bangs away forthwith.
And strange to say, he does the job
Quite well—and that's no myth.

And children coming home from school,
Look in at the open door.
They love to cheek the smithy bold,
And hear him give a roar.
Then off they bolt, and stand and jeer,
And hear him roar some more.

If you should have a gramophone,
The spring of which is broke,
You take it to the village smith,
Who treats it as a joke.
Such jobs as this are soft, forsooth,
To such a handy bloke.

It may be that your wireless set
Won't give results at all.
Don't be disturbed by such a fact,
Just on the smithy call.
And if he doesn't put it right,
I'll eat my grandma's shawl.

He'll take on any sort of task;
He'll even mend your tyres.
And if you've got a tooth that's loose
He'll pull it with his pliers.
No job's too small, no job's too large;
And he's agent for the dyers.

He keeps a stock of petrol tins,
Full up of good old juice;
So if your motor-bike runs dry,
And all the nuts get loose,
He'll put it right in half a jiff,
As cheery as the deuce.

Toiling, rejoicing, perspiring,
Throughout the day he goes.
And when the evening comes along,
He dons his other clothes,
And goes off to the old White Harp
Until it's time to close.



JOLLY OLD CAVALIERS AND FRIGHTFUL ROUNDHEADS

A Tale of Oliver Cromwell's Days, when Knights Were Priceless and All That Sort of Thing



By ARCHIBALD WINSTON DEREK GLENTHORNE

AUTHOR'S NOTE:—In the first half of this jolly old yarn, Lieut. Reggie Faversham, a dashing young chappie of the King's Army, is collared by a foul blighter named Col. Blood, who happens to belong to Oliver Cromwell's staff. They come to the Sign of the Royal Oak, a pretty priceless wayside inn, and Reggie wilts somewhat because his best girl is the landlord's daughter. This wench, Mistress Anne by name, pleads with Col. Blood for Reggie's release. But the poisonous old toad absolutely refuses, and the damsel weeps like the dickens. Col. Blood proceeds to yap that Reggie is to be shot at dawn, and they make a move for the old doorway. Then sounds of clanking spurs flow in, and Dick Turpin appears. Col. Blood nearly has apoplexy when he hears the chappie's name, and Dick Turpin swaggers forward, looking as fierce as anything. **NOW CARRY ON:**

MISTRESS ANNE, with a look of joy on her priceless face, dashed up to Reggie, and clung to him lovingly. And Reggie seized the buxom wench in his arms, and kissed her somewhat fruitily.

"Have courage, my own!" he breathed. "This laddie will help, methinks!"

Col. Blood, in the meantime, had pulled himself together so effectively that he whisked out his jolly old rapier, and proceeded to whirl it round. And Dick Turpin grinned, and laughed a pretty scornful laugh.

"What now?" says he. "Wouldst fight?"

"Blister my skin!" roared Col. Blood. "Thou scurvy varlet! Is't possible that you defy me? Oddslife, thou knave! Perchance thou wilt live a minute, but methinks not! Take that, dash you!"

Col. Blood jumped forward, and delivered a blow at Dick Turpin that would have cut the laddie in two slices if he had been there. But he leapt aside with an agility that would have been worth hundreds of quids to Joe Beckett, and then he brought his own rapier into play.

"Now," quoth he, "observe the jolly old fur fly! Stand clear, you chappies, and let me have some room! We'll have the colonel's blood! Oddsdeath! A joke, list ye! Marry, but I have a pretty wit!"

And Dick Turpin simply piled in like one o'clock, and Colonel Blood had a dashed foul five mintes. The pair fought a duel to the finish—one of those jolly old battles

that could only happen in the days of Cromwell. You know what I mean—gore flowing freely, rapiers glinting, and what not.

Anyhow, Dick Turpin won. I mean, dash it, he absolutely had to win, or I shouldn't have anything more to write about. And Col. Blood lay on the floor, moaning horribly, and cursing somewhat by way of variety.

As a matter of fact, the blighter wasn't hurt very much—only half-a-dozen sword cuts, one ear missing, and so forth. And in those days, wounds of this kind were looked upon as mere trifles. Chappies simply carried on as though nothing had happened.

"Prepare thyself!" said Dick Turpin, gazing at Reggie. "For the sake of thy fair sweetheart, I am helping thee. Absolutely! So bustle round and get ready



And Colonel Blood delivered a blow at Dick Turpin that would have cut the laddie in two slices if he had been there.

for departure. We start at once."

"At once!" repeated Reggie. "But where to, forsooth? I mean to say, what about Col. Blood's bodyguard, and all that? They'll collar us, perchance."

Dick Turpin laughed with somewhat priceless scorn.

"Burn me!" he said lightly. "Those chunks of fungus? Dash it, old tulip, thinkest I'm scared of such trash? By my sword! The varlets have already fled into the good old offing! At sight of me they whizzed across the landscape right mightily."

"Oh, kind sir, thou hast saved my lover's life," sobbed Mistress Anne, tears of joy charging down her face like a miniature waterfall. "How can I thank thee, brave knight? Thou art truly a man of iron."

Dick Turpin smiled, and he looked so dashed handsome that Mistress Anne was almost ready to jilt Reggie on the spot and whizz into the highwayman's arms. And that, of course, would have been pretty ghastly for the poor old bean. He would have felt shockingly pipped. But girls in those days were just as fickle as they are now, and they simply fought over these men of iron. I mean, girls are keen on a chappie who claims to be a Bit of a Lad.

But Dick Turpin was a knight of the good old road, and he had no time for hobnobbing with fair damsels. Between you and me, he was a bit of a blighter, too. He absolutely robbed people like the deuce.

"Come!" quoth he. "We must away! The wench will await thy return, and all will be well, methinks. I have a goodly scheme in my head, to boot!"

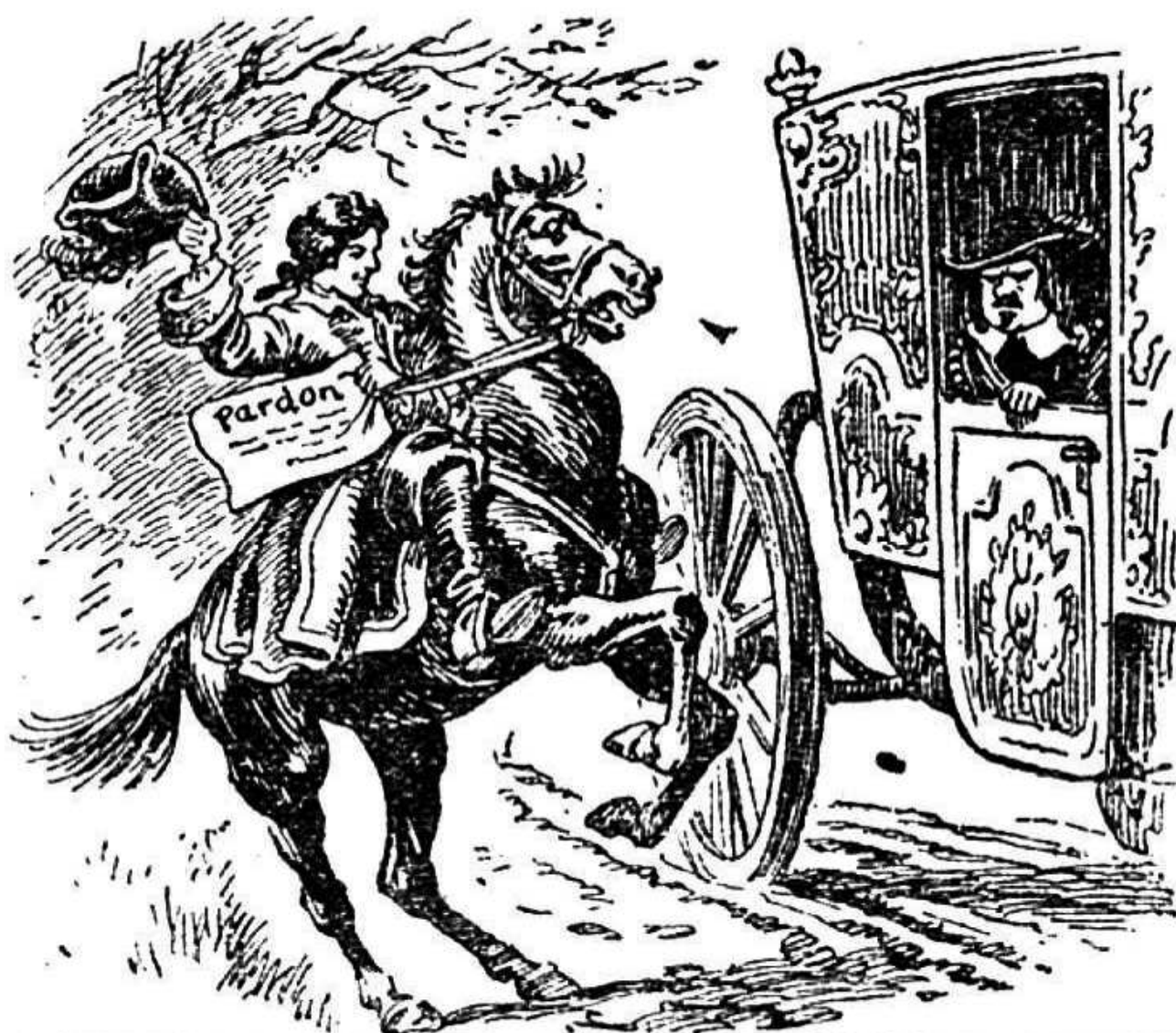
And in absolutely two minutes the pair were vanishing into the horizon. It wasn't long before they caught sight of a ripping carriage and pair, and Dick Turpin shoved his mask on, and whipped out a pair of revolvers.

"Wait in yonder spinney, old dear," says he. "Rat me, but there's rich plunder here, or I'm a varlet. Tarry awhile, and I'll soon join thee."

So Reggie, rather disapproving of the whole bally affair, waited in the spinney. And Dick Turpin rode up to the carriage and pair, and shot a couple of shots across the bows, so to speak.

"Hold!" he thundered. "Stand and deliver! Bail up, and so forth! In other words, your money or your life!"

The driver went all cold and clammy, and pulled up his horses in no time. And a hefty-looking chappie, dressed in his best glad rags, shoved his head out of the carriage window.



Seizing the pardon, Dick Turpin backed away and raised his old headgear.

"What now?" he cried. "Odds wounds! 'Tis Dick Turpin, beshrew me!"

"Absolutely," agreed Dick. "Sorry, old lad, but I've got to ask you to turn out your doubloons, and so forth. But what's this? Burn me with red hot pokers! Thou art Oliver Cromwell himself!"

"Ay, miscreant, I am Cromwell!" quoth the hefty one, dashed haughtily.

"Then, tyrant, make out a free pardon for one Reggie Faversham, and I will spare thy life," said Dick Turpin. "He was to be shot at dawn, or some such foul scheme, and it displeases me. Wilt do as I bid, or shall I pump a goodly assortment of lead into thy carcase?"

Oliver Cromwell wilted visibly. The chappie was brave enough, no doubt, but all this talk of lead rather bothered him. I mean to say, the prospect was not exactly fruity.

"Thou knave!" shouted Cromwell. "I'll jolly well do it."

And he forthwith scribbled a pardon, and Dick Turpin seized it. Then he backed away, and raised his good old headgear.

"'Tis well," he said. "Go thou on thy merry way, old companion."

And digging his spurs into his gee-gee's ribs, Dick Turpin simply waltzed into the offing. And Reggie was so dashed pleased when he saw the pardon that he nearly grabbed Dick Turpin and kissed the merchant.

And Lieut. Reggie, with joy in his heart, and the pardon in his hand, whizzed back to the old wayside inn, and fell into the arms of his best girl. And that, if I may say so, is that.

THE END.

SPUFING MI MAJOR

By Willy Handforth

MI wurd!
You wud have laffed at a joke I plaid on mi major at Christmas. No one wud beleave how sympul it is to pul that chapp's leg.

Wi, he wud byte annything! Wen he is not byting things, he is userly punching them.

But I must tel yu how I spuffed him. It was a gorgus spufe.

One morning in the holidays I put a letter on his playte addresd to him in a disguyzed hand riting. He thort it came from a girl, becos I rote his name in big round leters.

He loked orl round the table to see that no one was lukiing, and then opened the leter and red it. I had ritten:

"Derest darlinest Teddie,—I am orfully in luv with you. Meet me by mune lite at harf-past ten to-night by the old tower. You do not no hu i am, but I am despritley in luv with you.

Yors,

"MARGRATE."

The old tower is in the grounds some way from the house. My brotther red the letter and quikly put it into his pokket. Wots that letter about, I asked, after brekfast. I mean the won in the purpull envelope. Shut up, he sed. O veery wel, I sed, in a ioud voyce. Don't tel me if you don't want to. I expect your in luv and it's from a girl.

My patter heard that and chuckkled. Wot's that, he said, Edward in luv? I'm supprised to heer it.

You silly fat hed, shouted my brotther, it's nuthing ov the sort. But his cheeks went orl red. I thot I shud bust miself with laffing.

I could hardly wate till harf-past ten that night, I was so eeger. At ten, I went up to my bedd room and put on an ole skirt I had pinched out of one of my sister's cubbards. Then I put on an ole hatt.

A bit later I stroled out into the grounds, and it was pritty cold, I can tel you. But I diddent myrd. I went behind a bush and wayted.

It was offul dreery werk wayting, but at last I herd hevy footstepps cuming tords me. I reckernised them as my brotthers. Wen he came up, I came out from behind the bush and sedd Hush. So you have cum, Margrate, he said. Yes, I ansurd, I have cum; but Ime not Margrate. I have a noat from her.

I gave him an envelope, and sed now I must run off or I shall be cot, and it would never do. My brother nevvver reckernised my voice, and I skiped off. The leter I gave him sed:

"Dere Edward,—My frend is to giv you this leter, and it is to say I am not in luv with you any longer. I am going to marry a yung man in the village who is veery hansum. You are two uggerly for me.

Yors,

"MARGRATE."

I bolted in and took ov my things. Then I sterold into the droring room. In a few minnits my brotther came in, lukiing offly wild.

I worched him for a bit. He loked kind of wuried.

He went to the great and picked up the pokker. I sor him hit a peace of inofensiv cole savidgely.

Then he droped the pokker with a crash in two the fender.

I thot it was time to speke.

Halo, Edward, I sed calmly. Wear have you bin? Mind your own bizness, he replied. I only wundered if you had bin meeting any girls, I sed offly innocent. Becos a girl I no sed to me she wanted to meet you. Her name was Margrate.

M-M-M-Margrate! howled my brotther.

Sum name like that, I sed. Did she send me a messidge?

My brother looked at me hard. Then he rushed acros the room. You litle roter, he sed, I beleave you wer trying to pul mi leg. Theyres no such girl as Margrate. You rote those letters, and it was you who met me outside just now. Jist you wate a mo!

But I diddent wate. Tat-tar, I sed, and locked miself in mi bed-room. And I diddent apero till the coste was clere. Wun up to litle Willy agen!

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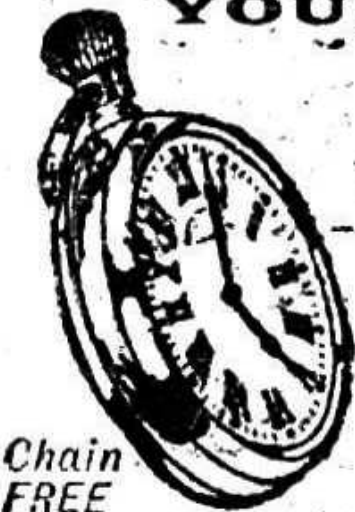
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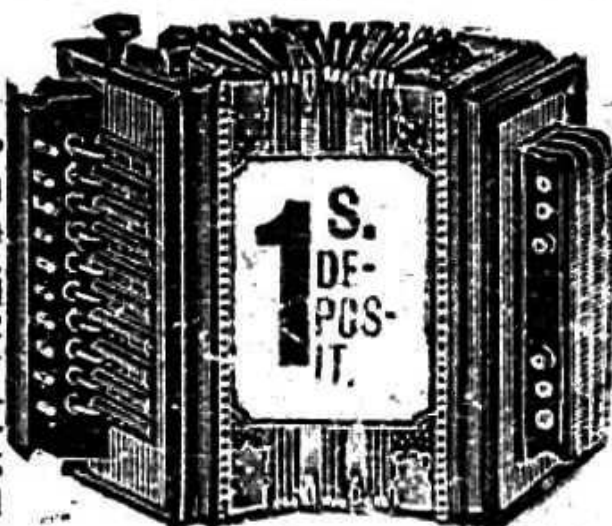


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