

ANOTHER FINE STORY OF THE MYSTERIOUS DR. KARNAK !

The
NELSON LEE
Library
AND ST. FRANKS MAGAZINE **2D.**



The Above Incident is taken from This Week's Story :—

THE EVIL EYE OF BAAL !



There were two peculiar footprints in the soft earth. They were unlike anything I had seen in all my experience.

THE EVIL EYE OF BAAL



Ever since the coming of Dr. Karnak to St. Frank's many strange and inexplicable happenings have occurred at the school. Dr. Karnak is an Oriental—an Egyptian, to be exact—who has come to St. Frank's as curator of the school museum and lecturer on Egyptology. Quite recently the museum has been enriched by the priceless Egyptian treasures presented by Lord Dorrimore from a tomb he has lately discovered in Upper Egypt ascribed to the ancient King of Baal, whose mummy is among the collection of exhibits at the St. Frank's museum. The series of misfortunes which befall the school are said by Dr. Karnak to be due to the influence of the spirit of Baal. Be this as it may, the Egyptian curator is no mean exponent of the arts of Black Magic, as the reader will discover in the gripping narrative we give below.

THE EDITOR

The Narrative Related Throughout by Nipper

CHAPTER I.

THE MAKER OF MAGIC!

GULLIVER shivered, and clutched at Fullwood's arm. "I don't like it!" he muttered huskily. "It's—it's too horrible!"

"Silence, boy!" said Dr. Karnak, his voice soft and purring. "Do not disturb the Circle. See! Already there is a movement of the spirit pencil! Ah! Better and better!"

The juniors sat there, fascinated. Only the dim, mysterious light from a single shaded lamp glowed down upon the gathering. In the air was the smell of incense, intermingled with an indefinable odour of oldness. In the shadows the hazy outlines of specimen cases could be seen, and over in the corner the silent, eerie figure of Baal, the mummy.

Dr. Karnak, attired in flowing Eastern

robes, presided over the strange meeting. His dark face was tense and keen, and his glittering eyes were alive with extraordinary power. And near him crouched his constant companion, the Serval cat—an uncanny creature with a glossy yellow coat covered with black spots.

It was a scene of mystery, of half-felt horror.

And yet this gathering was taking place in the very heart of St. Frank's, while most of the Remove fellows were busy at their prep, and while the fags were noisily racing up and down the Third Form passages.

"Watch!" said Dr. Karnak impressively.

There were eight juniors altogether, including Cecil De Valerie, Fullwood and Co., Timothy Tucker, Ellmore, Skelton. Most of these fellows were known in the Remove as cranks, and their present occupation was in

keeping with their general characters. De Valerie was the only exception. But he, strange to say, was the most ardent follower of Dr. Karnak of all.

They were in a circle, squatting on cushions and holding hands. And in the centre lay a stone slab, with a curious casket upon it—an age-old casket, which had been discovered in an Egyptian tomb. Overhead the shaded electric light glowed down, casting a weird, uncertain light.

"Oh! Oh!" muttered Bell huskily. "Look there! Look!"

"Shsssh!" purred Dr. Karnak.

A certain tenseness ran round the circle—an invisible current of mysterious expectancy. And all eyes were directed towards that casket. And suddenly a tap sounded, clearly and distinctly.

The lid of the casket had raised itself slightly!

It fell into place again with a tap, and there followed a silence that could almost be felt. The juniors were held in a kind of grip, and dared not even move a finger. Even their breathing was silenced.

And their pulses were throbbing tensely. For they knew that that casket contained absolutely nothing but a blank sheet of note-paper and a lead pencil! They had seen Dr. Karnak place these two small articles within the casket, and not one fellow had omitted to watch.

How, then, had the casket raised its lid?

The juniors remembered how Dr. Karnak had solemnly informed them that it was his object to obtain a message from the spirit of Baal, the Moon God. Over in one of those dim corners stood the mummy itself—cold, silent, implacable.

This was not the first meeting of the newly formed Sorcery Club—so called by Cecil De Valerie, its founder. For this normally level-headed junior had fallen under the spell of Dr. Karnak's powerful will.

The Egyptian had not been at St. Frank's long. He had, in fact, arrived at the old school at the commencement of the present term—in the capacity of science lecturer and librarian. But he did not interest the juniors in these subjects. Dr. Karnak was the curator of the new St. Frank's museum, and from the very first he had impressed the fellows strangely.

Many mysterious happenings had taken place during the past few days. An air of uncanny danger seemed to be hovering over the school. And Dr. Karnak himself attributed this to that mummy, thousands of years old, which stood in its sarcophagus in the corner.

Dr. Karnak was an Egyptologist of renown, a man who had studied his subject for years, and who was an expert on all archæological matters. Dr. Stafford himself was writing a book on this subject, and he was finding that Dr. Karnak was absolutely invaluable—a perfect mine of information.

Perhaps the Head would not have had such complete faith in Dr. Karnak if he had known that the latter was putting all sorts

of fantastic ideas into the heads of the boys. But the Head could know nothing of these things—for, isolated as principal of the great public school, he was as widely separated from the Junior School as the poles are apart.

But I knew all about it—and I had taken good care to give Nelson Lee a hint. The guv'nor just smiled, and I didn't exactly know what his opinion was. But I had half an idea that he was aware of the position. The guv'nor doesn't miss much, although he pretends to see nothing.

In my opinion, Dr. Karnak was a mysterious fraud. I'm not doubting his ability as a lecturer, nor am I casting any aspersions upon his knowledge of Egyptology. He was a fraud in the sense that he posed as a great mystic. He led the fellows to believe that the Black Arts could still be practised—that sorcery was not merely a myth, but a reality.

The mummy, supposed to be the earthly remains of a great ancient Egyptian sorcerer, had been presented to the museum by no less a person than our old friend, Lord Dorri-more.

For Dorrie, in his search of adventure, had recently taken out a large expedition to Egypt, and had discovered a wonderful new tomb. The mummy, with numerous other relics, had been sent to St. Frank's several weeks back.

And Dr. Karnak declared that the spirit of Baal, the Moon God, still dwelt within the embalmed human remains. Furthermore, he told the juniors that this spirit could take an earthly form, and "materialise"—chiefly when the moon was in a certain phase.

All the level-headed fellows had no doubt that it was sheer bunkum—an effort on Dr. Karnak's part to obtain cheap notoriety. But, unfortunately, there were a number of juniors who were not level-headed.

And they formed themselves into a club, with Cecil De Valerie at their head, and went in for occult research and kindred subjects. Nothing could have been more unhealthy. Already some of the fellows were becoming nervous, jumpy, and unnaturally subdued.

And this gathering in the museum was the first real meeting of the Sorcery Club. By all appearances, it was going to be a success—a success, that is, from the point of view of those who wanted uncanny results.

Again the lid of the casket raised itself, and it slowly fell—as though something within was vainly attempting to emerge. And yet it was impossible! That casket contained nothing but a pencil and a scrap of paper! And it was out of the question for human agency to be at work. The casket lay on a stone slab, and all the juniors had thoroughly examined it.

They sat there in the circle, fascinated. "Oh!" breathed Skelton huskily. "It's—it's opening again!"

The juniors almost ceased to breathe. Their gaze was fixed in fear and wonder upon the ancient casket. The lid raised itself

slightly, hesitated, and then something thrust it half open.

And all those who watched were prepared to swear that a grisly hand appeared—a brown, bony, mummified hand. In it was grasped the slip of paper. The latter fluttered down to the stone slab.

The hand disappeared, and the lid of the casket snapped down.

The juniors were utterly startled. Two or three of them had turned deathly pale—for the sight of that thing had been unnerving. And it was all the more extraordinary, because they positively knew that the casket had been empty, except for the pencil and paper.

"Ah!" murmured Dr. Karnak, in a long sigh.

The Serval cat lay crouching by his side, the eyes of the animal alight with fear, and her fangs were showing viciously. But as the casket closed the cat seemed to recover its former composure.

"Oh! It's—it's horrible!" said Gulliver hoarsely.

"There is nothing to be afraid of," purred Dr. Karnak. "The spirit of Baal has answered—and we have seen a manifestation that is denied to all but a few. The hand you saw was the hand of the materialised spirit!"

"But—but the mummy's still there—in the corner!" muttered Fullwood. "It's too uncanny for my liking—I think we've had enough for to-night."

"Wait! And do not give way to these paltry fears," said the Egyptian smoothly. "I have repeatedly told you that, when one fully understands this subject, the horror becomes no longer horror—and the unfathomable becomes clear. Ignorance is the only enemy of this great science. Remember, no harm will come to those who treat this subject with the solemnity it deserves. But it will be hard for those who scoff."

"We all believe," said De Valerie, his voice sounding dull. "And no harm will come to us. We are convinced of the great truth."

Fullwood gave De Valerie a sharp look. For, somehow, it seemed to the leader of Study A that De Valerie was not speaking his own words, but was giving voice, in a mechanical way, to the words of another.

Fullwood was no great believer in the occult, and he had only joined this so-called Sorcery Club in order to obtain a new thrill. In Ralph Leslie's opinion, things were rather slow at St. Frank's this term, and he welcomed Dr. Karnak as a relief from the general monotony.

Gulliver and Bell would have preferred to have remained out of the business altogether, for they did not possess the stamina or the pluck of their leader. But, when they had suggested backing out, Fullwood had jeered at them. Thus, in order to save their faces, they had attended this meeting. And now they wished they hadn't. For they were pale and shaken—in other words, scared stiff.

"I—I want to get away!" whispered Bell,

with a gulp. "It's—it's fiendish! That hand! I can see it now! I can see—"

"Hush—hush!" commanded Dr. Karnak sharply. "Boy! This is nothing more nor less than panic! Have I not already told you that there is nothing whatever to fear? No harm will come to those who have faith."

"Perhaps there is a message on the paper," said De Valerie dully.

Dr. Karnak reached out, picked up the paper, and glanced at it. He showed no signs of surprise as he gazed upon a number of queer-looking hieroglyphics. But the juniors were astounded afresh.

"How—how did those signs come on the paper, sir?" asked Skelton, deeply impressed. "It was blank when you put it in."

"Baal has answered," replied Dr. Karnak.

He opened the casket wide, and two or three of the juniors craned forward curiously and half fearfully. The glow from above fell full into the interior, and the juniors could see at once that the casket contained nothing but the pencil. The mysterious hand had vanished as uncannily as it had appeared.

"So!" murmured the Egyptian. "All is well now, my young friends. The materialisation is no longer with us, and our little gathering is ended. Come, we will have more lights."

He rose from his cushions, glided noiselessly over to the wall of the museum, and switched on two extra electric lights. One or two of the Removites breathed more freely.

"My hat! That's better!" whispered Bell. "I say, can't we get out now? I'm—I'm scared of this, and I don't mind admittin' it! No more sorcery for me—once is enough!"

"Same here!" said Gulliver, with a shiver.

"Funks!" jeered Fullwood contemptuously. "In my opinion, it was jolly interestin'—even now I'm not convinced that it was genuine. I'd like to have a look at that casket a bit more closely. But the thing's sacred—we mustn't touch it! Bally suspicious, to my mind!"

But the other juniors were not so sceptical.

"Remarkable, my dear sir," declared Timothy Tucker. "Kindly allow me to congratulate you upon the success of this manifestation of occult science. Quite so! Quite so! Yes, my dear sir, a most successful experiment. I trust we shall have further opportunities—"

"Undoubtedly," broke in Dr. Karnak. "To-night's meeting was only a tentative feeler, so to speak. Later we will conduct further experiments—and I have no doubt that we shall be even more successful."

"Exactly—exactly," said Tucker. "H'm! H'm! That is so. Provided we have the necessary aura there is no reason why we should not plunge still further into the realms of the Unknown. Quite so! Permit me to glance at the message, my dear sir. I am greatly interested—greatly interested."

Dr. Karnak smiled.

"I am afraid you wouldn't understand,

my dear boy," he said smoothly. "I am gratified at your enthusiasm, and I can see that I have a promising pupil. With regard to the hieroglyphics, these are utterly meaningless to any but an expert student. Even I, with my extensive knowledge, would have some difficulty in translating the message into English."

"Why, can't you tell us what it says now, sir?" asked Skelton.

"We will see—we will see!" said Dr. Karnak.

He stood there, gazing intently at the curious-looking symbols—his whole attitude one of intense concentration. The juniors watched him with interest, impressed by the mental greatness of their tutor. Was it possible that Dr. Karnak was just acting a part? In some respects, his movements and his talk were suggestive of the stage conjurer.

"Yes—yes!" purred the Egyptian. "I cannot give the exact translation, but my knowledge of these symbols is sufficient to assure me that herein lies a warning—a warning from Baal himself."

"A warning, sir?" asked De Valerie.

"Yes. Although it is but a repetition of my own advice," replied Karnak. "But, coming from this mystic source, the message is a thousandfold more valuable. Take heed, boys! And obey the warning of this mighty sorcerer. Do not gaze upon the face of the mummy."

Fullwood looked instinctively towards the silent figure.

"Be careful!" warned Bell nervously. "You're lookin' at it."

Dr. Karnak smiled.

"There is no danger in a mere glance, from a distance, or in passing," he exclaimed. "This warning is more subtle. It is intended for those who lack faith. It is intended for those who come here ridiculing, scoffing, jeering. True believers need fear nothing."

"I don't quite follow," said Fullwood.

Dr. Karnak fixed him with his piercing eyes.

"I suspect, my young friend, that you are not entirely in sympathy with our Cause," he said solemnly. "That is lamentable. And this warning applies to you very acutely. Glance at the mummy as you will—but do not dare to stand face to face with it, and stare upon its sacred countenance."

"Why, what will happen if I do?" asked Fullwood calmly.

"Nothing—nothing whatever," replied Dr. Karnak. "You may even repeat this process, and stare once again at the face of the mummy. But should you walk away and then return—and gaze a third time upon the visage of Baal, then swift disaster will befall."

"Oh, come off it, sir!" protested Fullwood. "How can that mummy cause disaster?"

"You may sneer—scoff!" replied Dr. Karnak grimly. "But the warning is written here—the warning from the spirit

of the sorcerer. Disobey, and this disaster will fall upon your own shoulders."

Even Ralph Leslie Fullwood was slightly impressed by the Egyptian's sombre tone. And when he left the museum, a few minutes later, with the other juniors, he was not quite so confident.

Was there something in this mysticism after all?

CHAPTER II.

THE UNBELIEVERS.



EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH beat his palm vigorously.

"Rot!" he exclaimed. "Sheer, unadulterated rot! If you think I believe all this

bunkum about sorcery, you've made a mistake."

"My dear chap, there's no need to get excited," remarked Reginald Pitt. "Keep calm! Allow the brainstorm to subside. As a matter of fact, everybody here agrees with you that Dr. Karnak is a spoofer!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good!" said Handforth, looking round. "Then we're all of the same opinion? Huh! What's the good of talking, then?"

The other fellows grinned. As there were no dissenting voices Handforth was done out of his argument. He couldn't very well go into a long wrangle with a crowd of chaps who all agreed with him.

We were in the Common-room—fifteen or sixteen of us. And it was noticed that De Valerie and Skelton and the rest were not present. The whole Remove knew that these juniors were holding a meeting of the Sorcery Club.

John Busterfield Boots, Percy Bray, Christine & Co., and a few other College House fellows had come over on a friendly visit—but their object was chiefly to inquire into the rumours regarding Dr. Karnak. The Monks had not come into contact with the Egyptian very much.

"And do you mean to tell me that these idiots actually believe that Karnak can practice sorcery?" asked Buster Boots dubiously. "Why, hang it all, the thing's too silly for words!"

I shook my head.

"It's a queer thing in this world that silly things generally attract the public," I replied. "It doesn't matter how dotty a subject may be, there's always somebody to take it up. And even level-headed chaps will make fatheads of themselves without knowing it."

Handforth nodded.

"Yes, and that applies ten times as much in America as it does here," he said, with relish. "We're getting pretty bad in England nowadays; but over in the United States they start these giddy cults every hour of the day, and the people join up in flocks. They must have brains like sheep."

"Aw, cut that out!" protested Ulysses Spencer Adams. "Say, how do you get that way? The folks over in the States are sure level-headed, and as soon as they find out that a thing is bunk they quit. Yep, sirree! I'm telling you that my home folks are sure wise guys."

"Of course they are," I said diplomatically. "We don't need to go into any discussion regarding America. And it's a fact, Buster," I went on, "that Dr. Karnak has succeeded in gathering a number of chaps round him, and they've taken up this sorcery business in earnest."

"You ought to do something about it," said Buster Boots.

"I'm going to," I replied. "As long as these cranky fellows go in for the rot it doesn't matter much. But as soon as there's any sign of it spreading I'll put a spoke in the wheel."

"Just like you!" grunted Handforth disgustedly. "Always waiting—always delaying. If I was skipper I'd take those chaps, get 'em in a quiet place, and punch their heads until they promise to chuck the whole thing!"

"It's not a bit of good adopting those ramheaded tactics, old son," I replied. "You're just proving that you don't understand the first rudiment of human nature. Supposing somebody forbade you to use Study D, what would you do? Fight like the dickens to have your own way. And it's just the same with these disciples of Dr. Karnak. By forbidding them to attend these meetings they'll only be all the more eager. We've got to adopt a more gradual process."

"Nipper's right," declared Pitt, nodding. "Diplomacy—that's the stuff. And that's why Nipper's such a good skipper. He always deals with every problem in a diplomatic manner. A ramheaded skipper soon comes a cropper."

John Busterfield Boots laughed ruefully.

"That's one for me, I suppose?" he said good-naturedly. "I was ramheaded enough when I led the Remove, wasn't I? And look what happened. Within two or three weeks I was off my giddy perch."

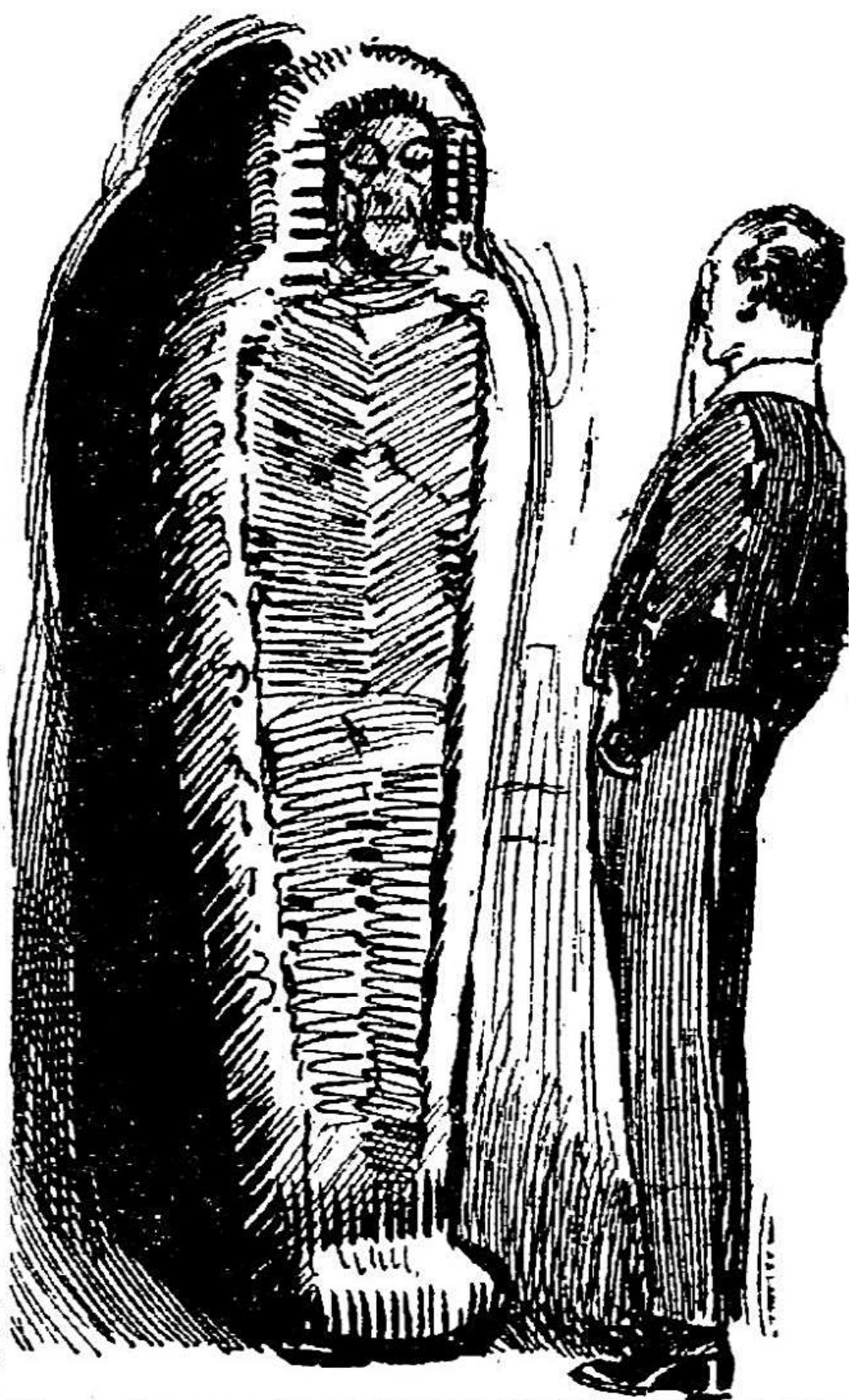
"Ah!" exclaimed Handforth suddenly. "Here they come. By George, just look at their dials! As pale as sheets; and they're absolutely shivering. I expect they've seen a few ghosts," he added sarcastically.

De Valerie came in with the other members of the Sorcery Club. And it was an undoubted fact that they were all looking shaky. Their attempts to appear unconcerned and at ease were rather painful. De Valerie had a dull expression of defiance on his dark, finely-moulded face, and his eyes were burning in strange contrast.

He looked round, apparently struck by the sudden silence.

"Anything wrong here?" he asked. "You're all jolly quiet."

"Reason to be, too," said Handforth bluntly. "Things have come to a pretty



"Now, dash you—do your worst!" said Archie, staring hard at the mummy.

pass when you chaps go and collect round that blessed Egyptian and practice witchcraft. Huh! What rot!"

De Valerie flushed.

"You don't seem to understand," he said quietly. "It's not witchcraft—it's a science. It's just as much a science as chemistry or any other form of research. It's only your ignorance of the subject—"

"Ignorance—rubbish!" cut in Handforth. "That's what the spiritualists say. They go mad on these seances, and mess about with ectoplasm—another word for cotton gauze—and then appear jolly injured because sensible people scoff. If you've got enough faith, you can believe in anything. It's just a form of madness, that's all."

"If it comes to that, all these cults are much of a muchness," remarked Pitt. "You've just got to believe things, without even asking any questions, and you're a firm adherent. What's been happening this evening?"

"We held a very successful meeting," replied De Valerie.

"That's no answer," said Handforth.

De Valerie's eyes flashed.

"If you want to know what happens at

these meetings you're quite at liberty to join the club," he said tartly. "But the members are all pledged not to discuss anything to outsiders."

Handforth snorted.

"More spool!" he snapped. "I'll bet nothing happened at all."

"Yes it did!" put in Gulliver. "We saw a horrible hand—"

"Remember your pledge!" interrupted De Valerie sharply.

"Oh, rot!" growled Gulliver. "Blow the pledge! I've finished with the club; I'm not a member any more. And I'm at liberty to say what I please. See? The whole thing's rotten to the core!"

"Tell us what happened!" demanded a dozen voices.

"We are longing to hear the news," said Clarence Fellowe. "You can tell us if choose. Kindly relate the little story, even though it is grim and hoary."

"I'm going to," said Gulliver defiantly.

"We are very keen to hear," said Fellowe. "But don't mind if we jeer. We think that all this tosh will clearly fail to wash. If sorcery were true, then wondrous things we'd do!"

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Handforth. "Can't you save that giddy poetry for the Mag? Poetry! Huh! Doggerel!"

"I admit it's rather bad, and it really makes me sad," replied Fellowe apologetically. "But still, I'll forthwith cease, and then you'll have some peace."

"Dry up!" said Gulliver. "I'll just tell you what happened. When we got into the museum Dr. Karnak was there—"

And Gulliver, in spite of De Valerie's protests, related everything that had occurred, and Bell bore him out. Fullwood stood by, without making any comment. Archie Glen thorpe had come in at the commencement, and he stood listening with keen attention.

"And do you think you can fool us with a yarn like that?" demanded Tommy Watson indignantly. "Do you think we believe all that tosh about a grisly hand coming out of the casket? Rubbish!"

"I tell you we saw it distinctly!" persisted Gulliver.

"Imagination!" said Pitt. "Imagination or trickery. In all probability it was trickery."

"It's all very well to talk like that, but we could see well enough that the box was empty," declared Gulliver. "I've always believed that this sorcery stuff was just twaddle, but I'm not so jolly sceptical now. It's a bit too much for me, anyway, and in future I'm going to leave it alone."

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Handforth breathing hard. "My giddy hat! You stand there and deliberately tell us that it was sorcery. Why, you blithering ass, that Egyptian chap was just fooling you and laughing up his sleeve."

"It wasn't foolery—it was a genuine manifestation," said De Valerie fiercely.

"What do you know about these things? You have absolutely no knowledge of the science, and yet you presume to criticise it in this way."

"And what about the hieroglyphics?" demanded Skelton.

"If you look at these things in a common-sense way, there's probably a common-sense explanation," I said quietly. "I'm looking at the affair impartially. I don't admit that Dr. Karnak can produce these manifestations, but queer things do happen, and that can't be denied. But any clever conjurer can show an empty box and then cause all sorts of things to come out of it. Did Dr. Karnak allow you to handle this casket?"

"No," replied Gulliver. "Fullwood wanted to pick it up, but Dr. Karnak told him that it would affect the experiment."

"There you are!" said Handforth scoffingly. "Karnak wouldn't allow anybody to examine it because it was a trick box! As for the hieroglyphics, they were on the paper all the time, I expect."

"There weren't!" put in Ellmore. "The paper was blank."

"Then either the paper was substituted, or else the symbols were written in invisible ink," I remarked. "There's all sorts of ways in which tricks like that can be done. Some chemical powder in the casket, for example, might have caused the hieroglyphics to appear. But one thing's certain. If Dr. Karnak is a conjurer, he's an expert at the game!"

"Well, you don't catch me asking for trouble," declared Gulliver. "I wouldn't go and look at that mummy for ten quid. Anybody who stares at the thing three times will get it in the neck. Disaster will follow. That's what the message said."

"And you believe it?" roared Handforth.

"I don't know whether I believe it or not, but I'm not taking any chances," replied Gulliver bluntly. "Blow the museum, and blow the mummy, too!"

Archie strolled forward and adjusted his monocle.

"Pardon me for shoving in, old screams, but I feel absolutely compelled to put in the good old word," he said. "I mean to say, here's all this chat going on, and here we are listening to it. It seems to me that something ought to be done. Here's a distinct opportunity to rally round and to prove how we regard this foul warning."

"What do you mean, Archie?" asked Church.

"Why, absolutely," replied Archie, "all this sorcery stuff. Not only dashed ridie., but somewhat near the edge. Allow me to remark, as pithily as possible, that I regard Dr. Karnak as a bally outsider!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The chappie appears out of the landscape, and proceeds to shove himself down amongst us," proceeded Archie. "And once here, he starts all this mystery business. I mean, if it isn't an example of priceless rot, what is? I feel roused; the tissues

are positively bursting with energy. As for the mummy, I've a good mind to go up to the bally thing and stare it in the face."

"Don't!" said Gulliver, with a shiver.

"That," said Archie, "has done it! I'm going to show Dr. Karnak how much I believe in his poisonous warnings. Gather round, dear lads, and accompany me to the museum. Absolutely! I feel that this is the precise time to get somewhat busy."

And Archie Glenthorne marched out of the Common-room, and quite a number of fellows followed him, including Handforth & Co., De Valerie, and myself. Most of the fellows had been aroused, and Dr. Karnak was not exactly in favour.

We arrived at the museum, and found it empty. But all the lights were glowing, and there was nothing mysterious or eerie about the place. In fact, the big, curiously shaped room was merely drab and sombre. Even a fag wouldn't have been scared.

But left alone in that place, with only one light glowing, the whole aspect of the museum changed. It became a place of unseen horrors; the very atmosphere itself seeming to be charged with mysterious fear.

"Dear old lads, kindly watch," said Archie.

He strode straight up to the mummy and stared into its dried, shrivelled face for an appreciable time. Then he walked away, paused for a little period, and strode back, and once again stared at the mummy. For a third time he did this, and the watching juniors, at first amused, were suddenly impressed. Archie's actions were very deliberate.

"Now, dash you—do your worst!" said Archie, adjusting his monocle and staring hard at the mummy. "I must be allowed to further remark that you must have been a frightfully ugly chappie when you were alive."

"This is madness!" said De Valerie hoarsely. "You'll regret it, Glenthorne—you'll be sorry for this. The curse of Baal is now upon you!"

"Good!" said Archie calmly. "I am dashed thankful that I'm not a priceless ass. Any fellow who is afraid to look at this harmless object is a bally funk!"

"All the same, it seems a bit unnecessary," said Tommy Watson. "I don't believe any of the rot, but there's—there's something uncanny about it. It's like the figure 13—lots of people don't believe it's unlucky, but they try to avoid it. There's no sense in asking for trouble."

"Rats!" said Handforth tartly.

And with much display he proceeded to copy Archie's example. Three times he stared at the mummy—to prove his contempt for the Egyptian's warning. And Archie stood looking on, highly delighted.

"Topping!" he announced. "I mean to say, it's up to everybody to stagger for-

ward and do likewise. I think we ought to show Dr. Karnak that we regard him with a particularly foul brand of disdain."

"Thank you, Glenthorne," purred a soft voice in the rear.

We turned and found that Dr. Karnak had noiselessly entered the museum from the library. Archie was not at all dismayed, as many juniors suspected he would be. On the contrary he gave his eyeglass a firm twist, and then proceeded to look Dr. Karnak up and down, as though he were some utter stranger.

"Absolutely!" said Archie firmly. "Without wishing to be offensive, dear old soul, I wish to remark that I regard you with a large quantity of scorn. If the expression were not impolite, I would even describe you as a blot on the landscape. I mean, dash it, you've simply been scaring these chappies into believing all sorts of bally twaddle."

Dr. Karnak's eyes burned, but his face was still smiling.

"I will attribute your insults to your ignorance, Glenthorne," he said smoothly. "Realising that your words are but the vapourings of a simple mind, I will refrain from reporting this breach to your House-master. But you must refrain from further insults, or I shall be compelled to change my mind."

Archie drew himself up with dignity.

"It is not the habit of a Glenthorne to be insulting, sir," he said. "But I have stated my opinion, and there it stands—absolutely! You will be frightfully interested to know that I have gazed thrice into the face of Baal! I want to show you how much I think of your priceless sorcery!"

"The same here," said Handforth. "I've looked at the mummy three times, too. If that mouldy old thing can hurt me, then I shan't be surprised if somebody flies the Atlantic in a traction engine!"

"Your witticisms are out of place," said Dr. Karnak solemnly. "I do not bear any bitter thoughts against you for this foolish defiance—for I realise that it is but the outcome of ignorance. And I am fearful for the safety of you two boys. You have done a dangerous thing—a foolish, insane thing! For you have brought the wrath of an evil spirit upon your heads."

I looked at Dr. Karnak curiously.

"But you don't mean to actually declare that something disastrous will happen to Handforth and Glenthorne, sir?" I asked. "You're not telling us that this evil spirit will cause some manifestation?"

"The subject is immense," replied Dr. Karnak. "The possibilities are so fraught with horror that I tremble to think deeply on the subject. These two boys have disregarded the warning, and the result may be grave, indeed. I will do my utmost to protect them, but my powers are puny in comparison to those of Baal. I can say no more."

He spoke impressively, and although Handforth wanted to say many things, he could not find his voice. And very soon afterwards we all left the museum and returned to the junior quarters.

And it seemed that a shadow had come over the Remove. I knew that it was only the effect of Dr. Karnak's forceful personality. But there could be no denying that the fellows were unusually quiet. There seemed to be an air of impending disaster—as though the warning was already about to take effect.

Karnak's influence. He had caused this uneasiness to spread throughout the Remove. And juniors who had never previously given a thought to dark passages and shadowy corners, were now almost afraid to go about alone.

I noticed that most of the fellows got undressed as rapidly as possible, and snuggled down into bed. Even Jarrow, the new boy, was affected, for he was by no means as talkative as usual.

"Well, Handy's still safe," remarked Pitt lightly. "He hasn't been spirited away by

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CHAPTER III.

THE SPELL OF THE EVIL EYE.



"PITY they don't give us more light in the dormitory," grumbled Gulliver, as he sat on the edge of his bed. "Jolly mean, I call it! Nothing but a dismal hole!

Ugh! And cold, too!"

The Remove dormitory in the Ancient House was just the same as it had always been. Gulliver didn't realise that it was his own nervousness that made the room appear sombre and chill. And Gulliver's feelings were reciprocated by many of the other fellows.

It was just one of the results of Dr.

a filmy ghost. Mind you don't have nightmares, Handy. And perhaps you'd better padlock yourself to the bed. We don't want that mummy to come stalking in, and carry you off in the dead of night!"

"I say, cheese it!" growled Church. "Don't talk about that rotten mummy now!"

"Sorry!" grinned Pitt. "Getting nervous?"

"He'd better—that's all!" said Handforth curtly. "Look here, Church, my lad! I've already warned you that I'm not standing any rot! Down in the study you started calling me names for looking at that mummy."

"Well, it was a bit reckless," said Church.

"You—you hopeless ass!" said Handforth

bitterly. "I suppose you'll be joining that rotten club to-morrow? I'm fed up with the whole subject—and I don't want to hear any more about it."

"Then we're both satisfied," retorted Church.

"What?"

"I'm sick of the subject, too—and I wish to goodness that Dr. Karnak had never come near St. Frank's at all," went on Church. "Ever since this term began we've had trouble. Only a few days ago you nearly had a quarrel with your best girl."

Handforth paused, in the act of removing a sock.

"My—my best girl!" he repeated, turning red. "Why, you rotter, what the dickens do you mean?"

"Never heard of Irene Manners, I suppose?" asked Church sarcastically.

Handforth rolled up his sleeves, and advanced.

"I'll jolly well show you something!" he said thickly. "Calling Irene Manners my best girl! You know jolly well that I regard all girls with indifference! Girls don't interest me! They're too silly and frivolous for a strong, silent chap like me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The whole dormitory howled at Handforth's description of himself.

"Listen to the strong, silent man breaking the stillness!" said Reggie Pitt. "In about two seconds, he'll break something else—probably some portion of Church."

The Remove was glad enough of the diversion, and the fellows quite recovered their high spirits as Handforth proceeded to chase Church up and down the dormitory.

But Church was wonderfully agile, and the manner in which he dodged underneath the beds was simply comical. In the middle of it all, Fenton looked in to see if everything was quiet. It wasn't.

"Now then—none of this larking about," said Fenton sternly. "What are you grovelling on the floor for, Church? Get into bed, you young duffer!"

Church hopped into bed, and Fenton glanced round.

"All right now?" he asked. "I'm going to put the lights out—Hullo! Somebody missing! Where's Handforth?"

"Oh, somewhere about," said Pitt. "I shouldn't be surprised if he's under my bed. The springs seem to have become solid, anyhow, and perhaps Handy's got jammed?"

The Sixth Former strode up, and gazed under Reggie's bed.

"Come out of that!" he said sharply. "I suppose you were chasing Church, eh? You'd better leave it until the morning—if there's any noise in this dormitory to-night I'll be back with a cane!"

Handforth crawled out, very subdued, and a few minutes later he was in bed. But as soon as the door had closed behind Fenton, with the dormitory in darkness, Handforth sat up like a Jack-in-the-box.

"Go easy, old man!" murmured Church. "No need to get excited—"

"Wait!" said Handforth thickly. "Just you wait until to-morrow!"

Church breathed more freely—for he knew, from past experience, that Handforth would have completely forgotten the incident in the morning. And the dormitory was allowed to settle itself peacefully for sleep.

It seemed to me that only a few minutes had elapsed before I suddenly awoke with a start. I half sat up, wondering what had aroused me. The dormitory was quite still, and the whole school seemed to be sleeping peacefully. But I had an impression that a cry had awakened me.

But all was still, and I came to the conclusion that I must have had a kind of dream. And then, just as I was about to lay my head back on the pillow a sound came to my ears—a kind of plaintive wail from somewhere in the building; not so very far distant. And I recognised the tone at once.

"Archie!" I murmured. "What on earth's the matter with the chap?"

In a flash my mind went back to the happenings of the evening—I remembered that Archie was one of the juniors who had "gazed thrice upon the face of Baal." I jumped out of bed without loss of time.

"I expect that rotten affair is preying on Archie's mind, and he's having a nightmare," I told myself. "Anyhow, I'd better go along and see what the trouble is. I don't like the sound of that wail."

It only took me a few moments to put on my dressing gown and slippers. Then I noiselessly padded out of the dormitory—not without a small, chill feeling of uneasiness.

Try as I would, I couldn't remove the picture of Dr. Karnak at that mummy, from my mind. In some strange way, the Egyptian had absolutely stamped himself upon every member of the Remove, myself included.

Archie Glenthorne did not sleep in the dormitory, with the rest of us. He had a bed-room of his own, just a short distance along the corridor. For Archie was a fastidious youth, with dozens of different suits, and a valet to look after his personal welfare. Nobody was jealous of Archie, for it was realised by all that he was too helpless to fend for himself.

I reached his door, turned the handle, and passed inside. And a feeling of relief swept over me as I saw Archie sitting up in bed, with a little standard electric lamp glowing on a bedside-table.

"At last!" said Archie, with relief. "You've been a dashed long time, Phipps—Oh, I say! This is too bad! I thought you were Phipps—I positively thought you were the dear old lad!"

"Never mind Phipps," I said indignantly. "What's the idea of yelling like that in the middle of the night? It's a wonder you haven't disturbed the whole house!"

Going closer to the bed, I detected that Archie was looking quite pale and shaken. His customary imperturbability had vanished. And although he was disappointed at seeing me, instead of Phipps, relief was apparent in his eyes.

"You look a bit pale," I said. "Has anything happened, Archie?"

"Absolutely," he replied. "I mean to say, I can't tell you what, but I've just had a most poisonous experience. The bell is out of order, so I was broadcasting a few healthy wails to bring Phipps rolling along to the young master's side. Sorry if I disturbed you, old dear."

"It doesn't matter about disturbing me," I returned. "And I don't suppose Phipps will come—he sleeps too far off to hear any sound from you. But what's the matter? What's this poisonous experience you talk about?"

Archie was recovering some of his composure.

"Something," he said, "was in the room."

"In the room?"

"Absolutely," declared Archie. "I don't know what caused me to awaken, but after indulging in forty of the good old winks, I sat up, and had a dashed fixed impression that I wasn't alone. The moonlight was rolling into the room in chunks, and the effect was pretty eerie."

"Well?" I said curiously.

"Well, there you are," replied Archie. "That Shape, don't you know, appeared in the offing—or, to be more exact, at the window."

"Shape?"

"Shape!" repeated Archie firmly. "I know, dear old boy, that it sounds most frightfully vague. But, as a matter of fact, it was vague. Just a dim form, you know. It passed between the foot of the bed and the window, and I absolutely felt it."

"You mean it touched you?"

"Absolutely not!" replied Archie, with a shiver. "Nothing so foul as that! But, at the same time, I had a ghastly sensation that some Presence was in the good old apartment. In addition to seeing that Shape, I felt that I was no longer alone in the bedchamber. You gather the trend?"

"I'm hanged if I do," I replied. "It seems to me you had a nightmare—"

"Oddslife!" ejaculated Archie. "In other words, gadzooks! Don't be so frightfully ridie! Dream, what? Absolutely nothing doing, old lad! I mean, there it was—positively in the room with me, a huge, frightful mass of horribleness, if you follow me. And then it oozed through the window."

Archie was quite emphatic, and I became convinced that my first surmise was incorrect. It wasn't merely a nightmare. Imagination, perhaps—but without question the elegant junior had been awake. Had he fancied that shapeless Presence, or had he really seen something?

"How long ago did this happen?" I asked keenly.

"About three or four minutes before you materialised," replied Archie. "And I sat here, quivering like one of those bally table jelly things!"

"Are you sure it vanished through the window?"

"Absolutely."

"It couldn't possibly have departed by the door?"

"My dear chappie, the scheme is out of the question," replied Archie. "You see, the door is so close to the bed that I should have grabbed at the dashed thing as it went by. No, laddie—the window. I mean to say, I saw it whizz out. It sort of blotted out the moonlight for a time."

This was quite definite, and I went straight over to the window and raised the lower sash. It hadn't been quite closed, but Archie informed me that he had left it like this before getting into bed.

I leaned out, and gazed down upon the silent, moonlit Triangle. The whole of St. Frank's was peacefully sleeping, and a more perfect winter's night could hardly be imagined. The stars were gleaming, in spite of the moon, and there was a touch of keen frost in the air.

As far as I could see, not a single thing moved in any direction. From Bellton village came the crowing of a cockerel, to be answered by a distant compatriot over towards Edgemore. And the faint howling of a dog came to my ears. But these were merely the ordinary sounds of the night.

"This is jolly queer," I said thoughtfully. "I don't want to doubt your story, Archie, but it seems absolutely impossible."

"I know it, old tulip—but the thing actually happened," replied Archie. "Pray don't imagine that I was asleep, or that I'm one of those soft blighters who suffer from sundry delusions."

"But how on earth could any living thing have got down from this window?" I asked. "There's no ivy just here, so it couldn't have climbed down. And no human being could jump. Of course, that beastly cat of Dr. Karnak's—"

"Oh, I say! Dash it!" protested Archie. "This thing wasn't a cat—it was about twice the size of an ordinary chappie—a whacking great Presence that seemed to fill the whole room!"

For the life of me, I couldn't help feeling a bit nervous. I had heard Dr. Karnak's warning that the spirit of Baal sometimes took an earthly shape—that it became an Elemental. And any keen spiritualist will declare that these Elementals take grotesque and awful shapes—sometimes appearing to fill a whole room. Archie's description of his adventure was startlingly akin to the stories that spiritualists tell.

Gazing down at the windowsill, I suddenly caught my breath in. For it seemed to me that two or three peculiar marks were scratched upon the stonework. And,

although I thrust the idea out of my mind, it struck me that they might have been made by some bony claw. The whole affair was uncanny, and I gave myself a sudden shake.

"This won't do!" I muttered curtly. "I'm simply letting my imagination run wild. There must be a commonplace explanation."

"Speaking to me, old soul?" asked Archie.

"I don't know what to make of it, old man," I said, turning. "But the best thing you can do is to get to sleep again, and forget the whole incident. If you like I'll fetch Phipps, and get him to sleep with you—"

"Absolutely not," interrupted Archie warmly. "Why, dash it all, you don't mean to say that you think I'm scared? Somewhat unnerved, perhaps, but still sprightly and charged up with a large quantity of horse-power. The Glenthornes, allow me to point out, are never scared!"

I grinned.

"All right—get to sleep," I said. "We'll say nothing about this, Archie—no need to get up a discussion over nothing. And the chaps would only say you'd imagined everything."

I left him, and as soon as I had closed his door, a thought struck me. And, on the spur of the moment, I came to a decision. I remembered how Dr. Karnak had talked of that mummy. And if the thing was capable of taking an earthly shape it must necessarily leave its sarcophagus—

I shook myself, for the thought was ghastly—grotesque and horrible. And although I knew the whole thing was a form of madness, I hurried quickly downstairs towards the museum. I begrudged every step, but somehow I couldn't hold myself back. An irresistible instinct told me to go and have a look at that mummy—just to assure myself that my suspicions were ridiculous.

For the idea of that dead thing coming out of the museum and roaming about in the moonlight was so frightful that I felt sickened. I was determined to see the mummy with my own eyes, so that I could give the lie to Dr. Karnak if he dared to bring forward such an explanation.

But when I reached the museum I felt shaky and nervous. It was a most unusual experience for me, because I always pride myself upon being impervious to such emotions. However, in order to make this record accurate, I must set down that I was almost on the point of fleeing.

With an effort I pulled myself together and entered the library. I switched on the lights, and strode quickly across to the door of the museum. I would get it over before this moment of strength deserted me.

With one movement I opened the museum door and put my hand round to the switch. The light came on, and I caught a glimpse of the various specimen cases—gloomy and sombre in their dark surroundings.

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Even then, when I was practically within the museum, I nearly turned and fled. And this sudden fear of mine was utterly without reason, as my common sense told me. And it was only by a tremendous effort of will that I again gripped myself. On the morrow I should laugh contemptuously at my own behaviour.

Owing to the shape of the museum, I could not see the mummy from the door, but had to walk along to the angle of the apartment. I did so, a curious tingling sensation assailing my skin. And I had an almost uncontrollable desire to look over my shoulders.

I turned the angle of the room, and came to a dead stop. My heart beat throbbingly. My eyes were fixed in a blank stare. And I caught my breath in with a gulp of sheer amazement and horror.

The mummy-case was empty. The mummy itself had gone!

For a second I thought I was mad. I had come here to prove that Dr. Karnak's talk was sheer bosh, but the very fact of the mummy being absent seemed to prove that the Egyptian's story was correct! Archie had seen that awful Shape in his room—and Archie was one of the fellows who had defied the curse of the mummy. And the sarcophagus was empty!

I could see it there—in the eerie reflected light—empty and deserted. That dried-up relic of ancient humanity had gone—had materialised into an earthly monster of appalling shape—

As the thought came to me, something seemed to crack inside my head. The fear that the monstrous thing would suddenly clutch at me bereft me of all my remaining courage.

I turned on my heel, and sped to the door.

And although I had only a yard or two to cover, it seemed ages before I got into the library. I closed the door behind me, and leaned against it, dizzy and almost spent. I closed my eyes and told myself that I was a weak, imaginative fool.

There was a slight sound, and I opened my eyes and gulped.

Dr. Karnak was standing in the library doorway, attired in a long, flowing robe, and upon his shoulders was perched the yellow, black-spotted Serval cat. But although his appearance was so unexpected and so startling, the very fact that he was flesh and blood caused a wave of relief to pass over me.

"What have you done with that mummy?" I asked hoarsely.

Dr. Karnak advanced.

"You are unnerved, young man," he said, his voice smooth and impassive. "There is nothing wrong here. And I am the one who should ask questions—not you. Why are you out of bed at this hour of the night?"

"The mummy!" I insisted. "It isn't in the museum! It has vanished out of its case!"

Dr. Karnak uttered a soft laugh.

"Rubbish!" he purred. "I am afraid you have been allowing yourself to get into a state of imaginative terror. The mummy has not been touched, and is still in its accustomed place."

As I looked at the Egyptian I partially recovered myself, and I grew calm. I suspected the man of demoniacal work. In my eyes, at that moment, he appeared to be the very embodiment of all that was evil.

"The mummy isn't there, I tell you!" I insisted. "What have you done, Dr. Karnak? There's something horrible going on—"

"Let me convince you that you are suffering from a delusion," interrupted Dr. Karnak curtly. "Come!"

He strode to the museum door, flung it open, and walked inside—the cat clinging to his shoulder tenaciously. I followed, although the very thought of entering that place again appalled me. But I wasn't going to let him see that I felt unnerved.

"Well?" asked Dr. Karnak sardonically.

I stared, almost unable to believe my eyes. For there, standing impassively in its case,

was the mummy—just as it had always stood. I ran up, so that I could examine it at closer quarters. There was no fakery here. The mummy was in its case, and there was no sign of it having been interfered with.

For a few seconds I stood quite still, and in that brief space of time a great change came over me. I lost every atom of my nervousness, and felt only a bitter hatred against this man—for I had a positive conviction that he was a deliberate trickster. By some hidden means—some conjuring manipulation—he was causing these uncanny effects. And with that conviction upon me I knew I had nothing to be afraid of.

But had I really seen the empty case? Was it possible that in my excited condition I had made a mistake? The museum was gloomy, and the light in this particular corner was by no means certain. But I told myself that I could never have made such a blunder. My eyesight had not played me false. The case had been empty when I first looked.

"Well?" repeated Dr. Karnak.

"I can't understand it," I replied steadily. "But that mummy was not in its case two minutes ago—or, if it was, it was rendered invisible by some mechanical means."

"This talk of yours, Nipper, is ridiculous!" said Dr. Karnak. "Do you suspect me of such magic? On the one hand you regard me as a trickster and a fraud—yes, I know it!—and on the other hand you credit me with the powers of a miracle-worker. I fail to understand you."

"Not long ago Glenthorne gave a shout in his room," I said deliberately. "I heard it, and went there. Glenthorne was sitting up in bed, and he told me that he had seen a Shape, and that it vanished through the window."

The Egyptian started, and he looked at me strangely.

"Then perhaps you were right," he muttered. "Perhaps the mummy was indeed absent! This is far worse than ever I suspected!"

"So it was the mummy that appeared in Glenthorne's room?" I asked, with apparent sarcasm.

"No; not the mummy, but the earthly shape it assumes at certain periods," replied Karnak impressively. "You do not believe it—you ridicule the very suggestion. But, as I stand here, it is true! What Glenthorne saw was the earthly shape of Baal—a horrific form, indeed! And it can have but one meaning. Disaster will befall that boy ere many hours have elapsed!"

"Oh, but look here—"

"Enough!" interrupted Dr. Karnak. "Let us leave this place."

He refused to speak further, and a few minutes later I went up to bed, my mind in a turmoil. And although I tried to convince myself that there was some childish simple explanation of all this mystery, I was filled with a vague apprehension.

CHAPTER IV.

PERSECUTED BY THE UNKNOWN!



"W H A T - H O!" said Archie, blinking. "Dash it all, Phipps, what's the idea? I mean, barging in like this before the young master has had his full quota of beauty sleep? Allow me to remark, Phipps, that I'm dashed sleepy!"

Phipps placed a tea-tray upon Archie's bed.

"It is the usual hour, sir," he said imperturbably.

"The usual hour, what?" repeated Archie. "But, I say old thing, not really? I had an idea that it was some ghastly hour like six o'clock! The fact is, I feel considerably washed out!"

"Apparently, Master Archie, you have slept indifferently," said Phipps. "The tea, no doubt, will have a reviving effect."

"Oh, rather! There's nothing like the stuff," agreed Archie. "When it comes to a matter of reviving, the good old brew is just the liquid that shoves energy into a chappie's system. Thanks, old tulip—thanks muchly!"

Archie gratefully imbibed several big sips of tea, and by the time he had half emptied the cup, he was in a much more sprightly condition. But it was forced, to a certain degree. Archie had had a restless night, but he didn't like admitting it.

"Good!" he said, thrusting the bedclothes aside and leaping out. "By gad! Did you see that, Phipps? Absolutely an example of that Kruschen feeling!"

Phipps looked at his young master closely.

"You appear to be somewhat heavy this morning, sir," he said.

"Well, not exactly heavy, Phipps—but I've got to admit that the tissues are not fully restored," said Archie. "However, that's a trifle. Kindly proceed with the business, old lad. The young master wishes to adorn his person with raiment for the day."

And Archie, having dressed, tried to convince himself that he had suffered from a particularly aggressive dream during the night. He wondered if the incidents had really happened, and pondered deeply.

"Dash it all, I must grab Nipper by the coat-button, and whisper a few words into his leaside ear," Archie told himself. "This point has got to be decided. I mean to say, I shall wilt away to a dashed shadow unless I know the truth. Did I see something in the night, or did I not? Did Nipper come to my bedside, or am I going off my bally head?"

In the middle of these ruminations Archie suddenly paused, startled. He was in the act of combing his hair—a somewhat delicate business. Phipps had retired and Archie was alone.

He had scarcely placed the comb to his head when it cracked between his fingers and

fell to the floor. And as it struck the linoleum it cracked into a hundred fragments.

"Odds life!" gasped Archie. "That's dashed rummy!"

He stood there, staring at the smashed comb. It was part of a set—a beautiful tortoiseshell set that had been presented to him by an aunt as a Christmas box. And it was quite extraordinary that the comb should smash in this way.

He had used it many times, without the slightest sign of trouble. A fracture he could understand, for such a thing might have been caused by an invisible flaw in the shell. But for the two halves to literally break up like a thin sheet of brittle glass, was almost uncanny.

"How absolutely ghastly!" murmured Archie. "Phipps! I say, Phipps! Kindly come to the young master, and rally round with yards of assistance!"

As it happened, Phipps was just entering the room, and he soon saw what had happened. He picked up a small piece of the comb in surprise.

"This is very remarkable, sir," he said curiously.

"Remarkable, what?" repeated Archie. "In my opinion, it's bally tragic! How am I going to comb my dashed hair?"

Phipps held up the piece of tortoiseshell between his fingers, and with the faintest suspicion of pressure it splintered up.

"The comb was quite strong yesterday, sir," said Phipps. "I can't understand how it could have become so brittle. A disaster of this kind to a tortoiseshell comb is quite new to me."

"A disaster!" repeated Archie, with a start. "Gadzooks! That reminds me!"

"Yes, sir?" said Phipps politely.

"Oh, nothing, laddie—nothing!" said Archie with haste.

As a matter of fact, he had just remembered Dr. Karnak's prophecy—all those who gazed thrice upon the face of Baal would meet with disaster! Archie, to show his contempt for such foolishness, had gazed upon the mummy. Was this broken comb a sign?

It was only a trifle, true enough, but undoubtedly significant. For it was so unaccountable. There was no feasible explanation. For the comb to break up in that way, after being so sound previously, was strange in the extreme.

Archie was more startled than he cared to say; but as he languidly went downstairs he told himself that he was several kinds of an ass. There couldn't be anything in it really.

He went to his study, and found a cheerful fire blazing in the grate. He lowered himself into one of the luxurious lounges, and basked there in the blaze from the fire.

"What-ho!" he murmured. "Ease—ease in large quantities. This is distinctly the stuff to make a chappie scintillate with the joy of life! Absolutely! I must say that Phipps is a treasure!"

He spread out his hands towards the fire,

and nearly dozed. The effect was so soothing that he almost lost himself. And outside, in the passage, I was having a word with Handforth.

"Seen Archie this morning?" I asked.

"Yes; he just crawled along to his study," replied Edward Oswald.

"Crawled?"

"Well, the ass was looking a bit washed out," replied Handy. "He just dragged himself along, and didn't even have the energy to wear his eye-glass. But that's nothing—he's always half-asleep."

I went along to Archie's study and, after tapping, entered. Glenthorne gave a violent start, and blinked at me.

"Oh, rather!" he said, jumping up, and nearly collapsing over the rug. "Priceless morning, what? Jolly glad to see you, old scream."

"You were dozing, Archie," I said severely.

"Absolutely not!" he protested. "Or, I should say, absolutely yes! The fact is, in the words of good old Adams, I feel sunk!"

"Sunk?" I repeated.

"Some such word, laddie."

"I suppose you mean punk?" I grinned.

"Absolutely," said Archie. "That's it—punk! I think it means rotten, or possibly worse than rotten! If so, it's the very word; because that's how I feel. I mean, I feel like it."

"And you look a bit punk, too," I said critically. "Did you sleep well after that little affair last night?"

"Then it really happened, what?" said Archie. "I thought perhaps I had dreamed it, you know. I thought—"

Crash!

Without the slightest warning one of Archie's gorgeous pictures dropped to the floor with a smash that splintered the glass to fragments and badly injured the frame—a massive gilt one.

Archie sat down abruptly, pale and shaken.

"What—what was it, laddie?" he breathed.

"I mean, kindly—"

"You ought to get Phipps to hang your pictures a bit better," I interrupted. "It's rather disturbing when they come crashing down like that."

We both stared at the fallen picture—and I think we shared the same thought. Somehow, we couldn't help feeling that it was a kind of omen. There's a superstition about pictures that fall. Neither of us were superstitious, but it was certainly remarkable that such a thing should happen just now.

"This, don't you know, is dashed queer," said Archie huskily. "Phipps is a particular chappie, and he simply couldn't hang a picture insecurely. He's so bally thorough that—"

"Well, I'm hanged!" I broke in, startled.

I had picked up the picture and was examining the frame—expecting to see a broken cord. But the heavy wire was quite intact, and it was as securely fixed to the frame as ever. That wire would have sustained a frame ten times the size.

"Wait a minute!" I said tensely.

I grabbed a chair, stood upon it, and stared at the hook at close quarters. I had already glanced up at it from the floor level. And now I saw, to my astonishment, that the hook itself, resting firmly upon the support, was not even cracked.

"There's something almost uncanny about this," I said quietly. "The wire's intact—the fastenings are intact—and the hook is intact! How in the name of all that's queer did the picture come down?"

Archie simply stared, mystified.

And I thought of stories that I had heard—vague yarns of haunted houses, where pictures dropped to the floor without any apparent reason. I had always regarded such tales with scorn. But here was an example before my very eyes!

"I say, old companion!" breathed Archie. "I say! Do you—do you think this is connected with that frightful mummy? I mean, it sounds pricelessly dotty, and all that, but there you are! And that comb? Why did it break up?"

"What comb?" I asked curiously.

He told me of the strange incident.

"Yes, it's funny," I agreed slowly.

"Both happenings are beyond any normal understanding. Of course, the comb might have been tampered with. That would account for it breaking up."

"But, dash it, who would tamper with a comb?" asked Archie doubtfully. "And a thing like that couldn't be filed, or anything, because you'd see the marks."

"Yes, but it's quite possible that some strong chemical solution would have the effect of making the tortoiseshell brittle," I replied keenly. "It sounds tall, I know, but I'm not going to fool myself that there's any supernatural work going on."

But the picture, dear old lad?" asked Archie. "How could the bally thing have been lifted off its hook, and dropped? I mean, it's dashed unnerving. Kindly assure me that no grey hairs are showing!"

I looked up thoughtfully at the picture hook.

"Of course, there's a childishly simple explanation," I said keenly.

"Then I must have the mind of an infant, because I can't find any dashed explanation," protested Archie. "Of course, I know well enough that you've got a bulging mass of grey matter, but kindly explain how it works. I mean, this picture—"

"Look here, Archie, don't say anything to the other chaps, I said. "But supposing somebody came in here in the middle of the night? Supposing they got on a chair, and lifted that picture wire

out of the hook's slot, and balanced it on the very edge?"

"Oddslife!" breathed Archie faintly.

"You see now?" I asked. "That picture would rest there, just the same as ever—and it's a million-to-one chance that nobody would notice anything wrong. But the slightest draught—or the faintest quiver caused by somebody walking across the room above—would make that wire slip from the edge of the hook. And down would come the picture, without any apparent reason."

Archie gazed at me admiringly.

"Dashed clever!" he exclaimed. "How do you do it, Nipper?" he asked. "I mean, it's so bally simple when you put it like that."

"As far as I can see it's the only explanation," I went on. "The most uncanny happenings can generally be accounted for by commonsense deduction. And if my suspicion is right, we're up against trickery."

"But, I mean to say, who's doing it?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"Who knows?" I said. "Some of the chaps, perhaps, although that doesn't seem likely."

"Dr. Karnak?" asked Archie.

"Yes—it may be Dr. Karnak," I replied. "He may want to scare you—to convert you into one of his disciples. It seems extraordinary that such a clever scholar should descend to petty trickery of this kind. And we may be wrong—so don't take anything for granted. And above all, say nothing to anybody else."

In spite of my "explanation," Archie was very uneasy during the morning—indeed, during the whole day. Perhaps it was just the sheer "cussedness" of things—but all sorts of minor mishaps occurred to Archie that day. Most of them were merely trifling, but they were very noticeable.

And the fellows began to talk—they put these little mishaps down to the influence of the mummy.

I concluded that Archie was slightly nervous, and the minor accidents were caused by his own condition. And this was probably true. And he grew worse as the day wore on—until, at teatime, he was looking quite pale.

"Dear old scout, there's something in it," he declared to me. "I mean, all these dashed things couldn't happen without any reason. De Valerie told me that it's only a beginning—frightful things will soon be looming up—"

"You mustn't take any notice of De Valerie," I said sharply. "He's not himself nowadays."

"And, by gad, neither am I!" groaned Archie.

"What you want is some healthy exercise," I declared. "You won't do yourself any good by going to your study, and lolling in front of the fire. Take my advice, and go for a brisk walk—or a bicycle ride. Anything to get those silly ideas out of your way. There's nothing like exercise."

Archie looked hopeful.

"A brainy scheme," he said, nodding. "In fact, a priceless proposition." "I'm bothered if I won't do it! A big effort, but it's all in the cause of health! I'll take the old jigger, and wobble forth upon the road!"

Five minutes later Archie pedalled sedately out of the Triangle on his bicycle. It was growing dusk, but the evening was fine, and the roads were frosty and hard. And it wasn't long before Archie found that my advice was thoroughly sound.

By the time he had ridden half way to Bannington the blood was coursing healthily through his veins, and he felt a different fellow. In Bannington he paused to make one or two slight purchases, and started back on the ride to St. Frank's in high spirits.

"This," he observed, "is absolutely top-hole. I can feel the old life juice whizzing through the veins like one o'clock. Dash it, there's nothing so good as exercise when a chappie feels run down!"

It was quite dark by the time he reached Belton—but the darkness had no terrors for Archie. In his newly found cheerfulness, he positively felt like singing as he pedalled up the lane. In fact, he actually gave voice to one or two blithe notes.

But suddenly he paused. A thought had come to him. He remembered that black shape that had entered his bedroom—and he remembered that some juniors had talked of seeing a horrible form in the lane. On two or three occasions fellows had come tearing in, utterly terrified.

He shook the feeling from him, realising that he was going backwards. And he put all his energy into the pedalling, and went along the lane at increased speed. He was almost within sight of St. Frank's, when an extraordinary thing happened. The lane was empty. The stars were shining, and gave just sufficient light to show the solitary rider that no other human soul was near by.

He had succeeded in getting rid of that queer feeling—the feeling that he was being followed. And then, at that moment, something lifted him clean out of his saddle!

It was as though a gigantic unseen hand had come out of the surrounding gloom. It plucked Archie from the bicycle, lifted him high, and then he crashed down upon the road, unconscious!

And everything was still—the lane was utterly empty.

CHAPTER V.

NELSON LEE TAKES A HAND!



"WE shall have to look sharp!" said Irene Manners briskly.

"Oh, never mind—why hurry?" asked Doris. "Old Bondy's out, and you can

bet that Mrs. Tracey won't report us—we're as safe as eggs."

"Doris! I wish you wouldn't speak so disrespectfully of Miss Bond," said Irene, shocked. "Somebody might hear you, and that would sound terrible!"

Doris Berkeley laughed.

"Who cares?" she asked lightly. "Come on—let's be moving."

The three girls—Marjorie Temple was the third member of the little party—started from the village on the walk up the lane towards the Moor View School. It was necessary for them to pass St. Frank's on the way, and as they went, they speculated as to whether they would see any boys.

"Shouldn't be surprised if Handforth pops along," said Doris. "He generally appears when Irene is about—"

"Oh, Doris!" protested Irene, flushing prettily.

"Now, don't deny it!" said Doris sternly. "He's sweet on you, and I'm not sure that you're not a wee bit smitten yourself! Goodness knows why! Handforth's a big, ugly, clumsy fellow—"

"He's not!" declared Irene indignantly.

"A big, ugly, clumsy fellow with no more manners than a tramp," said Doris.

"Oh, it's too bad of you!" cried Irene. "How can you say such things, Doris? Handforth's a nice boy! He's clumsy, I'll admit, but he's ever so good-hearted, and he's so delightfully human—"

"Ah! Caught you!" chuckled Doris. "Naughty-naughty! I knew you'd get wild if I started running him down. And it proves that you've got a soft spot for him. I'm glad you think he's human. Personally, I had an idea he was a bit of an elephant."

"Dry up, Doris," said Marjorie. "You're making her wild."

The three girls continued their walk, chatting animatedly. And when they were getting near to St. Frank's they thought they saw something in the road—something that lay there, dim and motionless in the gloom.

Irene, who was slightly in advance, hurried forward curiously, and her foot touched against something metallic. She looked down, halting.

"Why it's a bicycle!" she exclaimed, catching her breath. "Oh! Somebody's had an accident! Quick!"

Now they were at close quarters they could see a sprawling form just a yard or so away. And they stood near, almost afraid to investigate further. That form was lying so still and quiet.

Marjorie screamed—with sheer alarm. And Irene, who was more capable, lost no time in shouting loudly for help. And she immediately knelt on the hard road beside the limp figure, and grasped an arm.

"Oh, he's badly hurt!" she said breathlessly. "It's Archie Glenthorne! Look! His head's bleeding—"

She said no more, but raised Archie up, and tried to get him to speak. And the sound of running footsteps came to the ears of the girls. As a matter of fact, Handforth and Co. had been standing near the gates, and on the still air of the quiet evening they had heard Marjorie's scream, followed by the cries for help.

Recognising the voice, Handforth simply flew.

And Church and McClure tore along with him. They arrived on the scene breathless, and panting hard.

"Anything wrong here?" asked Handforth. "By George! Who's that lying there? Did some ruffian attack you, Miss Irene?"

"Don't be silly!" said the girl quickly. "This is Archie."

"Archie!" gasped Handforth.

"Yes—he must have met with an accident," put in Doris. "We found him lying here; just like this. That's his bicycle lying there. But I can't understand how he crashed over, because the road's quite dry and smooth here."

Handforth and Co. bent over Archie, and roughly yanked him to his feet. Being schoolboys, they had no particular consideration for the unhappy victim. Their main idea was to bring him to life again.

"Oh, how can you?" asked Irene. "Don't be so rough—"

"What-ho!" murmured Archie dreamily. "Do I hear sweet feminine voices, or am I dreaming? Oh, it's you, Handy! That's dashed queer! I distinctly heard— Oh, by gad!"

Recovering, he had caught sight of the girls, and for a few moments he was rather confused knowing that he was in a considerable state of disorder.

"Thank goodness you've come round, anyhow," said Handforth. "What happened? How the dickens did you bit over like that?"

"Sorry, old boy, but I don't quite follow," said Archie, puzzled.

"We found you lying in the road, unconscious," put in Irene gently. "You must have fallen off your bicycle, Archie."

A gleam of intelligence came into Archie's eyes.

"Oh, yes rather," he said. "That's it! I was on the old bike, wasn't I? Absolutely! And then some foul thing came along and lifted me clean out of the saddle. Fairly grabbed me by the chest, and I went flying. I'm dashed if I can remember what happened after that."

"You must have hit the ground with your head," said Church. "There's a nasty looking gash just against your left

ear. But what do you mean—some foul thing came and lifted you out of the saddle?"

Archie looked round apprehensively.

"I'm not usually a nervous chappie, but I must admit that I'm frightfully windy at the moment," he observed. "It was dashed uncanny! I saw nothing, and had no warning. But all at once I was lifted out of the saddle, and there you are!"

"Rats! You must have caught against a stone, or a rut," said Handforth.

"No, old boy—not at all," said Archie quietly. "I didn't fall over—I didn't have an ordinary spill. Absolutely not. I was lifted clean into the air, and the old jigger went from under me. Then, after turning sundry somersaults, I must have come into contact with terra-firma somewhat mightily."

There was a silence, during which Irene dabbed at Archie's head with her dainty handkerchief. And Archie, who found this treatment very soothing, made no objections. In fact, he seemed on the point of swooning off again—but this was probably only bluff.

Irene was thinking of an incident that had happened some days ago. In this very lane, almost at the same spot, she had been followed by a grotesque, shapeless monster—the mystery of which had never been cleared up. And Handforth and Co. had similar thoughts. For on that memorable evening they, too had been followed by that awful Shape.

Had Archie been attacked by that—that Thing?

His description of the mishap was eloquent—for it clearly indicated that he had not fallen over in the ordinary way of a spill. Besides, Archie was an excellent cyclist, the road was good, and there was no reason why he should tell any faked story.

Irene was the first to make a move.

"This won't do!" she said suddenly. "Do you think you can walk, Archie, if these other boys help you along?"

Archie opened his eyes dreamily.

"The fact is, I'm dashed weak," he murmured. "The old tissues appear to be wilting under the strain. However, I'll have a stab at it, dear old girl. Absolutely! Anything to oblige a lady!"

"Come on!" said Handforth gruffly. "There's nothing wrong with you!"

"Oh, Ted, how can you?" asked Irene sharply. "You're perfectly unkind! Haven't you any feelings at all?"

Handforth tried to speak, but only gulped. He was, to tell the truth, violently jealous. To see Archie practically in Irene's arms like this was almost too much for him. And he allowed his words to be rather rough. Actually, Handforth was as kind-hearted as Irene herself.

"Come on, old man," said Church. "Just see if you can totter along."

Archie was helped up, and he was quite capable of walking to the school, assisted



And the next moment that ghastly thing clutched Reggie Pitt firmly to its side and leapt straight outwards, into mid-air.

by Handforth and Co. And after a few yards he squared his shoulders, and cheerfully declared that he was as fit as a fiddle.

And yet he was really dizzy with pain. His head ached abominably, and he felt curiously shaky at the knees, for a sickly faintness assailed him. But he made out that he was fit.

If there had been nothing wrong with him at all, he would have moaned out in a feeble voice that he was nearly on the point of expiring. This was just one of Archie's little peculiarities. He made a mountain out of a mole hill, but when it came to a matter of real gravity, he laughed at it.

At the school gates Irene and Co. bade good-night to the boys, and said they would inquire about Archie on the morrow. And the four juniors walked across the Triangle in the direction of the Ancient House.

"The scheme," said Archie, "is to slip indoors without any of the chappies spotting us. How about it? I mean to say, I don't want a dashed lot of talk, you know—"

"Too late," said Handforth. "We've been seen."

Archie groaned. Armstrong and Griffith and a crowd of other fellows were just emerging from the Ancient House lobby, and it was quite impossible for Archie to get indoors without being observed. Within a minute, in fact, he was surrounded. And I was curious to find out what all the excitement was about.

Seeing that there was no escape, Archie related his experience. And Skelton and one or two other juniors lost no time in declaring that the disaster was the result of the mummy's evil influence.

"You can't get away from it," said Skelton. "Things have been happening to Archie all day—and this accident crowns everything. I expect it's only by a piece of luck that he wasn't killed outright!"

"About time that rotten mummy was taken away!" said Armstrong bluntly.

"Hear, hear!"

"Everythi'g's going wrong this term!"

"The blessed thing is bringing bad luck all round!"

"Now, don't get excited," I said quietly. "Perhaps it was quite an ordinary accident that Archie had. It's absolutely impossible that he could have been pulled out of the saddle as he thinks."

"Dear old thing, I wish I could agree," said Archie. "But absolutely not. Dash it all, I ought to know! There I was, riding along as tranquil as anything, when something grabbed me by the chest—"

"By the chest?" I repeated curiously.

"Absolutely—caught me well above the waist, and swept me right out of the saddle."

"And you saw nothing at all?"

"My dear old soul, there was nothing to see," replied Archie simply. "This bally grip came out of the air—invisible and

pretty poisonous, I can tell you. Kindly change the sub. I'm slightly weary."

And Archie was allowed to go indoors—where, after being handed over to Phipps, he was carefully attended to, and made comfortable. I had noticed one thing—a mere trifle—but it set me thinking.

And without any loss of time I went straight to Nelson Lee's study, and told the guv'nor the whole yarn. He listened patiently, and when I had finished, he sat back and regarded me with thoughtful eyes.

"And some of the boys are attributing these remarkable happenings to our friend, Dr. Karnak?" he asked slowly. "H'm! We cannot wonder at that, for Dr. Karnak's personality is powerful."

"What do you think of him, sir?" I asked eagerly.

"Really, Nipper, I am not in a position to pass any opinion on Dr. Karnak," replied Nelson Lee. "And we must confine ourselves to this little problem. Why did Glenthorne fall from his machine? He positively declares that he was lifted out of the saddle?"

"Yes, sir."

"And he saw nothing whatever?"

"Nothing, guv'nor," I replied. "But one thing struck me as rather strange. One of his overcoat buttons is snapped clean in two. And yet he fell on his head. Of course, the button may have snapped when he doubled up, but it's queer."

"Not only queer, Nipper, but significant," said Nelson Lee. "Tell me the exact position of this smashed button."

"Just on the chest—the top button, in fact."

"Then a solution to the mystery lies bare before us," smiled Nelson Lee. "It is so simple that it may seem absurd. But it fits the case exactly, and in my opinion is the most likely solution of all."

"What is it, sir?" I asked quickly.

"A steel wire—stretched tightly across the lane."

"Great Scott!" I ejaculated, staring at the guv'nor. "But—but— Oh, it seems impossible, sir!"

"On the contrary, it fits every fact that we know," replied Lee calmly. "The smashed overcoat button, for example. We will assume, for the sake of argument, that the mishap was actually caused by a taut wire. In the gloom of the lane, Glenthorne would see nothing of it, the wire being invisible. Stretched at a carefully calculated height, it would catch the cyclist fairly in the chest, perhaps touching the arms at the same time. And the sheer force of the impact would lift Glenthorne completely out of the saddle, and probably cause him to turn a double somersault before crashing to the ground."

"By jingo, it's an idea, sir," I declared.

"And Dr. Karnak could easily work that, because he might have seen Archie leaving. But how can we prove anything?"

"I'm afraid it will be difficult," replied

Nelson Lee. "However, find out the exact place where this accident occurred, and meet me in the Triangle in five minutes. We'll go and have a little investigation at close quarters."

I was quite keen on the idea, and two minutes later I was with Archie, asking him to give me the exact location. He did so, having remembered two tall trees that grew just on the other side of the hedge, opposite the wood.

"By the way," I asked. "Did this thing grip you by the arms?"

"Hardly, dear old companion," said Archie languidly. "It seemed to grab me by the chest, you know. But now you come to mention it, I've got rather a foul bruise on my right arm, and there's a bit of a graze on the left arm, too. Dashed queer, what?"

"I'm not so sure," I replied vaguely.

For in my opinion it wasn't queer at all—it substantiated Nelson Lee's theory. I left Archie, and met Nelson Lee out in the Triangle, as we had arranged. And we at once set off down the lane. It was an easy matter to pick out the spot that Archie had described. And Nelson Lee's first move was to thoroughly examine the tree-trunks at that spot.

"Assuming that somebody performed the trick as we have suggested, he would naturally fix one end of the wire round a tree-trunk, and stretch the wire itself across the road," said Nelson Lee. "Perhaps he had it looped up on an overhanging branch, so that other traffic could go by in safety—for it is clear that Glenthorne was the selected victim. Seeing the boy approaching, the trickster merely pulled the wire taut, thus unlooping it, and gave it two or three turns round the tree trunk near him. In that way the wire would be stretched as tight as something solid, and would inevitably have the effect of lifting the rider completely out of the saddle."

Flashing his torch about, Lee was presently successful. He had taken great care not to trample about much, and had warned me. For he was aware that footprints were possibly on the spot.

On one of the tree-trunks we found some recently made grooves. They were not cuts, but the bark was badly bruised and scarred. Without any question, these marks would have been made by a steel wire.

"Interesting, Nipper," said Lee, "but hardly conclusive enough as evidence. Quite sufficient to convince me that a wire was employed. But we could not possibly bring this forward as actual proof. We must keep our own counsel, and remain on the alert."

"Do you really suspect Dr. Karnak, sir?"

"I must confess that the man has impressed me very unfavourably," replied Nelson Lee. "At the same time, it would be unjust to suspect him upon such scant evidence. This trick may have been the malicious act of a group of boys for all we know—perhaps village boys. I admit

that the possibility is only slight, but it is a very unwise thing to form a theory, and then attempt to make facts fit that theory. We must keep an open mind concerning Dr. Karnak."

While the gov'nor was speaking, he was engaged in a careful search of the soft ground on the other side of the hedge. And, suddenly, he came to a halt and allowed his torchlight to concentrate itself upon a certain spot.

"Hallo—hallo!" he murmured. "What have we here?"

"My goodness!" I said, startled.

There were two peculiar footprints in the soft earth, impressed there as though the maker of them had been standing motionless on the spot for some time. Heavy grass surrounded this one place, so that no other footprints were visible. But these two in the soft earth were sharply defined.

And there was something extraordinary about them. For they were not the marks of booted feet, but unlike anything I had ever seen in my experience. The heel portion might have been made by a bare human foot, but the front half of the prints resembled the spoor of an animal.

"What—what can it mean, sir?" I asked tensely.

"I don't know, Nipper—I don't know," replied Nelson Lee, his voice steady but as tense as my own. "These footprints are startling."

"They—they look like the marks of some awful monster," I muttered.

"Yes, but you must not let your imagination run away with you," said Lee. "Don't say a word, Nipper; we will keep this affair to ourselves. And you may be quite sure that I shall make it my business to watch Dr. Karnak."

Nelson Lee would say no more. We left the spot and walked back to St. Frank's. I didn't feel like conversation, for my thoughts were too involved. Was it possible that there was some truth in these fantastic stories of an uncouth Shape?

I was still busy with my thoughts when we entered the Triangle. And as we approached the Ancient House we heard a slight sound of commotion. And then Watson came running out.

He saw us and hurried up, his face pale and concerned.

"Quick, sir!" he panted, grasping at Nelson Lee's arm. "Handforth's just fallen downstairs, from top to bottom, and he's broken his leg!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE UNSEEN MENACE.



NELSON LEE wasted no time in asking questions.

He entered the Ancient House at a run, with Tommy Watson and myself just behind him. So disaster had befallen Handforth now! There was

something horribly relentless about the working of the curse.

Within the lobby we saw Handforth sitting at the foot of the stairs. His face was pale; he looked dazed, and he was surrounded by Church and McClure and a few other fellows. All were looking scared.

"Quick, sir!" said Church huskily. "I believe his leg's broken!"

Handforth moaned, and leaned back against his chums. The very pallor of his face proved that he was in great pain. His collar had come unfastened, and he was more or less of a wreck.

Nelson Lee knelt down beside him, and very gently straightened out the leg that was doubled under Handforth in such an unnatural attitude.

"Oh—oh!" groaned Handy. "It's all smashed up, sir. I can feel the broken ends grating against one another!"

I winced at this blunt statement, but Nelson Lee persisted.

"Apparently, Handforth, you have a somewhat wonderful imagination," he said quietly. "Your leg is not fractured; it is not even badly hurt. At the most you have received a sprain and a bad bruise."

The listening juniors breathed with relief, and Handforth sat forward, his eyes wide open. He recovered with marvellous rapidity.

"Ain't my leg broken, sir?" he asked indignantly.

"I have just told you that it is not."

"You—you fathead!" snorted Handforth, glaring at Church. "Two minutes ago you told me my thigh was cracked, and my shin in splinters. A fat lot you know! I might have known you were only fooling me."

"But—but aren't you glad?" gasped Church aghast.

"Of course I am! But there was no need for you to make such an ass of yourself!" roared Handforth, leaping to his feet with a sudden heave. "Ow! By George! Yaroo! Help!"

Handforth collapsed backwards, for the very act of getting to his feet in that reckless way had caused him intense pain. However, he had proved to everybody's satisfaction that his leg was quite whole.

"The best thing you can do, my boy, is to go to bed at once," said Nelson Lee. "In fact, I think I had better send you to the sanatorium. You must be properly treated without delay."

"Oh, my only hat!" groaned Handforth in dismay.

"And how did you come to sustain such a serious fall?" asked Lee.

Handforth's expression suddenly became dark.

"I don't know, sir. I was just at the top of the stairs when something clutched at my foot and tripped me," he declared. "I didn't have a chance; I came down head-first, and it's a wonder I wasn't killed."

"You say that something clutched your foot?"

"Yes, sir."

"But, my boy, that seems very vague," protested Nelson Lee. "I can hardly think that anybody would be malicious enough to trip you in such a deliberate fashion. Did you see anything suspicious?"

"Nothing at all, sir."

Nelson Lee pursed his lips and looked dubious. He was half-convinced that Handforth had tripped in the ordinary way—the result of his own reckless blundering. But all this talk about disaster had led him to believe that something had clutched him.

The incident, however, had a big effect on the Remove. All the members of the Sorcery Club, led by De Valerie, persisted in declaring that the spirit of Baal had caused both the accident to Archie and the accident to Handforth. And the Remove Common-room was the scene of much activity.

A number of fellows grew quite indignant, and declared that the mummy was a menace. They talked about getting up a petition to the headmaster to have the thing removed, and the museum closed, and Dr. Karnak dismissed.

Of course, the matter didn't get beyond this stage of idle talk. Nobody wanted to take part in the actual petition. And, as I anticipated from the first, bedtime arrived without anything being decided.

Handforth was in the sanatorium, and Archie was still feeling the effects of his serious fall. The Remove had plenty to talk about as it went to bed. And now, with the night before them, the juniors began to get rather nervous.

Reggie Pitt took hold of my arm as we were going upstairs.

"Got an idea," he confided softly. "Supposing we keep watch to-night?"

"Keep watch?" I repeated.

"Yes. We'll let the other chaps go to sleep, and then slip out of bed and get dressed," murmured Pitt. "At eleven o'clock, say. We'll watch old Karnak, and see what he gets up to. It's my belief he starts his tricks after we're all in bed."

At first I was a little uncertain, but agreed to Reggie's suggestion. It would do no harm to keep watch. We should possibly see nothing suspicious, but on the other hand there was a distinct possibility that we might catch Dr. Karnak red-handed in some fakery. And even the slightest proof of trickery against Dr. Karnak would be a big asset.

I wasn't at all surprised that Reggie Pitt was sound asleep when the school clock chimed out the hour of eleven. He had fully intended keeping awake, but he hadn't managed to do so.

However, I soon shook him up, all the other members of the Remove being sound asleep.

"Sorry, old man," whispered Pitt. "Can't understand it. It seems to me that I only closed my eyes three minutes ago. I say, it's a bit chilly to-night. Think it's worth while going ahead with the scheme?"

I gazed at him sternly.

"And it was your own idea!" I said, with reproach.

"Yes, I know—sorry!" he muttered. "Shan't be a tick!"

He hopped out of bed, and by the time he had put his things on he was quite brisk. And he called himself a few choice names for trying to back out. By five past eleven we were outside in the corridor.

Dr. Karnak's bedroom was situated in another part of the Ancient House, and we had to traverse several corridors before we reached it. And as we approached the bedroom door, we stole forward with extra caution.

I led the way, and warned Pitt to be instantly ready to flee in case Dr. Karnak suddenly emerged. It was by no means certain that he was in his room. If we heard no sounds, we had planned to creep down to the museum.

But even before we got opposite the doorway, we knew that Dr. Karnak was upstairs. For from his room came some curious sounds—so curious as to be almost indefinable.

There was a strange droning, and now and again Dr. Karnak's voice could be heard rising and falling. And once there came the low, plaintive cry of the Serval cat. Reggie Pitt and I gazed at one another doubtfully in the gloom.

"What on earth is he up to in there?" breathed Reggie, after we had moved a few feet away. "I'm blessed if I like it! It sounds so beastly uncanny!"

"It does," I agreed. "I'd like to know what the man's up to."

"By Jove! I've just remembered!" breathed Pitt. "Look here—these are the Fifth Form bath-rooms," he added, pointing to the two doorways just near by. "There's a wide ledge running along the face of the building outside these windows—and that ledge goes past Karnak's window, too. Some of the Fifth Form chaps are always larking about on that ledge."

I considered the matter.

"Yes, we could creep along that ledge safely enough," I said softly. "But, hang it all, are we justified? Don't you think it's a bit too much like spying? I mean trying to peep into the man's bed-room!"

Pitt pulled at my arm.

"Rats!" he breathed. "We'd never descend to spying on any decent chap. But this is more in the nature of detective work. We suspect Karnak of all sorts of tricks, and it's just possible that we may spot him in the act of working a few."

I decided that Pitt was right, and a moment later we had crept into one of the bath-rooms, and I cautiously raised the window. The outlook from here was rather confined. The cloisters were over to the left, but the Triangle was not visible.

The Head's garden, in fact, lay just

below, and the view was curtailed by a clump of high trees which rose up in their leafless condition comparatively near-by. One tree, a little apart from the rest, almost touched the school wall with its out-flung branches.

The ledge upon which we found ourselves was quite a foot wide, and to walk along it was an easy matter. The old stonework was rough and secure, with practically no chance of slipping.

Pitt recognised me as the leader, and I was the first to creep along the ledge. In fact, he decided to wait near the bathroom window for a minute, in case of any alarm.

I crouched down as I came to Dr. Karnak's window, and I felt a little thrill of pleasure as I noted that the window blind was only half drawn. It was not necessary to draw it at all, for nothing overlooked this side of the House, and the Egyptian obviously believed himself to be private.

I went down on all fours as I got close, and then, cautiously, I peeped round the wall, and found myself looking straight into Dr. Karnak's room. And my gaze became fixed, for the scene within that apartment was remarkable.

The light was dim—a shaded electric globe overhead, in the centre of the room with the rest of the place in gloom. Under that light there was a small brazier, and the smoke from incense was curling up. Dr. Karnak himself was no longer the staid, impressive science lecturer that we knew.

He was in there, attired in flowing Eastern robes, and he was capering round and round the brazier in a sort of wild dance of frenzy. There was something revolting about the whole scene.

Squatting on a pedestal was the Serval cat—watching her master with a curious, impassive look. It is no exaggeration to say that I was quite startled. For what earthly reason was Dr. Karnak acting like a madman?

Perhaps he was invoking the aid of the evil spirits, in his own peculiar way. Perhaps it was just a frenzy of his—a kind of safety valve which he allowed to work in the privacy of his own apartment. In any case, the scene was very different from what I had anticipated.

Reggie Pitt, in my rear, apparently, sensed that I had met with success, for he was creeping along the ledge behind me. Something caused me to turn, and glance at him. A slight sound, perhaps—I don't quite know.

At all events, I turned my head sharply, with an uncertain feeling of vague apprehension. And the sight that met my gaze caused me to cling there, with my heart nearly ceasing its beat.

For Reggie Pitt was creeping along, and behind him loomed a great, awful form. In that intense gloom, it was impossible to see

anything distinctly. I only knew that it was a fast, horrid Shape, and in the same flash I realised that I was handicapped.

I couldn't shout a warning, or Dr. Karnak would know that I was outside his window. And there was no time for me to go to Reggie's assistance. In fact, the whole thing was over in a moment.

And until the startling incident actually took place, I was trying to convince myself that my eyes were deceiving me. But as I watched, that great shapeless form seemed to absolutely envelop the creeping junior.

In one movement Pitt was lifted clean off the ledge. I heard him give a gasp of sudden fear and alarm. And the next moment that ghastly thing clutched Reggie Pitt firmly to its side and leapt straight outwards, in one enormous bound, into mid-air!

CHAPTER VII.

THE POWER OF DR. KARNAK!



HORROR gripped me—it numbed my very muscles. During that first awful second I believed that Pitt had been carried off by some frightful apparition from another

world. I expected to hear the awful thud as his body struck the hard pathway below.

But, instead, I heard the crashing and smashing of twigs and branches. Then, with a sudden return of my wits, I caught a fleeting glimpse of a patch of deeper blackness in the midst of the nearest tree.

It vanished—and I knew the truth.

Relief came to me—a great surge of it. But it was immediately followed by a feeling of sickening apprehension. I was relieved because that crashing of twigs had convinced me that Reggie Pitt was gripped by something that was made of flesh and blood. It was no ghost. Unless—unless—But I thrust aside all consideration of the mummy. It was too horrible to believe that Pitt was in the grasp of Baal in his earthly guise.

My one thought was to get to the ground as quickly as possible, and to do something to trace the unfortunate junior. And even before I reached the bath-room, I decided that my first move would be to rush to Nelson Lee.

I fairly flung myself through the bath-room window, and as I did so a figure appeared in the doorway. Dr. Karnak stood before me—sedate, impassive and immobile.

"What are you doing here?" he asked harshly.

"Oh!" I gasped, startled by his sudden presence. "How did you know? You must be a fiend—you almost know things before they happen! What have you done to Pitt? Answer me—answer me! What have you done to him?"

"Control yourself, boy," said Dr. Karnak, his voice calm and placid. "No good will come of this excitement. I suspect that you were attempting to spy on me, and——"

"Yes, I was!" I shouted thickly. "You're causing nothing but mischief here—mischief and trouble! What was that thing that carried Pitt away in mid-air and took him off? You know! I believe you worked everything!"

I spoke passionately, for my anxiety was as great as my fury. Afterwards, I realised that I had made a mistake. I should never have revealed my hand to the Egyptian in that way. But I'm only human, and Reggie's awful fate had bereft me of all my usual caution.

Dr. Karnak's calmness brought me to myself.

"You are talking wildly," he said. "I know nothing of what has happened to any companion of yours. I only know that I heard suspicious sounds, and came along to inquire into them. What are you doing here?"

"Never mind what I'm doing!" I exclaimed hoarsely. "Pitt was on this ledge, just outside this window, and some horrible object came along, and grabbed hold of him. And then it leapt outwards, with Pitt in its grasp, and vanished into a tree."

Dr. Karnak gave a husky cry.

"What—what was this thing like?" he asked curtly.

"I can't tell you—I only know that it was a monstrous looking creature," I replied. "Oh, it's no good talking—I've got to go and get help! Perhaps Pitt's lying down there, mangled and——"

"Wait!" interrupted the Egyptian. "There is only one way in which Pitt can be aided. And I am the only man who knows the way. Perchance I shall be able to save him from a death that is too ghastly to mention."

"What do you mean?" I asked faintly.

"Do not dare to scoff—do not dare to disbelieve," said Dr. Karnak, grasping my arm. "But Pitt has been seized and carried away by the earth form of Baal! Yes! It is true! That horrible creature has got him in its clutches, and his peril is terrible."

"I don't believe it!" I said thickly. "It can't be true!"

"He can be saved only by my efforts!" persisted Dr. Karnak.

For a moment I stood there, thinking, my brain in a whirl. My one desire was to flare out at this man, and tell him what I thought of him. I wanted to ignore him, and arouse the school, and get up an immediate search party. But something told me to quell these thoughts.

In the first place, a search party would probably be useless. Dr. Karnak, on the other hand, possibly knew a great deal more of this affair than he admitted. And if he had engineered, he would be able to

get Reginald Pitt back. It struck me that the whole affair might have been done for the sake of effect.

But then, again, I was torn. How could Karnak have known? How could he have planned anything—when he didn't even know that we were planning to watch him? The ghastly incident had occurred less than five minutes after we had arrived on the scene.

But it was impossible to delay.

"All right!" I said fiercely. "I agree—I'll do what you say."

"I am glad that you have revealed a spark of common sense," exclaimed Dr.

Karnak, in a far away voice. "Tap De Valerie upon the shoulder."

"But—but I don't understand——"

"You are not called upon to interrupt!" exclaimed the other. "Go! De Valerie will lead the way to the spot where Pitt has been taken. But hasten! Lose not a second! The peril is deadly!"

Again he went off into the trance-like state, and my hesitation left me. In that second I had come to a decision. I would go to De Valerie, I would tap him on the shoulder as directed—but if De Valerie failed to respond at once, I would arouse a big search party.



"It's all right, old man—thank Heaven we've found you!" I panted. "I can't understand it—I don't pretend to!"

Karnak. Go! Go to the dormitory—But wait!"

He turned on his heel, and walked swiftly to his room. I followed. The Egyptian went across to a little wooden stand that stood against a wall. Upon it was a stone figure of Baal, the moon god—a relic from one of the Egyptian tombs.

And Dr. Karnak took a cushion, and, kneeling upon it, he appeared to go in a kind of trance. I stood by, impatient and uneasy. It seemed to me that this was a criminal waste of time.

"Go to your dormitory!" droned out Dr.

The extraordinary nature of the affair did not strike me at the time. I was too worried and too upset. But if I had had more time for thought, I should have wondered how on earth Cecil De Valerie could possibly help in this affair. He had been asleep ever since lights-out.

But there was no question that he was strangely influenced by Dr. Karnak. In some remarkable manner De Valerie's will answered to the Egyptian's will. The boy, in fact, was in Dr. Karnak's power—although he didn't even know it himself. I believed that it was a form of hypnotism.

Like the wind I flew along the passages, reached the dormitory, and found everything quiet and still.

I bent over Cecil De Valerie, and detected at once that he was breathing heavily and laboriously. But the instant I tapped him on the shoulder he sat up, his eyes wide open. His breathing became more regular, and without saying a word to me, he commenced dressing.

"Val!" I whispered. "Do you know what you have to do?"

He did not answer me. Indeed, it seemed as though he had not heard. And, in spite of my anxiety, I was awed. There was something so uncanny about it. He was wide awake, and active, but I was convinced that he knew nothing of his own movements.

He dressed in a remarkably short space of time, and then he walked to the door and passed out, attempting to close it behind him—just as though he were alone. He did not know that I was following him.

And this exhibition of Dr. Karnak's mystic power impressed me more than anything that had previously happened. I could not possibly bring myself to believe that these two had prepared anything in advance. De Valerie was just an automaton. He was obeying the will of Dr. Karnak.

But I was too concerned to give the matter very much thought. I was filled with acute anxiety regarding Reggie Pitt. It seemed to me that hours had elapsed since he had been carried off. But, as a matter of fact, scarcely more than ten minutes had elapsed.

De Valerie made his way out through the side door, and I expected him to make off in the direction of the Head's shrubbery—towards those trees where the terrible incident had happened.

But De Valerie cut straight across the Triangle, walking towards the school wall. I plucked at his sleeve.

"Val!" I breathed. "Can't you hear me? You're going wrong!"

He tugged at his sleeve fiercely, shaking off my grip. But he did not answer, and kept to the same course. He reached the wall, sprang to the top, and jumped down into the lane.

In a moment I had followed.

And I was quite certain by now that I should only endanger the whole enterprise by attempting to arouse him. Indeed, if I did succeed in doing so, he would probably know nothing at all, and then we should be stranded.

So I let him walk on, a vague sense of disaster and horror oppressing me. Until this hour I had never had the slightest example of Dr. Karnak's mystic power.

Whatever the man was—scoundrel or trickster—there was no question that he possessed powers beyond the ordinary.

De Valerie went on until he reached the stile, leading into Bellton Wood. Without hesitation he crossed it, and took the foot-path through the trees. And he did everything deliberately, just as though he knew to the tiniest detail where he had to go.

The wood was peopled by dim shadows and figments of my own imagination. I seemed to expect that monstrous form; I was prepared for it to appear before us at any moment. And for once in my life I felt weak with nervousness.

But this was no time to show the white feather; I simply had to go on. Pitt's safety was important above all else. And if he could be recovered in this seemingly miraculous fashion, it would be beyond my understanding.

Abruptly, De Valerie left the path, and made his way through the untrodden woods. Yet he never bumped against a tree trunk, he never faltered, and he tripped over jutting roots far less than I did.

And when he reached the brink of a deep gully I clutched at him wildly, but missed. Yawning at his feet there was a great drop—a sheer fall of over fifty feet, with jagged rocks below. I expected to see him go hurtling downwards, and I cried aloud.

But, as though I didn't exist, he turned away from that chasm, and walked along to a spot where a steep, natural descent led into the very depths of the gully. What guiding power was it that had saved him from disaster in the nick of time? I followed, almost sick with fear.

And when De Valerie reached the bottom of the gully he picked his way along the rocks, and came to a sudden halt.

"Who—who's that?" came a faint, pained voice.

"Reggie!" I gasped, my heart giving a leap.

Dashing forward, I saw that Reginald Pitt was lying there—mauled, dishevelled, and only just conscious. He had seen us loom up, and the sound of our movements had partially aroused him.

"It's all right, old man—thank Heaven we've found you!" I panted. "I can't understand it—I don't pretend to!"

"Oh, Nipper! It's you—it's you!" breathed Pitt, with untold relief.

"Back! Come back!" exclaimed Cecil De Valerie.

His voice was hoarse and strained—and these were the first words he had uttered since I had aroused him in the dormitory. And there was something about his command so imperative that I leapt into activity. I wasted no time in questions, or in even glancing round.

Seizing Reggie under the armpits, I dragged him back with all my strength. And exactly as I did so, there came a sound of crackling and crumbling from above—from the rocky top of that gully.

With a shout of alarm, I literally hurled

my burden under the cover of a great boulder, and crouched there after him.

Cra-a-ash!

There sounded a great, booming, thunderous crash—as several tons of solid rock parted from the cliff top, and came hurtling down. And that mass of death-dealing rock had fallen on the exact spot where Reginald Pitt had been lying.

His peril had, indeed, been deadly!

And I rose to my feet, and stared up at the cliff top in the faint moonlight. I could see nothing except the gaunt outline of the leafless trees. There was no living figure—nothing.

But, vaguely, I suspected.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DEEPENING MYSTERY!



CECIL DE VALERIE shuddered throughout his whole frame.

He had been standing there motionless. And his attitude was so fixed that I placed a hand on his arm.

And that touch, it seemed, caused the shudder to run through him. He swayed, and would have fallen.

"Steady!" I said, holding him. "Thanks to you, old man, Pitt is safe."

De Valerie looked at me blankly—his eyes filled with astonishment and half-dazed confusion.

"Where—where are we?" he muttered hoarsely. "What's this? Trees—the woods? I—I don't understand!"

I looked at him queerly.

"Don't you know that you got dressed and came out?" I inquired.

"I—I don't—don't seem to remember," he muttered.

"But you've saved Pitt's life!"

"My head—my head!" whispered De Valerie, pressing his temples. "It's aching terribly. I'm dizzy! What does it mean? Why are we out here, in the middle of the night?"

"All right, old son—I'll explain later," I said quietly. "Just come and sit down for a few minutes."

Much as I wanted to get away from that ghastly spot, I knew that neither of my companions were in a fit condition to leave just yet. De Valerie sat down obediently enough, still dazed.

I was convinced in my own mind that he had been in a hypnotic state—obviously the work of Dr. Karnak. And now that the danger to Pitt was over, he had been released. Dr. Karnak, in the school, was no longer exerting his powerful will.

I gave all my attention to Reggie Pitt. He was crouching there, shivering as though with ague—yet he didn't feel excessively cold. He was covered with dirt and twigs and dead leaves, but did not appear to be bodily harmed. His condition of semi-consciousness had not been through injury, but wing to sheer horror.

"I'm glad you came, Nipper—I think I should have died!" he muttered. "Time after time I told myself that it was only a nightmare, and that I should wake up. Oh, it was horrible—horrible!"

"What's happened, old man?" I asked gently.

"I don't know—oh, I don't know!" he whispered. "I can't seem to remember properly. I heard something behind me as I was on that ledge. And then I was grabbed by something—my face was covered with an awful furry arm—at least, it seemed to be an arm. I think I must have fainted, because I don't know much more."

He shivered, and clung to me.

"And there was a smell, too!" he breathed—"a horrible, animal-like odour that sickened me and filled me with nausea. Then I found myself here—in this gully. I thought I was alone at first, and then a monstrous thing seemed to arise out of the very ground, and it moved away into the blackness."

"You didn't see it distinctly?"

"No, I couldn't—and I was afraid to look," he muttered.

That the adventure had been horrible in the extreme was self-evident—for Reginald Pitt was a strong, self-reliant junior with iron nerves. He was about the last fellow I should have suspected of collapsing through fear. There was no question of his courage—no doubt concerning his great pluck. And I knew that he had passed through a ghastly time to reduce him to this state.

"Let's—let's get back to the school!" he said huskily. "I can't stand out here any longer—it's too cold and mysterious. Oh! That—that Thing might come again!"

"Why can't you explain?" broke De Valerie petulantly. "Why am I here, in this gully? Who brought me here?"

"Dr. Karnak," I replied quietly.

"Dr. Karnak!" repeated De Valerie, with a violent start.

As quietly as I could, I told them exactly what had happened. And by the time I had finished they were both more composed.

"I don't like to remind you, old son, but what was your impression of that strange monster?" I asked. "You only had a fleeting vision—just a moment of consciousness. And what was it like?"

"I can't tell you," replied Pitt. "I don't know."

"But it was solid?"

"Oh, yes—solid enough," he said. "It wasn't a ghost, if that's what you mean."

"Then perhaps there's a natural explanation after all," I said slowly. "But it seems to me that it's altogether too hideously fantastic for any normal solution. We'd better get back to the school," I added abruptly.

They were quite ready.

And by the time we reached Bellton Lane, Pitt had so far recovered that he had got some of his old colour back. And De Valerie, now in full possession of the truth, was

silent. He was in no trance now, but his thoughts were evidently deep and intense.

We got into the Ancient House by means of the side door—which still remained on the jar, just as De Valerie and I had left it in our haste. And after we had mounted the stairs we paused on the landing. The school was utterly silent, for peaceful sleep reigned supreme.

"I think we'd better go to Dr. Karnak, and tell him," I said quietly. "It was he who saved you, Pitt, and—"

"Yes, and it was he who put me into the danger in the first place," interrupted Pitt bitterly. "I've got nothing to thank Dr. Karnak for. That rock would never have fallen but for his evil work. It was all planned."

"It may have been, but I can't see how," I replied. "In any case, I think we'd better see him."

And we went quietly down the passage until we arrived at Dr. Karnak's door. I tapped upon it and waited. At first there was no response, but in answer to my second tap Dr. Karnak's voice came to us.

"Come in!" he said sleepily.

We entered.

To our surprise, Dr. Karnak was sitting up in bed, and he had switched on a small table lamp near him. In one swift glance round the room I saw that the whole appearance was altered. It was now an ordinary bedroom, with nothing bizarre about it whatever.

Coiled up on a soft, sheepskin rug was the Serval cat. It looked up at us lazily, yawned, and then coiled round for sleep again—in just the same innocent, peaceful manner as any homely tom-cat.

"What is this?" asked Dr. Karnak in astonishment. "What on earth are you boys doing here at such an hour?"

"We found him, sir," I said steadily.

"I fail to understand. You found whom?" asked the Egyptian.

"Why, you—you don't mean to say that —" I paused, looking at Dr. Karnak in sudden astonishment. "Pitt, sir," I exclaimed. "Don't you remember how you told me to tap De Valerie on the shoulder?"

Dr. Karnak laughed softly.

"Let me advise you, my young friend, to go back to bed," he said. "It appears that you have been suffering from some acute nightmare. I know nothing about Pitt. I gave you no instructions concerning De Valerie. I have been asleep since ten-thirty."

I caught my breath in sharply.

"But—but—" I began.

I paused, quite unable to form any words. And then, in a flash, I realised grimly that he was deliberately denying all knowledge of the night's dread work. And he was doing this with a reason.

It was to avoid the possible results of any inquiry. If we told anything to the Headmaster, for example, it would be supposed that we had imagined the whole occurrence.

Dr. Karnak would persist in his denial, and it was an absolute certainty that the Head would discredit such a grotesque yarn.

But at the same time it sent a thrill through me. For by acting in this way Dr. Karnak was tacitly admitting that he was afraid of any inquiry. And that proved that my suspicions were correct. An inquiry, once set afoot, would possibly reveal things which Dr. Karnak wished to keep secret. If he were a trickster and a fraud, an investigation was the last thing he could afford. But if these manifestations had been genuine, there would have been no necessity for him to take up this attitude of ignorance.

I bowed.

"I'm sorry, Dr. Karnak, for disturbing you," I said politely. "It must have been a dream, after all. I think we'd better keep it quite to ourselves, you chaps," I added to the others. "We don't want it talked about."

"That advice is sound," said Dr. Karnak drily. "Now kindly leave me."

We passed out of the room, Pitt rather puzzled.

"It's all right," I said keenly. "He's not such a sorcerer, after all! Did you notice how scared he was of this affair going any further? We've only got to wait our time and we'll have him."

"But—but the monster—" began Pitt.

"I don't know," I replied thoughtfully. "But you can bet your last cent that the monster isn't the earthly form of our friend, the mummy. There's something jolly fishy about the whole business, take it from me!"

And, without any further discussion, we went straight to bed.

In the morning both Pitt and De Valerie were practically themselves—a little heavy through lack of sleep, but in no way harmed. I was especially pleased about Pitt, for I had feared that the shock to his nerves would have a lasting effect.

My very first task, in going downstairs, was to make my way to Nelson Lee's study. The guv'nor wasn't there, so I made myself comfortable in his easy-chair before the fire, and waited. He arrived five minutes afterwards.

"Oh, indeed!" he said pleasantly. "So this is what I find when I enter my study! Do you intend to make this a morning habit, young man?"

"Well, guv'nor, I was just thinking it would be a pretty good idea," I replied. "I'd no idea it was so cosy and comfy first thing. But I really came here to have a word with you."

"Concerning last night's strange happenings, I presume?" asked Nelson Lee calmly. I stared.

"What do you know about them, sir?" I asked blankly.

"Rather more than you suspect, at all events," replied the guv'nor. "But I will not deceive you, Nipper. I only know that Dr. Karnak was active, and that you and another boy crossed the Triangle between

eleven and twelve o'clock—returning with a third boy later."

"My hat!" I gasped. "And I thought we weren't spotted!"

"It is just as well that you have come to me now—for I should certainly have sent for you, my lad," said Nelson Lee grimly. "Now, come—let me have the story. I can be sure that it is not one you are afraid to tell."

In clear detail, I explained to Nelson Lee exactly what had happened—describing my first glimpse into Karnak's bedroom, my vision of Pitt being carried away, Dr. Karnak's sudden appearance in the bathroom, his trance-like condition before the statue of the moon god, and, in fact, everything.

Nelson Lee listened almost without comment until I had done.

"A highly diverting narrative, my boy," said Lee at length. "Thank Heaven you dragged Pitt away before that mass of rock fell. Well, it seems that I shall have to bestir myself in earnest."

"Last night I was ready to believe anything, sir," I declared. "I was almost convinced that the monster was an Elemental—the earthly form of Baal, just as Dr. Karnak told us. I was as good as converted."

"And now?"

"Now I'm all the more convinced that there's a lot of devilment going on," I replied. "I came to that conclusion last night, gov'nor—before I went to sleep. Because it was very significant, to my mind, that Dr. Karnak should deny all knowledge of the business."

Nelson Lee nodded.

"You are quite right," he said. "You have touched the weak spot, Nipper. You may be quite certain that Dr. Karnak will not permit any close inquiry to be held. He has the full confidence of Dr. Stafford—"

"Don't you think we'd better go to the Head, and tell him all about it, sir?" I asked. "This man ought to be sent away at once."

"I am afraid it would be rather unfair to Dr. Karnak if we made out any case against him at present," replied Nelson Lee slowly. "In the first place, he has the complete confidence of Dr. Stafford, and he would deny everything we state. Furthermore, we have not one shred of tangible evidence with which to substantiate our charge. My dear Nipper, before we can move a finger against Dr. Karnak we must have some visible evidence—some concrete proof!"

"Then you think he's playing a deep game?"

"I do; but I'm not quite certain what that game is," said the gov'nor grimly. "I mean to investigate quietly and unobtrusively. With regard to all these manifestations, you may make your mind easy. It was sheer bluff, of course, for Dr. Karnak to warn the boys about gazing upon the face of Baal. That was a mere theatrical dodge. And I am convinced that the accident to Glenthorne was engineered—and it is just possible that Handforth was deliberately

tripped. It could have been done by a very simple device."

"And the monster, sir?"

"I'll confess that there I am baffled," replied Lee. "The monster may be a confederate, and before long we shall know more about it. I believe that Dr. Karnak is capable of hypnotism—we have the evidence of that with De Valerie. The picture falling in Glenthorne's study was possibly another piece of manipulation. And there can be no question that Dr. Karnak had provided himself with many cunning pieces of trick mechanism. The museum, I believe, is a kind of small edition of Maskelyne's Theatre of Magic!"

"Why, have you examined the place, sir?" I asked eagerly.

"No; but I happen to possess a fair amount of common sense," said Nelson Lee. "It would have been unwise for me to penetrate into the museum—for you can be quite sure that Dr. Karnak is keeping his eye on me. I should not be surprised if one of these days I received attention from him—and unwelcome attention at that. But I am quite prepared."

"Phew!" I whispered. "Then we shall probably have some excitement?"

"Such a contingency is by no means remote," said the gov'nor smoothly. "But, you see, Nipper, we cannot move at present. Without proof we are helpless. Not that Dr. Karnak will have his own way much longer!"

"But why is he doing all this?" I asked.

"The man is a rascal—with a love of ostentation," said the gov'nor. "It pleases him to pose as a worker of magic. It is just possible that he merely possesses a kind of kink; but I think there is more in it than that."

Nelson Lee's surmise was undoubtedly correct; but neither he nor I knew the full extent of Dr. Karnak's game. Little did we imagine how dramatic and mysterious were the happenings of the next few weeks to prove.

Strange events had happened—but stranger events were to come!

THE END.

NEXT WEEK!

Another Absorbing Story of
DR. KARNAK in:—

"THE CURSE OF THE MOON GOD!"

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UNLIKE London, with its many great termini, New York has only two important stations. But what New York lacks in number it makes up for in size and impressiveness. And over on the other side they don't refer to one of these great stations as a terminus, but as a terminal.

New York's two vast stations are the Grand Central and the Pennsylvania. We will take the Grand Central first. This is situated in the very heart of New York, on 42nd. Street, and is the starting point of all the New York Central Railroad's trains and associated lines.

Approaching the station itself, the stranger would have no knowledge that a railway was anywhere in the vicinity, for the trains do not run into these great New York stations in the open, as they do, for example, into Victoria or Charing Cross.

All the New York trains enter the city far underground, through great tunnels, which are built identically the same as our own tubes. And they are drawn in and out by means of electric engines—steam locomotives being substituted beyond the outskirts of the city. The almost total absence of steam engines in New York is one of the causes of that city's clear atmosphere.

The Grand Central Station is a magnificent structure. Once inside, no matter how cold the weather may be in the open, you need have no fear of being chilly if you have to wait for your train. For the whole vast station is steam heated, and to a European this heat is rather too great for comfort. But it is certainly preferable to the draughty coldness of many London termini.

The great booking-hall is of enormous height, resembling the interior of a cathedral—brilliantly illuminated, with white stone flooring and staircases. The ticket offices lie all around, with huge waiting-rooms, rest-rooms for the ladies, and restaurants.

Having obtained your ticket, you stroll along to the track from which your train departs, and pass through the barrier to descend further stairs to the waiting train. There are no platforms as we know them over here. Having climbed into your train,

it soon glides out under electric power, burrows its way beneath New York, and emerges into the open far beyond.

The Pennsylvania Station, on 7th Avenue at 32nd. Street, is the terminus of the Pennsylvania Railroad—as the name of the station indicates. And this station, although differing from the Grand Central, is built upon a plan just as palatial and every bit as impressive.

Whereas in England we are instructed to go to Platform No. 12, say, in New York one goes to Track No. 12. And there are tracks galore, with trains departing to every corner of the United States at frequent intervals. In New York one thinks nothing of starting off from one of these great stations on a brief trip to Chicago, a thousand miles away. To the Americans it is not much more than a jump—a week-end journey, for which a small hand-grip is the only necessary luggage.

One enters the Pennsylvania Station from 7th Avenue through a great arcade, where there are all manner of shops. And below, on the lower floors of the station itself, are great bookstalls, cigar shops, and inviting-looking confectionery stores. The big central hall of the Pennsylvania Station is really more cathedral like than its sister on 42nd. Street. And here you find the same lavish display in the matter of lighting and great, spacious halls, staircases and corridors.

Of course, in comparing these termini to those of London, we must remember that New York is much newer, and that when the time comes for London to renew its great stations they will probably be every bit as commodious and sumptuous as those of New York. But they will never be so large, for the simple reason that these two main stations in New York serve the whole vast continent. In London we have no necessity for such enormous stations.

All the railroad porters in New York are coloured men, and they are just as susceptible to tips as our own English porters—only in a more acute form. Woe betide you if you fail to tip your coloured porter in a manner that he considers adequate! At the least, you will certainly get a very black look!

AMUSING STORY THIS WEEK BY ARCHIE!

No. 7. Vol. 1.

Edited by Nipper.

January 12, 1924.



St. Frank's Magazine

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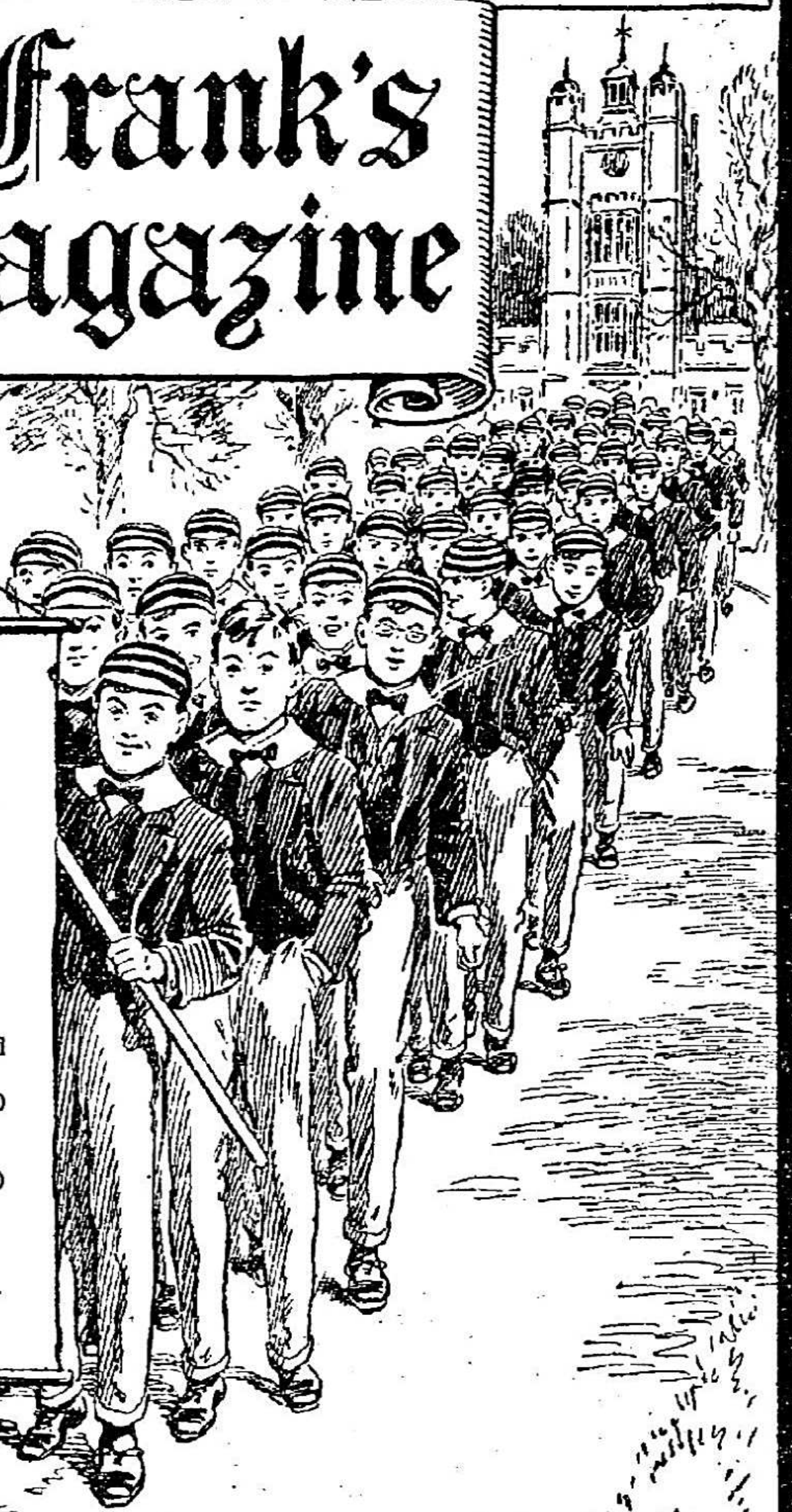
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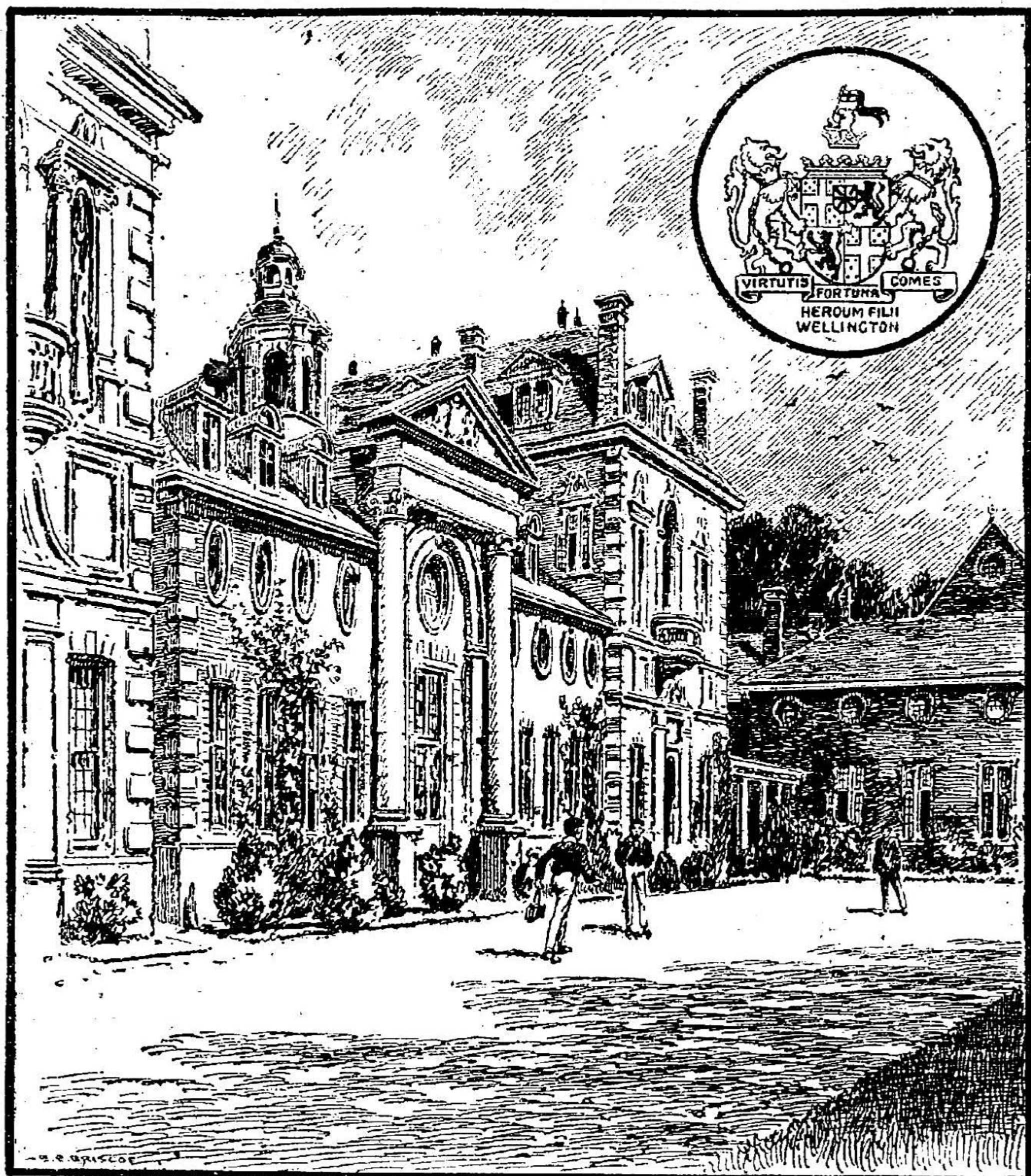


THE MAG. OF MANY BRIGHT FEATURES!

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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

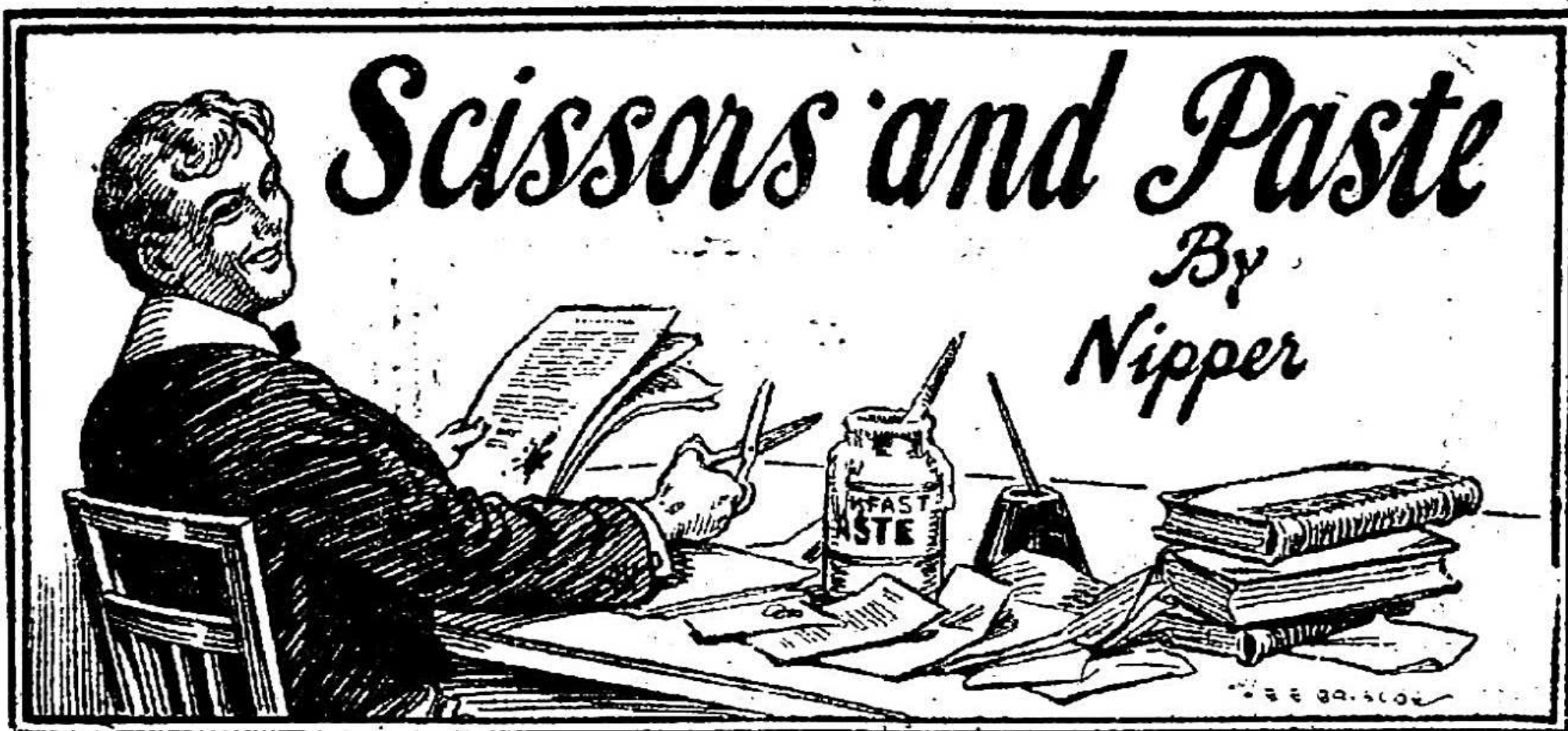
No. 9. WELLINGTON.



WELLINGTON COLLEGE.

Founded in honour of the Duke of Wellington, this famous school was opened in 1853, the cost being defrayed by public subscription. The school was established for the education of the sons of deceased officers, who have held commissions in His Majesty's Army or in the Army of the Hon. East India Company. Foundationers number about 90 boys, who are sons of Army officers and eligible at reduced fees. Non-Foundationers are

admitted making altogether a total of about 500 boys in the school. The buildings, erected on a site near Wokingham, consist of the College proper and four Houses. Every boy has a room to himself, which he can use for sleeping and as a study. In the College Building there are eleven dormitories, each containing from 30 to 39 rooms. The four Houses contain 33 rooms each. In the Great War 600 Wellingtonians were killed and 800 were wounded.



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

My dear Chums,
Another jolly old yarn from the Genial Ass is one of this week's super-attractions. When Archie told me last week that he was thinking of doing a pirate story for the Mag., I told him not to try and be funny, and to leave blood-curdling yarns to the great Edward Oswald. Archie took this as a kind of challenge from me that he could not write a pirate story. Whereupon, he set to work immediately, and on the following day brought me the story completed. On reading it, it struck me as being quite funny. I hope you will think the same and enjoy it.

The Trials of an Editor.

And talking about fun, I can't help mentioning that an editor's life is not conspicuous for that commodity. Most people seem to picture an editor as a lucky chap who lounges all day in an armchair, while authors and artists wait breathlessly for his orders. Nothing is less like the truth. Artists and authors, while all right in their way—that is when they are artisting and authoring—are quite harmless individuals. But when they invade the Editorial Sanctum, they are the limit. Wait! If only they would! It's about time we got a fat Yale lock on the door of Study C. That would do it. I'd make 'em wait, lined up in the Remove passage! But as it is, waiting is the last thing they think of doing. They barge into the study as though they owned it.

Borrowing the Typewriter.

In fact, on press days Sir Montie and Tommy Watson have got into the habit of clearing out altogether. They couldn't stand the constant bickering that went on. It needs to be heard to be believed. The greatest offender, needless to say, is that prince of fatheads whose initials are

E. O. H. I hope I'm not appearing annoyed when I say this, but really he's getting a bit too thick. Last press day he came in to borrow the office typewriter. "I just want to finish this article," he exclaimed, waving a sheet of paper at me. "Know you won't mind."

I nodded permission, and E. O. H. started to bang the keys. He typed for about a minute, and then came a colossal crash. The silly ass had knocked the typewriter on to the floor.

"The—the rotten thing!" he gasped, stooping to pick it up. "Why don't you get a better machine, Nipper? One that won't overbalance."

I refrained from telling E. O. H. that the typewriter was quite a good one, and that he alone was responsible for it falling over. He began thumping the keys again, and then suddenly stopped.

"Look here, Nipper," he shouted, "the beastly keyboard's got twisted up! It won't write!"

"You mean you've smashed up our machine?" I said grimly.

"I—I smashed it!" roared E. O. H. "What utter rot! It was smashed before you lent it to me, and now you won't mend it!"

I said nothing, but went on with my work.

I heard sundry bangs and bumps, and guessed that E. O. H. was trying his hand at repairs. Then he caught hold of the machine and tugged it in my direction.

In doing so, the clever chap calmly knocked over my inkpot, the black fluid spreading in a thick stream over my books and papers.

That was too much. I rose in anger, and caught Handy by the shoulder. "You burbling idiot!" I shouted. "Out you go!" And I pushed him out of the study and locked him out.

It's not a bed of roses.

Your old pal,

NIPPER.

• GOSSIP OF THE WEEK •

A Chatty Contribution :: By HUBERT JARROW

THINGS have been pretty lively in the Form-room during the past week. I mean, what with Mr. Crowell having lumbago, or something, and the chimney smoking, and the weather getting colder, we've had something to contend with. But we've come through the ordeal all right.

As I told Mr. Crowell, lumbago is a serious business. It's no good letting it get hold of you, because if you do there's no telling what may happen. I don't think it's catching, but at the same time, it puts a chap off his stroke a bit when the Form-master crawls about nearly doubled up. Not that I don't sympathise with Mr. Crowell. I do. But he ought to take a rest, and leave the Remove in charge of a prefect.

Nothing would be more popular. With a prefect in charge, we could do pretty well as we liked. I mean, why not? And then again, think of what happened on Tuesday. There was Handforth, absolutely scrapping with Church and McClure in the middle of the history lesson. That sort of thing isn't really done.

And take history. A wonderful subject, when you come to consider it. Of course, it's just as wonderful, even if you don't consider it. It's there, and you can't get away from it. History! I mean, the very word conjures up visions of England's past glory.

Naturally, there's a lot to be said in favour of conjuring. And it would need a jolly clever conjurer to find any glory in England just now. What with these elections and all this talk about Free Trade and Tariff Reform—Well, there it is. I mean, we don't really understand these things. But if it comes to that, who does?

Take the average politician, what is he—or she? Because, nowadays, these women are getting into Parliament. These women are absolutely shoving the men out, and collaring their seats. It must be pretty rotten for any man to have a woman come along and take his seat away.

I'm all in favour of Protection. I think we ought to have somebody officially appointed by the Form to protect us from these chaps who come along, making horrible puns. I mean, what's worse than a pun? Something ought to be done about it. Only on Wednesday afternoon Pitt said

that he'd eaten some meat patties from the tuckshop and they'd made his tummy Hake. Now that sort of thing is criminal, and we ought to get together and put a stop to it. It's just a question of Protection being absolutely necessary.

And I'm in favour of Free Trade, too. Look what happened on Thursday. Some chap wanted to sell me a pocket-knife for two bob, and I was just going to pay up and complete the deal when another chap came along and said the knife was worth half-a-sovereign. And the price went up like a shot, and I had to pay three-and-six in the end. I'm all for Free Trade. If a chap's willing to sell something for a certain price he ought to be left alone.

Just look at prices in these days—I don't mean candles, although Price's are pretty decent, if you really want these things. Take prices in general. Think of the money you have to pay for the absolute necessities of life. For example, cocoanut toffee, or almond rock.

Sixpence for a quarter of a pound! This means two shillings a pound. And you've only got to reckon the cost of sugar and almonds and cocoanuts and things, and you see how these sweet manufacturers get so jolly rich. No wonder they roll about in their cars and invest in Savings Certificates.

Some fellows believe in keeping their savings intact. Of course, they only believe in it; they don't do it. They take their pocket-money and put about a third of it away, meaning to save up for a bike or a new pair of footer boots or a wireless set. And then towards Friday they get stony and break into the savings, and by Saturday they're all gone.

Ask any chap to lend you a shilling on Friday evening. All he can do is to gasp, because it's pretty certain he was just going to ask you for half-a-crown. I mean, money is jolly scarce these days. And when you do get some of it, it simply fades into thin air. As far as I can see there's only one solution to the whole problem. What we've got to do is to get together—

(No more room in this number, old man. Leave it until next week.—ED.)



Fullwood's Ordeal

A Complete Story

By REGINALD PITT

I.

THE TELEGRAM.

TUBBS, the Ancient House pageboy, was looking for Ralph Leslie Fullwood—the leader of the Nuts of the Remove.

After trying Study A, and finding it deserted, Tubbs wended his way to the Common-room—nearly becoming deaf as he opened the door of that famous apartment.

A good number of juniors were there, and in consequence there was a considerable din being made. Handforth, as usual, was the most generous contributor to the general racket, for he was engaged in one of his customary arguments with his long-suffering study chums, Church and McClure.

Tubbs grinned to himself as he entered, and looked round for Fullwood—spotting him in a few moments near the window, in company with Gulliver and Bell. The pageboy crossed over to him at once, and handed him an orange-coloured envelope.

"Telegram for you, Master Fullwood," he said. "It came about three minutes ago, and Mrs. Poulter told the boy not to wait for no answer!"

Fullwood took the telegram, and looked at it with a slightly puzzled frown on his face.

"Thanks, Tubby!" he exclaimed, feeling in his pocket for a coin. "Here you are!"

He handed the tip to the pageboy with his usual lordly manner, and then proceeded to rip open the envelope—Gulliver and Bell watching him with great interest.

"Hope it's no bad news, old man!" said Bell, shaking his head. "Dashed if I like unexpected telegrams—"

"Don't worry!" put in De Valerie, who was standing near. "I expect it's a tip for the three o'clock race to-morrow! Just like Fullwood to get wires 'direct from the stable,' you know!"

Fullwood scowled, and pulled out the flimsy sheet of paper from the envelope, afterwards unfolding it curiously. Then he proceeded to read the message—his expression changing as he did so.

"Thank goodness it's nothin' serious!" he exclaimed, in a tone of relief. "All the same, it's bally rotten news, you chaps!"

My Uncle Charlie is comin' to see me—comin' here to-night!"

Gulliver nodded.

"Oh, good!" he observed. "What's the matter with that news, Fully? If your uncle is comin' he'll surely give you a whackin' great tip—an' that's just what we can do with now! Remember we're practically stony—"

"Don't talk so fast, you idiot!" broke in Fullwood sourly. "I tell you we're in a deuce of a fix! It's impossible for me to receive Uncle Charlie here—at St. Frank's! I—I should never be able to hold up my head again!"

"Why?" demanded Bell.

"Because he's an outsider—a penniless, down-at-heel nobody!" grunted Fullwood. "I haven't seen him for years an' years, but I know he's as poor as a church mouse—an' as shabby as the dickens! He'll disgrace me if he comes here!"

"Well, he is coming here, according to that wire!" said Bell. "So what's the good of kicking? We've got to make the best of it—that's all! Perhaps he isn't so bad as you think, Fully?"

"What time is he due?" asked Gulliver.

"Somewhere about five, he says," answered Fullwood. "Blow him! Just when we wanted to have a nice quiet evenin' in the study, too! Anyhow, I'm jolly well not goin' to meet him—and that's flat! If he likes to come here on a surprise visit, he can find his own bally way from the station!"

And Ralph Leslie Fullwood turned and walked out of the Common-room with his two bosom companions—evidently the reverse of pleased.

Poor relations, obviously, did not appeal to the Nuts of the Remove!

II.

FULLWOOD HEARS A FEW HOME TRUTHS!

"**H**ERE he comes!"

Fullwood growled out the words in an unpleasant tone as he saw the figure of a stranger enter the school gates, and walk across the Triangle towards the ancient old pile.

The time was ten minutes to five, and the three Nuts of the Remove were on the look-out for Fullwood's undesirable relation. It was their intention to run out and pilot Uncle Charlie directly to their study—so that he should not be seen by any more of the juniors than was absolutely necessary.

Accordingly, the trio of Study A hurried out, and intercepted the visitor. Fullwood's temper was by no means improved by Uncle Charlie's appearance—for he certainly looked a "penniless, down-at-heel nobody" in very truth! He was a slightly undersized individual, with an untidy beard and moustache, and a shabby overcoat which would have disgraced a self-respecting scarecrow. Fullwood had not seen him for some years, and he scarcely recognised him.

"Are—are you Mr. Charles Fullwood?" he asked abruptly, halting before the stranger uncertainly.

The newcomer nodded.

"What a question—what a question, Ralph!" he exclaimed, in a rather gruff, but not unpleasant voice. "Surely you recognise your Uncle Charlie, my boy?"

Fullwood coloured a trifle.

"Well, you see, it's a deuce of a time since we met, you know!" he exclaimed. "I got your wire all right, and I'm dashed glad to see you, uncle! Come along to the study, an' we'll have a cup of tea! By the way, these two chaps are my pals—Gulliver and Bell."

He introduced them at once, and then the trio gently propelled Uncle Charlie to the study. Fortunately, they encountered very few juniors on the way—but this was because the majority of them were preparing their own teas.

Fullwood breathed a sigh of relief as the door of Study A closed behind the visitor. Mr. Fullwood appeared to notice no signs of his lack of welcome, but proceeded to take off his dilapidated overcoat and hat, and to fling them over a chair. Then he rubbed his hands together, and looked round the room.

"Ah! Very comfortable quarters, I must say—very comfortable!" he said breezily. "I observe that you have prepared tea, Ralph—but before we partake of the meal I have a few words to say to you—"

"Oh, in that case Gulliver and I had better evaporate!" said Bell, making for the door.

"Nothing of the sort, my boy—please remain!" said Mr. Fullwood quickly. "What I have to say concerns you all—although, perhaps, my remarks will be mainly directed in Ralph's direction. However, I would much rather speak to the three of you together."

Fullwood nodded.

"Right-ho, uncle!" he said resignedly. "You talk in a bally mysterious fashion, an' I'm quite anxious to hear your news! Anythin' important?"

"Most important!" said Uncle Charlie, with a stern note in his voice. "What would you say if I told you that I have come here especially to warn you, eh? What would you say if I informed you that you are in great peril?"

Fullwood looked at his uncle in alarm.

"Warn me!" he repeated. "In great peril? Great Scott!"

"Exactly, Ralph—peril is none too strong word, as you will soon realise!" said Mr. Fullwood sternly. "That is, of course, if the information I have received is true!"

"Information?" said Ralph Leslie faintly. "What—what are you talkin' about, uncle?"

"You will know in a moment!" thundered Mr. Fullwood, looking at his nephew with a contemptuous glance. "Supposing I tell you that your father has received a very full and detailed account of your misbehaviour in this school—of your card-playing, your gambling, your breaking bounds to visit a disreputable inn called the White Hart, and a thousand-and-one other things? What effect do you suppose all this would have upon him?"

Fullwood nearly choked, and he looked at his uncle with white face and staring eyes. He had never imagined anything so ghastly as this would result from the visit of his relation, and for a few moments he remained speechless.

"G-g-good heavens!" he gasped at last. "Who—who has been giving me away—I—mean, who has been spinnin' these yarns to my pater?"

Mr. Fullwood smiled.

"Perhaps it never occurred to you that your conduct might one day exasperate your schoolfellows to such an extent that they determined to make a report to your father?" he observed. "I understand that you have been such an out-and-out cad all along that—"

"Do you mean to say that the Remove chaps have written to Fullwood's pater?" yelled Gulliver, in consternation. "By jingo! Perhaps they've done the same to mine and Bell's—I mean— Hang it all, I don't believe it!"

Mr. Fullwood looked at Gulliver contemptuously.

"Well, by all accounts, it would serve you right if they did!" he exclaimed. "As far as I can make out, the three of you are a set of downright young hooligans, totally unfit to mix with the healthy young Britons who are congregated in this magnificent college! But I will say no more.

Possibly my words will have some effect, and cause you to alter your ways a trifle. Now it is imperative that I leave you—My hat!”

Mr. Fullwood broke off with that curious exclamation owing to the fact that the door of Study A was suddenly flung open—to reveal a crowd of laughing juniors in the passage.

One of them—Handforth, to be exact—elbowed his way through the throng and looked at Fullwood.

“Better get that scarecrow out of the study quickly, Fullwood!” he said, nodding towards the visitor. “Your uncle’s just arrived—in a whacking great American touring car, too! You said he was a beggar to all intents and purposes, but it looks as if he’s made a pretty big pile across the water!”

Fullwood and Gulliver and Bell turned and stared at “Uncle Charlie” in amazement—but that gentleman was already squeezing out of the study, and making tracks to the bath-room.

A few minutes later Fullwood’s uncle arrived, and proved to be the very opposite to the “spook” uncle who had just departed. Handforth’s estimate of him had been very near the mark—for Fullwood learned later that his Uncle Charlie was one of the richest and most influential stock-brokers in New York.

But the cads of the Remove never learned who had impersonated Fullwood’s relation so successfully—neither did they heed the wise words which he had allowed to fall from his lips. They say that it’s impossible for a leopard to change his spots—and this little saying applies equally well to Fullwood and Co.

Not many of the juniors were in the “know”—but it was Nipper who had “spoofed” the Nuts, and filled them with fear and trembling. He had been in the Common-room when Tubbs delivered the telegram, and he had heard Fullwood’s uncomplimentary remarks concerning the visitor.



Mr. Fullwood broke off with that curious exclamation owing to the fact that the door of Study A was suddenly flung open—to reveal a crowd of laughing juniors in the passage.

And Nipper, with his usual thoroughness, had engineered the plot—and had carried it through perfectly.

Whether Fullwood and his pals would ever profit by the lesson they had received remained to be seen—but the general opinion was that they wouldn’t.

And the general opinion proved to be right.

THE END.

SAYINGS OF THE WEEK.

“If you don’t believe me I’ll jolly well punch your head!”—E. O. HANDFORTH.

“It’s absurd to suggest I shall need a new overcoat this winter.”—DUKE OF SOMERTON.

“I haven’t had anything to eat for at least an hour!”—FATTY LITTLE.

“My pater’s practically a millionaire.”—CHAMBERS.

“Cigarettes run away with the deuce of a lot of a chap’s money.”—FULLWOOD.

“The St. Frank’s Magazine is a credit to the College.”—DR. STAFFORD.

“In Study D. two’s company, three’s—a scrap!”—ARNOLD MCCLURE.

“I am very fond of ‘listening-in.’”—TEDDY LONG.

“I really must confess the Magazine was most enjoyable.”—MR. CROWELL.

“Lessons are a frightful fag, begad!”—SIR MONTIE FREGELLIS-WEST.

“Yes, We Have No—.”—ANY JUNIOR.

“Good morning as it were, and all that sort of jolly old rot!”—ARCHIE GLENTHORNE.



E. Sopp's Fables

By
Edgar Sopp of the Fifth

No. 7.—The Fable of the Fags and the Hothouse.

IT came to pass one day that certain Youthful Citizens went forth upon a Warlike Errand. They numbered ten Strong, and consisted of Willy Handforth and his Band. And they penetrated deep into the Enemy's Country, bent upon Havoc.

The plan of campaign, as outlined by Willy, was to catch the enemy On the Hop. The enemy, let it be said, was that Great Force known throughout the land as the College House section of the Third.

And the Fossils ruthlessly invaded the territory of the Monks, and sought the foe. But, lo, the Enemy was nowhere to be found, and thereupon Willy drew his army around him and held Conclave.

And it was in the midst of this Conclave that the Enemy hove in sight. And forthwith the Battle raged. And the place was at the corner of the Triangle, with the garden of the Head in the rear.

And, behold, the Battle waxed fast and furious.

It must be recorded that Winter lay upon the earth, and much snow abounded. And the snow, in the form of balls, whizzed mightily back and forth. The warriors of the Third were using this snow, forsooth, as Ammunition.

And it came to pass that one fag, in his Excitement, gathered up a Hefty Stone in the midst of the snow, and noticed not that the snowball was Unduly Heavy. And he Let Fly, and the snowball sped forward on its Errand of Destruction.

And by great good fortune the snowball missed its Human Objective, and vanished over the hedge into the Head's garden. And there sounded upon the crisp air a splintering Crash of Glass. The battle ceased as though by Magic, and the Rival Armies gazed at one another with Full Understanding. And consternation swept through the Motley Throng.

For they did know that beyond the hedge lay the Head's conservatory. And they did know that the Head was Frightfully Strict about the conservatory. And they did know that unless they vanished Jolly Quickly they would be For It.

And, lo, the battle was abandoned, and

the warriors fled. But, alas, they were in ignorance of the Fact that the Head himself had been taking a look at the Weather through his study window. And the Head did see the destruction wrought upon his conservatory, and he did Wax Wrath.

And it must also be sadly recorded that the Head noticed the fag who had hurled the Deady Missile, and he forthwith rang his Bell, and instructed his servant to go forth and search for one Handforth minor.

And the servant went forth in obedience to his master's commands, and though he tarried long in the passages and corridors, he found not he whom he sought. So he ventured out into the wilderness and continued his search.

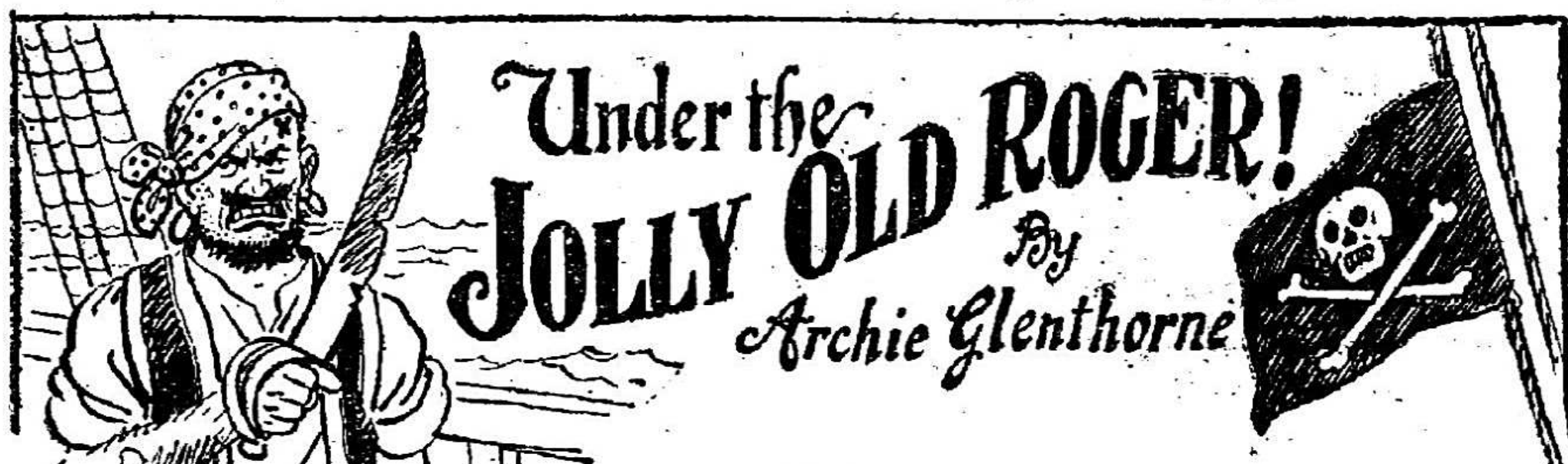
And it came to pass that Willy was Discovered lurking in the village tuck-shop—a Haven of Refuge much favoured by his Kind. Having delivered his Sinister Message, the servant departed, feeling that he had Done Well. And Willy, with misgiving in his Heart, and much pastry in his Stomach, wended his way back along the road. And as he went he turned over Many Things in his mind, wondering greatly.

His brow grew black as he progressed, for the suspicion came to him that Some Rotter had sneaked. However, there was no getting Out of It. And thus he presented himself unto the Head, his eyes full of innocence, and his face calm and placid. Not that these Outward Signs were any True Indication of his Inner Feelings.

And the Head arose from his chair, and spake, saying words of much solemnity, and issuing a warning against all Mischievous Juniors who thoughtlessly hurled snowballs in the Triangle. And Willy tarried longer in the Head's sanctum, and sounds of Great Swishing came therefrom.

And when Willy finally emerged, his face was no longer Innocent, but screwed up in Pain, and his hands were tucked beneath his arms, and he walked Strangely, as though wounded in the Rear.

MORAL: THOSE WHO LIVE NEAR GLASSHOUSES SHOULD NEVER THROW SNOWBALLS!



JACK DARING fixed his jolly old optics on the horizon.

I mean to say, he stared out to sea and all that kind of rot. Jack was second or third mate, or whatever it is on a boat—on a sailing ship, as it were.

The old chappie lived a long time ago and what not. Before they invented steam and that kind of thing. I mean he was a young chap then. But if he were alive now he'd be jolly old. Anyway, he was young Jack at the time I'm writing about, if you follow me.

He stared out to sea through his spectacles. I mean to say glasses, as it were. And the old bean saw a puff of jolly old smoke on the horizon. He whistled down the binnacle, and what not, and tooted the priceless old horn. And struck three bells on the windlass.

He was an awfully bright kind of chappie. I mean to say he did things on the hustle. Absolutely!

And in a second up rushed the captain, and all that.

"All aboard to port, old fruit," shouted Jack.

"Aye, aye, old turnip," ejaculated the captain. "What's abaft the beam?"

"Pirates!" yelled Jack. "Absolutely a whole boatload of them, as it were. Get out the jolly old cutlasses and serve all hands with grog!"

"What-ho!" gasped the captain, and dashed below like a two-year-old.

By that time the pirate boat was simply barging down on them. But Jack was a stout lad. I mean he never turned a jolly old hair. He took a sip out of his glass and held it to his eye.

And by then the pirate craft was alongside.

She was a simply stunning turn-out. I mean to say, she had jolly nutty sails and all that rot. And hefty great guns and pistols and so forth fairly bulging out of her sides. And on her flagstaff she had a skull and what not. Crossbones, as it were.

Jack gasped with surprise and all that.

But he only managed to get in one gasp. For the pirate captain and a lot of his men began to swarm on to Jack's jolly old ship.

I mean it was absolutely the limit. Here were these pirate chappies coming on board. They were awfully rough kind of johnnies. I mean to say, they had coloured handkerchiefs and all that sort of stuff tied round their heads. And they had knives and what not in their teeth.

The poor old lad simply stared with surprise!

And then the pirate captain hopped on to the deck followed by his pirate crew. They surrounded Jack Daring. He simply couldn't resist. Absolutely not!

They fired at him with revolvers and so forth! And some of them dashed at him with their knives, and all that sort of thing. Of course, the old tulip resisted, as it were. But it was no use. I mean to say, there were so many of the old beans—what?

So they took him on board the pirate craft. And then the skipper shook his finger at the old lad.

"Do you surrender your ship and all that kind of thing?" he bawled.

"Absolutely not, old egg!" gasped Jack Daring defiantly.

"Right-ho!" yelled the captain hoarsely. "Then you'll have to salute the jolly old Roger."

He pointed to a flag, or whatever it was on the mast. I mean to say, a bit of stuff, as it were, with a skull and crossbones on it, as I said before.

But Jack Daring was a fearfully stoutish kind of old lad.

"You can bury your head, captain," he hissed.

"Avast, there, and all that rot," the captain replied. "If you won't salute the jolly old Roger, then you'll have to walk along the jolly old plank."

That's what the old chappie said. I mean it wasn't right, and all that sort of stuff. But Jack Daring didn't mind. He was a chip off the old block, and so forth.

They brought forth the old plank and laid it along the deck and what not. Then the pirate captain took Jack's arm.

"Just you trickle along that, old fruit," he ejaculated.

Jack Daring was a topping kind of chap. He was as brave as a lion, as you might put it. So he began to stagger along the jolly old plank. But Jack was a clever kind of old lad in his way. Brainy and so forth, if you follow me. And he saw that if he walked along the plank he might fall over the end.

Then he would get wet, so to speak. He might be drowned, and all that.

So he took his revolver out of his pocket and fired it at the pirate captain.

"Hold up your jolly old hands!" he shouted hoarsely.

But the old lad had fired before he thought of this bright remark. I mean to say, it's dashed difficult to keep your head at that sort of time, as it were.

The pirate captain absolutely crumpled up, and Jack shot him two or three times more, if you know what I mean. Then he jumped off the jolly old plank and shot a few more of the pirate crew. Absolutely!

They were a cowardly lot, if you follow me. They threw up their hands and Jack Daring caught them. He was a priceless good catch, as it were.

"You jolly old pirates," he said breathlessly, "you're my prisoners, and so forth. March back to the ship."

He was a jolly stout lad, but he forgot they couldn't march over the sea. But they were too frightened and so forth to think about that. They staggered on to the waves, and all that kind of thing, and as they couldn't swim they were all drowned!

I mean to say, it was a jolly bright wheeze. Because Jack Daring had captured the pirate craft and what not.

The old lad produced the old bandana. That is to say he took out his hanky and began to mop his brow.

And all this time the sea had been getting rougher and rougher. Oceans of assorted roughness appeared in the offing as it were. There was a large assortment of billows and waves and all that rot. Atlantic rollers began to roll up in large quants.

Vast supplies of storm and stress began

to arrive if you follow me. The pirate craft began to rock and the poor old lad began to rock too. And then he realised the ship was going to sink. She had never been very strong, rather an invalid if I might put it so.

Things began to get a bit priceless. Whacking great rollers began to bust the



So he took his revolver out of his pocket and fired at the jolly old captain.

old boat up. Her jolly old hull fell into the sea with a crash.

And the next moment the deck house slid over the side and the binnacle hopped over the rail. It was all jolly well U.P. and all that. The ship was sinking, and his own boat was a quarter of a mile to larboard and what not.

But Jack Daring did not despair. He stood firmly on the bit of deck that was left with his feet planted squarely on the main struts and his hands clenching the back axle.

"This is utterly awful," he groaned. "There is only one thing to do, I must jump on to my own boat as we sink. Absolutely!"

With a thud the old boat sank and Jack leapt into the air. He went through it cleanly and landed lightly on the deck of his own ship!

And later on the captain made him head steward or what not for his bravery.

So the old lad did jolly well. Absolutely!

THE END.

What it Feels Like to be a Millionaire!

Cuthbert Chambers, of the Fifth, airs his views!

Related by WALTER CHURCH

EVERYBODY knows what a terrific swanker Chambers of the Fifth is, and consequently nobody at St. Frank's was exactly surprised to see him strutting about with his usual air of self-importance the other afternoon.

Several of the Remove fellows noticed him trying to interest Phillips and Bryant, and a few other Fifth Formers, in something or other—but they would have none of it, and left him after a few moments talking to the thin air.

Handforth grinned.

"Serves the fathead right!" he declared. "Chambers is getting too big for his blessed boots, and he'll come a cropper one of these days! Look at him now—proud as a pig with two giddy tails!"

McClure nodded.

"There seems to be something queer about Chambers," he observed. "We all know that he's a bad sufferer from swelled head—but he looks unusually inflated to-day!"

Handforth snorted disgustedly.

"I expect he's just received a big tip from his pater, and thinks he owns the blessed earth!" he exclaimed. "I'm fed-

up with him and his bounce! Hi! Chambers!" he bawled suddenly. "What's up with you? Suddenly come into a million, or what?"

The Fifth Former condescended to turn round, nod genially, and stroll towards us. He was looking extremely pleased with himself, but there was a certain "something" about him which was distinctly different from usual.

"Exactly!" he replied coolly.

"You've hit the nail on the head first time, Handy!"

"What?" asked

Handforth, staring. "Hit the nail on the head?"

"Precisely!"

"What are you talking about, you ass?" said Handforth, with a snort. "Do you mean to say you've come into a million?"

Chambers nodded.

"Two million, to be exact!" he replied.

Handforth nearly reeled into McClure's arms with surprise, but recovered himself on the instant. Then he slowly began to pull up his sleeves, eyeing Chambers murderously as he did so.

"By George!" he yelled. "I'll teach this fathead to pull my leg! Fancy trying to stuff us up with the yarn that he's a giddy millionaire! I'll jolly well smash him into pulp—"

"You cheeky young sweep!" said Chambers, glaring. "What I have told you happens to be true! The last post brought me the news that I'm the owner of a cool two million! I'd no idea that it felt so stunning to be a millionaire before, and I've made up my mind to have no end of a time! Just think what I can buy with a pot of money like that!"

(Continued on page iii of Cover.)



Teddy Long pushed his way through the crowd, and it was noticeable that he had a knowing grin on his features,



PAINFUL PARODIES

PERPETRATED
By
Clarence Fellowe.

THE WRECK OF THE REST-OF-US.

Remove against the Rest-of-us,
That was the match that day,
For the skipper felt that he oughter
Find out our form at play.

Blue was the sky as we took the field,
And hopeful did we feel;
For we meant to give the First Team
socks—
Perchance a victory steal.

The skipper he stood beside the Pav.,
A lemon to his mouth,
And watched how the veering wind did
blow
The flags now west, now south.

Then up and spake an old player,
Who'd scored a hundred goals:
"We'll have to play for all we're worth,
With all our hearts and souls.

"Last night these chaps were practising
hard,
And to-day their form we'll see."
The skipper he blew a pip from his
mouth,
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

And then the game began at once,
The Rest-of-us were grim.
But the skipper's men were all over
us,
And our hearts grew faint and dim.

Down came the ball and smote against
The goalie, full of strength;
He shudder'd and paused, like a pole-
axed bull,
Then slithered down full length.

And as he lay there in the mud
Up dashed a forward fierce
And slammed the leather into the goal—
In fact, the net did pierce.

"Oh, goodness, I hear a buzzing sound.
Oh, say, what may it be?"
The goalie sat up in a dazed condish,
and a mournful groan groaned he.

We yanked him up and sponged him,
And then the game went on:
But though we tried to score, we failed,
And soon our hopes were gone.

Half-time arrived to find us down
Full five goals of the best.
What need for me to tell you more?
What need to write the rest?

Such was the wreck of the Rest-of-us
On that day, cold and sad.
But the skipper had learned the awful
truth—
Our form was worse than bad!

(Continued from page 11.)

Several other Removites had by this time crowded round, and Chambers swelled up more than ever—evidently enjoying the sensation he had caused. He was the centre of attention in an instant, and the juniors yelled excitedly.

"Yah! Swank!"

"Chamber's bluff!"

The Fifth Former looked round on the seething crowd calmly, and held his head up high.

"All right!" he said, with a shrug of the shoulders. "If you don't like to believe it, that's your affair! I didn't expect you to! The amount is so colossal that I can scarcely realise it myself! Two million is a figure which fairly makes a chap's head reel—and its buying power is enough to make a fellow collapse with dizziness! I can tell you, it's absolutely great to feel that you're a millionaire twice over!"

His words were greeted with more yells of derision, and it was clear that very few of his hearers were taking him seriously, or believing in his good fortune. But his statements were confirmed in a striking manner almost at once.

For at this moment Teddy Long pushed his way through the crowd, and it was noticeable that he had a knowing grin on his features. He glanced at Chambers coolly, and then faced the crowd.

"What Chambers said is true!" he announced. "He's a millionaire right enough—I saw him open the letter which told him the news!"

"Great pip!" gasped Handforth.

"Impossible!" said Hubbard, with a sniff. "You can't tell me that Chambers is worth two giddy million—"

"Yes he is!" cut in Long, grinning hugely. "But he didn't tell you everything! As a matter of fact, he's worth exactly a tanner—for the money he received was a couple of German billion-mark notes! You can buy 'em on the London street at threepence each!"

Five minutes later the great Chambers crawled away looking a sorry spectacle—having received the "bumping" of his life in return for spoofing the juniors.

There's no doubt that he knows exactly what it feels like to be a millionaire!

THE END.

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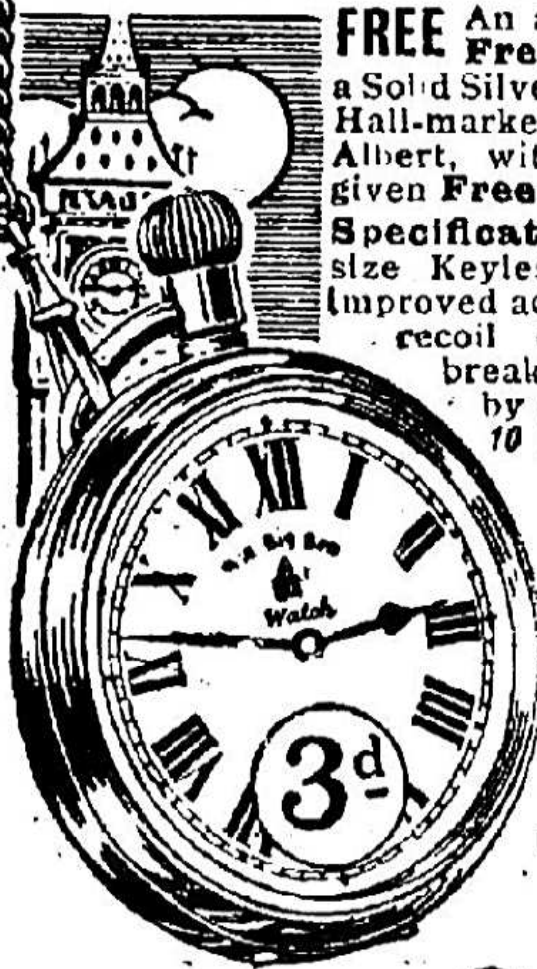
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Printed and Published every Wednesday by the Proprietors, the Amalgamated Press (1922), Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4. Advertisement Offices, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4. Subscription Rates: Inland and Abroad, 11/- annum; 5/6 for six months. Sole Agents for South Africa: The Central News Agency, Ltd. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Limited; and for Canada: The Imperial News Co. (Canada), Limited.