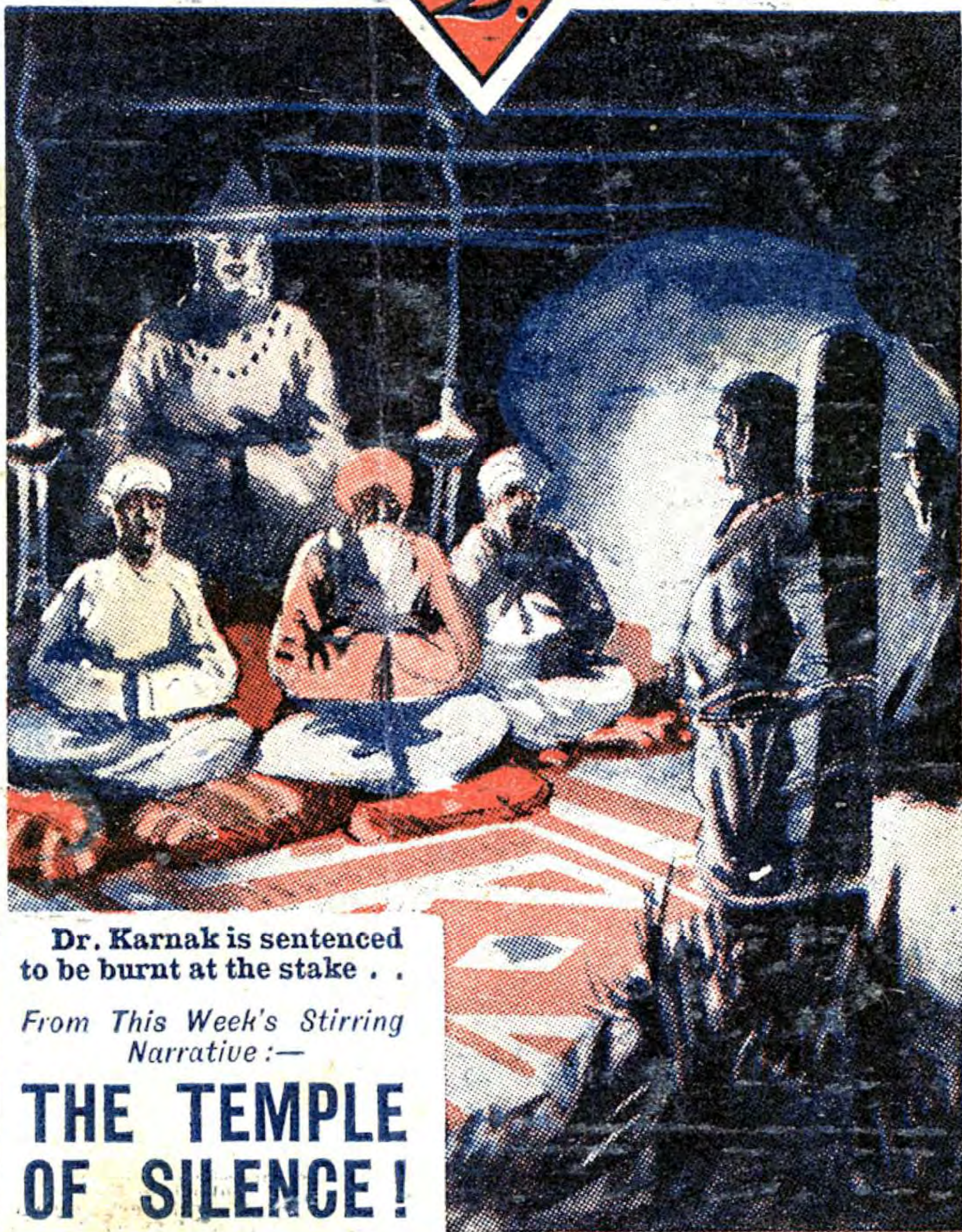


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Dr. Karnak is sentenced
to be burnt at the stake . .

*From This Week's Stirring
Narrative :—*

THE TEMPLE OF SILENCE!



Dr. Karnak gave a hoarse, choking cry. The rope was round his neck and it had been pulled taut almost to the point of strangling him.



THE TEMPLE of SILENCE!

The evil influence of Dr. Karnak upon a band of credulous juniors, headed by De Valerie, who styled themselves the Sorcerers' Club, was brought to an inglorious end last week by the prompt action of Nelson Lee. The Egyptian retaliated by a dastardly attempt on the life of the detective. This, happily, failed at the crucial moment, and Nelson Lee is now keeping a

sharp eye on Dr. Karnak. Lurking in the neighbourhood of St. Frank's are a number of Egyptians belonging to a sect of which Dr. Karnak was once an adherent, and for some reason they are lying in wait watching for an opportunity to capture their former associate. This they nearly succeed in doing, and the subsequent investigation leading to the discovery of the mysterious rites of the Temple of Silence is described in this week's absorbing story.

THE EDITOR.

The Narrative Related Throughout by Nipper

CHAPTER I.

THE FUMES OF INCENSE.

"MARVELLOUS!" repeated Walter Church.

"In fact, not only marvellous, but absolutely sensational!" said Handforth carelessly. "I'm not boasting, of course, but I can tell you plainly that this invention of mine is revolutionary."

He gazed at his chums with an air of importance. But rather to his disappointment, Church and McClure looked entirely unimpressed. They did not share their leader's enthusiasm in the least.

"And what is it?" asked McClure, as though he had been asked a riddle.

"It's a secret," replied Edward Oswald Handforth mysteriously. "A dead secret, my lad. Why, if a word of this was breathed abroad, England's enemies would steal the invention like a shot."

"England's enemies?" said Church. "She hasn't got any, has she? We're at peace, you ass! And why can't you tell us what the invention is? A machine-gun, I

suppose?" he asked, with a touch of sarcasm.

Handforth sniffed.

"Fathead!" he mocked. "Any duffer can invent a machine-gun! This aeroplane of mine is the most amazing creation of the century. It embodies an entirely new principle and will revolutionise the whole science of flying. And we're going to test it this afternoon."

Church and McClure exchanged sympathetic glances.

"Oh, so it's an aeroplane?" said McClure wearily.

Handforth started.

"Who told you?" he demanded fiercely. "By George! Somebody's been spying! You rotter! You've been following me about and seeing me at work in the old barn. If you've told anybody else I'll slaughter you!"

McClure grinned.

"Go easy, old man," he said. "I haven't been spying. You let the cat out of the bag yourself, not a minute ago. Didn't

you say that your invention will revolutionise flying?"

"Great pip; did I?" gasped Handforth. "That only shows how careful you've got to be. Well, I've told you, so now you know. Yes, this invention is an aeroplane. It's a marvellous machine, and it'll fly at a thousand miles an hour."

"Wonderful!" said Church, yawning.

"Staggering!" said McClure absently.

Handforth glared at his chums in surprise and indignation. Their total lack of enthusiasm was painful.

"Don't you realise what I'm saying?" he asked hotly.

"Oh, something about an aeroplane, wasn't it?" asked Church. "Never mind that now. There's a First Eleven match this afternoon—"

"Blow the First Eleven match!" roared Handforth. "My goodness! All you can do is to think about football—football! And this terrific invention is destined to—to—"

"Revolutionise flying," said McClure mechanically.

The three juniors were in Study D, in the Ancient House of St. Frank's. It wasn't dinner-time yet, and it was a half-holiday. Handforth had dragged his chums into the privacy of the study, in order to let them into the great and momentous secret.

And their weary indifference was rather a blow to him. For days he had been picturing this scene. He had visualised how Church and McClure would start back in staggered amazement when he made his announcement. But the reality was vastly different from the imaginary. For Church and McClure looked about as bored as two healthy youngsters could look.

For nearly a week Handforth had been mysterious. This was nothing new. At periodic intervals he would have one of these spells, and his study-mates had grown to look out for them. At first they had been a little curious, certainly, and they had even asked him questions.

But he had waved them aside, declaring that the matter was too important for them to know. Daily he had vanished for an hour or two, fondly imagining that his chums had no inkling as to his movements. But they had been aware from the first that Handforth had been doing something secretive in the old barn—that deserted building which was known to the juniors as Fort Resolute.

And now the great secret was out.

"So you've been building this aeroplane on the quiet?" asked Church. "Good for you, old man. And are you going to fly it this afternoon?"

"Yes."

"At a thousand miles an hour?" asked McClure politely. "Somehow I don't feel much like flying to-day; I don't think I'll go up as a passenger. Now Church is rather keen on flying—"

"I hate it!" interrupted Church hastily.

"You—you pitiful fatheads!" said Handforth with withering scorn. "What's the idea of talking about going for a flight? This machine of mine is only a model."

"Oh!" said McClure. "Only a model!"

"You—you exasperating chump!" hooted Handforth. "How do you suppose I could have made a full-sized machine in a week!"

McClure shrugged his shoulders.

"My dear chap, you mustn't blame us for thinking things like this," he said. "We know you're so wonderful, that we naturally expected something extraordinary. For days we've been waiting for a staggering shock. But if it's only a model, it doesn't seem much good testing it."

Handforth breathed hard. But he was mollified. The boredom of his chums was apparently due to the fact that they had expected something bigger of him—and this, after all, was by way of being a compliment. The mighty Handforth had no suspicion that his leg was being gently pulled.

"Well, under the circumstances I'll forgive you," he said kindly. "But you're wrong about the model. To-day's test will be historical. I've worked out all my theories, and it's impossible for the machine to fail. The test is really a mere matter of form, and I shall require you to come as witnesses. After that, I'm going to take my invention to the Home Secretary and offer it to him for five hundred quid."

Church looked startled.

"Five hundred quid!" he echoed. "You idiot!"

"It's not too much to ask, is it?" asked Handforth anxiously.

"Too much!" said Church. "My dear chap, you'd simply be giving it away. The price of a revolutionary aeroplane is more like five thousand quid. And if it's positively successful, you might make a cool million. There's never any telling with these great inventions."

Handforth became rather excited.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I didn't want to be too greedy," he said. "Still, after what you've said, perhaps I'd better ask for a hundred thousand down, and the rest by instalments."

McClure looked rather puzzled.

"But you'll get into trouble," he objected. "If you've really got a revolutionary aeroplane the Government would drop on you. They don't believe in these revolutionaries, you know."

"You dense ass!" snapped Handforth. "It's revolutionary in the sense that it's going to absolutely knock every existing aeroplane into the dust-heap. This machine of mine is the wonder of the age."

"I think you ought to go to the War Office, not the Home Secretary," said Church thoughtfully. "The Home Secretary doesn't deal with things like that. Still, it doesn't matter," he added briskly. "There goes the dinner-bell."

And the chums of Study D went into

the big dining-hall. Church and McClure were only too pleased to escape. But they were beginning to look upon the afternoon's prospects with rather more interest. They were becoming quite anxious to see this remarkable production of Handforth's genius.

Edward Oswald did not keep them waiting long. As soon as dinner was over he rushed them out to the old barn, saying that it would be better to get off before the crowd came out.

Reaching the barn, they went up the perpendicular ladder and so through into loft. One corner of this place was cut off by means of some ancient sacking, which was hanging on a line. Handforth swung the sacking back, and there was something proud and dignified in his action.

"Take a look at it," he said carelessly. Church and McClure looked.

"There's no model aeroplane here," said Church, staring. "Just a heap of old bits of wood and varnished linen. My hat! Somebody must have come along and stolen the great invention."

"German spies!" said McClure hoarsely. Handforth nearly choked.

"You—you blithering asses!" he howled. "There's the aeroplane! You're looking at it all the time!"

"That!" gasped McClure, reeling.

He and Church stared at the object which they had mistaken for a pile of wreckage. And now that they came to look at it closely, they could see that it bore some slight resemblance to an aeroplane.

The wings were made of bits of cane and bamboo, with oiled silk, or some such material, stretched tightly over the rude framework. There was a kind of body, and some drunken looking skids underneath. And a vast quantity of elastic was festooned all round the thing.

"Sorry!" exclaimed Church. "So this is it? Fine—wonderful! By jingo, it's an absolute triumph!"

McClure added further words of praise, and between the pair of them they managed to make Handforth forget their earlier remarks—for which they could hardly be blamed. They had been looking for something rather better.

"Now we're going to smuggle the thing out," said Handforth. "Mustn't let anybody see it—too risky. We can nip down by the river, then across the fields until we come to the moor. That's where we're going to test it."

"But can't we test it here?"

"Of course not—must have a big space," said Handforth. "I've got all the controls fixed so that it will shoot off for ten miles, climbing to ten thousand feet on the way. Then it will turn round and come back."

Church and McClure had nothing to say to this remarkable programme. They resigned themselves to the inevitable, and helped their chief to convey the invention down. This having been accomplished successfully, they set off to the moor.

The model was a big one, and was rather awkward to carry. However, the juniors managed it without a great deal of trouble. Church and McClure were uncommunicative—being, in fact, inwardly sorry for their leader.

His optimism was startling. He really believed that this thing would fly for ten miles, and do all the other astonishing feats that he had planned out in theory. And Church and McClure, realising that an awakening was to come, refrained from making any prophecies.

"Of course this is only a rough model," remarked Handforth, probably feeling that some sort of explanation was necessary. "It doesn't look much, I'll admit; but appearances are of no importance in these things. As you'll see, the design is absolutely novel and original."

"We can see that," said Church promptly. "I'll bet it's the only aeroplane like it in the whole world."

Handforth failed to observe that this remark was tinged with sarcasm. And in due course the trio arrived on the wide, open moor. There was very little wind, and the conditions were perfect for the test.

"Now you chaps hold her, while I twist the elastic," said Handforth. "Of course, in my next model I shall have a proper engine—this is only an experimental machine. But the wings are designed in such a way that they've got a terrific lift, and the steering is automatic."

"Jolly good!" said McClure, with feigned enthusiasm.

The machine was fitted with one propellor—the only thing that had not been made by Handforth personally. It was a good one, and of huge size. Handforth proceeded to wind it up with great care. It took about ten minutes. By the end of this time the elastic was so tightly stretched that the whole machine was in danger of twisting itself into knots, and it was only by a miracle that it didn't collapse.

"Now!" roared Handforth triumphantly.

He released the propellor, and it roared with a terrific swishing whirl. The model was given a heave forward, and it fairly shot into the air like a projectile. With a giddy, lunging swerve it shot towards the ground, heavily banked. Church and McClure began to grin, and Handforth gasped with dismay.

But then happily a puff of wind came along, and the expected disaster was averted. Even on the point of crashing, the machine suddenly soared upwards with a graceful movement and swung round at tremendous speed.

"Good!" shouted Handforth. "Now she's off!"

"Well I'm jiggered!" muttered Church. "It's really flying!"

But their remarks were rather premature. Just as the model got over their heads the elastic gave out, having failed to carry the machine twenty miles, as Handforth had

optimistically expected. And the machine gave a lurch, sagged like a wounded bird, and then came hurtling down out of all control.

"Look out!" yelled Church.

He and McClure rushed away, but Handforth stood there, transfixed with amazement and dismay. And his wonderful model crashed with devastating effect on the top of its designer.

Handforth sat down with a thud, and he presented a somewhat ludicrous spectacle with the remains of his aeroplane round his neck. Other pieces were strewn around him. Church and McClure simply couldn't help grinning.

"Marvellous!" said Church. "How on earth did you arrange it so beautifully, old man? I suppose the next flight will be to Brighton and back? Or why not cross the Channel—"

"Wrecked!" said Handforth in a hollow voice. "Something must have gone wrong! I expect the rudder was jammed. And just as I had everything so perfect, too. All my work for nothing!"

There was such a tragic note in his voice that his chums lost their grins. They could hardly help sympathising with their leader, his distress was so genuine. But even now Handforth wouldn't admit that there had been anything wrong with the design of the aeroplane.

He disentangled himself from the remains, and was quite unhurt. And a glance was sufficient to convince him that salvage was impossible. He faced the situation bravely.

"This is the kind of thing that all pioneers have to contend with," he said in a firm voice. "But I'm not discouraged. I'm more convinced than ever that my design is absolutely unique."

"Unique?" repeated Church. "It's revolutionary."

Handforth gave Church a suspicious glance, but the crisis passed, for McClure came to the rescue at once.

"Never mind," he said cheerfully. "Better luck next time, old man. And now it wouldn't be a bad idea if we toddled back. We're having Irene & Co. to tea, you know, and there's a good deal of preparation work."

Handforth lost his gloomy look.

"Yes, by George!" he said. "The girls are coming to tea, eh? What's the time? We shall have to rush back—"

"Plenty of time yet," put in McClure. "Why not go back through the tunnel? You know, down in the old quarry, and through the deserted workings, and then up into the monastery ruins. We haven't been that way for months."

"Oh, bother the tunnel!" growled Church. "There may be tramps in there. Somebody saw a mysterious figure lurking down near the old workings last week. For all we know, there may be some crooks down there."

This was a most unfortunate remark to make in Handforth's hearing. He pricked up his ears, so to speak, and his expression became tense. His great disappointment at the failure of his aeroplane was forgotten.

"Mysterious figures, eh?" he said grimly. "By George, you're right, old man! There must be a gang of crooks at work in those old tunnels. Coiners, I expect, or counterfeiters of currency notes. We'll go down and investigate."

Nothing would shake Handforth from his purpose. He probably felt keenly disappointed over the failure of his "invention," and he turned to this proposed investigation as a means of distraction. Church and McClure were not particularly upset, because by returning to St. Frank's via the old tunnel, they would only waste a very little time.

Having reached the quarry, they made their way to a spot where they could descend with ease. It was very lonely and desolate. There was something rather mournful about this weed-grown waste, which had once been a scene of great activity. But for many years the quarry had been abandoned, and it was just like a wound on the face of the moor, melancholy and dreary.

Nobody knew how many deserted shafts there were, or how many tunnels penetrated into the bowels of the earth. Even the St. Frank's fellows, keen explorers by the very nature of their youth, had not probed the full intricacies of the ancient workings.

But there were one or two tunnels that were well known—that were, in fact, almost recognised short cuts. And one of these was the tunnel which led from the north-east corner of the quarry, far underground, and direct into the ancient vaults beneath the monastery ruins.

Handforth & Co. plunged into the tunnel without waste of time. And they had only just got inside when Handforth came to a sudden halt.

"My hat!" he said. "We haven't got any lights!"

Church and McClure had thought of this, but they had refrained from saying anything. It was just as well to let Handforth find these things out for himself.

"You're a fine pair!" he said witheringly. "Why didn't you put some candles in your pockets—and matches?"

"Steady, old man!" protested Church. "We didn't know we were going to explore these tunnels, did we? Best thing we can do is to go out again, and—"

"Not likely!" interrupted Handforth. "We can feel our way— Wait a minute!" he added abruptly. "What about that torch of yours, Church?"

"Torch?" repeated Church innocently.

"Yes, you ass! Didn't you show it to me this morning?"

"By jingo, yes!" said Church, with a note of surprise. "Fancy you remembering that, Handy! I believe I've got it on me."

With a sigh of resignation, he produced a small electric torch, and switched it on. As a matter of fact, he had been hoping that Handforth wouldn't remember, for Church was not exactly bursting with anxiety to explore these gloomy tunnels. But for once Handforth's memory had served him well.

"Come on, you fathead—hand over that torch!" he said briskly.

Church handed it over. He couldn't grumble very much, because it had been McClure's suggestion that they should go home through the tunnel. And, after all, they'd arrive back in almost the same time.

The bright beam of light shot out, and

a dark, narrow opening which led away into the mysterious recesses of this catacomb. And Handforth sniffed the air sharply.

"Jolly queer," he murmured. "Can't you smell something?"

"Yes—scent," said Church. "A kind of Oriental niff."

"It's more like incense fumes," whispered McClure. "But that's rot! How could there be fumes of incense down here?"

But as the juniors stood there, sniffing, a much more powerful waft of the pungent odour came to their nostrils. And, without any question, that scent was caused by the burning of incense.

What could it mean?



He held the lamp high, and the light from it fell upon four figures in flowing Eastern robes.

Handforth flashed it up and down, and peered forward like a sleuth on the trail. Even when there wasn't any trail to follow, Handforth liked to pretend there was.

"Forgers!" he murmured keenly. "Either forgers or coiners, I'll bet! Now, I'll lead the way, and you chaps can follow. And don't make a sound."

They proceeded along the old working with caution. It was quite a wide tunnel, with rough wooden supports here and there, some of them being partially tumbled down. But the tunnel itself was perfectly safe, and the air was pure.

They had progressed a considerable distance when Handforth pulled himself up and flashed his light down a cross tunnel—

CHAPTER II.

AFTER LIGHTS-OUT.



HANDFORTH was anxious to go exploring straight away, but Church and McClure detained him, and finally succeeded in dissuading him from his purpose.

"We've got to remember the girls," said Church. "They're coming to tea, you know, and it would be rotten form on our part if we kept them waiting. We might easily get lost, you know, in these rummy old tunnels."

"But I want to find out the reason for

this incense," argued Handforth. "I've never heard of coiners using stuff of that sort, but there's no telling. Perhaps we'd better leave it until after tea," he went on thoughtfully. "I'll admit that it would be pretty ghastly if we kept Miss Irene waiting."

"Too awful for words," said McClure. "She'd never speak to us again."

And they walked on down the tunnel—Handforth, to their relief, accompanying them. But he had badly wanted to explore that branch gallery. It was only the thought of Irene Manners that made him abandon the project. If his own father had been coming to tea, he would have

down into the tunnel, exploring, after tea. We'll take two or three torches, too."

"Better not bother about it," said Church.

"Rot! There's something queer about that incense," said Handforth grimly. "Why should incense be burning down in those deserted old workings? That's what we're going to find out."

"Is it a secret, or can I have a look in?" I asked interestedly.

Handforth & Co. turned and regarded me as I stood in the doorway. I had had no intention of eavesdropping, and had overheard the words by sheer accident. But Handforth glared at me aggressively.

"I say, that's a bit thick!" he said

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neglected him without compunction. But Irene was different.

The three juniors reached the old vault without any further incident. That smell of the incense only came from the one point. There was no recurrence in any other part of the tunnel. But the juniors did not forget the matter. It had puzzled them exceedingly.

They were even talking about it as they went into the cloak-room to hang up their overcoats.

"Of course, we had to get back," said Handforth. "We've only got an hour to prepare for tea, as it is. And we can go

warmly. "Standing there, listening. I didn't think you were that kind of chap, Nipper."

"Draw it mild, my son," I objected. "How was I to know the matter was private? I can't help it if you discuss confidential matters in public places. And I asked if it was a secret, didn't I?"

Handforth was somewhat softened.

"Oh, well, I don't suppose it matters," he said. "So I'll let you off."

"Thanks," I said gratefully.

"Look here, Handy, Nipper heard what you were saying about the deserted workings and the incense, so we might as well

tell him the rest," said Church. "Perhaps he'll be able to suggest something."

And before Handforth could stop him, Church had related to me the event that had recently taken place. He probably thought that I should put my foot down on all suggestion of going exploring after tea. But I listened to the story with rapidly growing interest.

"Incense, eh?" I said thoughtfully. "Coming from one of those old disused tunnels? There's something a bit fishy about that, my sons. Don't get talking to the other fellows—be cautious. And, later on, we'll get up a little exploring party."

Church looked at me rather blankly.

"You mean it?" he asked, staring.

"Yes; but we don't want to talk about it here," I said. "Can you fellows come to my study after prep? Good! Then keep mum until then. Somebody coming now, and we don't want everybody to know."

I walked out, and Handforth & Co. soon followed, and made their way to Study D. And in the bustle of their preparations for the visitors, they had no time to think of that other matter.

Irene Manners and Marjorie Temple and Doris Berkeley all came—a very special occasion indeed. And Study D was looking far cleaner than it had looked for months. There were even flowers, and a pair of clean curtains, a tablecloth that gleamed spotlessly—borrowed, of course, from Mrs. Poulter for the occasion—and all manner of crockery and silverware. This latter had been collected together from almost every study along the passage. Handforth had only accepted the very best out of all that was offered.

Quite a large proportion of the stuff was Archie Glenthorne's—this genial youth having lent it without demur. He felt that it would be quite safe, seeing that Irene & Co. would be present. Handforth wasn't likely to start any of his punching tactics on such an occasion.

The tea, it may mentioned at once, was a huge success, and it wasn't really over until almost seven o'clock. And then the three fair visitors were obliged to hasten away, in order to be back at the Moor View School in time for calling-over. Needless to say, Handforth & Co. had received their Housemaster's consent before inviting the young ladies.

It was mere politeness, of course, to escort Irene & Co. home. And then it meant a dash back to the school, a rushed hour at prep, and then it was just upon supper-time. The evening had been quite crammed, and until now Handforth hadn't had any time to think about his other plans.

But as he pushed his books aside, he started.

"I say, what about that appointment?" he asked blankly.

"Appointment?" said McClure.

"Yes, you know—in Study C," said

Handforth. "My only hat! We were going to explore that tunnel this evening. And now it's practically supper-time, and we shan't be able to do it."

Church grinned.

"Well, that's one good thing, anyway," he said. "Personally, I don't believe in this exploring business," he yawned. "I shall be ready for bed soon, anyhow."

"If you think I'm going to chuck it up you've made a bloomer," said Handforth grimly, as he rose to his feet. "Come on, we'll go next door and see what Nipper has to say. I don't altogether approve of the fathead being in the affair at all, but it's too late to argue now. Just like you chaps to give the show away. Nipper's too fond of shoving forward."

Handforth left the study, and Church and McClure followed. A moment later they presented themselves next door. I was standing in front of the fire, chatting with Reginald Pitt and Tommy Watson. Tregellis-West was deeply immersed in Mah-Jong with the chums of Study M.

"Just talking about you," I said, as our visitors came in. "This is a nice time to present yourselves."

"Couldn't help it," said Church. "We've been rushed all the time."

"This is what comes of having fair young damsels to tea!" said Pitt severely. "I don't know what things are coming to nowadays. You needn't look so mysterious, Handy—we all know about that incense."

"Oh, you do?" said Handforth. "The whole school knows, it seems."

"Only these two fellows," I replied. "I thought it better to tell them, because we shall need a fairly large party. There's strength in numbers, don't forget, and there may be some scrapping."

"Good!" said Handforth eagerly. "But there isn't time—"

"Not now," I interrupted. "We'll go after lights-out."

Handforth was as keen as mustard on the spot. Church and McClure did not look quite so enthusiastic. In fact, they couldn't understand why I had countenanced the project.

But there was more in it than they knew of.

Immediately upon hearing of that mysterious incense, I had connected it with Dr. Karnak and his unknown enemies. The Egyptian science master had been quite subdued during the past few days, and there had been no more of his alleged sorcery.

Since Cecil De Valerie had had that terrible attack of brain fever, things had been quiet at St. Frank's. De Valerie was gone now, however, and we should not see him back in the Remove until the next term. His dramatic collapse had been undoubtedly due to Dr. Karnak's influence.

Nelson Lee had taken no action in the matter because of various reasons. In the first place, he wanted no inquiry at the

moment. For the unfortunate De Valerie had collapsed when he had been at the point of plunging a poisoned needle into Lee's neck. The junior had been entirely under Dr. Karnak's hypnotic power at the moment, but he had succeeded in breaking the spell at the fatal moment.

The gov'nor knew, therefore, that Dr. Karnak had deliberately attempted to murder him. For the Egyptian had grown to hate Nelson Lee with a fierce, burning fury. Even now, although Dr. Karnak kept himself well in hand, that hatred was none the less intense.

De Valerie's grave illness had come as a shock to the science master, and it had served to subdue him somewhat. But he never went out during the hours of moonlight, proving that his fear for his mysterious enemies was just as acute as ever.

And upon hearing Handforth's story of the incense, it struck me at once that here there was a direct clue to the mystery. These lurking strangers were hiding themselves down in the old quarry workings!

It would be rather good if we could find out something definite, and then lay the information before Nelson Lee, so that he could take drastic action. For I was keen to see the back of Dr. Karnak. The gov'nor didn't want to move until he had positive proof.

"We'll go exploring after lights-out?" repeated Handforth. "Good egg! I must say, Nipper, that you've got more sense than I gave you credit for. I was going to suggest the same thing, only I thought you'd jib."

"You'll never find me jibbing when there's something important to be done," I replied. "Look here, my sons. You know as well as I do that Dr. Karnak is scared out of his wits of the moonlight. He's afraid to go out because he's a fugitive from an Egyptian secret society. That's the theory, anyhow. These rummy people worship Baal, the moon god, and they can only nab their enemies when the moon's shining. If we can positively prove that these people are hiding in the tunnels, we might have a story for the police."

"The police!" said Tommy Watson startled.

"Yes," I declared. "The smooth-tongued Dr. Karnak may be an eminent scholar, but he's several kinds of a rascal, too. But we won't discuss that now. I'm fed up with the inactivity, and regard this opportunity with quite a large amount of keenness."

"Don't forget that I made the discovery," said Handforth.

"You needn't worry—I shan't be allowed to forget it," I chuckled. "At least, not while you're alive, old man. The matter is so important that I think we shall be justified in breaking bounds after lights-out."

"It's a pretty serious step," said Church doubtfully.

"A fellow never gets far in this world unless he takes a chance now and again," I replied. "And it isn't as though we planned to break bounds for some evil purpose. It's all in the interests of the school. Even if we're spotted, we shall only get a formal punishment. But enough of this jaw. Let's settle upon our plan of action."

"That's the idea!" said Handforth. "We'll concentrate."

He put his hands behind his back, sunk his head on his chest, and paced slowly up and down the study.

"Don't disturb him," said Pitt. "He thinks he's Felix, the Cat."

"Ha ha, ha!"

"Eh?" said Handforth, with a start. "What do you mean—Felix, the Cat? I'm thinking; I'm concentrating."

"Well, Felix marches up and down like that if he has a problem to think out," grinned Pitt. "Personally, I don't think there's any need for you to strain your massive brain, old son. Nipper is the leader of this party, and he'll do all the thinking."

"Oh!" said Handforth grimly. "So that's it, eh? Nipper's the leader? What about me? Didn't I make the discovery—?"

"Oh, for goodness' sake let's finish with arguments!" I broke in. "Gentlemen, allow me to make it quite clear that Handforth is the leader of this expedition. But I trust I shall be allowed to serve in the capacity of a faithful lieutenant."

Handforth beamed.

"Good!" he said. "Now that's the kind of spirit I like. Lieutenant! Why, of course! In fact, I'll make you my general."

The point was settled with honour, and Handforth basked in the delusion that he was to lead the party. But as he would be kept strictly in check it didn't matter very much what he thought.

He went to bed at the usual time, and I particularly warned Handforth against making any veiled or mysterious remarks. It was one of Handforth's little habits to give secrets away, sublimely unconscious of the fact that he was doing so.

But this matter was of such importance that for once he kept himself in check, and the Remove went to sleep without anybody guessing what was in the wind.

But at eleven o'clock, as the chimes were booming out, I slipped out of bed and looked up and down at the rows of silent beds.

"Hist!" I breathed. "Time, you chaps!" Reggie Pitt sat up, alert.

"I'm ready," he said. "Haven't been asleep, in fact."

Handforth was awake, too, although somewhat sleepy and heavy. He had just dozed now and again but was soon alert. The other members of the party had gone off into sound slumber. For a moment I wondered whether it wouldn't be better to leave them sleeping. But I concluded, after a brief consultation, that six of us would

be none too many. In case of trouble, we wanted a decent force.

So Watson and Church and McClure were awakened without compunction. And exactly ten minutes later we all crept down like shadows and emerged into the dark coldness of the Triangle.

We were well armed, for before going to bed we had prepared a number of heavy club-like sticks, in case of emergencies. And we had four electric-torches between us, to say nothing of a supply of matches and candles, in case the electric batteries ran out, which was most unlikely.

It did not take us long to descend the crumbling circular staircase which led from the picturesque old ruins down into the monastery vault. This latter place was somewhat eerie and creepy at such an hour, more particularly as there had been uncanny events during the past few weeks.

The vaults, cold and damp, with their low-arched roofs and mouldering walls, struck a chill into us as we entered. But this sensation of weirdness was largely to do with our own imagination. We knew that the hour was approaching midnight, and so we felt that a ghostly atmosphere was abroad. If the hour had been midday, our feelings would have been quite different. Yet this vault, far underground, was exactly the same. It only shows to what length the imagination can go.

But I did not give the others time to get really scared, even if they were inclined to show signs of it. I led the way straight into the wide, well-preserved tunnel which led in the direction of the old quarry.

But Handforth now went in advance; he had taken the lead. And he had dropped a great deal of his usual exaggerated air of importance. In fact, he realised that this affair was no mere jape, but a serious investigation.

We heard no sounds but those we made ourselves. We saw nothing of a suspicious nature. And at last we arrived at the side gallery where Handforth & Co. had detected the scent of burning incense.

"This is the spot," breathed Handforth, sniffing. "By George! Yes, I can smell it now! Can't you?"

There was no imagination about it. The aromatic, pungent fumes were coming from the small tunnel so clearly that our nostrils were assailed by the semi-sickly odour.

"We've got to go more cautiously than ever now," I whispered. "We've come here to spot things, not to get ourselves into trouble. So even if we see any of these mysterious chaps we must hold back. Handy and I will go first."

The rest offered no objection, and in pairs we cautiously padded our way down that narrow working. But after we had progressed twenty or thirty yards we found that the tunnel divided itself into two, branching off evenly in a narrow fork. Both the new tunnels were of the same size and appearance.

I inspected the ground with care, but it was so dry and hard that there was no indication of footprints. I could not determine which tunnel had been recently used. And we all paused, irresolute.

"Better break up into two parties," suggested Handforth. "I'll go with Church and McClure along this left tunnel, and you three fellows take the other one. We'll scout round and then come back to this point and report."

I didn't quite like this arrangement, but there was no help for it. Handforth was set on the scheme, and when I objected he commenced arguing. And there was risk of him raising his voice.

And so at length the scheme had to be adopted. Handforth & Co. went one way, and Reggie and Tommy and I went the other. And we had agreed that we should all return to the fork at the end of half an hour, or before.

"I wouldn't mind so much, only Handy is such a reckless beggar," I whispered, after the chums of Study D had vanished. "There's no telling what he'll be up to. Still, it can't be helped. Come on!"

We plunged into the other tunnel, and at intervals I extinguished my electric-torch, leaving us in utter darkness. I was trying to see if there was any gleam or glimmer of light ahead. I realised that our torches gave us completely away to anybody who happened to be beyond.

And so whenever possible we felt our way onwards in pitchy darkness. After about five minutes of this I was suddenly brought up by colliding with the solid wall, when it had seemed to me that the tunnel went straight on.

But I did not switch on my torch. For I caught a glimmer out of the corner of my eye, and quickly turned my head.

"Look!" I breathed. "Careful now, for goodness' sake!"

A weak glow could be seen hovering there in the intense blackness. The effect was rather mysterious at first. But it only took me a few moments to know just how we stood.

We had come to a sharp turn in the tunnel, and along this new direction a light of some sort was reflected into the passage. It was so weak that if our torches had been on we should never have seen it. But in that Stygian darkness the glow stood out perceptibly.

"Better not talk now," breathed Pitt. "We'll go inch by inch."

Like three shadows we edged our way along the tunnel. At any moment we might encounter some of those mysterious Arabs or Egyptians, who I knew were not far distant. If Nelson Lee had known about this project he would have been very annoyed. But I had been simply unable to resist the lure.

It was very lucky for us that we walked with such extreme caution. For any precipitate action would undoubtedly have

led to consequences of the utmost gravity. For suddenly as I edged forward, I found nothing whatever beneath my foot. Only in the nick of time I pulled back. I had been about to walk into blank space! An abyss yawned at my feet.

"Steady!" I whispered. "Don't push, you idiots!"

I crouched on my knees, and my chums followed suit and drew level with me. And we knelt there in a row.

Below us lay a great cavern—a big underground place that few people in the district suspected. And this old working, instead of entering the cavern at the floor level, came out somewhere near the roof.

Consequently we were perched up there, high above, gazing down into the cavern from a vantage point which was as good as invisible to anybody who happened to be on the floor level. The end of our tunnel was only a low, jagged hole, and so small as to attract little notice. And only our heads were showing. So, in this dim light it would need some remarkably keen eyes to detect our presence. All the advantage of the situation was with us.

And as we gazed down we were filled with silent amazement. For the whole scene was laid bare below us, clear and distinct to our eyes. For the source of that dim glow was apparent, and we could distinguish every object in the cavern clearly and easily.

It was no mere rocky cave containing a few remnants of mining implements and such-like. All this had been carefully effaced. Instead, the place was reminiscent of Egypt. It was almost as though we were in the mysterious depths of a great pyramid.

For that cavern was like a secret temple, with draped sides, and with the smell of burning incense heavy on the air. Immediately opposite us, on the other side of the domed cavern, stood a massive idol—a kind of huge figure of Baal, the moon god.

On both sides of it were stately pedestals, with braziers burning with a glowing fire. And there were strange lanterns, too. The front of the idol was strewn with prayer rugs and rich Oriental carpets. And there were figures moving about—fleeing, mysterious figures in flowing robes.

We gazed down in something like awe, and then stared at one another in that faint, reflected glow. What could it mean? Prepared for a surprise, we had never expected to gaze upon such a remarkable sight as this.

CHAPTER III.

THE NOOSE OF ROPE.



DR. KARNAK was preparing for bed.

St. Frank's lay quiet and still, for all the boys had been asleep for some time. And the curator of the school museum moved

about his room with that strange cat-like tread for which he was renowned.

Dr. Karnak was looking thoughtful and subdued.

Things had not been going as he had intended. The tragic happening to Cecil De Valerie had not pleased him. He had used the boy as a tool, and now that De Valerie had gone from the school the Egyptian was handicapped.

If all had gone right, Nelson Lee would have been dead by now, and his untimely end would have been a mystery that no doctors could have solved.

But Karnak's scheme had failed, and Nelson Lee still lived, and was, furthermore, fully alive to the fact that Dr. Karnak had planned to murder him. The Egyptian did not know this, or his mental state would have been a little less settled.

The Egyptian was an expert on poisons, and the one he had intended that Nelson Lee should perish of was of the deadliest nature. A mere prick and death followed without delay. It was a poison that even Dr. Karnak could not afford to be careless with.

And although he had been inactive during the past week, his thoughts were busy. He was concerned chiefly by those relentless enemies of his who were but waiting their opportunity to strike.

At any moment they might decide to take action. But they were frustrated while Dr. Karnak remained safely in the school. They would not dare to break in, for the attendant risks were too great. And so, Karnak told himself, he was safe so long as he persisted in his policy of lying low.

He went to the window and cautiously pushed open the lower sash. Outside, the half-moon was lightly filmed by fleecy clouds. And as Dr. Karnak glanced up at the pale crescent he pursed his lips. It irritated him that the moon should be the cause of his present predicament.

"Bah!" he muttered beneath his breath. "Heathens! Wild, imbecile notions! And I was fool enough to believe in it a few years back! May Allah curse those who beset me!"

Dr. Karnak had not merely come to the window for the purpose of staring at the moon. His Serval cat—that strange pet of his—had just been out for her customary quarter-hour of exercise. Dr. Karnak always allowed the strange, yellow cat to go out nightly.

And the animal descended the ivy with less trouble than a human being descends a staircase. And at the faintest signal from Dr. Karnak the Serval sat would always return.

Dr. Karnak leaned out of the window, his thoughts far away from the matter in hand. He was about to form his lips into a whistling position when something of a rather extraordinary nature took place.

There came a slight hiss, and a thin rope shot up from the ground as though sent

from spectral hands. The loop hovered for a brief second over the fez on Dr. Karnak's head. And then in the same second that the Egyptian became aware of a vague peril, the loop descended.

Dr. Karnak gave a hoarse, choking cry.

The rope was round his neck, and it had been pulled taut almost to the point of strangling him. The thing had been done so quickly, so stealthily, that it was a masterpiece of cunning action. And in a flash Dr. Karnak realised that his enemies had got him at last.

And through his own carelessness! But he had never dreamed that there could be any danger in leaning out of the window to call his cat. Indeed, he had been absolutely certain that the faithful animal would fly back to the window if it became aware of any lurking figures. The very fact that the Serval cat had not returned proved to Dr. Karnak that some mischance had befallen the animal.

And he, Karnak, was in the toils!

These men, these enemies, had not been so idle as the absence of action had indicated. They had evidently been watching, night after night. And they knew that it was a regular custom for Dr. Karnak to let the cat out.

And on this night they had struck. They had either killed or captured the cat, and had then lurked beneath the window, waiting tensely for that moment when Dr. Karnak would lean out.

All this passed through the Egyptian's brain in a flash. He knew perfectly well if he was to live he would have to act with the speed of desperation. Even now the cord was drawn so tight that Karnak could scarcely catch his breath. He gurgled softly, as though choking.

And then suddenly he fell forward over the window-sill, limp and apparently lifeless. But it was only a trick. As he appeared to collapse, he had drawn something that looked like a pencil from his waistcoat pocket. And as he lay over the window-sill he watched keenly, his brain as alert as ever.

He saw, in the darkness below, a darker patch. It moved slightly, and Karnak knew that this was the figure of the man who was holding the other end of the rope. Even though his senses were reeling from the effect of the strangling rope, Dr. Karnak placed the pencil-like object to his lips.

Hiss!

From below came a sharp cry—very faint, but nevertheless audible. And at the same instant the rope sprang loose. Dr. Karnak seized it, and gave a fierce tug.

And the next moment he staggered back into the room, slammed down the window, and jerked the curtains into position. And then, wrenching the rope from about his neck, he sank into a chair.

And he lay there, breathing hard, his



The unfortunate chums of study D were standing there in a row, their ankles securely fettered, and chained to the wall!

eyes gleaming with a fire that told of fear and triumph intermixed.

Even at the crucial moment, he had beaten these cunning marauders. They had had him in an apparently impossible position—trapped in such a manner that escape was out of the question. And yet, owing to his quick wittedness, Dr. Karnak had slipped out of the trap.

The narrowness of his escape startled him.

For it proved that these enemies were grim and determined. They were not going to relinquish their efforts until they had succeeded in their object. Dr. Karnak even contemplated fleeing from St. Frank's as soon as daylight came. But he dismissed this idea. He was in a good position, and even if he went elsewhere, his foes would follow.

It would be better to remain, and defy them. For, surely, he was safer in this great public school than he would be in any other place. He sat there, fingering his neck grimly.

And after a moment or two he rose to his feet, crossed to the mirror, and gazed at his reflection. He scowled with fury, for on his neck there was a fierce, ugly weal. It was painful, too, but the Egyptian gave no thought of this.

Returning to the chair he sat down, and examined that little tube which so much resembled a pencil. It was an ingenious device, being, in fact, a blow pipe of cunning design. Dr. Karnak proceeded to re-load it with a tiny dart, which he took from a little pocket in his wallet.

And his thoughts, as he did so, were

centred upon the man who had stood beneath his window. Without question, Dr. Karnak had scored a hit. That little dart, projected swiftly from the tube, had found a mark. And the victim was now as good as dead.

For that dart had been poisoned!

The poison, however, was not of the same quality that had been employed in the case of Nelson Lee. One touch of that would have killed Lee on the spot. But Dr. Karnak had no desire to cause a dark-skinned stranger to be found lying dead beneath his window.

The poison on the point of that dart was deadly enough, but its action was slow. The man would have time to get away, and to return to his haunts. Thus he would die where none could see, but he would die none the less shortly. In this one matter alone Dr. Karnak had given evidence of his super cunning.

And he lay back in his chair, congratulating himself upon the outcome. After this example of his determination, these men would perhaps hesitate at further trickery. It was even possible that they would take fright, and give up the whole thing as a bad job.

But if Dr. Karnak consoled himself with such thoughts as these, he was living in a fool's paradise!

CHAPTER IV.

DR. BRETT'S STRANGE VISITORS!



DR. JAMES BRETT, the cheery practitioner of Bellton, laid his book aside with a sigh, and removed the pipe from his mouth.

"That's right, ring away!" he said gruffly. "Confound you!"

He glared at the electric bell just over his head, and reluctantly got down to the floor, and donned his dressing gown and slippers. It wasn't usual for his night bell to ring, and he had certainly not expected any summons on this particular occasion.

Being a bachelor, Dr. Brett found much entertainment in reading, and it was his nightly custom to have a chapter in bed, with a pipe to keep his company. He was rather addicted to thrillers, and the story he was now reading was at its most interesting point. He strongly objected to being disturbed.

But duty came first, and so he picked up the lamp—there was no electric light in Bellton—and went out on the landing. As he passed downstairs he swiftly ran over the list of patients who might have suffered from a sudden relapse.

"Probably old Mrs. Brackett, over in Edgemore Lane," he murmured. "She's a fidgetty old soul, but she'll live for years yet. Or it might be Mrs. Johnson's baby."

He was quite convinced, in any case,

that the night call was most unnecessary. Experience had told him that the majority of these cases could easily be left over until the morning without any fear of complications.

Reaching the hall, he unbolted the front door, slipped back the catch, and flung the door open. He held the lamp high, and the light from it fell upon four figures who were standing on the step.

Dr. Brett nearly dropped the lamp in his surprise.

"My gad!" he ejaculated. "What on earth—"

He paused, for sheer lack of something to say. Expecting a small country child, or perhaps a hastily clad youth, he was positively staggered to gaze upon the sight which really met his vision.

For a brief instant he wondered if he was dreaming. The four figures were dark swarthy men, and they were all attired in flowing Eastern robes, with turbans. And for a brief spell, the silence was unbroken.

Brett stood there, holding the lamp aloft, staring rather blankly. And while he did so, the four extraordinary strangers closed round him, and literally forced him into the hall.

"Steady!" said Brett. "What's the idea? Who in the name of wonder are you, and what's the meaning of this business?"

He was rapidly recovering his wits, and he looked at his visitors suspiciously, still holding the lamp high. It had crossed his mind that this was perhaps a joke of some kind. During the day he had visited the Bannington Hospital, and a group of medical students there had been somewhat boisterous. A joke of their's, perhaps!

"All right, boys—pretty good, but you don't fool me," said the doctor calmly. "So you'd better drop this picturesque bluff—"

"You make mistake," interrupted one of the others, his English being very indifferent and broken. "No fool you. Serious. You come with us. You bring knives for operations."

Dr. Brett was not satisfied, even now.

"Knives for an operations, eh?" he said grimly. "Oh, certainly! What's the case? Do you want somebody's head removed? Personally, I think a chopper would be more suitable—"

"You make fun—bad!" interrupted the spokesman harshly. "Every second important. No time to waste. You come now, or—"

He left the sentence unfinished on a significant note.

"Or what?" inquired the doctor.

"Unsheath thy knives, and let this heathen dog set eyes upon our blades," snapped the visitor. "By the prophet! We will have our will, or this infidel perishes on his very hearth!"

The words were spoken in Arabic—swift,

whip-like. And, instantly, the other three men unsheathed some very wicked looking daggers. They held the points of these weapons to Dr. Brett's chest.

He turned rather pale, startled afresh by this exhibition of grim determination. There no longer lurked in his mind any suspicion that this affair was a practical joke.

But what startled him even more were the words themselves. They had been spoken swiftly, but Brett had understood their purport. Perhaps a suspicion of this entered the mind of the spokesman.

"Wilt thou do as we command, or dost thou prefer a swift death?" he asked in Arabic. "Allah is great, and if he so determines thou shalt die, there is no hope for thee, for what is written is written."

Dr. Brett stared at the man blankly.

"What's the good of talking that gibberish to me?" he asked. "Keep to English, and I can understand—although your accent is atrocious. And cover up these infernal knives!"

The spokesman was satisfied. But in this respect he was at fault. For Dr. Brett had understood every word. It had occurred to him, however, that it might be to his advantage to profess ignorance of Arabic. He didn't quite know why he adopted this attitude, but the ruse had succeeded.

It may be wondered how it came about that a modest country doctor should have a fairly intimate knowledge of Arabic. But the explanation is astonishingly simple. Brett had served for eighteen months in Egypt and Palestine during the great war, and he had taken quite an interest in the native tongue. He could speak the language hardly at all, but he could understand perfectly.

"We will cover the knives when you agree," said the man. "You must come. Operation to save life. We must delay not."

Dr. Brett began to take more interest.

"What's the nature of this case?" he asked sharply.

"Arm—poison," said the other. "Must cut off! Return within hour, or man dead. Hurry! You understand? We are serious!"

He pressed the point of his blade towards Dr. Brett's chest, and the other men followed his example. The village practitioner gave a little gulp, and felt slightly unnerved. For something told him that his very life depended upon his next word. A refusal would mean swift, sudden and ghastly death. He had no alternative.

"I will come!" he said hastily.

"It is well," replied the other. "Your knives—get them."

"Look here, I've got to dress——"

"No dress—no time! Come!"

Brett went into his surgery near by, wondering if he would have an opportunity of using the telephone. He might ring up

the police—or Nelson Lee—— Yes, by Jove! Lee! He was the man for this business!

But Dr. Brett was not allowed to go anywhere near the telephone, let alone use it. He obtained the necessary instruments, antiseptics and so forth, and within a few minutes he was ready for departure. He had succeeded in slipping his feet into a pair of tennis shoes—which were certainly more comfortable than the bedroom slippers.

"You are ready?" asked one of his captors.

"Yes, but I'd like to get dressed," replied Brett warmly. "It won't take me more than two minutes. Hang it all, I must be decent! I can't go about the countryside in my confounded pyjamas!"

The man made no reply, but he made a sign to his companion, and they closed round Dr. Brett, and he found himself being hustled out of the house. He knew that it was useless shouting for help, because the only other occupants of the building were an elderly housekeeper who happened to be deaf, and Williams, the doctor's chauffeur. And Williams always slept so soundly that he had invested in two alarm clocks to get him up in the morning. The roaring of a lion wouldn't arouse him at this hour.

Quite apart from all this, Dr. Brett had no desire to call for help. This affair had begun to interest him. From a professional point of view it promised to be a serious case, and from every other point of view, it was dramatic and sensational.

The doctor found himself in the lane. He wondered where he would be led to, and what manner of dwelling these strangers had come from. Some circus, perhaps, or a travelling show. Certainly, the doctor had heard nothing about any dark-skinned strangers in the district. Unless—unless— Yes, there was that affair at St. Frank's with Dr. Karnak! Perhaps these fellows were connected with the Egyptian science lecturer! And perhaps he was about to be led to the school itself.

But Dr. Brett was not allowed to know. For his gate had hardly been reached when at a word his captors halted. And a heavy silken scarf was tied completely round his head, so that he was effectively blindfolded. By no amount of hitching, would he be able to shift that silken bandage.

And then he was walked off into the night. He could tell, during the first few yards, that the road had been left behind. And his captors did not stick to lane or footpaths. They led him over grassy meadows, and even through ploughed fields. He was thankful, indeed, that he donned those stout tennis shoes.

For the rest, his pyjamas and dressing gown served him well, for the night was dry and fine, and not particularly cold. But the darkness was intense, and to Dr. Brett it was impenetrable. Through that silken bandage he could see absolutely

nothing. And the nocturnal stillness was such that he could distinguish nothing by means of sound.

He had lost all sense of direction, and did not know whether he was being taken in the direction of Caistowe, or Edgemore, or Bannington, or any of the quiet hamlets round about.

His sum total of knowledge was that he was being taken across fields and meadows. And just as he was getting resigned to the fact that he was to walk all night, his journey came to an end.

It had seemed to him, a few hundred yards back, that they had entered upon a kind of avenue, or perhaps a wood. For their footsteps seemed to echo, somehow, and Brett was quite sure that they were no longer in the open.

Having utterly no idea as to the nature of his destination he did not think of the old quarry tunnels. He still had the impression that he was in the open air. The bandage over his face, which even covered his mouth, prevented him from feeling any change in atmospheric conditions.

He was brought to a halt, and he heard a key turned in a lock. Then he was ushered forward a few paces more, and swiftly the silk was removed. He looked round, blinking. His four captors had moved a little aside, and Dr. Brett could see that he was in a comparatively small room, which was entirely draped in black.

He assumed, of course, that this room was in a house, or cottage. And it was obviously draped in black, concealing window and door, so that he would not be able to recognise anything that would help him to fix the locality of this room.

But at the moment there was something more important for him to think of.

The spokesman of the party pointed.

"Attend!" he said curtly. "Do work well, and you get reward."

Dr. Brett now saw a divan against one of the walls. Light was provided by means of two curious lamps, and one member of the party held a powerful electric torch. The full light from this was focussed upon the patient.

And Dr. Brett's professional instincts were instantly aroused. For the man on the divan was palpably in a bad way. He writhed in mortal agony, and his dark face was bathed in cold perspiration. His left arm was swollen so much that it was terrible to look upon.

The doctor forgot his surroundings, he forgot the bizarre nature of his forced attendance, and he quickly knelt beside the

divan, and subjected the sufferer to a swift, careful examination.

"You can operate?" asked the Egyptian.

"No, I hardly think so—"

"But you are surgeon—you know how to heal?"

"Yes, I know how to heal," agreed Dr. Brett. "I am also a surgeon, and I can use the knife if necessary. But I never resort to such drastic measures unless it is absolutely a matter of life or death. It would be a horrible thing to cut this man's arm off for no reason."

"Unless you take arm off, he die," said the other curtly.

Dr. Brett made no answer, but examined the patient afresh. The arm itself was badly poisoned, but the man's companions had applied a rough kind of tourniquet, which had helped to stop the flow of blood. Thus, the poison had been confined to the arm alone. But the fellow's agony must have been well nigh unbearable. Yet he made no sound.

The doctor had recognised the poison. He had learned much regarding poisons from Nelson Lee, who was an expert on the subject, and for the first time Brett's knowledge was serving him well. He had studied poisons rather as a hobby than anything else, for there had been very little chance of him encountering such cases in his quiet country practice.

He knew, moreover, that an injection of a certain drug would act as a powerful antidote, killing the poison before any grave complications developed. He was convinced that no surgical operation was necessary.

And for half an hour he worked quietly, methodically, and with intent concentration. His captors could see that he was putting his heart and soul into the case, and never once did they urge him. Their grim expressions, indeed, were now relaxing, and they looked at Brett with kindly eyes.

For the patient was so much better that Brett's treatment was obviously good. The unfortunate fellow had ceased to writhe, the agonised expression had gone from his face, and he lay on the divan, apparently comfortable. And at last Dr. Brett rose to his feet.

Two of his captors were near by, but the other two were standing some few feet away, talking in Arabic. Brett did not even glance at them, but busied himself with repacking his bag.

But he could understand every word that was being said—at least, he gathered the gist of the conversation.

"Praise be to Allah that this unbeliever is skilled," said one of the men. "Already Hassan is easy on his couch. We will reward this infidel richly for his timely service."

"Thou hast spoken well, O brother," said the other. "And ere the night is over, with the help of Allah, we will settle with that treacherous dog who lurks in the security of the heathen school. For before

ANSWERS
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a new dawn breaks; Karnak will pay dearly for the mischief he has wrought. The prophet is all seeing, and will help us in our just cause."

"Praise be to Allah!" was the reply. "By my father's beard, the treacherous outcast shall be brought hither. And then thou and I will see him pay the penalty that is the reward of treachery and deceit. While this unbeliever is escorted back to his house, we will bring Karnak hither."

"A task that will not be so easy——"

"Thou art mistaken," interrupted the other man. "For we have no further patience. To-night we strike. And Allah has put a plan into my head. The light of truth has been shown to me, and before two hours have passed, the traitor will be brought hither. For so it is written, and so it will be!"

"Thy words are good, O brother. But, see! The infidel doctor is preparing to depart, and it would be well if thou made speech with him."

They turned, and approached Dr. Brett, who was nearly ready.

"You finish?" asked the spokesman.

"I've done as much as I can at present," said Dr. Brett. "But the man will need some attention, and I ought to have a look at him to-morrow. He is in no danger, and will recover."

"'Tis well," said the other. "And if you not come?"

"There is just a possibility that complications may set in, but the risk is not very great," replied Brett. "My treatment has eased him a great deal, and I am delighted with the success. It would have been an inhuman act to amputate the arm, for such a drastic measure is not necessary."

"You are clever—you are skilled," said the Egyptian. "Can you not leave medicine? We will give it. Balm or ointment, may be——"

Dr. Brett pointed to a stool.

"You will find everything there," he said. "And if you will listen carefully, I will give you full instructions as to the methods you should employ. If the man is looked after properly, he will soon be himself."

And the doctor proceeded to explain exactly what should be done. The man in the flowing robes listened attentively, and made one or two notes in a tiny pocket-book which he produced. Finally, he bowed slightly, and turned to his companions.

"Tie the silken scarf around the unbeliever's face," he commanded in Arabic.

Once again Dr. Brett was blindfolded. And then the same procedure was carried out. He was led along, and although he had no definite information as to his destination, he believed that he was being taken home. His angry thoughts against his captors were beginning to diminish.

After all, they had done him no harm, but had treated him well throughout his short period of captivity. But the conversation he had overheard regarding Dr.

Karnak filled him with a certain subdued excitement. For it was perfectly clear that some sinister work was afoot.

Brett did not know that he had now only two captors. They walked on either side of him, silent and impassive. It made practically little difference whether he knew the facts or not, for he could not have broken away. But two men were quite sufficient to escort him now. And the other two, as it happened, had more important work to attend to.

At length, Dr. Brett was brought to a halt. Without a word, the bandage was removed from his eyes, and it was instantly replaced by his own handkerchief. This was pulled tight, and swiftly knotted.

He became aware of a slight sound, as though caused by receding footsteps. He tugged at the handkerchief, and forcibly tore it away. And, blinking there in the gloom of night, he dimly saw that he was standing at the gate of his own house.

The road, in both directions, was completely deserted.

There was not a sign or sound of his recent companions. It was as though they had vanished into the thin air. But they had taken good care to take their own silken scarf, so that it would not act as a clue.

"Well, I'm hanged!" muttered Dr. Brett, in amazement.

It was absolutely impossible for him to know where he had been taken to, and under no circumstances could he find his way back. The whole affair was like some fantastic dream, or a page from the Arabian Nights.

He put his hand on the gate, and the slight movement caused something to fall with a soft clink to the ground. He lifted it up, wondering, and found that the object was a small linen bag, tied at the top. It was quite plain, and a trifle soiled.

Quickly, Dr. Brett opened the bag, and poured ten golden sovereigns into his other hand. He gazed at the money with a slight thrill. After all, these fellows weren't so bad! They had put him through an uncomfortable experience, but they had paid him well for his compulsory services.

And then a thought came to him, and his eyes gleamed. He pushed open the gate, and strode swiftly up the short path.

CHAPTER V.

JUST LIKE HANDFORTH!



"EASY, old man—easy!" breathed Church.

"Don't preach to me—I know what I'm doing!" said Handforth tartly. "All you fellows have got to do is to follow, and you can keep your giddy advice to yourselves. I'm leader!"

"But we've come a long way, and we've been at least twenty minutes," said Church. "And don't forget we arranged to

meet Nipper and the others at the end of half-an-hour. We shan't get back in time."

"Rot!" whispered Handforth gruffly. "What does it matter, anyhow? I'm keen on following this tunnel to the end."

The chums of Study D had been progressing cautiously along the old mine working which they had selected. So far they had come across nothing suspicious, and Handforth was feeling rather disappointed.

He had been hoping that he would come across an underground workshop, where masked men were busy at printing counterfeit notes—or possibly a coiner's den, where molten metal was being poured into casts, and where further villains were talking about swag, and cracking the crib.

Handforth's mind usually ran in this channel. Consequently, he was very disgusted at the utter lack of excitement. By all appearances, the tunnel was deserted, and had not been traversed for years.

Therefore, instead of turning back, Handforth insisted upon going onwards—penetrating deeper and deeper into the black labyrinth. He had made up his mind to discover something, and nothing would alter him.

His obstinacy had won. And he would press on until he found something worth discovering, or until the passage came to a blank end. Handforth was one of those fellows who never give in. He never counted the odds in anything, and the mere passage of time was a matter of little or no importance. He was just the sort of fellow who would lead a company of soldiers into battle; into apparent death, and through sheer force of obstinacy would win through.

Church and McClure, although plucky enough, considered the whole matter a waste of time. They looked at the thing from a commonsense standpoint, and were not slow in making a very obvious deduction.

In this portion of the tunnel there was no trace whatever of the incense, and this fact alone proved to Church and McClure that they were coming away from the source of that pungent perfume. Left to themselves, they would have gone back and explored in a totally different direction.

But to argue with Handforth was about as promising as telling the tide to recede before it was at the flood.

And so, with Handy leading the way, they crept on. The light from the electric torch gleamed brightly, and they were able to pick their way without any trouble. And the going was not altogether smooth. For in various places the tunnel was crumbling away, the floor being littered with chunks of rock, dust, and other debris.

The very absence of footprints should have told a self-confessed detective like Handforth that no other human beings had passed down this tunnel for ages. And the

air was by no means pure. It was becoming stuffy and almost suffocating.

"I say, old man, it's dangerous, you know," said Church. "There might be gas further along."

"Gas?" repeated Handforth, staring.

"Yes."

"You fathead! There are no gas mains down here," said Handforth. "So how do you expect there can be a leak?"

"I'm not talking about coal gas," said Church sourly. "What about fire damp? That's the gas they have in these coal mines. It kills people in next to no time, you know. And if you strike a match there's a terrible explosion."

Handforth, in order to prove how absurd the contention was, pulled out a box of matches, and struck a light at once. The flame burned evenly, and Handforth gave a sarcastic laugh.

"Well?" he sneered. "Not blown to bits, are we?"

"My hat! You're a reckless boulder!" said McClure huskily.

And he was right. If the whole tunnel had been full of explosive gas—but insufficient to affect the juniors' breathing—he would have struck that match just the same, and the brief careers of Handforth, Church and McClure would have come to an untimely end. Handforth believed in getting at the root of things, and in his blundering way he didn't care what risks he took.

His chums decided not to bring up any similar arguments, but allowed Handforth to go his own way. He didn't go far. For after another hundred yards, the tunnel became impassable.

The roof had caved in completely, blocking the whole passage. There wasn't room enough for a rabbit to squeeze through. And Handforth gave a grunt of utter disgust, and glared fiercely at his unfortunate companions.

"You fatheads!" he said witheringly.

"Eh?"

"What do you think of yourselves?" asked Handforth. "Making me come all this way for nothing! Look at the time we've wasted."

Church and McClure bristled with instant indignation.

"We made you come!" snapped Church. "Why, you blithering idiot! Haven't we been trying for the last quarter of an hour to make you chuck it up? We told you all along that it was a dotty idea!"

"And now you calmly turn round and blame us!" snorted McClure.

Handforth breathed hard.

"Haven't you got any more sense than to talk like that?" he asked bitterly. "Whenever you fellows find yourselves in the wrong, you always put the blame on me! And you're supposed to be my chums!"

If Church and McClure had not been schooled in the art of keeping their tempers, a free fight would have taken

place almost at once. For it certainly was decidedly thick of Handforth to attribute them with his own folly.

"We won't argue!" said Church thickly. "Let's go back."

So they retraced their steps, and they had only travelled about two hundred yards when Handforth came to a halt, staring.

"That's jolly queer!" he said wonderingly. "I'll swear we only came down one tunnel, and yet there are two here!"

All three juniors stood still, regarding the problem. They certainly had no recollection of a branch tunnel. And yet here it was, forking off sharply. Travelling in

to have been prepared for something like this. Still, I won't grumble at you."

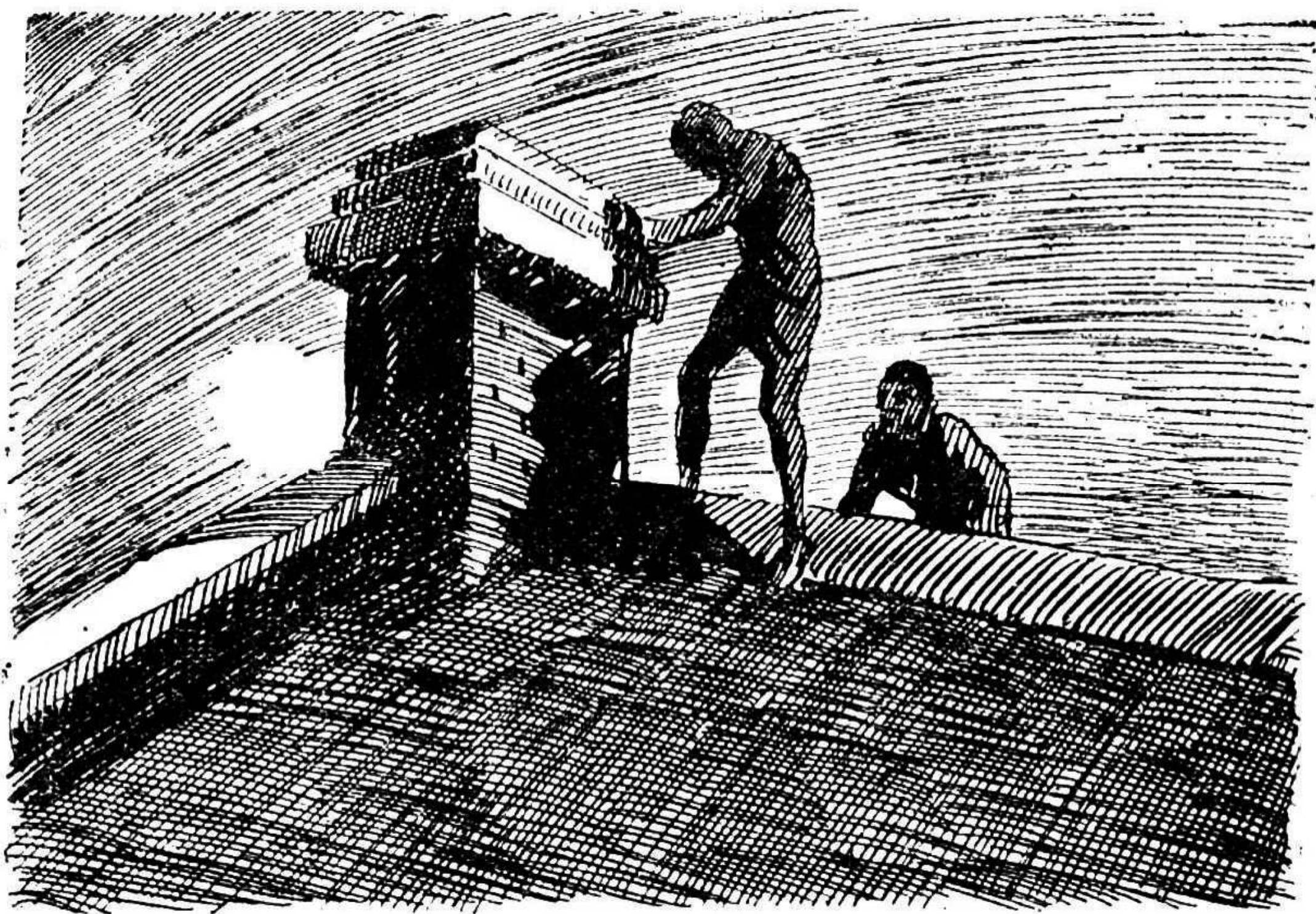
"Thanks awfully!" said McClure.

They took the left-hand tunnel, believing that this was the one they had previously used. But after they had turned one or two bends, Church shook his head.

"We'd better go back," he said. "We didn't come through this tunnel before. There weren't any turnings of this sort, I'll swear. We're only going deeper and deeper into the maze."

"S-s-s-h!" whispered Handforth abruptly.

At the same instant he snapped his light off, and cautiously crept forward to the



And now they stood there, dimly outlined against the night sky, as they approached the chimney, like ghouls of the darkness:

the other direction it was hardly noticeable, unless actually searched for.

But now it made all the difference.

For the trio did not know which tunnel they had originally used! The floor was rocky and hard at this point, and no footprints were discernible. And at last Church gave a somewhat expressive grunt.

"Oh, well, it's no good staring," he said. "All we can do is to chance it. Goodness knows where we shall find ourselves. It looks to me as if we're lost. These tunnels are like the catacombs!"

"It's your fault—for not looking where you're going," grunted Handforth. "You chaps brought up the rear, and you ought

next bend. A faint whiff of incense had come to his nose, and he rather fancied that he had heard a sound, too.

"My goodness!" he breathed, as he peered round the corner.

For it was not pitchy black in the distance of the tunnel. Instead, there was the glow of a light, and Handforth even heard a fragmentary murmur of conversation.

"What is it?" whispered Church, creeping up behind.

"Dry up, you ass—don't interrupt!" breathed Handforth. "It's the gang! The giddy smugglers are just ahead of us, and I expect they're taking in a consignment of whisky, or something."

"Smugglers?" said McClure. "I thought you said they were coiners?"

"Oh, well, it doesn't make any difference," said Handforth, who didn't worry about such details. "The main thing is that we've found the gang's headquarters. This is the result of having a trained detective for a leader!"

"Why, you fathead, we got lost, and we hit upon this tunnel by accident," said McClure relentlessly. "So don't take on any airs!"

"Wait!" hissed Handforth grimly. "I can't biff you now, but as soon as we get outside I'll give you one for that!"

He crept slowly onwards, and Church and McClure followed. They didn't actually believe in this, but there was no alternative. They would have thought it wiser to return to the rest of the party, and make a report. But Handforth was all for pressing on. And his chums had to go with him, in case of trouble. And this contingency was most probable.

They reached the end of a short stretch of narrow tunnel, and then found themselves in a small, low cavern. It was really little more than an opening out of the tunnel itself.

The roof was not more than five feet high in any place, and it was practically touching the heads of the juniors. The cavern was nearly circular, with rough, jagged sides and one or two ancient supports in the centre. The place, in fact, was a relic of the old workings.

It was quite possible to see in this chamber without the electric-torch. For another cavern opened out from it, and here there burned a flare of some kind, for the reflected light was flickering and eerie. Just a ruddy, uneven glow.

Handforth turned, his eyes glittering.

"You chaps stop here," he murmured. "I'm going to have a squint into this other—" He broke off abruptly, and stared beyond Church and McClure with alarm leaping into his expression. "Look out!" he roared.

The sudden change in his voice made Church and McClure jump several inches from the floor. They had not been expecting any such shout, and they hadn't the faintest idea why Handforth had become so alarmed. But they knew all about it a moment later.

For they were seized by rough, muscular hands—seized before they could even make the slightest attempt to get free. True, they struggled, but it was hopeless. And Handforth was dealt with almost as quickly. For two powerful men attacked him.

"Rescue, St. Frank's!" yelled Church wildly. "Help! Nipper! Reggie! Help! Rescue, Remove!"

But Church's voice was only mocked back at him from the confining walls of the cavern. And the very fact that he was not instantly silenced indicated that these men had no fear of interruption.

They were certainly not a gang of coiners, for they were dressed in strange Oriental robes, and they were all dark-skinned men with turbans.

"Pigs, and sons of pigs!" shouted one of the captors. "By the beard of the prophet, these dogs of unbelievers shall suffer! Hold them tightly, my brothers, for we must not let them have their liberty."

These words were spoken in Arabic, and so Handforth & Co. had no knowledge of the insults that had been heaped upon their heads. But from the very tone they knew that the dusky gentleman was not friendly.

"What's the idea of talking Italian?" asked Handforth sourly. "If you can't speak English, you'd better keep quiet!"

The men made no reply. Two of them held Handforth, and Church and McClure were held by two others. They were not quite so unruly, and needed less attention.

The worshippers of Allah lost no time in leading their prisoners out of the cavern and along a short tunnel. And in a very few moments they encountered a tall, bearded man, who gazed at them with glowing eyes.

"Why here?" he demanded in English.

"Why are we here?" repeated Handforth defiantly. "Because we mean to find out what you fellows are up to, and then hand you over to the police. There's something fishy about this business."

"Let your tongue rest," said the other. "What others came with you?"

"Others?" said Church quickly. "Why, no others. We came alone."

"Quite alone," added Handforth, catching the idea.

The answer was true enough in a way, although rather deceptive. They had certainly come alone in that tunnel, and the statement was near enough to the truth to satisfy the juniors. Besides, the situation thoroughly justified this slight evasion.

"Foolish," said the bearded Egyptian. "You shall suffer. But no harm will befall you. To-morrow you will go. To-night you must remain."

Handforth started.

"Are you going to keep us here all night?" he gasped.

"It is the will of Allah," said the other gravely.

"The will of Allah?" repeated Handforth. "Who's he?"

"Allah is one who knows all, who sees all, who hears all," replied the patriarch reverently. "Allah is great—Allah is the beginning of all things, and the ending of all things. And you not know. Poor, unbelieving infidel!" He turned, and addressed his men in Arabic. "Bring the young puppies hither, and thou wilt make all haste, since the traitor himself will be here ere long. We have no time to waste on these unbelieving wretches."

"It shall be as thou sayest," murmured

one of the others. "For is it not the will of Allah?"

It was fairly obvious that these Egyptians, although quite unscrupulous in their methods, were religious to a point of fanaticism. They could hardly say a sentence without referring to the almighty Allah.

The three juniors were led away, until presently they were amazed to find themselves in a vast cavern, the presence of which they had never suspected. And now they were beginning to be rather nervous. The impressiveness of their new surroundings filled them with a kind of awe.

Even Handforth was subdued. He seemed to fully realise that there was utterly no hope of escape.

The great cavern was a revelation.

The place reeked of incense, the fumes arising from two braziers, one on either side of a great idol. This latter was a quaint, grotesque figure, and immediately in front of it stood a kind of stake, buried in the hard rock. Oriental lamps, dotted about, provided the cavern with a dim, subdued illumination.

There were divans, cushions, too, and costly rugs. Even in their wildest flights of imagination, Handforth & Co. had never suspected that a chamber of this sort existed in the old workings.

But there was one thing they did not see.

High above, practically lost in the dense gloom of the cavern's ceiling, was a slit-like cavity, the very surrounding rocks helping to conceal the opening. And, crouching there, were three figures.

Needless to say, these were the figures of Tommy Watson, Reggie Pitt, and myself. And we were greatly concerned when we saw Handforth & Co. below in the hands of those robed figures.

"Oh, the hopeless duffers!" I breathed. "They've allowed themselves to be collared!"

"Just like Handforth!" muttered Pitt.

"No wonder we couldn't see anything of them ten minutes ago," said Watson softly.

"I say, what can we do?"

"Nothing—just yet," I replied. "But we've got the advantage, and there's no need to worry."

A short time earlier Watson and Pitt had slipped back to that fork in the tunnel to see if Handforth & Co. had returned. But they had returned with the report that the Study D trio had not arrived.

And we had, in fact, been discussing what we should do when we observed Handforth & Co. being led into the big cavern. The immediate problem was solved, but it seemed that a bigger one had presented itself.

We watched keenly secure in our lofty hiding-place.

And there was one thing we were thankful for. Handforth & Co. were not taken beyond our field of vision. They were led to a spot at the other side of the cavern,

and in the dimness we could only see the robed figures. But after a short time these moved away.

And then we caught our breaths in.

For the unfortunate chums of Study D were standing there in a row, their ankles securely fettered, and chained to the wall! Escape was absolutely out of the question.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CAPTURE OF DR. KARNAK.



ST. FRANK'S lay silent and mysterious under the spell of night.

It was calm and almost windless, with a clear crispness in the air that made the stars gleam and glitter with a hard radiance. A few fleecy clouds were hovering lazily in the heavens, half-concealing the crescent moon beyond the turrets and towers of the picturesque pile.

No lights were showing from any windows, and the majority of the many occupants of St. Frank's had been asleep for a considerable time. It was the hour when the peace lay undisturbed.

As though from nowhere, four figures seemed to materialise from the gloom of the Head's shrubbery. They paused there for only a few moments, and then divided up, two remaining in the shadow of the trees, and the other two making their way stealthily and cat-like towards the ivy-covered wall of the north wing.

These figures were black—entirely black. They were robed in close-fitting garments, which did not hinder their progress, and which made no sound. There was not even the faintest swish as they walked.

Foot by foot the pair crept round to the wall, and at last commenced the dangerous climb. For, although the ivy was strong and tough, the least slip or mischance would precipitate the climber to the stones below.

But these men were nimble, and they appeared to claw their way up the face of the building with the skill of apes. The first negotiated the climb without a single slip.

And as soon as he had reached the coping, the second man repeated the performance. And so they stood there, whispering together for a moment or two. One of the men produced a kind of folded canvas square from his clothing. It was stiff and board-like.

The other man already had in his hand a small box, not unlike a snuff container. And they at once mounted the roof with stealthy tread, until at length they reached an ornamental chimney which stood alone.

In spite of the difficulties of the ascent, the men had performed the journey without mishap. And now they stood there, dimly outlined against the night sky, one on either

side of the chimney, like ghouls of the darkness.

One of the men put his hand over the top of the chimney and quickly withdrew it. Waves of heat were ascending in quantity, proving beyond question that a fire of considerable activity remained in the grate below.

These night workers had hoped for this, and had come prepared. They had made observations on other nights, too, and had known in advance that Dr. Karnak invariably banked his fire up before going to sleep. For if there was one thing the Egyptian science lecturer feared it was the cold.

Therefore, these men had come upon a certainty, so to speak. But it was just as well to be absolutely sure.

The figure with the snuff-box opened the lid, and then held the box over the opening of the chimney. He shook some powder out—coarse powder, which dropped in a cloud to the fire in the room below, and not far distant, for the chimney was quite short.

Again he shook the box, and the remainder of the powder descended. It was all done in less than two seconds.

Instantly, the second man clapped the stiff canvas over the top of the chimney and held it there tightly, so that none of the fumes escaped. The heat was not sufficient to damage the canvas, and, as a muffler, it was a complete and unqualified success.

The two men stood there, holding the canvas down, and uttering no word.

And so five minutes ticked away.

Not once during that period had the figures moved. They remained there as though part of the architecture itself—silent, impassive, and eloquent of utter relentlessness.

And in the room below, which was Dr. Karnak's bed-room, the victim was lying full length in bed, unconscious. He had been asleep, secure in his belief that the enemy would make no further move on this particular night.

He had been infuriated beyond measure at the non-return of his pet. But he dared not venture out to search for the Servat cat. Somehow, he had a conviction that the animal was lying somewhere outside, stark in death.

At first sleep had not come to him easily, but he had fully realised that no good purpose could be served by remaining awake. He was still labouring under the delusion that his enemies would not dare to break into the school.

And, at length, Dr. Karnak had composed himself for sleep, and he was actually dozing when the first whiff of fumes surged into the room from the blocked chimney. But the Egyptian knew nothing of this, and the fumes themselves had no choking effect.

On the contrary, they were soothing in

the extreme. Thus Dr. Karnak did not even stir himself, but passed from a doze into a deep, heavy state of unconsciousness.

And, above, one of the figures at last moved.

He held his arm out so that it was outlined against the sky.

Near the shrubbery the other two figures became active. They had been watching for that signal. And now it had come, they knew that the way was clear for them to take action.

As silently as their confederates, they crept towards the school—but mounted the ivy at a different point. There was some creeper beneath Karnak's window, but its strength was totally insufficient to bear the weight of a man, although the Servat cat had used it with success.

These two figures climbed to the coping at the end of the building, and then they worked their way along like shadows until they arrived immediately above Karnak's window.

With the agility of acrobats they lowered themselves. One man hung at full length, having obtained a firm hold on the stonework. And his companion proceeded to climb down the other's body—inch by inch.

A slip would have meant disaster.

But there was no slip. The fellow gave a slight inward swing, and the next moment his feet were firmly on the window-sill. After that, it was the work of a moment to assist his companion down.

Before opening the window they tied damp cloths around their faces, and these cloths, too, were black. The men were now protected, and could enter the fume-choked room without danger.

Skilfully the window was unfastened. And then the lower sash was thrust up with great care. The two men entered. Even with their protection, they could soon feel the effect of the noxious fumes. The faint light which came from the window revealed Dr. Karnak in bed—still and apparently lifeless.

One of the intruders crossed over to the bed, shook Dr. Karnak roughly, and then felt over his heart. It was beating steadily. For the fumes were not dangerous—they only induced a drugged sleep.

With scarcely a sound, Dr. Karnak was hauled off the bed, and he was placed in a long black sack. The end of this was tied with rope, the rope itself being a part of the sack. It was attached to the canvas so securely that no amount of pulling could sever it.

Having progressed this far, the figures went to the window again and glanced out.

All was clear.

There were just two dim blobs below—the forms of those other men who had got down from their lofty perch on the roof, leaving no trace of any sort near the chimney to tell of their activities.

The sack was carried to the window and gently eased out. And the two men

lowered the unfortunate Dr. Karnak foot by foot. They leaned out of the window, passing the rope between their hands.

And at last the sack fell into the waiting clutches of the other pair below. There was something rather uncanny about the way in which these men worked.

They were slow, deliberate, and yet the work was accomplished with a certainty that was as relentless as time itself.

And Dr. Karnak was fairly in the hands of his enemies at last!

For long they had refrained from making any actual descent upon the school. But to-night their patience had come to an end, and they had made one bold move. Their determination had been made all the keener because of Dr. Karnak's deliberate attempt to murder one of their number.

And they probably felt that any delay after that incident might mean that Karnak would slip through their fingers. For it was hardly probable that he would remain longer at St. Frank's.

After the victim had been lowered to the ground, he was carefully lifted, and carried out beyond the shrubbery, and a few minutes later the party was on its way to the quarry.

The very fact that Dr. Karnak had been captured in this way boded ill for him.

If it was merely his death these men wanted, they could have killed him a score or times. But there was something more, something that at present was inexplicable.

It was necessary for Dr. Karnak to be removed alive—for what?

CHAPTER VII.

NELSON LEE INVESTIGATES.



"EXTRAORDINARY! I'd think it was all a dream, if it wasn't for these golden sovereigns."

Dr. Brett had entered his house, and the prosaic nature of his surroundings caused his recent adventure to appear unreal and altogether fantastic. Even now, he caught himself doubting the truth of it.

But he knew, all the time, that the affair was grim reality. And so he was further concerned by the words he had overheard regarding the plans for Dr. Karnak's removal. Brett had no affection for Karnak whatever, but he could not help thinking that there was some sinister plot afoot.

And after he had got over his first surprise, he began wondering if it would be possible for him to take action. He glanced at his watch, and gave a somewhat expressive grunt.

"No good going up now—everybody's asleep," he murmured. "Lee, of course — Yes, by Jove! I'll ring him up! I

believe he's got a 'phone in his room. Anyhow, I'll make sure."

Brett was in his consulting room, and went over to the telephone, and waited for the sleepy night operator to answer.

"Number, please!" came the inquiry, at length.

"Bannington, 7-3," said Dr. Brett.

He waited, lighting a cigarette in the meantime. And he was confidently expecting that the operator would inform him that there was no reply. However, he had hardly placed the receiver to his ear again when Nelson Lee's voice came, so clearly as to be rather startling.

"Hallo! Who is it, please?"

"That you, Lee! Good!" said the doctor. "Brett speaking. Hope I haven't got you out of bed."

"Not at all," said Nelson Lee. "I'm in bed."

"The deuce you are!" exclaimed Brett. "Then it's pretty clear that I must have awakened you. I'd like your opinion on a certain matter."

"Delighted to oblige you, old man," came Lee's dry voice. "Apparently the matter must be of some urgency, or you would scarcely ring me up in the very small hours."

"The fact is, Lee, I've had a most extraordinary adventure," said Dr. Brett breathlessly. "I've been captured by Arabs, or Turks, or somebody like that—Egyptians, to be exact. And Dr. Karnak is going to be spirited away from St. Frank's before the morning."

There was a brief silence, and when Nelson Lee spoke again over the wires, his voice had lost its semi-humorous note, and was sharp and grim.

"Come, Brett, let me hear about this," he said quickly.

"First of all, Lee, I'd like you to just satisfy yourself that Karnak is safe," said the doctor. "I'll hang on until you come back. It wouldn't be a bad idea to give him the tip that these gentry are after him. I don't pretend to know what it's all about, but it seems fishy, to my mind."

"What did you hear regarding Karnak—exactly?"

"That a small gang of these dusky lads are to go to St. Frank's, and bring Karnak away by force," replied Dr. Brett. "I can't give you any details as to time, or what methods will be employed. But I don't think the threat was an idle one. I'd like to give you the whole yarn—"

"And I shall be most interested to hear it," said Lee. "Hang on for a few minutes, Brett. I won't be long."

"Right," said the doctor, more delighted than he knew that he was able to talk to somebody over his startling experience.

Nelson Lee, at the other end of the wire, placed the telephone on his side-table, and quickly leapt out of bed. A moment later

he had donned his dressing-gown and slippers, and left the room.

It only took him a few moments to reach Dr. Karnak's sleeping apartment. He did not tap at the door, but quietly turned the handle. As he had half expected, the door refused to budge.

As there was no alternative, Nelson Lee tapped.

There was no reply—no sound from within.

The detective tapped harder—indeed, he knocked loudly. But still there was no response. This was significant. Dr. Karnak was a light sleeper, as Nelson Lee knew well enough, and it was only reasonable to suppose that during this tense period he would be more wakeful than usual.

It was just possible that he was deliberately refraining from giving an answer. But Nelson Lee did not think this likely. He had heard from Dr. Brett that Karnak's enemies were planning to enter the school. And this had given Lee a surprise.

For even Lee had not believed that the time for drastic action had yet arrived. He knew nothing, of course, of Karnak's murderous action earlier, which had precipitated this latest effort.

Lee was at a loss for a moment, but he swiftly turned, and went back to his bedroom. He grabbed the telephone.

"There?" he asked sharply.

"Oh, hallo! You've been quick——"

"Hang on, Brett; I can't get any reply from Karnak's room," said Lee. "I shall have to force an entry. Wait until I return."

He placed the telephone down again, crossed to a chest of drawers, and removed a small bunch of keys. Armed with this, he returned to the Egyptian's bedroom, and softly tried the keys in the lock.

At the third attempt, the bolt slid back, and the door silently opened. Lee felt round the door-post, and snapped the electric lights on. And as he paused there, he sniffed sharply.

"Ah!" he muttered. "I'm too late!"

He recognised the smell of those fumes—knew them to be caused by a drug that induced heavy sleep. And one glance at the bedroom itself was sufficient for him.

It was empty.

The bed was rumpled and untidy. But nothing else whatever in the room was disturbed, and there was no sign of the Serval cat. The window was closed, and everything seemed to be quite normal.

But the pungent, stuffy smell in the air was eloquent, and the very absence of Dr. Karnak was doubly so. Swiftly, Lee crossed the room, flung open the window, and leaned out.

The moon gazed upon him benignly, and one or two stars gave him a knowing wink. They knew exactly what had happened, even if Lee did not. And it almost seemed as if the moon was mocking at him.

Lee confined his attention to the window-

sill, however, directing the light from his torch upon the stonework. To the untrained mind the windowsill would have revealed much—to Lee it revealed the full story.

For the very nature of the marks told Lee exactly what had happened. There were footprints clear and visible. They were confused and blurry, but none the less obvious.

The men had probably swung down from the coping above, Lee decided. And Dr. Karnak himself had been lowered by means of a rope. For there, in the sill, was a slightly worn groove—which even now bore traces of fluffy hemp.

From over in the shrubbery a faint crack sounded, although no wind was blowing. A cat, possibly, or some lurking creature of the night. But that sound might easily have been caused by a human being.

And Lee was quite sure that Karnak had only been absent for a few minutes. This abduction had just taken place. As though to prove the point, Lee crossed to the bed, and thrust his hand in that portion of it which had remained covered. He looked grim.

For the bed was distinctly and perceptibly warm.

"It seems that friend Karnak has found some trouble of his own at last," murmured Nelson Lee. "I wonder what has happened to the cat? No time to look now. I must talk with Brett at once."

Lee was not at all anxious to save Karnak from any fate that was hanging over him. He felt, indeed, that no matter how drastic it might be, Karnak deserved it. The manner in which he had deliberately attempted to murder the detective had alienated every ounce of sympathy that Lee might have had.

Since there was nothing to be done in this room, Lee quickly passed out, switching off the light, and relocking the door. He returned to his own bedroom, and seized the telephone.

"Sorry to keep you waiting so long, old man," he said.

"Good gad! I thought you'd forgotten all about me!" protested the doctor. "What's the idea, Lee?"

"Karnak has been taken away—kidnapped," replied Nelson Lee. "You were five minutes too late, Brett, or I might have put a stopper on the scheme."

"My dear man, I rang up as soon as I could——"

"Quite so—I'm not grumbling," interrupted the detective. "In fact, I'd like to commend you for being as prompt as you were. And I want to hear the full story."

"Well, it was this way," said Brett. "I was having a pipe in bed, and reading, when the night bell rang——"

"Don't trouble to tell me all about it now," broke in Lee. "I'm going to slip some clothes on, and meet you somewhere. We can't discuss this matter satisfactorily

over the telephone. Can you be at the stile in Bellton Lane in exactly twelve minutes from now?"

"I expect so—but it'll be a rush."

"All right—I'll meet you there in twelve minutes," said Lee crisply. "I've got to dress, don't forget, or I'd give you even less time."

"Hang it all, I've got to dress, too!" snapped Brett.

They hung up a second afterwards, and Lee lost no time in fairly leaping into his clothes. When it came to a matter of urgency, Nelson Lee could beat any school-boy in the art of dressing. The clothes went on him as though by magic, and in four minutes he was ready.

Without arousing anybody in the school, he slipped downstairs, passed out into the Triangle, and let himself out into the lane by means of the small private gate—of which, of course, he had the key.

In the meantime, Dr. Brett was dashing into his clothes—he had no desire to walk about the country lanes any longer in his pyjamas and a dressing-gown. He congratulated himself that he had done wonders.

And he even chuckled, in spite of the gravity of the affair, as he approached the stile. He was confident that he had beaten Leo with ease, and he resolved to have a quiet cigarette on the stile while he waited.

But a figure was already waiting there.

"Well done, Brett!" came a quiet voice. "twelve minutes to the second!"

"Confound you, Lee, I can never give you a surprise!" grumbled Dr. Brett. "I thought I'd beaten you."

"Sorry, doctor—I didn't want to disappoint you," said Lee. "But I understood this matter was important?"

"Yes; so it is. Sorry if I appeared indifferent," said Dr. Brett. "I tell you, Lee, I've had the very deuce of an experience. In fact, the most rummy affair that's ever happened to me. More like a nightmare than anything else. Listen carefully, and I'll tell you the whole yarn."

And while they walked fairly briskly, Dr. Brett explained precisely what had taken place. He told Lee how those men had surrounded him on his doorstep, and how they had compelled him to accompany them at the point of the dagger. He further went on to describe the walk through the night, and the subsequent ministrations to the man with the poisoned arm.

And Brett was so engrossed in his talk that he did not even know that he and Lee were progressing over the fields at a sharp walk, and that they were getting ever nearer to the edge of Bannington Moor.

"Very remarkable, indeed," said Lee, at length. "As you say, Brett, an astounding experience. Well, personally, I think you are very lucky to have come out of it so well—and doubly lucky to get the ten pounds, Upon my soul. Brett, you haven't got many patients who pay such princely fees!"



The two men lowered the unfortunate Dr. Karnak foot by foot to the waiting pair below.

"I wouldn't mind having a patient like that every night," said Brett. "But the thing that's worrying me is this: Where was I taken to, and what's become of Karnak?"

"Have you really no suspicion of the direction you took?"

"Not a ha'porth," replied Brett. "All I know is that I was marched across fields and meadows, and that finally I was taken into this queer house with the black draped room."

"Not a house, Brett—not a house," corrected Lee.

"What do you mean?" asked the doctor. "And, by Jove, where on earth are we going to? Why, we're on the moor! And I hadn't noticed it until this minute. What's the game, Lee?"

"We are going on a little investigation, Brett—that is, if you are game," said Nelson Lee. "There is just a possibility that we shall be able to rescue Karnak from these enemies of his."

"But, man alive, this is nonsense!" persisted Brett. "How can you know where to look?"

"Because the chances are a hundred to one that Karnak has been taken to the same place you were taken to."

"Of course. But where was I taken to?"

"The deserted quarry—which you now glimpse ahead."

"The quarry!" echoed Brett. "Look here, Lee, this is little short of miraculous! How on earth could you deduce, from my remarks, that I'd been taken to the quarry? Did you see some clay on my shoes, or something?"

Nelson Lee laughed softly.

"Fortunately, I am not one of those fiction detectives," he chuckled. "I am not empowered to perform such marvels of detective investigation. No, Brett. Let me assure you at once that I claim no credit. I have known for days that these Egyptians—these enemies of Karnak—have securely lodged themselves in the labyrinth of tunnels which open out from the quarry."

"Oh!" said Brett slowly. "So that's it?"

"Yes, that's it," agreed Lee. "From your story I can clearly follow that you were actually taken along one of these tunnels. In your blindfolded and muffled condition you thought that the dull sound of your footsteps was caused by an avenue, or a path through a wood. In reality you were walking along that tunnel. And the room draped in black was actually a cavern. The rich carpet on the floor no doubt helped to deceive you."

Dr. Brett was further bewildered.

"It seems altogether too ridiculous," he muttered. "Of course, I'm not doubting you, Lee, but it certainly does seem queer."

"It not only seems queer, but it is queer," replied Lee. "But I think a climax is at hand to-night. I am glad of it, too. We will go cautiously now, Brett, and I think it will be better if we do not converse."

They were actually entering the quarry, and a few minutes later they reached the dark cavity which denoted the entrance to the disused working—the tunnel that led deep into the bowels of the earth.

Nelson Lee was thankful that these strange Orientals did not trouble to set any man on guard. They believed themselves to be quite secure, and apparently thought this precaution unnecessary.

"They're a rummy lot," breathed Dr. Brett, as they entered the tunnel. "You say they worship this moon god? And yet they're always invoking the aid of Allah. What do you make of that?"

"These men are no doubt faithful to Islam in a way," breathed Lee. "But they regard the moon god as an additional diety. I don't pretend to know much about them and their religion, but they are obviously fanatics. And, as you know, Brett, fanatics are an irresponsible lot, at the best."

Lee reminded Brett that silence was to be the order, and they proceeded upon their way. The detective, who knew these tunnels practically by heart, penetrated deeper and deeper into the maze.

And at length with that odour of incense strong in their nostrils, the pair found themselves creeping towards a glow at the end of a short tunnel. They had not encountered a soul. And this was easily explained, for a ceremony was on hand that required all the faithful ones to attend. They had little fear that an interruption would come.

A few moments later Lee and Brett wormed their way to the end of the tunnel,

and they found themselves gazing upon an extraordinary sight. It was one that caused Brett at least to stare in open-eyed amazement.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TEMPLE OF SILENCE.



SILENCE brooded over the whole scene.

The quaint figure of the moon god was illuminated by the braziers on either side, which were now flaming and creating a ruddy glow. Near one of the divans, on a kind of platform, sat three robed figures. The man in the centre was apparently the High Priest, or whatever he called himself.

He was the patriarch with the white beard. All were attired in Oriental robes, and they appeared to be sitting as judges.

Other figures were standing round; but the most striking figure of all was that of Dr. Karnak himself. For he was bound hand and foot to that huge stake in front of the idol.

And Dr. Brett caught his breath in sharply as he saw that small bundles of faggots were piled round Dr. Karnak's feet. And there were little barrels of oil and other inflammable matter.

Was it possible that the wretched man was to be burnt at the stake?

Dr. Brett was so horrified that he clutched at Nelson Lee's arm. But the detective motioned him to be silent.

The least sound indeed might have betrayed them.

For in this temple of silence it would have been an unwise thing to speak at all. Brett hardly realised it at first, but the trial was progressing all the time.

Whether the men were talking together Lee could not definitely say. If so, they spoke in the faintest of faint whispers. Dr. Karnak was conscious now, and his eyes were wild and staring.

"Mercy, O Great One!" he pleaded, his voice breaking the silence strangely. "I am but dust beneath thy feet! I am unfit to scrub the floors of thy house! I repent my sin, and Allah will be merciful! So it is written, and thou canst not alter—"

"Be thou silent, O treacherous dog!" said the bearded man, also in Arabic. "Thou art for ever cast out and accursed. For hast thou not lived as an unbeliever? Hast thou not turned thy back on the ways of the Faithful? Base, traitorous infidel! Thy hour has come and nought will save thee! Long have we waited for this day, and great have been our pains to bring thee hither. Even now thy very spoken words are an insult to Baal, who watches over us even as Allah!"

Karnak said no more. Indeed, he seemed too exhausted, too utterly spent for further conversation. He appeared to be on the

verge of a breakdown. And he hung there, in his bonds, breathing with difficulty.

But it was apparent that his fate was to be too horrible for contemplation. Burnt at the stake! It was the punishment for all who turned traitors to the moon god.

And now it was fairly obvious why these worshippers of Baal had been at such enormous trouble to bring Dr. Karnak actually into their own haunts, instead of dealing with him drastically in the open. For this punishment, and this one punishment alone, was adequate. And it could only be performed in the Temple of the Moon God.

And while this scene was going on, while Dr. Karnak lived through those moments which were likely to be his last, three tense and thrilled figures crouched up in that cavity far above.

They were, of course, Reggie Pitt and Tommy Watson and myself. Events had been happening so rapidly that we had scarcely moved. We had been trying to decide upon some plan whereby Handforth & Co. could be rescued, when Dr. Karnak had been brought in.

And we had watched, fascinated, while he was bound to the stake, and while other preparations were made. Handforth & Co. meanwhile had been left in their fetters, chained to the wall. They were given no attention whatever. For the time being it seemed they were safe.

But what if they, too, were to be sacrificed at the stake? The thought was too appalling for contemplation.

But to even think of going to the rescue of the unfortunate juniors now was out of the question. For one thing, we did not know the way down into the cavern, and if we searched these passages for the correct route, we might lose ourselves and possibly fall into the enemy's hands ourselves.

So we decided upon the other alternative. And while we watched the preparation of Karnak's fate, we quietly and skilfully made an improvised rope. Coming along the passage, I had noticed a heap of old canvas thrown aside and obviously of no use. At the time I thought little of it, but when the question of a rope cropped up, I remembered.

And that canvas, torn into broad strips, and tied together, made a most excellent support. One end of this was knotted round a great projection of rock. And so we were ready when the time came.

We should merely have to throw that canvas rope down and slither to the floor of the cavern, one after the other. But it was no good thinking of that just now. At the first sign of movement we should be seen and should simply deliver ourselves into the enemy's hands.

Our only course therefore was to wait. And while we waited a change came over the scene below. Karnak had started speaking, and the spell of silence seemed

to be broken. And suddenly Reggie Pitt grasped my arm.

"Can—can you see something over there?" he breathed tensely.

"Where? Oh, you mean——"

"Yes—that tunnel entrance," whispered Pitt.

I gazed keenly, and my heart gave a jump. For I saw two dim figures. They were much plainer to us than they were to the Egyptians on the floor of the temple."

"The gov'nor!" I muttered. "And there's somebody with him——"

"Dr. Brett, I think," said Tommy Watson.

"Yes, by Jove, you're right!" I exclaimed. "And this means that there's going to be some action in a minute or two. We'd better hold ourselves ready to join in at the right moment."

"Look here," breathed Reggie. "They're all looking the other way now—the whole bunch. If we look alive we can slip down this rope and edge our way over to Handforth & Co. before we're spotted. Shall we chance it?"

"Yes," I muttered. "I don't care now the gov'nor's here."

To think was to act, and a moment later I was cautiously sliding down the canvas rope. The very instant I touched the floor Pitt came down after me, and Watson followed.

So intent were the Orientals on their murderous task that they saw nothing of us. We were in deep gloom, and this helped us greatly. And without losing a moment we edged our way round the cavern wall to the spot where Handforth & Co. were fettered.

I had an idea that Nelson Lee had spotted us, and I was hoping that our presence would not upset any of his plans. Still, it was better that he should know, so there could be no misunderstandings.

We found ourselves opposite the chums of Study D, and they were thrilling with excitement, having seen our approach long since. Handforth's greeting was characteristic.

"And about time, too!" he said tartly.

"You rotter!" breathed Church. "These chaps have risked everything to help us, and all you can do is to grumble——"

"I'm not grumbling," growled Handy. "They're bricks—they're topholders! But they might have come a bit sooner, that's all!"

"Don't be too sure that you're going to be freed even now," I whispered. "Let's have a look at these anklets."

I bent down and quickly examined the clasps. And I felt relieved when I saw that the iron locking devices were simply operated by powerful springs. The human hand alone could not force the cuffs apart.

But in a moment I had taken a heavy clasp-knife from my pocket and I snapped open a blade which was really a screw-driver. Forcing this into the crack in the

metal-work, I exerted my strength and the clasp sprang back with a click.

Handforth was free. And Church and McClure were treated in the same manner in quick succession. The six of us were now at liberty, and still the enemy had not observed our movements, for they had no time to devote to us. We crouched against the wall, watching.

"Jolly good of you to come like this," muttered Handforth. "My hat! My ankles are as sore as the dickens."

"Never mind the soreness," I said; "you're free!"

"If we'd come before we might have saved Handy from being sore," said Pitt drily. "And, what's more important, we might have been out of this place by now. Somehow I think we'd better vamoose."

"And leave all this excitement?" asked Handforth.

"Yes; there's nothing like seizing an opportunity while it lasts," replied Reggie. "My dear chap, we don't want to end our earthly existence in flames, do we?"

Handforth looked at the bound Dr. Karnak and shuddered.

"Yes, we'd better go," he said huskily. "It's—it's awful. But can't we do something to help the rotter? I think Karnak's a beast, but it's simply horrible to see him in this fix."

Before our discussion could go further the next move came.

The "judges" had been talking among themselves, and at length the chief man rose in his seat and held up a hand.

He gave a sharp order, and although we could not understand his words, the action that followed was significant enough. For one of the attendants thrust a torch into the flame from the nearest brazier and it quickly flared up. With this in his hand he approached the stake.

"No!" screamed Dr. Karnak wildly. "You fiends!"

In his dire extremity and excitement he spoke in English. The man with the torch paid not the slightest atom of notice, but bent down, intending to thrust the flame among the faggots and oil.

I felt something seem to clutch at my heart. Why didn't the gov'nor act? Was he going to see this man put to a horrible death? I opened my mouth to give a great yell, so that attention would be diverted to me. But before I could utter a sound, Nelson Lee's voice rang out, clear and sharp.

"Hold!" he exclaimed curtly.

The man with the torch swung round, startled. And all the others stared blankly at Nelson Lee and Dr. Brett, as they stepped out of the tunnel into the big cavern. Nelson Lee was holding a revolver in his grasp.

"I call upon you to surrender," he shouted. "Every man here will stand perfectly still and raise his hands above his head."

The Egyptians stood stock-still, but did

not raise their hands. And the white-bearded man cursed with all the flowery fury of his native tongue. He called upon Allah to strike down these intruders.

"Apply the torch!" he shouted. "Heed not these infidel dogs!"

The man with the flare attempted to obey.

Crack!

Nelson Lee's revolver spoke, and a bullet sang past the man's ear. He dropped the torch to the ground, and stood there shivering with fear. And then Lee acted in a different manner.

He ran forward, and whipped out of his pocket a hand-grenade. He held it aloft, the other hand being ready to release the safety catch.

"Knowest thou what this is?" he shouted in Arabic. "Perchance thou fought during the big war? Know, then, that this bomb explodes even as I hurl it among thee. Hold still, every man, or it will be released!"

There was something in Nelson Lee's voice that arrested the Egyptians as they stood. And Dr. Brett, who had received his instructions earlier, ran forward on the second.

He arrived at the stake, and four swift slashes of his open knife cut through the ropes. Dr. Karnak staggered into his arms, nearly fainting with the awful shock of his experience.

And it had all happened so quickly that his enemies had not realised that Lee could hardly have hurled a hand-grenade at that moment. They were startled into inactivity.

"Boys," called out Lee steadily. "Come here at once!"

He said no more, but it was enough. We sped round the cavern and were soon at the gov'nor's side. He had seen us earlier and knew that we were free to come.

"Along the tunnel—run!" he commanded. "Do not wait for us. Get into the open and return to the school. Hurry!"

We sped away, although we badly wanted to see the termination of this affair. In fact, it seemed like turning tail when the danger was at its worst. So instead of speeding away, we paused soon after entering the tunnel.

At the sight of Dr. Karnak staggering away, aided by Dr. Brett, the Egyptians seemed to go mad with frenzy. They lost their fear, and came dashing forward, their knives glittering evilly.

With a click, Lee released the catch of his grenade and hurled it into the very midst of the berobed throng. They turned as they saw it coming, attempting to flee.

The bomb struck the ground, sparks flying from it in myriads. Screaming with fear, the Orientals scattered in all directions. And Nelson Lee and Brett, taking Dr. Karnak between them, rushed him out into the tunnel. They had no desire to wait longer. They didn't want to see the end of the affair.

They had hardly got twenty yards down the tunnel when a dull boom sounded. Lee took not the slightest atom of notice, but pressed on, forcing the half-fainting Karnak along with him.

And at last they reached the outer air, where the moon was still shining serenely down, peaceful and calm. Out here, in the old quarry, it seemed impossible that such bizarre events could have been taking place.

"Wasn't it a bit drastic, old man?" gasped Brett.

"The hand-grenade?"

"Yes," said Brett. "Some of those fellows must have been blown to atoms."

Nelson Lee gave a grim laugh.

"Surely, Brett, you know me better than that?" he said. "It was quite an ordinary grenade in general appearance, I know; but it happened to be filled with the contents of a harmless firework. I had it by me as a curio, and I thought it would come in handy. Noisy, Brett, but no more. It wouldn't do more than scare a man at close range."

Brett looked relieved.

"That's fine," he said. "And it worked just as effectively as the real thing."

Half an hour later we were all in St. Frank's, including Dr. Brett. He had come along to examine Karnak, who was apparently in a very bad way. The shock to his whole system was so great that he hardly had strength to talk. There was a wild look in his eye, and at the same time

an expression of untold relief. He was put to bed, and Lee made quite certain that he used a room on the opposite side of the school.

"We will not discuss matters to-night, Dr. Karnak," said Lee quietly. "But after what has happened, I think you will fully appreciate that your presence at St. Frank's would be a mistake."

Dr. Karnak looked at Lee with an expression which the detective could not define. Perhaps Karnak was unable to analyse his own emotions. He had attempted to kill Lee, and yet it was Lee who had saved him from a horrible death.

"I realise, Mr. Lee, that my position in the school has become untenable. And to-morrow I shall tender my resignation," he said. "For the present I beg of you to let me rest."

And Nelson Lee retired—coming out into the corridor to pack Handforth & Co., and the rest of us off to bed. He informed us that our story could wait until the morrow.

And Dr. Karnak's bolt was shot. He was booked to leave the school almost at once, and not one of us felt sorry. But even then, at the eleventh hour, the Egyptian's enemies did not acknowledge defeat.

For the climax of the whole strange series of episodes was almost at hand. And this climax was to prove worthy of the previous happenings. I might as well say at once that, extraordinary as the night's adventure had been, even more extraordinary happenings were to follow.

THE END.

Editorial Announcement.

My Dear Readers,

The surprising discovery of the Temple of Silence, hidden away in the catacombs of Bannington Moor, and the rescue of Dr. Karnak from being burnt at the stake by his enemies, are significant of the approaching crisis to the extraordinary adventures of Dr. Karnak. The ultimate fate of the Egyptian curator will be told in next week's story, "The Schoolboy Spy; or, The Wages of Treachery!" In my opinion this yarn is quite the best the author has written in the present series, and when you have read it, I am sure you will say the same.

MR. BRISCOE'S ORIGINAL SKETCHES.

Send along a photo of your school if it has not already appeared in the Mag., and should Mr. Briscoe decide to make a sketch from it for his wonderful pen drawings in the school series, you will be sent the original drawing after it has been used for reproduction.

THE AUTHOR'S PORTRAIT.

It is about time I said something about when the long-awaited portrait of Mr. Brooks is likely to make its appearance in

THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY. If I can induce him to visit a photographer next week—from the time of writing—it will appear in about a fortnight from the time you read this. Mr. Brooks is one of those exceedingly modest gentlemen who will face any ordeal before that of the camera. Since, however, he has promised to do so, you may depend that he will not disappoint you, my chums, and I will let you know the glad news a week in advance of the date when the portrait will appear.

THE COMING NEW SERIES.

I wonder if any of you, my chums, can guess what the new series will be about? Supposing you were the author, what would you select for the forthcoming series? I don't expect anyone will guess correctly what I have in store for you, for as far as I know the new series have never been done before. I can tell you this much. These coming stories will rank as among our author's greatest achievements. Look out for announcement next week!

Your sincere friend,

NIPPER.



MY AMERICAN NOTE-BOOK

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



No. 10. AMERICAN SHOPS THAT ARE DIFFERENT

TAKING the American shops as a whole, they are practically the same as the shops in England. Of course, over in New York they call them stores, although just recently it is becoming quite the vogue to use the English word of "shop."

Such establishments as the big department stores, grocers, butchers, bakers, haberdashers, drapers, milliners, tobacconists, etc., are practically identical with their English prototypes.

But there are some shops which are different, and I propose, in this little article, to deal with them, as I feel that it will be of some interest to the average British reader.

I have mentioned butchers among the above, but you never go to a butcher-shop in New York—it is always called a meat market. And a fish-shop is generally attached to it. Fishmongers seldom carry on that business alone. And fish in New York is always called sea food. You don't go and ask for fish, but "sea food." It seems rather strange at first.

In America a chemist's is always called a drug store. And the drug store, let me add, is very different to what the uninitiated would expect. The American drug store is more of a social club than a chemist's. There is one of these establishments at practically every street corner. There must be thousands of them in New York alone.

Their chief business seems to consist of serving ice-creams and mineral waters, sundaes, frappés, seltzers, and so forth. The soda fountain of a drug store usually occupies one entire side of the shop. And all the way along the counter are fixed seats, with swivel tops. Practically everybody in England and Scotland and Wales has seen these in the comedy films.

And ice-cream and iced drinks can be purchased all the year round. It matters not if the temperature is below zero outside, the drug store is always cosy and warm, and you can lounge there and consume chilly dishes to your heart's content—or until your cash gives out.

The drug stores do a big business, too, in sweetstuffs and tobacco and cigarettes. For every drug store is also a confectioner's

and tobacconist's—to say nothing of being a stationer's shop included, with photography and books and magazines and novelties as helpful side-lines. It is astonishing how many of these establishments there are, and how they all seem to flourish.

In consequence of the drug stores being so versatile, there are comparatively few sweetstuff-shops—which, in America, are always called candy stores. Everything is candy. You want chocolates—you ask for candy. All this type of sweetmeat, including marzipan, creams, and such-like, come under the term of soft candy. Toffee, boiled sweets, and similar confections are "hard candy."

Another shop in America that we hardly see in London is the ubiquitous delicatessen store. This is a kind of equivalent to our ham and beef shops, but totally different, too. It is a place where one can purchase every kind of cooked food. And most of them sell general grocery, too.

At these delicatessen stores you can buy any kind of salad your palate longs for. You can get roast chicken, beef, lamb, pork, smoked sausages—frankfurters—pickled fish, and a hundred-and-one other ready-to-eat delicacies that I cannot possibly remember. And these places—in New York, at least—frequently keep their doors open until one or two o'clock in the morning. So it matters not how bare your larder may be at supper-time, you can always pop out and buy food of practically any kind you wish.

There are no newspaper shops in New York. All the daily and weekly periodicals—and there are hundreds of them—are purchased from the "news-stands." These are dotted about at street corners, on all the subway platforms, the elevated railroad platforms, etc. And the newspapers do not publish any placards. But they make up for this by using enormous type on their front pages.

The barber-shop looks something like our own hairdresser's, but when you get inside, you find there is a difference—in the charges. And I feel that I can enlarge on the American "barber-shop" so expansively that there is certainly not room for the subject here. Perhaps I will deal with it in another article.

MR. CLIFFORD'S SPORTS "POW-WOW"

BEGINS IN THIS ISSUE!

No. 11. Vol. 1.

Edited by Nipper.

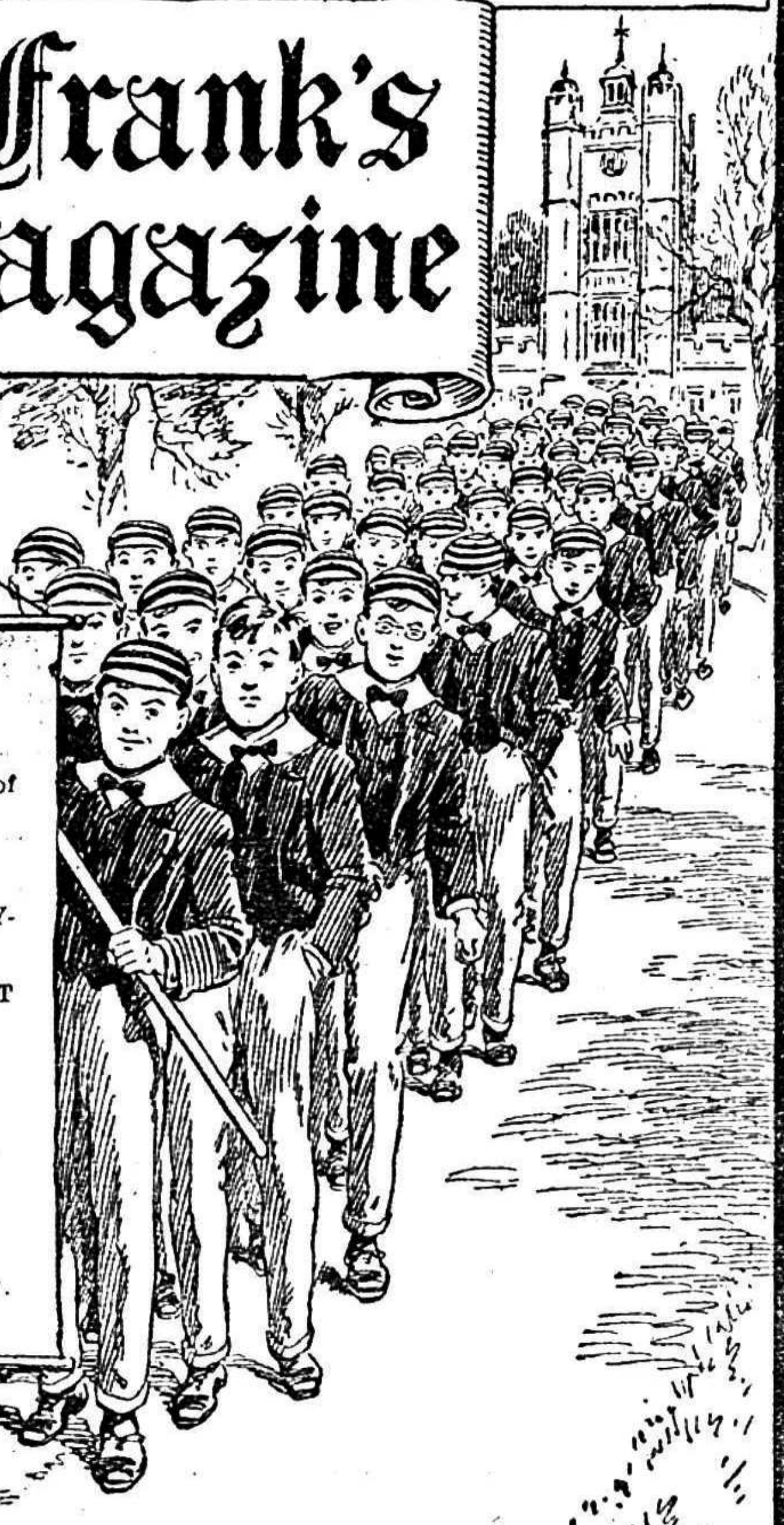
February 9, 1924.



St. Frank's Magazine

CONTENTS

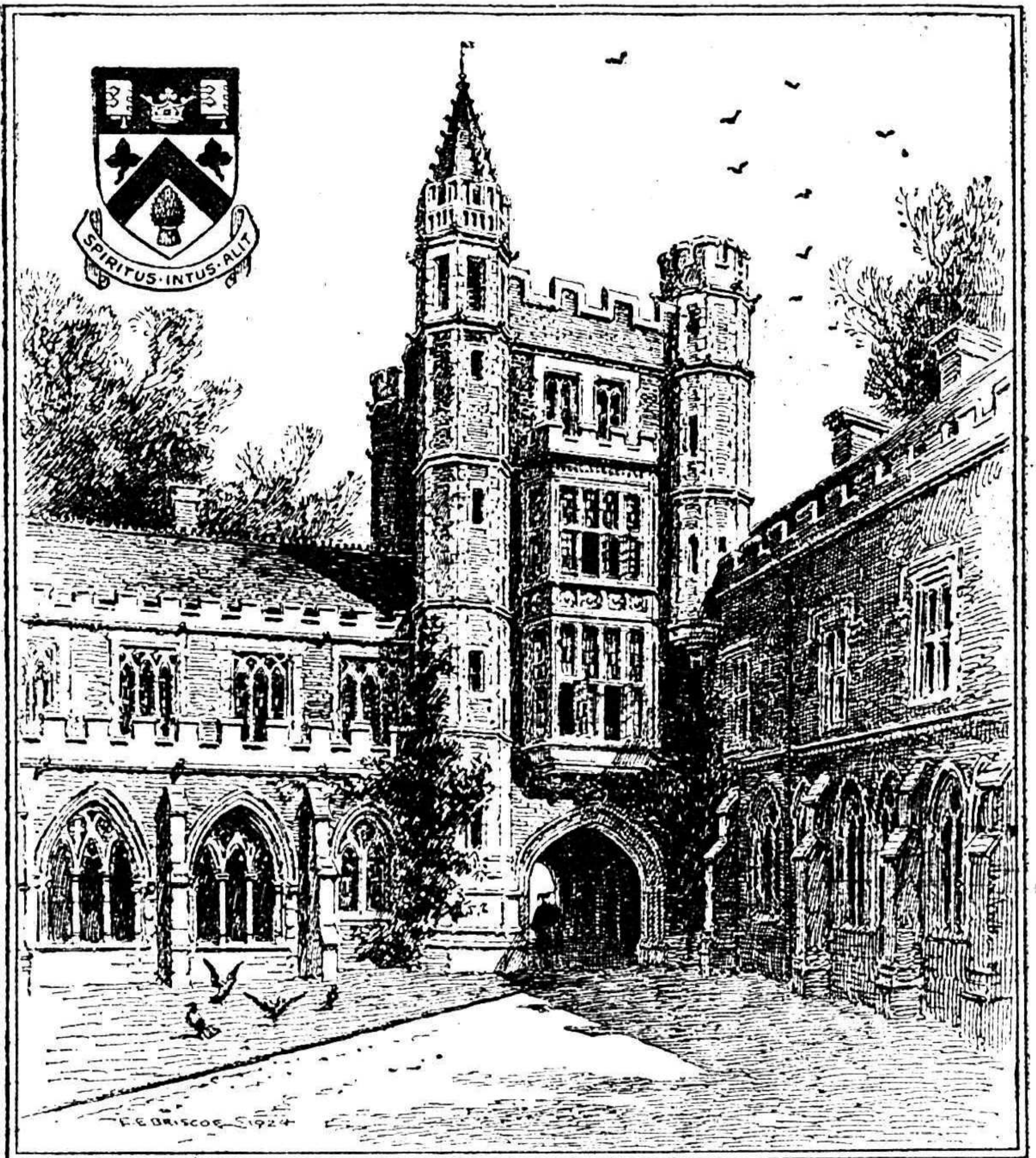
OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.
Splendid Full-page Sketch of
CLIFTON COLLEGE.
By Mr. E. E. Briscoe.
SCISSORS AND PASTE.
By the Editor.
ANYTHING AND EVERY-
THING.
By Hubert Jarrow.
THE THIRD FORM AT
ST. DICK'S.
A Complete Story.
By Willie Handforth.
GETTING ON TOP.
By Buster Boots.
E. SOPP'S FABLES.
MR. CLIFFORD'S
POW-WOW.
The Rules of Soccer.
PAINFUL PARODIES.
I Passed By Your Window.
By Clarence Fellowe.



OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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

No. 13. CLIFTON.



CLIFTON COLLEGE.

This well-known Gloucestershire public school situated at Clifton, near Bristol, was founded in 1862 by private persons, and became incorporated by charter in 1877. The first Headmaster was Dr. Percival, who afterwards became Bishop of Hereford. There are seven houses comprising the upper school, which is limited to 400 boys, and two houses for the juniors, who number 140. In addition, there are a

number of day boys. The school has a modern and classical side, and special departments for military training and engineering. It is well equipped with fine playing fields, laboratories, a museum, library, etc. Special facilities are given in training boys for the Army, and in this branch it can be justly proud, for Earl Haig was formerly a pupil here, and 8,063 old boys served in the Great War, 577 of whom lost their lives.



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

My dear Chums,

I have much pleasure in publishing this week the first of Mr. Clifford's sporting chats. And now that the ball has started rolling, I hope that our esteemed Sports Master will continue to illuminate these pages with his breezy talks for many weeks to come. The rules of footer with which Mr. Clifford begins his series are described in such a way that they can neither fail to interest nor to leave any doubt about their proper interpretation when applied to the game. It has been found impossible to deal with all the rules in one article. The author told me himself that he was astonished when he discovered, after filling many pages of foolscap, that he had only disposed of four rules. In his next article he will speak about the touchline rule and explain that most perplexing of footer rules, the off-side rule. I am sorry that there are no prizes to be offered for answering the questions correctly at the end of the article. They are put there as a test of what you know about the rules of footer as a result of having read Mr. Clifford's article. The correct answers will appear next week.

HANDY'S DELUSION.

"The Third Form of St. Dick's," by Willie Handforth, which takes up more space in the Mag. than it deserves, will probably bring forth some caustic remarks from his Major, the more so since it takes the place of a Trackett Grim yarn. Edward Oswald has only himself to thank for this. He promised me a complete story over a week ago, and just as we were going to press he appeared with only the opening of the story, casually remarking that he would bring in the rest of the copy in the morning. Handy is under the impression that the Mag. is simply

clamouring for his stuff, and that we would cheerfully suspend publication for a week rather than miss one of his stories.

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS AND OTHERS.

One of my chums writes to say that, though he is delighted with the Mag., he thinks we ought to give some of the other boys an opportunity of appearing in its columns. Every week, he points out, there are the same contributors. If some of the other fellows had a look in, he continues, it would add variety to the Mag. There is much truth in what my chum says. We should certainly get variety if I published every story and article that was sent in, supposing the Mag. was big enough to accommodate them all. That is to say, the contributions would vary in quality from good to bad and indifferent. Unfortunately, though we have a fair sprinkling of talented writers, it is not everyone who has the ability to write stories or articles that will interest or appeal to our sense of humour. Such features as E. Sopp's Fables, Painful Parodies, etc., seem to grow in popularity every week. Many of my chums tell me that they would like them to go on indefinitely. As for the stories of Trackett Grim, it would not do for Handy to know what my chums think of them. His head is swollen enough already.

WHICH IS YOUR FAVOURITE FEATURE?

Chums are cordially invited to send in their opinions as to which feature they like best in the Mag. As a matter of fact, I want you to settle a little dispute between myself and Pitt on this question. So often have I had to settle disputes between my readers that I am sure you will not mind doing the same for Pitt and myself on this occasion.

Your sincere chum,

NIPPER.



On Anything and Everything

GOSSIP OF THE WEEK

By HUBERT JARROW

AS far as I can see the time has come when we ought to combine, and pull ourselves together and do something to improve the general order of things. I mean, that's what ought to be done.

Here we are, getting on for the middle of Term, and almost before we know where we are, the Easter holidays will be upon us. And it would never do to let the Easter holidays come without having performed something worthy. If you understand what I mean, the idea is to pull our socks up, and get busy.

And the styles in socks nowadays are so varied that a chap absolutely doesn't know what to do. He goes into one of these sock shops, and the assistant spreads all sorts of dazzling colours in front of him. There are socks with stripes, and socks with silk checks, and socks with stripes and checks mixed. I mean, it's a bit difficult for a fellow to choose. He gets dazzled. And a pair of socks with checks all over them is horrible.

Chambers told me the other day that his father always goes about with cheques all over him. I don't know why. Because cheques aren't any good unless you put them in the bank—and sometimes they're not any good, even then. I mean, a cheque, after all, is only a mere scrap of paper. Unless the drawer has got money in the bank, the cheque's no more good than a bus ticket.

And I can't understand why these bus companies don't institute a different system. You get in a bus, and pay tuppence, or whatever the fare is, and you've got to hang on to that ticket all the time. I mean it's such a nuisance. Every time you keep the ticket handy, nothing happens. But the first time you lose the ticket, the inspector wants to see it. In my opinion, they ought to take your fare as you get off, and then you wouldn't have any time to lose the ticket. You could throw it away at once—or give it to one of those queer young people who buzz round buses, asking for used tickets. Good-

ness knows what they want them for, but I suppose it's just a habit.

And talking about habits, I've noticed that Armstrong has just developed a pretty bad one. He goes about biting his nails, and chewing them for all he's worth. Mr. Crowell told him about it two or three times, but he's no better. A chap who bites his fingernails is a lazy beggar. Even if he hasn't got a nail clipper, surely he could borrow a pair of scissors?

I saw a neat pair of scissors the other day. As a matter of fact, Handforth produced them in class, and started swanking about them. His aunt, or somebody, had sent them to him as a present. At the moment they're with Mr. Crowell, who has commandeered them for a week—until Handforth can learn not to bring them out in class. They're folding things, you know. You just release a spring, and before your very eyes some odd pieces of nickelled metal whizz out, and you find that you're holding a pair of scissors. I mean, a brainy idea. Of course, they won't cut, but you can't expect everything.

Chambers' razor won't cut, either. At least, to judge by his chin. It's queer how a kind of down is beginning to appear. You've only got to mention it to Chambers, and he seems to go mad. I don't know why a chap should be so sensitive because he happens to get a beard. (Better take care, old man. On the morning of publication, I should keep my eye open for Cuthbert, if I were you. He'll see red when he reads this article.—Ed., St. Frank's Mag.)

Beards appear to be going out of fashion. Even the Head hasn't got one. Of course, goats still have beards, but that's because they don't know how to shave. Fatty Little was talking about keeping a goat, so that he'd always have plenty of milk. But the other fellows told Fatty not to be an ass. To keep him always supplied, he needs a herd of cows.

I've got an uncle living in Cowes, and I've been there once or twice, but the Isle of Wight always strikes me as being a bit too quiet. Ryde isn't so bad, and it's pretty ripping in the summertime.

THE THIRD FORM AT ST. DICK'S

A Complete School Story

By **WILLY HANDFORTH**

JACK FEARLESS of the Third Form at St. Dick's stood with his hands in his pockets in front of the fire in his study.

Or! the boys above the first and second forms had studdies at St. Dick's. And the Third form studdies wer kwite as good as those of the other fellers.

Its orl rott he sed to his chums Fred Jolly and Tommy Ripping Its orl rott about those chapps in the Remove swanking about. And its joly wel got to be stoped.

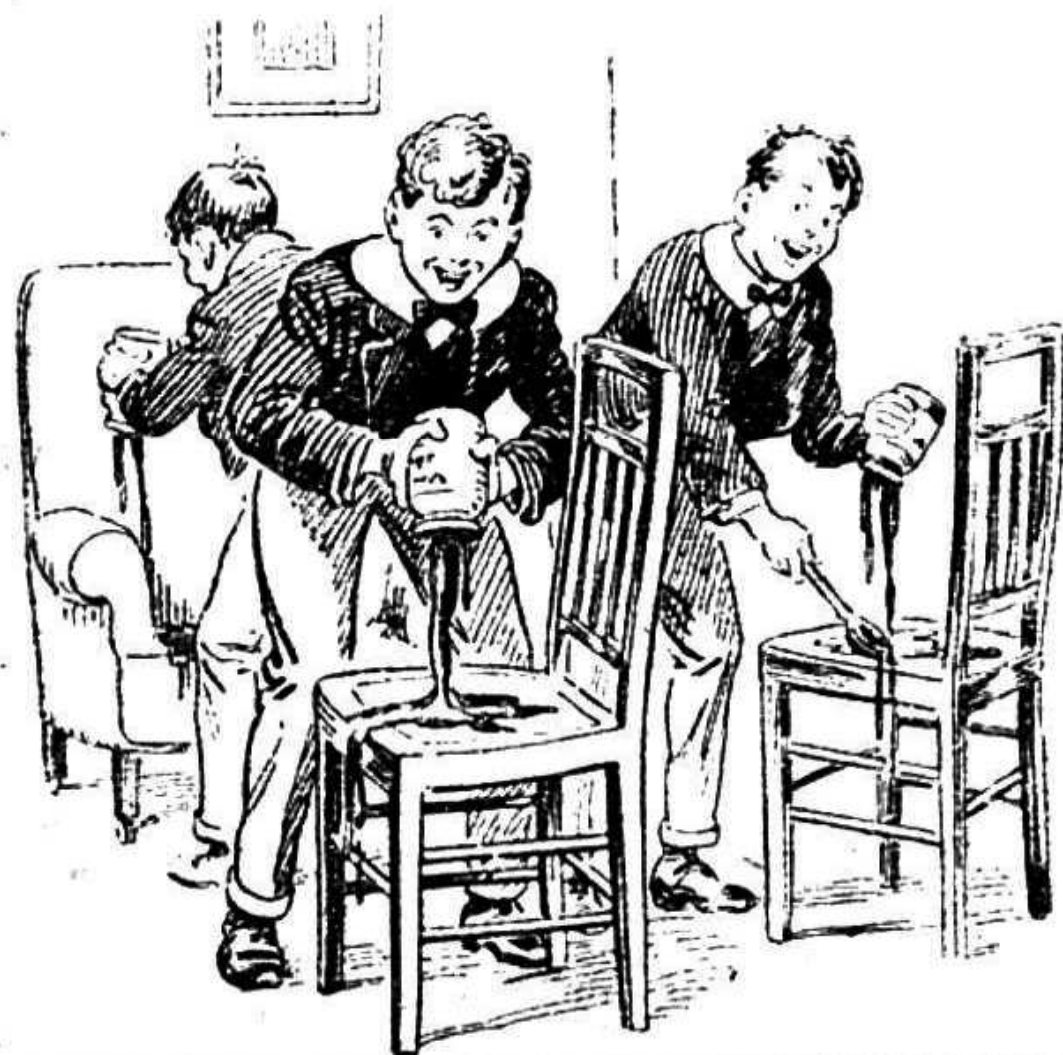
But how put in Fred Jolly.

Their a bulying lot aded Tommy Ripping only yesterday Gullwood gave me a roten clump on the hed becos I cheaked him.

Thats wot I mene sed Jack Fearless Gullwood and Co are a sett of cads and the otther chapps in the Remove wont stop them so it must be left two the Third.

Thats rite aggreed Tommy but how ar we going to do it?

Ive got a toping plann sed Jack Fearless If yew two will bak me up its bound to suceed.



They pored out the jam and marmalaid into the three chares that the studdy poseded.

Wot is it asked the too otthers in 1 breth. Jack Fearless tuk his hans out of his pckets and told his chumms. They laffed like annything.

Its a grate weze sed Tommy its bound to suceed. Lets do it now. Those Removites kneed taking down a pegg or 2.

So the 3 chumms went out into the pasage and up the stares to the pasage okupide by the Remove studdies. The studdy okupide by Gullwood and Co was number 5.

Jack Fearless cortiously listened outside Study 5 and then he gently pushed open the dor. Their was nowon inside.

As I thort he sed eum in yew fellers.

The 3 chumms went in two the studdy and clozed the dor after them. It was kwite plane that Gullwood and Co wud not be in yet awile.

Now then sed Fearless weel get on with the jobb.

He went to the cubbard and opened it. Inside wer a lot of things two etc. There wer pots of jam and marmelaid and other things. But Fearless only wurried about the jam and marmalaid.

He took out 3 pots and gave one eech to his chumms. They took of the tops and Fred Jolly laffed.

Ha ha ha he sed wont they be plezed.

Then Jack Fearless and his chumms began to wurk there weeze. They pored out the jam and marmalaid into the three chares that the studdy poseded!

Mi wurd! It was a bit thick!

I mene the jam was. Orl over the seats and on the backs the stikky likwid was pored. It wasent exackly likwid but it was jolly stikky I can tel yew.

Wot a jape rored Jack Fearless wen he had finnishid, ile bet thatull make them sit up.

O rarter sed Tommy Ripping theyle sit up right enuff but they wont be able to stand up.

Then Jack Fearless produced a long bit of thick tuine from his pokket. He tyde it to 2 of the legs of the table and lade it akross the flor to the dor. Then he put the mat over it so that it cud not be seen.

He opened the door and let the tune into the passage which was rather dark. Across the passage was a box room very rarely used.

Now yew chaps he sed we must shut the study door and hide in here. Gullwood and Co. will soon be back.

Ha ha ha roared the other 2 wot a bit of fun!

Allmost as they got into the box room they herd footsteps and Gullwood and Co came down the passage. They wer torking and laffing. They entered there study and left the door open.

Now for sum tee sed Gullwood throwing himself onto the largest armchair Belliver yew might get out the tee things and get the kettle boiling.

Rito sed Belliver and went to the cubbard.

I may as wel sit down 2 sed Fuller the third member of the tryo.

Belliver went to the cubbard and got out the tee things wich he set out on the table. Then he put the kettle on the fire and sat down in the third chair.

Now we shall see the fun wispered Jack Fearless.

He was rite. In five minnits the kettle began to sing.

Good muttered Fuller we shall sune get tee. Bi the way he added this chare feles sort ov damp. Wot can it bee?

Mynes rather stikky sed Gullwood.

And so is myne aded Belliver.

The three of them began to get up from there chares. Then the fun began!

For wen they got up the chares got up too!

Jack Fearless and Co laffed themselves herse. Gullwood, Belliver and Fuller danzed round the study with the chares fixed on behind as if they wer stuk on with glu!

It was an uprorious site!

Wow! shouted Belliver the chares must be hornted!

Yarooooooh yeled Fuller I carnt get mine off!

Its sum roten trik belode Gullwood.

Orl three danzed round the study with the chares stuk on behind? Yew never sor such a site! Gullwood was the first to get over it. His chare sudenly fell of him on two the flor.

He ran his hands over it. Then he snifed it like a pupp.

Its jam yew felows he cried.

He pulled the chares ov the other too.

So it is they said. Its sum beestly trik!

Wel lets hav tee sed Gullwood the ketels boiling.

They sprad the things out on the table. And Jack Fearless and Co were in the passage laffing as tho there sides wud brake.



They danzed round the study with the chares fixed on behind as if they were stuk on with glu!

Then the tee things were lade out on the table and the three sat down.

Now whispered Fearless.

He puled the string he held in his hand and the tee table moved over slitley in his direckshun.

Wot—did yew nottice that? asked Gullwood.

Fearless puled agen. The table muved agen!

I—I sa shouted Fuller the—the tables mum—mum—moving!

So it was! As Jack Fearless puled the string the table started to tople over. It was a site I can tel yu.

Its hornted shouted Belliver.

The three felows stud up and worched the table. It began to stand on won end. Then it slowly heved over.

With a crash orl the teethings fel to the flor.

Mi hat yeled the thre chumms its bewiched!

The tee pot fell into the cups and they fell into the playts and they orl crashed to the flor with a terrible noyse!

Gullwood and Co were uterly scayred but then Gullwood broak out.

I no he sed its a roten trik I can see a bit of string under the karpet.

He dashed to the door. But he was 2 late.

Cum on cried Jack Fearless to his chumms the jokes over.

They orl did a bunk and wen Gullwood rushed in to the passage their was no one theyre. The passage was empty. Gullwood was furrius. He smaked his chumms heds but they wer not to blame.

Thats won to us sed Jack Fearless weve skored this time.

And I think yew wil agree they had!

GETTING ON TOP

A Weekly Dose of Helpful Hints for the Weak

By **BUSTER BOOTS**

No. 2.—LIVE-WIRE METHODS

Variety Is Essential.

In my last article I mentioned that there were three cardinal rules for the boy who Meant to Get On. They consisted in Pep, Push and Punch, though, for the sake of Variety, I have altered their order.

You must have Variety. It is Essential. For instance, if we had no Variety, everything would be the same. Life would become a monotony. Everything would be at a dead level. This Mag., to quote an example, would contain precisely the same articles every week. You can all understand how dreadful that would be. Why they might all be written by Handforth!

The Case of Handforth.

Mention of this junior's name reminds me that I intended to touch on the careers of various juniors, pointing out where Live-Wire Methods would have been of great value.

Take Handforth's case. He is not a bad sort. He has several virtues. At least he may have, though they are difficult to remember.

Let us suppose he has. Let us say that he can Use His Fists. Now that is a great thing. Fists were given us to use. Otherwise we should have had fins like fish, or shells like oysters, or wings like birds.

Handforth has this great blessing; but what does he do with it. Does he use it? Does he, in fact, make use of his fists?

I consider he does not.

It is true he has given Church and McClure an occasional Punch. But that is not everything. Any average boy at St. Frank's could do that.

No. Handy has not used his fists. He has never knocked me out. I challenge anyone to say he has.

Don't Be a Back Number!

He has, in fact, forgotten Variety. If he occasionally used his fists on this principle of Live-Wire Methods, he would be introducing a Note of Variety.

It is this Note of Variety that brings Success. And without Live-Wire Methods there can be no success.

Take another Junior. I refer to Archie Glenthorne. A most amiable fellow in many

ways. He can eat, sleep, snore, speak, walk and wear an eyeglass.

Yet with these great Virtues, what is he? I repeat—what is he?

He is a Back Number.

Why? Because he has no Variety. In other words, he has never learnt to practise Live-Wire Methods.

If he had, what would be the result?

He would, for one thing, be able to talk twice as fast and use only half the usual amount of words. Added to this, he would be able to exist without the aid of Phipps.

If Archie Took Up My System.

Not that I object to Phipps. But he is a great Expense. And he Produces Nothing. He is a Dead Weight. He is a Parasite.

He does not Spin nor Toil. He is an Adjunct. A Millstone round Archie's neck. The whole business is Uneconomical. Now, by using my Live-Wire Methods, Archie would not only be able to do without the aid of Phipps, but he would learn to do for himself a number of useful and beneficial services.

He would be able to brush his own hair. He would be able to put his trousers in his press. He would be able to stick stamps on letters, to use a knife and fork at meals, to put on his cap right side in front, to shake hands, and numerous other actions which can only be performed by those who have gained Will-power.

Will-power.

Will-power is the Stock-in-trade of the Live Wire. It increases the Height, Removes Pimples, Drives Engines, Puts out Fires, and insures you against Burglary, Theft, Stealing, Headaches, Loss of Appetite, Overwork, and hundreds of other ailments.

If Fatty Little, for instance, was to adopt these Live-wire Methods he would never have to desert the Tuck-shop. He would never suffer from Loss of Appetite.

I think I have done enough in this article to show you that there is Something in What I Say.

It is easy to Succeed if you go about it the Direct Way.

(Next week I propose to deal more fully with the subject of Success at School. Don't miss my article on any account.)



E. Sopp's Fables

By
Edgar Sopp of the Fifth

No. 11.—The Fable of The Old Woman The Snobs, and The Gentlemen.

IT came to pass one wintry afternoon that an Old Woman departed from St. Frank's, carrying a Formidable Burden. She was well known, far and near, throughout the land, as the Old Clothes Lady. In other words, she was what is known as a Wardrobe Dealer. Or, to be more exact, she purchased, for a Mere Song, such articles of attire as had become Ragged and Worn.

And the Old Woman had tarried long in the Domestic Quarters of the Ancient House, and had done a Good Stroke of Business with sundry Under Servants. And her Spoils were such that she could hardly stagger under the Load.

And she was Weighed Down and bent nigh unto Double as she Staggered forth into the Lane. But, notwithstanding her age, she was Plucky and Determined, and she persevered womanfully.

Her progress was Slow and Tedious, for it was necessary for her to take frequent rests, in which to regain her Breath. For she was Somewhat Wheezy, and her Rheumatiz was affected by the Dratted Weather.

And, behold, three Elegant Youths strolled languidly down the lane, and they did see the Old Woman, and they did gaze with scorn and Derision. For these Elegant Youths were no less than Fullwood and Co., of the Remove.

And as they drew level with the Wheezy One, who chanced to be resting, they passed loud and sneering remarks, asking one another why this Disreputable Old Hag was allowed to visit the school, and why she couldn't do her Rotten Work in the dark, instead of getting in the way of Decent People, and spoiling the look of the Landscape with her Filthy Bundles.

And the Elegant Youths passed on, feeling that they had Done the Right Thing. And the Old Woman did gaze after them, and she did wonder What Manner of young gentlemen they happened to be—who sneered and jeered at a Poor Old Soul who was doing them No Harm, but was doing her best to earn an Honest Living.

Again she lifted her Formidable Burden, and again she journeyed.

And, lo, three other youths appeared, and they, too, overtook the old Woman. These youths were not so Elegant as Fullwood and Co., but they were nevertheless Smart. They were Armstrong and Griffith and Doyle, and they also graced the Remove with their presence.

It chanced that the Old Lady took up her Burden as they were about to pass, and, behold, she staggered under the great weight, and it was as much as she could do to keep from Falling. However, she managed to Hang On, and by this time Armstrong and Co. had passed.

They did not sneer, but passed whispered Remarks, pitying the Old Woman, and sympathising with her in her Great Trouble. They would love to Lend a Hand, but, of course, it was Out of the Question. Under no circumstances could they, the Sons of Gentlemen, be seen helping an old village hag with her bundles of Rotten Rags. It was altogether below their Dignity.

Thus, it will be seen that these Three Youths were different from Fullwood and Co., of whom not a redeeming word can be Set Down. While rejecting the idea of assistance, they did, at least, Feel Sorry for the Old Girl.

And it came to pass that even another Three Youths appeared. And they, too, overtook the Old Woman as she was about to lift her great bundle for another short spasm. To be precise, she did lift it, and Reeled Along under its overpowering weight.

And the Three Youths, who, forsooth, were Handforth and Co., took one glance at the Poor Old Soul, and they did dash forward with One Accord. And they did raise their caps, and ask if they could Do Anything.

And, lo, they waited not for the Old Woman to reply, but they seized the Bundle, and proceeded to carry it down to the village between them, much to the Relief and Gratitude of the Old Woman,

And it embarrassed Handforth and Co.

not one whit when the Vicar passed by, and gazed upon them. It in no way hurt them when the Head himself came by in his car. For they knew, in their hearts, that what they were doing was Right. Indeed, such was their Sterling Calibre, they could not have passed the Old Woman without offering a Hand.

Thus they came to the village, and they did carry their Burden right to the door of the Old Woman's cottage, which was situated in a quiet-portion of the High Street. And, behold, they were observed by Fullwood and Co., and by Armstrong and Co.

And dark and scowling were the faces of Fullwood and Co.; and haughty and proud were the faces of Armstrong and Co. And there were many remarks passed, so loudly that all could hear.

Fullwood pointed an Accusing Finger and spake, saying, what had the school come to when fellows Disgraced Themselves in this manner by putting their hands on the Filthy Bundles of this Rotten Hag? And Gulliver and Bell upheld their leader, and did likewise Wax Wrath.

And Armstrong also spake, saying that it was a Bit Thick for Handforth and Co. to Cheaper the school by carrying the Old Woman's bundle. He was sorry for her, but she shouldn't go about with such parcels. It was her own fault. And Griffith and Doyle concurred.

And Handforth turned, and his eyes did gleam. And, lo, he told the Cads what he thought of them in Plain Language. And he likewise told the Snobs what he thought of them, too.

And it came to pass that a Wise Man emerged from a shop doorway, revealing himself as Mr. Nelson Lee. And the Wise Man gazed approvingly upon Handforth and Co., and he did commend them warmly for their Humanity and their True Gentlemanly Behaviour.

Then did the Wise Man turn and revile the Cads and the Snobs, showing them up in Public for the Rotters they were. And they did crawl away, lashed under that Accusing Tongue, the centre of attention from the Whole Populace, who Cast them Out and regarded them with Scorn and Contempt.

MORAL: IT COSTS NOTHING TO ACT LIKE A GENTLEMAN.

There was an enthusiastic meeting in the Small Lecture-Hall, on Friday evening. Mr. Timothy Tucker took the chair, and after a few preliminary remarks, introduced the speaker, Mr. Timothy Tucker. The audience, consisting of Mr. Timothy Tucker, was in hearty accord with the speaker's remarks, and the meeting concluded with further enthusiasm. We have to thank the meeting's reporter, Mr. Timothy Tucker, for these notes.



PAINFUL PARODIES

PERPETRATED
By
Clarence Fellowe.

I Passed By Your Window

(With apologies to the popular song)

STUDY A.

I passed by your window,
And the air was all rank.
The fag-smoke in volumes
Just lay in a bank.
And, oh, I thought grimly,
You reckless young cads,
You're in for a licking,
A licking, my lads!

STUDY D.

I passed by your window,
And I ought to be dead;
For out came the coal-box
And inch off my head.
And, oh, I prayed softly
For Church and McClure,
And sent them some ointment
Their bruises to cure.

STUDY E.

I passed by your window,
And I heard a cracked voice,
For T.T. was spouting;
I didn't rejoice.
And, oh, I stole swiftly
Away from the scene
Convinced that Tim Tucker
Is right off his bean!

STUDY L.

I passed by your window
And I caught a great whiff
Of frying and toasting;
I paused there to sniff.
And, oh, I leapt nimbly
Clean over the sill,
But Fatty's queer mixtures
Have made me quite ill!

STUDY ?

I passed by the window
And didn't glance in,
From inside there issued
A terrible din,
And, oh, you snored loudly
As in there you lay—
You sleep in the night-time,
And doze in the day.



No. I. The Seventeen Rules of Soccer Football.

YOU'VE often heard of me in the yarns of Nipper & Co. that you read in in the N.L. Library week by week. I am the sports-master of St. Frank's, and I am as proud of that fact as all the boys here are to wear the St. Frank's colours. It is good to be a master when you have such intelligent and praise-worthy pupils as Nipper and the rest (though don't tell them I said so, or they might feel inclined to get swelled head), and I thoroughly enjoy my work.

But I am not content with being a master. However chummy one gets with his pupils, the fact that a boy is a pupil and the other is a master sets up a sort of barrier between them. I want you to forget, at these weekly pow-wows, all of you, that I am a master. I want you to regard me as your pal and as your trainer, if you will—one to whom you might look to answer your difficult questions, and one who will always be ready to help you.

WANT ADVICE ?—ASK ME!

If I can I will. Because I've said that, however, I don't want you to look upon me as a walking encyclopedia of sport. I know a fairish bit about most sports, of course, otherwise I shouldn't occupy the position I now hold; but I think I know most about the subjects that are most likely to interest you. If this sounds like blowing my own trumpet, then I must apologise; but there is nobody else to blow it for me, and I want you to thoroughly get it into your head that I am here to help you. That's that! Remember it in future when you seek advice.

WHAT SHALL WE TALK ABOUT?

This is our first pow-wow together, and it's quite an informal affair. If you find that you like it, then we shall have these same pow-wows every week until further notice; but if you get fed up, just write to the editor of this magazine and tell him so, and we'll call it off. Until we get fairly going, I am going to suggest the subjects of these weekly chats; after that I shall invite you

to name the subject you would like most to hear discussed. And as Soccer football is all the rage at the present time, I vote that we devote our first pow-wow to the game.

You all play Soccer, or are interested in it, otherwise you wouldn't be reading this article. You all play it, I say, in that rough and ready form in which most boys play it. Therefore, very probably, there are many of you who do not play the game as it should be played. And this is probably due to the fact that you have never made a serious attempt to grasp the rules.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RULES.

Obviously, to play any game properly, you must master the rules first. And as the F.A. laws are rather liable to confuse lads who have not attained that age of understanding which we usually connect with the senior boys, it is my purpose, in this and my next article, to endeavour to shed some light upon problems which may have perplexed you.

So get out your books of rules and follow me.

Come to the first of the seventeen rules which govern the game of Association Football. There is not much to hesitate over here, for the initial is one of the simplest in the series. It tells you the dimensions of the field of play, the various areas, all about the lines you find drawn out on a pitch, about the circumference and composition of the ball, and the number of players per side. If you study it intelligently you cannot go very far wrong; but I should like to say a few words which, while appertaining to the rules, are not made apparent in the text.

THINGS YOU MAY AND MAY NOT DO.

You know, of course, that in League, Cup, or any competition match, substitutes are not allowed in place of injured players, but in friendly matches this rule may be modified with the consent, before the match commences, of the opposing teams. You know, too, that a team consists of five forwards, three halves, and two full backs, and a goalkeeper, and that the accepted rule is to line

up your forwards in the front rank, your halves behind them, your backs in rear of the halves, and your custodian between the sticks. It is not always necessary to line up like that, however. As long as you have eleven men on the field, you can line up as you wish. You can even have ten of them up on the half-way line, if you like, and in some cases—which I shall explain at later pow-wows—it is advisable to depart from the accepted method of lining up.

Another two points in regard to this rule, which I think it will be worth your while to note, is that the home club should always supply the ball, and though it is always advisable to have goal-nets if possible, the laws do not force you to supply them.

Well, that's that. Any questions?

WHEN TIME MAY BE CURTAILED.

Now for Law 2, which tells you how the game should commence. The usual length of a game, as you know, is ninety minutes; but the laws do not insist that this ninety minutes should always be played. If, for any reason, you find it is advisable to shorten the ninety minutes, and the opposition is agreeable, the match will be quite valid, even if the full time has not been played.

There is a mistaken impression that the winner of the toss is only entitled to choice of ends. On an ideal football day, however, it is practically immaterial into which goal your side kicks, so the advantage of winning the toss would appear to be lost. As a matter of fact, the winner has the choice of two things—that of choosing a goal, or taking the kick-off. Remember that; remember also that oft-times it is advantageous to have the first kick at the ball.

HOW LONG SHOULD THE INTERVAL BE?

Just another point, which, I am sure, some of you must be a little hazy about, having seen persons who have nothing whatever to do with the game kicking-off. No man outside the two competing elevens may kick off, except in the case of a charity match, and in that case only.

There's not much to be said about Rule 3, though what I have to say, I shall have to spout out jolly quickly, as I observe I am already getting dangerously near to the end of my space. Law 3 mainly concerns the interval and the changing of ends. The usual time given to an interval is, as you know, five minutes, though in certain circumstances this can be extended, providing you have a good reason and the referee gives his sanction. At your own and your opponents' desire, it can also be considerably curtailed or, if you wish, entirely ignored.

TWO GAMES IN ONE.

There have been many instances in the current season where it has been advisable to cut out the interval, owing to bad weather or bad light, in which case, of course, the two teams simply change over at half-time and

play straight on. In regard to this it is as well to note that in Cup competitions where extra time is played, that after the first ninety minutes, the game starts all over again, the captain tossing for choice of ends once more, and the teams changing over at the half-time interval of fifteen minutes.

HOW GOALS ARE SCORED.

Law 4 tells us many interesting things. It tells us, first of all, how a goal is scored, but seeing that you all know as much about that as I do, I'm not going to dwell upon it. It also tells us that the team with the most goals at the end of the match is the winner, and that teams finishing with an equal number of goals to their credit have drawn—too obvious to need discussion. But I have sometimes seen warm arguments about goals being allowed after the goalkeeper had displaced the bar in saving. Should ever such an incident happen to your team, and you feel inclined to argue or dispute the legality of the goal which is awarded, just remember this—that the referee, first and foremost, is in charge of the game, and that what he says, whether you consider it right or wrong must stand. It is not sportsman-like to argue with the referee.

A CHANCE FOR YOU!

For the rest, I do not think that Law 4 needs any further comment, and a jolly good job for me, too; for here I am at the end of my tether. Next week I'll have another chat to you about these rules, and, meantime, if you fancy yourself as a football expert, you might derive some amusement from answering the questions I have written for you, and which concern the first four laws of Association Football. I should be pleased to see your replies, together with any other remarks you have to make, and I shall be also pleased to publish the most interesting in these pages later on. By the way, how do you like these pow-wows? You'll write and tell me, won't you?

OUR FOOTBALL EXAMINATION PAPER.

Can You Answer These?

- 1.—May a player leave the field during the course of the game? If so, for what reasons?
- 2.—What is the dimension of the area in which the corner kick is taken?
- 3.—In the case of an improper kick-off, what should the referee do?
- 4.—Supposing the ball, striking the cross-bar or the upright, came to a dead stop on the goal-line, would it be a goal?
- 5.—What would happen, supposing the ball struck the referee in front of the goal, and thereby prevented a possible goal?
- 6.—In order to see properly, what position should the referee take at the moment of a player taking a shot at goal?
- 7.—What are the general dimensions of the field of play?
- 8.—What is the size and weight of the regulation ball?

LISTENING-IN!

By TEDDY LONG

I FIRMLY believe that every person should be the possessor of a wireless set.

Wireless is undoubtedly a means by which one can gain information, and in these days information is a valuable thing.

I do not possess a set myself; but that is not my fault. I asked Archie, and several of the others who have plenty of money, to lend me the cash to purchase one, and although I explained how my allowance was overdue and all that, they had the indecency to refuse.

But there are other means of gaining information besides by wireless. "Listening-in" at keyholes is one of them.

This is a fine art, and I have worked it up to a remarkable degree. By "Listening-in" I get to know of all the plots and those kind of things often days before they are planned to take place.

(Although the above article is ascribed to Teddy Long, it was really written by Jack Grey.—ED.)

Often too, I make hard cash out of this secret information. A fellow who is to be the victim of a plot is usually grateful when he is put wise to it, and able to frustrate it. That's where I score.

Of course, there is the hard side of listening at keyholes as in any other thing. A chap is liable to be caught at it, and then there is trouble.

To an experienced hand like myself, however, such happenings are rare. When they do happen though, the utmost discretion must be used.

For instance; it would hardly do for me to stop and put up a gory fight, when caught listening. Prefects would be attracted to the scene, and they would probably not take the same view of eavesdropping as I do! Consequently I have to do a thing my whole being abhors—bunk.

So you see it is not all plain sailing; some of it is very rough! And it is only after great painstaking, that one can hope to become efficient.

Anyway I find that I've used all the space at my disposal, so for further enlightenment on this fascinating and instructive art, you must patiently wait for my next article.

ARCHIE ON THE 'PHONE.

By TOMMY WATSON.

SCENE.—The Sixth Form Room. Archie is at the telephone about to ring up his tailor. Phipps sits near at hand, the catalogue of latest spring fashions for men in front of him.

ARCHIE.—I want you to get me a jolly old number, please, miss.

No, not thunder. I said number. A telephone number, as it were. Yes. One of those strings of figures, as you might say. What's that? No, I didn't say fingers. I want Bannington double O double 2 six.

(Pause.) Hallo! I say, hallo! Is that you, dear old bean?

What? No, I don't want to speak to Mr. Bean. Absolutely not. I want Mr. Snippet, my jolly old tailor. Will you bring him hither?

What's that, old tulip?

No, I didn't say I wanted any heather! I'm not a gardener or what not.

Heather in a pot! I mean to say, are you trying to be a perfect idiot? Hang it all, don't you know; I want to order a new suit.

Yes, old fruit!

No. Dash it all! I didn't say I was

going to shoot. I wish you'd jolly well lend an attentive ear and all that sort of thing. I mean to say—Hallo!

Hallo, as it were. Phipps, old lad, the jolly old bean at the other end seems to be blowing his nose into the receiver.

PHIPPS.—If you will allow me, sir (takes receiver). Are you there? Good! Mr. Archie Glenthorne wishes to order a new suit.

ARCHIE.—Absolutely! Many thanks, Phipps, you brainy lad. I'll continue the shopping, so to speak. (Takes back receiver).

Hallo! I wish to be measured for a new suit.

What! No, not a blue suit. I said I want to be measured for another jolly old suiting. Yes! A gent's fashionable suiting.

All the latest gadgets in buttons and what nots. I mean to say, an absolutely priceless spring suit.

What! You don't sell soot?

I didn't say soot, old pineapple? I say I want—What's that? You'll send it up with the which? The BEEF!

How much do I want? I mean to say, you're enough to throw a chap's thinking outfit completely out of gear! I said I want—Suet? Who said suet? I mean to say, Mr. Snippet—

Hallo! What! You're not Mr. Snippet! Then who are you? Who? Mr. Cuttit, the butcher! Phipps, old lad, we've got the wrong number. Ring off! Absolutely!

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