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New Series No. 93, OUT ON WEDNESDAY, October 31st, 1931.

Remarkable disappearance of Vivian Travers during football match.

The MENACED



▲▲▲▲▲
A mummy comes to life
... mysterious, hair-
raising ... but there's
something rummy about
that mummy!
▼▼▼▼▼

CHAPTER 1.

A Packing Case for Travers!

THEY'RE a dirty pair!" said Edward Oswald Handforth, of the St. Frank's Remove, in a thoughtful voice, as he eloquently spread out his hands.

"Very dirty!" agreed Vivian Travers.

"Eh?"

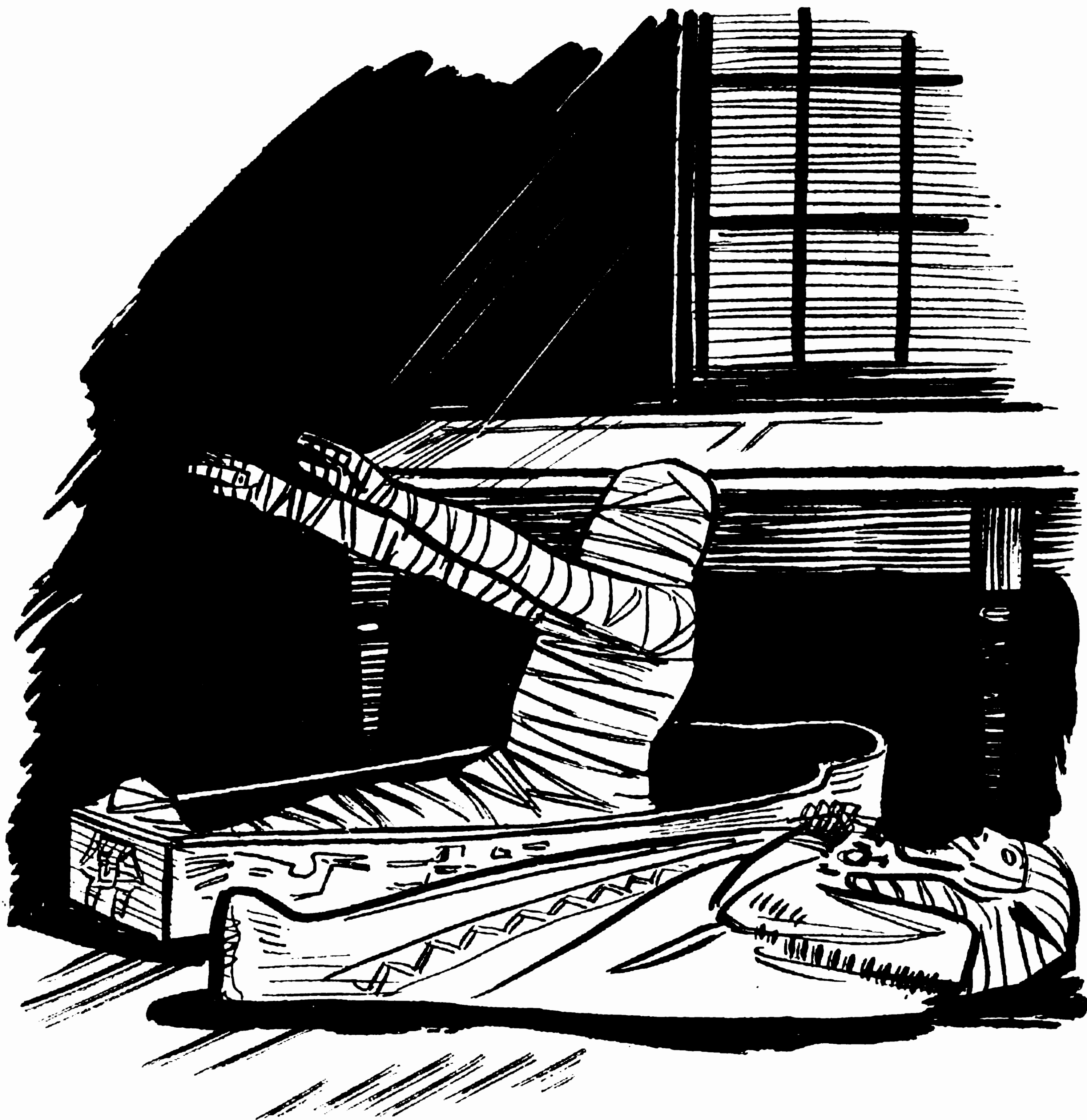
"I can't understand why you go about like it, dear old fellow," continued Travers, eyeing Handforth's hands with disfavour. "There's plenty of water in the school, and plenty of soap, too."

"What are you talking about?" gasped Handforth blankly.

Solve the mystery with Nipper and Co. in this thrilling complete yarn.

SCHOOLBOY!

By
**EDWY SEARLES
BROOKS**



"Didn't you just say that your hands were a dirty pair?"

"You—you howling idiot!" roared Handforth, turning crimson. "I was talking about the Yexford match!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The group of Removites round the steps of the Ancient House at St. Frank's chuckled amusedly. It included Nipper, the cheery Junior skipper, Reggie Pitt, Harry Gresham, Tregellis-West, and a few other stalwarts.

"Not my hands!" snorted Handforth. "The Yexford backs! You knew all the

time, you funny fathead, that I was talking about the Yexford backs!"

Vivian Travers, who was a cool, clear-headed, self-possessed junior, smiled urbanely.

"Well, well," he murmured. "You really should be more explicit, Handy, dear old fellow."

"Rats!" grunted Handforth. "We were talking about the Yexford match, weren't we? Thanks to our victory against Helmsford Council School—and away from home, too—we're nicely at the top of the League table. And we've got to stay there."

"Anybody might think you're the skipper, by the way you're gassing," said Church sarcastically.

"Oh, let him run on—he's entertaining," said Nipper, smiling. "And he's quite right, too. He's merely echoing the words I said about five minutes ago."

"And thinking they're his own," nodded Church with a sniff.

"We whacked those Council School chaps by two goals to one," said Edward Oswald Handforth stubbornly. "And why? Because we had to make up for the terrific defeat we had from the Grammarians, when they licked us by six goals to nil—at home, too! That was all the fault of that rotten ring of yours, Travers."

"But I thought you weren't superstitious?" murmured Travers.

"I'm not," retorted Handforth. "But most of you other chaps were so scared by that mouldy ring that you couldn't play your ordinary game. Thank goodness you were different last Saturday. Well, this week we're up against Yexford—and we all know that the Yexford chaps are as dirty as a muddy road."

"I'm afraid there's something in the charge, Handy," said Nipper regretfully. "That fellow Hopkins is the Junior skipper of Yexford, and he's a bounder. His first name may be Augustus, and his pater may be a bishop, but he's a blighter. Bevan and Williams, his pals, aren't much better."

"And what about Stillson and Neeve?" demanded Handforth. "They're the two chaps I was talking about—the backs. They don't care what dirty tricks they get up to on the field. They'd as soon trip a chap as look at him!"

"Anybody expecting a tuck-hamper?" asked Reggie Pitt abruptly.

"Tuck-hamper?" went up a chorus.

Football was immediately forgotten.

"I was only wondering," said the breezy leader of the West House juniors. "The lorry from the station has just arrived."

"Fathead," said Handforth, the hungry look dying from his eyes. "Fancy talking about tuck—just before dinner, too! Hampers aren't delivered on the goods lorry! This must be something for the school."

They drifted casually up as the big railway lorry lumbered further into the Triangle. It contained nothing but an enormous packing-case. It was at least seven feet long by four feet wide and deep. It was bound with iron.

"A piano for somebody," said Handforth. "Who's been ordering pianos?"

"It's not big enough for a piano, you chump," said McClure. "It might be a grandfather's clock—Hullo! I'm jiggered if it isn't addressed to you, Travers!"

Vivian Travers grinned.

"Look again," he said. "You must have read the name wrong—"

"But I didn't," insisted the other junior. "There it is, on the label—'Master Vivian Travers, Ancient House, St. Frank's College, Bellton, Sussex, England.' And look there! It's come from Egypt."

"What!" yelled Travers.

He had suddenly lost his airy manner, and now he became both serious and bewildered. One close look at the big label was sufficient; the great packing-case was, indeed, addressed to him.

"It's come from Cairo—yes, and Port Said," said Nipper, with interest. "It was shipped aboard the Hedingham Castle, and came via Tilbury Docks—"

"Well, I'm jiggered," said Travers uncomfortably.

A great packing-case addressed to him, and sent from Egypt! Of course, there wasn't any doubt that it had been sent by his father, who was in Egypt exploring the ruins of the Temple of Osra. But why his father should send such a huge case as this to St. Frank's was bewildering.

There had been many queer happenings at the school of late.

Mystery had piled upon mystery, and all the weird incidents had followed close upon the arrival of a supposedly "cursed" ancient Egyptian ring. Travers' father had sent it as a curio—a gold ring, set with seven blood-red rubies in the form of a seven-pointed star.

Ezra Quirke, the strange schoolboy mystic, who lived with his aunt at Market Donning, beyond Bannington, and who had once been a scholar at St. Frank's, declared that the ring was evil. He had advised Travers to destroy it; but Travers had not heeded. There had been apparitions, the unaccountable appearance of seven blood-red stars in the sky; more than one boy—and a girl, too—had been seized by unseen hands. A reign of terror had fallen upon the school—particularly by night.

The Egyptian ring had been burned—destroyed completely in the great furnace in the Ancient House boiler-room. Yet, later, Travers had found the ring intact in the drawer of his bureau! The juniors did not know it, but Bernard Forrest, the scamp of the Ancient House, could have explained that little mystery. For Forrest, in order to pay off a bookmaker,

had "borrowed" Travers' ring, and had replaced it later when his little trouble was over. An imitation ring had been destroyed. Still, all this added to the general mystery.

And even Forrest himself was convinced that the real ring possessed evil qualities; he would not have touched it again for a hundred pounds.

Things had been more or less normal at the old school for the past two or three days; and Vivian Travers and his school-fellows of the Remove were beginning to think that the "spell" was broken.

Now this immense packing-case arrived!

"It's funny that my pater hasn't written, telling me about this," said Travers, after the railway lorry had gone. "I don't even know what it is."

"You'll know soon enough if you open the case," suggested Handforth, who was naturally inquisitive.

By the orders of Mr. Alington Wilkes, the Housemaster, the case had been taken round to an outbuilding, where the contents—whatever they were—could be unpacked. But Travers was hesitating; and while he was hesitating a telegraph-boy arrived. The wire was for Travers. He opened it, read the contents, and a startled expression came into his eyes—almost an expression of fear.

"What is it, old man?" asked Nipper quietly. "Not bad news, I hope?"

"No, not bad news," said Travers. "This is a cablegram—from my pater."

"Oh!"

"It's about this big box," continued Travers, eyeing the packing-case with disfavour. "It contains a present for the school museum—and it's an Egyptian mummy!"

CHAPTER 2.

Exit Ezra Quirke!

"GREAT Scott!"

"Well, I'm blessed!"

"A mummy!"

There were exclamations of mingled astonishment and excitement. All eyes were turned upon the packing-case.

"Well, I must say your pater is doing the thing thoroughly," remarked Reggie Pitt, with a grin. "First he sends you a mystic ring, and now he follows it up with a genuine twenty-two carat mummy from the Pyramids! We ought to have some real mystery stuff——"

"Oh, do dry up!" growled Travers. "It's nothing, really. Only a present for the school museum."

"What does your pater say in his cablegram?" asked Handforth curiously.

Travers showed it to him, and the others were just as eager to read it.

"Packing-case containing mummy of Hebeb dispatched some time ago. You may expect it any day. Gift for school museum. Am writing to your headmaster.—FATHER."

"So this is the mummy of Hebeb?" said Nipper thoughtfully. "I wonder who Hebeb was when he was at home? Well, the message is clear enough, Travers. You'd better hand the giddy thing over to Professor Tucker. He's the curator of the museum—and mightily interested in things Egyptian, too."

"He'll go off his nut about this, I expect," nodded Travers.

Upon the whole he was feeling relieved. It was good to hear from his father. Only recently he had had a letter from Mr. Travers, and it was clear that Mr. Travers had been having trouble in Egypt; mysterious things had been happening, just the same as at St. Frank's. Mr. Travers' life had been in danger. There was an American explorer, named Wilbur Druton, who was somehow mixed up in the whole business. Travers had begun to wonder if there was some deep conspiracy afoot.

"I see that this telegram has come from a place called El Sidfa," he remarked. "I suppose that's the nearest telegraph station to Osra."

Interest in the mummy dwindled. As the property of Vivian Travers, it might have been intriguing; but as a present for the school museum, it was nothing particularly exciting.

"Funny thing your father didn't write," said Nipper, giving Travers a straight look.

"How do you mean?"

"Well, why go to the expense of cabling?" asked Nipper. "If he had written when he dispatched the mummy, the letter would have got here first, anyhow. Funny, too, that the cable should arrive within an hour of the packing-case."

"Coincidence, I suppose," said Travers, without giving the matter much thought.

"It may be—although there's just a hint that the cablegram was timed to get here at the same time as the packing-case," said Nipper shrewdly. "Still, I can't see that it matters much. There may be nothing in it."

"Nothing at all," said Travers, with a shrug.

Professor Sylvester Tucker, who, in addition to being science master, was an

eager amateur Egyptologist, was excited when he heard about the mummy. He promised Travers that he would have the case unpacked by two of the porters during the afternoon.

When lessons were over Travers came out of the School House with a number of other fellows, and his attention was immediately attracted by the slim, bizarre-looking figure which stood motionless near the fountain.

"Well, well," murmured Travers. "If it isn't our delightful friend, Ezra Quirke."

"He's heard about your giddy mummy, I expect," said Handforth, frowning. "Blow the chap! He gives me the creeps."

Quirke was attired in a long black overcoat, and he was bareheaded. His black, lank hair strayed untidily over his face. The face was pale, mask-like, and expressionless. There was something about his eyes, too, which made most people feel uncomfortable.

"What do you want, Quirke?" said Travers, speaking sharply—for him. "You've heard about the mummy, I suppose? Well, I'm not in the mood for hearing any of your fantastic rot. Understand?"

"My dear Travers, why do you jump at me like this?" asked Quirke reproachfully. "What ill have I done you? Have not my warnings been justified? From the first I have told you that the accursed ring of Osra is evil and——"

"I don't want to hear any more about that ring," broke in Travers bluntly. "I'm fed up with you; in fact, I'm fed up with this Egyptian business and mystery altogether."

"In a word, Quirke," said Nipper, "Travers is fed up."

"I regret that you should treat these matters with such levity," said Ezra Quirke in his toneless voice. "Yes, I confess that I heard of the mummy's arrival, and I was naturally interested. All things Egyptian attract me. Am I to understand that this mummy has come from the tomb of Osra?"

"You are to understand that you'd better mind your own business," snapped Vivian Travers irritably. "I don't care if the mummy came from Timbuctoo—or Halifax—or Togoland! It means nothing more to me than a chunk of well-masticated chewing-gum!"

"It grieves me to hear you talking in this strain——"

"How will it grieve you if I plant my fist in the middle of your map?" demanded Travers. "I'm the last fellow in the

world to treat a visitor with violence, but if you start any of your warnings, I'll slaughter you! That mummy is of no importance. It's only the well-parcelled remains of a Pharaoh or priest who went by the name of Heheb——"

"The Priest Heheb!" gasped Quirke, backing away, his flat eyes suddenly becoming aglow with fear. "Oh!"

The change in him was so marked that all the juniors regarded him with open curiosity. They were impressed. Vivian Travers merely glared.

"You'd better remember what I said," he exclaimed. "I've warned you——"

"You think I fear your fists?" interrupted Quirke passionately. "You tell me that the Mummy of Heheb is in this school! Oh, terrible! The Curse of the Ring of Raamses was appalling enough, but to have the Mummy of Heheb under this roof is a sign of disaster! There will be terrible happenings——"

"And one of them is going to start now!" roared Travers, exasperated beyond endurance. "Blow you and your piffle! Outside, Quirke!"

He pointed grimly towards the gates.

"But, listen, my friend——" began Quirke.

"I'm not your friend," yelled Travers.

He made a sudden dash, and grabbed Ezra Quirke by the collar of his jacket and the seat of his trousers. With a quick run, he hustled the strange boy towards the gates.

"But—but this is absurd——" gasped Quirke.

"Absurd or not, you're going out—on your neck," snapped Travers. "I've had about as much of you as I can stand!"

"Good egg!" grinned Handforth. "That's the way to treat him, Travers!"

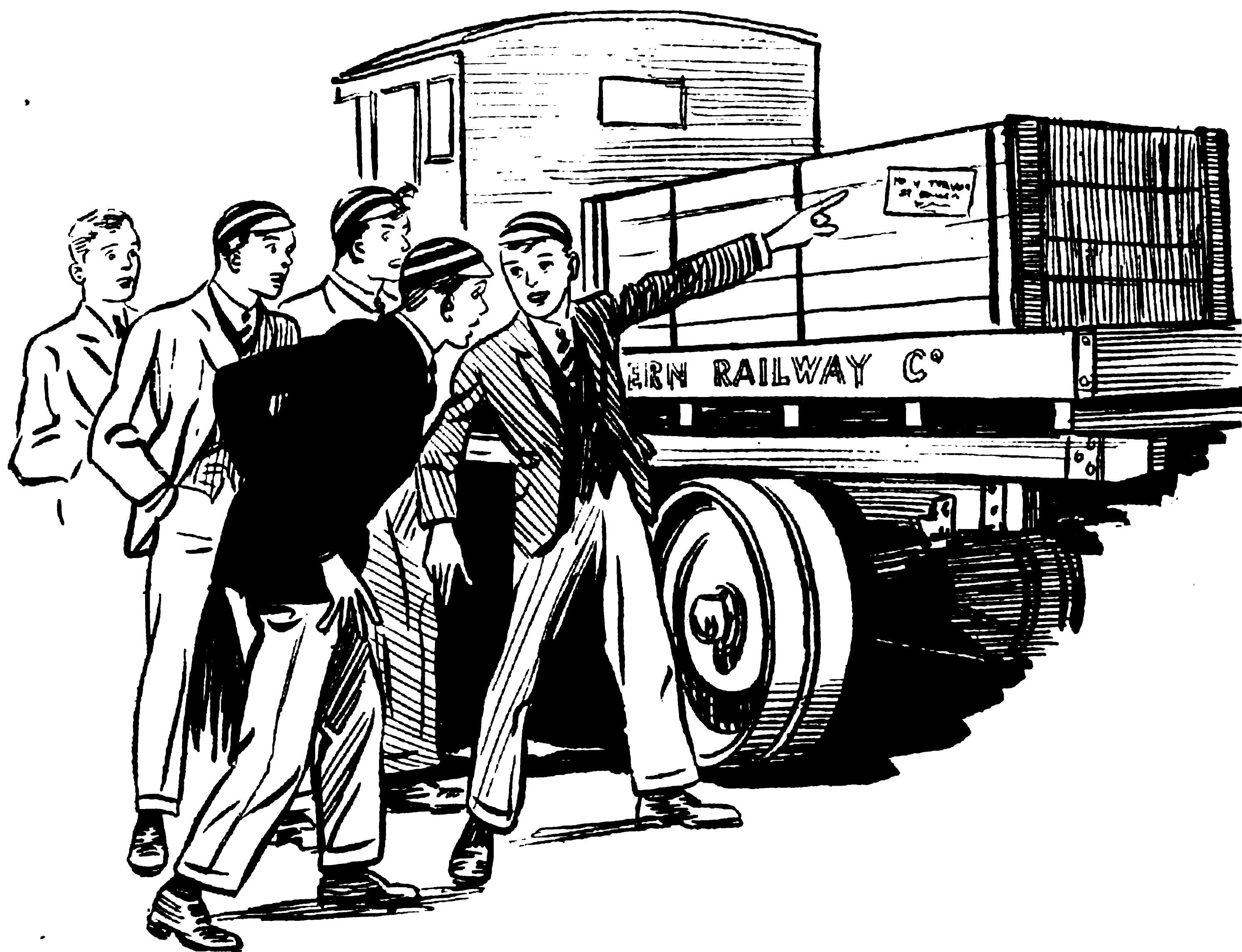
"Hear, hear!" chorused some of the others.

"You are mad!" shrieked Quirke. "The Curse of Osra is more active than ever; and with the Spirit of Heheb abroad——"

"Tell somebody else about the spirit of Heheb—we're not interested," retorted Travers. "So long, Quirke! Mind you don't make your bags dirty!"

With a mighty heave he pitched Ezra Quirke forward, and the unfortunate youth, losing his balance, went through the gateway literally "on his neck." He struck the muddy road, rolled over and over, and sat up, looking dazed.

"And that's that," said Travers, breathing hard. "I've been wanting to do it for days! I was ready to stand his rot about the ring, but when he starts on this mummy—well, it's more than my long-suffering nature can stick!"



On the lorry was an enormous packing-case. It was addressed to Vivian Travers, and it came from Egypt. This was another mystery which was to have startling results !

Ezra Quirke picked himself up without a word; he merely gave Vivian Travers a burning, malevolent look, and then turned on his heel and strode off down the lane.

wonderful antique casket. This casket was now resting on the floor of the museum, and the great lid had been removed. Within lay the mummy of the priest, Hebeb.

CHAPTER 3.

The Mystery Mummy!

“**D**ISAPPOINTING,” said Professor Sylvester Tucker, shaking his head. “Yes, Travers, I am afraid it is very disappointing.”

They were in the school museum, and Handforth & Co., Nipper, Tregellis-West, Watson, De Valerie, Gresham, and a few other Removites—who had all become suddenly interested in Egyptology—were standing round with an air of solemnity which befitted the occasion.

It was rather gloomy in the museum, for the light of the blustery October day was failing.

Professor Tucker had been very excited when he had heard the news; he had personally superintended the unpacking of the great case, abandoning a lecture so that he could be present. Inside the case was a

“Very interesting, of course,” said the professor. “Very interesting, indeed, Travers. But the—er—um—wrappings are singularly complete. In fact, much more complete. Not an inch of the actual mummy is visible.”

“But isn’t that usual, sir?” asked Travers mildly. “I thought all these Egyptian mummies were wound about with hundreds of yards of wrappings?”

Professor Tucker removed his glasses and bent closer over the casket. An indefinable odour of age was in the air; not unpleasant, but mysterious.

“Oh, no, Travers,” said the professor. “Certainly not! Some mummies are so—er—embalmed that the faces, and even the hands, are exposed. Shrivelled, of course, but nevertheless exposed. Here we have a mere mass of linen bandages, old and stained and by no means pleasant to look upon. H’m! I must confess I am grievously disappointed with your uncle.”

“My father, sir,” murmured Travers.

"What difference does it make, boy, whether he is your uncle or whether he is your father?" demanded the professor testily. "He has sent this mummy as a gift for the school museum, but it is quite uninteresting. A pity—a great pity."

The mummy was certainly well wrapped, and the boys all agreed that there was nothing much to look at.

"Now, in Egypt, in neolithic times," said the professor, with the air of a lecturer, "the—er—deceased were interred in skins, or mats. They were placed in sand-pits; and, as a result, there was a certain measure of preservation. But it was not until closed coffins were devised that the true art of mummification became developed."

"Yes, sir," said Travers dutifully.

"All sorts of substances were employed for the—um—purposes of embalming," continued the professor. "Bitumen, balsams, spices, caustic soda, and so forth. By the twenty-first dynasty—that is to say, some time after the year 1100 B.C.—the process became much more elaborate. Every limb and every digit was separately swathed in mummy cloth. Then the ancients sought to protect the bodies of their—er—dead by the placing of amulets, beads, and so forth, in the caskets. However, we need not go into this now. I don't suppose you are in the least interested."

Travers wasn't but he didn't say so. The professor drifted away, and left the museum. This great apartment, which was practically T-shaped, and which was filled with innumerable show-cases, was reached by passing through the school library in the Ancient House. The museum jutted out into the cloisters on one side, and it was in a very secluded part of the school.

"We'd better be going, too," said Travers carelessly.

But in spite of his tone, Nipper, at least, could see that he was uneasy. Professor Tucker's lack of interest disappointed him. If this mummy was a really good specimen the professor would have been intrigued, for he was a very learned Egyptologist.

"The Priest Hebeb?" the professor had said. "I've never heard of the Priest Hebeb! I'm not at all sure that there was a Priest Hebeb. And why, in any case, should he be embalmed and mummified? He could not have been anybody of much importance."

The juniors prepared to take their departure.

"Shall we put this lid on?" asked Handforth uncertainly.

"No reason why we should trouble," growled Travers. "The professor doesn't

seem to care. Still we might as well. Lend a hand, you chaps!"

They lifted the lid of the casket, and placed it in position. The juniors felt rather relieved; they did not like the look of that still shape which reposed in the casket.

"I can't help wondering why my pater sent the mummy," said Travers, after they had got outside. "If it isn't so very important——"

"You can't be sure, old man," interrupted Nipper. "Professor Tucker knows a good deal about Egypt—but his knowledge, after all, is infinitesimal. There is not a man in the world who knows very much about Ancient Egypt. The cleverest of them grope in the dark at times. Very likely Mr. Travers has something up his sleeve—something which will startle the world when he trots it out."

"Oh, let's forget it," said Handforth, giving himself a shake. "It's tea-time."

They went to their various studies, and they were glad enough to get into the warm, well-lighted rooms.

It was later in the evening that Professor Tucker happened to run across Cecil De Valerie in the Remove passage. The science master was looking very irritable, and he peered forward at Val with considerable impatience.

"Well?" he demanded. "Where are they, young man?"

"Eh? Where are what, sir?" asked De Valerie.

"Don't stand there asking me absurd questions," snapped the professor. "You know very well that I sent you to find my glasses, Handforth! Where have you been all this time? How do you suppose I can get on with my work without my glasses?"

"I'm not Handforth, sir," said De Valerie, smiling. "This is the first I've heard——"

Professor Tucker peered closely at him, bringing his face within a few inches of the junior's. The professor was exceedingly short-sighted.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed. "How extremely awkward! I thought you were Handforth! And you are Pitt all the time."

"No, sir; I'm De Valerie."

"Good gracious me!" said the professor. "You dark boys look all alike! Why don't you label yourselves? So you're De Valerie, are you? Well, do you think I care? Find Handforth for me at once! I sent him to the laboratory to find my glasses, and here I am, wandering about—— Upon my soul! Did I send Handforth to the laboratory?" he added

vaguely. "I don't think I did! How absurd! I sent Handforth to the village to buy me some stamps!"

De Valerie, who was used to the professor's absent-mindedness, chuckled inwardly.

"I think I know where your glasses are, sir," he said gently.

"Eh? What's that? You know— Good gracious, boy, why didn't you say so at first?" demanded Professor Tucker. "You stand there arguing with me, and all the time you know where my glasses are! Why don't you fetch them? Where are they?"

"In the museum, sir," explained Val. "Don't you remember taking them off when we were all looking at that mummy?"

"Mummy? What mummy?" said the professor. "I know nothing of any mummy. Of all the exasperating— Oh, yes! That wretched thing which was sent to the school by Gresham's father?"

"Not Gresham's father, sir— Travers' father."

"I don't think it's a good mummy," said the professor firmly.

"Probably the remains of some insignificant nobody. But what does it matter? We're wasting time. What were we talking about? Where are those stamps I sent you for?"

"You sent Handforth for the stamps, sir," said De Valerie patiently.

"Well, you're Handforth, aren't you?" demanded the exasperated science master. "I've never known such— Eh? What's that? You're not Handforth? Who said you were? And what does it matter who you are?"

"I've been telling you, sir, that your spectacles are in the museum," said De Valerie.

"My spectacles!" ejaculated Professor Tucker. "Then why, in Heaven's name, do you stand there gabbling like a fish-wife? If you know where my glasses are, why don't you fetch them? Go at once! Bring them to my study!"

"I thought perhaps you'd come with me, sir—"

"What on earth for?" interrupted the professor. "Are you afraid? Good gracious! A boy of your age and size afraid to go into the school museum! I am surprised at you, Pitt!"

"All right, sir," said De Valerie, giving it up as a bad job. "I'll go!"

CHAPTER 4.

Terror in the Museum!

CECIL DE VALERIE was hoping that he would find somebody in the library. The museum was reached through the library, and if there were any fellows there, they would go with Val to search for the professor's glasses. Somehow that musty room caused De Valerie to shiver. And there was something about that newly-arrived mummy, too, which made him uneasy.

"Oh, rats!" he muttered, when he opened the library door and found the room in darkness. "Just my luck!"

He switched on the lights, but they were so shaded that there wasn't much hope of the light penetrating into the museum. There was a switch in the museum, but it was one of those sort which could only be operated by a special key.

"It's a pity the professor can't look after his glasses better," grumbled De Valerie as he opened the museum door, and hesitated on the threshold. "Ugh! It looks beastly creepy!"

A moonbeam was straying through one of the museum windows, and it slanted across the spot where the ancient casket lay. No other light entered the room, except a dim glow from the library. The silence was almost oppressive—and it was only made all the more so by the vague moaning and whining of the wind outside.

De Valerie suddenly pulled himself together. What a weakling he was! It would only take him a moment to go to the casket and fetch the glasses; he had seen the professor place them on a little ledge at the angle of the wall. What was there to be afraid of, anyhow?

Val suddenly strode forward, and it was not until he was in close proximity to the casket that he suddenly halted, his breath catching with a gulp.

The lid of the casket was off!

And there, in the depths, lay the mummy! Yet Val had distinctly seen the fellows put that lid on—in fact, he had helped them to put it on. How could it have been removed?

He felt his nerve going—until, with a sudden laugh, an obvious explanation occurred to him. What an idiot he was! Somebody else had been in the museum, of course—perhaps some of the seniors—and they had had a look at the mummy. They had neglected to put the lid on again.

FIREWORK BLUES—

Causing E. O. Handforth to roar and dance! See next week's special Guy Fawkes story featuring the cheery Chums of St. Frank's. A riot of laughter and fun. Look out for this uproarious yarn.

Click!

It was a slight sound from behind him, and he spun round with a jump. The door, which he had left wide open, was closed!

"Hi!" shouted De Valerie breathlessly.

He dashed to the door, and grabbed the knob. He could not understand how the door had closed; he had not heard a sound until that ominous click had reached his ears. He turned the handle, but the door refused to budge.

"Here, I say, don't be a fool!" panted Val. "Open this door, whoever you are! Confound you! This is a dirty trick to play——"

He broke off, thinking that he had heard a faint rustle from somewhere in the museum. His heart was thudding. The silence was as intense as ever, except for the whining of the wind outside. The moonbeam, slanting through one of the windows, shone eerily upon the mummy in the casket.

Again and again De Valerie shook the door handle, and he was becoming more and more panic-stricken. The door was locked—yet there had not been a soul in the library. And if anybody was there now they would answer his shouts—unless it was being deliberately done as an ill-natured trick.

"Oh!" panted Val. "You cads! Open this door!"

He half-expected to hear chuckles, and the very thought made his cheeks burn. He realised that he was making a poor exhibition of himself. By a supreme effort he pulled himself together.

"You win," he said steadily. "But this joke's gone far enough, whoever you are. Open the door, and don't be an ass!"

Still there was utter silence.

De Valerie stood against the door, his heart thudding painfully. Again he heard that faint swishing sound from his rear—as though something stealthy had moved.

He looked round, trying to peer into the black corners of the museum. In spite of himself, his attention was drawn towards the moonlit mummy. And he felt himself growing rigid; it even seemed that the hair at the back of his head was rising at the roots.

For his horrified eyes saw something which robbed him of all his self-control. Slowly the mummy was moving—rising out of the casket!

A scream escaped Cecil De Valerie's lips. It came unbidden—he did not even know that he had screamed. He was stricken with mad panic. He leapt across the museum, flinging himself with all his force at one of the windows.

Cra-a-a-sh!

So great was the force of De Valerie's rush that the glass and the framework smashed to smithereens, and the terrified Removite plunged out headlong, to crash violently to the ground.

"GREAT Scott! What was that?" asked Nipper sharply.

He and Handforth were in the Triangle; they were crossing to the Modern House, to have a footer "pow-wow" with Lionel Corcoran and John Busterfield Boots. They had distinctly heard the crash of breaking glass—and just prior to that sound a vague-scream.

"It came from the cloisters," muttered Handforth. "I say, what the dickens——"

"Come on!" snapped Nipper.

They raced to the cloisters, spun round an angle of the old building, and were just in time to see Cecil De Valerie slowly picking himself up. Fragments of broken glass lay glinting in the moonlight.

"Val!" shouted Nipper. "What's happened? Are you hurt?"

"It moved—it moved," muttered De Valerie hoarsely. "The mummy! I tell you, it moved!"

Amazingly enough, he had come off with only a few scratches and bruises. So great had been the force of his charge that the damage was mostly confined to the window. Yet Val might very easily have injured himself seriously.

"The museum," muttered Handforth, looking up at the wrecked window in a startled way. "By George! The chap's scared out of his wits!"

"Pull yourself together, Val," said Nipper steadily. "Come along! There's nothing for you to be afraid of!"

They marched him out of the cloisters, and at length they reached the brilliantly-lit lobby of the Ancient House. They knew that something serious must have happened; for Cecil De Valerie was a level-headed fellow, and not at all given to absurd fancies.

"Hallo! What's wrong?" asked Travers curiously, as he came into the lobby with Jimmy Potts and Skeets. "For the love of Samson! Val's as white as a sheet!"

"What's happened?" asked Church and McClure, in one voice.

Others crowded round. The lights and the human companionship had a marked effect upon De Valerie. He recovered himself rapidly, but there was a defiant light in his eyes.

"How—how did I get out of the museum?" he asked in a low voice.

"Don't you remember?" demanded Handforth, staring. "You jumped clean



Quirke removed the wrappings from the mummy, and an extraordinary man, incredibly bony and shrivelled, stood revealed.

through one of the windows, smashing it to smithereens—framework and all!”

“We shall have to report that to the Housemaster,” said Nipper, whilst the others pressed round excitedly. “We needn’t tell any fibs, but we can gloss it over a bit. Now, Val, what made you lose your nerve?”

“You’ll all think I’m mad,” muttered De Valerie, “but when I got into the museum the door closed on me. I don’t know how. I was all in the dark, except for a stream of moonlight which fell on the mummy. And—and I heard funny, rustling sounds.”

“Oh, my hat!”

“Yes, yes!”

“And what then?”

“I looked round, and I saw the mummy moving,” panted Val. “Oh, you can look sceptical, but I tell you I saw it moving!”

“Rot!” said Handforth bluntly.

“It isn’t rot!” shouted Val. “I tell you——”

“Go easy, old man,” interrupted Nipper gently. “Your nerves were a bit on edge. You must have imagined it. The moonlight can play some rummy tricks, you know. Your own common-sense must tell you that an Egyptian mummy could not possibly move of its own accord.”

“It was rising,” whispered De Valerie, his dark eyes wide. “Rising up and up—in the casket!”

“Oh, crumbs!” said Church uncomfortably.

“I know it sounds silly—fantastic—impossible—but I saw it with my own eyes.” went on De Valerie, looking round more defiantly than ever. “I’m not a funk, you chaps! I’m not imagining anything, either. Don’t you believe me?”

They were silent.

"You don't—do you?" he demanded.

"Well, dear old fellow, it wants a bit of swallowing," said Travers gently. "You see, there's been such a lot of mystery about that rotten Egyptian ring of mine that anybody's nerves are liable to get on edge. And in a moonlit museum——"

"You think I got scared, don't you?" asked De Valerie fiercely. "Well, come to the museum now! Let's see if anything has happened to that mummy."

"A good idea," said Nipper approvingly.

They hurried to the library, and it was still empty when they arrived. The lights were on, just as Valerie had left them. It was Nipper himself who opened the door of the museum.

"You see?" he asked. "There's a spring-lock on this door, Val. Easy enough to open it from this side—but impossible to open it from the other."

"The door probably blew to in a draught," suggested Travers, nodding.

"But there wasn't any draught," protested De Valerie. "At least, I don't remember——"

"It's windy to-night, and a stray draught might easily have caught it," said Nipper. "Anyhow, let's go in."

He had an electric torch on him—and so had Handforth. They went into the museum—not without a quickening of their heartbeats. Some of the fellows hung back.

A cold wind was blowing in through the smashed window. The torchlights were directed upon the casket—and the first thing De Valerie noticed was that the lid was in place, just as it had been when Professor Tucker and the Removites had gone out earlier.

"But—but somebody must have been here," stammered Val.

"You've been here," growled Handforth.

"No! I—I mean, since I was here last," panted Val. "The lid was off, I tell you—and I saw the mummy rising——"

"I don't see how the lid could have got back," said Nipper, shaking his head. "Anyhow, we'll do the thing properly while we're here. Lend a hand, some of you!"

They lifted the lid off—and there, in the casket, was the mummy, as motionless and as mysterious as ever. Cecil De Valerie passed a hand over his brow.

"I can't understand it," he muttered. "I'll swear I saw——"

"That's all right," murmured Nipper. "You go along to the Common-room, Val, and sit in front of the fire. You'll feel better soon."

Somerton, who shared Study G with De Valerie, took him by the arm and led him out. Others went, too.

"What are we going to do about this window?" asked Handforth.

"Leave it as it is for the time being," replied Nipper. "Nobody is likely to get into the museum—and even if they did, they couldn't get past the door. Nothing can be done until to-morrow, anyhow. It won't do any harm."

The others were glad enough to get out of the museum, and Nipper was glad none of the prefects or masters had heard De Valerie's scream, or the crash. For that would have meant a lot of inquiries.

"Somehow, you chaps, I don't think we'd better report this affair to Old Wilkey until to-morrow," said Nipper slowly, when he and the others were in the library, and the museum door was closed. "We don't want any masters mixed up in this. And we might do some investigating of our own—to-night."

"By George," breathed Handforth eagerly. "Investigation, eh? What do you mean? Keep watch, or something?"

"Yes," said Nipper, nodding. "I can't get it out of my head that there's some dirty work afoot. You'll never make me believe that there's a supernatural explanation of all this mystery. And I'm suspicious of that mummy. I don't like the way it came into the school."

"How do you mean?" asked Travers, staring. "My father sent the mummy."

"Did he?" retorted Nipper. "How do you know? He didn't write to you, did he?"

"But the cable——"

"Anybody could have sent the cable," growled Nipper. "And it was jolly funny—that cable arriving at the same time as the packing-case. And look at Val's story, too. We know Val—and we know that he's not a funky, imaginative chap. I believe that something *did* happen in the museum a little while ago. I don't know what, but I'm certain that the lid of the casket was off. Val couldn't have made a mistake like that. There's some tricky business here, my sons."

"By Samson! I'm beginning to think you're right, too," muttered Travers, his eyes burning. "I'd give a term's pocket-money to get to the bottom of all this mystery!"

The library door opened, and Reggie Pitt, of the West House, came running in.

"I say!" he burst out. "We've just spotted Quirke's owl fluttering about amongst the chestnuts in the Triangle."

Nipper nodded.

"I'm not surprised," he said. "Another mystery touch, eh? I suppose you heard it hooting?"

"Yes," said Pitt. "Two or three of us went out—and there was the beastly thing, flying from one tree to another. It looked horribly eerie——"

"There's nothing really eerie about an owl," interrupted Nipper impatiently. "But just because owls fly about at night, people regard them as omens of evil, or some silly rot like that. Throw all those ideas out of your heads. That owl means that Quirke is somewhere about—and, to my mind, it's suspicious."

Little did those Removites guess where Ezra Quirke was—little did they dream of the amazing task upon which he was engaged!

CHAPTER 5.

The Man from Egypt!

WITH steady hands Ezra Quirke removed the linen wrappings from the mummy of Hebeb.

The only light which came into the museum was that of the moon, and occasionally even this would vanish as the moon became obscured behind a bank of clouds.

At intervals Quirke would pause, listening intently. He knew that he was taking a big risk. He had no right within the school museum. Yet, after what had recently happened, he did not think there was much chance of his being interrupted. The boys were not likely to come back to the museum during the hours of darkness.

Quirke had been waiting about outside—wondering, in fact, how he could get into the museum—when Cecil De Valerie had come plunging through the window. After the excitement had died down, Quirke's little problem had been solved—for he had found it very easy to climb through the broken window.

His present task was not so gruesome as it really seemed; for, after he had removed the outer bandages from the neighbourhood of the mummy's neck, he found the top section quite loose. The wrappings, in fact, were faked; the whole upper part was in the form of a helmet, and when Quirke exerted gentle pressure, it came away in his hand.

And there lay revealed, not the mummified head of a two-thousand-years-old priest, but the incredibly small head of a living man!

"You have kept me long, boy!" whispered a thin, foreign-sounding voice.

"I came as quickly as I could—almost immediately after nightfall," replied Quirke steadily. "What more would you have?"

"Help me," muttered the other briefly.

The rest of those "wrappings" were made in a similar way. They were cunningly devised. Within a few minutes, with Quirke's help, the amazing man who had come to St. Frank's in that mummy-case was standing up in the casket, stretching his bony limbs gingerly. All about him were the bindings, stained and musty, and apparently ages old.

The man, as he was now revealed, was one of the most extraordinary human beings imaginable.

His age was impossible to judge; he might have been anything from twenty-five to fifty. He was dark-skinned, and his hair was so close-cropped that he was almost shaven. His only clothing consisted of a loose cotton shirt and cotton shorts. His legs and arms were so incredibly bony that he could easily have obtained a job in any fair-ground as a living skeleton. His head was narrow, and no larger than that of a small boy. Clearly he was an Egyptian—and there could be little doubt that he was an Egyptian performer of some kind. A fakie—a man who earned his precarious living by performing tricks and stunts.

"Why have you come?" muttered Ezra Quirke. "This is risky, for if it is found out that I have been a party to this deception——"

"Boy, it is the order of my master," interrupted the other. "You have done your part? You have told the English boys of this school that the mummy is evil?"

Quirke quivered.

"I told them," he muttered, "but they would not believe. They threw me out."

"But they will believe," said the other. "Some of them were here not long since. One saw me moving. I heard somebody, and I thought he was you."

"So that is why De Valerie crashed through the window," whispered Quirke. "Now I understand! You were unwise; perhaps the boys already suspect."

"They are afraid—and before this night is out they will be terrified!" said the Egyptian. "I am here to work some of my wonders, yes? You know of me? You hear of Sata?"

"No," said Quirke. "I was told to watch—to enter the museum as soon as the casket had been unpacked. That is all I know."

"So you have not heard of Sata, the Magician?" murmured the other con-

temptuously. "You are a boy of ignorance."

Quirke gazed with unfriendly eyes at the strange man he had assisted.

"I do not like this trickery," he whispered. "It is dangerous. It is going too far. How did you come? Magician though you may be, you cannot tell me that you travelled from Egypt in a packing-case."

Sata laughed in a thin, unpleasant voice.

"My master is clever," he replied. "I come to England as an ordinary tourist; I come down to this village in the night. The packing-case is in the railway station, still in the truck. You see? I quickly take my place inside the casket. I do not wait long—not many hours. I come to the school as a mummy. And to-night I shall spread terror—and my master will be much pleased, and will gain much profit from my work."

"And the cablegram—the message?" asked Quirke. "That was sent by your master, too. A trick for this Travers boy, I understand."

"He is to be tricked yet more—and then will his father be defeated," said Sata cunningly.

IN the library Nipper and Travers were ostensibly engaged in searching through a big atlas for some geographical information. As it happened, however, nobody seemed keen on the library this evening. Not a senior had come in. And then Nipper remembered.

"Of course," he murmured, grinning at Travers. "Old Wilkey is giving one of his giddy lectures, isn't he? And you know how popular Old Wilkey is. All the seniors are there, I expect."

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"That means we shall have the library all to ourselves for the rest of the evening," nodded Travers. "Frankly, I can't see what good we're doing, dear old fellow. You don't seriously think that anything rummy will happen in the museum, do you?"

"There's no telling," replied Nipper, becoming grave. "I can't get it out of my head about Val. Something extraordinary must have happened in the museum—or he wouldn't have got so scared."

They were speaking in the lowest of tones, and occasionally either one of them would creep to the museum door and listen intently. It was Nipper's turn now. He straightened himself after a while, and he was frowning.

"Well?" breathed Travers.

"I don't know," said Nipper. "I thought I heard something—like whispering—but I can't be sure."

"I say, cheese it," protested Travers. "Who could be whispering in there? Nobody could have got in from outside—because Handy and some of the other chaps are watching."

It was quite true.

Nipper, whose suspicions were thoroughly aroused, was doing the thing properly. He and Travers would presently be relieved, but never for an instant would the library be left vacant. Nipper wanted to make absolutely sure that nobody entered. It was the same outside. Handforth & Co. were concealed somewhere near the cloisters, watching that broken museum window. If they saw anybody creeping near, they would give a signal. Unfortunately, Ezra Quirke had entered before the boys had taken up their stations. Thus, Quirke was in the museum all the time—but nobody knew it.

Travers went across and joined Nipper. They both pressed their ears to the woodwork of the museum door, and listened. Suddenly Travers found Nipper's gaze fixed upon him, and it was expressive.

"Did you hear?" breathed Nipper.

"Yes, by Samson!" muttered Travers. "What does it mean? I can swear I heard whispers just now."

"I'm going in," said Nipper grimly.

At that moment Handforth came into the library, with Church and McClure.

"Hallo!" he said. "What are you chaps doing?"

"Is everything all right outside?" whispered Nipper, leaving the museum door.

"Why, yes, of course," said Handforth, staring. "Three of the other chaps relieved us, so we thought we'd come along

"There's somebody in the museum," said Nipper.

"That's impossible," protested Handforth. "We've been watching the window all the time——"

"I don't care about that—there's somebody there," insisted Nipper. "Come on! We'll fling the door open suddenly, and give them a surprise."

Without waiting for the others to make any comment, Nipper seized the handle of the museum door, and with one pull he swung it open.

And there, facing the juniors, standing in the mummy casket, was the weird, skeleton-like figure of the Egyptian magician!

CHAPTER 6.

The Ghostly Priest!

"LOOK!" gasped Vivian Travers in a startled voice.

The apparition was unnerving enough. The figure was standing in the direct moonbeam, and it looked unearthly—ghostly. For the Egyptian was so thin, so scraggy, that it was difficult to believe that he could be a living man. He looked, indeed, like the thing he pretended to be—the risen mummy of the Priest, Hebeb!

Even Nipper was startled.

He did not know exactly what he had expected to see in the museum; but this mysterious figure, standing in the casket of the mummy, made him catch his breath in sharply. Handforth and the others, pressing from behind, pushed him forward into the museum.

At that very moment a black cloud crossed the face of the moon, and the room was plunged into darkness.

Thud!

The door behind the boys had closed—and the spring lock had operated! There was no way out for them—except by the window!

"We're trapped!" came a gasp from Church. "What's happened? Who closed the door?"

Nobody could answer. Ezra Quirke could have explained, for he had fastened a string to that door, and it was he who had pulled it to in the darkness. Quirke, unobserved in a dark corner of the museum, had been ready for this emergency—although he had never expected that the emergency would arise.

"Steady, you chaps!" shouted Nipper. "There's something crooked going on here!"

As he spoke he flashed on his electric torch, and the bright beam of light shot

out and split the darkness. But only for a second. A hand came out of the gloom and the torch was suddenly flung from Nipper's grip. It hurtled across the museum, crashed through the glass front of a show-case, and went out, the filament of the lamp smashed.

"Who did that?" yelled Handforth.

"I don't know," came Nipper's voice. "Confound it, we've no light now——"

He was interrupted by excited shouts from outside the smashed window. The boys who had been on the watch out there were attracted by the commotion. They came crowding to the window, full of eager inquiries.

"Did you see anything, you chaps?" asked Nipper sharply. "Did anybody come out through the window?"

"No!" said Fullwood. "What's happening? We thought we heard voices, and——"

"Look!" yelled somebody else, pointing.

Out there, in the night sky, seven blood-red stars were floating mysteriously in mid-air.

"Let's—let's get out of here!" panted one of the juniors, scared. "The place is haunted! That—that mummy——"

"Keep your nerve!" said Nipper. "There's no need to get frightened. If only we had a light——"

He broke off, the words dying on his lips. For dramatically, unexpectedly, a strange apparition had come into view, practically outside the other window of the museum. All the boys stared at it fascinatedly.

It was the ruddily-glowing figure of an Egyptian priest—a ghastly, weird-looking, phantom creature.

They all remembered it. For that strange figure had been seen before—since Travers had come into possession of the mysterious Ring of Raamses. And always its appearance had been preceded by the seven blood-red stars.

"After it, you chaps!" shouted Nipper. "I tell you there's trickery at work! Grab that ghost!"

He scrambled through the window, and Handforth and the others followed him in a rush. The phantom figure gave a low, horrible laugh, then, with one leap, it bounded into the air, passing higher and higher, rising incredibly over the great wall on the other side of the cloisters. And when it had reached its greatest height it suddenly vanished—faded away into nothingness, in mid-air.

"Oh!" went up a gasp.

Nipper was scrambling over the wall, and Travers was with him. The excite-

ment and confusion was tremendous. Half the boys were scared, and they hardly knew which way to turn. Only a few, such as Nipper and Travers and Handforth, kept their heads. But even they could do nothing. By the time they had climbed to the other side of the wall there was nothing to be seen. The Seven Stars had faded from the sky, and there was no trace of the phantom priest.

"Well, well," said Vivian Travers, taking a deep breath. "They're playing a fine game with us, aren't they?"

Nipper clutched at him.

"You stick with us, Travers," he said warningly. "Don't forget they're after you—and they might grab you in the darkness."

"By gad, I'm beginning to believe that you're right," said Travers. "At one time I was half inclined to believe that there was something supernatural about all this, but now I'm convinced it's all trickery!"

"This latest stunt was cleverly engineered," nodded Nipper. "Something was happening in the museum, and there was something human there, too—or that torch wouldn't have been knocked out of my hand. The apparition appeared at the right moment—on purpose to divert our attention. Travers, we were chumps to clear out of the museum like that. Let's get back."

Most of the others were anxious to flee for the brightly-lighted part of the Ancient House. They were feeling thoroughly scared. But Nipper was determined to take immediate action. He paused on his way back to the museum, and he grabbed Travers' arm.

"No, we'll go the other way," he said. "Quick! We'll get in through the library—and we'll see that the door remains open. I can get another torch, too! We're going to settle this thing once and for all."

The juniors rushed round to the front of the Ancient House, headed by Nipper and Travers. Most of them dashed through to the library—for, although they were scared, they were intensely curious, and they were irresistibly drawn to the museum.

The library was just as before. Nipper pulled upon the door of the museum and flashed the light of the electric torch—which he had obtained from his overcoat pocket—into the dark room.

And even Nipper gulped.

For there, silent and still, stood the casket, and the mummy of the Priest Hebeb was lying in its original position, wrapped up just the same. There was no indication that it had ever been moved!



Travers pulled open the drawer, and then gave a gasp of dismay. The seven-starred ring, which was the key to the treasure of Osra, had gone!

CHAPTER 7.

Travers Gets a Shock!

VIVIAN TRAVERS looked at Nipper incredulously.

"What do you make of it?" he whispered.

"I don't know—yet," replied the Junior captain. "I can only say that it's—suspicious."

"Oh, my hat! Let's get out of here," muttered Tommy Watson. "That—that thing we saw at first must have been a ghost! Here's the mummy, just as it arrived! How could a mummy come to life, anyhow? It's—it's impossible!"

"Keep your hair on, old man," said Nipper quietly. "When we came into this museum earlier a human figure was standing up in the mummy-case. We only caught a glimpse, and then the moon went in—and the library door closed on us. But we saw enough. We're not all crazy, and we all agree that a weird figure was standing in the casket."

"It must have been a ghost, as Watson says," whispered Church. "Nobody saw the figure afterwards—and then there was that phantom priest outside!"

"There are too many phantom priests," growled Nipper disbelievingly.

He turned his light on the door, hoping to find some explanation of the door's unaccountable closing. There was a little hole, freshly made, where a screw or an eyelet might have been inserted. As evidence of trickery, however, it proved nothing.

"Let's have a look at this mummy," said Travers, in a hard, determined voice.

They went across to the ancient casket, and Nipper flashed his light down upon the motionless figure.

"Jiggered if I can understand it," muttered Handforth. "The whole giddy business gets mysteriuser and mysteriuser—as they say in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.'"

"Fathead! You mean 'Alice in Wonderland,'" corrected Church from the rear. Handforth turned and glared.

"Is this a time for quibbling?" he demanded. "Always trying to bowl me out, aren't you?"

"Lend a hand here," said Travers suddenly. "We'll lift this mummy out of the casket."

"What!" gurgled Handforth, spinning round.

"Anybody got a knife or scissors?" went on Travers coolly. "We'll have these wrappings off."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Go easy, Travers!"

"I know what I'm doing," said Travers, almost harshly. "They think they can fool me, don't they? Well, they're wrong! Look here! This mummy is moving—it's breathing!"

Horried, the other juniors stared down at the mysterious figure. Nipper, looking closely, could distinctly see a trace of movement. He gave Travers a quick, approving glance.

"There's some trickery here all right," he muttered. "I suspected it all along, Travers. We mustn't let our imaginations run away with us. This is no mummy—it's a fake."

Four of them lifted the figure out of the casket, and laid it on the floor. The other boys, awed, stood round. It was a weird scene, with Nipper flashing the light of his electric torch upon the mummy.

With a sharp pocket-knife, Travers slashed through the linen wrappings, and in a moment he discovered that the entire upper section, like a helmet, was ready to

come away. He gripped it, and pulled. He caught his breath in, expecting to see—he knew not what.

The cunningly-devised "helmet" came away in his hands—and he stared at the face which was revealed. He stared in stupefied amazement.

"Quirke!" babbled two or three voices.

It was the face of Ezra Quirke! No mummy, no mysterious stranger—but Ezra Quirke himself!

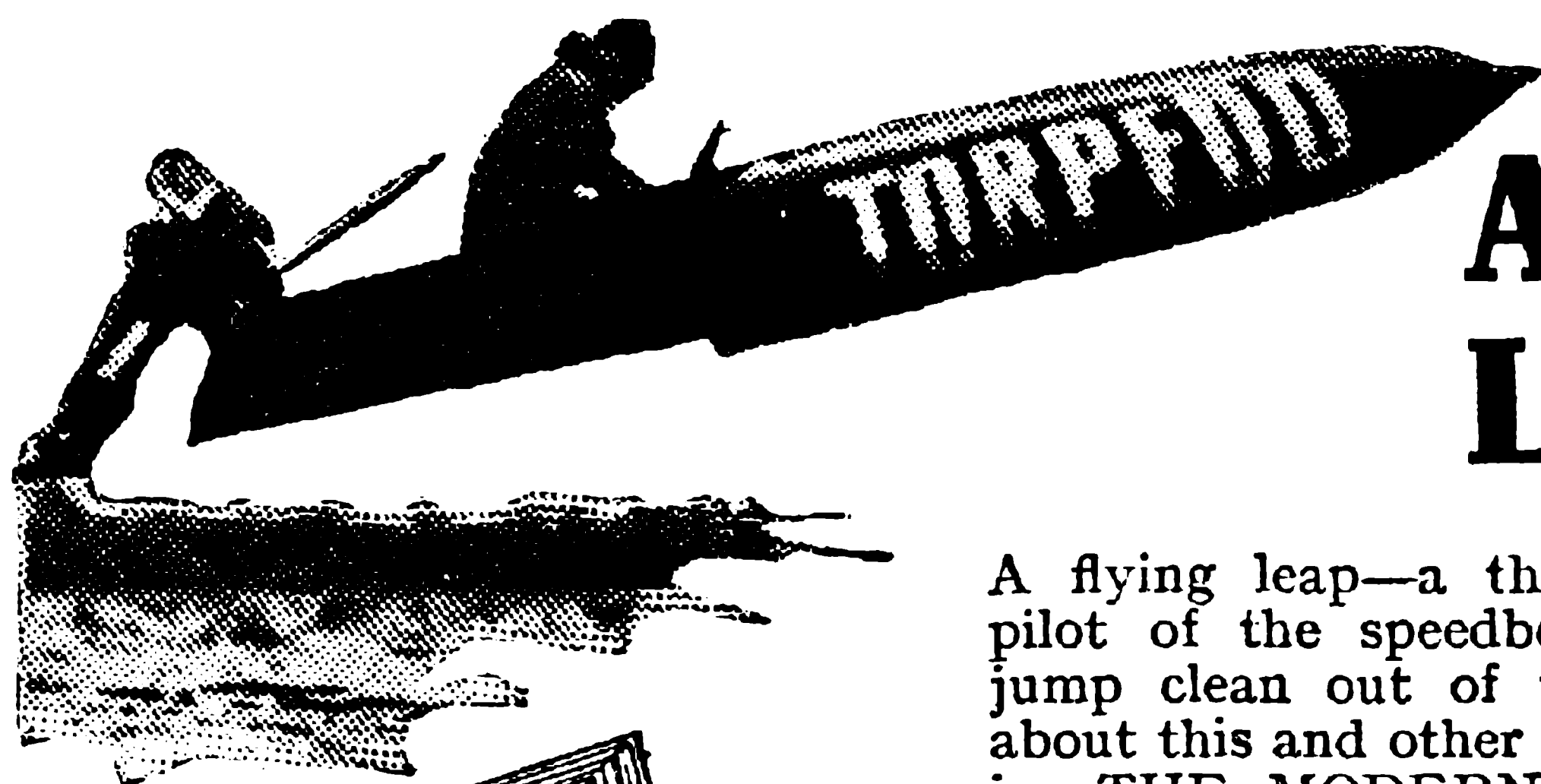
"What did I tell you?" snapped Travers harshly. "Ghosts, eh? Phantoms! Yes, like my boot! And if Quirke isn't mixed up in all this other tricky business, you can call me a Bashi-bazouk! Quirke! Wake-up! You can't fool us!"

"Get him out of these wrappings," said Nipper rapidly.

It did not take them long to slash through the linen, and Ezra Quirke was soon completely freed. He seemed to be unconscious, for he did not respond to the appeals of the schoolboys.

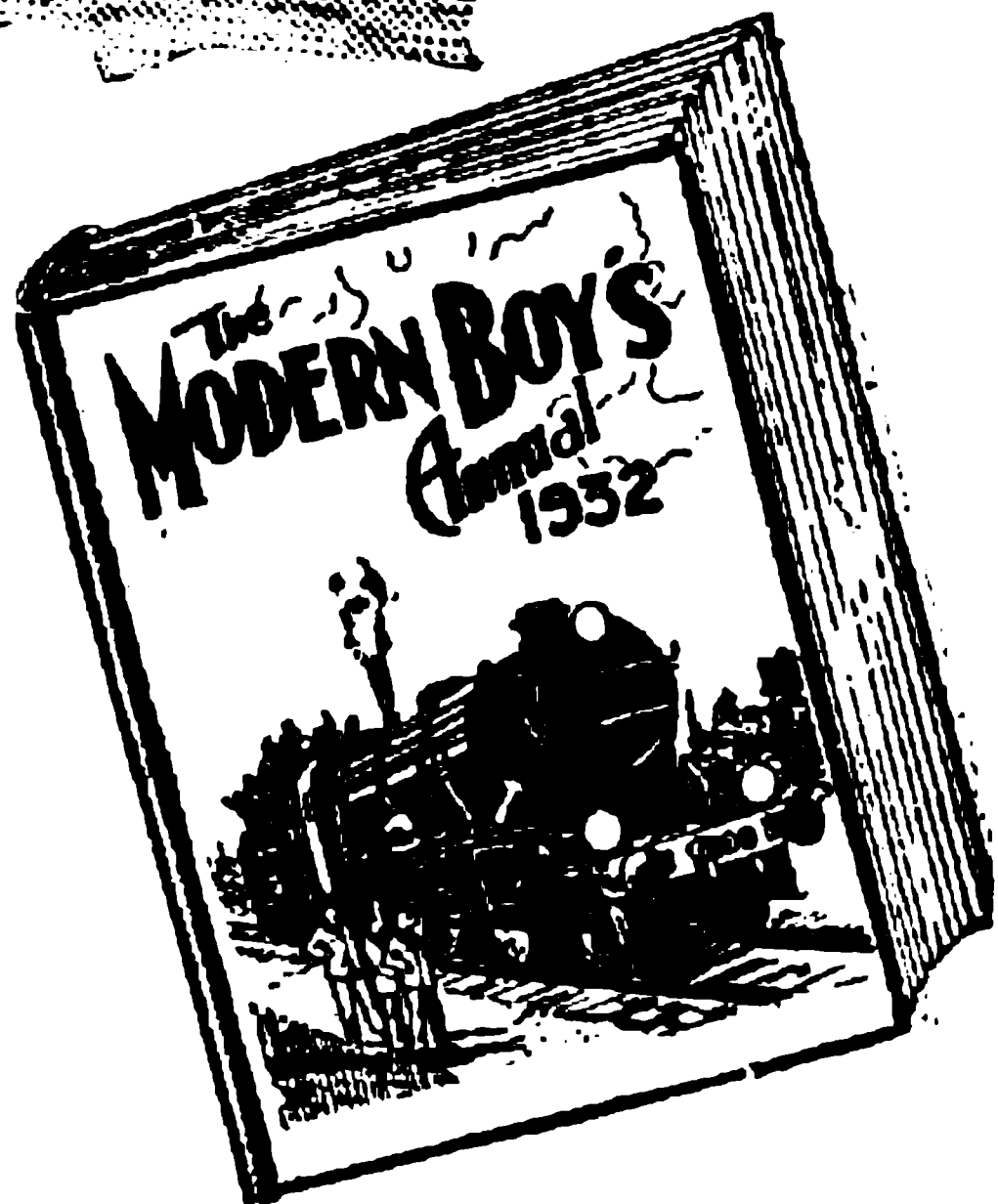
"I know a good way to revive him," said Nipper. "I've got a whacking great pin here. Hold him, Handy!"

Nipper and Travers and Handforth exchanged significant glances as Ezra Quirke groaned and moved. It seemed that his hearing was pretty good, after all!



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Blinking, he opened his eyes, and in them was a light of terror.

"Where is it?" he panted, half sitting up, and looking round. "The Spirit of Hebeb! The Evil Spirit! The materialised ghost——"

"Never mind about materialised ghosts," interrupted Nipper, giving Quirke a thump on the back. "Pull yourself together. What's happened? We found you giving a fair imitation of an Egyptian mummy."

"Good heavens! You found me in the casket—wrapped up as a mummy?" panted Quirke. "Oh, dreadful! I am in the toils, then! But I am a believer, and thus I have escaped death."

"You won't escape a pretty hard bumping unless you give us an explanation," said Travers curtly. "We've had enough of your bunkum, Quirke. Tell us what happened in this museum—in the darkness. Come on! Out with it!"

"I—I don't know," replied Quirke, making a quick recovery. "I heard a commotion—I came to this window, and looked in. Then I saw something moving—a horrible figure—and I knew it to be the materialised spirit of the Priest Hebeb! It attacked me, it fell upon me, and I remember no more."

"So the materialised spirit of our old pal, Hebeb, attacked you and rolled you in the mummy wrappings?" asked Nipper ironically. "And we're supposed to believe that Hebeb himself is roaming around, eh?"

"Yes, you are right," said Quirke fearfully. "His earthbound evil spirit has left its resting-place! This is the result of interfering with the tombs of the dead! Oh, fresh disaster will fall upon St. Frank's!"

"Look here, Quirke, are you going to tell us the truth or not?" demanded Travers ferociously. "We've heard enough of your rot. There was a man in this casket—and you know it! Either you helped him to escape——"

"But no! I didn't!" protested Quirke. "You can't say that, Travers! It's not true. I don't know anything."

Quirke would say nothing more. They let him go—and they decided to keep this amazing mystery of the missing mummy to themselves.

CHAPTER 8.

The Telephone Call!

"**S**TRICTLY speaking, I suppose we should have taken Quirke to our Housemaster," said Nipper thoughtfully. "But what would have been the good? Even Old Wilkey

couldn't have got anything out of the mysterious beggar."

"Just what I was thinking," nodded Travers. "It's not a police job, either. Quirke's a queer beggar, but I don't wish him any harm. I believe he's a bit 'touched,' you know."

"He's more cunning than you suspect," growled Nipper. "But I will say this for him—I believe he's acting for somebody else. Your father has mentioned an enemy, Travers—an American named Wilbur Druten. Doesn't it strike you that Druten may be playing some sort of dirty game?"

"Egypt's a long way off," said Travers slowly. "I believe you're right, though. Take this mummy, for instance. I'm pretty certain that my father didn't send it, or that cablegram."

"That's what I was trying to hint earlier in the day," said Nipper. "I was suspicious of the mummy as soon as it arrived. We shall have to look out for squalls, you chaps. There was a man in that casket, wrapped in the mummy cloth. He was probably smuggled in quite locally—after the packing-case had arrived from Egypt. That's how I look at it, anyhow. Not that it makes any difference to the present situation. We've got to keep our eyes wide open."

"It wouldn't be a bad idea to keep watch to-night," suggested Handforth eagerly. "The further we go, the more we see that all these uncanny happenings are centred round you, Travers."

"Don't I know it?" asked the unhappy Travers. "That rotten Egyptian ring seems to be the cause of all the trouble. This time I am going to destroy it."

Nipper laughed.

"Which merely proves that your mind is still in a whirl, old man," he said gently. "In one breath you swear that you are the victim of trickery, and in the next breath you talk of destroying a perfectly harmless ring! Don't forget that it was Quirke who worked up all that 'evil' about the Ring of Raamses. And he tried the same dodge with the mummy."

"Yes, I'm a chump," admitted Travers. "Don't you think we ought to tell Old Wilkey about this mummy? No good going to Professor Tucker, of course; he's the Curator, but he's too absent-minded."

"I'll go along and tell him," said Nipper, nodding. "I'll ask him to give us a free hand, too. I'll hint that it's all a trick, but the less we say the better."

On second thoughts Nipper roughly barricaded the museum window. With the help of the other chaps he pushed a heavy showcase in front of the window, and

wedged it there. There was very little possibility—now—of anybody getting in. The mummy casket was closed. And then the boys left the museum, locking the door after them.

More than once they had heard the weird, mournful hooting of Ezra Quirke's owl—and the sound, mingled with the sighing of the wind, was eerie in the extreme.

"Don't take any notice," advised Nipper. "That owl is just one of Quirke's 'effects.' It's as harmless as Willy Handforth's parrot."

When they reached the Ancient House, Tubbs, the page-boy, came running up to them.

"I say, Master Travers, I've been looking for you everywhere," he gasped breathlessly. "You're wanted, young gent—by Mr. Wilkes."

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Travers. "So Old Wilkey is on the track!"

"It's a telephone call for you, sir—an important one, I believe," said Tubbs eagerly.

Travers dashed off, suddenly excited. When he arrived in the Housemaster's study he found Mr. Alington Wilkes sitting at his desk, talking on the telephone. The kindly Housemaster looked up and nodded.

"Here is your son now, Mr. Travers," he said.

"By Samson!" exclaimed Travers excitedly. "Is it my pater on the 'phone, sir?"

Old Wilkey nodded, and surrendered the telephone to Travers. Very discreetly, he retired from the study.

"Hallo, pater!" said Travers into the 'phone.

"Vivian, listen to me!" came his father's familiar voice, as clearly as though he were speaking from a local exchange. "That ring! You remember? The curious ring with the seven rubies I sent you some time ago. You still have it safe?"

"Why, of course, pater," replied Travers.

"Splendid!" came his father's voice, full of relief. "I have every reason to believe that there has been some trickery and treachery with regard to that ring, Vivian."

"I should think there has, pater," said Travers. "You don't know half of it! I've been on the point of destroying the beastly thing more than once——"

"On no account must you let it pass out of your possession, Vivian," said Mr. Travers urgently. "Take great care of it—until I arrive! I have made the startling discovery that the hieroglyphics

on that ring contain the key to the lost treasures of the Osra Temple."

"Well, I'm jiggered!"

"So you will realise, Vivian, that the ring is of paramount importance," continued Mr. Travers. "Keep it very safe! Give it to your Housemaster, if you think it advisable—get him to lock it in his safe. If possible, I shall be with you to-morrow evening."

"Where are you now, pater?" asked Travers, bewildered.

"In Malta; I arrived by boat not an hour ago, and——"

"Malta!" gasped Travers. "But—but that's thousands of miles away, pater! And I can hear you as clearly as though you were in Bannington!"

"There is no limit to the marvels of wireless telephony, my boy," said Mr. Travers dryly. "I will explain everything to you when I arrive. I have made all arrangements to leave here by seaplane at dawn. I hope to be in England before dusk to-morrow—and I shall drive straight down to St. Frank's. Whatever you do, Vivian, keep that ring safe. I have enemies, and I believe those enemies are trying to get at you, too."

"I thought they were only trying to scare me, pater," said Travers. "There's a fellow here named Quirke—a mysterious beggar—who has been urging me to destroy the ring. He wouldn't do that if he knew that it contained the key to the Osra treasure."

"My enemies did not know of this until recently—I did not know of it myself," replied his father. "When I sent you the ring I thought it was merely a commonplace curio. Now I discover that it is the very key to the treasure."

"By Samson! The key to the treasure," repeated Travers excitedly. "All right, pater—don't you worry. I've got the ring safe, and I'll keep it safe."

A minute later his father rang off. Travers put the telephone away from him, and he sat back, his eyes gleaming animatedly.

"It's just one darned thing after another," he murmured. "The key to the Osra treasure, eh? Well, well! And my pater was speaking from Malta! What a world we live in!"

As he prepared to go out, Mr. Wilkes entered.

"Finished?" asked the Housemaster kindly. "About that ring, Travers. Your father mentioned it to me. If you would like me to put it in my safe——"

"Thanks awfully, sir," said Travers.

(Continued on page 24.)

Have you written to the Editor yet? All letters welcome!



A breezy chat with readers conducted by the **EDITOR**. All letters should be addressed to The Editor,

NELSON LEE LIBRARY, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Nipper's "particular" girl chum, Ernest Parson (Lewes) is Mary Summers. As you ask for further particulars of this nature, it will be as well to give a list of all the St. Frank's fellows who are lucky enough to have special girl friends—girls they can call their chums—so we'll put them in pairs. Nipper and Mary Summers; Handforth and Irene Manners; Reggie Pitt and Doris Berkeley; Archie Glenthorne and Marjorie Temple; Vivian Travers and Phyllis Palmer; Stanley Waldo and Betty Barlowe; Ralph Leslie Fullwood and Winnie Pitt; Johnny Onions and Tessa Love; Willy Handforth and Molly Stapleton; Kirby Keeble Parkington (late of St. Frank's and now of Carlton College) and Vera Wilkes; William Napoleon Browne and Dora Manners. Dora Manners, of course, does not belong to the Moor View School, being some years older than the other girls. She is attached to the St. Frank's Sanatorium as a nurse. The regular St. Frank's junior football eleven is made up as follows: Handforth, goalkeeper; Church, left-back; McClure, right-back; Harry Gresham, left-half; Buster Boots, centre-half; Dick Goodwin, right-half; Tregellis-West, outside-left; Fullwood, inside-left; Nipper, centre-forward; Travers, inside-right; Reggie Pitt, outside-right.

* * *

Thumbnail pen-pictures of three more Sixth-Formers:—**AUGUSTUS PARKIN**: A hulking, brawny senior. The particular friend of Simon Kenmore—which is another way of saying that he is an unpleasant fellow. Uncouth and ill-mannered, he seems quite out of place among the other Sixth-Formers. **CHARLES PAYNE**: He is Fatty Little's prototype in the Senior School. A very stout fellow, in more senses than one. Always smiling and happy, he is particularly popular when there is any social gathering, as he is an excellent amateur entertainer. **LLEWELLYN REES**: Another senior who

is greatly in demand at concerts and social gatherings, on account of his superb tenor voice. Rees, as his name tells, is Welsh, and he has all the Welsh natural love of melody. A small, neat senior, very alert and quick-witted.

* * *

The old series titles you want, H. C. Woollacott (New Malden) are: 453—"The Temple of Silence," 454—"The Wages of Treachery," 455—"The Invasion of St. Frank's," 456—"The Amazing Mr. Smith," 457—"Driven to Revolt," 458—"Handforth's Rebellion," 459—"The Rising of the Remove," 460—"The Siege of the Rebels," 461—"The Island Fortress," 463—"Fighting for St. Frank's," 464—"The Schoolboy Circus Owners."

* * *

There is really no reason why any reader should start his or her letter to me in this style: "This is the first time I have written to you, and I feel uncomfortable somehow." Then stop feeling uncomfortable, John S. Wood (Basingstoke). I want you to write freely and in the knowledge that your letter will be received and read, as from one pal to another. Write as often as you like. I'm glad to know that your father reads the Old Paper, too, and if he feels like writing to me, I should welcome his letters as much as yours. Other readers—and other fathers—please copy! Yes, and mothers, too—to say nothing of uncles and aunts and grandfathers and grandmothers and brothers and sisters. The more the merrier.

* * *

The rivalry between St. Frank's and the River House is as keen as ever, Joe B. Ralph (Battersea), and you won't have to wait long for a story dealing with this rivalry—not longer than next week's special Guy Fawkes story. Lord Dorrimore's full family name is as follows: Spencer Fitzhugh Cambridge, Eleventh Baron Dorrimore.

Tommy Watson gives a report on reporting.

HOW TO BE A REPORTER

If you asked most fellows what to do to become a reporter, they would answer: "Report." But it really isn't as simple as all that. It's all very well to collar a notebook and pencil and think you are a reporter; but the whole essence of the job is that you must have something to report. And, more than that, know how to do it.

There's an old story about a prominent local man who complained to the paper that his speeches were not reported in full. In order to get even with him, the reporter sent in his next speech just as it was delivered. It began:

"Er—er—ahem! My dear friends! Er—I—er—I have been asked to speak to-night—hoof-hoof-hoof!—on behalf of a—er—a very worthy cause—ahem!" And it continued like this for about two pages. That's an example of how not to report.

Take my latest job—getting some fashion notes from that lazy slacker, Archie Glenthorne. When I rolled into his study, he was, as usual, stretched out in a state of complete inertia on the sofa. I jabbed him in the ribs with my pencil, and he sat up with a shriek.

"Wake up, Archie!" I said. "I've come along to get an interview on the subject of winter fashions. Snap into it. What do you recommend in tweed suits?"

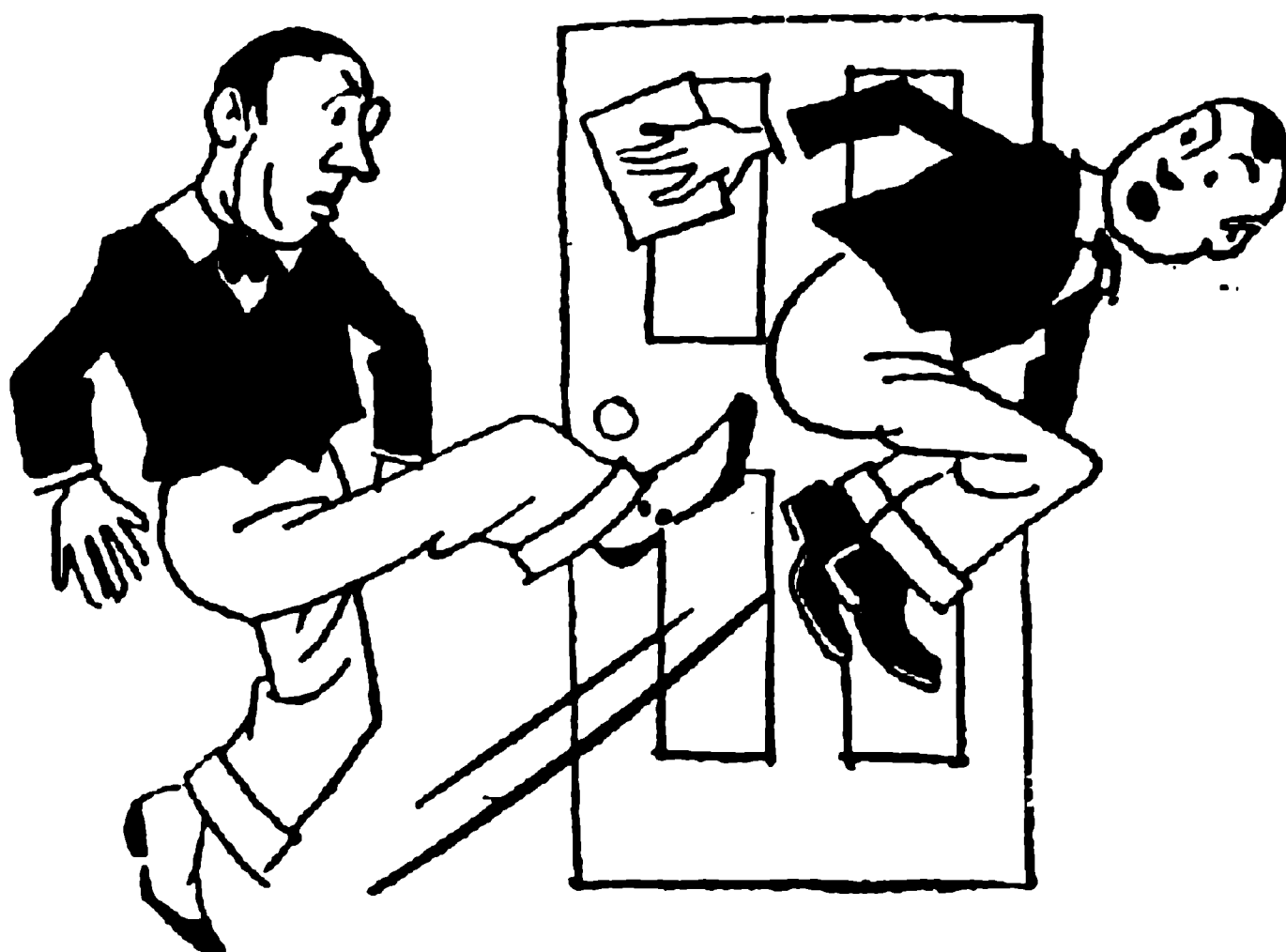
"Listen, dash you!" snorted Archie. "Do you realise that this is the first chunk of sleep I've seized since seven-thirty in the a.m.? Absolutely! And you come along and expect me to enchant your ear with discourse when I'm practically dead beat. The door is on your right," Archie informed me.

"I know that. I noticed it as I came in. Don't go to sleep, Archie—(another jab of the pencil)—I simply must have this interview. The Editor's waiting for it."

"If you dig me with that bally pencil again," remarked Archie, in concentrated tones, "I'll heave something at you. Go away. I was having the most topping dream just then. I dreamed I had jabbed a reporter with a toasting-fork, and was throwing rotten eggs at him. Buzz off!"

"About fashions——"

"Fashions, my left foot! Flow away, you awful ruffian! Erase yourself!"



One of the "joys" of reporting.

"Do you consider that poplin ties are likely to be the vogue again? (Snore!) And I suppose you think that the sombre colours of winter suits should be brightened by something neat in the way of shirtings? (Snore!) I thought so. Now what about socks? Do you prefer the half-hisle or shrunk wool? (Snore!) And the patterns? (Snore!) You favour a simple clock rather than a covering pattern of check?" (Snore!)

I jabbed Archie in the ribs again, and he shot off the sofa like a rocket.

"What-ho! What now? What's up?" he gurgled.

"I woke you up to say good-bye," I said, whereat Archie displayed unusual liveliness and kicked me out of the study.

Now I ask you—how can you report an interview with a cove who is asleep half the time? You'll find the answer in another column.

IT IS RUMOURED—

By Reggie Pitt

THAT Fatty Little, as a protest against the high prices of tuck, started a hunger-strike, and continued it bitterly for twelve minutes.

That Josh Cuttle was two seconds late with the rising-bell yesterday.

That E. Snipe construed a line of Virgil without an error. (P.S.—This rumour has since been officially denied.)

That in 1908 the spectators at a football match agreed with a decision of the referee.

That De Valerie likes corporal punishment. (Val took part in a debate that corporal punishment should be abolished—and opposed the motion. Yah! Blackleg!)

UNCLE JIM

(At the image of doughnuts with jam in, Sir James Potter to amuse and readers, bless them.)

FIRST of all to the list had suffered me.

Billy Rickey know if I can fretwork. I can beasty difficult.

Claude Thibault what makes Sheer carelessness.

Now, listen, wriggling. The so much to amuse you. That being just consider the

HENRY ARTHUR WHACE

This Bushwhacker what a poet! Master of Pathos everybody to tell

When he was posed that famous Sad Fate of the NOT Listen Kind Friends. wept. It ran:

There was
Who drank
There was
But now,

When motor-vented, Bushwhacker sion with his friend

I tried to ride from Charlie Green;
But, as I could They kicked Square.

Henry A. probably have other stirring time he slipped met a sad end.

FIZZ! CL

SPECIAL

It will be Funnel

WINTER FASHIONS

An interview with ARCHIE GLENTHORNE.

WHEN I looked into Mr. Glen-
thorne's study, he welcomed
me with his usual charming
smile, and invited me to sit
down.

"I have looked in to interview you
on the subject of Winter Fashions," I
told him.

"Certainly, old lad!" he answered at
once. "What do you want to know?"

"Well, first of all, your opinion of
tweed suits."

Archie looked thoughtful.

"Mind you," he said, "I dare say
Phipps would disagree with everything
I say, but I'm bound to confess that
the good old partiality does run in
favour of bright colours. Saxe-blue
rather than navy—cobalt rather than
indigo, so to speak. Anything that will
hit the optic and register an impression
in the mind. By the way, double-
breasted jackets are not worn this
winter. Phipps says so."

"Indeed! As regards neckties——"

"There again, you strike the bone of
contention. Absolutely! Phipps is all
for poplin and woven patterns. I take
a firm stand for foulards and silks.
Result—a number one sized bust up.

Tell your readers to bank on increas-
able silk. That is all the rage."

"Very good! And shirtings——"

"Same thing! Phipps," said Archie
coldly, "has a perfectly animal passion
for Bedford cords and such like. The
man is hopeless. I know of shops, old
laddie, where one can buy the most
marvellous apple-green shirts at a per-
fectly reasonable price. But when I
ordered a dozen by way of sample,
Phipps gave them to a rag-and-bone
man in exchange for a toy windmill,
which I haven't used once."

"Now, what about socks?"

"Wool, old laddie. Well shrunk.
Shrunk, in fact, until it hasn't the
strength to shrink any more. Phipps
agrees with me, by the way. Must be
ill, I fancy."

"And the patterns?"

"A small 'all-over' pattern is better
than a plain clock. I think so, anyway.
Phipps won't express his opinion until
he knows mine—so that he can disagree
with it."

"Well, many thanks, Mr. Glen-
thorne. I must be pushing along now."

"Look in again any time you're pass-
ing," he said cordially, and held the
door open for my exit.

SO THIS IS SCOTLAND

By ARNOLD McCLURE.

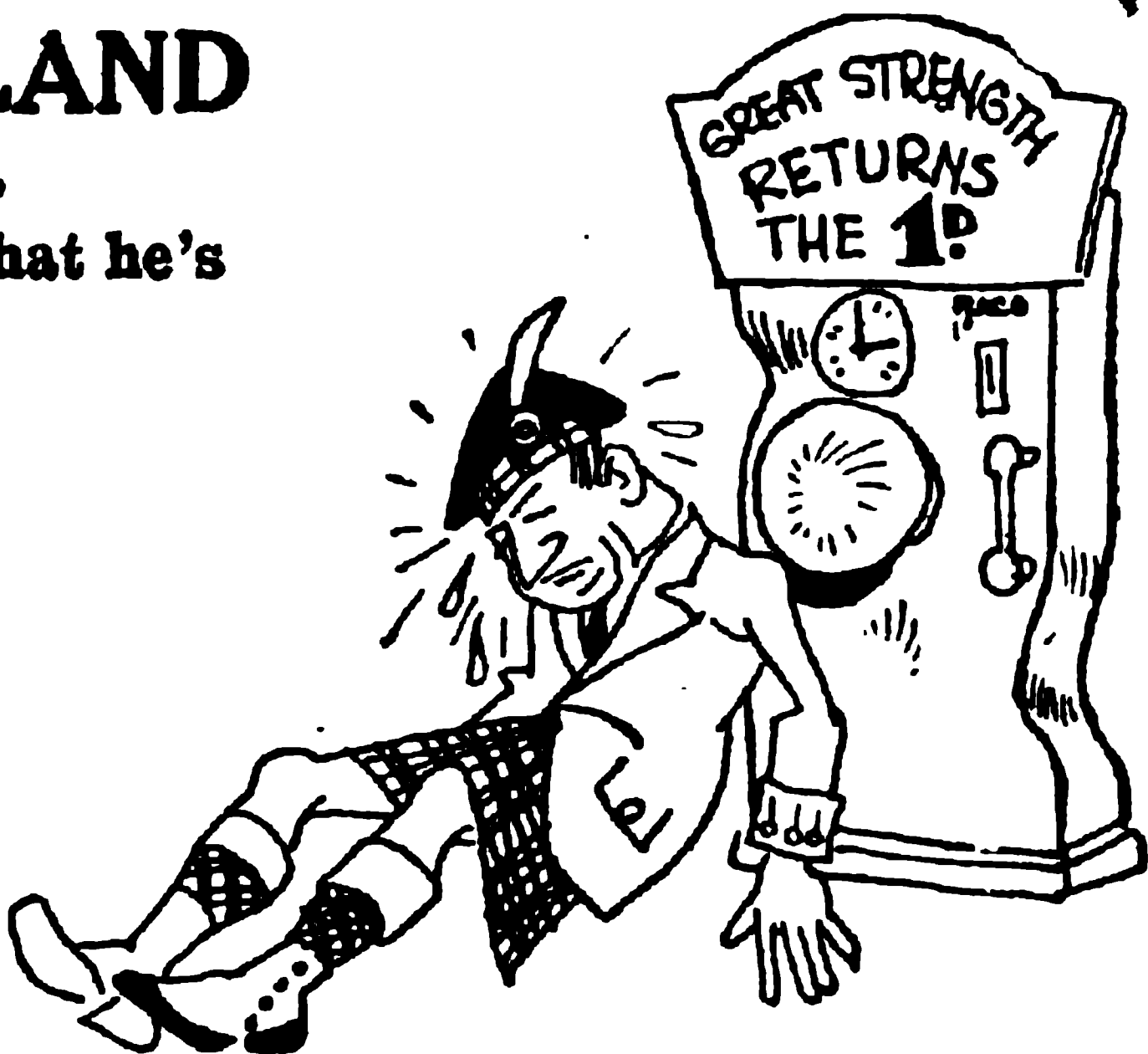
(Who is Scotch himself and knows what he's
talking about!)

THE first thing you will notice, upon
arrival in Scotland, is that all the
streets are deserted. This is, of
course, because it is a Flag Day.
On the occasions of the House-to-house
Collections, the streets are so full that
it is impossible to get by.

The first man you meet will say to
you: "Hoots, mon! Wull ye no' be
telling me the way to the Free Kirk?"
And before you get out of the railway
station you will notice a Scotsman ly-
ing in a state of complete exhaustion
at the foot of every machine marked,
"Great Strength Returns the Penny."

As you pass the cinema, you will
observe a Scot trying to bet the com-
missionaire sixpence that he won't let
him into the ninepenny seats for
nothing. As the man opens his purse,
kindly note the moth which will imme-
diately fly out.

Take a tram to the seaside, and notice
the fact that Scotsmen always take their
tickets a penny one at a time—no



matter how far they are going. This is
in case the tram breaks down. The lady
and gentleman with the small boy are
worth observing. They have just
adopted the little boy because the gen-
tleman chanced to find a boy's cap.

Arrived at the seaside, you will see a
number of Scotsmen preparing to go for
a long, long swim. They are emigrating
to America.

This is Scotland! If you don't believe
me, look at any of the English comic
papers.

CHAT

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86-87).

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BANG!

AWKES

bang!

ever!

THE MENACED SCHOOLBOY!

(Continued from page 20.)

"It's a good idea, and I'll bring it to you at once."

"I've been having a word with Nipper," continued Old Wilkey. "It seems that there have been some—er—queer happenings in the museum. I didn't inquire too closely, Travers, but I judge that they are all connected with your father's affairs. So we'll leave an inquiry until to-morrow evening, when he arrives, eh?"

"Thanks awfully, sir," said Travers gratefully. "I'm sure my pater will explain everything."

He hurried out, and Nipper and Handforth and the others were astonished when they learned the news.

"So that ring is terrifically valuable, after all," said Handforth, in wonder. "By George! And we thought we had destroyed it!"

"We'll fetch it at once," said Travers briskly. "Come on! Old Wilkey is going to lock it in his safe."

They hurried to Study H, and Vivian Travers went to the bureau. He pulled open the drawer where the Ring of Osra was kept—and the drawer was empty!

CHAPTER 9.

Quirke's Owl Comes in Useful!

"**G**ONE!" breathed Vivian Travers tragically.

"Oh, my hat!" said Handforth. "But—but how? Are you sure you left it in that drawer, Travers?"

"It was there at tea-time," said Travers in wild alarm. "I had a look at it. Nobody's been here since, that I know of——"

"The window is unlatched," interrupted Nipper sharply. "Great Scott! Look here! There's a trace of gravel on the window-sill—and it's damp."

"Somebody's been in!" ejaculated Handforth brilliantly.

"And I promised my pater that I'd keep it safe," said Travers. "I can't even get at him—to tell him. This is Quirke's doing——"

"There's no evidence against Quirke," interrupted Nipper quietly. "You can't blame him like that, Travers. You say that your father mentioned some enemies. One of them must have been here—and recently, too."

He flung open the study window, and leapt out into the darkness of the West Square. The others followed.

At that very moment, lurking near the shrubbery, was the skeleton-like figure of Sata, the Egyptian.

Ezra Quirke had been putting in some rapid work. Lurking near the Ancient House, he had heard Tubbs telling Travers that he was wanted on the telephone; and it had only taken Quirke a moment or two to slip round to the window of Mr. Wilkes' study. There he had crouched, listening; he had heard Travers' reference to the ring—that it was the key to the treasure of Osra.

On the spur of the moment Quirke had run off, and in the shrubbery he had met Sata—who, of course, had wrapped Quirke in the mummy cloth, and had afterwards escaped in the darkness. It had been a little stunt further to mystify and scare the juniors. Quirke had been very disappointed at the result, for the juniors had refused to be scared. Quirke, in fact, was beginning to see that his game was nearly over.

In a few brief words, he had told Sata to go to Study H, and to take the ring from the drawer of the bureau. Together they had crept into the West Square, and Quirke had pointed out the dark window of the study. Then he had retreated into the shrubbery, to wait.

It had all been done very quickly—very efficiently. Sata had left Study H only a minute before the boys had entered. Now, with the ring in his hand, he penetrated into the shrubbery in search of Quirke.

He came to a little clearing near the monastery ruins; and there stood Quirke in the moonlight. On the mystery boy's shoulder was perched his weird-looking owl.

"You have it?" asked Quirke softly, as the Egyptian approached.

"I have it," said Sata.

He held out the ring and the red stones gleamed dully and wickedly in the moonlight. Then an unexpected thing happened. The owl fluttered forward, and with one peck it took the Ring of Osra in its beak. The next moment the creature was flying off, fluttering amid the black trees.

"Come back—come back!" panted Quirke furiously. "Come, my beauty, my precious!"

But the owl, for once, took no notice of its master's voice. It flew out into the open Triangle, and perched itself upon a corner of the parapet of the West House.

Quirke ran out; he gave a peculiar little whistle.

"Come, come," he said softly. "Do as you are told, little beauty! Come to your master!"

The owl took wing and fluttered down; and at the same moment a crowd of Removites came bursting through West Arch. They had heard Quirke's voice, and they were bent upon an immediate investigation. They were just in time to see the owl settling upon Ezra Quirke's shoulder.

"It's only that beastly bounder and his owl," grunted Handforth disgustedly.

But Nipper had caught a faint gleam of red, reflected by the moonlight, and as Quirke was turning to effect one of his typically mysterious disappearances, Nipper ran. Travers ran, too.

They clutched at Quirke, they held him. The owl gave a wild screech, and something dropped from its beak and fell to the gravel.

"Be careful," warned Quirke. "My little pet can be dangerous——"

"He can be a thief, too, can't he?" snapped Nipper, pouncing down and picking up the thing which had dropped. "Here's your ring, Travers."

"For the love of Samson," exclaimed Vivian Travers.

Quirke was staring with those strange eyes of his.

"The Ring of Osra!" he breathed. "Again it exerts its evil! Now I can understand why my owl disobeyed; it was affected by the deadly spirit——"

"You can cut out that bunkum, Quirke," rapped out Nipper. "And you can thank your lucky stars that we don't hand you over to the police."

For once Ezra Quirke betrayed his feelings; a spasm passed over his face, and his eyes were full of fear.

"The police?" he muttered huskily.

"I don't know how your owl got hold of that ring—perhaps you sent it into the study to get the ring out of the drawer," said Nipper. "Anyhow, you stole that ring Quirke. No, we don't want to hear any explanation. Clear out while you're safe!"

"Fools—fools," said Quirke impressively. "The Ring of Osra is evil—it is fraught with deadly menace. Destroy it as you would destroy a venomous snake! Have I not warned you before?"

"Yes, that's a good idea," said Nipper unexpectedly. "Destroy the ring, eh? Give it to me, Travers."

Travers, staring, surrendered the ring before he could quite realise Nipper's intention. With a quick movement Nipper lowered his hand; there was a faint tinkle. With a grinding thud, Nipper brought his heel down upon the flagstone path.

"No, no!" screamed Quirke frantically. "You are mad! Don't crush——"

"But I thought you advised us to destroy the ring?" asked Nipper blandly.

He continued his stamping and grinding, and Ezra Quirke backed away. He knew, in that second, that he had betrayed himself. He had not expected Nipper to take him at his word. He shrank away into the gloom.

"That proves it," said Nipper grimly. "He tried to pinch your ring, Travers, because he must know that it's the key to the treasure."

"But—but——" began Travers.

"Here's your ring," went on Nipper, handing it over. "I've only been stamping on a brass cog from a cheap alarm clock."

"You shouldn't give me these shocks, dear old fellow," said Travers, with a gulp.

CHAPTER 10.

Guarding the Ring!

TEN minutes later the fateful ring was securely locked away in Mr. Wilkes' safe.

"Well, that's that!" said Travers with relief. "Now perhaps we shall have some peace."

He was in the Common-room with a crowd of other Removites, and everybody was agog with excitement. All sorts of rumours had been floating about, and there was a general air of mystery.

"You mustn't forget, Travers, that the ring has suddenly become important," said Nipper shrewdly. "When your father sent it to you he didn't know of its real value. By what I can see, this American, Wilbur Druten, is after the Osra treasure, too. That ring is vital. And I'm not absolutely sure that it will be safe in Old Wilkey's study."

"I say, cheese it!" protested Travers. "I was just beginning to feel comfortable."

"That safe is old-fashioned, and any expert could open it in no time," continued Nipper. "I doubt if there is any safe at St. Frank's which is really burglar proof."

"Anyhow, we'll keep watch," said Handforth complacently. "How's that? We needn't tell Old Wilkey anything; but we can take it in turns throughout the night, eh? And if anybody comes to monkey with Old Wilkey's safe we'll be ready."

To Vivian Travers' surprise, Nipper agreed.

"Yes, we'll do that," he said. "It's just as well to be on the safe side."

"I'm afraid I'm giving you chaps an awful lot of trouble," said Travers uncomfortably. "The wretched business will be over by to-morrow night, of course, but in the meantime——"

"In the meantime, you keep your hair on, and stop worrying," smiled Nipper. "This thing is bigger than you suspect, Travers, old man."

Bernard Forrest came forward, cool and collected as ever, but looking strangely resolute.

"There's something I want to tell you chaps," he said quietly.

"Oh?"

They were not particularly cordial.

"Yes," said Forrest. "About that ring. You remember some of us thought we had thrown it into the boiler furnace the other night, yet it was in the drawer the next day?"

"That's one of the mysteries we haven't been able to explain," said Nipper, looking at Forrest keenly. "Can you explain it?"

"Easily!" replied Forrest. "Don't jump on me, or anything like that, but I thought I'd add to the mystery a bit. Only a jape, of course, but as the affair has become so serious I'd better explain."

Forrest did not suffer much from conscience, but the way in which he had used Travers' ring worried him a bit. He was afraid, too, that there would be inquiries later on. Far better, then, to clear up the little mystery now. There was no need for him to explain that he took the ring in order to pay off a pressing book-maker; he could keep that to himself.

"I happened to spot a cheap ring in a Bannington shop," he said with a smile, "and when I heard some of you chaps planning to burn Travers' ring, I substituted the imitation one for the real."

"Why, you tricky bounder!" said Handforth indignantly.

"So you did really burn the ring, but it was the wrong one," said Forrest. "The next day, of course, I slipped the real ring into Travers' drawer. Naturally, you were all pretty well staggered when you found it there. A simple enough explanation now you've got it, but I thought I'd better tell you."

Escorted by Handforth on his Morris Minor, and by other juniors on their motor-cycles, Travers went to Bannington. None of them saw the two figures which lurked in Bellton Wood.



"Are you sure you've told us everything?" asked Nipper, looking at him hard.

"I've told you enough," retorted Forrest, with a shrug.

Travers and the others were glad that the little incident was cleared up; they all suspected that Forrest had had a deeper motive but it wasn't worth bothering about.

Never for an instant during the night was Mr. Wilkes' study left unguarded. Two Removites sat in the study itself, and two others kept watch from an upper window. At intervals during the night other boys came on duty as relief.

But nothing happened.

At about 3 a.m. the watchers from the upper window thought they saw a lurking figure near West Arch, and there was an alarm. Nipper and some others went out to investigate, but they found nothing unusual. However, it was quite possible that somebody had been there, and, seeing the boys on the watch, had quietly stolen away, realising the futility of making any attempt upon Mr. Wilkes' safe.

Even after daylight had come the juniors did not relax their vigilance. When Mr. Wilkes came into his study shortly after 8 o'clock he found Gresham and Duncan there, one sitting in his easy-chair, and the other sprawling on the hearth-rug.

"Good-morning, old chaps!" said Mr. Wilkes genially. "Early birds, aren't you?" The two juniors jumped up, rather confused. "We—we didn't expect you so early, sir," stammered Gresham. "If you didn't expect me, what are you doing in my study?" asked Old Wilkey mildly. "We've been keeping watch, sir, on your safe," explained Duncan. "Two of us have been on duty throughout the night."

Travers himself arrived at that moment, and he was looking eager.

"Do you mind if I have the ring, sir?" he asked. "I'm awfully sorry we've bothered you like this."

"That's all right," said the kindly Housemaster. "I think you boys did the right thing. But why do you want the ring, Travers?"

"I'm fed-up with all this mystery, sir," replied Vivian Travers gruffly. "I'm going to take that ring to my bank in Bannington."

"Oh, your bank?" asked Old Wilkey. "You have a bank, then?"

"I mean the bank where I keep my account, sir."

"I'm sure I don't know what you boys are coming to nowadays," sighed Old Wilkey, as he sat down at his desk. "Some of you even have banking accounts of your own! When I was a youngster— Still, we needn't go into that. So you're going to take the ring to the bank, Travers? That's not a bad idea."

"If I don't, sir, I shall be on the jump all day," confessed Travers. "So I thought I'd give it to my bank manager, and ask him to put it in the strong-room. Nobody will get at it there."

"But somebody might get at it on your way to the bank," said Mr.

Wilkes warningly. "I hope you're having a strong bodyguard, Travers?" The juniors were not quite certain whether he was ironic or not. "You can't be too sure. I should suggest Handforth in front in his Morris Minor, and a few other fellows behind on their motor-cycles."

Travers grinned.

"As a matter of fact, sir, that's almost exactly as we've planned it," he said. "We're not going to let anything happen to that ring on the way. And we were wondering, sir, if you would give us permission to buzz off immediately after brekker."

"Yes, certainly; but be back in time for lessons," said Mr. Wilkes.



"Good lads! Stout fellows!" chuckled Old Wilkey approvingly, much to the juniors' relief. "That's the style! Making assurance doubly sure, eh? Although, I must say, you don't seem to have a great deal of faith in my nice-looking safe."

"Nipper says that it could easily be burgled, sir," explained Gresham.

"And I believe it could," admitted Mr. Wilkes. "H'm! I hope you boys aren't thinking of keeping up this programme throughout the day? I'm always glad to see you, of course, but—"

"Travers says he's going to take the ring away immediately after breakfast, sir," put in Gresham.

There was no hitch, and even Travers began to think that they had taken a lot of unnecessary trouble. He would not have thought so if he had seen the lurking figures in Bellton Wood as he and the others passed. The enemy was ready—but the schoolboys were too astute!

Travers was not thoroughly comfortable until he emerged from the bank in the Bannington High Street. That precious ring was now locked away in the strong-room, and there it would remain until Travers went with his father to get it out.

Travers felt as though a great load had been lifted from his shoulders, but he was unwise to relax his vigilance even now. For the enemy was preparing the final coup.

CHAPTER 11.

Mr. Wilbur Druten—Crook!

A BIG, long-distance aeroplane of the monoplane type droned across the Channel that morning and landed at Lympne, the great airport on the Kent coast.

The man who stepped out of it was Mr. Wilbur Druten, the well-known American traveller and Egyptologist. His passport and his other papers were in perfect order, and although he was looking haggard and tired, he elected to fly straight on once he had obtained the official permit.

Mr. Druten was flying alone, for he was a skilled pilot. Taking off from the aerodrome, he followed the coastline westwards, and although he had never visited this part of England before, he easily picked out the Shingle Head Lighthouse near Caistowe. Here he turned inland, passing over Caistowe itself and landing in a meadow belonging to a local farmer.

Mr. Druten glibly explained that he had experienced slight engine trouble, and he made arrangements for the 'plane to remain in the meadow for the rest of the day. He assured the farmer that he would take off during the evening. The meadow was very isolated, there not being a house or a cottage within two or three miles.

Mr. Druten walked into Caistowe, and soon he was busy at the telephone.

An hour later found him in a hired saloon car of expensive make. Mr. Druten had plenty of money—and money works wonders.

Driving slowly to Bellton, the American crossed the bridge and took the narrow lane which glances off parallel with the river. It was mid-morning now, and at St. Frank's all the boys were at lessons. The countryside was quiet and peaceful.

Opposite a dense thicket which joined up with Bellton Wood, the big car came to a halt. Mr. Druten gave three sharp hoots of the electric horn. Ezra Quirke came out of the thicket, and in a moment he was in the car,

"I am here, Mr. Druten," he said unemotionally.

The American gave him a keen look.

"The others?" he asked briefly.

"Waiting," said Quirke.

"Bring them."

No words were wasted. Quirke left the car, and soon he returned with a well-dressed man who had a scar running across his face. He was a villainous-looking rascal, obviously a member of the criminal fraternity. Also, there was the bony Egyptian, Sata.

They all entered the car, and the rear blinds were drawn. Mr. Druten drove away. He drove to a desolate spot in the middle of Bannington Moor. Here he stopped the car and switched off the engine.

"I fancy we are safe from eavesdropping here," said the American, turning in his seat. "Now, Zenas Skinner, you will tell me what has been done—briefly but accurately."

"Well, Mr. Druten, we've followed out your orders as far as possible," said the man with the scarred face. "But those blamed boys are too fly! They were properly scared at first, but during the past day or two they've begun to twig. Seems to me the game hasn't panned out as it should."

"Don't I know that, you mutt?" snapped Druten. "Why do you suppose I flew from Marseilles? I got ahead of Travers, but when I landed at the French port I found that he was using a 'plane, too, and he'll be in England to-day. We've got to work fast."

"We have done our best, Mr. Druten," said Ezra Quirke quietly. "When I started working for you I did not know to what lengths you would require me to go. There are many things of which I do not approve."

"You don't say!" snapped the American. "You infernal young fool! Do you think I care whether you approve or not? I've been paying you well—"

"You paid me to work up an atmosphere of mystery around the boy Travers," said Quirke tonelessly. "That was all I bargained to do. Zenas has done his part, too. Acting as the ghost of the High Priest, he has taken many risks. On many occasions we have thrown the electrical stars into the sky."

"Yes, yes, I guess you've done that part all right," said Mr. Druten impatiently. "My object, as you know, was to scare the boy—and to scare him so thoroughly that he would write to his father. I wanted him to be so surrounded by mystery that the school authorities, too, would take action. The whole idea was to force Mr. Travers to abandon his work at the Temple of Osra. He beat me in getting that concession, and I have never forgiven him. But now there is something of greater importance. I have discovered that the ruby ring is the very key to the inner tomb. Without it we can do nothing. I am in England to get that ring. Let me have it."

"You cannot have it, Mr. Druten," said Quirke. "Our attempts to secure it have failed."

Druten stared.
 "But I cabled you," he said angrily. "I gave you express instructions——"

"Your cablegram did not arrive until this morning, although I discovered the significance of the ring last night," said Quirke.

And he explained how he had overheard the telephone conversation.

"You say that the ring was put into the schoolmaster's safe?" rapped out Druten. "What of it? You, Skinner! Don't you call yourself an expert safe-breaker? Couldn't you——"

"We meant to make a try, but it was no good," growled Zenas Skinner. "We found the boys were on the watch, and if we had gone nearer we should have been trapped. It was just the same this morning. The boys went into the town, but there were so many of them that we daren't act."

The American bit his lip.

"So these boys are definitely suspicious, are they?" he muttered. "They're not fooled any longer. That's bad—blamed bad!"

"You have yet to hear the worst, Mr. Druten," said Quirke, and it almost seemed as if he spoke the words with relish. "Young Travers has taken the ring to a bank in Bannington, and he has placed the ring in the vaults. It is beyond your reach."

Druten stared unbelievably for a moment, and then he cursed.

"You blundering fools!" he snarled savagely. "I guess I was crazy to trust you! All you had to do was to get that ring—and you allow this mutt of a schoolboy to beat you to it! You let him take the ring to a bank!"

"It was not until last night that we knew of the ring's value, chief," protested Zenas. "We could have got it earlier all right, but what's the good of rounding on us? We've done everything you paid us to do. This job hasn't been a cinch, and don't you think it has!"

"You have failed from the start!" snapped the American. "You failed to scare that boy. By all that I can understand, he never once wrote to his father——"

"These boys are not such fools, Mr. Druten," interrupted Quirke with a shrug.

"Some were frightened, yes, but such boys as Travers and Nipper and Handforth are hard to convince. We have adopted every kind of trickery. As you planned, the supposed mummy arrived yesterday. Sata took his place in the casket, and he reached the school."

Quirke gave an account of what had happened, and Druten listened gloomily.

"What of the gems and the other curios?" he asked abruptly, turning to Zenas Skinner.

"They are safe," replied the Man with the Scarred Face. "Sata and I broke into the railway station during the night, and we unwrapped the mummy. Sata took its place, and the next day the mummy was taken to the school in the ordinary way."

Here was evidence of a cunning plot. Wilbur Druten had dispatched that mummy from Egypt, but it was no mummy at all, but a cleverly camouflaged receptacle for smuggling out of Egypt certain priceless treasures—relics which the Egyptian authorities would never have allowed the American to take away. There had been a double purpose in sending that mummy case to England. The trick to fool the St. Frank's boys had been secondary.

"The ring is in a bank vault, but we must have it to-day before Travers arrives from Egypt," said Druten grimly. "It is a good thing I am here. That ring contains the key to a fortune, and I am not going to be beaten at the post!"

"You don't know what you're talking about, chief," protested Skinner. "The ring's in a bank vault. We can't get at it. You're not suggesting that we should bust the bank?"

"There is the boy," retorted Wilbur Druten. "We can get at the boy, and we can force him to write an authority to the bank manager to surrender the ring. It is the only course left. We'll win, too! I have never been beaten yet, and I'm not going to be beaten now!"

CHAPTER 12.

Travers Trapped!

TRAVERS was happier that day and more contented in mind than he had been for a week or two.

That wretched ring was definitely out of the school. In the safe keeping of the bank, it was no longer any worry to him. Besides, there was an important football match to-day, and he thrust all other things out of his mind.

It was the Yexford match, and the Saints were determined to win. The Yexford Junior XI was notoriously "dirty," mainly because the skipper, Augustus Hopkins, was an unsporting bounder who believed in winning by hook or by crook. If he couldn't win fairly he would win foully.

Travers turned out in his usual position of inside-right, and he entered into the game vigorously. There was nothing to worry him now. His father would be at the school during the evening, and then everything would be all serene.

This healthy sport on such a brisk autumn afternoon was the very thing to disperse all the atmosphere of mystery and horror which had been surrounding St. Frank's of late. The Saints were well at the top of the League table, and they were determined to keep their position. Certainly they weren't going to let the Yexford rotters displace them.

Travers was especially happy because he had received a cablegram from his father,

dispatched in Rome, saying that the trip from Malta across the Mediterranean had been successfully accomplished, and that a fresh 'plane, a faster one, was starting off immediately for England.

So bucked was Travers that ten minutes after the start of play he ran clean through and scored a delightful goal. Neeve, one of the Yexford backs, had attempted to trip him, but Travers had not been caught napping.

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Travers!"

The spectators were delighted. It was rather fitting that Travers should open the St. Frank's score. Everybody had been saying that there was a "curse" on him, and he was just proving how wrong they were.

On the whole, the Yexford players were playing a cleaner game than the Saints had been expecting. Only one or two of them attempted any questionable tactics. By half-time the Saints were two up, Nipper having scored the second goal.

"Jolly good, Travers, old man," said Nipper heartily at the beginning of the brief interval. "Feeling better to-day, aren't you?"

"Heaps!" grinned Travers. "Never been happier."

He even continued grinning when he saw Ezra Quirke coming towards him. Quirke did not affect him at all now.

"I wonder you've the nerve to come here like this, Quirke," said Travers almost admiringly. "Well, well! As gloomy as ever, dear old fellow! Rather disappointed, perhaps, because you were prevented from stealing my pater's ring last night."

"Stealing," protested Quirke.

"Stealing is the word I used, and stealing is the word I meant," nodded Travers coolly.

"You are wrong," said the other. "It is unfair of you to harbour such base thoughts, Travers. Not that I wish to discuss that subject now. I am grieved for you, Travers."

"Go ahead—be as grieved as you like," said Travers obligingly.

"Can I have a word with you—alone?"

Quirke did not wait for Travers to answer, but drew him aside. At it happened, Nipper and Handforth and the others did not notice this little incident, for they were talking to the Yexford players, and, in any case, they did not think it possible that Travers could come to any harm on the football field in mid-afternoon.

"Well," asked Travers, losing some of his patience, "what's all the mystery?"

"There is no mystery," replied Quirke quietly. "It was merely my desire to condole with you privately—away from all the raucous noises of this uncouth field."

"Condole with me?" repeated Travers, staring.



Jokes from readers wanted for this feature! If you know a good rib-tickler, send it along now. A handsome watch will be awarded each week to the sender of the best joke; pocket wallets and penknives are also offered as prizes. Address your jokes to "Smilers," Nelson Lee Library, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4.

NOT TRANSFERABLE.

Tommy's left cheek bulged suspiciously, and his teacher frowned upon him severely.

"Give me what you have in your mouth!" he said sternly.

"I wish I could—but it's the toothache," replied Tommy ruefully.

(S. Mercer, 10, Dumbreak Road, Well Hall, London, S.E.9, has been awarded a handsome watch.)

HOW ABSURD.

Judge (to nigger): "You say you dined at the Hotel Posh. What did you eat?"

Nigger: "Beefsteak, my lord."

Judge: "On your oath?"

Nigger: "No, sah, on de plate."

(J. Upton, 207, Galpins Road, Thornton Heath, has been awarded a penknife.)

THE HINT.

Boring Guest: "That is a strange clock you have in the hall."

Host: "Yes, we call it 'The Guest.'"

Guest: "Why is that?"

Host: "It won't go."

(V. Spiers, Clydesdale, 3, Argyle Road, Finchley, London, N.12, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

TEE-HEE.

"Bill, this coffee tastes like cocoa."

"Sorry, mate, I must have given you tea."

(J. Pouncett, 18, Hubert Road, Birmingham, has been awarded a penknife.)

ARTFUL JIMMY.

Young Jimmy entered the room in a very serious frame of mind.

"Daddy," he said, "will you give me some money?"

"And why do you want money?" asked father, very much on his guard.

"Well, daddy," came the reply, "I've been thinking how awful it would be if a robber were to hold me up and say, 'Your money or your life,' and I hadn't any money."

(L. Masters, 194, Shirland Road, Paddington, London, W.9, has been awarded a penknife.)

COUNTING HIS CHICKENS.

Father: "Tommy, I promised you a bicycle if you passed your examination, but I see you

"Oh, but surely you have heard?" asked Quirke suddenly. "Good heavens, have I blundered? I thought you knew that—But—no! Now that I remember, you were smiling, you were happy."

"What in the name of Samson are you talking about?" demanded Travers.

"Your father," muttered Quirke.

"Eh?"

"You have not heard of the—accident?"

"Heard of—"

Vivian Travers paused, and his face went pale. He clutched at Ezra Quirke's skinny arm.

"Accident?" he repeated huskily. "What do you mean? Quick! Tell me!"

"Please, Travers, you are hurting me," protested Quirke. "I am sorry if I gave you a shock. But it is reported in the early evening paper that there was an accident to your father's aeroplane. I am sorry if I told you too suddenly—"

"An accident to my pater's aeroplane," said Travers in a low voice. "Where? When? How?"

"I don't know—the report is very brief—it is in the stop press column," said Quirke. "I wish I had the newspaper with me, but I left it in the village. The report says that an aeroplane crashed somewhere in Italy this morning quite early. There is no detailed news, and it is not known whether your father was killed or not. But I believe

it gives the place where the crash happened. I cannot remember it."

Travers' head was whirling, and never for an instant did he suspect that this was a trap.

"I must see that newspaper!" panted Travers tragically.

He ran off without another word, and Quirke took care to go with him. Quirke was relieved when he found that nobody in particular had noticed their departure. Travers had completely forgotten the match.

As he ran out of the main gateway, with Quirke at his heels, a big saloon car was passing.

"Hallo, young 'un!" sang out the man at the wheel. "In a hurry? Care for a lift?"

"Thanks!" gasped Travers.

He pulled open the door, tumbled in—and strong hands came out of the gloom at the rear of the car, gripped him, and he was pulled forcibly forward. Another hand clapped itself over his mouth.

Quirke also scrambled in, and the car moved on.

The whole incident had occupied fifteen seconds, and so quickly, so efficiently had it been done that even if there had been witnesses, those witnesses would have thought nothing.

Speed had accomplished the enemy's latest trick, and Vivian Travers was a prisoner!

have failed. What have you been doing in your spare time?"

Tommy: "Learning to ride a bicycle."

(C. Dawson, 52, Durham Road, Bradford, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

ALWAYS MISSING.

Teacher: "Harold, do you know what a blotter is?"

Harold: "Yes, sir; it's the thing you hunt for while the ink gets dry."

(E. Reeve, 19, Fleming Mead, Mitcham, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

SAFETY FIRST.

Passers-by in a certain street were amazed to observe a most peculiar procedure. They saw one youngster fasten a muzzle over the face of another small boy.

"Why are you doing that?" asked one curious onlooker.

"Cos I'm sending him in this shop for some sweets," replied the youngster.

(A. O'Brien, P.O. Box 679, East London, South Africa, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

BADLY EXPRESSED.

Percy: "I'm quite a near neighbour of yours. I live in one of those houses by the river."

Neighbour: "Really! Then I hope you'll drop in some day."

(S. Elsworth, 19, Milton Place, Hopwood Lane, Halifax, has been awarded a penknife.)

GIVE AND TAKE.

The man walking along the road was horrified when he saw two boys fighting hammer and tongs.

"You should learn to give and take," he remonstrated gently.

"I did," retorted one boy aggressively. "I gave Bill a punch in the eye and took his apple."

(C. Wells, 102, Wenlock Street, New North Road, London, N.1, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

BEHIND BEFORE.

Railway Passenger: "Guard, we're very late."

Irish Guard: "Yes, sorr. The train before us was behind, and this was behind before besides."

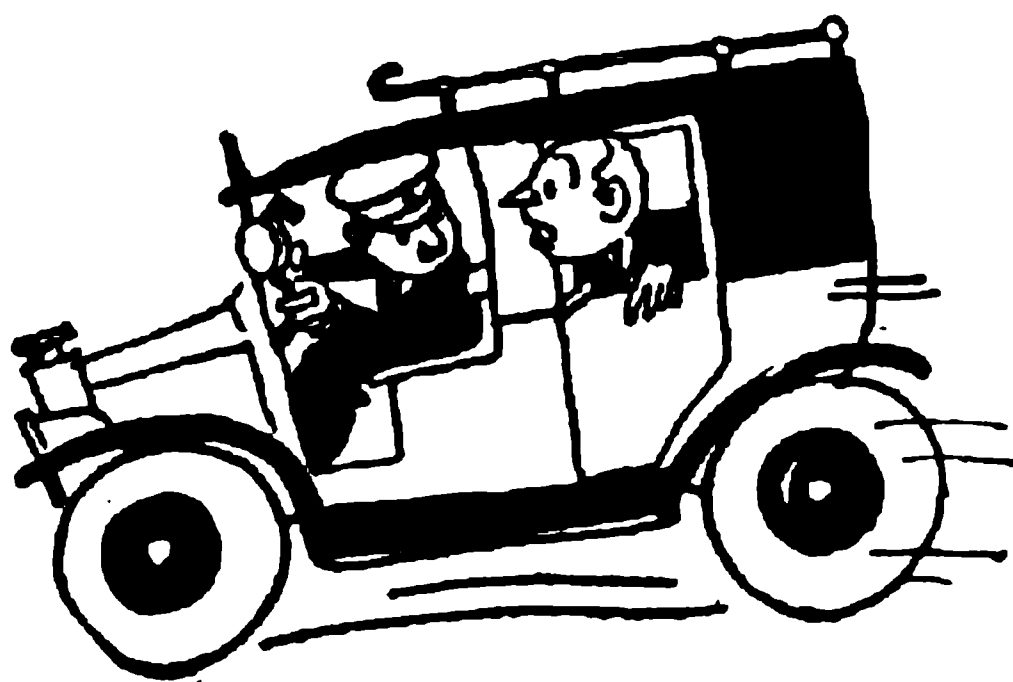
(Miss M. Dibley, 4a, Station Road, Bognor Regis, has been awarded a penknife.)

HELP.

Terrified Passenger (in run-away taxi): "Will we hit anything?"

Driver: "I hope so, sir. This road goes over the cliff half a mile farther on."

(F. Wilson, 26, Dial Road, Stockport, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)



CHAPTER 13.

Missing!

BIGGLESWADE, of the Sixth Form at St. Frank's, frowned.

"Where's your eleventh man?" he demanded. "He's holding up the game."

Nipper looked round impatiently.

"It's not like Travers to run off at half-time," he said. "Where the dickens can he have got to? You'd better give that whistle another blast, Biggy."

Phceeeep!

Biggleswade blew shrilly. The teams were lined up for the re-start, but the inside-right position was vacant. Vivian Travers was not in his place. One or two juniors dashed to the pavilion and searched, but Travers was not there.

"Hadn't we better be getting on?" suggested Hopkins sarcastically. "We chaps want to get home some time to-day, you know."

"All right—keep your hair on!" said Biggleswade gruffly. "I'm afraid we shall have to start, you kids. You'll have to play a man short until he turns up."

"Just a minute, Biggy," said Nipper urgently. "There's something fishy about this. I don't like the look of it at all. Travers wouldn't keep away deliberately. Something must have happened to him."

"Don't be a young ass!" protested Biggy. "What could have happened to him out here in broad daylight?"

It was Teddy Long, of the Remove, who provided a clue.

"You chaps looking for Travers?" he puffed as he ran on to the field.

"Yes."

"I saw him with Quirke," said Teddy excitedly.

"What!"

"It's a fact," said Long. "He was talking with Quirke not five minutes ago."

"Quirke again!" said Nipper furiously. "More treachery, I suppose. Which way did they go, Long?"

"I—I don't know," replied Teddy. "That beast Armstrong grabbed me and made me go indoors to fetch a scarf. And he's not even in my House! Does he think I'm his fag, or what?"

"Never mind Armstrong," said Nipper. "You say you saw Travers talking with Quirke? Where?"

"Here, on Little Side—just near the gate."

"You can't hold up the game like this, Nipper," said Biggleswade uncomfortably. "These Yexford kids are getting impatient. Travers will turn up soon, I expect."

"All right—just coming," said Nipper. "I say, Gresham."

"Hallo!"

"I want Potts and a few more of you to dash around and see if you can find Travers," said Nipper rapidly. "He can't be far away. Quirke must have tricked him by some fake yarn. See what you can do."

"Right-o!" said Gresham promptly.

Nipper went on the field, but by now, of course, Handforth and Church and McClure and the other players had heard of this latest "mystery," and they were considerably disturbed.

As a result, when the game re-started the Saints were not only a man short, but they were failing to concentrate on the game.

Something had happened to Travers, and it was something in connection with Quirke. In the circumstances it was not very surprising that Hopkins ran through after three minutes of play and scored a comparatively easy goal. Handforth had been looking round at the critical moment searching for Travers, and by the time he discovered that the Yexford forwards were making an attack the ball was in the net.

Meanwhile, Gresham and the other fellows were making a hurried search. Harry Gresham usually played in the left-half position for the Junior XI; but he was suffering from a strained muscle, and Oldfield, of the Fourth, had taken his place.

They searched indoors, they searched the grounds, and two of them even cycled to the village. But they could not find any trace of Vivian Travers. He had vanished completely.

"Well, it's jolly funny," said Gresham at length. "He wouldn't have left the footer match unless it was something tremendously important. I can't make it out. Travers is as keen as mustard. He wouldn't 'fall' for any more of Quirke's rot."

"That's just it," said Jimmy Potts, frowning. "He knows what Quirke is. So how was it done?"

They drifted back to Little Side disconsolate. They had already heard that Yexford had scored another goal, bringing the visitors equal. With a man short, and with their minds distracted from the game, the Saints were making a poor show in the second half.

"Here they are!" went up a yell as Gresham and the others appeared.

Church glanced round, and his eager eyes sought the group. He was disappointed to see that Vivian Travers was not there.

"They haven't found him, you chaps!" he sang out. "Can't see Travers."

"Look out!" yelled Handforth in alarm. "Stop that Yexford chap, you idiot!"

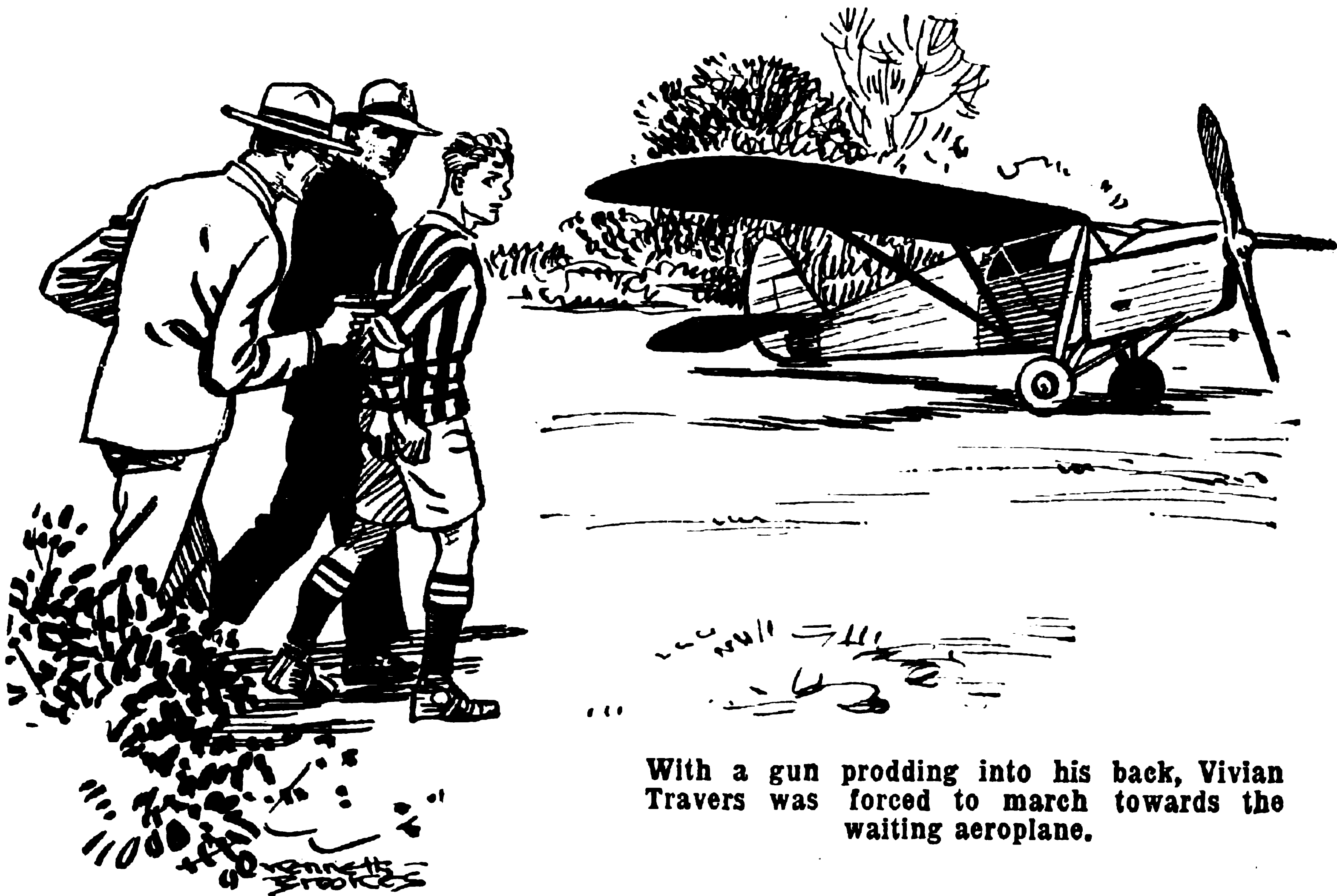
Both Church and McClure leapt. For a moment they had relaxed their vigilance, and two of the Yexford forwards, taking advantage of the opportunity, made a swift rush through. The St. Frank's backs were left standing.

Hopkins had possession of the ball, and he was running swiftly for goal.

"By George!" gurgled Handforth.

He could see that the situation was desperate. He ran out gamely, and flung himself full-length at the feet of the oncoming forward.

Hopkins kicked. The ball shot goalwards, and Hopkins' boot struck Handforth on the



With a gun prodding into his back, Vivian Travers was forced to march towards the waiting aeroplane.

side of the head. The burly St. Frank's goalie rolled over.

"Oh, goal!"

"Great Scott!"

It was a goal right enough—and then the whistle blew. Handforth was lying motionless. Church dashed up and knelt down anxiously beside him. McClure confronted Hopkins angrily.

"You—you reckless idiot!" he accused.

"It wasn't my fault. I didn't know he was going to fling himself at my feet," retorted Hopkins with justifiable indignation. "How could I help it? Of course, I'm sorry——"

He broke off, for at that moment Handforth sat up, dazed and bewildered.

"Don't blame Hopkins," he muttered. "It wasn't his fault. I ran into his feet."

"There you are," said Hopkins triumphantly.

Some of the spectators were shouting excitedly, appealing for a foul. But Biggleswade shook his head. There had been no foul. The goal was a good one.

And when the game finished some time later, the Saints were mortified by the result. They were beaten—three-two—on their own ground!

CHAPTER 14.

In the Hands of the Enemy!

TRAVERS' first emotion on finding himself imprisoned in the car was mainly one of bewilderment.

"Take it easy, young 'un!" said a calm, cool voice. "You'll do yourself no good, I guess, by struggling."

By a supreme effort Travers forced the hand away from his mouth. The car was now speeding rapidly.

"My father!" gasped Travers.

"I am sorry, Travers," came Quirke's voice. "I was compelled to tell you that false story about your father. We thought it would be the simplest way of making you lose your head. Your father's 'plane has not met with an accident at all."

Travers could not reply, for a heavy bandage had been tied round his mouth. He was filled with overwhelming relief at the news that his father was unharmed; and filled with anger against himself, too.

What a fool he had been! If only he had thought for a moment he would have seen that the story was just a trick to entice him away from Little Side.

In a quiet by-lane the car was pulled up, and Mr. Wilbur Druten, turning round in the driver's seat, looked at Travers thoughtfully.

"Sorry, kid, to manhandle you in this way," he said bluntly. "But don't worry; you'll come to no harm."

Travers could only glare.

"You can take that scarf away from his mouth now, Skinner," went on Mr. Druten. "Let the kid talk."

The Man with the Scarred Face removed the scarf.

"You can be put in prison for this!" exclaimed Travers fiercely.

"I guess I'm ready to take the risk," said the American.

"You—you crooks!" went on Travers fiercely. "You've taken me away from an

important football match! They'll have to play without me——"

"To bad!" said Druten with regret. "That's sure tough, kid. But it so happens that there's something more important than football for us to discuss. You've got a ruby ring of mine——"

"You're a liar!" snapped Travers. "That ring belongs to my father!"

"Well, we won't argue," said Druten. "That ring came out of the Osra tomb, and I'm figuring that it's mine. Your father tricked me over that concession."

"You mean, you tried to trick him—and you failed."

"We won't argue about that either," said the American. "That ring was in your possession until yesterday, sonny. You took it to the bank, didn't you?"

"You seem to know everything," retorted Travers. "But it's safe enough in the bank. That's done you, hasn't it?"

"Well, it's made it kinda hard," admitted Druten, his voice cold and relentless. "I'm not denying that you put one over on me there, kid. Now, about letting you go. All you've got to do is to write a little letter to your bank-manager, telling him to release the ring, and you'll go free."

Travers laughed.

"What do you take me for?" he asked. "I'm not going to write any letter!"

"Please yourself," said the crook. "I shall keep you a prisoner until you change your mind, that's all. I guess I'm a patient man."

"And what about when my father arrives?" asked Travers with scorn. "He'll be here this evening—and then that ring will be beyond your reach."

"Beyond his reach, too," said Druten.

"Eh?"

"Even your father cannot get that ring without your authority," said the American coolly. "You may be a schoolboy, but your signature will be required by that bank-manager before he releases the ring. It would be as much as his job is worth to give it up to another party—even your father."

Travers started. He did not know whether Druten's statement was accurate, but if it was—even Mr. Travers could not get that ring!

"I'm quite willing to do a little deal," went on Druten coolly. "If you're obstinate, kid, I'll keep you. Do you get me? Then, later, I'll have a conference with poppa, and we'll effect a little exchange. He can have you, and I'll have the ring."

"You—you scoundrel!" shouted Travers thickly. "You mean, you're going to keep me as a hostage?"

"I guess you're brainy!" said the other mockingly.

"Be sensible, Travers!" urged Ezra Quirke. "Write the letter, and I will take it to the bank. Give up this ring. It has brought you nothing but trouble, and it will bring your father trouble, too. How many more times must I warn you? Let this man have it——"

"Shut up!" interrupted Travers. "I'm not listening to you or to this crook either. My father entrusted me with that ring, and I'm not going to give it up. You can all go and eat coke!"

Wilbur Druten scowled.

"I shall get that ring, even if I have to wait days—weeks!" he said tensely. "While I keep you under my eye the ring will remain safe in the bank vault. Nobody can touch it. I shall not keep you here, young Travers. I shall take you away—far, far away. No search-parties organised by your school-fellows shall locate you!"

He gave an order, and the scarf was once

COMING NEXT WEDNESDAY!



again tied round Travers' mouth. Then the car sped on.

When at length it came to a standstill the door was flung open and Travers was forced out. He found himself on the edge of a little wood. A big meadow lay beyond, but there was not a house or a cottage in sight. At the far end of the meadow stood a big cabin-monoplane.

Travers was bewildered. What did these people intend doing to him? Quirke did not leave the car. Travers was taken by Druten and Skinner. Between them they marched him across the field. His scarf had been removed, but there was something hard pressing into the middle of his back.

"Remember," said Druten grimly, "if you see anybody, keep walking. Don't shout!"

I've got a gun sticking into your spine, and it's a silent one!"

Bewildered, Travers walked on. When they reached the aeroplane Druten flung open the door and Travers was bundled in. A fresh surprise awaited him. The queer Egyptian, so skinny as to be almost like a skeleton, was there. Sata, the man who had been in the school museum the previous night!

"Sata, take him!" snapped Druten. "You know what to do."

Travers found bony arms wrapped about him. With the skill of a magician Sata tied his hands. Travers found himself lying full-

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length on the carpet which covered the floor of the 'plane's cabin.

The engine suddenly sprang to life, and the roar of it filled Travers' ears. At the same moment the great machine commenced moving bumpily across the meadow.

Sata was bending evilly over Travers.

"You go on a long, restful journey!" breathed the Egyptian. "Oh, yes! Such a long journey!"

He pressed something hard over Travers' face and nostrils. For a moment the startled schoolboy struggled, and he felt his senses reeling. Then he had an extraordinary sensation of dropping, dropping, and everything went black. The last thing he remembered was the steady drone of the aeroplane's engine.

CHAPTER 15,

The Tomb of Osra!

IT was the pungent smell of burning incense which first told Vivian Travers that he had recovered consciousness.

There was no droning in his ears now; he felt, indeed, as though he had awakened to a new world. He had lost all count of time, but he had a vague, absurd impression that days had elapsed—weeks. Perhaps it was because of the drug which had been administered. His head was throbbing and it was only with great difficulty that he could concentrate on any one subject.

The incense claimed his attention at first. It was rather nice. It soothed him. And it was strangely reminiscent of the mystic East.

First his sense of smell, then his sense of hearing. He became aware of a curious chanting in a human voice, low but musical.

"Where in the name of wonder am I?" he thought dully. He could not speak the words, because he was gagged.

He found, rather to his surprise, that he was reclining on soft cushions. His arms and legs were bound. He raised himself on his elbow, and for a moment it seemed to him as though the top of his head was coming off. He closed his eyes in agony, then opened them again. A man, quaintly dressed, was kneeling before an altar, at the head of which was an idol. In front of the idol were two strange lamps burning with a ruddy glow. Midway between Travers and the chanting priest stood a little pedestal, and wreaths of smoke were rising from it as the incense burned.

Travers caught his breath in dismayed incredulity. Surely all this could mean only one thing. He was in Egypt!

At that moment a heavy curtain moved and a figure appeared—a man neatly dressed in white drill. He carried a pith helmet in his hand, and with a handkerchief he was mopping his brow. Apparently he did not know that Travers had awakened.

"Infernal heat!" he muttered. "Gosh! It must be over a hundred in the shade outside! It's a mighty fine relief to come into this tomb. Guess I never realised that tombs could be so useful."

Putting on his helmet, he crossed and peered down at Travers. He removed the gag.

"Well, say!" he ejaculated. "So you've come up for air, sonny!"

"Where am I?" asked Travers tensely.

"You ought to know better than I," said Wilbur Druten. "I guess I'm pretty well blind in here after the blazing sunshine outside. Phew! It's damp and smelly, but it's darned cool!"

Travers shivered; to him it felt dank and cold. Even the pungent incense could not disguise the utter chilliness of that tomb.

"I seem to remember—dimly," muttered the schoolboy. "I was in an aeroplane—in a meadow somewhere."

"That was way back last week," interrupted the American. "It's Tuesday morning now."

"Tuesday morning!" gasped Travers. "But—but you took me away from St. Frank's on Saturday!"

"Sure!" said Druten. "You don't figure that I could get you from England to Egypt in much less time, do you—even by 'plane? Yes, sonny, you're in the Sacred Tomb of Osra. How do you like your new lodgings?"

Travers fell back amongst the cushions, breathing hard. The Tomb of Osra! It was almost unbelievable. Druten had said that he would take Travers far, far away; but Egypt—

"I didn't want any trouble with you on the trip," said Druten grimly, "so I made certain. You've been 'under' for over forty-eight hours, sonny. And let me tell you that you're beyond the reach of your father and your friends. You're out of England. You're in my power completely."

"You—you scoundrel!" panted Travers.

"I'm reckoning that we can do without the melodramatics," said the American calmly. "See here, Travers, let's get this thing straight. I'm not keen on keeping you here. It'll cost money to feed you. It'll cost more money to have you efficiently guarded. You can go free just as soon as you write that letter."

"I won't give in—I won't!" exclaimed Travers fiercely. "My pater will find me. And there's Mr. Lee, too!"

Druten's eyes flashed angrily. He again gagged Travers, then turned.

"Sata!" said Druten curtly.

The man in the robes turned from the idol, and Travers saw that he was the skinny Egyptian. He looked impressive in his robes.

"Keep this kid here," said the American, his voice full of menace. "You have the brazier and the irons? Prepare them! He's obstinate, and he needs persuading!"

Sata bowed low.

"Master, I obey!"

Travers, horrified by the order, watched the Egyptian as he prepared a quaint little charcoal brazier. Travers could guess what the hot irons were for.

Wilbur Druten, turning on his heel, passed out of the tomb beyond the heavy curtain. It was utterly dark, and he went up some crumbling stone steps.

But presently, when he reached the top, instead of emerging into blazing hot sunshine as his former words and behaviour had indicated, he came out under a black, cloudy sky. A chill wind was blowing. And he was not on a hot Egyptian desert, but in the monastery ruins at St. Frank's!

CHAPTER 16.

The Last Trick!

ST. FRANK'S!

It was a cunning, ingenious dodge. Travers, below in that supposed tomb, was completely fooled. Yet the trick had been extraordinarily simple to put into effect.

The drug, quite harmless in itself, had robbed Vivian Travers of his senses before the aeroplane had left the ground. As a matter of fact, it had only taxied to the other side of the meadow, where Travers had been quickly put back into the car. As soon as darkness had fallen he had been smuggled by way of the Half-Mile Meadow near St. Frank's into the monastery ruins. Then he had been taken down into the old vault.

The vault was more or less camouflaged—a rug or two on the floor, some cushions, curtains hanging here and there. An imitation altar with lamps, and an idol. A brazier, an incense burner. All these things, coupled with the gloom, made the necessary "atmosphere." It had been a clever touch of Druten's, appearing dressed in white drill with a pith helmet and complaining of the intense heat and dazzling sunlight. Travers had the definite impression that he really was in Egypt and that it was Tuesday.

Actually it was still comparatively early on the Saturday evening. His father had not yet arrived at the school, and was not due to arrive for another hour or two. Druten's plan was to force that letter from the boy immediately. It was any odds that the bank-manager would surrender that ring on Travers' written authority. The bank would not be open, but Quirke knew where the manager lived. And Quirke himself was an old St. Frank's boy, and still possessed a St. Frank's cap, which he would wear for the occasion.

At the top of the monastery vault steps stood a silent figure. It was the man Zenas Skinner, and he was wearing some curious clothing. A great cloak enveloped him.

"Everything quiet?" muttered Druten.

"Yes," said the other. "Quirke is over in another part of the school. Do you think it wise, chief, to do another stunt this evening?"

"Sure!" said the American. "These kids think that Travers has been mysteriously spirited away. The more we can fool 'em the better. Quirke's getting them all worked up, and when you see the seven stars you'll do your stuff. Understand? You're all ready, I suppose?"

"I am waiting for the sign," replied Zenas.

Druten nodded and went down the steps again into the vault. The brazier was burning fiercely now, and the irons were getting red-hot.

"NOT a trace," said Jimmy Potts wearily. "I tell you, Nipper, I'm getting scared."

There was a number of Removites collected on the Ancient House steps. They had just come in from all directions—Nipper, Handforth & Co., Gresham, Reggie Pitt and others. They had been searching far and wide, but they had found no trace whatever of the missing Vivian Travers.

"It's so rummy!" growled Handforth. "I mean, he just—vanished! Somebody saw

him with Quirke, and that was the last of him. Where did he go, and how? Why doesn't he telephone or something?"

Bang-bang! Sizzzz! Bang-bang!
"I wish those Third Form kids would stop playing with crackers and squibs!" said Nipper irritably. "It's not Guy Fawkes day until next week."

Reggie Pitt gave him a straight look.
"Your nerves are getting a bit jumpy, old son," he said. "Never mind the kids. Let them have their fun."
"You're right," muttered Nipper. "Yes, I suppose my nerves—Hullo! Look! It's Quirke!"

A figure had approached the steps, and the Removites recognised it at once. They surrounded Ezra Quirke in a body.

"Where's Travers?" demanded Handforth fiercely.

"I do not understand," said Quirke as though bewildered.

"Travers has vanished," said Nipper. "He was last seen with you during the football match."

"Travers has vanished?" repeated Quirke, horrified. "Yes, yes! He spoke to me during the football match. He even came with me as far as the gates, but I did not see him afterwards. You tell me that he has gone? Where?"

Nipper seized Quirke by the arm.
"Look here, you mysterious boulder, we've had enough of you!" said the Remove captain fiercely. "You know where Travers is, and you're going to tell us."

"But I don't!" protested Quirke. "I know nothing! Heavens! It is the Spirit of the Mummy of Priest Hebeb! Did I not tell you what would happen—"

from the casket last night, but during the daylight hours it has been powerless. Now, with the coming of darkness—"

"You can keep that hokum for yourself," broke in Nipper. "Travers didn't disappear in the darkness, but during the daylight."

"There is danger abroad this night," said Quirke impressively. "You may threaten me, you may deal violently with me, but it will make no difference."

Sizzzzzzh!
A penny rocket, fired by one of the fags, shot across the Triangle diagonally. It had either gone off prematurely, or the owner had failed to set it in an upright position. It shot over the trees of the shrubbery, a shower of sparks following its trail like a comet. Then, abruptly, there was a loud "pop!" and a great burst of lurid flame from the direction of the monastery ruins.

"Great Scott!" gasped Handforth. "What was that?"

Before the others could answer, wild screams sounded—the cries of a man in utter panic. The glare increased.

"Come on!" said Nipper sharply.
"No, no!" panted Quirke. "You must not go there—"

He was pushed out of the way. The Removites ran through the shrubbery, and a

number of fags, scared by what they had done, scuttled in all directions.

"Look!" yelled Jimmy Potts in amazement.

A man was staggering near the ruins, and behind him there was a blazing, billowing mass. He stumbled, fell, screaming still; but he was more terrified than hurt. When the astonished Removites reached him they found that he was entangled amongst many ropes, and there was a kind of harness attached to him.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Nipper, as the powerful beam of his electric torch flashed on the figure. "Look here!"

They could all see that the man was wearing a black cloak, and underneath a queer garment which glowed mysteriously. In a flash Nipper knew the truth. After one look at the dying flames in the man's rear the whole mystery was explained.

"He's all right," said Nipper after a quick look at the man. "Scorched a bit, perhaps, but that's all. Scared more than anything. That rocket must have set fire to his balloon."

"His—what?" yelled Handforth.

"Allow me to introduce the ghost—the mysterious Egyptian priest!" said Nipper, whilst Zenas Skinner was assisted to his feet. "See this luminous robe? The black cloak can be let down at will, making it possible for the 'apparition' to vanish in mid-air."

"But—but we've seen the ghost flying over trees!" protested Reggie Pitt.

"Ever heard of balloon-jumping?" retorted Nipper. "It was quite popular some years ago. A man has a miniature balloon attached to him by means of ropes. He jumps, and he can clear trees and houses if he's skilful. This fellow only used the apparatus when the night was pitch-dark so that the balloon wouldn't be seen. He himself was luminous, so he stood out clearly."

The trickster trembled, for he was afraid of these schoolboys. He was a man who had done a great deal of balloon-jumping in the United States and on the Continent; he had given exhibitions, and he was one of the most

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skilful exponents in existence. Wilbur Druten had paid him handsomely for his services.

"Now we're beginning to get the hang of it," said Jimmy Potts. "There was no mummy, and there's no ghostly Egyptian priest. Fakery from start to finish!"

"I say," yelled Handforth excitedly, "this man was right in the monastery ruins. Why, what about Travers?"

"By jingo, Handy, you're right!" said Nipper. "There's a vault down there. Quick! Let's go down and search!"

CHAPTER 17.

The Mystery Explained!

"**N**OW!" said Wilbur Druten.

Sata, with hot irons in his hands, was bending evilly over Vivian Travers. Druten stood by, and in one hand he held a sheet of paper and in the other a fountain-pen. The gag had been removed from Travers' mouth, and his limbs were also free.

"You can choose, sonny!" said the American. "The irons—or the pen! And don't forget that you are thousands of miles from your friends!"

Travers felt his heart thumping. These men were going to torture him. Either that or he must write that letter—the letter which would release the ring of Osra for which his father had journeyed all the way to England.

"No, no, I won't!" panted the boy. "You're only bluffing, you crook! You wouldn't dare torture me."

"Master, I am ready," murmured Sata.

There was a moment's silence, tense and dramatic. Sata came nearer and nearer. The red-hot iron sent forth its glowing heat so that Travers could feel it scorching his neck and face.

Was he dreaming, or could he really hear Handforth's voice? The silence of the vault was unearthly, and Handforth's voice came vaguely, mysteriously from somewhere above.

"I say," came those well-known tones, "this man was right in the monastery ruins! Why, what about Travers?"

Travers gulped. Druten, too, had heard the voice, and he spoke hastily, commanding Sata to commence the ordeal.

But Travers was like a boy transformed. Handforth! It *was* Handforth's voice! And Handforth had been saying something about the monastery ruins!

In that same flash the truth came to Travers. His dazed eyes roved round the vault, and now he recognised it. Great Scott, he wasn't in Egypt at all! He was practically underneath St. Frank's!

"You tricky rotters!" he yelled, leaping to his feet.

His move was so unexpected that neither Druten nor Sata could stop him. His head felt as though it would burst, but he staggered across to the curtains, and found himself at the bottom of a stairway.

"Help! Help!" he shouted at the top of his voice. "Remove, ahoy! Rescue! Help!"

Hands clutched at him from behind and dragged him back.

"You infernal young brat!" snarled Wilbur Druten.

But Travers' voice had been heard above, for Nipper and Handforth and the others were already racing down the vault steps. They came tumbling in like a flood. The lights had been extinguished, and Druten and Sata had dragged Travers back into one of the corners. But the gleaming beams from the electric torches held by Nipper and Handforth were sufficient.

"There they are!" yelled Handforth.

The fight was short and sharp. There were a dozen strong, determined boys—and only two men. Druten and his Egyptian assistant were swamped.

"**Y**OU see," said Mr. Travers, "it was like this."

He had arrived at the old school an hour earlier than he had expected, and he had found St. Frank's seething with excitement. Wilbur Druten, Sata and Zenas Skinner were under arrest. Quirke had been allowed to go free. He was only a boy, and it was likely enough that in the first place he had never known Druten's real motive. Druten had got to know of him through the man Skinner, and because Quirke had a reputation as a mystic he had been used.

Mr. Travers was with his son now, and there were many others present—Nelson Lee himself, Mr. Wilkes, Nipper, Handforth and all those other boys who had taken part in the final exciting scenes.

"This man Druten is an adventurer," explained Mr. Travers. "Not an ordinary crook, because he believes in working within the law. This is about the first time that he has overstepped the mark, and he only did it because he was desperate. You see, we both knew that the Temple of Osra contained the treasures of Queen Osra, and it was my ambition to be the discoverer. Druten was slow, and he found himself beaten.

"It was his idea to seize this great treasure in secret, whilst pretending that his discoveries were of no importance. He's done the same sort of thing before. He takes his treasures in secret to America, and there he sells them, piece by piece, to American millionaires, who, of course, will pay fantastic sums for such relics. They are always warned to keep it dark, and somehow American millionaires are quite ready to buy relics from the Old World under such conditions. If Druten had obtained the Osra treasure he could have sold it easily with tremendous profit to himself. My object, of course, was to unearth the treasure, but to hand it over to the Egyptian Government."

"We can well understand why the Egyptian Government is opposed to English-

(Concluded on page 43.)

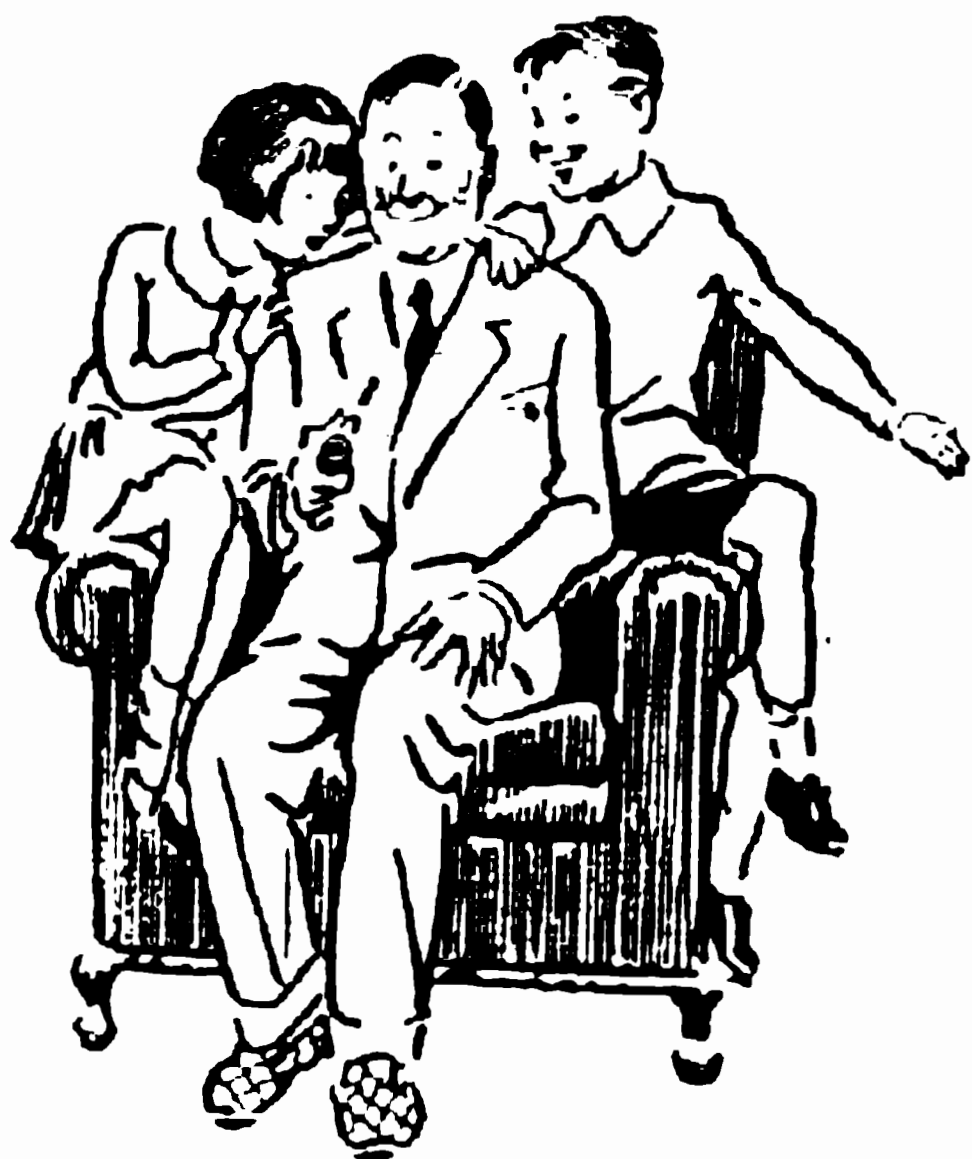
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As to who can serve you most*



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The Devilry of Satan!

WITH the knife gripped between his teeth, his eyes glinting evilly, the man crept silently towards the sleeping form of Dick Forrester. Nearer and nearer; now he was less than a yard away. His hand went to his mouth and clasped the knife. And still Dick slept, oblivious of his awful danger.

A sudden thunder of approaching hoofs made the man turn abruptly. Surprise showed on his face; surprise which quickly turned to panic-stricken dismay.

Charging down upon him was a magnificent black horse, eyes gleaming wickedly, nostrils distended, teeth bared. Like a whirlwind fury it swept up. With a bellowing snort it reared on its haunches; forelegs lashed out.

There came an agonised cry, cut short abruptly; a tinkle of something falling on stone. Then silence, broken at last by a triumphant whinny as Black Satan joyfully licked the face of his young master!

Dick Forrester awoke with a start. When he opened his eyes his head was singing like a kettle, and he felt pain in every inch of his body. He blinked upwards for a moment, and then gave a delighted cry.

"Satan!" he exclaimed.

A soft whinny answered him, and a cold, velvety nose was thrust into Dick's hand. The splendid black horse, mud-spattered and covered with sweat, but sound as a bell, and with saddle and irons intact, was standing over him.

Dick felt as if the heart was back in his body once more. Hardly able to believe his eyes, he raised himself, and a groan escaped him. The hardships he had been through, strong and wiry as he was, had left their mark on him; the fever was in his brain, and he ached violently all over.

Satan muzzled him anxiously, and whinnied sympathetically. He understood that all was not well with his young master.

Suddenly, Dick's eyes lit on something that made him stare and rub his eyes. A few feet away lay a prostrate figure—the lifeless body of a man. It was a gruesome sight, looking as if the life had been beaten out with sledge-hammers. Dick recognised it as one of Sweeny's men.

"'Od's mercy!" exclaimed Dick. "What's this?"

Black Satan looked towards the inert thing. His eye gleamed wickedly; he tossed his

mane, and snorted. Then he turned to caress his master again. A naked knife lay beside the body. Dick understood.

"You killed him, Satan! 'Od's blood, you found him about to kill me, and your hoofs and teeth made an end of him. 'Tis one of Sweeny's footpads, and once again you've saved my life!"

He staggered up, and threw an arm around Satan's glossy neck. Never did horse and man understand each other like Dick and his steed—not even Turpin and Black Bess.

How the splendid beast had found him upon the moors Dick did not know, but one thing he understood—Satan had saved him once again.

"Ay, Heaven help any man who dares face your hoofs! Come, old boy, this moor is a weary place, and we shall both be the better for food and rest, if we can find it. I feel as though I were sick of an ague."

Painfully he mounted into the saddle, and rode away. The mosses and heather made soft riding, and, feeling he could stand it, Dick put Satan to a canter. He did not check him till they had covered seven or eight miles and had reached the borders of the moor.

"I can ride no longer!" muttered Dick, swaying in the saddle. "I shall be on the ground again ere long. We must have shelter, at any cost. Is not that a house among the trees?"

A rambling, prosperous-looking old farmhouse lay before him, nestling in a pleasant grove. Whether the people were friendly or hostile, Dick did not know. At least, they would probably not know him, and he still had some gold in his saddle-pouch. He drew the silver-mounted pistols from the holsters and put them in his pockets, then rode up to the farm-house. A good-looking, grey-haired old farmer answered his knock.

"Can you shelter me for a night, good man?" said Dick. "I and my beast are worn out, and have lost our way. You shall not lose by it."

"Come in, sir," said the farmer, staring rather hard at Black Satan. "You look travel-worn. Say nothing of loss or profit. My house has always a meal or bed for a traveller, and I take no man's silver."

Dick replied gratefully, and, sick as he was, he looked to Satan's wants and groomed him down before he did anything else. Then he entered the house.

The farmer's wife, a cleanly, comfortable old dame, rose and curtsied; and then a cry escaped her.

"Grammercy! The young highwayman—the companion of Turpin!" she exclaimed.

"Highwayman!" cried the farmer, staring. Dick flushed, and looked downcast.

"I am known, it seems," he said. "No matter, good people, I will go elsewhere. Let me depart."

"Depart!" cried the dame. "Nay, not while we have a roof over us! Sir, do you not recognise me?"

Dick looked at her unsteadily, but was none the wiser.

"Your pardon," he said. "I have a fever upon me, and do not see very well. My eyes swim somewhat."

"Ay, so I see!" said the dame pityingly. "Will, do you have the best bed set in order without delay. I am thankful for this. Why, sir, do you not remember Janet Bullford, in the old market-cart, whom you saved last year from the ruffing robber who would have shot my old horse in sport? Grammercy, you and kindly Master Turpin took his pistols and bound him under the girths of his own horse for a lesson, and I prayed you always to count on my gratitude!"

"Faith, is it he?" exclaimed the farmer. "You are a hundred times welcome, sir!"

In a moment the memory came back to Dick—it was the dame he had saved from a ruffianly highwayman, soon after Vane Forrester first outlawed him. Even now he had the man's pistols in his pocket. The old couple showered him with gratitude.

"I am blithe to have fallen into such kindly hands," said Dick. "The service I did was nothing. But I had not thought I was so near the scene of that affair. 'Twere better I should journey to some inn, lest I bring trouble on you."

"Nay, you shall not stir an inch till you are sound and strong again," said the farmer heartily. "And be sure, sir, no treachery can reach you under our roof. They should burn the house over us before we would give you up, though it were the lord-lieutenant himself who came to seek you!"

Dick gave in at this—indeed, he was so weak he could not do otherwise. The farmer and his wife let him lack for nothing; they tended him as their own son. He soon found himself between lavender-scented sheets in a large bed-room with a blazing fire of beech-

HOW THE STORY BEGAN.

DICK FORRESTER, formerly a young highwayman, has been deprived of his estate and fortune by the trickery of

HECTOR FORRESTER. This is only the beginning of Dick's troubles, for he next falls foul of

CAPTAIN SWEENEY, the notorious leader of a gang of footpads, and is also wanted by the King's Riders for assisting his former comrade of the road,

RICHARD TURPIN, the famous highwayman, to escape capture. Dick is forced to become an outlaw, and he and Turpin ride off together. They are pursued by Riders, but make their escape after a fierce fight. Turpin goes off on a mission, arranging to meet Dick three days later. Dick is trapped by Sweeny. He escapes after a gruelling time and, exhausted, falls asleep on the moor. Thus he does not see a man, armed with a knife, creeping towards him.

(Now read on.)

logs. He was in sorry condition, but broths and soups were served him by the good dame, who was famed for her skill in herbs and doctoring.

A Visit from the Sheriff!

DICK slept well, and the next day he was much better. Every kindness was showered on him. By the morning after, he felt himself near as sound as ever, and he rose and dressed himself, thankful that he had fallen into such good hands.

"A service done for kindness is never lost," he said to himself, buckling on his sword, which had been cleansed of its rust and wet. "'Twas a good day's work when I tackled that bullying robber and saved the good dame from him. But what is this fracas below?"

Loud voices reached him from the living-room downstairs.

"I tell you once more, sir, I have no news to give you!" said the farmer's voice stoutly.

"'Od's blood, man!" said a fierce, commanding reply. "If you do not tell me all you know, and instantly, you will find yourself in sorry case. I have certain news that this rogue stopped at your house a night, and passed on. You must know where he went, and I command you, in the King's name, to inform me. Refuse at your peril!"

"'Od's bodikins!" muttered Dick. "Here's a pretty to-do!"

He strode to the window. On the drive outside were three horsemen, one of them a young officer of the Courts. The other two were sheriff's men, and one held the bridle of a handsome thoroughbred bay.

"I do not know where the rogue, as you call him, journeyed to, your honour," came the farmer's voice again.

"Plague take it!" said Dick to himself. "'Tis the sheriff of the district, and he has tracked me here with his men!"

A bright-looking lad of ten, the farmer's son, came hurrying into the room.

"The sheriff is here to take you, sir! My father begs you to ride for your life, and he will hold the men in conversation till you are well away. You have only to slip out by the back window here, which is not guarded, take your horse from the stable, and gallop through the wood, where they will not see you."

"Ay, that's true," muttered Dick. "But this will mean ruin to these good folk who have sheltered me, and that I will not countenance."

Down the stairs he went to the room where the angry voices were mingling, and strode in.

"Good-morrow, Master Sheriff!" he cried. "Are you seeking Galloping Dick, the highwayman? I know where he is, and you have but to ride with me and I will show you!"

Farmer Bullford turned white, and the sheriff, a tall, handsome man of about thirty, with a fierce expression, stared at Dick.

"Ah!" he said. "Is this hearsay, or do

you truly know where the knave is? Mark you, lead me on no wild-goose chase!"

"On my honour," said Dick, bringing his fist down on the table, "I will show him to you! I guarantee it in the sum of a hundred guineas, so that you may know I speak the truth. But whether you can take him when I show him you is your own affair."

"I go bail for that!" said the sheriff fiercely. "Now, sir, what news?"

"Mount and ride with all speed!" cried Dick. "We must not delay, for he is a slippery rogue, I promise you."

Together they made for the door. Dick, throwing a glance of warning and farewell back at the amazed Farmer Bullford, laid his fingers on his lips as a sign to remain silent, and followed the sheriff out. A few moments later he was on the back of Black Satan, galloping away with the sheriff and his men.

"That is a fine beast of yours!" said the sheriff, as they rode, staring at Black Satan.

"Ay!" laughed Dick. "Dick Forrester himself has not a better. And they say he rides a pretty piece of horse-flesh, too."

"How long shall we ride to find him? Is he far off?"

"Faith, no great distance," returned Dick. "Yet we must ride half a dozen miles or so before you can deal with him."

"You are no friend of his, it seems," said the sheriff, looking askance at the young highwayman.

"You have hit it—I am his worst enemy," said Dick.

"Let us press on," returned the sheriff.

They spurred their horses into a gallop, and the miles were reeled off. Dick led them forth across the moor.

"'Od's wounds!" he thought. "This sheriff is the father of all fools! 'Tis well he did not recognise me by the posted description. I had only to walk right into his arms at the farm, whereby he was sure the highwayman he was after would not dare to do that, and the truth never struck him."

He took a shorter hold of Black Satan.

"Turn to the right here, Master Sheriff."

"'Od's!" said his worship. "'Tis a lonely piece of country you are leading us over!"

"A highwayman loves loneliness," said Dick, "especially when the sheriff's posse is after him!"

"Now, how to make sure that Farmer Bullford does not suffer by what he has done," thought Dick to himself. "To escape myself is easy, but that is not my concern at the moment. Ah, an idea! It's something of a forlorn hope, yet I can but try it."

Outwitted!

DICK kept a watchful eye on the young lieutenant who rode on the near side of him. The young man had somewhat of a loose seat, and was not on too good terms with the big, bony sorrel that he bestrode.

They were cantering over some mossy ground by the side of a river, when Dick, at

if by accident, cannoned Black Satan into the sorrel's quarters in the midst of its stride, and over rolled the big, gawky brute like a shot rabbit, sending the lieutenant several yards away, to land on his hands and knees. Everybody looked towards the fallen man, and Dick, as the sorrel scrambled up, gave it a sly cut with his whip that sent it careering away over the wolds.

"I beg you ten thousand pardons, my dear sir!" cried Dick. "We were riding a trifle over-close, I fear. You are not hurt, I trust?"

"Hurt? No, sir; but no thanks to you!" cried the lieutenant, with a muttered curse at Dick's clumsiness. He picked himself up and looked across the moor in dismay. "Plague on it, there goes my horse over hill and dale! After him, you two rogues there!"

Away galloped the two troopers after the runaway, and it was plain it would need both of them to catch him, for the sorrel, with no rider on his back, was bounding gaily over the landscape.

"This delay bodes ill for our enterprise, sir!" cried Dick to the sheriff, who was chafing with impatience. "We may lose our man if we are not quick—I had hoped to be there by now. It will be best for the two of us to push on, and let the others follow, lest the knave be off from the place I shall take you to."

"Ay, spur on!" cried the sheriff impatiently. "Let them bring up the rear."

Dick turned to the lieutenant.

"When you get your horse, bring the man on to Neatsford Hamlet, straight over Black Down, with all speed!" he ordered.

The lieutenant nodded, whereat Dick wheeled Satan, and he and the sheriff galloped away across the rolling moor, soon losing view of the others. At full speed did the young highwayman make the sheriff gallop, and after a while Dick shook with mirth.

"What the pest makes you laugh so?" said the sheriff testily.

"Ho, ho! I beg your worship's pardon!" guffawed Dick, his sides shaking and the tears running down his cheeks. "A jest which was told me yesterday has just come home to me, and I now see the point."

The sheriff looked at this companion sourly. They were now a couple of miles or more from the scene of the lieutenant's fall.

There was a pistol at his worship's belt, and another in his saddle-holster. Still laughing, Dick suddenly bent forward, plucked the pistol from the sheriff's belt with a quick movement, and fired it in the air. Then, flinging it away, he cried:

"Halt!"

"Od's death!" roared the sheriff furiously, reining his horse back on its haunches, and quickly snatched at the pistol in his holster.

(Dick or the sheriff—who will triumph? Read next Wednesday's enthralling instalment.)

THE MENACED SCHOOLBOY!

(Continued from page 38.)

men and Americans exploring the tombs of the ancients," said Nelson Lee, nodding. "There has been too much smuggling and underhand work."

"Druten was furious with me, and he swore that he would force me out of Egypt," continued Mr. Travers. "He tried at first to work up an atmosphere of mystery and dread at St. Frank's. His idea was to make me think that my son's life was in danger, and that as a result I would abandon work at the Temple of Osra and come home. But I was well aware of his wiles. Then unexpectedly I found that the ruby ring, which I had thought to be of small importance, was the very key to the inner treasure chamber. Druten also learned of its importance, and he flew to England to make a last desperate bid. As you all know, it failed."

And so the mystery was cleared up to a great extent, and a few days later it was completely cleared up when Travers received a letter from Ezra Quirke.

Quirke realised how nearly he had landed himself into trouble, and he expressed his gratitude that Travers had allowed the matter to drop. He explained how he had

tied a piece of black string across the dormitory corridor, thus causing Travers to fall down the stairs; explained how, through hypnotism, he had been the cause of Travers crashing into the goalpost during that remarkable match between St. Frank's and the Bannington Grammar School. From the tone of Quirke's letter it was obvious that he was sincerely sorry that this had ever happened.

Travers smiled whimsically when he finished reading the letter.

"And that's that!" he said. "Well, well! Quirke's a queer beggar, and I haven't much use for him, but I must say that this letter has made me readjust my views slightly. If only he'd forget all about this occult business there might be some hope for him. But, anyway, there's no denying he's provided us with plenty of excitement and thrills during the past few days, for which due thanks. What say you, chaps?" he added, turning to his two chums.

Jimmy Potts and Skeets Bellton nodded. They agreed unanimously!

THE END.

(Plenty of fireworks and fun in next week's special Guy Fawkes yarn of the Chums of St. Frank's. Entitled: "Hand-forth The Guy!" Don't miss it. Ask your newsagent to reserve you a copy.)

A City of Fireworks!

How and Where the Big Bangs Are Made.

WHERE do fireworks come from, boys? I never thought about it at all until I visited a certain big factory at Huddersfield and saw "Standard" fireworks actually being made.

From Land's End to John o'Groats, November 5th spells fun and fireworks to every boy in the British Isles. It is the day above all others when squibs and rockets are let off without hindrance, and the "man in blue" is obligingly blind and deaf to the doings of youthful disturbers of the peace.

Not many lads, probably, stop to think what a lot of time and hard work has been necessary to produce the marvellous collection of Golden Arrows, Silver Bullets, Rising Suns, and Chrysanthemum Fountains which all "go up in smoke" within a few seconds of being lighted. (Everybody has "money to burn" on Plotz Day!) I never realised it myself until I saw Standard fireworks actually being made. Talk about hard work!

Who Invented Fireworks?

To provide one night's entertainment, the entire staffs of several large firms in different parts of England are kept busy throughout the year. The Standard Fireworks firm in Yorkshire—the county in which Guy Fawkes was born—employs over four hundred people all the year round, and it has depots in London, Manchester, Newcastle, Cardiff, and Southampton which bear a strong likeness to munition works. The factories can aptly be called small cities of fireworks. Little did Guy think he was laying the foundation of such a big industry as this when he made his famous attempt to make a bonfire of the Houses of Parliament!

The beginning of fireworks, though, goes a good deal further back than that. No one seems to know who was the actual inventor of them—some say that they began with the Romans, and others

think that the Chinese had a good deal to do with their origin. Bonfires have been used as a signal of rejoicing from the earliest days, but a bonfire is a tame affair compared with the startling effects obtained from the fireworks of to-day.

Used by Henry VII.

A knowledge of saltpetre, gunpowder, and other inflammable substances was brought to England by the Crusaders from the East, and the chemists of that time evidently made some successful experiments with these materials in the years that followed, for a firework display was given at the wedding of King Henry VII., and one of the features of the celebration was a red firework dragon which spouted flames.

Dragons seem to have been popular in England in those times. A firework display given on the occasion of another Royal wedding—that of the daughter of King James—illustrated the story of St. George and the Dragon. It was performed by Army gunners, and was dangerous business even for these men, as their knowledge of the explosives they were handling must have been very incomplete.

Buy the Best.

Provided that the fireworks come from a reputable maker, such as Standard Fireworks, Ltd., and that the instructions accompanying them are carefully followed, a modern firework display is exciting enough for anyone without being in the least dangerous. Remember, though, that you can hardly blame the maker if trouble results from holding a firework labelled "Not to be held in the hand"!

I was told that about half a million of money is spent every year on Guy Fawkes' Day on the purchase of fireworks, and you can imagine what a great deal this means, especially as the great majority of fireworks sold are the cheap varieties, ranging in price from one halfpenny to sixpence.

If you want the best fireworks, boys, insist on the "Standard" brand!

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Printed and published every Wednesday by the Proprietors, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement Offices: The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, E.C.4. Registered for transmission by Canadian magazine post. Subscription Rates: Inland and Abroad, 11/- per annum; 5/6 for six months. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd.; and for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd.