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The NELSON LEE



The
**MUMMY
MYSTERY!**

New Series No. 16.

OUT ON WEDNESDAY

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Tell Your Pals About These New St. Frank's Yarns—They'll Be Interested!

"K.K." — K-O!

BY
EDWY
SEARLES
BROOKS



CHAPTER 1.

K. K. Parkington, Limited!

CLACK!

It was a mighty swipe, and Edward Oswald Handforth, self-appointed captain of the St. Frank's Remove—he had temporarily resigned from Nelson Lee's Detective Academy—gazed proudly after the ball as it winged its way towards the boundary.

"That's the way to hit, my sons!" he said. "No messing about with the giddy ball! Hit it—and hit it hard! The science of cricket is all very well, but if a batsman wants to get runs he's got to hit."

Nobody took much notice. Nobody ever did take much notice of Handy. He was fond of gassing, and the safest way was to let him gas.

The May morning was brilliant, with the sun peeping over the roof of the School House tower. From Little Side the scaffolding on the East wing was in full view, and a number of workmen were commencing their day's labours. St. Frank's wasn't finished yet. The East wing—comprising the Modern and East Houses—was still in a state of semi-erection. None of the Fourth-Formers had returned and, indeed, only about half the actual school was on the spot at present. Yet, to all intents and purposes, St. Frank's was in full swing again.

It wasn't much after six o'clock, and the school as a whole was still in bed. These Junior cricketers were early risers, Handforth having fished them out for special practice. When Handforth started fishing people out, it was utterly useless to attempt any further sleep.

"Come on!" yelled Handforth boisterously. "You're a great bowler, Gresham—see if you can take my wicket."

Harry Gresham, son of the famous "Hat Trick" Gresham, took the leather and sent down one of his specials.

Clack!

Handforth got hold of it beautifully. He felt he could play ducks and drakes with Larwood this morning. The ball went soaring away, rising higher and higher.

"Oh, good hit, Handy!"

The ball sailed towards the upper scaffolding of the new buildings. A slim figure in overalls, reaching out, caught the ball deftly. Without a second's hesitation he returned it.

"That's Pipes, the plumber's mate," said Travers. "By Samson! That was hot stuff!"

Travers was so struck by that lightning-like return that he left the playing-fields and climbed the scaffold. He found "Pipes" Parker lighting a blow-lamp at the top of the building. Pipes was a wiry youth, with a permanently-mournful countenance.

"You weren't long in pitching the ball back, Pipes, old man," said Travers.

BIFF! BANG! THUD!
Edward Oswald Handforth's on
the warpath—and K. K. Park-
ington's on the floor!

"I'm sure," agreed the plumber's mate briefly.

"Know something about cricket, don't you?"

"I'm sure!"

"Belong to any team?" asked Travers.

Pipes drew a deep breath, and Travers waited. As far as he could remember, the plumber's mate had only said "I'm sure!" in answer to any and every kind of remark. Travers had begun to think that was the full extent of his vocabulary.

"Marshall Road School XI," said Pipes, as though with reluctance.

"Marshall Road! That's one of the Bannington Council Schools, isn't it?"

"I'm sure."

"But you've left school?"

"I'm sure."

"If you say 'I'm sure' again, I'll knock you off this giddy scaffolding," said Travers threateningly.

"I'm sure!" said Pipes, with a gloomy look towards the earth.

"Do you still play cricket?"

"Skipper," replied Pipes. "Other chaps still at school, but I'm skipper. Give you a game, if you like."

"That's what I wanted to find out," said Travers. "And if your pals are as hot as you are, they'll give us a good game."

"I'm sure!" said Pipes, with conviction.

On Little Side the early-risers had ceased their practice. All eyes were turned upon twelve juniors, resplendent in white flannels, who had just arrived. They were led by a red-headed young giant with a square jaw, a slightly-upturned nose, and a pair of massive shoulders.

In short, Kirby Keeble Parkington Limited had arrived.

CHAPTER 2.

The Red-Hot K. K.!

K. K. PARKINGTON had two special chums—Harvey Deeks and Clement Goffin. They were known as the Red-hot Trio. Not that the other nine juniors from Carlton College were not equally red-hot. These twelve, known as the Carlton Gang, had arrived at St. Frank's at the re-opening of the school, and it was plainly their intention to "run the show."

In fact, it was because of the attitude of the Carlton Gang that Handforth had lost his interest in detective work, and had elected to stay at St. Frank's.

"Well, what do we see here?" said K. K., looking round with a sort of amused tolerance. "Little boys shouldn't be up so early as this. The rising-bell won't go for another half an hour, and besides, you're in our way."

"You funny ass!" said Handforth truculently. "What about your being in our way? We're practising cricket! It's the

beginning of the season, and I've got to get my men into shape."

Parkington glanced round.

"You'll never do it, old man. Nature made them this shape, and I'm afraid they'll have to stay like it," he replied. "And in case there's any misunderstanding, I'd like to point out that I'm the Junior captain, and that these friends of mine constitute the Junior XI—even including a twelfth man."

There was an immediate uproar. K. K. Parkington Limited gathered themselves together in a sort of solid square, and they automatically clenched their fists. This was what they called the Carlton Game. In that formation, it was practically impossible to bowl them over and bump them.

"It's about time you fellows were squashed!" said Handforth wrathfully. "I've never heard of such nerve! You're all new kids—and you come here under the impression that you can rule the roost!"

"It's no impression, sweetheart," said K. K. "We're already ruling it. As I have pointed out to you at least a dozen times, we're red-hot, and we've decided to instil some life into this defunct old carcass of a school. We're from Carlton. That means that we're hot. We now belong to St. Frank's, and we're determined to restore the fine old traditions of St. Frank's."

"If there's any restoring to be done, we'll do it—we, the regular St. Frank's chaps!" snapped Handforth. "You chaps are rank outsiders. And just to prove how red-hot you are, K. K. Parking-place, or whatever your silly name is, I'm going to give you a good hiding! Put up your fists!"

"Company, ready!" said K. K. briskly.

"None of that!" snorted Handforth. "This is a personal challenge—and if you're a sportsman, you'll accept. We'll fight, K. K.; and if I win, I'm skipper. If you win, you're skipper."

"That's fair, K. K.," said Deeks. "Kill him!"

The new boy considered. There seemed little doubt that he could wipe Handforth up with one fist. He was even bigger than the burly Edward Oswald; his reach was longer, his shoulders were broader, and he was at least a stone heavier.

"I'm game, sweetheart," he said cheerily. "But there's one little point. K. K. Parkington Limited always fights as a unit. If I take you on, you've got to select eleven other fellows to fight my pals. We'll have twelve scraps at once—and get it over quickly."

"Suits me!" said Travers, rolling up his sleeves.

Some of the other "Old-Timers" were less enthusiastic. It was a fact—an unpleasant fact—that all the Carlton fellows were young giants.

However, it was impossible for K. K.'s challenge to be ignored. It was a perfectly fair one. The Removites accepted it with open derision, whatever their inner feelings might have been.

"There's just one point," said Parkington sweetly. "This fight goes by the majority."

"What do you mean?" asked Handforth, with suspicion.

"If the majority of your fellows win their fights, you choose your own skipper," replied K. K. "If the majority of my fellows win, they'll choose me. Is that understood and agreed upon?"

"It is," said Handforth darkly. "There'll be twelve of you licked!"

It was a novel battle, and it was fortunate that the hour was so early; or sundry prefects and masters might have descended upon Little Side with canes. From a distance, the affair had all the appearance of a free fight. Scores of workmen on the new building ceased their labours in order to watch. It was a bare-fist business—a fight to the finish for every pair. These stalwarts from Carlton College scorned the use of boxing gloves.

Crash! Biff! Thud!

Edward Oswald Handforth sailed in with all his volcanic impetuosity. The sturdy K. K. had the surprise of his life. Something like a sledge-hammer hit him on the jaw, and then an Indian club flattened his nose, and a cricket bat broke about four of his ribs.

At least, that is what it felt like. Handforth's fists were far more dangerous than K. K. had expected. For the first time since his arrival, his confidence received a jolting. He had made the grave blunder of setting Handforth down as a "wind-bag."

"And see how you like this!" roared Handforth.

Deftly he dodged a wicked left-hook, got out of reach of a straight right, and rammed home a pile-driver of his own. K. K. rocked. Handforth was several kinds of an ass, but when it came to fighting he was all there. It was the one thing he could do.

Crash! Biff!

The leader of the Red-hots went down sprawling. But he was game. His nose was swelling, his left eye was becoming blackened, and he felt so dizzy that everything was buzzing round, but he staggered to his feet and carried on.

"Want another one?" asked Handforth cheerfully.

He delivered it—a clean knock-out. K. K. subsided, with bells ringing in his ears. And when he gradually recovered, he began to readjust his whole focus. Taking command of St. Frank's wasn't quite so easy as he had imagined.

He could hear cheering from the workmen, and he had an awful suspicion that disaster had completely overtaken his men. As his vision began to clear he counted the members of the Carlton Gang who were still standing. Little Side was littered with the vanquished. K. K. counted those standing.

Three—four— Why, by Jove! Seven! Seven of his stalwarts were still on their feet. And Edward Oswald Handforth was shouting with fierce indignation. K. K. smiled serenely.



Handforth hit the ball a mighty clout—

—and it sailed up amid the scaffolding, to be deftly caught by Pipes, the plumber's mate.



CHAPTER 3.

Travers the Spoofer!

HANDFORTH nearly choked. "What's this?" he demanded thickly. "Gresham, get up! Singleton, you ass, fight! Trotwood, are you dead? Potts, you howling idiot, why don't you pull yourself together?"

It was no good. Seven of the Old-Timers were "out." Seven of the Carlton Gang had won.

"Sweetheart, your fist!" said a tired voice.

K. K. Parkington was on his feet. He was a wreck, but he seized Handforth's fist and shook it heartily, an admiring look in his eyes.

"Many apologies, old bean," he said. "I didn't think there was a Removite living who could whack me. We live and learn. I know a better man when he licks me. Congrats!"

"That's all right," said Handforth uncomfortably.

All the same, he was impressed by K. K.'s sporting spirit.

"You've slaughtered me, but I really must point out that the battle is ours," went on K. K. contentedly. "That being so, I'm skipper. Is that understood?"

Handforth looked mournfully at his fallen comrades.

"A bet's a bet," he said, shaking his head. "You win!"

A moment later he had brightened up. Solomon Levi, of the West House, had struggled to his feet. There was a warlike look in his eyes.

"I'm not whacked yet!" he said defiantly. "Nobody's counted me out!"

He rushed at his opponent, and Handforth watched eagerly. If Levi could only win, that would make things even. And as Handy had licked the leader, it would mean that he could claim a victory.

"Look out!" came a sudden yell.

A skinny figure, wearing a flowing gown, came rushing on to Little Side. A derisive cheer went up from the watching workmen. It was their cheering which had attracted Mr. Horace Pycraft on to the scene of battle.

"Stop! Stop at once!" he shouted, rushing up to Levi and his opponent.

Crash!

The Jewish boy, unable to pull himself up, landed a beautiful right-hander on Mr. Pycraft's jaw. The Form-master went over like a nine-pin, and lay still. At the same second, Levi's opponent landed the deciding blow, and Levi lost all further interest in the proceedings.

"Quick! Let's play cricket!" urged K. K. like lightning.

The others grasped his meaning. The fellows who were still "out" were seized and whirled into the pavilion. The rest disposed themselves over the field. It was all done within a minute, and when Mr. Pycraft sat up, thoroughly dazed, he beheld a peaceful enough scene. White-clad juniors

enthusiastically engaged at cricket practice. Harvey Deeks was nearest to the Form-master.

"Go easy, you chaps!" he sang out. "Careful how you throw that ball! Come and lend a hand with Mr. Pycraft. Do you want to hit him again?"

Willing hands assisted Mr. Pycraft to his feet.

"How dare you?" spluttered the Form-master. "You were fighting! A disgraceful spectacle! The whole of Little Side was crowded with fighters!"

"Fighting, sir?" asked K. K. incredulously. "Are you sure you haven't been dreaming, sir? We're at cricket practice. And if you will dash on the field so unexpectedly, you must expect to be hit. Cricket balls are hard things."

"Good gracious me!" muttered Mr. Pycraft dazedly. "I—I thought—I was certain——"

He looked round again at the peaceful scene, and suddenly felt foolish. He was so dazed that he came to the conclusion that he must have been imagining things. Hastily, he took his departure, conscious of the fact that he cut an absurd figure.

"That's the way to do it, my sons," said K. K., grinning.

"My only hat, you're a corker!" admitted Jimmy Potts. "If you hadn't spoofed Piccan like that, he'd have detained us for a fortnight."

"Don't I know it?" retorted Parkington. "I'm a great spoofer!"

"Look here!" put in Handforth excitedly. "What about the battle? Levi would have won if Piccan hadn't butted in! The chap who was fighting him took advantage of Piccan's interference to give him the knock-out."

"Hear, hear!" went up a chorus.

It was certainly a debatable point—but, as K. K. Parkington pointed out, Piccan or no Piccan, Solomon Levi had to be carried into the pavilion. With much reluctance, the Removites accepted K. K. as their skipper.

"**W**HAT about fixtures?" asked Kirby Keeble Parkington, after breakfast, as he and a number of other fellows lounged on the Ancient House steps. "I shall expect you chaps to give me all the information I need."

"About the schools we generally play?" asked Travers thoughtfully.

"Yes, I'm a newcomer here, as you know," replied K. K. "I'm thinking of fixing up a game for this afternoon. My own Eleven, of course."

"Oh, of course," agreed Travers.

"Is there any school close handy we could play?" went on the new skipper. "It's a good idea, this new arrangement for lessons. Work all over at a quarter to three, and that leaves plenty of time for a game any afternoon we like."

"H'm! Let me see," murmured Travers, with a quick wink at Potts and Gresham and Dodd, who were the only other Old-Timers within hearing. "There's the Moor View School."

He waited, and the others caught in their breath. To their gratification, K. K. did not grin, as they had half-feared. The Carlton Gang were newcomers, and they hadn't yet fully acquainted themselves with the local geography.

"Moor View School?" repeated K. K. "Is that a big place? Is it handy?"

"Not far away," replied Travers casually. "They'll be glad to give us a game, I'm sure. The skipper's name is Manners—I. Manners, I think. Give you a game like a shot, if you write a note. One of the fags will take it."

Travers spoke so innocently that not one of the Gang suspected that he, too, was a great spoofer. The Old-Timers listened breathlessly. They had heard that Irene Manners & Co., the cheery chums of the Moor View School for Girls, were hot on cricket this season. The girls saw no reason why they shouldn't play the great game as well as the boys. What a glorious jape it would be if only the match could be arranged!

"There's the Marshall School Junior XI, too," went on Travers, as a second brilliant thought occurred to him. "Drop a note to Jim Parker, the skipper, and he'll fix up a game. That's a Bannington School. Moor View is handier, of course."

"Well, we'll have two strings to our bow," said K. K. "I'll write a couple of notes offering games for to-day and later on in the week. We're bound to get a game for this afternoon, anyhow. What names did you say?"

"I'll come along and help you," said Travers obligingly.

CHAPTER 4.

A Shock for K. K.!

"**W**HEN I get busy, I get busy in earnest," said K. K. contentedly.

Morning lessons were over, and the new Junior skipper was congratulating himself on his smartness. An answering note had come from "I. Manners," readily agreeing to a match for that afternoon. It was only with the greatest difficulty that Handforth and his supporters had kept their faces straight. Travers' spoof had worked like a dream; the Carlton Gang had no suspicion of the truth.

Rather to K. K.'s surprise, Handforth didn't make any fuss about the Eleven. The new skipper had placed the list of players on the notice-board: Parkington (captain), Deeks, Coffin, Letts, Mayhew, Jepson, Kersey, Bonner, Fiske, Langley, Baines; twelfth man, Haddock.

His eleven playing a team of girls! K. K. Parkington nearly rocked on his heels. He had been spoofed "up to the eyes!"



"The whole giddy Carlton crowd!" said Handforth, with a sniff, as he inspected the list. "It's dotty, of course. What about our own crack players—Gresham and Travers and Dodd and Bangs—and me?"

However, Handy said nothing to K. K., and the members of the Carlton Gang, in their self-satisfaction, assumed that the Old-Timers were too weak-spirited to offer any protest.

That afternoon K. K. & Co. sallied out on to Little Side in their full regalia. They were immaculate from head to toe, with brand new caps and dazzlingly white flannels.

"Hallo! What the dickens does this mean?" ejaculated Letts abruptly.

Little Side was in possession of a number of schoolgirls! They were all in white, too, and they not only looked smart and business-like, but remarkably charming. One of the girls—a particularly pretty girl with fair hair and blue eyes—came running up.

"You're Parkington, the captain, aren't you?" she asked sweetly.

"Yes, but—"

"It was awfully nice of you to offer us a game," went on the girl, to K. K.'s stupefaction. "We're the Moor View team. I'm Irene Manners, the skipper. Shall we toss straight away?"

The boys from Carlton uttered various ejaculations of horror, and K. K. nearly rocked on his heels.

"Wha-a-a-at!" he gurgled. "The—the Moor View team! You don't mean to say that I asked you *girls* to give us a match?"

"Of course you did," laughed Irene. "Very sporting of you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

From every corner of Little Side a yell of laughter went up.

"I'm a useful chap for lending a hand, K. K., dear old fellow," said Travers calmly. "We ought to see a good game this afternoon."

K. K. looked at him steadily.

"You did this on purpose!" he said hoarsely. "You knew they were girls."

"Of course," drawled Travers. "I'm a great spoofer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm really awfully sorry, Miss Manners, but there's a little misunderstanding," said Parkington, turning to Irene. "I was under the impression that the Moor View was a boys' school—"

"Look here, K. K., my lad!" broke in Handforth sternly. "What are you trying to do? You offered these girls a game—"

the first game of the season, in fact—and if you back out of it you'll be no sportsman."

"You're right," agreed K. K., pulling himself together. "Sorry, Miss Manners! Forget what I just said. I'm ready to start when you are!"

He swallowed hard, and gave a sharp glance at his team as some of them commenced protesting. Whatever his shortcomings, this red-headed young giant from Carlton was a sportsman.

"The game will be over in half an hour," grinned K. K. to one of his gang.

"Oh, that's how you look at it, is it?" said Handforth. "Let me tell you that these girls are hot stuff at cricket. And look here, Ginger! If you lose this match for us you'll have to resign the captaincy on the spot."

Kirby Keeble Parkington laughed.

"Lose?" he repeated. "Don't be funny! This won't be a game—it'll be a joke! Of course I'll resign if we lose; but there's no more chance of that than of your face suddenly becoming handsome!"

CHAPTER 5.

Squashed!

"**G**IRLS—girls! It's up to you!" said Handforth breathlessly.

He was in the pavilion, and Doris Berkeley, who was wicket-keeper, was strapping on her leg-pads. The toss had been taken, and K. K. had won. He had elected to bat first.

"You told us these cheeky Carlton fellows were being spoofed, but we didn't expect them to take things so much for granted," said Irene warmly. "My hat! We'll show 'em!"

"You've got to beat 'em!" urged Handforth. "I've seen you at practice—and I know how hot you are! If you win, this Carlton ass will have to resign, and that'll make me skipper."

"Leave it to us, Ted," said Irene confidently.

K. K. and his team had got over the shock by now, and they were sportsmen enough to carry the thing through. Yet they were utterly contemptuous of the Moor View XI. Girls, after all, were girls. It was ridiculous to suppose that they could play cricket. In this frame of mind K. K. and Harvey Deeks went out to open the St. Frank's innings.

Winnie Pitt opened the bowling—and Parkington received his second shock of the day. He expected a weak, slow, easy ball. What actually came down the pitch was a sort of high-explosive shell. It whipped under his bat, and his wicket was spreadeagled!

"Hurrah!"

"Out first ball!"

K. K. looked stunned as he went back to the pavilion.

"A fluke!" said Kersey, who was next man in.

He was not so careless as K. K., but even then he only just succeeded in blocking Winnie Pitt's second delivery. For a girl, she was a devastatingly-fast bowler. When the over was finished, St. Frank's had only managed to score two singles.

Ena Handforth bowled from the other end. She wasn't fast, like Winnie, but she was so tricky that she took a wicket with the third ball. These Carlton fellows were fair cricketers, but they had had little practice this season—and, to add to their handicap, they still held the view that this girls' team was not to be taken seriously.

The result was inevitable. A rot set in after Deeks and Baines had made a good stand. Man after man was either clean bowled or caught. With only 73 on the scoreboard, the last St. Frank's man was out. K. K. Parkington, in the pavilion, groaned.

"It's awful!" he said. "It's horrible—ghastly—humiliating! Seventy-three, all out—and we're playing against girls!"

"Cheer up!" said Goffin. "We'll dismiss them all for about twenty."

"Will we?" asked K. K., with another groan. "Somehow, I'm beginning to have my doubts! These girls are putting the wind up me! They're hot!"

He had all the more reason to say this twenty minutes later. Irene and Doris were batting, and Mayhew and Langley, the star bowlers of the Carlton Gang, found it impossible to stop the girls scoring. Irene's wicket didn't fall until she had scored 27, and as she walked back to the pavilion she was cheered to the echo. Ena Handforth took her place, and with a style very similar to that of her burly brother, she lashed out with great vim at everything.

With only three wickets down, the Moor View girls had the satisfaction of seeing 74 go up on the board. They had won by seven wickets! It was a humiliating defeat for the arrogant new Removites, and the girls came in for a rousing reception from the Old-Timers.

"Well, K. K., what about it??" asked Handforth genially. "As skipper of the Junior XI, I'd like to tell you that I shan't require any of you duffers in my team."

Kirby Keeble Parkington sighed.

"Don't rub it in!" he said sorrowfully. "This is your day out, Handy, old man! But don't look so pleased with yourself! The Carlton Gang is as red-hot as ever. It won't take us long to wipe out this blot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Handforth laughed uproariously.

"Go and eat coke!" he shouted. "You're beaten, K. K., and you know it. Come on, the Old-Timers! Let us eat, drink, and be merry—for the great K. K. is squashed!"

THE END.

(But you can bet that K.K. is not squashed for long. He'll go all out to avenge himself against the celebrated E. O. Handforth. Don't miss next week's rollicking complete school yarn, chums; it's entitled, "Handy the Plumber!")

The THREE TERRORS!



THREE TERRORS

and

FOUR CROOKS

and

FOUR SNAKES

make

FIVE PAGES OF LAUGHTER!

Conk Cops The Crooks!

THE old caravan moved slowly along the road towards Dumbledore Feast.

The Three Terrors—Conkey King, Whacky Clark and Bob Smith—and their pal, Chummy Chubb, rode on the roof amongst the basketware. Conkey had made himself comfortable in an armchair which Cocco, the kindly old gipsy who owned the outfit, had plaited neatly out of osier.

"May as well travel first-class as third," said Conk, who always believed in making himself comfortable; and from the swell seat he eyed the people who were working their way towards Dumbledore Feast. There was no hurry for the old caravan to get to the Feast. It lasted for a week.

Started in the time of Henry the Seventh, Dumbledore Feast was *the* great annual event in the lives of the local inhabitants. Here they congregated and made merry; here they forgot their worries on the swings and roundabouts and at the innumerable sideshows. Another important feature of the Feast was the cattle market, where the farmers disposed of their stock.

Cocco brought the caravan to a standstill in a pleasant wood by the side of the road. They were within reasonable distance of Dumbledore. Indeed, the boys could hear the dis-

tant music of the steam roundabouts and the cracks of the rifles in the shooting galleries.

"Got a lot of clothes' pegs to finish, boys," said the old gipsy. "You can run around in the woods and gather some of this herb!"

Cocco showed them a small running plant that grew sparsely under the trees. Cocco was a great herbalist, and he had already taught the boys a good deal about the medical herbs which grow by the roadside and on the common lands.

"It's what the Gippos call horse-tonic," said Cocco. "That's what they gave the outsider that won the Lincolnshire, an' he romped home at forty to one."

The boys took the sample of the plant, and, arming themselves with bags, crept into the shadow of the woods.

Conkey & Co. were glad to be in the woods, for Chummy was teaching them a new game which was to move through a woodland like a Redskin without being seen or heard. These woods were just the sort of place for such a game. They were full of great trees and expanses of tall bracken through which the boys could move unseen.

Before they disappeared into this sea of fern and trees, Chummy Chubb pointed out a group of firs, with one tall-growing pine which stood up like the spire of a cathedral.

"Now, boys," he said, "we gotta meet close by that tree a quarter-mile away, and none of us must see the other or be seen by any other person till we get there—even a dozen gamekeepers on the look-out ought not to rumble us!"

And away they went, crawling slowly through the ferns, stopping now and then to gather the running tufts of the horse-tonic which grew at rare intervals on the long slopes. No one, to look at the undergrowth, would have dreamed that four boys were moving through it.

Conk crawled on a bit faster than his pals, and he was a couple of hundred yards ahead when he neared the group of trees which Chummy had indicated.

He had found his way into a sort of tunnel through the ferns, and, sniffing the air, realised that he was travelling along the private road of some old fox. Then he heard voices ahead of him.

Conk stopped crawling. There were men in front of him—men with a motor-car, for he heard the door slam—men who were eating and drinking, for he heard a cork pop.

It wasn't a ginger-beer cork, either. There was a plonk and a fizz, which told Conk that the picnic party, or whatever it was, was regaling itself on bubbly wine.

"It might be th' ole squire an' his clique," thought Conk to himself. "They won't want a lotta gipsy nibs like us butting into their party. They might accuse us of poachin', and wouldn't believe me if I told 'em we were only playing at Redskins!"

But the voices that came to his ears were not those of some swell squire and his guests.

"Ere, chuck up the sandwiches, Flashy!" said a gruff voice. "It was a bit o' luck that we picked out this car with the toffs' lunch all aboard—bubbly an' all! That's where to pick 'em up. On the racecourses!" added the speaker.

Conkey peeped through the stems of the bracken. The nearest race fixture was a hundred miles away. These men had stolen the car before lunch-time at Fishwick races. Conk knew well enough that a car is stolen, not for the car itself, but to provide a vehicle for further crime.

He had a glimpse of the gentleman addressed as "Flashy," who was handing round the sandwiches to his three confederates. Flashy's face was not his fortune. He was a hang-dog looking chap, and he did not seem to be in a hopeful mind.

"It's awright to bag a car, Slimmy, but what made you come to a dead an' alive 'ole like this to pick up a few crowns beats me. Must be off yer chumperino!" he grumbled.

Conk made a sign for silence. He was conscious that Bob and Whacky Clark and Chummy were closing up behind him, having come along on hands and knees through the fox tunnel.

"Don't talk silly, Flashy!" answered Slimmy rather angrily. "I know what I'm

up to! There's lots o' jack at Dumbledore Feast. These farmers deal in spot cash, and the little bank 'ere does a good trade. To-night, when the circus an' wild beast show ends up, there will be fifteen thousand pounds in this place, and half the farmers will have banked their money in the little two-day-a-week bank at the cottage!"

"Slimmy's right!" put in a hoarse, snarling voice. "That bank ain't a bank in the way of saying. It only opens twice a week when the clerk comes across from Buncombe Regis with thirty quid in a bag, and sits in the parlour eatin' bread an' 'oney. But he'll be sleeping there to-night with five or six thousand smackers. When we lets the lions loose, as like as not 'e'll run out to see what it's all about—and that's our chance!"

"I don't like that lion idea," piped up a thin voice which belonged to a little man with the well-baked white face of an old lag.

"What's th' idea of letting the lions loose?"

"Why, to distract attention, of course," said the man with the hoarse, snarling voice.

"With three lions running about amongst the caravans, and all the horses stampeding an' the pigs squealing and the cattle mooing, and the sheep jumping out of their pens—why, no one will notice us. Leave that ter me. I was with a circus once. No need fer you to be afraid, Chingy Corp!"

"What did you do in the circus?" asked Chingy Corp.

"Used ter wash the elephants," said the gruff man.

"Then what d'you know about lions, Pongo Stubbs?" asked Chingy.

"Used ter feed 'em," said Pongo Stubbs. "I'd been with the circus yet if the elephant hadn't taken a dislike to me. Tried to conk me with 'is trunk. Then 'e tried to tread on me. But when the dirty 'ound tried to sit on me, I thought it was 'bout time to give in me card!"

Conk had heard all he wanted. Here was a racecourse gang turned motor bandits!

The old fox who used that road to the rabbit warrens never moved more quietly than the boys as they crawled back from this dangerous neighbourhood.

Even Conk was perspiring a bit when they came out of the undergrowth a quarter of a mile away from that sinister picnic party.

"I was afraid you chaps might make a sound," he said. "That gang would have thought no more of giving us the once over than of cracking another bottle if they thought we'd heard their plot. See their faces! Coo lummy! A reg'lar collection of lifers!"

They ran through the woods swiftly to take the tale to old Cocco, who was just finishing a gross of clothes' pegs. Cocco listen gravely to their story, and to the descriptions of the men.

"D'you know them, Cocco?" asked Conk.

Cocco shook his head.

"They are not one of the usual racecourse gangs," he replied. "I guess we'll push along



The crooks shrieked with terror as they found themselves attacked by the snakes—while Conkey & Co. looked on and grinned their delight.

and warn Mr. Spangles about 'em when we get to the circus."

Conk's Brainwave!

COCKO put the old horse in the van, and they jogged along the road towards Dumbledore Green.

"That's the road those rascals will come by," said Cocko Lee, pointing with his whip to a sandy path which pushed into the woods. "They are hiding up there so that they'll not be noticed, and they'll stay there till the evening when the cars come in from the surrounding country and the fun of the fair begins. That's when the farmers begin to get a bit merry and are easy to rob!"

Dumbledore Green was a picture as the caravan turned off the road. Pigs were squealing, sheep were bleating, and fat steers were panting as fat farmers poked them with their sticks and figured out how much cash they would rake in.

Along the side of the green, gipsy horse-dealers were showing off their animals, which stepped out like two-year-olds under the influence of ginger and horse-tonic.

And, down at the end of the green, rose a town of tents surrounded by steam roundabouts, gaily-painted traction engines, and side-shows. This was Sawyer and Spangle's Grand American Circus and Fun Fair. Towards this, Cocko steered the old van, bringing it to an anchor close outside the

great ring of tents. He was quite at home and welcome, for all the circus world knew Cocko and his old white horse.

Amongst the houses that edged the green, not far from the Fun Fair, was a large cottage labelled with a brass plate which bore the legend, "BANK."

This was the centre on which Pongo Stubbs and his gang were to rendezvous when the lions were let loose and the bank clerk was caught alone.

Through the windows the boys could see the bank clerk. He was a mild young man with specs like Harold Lloyd, and he was taking in money from the stall-keepers and shooting out five-bob bags of coppers as fast as he could go.

Conkey & Co. were not long in discovering that his name was Mr. Mivvens, for everyone was talking about Mr. Mivvens. He had run short of coppers an hour ago, and was expecting a hundredweight in a cart.

Cocko led the boys into the circus. They were not asked to pay.

"Coo lummy!" exclaimed Conkey as they walked in. "This is all right, going into a circus on the Land o' Nod!"

Cocko led them to a smart caravan, and, walking up its steps, opened the door, getting a friendly greeting from a large fat man with a diamond tie-pin nearly as big as the horseshoe it represented. This was Mr. Spangle.

"Evening, Cocco!" he smiled.

"Hallo, Mr. Spangle!" acknowledged Cocco. "I've got some important news for you. Boys, tell the gentleman what you heard up in the woods. There's going to be a daring attempt to-night what might wreck the show!" he added.

"Hey? What's that?" demanded Mr. Spangle. "Wreck my show?"

But he was reassured when Conkey unfolded the story and told him how the miscreants proposed to open the door of the lions' den and let the lions loose.

"That jus' shows you!" said Mr. Spangle. "Shows you how stupid these so-called criminals are! Why, old Harry an' George are let loose every night when the show is over. If you open that door those two lions just pop out and come round to my van 'ere and rub their 'eads against the door till I let 'em in. Then they 'ops up on the bunks there and I give 'em a ginger nut. They stay while I count the takings, and you can be sure that them smash and grabbers won't try any of their business with a coupla lions watching the ole till."

"But don't the lions think of 'opping it, sir?" asked Conk.

"Op it!" exclaimed Mr. Spangle. "Why, pore old George and Harry are as full up of rheumatism as I am myself. It's all they can do to get round to this van at night for their ginger-nut, and sometimes I've got to lift poor ole George up on the seat there. 'Course, they looks fierce enough in their cage, sittin' with their paws folded and waitin' for dinner-time to come round—but they're as mild as lambs. Now, Fred—what was George's son—was a different lion altogether. He was a nib, Fred was, but he started mobbing the ole pot and pan, so I had to sell him. Got saucy, Fred did. But young lions are like that. Soon as they get a coupla pounds o' shin of beef inside 'em they think they've bought the earth!"

Mr. Spangle stared in front of him.

"However, those chaps will stand more chance when they go for the bank," he said. "I've warned Mr. Mivvens about it, but he only laughs. He hasn't got a safe—only that great wooden cupboard—and there's quids and quids stowed away in that during the Feast week. I've offered to take charge of the money fer him. I could put the boxes in with Joe, my new Bengal tiger, and I bet they would be as safe as the Bank of England. Joe ain't like Harry and George. A nasty beast he is, reg'lar man-eater. But Mr. Mivvens says 'No.' He says that cottage is a bank, and, by the regulations of the bank, he's got to keep the money in the bank in case there's a run on it. That's bank law!"

Conk leaned forward. He had got a bright idea.

"Those chaps are sure to start an alarm!" he said. "Why not put something in the cupboard with the money?"

"What?" asked Mr. Spangle.

Conk pointed to the great poster which, fresh from the printer, adorned the wall of the caravan. It showed Lola Alvarez, the Snake Queen of Mexico, a lady loaded up with huge serpents and surrounded by alligators and cobras, while deadly asps and adders served her as wristlets.

"That's a good idea!" said Mr. Spangle. He put his head out at the back of the van and called to the van next door. "Jane!" he shouted. "Come here. I want to have a little chat."

"Coming, father!" replied the young lady addressed as Jane.

"Jane is my daughter," explained Mr. Spangle proudly. "She appears as Lola Alvarez, the Snake Queen of Mexico."

The boys were a bit disappointed when Miss Lola Alvarez made her appearance. She wore no snakes, only a bead necklace which had "Price one bob" written all over it.

"We want to borrow your snakes to-night, after the show," said her father. "There will be an attempt to rob the bank. Lend us Sid and Perce the boa-constrictors, and Charley the alligator, and that big new snake of yours—the one that spits in your eye and then tries to crush you."

"Burglars, father?" gasped Miss Jane Spangle. "Oh, dad, they won't hurt my snakes, will they? I dread burglars! I couldn't bear to meet a burglar. I'd die of fright!"

"The burglars are more likely to die of fright," grinned her father. "You lend us your snakes, Janey, and I shouldn't be at all surprised if the bank don't give you something handsome for defending their property—might stand you a di'mond necklace that you are always hankering for!"

That put another complexion on matters. Jane was agreeable.

"Now," said Mr. Spangle, "we'll go and arrange matters with Mr. Mivvens. I'll just step across to the bank."

He came back in five minutes.

"That's all right, boys," he announced. "Mr. Mivvens will be counting coppers when those men come. What are they like?"

"There they are!" said Conk, pointing through the window.

A car had drawn up near the bank, and four men descended from it. They joined in the fun of the fair, buying peppermint rock, knocking down the coco-nuts, and spending money right and left. Then they went towards the box-office to engage seats for the circus. Mr. Spangle was there to meet them. When he came back to his caravan he was beaming.

"I've given them seats where I can watch them," he told Conkey & Co. "Now, boys, if you want to see the fun you can help Janey over with the snakes at nine o'clock to-night, and you can hide in the little side room at the bank. I know jus' what those chaps will do. Now I'm going to have some tea!"

One Exciting Night!

THE boys could hardly live till nine o'clock that night. They had the free run of the circus, and Conk nearly had the seat of his trousers taken out by a leopard that did not like his face.

At eight-forty-five Lola Alvarez, the Snake Queen of Mexico, was in the ring, looped in by ugly boa-constrictors nearly fourteen feet long, with small snakes round her wrists, and alligators walking round her in circles. And, in the best seats, Pongo Stubbs and his companions were sitting applauding every turn.

Out at the back of the great dark tent, the Snake Queen of Mexico met Conkey & Co. She had put her pets into bags, and it was as much as Conk could do to carry Sid and Perce the boa-constrictors, who were squirming about in their sack, across to the bank.

Mr. Mivvens was there counting coppers. He was a calm young man, and did not flinch when the boys had a struggle to shove Sid and Perce into the cupboard.

The Snake Queen handled the big snake that spat, and Charley and Rufus the alligators, herself. Then, when she had got them in the cupboard, she stuffed in the small snakes which were not so troublesome.

After that the boys retired into the dark room at the side of the office, while Mr. Mivvens kept on counting coppers.

Time went very slowly. The boys could hear the band playing in the great circus tent over the way. At last, however, the show was over, and then the people came out and moved amongst the stalls in a rush, crowding round the fish and chip saloons and having a last go at the peppermint rock.

Now was the time when the burglars had planned to stick up the bank. Mr. Spangle knew how to arrange effects. When Pongo Stubbs had pulled the bolt that lifted the grid of the cage where George and Harry were stowed for the night, and had rushed away, Mr. Spangle, watching them make for the bank, gave the signal for the biggest razz that the steam roundabouts and the circus hands could raise.

Everyone yelled. George and Harry, the lions, were so frightened that they got back into their cage, thinking that Bedlam was loose.

And ere the noise had reached its height Pongo Stubbs, masked, and followed by his three friends, marched into the bank cottage.

"Up with ya hands!" he ordered Mr. Mivvens, covering him with a pistol. "Quick, boys! The lions are loose. Open that cupboard—the key's in it. That's where the stuff is stowed!"

Slimmy and Chingy Corp dashed at the cupboard, eager to lay their mitts on the cash. The door flew open, and Chingy gave a yell as Sid and Perce shot out, followed by the snake that spat.

Sid thumped on to the floor and slid over the lino. Then Pongo gave a horrified shout as Sid slithered up his leg and coiled himself round the crook. Terrified, Pongo squeezed the trigger of the revolver, and a bullet shot through the ceiling.

The snake that spat wrapped itself round Slimmy, who yelled, strangely enough, for the police, while Chingy, half enfolded by a boa-constrictor, rushed in amongst Conkey & Co., who had just entered.

"Take 'im away!" wailed the crook.

The elephants in the circus were trumpeting loudly as a rush of cowboys, Redskins, and other circus hands surrounded the bank, roping the burglars like steers and struggling with the Snake Queen's serpents, who, having got a night out, wanted to keep it up.

It was near eleven o'clock before things quieted down, and the four bandits, bound hand and foot, were driven off to the police-station.

Then Mr. Spangle called the Three Terrors and Chummy and Cocco to his van.

"Come on, boys!" he boomed. "Come an' have a ginger-nut. It's all right, Conk—don't be frightened! Just give ole Harry a shove up. He'll make room for you on the seat. Never bit anything in his life, that lion didn't—excep' his dinner!"

THE END.

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THRILLING DETECTIVE ADVENTURE IN EGYPT AND ENGLAND!

The MUMMY MYSTERY



By

ROBERT W. COMRADE

Prologue.

THE chant rose and fell until at times it became a weird, prolonged wailing. It was echoed and re-echoed by the rock walls of the great chamber.

This rock chamber, in the heart of the Nahlak Pyramid, was the secret meeting-place of the mysterious priests of Nahlak. For countless centuries this little-known sect had performed its religious rites here. In this age of wireless and aeroplanes, the descendants of the Ancient Egyptians still met as in the bygone ages.

There was perhaps fifteen or twenty of the robed figures. They were in the centre of the chamber, kneeling before an altar—a great marble slab, lit by tongues of leaping flame. All round this slab there was a deep groove, and this groove was filled with oil. It burned luridly, the flames leaping up and filling the stuffy atmosphere with acrid fumes.

One of the figures,

dressed more elaborately than the others, rose slowly to his feet. The wailing ceased. The High Priest held up an impressive hand. He was a tall man, with a dark face and deeply-sunken eyes, which burned with inward fires, strangely reflecting the flickering from the torches that illuminated the chamber.

"Let the Curse of Osiris be upon those who have desecrated the tomb of our lord, the King," droned the High Priest in a strange language, his voice quivering with suppressed intensity. "The secret remains of King Nahlak, buried in this pyramid thousands of years ago, have been stolen from us. Death will come to those who performed this accursed deed."

The other priests murmured in assent.

"We know not how this thing was done, but our agents are even now at work, and they will be successful," continued the High Priest. "Our sacred mummy, with its rich sarco-

Egypt! The land of mystery and romance—but for Nelson Lee and Nipper the land of hectic excitement and perilous adventure!

phagus, shall be restored! It is the will of Nahlak!"

He turned and gazed towards a great stone pedestal. Torches burned all round it, and the fires of countless rubies and emeralds and diamonds glowed and smouldered in their settings. But the top of that pedestal was empty.

"Men of the accursed white race have done this thing, or have bribed men of our own blood," continued the High Priest. "It

under the Curse of Osiris. So it is written!"

Once again the wailing echoed and re-echoed throughout the rock chamber. And outside, under the starry Egyptian sky, a deep silence brooded over the desert.

CHAPTER I.

The Mummy of Nahlak!

THAT famous thoroughfare, the Muski, in Cairo, was comparatively quiet. Four figures, dressed in immaculate white, strode along, chatting. The two in advance were Nelson Lee, the celebrated criminologist, and Lord Dorrimore, the equally celebrated millionaire explorer.

Just behind them Nipper was listening amusedly to the comments of William Napoleon Browne. The two "cubs" had thoroughly enjoyed their short spell in Cairo, and Browne was now enlarging upon the hidden mysteries of this land of wonder and unsolved riddles.



has been discovered that Rahmed was a dog of a traitor, and he has paid the penalty. It was he who assisted these jackals to rob our tomb."

"May his spirit for ever be tortured," muttered one of the others.

"Eternal unrest is his!" said the High Priest impressively. "Osiris, God of the Underworld, has condemned the traitor Rahmed to everlasting torment. And all those who lay sacrilegious hands on the sarcophagus of King Nahlak will also be

Busy in the daytime, the Muski was now nearly deserted. Overhead twinkled the myriad stars of the sub-tropical night. Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore turned into an alley opening, and mounted some rough, uneven steps. The thoroughfare was very characteristic of Cairo. It wound tortuously between tall houses, which in the daytime effectively shut out the sunshine.

"We'd better be getting back to the hotel now, young 'uns," remarked Lee. "I think we've seen enough of Cairo for to-night."

They were staying at Shepheard's, the most famous hotel in Cairo, and were due to leave for England on the morrow. Lee had come out to the Egyptian capital in order to capture a dangerous Italian crook, and this mission had been successfully accomplished. It had been Lord Dorrimore's idea to make the trip by air, and he had piloted his own 'plane. Nipper and Browne had come merely for the trip.

They had now reached the European quarter, where the streets were well-lighted and little different from those of any English city.

"By Jove! What's that?" ejaculated Lee abruptly.

A big covered car was approaching, some two or three hundred yards away. Even as Nelson Lee spoke it was overtaken by another car, an open one. The two cars were now side by side, perilously close to one another.

Crack! Crack!

"By the Lord Harry! Shots!" shouted Lord Dorrimore.

The covered car swerved madly, struck the pavement, and seemed on the point of overturning. The driver was in a state of collapse over his wheel, evidently having been hit, but by a supreme effort he applied his brakes and averted a disaster. The open car had now stopped, and three or four dark-skinned men leapt out and swarmed round the other vehicle.

"Well I'm hanged! Car bandits!" said Dorrie. "So they've got those gentlemen in Cairo, have they? I rather think it's up to us to butt in, what?"

Nelson Lee was already running. His companions tore along, and their arrival took the bandits completely by surprise. Lord Dorrimore sailed in without asking any questions. One of the Egyptians caught the full brunt of a left-hook which lifted him completely off his feet.

Nelson was equally busy, and Nipper and Browne were thoroughly disgusted when the bandits abandoned their attack. Shouting amongst themselves they ran back to their own car, leapt in, and drove off at high speed. The man who had been knocked over by Dorrie only just managed to scramble aboard.

"Too quick to be enjoyable," said his lordship, rubbing his knuckles. "The one-eyed cowards. Didn't even give us a decent scrap!"

"Never mind that, old man," said Lee. "Lend me a hand with this fellow."

The driver of the covered car was alone, and he was hurt. Blood was staining his clothing near the left shoulder, and it was evident that a bullet had penetrated his chest.

"Longden's Hotel—Lord Colchester!" the man muttered.

He collapsed before he could say anything else. Lee and Dorrie gently lifted him out of the driver's seat, and Lee took his place. The car was not an ordinary one. The rear

was entirely closed in, almost like a commercial delivery van.

"Good thing the fellow gave us a hint of where he was going," remarked Lee. "Perhaps we shall be able to learn more at Longden's Hotel."

The great detective's instinct told him that this was no ordinary hold-up. The very mention of Lord Colchester's name was significant. Who had not heard of Lord Colchester, the renowned Egyptologist?

Surprisingly enough, the incident had passed unnoticed except by Nelson Lee and his companions. One or two passers-by now gave the car a curious glance or two, but that was all. Lee and the boys found room in the front seat, Nipper and Browne supporting the injured man. Dorrie was satisfied with the step.

Longden's Hotel was comparatively near. It was a modern building surrounded by picturesque verandas and set amidst beautiful gardens, where palms and flowers grew in profusion.

"Better ask for Lord Colchester at once," said Lee.

DORRIE was in and out of the hotel within a couple of minutes. Accompanying him was an eager, elderly man in ill-fitting evening-dress, and wearing thick glasses. Lee recognised him at once as the famous Lord Colchester.

"The mummy!" he exclaimed excitedly. "Has anything happened?"

"This car was held up ten minutes ago, and the driver shot," replied Lee. "My friends and myself happened to be near, and we prevented the car from being stolen. The driver is seriously injured."

"My dear sir! I don't know who you are, but I am eternally grateful to you," said Lord Colchester, wringing Lee's hand. "This car contains the mummy of King Nahlak! One of the most precious relics of this ancient country! You have done a service for me which I can never repay!"

"What I have done is insignificant," replied Lee coolly. "After what has happened, it might be advisable to get this mummy into the hotel as quickly as possible. It doesn't seem to be particularly safe."

Lord Colchester shouted for porters and page-boys, forgetful of the fact that the hour was late, and that the ordinary service of the hotel was unavailable. However, Lord Dorrimore and Nipper and Browne soon had the back of the car open, and they found within a large, cumbersome object covered with sacking. It was not unlike a big packing-case.

A man in immaculate evening-dress came out of the hotel and looked on interestedly. He even ventured to help.

"This is really good of you, Sir Charles," said Lord Colchester. "Yes, thanks! I think we shall need you. Careful now—careful! For mercy's sake, handle it gently!"

He dodged and danced about, bubbling with excitement. The heavy sarcophagus

was carried into the hotel, up the big staircase, and into Lord Colchester's private suite.

"Splendid!" beamed Lord Colchester breathlessly. "If you gentlemen care to stay, I will show you one of the most remarkable— But where is your friend?" he added, looking at Dorrie.

"Gone to see about the injured driver, I think," said his lordship. "My friend, by the way, is Mr. Nelson Lee. You may have heard of him. My own name is Dorrimore."

"Lord Dorrimore?" ejaculated the other. "Well! This is remarkably fortunate! I heard only to-day that you had arrived from England. Came by 'plane, didn't you? But never mind—never mind! When Mr. Lee returns, we will show him something worth seeing."

Nelson Lee was not long. Nipper and Browne were slightly amused, for Lord Colchester's excitement seemed unnecessary. They themselves could not muster any enthusiasm over the mummy.

"I've sent a man over to Shepherd's to fetch our things," said Lee, glancing at Dorrie. "We'll stay here to-night, old man."

"What on earth—"

"I somehow think we shall be needed," whispered Lee.

"By glory! So that's how it goes, is it?" breathed Dorrie.

They were introduced to the man in evening-dress. He was Sir Charles Harrington, one of those rich idlers who apparently spend the bulk of their time abroad, drifting from hotel to hotel, according to the season.

"I don't mind admitting I'm infernally interested," said Sir Charles. "I was talking to Colchester about this very mummy when you fellows blew in. So somebody tried to pinch it, did they? Why? It's not valuable, is it?"

Lord Colchester looked horrified.

"Valuable!" he echoed. "My dear good man, this mummy is without price! After getting it to England, I shall present it to the British Museum, if the Museum authorities will accept it. King Nahlak was one of the little-known monarchs of the Meyraam Dynasty. His tomb may not be so gorgeous or elaborate as that of Tut-Ankh-Amen, but it is of far greater importance from an historical point of view."

"May we see the gentleman?" asked Dorrie.

"You shall see the mummy now—at once," replied Lord Colchester.

They did. The canvas coverings were removed, and the sarcophagus was revealed. As such things go, it was not much of a specimen—plain and unattractive. The

great lid was not fastened in the ordinary way, but by means of metal clamps.

Dorrie and Nipper and the others felt a little thrill as the lid was removed. The mummy, when it was revealed, was in no way gruesome, however. It was in an excellent state of preservation, and it was difficult to realise that it had been lying in this sarcophagus for countless centuries.

"A perfect specimen—amazing—far better than I had ever hoped for!" gloated Lord Colchester.

"How did you get hold of it?" asked Sir Charles curiously.

"By luck—pure luck!" replied the Egyptologist. "For years I have been interested in the Nahlak Pyramid, but never have I been able to penetrate its mysterious recesses. Then, one day, some weeks ago, I got in touch with a man named Rahmed. He promised to obtain the mummy for me if I paid him a considerable sum of money, which I did."

"And this man, Rahmed? What of him?" asked Nelson Lee, interested.

"I believe the poor fellow is dead," replied the other, losing some of his enthusiasm. "I heard some rumour to the effect that he had been murdered. But you don't blame me for that?" he added sharply. "The man offered to help me, and his death may have been a pure coincidence."

"You are deluding yourself, Lord Colchester," said Lee grimly. "You know perfectly well that that man was murdered because he stole the mummy from the Nahlak Pyramid. You are taking a very grave risk."

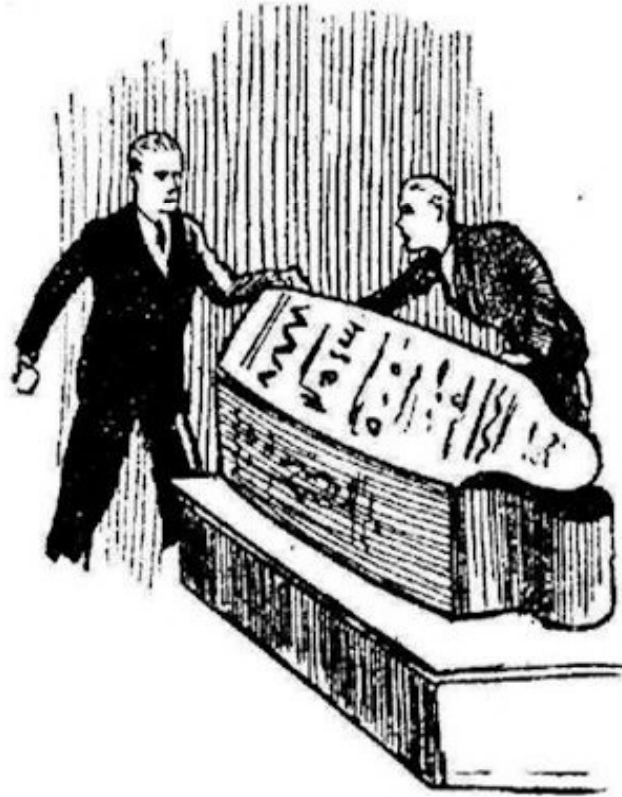
"I have taken risks for thirty years," replied Lord Colchester quietly. "I have penetrated into many pyramids and tombs—and I still live. All this talk about curses and death is so much clap-trap."

"One day you may have cause to alter your opinion," replied Lee. "I certainly advise you to seek police protection now. There is obviously a movement afoot to prevent this mummy being taken out of the country, and it is my considered opinion that something dramatic will happen to-night—unless you take precautions."

The Egyptologist laughed.

"I could understand your fears, Mr. Lee, if I had rifled the Nahlak Pyramid of its worldly treasure," he replied. "It is reputed to contain a fortune in jewels. This mummy is intrinsically valueless—of interest only to historians such as myself. I do not consider that I have done anything wrong in procuring it for the benefit of posterity."

His lordship's manner was short and sharp, and it was evident that he was annoyed by



Nelson Lee's comments. His attitude became cold, in sharp contrast to his former effusiveness.

"We are glad to have been of service to you, Lord Colchester, and now, with your permission, we'll leave," said Lee with equal coldness. "Are you ready, Dorrie? Come, boys!"

An uncomfortable flush suffused Lord Colchester's face.

"I regret that we should differ on this matter, Mr. Lee," he said stiffly, "but I really have no patience with panic-mongers. Permit me to understand this subject better than you."

Lee bowed, and a moment later he and Dorrie and the boys were outside in the carpeted corridor.

"Huffy old blighter!" commented Dorrie indignantly.

Lee made no comment. He led the way to the room which he had engaged for Dorrie and himself. Another room for Nipper and Browne adjoined, but the two cubs followed Lee into the first apartment.

"What's the idea of stopping here, gov'nor?" asked Nipper.

"I rather think that Lord Colchester will be in need of help to-night," replied Nelson Lee. "He may be a clever man in his own line, but he's very simple in other ways. He doesn't seem to realise that he has aroused a hornets' nest—that he might be murdered at any minute. Perhaps it's none of my business to interfere, but I'm interested in Egyptology—"

"Then you really do think there's danger?" asked Dorrie.

Lee did not answer for a moment. He strode across to the curtained window and peeped through. Outside the Oriental gardens were bathed in soft moonlight. Lee suddenly beckoned.

"Here's your answer," he said.

Dorrie and the boys hurried over, and peering through the curtains they were just in time to see a stealthy figure moving from one bush to another.

"There'll be no sleep for us to-night," said Lee quietly. "If Lord Colchester hasn't enough sense to look after himself, we must do it for him."

CHAPTER 2.

Crooks of Another Kind!

SIR CHARLES HARRINGTON yawned as he strolled into his own room. He closed the door and locked it, and his manner instantly changed.

"There's a fortune for us, Mansell!" he said, almost fiercely.

Another man was in that room. He was tall and attired in scrupulous evening-dress.

"What's the game now, Charley?" he asked.

Sir Charles sat down and lit a cigarette.

"The Nahlak Pyramid!" he said tensely. "That old fool, Colchester, was telling me about it early this evening, and after what's just happened I can see a chance of grabbing a fortune. That pyramid is packed with jewels."

Mansell sighed.

"You mentioned something like that before down in the smoking-room," he said impatiently. "What's the matter with you? Why will you get these bees in your bonnet? We're confidence-men, not pyramid robbers. We're here to tack ourselves on to unsuspecting tourists. So far, we've had a lot of bad luck. Cairo isn't our happy hunting-ground."

"But this is something bigger—something that'll put us on our feet for the rest of our lives," urged Harrington. "Thank the stars that Lee didn't recognise me."

Mansell jumped nearly out of his chair.

"Lee!" he repeated, startled. "Nelson Lee? Is he here?"

"Yes, but—"

"We heard he was staying at Shepheard's."

"Never mind that," said Sir Charles impatiently. "Lee happened to save Colchester's confounded mummy to-night. I'll tell you about it in a minute. The main thing is, he didn't spot me. I'm certain of that. And he believes that an attempt will be made to-night to grab the mummy."

An impulse seized him; he switched off the light and went to the window. For over five minutes he stood there, gazing out into the moonlit gardens. Mansell, in the meantime, continued to smoke in the darkness.

THESE two men were not quite what they seemed. Charley Harrington, confidence-man, had thought it a good idea to tack "Sir" on to his name, and so far it had worked well. He and Mansell had drifted to Cairo from Nice, Cannes and Monte Carlo. Two or three minor coups on the Cote-D'Azur had warned Messrs. Harrington and Mansell that they would be safer elsewhere. Thus Cairo was unlucky enough to be harbouring them.

"Lee was right!" snapped Harrington suddenly, as he came away from the window and switched on the lights. "There are men out there, Mansell."

"Men?" repeated the other vaguely.

"Native blighters," said Harrington. "I spotted at least three hiding among the bushes. There's something on—something big, too. It's pretty clear that they mean to take that mummy."

"I wish you'd tell me what you're getting at," said Mansell plaintively.

Quickly he was informed of the events that had already happened. Harrington was in the fortunate position, too, of being Lord Colchester's confidant. The trusting Egyptologist had fallen an easy victim to Harrington's wiles—Harrington having had an idea, originally, that his lordship might be an easy bird to pluck. Now there was bigger game in view.

Nelson Lee and Lord Dorri-more fought desperately, but they were outnumbered. In spite of their efforts the invaders were getting away with the sarcophagus.



"The old boy knows everything about these pyramids and mummies and things," continued Harrington in a low voice. "What he doesn't know about Egypt isn't worth learning. He's one of the world's greatest authorities."

"What the heck——"

"Listen to me," said Harrington. "This mummy has been guarded for centuries by a cult of priests—the job has been handed

down from father to son, sort of thing. Now Colchester's got the mummy. These priests have already made one attempt to get it back, and it's a certain bet that they'll make another attempt to-night."

"You mean they'll break into the hotel?" asked Mansell sceptically.

"Unless they act to-night, it'll be too late, and that's why I'm so certain," replied Harrington. "And don't forget, Mansell, that that pyramid, into which no white man has ever penetrated, is packed with jewels. Hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of

stuff, my boy. Doesn't that make your mouth water?"

"They say that some of the planets are loaded with gold, but we can't get it, can we?" retorted Mansell. "My dear Charley, why reach for the unattainable? That pyramid has resisted the efforts of white men to penetrate it for hundreds of years. How the devil do you suppose you can get in? Pull yourself together, old boy. The jewels are tempting, I dare say, but——"

"You think I'm a fool, don't you?" broke in Harrington. "But you're the fool, Mansell—and a blind one at that."

"We needn't get abusive, need we?"

"These Egyptian fanatics are likely to grab that sarcophagus to-night," said Harrington impressively. "Supposing they get it—which is the most likely thing. What will they do with it?"

"Well, at a rough guess, they'll probably rush it to the pyramid."

"Exactly," said Harrington. "And if I'm in that sarcophagus instead of the mummy I shall get into the pyramid, shan't I?"

Mansell stared in blank amazement.

"You—you mean——" he began incredulously.

"Exactly!" agreed the other again.

TWO figures, silent and stealthy, crept like shadows into Lord Colchester's bed-room. They closed and locked the door. Although the door had originally been locked on the inside, it had taken Mansell only a moment or two to insert a pair of thin tweezers into the keyhole and turn the key.

The curtains were drawn, and the moonlight streamed in. Lord Colchester slept soundly, snoring with a regular rhythm. On the other side of the room stood the sarcophagus, the lid now in position.

It was Harrington who crept over to the bed. Something rose in the air and came down with a dull thud on the unfortunate peer's left temple. He scarcely moved an inch. The snoring ceased, and his breathing became faint. That one blow had knocked him senseless.

Working in the moonlight, the two men quickly unfastened the sarcophagus lid. Harrington had the advantage of having previously seen the lid removed. It was not quite so easy to take the mummy out, for this gruesome relic of humanity was cunningly and securely fastened. At last it was out, however, and the priests of Nahlak would have screamed with rage if they could have seen the contemptuous way in which the sacred mummy was placed into the big wardrobe. The key was turned on it, and Harrington put the key into his pocket.

"Now!" he muttered. "Don't forget the wedges of wood, old man."

He placed himself in the sarcophagus, and Mansell shivered.

"I don't like it, Charley," he said, almost pleadingly. "Don't do it! It's not worth

it. It's suicide—madness. You'll never come out of there alive!"

"Put that lid on, and don't talk so much!" snapped Harrington. "I've got everything—two automatics, my own whisky flask, yours filled with water, some beef tablets, and those sandwiches we had left over. I could last out for three days if necessary. On with the lid!"

Mansell held out his hand.

"You're game, Charley!" he said, as they gripped. "By thunder, you're game! All the luck in the world, old man."

As he put the lid on, he shook. He was far more nervous than Harrington. He carefully inserted little wooden wedges at various points between the lid and the case itself. The clamps were harder to fasten, but they held more securely. Through the crevices that were thus left, Harrington would be assured of a supply of air.

Yet it was a risky, death-defying game!

CHAPTER 3.

After Midnight!

WILLIAM NAPOLEON BROWNE had a dreamy look in his eyes.

"This affair, brother, has all the indications of a hectic adventure," he said contentedly. "A little further waiting, and I believe that we shall find ourselves in the thick of Mystery."

"It looks like it," agreed Nipper.

They were on the first-floor veranda of their hotel, sitting discreetly behind some screening palm plants. They could obtain an excellent view of a large section of the gardens, and Lee had placed them there to watch. At the first sign of any activity, they were immediately to report.

"Without wishing to disparage the good old Chief, I must observe that this particular stunt is futile," went on Browne. "Brother Colchester's window is not even within view. In fact, we're just about as useful here as these palm plants."

"The gov'nor's watching the other side of the hotel," whispered Nipper.

"Brother Dorrie, too," nodded Browne. "But surely four pair of eyes are better than two? What do you say to the wheeze of slithering down the veranda and lurking behind some of the undergrowth? Surely we can do better there?"

"It's a good idea," replied Nipper promptly. "We can't let the gov'nor have everything his own way. We've got to exceed his orders now and again. Come on!"

It was an easy task for them to lower themselves to the ground, and once there they found plenty of cover. There were bushes and shrubs in plenty, and they were soon crouching behind a thick bush. The rest of the gardens appeared to be deserted; the hotel was in darkness. It was now well after midnight.

"I think we'd better separate," murmured Nipper. "You go across to the left, and I'll take the other way. We both know which is Lord Colchester's window, and we can keep our eyes on it."

"Splendid!" agreed Browne.

They separated. Nipper, moving cautiously from bush to bush, had scarcely gone twenty yards, when something happened. Two figures unexpectedly arose from the cover of a thick, tropical shrub, and they fell upon Nipper from behind. Like lightning he turned, but he was a shade too late. Something struck him on the head, and he collapsed. This seemed to be a signal, for at the same moment the whole garden became alive with running figures. They raced for the veranda and commenced swarming up—and it was apparent that they were making for Lord Colchester's bedroom.

William Napoleon Browne, crouching low, uttered a sigh of regret. His one desire was to pile into these raiders with all his enthusiasm, but he had seen that attack upon Nipper. His duty was plain. He ran across to the spot where Nipper had been flung, and bent over the still figure. A moment's examination satisfied him that no great harm had been done, and there was a cool pool of water near at hand.

"It is just as well to be a Boy Scout," murmured Browne, as he commenced first aid.

"HERE they come, Dorrie!" said Nelson Lee.

"You're an uncanny beggar, Lee—you always guess right!" said Lord Dorrimore, clenching his fists. "Well, what about it? You're the captain of this team. What do we do?"

Lee did not answer. He ran swiftly out of the room, raced along to Lord Colchester's apartment, and tried the door. As he had expected, it was locked.

"Come on, Dorrie," he said.

His lordship's help was not needed, for Nelson Lee's one charge burst the door open. Lee's main idea was to be on the spot so that he could protect Lord Colchester's life—for there was little doubt that these fanatical Egyptians would destroy the Egyptologist as ruthlessly as they had destroyed the traitor, Rahmed.

Watching from his own window, Lee had seen the sudden rush of figures. Even now they were almost outside the window. In two strides, Lee reached the bed, and took Lord Colchester by the shoulder.

"Wake up!" he said sharply. "There's trouble afoot. Why—Hallo! What's this?"

His tone changed as he bent over the unconscious peer. He could see the ugly bruise on Lord Colchester's temple, and he knew that the man was unconscious.

"This is strange, Dorrie," said Lee quickly. "There's been some inside work! We've kept watch all the time, and nobody has entered from the outside. By James! I wonder if Harrington did this? I've had my suspicion about that fellow from the first moment I saw him."

Before Dorrie could make any comment, the big French windows were burst open and a number of figures came tumbling in. There was evidently to be no secrecy about this raid; the Egyptians counted upon speed.

"Hands up!" snapped Lee. "Don't move, any of you!"

The invaders took no notice. Either they did not understand English or they were reckless. Four of them charged at Lee and Dorrie, and as none of them appeared to be armed, it was against the principles of the two Englishmen to use their revolvers.

"If you want a scrap we'll give you one," yelled Dorrie enthusiastically.

Crash!

He sailed in with gusto, and for the next three or four minutes he and Nelson Lee had their hands full. It was a case of two to one, but they managed to keep their end up. They fought with all their strength, and were relieved to find that these attackers made no use of knives.

But the whole thing was a ruse.

Not that Lee was fooled. Even as he fought, he could see other men struggling with the sarcophagus, and getting it to the window. If the truth must be told, Lee wasn't sorry to see the relic of the Nahlak Pyramid being taken away. His only object in being here was to protect Lord Colchester.

"I SERIOUSLY fear, Brother, that we have missed the whole of Act 1," said Browne regretfully. "The curtain has already risen on Act 2—"

"Somebody bashed me on the head!" interrupted Nipper, looking round dazedly.

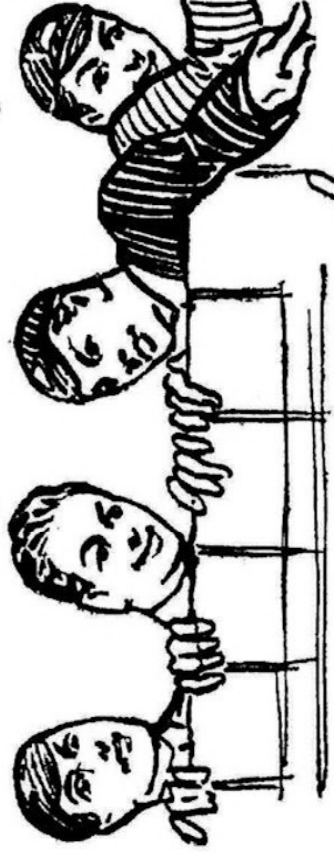
"I believe it, brother. There's a lump on your head as big as a cricket ball."

"What's happening?" went on Nipper, staring towards the hotel, where lights were appearing one after another, and where a number of figures could be seen on the first-floor veranda. "What about the gov'nor? And Dorrie? I'm all at sea."

"Various things have happened within the last minute," said William Napoleon. "The chief event was the arrival of the

(Continued on page 24.)





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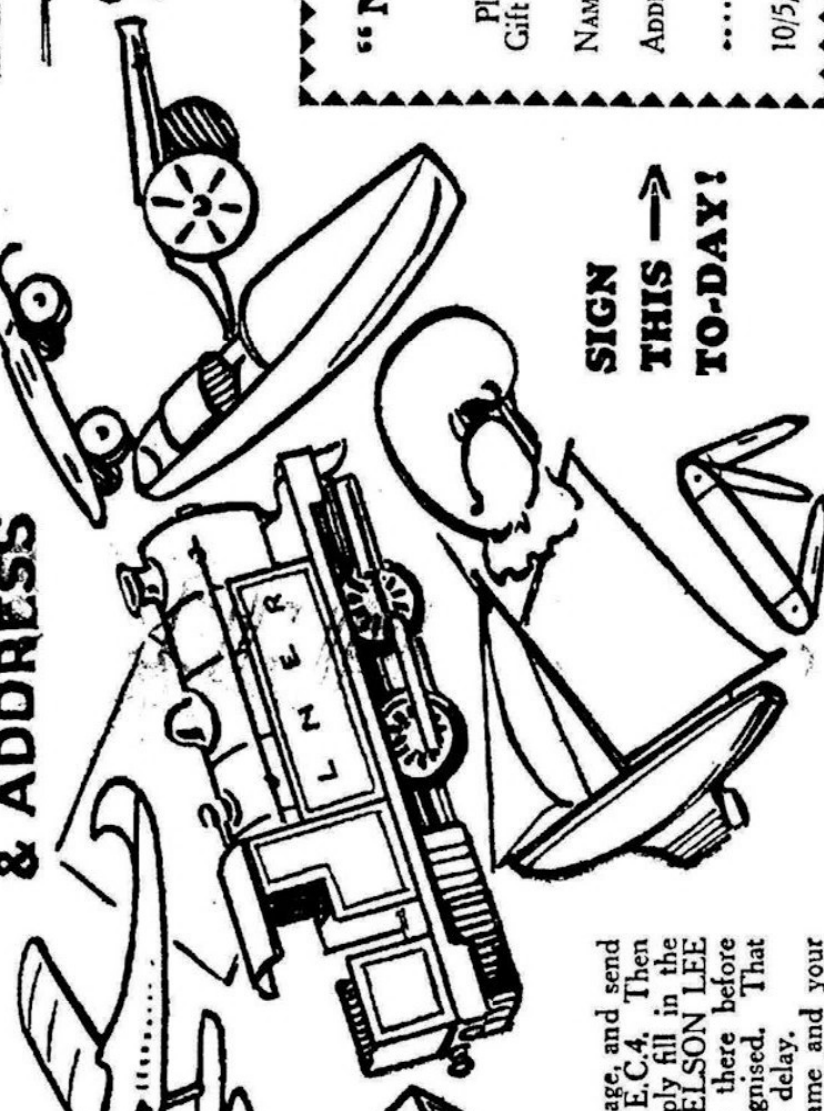
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- David E. Wilkinson, 9, Haven Terrace, EALING, W.5.

THE MUMMY MYSTERY!

(Continued from page 21.)

Nahlak gang, closely followed by the motor-lorry which you now see under the veranda."

Nipper stared. Something big and oblong was being lowered from the veranda towards the waiting lorry.

"The sarcophagus!" breathed Nipper. "They're pinching the mummy!"

"They're welcome to it, as far as I'm concerned, but I really feel that we ought to see this through," said Browne. "If you're feeling a bit better, brother, we might get nearer. With luck, we shall still get a bit of fighting."

"Wait!" urged Nipper. "Look! They've got that thing in the lorry now, and they've all run round to the front. There's a big tarpaulin slung over the back. Supposing we creep in? Let's go on with this lorry and find out where it's making for. After all, this mummy is Lord Colchester's."

"It promises well," said Browne contentedly.

They ran up in the gloom, and in the confusion they succeeded in scrambling under the tarpaulin unobserved. Only just in time, for the lorry moved off, lumbered out of the hotel grounds, and was soon travelling at top speed.

In the hotel, Lord Colchester, under Lee's expert attention, was coming round. The fight was over—for with the departure of the lorry the Egyptians had fled. They

had got what they had come for—the mummy of King Nahlak. But they had not wreaked their vengeance on Lord Colchester.

"Take it easily, Lord Colchester," said Lee soothingly, as the old man recovered his full senses. "When you are feeling sufficiently strong, I want you to tell me how you came by this ugly bruise on your head."

"I know nothing!" protested Lord Colchester, sitting up in bed and feeling the bandage which surrounded his head. "I went to sleep in the ordinary way. I remembered nothing more until you awakened me. I cannot understand—The mummy!" he shouted hoarsely. "What have you done with the mummy?"

He stared across the room with frantic anxiety.

"There has been a raid on the hotel," explained Lee gently. "Unfortunately the mummy was seized."

"Seized!" panted his lordship. "This is appalling! All my months of work—my scheming and planning—all for nothing! I have spent thousands of pounds in obtaining that mummy!"

"But for Mr. Lee, you'd have lost your life," said Dorrie pointedly. "Far better let the mummy go."

Lord Colchester did not heed. The famous Egyptologist had no thoughts except for the missing mummy. Its loss had come as a great blow to him. For some time he would not be consoled, in spite of Lee's and Dorrie-



Jokes from readers wanted for this feature! If you know of a good rib tickler send it along now—and win a prize! A handsome watch will be awarded each week to the sender of the best joke; all other readers whose efforts are published will receive a pocket wallet or a penknife. Address your jokes to: "Smilers," Nelson Lee Library, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4.

DEAD MEN TELL TALES!

Mrs. Timkins was taking her son to school for the first time, and after impressing the headmaster with the necessity of his having a thorough education, finished up by saying:

"And be sure that my son learns Latin."

"But, my dear madam," said the master, "Latin is a dead language."

"That's all right," replied Mrs. Timkins. "He'll want it. He's going to be an undertaker."

(G. Wilson, 8, Manor Lane Terrace, Lee, S.E.13, has been awarded a handsome watch.)



HOLLOW!

The stout man on the scales was eagerly watched by two small boys. The man dropped in his penny, but the machine was out of order and registered only seventy-five pounds.

"Lummy, Bill!" gasped one of the boys in amazement. "He's hollow!"

(R. Arford, "Longbrook," Milton Abbott, Tavistock, Devon, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

THE DUNCE!

Father to son: "I am very glad that you are not on the dunce's stool now. I hope you will never stand on it again, Tommy."

Tommy: "No, father—not until they've finished painting it."

(G. Tudgay, 132, Coronation Road, Southville, Bristol, has been awarded a penknife.)

WHEN THE WORRIER WORRIED!

Bill: "You know, Will, I have been worrying so much lately that I have hired a man to do my worrying for me. I am paying him one pound a day."

Will: "But where are you going to get the money to pay him?"

Bill: "Didn't I tell you? That's the first thing he's got to worry about."

(R. Clarry, 14, Algonquin Avenue,

more's efforts to placate him. Then, at last, weakened by his injury, combined with his anxiety, he fell asleep. Not until then did the two men leave him.

"I wonder why the boys didn't show up during the fight?" remarked Lee as they went to their own room. "Now I come to think of it, we haven't seen anything of them at all. We'd better have a word with them."

But Nipper and Browne had mysteriously disappeared. They weren't in their room, and when Lee made inquiries, nothing had been seen of them. He began to get a little anxious.

"I don't like it, old man," he said, as he and Dorrie went down into the gardens. "I hope nothing serious has happened to them. They might have come up against some of those men here."

They searched, but it was not until nearly half an hour had elapsed that Lee suddenly pounced upon an object which shone in the moonlight. It was a silver pencil, with a piece of paper wrapped round it.

"This pencil is Nipper's!" said Lee sharply.

He unrolled the paper, and read the words:

"On lorry—finding out where it's going. B. with me.—N."

Lee passed it across to Dorrie, and they both looked at one another in the moonlight.

"Just like 'em," commented his lordship.

"Daring young beggars! I suppose this means no sleep for us? Action of some sort is indicated, what?"

"Quick action, too," replied Lee. "This is unexpected, Dorrie—and unfortunate. I didn't want to be mixed up in this mummy business! It seems that we've got to go to that pyramid, after all."

"The Nahlak Pyramid! You think that—"

"What else?" broke in Lee. "That mummy is being taken back to its ancient tomb. Nahlak is not a great many miles from Cairo, and that lorry left over an hour ago. I even doubt if we can overtake it in the time."

"And those boys might find a whole packet of trouble," agreed Dorrie. "Yes, it's bad."

"There's one way," said Nelson Lee, his eyes gleaming. "Dorrie, we shall have to use your 'plane! With any ordinary luck, we'll be at the pyramid at the same time as the lorry."

CHAPTER 4.

The Chamber of Mystery!

NIPPER suddenly clutched at Browne's arm.

"They're stopping!" he muttered. "Quick! If they collar us out here, we're done for."

It seemed to them that they had been jolting along for many hours. They knew that

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

LOOKING AT HERSELF!

Cross Old Lady (in antique shop): "I suppose this is another of those horrible portraits which you call art?"

Shopkeeper (politely): "Excuse me, madam, this is a mirror!"

(N. W. Harding, 79, Norton Road, Reading, Berks, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

BETTER STUFF!

Hairdresser: "Your hair is very thin on top, sir."

Customer: "Yes; the result of Anno Domini."

Hairdresser: "Oh, that's no good at all! You should try a bottle of our lotion."

(C. Egerton, 11, Kings Road, Clissold Park, N.4, has been awarded a penknife.)

A SURE WAY!

A Scotsman was crossing the Channel, and he was beginning to feel sea-sick, so he inquired of the captain how he could ward it off.

"Lean over the rail and hold a shilling between your teeth!" replied the captain.

(J. A. Gould, 53, East Dulwich Grove, S.E.22, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)



HARD LUCK!

"Why the gloomy look, Jock?"

"Weel," replied Jock, "I joined the Navy to see the world, and they put me in a blinkin' submarine!"

(G. Gidley, Sunnyside, Causeway, Horndean, Hants, has been awarded a pocket wallet.)

GOT 'EM ALL BEAT!

"Well, boys," said Uncle Bert, "how are you getting on at school?"

"I'm first in arithmetic," Jackie replied.

"I'm first in grammar," said Joe.

"Fine!" commented Uncle Bert. "And what are you first in, Sammy?"

"I'm first in the street when it's time to go home!" retorted Sammy.

(H. Hillyar, Castle Inn, Russell Street, Dover, has been awarded a penknife.)

TOO GOOD TO MISS!

Mother: "Bobby, how dare you strike your little sister!"

Bobby: "Auntie made me."

Auntie: "Nonsense, Bobby! I said if you did I would never kiss you again."

Bobby: "Well, I couldn't miss a chance like that, could I?"

(J. Plastow, 126, Macoma Road, Plumstead, S.E.18, has been awarded a penknife.)

they had left Cairo and the main roads far behind. For a considerable time the lorry—which was a light one, fitted with pneumatic tyres and capable of high speed—had been bumping and swaying over a rough desert track. Now it was slowing up.

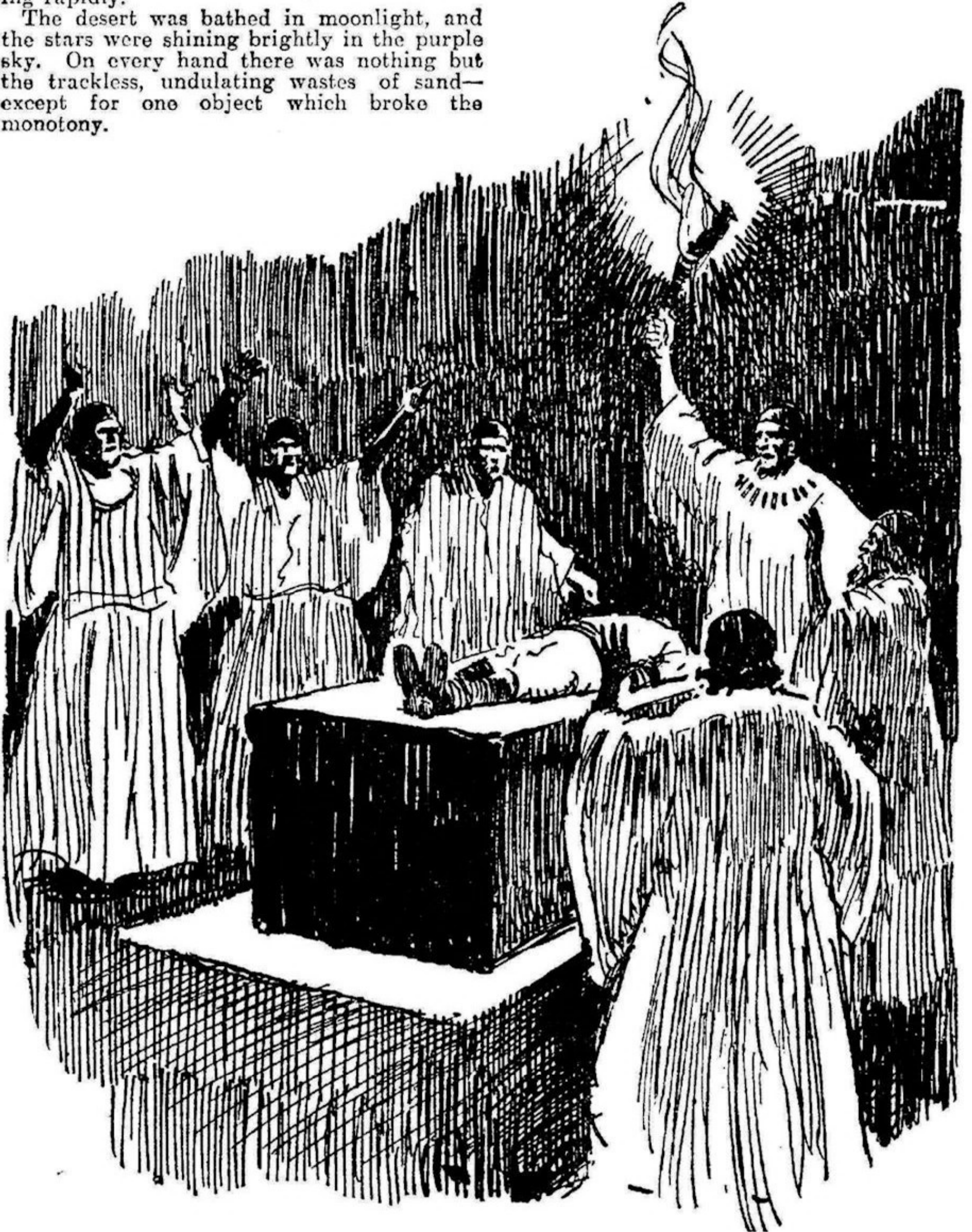
Nipper acted with brainy promptness. As the vehicle came to a stop, he slid like an eel out of the rear and dived underneath. Browne followed his example. Within a few moments they had half-burrowed themselves in the deep sand, which was soft and dry. They lay there motionless, their hearts beating rapidly.

The desert was bathed in moonlight, and the stars were shining brightly in the purple sky. On every hand there was nothing but the trackless, undulating wastes of sand—except for one object which broke the monotony.

Within half a mile stood the Nahlak Pyramid.

This was an isolated relic of Ancient Egypt; one of the smaller pyramids, and generally considered by Egyptologists to be of only minor importance. Lord Colchester had always held an opposite view, and it had been his life's ambition to confound his contemporaries.

The pyramid was uneven and badly damaged by age and wind and storm. From a distance the sloping sides looked comparatively smooth; but near at hand they were



revealed as being rough, like a series of great steps.

The lorry had halted at a spot where the sand began to get loose and treacherous. The vehicle could not proceed much farther without the risk of its becoming embedded.



Nelson Lee and his two companions stared down in horror at the scene. Bound to a slab of stone—a human sacrifice—was Nipper!

There were only two men with it, but across the sands other men were approaching from the pyramid. The priests of Nahlak had been on the watch—waiting.

No time was lost. The sarcophagus was lifted out and placed on the shoulders of eight men. It was carried off at once. Simultaneously the lorry began to move.

"What now, brother?" breathed Browne.

"We'd better stay where we are," replied Nipper. "It's the only thing to do."

The two watchers were left lying in the sand, and they waited patiently. Browne was the first to look up. The lorry had practically vanished into a deep depression of the desert. The men with the sarcophagus were just rounding a hummocky sand dune.

"All is well, brother," murmured Browne. "Arise!"

They stood up and shook the sand from their clothing.

"Thought so!" whispered Nipper. "There's the pyramid. We'll shadow those beggars and see exactly what they do?"

"Two minds with but a single thought," agreed Browne. "Forward, brother!"

They were overjoyed at the success of their plan. The Egyptians had no inkling that these two "infidels" had followed them; thus no special precautions were taken.

Browne and Nipper, edging round the sand hummock, saw the men with the sarcophagus approaching the pyramid. Following cautiously, the shadowers dived into a hollow, mounted the summit of another dune, and pressed on. They were only a short distance away when they saw the sarcophagus being hoisted up the great stone inequalities of the pyramid.

"This," breathed Browne, "looks interesting."

He pulled out a small pair of binoculars—which he had previously used for scanning the hotel gardens—and levelled them. He and Nipper were lying full length on the top of a little sandhill. The huge bulk of the pyramid towered in front of them.

Luck was with the watchers, for the moon shone fully on the face of the pyramid. Through his glasses, Browne was able to see clearly all that was taking place. The Egyptians, on the other hand, were at a disadvantage—for the sandhill was deeply shadowed.

"Ye gods!" whispered Browne suddenly.

He was rather startled to see a huge section of stone swing back; and he had noted one of the men pressing hard on a rocky projection. So that was how the trick was done! The sarcophagus and the men were all disappearing into the black cavity. Within a minute the great stone came back into place.

"Well, that's that," said Browne. "Our friends have been rude enough to go indoors without even offering us the hospitality of a drink."

"And that's the secret of this pyramid—a secret which has been preserved for centuries," murmured Nipper. "I'll bet we're the first white people to find it out."

"So you saw, too?" said Browne, nodding at Nipper's own night-glasses. "Well, what's the next move, brother?"

"I'm going into that pyramid—if I can open the door."

"Behave yourself, Brother Nipper," said Browne sternly. "Always remember that seniority counts. It is essentially my task—"

"Rats! I thought of it—and I'm going."

"One moment," urged Browne, pained. "I have always understood, on the best authority, that you are a sportsman. Let us toss for this honour."

"That's fair," agreed Nipper. "I call heads."

Browne tossed, and sighed.

"Alas, heads it is!" he said sadly. "You will, at least, be cautious, brother. If there is danger, retreat. I would add that, if you do not appear within half an hour, I shall certainly try my own luck."

Nipper went. William Napoleon Browne, watching, gave a little murmur of satisfaction as he saw that section of stone slide back. Nipper turned, waved, and vanished into the pyramid. The stone slid back into place.

"Alone in the desert," said Browne meditatively. "An experience which few can— But wait! Am I really alone? Somehow, I fancy not. For do I not hear the voice of Singing Susie?"

He listened intently. Far away sounded the purr of an aeroplane engine. It had a note all its own—a singing note—which had prompted Browne to provide that particular plane with such a nickname. It was Dorrie's saloon monoplane; and as Browne searched the sky, he saw a speck in the distance. The engine had now shut off, and except for the soft whistling of the propeller there was no sound.

"Brother Lee is doubtless anxious," chuckled Browne. "This is distinctly the goods! Out by lorry—home by 'plane!"

The 'plane circled down gracefully, touched the sand, taxied for a few yards, and then came to a standstill. Dorrie had made a magnificent landing, considering the difficult nature of the ground.

"**B**ROWNE!" said Nelson Lee with considerable relief. "But where is Nipper? What folly have you boys been up to?"

It only took Browne three minutes to give all the details—a record for such a long-winded gentleman as himself.

"I cannot blame you for acting as you did, because you failed to realise the dangers," said Nelson Lee. "It was madness for Nipper to go into that pyramid. If he is caught he will be killed. No white man has ever been known to enter, and these priests are fanatical. We must fetch Nipper at once."

"He thought it rather a bright scheme," said Browne, "and I must admit I thought it a bright scheme, too. Funny how opinions differ."

"Boys will be boys!" put in Lord Dorri-more. "If I'd been here earlier, hanged if I wouldn't have gone with Nipper!"

Lee looked at them grimly.

"Now, look here, you two," he said deliberately. "I don't want to sound panicky, but we've got some dangerous work ahead of us. There may be no escaping alive from this pyramid once you set foot inside it. In

all seriousness, I suggest that you should let me go alone."

"Can't you say something funnier?" asked Dorrie with a glare.

"Don't misunderstand me," urged Lee. "There's no earthly reason why you two should risk your lives like this. Nipper didn't realise the danger—and I don't think you do, Browne. But it exists, all the same. This pyramid is a death-trap."

"Doesn't it occur to you, Chief, that while we're gassing here, Brother Nipper might be going through the hoop?" suggested Browne gently. "You can't get in without me—because I'm the only one of us who knows the secret. Shall we make a start?"

Nelson Lee gave it up. A moment later they were hurrying across the sand towards the black, forbidding pile of the pyramid.

WITH Nelson Lee leading the way, they plunged down a stifling, musty-smelling stone passage. In one hand Lee carried an electric torch and in the other an automatic pistol. The passage, cut out of solid rock, led slightly downwards.

Fortunately there were no confusing side tunnels. Just this one, which led deeper and deeper into the heart of the pyramid. By now they must have penetrated into the deepest recesses. Nelson Lee paused, murmured a warning, and switched out his torch. They stood there, holding their breath. The blackness was like something tangible; the silence was almost frightening.

They pressed on again, the heat increasing. It seemed to radiate from the very rock walls. Suddenly the passage took a sharp turn, and almost before Lee knew it he was standing in a smallish rock cavern. It was barren, but at various points round this cavern there were other tunnel mouths.

"Wait!" breathed Lee.

He went back to the tunnel they had just emerged from, and he made a small chalk mark on the rock at the top. They could not afford to be confused if they were obliged to run for their lives.

"Listen!" whispered Browne. "I can hear something now!"

They all listened, and a weird, wailing sound came to their ears. Lee went from tunnel to tunnel, and he was soon satisfied.

"This one," he murmured. "Come!"

He plunged in, and almost immediately the sounds became intensified. The three proceeded with excessive caution, yet they were taken by surprise at the abruptness with which they came upon the strange, fantastic scene in the great rock cavern.

There was a sharp turn in the tunnel, and Lee found himself in a kind of gallery. It was a stone ledge, high above the floor of the cavern. There was no guarding rail, and only by pulling himself up short did Lee stop himself from plunging over the edge. The others were just behind him, and they halted.

They beheld an amazing scene. Flaring torches provided the illumination, and the air was suffocating with heat and fumes. Down on the floor of the cavern crouched a number

of strangely robed figures. And on a big stone slab lay the bound figure of Nipper!

Lee caught in his breath. All round that slab there was a deep groove, and the groove was filled with a liquid which reflected the torch-light. Even as Lee stared, the High Priest plucked one of the torches from its holder and held it towards that groove.

In a flash, Lee knew the truth. It was oil! Nipper was to be subjected to the ancient rite of fire—he was to be burned to death as a sacrifice to the God of Osiris!

CHAPTER 5.

The Bargain!

NELSON LEE did not hesitate for a second. His revolver sputtered flame, and the torch was tossed violently out of the High Priest's hand.

"Hands up!" shouted the detective.

The priests leapt to their feet and stood staring upwards. Nipper gave a cry, and tried to twist his head round so that he could see. For some seconds there was a silence. Then:

"Dogs of infidels!" snarled the High Priest in excellent English. "You have violated the sacred recesses of Nahlak! The only punishment is death! White men have entered before—but never have they emerged."

"We came not to violate these sacred recesses, but to fetch the boy you are about to murder," replied Nelson Lee. "Release him and allow him to join us, or I will shoot you all as you stand."

"Big words, infidel!" sneered the High Priest, and his hand sprang to one of the rock walls. The next second the ledge upon which Lee and his companions stood tilted forward. They clutched and scrambled to keep their hold, but the rock was smooth. The tilting increased, and it was impossible to cling any longer. Like stones they were precipitated to the floor of the cavern below, to be pounced upon by the priests.

"Guv'nor!" came a cry from Nipper.

Any kind of fight was out of the question. The fall had almost paralysed Lee's right arm; Lord Dorrimore was half-stunned; and Browne believed that he had dislocated his shoulder. Before they could even begin to recover they were dragged across the cavern by many hands. They were fastened to the rock walls by strong metal clamps. These clamps encircled their wrists and ankles. The edges were sharp, and the smallest movement would have meant tearing their flesh.

The High Priest was like a madman. He shouted and gesticulated wildly. Nipper was dragged from the stone slab and clamped in the same way as the others. It was evident that the High Priest had changed his mind.

"You shall all die!" he screamed. "You shall die as befit dogs who desecrate these sacred walls."

He turned to his companions, and they all vanished from the rock chamber. What devilry were they setting out to prepare?

"It's all my fault, guv'nor!" panted Nipper. "I was an idiot to come in this place. I was suddenly grabbed—"

"Never mind, old son," interrupted Lee. "I'm afraid things are pretty bad, but we had to come. We couldn't leave you to your fate."

They were suddenly attracted by strange sounds from the other side of the cavern—sounds of shuffling and straining. The sounds appeared to come from the sarcophagus of King Nahlak, which stood back on its own pedestal—as it had stood for centuries. The pedestal, as the prisoners gazed upon it, burned with a million coloured fires from the rich gems which adorned it.

"Look!" gasped Dorrie abruptly. "The lid is coming off!"

Seldom had Nipper or Browne felt their hair bristling, but they felt it doing so now. The sarcophagus was being burst open from within! They stared, fascinated, hardly knowing what to expect.

Crash!

The lid was shattered, and a figure, tumbling out, fell from the pedestal to the floor. It was not a mummy, but a white man—a living white man!

"Harrington!" exclaimed Nelson Lee.

In a flash, he knew why Lord Colchester had been knocked on the head. The lure of these jewels! "Sir Charles Harrington" was a confidence man—as Lee had first believed—and he had taken this extraordinary chance.

Harrington swayed as he stood. Perspiration almost poured from him; his face was haggard. His ordeal had been far more terrifying than he had ever believed, and he had broken free from the sarcophagus in a frenzy, unable to stand the torture any longer.

But now he rapidly recovered; and as Lee recognised him so he recognised Lee. One glance told him that these other whites were helpless. Then his gaze roved round to the pedestal. He lurched towards it, a hoarse cry in his throat.

In that second he forgot everything except the jewels. He clutched at them in his madness. He tore them from their settings, plunging them into his pockets like so many marbles. Not until he had stripped the pedestal did he turn. And now his eyes were glowing with baleful triumph.

"A fortune!" he croaked. "Do you understand, Lee, you infernal detective? Diamonds—rubies—emeralds! Stones of better quality than any that are mined nowadays! And they're mine!"

"Pull yourself together, Harrington!" said Lee. "If those priests come back you'll be put where we are. There's a chance for us all to escape—"

"Not on your life!" broke in Harrington, with a mad laugh. "I'm going—but you're staying here! If I let you escape, do you think you'd give me any peace? You'd

hound me until you caught me! I'm a thief, aren't I? I've robbed this heathen temple, or whatever it is, and what I've taken I'll keep! By leaving you here, I shall be safe!"

Without another word, he swung round and ran into one of the tunnels.

"The dog!" said Lord Dorrimore.

"And he was our only chance!" muttered Nipper.

Bang! Bang!

Dull explosions sounded, mysteriously from the distance; screams followed. Then two more bangs—fainter this time. After that, silence!

HARRINGTON never remembered how he got out.

He only knew that he shot at least three men—robed figures who barred his way. Then, panting and gasping, he plunged along the tunnels. At last he found an exit—a stone that moved when he pressed on it. He was out on the desert, under the twinkling stars, with the faint night breeze fanning his super-heated cheeks.

"Free!" he croaked. "And I've got a fortune!"

He stumbled down from the pyramid, reached the desert sands, and plunged across the great waste at random.

IN the rock chamber, the High Priest was like a man possessed of devils. Those first two men who had been shot had been carrying a basketful of snakes—intended for the torture of the four victims. The snakes were to have been released, so that the prisoners would suffer agonies of torment before death was theirs.

Now everything was changed.

Three men were dead. The sacred sarcophagus was smashed, and the mummy was not there! For some time the High Priest stared at the empty sarcophagus like a dazed man; then his fury burst forth.

"Vengeance!" he shouted thickly. "The tortures I had planned are nothing compared with the tortures that shall punish you for this sacrilege. Three of my priests have you murdered—the sacred gems of Nahlak have you stolen—and the sacred mummy itself is still missing!"

Nelson Lee thought rapidly. A staggering idea had occurred to him. The mummy, he knew, must be at Longden's Hotel. And the jewels were with Harrington.

"Listen, O Priest!" he said impressively. "We came not to rob your treasures, but to save the life of this one boy, who should never have entered these sacred precincts. The man who murdered your fellow priests, and who robbed your god, is a criminal. We are hunters of criminals. Spare our lives, and we will restore all that which has been stolen—your sacred mummy and the jewels."

The High Priest was somewhat calmed by Nelson Lee's tone.

"I believe it not!" he snarled. "I have you here, and here you shall die."

"And by killing us, so will you kill all hope of ever recovering the mummy of your ancient king and the jewels that were once his."

The High Priest breathed hard.

"Let us strike a bargain," continued Lee. "Our lives in return for the restoration of what you have lost."

Without a word the High Priest turned on his heel and he joined the other priests, who were talking excitedly together round the robbed pedestal. A consultation took place.

"I can't believe they'll agree, gov'nor," whispered Nipper. "They've got us now, and they'll kill us."

Minutes of tense anxiety for the three prisoners passed, then the High Priest approached, his maddened fury gone.

"You shall all go free," he said coldly.

"Your decision is wise," commented Nelson Lee.

"You shall leave this Pyramid as you entered, and you will be given the space of two weeks for the fulfilment of your sacred promise," continued the High Priest. "If, at the end of that time, the mummy and the jewels are not returned, the Curse of Osiris will be upon you."

The other priests came forward, and the prisoners were released. Then they were led out through the dark, stuffy tunnels until at length they reached the open air. The dawn was just breaking, and the trio breathed in the cool air with fervent thankfulness.

CHAPTER 6.

The Chase!

LORD DORRIMORE got the monoplane into the air cleverly; it was ticklish business, off the sands, but he managed it. Once in the air, the 'plane sped back rapidly to Cairo. Before Longden's Hotel was fully awake, the four guests were back in their quarters. They bathed, changed, and the other guests in the hotel little imagined what startling adventures had happened during the night.

Nelson Lee's first task was to seek an interview with Lord Colchester. A search of his lordship's bed-room revealed—as Lee had expected—the fateful mummy. It was stowed away in the locked wardrobe.

"But this is splendid!" declared Lord Colchester, from his bed. "The mummy! By what extraordinary chance does it come to be in the wardrobe?"

Lee went over to the bed.

"Listen to me, Lord Colchester," he said gravely. "I will tell you a story, and if, when I have finished, you still desire to keep this mummy, I shall be a very surprised man."

He told his story, and the famous Egyptologist was looking worried and concerned when he had finished.

"A remarkable experience, Mr. Lee—indeed, a terrifying adventure," he said. "Of course, the mummy must be returned. Since you gave your word, that is sufficient. You bought your lives by giving your word, and you must naturally keep it."

"I was sure that you would be reasonable," said Nelson Lee. "With your permission, sir, I will have this mummy removed without delay to a bank vault in this city."

"But has it not to be returned to the pyramid?"

"Yes; but it is idle returning the mummy without the jewels," replied Lee. "My only hope of getting those jewels is to secure Harrington's arrest. It may be a difficult task, or it may be simple. It all depends upon Harrington's movements."



A number of robed figures dashed in and the crooks were overwhelmed and borne to the ground

LEE set to work rapidly. The mummy was removed to a secure place, and Lee himself consulted with the Cairo police authorities. He was promised every help. A careful watch would be kept for "Sir" Charles Harrington at every big centre.

Lee was hopeful that he would get on the track of Harrington through Mansell, his confederate. In this hope he was not doomed to disappointment. Mansell had disappeared; he had left the hotel at some hour during the night, and nobody had seen him go, and nobody knew where he had gone.

Later on in the morning Nelson Lee, owing to his high-pressure inquiries, elicited the significant information that Mansell had hired a fast two-seater aeroplane from a private club on the outskirts of Cairo. He was an excellent pilot, it seemed, for he had produced his certificate. Mansell had flown off, and although he had promised to return within an hour he had failed to do so.

"This is highly important, Dorrie," said Lee, as he discussed the latest development with Lord Dorrimore. "It looks very much as though Mansell hired this aeroplane on purpose to fly to the desert. He knew that Harrington's mission was a hazardous one, and his idea, no doubt, was to be near the pyramid in case he should be required. The question is, did Mansell pick up Harrington? He obtained the aeroplane soon after dawn. He has not been seen since, and no word of an accident has been received. To my mind, it looks very fishy."

"Don't you think we'd better get in our own 'plane and do a bit of scouting?" asked Dorrie.

"I'm afraid it would be a waste of time," replied Nelson Lee, shaking his head. "We had far better remain at our hotel so that we shall be on the spot if any fresh news comes in."

"Do you think the Egyptian authorities will give you the help you need?"

"They are doing their utmost," said Lee. "Not only the Egyptian authorities, but the authorities of every country in Europe have been warned. Spain, Italy, France, England, Germany. All have been told to watch. That aeroplane, if Harrington has escaped on it, is bound to be seen, and we shall learn of its whereabouts. We can only wait in patience."

"We can wait, but I'm not so sure about the patience part of it," demurred his lordship.

IT wasn't until mid-afternoon that another item of news came in. There had been all sorts of rumours concerning aeroplanes which had been seen in various parts of Egypt, but all of these had proved false trails. Now came something which looked really sound. A two-seater aeroplane, containing two Englishmen, had landed at a small town in Southern Italy.

There was no aerodrome there, and the official lettering and the numbering of the aeroplane had not been taken. It was known, however, that the machine had landed after flying across the Mediterranean. Supplies of petrol had been obtained after some difficulty and the machine had flown on. Its destination had not been named, but it was fairly certain that the machine had been making for Paris or Berlin or London.

"I expected as much," said Lee. "By Jove! They had a nerve to cross the Mediterranean on a hired 'plane like that without being certain of their petrol supply! An indication, Dorrie, of their desperate state. I haven't the slightest doubt that this is the machine we are after."

"What shall we do, then?"

"Fly off for London at once," replied Lee. "Don't forget that Harrington has a large number of precious stones, and he will want to dispose of them. He is an Englishman, and his first thought will be to approach a 'fence.' He may go to Amsterdam or Berlin, but he is far more likely to make for London."

It was a chase now, with the crooks having a long start. Hasty preparations were made, and Nelson Lee, Dorrie and the two "cubs" raced away to the aerodrome. Dorrie's machine was ready, fully loaded with petrol and ready to take the air.

It was almost evening now, and they set off on the long, long flight back to England.

Lee and Dorrie took it in turns to pilot the 'plane. Between whiles they snatched a little sleep. Nipper and Browne, in the cabin, slept soundly for a great deal of the journey.

The weather fortunately was fair throughout, and right through the night the 'plane hummed on her way. One landing was made for fresh petrol supplies, and this was only a brief delay. Then on again. Not a hitch occurred, and at long last Lord Dorrimore arrived at Croydon Aerodrome.

Nelson Lee's old friend, Chief Detective-inspector Lennard, of Scotland Yard, was one of the first men to greet the Gray's Inn Road detective when he alighted.

"Got your wireless," he said. "My word, Lee, you've been making fast time. They say you've beaten the night aeroplane record for the trip."

"Never mind that, Lennard," said Lee. "What news of Harrington?"

"None, I'm afraid—nothing definite, anyway," replied the Yard man. "We've kept a close watch everywhere, and the machine has certainly not landed at any recognised aerodrome."

"You had reports from the Continent?"

"Plenty; but as I've said, nothing definite," said Lennard. "There's one item of news, though, that may lead to something. Not half an hour ago we had a report that some aeroplane wreckage was found early this morning in mid-Channel."

"That's bad," said Lee gravely. "Where was this wreckage found? And who found it?"

"A fishing trawler, out of Newhaven," replied the chief inspector. "The wreckage got clogged in the nets, I understand, and the skipper brought it back to harbour."

"What about it, Dorrie?" asked Lee, turning to the sporting peer.

"Want to go to Newhaven?" asked Dorrie. "Right-ho! Jump in. Can't beat the little bus!"

"You two boys had better return to the Academy," said Lee, turning to Nipper and Browne. "You've had enough excitement, and you couldn't be of any use on this trip, anyhow. Get back to the Academy, and await further orders."

"O.K., Chief," replied Nipper readily.

They went off at once, and the chief inspector soon took his departure, too. Nelson Lee was looking very serious as he stood by with Dorrie, waiting for the 'plane's petrol-tank to be refilled.

"We must examine that 'plane wreckage, Dorrie," he said. "We've got an exact description of the machine from the Cairo Club, and we shall know at once if this is a part of that 'plane. It looks very much as if the crooks ran out of petrol on the last lap and fell into the sea."

"In that case they must have lost their lives, and the jewels have gone down with them," said Dorrie, making a grimace. "That's ugly, isn't it? I doubt if those Nahlak johnnies will believe such a yarn."

"They will certainly disbelieve it," agreed Lee grimly. "And in that case they will probably proceed to exact their vengeance upon us."

Dorrie nodded.

"Taking everything into consideration, the prospect is mouldy in the extreme," he observed. "However, we'll live in hopes."

CHAPTER 7.

The Man Hunt!

A CAREFUL examination of the wreckage, which was still aboard the fishing trawler at Newhaven, convinced Nelson Lee of one definite thing. That aeroplane wreckage was part of the machine which had been hired by Mansell from the private Cairo aero-club!

"I was afraid of it, Dorrie," said Lee. "This is the worst thing that could have happened."

"It's infernally disturbin'," admitted his lordship.

They approached the trawler's skipper—a bluff, mahogany-featured old sea-dog.

"No, we didn't see nothing of the accident, sir," he replied in answer to Nelson Lee's questions. "We just picked them bits o' wreckage up in our nets."

"How far from the coast?"

"Practically in mid-Channel, sir," replied the skipper. "I reckon the machine must have been smashed to bits, or there wouldn't have been that small wreckage. Come down in the night, I dare say, and the pilot made a miscalculation about the height. Poor beggars, they must have been killed."

Nelson Lee thanked him, tipped him, and then he and Dorrie went ashore.

"We're in a mess, old man," said Lee. "Those diamonds are at the bottom of the Channel—and that makes it impossible for us to keep our promise to the High Priest of Nahlak."

"And if we go back there and explain, we shall simply be collared and used as a sacrifice, or something equally pleasant," remarked Dorrie. "Rather a dilemma, isn't it?"

They were silent as they picked their way along the beach. Then suddenly Nelson Lee's attitude changed. His powers of observation were almost uncanny—and now, unexpectedly, he saw something which sent a thrill through his frame.

He and Dorrie were just passing a powerful motor-boat, which was drawn high and dry on the beach. Something had glinted in the sunshine; something which caught Lee's eyes. A less alert man might have missed the significance—but not Nelson Lee.

"By James! Look at this, Dorrie!" he said tensely. He was bending over the motor-boat's bows. Pointing, he indicated a strange silvery sheen. Yet the bows of the boat were painted red.

"I'm frightfully dense," said Dorrie. "I can't see anything to enthuse about."

"Silver paint, old man—on the bows of this boat," declared Lee. "Look at it! Exactly the same kind of silver paint as on that wrecked aeroplane! It's fresh, too—it hasn't been on here twelve hours yet."

A longshoreman strolled up, and he respectfully touched his cap.

"Fine boat that, sir," he remarked.

"Yes, so I was just saying to my friend," replied Lee. "When was she last out?"

"Why, only this morning, sir."

"Did she go for a long trip?"

"Came over from Boulogne, sir," replied the man. "Come over in the night, too, I believe."

Nelson Lee appeared only casually interested.

"Yes, she's a trim craft," he said. "Do you happen to know who she belongs to?"

"Why, yes, sir—she's owned by Mr. Samuel Clarke."

Lee continued talking for some minutes, and he soon discovered where Mr. Samuel Clarke lived. Then he and Lord Dorrimore set off.

"This is important, Dorrie," declared Lee. "That motor-boat crossed from Boulogne during the night—and the 'plane must have crashed into the Channel during the night! I'm beginning to have a theory."

LEE was not surprised when he learned, on inquiry at Mr. Clarke's house, that Mr. Clarke was abroad. But Mr. Clarke's chauffeur, a man named Skelton, was in the habit of taking the motor-boat out for trips now and again. It was a fact that Skelton had been away during the night. Lee learned these details from the housekeeper.

"Round to the garage, Dorrie," said the detective, after they had left the house.

They found Skelton in the garage, busy with one of Mr. Clarke's cars. The man had a shifty look about him as Lee and Dorrie came up.

"I understand, Skelton, that you crossed from Boulogne in your employer's motor-boat last night?" asked Lee, getting straight to the point.

"Yes, sir—that's right, sir."

"Do you usually make such trips as that?"

"Not often, sir, but the weather's been so nice lately that I thought it would be a bit

of fun," said the chauffeur. "As a matter of fact, I had a bet on with one of my pals. No harm in it, sir."

"Not at all—but here's the point," said Lee. "Do you remember running into any aeroplane wreckage—"

"No, sir—no, sir!" interrupted Skelton huskily. "I didn't see no aeroplane, or wreckage, either."

But he had given himself away.

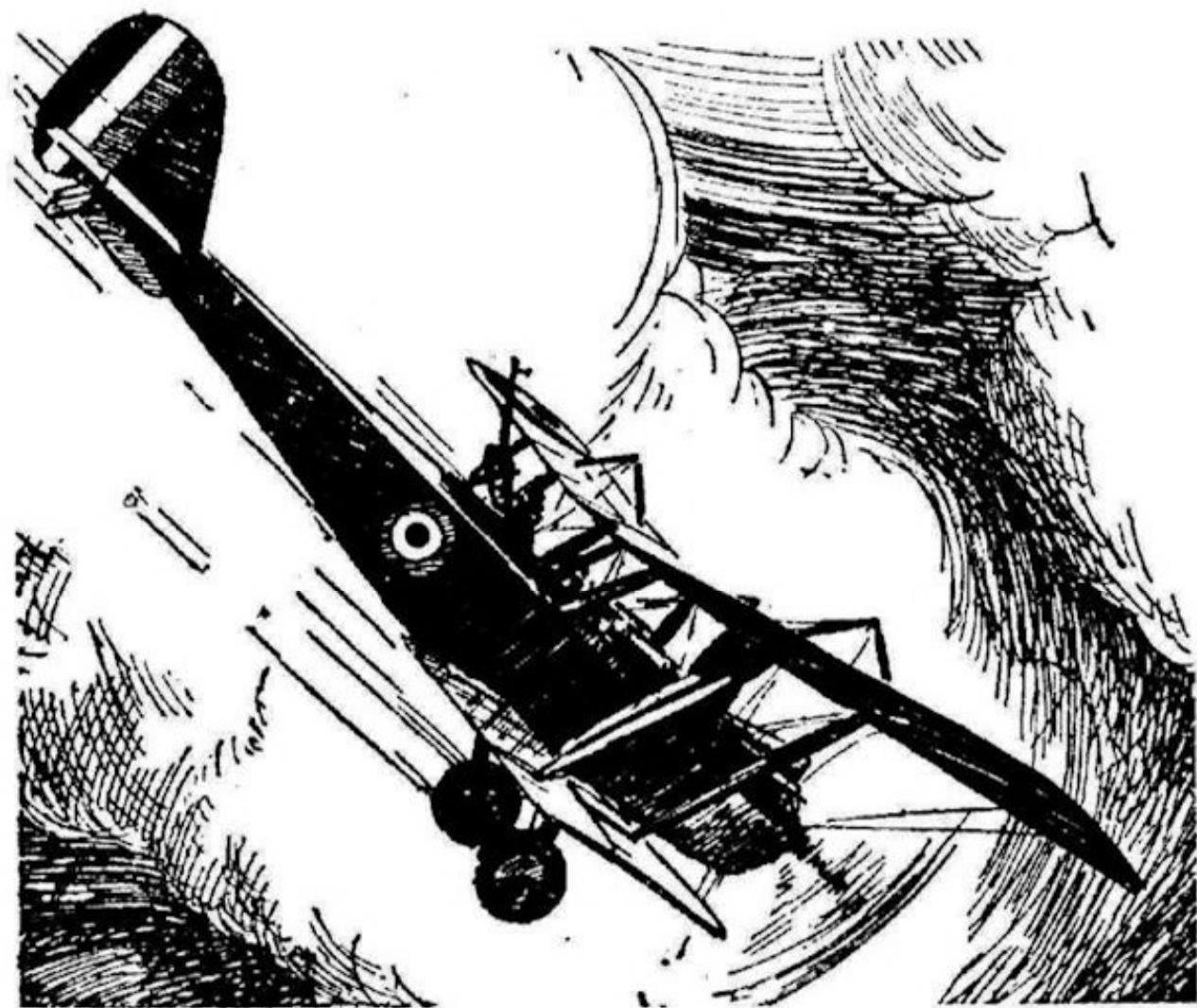
"Your denial is rather too frantic, my friend," said Lee grimly. "I had better tell you that my name is Lee, and that I am a detective."

"But—but I ain't done nothing wrong, sir!" panted Skelton, terrified.

"Nevertheless, you may be liable to arrest for aiding and abetting the escape of two wanted criminals," replied Lee.

Skelton turned pale.

"Criminals, sir!" he said hoarsely. "I never knew. Honest, I didn't, sir! They told me they was just ordinary gents, and that they wanted to take advantage of the



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accident by making a bit of sensation in the newspapers."

"Whatever they told you, I doubt if you believed it," said Lee. "Now, Skelton, I should advise you to tell me the full truth. These men paid you something for bringing them ashore in your motor-boat, didn't they?"

"It was like this, sir—and this is the truth!" said Skelton desperately. "I was comin' over—and I was all alone, mind you—when I was surprised to see an aeroplane circlin' over me in the moonlight. The engine was missing pretty badly, an' presently the 'plane flopped down into the water, not twenty yards off my starboard."

"You mean it came down into the sea deliberately?"

"Yes, sir; but the gent said that all his petrol had gone, and he had to come down somewhere. He had spotted the lights o' my boat, an' dropped near me, so that I could take him and his pal off."

"That was probably a tale—I expect there was still plenty of petrol on that 'plane," commented Lee. "Those men were criminals, and their one desire was to land in England in secret."

"They said that as they'd had to come down they might have some fun out of it, sir," continued Skelton. "They gave me a hundred quid to put 'em ashore in a quiet cove, where there wasn't no houses or nothing. Before they left the 'plane, they smashed it up a bit so that the best part of it sank."

"You put them ashore in this cove," said Lee. "What happened to them after that?"

"I don't know, sir—and that's the truth!" replied the man.

"IT was a master-stroke of Harrington's to adopt that dodge," said Lee, as he and Lord Dorrimore walked back into Newhaven. "The 'plane wasn't his, so he didn't mind losing it. And by allowing some of the wreckage to float in the Channel, he hoped to give the impression that he and Mansell had perished."

"You were pretty brilliant, too, old man," said Dorrie. "Anyhow, you now know that the jewels are still safe, and that Harrington and Mansell are in England."

"Yes, by Jove, and they'll try to dispose of those jewels at the very first opportunity," said Lee. "I rather think I will do a bit of telephoning before we go back to the 'plane, old man."

Lee's chief telephone message was to the Detective Academy. He sent out every cub—disguised—to watch various premises in different parts of London. Every well-known fence was to be watched. Harrington was certain to go to a receiver sooner or later—probably that very day.

"You've been a real friend, Dorrie," said Lee, when they were once more in the 'plane, on the way to London. "You've helped me enormously—"

"Dry up!" interrupted Dorrie. "If you can't talk sense, don't talk at all!"

Lee was alone when he arrived at the Detective Academy. It was evening, and darkness was near at hand. None of the cubs was in, and apparently no message had arrived. The detective went to his study, and just as he entered the telephone-bell rang. It was William Napoleon Browne at the other end.

"That you, Chief?" he asked. "Good! I was hoping that you'd be back. We've spotted Harrington and Mansell at last."

"Well done!" said Lee approvingly. "Let's have the details, old man."

"One of our fellows—Pitt—was watching the Botley Club, just off the Commercial Road. You know it, sir?"

"I fancy so," smiled Lee. "The Botley is one of the worst night-clubs in the East End."

"Harrington and Mansell arrived in a taxicab with another man, a fellow named Lucas Mordan," said Browne. "I've made inquiries of the police, and they tell me that Mordan is a jeweller."

"And he is also suspected of being a very clever fence," said Lee. "This is splendid news that you tell me, Browne. I want you to go round and recall all the cubs. Get hold of as many as you can. You yourself had better go to Mordan's shop and watch it. Don't leave until you get fresh orders."

"O.K., Chief!" came Browne's voice.

MR. LUCAS MORDAN, an elderly, wizened man, turned the beautiful stones over in his fingers.

"They're not bad, Charley," he said cautiously. "I've seen better, of course—"

"You're a liar!" broke in Harrington angrily. "You've never seen any emeralds like those in all your life. None of your tricks, Mordan!"

It was three hours later, and Harrington and Mansell were sitting in Lucas Mordan's little back office. The table was strewn with the precious stones which had been taken from the Nahlak Pyramid.

"These stones are better than any that are mined to-day," continued Harrington hotly. "Look at 'em! Each one will cut up into three or four, and they can be disposed of without trouble. This is the biggest deal that's ever come your way, Mordan, and you'll pay my price or I'll take 'em somewhere else."

"Easy," said Mordan gently. "No need to lose your temper, Charley. I'll admit that these stones are good. But your price is ridiculous. I haven't got the money."

"You can get it, and if you don't get it I'll take the stuff over to Amsterdam or Berlin," said Harrington.

"Well, we'll have another look," said Mordan. "But you'll have to reduce that price—"

He broke off, and swung round abruptly in his chair. A sound had come from a

(Concluded on page 44.)

Thrills! Thrills!

THE NIGHT HAWK!



No. 6: THE MIDNIGHT RAID!

A house in a lonely part of Norfolk. Overhead the Night Hawk; below the terrified Benton Gang—and they know that this is their night of doom!

Impending Peril!

IN the luxurious study of his headquarters, on the desolate East Coast, Silas Benton, Britain's master-criminal and the Night Hawk's deadly foe, paced to and fro, a letter clutched in his writhing fingers.

His dark, sinister face was twitching with mingled fear and fury, and at every other second he glanced murderously at the letter in his hand. The crumpled sheet bore a single line, written in strong, angular characters:

"On the night of the 21st, I shall destroy your gang!"

There was no signature. None was necessary. Only too well Silas Benton knew the writer of that contemptuous warning!

And to-day was the 21st.

Snarling, he turned and pressed a bell. His pale eyes glittered at the man who answered the summons, Otto van Loon, his chief lieutenant.

"Well?" he snapped impatiently.

"Everything O.K., chief!" replied the other gruffly. But his leader's eyes continued to bore into him suspiciously.

"Are the searchlights ready?"

For answer, Van Loon pulled aside the

thick curtain. Although it was a dark night, the grounds of the house were ablaze. Acrodrome floodlights lit up every inch of the lawns and shrubberies, while high in the air great luminous patches flickered in the sky from a searchlight battery on the roof of the house.

Silas Benton grunted. If the Night Hawk attacked—and the gang-leader knew that nothing was more certain—at least he would not do so unseen.

"What else?"

"Every inch of the wall has been wired and electrified!" went on Van Loon quickly. "It will be instant death if he so much as brushes against it! All the men are armed with rifles, as you ordered, and I have issued chlorine bullets to everyone. If we do not bring the cursed dog down, we shall gas him!"

"Yes, yes! Go on, fool!" grated Silas Benton harshly. "What else? The police?"

His lieutenant smiled complacently.

"The local police have been dealt with!" he said significantly. Then he held up his hand. In the ensuing silence, both men heard the faint roar of a powerful airplane. "You see, chief, everything we planned is ready!" went on Van Loon. "That is Pete in the

biplane, patrolling above the grounds, with Morgan and the Italian armed with machine-guns!"

He smiled again; but Silas Benton was still listening to the sound of the 'plane.

"At what height have you ordered Pete to fly?" he demanded abruptly.

"At one thousand feet, as you ordered, chief!" Van Loon replied, looking surprised. Next moment he was cowering in a corner, as his demoniac leader flew at him, raging.

"Dolt! Cur! Imbecile!" foamed Benton. "Two thousand, I told you! Two thousand! Of what use is a 'plane if its enemy can swoop down on it? I tell you, curse you, that Thurston Kyle can climb to any height on those devil-wings!"

Otto van Loon's imploring hands tried in vain to ward off the shower of blows that descended upon him. A crashing punch to the chin scattered his remaining wits, and a savage kick pitched him heavily to the ground. And at that moment, while the two were wasting precious time fighting, Thurston Kyle, the Night Hawk, was swooping down on them from the dark clouds!

The Attack!

SILAS BENTON was a clever and ruthless man—he would not have led the terrible Benton gang otherwise—but he was up against an opponent whose cold, scientific brain and uncanny foresight could beat him at every turn.

Owing to the destruction of his radio, Thurston Kyle knew little or nothing of the diabolical defences that had been thrown up against him; but he knew enough of the fiendish nature of his foes to guess. He, too, had made his preparations for this single-handed death raid on the nerve-centre of the evil organisation; as the rogues were to find out shortly—to their bitter cost!

For the last hour he had been wheeling at terrific speed among the clouds, three thousand feet above his enemies. From time to time a searchlight caught him, but at the pace he was travelling, he was out of its glare in a second. If the eager watchers below saw anything at all, in that brief space of time, they took him for a high-flying gull or other bird.

Of all the gang, only Otto van Loon knew what he was like. Others had seen him; but they had died the next instant. To most of the men, the Night Hawk was a dreadful mystery.

In place of his usual flying helmet, he wore a specially designed headpiece to-night. A pair of goggles protected his eyes, fitted with the powerful lens used by aviators on night-flying operations. With the aid of these, he cut out the glare of the floodlights, and a grim smile curved his firm lips as he examined Silas Benton's defences patiently and thoroughly.

At last he was ready for action! The sight of the airplane flying harmlessly beneath him made him laugh in scorn when he saw the

height at which she was patrolling. It was the same 'plane that had nearly thrown him to death when his foes had trapped him a short time ago. Now, Otto van Loon's blunder had placed it at his mercy!

Closing his vizor, the Night Hawk stretched out his arms and dived. For two thousand feet he dropped like a shooting star, the great steel-feathered wings whistling softly.

From the grounds below came a yell of alarm, the screech of whistles—and a snapping crackle of rifle fire. The gang had seen him. The attack had begun!

Everywhere men leapt into activity. Long before he reached the 'plane, a volley of lead and chlorine bullets were singing venomously through the air.

They were harmless. The marksmen who could have hit that slim black figure hissing through the darkness, with a single bullet, did not live. In arming his men with rifles, Silas Benton had made another serious mistake. One powerful shot-gun would have been worth twenty such weapons.

With all his force, Thurston Kyle struck the 'plane. Instantly her pilot threw her the other way, banking dizzily in an effort to hurl the Bird Man into the air again.

The manœuvre was exactly what the Night Hawk wanted. As the machine roared round, her wing rose, lifting him up so that for a brief second he looked down into her cabin.

Only for a second; but it was sufficient. His right hand gun sputtered, and the pilot collapsed with a bullet squarely between the eyes.

Madly the two machine-gunners tried to bring their weapons to bear, and sweep their terrible foe off the wing with a shower of lead. Before they could do so, however, the dead pilot himself defeated them by lurching across the joystick, and thrusting it forward.

In a flash the 'plane dipped and nose-dived. Headlong it fell, beyond control, straight for the searchlight station on the roof. Behind it swooped the Night Hawk, both revolvers blazing.

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40, FARRINGTON SQUARE, BIRMINGHAM

His bullets went home. Before the 'plane had gone far, a streak of flame gushed from her tank. When at last she crashed, she was ablaze from stem to stern. Smash through the searchlights and roof she went, ramming the screaming men into the rafters to a terrible doom.

The force of the impact sent lighted petrol splashing in all directions. Within a few seconds, Silas Benton's house was flaring like a beacon!

Inside the house, Benton and his lieutenant glared like wild animals at bay. Pandemonium reigned around them; the hideous roar of the flames on the roof turned them livid with fear.

Recovering, the master-criminal wheeled and made a lightning leap for a corner cupboard, threw open the door and staggered inside.

Yelling with rage, Van Loon jumped towards him. Too late! The door slammed in his face, and, as he beat upon it hysterically, the sound of an electric lift descending mocked his ears.

One of the Night Hawk's foes, at least, had thrown up the sponge at the first set-back. Silas Benton had escaped. For that small lift led down into a secret network of passages beneath the house, where not even Thurston Kyle could follow.

A noise of rending masonry made Van Loon look up. In the ceiling, a wide crack had appeared. He saved himself from death only by a frantic dive through the window, just as the whole room caved in entirely.

Outside, terrified men were scuttling like rats from cover to cover, firing feverishly every time they caught a glimpse of two curved wings. The floodlights were still in action, but the rolling smoke and dancing flames of the burning mansion screened the Night Hawk effectively.

Bursting magnificently through the thick billows, he sent a spray of shots into a shrubbery, dropping the riflemen there into quiet, sprawling heaps, and sending others scattering for better shelter.

He watched one of them leap on the high wall in an effort to escape, too blind with fear to remember the death wires covering every inch of it. One choking yell the man gave, then his body arched and stiffened as the terrific current raced through it, shooting him into the air like a stone from a catapult.

Above the yells and shots, the roar of the flames, and the heavy crash of stonework as Silas Benton's mansion crumpled into fiery ruins, the Night Hawk's laugh ran out, shrill and terrible.

A new terror was added to the scene now. Wheeling and diving at breathless speed, Thurston Kyle slashed through his enemies. His long hands, strong as steel talons, picked men out of bushes or caught them as they ran for cover, and the end was always the same.

Pleading vainly for mercy, the miscreants who had terrorised Britain for so long were

hurried through the air. They heard a short, fierce laugh, felt themselves hurtling downwards; then a body struck the electric wires, and another shapeless heap joined those already on the ground.

Staggering to his feet after his jump from the burning house, Otto van Loon glared up just in time to see the Night Hawk whistling down upon him. He made a desperate grab for a rifle on the ground, and fired. The chlorine bullet struck his opponent full on the helmet and exploded at once, but to his horror, the winged avenger came on without stopping.

Firing again, he missed. It was his last chance. As he swept him into the air, Thurston Kyle laughed at him through his respirator. He had anticipated chlorine bullets!

"No mercy this time, Otto van Loon!" he cried exultantly. "Where is Silas Benton?"

"Bolted, you hound!" raved his struggling captive. "He's cheated you—a-ah!"

A body dropped through the air—and Van Loon went to his death.

The Avenger!

FURIOUS at the escape of his chief enemy, the man who had killed his father, the Night Hawk raged like a whirlwind among the others. Escape was impossible. They had cut themselves off by their own electric wall, and, in addition, the floodlights showed them up plainly to those baleful eyes glaring down through the protecting goggles.

Discipline thrown to the winds, weapons useless and discarded, the Benton gang begged for quarter. There was none.

At dead of night, amid the sand-dunes and marshes of the lonely East Coast, the powerful band dissolved into nothing. Where the police of many countries had failed for years, one man, on quivering, sable wings, succeeded.

Some went out like men, firing rapidly at the dim figure flashing through the drifting smoke, until they were either shot or snatched off their feet; but most of them cowered limply in the darkest shadows they could find.

Suddenly, one of the floodlights snapped out. A stray bullet had smashed the lamp. Recovering their fear-dulled wits, some of the gang poured a volley into the others' lights, and in a few seconds every one was destroyed.

They had a chance now—or thought they had—for the grounds were lit only by the unsteady glare of the burning house.

A few of them took to the trees. One man, a long-limbed giant, armed with a knife, hurled himself recklessly from a bough as the Night Hawk flew past, twined an arm of steel round the other's waist, and smashed home a terrible blow, yelling with triumph as he did so.

His note changed next moment to a hoarse bellow of fright, when the knife point glanced harmlessly off the Night Hawk's breast and

snapped. Under that black leather flying-coat, Thurston Kyle wore a suit of finest chain-mail—already that night it had saved his life a score of times.

Bearing him up into the darkness, Kyle fought the giant long and silently. The man was as strong as a lion, and desperate; he clung to the Night Hawk like a leech, straining for a grip on his throat.

Patiently the Night Hawk met him, strength for strength, wearing him down.



Snatching his own hand clear for a moment, he sent in a lightning jab to the giant's uncovered jaw.

The man redoubled his efforts—another blow and another jarred him into unconsciousness. Gradually his arms and legs fell away, his head lolled back. With a last vigorous kick, Thurston Kyle shot clear and swerved away as his senseless foe dropped to the ground.

Of all the great gang, only five now remained, five men who still retained a spark of reason and judgment.

The Night Hawk's fight with the giant gave them one last opportunity, which they were quick to seize, rushing across the grounds towards the big double gates for their lives. With the last few bullets left in their guns, they poured a volley into the insulators that held the wires across the gate, smashing them to atoms.

Under that withering fire, the wires parted.

A gap had been made at last in that terrible wall of death they themselves had erected. Fighting and cursing, the panic-stricken men made a rush—and jammed themselves into a hopeless bunch between the gates. During those frantic seconds the Night Hawk shook off his giant antagonist and came flashing across in pursuit. Hovering above the terrified men, he laughed aloud, and reached



Swooping down, the Night Hawk sent a spray of bullets hissing among his enemies.

for the back of his belt. He, too, held a weapon in reserve!

Sliding the long hand-grenade from its webbing loops, he drew the pin. His long black arm swung over and the bomb whistled downwards, straight into the midst of the struggling group.

A red flame split the night; the harsh thud of the explosion followed—and the last remnant of the Benton gang—disappeared!

Wearily the Night Hawk rose in the air. The terrific speed at which he had attacked, together with the bewildering turns and swoops he had executed, had sapped even his great strength.

Several times he had been hit, and although his wonderful chain-mail had protected him, he had been badly bruised. Gaping holes in his black pinions showed where steel "feathers" had been shot away, and a bullet had half-torn one of the straps.

But he had won! Hanging motionless on outspread wings, he stared down at the havoc beneath. Silas Benton's great mansion was now a pile of smoking ashes; his men—stayed where they had fallen!

Yet the victory was not quite complete! As the Night Hawk flew slowly homewards, a man, who crouched abjectly among the sand-dunes, looked up and saw him. He stared for an instant, then burrowed deeper into the long, coarse grass.

The Benton Gang was shattered. But its leader had escaped!

(Only Silas Benton himself left now—and in next Wednesday's thrilling yarn the Night Hawk completes his grim work of vengeance!)

IT'S NOT TOO LATE for NEW READERS to START this GRAND SERIAL NOW!

THE IRON SPEEDMAN!

By
**ALFRED
EDGAR**

BRAKES !

A lorry stretched across the road—and coming round a bend at ump-teen miles an hour hurtles Jim Ross.

THRILLS !



The Ross-Ryan Eight!

THE chums decided that Sniff had just been trying to save his face in front of the little crowd, and they forgot him as they finished their circuit on the practice car, Jim driving all out until, finally, they rolled, with throttled engine, back to the village.

"Mr. Ryan promised that the racer would be ready this morning," Jim said as he climbed out. "When it comes we'll take it for a gentle run, and to-morrow we'll give it a real test on the roads."

"There'll only be time for one run," Joe reminded him. "Steve says we've got to leave for Ireland the day after to-morrow, to be in time for practice there."

They put the big car away and went in for breakfast. Towards the middle of the morning people began to arrive at the garage, stopping all work. They were waiting to see the new machine arrive.

It came on a lorry, and sitting beside the driver was tubby Mr. Ryan himself. The car was sheeted over, and not until a gang of mechanics had got the machine down to the road in front of the garage was the sheet removed.

Jim and Joe stood side by side while this little ceremony was being performed, and Jim's heart was thumping as he waited to see the Ross-Ryan racer revealed. He knew that Steve had suggested little alterations in the new car's design, and that Mr. Ryan himself had made some improvements in the stream-lining.

When the sheet fell away, Jim and Joe stood spellbound, and everyone in the crowd was dumb.

The sun was shining very brightly down on the warm, sleepy little village, and the crowd was formed of country yokels, men who'd never thought twice about speed machines until young Jim had startled them. But even they realised that they were looking at something wonderful.

The car was painted in green, England's International racing colours. It was like, and yet unlike, the smashed Ross-Eight which it was to replace.

It looked a shade lower. From radiator to sweeping tail its lines were as smooth as those of high-speed motor-boat. The engine cover was heavily slashed with

louvres, and so was the casing above the oil tank placed between the dumb irons.

There was about that quiescent car something which told of leaping speed and terrific power. It was as shapely, as beautiful as a super-fast monoplane, and when Mr. Ryan lifted the engine cover the boys saw an engine which was absolutely spotless, gleaming aluminium, with a supercharger at the front offering promise of almost vicious acceleration.

"Like it, Jim?" Mr. Ryan asked, but he had to wait until Jim had walked all round the car, tried the seating and the controls before he got his answer. Then Jim offered his hand and said:

"Thank you, sir—and I'll either do justice to it in the race, or else I'll break my neck!"

"You'll handle it all right," the engineer answered. "Now we'll start up the engine, and you can try it through the village. Don't go fast, just get the feel of the machine."

Jim took his seat at the wheel and Joe slipped in beside him. Mechanics made the engine ready, then push-started the engine, and Jim turned it on the road to run through the little hamlet.

It's exhaust had a crackle like that of a machine-gun battery in action, and the sound brought everyone to their doors. Jim let the machine run slowly through the village, then he turned it again, and stepped on the throttle pedal.

If there had been a fifteen-inch gun-muzzle wrapped round its tail, and if the gun itself had been loaded with something super in the way of explosives, the racer could not have got away more rapidly.

The leather squab punched Joe in the back and left him gasping. The village trees, the buildings and the telegraph poles seemed to sway and slant towards them as the car ripped off. The triangular village green looked to be no more than a cabbage patch, so fast did they pass it.

They shot at the garage and the waiting crowd under full throttle, and when Jim stepped on the brake pedal, the way in which the car pulled up almost sent Joe headlong through the tiny windscreen in front of him.

Four times Jim went through the village, and everything in the street stayed off the road, leaving it clear for him. When, finally,

he pulled up and Mr. Ryan asked him what he thought about the car now, Jim could not find words to express his appreciation. All he could do was to shake hands with the engineer once more, and then shake hands all over again.

"What I want you to do now," Mr. Ryan said, "is take the car out for a two-hundred-miles' run over pretty rough roads—but not attempting to do any speed. That will bed down everything on the chassis. When you get back, my mechanics will go right over it and tighten up any loose nuts they can find."

"And in the morning I'll do a fifty-mile practice run around the circuit I've been working on here!" Jim said quickly.

"That's the idea! We'll see what the car can really do then—but no speed this afternoon, mind!"

Jim started off with Joe then and there. He did not go over main roads, but along country byways where the surface was uneven. But the car seemed to travel just as smoothly as on perfect tracks.

Jim didn't go fast. Now and again he touched somewhere between eighty and ninety m.p.h., but that was all. It felt to him as though the car could do a hundred and fifty m.p.h. It handled magnificently, and when he arrived back he was full of praise for it.

The waiting mechanics started work at once. It was late afternoon then, and they were still working when a stranger lounged through the door of the bar-room of the village inn. The place was packed out, and the village policeman was there, arranging for volunteers to guard the roads during Jim's first practice run with the new car in the morning.

The stranger heard everything there was to hear. He found the villagers only too ready to describe the car to him and tell him where it was to be seen—but he did not go to look at it.

It was dark when he left and made for a car hidden in the mouth of a lane remote from the cottages. He drove straight to the Ace works. There he found Stargie and Sniff Dix removing all possible marks of identification from a five-ton lorry which had been loaded with scrap metal.

The lorry was the "little surprise" which Sniff had promised to Jim!

HOW THE STORY STARTED.

JIM ROSS, iron-nerved, daring, is a born racing driver. His brother, STEVE ROSS, has just completed building a special racing car known as the Ross Eight, and they take it down to Brooklands for a big race. They are accompanied by JOE COOPER, Jim's chum, who acts as mechanic. Jim realises that his most dangerous rival is LON STARGIE, the crack speedman of Ace Motors. Stargie is unscrupulous, too—as Jim discovers to his cost during the race. Jim is winning, and then the Ace speedman deliberately makes him crash. After the race Jim vows he will get his own back against Stargie in the Irish Grand Prix. The Ross Eight having been wrecked, Mr. Ryan, owner of the Ryan Engineering Company, agrees to build another car for Jim. During a practice run Jim and Joe discover Sniff Dix, Stargie's mechanic, spying upon them. They catch the man. Joe wants to fight him, but Jim lets him go with a caution. As Sniff hurries away he turns and shouts jeeringly: "There's a little surprise coming to you—and it won't be a pleasant one!"

(Now read on.)

The Shadow of Death!

JIM and Joe were up with the first streak of dawn. About two minutes after they got down to the garage, men from the Ryan Engineering works arrived. They had left the new racer all ready for starting, and there was nothing more that they could do, but they came because they wanted to watch the car do its practice run.

Mr. Ryan came with the men, pretty well everybody employed in the local engineering works also arrived. Up and down the village, doors opened and the inhabitants of Woodburn stumbled sleepy-eyed into the chill morning air.

By the time that the sun fairly rose, the village was as busy as on any market day. Motor-cycles were popping and banging everywhere, old cars clattered up and down, finally to sail out of the village overloaded with people—scouts who were to "police" the course and keep everybody off it.

Jim had planned a four-mile circuit, which had a straightaway clear through the village, and with its worst turn at Shawpit Hill. All by-lanes and crossings were being looked after by volunteers, and the way lay through very narrow roads and lanes over which he had already practised.

The village constable, wearing an ordinary jacket above his uniform trousers, was in charge of all the arrangements. The policemen from four near-by villages were also on the spot helping him—all looking very unofficial, and all cheerfully assisting in spite of the fact that Jim reckoned he'd be touching over 100 m.p.h. through the village, and the legal speed limit was still 20 m.p.h.!

Finally, to the cheers of the crowd, the car was pushed out, the engine started up, and Jim appeared with Joe. Both were wearing white racing overalls, crash-helmets and goggles; Jim wasn't smiling, because he was too anxious to make a good show.

Jim slid behind the steering-wheel, and Joe huddled down beside him. Steve stood at the side of the road, a white flag upraised, and beside him stood Mr. Ryan and two mechanics with stop-watches.

"All ready?" called Steve.

Jim nodded and slipped into gear. The flag came down and the car went off with a zooming roar, taking the left-hand fork at the village end and shooting into a narrow, high-hedged lane at a speed which made Joe tuck himself low in the cockpit and peer through his windscreen with only one eye as the first corner came up.

The car ripped round it, throttle wide open, riding as steadily as the old grey practice car had done—but travelling almost half as fast again! Joe sat up when they were round, and he never ducked down again, because he was too occupied in wondering where they would crash.

The howling of the supercharger screeched at him, and the crackle of the exhaust rattled above all else, so that the machine hurtled

along in a whirl of deafening sound. She bounced and jerked on the uneven road, and never for the fraction of a second was the steering-wheel still.

Jim drove with the back of his head rammed against the leather pad behind, his head tilted to one side as he peered past the edge of the windscreen. His jaw was set and his eyes gleamed behind their goggles, while every muscle and nerve in his body was taut and braced for action.

Under his hands the car felt like a thoroughbred horse on the verge of bolting—all shuddering strength and fierce speed. When he changed down and used his brakes for difficult corners, the machine seemed to scream in anger at the delay, diving round the turn like a wheeling bird.

They went down the quarter-mile straight which led to the hairpin corner at the foot of Shawpit Hill at more than 90 m.p.h., to take the deadly corner with the outside wheels shaving the very brink of the ditch—around and away before the watchers there could realise that they had arrived.

And as the streaking car cleared the corner, Joe sighted a figure beside the steep and narrow road on the hill itself—Sniff Dix!

Joe forgot him then as the car whirled on, finally to approach the back end of the village in a long and sweeping curve, with Jim treading the throttle wide open as he yelled:

"Now I'll let her go!"

They entered the village with their pace leaping up and past 100 m.p.h. Windows flew wide as they shot past. Men at garden gates crouched, awed at the car's speed.

Past the green they went, travelling with speed still rising. Past the garage they hurtled, stop-watches clicking and the spectators there too startled at the car's speed to raise a cheer as they watched the Ross-Ryan racer dive like a meteor into the left-hand fork and start the second of the twelve practice circuits.

Each time round, Jim got faster. With his fifth lap he put up a speed which broke all his former efforts—and his fifth lap was his last, because on the sixth circuit, Sniff Dix unwrapped his "little surprise."

The racer took the bend to the quarter-mile straight which led to Shawpit Hill, with the throttle stamped wide open, and Jim straining behind the wheel as he forced the machine on. Where he had done 90 m.p.h. he was now touching above 100 m.p.h., and the green projectile seemed to claw the road beneath its wheels in one sustained, defiant plunge.

It was Joe who saw, still half-masked by bushes, the massive shape of the five-ton lorry, coming down the steep road at the side of the hill. He yelled. Then Jim saw the vehicle.

It was driverless, and in the moment that he sighted it the thing shattered the gate protecting the hillside track, plunging out to the narrow lane before them. It blocked the roadway from side to side.

From the moment Jim saw it, with the broken gate flying to fragments under the lorry's impact, he had hardly one second in which to think; just the merest fraction of time in which to save himself and his chum.

His brain worked at lightning speed, thoughts flashing with the uncanny rapidity which marks the true-born racing driver. He could not get past the lorry—he could not stop—he must chance going through the hedge.

He pulled the car to the side of the road, then swung the steering-wheel hard over, charging the hedge at an angle—shaving the very radiator of the clattering lorry!

The car went into the hedge at unchecked speed. Jim saw its leafy screen dissolve, branches, twigs and leaves flying out. There was a wild jerk as the machine's wheels kicked from the bank and the racer sailed high in the air.

He had a glimpse of the grassy meadow before him, the same as that across which they had chased Sniff Dix. While the car was in mid-air he locked the steering over. He felt the wheels touch the dew-wet, slippery grass, and instantly the machine flung round in a colossal skid.

Jim knew that unless he skidded the machine round and round, it was liable to slash full across the meadow to the road beyond and crash there.

He heaved the wheel the other way, and the car answered, skidding anew. It went across and around the meadow in a series of fierce slides.

Grass and earth flew wide and high, then the cars mad circling eased, and it stopped where ground rose to bushes at the hill's foot, and the green slime of the duckpond shone in the morning sunlight.

Where they had come through the hedge was a round hole, such as a shell might make in a brick wall. Some way beyond it, the heavy lorry had stopped, its momentum spent, and its radiator driven into the hedge farther along.

Head spinning from the fury of their skids, Joe clung in his seat at Jim's side, staring straight up the hill. As he stared, he saw a startled figure break cover.

"There's—Sniff!" Joe gasped the words as he struggled from the car. His head was still spinning, and he pitched full length, then scrambled to his feet and started in pursuit of the Ace man whose craft and evil cunning had brought them both into the shadow of death!

(Make sure you read next Wednesday's exciting instalment of this corking serial, chums. And don't forget that you may be the possessor of a handsome Free Gift next week—look out for your name!)

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THE MUMMY MYSTERY!

(Continued from page 35.)

door at the rear. At the same moment other sounds came from the direction of the shop. The three men sprang to their feet. Then with one accord they uttered exclamations of startled amazement. Figures were pouring into the office—robed figures, with dark-skinned faces. And while Mansell and Mordan were thunderstruck, Harrington was stricken with terror.

"The priests!" he shrieked. "The Priests of Nahlak!"

The robed figures flung themselves upon the three men. Harrington attempted to pull a revolver, but he was stopped. Three of the robed figures leapt upon him and bore him to the floor. Mordan and Mansell were treated in the same way. Ropes were produced and the rascally trio were quickly secured.

"O.K., Chief!" sang out a cheery voice. "We've got 'em like a lot of trussed fowls."

The robes were discarded, and Harrington goggled with amazement and fear. These Priests of Nahlak were Nelson Lee and his cubs!

"You!" panted Harrington, staring at the famous detective. "But I left you in that cavern—"

"To die!" snapped Lee. "I knew that you were desperate, Harrington, so I staged this little comedy. My object was to give you a fright so that you would not be able to use that gun of yours so freely, as you used it to murder those unfortunate Egyptians."

THE coup was a complete success. Lee made a clean sweep, and every one of the Nahlak jewels was recovered. Harrington and Mansell and Mordan were placed under arrest.

It was left for Nelson Lee again to accept Lord Dorrinore's offer of a "lift." Together they flew out to Egypt, and the great detective kept his promise to the High Priest of the Pyramid of Nahlak; he handed over the mummy and the jewels. And there could be no doubt that in that gratified High Priest, Nelson Lee had made a friend for life.

THE END.

(Another magnificent long complete detective yarn featuring Nelson Lee and Nipper next week, entitled "The Vanished Film Star!")

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