

NEW SERIAL
STORY.

GRAND LONG
SCHOOL TALE.

SPLENDID COMIC
PICTURES.



The Magnet ¹⁰/₂ 1

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ARCHIE HOWELL'S RETURN!



THE WRONG "CONQUERING HERO" TURNS UP! THE FIFTH-FORM MASTER ARRIVES
INSTEAD OF ARCHIE HOWELL OF THE REMOVE FORM!

(A stirring scene in the Long Complete School Tale contained in this issue.)



For Next Monday.

"IN BORROWED PLUMES!"

By Frank Richards.

Our next story by your favourite author deals with the exciting adventures of the chums of the Remove when they have to come to grips with Gosling, the school porter. Gossy takes up a new attitude with the juniors of Greyfriars, and as that attitude is Prussian-like, not to say the least of it, Harry Wharton works out a scheme for his downfall.

Billy Bunter, for once, is made use of by the chums of the Remove, and how the Owl of the Remove tackles Gosling

"IN BORROWED PLUMES"

makes one of the funniest stories we have had for many a long time.

ITEMS.

Correspondence is wanted by D. McMurtrie, Frankston P.O., Victoria, Australia; by Miss Irene Crossman, 5, West Luton Place, Cardiff, with readers of eighteen upwards; Gerald Fielding, 7, Pearson Street, Belgrave Road, Darwen, Lancs. Members of the C.C.C. are informed that the club has closed down in consequence of the increased cost of postage. The president will be glad to hear from any of his friends at 12, Tavistock Place, Bloomsbury, W.C.1.

THE RIGHT WAY.

There are better things than grumbling. You may have noted this fascinating fact. Readers of the Companion Papers are not short of wit. You should see the points raised by my correspondents. But enough! To the grumble. There is the silent variety, the noisy one, the raging ditto. All are bad. If you took a nice little stroll from the north of Caledonia, stern and wild, down into Cornwall, and inquired of folks as you went along whether they were satisfied, hardly one of them would admit contentment. Something has gone wrong. Some crazy old ambition went awry, like the best laid schemes of mice and men. What I hope, and believe, is true in the majority of instances, is that behind the growl and the dismal jeremiad may be found, for those who look, a sense that is all very well as it is.

ANOTHER SLANDER.

The tortoise is, I am convinced, a much maligned animal. I met one in a country garden the other day, and its activity showed pretty plainly that the old ideas about slowness are erroneous. The tortoise in question was as lively as a cricket. It fairly scampered down the path in quest of young lettuces. If you picked it up it paddled away with its legs in mid air, while its worthy and

thoughtful-looking cranium kept on popping in and out like a brisk M.P. buzzing round the division lobby. If the hare were only slightly handicapped it would never have indulged in that nap, which, all said and done, was pure swank on its part.

MORE REQUESTS.

Misses Doris Mesley and Ruby Etheridge, 192, Canbury Park Road, Kingston-on-Thames, ask for girl correspondents. Cyril Fleming, P.O. Box 302, Port Elizabeth, wants to hear from chums.

PERSIA.

Sydney H. Cocks, Parkfield Cottage, The Embankment, Great Meads, near Hoylake, Cheshire, asks me to find him a

QUITE CORRECT!



Fatboy: "I say, the Prince of Wales can't use these two fingers."

Thinboy: "By Jove! How's that?"

Fatboy: "Because they belong to me."

A DIFFERENT TALE!



Pier Attendant: "Why, you're a regular little coward! Don't you know that a barking dog never bites?"

Johnny: "Yes, I know that; but I don't know whether the dog knows it."

correspondent in Persia, as he would like to keep in touch with that Eastern land. There is a reason for this wish which will strike a sympathetic chord, for my chum has to mourn the loss of a cousin who lived in Persia and often wrote to him.

A RHODESIAN BOY.

Joseph Izzard, who writes from Salisbury, South Rhodesia, asks me to introduce a character from the great province which is linked up with the personality of the great Cecil J. Rhodes. I will think it over. Perhaps the best way would be to ask J. I. to step right into one of the yarns. I am always delighted to hear from chums in this part of the world.

AMATEUR JOURNALISM.

Mr. John Holliday, 131, Brinkburn Avenue, Gateshead-on-Tyne, is largely interested in amateur journalism, and would be pleased to hear from those who feel as he does regarding this fascinating subject.

FOOTBALL.

I am asked to insert the following: Blundell United Eleven, medium, 17-18, require away matches and home from September 10th.—H. Platt, 10, Blundell Street, Caledonian Road, King's Cross.

THE GREYFRIARS HERALD.

Please note that the bumper number of the "Herald," out September 4th, will contain two very special attractions, in addition to its usual budget of good things.

"For Club and Cup," by Tom North of the Sixth, starts in the "Greyfriars Herald" of the date mentioned. This yarn is a real winner. It shows the struggles of a plucky youngster who takes over the management of a professional football team when everything is going wrong.

The second big draw for this week in the "Greyfriars Herald" is the commencement of a serial called "The Secret of Idol Island." This tale will grip anybody. It deals with a mysterious island in the South Pacific, and I recommend all my chums to make sure of their copies as there is bound to be a rush.

STORIES WANTED.

Stories are asked for by Cecil Lee, 5, Scott Street, West Dyke, Redcar, Yorks, who is running an amateur magazine. E. F. Clements, 4, Alfred Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham, wants contributions for his magazine.

Your Editor



Betty took one of Coker's arms, and Beryl the other, and the unhappy Fifth-former piloted his cousins down to the school gates. The trio set off in the direction of Friardale, and a hilarious crowd of Removites followed. (See Chapter 7.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Not According to Programme!

"WHAT shall we do with ourselves, kidlets?"

It was Bob Cherry of the Remove who spoke.

The Famous Five were assembled in Study No. 1, and they were faced with the problem—the very pleasant problem—of how to spend their half-holiday.

"I suggest the river," said Frank Nugent.

"And I suggest cricket," said Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry turned to Hurree Singh.

"What do you say, Inky? Shall we swimfully swim, or cricketfully play cricket?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I vote fully propose," said the Nabob of Bhanipur, "that we go for the esteemed spinfulness on our bikes."

"In other words, scorch on the jigful jiggers until we are puncturefully punctured?" said Bob Cherry. "No, thanks! It's too hot for biking."

Harry Wharton was about to suggest an alternative to cricket and swimming and cycling when the door of study No. 1 was thrown open, and Billy Bunter burst in like a cyclone.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Buzz off, porpoise!" exclaimed five voices.

And five boots were promptly lifted from the floor, in order to enforce the command.

Billy Bunter backed away towards the door.

"Don't be beasts!" he said. "I've brought news, great news!"

"You're leaving Greyfriars?" suggested Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"What's this great news your babbling about, Bunter?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"An old pal of mine is coming back to Greyfriars."

"What?"

The Famous Five stared blankly at the Owl of the Remove.

"My old pal Archie!" said Bunter impressively.

"Archie!" echoed Johnny Bull.

"Archie who?"

"Archie Howell, of course!"

"My hat!"

"Why, you fat worm!" said Bob Cherry wrathfully. "Howell's no pal of yours! But—but is it a fact that he's coming back?"

Billy Bunter nodded.

"When?"

"This afternoon. I happened to hear the Head telling Quelch that he was arriving by the three-thirty train."

"Oh, good!"

In their delight at the news the juniors quite forgot to take Billy Bunter to task for eavesdropping.

Archie Howell, the brother of Miss Phyllis, of Cliff House, was indeed an old pal, not of Bunter, but of the Famous Five.

Archie had been absent from the school for several weeks. He had been very ill as the result of a terrible experience he had undergone as a new boy. And now that he was fit again, and sound in wind and limb, he was coming back to Greyfriars to take his place in the ranks of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows," said Billy

A Magnificent Long,
Complete School Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co.
at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

Bunter, "I think my pal Archie ought to be given a jolly good reception. He had a very thin time when he was here before. You fellows misunderstood him and persecuted him, and made his life a misery, and I was the only chap who stood by him when he was under a cloud."

"Why, you fat fibber!" roared Johnny Bull. "You were as much against him as anybody!"

"Oh, really——"

"Kick him out!" growled Wharton.

And, before Billy Bunter fully realised what was happening, five boots clumped together on the rear of his plump person, and he was propelled through the doorway and into the passage.

"Yaroooooh! Beasts! Rotters! Archie will make you sit up for this when I tell him you've ill-treated an old pal of his!"

Slam!

The door of Study No. 1 was banged in Billy Bunter's fat face, and the fat junior limped disconsolately away down the passage. He considered that, as a bearer of good tidings, he had been treated very badly indeed.

When Bunter had gone the Famous Five exchanged delighted glances.

"Good old Archie!" said Bob Cherry, with enthusiasm. "I'm awfully glad he's coming back!"

"He'll be jolly useful to the Remove," said Harry Wharton. "With Archie in the eleven, we shall wind up the cricket season in great style."

"Yes, rather!"

Archie Howell was a sterling cricketer, and he was sterling in every other respect as well. And his reappearance in the Remove would be hailed with great joy.

"This solves the problem of what to do with ourselves," said Frank Nugent. "We'll go down to the station and meet Archie."

"Of course!"

"And we'll give him the biggest recep-

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 655.

tion he's ever had in his life!" said Johnny Bull.

"Hear, hear!"

"Thank goodness we're in funds!" said Harry Wharton. "The first thing to be done is to lay in supplies from the tuckshop. Come on!"

The Famous Five adjourned to the little shop in the corner of the Close, and they rapped out orders on such a lavish scale that Mrs. Minble fairly gasped.

There was quite a crowd of Removites in the shop, quaffing ginger-beer. They glanced curiously at Harry Wharton & Co.

"Laying in for a siege, you fellows?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"No," said Bob Cherry. "This is Archie Howell's benefit."

"What? You don't mean to say Howell's coming back?"

Bob nodded.

"He's coming by the three-thirty," he said.

There was a buzz of excitement in the tuckshop.

"This is jolly good news, and no mistake!" said Mark Linley. "I'm ever so glad Howell's coming back."

"Same here!"

"Faith, an' he's a broth of a boy, entirely!" said Micky Desmond.

"The very least we can do," chimed in Peter Todd, "is to go down to the station in force, and give him a big reception."

"Hear, hear!"

Coker, Potter, and Greene, of the Fifth, were perched on stools beside the counter, sampling strawberry ices.

Coker pricked up his ears at the mention of Archie Howell's name.

"I say, you kids," he began, "do I understand—"

"Of course not!" said Bob Cherry. "In order to understand, it's necessary to have an understanding!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker frowned.

"None of your cheek!" he said sharply. "Do I understand that Howell's arriving this afternoon by the three-thirty?"

"That's so, Mighty Chief," said Bob Cherry.

Coker looked very thoughtful. He turned to Potter and Greene, and muttered something to them in a low tone. And then the three Fifth-Formers, leaving their strawberry ices unfinished, strolled out of the tuckshop.

"Now, about this reception, you fellows," said Harry Wharton. "I think we ought to make it a musical one."

"What-ho!"

"There will be rather a difficulty in getting instruments—"

"Not at all," said Squiff. "I've got a prehistoric flute."

"And I know where there's a big drum."

"And I've got a kettle-drum!"

"And I've got a pair of ear-drums!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll take this grub along to the study," said Harry Wharton. "Meanwhile, you fellows can forage around for musical instruments."

Scenes of great activity followed.

Squiff rummaged about in his trunk for the ancient flute, Bolsover major got hold of a big drum, Peter Todd unearthed a kettle-drum, Micky Desmond borrowed a cornet from Hoskins, the musician of the Shell, and Monty Newland appeared on the scene with a pair of cymbals, which he had either begged, borrowed, or stolen.

Fellows who were unable to procure instruments of a more musical kind contented themselves with mouth-organs.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 655.

and others, who did not boast even mouth-organs, fell back upon combs and tissue-paper. One enterprising junior borrowed a dustpan and a poker from Gosling's lodge. Not much melody could be squeezed out of that sort of thing, but the Removites believed in sound rather than melody.

The amateur musicians lined up in the Close, where they paused, in order to tune up.

The din was appalling.

Bolsover major belaboured the big drum; Monty Newland clashed the cymbals; Squiff's ancient flute screeched discordantly; and mouth-organs, tin-whistles, and combs and tissue-paper caused a perfect pandemonium.

The window of the Head's study was thrown open, and Dr. Locke glanced out into the Close.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed. "What is the meaning of this uproar?"

Pom, pom, pom!

Clash, clash, clash!

Ta-ra-ra-pom! Ta-ra-ra-pom!

The Head's question was drowned by the din.

Over a score of juniors, with bulging cheeks, and eyes which seemed to be starting from their sockets, were exercising their lung-power to the fullest advantage.

The mouth-organists seemed to be trying to drown the tin-whistlers; and Bolsover major was walloping the big drum untiringly and unmercifully. As for the comb-and-tissue-paper brigade, they nearly blew their own teeth out, and the teeth of the combs as well.

The Head stopped his ears.

"Good gracious!" he exclaimed. "The boys appear to have taken leave of their senses! Wharton! Cherry! Bolsover! How dare you?"

Harry Wharton made a desperate effort to subdue the musicians, and at last he succeeded.

"What does this mean, Wharton?" thundered the Head.

"Ahem! We—we're tuning up, sir."

"What!"

"We understand that Archie Howell is coming back to Greyfriars, sir," said Peter Todd, "and we're going down to the station to give him a reception."

The Head smiled.

"I am afraid that Howell will hardly appreciate a reception of that sort," he said.

"He'll appreciate music, sir—" began Bob Cherry.

"Doubtless. But that is not music. It is what Shakespeare calls 'sound and fury, signifying nothing.' You boys will kindly refrain from making such a din within the precincts of Greyfriars."

And the Head retired, and closed the window.

"Come along, you fellows," said Harry Wharton. "It's nearly half-past three. We've just got time to get down to the station."

And the procession, headed by Bolsover major, the big-drummer, streamed out of the school gateway.

The musicians attracted quite a lot of attention in the country lanes. Cyclists and pedestrians stared at them in astonishment. And when they reached the station, and crowded on to the little platform, the stationmaster and the porters nearly fell down.

"Train's signalled," remarked Frank Nugent.

"I can hear her coming," said Vernon-Smith. "Get ready, you fellows!"

The juniors put their instruments to their lips as the train swung into view round a curve.

"What are you going to play?" demanded Bolsover major. "The Con-

quering Hero, or 'When Johnny Comes Marching Home'?"

"Both," said Bob Cherry. "We'll have the 'Conquering Hero' first."

The train rumbled to a standstill; and simultaneously the musicians commenced operations.

The din was truly terrific. Passengers leaned out of the carriage windows in amazement, wondering what was going on.

During the proceedings, the juniors kept their eyes open for Archie Howell. But they espied him not.

Only one passenger alighted from the train. This was Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth.

Mr. Prout had been away from Greyfriars for a few days, taking part in an amateur golf tournament. He was now returning, and he at once jumped to the conclusion that this noisy reception was being held in his honour.

The master of the Fifth blushed, and, after standing stock-still for a moment, he bowed his acknowledgments to the musicians.

"My boys—" he began.

Ta-ra-ra-pom! Ta-ra-ra-pom!

Crash! Crash!

"My boys—my dear boys—"

Pom! Pom! Pom!

The Removites puffed and blew until they were breathless. They played "The Conquering Hero," and "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," and then a selection from each. And by this time they were exhausted.

Mr. Prout felt quite convinced that he—and no other—was the conquering hero. He had won the open golf tournament at Eastward Ho, and he imagined that Harry Wharton & Co. had heard of his triumph, and had decided to give him a great reception.

"My boys," said Mr. Prout, "I am greatly touched—"

"I suspected it all along!" murmured Bob Cherry, tapping his forehead.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am greatly touched by this demonstration on my behalf! I feel very flattered to think that you have come down to the station in force to welcome me back—"

"But we haven't, sir!" said Harry Wharton.

"What!"

"It wasn't you that we came to meet, sir—"

"Bless my soul!"

"It was Archie Howell."

Mr. Prout frowned, and the juniors chuckled.

"Had you not heard of my great victory on the links?" demanded the master of the Fifth.

"No, sir," said Vernon-Smith, in surprise. "You don't mean to say you won?"

"I defeated Tom Niblick, the Eastward Ho amateur, at the thirty-seventh hole."

"Did he play blindfolded, and with a broken wrist, sir?" inquired Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You will take a hundred lines, Field, for impertinence!" snapped Mr. Prout.

And, feeling very humiliated at the discovery that he was not the conquering hero, after all, the master of the Fifth stamped out of the station.

The train moved on; but there was no sign of Archie Howell.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged dismayed glances.

"He hasn't turned up," said Johnny Bull.

"P'raps Bunter was telling whoppers, as usual?" said Nugent.

Wharton shook his head.

"Archie's expected all right," he said.



Progress was difficult, for the would-be rescuer was impeded by his heavy boots, his frock coat, and his striped trousers. "Quick! Quick!" panted Beryl. "I'm going under for the third time!" (See Chapter 8.)

"We told the Head we were going to meet him—"

"And the Head would have told us if he wasn't coming," said Tom Brown.

"Exactly!"

"Shall we wait for the next train?" suggested Peter Todd.

"Not worth it," said Wharton.

"There isn't another train till five. We'd better get back to the school."

And the Remove musicians, having expended their energy in vain, tramped back to Greyfriars in gloomy silence, wondering what had become of Archie Howell.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

First in the Field!

COKER of the Fifth chuckled as he led Potter and Greene out of the tuckshop.

"We shall steal a march on those Remove fags this time!" he said.

"How?" asked Potter.

"We'll pop over to Courtfield, and intercept the train there, and bring Howell back to Greyfriars, while Wharton & Co. are hanging about on Friardale Station, waiting for him."

"Not a bad wheeze," said Greene. "But why should we go out of our way to meet this kid Howell?"

"He's nothing to us," said Potter. "It would be different if he was still in the Fifth. But he's in the Remove now.

and I don't see why we should fag all the way over to Courtfield to meet him."

"You don't see anything, George Potter!" said Coker witheringly.

"You're as blind as a bat, and as dense as a donkey!"

"Look here—"

"I'm anxious to be on the best of terms with young Howell," Coker went on.

"Why?" asked Potter and Greene together.

"Because he—he's such an awfully good sort," said Coker, rather vaguely.

That was not Coker's real reason, of course. The truth of the matter was, that he was keenly desirous of getting into the good graces of Phyllis Howell of Cliff House. And one of the surest ways of becoming friendly with Miss Phyllis was to win the friendship of her brother.

In the past Coker had pressed his attentions upon Miss Phyllis, and he had met with nothing but rebuffs and rebukes.

The Cliff House girl seemed to prefer the company of Harry Wharton & Co. to the society of Coker. And the Removes declared that this showed very good taste on Miss Phyllis' part.

But Coker was not easily discouraged. He meant to win the esteem of Phyllis Howell, if it took him whole terms to do so. And he resolved to make use of Archie as a means to the end.

"Dashed if I'm keen on going to Courtfield!" said Potter.

"Neither am I!" said Greene. "Coker can go by himself!"

"Oh, all right!" said Coker. "I might mention that I'm standing a big feed in my study this afternoon; and if you fellows don't choose to come with me to Courtfield, you jolly well won't come to the feed!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Potter and Greene knew that when Coker entertained, he did so on a lavish scale. And they had no wish to take a back seat in the little celebration which Coker had arranged for that afternoon.

"We'll come, old man!" said Greene hurriedly.

"Yes, rather!" said Potter.

Coker grinned.

"Good!" he said. "I'll fetch my motor-bike—"

"You jolly well won't!" said Potter, with a shudder.

"Eh?"

"I'll never ride in your side-car again—not for all the wealth of the Indies!" declared Potter, with resolution.

"And I'll never ride again on the carrier at the back!" said Greene, with equal determination. "The last time I went out with you, Coker, I was shot into a prickly hedge—"

"That's nothing!" said Coker. "You might have gone under a steam-roller!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 655.

"I know. And I'm not prepared to run the risk again."

"I'm a jolly careful rider——"

"That farmer didn't seem to think so when you ran over a couple of his prize bantams!" growled Potter.

"Look here——"

"We'll come to Courtfield," said Greene. "But only on condition that we walk."

Coker, however, didn't see the fun of walking when he was the proud possessor of a motor-bike. He went round to the bicycle-shed, and reappeared shortly afterwards pushing his machine.

Potter and Greene promptly skipped aside out of the danger-zone.

"You're not coming?" said Coker.

"No!"

"Then I'll go alone!"

But Coker was unable to carry out his threat, for the simple reason that the motor-bike refused to budge.

Coker coaxed it; he wooed it with honeyed words; he pulled every sort of lever in the hope that the machine would leap forward. But it remained inanimate.

"Something gone wrong with the works!" chuckled Potter.

And Greene nudged his chum delightedly.

Coker grew very red in the face. He stopped coaxing the obstinate machine, and he barked at it instead.

But that motor-bike was impervious alike to threats and cajolings. It remained motionless. And, finally, Coker was compelled to give it up. He restored the machine to the shed, and set out on foot with Potter and Greene.

"I had a fiver this morning from my Aunt Judy," said Coker, when the trio reached the familiar High Street of Courtfield. "I therefore consider that it's incumbent——"

"Good word!" murmured Potter.

"Ass! I consider that it's incumbent upon us to do the thing in style. We'll hire a car from the garage to take Howell back to Greyfriars."

"My hat!"

Coker was always in a generous mood when he had a remittance from his devoted aunt. As his study-mates frequently observed, his generosity was far in excess of his personal beauty.

The car was duly hired, and the three Fifth-Formers drove up in style to the station.

They were only just in time.

The local train, which was due to arrive at Friardale at three-thirty, was already in, and a number of passengers were in the act of boarding it. One of them was a slim, good-looking youth in Etons.

"Howell!" ejaculated Coker.

Archie turned at the mention of his name. His face lighted up when he caught sight of the Greyfriars fellows. He would have preferred to see Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove. At the same time he appreciated the kindness of the Fifth-Formers in coming to meet him.

"Hallo, dear boys!" he said genially. "Welcome home, kid!" said Coker impressively.

Archie Howell shook hands all round. "Very decent of you fellows to come an' meet me," he said.

"Not at all!" said Coker. "Car's waiting outside."

"By Jove! You're doin' things in style!"

"I always do," said Coker. "Got any luggage?"

"Yes. That gladstone-bag's mine."

Coker pounced upon the bag, and conveyed it to the waiting car. The others followed.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 655.

It was a very novel experience for a Removite to be waited on hand and foot, so to speak, by a Fifth-Former.

But Archie Howell was not dense. He understood Coker's motives perfectly. It was because he happened to be Phyllis Howell's brother that Coker was putting himself out like this.

"Where to, sir?" asked the driver.

"Greyfriars, of course!" said Coker.

The car bounded forward, and it was soon speeding along the country lanes.

"Awfully glad to see you back, kid!" said Coker, beaming at Archie Howell.

"How are you feeling?"

"Fit as a fiddle, begad!"

"Hungry?"

"I could eat a donkey's hind-leg off!"

"That's good! There's a topping spread waiting for you at Greyfriars. I've arranged for a couple of fags to get the grub ready."

"Your generosity, old man, is over-powerin'!" murmured Archie.

As the car swung through the gateway of Greyfriars a great shout went up, and there was quite a stampede in the Close.

Harry Wharton & Co. had just returned from their fruitless visit to Friardale station, and they were amazed to see Archie Howell on board the car.

"Here he is!"

"Good old Archie!"

"Hurrah!"

"Strike up 'The Conquering Hero,' you fellows!" roared Bob Cherry.

The juniors still had their instruments, and, despite the Head's warning, they broke into a most unearthly din.

Doctor Locke again opened his window, and glanced out; but, seeing Archie Howell, he merely smiled and withdrew. He knew that if anybody deserved a rousing reception it was Archie.

The commotion in the Close was terrific. The juniors were supposed to be rendering "The Conquering Hero," but it sounded more like a combination of "Rule, Britannia," "There's a Tramp, Tramp, Tramping on the Highway," and the "Robbers' March" from "Chu Chin Chow."

Archie Howell smiled at the demonstrators. And Coker of the Fifth glared at them.

"Stop that row, you cheeky fags!"

Pom, pom, pom!

"Stop it, I say!"

Crash, crash! Ta-ra-ra-pom!

The musicians were fairly wound up, and they did not desist until they were almost breathless. Then they made a combined rush at Archie Howell.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Welcome back, Archie!"

"We went down to the station to meet you, old chap," said Harry Wharton. "But these bounders"—the speaker pointed to Coker & Co.—"must have stolen a march on us, and met you at Courtfield."

"Stand back, you young cubs!" roared Coker. "I'm taking Howell along to my study!"

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"Go and eat coke!"

And then a fierce struggle began—a struggle for the possession of Archie Howell.

Harry Wharton & Co. made strenuous efforts to drag Archie from the car, and Coker & Co. made equally strenuous efforts to keep him in it. The result was that the unfortunate Archie was nearly torn limb from limb.

But numbers began to tell. And after a fierce tussle the Removites won the day. They dragged Archie down from the car, and then Harry Wharton and

Bob Cherry swung him up on to their shoulders.

"Hurrah!"

"We've got him!"

"Bring him along!"

"This is what I call a movin' demonstration!" panted Archie, as he was borne into the building. "Movin' in more senses than one!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker & Co. were simply furious. They had gone to the trouble of going over to Courtfield to meet Archie Howell. They had hired a car to bring him back to Greyfriars. And, now that he was back, he had been appropriated by his own Form-fellows.

"After them!" shouted Coker.

But the task of reclaiming Archie Howell was a hopeless one. It meant fighting a whole army of Removites.

And so Coker & Co. were reluctantly compelled to admit defeat. And they had the mortification of seeing Archie Howell borne shoulder-high to Study No. 1 in the Remove-passageway.

The journey to Courtfield, the hiring of the car, the preparations for a magnificent spread in Coker's study—all were in vain!

And, with feelings too deep for words, the Fifth-Formers staggered away to their own quarters.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Chance of a Lifetime!

"IT'S good to be back!"

Archie Howell uttered the words with a sigh of contentment.

He had been installed in the place of honour in Study No. 1, and, glancing round, he beheld a sea of friendly faces. Glad though he was to be back at Greyfriars, back in his old place in the Remove, Harry Wharton & Co. were even more glad. They had treated Archie Howell none too kindly in the past, and they were very anxious to make amends.

"What's been happenin' at Greyfriars since I left?" inquired Archie.

"Nothing—barring the usual stunts and japes and things," said Bob Cherry. "The Remove have kept their end up, and come out top dogs every time, of course."

"Oh, of course!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Been winnin' all your cricket-matches?" asked Archie.

"We've had one or two lickings," said Harry Wharton. "But now that you're back, Archie, we shall finish the season in style."

"Yes, rather!"

There was a tap on the door of the study.

"Come in, fathead!" sang out Bob Cherry.

The door opened, admitting Phyllis Howell, Marjorie Hazeldene, and Clara Trevlyn, of Cliff House.

"Sorry!" stuttered Bob Cherry, colouring to the roots of his hair. "I—I didn't know——"

"That's all right!" said Phyllis Howell cheerfully.

And then she shook hands cordially with her brother.

"Awfully glad you're back again, Archie!"

"So am I, dear gal!"

"Had a good time at home?"

"Not bad. But I was fed up long before the finish. Couldn't bear to be slackin' an' potterin' about. Give me the strenuous life, every time!"

"Make room for the ladies, there!" said Harry Wharton.

Bob Cherry promptly vacated his chair,



"I really must be going in now," said Miss Phyllis. "It's fearfully late. Thanks so much for entertaining me. Good-night!" "I say, Miss Phyllis——" began Coker. But Miss Phyllis was gone. (See Chapter 4.)

and sat on the coal-scuttle, while Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull perched themselves on the window-sill.

The girls took the seats which the juniors had vacated, and the repast was soon in full swing.

The Famous Five had spared no pains to make the banquet a success. There was a rabbit-pie, there were cakes and pastries of every description, strawberries and cream in abundance; and Hurree Singh was despatched to the tuckshop for some vanilla ices.

"This is simply top-hole!" murmured Archie Howell. "The last meal I had was at Charin' Cross, where I sampled a ham-sandwich that came out of the Ark with Noah."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows——"

A fat face, adorned with a pair of spectacles, appeared in the doorway.

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

The Owl of the Remove cast longing eyes at the good things on the table, and his mouth fairly watered.

"Oh, really——" he said. "I'm sure my old pal Archie would like me to have a whack!"

"Certainly!" said Archie. "Hand me a cricket-stump, somebody!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton picked up a loaf of bread, with the intention of bowling Billy Bunter through the doorway like a fat skittle. But Archie Howell intervened.

"Let him stay," he said. "This is a

time of peace on earth and goodwill towards prize porkers!"

So Bunter stayed. There was no room for him at the table, but he wedged himself on the window-sill, between Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull; and he made a rapid inroad into the rabbit-pie.

The meal progressed merrily. But there were numerous interruptions. Fellows kept coming in to say how pleased they were to see Archie Howell back again in the Remove. And many of them lingered, in the hope of being invited to the feed. The decent fellows were allowed to remain, there being ample tuck to go round; and the cads were promptly shown the way out. Study No. 1 was soon packed.

Vernon-Smith and Squiff, and Tom Brown, Peter Todd and Dick Penfold and Monty Newland, and Dick Russell, Ogilvy, and Micky Desmond squeezed themselves into the apartment.

Archie Howell grinned.

"Owin' to considerable pressure on our space, as an editor would say I'm afraid you fellows sittin' on the window-sill will have to dangle your legs out into the Close!" he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "isn't this rabbit-pie ripping?"

"As none of us have sampled it, barring you, we're not in a position to say!" growled Johnny Bull.

The Cliff House girls surveyed Billy Bunter in some concern.

"Why, he's eaten the whole of that pie!" said Marjorie Hazeldene, aghast.

"I'm sure he'll burst!" said Clara Trevlyn.

"I haven't really started yet," said Bunter.

"Great Scott!"

"Pass the ham, and the bread-and-butter, and the cruet, and the mustard pickles!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"His appetite is bigger than his sister Bessie's," said Phyllis Howell. "And that's saying a good deal!"

There was a tramping of feet in the passage.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! More visitors!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

The door was thrown open with startling suddenness, and Coker, Potter, and Greene, of the Fifth, came charging into the study like infuriated bulls.

Coker had arranged to launch a surprise attack on the juniors, in the hope of being able to capture Archie Howell, and pilot him away to the Fifth Form quarters.

But when he caught sight of the Cliff House girls Coker stopped dead. So did Potter and Greene.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Coker, in dismay. "I—we—we didn't know there were any ladies present!"

"Carry on!" said Phyllis Howell cheerfully. "Never mind us!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 655.

"Ahem! We—we came along to—to welcome your brother back to the fold, Miss Phyllis."

"Queer sort of welcome when you come charging into the study like a herd of buffaloes!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"You're carrying cricket-stumps, too," observed Frank Nugent. "Is that part of the welcome?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker turned to Archie Howell.

"Will you come along to my study?" he asked.

"I'm quite comfy here, thanks, dear boy."

"Will you come, Miss Phyllis?"

"What ever for?" exclaimed Phyllis.

"Just to—to have a friendly jaw, you know!"

But Phyllis declined.

"I say, Coker, I'll come along!" said Billy Bunter. "There's no grub left here, and I know you've laid in supplies in your study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Needless to state, Coker did not close with Bunter's kind offer.

Realising the impossibility of persuading either Archie or Phyllis to accompany him, the Fifth-Former retired from the study with Potter and Greene.

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" sang out Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker felt furious. But he could not vent his fury in the presence of the Cliff House girls. He scowled savagely as he went back to his own quarters with Potter and Greene.

"Those fags are entertaining Miss Phyllis again!" he exclaimed. "I can never get a look in. Why Miss Phyllis should always go with Wharton & Co., when there's a good-looking fellow ready and willing to entertain her, beats me altogether!"

"Who's the good-looking fellow?" inquired Potter.

"Me, of course!"

"You! You've got the cheek to call yourself good-looking? Why, you've got a face like a grilled kipper!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Greene.

"If I had a face like yours, Horace," continued Potter, "I'd take it to the nearest pawnshop—"

Biff!

Unable to contain himself any longer, Coker hit out. He floored the humorous Potter with a drive to the jaw, and Potter felt anything but humorous as he measured his length in the passage.

Greene backed away in alarm, but there was no escape for him. Coker smote him with great violence on the nose, and Greene rolled over on top of Potter.

Leaving his study-mates to sort themselves out, Coker strode on.

He was in a savage temper. Everything seemed to have gone wrong. He had made elaborate arrangements to entertain Archie Howell, and Harry Wharton & Co. had nipped the scheme in the bud.

Then, when Coker had asked Archie and Phyllis, in turn, to come along to his study, both had declined.

Coker felt desperately anxious to chum up with Phyllis, and he felt sure that if he could only get her alone, when those cheeky fags were out of the way, he would be able to convince her what a really fine fellow he was.

But how could he get Phyllis to himself, even for five minutes? Every time he saw her she had a bodyguard of about a dozen fellows with her.

Coker went into his study. The table was laden with good things, in honour of Archie Howell. But Archie was being

well looked after by the Remove, and Coker's generosity was wasted.

"I shall have to get rid of this stuff somehow!" growled Coker.

He got rid of it easily enough. Blandell and Bland and Fitzgerald, and half a dozen other Fifth-Formers, were only too willing to assist Coker in disposing of the good things. And Potter and Greene, having recovered from their study-mate's onslaught, came and joined in.

Coker himself ate little. He was badly out of sorts. And when the feed was half-way through he went for a stroll in the Close.

As he paced to and fro he suddenly caught sight of Phyllis Howell. She was walking towards the school gates, and she was alone!

Coker's heart leapt. He was beside the Cliff House girl in an instant.

"Where are the others, Miss Phyllis?" he asked.

"They've gone!"

"Gone!"

"Yes. There's been a misunderstanding. I went round to the sanatorium, to have a chat with the matron, and Wharton and the others evidently thought I'd gone back to Cliff House. So they've followed on, as they think, with Marjorie and Clara."

"My hat!"

"So I must resign myself to going back alone," said Phyllis, with a smile.

"Alone?" Coker almost shouted the word. "No jolly fear! I'll see you to Cliff House, Miss Phyllis."

The chance was too good to be missed, and Coker's rugged face fairly glowed with delight. At last he had an opportunity of walking and talking with Miss Phyllis, and of proving to her what an entertaining fellow he was.

Phyllis hesitated. She had no desire whatever for Coker's company. On the other hand, she didn't want to hurt his feelings.

"Thanks awfully!" she said. "It's very good of you to offer to take me back!"

"Not at all!" said Coker.

And he strutted along beside Miss Phyllis, feeling as proud as a peacock, and congratulating himself that his great chance had come at last—his chance of favourably impressing Archie Howell's sister, and thereby winning her lasting friendship!



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THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Coker, the Squire of Dames!

"THE moon has raised her lamp above!" said Coker poetically.

"Eh?"

"The flaming orb illumines the heavens!"

Phyllis Howell gazed at her companion with some concern.

"Are you feeling quite well?" she asked.

"Quite!" said Coker. "Why?"

"Well, you say such queer things!"

"Do I, Miss Phyllis? The fact is I'm feeling poetical this evening. When I'm walking with you something seems to be sticking in my soul."

"Hadn't you better take your boot off, then?"

"I don't mean the sole of my boot. I mean my soul."

And Coker tapped his chest in a vague sort of way, and raised his eyes with a rapturous expression.

"I'm sure you're not well," said Phyllis. "It must have been the heat of the sun. Hadn't you better see a doctor?"

Coker did not seem to hear that question.

"He wandered in the fields at eventide," he quoted softly.

"It seems to me that you're wandering in your mind!" she said. "For goodness' sake drop this poetical piffle, and talk sensibly! Tell me about your achievements on the cricket-field—if any!"

The sarcasm of his fair companion was quite wasted upon Horace Coker. He started talking about his own achievements and abilities; and once he got wound up on that topic there was no stopping him.

"I'm a top-hole cricketer, Miss Phyllis," he said. "It runs in the family, you know. My grandfather, Baron Coker of Cokerville, played for Dudshire, and I've inherited all his talents."

"I've never seen you play for Greyfriars," said Phyllis.

Coker frowned.

"That's Wingate's fault," he said. "Wingate's a chopheaded chump! He doesn't know a good player when he sees one. Over and over again I've offered to run the first eleven; but Wingate won't have any. He tells me to keep off the grass."

Phyllis chuckled softly.

"The truth of the matter is that Wingate's jealous of me," Coker went on.

"Jealous! Why?"

"Because I'm such a popular man with the ladies, you know."

"Oh!"

"Regular ladies' man I am, no mistake! When I was home for the summer vac I had all my work cut out to keep the girls away. It was like warding off mosquitoes!"

"Really!"

"Yes. I was the centre of attraction," said Coker. "I heard one girl say that I looked like a young Greek god."

"Was she blind?" murmured Phyllis.

"Nunno. She really meant it. And another girl said I was an Adonis, whatever that is."

"Then you must have been the only fellow in the neighbourhood," said Phyllis, laughing. "I say, don't walk too fast! I can't keep up with that tremendous stride of yours."

Coker slackened his pace, and then, for the first time, Phyllis became aware of the fact that they were proceeding, not towards Cliff House, but in the direction of Friardale. She stopped short in the roadway.

"What's wrong, Miss Phyllis?" inquired Coker.

"We're going towards the village——"

"Exactly!"

"But——"

"I'm going to take you to the picture-palace, you see," said Coker.

"What!"

"Now that I've got you to myself for a time, I mean to make the most of it. It will be ripping fun in the sixpenny seats."

Phyllis glanced at her watch.

"It's getting late," she demurred.

"Never mind! I'll see you back to Cliff House afterwards."

Phyllis was not at all keen on going to the pictures. She had been the night before with Marjorie and Clara, and as there was no change of programme it would mean seeing the same films over again.

But Coker was so much in earnest, and he would have been so disappointed at a refusal, that Phyllis consented to accompany him, just for an hour.

Coker escorted the Cliff House girl into the cinema, and Phyllis was soon bored to tears. She knew exactly what was coming as she watched the films. She knew that the hero was going to marry the millionaire's daughter, and that the villains—there were about a dozen of them—were going to get it in the neck. She knew what the next film would be, and the film after that, and she fervently wished that she had not agreed to come.

As for Coker, he didn't see a single film. He was absorbed in the contemplation of his fair companion.

Phyllis Howell was indeed a beautiful girl, in an athletic sort of way, and Coker was carried off his feet by her attractions.

An hour passed, and then, to Phyllis Howell's relief, and to Coker's dismay, the show came to an end.

The tired-looking girl at the piano thumped out the National Anthem, and the audience streamed out of the building.

In the bright moonlight, Coker accompanied Phyllis Howell to Cliff House.

They paused when they reached the gateway of the girls' school.

Coker told himself that he had made a very good impression on Miss Phyllis, and that hereafter she would be pining for his company.

"When shall we meet again, Miss Phyllis?" he said. "To-morrow afternoon?"

"I'm playing tennis to-morrow afternoon," said Phyllis hastily.

"Friday afternoon, then?"

"I shall be busy then, writing stuff for the 'Cliff House Weekly.'"

"Can I come over and give you a hand?" said Coker eagerly. "I'm a topping poet, you know!"

"I'm afraid the editress of the 'Weekly' doesn't require any outside help."

"What about Saturday afternoon?" said Coker.

Phyllis did not seem to hear that question.

"I really must be going in now," she said. "It's fearfully late. Thanks so much for entertaining me. Good-night!"

"I say, Miss Phyllis——" began Coker.

But Phyllis was gone.

The Fifth-Former turned slowly on his heels and walked back to Greyfriars.

The hour was late. It was past locking-up time, and Coker had no late pass. He hoped to get into the school unobserved, and he succeeded—up to a point. He clambered over the school wall, and made his way across the Close without mishap. But as he was ascending the stairs to the

Fifth Form dormitory he encountered the very last person he wished to see at that moment—Mr. Prout.

"Coker!" thundered the master of the Fifth.

"Yessir?"

"You are late—excessively late!"

Coker mumbled something to the effect that his watch was erratic.

"I will hear no excuses!" snapped Mr. Prout. "For coming in late and for attempting to avoid detection you will take five hundred lines!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And I shall expect the imposition to be completed and handed to me by six o'clock to-morrow evening."

So saying, Mr. Prout passed on down the stairs, and Coker proceeded to the dormitory, reflecting that it was not all honey being a squire of dames!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Slight Mistake!

"HOW do I write 'Phyllis'?" inquired Coker. "With a capital 'F' or a small one?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" cackled Potter and Greene.

Coker was seated in the armchair in his study with his huge feet resting on the table. A writing-pad was on his knee, and his brows were corrugated in thought. He glared at his amused study-mates.

"What are you fellows cackling at?" he demanded.

"You!" said Potter frankly.

"You're too funny for words, Horace, old man!" gurgled Greene.

"Funny, am I?" hooted Coker. "Just because I ask you if 'Phyllis' begins with a capital 'F' or a small one?"

"Ass!" said Potter. "It doesn't begin with an 'F' at all!"

"What!"

"It starts with a 'P,' of course!"

Coker smiled scornfully.

"You've got lots to learn, George Potter," he said. "Your spelling's frightfully feeble. You can't even spell a name that's in everyday use!"

"Why, you—you——"

"F-i-l-l-i-s spells Phyllis," said Coker. "But I wasn't quite sure whether it was a capital 'F' or a small one."

"Oh, you're potty!" said Greene, in disgust.

"Eh?"

"You've got bats in your belfry!" said Potter.

Coker frowned.

"If I was as potty as you, Potter, and as green as Greene, I should be a candidate for Colney Hatch!" he said. "And if it wasn't for the fact that I'm composing an important poem I'd wade in and slaughter the pair of you!"

Potter and Greene regarded their study-mate more in sorrow than in anger.

"You don't meant to say you're going to send some more of your silly piffle to Miss Phyllis?" exclaimed Greene.

"It isn't piffle!" said Coker warmly.

"It's jolly good stuff—worthy of Byron at this best. Just listen to the opening lines——"

"Mercy!" moaned Potter.

"Spare us!" gasped Greene.

But Coker showed no consideration for the feelings of his study-mates. And he started to recite:

"Sweet Phyllis of the flowing locks,
You move my soul to sudden shocks.
We all agree you're simply 'IT';
Your beauty gives a chap a fit!"

"Help!" murmured Potter.

"Talk about doubtful compliments!" said Greene. "I don't think Miss Phyllis will be best pleased when she's told that her beauty gives a chap a fit!"

"I mean a fit of rapture," said Coker.

"Oh!"

"And what price the sudden shocks?" said Potter.

"I mean shocks of delight."

"Well, I should advise you to make it a bit more explicit, unless you want a libel action brought against you."

"I can see what it is, George Potter," said Coker; "you're jealous of my poetic art."

"Jealous!" hooted Potter. "Why, you—you burbling imbecile——"

"I'll read the second verse——" began Coker.

"You can jolly well read it to yourself, then!" said Greene. "I'm off!"

"Same here!" said Potter.

And Coker's study-mates hurriedly fled from the study. They could put up with a great deal from Horace Coker, but when he started to declaim his so-called poetry they felt that the limit of human endurance had been reached.

"Silly asses!" growled Coker, when Potter and Greene had taken their departure. "Their souls can't rise to this sort of thing!"

And he went on scribbling.

Dinner was over at Greyfriars, and Coker should by rights have been engaged upon the imposition which Mr. Prout had awarded him overnight. But he was so engrossed in the poem he was composing for Phyllis Howell's benefit that he had forgotten all about the im-

Mr. Prout, however, had not forgotten. Half an hour later, just as Coker had put the finishing touches to his tender effusion, the master of the Fifth glanced into the study.

"I trust, Coker," he said, "that you are making good progress with the imposition I gave you?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Mr. Prout looked grim.

"Am I to understand, Coker, that you have not yet started on the task?"

"Not yet, sir."

"I warn you that if those lines are not handed in to me by the specified time—six o'clock—there will be serious trouble!" said Mr. Prout.

And he swept away.

When the Form-master had retired Coker commenced the task which had hitherto slipped his memory. He covered sheet after sheet of im-

pot, paper with his spider-like scrawl. But before he was half-way through the bell rang for afternoon lessons.

"It's going to be a race against time," muttered Coker. "If I don't get those confounded lines finished by six, I shall be fairly in the soup!"

As soon as lessons were over, he returned to his task.

Potter and Greene came into the study to see about tea. Coker promptly showed them the way out.

"I'm busy!" he growled. "Make yourselves scarce until six o'clock!"

And he returned to his task with fresh vigour.

It was, indeed, a race against Time. And it looked as though Time would win. But Coker scribbled away as if for a wager, and he completed the lines just as the first stroke of six sounded from the clock tower.

There was a tap on the door of the study, and the Famous Five and Archie Howell looked in.

"Look here, Coker," said Bob Cherry,

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 655.

"we want to know what you mean by taking Miss Phyllis out last night?"

"Awful cheek, I call it!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Colossal cheek!" chimed in Archie Howell. "What d'you mean by it, Coker?"

Coker seemed neither to hear nor heed. He hastily pinned together several sheets of impot, paper and rushed pell-mell out of the study, bowling over Frank Nugent and Hurree Singh en route.

"Ow!"

"Oh!"

By the time the victims of the collision had scrambled to their feet, Coker was gone. He disappeared along the passage, and burst breathlessly into Mr. Prout's study.

"Ah! You are just in time, Coker," said the master of the Fifth. "You have completed your imposition?"

"Yes, sir."

"Let me see it."

Coker handed over the sheets of impot, paper, and Mr. Prout frowned as he glanced at them. His frown deepened. He grew purple in the face. He choked, he spluttered, and he appeared to be on the verge of an apoplectic fit.

Coker stared at his Form-master in amazement. He was aware that his handwriting was not exactly of the copy-book variety. But that was no reason why Mr. Prout should look so murderous.

"Nothing wrong, sir I hope?" ventured Coker.

Mr. Prout jumped to his feet.

"Nothing wrong!" he repeated, in tones of thunder. "Your impertinence, Coker, exceeds all bounds! Look—look at this!"

Coker's eyes nearly goggled out of his head as he glanced over Mr. Prout's shoulder. For this was what he saw:

"Sweet Phillis of the flowing lox,
You move my sole to sudden shox.
We all agree you're simply 'IT':
Yore bewty gives a chap a fit!"

"Mum-mum-my hat!" gasped Coker, in dismay.

He realised what had happened. In his frantic haste, he had pinned together and brought to Mr. Prout's study the poem that he had intended for Phyllis Howell! And he had left his impot, behind.

"Boy!" Mr. Prout's tone was like the detonation of a bomb. "How dare you play such a preposterous prank on your Form-master? How dare you, I repeat?"

"I—I— It was all a mistake, sir—"

"What is this piffle—this balderdash?"

"It's a poem, sir—"

"A what?" gasped Mr. Prout.

"A set of verses, sir, addressed to Miss Howell, of Cliff House. They somehow got mixed up with my impot, and I brought them along by mistake."

"Is this intended to be an insulting poem, Coker?"

"Nunno, sir—a flattering one!"

"I am afraid the recipient will hardly regard it as such," said Mr. Prout drily. "She will not like to be informed that her beauty sends an individual into a fit."

"Ahem! That means a fit of rapture, sir."

"I am begining to suspect, Coker, that you are mentally deranged!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Take this absurd piffle away, and bring me your imposition."

Coker went back to his study. He found the Famous Five and Archie

Howell waiting for his blood, so to speak.

"Here he is!" growled Johnny Bull. "Let's bump the cheeky bounder!"

And a combined rush was made at Horace Coker.

"Here, hold on—I mean, leggo! I've got to take an impot, along to Prout!"

"Bump!"

Coker descended on to the carpet with an impact which shook every bone in his body.

"Once more!" panted Bob Cherry.

"Bump!"

"Yaroooh!"

"An' one for luck, dear boys!" sang out Archie Howell.

By the time the Removites had finished with him, Coker looked a very complete wreck. His collar and tie were streaming loose; his hair was tousled; and he felt as if he had been mixed up with a steam-roller.

"That'll teach you to keep off the grass in future, so far as Miss Phyllis is concerned!" said Harry Wharton. "She doesn't want to be dragged to picture-shows against her will by tame lunatics!"

"Ow! How did you fags find out?"

"Miss Phyllis told us, of course," said Nugent. "She said you spouted poetry to her, and behaved like a blithering imbecile!"

"In other words, you behaved naturally!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You will be doing us a great favour," said Archie Howell gracefully, "by not inflictin' your society on my sister again."

Coker gave a snort. And he completely overlooked the necessity for being on good terms with Archie.

"I'll see her as often as I jolly well like!" he said. "In fact, I'm going over to see her on Saturday afternoon."

"We shall see!" said Harry Wharton grimly.

And the Removites went back to their own quarters.

LIGHTING-UP TIME FOR THIS WEEK.



AUGUST.

23rd Monday	- - -	8.35 p.m.
24th Tuesday	- - -	8.33 "
25th Wednesday	- - -	8.31 "
26th Thursday	- - -	8.29 "
27th Friday	- - -	8.26 "
28th Saturday	- - -	8.24 "
29th Sunday	- - -	8.22 "

As for Coker, he spent about twenty minutes in trying to make himself look presentable—an almost impossible task—and then he took his imposition along to Mr. Prout. After which he sealed and despatched the poem which he had written for Phyllis Howell's benefit. And he told himself that Miss Phyllis was bound to sit up and take notice of a fellow who wrote poetry worthy of the pen of a Byron or the typewriter of a Kipling!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Protecting Phyllis!

"SOMETHIN' will have to be done!"

Archie Howell of the Remove uttered the words with resolution. And the Famous Five unanimously agreed that someone would have to be done.

Twenty-four hours had elapsed since Coker of the Fifth despatched his touching ode to Phyllis Howell.

The Famous Five had been playing cricket, and Archie had been over to Cliff House to tea. On his return he told his chums all about the weird doggerel which Coker had sent to his sister.

"If ever there was a moonstruck, silly idiot, it's Coker!" declared Bob Cherry. "He's making himself a positive nuisance to Miss Phyllis."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"He keeps bombarding her with his piffle; and, what's worse, he keeps going over to Cliff House to see her."

"It isn't as if he's an attractive sort of fellow, like one of us," said Johnny Bull modestly. "Coker's got nothing to commend him at all, and I don't wonder that Miss Phyllis doesn't want to be bothered with him."

"The trouble is, dear boys," said Archie Howell, "that Coker's made up his mind to go over to Cliff House on Saturday afternoon. An' Phyllis doesn't want to see him. She's givin' a tea-party, or somethin' of that sort, an' it will be simply awful if Coker comes bargin' in!"

"Can't she write and put him off?" suggested Nugent.

"She's already written, but Coker won't take the hint."

"In that case," said Harry Wharton, "it's up to us to prevent him from going over to Cliff House. Miss Phyllis has got to be protected."

"Hear, hear!"

"Any suggestions for getting Coker out of the way on Saturday?" said Johnny Bull. "Don't all speak at once!"

"I proposefully suggest," said Hurree Singh, "that we lockfully imprison him in the tower."

"Or the cloisters," said Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"That would be a bit too thick," he said.

"Rats! It's been done before."

"In any case," said Wharton, "it would be difficult to collar Coker. He's always got Potter and Greene with him, and if we collar one we shall have to collar the lot."

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Archie Howell.

The Famous Five stared at their chum in astonishment.

"Wherefore this merriment, Archie?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"I've got a wheeze, dear boys!"

"Oh, good!"

"Throw it chuckfully off your esteemed chest!" said Hurree Singh.

Archie Howell glanced round, to make sure that Billy Bunter was not within



It was a very novel experience for a Removite to be waited on hand and foot, so to speak, by a Fifth-former. But Archie Howell was not dense. He understood Coker's motive perfectly. It was because he happened to be Phyllis Howell's brother that Coker was putting himself out like this. (See Chapter 2.)

earshot. The conversation was taking place on the cricket-field.

"I don't claim to be a clever sort of cove," said Archie, "but you fellows will agree that I'm not a bad actor."

"You can act rippingly!" said Wharton cordially. "But what's that got to do with Coker?"

"Everythin'. Nugent's rather a girlish sort of chap—no offence meant—an' I propose that he an' I tog up as girls."

"What?"

"An' come to Greyfriars on Saturday afternoon, pretendin' to be two of Coker's girl cousins that he's never seen before."

"My hat!"

"We shall lead Coker the dickens of a dance!" said Archie. "An', incidentally, we shall prevent him from goin' over to Cliff House to see Phyllis."

"Ripping!"

"There won't be any difficulty in gettin' the togs," continued Archie. "Old Lazarus, in Courtfield, will be able to supply us with the skirts an' things, likewise the wigs an' the grease-paint. An' when we roll up at Greyfriars—a pair of the ugliest flappers you ever saw—Coker's face will be worth a guinea a box!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five laughed loud and long at the prospect of spoofing Coker.

If two females arrived at the school on Saturday, and vowed that they were Coker's cousins, the Fifth-Former would be compelled to take them in tow and entertain them. And he would be unable to carry out his original intention of spending the afternoon with Phyllis Howell.

"It's a great stunt!" said Harry Wharton, with enthusiasm.

"Coker won't be able to go within a mile of Cliff House on Saturday afternoon!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "He'll be otherwise engaged."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Very much so!" murmured Archie Howell. "Franky an' I won't give him a minute's peace."

"He'll blossom into a girl-hater by the time we've finished with him!" chortled Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It will be rather rough on Coker," said Johnny Bull. "But, after all, he'll have only himself to blame. He's got no right to force his attentions on Miss Phyllis."

The juniors had come to the conclusion that Coker must be cured of his infatuation.

tion for Miss Phyllis. And the very best way to cure him would be to make him heartedly "fed-up" with the other sex.

After the jape against Coker had been discussed in detail, Archie Howell and Frank Nugent cycled over to Courtfield.

Mr. Lazarus, dealer in antiques, old clothes, and so forth, was able to fix them up with what they wanted. He produced some hideous, cumbersome, out-of-date apparel, which the two juniors donned over their Etons. Then they surveyed themselves in the mirror.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a priceless pair of freaks!"

Archie Howell and Frank Nugent looked so irresistibly comical that they laughed until the tears streamed down their cheeks.

"I think we shall make an impression!" gurgled Nugent.

"An impression that Coker won't forget till his dyin' day!" chuckled Archie Howell.

"Of course, when we have the wigs and grease-paint on, we shall look the real goods."

"Absolutely!"

"You will hire these clothes, young gentlemen?" said Mr. Lazarus, rubbing his hands.

"Yes, rather!" said Nugent. "And we shall want a couple of wigs and some sticks of grease-paint."

"Ferry good, Master Nugent."

Half an hour later a couple of cyclists entered the gateway of Greyfriars. A mysterious-looking bundle was affixed to the handle-bars of each machine.

Coker of the Fifth was lounging in the gateway, and he noticed those bundles. But it didn't occur to the great Coker that they had any connection with himself.

And the expressions of Frank Nugent and Archie Howell were so innocent that Coker little dreamt that a jape had been hatched against him, and that he was shortly to become the laughing-stock of Greyfriars!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Cousins Arrive.

"TOP-HOLE!" murmured Coker. It was Saturday afternoon, and the great Horace was standing before the looking-glass surveying himself from top to toe.

Potter and Greene were standing behind Coker, and they were chuckling.

Coker's appearance at that moment would have made a cat laugh. He wore a striped and very baggy pair of trousers, and a very tight frock-coat, which was in imminent danger of bursting at the seams.

Pinned to one of the lapels of this coat was a huge carnation, which had the appearance of a coloured cabbage.

Coker also sported a fancy waistcoat which resembled Joseph's coat of many colours. His boots were of patent leather, and they shone so that Coker could see his face in them.

The boots were surmounted by a pair of silk spats, and on Coker's curiously-shaped head was perched a shining "topper."

Coker seemed to imagine that his appearance was very fetching, for he kept muttering "Top-hole!" to himself, like a parrot.

"When Miss Phyllis sees me this afternoon," he said, at length, "she'll fall at my feet!"

"In a pink fit!" murmured Potter.

Coker spun round from the looking-glass.

"Eh? What was that?" he demanded sharply.

"I said you looked simply 'IT'!" said Potter unblushingly.

"My necktie isn't too loud, is it?" asked Coker anxiously.

"Loud?" echoed Greene. "Why, it simply shrieks!"

"Look here, William Greene——"

"I'm looking!" said Greene. "And I've never seen a bigger guy since we burnt the effigy of the Kaiser last November!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Potter.

Coker clenched his big fists, and he looked as if he were about to commit assault and battery on his humorous study-mates. But he held himself in check. He could not afford to spoil his personal appearance. Greene knew this, and he therefore "cheeked" Coker as much as he liked.

"You're jealous, that's what it is," said Coker. "You know that I look awfully perfect——"

"On the contrary, old man, you look perfectly awful!" said Potter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you——" spluttered Coker.

And then, finding that his necktie had

drifted round to his right shoulder, he started to adjust it in front of the looking-glass.

Having adjusted the tie to his satisfaction, Coker crossed to the window, and glanced out into the Close.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated.

Potter and Greene came and glanced over their study-mate's shoulder, and they, too, uttered exclamations of astonishment.

A couple of extraordinary-looking females were in the act of crossing the Close. Neither of them could, by any stretch of imagination, be termed beautiful. They wore clothes which might have been fashionable in the days of Queen Anne, but which were hopelessly out-of-date now. And beneath their wide-brimmed hats, which were plumed with feathers, two hideous faces were visible. And each face was adorned by a pair of huge spectacles. One of the females carried a pink parasol, and the other a green one.

"Great jumping crackers!" gasped Greene.

"Who—what——" stuttered Potter, in amazement.

As the two females—it would have been gross flattery to refer to them as young ladies—came tripping across the Close, they were joined by a hilarious crowd of Removites.

All the fellows who could be trusted had been let into the jape, and they were doubled up with laughter at the sight of Archie Howell and Frank Nugent. And the fellows who were not in the know laughed even more loudly.

"Oh dear!" gasped Bolsover major.

"I shall burst a boiler in a minute!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They seemed to have mistaken this place for a Freaks Museum!" gurgled Skinner.

"Both of 'em look as if they've taken booby prizes in a beauty contest!" said Stott.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker, Potter, and Greene stood rooted to the floor of their study. They had never seen such appalling-looking specimens in their lives.

Presently there was a tramping of feet in the passage.

The door of Coker's study was thrown open, and a crowd of grinning Removites looked in.

"Clear off, you cheeky young cubs!" growled Coker.

"We've come to tell you that you're wanted," said Bob Cherry.

"Me?" said Coker ungrammatically.

"Who wants me?"

"Your cousins."

"Eh?"

"Your charming girl cousins from Borneo."

Coker stared.

"Why, I haven't any cousins in Borneo!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, yes, you have!" said Vernon-Smith. "But you haven't had the pleasure of meeting 'em yet. They're down in the Close."

A horrified expression came over Coker's face.

"You—you don't mean to say that those two freaks who have just turned up are my cousins?" he gasped.

"They're not freaks," said Johnny Bull. "They're simply charming! It's a jolly shame that you should say such a thing about your own cousins!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Shame!"

"Come and greet the ladies, Coker!"

"Don't hang back!"

Coker groaned. It did not occur to him that this might be a jape. And although he had never heard of them before, he was quite prepared to believe

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that the two females waiting in the Close were actually his cousins.

But how could he possibly face them? He would rather have faced a couple of fiery dragons than those ugly flappers.

The Removites, however, were very persistent.

"Come along, Coker!"

"No backing out!"

So Coker had to go. He appealed to Potter and Greene to accompany him, but his study mates weren't having any.

"It's your funeral, old man!" said Potter. "They're not our cousins."

"And it's up to you to entertain them yourself," said Greene.

"Oh crumbs!"

Very reluctantly Coker wended his way to the Close. A crowd of laughing juniors followed on his heels.

The two females were waiting for Coker. And as soon as they caught sight of him they made a combined rush in his direction.

"Dear cousin Horace!" exclaimed one of the girls.

And, to Coker's consternation, and to the vast amusement of the onlookers, she kissed him loudly on the cheek.

"I'm Betty!" she said. "And this is Beryl! Come and greet cousin Horace, Beryl!"

Archie Howell, alias Beryl, threw his arms round Coker's neck, and greeted him effusively.

"We've come all the way from Borneo," said Betty. "And, of course, we couldn't come to England without calling on our dear cousin!"

"Of course not!" said Beryl. "How sweet he looks! How adorable!"

Harry Wharton & Co. went into fits of helpless laughter. The merry antics of Betty and Beryl fairly sent them into convulsions.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"Hold me up, somebody!"

Beryl's arms were still entwined round Coker's neck. With great difficulty, the Fifth-Former removed them.

"I say, let's get out of this!" he muttered hoarsely.

"Certainly!" said Betty, catching sight of Mr. Quelch in the distance, and not wishing to encounter the master of the Remove at that moment. "Is there a tearshop in the village?"

"Yes," said Coker eagerly. He was feverishly anxious to get his unattractive cousins away from the school.

"Lead on, then, cousin Horace!" said Beryl.

Betty took one of Coker's arms, and Beryl the other, and the unhappy Fifth-Former piloted his cousins down to the school gates.

The trio set off in the direction of Friardale, and a hilarious crowd of Removites followed.

"It's working like a charm!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "Poor old Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They'll make him stand them a tremendous feed!" said Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Johnny Bull. "We must go into the bunshop and see the fun!"

Coker of the Fifth had been in some awkward predicaments in his time, but never such an awkward one as this. He badly wanted to turn and flee from the two persistent females; but he knew that the other fellows would not allow him to leave his cousins in the lurch. So he walked on between Betty and Beryl, feeling more uncomfortable than any condemned felon who ever walked between two warders.

With a pang of regret he realised that his proposed visit to Cliff House was decidedly "off." His two cousins would

probably monopolise him for the whole of the afternoon.

It was an appalling prospect. But there was no way out. And so Horace Coker reluctantly resigned himself to his fate!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Completely Cured!

"**M**INE'S a dish of strawberries!" said Betty.

"Same here, with a pint of cream!" said Beryl.

Coker had escorted his cousins into the bunshop.

Harry Wharton & Co. came in a few moments later, and they seated themselves at the tables to watch the fun.

The expression on Coker's face was, as Archie Howell had predicted, worth a guinea a box. The perspiration was streaming down the Fifth-Former's cheeks, and he was painfully conscious of the fact that the Greyfriars juniors and the waitresses and the other people in the bunshop were laughing at him.

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The waitress who brought the strawberries and cream tried hard to keep her face straight, but she failed hopelessly. Her gravity went by the board, and she fairly exploded.

"Ha, ha! Would you—ha, ha, ha!—like to eat, sir?" she spluttered.

"Nothing!" growled Coker.

"Oh, come!" said Betty. "Won't you have some strawberries-and-cream, cousin Horace?"

"I—I don't feel hungry, thanks!" stammered Coker.

He did. But he was doubtful whether his funds would run to strawberries-and-cream for three. Besides, he could not have eaten a meal with enjoyment, in the circumstances.

"Can I press you to a little jelly?" murmured Beryl, putting her arm round Coker's waist, and giving him a tight squeeze.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the onlookers. Beryl displayed remarkable strength for a girl, and Coker felt like a squashed sardine.

"Dear Horace doesn't look very happy," observed Betty. "Are you feeling quite well, Horace?"

"Quite!" muttered Coker.

"When Aunt Judy last wrote to us," said Beryl, "she mentioned that you were suffering from water on the brain. I trust the attack has passed?"

"I've never had water on the brain in my life!" growled Coker.

"For the simple reason that he doesn't possess a brain!" chimed in Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"These strawberries are prime!" said Betty, smacking her lips. "Sure you won't have any, cousin Horace?"

"Quite sure, thanks!"

"You've no objection to our having another dish?" said Beryl.

"N-n-not at all!" muttered the distracted Coker. "Go right ahead! Never mind me!"

Betty and Beryl went ahead in great style. Having disposed of one consignment of strawberries-and-cream, they started operations on another.

Coker looked on in a sort of stupor. He was beginning to doubt whether he would have sufficient cash to foot the bill.

As time went on, his doubts increased. For Betty and Beryl consumed a tremendous pile of bread-and-butter between them, and they ordered an additional pot of tea.

"Cousin Horace hasn't got much to say for himself," remarked Beryl. "How are you getting on at Greyfriars, Horace? Are you still in the Third Form?"

"I'm in the Fifth!" said Coker indignantly.

"Oh! I suppose you were put into the Fifth because of your age and size?" said Betty. "It couldn't possibly have been on account of your scholastic attainments!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Harry Wharton & Co.

With burning cheeks and gleaming eyes Coker turned to the laughing juniors.

"Clear out, you fags!" he said wrathfully.

"Rats!"

"The young ladies don't mind us staying," said Vernon-Smith.

"Not a bit!" said Beryl cheerfully.

At this stage Harry Wharton beckoned frantically to Betty, who rose from the table and went over to him.

"Franky, you ass," muttered Wharton, in a low tone, "you've rubbed one of your false eyebrows away!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Don't let Coker twig it, for goodness' sake!"

"What shall I do?" murmured Nugent, in dismay.

"Better rub the other one away, to make it match. There's just a chance that Coker won't notice anything."

Frank Nugent removed the other eyebrow, and returned to Coker's table.

Fortunately, the Fifth-Former did not notice any change in Betty's appearance.

In due course the waitress presented the bill.

Coker's complexion turned a sickly yellow as he glanced at the document.

The bill was for eighteen shillings, and Coker didn't possess half that amount.

"Help!" he groaned.

Betty and Beryl regarded their host in some concern.

"You're not well!" said the former, with conviction. "It's too stuffy in this place. Let's come for a walk."

The girls rose from the table, and the waitress was standing in the offing, so to speak, waiting for the bill to be settled.

The harassed Coker stepped across to Harry Wharton, and muttered in his ear:

"Lend me ten bob, kid, for goodness' sake!"

There was such a woebegone expression on Coker's face that the captain of the

Remove had no alternative but to go to the rescue. He slipped a ten-shilling note into the Fifth-Former's hand, and Coker paid the bill. Then, with Betty leaning heavily on one arm, and Beryl on the other, he staggered out of the bunshop.

"Don't let's go back to Greyfriars!" said Coker desperately. "We'll take a stroll along the towing-path by the river."

"As you please, cousin Horace!" murmured Betty.

Harry Wharton & Co., who were thoroughly enjoying the jape, set off in the wake of the trio.

Coker did not look behind, but he could feel that there was a grinning throng in the rear.

Betty and Beryl chattered amiably to their companion as they went; but Coker's replies were confined to monosyllables. He was heartily sick of the thankless task of taking his cousins in tow.

As the trio branched off along the towing-path Coker gave a convulsive start.

Reclining in the grass, a short distance away, were Phyllis Howell, Marjorie Hazeldene, Clara Trevlyn, and several more Cliff House girls. They had a tuck-hamper with them, and were evidently enjoying a picnic.

When the girls caught sight of Coker, with a quaint-looking female clinging to each arm, they were unable to restrain their merriment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A peal of laughter rang out, and Coker coloured to the roots of his hair.

"Let's cross over to the opposite bank!" he muttered hastily.

"Very well, dear Horace," said Beryl.

The sole means of crossing the river at that part consisted of a narrow, wooden plank. Beryl promptly set foot on it, and started to go across.

"Do be careful, darling!" said Betty.

"That plank doesn't look very safe."

"Nonsense!" replied Beryl, lurching from one side to the other, like a ship in distress. "It's as safe as houses—"

Splash!

Even as she spoke Beryl lost her footing. Throwing out her arms like a windmill, she toppled off the plank, and landed with a tremendous splash in the middle of the stream.

Coker stood petrified on the bank.

"M-m-my hat!" he ejaculated.

Betty turned an agitated face to the Fifth-Former.

"Don't stand there mumbling!" she cried shrilly. "Can't you hear Beryl calling for help?"

Coker was not deaf. He would have needed to be very deaf indeed not to hear Beryl's wild screams.

"Help! Rescue! Save me! I'm drowning!"

"Half a jiffy!" gasped Coker. "I'll just take off my coat—"

"No time!" said Betty quickly. "In you go!"

And she gave Coker a shove which sent him headfirst into the river.

Harry Wharton & Co., who had arrived on the scene by this time, were holding their sides with laughter. But the Cliff House girls, blissfully unaware of the fact that a jape was being played, looked quite startled.

"That girl!" gasped Phyllis Howell, turning pale. "She will be drowned!"

"No fear of that," said Bob Cherry. "Coker will fish her out all right!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see how you can be so callous!" said Marjorie Hazeldene reprovingly. "This is a matter of life and death!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 655.

But the Removites didn't seem to think so. Their laughter echoed along the towing-path.

Meanwhile, Coker was striking out towards the screaming Beryl.

Progress was difficult, for the would-be rescuer was impeded by his heavy boots, his frock-coat, and his striped trousers.

"Quick! Quick!" panted Beryl. "I'm going under for the third time!"

"Gug-gug-gug!" spluttered Coker.

That was all he could say, for Beryl was splashing the water so fiercely that about half a pint of it entered Coker's mouth.

At last the Fifth-Former succeeded in catching hold of his cousin, whom he proceeded to tow to the bank.

Harry Wharton & Co. were too helpless with laughter to do anything. But the Cliff House girls ran to the side of the river, and hauled rescuer and rescued on to the bank.

Beryl collapsed in the grass in a sort of swoon.

"She's fainted!" panted Coker. "I'll jolly soon bring her round. Why—my only aunt!"

Coker broke off with an exclamation of amazement.

Beryl's skirt had shrunk considerably, and protruding from beneath it was a pair of turned-up trousers, such as were worn by the Greyfriars fellows!

"My only aunt!" repeated Coker.

And then Beryl realised that further deception would be unnecessary. So she scrambled to her feet, wrenched off her hat and her wig and her feminine attire, and was immediately transformed into a junior in Etons—Archie Howell, to wit!

Betty did likewise, and stood revealed as Frank Nugent.

There was a gasp of astonishment from the Cliff House girls, and a further yell of laughter from Harry Wharton & Co.

As for Coker, his eyes almost goggled out of his head. He tried to speak, but no words would come.

"Thanks very much, Coker, for fishin' me out of the river!" said Archie Howell, in his natural voice.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Many thanks, also, for the feed in the bunshop!" said Frank Nugent. "It was top-hole!"

Coker's feelings were almost homicidal. He wanted to hurl himself at the japers,



"When Miss Phyllis sees me this afternoon," said Coker, "she'll fall at my feet!" Potter and Greene gave a chuckle. (See Chapter 7.)

and knock their heads together. But he stood rooted to the ground, unable to move.

"Archie!" said Phyllis Howell, in amazement. "What—what does this mean?"

"It means," chuckled Archie, "that we've been lookin' after Coker this afternoon, in order to keep him out of your way!"

"But—but why did you dress up as girls?" exclaimed Marjorie Hazeldene.

"It was all part of the game. We pretended to be Coker's cousins from Borneo—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"An' we persuaded him to take us in tow, an' stand us a feed at the bunshop."

"Did you tumble off that plank accidentally, or on purpose?" asked Clara Trevlyn.

"On purpose, of course!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker's face was a study. He had recovered at last the power of speech, and he told Archie Howell and Frank Nugent, in language which was more emphatic than polite, exactly what he thought of them.

He had recovered, too, the power of action. But he could not attack the japers just then, for two reasons. Firstly, it would have been bad form to scrap in the presence of the Cliff House girls; and secondly, Harry Wharton & Co. would promptly have lined up to protect their Form-fellows.

So Coker, breathing out threatenings and slaughter, and leaving a watery trail behind him, squelched away in the direction of Greyfriars.

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" sang out Bob Cherry. "I don't think Coker will pester you any more, Miss Phyllis, now that we've taken drastic measures!"

Archie Howell shook himself like a drenched terrier.

"I'm simply swamped, begad!" he said. "Still, it was worth a duckin' to see Coker perform the gallant rescue stunt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The jape worked like a charm," said Harry Wharton. "You fellows were great! But I thought Franky would give the show away in the bunshop, when he wiped one of his false eyebrows away."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think we'll be gettin' back to Greyfriars," said Archie Howell. "I want to change these togs."

And the juniors bade au revoir to their girl chums, and followed in the wake of Coker.

Archie Howell's amazing jape achieved its object.

Coker of the Fifth made no further attempts to win the friendship and esteem of Miss Phyllis.

No more poems were addressed to "Sweet Phillis of the flowing lox"; and Coker paid no further visits to Cliff House. He confided to Potter and Greene that he was altogether "fed-up" with the other sex, and that he would have nothing more to do with girls. He was not likely to keep this resolve permanently; but for a time, at any rate, Miss Phyllis would be free from his attentions.

And Coker of the Fifth was probably the only fellow at Greyfriars who had cause to regret Archie Howell's Return!

THE END.

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Marcus, an upright, honest gladiator, is chosen to wrestle with Nabis, a famous Greek champion of Nero's court.

The contest takes place at a huge feast in Nero's palace.

To the place have come all in Rome who count—senators, patricians, famous artists, philosophers, and their great ladies. Whilst there, too, are charioteers, musicians, and dancers.

It is a night of nights, and a more than hard one for the palace slaves.

Marcus defeats Nabis, and is also instrumental in saving Nero when an assassin endeavours to slay the all-powerful ruler of Rome. For this Nero presents Marcus with a purse of gold, and the celebrations proceed on a lavish scale.

Among the slaves waiting at table is one Eunice, a young and beautiful Briton, who is loved by Marcus. Eunice incurs Nero's displeasure, and he turns angrily to the soldiers about him.

"Take this careless chit and give her three hundred lashes!" he thunders. "Not one less—you understand! By the white knees of the Graces, you shall be taught a lesson, girl!"

"Have mercy, sire!" the girl pleads.

Nero, however, turns away; and, meaning, Eunice is hurried from the great room.

Marcus hears the dreadful command, and rushes to the room where the punishment is being carried out. He flings himself upon the brutal soldiers, and fights a grim hand-to-hand contest. The odds against him look like telling when there comes a startled interruption to the combat.

"Hold!" a terrible voice cries.

Nero stands before them, and for a moment the young gladiator's life hangs by a thread. Then the great despot speaks.

"For a long time now," he says, "a scoundrelly pirate, known as Strongbow, the Rover, has waylaid our ships as they leave Egypt laden with grain and costly treasures. He has killed our men, plundered our vessels, and sunk them, and it is high time he was captured and fittingly punished.

"To-morrow, O Gladiator, a ship, men, and arms shall be placed at your disposal, and you shall sail for Egypt, and by my command leave no stone unturned to run this catiff down. If you succeed, and bring him to Rome by the time of the commencement of the summer games,

you shall be made rich, and be given a wedding of a magnificence of which you have not dreamed. If you fail, then this Eunice whom you love shall be led into the arena and sacrificed to the lions."

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

THE next moment Eunice was sobbing hysterically, and trembling from head to foot.

The prætorian soldiers, hardened though they were to sights of suffering, cast sympathetic glances towards the gladiator and the beautiful, fragile-looking English girl; and one by one withdrew from the room. It was a scene too sacred to be intruded upon.

Nero's guests had followed him when he had walked away after delivering his inhuman decision, and Marcus and Eunice were left alone for the time being, though that was not for long.

Even as he gently led her to a marble bench near a tinkling fountain the black face of a Numidian slave looked in at the doorway. The man withdrew quickly, but Marcus could see his tall, lithe figure standing outside in the shadows, and knew that already Nero's spies had been instructed to keep a constant watch upon Eunice.

For a moment the young gladiator left the weeping girl, to secure his cloak which had fallen to the floor during his fight with the soldiers.

Throwing it about his shoulders, he returned, sat beside her, and whispered heartening, comforting words, though even as he spoke them a vision was before the eye of his brain that was almost too terrible to contemplate.

He saw the girl thrust into the sand-sprinkled arena, saw the iron grills opening and the tawny lions creeping out, and—

It was only with difficulty that he suppressed a shudder. Oh, if only it could be possible to confront Nero unguarded and alone! Cheerfully could he kill him! He was too vile to live, and it would be only justice.

Bitterly Marcus repented now of having prevented Petilius from stabbing the tyrant. This was how Nero had repaid him—by threatening the sweet life that was dearer to him than anything else in the world.

"Take courage, Eunice," he said tenderly. "I will capture Strongbow, and bring him back to Rome in time!"

"I will try to be brave, O Marcus," she whispered, stifling her sobs, and raising her lips to his. "Day and night will I pray for your success, and my prayers will be answered."

Marcus bowed his head, and for some time they sat in silence, his strong arm about her shoulders. Eunice grew calmer after a while; and presently she gave a little cry, and her fingers went to his muscular arm.

His cloak had fallen back, and on the white, gleaming flesh was visible a strange design that the girl had not noticed before.

It was in the form of a fiercely-twisted serpent, exquisitely tattooed in red, yellow, and blue, with long, protruding fangs, and prominent eyes that looked strangely lifelik.

"Marcus, what is this?" she cried, in surprise.

"I know not what it means, dear one," he answered, shaking his head; "but it was upon my arm when I was discovered upon the threshold of my foster-father Benedict."

"Never before have I seen anything like it, my Marcus," she said, still gazing at the pictured snake in wonder.

Marcus smiled, forgetting for the moment the black, threatening shadow Nero's caprice had flung over them.

"It is what is called tattooing, O divine one," he explained. "And because of this sometimes methinks I am no Roman, but a Greek. Even at the time of the Mycenaean period the Greeks knew of tattooing, and the practice was with them a common one that has lived ever since. It is the one clue—if clue it can be called—to my identity."

"How strange!" Eunice murmured; and before she could say more there came an interruption.

Nero's friend Petronius, who was known as the arbiter of elegance, had entered the room, and was approaching them.

"I greet you, O gladiator!" he said, as Marcus rose to meet him. "I come with a message from Caesar.* It is his will that you remain in the palace to-night, and think well over your plans for the carrying out of your mission. He

*Meaning Nero. All the Emperors of Rome at this period were called Caesar.
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instructs me to inform you that nothing you require will be denied you—for, in truth, Cæsar is mightily displeased with this caitiff, who has robbed and rifled so many of our treasure-ships, and desires his capture."

"I thank you, O Petronius," Marcus replied, bowing.

Petronius, who was possessed of a far more kindly disposition than most of the aristocracy of Rome, and who secretly loathed cruelty in any shape or form, looked from the young man to the girl, who had remained seated upon the bench.

He drew Marcus aside.

"You have proved yourself a brave man," he said, "and I admire you. May all the gods, especially Æsculapius and Cypris, be indulgent to you, for under their joint protection nothing can go amiss. Sail and conquer, Marcus, for"—he lowered his voice meaningly—"the sake of the maiden."

"If I fail he will show no mercy?" Marcus whispered, speaking so low that Eunice could not hear.

"No," Petronius answered gravely; "even though you saved his life. Nero's decisions are unalterable."

"Canst tell me anything of this corsair Strongbow?" Marcus asked, after a pause. "I know of him only from the vaguest rumours."

"Ah, as for that, I can tell you little," Petronius returned, with a shrug of his shoulders. "He is believed by some to have belonged to the nobles of Rome, and to be one of the few to escape after incurring Nero's displeasure and being condemned by him. He has at his command at least six vessels, and it is always our ships which sail from Alexandria that he attacks. It will be thither that you must go in search of him."

Again Marcus thanked him, and as he was about to take his departure Petronius pointed to a gong.

"Strike that when you are ready to seek rest," he said. "A slave will come who has orders to show you to the room that has been allotted to you for the night. Until then, by the graciousness of Cæsar"—there was the faintest trace of irony in his tones—"you may remain with the maiden, and take your farewell of her. To-morrow at sunrise you will be required to prepare for your journey to Antium. It is in Nero's mind to witness your departure on your quest, and if the whim is still with him to-morrow he, too, will be travelling to the sea."

He nodded and withdrew, and once again Marcus was alone with the girl he loved, save for the spies who stood outside the room to guard her.

They were sweet, sad hours, during which their hearts were too full to allow of many words. When, late that night, Marcus at last tore himself from her his mind was already upon his plans for his crusade against the pirate.

Having struck the gong, as Petronius had instructed, he was shown by a slave to a secluded apartment at the rear of the great palace, where, as well as writing-materials, he found sleeping-accommodation, an array of garments, a square shield, a metal breastplate and helmet, and a strongly-fashioned sword, evidently intended for him.

He wasted little time on examining these things, but, lowering himself to a divan, he sat, with his chin resting in his palms, thinking, thinking.

All through the night Marcus remained thus, perfecting his schemes, which must be successful if Eunice were to be saved from a monstrous death. And it was not

until dawn had come that he betook himself to an adjoining bath-room.

A cold plunge revived him wonderfully after his all-night sitting. He made a selection of the clothing placed at his disposal, donned the helmet, and buckled on the breastplate. He had just finished adjusting his sandals when a slave ushered in Petronius.

"Hold yourself in readiness to appear before Cæsar," he said. "He would hear what plans you have made, and if he is of the same mind as he was last night, he's journeying to Antium to see you start, as I thought likely."

With this message Petronius left him, but it was quite four hours before Marcus was informed by a slave that Nero awaited his presence, and he was chafing with impatience.

The mountebank emperor had bathed, been massaged and anointed, but as he sat, surrounded by crowds of courtiers, guards, and slaves, in his private chamber, with his golden-haired consort Poppæa by his side, he showed many signs of the dissipation of the night before.

His short-sighted eyes looked even more puffy and glassy than usual as he raised to them his polished emerald and inspected Marcus as he entered. His apish face was more mottled and bloated, and his hands were tremulous and unsteady.

Though all his soul revolted at making a pretence of honouring such a tyrant and scoundrel, Marcus went down on one knee before him, as was customary, knowing that to offend him might mean injuring Eunice.

He remained with bowed head until Nero commanded him to rise. As he came to his feet the emperor leaned forward upon the luxurious divan upon which he was seated.

"You have thought well over your mission, gladiator?" he asked haughtily.

"All through the night have I planned, O mighty ruler!" Marcus answered simply.

"I would listen to your schemes for the capture of this villainous rover," Nero commanded, nodding and leaning back upon his costly cushions.

At no time in his life had Marcus been troubled with nervousness, and, although hundreds of eyes were upon him, and he was before the all-powerful ruler of Rome, he spoke out clearly and without hesitation.

"My plan is this, O sire," he said quickly. "I would be given a ship in which arms are concealed, but which appears merely a boat intended to carry goods. As it is the ships from Alexandria Strongbow waylays and robs, I would sail there, and have the vessel laden with a very valuable cargo—"

"To risk losing to this caitiff?" Nero sneered, frowning.

"Nay, sire, the treasures the vessel holds will be there but to trick him," Marcus objected boldly. "Whilst the boat lies in port at Alexandria, I and the men I take with me will go ashore, and not only boast of the value of the goods we are taking back to Rome, but greatly exaggerate their costliness. Methinks it likely that Strongbow has spies in Alexandria who carry to him news of when a ship that is worth plundering leaves the port, and by this ruse I hope to ensure his attacking us."

"And then?" Nero suggested, looking interested.

Marcus permitted himself a faint smile.

"Then, sire, when Strongbow and his crew are about to board us, they shall find that we are a fighting ship as well as one with a costly loading," he explained quietly. "They shall receive

such a shower of stones from our slings, arrows from our bows, and well-aimed javelins, that they will be mightily surprised, and surprised and wounded men are easier of capture than those who expect resistance and are prepared for it."

Nero jerked back his head to laugh, but the effects of the wine he had consumed on the previous night made the action so painful that he had hard work to suppress a groan. He, however, clapped his hands in an almost childish delight.

"Well done, gladiator!" he cried. "I was fortunate in finding such a man as you for the task of bringing this knave to book!"

He signed to Petronius, who moved forward and bowed before him.

"Give orders that all that the gladiator has outlined shall be made possible for him, good friend," he said; then, turning again to Marcus:

"At Antium lies the largest ship in the world. It will be well suited to your purpose, and you will take this vessel. Ask of Petronius all that you desire in the shape of funds, authorities, men, and arms, and he will see that you do not leave these shores dissatisfied."

Marcus thanked him, and, bowing low, backed from his presence with Petronius. An hour later he had made all arrangements for his departure, had picked the men he was to take with him, and had set off for Antium. And, two hours after him, Nero also journeyed there.

Antium, the town of villas and palaces, and the favourite Roman watering-place, was in a whirl of excitement.

The news of the coming of Marcus, and the mission on which he was setting out, had travelled there ahead of him, whilst it had become known that the all-powerful Nero was coming to the seaport to spend there a period of rest, after witnessing the gladiator's start.

In the harbour, gently tossing on the azure sea, was the vessel which had caused interest since it had put in at Antium, because it was unquestionably the largest yet built, and which was arousing double interest now, as it was to carry Marcus across the waters on his crusade against Strongbow, the Rover.

Its leather sails had been hoisted, and the people of Antium waited now to see Marcus arrive, and the many rovers—there was room for fifty a side—take their places—waited, too, for Cæsar and the gorgeous procession he was sure to bring with him.

Nero always took with him thousands of chariots when he travelled, and his Court was innumerable. When he migrated to Antium—which, by the way, was his birthplace—those who followed him always amounted to at least a legion, and a legion in that day signified twelve hundred men.

A vast crowd gathered along the roads. Nobles, commoners, rich men, poor men, vendors, beggars, and thieves jostled one another for positions whence they could secure good views. Wealthy women, the wives and daughters of tradesmen, and those of peasants, swelled the surging throng.

Word passed from mouth to mouth that Marcus, the gladiator who had so suddenly leapt into fame, had arrived with his crew, and was waiting only for the arrival of the illustrious emperor to board the ship.

And Nero came at last, heralded by a mighty flourish of trumpets, and with a pomp and splendour that well nigh defies the pen to describe.

A detachment of black Numidian horsemen were the leaders of the procession, gorgeous in yellow uniforms, gilt



Marcus and Leo sprang into view in their gleaming helmets and breastplates, and simultaneously the former rapped out an order that brought the other fifty mail-clad men bounding to their feet. (See Page 18.)

at the waist with crimson, and with huge golden earrings in their ears. Their bamboo lances swayed as they rode, their blades flashing in the sunshine.

Followed waggons, bearing gorgeous tents, cages containing live birds, the brains and tongues of which would eventually be served at Nero's table. Multitudes of slaves came next, carrying baskets of luscious fruit and other articles, that stood a danger of becoming bruised or spoiled in the conveyances.

A party of pretorians, who carried whips; then the bearers of the musical instruments of Nero's Court—harps, flutes, twisted golden trumpets, lutes, flutes, zithers, and cymbals. Priceless jewels, which were set in many of these, caught and flung back the rays of the sun, as if in contempt.

More soldiers, more slaves, skilfully-trained lions and tigers, led by gigantic Arabs and Hindus by chains of steel hidden by flowers. So great was the conceit of Nero that these animals were trained and with him at all times, in case he felt so disposed to follow in the footsteps of Bacchus, and harness them to his chariots.

Last came the litters and chariots of the despotic ruler, the latter drawn by pure white horses shod with gold.

The conveyances themselves were mostly of the same precious metal and draped with gorgeous purple hangings. In most cases they were inlaid with

pearls or ivory, and all glittered with costly gems.

Preceded by a guard of pretorians in heavy armour and a crowd of white-clad servitors, Nero himself brought up the rear of the mighty procession. He was reclining in a shaded chariot, drawn by twelve splendid milk-white steeds, and the fair-haired Poppæa was by his side.

Deafening cheers greeted him, though amongst them were cries that brought a heavy frown to his dissipated face, such as "Murderer!" "Tyrant!" and "Down with the drunkard Emperor!"

So vast was the crowd, however, that it was hopeless for him or his lynx-eyed guards to try to single out the offenders.

Nero's chariot came to a halt facing the great ship that lay in the harbour, and he rose to his feet. It was the signal for Marcus and the hundred men who were to accompany him on his cruise to file across the gangway that had been run from the landing-stage to the deck of the vessel.

A slight delay occurred after the last man had gone aboard; whilst the gangway was hauled away, curt orders sent the rowers to their appointed places, and the moorings were cast.

Then, to the accompaniment of a blare of trumpets and ringing cheers from the shore, the hundred oars dipped almost as one, and the vessel's nose was turned seawards. Its sails bellied in the breeze, and Marcus had started upon his great quest.

A splendid figure in his shining armour, he stood in the stern, waving his sword in farewell. Cheer after cheer followed him, and in a dim kind of way he realised that he had suddenly become famous.

But his fame was as ashes in his mouth. He thought only of Eunice and the terrible fate that awaited her unless he could capture Strongbow and bring him back, a prisoner, to Rome, in time.

A Grim Struggle.

MARCUS stood in the darkness at the corner of an evil-smelling street in Alexandria.

His vessel, which he had christened the Conqueror, had completed its long voyage and put in at the Egyptian port four days ago, and now it was loaded with a costly cargo of ivory, gold-dust, valuable silks, and wheat, and ready to make a pretence of peacefully sailing back to Rome in accordance with the gladiator's plans.

Amongst the men whom Marcus had taken with him as his crew was another gladiator named Leo, and it was for him that Marcus waited now.

Leo and he had been firm friends whilst both undergoing their training at the gladiatorial school in Rome, and Marcus, knowing him to be as brave as a lion and as honest as the day, had

especially requested to be allowed to make him his second-in-command.

Marcus no longer wore his armour, but, for the sake of appearances, was disguised as a sailor. Leo and he had frequented the bazaars and wine-shops, and, following out the rule that Marcus had planned, never ceased to talk of the great ship they had brought from Rome and the immense value of the cargo she was to carry on her return voyage.

The heavy, acromatic odours of the East assailed the young man's nostrils as he waited in the shadows.

Strange, sinister figures passed him—Arabs, Moors, and half-castes of the deserts, many capable of pilfering and murdering for a few coins. Almost every nationality could be found in Alexandria at that period—the Egyptians themselves, Romans, Greeks, Jews, and a sprinkling of men and women from almost every other known country.

A footfall sounded near at hand, and from out of the gloom stepped Leo.

"Well?" Marcus asked quickly.

"Methinks we were right, Marcus," his friend, who, like himself, was dressed as a sailor, answered. "You failed to find the Greek who wanted to be so friendly?"

"And you?"

"And I, too. He was in none of the wine-shops I visited. Depend upon it, Marcus, he was one of Strongbow's spies, and waited only long enough to learn when we were setting sail ere hurrying to his master with the information."

Marcus nodded in agreement, and Leo allowed his expansive mouth to relax into a grin. He was a jolly-natured fellow, was Leo, though his face was not in keeping with the handsomeness of his muscular body. It was freckled, his nose was snub, and his hair a flaming red.

"By Hercules!" he said. "Before we are far from these shores Strongbow and his merry men will bear down upon us, and then there will be a glorious melee, my Marcus!"

"You grinning knave! Methinks you are spoiling for a fight by your tone!" Marcus laughed, as they linked arms, and moved away through the darkness towards the harbour.

"I am!" Leo declared frankly. "And the sooner it comes the better!"

Half an hour later all the crew were aboard, as well as Marcus and Leo, and

the former gave orders for the vessel to be cast off. Only half of the crew were rowing. The other fifty men were quietly donning breast-plates, metal helmets, and coats of mail, an example set by their two young leaders.

There was not a man amongst the sailors who was not a born fighter, and it is almost safe to say that all would willingly have laid down their lives for the gladiator who had conducted them on their adventurous expedition. During the long, tedious voyage Marcus had shown them that, as well as being a stern leader, he could be fair and just, and he was loved and respected by them.

For hour after hour the Conqueror crept on through the semi-darkness, Marcus himself keeping an unwavering look-out as he stood in the bows. The great stars that spangled the purple vault above made it possible for him to scan the sea for an extensive distance, and presently he passed the word that an island lay ahead.

They were pursuing a slightly different course to that they had taken in coming, and had not sighted this strip of land on their inward voyage.

Nearer and nearer to the island the Conqueror sailed, and the dawn drew near, the stars paling and a greyish light beginning to creep across the sky. Leo, who was near his friend, suddenly saw Marcus' body stiffen, and next moment he had swung round, his clear, fearless eyes glittering with excitement.

"Look, Leo!" he commanded sharply.

His friend hastened forward, and together they stood peering intently towards the palm-dotted, sandy, and rocky land ahead.

From beyond it were creeping seven ships, and there was little doubt that they belonged to the man they had come in search of—Strongbow!

Marcus issued quick, precise orders that sent the men in armour flat upon their faces in the bottom of the ship, their weapons held in readiness for use. For a while the Conqueror was kept steadily on her course as though, if the other ships had been sighted, no misgivings were felt concerning them.

Then, as the Conqueror sailed quite near, Marcus gave a command for her to be turned as though attempting to run for it.

It was a fine piece of strategy. The gladiator himself crouched in the stern

as the ship was swung round with an unnecessary slowness, and he smiled grimly as he drew his sword. The other boats, which had leather sails like the Conqueror, and some ten rowers aside, were being sent at a surprising speed in pursuit.

Soon they were within hailing distance, and rapidly overhauling the larger and more ungainly vessel. The eagerly-watching gladiator saw a man rise in the bows of the one leading, and make a trumpet of his hands.

"Hold!" he shouted. "Hold—or we'll slay you all, and send you to the bottom with your ship!"

And, with that grim little smile still curling his lips, Marcus commanded the men at the oars to cease rowing.

As the Conqueror slowed down, and came almost to a standstill, the pirates—there was no question now that they were that—very naturally took it as a sign of surrender. One by one the seven smaller ships came running alongside, their sails tautened by the stiffish breeze that was blowing, and now those aboard the Conqueror had an opportunity of taking stock of their crews.

In each case they were a cut-throat, nondescript gang, with many blacks and half-castes among them. The faces of the white men were tanned deeply with exposure to the tropical suns; they wore red caps or coloured handkerchiefs wound about their heads, and held knives between their teeth in readiness to board their supposed prey.

In the brief moment in which they were drawing alongside it was the man who had hailed them that Marcus studied chiefly. He, the gladiator took to be Strongbow himself, as he was dressed rather better than any of the others, and was obviously a man to command.

He was handsome in a cruel, fierce way, with steady blue eyes, and a flaxen beard and moustache. He had not drawn his knife like the others, though he held a heavy sword.

The rover vessels were swiftly made fast to the Conqueror; then the thing that happened next was like a thunder-clap.

Marcus and Leo sprang into view in their gleaming helmets and breastplates, and simultaneously the former rapped out an order that brought the other fifty mail-clad men bounding to their feet.

(Continued on page 19.)

THE SNAKE RECOILED ON HIM!



1. Cecil the waster thought it time he had a new suit, so he proceeded to take one as he strolled along the pebbly beach.



2. But it happened to belong to Smiff, the performing snake proprietor, who had trained one of his reptiles to act as a clothes-horse.



3. It was hard luck on Cecil the waster, because that snake made a good job of it, until the arm of the law came along and marched Cecil away to the station.

BY NERO'S COMMAND.*(Continued from page 18.)*

A perfect fusillade of stones whizzed from their slings, a death-dealing shower of arrows leapt from bows, and javelins hurtled through the air, striking down the pirates on all sides.

Not one of them had had time to step aboard the Conqueror, and, according to a prearranged plan, the order of things was reversed. It was Marcus' men who boarded the attacking vessels ere their crews recovered from their surprise.

Something very like pandemonium reigned then. The first unexpected volley of weapons had lain low practically a third of the approximate one hundred and fifty men manning the corsair-ships, and as the men of the Conqueror who had been rowing snatched up arms and rushed after their boarding-comrades, the numbers of the battling parties were about equalised.

Marcus had immediately singled out Strongbow, and the gladiator was the first to leap aboard the pirate-leader's

ship. Strongbow rapped out a startled oath as, somewhat recovering from his surprise, he found Marcus rushing at him, his sword upraised. And it was only in the nick of time that he parried the thrust the gladiator made at his shoulder.

Leaping back, Strongbow threw himself on guard. Marcus went swiftly after him, and their blades met with a ringing clash.

With the crash of steel upon steel and the groans of the wounded and dying ringing in their ears, the two fought desperately for the mastery. Marcus slowly but surely forced Strongbow across the deck until his back was against the bulwarks and he was panting sharply with his exertions.

"Yield!" Marcus commanded sternly. "I mean to make you a prisoner, and take you back to Rome!"

"To Rome and the torturers—never!" Strongbow said, through his clenched teeth. And he made a desperate slash with his blade at his enemy which broke through his guard, and slightly wounded

him as it ripped the clothing from his arm.

Marcus struck aside his weapon just in time as the pirate-chief aimed at him another blow, and, with a dexterous twist of his wrist, sent Strongbow's sword flying from his hand.

"Surrender now!" the gladiator cried, his blade at the rover's throat.

But then a startling thing happened.

Strongbow's eyes had fallen upon the tattooed design on Marcus' arm, which was revealed by reason of his short sleeve having been cut away.

"My son!" Strongbow gasped hoarsely, his eyes still fixed as if fascinated upon the pictured serpent. "My long-lost boy! Hold! Wouldst you deliver your own father over to Nero and a death too awful to contemplate?"

(This grand story will be continued in next Monday's issue of the MAGNET. Your favourite paper is selling like hot cakes. If you want to make certain of your copy you should order your copy in advance.)

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EVERY woman and girl can double her beauty and attractiveness by devoting only two minutes a day to "Harlene Hair-Drill."

To-day all the leading Actresses, Cinema Queens, and Society Leaders make it a part of their daily toilet and willingly testify to its hair-growing and beautifying results. To-day YOU, too, can prove the truth of this statement without fee or obligation, for the Inventor-Discoverer of "Harlene" offers to every reader a Free Trial "Harlene" Outfit.

A USEFUL AND WELCOME FREE GIFT.

You can secure one of these hair-health parcels at once by simply posting the coupon below, together with your name and address, and four penny stamps to cover cost of postage and packing of the parcel.

By return you will receive this Four-Fold Gift:—

1. A Trial Bottle of "Harlene," containing sufficient of this famous hair food and tonic to last 7 days.
2. A Free Packet of the wonderful scalp and hair-cleansing "Cremex" Shampoo Powder, which prepares the scalp and hair for the successful "Harlene Hair-Drill."
3. Free Trial Bottle of "Uzon," a high-class Brilliantine that gives to "Harlene-Drilled" Hair the radiant lustre of perfect health, and which is especially beneficial in those cases where the scalp is inclined to be dry.

4. The Manual of "Harlene Hair-Drill," containing detailed instructions. Write in the first place for one of the 1,000,000 "Harlene Hair-Drill" Outfits, and prove its efficacy for yourself free of personal expense.

After a Free Trial you will be able to obtain further supplies of "Harlene" at 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., and 4s. 9d. per bottle; "Uzon" Brilliantine at 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. per bottle; and "Cremex" Shampoo Powders 1s. 1½d. per box of seven shampoos (single packets 2d. each), from all Chemists and Stores, or will be sent direct on receipt of 6d. extra for postage from Edwards' Harlene, Ltd., 20, 22, 24 and 26, Lamb's Conduit Street, London, W.C. 1.



YOU ARE WELCOME TO A 4-IN-ONE GIFT THAT WILL MAKE YOU LOOK YEARS YOUNGER.

It is wonderful what only 2 minutes a day practice of "Harlene Hair-Drill" will achieve in the cultivation and preservation of a glorious head of hair. Try it free for one week. Accept one of the 1,000,000 free 4-IN-1 Gift Outfits. (See coupon below.)

'HARLENE' FREE GIFT FORM

Detach and post to EDWARDS' HARLENE, LTD., 20, 22, 24 and 26, Lamb's Conduit Street, London, W.C. 1.

Dear Sirs,—Please send me your Free "Harlene" Four-Fold Hair-Growing Outfit as described. I enclose 4d. in stamps for postage and packing of parcel to my address.

MAGNET, 28/8/20.

NOTE TO READER.

Write your full name and address clearly on a plain piece of paper, pin this Coupon to it, and post as directed above. (Mark envelope "Sample Dept.")

NICKEL SILVER WATCHES

DELIVERED ON FIRST PAYMENT OF

2/- ONLY. YOU HAVE WATCH WHILST PAYING FOR IT.



Gent's full-size Railway-timekeeping Keyless Lever Watch. Stout Nickel Silver Damp and Dustproof cases, plain dial, perfectly balanced superior Lever movement, splendid timekeeper. Price 15/- each. Luminous dial (see time in the dark), 2/- extra. Wrist, 2/- extra, Ladies' or Gent's.

WE will send either of these watches on receipt of P.O. for 2/-. After receiving watch you send us a further 2/- and promise to pay the remaining balance by weekly or monthly instalments. For cash with order enclose 14/- only. Five years' warranty given with every watch.

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CUT THIS OUT

"The Magnet." PEN COUPON. Value 2d.

Send this coupon with P.O. for only 5/- direct to the Fleet Pen Co., 119, Fleet St., London, E.C. 4. In return you will receive (post free) a splendid British Made 14-ct. Gold Nibbed Fleet Fountain Pen, value 10/6. If you save 12 further coupons, each will count as 2d. off the price; so you may send 13 coupons and only 3/-. Say whether you want a fine, medium, or broad nib. This great offer is made to introduce the famous Fleet Pen to the MAGNET readers. (Foreign postage extra.) Satisfaction guaranteed or cash returned. Self-Filling, or Safety Models, 2/- extra.

No. 1. 30/-



No. 2. 35/-



No. 3. 35/-



No. 4. 27/6



No. 5. 30/-



No. 6. 30/-



No. 7. 35/-



No. 8. 35/-



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EVERYTHING ON EASY TERMS.

No. 1. Masters' Famous "Ajax" Service Capless Boot for Police, Post and Railwaymen, price 30/-; easy terms, 5/- deposit and 5/- monthly. Specially selected material, price 35/-; same terms.

No. 2. The King of All—an extra smart Boot for Sunday or business—extra good quality, only 35/-; easy terms, 5/- deposit and 5/- monthly.

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5/- MONTHLY

No. 4. Masters' "Empire" Boot, a reliable Boot for everyday wear, price 27/6; superior quality, 30/-; easy terms, 5/- deposit and 5/- monthly.

No. 5. Gent's Shoes in Strong Box Leather, smart shape, price 30/-; 5/- deposit and 5/- monthly. Also in Brogue, Black 30/-, Tan 35/-; same terms, 5/- monthly. Wonderful good value.

No. 6. Ladies' Smart Walking Shoe, in Black Box, 25/-; Glacé Kid, 30/- and 35/-; Tan, 35/-; very smart Shoe; or 5/- deposit and 5/- monthly.

No. 7. Ladies' Strong Box Boots, 27/6; Glacé, 35/-, Lace or Button; 5/- deposit and 5/- monthly. Tan, 45/-, or 7/6 monthly.

Send 5/- deposit with size and say which pair we shall send you. Pay balance 5/- monthly after delivery.

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is the greatest handicap in life to any man or woman. You are nervous, tired, or feel awkward in the presence of others. Send 3 penny stamps for particulars of the Nervousness Treatment, used in the Navy, from the Admiralty, and in the Army from Colonel to Private, D.S.O., M.C., M.M., and M.B. EDWARDS' HARLENE, LTD., 527, Imperial Buildings, London, E.C. 4.

