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Every
Monday

FIRST PART INSIDE

"THE SCHOOLBOY CINEMA STARS." "MARCUS THE BRAVE!" "IF CHARLIE CHAPLIN WERE A FORM-MASTER!"
Splendid Grevfriars Story in this issue. First Instalment of Wonderful Serial Magnificent Comic Picture Supplement.



OUR BUMPER NUMBER!

This issue of the MAGNET LIBRARY is entitled, from every point of view, to be considered a real Bumper Number. In addition to the extra-fine school story from the pen of famous Frank Richards, and to the grand new and specially-illustrated serial story, I am giving away to every reader, FREE, as you see, the first part of a

GRAND PRESENTATION BOOK,

containing dozens of beautiful photo-gravure portraits of your

FAVOURITE CINEMA STARS.

Now, this book, when completed, will be a unique and beautiful production, well worth keeping. It behoves every reader, therefore, to be quite sure of getting each part as it appears. This will cost you nothing, as the remaining parts will be given free with the next three issues of the MAGNET LIBRARY. Look out, therefore, for next Monday's

BUMPER FREE GIFT NUMBER

of your favourite paper. Besides the Presentation Book, next Monday's issue will contain a very special, long, complete story, entitled,

"WINGATE'S SACRIFICE!"

By Frank Richards,

and also a grand, extra-long instalment of popular Victor Nelson's magnificent new serial,

"MARCUS THE BRAVE!"

which will thrill every heart.

To this must be added another splendid set of funny "Charlie Chaplin" pictures on page 19.

This fine programme is completed by a

particularly interesting health article, another set of puzzle pictures in connection with our grand new "Missing Letters" Competition, and, lastly, by my own little "Chat," for which I hope to find an odd corner. Altogether, next Monday's MAGNET will be something to look forward to. There will be a rush for it, I warn you, so regular readers should make sure in advance that their copies will be reserved for them at their newsagents.

FRANK RICHARDS.

It is only possible to take a few lines from a magnificent letter to hand from Colchester, written by a gentleman who understands "just a little"—which means pretty well everything—of the subject he tackles so skilfully. "The exceptional merit of Frank Richards," says my correspondent, "lies in his imagination. He is fresh, versatile, original, and never failing. He shows the high Rugby School code of honour in matters of theft and lying and selfishness and petty tyranny. Then his stories indicate a fine, gentlemanly, chivalrous treatment of the English schoolgirl." My correspondent tells me that Mr. Frank Richards is carrying on the grand tradition of "Tom Brown's Schooldays." Sincere thanks to the writer. Frank Richards has been writing school yarns for many years, and the popularity of his work continues to increase. He has the atmosphere of the Common-room and the playground, and he does understand schoolboys, which little circumstances account for his triumph.

A SUGGESTION.

Among the many ideas which are showered in upon me is one concerning a real country story, a yarn dealing with a far-away village, where life seems to

jog along uneventfully, but which, all the same, is chock-full of excitement. The notion is worth considering, for it is not so much the actual happenings of a tale that matter as the style in which said occurrences are related. There might be a village green, likewise a mad bull, also an inventor who did risky things in the old house hidden by trees, where the scientist had his laboratory, and the place might get blown up. You never know! I shall think the matter over. What do my chums think?

RUSSIA.

We hear more about Russia these days than ever before, but it is to be hoped ere long we shall get something cheery concerning the great people up north. Russia looks fascinating as the train glides on from the German frontier, the green and many-coloured roofs giving animation to the scene. Russia has a wonderful climate, with a hurry-up sort of summer which, in a few short months, brings forth marvellous vegetation. Russia has sent many dancers and public entertainers to this country, but there was always a welcome for our funny men, and a British visitor to a Petrograd circus heard the clown sing out to his colleague as the two swung into the arena, "Come on, Jack! Let's show 'em how to do it!" Until recent years Russia was the land of some of the most picturesque festivals imaginable. The professional Russian dancer one sees in this country represents an art at which his countrymen have always excelled.

Your Editor

NOT THE WAY TO BEEHIVE! ILLUSTRATED TERMS (No. 2.)



Mamma Bee: "Willie, why are you stinging that poor little boy?"

Willie Bee: "I'm only having a game of touch with him, ma."



"Poverty" Stricken.

WELL IN THE SOUP!



Lodger: "Madam, I have found six-pence in my soup."

Landlady: "Oh, that's all right! A little 'change' in your diet, you know."

THE SCHOOLBOY CINEMA STARS!

A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale, dealing with the Adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars. Specially written for this issue of THE MAGNET.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Mr. Hunker Blows in!

"SAY, Bub!"

Billy Bunter jumped.

He jumped, partly because he was startled by that peculiar mode of address, and partly because he was poked in the ribs by the end of a malacca-cane.

The fat junior was loafing in the quadrangle at Greyfriars, with his hands in his pockets, and a gloomy frown upon his brow. As often happened with Billy Bunter, his financial resources were at a low ebb, and, as if to tantalise him, Mrs. Mimble had a new stock of tarts in at the school-shop. Bunter had made a round of the Remove and the Fourth in search of a loan, without meeting with any success, and he was loafing dismally in the quad, reflecting upon the emptiness of existence, when he was startled by the malacca-cane and "Say, Bub!"—the former wielded by a bony hand, the latter uttered in a powerful voice with a strong, nasal twang.

Bunter spun round.

"Ow!" he ejaculated. "You silly ass!"

"Hay?"

"Wharrer you poking me for?" demanded Bunter indignantly, glaring at the stranger through his big spectacles.

The stranger glared at him in return. He seemed keenly interested in Bunter.

He was rather a remarkable-looking gentleman, quite a new kind of visitor for the old school.

He was tall, and he was rather bony. His face was long and narrow, the pointed chin adorned by a goatee-beard. He wore a waistcoat that rivalled Joseph's celebrated coat in variety of striking hues. His hair, which was rather long, and curly and oily, was surmounted by a very high hat. Across his gorgeous waistcoat was a watch-chain that looked like a gold cable. His trousers were grey, with red and blue stripes in them, and his boots were tan, with a most aggressive glitter.

Bunter fairly blinked at him.

Such a gorgeous and striking visitor had certainly never dropped into the old quadrangle of Greyfriars before, and

he looked queerly out of place among the grey old buildings and the venerable trees.

"Top notch!" he ejaculated, still staring at Bunter.

"Are you speaking to me?" hooted Bunter.

"O.K.!" said the stranger enthusiastically. "The very thing—the genuine goods, by hokey! I guess I've come to the right shop! What's your name? I suppose you've got a name?"

"My name's Bunter!" growled the Owl of the Remove. "What's yours?"

The stranger smiled.

"Cyrus Hunker!" he said genially.

"I calculate you've heard the name?" Bunter sniffed.

He was not pleased by Mr. Hunker's aspect, nor by his manner, and, above all, he was not pleased by the jab he had received in his fat ribs.

"Never heard it in my life," he said.

"Is it a name?"

"Turn round!" said Mr. Hunker.

"What?"

"Turn round!"

"What for?" snorted Bunter.

"I guess I want to look you all over," said Mr. Hunker. "You're the thing

I've been looking for for dogs' ages. Turn round slowly."

"Look here—Yarooooh!" roared Bunter, as the malacca-cane jabbed him in the ribs again.

He spun round.

Mr. Hunker had a commanding air, and he was evidently accustomed to being obeyed. He enforced his commands with the malacca-cane.

"Top-notch!" repeated Mr. Hunker enthusiastically. "Bunker—did you say your name was Bunker—"

"Bunter!" snorted the fat junior.

"Yep—Bunter! Good! Bunter, I want you."

"You can want!" sniffed Bunter.

"By hokey! I guess you're a school boy hyer?"

"Of course I am."

"You're wasted hyer," said Mr. Hunker. "Why, you were born for film. Nature planned you specially for film. You've been designed by Nature to set the auditorium up a roar. Catch on?"

"Eh?"

"You're worth your weight in green-backs to a producer," said Mr. Hunker. "And I guess your weight is something tidy. Why, when I get you on my films, Charlie Chaplin will have to take a back seat. He will have to hide his diminished head, sir, when you get before the public. You're the funniest thing going!"

"You cheeky ass!" roared Bunter indignantly. "What the thunder do you mean?"

Mr. Hunker tapped him on the head with his cane.

"You're my goods!" he said. "You're the article! I'm going to speak to your headmaster specially about you! I guess I'll kidnap you if I can't get you any other way. I never saw anything so funny! You're a scream, sir! You're a real shriek!"

Billy Bunter could not really be expected to be pleased by these complimentary remarks.

He had a firm belief that he was rather a distinguished-looking fellow—stately, and all that.

To be told that he looked a "real shriek" was not flattering.

Bunter drew himself up to his full

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THE FIRST PART OF OUR FREE PRESENTATION BOOK.

height—which put his cap on a level with Mr. Hunker's tremendous watch-chain—and stared at the visitor through his spectacles.

It was a crushing look.

It started at Mr. Hunker's long, sharp nose, and travelled down to Mr. Hunker's gleaming boots.

From the boots the crushing glance travelled up again to Mr. Hunker's sharp nose.

This was what Bunter called looking a fellow up and down, and he believed that the effect was withering.

But it did not wither Mr. Hunker.

That gentleman regarded him with surprise at first, then with growing admiration, and when Bunter had finished looking him up and down Mr. Hunker ejaculated with great enthusiasm:

"Do that again!"

"Wha-a-at?" stuttered Bunter.

"Do it again! It's tip-top! Do that on the film, and I guess the audience will have to be carried out in hysterics."

"You—you—you—" stuttered Bunter.

Evidently Mr. Hunker was not withered.

"I guess I'm bagging you," said Mr. Hunker. "You're the real goods. Charlie Chaplin is a goose to you. You're it! I guess you're coming to my cinema-school, if I have to yank you along by the short hairs!"

"Cinema-school!" repeated Bunter.

"Sure! Where's your headmaster's office in this shebang?" asked Mr. Hunker, looking round. "I guess I'm hyer to see Dr. Locke. Take me to him."

"I—"

"Get a move on!"

The order was enforced by another jab of the cane, and Bunter yelped, and led the way.

In quite a dazed state, he showed the American gentleman to Dr. Locke's study in the School House.

And when Mr. Hunker was shut up with the Head of Greyfriars, Billy Bunter, feeling extremely curious on the subject of his visit, lingered for some time by the keyhole, in order to obtain further information on the subject.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter Makes a Bargain!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Nothing doing!" said Harry Wharton.

"But I say—"

"My dear chap," said Bob Cherry, "you've tried us all already, and we didn't pan out. We're not going to pan out now. Scoot!"

"If you think I've come to borrow money of you—"

"The thankfulness is terrific, my esteemed Bunter!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Well, I haven't!" hooted Bunter.

"Fan me, somebody!" said Frank Nugent.

"I've come to do you fellows a good turn!" said Bunter, with an angry blink at the five juniors in Study No. 1 in the Remove passage.

"You're going to offer to look after our tin for us?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No!" roared Bunter.

"Well, what's the game, Bunt?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing.

"I'm going to put you fellows on a good thing," said Bunter impressively.

"How would you chaps like to act for the films?"

"What?"

"Which?"

"How?"

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"Act for the films," said Bunter, grinning with satisfaction at the impression he had made.

"Wandering in your mind?" asked Bob Cherry.

"A friend of mine, a well-known American producer, would be willing to take you on at a word from me," said Bunter.

"Ass!"

"I dare say you've heard of Cyrus Hunker—"

"Never!"

"Where were you brought up?" sneered Bunter scornfully. "The name's jolly well known in the cinema world, I can tell you."

"Well, we don't live in the cinema world," said Wharton. "You don't, either, for that matter. You don't know any producers."

"I happen to know Cyrus Hunker," answered the fat junior loftily. "He's come to Greyfriars to see me."

"Gammon!"

"He wants to engage me to act for the films."

"Pile it on!"

"It's true, you silly asses! And if I say the word he'll take you follows on, too. How'd you like a month or so away from Greyfriars, living like fighting-cocks at Hawthorne Park—"

"Where and what's Hawthorne Park?"

"That's Hunker's place, where his cinema school is. He trains film actors, you know, and takes pictures for films. He's been to Cliff House already, and engaged some of the girls for schoolgirl parts. They'll be here—Marjorie and Clara and Barbara, you know."

"Rats!"

"Now he's here," said Bunter, "shall I put in a word for you? It would be a nobby change for you—what?"

"Oh, we'd like it no end!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "But as you're only gammoning—"

"Honest Injun!" said Bunter. "You pay me a small fee—"

"What?"

"Say five bob each, and I'll get you an engagement for Hunker's cinema school. Is it a go?"

The Famous Five of the Remove stared at Bunter and at one another.

The fat junior seemed to be in earnest, but his tale was even more incredible than usual. They had never heard of Cyrus Hunker before, and they were blissfully ignorant of the fact that Bunter had obtained extensive information with his fat ear to the headmaster's keyhole.

"Let's make a bargain," said Bunter, in a businesslike manner. "You'd like a few weeks at Hawthorne Park, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, ass! But—"

"Well, I'll speak to Hunker. Now, if Hunker engages you to act, and the Head consents, you'll go, and in that case you pay me my fee. That's fair, isn't it?"

"Fair as a die!" said Bob Cherry.

"But—"

"But you're pulling our leg, you gammoning owl!" said Johnny Bull suspiciously.

"Honest Injun, I tell you!"

"Your Injun isn't over honest," said Bob Cherry, shaking his head. "But we'll make a bargain with you, Bunter. If you're telling the truth, and we're taken on in a cinema school, we'll stand you your giddy fee. If not, we'll give you the ragging of your life."

"Hear, hear!"

"The hearfulness is terrific!"

To the surprise of the chums of the Remove William George Bunter nodded assent at once.

"Done!" he said.

"Oh, you agree to that?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"On condition that you offer your services, of course," said Bunter.

"Oh, yes!"

"Then it's a go!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of the study, completely satisfied. The chums of the Remove exchanged glances.

"There can't be anything in it!" said Nugent.

"Blessed if I know!" confessed Wharton. "If Bunter's gammoning, he knows he's let in for a ragging."

"Which he'll jolly well get!" said Bob.

"Yes, rather."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked that the ratherfulness was terrific. And there was no doubt upon that point.

Harry Wharton & Co. left the study, and the sound of voices in No. 7 fell upon their ears.

"I tell you it's so, Peter Todd. I can use my influence with Hunker, and you'll get a chance in the cinema school. As you're my pal, I'll charge you only five shillings."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter's still going it!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"There must be something in it!" said Harry, wrinkling his brow in perplexity.

"Blessed if I understand it, though!"

A little later, in the quadrangle, the Famous Five came upon Billy Bunter again. He was addressing Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth.

"Using my influence with Hunker, I can—"

That was what the Co. heard as they passed. Evidently the Owl of the Remove was still going it.

Harry Wharton & Co. had gone down to Little Side to punt a ball about before tea, when they were hailed by Wingate of the Sixth.

"Indoors, you kids!" called out the captain of Greyfriars.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's on?" called back Bob Cherry.

Wingate shook his head.

"I don't know; but all the school's to assemble in Hall!" he answered. "Buck up!"

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Bob.

The Famous Five made their way towards the School House in a state of considerable surprise. A crowd of fellows were going in, among them William George Bunter. The fat junior gave the chums of the Remove a grin and a wink.

"Five bob each, you know," he said.

"If we got taken on for the film school, you ass!" said Wharton.

"Yes, that's so."

"But—"

"Now, then, get into Hall, you fags!" called out Loder of the Sixth gruffly.

"Don't hang about there!"

"Bow-wow!" answered Bob Cherry cheerfully.

And he dodged into Hall as the bully of the Sixth made a dive at him.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Startling Announcement!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. took their places in the ranks of the Remove, amid a murmur of voices.

It was understood that the school was assembled to be addressed by the Head. But on what topic nobody seemed to know.

Squiff of the Remove inquired politely of Coker of the Fifth whether it was a flogging, with Coker as the sufferer, a question to which Horace Coker replied only with a snort.



The camera-man ground on at his machine, taking a remarkable series of pictures to delight the American public, and inform them how football was played in the Old Country. But it seemed pretty clear that a public that depended on Mr. Hunker for information would be led up a side-street—as Mr. Hunker himself would have expressed it. (See Chapter 7.)

Billy Bunter was grinning the grin of a fellow who knew something; but everybody else seemed to be in the dark.

Bunter would have been in the dark, too, as a matter of fact, but for his propensity towards keyholes.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes his nibs!" murmured Bob Cherry. And there was a hush as the Head entered the Hall by the upper door.

Dr. Locke did not come alone.

He was accompanied by a tall gentleman in a gorgeous waistcoat. No other than Cyrus Hunker, of transatlantic fame as a film-producer.

Beside the quiet old Head Mr. Hunker looked like some tremendous tropical flower in full bloom.

"Who on earth's that merchant?" murmured Johnny Bull.

"That's Hunker," said the Owl of the Remove. "My friend the film-producer, you know."

"What the thump is a film-producer doing at Greyfriars?" said Vernon-Smith of the Remove, in perplexity.

"We'll soon see!" remarked Wharton.

The prefects called for silence, and Mr. Quelch glanced severely at the Remove, and there was a hush again. Then the Head spoke. His voice was listened to with keen interest by all Greyfriars, from the head of the Sixth down to the smallest fag in the Second Form.

First of all, he presented Mr. Cyrus Hunker, a gentleman well known on both sides of the Atlantic, and whose object in visiting Greyfriars was approved by the august governing board of that ancient scholastic foundation.

"I suppose we ought to cheer here," murmured Bob Cherry.

"Shurrup!"

"Rats! Let's give him a cheer."

"You ass—"

"Hurrah!" roared Bob.

"Silence!" shouted Loder of the Sixth.

"Silence!" rapped out the Remove-master.

The Head continued:

"My boys, Mr. Hunker is here to make a proposition which will, doubtless, seem a little startling to some of you. His plan has the approval of the governors. I may say that it has my approval also."

"Good!" interjected Mr. Hunker.

"Mr. Hunker is a film producer," continued the Head. "He has a cinema school on the coast, at some distance from Greyfriars, called Hawthorne Park. At this school film-actors are trained. Mr. Hunker desires to produce some films with school scenes, and he has requested me to allow a number of Greyfriars boys to volunteer their services."

"Oh!"

The Greyfriars fellows began to understand.

"I see no reason to refuse this request," continued the Head. "Any boy present is at liberty to volunteer his services; but, of course, a very careful selection will be made. The Form-masters will be consulted, and their approval secured, before any boy is allowed to go. Volunteers will be taken to Hawthorne Park, where there is ample accommodation of every kind. A master will be sent with the party, so

that the usual studies will not be entirely neglected. Mr. Hunker requires about fifty boys, and volunteers may give their names to their Form-masters."

"My hat!"

"Hurrah!"

There was no doubt that there would be plenty of volunteers.

The Head spoke a few more words, and retired with Mr. Hunker. Then there was a rush of fellows to give in their names.

It was, as Bob Cherry remarked, no end of a gorgeous idea, and the only drawback was that a master would accompany the party, and there would be "business as usual."

But the prospect of putting up for an indefinite time at Hawthorne Park, and acting for the films, was irresistibly attractive, and at least half the Greyfriars fellows volunteered on the spot.

There was quite an exciting scene in Hall, with fellows crowding up on all sides, and the Form-masters busily taking down the names. Mr. Quelch found that he had to take down every name in the Remove, with the exception of Lord Mauleverer. His lordship was not disposed to exert himself as a cinema actor; but everybody else was eager. As Mr. Hunker required only fifty volunteers, it was evident that there would have to be a process of selection and weeding out.

The Famous Five of the Remove were among the first to get their names taken, and they left Big Hall, and retired to Saudy No. 1 to tea, to discuss their new prospects. Billy Bunter looked in a

few minutes later, with a grin on his fat face.

"All serene—what?" he said.

"Right as rain," said Harry Wharton. "We shall go, I expect. We're in Quelch's good books at present. I don't suppose you'll be let off from school, though, you slacker!"

Bunter chuckled.

"My name's down," he said, "and Hunker has asked specially for me. He told me he wanted me very specially. I shall do the hero parts, you know—melodramatic bits that require a chap with a fine figure and a—a commanding presence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! But, to come down to business, you owe me five bob each."

"What?"

"You haven't forgotten our bargain, I suppose?" said Billy Bunter sarcastically.

The Famous Five stared at him.

"You didn't get us the job, did you?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You fat fraud!"

"I say, you fellows, you know what the bargain was; you're to pay my fee if you're taken on to go to Hawthorne Park and act for the films. That was the agreement."

"Ye-es; but we thought—"

"We—we thought—"

Bunter sniffed.

"Never mind what you thought," he said briskly. "That's what you agreed on, and I'm holding you to it. Five bob each!"

"You spoofing porpoise," roared Johnny Bull, "you've taken us in!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"You knew that Hunker was going to ask for volunteers."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Listening at some keyhole, I suppose!" snorted Bob Cherry. "You just knew what was going to be said in Hall, and you came here and spoofed us!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"The esteemed Bunter is a rascally and admirable spoofer," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "He has caught us napsfully; but a bargain is a bargain, and if we are taken on by the elegant and ridiculous Hunker, we are bound to pay Bunter his esteemed fee."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"That's so; but—"

"Just what I say," said Bunter. "Pay up and look pleasant. He, he, he!"

"We'll pay up when it's settled that we're going to Hawthorne Park," said the captain of the Remove. "You can wait till then for the money. But you needn't wait for the rest; you're going to have the ragging now for spoofing us, you fat rotter!"

"Oh, really—I say you, fellows—Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as the Famous Five laid violent hands upon his podgy person.

Bump, bump, bump!

William George Bunter was strewn along the Remove passage, and the door of Study No. 1 slammed on him; and for a good five minutes afterwards the voice of William George was heard raised in lament, and his voice was like unto the voice of the Bull of Bashan.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

On the Road.

"WE'RE off!"

"Hurrah!"

"Hip-pip!" roared Bob Cherry, in great exuberance of spirits.

There was something like uproar at THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 660.

Greyfriars School as the specially selected party started.

Not everybody who volunteered was able to go. Fellows who had slacked at lessons found they couldn't be spared. Their Form-masters had the casting vote.

The Famous Five were high up in the Remove, and they had permission, as a matter of course. Peter Todd and Vernon Smith and Tom Brown, Squiff and Mark Linley, Penfold and Tom Redwing, and a crowd of other Removites went with them. Billy Bunter would certainly have been refused permission but for the special request of Mr. Hunker. Cyrus Hunker was determined on the Owl of the Remove, though not for "hero parts," as the fat junior would have made his Form-fellows believe. Bunter was not wanted to play the dashing cowboy, or the heroic gentleman in khaki, as he averred; he was wanted to rival the celebrated Charlie as a funny article, for which, according to Cyrus Hunker, Nature had designed him. Bunter was not pleased at being regarded as a "real shriek," but he was glad to go on any terms. And he went.

There was a crowd of the Fourth, too—the elegant Cecil Reginald Temple, and Dabney, and Fry, and some more. And Hobson came with a crowd of the Shell. There were six or seven of the Fifth, including the great Coker and his chums Potter and Greene. And some of the high-and-mighty Sixth had volunteered. Mr. Hunker wanted some of the big seniors, and they were quite ready to oblige. Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, came, with Loder, and Gwynne, and some others.

Mr. Hunker did the thing in style. There was no catching of miserable local trains for his recruits. A gigantic motor-omnibus called at Greyfriars for them.

The motor-bus was to carry them direct from the school to Hawthorne Park, and it was soon crowded with the recruits and their bags and baggage.

The Removites crowded to the top early, leaving the inside places to their elders. Bob Cherry had provided himself with a bugle, and Johnny Bull had his concertina, and there was a liberal allowance of mouth-organs and tin whistles. Apparently, the journey was to be made with musical honours. Envious eyes watched the big motor-bus as it rolled away from the gates of Greyfriars. Mr. Quelch, the master selected by the Head to accompany the party, sat inside with the Sixth-Formers and the Fifth, in great state. The Remove-master was serious and solemn, as usual; but everybody else was in a state of high hilarity. Even Loder of the Sixth was seen to smile in a genial way, and the great Coker unbent and was playful.

"Off! Hurrah!"

"Hip-pip!"

With a roar and a growl, the big motor-bus got under way, and rolled off, on the Courtfield road, and the fellows left behind gave the recruits a cheer as they started.

"Ta-ta-ra-ra-rara!" rang Bob Cherry's bugle joyfully, and the whole orchestra joined in.

The din was, as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh justly remarked, terrific.

As they rolled through Courtfield High Street all eyes were turned on the motor-bus, and the musicians on the roof put on an extra flourish.

A head popped up the ladder at the back of the bus.

"Boys!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Oh, it's Quelch! Yes, sir!"

"Not so much noise, please!"

"Don't you care for music, sir?" asked Bob innocently.

"Certainly I do, Cherry; but I do not care for a tuneless, discordant noise!" snapped the Remove-master.

And the head disappeared.

And there was silence on top of the bus for nearly a minute.

Then the musical honours set in again, and this time Mr. Quelch resigned himself to his fate and held his peace.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry suddenly. "There's the Cliff House lot!"

Through Courtfield, the motor-bus rolled out on the open country road, and overtook a large motor char-a-banc.

The char-a-banc was crowded with Cliff House girls; and the juniors waved hats and caps enthusiastically to Marjorie Hazeldene and Miss Clara and Barbara and Mabel Lynn, and Philippa Derwent and the rest.

The girls waved back merrily.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Are you off to Hawthorne Park?" yelled Bob Cherry, as the two vehicles came abreast.

"Yes," answered Marjorie, with a smile.

"Hurrah!"

"Isn't it ripping?" exclaimed Miss Clara. "Cyrus Hunker is an old duck, isn't he?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Clara!" murmured Miss Locke, who was in charge of the Cliff House party.

"We'll race you to Hawthorne Park!" exclaimed Barbara Redfern.

"Good! We'll beat you!"

"Buck up, driver!"

"Put it on, chauffeur!" exclaimed Miss Clara.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two chauffeurs grinned at one another. The char-a-banc, which was the lighter vehicle, shot ahead, and the Removites yelled to their driver to put on speed. The motor-bus growled and bumped in pursuit of the char-a-banc.

"Put it on!" roared Bob Cherry. "You're not half going it, chauffeur! Never mind if you bust something!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter—"

"I say, we're going too fast, you know—"

"Throw Bunter out!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "It's Bunter that's keeping us back! If we weighed a ton less we'd beat the char-a-banc!"

"Good egg!"

"Over you go, Bunter!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter. "Help! Murder! Fire! Yooooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooh! Hands off, you beasts!" yelled Bunter.

"Over with him!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Now, then, Bunter, you want us to win the race, I suppose?"

"Yaroooh! Blow the race! Do you think I want to be killed?" howled Bunter.

"What does it matter?"

"Why, you—you unfeeling beast—"

"Throw him over!"

"Yow-ow! Help!"

Billy Bunter plunged under the seat for safety. Half a dozen merry Removites promptly clapped their feet on him to keep him there. The howls of William George were drowned by a fresh burst of music. Perhaps because it was not relieved of Bunter's weight, the motor-bus was hopelessly beaten in the race; and Marjorie & Co. waved mocking hands at the Removites as they disappeared in the distance.



The trap dashed on towards the spot where Loder was standing, and the Greyfriars prefect made ready for his spring.
(See chapter 9.)

The empty char-a-banc was rolling away from the gates of Hawthorne Park when the Greyfriars party arrived there. But they arrived in good time for lunch, where they met Marjorie & Co. again, in the greatest of spirits.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

At the Cinema School!

"NOW, then, you fags!" It was the dulcet voice of Loder of the Sixth.

After lunch, Harry Wharton & Co. were entertaining themselves by making a round of the extensive grounds at Hawthorne Park, with Marjorie and Clara and Barbara and Mabel.

The American producer's place was of very great extent, with wide, green lawns, and a thick wood, and a stream flowing through the grounds. In the grounds, too, were many buildings, some of a curious design—evidently used in the "pictures." There was a great garage with half a dozen cars in it, as well as a coach-house and stables. Mr. Hunker was evidently a gentleman with plenty of money, which he spent like water in producing the celebrated Hunker Films. The juniors and the girls were delighted with all they saw, and they congratulated themselves on being among the selected party of cinema recruits.

Loder's voice interrupted them. Gerald Loder was very pleased to find himself at Hawthorne Park; but he was still Loder the bully. His manners and customs were evidently not intended to be changed in his new quarters. His

tone was bullying and aggressive as he addressed the chums of the Remove.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "Where's that dog?"

"What dog?" asked Wharton.

"Didn't you hear a dog barking? Oh, my mistake! Was it you speaking to us, Loder?" asked Bob sweetly.

Loder scowled.

"I want none of your cheek, Cherry!" he said warningly.

"Well, I want none of yours, old top," answered Bob. "Exchange no robbery, you know."

"If you want to start here with a thrashing—" roared Loder.

"Rats!"

"What?"

"R—A—T—S!" spelt out Bob Cherry, in order to make his meaning quite clear.

Loder made a rush at him.

"Line up!" chuckled Wharton.

"We're not at Greyfriars now; prefects don't count at Hawthorne Park! Collar him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh dear!" ejaculated Marjorie.

"Go it, yo cripples!" exclaimed Miss Clara encouragingly. "Give him beans!"

Loder gave a howl as he was collared by the merry Removites.

He was swept off his feet, and his nose was gently rubbed in the gravel of the garden path.

"Gurrgrggh!" mumbled Loder. "Leggo, you young demons! I'll smash you—I'll—gurrgrggh!"

"Now, then, what's that game?" It was George Wingate's voice, and the captain of Greyfriars came striding up with a frown. "None of your larks

here, you young rascals! Let Loder go at once!"

"Certainly!" said Bob. "Drop him, you chaps!"

The juniors dropped Loder, and he bumped into the gravel with a howl. He sprang up again, red with fury.

"I—I—I'll—" he spluttered.

"Quiet!" said Wingate sternly.

"There are ladies present, Loder."

"Hang them! I'll—"

"You'll be quiet," said Wingate, with a gleam in his eyes which had a very quietening effect on Loder of the Sixth. The bully of Greyfriars gritted his teeth, and strode savagely away. Wingate turned to the juniors, frowning. "Not too much of your larks here," he said. "Now get along to Mr. Hunker's office; he wants to speak to all of you."

"Right-ho, Wingate!"

The juniors started for the house, Wingate following them. As they approached the door of Mr. Hunker's office a young lady came out, with a bag in her hand. A car was waiting at the gate.

Harry Wharton & Co. "capped" her respectfully.

They guessed that this was one of Mr. Hunker's acting company, and they thought they had seldom seen so charming a young lady. Certainly she was very pleasant to look at, with smiling lips and deep, dark eyes.

"Miss Mainwaring!" ejaculated Wingate, colouring, as he raised his hat.

The girl paused, and glanced at him.

"You know me?" she said, with a smile.

Wingate's colour deepened.

"Only from the pictures," he said;

"I've seen you on the films, Miss Main-

waring. "I—I always go to the pictures when you are on the screen."

Elsie Mainwaring laughed pleasantly. "That is a very great compliment," she said. "You are one of the school-boys here to act for Mr. Hunker, I suppose?"

"Yes—I'm in the Sixth!" added Wingate quickly. For some reason, best known to himself, George Wingate did not want to be taken by Elsie Mainwaring for a mere schoolboy like the juniors. "May I—may I carry your bag to the car?"

"Certainly, if you wish!"

Wingate relieved Miss Mainwaring of her bag, and walked down the path by her side to the gate.

Bob Cherry closed one eye at his comrades.

"Did you see him blush?" he murmured.

The juniors chuckled.

"I'd noticed that Wingate had taken to dropping in at Courtfield Cinema pretty often," grinned Johnny Bull. "So that was the attraction! I remember seeing her face on the film once, now I think of it. Awfully pretty girl!"

"Nobby!" said Bob. "Looks a nice girl, too. I suppose it wouldn't be safe to chip Wingate about it?"

"Ha, ha—rather not!"

Harry Wharton & Co. glanced after Wingate.

The thought had occurred to them that "old Wingate," the rather serious and sedate captain of Greyfriars, was "struck" with the cinema star, and they found that thought rather entertaining.

Miss Elsie Mainwaring had stepped into the car, and Wingate had handed in her bag. Now he stood by the car speaking to her, and the junior saw the girl smile again.

The car rolled away.

But Wingate did not turn back towards the house. The juniors saw him standing in the road, gazing after the car. Mr. Quelch looked out of the office doorway.

"Come, come!" he said. "Mr. Hunker is waiting for you!"

"Yes, sir!"

Thus reminded of their duties, the juniors crowded into the office.

Marjorie & Co. went in with them, looking a little shy. But it was not easy to be shy with Cyrus Hunker. That enterprising transatlantic gentleman had no use for shyness.

The great producer was seated at a gigantic roll-top desk, with a cheroot sticking out of the corner of his mouth, and his silk-hat on the back of his head.

He rose, with a genial smile, as the party came in.

"So hyer you are!" he said.

"Here we are, sir!" answered Harry Wharton.

"I guess I'm glad to see you cavorting round this shebang!" said Mr. Hunker hospitably. "Hyer, help yourselves!"

He extended a cigarette-case towards the boys. The juniors blinked at him.

Mr. Quelch almost raised his hands in horror.

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

"Help yourself, Bob!" said Mr. Hunker genially. "Now, then, light up!"

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Quelch.

The juniors mechanically took the cigarettes. They hardly knew what to do, and they did not want to hurt Mr. Hunker's genial feelings.

Cyrus Hunker blew out a thick cloud of smoke.

"Now—" he began.

"My dear sir!" ejaculated the Remove-master.

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Cyrus glanced at him.

"Yep?"

"The—the—the boys do not smoke!" stuttered Mr. Quelch. "And—and above all, the girls who have come here do not smoke! I—I am sure that Miss Locke would be shocked at the—the idea! My dear sir—"

"My mistake!" said Mr. Hunker, with undiminished good-humour. "I guess there's a few of my comp. that do not fume, but it's a matter of taste. Chuck 'em away, sonnies, if you like!"

"Oh, I smoke, sir!" said Billy Bunter manfully. "I—I'm rather fond of smoking, sir!"

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye fixed on him.

"Bunter!"

"Oh! Ye-e-es, sir!"

"You do not smoke, Bunter!"

"I—I—"

"If you smoke, Bunter, it will be my painful duty to administer severe correction with a cane!"

"I—I—I mean, I don't smoke, sir!"

gasped Bunter.

"I thought so!" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

And Bunter didn't smoke.

"Sit down!" said Mr. Hunker.

"Those who can't find chairs can stand. Now, I guess I'm going to talk to you a few, and put you wise. You're oysters in this act, and I'm the gramophone. Got that?"

Harry Wharton & Co. grinned—they had "got it." And they listened in respectful silence while Mr. Cyrus Hunker expounded to them, and "put them wise" as to what was wanted of them at Hawthorne Park. And when the interview was over the chums of Greyfriars agreed that Mr. Hunker was a good sort, though of an original variety; and Miss Clara repeated her observation that he was an "old duck." An observation with which Cyrus Hunker would hardly have agreed if he had heard it; for his own persuasion was that he looked a young duck!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Wingate's Secret!

THE next few days were strange and novel, but very enjoyable, to Harry Wharton & Co. and the rest of the amateur cinematographic artists.

They soon settled down in their places at Hawthorne Park.

A bungalow in the grounds was tenanted by Miss Locke and the Cliff House girls, and another had been allotted to the Greyfriars juniors. The seniors had quarters in Mr. Hunker's big mansion.

In that mansion, too, were the rooms devoted to lessons, which all the boys and girls could very well have dispensed with. But lessons occupied only a short portion of the day, the remainder being devoted to their cinema studies.

Lessons finished early, so far as Mr. Quelch and Miss Locke were concerned, and then instruction began in cinema-acting.

Harry Wharton & Co. proved themselves apt pupils.

Their experience in the Remove Dramatic Society stood them in good stead now.

They were looking forward keenly to the time when they would be acting before the cinematograph-camera, which would put them and their doings on permanent record.

The juniors were rather surprised at first to see a solemn old fogey—as they termed him—like Wingate of the Sixth take so kindly to cinema-acting. They

had been rather surprised at the Greyfriars captain having volunteered at all.

But Wingate certainly threw himself into the business with great keenness, and he developed unsuspected abilities.

Two or three times George Wingate was seen walking in the grounds with Elsie Mainwaring, or chatting to that charming young lady in the corridors.

Some of the juniors suspected that Miss Elsie was really the attraction that had drawn Wingate to Hawthorne Park; and there was soon proof of it. Billy Bunter came into the juniors' bungalow one afternoon with an extensive grin on his fat face, and ejaculated "He, he, he!" in a very gleeful manner.

"Well, what's the joke, Fatty?" asked Bob Cherry. "Have you been telling Hunker that you want a prize part as a romantic hero?"

"He, he, he! It's Wingate!" chortled Bunter.

"What about old Wingate?"

"He's spoony!" yelled Bunter. "He, he, he!"

"Don't be an ass, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton sharply.

"But he is!" shrieked Bunter. "I just came on him in the wood—beside the lake, you know—and he was talking to Miss Elsie—"

"Did you listen, you fat rotter?" boomed Johnny Bull.

"Of course not!" said Bunter indignantly. "I hope you don't think I'm capable of doing anything of the kind. I just happened to hear what Wingate was saying, because I stopped to tie my shoe-lace—"

"You fat rotter!" said Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Don't tell us what you've heard, you Paul Pry!" growled Wharton.

"Let's have it!" exclaimed Skinner of the Remove. "Go ahead, Bunter, and never mind Wharton."

"Well, Wingate said—"

"Dry up!" roared Bob Cherry.

"He said he's often seen her on the screen, you know, and that's why he volunteered to come here, because he knew that she was a member of Mr. Hunker's company—"

"Ring off!"

"And he wanted to make her acquaintance—he, he, he!"

"Will you shut up?" exclaimed Wharton angrily.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Tell us the rest!" chortled Skinner.

"What did she say?"

"She just smiled," said Bunter. "I think she was pleased. Blessed if I know what she can see in Wingate, though. Now, if she gave me the glad eye, a fellow could understand it—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, I haven't given her much attention," said Bunter. "I wouldn't make Marjorie jealous, you know."

"You silly owl!" shrieked Bob Cherry.

"Do you want my boot?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"What else did Wingate say?"

demanding Skinner.

"He said— Yaroooooop!" roared Bunter.

Billy Bunter did not mean that George Wingate had made that extraordinary remark; he made it on his own account, as Bob Cherry seized him by the collar and bumped him on the floor.

"Yow-ow! Help!" yelled Bunter.

"You fat rascal!"

"Yow-ow-wooop!"

Bob Cherry, with an iron grip on the back of Bunter's neck, rubbed the fat junior's nose forcibly on the floor. Bunter wriggled and struggled and howled frantically.

"Now, then, what are you up to,

Cherry?" It was Wingate's voice, as the captain of Greyfriars looked in. "Stop it! Do you know Bunter's howling can be heard all over the place?"

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "Never thought of that, Wingate!"

"Well, let him go!" snapped Wingate. Bob released the fat junior.

Billy Bunter sat up, breathlessly, and roared.

"Yow-ow-ow! You lick him, Wingate, you're a prefect. You ought to stop bullying! Yow-ow-ow! I'm being bullied! Yooop!"

Wingate fixed a stern look on Bob Cherry. Bob coloured to the ears. He did not want to explain why he had been rubbing Bunter's nose on the floor, especially to Wingate.

"What were you handling Bunter for, Cherry?" asked the Sixth-Former quietly.

"I—I—"

"Out with it, sharp!"

"I—I wasn't bullying, Wingate. You ought to know that I wouldn't!" exclaimed Bob.

"Well, what were you doing, then?"

"I—I was just ragging the fat rotter a bit—"

"What for?"

"I—I didn't like the tone of his conversation," stammered Bob.

"That's not good enough. You can't rag Bunter whenever you don't like the tone of his conversation, Cherry."

"You—you see, I—I—" stammered Bob.

"I shall report this to Mr. Quelch, and ask him to cane you!" said Wingate, frowning.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Unless you give me a good reason at once for ragging Bunter."

"Well, he—he—" Bob hesitated.

"He what?"

"He was talking rot," said Harry Wharton, coming to the rescue.

"You can tell me what he said, I suppose?"

"Ahem!"

"The esteemed Wingate would be infuriated," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur gently.

Wingate started.

"Do you mean that he was talking about me?"

"Ahem!"

Wingate looked from one to the other of the juniors. Skinner was grinning, but the others looked serious enough. Billy Bunter realised that he didn't want the facts to be stated, and he clipped in hurriedly.

"I—I say, Wingate, it's all right—don't worry—"

"Oh, it's all right, is it?" growled Wingate.

"Yes, all serene, you know. I—I was only joking. I—I never heard you at all—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, I—I wasn't in the wood at—" floundered Bunter.

Wingate's face crimsoned.

"You were in the wood?"

"Nunno, I wasn't—I've just said that I wasn't!" bumbled Bunter. "I—I never saw you with Miss Mainwaring, and I never said— Yooooop!"

Wingate understood then, and he descended on the hapless prevaricator like a cyclone. Loud spansks rang upon Bunter's fat person.

Spank, spank, spank!

"Yaroooh! Help! Fire! Murder! Yaroooh!" roared Bunter. "Wharrer you up to? You're a worse—yoop—beast than Bob Cherry! Ow! Yow! I never said you were spoony— Yaroooooh!"

Spank, spank, spank!

Wingate turned and walked out of the bungalow, leaving Bunter yelling. The fat junior scrambled to his feet, crimson with wrath, and howling with anguish.

"Yow-ow-ow! The awful beast! Why don't you fellows back up a chap in your own Form? Yow-ow-ow!"

"Kick him out!" said Nugent.

"Why, you rotter— Yooop!"

Two or three boots helped William George Bunter out of the bungalow, and he departed, roaring. But his tale had been told, and from that time George Wingate was an object of deep interest to the Greyfriars juniors; and there were many smiles when next he was seen chatting with Miss Elsie on the lawn. Big, rugged Wingate, whom nobody had ever suspected of being in the least degree "spoony," had fallen a victim to the bright eyes of the cinema star—though he was hardly aware of it himself, and Miss Elsie certainly was not aware of it.

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THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Film Footer!

"FOOTBALL to-day!" Harry Wharton remarked.

More than a week had passed since the amateur cinema actors had been installed at Hawthorne Park.

In that time they had been very busy, and they had made great progress.

Mr. Cyrus Hunker, who took a leading part personally in their instruction, had selected a number of the juniors who were to appear in a football match that was to be taken down on the camera.

He had made a wide and rather remarkable selection, for all the Sixth and Fifth-Formers were selected, as well as at least twenty-five juniors. They supposed that Mr. Hunker intended to weed them out later. They did not yet know to the full Mr. Hunker's original and remarkable ideas on the subject of football.

About thirty-five fellows turned up on the football ground in the park, in jerseys and shorts, Wingate captaining one side, and Loder the other. The two skippers selected their teams, the rest of the

recruits standing about. Coker of the Fifth offered his services in turn to both skippers, and was surprised and annoyed to find that Wingate and Loder—who seldom agreed—were quite unanimous in rejecting his valuable services. It was to be a film-match, but they saw no reason why it should not be good football, too, and, therefore, Horace Coker was superfluous.

Potter and Greene were taken on, and Coker stood and snorted in his football rig—"All dressed up and nowhere to go!" as Vernon-Smith remarked humorously.

"Look here, Hunker told me to come down, Wingate," said Coker. "He expects to see me play!"

"Bosh!" answered Wingate.

"You'd better put me in, Loder—"

"Rats!"

"You'd like to beat Wingate, wouldn't you?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Then put me in."

"My dear chap, that's why I'm leaving you out!" answered Loder blandly.

And Horace Coker snorted again emphatically. Somehow, nobody ever did realise what a tremendous footballer he was.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Hunker!" said Bob Cherry. The Famous Five were all in Wingate's eleven.

Cyrus' waistcoat dawned upon a dazzled football-field. The producer came cheerily up, with his big cigar sticking out of the corner of his mouth. He stopped to give some instructions to the man with the camera, and then came on and greeted the footballers.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Quite!" answered Wingate.

"Then slide in!"

The skippers tossed for goal, and Wingate kicked off. Cyrus Hunker watched the game for a few minutes, and did not seem pleased. He called out to Wingate:

"Hold on!"

The referee, who was a member of Mr. Hunker's film company, blew his whistle, and the game stopped. Wingate came to the ropes, not overpleased. Football was a serious matter to the captain of Greyfriars.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Call that football?" inquired Mr. Hunker.

"Eh? Yes!"

"That won't do for the American public," said Mr. Hunker decidedly. "Our public over the pond, sir, wants something with a punch in it. You get me?"

"But—" began Wingate, puzzled.

"More push and go," explained Mr. Hunker. "For instance, you haven't got enough men on the field."

"We've got the full number—eleven a-side," said the puzzled Greyfriars captain.

"What are these other fellows loafing around for?" asked Mr. Hunker. "Why ain't they playing?"

"But eleven—"

"That's the number, according to the rules of the game," said Loder.

Mr. Hunker snorted.

Evidently his transatlantic mind was superior to such trifling considerations as the rules of a game.

"It won't wash!" he said. "Not punch enough! Put the rest of them in!"

"B-but—"

"Get on the field, the lot of you!" called out Mr. Hunker.

"Right-ho, sir!" said Coker joyfully.

The grinning fellows crowded upon the football-field. They were quite pleased at this amazing order from Mr. Hunker. Certainly it wouldn't be football, but it was better than standing around in the cold. George Wingate's face was a study.

"But," he stuttered, "that isn't the

game! If the picture's for the American public, I suppose you want to show them a real game."

Mr. Hunker smiled compassionately.

"I guess I want to show my public what my public wants to see," he explained. "That's the secret of film producing, sir—give the public what they want; and if it don't square with the facts, so much the worse for the facts!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Wingate.

"I'm going to show the American public what British football is like—but there's got to be a punch in it!" said Mr. Hunker cheerily. "Now, I noticed you were simply kicking that ball about with your feet—"

"That's the game."

"Why don't you pick it up and chuck it sometimes?"

"Eh? That's Rugger!"

"My dear man, I don't care a Continental red cent whether it's Rugger, or hugger, or mugger!" said Mr. Hunker genially. "I know what I want, and what my public wants. I can't waste yards of film on a tame show! Film costs money, as I deessay you know. Put some life into it. I've got to give the American public a real idea of football. See? Something as lively as our baseball over the pond. Use your hands as well as your feet!"

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Sort of mixture of Rugger and Soccer," said Loder, with a grin.

"Mixture of any old thing you like, so long as there's plenty of punch in it," said Mr. Hunker. "Go for one another a bit, too. Yank one another over, and so on."

"Oh, I—I see!" gasped Wingate.

"And you'd better have a ball to each side," continued Mr. Hunker; "that will make the game more interesting."

"T-t-two footballs!" said Wingate dazedly.

"Yep—three, in fact," said Mr. Hunker generously. "Plenty of 'em here—no shortage of footballs in this hyer shebang. Chuck in three balls, and thirty or forty players, and put some life in it! Got that?"

"Oh crumbs!"

Wingate had "got" it, though he assimilated it with difficulty. But he was there to carry out Mr. Hunker's instructions, and he carried them out.

With nearly twenty a-side, and three balls in play, and handling going on in a way that outdid Rugby, the game certainly looked lively.

Lively it undoubtedly was.

It wasn't football, but there was no doubt whatever about the liveliness of it.

If it resembled anything, it resembled one of those ancient Rugby games in which half a school would play the other half.

But Mr. Hunker was satisfied.

He rubbed his hands with satisfaction as he watched, and called to the camera-man to "start in."

The camera-man started in, grinning.

Coker of the Fifth had captured one of the balls, and was rushing it to a goal—he didn't know which, but fortunately that didn't matter. Three or four Removites hurled themselves on Coker and brought him to the ground with a most effective tackle. At the same time Temple, Dabney, & Co. of the Fourth charged down Loder, against whom they had old scores, and sprawled him out and rolled on him. And Potter and Greene got the referee in a charge and hurled him headlong into goal.

"Bray-vo!" sang out the delighted Mr. Hunker. "Bray-vo! This is something like football! Go it! Put in some punch! Hurray!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"Yaroo! Gerroff my neck!" shrieked Coker.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Help!"

"Go it!"

The camera-man ground on at his machine, taking a remarkable series of pictures to delight the American public, and inform them how football was played in the Old Country. But it seemed pretty clear that a public that depended on Mr. Hunker for information would be led up a side-street, as Mr. Hunker himself would have expressed it.

But Mr. Hunker was satisfied, and most of the footballers were satisfied, and, though there were a good many signs of damage on all sides when the game was over, the footballers came off in great spirits.

And when the football film was produced on the screen in Mr. Hunker's own private show-room the Greyfriars fellows crowded to see it, and there were yells of laughter as they recognised themselves on the screen. It seemed a screaming joke to the juniors—though it was, apparently, to be taken seriously by the great public on the other side of the Atlantic.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Under the Shadow!

"ELSIE!"

Harry Wharton started.

It was a week or so after the football match, and Harry Wharton had retired to a shady part of the wood, by the lake, to study his part in a cowboy play. Wharton had been assigned the part of a handsome young cowpuncher, and had already been through several rehearsals. In the rehearsals at Hawthorne Park the characters were given speaking parts, as in a theatre, although, of course, when the play came on the films all would be dumb show. But by putting in the speeches at the rehearsals Mr. Hunker believed that

he produced better effects for the camera-man to take down, as no doubt he did.

Harry Wharton was studying his part with great care, lying in a thicket near the lake, having retired there for quiet and solitude. And in the midst of the quiet he suddenly heard Wingate's voice.

He stirred uneasily.

He had not heard footsteps on the velvety grass under the trees, or he would have retreated from the spot. Now it was too late. Wingate and Miss Mainwaring had stopped within a few yards of him, and the junior could not move without betraying his presence—which an instinct of delicacy forbade him to do.

He realised very clearly that Wingate would be annoyed and mortified if he had known that anyone heard him speak Miss Mainwaring's name in that low and tender tone.

Wharton lay still, hoping they were passing on.

But they had stopped.

"Elsie!" Wingate's voice went on softly. "You—you don't mind my calling you Elsie, do you?"

"My dear boy, why not?" said Miss Mainwaring's voice. "Mr. Hunker calls me Elsie, so do most of the company."

"I—I don't mean it like that," said Wingate hastily. "I—I should be miserable if I thought you'd suppose I was speaking familiarly. But—but it's such a pretty name—"

He was quite unlike Billy Bunter, who would have enjoyed his present position. Wharton was far from enjoying it.

"I—I know I've no right to speak to you as—as I'm going to do," went on Wingate. "We've known each other such a short time, and—and I suppose we're not even friends—"

"Oh, yes, we are friends!"

"Then, if you'll let me call myself your friend, Elsie, let me—let me help you, if I can. I—I've seen for some time that there's something the matter—something wrong—"

"You've seen?" The girl's voice was altered now.

"Your face has often been clouded," said Wingate. "I—I've thought for some time something was troubling you. Isn't it true?"

There was silence, and Wharton hoped that the two had walked on. But after a few minutes Miss Mainwaring's voice was audible again, though in very low tones.

"It is true," she said, with a sigh. "There is something that does trouble me, but—but—"

"Can't I help you?"

"I fear not."

"I—I wish I could!" said Wingate. "I—"

"Let us go on," said Elsie, and, to Wharton's infinite relief, they walked on through the wood, and he heard no more.

He could not help thinking about what he had heard, however.

He, as well as Wingate, had noticed for some days past that Miss Elsie, the bright-eyed cinema star, had shown a pre-occupation that was new to her, and he had seen her with a clouded brow. Sometimes, too, she had made mistakes at rehearsal, much to Mr. Cyrus Hunker's exasperation. Wharton had a boyish admiration for the pretty cinema actress, who was, indeed, already adored more or less by all the Greyfriars fellows. Even Bob Cherry had remarked that he had never seen anybody prettier, excepting Marjorie. Harry Wharton felt concerned to know that Elsie was in some trouble, and Wingate's tones had shown how much it moved him.

Wharton did not mention, even to his own chums, what he had accidentally heard in the wood, but it did not leave his mind.

LIGHTING-UP TIME FOR THIS WEEK.



SEPTEMBER.

27th Monday	- - - -	6.16 p.m.
28th Tuesday	- - - -	6.14 "
29th Wednesday	- - - -	6.11 "
30th Thursday	- - - -	6.9 "

OCTOBER.

1st Friday	- - - -	6.7 p.m.
2nd Saturday	- - - -	6.5 "
3rd Sunday	- - - -	6.2 "



"Robbed!" roared Mr. Hunker. "I guess some sneaking, slab-sided galoot has been through my desk and lifted my greenbacks! I guess I'm going to know who it was, just a few. Robbed—by hokey!" Harry Wharton's heart was like lead in his breast. (See chapter 10.)

When he saw Wingate again the Greyfriars captain was crossing the lawn to the house, with his hands driven deep into his pockets, and a moody frown on his brow.

The junior glanced at him; but Wingate did not see him. He passed into the house, still frowning moodily.

It was the following day that Wharton saw Elsie at rehearsal. It was clear to others as well as Harry that Miss Mainwaring was thinking of something other than the work in hand.

Mr. Hunker, who was conducting the rehearsal, rapped out several remarks to the leading lady that displayed intense irritation. Wingate, who was a Western "rustler" in the piece, kept his eyes almost constantly upon her face, and it was easy to read his secret in his eyes.

Elsie pulled herself together with an effort, however, and the rehearsal finished to Mr. Hunker's satisfaction.

Billy Bunter chuckled his fat chuckle as the juniors left after the rehearsal.

"I say, you fellows, I'm thinking of a joke on Wingate," he said to the Famous Five, as they were divesting themselves of the cowboy garb in their bungalow. "He's no end soft on Miss Elsie—"

"Shurrup!"

"What price butting in, and cutting him out?" said Bunter.

"Eh?"

"Of course, I'm a good deal younger than Elsie," said Bunter thoughtfully. "But age doesn't count much. When a fellow's really good-looking—strikingly handsome, in fact—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I expect jealousy from you fellows,"

said Bunter loftily. "'Tain't only looks, either. A fellow has a way with girls. Some chaps have a sort of fascination. That's how I do it. You fellows must have noticed how all the girls at Cliff House run after me—"

A cowboy boot sailed through the air, and landed on Bunter's chin, and his subsequent remarks, though emphatic, were unintelligible.

"I fancy Wingate would like Loder's part," remarked Skinner, with a grin. "Hunker's made Wingate a rustler—very suitable to his type of chivvy, I suppose he thinks—and Loder's the handsome cowboy who rescues the giddy heroine. Lucky for her she's not going to be in any real danger, or Loder wouldn't fill the bill."

"I ought to have had Loder's part!" growled Billy Bunter. "That fellow can't act! He doesn't look the part, either! Now, I—"

"You're Chaplin minor!" grinned Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter snorted. It was a never-ending grievance to Billy Bunter that Mr. Hunker persisted in using him for comic relief.

Bunter had ventured to explain to the producer that he was really suited for a romantic hero part, but Mr. Hunker had only chuckled. He was quite satisfied with Bunter for comic relief; indeed, for that purpose he assured the Owl of the Remove that he was worth his weight in gold. The fact that Bunter couldn't act did not matter at all. He simply had to roll on and be himself, and then he out-Chaplined Chaplin. With all of which

Billy Bunter profoundly disagreed. But everybody else at Hawthorne Park was quite in agreement with Cyrus Hunker on the point.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Coward and Hero!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here's the merry hero!"

Loder scowled.

It was the following afternoon, and Loder had come out, dressed for his part in the open-air rehearsal.

Loder looked a really dashing cowboy; indeed, so far as looks went, he was more suited for the hero's role than Wingate. So far as other qualities went, the reverse was the case; but the cinema was concerned only with appearances.

Mr. Hunker had made his arrangements elaborately for the open-air act. Miss Mainwaring, in a runaway trap, was to dash along the coast-road, and Loder, lurking behind some rocks, was to spring out at the critical moment and stop the runaway horse at the risk of his life—so far as appearances went, of course. There was to be no real risk in the performance.

Harry Wharton & Co. intended to see the scene, and they followed when Loder cantered out of the gates on his pony. Mr. Hunker only warned them to keep out of the picture.

The Famous Five squatted on a high point of rocks overlooking the scene, where they were out of range of the camera.

They watched with a great deal of interest.

In the distance, at the gates, Miss Mainwaring was mounting into a trap, the horse of which was to run away.

Down the road, Loder was behind a rock, and his pony standing by his side.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's old Wingate!" said Bob.

He pointed to a figure in the distance, some hundreds of yards beyond the spot where Loder stood.

It was the Greyfriars captain.

Wingate was not wanted in the scene, and he had gone for a walk by himself, and Harry Wharton, as he glanced at him, could see the droop in his shoulders, even at that distance. He could guess that George Wingate was in a thoughtful and moody frame of mind that sunny afternoon.

Clatter, clatter, clatter!

"Here comes the trap!"

"My hat! It looks real enough!" remarked Nugent. "Anybody would swear that horse was really running away!"

The juniors stared down at the trap as it rattled and clattered along the road.

Miss Mainwaring had dropped the reins, and was clinging to the trap in a very realistic way, her face displaying strong cinematograph terror.

Clatter, clatter!

The horse dashed on.

"My hat!" ejaculated Wharton suddenly, his face becoming very grave. "The beast is really running away—"

"Only for effect!" said Johnny Bull.

Wharton shook his head.

"I don't believe Miss Elsie could pull him in now if she wanted to," he said anxiously.

"Well, Loder's going to stop him."

Clatter, clatter!

The trap dashed on towards the spot where Loder was standing, and the Greyfriars prefect made ready for his spring.

From the distance where they stood the Famous Five could not make out his face clearly, but Wharton thought he saw the colour change.

He set his teeth.

"He couldn't funk it!" he muttered. "If he does there'll be an accident."

"He couldn't!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"The horse is really wild, I believe."

"But Loder— My hat!"

Loder had sprung out from the rocks.

But the horse was very fresh, and it had taken the bit between its teeth, and it dashed down on Loder in a way that might have startled even a strong nerve.

Loder's courage failed him.

This was not the harmless scene, devoid of risk, that he had supposed it would be.

He backed quickly out of the way, his face white, and the runaway horse—really a runaway now—went thundering past him.

There was a gasp from the camera man, and a yell of rage from Cyrus Hunker, who was standing behind the camera.

"You jay!" roared Mr. Hunker. "What's that game? Don't you know your part? You slab-sided jay!"

Clatter, clatter!

In his rage at the spoiling of the picture Mr. Hunker was oblivious of the real danger of the cinema star.

It dawned upon Elsie Mainwaring, and she caught wildly at the reins. But they slipped beyond her grasp.

The girl gave a piercing cry.

Her face was white now.

Harry Wharton & Co. began running frantically down the rocks. But they were far behind the runaway, and too far off to hope to be able to help. The trap clattered madly on.

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Clatter, clatter!

"Help!"

An athletic figure turned in the road ahead of the runaway. The trap had almost overtaken Wingate.

For a moment the Greyfriars captain stared at the trap and the white-faced girl sitting in it, holding on for dear life, and the trampling, maddened horse.

Then he understood.

"Help!" shrieked Elsie.

The horse thundered down on to the schoolboy in the road.

Wingate stood like a rock.

Clatter, clatter!

It seemed certain that the Greyfriars captain would be run down and trampled to death beneath the thudding hoofs, and Elsie shrieked aloud with horror.

But even as the horse reached him Wingate made a spring, and the next moment was hanging on to the bit, carried along by the horse in its furious career.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

The maddened horse rushed on, dragging the Greyfriars captain along the road.

But Wingate's weight very quickly told.

It seemed to him that his arms were being torn from their sockets, as he was dragged and bumped along; but the horse slowed down at last, and at length he stood still, mastered, and trembling in every limb.

Wingate, panting, still held him by the head. But his eyes were turned towards the clinging figure in the trap, and his heart was in his eyes.

"Elsie!" he breathed.

"Oh, you have saved me—you have saved me!" panted the girl. "I should have been killed—" Her voice broke off.

Harry Wharton & Co. came tearing up. Wharton took the horse's head from Wingate, and the Greyfriars captain helped Elsie from the trap. She leaned heavily on his arm.

Cyrus Hunker came panting up more slowly than the juniors. His face was pale now.

"You're not hurt, Elsie?" he panted.

She shook her head without speaking.

The producer gasped with relief. In his mind's eye he had seen a serious accident and the loss of his star! Whether Mr. Hunker was more concerned about Elsie as a star or as herself we will not undertake to say. But certainly he was immensely relieved to find her safe and sound.

"I guess it wouldn't have happened if that white-livered jay hadn't funk'd!" he gasped. "It was all right at that point if he'd played up! I'll talk to him. I'll make his hair curl, I guess. Young Wingate, you're a real man! You're the genuine white article! Shake!"

One of Wingate's arms was supporting Elsie. Mr. Hunker grasped the other hand, and wrung it ecstatically. What would have happened to his films if Miss Mainwaring had been "crooked" he dared not think. He was really grateful to Wingate.

"Better walk home, my dear," he said.

"I guess you're rattled. Take my arm." But Miss Mainwaring did not seem to hear that offer. It was George Wingate's arm she leaned on, as she moved slowly away in the direction of Hawthorne Park.

She did not speak till they reached the house. Then her dark eyes turned on Wingate's face with an eloquent look.

"You saved my life!" she whispered.

"I'd have given my life for you!" he said simply.

"You are hurt?"

"Only a few bruises—nothing!"

"I shall never forget this!" she said,

and she pressed his hand, and left him, with a tremulous smile.

Wingate walked away to his own quarters like a fellow in a dream. He was badly shaken and bruised, but he did not feel his injuries. He was happy, strangely happy and elated.

But there was another fellow who was not happy. Mr. Cyrus Hunker was talking to Loder, and making his hair curl, as he had threatened. Loder had spoiled the picture, wasted yards of film, and endangered the life of the bright, particular star of the Cyrus Hunker Company, and Mr. Hunker almost exhausted his extensive vocabulary in telling Gerald Loder what he thought of him. When he had finished—which was not till he was out of breath—Loder limped away, leaving Mr. Hunker still gesticulating. Loder certainly was not feeling happy that afternoon!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Black Suspicions!

"ELSIE!"

"Miss Mainwaring!"

"Gone!"

Cyrus Hunker was almost raving.

The whole cinema school was astonished and disturbed.

It was two or three days after the incident in the trap, and matters had gone on normally. The trap episode had been played over again when Elsie Mainwaring recovered from her fright, and the picture had been taken with success. There were few more scenes required now to complete the cowboy film, and the last scene in which Elsie was required had been taken. And then the star of the Cinema had vanished.

Where she had gone was a mystery! Why she was gone puzzled Mr. Cyrus Hunker as well as the juniors.

But she was gone.

Harry Wharton & Co. learned that she had left a brief note for Mr. Hunker, telling him that she must go, giving no reason.

That was all.

Cyrus Hunker raved in expressive American, and almost tore his goatee beard in his fury and consternation.

A star of the first magnitude had disappeared from the constellation at Hawthorne Park, and Cyrus mourned, and would not be comforted.

"It might have been worse," Billy Bunter sagely remarked to the Removites, as they discussed the mysterious disappearance of the star.

"How might it, fathead?" grunted Bob Cherry.

"Well, I might have gone, you know," said Bunter. "What would Hunker have done then? He ought to think of that."

Apparently Mr. Hunker did not think of it; or, if he did, he derived no comfort therefrom.

For a whole day Cyrus Hunker was busy with telegraph and telephone, inquiring after the vanished star.

But he learned nothing.

The next day Harry Wharton & Co. came upon him speaking to George Wingate in the garden. Wingate's face was black and gloomy. He had spoken hardly a word since Elsie had gone.

"Do you know anything about it?" Mr. Hunker was demanding, in a loud voice, as the juniors came by.

Wingate stared moodily at the producer.

"What should I know about it?" he muttered.

"Waal, I guess you were mighty friendly with Elsie," said Mr. Hunker. "I guess I've never known her take to

any galoot as she did to you. She was always standoffish with most of my comp.—even with me, I calculate. But she was always chinwagging with you, Bub. Didn't she tell you she meant to go?"

"No."

"You haven't any idea why she's gone?"

"I—I fear that there was some trouble that was weighing on her mind," said Wingate, in a low voice, his face full of distress.

"What was it?"

"I don't know. Only I thought—"

Cyrus Hunker gave a snort.

"Jest stayed to finish the film, and then vamooseed the ranch," he ejaculated.

"By hokey!"

And he stamped away in great wrath.

Wingate glanced at the juniors, and turned and walked away.

"Poor old Wingate!" murmured Bob Cherry. "He seems to feel it a good bit."

"Perhaps it's all the better for him," grunted Johnny Bull. "Wingate was well on the way to making a fool himself."

"But the painfulness of the separateness is terrific, all the same, my worthy Johnny," murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh gently.

Wingate kept to himself that day,

even avoiding Gwynne, his chum in the Sixth. But at tea-time Bunter had news at the Remove tea-table.

"Wingate's hard up!" he announced.

"How do you know that, Paul Pry?"

grunted Johnny Bull.

Bunter grinned.

"Because I heard him speaking to Gwynne just before I came in. He was borrowing money of Gwynne."

"Wingate never borrows money,"

said Wharton.

"But he did! I heard—"

"Oh, ring off!" snapped the captain of the Remove.

After tea Harry Wharton walked down to the post-office in the village, about half a mile from Hawthorne Park. He was returning, when he spotted George Wingate in the lane, with his coat off and a bag in his hand. Wingate was heading for the railway-station, and Wharton stared after him for a minute. Then he broke into a run after the Sixth-Former.

"Wingate!" he called out.

The Greyfriars captain started, and turned quickly.

"Oh, you!" he said. "What do you want, Wharton?"

"You're not going away?" exclaimed Wharton, glancing at the bag, and then at Wingate's pale face.

Wingate hesitated a moment.

"Yes," he answered at length, "I meant to slip away quietly. You needn't mention that you've seen me."

"But—but—" exclaimed Wharton, in dismay.

He understood the matter clearly enough. It was Elsie Mainwaring who was drawing Wingate away from Hawthorne Park, as she had drawn him there in the first place. Wingate seemed to read the thought in the junior's mind, and a crimson flush crept into his cheeks.

"You're not going back to Greyfriars?" faltered Wharton.

"No."

"But—but the Head, Wingate!" exclaimed Wharton anxiously. "Think what you're going to do! You don't know where to look for Miss Mainwaring. You don't even know whether she wants to be found. She must have had her own reasons for going away."

Wingate's eyes blazed, and he clenched his hand for a moment. Wharton, realising that it was the captain of Greyfriars that he, a junior, was speaking to in this strain, paused. Wingate's look was angry for a moment; then next he turned on his heel and strode away to the railway-station.

Harry Wharton watched him till he disappeared into the station, and then

(Continued on page 18.)

SOMETHING QUITE NEW!

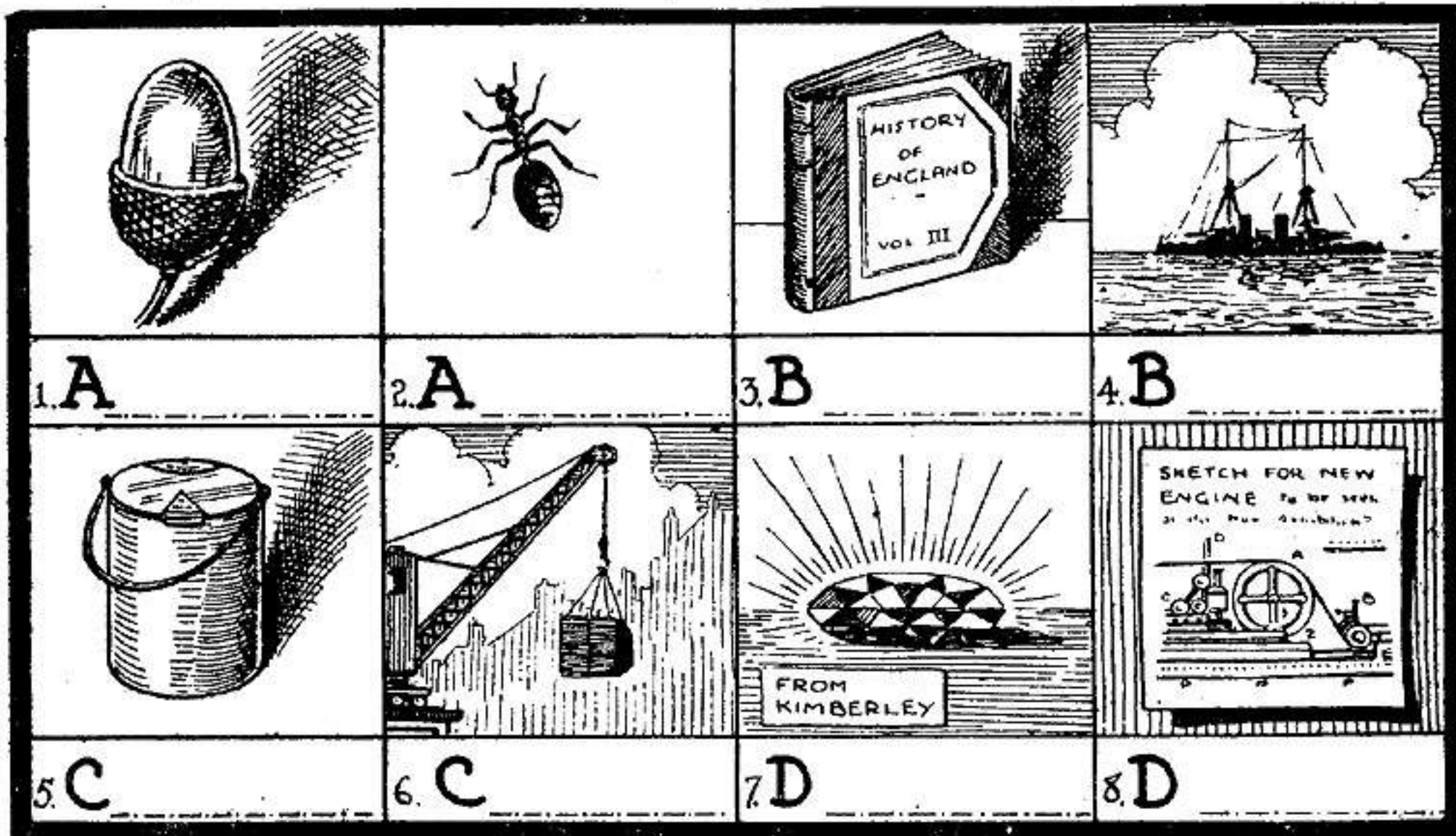
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There will be six sets of puzzles in all—five more will appear after the one on this page. The above splendid First Prize will be awarded to the reader who sends in a complete solution of the words represented which corresponds exactly with the list which is in the possession of the Editor. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit.

Do not send in your efforts now ON ANY ACCOUNT. Keep them by you until final directions appear.



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MARCUS THE BRAVE



THE FIRST INSTALMENT OF A STORY
DEALING WITH NERO, AND HIS GLADIATORS.
BY FAMOUS VICTOR NELSON.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Nero's Terror!

"**W**OE is me! Is this love—respect—loyalty? I have given them food that they may fill themselves to their throats, coal to cook it upon, money, clothes—everything! Yet they revile me, and cry out for my throne and life!"

Nero, murderer, mountebank, and drunkard, yet, withal, Emperor of Rome, left the pile of luxurious cushions upon which he had been reclining, and restlessly paced the room as he uttered the bitter words.

His courtiers watched him uneasily, a trace fearfully. When in such moods as this, it was often the conceited despot's custom to vent his temper upon the first person on whom his eyes chanced to rest.

(1.)

Knowing a well-deserved punishment awaited them for their brutal crimes upon the seas, the pirates marched with bowed heads and dejected looks.

(2.)

In the crowd of Christian captives Marcus saw Eunice. "Sire, what does this mean?" he said hoarsely to Nero, pointing to her with a trembling finger.

(3.)

Marcus, the gladiator and prince of the arena.

(4.)

Eunice, the beautiful slave-girl from Britain.



The slaves and pretorian guards standing in the background of the impromptu Court trembled as their master clutched his temples, struck his breast, and groaned. But suddenly he grew calmer, and returned to the great heap of cushions ranged upon the marble floor.

"What would they have more?" he demanded, with a helpless gesture, fixing his gaze upon his friend and adviser, Petronius, who was known throughout Rome as the Arbiter of Elegance.

The latter shrugged his shoulders.

"Revenge!" he answered bluntly, not caring for once whether he offended or pleased.

Nero shuddered, his bloated, apish face seeming to grow more haggard and grey. In spite of his vanity and supreme power, at heart he was an arrant coward, and was unable to help showing it, now that danger threatened him.

The Great Fire of Rome had only just begun to burn itself out; for it is at that period of Nero's reign that our story opens.

For seven days the once fine city had blazed and roared, and blotted out the sky with dense upheavals of sparks and smoke.

It had been a tragedy such as the world had seldom known before. Thousands had perished in the flames. Slaves, barbarians, and the rabble from the slums and alleys had taken advantage of the confusion to rob, slay, and put down all attempts to maintain authority and order.

Whole streets had fallen, the panic and tumult had hourly increased. Never since the Gaul invasion led by Brennus had Rome seen a disaster approaching this. Where magnificent abodes of the rich and palaces had stood were left only red-hot pillars and smouldering ruins. The centre of the city, away upon the hills, was like a vast, seething volcano. The roads leading from it were thick with refugees of every rank and class, who rushed from the inferno with terror-distorted faces and the fear of death in their eyes.

The fire drew in building after building, street after street, district after district. There was no stopping it, and each day saw more and more of Rome destroyed, until out of its fourteen divisions but four were left.

And, save for the vagrants and beggars who had done well out of their pilfering and plundering, the people were filled with a mad rage against Nero; for rumours which would not be denied had it that the city had been deliberately fired by his orders.

Alarmed at this, Nero had flung open the gardens of Cæsar and other magnificent parks and open places for the refugees to camp upon, and showered grain, olives, and various other kinds of food upon them.

The scum from the alleys and byways feasted and lazed, and were content; but the better classes were not so easily compensated for the loss of their homes, their treasured possessions, and the dear ones who had perished in the flames and the orgy of rioting and bloodshed.

Nero was told of their outcries against him; and, closely guarded in a palace at Antium, had lain low and trembled for the safety of his dissipated carcass.

People who saw the emperor for the first time were apt to be amazed, having taken him to be quite a different type of man.

They expected to see a coldly handsome, dignified face, symbolic of that of a great and mighty ruler, but in reality gazed upon the countenance of a drunkard and dissipated mountebank, curiously like that of an ape, save for the conscious-

ness of power that was in the eyes, and a rather good, broad forehead.

He had a thick, bull-like neck that, behind his back, was a subject for contempt and joking on the part of his courtiers, and he was affected with a near-sightedness that had given him a habit of continually raising a highly-polished emerald to his eyes. Without it, he could see nothing clearly that was not almost beneath his nose.

Yet, with all his defects, Nero's conceit and self-esteem were colossal. He wrote poems and verses, and as none dared do anything but praise them, he had grown to believe himself one of the greatest masters with his pen the world had seen born.

Even his beloved poems were forgotten now, however, as he hid in the hastily-provised Court in this palace near the sea. He felt that death was very near, and that almost any hour that struck might be his last.

Nero flung out his podgy hands in a gesture of anger and impatience.

"Asses! Fools!" he cried. "Canst do nothing but stare at me? Have none of you some suggestion to make to quiet the mob who cry out for my life?"

A courtier suggested a journey to Egypt, which had long been proposed and talked of. But Petronius promptly disagreed.

"And let the people think that you fear them, O Divine One?" he asked, with a trace of sarcasm. "By Bacchus, that would be worse than committing suicide! I tell you, sire, that the matter must be handled with the utmost tact and forethought! The mob need only a leader to overthrow your rule! You could go to Egypt, but when you returned you would find it impossible again to ascend your throne! Someone else would by that time have been proclaimed Cæsar, and in Rome your life would not be worth a moment's purchase!"

"Comforting words, O Arbiter of Elegance!" Nero sneered bitterly. "I expected more from you!"

"I speak only the truth, O Divine One!" Petronius answered, with conviction. "You have not passed amongst the people as I have done, and heard the threats they make!"

The emperor grew more angry. His near-sighted eyes glittered unpleasantly, and it was plain he was in a dangerous mood.

"What say you, Horace?" he demanded, raising his emerald and fixing his glance upon the courtier who was also prefect of the pretorian soldiers. "Answer on your head!"

"My head!" Horace, a wizened, unpleasant-looking little man, glared at Nero insolently. "You threaten my head!" he snarled. "Take care, sire! If harm befell me, the soldiers would no longer remain loyal!"

A dead silence fell over the crowded court-room. Horace, knowing Nero was probably seeking a scapegoat on whom he could place responsibility for the firing of the city, had taken the bull by the horns. He meant to fight.

Slaves shivered. Courtiers stood aghast. Would Nero order Horace to be flung into the dungeons, or—

"My men set fire to Rome, it is true," Horace said, speaking again before the amazed and angry emperor could make any reply. "But it was at your orders, sire! You wished to see a real city in flames, that you might give a great poem on the subject to the world, and I and my soldiers—"

"Stop!" Nero thundered, his hands clutching nervously at his amethyst robe, as he glanced furtively at the sea of faces

about him. "I did but joke, Horace!" he said quickly, knowing that the prefect held him in the hollow of his hand, and wishing to slip out of an awkward and humiliating position as gracefully as possible. "If your brain is addled, and you have no way out of our difficulties to submit, I must seek elsewhere for inspiration!"

Horace permitted himself the faintest of smiles, in which lurked triumph; for he knew that his defiant stand had been for the best and that he had conquered. In a moment he was once again the oily-tongued and courteous subject and adviser.

"There is a plan I would suggest to you, O Incomparable Ruler!" he declared. "It is, methinks, a clever one at that. Why not say that the Christians fired Rome?"

Nero gave a cry of delight and exultation.

"By Hercules, that is excellent, Horace!" he exclaimed, rubbing his hands and laughing. "We can say that they set Rome blazing because they thought it needed cleansing of its pomp and sin!"

Horace inclined his head.

"Verily," he answered, "with the statement properly noised abroad, the people would believe. They would deeply regret their disloyal outbursts against you, and demand that the Christians be severely punished—flung to the lions, or slain by gladiators!"

Nero rose to his feet, and again took a turn up and down the highly polished marble floor.

"Grand!" he murmured. "Excellent! Methought that I had not one man of wit and brains about me, but I was mistaken. Go you at once, good friend, and see that the necessary rumours are set afloat, and have your soldiers seek out the people who claim the faith of Christianity, and fling them into the dungeons!"

"Stay!"

It was Petronius who spoke, and Nero regarded him in surprise.

"Well?" he demanded.

"Is the scheme not too fiendish and unjust, O Cæsar?" Petronius asked quietly, with a lifting of his shoulders. "What will you do with these people when the pretorians have cast them into prison?"

"Why, that is not difficult to decide, Petronius," Nero answered coldly. "The summer games are at hand, and the people shall be treated to such sport as they have not thought to be possible in their wildest dreams! I will have dogs brought from the Pyrenees and from Ireland—great packs that shall be purposely kept famished—lions and the wolves from the hills! The Christians shall be turned into the arena to face fiercest tigers from Africa, packs of these wild beasts, and—"

"But what have they done to deserve so terrible a fate, O Divine One?" Petronius asked, though he knew that he was risking his own life by raising his protest.

Nero laughed in a manner that was not good to hear.

"Knowest thou not that the Christians set fire to Rome?" he asked meaningly; and, although his blood boiled at the diabolical injustice of the conspiracy, Petronius knew that it was useless to argue further, and bowed his head.

Horace hastened from the palace, and called together certain men he knew who could be trusted to say anything, and set any rumour afloat, provided they were well paid; and they did their inhuman work all too well.

By evening every part of the city and

its suburbs rang with cries of "The Christians burned Rome! Fling them to the lions!" and wholesale captures by Nero's pretorians began.

The people might have doubted in their hearts the Christians' guilt, but they pretended to believe that the great and tragical blaze had been their work. Indeed, they wanted to believe such to be the case, being aware that it meant such sights in the new arena—which was already being planned—as had never before been witnessed.

Rome loved cruelty, and just now was in a vengeful, bitter mood, desiring that someone, no matter who, should suffer for its wrongs. To drown the memory of the all-consuming inferno in the blood of the Christians suited the people very well, and the soldiers' work was gloated over.

Many even helped in it. It was not a hard task to find Christians, for they had never concealed their faith. All through the night captures went on.

No pity was shown. Women were dragged to prison by their hair, children snatched from their mothers and driven before the pretorians with heartless blows from whips and the flat of swords. Ruined Rome was filled with madness and the desire for blood and cruelty.

And Nero, who had learned that all threats against him had been forgotten in this new diversion, sat serenely in the palace at Antium, smiled complacently, and commenced his poem on the burning of Rome.

Marcus the Brave—Betrayed!

"**W**HAT does it mean, these cries against the Christians, Marcus? Do you believe that it was they who started the fire?"

The speaker was a sandy-haired, freckle-faced young giant, who stood on the deck of a vessel lying beside the Antium landing-stage.

The ship was called the *Conqueror*, and had but recently returned from a voyage to Africa, especially commissioned by Nero with the object of capturing a notorious pirate who had for years robbed and sunk ships laden with costly cargoes intended for Rome.

The expedition had been led by the

sandy-haired lad's companion, who now stood beside him on the deck.

The latter's name was Marcus, and until he had set off upon the mission just completed he had been a gladiator who was the hero of many combats in the arena.

In direct contrast to Leo, his friend, Marcus had all the refined handsomeness of a Greek god, yet about him there was a charming boyishness, despite his twenty years.

Just now he was a trifle pale, and there was a bandage about his forehead. He looked just a little haggard and worn; but, considering his experiences of less than a week ago, that was not to be wondered at.

Marcus loved a beautiful British girl named Eunice, who had been a slave in the palace of Nero on the Palatine. When this noble edifice had been destroyed by the fire, Eunice had fled with other slaves to the trans-Tiber. After braving the terrible heat and smoke, Marcus had found her there, and saved her from being crushed to death by an elephant, which, mad with terror, had escaped from a near-by menagerie and run amok in the congested streets.

In doing this the young gladiator had not escaped without serious injury, and he had been cared for until yesterday in the house of a Christian named Cato. Eunice, his sweetheart, had nursed him; for she, too, had stayed there, she being a believer and follower of Cato's faith.

Yet, though he was still weak, and far from himself, Marcus was very happy.

Nero had promised him that if he succeeded in capturing the rover Strongbow, and brought him back to Rome a prisoner, he would free Eunice, and arrange a wedding for the lad and the girl of an unprecedented splendour.

For the ceremony and pomp Marcus cared not a rap, but the thought that Eunice would soon be his wife, and freed from slavery, meant more to him than life itself.

His mission had been fraught with many perils, and more than once he and Leo had been within an ace of meeting their deaths. In the end, however, they had won through, and Strongbow and almost his entire gang, together with six out of the seven ships the pirate had commanded, had been triumphantly brought to Antium.

The vessels lay now near the *Conqueror*, which was the largest boat yet to be built, and could accommodate no less than fifty rowers a side. On the enormous ship herself, and also upon the captured boats, were hosts of pirates in chains and fetters—a mixed and villainous-looking crew, comprising but few white men, but any amount of negroes, half-castes, and Egyptians of low birth.

Marcus was deep in thought, and his comrade Leo had to repeat his question, before he heard and heeded it.

"The Christians—nay, I do not think they started the fire!" Marcus said, his face growing stern. "From what I heard in Rome when I was riding through the heat and smoke and the frenzied people who were seeking safety, it was the work of Nero's hirelings!"

"You believe Nero deliberately had the blaze kindled, Marcus?" Leo gasped in amazement, staring at his friend. "But why—why? Tell me that!"

Marcus shook his head with an air of helplessness.

"Who can say what motives the madman had?" he returned. "Some say it was to rid the city of the evil odours which came from the narrow streets and alleyways. But nothing is certain save that, when men rushed through the street hurling blazing torches into the shops and houses, Nero's soldiers prevented the people from extinguishing the fires they started."

"By the shade of my mother if 'twas by his command, he deserves not only banishment, but death!" Leo declared indignantly. "Think of the women and little children who must have perished in the panic and flames! It is monstrous—worse!"

"And more monstrous things are to come, good friend," Marcus said gravely. "These Christians whom Nero is having flung into prison and blamed for his crowning crime against humanity will be driven into the arena, crucified, or burnt alive! You can depend upon that, Leo! There are times when I feel I hate Rome—hate its people for their callousness and the delight they take in all things unjust and cruel!"

Leo gave a gesture of agreement, then shrugged his broad shoulders.

"I share similar feelings at times also, Marcus," he replied. "But what can one do? Nothing, save look on and remain inactive, if nauseated and disgusted! Nero and those who follow him are all-powerful, and methinks things will never alter!"

"Don't be too sure of that," his comrade objected. "Had you been with me and seen the sights I saw, heard the cries I heard, in Rome, whilst it roared and blazed, you would think differently."

His eyes flashed and he drew a deep breath.

"I tell you, Leo, that the people only needed to find just then a man who could be bold enough to stand up amongst them and proclaim himself their leader, and Nero would have been dethroned, and have been compelled to fly for his life! Methought his hour had struck ere this, but by the unjust and inhuman scheme he has hit upon to throw the blame for this last misdeed upon other and innocent shoulders, he has at least gained a respite from his people's wrath. But, though they will pretend to think the Christians guilty whilst they watch them perish in the arena, accept gifts Nero will lavish upon them, and scramble for the lottery tickets he will issue and distribute, they will know in their innermost souls where the blame lies, and will not forget!"

Leo clapped his friend upon the back.

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"You should have been an orator!" he declared, with a laugh.

"I speak strongly because I feel strongly!" the young gladiator answered quietly. "I do not forget that Eunice is a Christian, and, but for the promise Nero has given me to free her and arrange our wedding, she might be among the poor creatures who are dragged from their homes, and lashed and driven along the roads in chains to the prisons."

"They say the prisons near Rome are full to overflowing, and that to-day Christians will be brought to the gaol which lies near here, and whither Strongbow and our prisoners are bound," Leo said musingly. "But knowest thou how the time flies? We must be getting into our finery, Marcus, to receive the bull-necked jackass when he arrives!"

"By Bacchus, yes!" Marcus exclaimed. "I was thinking of other things, my Leo, and almost forgetting Nero!"

They both hurried to their quarters and donned their burnished helmets, breastplates, and swords.

This morning Strongbow and his captured crew were to be formally handed over by Marcus to Nero's pretorian soldiers, and, no longer afraid to show himself in public because of his scheme to make the Christians his scapegoats, Nero himself was to be present to witness the ceremony.

He was due to arrive with his courtiers and followers at the quayside at almost any moment now, and, as Marcus and Leo returned to the Conqueror's deck, they found pretorians lining the street by the waterside, and also hosts of sight-seers.

Marcus' mission and the success of his voyage was no secret to the people of Antium and elsewhere, and he was looked upon as a hero, and one who had rendered a great service to the community.

As he was glimpsed—a fine figure in his gleaming armour—a rousing cheer was raised for him, and, in response, he drew his sword and waved it to the crowd, which was increasing in volume with every moment that passed.

Then, after Leo had issued brisk orders that caused the Conqueror's sailors to line up behind him and Marcus upon the deck, there came a period of waiting. But Nero came at last—came, as usual, with a terrific flourish of trumpets and a pomp and magnificence that dazzled the eyes.

First arrived a detachment of Numidian horsemen, the sun glistening upon their ebony black faces and glinting upon the huge gilt earrings that swung in their ear. They wore gorgeous yellow uniforms, girt at the waist with crimson, and carried formidable lances, with long, bamboo shafts. They were followed by hosts of slaves, arrayed in gaily-coloured robes of silk. Detachment after detachment of pretorian guards marched after them, then bearers of various musical instruments—long, twisted trumpets of gold and silver, flutes, lutes, zithers, and cymbals.

In their wake swung along a pretorian detachment of huge Sicambrians, bearded, with red, flaxen hair, and blue eyes. They bore in front of them Roman eagles, inscribed tablets, and busts of Nero.

From beneath the skins and armour worn by these soldiers protruded bare, muscular, sun-burned arms. They were the most feared of Cæsar's warriors, and, conscious of their own strength and power, looked about them with contemptuous eyes.

But, fine though they were, the people paid but scanty attention to them, for they heralded the approach of Cæsar himself.

Preceded by beautiful chariots of gold,

draped with costly hangings, Nero rode in a magnificent conveyance of a similar kind, and composed of the same precious metal. But it was studded with the rarest of precious stones, and drawn by no less than twelve Idumean horses shod with gold.

Perhaps because he judged that his own fancied beauty would be magnified by contrast, two deformed dwarfs lay at his feet. He was attired in a tunic and toga of his favourite colour—amethyst—and a laurel wreath reposed upon his head.

The trumpets blared again, and Nero's chariot came to a standstill before the landing-stage and abreast of the mighty Conqueror.

At a sharp command from Marcus the sailors sank to one knee, as did he and Leo and the vessel's officers, remaining thus until Nero had stepped from his chariot and waved his hand as a signal for them to rise.

The people cheered themselves hoarse, partially because those near the pretorian guards, at least, feared to do anything else. Then silence fell as a herald sounded his trumpet and announced that the guards were ready to receive the captured Strongbow and his men.

Orders rang out again upon the ship, from which a long gangway had been run to the shore. Certain of Nero's pretorian detachments marched forward as the Emperor stepped back, and they stood waiting, with their swords drawn, to receive the unhappy prisoners.

The latter were urged forward in their fetters and chains, passing across the Conqueror's deck and on to the broad gangway. It was an impressive sight. Knowing a well-deserved punishment awaited them for their brutal crimes upon the seas, the pirates marched with bowed heads and dejected looks.

Only Strongbow himself, who was the first to be compelled to land, showed spirit. He walked with his head held high, and a contemptuous sneer upon his lips. As he passed Marcus and Leo he shot at them a vicious glance full of hatred, and clenched his hands until the nails bit into the flesh of his palms.

He would have paused to spit upon the ground as he passed Nero, but a prod in the back from a soldier's blade forced him hurriedly on.

There were well over a hundred prisoners, and their disembarkation took a considerable time. After those from the Conqueror had been marched ashore, the six smaller vessels were berthed against the quay in turn, and the captives from them followed the others ashore.

At a sign from Nero, his musicians played. With hoarse commands, and here and there a savage blow, the pretorians marshalled the pirates into formation to march to the prison, which lay a short distance across country.

Tramp, tramp, tramp! Closely watched by their guards, squad after squad went listlessly down the road, their chains clanking, and their feet sending up a cloud of dust, until the last of the non-descript horde were on the move.

The pretorians broke into a song, and the sun flashed upon their armour and helmets as they vanished with their charges around a bend in the street.

It was over! The formal delivering over to justice of Strongbow the Rover and his cut-throat gang had been carried out, and the end of one of the worst pests of the sea had come.

Nero waved his hand, and the music ceased, then signed that he wished to receive Marcus and publicly thank him for the service he had rendered the State.

But as the gladiator came briskly across the gangway and set foot on the quay there came an interruption.

"The Christians to the lions!"

The cry came again and again from the crowds at some distance up the street, and as both Nero and Marcus turned their heads in that direction they saw that a party of soldiers were bringing along the road some twoscore of the unfortunate men and women upon whom the arch-fiend who ruled Rome had saddled his crime.

Commands rang out, and the pretorians in charge of the Christians, who had been on their way to the prison where the pirates had gone, halted their captives. But Nero beckoned to the officer in charge of them to proceed on his way and pass him.

"Let nothing hinder the taking of these foul criminals to their punishment!" he cried piously. "The corpses of those who perished in the flames demand vengeance!"

Marcus drew back to let the unhappy prisoners and the soldiers pass him; then, as they were marched nearer, he uttered a startled and horrified cry.

He drew in a sharp, hissing breath, and reeled back as one who had received a heavy blow between the eyes.

For in the crowd of captives, her sweet, girlish face like marble, yet with a curiously resigned and peaceful look in her eyes, was the girl he loved—the girl for whom he had faced endless perils across the seas, and whom Nero had promised to free and give him for his wife. Eunice—the girl-slave from Britain!

"Sire, what does this mean?" he gasped hoarsely, pointing to her with a trembling hand.

Nero raised his emerald, and, as the prisoners were halted at his gesture, he dispassionately surveyed his slave.

"It means, O gladiator," he said, with the trace of a sneer, "that the maiden whom thou wouldst wed must be a Christian, and that your marriage with her will therefore be impossible."

In a moment Marcus was on his knees before him, pleading desperately, wildly, for the life of the girl.

"After all I have done for Rome, after your pledged word, O Divine One," he cried, "you will not cast her to the lions!"

But, with a cold expression in his dissipated eyes and a cruel little smile twisting his thick lips, Nero impatiently motioned to him to rise.

"She is a Christian, and I have decreed that not one Christian who is captured shall escape the arena!" he answered, in a tone of ice. "What wouldst thou have? Is my decision not just? These people fired Rome! The hand of this very maid may have cast a blazing brand that fired a whole street!"

"It's a lie!"

The words came thickly from Marcus' lips as, with clenched hands and blazing eyes, he came to his feet. His brain was whirling. He was crazed with rage. For the moment to him Nero was no longer a monarch, but just a man who was heartlessly betraying him and breaking his word.

"It's a lie!" he cried again, his indignation and mad anger causing him to throw all discretion to the winds. "It was by your orders Rome was fired, and, like the murderer that you are, you would send hundreds of innocent souls to their death to make your people forget your crime!"

(There will be another instalment of this grand serial next week. Order your copy of the MAGNET early!)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 660.

HELP!

An Interesting and Instructive Article. Being No. 1 of a Splendid Series of Interest to Old and Young.

By **GEORGE HOWE.**

"**D**ID you hear about the rag last night? Poor old Bowser put his hand through the window, and made an awful gash in his wrist. He bled like a pig!"

"Yes. And I heard that the poor fellow was nearly dead when the doctor arrived."

"Well, the doctor was out, and didn't get here until more than a hour after he was sent for."

"I'm not blaming the doctor. What I feel vexed about is that none of you fellows knew how to stop the bleeding."

"Oh! I suppose you are going to pose as a doctor now?"

"Don't sneer, old fellow. I'm not posing as a doctor, and wouldn't attempt to take the place of a doctor; but knowing what to do in an accident until the doctor comes has saved many a life, and you could have saved Bowser all that suffering last night. I say, why don't you learn? It's interesting, and if you like I'll tell you something about it."

"Fire away, then!"

"As Bowser's case is so fresh in our memories, I'll take bleeding first."

"How will you take it? Hot?"

"Now, look here. I'm not going on if you're going to interrupt at every sentence!"

"Sorry! You began in the clouds, like a stuffy lecturer!"

"I beg your pardon! Stop me if I do that again."

"I suppose some of you fellows fainted when you saw some blood? Many people do. But that can be got over by learning all you can about yourself. After all, there is nothing to be afraid of in blood. Everybody has it, and, unlike the measles, they have it always. It is as natural as breath, neither of which can be done without. So if you ever feel inclined to be faint at the sight of bleeding, pull yourself together, and forget your own feelings in the effort to help the sufferer to bear his."

"The blood-supply in our bodies is something like the water-supply of a town. The heart is the pumping-station, the lungs are the filter-beds, and the blood-vessels are the pipes. There is this difference: in the water-supply the dirty water is not taken back to the pumping-station through pipes, but the blood in the body is."

"These pipes in our bodies have different names, and you ought to know them. The pipes which carry the pure blood from the heart are called arteries. Note that—heart to arteries. As the arteries near the parts they have to supply with pure blood they become smaller and smaller, until about 30,000 are required to cover an inch. These tiny vessels are called capillaries, from the Latin capillus, meaning a hair. They are much smaller than a hair, and to see them without a good microscope would 'cap Hilary,' or anyone else!"

"Capillaries supply the nourishment that is in the blood to the body, and

take the waste material from the body into the blood. Just as the arteries taper off into capillaries, the capillaries enlarge into veins, which convey the impure blood to the heart. The right side of the heart pumps this impure blood through the lungs, where it is purified by the breathing. The blood goes back to the heart, but this time into the left side, and it is from the left side of the heart that the blood is again pumped through the body."

"Bleeding from each of these blood-vessels is quite distinct. From capillaries the blood oozes, and is brick red. The veins pour out their contents in a steady stream; the blood is dark, and comes from the side of the wound farther from the heart. A damaged artery ejects scarlet blood in jerky jets from the side of the wound nearer the heart."

"Aren't you getting rather eloquent again? I like the 'jerky jets'; it sounds like a new 'comic'! But, I say, how do you stop the bleeding?"

"How do you stop a leak in a water-pipe until the plumber comes? Don't you put your finger—or, better still, your thumb—over the hole until somebody gets a piece of rag to tie round the pipe? That is exactly how you treat a 'leak' in a blood-vessel, unless there is something in the wound. If life were at stake you wouldn't even stop for that, but press the finger on the wound at once, and take all risks. Fortunately this does not often need to be done, and there is usually time to put a fold of a clean handkerchief, or the inside of an envelope, between your thumb and the wound. Even this is not necessary if the thumb is quite clean. When the bleeding has stopped, place a pad on the spot where your thumb was, and fix the pad in position with a bandage. The pad can be made of a clean handkerchief folded corners to centre two or three times. The smooth side of the pad goes next the wound. Though the orthodox bandage is a right-angled triangle with a base of about fifty inches, anything that is long enough and strong enough for the purpose will do. Use a large handkerchief, or your necktie if nothing else is handy. The centre of the bandage is placed on the pad, the ends carried round the limb and tied firmly on the pad."

"Be careful about that knot. Most people tie 'granny' knots. Why they should be called 'grannies' I don't know, unless it is that they are not expected to last long. Certainly a 'granny' knot does not keep tight, is difficult to undo, and lies in a lump. The correct knot to tie is a 'reef,' and it is made by passing the right end over the left, then the left over the right. This is a knot you can rely on. It lies flat, with the ends along the bandage, does not work loose, and can be easily undone."

"Next week we will talk about turning off the supply at the 'taps.'"

THE SCHOOLBOY CINEMA STARS.

(Continued from page 13.)

he turned to walk to Hawthorne Park, much troubled in his mind.

He liked and respected Wingate, as all the Greyfriars fellows did, and he could not help feeling concerned for the Greyfriars captain. Elsie Mainwaring was the magnet that drew him; but it was folly—folly! And what could be the end of it?

Wharton's face was clouded as he reached the gate of Mr. Cyrus Hunker's headquarters.

"Seen Wingate?" asked Bob Cherry, as he came in.

Wharton nodded.

"Bunter says he saw him packing a bag. He believes he's going to cut," said Bob, in a low voice. "Of course, Bunter is a silly ass—"

"I'm afraid Bunter's right this time, old fellow. Wingate's cut."

"My hat!" said Bob.

"It's rotten!" said Wharton uneasily. "Of—of course, you can guess why he's gone. It's folly!"

"No doubt about that," said Bob.

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"So—so that's why he was borrowing money of Gwynne, according to Bunter. If the awful ass is going to look for Miss Mainwaring, he will want money—more than he's got, I fancy! Of course, he may have heard from her."

"But, I say, there's something wrong!" said Bunter, jerking a rat thumb in the direction of the house. "I've just passed old Hunker's window; it was open, and he was fairly yelling!"

"What about, ass?"

"He was in a rare bait, I can tell you. Simply yelling like a Red Indian!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look there!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

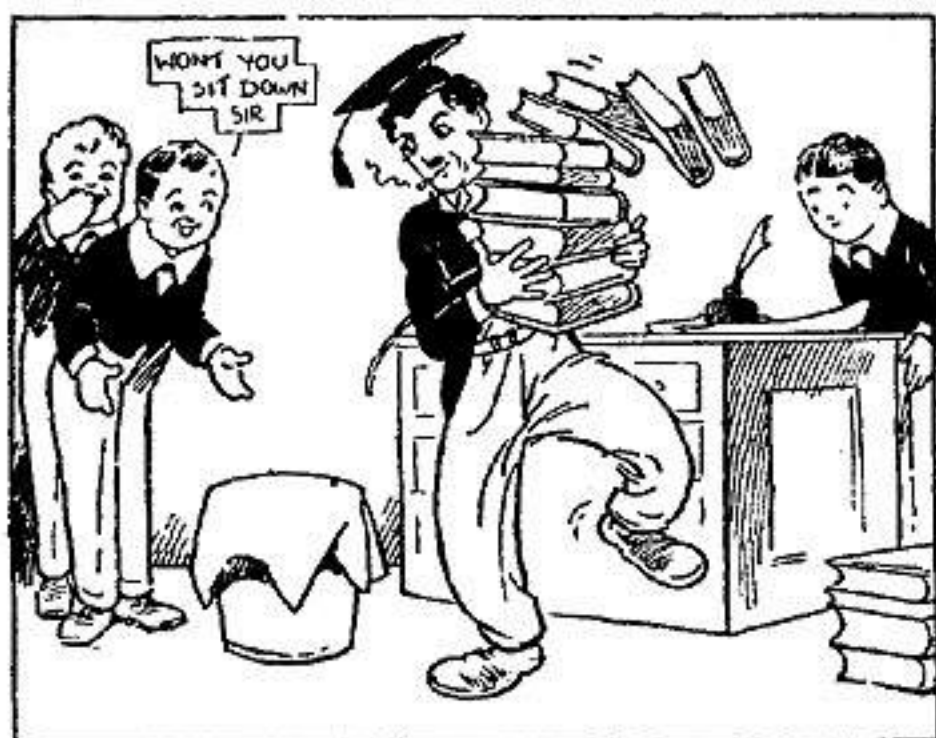
The door of Mr. Hunker's office had opened.

Cyrus Hunker appeared in the doorway, his face purple, and his goatee beard bristling with rage.

(Continued on page 20.)

IF CHARLIE CHAPLIN WERE A FORM-MASTER!

The First of a Screamingly Funny Set of Comic Pictures. Drawn by J. MACWILSON.



1. Tee-hee! Here's fun, lads and lassies! Charlie Chaplin, the scream of the screen, has struck a fine job as Form-master at the classic Academy for the Sons of Cabinet Ministers, plumbers, and gasfitters. "What joy!" chortled the ladlets. "Won't you sit down, sir?" wuffed Willie Wagg politely.



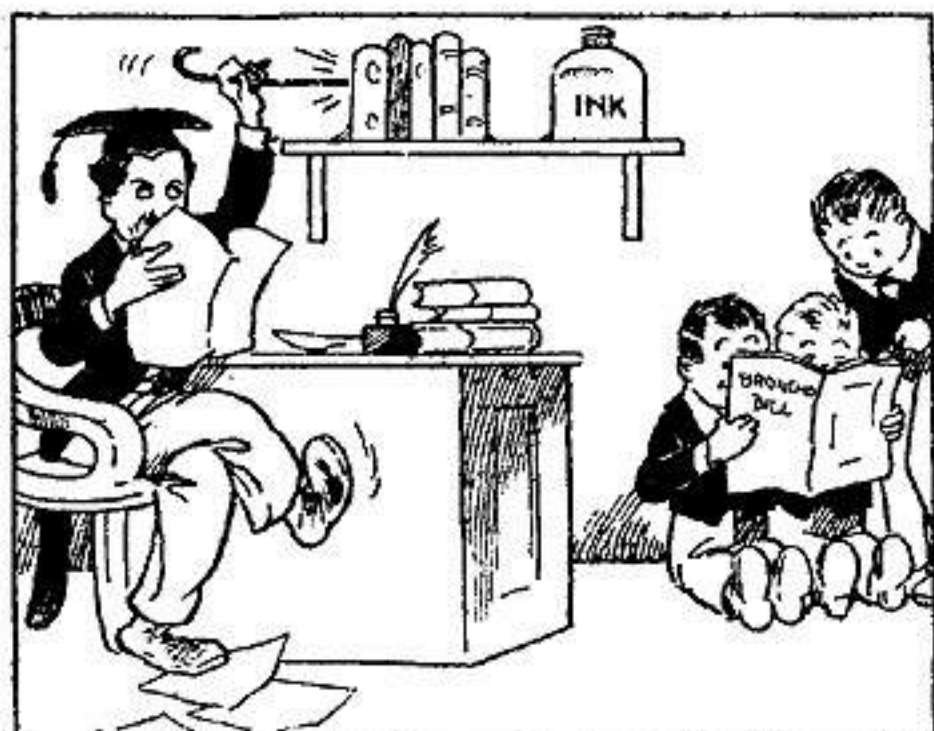
2. "Woof!" gasped Charlie, as he subsided into about a gallon of watery wetness. "Ha, ha, ha! What a priceless old prune you are, to be sure, sir!" chirruped the infants. "You absolutely take the bath-bun—specially the bath—indeed you do, sir!" "Oh, throw me a lifebuoy, someone!" gurgled the Form-master.



3. But nothing can damp the spirits of our filmy fun-merchant for longer than it takes you to say, "A manager imagined he was managing an imaginary menagerie," and he soon returned to the merry old Form-room.



4. But, oh, tut-tut! When he took his seat on the handsome old mahogany stool, he straightway arose with exceeding alacrity. "Yow-wow!" he howled. "I've been attacked by a wasp or something!" But when he saw that tack—



5. Charlie tackfully—ahem!—tactfully said nothing, but he got his film-brain to work all the same. With his cane he gently prodded the useful old guides to knowledge, and—



6. Biff! Over went the jar of blue-black on to the nappers of the naughty little nippers. "Toodlo-oo, boys!" chortled Charlie. "The class is dismissed!" But look out next week! THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 660.

SCHOOLBOY CINEMA STARS.

(Continued from page 18.)

Evidently there was something very wrong with the producer.

"What has happened?" exclaimed Marjorie Hazeldene, breathlessly.

"Blessed if I know!" said Wharton, with a sinking at the heart for which he could hardly account. "Come on; let's see!"

They hurried towards the house.

Cyrus Hunker was gesticulating with fury, and shouting—or, rather, raving. As the juniors drew nearer they heard his words:

"Robbed! Robbed!"

"I say, you fellows, do you think it was Wingate?" asked Billy Bunter.

"Shut up!" hissed Wharton.

"Robbed!" roared Mr. Hunker. "I guess some sneaking, slab-sided galoot has been through my desk and lifted my

greenbacks! I guess I'm going to know who it was, just a few!"

Wharton's heart was like lead in his breast. It was impossible to suspect old Wingate of such a base crime.

"What has happened?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, coming up breathlessly.

"I guess I've been robbed!" roared Mr. Hunker. "A hundred pounds has been taken from my desk!"

"It is quite impossible that a Greyfriars boy—" began Mr. Quelch haughtily.

Cyrus interrupted him with a snort.

"I guess that is what we're going to see, sir! First of all, call over the roll. Let's see whether anybody is missing!"

Wharton's eyes met Bob Cherry's.

"It—it's impossible!"

"I'm sure of that!" breathed Wharton. "But—"

"What will it look like?" muttered Bob miserably. "Poor old Wingate! If he only knew!"

"He would come back at once if he knew." Wharton drove the black, wretched suspicion from his mind. "But he doesn't know, Bob! And—and they will think—" His voice faltered.

Mr. Quelch was already calling the roll of the Greyfriars fellows. All answered to their names but one. Wingate was missing. Mr. Hunker smiled grimly as he noted the fact.

"Doubtless he has gone for a walk, and will return by dark," said Mr. Quelch.

Wingate did not return by dark—he did not return at all. And when the cinema school went to bed that night there was certainty in Mr. Hunker's mind—and black suspicion in the minds of the schoolboy cinema stars.

THE END.

(There will be another story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled: "WINGATE'S SACRIFICE!" Make a point of ordering your copy EARLY!)

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