

MONDAY IS "MAGNET" DAY!



The **Magnet** Library

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"HIS LAST CARD!"

GRAND COMPLETE TALE OF THE CHUMS OF GREYFRIARS!



RESCUE IN SIGHT FOR THE KIDNAPPED CINEMA STAR!

(An Exciting Incident in this week's Grand Complete School Story.)

**For Next Monday.**

Here is a list of the grand stories to be found in next week's issue:

"COKER'S CRAZE!"

By Frank Richards,

is the title of the long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., at Greyfriars. Of all the humorous yarns we have had this is one of the best. Coker of the Fifth, the most prominent figure in the tale, has a sudden longing to become a film-star, and, being sure of his abilities, he goes as far as announcing to the Head his intention of leaving the school to fulfil his ambition. But the Head thinks otherwise. Wibley hatches a scheme to help Coker, and the fun commences!

To follow this will be yet another long instalment of our thrilling serial of a young gladiator's adventures at the time of Nero's reign of terror over the Roman Empire, entitled:

"MARCUS THE BRAVE!"

By Famous Victor Nelson.

According to the letters from many of my chums, this story has gained immense popularity, and they will like this instalment even better than its predecessors.

The Sixth and Last set of pictures to our

GRAND COMPETITION

will also be included in the list. This feature is a great "scoop," and my chums tell me that they have spent many an interesting evening puzzling

out the solutions to the pictures. It is vitally important that you should have this last set, otherwise all your work will be wasted on the sets in hand.

It is up to you, then, to make sure of next week's number, and that can only be done by ordering your copy well in advance.

And another lot of screamingly funny pictures of

"CHARLIE CHAPLIN—FORM-MASTER!"

will be found on page 19 of next Monday's issue.

FROM CORNWALL.

A correspondent who is touring in the interesting south-west corner of the country, where so many quaint customs linger, sends me a capital letter. He is seeing Falmouth and its immense harbour, and St. Austell and the Helford River, and he asks me whether I know these places. Well, some of them! St. Mawes' Regatta was great, and in the evening the sailors from the Foudroyant and the inhabitants gave the Flora Dance, which Sir William Treloar made famous. My correspondent is immensely pleased with the Greyfriars model in "Chuckles," and he would like to have the figures of the characters as well.

RHYMES.

There is always a peck of worry over rhymes. Only yesterday I was told of a clinking comic poem which was turned

down by a contemporary because the word to rhyme with "verger" seemed, in the editor's opinion, to be the wrong one. Think of the bitter chagrin of the hopeful poet, stewing at midnight, unable to get a wink of sleep just through miserable, haunting disappointment! Besides, the thing is so easy. Look at it:

"I heard yer,"
Said the verger.

The thing jumps at you, though why anybody should want to be humorous about a verger is more than I know. The late Sir Walter Raleigh knew good rhymes. About the time, I should say, he lit up his first pipeful of prime Virginian tobacco, he must have thrown off this dainty trifle:

"May pure contents
For ever pitch their tents,
Upon the downs, 'midst rocks and mountains,
And peace still slumber by the purling fountains!"

There it is, all complete. Mountains and fountains; they always did rhyme. Why, I have even seen verses which dragged in Bunter as a precious food-hunter! Oh, it can be done, you know! There is a lot of critical mush talked about the difficulty of rhyming. When in doubt hire a dictionary.

Your Editor

SMARTLY HAT-TIRED!

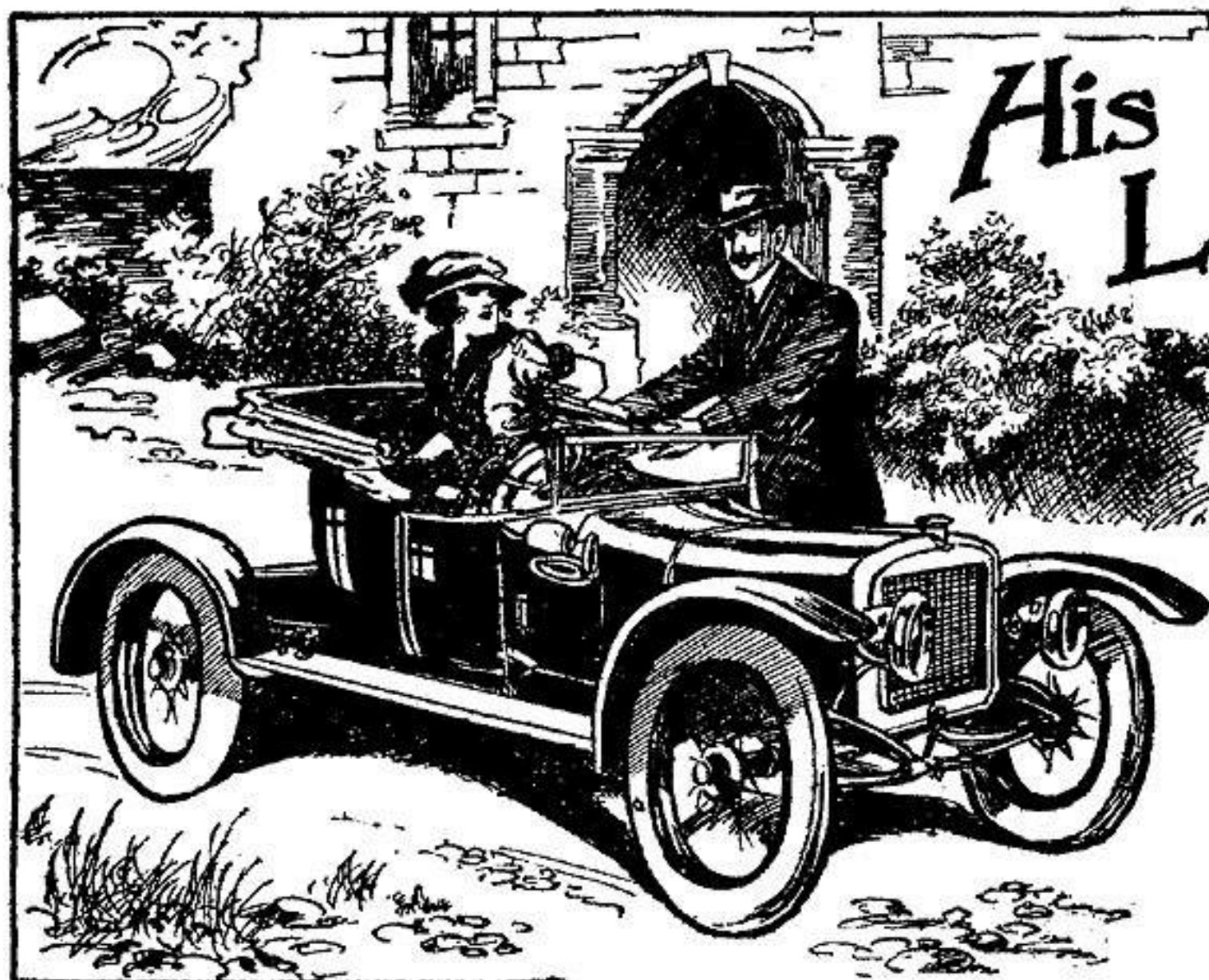
What Willy feels like when he goes out in view of the public for the first time in his new top-hat!

ONLY LOST!

Bill Bigfellow (to policeman who is leading a lost child to the station):
"What's he done, guv'nor?"

HE MISUNDERSTOOD!

Old Hand: "What are you in here for?"
New Arrival: "My doctor advised me to take something for my cold—so I took a man's watch!"



His Last Card!

A Splendid Complete Story of Elsie Mainwaring, Cinema Star, and the Chums of Greyfriars School.

... BY ...
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Startling Message!

BUZZ-Z-Z!
The telephone bell rang in Cyrus Hunker's office, in the block of buildings at Hawthorne Park.

Cyrus Hunker, the film-producer, was not there, though his voice, outside the office, could be heard through the open window. There were five Greyfriars juniors in the office—Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove. The Famous Five had come there to receive some instructions from Mr. Hunker with regard to the new film in which they were taking part, and they were dutifully waiting for the film-producer to step in when the telephone bell buzzed.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's the giddy telephone!" remarked Bob Cherry. "Better call Hunky."

Buzz-z-z-z-z!

Harry Wharton stepped to the window.

Outside, Cyrus Hunker was engaged in conversation with Miss Elsie Mainwaring, the cinema star, and Wingate of the Sixth Form at Greyfriars. The film-producer was talking hard—he generally was. Indeed, Cyrus Hunker's long chin was the most active part of Cyrus Hunker. It received much more exercise than the rest of him. Wharton waited for a lull to chip in; and the breezy American gentleman, having paused for a second to take in breath, Wharton rapped out:

"Telephone, Mr. Hunker."

Cyrus Hunker gave a sharp glance round.

"I guess you're old enough to take a call on a telephone, Wharton!" he rapped back.

"Oh, certainly!" said Harry.

He hurried across to the telephone; Cyrus Hunker's voice going on again as if there had been no lull.

Harry Wharton lifted the receiver from the hooks, and the spluttering buzz of the bell ceased.

"Hallo!" he said into the transmitter.

"Is that Cyrus Hunker?" came a quick inquiry through the telephone, and Wharton started.

He knew the voice.

It was that of Vernon Carson, the film actor, who had been "fired" out of Cyrus Hunker's company a few days before—Elsie's enemy, and the bitter enemy of George Wingate.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's up?" asked Bob, catching the expression on his chum's face.

"It's Carson," said Harry.

"That rotter? Tell him to go and eat coke!" said Frank Nugent.

"Are you there?" came impatiently on the telephone. "Is that you, Cyrus Hunker?"

"It's Wharton —"

"You cub!"

"Thank you, Mr. Carson! I'm taking the call for Mr. Hunker. What shall I tell him you want?"

"I want to speak to Elsie Mainwaring."

"My dear chap, Elsie Mainwaring won't waste a word on you," answered Wharton. "If you come near her again, you're going to be kicked out as you were before. There's no end of boots ready for you here!"

"Tell Miss Mainwaring I want to speak to her!"

Wharton looked at his chums.

"It's that cad Carson, and he wants to speak to Miss Elsie," he said. "He wants to threaten her as he did before, I suppose. You tell Hunker the cad is on the wire, Frank, while I talk to him and tell him what we think of him!"

"Right-ho!" grinned Frank.

He went to the window to call to the film-producer, while Harry Wharton spoke into the transmitter.

"Carson!"

"Hallo!"

"We're telling Hunker it's you. I wish you had called personally instead of using the telephone. It was such a pleasure to kick you out last time——"

"You cub!"

"We should enjoy doing it over again. We——"

Cyrus Hunker came striding into the office. The news that Vernon Carson had rung up had had the effect of cutting off the producer's "chinwag." His brow was dark as he came in and jerked the receiver away from Harry Wharton.

"I guess I'll give that pesky jay some plain talk," he said. "Hallo, is that you, Carson?"

"Yes, I——"

"You slab-sided mugwump——"

"I——"

"You sneaking, crawling, wall-eyed polecat!" went on Cyrus Hunker with an eloquence that made Harry Wharton & Co. smile. "You slab-sided remnant! You—you plate-licker in a chop-suey joint! You pesky apology for a hobo! Now, then, what do you want? Fire it out and vamoose!"

"I want to speak to Miss Mainwaring——"

"Go and chop chips!"

"I want——"

"You want lambasting!" hooted Cyrus Hunker. "You want your hair combed, that's what you want! You happen around this hyer shebang personally, my bucko, and you'll get what you want—sudden! Is that explicit?"

"I——"

"You hear me yaup?" snorted Cyrus Hunker. "I'm wasting breath on you. Travel!"

And Mr. Hunker jammed the receiver back on the hooks with an emphasis that made the telephone dance.

He turned to the juniors so suddenly that he caught the grins on their faces.

"I guess that scallywag gets my goat," said Mr. Hunker in the picturesque language of his native land. "He does that some. After his low down gum-game hyer, to have the nerve to—— Jumping Jehosaphat, there she goes again!"

"She" was the telephone bell.

Buzz-z-z-z!

Mr. Hunker jerked at the receiver, and howled:

"Hallo!"

"Tell Miss Mainwaring——"

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"Is that you, you double-faced firebug?" howled Mr. Hunker.

"Yes. Tell—"

"I guess—"

"Tell her that her father—"

"Eh, what? What's that about Miss Mainwaring's father?" ejaculated Mr. Hunker.

"Her father is found—"

"I guess I never knew that he was mislaid," answered Mr. Hunker. "Never knew the gent at all. What gaff are you giving me now?"

"Her father is found," went on the cool voice of Vernon Carson. "I have found him. Tell her so. Tell her unless she speaks to me at once her father will take the consequences!"

"I guess that's a pesky conundrum for me," said Mr. Hunker. "Is it all hot air?"

"Tell her what I say, and see!" said Carson.

Mr. Hunker paused.

He was in doubt. He could not help remembering that while Vernon Carson had been at Hawthorne Park Elsie had displayed a fear of him that was unaccountable to the producer. It had occurred to him more than once that there was some secret between the two. But, after a moment or two of reflection, he spoke into the transmitter again.

"I guess you're giving me hot air, Vernon Carson," he said. "You can wander away and chop chips. If you've got anything to say to Miss Mainwaring tell me fair an' square, and I'll be the judge. I guess I ain't going to allow you to worry that girl!"

"Let her come to the telephone—"

"Cut that out!" said Cyrus Hunker decisively. "You can give me the goods or not, as you dashed well choose; and I give you one second to make up your mind in!"

"I'll tell you. Unless Miss Mainwaring intervenes, her father will be arrested this afternoon."

Cyrus Hunker jumped.

"Arrested!" he ejaculated.

"Yes."

"Is that square?"

"Square as a die."

"I reckon I'll speak a word to Elsie. Hang on!"

The film-producer turned to the juniors.

"Wharton, call Miss Mainwaring in hyer, will you? Then you kids can clear off for a bit. I'll speak to you presently."

"Yes, sir."

The Famous Five quitted the office. Outside, Miss Mainwaring was walking towards the gates with Wingate. Harry Wharton sprinted after them.

"Miss Mainwaring!" he called.

The girl turned back, and gave him a bright smile and a nod. The cinema star was on the friendliest terms with Harry Wharton & Co. of the Greyfriars Remove.

"Yes?" she said.

"Mr. Hunker wishes you to step into his office." Wharton paused a moment. "Carson's on the telephone, and—and he's said something about your father, Miss Mainwaring. I—I thought I'd give you the tip. He's most likely telling some rotten lie to trouble you, so—"

"My father!"

Elsie's face became white.

"Elsie!" muttered Wingate, touching her arm.

The girl did not answer. She turned back, and ran quickly to Cyrus Hunker's office. The door closed upon her. Wingate of the Sixth stood looking after her, with a troubled face, and Harry Wharton & Co. walked away in silence.

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

In a Villain's Power!

ELSIE MAINWARING came breathlessly into Cyrus Hunker's office. The film-producer was still standing at the telephone, receiver in hand. He gave the girl a glance of very acute inquiry.

"I guess that galoot Carson's on the wire, Elsie," he said. "He says something about your father—"

"Oh, Heaven!" breathed the girl.

"He says he's found him!"

"Oh!"

Elsie stood unsteadily for a moment, her hand pressed to her heart. Mr. Hunker's look became very sombre.

"I guess I've thought more'n once, Elsie, that you had some reason to be afraid of that pesky polecat," he said. "Remember, you've got friends hyer to stand by you, kid. Would you care to speak to that scallywag?"

Elsie nodded silently.

Cyrus Hunker handed her the receiver, and quitted the office, closing the door after him.

Elsie stood with the receiver shaking in her trembling hand. Her face was ashy white with fear now. She raised the receiver at last, and the voice of Vernon Carson's became audible.

"Are you there? Hang you! Have you cut off again? I—"

"I am here. I—"

"Oh! Is that you, Elsie?" Vernon Carson's tone changed at once. "Is that Elsie Mainwaring speaking?"

"Yes."

"Good! I'd have come to see you, but—Carson's tone had a mocking inflection—"after the way I left Hawthorne Park last week, I did not care to call, Elsie. But I haven't been idle. I have been seeking your father, my dear, and I have found him."

The girl shuddered.

"A postmark on an envelope was my clue," went on the mocking voice. "I followed it up. You ought to have known that I should not be easily defeated, Elsie. I have found him. It needs only a word from me to put the police upon his track."

"Oh, Heaven!"

"You hear me, Elsie?"

"I hear you, Vernon Carson," said Elsie, speaking very calmly, with an effort. "But I do not believe you. You are trying to trick me, like the villain you are!"

A laugh was audible on the wires.

"Do you know where I am telephoning from, Elsie—"

"No."

"From Seaciff."

Elsie trembled.

"Does that not tell you that I know?" sneered Carson. "Your father is at Seaciff; that is where he has hidden himself since he fled from his last hiding-place. Do you believe now that I am telling you the truth?"

Elsie gave a moan.

"You—you will not harm him?" she whispered. "He has never harmed you. And he is innocent; you know it."

"How should I know it?" sneered Carson. "I know that a judge and jury have found him guilty of theft. I know that he is supposed to have his loot with him where he is hiding."

"You know that is false! You know he is poor. You spied upon me when I was sending him money, long ago!" cried Elsie. "And you—you knew him before his misfortune, and you know he is innocent. Have you no mercy?"

"After what I have been through at Hawthorne Park!" sneered the film-actor. "After I have been beaten like a dog by your schoolboy lover, and

kicked from the gates of Hawthorne Park? You know upon what terms I will show your father mercy."

"Oh, Heaven!"

"You will come to Seaciff at once, Elsie," went on Vernon Carson. "Leave Hawthorne Park in an hour's time, and I will pick you up on the road to the village in my car, and bring you here. Your father will be glad to see you." He laughed. "We will see him together. I will ask him for your hand in due form. It is not every man of my standing who would ask for the hand of a convict's daughter. But I love you, Elsie!"

"Silence!"

Carson laughed again.

"Will you come?" he said.

"You will hold your hand, if I come?" she breathed.

"That is understood."

"I will come."

"In an hour's time, on the village road, Elsie?"

"Yes."

"Good!"

The girl replaced the receiver.

She staggered rather than walked from the telephone, and stood for some minutes with her hand resting on Cyrus Hunker's big roll-top desk, her breath coming in quick gasps.

The blow had fallen at last; her fear of Vernon Carson had been well-founded. That dread had always haunted her, that her enemy would find the track of her fugitive father, and thus gain the upper hand. And now Vernon Carson had succeeded, what was to happen?

"Oh, Heaven help me!" she prayed, as she stood swaying by the desk, and the tears ran down her cheeks.

The office door opened.

It was George Wingate who entered.

"Elsie," he exclaimed, "I could not wait—Good heavens! What is the matter?"

He sprang towards her.

"Elsie, you are crying! What—what—what has that villain said?"

"It is all over," said the girl, in a low, dull voice. "I feared that it must come, and now it has come. I—I must leave Hawthorne Park again, at once."

"Elsie!"

"I must go!" she whispered. "I must!"

"At his order?" exclaimed Wingate, in amazement and anger.

She nodded.

"But—but this is madness!" he exclaimed huskily. "Elsie, you cannot be speaking seriously. How can that villain have this power over you? Why do you fear him so? I have protected you once, cannot I protect you now?"

The girl's glance was sad and kind as it rested on his eager, loyal face. But she shook her head.

"I dare not defy him now," she whispered.

"But why—why?"

She drew a deep breath.

"Perhaps you should know," she said. "It is better that you should know. You will never see me again—"

"Never see you again!" exclaimed Wingate blankly.

"No."

"But why?"

"Because," said Elsie, in a shuddering voice—"because I shall marry Vernon Carson!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Elsie's Secret!

GEORGE WINGATE stared blankly at the girl.

He seemed unable to believe his ears.

"Elsie!" He found his voice at last.



Wingate stood back by the roadside, and watched the green car as it vanished down the lane. Elsie was gone, carried away by Vernon Carson—whither he did not know. (See chapter 4.)

"Elsie! Marry Vernon Carson—that cur, that bully! Are you out of your senses?"

"There is no help!" She looked round her helplessly, and sank into Cyrus Hunker's big revolving-chair. "Listen to me; it is better that you should know. My father——"

Her voice choked.

"Your father——"

"He is a fugitive from justice."

"Elsie!"

"He is innocent," she said. "In my heart I know that he is innocent. I believe that Vernon Carson knows it. He knew him before—before it happened. Listen!" Her voice was scarcely audible, and Wingate bent his head to catch her words. "It was two years ago—before I had made a name as a film-actress, before I had met Cyrus Hunker. My father was secretary to a film-producer in London. Vernon Carson was the star of the company. Even then he was pestering me with his hateful attentions!" She shivered. "Major Carew—the producer—was robbed of a large sum—several thousands of pounds—and my father——"

Her voice broke.

"My poor Elsie!" whispered Wingate.

He pressed her hand.

"He was arrested for the crime, tried, and found guilty, and sent to prison!" faltered the girl. "He escaped afterwards. But—but he was innocent! He was innocent! Never for a moment did

I lose my faith in him. But he was ruined, and a fugitive, when he came to me afterwards. I—— There was only I to help him. I was so glad to help him. By good fortune I had become successful as a film-actress. I had money to help him, and since then he has lived in hiding. I have thanked Heaven many times that I was able to earn the money to help my dear father. But you—you do not know him. You may not believe——"

"I believe as you believe, Elsie," said Wingate.

She smiled faintly.

"Then Vernon Carson discovered him," she said. "That was when I fled to Flitchester, and you came. I had sent him word—while Carson was seeking me, he escaped—and found a new hiding-place at Seaciff, not many miles from here. I had seen the place while we were studying backgrounds for the films, and taken the little cottage on the cliff, to be in readiness if it was needed. I knew Carson's intentions, and I feared him."

She panted for breath.

"Carson was baffled for that time, but now he has succeeded. He has been spying—a postmark on some old envelope was his clue, he says. He has found my father."

"And now——"

"He threatens to hand him over to the police."

Wingate gritted his teeth.

"The villain—the villain! But cannot you warn him again?"

"Carson is at Seaciff; he is watching. This time he has taken his precautions; there is no escape for my poor father this time. Vernon Carson has the upper hand at last."

"But you——"

"I must save my father!"

"But——" groaned Wingate.

"If I marry him he will be silent—and on no other terms!" she whispered. "I would die sooner, but that would not save my father. But—but if a chance remains, I shall take it; but I dare not disobey him now. I am to go to Seaciff. It is his order, and his order must be obeyed, or my father will suffer!"

"But your father would never wish you——"

She interrupted him.

"Never; but I must save him. He could not go back to that life in death; it would kill him. Already he is terribly changed from what he was—what I remember him. I must save him—he is my father!"

Wingate groaned.

What could he say?

With all the strength of his boyish heart the Greyfriars captain loved the cinema-star—a love boyish, foolish perhaps, but deep and loyal. He would have died to save her. And he could not even help her. More than once his strong arm had interposed between Elsie

and her enemy. But now he could not help her.

"I have told you," she whispered, "so that you will not think hardly of me. Your friendship has been a happiness to me; but I knew it could not last." She rose to her feet, and held out her hand with a tremulous smile. "Good-bye now—for ever!"

"Not for ever, Elsie," said Wingate huskily. "I must—I will—find some way to save you!"

She shook her head sadly.

"It is impossible now. Good-bye!"

She touched his hand, and hurried away.

Wingate made a step after her, but stopped.

What could he do or say?

With a face as white as Elsie's own, he stopped. His brain was throbbing. Elsie was in the toils, and he could not help her! That was the bitter thought that beat in his brain.

Cyrus Hunker came into the office and glanced at him.

"Where's Elsie?" he asked.

"She's gone."

"Has that scallywag upset her?" asked the producer, with a frown.

"I—I think so."

"I guess Mister Carson will get his dandy hide tanned if I light on him again—just a few!" said Cyrus Hunker emphatically. "Upsetting my star, by hokey, when we're in the middle of a film that is going to knock spots off creation! But I guess she'll pull round this afternoon in time for the scene. She's a good business girl, Elsie is. You'll be wanted, Wingate."

Wingate smiled in a ghastly way.

He did not want to disappoint Mr. Hunker. He had come to Hawthorne Park, with the rest of the Greyfriars crowd, to help Mr. Hunker in his production of some very special films that were to "lick creation" in the cinema-world. But nothing was farther from his thoughts now than acting before the camera.

"You don't look very spry yourself, sonny," said Mr. Hunker. "Mind you're in form this afternoon. And now I guess I'm busy."

Wingate left the office.

He tramped away, hardly knowing whither he went; but his steps led him towards the gates of Hawthorne Park.

His heart was like lead in his breast.

Elsie was going! Elsie was in the power of her deadly enemy—an enemy whose hard and cynical heart knew no mercy. Wingate felt stunned.

Harry Wharton & Co. were near the gates, with serious faces. They had heard enough of the talk on the telephone to know that Elsie Mainwaring was threatened with some disaster. Wingate's expression was enough to tell them that their fears were well-founded. Harry Wharton left his chums and approached the Greyfriars captain.

"Wingate," he began, "is—is Miss Elsie in danger?"

Wingate nodded without speaking.

"That villain Carson—"

"Yes," Wingate paused. "Do you know where Seaciff is, Wharton? Is it far from here?"

"Seaciff!" said Harry Wharton. "I've heard of it. We cycled through the place once last summer. Yes; it's along the coast, Wingate. Not towards Greyfriars; the other way. About ten miles, I think."

"Thank you, Wharton."

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"But—but Miss Mainwaring—"

Wingate made a weary gesture.

"You can't help, kid. Run away!"

The junior moved slowly away. He rejoined his chums, and they remained at a distance, as Elsie Mainwaring came down to the gates, dressed evidently for a journey.

"Is she going away again, then?" muttered Johnny Bull.

Wharton clenched his hands.

"I wish that villain were here!" he muttered.

"The wishfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Elsie passed out of the gates, Wingate of the Sixth walking at her side. The chums of the Remove turned away in a dismal humour.

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter rolled up, to be greeted by five separate glares. The chums of the Remove were feeling down in the dumps, and were not inclined to listen to the remarks of the fat junior. They were in no mood for William George Bunter just then.

"Oh, roll away!" exclaimed Bob Cherry impatiently.

"I say, you fellows, you might be a bit sympathetic," said the Owl of the Remove, in an injured tone. "I'm leaving Hawthorne Park to-day—"

"Good riddance!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull, I think it's rather rotten!" said Billy Bunter plaintively. "Old Hunker and Mr. Quelch are quite ratty about that affair of the banknotes—just as if it was my fault, you know. Now Hunker don't want me for the pictures any more, I'm to be sent back, before you fellows, you know. Isn't it rotten? And all the time I've been here I haven't once been given a part that really suited me; only comic parts, you know, not in my line at all."

"Fathead!"

"Wingate's part would have suited me down to the ground," said Bunter discontentedly. "Dashing sort of hero, you know, just in my line. And the love-making bits, too; I could do that in splendid style, especially with Elsie. Do you know?"—Bunter lowered his voice confidentially—"have you fellows noticed—"

"What, you ass?"

"Elsie's rather struck on me," said Bunter complacently. "She lets that ass Wingate bore her a lot, she's so good-natured, but I've often seen her glance at me with such a smile. There's no doubt about it, you know; she's fairly gone! Of course, you stodgy fellows never think of such things, but I'm rather used to being run after by girls. Did you fellows notice how down she looked a few minutes ago, before she went out? She's heard that I'm going away, you know."

"You silly ass!" roared Johnny Bull, in a formidable voice.

"Oh, really, Bull, it's no good being jealous, you know. It's queer how fellows always are jealous of a really good-looking chap—Yaroooh!"

The Famous Five were not feeling very patient just then, and what little patience they had, Bunter had exhausted. They collared the fat junior and sat him down with a heavy bump, and walked away.

"Beasts!" gasped Bunter. "Yow-ow! Just jealous of a fellow's good looks! Yow-ow-ow! I was going to stand them a feed out of my postal-order when we got back to Greyfriars, and now I won't! Yow-ow-ow!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Vernon Carson's Triumph!

"GO back—go back!" Elsie had not noticed, for some minutes, that Wingate had joined her, as she hurried away from Hawthorne Park towards the village. She gave a start as she realised that the Greyfriars captain was with her, and stopped.

"Go back!"

"I shall not see you again, Elsie, so you have said," replied Wingate miserably. "Let me come to the station with you, at least."

"I am not going to the station—"

"Seaciff is ten miles from here, Elsie."

She coloured.

"Vernon Carson will be here, in the car," she said. "Do not see him; it is better for you not to meet."

"You are going with him—in his car?"

"Have I any choice?" exclaimed Elsie. "Go back before he comes."

Wingate paused.

The impulse was strong upon him to go on with the girl, and meet her persecutor face to face, to hurl bitter words at the plotting villain, and follow them up with blows. His rage against Vernon Carson was at boiling point. As he stood hesitating, the buzz of an automobile was heard under the trees in the lane, and Wingate started and looked towards the village.

A handsome, green car swept into view, with Vernon Carson seated at the steering-wheel.

The car rushed up, and stopped only a few paces from Elsie and Wingate. Carson's dark eyes glinted at the sight of the Greyfriars captain. He had not forgotten the terrible thrashing Wingate had given him in that lane only a short time ago.

But after the one quick, savage glance he took no further notice of Wingate. He jumped out of the handsome two-seater, and raised his hat to Elsie Mainwaring.

"You have been as good as your word, Elsie," he said, with a smile.

"I am here because I have no choice," answered the girl quietly. "If I were free to choose I should not be here, as you know."

Carson shrugged his shoulders.

"At all events, you are here," he said lightly. "Jump in! We shall be at Seaciff under the half-hour."

"My father—"

"He expects you."

"You have told him?"

Carson smiled.

"Why not? He knew I was a suitor for your hand in the old days, before—"

He checked himself, with a sidelong look at George Wingate.

"Mr. Wingate knows all," said Elsie coldly.

"You have told him?"

"Yes; and he believes that my father is innocent, as I do," said the girl proudly.

Carson's lip curled.

"Master Wingate is honoured by your confidence," he said sarcastically. "Do you wish to take leave of your schoolboy friend before you come?"

"I wish to be certain that you know what you have hinted before I enter the car," said Elsie Mainwaring. "You say that you have found my father, and seen him—"

"You do not trust my word?"

"Not without proof," said Elsie coldly.

The film actor laughed lightly.

"I have found your father at Seaciff," he said. "You seemed convinced

when I told you on the telephone. But I will satisfy you. He is living at a little cottage on the cliff outside Seaciff, a mile from any other house—an old fisherman's cottage. He has been living alone there, and an old dame goes out daily to attend to him. A friend of mine—to be more exact, a man in my pay—is watching the cottage closely, and if your father should make any attempt to leave he will be arrested on the spot. I have not forgotten how you tricked me last time by warning him. Are you satisfied now?"

Elsie sighed deeply.

"I am satisfied," she said wearily. "You have the power in your hands, and I know you too well to expect to find a single generous impulse in your heart. As well ask mercy of an adder!"

"You compliment me, Elsie."

"Enough! I am ready to go to Seaciff, if that is your order," the girl said bitterly. "I am under your orders now."

"It is just as well that you realise it," said Carson coolly. "Jump in, if you are ready."

Wingate made a stride forward.

"Elsie," he said hoarsely, "do not go with that villain—do not! Your father would never wish to sacrifice you to him; he could not! It is not right for a woman to suffer for a man. Do not go!"

"I have already decided that," she answered. "Good-bye, and think of me as kindly as you can."

"Oh, Elsie—"

"And stand back!" said Carson, with a sneer. "You are in the way, my fine young fellow! Go back to your school-books, and mind your own business, and it will be all the better for you!"

Wingate's hands twitched.

"You cur!" he said thickly. "You cur! I will—" He advanced upon the film actor, his hands up, and his eyes blazing.

Vernon Carson backed hurriedly.

His hand went like a flash to his pocket, evidently for a weapon. The next moment a revolver glinted in the sun.

"Stand back!" he said, between his teeth. "Another step, and I swear I will shoot!"

Elsie ran between them.

"Stop!" she cried breathlessly. "My dear, dear friend, you cannot help me now; there is no hope! Go back, and forget me if you can. Good-bye! Good-bye!"

Wingate dropped his hands.

His eyes burned at Vernon Carson, who smiled mockingly.

"I thought this would bring you to reason!" he remarked, with a motion of the silver-plated revolver.

Wingate's lip curled scornfully.

"It is not your pistol that stops me," he said. "Nor do I believe you would dare to use it, coward that you are! If I could save Miss Mainwaring from your power you would find that your weapon would not save you from me, you cur!"

"Go—go!" breathed Elsie.

Wingate turned away, his heart like lead.

Elsie stepped into the car, and Vernon Carson followed her in, and took the wheel.

Wingate stood back by the roadside, and watched the green car start. Carson backed it to the grass, turned, and started, and the car buzzed off at a rattling pace. The Greyfriars captain watched it as it vanished in a cloud of dust.

Elsie was gone!

She was gone—and with her enemy! He could not save her—he could not help her. With a heavy heart, the Greyfriars captain tramped back to Hawthorne Park.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Cyrus Hunker Gets Excited!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. saw Wingate come in, but they did not venture to question him.

The Greyfriars captain's look was dark, and he hurried at once to the house. Cyrus Hunker called to him from his office doorway as he passed, but Wingate did not seem to hear, and he went into the house. Mr. Hunker blinked after him, evidently surprised.

"Say, bub!" he called out to Wharton.

"Yes, sir?" said Harry.

"What's got that young scallywag by the ear?" inquired Mr. Hunker.

"I—I don't know!"

"I guess this sort of thing won't do for this hyer show!" said Mr. Hunker portentously. "You go and tell Wingate that I want him in my office instanter!"

And the indignant producer turned back into his office, and closed the door with a slam, which indicated that he was in considerable dudgeon at Wingate's behaviour.

Harry Wharton followed Wingate into the house but he did not have to go as far as the Greyfriars captain's room. He met Wingate on the stairs, coming down again. There was a small bag in the Sixth-Former's hand.

"Mr. Hunker says—" began the junior.

"Confound Mr. Hunker!" broke out Wingate passionately.

"Wha-a-at!"

"I—I mean—" The Sixth-Former flushed. "I can't bother with him now. Tell him I'm sorry—I've got to go out. I may not be back to-night—"

"But—" began Wharton, in dismay.

"I've no time to waste!"

George Wingate hurried out of the house.

"My hat!" muttered Wharton, as he followed him. "What's going to happen now?"

As he came out of the house, he caught sight of Wingate again, wheeling out his bicycle. The Greyfriars Sixth-Former mounted on the drive, and pedalled away towards the gates. Mr. Cyrus Hunker fairly bounced out of his office; apparently his eagle eye had been on the window.

"Wingate!" he roared.

Wingate did not even turn his head.

"Wingate! You pesky scallywag!"

"He says—" began Wharton.

"Bother what he says!" roared Cyrus Hunker. "What sort of a game is this? Isn't he wanted to rehearse for the film this afternoon? Where is he going? Come back, you pesky galoot!"

Wingate whizzed out of the gateway on his bicycle and vanished. Cyrus Hunker looked like dancing with rage.

"What is the trouble, Mr. Hunker?" asked Mr. Quelch, quietly appearing on the scene.

Cyrus Hunker spun round on the Remove-master, gesticulating.

"I guess that goat has absquatulated!" he hooted.

"What?"

"That young goat has beat it again!" hooted Mr. Hunker. "He's wanted to rehearse—am I going to have my film dished, sir? Not if this child knows himself! What sort of a game is this? Did these boys come to Hawthorne Park to show on the films, or didn't they? Haven't they ever heard of the word 'business'? I want to know!"

"But—" began the puzzled Mr. Quelch.

"I want to know!" snorted Cyrus Hunker. "What's this game? Oh, search me!"

Mr. Quelch blinked at him.

"Search you?" he ejaculated. "In

the name of goodness, Mr. Hunker, what am I to search you for?"

Cyrus Hunker snorted.

"I guess you don't know English—and you're a schoolmaster!" he grunted.

"But, really—oh, perhaps it is an American expression?" said Mr. Quelch, catching on, as it were.

"Yep—perhaps it is!" said Cyrus Hunker, with crushing sarcasm. "Oh, carry me home to die! What an island—what a benighted island! Why did I ever step on a barge and drift over the pond? Why? I want to know!"

"But—"

"That young goat has beat it—and he's wanted!" roared Mr. Hunker. "Hyer, Wharton—Bull—Cherry—and the rest of you, get out your bikes and go after that antelope! Yank him back hyer by the short hairs! Bring him back, alive or dead! You take me?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Are you growing out of the ground like trees?" roared Mr. Hunker. "If you're not, get a move on!"

"But—"

"Sharp's the word! Get busy! Go after that goat and bring him back! You hear me whisper?" shrieked Mr. Hunker.

"Oh, all right!" gasped Wharton.

The Greyfriars juniors were there to obey Mr. Hunker's instructions. They ran for their bicycles.

They were quite ready to go after Wingate of the Sixth, if it came to that. Bringing him back, if he was not willing to return was another matter. The captain of Greyfriars was rather a hefty fellow to handle, even if the Removites had been willing to handle him on Mr. Hunker's instructions. But they were willing to ride after him at least.

"Buck up!" shouted Mr. Hunker, as they ran their machines out. "Get a move on! Don't wait while your tyres grow ginger whiskers! Put it on! Yank him back so that I can talk to him! You hear me articulate?"

Everybody at Hawthorne Park could hear Cyrus Hunker at that moment.

"We're off, sir!" called out Bob Cherry cheerily.

"Put some punch into it!" yelled Cyrus Hunker after them. "Don't go to sleep! Let it bite!"

The Famous Five swept out of the gateway in a bunch. They were putting "punch" into it, and "letting it bite," as Mr. Hunker expressed it in his weird dialect.

Cyrus Hunker gave a snort as they disappeared, and strode back to his office, leaving Mr. Quelch very much perplexed.

Out on the road, Harry Wharton & Co. pedalled on rapidly towards the village. Wingate had turned in that direction from the gates, though he was long out of sight now.

"Anybody know where's he gone?" asked Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "I don't mind a spin on a fine day—but the Hunker bird told us to go after old Wingate."

"Seaciff, I think," said Harry Wharton. "He was asking me about it some little while ago. We can't see him—we'd better try the Seaciff road."

"Right-ho! As good as any other, as we don't know where he's gone!" remarked Nugent.

"But what about bringing him back?" asked Johnny Bull, as they spun through the village street. "I suppose he's bunked for some reason—and he won't come back for us, will he?"

"Not likely!" said Bob.

"The not-likelihood is terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh. "He is more probable to give us esteem'd cuffs on ear!"

"Well, we can tell him what Mr. Hunker says," said Harry Wharton. "Of course, we're not going to handle him in any way if he won't come back. Hunker is a very knowing card in his way; but he doesn't know that Lower Fourth chaps can't handle the captain of the school. The fact is, he's got a lot to learn about Greyfriars yet!"

"He has—he have!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "We'll tell Wingate what he says, and leave it to him. Anyhow, it's a ten-mile run to Seacliff, so we'd better get a move on!"

And the juniors rode on fast.

But, fast as they rode, Wingate rode faster, and they did not sight the Greyfriars captain on the way to Seacliff.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Elsie's Father!

GEORGE WINGATE drove hard at his pedals, and the miles flew under the circling wheels. He seemed unconscious of fatigue.

The cinema school and the film production at Hawthorne Park had vanished from his mind. He was thinking only of Elsie.

That Cyrus Hunker had fixed that sunny day for the production of a very important reel, and that he was wanted to act before the camera, was a trifling matter to George Wingate now. As a matter of fact, Elsie Mainwaring was wanted in the same scene, and so, in any case, the irate producer would have been compelled to postpone the taking of the film. Wingate was at Hawthorne Park to oblige Mr. Hunker, but there were, after all, more important considerations than even Mr. Hunker's world-famous films. It must be confessed that Wingate did not bestow one thought upon Cyrus Hunker as he drove at his pedals.

Elsie occupied his thoughts. Elsie must be saved from Vernon Carson, and from her own generous devotion. Elsie must be saved—that was the thought that throbbed in his brain.

He knew now where to find her father. He judged John Mainwaring by his daughter; if he was an innocent man, as Elsie believed—if he was anything like Elsie herself—he would never permit this sacrifice. Better that he should go back to the prison he had once escaped from than that Elsie should be sacrificed to a black-hearted villain. There was no sacrifice at which Wingate would have stopped short to save her—and would her father hesitate?

John Mainwaring could not know what his daughter's desperate intention was—he could not know that she was ready to blacken her life, to break her heart to save him. If he knew it, he would never allow it—Wingate was sure of that. And he must know it. Wingate would tell him, and so the plotting villain would be baffled at last. Elsie might hate him for it. He did not even care for that, so long as he saved her from her intended sacrifice.

To reach Seacliff at the earliest possible moment—to find John Mainwaring and tell him the truth—that was Wingate's intention.

The green car had sped away in the direction of Seacliff, and, fast as Wingate rode—madly as he drove at his pedals—he knew that he could never overtake the rapid automobile. Elsie would be with her father when he arrived—Vernon Carson was taking her to her father. Even in her presence he would tell John Mainwaring the truth—warn him that he was to preserve his liberty at the cost of his daughter's despair. He was determined upon that.

Seacliff came into sight at last—a little

lonely fishing village, sprawling at the foot of a cliff. Wingate rode into the village with the perspiration streaming down his face. He glanced round him quickly, and jumped off his bicycle outside a little shop, which was a grocery, a general stores, and also the village post-office. He knew that John Mainwaring's lonely cottage was a mile or so from the village, but exactly where it was he did not know; and it was necessary to inquire.

He noted, as he dismounted, that a crowd of villagers were gathered in front of a cottage a few doors away, engaged in excited talk. They were watching the window of the cottage with curious eyes. On the fence of the garden was a strip of enamelled tin, bearing the single word "Police." Evidently the cottage was the dwelling of the village policeman. The buzz of the crowd caught Wingate's ear as he looked, and a name came through the murmur that struck him.

"Mainwaring!"

Elsie's name on the lips of the Seacliff crowd. What did it mean? What had happened?

Had Vernon Castle, after all, betrayed the unhappy fugitive? That would have been to defeat his own plot. What, then, had happened? It was evident that the sleepy little village was in a state of unusual excitement, and all attention was fixed on the policeman's cottage. And the name of Mainwaring was passing from mouth to mouth. Wingate left his bicycle leaning on the shop and joined the crowd outside the cottage.

"What's going on?" he asked, addressing a stout countryman in a snock frock.

The man blinked at him.

"He's in there," he said, jerking a horny thumb towards the latticed window.

"Who is?"

"Him that lived at the cliff cottage, measter. Name of Jones, as folks thought," replied the villager. "But when he give hisself oop—"

Wingate started.

"He gave hisself up!" he exclaimed.

"That he did, measter. He walked into Mr. Hodson's cottage this morning—Mr. Hodson being our policeman, you understand. Says he, 'I'm John Mainwaring,' he said. 'You don't know the name. I'm wanted by the police in London this two years, and I'm here to give myself up,' he said."

"Oh!" breathed Wingate.

He began to understand.

John Mainwaring was a worthy father of Elsie. He knew the cunning scheme of Vernon Carson—Wingate understood that now. He knew that his daughter would sacrifice herself to save him. And he had given himself up to prevent that sacrifice.

There was no need for Wingate to warn him now. He knew, and he had acted promptly, like a brave and honest man.

Surely the man who would do that was innocent of the crime laid to his charge. Surely. The villager's voice was going on, while Wingate's thoughts were busy. The old gentleman was glad to have a strange ear into which to pour his exciting tale.

"Mr. Hodson says to me arter, 'you could have knocked me hover with a feather, Giles,' he says. 'Walking into a man's cottage like that 'ere,' he says, 'and giving hisself up like that,' he says. 'Never 'eard of the man afore,' he says, 'not being a reader of London papers and such.' Mr. Jones—that is Mr. Mainwaring, you unnerstand, measter—he had to tell Mr. Hodson what to do, which is like what never happened before, I says to Mr. Hodson. 'You'll have to take

me into Folkestone and hand me over to the authorities there,' he says. 'They'll know me there, easy enough,' he says, or words to that effect, you unnerstand, measter?"

"Yes, yes," said Wingate.

"So Mr. Hodson, puzzled like, asks him to sit down while he gets a trap to drive him over to Folkestone," went on the old villager, "and there he is, waiting. And 'ere comes Mr. Hodson with the trap."

The crowd surged back from the cottage as a heavy farmer's trap rolled up to the gate, the village policeman driving it. There was a murmur of deep interest as the ruddy-complexioned village constable stepped down. Mr. Giles took the horse's head to hold it.

The policeman went up the little path to the cottage and entered, and the villagers watched breathlessly.

In a couple of minutes the policeman emerged with another man at his side.

"There's Mr. Mainwaring!" said a dozen voices.

Wingate gazed at the man.

John Mainwaring was a man in early middle-age, with hair and beard prematurely grey. His face was quiet and handsome, and there was a likeness to Elsie that Wingate recognised at once. He walked with a firm step, looking neither to the right nor the left, and seemed unconscious of the presence of the curious crowd.

"Here's the trap, sir," said the policeman, as they came out of the gate, and his manner was quite respectful to his prisoner.

Wingate started forward.

"Mr. Mainwaring!" he exclaimed breathlessly.

The prisoner glanced at him.

"You know me?" he asked.

"'Ere, you stand back, young man!" interposed Mr. Hodson.

"One word!" exclaimed Wingate.

"Mr. Mainwaring, I have never seen you before, but I know your daughter. I am her friend."

John Mainwaring looked searchingly into the frank, earnest face of the captain of Greyfriars. He made a motion to hold out his hand, evidently pleased at what he saw in Wingate's face, but he dropped it to his side again, flushing.

But Wingate held out his hand.

"Give me your hand, sir," he said.

"I believe in your innocence, as Elsie does. And it may comfort you to know that she has friends—devoted friends—who will protect her. My name is Wingate—"

"God bless you, my boy!" said Mr. Mainwaring, and he gave Wingate his hand. "Your face is honourable. Elsie has spoken to me of you, and I am glad that you are her friend! My poor girl! She needs friends now, when that villain—"

He broke off.

"Vernon Carson cannot harm her now, sir," said Wingate. "You have saved her from him. I came to tell you, and I found— That is why you gave yourself up?"

John Mainwaring nodded.

"Carson made his demand to me," he said, in a low voice. "I spurned him, the cur! I knew that Elsie would sacrifice herself to save me, and this was the only way to prevent it. You will tell her not to grieve. I shall go back to prison happy in knowing that I have saved her from that last sacrifice, after all her goodness to me. I am ready, sir," he added, addressing the ruddy-faced village constable.

He stepped into the trap, and the village policeman followed him in and took up the reins.

With his prisoner sitting by his side the constable drove away down the village street.

Wingate turned back to his bicycle. John Mainwaring was gone—back to prison—back to a living death, to save his daughter from her own generous devotion. But Elsie did not know. He must find Elsie and tell her—

A sudden thought struck him, and he turned white. Did Carson know the fugitive's intention? He must know. Then he had come to Hawthorne Park with a lie on his lips. He knew that it was too late for Elsie to save her father when he had come for her in the green car. Elsie had gone with him in the car—where?

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER:

Vernon Carson's Last Card!

VERNON CARSON glanced several times at Elsie, as she sat by his side in the green car, rushing swiftly along the lanes. The girl avoided his glance. Her eyes were fixed straight before her. She did not note the mocking smile that crossed Vernon Carson's face.

But the girl gave a sudden start at last. The car had covered more than ten miles, and it was borne in upon her mind suddenly that the road they were following was strange to her.

She turned quickly to the film-actor. "This is not the way to Seaciff!" she exclaimed.

"Have you just discovered that?"

She gave him a startled look.

"What does this mean?" she exclaimed breathlessly. "I am going to Seaciff, to my father."

"You are not going to Seaciff," answered Vernon Carson, coolly and deliberately.

"What?"

"You may as well know the truth at once," he said, his gleaming eyes flashing on her for a moment. "Your father is no longer at Seaciff!"

She caught her breath.

"Then—then you lied to me; you have not found him?" cried Elsie.

"I have found him. I saw him this morning," answered Carson coolly. "I told him that his liberty depended on you."

"Oh! And—and what—"

"He did not act as I expected," said the film-actor, shrugging his shoulders. "I had expected to find a shrinking fugitive, ready to agree to anything to save his freedom. Instead of that—"

"Oh, fool, fool!" the girl muttered, clasping her hands. "You do not understand him. You have ruined all now. He will never permit—"

"I know that—now!"

"Then what has happened?" exclaimed Elsie. "Why did you come to Hawthorne Park?"

"To bring you away in my car—as I have done."

"But my father—"

"He gave himself up to the police this morning."

Elsie gave a bitter cry.

"Then all is lost."

Carson smiled evilly.

"All is lost for John Mainwaring," he said. "He goes back to prison. And let him go, for an obstinate fool, as he is!"

"My father!" moaned Elsie.

Her eyes were heavy with tears. Carson drove steadily on, waiting for her to speak again.

"He is already arrested?" she asked at last, in a low voice, almost a whisper.

"I left him on the way to the village policeman's cottage, to give himself up," Carson sneered. "He knew that you would agree to my terms to save him, and he has given himself up so that you should not."

"My noble father!"

Carson shrugged his shoulders again.

"But now," exclaimed Elsie—"now, villain, you have no hold upon me—you have no power over me. My father has saved me."

"So he thinks."

"You came to me with a lie!" the girl exclaimed scornfully. "But at least I do not fear you now, Vernon Carson. You cannot harm me now that the worst has happened to my father."

He did not reply, but the evil smile on his face gave the girl a strange chill.

"Stop the car!" she exclaimed imperiously.

He drove on steadily.

"Do you hear me, Vernon Carson? I refuse to remain in the car another moment!"

"You refuse," smiled Carson. "But how can you help yourself?"

"Set me down at once!"

He laughed.

The next issue of "THE MAGNET" will contain a screamingly-funny, long, complete story of the Chums of Greyfriars, entitled:

"COKER'S CRAZE!"

By Frank Richards.

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"Cannot you see the facts yet?" he asked mockingly. "My dear Elsie, when your father determined to give himself up, I saw all my plans crumble into ruin. My hold over you was gone. I could only influence you by threatening your father's safety. My power was gone, but was I to give you up? Never! There remained only this."

"Vernon Carson, you dare—"

"I came to you—with a lie, as you say—to secure you before you knew that your father was out of my power," he said coolly. "I have succeeded. You are in my power still, Elsie, in a different way. When you leave this car, you will leave it to enter your future home."

"What?"

"Which you will only leave as my wife."

"Are you mad?"

"You will see!"

Elsie Mainwaring gazed with dilated eyes at the man at her side. For some moments she could scarcely realise the position.

But the hard, determined expression

on the film-actor's face was enough to convince her.

"You—you have dared—" she panted. "This is an abduction!"

"You can call it so."

"Do you think I will remain a prisoner in your house? You must be mad to think so."

"I think you will have no choice," answered Vernon Carson.

"I command you to stop the car at once."

The car rushed on.

Elsie Mainwaring gave a wild look at the roadside; it was death to attempt to leap from the rushing car.

She sank back in her seat, panting.

She understood all now.

This man, who loved her in his savage, selfish way, had seen all his cunning plotting crumble to ruin by the devotion of John Mainwaring. The convict's love for his daughter had ruined all his plans. There remained only one desperate resource, if he was not to give up Elsie for ever, and he had taken it. He had set the law at defiance; he was playing the ruffian. It was the last throw of the dice for Vernon Carson, to win or lose all.

"Oh, Heaven!" whispered Elsie.

The roads were strange to her. She did not know where the car was now, though she knew that it was at a great distance from Hawthorne Park already, and not in the direction of Seaciff.

The sea glimmered into sight suddenly, as the car swung into a road following the coast.

"Where are we?" panted Elsie at last.

"That I shall not tell you."

"You dare not keep me a prisoner."

"You will see."

"Have you no pity? I must go to my father."

"You would not be allowed to see him."

"Villain, villain! It is your doing!" cried Elsie, in despair. "But for you he would be a free man."

"It is his own doing. I am not responsible for his obstinate folly."

The car slowed down now, climbing a steep road by the cliffs. Again Elsie glanced out desperately. Carson released one hand from the wheel and clasped her wrist.

"It is death to jump!" he said quietly.

"And it will be death for both of us, on this steep road, if you draw my attention from driving. Keep your senses, Elsie."

"I think you are out of your senses," said the girl bitterly. "You have no power over me now, and if you kept me a prisoner, as you threaten, it would make no difference to my scorn and hatred of you!"

"We shall see!"

The car climbed on. Elsie gazed about her. A wild and desolate moorland stretched to the cliffs that jutted in chalky masses over a low beach. The car had left the lower road, and was following a rough, chalky track on the cliff top, rumbling and bumping on the rough ground. Ahead a little building appeared, almost on the edge of the cliffs. Elsie gave a cry. It was a familiar spot to her at last.

"You know the place?" grinned Carson.

"We came here to take a film, weeks ago," said Elsie. "That ruined castle was in the scene."

"Exactly. That was how I came to know the place. I have bought it."

"You have?"

"It is almost in ruins, and has been uninhabited for half a century," said Carson. "Its only use now is as a film background. But it is my property now."

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I foresaw that something of this kind might happen." He laughed. "This was always my last card to play. The old tower was in readiness, if it came to this, Elsie."

"And you think—"

"I think you will remain a prisoner in the tower, Elsie, until you decide to marry me," he answered. "It is my last card, and I am playing it to win!"

"I think you must be mad!"

"Think as you please; it will make no difference. Ah, here we stop!"

At a dozen yards from the old ruin the car came to a halt.

Carson alighted, and extended his hand to Elsie.

"I will not enter."

"I shall use force then!"

"You are coward enough—"

"Your schoolboy friend is not here now!" said Carson sardonically. "Why not?"

The girl made a gesture of disdain, and stepped from the car. A minute more, and she was within the ruined tower that looked across the sea from the soaring cliff.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Cyrus Hunker Knows Something!

"WINGATE!"

Harry Wharton called out his name.

The Famous Five had made good speed on the road, and the fishing village of Seacliff was just before them.

"He's coming back then," said Bob Cherry. "No need to carry him home by the ears, as the Hunker-bird told us."

"Wingate!"

The juniors slowed down, as Wingate came speeding up the road. The Greyfriars captain was riding hard, bent over his handlebars, his face strangely set. He did not see them, but he looked up as his name was shouted, and jammed on his brakes.

"Wharton, you—"

"Mr. Hunker sent us after you," said Harry, jumping down. "He wants you to come back—"

"Hang Hunker!"

"Ahem! The film this afternoon—"

"Confound the film!" Wharton jumped from his bicycle. "Have you seen anything of Elsie—of Miss Mainwaring?"

"No," said Wharton, in wonder—"not since she left Hawthorne Park this morning. You went out with her then—"

"Or Vernon Carson?"

"No."

Wingate panted.

"She went in a green car with him—a two-seater," he said. "You have not seen a green car on the road?"

"No."

"They did not come to Seacliff," said Wingate, speaking more to himself than to the wondering juniors. "I have been to the cottage—they have not been there. Where has he taken her, then?"

Wharton started.

"Do you mean to say that Carson—"

"He has taken Miss Mainwaring away in a car!" panted Wingate. "Heaven knows where they are now! He lied to her. He said he was taking her to her father; but now I know that was not true! I must get back. She must be searched for—"

"But—" gasped Wharton.

Wingate did not listen. He leaped on his machine again, and drove at his pedals. The Famous Five stared at one another.

"This is a go!" said Nugent.

"The go-fulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh. "Is it possible that the

beautiful and esteemed cinema-miss has been forcefully taken off by rascally Carson?"

"Looks like it," said Harry. "I believe he's villain enough. Let's get back to Hawthorne Park."

The juniors remounted and rode after Wingate.

They put on good speed; but the captain of Greyfriars was soon out of sight, riding like the wind.

The chums of the Remove arrived at Hawthorne Park, rather out of breath with their hard ride, and jumped off their machines at the gate.

Billy Bunter loomed up there with a bag in his hand and a discontented expression on his fat face.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Has Wingate come in?" asked Wharton.

"Yes; but I say—"

"Has Miss Elsie come back?"

"Not that I know of. I say—"

The chums of the Remove hurried in without waiting to hear Billy Bunter's remarks. William George was a very negligible person at that moment.

Bunter blinked after them wrathfully and roiled out of the gateway, his estimable company not being any longer required at the film-producer's headquarters. Bunter's original ideas with regard to the rights of property had not endeared him to Cyrus Hunker.

Harry Wharton & Co. hurried on to Mr. Hunker's office. The door was half-open, and they heard Wingate's voice within. They looked into the office to see Cyrus Hunker leaning back in his swivel chair, calmly smoking a cheroot, Wingate standing before him the prey to a feverish excitement.

Mr. Hunker nodded to the juniors.

"I see you're back," he remarked.

"One of you go and tell my chauffeur to get out the big Rolls-Royce."

"Certainly."

Frank Nugent hurried away with the message. The others remained, as Mr. Hunker did not bid them go. They were

LIGHTING-UP TIME FOR THIS WEEK.



OCTOBER.

25th Monday-	- - -	5.15 p.m.
26th Tuesday-	- - -	5.13 "
27th Wednesday-	- - -	5.11 "
28th Thursday-	- - -	5.9 "
29th Friday-	- - -	5.7 "
30th Saturday-	- - -	5.5 "
31st Sunday-	- - -	5.3 "

keenly anxious about Elsie, and very eager to help.

"I came back here," Wingate panted. "I thought you would take instant measures, Mr. Hunker."

"Correct!"

"I have told you what has happened," said Wingate fiercely. "You know that that villain Carson has taken Miss Mainwaring away—"

"So it seems, sonny."

"The police—"

"I reckon I'm not calling in the police," said Mr. Hunker calmly.

"Then I shall call them in!" shouted Wingate. "You know that Elsie is in the power of that villain, and you sit smoking a cigar—"

"Yes," assented Mr. Hunker calmly. "Why not smoke a cigar while I'm waitin' for my car, bub?"

"Your car!" hissed Wingate. "You are going for a drive, when you know that—"

"Really, Mr. Hunker—" said Harry Wharton warmly.

The film-producer regarded them calmly through a cloud of smoke.

"I guess you kids came from your school to act under my orders," he remarked. "Hyer you are teaching me my business. It's kind of you. I don't deny that it's kind, but—"

"I tell you—" shouted Wingate.

"Cut that out, bub!" said Mr. Hunker soothingly. "Cut it out!"

"I am going to the police, then, at once!" exclaimed Wingate savagely.

"Can I use your telephone?"

"Better use my car," suggested Mr. Hunker. "There's plenty of room for a party."

"Your car? Do you think—"

Nugent came back into the office.

"The car will be here in a minute, sir," he said.

"Good!" Cyrus Hunker rose from his swivel chair, threw away the stump of his cheroot and yawned. "I guess I want my fur coat and my hat. You boys like to come in the car? Lots of room."

"But—"

"Carson seems to be a pesky desperate customer," said Mr. Hunker. "I may need help to deal with him."

"Carson!" exclaimed Wingate. "You are going—"

Cyrus Hunker yawned again.

"Naturally."

"But you do not know where he is."

"Take a rest, sonny. While you've been blowing off steam I've been putting in a spell with my thinker," explained Mr. Hunker. "I guess I know where to look for that scallywag. Just a few, sir!"

"Oh!" gasped Wingate.

"You get me?" said Hunker cheerfully. "We're going in the car to call on old pal Carson. You can come along if you don't talk so much. I guess I can do the chin-wag that's required in this co. You catch on?"

"But how do you know—"

Cyrus Hunker tapped his forehead.

"Brain!" he said calmly. "In Chicawgo we get an edge put on it—a fine edge, sir. I figure it out like this. There's an old show on the cliffs twenty miles from hyer—an old ruined tower that we used as a background for a film some weeks ago. After sizing up that old show, I said to myself that it would be pesky useful to Cyrus Hunker for future productions. You get me?"

"But—"

"Romantic background, you know, useful for scenes from the Middle Ages, and all that, with a bit of trimming for a Spanish castle-scene taken in the South of Spain, you know, by the Cyrus



Wingate held out his hand. "Sir," he said to Mr. Mainwaring, "I believe in your innocence, as Elsie does. And it may comfort you to know that she has friends who will protect her." "God bless you, my boy," returned Mr. Mainwaring, giving Wingate his hand. (See chapter 6.)

Hunker Films; but, between ourselves, no need to go as far as Spain for it. You get me? So I inquired after that old shebang which was for sale, and I found it had been snapped up. Name of the buyer—Vernon Carson."

"Oh!"

"Cyrus Hunker asked himself what Carson wanted that old show for," continued the producer cheerfully. "Not fit to live in, exceptin' for bats and owls. No use exceptin' to a producer, and Carson's an actor, not a producer. I was puzzled—flummoxed, in fact. Not my bizney, though, so I let it slide out of my brain-box. Now it's come back, when it's wanted. That's the kind of brain we grow in Chicawgo. You catch on? I guess I know now why Vernon Carson paid hard cash for a shebang ten miles from nearly everywhere."

"You think—"

"I know," answered Mr. Hunker calmly. "It's a cinch. Carson had this precious scheme in mind at the time. I reckon that he figured out that it might come to it if Elsie wouldn't look at him, and she wouldn't. Sensible girl, I guess. Carson's taken her off in a green car, but he can't keep her perpetual in a car, green or yaller or blue, I guess. He's got to stow the goods somewhere. Where is he goin' to stow the goods, young Wingate?"

"The goods! You mean Elsie—"

"You've got it. Where is he goin' to warehouse the goods?" said Cyrus Hunker. "I guess it's in that lonely old

ruined tower, and nowhere else. You catch on to the probability?"

"Pretty certain, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"I—I suppose you're right," said Wingate, after a pause.

"Your supposer is in good working order, sonny. Hallo, there's the car! Now, who's coming?"

The Famous Five and Wingate followed Mr. Hunker to the big Rolls-Royce. Cyrus Hunker rapped out a few words to the chauffeur, and the car buzzed out of the gateway. It sped away at a great rate, and Cyrus Hunker lighted a fresh cheroot, and blew out clouds of smoke with cheerful calmness while the Rollys-Royce ate up the miles.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

"**E**LSIE!"

The heavy oaken door opened, and Elsie Mainwaring looked up as Vernon Carson entered the old tower.

She had been alone for a couple of hours.

There was only one habitable room in the dismantled building, with a narrow loophole window and a heavy door. The door had been locked on the outside when Carson left her, to take away the car. Elsie had heard the green car buzzing away, and long silence had fol-

lowed. From the loophole she could catch a glimpse of the sea and of sea-gulls circling as she sat in the stone window-seat, that was all. Profound silence reigned in the solitary spot, broken only by the cries of the gulls.

It was almost a relief when the door opened and Vernon Carson strode in. She raised her eyes to his face.

"Well?" said Elsie calmly.

"I have taken the car away," said the film actor quietly. "If your friends succeed in tracing a green car on the road, Elsie, they will trace it to Folkestone—sufficiently far from here."

Elsie's face fell.

The film actor had guessed her secret hope, and his words had dashed it to the ground.

He smiled.

"You do not look for rescue now, Elsie?"

"I hope."

"Your hope will not last you many days," he said. "You will soon grow weary of the solitude."

"The solitude is preferable to your company," said Elsie bitterly. "I am thinking of my father. If I am your prisoner cannot you leave me in peace in my prison?"

Vernon Carson winced.

"You will change your mind," he said quietly. "Will you join me at lunch, Elsie?"

"No."

"It will be ready in the outer room

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when you change your mind," said the film actor sardonically.

He stepped out, and closed the door after him without locking it. Elsie heard him humming a tune in the outer room.

Her gaze turned upon the strip of sky visible through the loophole, and she sighed deeply. She was thinking less of her own situation than of her father, now a prisoner again in the hands of justice. From the deep silence without came a sound that mingled with the cries of the seagulls. Elsie started.

It was the whirr of a powerful motor-car that echoed over the solitary cliff.

She heard a startled exclamation in the adjoining room. Carson had heard the car.

The girl rose quickly to her feet, and ran to the door. In a moment it was open, and she was in the outer room.

Carson was standing at the low, arched doorway that opened on the cliff. His back was to her.

She heard him utter a ringing curse.

"Cyrus Hunker! Here!"

"Thank Heaven!" cried Elsie.

The film actor spun round towards her.

"Not yet!" he hissed. "They have not taken you from me yet, Elsie!" He drew the silver-plated revolver from his pocket, his eyes blazing with a desperate light. "How have they found us—so soon, too? A thousand curses—"

Elsie looked past him through the arched doorway.

A hundred yards away, on the rough cliff, a big Rolls-Royce had halted. She knew Cyrus Hunker's imposing car.

From the car Cyrus Hunker had descended, followed by Wingate and Harry Wharton & Co.

The seven of them were starting towards the old tower.

Carson ground his teeth with rage.

How he had been tracked out so swiftly was a mystery to him. He did not know that the film producer was aware of his purchase of the lonely ruin. He cast a wild glance round. The outer door of the old tower had long fallen in ruins. There was no time to barricade. He stood in the arched doorway, revolver in hand, a desperate man, as Cyrus Hunker and his companions came up.

Cyrus Hunker gave him a nod and a grin.

"Mornin', old bean!" he said genially. "First-rate pose, Carson, but I haven't brought the camera man, so cut it out!"

Wingate strode forward.

"You scoundrel!" he exclaimed hoarsely.

Vernon Carson raised the revolver.

"Stand back!" His lips were drawn back over his clenched teeth, in a snarl like an animal's. "Stand back, or I will shoot!"

Wingate gave a contemptuous laugh.

"You are not acting for the screen now!" he said. And with that he rushed on the film actor.

Elsie shrieked.

"Take care—"

Crack!

Vernon Carson was as good as his word. He fired desperately, as Wingate rushed on him.

But as he fired, a fragment of rock hurled by Bob Cherry struck him on the arm, and the pistol swayed; the bullet missed Wingate by a foot or more. The desperado had no time for another shot. Wingate was upon him in a second, grasping him, and they rolled over together.

Crack!

"Look out!" yelled Cyrus Hunker, as

the struggling film actor pulled trigger again. The bullet crashed on the wall.

"Oh, Heaven!" moaned Elsie.

"Collar him!" breathed Wharton.

Crack rang the pistol again, as Carson struggled with the Sixth-Former of Greyfriars. The muzzle was close to Wingate's side, but the Greyfriars captain had a grip on his arm, and he twisted it as the bullet flew. Again the shot missed. Carson panted with rage. They struggled furiously, but the powerful Sixth-Former of Greyfriars was gaining the upper hand, when the revolver rang out a fourth time, and there was a shriek of fearful agony.

"Wingate!"

"I am not hurt!" Wingate sprang breathlessly to his feet. "But he—"

Vernon Carson lay stretched upon the stone floor.

Wingate was unhurt; but the film actor's face was already deathly pale.

A crimson pool formed on the stone floor beside him. In the blind struggle Vernon Carson had fired blindly, and the bullet had found a billet in his own body.

"Good heavens!" panted Wharton.

Cyrus Hunker's face was very grave. He stooped and plucked the revolver from the fainting man's hand.

"His own doing," he said, in a low voice. "Wharton, cut down to the car; send the chauffeur for a doctor—quick!"

Wharton darted away.

But all who looked on could see that a doctor, when he came, would be of little use. Vernon Carson realised it himself; his old bitter, cynical smile came back to his pale lips.

"The game's up!" he said thickly. "I've played it out to the end, and the cards have gone against me. Elsie!"

The girl approached him, and knelt by his side. All her anger, all her bitterness, vanished in the presence of death.

His eyes dwelt on her pitying face.

"You are sorry for me, Elsie," he muttered. "You are an angel! I—I have been a brute! I—I'm sorry now. I've injured you, Elsie!"

"Don't speak of that now," she said gently.

"But I must! I have injured you more than you know. I have a confession to make. It is all I can do before I—before I go! Elsie"—he breathed

hard—"tell them to come closer; there must be witnesses. It was I—I who robbed Major Carew. Your father is innocent!"

Elsie gave a cry.

"Some of the banknotes—more than a thousand pounds—will be found in my flat in London!" muttered Carson. "I did not succeed in getting rid of all of them. They can be found. Your father will be cleared. Elsie, say that you forgive me!"

The girl choked.

"I forgive you!" she whispered. "Heaven forgive you, too!"

There was silence in the ruined tower by the sea. The cold hand of the film actor was held in Elsie's as his life ebbed away.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Wingate's Farewell!

"GOOD-BYE to Hawthorne Park!" said Bob Cherry.

It was a couple of weeks since the tragic scene in the old tower. Elsie Mainwaring had recovered from the terrible shock of that scene. The colour had returned to her beautiful face; she was happy at Hawthorne Park. And with her there now was her father. John Mainwaring had been cleared by Vernon Carson's confession, and the recovery of the stolen notes; his release had followed in due course. And when Elsie's father came to Hawthorne Park, he was given a great welcome by the cinema company and the Greyfriars fellows. Elsie's beautiful face was bright and happy now. And Wingate was happy, too, though sometimes his happiness was clouded by the thought of a parting.

The last day had come.

The stay of the Greyfriars juniors at the cinema school had been an eventful one; but the time had come to return to Greyfriars. In the sunny morning the motor-bus and the char-a-banc had come round, and the Greyfriars fellows piled into the first, the Cliff House girls into the second. It was a merry party, and Elsie Mainwaring waved them adieu from her window.

"Where's Wingate?" asked Harry Wharton suddenly.

Bob Cherry smiled.

"He's following on his bike, I think," he answered. "I fancy he's got a special good-bye to say to somebody."

"Hallo, we're off!" said Johnny Bull.

Cyrus Hunker waved his cheroot in farewell, and the Greyfriars party gave him a cheer as they rolled off. Elsie watched from the window till they were gone. She turned, and gave a little start. George Wingate stood before her.

"I thought you would come to say good-bye," she said. "But the others have gone."

"I must speak to you before I go, Elsie."

The girl's face clouded.

She knew what was in Wingate's heart, though she had tried not to realise it. There was infinite kindness and compassion in her beautiful face as she looked at him. But there was not what the Greyfriars captain had, perhaps, hoped to see there.

"My dear friend," she said softly.

Wingate took her hand.

"Elsie," he said, in a low voice—"Elsie, I—I must speak before I go—if I am to go. Elsie, I think you know what I am going to say—that I—I love you, Elsie."

"I did know it," said the girl quietly; "and I am sorry—"

"Sorry!"

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CHILDREN'S 2 NEWSPAPER

Out on Friday.

"Yes; because it must give you pain to leave me," she said. "It gives me pain also. I shall always think of you as a very dear friend—a friend who helped me bravely and loyally in my hour of need!"

"But—but more than that——"

She shook her head sadly.

"Anything more than that is a dream," the soft voice went on. "Later, my dear friend, you, too, would know that it was only a dream—a dream of your boyhood."

"Never!"

"So you believe now. But I am older than you," she said, with a faint smile. "And, in this, wiser. You must

return to your duty, and I will not ask you to forget me, though it might be for your happiness to do so. But think of me only as a loving friend—as I shall think of you."

He raised his eyes to her face.

"And that is all?" he said, in a low voice.

"It must be all."

Wingate bowed his head, his lips twitching. He pressed her hand for the last time.

"Good-bye, Elsie! I shall never change; perhaps some day you will come to believe that. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, my dear!"

She drew nearer to him, and her lips

touched his forehead, once, gently. The next moment Elsie Mainwaring was alone. A deep sigh escaped her as she turned to the window. She saw him crossing to the gates. A pang was in her heart as she saw how his proud head drooped.

"But he will forget!" she whispered. There was a step in the room, and she turned to greet her father, with a smile on her lips, but there were tears in her eyes.

THE END.

(Another grand long story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled: "COKER'S CRAZE!" By Frank Richards. Order EARLY!)

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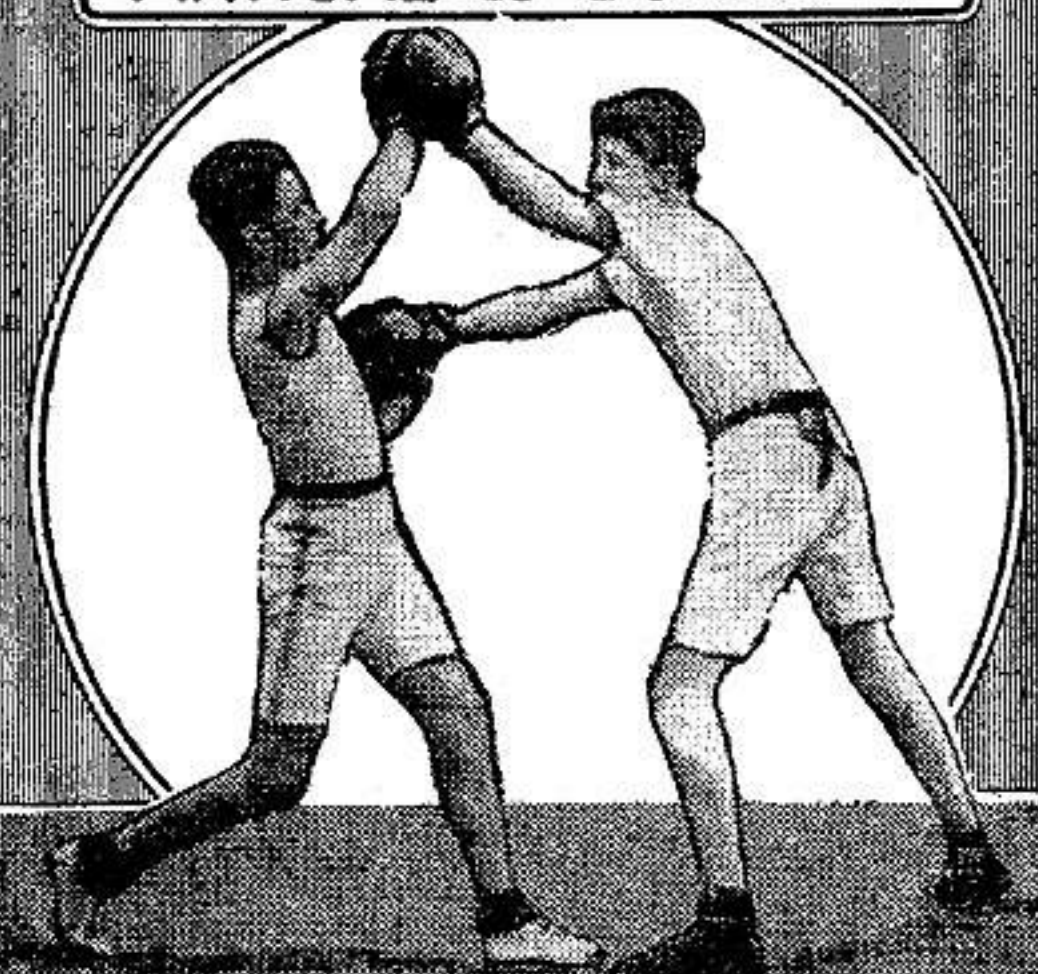
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STORYETTES.

ECONOMY.

Sandy (at pay-office of public baths): "How much for a bath, mon?"

Attendant: "One shilling, sir."

Sandy: "Ay, mon, that's a wee tee much. Can ye no charge saxpence and put in half the usual amount of water?"

BREAKERS AHEAD!

The dear old lady was chatting amiably with the innocent little lift-boy as the lift rattled upwards.

"Don't you find this work monotonous?" she asked.

"Oh, no, mum!" came the reply brightly. "Sometimes it's quite exciting. Only yesterday a man started to get out too soon, and got his head cracked; and last week the engine broke down, and everybody 'cept me was nearly killed. And now this 'ere rope looks sort o' weak—I shouldn't wonder if it broke any time. And the engineer's away ill to-day, and a hamatoor's on his job, an' that makes things interestin'!"

LION-HEARTED!

Several Jack Tars, being on leave, visited a circus, and secured seats in the front row.

During the performance a charming young lady lion-tamer, who had got into the lions' cage, beckoned to a savage-looking beast, which came forward and took a piece of sugar from her mouth.

"Why, I could do that trick!" exclaimed one of the sailors.

"Oh!" stammered the fair tamer. "Could you really?"

"You bet your sweet life!" calmly answered the sailor. "Just as well as the lion!"

EASILY EARNED.

"Do you know where Teddy Brown lives, my boy?" asked a kind old lady of the diminutive youth.

"Yes; he ain't at home, though. If you'll give me a penny, ma'am, I'll find him for you!" replied the youngster.

"All right, here's a penny. Run off and find him."

"Thank you, ma'am! I'm him!"

ANY 'ARM?

Anxious Father: "And could you support my daughter?"

Suitor: "I have two strong arms."

Anxious Father: "But can they support her?"

Suitor: "They often have, sir."

Salesman: "You'll find those good-wearing socks, sir."

Customer: "Rather loud, ain't they?"

Salesman: "Yes, sir. But that keeps the feet from going to sleep!"

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A MAGNIFICENT NEW SERIAL OF ANCIENT ROME!



MARCUS.



MARCUS THE BRAVE

A THRILLING STORY
DEALING WITH NERO, AND HIS GLADIATORS.
BY FAMOUS VICTOR NELSON.



READ THIS FIRST.

MARCUS, a gladiator of Ancient Rome, returned from a voyage during which he captured Strongbow, a notorious pirate. As his reward from Nero, the emperor, Marcus claimed the hand of Eunice, a Christian slave-girl, in marriage. Nero, however, spurned him, the girl having been condemned to death in the arena. Marcus was imprisoned, but his friend Leo, gaining access to the emperor's private apartment by means of a secret passage, compelled Nero, at the sword's point, to release Marcus. The two friends then fled to Eunice's prison, with the order for her release, which they had forced Nero to sign. But they are tracked and thrown into prison to await death in the arena. Meanwhile, preparations for the Roman Games are continued.

(Now read on.)



EUNICE.

In the Arena's Maw!

AS the morning advanced, and the fighting-men made their appearance in command of their training-masters, excitement reached fever heat.

"Embrace us ere death embraces us!" The gladiators called the invitation jestingly to the girls who flung flowers before them ere they passed in at the great gates through which many were destined never to return.

In the rear of them followed the mastigophori—scourgers—armed with lashes. Their task was to goad the fighters to renewed and greater efforts when wounded, or their strength flagged.

Coffins—ugly wooden coffins—arrived in waggons drawn by mules. The ever-increasing crowds clapped their hands and cheered as they counted them and saw their large numbers, for the more coffins the more victims they were to see fall in the games.

Tremendous hosts of slaves came next, whose duty it was to be in attendance in the amphitheatre. They were to see people into their seats, carry them drinks and food, and distribute Nero's lottery tickets.

Last came the pretorians—detachment after detachment—to make sure of some semblance of order being kept. And now the entrance gates were opened.

So vast was the throng that it continued to stream in for the next hour and a half, and it was amazing that the structure could hold so many thousands of human beings. As it filed into the seats the multitude made a droning uproar like the beating of heavy waves upon a rock-bound coast, and when it was settled in the tier upon tier of seats surrounding the gigantic, sanded arena, formed a mighty and unbroken sea of faces.

Came the priests of various temples and the vestal virgins, when the majority were seated; and, at length, the prefect of the city made his appearance.

He was hemmed in with guards in flashing armour, and in his wake flowed the litters of consuls, senators, and patricians, public officers, elders, and the noble ladies of Rome.

The mighty concourse waited now only for the arrival of Nero himself.

When at length the people were beginning to fidget with suppressed excitement and impatience a blaring of trumpets announced his entry into the royal box, and the mountebank was seen

wearing his favourite amethyst, with diamond collar and a golden wreath. His golden-haired consort was present, and sat on his right.

After the prefect of the city had ridden round the flower-strewn arena, and given the signal for the performance to commence, the spectators watched with only ill-concealed impatience a chariot race, for they wanted to see the gladiators.

They had not, as it happened, long to wait, for the gladiators had their turn next.

The andabates were the first to make their appearance. These were the gladiators who wore helmets without eye openings, and dozens of them entered from opposite sides of the great sanded space, and shook their swords in the air.

The men with whips who followed them in urged them forward, and as the two opposing parties met and struck and thrust blindly at one another the rabble portion of the onlookers shrieked delight at their clumsy movements.

The fight grew furious. The combatants, having closed in and each found an adversary, cast aside their shields and clutched each other, to fight, then, to the death.

When a gladiator fell he raised his fingers to signify that he was wounded, and sought for mercy; but the crowd, in most cases, wanted to see them die, and screamed for them to be slain.

Slowly the combatants grew less. As they were killed slaves carried them from the arena, which was freshly sanded and strewn with crocus leaves. Only two remained, at length, and the scourgers guided them together, then pushed them so that they fell and stabbed madly at each other as they lay upon the sand.

In the end both collapsed from loss of blood, and amid cries from the audience of "It is finished!" more slaves carried them from sight. The whole spectacle was nauseating, terrible; but it was delighted in by these people of Rome, and they stamped and shouted for more such sights.

In turn the Thracians, Mirmillons, Gauls, and net-bearers followed and fought; and away in his cell, situated near the wild beasts' dens, the applause of the multitude floated to the ears of Marcus.

He had been brought to the arena early that morning, and had caught a glimpse of Leo, who must now be in another cell, though he had not seen Eunice, and whether or no she was to

die to-day the unfortunate lad did not know.

Marcus was now little the worse for the heavy blow over the head Strongbow had struck him with his manacles, and during his captivity efforts had been made to build up his strength.

At first he could not understand the reason for this, then he had realised that he was probably to be allowed to make some sort of fight in the arena ere he died, and it did not surprise him when a body of pretorian guards entered his cell, flung him a gladiator's breastplate, helmet and sword, and commanded him to don them.

"Why should I?" he said quietly, as he faced the soldiers. "Methinks that, in any case, I am to die. Why should I please the mob by prolonging my life in hopeless strife?"

The leader of the pretorians shrugged his shoulders.

"Would you not protect the maiden whom you love?" he asked significantly.

"You mean——" Marcus exclaimed hoarsely, with a start.

"That she will stand with you in the arena," the man answered. And now Marcus began to understand something of the fiendish scheme Caesar must have hatched to amuse the people at his and his loved one's expense.

With a heavy heart he put on the breastplate and helmet, and picked up the sword.

"I am ready!" he said simply.

He was marched from the cell along a dark corridor that ended in an iron grille looking out into the arena. The roaring and snarling of wild animals had grown louder now, and rang like a death-knell in the lad's ears.

The grille was opened, and he was thrust out into the arena. For a moment, half blinded by the sudden glare of light after the gloom, he stood on the sand, irresolute. Then, as his vision cleared, he looked upon a sight which sent him hastening forward.

Right away in the centre of the arena was Eunice and Leo. The girl was upon her knees, her hands clasped in prayer, and, in breastplate and helmet like himself, Leo stood over her, a sword held in his hand. His eyes were fixed in horrified fascination upon one of the grilles through which some attendants had gone, and from beyond which issued a babel of yelping and snarling.

Marcus pressed his elbows to his sides, and hastened towards his sweetheart and friend; but even as he reached them, that for which Leo had evidently been waiting occurred.



The wolves came at Marcus and Leo like so many snarling demons. With hearts beating fast, the two heroes faced the savage beasts. (See this page.)

The grille he had been gazing at was swung open, and into the arena rushed a whole pack of gaunt, famished-looking wolves.

Eunice uttered a low moan of fear, and fell forward on her face upon the sand. Derisive yells broke from the onlookers, but they were abruptly silenced, and the mighty crowd stared in wonder as they saw the girl struggle up once more, with white, set face, and again clasp her hands.

The wolves seemed stupefied by the sudden light, just as Marcus had been dazed when he first encountered it. Next they eyed the three humans askance, standing stationary, and seeming in doubt whether to attack them. That, however, was not for long.

Semi-starvation made them brave, and, as one of the bolder spirits amongst them flung up his lean, grey head, and gave tongue, the whole pack set up a chorus of blood-curdling howls, and with bared fangs and hungry eyes raced across the stretch of sand dividing them from their intended victims.

Against Desperate Odds!

ATENSE silence fell over the mighty amphitheatre. As the wolves were seen to dash towards the two gladiators and the kneeling girl, the multitude watched, breathless.

In the royal box, Nero raised his

emerald to his eyes and leant a little forward. Poppæa Sabina, his golden-haired consort, was moved out of her usual haughty calm, and laid a hand that trembled with excitement upon the sleeve of his amethyst robe.

Even Petronius, the Arbiter of Elegance, who was in the box with other courtiers, awoke to interest, and stared down into the arena in fascination.

There were seven wolves, and all were famished, and made bold and fierce by their hunger. They came at Marcus and Leo like so many snarling demons, eyes ablaze, teeth wickedly bared.

Two of them sprang simultaneously at Marcus. He met one with a blow from his sword that split its snout and sent it back, snarling with agony and rage, and more than surprised.

Leo thrust at the other as it rose in its bound for the throat of his friend. His attack was both swift and lucky, for he wounded it in such a manner that its heart was pierced, and it fell dead upon the sand.

Instantly its fellows leapt upon it and started to devour it—a ghastly undertaking, yet one, nevertheless, that afforded the two young Romans a short respite.

Eunice was still upon her knees, and her lips still moved in prayer, though she was trembling violently, and her girlish face was deathly-white.

Marcus and Leo seized now an opportunity that might not come again. They

leapt amongst the six wolves as they snarled and fought over the warm flesh of their slain companion.

A gasp ran through the packed auditorium. "What bravery!" more than one person could not help exclaiming. The vast throng of men and women craned forward in mingled excitement and admiration, and watched, spellbound.

They saw the savage, gaunt, grey animals wheel from their feast—saw them leap savagely at their enemies, though it was not before Marcus had wounded another of them so badly that it crawled away, whining, cowed, and crippled.

Five of the creatures were left seriously to be reckoned with. For a breathing space, men and wolves were so entangled that it was difficult for the onlookers to determine what was really happening.

One of the largest snapped for Leo's leg, and its teeth missed his calf only by the fraction of an inch. Like lightning, he struck at it with his sword, exerting every ounce of his fine strength and cracking its tough skull.

It was not done for, however, in the one blow, hard and shattering though it had been. With bared fangs, the animal sprang again, though this time it was blindly, dazedly.

Leo met it with a terrific lunge, which was aimed upwards, and drove the point of his weapon into the brute's stomach. Its teeth snapped so near his face that

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Leo felt its hot breath mingle with his, but it was the wolf's last effort.

With a howl of pain, it fell in a huddled heap at the gladiator's feet, writhed for a moment, then lay still, with its life's blood dying the sand.

Marcus, meanwhile, was warding off the attack of two of the remaining beasts. His blade moved and flashed so quickly that it was difficult to follow it with the eyes.

He had slightly wounded both the brutes, and driven them to insane fury. Fortunately, the two other animals left uninjured had each dragged a part of their dead companion away, and were gnawing at it, content, for the time being at least, to let their human prey alone, so that Leo was able to rush to his chum's assistance.

The two young Romans retreated slowly before their snarling and snapping foes; but the wolves flung themselves at them again and again, and people in the audience began to make bets on the result of the fight, the majority being of the opinion that in the end the gladiators would go down before the animals' attack, and be torn to pieces.

"Hercules!" Caesar cried, clapping his hands in almost childish excitement. "What say you, Petronius? How will it end?"

The Arbiter of Elegance shook his head.

"'Tis hard to say, Divine One," he answered, "though truly those lads are wonderful, and— Ah! Methinks now that they—the gladiators—will be victorious!"

Marcus had disposed of one of the attacking wolves.

A swinging blow with his weapon had broken one of its fore-legs, and as, yelping shrilly, it fell to the sand and instinctively licked at the ugly wound left by the sword, the lad pounced upon it, and drove home a deadly thrust behind its shoulder.

The wound inflicted was a fatal one. It fell on its side, its limbs kicked once, and it quivered convulsively, then Death claimed it.

Together, Leo and Marcus tackled the remaining wolf of the pack, and a few seconds later, with its throat pierced, it fell to rise no more; but, even as it struggled in its last throes, there came a sharp cry of terror from Eunice.

As one man, Leo and Marcus swung round towards her, to find her upon her feet and see her dart to one side to avoid the spring of one of the wolves which had up till now been devouring a portion of the first of its companions to die.

It turned in a flash, and before the two gladiators could hope to protect her again, jumped full at the girl.

Marcus uttered a choking groan of horror, expecting to see the girl he loved borne to the sand and the wolf bury its fangs in her white throat. The instinct of self-preservation, however, came to Eunice, and in the very nick of time she flung herself to one knee.

The long, grey body of the wolf shot completely over her head, and as, baffled and surprised, it landed upon the sand, Marcus and Leo rushed towards it.

Quick though they were, they were barely in time to prevent it leaping upon the crouching figure of the girl.

As they made for it, it wheeled like lightning, uttered a ferocious snarl, and flew straight for Eunice as she was in the act of scrambling to her feet.

Marcus was nearer than his friend. He had seen in that brief but terrible moment when it crouched for its spring that he had no hope of using his sword upon it with any degree of certainty, and, although he knew well enough that it meant almost certain death, he flung the

weapon aside, and, as the wolf leapt, so did he, his bare hands outstretched to grapple with it.

His powerful fingers closed accurately about the shaggy throat. Then, next instant, man and beast were rolling over and over upon the sand in a combat that almost beggars description.

In vain, Marcus tightened his grip, and pressed at the creature's windpipe in an attempt to choke the life from its squirming body. It was vain, too, that the wolf tried to fasten its yellow teeth in his arm—in vain that it struggled to break free.

With a hand pressed to her heart, Eunice watched the fight. Her eyes were dilated with fear—fear for the man she loved, yet the while she was filled with admiration at his reckless bravery.

Gripping hard upon his sword, Leo dashed to the struggling figures, but man and wolf were so mixed up that for the moment he dared not use his weapon, lest he wounded his friend instead of the animal. The wolf was one of the most powerful creatures of its kind, and scratched, squirmed, and kicked with a fury there seemed no checking.

Every moment Marcus expected it to wrench its neck free of his clutching fingers, and now, as they rolled over again, the animal made fierce, desperate snaps at his face. Yet, somehow, for the time being, he contrived to hold it away from him, save that once one of its striking fore-paws reached its mark, inflicting a long scratch from his temple to his chin.

Just as the animal had forced down its snout to within a couple of inches of Marcus' throat, help came from Leo.

He drove his sword almost to the hilt between its ribs, using a cool and skilful judgment that despatched it with the one clean thrust.

As Marcus tossed it from him and rose panting to his feet, shouts, stamping, clapping, and whistling thundered from every part of the amphitheatre.

Whatever happened to them, the two gladiators had won the admiration and goodwill of the mighty audience.

Would Caesar dare set the feelings and opinion of the people at naught, and still decree that Eunice and they should die?

An Amazing Escape!

FOR fully half a minute cheers and applause shook the great structure to its foundations.

It was next to impossible for anyone in the auditorium to make themselves heard if they addressed those seated next them.

In the arena, Leo had his lips close to Marcus' ear, and his hand was eagerly gripping his friend's arm.

"Quick!" he said, almost shouting so that Marcus should hear him above the din. "For Eunice's sake, beg for mercy!"

All the pluck and manhood in Marcus rebelled at the idea, but for Eunice any course that might lead to life and freedom must be adopted.

He advanced to Leo's side. Already the latter had walked to the centre of the gigantic sanded ring, and was holding up his fingers, the sign that he begged for a merciful decision.

Marcus followed his example, and they waited with indrawn breath to see how the thousands who clapped and applauded them would receive their plea.

For a tense moment, their fate, so far as the crowds were concerned, hung in the balance. The shouting and stamping, the hand-clapping and whistling, died into an almost complete silence. It was as though the throng wavered between an instinct of fairness and sportsmanship and its lust for sights of cruelty and suffering.

People looked at the wolves lying dead or helplessly hors-de-combat upon the sand. Only one out of the pack of seven remained unhurt, and, glutted, and with no desire for further prey, he had retired to the farther side of the arena, where he lay gnawing at a bone of the wolf that had been torn to pieces and devoured.

The spectators realised that they had watched bravery that amounted to sterling heroism, and the hearts of nine out of ten were touched.

As deafening as before, fresh applause broke out, and thousands of thumbs were turned upwards, signifying that it was the desire of the respective owners that the men in the arena were to be spared.

Amazed at the result of the combat, Nero knitted his brows, and gazed around the vast auditorium, making use of his inevitable emerald.

"Dost see?" he muttered to Petronius. "The people would have the caitiffs spared! By Bacchus, but it cannot be!"

"Would it be wise, O Divinity, to decide otherwise?" Petronius queried meaningly. "To go against them so soon after the fire, and the rumours set afloat concerning it, might cause you—well, unnecessary trouble."

"Do I rule Rome, or do the rabble rule me, Petronius?" Caesar asked, lowering his emerald, and regarding the Arbiter of Elegance with a cold look.

"I merely offer advice that perchance would be for your good, O Caesar," Petronius returned, shrugging his shoulders. "It is for you, in your mightiness and divine power, to accept it or follow your own opinions."

"I will order the fiercest of the lions to be loosed upon them," Nero said, after a pause; and actually turned to Horace, the prefect of his pretorians, to instruct him to make known his wishes to the men in charge of the dens.

"Hold!" It was Poppæa who spoke, and she laid an arresting hand upon his arm. "Petronius counsels wisely," she said. "Be not in a hurry to disregard his words."

"Dost forget that both those dogs of gladiators assaulted me, and set my power and dignity at naught?" Nero demanded angrily. "I tell you that they shall die! If the people are troublesome, there are the soldiers to deal with them, and—"

"But why make yourself unpopular?" the Augusta whispered, her fingers still resting lightly upon the sleeve of his robe. "Spare them now, and later"—she laughed softly—"they can pay with their lives for their crimes against you."

"You mean?" Nero demanded, his unhealthy, near-sighted eyes turned upon her questioningly, and he wondered what was the meaning of the cruel little smile that played about her red lips.

"That they can be sent into the arena with the Christians whom you have arranged to be sewn in the skins of beasts. You will still have the satisfaction of seeing lions, or other wild animals, tear them limb from limb, and know that you have been revenged; whilst the people will not recognise them, and will adore you for giving them their liberty, and showing that you can be as kind as you are mighty."

Again Caesar contracted his brows, and, with his emerald raised, looked around the arena.

The clamour for the sparing of the gladiators, and the beautiful British slave whom they had so gallantly protected, was increasing rather than diminishing.

In the lower seats, where the white togas of senators gleamed like snow, in those higher, where the common people

were herded, it was the same—nothing but extended hands, with raised thumbs.

Nero passed a hand before his lips to hide his smile.

"Yes, I will spare them—now," he said, and laughed maliciously. "By Bacchus, trust a woman for having clever ideas when they are needed!"

He turned to Horace.

"Give the word that they are to be taken from the arena, but not released. You understand?"

Horace bowed.

"I understand perfectly, Divinity," he answered.

Their eyes met, and the cruelty in those of Nero was reflected in the eyes of the prefect.

Presently trumpets sounded. A door in the arena opened, and men with red-hot irons appeared, to drive back into its den the uninjured wolf.

From another entrance marched a body of pretorians, in charge of an officer in an embroidered mantle, who held his thumb raised, to signify that the wishes of the audience as to mercy being granted were to be conceded by the grace of his imperial master.

Enthusiasm now reached fever-heat. Women tossed bouquets of flowers towards the gladiators and the surprised and bewildered Eunice. Cheer after cheer was given for them and Nero; and, as they were escorted from the sanded

ring, the hearts of the lads and the girl beat high with hope, for it looked as though their persecution was to cease at last.

What a change, however, immediately they had passed from view into one of the gloomy corridors in the amphitheatre's basement!

Without warning, the soldiers fell upon them, and they were seized and parted. Eunice and Marcus exchanged a glance of despair as they were torn apart, whilst Leo fought like a madman.

As his sword had been knocked from his hand he had little chance of giving his guards much trouble. He was marched down one of the numerous corridors, and struck at brutally when he tried to hang back.

For the time it will be necessary for us to follow the fortunes—or, rather, misfortunes—of Leo, for soon he was destined to have opportunities come to him which were to have far-reaching results.

He was hustled by the pretorians through a network of passages, and, just before he was thrust into a cell, passed one of the many chambers of horror to be found in all Roman amphitheatres in those days when the so-called games were in progress.

It was the spacious, cellar-like room to which the bodies of gladiators were carried after they met their death in the arena.

Here they were callously stripped of their armour, and lain in the wooden coffins which stood there in readiness to receive them.

Leo could scarce suppress a shudder as, in passing, he glanced through the doorway and saw the ghoul-like figures of the slaves on duty there, working amongst the dead in the semi-gloom.

No attempt was made to fetter him, but, through a small grating in the door of his cell, Leo could see that a soldier had been left on guard. And, then, as he chanced to lower his eyes, he noticed something else.

The door had been slammed and the key turned in the heavy lock; but it could not have been properly closed, for the tongue of the lock had missed entering its socket, and the door was left ajar.

For a few seconds Leo stared at it in fascination, then, as he listened intently, he became fairly sure that only the one pretorian on guard remained in the corridor, and a wild excitement gripped him.

To think was to act with Leo, and, slender though the hope of escape from the amphitheatre might be, any chance was worth taking.

With the stealth and noiselessness of a cat, the gladiator stole to the door. His hand went out, and his fingers closed

(Continued on page 20.)

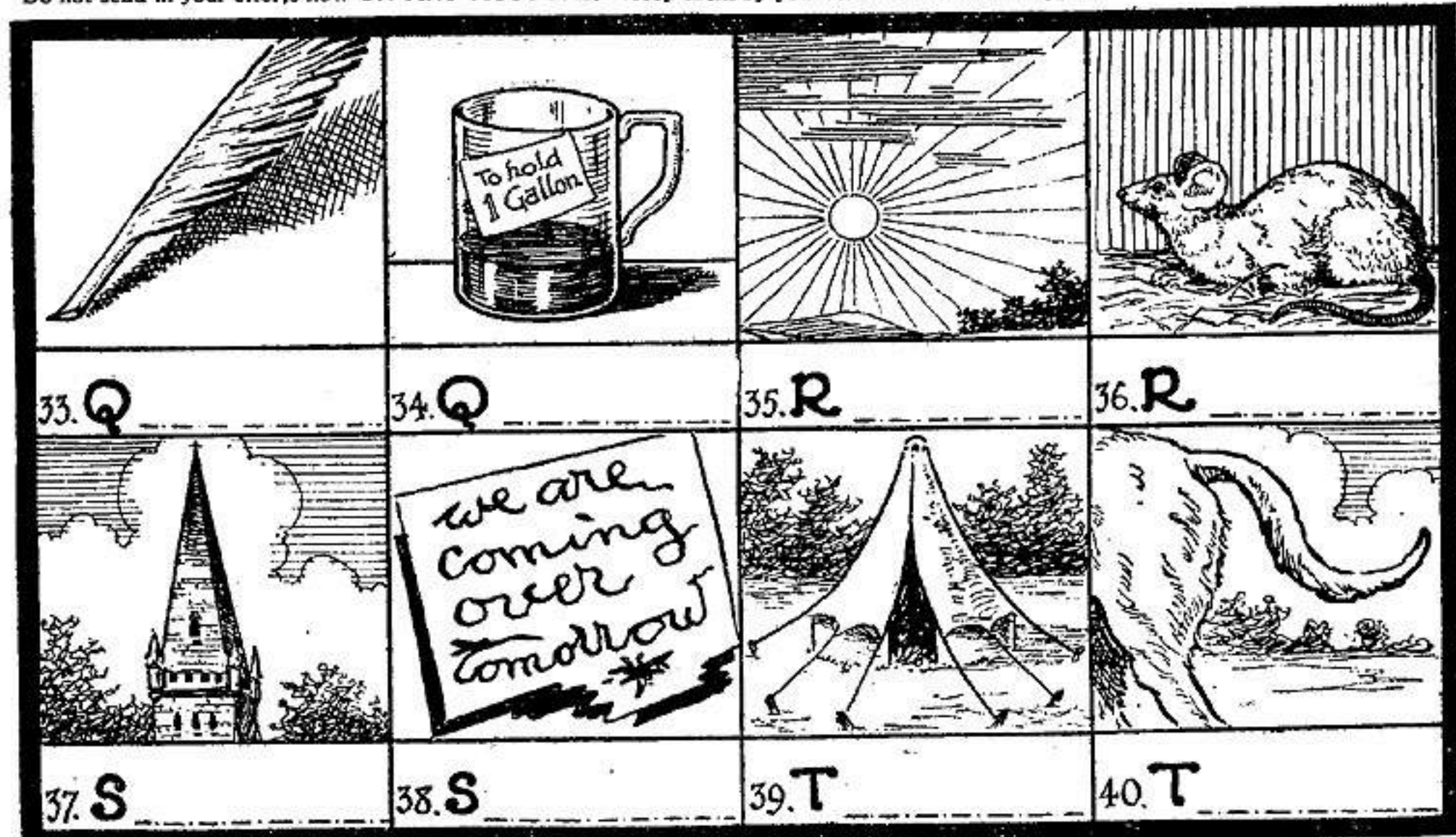
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POISONED!

A Splendid "First-Aid" Article.

By **GEORGE HOWE.**

"**W**HY, man, you look as if you had seen a ghost! What's the matter with you?"

"Smoking. Hird asked a few of us to spend the afternoon in his orchard, and provided cigarettes. When I said I didn't smoke they laughed at me and chaffed me so much that I thought I would show them I could smoke as much as any of them; and I did. But when I got home I felt awfully queer. I'd been chewing grass so that my mater shouldn't smell the tobacco, but she spotted it when she saw me looking badly, and I had such a rough time that I've hardly got over it."

"Was she so rough on you?"

"In a way she was. She didn't say much. In fact, I thought she smiled when I owned up. I didn't like what she did, though. You should have seen me drinking mustard and water to make me sick. Then she gave me a dose of castor oil. Ugh! I went to bed after that. She said I'd be all right this morning, but I haven't quite got over it."

"Your mater knows how to treat poisoning."

"Poisoning? I wasn't poisoned!"

"Of course you were! A poison is something which is absorbed into the system, or acts chemically on the tissues so as to injure the health or to kill. Yours was a mild case of nicotine poisoning. If you had drunk some of the stuff they use in the orchard to kill the pests, you would have begun to be ill in the same way; but the end would have been different. That stuff is nicotine in a stronger form."

"I thought people only drank poison when they wanted to kill themselves."

"Many do; but some are poisoned by accident, like that chap who had been larking with some prussic acid in the lab., and ended by tasting it. My pater was on the jury at the inquest. It is possible that if someone had been there who knew how to deal with cases of poisoning, his life would have been saved."

"You might tell me something more about poisons. It may be handy some-time."

"Whether it is or not, you could have the principles in your head, and not be like the instruction-book on swimming, which said: 'When drowning, turn to page 127.' There's no time for that, either when drowning or being poisoned. Last summer I was poisoned by some tinned meat, though I thought I should never be 'taken in and done for' in that way."

"What did you do?"

"My people had gone away for the day. I didn't want to go with them, so they left me plenty of tuck, and I had a fine time until after lunch, when I began to be ill, and recognised the symptoms of ptomaine poisoning—that is poisoning by bad food. I made myself sick, drank the coffee out of the thermos flask which had been left for me, but had only strength to crawl to the door and open it. There I was found by old

Stickem, who happened to be passing. He brought me in, and did just what your mother did to you, but sent for the doctor. It was an awful sell, as I shall not be left at home again. The doc. said I had saved my life by knowing what to do."

"There are ever so many different poisons. Some of them act in the same way, and are treated in the same manner. Others are different; but there are certain principles which apply to all kinds of poisons."

"The first is, to always send for the doctor at once, letting him know it is a case of poisoning. If you know what the poison is, that will be a help to him to know what to bring with him, and should be mentioned."

"The second is to remove the poison. This is done by making the person sick; but it must not be done in corrosive poisoning. I'll tell you the reason for that later. Three things are used for this—there are others, but you need not trouble about the others. Two fingers to the back of the throat; a tablespoonful of mustard in a tumbler of lukewarm

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water; two tablespoonfuls of salt—kitchen in preference to table salt—in the same quantity of lukewarm water. Repeat the dose until vomiting takes place. I hope you haven't forgotten that nothing is to be given at the mouth to an unconscious person? That applies always."

"The third principle is to give an antidote. An antidote is something which neutralises the poison. You have learnt in the chemistry class that an acid neutralises an alkali, and an alkali an acid. If acid has been swallowed, the safe alkalis are lime-water, plaster scraped off the wall or ceiling and mixed with water, calcined magnesia, and soap and water. For alkalis, such as ammonia, quick lime, caustic soda, or potash, the best acids are vinegar or lemon-juice, a tablespoonful to a tumbler of warm water."

"The fourth principle is to relieve the pain by giving something that soothes, generally called 'a demulcent drink.' These are milk, raw eggs beaten up in water or milk, salad oil, olive or sweet oil, and strong tea. You may remember these by the word **MESS**. M, milk; E, eggs; S, salad oil; S, strong tea. But see you don't make a mess of it!"

"Here's a tip for the principles: D.

doctor; R, remove the poison; A, anti-dote; T, tea. And you may remember the two and their connection by saying **DRAT the POISONOUS MESS.**

"There are two or three other things that should not be forgotten. Always wash out the mouth before giving anything to drink, and so save more poison from going into the stomach. Keep everything—bottles, food, utensils, vomit, poison, etc., just as they are until the doctor comes. That is very important. And the other thing is to treat for shock by keeping the person warm."

"The poisons are divided into classes according to their action."

"1. Corrosives. These are acids such as spirits of salts, acetic, nitric, and sulphuric acids; and caustic alkalis, such as corrosive salts and those mentioned under the third principle. All corrosives burn where they touch, and you can imagine where that would be if you think of yourself taking the stuff. The burn may be anything from redness and swelling to charring, according to the strength of the poison, and whether an antidote has been given immediately or not. The throat may be swollen and the breathing difficult. In all cases of corrosive poisoning **NEVER GIVE AN EMETIC**, as the stomach may be perforated. Give the antidote. By the way, a girl's life was once saved by a man grinding up his clay pipe and giving that as an antidote, as there was nothing else handy in the whitewash line. She had taken oxalic acid, and lived to thank her brainy rescuer."

"2. Irritants. These do not burn, but gradually the pain increases, causing vomiting and purging, and usually they kill through exhausting the victim. Arsenic, tartar emetic, zinc, and the salts of other metals, the essential oils, and phosphorus are the commonest. Carry out the principles, except in the case of phosphorus poisoning, when no oil must be given, as the oil would dissolve the poison and carry it quicker into the system."

"3. Narcotics. Giddiness, drowsiness, delirium, and in the case of opium, the pupils of the eye are so contracted that they have been called 'pin-point pupils.' Among these are the various preparations of opium, chloroform, belladonna, chloral, veronal, alcohol, etc. There is a section of the narcotics which are also irritants, among them being aconite, strychnine, hemlock, and various fungi. Besides carrying out the principles, it is necessary in all cases of narcotic poisoning to keep the person awake. Walk him about, slap him on the face, neck, chest, back, and the soles of the feet with a wet towel. Kept awake, he may recover. If the poison is opium, ten grains of permanganate of potash in a pint of water every half-hour should be given."

In cases where the throat is swelling and the breathing threatened, treat as for scalded throat, by putting hot flannels to the throat, and giving sips of cold water. If breathing is ceasing in prussic acid and strychnine poisoning, get to work with artificial respiration. Prussic acid is also a case for plenty of alcohol, being one of the rare cases where this is allowed to be given except on instructions from a doctor."

"I don't think I should like to be poisoned. It is too horrid!"

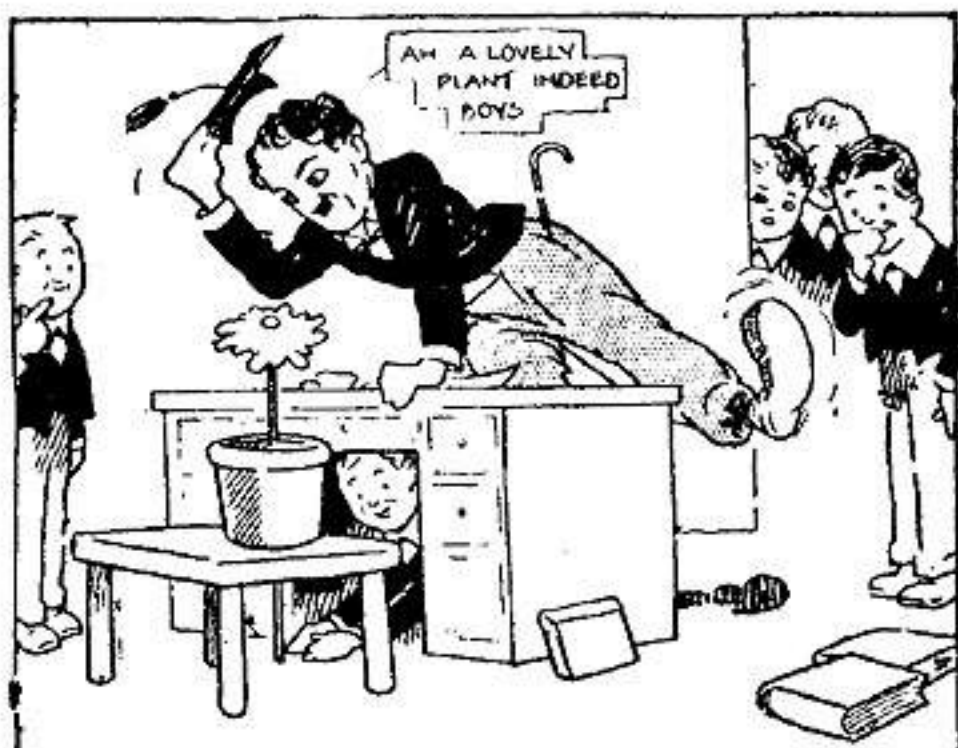
"And I hope you'll never have to help anyone who is poisoned; but if you have, you'll be ready, even for yourself!"

(Another splendid article next
Monday.)

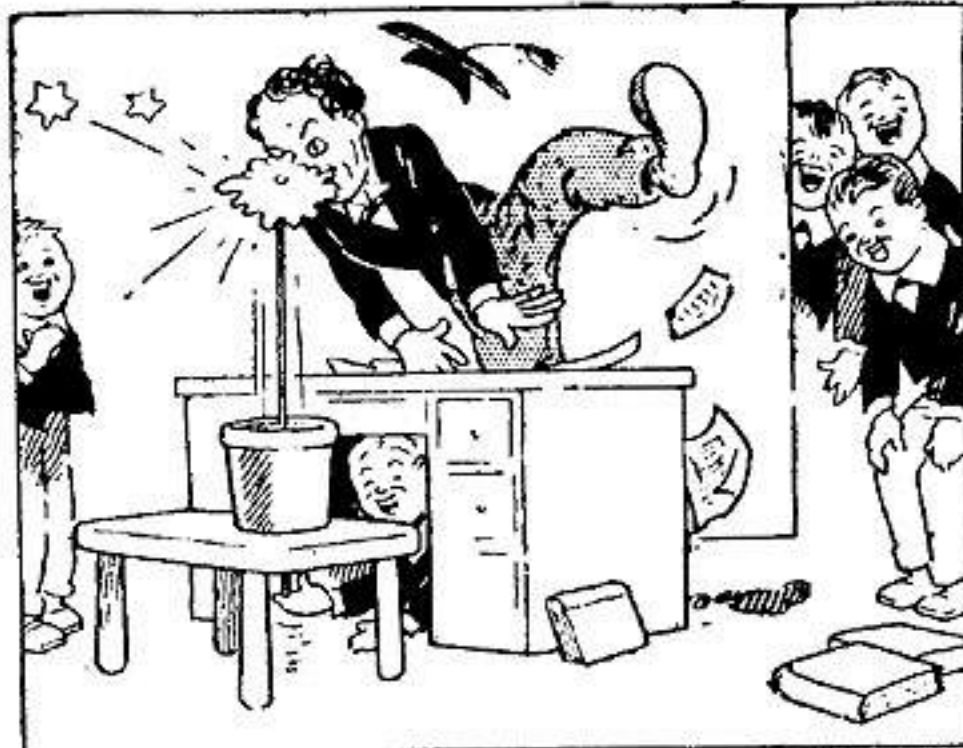


CHARLIE CHAPLIN—FORM-MASTER!

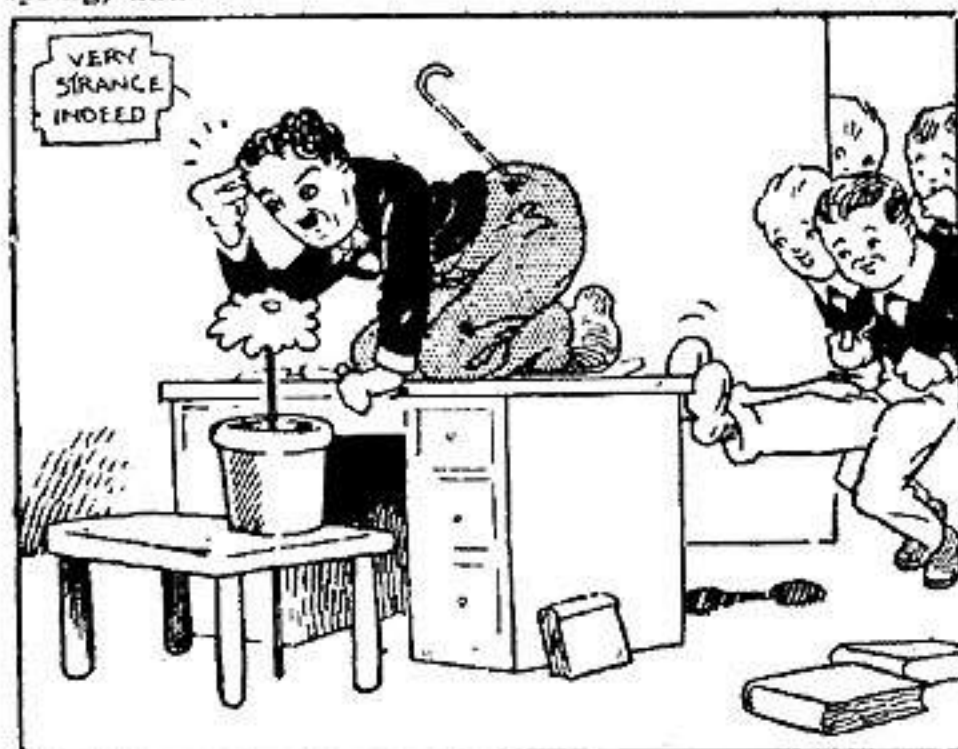
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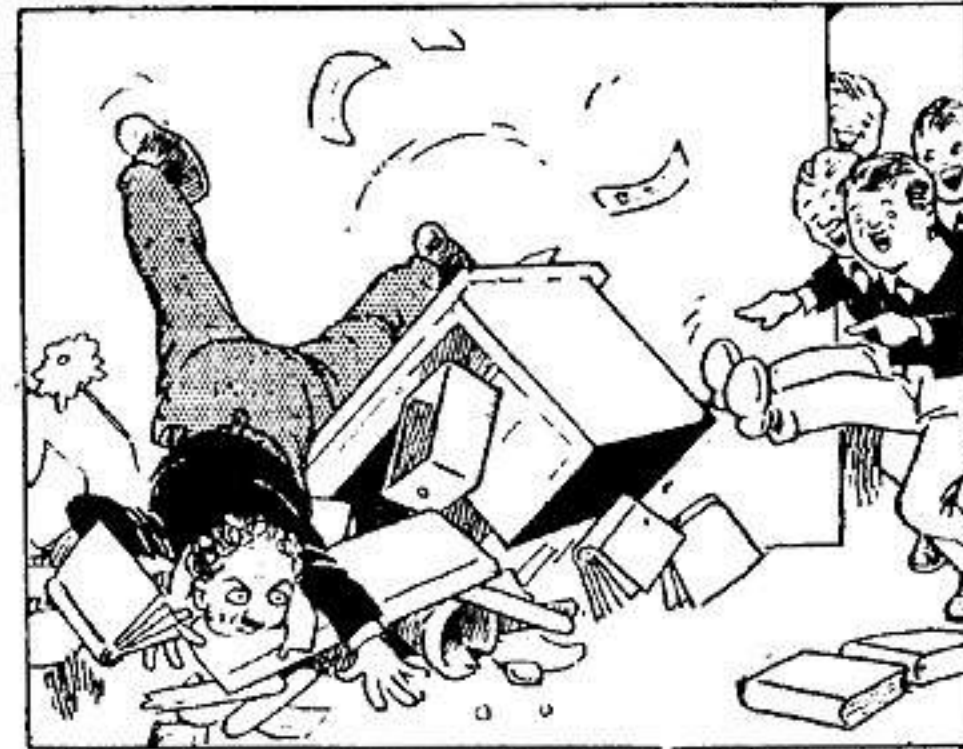
1. "Ah, a lovely plant, indeed, boys!" chirruped Charlie, as he vaulted into the Form-room t'other morn and saw the beautiful blossom brought in by the thoughtful little fags. "Although winter draweth on, it helps to remind me of spring, and—"



2. "Yes, teacher," wuffed Willie Wagg from under the desk, as he gave the dainty dahlia a hearty tap from beneath. "we thought it would remind you of spring!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the other juniors. "We believe teacher's scenting a joke now!"



3. "A strange phenomenon," murmured our filmy Form-master, examining the lovely hothouse bloom. "It seemed to me as though it suddenly grew upwards." "Perhaps it mistook your face for the sun, teacher!" suggested Tommy Titters. Then he and—



4. Willie Wagg sent the useful old desk flying with their number nines. "Yow-wow! Gr-rroogh!" spluttered Charlie. "Another shattering earthquake! Divide my little black moustache between Duggie Fairbanks and Fatty Arbuckle, boys, and tell 'em 'no flowers'!"



5. But Charlie soon got his powerful hydraulic film-brain into proper working order again, and then that young scamp, Willie Wagg, got it in the neck. "Collared, by thump!" muttered the rest of the scared scallywags.



6. "Now, Willie," chortled our fun-merchant, "you can help with the out-of-pocket expenses!" And after Charlie had done with the rest of the naughty nippers, they hadn't the price of next week's MAGNET among the lot of 'em!

MARCUS THE BRAVE!

(Continued from page 17.)

gently about its edge; then, inch by inch, he began to draw it towards him.

The pretorian soldier had his sword drawn, but stood with his back towards the lad. Abruptly, Leo flung the door back upon its hinges, and, with a panther-like bound, gripped the startled guard by the throat from behind, and planted a knee sharply in the small of his back.

The fellow had no time to cry out. He was brought down with a thud, and, it being no time to be too scrupulous, Leo promptly dashed his head against the wall with sufficient force to stun him.

A glance up and down the gloomy passage assured the lad that not a soul had been near to see what had happened. Letting a quick sigh of relief escape him, he dragged the soldier into the cell, and closed and locked the door upon him.

With his pulses racing and his heart

pounding hard with excitement, Leo stole back the way he had come when the guards had forced him here.

He reached the vicinity of the room of death with its ghastly contents and listlessly-working slaves, and as he came almost abreast of the doorway an idea occurred to him that was so daring that it almost startled himself.

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

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