

LITTLE FOLKS

Hugh's Escape.

At first Hugh thought he wouldn't like it. All the pretty green bit of common just outside the garden-wall to be cut up and covered with ugly red brick houses! No more games at cricket or ball on the grass! It was all certainly immensely disagreeable, and Hugh and his sister Minnie both loudly declared it was a shame, a horrid shame, and just showed once more how stupid grown-up people were. But when their mother explained (not without a few tears in her eyes, poor mother!) that the death of their father necessitated the ground being sold, and that the money she had received for it

shut up to Mother, but it's wretched all the same.'

However, when the houses began to go up, Hugh altered his mind marvellously. The new houses were far more fun to play in than the green had been. He climbed the ladders, jumped the scaffolding, and risked his neck as boys will, fifty times a day, for it was holiday-time, and yet always turned up at home all right for his dinner, instructing his mother and Minnie all the time he was eating, in the art of building. He was learned on brick-laying, and grew quite knowing about mortar, till his mother laughed and told him he had better give up the notion

celebrate than that,' answered his mother. 'Go out, Hugh, at once, and say to the foreman, that if the men will leave the beer alone, Jane will make big mugs of cocoa for them, and I'll send out cakes to take with it, or anything else they prefer, as long as they will do without that foolish beer-drinking. Hugh shook his head. 'They won't take cocoa,' he said confidently. 'Men like beer, Mother, better than things like that.' Hugh, you see, had been learning other things not so harmless as house-building, those holidays. However, out he ran, and soon came back much astounded.

'They all say thank you, and they'll take the cocoa, much obliged to the good lady,' he announced, repeating the words of the foreman verbatim. 'All but Ersom. He says: "None of your wishy-washy, teetotal rubbish for him, so long as there is good beer to be had for the asking."'

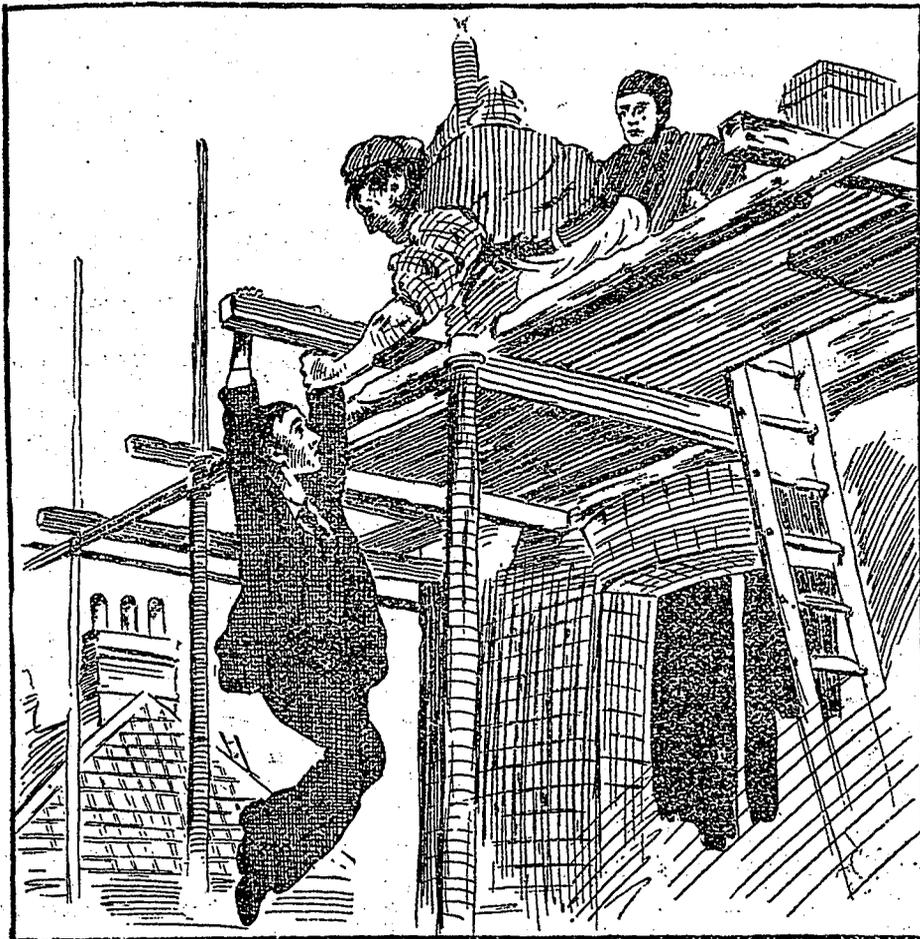
'That's a pity,' returned Mrs. Martin quietly. 'However, we can't help it. Say to the foreman the cocoa will be out in ten minutes, and I'll set about getting it ready.'

Now Mrs. Martin did nothing by halves, and the five workmen who presently sat down to the heaped-up plates of cake, and great jugs of cocoa she sent out, had a far better breakfast of it than Ersom, who stood looking on after his pot of beer was drained.

Presently they all resumed work, and it so chanced that Hugh accompanied Ersom and another man to the top of the second house, where the next chimneys were to be set on. In about five minutes, Ersom, whose hand was not over steady, dropped his trowel, and away it rolled down the unslated roof. Instantly Hugh darted after it. He was sure-footed enough, but a jutting-out plank caught his toe, and he suddenly stumbled forward, slipping forward, never able to stop himself, to the very edge of the scaffolding, when he managed as if by a miracle to catch on to one of the beams. There he hung, fully forty feet from the ground.

'Oh, save me, save me!' cried the terrified boy.

Ersom and the other man hastened as best they could forward,



would enable them to stay on in their own house, the children were silenced.

'Don't let's talk about it any more,' said Minnie, tossing up her ball for Hugh to catch. 'We've got to put up with it, and it vexes Mother when we make a fuss; and, after all, we can play nearly as well in the garden.'

'Not a quarter so well, Sausage,' returned Hugh, who went to a big school, and called his small sister all the nicknames he learned there, but meant no harm for all that. 'That's all you know about it, for girls never are up to snuff. We'll

of going to college, and become a house-buider instead. But Hugh hadn't quite made up his mind to that.

One fine morning the first chimneys were put on, and Hugh, coming in late for breakfast, excitedly told his mother that the foreman was sending up to the 'Green Man' for six pots of beer.

'What's that for?' asked Mrs. Martin, looking grave.

'To celebrate,' returned Hugh grandly. 'It's always done when the first chimneys are put on, don't you know.'

'They might find a better way to