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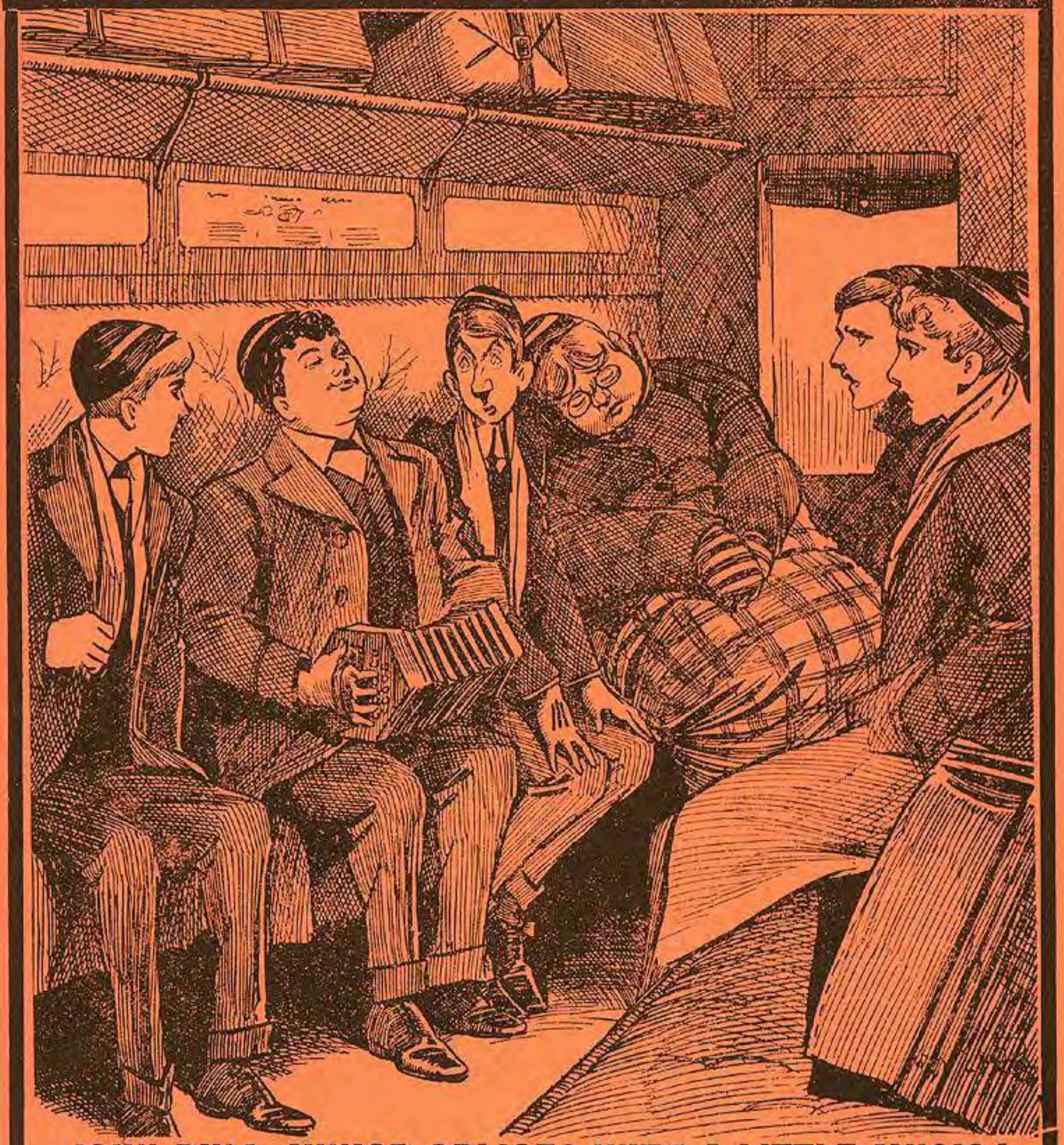

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"You're too long tuning up, I guess," said Fisher T. Fish, kicking the concertina in the middle. "You said you were going to play 'Yankee Doodle.'" "You ass!" roared John Bull junior, "I was playing 'Yankee Doodle'"!

Forward, Fish!

A Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale of

Harry Wharton & Co.

at Greyfriars.

— BY —

FRANK RICHARDS.

****

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Back to School.

HARRY WHARTON was sitting in a corner of the carriage, looking out of the window at the snowy fields and woods along the railway line. Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent were playing chess on a pocket-board, from which the pieces and pawns occasionally jumped when the train bumped, as it did every minute or two. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh sat with a beaming smile upon his dusky face, and a fur-lined coat drawn closely about him, and two scarves and a silk-muffler round his neck. Billy Bunter, in the corner opposite Wharton, was leaning back and snoring. There was a smear of jam on Billy Bunter's face, showing that he had been indulging in the refreshment of pastry en route. Two or three other fellows were in the carriage—all fellows belonging to Greyfriars, and going back to school for the opening of the new term.

Bull, the new junior, had a case on his knee. That case contained a concertina. Bull was debating in his mind whether to open it. A long railway journey was really an excellent opportunity for a little practice. But Bull did not know exactly how his travelling-companions would take it.

The other carriages in the train were crowded with fellows. At the junction, Greyfriars fellows from all quarters of the kingdom had met, and crammed themselves into the train for Greyfriars. There was Micky Desmond from Tipperary, and Morgan from Wales, and Treluce from Cornwall, Ogilvy from Scotland, and Elliott from the Border. From north, south, east, and west they came, to gather once more within the old walls of Greyfriars.

The "local" was crammed. The windows were full with fellows looking out at the winter scenery, and shouting to people along the line. From some of the carriages came the roar of a chorus. Even some of the seniors were shouting

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just as if they were juniors and Nugent even said he believed he heard the deep tones of Wingate, the captain of the school, mingling in the chorus of "On the Ball," which proceeded from a first-class carriage packed with the Sixth.

"Looks jolly, doesn't it?" Harry Wharton said, turning his eyes into the carriage again from the scenery. "We shall get some snowballing."

"Check!" said Bob Cherry.

"That's all right," said Nugent. "I shove my knight in."

"The jollyfulness is terrific," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "The holidays have been happy and venerable, but the returnfulness to the honourable halls of the esteemed Greyfriars is also welcome."

"Hear, hear!" said Tom Brown, the New Zealander.

"Yes, it is very pleasant to return to the old school," said Alonzo Todd, the Duffer of Greyfriars, blinking up from a book. "I am glad to hear you make that remark, Inky. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me that we should not be displeased to return to the scene of our scholastic labours, after the relaxation afforded by the vacation."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Brown.

"My dear Brown——"

"Did they put any dictionaries in your Christmas-pudding, Toddy?" asked Brown.

Todd looked surprised.

"Certainly not, Brown. There were threepenny-pieces—I remember Uncle Benjamin got one on his teeth, and he said something I could not quite catch—but there were no dictionaries. They would be too large; and besides, the damp would spoil them, as well as its being quite certain that the flavour would have a deleterious effect upon the quality of the comestible under discussion."

Bunter opened his eyes and blinked.

"I say, you fellows, shut up!" he said. "Let a chap get a snooze!"

And he closed his eyes behind his big spectacles again.

"My dear Bunter——"

"Snore!"

"Yes," went on Alonzo. "It is indeed pleasant to meet again, after going home for the holidays. How were all your people at home, Brown?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Brown——"

"You see, I haven't been home!" roared Tom Brown. "New Zealand is a little too far to get to for a short vacation."

"Dear me! I quite forgot that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear me! I trust you had an enjoyable time under the family roof Fish?" said Alonzo Todd benevolently, turning to Fisher T. Fish, the American junior.

Fish grinned.

"I guess New York is a little too far to walk home for a vac., too," he remarked.

"Dear me so it is!"

Gr-r-r-r-row-w-wl!

The juniors all jumped and looked at John Bull junior. That cheerful youth had taken his concertina out of its case at last, and tried a squeeze upon it—a sort of preliminary canter, so to speak.

"Shut up, Bull!"

"Look here," said Bull, "I think you ought to like a little music to while away the time."

"Music—yes."

"The music of the honourable Bull is terrific."

"A little too terrific!" growled Nugent. "Chuck it, Bull!"

"Look here——"

"Rats!"

"Yes, it's a little too bad," said Harry Wharton. "Have mercy, old son!"

John Bull snorted.

"You've got no ear!" he snapped.

"I wish I hadn't when you begin that thing," said Bob Cherry.

"The earfulness is terrific."

"I guess that thing ought to be suppressed," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "I never heard anything like it, excepting a sawmill. Can you play 'Yankee Doodle,' or 'Hail Columbia,' or any real tunes like that, Bully?"

Bull brightened up.

"Certainly," he said. "I'll give you 'Yankee Doodle.'"

"Well, p'r'aps I could stand that."

"But we couldn't!" howled Nugent. "Chuck it!"

But John Bull, who needed only the very slightest encouragement to turn on his instrument of torture, had started.

Cr-r-r-r-ash! Grind! Grooh!

"Stop!"

"Hold on!"

"Let up!"

"Chuck it!"

"Mercy!"

John Bull paid no heed. He had his head a little on one side, and there was a dreamy expression upon his face. When he looked like that, John Bull was lost to his surroundings; floating away, as it were, upon the full tide of melody. But what was melody to him was not melodious to the rest. As Nugent had remarked, what was sport to him was death to others.

Fisher T. Fish listened for a few minutes, and then he put out a long, thin leg, and kicked the concertina upward.

Bull stopped playing perforce, for Fish's foot had caught the instrument in the middle when it was at full stretch, and doubled it up.

There was a ghastly squeak from the concertina and it ceased.

John Bull glared at the American.

"You ass——"

"You're too long tuning up, I guess," said Fish. "You said you were going to play 'Yankee Doodle.'"

"You—you chump! I was playing 'Yankee Doodle.'"

"Oh, come off! Do you think I shouldn't have recognised it?"

"I was working in a few variations."

"I guess."

Grooh!

Bull started again.

"Stop!" roared the juniors, with one voice.

Nugent stopped his ears. Bob Cherry looked round for a safe place to lay the chess-board while he slaughtered the musician. Wharton jumped to his feet.

"Stop!"

But the concertina sawed on.

"Stop him!"

"Collar him!"

"Slay him!"

"Hold on!" yelled John Bull, as the juniors grasped him wrathfully. "I—— Oh! Yow!"

Down he went with a bump. The concertina crashed on the floor, and John Bull bumped upon it.

There was a gasp from the concertina, and a yell from John Bull.

Then both of them disappeared under a heap of juniors.

———

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Yankee Swank.

"YAROOH!"

"Bump him!"

"Help!"

"Squash him!"

"Ow!"

John Bull struggled and roared under the juniors. But he was pinned down by sheer weight in the bottom of the crowded carriage.

"I guess we'll keep him there till Friardale," drawled Fisher T. Fish. "He won't make so much row there."

"Yow!"

"Shut up, Bull!"

"Yarooh!"

"Well, that's better than the concertina, I guess, anyhow."

"Lemme gerrup, you idiots!"

"Where's the concertina?"

"He's rolling on it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lemme gerrup!"

Fisher T. Fish dragged the concertina out from under John Bull. The instrument gave a dreadful shriek as it came out.

"Now, I guess I'll chuck this out of the window!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold on!" shrieked Bull. "I—I won't play it!"

"Honour?"

"Yes, you ass!"

John Bull was allowed to get up. He was in a very dusty and rumpled condition. He dusted himself down and glared at the grinning juniors.

"You chumps——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gimme that concertina!"

"Here you are," grinned Fisher T. Fish. "Shove it back into the case, then, and keep a muzzle on it."

"You fathead!"

But John Bull obeyed. The precious concertina was packed in the case and put up on the rack. Then John Bull dusted himself and tried to fasten his collar on a broken stud.

"I say, you fellows, you might let a chap sleep," mumbled

"THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S." A Grand, New School Tale, by Charles Hamilton, is in THE "EMPIRE" LIBRARY this Week. Price One Halfpenny.

The Sixth-Formers, with a roar of laughter, got into the hack and drove away. Billy Bunter sat up in the snow and blinked. He did not ask anybody else for a lift. (*See page 5.*)

Billy Bunter, blinking through his big spectacles. "When I wake up I get hungry. Anybody got any toffee?"

"No!"

"Chocolate would do."

"Rats!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm thinking of standing a feed to celebrate the opening of the term, you know. If you like to subscribe, say, a pound each, I could do the thing in ripping style. I would accept a shilling each. What do you say?"

"Go to sleep!"

"Oh, really——"

"Blessed if I know where the knights are, and the rooks, too!" growled Bob Cherry, who was searching about the carriage for the chessmen, upset and scattered in the tussle with John Bull. "How are we going to finish the game?"

"Here is an honourable knight," said Hurree Singh, "but it has received the treadfulness from an esteemed boot."

"It's smashed."

"Never mind; here we are at Greyfriars," said Harry Wharton, as the train slackened speed. "My hat, look at the snow!"

The Friardale station had only a small portion of the platform roofed. The rest extended beyond the shelter of the roof, and thick snow covered it. Flakes were still falling.

On the platform there were a good many people, and among them a number of lads, whom the Greyfriars fellows immediately recognised.

"Trumper & Co.!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

The Courtfield County Council School fellows waved their caps to the incoming train, and then gathered up snowballs.

"Great Scott!" said Harry. "They're going to open on us as soon as we stop! Jump out as quickly as you can. There's plenty of snow, luckily."

The train came to a standstill in the station.

Doors were flung open at once, and crowds of fellows poured out on the platform.

Whiz! whiz!

Smash!

"Oh!"

"Ow!"

"Yarooh!"

Snowballs smashed and burst on all sides, and the Greyfriars fellows had a hot reception as they scrambled on the platform.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Trumper & Co.

"Give 'em socks!"

"Yeth, give 'em thocks, dear boys," said Solly Lazarus.

Harry Wharton received a snowball under the ear, and another on the nose. As he stooped down to gather snow, he got another in the neck, and another knocked his cap off.

But then he was ready for war!

With a snowball in each hand, he rose and led a rush towards Trumper & Co.

"Come on!" he shouted.

"Hurray!"

Whiz! smash! flop!

Snowballs flew fast and furious, much to the exasperation of the porters and the passengers who did not belong to Greyfriars.

But they did not count!

Harry Wharton & Co. greatly outnumbered the Courtfielders, and Trumper and his friends were driven from the platform under a shower of snowballs.

NEXT WEEK: "ROLLING IN MONEY." A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS

Right out of the station they went, and in the village street they made a stand for a few minutes round the old pump.

But a rush of the Greyfriars juniors scattered them, and they fled in various directions.

Fisher T. Fish waved his hand excitedly.

"Come on!" he shouted. "After them!"

"Oh, let 'em go!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "They've had enough."

"I guess it's better to drive it home," said the American junior. "Come on. I'll show you how to do it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you coming?"

"No fear!"

"Oh, you Greyfriars chaps are half-asleep!" said the American. "I'm after them, I guess, anyhow."

And he dashed after Trumper.

He had not taken six steps before he stepped upon a slide the village children had made in the street, and which he had not noticed in his hurry.

"Oh!" he gasped.

His feet shot forward, and he had to follow them.

The impetus of his rush sent him along at top speed.

He whizzed like an arrow down the slide, his arms waving wildly, his scarf flying behind, and his cap sailing away on the wind.

The Greyfriars juniors looked on and roared.

The smart Yankee was always showing them things, and promising to let all Greyfriars see the way things should really be done; and his efforts at instruction generally ended something in this manner.

"Oh!" gasped Fish. "Help! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why don't you stop?" howled Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Back-pedal!"

"Put the brake on!"

"Ha, ha, ha! That's how it's done—he's showing us how they do it over there!"

The juniors yelled.

Fish was shooting along helplessly, his arms waving. He could not stop himself, and he could not get his balance. At the end of the slide he ran into a mass of snow, and rolled head over heels in it.

The juniors, gasping with laughter, ran after him.

Fish sat up in the midst of the snow.

He was smothered with it, and looked very dazed and bewildered.

"Gerrooh!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess——"

"Is that how you do it over there?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Rather!" shrieked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Then they picked the smart American out of the snow, and dusted him down; and for nearly five minutes after that Fisher T. Fish was not seen to swank.

———

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
A Lift for Bunter.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. set out to walk to the school. There were not nearly enough vehicles in all Friardale for all the juniors, let alone the seniors, who, of course, had first choice.

The snow was falling, and the lane was thick with it, but the lads did not care for that. Billy Bunter cared; but, then, nobody cared whether Bunter cared or not.

"I say, you fellows," exclaimed Bunter, as the chums of the Remove started, "hold on a minute! I say, are you going to walk?"

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"I can't walk, you know."

"Why can't you?"

"Oh, really, Wharton! You know I'm of a delicate constitution, and my medical man has warned me to avoid exertion. I shall have to ride."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Then you can wait your turn with the hack."

"Very well, I'll wait in the tuckshop," said Bunter. "I feel that I need a snack. I suppose you can lend me five bob till I get to Greyfriars?"

"Got heaps of money there, haven't you?" asked Bob Cherry sarcastically.

"I'm expecting a postal order——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you know! Some titled friends of mine have promised me——"

"Oh, ring off!"

"Look here, are you going to lend me five bob or not?" bawled Bunter.

"Not!" said the juniors together cheerfully. And they walked off in the snow, leaving Billy Bunter glaring through his spectacles in great indignation.

He blinked round for other victims. It was natural to suppose that on the first day of term the fellows would be mostly flush, and in flush times a remorseless borrower like Bunter thrived.

"I say, Wun Lung," he remarked, addressing a shivering little Chinee who had just come out of the station, "I hope you've enjoyed your holidays."

Wun Lung turned his almond eyes upon Bunter. He knew Bunter of old, and knew what a polite inquiry from Bunter meant.

"Velly nicee, me tankee," he said.

"I'm so glad. I suppose you got lots of tips?"

"Allee light."

"Come back flush, I suppose?"

"No savvy."

"I say, Wun Lung, old chap, I hope you'll be in my study this term. I don't much like Todd and Bull in my study. We had jolly nice times when we shared the same study, didn't we?"

Wun Lung grinned.

"Me no lemembel."

"Well, as we're going to be together. I suppose you wouldn't object to lending me half-a-crown?"

"No savvy."

"A couple of bob would do."

"No savvy."

"Look here, Wun Lung, if you can stand me a bob——"

"No savvy."

"Now, my dear old chap——"

"No savvy."

"You heathen beast——"

"No savvy."

"You—you pigtailed rotter, I'll—I'll——" Wun Lung scuttled off before the fat junior could finish, and Bunter was left to snort with wrath.

"Beastly weather for beginning the term, Bulstrode," he remarked, sidling up to the burly Removite as he came out of the station.

Bulstrode looked down at him.

"Ought to suit you, then," he said. "One beastly thing ought to agree with another."

"Oh, really, Bulstrode——"

Bulstrode walked on grinning. Billy Bunter glared after him, and then, catching sight of Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, he rolled over to him.

"I say, Smithy, old fellow——"

"What are you calling me old fellow for?" demanded the Bounder, with a stare. "What do you want?"

"Oh, really, Smith——"

"Oh, buzz off!"

Vernon-Smith turned away and joined Hazeldene, and the two walked up the lane together.

Bunter snorted.

Beginning of term might be a flush time, but there did not seem to be anything for Bunter. Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, came down to a waiting hack, with two or three more of the Sixth.

"I suppose you wouldn't mind giving me a lift, Wingate?" said Bunter.

The captain of Greyfriars stared at him. For a junior to ask for a lift from the captain of the school was unparalleled nerve, in the first place. And as there were four of the Sixth to go into a small hack, there wasn't much room to spare, and Bunter always needed as much room as two.

"What did you say?" demanded Wingate.

"You might give me a lift."

"Cheeky young cad!" said Courtney.

"Oh, really, Courtney——"

"A lift!" repeated Wingate.

"Yes, please. I'm not really strong enough to walk, you know. I dare say you've noticed what a delicate chap I am."

Wingate looked at the fat junior and grinned. Judging by appearances, he would not have said that William George Bunter was very delicate

"Do you think there's room for you in the hack with us, Bunter?" asked the Greyfriars captain, with ominous politeness.

"Oh, we could squeeze, you know!"

"Or perhaps one of us could sit on the floor?" Wingate suggested.

"Well, yes, if you wouldn't mind."

Wingate gasped.

"I—I'm afraid I can't give you a lift in the hack," he said. "I could give you another sort of lift; I think I will."

"Good!"

"You don't mind what sort of lift?"

"Oh, no, Wingate! I'm an accommodating chap, you know."

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"So am I!" said Wingate cheerfully. "I'd give anybody a lift like this—and I'm specially glad to give it to a chap like you, Bunter."

And he swung the fat junior round, and gave him a lift—with his boot.

Biff!

Billy Bunter let out a terrific yell.

It was a regular goal-kick, and it hurled the fat junior off the pavement into a bank of snow beside the road, where he rolled and gasped in a way that Hurree Jamset Ram Singh would have described as terrific.

The Sixth-Formers, with a roar of laughter, got into the hack and drove away. Billy Bunter sat up in the snow and blinked. He did not ask anybody else for a lift.

—•—

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Fish on Football.

"GREYFRIARS again!" said Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton & Co. were the first to arrive. They were ruddy from the tramp down the lane, and in high spirits. Gosling, the school porter, came to open the gates, with an extremely surly expression on his face.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Gossy!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It's jolly nice of you to look so happy at seeing us again!"

"Yes, rather! It's nice of you, Gossy!"

"The nicefulness is terrific."

"I guess his face is enough to set a chap up in cheerfulness for life. How do you do these things, Gossy?"

Gosling scowled. The chaff of the cheery juniors did not enliven him. Gosling had a secret opinion that boys in general, and Greyfriars boys in particular, ought to be taken away quietly and drowned. While the boys were at Greyfriars, Gosling's duties, of course, were much heavier than during the vacations. Gosling was paid to work, not to idle, but that made no difference to Gosling. He did not like work, and he did not like boys.

"'Ere you are again!" he grunted, half to himself. "Nice goings hon now, I suppose. Wot I says is this 'ere, if there's any nonsense, I'll report yer."

"Pleasant voice, too, after not hearing it for so long," said Tom Brown affably. "I don't agree with those chaps who say Gosling's voice is like filing a saw. It sounds more like sawing wood to me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Such nice, homely manners, too," said Nugent. "Match his face, you know—I believe that's what you'd call very homely."

"Young rips!" said Gosling. "I wish I was their 'ead-master, that's wot I say—this 'ere, I only wishes as I was their 'ead-master."

"Thirsty, Gosling?" asked Wharton.

The school-porter's expression melted at once.

"Which I am," he replied. "It's a cold day, and something warm keeps a man's sperrits up, Master Wharton."

"Something nice and hot, you mean?"

"Yes."

"Quite hot?"

"Yes, Master Wharton."

"Got a kettle?"

"Suttingly!"

"And some water?"

"Plenty."

"Then I should recommend you to boil some water——"

"Eh?"

"And drink it. Good-bye, Gosling!"

And the juniors marched on, leaving Gosling glaring.

The snow was thick in the old quadrangle, and piled up against the walls. The windows were thick with frost.

The great door of the School House stood wide open, and from within came the ruddy reflection of the fire in the hall. Mrs. Kebble, the housekeeper, looked out of the doorway, and greeted the juniors with her kind smile.

"Back again, Mrs. Kebble!" said Harry Wharton cheerily.

"Yes, and I'm glad to see you, my dears. The House is lonely without the boys," said Mrs. Kebble.

"It's jolly nice of you to say so," said Nugent. "You ought to try to convert Gosling. He doesn't seem half so pleased."

Mrs. Kebble laughed.

"Come in, my dears. I suppose you are hungry. There are sandwiches here to go on with for all who are hungry."

"You're a darling, Mrs. Kebble."

"The darlingfulness of the esteemed Mrs. Kebble is terrific."

And the juniors, taking off their coats, were soon toasting their boots round the blazing log fire in the wide grate in the hall, and discussing sandwiches and the new term with equal interest.

"Glad to be back, after all," said Mark Linley, who had come in a few minutes after Wharton and the rest. "It's jolly here."

NEXT WEEK: "ROLLING IN MONEY."

EVERY TUESDAY. The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

"How's Lancashire, Marky?"

"Snowy," said Mark, laughing, "and cold. But ripping as ever! I've seen some splendid footer matches during the holidays—League and Northern Union both."

"Good; wish I had. No Northern Union in my part of the country," said Wharton. "We get some Rugby Union, though—good games, too!"

"You play footer here!" asked Fisher T. Fish.

"What?"

"Do you play footer?"

The juniors stared at the American.

They stared—blankly.

To ask a Greyfriars fellow if he played footer, was like asking a fish if it could swim, or a bird if it flew.

Fisher T. Fish was never nearer in his life to being seized and bumped hard than he was at that moment.

"Play footer?" echoed Wharton, at last.

"Yes. Do you?"

"Do we?" howled Bob Cherry. "I guess so!"

"The playfulness of the esteemed footer is terrific."

"Oh, you play, then!"

"Yes, we play a little," said Wharton, with elaborate sarcasm. "We just push the ball about a bit, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good!" said Fish, quite unmoved. "I play, you know. I suppose, as a matter of fact, you just knock the thing about in a schoolboy fashion. I guess I can show you some things in footer."

"I guess you've guessed wrong."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You put up a player against me, and he'll get left, I guess. Why, you should see how we play over there," said Fish. "I'll show you how to play footer to-morrow."

"My hat!"

"Oh, squash him!"

"Cheeky cad!"

"Good old Yank Swank!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you hang on till to-morrow!" said Fish serenely. "I'm giving you straight goods—I can play some!"

"So can we—a few."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, surely! But I guess we can lay over anything you can do, over there."

"I hear you play a Rugger game with a Soccer team," said Wharton, with some interest. "Is that so?"

"What's Rugger?"

"Eh?"

"And what's Soccer?"

"What?"

"We play real football," Fish explained.

"Oh, squash him!"

"I wish I could get an American team over here to play you," said Fish, with a sigh. "We'd whip the whole school, seniors and all."

"There's one thing you can lick the whole school in already."

"Lots of things, you mean; but what specially?"

"Swank!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess——"

"Oh, lie down!" said Bob Cherry. "From what I hear, your blessed American footer is a regular hooligan game, and the chaps wrap themselves up in things so that they won't get hurt——"

"They get killed sometimes," said Fish, with rather an air of pride. "Legs broken, arms broken, and so on—occasionally a neck broken. I heard that there are as many

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A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

people killed in football in a season over there as were killed in the battle of Chickabiddy Lick. Surely!"

"We'll see you play to-morrow," said Wharton, with a grin.

"I guess I'll show you something. I rather reckon we can lay over anything in the Old Country. You're rather played out."

"Oh, ring off!"

"On your last legs, you know, and in a state of nerves lest the Germans should come and gobble you up," grinned Fish. "I guess——"

"What——"

"I guess I'm going to wake up this old place a bit this term. I'm a new boy here, but the place will hear from me. Yes, sir!"

"Rats!"

"Footer, cricket, running, walking, swimming, anything you like; I'll undertake to knock spots off any blessed John Bull going," said Fish.

Bull entered as the American spoke. He stared, and then walked over to the Yankee junior.

"I'm ready," he remarked.

"Eh?"

"I'm a John Bull. I'm waiting for the spots to be knocked off."

And the juniors roared.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
Very Much Left.

JOHN BULL junior stood in his square, solid way, in front of the American, with his hands up. He was evidently very much in earnest. The juniors roared with laughter.

The sturdy, strong-limbed young Briton would be pretty certain to make short work of the slim, light American, who was all keenness and alertness, if he once started on him. That was clear to everybody present excepting Fisher T. Fish. There was not a tenth part of Fish's swank about John Bull; but there was no doubt at all that he could knock the American into the middle of next week, if not still further along the calendar.

Bull had licked Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove, on his first day at Greyfriars. Bulstrode had treated him with great respect since then. Several fellows had tried to get up a fight between Bull and Wharton, the captain of the Remove, and which would get the better of such a fight was really a dubious point. But both the juniors were too sensible to be dragged into a quarrel for the amusement of Bulstrode, and Skinner, and their cronies.

Bull looked at the American in his steadfast way.

"Well, are you coming on?" he asked.

Fish shook his head.

"I guess I don't want to kill you," he said.

"My word!" said John Bull. "Why, I'll undertake to fight you with one hand, if you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish grinned.

"You'd want both hands, and both feet, to keep your end up, if I once started on you," he said; "but I won't do it. I don't want to hurt you."

"My dear fellows," said Alonzo Todd. "Pray do not enter into a hostile encounter. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to interfere in such a case, and endeavour to restore amicable relations. Now——"

"Shut up, Todd——"

"My dear Cherry——"

"Order!"

"But my Uncle Benjamin——"

"Blow your Uncle Benjamin!"

"Really——"

Two or three juniors pushed Todd back into a seat, and a couple of them sat on him to keep him there.

"Go it!" said Bulstrode, who was anxious to see John Bull on the war-path again, to judge what form he was in. Bulstrode had not given up the hope yet of bringing about a conflict between Wharton and Bull. "Wire in! Give the swanker socks, Johnny."

"Wire in!"

"Go it!"

"I'm waiting," said John Bull.

"I guess I won't hurt you."

"Then you'll take back all your swanking rot," said John Bull, in his calm and placid way. "Every word of it!"

"Rats!"

"You'll fight, then."

"I tell you you'd get simply crippled."

"I'll risk that."

"Here, have the gloves on for a few minutes, before the seniors arrive," said Harry Wharton. "No harm in that. Cut upstairs and get some gloves, Frank."

"Right-ho!"

"Oh, I don't mind!" drawled Fisher T. Fish. "I'll put the gloves on, and show you how we box over there; but I don't want to hurt the chap."

The gloves were soon brought.

Fish and John Bull donned them, and the juniors stood back, clearing a circle to give the combatants plenty of room.

Fisher T. Fish advanced to the conflict with his usual air of cool and easy confidence.

John Bull looked quiet and steadfast. But he showed that he could be quick.

"Time!" said Wharton.

"Go it!"

"The go-fulness is terrific."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was right, it was terrific. Bull advanced upon the Yankee, crumpled up his defence in no time, and drove him round the ring.

The juniors roared.

Fish simply put up no defence at all. He had some idea of boxing, but he was not so strong, and not so quick, and not nearly so good a boxer as the quiet English lad.

Bull could have done what he liked with him.

Fish went round and round the ring, Bull tapping him on the nose, the chest, and the chin with perfect ease, and every blow could have been a knock-down one if the junior had chosen.

"Time!" gasped Wharton, breathless with laughter.

Bull dropped his hands.

The American stood where he was, pumping in breath, with a face the colour of a beetroot. He was hardly able to stand after his exertions.

"I—I guess—I—I'm a bit off colour," he gasped. "It's the sandwiches."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess——"

But what the American junior guessed was drowned in a roar of laughter.

"Time!"

"I guess this has gone far enough," said Fish. "If you like to give me best, Johnny Bull, we'll ring off."

"What nerve!" gasped Nugent. "Why, you ass, Bull has been playing with you all the time."

"What's your say-so, Bull?"

Bull chuckled.

"I'll keep on," he said.

"Oh, all O. K. if you're determined to be licked!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They closed in strife again. Now the American succeeded in getting a tap on John Bull's nose.

It had the effect of exciting Bull a little.

He attacked in real earnest.

There was a sound of wheels in the Close, of voices at the door. The rest of the Greyfriars' fellows had arrived. But the juniors were too engrossed in the conflict to heed even the arrival of the seniors and prefects.

Wingate appeared in the doorway, and stared at the scene going on in the hall in blank amazement.

"What the——" he began.

Biff!

John Bull junior landed out with unusual force, and the blow, passing the American junior's guard with perfect ease, caught Fisher T. Fish on the nose with a concussion that brought a rush of water to his eyes.

"Oh!" gasped Fish.

He shot backwards, as if a cannon-ball had smitten him, and crashed fairly against Wingate.

The Greyfriars captain staggered under the shock, and grasped hold of Fish to save himself.

Then they went with a crash to the floor together.

"Oh!" roared Wingate.

"Great Scott!" gasped Harry Wharton. "He's floored Wingate!"

"The floorfulness is terrific."

"My hat!"

"Ow!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "I guess—— Gerooh!"

Wingate staggered to his feet. He grasped Fisher T. Fish by the collar and dragged him up.

"Now," he roared, "what does this mean?"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
The Milky Way.

"I GUESS——"

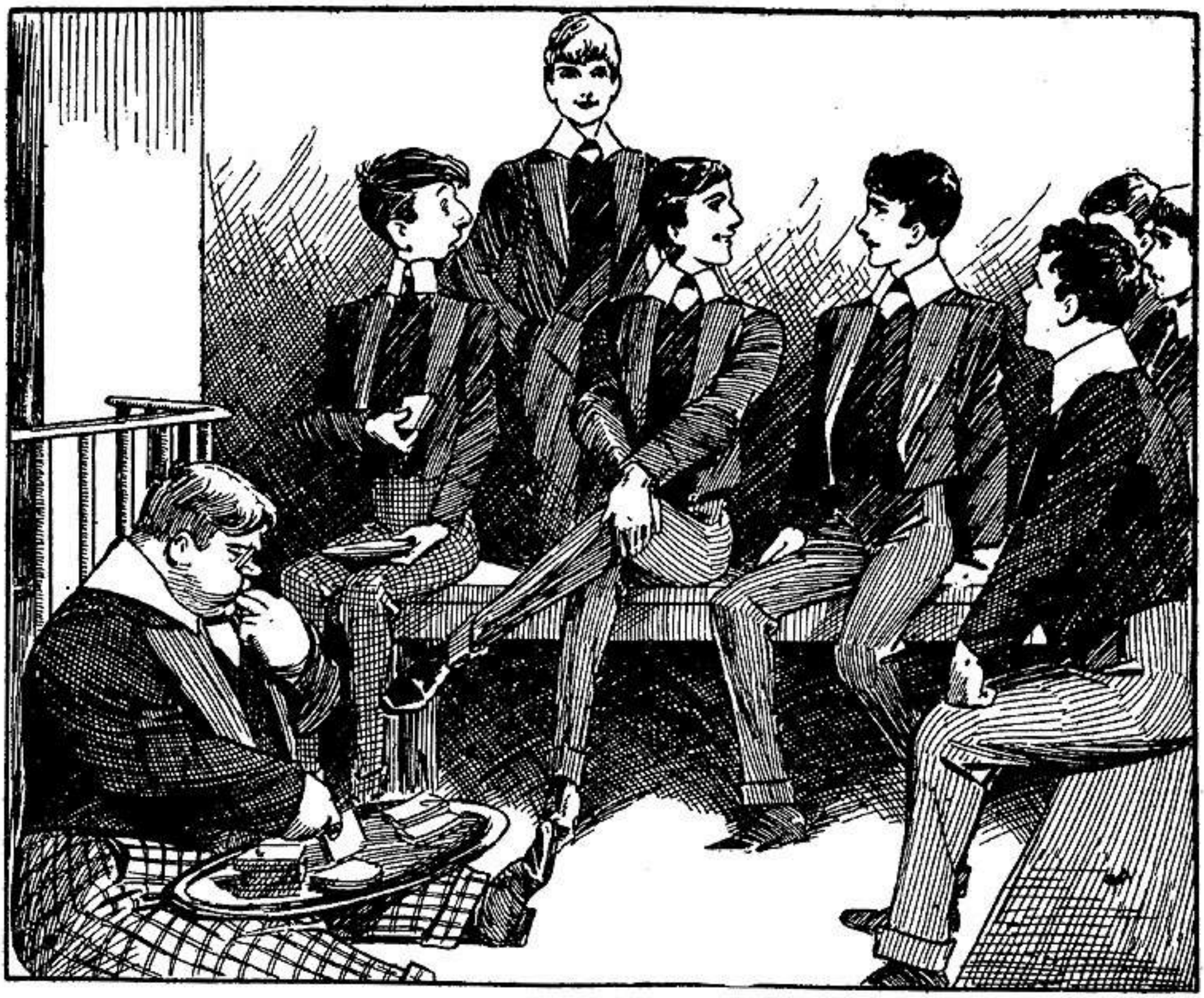
"What does this mean?" roared Wingate, shaking the unfortunate American till his heels rattled on the floor.

"I guess——"

"Oh, let him off, Wingate!" exclaimed Wharton. "He was only showing us how they box in New York."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S." A Grand, New School Tale, by Charles Hamilton, is in THE "EMPIRE" LIBRARY this Week. Price One Halfpenny.



"You play footer here?" asked Fisher T. Fish. "Yes, we play a little," said Harry Wharton, with elaborate sarcasm. "We just push the ball about a bit, you know." (See page 5.)

Wingate burst into a laugh. He released the American junior.

"You young ass!" he exclaimed. "You'd better be a little more careful next time."

"Ow!"

Fish sank upon a stool, gasping.

Wingate and Courtney walked on, leaving the Removites roaring with laughter. Fisher T. Fish sat and pumped in breath.

John Bull stood like a rock and waited.

"Well," said Bulstrode, "are you finished, Fish?"

"I guess so."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All right," said John Bull, "I'm sure I'm satisfied, if you are; but if you ever want to show us any more American boxing, remember I'm ready to oblige you."

Fisher T. Fish made no reply to that. The juniors simply yelled. They had expected the American to go down before the sturdy Bull, but not quite so easily. And after his offer to show them what boxing was really like, his downfall was ludicrous.

Having thoroughly warmed themselves, Harry Wharton & Co. made room for later comers, and went up to their study in the Remove passage. There was a fire lighted ready in each study, and the warm glow of it cheered the juniors. Wharton, Nugent, and Hurree Singh went into No. 1, Bob Cherry and Mark Linley went along to No. 13, and Fisher T. Fish and Alonzo Todd to No. 14. Billy Bunter shared that study with them, but the fat junior had not yet arrived from Friardale.

"Well, this is ripping," said Wharton, looking round. "No place like home, is there? Shove the kettle on. We'll have some tea to wash down the sandwiches."

"Got any tea?"

"I'll cut across to the tuckshop and get some while you're putting on the kettle."

"Done!"

Harry Wharton went out into the snowy Close, and crossed to the little tuckshop, half-hidden by the gaunt elms. Mrs. Mimble, fat-faced and cheery, greeted him with a smile.

"Happy New Year!" said Harry Wharton. "And a pound of tea! And sugar and milk, please."

He turned as Wun Lung came into the shop.

"Hallo, kid!"

"Lookee out!" said Wun Lung mysteriously.

"Why, what's the matter?"

"Lodel and Calnee lookee for you goee in."

"What for?"

"Glub," said the little Celestial tersely.

Wharton whistled.

"Thanks, Wun Lung!" he said.

And when he took up his purchases, Wharton remembered the warning. Loder and Carne frequently replenished their tables in this way, and Wharton was on the watch for them as he went back to the School House. He carried his parcels under his left arm, and the jug of milk in his right hand.

NEXT WEEK: "ROLLING IN MONEY." A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS

"Here he is!" exclaimed Carne, as Wharton arrived at the foot of the stairs.

The captain of the Remove halted.

"Do you want anything, Carne?" he asked. "Or you, Loder?"

"Yes," said Loder coolly. "Take those things into my study. I'm not sure whether they're things you juniors can have. I'll look at them first."

Harry Wharton looked grim. If the purchases he had just made ever went into the prefect's study, he knew how little chance there was of their ever coming out again. He made a move as if to go down to the Sixth-Form studies, and the two bullies of the Sixth grinned at one another. Then, with a sudden spring, Wharton gained the stairs, and ran up.

"Stop him!" shouted Carne.

The two seniors sprang after Wharton at once. Carne missed him, but Loder grasped him by the ankle as he gained the fourth stair.

"Got him!" grinned Loder.

"Leggo!"

"Come down, you young cad!"

Wharton made an effort to wrench himself away. But in vain. He swung the jug of milk round, and there was a loud splash as the contents shot into Loder's face.

"Gerrooh!" roared Loder, staggering back, choking.

Harry dashed up the stairs.

He arrived at No. 1 Study breathless, dashed in, and hurled the parcels on the table.

"Look out!" he gasped.

"Where's the milk?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Gone!"

"Upset it, you duffer?"

"No; I've upset Loder. He had my ankle, and there was only one way to get free——"

"What was that?"

"The milky way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I bunged the milk at his napper," said Wharton. "He's after me! Look out!"

There was a tramp of feet in the passage.

Loder, streaming with milk, glared into the study, and Carne glared over his shoulder.

The three juniors lined up instantly. Harry Wharton had the milk-jug in his hand, and Nugent had snatched up a cricket-stump. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh grasped the poker. The three of them looked so dangerous that Loder, furious as he was, hesitated.

It was against all rules for a junior to resist a prefect, but it was quite certain that Harry Wharton & Co. would resist, and Loder did not want to be hurt.

"Put those things down!" he roared.

"No fear!"

"I order you—as a prefect!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I'll—I'll——"

"Rats!"

"Go for them, Loder," said Carne, showing no great desire, however, to come forward himself.

"I'll smash them—I'll——"

"Better keep your distance," said Harry Wharton. "If you raid a chap's grub like a giddy junior, you must expect to be treated like a junior."

"That's only fair and square," said Nugent, and the Nabob of Bhanipur added that the fair and squarefulness was terrific.

Loder gave the juniors a furious look.

"I'll remember this!" he exclaimed.

"Go ahead!"

And the two seniors tramped away.

"One to us!" said Nugent. "But we shall have to look out for Loder. And we shall have no milk for tea."

"It was worth the milk to give Loder a swamp on the napper with it."

"Ha, ha! It was!"

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh added that the wasfulness was terrific.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
Bunter Wishes to Stand a Feed.

THE chums of the Remove had finished their tea, when a fat face and a large pair of spectacles glimmered into the study.

Billy Bunter had arrived, and the scent of tea had drawn him into No. 1 Study in the first place. He blinked in at the juniors with as amiable an expression as he could muster.

"Finished tea?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Anything left?"

"Yes," grinned Nugent. "If you came here for tea, you're left—badly left! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you know——"

"There's a sardine, and some cold tea," said Harry Wharton. "I'm sure you're welcome to both of them; but don't gorge recklessly."

Bunter slammed the door, and passed on down the passage. He looked in at No. 13 Study, where Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, and Wun Lung were making themselves at home for the new term. Bob Cherry had a sandwich in his left hand, and a hammer in his right, and his sleeves rolled up. He was evidently busy, and had no time to stop for tea. Mark Linley was holding a picture, which Bob was going to hang up. Bob had brought the picture to Greyfriars to adorn the study, having picked it up as a great bargain during a visit to London.

"I say, you fellows——" began Bunter.

"Try the next door," said Bob, looking round. "No broken victuals given away here."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Buzz off! I'm busy!"

"I was wondering if you fellows would let me stand a feed in your study. I should ask you all to it, of course."

"Yes, if you like. You can bring the things here. I shall be hungry when I've done hanging this picture."

"I suppose you wouldn't mind lending me a few bob?"

"Get out!" roared Bob Cherry.

"But I say, you know——"

Bob Cherry flourished the hammer, and made a rush at Billy Bunter. The fat junior skipped out of the study in record time.

"Beast!" he howled back from the corridor.

He ran into No. 14. The three sharers of that study were all there—Alonzo Todd, John Bull, and Fisher T. Fish, the American.

They bestowed inquiring glances on Bunter.

"I guess you were brought up in a ten-acre field," said Fish. "Or is it a cultivated habit of yours, bursting into a room and leaving the door open?"

"Ow!"

"What's the trouble?"

"Excuse me," gasped Bunter. "That beast Cherry is after me with a hammer!"

"Dear me!" ejaculated Alonzo Todd. "That is very reckless of Cherry. My Uncle Benjamin always says that one should be careful——"

"He's nearly fractured my skull, and——"

"Got any marks?" asked John Bull.

"Well, no, I don't think there's a mark——"

"You blessed fabricator!"

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Dear me!" said Alonzo. "You should never lie, Bunter. My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked—nay, disgusted, if he heard——"

"Oh, blow your Uncle Benjamin!"

"My dear Bunter——"

"I want you fellows to let me stand a feed in this study, to celebrate the opening of the new term," said Bunter. "This was my study, only I'm changing out this term. I should like to stand a feed here, and invite you fellows, for the sake of old times."

"That is very generous of you, Bunter."

"Well, the fact is, I mean to be generous."

"Sorter change?" asked Fish.

"Oh, really, Fish——"

"No objection to standing a feed here," said John Bull. "But I suppose you'll want us to pay for it?"

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"I guess you can go ahead," said Fish. "I'm pretty sharp set myself."

"I should refuse to accept any contribution from you fellows. That will have to be understood at the start, of course."

"Well, go ahead."

"Only, as it happens, some postal orders I was expecting from a titled friend, have not had time to arrive yet, you see. I would accept a small loan, to be repaid immediately my postal orders arrive."

"I guess——"

"Rats!"

"My dear Bunter, you can have the ten shillings of mine which you used by mistake last term, and which you promised to bring the first day of this term. I suppose you have it about you?"

Bunter blinked at Alonzo.

"The fact is, Todd, I—I'm expecting that among the other postal orders. It hasn't arrived yet, owing to—to the delay in the Christmas post, you know. You shall have it immediately it arrives."

"Then there is the loan of seven-and-six, and the five shillings——"

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"You shall have them all to-night, without fail, out of my postal orders."

"You are quite certain, Bunter?"

"Quite certain."

"Very good," said Todd, with a smile of satisfaction. "Then I shall be able to make that New Year's gift."

"To me?" asked Bunter.

"You! Certainly not. My Uncle Benjamin recommended me to make some little New Year's gift to the Head, and I had thought of presenting him with a goose."

"With a ticket on it, I suppose—'When this you see, remember me?'" asked Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh, no!" said Todd, without in the least seeing the joke. "Just a few words from myself expressive of the great esteem in which I hold the Head, and the respect we all feel for him. My Uncle Benjamin said——"

"Speaking of that feed——" said Bunter

"Speaking of the New Year's gift——"

"But the feed——"

"My dear Bunter——"

"You see, I require——"

"You are sure the postal orders will come, Bunter?"

"Oh, quite certain!"

"Very well, I shall rely upon you."

"And if you could make me a small loan now, say five shillings——"

"I am sorry I have no money, Bunter."

Bunter snorted

"I say, Bull——"

"Rats!"

"Fish, old man——"

"More rats!"

"But I say, you fellows——"

"Go and eat coke!"

"My hat!" exclaimed John Bull. "What's that?"

"That" was a terrific hammering in the next study.

"Oh, it's only Bob Cherry hanging a picture!" said Billy Bunter. "Speaking of that feed——"

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter; you make me tired!"

"But I say——"

"Get out!" roared Fish. "Here, hand me that cricket-stump, Todd!"

"Oh, certainly! Here it is!"

"Now, then, Bunter——"

Billy Bunter was gone before the cricket-stump could be got into play. From the end of the corridor he yelled back "Beasts!" and then fled downstairs. And the chums of the end study, laughing, looked in at No. 13 to see Bob Cherry hanging his picture.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.
Fish Hangs the Picture.

BOB CHERRY was getting a little excited.

He had driven a nail into the wall, and the nail, after refusing to enter for some time, had shot into the wall its full length, and Bob could not get it out again. He was trying to prise it out with the end of the hammer-head, in vain, when Fisher T. Fish looked into the study.

Bob was standing on a pair of steps, gouging away at the nail, with a very red face and gleaming eyes.

Fragments of plaster tumbled down, and Wun Lung, having caught one in his eye, retired to a corner to scrape it out, and, as the poet so well puts it, the subsequent proceedings interested him no more.

Mark Linley was holding the steps with one hand, and the picture with the other, all ready for Bob Cherry.

"I'll have the blessed thing out, if I have the blessed wall down!" grunted Bob Cherry.

Mark grinned.

"You're getting some of the wall down, anyway," he remarked.

There was a chuckle at the door.

Bob Cherry looked down rather excitedly, to see Fisher T. Fish standing there, looking in with his usual air of superior knowledge.

"Well, what do you want?" snapped Bob, whose temper was a little ruffled by the chuckle.

"Nothing, I guess."

"Take it and go, then!"

"Wrap it up for me," said Fish, with unmoved coolness.

Bob snorted.

"Oh, buzz off!" he exclaimed. "I'm busy!"

"I guess I can help you."

"Rats!"

"My dear fellow, I'll show you how we hang pictures over there if you like," said the American junior.

"Ass!"

"You're making a pretty muck of it, anyhow."

"If you could hang this picture better than I can——" bawled Bob Cherry.

"I guess I could."

"Then you can try," said Bob, who was getting a little tired of his exertions, and who found the atmosphere very

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hot so near the ceiling, for there was a big fire in the study, and the gas was alight.

"I guess I'll handle it to the queen's taste," said Fisher T. Fish, who frequently dropped into American slang that was very mysterious to the Greyfriars fellows. "Just you let me handle it, that's all."

"Here you are, then!"

Bob descended from the steps and handed the hammer to the American.

Fisher T. Fish mounted the steps, still with the superior smile upon his face.

The hammering had brought half the Remove along the passage to see what was going on. They watched the American with great interest.

Fish's attempts to show how things were done "over there" generally caused disaster of some sort, and the juniors were looking for fun. They were not disappointed either.

"You see, there's a way of hanging pictures, and a way not to hang them," Fisher T. Fish remarked, as he mounted the steps. "Now, when I'm at work I don't cotton to people hanging round. Let go the steps, will you?"

"If you like," said Mark Linley.

"I guess I do like."

"They're not very steady, you know."

"I reckon I can keep 'em steady."

"Oh, all right!"

And the Lancashire lad retired, not sorry to be out of range of the hammer while it was in the hands of the American junior.

"Allee safee hele," remarked Wun Lung, as Mark joined him in the corner. "Me tinkee Yankee-swankee gleat duffel. What you tinkee?"

Mark Linley smiled, but did not reply. As a matter of fact, he shared the opinion of the little Chinee.

"Go it, Fishy!" said Harry Wharton from the passage. "Let's see how you do things over there!"

"I guess I will."

"Pile in, Fishy!"

Fishy piled in. He opened his pocket-knife to get the nail out of the wall. It was a nail with a big brass head, and it had cost a penny by itself, and such nails were not plentiful in the junior studies. Fish inserted the blade of the knife under the flat head of the nail and jerked.

There was a snap!

"I reckoned it would come," he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh! My hat!"

It was not the nail that had come, it was the blade of the knife that had snapped off short.

The juniors roared.

Anybody but Fisher T. Fish would have looked a little sheepish. But not so the American junior.

His coolness was proof against anything.

He opened the other blade of the knife and tried again.

Snap!

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Frank Nugent. "He's playing snap by himself!"

"The snapfulness is terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess that nail won't come out," said Fisher T. Fish. "Ain't you got any more nails in the place, Cherry?"

"I could have used a fresh nail myself," said Bob coolly. "You were going to show me how to do things. Get that nail out."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors crammed in the doorway. "Go it, Fishy!"

Fish cocked his eye thoughtfully at the nail, and then crashed the hammer on the wall two or three times in succession. The plaster tumbled down in great chunks.

"Here, look out!" roared Bob Cherry. "You'll be through into the next study in a jiffy!"

"I guess I've loosened that nail."

"You chump——"

"Look here!"

Fisher T. Fish picked the nail from the wall. It was not difficult as he had smashed great gashes in the wall all round it.

Bob Cherry simply glared.

"You frabjous chump!" he shrieked. "I suppose I could have done that by smashing a big hole in the wall. What will that look like now?"

"Well, you can hang the picture higher, you know, and cover it up," the American junior suggested.

"I suppose we shall have to. But of all the chumps——"

"The chumpfulness is terrific."

"Go it, Fishy!"

"I guess I can work the riffle," said Fish. "Here goes!"

He planted the nail in a fresh spot, about a foot above the gashes in the wall, and hammered at it.

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Then he gave a terrific whoop.

"Yarooh!"

Hammer and nail crashed to the floor. Fisher T. Fish sat on the top of the steps and sucked his thumb and yelled.

The juniors below shrieked with merriment.

"Yaroo!" roared Fish. "Yow! Ow! Ugh! Yoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fish had hammered his thumb, but there was no sympathy going. The juniors roared with laughter. They couldn't help it.

"Well, if that's the way they do it over there I prefer the old-fashioned way," Nugent remarked. "I should think it would hurt the thumb, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow!"

"Go it, Fishy!"

Fish gave his thumb a last suck, and tried again.

Bob Cherry grinned, and handed up the hammer and the nail, and then retired to a safe distance.

Fish, grunting with the pain in his thumb, hammered the nail into the wall. It went half-way in, and stuck loosely in the plaster.

"Now gimme the picture," he said.

"That nail's not safe."

"I guess it's all right."

"I tell you——"

"I reckon I'm hanging this picture."

"Well, look here, if you damage the picture——"

"Oh, bosh! That's all right!"

The picture was handed up, not without misgivings.

Fisher T. Fish put the cord over the nail.

"Is that straight?" he asked.

"Ha, ha! No!"

"Well, a little more on the left perhaps——"

"Ass! On the right!"

"I guess—— Oh! Ow!"

The nail tore out, and Fisher T. Fish made a grab at the picture to save it—with the natural result that he lost his balance on the steps. The latter reeled over, and there was a crash as the picture smashed on the floor, and a terrific bump as Fisher T. Fish landed there.

Bob Cherry added a yell as the hammer dropped on his foot.

"Oh!"

"Ow!"

And the spectators roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.
A High Jump.

FISHER T. FISH sat looking dazed.

Bob Cherry danced on one foot, clasping the other, and yelling. He was hurt, and the whole school could have known it, for Bob's voice could be heard far and wide.

Mark Linley picked up the picture ruefully.

The glass was smashed to atoms, and there was a gash across the picture. The frame had been broken, too, at one corner.

That work of art would probably not be worth very much after Fisher T. Fish's attempts to hang it.

The juniors in the passage laughed themselves breathless. But the occurrence did not seem so funny to Bob Cherry. He was hurt, and his picture was smashed. Bob Cherry was wrathful.

As soon as the pain in his toe subsided a little he advanced upon the American junior.

Fish still sat on the floor looking dazed.

Bob Cherry grasped him by the collar.

"Hallo! Leggo!" gasped Fish.

"You ass!"

"I guess——"

"You chump!"

"Look here——"

"Out you go!" roared Bob Cherry. "Clear the way, you fellows!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors crowded aside to give Bob Cherry room. He dragged the American junior to the door and, with a vigorous application of his boot, rolled him into the passage.

Fisher T. Fish sprawled among countless feet in the passage, gasping for breath.

"There!" roared Bob Cherry. "If you show your nose in this study again I'll take the hammer to you, you blessed Yankee fraud!"

And he slammed the door of the study.

Fisher T. Fish staggered up.

"I guess I'm hurt!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha! You look it!"

"I'm not going to take that lying down, I guess. There's going to be trouble," said Fisher T. Fish, rolling back his cuffs. "You can't boot an American citizen. No, sir!"

"Go it, Fishy!"

"Scalp him!"

"Pile in!"

"I guess so, sir!"

And Fisher T. Fish rushed back to the door of Study No. 13, flung it open, and rushed into the study in the most warlike way.

"Keep clear!" gasped Harry Wharton. "He's coming out soon!"

"Yes, rather!"

Harry Wharton was right.

There was a sound of scuffling in the study, and then the American junior came tearing out at top speed, with Bob Cherry behind him, brandishing the hammer.

"Hold him!" gasped Fish. "He's mad! Hold him!"

And he fled wildly down the passage.

Bob Cherry pursued him as far as the head of the stairs, down which Fisher T. Fish went leaping, falling and rolling down the last dozen.

"You come back, that's all!" bellowed Bob Cherry. "I'll teach you how we do things over here, you fraud! I'd brain you if you had any brains! Yah!"

But Fisher T. Fish did not come back.

He took refuge in the common-room, but his spirits were not damped. When Harry Wharton & Co. went down presently Fisher T. Fish was holding forth on the subject of jumping. Jumping, it appears, was second nature to Fisher T. Fish—in fact, athletics was a science he had exhausted, so to speak.

"You should see how we do it over there!" he said.

"Let's see you do it over here, then," said Bulstrode. "You say you jump over chairs at home?"

"Yes, I guess so."

"Well, we've got chairs here."

"Hardly room for a run, you know."

"Oh, such a splendid jumper as you are ought to be able to jump without a run," said Skinner, with a grin.

"So I could, but I guess I'm a bit out of practice."

"You could get a run in the passage," suggested Ogilvy. "Take the whole length of it if you like, and have the chair inside the doorway here."

Fisher T. Fish was fairly caught.

"I guess I can do it," he said.

"Do it, then."

"Play up, Fishy!"

There was one trait in Fish's character—when he was caught in his swanking he would always try to make his words good. Perhaps he believed all the things he said. Perhaps all Americans do. Who knows?

Fish walked out of the common-room with quite a jaunty air, and Bulstrode placed a chair within the room, in clear sight.

It was rather a high-backed chair, but there were a dozen fellows in the Remove who could have jumped it with ease.

But it was extremely doubtful if Fisher T. Fish could. He had declared that in New York he had jumped over higher chairs. But New York was not Greyfriars, and, as Bob Cherry remarked, the jump had had time to grow while Fisher T. Fish was crossing the Atlantic.

"Ready?" asked Bulstrode.

"Yes; stand clear."

"Stand back, you fellows!"

The fellows stood back, grinning. The general impression was that Fisher T. Fish would funk the jump.

But the American junior certainly started off well.

He came down the passage at a trot, and increased his speed as he neared the open door of the common-room. The common-room door was across the end of the passage, which ended at the room, so that the run was clear right along the passage and across the room.

Fisher T. Fish came dashing along right into the doorway.

Then he stopped.

There was a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Funk!"

"Go home!"

"Is that how you do it over there?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I hadn't got the distance quite right," said Fisher T. Fish, without looking in the least abashed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go back and guess again, then, look you!" said Morgan.

And the juniors roared.

Fisher T. Fish strolled carelessly back along the passage. He turned, facing the open door of the common-room again, and judged the distance with his eye.

"Look out!" he exclaimed.

"We're looking out."

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Fisher T. Fish advanced to the conflict with his usual air of cool and easy confidence, while John Bull looked quiet and steadfast. "Time!" said Harry Wharton. (*See page 6.*)

"I'm coming!"

"Well, come on, then!"

Fish came racing along the passage.

He certainly looked as if he meant business this time.

But just as he passed the doorway his pace slackened, and he just reached the chair, and stood looking at it, without a jump.

The Remove roared again.

"Baulked, by Jove!"

"Funk!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish turned a little pink this time. He realised that he was not quite living up to the reputation he had given himself.

"I guess the third time does it," he said.

"Oh, we're getting tired!"

"Yes, ring off, Fishy! You know you can't do it. You're spoofing."

"The spoof-fulness of the honourable and ludicrous Fish is terrific!"

"I guess I can do it."

"Well, this is your last guess," said Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish backed away along the passage with a very determined expression upon his keen features.

He meant business this time. The juniors were laughing, not having the least expectation that Fish would attempt the jump at all.

But Fish was in earnest now. He came along the passage again at top speed, and came tearing into the room, right up to the chair, and jumped.

And his foot caught in the top rail at the back of the chair.

The chair went over with a crash, and so did Fisher T. Fish.

There was a roar.

"Well jumped!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish had landed on his hands and knees. He remained on them for some seconds, and then rose slowly, rubbing his hands painfully.

"I guess I'm a bit out of form," he remarked.

"I guess you are!" grinned Bob Cherry. "You'd better try again. You've kicked the top rail off that chair, but there are others."

Fisher T. Fish did not reply. He hurried away in search of some embrocation for his hands—which needed it. He left the juniors shrieking with laughter, and for the rest of that evening there was no more swank from Fisher T. Fish.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.
Fagging for Bunter.

"GR-R-R! It's jolly cold!" said Billy Bunter.

"Generally is at this time of the year," Bob Cherry remarked.

"What I mean is, there's no fire in my study," said Bunter sulkily. "I think it's rotten making the fellows pay for their own coals."

"Well, you've never paid for any yet."

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"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"I jolly well missed a lot from my study this morning," growled Bulstrode. "I've got a pretty clear idea who raided my locker."

Bunter did not seem to hear that remark.

"I think I shall very likely be ill if I do my prep. in a study without a fire in it," he remarked.

"Comee in my studee," said Wun Lung, the little Chinee.

"Thank you, I don't care to accept favours of a heathen."

"Nice polite chap, ain't he?" remarked Nugent. "Why can't you do your prep. here in the common-room?"

"Well, the noise would disturb me, you know."

"There's a fire in the Form-room," Harry Wharton remarked.

"It's draughty."

"Dear me!" said Alonzo Todd. "That is very remarkable. I have never heard of a fire being draughty before."

"Ass! I mean the Form-room!"

"You can do your prep. in No. 1 if you like," said Harry.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Thank you, Wharton, but after the way you fellows have treated me, I don't care to accept your hospitality."

"Go and eat coke, then!"

"If there was any fellow decent enough to lend me a bob, I could get some coals in," Billy Bunter remarked. "I should think some fellow might do it, when I'm going to stand a bust-up to the whole Form, regardless of expense."

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode——"

Bob Cherry fumbled in his pocket. Bob had had a remittance that day from an affectionate uncle, and he was in funds, and when Bob was in funds, it was generally easy for anyone who wanted money to get some of Bob's.

"Here you are, you fat bounder," he said. "Here's a bob1et. But look here, you'd better spend it on the coals—do you hear? No more of your gorging tarts. You've had enough to-day to make a hippopotamus ill. I shall look into your study presently to see if there's a fire going, and if there isn't, you'll get a thick ear."

"I trust that you don't think I should spend this money for any other purpose, Cherry. It would amount practically to embezzlement."

"Exactly. So look out for thick ears if you do."

"Oh, really——"

"Buzz off!"

Billy Bunter rolled away. Wun Lung was leaving the junior common-room, and Bunter joined him in the passage. He twitched the little Chinee by the pigtail, and Wun Lung looked round at him with his sleepy, almond eyes.

"I say, Wun Lung," said Bunter, in a confidential tone. "About that bust-up; I believe you intended to make a contribution."

"No savvy!"

"Of course, I know you're rolling in money; you've got as much as Vernon-Smith, or more. I suppose you could stand a fiver as easily as anything."

"No savvy!"

"You heathen cad——"

"No savvy!"

"Look here, Wun Lung, I want you to come to the feed," Bunter explained persuasively. "My real object in standing this feed is to show the fellows how much I like you and respect you, you know. I want to make you the guest of honour, and show the chaps I don't look down on you because you're a rotten heathen."

"No savvy!"

"I really had you in my mind all the time, when I planned the whole thing," said Bunter. "I'm going to carry it through for your sake, regardless of expense. If you cared to stand a sov. towards it, I would accept it."

Wun Lung grinned. He had no doubt on that point.

"Now, what do you say, old fellow?" said Bunter.

"No savvy!"

"Now, look here, Wun Lung, old chap——"

"No savvy!"

"You—you heathen, pigtailed beast!" exclaimed Bunter. "I'll——"

The little Chinee scuttled off before the fat junior could get at him. Bunter went on his way breathing wrath. He moved off directly to the tuckshop. In spite of what Bob Cherry had said, Bunter could not resist the tuckshop when he had any money. The shilling was rapidly expended in tarts, and Bunter rolled out of the tuckshop again, a jammier but a fatter junior.

He went up to his study, and the chill of the room made him shiver. He blinked into the study, and remembered Bob Cherry's warning.

"That Chinese beast generally has plenty of coals," he muttered. "Blessed if I see why I should go without while a rotten heathen has plenty."

And he went into No. 13.

Wun Lung was there, curled up in the armchair before the fire in his usual attitude. He half opened his slits of eyes to blink at Bunter. Bunter looked round the study, and picked up a cricket-stump.

"I say, Wun Lung," he remarked, with unpleasant emphasis, "I've got no fire in my study. I want you to light one."

"Buntee got coalee?"

"No. You can find some coal and some wood. And you'll do it at once, or you'll get this cricket-stump about you. Savvy?"

"Me savvy," said the little Celestial promptly, for Bunter had the stump dangerously close to his head.

"Buck up, then, and I'll have a rest in the armchair here while you're gone," said Billy Bunter.

Wun Lung rose from the chair. There was a very peculiar expression in his eyes. Bunter sat down in his place.

"Be off with you," he said; with a wave of his fat hand.

"Allee light."

"And buck up, or I shall come to look for you!"

"Me buckee up."

The little Chinee gathered up a scuttle of coal and wood and paper, and if he gathered up any other articles Bunter did not see them, for he was sitting in the armchair now blinking at the fire.

Wun Lung glided out of the study.

Bob Cherry met him in the passage. He looked in surprise at the coal and the wood and a cardboard box Wun Lung had under his arm.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What have you got there, kid?" he exclaimed.

"Me faggee for Buntee."

"Fagging for Bunter?"

"Allee light. Me lightee file."

Bob Cherry stared.

"But what on earth do you want a box of fireworks to light a fire for?" he demanded.

Wun Lung grinned.

"Left flom bonfile day," he remarked. "Pitee wastee, what you tinkee? Gleat sulplise fol Buntee."

Bob Cherry roared. The little Chinee winked softly, and glided into Bunter's study. Ten minutes later he came back into No. 13. Bob Cherry was there now, but he had not turned Bunter out of the armchair. Bunter blinked at the Chinee.

"Have you done it?" he asked.

"Me done."

"Good!"

Bunter rolled out of the armchair, and quitted the study. Bob Cherry grinned at the little Chinee.

"What have you been doing, you young villain?"

Wun Lung chuckled softly. But he made no other answer.

Billy Bunter entered his study, and grunted. The fire was laid in the grate, but it was not lighted. It only required a match to be placed to it, however. Bunter struck a match, bent down before the grate, and applied the light to the paper stuffed in between the lower bars.

There was a fizzing sound.

"What's that?" murmured Bunter. "I—— Oh! Ow! Yow!"

Bang!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.
Sympathy Discouraged.

BANG!

Bang!

Bang!

Bunter jumped clear off the floor in his amazement.

Coals and sticks were flying out of the grate in all directions, and several of them pelted the fat junior as he staggered back.

Bang! Fizz! Swoosh!

Bang!

Smoke and the smell of gunpowder pervaded the study. Bunter made a wild rush for the door, and stumbled over a chair and rolled on the floor. Bang! bang! whizz! came from the grate.

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Help! Fire! Yow! Yarooh! Help!"

Bang, bang, bang!

"Help!"

There was a rush of feet in the passage. Bob Cherry looked into the study in alarm, with Wun Lung grinning behind him. Bang and whizz and fizz and rattle still proceeded from the grate, which was crammed with fireworks.

Jumping crackers had jumped out, and were exploding in all directions, and squibs and roman-candles were going off gaily.

"THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S." A Grand, New School Tale, by Charles Hamilton, is in THE "EMPIRE" LIBRARY this Week. Price One Halfpenny.

"My hat!" gasped Bob. "Wun Lung, you young ass, you dangerous duffer! You shouldn't play a mad trick like that."

"No savvy!"

"You might have set the study on fire."

"No savvy!"

"What on earth's the matter?" cried Mark Linley, running along the passage. "Who's letting off fireworks here?"

"No savvy!"

"Help!" moaned Bunter. "I'm dead—I—I mean I'm dying! My legs are blown off, and I'm blind, and—and lame! Ow!"

"Great Scott!"

Bang, bang, bang!

Whizz-z-z-z-z-z!

"Phew!"

"What silly duffer——"

"Cave! Here's Wingate!"

Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, was dashing along the passage with an enraged face. Wingate had trouble enough with the Remove, as a rule; they were not an orderly Form. But for a fellow to start letting off fireworks indoors seemed to Wingate altogether past the limit, even for a Removite.

"What's all this?" he shouted. "Who's letting off those crackers? Oh, Bunter!"

The study was thick with smoke and smell. Wingate almost stumbled over the fat junior as he rushed in. Bob Cherry gave Wun Lung a warning look, and the little Chinee melted away promptly.

Wingate stirred the fat junior in the ribs with his boot.

"Bunter! Get up! How dare you let off fireworks indoors?"

"Ow! I'm hurt!"

"Good heavens! The young idiot has injured himself with these mad tricks!" exclaimed Wingate, stooping down beside Bunter. "Where are you hurt, Bunter?"

"M-m-m-my leg's blown off!"

"Don't be an idiot!" said Wingate sharply. "Where are you hurt?"

"I—I mean I'm blinded!"

"Let me look at your eyes."

"I—I meant to say that my fingers are blown off—that is to say, I'm suffering from shock to the system, and—and——!"

Wingate grasped the fat junior by the collar, and dragged him to his feet.

"You're not hurt yet, but you're going to be!" he exclaimed. "I haven't got a cane with me, but I will spank you!"

"Ow! Yow! It wasn't me!"

"Stop that row!"

"Yow! I tell you——"

Wingate gave the Owl of the Remove no time to talk. He sat down, and threw Bunter across his knee. Then he spanked, with a heavy hand and a powerful arm.

Spank, spank, spank!

The juniors in the passage roared. Billy Bunter roared, too, but in a different way. He scrambled and struggled, but he could not escape from the senior's muscular grip. The spanks fell till Wingate's arm was tired.

Then he rolled the fat junior to the floor.

"There," he panted, "that will be a lesson to you! Don't you ever let off any fireworks indoors again, Bunter, or you'll get some more!"

And Wingate strode away.

Bunter sat up on the carpet, and then promptly rolled over again. He did not care to adopt a sitting posture just then.

"Ow!" he groaned. "That beast has nearly killed me! Yow!"

"And you were dead already!" remarked Bob Cherry sympathetically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Yow! Groo!"

"But what on earth were you letting off fireworks here for, Bunter?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You must have known that you'd get into a row."

"I didn't!" roared Bunter.

"Oh, rats! Why, we heard them—and, besides, the study's full of smoke, now," said Harry.

"It was Wun Lung!"

"Oh!"

"He laid the fire for me, and crammed it full of fireworks!" yelled Bunter. "I didn't know they were there when I shoved the match in."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "He was fagging Wun Lung, you know, and that's the way the heathen fags for him! Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors roared.

Bunter was left alone, groaning in the study, or, rather, not quite alone, for Alonzo Todd, who was always sympathetic, went in to comfort him.

"I'm so sorry for this, my dear Bunter," he remarked. "Can I do anything for you?"

Bunter ceased to groan for a moment.

"Yes," he said. "I—I think something to eat would buck

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me up. If you could get me some rabbit-pies, and—and tarts——"

"I'm so sorry, Bunter——"

"Well, cut down to Mrs. Mimble's, and——"

"But I have no money, unless you could return me a part of that ten shillings of mine which you used by mistake, Bunter."

The fat junior snorted.

"But I'm really sorry to see you in pain," said Alonzo. "My dear Bunter, won't you let this be a lesson to you?"

"Eh?"

"My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me that we should gain lessons from all our experiences, even the most painful ones," said Todd. "Now, you were acting in a very unjustifiable and really caddish manner in fagging a boy very much smaller than yourself. You admit that, Bunter?"

"Oh, get out!"

"This punishment has fallen upon you in consequence, and must be regarded somewhat in the light of poetical justice," Todd explained. "It is probably really for your benefit in the long run. You may avoid that error in future, and will come to reflect with real satisfaction upon this spanking you have received, which may be the means of setting you upon the right path, Bunter."

Bunter looked round wildly for a weapon. A cushion was the only thing within reach, and he reached for it.

"Consequently, my dear Bunter, while I sympathise with you, I cannot but rejoice at this occurrence, which may be the means of—— Yowp!"

Biff!

The cushion smote Alonzo full in his beaming face, and bowled him over backwards like a cannon-ball.

"Ow! Oh! Dear me! Yarooh!"

Todd sat up, and stared at Bunter.

"My dear Bunter——"

Bunter reached for the cushion again. Todd skipped to the door. He dashed into the passage, putting his head into the doorway again to continue, keeping a watchful eye on the cushion.

"My dear Bunter, my uncle would be shocked—nay, disgusted, at this!"

Whizz!

Todd drew back just in time, and the cushion missed him by a hair's breadth.

"Dear me!" murmured Todd. "I have very seldom encountered any youth of so ungrateful and violent a nature as Bunter. I shall not extend my sympathy to him any more."

And he didn't.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Question of the Goose.

"My dear Fish——"

Fisher T. Fish grunted.

He was not in his usual cheerful humour. There was a pain in his hands from the effects of his fall the previous night when giving the exhibition of high jumping in the junior common-room. A great deal of skin had been rubbed off his knees, too, and they smarted. Fisher T. Fish believed in smartness, but he did not like that variety of it, so he was a little less cheerful than usual.

"I trust you are not suffering very great pain, Fish," said Alonzo gently. "If so, I condole with you most sincerely. My Uncle Benjamin says I should always condole with a person in pain, even if his trouble has been brought upon himself by his own foolishness."

Fish snorted.

"Have you a cold in the nose, Fish?"

"No!" roared Fish.

"Dear me! You need not shout at me like that!" said Todd, in surprise. "I am not deaf. Dutton is deaf, and it is necessary to exert oneself vocally in order to carry on a conversation with him, but it is not in the slightest degree necessary in my case, Fish."

Fish sniffed.

"My dear Fish, I am sure you have a cold. Will you try some of the lozenges my Uncle Benjamin sent me the last time I had a cold?"

"Shut up!"

Alonzo stared.

"I must say you are ungrateful, and even rude, Fish. You are as rude as Bunter was when I sympathised with him over the firework affair. I really think, Fish, that you should cultivate a more agreeable manner, or it will not be wholly conducive to our mutual comfort for us to occupy the same study."

Snort!

"I cannot help feeling assured that you are suffering from the insidious attack of a cold, or some similar disturbance

NEXT WEEK: "ROLLING IN MONEY." A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

of the normal system," said Todd. "However, I will not pursue that topic against your inclinations. I was about to remark that there is an opportunity for this study to distinguish itself."

Fish looked a little interested. Anything that would bring him into the public eye had a certain amount of interest for him.

"What's the game?" he asked.

"My Uncle Benjamin suggested the propriety of making the Head a New Year's gift," said Alonzo. "I thought of a goose as a most seasonable gift. Unfortunately, I have no money."

"I guess that knocks it on the head, then."

"Bunter owes me several considerable sums, but he is depending upon some postal-orders to pay me, and they seem a little uncertain. I was thinking that all three of us in this study might subscribe together to raise the money to purchase a really handsome goose for the doctor."

"Rats!"

"Don't you like the idea?"

"I guess not."

"Why not?"

"Oh, it would be rotten!"

"Not at all. I should be very careful indeed to select a goose in the very best of condition, of course——"

"Ass! I mean the scheme would be rotten."

"My Uncle Benjamin——"

"I guess your Uncle Benjamin wants a strait-jacket!" grunted Fisher T. Fish. "I'll subscribe a dime towards buying him one, if you like."

"My dear Fish——"

John Bull entered the study. John Bull was looking very cheerful and smiling. The American looked at him inquiringly.

"What's on?" he asked.

"I've had a letter from my grand-aunt," said John Bull, with a grin.

"Oh! Big tip, I suppose?"

"No; but she's going to come down awfully handsome," said Bull. "Going to make over a lot of tin to me."

"Oh, dodging the death duties, I suppose?"

"I don't know. Anyway, she's going to do it, and I shall be rolling in filthy lucre," said John Bull. "It will be ripping."

"My dear Bull, this is a very excellent opportunity. Would you care to subscribe towards purchasing a really handsome goose for the Head for a New Year's gift?"

"Not much!"

"My dear——"

"Rats!"

John Bull was nothing if not direct.

"Very well," said Alonzo, with dignity. "I shall seek assistance elsewhere, as I am not supported in this really excellent idea in my own study."

And Alonzo Todd went out, leaving Fisher T. Fish and John Bull junior grinning.

Alonzo stopped at the door of No. 1 Study, to look for Harry Wharton, but the captain of the Remove was not there. Todd ran him down in the quadrangle, where he was talking to Nugent and Bob Cherry, upon a most important subject—to the juniors—when the footer field was likely to be in a fit condition for play. The juniors were keen to begin footer again; and, besides, Fisher T. Fish had promised to show them how they played football "over there." The chums were anxious to be shown.

"Hallo, Toddy!"

"I have already mentioned my Uncle Benjamin's suggestion that I should present the Head with a New Year's gift, Wharton. Would you fellows care to subscribe towards purchasing a really handsome Christmas goose for the purpose?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not see the cause of your merriment. My Uncle Benjamin thought it was a very good idea indeed."

"My dear Duffer, it's no good. Money's tight, and the Head doesn't want any presents from us," said Bob Cherry.

"My dear Cherry——"

"Of course, I could tell you where you could get a full-sized goose for nothing," said Nugent. "He's alive, but would that matter?"

"Not at all."

"Shall I tell you where he is, then?"

"Oh, certainly; and thank you very much, Nugent. Where is he?"

"Here!" said Frank, tapping the Duffer of Greyfriars on the shoulder.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry burst into a laugh, but Alonzo Todd was far from seeing the joke. He looked round in bewilderment.

"My dear Nugent, I do not see a goose."

"Here he is!"

"Ow! Please don't thump me in that manner, Nugent. I declare that you are mistaken; there is certainly no goose here."

Nugent took out a little pocket-mirror, and held it up for Todd to look into. The Duffer of Greyfriars blinked at it.

"See that?" demanded Nugent.

"Yes, certainly."

"Look into it."

"Yes?"

"Well, there's the goose."

"You are joking, Nugent. I cannot see a goose reflected in the mirror. There is certainly the reflection of your face."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

Nugent looked cross.

"What on earth are you cackling at, Bob?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cachinnating ass!"

Bob Cherry roared. Nugent put the mirror into his pocket and walked away. Alonzo Todd looked after him in great astonishment.

"I do not quite understand Nugent," he said, in great bewilderment. "If anybody else referred to him as a goose, I am sure he would be annoyed."

Wharton and Bob Cherry staggered away, gasping with laughter. They felt that if they listened to Alonzo any longer they would be ill.

Todd shook his head solemnly, and walked away in search of subscribers to the goose fund.

"Bunter!" he called out. "Hallo, Bunter!" He had caught sight of the fat junior; but Billy Bunter melted away. He did not want any further requests from Alonzo Todd for the five shillings, the seven-and-six, the ninepence, or any other of the various loans he had extracted from the Duffer of Greyfriars during the past term.

Vernon-Smith, the Bounder, was talking with Bulstrode on the steps of the School House, and Todd stopped to speak to him. The Bounder gave him a stare. Todd's simple nature was not much in accordance with the hard, unscrupulous ways of the Bounder.

"What do you want?" he snapped.

"My dear Smith——"

"Oh, cut that out!"

"Ahem! I was thinking that you might care to subscribe to a fund I am trying to raise to purchase a goose for the Head as a New Year's gift. My Uncle Benjamin——"

"Oh, buzz off!"

"My dear Smith, I——"

"Clear!"

Alonzo sighed, and walked on. He did not seem to be receiving very much encouragement in the carrying out of a really ripping idea. Bulstrode looked after the Duffer of Greyfriars, and a very peculiar smile came upon his face. Perhaps Todd's idea of a New Year's gift to the Head had put some scheme for a jape into the burly Removite's mind.

ROLLING IN MONEY!

Who is? Well—See next week's MAGNET LIBRARY.

Usual Price . One Penny.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.
The Goose.

"GOOSE, sir, for Master Bulstrode!"

Alonzo Todd stared at the carrier's man. He was on the point of calling in at Bulstrode's study. The sight of a man with a rather large box on his shoulder made him pause.

He was often an intruder in other fellow's studies. But he did not mean to be.

"Oh, you Greyfriars chaps are half asleep," said Fisher T. Fish, dashing after Trumper & Co. He had not taken six steps before he stepped upon a slide the village children had made in the street, his feet shot forward and he had to follow them. (See page 4.)

"Is this the right door, sir?" asked the carrier.

Alonzo came to himself with a start.

"Yes, my dear fellow. But I must say I can't imagine what Bulstrode wants with a goose."

"But my orders are to deliver it, sir," said the carrier, with a grin. "Sorry if I don't suit."

And he knocked at Bulstrode's door.

Obeying the order to enter, he went in. Alonzo Todd stared after him in open-mouthed wonder. It was only a few hours since his vain attempt to raise a goose fund.

"Hallo, Todd! That's right, come in!" said Bulstrode, as if Alonzo were a long-lost brother. "Here you are, porter, and a happy New Year to you."

Alonzo stared more than ever at Bulstrode's unusual good-humour.

"Same to you, sir!" returned the carrier's man heartily. "I hopes the bird is a right good 'un."

Bulstrode coughed loudly, and the porter, taking the hint, went off without another word.

"You're just the fellow I wanted, Todd," said Bulstrode, as the door closed. "You couldn't have happened in better."

"Indeed, Bulstrode! Then I'm sure I'm very pleased. As my Uncle Benjamin used to say——"

"Your Uncle Benjamin did talk a lot, didn't he, Todd?" broke in Bulstrode.

"Yes, Bulstrode. And he always advised me to bear with people, however inconsiderate they were," said the Duffer of Greyfriars.

Bulstrode bit his lip. The perfectly innocent face of Alonzo sometimes raised doubts as to his being really unconscious of the subtlety of his replies. But Bulstrode soon recovered himself. He had other fish to fry.

"Yes, Todd," he went on. "I heard you saying that if you could stand the expense, you would present the Head with a goose, or something of that sort, for a New Year's present."

Alonzo's face was wreathed in smiles. Bulstrode was wonderful to-day.

"You are right, Bulstrode. And I think I ought to say you are very observant. I did want to make the Head a present."

"Good!" said Bulstrode. "Then here you are, Todd!"

"Where, Bulstrode?" asked the duffer, looking round the room. "I don't see any present."

"Why, what the dickens have we been talking about?"

"The goose, of course," returned Alonzo, with awful simplicity. "But surely, Bulstrode, you don't mean——"

"Yes, I do," said Bulstrode. "It's for you, Todd. I ordered it, thinking it jolly hard lines that a fellow should be debarred from such a good action for the sake of a few shillings. There it is, old chap; take it!"

And Bulstrode waved his hand majestically towards the box.

For a minute Alonzo's mouth was moving in a vain attempt to frame a fitting reply to Bulstrode's kindness.

But before he could get out a single murmur there came a knock at the door, and Skinner came in.

"That's good for you, Skinner!" said Bulstrode. "Is knocking at fellows' doors before entering part of your New Year good intentions?"

But it was agreed at Greyfriars that Skinner had no real feelings, and Bulstrode's sarcasm passed unnoticed.

All the answer that the bully of the Remove got was a giggle, as Skinner took in Alonzo's looks at the mysterious box. He had an inkling that "something was on."

Alonzo Todd had not yet even noticed Skinner's entrance. He was too much taken up with the thought that he was going to make the Head a present, after all.

A smack on the back from Skinner almost knocked him on his knees.

"Wake up, Toddy! Is it a conjuring trick, or are you trying to thought-read what's in the giddy box?"

"I'll thank you not to interfere with my guests, Skinner," said Bulstrode, rising

Both Skinner and Alonzo stared in perfect amazement at Bulstrode. He seemed to have changed a great deal.

"Anything gone wrong, Bulstrode?" asked Skinner, with a grin.

"There may be, Skinner, if you don't chuck your present style. What d'you mean coming in my study and almost knocking my guest down——"

"Oh, rats! Come off, Bulstrode!"

"Yes, really, Bulstrode," said Alonzo meekly. "I thank you, of course, for interfering on my behalf, but the pain in my shoulder has now abated. I think my Uncle Benjamin would approve of you letting Skinner off."

"Yes, I think you might, Bulstrode," said Skinner, with a wink. "Go on with the thought-reading business, Todd. A quicker way would be to ask Bulstrode what's in the giddy thing, though."

Alonzo looked blankly at Skinner.

"Your conduct is perfectly incomprehensible, Skinner," he said. Then, turning to Bulstrode: "Shall we take a look at the goose, Bulstrode, before we deliver it?"

"We?" said Bulstrode. "I have nothing to do with it. It's all your own, Todd."

A low whistle escaped Skinner as he heard the word goose. But it soon changed to a suppressed yell of pain as Bulstrode gave him a "back kick," as an intimation to be quiet.

"But I don't think it would be honourable of me, Bulstrode, to take all the credit myself."

"Oh, that's all right, Todd. Just you go right on with the fowl. The Head will be just as pleased to have it from one junior, as if it had come from the whole school."

And with that, Bulstrode winked at Skinner in a more friendly way.

Skinner grinned.

"But my Uncle Benjamin said I was never to take away a person's just rights," said Alonzo. "You know you bought the goose, Bulstrode, and you ought to share the honour with me."

"No, Todd. It was your idea, and I disclaim all credit."

"You see, Todd, Bulstrode was touched at your being short of cash."

"D'you really think so, Skinner?" asked the Duffer of Greyfriars.

"Rather! Can you doubt it when you look at him, Todd?"

Alonzo looked almost on the point of throwing his arms round Bulstrode's neck. His face was simply mellow in gratitude and admiration.

"I'm sure my Uncle Benjamin would have liked you to be with me in this, Bulstrode," he said. "But we'll take a look at the goose, nevertheless. Pray allow me, Skinner."

Permission from Skinner was really necessary, for he was now sitting on the box.

"There's no need, Todd, really!" Bulstrode hastened to explain. "It's from Gubbins's, and their things are always all right. Why not take it along to the Head just as it is?"

"Oh, very well, Bulstrode; I shall be delighted," said Alonzo. "I'll take it at once The Head will be pleased."

"I hope so," returned Bulstrode; still with the unutterable politeness which had puzzled Alonzo so much.

"Well. Thank you very much, Bulstrode," said Alonzo, making Bulstrode a dignified bow. "And that's for my Uncle Benjamin as well, of course. You're a kind-hearted fellow——"

Bulstrode returned Alonzo's bow. Skinner's mouth was in the position of a capital O. To say he was surprised would be mild. But when, after a slight pause, Alonzo added "After all," he had to hide his face in his hands.

But Bulstrode did not move a muscle till the door had closed after the Duffer of Greyfriars.

Then he turned to Skinner.

"What are you laughing at, you blessed image?" he demanded. "You nearly spoiled the thing!"

"What, the goose?" said Skinner, giggling.

"Don't rot, Skinner! You know very well what I mean."

"Oh, no offence, Bulstrode!" said Skinner hastily. "I remember him talking about presenting the Head with a gander, or something."

Bulstrode chuckled.

"You don't mean to say that you've bought him a goose for the purpose, Bulstrode?"

"Why not? D'you think I never do anything——"

Bulstrode was going to say good, but he recollected himself in time.

"I understand," said Skinner. "But I say, Bulstrode, you're not giving it to me that it's a real one, surely?"

"Why not, Skinner?"

"Oh, come off it, you know, Bulstrode. You're not well today. Come on to the facts."

"I have given them to you. It's a real goose——"

"A real, live goose, Bulstrode?" asked Skinner, scarcely able to believe his own ears.

"I didn't say that, Skinner."

"Well, I like that. What did you say?"

"I said a real one."

"Well, what are you getting at? Come on! Chuck this rot!"

"Well, mine, or, rather, Alonzo's, is a real automatic one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Bulstrode and Skinner went out to wait for Alonzo's return.

Meanwhile, Alonzo had reached the Head's house, and was shown into the library until Dr. Locke could see him.

The maid disappeared with a titter, and returned in a few minutes to summon Alonzo to the Head's presence.

Doctor Locke was in his drawing-room, with Mrs. Locke and his little daughter, Molly.

"Ha, Todd! How do you do?" said the Head. "Pray sit down."

Mrs. Locke indicated a chair to Alonzo, who advance towards it with a doubtful smile.

Little Molly's attention was centred entirely on the box. Alonzo was merely transit agent, so to put it.

Embarrassed enough, Alonzo Todd suddenly thought he had better stand, and intimated the same to the Head haltingly.

"Certainly, Todd, if you like. But to what am I indebted for this visit?"

"If you please, sir," began Alonzo, "my Uncle Benjamin——"

"Excuse me interrupting, Todd. But he seems to be a remarkable man," said the Head dryly.

"He is, sir," said Alonzo, stretching his neck out very much like a goose, in his earnestness. "And this is his idea, sir, really."

"Pray what is his idea, Todd?" said Dr. Locke, rather puzzled.

"This sir," said Alonzo, tapping the lid of the box. "I had an idea I ought to make you a New Year's present, and I asked his opinion. He approved of my idea, sir, and I've brought the present."

And Alonzo laid the box on the table.

Dr. Locke was touched. The thought that one of his boys should conceive the idea of making him a present was very gratifying. For Dr. Locke was very proud of the good opinion of his boys.

"Thank you, Todd. You are very good. I am delighted——"

"I think you will be, sir," went on Alonzo, forgetting that he had interrupted the Head in his eagerness to get the business over. "My Uncle Benjamin said a goose would be the very loveliest of presents. Would you like me to take it out of the box for you, sir?"

"Certainly, Todd. By all means. Your Uncle Benjamin's quite right. And it's a very seasonable present, too."

"Yes, sir. Uncle Benjamin always does his with sage and onions," returned Alonzo, as he got the box open.

The Head started. He had not meant the same thing as Alonzo, evidently. Alonzo Todd was a curious lad.

Then the lid came away. But it did not reveal what Alonzo, or anyone present, for that matter, expected. He stood staring at the open box like one transfixed.

"Todd!" said the Head sternly.

But Alonzo did not hear. Neither did he see anything but the box; or, rather, what had elevated itself from the depths. Instead of the white down of a poulterer's goose, something like a piece of indiarubber had sprung up the moment he unloosed the lid.

It at once seemed to settle into a swing like an inverted pendulum, emitting a very loud quack at every third swing. Then Alonzo saw it was an automatic goose!

"Todd!" repeated Dr. Locke indignantly.

"Quack!" went the goose.

"Oh, lovely, mamma!" said little Molly.

"Todd!" thundered the Head again.

But Alonzo Todd had eyes for nothing but the absurd thing that mocked him on the table, and his ears heard nothing but—

"Quack, quack, quack, quack, quack!"

"THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S." A Grand, New School Tale, by Charles Hamilton, is in THE "EMPIRE" LIBRARY this Week. Price One Halfpenny.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not Nice for Alonzo—or for Bulstrode!

QUACK, quack, quack!

Qua-a-a-ck!

Alonzo Todd stood dumbfounded.

The automatic-indiarubber goose stood up in the box, and quacked away cheerfully. It was evidently made to swing and quack all the while it was not depressed by the lid of the box.

Little Molly was delighted. The automatic goose was more to her than a real goose would have been.

But Dr. Locke was not delighted.

His face was like a thundercloud.

He could only believe that Alonzo had had the temerity to play a jape upon him—upon him—the Head of Greyfriars!

Festive juniors at Greyfriars had japed prefects—they had even been known to jape masters. But the Head!

To jape the Head was unheard of—amazing—incredible! But Alonzo Todd had done it!

Every quack of the goose said so, as plain as a goose could speak.

"Todd!" thundered the Head.

"Oh!"

That was Todd's first remark. He gasped it out.

"Todd! Todd!"

"Oh, sir!"

"How dare you?"

"Dare, sir?"

"Yes, sir! Yes, Todd! This ridiculous, disrespectful prank——"

"Prank, sir?"

Alonzo Todd was startled and bewildered, and when he was bewildered, he had a way of repeating what was said to him. It was not a way that was likely to allay a storm.

"Todd! How dare you repeat my words, like a—a parrot?"

"Parrot, sir?"

"Boy, you have brought this—this ridiculous thing——"

"Ridiculous thing, sir?"

"Yes, ridiculous thing, on purpose to play a joke on me—a joke on your head-master, sir!" thundered the Head, as if he himself could hardly credit Todd's enormity, though he had the evidence of his own eyes.

"H-h-head-master, sir?" stammered Todd.

"I—I will deal with you to-morrow!" gasped the Head, remembering that his wife and daughter were present, and that his loud tones were hardly appropriate under the circumstances, however much exasperated he might be.

"To-morrow, sir?"

"Go away, at once!"

"At—at once, sir?"

"And take that thing with you!"

"With me, sir?"

"Go!"

"Go, sir?"

The Head made a movement towards the frightened junior. Alonzo Todd seized the box and fled.

He dashed out of the room; but the next moment he put a crimson face inside the door again.

"I trust, sir——"

"What? Todd! Go!"

"But I trust, sir——"

"Will you go, boy?"

"Yes, sir. But I trust you do not believe——"

The Head strode towards the door. Todd was keenly desirous of explaining. But even the Duffer of Greyfriars realised that he had better not remain just then.

He scuttled down the passage with the box under his arm. The Head looked after him from the door of the drawing-room.

"Todd, you will immediately destroy that ridiculous thing! Do you hear? And I shall punish you severely to-morrow! Not a word! Go!"

And Todd went.

He escaped into the quadrangle with the unfortunate goose in the box under his arm, and an extremely despondent expression upon his face.

"Oh, dear, what would Uncle Benjamin say?" he murmured. "It was too bad of Bulstrode. He was very, very inconsiderate. Oh, dear! I suppose I must do as the Head told me, though really this is a most expensive toy, and it seems a pity to waste it. But Uncle Benjamin told me I must never disobey a master's orders."

And Alonzo Todd made his way to the woodshed, where he knew that he would find a chopper. He found the chopper, and began to chop the automatic goose and the box it was fastened in.

The goose gave one last creaking quack, and sank in a heap under the chopper. Todd wielded the chopper manfully. Goose and box and springs crashed into pieces under his doughty blows.

"My hat! What's all that row about?" exclaimed a voice at the door.

Alonzo Todd looked round. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry were looking into the woodshed. Todd blinked at them breathlessly. He was fatigued with his exertions.

"My dear Wharton, I have had a most unpleasant experience, and I fear that there will be painful consequences to-morrow!" he gasped. "Bulstrode gave me a goose to present to the Head as a New Year's gift, and he was playing a most inconsiderate joke upon me. It was an automatic goose, and when I opened the box it quacked at the Head in a manner that was, to say the least of it, disrespectful."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is not really a laughing matter, Wharton. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to be very respectful to my masters, and I have unfortunately been placed in the position of appearing to jape the Head."

"Ha, ha, ha! You ass!" roared Bob Cherry. "I've seen that automatic goose—it was in Parker's window, marked a guinea."

"Dear me! How very expensive, considering that I have destroyed it, as the Head ordered!" said Todd. "Bulstrode must be very reckless with his money, and must have a great deal, to expend it in this manner."

"Ha, ha, ha! I'll jolly well bet he hasn't paid for it!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton and Bob Cherry roared. They followed Alonzo Todd to the house, when the Duffer of Greyfriars relinquished the chopper. Bulstrode, Skinner, and a crowd of other fellows met them in the hall, all of them laughing. The joke had been too good to keep, and nearly all the Remove and the Upper Fourth were waiting to see Alonzo come back with the goose.

A roar of laughter greeted him.

"Hallo, Todd!"

"Have you made the presentation?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How did the Head take it?"

"Was he pleased?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear fellows——" said Alonzo, blinking round at the juniors. "My dear friends, I think you will agree with me that it was most inconsiderate of Bulstrode. The Head was, naturally, very displeased."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And he believed that I had intended to jape him——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I am to be punished to-morrow——"

The juniors shrieked.

"I cannot regard a jape of this kind as justifiable, you know. My Uncle Benjamin would consider Bulstrode as being quite deceitful in the matter, and would be shocked—nay, disgusted!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" almost sobbed Bulstrode. "It's the creamiest thing that ever happened. I only wish I could have seen the Head's face."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I suppose he hasn't kept the goose, Toddy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No," said Todd, blinking at Bulstrode. "He told me to take it away instantly——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And destroy it——"

"What?"

"And I did."

"What?"

"My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to obey the orders of my masters," said Todd. "I thought it a waste, but I have done it."

Bulstrode looked dazed.

"You—you've done it?" he gasped.

"Oh, certainly. I took the goose immediately to the woodshed and chopped it up."

Bulstrode's face was a study. He had hired that automatic goose, paying two shillings for the loan of it for a day. The price was a guinea, and he would have to pay for it now, that was quite certain. The juniors burst into a renewed roar of laughter, but it was against Bulstrode now.

"You—you chopped it up?" Bulstrode managed to jerk out at last.

"Oh, certainly!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors.

"You—you dangerous lunatic!" yelled Bulstrode.

EVERY TUESDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

ANSWERS

NEXT WEEK: "ROLLING IN MONEY." A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"My dear Bulstrode——"

"You—you chump!"

"You must remember that you gave me the goose, Bulstrode. It therefore became my property, and——"

"You—you—you——"

"Pray do not get excited. My Uncle Benjamin always cautioned me against losing my temper, and——"

"You—you——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode stood speechless for a moment. Then he rushed at Alonzo Todd.

"You—you chump! I'll pulverise you!" he roared.

And the juniors yelled again.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Guinea to Pay.

"MY dear Bulstrode—— Ow!"

Alonzo Todd staggered back as Bulstrode rushed upon him. The bully of the Remove was evidently past argument now, and if no one had interfered the Duffer of Greyfriars would certainly have been hurt.

But there were a good many present who did not mean to let Alonzo suffer, at Bulstrode's hands at least, for the result of Bulstrode's jape.

Harry Wharton caught the bully of the Remove by the shoulder, and swung him away from Alonzo Todd.

"None of that!" he said curtly.

"Let go!" roared Bulstrode.

"I'll let go; but you're not going to touch Todd," said Wharton quietly, and he released Bulstrode, and placed himself before the Duffer of Greyfriars.

Bulstrode clenched his hands.

"I'll smash him!" he shouted.

"You'll smash me first, then!"

"Oh, draw it mild, Bulstrode!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "You can't grumble if your own jape has worked out in a way you don't like."

"Who's going to pay the guinea?" grinned Nugent. "Parker will want paying for his automatic goose. Ha, ha, ha!"

"The payfulness will be the terrific necessity."

"Have you really smashed it up, Todd?" demanded Skinner.

Todd looked at him in surprise.

"Oh, certainly! The Head told me to."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess the joke's kinder up against Bulstrode this time," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

Bulstrode strove to control his temper. Alonzo had plenty of friends to stand by him, if it came to a tussle, and Bulstrode realised that it would not do. Besides, he reflected that hammering Todd would not restore the automatic goose. That was done for now, and it would have to be paid for. Mr. Parker would want the full price of it when he found that his goose had been reduced to fragments.

"Well, if Todd's smashed it, Todd can pay for it," Bulstrode snarled.

Alonzo shook his head.

"I could not afford to pay for it, Bulstrode. Besides, as a matter of principle, I should refuse to do so. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to stick to principle before everything else."

"You—you fathead."

"My dear Bulstrode, you gave me the goose. I call Skinner to witness that you gave me the goose."

"You jolly well did, Bulstrode," grinned Skinner. "I was there."

"I thought the Duffer would bring it back, of course——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess Todd had a right to do as he liked with his own goose," said Fish. "Whether the Head told him to or not, he had a right to smash it up if he wanted to. Yes, sir."

"Right as rain," said Tom Brown.

"The rightfulness is terrific."

Bulstrode snarled.

"Well, the man's calling for the goose this evening, and Todd can explain to him."

"I shall have great pleasure in explaining the whole matter," said Todd. "My Uncle Benjamin said I should be always willing to explain anything. But the cost of reimbursing the owner of the goose will naturally fall upon yourself, Bulstrode."

"I guess so."

"It's a case of the biter bit," said Harry Wharton, laughing; "and if Bulstrode had any decency, he'd own up to the Head, too, and save Todd from his licking to-morrow."

"Oh, catch him doing that!" said Ogilvy, with a sniff.

"I guess I'll be around when the man calls for the goose," chuckled Fisher T. Fish.

And the rest of the fellows decided that they would be "around," too, on that occasion.

It was about an hour later that the man from the toyshop came in and asked for Master Bulstrode. Trotter, the page, who had heard the whole story, and was grinning over it, conducted the man to Bulstrode's study, and a crowd of interested juniors followed him there.

"I've called for the goose, please, sir," said Mr. Parker's man respectfully.

"I haven't got it," said Bulstrode.

"But I'm to take it back."

"A fellow here, named Todd, has smashed it up," explained Bulstrode. "Tell Mr. Parker to send the bill in to him."

"I'm afraid Mr. Parker will hold you responsible, sir, as the goose was hired out to you," said the man.

"Tell him I'm not responsible, and I can't and won't pay," snapped Bulstrode.

"Very well, sir; Mr. Parker himself will call about it."

"Tell him it's no good."

And with that the man departed.

"You're an ass, Bulstrode," Russell remarked. "You'll have to pay. You're legally responsible, as the goose was hired out to you."

"I guess that's correct."

"Oh, rats!" snapped Bulstrode.

Half an hour later Mr. Parker, the toy and sports merchant of Friardale, arrived. He came in with a very red face, and demanded to see Bulstrode. Needless to say, there were plenty of juniors only too eager to take him to Bulstrode's room. Mr. Parker was shown into Bulstrode's study by a crowd of fellows.

Bulstrode looked uneasy enough. It was one thing to bluff Mr. Parker's man, but another matter to deal with the irate shopkeeper himself.

"Now, then, Master Bulstrode, about that goose," said Mr. Parker.

"It's been smashed up."

"Then I hold you responsible, of course."

"I'm not responsible."

"You are! The price of that goose was a guinea, but I don't want to be 'ard on you," said Mr. Parker. "If there's been an accident, I'll go easy. I'll take a pound."

"You won't take a pound from me," said Bulstrode. "I haven't it, for one thing."

"There was the two shillings paid for the hire," said Mr. Parker. "I deduct that. You owe me eighteen shillings, Master Bulstrode."

"I don't see it."

"I'm willing to take half, and wait for the rest."

"You won't take any from me. Ask Todd. He smashed the goose."

"I don't know Todd, and don't want to. You hired the ortymatic goose, and you're responsible," said Mr. Parker. "You pay me, or I goes to the Head."

Bulstrode turned quite pale.

If Mr. Parker appealed to the Head of Greyfriars, Bulstrode knew perfectly well that he would be ordered to pay for the goose. Worse than that, the Head would learn the whole story, and would know that it was Bulstrode, and not Alonzo Todd, who was responsible for the jape.

"Well?" said Mr. Parker.

Bulstrode gritted his teeth.

"I suppose I shall have to pay," he said.

"I s'pose so," assented Mr. Parker grimly.

"I've only got five shillings," said Bulstrode desperately. "I'll settle the rest on Saturday."

"Done!" said Mr. Parker. "I'm not a 'ard man."

And Mr. Parker pocketed the five shillings, and Bulstrode's written promise to pay the balance of thirteen shillings on the ensuing Saturday, and departed satisfied. Bulstrode remained—not satisfied.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Fish Snowballs.

THE next morning, when the Remove took their places in the class-room, Alonzo Todd was in a state of considerable nervousness. He expected to be called out before the class, and marched up for punishment, and the prospect was not pleasing. He had not really been to blame, having been led away only by his excellent intentions—a thing that very frequently happened to the Duffer of Greyfriars. There was a great deal of feeling in the Form on the subject. The general opinion was that Bulstrode ought to own up; an idea that Bulstrode scoffed at. But, strange to relate, Alonzo Todd was not called out by Mr. Quelch to go into the Head's study. Mr. Quelch seemed to be unaware that any punishment was impending, and the morning

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passed off uneventfully. When the time came for the class to be dismissed, Todd's uneasiness revived. But the Remove were dismissed without any reference to Todd, and it became clear that the matter had been overlooked, and that Todd was not to be called up for punishment at all.

"You've got off cheaply, Toddy, old son," said Harry Wharton, after they had left the Form-room. "The Head's overlooked the matter, or forgotten it."

"Forgotten it?" said Todd.

"Possibly."

"Oh, dear!"

"Why, what's the matter now?"

Alonzo looked reflective and distressed.

"My Uncle Benjamin told me always to remind any of my kind masters who should forget anything," he said. "Under the peculiar circumstances, my dear Wharton, do you think I am called upon to remind the Head of the fact that he intended to cane me to-day?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Wharton——"

"No, Toddy, I don't think you're called upon to remind him of that," grinned Wharton. "You can safely and conscientiously let it pass."

"You really think so, my dear Wharton?"

"Yes, ass. Besides, most likely the Head's guessed that you were only being japed by someone else, and he means to look over it. If you remind him, he'll be bound to lick you. Better let sleeping dogs lie."

Todd looked round nervously.

"I—I do not see any dogs here, Wharton."

"Ha, ha, you duffer! I was referring to the Head."

"My dear Wharton, I trust you were not referring to the Head as a dog. It would not be respectful; and my Uncle Benjamin always said——"

But Wharton walked away without stopping to hear what Todd's Uncle Benjamin had always said. Alonzo reflected over the matter a great deal, but he finally decided to take Wharton's advice, and not remind the Head of the matter. Which was all the better for Todd.

Wharton went out into the Close. There was no snow falling, but the ground was thick with it. The drive had been cleared by spade-work from the School House to the gates, but the rest of the wide expanse was covered with a gleaming mantle of white. The juniors were snowballing one another. There was no footer to be had, and snowballing was the next best amusement that offered.

Fisher T. Fish came out of the house with his usual saunter, and he looked at the juniors with his usual eye of cool criticism.

"I sha'n't be able to show you chaps how to play footer yet awhile," he remarked.

"Perhaps never!" suggested Bob Cherry sarcastically.

"Oh, I guess it will be as easy as rolling off a log, when the ground's good. Look here, do you call that snowballing?"

"Something of the sort."

Fisher T. Fish laughed.

"You should see us snowballing over there," he remarked. "I guess we could knock spots off some of you. Yes, sir."

"Come and play now, then!" exclaimed John Bull.

"Oh, I guess you ain't up to American form."

"Let's see. Look here," said Harry Wharton. "I'll take you on, man to man. Make our own snowballs, and pelt as hard as we can, and the chap who drives the other across the Close is the winner."

"Nope!"

"Why not?" demanded a dozen voices.

"Wharton ain't within speaking distance of my form, you know."

"You won't take it on?"

"Nope!"

"You blessed windbag!" exclaimed Harry Wharton wrathfully. "If you're going to funk it, for goodness' sake stop swanking!"

"Funk!" shouted the Removites.

"Oh, I guess I ain't funking, not by long chalks!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish warmly. "I'll give Wharton a lesson, if he likes."

"I'm ready for instruction," said Harry, with a grin.

"Go it, Yank!"

"Pile in! Show us how it's done!"

"Yep!" said Fish. "I guess I will, some!"

The two juniors took up their stand eight feet apart in the thick snow. The terms of the contest were simple. They were to pelt each other till one gave ground, and the winner was, as Harry had said, the one who drove the other before him.

The juniors stood round in a circle at a goodly distance, to avoid the flying missiles. Wharton and Fish stooped to grasp up the snow.

There was a confident grin on Fisher T. Fish's face. It was evident that he had no doubt of his own powers.

The Removites grinned, too. They expected to see that grin wiped off Fisher T. Fish's countenance before long; and they were not disappointed.

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"Ready!" sang out Nugent.

"Ready!" replied Harry Wharton, at once.

"Yep!" said Fish.

"Start!"

And they started.

Fisher T. Fish hurled the first ball—too hastily, and it missed Wharton by a foot or more.

Harry Wharton replied with a whizzing missile that caught the American junior full on the mouth, and smashed there.

Fisher T. Fish gave a gulping gasp.

As he staggered, Wharton hurled another ball, and it impinged upon Fish's chin, and then a third followed it, catching him under the chin.

"Yarooh!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

Whiz, whiz, whiz!

Wharton's snowballs flew as fast as he could make them and hurl them, which was much faster than Fish could do either.

The American junior rolled over in the snow under the hail of snowballs. But there the snowballs pelted him with merciless persistance, and he scrambled up blindly.

Whiz, whiz, whiz!

Biff, biff, biff!

"Ow! Yow! Whoop! Yarooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish fairly took to his heels at last.

Harry Wharton pursued him, grasping up handfuls of snow, and pelting the American junior at every step.

"Ow! Hellup! Stop! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish had reached the school wall, and could not go farther. He backed against the wall and held up his hands, and Harry Wharton, who was laughing too much to run any farther, stopped, too, and lowered his hand containing the ready missile.

"Done?" he asked.

"Yow! I guess so! Ow!"

"But you haven't shown us how they snowball over there."

"Yow! Ow!"

"Jevver get left?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow! Keep off!"

Wharton dropped the snowball to the ground, laughing. Fisher T. Fish had had his lesson.

The American junior, rubbing the snow out of his eyes and nose and ears, fairly crawled away under the laughter of the juniors.

But within ten minutes Fisher T. Fish was Fisher T. Fish again, and swanking as much as ever. There was no repressing the junior from New York for long.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.
Bunter Skates.

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"Rats!"

"But I say——"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Look here," said Bunter, blinking at the chums of the Remove indignantly through his spectacles. "Look here——"

"Get a new face, then!" said Bob Cherry. "You can't expect a chap to look at that one of his own free will."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Buzz off, old son! We haven't any money to lend!"

"I hope you don't think I want to borrow any money of you," said Bunter loftily. "I despise a borrower!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you cared to advance me a couple of bob off a postal-order I'm expecting this evening, it would be a different matter, of course."

"Rats!"

"But what I was going to say was——"

"Rubbish!"

"Oh, really, Nugent! Look here, you chaps are going on the ice, aren't you?"

"Yes, rather!"

Harry Wharton & Co. had brought down their skates, and as the skates were hanging on their arms, it really was not very difficult for Bunter to guess that they were going for a skate on the frozen Sark.

"I'll come with you," said Bunter.

"Rats!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm a splendid skater, you know, and I always prefer skating in a pair," said Bunter. "I'm a dab at skating, you know. I'll show you fellows how to do things!"

NEXT WEEK: "ROLLING IN MONEY." A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"More rats!"

And the chums of the Remove walked on towards the river laughing. They did not intend to have their skating spoiled by the fat junior, who would have rewarded their good-nature with nothing but grumbling and discord.

Billy Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove as they turned away, his little round eyes twinkling with annoyance behind his big spectacles.

"Beasts!"

And Billy Bunter shook his fist after the departing chums of the Remove. Not that Bunter would or could have done anything. Harry Wharton & Co. were well able to care for themselves, and they regarded the anger of the Owl of the Remove as the wind that passeth.

"Pigs! And to a fellow like me that can do figure-skating, too! I'll bet anything that the ice won't bear Bob Cherry's big feet!" he went on.

And really Billy Bunter was very waspish. He had deliberately given up a nice little snack in Mrs. Mimble's tuckshop five minutes before he had had enough. And then to be told they did not want him on the ice!

"The rotten swankers!" he burst out again. "But I know what it is. They don't want me to show them up with my good skating. I'll bet——"

"My Uncle Benjamin always said it was a very bad thing to make bets, Bunter."

Billy Bunter wheeled round. The still small voice of Alonzo Todd took him rather by surprise.

"What do you know about it, you duffer?" he demanded.

"Well, I know that Uncle Benjamin's horse never would come in first, Bunter——"

"Horse!" yelled the fat junior. "Who the dickens is talking of horses——"

"Why, surely, Bunter, you are not going to deny that you were talking of betting as I approached you. Betting and horses are the same thing, I suppose, aren't they?"

"If you didn't come crawling up behind a fellow when he's—when he's—busy, you wouldn't suppose anything," said Bunter blusteringly.

"I was merely making an observation on Wharton," he continued. "You did startle me, though, Todd."

"I'm sorry I alarmed you, Bunter. But you seemed so excited about something, that I felt it my duty to offer you any assistance in my power. Pray what is the matter?"

"Oh—oh, nothing, really, Todd! I was going to take those rotters on the ice with me, and I've had to decline. They're just the limit, you know. I'm a ripping figure-skater, you know."

"Skating! Why, has the gymnasium been turned into a rink, then, Bunter?"

"Oh, come off it, Todd! That's too strong. You don't mean to say you've not noticed the frosts we've had these last few days?"

"I remember the bath being so cold this morning that it made my nose very red, Bunter. But is there skating on the ice?"

"Yes, rather!"

"I have a pair of skates. My Uncle Benjamin used them when he went to Earl's Court rink——"

"They're no use for this, Todd," said Billy Bunter.

"But I have another pair, with iron rails along the bottom ——"

"Blades," said Bunter oracularly. "Rollers are no use at all on ice!"

"Thank you, Bunter! Your knowledge of the subject is evidently extensive. I suppose you are a good skater——"

Billy Bunter swelled out like a pouter pigeon. He blinked patronisingly at Alonzo before he could decide on a sufficiently impressive reply.

"I've never won any medals, my dear fellow. As a matter of fact, I was so far above my competitors that it would have been a mockery to present them to me," he said.

Alonzo was impressed. For the moment he entirely forgot Billy Bunter's fertile imagination.

"Would you care to accompany me to the ice?" went on the fat junior. "I'd give you a hand, you know. But you wouldn't mind doing a little watching, would you?"

"Oh, no, Bunter! I should be very happy——"

"One always skates better with a decent ring of admirers ——"

"Indeed, Bunter, you must be mistaken. I never remember my Uncle Benjamin doing anything of the kind——"

"Ass! I was speaking of myself."

"Oh! Then I beg your pardon, Bunter! As a matter of fact, I shall be very pleased to form the nucleus of a ring of admirers."

Billy Bunter stared at Alonzo Todd.

But over all Alonzo's observations there reigned an absolute calm of face. Everything he uttered was always for the best, and, in strict accordance with what his Uncle Benjamin had taught him.

The Falstaff of Greyfriars was on the point of pouring the vials of his wrath over Alonzo when an idea seemed to strike him. Alonzo had only made what he considered a plain statement of fact. And time was going, too. If they wanted to skate they had better hurry.

Time and dinner-bells wait for no man. Furthermore, Billy Bunter's idea was to do a little deal with the Duffer first—a deal for Bunter's benefit, needless to say.

"You'd better let me see those skates, Todd," he broke in shortly. "If you haven't used them for a long time they may not be safe."

"I shall be delighted if you will look at them for me, Bunter. Pray come with me to my study now."

"All right, Todd. But I'll just run to my room first, if you don't mind."

Alonzo was rather surprised at Bunter's unusual politeness, and then staring after him for a few seconds, he walked to his own study.

"Just the thing for him," grunted Billy Bunter, rummaging in an old cupboard. "And it will be a nice little feed for me. His own skates will be no use, of course. It stands to reason they won't."

And he at length dragged an old pair of skates to light. They looked ready for the marine-store man, the straps being quite mouldy in some places, and the blades in a very "rocky" condition on the edge, to say nothing of a little incidental rust.

The skates having been found, Billy Bunter made not the least stir to keep his appointment with Alonzo. That was part of his idea. He had something to "work" on the Duffer, and he knew that Alonzo would very soon get tired of waiting in his own study, and would come to look for him. And that was what Billy Bunter wanted. His visiting list was not extensive, and he knew there was no fear of an interruption there.

Alonzo soon came along the passage. Billy Bunter instantly became very busy looking in the cupboard.

"What a time you've been, Bunter," said Alonzo. "I thought I had better come for you. I've brought my skates. Here they are. Tell me what you think of them, please, Bunter."

Billy Bunter looked up, and grunted as he took the skates from Alonzo Todd.

They were in very much better condition than the old things he had unearthed in his cupboard. But that was a detail. Alonzo must pay for his experience. That was Bunter's idea.

"No good, Todd," he said. "They're not quite the thing. It's rather difficult to explain, but you can take it from me. Better have these."

Alonzo looked doubtfully at the rusty things Bunter held out to him. His own looked better.

"I know they look a bit dusty, Todd," went on Billy Bunter, "but these are the real thing. I used to use them——"

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, Bunter, but I prefer my own——"

"But I couldn't undertake to show you any tricks if you skate in 'them!' And, besides, these have to be tried to be appreciated. And I only want a bob for them."

Alonzo looked backwards and forwards from pair to pair for a moment, then he gave in.

Bunter pocketed the shilling, and in two minutes they were off for the Sark.

"We'll take a newspaper with us to sit on, Bunter," said Alonzo, producing one from the depths of his overcoat. "My Uncle Benjamin always said it was safest not to sit on damp grass without something underneath you. Besides, it saved his trousers, he said."

Billy Bunter growled. He would have preferred to have gone into Mrs. Mimble's for another snack before starting. But time pressed, and he was thirsting to show Harry Wharton & Co. something.

They soon reached the bank of the frozen river, and Harry Wharton & Co. gave a shout as they saw the luckless pair draw near.

First, Alonzo spreading the newspaper for Billy Bunter to sit on elicited roars of laughter. Then there was another yell as Alonzo's piece was blown away in a little puff of wind, and the Duffer of Greyfriars slid several yards on his back along the ice in pursuit. He crawled off again gasping.

"What! You don't mean to say you've had enough already?" said Billy Bunter, struggling with his skates.

"Yes, thank you, Bunter! I think that is sufficient skating for to-day."

"But you haven't begun yet, Todd."

"But one of those fellows caught me in the neck with his heel, Bunter."

"That's nothing," said Billy Bunter. "You get used to that sort of thing. There are always some hooligans on a piece of ice, you know. Come on!"

"THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S." A Grand, New School Tale, by Charles Hamilton, is in THE "EMPIRE" LIBRARY this Week. Price One Halfpenny.

"Is it very slippery, Bunter?"

"Well, it is a bit at first, but one soon get's used to it," returned the fat junior sententiously.

"Then perhaps I'll not try, after all, thank you, Bunter!"

"Good, Todd!" grinned Billy Bunter, feeling his way down the bank gingerly. "Just you watch me."

"Certainly, Bunter. What are you going to do——"

Billy Bunter found his weight rather trying as he crawled down the bank. Todd's persistence annoyed him. He did not want to lose his balance before he had actually been on the ice.

"Oh, I say, Todd, don't bother a chap so much! It's jolly rotten getting down here on skates. As a matter of fact, I was thinking of showing you how to do a figure eight first. Give us your hand. Quick—— Ow! Shoosh! Ow——"

As Billy Bunter spoke his legs suddenly shot from under him, and he slid down the rest of the river-bank. Recovering himself temporarily, he managed to get his feet together, and away he went skidding into the middle of the river.

But his balance somehow refused to be maintained. Arrived at the middle of the skating-ring, his legs suddenly seemed to want to go forward, while his heavy body was apparently determined to go in the opposite direction.

Up and down flashed his limbs as he still struggled to re-establish his equilibrium.

Harry Wharton & Co. roared till their sides ached.

Down he went at last, accompanied by screams of mirth.

"I say, Bunty, what figure do you call that?" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Banter told me he was going to do the figure eight, Wharton," said Alonzo Todd, from the bank.

"And he's given us eight thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight," said Bob Cherry, laughing, "just to show us what he can do."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Cherry, would it not be better to assist Bunter?" said Alonzo. "My Uncle Benjamin told me to always be kind to the fallen."

"All right, Todd!" sang out Bob Cherry. "We don't mind you picking up Bunter, do we, chaps?"

"No!" shouted the chums. "We should like it terrific!"

"Come and help me up, you lanky ass!" yelled Bunter. "I shall get my death of cold here!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Beasts!"

"If he persists in screaming his pedigree at you I should leave him there, Todd, if I were you," said Frank Nugent.

"I hope I shall do my duty to a fellow-creature, in any case," said Alonzo, walking forward. "But I cannot help making the observation, Bunter, that you have brought this on yourself."

"Beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And amid cheers and roars of laughter Alonzo proceeded to try and get Billy Bunter on his feet again.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Fisher T. Fish to the Rescue.

"Ow! Careful, ass!"

"My dear Bunter!"

"Mind! It's horribly slippery!"

"You will generally find, Bunter, that ice is slippery," said Alonzo. "My Uncle Benjamin has explained to me the cause of——"

"Oh, help me up!"

"I was explaining——"

"Ass! Help me up!"

"Take a firm grip round my neck, Bunter, and as I rise it will drag you up to your feet."

Billy Bunter obeyed, and the Duffer of Greyfriars strove to rise upright.

But Billy Bunter was a champion heavy-weight.

Instead of Alonzo rising to an upright position, and pulling up Bunter, Bunter pulled the Duffer of Greyfriars down to a horizontal one.

The fat junior sank back again upon the ice, and Alonzo flopped down on him with a grunt, and Bunter gave a breathless yell.

"Ow! You ass! Gerrup!"

"I'm so sorry——"

"Gerrup! You're sq-q-q-quashing me! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Remove.

"My dear Bunter——"

The fat junior got one arm free, and gave Alonzo a terrific drive in the ribs. The Duffer of Greyfriars yelled, and rolled off him, his skates clinking along on the ice.

"Dear me! Oh!"

Bunter sat up, gasping.

The skaters were in a ring round him, yelling with laughter, and two or three of them, in their excess of merriment, had slipped over on their skates and sat down, too.

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Billy Bunter blinked indignantly at the yelling juniors through his big spectacles.

"You howling asses——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You chirping duffers——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You dangerous lunatics——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Can't you come and help me?" roared Bunter furiously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows——"

But the fellows only roared. They were laughing too much to come and help Bunter, even if they had wanted to.

Bunter made a desperate effort to get upon his feet. But each time he strove to rise his skates travelled in different directions. Bunter, as a matter of fact, was a very bad skater, and almost helpless on skates.

He blinked at Alonzo Todd again.

"Come and lend me a hand, Todd!" he gasped.

But Alonzo Todd, though he was far from bearing malice, had not forgotten that punch in the ribs. Todd had his dignity.

"I'm so sorry, Bunter——"

"Mind you don't fall on me again——"

"My dear Bunter——"

"Lend a hand, you chump!"

"I'm so sorry, Bunter, but I cannot aid you. In the first place, I have been reduced to a breathless state by the severe concussion of your fist upon my ribs. In the second place, I regard you as ungrateful and unfeeling. My Uncle Benjamin cautioned me never to have anything to do with ungrateful and unfeeling people."

"Chump! Ass!"

"My dear Bunter——"

"Fat-head!"

"I can only retire from the spot, Bunter, as you persist in addressing me in terms of disrespect and opprobrium."

And Alonzo Todd forthwith retired from the spot.

Billy Bunter snorted.

He was, as Todd had remarked perfectly correctly, both ungrateful and unfeeling, and with these estimable qualities he had driven away the only fellow who was at all inclined to help him. Though whether Alonzo Todd's assistance would have been of much use to Bunter is a great question.

The fat junior blinked round. He was beginning to feel very cold where he came in contact with the ice.

"I say, you fellows, lend me a hand——"

"I'll lend you a foot if you like, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Bulstrode——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're too dangerous, Bunter," said Tom Brown. "You ought to be labelled 'Dangerous to skaters' when you go on the ice."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I can manage it."

It was Fisher T. Fish.

The American junior had his skates on, and he was gliding towards the scene in what he regarded as a masterly manner, but it was a manner that did not call forth any enthusiastic admiration from the Removites.

He skated up to Bunter.

"I guess I'll help you, Bunter."

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter ungraciously. "Mind you're careful, Fishy."

"Surely!"

"Lay hold of me under the arms and lift me very carefully. Mind, I'm delicate."

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, Fish——"

"Put your paws on my shoulders," said Fish, "and hang on. Now, here goes, I guess."

He dragged the fat junior up.

Billy Bunter's skates beat a tattoo upon the ice, and he clung desperately to the American junior.

"Mind!" he roared.

"I guess you're all O.K."

"Ow! I'm falling! You're letting go!"

"Nope!"

"Yarooh! Hold on!"

"Yep."

"Whoop! We're going!"

"Great snakes!"

They were going—there was no mistake about that!

With a whiz and a clink they shot along the smooth ice, and their struggles to stop only increased their speed.

Fisher T. Fish strove to drag himself loose from the fat junior.

But Billy Bunter clung on like grim death. He did not mean to part with his only visible means of support.

NEXT WEEK: "ROLLING IN MONEY." A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Yow! Help!"

"I guess——"

Crash!

They shot together into a bed of frozen reeds, and rolled over. Fisher T. Fish sat up, gasping. Bunter sprawled in the reeds and roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Remove. "Is that the way you do it over there, Fishy? Jevver get left? Ha, ha, ha!"

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Fish Kicks!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. trooped in to dinner, laughing loudly. Billy Bunter on the ice was funny; but Fisher T. Fish in the role of rescuer was funnier still. The American had failed to come up to time again, but the juniors were getting used to his failures to make good his swank.

Fisher T. Fish had received two or three hacks from Bunter's skates while engaged in the work of rescue, and so he was a little subdued during dinner.

But as he recovered, his usual manner returned, and again, as Bob Cherry put it, it was "Forward, Fish."

"I guess I wish the weather would calm," Fisher T. Fish remarked, as he stood with a group of juniors, looking out of a window into the white, shining Close. "I want to show you how we play footer over there."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Anything like the way you box, Fishy?"

"Oh, rats!"

"Or like the way you skate?"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Or the way you snowball?"

Fish snorted.

"Oh, ring off!" he exclaimed. "You make me tired. I guess I'll show you what footer is like, anyhow."

"Show us now," said Nugent. "We've got a ball here, and the passage is wide enough for kicking."

"Well, I guess——"

"Ha, ha, ha! Funking again!"

"I guess I'm not funking any. I'll kick a footer with any of you," declared Fisher T. Fish.

"Here you are, then."

"Go ahead, Fishy!"

"On the ball, Yankee!"

Nugent brought a footer into sight immediately.

Fisher T. Fish looked at it a little dubiously.

"Never seen a football before?" asked Tom Brown sarcastically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I can kick with anybody," said Fisher T. Fish. "Shove the ball down there, and you watch the way we do it over there."

"Good old Yank!"

"Go it!"

"On the swank—I mean on the ball."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish placed the ball with a careful hand and eye.

"There you are!" said Nugent. "Those antlers over the Common-room door are goal. If you can touch 'em with the ball I'll admit you can kick."

"Yes, rather, Fishy!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"I guess it's as easy as rolling off a log," said Fisher T. Fish, glancing at the Common-room door facing the end of the long, wide passage. "Give me something a bit harder to do—do!"

"That's hard enough, if you can do it."

"If! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I reckon it's dead easy."

"Well, play up, then!" exclaimed Hazeldene. "We're waiting."

"Oh, all O.K.!"

The American junior carefully calculated, and his foot swept forward. But it did not touch the footer. Fisher T. Fish had evidently made a slight miscalculation, for his boot swept past the ball and shot up into the air.

The Remove roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Whoop!"

Fisher T. Fish lost his balance as his foot went flying upward. He sat down on the floor of the passage with a reverberating bump.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!"

"Is that how you do it over there?" shrieked Bob Cherry. "My hat! I should think you had the footer-grounds fitted out with cushions, then!"

"Groo!"

Harry Wharton ran to help the American junior up.

Fisher T. Fish contorted himself a little as he stood upon his feet again, as if he had a pain somewhere.

"Ow! I guess that hurt," he grunted.

"Try again, Fishy!"

"Go it!"

"Kick! Kick!"

"I guess it's dead easy. I kinder missed it that time."

"Ha, ha! You kinder did!" shouted Nugent.

"This will be all O.K."

Fisher T. Fish kicked the footer again.

This time his toe did hit the football, and it rose from the floor and whizzed through the air.

But it did not whizz at the target.

It swerved off towards the staircase and smote with terrific force a little gentleman with curled and waxed moustache who was descending.

There was a terrific yell.

"Ah! Oh! Ciel! Mon Dieu! I am kill!"

And Monsieur Charpentier, the Greyfriars French-master, rolled down the stairs, wildly clutching at the banisters.

"My only hat!" shouted Harry Wharton. "You've done it now, Fish!"

"Thunder!"

"Cut off, you ass!"

"I guess——"

"Get outside!"

Fisher T. Fish hesitated a moment, and then ran. It was advisable under the circumstances to get out of the sight of the French-master.

Wharton and Hurree Singh helped the little Parisian gentleman to his feet at the bottom of the staircase. Nugent had captured the rebounding footer, and had whipped it out of sight in next to no time.

"Ciel!" gasped Monsieur Charpentier. "Ciel! I vas struck viz sumzing in the zomack, and I fall!"

"We saw you fall, sir," said Harry Wharton sympathetically. "We ran to help you at once, Monsieur Charpentier."

"I zank you ferry moosh, Wharton!"

"Not at all, sir. Only too jolly glad to be of any help, sir!"

"The gladfulness is terrific."

"I—I vas struck," said Mossoo, looking round in great bewilderment. "You did not strike me viz anyzing, Wharton?"

"I, sir? No, sir!"

"I think I could explain, sir," said Alonzo Todd innocently. "A football propelled by a kick——"

"Todd! I say, Todd! Todd!" bellowed Bulstrode.

"Yes, Bulstrode?"

"You say——" said the little Frenchman.

"Yes, sir," said Todd, turning back. "A football, describing its natural trajectory under the propulsion of——"

"Todd! Todd!"

"Yes? Is that someone calling me?"

"Yes, ass! Cut off!"

"Pray excuse me, Monsieur——"

"But I zink——"

Todd ran off in a great hurry, with Bulstrode grasping his arm. Round the nearest corner Bulstrode changed his grasp to Todd's neck and knocked his head against the wall there several times.

"Ow! My dear Bulstrode! What—what——"

"Now keep quiet, you ass!"

"Really, Bulstrode——"

"You're not to give Fish away, you ass! Savvy?"

"But I had no intention of giving any fish away," said Alonzo Todd, bewildered. "I do not possess any fish to give away, Bulstrode."

"Ass!" yelled Bulstrode. "You're not to tell Mossoo about the Yank kicking the footer."

"Oh, I see, Bulstrode! I understand perfectly. But——"

"Fathead!"

And Bulstrode swung off, leaving Alonzo rubbing his head ruefully. Meanwhile, Monsieur Charpentier had given up the matter. He had not seen the football, and he could not guess what it was that had smitten him in full career, so to speak, as he trotted downstairs. And, needless to say, no one of the juniors was at all inclined to enlighten him upon the subject.

"I zink zat is a mystery," said Monsieur Charpentier. "I feel certain zat somezing smite me viz violence, and yet zere is nozzing. It is a mystery."

And he gave it up.

The chums of the Remove, laughing, joined Fisher T. Fish in the common-room. The American junior was waiting in some anxiety.

"All over?" he asked.

"Yes," said Wharton, laughing.

"THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S." A Grand, New School Tale, by Charles Hamilton, is in THE "EMPIRE" LIBRARY this Week. Price One Halfpenny.

"Good!" said Fish, with a breath of relief. "Of course, I hadn't the least idea the blessed thing would whiz up there and hit the little bounder."

"Ha, ha, ha! You'd better get into a ten-acre field and shut the gate, the next time you show us how they kick footers over there!" grinned Nugent. "You're too dangerous at close quarters, Fishy."

"I guess——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.
The Romancers!

BULSTRODE came into Harry Wharton's study at tea-time that afternoon. Wharton was making toast, and Nugent was buttering it. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was making the tea. The chums of the Remove ceased their various occupations to look at Bulstrode. It was not often that the Bully of the Remove honoured them with a visit.

A rather disagreeable look passed over Bulstrode's face.

"I haven't come to tea!" he exclaimed.

"Never mind; you can stay to tea, if you like," said Harry Wharton. "You're quite welcome."

Bulstrode paused.

Harry Wharton's hearty and cordial manner took him somewhat aback, and he coloured a little.

"Well, you're very decent!" he exclaimed. "As a matter of fact, I was going to have tea in Hall, as Hazeldene has gone over to have tea with his sister at Cliff House, and Brown is out to tea with Bob Cherry and Linley."

"Sit down and make yourself at home, then," said Nugent hospitably. "It mayn't be much of a feed, but it's better than tea in Hall, any day."

"Thanks, I will."

And Bulstrode sat down.

"The welcomefulness of the esteemed Bulstrode is terrific," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur, with one of his most princely bows to the burly Removite. "The honour of beholding the honourable face of the handsome Bulstrode in our poor study is also great."

Bulstrode grinned.

"Oh, draw it mild!" he remarked. "I say, Wharton, I came here to speak to you on the question of Fish."

"Fish for tea, do you mean?" asked Frank Nugent.

"We've got toast and sardines," said Wharton.

"Ha, ha! I mean, Yankee Fish."

"Oh, I see!"

"What's his latest?"

"Oh, he's swanking away in the common-room now!" said Bulstrode, with a snort of disgust. "I've seen some swanking before, but nothing to equal that blessed Yankee, and that's the truth."

"The esteemed Bulstrode is quite correct."

"And the best of it is, or, rather, the worst of it is, that the fellow can't do a blessed single thing!" Bulstrode exclaimed warmly.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"We've discovered that already," he remarked.

"Well, I don't think we ought to stand it," said Bulstrode. "He swanks on every blessed subject till we put him to the test, and then he shows up worse than some kid out of the Second Form."

"Quite so."

"The sofulness is terrific."

"Now, he's jawing about painting," said Bulstrode. "That's a thing where he can't be put to the test and shown up, and he's swanking away for all he's worth."

"Good old Fish!"

"The pictures he's painted over there would make Raphael blush with envy, and Murillo tear his hair, to judge by the way he talks," said Bulstrode. "I don't believe the fellow could whitewash a wall, as a matter of fact."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I think the time's come to shut him up for good!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Jolly good idea, if it could be done," he remarked; "but I don't think anything less than a gag would induce Fisher T. Fish to shut up."

"I was thinking of a rag."

"Go ahead."

"Well, suppose we all take to swanking in the same way," said Bulstrode, with a grin. "Whenever he tells a whopper, we'll tell a bigger one, till he begins to see that he's an ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then we might put some notices up in his study," went on Bulstrode. "Something about swank and check, you know. We could pin labels on his back and over his bed, and stick 'em on his hat. I think if we set our minds to it, we could put him up to a wrinkle about swanking."

"Good egg!"

"The goodfulness of the egg is terrific."

And Bulstrode and the chums, with unusual amicability, discussed their tea, and the new wheeze, at the same time.

EVERY TUESDAY. The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

Harry Wharton & Co. were fully agreed with Bulstrode upon the point that all the Lower School was getting fed up with Fish's swank.

When they descended to the common-room, Fisher T. Fish was holding the floor, so to speak.

"Toboggans!" he said. "Yes, I guess you should have seen us tobogganing on the Hudson river. It would have opened your eyes."

"Ahem!"

"Jevver toboggan, you chaps?"

"Oh, rather," said Nugent; "but we do it on a big style here! We have a toboggan made twenty-five miles long, you know."

"Eh?"

"And we use a sleigh as large as a house."

"I guess that's a crammer."

"Well, we're telling crammers, aren't we?" said Nugent innocently.

There was a yell of laughter, and Fisher T. Fish turned quite pink. Nothing more was heard on the subject of toboggans for some time.

But at the supper table Fish was quite himself again.

"Pretty skinny this," he remarked, referring to the bread and cheese. "We used to have tremendous suppers in my school in the United States."

"Did you really?" said Billy Bunter. "I wish I had been born an American. Did you have kidney-pies?"

"We had all kinds of things—big trout, and fresh salmon, and——"

"My dear chap, that's nothing," said Bulstrode. "We used to have whales here."

"What?"

"Baked whole, with their tails on, you know."

"Oh!"

"And if I described the trouble it was getting them into the dining-room, you know, I guess it would make you open your eyes some," said Bulstrode.

The juniors giggled, and Fisher T. Fish was quite silent.

As they went up to the dormitory after supper, the American junior was talking much less than usual. But when a festive junior spoke of leap-frog in the dormitory before going to bed, Fish woke up again, so to speak.

"You should have seen us playing leap-frog in my old school," he remarked. "I could give you some pointers about that, I guess."

"Well, there's time before lights out!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Go ahead."

"Oh, I guess I won't make a row this time of the night! But——"

"Besides," said Wharton seriously, "you remember the last time we played leap-frog here? Chap jumped so hard that he sailed out of the window, and was never seen again. Did you ever beat that at your school in the United States, Fishy?"

Fish smiled a sickly smile.

"I guess you're prevaricating," he remarked. "It seems to have come over you all suddenly."

"Oh, it's catching!" explained Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess——"

"You brought the infection!" roared Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess——"

But Fisher T. Fish had no chance to make his voice heard. The juniors yelled with laughter.

Wingate came in, and the Remove turned in, and the lights were put out. And for the first time since he had been at Greyfriars, Fisher T. Fish did not occupy ten minutes before sleeping, with stories of his wonderful exploits "over there."

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.
A Fall for Fish!

"GREAT snakes!"

Fisher T. Fish uttered that exclamation as he woke, and sat up in bed on the following morning.

The rising-bell was clanging out, and the Removites were yawning and turning over in bed.

But someone had evidently been up before rising-bell.

For a cardboard placard was fastened at the foot of Fisher T. Fish's bed, so placed that it fronted him as he sat up.

Upon it the following words were inscribed in big black letters, with bold sweeps of the brush:

"Fisher T. Fish! Swank merchant! Whoppers while you wait!"

Fish stared at the card.

NEXT WEEK: "ROLLING IN MONEY." A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

The other juniors stared at it, too, as they woke up and caught sight of it.

A yell of laughter rang through the Remove dormitory.

Fisher T. Fish skipped out of bed with a very red face.

"Who put that there?" he shouted.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who did it, I want to know?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish took the card and tore it into fragments, and scattered them up and down the dormitory.

Then, with a clouded face, he turned to his toilet.

The Remove grinned joyously.

They grinned still more as they went downstairs, following Fisher T. Fish. For someone had brushed against the American, and in brushing against him had pinned a card upon his back—a small card, but large enough to attract notice wherever the American junior moved.

It bore the inscription:

"WATCH ME SWANK!"

The juniors simply roared.

To see Fisher T. Fish walking on with his usual strut, and that notice on his back, seemed to the juniors too funny for words.

Fisher T. Fish looked at the yelling juniors several times, wondering what was the cause of the laughter.

But he could not see, of course, the little card, pinned to his jacket, in the middle of his back.

"I guess you're off your rockers, this morning!" he exclaimed. "What's the cackle about?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the joke?"

"You are!" yelled Ogilvy. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"What do you mean? Look here——"

"We're looking. We're watching you swank!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish swung away angrily.

Every fellow who caught sight of the notice on the American junior's back burst into a roar as he passed.

Seniors as well as juniors caught it. Even Ionides, the worst-tempered fellow in the school, roared with laughter.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, saw them all in the passage, but as Fish was coming towards him he did not immediately see the notice.

The loud laughter puzzled him a little. He saw that it was directed towards Fish, but did not see the reason.

"Whatever is the matter, Fish?" he exclaimed.

Fish was very pink by this time.

"I guess I'm in the dark, sir," he said. "The guys have got some joke up among themselves, I opine!"

"Dear me! It is very peculiar,"

"Yep."

Fish passed on, the Form-master glancing after him. Then the truth dawned on Mr. Quelch, and he smiled.

Fisher T. Fish proceeded into the quadrangle, followed by yells of laughter wherever he went.

He cornered Alonzo Todd in the Close, grasping the obliging youth by the shoulder and questioning him. He knew that he could depend upon Alonzo's good-nature, at least.

"I guess there's some joke on, Todd!" he exclaimed.

"My dear Fish——"

"Where does the cackle come in?"

"My dear—— Oh!"

Fisher T. Fish shook the Duffer of Greyfriars.

"Where does the laugh come in?" he demanded.

Alonzo looked perplexed.

"The laugh does not come in, Fish," he explained; "it comes out. The laugh is caused by an outward expiration of the breath, accompanied by certain facial contortions. It is quite a mistake to suppose that a laugh could come in. It always comes out. You see——"

"Ass!" roared Fish.

"My dear fellow——"

"What are the fellows cackling at?"

"They are cackling at you, my dear Fish."

Fish glared.

"But why?"

"They are watching you swank," explained Alonzo, "according to the written invitation on the card on your back, my dear Fish."

Fish gave a yell.

"Card! On my back!"

"Oh, certainly! Were you not aware of it, my dear Fish?"

"Idiot!"

"Dear me! That is a very rude expression, Fish, and my Uncle Benjamin would be shocked, not to say disgusted, if he heard it. You see——"

Fish was groping round his back.

He could not reach the little card, however, which was securely pinned high up between his thin shoulders.

He glared at Alonzo Todd.

"Can't you help a chap, you long-legged guy?" he roared.

"I doubt whether Bulstrode would take it kindly if I should interfere," said Alonzo doubtfully. "You see, that joke was undoubtedly played upon you in order to diminish the absurd and exaggerated swank with which you comport yourself."

"Dummy!"

"My dear Fish——"

"Take that thing off me, or I'll punch your fat head!" roared Fisher T. Fish, quite losing his temper.

"I decline to do anything of the sort. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me never, under any imaginable circumstances, to yield to threats."

"You—you—you——"

"As you are so extremely bad-tempered and unreasonable, Fish, I fear that I am left no alternative but to put a period to this conversation. Oh!"

Fisher T. Fish put a period to the conversation by punching Todd's nose. Todd staggered back against the wall, in a state of great astonishment and indignation; and Fish tore off his jacket, and, standing in his shirt-sleeves, tore the offending label from his jacket.

Then he put on his jacket again, amid a circle of assembled and admiring juniors, who were shrieking with laughter.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Alonzo, rubbing his nose. "I have been smitten with considerable violence upon my nasal organ, and the concussion has been provocative of an unpleasant amount of bodily pain. Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go for Fish! Knock him down!"

"Whop him, Toddy!"

Alonzo put his fists up, and advanced upon the American junior.

"I fear, Fish, that I shall be compelled to chastise you, unless you apologise for that brutal and unprovoked attack upon my nasal organ."

"Rats!"

"I'm so sorry to have to punch you, Fish, but my Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to decline to take a blow without an adequate retaliation. Will you have the kindness to come on?"

Fisher T. Fisher had the kindness to come on. He was feeling so exasperated—so mad, as he would have said in the American language—that he was glad of someone to wreak his wrath upon. And surely the Duffer of Greyfriars should not have been a very formidable foe.

But Alonzo, though he had little science, had heaps of pluck and mountains of determination. And Fisher T. Fish's powers, as the chums of Greyfriars had already discovered, consisted chiefly in saying what he could do, and not in doing anything in particular.

To Fish's great astonishment, Alonzo's slogging attack knocked him far and wide. He was knocked down two or three times, and then driven round the ring of delighted juniors, who cheered Alonzo to the echo.

It was in vain that Fish landed punch after punch upon the Duffer of Greyfriars.

Alonzo stuck to his guns, and his windmill blows rained upon the American junior. Never had Alonzo shown himself so warlike.

The cheers of the Remove excited him and urged him on. He felt that he was standing up for Greyfriars against the swanking stranger who had come there to show them things.

Fisher T. Fish bumped on the ground for the fourth time—and the last.

He sat up, but he did not rise.

"I guess I'm done," he remarked, with perfect coolness.

Alonzo dropped his hands.

"My Uncle Benjamin always told me to be sorry if I hurt anybody," he said; "and, to judge by the considerably swollen state of Fish's nose, and the peculiarly shadowed appearance of his left eye, I fear very much that he has been hurt."

"Ha, ha! He looks like it!" yelled Bob Cherry.

Fisher T. Fish rose to his feet. He mopped his streaming nose with a handkerchief. He had been licked to the wide world by the biggest duffer in the Form. But, to do him justice, there was no resentment or malice in Fish's face. His coolness was unimpaired by his defeat, and so was his excellent opinion of himself.

"You ain't such a bad boxer, either," he remarked to Alonzo. "You can put up your fists. But you should see the way we box over there!"

And Fisher T. Fish walked away, leaving the juniors gasping.

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete tale next Tuesday, entitled: "Rolling in Money," by Frank Richards. Order in advance. Price one penny.)

"THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S." A Grand, New School Tale, by Charles Hamilton, is in THE "EMPIRE" LIBRARY this Week. Price One Halfpenny.

STANLEY DARE
The Boy Detective

INTRODUCTION.

Stanley Dare, the Boy Detective, is visited one day by a man named Martin who has had sent to him at different times four raven's feathers accompanied by a warning letter. Dare promises to try and find the sender, but the same night Martin is mysteriously poisoned. Suspecting Garstone—the inheritor of the poisoned man's money—of being involved in Martin's death, Dare and Professor MacAndrew visit him, and attempt to learn the truth from him. They fail in this, however. "He mistrusted us from the beginning," says the young detective later, as he and the professor are seated at dinner.

(Now go on with the Story.)

Stanley Dare Is Dissatisfied—The New Footman—Alice Conveys Another Warning—Shadows—Drugged.

"Could anyone have warned him against us?" said the professor. "It doesna seem feasible. But if not, we are either suspecting him wrongly, or else he has a wonderful command over himself. Yet, when ye put the black feather on the table I thocht—mind ye, I wouldna be certain—but I thocht that just for a fraction of time a gleam of fear shone in his eyes."

"I had the same idea," replied Dare. "But it was so fleeting, that I believed I was mistaken."

The young detective produced a worn, leather-covered pocket-book, which he had picked up in the underground chamber, which was a secret rendezvous of the Raven gang. There was a small memorandum-book slipped in through the elastic-band inside it. Among a number of other entries, having reference, apparently, to illegal work which the gang had done, or had arranged to do, was the following:

"Received a letter signed with the initials P. G., in which writer states that the missing book, containing the records of the society, is now in the possession of a man named Lawrence Martin, supposed at one time—years ago—to have been a Raven. The usual warnings to be sent to Martin."

Under a later date another entry occurred, which referred to the same matter. It was brief and terribly significant.

"Warnings disregarded," it ran; "consequently Lawrence Martin has paid the penalty. The records have not been found."

Dare, having read out these extracts once again, closed the book and replaced it in his pocket.

"The initials, P. G., stand for Philip Garstone," he said. "Of course, they might stand for a hundred other names, but in connection with that mysterious letter we have to remember that Garstone was Lawrence Martin's nearest relative—that he was the one person who would benefit if Martin died without making a will. But as there was always the possibility that Martin might take it into his head to make a will, leaving all his money to someone else, it was to Garstone's interest that he should die before he did so. Moreover, Garstone was in low water, and wanted money badly. He was not a man who was, or is, troubled with many scruples; but to bring about his cousin's death with his own hands—to commit murder, in fact—was running too great a risk. If he only could compass his death in such a manner that no suspicion should fall on himself, it would be all right. That letter was the outcome——"

"Stay!" interrupted MacAndrew. "How could this fellow Garstone have known anything about the missing records of the Raven gang?"

"That is what I have yet to find out," pursued Dare. "You know I have believed from the beginning that it was through some outside influence that the Ravens struck at Lawrence Martin. We have it here"—he tapped his pocket—"in black and white. The man whose initials are P. G.—whether Philip Garstone or another—is the man who has the records book in his possession. When we get hold of that book that case will be finished."

"But would a man be such a fool as to call the attention of the gang to the fact that he knew the book was missing," said the professor, "if he had it himself, even though he accused another of having stolen it?"

"If criminals never committed some act of folly which helped to lead to their detection," said Dare, "there would be ten times more undiscovered crimes now than there are. But I was saying that I should have to obtain a glimpse of the contents of the bureau in the library of Priory House."

"Ye were saying that," agreed MacAndrew, who, having finished supper, was stuffing tobacco into his favourite briar.

"Have ye a plan?"

"I have. Read that."

Dare passed over the "Evening Star," an Ipswich evening paper, and pointed to an advertisement which he had marked with blue pencil.

"Footman wanted," it ran.—"Apply personally on Tuesday evening next between the hours of five and seven, at Priory House, Marplesdon."

Professor MacAndrew read the advertisement, and smiled grimly.

"You mean to apply for the situation?" he said.

"Yes," replied Dare. "I may not get it, of course, but I must take that chance."

"Ye'll need tae have testimonials."

"I shall have them."

They returned to London on the following morning in time to be present when the police raided the vaults and underground chambers beneath Isaac Cohen's house. Bassett, the Jew, and the two other men were captured after a sharp struggle; but they only represented a very small proportion of the terrible society known as the Ravens. They were, however, the only ones who had any direct connection with the murder of Lawrence Martin, except, perhaps, the ruffian named Scarthe. But he was no longer at that rendezvous.

Having given evidence at the preliminary magisterial inquiry, Stanley Dare returned to Ipswich on Tuesday, and duly presented himself at Priory House in the evening as an applicant for the berth of footman. He had disguised his features to some extent, but it was not possible to do much in that way, as he could only attach a pair of inch-long side-whiskers at the sides of his face—male servants not being allowed to wear a greater amount of hirsute appendages.

Dare was the smartest-looking of the applicants. His references were satisfactory, and he was engaged. Philip Garstone little dreamed who it was he was engaging, or that the new footman had been in the house only three days previously as "Mr. Smith," a solicitor.

The young detective knew very well what the duties of a footman were, and contrived to perform them in so satisfactory a manner as to draw forth an expression of approval from his senior—two footmen were kept, but no butler—very much to Dare's amusement.

But every hour of the day he was watching for an opportunity to discover the secret of the locked bureau, for that it contained the missing records he felt certain. He did not believe they had been destroyed.

Philip Garstone seemed to be in rather a confident frame of mind. Perhaps he considered that the arrest of Bassett and his companions was, after all, one of the best things that could have happened for him. He had, of course, read the account of their arrest in the newspapers.

At last the opportunity came. Dare slept in a double-bedded room with the other footman; but one night that

NEXT WEEK: "ROLLING IN MONEY." A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

individual obained leave to go to his home and remain until the following evening. Dare had the bed-room to himself, and could quit it at any time without his movements being noticed or questioned. By midnight everybody in the house had retired to rest. He allowed an hour and a half to pass; by that time, he calculated, even the most restless of them must surely be in a sound slumber. It wanted a quarter to two as he quietly slipped from his room and made his way noiselessly down to the first floor, on which the library was situated. He felt rather like a burglar, and he smiled grimly as he thought what might happen if Philip Garstone were to come down and find the new footman in the library turning over the contents of the bureau.

There was no need for a light. The moon sailed high in a cloudless heaven, and a broad shaft of radiance came through one of the windows, rendering every object in one part of the room quite clear and distinct.

The other half of the room was in shadow, and it was from this side that the second window—high and narrow—gave a look-out upon the woods.

Dare had a bunch of skeleton keys with him that had been made in Brussels. They were the most perfect specimens of their kind that had ever been manufactured, and there were but few locks which they could not open.

The young detective had just fitted the first one into the brass "rajah" lock of the bureau lid, when the library door was softly pushed open a few inches, and the startled face of Garstone's eleven-year-old daughter appeared at the opening. Dare's back was to the door, and he did not see her, and as she was in her bare feet, with only her nightdress on, her movements were as noiseless as those of a kitten.

With wide-open, frightened eyes, Alice stared at the young detective, mistaking him for a burglar; for she did not recognise him in the mystic light with his back towards her.

Then she crept away as noiselessly as she had come, and, making her way to her father's room, aroused him from his sleep.

"What is the matter?" he demanded sharply. "Who are you? Alice! What is wrong that you are wandering about the house at this time of night?"

"Papa, there is a burglar in the library!"

"Eh?"

Philip Garstone jumped out of bed and went to the door. He was in his sleeping-suit, and as the night was not cold he did not trouble to put on any more clothes. For a few moments he listened, but could not hear anything.

"Tell me what you saw or heard, Alice," he said. "To begin with, what took you down to the library at two o'clock in the morning when you ought to have been in bed and asleep?"

"Something woke me up, papa," replied the girl. "I don't know what it was, but I was wide awake in a minute. Then I thought I heard someone pass my door, so I ran out into the corridor. I could not see anyone at first, but when I peeped over the banisters I saw a man go into the library. I wasn't afraid, so I went downstairs and looked into the library. There was a man there trying to unlock your bureau!"

"Trying to unlock my bureau?"

Philip Garstone was alert enough now, although his face went a shade paler. He slipped a loaded revolver into the breast-pocket of his sleeping-jacket.

"Run back into your room, Alice," he said, "and jump into bed. I must go and frighten this burglar away. Mind you remain in your room. I will tell you when the man has gone."

"Very well, papa."

The girl returned to her room and got into bed again, listening with bated breath for sounds of altercation or strife, which she feared must soon be heard.

But time went by, and no such sounds reached her ears. A deathlike stillness reigned in the house. Then her tired eyes closed in sleep.

. . . . . .

Click!

It was the third key that did it. The bureau was unlocked, and Stanley Dare let the polished mahogany lid down upon the rests. There were a few papers and letters in pigeon-holes, that was all that could be seen. Certainly there was no book visible, and a brief examination of the documents available proved that they were of very little importance, and had no bearing on the "records" of the mysterious Ravens. But the young detective was not cast down on that account. He knew that in old articles of furniture like the one he was standing in front of there often were secret recesses of some kind or another, so he set to work in a systematic manner to try and discover one.

In five minutes he had found out that the framework of one set of pigeon-holes was movable. In another three minutes he had the secret recess at the back of them exposed to view. The recess contained a dingy-looking, leather-covered volume that had the appearance of a ledger. He examined it in the light of the moon.

"The records of the Raven gang!" he cried triumphantly. "At last I have them. Now I know with absolute certainty who was the instigator of the murder of Lawrence Martin!"

"If you know, the knowledge will avail you little!"

Dare swung round sharply, to find Philip Garstone standing at his elbow with a sinister scowl on his evil face, and a revolver gripped in his hand. Garstone gave an exclamation of astonishment when he saw who it was.

"The new footman!" he cried. "Hang you! Are you one of the gang sent here to spy upon me?"

"I am not," replied Dare. "I am a detective, engaged to find out who it was that murdered Lawrence Martin. That actual murderer is now in custody. But you are the man who instigated the murder, simply for the greed of wealth. Of the two, you are the greater villain!"

Philip Garstone laughed with a sound like the hiss of a serpent.

"A detective?" he said. "You will have to be dealt with in another fashion, then. A private detective evidently, for you have done what the police could not have ventured to do. I think that if I handed you over to their charge for obtaining admission to my house under false pretences and attempted burglary——"

"Nothing would suit me better," interrupted Dare. "Pray do so at once."

Garstone was nonplussed by the young detective's coolness. It was the last thing which he desired, to have the whole case brought to light in a police-court, although he believed that he had managed things so cunningly that he could keep free of the clutches of the law. He expressed himself to this effect.

"You think to escape your just punishment," exclaimed Dare, "and it may be that you will escape legal punishment, but in the end I am firmly convinced that by some means or other you will receive your deserts. I shall take care that the true facts of this case are made known to the world."

Philip Garstone did not reply at once, but he handled his revolver menacingly. At the library window a dark shadow appeared—the shadow of a man. It vanished. Another came, and vanished. They were unseen by the occupants of the room, who were intent on each other's movements.

"You may not have the opportunity of making your valuable discovery, such as it is, known to the world," said Garstone, with a malignant sneer.

"A few years ago, under an assumed name," pursued Dare, "you had some dealings with the Raven gang. Later, a book containing the records of that society fell into your hands. It is here." He placed his hand upon the leather-covered volume. "You wished to compass your relative's death without any suspicion falling on yourself, and to that end you sent a communication to the gang to the effect that Martin had in his possession the very book which you had yourself stolen and still retained. You knew that they would go to any lengths to regain possession of that book, for if it got into the hands of the police it would bring more than one member of the gang to the scaffold. The result was that Lawrence Martin was murdered, and, morally, you, Philip Garstone, are his murderer!"

"You think to spread that story abroad, do you?" snarled Garstone. "You hound, I'll kill you first!"

He sprang upon Dare and clutched him by the throat, and a sharp struggle ensued, in the midst of which the window was raised, and four masked men climbed into the room.

They leaped upon the two combatants with the silent stealthiness of tigers, and a strange melee now ensued. But so quietly was it carried on, the carpet being thick and soft, that not a sound penetrated beyond the closed door, and not another soul in the house was aware of the terrible drama that was being enacted so close to them.

The only weapons that the masked men used were chloroform-pads, but at close quarters no more effective weapons could be devised. In two minutes it was all over, and Stanley Dare and Philip Garstone, so recently antagonists, were now lying prone and unconscious on the floor.

"The record book!" whispered a hoarse voice.

"I have it," replied another of the men. "What are we to do with this fellow?"

He kicked Dare in the side with his foot.

"We've no time to waste on him now. His business can be settled afterwards. Secure Garstone and lower him out of the window."

In a remarkably short space of time it was done.

"Make for the old hut in the wood," the leader of the masked men ordered. "We are not likely to be disturbed there."

Five minutes later they had vanished as quickly and silently as they came, and Stanley Dare was left there on the library floor, inert and unconscious.

"THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S." A Grand, New School Tale, by Charles Hamilton, is in THE "EMPIRE" LIBRARY this Week. Price One Halfpenny.

Retribution—The Breaking up of the Raven Gang—The Long Last Journey—Conclusion.

A smoky oil-lamp hung from the centre rafter of the old hut in Marplesdon Woods, casting a dim, murky light on as strange a scene as ever had been witnessed within the four walls of the tumbledown edifice.

The four masked men who had carried Garstone off from his house were standing at one side of the room, and Philip Garstone, with his ankles bound with ropes, was seated on a packing-case on the other side. A rough sort of apology for a table, consisting of two planks laid upon empty cases, was between the prisoner and his captors.

The man who was speaking was Scarthe, for the masked men were four of the Raven gang.

"We ain't over-partickler in our society," he was saying, "and if we think it's to our advantage to put a man out of the way—w'y, he's put out of the way, and there you have it. But we draws the line, Mister Philip Garstone, of being made catspaws for others. Pay us high enough, an' we'll undertake work what other chaps ain't got the pluck, or the chance, to carry out theirselves; but we ain't going to be tricked into doing it!"

"What do you mean?" demanded Garstone. "I insist upon being released this instant. This farce has gone on quite long enough. I will give you my word, if you desire it, to take no action against you for the outrage——"

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"And that is what you wanted. We draw the line at doin' other people's dirty work, d'yer understand?"

"But you said just now that the gang would do anything if the price paid was high enough!" cried Garstone, grasping at a faint hope of making a bargain with these men as a drowning man grasps at a straw. "I can pay you well now for what you have done. Name your price, and I'll pay it!"

"You are going to pay it!" replied Scarthe grimly. "The price you pay will be a high one—the highest that a man can pay. That's our way of doing business!"

"I am not rich!" stammered Garstone, trying to pút away the deadly fear that was gripping at his heart with ice-cold hand. "And when I said name the price, I——"

"The price you'll pay," interrupted Scarthe, speaking slowly and deliberately, "is the same as you made Lawrence Martin pay—no less. That is the order of the society, and we are here to carry it out!"

"You daren't!" cried Garstone, his voice rising almost to a scream. "Would you murder me? I won't submit! Do you think I'll sit here calmly and let you take my life? Help here! Help, I say!"

He shouted at the top of his voice, but the only effect it had was to arouse the mocking laughter of the men who had constituted themselves his judges and executioners. He bent down and tried to unfasten the cord which bound his ankles, but they jerked him up again, and one man on each side held his arms.

"There's nobody to hear you shout," said Scarthe, who was the spokesman throughout, "so, as I said before, you had better save your breath. It is getting precious now. Set the bottle and the glass on the table, Jake; this gentleman is going to drink success to the Ravens!"

A laugh greeted this brutal jest, for they knew well enough that the wine they were about to force him to drink would be the last to pass his lips upon this earth. The bottle was produced, and a glass—a crimson glass, identical with the one from which Lawrence Martin had drunk the draught which killed him—for these men omitted no detail that would give an added terror to any revenge they meant to take. The glass had been treated with the poison which carried death to every glutinous drop.

Scarthe poured out the wine—"a bumper," as he facetiously remarked—and held the glass out towards Garstone.

"Drink it up!" he said. "You have never tasted anything so choice as that before in all your life!"

"I won't touch it!" screamed Philip Garstone. "It is poisoned! I refuse to drink it!"

"You'll find this the pleasantest way of—of paying the price," said Scarthe. "But we are considerate. We won't

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A hoarse shout of laughter interrupted him, and he quailed before it, as though it had been a savage blow. His poor attempt at bluff had failed, and he sat there white and trembling, with a haunting fear showing in his widely-dilated eyes, and beads of sweat that stood out upon his forehead.

"Your word ain't worth much!" exclaimed Scarthe. "And as for saying you won't take action against us if we release you—w'y you're going out of yer way to waste yer valuable breath. You can't take any action against us, becos' we ain't a-goin' to release yer!"

"What are you going to do with me?" cried Philip Garstone. "Why should you treat me like this? I have never harmed you!"

Scarthe tapped the leather-bound volume on the table, the book containing the terrible records of crimes that had been committed by the ruthless gang who called themselves the Ravens. Philip Garstone inwardly cursed his folly that he had not destroyed the fatal book long ago, instead of keeping it in the vain hope that it would place the leaders of the gang one day in his power.

"You stole these records," said Scarthe. "It ain't no use in denying it. I say you stole them. And then, so as you could get his money, you put the blame on to an innocent man—your cousin, Lawrence Martin."

"But I didn't know——"

"You knew it meant his death!" thundered Scarthe.

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force you to drink it. We will give you the choice. Bring the rope, Jake!"

A rope, with an ominously-suggestive noose at one end, was flung upon the table by the side of the wine.

"There are some handy trees outside," pursued Scarthe, "if you prefer that way."

Philip Garstone changed his tone. He appealed to their cupidity. He hoped by again offering money to turn them from their purpose.

"Let me free," he cried, "and you shall have a thousand pounds apiece! Think! You could do much with a thousand pounds!"

"We could do more with our lives," replied Jake. "The society has got a long arm, and if we did not fulfil our orders, it would reach us. We should then share the fate which is to be dealt out to you, for you would not escape in the end. It is hopeless to appeal to us. Choose between the wine and the rope; and if you know any prayers, and feel inclined to say them—say them now!"

Philip Garstone realised at last, if he had not done so before, that there was no possible hope for him.

"The glass!" he gasped.

Scarthe handed it to him. His face was awful to see. It had turned to a sickly, sweat-bedabbled grey; his lips were almost colourless, and his eyes were strained with terror.

His hand shook to such an extent that some of the wine was spilled on to the floor. He raised the glass, while the four men watched him curiously.

"You fools!" he cried suddenly, in a high-pitched voice. "Drink the wine yourselves. I will not take my own life!"

With all his force he flung the glass at them. Scarthe raised his arm to shield his face. It struck it just above the wrist, glanced off, and smashed into the lantern. In an instant the room of the hut was plunged into darkness.

There was some confusion, fierce oaths and cries, which were presently stilled by an awful, blood-curdling shriek, which rose above all other sounds. One of the men struck a match and re-lit the lantern. They looked for Philip Garstone. He was stretched out upon the ground—quite dead. No drop of the poisoned wine had passed his lips. Death had been caused by the breaking of a blood-vessel.

"He is dead," exclaimed Scarthe; "and our work is done!"

His eyes fell on the roughly made table as he spoke, and what he saw there caused an exclamation of fear to break from his lips.

Four black feathers were lying there side by side. They were not there before the light went out. How had they got there during the darkness?

The men looked from one to the other with startled gaze.

"Who put them there?" asked Jake, in a hoarse whisper.

"We sent four to Lawrence Martin before he was put out of the way. Are these the same ones?"

Silence fell upon the group—the silence of a superstitious fear. Outside, in the woods, in the first grey of the coming dawn the birds were waking, and beginning to trill forth their songs. Within the hut was death and terror and crime.

"Are these the same feathers that were sent to Lawrence Martin?" repeated Jake helplessly.

"I can answer that question—they are!"

The hut door swung open, and Stanley Dare stood before them. Scarthe whipped out his revolver, but a commanding voice bade him put it down. Through the narrow slit in the woodwork which did duty for a window, a hand and arm were thrust. The pistol which the hand grasped was pointed full at Scarthe's head.

Voices sounded outside, and the tramping of feet. Dare stood on one side, and men pushed through the doorway into the hut. The professor first, then an inspector of police, and after him several constables.

"There are your prisoners," said Dare. "We are too late to save Garstone's life, but his fate is but a just punishment for the crime which he has committed."

"Make a break for it!" yelled Scarthe to his companions. "Don't give in like mugs. Fight your way out!"

For a matter of five minutes there was a scene of the wildest confusion within the hut, and during the struggle it was difficult to distinguish between friend and foe, as the lantern was completely smashed up this time by a revolver shot.

Stanley Dare had gripped hold of Scarthe, and they fought amid the wreckage of the table for a few minutes under the feet of the other combatants. But in the end, Scarthe and his three associates were secured and conveyed to the Ipswich police-station, the Marplesdon one not being considered safe enough for the custody of such desperadoes. The body of Philip Garstone was removed to Priory House, but not before little Alice had been taken away by the professor and placed under the care of his housekeeper, whom he had sent for from London.

A few words may suffice to tell the little that remains to be told of this strange case.

There were now eight men of the Raven gang in custody, including three who, to a great extent, had had control of the London branch of that terrible society—Bassett, Cohen, and Scarthe.

Bassett was tried and brought to justice. The book containing the records of the gang furnished crushing evidence against them; and all those who had so far been captured were condemned to various terms of imprisonment.

But the branches of the gang and its membership of dangerous criminals were more numerous than had at first been supposed, and it was mainly due to the exertions of Stanley Dare that its secret power was crushed.

It will be within the memory of the public how completely the evidence which Dare accumulated exposed the organisation of the Raven gang, and led to its eventual breaking up and the punishment of its leaders. But all this was not accomplished for many months afterwards; and the adventures and perils which the young detective went through while pitted against them have no connection with this particular story. They will be related at some future time.

. . . . . .

One other scene—a peaceful and happy one this time. Professor MacAndrew and Stanley Dare were seated in the former's comfortable dining-room in his house at Chelsea. They were sitting over their wine and dessert.

"I knew from the first," Dare was saying, "how access was obtained to Martin's rooms. You remember that his landlady stated that he returned to fetch something which he had forgotten. He did not do anything of the kind. It was Bassett, who must have been shadowing him, that went back to the house. He was so cleverly made up to represent Martin that even the landlady was deceived. Once inside the house everything was easy. He ransacked the rooms in search of the records; but, not finding them, proceeded to carry out the vengeance of the gang. The glass which Martin used every night when he had his wine before going to bed was rubbed over on the inside with that poison which we discovered. Nothing more was needed. The victim's fate was sealed, for death would ensue within five minutes after he had drunk the wine in the poisoned glass."

"Mon, it was one of the most fiendish and ingenious plots that ever I heard of," said MacAndrew.

"What about little Alice Garstone?" asked Dare. "Have you decided to adopt her?"

"Yes, the little lassie has taken a liking for me. She thinks I am her uncle. I'll send her to a guid school. Ah, here she is!"

The pretty, blue-eyed damsel entered the room, and ran across at once to the old Scotsman.

"Uncle," she said gravely. "I've been wanting to ask you something ever since we came here. Where is papa? I haven't seen him since we left Priory House."

The professor glanced at her thoughtfully.

"Your papa, lassie," he said, at length, "has gone on a long journey—a verra, verra long journey. He went on it so suddenly that he hadna' time to say good-bye!"

THE END.

Printed and published by the Proprietors at 23, Bouverie Street, London, England. Agents for Australia: Gordon & Gotch, Ltd., Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, and Wellington, N.Z.; for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd., Cape Town, and Johannesburg; Canada: The Imperial News Co., Ltd., Toronto. Subscription, 7s. per annum. Saturday, January 14th, 1911.

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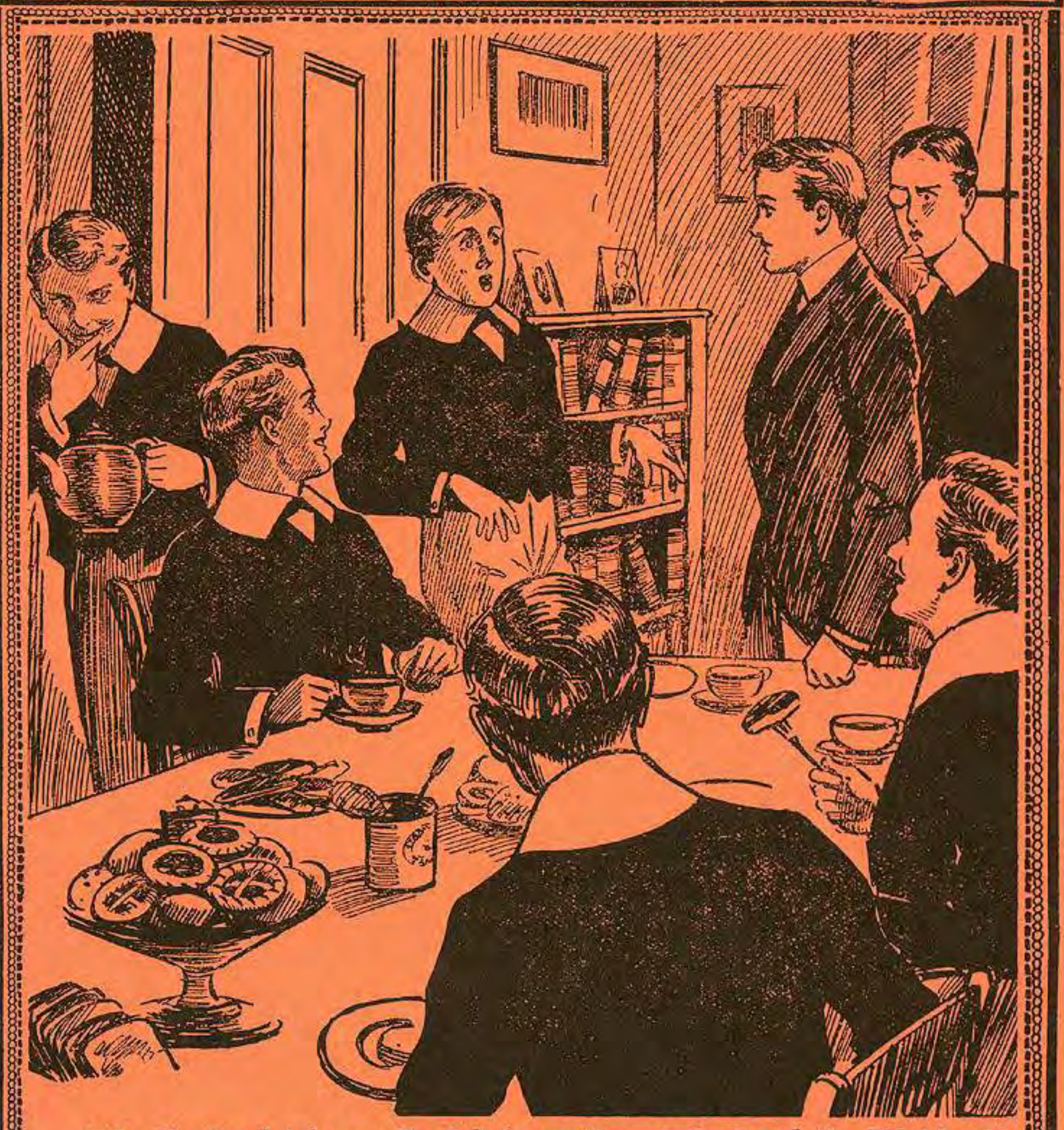

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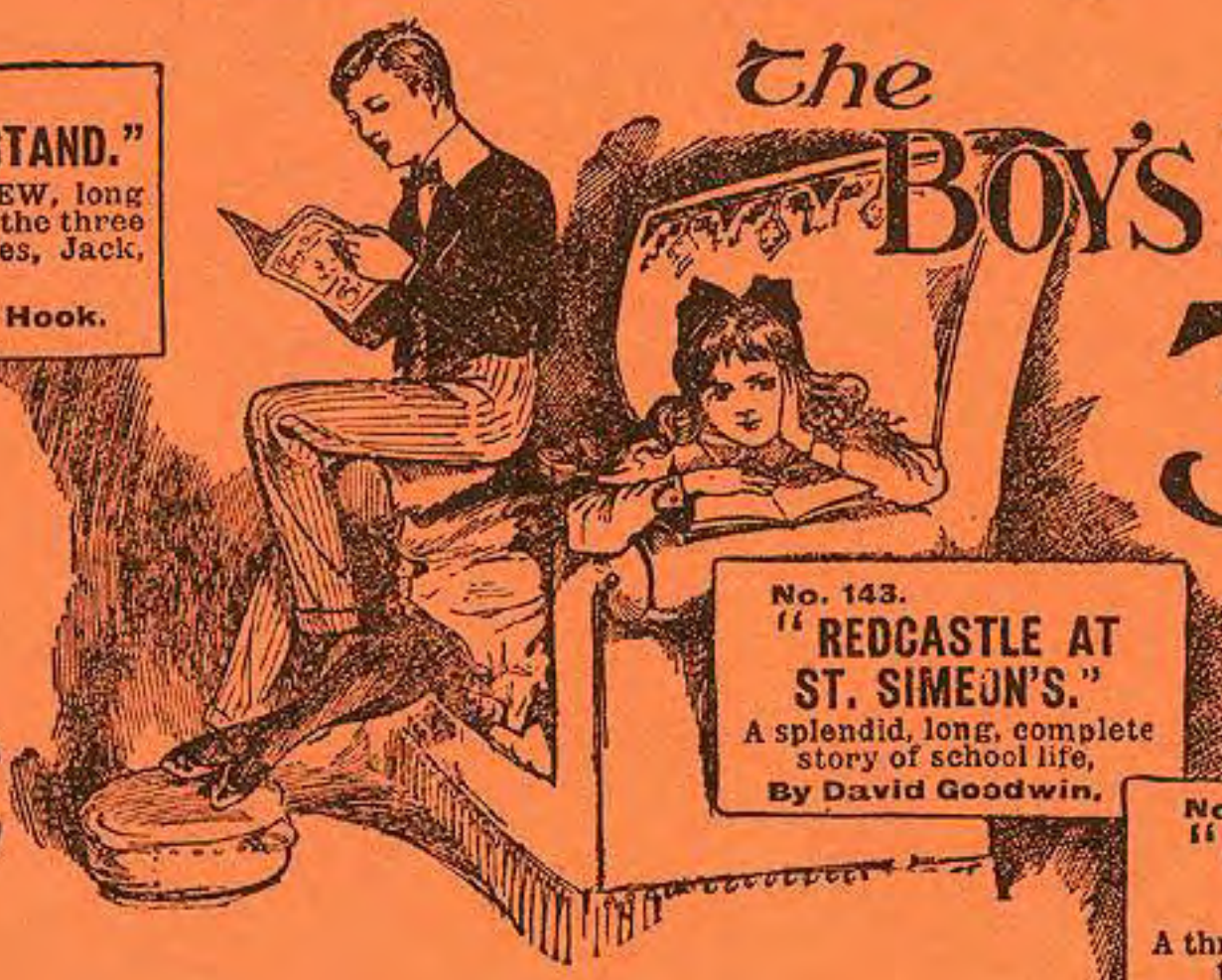

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