

'ROLLING IN MONEY.' Read the Splendid Tale of
Greyfriars School—John
Bull's Fortune—IN THIS
ISSUE.

Grand
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School
Tale
of
Harry
Wharton
& Co.

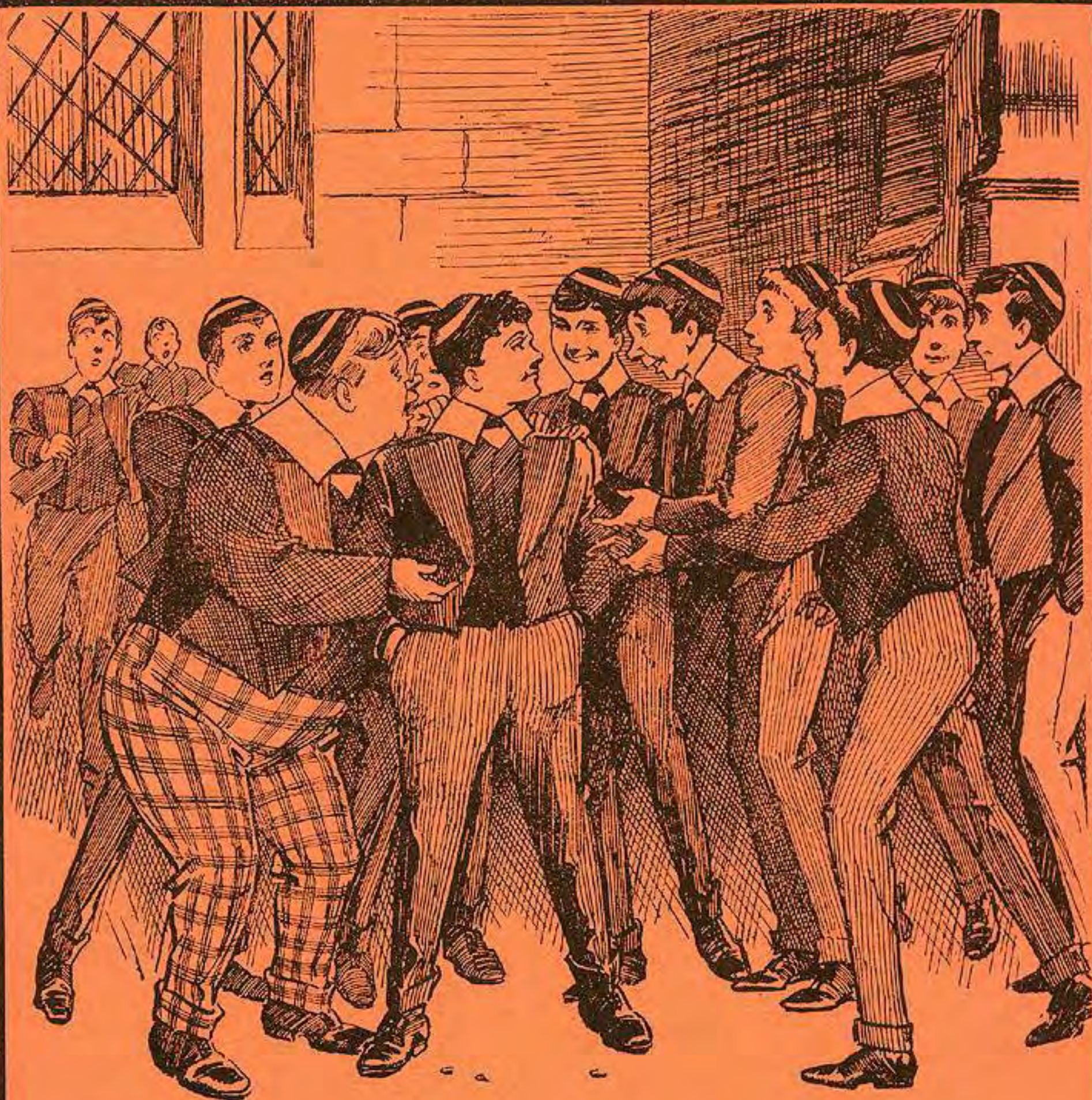
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No. 154 |

Grand, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.

| Vol. 5.



£500

"Lend me five pounds, old chap!" "Lend me half-a-sovereign, old boy!" "Dear old pal, hand over five bob!" came from the crowd surrounding the wealthy John Bull junior.

SENT FOR



This is the Title of the
Story for next Tuesday:



"SPOOFING ALONZO."



A Complete School-Story Book, attractive to All Readers.

The Editor will be obliged if you will hand this book, when finished with, to a friend.

ROLLING IN MONEY.



THE FIRST CHAPTER. Music Hath Charms.

"O H!"
"Listen!"
"Great Scott!"
"The great-Scott-fulness is terrific!"
"My hat!"
"Oh!"

Those exclamations, and many more of the kind, rose crescendo in the Remove passage at Greyfriars.

It was tea-time, and most of the Remove—the Lower Fourth—were having tea in their studies.

Harry Wharton and his chums were enjoying toast and eggs in No. 1 Study. Bob Cherry and Mark Linley and little Wun Lung were discussing a pie in No. 13—and the rest of the Remove were similarly employed.

But there had come a sudden interruption.

Fellows came to the doors of the studies with chunks of cake, or bread-and-butter in their hands, and wrath in their faces.

A Splendid, Long, Complete
School Tale of
HARRY WHARTON & Co.,
at Greyfriars.

— BY —

FRANK RICHARDS.

Exclamations of rage resounded through the length and breadth of the Remove passage.

The cause was a wild and weird volume of sound that proceeded from the last study in the passage, No. 14.

The noise was comparable to many things—to the howling of maddened cats, the growling of infuriated dogs, the whining of a herd of jackals, the roaring of the wild beasts at the Zoo, the grind of a mill-wheel, the whirr of a motor-car.

But it was caused by a concertina, played with extraordinary want of skill, and with deadly determination, by a junior in the end study.

It was surprising that so terrific a din could proceed from a single instrument, wielded by a single pair of hands.

But so it was.

When Bull, of the Remove, really played the concertina, the fact was known to all Greyfriars.

It is on record that music has been extracted from concertinas. But John Bull, of the Greyfriars Remove, had never learned the secret.

But if he could not master the art of extracting melody

from his instrument, it was not for want of patience and vigour.

Bull would have practised every day for hours, if he could have managed it, but though he was equal to it, Greyfriars wasn't.

Dire threats of homicide had been made if he ventured to play that dreaded instrument within the walls of Greyfriars, and for some time Bull had let it alone.

But it was bound to break out again.

And now it had broken out—worse than ever, the juniors thought, after their rest from it.

To think of having tea while Bull was playing the concertina was impossible. The juniors came out into the passage wrathfully. Bob Cherry and Mark Linley were the first out. They were in the study next to the offender. As for little Wun Lung, he was the only fellow in the Remove who could stand it. He said it reminded him of the music at home in China—which was quite possible.

Bob Cherry kicked at the door of No. 14, turning the handle.

But the door did not open.

John Bull had taken the precaution of locking it on the inside.

"Bull!" roared Bob Cherry, kicking away. "Bull! I say! Open the door!"

Crash—crash went the concertina!

There was no other reply to Bob Cherry's exhortations.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "The fellow ought to be ragged bald-headed for bringing such a thing into Greyfriars at all. Bull! Open the door!"

Crash! Crash!

Yow-w-w-w-w!

"My hat!"

"The hatfulness is terrific!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur. "The din of the awful concertina is terrific also."

"Stop it, Bull!"

"Chuck it!"

"We'll slay you!"

"We'll squash you!"

"Hold on!"

"Mercy!"

The crowd of juniors kicked at the door.

But there was no reply from within but the wild howl of the concertina. The probability was that John Bull did not even hear them.

"Where are the chaps who dig with him?" exclaimed Frank Nugent, looking round. "Is Todd or Fish in the study?"

"I guess I'm not," said Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, who shared that study with Bull and Alonzo Todd. "I'm here."

"I also am here," said Alonzo Todd distressfully. "If I were within the study, Nugent, I should be glad to oblige you by opening the door. My Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me to be obliging. But being outside the study, you will doubtless observe that it is impossible for me to open the door from within."

"Go hon!"

"My dear Nugent——"

"Tell him to open the door, Fishy!" shouted Bob Cherry. "It's your study, you know, and you have a right to go in."

"I guess so!"

Fisher T. Fish banged on the door.

"Bull! Bully, old son! Hustle now, and get this door open! I guess I'm coming in! You hear me yaup?"

Crash—grind—howl!

"Oh, he won't open for Fish!" said Bulstrode. "We shall have to smash the door in."

"Hear, hear!"

"Bull! Bull! Bull!"

"Stop that row!"

"Let's smash in the door," said Skinner. "I can't stand it! We can get the stool from along the passage."

"Come on!" exclaimed Snoop.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter!"

"But I say——"

"Get out of the way, Tubby!"

"Oh, really, Brown——"

The howling of the concertina in the study ceased for a moment. The juniors renewed their yells to the sole occupant of No. 14. It was clear that he had reached the end of a tune, but he was pretty certain to start immediately upon another.

"Bull!"

"Hallo!"

"I say, you fellows——" persisted Billy Bunter, trying to squeeze his fat form forward in vain, through the crowd of juniors. "I say, you know——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

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"Bull! I say, Bull!"

"What do you want?"

"Stop that ghastly row, will you?" roared Wharton, through the keyhole. "Open the door, and let us come in."

"No fear!"

"Then chuck that awful din!"

"I'm practising."

"Go out on the island in the river and practice, then, or up to the top of the Black Pike, or on a boat in the bay," yelled Wharton.

"Rats!"

"We can't stand it here."

"I'm only going to practise for another quarter of an hour to-day."

"Quarter of a century! Ass! We can't stand it for another quarter of a minute."

The chums heard John Bull laugh softly, and then the wild howl of the concertina recommenced. The juniors raged at the door, while within the study the concertina howled and crashed.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter Does It.

HARRY WHARTON shouted through the keyhole. Bob Cherry and Linley kicked on the door. Tom Brown, the New Zealander, hammered with a cricket-stump. But the musician took not the slightest heed.

He was floating away, as it were, upon the full flood of horrid discord.

The juniors raged in the passage.

They were furious; but they were helpless. They could not break in the strong oaken door. True, a Remove door had been battered in once by a form, but it had brought the prefects upon the spot, and there had been trouble.

"What the dickens——" said Harry Wharton.

"The rotter!"

"The beast!"

"The Philistine!"

"The Hottentot!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"But I've got a dodge for making him open the door," exclaimed the Owl of the Remove, blinking indignantly at the juniors through his big spectacles.

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Good!" exclaimed Nugent. "Let Bunter roll against it, and it's bound to go."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Well, what's the dodge, Bunter?" exclaimed Bulstrode. "Out with it, or dry up!"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode——"

"What is it, you young ass?"

"You know what a ripping ventriloquist I am——"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Look here, you know jolly well I'm a splendid ventriloquist," said the fat junior wrathfully. "You know how jolly well I can imitate voices. Look here, I'll imitate Mr. Quelch's voice, and make him open the door."

"Good egg!" said Nugent. "I remember your working that wheeze on somebody before."

"That was before Bull came; he won't be up to it."

"Let him try, Harry!"

"Oh, all right!" said Wharton. "Go ahead, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter hesitated. Now that he had gained a hearing, he was in no hurry to begin. He had his terms to make first.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Go ahead, Bunter!"

"Buck up!"

"Yes, but——"

"Begin, you fat duffer!"

"That's all very well, Bulstrode, but I'm feeling faint from want of food," said Bunter. "You know how delicate I am, and that I have to be kept up by taking constant nourishment. Now——"

"Br-r-r!"

"Oh, really, Nugent! I'm short of cash at present, but I'm expecting a postal-order this evening. If you chaps like to lend me half-a-crown till it comes——"

"You shall have a bob if you get that door open," said Harry Wharton, "and I'll kick you along the passage if you don't!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Begin!" roared Wharton.

"Oh, all right!" grunted Bunter. "Did you say a bob or eightpence, Wharton?"



Billy Bunter went to John Bull's bed with the water-bottle in his hands. The bottle was an old one, and it leaked at the screw stopper. But Bunter didn't notice that—his thoughts were elsewhere.

"I said a bob; and you'll get a licking instead of the bob if you don't buck up!"

"Oh, really—"

"Begin, you chump!"

Bunter drew closer to the door, and the juniors ceased kicking and shouting, to give an appearance of being awed by the arrival of a master.

Bunter rapped sharply on the door.

"Open this door, Bull!" he called out, in so exact an imitation of the stern tones of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, that the juniors started.

But from within the study came only the grinding howl of the concertina.

"Try again!" whispered Wharton.

"All right."

Billy Bunter raised his voice.

"Bull, open this door immediately!"

John Bull heard the words then. Not for a moment did he suspect that it was the ventriloquist of Greyfriars imitating the tones of the Form-master.

The din of the concertina died away, and a blessed, peaceful silence fell upon the Remove passage.

There was a sound of a footstep inside the door.

"My hat, it's working!" muttered Harry Wharton.

"The workfulness of the esteemed wheeze is terrific."

"Bull," rapped out Bunter, still in Mr. Quelch's tones, "do you hear me?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then open the door immediately!"

"Ye-es, sir."

There was a click in the lock, and the door was flung open.

John Bull, concertina in hand, appeared upon the threshold. He stared at the juniors, in search of Mr. Quelch.

Mr. Quelch was not there; but before the junior could discover that he had been tricked, the Removites rushed tumultuously into the study.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Telegram for John Bull.

JOHN BULL backed away, dropped the concertina upon the table, and put up his fists. John Bull was a sturdy, ruddy junior, of compact build, and strong almost as a horse, but he had no chance against the wave of humanity that engulfed him.

He rolled over on the floor of the study, and half a dozen of the juniors rolled over him.

"Got him!" roared Skinner.

"Hurray!"

"Collar him!"

"Bump him!"

"Squash him!"

"Oh!" roared John Bull. "Yow! Yarrah! Stop it! What do you mean, you howling duffers? Yarrah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pile on him!"

"The pilefulness is terrific."

The Removites did pile on the offending heys of the concertina.

Five or six were sitting on John Bull as he lay wriggling on the carpet.

The fallen junior was gasping for breath. He forgot his

own troubles, however, to give a shout of alarm as Bob Cherry seized the concertina from the table.

"Hold on, Cherry! Don't you knock that about!"

Bob Cherry grinned.

"I'm jolly well going to smash it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rip it open!"

"Here's a knife."

John Bull struggled desperately.

"Let it alone!" he yelled.

"Well," said Bob Cherry, putting the edge of a pocket-knife blade close to the concertina, "suppose we make terms."

"Let that concertina alone!"

"I will, on condition that you let it alone."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess that's fair," said Fisher T. Fish. "You can't expect us to stand it, Bull."

"Rats!"

"Now, then," said Bob, "we'll come to an agreement. If we leave the beastly thing in existence, you'll promise, honour bright, not to play it unless you're asked."

"Ha, ha! That's not likely to happen."

"The not-likelyfulness is terrific."

John Bull looked rebellious.

But the edge of the knife was very near the concertina. Bulstrode had picked up the poker to add his little aid in the work of destruction.

"Now, then, what do you say?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"I—I—"

"Yes or no?"

"Look here—"

"Will you promise?"

"I have to keep up my practice," howled John Bull.

"And we have to keep your practice down," grinned Bob Cherry, "and it looks to me as if we shall score if we make an end of the horrible instrument of torture."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The scorefulness will be terrific."

"Now, then, Bull, your last chance."

John Bull gave a gasp.

It was a hard promise that was exacted from him, but there was evidently no other way to save the existence of his beloved concertina.

"Oh, all right!" he grunted.

"You promise?"

"Ye-e-es."

"Never to play the concertina here again unless you're asked?"

"Yes," growled John Bull.

"Honest injun?"

"Yes, honest injun."

Bob Cherry burst into a laugh, and laid the concertina down upon the table.

"I think that's all right," he remarked.

"I guess so," said Fisher T. Fish.

"I am sure that John Bull will keep his word with the utmost exactitude, my dear fellows," said Alonzo Todd. "It will be a great satisfaction to him to reflect that he has conferred an obligation upon the whole Form. My Uncle Benjamin always told me—"

"Did your Uncle Benjamin ever tell you to shut up, Todd?" asked Bulstrode.

"Oh, dear! Certainly not!"

"Then he neglected his avuncular duties."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Bulstrode—"

"Lemme gerrup!" growled John Bull.

The dusty and dishevelled junior was allowed to rise to his feet. He picked up the concertina at once, and put it away in a locker, and locked it up.

"You asses—," he began.

"My dear Bull—"

"Oh, ring off! You chumps don't understand music."

"We haven't heard any here," Nugent remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You're wanted, Bull!"

The voice of Trotter, the page, was heard in the passage.

"Master Bull, please! Is Master Bull here?"

"Quelchy has heard the row," grinned Bob Cherry.

"You'll get hauled over the coals, now, Bull."

"Rats!"

Trotter came into the study. He grinned all over his fat face at the sight of the red and dusty juniors.

He had a buff-coloured envelope in his hands. John Bull was standing with his hands in his pockets, but he extracted one hand to take the telegram as Trotter extended it to him.

"Telegram for Master Bull!" said Trotter.

"Thank you, Trotter!"

"Boy's waiting."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Nothing wrong at home, I hope?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

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Bull shook his head.

"No, I think not. It's from Have—Mr. Have, my Aunt Tabitha's lawyer, I believe. He was going to wire me when—"

John Bull did not finish the sentence.

He tore open the buff envelope, and unfolded the flimsy strip within, and read the message in the thick black lettering.

Then he gave a long, low whistle.

The juniors all looked at him. Telegrams were not commonly received by juniors at Greyfriars, and they were interested. Fellows who had telegrams became the cynosure of all eyes for the time being.

"My only hat!" ejaculated John Bull.

"News?" asked several voices.

"Great Scott, yes!"

"Any answer, sir?" said Trotter.

"Answer! Oh, no!"

"Very well, sir."

Trotter turned to the door. John Bull called to him.

"Hold on, Trotter!"

"Yes, Master Bull."

"Give this to the telegraph chap," said Bull, extending a half-crown to Trotter, "and here's one for yourself."

Trotter gasped. It was the first time a junior had ever presented him with a half-crown. The juniors stared at John Bull in amazement, as Trotter left the study with the two half-crowns in his grasp.

They knew that John Bull had a rich father, and was pretty well supplied with money, and that he had liberal tips from his aunt; but they had always known him for a sober, level-headed sort of fellow, who would never waste money recklessly, however much he had of it.

His sudden extravagance struck them all with surprise.

"What on earth are you up to, Bull?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, in amazement. "Have you come into a fortune as big as Vernon-Smith's?"

"I say, you fellows, I know what it is. His aunt's been telegraphing him money," said Billy Bunter. "You can telegraph money, you know. A titled friend of mine was going to telegraph me some, but he—he forgot. I say, Bull, old man, if you could lend me a half-sovereign off a postal-order I'm expecting this evening—"

John Bull groped in his pocket, produced a half-sovereign, and handed it to Billy Bunter.

The Removites could only stare.

Bunter could scarcely believe his eyes for a moment.

He blinked at the gleaming golden coin through his big spectacles, his mouth open, gasping like a fish out of water.

Then he suddenly bolted from the study.

A sudden fear had smitten him that John Bull might be joking, or might change his mind, and Bunter did not mean to part with that half-sovereign. He made a record run to the school tuckshop.

"My hat!" ejaculated Wharton. "What do you mean by that, Bull? You know jolly well that Bunter isn't going to have a postal-order. He won't pay you a penny!"

"I don't care."

"You don't care?"

"Not a bit."

"Why not? Isn't half-a-sovereign anything to you?"

"Nothing."

"What!"

"What! Why?"

"Because I shall be rolling in gold to-morrow."

"My hat!"

— — —

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Five Hundred Pounds.

"BUT, my dear madam—"

"Stuff!"

"My dear Miss Bull—"

"Come, come!"

"Yes, but—"

"Please attend to business, Mr. Have."

Mr. Have, of the well-known firm of Have and Hookit, gave a despairing shrug of the shoulders.

He knew of old that Miss Tabitha Bull was not a person to be reasoned with.

Johnny himself, her dutiful nephew, though a determined youngster, never tried to argue with his Aunt Tabitha.

When Aunt Tabitha made up her mind to do a thing, that thing was done; and when she made up her mind that anybody else should do a thing, it was but seldom that the thing wasn't done.

For sheer force of character, Miss Tabitha Bull took, so to speak, the whole cake.

Mr. Have objected to the course the old lady had mapped

out, because it was his duty as the family lawyer, and senior partner in Have & Hookit, to so object.

But he knew beforehand that Miss Tabitha Bull would take not the slightest notice of any of his objections.

He might as well have saved his breath. But Miss Tabitha was a client very profitable to the firm of Have & Hookit, and legally entitled to a certain expenditure of breath on the part of the senior partner. Therefore, he expended it in objections, knowing all the time that Miss Tabitha would reply, "Stuff!"

Miss Tabitha was very determined, very eccentric, and very rich, and she had always been accustomed to having her own way.

Affectionate relations—not at all curious, of course, as to what might or might not be written down in Miss Tabitha's will—paid her the most devoted attention. Nephews and nieces were fondly interested in her health. Brothers and sisters would come and stay with her, and bring their families. Five nieces had been named after her, and as it was impossible to name nephews Tabitha, several of the nephews were nicknamed Tabby by their affectionate parents.

There was only one nephew who did not bow down and worship at the shrine of Miss Tabitha's moneybags.

That one was Johnny.

John Bull, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, treated his Aunt Tabitha with the same blunt respect he showed to all his elders—just so much, and no more. As a matter of fact, if he made a distinction, he was a little more blunt to Miss Bull than he was to any other lady.

It was very clearly understood that Johnny did not care twopenno whether he was put down in Miss Bull's will or not.

It was probably for that very reason that he was destined to inherit the bulk of the old lady's fortune.

Mr. Have had drawn up Miss Bull's will long ago. He knew how much her favourite nephew was to benefit under it.

But Miss Bull's latest idea startled even Mr. Have. He raised objections, as bound to by his professional duty, and then prepared to carry out Miss Tabitha's wishes.

Indeed, Aunt Tabitha was not a person to be lightly argued with.

Even John Bull, as we have said, never attempted it; but he would go on his own way, if he thought it right, without argument.

The old lady had a kind, if eccentric, heart, but she had a grim face, flanked by early Victorian curls.

Some of her dutiful nephews and nieces—strictly among themselves—had compared her to a Gorgon. Indeed, some of them, who had been lashed by her sharp tongue, would have wished—if they could have been sure that they were "down" in the will—for a Perseus to come along.

Mr. Have made a gesture, and took out a fountain-pen.

"Before I proceed, Miss Bull," he remarked, "my professional duty compels me to remark that this is a most unheard-of proceeding."

"You have said so before, Mr. Have," said the old lady, in her shrill voice.

"And I say so again," said Mr. Have. Mr. Have had a high idea of professional duty. His professional duty, as a rule, consisted in piling up fees for his clients to pay. He never neglected his professional duty in that respect, at all events.

"Then please do not say so a third time," said Miss Bull.

"My dear madam—"

"Stuff!"

"To hand the sum of five hundred pounds to a mere boy—"

"I—"

"A junior at a public school—"

"I have decided."

"A mere child—"

"I have reflected upon it."

"My dear madam!"

"Stuff!"

"My dear Miss Bull—"

"Please don't pursue the subject, Mr. Have," said Miss Bull, raising her thin hand. "I have decided what to do."

"Very well," said Mr. Have, with a sigh. "Of course, you will have your way, Miss Bull."

The old lady smiled.

"I generally do," she remarked.

"Yes, I am afraid you do."

"But I am willing to explain," said Miss Bull, conciliated by the lawyer's submission. "I have an object in what I do. No doubt you consider me eccentric—"

The lawyer raised his hands in repudiation of the very idea, but Miss Bull went on with the frankness for which she was famous.

"Yes, you know you do. But I have thought this out. I believe that my nephew John is a brave, steady, and firm lad."

"I'm quite sure—"

"I don't see how you can be quite sure about it, Mr. Have."

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NEXT WEEK: "SPOOFING ALONZO."

EVERY
TUESDAY.

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

Have, when you hardly know the boy," said Miss Bull unceremoniously. "You know that he will inherit the bulk of my estate."

"Certainly," said the lawyer meekly.

"But if he should prove to be unworthy, I should disinherit him in a moment," said the old lady, with a spark in her eyes.

"Quite just—"

"Do you really think so?"

"Ahem—my dear madam!" murmured Mr. Have, inwardly wondering whether he would not leave Miss Bull to his partner in the future.

"Just or unjust, I shall keep to that intention," said Miss Bull. "I have always been accustomed to having my own way."

"Yes, indeed!"

"If Johnny should turn out weak, wicked, and worthless, or any of the three, I should cut him off without a penny."

"H'm!" said Mr. Have, considering that the least committal of any reply he could possibly make.

"I am resolved upon that, Mr. Have."

"Quite so, madam."

"And, therefore, I wish to put Johnny to the test."

"Indeed! Yes."

"Five hundred pounds, in small notes and in gold, will be placed in his hands, with an explanation that he can do exactly as he likes with it—spend it, waste it, give it away, burn it if he pleases."

"Ah!"

"If he should plunge into any excesses unworthy of the estimate I have formed of his character; if he should fall the victim of bad associates; if he should drink or gamble, I shall know that he is not the boy I have taken him to be."

"A hard test, madam."

"I intend it to be hard."

"But the natural result of placing so huge a sum of money in the boy's hands will be to make him reckless, extravagant—"

"I suppose so. That does not matter. Let him be as reckless as he likes—as extravagant as he chooses. So long as no mean trait in his character is brought to light, I shall know that he is worthy."

"Ahem!"

"You think the money will have a bad effect upon him, Mr. Have."

"I fear it."

"And you are thinking of giving him a hint of my real objects in handing him this large sum of money."

"Ahem!"

"I forbid you to say a word. You may tell him that the money is coming, and that is all—not a hint of my intentions."

The lawyer bowed.

"Your will in the matter is law, of course, my dear Miss Bull."

"Quite so. Now you will write directions to my banker."

"Ahem!"

"And then you will write to Johnny."

"With pleasure."

"But not a word of my intentions,"

"Not a word," agreed Mr. Have.

"He must not know that I am putting him to the test."

"Certainly not."

And Mr. Have, with a wrinkle in his brow, drew up the instructions to Miss Bull's banker to place the sum of five hundred pounds, in gold and notes, in the hands of John Bull, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Great News!

"GREAT Scott!"

"Blessed if I believe it!"

"Oh, it's true!"

"Phew!"

"Show us the telegram, Bull!"

"Where's that wire?"

"My hat!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"My word!"

There was a crowd of juniors round John Bull in the junior common-room at Greyfriars.

The hero of the occasion seemed undisturbed.

John Bull junior was so strong, and steady, and calm that it required a great deal to upset his equanimity.

And his equanimity was not upset by the news which had so greatly excited his friends in the Lower Fourth Form.

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

The juniors stared at the telegram; every fellow in the Form insisted upon having a look at it.

The news was true enough.

At all events, the telegram was genuine; there could be no doubt about that.

"You see, I've had a letter from Mr. Have already, explaining all about it," Bull said. "This telegram is only to tell me when the cash will arrive."

"How much?"

"Five hundred pounds."

"My hat!"

"Impossible!"

"It's true."

"Five hundred quids?"

"Exactly."

"All your own?" demanded Skinner.

"All my own."

"To do what you like with?"

"Exactly what I like."

"Well, I guess that takes the whole biscuit factory!" said Fisher T. Fish. "My popper wouldn't hand me out five hundred dollars. Not much!"

"Aunt Tabitha's a brick!" said John Bull. "It's ripping! I shall have a good time."

"Phew! Rather!"

"I say, Bull, old man—"

"Hallo, Bunter?"

"You won't forget our old friendship at a time like this, I know," said Billy Bunter, blinking affectionately at John Bull. "Look here, if you like I'll mind the money for you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

The juniors roared at the idea of Billy Bunter minding money for anybody.

John Bull chuckled.

"I rather think it will be safer with me, Bunter," he remarked.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"What a splendid amount of good you will be able to do with it," said Alonzo Todd beamingly. "I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would give some excellent advice if he were here."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Bull, I should recommend—"

"Oh, we'll help Bull spend the money," said Skinner. "My suggestion is a big feed for all the Form."

"Hear, hear!"

"Hurrah!"

"Play up, John Bull!"

Johnny laughed.

"I'm quite agreeable," he said. "I'm sure you won't find me mean, anyway. Five hundred pounds is a lot of money."

"Bravo!"

"I say, Bull, I'll help you order the things," said Billy Bunter. "I suppose you'll have the feed to-night, won't you?"

"The money won't be here till to-morrow morning."

"Yes, but Mrs. Mumble will give you any amount of tick when you tell her about the five hundred pounds coming in to-morrow."

John Bull shook his head.

"We'll wait till the cash comes," he said.

"But you say it's certain to come."

"Yes, it's certain enough."

"Then why wait?" urged Billy Bunter.

"I'm not going to run credit. I never have, and never will," said John Bull. "What I can't pay for in cash I don't want."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

Bunter looked disappointed.

"That isn't business, you know," he remarked. "The whole modern system of—of credit is built up on—on credit, and—"

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Wait till to-morrow, Bunter," said Frank Nugent. "Don't have anything to eat till the quids come, and you'll have a first-class appetite for the feed."

"I don't want to talk to you chaps," said Bunter, with dignity. "John Bull is my best chum—"

"Am I?" said Bull. "This is the first I've heard of it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, John—"

"Br-r-r! Don't call me John."

"I—I meant Johnny—"

"Or Johnny either."

"I—I say, will you come and have a feed with me?" said Bunter. "If you're going to treat us to-morrow, I think we ought to feed you now. Do come and have some of the mince-pies at Mrs. Mumble's."

John Bull hesitated.

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"I'm sure that, under the circumstances, Wharton will lend me a few bobs off the postal-order I'm expecting this evening," Bunter remarked.

"You—you fat fraud!" said John Bull.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Indeed, I would be very pleased to lend you some money to treat Bull," said Alonzo Todd. "How much would you require?"

"Oh, about ten bob—"

"Ah! I'm afraid—"

"Five bob would do—"

"I'm—"

"Make it half-a-crown, Toddy."

"I'm so sorry! I have only sixpence, and—"

"You—you ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Bunter—"

"Chump!"

"I'm so sorry—"

"Fat-head!"

And Bunter rolled away, leaving Alonzo Todd looking very distressed. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent marched John Bull off to the tuckshop, however, and stood him the mince-pies. It was only fair, as he was to come down so handsome on the morrow.

"Dear me!" said Alonzo. "I'm so sorry that Bunter should take my endeavour to oblige him in this spirit. My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked at him, not to say disgusted."

"Oh, never mind Bunter!" said Skinner, patting Alonzo on the shoulder, with a wink at Bulstrode. "The whole Form knows what you're worth, Todd."

"That is indeed very gratifying, Skinner. My Uncle Benjamin would be delighted to hear a remark like that."

"Oh, we're all agreed about you, Todd. You're splendid! Look here, if you can keep a secret, Todd—"

"My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me never to have secrets, Skinner. I'm so sorry, but I fear that I could not undertake to preserve secrecy."

"Well, I won't tell you, then," said Skinner gravely. "But you may expect some token of the respect of the Form—a testimonial of the regard we all feel for you. That's all I'll say at present."

"My dear Skinner—"

"Mum's the word!" said Skinner mysteriously.

"My dear, dear fellow, I am delighted! The statement you have made is gratifying to me in the extreme."

"Good!" said Skinner. And he walked away with Bulstrode.

The latter looked at him in perplexity.

"What rot were you telling Todd?" he asked.

"I'll explain," said Skinner.

He explained in a low voice, and Bulstrode gave a sudden yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dry up!" said Skinner, with a grin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Meanwhile, Alonzo Todd wore a most happy and gratified expression upon his face. He was greatly pleased to hear that his Form-fellows held him in such high esteem, and the thought of a jape never occurred to his innocent mind.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Not According to Programme.

"ANOTHER mince-pie, Bull?"

"Another cake?"

"One more ginger-pop?"

John Bull laughed.

"No, thanks!" he said. "'Nuff's as good as a feast. Thanks, I've had enough—and a little more."

"Well, we don't often get a chance of feeding a bloated millionaire, you know," said Harry Wharton laughingly.

"We always loved Johnny from his early youth," said Nugent solemnly; "or, at all events, we should have, if we had known him."

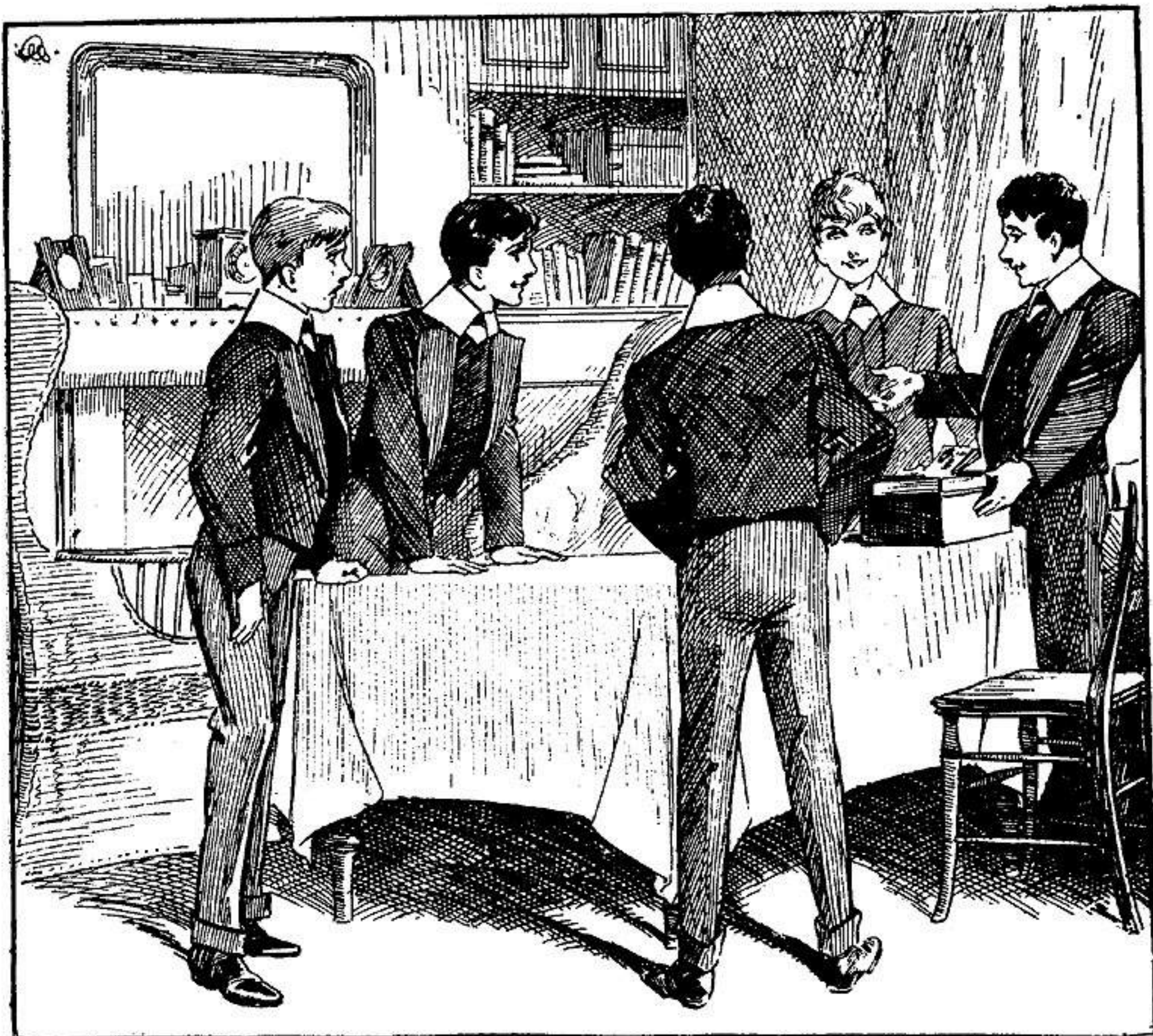
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's something so nice about Johnny," said Tom Brown. "I suppose it must be the five hundred quid."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Johnny laughed merrily. He was quite willing to take any amount of badinage. He knew that the Famous Four would never have dreamed of "making up" to him on account of his sudden wealth. But there were many fellows at Greyfriars who were willing to ladle out any amount of flattery in order to share in the loot.

But it is safe to say that John Bull was quite keen enough to see through any fellow who came looking for loans, and loans alone.



The juniors stared at the money received by John Bull in astonishment. "My—my only hat!" muttered Harry Wharton. "Five hundred pounds! Five hundred solid pounds!"

The juniors left the tuckshop, and moved across the shadowy Close towards the School House.

There was snow in the Close, and light flakes were falling. But the snow was very nearly over, and snowballing would soon be a thing of the past.

A little, fat figure came through the gloom, crossing in the direction of the Cloisters.

"Ah!" said a voice. "Is zat ze garcon, Bull, n'est ce pas?"

"Yes, Mossoo," said John Bull.

Little Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, stopped. He peered at John Bull in the gloom of the Close as the boys raised their caps.

"Ciel!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "I hear ze strango news of you, mon garcon. You are to roll in ze gold, so zat zey tell me."

John Bull grinned.

"I've got some money coming to-morrow, sir," he replied.

"Zat is so? I counsel you to be ferry careful viz it," said the little Frenchman. "You will take care of zat money, Bull, and not fling it about and play vat you call ze giddy oxen."

And Mossoo walked on.

"Good advice, Bull, old man," said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, I shall be all right," said John Bull carelessly. He glanced after the little Frenchman. "What's Mossoo going to the Cloisters for?"

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NEXT
WEEK:

"SPOOFING ALONZO."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Oh, you're new here, of course. Mossoo is a poet."

"A what?"

"A poet!" grinned Wharton. "He writes yards and yards of stuff, and he walks out in the Close of an evening making it up. Sometimes the chaps who were out for a sprint in the Close at night used to see him, and hear him muttering, and there was a rumour that he was off his rocker, but it came out that he was a poet."

"Much the same thing," remarked Nugent.

"Ha, ha! Perhaps! Well, he's always at it, and his favourite walk is under the study windows. There's a row of trees there, and it's a very quiet walk at night time. We've often seen him from the study window, trotting up and down and muttering things. He's harmless, quite harmless, though. I suppose he's going into the Cloisters now because it's snowing."

The juniors went on to the house.

Bulstrode and Skinner passed them in the Close. Both the Remove fellows were chuckling, and Harry Wharton paused as they passed.

"There's some jape on," he remarked.

"I say, Bulstrode!" called out Wharton.

The Remove bully stopped.

"Hallo!" he said.

"What are you up to?"

Bulstrode gave a low laugh.

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

"It's Mossos! We're going to snowball him, and he won't see in the dark who it is. He'll most likely think it's Rosenblum's boys. Anyway, he won't see us."

Wharton's brows contracted.

"Hang it all, he's such an excitable little beggar, you might startle him into a fit," he exclaimed.

"Oh, rot!"

"Look here, you know——"

"I know he's given me fifty lines of rotten Moliere," said Bulstrode angrily, "and I know I'm going to get level with him."

"But——"

"Oh, mind your own business, Wharton! You're always interfering with somebody."

Harry Wharton coloured.

That was an accusation that was sometimes made against him—that of interfering. He was captain of the Remove, and bound to interfere in some matters. But he had a natural dislike of appearing to set himself up on a pedestal to judge his Form-fellows.

At the same time, it seemed to him a cruel joke to snowball the little Frenchman in the darkness of the Cloisters. Little Monsieur Charpentier might or might not be a poet, but he certainly was a bundle of nerves, and the shock might quite possibly have a serious effect upon him.

"Look here, Bulstrode, drop it!" exclaimed Wharton.

"I won't!"

"I tell you——"

"Are you going to sneak?" demanded Bulstrode, with an angry sneer.

"No, but——"

"Well, mind your own business. Come on, Skinner!"

"Yes, buck up!" said Skinner.

The two Removes hurried on. Harry Wharton stood irresolute. He did not like the idea of Monsieur Charpentier being victimised in that way, yet to interfere would be doing what he knew the whole Form would condemn. As to "sneaking," giving Bulstrode away to the master, that was, of course, impossible.

"Well, it's not our business, anyway," said Nugent.

"No, I suppose not, but——"

"And it's too late now."

Wharton was silent. He listened for sounds from the Cloisters. There was a moon, but it was hidden behind banks of thick clouds, and the Close was very dark. Under the shadow of the Cloisters it was almost pitchy. Bulstrode and Skinner could hardly see one another as they entered the Cloisters. They had gathered up handfuls of snow, all ready for pelting of the French-master.

Bulstrode stopped to listen.

"Blessed if I can hear him!" he said.

"I can't, either. We'll soon spot him, though," said Skinner confidently. "The old duffer will be jabbering French to himself; you know his style."

"Yes, but where is he?"

"Come further on; we shall hear him in a minute. He can't see us in the dark, and we shall be able to give him two or three fairly in the chivvy."

Bulstrode ohuckled.

"Good! I'll teach the old alien bounder to give me his rotten Moliere to copy out."

"This way—— My hat!"

Skinner broke off suddenly as a form loomed up in the gloom.

"Ciel!" ejaculated a voice. "Ah, I see, you vicked poys! You plot viz yourself to snowball your master!"

"Oh!"

"Ah!"

The two young rascals stood transfixed.

They had not dreamed that the French-master was so close at hand, and they shivered as they realised that he must have heard every word they uttered.

Monsieur Charpentier was usually a kind and good-tempered little man. But what the two juniors had said was quite enough to ruffle the temper of the best-tempered of people.

The little French-master whisked his walking-cane in the air.

"Ah! I zink zat you are two vicked poys," he said.

"If you please, sir——"

"We—we didn't mean——"

"Do not tell ze falsehoods also viz you," said Monsieur Charpentier contemptuously. "Zat is vorse zan ever."

"If you please, Mossos——"

"If you please, Bulstrode, you vill hold out your hand, and I canes you viz ze stick," said Monsieur Charpentier.

"Oh, sir——"

"Hold out ze hand at vunce, Bulstrode!"

The Remove bully gritted his teeth as he obeyed. There was no help for it. Monsieur Charpentier gave him a cut that made his hand tingle.

"Ow!" grunted Bulstrode.

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"Now you, Skinnair!"

"If you please, Mossos, I apologise, and——"

"You vill hold out your hand also, viz you?"

"But, sir——"

"At vunce, Skinnair!"

Skinner unwillingly held out his hand. He received a cut across the palm that made him jump.

It was evidently not too dark for Monsieur Charpentier to take good aim.

"Zat is enoff for you, Skinnair. But I zink zat you are ze leader, Bulstrode, and I giffs you vun more viz you."

"Not at all, sir. I——"

"Hold out ze hand!"

Bulstrode sullenly extended his hand. The cane came down with a loud swish, and the burly Remove drew back his hand suddenly.

Thwack!

The cane rang against Monsieur Charpentier's leg.

"Ciel!" yelled the little French-master. "Ciel! Yah! Ow! Vicked poys!"

He caught Bulstrode by the collar, and began to lash him across the back with the cane.

"Oh!" roared Bulstrode. "Ow! Yow!"

"Take zat, and zat!"

"Yow! Ow!"

Bulstrode tore himself away, and ran. The little Frenchman dashed after him, still lashing with the cane.

It was fortunate for Bulstrode that he was a good runner. But he received half a dozen cuts ere he escaped from the little Frenchman. Mossos halted at last, breathless, and Bulstrode dashed on to the House. In his wild flight he ran into the group of juniors outside.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's the matter?"

"Ow! Let me pass! That French beast is after me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let me——"

"It's all right, Bulstrode," said Harry Wharton laughing; "he's not coming."

The Remove bully cast a hurried glance behind him. The little Frenchman had given up the pursuit. Bulstrode gasped for breath.

"Groo!" he muttered. "The beast did lay it on. I'll pay him out for it."

"Ha, ha! Well, I warned you to leave him alone."

"Oh, shut up!"

Bulstrode stamped on into the House. He left the chums of the Remove grinning. They did not feel much sympathy for Bulstrode. He had intended to play an ill-natured trick, but it had turned out against himself, and he had probably received no more than he deserved.

Skinner joined him there, holding one hand in the other, and grunting very expressively.

"Well, I must say that ended pretty rottenly for us," Skinner remarked ruefully.

Bulstrode set his teeth hard.

"I'll make that French monkey wriggle for it, though," he said.

And as it happened—though it did not always happen—Bulstrode kept his word.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Testimonial.

"S ORRY to disturb you, Todd, really!"

Alonzo looked up from the book he was reading. Bulstrode, Skinner, Snoop, and several other juniors were walking in through his study door, cap in hand. Alonzo had been so deep in his book that he had not heard their knock, and he stared in amazement at their unusual deferential manner.

"I don't mind, Bulstrode," he said, "if I can be of any use. My Uncle Benjamin——"

"Yes, just so," said Bulstrode; "I know. We'll take the usual for granted, Todd. But we're jolly glad you're in, aren't we, chaps?"

"Rather!"

"My Uncle Benjamin told me never to interrupt people, Bulstrode," said Alonzo, in a more mild tone than usual. "But I'll forgive you, because he also said there was no force like the force of a good example."

Bulstrode bowed.

"And it's just because we have taken Uncle Benjamin's views to heart, Todd, that we are here to see you," said Skinner.

"Rather!" echoed Snoop. "Todd and his Uncle Benjamin are rapidly becoming a proverb at Greyfriars."

"Dry up, Snoop, or you'll give Todd the hump to begin with," said Bulstrode grandly. "I'm doing this——"

"For us, of course, Bulstrode," said Skinner and Snoop

together. "You're spokesman, old chap, but we're all in it, you know."

"Rather!" cried the juniors in the doorway.

Alonzo beamed on his uninvited guests.

"This is very gratifying, Bulstrode. May I ask what is the matter with Skinner's wrist? He appears to have it twisted permanently behind him?"

"Certainly, Todd," answered Bulstrode. "That brings me to the point. As we have said, the influence of Uncle Benjamin and your worthy self on the social life of Greyfriars cannot be overestimated, Todd."

"My dear Bulstrode, how kind——"

"Don't thank me!" said Bulstrode, putting up his hand. "It is our place to thank you for the many improvements you have made since you came to Greyfriars. So I have nothing more to do but call upon Skinner to present you with a small token of our esteem. Now, kids, three cheers for Todd!"

And after the cheers had subsided, Alonzo stared in greater wonder than ever at Skinner, who was approaching him with great deference, holding forward a large jam-tart.

"It's a specially flavoured one, Todd," said Bulstrode grandiosely.

"What-ho!" whispered Snoop to those behind. "Skinner and I did it ourselves with ammoniated tincture of quinine."

"Shut up, Snoop, you jay!" Bulstrode muttered. Then he blandly resumed his former tone. "There is only one condition we should like to impose, Todd," he said hesitatingly.

"Pray ask it, Bulstrode. How could I refuse any condition in the face of such kindness?"

"Uncle Benjamin wouldn't like you to, would he, Todd?" said Skinner.

"Certainly not, Skinner!" returned Alonzo. "Pray tell me your condition, if you please, Bulstrode. My Uncle Benjamin——"

"Oh, no, we didn't mean him to have any!" said Bulstrode. "We merely want you to promise to eat it all yourself."

"But surely that would be greedy, Bulstrode. Won't you let me offer you some of it, now?"

The deputation perceptibly changed countenance. But Bulstrode saved the situation.

"Well, to oblige you, we wouldn't mind your inviting a friend in, Alonzo. One friend, mind. We couldn't stand you sharing it out with the mob——"

"And our part in it, is merely to make the presentation, Todd," said Skinner. "And you'll oblige us in the matter of the condition, won't you?"

Alonzo opened his mouth to speak. But his attempt at returning thanks was a lamentable failure. He was literally too full for words.

"We understand, Todd," said Bulstrode, with great sympathy. "Don't bother. Now, chaps—three more for Todd!"

"Hooray!" grinned the juniors. "Three cheers for Todd and Uncle Benjamin! Hooray!"

And the deputation began to file out of the study. Alonzo Todd at last found his voice.

"But you will surely allow me to give you fellows a bit?" he said plaintively.

Everyone except Bulstrode and Skinner was in the passage in two seconds.

"No, thank you, Todd!" said Bulstrode. "It's all your own, and it would spoil our gift if we waded into it as soon as we had presented it to you. But you will honour our condition, won't you? Only one friend. No more."

"You may rely on me, gentlemen," answered Alonzo. "I have Bunter in my mind. He never gets enough to eat, poor fellow——"

Bulstrode and Skinner dare not wait for any more. They were nearly bursting with suppressed laughter. They bolted down the passage after the others, and Alonzo was left to himself.

"Tell Bunter I shall be pleased to see him, if you should meet him, Bulstrode!" called out the Duffer of Greyfriars after them.

"What-ho!" murmured the fleeing pair.

And Alonzo took up the tart to smell at it.

"It's lovely," he said. "I wish Bunter would come at once."

But Billy Bunter did not happen to be in Bulstrode, Skinner & Co.'s way just then, and Alonzo, with whetted appetite, soon got tired of waiting. He resolved to go for Billy Bunter himself.

Hardly had he got to the end of the passage when a fat form came panting up the steps.

"Ah, Bunter, my dear fellow, I am looking for you!"

"Really now, Todd! How fortunate! I'm looking for you!" gasped the Owl of the Remove. "Am I in time?"

"Oh, yes! Come on, my dear Bunter! I thought of you at once when the fellows said I might invite a friend to share the tart with me——"

"Really, Todd!" said Billy Bunter, gaining the top stair. "And I'm awfully peckish, too. Where is it?"

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NEXT WEEK: "SPOOFING ALONZO."

EVERY
TUESDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

"This way, Bunter. I don't care how soon we begin either——"

"Don't talk, Todd, at such a time as this!" interrupted Bunter.

And brushing past Alonzo, he led the way to the "hall of feast."

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, as he caught sight of the tart on the table. "I could just do that in myself nicely! I suppose there's nothing the matter with it, Todd?"

Alonzo stared at Billy Bunter. Used as he was to him, Bunter's bad manners were almost too much for Alonzo.

"My Uncle Benjamin told me never to look a gift horse in the mouth, Bunter——"

"Look here, no rot just now, Todd!" interrupted the Owl of the Remove again. "Is this a feed, or what? How much are you going to give a fellow?"

"You don't seem very grateful, Bunter," said Alonzo reproachfully. "But I'll get you a knife, and you can help yourself. My Uncle Benjamin told me always to return good for evil——"

"Oh, really, Todd——"

"Why did you ask was the tart all right, Bunter?" asked Alonzo mildly.

"Well—really—— Well—I once—had a Christmas-pudding that turned out a bit 'nuttty,'" said Billy Bunter, with an apologetic jerk.

"Oh! Then that explains your conduct, Bunter. Here's the knife."

"How much shall I take—a half?"

"Certainly, if you like, Bunter. My Uncle Benjamin would think it all right, I'm sure, as long as you left me enough——"

Alonzo dried up precipitately as he noted the lump Billy Bunter was cutting for himself. The simple youth had intended to finish his sentence with "enough to keep his promise to the fellows," but Billy Bunter's idea of "half" was a thing to be wondered at. Then before Alonzo could recover, the Owl of the Remove began to fill up with tart. It couldn't be called a bite. Hurree Singh would have called it terrific.

But the way of the wrongdoer is hard. Billy Bunter's gluttony brought its own punishment.

"Groo! Oosh! Groo! Sntchtchtch! Ow!" he spluttered.

"My dear Bunter!" exclaimed Alonzo, in great surprise. "What ever is the matter with you——"

"Ow! I'm poisoned! Murder! Groo! Oooch! Groo-roooooo!"

Alonzo drew back.

"Are you ill, Bunter, my dear fellow? If so, let me help——"

He didn't get any further. Bellowing like a bull, Billy Bunter made one wild rush at the Duffer of Greyfriars, and knocked him sprawling with a terrific punch on the nose.

"I'll give you working your rotten japes on me!" he roared, kicking his half of the tart at the unfortunate Alonzo, who was rubbing his nose behind a desk in the corner.

"But, my dear Bunter——"

"Come out!" roared Bunter. "I'll smash you!" Then Bunter dashed away down the passage like one who had suddenly lost his reason.

Alonzo Todd waited behind the desk for a few minutes. But Billy Bunter did not return as he had expected. Then he sat down at the table again and stared at the tart.

"What ever could have made Bunter behave like that?" he mused. What should he do? His Uncle Benjamin would never approve of him breaking his promise. He must eat what remained of the tart, whatever he thought about the strange conduct of Bunter. He had one consolation. The fellows would not expect him to eat the part Billy Bunter had kicked about the study. But he would not waver. He would keep his promise.

And two seconds later, Alonzo Todd understood Billy Bunter's strange conduct perfectly.

The first mouthful of tart made his face assume an expression like incipient apoplexy, and he rose from his seat spitting it out.

"Oh!" he gasped. "Ow! Now I understand Bunter's mysterious conduct. There is something wrong with the tart! Ow! Groo! Yaroo!"

ANSWERS

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Conscientious Alonzo.

BOB CHERRY and John Bull looked in at the door of Alonzo's study.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob, in astonishment. "What's the matter?"

"Groo!"

"What's the matter with Bunter?" asked Bull. "He's just passed us coughing and grunting as if he'd swallowed a packet of mustard."

"Yow!"

"Great Scott! I say, Todd, old man, what is it?"

"Ugh!"

Alonzo gasped and spluttered, and spluttered and gasped. The two juniors looked at him, half laughing and half alarmed.

Alonzo recovered his breath at last.

"I'm so sorry," he said. "I did not mean to alarm you. But I have had a most unpleasant experience."

"Taking up Bunter's dodge, and eating too much?" asked John Bull, with a glance at the remains of the tart.

"Indeed, no, Bull. I have eaten very little, and it has imparted a most disagreeable sensation to my inward organs. Bulstrode and Skinner very kindly presented me with this tart, as a token of esteem—"

"What's the matter with it?"

"My dear Cherry—"

"Something wrong with it, I suppose?"

"It certainly had a most horrid taste. I imagine that the jam must have gone a little whiffy," said Alonzo.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pray taste it, Cherry—"

"No fear!" said Bob Cherry promptly.

"It is very unpleasant indeed. The worst of it is, that I had promised Bulstrode to eat it myself, and my Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me never to break my word."

"It was a jape, you ass!"

"My dear fellow—"

"Bulstrode was pulling your silly leg!" roared Bob Cherry. "He's doctored the tart for you."

"Dear me! Do you really think Bulstrode would be so deceitful, Cherry?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes, rather!"

"The deceitfulness of the esteemed Bulstrode is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who had come along the passage with a crowd of other fellows to see what the noise was about.

"What-ho!" said Harry Wharton. "Chuck it in the fire, Todd!"

"My dear Wharton, you would not counsel me to break a promise?"

"Of course not."

"I have promised to eat that tart."

"It was a trick."

"I do not think my Uncle Benjamin would approve of my breaking my promise, however, even if it was a trick," said Alonzo, with a shake of the head. "It will be a lesson to me not to make rash promises, and I trust that you fellows will take the lesson to heart also."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The ha-ha-ha-fulness is terrific."

"Look here, Alonzo—"

"Don't be an ass!"

"I am afraid that I have no alternative but to eat the tart, my dear friends. It will be horrible."

"What have they done to it?" asked Tom Brown.

"I do not know; but the taste is bitter."

"Somebody taste it."

"You taste it, Brown."

"No fear!"

"I say, Fish, taste this tart."

"I guess not."

"Linley, old man—"

Mark Linley laughed, and broke off a small piece of the tart and tasted it. Then he made an extremely wry face.

"What is it?" asked a dozen voices.

"Quinine, it tastes like," said the Lancashire lad. "Ammoniated quinine, I believe—the stuff you use for colds."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites simply roared at the idea of presenting Alonzo with a tart flavoured with ammoniated quinine.

The Duffer of Greyfriars looked at them reproachfully.

"My dear fellows—" he began.

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

"It is really no laughing matter. I am bound by my promise to eat the tart—at all events, the portion which I

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have not presented to Bunter. My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked if I did not keep my word—nay, disgusted."

The juniors yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Todd!"

"Pile in, Alonzo!"

"Good old Duffer!"

"You don't mean to say that you're really going to eat that horrible thing, Todd?" demanded Vernon-Smith, in amazement.

Vernon-Smith, the Bounder, had never troubled to keep a promise in his life, and it was not surprising that Todd astonished him.

Alonzo nodded.

"I fear that I am bound to do so, my dear Smith," he said.

"Well, you are a duffer!"

"My dear Smith—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo sat down at the table before the tart again. The juniors watched him breathlessly. Regard for a promise was, of course, a praiseworthy thing. Todd seemed to be carrying conscientious scruples rather far. It seemed impossible that he would really eat a jam-tart flavoured with ammoniated quinine. But the conscientiousness of Alonzo Todd was without bounds. He had been very, very carefully brought up by his Uncle Benjamin.

He put a fragment into his mouth, and twisted up his face.

"Ugh!"

The juniors grinned. Some of them shouted encouragement to Alonzo Todd.

"Go it, Toddy!"

"Buck up!"

"Take a really decent bite!"

"Wire in!"

"My dear fellows, it is not so easy to wire in, for the thing has a decidedly disagreeable taste. However, my Uncle Benjamin would disapprove very strongly of my disregarding my word. Ugh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it!"

"On the ball!"

Alonzo started again.

This time he kept on heroically, munching away at that terrible tart.

The juniors watched him, choking with laughter. They had no time to feel sympathetic, the whole thing was too funny.

Alonzo Todd's face assumed a pale colour, which gradually changed to an art shade in green as he proceeded.

His eyes seemed to be trying to bulge out of their sockets, and his very hair seemed to want to stand on end.

But he kept steadily on.

Fragment by fragment the terrible tart disappeared, the juniors watching the performance with breathless interest.

It was almost finished when Todd ceased, his face going through all sorts of horrible contortions.

"Ugh!" he said.

"Chuck it up now, Toddy," said Bob Cherry. "You've eaten enough to keep your word, and to satisfy your Uncle Benjamin, you know."

Todd shook his head.

"I—I—groo—I must finish it, Cherry. But—but you might open the window, will you, in—in case—"

Bob Cherry understood. He crossed to the window and threw up the lower sash. It was all ready for Alonzo to rush to it in case of necessity, as a Channel passenger rushes to the side of the boat.

Alonzo's jaws worked slowly, but the remains of the tart were disposed of at last. The last morsel had gone in, when a fearful change came over Todd's face, and he jumped up so quickly that he kicked his chair over backwards.

He made a wild rush to the window.

"He's got it!" murmured Nugent; and the Nabob of Bhanipur remarked that the gotfulness was terrific.

Todd was hanging his head and shoulders out over the window-sill. His form was shaken by internal commotions, heaving and heaving convulsively.

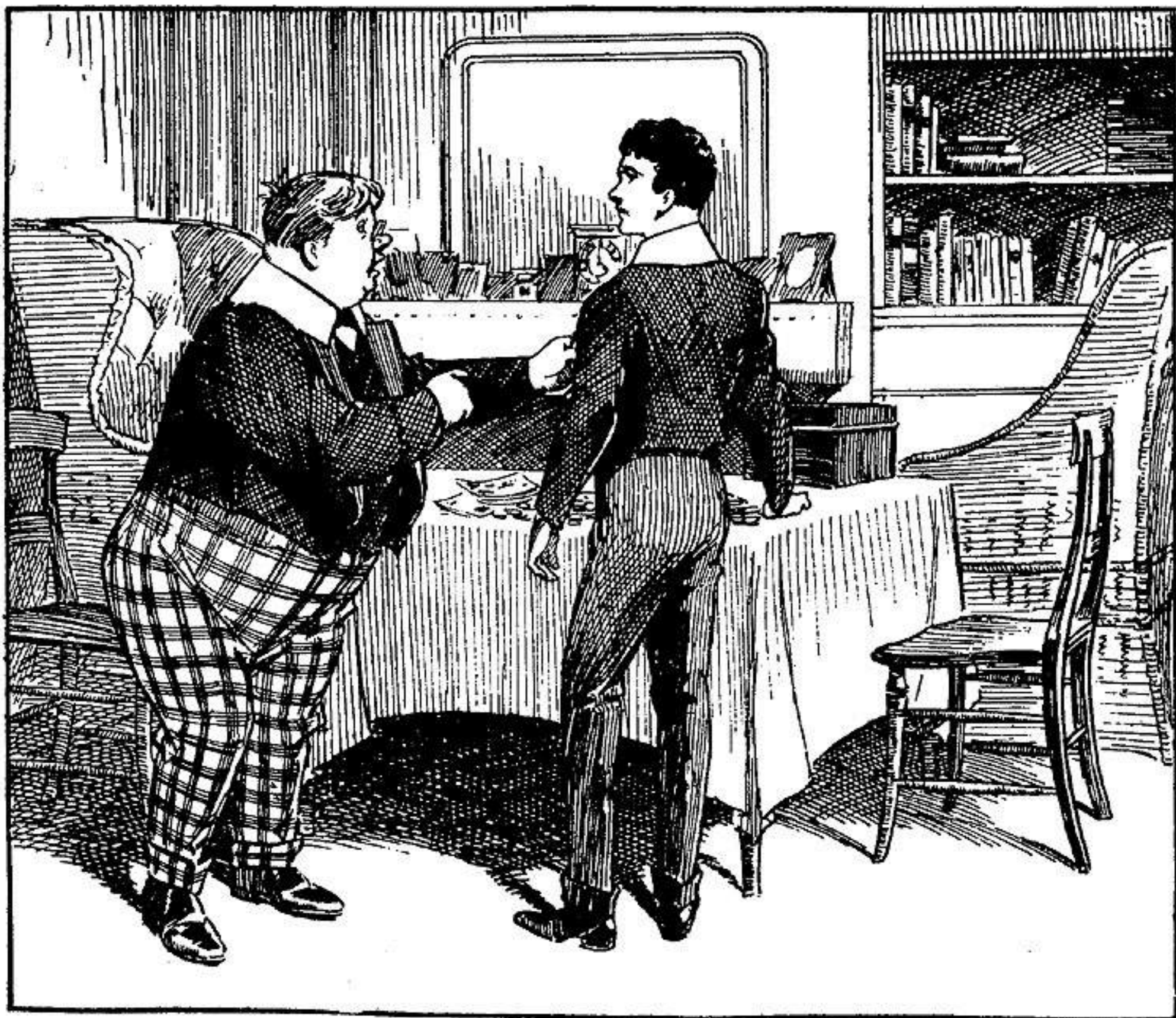
"Todd, old man, how do you feel?"

"Better now, Todd?"

"How pleased Uncle Benjamin would be!"

"Poor old Todd!"

But Alonzo made no reply to the remarks addressed to him. He heeded not; in fact, he did not hear. The most seasick passenger on the rockiest Channel-boat on the roughest day did not suffer more than Alonzo Todd at that moment.



"I say, Bull, old man," said Billy Bunter, softly. "Could you lend me a couple of hundred pounds?" John Bull stared at the Owl of the Remove. He was too astonished to speak for a minute. (See page 16.)

THE NINTH CHAPTER John Bull in Hot Water.

JOHN BULL was the object of the most polite attentions possible that evening. The fact that his Aunt Tabitha was sending him five hundred pounds on the following day in ready cash was quite enough to make him a remarkable personage. And the fact that he was expected to be very generous in sharing it out made him the recipient of many little attentions that would not under ordinary circumstances have fallen to his lot.

It was even noticeable that Loder, the prefect, when he saw the Remove off to bed, was very civil to John Bull. He asked Bull a question about how he had enjoyed his Christmas holidays—a mark of the most tremendous condescension. Coker and Blundell and Higgs of the Fifth stopped Bull in the passage to say good-night. John Bull replied to them with his usual placid calm. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Upper Fourth bade him good-night in the passage, and grinned politely when he replied with an ancient and classic monosyllable—"Rats!"

Whether John Bull realised that it was his great expectations that caused the sudden wave of polite attentions was not apparent from his manner. Outwardly he preserved the most unruffled calm.

In the dormitory, when he went to bed, many of the Remove were remarkably nice to John Bull.

Snoop asked him if he would like him to pull his boots off, a query to which Bull replied by requesting Snoop to go

NEXT
WEEK:

"SPOOFING ALONZO."

and eat coke—a reply that made Snoop look very sheepish, and let the matter drop.

Stott remarked that it was a cold night, and offered Bull a blanket off his bed, with the statement that he, Stott, never did care for much bedclothes; but Stott, too, dropped the subject when John Bull replied, "Rot!"

Billy Bunter was the most persistent of all John Bull's new admirers.

Bunter was feeling extremely wild at the knowledge that he had been once in Bull's study, and might now have been the great man's study-mate if he had only known in time.

He was not likely to get back into Study No. 14 now. When fellows got rid of Bunter from their studies they were never anxious to have him back. During his career in the Lower Fourth at Greyfriars the fat junior had been through many studies, and his departure from one was always an occasion of great enthusiasm among the fellows he deserted.

"It's a cold night, Bull," he remarked, sidling up to the great man.

"Usually is in winter," said Bull.

Bunter blinked at him; and then, deciding to take the reply as a joke, burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! He, he, he!"

John Bull stared at him.

"What's that row about?" he demanded.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Shut up, and go to bed—do!"

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

"Ha, ha! You're such a funny chap, you know!" grinned Bunter. "He, he, he!"

"Oh, am I? Looking for a thick ear?"

Billy Bunter backed away so suddenly that he trod on Bulstrode's toe, and Bulstrode gave him a shove that sent him staggering. He sat down beside a bed and gasped.

"Ow! Oh, really, Ogilvy——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, was it you, Bulstrode? Beast!"

John Bull turned in.

It was some minutes before Billy Bunter recovered sufficiently to return to the attack.

"I say, Johnny——" he exclaimed.

"Eh? Who are you calling Johnny?"

"You, old chap!"

"Well, chuck it!"

"Oh, really, Johnny——"

"Chuck it!" roared John Bull.

"I was thinking that as it's a cold night, you might like a hot-water bottle," said Bunter ingratiatingly.

"Bosh!"

"Look here, Bull——"

"Rats!"

And John Bull turned over to go to sleep.

Loder looked in, and the juniors tumbled hastily into bed. The lights were turned out.

"I say, Bull," said Morgan from his bed, "what are you going to do with the cash when you get it?"

"Eh?" said John Bull sleepily. John Bull had the gift of going to sleep soundly as soon as he went to bed.

"What are you going to do——"

"I'm going to sleep."

"I mean to-morrow, when——"

"Groo!"

"I say, Bull——"

"Groo-oor!"

"Bull, old man——"

Snore.

"Ha, ha, ha! He's asleep!"

"I say, you fellows, I really think Johnny ought to have a hot-water bottle. I'm very much afraid for his health, you know."

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"It's all very well for you, Bob Cherry! Johnny isn't your best friend, and, of course, you don't feel anxious about him—as I do."

"Br-r-r-r!"

Billy Bunter relapsed into silence. But he did not give up the idea of ingratiating himself with John Bull by supplying him with a hot-water bottle. Some of the Sixth, of a luxurious turn of mind, had hot-water bottles of a night—such as Ionides and Carne. Billy Bunter turned the matter over in his mind, and finally crawled out of bed and descended to his study, in the Remove passage, belonging to Harry Wharton & Co.

Two or three voices hailed him as he went.

"Is that you, Bunter?"

"Where are you off to?"

"You'll have indigestion if you gorge now."

Billy Bunter made no reply.

He rolled away, and went down the stairs, blinking round keenly, on the watch for a possible prefect looking out.

He reached No. 1 Study in safety, and lighted the gas. There was a spirit stove in the study, and Bunter soon had a kettle of water on it, and the spirit flame blazing away.

He knew that there was an old hot-water bottle in the study cupboard, which he had used himself during one of his imaginary illnesses. He soon had it out, and then he waited for the water to boil.

He occupied the time by raiding the provisions in the cupboard. Billy Bunter could always pass a comfortable ten minutes putting away an extra meal. The water boiled at last, and Bunter filled the hot-water bottle.

He crept away to the Remove dormitory with it.

Silence greeted him as he entered. The fellows had fallen asleep.

Bunter closed the door, and crept towards John Bull's bed.

He meant to slip the hot-water bottle into the bed without awakening the object of his kindly attention.

When John Bull woke up, and found that he had been looked after in this kindly and thoughtful manner, his gratitude was sure to be immense.

So Bunter thought, at all events. He drew up the edge of the bedclothes, and slipped in the hot-water bottle.

The bottle was an old one, and had not been taken much care of. The natural consequence was that it leaked at the screw stopper.

Bunter did not observe that.

But when the hot-water bottle was placed close to John

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Bull's back, it was pretty certain that he would soon observe it.

Bunter pressed the bedclothes down over the bottle, and crept back to his own bed.

Then a sudden sound broke the silence of the Remove dormitory.

It was a short, sharp yell from the bed occupied by John Bull junior.

It was followed by a loud yell.

"Ow! Yaroo!"

Billy Bunter stopped, and blinked back towards John Bull. The latter had made a sudden leap up in bed.

"Yaroo!" he roared. "Yaroo! Oh! Oh!"

The fellows woke up on all sides, and a dozen voices shouted.

"What's the matter?"

"Who's that?"

"What's the row?"

"Yow!" yelled John Bull. "I'm scalded! Ow!"

The unfortunate junior had been awakened by boiling-hot water dripping on his back, and he had clutched wildly at the hot-water bottle, and jerked out the stopper, which fitted very imperfectly.

The rush of hot water made him fairly jump.

He leaped wildly out of bed, and a gurgling sound behind him showed that the rest of the water was pouring out of the bottle and swamping the bed.

"Ow! Help! I'm scalded! Yaroo!"

"My word!" muttered Bunter. "The blessed thing must have leaked! Oh, dear! I wonder if Bull will be waxy?"

And he slipped into bed quickly, and drew the coverlet over him, and began to snore.

He was no longer desirous of gaining the credit of having introduced that hot-water bottle into John Bull's bed.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Kind Attention.

"Y AROOH!"

"My hat!"

"The myhatfulness is terrific."

Harry Wharton jumped out of bed, struck a match, and lighted a candle. The light glimmered on John Bull, in his pyjamas, dancing what appeared to be a wild and fantastic hornpipe.

"Yaroo! Yow! Yoop!"

"By Jove!"

"Great Scott!"

"What's the matter?"

"The matterfulness seems to be terrific."

"I guess somebody's hurt."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

John Bull calmed down a little. The first brunt of the pain had passed off. But he was still considerably hurt.

He was less hurt now, however, than furious.

"I've been scalded!" he roared. "Somebody's been pouring hot water into my bed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who was it?" roared Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did anybody see it?"

"I guess I was asleep," remarked Fisher T. Fish, "Bunter said something about getting you a hot-water bottle, though."

"So he did! Bunter!"

Billy Bunter snored loudly.

"Bunter!" roared John Bull.

Snore!

"Are you asleep, Bunter?"

Snore!

"Well, he's snoring enough to be asleep," grinned Frank Nugent.

"Methinks the lady doth protest too much," chuckled Bob Cherry. "He never snores quite so loudly as that when he's really asleep."

Bunter's snore took on a diminuendo at once.

It was so perfectly evident that the fat junior was assuming that snore, that the Removites burst into a roar of laughter.

John Bull did not laugh. He was feeling too scalded. He rushed to Bunter's bed, and laid violent hands upon the bedclothes.

"Ow!" yelped Bunter. "I'm asleep—I mean, leggo—chuck it! Ow!"

The bedclothes flew off. Bunter's fat legs kicked in the air, and John Bull brought down his palm in a mighty slap on the pyjamas.

"Yow!" roared Bunter.

"Are you asleep now, you fat fraud?"

"Yes! No! Yow!"

"What did you pour that hot water over me for?"
 "I—I—I didn't."
 "Who did, then?"
 "Yow! I think it must have been Wharton! Yah!"
 "What's that?" shouted Harry Wharton. "I?"
 "I—I thought you were asleep, Wharton. I—I mean it must have been Bob Cherry."
 "I!" roared Bob Cherry.
 "Oh, really, Cherry—I meant Tom Brown, that New Zealand beast—"
 "That what?" shouted Tom Brown.
 "I—I'm sincerely sorry, Brown. That was a slip of the tongue. I didn't really mean to say that at all."
 "Not if you knew I was awake, you fraud."
 "Oh, really, Brown—"
 John Bull laid violent hands upon Bunter, and dragged him from the bed. The fat junior rolled on the floor, yelling fiendishly in anticipation of smacks.
 "Ow! Yow! Yah! Yaroo!"
 "Now, then, what did you put the hot water on me for?"
 "It was a hot-water bottle," gasped Bunter. "It—it was a kindly attention. I didn't know the rotten thing leaked."
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.
 "Oh, really, you fellows—"
 "You fat boulder!" exclaimed John Bull wrathfully.
 "Well, the bed's soaked now, and I can't sleep in it. As you're so fond of hot water in bed, you can sleep in my bed, and I'll have yours."
 "Oh, really Bull—"
 "There you are!"
 John Bull rolled Bunter over towards his bed, and then entered Bunter's, and laid down. He was evidently in earnest.
 Bunter staggered up, blinking at John Bull, comfortably ensconced in his bed. Then he blinked at Bull's bed. In the candle-light he could see that the bed was simply drenched with water. The bottle was empty.
 "I—I say, Bull, I suppose you're joking!" he exclaimed.
 "Groo!"
 "Look here, Bull, you're not going to sleep in my bed."
 "Gro-o-oh!"
 "Bull! I say, Bull!"
 Snore!
 John Bull was asleep.
 "Do you want the candle, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton, getting back into bed.
 "Yes. I say, Wharton, do you mind if I sleep in your bed to-night?"
 "No room for a porpoise in my bed."
 "Can I sleep with you, Cherry?"
 "Not much!" said Bob Cherry promptly.
 "I say, Stott, I'm going to sleep in your bed—"
 "You're jolly well not."
 "Look here, I can't sleep in a bed drenched with water," roared Bunter.
 "You can argue that out with John Bull," chuckled Bulstrode. "Only don't make a row. If you keep me awake, I shall get up and larrup you."
 "Oh, really, Bulstrode—"
 "Dry up!"
 The juniors settled down to sleep, leaving William George Bunter to solve the problem as best he might.
 The fat junior blinked indignantly at the other fellows, and then groaned as he surveyed the decidedly damp bed.
 "I say, you fellows, I shall have to sleep on the floor," he grunted.
 There was no reply. No one seemed to care whether the Owl of the Remove slept on the floor or not.
 Bunter, groaning loudly, dragged the bedclothes over on the floor, and arranged the bolster and pillows there.
 Bulstrode sat up in bed.
 "What are you groaning about, Bunter?" he asked.
 "I'm catching cold," said Bunter, despondently. "I expect I shall be seriously ill in the morning."
 "You can be seriously ill in the morning if you like," said Bulstrode. "I don't care about that. But if you don't shut up now, I'll get up and give you something to groan for."
 "Oh, really, Bulstrode—"
 "Will you shut up?"
 Billy Bunter thought he had better shut up. He rolled himself up in John Bull's bedclothes, and sought repose on the floor. As a matter of fact, Bunter could have slept anywhere; he was a wonderful sleeper, and could have slept through earthquakes and tornadoes.
 He did not wake till the rising-bell clanged out in the frosty morning air.
 John Bull sat up in bed, and grinned at the sight of Bunter snuggled under the bedclothes on the floor.
 "Had a good night's rest, Bunter?" he asked.
 Billy Bunter groaned.
 "Caught a cold?" asked John Bull.
 "Ow! Yes."
 "Feeling nearly dead?"
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NEXT
WEEK.

"SPOOFING ALONZO."

"Yes, quite—I—I mean nearly—"
 "Good!"
 "Eh?"
 "Perhaps you won't shove leaky hot-water bottles into a fellow's bed again," said John Bull.
 "Yah! It was just a friendly, kind attention—"
 "Then you'd better ring off with your friendly, kind attentions, that's all," said Bull, as he turned out of bed.
 And Bunter murmured things to himself, which he would have said out loud but for the fact that John Bull was to receive, that day, the sum of five hundred pounds in ready cash.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Ready Cash.

JOHN BULL was the centre of attention in the Remove Form-room that morning.
 That morning, the juniors knew, the cash was to arrive—five hundred pounds in a box! It was amazing but true. Miss Tabitha's motives in sending it the juniors did not know, nor John Bull either. But it was coming—that was the main thing.
 It is to be feared that the Removites that morning gave more attention to the prospects of John Bull's windfall than to the lessons.
 Mr. Quelch, who had heard of the extraordinary gift of Aunt Tabitha, was very patient with his class. But John Bull, for one, showed no undue excitement. He was as calmly and placidly attentive to his work as ever. If he had been about to receive a cheque for a million pounds it would probably not have disturbed the serenity of John Bull junior.
 When the sound of wheels was heard in the Close the excitement of the Remove rose to fever heat.
 That the carrier would arrive with the precious box was certain before morning lessons were over.
 John Bull had left instructions for it to be taken to his study—and there it would be waiting for him when work was finished that morning.
 At ten minutes before the time of dismissal Billy Bunter rose in his place.
 "If you please, sir—" he began.
 "Well, Bunter?" Mr. Quelch rapped out.
 "If you please, sir, may I go a little early? There's a letter I want to post, sir."
 "The collection is not till two o'clock, Bunter."
 "Ahem—sir! Nothing like being early sir. Punctuality is the thief of time, sir—I mean, sir, that—"
 "Sit down, Bunter!"
 "Yes, sir; but—"
 "Sit down!" rapped Mr. Quelch.
 And Bunter sat down.
 "No burglaries allowed," grinned Bob Cherry. "Narrow escape of your five hundred quid, Bull."
 "Oh, really, Cherry!"
 Mr. Quelch dismissed the class at last.
 Billy Bunter made at once for the staircase, and somebody put out a foot and tripped him over, and he sat on the lowest step and grunted.
 John Bull passed him, and went up to his study. He had asked his chums to go with him to see the box opened; and Harry Wharton and Bob and Nugent and Hurree Singh and Tom Brown and Mark Linley gathered in the study with the happy possessor of five hundred pounds.
 The box lay upon the table.
 The juniors gazed at it almost with awe.
 "Fancy five hundred quids being in that blessed box!" said Bob Cherry. "It's almost too marvellous!"
 "Wish I had an Aunt Tabitha!" grunted Nugent. "Why, she beats Coker's aunt hollow—and she used to come down very handsome for Coker."
 John Bull smiled, and opened the box.
 The juniors looked on breathlessly.
 John Bull, with a hand that did not tremble, turned out the contents of the box. They were dazzling.
 There were sovereigns in little rolls, and banknotes for all amounts up to twenty pounds in crisp batches.
 The juniors had never seen so much money at once before, and they were simply dazzled.
 "Wonderful!" exclaimed Wharton.
 "Gorgeous!"
 "Splendid!"
 "Terrific!"
 "I guess this beats the deck!" said Fisher T. Fish, looking in. "Why, my popper never comes down like that—I guess not!"
 "Let's have a look, Bull."
 "Let's see the giddy gold."

"My hat!"
 "Wonderful!"
 "Good old auntie!"
 "Hurray!"
 "Halves!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

John Bull stood with a quiet smile on his face as the eager juniors crammed themselves into the study and surged round the box.

They feasted their eyes upon the cash, only John Bull himself appearing indifferent and unaffected by it.

"Blessed if he doesn't take it as calmly as if he had thousands of quids coming down every day!" exclaimed Hazeldene. "Ain't you delighted, you ass?"

John Bull laughed.

"Yes, rather!" he said. "But there's nothing to get excited about. Look here, let's get out to the tuckshop, and every fellow can order what he likes."

"Hurray!"

The juniors streamed out of the study.

Billy Bunter made a noble first.

They crossed to Mrs. Mumble's tuckshop in a joyous stream. Fellows of other Forms joined them, and all were welcome. There was surely money enough to pay for the most extensive feed that Mrs. Mumble's little shop could stand.

John Bull remained to cram gold and notes into all his pockets. He was fairly bulging with money by the time he finished.

As he entered the tuckshop room was made for him by the juniors, crammed as they were.

"Here he comes!"

"Walk right in, sonny!"

"See, the conquering hero——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This way, Bull!"

"Dear boy!"

"Nice chap!"

"Hurray!"

John Bull walked in, grinning. Place of honour was found for him, and an admiring circle crammed round him, eating and drinking without limit. Everybody was talking at once—excepting Billy Bunter. He did not talk at all. His jaws were too busily occupied otherwise.

"My dear Bull," said Alonzo, digging a horny knuckle into John Bull's ribs—"my dear Bull, this is extremely——"

"Ow!"

"What is the matter, my dear Bull?"

"You've punctured me, you ass!"

"I'm so sorry, my dear Bull. As I was saying, this is extremely generous and noble of you. I rejoice to see it, my dear Bull. At the same time, I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would advise you to be careful and moderate. If my aunt were to send me five hundred pounds I should certainly say——Yarrah!"

Alonzo had not meant to finish that way.

But Bob Cherry, with the idea of cutting short his flow of eloquence, had opened a bottle of gingerbeer just under his nose, and Alonzo's face was swamped.

"Yoop!" he roared. "Ow! My dear Cherry——"

"Never mind!" said Bob Cherry. "There's some left!"

"My dear——"

"Not a word, my dear Todd. I won't allow you to apologise."

"But——"

"Not a word!"

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

"My dear fellows——"

"Put a cake in your face, Toddy, and shut up!" said Nugent.

"Under the circumstances——"

"No, under your nose!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

Bob Cherry poked a tart into Alonzo's mouth as he opened it to speak, and Alonzo almost choked. His eloquence was stopped for some time afterwards.

It was a record feed in Mrs. Mumble's shop. And when John Bull put his hand into his trousers-pocket and drew out a handful of gold and notes to pay the bill the good dame's eyes almost started from her head.

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THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

John Bull Does Not Want to See Life.

"HURRAY!"

"Good old Bull!"

"I say, you fellows, is Bull there?"

"Where is John Bull?"

"Bull, old man, will you come and play——"

"Come along, old chap!"

"I suppose you wouldn't mind lending me a pound till Saturday——"

"Look here, old chap, I'm stony! If you could stand a fiver——"

John Bull grinned serenely.

He was standing in the Close in the midst of a crowd of fellows. Every cadger at Greyfriars was gathered round the youth who owned five hundred pounds to do as he liked with.

It was an excited crowd.

Many fellows who would not ordinarily have paid much attention to a fellow with money, were dazzled by John Bull's wealth, and had joined the crowd of worshippers.

John Bull was unmoved.

What would have turned many an older fellow's head had not the slightest effect upon John Bull.

"Oh, cheese it!" exclaimed the fortunate nephew of Aunt Tabitha.

"I say, Bull——"

"Bull, old man——"

"Johnny, old son——"

"My dear fellow——"

John Bull drew a handful of sovereigns from his trousers pocket.

"Who wants a quid?" he asked.

"I do!"

"I do!"

"And I!"

"And I!"

"I say, Bull, I'll take it as a loan. I could not accept a gift," said Bunter. "Shall I put this down to the old account, or will you have it out of my postal-order to-morrow morning?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I'll take a couple, if you like, Bull."

"'Nother one here, please!"

"My hat! This is simply gorgeous!"

John Bull handed out the sovereigns with perfect indifference.

His pockets were full of them, and he was quite willing to hand them out. There were few of the fellows whose feelings of personal dignity interfered with their acceptance of the golden gifts.

John Bull strolled away with his hands in his pockets. He went up to his study, to work through an imposition Monsieur Charpentier, the French-master, had given him. He had not been at work many minutes before his door was opened, and Vernon-Smith, the fellow who was called the Bounder of Greyfriars, entered.

John Bull gave him a curt nod.

He did not know Vernon-Smith very well, but between the frank, hearty John Bull and the deep and cunning Bounder of Greyfriars there could be little in common.

But Vernon-Smith's manner was all cordiality now.

"I want to speak to you, Bull," he remarked.

John Bull dived his hand into his trousers-pocket.

"How much?" he asked tersely.

The Bounder burst into a laugh.

"Ha, ha! I haven't come to borrow money!" he exclaimed.

"No," said Bull, withdrawing his hand. "What do you want then?"

"Only to speak to you."

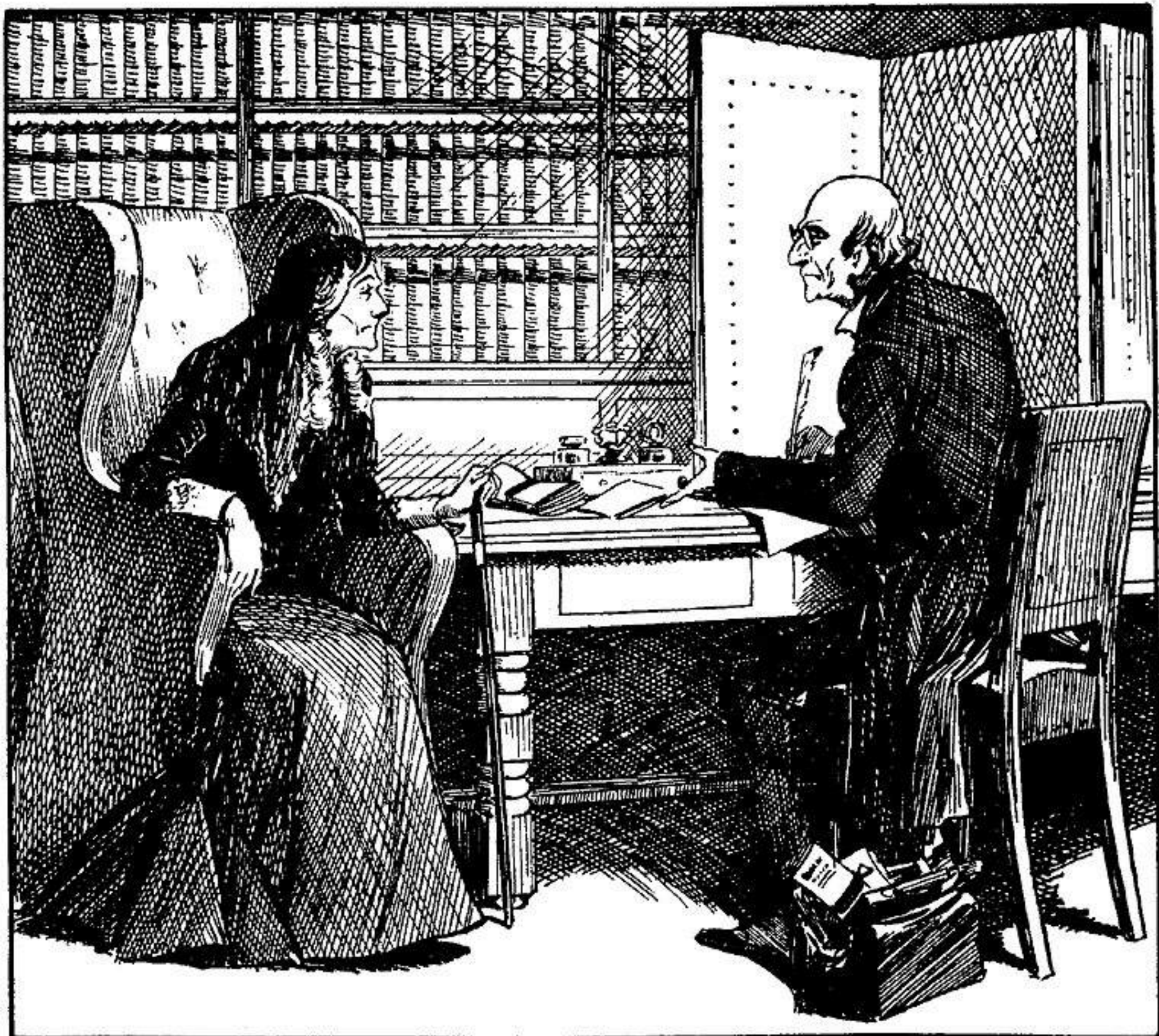
"Well, that's free of charge," said the junior. "Go ahead!"

NEXT WEEK.

Do not miss . . .

"Spoofing
 Alonzo!"

A Capital Tale of the Duffer
 of Greyfriars.



"Before I proceed, Miss Bull," remarked the lawyer, "my professional duty compels me to remark that it is a most unheard of proceeding!" "So you've said before," said John Bull's Aunt Tabitha, calmly. (See page 5.)

"I'm not after your money. I dare say I could raise as much myself if I wanted to," said Vernon-Smith carelessly. "My father's a millionaire—and he lets me have as much money as I like. I've never been able to find a chap at Greyfriars with enough money to associate with me."

John Bull looked at him curiously.

"That so?" he asked.

"No. I usually chum up with Hazeldene, but he's a sponge—he's got no money, and I have to pay his exes everywhere."

"Oh, nice way to talk of a chum!"

"He's not a chum—I'm only making use of him," said the Bounder. "He's got the cheek, too, to eat my grub and spend my money, and refuse at the same time to let me know his sister Marjorie."

"Well," said John Bull, in his slow, deliberate way, "from what I've seen of you, Smithy, I should say he's about right in that. You're about the last fellow in the world I'd introduce to my sister."

Vernon-Smith smiled sneeringly.

"Never mind that," he said. "Drop Hazeldene. Look here, you and I both have heaps of money; you've got enough tin to enjoy yourself, but you don't know the way. You don't know the ropes here yet. Do you want to see life?"

"See life?" said John Bull slowly.

"Yes—life!"

"I don't quite understand you."

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"I suppose you're not contented with this humdrum rot that satisfies the other fellows!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "You don't want to spend all your time playing footer and hockey, and taking Sunday walks with the Cliff House girls. You want to see life."

"What kind of life?" asked John Bull quietly.

"Real life," said Vernon-Smith coolly. "I can show it you. What do you say to a little run out to-night—"

"To-night?"

"Yes; after lights out in the dorm."

John Bull stared at him.

"I've never broken bounds at night," he said. "If it were a lark I might. But what sort of thing do you mean?"

"I mean to take you to see life—a quiet game of poker or euchre, and drinks, and smokes, and jolly society," said Vernon-Smith.

"You're joking, I suppose?"

"Not in the least."

"Do you mean to say that you keep that kind of society?"

"Yes, rather."

"After lights out."

"Exactly."

"And you've never been found out?"

"It wouldn't make much difference if I were," said the Bounder boastfully. "My father has too much influence with the Head for me to be sacked from the school—and he could protect you, too!"

John Bull was silent. He was looking at the cad of the

Remove with quiet, steady eyes, that made Vernon-Smith feel uncomfortable.

In spite of himself, he dropped his eyes before John Bull's steady gaze.

"So that's what you call seeing life?" said Bull, at last.

"Certainly," replied Vernon-Smith. "Now, what do you say?"

John Bull looked reflective. He rose, and opened the study door. Vernon-Smith looked at him in surprise and uneasiness.

"What do you say, Bull?" he repeated.

"Say?" said John Bull. "I say that I give you half a minute to get clear of my study!"

"What?"

"I don't want to see life—your sort of life. I don't want to be a bounder and a cad," said John Bull cheerfully and quietly. "I don't want to have anything to say to you. Get out!"

Vernon-Smith's face turned crimson with rage.

"You—you insulting hound!" he exclaimed furiously.

John Bull shrugged his shoulders.

"I shouldn't think it was possible to insult a fellow like you," he said. "Anyway, get out of my study!"

"I—I—"

"On my word, Smith, if you don't get out, I'll kick you out."

John Bull did not raise his voice in the least. But there was more in his low, quiet tones than there could have been in the loudest bluster.

Vernon-Smith gave him one look, and then stepped through the doorway into the passage. Gladly enough he would have flung himself upon the sturdy junior. But he remembered in time that John Bull had licked Bulstrode, who could have made rings round the Bounder of Greyfriars at any time. John Bull was not a fellow to be lightly tackled with fists.

The Bounder of Greyfriars paused to look back at the junior, with a quiet, deadly glance of hatred.

"I'll remember this!" he said.

John Bull laughed scornfully.

"Remember to keep outside my study in future, too," he said.

Then he closed the door.

He returned to his work, but he was not left long uninterrupted. The door opened, and a fat face peered in, and a pair of big spectacles glinted. Billy Bunter insinuated himself into the study.

"I say, Bull, old man," said the Owl of the Remove softly.

"Well?" rapped out John Bull.

"I'm going to ask you a favour—"

"How much?"

"Ahem! What I was going to say is—can you—er—ahem! Could you lend me a couple of hundred pounds, old chap?"

John Bull stared at the Owl of the Remove. He was too astonished to speak for a moment.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

John Bull picked up a heavy ebony ruler from the table, and made a quick step towards Billy Bunter. The fat junior gave him one blink, and dashed out of the study and slammed the door. John Bull laughed, and sat down at his table again. Billy Bunter did not pause till he reached the end of the passage, and there he stopped and gasped.

"Beast!" he murmured.

Billy Bunter had had one gorgeous feed that day, but, like Oliver Twist, he wanted more. Where he was to get more was the problem the fat junior had now to solve.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Alonzo's Windfall.

"TODD! Todd!"

Billy Bunter's voice echoed round the Cloisters. He appeared greatly excited.

"Todd! Todd! Where are you? Todd!"

"Yes, Bunter. Here I am!"

Billy Bunter pulled up sharp as a mild face popped itself through a hole in the tracery of the stonework. The Duffer of Greyfriars had ensconced himself in a snug corner to read. He had not heard Billy Bunter until the latter was right upon him.

"Oh," said Billy Bunter, "I'm glad I've found you, Todd! I—er—I—"

"Then so am I, Bunter," said Alonzo Todd pleasantly. "I'm very glad, Bunter. But pray what is the matter? You are very excited—"

"And so would you be if you bore the good news I do," said Billy Bunter. "I—I—I—"

A quick observer would have known in a moment that Billy

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Bunter was "putting it on." But Alonzo was quite taken in by his dramatic pauses.

"Very good—very good, Bunter, my dear fellow. But pray calm yourself before you go on. You are quite distressing me. My Uncle Benjamin—"

"I—I— Really, Todd, I—" began the Owl of the Remove again.

Alonzo was quite touched at Billy Bunter's excitement.

"Yes, Bunter," he said, in a most sympathetic voice. "But I always said you would pay me back."

Billy Bunter's excitement stopped instantly. In an instant he became all dignified curiosity.

"Eh—eh? What's that, Todd! Pay you back?"

"Yes, Bunter," explained Alonzo. "You are going to pay me back that ten shillings I once advanced you on one of your postal-orders coming to you, aren't you?"

"Well—er—yes, of course I am, Todd! But not just now," said Billy Bunter. "I am expecting—"

"Oh, yes; I know, Bunter! But I wrote to my Uncle Benjamin about the things you were expecting to come by post, especially postal-orders," said Alonzo. "And he said it was a very old tale, whatever that may mean—"

"Oh, yes, Todd!" interrupted Billy Bunter. "But your Uncle Benjamin doesn't understand me—"

"Excuse me, Bunter, if I disagree with you. I think he does. It seems to me you want a new tale, you know."

"That's just it," said the Owl of the Remove. "I've got one. And it's one you'll like, too, Todd!"

"You interest me, Bunter. But I think I can guess it. You've come to propose paying me back a shilling a week—"

"Oh, really, Todd—"

Alonzo's face was a study. Bunter's tone admitted of but one interpretation. He had not the least intention of doing as Alonzo suggested.

"But how could your statement interest me, otherwise, Bunter?" asked Alonzo.

"Oh, you leave that to me, Todd!" said Billy Bunter. "What would you say if I told you you had come into a lot of money?"

Alonzo Todd stared at Billy Bunter.

"I should be very pleased, Bunter. And so would my Uncle Benjamin," said Alonzo. "But you are joking, of course, Bunter?"

The Owl of the Remove shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, really, Todd," he said testily. "Now, what reason is there that Bull should be the only fellow to have £500 sent him?"

Alonzo's curiosity was aroused. His face became radiant.

"But you don't mean to say, Bunter—" he began.

"I mean to say," interrupted the Owl of the Remove.

"That I met Bull only just now, and he told me his Aunt Tabitha was going to send you £500, the same as she has done for him—"

The book fell from Alonzo's hand. He stared at Billy Bunter as if he were a fairy godmother. The "fairy godmother" kept it all up with a face of brass.

"Bull said she wished to do it in recognition of your elevating influence on him, and all of us. He says she said such a fellow ought to be rewarded. Oh, I say, Todd, don't let it knock you so silly!"

Alonzo was still staring at Billy Bunter as if it were his one thought in life.

"I beg your pardon, I'm sure, Bunter," said the Duffer of Greyfriars, coming out of his momentary trance. "But I was thinking of what Bull's aunty said about rewarding me. I shall write to her and tell her that the credit is entirely due to my Uncle Benjamin."

"Oh, blow—I mean, you'll wait till the stuff arrives first, of course, Todd?" said Billy Bunter.

"Perhaps it would be better, Bunter," agreed Alonzo. "When is Bull's aunty going to send it? Do you know, Bunter?"

"Bull said it was in the carrier's hands already," said Billy Bunter. "I should say it'll be here almost any minute. That's only a small matter, though. I've heard it said many a time that fellows who are expecting money can always get a draft."

"Draft, Bunter?"

"Yes. An advance of money, you know," explained the fat junior. "You couldn't get an advance of tin at Greyfriars, of course, Todd. But Mrs. Mumble would let you have some—"

Billy Bunter broke off in the middle of his sentence. Sitting down in an angle of the Cloisters, he began to fan himself vigorously.

"Oh, dear!" he cried. "I'm—"

Alonzo was alarmed.

"My dear Bunter, are you ill—"

"This comes of running all over the coll. after a chap,"

said Billy Bunter, meaning. "I was simply run off my legs to find you—"

"Why, you don't really mean to say I'm the cause of your suffering, Bunter?" said Alonzo sympathetically.

"Not exactly, of course, Todd, old chap. But it has made me feel faint, really."

"I'm very sorry, I'm sure," said Alonzo. "If I had any money, Bunter—"

"Why, you've tons of tin!" broke in the Owl of the Remove hotly.

"Ah, yes, my dear Bunter," returned Alonzo, with naive simplicity. "But my Uncle Benjamin would never approve of me spending the bird in the bush."

"Well, I like that—I must say!" said Billy Bunter, coming dangerously near a recovery in his eagerness. "What about—what I told you of a draft? Mrs. Mimble would—"

"If we can procure anything at Mrs. Mimble's that will relieve your distress, my dear Bunter, pray let us proceed there without delay," interrupted Alonzo.

The Duffer of Greyfriars was surprised at the way Billy Bunter found he could stand up.

"You needn't be afraid about the tin, Todd," he said. "I shouldn't be surprised if we meet the carrier as we go to Mrs. Mimble's."

"Really, Bunter!"

"And by the way, Todd, hadn't you better do the thing properly while you're about it?"

"About what, Bunter?" asked Alonzo, in surprise.

"Well, I only want something to take my pain away," explained Bunter facetiously. "But the other fellows, you know— Well, Todd, I put it to you, how would you like it yourself? Bull's been doing the thing handsome, you know."

"Indeed, Bunter!" said Alonzo innocently.

As yet, he had not the faintest suspicion of what Bunter was driving at.

"Yes," said the Owl of the Remove, "he gave Mrs. Mimble a splendid order—"

"My dear Bunter—"

"Yes," said Billy Bunter, "he gave the fellows a rattling good time. It wasn't much in my line, of course—ahem!—but I joined in just to show there was no ill-feeling. Yes, I say, Bull's treat was splendid! I say, Todd, really, you know—"

And Billy Bunter broke off suddenly to stare at Alonzo in a way that a brick wall might have understood.

"Oh, I see!" said Alonzo.

The Owl of the Remove interrupted Alonzo with a deep sigh.

"He let them order what they liked, regardless, Todd," said the fat youth, blinking convincingly at Alonzo. "It's the thing, you know."

Alonzo was impressed, and Billy Bunter was relieved. In another moment they would be at Mrs. Mimble's.

"Let us make arrangements then, pray, Bunter," said Alonzo. "I have no desire to interfere with precedent. I'm sure my Uncle Benjamin would advise me to do the right thing. Help me to arrange the draft business with Mrs. Mimble, if you please. And then, if you wouldn't mind inviting those fellows whom you think ought to come, I should be very pleased."

Billy Bunter did not require twice telling. He simply buzzed into Mrs. Mimble's little shop.

On his word alone the projected "trust" would have been a failure. But the old lady knew Alonzo "would pay for things," and in a few minutes Bunter was at the counter stowing away a large pork-pie as fast as he could. He had concluded he could not afford to lose a minute, and had despatched a fag who happened to be outside Mrs. Mimble's to whip in Bulstrode, Snoop, Skinner, and Stott.

Alonzo Todd was in the position that sporting men call "also ran," maintaining a pleasant conversation with Mrs. Mimble, and trying to look as busy as Bunter, on a bath-bun and a glass of dry ginger-ale.

"Hallo, Toddy!"

Alonzo was not prepared for Bulstrode's boisterous salutation. Drinking ginger-ale and being heartily smacked on the shoulder leads to trouble.

"Congratulations!" said Bulstrode, laughing hugely as Alonzo sprayed ginger-ale all over Billy Bunter.

Bulstrode had not the least idea why he must congratulate Alonzo, but he thought it best to begin in that way.

"Here, you let my friend alone, Bulstrode!" cried Billy Bunter indignantly.

Bulstrode, to say nothing of the other juniors who had come to the feast, stared in open-mouthed wonder at Bunter. That the Owl of the Remove should leave off eating for a moment, to interfere in the cause of any fellow, was past their understanding.

But Alonzo Todd soon enlightened them.

"I'm perfectly willing to believe you meant well, Bulstrode," he said simply. "Please to wade in. I understand that is the correct term on these occasions."

Skinner grinned from ear to ear. Snoop pulled Stott by the jacket.

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NEXT
WEEK;

"SPOOFING ALONZO."

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ONE
PENNY.

"Look here, Bunter," said Bulstrode, "if this is one of your rotten japes—"

"Not at all, Bulstrode," Alonzo hastened to interpose. "My friend Bunter merely advised me on the course I am taking. Please to wade in."

"'Nuff said!" said Skinner, with a more than usually wide grin.

And it was so. Mrs. Mimble was having a busier time than she could remember for a long time.

Alonzo beamed on them. The old lady behind the counter looked doubtful once or twice when the orders assumed strange proportions, but Alonzo invariably assured her with:

"It will be quite right, Mrs. Mimble. I'm paying. My Uncle Benjamin said that when I entertained anyone, I was to be sure to look after my guests well."

And the guests certainly saw to it that Alonzo did not fail on this occasion. In a very short time it was buzzing about the quadrangle that Alonzo Todd was standing a feed. Like flies on jam, came juniors to the feed.

"Thank you, you fellows!" said Alonzo, as he received their congratulations. "Please to wade in."

But all things have an end. At last Alonzo's offers of further refreshment were declined with a profusion of thanks. The juniors began to file out of the shop, slipping Alonzo on the shoulder, wringing his hand till his arm ached, hustling him as they went till he must have felt something like a blancmange.

At last they were all gone—all except Billy Bunter.

"Go on, my dear Bunter," said Alonzo, shining with the light of hospitality. "Please to wade in."

But Billy Bunter had met his match at last. He couldn't have eaten another morsel to save his life. And there stood Alonzo—Alonzo Todd, of all fellows—challenging him to go on.

But Bunter was resolved to show he could accept defeat. Clambering down from his stool, he walked to Alonzo.

"Todd," he said, with much emotion, "it is the feed of my life. I cannot eat another bit!"

"Oh, I'm so pleased, Bunter!" said Alonzo rather unfortunately.

Shaking Alonzo Todd's hand in eloquent silence, Billy went out into the sunlight, blinking.

"Shall I give you the bill now, Master Todd?" asked Mrs. Mimble.

Alonzo turned, with a start.

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Mimble, if you please! Wade—I mean, how much is it?"

"Nine pounds, fifteen-and-tenpence, Master Todd."

The Duffer of Greyfriars was rather startled at the huge total, but he turned a smiling face on the old lady.

"I'm afraid I haven't enough with me to settle it now, Mrs. Mimble. Please to send it up to my study, and I'll send you a cheque."

It was Mrs. Mimble's turn to look astonished, but she recollected that Alonzo Todd was a truthful lad.

"Oh, that's all right, sir!" she said. "Thank you, very much, sir!"

"Yes," said Alonzo.

And, raising his cap, he went out.

"Hallo, Toddy! How's the game?"

It was John Bull, Alonzo's study-mate, who overtook him as he wended his way to the study.

"Oh, I'm very well, thank you, Bull!" answered Alonzo. "It's very good of your aunty, isn't it?"

Bull stared at Alonzo Todd.

"What's very good?" he asked.

"Why, Bull, surely you have heard that she's sending me five hundred pounds? I've just been standing the fellows a feed."

Bull stared at Alonzo as if he were a lunatic.

"Who told you?" he said.

"Oh, come, Bull! Bunter, of course. But surely you know—"

"Ha, ha, ha! You ass! You've been done! Ha, ha, ha!"

And John Bull roared, while Alonzo looked at him like one in a dream.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Lucky for Alonzo.

JOHN BULL simply roared.

The utter simplicity of Alonzo Todd, in being "spoofed" by Bunter's ridiculous yarn, appealed to the junior as funny.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he roared.

"My dear Bull—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo blinked at him in amazement and dismay. Alonzo never suspected anybody of pulling his leg, though he had

been "spoofed" so often that really he might have been excused if he had grown a little suspicious. But Alonzo was never likely to grow suspicious, if he lived to the age of Methuselah.

"Do you mean to say, Bull, that your auntie is not sending me five hundred pounds?" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Bull, I really——"

"Of course, she isn't!" roared John Bull.

"But Bunter distinctly said——"

"He was pulling your leg, you ass!"

"Oh dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But—but Bunter said that it was the case, owing to my good influence over you, my dear Bull, and the other fellows," said Todd, in bewilderment. "Are you sure you haven't made a mistake, my dear fellow?"

John Bull only roared.

"What's the joke?" demanded Bob Cherry, coming up with several other fellows, attracted by the roars of laughter.

"The jokefulness seems to be terrific," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Oh, hold me, somebody!" gasped John Bull. "The champion ass! Bunter has been spoofing him with a terrific yarn."

"It's very odd," said Alonzo. "Bunter stated to me in the most explicit terms that Bull's auntie had decided to send me five hundred pounds, the same as Bull, because of my elevating influence in the Form."

The juniors shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It appears now that Bunter has made an incorrect statement. I cannot believe that he deliberately prevaricated. I fear there must be some mistake."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear fellows——"

"Here's Bunter," exclaimed Bob Cherry, catching sight of the Owl of the Remove on a seat under the elms. "Let's ask him."

Bunter was resting after his labours in the tuckshop. He needed a rest. But as he saw the crowd of juniors coming towards him, he made an effort to rise and bolt, but they were round him before he could get away.

Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles, with a feeble attempt at an ingratiating grin.

"I—I say, you fellows, it's a fine day, ain't it?" he remarked.

"What have you been telling Todd?"

"Todd! I—I don't remember telling him anything."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Bunter, surely your memory is failing," exclaimed Alonzo Todd, in astonishment. "You surely remember coming to me in the Cloisters with the news that John Bull's aunt had signified her intention of sending me five hundred pounds?"

"Oh!" said Bunter. "I—I say, you fellows, you know that was a joke."

"My dear Bunter——"

"It was only a little joke, of course," said Bunter. "I expected you to see through it at once. He, he, he!"

Bunter's feeble cackle died away under the grim, storn looks of the juniors. Bunter realised that he was dangerously near to a ragging. And Bunter had crammed himself so full in the tuckshop that he was feeling very uncomfortable within, and he felt that if a hand were laid upon him he would be ill.

"I—I say, you fellows——" he murmured feebly.

"It was very, very wrong of you, Bunter," said Todd. "My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked—nay, disgusted. You led me to stand a great feed at the tuckshop when I could not afford to do so. I owe Mrs. Mimble the great sum of nine pounds, fifteen shillings and tenpence, and I have only two shillings and sixpence to pay it with."

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"I am really placed in a most difficult and awkward position," said Todd, in great distress. "I can offer to place the whole of my pocket-money at the disposal of Mrs. Mimble; but how long will it take to pay off nine pounds, fifteen shillings and tenpence at the rate of two shillings a week?"

"My word! A great deal longer than Mrs. Mimble will be inclined to wait for the money," grinned Ogilvy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is really no laughing matter, my dear fellows. I am placed in a most unfortunate and discreditable position by Bunter's mistaken sense of humour."

"Well, we'll give Bunter a jolly good bumping for it, anyway," said Bob Cherry. "That will be some consolation to you, Todd."

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"My dear Cherry——"

"Collar him!"

"I—I say, you fellows!" exclaimed Bunter, as the juniors closed round him with grim looks. "D-d-d-don't you touch me, you know!"

"Rats!"

"I—I—I'm ill, you know."

"Yes; we've heard all about that before!" said Bob Cherry. "We know your illnesses, Bunt. Nothing like a bumping to cure you."

"Really, Cherry——"

"Collar the fat bounder!"

Billy Bunter was collared and jerked off the seat under the elms.

The fat junior did not make any resistance. He was incapable of it. He was like a lump of jelly in the hands of the Removites.

His fat face had turned a ghastly colour, and strange, mysterious sounds proceeded from his throat.

"My word!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "He does look seedy this time, though!"

"Grooh!"

"The genuineness is terrific, my worthy chums!"

"Groo-oo!"

"My dear fellows, pray let him alone!" said Alonzo Todd. "He looks as if he were seasick, and I know that is a dreadful feeling!"

The juniors released Bunter.

He fell back into his former position on the seat, his face changing into a variety of art shades of colour curious to look upon.

He was evidently in no condition to be bumped. For once, Nemesis had fairly overtaken the glutton of the Remove.

The juniors turned away. Bunter was not at that moment a pleasant sight to look upon. Alonzo Todd walked away with a deeply distressed face. Above all things, his excellent Uncle Benjamin had cautioned him to keep clear of getting into debt, and here he was in debt to the extent of nine pounds, fifteen shillings and tenpence, with assets half-a-crown to meet his liabilities. It was an awful position for the unfortunate Alonzo.

John Bull slipped his hand through Alonzo's arm.

The Duffer of Greyfriars turned a lack-lustre eye upon him.

"Cheer up!" said John Bull cheerfully.

"I'm so sorry, Bull, but I cannot help feeling depressed and anxious. I owe Mrs. Mimble the sum of nine pounds, fifteen shillings and tenpence——"

"Let's go and make an arrangement with her."

"But——"

"Come on!"

John Bull, in his masterful manner, marched Alonzo Todd off to the tuckshop, without listening to his objections.

Todd had not the least idea what he could say to Mrs. Mimble. When he started explaining to her that he couldn't pay that bill, he had a premonition of the expression that would come over the good dame's face. He had seen her look at Bunter.

He followed Bull nervously into the shop. Mrs. Mimble greeted them with a smile.

"My dear Mrs. Mimble——" began Todd haltingly.

John Bull cut in.

"Todd's come to settle his bill," he said. "Nine pounds fifteen-and-tenpence, isn't it?"

"Just that, Master Bull!"

John Bull laid a couple of five-pound notes on the counter.

"Give the change to your little boy, Mrs. Mimble!" he said.

"Thank you kindly, sir!"

"But my dear Bull——" ejaculated Alonzo.

"Come on, Duffer!" said John Bull.

And he dragged Alonzo away.

Outside the tuckshop, Alonzo insisted upon speaking.

"You do not really mean to pay that bill, Bull?" he exclaimed.

John Bull laughed.

"I've paid it, haven't I?" he said.

"Then I owe you——"

"Nothing!"

"But I cannot allow you——"

"Todd, old man, I insist upon your obliging me in this matter," said John Bull solemnly. "Not a word—I insist! I shall take it personally if you object!"

"If you put it like that, my dear Bull, I can only say——"

"Just so! Good-bye!"

And John Bull walked away with his hands in his pockets, leaving Alonzo Todd almost speechless with emotion.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.
Evening Dress Indispensable.

MY Uncle Benjamin would be very pleased if he knew, Trotter."

"Yes, sir. But how about you, Master Todd? What shall I tell the Head?"

"Ah, yes! Of course! Please to say, Trotter, that I shall be very pleased. You may assure Dr. Locke that I will present myself at five o'clock punctually!" said Alonzo.

Trotter apparently was in a hurry. He had the door open as Alonzo spoke, and anyone in the passage could have heard every word.

Hazeldene, Bulstrode, and Ogilvy were coming along the passage.

"Quick!" whispered Bulstrode, dragging the other two after him into the nearest empty study. "Here's a lark!"

"Yes, Master Todd," said Trotter, trotting into the passage. "Always be punctual, especially when you come to tea with the Head! And, besides, I've heard that late-comers always get cold tea."

"Thank you, Trotter! I'll certainly consider that," returned Alonzo.

And the three in the empty study heard Trotter's trotting die away and Alonzo Todd's door close before they ventured out.

"The wee Todd is a person of importance, it seems," grinned Ogilvy. "Tea with the Head—eh?"

"Perhaps the Head means to return thanks for that goose Alonzo presented to him," said Hazeldene, with a quiet smile at Bulstrode.

Bulstrode scowled slightly. He owed Alonzo Todd one, as the saying is, for the smashing of that hired automaton, and the incidental damage of one guinea. Alonzo had done it at the Head's command. But Bulstrode thought he ought to have known better.

"Oh, don't be funny, Hazeldene!" he said. "Perhaps you'll say next it's for brilliancy in Form? But I would like to know what the beggar's done."

The three looked earnestly at one another. There was nothing unusual in a junior being invited to tea with the Head. But Alonzo!

'Twas thus. Since Alonzo's appearance in Dr. Locke's drawing-room with the goose, little Molly Locke had promoted him to the highest pinnacle of importance at Greyfriars. And at last the doctor consented to invite Alonzo to tea to please her.

"I can't make it out," said Bulstrode perplexedly.

"What does it matter, Bulstrode? Leave him in peace for once."

The burly Removite looked as if he would like to leave Ogilvy in pieces.

"Oh, rot, Ogilvy!" said Hazeldene. "There's no harm in a little bit of fun. I say, I've an idea! Suppose we tell him that evening-dress is indispensable?"

A broad grin overspread the faces of Bulstrode and Ogilvy.

"Let us kiss him for his mother, Bulstrode!" said the Scotch youth. "Bend down thy napper to receive our crowns of myrtle! Ow! Chuck it, Hazeldene!"

Bulstrode and Hazeldene laughed as Ogilvy rubbed his damaged ear.

"But your suggestion's just the thing, Hazel!" said Bulstrode. "Let's get out! Come on to find the giddy Todd!"

"That's soon done!" said Ogilvy. "The beggar's in his study!"

And they approached Alonzo's door. They found the Duffer of Greyfriars in a brown study.

"Hullo, Todd! Thinking it out?"

Bulstrode had not meant anything in particular. Alonzo could only think of one thing just then. His face brightened perceptibly. The invitation had already made him famous.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I was, Bulstrode," he said mildly. "But I cannot imagine how you can know so soon that I am invited to take tea with the Head—"

The juniors grinned.

"How did you know?"

"Of course, I know, now you tell me!" interrupted Bulstrode. "My first remark referred to your studious attitude as I came in, Todd. You're going, of course?"

"Yes, Bulstrode. But I was just wishing my Uncle Benjamin was here. I am not quite decided what to—"

"Wear?" suggested Ogilvy, with owl-like gravity.

"How clever of you, Ogilvy! That is my exact difficulty," said Alonzo, with a beaming smile.

Bulstrode and Hazeldene nodded. Ogilvy had excelled himself for once. Alonzo was already well on the hooks.

"You're very right, Todd," said Hazeldene quietly. "I should be very particular on an occasion like this. The proper thing—"

"Is evening-dress," said Bulstrode.

Alonzo looked alarmed.

"Indispensable!" said Ogilvy emphatically.

"Then I'm afraid an insurmountable difficulty presents

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itself to my fulfilling promise to Dr. Locke," said Alonzo.

Hazeldene sighed.

"Are you quite sure, Ogilvy?" asked Alonzo anxiously.

"You see the Head might expel you, if you appeared in anything but the proper garments," said Bulstrode.

Alonzo turned a horrified gaze on Bulstrode. He had made an awful mistake this time. Why hadn't he ascertained such an important fact before accepting the invitation? Whatever should he do?"

They regarded him with the solemnity of Chinese mandarins.

"You see, Todd, anyone of us would be delighted to lend you a dress suit," began Ogilvy. "But—"

"Thank you, Ogilvy!" said Alonzo, with avidity.

"But we haven't any just now."

Alonzo went quite limp. To say his face was as long as a fiddle would be mild. As long as a whole orchestra would be better.

"Fellows like us don't expect invitations from the Head," explained Bulstrode. "We haven't anything just ready at the moment."

"Of course not," assented Alonzo; "but I thank you very much for the delicacy you observe in the discussion of my disability. It must be an oversight of my Uncle Benjamin's—"

"Ah! I've got it!" said Ogilvy brightly. "Couldn't we borrow a suit for him?"

"My Uncle Benjamin wouldn't—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's too much, you know. We meant you!"

"Oh!" said Alonzo. "It's very kind of you, Ogilvy. Where will you—"

Ogilvy waved his arm like a prince.

"Leave it to us, Todd," he said largely. "I think I can get the things for you, if you are agreeable?"

"I should be infinitely obliged, Ogilvy."

"Oh, that's all right! What time shall we bring them, Toddy?"

"Early, if you please, Ogilvy. My Uncle Benjamin would like me to have ample time to dress on such an occasion, I'm sure—"

"Good!" said all three. "We'll be here. By-bye, Todd!"

And seeing by Alonzo's expressive countenance that a ponderous speech of thanks was coming, they got out as quickly as they could. They felt it would be too much for them.

"Now, you ass!" said Bulstrode, as soon as they had laughed some of it off. "What's this rot of yours? Borrowing a dress suit? I must say you've done us in beautifully! You've spoiled the whole thing, really!"

"Not so fast, Bulstrode," said Ogilvy, with a quiet grin. "What about borrowing Loder's dress clothes?"

And in two minutes Hazeldene and Bulstrode were quite satisfied with Ogilvy's proposal.

"I know he's going out immediately after lessons to-day. I heard him tell that Greek chap. It will be quite easy. I'll get the things myself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Bulstrode very willingly left to Ogilvy the task of raiding Loder's study. Promptly, at two minutes after half-past four, they knocked at Alonzo's study door. Ogilvy was carrying a brown-paper parcel. They entered, to find that Alonzo was not yet there.

"Better than ever," chuckled Bulstrode. "He will fall on our necks for joy and weep tears of happiness."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the trio were more deferential than ever when Alonzo came in. The Duffer of Greyfriars was too full for words. He held up Loder's garments with eyes expressive of gratitude.

"You're sure no one will be embarrassed by this?" he asked.

Hazeldene made a choking sound, Bulstrode busied himself looking for a packet of pins, and Ogilvy coughed. They all knew well enough that Loder's things were about five sizes too large for Alonzo Todd.

"We'd better make haste, Todd," said Ogilvy. "Let me help you into these bags."

Alonzo was still too full to talk, and he submitted to the attentions of Ogilvy, much as a tailor's dummy might have done. Hazeldene and Bulstrode put in one or two critical remarks.

They hardly dared to look at Alonzo. But at last they risked it. The effect was nearly disastrous. Loder's trousers were at least a foot too long for Alonzo Todd, and where his feet should have been, there appeared two short

lengths of trousers at right angles on the floor, giving him an appearance of a "badly bent gentleman," so to speak.

Hazeldene made a noise like a miniature gas-engine out of control, until Bulstrode kicked him.

Ogilvy had a face like a judge, and Bulstrode himself found it hard to keep equally grave. But he braced himself with an effort, and helped Ogilvy.

"Shall I do, Hazeldene?" asked Alonzo.

Hazeldene was nearly bursting again, but he controlled himself.

"What are you laughing at Hazeldene, please?"

Bulstrode and Ogilvy seizing their opportunity, scowled at Hazeldene.

"I was thinking of my aunt, Todd. She used to look so funny in—"

"Your aunt, Hazeldene?" asked Alonzo, gaping with surprise. "How can you say such things? She never wore things like these, surely—"

"Ha, ha! Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode rushed forward with the coat for Alonzo. Hazeldene would spoil everything, yet!

"It's all right, Todd." They almost shouted, so as to drown Hazeldene's uncontrollable laughter. "You look ripping, old chap. Never mind the cackling ass. Ha, ha!"

The last exclamation was occasioned by the sight of Loder's coat-tails reaching down to the middle of Alonzo's calves. The Duffer of Greyfriars looked something like a low comedian without the paint. His sleeves hung over his hands, making his arms look like elephant's trunks.

"You do seem pleased, though; don't you, you fellows?" he said, smiling. "I'm so glad. It would have been fearful to go in the wrong things. These are a little large, I'm afraid. But perhaps you could arrange some more improvements with pins, Ogilvy?"

And Ogilvy did.

And Alonzo took his departure for the Head's at ten minutes to five. Then Bulstrode, Ogilvy and Hazeldene laid themselves on the study floor and chuckled in one steady stream of deepest merriment for fully ten minutes.

Meanwhile, Alonzo arrived at the Head's door. The maid appeared, and grinning from ear to ear, took in his name to the Head.

Alonzo entered—and conquered.

Dr. Locke and Mrs. Locke rose dazed. Little Molly ran behind her mother's chair. The Head could hardly be expected to hide his surprise. He was used to the vagaries of Alonzo Todd. But—

"Good-afternoon, Todd!" he said, very politely.

But Alonzo's luck was not in to-day. Seeing the strange effect he had on Mrs. Locke and Molly, he had begun to rub one leg against the other. He soon desisted. A pin coming loose in the process embedded itself in the calf of his leg, just as the doctor spoke. One side of Alonzo's face was instantly wreathed in pain. But he tried to smile, and succeeded in producing a very droll wink. Dr. Locke's face coloured.

"It was a pin, sir," said Alonzo feebly.

His chin dropped so low into his collar that he was the very picture of despair. The Head stared at him more than ever. Then he turned to his wife and daughter.

"Won't you give Master Todd some tea, Molly?" he said kindly.

Molly came forth from behind the chair. She still appeared to have some idea that Alonzo might bite. But in the end she assisted her mother to pour out the tea.

"Is it usual in your part of the country to dress for afternoon tea, Todd?" asked the Head, evidently thinking it best to reassure Alonzo, if possible.

"I don't know, sir—"

The Head almost dropped his cup. Mrs. Locke and Molly could not help but stare at Alonzo.

"You don't know, Todd," said the Head, rather tartly.

"No, sir. But my Uncle Benjamin would be able to tell you, sir, I'm sure."

Dr. Locke looked keenly at Alonzo. The Duffer of Greyfriars was on dangerous ground for a moment. But the most suspicious person would not have accused Alonzo of playing a practical joke. His face was perfect innocence—and some distress.

"Won't you sit down, Todd?" said the Head, resolved to humour Alonzo.

"I'd rather stand, sir, if I may," began Alonzo earnestly, remembering the pins.

"Tut, tut, my lad! Sit down!"

Alonzo looked round in deepest despair. All this time he had been nervously working his feet about, regardless of sundry pricks. Chancing to look down at his feet he gave a groan.

Ogilvy's pins had evidently been badly pinned. The trousers were hanging like two bags over Alonzo's boots.

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and he had unwittingly assumed his former badly bent aspect.

"Come, Todd!" said the Head again. "Why this hesitation?"

Down went Alonzo all forgetful of the pins in his extreme misery, reaching forward to take the cup from Mrs. Locke as he did so. He bounded up again with a yell like a savage, knocking the tea flying out of Mrs. Locke's hand.

"Ow! O-o-o-o!" shrieked Alonzo, backing on to the edge of the table, and getting three more in the small of the back. "O—h!"

The Head was speechless with astonishment. He began to think Alonzo Todd was out of his mind. He waved Mrs. Locke and Molly on one side, as if there was danger.

"I'm extremely sorry, sir," said Alonzo, almost tearfully. "But I was told this attire was the proper thing. I'm afraid I've had an accident in my arrangements—"

He got no further. Bowing to Mrs. Locke and Molly as he spoke, another pin asserted itself.

Alonzo bucked forward in the direction of the Head, and lost his balance. Down he went in a sitting position to receive the business end of six more pins.

The roar he gave made the doctor and his wife and daughter go white. But Dr. Locke thought that enough was as good as a feast.

"Get up, sir!" he said to Alonzo severely.

But it was needless. The flying ends of the long trousers fluttered in the doctor's sight but the fraction of a second. Alonzo leapt to his feet again as quick as an acrobat.

"What d'you mean, sir!" thundered the Head. "What d'you mean presenting yourself in this manner!"

"It is indispensable, sir!" moaned poor Alonzo, tugging at his garment to keep the pins off his flesh.

"Indispensable, sir!" said the Head.

"Ye-es, sir!" gasped Alonzo. "I—I was told so, sir."

"What?"

"I was in doubt what to wear, sir, and I was assured that evening-dress was indispensable on such an occasion, sir," said Alonzo, giving another little yelp, as another pin scratched him.

Dr. Locke looked at Alonzo. The anger faded out of his face, and his lips twitched. He looked at Mrs. Locke. That good lady was smiling, and trying not to laugh. Little Molly burst into a sudden shriek of laughter, and buried her face in a cushion.

Alonzo stood writhing in his evening clothes, with his face looking as if all the blood in his body had been pumped into it.

"My—my—bless my soul!" gasped the Head. "This is—this is extraordinary!"

"My dear sir—"

"Could you not see, Todd, that you were being deceived for the purposes of a joke?" demanded the Head.

"Joke, sir!"

"You—you are a most simple boy, Todd!"

"Simple, sir!" gasped Alonzo.

"Yes, ridiculously simple, Todd."

"Ridiculously, sir!"

"Pray do not repeat my words in that absurd, parrot-like manner, Todd!" exclaimed the Head tartly.

"Repeat your words, sir."

"Todd! I really—"

"Really, sir!"

"Oh, dear!" murmured Mrs. Locke. "Molly, you must not laugh! I forbid you to laugh in that way, Molly! Ha, ha, ha!"

Molly was suffocating. Mrs. Locke ran into the adjoining room. She felt that she would scream with merriment. Dr. Locke made a gallant effort to compose his face, but the sight of Alonzo Todd standing there with the trouser-legs extending over his boots, and the sleeves over the ends of his fingers, and twisting and turning as the pins scratched him, was too much.

The Head burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo Todd gave one wild look round the room, and fled. The door closed behind him, and Dr. Locke sank into a chair, and simply shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, dear, how absurd! Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bull Pays.

ALONZO TODD quitted the Head's house with his cheeks burning. He realised that he had made a terrific "bloomer" this time, and that his having tea with the Head had not been exactly a success. As a matter of fact, he hadn't had any tea at all. He came out of the house, and found several juniors waiting for him in the Close. He looked reproachfully at Bulstrode and Hazeldene.

"Had a good time?" asked Bulstrode cheerfully.

"My dear Bulstrode—"

"You haven't stayed very long," Hazeldene remarked.

"My dear Hazeldene—"

"Didn't you enjoy it?" asked Bulstrode.

Alonzo Todd looked at them more in sorrow than in anger.

"You have taken advantage of my trustfulness," he said.

"My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to have faith in human nature, although unscrupulous persons might take advantage of it. But, my dear fellows, to make me go to the Head's to tea in evening dress, when it was quite the wrong thing—"

"Wrong thing!" exclaimed Bulstrode, in astonishment.

"Yes, indeed!"

"Do you hear that, Hazeldene? He says it's the wrong thing, and he doesn't give us credit for our good intentions in the matter," said Bulstrode sadly. "I suppose it's too much to expect gratitude from anybody, but I did think that Todd would be decent about it."

Hazeldene sighed.

"Better not expect anything of anybody, Bulstrode, and then you never get disappointed," he replied. "But I admit that I, myself, had a higher opinion of Todd."

Alonzo Todd looked greatly distressed.

"I—I'm so sorry!" he exclaimed. "I—I understood that it was a jape, you know. If you fellows acted with good intentions, of course I am willing to take your kindness in the spirit in which it was meant, in spite of the deplorable results."

"Oh, Todd!"

"Oh, Alonzo!"

"I'm so—so very sorry if I've hurt your feelings," said Alonzo anxiously. "But pray excuse me now. I must get these things off. I am afraid they have been a trifle damaged."

And Todd hurried on towards the School House.

Bulstrode and Hazeldene staggered against the wall, holding their sides. Todd heard a sound suspiciously like laughter as he hurried on. But he would not suspect his kind friends of laughing.

He entered the School House, and there was a yell at once, as he was seen.

"What on earth are you doing in that rig?" demanded Harry Wharton. "Are you dressing for a comic turn somewhere?"

"My dear Wharton—"

"The comicfulness of the esteemed and ludicrous Todd is terrific."

"Good old Todd! Ha, ha, ha! My word! Where did you get those coat tails?"

"Where did you get those bags?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where did you dig up that dress suit?" roared John Bull, slapping Alonzo Todd on the shoulder.

"Ow! My dear Bull, I did not dig it up at all. It was lent to me. Bulstrode borrowed it somewhere to lend to me. I should be very glad to find the owner, as I desire to return it. I fear that it has been slightly damaged, and I wish to apologise very much for any injury the clothes have received."

As Todd had been walking through the mud in the Close with the trouser-legs extending a foot under his boots, the trousers certainly might be considered damaged.

A yelling crowd gathered round Alonzo.

In the midst of the merriment, Loder came out of his study, with a scowl on his face. The prefect was never very good-tempered; but just now he looked furious.

"Some of you kids been in my study?" he exclaimed angrily.

The juniors looked round at him. Some of them drew quietly away. Loder's look portended trouble to somebody.

"I haven't," said Wharton, as the prefect's eye seemed to single him out.

"Nor I," said Bob Cherry. "What's the matter?"

"Somebody's taken my dress clothes away!" growled Loder. "I warn the fellow, whoever he was, to bring them back at once. I don't like japes of this sort."

"My hat!"

"Oh, Todd!"

Loder caught sight of Todd, and pushed through the juniors roughly. He stared at the amazing figure of the Duffer of the Remove.

"Todd! What does this mean?"

"If you please, Loder—"

Loder gave a start as he recognised his own clothes on Todd. His face became transfigured with rage.

"Why, you—you—you—your cheeky young scoundrel!" he roared. "You've got my clothes on—and you've ruined them."

"Your clothes, Loder?" gasped Alonzo.

"You—you—you young thief!" Loder stared at his clothes, too dismayed, now he saw the damage that had been done, to be angry. "You've ruined them. They cost me ten pounds! You—you young villain!"

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NEXT WEEK: "SPOOFING ALONZO."

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ONE
PENNY.

"Oh, dear!"

"You'll pay for them!" gasped Loder. "I won't lick you. I won't give you lines. I'll just march you to the Head, and you'll pay for those clothes."

"I am so sorry, Loder, but it will be quite impossible for me to pay for the clothes, if they cost ten pounds. I have only half-a-crown, and the money that Bunter owes me, which is a little uncertain—"

"The uncertainty is terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, to the Head, you young swindler!"

"My dear Loder, it is extremely unjust to characterise me as a dishonest person. I am sure my Uncle Benjamin—"

"Come with me!" roared Loder.

"Hold on!" said John Bull quietly. "How much did you say the togs cost you, Loder?"

Loder glared at him.

"Ten pounds!" he snorted.

"Then you were done," said Bull quietly. "But if you say ten pounds, ten pounds it is, and there you are!"

He held out a ten-pound note to the astonished prefect. Loder gazed at it almost dazedly, and then gazed at John Bull.

"W-w-what do you mean?" he exclaimed.

"That's to pay for the clothes, and I'll keep them," said John Bull calmly. "They'll come in handy for amateur theatricals."

Loder stared at him, and then took the banknote. If John Bull chose to buy the clothes at that figure, he was welcome to do so. The clothes were not new, and, as a matter of fact, they had only cost Loder eight pounds in the first place. Loder did not think it necessary to mention that fact now.

"Oh, very well!" he exclaimed. "It will be a lot of trouble to me to get new things made, but if you really want to pay for the damage Todd has done—"

"Money talks," said John Bull tersely.

"Oh, very well!"

Loder slipped the banknote into his pocket and turned away. It was not a very dignified proceeding on his part to take it, perhaps, but probably Loder thought that ten pounds was worth more than what dignity he may have possessed.

The juniors looked at John Bull in great admiration.

"Got any more ten-pound notes to give away, Bull, old man?" said Nugent affectionately.

John Bull laughed.

"My dear Bull, I can only say—" began Alonzo Todd.

"Exactly."

"I can only say—"

"Rats!"

And Bull walked away, with his hands in his pockets. Bull was a most unpromising person to express gratitude to.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Musical Evening.

"BULL, old man!"

John Bull looked up from his work. He was finishing the French imposition that Monsieur Charpentier had so kindly bestowed upon him. John Bull very seldom had an imposition, but when he had he never left it till the last moment, as many of the boys did. He was too business-like and steady-going for that. He would put in a few minutes at it whenever he had a few minutes to spare, and his work was always done in time. He had a dozen more lines to write when Hazeldene, Skinner, and Snoop looked into his study with an affectionate greeting.

"Hallo!" said Bull, in his brusque way.

"Just looked in to see you," said Hazeldene pleasantly.

"That an imposition you're doing? Can I help you?"

Bull shook his head.

"I don't see how you can," he said. "Monsieur Charpentier gave it to me to do. You can't write it out for me, I suppose?"

"Yes, I could. I'd imitate your writing, too, and make it look as if it were your work."

"Can't be did."

"Well, I wanted to do you a good turn—"

"Thanks, all the same; but it's not business. Mossoo gave me the lines, and it would be a bit like telling lies to take in another chap's lines."

"We all do it here," said Hazeldene, colouring.

"Well, I'm not judging anybody else," said John Bull. "I don't like the idea myself, and so I'll do the impot. on my own. Thanks, all the same."

And he went on writing.

The visitors to the study looked at one another as John

Bull's pen travelled steadily and methodically across the paper.

They wanted to be John Bull's special friends. John Bull's special friends were likely to have a specially good time, under the circumstances. They were willing to stroke John Bull down the back to any extent, but, somehow or another, the sturdy junior did not seem amenable to "soft sawder."

"I suppose you'll soon be done that, Bull, old son?" said Skinner, after a pause.

"Yes, soon," said John Bull.

"Come out for a walk when you've finished?"

"Thanks, no; I'm going to write out fifty extra lines, ready for my next imposition," said Bull cheerfully. "Not much weather for walking out in the evening, is it?"

"Well, pleasant company, you know!" murmured Snoop.

"Pleasant mist, too—and pleasant rain," said John Bull, looking at the window. "I'll stay in, thanks."

"We were thinking of getting up a bit of a celebration in our study," Skinner remarked. "Would you care to come?"

"Certainly, dear boy!"

The other fellows looked at Skinner. He had invented the celebration on the spot, in his anxiety to chum up with John Bull.

"It will be a—a quiet little affair," said Skinner desperately. "Just a few fellows, and—and a song, you know. Wharton's going to bring his violin to accompany."

"I'll come," said Bull. "When?"

"Seven o'clock."

"Right-ho! Depend on me."

John Bull's pen travelled over the paper again. The three fellows looked at one another, and retired from the study. There was evidently nothing more to be done there.

"What on earth do you mean about a celebration in the study, Skinny?" Snoop inquired in the passage. "You're stony, ain't you?"

"Dead stony!"

"So am I."

"And I, too," said Hazeldene ruefully. "I was depending on a half-sov. at least from Bull. Crusty sort of beast, ain't he?"

"We can't stand a feed, that's certain," said Skinner; "but it doesn't matter. Bull's been fed up to the chin to-day. We'll have a little music."

"Well, if Wharton will come and play his fiddle, I suppose it will be all right. Wharton can play, when you come to think of it. Bit different from Bull and his awful concertina, anyway."

"Yes, rather. Thank goodness he never mentioned bringing that! I don't think I could stand that, even for the whole five hundred pounds."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were in the common-room, when Skinner came up with such an agreeable expression upon his face that they knew at once that he wanted something.

"Haven't heard your violin for a long time, Wharton," Skinner remarked.

Harry Wharton looked surprised.

"Why, I was playing last evening," he said.

"Ah! Were you? I didn't get a chance to come."

"Sorry," said Harry. "I asked any of the fellows to step in if they liked, and I felt sure that you heard me."

Skinner coloured a little. As a matter of fact, he cared nothing about music, and when he had heard that violin-playing was on, he had departed at once for the gym. And he had forgotten the whole matter by this time.

"Well, I—I'm sorry I missed it," he said. "You know what a musical chap I am, don't you?"

"Are you?" said Harry, in surprise. "I didn't know it."

"Ahem! I simply adore music!" said Skinner. "I wanted to ask you if you'd bring your fiddle along to my study about seven. I've got a few musical friends coming in, and they're so anxious to hear you play."

"If you mean that—"

"Mean it?" ejaculated Skinner. "Of course I mean it!"

"Then I'll be glad to come."

"Thanks awfully! Hope you other fellows will come, too," said Skinner. "No feed, you know—quite an artistic gathering."

"Oh, we'll come!"

And Skinner walked away very satisfied. He was in his study, with Snoop and Hazeldene, when seven o'clock struck from the old tower. John Bull looked in to the very minute. Nobody had ever known John Bull to be late.

"Come in!" said Skinner heartily. "In good time, I see. You're a business man—I can see that, Bull, old fellow!"

"Business all over," said Hazeldene admiringly.

"Just my sentiments," remarked Snoop. "When I look at Johnny Bull, I think to myself, what a splendid specimen

of a fine old English gentleman—I mean a fine young English gentleman, so to put it."

"Oh, cheese it!" said John Bull, in his charming direct manner.

Snoop turned pink.

"Ahem!" he murmured.

Billy Bunter looked in at the door. His face was spread over with a grin of anticipation. Bunter had a mysterious way of scenting out any sort of gathering that might possibly turn out to be a feed.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Get out, Bunter!"

"I suppose I can come in where my friend Bull comes?" said Billy Bunter warmly. "I'm sure that Bull wants me to stay."

"What rot!" said Johnny.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Clear out, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, you fellows, I say—"

Skinner reached out towards the poker. Billy Bunter stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once, to borrow a phrase from Shakespeare.

Harry Wharton & Co. appeared a few minutes later. Wharton had his violin case under his arm. Skinner greeted them with affectionate nods.

"Come right in," he said. "It's jolly good of you, Wharton. I suppose you'll be playing something classical, like—like Beethoven's Concerto in X minor."

"Well, I don't think I'll undertake to play a Concerto all by myself," said Harry, laughing. "I— Oh!"

He was fumbling in his pocket.

"Anybody seen the key of my violin case?" he asked.

"Do you keep it locked?" asked Skinner.

"Yes, rather, ever since Bunter borrowed it once, to practise on."

Wharton went through his pockets, but he could not find the key.

"Sorry," he exclaimed. "I ought to have looked before I came. Blessed if I know how I'm going to open the case."

"Might break it open," suggested Snoop.

Wharton glared.

"Ass!" he replied.

"Well, you see, I—I thought—"

"Wasn't the key in the pocket of your other jacket?" asked Nugent.

"By Jove! Yes! I'll be back in a minute, you chaps."

Wharton ran off, leaving his violin-case behind. As he approached his own study, a fat figure disappeared down the corridor. Wharton went into the study, and felt in the pockets of the jacket on the door, but no key was to be found. He returned to Skinner's study.

"Sorry!" he announced. "I can't possibly get the case open without the key, and the key's lost. It's rotten, I know."

He picked up the violin-case.

"Never mind," said John Bull. "I'll fetch my concertina if you like."

Harry Wharton & Co. did not appear to hear the remark. They left the study hurriedly.

John Bull stood with his hands in his pockets, whistling.

Skinner, Snoop, and Hazeldene looked at one another in dismay. Their musical evening, so far, did not seem very successful. John Bull looked at them inquiringly.

"Well, shall I fetch my concertina?" he asked.

Skinner hesitated. Gladly enough would he have obliged John Bull. He would have done anything for the possessor of five hundred pounds, excepting that. But he felt that he could not undertake to listen to that awful instrument of torture at close quarters, even if Bull had offered him half Aunt Tabitha's money in a lump.

"Well?" said Bull brusquely.

"I—I think I'd like to hear the concertina," murmured Snoop.

"Yes, another time," said Skinner, with desperate cheerfulness. "But—but just now, you know, I was thinking that we might play—er—dominoes."

"Good!" exclaimed Hazeldene, with great enthusiasm. "I simply adore dominoes. You'd like to play dominoes, Bull."

"Ripping game," said Snoop. "So—er—exciting."

John Bull snorted.

"Rats!" he replied.

"Oh, I say, Bull! Bull, old man, you're not going! Look here, Bull, you—you can bring the concertina if you like!" exclaimed Skinner desperately.

But Bull was gone.

The three schemers stood in dismay. The little scheme had worked out quite wrongly, and the chances were that they had offended John Bull, instead of propitiating him. A fat face blinked in at the door.

(Continued on page 24.)



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"Hullo!" said Bunter. "I haven't heard any music."
 "Oh, clear out, confound you!" Skinner growled. "I don't want any of your jaw now."
 "Bull gone?"
 "Yes, you fat rotter! Buzz-off!"
 "Wharton's gone, too, I see," Bunter remarked, blinking round the study. "Jolly soon over, your musical evening, Skinny. You might as well have asked me."
 "Oh, get out!"
 The Owl of the Remove grinned.
 "It might have paid you to ask me," he remarked.
 "You see, I might have been able to find the key of Wharton's violin-case."

"Eh?"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Billy Bunter.
 The three schemers stared at the fat junior. It dawned upon them that the loss of the key had been Bunter's work, in return for his exclusion from the party. He had certainly succeeded in "mucking-up" the musical evening.
 "You fat young fraud!" roared Skinner furiously.
 "Ha, ha, ha!" Bunter threw a small key clinking upon the table. "Give that to Wharton when you see him again, will you? Say I found it in a jacket pocket on a door. Ha, ha, ha!"
 Skinner, Snoop, and Hazeldene made a rush at him. Billy Bunter slammed the door and fled.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Burglarious.

"GOOD-EVENING, Todd!"

Alonzo Todd looked up from the large volume he was poring over, to see Skinner and Snoop insinuating themselves into the library.

"Good-evening, Skinner!" he said pleasantly.
 "I hope you'll excuse me—"
 "And me, Todd," put in Snoop. "Sorry to disturb you, really. Good book, eh? Red Indians, I suppose?"

"No, indeed, Snoop," returned Alonzo. "My Uncle Benjamin told me never to read books of that sort. I'm reading 'Wholesome Lessons for Humanity, Gathered from the Lesser-known Habits of the American Fauna.' I will lend it to you when I've finished with it, if you like."

Skinner and Snoop assumed an attitude of profound attention, but they hastened to declare that they couldn't think of troubling Alonzo so much.

"It isn't a trouble, really," Alonzo said.
 "And I think we had better go, Snoop," said Skinner, as if he had not heard Alonzo. "It isn't fair to bother him with what we have on our minds, at such a time."

"No. Perhaps you're right, Skinner."
 "Oh, but I could not consent to let you go now," said Alonzo. "My Uncle Benjamin said I was always to be obliging and make myself useful on every possible occasion."
 "Well, what's to be done?" demanded Skinner, of his companion. "It isn't right, really—"

Alonzo looked almost imploringly from one to the other.
 "I beg of you to tell me, Skinner and Snoop," he said. "I can finish my reading another time, especially if it is anything particular."

Skinner and Snoop exchanged hurried glances. Alonzo Todd was playing into their hands. Their unusual politeness did not appear to excite his suspicions.

"That's the worst of it," said Snoop despondently. "It's about a burglary."

"Burglary!" gasped Alonzo, horror-stricken.
 Skinner and Snoop looked at him very seriously.
 "I'm afraid my Uncle Benjamin wouldn't approve of my taking part in a burglary, Skinner."

"Oh, don't alarm yourself, Todd!" replied Skinner. "It isn't anything like that. But we've discovered that one is to be committed. Snoop and I were having a walk through the fields just after tea to-night, and while passing a fir plantation we overheard two men plotting to rob Bull's study."

Alonzo's face was a picture of horror. He turned such a stare of consternation on Skinner that the latter had to stop for the moment lest he should burst out laughing.

"Why, that's my study also, Skinner!" said the Duffer of Greyfriars.

"Yes, we know. Now you see why we came to you, Todd."

"Of course. Need I say how grateful I am to you? My Uncle Benjamin would thank—"

"And we heard them arranging that the one who is to commit the burglary will disguise himself as M. Charpentier," interrupted Skinner, in an awed voice, and recklessly flouting Alonzo's celebrated relation.

"Dear me! How strange! Don't you think it would be best to tell the—"

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Skinner and Snoop shook their heads vigorously.
 "Wouldn't do to tell anyone, Todd," said Skinner. "The burglar is after Bull's money, thinking Bull keeps it in his study. We were trying to think of some way of checking the rascal. The fellows would only think we had got the whole thing up between ourselves if it came out, you know."
 "If someone would keep watch now," suggested Snoop.
 "I would myself, only I'm such a sleepy chap—"
 "So would I," said Skinner. "I had an idea at first of mounting guard, without bothering Todd like this. I had cut-and-dried plans for capturing the brute, too. But I really cannot put such a lot of things off. It's simply rotten—"
 "Pray don't worry about the trouble, my dear Skinner," said Alonzo, swallowing the bait whole. "Perhaps I could do something, you know."

"Well, there's no reason why a fellow should not defend his own property, anyway," said Snoop. "If it were my study, I'd give the boulder a reception, I give you my word!"

"Well," said Skinner diffidently, "a determined fellow might do a lot. But in any case, there isn't much time. The fellow had found out by some means that Bull is usually in the common-room at half-past eight."

Alonzo Todd jumped up. Putting his book away, he walked to the door.

"Why, what are you going to do, Todd?" cried Skinner and Snoop, in mock surprise.

"I'm going to do what my Uncle Benjamin would recommend, I'm sure," said Alonzo. "I'm going to prevent the burglary—nay, capture him if I can, Skinner and Snoop."

And there was a real, heroic light in Alonzo Todd's eyes.
 "Don't I wish I could help you?" said Snoop.

"And I," echoed Skinner. "Stay, Todd. I can help you. If you got a pail of some stuff or other to chuck over him now?"

"Thank you, Skinner. I'll think about that. I shall inform my Uncle Benjamin of your kindness in letting me know of this. I should be sorry if Bull lost any money, of course, and I cannot permit myself to be robbed of some valuable books that Uncle Benjamin gave me."

"So that settles it," grinned Skinner, as Alonzo trotted off to make ready for his vigil.

Arrived at the study he shared with John Bull, Alonzo took a cautious look through the window to see if there was anyone in the quadrangle. But there wasn't a soul in sight.

The moon was just rising in all her glory. It did not strike Alonzo as strange that a burglar should choose such an evening. But he was glad the moonlight would enable him to see anyone approach, however careful that person might be.

"Dear me!" he said to himself. "I really think that idea of a bucket that Skinner mentioned will be a good thing. Now, where can I get a bucket, I wonder?"

And the Duffer of Greyfriars sat down to think it out. He had been the victim of more than one jape in which a bucket figured prominently. But up to now, he had never been on the aggressive side, so to put it, and where a bucket might be obtained presented itself to Alonzo as a really deep problem.

Suddenly he jumped from his seat.
 "Why, of course," he said, smiling placidly. "Trotter leaves one by the side of that old water-butt sometimes. I'll go and look."

Five minutes later Alonzo Todd returned to the study with a bucket in his hand. Hiding it in one corner of the room, he began to hunt for things that would make up a nice mixture.

Tins of blacking, some liquid glue, transparent gum, some mouldy coffee-grounds that had been overlooked, were shortly unearthed.

"That would be a good thing to put in, too," said Alonzo, coming across an egg with a crack in the shell a moment later. "Oh, dear!"

Still, he found plenty of "nice" things to put in the bucket. Then when he had filled the bucket with water, he locked his study door. He was determined that the burglar should have no more chance than could be helped. Then he made the nauseous mixture.

"I much regret that this should be necessary," he said musingly. "But I think Uncle Benjamin would agree that I'm left no option. He would also say that wrongdoers deserve a lesson sometimes, I'm sure."

And, after satisfying himself that the stuff would do, he placed it under the window, and sat down to watch.

For greater security he had opened the window.
 "Dear me, it is cold, though!" said Alonzo. "I wish I'd lighted the fire."

The thought was father to the deed. He was on the point of striking a match, when it occurred to him that it would probably be seen by the burglar. The fellow would be watching the window.

With a sigh Alonzo sat down again behind the curtains.

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Ten minutes passed. Despite the way he rubbed his arms and thighs, and the way he kept blowing through his hands, Alonzo was nearly stiff.

"Dear me," he said. "I wish he'd come——"

The absurdity of his remark inspired a still more chilling silence. Alonzo Todd began to think about deserting his vigil—very briefly, of course, while he went to fetch his overcoat.

Then he reflected that even so short a time would be ample for a skilful burglar to make his depredations.

"I might fasten the window down," he thought, his teeth chattering with the cold.

But that would make a noise, and the burglar would then depart without receiving his lesson. No. Alonzo determined to sit it out if they came in the morning, and found him congealed into an icicle.

But the cold was hard to bear, and he was on the point of risking the run for his overcoat, when there was a slight stir in the quadrangle.

In a moment Alonzo's heart was in his mouth, as the saying is. Yes! There it was again. A footstep—and it was coming towards the open window, too! In his anxiety Alonzo nearly knocked the bucket over. The narrow escape somewhat brought him to his mind. Carefully shifting the bucket, he knelt down and peered over the window-sill. He drew his head back immediately.

There in the middle of the quadrangle was a short fat figure moving about in a most mysterious way. Alonzo thought it looked like a Frenchman, too. There could not be much doubt. This was the burglar. Alonzo cowered behind the sill, and nearly upset the bucket again.

"Oh, dear!" he murmured, as the steps came nearer.

Then Alonzo's pulse beat wildly as he heard a rapid jabber in French ascend from below.

"Oh, dear!" repeated Alonzo. "Skinner and Snoop were right. The ruffian's rope-ladder will rattle on the window-sill in a moment. How shall I have courage enough to throw it down again? Oh, dear!"

But no rope-ladder was flung into the room. The French language was having a red-letter day, though. Alonzo could not but note that he had never heard so many words in such a short time before.

Cautiously he peered over the window-sill again. There in the moonlight was a fat little figure jabbering away like a baboon, and gesticulating in a most alarming manner.

Alonzo was spellbound.

"He's a clever fellow, anyway," he murmured. "What a pity that a man who can imitate M. Charpentier so well as that should take to thieving! Why, it's M. Charpentier to the life!"

His further reflections were cut short by the burglar stopping and beginning to search in a back pocket for something.

"Oh, dear!" moaned Alonzo. "Here comes the rope-ladder! Now, here goes!"

And Alonzo stooped down for the bucket. But the jabbering began again, and, peering out, Alonzo saw that the burglar had commenced to move up and down right under the study window. Now was the time.

Alonzo, thinking this was the strangest burglar ever known, lifted the bucket on to the window-sill. He was desperately cold, and he meant that the fellow should have the full benefit when he did throw it.

"Dear me! His voice is very disconcerting to me!" murmured Alonzo, as the man was about to pass under the window again. "Here goes!"

"Glorious orb of heaven, pour out thy light!" raved the burglar, in French.

And Alonzo did his best.

"Ah! Ma foi! Vhat eet ees? Oh, Heaven!" screamed the burglar. "Vhat ruffian pour ze sewair on ze head of me!"

Alonzo blanched. The voice was terribly like M. Charpentier's.

"It's only his cunning, though," thought the Duffer of Greyfriars. "He would have been up here in another moment."

And with that he sent the last drops from the bucket over his victim.

"Ah, again it ees! Ze scoundrel——"

"Go away!" said Alonzo, as mildly as he could. "You're a thief, and must expect such treatment!"

"Teifs!" screamed the burglar. "It ees Tott. I hear veez myself! Ah, I go to zee Head! R-r-revenge!"

"It is no use to think to deceive me any more," said Alonzo. "I have heard all about you. I know, you know. Now go away, and be thankful that I do not raise the alarm instead of letting you go. You are a naughty man!"

"Let me go!" howled the figure in the quadrangle.

And with a yell like a wild Indian, it darted off into the gloom on the other side of the Close.

And after carefully fastening up the window, Alonzo Todd locked the door and went to the dormitory, without troubling to take back Trotter's bucket.

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NEXT
WEEK:

"SPOOFING ALONZO."

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ONE
PENNY.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Magnanimous Mossoo.

"CIEL! I am soak—I am drench! I am black as ze aco of ze spade, and I am smell fearful viz myself!"

The little fat figure hopped in at the doorway of the School House, gesticulating and shrieking.

There was a rush of fellows to look at him.

"Ciel! Help! Ze back! Ze smell! Mon Dieu!"

"It's Monsieur Charpentier!" exclaimed Wingate, of the Sixth, in wonder.

"My hat!"

"Old Mossoo!"

"What's he been doing?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The little Frenchman raved and waved his hands. He was at the very top of his compass as he shrieked.

"Mon Dieu! I am outrage! I am drown! Ciel! R-r-revenge!"

"My word!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellows could not help yelling at the strange sight.

The Remove were going up to bed, but they stopped as they heard the wild yells of the little Frenchman, and roared with laughter.

Alonzo was already in the dormitory. He wanted to wash off the stains he had gathered from the mixture before he turned in.

Mr. Quelch came hurrying out of his study.

He started with amazement and horror at the sight of the wild, blackened figure, with its evil scent and its wildly-waving hands.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the Remove-master. "Who—what is that?"

"Ciel! I am outrage!"

"Monsieur Charpentier!"

"Hélas! I know not vezzer I am Monsieur Charpentier, or vezzer I dream viz myself!" the little Frenchman gasped.

"Whatever has happened?" gasped the Remove-master.

"Good heavens! How could you possibly get into that state, Monsieur Charpentier?"

"I am drench viz ze muck zat is trown over me from ze window of ze study, sair."

Mr. Quelch's brow darkened.

"What? Do you mean to say that one of the boys——"

"Oui, oui, oui! It is zat Todd!"

"Todd? You amaze me! I am sure Todd would never——"

"I hear his voice viz him, sair. It is sa voix—his voice."

"I am amazed, Monsieur Charpentier. I will send for Todd at once. Skinner, will you go and fetch Todd? Dear me, I was sure I saw Skinner there! Hazeldene, please go and find Todd, and bring him here at once."

"Yes, sir," said Hazeldene.

Alonzo Todd arrived in a few minutes with Hazeldene. He stared at the blackened figure of the French-master in great amazement.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed. "How very odd! It is amazing! Mr. Quelch, that man is a burglar."

"What?"

"He is a burglar, sir!"

"Are you mad, Todd?"

"Certainly not, sir. There is no insanity in the family, so far as I am aware, sir. People have said that my Uncle Benjamin is eccentric, but——"

"Todd!"

"Yes, sir, I was warned that a burglar was coming to attempt to break into my study, sir, to steal John Bull's money."

"This is Monsieur Charpentier."

Alonzo Todd smiled the smile of superior knowledge.

"Not at all, sir," he said. "This is not Monsieur Charpentier, sir. That is a wicked burglar, sir, disguised as Monsieur Charpentier."

"What?" shouted Mr. Quelch.

Alonzo jumped. The crowd of fellows roared with laughter—they could not help it. Even the Remove-master's frowning glances could not repress the merriment.

"Todd, I do not know whether you are utterly stupid, or whether this is an astounding piece of impertinence——"

"Oh, sir! Impertinence?"

"Yes, Todd. This is Monsieur Charpentier——"

"It's a burglar, sir."

"Boy, do you dare to contradict me?"

"N-n-n-no, sir. My Uncle Benjamin told me never to contradict a master, sir, even when he was in the wrong."

The fellows roared again.

"Todd," said Mr. Quelch, controlling his temper with difficulty, "this is Monsieur Charpentier. I suppose some-

body has told you that it was a burglar in disguise—an absurd story, which would have imposed upon no one but you, I am sure. You have treated Monsieur Charpentier in a disgraceful way."

"I am soaked! It is so awfulest ting! I am drench. I smell fearful—"

Alonzo's eyes almost started from his head as he realised that it was the genuine Monsieur Charpentier who stood before him.

"Oh, sir," he gasped, "I—I—I'm so sorry!"

"Your sorrow will not remove the horrible mess you have thrown over Monsieur Charpentier," said the Remove-master tartly. "Who was it told you this ridiculous story?"

"Under the circumstances, sir, I—I would rather not give you their names, sir," stammered the Duffer of Greyfriars.

"Todd!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir! My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me, sir, that I should never tell tales for any reason whatever, sir," said Alonzo.

"Then the punishment will fall upon yourself solely!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Follow me into my study immediately, Todd."

"Ye-e-e-s, sir! Oh, certainly!"

"I assure you, Monsieur Charpentier, that the offender will be adequately punished," said the Remove-master, with a setting of the lips which showed that he meant every word he said.

"Ciel! I zink zat ze silly garcon should be punish—zat is so. At ze same time, sair, I see zat he 'ave been taken in—vat you call spoof. I zink zat I pardon him," said Mossos magnanimously. "I zink I beg you not to punish him, sair."

Mr. Quelch halted.

"What? After what he has done, Monsieur Charpentier?"

"I zink zat he is a victim," said the good little Frenchman.

"I zink I takes it as a great favour if you pardon him, sair."

"I will certainly do so at your request, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "I only trust that Todd will fully understand and appreciate your magnanimity, monsieur."

"Oh, sir," exclaimed Alonzo Todd, "I assure you that you shall have no reason to be in the slightest degree disappointed with me in that respect, sir! I am only too keenly conscious of the extent to which I am beholden to this kind-hearted gentleman, whom I have injured under a misapprehension and quite unwittingly."

"Good old dictionary!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Go it, Toddy!"

Mr. Quelch turned away, trying not to smile. The little Frenchman grinned under his covering of blackness.

Alonzo Todd could be very funny sometimes, while in complete unconsciousness of the fact.

"I zink zat it is all right, Todd," said Monsieur Charpentier. "But if I find ze boys zat are really to blame I makes it varm ting for zem."

And the little Frenchman waddled away to a bath-room, and the boys gave him a cheer as he went—a thing they had seldom done for Mossos. But there was no doubt that Mossos had been very magnanimous on this occasion.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Too Much!

JOHN BULL sat in his study the next day, looking somewhat disconsolately at the case containing his concertina. John Bull had not done any concertina practice for some time, and he missed that pleasure. The other fellows missed it—but they were glad to do so—in fact, delighted. But John Bull was not pleased. There is none of us who does not have his little weakness—and that concertina was John Bull's weakness.

But John Bull had given his word that he would not play the concertina again unless he was asked; and that he would never be asked was the remotest of possibilities.

"It's rotten!" said John Bull disconsolately.

"Oh, no, it isn't so bad as that, old fellow!" said a voice at the door.

John Bull looked round. Billy Bunter was blinking into the study.

"Hallo!" said Bull gruffly.

"It's not very nice perhaps," said Bunter. "But you shouldn't call it rotten. It's not so bad as all that."

"What are you talking about?" demanded John Bull.

"The concertina."

"Ass!"

"I—I thought you were speaking of the concertina, as—as you were looking at it," stammered Billy Bunter. "M-m-my mistake, of course!"

"Do you want anything?" asked John Bull directly.

"Ye-e-e-s."

"How much?"

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Bunter looked injured.

"Oh, really, Bull, I don't think you ought to impute mercenary motives to me like that. We've come to ask you—Come in, Snoop, old man, you needn't be shy. We've come to ask you if you'd mind giving us a little music."

John Bull's face brightened up at once.

Snoop came into the study, grinning. The two of them stood and looked at John Bull.

"We simply dote on music," said Bunter. "I was trying to get a chance to hear Wharton playing his violin last evening, but it didn't come off somehow. But—but I know Wharton's violin is nothing like your concertina. You know that, Snoop?"

"Yes, rather!" said Snoop.

"We hoped you'd play to us if we asked you," said Bunter. "There's plenty of time before afternoon school, if you'd be kind enough to give us a tune."

John Bull's face had brightened up wonderfully. Billy Bunter had touched his weak point. If there was one matter upon which John Bull could be flattered, it was upon his concertina playing. There he was at the mercy of an insidious flatterer. The expression upon his face showed Bunter and Snoop that he was their prey.

"The other fellows aren't musical, you know," Bunter went on, pursuing his advantage. "Harry Wharton thinks he can play; but, bless you, he doesn't know anything about real music. Now, your concertina reminds me of—of an organ in a cathedral—and—and the chorus in a good oratorio—and an operatic work, you know. You seem to get the good effects of a whole orchestra into the one instrument."

John Bull smiled.

"I didn't know that you had such a keen taste and such an ear for music," he said. "I suppose every fellow has something in him, if you can only find it out—even the biggest ass, you know."

Bunter coughed.

John Bull's remark was not exactly gratifying. But nothing the possessor of five hundred pounds could have said would have offended William George Bunter.

"I suppose you wouldn't mind playing us a tune or two?" Bunter remarked engagingly.

John Bull nodded.

"I should be delighted if you'd really like me to," he said.

"Oh, really, Bull, we've been looking forward to it for a long time! Haven't we, Snoop?"

"Just so!" said Snoop. "But we hadn't the cheek to ask really. It seems like asking a chap like Turner to paint us a picture, or Tennyson to write a poem for us."

"That's it," said Bunter. "It seems like a cheek. But then we thought you might be willing to do it, so as to improve our musical taste."

"I'll play for you with pleasure," said John Bull. "The fellows made me promise to keep off the concertina unless I were asked to play."

"Well, we're asking you."

"And I'll play."

John Bull opened the case and took out the famous concertina—the instrument which had caused so much suffering since it had been manufactured.

Bunter and Snoop drew a deep breath each, like fellows preparing to mount the scaffold.

They had found the way to John Bull's heart, and if they could endure the concertina, there was no doubt that they would have a permanent friendship with him. John Bull would be as chummy as they chose with the fellows who admired his concertina, and were eager to hear him playing it.

But would they be able to stand the horrid discords? It was a terrible price to have to pay, even for a free share in five hundred pounds.

They were very nervous of the ordeal. But both had made up their minds that they would stick it out manfully to the very finish.

"Better lock the door," Snoop remarked. "Those unmusical bounders may come and interrupt, as they did the other day, you know."

"Yes, lock it," said Bunter.

John Bull nodded assent. The door was locked, and Bunter and Snoop sat down to enjoy the music.

John Bull drew open the concertina with a long, shuddering, rasping sound, and Bunter started as if he had the toothache. Snoop sat tight.

Bull sat on the corner of the table, his favourite position for playing, and started. He had his head a little on one side, and a dreamy expression on his face.

Crash! Grind! Gr-r-r-r! Sereech!

The concertina was fairly going. John Bull threw himself into it, and slaved away at the concertina with all his force, producing a greater volume of hideous noise than he had ever succeeded in extracting from it before.

Billy Bunter closed his eyes, and would gladly have closed his ears. Snoop held on tight to the arms of his chair, and set his teeth.

Cras-s-s-sh!

There was a sound of hurried footsteps in the passage. The door was tried, and then it was hammered upon furiously from outside.

"Stop that row!"

"Chuck it, I say!"

"You villain! Stop it!"

John Bull sawed and scraped on.

The hammering at the door grew louder. Not the slightest heed of it did the musician take. He was rapt, as it were, in the ocean of harmony, only there wasn't much harmony in this case.

Some concertinas sound well when they are played; some don't. John Bull's one was of the variety that don't.

Jangled, out of tune, and harsh, was a mild description of it. Even Shakespeare had no words to describe it fully.

Hammer, hammer, hammer! came at the door. Then came Wharton's voice shouting through the keyhole.

"Bull! John Bull! Stop it!"

Cras-s-s-sh! Grin-n-n-nd!

"Bull! You're breaking your promise!"

John Bull ceased to saw.

"I'm not!" he called back. "I'd punch your head for that, Wharton, if you were in here!"

"You promised never to play that beastly thing here again, unless you were asked," shouted Wharton wrathfully.

"I know I did, and I've kept my word."

"You're playing it now," yelled Bob Cherry.

"I've been asked."

"What!"

"I've been asked."

"Oh, don't rot!"

EVERY
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ONE
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"Beautiful!" said Snoop, with a groan.

"Good!"

John Bull ground on at the concertina. He took not the slightest notice of the hammering at the door, or the threats bawled through the keyhole.

Had Bunter and Snoop been able to stand it, there is no doubt that the rest of the Remove would have had to stand it too, for the door was locked, and they could not burst it open. But human nature could not stand too much; the endurance of flesh and blood had its limits.

Snoop's endurance reached its limit first.

He staggered to his feet.

"Hold on!" whispered Bunter. "It can't last much longer."

Snoop shook his head wildly

"I—I can't!" he gasped.

He staggered to the door.

"Hold on!" yelled Bunter desperately.

But Snoop had turned back the key, and opened the door. He simply reeled into the passage.

There was a yell from the juniors outside, and they rushed into the study.

"I say, you fellows—" began Bunter feebly.

Someone hurled Bunter's chair over, and he bumped on the floor, and rolled under the table. He deemed it wiser to remain there.

John Bull was torn off the table in a second. His concertina went rolling on the floor, and John Bull went rolling over it, and a dozen infuriated juniors rolled over him.

"Bump him!" rose the shout. "Bump him!"

Next Week:

"SPOOFING ALONZO!"

Another Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By
FRANK RICHARDS; and

A long instalment of our splendid new serial,

"WOLVES OF THE DEEP."

By **SIDNEY DREW.**

ORDER YOUR "MAGNET" IN ADVANCE.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

"Bunter and Snoop asked me. They're in here, listening to the music," said John Bull indignantly. "You see, there are at least two chaps in the Remove who can appreciate really good and classical music."

"You ass!" roared Wharton. "They're spoofing you! They're stuffing you up! Chuck it! I tell you we can't stand that row!"

"Rats!"

John Bull started again.

The inharmonious, unmelodious strains of the concertina rang through the study, and through the Remove passage.

The juniors outside in the passage raved. Fellows in the Close heard the hideous discord, and walked quickly away with their fingers to their ears.

But the greatest sufferers were the two sycophants in the study. Bunter and Snoop were paying dear for their duplicity.

Neither of the juniors were musical. If either had been, he would have gone into a fit. But, without being musical, they had nerves. And no known set of nerves—with the exception of John Bull's—could have stood that terrible concertina at close quarters.

Billy Bunter felt as if someone were hammering nails into his ears while a bad attack of toothache spread all over his head. That was the charming effect of John Bull's music at close range.

Snoop's expressions, changing every moment, showed how much he suffered. The sweat was pouring down his face almost in chunks.

"Oh!" grunted Bunter suddenly.

John Bull looked at him.

"Did you speak, Bunter?" he asked.

"No—yes!" stammered Bunter. "I said it was—was lovely."

Strong hands grasped the struggling junior. He was bumped, and bumped again. Meanwhile, Bulstrode and Skinner were taking it in turns to jump on the concertina. A few agonised squeaks escaped from that instrument, and then its dreaded voice was silent for ever.

The juniors had slain the jabberwock, so to speak!

The concertina had lost all semblance to the form of a concertina. John Bull had almost lost all semblance to a junior. He was dusty dishevelled; his clothes in rags, his collar torn off, his very trousers ripped and rent. Never had a junior been so handled in all the history of Greyfriars. And as he was clutched and bumped, and rolled and pushed, sovereigns and banknotes rolled out of his pockets and over the floor.

"There!" gasped Harry Wharton at last. "I think that will do!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Looks like it."

"The lookfulness is terrific."

Bulstrode gave a final stamp upon the concertina, and then the avengers streamed out of the study.

John Bull was left sitting beside his ruined concertina, gasping. He sat in the midst of spilled sovereigns, but he did not heed them. He was thinking of his concertina, so far as he was able to think at all.

"My hat!" he gasped at last.

Bob Cherry looked back as he went, and laughed.

"Rolling in money, and no mistake, now!" he said.

The juniors roared.

They left John Bull sitting in money, if not rolling in it. And they went away with the pleased feeling of duty well done, and the happy consciousness that the concertina would be heard no more at Greyfriars.

THE END.

NEXT
WEEK:

"SPOOFING ALONZO."

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

GRAND NEW ADVENTURE SERIAL COMMENCES TO-DAY.

Wolves of the Deep.

The Story of a Great Conspiracy, introducing Ferrers Lord and Ching-Lung.

By **SIDNEY DREW.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Mysterious Ferrers Lord.

A wet, misty night had followed a day of blustering wind and rain. The Great City slumbered beneath its grey canopy of smoke, and the huge clock at Westminster sent its chimes reverberating sullenly across the wilderness of roofs and chimneys.

The tide was racing out, gurgling and hissing weirdly against the pillars of the dark bridge. A few lanterns glimmered upon the moored barges, and the narrowing lights of the Embankment glistened dimly in the oily stream. It was no night to tempt stragglers abroad. The few belated wayfarers and merry-makers turned up their collars and hurried on doggedly.

As Big Ben's lusty voice struck two, a hansom came spinning rapidly up the incline of the bridge. A young fellow in spotless evening-dress was lying back lazily among the cushions puffing at a cigarette. The horse stumbled upon the greasy pavement, and he pushed open the trapdoor in the roof of the cab. The cabby bent to listen.

"Look here, driver," he said angrily, "I may be insured, but I don't want to get my neck broken! I'm rather partial to my neck, if it's all the same to you. That's twice you have narrowly escaped pitching me out. It's not a matter of life and death, or even a fire. Take your time, my friend."

"All right, sir; I beg your pardon, sir. The roads is just grease."

He tightened the reins, and slackened the pace of the restive horse. As the cab neared the centre of the bridge a piercing shriek for help rose from the black river.

The young man dashed open the door of the hansom, and flung himself out. He ran to the parapet of the bridge and looked down. A barge had broken from its moorings, and the mad current was sending it tearing towards the bridge. A solitary woman, mad with terror, was labouring at the ponderous steering-oar and shrieking piteously for aid.

The young man turned white as death. The oar was too heavy for the woman's arms. Like a flash the barge darted towards the bridge, spun round like a cork in the grip of the boiling current, and struck one of the massive pillars with a deafening crash.

"Stop him! Stop him!"

They were too late. The young man flung his dress-coat into the muddy gutter, kicked off his shoes, and gained the parapet at a bound. Eager hands tried to seize him and drag him back. He left half his silk waistcoat in a policeman's clutch. He fell like a stone, and the bubbling water closed over him and chilled him to the very bone.

He rose at last, gasping for breath, and swept the water from his eyes. A mass of splintered wreckage danced past, and something flashed white against the inky water. He was a practised swimmer, and caught it, but flung it away. It was only a soaked sunbonnet, such as barge-women wear.

The alarm had been given, and a tug was shooting to the rescue. The young man turned his head up-stream, but no man could battle against such a current. The lights of the bridge were fading into a mist. He raised himself to peer around. Something grazed his arm, and he clutched at it blindly. He uttered a cry of joy.

Alive or dead he had her at last. Turning on his back, he drew the white face above the water, and struck out for the shore. He heard a lash of screws, and uttered a hoarse

cry. No one heard, for the rush of the tide choked it, and the tug slid past.

The biting cold of the water was telling upon him now. His limbs felt numbed and dead, and his teeth were chattering. Unimpeded, he might have gained the bank; but the thought never crossed his mind to abandon the limp body to the treacherous river, to be whirled, battered and shapeless, to the distant sea.

A black shadow rose before him, and again he uttered a despairing cry. The tide swung him so close to an anchored steamer that his outstretched fingers grazed her rusted plates.

"Help! Help!"

The hiss of the torrent mocked him, a mist swam before his eyes. He sank and rose, panting and choking. The air seemed filled with dancing specks of fire. His head reeled, and a thousand blended noises rang in his ears. He did not see the little boat that shot out from the gloom, or feel the strong arm that caught him by the collar. He had found forgetfulness, but the cruel river had been robbed of its prey.

The young man woke with a start and stared dazedly round him. He was tucked snugly in a hammock wrapped in blankets. A cheerful fire was throwing dancing shafts of ruddy light upon the rafters of the ceiling of the long, low room. At a table near the curtained window a man sat writing, with a shaggy Russian wolfhound crouched beside him.

"You are awake, I see, Mr. Thurston," said a deep voice.

The young man started at the sound of his name. The writer turned, and rose lazily from his chair. He was tall and thin, and his crisp, curling hair was shot with grey. The eyes were black and piercing, the shaven chin square and strong. He went to the side of the hammock.

"How did I come here?" asked Thurston dazedly. "Where am I? How do you know my name?" He put his hand to his head with a shiver. "Ah, I remember now—the river and the barge! Is the woman saved?"

"She is dead. You did everything that a brave man could do to save her. I saw it all from my boat, but lost you in the darkness. Luckily I found you again, and just in time. Let me feel your pulse. Tut! In a few hours you will be yourself again."

"Then I have to thank you for my life," said the young man.

"I suppose you have. I have to keep my affairs as secret as possible, but your lucky star was in the ascendant. I had just left my club, and my private hansom put me down at the Temple Pier. I love this great river for it fascinates me. Very soon you will know why I prowled about in my solitary boat in the darkness like an owl, and why I found you. You say I have saved your life."

The dark eyes flashed again, and he went on:

"Is it worth thanking me for? I have watched you for some time. You have health, strength, and wit, and yet you live an empty, aimless life. Is an aimless life worth living, my friend?"

Again Rupert Thurston gave a start. Those strange, uncanny eyes seemed to pierce into his very soul, and to read what was written there.

He felt it was the truth. But how did this man know? Thurston had eight hundred a year and nothing to do. For two years he had idled away his time. He was tired of his empty life, but he had always lived like this. He raised himself, and stared at Ferrers Lord.

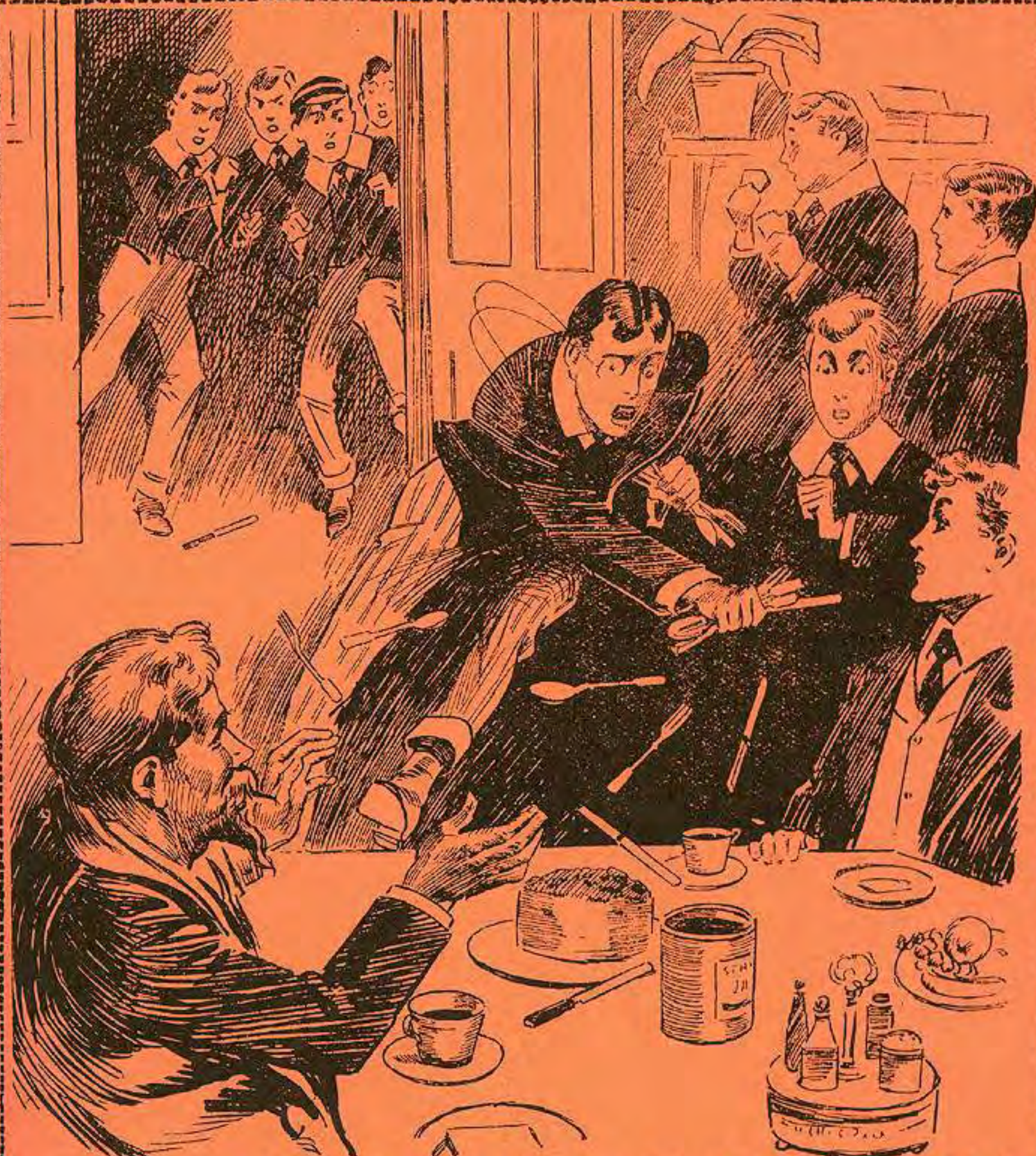
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CRASH! Arthur Augustus came flying in, and knives and forks went to right and left. "WESCUE!" he yelled.

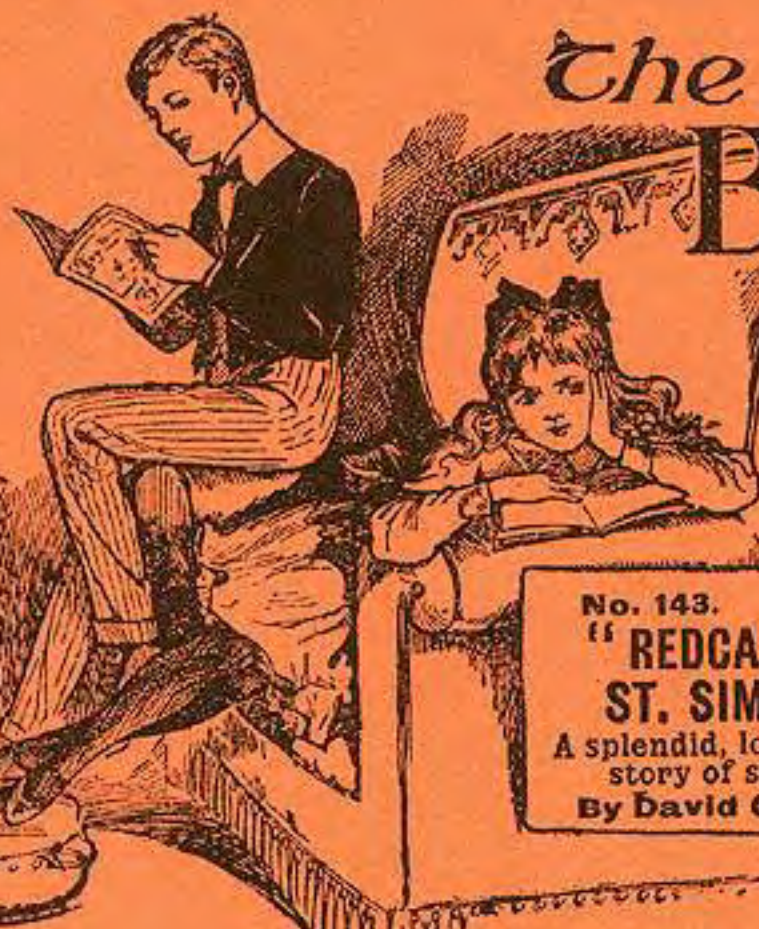
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