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[Our Readers are informed that the characters in the following Story are purely imaginary, and no reference or allusion is made to any living person. Actual names may be unintentionally mentioned, but the Editor wishes it to be distinctly understood that no adverse personal reflection is intended.]



THE FIRST CHAPTER. No Loans!

"YOU fellows going out?"

Billy Bunter put his head into Harry Wharton's study to ask the question. Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh were there. Nugent carried a bundle of towels on his arm, and Wharton was sorting bathing costumes out of a box. Billy Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles.

"No," said Wharton brusquely.

"I don't mind if I come with you," said Bunter, proceeding as if Wharton had not spoken. "I've got nothing special to do this afternoon. I was expecting a titled friend of mine to run down in his motor-car, but he hasn't come somehow, and—"

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

Poor Old Bunter!

A GRAND, LONG,
COMPLETE TALE

OF THE
CHUMS OF GREYFRIARS.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Look here, we're going for a splash in the swimming-bath," said Harry curtly. "We're not going for a feed. We're not going to call in at the tuckshop. We're not going to eat or drink anything. So you can buzz off."

Bunter blinked at him.

"You're going to the swimming-bath, you fellows?"

"Yes."

"Then you won't be spending any money?"

"None at all."

"Ahem! In that case you might be able to advance me a few bob off a postal-order I'm expecting to-night," said Bunter. "It should really have come this morning, but there has been a delay in the post."

"Rats!"

"If you could make it five bob—"

"I'll make it a thick ear if you don't clear out!" exclaimed Nugent wrathfully, as he made a step towards the fat junior. Billy Bunter dodged out into the passage.

But as the juniors did not pursue him, the fat face, with its big spectacles, blinked into the doorway again in a few moments.

"I say you fellows—"

Nugent grasped the poker, and brandished it, rushing towards the door. Billy Bunter gave a gasp of terror, and bolted down the passage.

Nugent grinned, and threw down the poker with a clang into the grate.

"Blessed if that chap doesn't get worse and worse!" he

exclaimed. "It's simply marvellous that he should expect fellows to take in that postal-order yarn after all this time."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"There's one thing to be thankful for in regard to Bunter," he said.

"What's that?"

"That he isn't in our study now. He used to be."

"Ha, ha! Quite right."

"The rightfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, in his weird English. "The absentfulness of the honourable and caddish Bunter is the boon and the blessing."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry, of the Remove, looked in at the door. "There's no hurry, you fellows; the water's not in the bath yet."

"Oh, that's Goshing, of course!" said Wharton crossly. "How long is the boulder going to be, I wonder?"

"Half an hour, very likely. Let's have a trot round the Close."

The juniors left the study and went downstairs. The great swimming-bath at Greyfriars was a very popular institution, but it was only at certain times during the week that it was available to the juniors. The chums of the Remove passed Billy Bunter in the passage. He blinked at them, and was about to speak, when they tramped downstairs, and left him to address the desert air.

"Beasts!" murmured Bunter.

He rolled along the passage to the end study. In that study—No. 14—he knew he would find one fellow—John Bull, of the Remove. For John Bull occupied most of his half-holidays just now in devoting his attention to the school paper—"John Bull Junior's Weekly."

Bull was editor of the junior paper, and his post was by no means a sinecure. He found that an editor had real work to do, and that looking after the "Weekly" took up a great deal of his time.

Bull lifted his head and frowned as Bunter rolled in. The fat junior stopped and blinked at him from a safe distance. He had had some painful experiences in the editorial room of "John Bull's Weekly."

"I say, Bull—" he began.

"Buzz off!"

"But I say—"

"I'm busy!"

"I'll help you if you like. I'm willing to put in contributions of any length, and of first-class quality. I've made the offer before."

"And I've refused it. I've had enough of your copying down poems out of Tennyson and stories out of the 'Marvel,' and working them off as your own," growled Bull. "Get out!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Clear!"

"The fact of the matter is, Bull, that I'm stony. I've been disappointed about a postal-order."

John Bull grasped the inkpot, and swished it towards Bunter. The Owl of the Remove popped back into the passage just in time to avoid a stream of ink.

"Beast!" he roared.

But he did not venture to look into the study again.

He rolled disconsolately down the passage, and stopped at the next door. This was the room tenanted by Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, and Wun Lung, the Chinese. Bob Cherry was out, but Linley, who was working up for a prize exam., was busy in the study, and little Wun Lung was curled up in the armchair before the fire.

"I say, you fellows—" began Bunter.

Mark Linley looked up patiently from his work. The scholarship boy was deep in Greek, a subject that was as Sanskrit or Chinese to Billy Bunter, and indeed to most of the Remove fellows, for Greek was not in the regular curriculum at Greyfriars. The fat junior blinked at the page that Linley had been covering with signs that seemed to him like wandering spiders and insects, and grunted.

"Blessed if I know how you can waste time over that rot," he remarked.

Mark smiled a little.

"It is not rot, Bunter," he said.

"Well, look here, I've been disappointed about a postal-order. A titled friend of mine was going to send me a remittance, but there has been some delay in the post. Can you lend me half-a-crown?"

Linley shook his head.

"I'm sorry; no."

"Make it a bob."

"I cannot."

"Do you mean to say that you haven't a bob about you?" demanded Bunter scornfully. Billy Bunter was always inclined to be scornful towards the scholarship boy; but he generally kept his scorn within bounds, for Mark Linley was a painfully hard hitter when his quiet temper was fairly roused.

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Linley coloured.

"Yes, I have more than one shilling about me," he said.

"Well, lend me one."

"I cannot."

"Why not?" demanded Billy Bunter belligerently.

"I cannot spare it."

"But I've already explained that I'm going to settle this moment my postal-order comes," said Bunter. "Didn't you hear me?"

"Yes, I heard you."

"Well, isn't that good enough for you?"

"I'm sorry; no."

Bunter glared through his spectacles. According to Bunter's point of view, the scholarship fellow ought to have felt honoured to lend to Bunter, even if he ran the risk of never seeing his money again.

"Well, you cheeky factory boulder!" he exclaimed. "I suppose you learned those manners in the slum you were brought up in, didn't you?"

Mark Linley's eyes gleamed, and he laid down his pen and rose to his feet. Billy Bunter viewed that proceeding with alarm. There was only one thing that could equal Bunter's insolence, and that was his meekness when his insolence got him into trouble.

"I—I say, you know," he stammered, "I—I meant to say I—I always regarded you as a chap with very pleasant manners, you know."

Linley smiled scornfully, and sat down again, and took no further notice of Bunter. The fat junior gave him a doubtful blink, and then looked at the little Chinese in the armchair.

"I say, Wun Lung—"

The little Celestial opened his almond eyes, and looked sleepily at Bunter.

"Allee light," he murmured.

"Got any tin?"

"No savvy."

"You see, I happen to be hard up this afternoon. I've been disappointed about a remittance I expected from a titled friend of mine. Can you lend me ten bob?"

"No savvy."

"Say five bob, then."

"No savvy."

Bunter glared. That baffling reply from Wun Lung left him no opening. As a matter of fact, Wun Lung "savvied" very well, but truthfulness was not one of the things he had been taught in China.

"Look here, Wun Lung, if you like to lend me a half-crown—"

"No savvy."

"You heathen beast!"

"No savvy."

"Come, old chap, don't be a cad, you know. I only want half-a-crown until my postal-order comes this evening," said Bunter persuasively. "Look here, I'll let you have back three-and-six for it."

"No savvy."

"You—you pigtailed young rotter!"

"No savvy."

"I say, old fellow—"

Mark Linley rose again and opened the door. His look was enough for Billy Bunter.

The fat junior rolled out into the passage, and the Lancashire lad closed the door behind him.

"Beasts!" said Billy Bunter.

And he rolled away in search of a lender.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

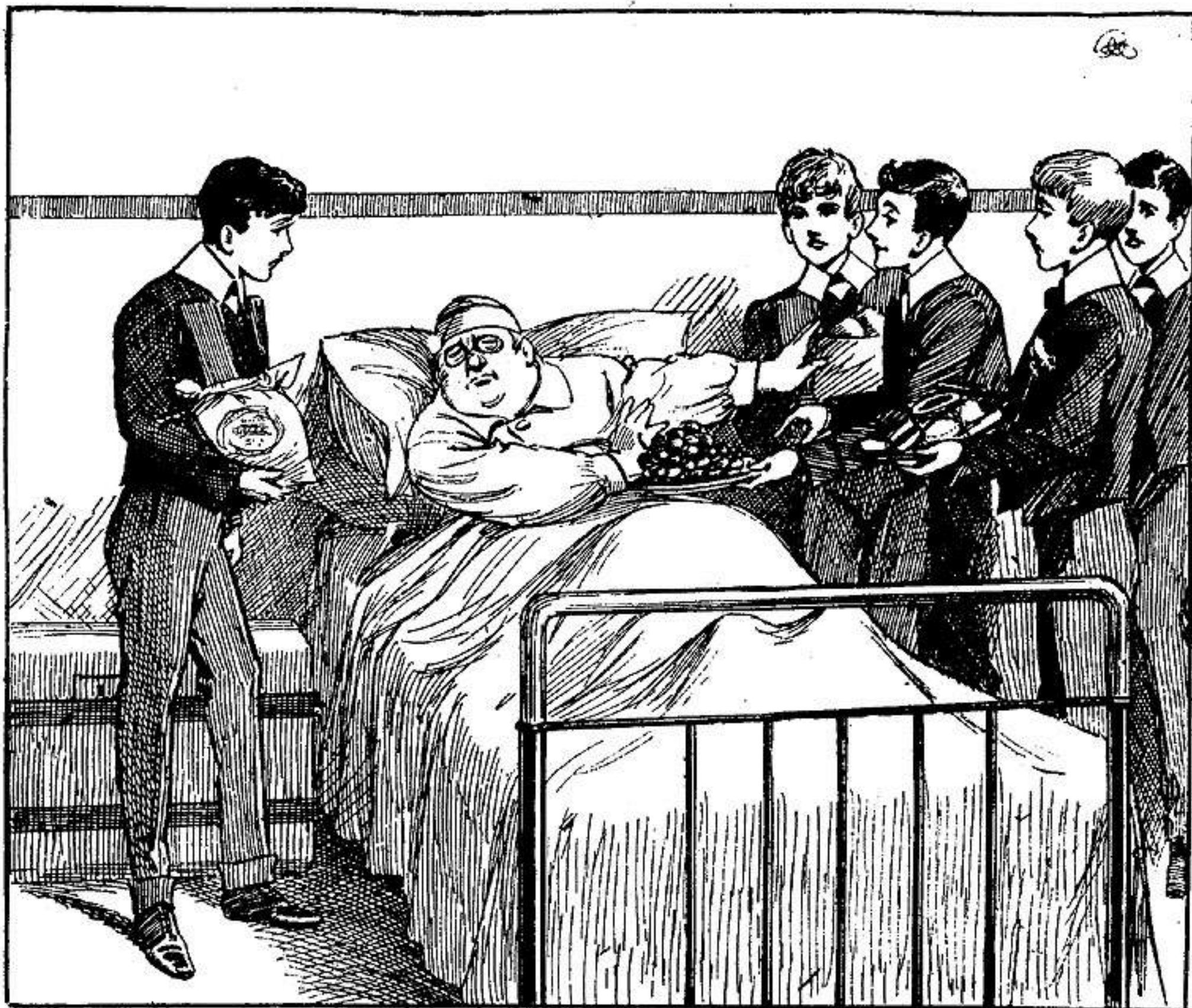
Spool!

BILLY BUNTER blinked discontentedly as he rolled out into the Close. It was not very long since Bunter had had his dinner, but he was hungry—at all events, he imagined that he was hungry. Bunter was accustomed to getting all the meals he could, in season and out of season. And Mrs. Mumble, who kept the school tuckshop, had a new supply of jam-tarts in that day—nice and fresh, and crisp and tasty. Those tarts haunted Billy Bunter. Until he had raised a loan and plunged into the tarts, he felt that he could not be happy.

But the Remove were fed up with Bunter's borrowing proclivities. They seemed even less inclined to lend than usual.

Ogilvy, and Morgan, and Treluce, and Micky Desmond were tried in turn, and the result was nil. There was no cash going.

Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, were strolling in the Close, and Bunter came up to them with an insinuating wriggle. As a rule, no Removite would have had cheek enough to attempt to borrow of a fellow in the higher Form. But Billy Bunter had cheek enough for anything, especially when he was hungry.



Billy Bunter blinked at the comestibles. They would have made his mouth water at any other time. But he seemed to have lost his appetite along with his memory. "I don't want any!" he said. (See page 8.)

"I say, you fellows—" he began.
"Hallo, porpoise!" said Temple.
"Oh, really—"
"He wants some exercise to take his fat down," said Fry, with a wink at the others. "He's come to just the right parties."
"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.
"Chase him!"
"Oh, really— Oh—oh—oh!"
Whether Temple, Dabney & Co. guessed that Bunter wanted to borrow, or whether they simply wanted a little fun, is doubtful, but they certainly gave Bunter some of the exercise which he needed but did not want.
The three of them rushed straight at the fat junior, and as he turned to fly, three boots came upon him at the same moment.
Biff!
"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Yow!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Goal!" shouted Dabney. "Go it! Pass there!"
"Yaroo!"
Bunter fled at top speed. He rushed right into Harry Wharton & Co., and stopped, with Bob Cherry grasping him round the neck. He had nearly knocked Bob flying.
"You ass!" gasped Bob.
"Yow! Yah! Rescue! Oh!"
The Fourth-Formers grinned and walked away. Billy Bunter stood blinking and gasping for breath.
"Yow! I'm hurt! I'm fainting!" he moaned. "Help me to the tuckshop! I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh, really, you fellows—"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I—I can't stand up! I—"
"Dear me!" said Bob Cherry sympathetically. "Then you'd better sit down."
And he sat Bunter down with a bump on the ground.
"Yah! Ah! Oh!"
The Famous Four walked away laughing. Billy Bunter sat gasping on the ground, and blinking furiously after the chums of the Remove.
"I guess you're taking a rest—hey?" remarked Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, as he strolled up, with his hands in his pockets.
Bunter blinked at him.
"Ow! I'm hurt! I—I've been assaulted and battered! I—I feel that I shall be ill unless I have some refreshment at once. Will you help me as far as the tuckshop, Fishy?"
Fish grinned.
"Too feeble to walk—hey?" he asked.
"Ye-es. You could knock me down with a feather," said Bunter pathetically.
"You opine you'd roll over if I touched you with my foot—hey?" asked Fish.
"Ye-es, I'm sure I should."
"Yep? We'll see, I guess."
And Fisher T. Fish put out a long leg and pushed Bunter on the chest with his boot, and, sure enough, the fat junior rolled over backwards.

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NEXT
TUESDAY: "ALONZO THE FOOTBALLER."

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fish. And he strolled away. Bunter sat up again and blinked. "Ow! Beast! Yow!" "My dear Bunter!" exclaimed Alonzo Todd, the kindly youth who was known as the Duffer of Greyfriars. "My dear Bunter! I—"

"Ow! Help!" "I trust you are not injured, Bunter, and that the concussion of Fish's pedal extremity has produced no lasting effects," said Alonzo, in his long-winded way.

"Ow! I'm seriously injured!" groaned Bunter. "I—I say, will you help me as far as the tuckshop, Todd?"

"Certainly, my dear Bunter. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to help any fellow who was in distress," said Todd. "Pray lean on my arm."

"Ow! Oh! Groo!" "My dear Bunter, you seem to be seriously injured. Would it be better for me to run and summon medical attendance and a stretcher?" suggested Alonzo.

"Groo! No!" Bunter leaned heavily upon Todd's arm as the Duffer of Greyfriars led him to the school shop, in the corner of the Close behind the elms. Todd manfully bore the weight—which was considerable—and piloted him into the shop.

Bunter sank heavily into a chair. Mrs. Mimble came out of her little parlour. Her expression was not amiable at the sight of Billy Bunter.

"My dear Mrs. Mimble, Bunter is seriously injured," said Todd distressfully. "I think he requires some refreshment to revive him."

"Jam-tarts," groaned Bunter. Mrs. Mimble sniffed.

"Master Bunter can have all the jam-tarts he can pay for," she said.

"Ow! Groo!" "My dear Mrs. Mimble, surely, in a serious case like this, you will not stand upon so paltry a question as mere monetary payment?" exclaimed Todd, in astonishment.

Mrs. Mimble sniffed again, but vouchsafed no other reply. "You—you lend me a bob, Todd," said Bunter faintly.

"You can have it back out of my postal-order this evening."

"I'm so sorry, Bunter—"

"Make it a tanner, then."

"I'm so sorry, but I cannot, as I have no money. It is an extremely unfortunate concurrence of circumstances, but—"

Bunter sat upright on the chair. "Do you mean to say you're stony?" he growled.

"Dear me, what a sudden recovery!" exclaimed Todd, in astonishment. "Yes, Bunter, I am indeed destitute of ready cash—or, as you describe it, stony!"

"You ass! Why couldn't you say so before?"

"But you did not ask me, Bunter. You made no allusion to money. You simply requested me to aid you as far as the tuckshop," said Todd, in surprise.

Bunter snorted, and stamped out of the shop. Todd looked after him in the greatest amazement. Then a pained expression dawned upon his face.

"Dear me! Bunter has been deceiving me once more! My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked at him—indeed, disgusted. I must remonstrate with Bunter."

Todd followed the fat junior, and tapped him on the shoulder.

Billy Bunter swung round with an angry snort.

"Well, what do you want?" he growled.

"My dear Bunter, you have again relapsed into distinct and inexcusable untruthfulness, after I had begged and implored of you to break yourself of the habit," said Alonzo.

"Again, my dear Bunter, I beg and implore you—"

"Fathead!" "I beg and implore—" Biff! The exasperated Bunter let out his right, and it caught Alonzo Todd on the end of his somewhat prominent nose. Alonzo sat down. "Oh!" he gasped. And the fat junior, somewhat comforted, rolled away and left the Duffer of Greyfriars sitting there.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Hurt!

"I SAY, you fellows—" Harry Wharton & Co. grunted in chorus. There seemed to be no getting rid of Bunter that afternoon.

"Well, what is it now?" asked Harry.

"I'm coming for a swim with you," said Bunter, blinking at him. "You know, I'm a dab at swimming. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you some tips about swimming, if you'll stand a feed afterwards."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Oh, really, you know—" "You ass!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "You can't swim for toffee, and you know you can't! You can just keep afloat in calm water."

"Oh, of course, it's no good arguing with a chap who's jealous of what a fellow can do!" said Bunter loftily. "But I'm willing to give you some tips. Anyway, I'm going swimming."

"Better keep out of the bath—you'll be in the way."

"I suppose I can do as I like."

"Yes, but—" "Oh, rats!"

Bunter stamped away.

As a matter of fact, he was an extremely poor swimmer, but he meant to swim that afternoon, if only because he knew that he would be in the way in the bath.

He went into the House and changed into swimming costume, and came out again with a big coat wrapped round him.

The chums of the Remove saw him as he made for the swimming-bath and grinned.

"We're going to have an exhibition, I suppose," said Wharton; "and somebody will have to fish the fat duffer out."

"The fishfulness will be terrific."

"I suppose the ass knows the water isn't in the bath yet," said Nugent. "He's not duffer enough to jump in without it."

"Well, I suppose he can see!"

"I don't know—" "Bunter!" called out Wharton. "Bunter!" He ran towards the fat junior.

Bunter had reached the door. He blinked round at Wharton, and went in. The fat junior imagined that the chums of the Remove were going to stop him, and he could be very obstinate when he liked.

He hurried in, and threw off the cloak, and took off his spectacles. He could not, of course, keep his glasses on in the water, as they became opaque when wetted. But without his glasses Bunter was terribly short-sighted. The atmosphere became as a fog to him, and the things he could see he could not see clearly.

He ran to the swimming-bath.

Harry Wharton & Co. came running in. Wharton was really alarmed about the fat junior. It seemed hardly possible that Bunter would not notice that the bath was empty and plunge down on the tiles; but there was no accounting for what Bunter might do.

"Bunter!" called out Harry.

"Oh, rats!"

"Don't jump in!" roared Harry. "There's— Oh, he's done it!"

The fat junior had dived from the side into the bath.

Crash!

"My hat!"

"Good heavens!"

"Poor old Bunter!"

There was one cry from the swimming-bath—and silence. The juniors' hearts stood still for a moment.

They advanced with faltering steps to the side of the bath and looked in.

Billy Bunter lay extended on the white tiles, without sound or motion.

"Good heavens!" muttered Harry Wharton, his face blanching. "He's hurt!"

"He must be!"

"The hurtfulness is terrific."

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"Bunter! Bunter!"
There was no reply from the fat junior.
He lay quite still, without a sound.
The Greyfriars fellows were accustomed to Billy Bunter's "spoofing." He could pretend to be seriously hurt on the slightest occasion. But this time they felt instinctively that it was not spoof. Bunter was hurt!
Harry Wharton jumped down into the bath.
He bent over Billy Bunter, and raised his head.
Billy Bunter was deadly pale, and there was a large bruise on his head, and his eyes were closed.
"Bunter, old man!"
But Bunter could not speak. Bunter was insensible. It was genuine this time!
"Is it very bad?" called out Nugent.
"Yes, he's stunned."
"Oh!"
"Poor old Bunter!"
"We must get a doctor to him!" exclaimed Harry. "Or, rather, it will be quicker to take him to the doctor. Tell Gosling to get his trap ready."
"Right-ho!"
Nugent dashed out. Bob Cherry joined Harry, and they carried Bunter up out of the swimming-bath.
The fat junior neither moved nor spoke.
"One of you had better call in Mr. Quelch," said Harry, in a low voice. "He—"
"I am here!"
Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, came quickly up.
His face was dark and concerned.
"I have just met Nugent," he said. "He says that Bunter has been hurt—that he jumped into the bath without noticing that it was empty—"
"He dived in, sir."
"Poor lad! But how—"
"He had his glasses off, and I suppose he couldn't see," said Harry, in distress. "I never knew the poor chap was so short-sighted as that, sir. Shall we take him down to the doctor's? It will be quicker than sending for Dr. Whirter."
"Yes, yes, by all means!"
Nugent came dashing in.
"The trap's ready."
"Let me help you carry him," said Mr. Quelch. "So far as I can see, he is simply stunned, and there is no great injury done. But I will come with you."
"Yes, sir."
Bunter was carried out to the trap.
As he was placed in the vehicle Bunter's eyes opened, and he gave a groan.
"Oh, my head! Ow! It aches! What's the matter?"
"It's all right, old son," said Harry softly. "You've had a bump, but we're looking after you."
"Lemme alone!"
"We're not going to hurt you, old chap. Just lie on the cushions."
"Who are you?"
"Eh?"
"Who are you?" said Bunter peevishly. "Lemme alone."
"He does not recognise you without his glasses," said Mr. Quelch. "Lie quiet, Bunter. You have bruised your head, and we are taking you to the doctor's."
Billy Bunter did not reply.
His eyes had closed, and he seemed to be unconscious again. Harry Wharton and Alonzo Todd sat with him in the trap, and Mr. Quelch took the reins.
The vehicle dashed out of the gates of Greyfriars.
A crowd of juniors stood round, and while some of them were touched and sympathetic, the general feeling was one of suspicion and scoffing.
Billy Bunter's humbug was too well known. There were few among the fellows who heard of the accident who believed that Bunter was really hurt.
But the fat junior was not spoofing this time. Bunter was hurt, and his injury was destined to have peculiar consequences, for himself and for others.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Bunter Loses His Memory.

TEN minutes later, Billy Bunter was in Dr. Whirter's surgery, and the little medico was leaning over and examining him. Alonzo Todd stood looking on with an expression of the deepest sympathy on his face.
The Duffer of Greyfriars drew Wharton aside.
"I'm so sorry, Wharton," he murmured.
"We're all sorry," said Harry.
"Yes, but I feel that I am bound to be particularly sorry," said Todd, "because I spoke quite crossly to Bunter a short time before his accident, and I was looking for him to punch his head when I learned that he had been injured. Wharton, I am shocked to have to confess that I had allowed myself to entertain revengeful feelings, because Bunter had punched my nose. My Uncle Benjamin—"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

NEXT
TUESDAY: "ALONZO THE FOOTBALLER."

"Hush! He's speaking!"
"Do you feel much pain, my lad?" asked the physician.
Bunter blinked at him.
"He wants his glasses," said Harry.
"Eh, what's that?"
"I've got your glasses here, old chap."
"Glasses?"
"Yes; here they are."
Bunter blinked at the pair of spectacles that Wharton held out to him. He was sitting up, with a somewhat wild expression on his face. He made no motion to take the spectacles.
"Look here, none of your larks!" he exclaimed. "I'm not going to wear those things."
"But—but they're yours."
"Rats!"
Harry Wharton stared at him. He could not understand Bunter in the least now. Some strange and inexplicable change seemed to have come over the fat junior.
Dr. Whirter took the spectacles, and placed them on Bunter's nose. The fat junior blinked through them, and evidently found himself seeing better with the aid of the glasses, for he allowed them to remain there.
Dr. Whirter drew Mr. Quelch into the next room. The master of the Remove was looking a little anxious.
"Well, doctor?" he said.
"The boy has had a severe shock, and he has a very large bump on his head, which must be kept bandaged for some time," said Dr. Whirter. "Otherwise, there is little the matter with him. Had he been in good condition, he would have stood the shock much better. But he is in a low state from over-feeding and want of exercise. He will not be able to take his place in class for a week, at least; but I see no reason why he should be confined to the sanatorium. But you will use your own judgment about that."
"But he seems very strange in his manner."
"That is because he is still dazed from the shock. I have no doubt that his manner will become normal in a few hours."
Mr. Quelch nodded.
"Then I may take him back to Greyfriars with me?"
"Certainly!"
Mr. Quelch rejoined Bunter.
"Do you feel strong enough to move?" he asked.
Bunter blinked peevishly.
"I'm all right," he said.
"Does your head ache?"
"Of course it does. There's a big lump on it."
"You shall have a good rest when we get back to Greyfriars," said Mr. Quelch.
The fat junior stared at him.
"Greyfriars?"
"Yes, Bunter."
"Where's that?"
"What?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, quite staggered.
"I don't know what you're talking about. Who are you?"
"I! Surely you know me, Bunter—your Form-master, Mr. Quelch?"
"Form-master?"
"Yes."
Bunter blinked at him, and then closed his eyes. He seemed to be grappling with some mental problem. Mr. Quelch seemed very much perplexed.
"He is still suffering from shock," said Dr. Whirter. "It will pass off!"
Billy Bunter was taken out to the trap. He did not speak a word while he was placed in it. During the drive to Greyfriars, he looked round him curiously several times, as a new boy might have looked round upon wholly new scenery.
Wharton and Todd watched him. They were vaguely uneasy, and vaguely alarmed. Even Alonzo Todd's loquacity was dried up.
Bunter's manner was strange. It would have been like the fat junior to talk on in an endless stream, and make the most of his injury. But he did not. He did not open his lips, but only looked about him with that strange expression upon his face, as if thoughts were passing in his mind that he could hardly grasp, and could not utter.
What was the matter with Bunter?
Wharton felt that the injury had gone deeper than Dr. Whirter imagined. There was something odd, something alarming, in Bunter's look.
The trap arrived at Greyfriars, and stopped outside the School House. Billy Bunter looked at the grey old building, and at the crowds of fellows in the Close, with a new and startled look.
"Here we are again!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as cheerfully as he could.

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums
of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

Bunter blinked at him without replying. Wharton descended from the trap, and helped Bunter down. The fat junior looked round him with an odd, scared expression.

"Look here!" he exclaimed suddenly. "What's this place you've brought me to, you fellows?"

"Bunter!"

"What's this place, I say?"

"Don't you know Greyfriars again?"

"Greyfriars!" said Bunter, with a puzzled look.

"Yes, your old school, Billy?"

Bunter looked round vacantly.

"Gammon," said Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove. "We know Bunter. He's trying to spoof us again. Come off, Bunter."

"I guess so!" remarked Fisher T. Fish.

Bunter blinked at them without speaking.

"Shut up, you chaps!" said Wharton quietly. "Bunter's not well. He's had an awful crack on the head, and it's just upset him. Come in, Bunter!"

He led the fat junior towards the door.

Bunter resisted.

"Look here, I'm not going in there!" he exclaimed angrily. "I don't know the place, and I'm not going in."

There was a buzz of amazement from the juniors crowded round.

Bunter's words took their breath away.

"My only hat!" muttered Bob Cherry. "He's lost his memory!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

(Not Spoof!)

"POOR old Bunter!"

That was what Bob Cherry said, as the fat junior passed into the house, with his arm linked in Harry Wharton's.

His words were echoed by several fellows, but Bulstrode burst into a laugh.

"You surely don't believe him!" he exclaimed contemptuously. "He's spoofing! I think we've had enough of Bunter's spoof to know it when we see it."

"What-ho!" said Skinner.

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"I don't think he's spoofing now," he said. "It looked genuine enough. It was that biff on the bottom of the bath that did it. He's hurt his head somehow."

"More likely to hurt the bath."

"Oh, rats! I tell you he's hurt, and he's suffering from shock to the system. He's lost his memory."

"Bosh!"

And Bulstrode put his hands into his pockets, and walked away, whistling. Bulstrode's opinion was shared by more fellows than was Bob Cherry's. They knew Bunter.

"I guess it's a little steep, you know," Fisher T. Fish remarked. "Anyway, if we don't believe the chap, it's his own funeral; he's such an awful whopper merchant!"

"You are quite right, Fish," said Alonzo Todd. "Bunter is certainly untruthful, though I have begged and implored of him to become more honourable. I have often wished that my Uncle Benjamin had an opportunity of speaking a few words to him; but in the present case I think that Bunter is sincere."

"I guess it's too steep."

"Lies, of course," said Vernon-Smith. "We all know Bunter."

And so said many more.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter was taken into the house by Harry Wharton. With his head bandaged up, and a still dazed and bewildered expression upon his face, the fat junior looked very curious, and it was evident that he could not quite get his bearings. Familiar objects seemed new to him, and he did not seem, even, quite sure of his own name, for on more than one occasion he paid no attention when addressed as Bunter or Billy.

If the fat junior was spoofing, and acting all the time, he was doing it remarkably well. But Wharton did not think so. He was convinced that the unfortunate Owl of the Remove was sincere this time. The bump on his head had done it, and for the present, at least, the terrible shock had shattered Bunter's memory. It was not an uncommon occurrence, and the question was—would it last? Would the Owl of the Remove ever be himself again?

Bunter had been as nearly intolerable as it was possible for a boy to be, while in health. But Wharton forgot all that now. He even felt that he had been a little hard on the fat junior. As a matter of fact, Wharton had been more patient with him than any other fellow at Greyfriars, with perhaps the exception of Alonzo Todd. But all Bunter's sins were forgotten now.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

"I can leave him to you, I think," said Mr. Quelch. "Under the circumstances, he will require looking after, Wharton."

"Yes, sir; I'll look after him."

"Very good!"

"You'd like to lie down for a bit, Bunter?" asked Wharton. Bunter blinked at him.

"No, I wouldn't!" he said.

"Will you come into the study?"

"What study?"

"My study, or your own."

"No, I won't!"

"H'm! Will you have something to eat?" asked Wharton, playing what he considered to be a trump card. Billy Bunter had never been known to refuse an invitation of that kind.

"I'm not hungry," said Bunter.

Wharton almost staggered.

"W-w-what!" he gasped. "Not hungry?"

"No."

"Sure, Billy?"

Bunter made a peevish gesture.

"I suppose I ought to know whether I'm hungry or not!" he exclaimed.

"Ye-es, but—but—"

"Well, I'm not. I've got a headache," said Bunter, passing his fat hand over the bandage. "How did I get this lump on my head?"

"You dived into the swimming-bath when there wasn't any water?"

"Oh, did I?"

"Don't you remember, Billy?"

"No, I don't."

"My word, it's genuine enough," said Nugent, as he joined them. "What are you going to do with him, Harry?"

Harry Wharton rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"Blessed if I know!" he exclaimed. "It's pretty clear that he's lost his memory—for the present, at least. I've heard of such things before. I suppose it will come back again; but for the present—"

"Yes, that's it! It's a jolly curious thing; but we shall have to look after the poor boulder—he hasn't any chum!"

"Well, that's his own fault—I mean," added Wharton hastily, "we should have been his chums if—if things had been different. Still, we'll look after him."

Bunter was blinking to and fro.

"I say, you fellows!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, Bunter?"

"What does all this mean? How did I get this bump on my head?"

"I—I've just told you!" stammered Wharton.

"Have you?" said Bunter vacantly.

"Poor old Bunter!" murmured Nugent.

"Come to your room, Bunter," said Wharton softly.

The fat junior made no resistance. Wharton piloted him up to his study. Bunter had a small room in the Remove passage to himself. There was room for two, certainly, but nobody in the Remove had ever shown any ambition to share that study with Bunter. The Owl of the Remove was not popular as a study-mate. More than one study had tried him, and had found him insufferable.

Mr. Quelch had believed that, among the Remove fellows, surrounded by familiar associations, Bunter would soon recover.

But as the fat junior entered his own study, it was clear that he did not recognise it. He blinked round the room like a stranger.

"Your own study, you know," said Harry Wharton.

"Is it?"

"Yes. Sit down, old chap."

Bunter grunted.

The study did not look very cheerful. It was a cold day, but there was no fire there. It was Billy Bunter's little way to spend all his pocket-money, and all the little loans he succeeded in raising, at the tuckshop, and he depended for coals upon what he could borrow along the passage. Bunter was untidy, too, and his study was always in a slovenly state.

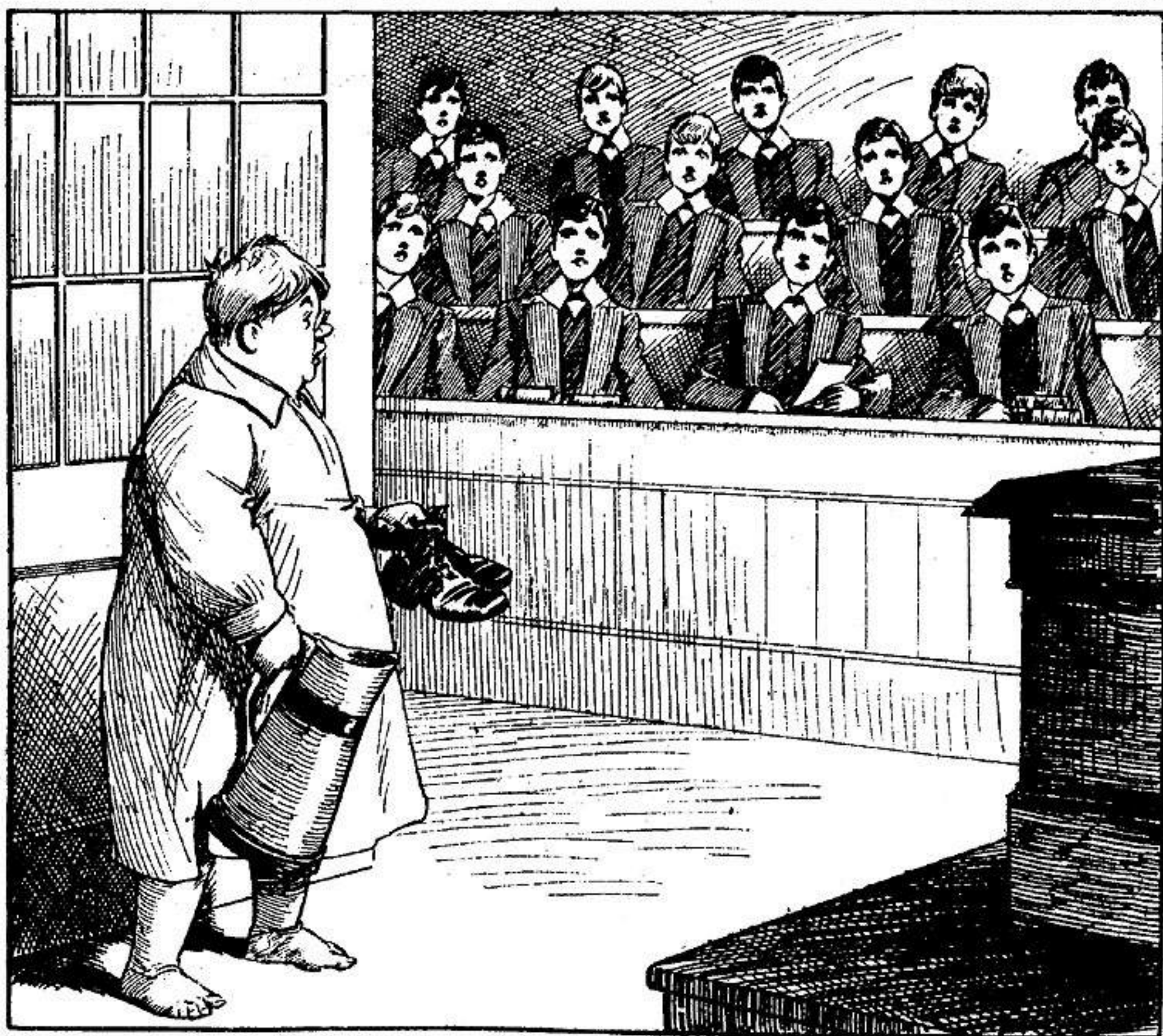
Wharton looked round it with a disapproving eye.

It certainly was not a cheerful place to take an invalid into.

"Look here," he said, in a low voice, to Nugent, "I think we'd better get him to bed. He may be better after lying down for a time. Then you and the fellows can clear up the study a bit, and get a fire going, in case he wants to come down."

"Right you are!" said Nugent cheerfully.

The chums of the Remove were giving up their half-holiday to the Owl, but they did not even think of that. They were quite willing to make any sacrifice for a fellow in poor Billy Bunter's state.



The Form-room door opened and Billy Bunter entered. He was clad in his night-shirt, and in one hand he carried his boots. He looked round the room with a dazed expression on his face. "I—I say, you fellows!" he stammered, "I—I heard the bell, and—and I've come down!" (See Page 21.)

Bunter was taken up to the dormitory. He made no resistance as Wharton put him to bed. As a rule, Bunter was always prepared to go to sleep. After eating, his greatest pleasure lay in sleeping.

But he was very wakeful now. He lay in bed blinking at Wharton through his big spectacles, and so, evidently, trying to puzzle out something in his mind, that it was painful to watch the changing expressions of his face.

Several juniors came into the dormitory, impelled by curiosity or sympathy. When they looked at Bunter their doubts as to the genuineness of his malady were dispelled. He could never have acted like this if he had been shamming.

"I say—what's your name?" said Bunter.

"Wharton!" said Harry quietly.

"I've heard that name before," said Bunter.

"Yes, I dare say, old fellow," said Harry cheerfully.

"I'm an old friend of yours, you know. I've known you a long time."

"Have you?" said Bunter doubtfully.

"Yes, quite a long time, kid."

"I've been here before," said Bunter, blinking round the dormitory.

"Yes; it's the dorm."

"The dorm?" repeated Bunter.

"That's it—the Remove dormitory, you know."

"Oh!" said Bunter.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

NEXT
TUESDAY: **"ALONZO THE FOOTBALLER."**

"My hat!" said Bulstrode, softly. "He can't be spoofing to that extent! He'd have given himself away before this!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Then it's genuine! Poor old Bunter!" said Bulstrode, and his voice was unusually soft.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Amazing!

JOHAN BULL came into the Remove dormitory with a bag in his hand. Bull's face was grave and quiet. He was sorry for Bunter—as the others were—and anxious about him. He came up to the bedside, and Harry Wharton glanced at the bag.

"Is he any better?" asked Bull.

Wharton shook his head.

"He doesn't seem to be in much pain," he replied, "but his memory's gone. He doesn't know me. He doesn't even know the dorm."

"Poor old Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Yes, Bunter?"

"I—I—I—"

Bunter broke off. A gleam of intelligence had flashed

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

into his dazed face, but it was gone again. Had it been a momentary glimmer of returning memory? If so, it was gone, and it did not recur.

John Bull stepped to the bedside.

"How do you feel, Bunter?" he asked.

"Eh?"

"Don't you know me?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"No, I don't! Who are you?"

"I'm John Bull!"

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Bunter peevishly.

"I—I'm not being funny," said Bull, rather taken aback.

"I'm John Bull, you know!"

"Why don't you say you're Uncle Sam?" said Bunter with a sniff. "Do you think I believe that's a real name, you duffer?"

John Bull turned pink. He was accustomed to chipping on that subject, for it seemed comical to many fellows that his name should be John Bull. But he could not be angry with Bunter just then. There was a soft chuckle from the juniors behind John Bull, but he did not seem to hear it.

"I—I—my name is really Bull, you know," he said. "But never mind that. I've brought you something to eat, Bunter."

"I'm not hungry!"

"Eh?"

"I'm not hungry!" said Bunter.

"Oh, draw it mild!" murmured Bulstrode. "We can't quite swallow that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, you chaps!" said Wharton, frowning.

"Look here, Bunter," said John Bull, opening the bag, "I've got some of Mrs. Mumble's latest in tarts, and some cream puffs, and—and pork-pies! Look!"

"Here's a beautiful savelly!" said Nugent.

"Look at this plum-cake!" added Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter blinked at the comestibles. They would have made his mouth water at any other time. But he seemed to have lost his appetite along with his memory.

He shook his head and turned away.

"I don't want any!" he said.

"But—but they're ripping!"

"I'm not hungry!"

"Look at these tarts!"

"And these doughnuts!"

"Oh, take 'em away!"

"What!"

"I don't want them!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Bulstrode.

"The hatfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh. "The esteemed Bunter has completely changed his spots, like the Ethiopian leopard!"

"My word, he has!"

"Quiet, you chaps!" said Wharton. "Look here, you'd better buzz off. I'm going to try and get him to sleep."

"Hush-a-bye, baby!" sneered Snoop.

Wharton's eyes gleamed, and he stepped towards Snoop.

"Get out, you cad!" he said in a low voice.

And Snoop got out.

Most of the juniors followed. Harry Wharton tucked the bedclothes in round Bunter, and the fat junior blinked at him the while.

"You'd like to go to sleep, old fellow?" said Harry.

"No, I wouldn't!"

"But—but—"

"I'm not sleepy!"

"But—"

"Look here, I'm not staying in bed!" said Bunter, suddenly sitting up. "It's not night-time! What the dickens should I go to bed for?"

"You're—you're ill, you know!" said Wharton feebly.

"I'm not ill!"

"Well, you see—"

"Who says I'm ill?"

"You—you've got a lump on your head, you know, and—"

"Well, I'm getting up!"

"Better lie down a bit," said Wharton, urgingly. "It will do you good, Billy, old chap! Lie down and go to sleep a bit, and I'll stay with you in case you wake up, and—and then we'll go and have a feed in the study."

"I don't want a feed in the study."

"Oh!"

"I'm going to get up!"

"Well, if you really want to—" said Harry hesitatingly.

Bunter settled all doubts upon that point by putting a fat leg out of bed. He blinked round him peevishly.

"Where are my clothes?" he exclaimed.

Wharton handed him his clothes and helped him to dress. He did not utter a further word of remonstrance.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

Under the circumstances, he felt that it was better to allow Bunter to have his way unquestioned.

Bunter was soon dressed, and he rolled towards the door.

Wharton followed him, and with a curious uneasiness and anxiety in his heart which he had never expected to feel on account of Billy Bunter, he accompanied the fat junior downstairs.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Must be Ill.

NUGENT and the others had made a great difference in Bunter's study. The room which had been the dimmest and untidiest in the Remove passage, had been newly swept and garnished. The table was clear, and covered with a nice red cover belonging to Study No. 1. There was a rug on the floor taken out of No. 14. The grate was adorned with a brass fender borrowed from Bulstrode's room, and the dead ashes had all been taken away, and there was a cheerful fire burning.

It would not have been surprising if Billy Bunter did not know his own study now.

Wharton looked surprised himself.

"Well, I must say this is ripping!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, it's not bad," said Nugent, looking round with an eye of pride. "I must say we've made a difference."

"The differentfulness is terrific!"

"Whose armchair?" asked Wharton.

"Mine," said John Bull, with a grin. "I believe Bunter has a fancy for armchairs, so I've just wheeled it in."

"Good!"

"Sit down, Billy!"

Bunter had not forgotten that an armchair was comfortable. He sank down into John Bull's well-padded armchair with great comfort.

"Comfy, old son?"

Bunter grunted. The grunt could be taken to mean that he was comfortable.

"Now, what about tea?" said Wharton. "I suppose you're ready for tea, Billy?"

"Eh?"

"Getting peckish?"

Bunter seemed to consider.

"Oh, I don't know!" he said. "I've no appetite."

"Poor old Bunter!"

"Suppose we chat with him," suggested Bob Cherry.

"Oh, don't jaw!" said Bunter.

Bob smiled a sickly smile. Bunter's peculiarly gracious manners had evidently undergone no change.

There was a tap at the door, and Alonzo Todd inserted his head into the study. Then he came in cautiously on tip-toe.

"Is he better?" he asked, in a hushed voice.

"About the same," said Wharton. "No need to creep about like a ghost. He's awake, and doesn't want to go to sleep."

"Very good, my dear Wharton. 'I was thinking,' said Alonzo, "of reading out aloud to Bunter. It is a thing that invalids usually like very much. I have brought a very interesting volume. It is called 'Sherrick; or, Bit By Bit,' and contains many very valuable lessons to schoolboys."

"My dear ass—"

"Perhaps you have never read the book, Wharton," said Alonzo reprovingly. "It clearly demonstrates that a boy may be very happy while he is reckless and wicked, and that as soon as he turns thoroughly good he dies of a painful disease. Such a book may be very useful to Bunter—"

"Fathead!"

"My dear Wharton—"

"Would you like Todd to read to you, Bunter?"

"Let him begin, that's all," said Bunter.

Bunter's tone could not be considered encouraging, even by Todd. Todd did not begin.

"My dear Bunter," he exclaimed, "I'm so sorry to observe that you have no taste even for improving literature. Perhaps you would like me to read you some extracts from the 'Dictionary of Scientific but Otherwise Useful Facts'? Some observations on the habits of the ichthyosaurus of ancient times appeared to me very interesting when I perused them myself, and—"

"Oh, cheese it, Todd!" said Bob Cherry.

"My dear Cherry—"

"Kick that lunatic out!" said Bunter.

"Oh, dear!"

"Buzz off, Todd! You bother the patient," said Wharton, grinning.

"Dear me! I'm so sorry to see Bunter in this state of mind. Perhaps, however, he may care for me to read to him to-morrow. I'm sure, I'm always at his service. My Uncle

Benjamin always impressed upon me to— Well, very well, I am going. You need not propel me towards the door in that somewhat rude manner, Bull. I am about to take my departure, and—"

But the closing door shut off the remainder of the remarks made by the Duffer of Greyfriars.

Bunter blinked at the juniors.

"I say, you fellows, why don't you sit down?" he asked. "I should think you'd get tired, standing up all the time."

The juniors fairly gasped.

It was the first time, since any of them had known Bunter, that the fat junior had ever expressed any concern for anybody but himself.

"My only hat!" murmured Nugent.

"Bunter, old man—" began Bob Cherry, but his voice fairly failed him.

"Oh, sit down! Would you like the armchair?"

"Eh?"

"Any of you care to have the armchair?"

"My hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"Can't you answer?" asked Bunter.

"It's all right, old chap!" gasped Wharton. "The armchair was brought here for you, because you're rocky. That's all right."

"Oh, all serene!"

"Ready for tea, Bunter?"

"Well, I'm getting peckish, I think," said Bunter, rubbing his fat hand over his forehead, as if he were not quite certain of it. "I don't know. Did you say this was my study?"

"Yes."

"See if there's anything in the cupboard."

"Oh, we're standing treat!"

"You're not standing treat," said Bunter. "If you're coming to tea in my study, I'm standing treat."

"We shall hear about the postal-order next," murmured Bob Cherry.

"Eh?" exclaimed Bunter, whose ears seemed to be unusually quick, in spite of the shock his head had received. "What's that?"

"I—I—I wondered whether you were expecting a postal-order, that's all," stammered Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter wrinkled his brows. The words "postal-order" seemed to touch a chord in his shattered memory, but the effort to remember was evidently too much for him.

He shook his head.

"No; I'm not expecting a postal-order," he replied.

"What!"

"I'm not expecting a postal-order," said Bunter peevishly. "I never get postal-orders. There's nobody to send me postal-orders that I know of."

The chums of the Remove stared at him blankly.

Billy Bunter, all unconsciously, was telling the truth for once in his life. The juniors knew that Bunter was not himself just now, but they had never expected this, or anything like this.

"My only hat!" Bob Cherry murmured. "Bunter sick is better than Bunter well."

"What-ho!"

"I don't think I have any money about me," said Bunter, feeling in his pockets. "I'm afraid I sha'n't be able to stand treat, you chaps."

"It's all right. We're going to stand a feed."

"Not to me."

"B-b-b-but why not?"

Bunter shook his head. The juniors gazed at him, and then at one another. Billy Bunter picked up the poker and stirred the fire. Even that slight action added to the amazement of the chums.

Bunter had never poked the fire before of his own free will. He had always left that task for somebody else to do. He would never replenish the fire even; and even if he were the only fellow in the room, he would sit calmly by it and let it go out, unless somebody else put on coals.

Bunter had become considerate; Bunter had become independent; Bunter was thinking of others instead of wholly of himself. Certainly, Bunter must be very, very ill. That was how the Greyfriars' juniors looked at it.

"My hat!" said Wharton at last. "My only summer hat!"

Nugent gave a start.

"I know!" he exclaimed suddenly.

"Eh? You know what?"

"A dodge—to make him remember."

"Good! What's the dodge?"

"Bunter minor."

EVERY
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Sammy says "Spool."

HARRY WHARTON'S face brightened up. "Of course!" he exclaimed.

He wondered that he had not thought of it before; but the strange alteration in Billy Bunter had occupied all his thoughts.

Bunter's minor was at Greyfriars—in the Second Form. Sammy Bunter was not a popular youth in his Form or out of it—he was too much like his major to be popular anywhere. Neither was he popular with his elder brother; in fact, there was very little love lost between major and minor.

Sammy was a younger edition of Billy, and so it was certain that they could not get on well together. Both wanted to borrow of the other; both wanted to get the better of every transaction; both were greedy and unscrupulous. Under the circumstances, brotherly love was not likely to flourish. And it didn't.

The two Bunters, after the first few days following Sammy's arrival at Greyfriars, had seen very little of one another. But now that Billy Bunter was ill, the chums naturally supposed that Sammy would be sympathetic, and if anything could bring back Billy to a recollection of old times, surely it would be the sight of his brother.

Even with his memory gone as it was, surely Billy could not forget Sammy.

"Bunter minor!" repeated Bob Cherry. "Good! It's rather curious that he hasn't been here, as a matter of fact. He must have heard about this."

"He must have, certainly."

"I should think he would have come."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders. He knew how much sympathy Bunter minor was likely to feel if he heard that Bunter major had had an accident.

"Well, suppose we call him in," he said.

"Good egg!"

"Bunter, old man—"

Billy Bunter blinked round.

"Yes. What is it?"

"Would you like to see your minor?"

Bunter looked puzzled.

"My minor!" he repeated.

"Yes. Sammy, you know."

"Sammy!"

"Yes. You haven't forgotten that you've got a minor at Greyfriars, I suppose, have you?" exclaimed Frank Nugent, in astonishment.

Bunter rubbed his forehead, as if to recall wandering thoughts.

"Sammy!" he repeated vaguely.

"Yes. Shall I call him in?"

"Better fetch him, anyway," whispered Wharton. "No good talking to Billy. He doesn't seem to understand."

"Right-ho! I'll have him here in a jiffy."

Frank Nugent left the study. He had a cloud upon his face now. He was sincerely concerned for Billy Bunter. If Bunter did not remember that he had a minor at Greyfriars, his state must be very serious indeed.

"Seen Bunter minor?" Nugent asked every fellow he met.

"Hasn't he been to see his major?" asked Bulstrode, with a sneer.

"Not yet."

"Nice, affectionate family, the Bunters!"

"Well, I'm going to take him to see Billy. Seen young Bunter, Ogilvy?"

"No," said Ogilvy.

"Faith, and he's in the Second Form-room, I believe!" said Micky Desmond. "I saw him go in with young Hop Hi."

"Oh, good!"

Frank Nugent made his way to the fags' Form-room. As he neared the door of the Second Form-room, he heard the loud and excited voices within. There was some disturbance going on among the heroes of the Second, evidently.

Nugent grinned as he pushed open the door. He knew that Sammy Bunter was unpopular in the Second Form, and he would not have been surprised if the Second had been ragging the younger edition of the Owl of the Remove.

He looked into the room. A group of excited fags surrounded Sammy Bunter, who was blinking angrily through his spectacles. He looked very like his major at that moment—that is, as the major had been before his accident.

Nugent minor—Frank's younger brother—was brandishing a clenched and somewhat grimy first in Bunter minor's face.

"Pig!" he roared.

"Beast!" shouted Myers.

ANSWERS

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

NEXT
TUESDAY: "ALONZO THE FOOTBALLER."

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums
of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Rotter!"

"Fat toad!"

"My word!" murmured Frank Nugent. "It sounded like the Remove talking to Billy! Hallo, young shavers, what's the row here?"

The fags turned and glared at Nugent major. Dicky Nugent glared as much as the others. He was on the best of terms with his major. But none of the Second liked interference from a fellow in a higher Form.

"Mind your own bizney!" growled Myers.

"What's the row?"

"Oh, it's this beast Bunter minor!" said Dicky Nugent. "He's found out where we kept the grub we were going to have for a feed—"

"He nosed it out, the beast!"

"And he's scoffed it!"

"Scoffed every crumb!"

"Clean as a whistle—the beast!"

"The cad!"

"The porker!"

"I—I—I didn't, you know!" stammered Sammy Bunter. "I—I came across the parcel under the desk just by accident, and—"

"Liar!"

"Chuck it! Rats!"

"I give you my word—" stammered Sammy.

"Yes, your word's worth a lot!" said Gatty contemptuously.

"Bunter minor's wanted," said Frank, interrupting the dispute. "Come on, Samuel!"

"I hope it's to go to the Head for a licking," said Gatty viciously.

"No, it isn't!"

"Well, we're jolly well going to lick him," declared Dicky Nugent. "The fat boulder's scoffed all our tommy, and he's going to sit up for it."

"He won't pay for the grub!" howled Myers indignantly.

"Come on, Sammy! You must let him off this time, Dick—his brother's ill, and Sammy's to go and see him," said Frank.

Dicky snorted.

"He knows his brother's ill, but he doesn't want to go and see him!" he exclaimed. "I told him an hour ago that Billy was laid up."

"I—I—I do want to see him!" said Sammy, catching at a straw as it were. "I—I feel very anxious about Billy—I do really, you know!"

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"Look here, I'm going to see Billy—"

"Come on!" exclaimed Frank Nugent, catching the fat Second-Former by the arm and hurrying him out of the room.

The fags made a motion to follow him. But Dicky Nugent restrained them.

"Plenty of time," he remarked significantly.

Which remark was not grateful or comforting to Sammy Bunter as he rolled away with Nugent major. He was evidently glad, however, to escape from the dangerous precincts of the Form-room. It was a respite, at least.

"Where's Billy?" he asked, as Nugent led him to the staircase.

"In his study."

Bunter minor looked at the stairs.

"I don't know that it's worth going upstairs," he said.

"It's a beastly fag climbing up a blessed staircase. Tell him I hope he's better."

Nugent looked at the fat fag.

"Don't you want to see him?" he asked.

"Well, I don't see that it will do him any good to see me, will it?" said Sammy Bunter argumentatively.

Nugent gave a contemptuous sniff.

"I don't see how it could do anybody good to see you," he replied. "But you're coming to see your major, in case he should want to see you. There's no accounting for tastes, and he might."

"Look here, Nugent major—"

"This way!"

Bunter minor stood squarely on his fat little legs, and looked at Nugent. He was so evidently turning over in his mind the chances of a successful bolt, that Frank drew a step nearer to him, ready to grab him.

"Look here, Nugent major," repeated Sammy. "You lend me a shilling, and I'll come up and see Billy."

"I'll lend you a thick ear, if you don't come, you toad."

"I'm short of tin. Billy owes me a lot of money," said Sammy, in an injured tone. "You lend me sixpence—"

Frank grasped the fat fag by the shoulder.

"This way, you fat worm!"

"Look here, it's all spoof, you know!" exclaimed Bunter minor, wriggling as the Remove grasped him; "Billy's only spoofing you! You know Billy! I don't want to give him away, as he's my major; but, as a matter of fact, he's simply

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

pulling your leg. He's no more ill than I am, and he's no more lost his memory than you have."

"He is really ill—"

"Stuff!"

"And he's really lost his memory—"

"Rats!"

Nugent changed his grip from Sammy's shoulder to Sammy's ear, and the fat fag gave an agonised squeal.

"Ow!"

"I'm not accustomed to having my remarks called stuff by fags," said Nugent wrathfully. "Now, you'd better come—"

"Yow-w-w-w! Leggo!"

"Are you coming?"

"Groo! Leggo! Oh!"

"Well, your ear's coming," said Nugent indifferently. "You can please yourself about coming along with it."

And he went upstairs, dragging Bunter minor by the ear. There was no doubt that Sammy's ear was bound to go with Nugent, and after one tug, Sammy decided to go with his ear. He went.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Very Brotherly.

"I SAY, you fellows—"

The juniors in the study all turned towards Billy Bunter instantly. Billy Bunter was an invalid now, and the centre of all attention. The Removes did not seem to be able to make enough of him.

"Yes, Bunter?" said Wharton.

"What is it, old fellow?" asked Bob Cherry.

Bunter grunted.

"What's that row in the passage? Somebody's being hurt."

It was another surprise for the juniors. Certainly there was a sound of scuffling feet in the passage, and an occasional squeal, and an ejaculation once or twice of "Leggo my ear!"

But Billy Bunter was not wont to be affected by trouble befalling anybody but himself.

"I—I think it's Nugent bringing your minor," said Harry, a little awkwardly.

He opened the door of the study.

Nugent marched Bunter minor in, with a grip on his ear. The fat fag was looking very savage and sulky.

"Here he is!" said Frank cheerfully.

"Here's your minor, Billy!" said Wharton.

Billy Bunter blinked at his minor. His minor blinked back at him, with very little of brotherly love in his looks.

"Oh, I hear you're ill, Billy!" said Sammy ungraciously.

Bunter major blinked at him.

"Of course, I know it's all spoof," said Sammy.

"Eh?"

"Getting deaf in your old age?" asked Sammy pleasantly.

"Don't play the goat. I suppose you're not going to try and take me in!"

Bunter looked bewildered.

"Who are you?" he asked.

Sammy stared at him.

"Oh, come, that's too rich!" he exclaimed. "You're not going to pretend that you don't know me, I suppose."

"Who is it?"

"It's your minor, Billy!"

"My m-m-minor!"

"Yes. Don't you know him?"

"Yes, your m-m-minor!" mimicked Sammy Bunter.

"Your m-in-minor! What on earth are you playing this dodge for, Billy? Are you getting a feed out of it?"

"I don't understand you."

"What's the little game?"

"Game?"

"Yes. What axe have you got to grind?"

"Axe?"

"Blessed if he isn't taking to repeating things like a parrot, like that chap Todd!" exclaimed Sammy Bunter, in disgust.

"Look here, Billy, it's no good trying to pull my leg. You can take these chaps in, but you can't expect to take me in, when I was brought up with you."

"A prophet is never without honour except in his own country," murmured Nugent.

Sammy stared round angrily at the juniors.

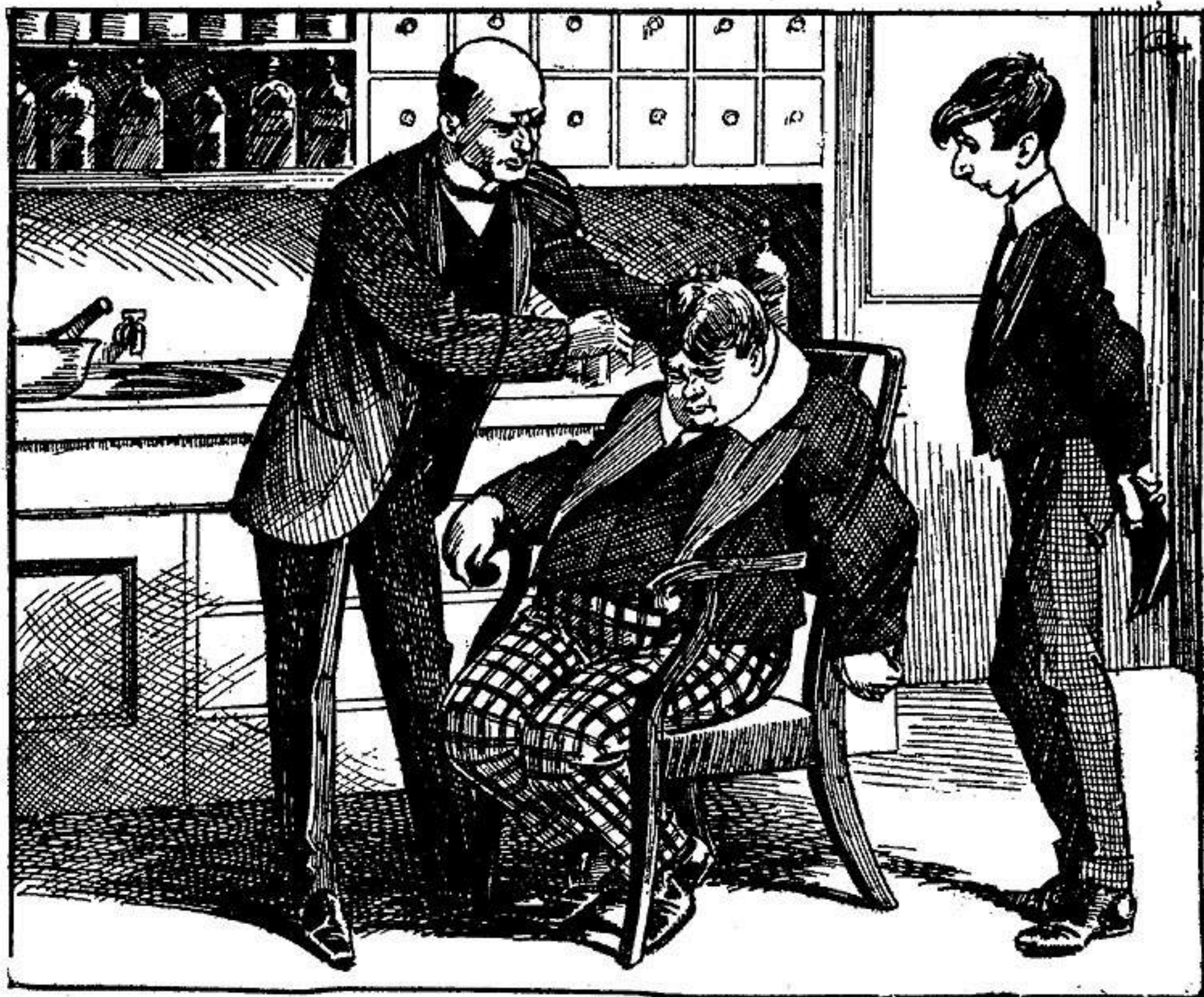
"Do you mean to say you take in this rotten spoof?" he exclaimed, with a scornful sniff. "Bah! He's only pulling your leg, I tell you!"

"Hold your tongue!" said Wharton.

"I tell you—"

"Shut up, unless you want a thick ear. Don't you know this chap, Billy?" asked Harry Wharton quietly and kindly, laying his hand upon Billy Bunter's shoulder.

Bunter blinked at Sammy, and shook his head.



The little medico was leaning over Billy Bunter, examining him. Alonzo Todd stood looking on with an expression of deepest sympathy on his face. "I am so sorry!" he murmured. (See page 6.)

"No, I don't know him," he said.

Sammy Bunter gave a long, low whistle.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated.

Bunter continued to blink at him in a doubtful, puzzled sort of way. He was evidently trying to recollect something, but trying in vain.

But Sammy Bunter was far from believing that his major was doing anything but acting. As Bunter's minor, and his early companion at home, he knew even more of the deceptiveness of Bunter's nature than the others did. And Sammy Bunter was armed strong in disbelief. He was not to be taken in. It was true this time, as it happened—but Bunter minor was not to be taken in, all the same. If Billy had perished, Sammy would probably have declined to believe that he was really dead. Upon one thing Sammy Bunter's mind was made up—whatever Billy did was a sham, and whatever he said was an untruth. His belief was founded upon long and intimate acquaintance with Bunter.

Sammy watched the varying expressions upon his major's face with a grin on his own.

"My aunt!" he exclaimed at last. "You do it well, Billy. I thought it was your usual swank when you said you could act. But you can act."

"Shut up!" said Bull.

John Bull had just come into the study with the things for tea. John Bull, who had heaps of money, had expended some of his funds very liberally in providing a dainty tea for Bunter.

He turned out the things on the table, and Sammy Bunter watched them with greedy eyes.

"I say, are you standing Billy a feed, you chaps?" he exclaimed.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

NEXT
TUESDAY: "ALONZO THE FOOTBALLER."

"Yes, we are!"

"Because he's ill?"

"Yes."

"And because he's lost his memory?"

"Just so!"

"But it's all spoof!" said Sammy Bunter, in wonder.

"Oh, ring off that!"

Sammy looked at his major, and looked at the juniors. His eyes were wide open behind his round spectacles.

It seemed amazing to him, perfectly convinced as he was that his major was spoofing, that the other fellows could not see it.

"Do you mean to say seriously that you believe him?" he ejaculated at last.

"Yes, you young rotter."

"But he's pulling your leg."

"Oh, dry up!"

Sammy whistled.

"Look here, Billy, come off!" he exclaimed. "Why don't you own up? You know what an ass you are, and you'll give the show away soon—as you always do when you're spoofing. Why don't you own up?"

Bunter major blinked at him.

"I don't understand you," he said.

"Look here, you're telling these chaps you've lost your memory—"

Billy Bunter looked bewildered.

"Lost my memory?" he repeated.

"Yes. I know it's gammon!"

"I—I haven't said I've lost my memory," said Bunter, blinking, in bewilderment. "Who—who said I said so? I —"

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"It's all right, Billy! You'll be all right soon," said Wharton. "You've only had a shock. You'll be all right to-morrow."

"But I—I—I—"

"You get out, you hard-hearted young cad!" said John Bull, taking Bunter minor by the shoulder and jerking him to the door. "It won't do poor old Bunter any good, to see you, anyway. Travel!"

Bunter minor rolled out under the grip of the sturdy junior. He blinked curiously at John Bull in the passage.

"You really believe that Billy has lost his memory?" he asked.

"Yes, of course."

"You don't think it's gammon?"

"No, you toad!"

"You're going to look after him?"

"Certainly we are!"

"And feed him?"

"Anything he likes to eat—certainly."

"My aunt!" said Sammy Bunter. "I wonder if they would do as much for me in the Second Form if I gammoned them?"

"You—you blessed Doubting Thomas!" exclaimed John Bull angrily. "Get out!"

He lifted his boot.

Sammy Bunter gave a yelp of alarm and started to run. John Bull's boot smote him behind and changed his run into a jump.

Bump!

"Yarrah!"

Sammy Bunter plunged wildly forward. He rolled on the linoleum, and then sat up and glared at John Bull.

"You beast!"

"Scat!"

"You rotter—"

John Bull made a rush at him. Plump as he was, Sammy Bunter was on his feet in a moment and bolting for the stairs. He scuttled down them at top speed, and at the bottom of the staircase paused, gasping for breath.

"Rotter!" he muttered.

John Bull was not pursuing him. Sammy panted and gasped, and gasped and panted. When he had fully recovered his breath he rolled away, with a peculiar gleam in his little piggy eyes. Some new idea was evidently working in the brain of Bunter minor.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

"How's Bunter?"

JOHN BULL re-entered Billy Bunter's study and closed the door. Nugent had spread a white tablecloth over the table, and the juniors were laying it for tea. Harry Wharton was poking the fire under the kettle. Bunter watched the preparations for tea with the same odd, absent expression upon his face.

"I say, you fellows, let me help!" he exclaimed.

"It's all right, old chap! There's no cooking to do!"

"I can help you lay the cloth."

"My hat!"

Bunter rose from the armchair.

They allowed him to help—they were too astonished to do anything else.

In a study feed Bunter had always been willing to lend a hand with the cooking. Bunter was a great cook, and fond of cooking—and in the process of cooking he would help himself to continual little snacks. But he had never been known to offer to do anything else.

It was clear that there was a great change in Bunter.

Wharton made the tea, and brought the teapot up to the table. Nugent had boiled the eggs, and a cheerful table it was, with fragrant tea and fresh eggs and ham and crisp, fresh bread-and-butter, and cakes and tarts were piled on the table to finish with.

There was a knucky rap on the door, and the head of Fisher T. Fish was projected into the study. The American boy grinned round genially.

"Bunter better?" he asked.

"Just the same."

"I guess I'm feeling sympathetic, some," said Fish. "I s'pose it will be all O.K. if I come in and keep him company a bit."

"Certainly!"

"Yep? Right you are!"

"Had your tea?" asked Harry, with a smile.

"Nope."

"Will you have tea with us?"

"Yep."

"There's a chair."

Fisher T. Fish sat down.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

A minute later the door opened, and Bulstrode looked in. He also had a very genial expression upon his face.

"Bunter better?" he asked.

"Just the same."

"I'm awfully sorry for Bunter," said Bulstrode, coming gently into the study. "How do you feel, Bunter, old man?"

"Eh?"

"Feeling better?"

"Who are you?"

"Eh? Oh, I'm Bulstrode—your old friend, you know!"

"Oh!"

"My hat, what a feed you've got there!" exclaimed Bulstrode, glancing at the table. "Ham and eggs and cold chicken and ham-patties and cake and—My word, who's going to eat that blessed mountain of grub?"

"It's a feed for Bunter."

"Hungry, Bunter?"

"Not very," said the fat junior, blinking.

"My hat! First time I've heard him say that. I thought I'd look in and keep Bunter company for a bit," said Bulstrode blandly. "No objection, I suppose?"

"Oh, no!"

"I'll bring in a chair for myself."

Bulstrode brought in a chair for himself. He made room at the table by shoving Fisher T. Fish a little aside.

"Had your tea?" asked Nugent.

"Not yet."

"Pile in!"

"Thanks awfully!"

The door opened again just as Bulstrode started. Ogilvy of the Remove looked in. He seemed surprised at seeing so many fellows in the study; but he grinned genially, and nodded to all of them together.

"Bunter better?" he asked.

"My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

He had been surprised at so much concern for Bunter. All the fellows were naturally sorry, but it was curious that they should call in and inquire after the Owl of the Remove in this way. But Wharton had "tumbled" now. The anxious inquirers after Billy Bunter's health had seen John Bull shopping in Mrs. Mumble's establishment, or else had spotted him bringing in the feed.

The juniors were less concerned about Bunter's state of health than about the feed that was going on in the study.

"We're all rather anxious about Bunter," Ogilvy remarked.

"I hope he's better now."

"Same as ever."

"You chaps mind if I kept him company for a bit?"

The juniors burst into a laugh.

"Oh, come in and have tea!" exclaimed John Bull.

Ogilvy grinned.

"Well, since you're so pressing, I will!" he exclaimed.

And he did. There was no chair in the study, and no room at the table for it if there had been one. But the junior did not mind a little thing like that. He took a plate on his knees, and sat on the coalbox.

"Well, I must say this is ripping ham!" he exclaimed.

"I'm sorry Bunter is seedy. These eggs are done to a turn! It's rough on Bunter—but really this is splendid!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Brown looked in at the door. Hazledene was with him. They looked in in rather an uncertain way at the grinning faces in the room.

"Bunter better?" asked Brown.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How's old Bunter?" asked Hazledene.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two juniors coloured, and came in. Fisher T. Fish looked round with a grin.

"I guess you heard about the feed," he remarked.

"Ahem—"

"H'm!"

"It's all O.K., sonny! That's what I came to inquire—for Bunter, I guess," said the American junior placidly. "And there's plenty of grub going, I guess."

"Sit down," said John Bull. "I can't offer you anything better than the floor to sit on, but there's plenty of grub."

"Surely!"

"Oh, all right!" exclaimed Tom Brown, laughing. "Since you're so pressing—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Brown and Hazledene joined the feed. The study was now crammed. When the door opened again it knocked against Tom Brown's arm, and jerked his teacup, and he spilt half his tea on the carpet.

"Here, look out!" he shouted.

"Eh?" said Micky Desmond, looking in round the door. "Faith, and it's anxious for poor old Bunter I am intirely. Is he any better?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter darling, is it feeling better ye are?" asked Micky sympathetically. "Sure, and I'm anxious about ye."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, ye gossoons, and what are ye cackling about entirely?" demanded Micky.

"Squeeze in," said John Bull. "The ham and eggs are gone; but here's some cold chicken."

"Faith, but I came here to—"

"To inquire after Bunter. I know. So here's the cold chicken."

"You'll have to stand," said Harry Wharton, handing Micky a plate. "Stand close to the door, and keep the next boulder out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, and I—"

"There's somebody already!" yelled Bob Cherry, as the door opened about three inches and then met Micky's foot. A still small voice came in at the aperture:

"My dear fellows, how is Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is Bunter better?" repeated Alonzo Todd, rather puzzled by the laughter in the study. "I trust this unexpected and apparently unseemly merriment may be taken as an indication that Bunter's progress upon the whole affords satisfaction?"

"Bunter's all right!" roared John Bull. "The feed's growing the worse for wear, but you can come in if you can find room."

"My dear Bull, I was not thinking of the feed—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As a matter of fact, I have brought Bunter some beef-tea, so I should be obliged if you would admit me to the study," said Alonzo. "My Uncle Benjamin always recommended beef-tea in case of illness. I have made some."

"Bring him in, Micky."

Micky moved aside, and Alonzo squeezed in. He looked round the study in surprise.

"Dear me! You are quite crowded!"

"Yes; all these chaps came to inquire for Bunter."

"How exceedingly gratifying to know that so many of poor dear Bunter's Form-fellows are so anxious about him," said Alonzo, with a beaming smile. "I see that Bunter has somewhat recovered his appetite. I wonder if he would care for the beef-tea?"

"Let's look at it."

Alonzo held out a can containing a smoky-looking liquid.

"I made it myself," he said. "The can has been used to keep sardines in, but the sardines were getting very high, so I threw them away. I fear that a slight flavour was left in the can, but I do not think that that will affect the nutritiousness of the beef-tea. I obtained a large piece of beef, and I have boiled it over the fire in the can. Jones minor mischievously poured in a little ink, but not sufficient, I think, to exercise any deleterious influence over the beef-tea. I am sure that it will do Bunter a great deal of good. Would you like to taste it, Bunter?"

"Ugh!"

"My dear Bunter—"

"Buzz off, Todd, old son! Take the beef-tea away and bury it, and put something heavy on the grave so that it can't get out."

"My dear Cherry—"

"I guess it niffs," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

"The slight smell is merely due to the remnant of sardines—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nugent gently led the Duffer of Greyfriars to the door and led him out. Then he closed the door. As he did so Russell and Morgan of the Remove came racing up the passage.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Russell breathlessly, as Nugent was shutting the door. "How's Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How's Bunter? Look out!" panted Morgan.

Nugent locked the door. The two juniors outside tried the handle, and then kicked. Then Russell bawled through the keyhole:

"I say! How's Bunter?"

"Oh, Bunter's getting on all right!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "The getting onfulness is terrific, my esteemed chum!"

"We'd like to sit with him a bit—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No room—you're too late," said Nugent, through the keyhole. "Full—standing room only! Money returned at the box-office."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Russell and Morgan kicked at the door, and retired baffled. And during the next half-hour a dozen or more fellows came along the Remove passage and tried the door, and found it locked, and inquired anxiously after Bunter's health through the keyhole, and kindly offered to sit with him. The kind offers being declined with thanks, the anxious inquirers kicked at the door—very inconsiderately, considering how anxious they were for Bunter's health—and retired growling.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

EVERY
TUESDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Sammy Bunter Loses His Memory—

SAMMY BUNTER paused in the passage, with a gleam in his little round eyes. The idea that had flashed into his brain was working there. Sammy Bunter was very like his elder brother, but he was sharper in many things. His wits were keener, and moved more quickly. Sammy was far from believing in the reality of Billy Bunter's attack. He regarded the fat junior as having made things very easy and comfortable for himself by the simple process of "gammoning" the Remove.

Sammy would never have expected such a dodge to succeed. But it had succeeded with the Remove, who were keener fellows upon the whole than the fags in the Second. And fellows who disliked Bunter, fellows who hadn't been able to tolerate him well, had rallied round Bunter ill, and were looking after him, and giving him a really royal time. The dodge that had worked with the Remove—why shouldn't it work with the Second?

That was Sammy Bunter's idea.

Sammy had not lived long enough yet to learn by experience that the truth, however strange it may seem, gets itself believed somehow, while a lie, though never so plausible, imposes upon nobody for long.

It seemed to Sammy Bunter a first-class wheeze, and if Billy had worked it why shouldn't he? Sammy considered himself as being very much smarter than Billy. Indeed, he thought he had seen flaws in Bunter's action, though it had imposed upon the Remove. He felt that he could have kept up the "gammon" much better.

True, it seemed unlikely that the Second-Formers would be sympathetic towards him, even if he were ill. But it seemed quite as unlikely that the Removites would prove sympathetic towards Billy, yet they had so proved.

Undoubtedly it was a good dodge, and if Billy made a success of it why not Sammy? That was how Sammy looked at it.

"It's a jolly good wheeze!" Sammy murmured to himself. "The only thing is, how am I to get a shock to the system to destroy my memory without hurting myself?"

That was an important point.

No prospect of feeding would have induced Sammy Bunter to fling himself head first into a swimming-bath, as his major had done.

He could walk into a door or a wall and bump his head, but it would have to be a severe bump to make the fags believe in its terrible effects.

Sammy was turning the matter over in his mind when Loder, the prefect, came along the passage. Loder scowled at him.

Sammy had not offended Loder in any way. Loder scowled for a reason totally unconnected with Sammy. Blue Smoke, the favourite for the Great Swindell Handicap, had come in ninth or tenth instead of first, and Loder owed Mr. Cobb, of the Cross Keys, about five pounds in consequence. Betting on races was one of Loder's amusements, indulged in secret, and he found it, like most fellows, a very expensive one, though he was always just going to set matters right by bringing off a coup on a "dead cert."

It was really not Sammy Bunter's fault that Blue Smoke had come in tenth. Sammy Bunter had never even heard of Blue Smoke, or even of the Great Swindell Handicap. But he was handy to cuff, so Loder cuffed him.

Sammy set up a roar.

"Yow!"

"You fat young cub!" growled Loder. "Don't hang about the passages. Do you hear? Go out and get some exercise."

And he cuffed Sammy Bunter a second time, harder than the first.

Sammy Bunter gave a wild, ringing shriek, and dropped to the floor.

Loder stared at him angrily.

"Get up, you young fool!" he shouted.

Sammy Bunter lay quite still. He had caught sight of Dicky Nugent and Gatty of the Second Form coming down the passage. It was Sammy's chance, and he made the most of it. Loder of the Sixth had solved the difficulty for him.

"Get up, you fat rotter! Don't lie there malingering."

Sammy Bunter did not move or speak.

Loder stirred him with his foot. He did not know Sammy Bunter's "wheeze," but he knew that he was pretending to be injured.

"Get up, you cub!"

No reply.

"Hang it all, let him alone, you bully!" exclaimed Dicky Nugent, running forward. Dicky Nugent was only a fag in the Second, but he had nerve enough to check a whole army of prefects.

Loder glared at him.

"He's shamming!" he exclaimed.

Sammy Bunter groaned.

"You've hurt him!" exclaimed Nugent minor.

"Rot! I just flicked him."

"It's only young Bunter," remarked Gatty.

"Well, he's not going to be kicked when he's down, even Fatty Bunter," said Dick Nugent. "Let him alone, Loder, or I'll yell out to Wingate."

Loder gritted his teeth. Wingate, the captain of the school, was in his study, and he was not on the best of terms with the prefect. There was no telling whether he might not take the fag's side in the dispute.

"You'd better get that fat humbug away from here," exclaimed Loder. "He's only pretending to be hurt."

And he strode into his study and slammed the door.

Dick and Gatty raised up Bunter minor. It was not an easy task, for the fat fag was very heavy, and he did not give them the slightest assistance. He threw his whole weight upon them as they raised him, and they fairly staggered under it.

"My word!" said Gatty. "He must be hurt, after all!"

"Looks like it."

"Loder's a beast!"

"Bunter! Sammy!"

Sammy Bunter did not speak. His eyes were tightly closed. Only a faint moan escaped from his lips.

Dick Nugent looked anxious.

"He may be badly hurt," he said. "You know what's happened to his major through getting a rap on the head. I dare say they have weak heads in the Bunter family."

"Shouldn't wonder. What are you going to do with him?"

"Get him to the Form-room."

And Nugent and Gatty half led and half carried Sammy Bunter to the Form-room. There was a yell from the Second-Form fags as they brought him in.

"Here he is!"

"Here's the fat bounder!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

And Recovers It.

DICKY NUGENT gave a long, low whistle. Gatty ejaculated, "My hat!" Myers gasped. The rest of the Second Form fellows stared blankly. It was amazing. Sammy Bunter had lost his memory, just like his major. Loss of memory appeared to run in the Bunter family.

"Well, my word!" said Nugent minor at last. "If this doesn't take the cake! All through that beast Loder giving him a cuff."

"It wasn't a very hard one, either," said Gatty.

"No. He may have bumped his head on the floor in falling, though."

Myers ran his fingers over Bunter minor's head.

"There isn't any bump here," he remarked.

"No bump?"

"Nothing at all."

"Bump might be inside," suggested Myers sagely. "I've heard about concussion producing internal injuries, you know. I suppose that means a bump inside."

"Ass!"

"Look here, young Nugent—"

"Let me looker!"

It was the soft voice of Hop Hi, the younger brother of Wun Lung, of the Remove. Little Hop Hi pushed his way through the fags, his almond eyes blinking curiously. Chinaman as he was, Hop Hi was very popular in the Second Form. His unlimited pocket-money may have had something to do with it.

"You can look at him if you like," said Dicky Nugent. "He seems to be quite off his rocker, like Billy."

Sammy blinked at them.

"What's this place?" he repeated, just as if he had not asked the question before.

"Greyfriars," said Gatty.

"Is it a school?"

"My hat! Yes."

**NEXT
WEEK:**

"ALONZO The Footballer!"

"Nugent minor's got him!"

And the fags crowded round for vengeance. Dicky Nugent waved them back.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed.

There was a shout at once.

"Collar him!"

"Hold on, I say!" exclaimed Dicky Nugent, pushing back the excited fags. "There's something the matter with him. Loder has been going for him, and Bunter minor fainted or something."

"Phew!"

"What's the matter?"

"I don't know. Only his major has been ill through getting a bump on the napper, and has gone off his rocker. Perhaps—"

"He's coming to!" exclaimed Gatty.

Sammy Bunter's eyes opened.

The fags, hushed with alarm and surprise, gathered round almost in silence. They gazed in wonder and interest at Sammy Bunter.

The fat fag blinked through his spectacles with an unseeing gaze.

"Where am I?" he moaned.

"You're here," said Gatty.

This was pretty evident, without Gatty saying so. Dicky Nugent frowned him down, and replied:

"In the Second Form-room, Sammy."

"Eh?"

"You're in the Form-room."

"What Form-room?"

"Eh? The Second Form—your own Form."

"My Form? I haven't any Form."

"What?"

Sheer amazement held Dicky Nugent silent. Sammy Bunter rolled his little round eyes behind his spectacles.

"Where am I?" he gasped. "What's this place?"

"Greyfriars."

"Greyfriars! I've never heard of it."

The juniors could only stare. The truth burst upon them all at once. Sammy Bunter, like his major, had lost his memory.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

"You fellows belong to it?"

"Of course!"

"How did I come here?"

"My word! You've been here a long time."

"I—I feel a pain in my head," said Sammy Bunter, passing his fat hand over his brow. "Has—has anything happened to me?"

"You've had a cuff."

"Oh! I—I—I suffer very much."

"Velly strange," murmured Hop Hi, "Buntsee mince lossee memolee, likee Buntsee majee."

"Yes," said Dicky Nugent. "I suppose they're a weak-headed family. Only Bunter major had a fearful bump on his napper, and Sammy doesn't seem to have a mark at all."

"Soonee makee mark," said Hop Hi. "Me whackee with cicket stumpee."

"Keep that maniac off!" yelled Sammy Bunter. "You Chinese ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold on, Hop Hi!" exclaimed Nugent minor. "We don't want him marked, you young chump. What silly notion have you got in your noddle?"

"Buntsee mince no forget me Chineese."

"Oh!" exclaimed Gatty suspiciously. "That's so! If he's lost his memory, how does he know a Chinese from anybody else?"

"Buntsee mince explaine."

"I—I don't know him," stammered Sammy. "I've never seen him before. Oh, my head! The awful pain!"

And Sammy pressed a fat hand to his forehead.

The fags looked at Bunter minor very suspiciously now. They could see that the cunning little Chinese did not believe in the genuineness of his attack, and Hop Hi's doubt was spreading to themselves.

After all, it was very curious that Sammy Bunter should lose his memory on the very same day that Billy had lost his, and from so trifling a cause.

And the fags remembered what a determined and unrepentant spoofer Sammy Bunter was, quite equalling his elder brother in that line.

Sammy quailed a little.

Billy's "gammon," as he considered it, had gone down without raising a doubt. He was much cleverer than Billy, and the Second Form were certainly not any more brainy than the Remove. Surely he ought to have succeeded quite easily!

But he saw that there were breakers ahead now. The looks the fags cast upon him were suspicious and unsympathetic.

"Oh!" groaned Sammy. "The fearful pain! Oh! And I'm so hungry!"

"Hungry, are you?" said Gatty.

"Yes, fearfully. Oh, I think perhaps I might recover my memory if I had a really good blow-out!" groaned Sammy.

"Oh!" said Nugent minor.

"Velly luff on Buntsee mince," said Hop Hi.

"H'm!"

"Buntsee mince no lemembel himself or him name," said Hop Hi. "He not able to take legisteled lettel."

"A registered letter for Bunter minor?"

"He no able signee namce now."

Sammy Bunter started. He looked into the solemn, serious face of the little Chinese which was full of sympathetic concern.

A registered letter for him—a remittance from home, of course. He had been expecting, or, at least, hoping for one for a long time. And it had come now, just when he had lost his memory, and could not, of course, recover it all of a sudden for the sake of getting hold of his remittance.

It was too provoking.

"I suppose it will have to be given back to the postman," remarked Myers.

"I suppose so."

"Oh!" groaned Bunter minor. "Oh, the awful pain! I—I—I feel as if I can remember something now. I—I—Who am I?"

"You're Bunter minor," said Dick Nugent suspiciously.

"Oh, yes, of course! I—I—I'm Sammy Bunter!" exclaimed Sammy, blinking at the juniors. "I—I've had a fearful shock. I—I forgot everything. But—but it's all coming back now. The—the pain is going."

"Is it?"

"Yes, Oh, dear, I've had a fearful time!" groaned Sammy. "I—I forgot everything from the moment Loder knocked me down."

"How do you know it was Loder if you forgot?" asked Gatty.

"I—I—I've just remembered it."

"Blessed if I don't believe he was spoofing all along!" exclaimed Gatty. "It's just one of his rotten tricks."

"Look here, Gatty—"

"The fat fraud!"

"Isn't he just like his major, the bounder?"

"I—I think I'd better go and get that registered letter," mumbled Sammy. "I don't want it to be given back to the postman."

"Allee lightee," murmured Hop Hi. "No lettee."

"What!"

"No legisteled lettee."

Sammy Bunter glared at him through his spectacles with the glare of a basilisk. The cunning of the little Celestial dawned upon him, and it enraged him so much that he could hardly keep from springing at the grinning Hop Hi.

"You—you heathen rotter!" he yelled. "You've been lying!"

"Me no lie!" said Hop Hi warmly. "Me say if Buntsee mince losce memoly, Buntsee mince no able signee for legisteled lettee. No say legisteled lettee comce."

The fags burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fairly caught!" yelled Dicky Nugent. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"You heathen rotter!"

"Buntsee mince lecover memoly," said Hop Hi maliciously.

"Me so glad."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter minor groaned, as if the terrible pain in his head had returned. He pressed his fat fingers to his forehead.

"Ow! The pain! Oh!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Dicky Nugent. "It's come back, has it?"

"Yes, Ow! I—I feel very strange. Who—who are you?" mumbled Bunter minor.

"What!"

"What is this place?"

"This place!" murmured Dicky, dazed by the impudence of the fat fag. "My only summer bonnet! You're not trying to spoof us over again, are you?"

"I—I don't seem to remember—"

"I'll make you seem to remember, then," roared Dicky. "Bump him! We'll see if we can bump his memory back."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Yow! It's all right; I remember now!"

"Bump him!"



During his attack of loss of memory Billy Bunter did many strange things, among them being the reckless distribution of charity!

"I—I remember!"
 "You remember a little too late," grinned Dicky Nugent.
 "We'll give you the bumping all the same. It may save you from losing your memory again."

Bump!
 "Yow!"
 Bump!
 "Yaroo!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

And Sammy Bunter had the bumping.
 Apparently it had the effect predicted by Nugent minor, for after that bumping in the Form-room, Sammy Bunter showed no signs whatever of losing his memory.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER. Another Surprise from Bunter.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Who's that?"
 "That" was a ragged urchin who was tramping up to the School House across the Close of Greyfriars. He was a decidedly dirty and unkempt youth, and had evidently been on tramp for a long time, but what he wanted at Greyfriars was not clear, unless he had come in to beg. And in that case he must have been very keen to dodge the vigilance of Gosling, the porter.

A group of juniors on the School House steps stared at him. Bulstrode, who was among them, burst into a scoffing laugh.

"A blessed beggar, and no mistake!" he exclaimed. "Gosling ought to be sacked for letting him get in at the gates."

"Yes, rather!" said Skinner. "Let's rag him! Look here, we'll make the young rotter run the gauntlet in the Close. Give him a lesson about coming in here to beg."

"Good!" exclaimed Snoop.

"No, you won't!" said Bob Cherry.

Bulstrode & Co. glared at him.

"Who'll stop us?" demanded Bulstrode belligerently.

"I'll try," said Bob Cherry, facing the bully of the Remove calmly. "Yes, I know you can lick me, Bulstrode, but I can put up a jolly good fight every time, and if you want to take it on again, I'm ready."

"Look here, Cherry—"

"And I'm ready to back you up, Cherry," exclaimed Tom Brown, of New Zealand. "Nobody is going to bump or rag that poor little bounder while I'm here."

"Mind your own business, young Frozen Mutton!" snapped Skinner.

"It's my business, too," said Harry Wharton, coming out.

"Hands off that kid, Bulstrode, or there will be a row. I suppose he has no right here, but he's not going to be ragged. He looks as if he's had a hard time of it, anyway."

"Of course, you are bound to interfere!" sneered Bulstrode.

"Yes," said Wharton quietly, "I'm bound to interfere to stop any rotten cowardly bullying, whenever I get an opportunity."

Bulstrode turned crimson.

"I don't want to hurt the kid—" he began.

"Let him alone, then!"

The ragged urchin had come up to the steps. His keen eyes were looking out sharply and suspiciously from a dirty face with shaggy brows.

Probably if the juniors had wanted to rag him, they would have found it difficult to catch him.

"What do you want here?" demanded Snoop.

"If you gents will 'elp a poor lad—" began the urchin, in the regular whining voice of the mendicant.

"Rats! Buzz off!"

"Begging isn't allowed here," said Bulstrode. "You ought to be locked up. Get out!"

"Here! Hallo, you kid!"

It was a voice calling from a window.

The little beggar looked up, and so did the Removites.

The fat face of Billy Bunter appeared at the window.

The fat junior blinked down at the beggar.

"This way!" he called out.

The boy was not slow to take the hint. He ran towards the window, and stopped under it, holding his cap to catch what might be thrown out.

"Yes, sir, thank you, sir," he said.

The juniors stared in amazement as Bunter felt in his pockets.

Billy Bunter, in a state of health, had never been known to give anything away. That he should part with money to a beggar was astounding. He had already thrown a number of coins from the window that very morning to an ancient pedlar who had wandered into the Close.

In losing his memory, Billy Bunter seemed to have lost his original nature as well. He was feeling in his pockets

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

for money. Bunter was supposed to be stony, but he apparently had some money in his pockets. Bunter was not always so short of money as he affected to be.

The little tramp looked up eagerly.

"Ere y'are, sir!" he called out, holding out his cap.

Bunter threw out a coin.

It clinked on the ground, missing the cap, and there was a gleam of silver as the little tramp picked it up.

Another and another coin followed.

"Thank you, sir."

Bunter blinked at the beggar-boy.

"I'm sincerely sorry I can't give you any more," he said.

"That's all I have about me. And I'm not expecting any, either, unfortunately."

"Thank you kindly, sir. You're a gent, sir," said the tramp.

And he slipped his unexpected gains into some recess of his rags, and started towards the gates.

Bulstrode made a movement to follow him.

"Look here, he can't be allowed to get away with that money!" he exclaimed.

"It's only a few shillings."

"But Bunter is off his rocker, or he wouldn't have given it to him."

"I'll make it up to Bunter," said Harry Wharton quietly.

Bulstrode growled. As a matter of fact, he was not at all concerned about Bunter's loss, but he wanted an excuse for ragging the tramp.

"Hallo, Gossy's after him!" exclaimed Skinner, with malicious glee.

Wharton compressed his lips.

As the beggar-lad neared the gates, Gosling had come out of his lodge, with a big stick in his hand. Gosling had been careless in allowing the little tramp to enter, but he evidently meant to make up for it as the intruder went out.

The burly porter stood beside the gate, with the stick grasped in his hand. The boy could not escape without passing within reach of him.

The young tramp halted.

"Gossy's going to make him sit up!" chuckled Snoop.

"Oh, shut up, you cad!" said Wharton. "What harm has the kid ever done you? I suppose he couldn't help being born a beggar, could he?"

"Oh, you're always siding with some rotter, Wharton."

"I never side with you," said Wharton.

And there was a laugh at Snoop's expense.

"Well, he's going to get a lamming now, at any rate," said Bulstrode, with a spiteful sneer at Wharton.

Wharton looked towards the gates. The little ragamuffin had halted, evidently afraid to pass Gosling. The porter, after waiting for him a few moments, started towards him.

The boy stood ready to dodge.

Harry Wharton ran down the steps, and ran across to the gates.

"Gosling!" he called out. "Gosling!"

The school porter looked across at him.

"It's all right, Master Wharton! I've got the young 'ound! You see that he don't dodge, Master Wharton, and I'll paste 'im! I'll teach him to come in 'ere with his beggar's tricks. Wot I say is this 'ere—he's goin' to get a 'iding."

"Rats!"

"Hey?" said Gosling.

"Let him alone!"

The school porter stared blankly at Wharton. Why the handsome, well-dressed captain of the Remove should interfere on behalf of a ragged little ragamuffin was a mystery to the porter. Gosling's principle was to "chivy" anybody who had the misfortune to be at his mercy, and any other course of conduct he was wont to regard as "humbug."

"Look 'ere, Master Wharton!" he exclaimed, "Wot I says is this 'ere—that brat is goin' to 'ave a lickin' for comin' in 'ere, and if you interferes, I'll report yer to the 'Ead."

"Report away!" said Harry. "You're not going to touch him."

"Look 'ere!"

"Cut off, kid!" said Harry, pointing to the gates. "I'll stop this chap!"

The boy looked at him queerly.

"Thanky, young master," he said; "you're a good sort."

And he cut off towards the gates.

Gosling ran straight at him with brandished stick. Harry Wharton ran in, caught the porter's wrist, and twisted the stick away, flinging it to the ground.

"Master Wharton, I'll report yer!" roared Gosling.

"Oh, report, and be hanged!"

"Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Rats!"

The beggar boy had vanished. Harry Wharton walked back to the schoolhouse.

LOOK OUT FOR THE "X" IN THE "GEM" LIBRARY.

"See, the conquering hero comes!" sniggered Snoop.

Wharton looked at him.

"Do you want a thick ear?" he asked.

Snoop backed away.

"N-n-n-o thanks!"

"Then shut up."

And Snoop shut up. Gosling, with a face like a thundercloud, stumped over to the Head's house, to keep his promise of reporting Wharton for his interference.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Does Not Know Marjorie.

HARRY WHARTON looked in at Billy Bunter's study a little later. The fat junior was still staring vacantly out of the window.

He turned round, and blinked at Wharton as the latter came in. His brows were puckered up in a puzzled-perplexed expression.

"Feel better, Bunter?" asked Harry.

"I'm all right."

"Hungry?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"How can I be hungry, when we've only lately had tea?" he said. "I can't keep on eating all the time, can I?"

Harry Wharton smiled. It was clear that Billy Bunter's memory had not returned yet.

"I—I say, this place seems familiar, somehow," said Bunter, looking round with a bewildered expression.

"It's your study, Billy."

Bunter passed his hand over his head. He winced as his fat fingers came into contact with the bump there.

"Oh, you say I belong to this school?"

"Yes, rather."

"And I've been here a long time?"

"You were here before I came."

"I can't understand it. What were those fellows down there staring at when I was throwing some tin to the beggar?"

Harry Wharton hesitated.

"Well, you see, you used not to—to give much money away," he remarked slowly.

"Oh, I see."

"You must be stony now, Billy. Shall I lend you something?"

"Money, do you mean?"

"Yes; a few bob!"

The Owl of the Remove shook his head. Accustomed as he was by this time to the vagaries of the new Bunter, Wharton was staggered.

"No, thanks!" said Bunter. "You see, I don't know when I should be able to repay it. I don't expect to get any tin?"

"You might get a postal-order?" suggested Harry.

"I'm not expecting one."

"Oh!"

"So I won't take a loan, thanks! Hallo, who's that?"

Hazeldene of the Remove looked in at the door. He watched Billy Bunter curiously, and the fat junior blinked at him with equal curiosity.

"Who's that?" he asked.

"That's Hazeldene."

"Oh, is it? I don't know him."

"Well, I'm Hazel," said Hazeldene, with a laugh. "You know me now. Isn't he any better, Wharton? Doesn't he remember anything yet?"

Wharton shook his head.

"Sammy's been playing the same dodge in the Second Form," said Hazeldene, with a grin. "He's pretending to have lost his memory."

"Billy's not pretending."

"No, but Sammy was. I suppose he thought he would make a good thing out of it. The Second have been bumping him, and his memory's come back."

Wharton laughed.

"Serve him right!"

"But that isn't what I came to tell you," said Hazeldene. "My sister's come over to see me with Clara. Look here, Bunter knows her. He's a rotten little cad, and I never liked him speaking to Marjorie, but under the circumstances I think perhaps she may help to recall his silly memory."

"Good!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Billy Bunter started a little. The name of Marjorie seemed to recall something to his mind. Wharton was watching him.

"You know Marjorie, Billy?" he said.

Bunter looked strangely perplexed.

"Marjorie!" he repeated.

"Yes; Hazeldene's sister—of Cliff House, you know."

"N-n-o."

"You don't remember?"

"I seem to know the name," said Bunter, with evident distress. "But—but—"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

NEXT TUESDAY: "ALONZO THE FOOTBALLER."

EVERY
TUESDAY.

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"Let him see her," said Hazeldene.

"Good! Where are they now?"

"In my study."

"Come on, Billy!"

Wharton linked his arm through Bunter's, and led him down the Remove passage. Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara were in Hazel's study. Bulstrode and Tom Brown, who also shared that room, had left it to Hazeldene for the occasion, as was the general etiquette among the Greyfriars fellows when a fellow had lady visitors.

The two girls looked very fresh and rosy after their walk in the cold wind from Cliff House. There was a kettle singing on the fire, and a cloth on the table. Hazeldene was making some preparations for tea; but, as Hazeldene was in a perpetual state of "hard-up," his preparations were not very extensive. But he was doing his best. Except when he was on good terms with Vernon Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars—Hazeldene—was never flush of money. He had an allowance as large as most of the juniors, but he was always in debt.

Nugent was in the study, too, talking to the girls. Wharton dropped a whisper to him as he entered, and Nugent nodded and quietly departed.

Marjorie and Clara had been told about Billy Bunter's misfortune. They looked curiously at the fat junior as Wharton brought him in. They knew the untruthfulness of the Owl of the Remove so well that, without being suspicious, they did not believe in his sincerity this time, unless it was made clear to them that it was genuine. Miss Clara, indeed, was smiling with open scepticism.

"So poor Bunter is ill?" she said.

"Yes," said Harry. "He dived into the swimming-bath, and bumped his head on the tiles. There wasn't any water in it, you know."

"Poor Bunter!" said Marjorie softly. "What a dreadful bruise."

"The worst of it is that the shock had made him lose his memory," said Harry.

"Doesn't he remember anything?"

"Nothing."

"Poor Bunter."

"I daresay it will come back," said Harry. "I hoped that seeing you would make a difference. Don't you know Marjorie, Bunter?"

Bunter was blinking hard at the fair face of the girl.

He shook his head.

"Is that—Marjorie?"

"Yes, I am Marjorie," said the girl with a sweet smile. "Don't you know me, Billy? You surely can remember me?"

Another shake of the head.

"And you don't remember me?" asked Miss Clara.

"No. I'm sincerely sorry."

Miss Clara's eyes danced.

"Don't you remember that I owe you five shillings?" she asked.

"Oh, Clara!"

But Bunter shook his head still.

"No," he said. "Do you? Did I lend you five shillings?"

Miss Clara was nonplussed, if not convinced. The old Bunter would have claimed those five shillings without scruple, whether they were due to him or not. It was quite clear that a great change had come over Bunter.

"It's genuine enough," said Hazeldene.

"It looks like it," admitted Miss Clara. "But Bunter was always such a—a—a—"

"Liar!" said Hazeldene cheerfully.

"Story-teller!" said Miss Clara.

"But you can see that he is ill now," said Marjorie gently. "I am very, very sorry, Bunter. I hope it will soon be all right."

"Thank you," said Bunter.

Frank Nugent came into the study. He had a little bundle under his arm, and Hazeldene grinned as he saw it.

"There are your things, Hazel," said Frank carelessly.

"Thanks. Tea will be ready in a minute. You fellows are staying?"

"Certainly."

And a very cheerful party sat down to tea in Hazeldene's study. Billy Bunter was looking very cheerful, quite as much so as the others. There was still a bewildered expression lingering in his eyes, but the pain was almost gone from his damaged head, and he was cheering up wonderfully.

Just as tea was commencing—the second tea that afternoon for Wharton and Nugent—Trotter put his head in at the door.

"Master Wharton 'ere?"

"Yes," said Hazeldene. "What do you want?"

"Ead wants to see 'im in 'is study, please."

Wharton rose with a vexed look.

"I'm coming," he said.

Marjorie looked concerned.

"I hope it is not trouble," she said.

"Well, I hope not. It's a row with Gosling."

"Your tea will get cold," said Clara Trevlyn.

"Oh, that's all right; I've had tea once. Go on; don't wait for me. I'll be back as soon as I can," said Wharton.

And he left the study, and made his way to the Head's quarters with considerable inward misgivings. It was evident that Gosling had reported him, and that he was to be called over the coals for his interference with the school porter.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Gosling Does Not Understand It.

DR. LOCKE turned a curious look upon Wharton as he entered the dreaded apartment, where "swishings" were dealt out to wrongdoers. Wharton did not feel like a wrongdoer, and he held his head very high.

Gosling was standing in the Head's study with his hat in his hand, and a decidedly unpleasant expression upon his face.

Gosling was feeling very annoyed. He felt that he had been interfered with and flouted. He had a right to lay his stick about a little ragamuffin if he wished; at all events, that was his opinion. Wharton's interference in the matter he regarded as quite uncalled-for; and Gosling was nursing a grievance.

"I sent for you, Wharton," said the Head. "Gosling has made a complaint against you."

"I expected him to do so, sir."

"Oh; you thought he would come to me!"

"I thought very likely he would, sir," said Harry with a scornful glance at the dogged Gosling. "I hope you will not blame me, sir."

"Gosling declares that you have interfered with him in the execution of his duty, Wharton."

"I did not intend to do that, sir."

"Wot I says it this 'ere—you did do it!" said Gosling. "That's wot I say!"

"That will do, Gosling; I am speaking to Wharton now."

"Yes, sir; but—"

"It appears that a beggar had gained admittance to the grounds," said Dr. Locke, without taking any notice of Gosling, "and he came up to the house to beg, and someone gave him money."

"Yes, sir; Bunter was very generous to the kid."

The Head started.

"Bunter!"

"He's ill, sir," Wharton added, by way of explanation. Any generosity on the part of Billy Bunter called for an explanation.

The Head smiled slightly.

"And the boy was leaving when Gosling found him, and was about to punish him for entering the grounds, when you interfered?"

"Yes, sir," said Wharton. "He was a poor kid, sir, and looked as if he never got enough to eat. I didn't want to see him licked."

"A 'orrible-looking, little beast, 'e was, sir," said Gosling. "'Arf starved and dirty. He wanted a licking!"

The Head looked curiously at Gosling.

"Half starved?" he repeated inquiringly.

"Yes, sir," said Gosling, "famished, I should say—simply 'orrid! Disgraceful that sich should be allowed to tramp erround the country!"

"It is certainly disgraceful that any boy should be half starved, in any country," the Head agreed. "But it does not seem to me a reason for punishing him."

"Oh, them sort would steal as soon as look at you, sir."

"Did he steal anything?"

"He never had a chance, sir."

"Did he try to?"

"Well, no. He didn't 'ave a chance."

"Wharton, you appear to have interfered with Gosling, and prevented him from administering the chastisement he intended to this boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why did you do it?"

"Because—" Wharton hesitated.

"Well, Wharton?"

The Head's face was inscrutable; his voice betrayed nothing. But Wharton had no doubt that he was angry.

"Because it seemed rotten to lick the poor, little wretch, sir," said Harry. "He was a kid about my own age, sir, and he'd had awful luck, compared with me. I thought it would be a shame to lick him."

"So you interfered with Gosling?"

"Yes, sir."

"Knowing that he would report you to me, and that I

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

should probably punish you for interfering with him in the execution of his duty?"

Wharton was silent for a moment. Gosling indulged in an anticipatory grin. In his mind's eye, the surly Greyfriars porter could already see Harry Wharton wincing under the lash of the cane.

"Well?" said the Head curtly.

"I don't know that I thought all that out, sir," said Harry, "but—but it wouldn't have made any difference if I had, sir."

"You would have risked the punishment?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you are prepared to be caned for your act?"

"I am ready, sir," said Wharton quietly.

The Head smiled.

"Very good, Wharton. I am very glad to see that there is a boy in my school who is prepared to do a good and manly action at the risk of being punished for it. Gosling, I am glad you have reported Wharton's conduct to me—not because he deserves punishment, for he does not—but because it shows me that he is a noble lad, and because it will make me extremely distrustful of your reports in future."

Gosling almost staggered.

Wharton opened his eyes wide in surprise. He had been far from expecting to hear those words from Dr. Locke.

"I am very glad you acted as you did, Wharton," said the Head. "I have questioned you, simply to establish what really happened. Gosling, I am shocked with you!"

"Ho!" gasped Gosling. "Me, sir? I—I was goin' to thrash the beggar brat, sir!" Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"You need not say anything. You were going to act inconsiderately and cruelly, and Master Wharton stopped you. I should have stopped you if I had been present."

Gosling could only gasp.

"You may go, Wharton," said the Head kindly. "I shall not forget your conduct; I shall remember it in your favour."

"You are very good, sir."

Wharton thanked the Head and left the study, feeling a very great sense of relief. He had not felt in the wrong; but he had fully expected to be caned. He had never expected the Head to take so much trouble to get at the bottom of the affair, and to look at it in the way he did.

Gosling would gladly have followed Wharton out; but Dr. Locke was not quite done with him yet.

"Remain a moment, Gosling," he said, as the porter stumbled towards the door.

"Yes, sir," said Gosling feebly.

"I hope, Gosling, that upon reflection you will see that Wharton was right, and that you were totally in the wrong."

"Wot I says—"

"Never mind what you say. Listen to what I say; my time is valuable," said the Head. "It is your duty, Gosling, to keep bad or suspicious characters from entering the precincts of the school. But it is your duty to do so in a firm but a kind manner, and never to act a brutal or a bullying part. Towards the unfortunate, in particular, you should always endeavour to be specially kind and considerate—especially in the case of persons who naturally, cannot be held to blame for their unfortunate position."

Gosling could only gasp. All this was news to him.

"So I hope, Gosling, that you will take this lesson to heart," said the Head. "You may go!"

Gosling went. He almost staggered as he walked away. He reached his lodge in a dazed state. It was not till he was there that he was able to find his voice. Then he found speech, and said things; and it was just as well for Gosling that Dr. Locke did not hear what he said, otherwise Gosling's employment as school porter of Greyfriars would probably have come to a very sudden termination.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Music Wanted.

"HALLO—hallo—hallo! Licked?"

Bob Cherry had joined the tea-party in Hazeldene's study. Bob Cherry was not likely to remain long in ignorance of the fact that Marjorie was at Greyfriars. He greeted Harry Wharton with that cheerful question as he came into the study.

"Was it bad?" asked Marjorie sympathetically.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No!" he said.

"Got off?" asked Nugent.

"Yes; the Head's a brick! He's ragged Gossy and let me off!" said Harry cheerfully. "It's all right!"

"I'm so glad!" said Marjorie softly.

Nugent had explained the circumstances to her during Harry's absence, and Harry was more than ever of a hero in Marjorie's eyes in consequence. And the look of kind

regard that she gave him would have consoled him even if he had been caned by the Head.

"Well, you're lucky!" said Hazeldene. "Have some tea? It's not quite cold."

"Thanks."

"I'm jolly glad!" said Bunter. "I saw you, you know, from the window. That porter chap is a beast! What's his name?"

"Gosling."

"I seem to remember the name," said Bunter, with the old puzzled look creeping back into his eyes.

Wharton looked at him keenly. Was Bunter's memory slowly but surely coming back?

It was possible.

"You'd remember it all in time, Billy," said Frank Nugent. "Don't worry! Look here, Harry, I've got an idea!"

Tea was finished, and Bunter was put into the armchair before the fire. He was very comfortable there, and he stretched out his fat legs over the fender, and blinked at the fire, quite in his old way.

"Well, Frank?" said Harry.

Nugent lowered his voice.

"You know they say that music has charms to soothe the savage breast?" said Nugent. "Well, suppose that music might have the effect of bringing Bunter's memory back? It's quite possible! Some song, you know, that he used to know awfully well, might set the works going again, or whatever it is that's needed."

Wharton nodded thoughtfully. He fully believed that the only way to restore Bunter was to wake, somehow, old associations in his mind.

"Jolly good idea!" exclaimed a voice at the door.

John Bull came in with his hands in his pockets, as usual. He took them out, however, as he saw that there were girls present.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "Excuse my popping in, but I heard what you said as I passed. That idea of restoring Bunter by means of music is simply ripping!"

"Glad you think so!" said Frank, rather drily. He suspected what was coming.

"Yes," said Bull genially, "it's splendid! I shall be only too pleased to play the poor chap a few tunes on my concertina—"

"Rats!"

"A few carefully selected, stirring melodies," said Bull obstinately. "You don't know what effect they might have."

"Fatal, perhaps!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"Look here, Cherry—"

"It would be rotten to take such an advantage of Bunter in his present state!" said Nugent, with a shake of the head.

"Bunter, old man," said John Bull, after glaring at Nugent, "would you care to hear some music?"

"Certainly!" said Bunter.

"Shall I play my concertina to you?"

"Thank you very much."

"My hat!" ejaculated Wharton. "He's jolly well lost his memory to the last atom! If he remembered Bull's concertina, he wouldn't ask him to play it!"

"Look here, Wharton—"

"I say, you fellows, I think it's a good idea to have some music," said Bunter. "Of course, I don't want it unless the other fellows do."

"H'm! We bar concertinas," said Nugent. "My idea was, for Wharton and Marjorie to sing their duet. Bunter's heard them sing it heaps of times, and he knows it by heart. It might work the oracle, you know."

"Better try the concertina."

"Oh, blow the concertina!"

"Look here, Nugent—"

"Good—the duet!" exclaimed Bob Cherry eagerly. "It will be a treat for all of us to hear Marjorie sing, whether it does Bunter any good or not."

Marjorie laughed. She had a fervent admirer of all her powers in Bob Cherry. If her singing had been very much worse than it was, Bob would have considered it as leaving Tetrassini's quite in the shade. But, as a matter of fact, Marjorie had a very clear and sweet voice, and sang very charmingly.

"Well, you'll want an accompaniment to sing to," said John Bull. "I can play concertina accompaniments first-rate."

"Oh, rats!"

"Look here, Hazeldene—"

"I'll accompany you on the comb and paper, if you like," said Bob Cherry.

"We can manage without that," said Harry, laughing. "It's all right, Bull, concertinas are barred. You can go and play to Dutton—he's the only chap who can stand it."

Dutton was the deaf fellow in the Remove. But it was on record that even Dutton had suffered pangs from Bull's concertina.

John Bull grunted.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

NEXT TUESDAY: "ALONZO THE FOOTBALLER."

EVERY
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

"Well, I don't know that I want to play," he said. "I should like to educate you chaps in musical taste, that's all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you sing, Marjorie?" asked Harry Wharton.

"If you all wish—certainly!"

"Hear, hear!"

Billy Bunter blinked at Marjorie as she stood up to sing the duet with Harry Wharton. The duet was "Tell Me What Is Love," a very pretty and catching song, which suited the two admirably. At more than one school concert they had delivered it, amid great applause, and Bunter knew it almost as well as they did, though he could not have sung a note of it. The fat junior had no voice—though, until his loss of memory, he had always considered himself what he called a "dab" at singing.

"Tell me—tell me what is love—

That sets the world a-sighing,

That makes a maiden shyly smile,

Or dims her eyes with crying?"

Marjorie's sweet voice swelled softly through the study.

Billy Bunter gave a great start as he listened.

The juniors were watching him. It was evident that the melody touched some hidden chord in Bunter's dazed and confused brain.

The fat junior listened with intent ears as the duet was continued.

Harry Wharton's deeper voice rang out:

"Oh, love it is when'er it comes,

The boon that all are needing;

Though wilful maidens often frown,

When lovers, true, are pleading!"

Then the two fresh young voices were blended together.

As the last strains died away, Bunter rose from his seat. The juniors' eyes were fixed upon him.

"Bunter, old man!"

"I—I—" Bunter stammered. "I—I remember—"

He sank back into the chair again, and his eyes were closed.

Wharton sprang forward.

But Bunter's eyes opened immediately, and there was the same vacant stare in them.

"Bunter—you remember?"

"Eh?"

"You remember now?"

"I—I don't understand."

Wharton drew back, deeply disappointed. For a moment he knew, memory had flickered in Billy Bunter's mind—the dead chords had been touched with life; but it had only been for a moment.

All was blank again now.

Bunter sat in the chair, with the same perplexed look haunting his eyes, until the time came when Marjorie and Clara had to go. The girls bade him good-bye kindly and gently. They were very sorry for Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked home to Cliff House with Marjorie and Clara. John Bull remained with Bunter.

The sturdy junior had said that he would stay with the Owl of the Remove till Harry Wharton came back. He stood at the window, watching the juniors in the dusk as they crossed to the gates with the two girls. Harry Wharton and his chums were not likely to be back for an hour at least.

John Bull smiled to himself as he turned back towards Bunter. The fat junior gazed at him with dull and uninquiring eyes.

"Bunter, old man, you liked that song?"

"Yes," said Bunter.

"You'd like to hear my concertina?"

"Certainly, if you like," said Bunter amicably.

John Bull looked out of the study. He did not want to leave Bunter alone. It was best for the fat junior not to be left too much to himself, under the peculiar circumstances, and Bull had promised Wharton to look after him.

Fisher T. Fish came strolling along the passage, with his easy, American saunter. He gave John Bull a nod, and stopped as the sturdy junior spoke to him.

"Come in a minute, Fishy, will you?"

"Yep."

"Busy?" asked John Bull.

"Nope."

"Will you stay with Bunter a few minutes, while I go to my study to fetch something? I've promised Wharton not to leave him alone."

"Yep."

"Thanks."

Fisher T. Fish strolled into the study. He sat on the table, and swung his long legs, and talked cheerfully to Bunter.

John Bull hurried along to Remove passage to No. 14. He had gone for his concertina.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Music Not Wanted.

FISHER T. FISH was still talking when John Bull returned to Hazeldene's study, and Billy Bunter was still in the armchair. Bunter was not replying; but that did not matter at all to Fisher T. Fish. He talked because he found a charm in the sound of his own voice; and if the charm was not perceptible to others, that was not Fish's fault, and did not worry him in the least.

"I guess we can do things over there!" he was saying. "If you lost your memory in New York, Bunter, I reckon we've got specialists that would fix you up with a new one within two hours! Yes, sir!"

"Oh, good!" said John Bull, with a grin, as he came in. "Or, I suppose you could apply to the New York detectives if you lost your memory, and they'd get it back for you."

"Yep," said Fisher T. Fish. "I—I mean—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess we're slick over there!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess—Gee! What have you got there?"

"My concertina."

"You're not going to play it?"

"No—I'm carrying it about just for exercise," said Bull sarcastically.

"I guess I'm off, if you start that," said Fish.

"I guess you're off, anyway—off your silly chump!" said Bull. "I'm starting, anyway. You'd like to hear the concertina, Bunter?"

"Yes, please."

Fisher T. Fish slid off the table. He could stand many things, but he could not stand the musical endeavours of his study-mate.

"I guess I slide," he said. "When you turn on the music it's time to vamoose the ranch. But ain't it rather hard on Bunter?"

"Oh, buzz off!"

"I guess—"

Bull opened the concertina.

There was an agonised wail from the dreaded instrument, and Fisher T. Fish promptly bolted. He slammed the door after him, and ran.

John Bull paid no heed.

The beloved howl of his concertina was like a spur to him. He sawed the instrument up and down and in and out, to the accompaniment of wild howls and squeals.

Billy Bunter sat bolt upright in the chair.

There was no doubt that the music had some effect upon him. To judge by the expression of his face, it was not a pleasant effect.

But John Bull did not observe that. He was trying to wake the chords of memory. It really seemed as if he was trying to wake the dead.

Grind—crash—saw—wail—howl!

"Oh!" said Bunter.

"You know the tune?" asked Bull, with a beaming smile.

"No," said Bunter.

"You'll recognise it soon," said Bull, sawing away.

"Is it a tune?"

"Eh?"

"Is it a tune?" asked Bunter.

"Look here—"

"Would you mind stopping?"

"What?"

"It's awful!"

"Hey?"

"It gives me a pain in the head," said Bunter apologetically. "I'm not very well, you know. You might chuck it, old man."

Bull shook his head.

"That shows it's working," he said.

Billy Bunter looked puzzled.

"Working? I don't understand you."

"Working on your mind," explained Bull. "It's touching the chords of memory. As soon as you've listened to it a little while longer you'll be all right—you'll remember everything. Take my word for it."

"I—I—I'd rather lose my memory, thank you!" stammered Bunter.

"Oh, rot!"

Saw—saw—grind—wail!

"Oh dear!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

"What do you feel like now, Bunter?"

"Awful?"

"Is it doing you good?"

"Ow! No!"

"Be patient," said John Bull. "You must consider this as a pleasant sort of medical treatment, you know."

"Pleasant?" gasped Bunter.

"That's it."

Groo—grind—yaup—howl!

"Oh, oh! Stop! I—I'll get out!"

"Now, look here, Bunter—"

The door of the study was flung open. Bulstrode and Tom Brown and Fish and Russell and several more fellows rushed tumultuously in. John Bull lowered the concertina for a moment, staring in an annoyed way at the intruders.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"You ass!"

"You fathead!"

"Look here—" began Bull.

"Stop it!" roared Bulstrode furiously.

"Stop what?"

"That horrid row!"

"Look here, I'm playing to Bunter, and he's enjoying it—"

"Yah! Are you enjoying it, Bunter?" roared the juniors.

"Yow! No!"

"Isn't it awful?"

"Fearful!"

"It's a treatment," said Bull. "I'm trying to wake the chords of memory. By means of music, Bunter may be restored—"

"Well, he won't be restored by that horrible row!"

"I guess not."

"Chuck it!"

John Bull set his lips firmly, and started again. There was a roar of angry protest from the Removites. The discordance of Bull's concertina could be heard the whole length of the Remove passage.

"Chuck it!" yelled Bulstrode.

He led a rush at the sturdy junior. John Bull's concertina was dragged away. Bull put up his fists and hit out. But he was overwhelmed by numbers, and he rolled on the floor of the study in the midst of a struggling, gasping crowd.

"Collar him!"

"Squash him!"

"Bump him!"

The fight was a terrific one. John Bull was as tough as nails, and he was as angry as any fellows there. He rolled about the study in his desperate resistance, dragging his assailants with him. All hands were needed to keep the sturdy junior down. The concertina—the cause of the strife—had rolled unheeded upon the hearthrug.

But it was not unheeded for long. Billy Bunter caught sight of it, and, whether it woke a chord in his memory or not, whether he remembered previous tortures with that instrument or didn't remember them, he acted promptly.

While the terrific combat was going on Bunter pounced upon the concertina and crammed it into the fire.

He beat it down into the midst of the red cinders with the poker, and the concertina was soon blazing away merrily.

Bunter kept it well poked, and in a couple of minutes that unfortunate concertina was past praying for. But Bunter continued giving it savage pokes to make sure of it.

Meanwhile, John Bull was fighting hard. So strong was the junior and so determined, that he tore himself free of the odds against him at last and staggered to his feet. The burning concertina was sending showers of sparks up the chimney.

"Where's the concertina?" gasped John Bull.

Bulstrode staggered up.

"Don't let him get it! Ha, ha, ha! Good old Bunter! He's burning it!"

Bunter grinned.

"He won't play that rotten thing again!" he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

John Bull stared in dismay at his flaming musical instrument. There was no saving it now. Had Bunter been in a normal state of health he would have been knocked flying by the angry musician. But Bull, however angry he was, could not hit a fellow in Bunter's state. He simply glared at him.

"You fat villain!" he roared.

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

"I—I—I—"

"I've stopped that awful row, anyway," said Bunter.

"You—you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Chuck the bounder out!" gasped Bulstrode.

John Bull was collared again. With the united efforts of the juniors he was hurled forth, breathless, into the passage.

"I guess we can look after Bunter," panted Fisher T. Fish. "Bunter's a trump! He's settled that rotten thing for good!"

And he slammed the door.

The juniors roared with laughter as they watched the remains of the concertina flare away. There would be no more discord extracted from that dreaded instrument.

Billy Bunter's loss of memory had gained him the sympathy of all the Remove. But his latest exploit made him popular as well. The Removites felt that a fellow who had burnt John Bull's concertina deserved well of the Form.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise in the Form-room.

BILLY BUNTER was taken up to bed that night very tenderly by the chums of the Remove.

Mr. Quelch came into the Remove dormitory to see lights out, and he looked at Bunter as he lay in bed. Mr. Quelch was very much puzzled by Bunter's state. The doctor from Friardale had been to see him during the evening, but he could only say that Bunter was still suffering from shock to the system, and hope for the best.

"Good-night, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Good-night, sir!"

"Do you know who I am, Bunter?"

"No, sir."

"You do not recognise me?"

A painfully perplexed look came into Bunter's eyes, and he wrinkled his brows in an effort to remember.

"Never mind!" said Mr. Quelch hastily. "I will speak to you again in the morning, Bunter. You will not neglect him, Wharton?"

"Certainly not, sir!"

Mr. Quelch extinguished the light and retired.

There was a buzz of discussion among the Removites after he had gone. Bunter's curious condition interested them all, but there was not a fellow left now who thought that the fat junior was shamming. It was only too evident that Bunter's unhappy attack was genuine.

"My dear fellows," Alonzo Todd's still small voice was heard to observe, "I really wish some of you could suggest something that could be done for Bunter."

"I've an idea," said Bulstrode.

"What is it, my dear Bulstrode? Personally, I should be willing to do anything."

"Suppose you were to sit by his bedside and hold his hand all night?" suggested Bulstrode, with perfect gravity. "I think he would find that very comforting."

"Do you really think so?" asked Alonzo.

"I'm sure of it."

"In that case, I should be perfectly willing to do so. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to help the sick or unfortunate in every possible way," said Todd. "It would be a great pleasure to me."

"It's a ripping wheeze!" said Skinner. "It's done in all the 'Little Georgie' books. When little Georgie stops being bad and happy, and turns good and dies, there's always somebody sits by his bed and holds his hand while he snuffs out."

"That is a very coarse way of putting it, Skinner. 'Snuffing out' is a far from elegant expression, and I am sure you will not find it either in 'Sherrick' or 'Bit by Bit,' or in 'St. Fathead's' or the 'World of Fools.' I fear, Skinner, that you are too much addicted to slang, and I beg and implore you not to let this habit grow on you."

"Rats!"

"My dear Skinner——"

"Look here, Todd," said Bulstrode, "Bunter's suffering all the time you're talking. Aren't you going to sit by his bed and comfort him?"

"Oh, certainly!"

And Alonzo jumped out of bed.

There was a yell of laughter in the dormitory as the Duffer of Greyfriars was heard to turn out.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see the cause of risibility," said Todd. "Is it directed against me, my dear schoolfellows?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Cherry——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall certainly hold Bunter's hand the whole night if he wishes it," said Alonzo Todd firmly. "Bunter, my dear fellow, shall I hold your hand, and speak to you gently at intervals?"

"You ass!"

"Eh?"

"If you start pulling my leg, you ass, you'll get a thick ear!" growled the invalid.

"My dear Bunter, I did not mean to pull your leg," said Todd, in astonishment. "I was suggesting holding your hand."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

NEXT TUESDAY: "ALONZO THE FOOTBALLER."

EVERY
TUESDAY.

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up!"

"My dear Bunter——"

"Oh, go to bed, fathead!"

Alonzo went back to bed. Under the circumstances, he did not see how he could sit by Billy Bunter's bed and hold his hand. Bunter did not encourage him. Besides, Alonzo realised that his feet would get very cold.

Billy Bunter slept soundly that night, and he was still sleeping soundly when the rising-bell clanged out in the morning. The fat junior did not wake.

Harry Wharton looked at him when he turned out. The fat junior was sleeping very peacefully, and Wharton decided not to wake him.

"He won't have to attend classes this morning," he remarked. "He may as well have his sleep out. It may do him good."

"I suppose Quelch will let him off," Bob Cherry remarked.

"I'll explain to Quelch; don't make a row, you fellows. Let Bunter sleep as long as he likes."

And the Removites were very quiet in dressing. The Form went down and left Billy Bunter still fast asleep.

Harry Wharton explained to Mr. Quelch at the breakfast-table, as the Remove-master noted Bunter's absent place.

The Form-master nodded in reply.

"Quite right, Wharton; let him sleep, by all means."

The juniors went into the class-room at the usual hour, Bunter's place being vacant. There was an unusual gravity on the Remove that morning.

Bunter's empty place in the Form reminded them of the fat junior, and of his curious state, quite as much as his presence could have done.

Mr. Quelch left the Form-room during lessons for a short time, to go up to the dormitory and look at Bunter.

"Is Bunter all right, sir?" asked Wharton, when the Form-master returned.

"He is still asleep, Wharton."

"Thank you, sir!"

The juniors were dismissed at eleven o'clock for the usual recess. Mr. Quelch went to speak to the Head, and when the Remove reassembled for lessons, the Form-master had not yet returned.

Bunter had not appeared.

"Blessed if it isn't all right being a giddy invalid!" said Ogilvy. "Bunter is getting out of all the work."

"Faith, and ye're right!" said Micky Desmond. "I'll get somebody to punch my head and make me lose my memory—— Yarrooh! You spalpeen!"

He yelled as Ogilvy rapped his head.

"Faith, you gossoon! What did you do that for?" roared Micky.

"Well, you asked for it!" said Ogilvy. "Have you lost your memory yet?"

"You—you——"

"Shall I give you a harder one?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, and I——"

Micky Desmond doubled his fists. The Form-room door opened, and there was a general alarm.

"Cave!"

But it was not the Form-master.

It was Billy Bunter who entered. He had evidently just risen, and he was still in his nightshirt, his head still bandaged. He carried his boots in one hand, and he looked round the Form-room with a dazed expression.

Wharton ran to him.

"Billy!"

"I—I say, you fellows," stammered Bunter. "I—I heard the bell, and——" He broke off.

Wharton understood. Bunter had heard the bell for classes, and it had touched some chord in his dazed mind. He had got up, and come to the class-room.

"My word!" said Nugent. "If Quelch comes back——"

"Come back to the dormitory, Billy," said Wharton gently.

"But—but——"

"Cave!"

Mr. Quelch entered the Form-room. He stared in amazement at Bunter. Certainly it was an unusual sight in the Remove Form-room. A junior in his nightshirt had assuredly never been seen there before.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Wh-what does this mean?"

"Bunter's come down, sir!" said Wharton helplessly.

"Take him back to the dormitory."

Wharton led Billy Bunter from the room. The fat junior went quietly, dazedly. But there seemed to be a new gleam of intelligence in his face. Was the dormant memory waking up at last?

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Sammy Wants His Whack.

SAMMY BUNTER came into the Remove dormitory immediately after classes were dismissed that morning. The fat fag blinked round, and then came over to his major's bed. Billy Bunter was lying back on a heap of pillows, staring at the ceiling.

"I say, Billy!"

Bunter turned his head and blinked at his minor without speaking.

"I'm alone here," said Sammy.

"Who are you?" asked Billy Bunter.

"Oh, don't gammon me!" said Sammy peevishly. "You know jolly well who I am, as well as I know who you are—the biggest spoofer at Greyfriars. I tell you I'm alone here, and you can tell the truth."

"I don't understand you."

"You see, I'm not taken in with this gammon," Sammy explained. "I know you are spoofing the Remove!"

"Oh!"

"I suppose you're doing pretty well out of it," went on Sammy, "or you wouldn't be keeping it up so long. Blessed if I know how you're doing it. You've taken in your Form-master as well as your friends. I never thought you had it in you, Billy, really!"

And Bunter minor blinked at his major in unwilling admiration.

Billy Bunter was watching him all the time with the same puzzled stare, without uttering a word. He seemed to be trying to follow his minor's remarks, but without being able to understand them.

"But there's no need to keep it up with me," went on Sammy. "You don't think I'd give you away, do you?"

"I don't understand you."

Sammy snorted.

"Oh, come off!" he exclaimed contemptuously. "Look here, come out into the open. Don't keep it up with me. It's all in the family, ain't it?"

Billy Bunter blinked at him silently.

"I dare say I can help you with the dodge," said Sammy.

"I've tried it myself in the Second Form, but somehow it didn't work. That little Chinese beast, Hop Hi, bowled me out, the little rotter. But you're going strong, and I think you ought to let a brother share in the loot."

"Eh?"

"I suppose you're piling up grub, or borrowing money, or something," said Sammy. "You're not taking all this trouble for nothing, or merely to miss lessons, are you?"

"I don't know."

"Now, look here, Billy, I've told you I admit you do it well, so chuck it now!" Sammy explained impatiently. "Can't you see it's not wanted with me? I'm not going to give you away, and you can trust me. Besides, you can't take me in, anyway!"

Bunter did not speak. His minor surveyed him with growing wrath. According to Sammy, Billy Bunter was persisting in a useless deception, instead of trusting his minor, and Sammy was getting very exasperated.

"Look here," said Sammy, raising his voice—"look here, Billy, I'm getting fed up with this! Are you going to let me into the wheeze?"

"I don't understand you!"

"You—you whopping crammer! Do you want me to yank you out of that bed, and mop up the floor with you?" roared Sammy.

Billy Bunter only blinked.

Sammy laid hold of the bedclothes.

"Now, then, you're coming out!" he exclaimed. "If you can't own up to your own minor, you're going to be jolly well shown up. You always were a pig, Billy, trying to keep things to yourself instead of letting another fellow have his whack!"

"Leggo!" exclaimed Billy, clutching at the clothes.

"Yah! Rats!"

Sammy Bunter yanked at the bedclothes, and they came off. Bunter rolled out of bed after them, and laid hold of his minor. Excepting for the big hump bandaged up on his head, and the loss of his memory, Bunter could not be called ill. He certainly did not seem ill as he went for the fat fag who had jerked his bedclothes off.

Bump!

Sammy Bunter rolled on the floor, with Billy sprawling over him. Billy was not a light weight, and Sammy roared.

"Ow! Yow! Yah! Gerroff!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as he came in with Harry Wharton and John Bull. "What the dickens—"

"What's the row?" exclaimed Wharton.

"It's Sammy!"

"Sammy, you young rascal—"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

"Yow! Help! Yopp! Oh!"

The chums of the Remove rushed forward, and dragged Billy Bunter off Sammy. Bunter was pommelling his minor in the most business-like manner.

"Lemme get at him!" roared Bunter.

"Here, hold on!"

"He's had enough."

Sammy Bunter staggered to his feet.

"Ow! Ow!" he gasped. "Yow! I—I—"

"What did you come here bothering Billy for?" demanded Wharton sternly. "You know he's not well."

"Gammon!" roared Sammy.

"Look here, you young ass—"

"I—I only wanted a whack in the loot," snorted Sammy.

"He went for me. He's only gammoning you. He's no more lost his memory than I've lost mine. Yah!"

"Oh, get out!"

"If you let him take you in, you're a set of champs. Why—"

"Outside!" said Bob Cherry.

He took the fat fag by the ear, and led him, squealing, to the doorway. There he helped him into the passage with his boot, and Sammy Bunter rolled away.

Bunter major sat on his bed, gasping. After the excitement of the tussle with his minor, he was breathless and exhausted.

"You're not hurt, Billy?" asked Wharton anxiously.

Bunter put his glasses straight.

"No," he panted. "I—I'm tired. The young beast pulled the bedclothes off me. Is it time to get up yet?"

"It's half-past twelve."

"Oh! I'd better dress, then?"

"Let me help you."

The chums of the Remove helped Billy Bunter to dress. The fat junior went downstairs with them, and he was eyed with great curiosity by all who saw him. Several of the Sixth, who had heard of his queer state, looked at him with great interest. The seniors were as slow to believe in Bunter's illness as were the juniors. Loder, the prefect, stopped him in the passage.

"Bunter!" he exclaimed.

Billy Bunter blinked at him.

"Look here, Bunter. I hear that you're fooling your Form with some lie about losing your memory," said Loder, in his polite way. "You can't impose on me, you know."

"Eh?"

"You know who I am, well enough."

"I don't know you."

"You don't know my name?"

"No," said Bunter.

"Well, you've nerve enough," said Loder, in astonishment. "How long are you going to keep this rot up, Bunter?"

"I don't understand you."

Loder frowned angrily, and reached out for Bunter's ear. Harry Wharton stepped forward, and knocked his hand aside.

"None of that," he said quietly.

Loder glared at him.

"Wharton! How dare you interfere with me?"

"You're not going to touch Billy while he's in this state," said Harry Wharton quietly, but resolutely. "He's got friends to protect him while he's ill, at any rate."

Loder laughed scoffingly.

"He's only fooling you, you young idiot! This is another of his lies, that's all."

"I thought so at first," said Bob Cherry; "but it isn't. It's genuine enough."

"Rot!"

"Well, let him alone, anyway," said Wharton.

"I shall please myself about that," said Loder.

And he made a motion towards the fat junior. Bunter promptly slid behind Wharton. The latter did not budge an inch. He faced the towering senior with his fists clenched.

"Line up, you chaps!" said Harry quietly.

Five or six of the Remove lined up. Loder breathed hard with anger; but just then Mr. Quelch came along the passage, and the prefect, muttering something beneath his breath, went into his study.

Mr. Quelch paused. He glanced after Loder, and glanced at the juniors, but made no remark on the subject of the hostile attitude he had observed them in.

"Bunter," he said, "I hope you feel better."

"I feel all right, sir."

"You are excused lessons for the present," said Mr. Quelch. "You will please yourself about coming to the class-room or not."

"Thank you, sir."

Bunter rolled out into the Close with the chums of the

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Remove. He grunted several times, as if there were something on his mind. Finally, he looked at Harry Wharton in a sidelong way.

"I—I say, you know——"

"Yes, Billy?" said Wharton at once.

"I—I—I'm hungry."

The chums of the Remove exchanged glances of satisfaction. As Bunter had missed his breakfast by staying in bed, it was not surprising that he was hungry. But to hear him say so was like hearing the voice of the old Bunter. It was a sign that he was recovering; at all events, the juniors hoped so.

"This way to the tuckshop," said Nugent.

"Come on, Billy!"

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I don't think I've got any money——"

"That's all right, Billy. It's my treat."

"My dear fellows," exclaimed Alonzo Todd, calling out from the door of the School House—"my dear fellows, I have something very important to say to you——"

"Another time, Toddy."

"Impossible, Wharton! My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me never to put off striking the iron while it was hot till to-morrow while it could be done to-day——"

But the rest of the wisdom Alonzo had imbibed from his Uncle Benjamin was lost as the Remove chums piloted Billy Bunter away towards the school shop.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Todd Has a Plan.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. marched Bunter into Mrs. Mimble's little shop, and planted him upon a high stool at the counter. Mrs. Mimble, for once, met Bunter with an agreeable look. Billy Bunter was her best and her worst customer. The best, because he was willing to give unlimited orders; the worst, because he never paid for anything if he could help it. But Mrs. Mimble had heard of Bunter's misfortune, and her kindly heart had been moved—even to the extent of letting him have half a dozen tarts on credit if they had been required. But they were not required. Wharton was in funds.

"What would you like, Billy?" he asked. "It's my treat, Mrs. Mimble."

"Yes, Master Wharton."

Bunter cast one of his old looks round the little tuckshop.

"I—I think I'll begin with some pork-pies," he remarked.

The juniors grinned. Bunter did not say he would begin with a pork-pie, but with some pork-pies. It was quite the old Bunter.

"Pork-pies, please, Mrs. Mimble."

The good dame handed out the pork-pies.

Bunter commenced operations upon them.

The fat junior might have lost his memory, but he had not lost his appetite—on this occasion, at least.

He wired into the pork-pies, as he would have expressed it, with great energy, and they vanished at a record rate of speed.

"Good old Bunter!" murmured Bob Cherry. "He's getting to be himself again."

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "It is the great and boonful pleasure to see the esteemed Bunter resolutely becoming more like his old and esteemed self."

"And he is—— By Jove!"

There was no doubt about that. The third pork-pie was already gone, and the fourth was following fast.

"My dear Wharton——"

Alonzo Todd came rushing into the tuckshop breathlessly. The Duffer of Greyfriars was evidently spurred on by a new idea.

"Halle, hallo, hallo! Have a pork-pie?"

"Thank you very much, Cherry; but no. As I shall shortly be consuming my regular midday meal, I must not eat a pork-pie now. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me very much to be perfectly regular in my meals."

"Have a jam-tart, then?" said Nugent.

"My dear Nugent, a jam-tart, taken immediately before dinner, would, in all probability, exercise as deleterious an effect upon the digestion as a pork-pie."

"Go hon! Have a dictionary!"

"My dear Wharton! To come to business," said Alonzo. "I have hit upon a splendid plan for curing Bunter. I will explain it to you. I remember, my Uncle Benjamin——"

"Yes; we know you remember him, Todd. You've mentioned him before."

"My dear Wharton——"

"Have a bun, Toddy?"

"Thank you very much, Cherry, but I fear the results upon my internal organisation. As I was saying, I have a splendid——"

"Internal organisation?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

NEXT TUESDAY: "ALONZO THE FOOTBALLER."

EVERY
TUESDAY.

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"No; a splendid plan, Nugent. About Bunter——"

"Have some caraway seeds, Todd?"

"Thank you, no. My plan——"

"Will you have some cherry-stones?" asked Nugent. "Magpies eat them—other magpies."

"My dear Nugent——"

"I say, you fellows, I think I'll have some pudding now," said Bunter.

"Richard's himself again!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pudding for Bunter, Mrs. Mimble. Give him anything he wants."

"Yes, Master Wharton."

"You are very kind to Bunter," said Alonzo Todd, "but I hardly think that this is the best way to restore his lost memory. I think that my plan is much the better. I have been reading a scientific medical book on the subject of confusions, concussions, and shocks to the system."

"How good! Will you have some dough-nuts?"

"Thank you, no, not just before dinner. As I remarked, my Uncle Benjamin always cautioned me to be careful in that respect. I have studied the subject of injury to the brain by means of violent concussions, and I find that loss of memory, more or less complete, is by no means an unusual result of such an accident. But what I wish to direct your attention to specially is this—that many cases have been known in which a memory, lost through a concussion upon the head, has been restored by means of another concussion."

"My hat!"

"Such cases are by no means rare," said Todd. "In this book I am referring to, Dr. Softes gives several well-known cases that have come under his experience in hospitals. There was a famous case of a patient in his hospital who entirely forgot his name, and where he had come from. It turned out afterwards that the man was a well-known criminal, wanted by the police."

"Nice convenient loss of memory," said Bob Cherry.

"There was another case in his own knowledge of a page boy who was entrusted with a five-pound note to change, and who was utterly unable to account for the change, owing to a sudden loss of memory."

"Go hon!"

"Many more such convincing cases are cited in this book," said Todd earnestly, "and Dr. Softes mentions the undoubted and extremely interesting fact that loss of memory through one concussion has been known to be cured by another concussion on a different spot. Thus, there was a man who was found with his hand in the pocket of a coat in a cloak-room. He explained that he had fallen and knocked his head, and had been in a dazed state, and did not know what he was doing. The owner of the coat thereupon struck him violently upon the nose, and the man immediately recovered and took his departure."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I think I might try the tarts," said Billy Bunter.

"Good old Bunter! Go it!"

"Now, my dear form-fellows," went on Alonzo Todd, "Bunter has lost his memory through a concussion between his head and the bath floor. My idea is that another similar concussion would cure him. I suggest, therefore, taking Bunter to a swimming-bath and dropping him in, head first!"

"What!"

"The second concussion would probably undo the work of the first, and restore our dear friend Bunter quite to himself," said Todd.

The juniors stared at the Duffer of Greyfriars. They could do nothing else. They had not expected this wisdom, even from the Duffer.

"Well, you ass!" said Bob Cherry at last.

"My dear Cherry——"

"You fathead——"

"My dear Wharton——"

"You chumpful duffer!"

"My dear Inky——"

Billy Bunter was blinking at Alonzo through his spectacles, and he had ceased eating the jam tarts for a moment. He had taken up a couple of them—one in each hand—but not to eat. He was blinking at the Duffer of Greyfriars with a deadly blink.

"You're talking about me?" he asked.

"Yes, my dear Bunter. I have a plan for restoring your lost memory," said Todd, with a beaming smile. "by dropping you, head first, into the swimming-bath. I hope——"

"You—you chump!"

"My dear Bunter——"

"I—I'll teach you to make plans for me!" gasped Bunter.

"I—I—Take that! And that!"

Whiz! Biff Biff!

"Yaroorh!" yelled Alonzo.

The tarts smote him one in each eye, one after the other, and Alonzo Todd staggered back with a wild yell.

"Groo! Oh! Yah! Ugh!"

"You fathead!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo Todd, blinded by jam, gouged the sticky substance out of his eyes. He blinked frantically at the juniors with eyelids trying to stick together.

"Oh! Ow! My dear Bunter! I——"

Biff! Biff!

Tarts smote Alonzo right and left. Billy Bunter was very reckless with the tarts, probably because Wharton was footing the bill. Alonzo Todd made a dash for the door. Another tart biffed on the back of his neck, and another clung lovingly to his ear as he rushed out.

The chums of the Remove roared with laughter. Billy Bunter turned to his feeding again, and kept on steadily till the bell rang for dinner. When the juniors went into the dining-room, Alonzo Todd was there, and he blinked at them reproachfully. But he did not make any more suggestions for restoring Billy Bunter's memory.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

A Sudden Surprise.

AFTER school that day, Harry Wharton & Co. took Billy Bunter in charge when they came out of the form-room. There had been a fall of rain, and the ground was not in a fit state for footer practice. Billy Bunter had shown little sign of improvement during the day, and the chums of the Remove felt that they had to look after him.

"Hungry, Billy?" Nugent asked.

"Yes, rather," said Bunter.

It was clear that the Owl of the Remove was recovering, although his memory had not come back. The juniors had begun to think that it never would come back.

Bunter had been in this strange state now for a long time, and his form-fellows were ceasing to expect a change.

And, as several of the Remove observed, it wasn't wholly desirable that Billy Bunter should recover.

Bunter now was a much more decent fellow than the Bunter of old; and by losing the memory of what he had been, he was enabled to make a fresh start, and to turn over an entirely new leaf.

Certainly he was much easier to get on with now that he was not trying to borrow money of every fellow who had any and to insinuate himself into every feed that was stood in the lower school at Greyfriars.

"Come to the tuck-shop?" said Wharton.

"Right you are!"

Billy Bunter sat in Mrs. Mimble's shop and consumed another feed. He did quite as well as he had done on the previous day.

The rain was falling fast as the juniors were about to leave the little shop, to cut across the Close to the school house. They turned up the collars of their coats. Billy Bunter blinked out into the rain and drew back his head like a snail withdrawing its horns.

"It's jolly wet," he remarked.

"Yes; we shall have to run."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Go on, Billy."

"I don't want to get wet, you know."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"None of us do," he replied. "But we sha'n't get very wet, Billy. We can run. Come on, and make a dash for it!"

"Yes; but I say, couldn't one of you cut across first and get an umbrella?" said Billy Bunter.

The chums of the Remove looked at him.

This was the old Bunter, with a vengeance. It did not matter if they went out into the rain and were wetted so long as an umbrella was fetched for him. It was the Billy Bunter of old, with a vengeance! His memory was not coming back, but his original nature was.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob Cherry.

"Come, make a run for it," said Harry Wharton briefly.

"Oh, really, you know, I don't feel fit to run, just after eating, and I've had a good blow-out, too," said Billy Bunter.

"I'll get an umbrella, then," said Wharton quietly. "You fellows may as well stay, and I'll bring yours at the same time."

"Oh, rats!" said Bob Cherry. "Let Bunter stay here till the rain's over. He can go on feeding."

"Well perhaps I could go a few more tarts," said Billy Bunter thoughtfully.

"Go it, then," said Harry. "Give him whatever he wants to-day, Mrs. Mimble, and charge it to me."

"Yes, Master Wharton."

Bunter resumed his seat on the stool at the counter, and

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

recommenced operations upon the tarts. The chums of the Remove dashed across the Close with their collars turned up, and ran into the school house.

There were a crowd of juniors in the house, looking out disconsolately at the rain. The days were lengthening now, and they were looking forward to a run out after school. But the rain stopped all that.

"I guess we could get up a game of footer in the common-room," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "I could show you how we play footer over there."

"Rats! We know how you play footer," said Frank Nugent. "Still, it's not a bad idea to have a punt about in the common-room, if we don't make too much row and bring in the prefects."

"I've got a ball," said John Bull.

"Good egg!"

Bull brought down a footer, and the juniors closed the door of the common-room, and lined up for sides. As nearly all the Remove were there, and a great many of the Upper Fourth, the teams were very strong in numbers, like the old-fashioned sides at Rugby. It was the fun the juniors were after, not scientific football.

The game was soon going strong.

The fireplace was one goal, and the window at the opposite end of the common-room was the other; and goals were frequently kicked, with disastrous results to the diamond panes of the window. But as breakages were always charged to the juniors responsible for them that was not a serious matter; it meant items on bills, but not lickings.

The game was getting fast and furious, when the door of the common-room opened.

Billy Bunter entered.

The fat junior stood and blinked in surprise at the scene of uproar. As he stood there, the ball had been passed across with a whiz, and it was shooting straight for Bunter. There was a yell of warning as Fish, for whom the ball was intended, missed it by yards. The ball had bounced high, and before Bunter understood what the yell meant, it had struck him on the chin with a violent shock.

The fat junior staggered back and fell.

"Stop play!" shouted Wharton.

The juniors crowded round Bunter.

Harry Wharton was the first. He raised the fat junior in his arms. The concussion of the footer had not been hard enough to hurt anybody, but Bunter, always clumsy, had struck his head against the wainscot as he fell.

The Owl of the Remove lay quite still.

"My hat!" said Nugent in dismay. "He's hurt!"

"Just like Bunter to come in and catch the ball with his head," growled Bulstrode.

"Oh, shut up, Bulstrode!"

"He's hurt!" said Wharton.

There was concern in every face. Under ordinary circumstances, no one would have cared much, for the Remove were a tough crowd, and accustomed to giving and receiving hard knocks. But Bunter was not well now. Bunter already had a big bump on his head, and had lost his memory, and there was no telling what harm a new shock might do to him.

"Billy," said Harry as he raised the fat junior's head.

"Billy, old man!"

Billy Bunter did not reply.

He was unconscious.

"My word!" said Nugent. "It was only a tap, too—it wouldn't have sent anybody else off. Poor old Bunter!"

"The poorfulness of the old Bunter is terrific!"

"Help me get him up to the study," said Wharton. "We'll look after him there, and bathe his head. It's only a tap, but if he doesn't come to at once, we shall have to send for the doctor."

"Right you are!"

Three juniors took up the Owl of the Remove. In the midst of a crowd of them, he was carried up to the Remove passage without exciting attention, and put in the arm-chair in Harry Wharton's study.

Nugent fetched a bowl of water and sponge, and Bunter's collar was loosened, and Harry began to bathe his face.

"Give him room," said Wharton, pushing back the crowding juniors. "We don't want to suffocate him. Keep back!"

The juniors crowded out of the study. Some of them waited in the passage to hear how Bunter went on.

Wharton bathed the head of the Owl of the Remove. Bunter's eyes opened, and he blinked at Wharton dazedly without his spectacles.

Harry drew a deep breath of relief.

"He's coming to!"

"Thank goodness!"

"The thankfulness is terrific."

Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove. He did not seem to be able to make out where he was, or what had happened to him.

"I—I say!" he gasped.
 "Lie still, Billy! You're all right!" said Harry Wharton gently. "You've had a bump on the napper, but you'll be all right!"
 "I—I—It was your fault!"
 "Eh?"
 "It was all your fault. I suppose there wasn't any water in the bath!"
 "The—the bath!"
 "Yes," said Bunter peevishly. "I shouldn't have come such a cropper if there had been any water there, I suppose. I should have seen it was empty if you rotters hadn't been chasing after me."
 The juniors stared blankly at Billy Bunter. Had he lost his memory again, or was he mad—or what?

THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER.

Alonzo was Right.

HARRY WHARTON was silent for a full minute, looking steadfastly at the fat junior. He was too surprised for words.

Billy Bunter was growling, and feeling the bump on his head. He, too, seemed to be in a dazed state, but his wits were returning.

"What's all this water over me for?" he demanded.

"I—I've been bathing your head; to bring you round!" stammered Wharton.

Bunter grunted.

"Well, you might give a chap a towel, then," he said disagreeably.

Nugent silently handed Bunter a towel. The fat junior mopped his face and head, and threw the towel aside.

"Where are my glasses?"

"Here you are!"

Bunter replaced the glasses on his little fat nose. He blinked discontentedly at the juniors.

"I've got an awful bump on my head!" he growled. "It aches fearfully. The pain won't be gone for days. Yow!"

"The bump hurts?" asked Harry.

"Yes, awfully! Ow! Do you think you wouldn't be hurt by bumping your head on the floor of a bath?" demanded Billy Bunter.

"But—but—"

"I—I say, how did I come to have these clothes on?" exclaimed Bunter, looking down at his fat person in astonishment. "I was in my swimming things when I dived into the bath."

"You—you—"

"Do you mean to say that you dressed me, while I was off?" demanded Bunter. "What a silly trick! More sense to shove me in bed, I should think."

The juniors exchanged glances.

Amazing as it was, there was no doubt as to what had happened.

Billy Bunter had woke up from his second insensibility with his memory restored; there had been an element of truth, after all, in the seemingly absurd theory which Alonzo Todd had extracted from his scientific book. For not only had Bunter recovered his memory, but all that had happened since the accident in the swimming-bath was a blank to him.

He had taken up his life again, as it were, from the point where it had broken off, when he was stunned by his fall into the bath.

What had happened since was lost.

It was amazing, but the fact.

The juniors hardly knew how to explain. But that there must be some explanation was evident, for Bunter was beginning to look alarmed.

"Look here, you fellows," he exclaimed, "what does this mean? I suppose I was stunned when I fell into the bath, wasn't I? I don't remember anything since."

"Yes," said Wharton.

"What did you dress me for?"

"You see—"

"Why didn't you get a doctor?"

"You see—"

"Nice chaps you are to look after a chap, I must say!" snorted Bunter, in quite his old manner. "I might have been brained, I suppose, and you wouldn't care twopence. Look here, have any letters come for me while I've been lying here?"

"Letters?"

"Yes, I'm expecting a postal-order."

The juniors could not restrain a chuckle. It was the old Bunter, quite himself again; there was no mistake about that.

Bunter blinked at them indignantly.

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" he growled.

"I'm expecting several postal-orders, as a matter of fact, one

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 160.

NEXT

TUESDAY:

"ALONZO THE FOOTBALLER."

EVERY
TUESDAY.

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

of them from a titled friend of mine—a chap I'm very chummy with."

"Good old Bunter!"

"Look here, you fellows, how long have I been lying here?" demanded Bunter, with a vague uneasiness in his manner.

"Only a few minutes," said Wharton.

"Oh! It seems longer somehow," said Bunter. "Some duffer has put that calendar on to Thursday. It's Wednesday."

He was blinking at the little movable cardboard calendar on the mantelpiece, just in front of him. Wharton glanced at it.

"It is Thursday," he said.

Bunter snorted.

"What's the good of talking rot like that?" he demanded.

"Do you think I don't know which day of the week it is?"

Wharton coloured.

"It's Thursday, Billy," he said, as gently as he could.

"You've been ill!"

"Ill?" repeated Bunter.

"Yes. After that biff in the swimming-bath, you lost your memory."

Bunter stared at him.

"Lost my memory!"

"Yes."

"What rot!"

"Look here, Bunter—"

"I know jolly well I never lost my memory," said Bunter peevishly. "You're trying to pull my leg. What rot!"

"You did lose it," said Harry quietly, though the unpleasant manner of the fat junior was putting a great strain upon his temper. "You forgot all of us, and even your own name. You have been going about the school knowing nothing of what happened before that bump in the bath."

Billy Bunter looked incredulous.

"Oh, draw it mild!" he exclaimed.

"It's true, Bunter," said Alonzo Todd, coming forward. "I assure you, my dear Bunter, that the account Wharton has imparted to you is correct in every particular. Wharton is incapable of departing from the straight path of strict veracity, my dear Bunter!"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"Ahem! What has happened, my dear Bunter, has carried out a suggestion made by myself. It was my plan to restore your memory by a second shock similar to the first—and my idea was to drop you head first into the swimming-bath when there was no water in it, of course. By this means—"

"You—you beast!" gasped the Owl of the Remove.

"My dear Bunter—"

"You dangerous lunatic—"

"Ahem! My plan has been carried out by chance. The football biffed you in the common-room—h'm!—I mean it smote your chin with a concussion of considerable violence, and you were hurled to the floor, your head coming into contact with the wainscot—"

"Look here—"

"This second shock has apparently restored you, and it bears out the scientific theory elaborated in the volume of Dr. Softes, entitled 'Amazing Recoveries of Patients Attended by Myself'—"

"Oh, buzz off, Toddy!" said Harry Wharton. "Cheese it! You don't want to make Bunter ill again, you know. I heard of a man once who was talked to death."

"My dear Wharton—"

Alonzo was gently pushed into the passage. The news had passed round by this time that Billy Bunter had recovered, and fellows were crowding from far and near to see him. Among the rest came Sammy Bunter of the Second Form.

Sammy was grinning. He did not believe that his major had lost his memory at all, and so he naturally did not believe that he had recovered. He squeezed into the study as Billy Bunter was fastening his collar. Billy Bunter blinked at him with a far from affectionate gaze.

"So you've come round," said Sammy.

"Yes," growled Billy.

"Did they find you out?"

"Eh?"

"Did you chaps bowl him out?" asked Sammy. "Of course, I knew that it was gammon all along. I told you so, didn't I?"

"You did," said Harry Wharton. "But it wasn't gammon—it was genuine, and Billy has recovered. You ought to be glad, you young rascal!"

Sammy Bunter sniffed.

"Oh, I wasn't taken in, you see. I know Billy has been living like a fighting-cock ever since he lost his memory; but what has he dropped it for, if you hadn't bowled him out? Did you lose your nerve, Billy?"

"El!" said Bunter. "Living like a fighting-cock! What do you mean?"

"Well, the fellows have been standing you unlimited feeds, and making a lot of you," said Sammy. "Of course, that was your little game. But why have you chucked it, without being found out?"

Billy Bunter blinked at Sammy in dismay. Sammy's disbelief in his strange attack did not trouble Billy at all. It was another reflection that was worrying him.

His thoughts were quite visible in his face, and the chums of the Remove burst into an irresistible roar of laughter. Billy Bunter did not know, till Sammy had told him, that he had been living like a fighting-cock while his memory was lost; and his look showed only too plain that if he had known it he would not have been in such a hurry to recover. It had not occurred to the fat junior, under the circumstances, to conceal the fact that his memory had returned simply because he had not known that it was ever lost till he was told. It was an opportunity for "spoofing" such as would never occur twice in a lifetime; and Billy Bunter had allowed it to pass him.

"I—I say, you fellows!" stammered Bunter. "I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You were an ass!" said Sammy, with brotherly frankness. "You might have kept it up for a week, or for the whole blessed term! I'd have helped you—I offered to, if you'd let me take my whack in the loot—Ow!"

Billy Bunter, thoroughly exasperated, let out a fat fist, and Sammy staggered to the door. Nugent pushed him out and closed the door after him. Billy Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove in an uncertain sort of way.

"I—I say, you fellows—"

They knew what was coming. His changing expressions had given him away before he began.

Bunter worked up an expression of intense suffering.

"I—I say, you fellows! I—I feel very strange. I—I think I'm having a relapse. I—I think I'm losing my memory again!"

The juniors roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I forget who you are!" said Bunter. "I—I don't recognise you, Wharton, I don't even know your name—I mean—"

The juniors simply shrieked.

"Look here, you beasts!" roared Bunter. "I tell you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors walked away, still laughing. Billy Bunter glared after them and snorted. But he did not lose his memory again. He might keep it up his sleeve, as it were, as a card to be played on some more favourable occasion in the future—but for the present it was useless. There was no sympathy left now for poor old Bunter!

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Tuesday, entitled: "ALONZO THE FOOTBALLER," by Frank Richards. Order in advance. Price One Penny.)

Our Readers are informed that the characters in the following Serial Story are purely imaginary, and contain no reference or allusion to any living person. Actual names may be unintentionally mentioned, but the Editor wishes it to be distinctly understood that no adverse personal reflection is intended.]

GRAND NEW ADVENTURE SERIAL JUST STARTED!

Wolves of the Deep.

The Story of a Great Conspiracy, introducing Ferrers Lord and Ching-Lung.

By SIDNEY DREW.

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord is the possessor of a powerful submarine, called "The Lord of the Deep." One night the model is stolen from him by Michael Scaroff, a Russian. Ferrers Lord, accompanied by his friend, Rupert Thurston, sets out on the track of the Russian. They take train for Dover, but on the way a bullet comes whizzing through the carriage window, and later on the train is wrecked. Lord declares it to be Scaroff's handiwork. They reach Dover, and board a yacht called the "Violet," belonging to Ferrers Lord, but they have not gone far before a terrific gale comes on.

(Now go on with the story.)

The Storm—The Strange Vessel and the Stranger Demand—Fired on in Mid-Channel.

The darkness was intense even a dozen yards ahead; but the millionaire's keen eyes soon grew accustomed to the gloom. His cap, torn from his head, went flying aft; but he never stirred from his position. Two men, instead of one, were straining at the wheel, and two more stationed in the chains.

With the gale dead in her teeth, the little yacht made poor headway. A few distant lights flickered both to port and starboard, for the Channel was crowded with ships. Ferrers Lord looked round suddenly.

"How long do you think this will last, Mr. Crane?"

"I cannot say, sir; perhaps an hour or so. It came suddenly, and so I expect it will go suddenly. I haven't seen a storm rise so quickly for years. It came like a West Indian hurricane."

He staggered back, and for a moment his heart stood still. Like a trumpet-call Ferrers Lord's clear voice rang loud above the gale:

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"Helmi hard down, you fools!"

He was obeyed only just in time. A dark, shapeless mass, like a swimming dragon with a hundred glowing eyes, slid past them—a huge P. and O. liner that had come out of the darkness like a ghost. She vanished, without seeing or caring, and a mountain of water deluged the little yacht, whose bowsprit had almost scraped her towering side.

"A near thing!" said the officer hoarsely. "Hadr't we better slacken speed, sir?"

"No."

The yacht's head went slowly round, and once more she battled with the gale. She pitched and tossed like a cork in a millrace; but her stout engines thrashed away merrily, and drove her on slowly but surely. Ferrers Lord went below.

Thurston was sleeping like a child, for the drug had done its work. Ferrers Lord dashed the spray from his eyes, and, opening a drawer, took out an envelope. He laid its contents—a chart—upon the table, and bent eagerly over it. For a good half-hour he sat there in silence, his forehead puckered, and then, relocking the drawer, went out.

When he reached the deck the gale had dwindled, but it was still blowing strongly. Fate seemed against him at every turn. He looked up at the sky, and saw that the moon was beginning to gleam dimly through the clouds. Three bells sounded musically as he mounted the bridge, and he knew it was half-past one. Michael Scaroff had played his cards well, and was at least four hours ahead by now, probably nearly five.

The millionaire bit his lips. The Russian would be almost in Paris by this time, and would be well on his way to Berlin before the yacht steamed into Calais Harbour. Ferrers Lord had given up all hope of recovering the model. It was

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not that which urged him on, but the mad craving to revenge himself upon the man who had robbed him of the fruit of his bitter toil.

He knew that Scaroff would build a vessel similar to the Lord of the Deep, unless he could be checked in time, and he knew also that once he had planted his foot on Russian soil Scaroff would be safe.

It seemed madness to follow now, but the millionaire's dogged spirit would not allow him to turn back. There was still a chance that Scaroff would fancy himself safe from pursuit, and stay the night in Paris. It was a poor chance, but it was the only chance. The moment the Russian crossed the frontier the chase was ended, and he could snap his fingers at Ferrers Lord. For in holy Russia, that land of tyranny and oppression, Michael Scaroff was a prince, and he was above the law.

All this passed through the millionaire's mind in a flash; but he decided to take the slight shadow of a chance that Scaroff would sleep in Paris. The night grew brighter as he stared ahead, watching for the first glimpse of the lights of Calais Harbour. He guessed that they were a good nine miles away yet, but the yacht was travelling faster.

It rained heavily still, and the wind moaned weirdly through the cordage. He called to the officer:

"How far out are we?"

"About eight knots, sir. We couldn't do much against a wind like that. Look there, sir, right to port!"

Ferrers Lord turned eagerly, and peered in the direction of the officer's extended arm.

"I see nothing," he said.

"Neither do I, sir, now; but there's a vessel there, for I've seen her several times. Her smoke blew right across us before we nearly ran foul of the liner. I can't make her out. She's been to starboard, to port, ahead, and abaft of us. I can't make her out at all. I'll give her a call, sir."

He tugged at the cord, and the shrill hoot of the siren echoed hoarsely through the storm. There was no reply.

"You must have been mistaken," said Ferrers Lord, dreading some new disaster.

"I'll swear I'm not, sir. Look, sir! There she is, right ahead! Can't you smell her smoke?"

The millionaire saw her as the clouds broke, and gritted his teeth. Her smoke beat into his face, almost blinding him; but he caught a glimpse of a low-lying hull, and nothing more, except a few short spars. She carried no lights.

"What do you make of her, Crane?" he asked.

"I don't know, sir. She's got a mighty good turn of speed. French torpedo-boat destroyer, I should say."

"I hope so. Lend me your glass."

"Why do you hope so, sir?" asked the astonished officer.

The millionaire made no reply, but he was strangely uneasy. He focussed the glass upon the unknown vessel. A flash shot through the darkness, and something went hissing over his head. Then came the crash of a gun.

The glass fell from the millionaire's hand, and in the dim light officer and owner stared open-mouthed at each other.

"They fired at us!" gasped Crane. "That gun was shot, I'll swear!"

"It was," said Ferrers Lord. "Hang the human fiend!"

Every sailor was on deck by this time, and the black faces of the stokers were thrust anxiously above the aft-companion. Before an order could be given the unknown vessel was beside them.

"Heave to!" cried a gruff voice.

Ferrers Lord caught the officer by the arm.

"Serve out the rifles," he said, "while I talk to them. They have fired upon me, and it's my right to defend myself. Waste no time in getting the gun out, while I see what they want."

The officer descended the steps at a bound. Silently the little bow-chaser was run out; silently the startled sailors took the rifles that were passed from hand to hand. Lord's voice rang through the gloom.

"Who are you? What right have you to stop me on the high seas?"

A roar of laughter answered him.

"You don't call this the high seas, do you? Like every other Britisher, you think you can boss the waves, I suppose; but it will be more healthy for you to stop a bit. What's the name of your boat, and where are you going?"

Ferrers Lord gritted his teeth. The man spoke with an overdone Yankee twang, but the millionaire's skilled ears told him that the speaker was neither Englishman nor an American. He was either a Pole or a Russian.

"What has that to do with you?" he said angrily. "I refuse to answer. Get out of my way before I assert my rights and fire into you."

The moon broke through the clouds and sent down a flood of light. Ferrers Lord saw that the vessel below him was decked all over except amidships. She was crowded with men, and two tapering twelve-pounder guns were trained fore and aft. The smoke poured from her as she kept pace with the little yacht.

"Come," said the man on her bridge, "don't be a fool! I don't want to hurt you, if I can help it. The best thing you

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can do is to turn your nose round and slip back to Dover. I'm here to keep you out of Calais for an hour or two, and I mean to do it, if I have to blow you to Davy Jones."

Michael Scaroff again. He had contested every inch of the way, both on land and sea. The millionaire was mad with rage. Even in the crowded Channel, patrolled by cruisers as a London street is patrolled by police, this man's hirelings had dared to stop him by force against the law of all nations. Passion almost choked him, for he felt that resistance was almost hopeless.

"You had better take my advice, and slow down," said the captain of the unknown vessel, with a laugh. "It may be piracy, but the pay makes it worth the risk. I can steam twenty-eight knots, and will take some catching. Don't move, please; I've got you covered!"

Ferrers Lord saw a rifle pointed at his heart, and ground his teeth. The amazed sailors were listening eagerly to all that was said. A pirate in the Channel! It seemed incredible.

"You'll swing for this!" growled Ferrers Lord.

"That's my own affair. I'm getting a bit impatient. I give you exactly two minutes to make up your mind to stop and be sensible. If you're not open to reason, I'll draw off and bore a hole through you. You bet, I'm in dead earnest."

Ferrers Lord clenched his hands and bit his lips.

"A minute is up!" said the mocking voice. "I'm sorry to hurry you in any way. Show a light here!"

Till now the vessel had been in darkness, but a couple of electric lamps flashed out in her rigging. The man stood, watch in hand, and Ferrers Lord fixed his keen eyes upon him.

He was tall, and dressed in glistening oilskins. He raised his head, and the light fell full upon his bearded face. The millionaire gave a start, and jerked his arm swiftly downwards.

"Time!" cried the man.

A red flash shot from the millionaire's hand, followed by the spiteful crack of his little revolver. With a shrill cry the man reeled, crashed against the flimsy rail, and fell headlong to the deck. Ferrers Lord tugged over the indicator, and the bell in the engine-room rang. "Full speed ahead!"

"Rockets!" shouted Ferrers Lord. "Fire!"

He threw himself flat down, and a hail of bullets whistled over him. A dozen rifles spat out their leaden contents into the crowded ranks of Scaroff's mercenaries. The little yacht leapt ahead. The quickness of the thing seemed to have paralysed these modern pirates for only a straggling volley was fired. The steersman went down, with a bullet through his spine, and Crane dashed to the wheel.

Rocket after rocket went hissing up into the sky, telling of a vessel in distress. Shouts of rage sounded from behind, but the yacht was gaining with every beat of her screws.

A shell came shrieking past the Violet, but it was aimed too high, and its thunderous roar died away upon the wind.

"More speed!" cried the millionaire, through the speaking-tube. "Burn everything, anything, and screw down the valves! Blow the boilers out of her, if you can!"

Great masses of waste, soaked in oil, were flung into the furnaces by the sweating stokers. The throb of the engines shook the little vessel from stem to stern. Ferrers Lord looked through the night-glass, and groaned. The panic was over, and the pursuer was churning madly in pursuit, leaving a streaming wake behind her.

The yacht rose on every surge, but the pursuer seemed to cut through them like a knife. The roughness of the sea made it difficult to fire with any accuracy; but her gun crashed out again, and another shell hissed past.

"More steam!" shouted Ferrers Lord frantically. "She is doing half as much again as we are!"

He realised that, if help did not come quickly, the chase would be a short one. Rocket after rocket shot up, and burst into spangles of stars. He looked ahead, and uttered a cry of delight.

Three lights in a triangle loomed slowly out of the darkness—red, white, and green. Their distance apart, and their height above the water, showed that they belonged to some large vessel. Their pursuer saw them, too, and fired a last shot.

There was a blinding flash, a deafening roar, and then a sudden silence. The little yacht heeled over as the wind swept the blinding smoke away.

Ferrers Lord looked back with a shiver. The wheel was gone, and the waves were seething through the gaping rails aft. Abaft the funnel three men lay in huddled heaps. With the wheel the plucky steersman had vanished, swallowed by the sea he loved so well.

The millionaire's heart turned sick, and his head swam. A long beam of light shot over the waves, and rested upon the shattered yacht. She was moving round in a circle, like a bird with a broken wing. Her engines came to a standstill.

The rescuer came rushing out of the darkness—a mighty battleship. A boat was lowered, and danced over the waves, manned by brawny British tars.

"What's the row here?" cried a boyish voice. "What are you wasting rockets and powder for? Are you disabled?"

Ferrers Lord was calm now.

"Can you come aboard?" he said quietly.

"Certainly! It's a bit ticklish in a sea like this, but I suppose I'll manage it. Sling me a line!"

The young midgy mounted the rope as cleverly as a monkey. The millionaire met him.

"I have been fired on," he said, "with the British flag flying at my trunk. The captain was killed by the shell, that took the wheel out of us and knocked over those men."

The midgy gasped with astonishment.

"Jupiter! Fired at! Here's a game! Wait, and I'll send you help. We saw a tug a little while ago, and a rocket will bring her up. She went north-west, eh? Great Scott! Pull, you lubbers, pull!"

He dropped back into the boat, and like wildfire the story spread, and the battleship buzzed like a hive of bees. The boat returned as the ironclad's funnels spat out streams of smoke. She tore away, working her searchlight. A second light answered it from the west, a third from the north. The yacht's pursuer was between three fires.

A doctor came in the boat, but the men were past all human aid. A little tug danced merrily over the water, and took the Violet in tow. Ferrers Lord and the surgeon paced the deck together.

"This is the most mysterious thing I ever heard," said the doctor. "If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes I would not have believed it. Of course we are almost sure to capture the vessel, for every civilised port will be closed against her, or, rather, they will watch for her everywhere."

"A vessel is easily disguised," answered Ferrers Lord. "She was certainly a torpedo-boat destroyer, and such boats are not usually private property. The man I bowled over spoke like an American, or tried to do so. It will be difficult to prove anything if she happens to be the property of some Government."

"That is so; but it's an ugly business."

"Come below," said the millionaire, "and have a smoke. I have a friend there who has foolishly broken his arm. I suppose he is awake by this time."

Ferrers Lord entered the cabin first, and shook Thurston gently. The young man yawned drowsily and rubbed his eyes. He had slept through everything.

"Aren't we in Calais yet?" he asked.

"Almost, Rupert. This is a friend of mine—Fleet-Surgeon White—Mr. Rupert Thurston. Suppose we have a bottle of wine and talk of other things."

"Then you have been chatting while I was asleep," said Thurston. "You look pretty wet."

"Certainly we have, and I am a bit soaked. Ah, here's the wine!"

Glasses were filled and cigars lighted as the tug, towing the disabled yacht, steamed into the harbour.

Ferrers Lord was in the act of sipping his wine when a knock sounded upon the cabin-door.

"Come in!" he cried.

A man with a pointed black beard stepped softly in and looked round him.

"You are Monsieur Ferrers Lord?" he said.

"That is my name. What can I do for you?"

The man was holding a telegram in his hand.

"I am sorry," he said in French, "but I have orders from the London police to arrest you."

Inch by inch Ferrers Lord rose, clutching at the arm of his chair.

"Arrest me? Are you mad? On what charge?"

"For forging the name of Michael Scaroff to a cheque for fifteen thousand pounds on the Anglo-Russian Bank. Now, boys!"

Ferrers Lord reeled back as if stunned. The cabin was filled with gendarmes; the handcuffs clicked upon his wrists. Michael Scaroff had played another winning card.

Ferrers Lord clenched his manacled hands, and paced the little cabin like a caged tiger.

"What does it mean?" cried Thurston. "Arrested! Is the fellow mad?"

"It means that we are beaten, my friend," said the millionaire; "that the Russian fiend has had his own name forged and impersonated me somehow at the bank. It means that I am to kick my heels helplessly in a French gaol, while his special train carries him comfortably over the frontier into safety. We are beaten, Rupert, at least, for a time. Go to the British Consul, at once, and tell him Ferrers Lord needs him. I will wire to my bankers and my Paris agents. They will free me with apologies in a few hours. I am ready, inspector."

He nodded to the amazed doctor and Thurston, and went out, followed by the gendarmes. Though weak and ill, Thurston pulled himself together to carry out his mission to the British Consul.

The news that the Violet had been fired on by an unknown vessel, and that its owner, Ferrers Lord, the great English millionaire, had been arrested for forgery, spread like wildfire.

The morning papers were full of it, and crowds gathered at the harbour to stare at the damaged yacht.

At nine o'clock a closed carriage drove down to the harbour. It contained Ferrers Lord and Rupert Thurston.

The police had released the millionaire, with ample apologies, and apologies had also been telegraphed from Scotland Yard.

The whole charge against him had broken down, for at the very moment the cheque had been passed over the counter by the man who bore such a strange resemblance to the well-known millionaire, Ferrers Lord had been recognised at Burnham Railway Station by a dozen people.

By this time all Calais knew of it, and as Ferrers Lord crossed the gangway of the Dover packet, a loud burst of cheering filled the air.

He had changed his clothes, and was faultlessly dressed. He raised his silk hat again and again, and, taking Rupert's arm, hurried into the saloon.

At Dover there was another excited crowd anxiously waiting for the boat. Dozens of cameras were held in readiness, and dozens of newspaper men jostled each other for the privilege of being the first to interview the man who had been the victim of such a series of amazing adventures.

But Ferrers Lord had telegraphed his wishes already, and a cordon of police kept the people back and guarded the station.

During the passage across the Channel he had hardly spoken a word, but Thurston saw that his face was grave and stern.

He lay back among the cushions of the reserved carriage and lighted a cigar.

"We have made a very bad start, Rupert," he said, breaking the silence.

"In fact, a regular hash of things," answered the young man. "Do you know, I am beginning to look upon this Russian as a kind of fiend incarnate—a human demon? What is to be done?"

"Get the boat finished at once.

We can manage it in a week. There is no doubt that Scaroff will start to work his immediately. We are not stopping in London, but going North at once, to a little village south of Scarborough. The Lord of the Deep is almost there by this time. It is an out-of-the-way little place on one of my estates, and the people are devoted to me, so there is no risk of our preparations leaking out. Have you seen what the papers say about this?"

For Next Week



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Not to be outdone in a bid for fame Alonzo takes to the football field, with results that would be disastrous were they not so funny.

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