

"THE ARTFUL DODGER."

A Grand School Tale
of Harry Wharton
& Co. and Billy
Bunter.

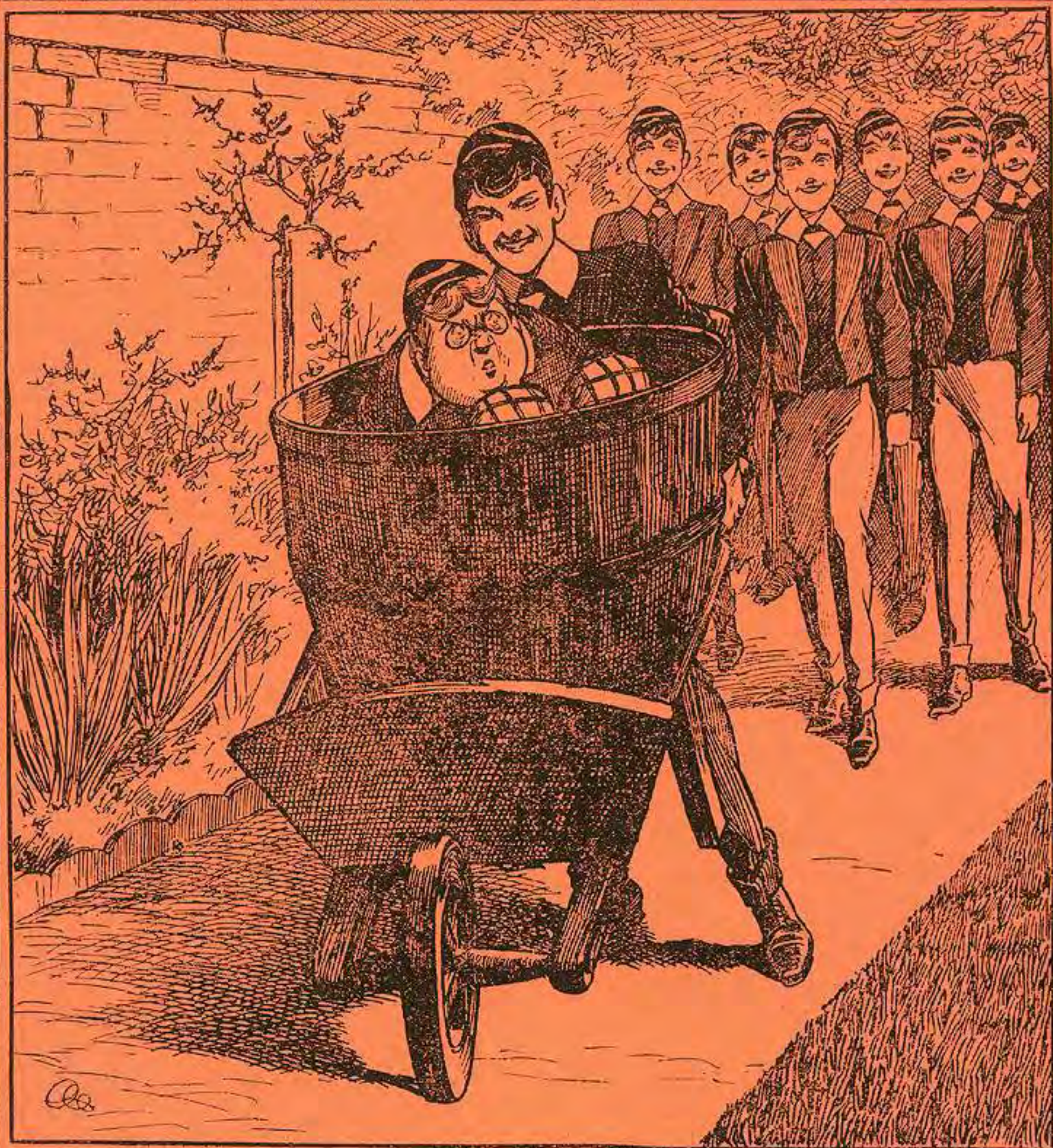
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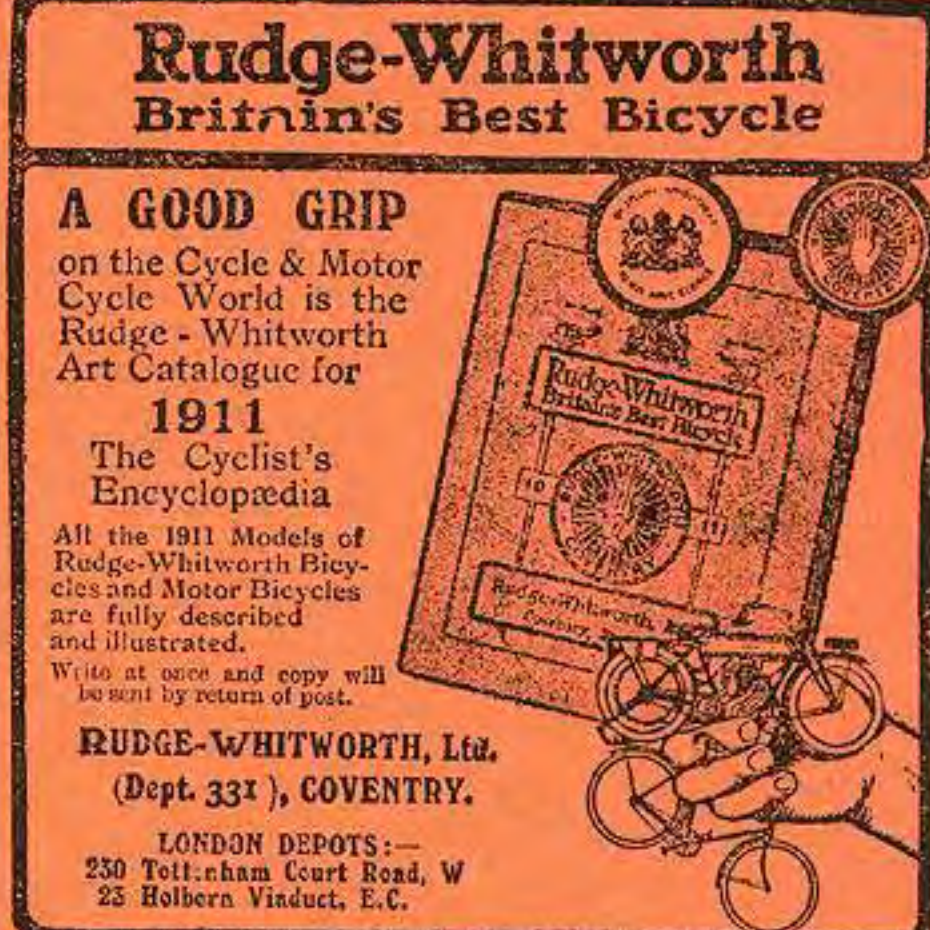
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THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Bunter Tries It On.

BILLY BUNTER was thinking. It was quite an unusual exercise for Billy Bunter; but he was doing it thoroughly now. He was sitting at the table in his study, in the Remove passage at Greyfriars, in an attitude of the deepest reflection.

The study did not look comfortable. Billy Bunter was probably the untidiest boy in the Remove. Bunter could do some things. He could cook—and he could eat what he cooked—till further orders. But he could not keep a study tidy, or any of his personal possessions, in anything like order. His study was dusty, there

The Artful Dodger

A Splendid,
Long, Complete Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars.

— BY —

FRANK RICHARDS.

were books and papers piled on the table, and ink splashed on the carpet, dust on the shelves, and a dead fire in the grate. Bunter's surroundings were not cheerful.

Bunter had that study to himself, and no one had even shown any desire to share it with him.

It seemed to Bunter a long time since he had been an inmate of Harry Wharton's study. Like the Israelites when they had gone forth from the land of Egypt, Billy Bunter looked back with great regret at the flesh-pots he had quitted. Study No. 1 seemed like a land flowing with milk and honey to the fat junior, now that he was thrown upon his own resources.

His various attempts to reinstate himself in Wharton's study had failed. Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh didn't want him back. They had told him so in the plainest of plain English.

Bunter was thinking it out now.

Once only of late he had succeeded in rousing the sympathy of Harry Wharton & Co., and of the Remove generally. It was when he had had a strange attack, owing to a bump on the head, he had lost his memory for several days, and the fellows, forgetting what an objectionable bounder he was, had been very kind indeed to him.

X

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Library.

Bunter had never ceased to regret recovering his memory. But why should he not lose it again? That was the idea that was in Bunter's mind now—that was what he was thinking out.

He raised his head at last, and put his spectacles straight upon his fat little nose.

"It's a jolly good idea!" he murmured. "Of course, it involves a slight deception. But they can't pretend that I'm to blame for that. If they'd treat me decently, I'd do the same for them. But when they keep a chap out of what is really his own study, and don't give him a chance to get enough to eat, and refuse, in the rudest possible way, to make him a little advance on a postal-order when he's expecting one, then what can they expect? Beasts!"

Billy Bunter rose to his feet.

He blinked round the study through his big spectacles. It was a small room—the smallest in the passage; but anybody excepting Bunter could have made it comfortable enough.

Bunter had not that gift. He could make anybody's study uncomfortable, but that was the limit of his powers. He thought of the armchair in Wharton's study, and grunted peevishly. Then he blinked out of the doorway.

A junior was coming along the passage. It was Fisher T. Fish, the American boy in the Lower Fourth. Bunter rolled out into his path.

"I say, Fish—I—I—mean, I forget your name!" he exclaimed. "Look here, do you know who I am?"

The American youth stopped, and stared at him. Fisher T. Fish had a very keen eye, and his eye seemed to go through Bunter like a gimlet.

"I guess you're the fattest guy in Greyfriars," he replied.

"Oh, really, Fish—I mean—"

"Never mind what you mean, Bunter! Buzz out of my way! I guess I want to get on!"

"But I want to know who I am!" said Bunter pathetically. "I've lost my memory, you know—"

"Where did you lose it?"

"In my study—I mean—"

"I guess you'd better look in your study for it, then!" Fish remarked, and he gave Bunter a gentle shove that sent him staggering into his doorway. "So-long. Jevver get left?"

He walked on, leaving Bunter blinking after him.

"Beast!" murmured Billy Bunter.

Fisher T. Fish disappeared into the end study.

Billy Bunter remained blinking disconsolately along the passage. He made up his mind that Fisher T. Fish was an unbelieving beast, and hoped for better luck at the next shot. He wanted to try his hand, as it were, at losing his memory before he ventured into Harry Wharton's study with the tale.

John Bull, of the Remove, was the next fellow to appear. It was getting near tea-time, and most of the Remove were likely to come up to their studies to tea. Bull came swinging along the passage with his hands in his pockets. Bunter emerged from his study, and Bull stopped just in time to avoid cannoning him.

"Hallo, you fat duffer!" he exclaimed. "What do you mean by playing jack-in-the-box like this? What's your little game?"

"Game?" said Bunter vacantly.

Bull stared at him.

"Off your rocker?" he asked.

"Rocker?"

"Blessed if he isn't babbling!" said Bull, in wonder. "What's the matter with you, Bunter? Are you ill?"

"Ill?"

"My hat, I hope it isn't hydrophobia!"

"I've lost my memory," explained Bunter.

"Eh?"

"I've lost my memory again. You remember I lost my memory through biffing my head in the swimming-bath? Well, I've lost it again."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared John Bull.

"Look here—"

"You fat duffer!" yelled Bull. "If you've lost your

memory, how do you know you lost it before? You couldn't remember that!"

"Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

John Bull walked away, leaving Bunter feeling inclined to kick himself. The best-laid schemes of mice and men often go wrong, and Bunter was evidently not built for a plotter. He had overlooked a most obvious objection to the story.

"Beasts!" he murmured.

Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, and little Wun Lung—the Chinese—came upstairs. Bunter resolved to try again. He had picked up a point from John Bull, and he meant to be more careful this time.

"I say, you fellows—" he began pathetically.

"Hallo—hallo—hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry cheerfully. "What's the trouble?"

"Would you mind telling me my name?"

The three juniors stared at him, astounded. On the occasion when Bunter had really lost his memory owing to shock, the truth had been apparent. But there is an old saying that a lie always looks like a lie. Bunter could affect to be as vacant as he liked, but he could not impress the truth of a falsehood upon the juniors.

"Your name?" said Mark Linley.

"Yes; I've forgotten it."

"My hat!"

"I—I think I've lost my memory," said Bunter faintly.

"Great Scott! Again?"

"Did I lose it before?" asked Bunter simply.

"You did, my son," said Bob Cherry. "You lost it once—and that once was enough. You can't be allowed to get into the habit of doing these things."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Ha, ha, ha! You haven't forgotten my name as well as your own!"

"I—I—I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors strode on, laughing. Bunter caught little Wun Lung by the sleeve as he glided by, and stopped him.

"I say, Wun Lung, old fellow—"

"Buntsee, lettee me go!"

"I've lost my memory, you know—"

"No savvy!"

"Would you mind telling me who I am?" said Bunter.

"No savvy!"

"Look here, Wun Lung—"

"Buntsee knowee my name, too!" chuckled the little Chinese.

"You—you heathen beast!"

"How Buntsee knowee me heathen if lost memolee?" grinned Wun Lung.

The exasperated Bunter made a cut at him, and the little Chinese dodged it, and scuttled down the passage after Bob Cherry and Linley. Bunter snorted with wrath.

"Beasts!"

Billy Bunter's experiment did not seem likely to be crowned with success. He caught sight of Tom Brown in the passage, talking to Hazeldene, and made one more attempt.

"I say, you fellows," he said, "would you mind telling me my name?"

"What's the joke?" asked Tom Brown, in surprise.

"I—I've lost my memory."

"My hat!"

"Hard cheese!" said Hazeldene sympathetically. "How did it happen?"

"I—I suddenly had a sort of vacant feeling, as if I—I had lost something," stammered Bunter. "I suppose it was—was then, you know. Would you mind telling me my name?"

"Certainly!" said Hazeldene blandly. "Your initials are L. F. I suppose you remember them?"

Bunter looked puzzled.

"N-n-no," he stammered. "W-w-what do they stand for?"

"Lying Fathead!" said Hazeldene.

"Oh, really—"

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

"Look here, you fellows—"

"Isn't that your name?" demanded Hazeldene.

"No, it jolly well isn't, and—"

"How do you know, if you've lost your memory?"

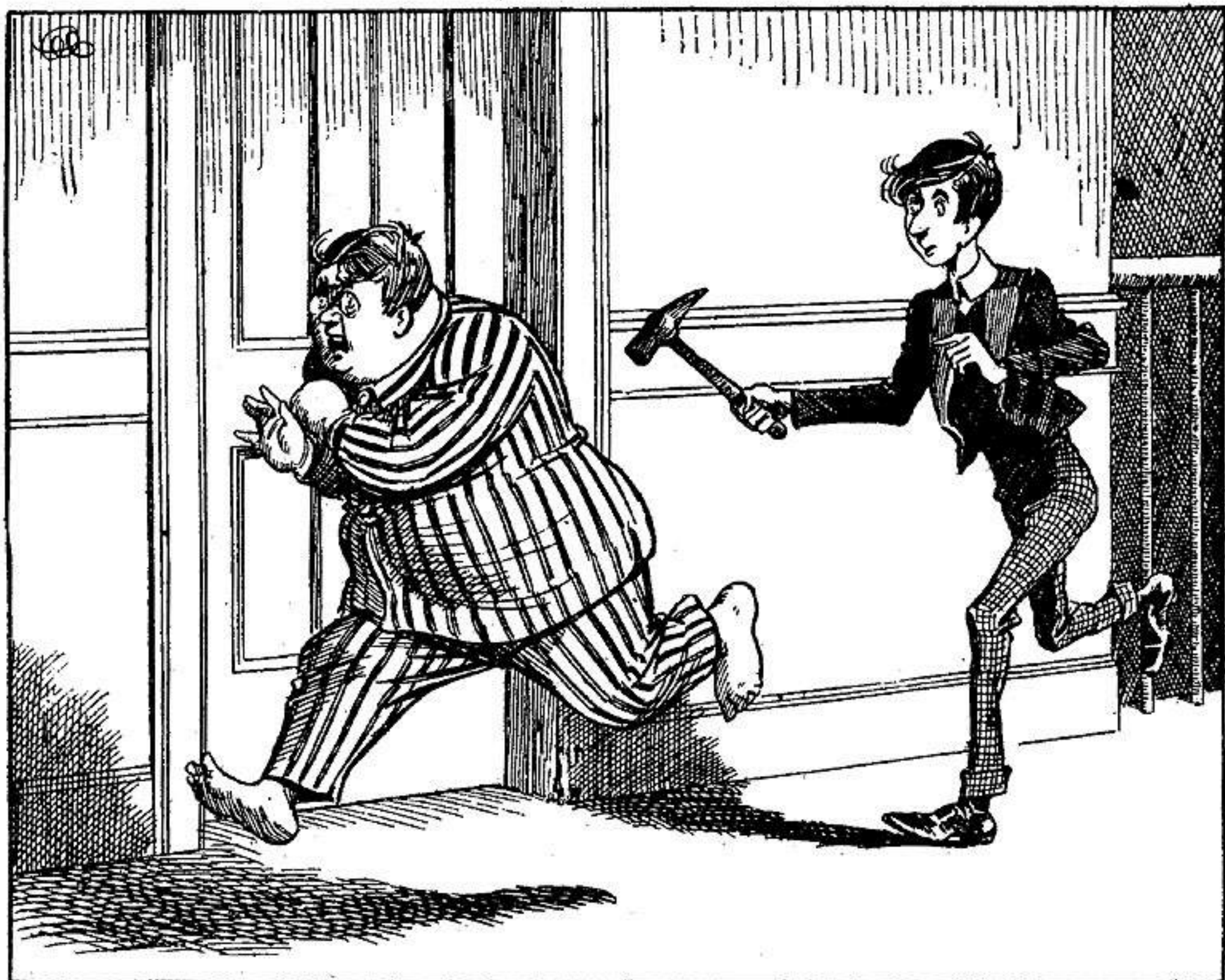
"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Hazeldene and Brown went into their study, leaving Billy Bunter blinking furiously.

ANSWERS

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 163.

HAVE YOU READ "THE IRON ISLAND" the Amazing Adventure Tale now running in the "GEM" LIBRARY? Price ONE PENNY. Now on Sale.



Billy Bunter dashed down the corridor at top speed, and after him rushed Alonzo Todd, brandishing the hammer. "Oh! Ow! Hellup! Keep him off," yelled the fat junior.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Only Way.

HARRY WHARTON stirred the fire in Study No. 1, and the kettle began to sing. Frank Nugent had turned the poached eggs out of the pan, and there was quite a fragrant scent in the study. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the nabob of Bhanipur, with a smile like unto a full-moon upon his dusky visage, was cutting bread-and-butter. The three chums looked very cosy and comfortable in their brightly-lighted study. They had been at football practice since afternoon school, and they had excellent appetites for tea. In case eggs and bread-and-butter and bloater-paste should not satisfy them, there was a big cake on the table, which would fill up—as Nugent expressed it—any space that might be left.

"Well, I'm hungry!" Nugent remarked, as he sat down. "Make the tea, my son. We shall beat the Upper Fourth in the next match!"

"Easily!" said Wharton, as he poured boiling water into the teapot, and a fragrant scent of tea arose. "The team are in fine form!"

"Alonzo Todd wants to play again."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The ha-ha-hafulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Ram Singh. "The playfulness of the esteemed Todd is the seasonful joke!"

The chums laughed as they sat down to tea. Alonzo Todd, the Duffer of Greyfriars, had been ambitious to become a footballer, and by special wish of the Head Wharton had given him a chance. But nothing would have induced the Remove to play the Duffer again; he was too terrible.

Nugent poured out the tea. As he was doing so, the door of the study opened.

Billy Bunter walked in.

The chums of the Remove stared at him. It was some time since Bunter had ceased to be an occupant of Study No. 1, but he could never be made to understand that his company was not yearned for there. He had a way of turning up at meal-times that was distinctly exasperating, for the juniors liked a chat over their tea, and Billy Bunter always made things uncomfortable. Bunter had a way of monopolising the conversation, for one thing, and he had only one topic—the wonderful abilities of William George Bunter. And a fellow could get fed up with that in the long run.

"Hallo!" said Nugent abruptly. "What do you want?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"Did you speak to me?" he asked.

"Yes, I did. What do you want?"

"Oh, really—"

"There's the door!" Wharton suggested.

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked that the doorfulness was terrific.

Bunter blinked at them indignantly.

"I say, you fellows, I suppose a chap can come into his own study?" he exclaimed.

"Eh?"

"What?"

Billy Bunter settled himself comfortably in the armchair—the armchair that anybody else seldom had an opportunity of using when Bunter had been a regular inmate of the study.

The three juniors watched him with amazement. Bunter's coolness took their breath away.

The fat junior blinked over the tea-table.

"I'll have eggs!" he said. "Any ham?"

"No!" said Wharton slowly. "There's no ham—and no eggs—for you!"

"Oh, really——"

"The unwelcomefulness of the honourable Bunter is terrific," Hurree Singh remarked. "If he would take his esteemed departure, it would be the boonful blessing."

"Oh, really, Inky——"

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"I'm jolly well not going to leave my own study," said Bunter.

"Look here, you young ass," said Harry Wharton angrily, "what do you mean? You know that you changed out of this study weeks ago, as well as we do."

"Eh?"

"You changed out of this study weeks ago," shrieked Wharton. "You know that perfectly well."

"What?"

"You know you changed——"

"You needn't shout," said Bunter. "I'm not deaf. I don't know what you're talking about. What's your name?"

Wharton gasped.

"What's my what?"

"Name."

"Name! My name's Wharton, you chump. What do you mean?"

Bunter passed a hand across his brow.

"I seem to remember it," he murmured.

The chums of the Remove fixed their eyes upon him. They were beginning to understand, and their eyes were beginning to gleam.

"Oh, you seem to remember it, do you?" said Harry Wharton ominously.

"Ye-es," said Bunter slowly. "What is my name?"

"Your name?"

"Yes."

"Oh, your name is Greedy Pig!"

"Oh, really——"

"There's the door, Bunter."

"Is my name Bunter?"

"Yes, your name's Bunter, and you're going out," said Frank Nugent. "You'd better go while you've got a chance."

"I'm not going out of my own study," said Bunter. "If I changed out, what study did I change into? I don't remember."

"Lost your memory again?"

"Yes, that must be it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

"Look here," exclaimed Wharton impatiently—"look here, Bunter, you can't spoof us with a yarn like that. Your minor—Sammy—tried it on, and it wouldn't work."

"Who's Sammy?"

"Your minor."

"Have I got a minor?"

"You'll have a thick ear soon," roared Wharton exasperated. "I tell you you can't take us in, you fat duffer. You ought to tell the truth. You're the stupidest liar I've ever come across. Stop it!"

"I say, you fellows, I've lost my memory, you know."

"Last time you lost your memory you lost your appetite, too," grinned Frank Nugent. "I suppose it's the same this time."

Bunter shook his head quickly.

"Oh, no!" he exclaimed. "It seems to have had quite a different effect this time; in fact, quite an opposite effect. I'm hungry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. I may be seriously ill, you know, especially if I don't have some nourishment

in time. I'm a rather delicate chap, and I require constant nourishment to keep me going at all. Look here, you fellows, I'm expecting a postal-order this evening."

"Ha, ha, ha! You haven't forgotten that!"

"I—I—I—really——"

"Look here," said Wharton, "when Bunter lost his memory last time, he recovered through having a bump on the head in the same place. The best thing we can do to restore him now is to try the same means."

"Hear, hear!" shouted Nugent.

"I—I say, you fellows, I don't think it would be any good this time," stammered Billy Bunter. "You—you see, the circumstances are different, and—and——"

"Never mind; we'll try it," said Nugent.

"But I say——"

"Hold him while I get the poker," said Harry Wharton, making a dive towards the grate.

Bunter jumped up in alarm.

Nugent made a rush at him, and collared him half-way to the door. Bunter squirmed in his grasp, yelling furiously.

"Ow-ow! Help! Murder! Yow!"

"Hold him!" roared Wharton.

"The holdfulness is terrific."

"Yow! Murder! Help!" shrieked Bunter.

"We've got him!"

Billy Bunter struggled desperately; but Nugent had him on one side, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh on the other. They dragged him back from the door towards Wharton.

Wharton brandished the poker ferociously in the air.

"Shove his head down on the table, and hold it there," he exclaimed. "I'll bring the poker down on it with both hands."

"Ha, ha, ha! All right."

"Yow! Help! You'll brain me! Yow!"

"Rot!" said Nugent elegantly. "You can't brain a chap unless he has brains, and you haven't any, Bunter, or you'd have shown some sign of it before now. Go it, Wharton!"

"Yaroooh! Help!"

"Hold him!"

Bunter's head was jammed down on the table, and, in spite of the fat junior's struggles, Nugent and Hurree Singh held him there. Wharton swung the poker in the air with both hands.

Crash!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Looking for Bunter.

CRASH!

The poker descended with a terrific concussion, not, of course, upon Billy Bunter's head, but upon a chair standing a yard away from him. The blow made the chair dance, but Billy Bunter roared as if he had received it.

"Yow! Yaroooh! Murder! Help!"

The door was flung open. Tom Brown and Hazeldene, and Ogilvy and Skinner came crowding in, with other fellows behind them.

"What's the matter?"

"What is it?"

"Faith, and who's doin' the murther?"

Bunter wrenched himself away from the chums of the Remove.

"Help!" he roared. "Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're not hurt. What's the matter?"

"Stop him!" roared Harry Wharton, brandishing the poker.

Bunter made a wild break for the door.

He burst through the crowd of Removites like a thunder-bolt. His weight forced a passage, and he spun out gasping into the passage.

"Ow!" he panted. "Yow! They're mad! Help! Murder! Ow!"

"Stop him!"

"Collar him!"

Billy Bunter broke into a wild run, and went down the passage at top speed.

"But what on earth's the matter?" demanded Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha! Bunter's lost his memory again."

"My hat!"

"And I was going to restore it by giving him a shock,"

Harry Wharton explained, as he tossed the poker into the grate. "But he wouldn't have it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear me!" exclaimed Alonzo Todd, coming along the passage. "Dear me! My dear Wharton, is it possible? Is Bunter suffering from a recurring attack?"

"Ha, ha! No; he's only spoofing."

"I trust, Wharton, that you are not suspecting Bunter of deception upon insufficient grounds," said Todd seriously.

"My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me that one

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should never be too hasty in doubting any statement, however remarkable."

"Well, Bunter's statements are a little too remarkable," grinned Nugent. "He's trying to spoof us, that's all."

"I trust that is the case, Nugent. I trust that Bunter is not suffering from a relapse. I think, under the circumstances, however, that it would be judicious and advisable to interview Bunter, and obtain an explicit statement from him upon this subject," said Todd, with a fine flow of language, due to the careful training of his Uncle Benjamin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear fellows——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo Todd departed in search of Bunter. The juniors dispersed, laughing, and Harry Wharton & Co. were at liberty to go on with their tea. Alonzo Todd's face was very serious. Todd took all things seriously, and he had been known to believe even Billy Bunter's statements, which showed an extraordinary credulousness. The other fellows never dreamed of believing Bunter, even when he was, by some mysterious chance, telling the truth. They knew the Owl of the Remove too well. But it was probable that if Todd lived to the venerable age of Methuselah, he would never lose the simple trustfulness of his nature.

Billy Bunter had disappeared from the Remove quarters. Under the impression that Harry Wharton was in earnest in the idea of applying the poker as a cure, Bunter had fled at top speed. Alonzo Todd hurried downstairs after him, but the Owl of the Remove was not to be seen.

"My dear Skinner!" exclaimed Todd, giving Skinner, of the Remove, a dig in the ribs with a bony knuckle. "My dear——"

"Ow!" gasped Skinner.

"I'm so sorry, Skinner. Did I startle you?"

"Ow! You ass! You've punctured me!"

"I'm so sorry. But have you seen Bunter? I am looking for Bunter," Todd explained. "He is suffering from a relapse, according to the statement he appears to have made to Wharton, and I wish to ascertain the precise facts."

"Better look in Loder's study," said Skinner, rubbing his injured rib. "You ass! If you poke me like that again——"

"I'm so sorry! But what should Bunter be doing in Loder's study?"

Skinner grinned. Loder was the worst-tempered prefect in the school, and it seemed to Skinner an excellent joke to send Todd inquiring into his study.

"Loder's hiding him," he explained. "He knows you want to see him, and he's hiding him in his study."

"My goodness!" ejaculated Alonzo.

"I should advise you to walk right in and ask for him," said Skinner. "If Loder cuts up rusty, explain to him that he has no right to lock up juniors in his cupboard."

"Oh, certainly! It is very cruel and inconsiderate of Loder to act in such a manner. I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would regard it as extremely reprehensible."

"I'm sure he would," agreed Skinner.

Todd ran off to the Sixth Form passage, and knocked at Loder's door and opened it.

Loder was at tea with Carne and Ionides, of the Sixth. The three seniors looked at Todd in a far from cordial manner.

"What do you want?" demanded Loder.

"Please, Loder, I'm looking for Bunter," Todd explained mildly.

"Bunter! He's not here."

Todd looked at him reprovingly.

"My dear Loder, I am sorry to see you departing from the truth. If you had had the advantage of being trained by my Uncle Benjamin——"

"Get out!"

"But, Bunter——"

"I tell you he's not here!" yelled Loder.

"Excuse me, Loder, but I have on several occasions known you to depart from the strict line of veracity," said Todd. "Under the circumstances, I am sure you will not object to my looking in your cupboard."

"M-m-my cupboard!" gasped Loder.

"Yes. If the Head knew that you locked a junior up in your cupboard I am sure he would express the strongest disapproval."

The three seniors exchanged glances, and rose to their feet. Todd had verily ventured into the lion's den in coming among the three blackest sheep of the Sixth. But the well-known Duffer of Greyfriars did not think of that. He was only anxious about Billy Bunter.

"Pray let me look in your cupboard, Loder——"

Loder waved his hand towards the cupboard.

"Look, then!" he said.

Todd advanced unsuspectingly into the study. He crossed to the cupboard, and the three seniors promptly placed themselves between him and the door.

"Collar the cad!" shouted Loder.

"My dear Loder—— Yow!"

Loder, Ionides, and Carne seized the junior together. They whirled him to the door. Loder caught a pat of butter from

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the table and jammed it into Todd's face, and then the three seniors, with simultaneous kicks, sent the Remove flying into the passage.

"Ow!" roared Alonzo.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Todd sprawled along the passage on his hands and knees. He was blinded with butter. He sat up dazedly, and blinked blindly at the seniors.

"M-m-my dear fellows——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I regard this unseemly proceeding as——"

Loder slammed the door. Todd staggered to his feet, wiping the butter out of his eyes with his handkerchief.

"Dear me!" he murmured. "I cannot but regard this conduct as ruffianly in the extreme. My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked—nay, disgusted! I think, upon the whole, I will not pursue my search for Bunter at present."

And Todd hurried away to wash the butter off his face in the Remove dormitory. As he entered the dormitory there was a howl of alarm from the darkness there.

"Ow! Keep off, you idiot!"

"Dear me! It is Bunter! He is not in Loder's study at all! Skinner must have been mistaken!" exclaimed Todd, in amazement.

"Keep off, you ass! If you touch me with that poker——"

"My dear Bunter——"

"Hallo! Is that you, Todd?"

"Yes, my dear Bunter! Why are you here in the darkness?"

"I—I thought it was Wharton!" panted Bunter. "I—I was hiding from the mad duffer! He was going to brain me with a poker! Are you sure he's not with you?"

"Quite sure, my dear Bunter."

Todd turned on the light. Billy Bunter was sitting on a bed, gasping for breath. The Duffer of Greyfriars filled his washstand basin with water, and proceeded to wash his face. Then, as he towelled it, he addressed Bunter.

"My dear Bunter, I hear that you have a relapse——"

"Eh?" said Bunter.

"You have a relapse——"

"No, I haven't!" said Bunter.

"But Wharton said——"

"Never mind what Wharton said! I haven't got anything of the kind!" said Billy Bunter. "Does it belong to Wharton?"

"Eh?"

"Has he lost one?"

"One what?"

"The thing you said I had," said Bunter peevishly—"a relapse, or something. I never took anything from the study. Under the circumstances, I would scorn to touch anything that belonged to Wharton or any of those beasts!"

"I certainly understood from Wharton that you had a relapse, Bunter, but if it is not true——" said Todd, very much puzzled.

"Of course it isn't! Whose was it?"

"Whose was what?"

"The relapse, ass!"

"I—I fear that you do not quite understand me, Bunter. I was referring to a return of your former illness—loss of memory."

"Oh, I see!" said Bunter peevishly. "Why couldn't you say so, then?"

"My dear Bunter——"

A vacant look came over Bunter's face.

"Eh?" he exclaimed. "What did you call me?"

"Bunter."

"Is that my name?" said Bunter.

"Yes, indeed! Have you forgotten?"

"Yes!" gasped Bunter. "I—I've lost my memory!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mrs. Mimble Does Not Play Up.

ALONZO TODD looked very much concerned. He towelled his face and refastened his collar, and then came over to Bunter, with a very sympathetic expression upon his simple face. He sat beside Bunter on the bed, and took his hand. Bunter watched the proceeding in some amazement.

"My dear Bunter," said Todd, "pray allow me to hold your hand. You may derive comfort from it. You have lost your memory again?"

"Yes!" moaned Bunter.

"Do you remember my name?"

Bunter blinked at him with a far-away expression.

"Is it Wharton?" he asked.

"Indeed it is not!"

"Nugent, then?"

"Not at all, my poor Bunter!"

"I think I've heard those names before," said Bunter, passing a hand across his brow.

"You have indeed, Bunter! My name is Todd."

"Todd! It seems familiar, somehow. Is your other name Harry?"

"No; that is Wharton's other name. My Christian name is Alonzo. I was named after my Uncle Benjamin's brother, my Uncle Alonzo, who unfortunately died before I was born. My Uncle Benjamin, however, assures me that I am very like him," said Todd. "My nose is very similar, and my voice—"

"I'm hungry!" said Bunter.

"Dear me! The last time you lost your memory you lost your appetite—"

"Have I lost my memory before?" asked Bunter vacantly.

"Oh, certainly! We were all very sorry. I am sure, Bunter, that the whole Remove will be very sympathetic when they learn of your relapse," said Todd. "I have, however, a plan for curing you."

"I—I think that perhaps a good square meal would set me up again," said Bunter, in a faint voice. "Suppose we come to the tuckshop, Todd?"

"Certainly, my dear Bunter!"

Bunter rose from the bed with alacrity, and jerked his fat hand away from Alonzo. He was all activity at once.

"Come on, then!" he exclaimed.

"With pleasure, my dear Bunter! I hope that amid familiar surroundings you may recover your memory."

And Bunter led the way to the tuckshop. Mrs. Mimble, who kept that little but well-patronised establishment behind the elms in a corner of the Close, did not look with an eye of favour upon Billy Bunter as he entered. The Owl of the Remove owed her too long an account already, and that afternoon he had been seeking—unsuccessfully—to add a few more items to it.

Bunter fell on the little counter with a moan of exhaustion.

"My dear Bunter," said Todd anxiously, "if you think that a feed would set you up—"

"I'm sure it would!" groaned Bunter.

"What would you like? Is there anything special that you could fancy, my dear Bunter?"

"I—I think I might have pork-pies to begin with."

"And what else, my poor fellow?"

"Jam-tarts."

"How many?"

"Oh, I think a dozen might do—say two dozen."

"Very good. Please serve Bunter, Mrs. Mimble. He has had a relapse, and has lost his memory again, and he thinks he may recover if he is fed."

"I—I'm sure of it!" moaned the fat junior.

"Please serve Bunter quickly, Mrs. Mimble."

Mrs. Mimble wore a very grim expression. She was not quite so simple as the Duffer of Greyfriars.

"Master Bunter can have all that he can pay for," she answered tartly.

"My dear Mrs. Mimble, at such a time as this—"

"Nonsense, Master Todd!"

"I fear, Mrs. Mimble, that my Uncle Benjamin would regard your conduct with the greatest disapprobation. However, as Mrs. Mimble will not serve you for some reason without being paid, Bunter, perhaps you had better see if you have some money."

Bunter blinked at him.

"I—I'm expecting a postal-order this evening, Todd, but until it comes I haven't any ready cash," he remarked. "I suppose you could stand—"

"Certainly, my dear Bunter! I will stand with pleasure if you wish to sit down, as there is only one seat here."

"Ass! I mean—"

"My dear Bunter—"

"I—I mean, my dear fellow, I mean you can stand a bit of a feed now, and I will settle up out of my postal-order," said Bunter.

"I'm so sorry—"

"Of course, it's certain to come!" said Bunter. "A titled friend of mine is sending it, and there's simply no possible doubt about it."

"I do not doubt your word for a moment, my dear Bunter, but, unfortunately, at the present moment I have no cash. If you have the ten shillings of mine which you used by mistake, and which you were going to repay me—"

Bunter snorted.

"Fathead!"

"My dear Bunter—"

"I—I mean, I've forgotten all about it. I—I feel very faint," said Bunter. "Are you sure you haven't got any tin?"

"I'm so sorry—"

"Perhaps you could borrow some—"

Todd shook his head.

"My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me, my

dear Bunter, never to borrow, and I promised him I would not," said the Duffer of Greyfriars sadly.

"Well, he isn't here now, and he won't know—"

"Bunter! You shock me! I—"

"Look here!" roared Bunter. "Are you going to stand me some grub, or ain't you?"

"Under the circumstances, I fear it is impossible. Perhaps Mrs. Mimble will be good enough to allow you to run a small account—"

"Which I won't, not if it was ever so!" said Mrs. Mimble emphatically. "And you'll oblige me by not coming into my shop and worriting a poor widow woman if you don't intend to buy anything, so there—"

"Under the peculiar circumstances of the case, my dear Mrs. Mimble—"

"Nonsense, Master Todd!"

"My dear—"

Mrs. Mimble sniffed, and turned away. It was pretty clear that she would never listen to the voice of the charmer. Todd turned a commiserating glance upon Bunter.

"I'm so sorry, Bunter, but the method you propose for combating your relapse is apparently impracticable."

"You—you ass!" grunted Bunter, sliding off the stool, and blinking at Alonzo wrathfully through his big spectacles.

"You chump! What did you bring me here for, then?"

"I naturally supposed you wished to make purchases, and—"

"Fathead!"

"My dear Bunter—"

"Silly ass! Chump! Cuckoo!"

"There is, however, another method by which your lost memory might be restored," said Todd eagerly. "I shall be only too happy to offer my services. Wharton's idea of using the poker, to counteract the strange effect upon your brain by a second shock, was really quite feasible. I should be glad to give you a shock with either a poker or a hammer—perhaps a hammer would answer the purpose better," said Alonzo thoughtfully. "If you are willing, my dear Bunter—"

"You dangerous ass!" roared Bunter.

"My dear Bunter, I shall be only too pleased to try. In fact, I will make the experiment now, using this soda-siphon instead of a hammer. My dear Bunter—"

But dear Bunter had fled.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Unbelievers.

HARRY WHARTON sat up in bed, and yawned, as the clang of the rising-bell came sounding through the morning air.

The early sunlight was struggling in at the windows of the Remove dormitory.

Clang, clang, clang!

The bell was ringing with vicious emphasis, only too indicative of the mood Gosling, the porter, was in as he rang.

Gosling did not like early rising. The only satisfaction in the matter, to him, was the fact that he could make others rise also. And Gosling put a great deal of vim into the ringing of the rising-bell.

"Time!" said John Bull.

"I believe that chap gets up specially early on cold mornings to make us turn out!" grumbled Hazeldene.

"Yow!"

"Yaw-aw-aw!"

Willing or unwilling, wakeful or yawning, the Remove had to turn out. The whole Form rolled out of bed, with one exception. The exception was William George Bunter. The Owl of the Remove lay blinking at the other fellows as they washed or dressed.

"Time to get up, fatty!" said Harry Wharton.

"Eh?"

"Time to get up."

"What?"

"Can't you hear the rising-bell?" bawled Bob Cherry.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Rising-bell! What's a rising-bell?" he asked.

The juniors gasped. Bob Cherry stared at Bunter blankly.

"Off your silly rocker?" he asked. "What duffer's game are you playing now?"

"Oh, really—"

"Get up, you fat duffer!"

"I don't think I shall rise this morning," said Bunter.

"Tell my father I can't come down to brekker."

"Your father!" said Nugent.

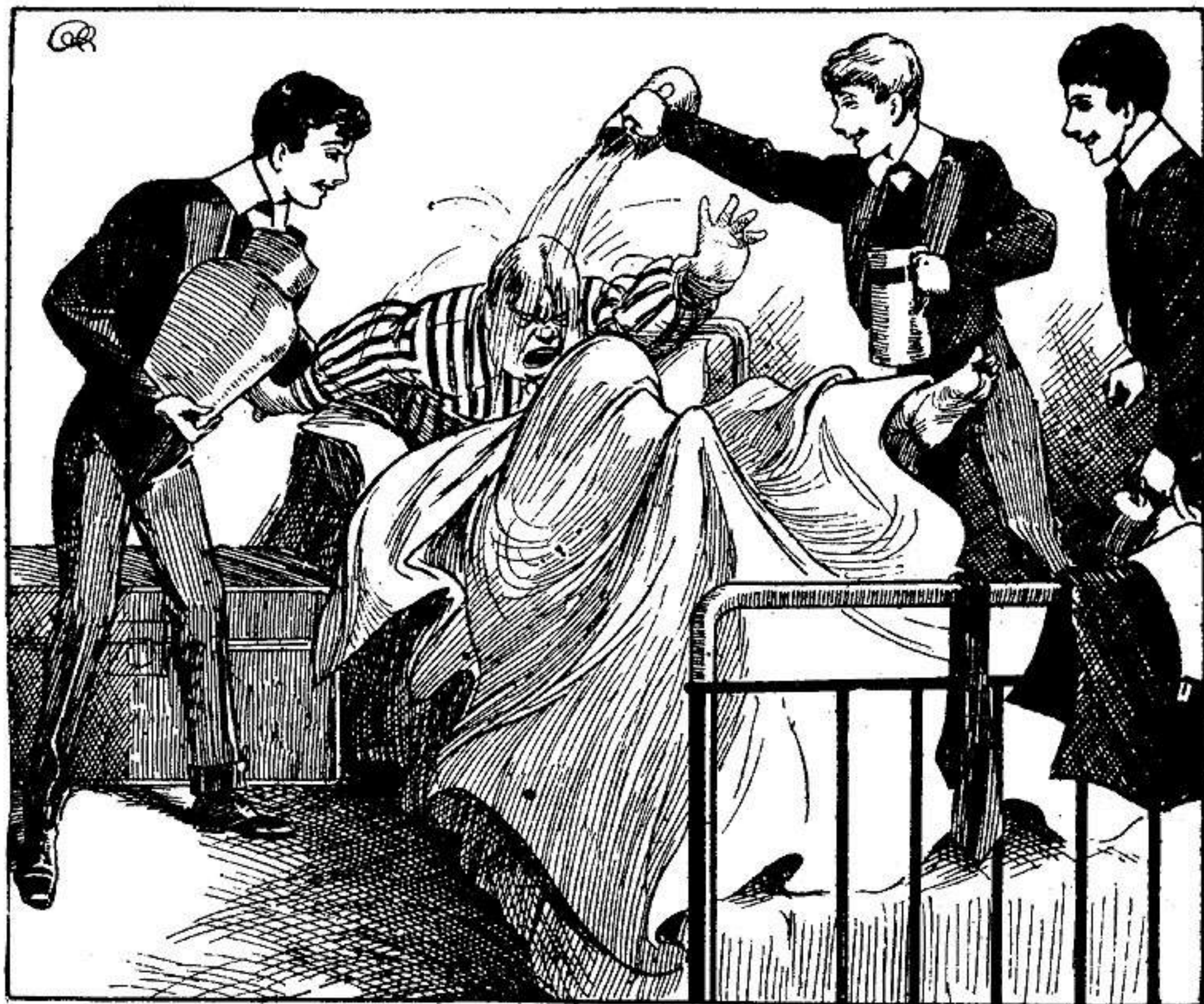
"Yes. Ain't I at home?" asked Bunter, with a wondering look.

"My hat!"

"He's at it again!"

"Spoofing!"

"My dear fellows," said Alonzo Todd, looking distressed.



"Look here, I'm going to sleep," said Billy Bunter. "I— Yow! Oooch!" The contents of the water-jugs descended upon the fat junior in one fell swoop, and Bunter was swamped! (See page 26.)

"It is evident that Bunter has lost his memory. We should be gentle with him. I am sure that that is what my Uncle Benjamin would recommend, under the circumstances."

"Yes, I'll be gentle with him, if he doesn't get up," said Bob Cherry. "Turn out, you fat duffer! We don't believe you."

"The don't believfulness of Bunter's esteemed lies is terrific."

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I don't know who you are."

"Bunter has lost his memory, and imagines he is at home," said Todd. "It is very touching. I know I am touched."

"Yes, I know you are, too," said Nugent, tapping his forehead significantly.

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

"My dear Nugent—"

"I—I say, I think I'll have my breakfast in bed," said Bunter. "Let one of the footmen bring it up, or the butler. I don't mind."

"He must have lost his memory," said Skinner. "You see, he's forgotten that he lives over a grocer's shop when he's at home."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't!" roared Bunter. "You're a beast, Skinner! You know jolly well that I don't live over a grocer's shop!"

"Ha, ha, ha! He's recovering his memory."

The Removites roared.

"I—I say, you fellows. I—I don't know who you are."

Harry Wharton came towards the fat junior's bed, with a grim expression upon his countenance. That Bunter should tell lies seemed to be in the nature of things. He was seldom known to tell anything else. The juniors had learned to take

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that patiently. But that he should tell perfectly obvious lies, and expect the fellows to believe them, was too exasperating. The Removites felt that it was an insult to their intelligence.

"You've lost your memory, have you?" asked Wharton.

Billy Bunter eyed the captain of the Remove apprehensively. But he stuck to his guns. He never could see when an untruth was played-out.

"Ye-es," he stammered. "Who are you?"

"You fancy that you're at home, in your father's house, don't you?"

"Ye-es."

"Better fancy that I'm your father, then, and that your father's licking you for not getting up in the morning," said Harry, tearing the bedclothes off the fat junior, and spanking him upon his exceedingly plump limbs.

Spank, spank, spank!

"Yaroo!" roared Bunter, jumping up. "Yow—ow!"

Spank, spank!

"Yow! Yoop!"

Bunter rolled out of bed on the other side, and stood gasping and blinking furiously at Wharton across the bed.

"Ow!" he yelled. "Yow! You beast, Wharton! You—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! He remembers your name now, Harry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Yow! Yoop! Groo!"

Bunter gasped and snorted, but he did not get into bed again. He proceeded to dress himself, snorting and grunting, all the time with suppressed indignation. His new scheme did not seem to be working out very well, so far. He had found

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only one believer, in Alonzo Todd. But Billy Bunter did not give up hope yet.

The Remove went down, Bunter being the last down. It had occurred to Bunter that, as was said of old, the prophet is not honoured in his own country. The Remove did not believe him; but the Upper Fourth might, and he might get some sympathy among the seniors, especially with Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, and the kindest-hearted chap in the upper school.

Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, were standing talking in the hall when Bunter came down. Bunter rolled up to them with a pathetic expression on his face, and they looked at him curiously.

"I say, you fellows—" he began.

Temple waved his hand.

"Sorry!" he replied. "We haven't any money to advance on postal-orders. We know you're receiving half-a-dozen from titled friends this afternoon; but we can't make a loan in advance. We don't want to put capital in any scheme for making heaps of money. You can go further."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Run away and play," said Fry, "and stop twisting your silly face up like that; it gives me a pain."

"Oh, really!" said Bunter. "I—I was going to ask you a small favour—"

"No cash," said Temple.

"Oh, rather!"

"Not to give away, at all events," Fry remarked.

"I—I don't want any money!"

The three Fourth Formers gave a dramatic start. They fixed looks of the most intense and anxious alarm on Bunter.

"You don't want any money?" they gasped.

"No, I—"

"You're ill?"

"No; I—"

"But you must be," said Temple argumentatively. "It's the first time I've seen you when you don't want to borrow money. Have you ever seen him like this before, Dab?"

"Oh, rather not!"

"Have you, Fry?"

"Never," said Fry emphatically.

"You'd better see a doctor," said Temple, looking kindly at Bunter. "Perhaps you ought to go into the sanatorium. It may be serious."

"I say, you fellows, don't play the giddy ox, you know. Would you mind telling me my name?" said Bunter pathetically.

"Your what?" gasped Temple.

"My name."

"Name! What do you mean?"

"I—I've forgotten it, you see!" stammered Bunter.

Temple comprehended. A gleam shot into his eyes.

"Oh, you've lost your memory again!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, that's it."

"And you want to know your name?"

"Yes, please."

"Munchausen," said Temple blandly. "You're a baron, you know—Baron Munchausen."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fry and Dabney.

"Oh, really, Temple!"

"Your second name is Rougemont," explained Temple, "and I think you must have been christened Ananias, too."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fourth Formers walked away, laughing heartily.

"Beasts!" murmured Billy Bunter.

The fat junior looked disconsolate. He caught sight of Wingate of the Sixth, leaving the house, in the fresh, morning sunlight, and rolled towards him.

"I say, Wingate!" he called out.

But the captain of Greyfriars was gone. Billy Bunter rolled out into the Close after him, and saw the captain disappear by the gate into the Head's garden. And after a moment's hesitation, the Owl of the Remove followed him.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER,

In the Barrow.

MISS ROSIE stepped out of the French window into the garden.

Very bright and pretty the young girl looked, as she stepped into the sunlight. The Head's daughter was plainly dressed—very differently from the time when she had been Mademoiselle Rosina, the star of the circus. The story of the recovery of the Head's lost child from the hands of the circus adventurer, Lasalle, was still the talk of Greyfriars. Wingate of the Sixth had been the means of it, and the friendship which had existed between him and the circus girl was strengthened now that "Mademoiselle Rosina" had become "Miss Rosie."

Miss Rosie had a habit of early rising, and Wingate was an early riser, too. What more natural than that they

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should meet and talk cheerily for a few minutes of a morning in the Head's garden? The talk, indeed, was simple enough—the prospects of the little flower-garden which Miss Rosie had taken under her own special charge, and the football prospects of the first eleven, of which Wingate was the captain, and their friendship, and the circus days, and the change of surroundings for Miss Rosie. But they liked talking to one another, as young people will.

Wingate had just raised his cap to Miss Rosie on the garden path, when Billy Bunter arrived at the gate. The short-sighted junior did not see either of them, but he knew that Wingate was there, and he opened the gate and came in. Wingate looked round as he heard him, with an expression of annoyance. Juniors were not allowed in the Head's garden, excepting by special permission.

"It's Bunter," said Wingate, in explanation to Miss Rosie, as she glanced at the junior, "a Remove boy."

Miss Rosie nodded. She had seen Bunter before, and she did not like him. That was the usual impression Bunter made upon people, though nothing would ever shake his conviction that he had a fascinating way with him.

"What do you want, Bunter?" asked Wingate.

Bunter looked at him vacantly.

"Did you address me?" he asked.

"Yes, you young duffer."

"Is my name Bunter?"

Wingate almost staggered. Miss Rosie looked curiously at the fat junior. It seemed to her that the boy must be out of his mind.

"Is your name Bunter?" repeated Wingate dazedly. "What's this? What rot are you talking? I suppose you know your own name."

"I don't, you know. You see—"

"What!"

"I—I've lost my memory."

Wingate looked hard at the fat junior. He knew all about Bunter's having lost his memory once. But he did not believe it this time.

"Don't talk nonsense," he said. "Get out of this garden!"

Bunter blinked round him vacantly.

"Is this a garden?" he asked.

"What!" gasped Wingate.

"Is this a garden?" he asked.

"Dear me!" murmured Miss Rosie. "What an absurd boy!"

"I—I've lost my memory," stammered Bunter.

"Go out of this garden, Bunter," said Wingate very distinctly.

Bunter blinked round him.

"Where shall I go?" he asked.

"Back to the house."

"What's a house?"

That question was too much for Wingate. He made a quick step towards the Owl of the Remove, and Bunter started back, trampling into the shrubbery.

Miss Rosie laid a detaining hand upon Wingate's arm. The captain of Greyfriars remembered himself, and unclenched his fist.

"The young duffer's trying to humbug me, for some reason!" he exclaimed. "He lost his memory once, owing to a shock, and now he's trying to make out he's lost it again."

"I—I've really lost it, Wingate—"

"Ah, you know my name, however!"

Bunter reddened.

"I—I—well, you see—"

"Get out of this garden," said Wingate angrily.

"What for?" demanded Bunter.

"You know perfectly well that juniors are not allowed in the Head's garden," said Wingate sharply. He was flushed with annoyance, as he saw a row of junior heads along the gate, watching the scene with amused grins. "Go out at once!"

"Is this the Head's garden?" asked Bunter.

"You know it is. Go out at once."

"Who's the Head?"

"What!"

"Who's the Head?" asked Bunter vacantly.

"You—you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a laugh from the juniors at the gate. Wingate looked over towards them. But for the presence of Miss Rosie, he would have taken Bunter by the collar and swung him out of the garden in a very short time.

But he did not wish to give any exhibition of that sort before Miss Rosie. He signed to Harry Wharton & Co. to come into the garden.

"Bunter seems to have made up his mind to play the fool here," he said. "Will you fellows take him away?"

"What-ho!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Don't hurt him," said Wingate. "Just take him away."

"Right-ho!"

Miss Rosie and Wingate walked down the garden. Billy Bunter stood amid a circle of juniors, blinking at them apprehensively through his big spectacles.

"I—I say, you fellows——" he began.

"This way, Bunter."

"M-m-my name's not Bunter! I——"

"This way, Ananias!"

"I—I——"

"Here, shove him in the barrow and wheel him out!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

There was a shout of approval at once.

"Hear, hear!"

"Shove him in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! I say, you fellows—— Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter was promptly collared.

The gardener had left a wheelbarrow, with a tub half full of soil in it, standing by the side of the garden-path. The juniors swung Bunter into the air, and in a moment he was planted in the tub.

The fat junior struggled violently.

"Ow! Leggo! Lemme out! Yah! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep quiet, Bunter."

"Yow! I won't—oh—ow!"

"Tie his arms!"

"Good!"

"Yow! I won't be tied! Yah! Yaroo!"

Bunter said that he would not be tied; but that did not make any difference. He was tied all the same.

He squatted, gasping, in the barrel, only his head showing above the top rim. He blinked furiously at the juniors.

"Yow! Lemme out! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wheel him out."

"Out he goes."

"Shove away!"

Harry Wharton raised the handles of the barrow, and shoved away. The barrow moved off down the path, a crowd of laughing juniors following.

Bunter panted and snorted in the barrow, but there was no escape for him. He squirmed round the barrel, wiping up a considerable quantity of earth with his clothes.

"Lemme out!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow! I—— Yah! Yaroo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wheel him out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors yelled with laughter as they followed the barrow. Right down to the gate Wharton rushed it, and Nugent held the gate open for the barrow to pass through. Billy Bunter was rushed through into the Close.

"Yow!" he roared. "Help! Oh!"

In his struggles he overturned the barrow. The tub shot out, and Billy Bunter shot out with it.

Bump!

"Ow! Yow! Yaroo!" roared the Owl of the Remove.

And the juniors yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Sudden Cure.

THERE were signs of wear and tear about Billy Bunter when he turned up in the Remove Form-room for morning lessons. The fat junior seemed quite "done in," as he would have called it, by the experiences he had gone through in the Head's garden. But the Artful Dodger of the Remove was far from giving up his idea. If the Remove were unbelieving, and the seniors sceptical, there remained the masters; and if he could convince his own Form-master, or the Head, that he had lost his memory, Bunter felt that it would be "all serene." If he could get excused lessons, that was something, at all events, to the laziest slacker in Greyfriars.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, did not look a promising subject for deception, certainly. Bunter had tried ventriloquism on him, with lamentable results to Bunter. Bunter had tried him with almost every excuse for shirking work, but excuses were of little avail with the inflexible Form-master.

But if Bunter lost his memory again, even Mr. Quelch was bound to unbend. Bunter knew that he had been very concerned on the last occasion.

Billy Bunter came into the Form-room a little late. The boys were already in their places, and Mr. Quelch looked round sharply as the late-comer came in.

"Bunter!" he rapped out.

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The Owl of the Remove walked straight on without replying.

Mr. Quelch stared at him in astonishment. He was accustomed to peculiar little manners and customs from Billy Bunter; but open disrespect of this sort quite took the Remove-master's breath away.

"Bunter!"

Bunter rolled on.

"My hat!" murmured Harry Wharton. "The young ass is playing his tricks on Quelch! He will be scalped."

"The scalpfulness will be terrific!"

"Bunter!"

Bunter took no notice. Mr. Quelch strode towards him, and grasped him by the shoulder, and shook him.

"Bunter, what do you mean?"

"Eh?"

"How dare you not reply to me?"

"What?"

"I spoke to you three times, Bunter. Are you deaf?"

"Certainly not."

"Then why did you not answer me, boy?"

"I—I—— Who are you, sir?"

"What! You know who I am."

"I—I don't, sir," said Bunter, blinking at him vacantly.

"I don't remember ever seeing you before, sir."

Mr. Quelch looked searchingly at him. For a moment he feared that Bunter was really suffering from a relapse, and that his memory had gone again.

But one look at Bunter's furtive mouth and shifty eyes convinced him of what was really the case—that the Owl of the Remove was attempting to make capital out of his late illness.

"Bunter," he said, in ominous tones, "you had better be careful what you say! I am not to be deceived."

"I don't know you, sir."

"I am your Form-master."

Bunter blinked at him.

"What's a Form-master, sir?"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"I don't know this place," said Bunter, blinking round the Form-room. "Who are all these fellows? I've never seen them before."

"Bunter!"

"Is this a school, sir?"

"Yes, Bunter, this is a school."

"I suppose I belong to it, as I'm here," said Bunter, with a puzzled look. "Would you mind telling me my name, sir?"

"Bunter."

"Bunter, sir? I—I thought it was—was Wharton or something," said Billy Bunter. "I can't remember."

"So you have lost your memory again, Bunter?"

"I—I fear so, sir."

"What is the cause of it?"

"I—I don't know," said Bunter. "I—I think it may be due to overwork, sir, and to having too little nourishment, sir."

"I do not think that can be the cause, Bunter. You are quite sure that you have lost your memory?" asked Mr. Quelch quietly.

"Yes, sir."

"You do not remember my name?"

"No, sir."

"Nor your own name?"

"No, sir."

The Remove held their breath. Bunter's nerve astounded them—but his stupidity surprised them still more. All of them could see that Mr. Quelch did not in the least believe his claim to have lost his memory once more, and that the fat junior had not the slightest chance of convincing the Form-master of it. But Bunter could not see it; and he went blindly on.

"If that is true, Bunter, it is a very serious case," said Mr. Quelch, in the same quiet, ominous tone. "But we must establish the truth. You have forgotten your own name, and that you are at school?"

"Quite, sir!" said Bunter blankly.

"Very well! We will see how far this loss of memory extends," said Mr. Quelch. "I do not wish to run the risk of being unjust to you, Bunter, although I am convinced that you are attempting to deceive me!"

"Oh, really, sir——"

"I understand, Bunter, that your late attack was caused by a shock, owing to your diving into the swimming-bath when it was empty."

"I can't remember, sir!"

"You were ill for some little time."

"Was I, sir?"

Bunter was well upon his guard. Keen as Mr. Quelch

was, it was not easy for him to catch the Owl of the Remove napping.

"But this time," resumed Mr. Quelch, "the attack seems to have come of its own accord, without any shock to bring it on!"

"It looks like it, sir."

"I suppose you forgot to get up this morning, when the rising-bell went, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir."

"But you did not forget to come down to breakfast. I remember seeing you at the breakfast-table," said Mr. Quelch.

"I—I was hungry, sir."

"Oh! You were hungry?"

"Yes, sir. I never really get enough to eat here, you know, sir. I've got a delicate constitution, and it needs keeping up, sir!"

"It is nearly an hour since breakfast," said Mr. Quelch, looking at the Form-room clock. "How does it happen, Bunter, that you remember that you were hungry then, if you have lost your memory, and do not remember even your own name?"

Bunter stammered.

"I—I—I forget, sir. As a matter of fact, sir, I wasn't hungry—that is to say, I don't know whether I was hungry or not, sir! I do not remember coming down to breakfast at all, sir, as a matter of fact!"

"Bunter!"

"I don't, sir. I should have stayed in bed if Wharton hadn't pushed me out, and—"

"Ah! Wharton made you get up, did he?"

"Yes, sir. He—"

"You remember that?"

"Yes, sir—no, sir—I mean no, sir, of course. I haven't the slightest recollection of it, sir!" said Bunter.

The Remove giggled. They could not help it. Billy Bunter was funny when he was floundering in self-contradictions. Mr. Quelch's brow grew very stern, and he reached a cane off his desk.

"Bunter! You have contradicted yourself in a way that shows conclusively that this story of yours is a fabrication!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Hold out your hand!"

"I—I—"

"Hold out your hand!" thundered Mr. Quelch. And Billy Bunter gave a startled jump, and held out his hand.

Thwack!

The cane rang upon his fat palm. Bunter gave a snort of anguish.

"Groo!"

"Do you remember your name now?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Groo! No, sir! Groo!"

"Hold out your other hand!"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"I am going to cure you of this loss of memory, Bunter, in case it should grow upon you," said Mr. Quelch. "I am going to cane you until you remember your name. Hold out your other hand, please!"

"I—I— If you please, sir, I—I think I remember it now," gasped the fat junior. "M-m-my name's Bunter, sir. It—it came into my mind like a flash!"

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

"Silence, please!" said Mr. Quelch. "Bunter, you have attempted to deceive me. You are a bad and lazy boy, and a disgrace to your Form. If you make any attempt of this kind again, the punishment will be really severe. Go to your place!"

And Billy Bunter went disconsolately to his place, rubbing his fat hand. He wisely resolved to leave Mr. Quelch out of his little scheme after that.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Eggs-actly.

"MY dear Wharton—"

"What about Hazeldene?" said Harry Wharton.

"My dear—"

"He has been improving lately," Harry Wharton continued, talking to Bob Cherry, and apparently oblivious of the fact that Alonzo Todd was trying to make himself heard. "He might be able to keep goal. And then, Marjorie is coming to see the match, and she would be pleased to see him playing!"

"Wharton—"

"Hallo, Todd! Did you speak?"

Todd blinked at Wharton dubiously. The Remove had come out of their Form-room, and most of them were chatting in the passage.

"Yes, Wharton, I spoke several times," said Todd. "I

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was beginning to fear that there was something wrong with your auricular nerves, my dear Wharton!"

"No; I'm not deaf, only bored!" said Wharton blandly.

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

"I have an idea, Wharton—"

"Whose?"

"My own," said Todd, who never saw a joke under any circumstances. "You remember Benson's circus, which was here last week?"

"Yes, rather!"

"You recall the clown, whose feats of juggling elicited considerable applause from the audience?"

"Did they?"

"They did."

"He was a funny beggar, and he juggled balls and things all right," said Bob Cherry. "He couldn't have juggled jaw-cracking words like you do, Todd!"

"My dear Cherry—"

"Well, what about him?" asked Harry Wharton. "I'm talking footer!"

"I'm so sorry, my dear Wharton. But you have probably noticed that I have a very sure hand—"

"Eh?"

"And a very sure eye—"

"What?"

"It has occurred to me," said Todd modestly, "that I should make an excellent juggler if I were to practise!"

"My hat!"

"I think that if I were to practise a little, I should be able to add a very interesting item to the entertainments you sometimes give," said Todd. "It was seeing the clown in Benson's circus that made me think of it. You will remember that he was able to keep six eggs in the air without breaking any of them!"

"My hat—Alonzo the clown!"

"My dear Cherry—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I should think you would make a ripping clown, in some ways, if not in others," said Wharton gravely. "A clown has to be a very funny merchant. Well, you wouldn't have to make up for the part!"

"Ahem! If you would be kind enough to lend me some cricket-balls to practise with, my dear Wharton, I should be very much obliged, and I should not be reluctant to perform whenever the Remove Dramatic Society gives an entertainment."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I've only one cricket-ball," he replied. "You can have that with pleasure!"

"Why not practise with eggs?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Unfortunately, I have no eggs!"

"That's all right—Mrs. Mimble sells them!"

"But my Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me never to be extravagant," said Todd. "If the eggs should, perchance, break, it would be a waste, and my Uncle Benjamin says, 'waste not, want not,' my dear Cherry."

"But Mrs. Mimble has got some special old eggs that she sells cheap," said Bob, "when her eggs have been new-laid for a whole term, she sells them off at any price they will fetch. You could get six of that kind for twopence!"

"It is a very good idea, Cherry, and I am grateful to you for suggesting it," said Todd, with a beaming smile. "I shall certainly take advantage of this most seasonable suggestion."

"You see," said Bob Cherry gravely, "if you're going to juggle with eggs, you'd better practise with eggs. They're a different shape and weight from cricket-balls."

"Quite so, my dear Cherry."

"Go ahead, then!"

"There is one small difficulty—"

"Not at all. A clever chap like you can always overcome difficulties!"

"Yes, but—"

"My dear Todd, you were simply born to be a clown. When you lay in the innocent cradle of childhood, destiny had already marked you out for a juggler. Buzz off!"

"But—"

"Good-bye."

"There is a slight difficulty," persisted Todd. "Mrs. Mimble would sell me six old eggs for twopence, but—"

"They'd be quite good enough!"

"But I have not twopence!"

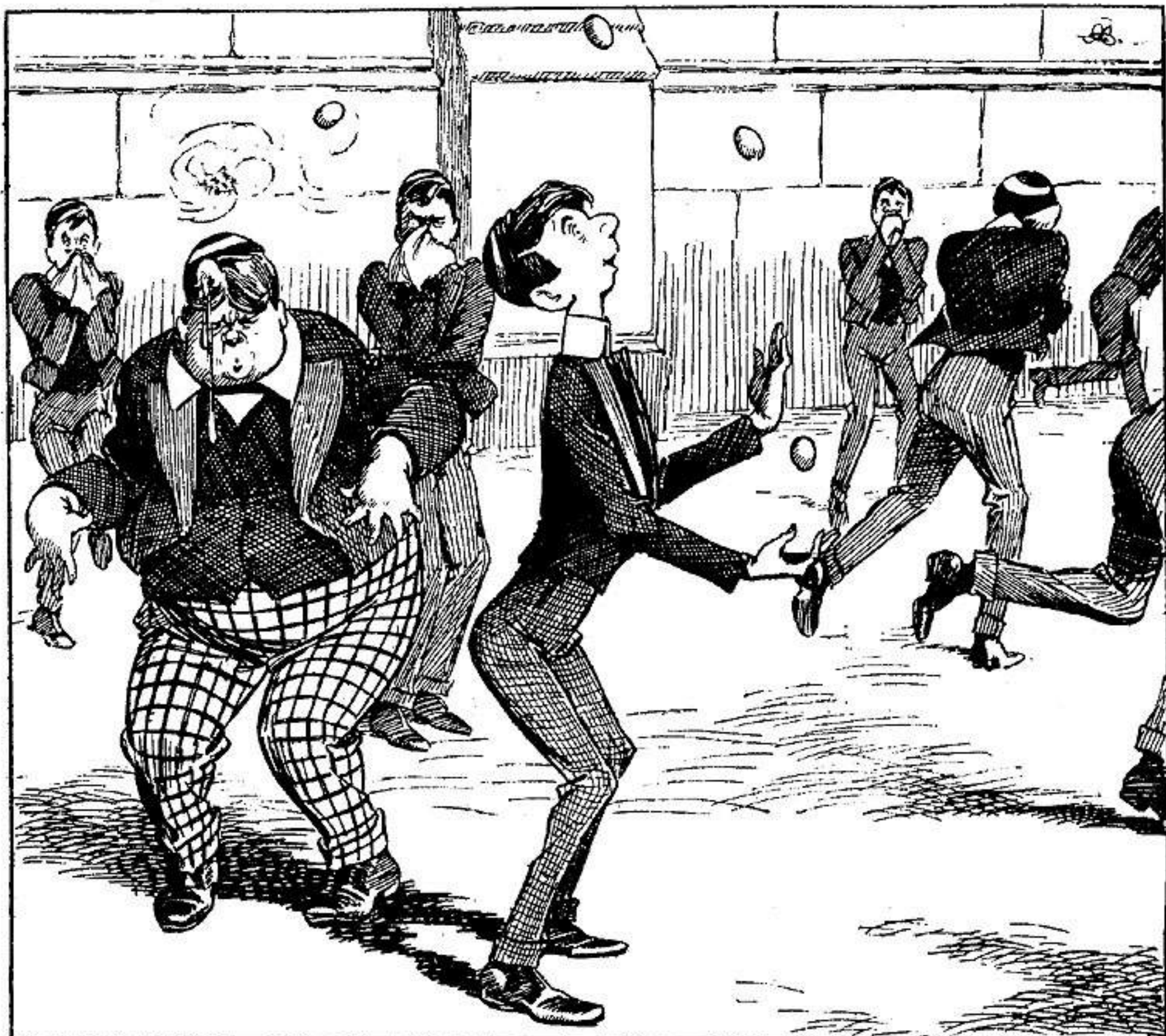
"Oh, I see! Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you would have the extreme kindness to make me a loan of that moderate amount, I would unfailingly repay it when I receive another remittance, either from my parents or from my Uncle Benjamin."

"Here you are!"

"Thank you so much."

"Buzz off!"



Todd threw five eggs up into the air at once and tried to juggle with them. But the eggs were not to be juggled with. They descended in all directions but Todd's, and there was a sudden yell from Billy Bunter. "Yow!" (See Page 12.)

Alonzo Todd departed with the two pennies in his hand. Harry Wharton looked at his chum with a grin.

"You ass, Bob! What are you going to make him juggle with eggs for? He'll smother himself with them!"

Bob Cherry roared.

"Quickest way of curing him," he replied. "Todd the Duffer is trouble enough; but Todd the Juggler would be the Thing-too-Much!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo Todd, quite ignorant of Bob's kindly motives, hurried out into the Close, and rushed across to the tuckshop. Billy Bunter sighted him as he went, and shouted after him.

"Todd—I say, Todd, I'll come with you."

Todd did not even hear. He ran right on, and disappeared into Mrs. Mimble's little establishment. Billy Bunter followed him as fast as his fat little legs could go. He rolled breathlessly into the tuckshop.

Todd had just completed the purchase of six extremely ancient eggs for twopence. He was taking up the bag when Bunter came panting in.

"I say, Todd—"

"My dear Bunter—"

"I don't mind having some—"

"Eh?"

"If you're having tarts—"

"I'm not, my dear Bunter."

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NEXT WEEK: "THE GREYFRIAR'S CLOWN." A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Well, dough-nuts, then—"

"My dear Bunter, I have purchased six eggs from Mrs. Mimble, but—"

"I'll help you cook 'em," said Bunter eagerly. "I should just like a little snack before dinner, and poached eggs always give me an appetite. Come up to my study, and I'll get some coal from Wharton's room, and—"

"But the eggs are not for cooking, Bunter."

"You're not going to eat them raw, I suppose?"

"Oh, certainly not! I am going to juggle with them."

"To what?" gasped Bunter.

"Juggle," said Todd, with a beaming smile. "I have discovered, Bunter, that I have some skill as a juggler, and my Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me that one should never neglect one's talents. I am about to practise with these eggs—"

"Ass!"

"I am sure that —"

"You'll smash 'em!"

Todd shook his head.

"Not at all, my dear Bunter—not at all! The clown at Benson's circus was able to keep six eggs in the air without breaking one; and, without personal conceit or vainglory, I may say that I am a more brainy chap than a circus clown. Do you not think so, my dear Bunter?"

"Look here—"

"You may watch me," said Todd, going out into the

Close. "It may be worth watching, my dear Bunter."

"Chump!"

"Ahem! My dear——"

"Well, can I have the eggs if you don't break 'em?" asked Bunter.

"Oh, certainly!"

"Hallo! What's the little game?" asked several voices, as Todd laid the paper bag down on the ground and picked up the eggs.

"A juggling trick, my dear fellows," Todd explained.

"My hat!"

"Todd a juggler?"

"Juggins, more like!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear fellows——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Todd!" roared Morgan. "This will be worth watching, look you. Ten to one he busts the eggs on his napper!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellows stood round to watch.

Bunter stood nearest, blinking at the amateur juggler. Bunter did not know how very cheaply Todd had obtained those eggs. Had he known, even Bunter would not have been anxious to obtain possession of them.

"Buck up, Todd!"

"Pile in!"

"On the ball!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Todd began to juggle.

He tossed one egg into the air and caught it, and then another, and caught that. The juniors gave him an encouraging cheer.

Billy Bunter watched him anxiously. He was very nervous about those eggs; they were to be his property if they weren't broken.

"I say, Todd, that's splendid!" he exclaimed. "That's enough to prove what a splendid juggler you are. Can I have the eggs now?"

"My dear Bunter——"

"Go on, Todd," shouted Ogilvy. "Keep it up!"

"Pile in, Toddy!"

Todd went on. Five eggs now went into the air at once, and Todd tried to juggle with them. But the eggs were not to be juggled with. They descended in all directions but Todd's; and there was a sudden yell from Billy Bunter.

Squelch!

"Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Ogilvy. "Bunter's got it."

The egg had smashed fairly upon Bunter's head. It ran down over the fat junior's face, and the smell of that egg——

There were no words in Johnson's, Walker's, or Webster's dictionaries to describe it. We shall leave it undescribed.

"My hat!" gasped Russell. "I'm off!"

"The egg's off!" gasped Skinner. "So am I. Run for your lives!"

"Run!"

The juniors bolted.

"Groo!" roared Bunter. "Yow! I'm suffocating! Yah! I'm sticky! Yow! Yah! Oh!"

"Huh!" gasped Todd. "The—the smell of that egg is far from pleasant, my dear Bunter. I—— Oh—ah!"

"Yow! Look here——"

But Todd did not stay to look. He bolted after the rest. Billy Bunter was left to negotiate with the egg unassisted.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Not a Doormat!

THERE was a sound of loud splashing in the bath-room. The juniors who heard it grinned joyously. Billy Bunter was washing off the effects of Alonzo's juggling. Bunter had stipulated that he was to have the eggs if they weren't broken. This one was broken, and he had had it, all the same, but he was not pleased. It required a great deal of washing to get rid of that clinging egg and its still more clinging odour. When Billy Bunter came downstairs at last he was greeted by a shout of laughter.

"Got over it?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Would you like to see some more juggling?"

"How did you like the egg, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter blinked at the juniors.

"Egg?" he repeated vacantly.

"The egg Alonzo dropped on you."

"Alonzo! Who's Alonzo?"

"Eh?"

"What's an egg?"

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"My hat!" roared Bulstrode. "He's at it again, pretending his memory's gone. Chuck it, you silly, fat duffer!"

"The silliness of the esteemed fat duffer is terrific!" said Hurree Singh. "The chuckfulness of the rotten wheeze would be the esteemed boonful blessing!"

"Chuck it, Bunter!"

"Eh?"

"Ring off, you plump chump!"

"I guess you've run that thing into the ground, Bunter," said Fisher T. Fish. "Go round for a new wheeze."

"I don't understand."

"I guess you do, you fat guy! Ring on a new number, do!"

"What's a wheeze?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who are you?"

"I guess I'm Fisher T. Fish—some."

"Who am I?"

"Eh? You?"

"Yes, I," said Bunter vacantly. "Who am I?"

"Oh, you're an escaped lunatic!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, he isn't," said Bob Cherry. "You're a doormat, Bunter! We wipe our feet on you. Spread the doormat out, you chaps!"

"Good!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Collar him!"

Billy Bunter made a rush to escape, but he was too late. The laughing juniors surrounded him, and he was promptly collared.

"I—I say——" roared Bunter. "Leggo! I remember now——"

"No, you don't!" said Bob Cherry grimly. "You are a doormat!"

"Yep!"

"I say——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter was plumped down on the floor.

The juniors jammed their boots upon him, and wiped them deliberately over Bunter's jacket and waistcoat and trousers.

The fat junior yelled and squirmed.

If Billy Bunter had really lost his memory as entirely as he pretended, it was not to be supposed that he remembered whether he was a doormat or not. Therefore, Bob Cherry felt quite within his rights in proposing that he should be used as one.

Used as one he certainly was.

The fat junior's roars soon brought a crowd of fellows to the spot, but they did not come to the rescue of the Owl of the Remove. They looked on and laughed.

"My hat! What's the row?" exclaimed Wingate, of the Sixth, coming out of his study.

"All serene!" said Bulstrode. "Bunter's lost his memory again."

"The young rascal!"

"He doesn't remember whether he's a doormat or not," explained Nugent, with a grin.

"What!"

"So we're wiping our feet on him till he remembers."

The Greyfriars captain nodded.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow!" shrieked Bunter. "Ow! Help! Murder! Rescue!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Recovered your memory yet, Bunter?"

"Yaroor!"

"The yaroorfulness of the esteemed Bunter is truly terrific!"

"Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tell us when you feel better, Bunter."

"Yaroor! Oh!"

"Found your memory?"

"Yes!" yelled Bunter. "Oh! Ow! I—I remember!"

"Are you a doormat?"

"N-n-no!"

"Do you remember whether you are or not?"

"Yow! Yes."

"What's your name?"

"Yow-wow! Bunter."

"H'm! Yow-wow sounds curious as a Christian name," said Bulstrode dubiously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cheese it, now!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Mind, Bunter, you'll get it in the neck every time you try to spoof us, so look out."

Billy Bunter staggered to his feet.

He was looking very dusty and dishevelled, and his face was dirty and smudged, and his head a tousled mass of untidy hair.

He blinked furiously at the juniors. They stood round him roaring with laughter.

"You rotters—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear fellows," exclaimed Alonzo Todd reprovingly, "I cannot but consider that you are somewhat hard on Bunter. Unpleasant as Bunter is, I think—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pray come with me, my dear Bunter," said Todd, offering his arm to the Owl of the Remove. "Allow me to assist you. Unpleasant and untruthful as you are, Bunter, I wish to help you, and—"

"Beast!"

"Eh?"

Bunter rolled away without further reply, leaving Alonzo Todd staring after him more in sorrow than in anger, and the juniors yelling.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

How It Is Done.

'MISS ROSIE!'

The girl started.

It was a voice she did not know, and it roused her from a reverie, as she stood in the Head's garden in the bright spring sunshine.

She looked quickly round.

Alonzo Todd came towards her, raising his cap as he came. He caught his foot in a trailing root as he did so, and stumbled forward, and fell upon his hands and knees at Miss Rosie's feet.

The girl started back in surprise, not unmixed with alarm.

"Ow!" gasped Todd. "I'm so sorry! I'm sure I beg your pardon, Miss Rosie! I assure you I did not do that on purpose!"

Rosie smiled a little. As Todd had come a terrific cropper on the hard gravel path, she hardly needed assuring that he had not done it on purpose.

The Duffer of Greyfriars scrambled to his feet, and dusted the knees of his trousers, and rubbed his aching hands.

"I'm so sorry!" he said.

"Dear me!" said Miss Rosie. "Did you wish to speak to me?"

"Yes, Miss Rosie, if you please!"

"What is it?"

"I trust you will not regard what I am going to say as impertinence," said Todd earnestly. "My Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me never to be guilty of anything of that sort, and I have continually striven to render myself worthy of the valuable instructions bestowed upon me by my revered avuncular relative."

Miss Rosie stared. She had never heard Todd's wonderful flow of language before, and so it came as a surprise to her.

"I—I beg your pardon!" she faltered.

"I am about to ask you a personal favour," said Todd.

"It is a fact, is it not, that you once belonged to Signor Benson's circus, Miss Rosie?"

The girl nodded.

"Thank you so much! You will remember that there was a clown attached to the circus, Miss Rosie, a most comical individual."

"Yes."

"I have an ambition to emulate that estimable and humorous gentleman," said Alonzo Todd. "I thought that perhaps it might be possible for me to join the circus during the vacation, and get some practice in the arena, and at the same time to turn an honest penny. I am somewhat in need of money, as I have lent all my ready cash to Bunter, and I wish to make an annual subscription to the Society for Providing Niggers with Knickerbockers, a society of which my Uncle Benjamin is president."

"Indeed!"

"Perhaps you would be kind enough to give me a recommendation to Signor Benson, whom you know so well," Todd suggested.

Miss Rosie smiled.

"I—I am afraid I could not do that," she said. "Besides, I have never seen you perform."

"That is easily remedied, madam," said Todd. "I will give you an exhibition of my powers if you care to satisfy yourself upon that point."

"But—"

"There is a trick which the clown in your circus used to perform," said Todd. "It was a trick of walking upon his hands."

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ONE
PENNY.

"Yes, but—"

"I am convinced that I could do it very well. It is true that I have never tried, but I have a feeling that I could do this very well indeed."

Miss Rosie laughed. She could not help it.

"My dear child—"

Todd blinked at her.

"Excuse me, Miss Rosie, but I think I am the same age as yourself, or very nearly," he said. "As a man—or, at least, as belonging to the masculine gender—I may be considered older."

"But—"

"I should be very pleased indeed to give you an example of my powers. I will walk upon my hands along this garden-path, if you would care to see me do so."

"But—"

"Say no more; I will do it at once. But pray excuse me; I have forgotten to introduce myself. Todd—Alonzo Theophilus Todd, of the Lower Fourth Form, Miss Rosie."

"But—"

"Pray allow me to demonstrate to you my powers as an acrobat, and you will be quite assured that I am a person suitable to recommend to Signor Benson."

"But—"

But Alonzo Theophilus Todd was not listening. He backed away to a short distance, and placed his cap on the ground.

Miss Rosie watched him in wonder.

Todd put his hands flat on the ground. They were a good size, and looked equal to supporting him, if he could manage the balancing part of the business.

He threw his legs into the air.

As a natural result, he went right over, and sprawled at full length on the gravel-path. Miss Rosie burst into an irresistible ripple of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Todd sat up, looking rather dazed. He did not quite know what had happened. He blushed as he saw the girl's laughing face.

"Dear me, how very odd!" exclaimed Alonzo. "I think I must have lost my balance that time, Miss Rosie."

"Ha, ha! I think you must have, Master Todd."

"I will try again."

"But—"

"Pray excuse me for my apparent rudeness in interrupting you, Miss Rosie, but my Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me that if at first you do not succeed, you should try, try, try again!" said Todd.

"But—"

"I will now demonstrate how it should be done."

The Duffer of Greyfriars placed his hands upon the gravel again. This time he elevated his feet in the air more cautiously, and assumed an inverted position, his legs lashing about wildly in the air.

His aspect was so utterly comical that Miss Rosie shrieked with laughter. Articles of all sorts were pouring out of Todd's pockets upon the garden-path. His face was crimson with exertion, and he panted for breath.

Wingate came through the gate in the garden, and looked at the peculiar figure of the Duffer of Greyfriars in amazement.

"Todd!" he gasped.

Crash!

Todd startled, lost his balance once again, and crashed down, and his boots went through a glass frame.

Crash-ash!

"Oh, dear!"

Wingate dashed up. Todd sat up, and blinked in dismay at the broken glass. The captain of Greyfriars grasped him by the collar, and dragged him to his feet.

"Todd!" he thundered.

"Ow! Ye-es! Ow!"

"What are you doing here?"

"Groo! Pray do not hold my collar so tightly, my dear Wingate. The compression of the throttle interferes naturally with the ease of articulation, and—Ow! Ah! Yah!"

Wingate shook the Duffer of Greyfriars violently.

"Groo! Ow! Oh!"

"What silly nonsense are you up to here?" shouted Wingate.

"Groo! I was demonstrating to Miss Rosie that I should be suitable to recommend to Signor Benson as an assistant clown!"

"You young ass—"

"My dear Wingate—groo—"

"You—you silly young ass!" said Wingate, in a fierce whisper.

"My dear—ow!"

Wingate half carried half dragged the Duffer of Greyfriars to the garden gate.

"Oh, do not hurt him, please!" cried Miss Rosie.

"Very well, Rosie!" said Wingate.

He jerked Todd over the gate, and dropped him on the other side, and then shook a warning fist at him.

"Cut off!" he exclaimed.

"My dear Wingate—"

"Buzz off!" roared Wingate.

"Under the circumstances—"

Wingate made a movement to open the gate. The Duffer of Greyfriars darted off at top speed, and Wingate returned laughing to Miss Rosie.

"What an extraordinary boy, George!" the girl exclaimed.

"Who—what is he?"

"Oh," said Wingate, "it's only Alonzo!"

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Poor Bunter!

"It is Bunter!"

Oh, dear!"

Marjorie Hazeldene and Miss Clara Trevelyan, her friend, stopped in the lane. The girl chums of Cliff House did not like William George Bunter. The moment they sighted his fat figure coming along Friardale Lane, they halted, and wished they had taken some other direction for their little walk.

Bunter would have been surprised if he had known. Truly, the girls had given him the most unequivocal signs that they did not like him. But Billy Bunter cheerfully concluded that that was only coyness.

That he really failed to fascinate any member of the gentle sex, Bunter could not and would not believe.

His evident belief that he was a fascinating fellow was quite enough in itself to make any girl dislike him; but Bunter was as obtuse as he was conceited.

He caught sight of the girls at the same moment as they saw him, and he came right on towards them. They exchanged glances. Much as they failed to appreciate Bunter, they did not want to appear actually to avoid him; they would not hurt even Bunter's feelings if they could help it.

"Dear me!" said Marjorie. "What shall we do?"

"Run away!" suggested Miss Clara.

Marjorie laughed.

"He is going to speak to us," said Miss Clara. "I cannot really stand him, Marjorie. I know I shall be rude to him."

Marjorie hesitated.

"Well, just say good-afternoon politely, and walk right on," she suggested.

"But he will join us."

"Then we'll walk fast."

"He's sure to follow."

"Then we'll walk faster. He can't walk very fast; he's too fat, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the girls walked on, determined to get rid of the obnoxious Owl of the Greyfriars Remove on those easy terms.

But, to their surprise, Bunter did not bear down upon them in his usual way, and did not even raise his cap.

"He doesn't seem to know," said Miss Clara in surprise.

"His sight is very bad."

"But he should know us at this distance."

"Perhaps he knows we don't want to speak to him," said Marjorie. "He may be going to pass us unrecognised, because he knows we don't like him."

Miss Clara sniffed.

"That wouldn't be much like Bunter," she said.

"Well, no; it wouldn't."

Bunter rolled on without a sign of recognition, till he was close to the two girls, and then he stopped and blinked at them through his big spectacles.

"I beg your pardon," he said; "but can you tell me whether there is a school about here called Greyfriars?"

The two girls stared at him in blank amazement. He was speaking to them as if they were two entire strangers, and as if he had never seen the school he belonged to. No wonder they were amazed.

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"Wh-what?" stammered Marjorie.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Miss Clara.

"I—I've lost my memory," explained Bunter. "I don't know you, and I've even forgotten my own name. It's terrible!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Poor Bunter!" said Marjorie softly.

The two girls of Cliff House had seen Bunter before, when he had lost his memory, and they imagined at once that the fat junior had had a relapse into his former strange state. It did not cross their minds for a moment that he was "spoofing."

"Oh, dear; I'm so sorry," said Marjorie. "Have you indeed lost your memory again, Bunter?"

"Yes—I mean—did I ever lose it before?" asked Billy Bunter, blinking round him in a dazed, lost sort of way.

"Certainly you did," said Marjorie.

"We saw you, and you didn't remember us," said Miss Clara.

"Have I ever seen you before, then?"

"Yes; I am Clara—this is Marjorie."

Billy Bunter blinked at them.

"I—I'm very happy to meet you, I'm sure," he said.

"Under the circumstances, I'm sure you will forgive me for having forgotten you."

"Yes, certainly," said Marjorie softly. "I'm very sorry to see you like this again. Is there anything we can do for you?"

Bunter looked round forlornly.

"I—I don't know where I am," he said. "I have a vague idea that I belong to a school or something. Perhaps you can tell me. Have you ever heard of a school named Greyfriars?"

"My poor fellow! Yes; that is the school you belong to."

"Oh, dear!" Bunter pressed his hand to his forehead. "I wish I could remember! I must have wandered away from the school, I suppose."

"Indeed, you must. It is a half-holiday at Greyfriars this afternoon, the same as at our school," said Marjorie; "so that does not matter—you will not have missed any lessons. I was thinking of calling in at Greyfriars to see my brother. Shall we take you there?"

"Yes, please."

"Come with us, then."

"Oh, thank you."

Bunter turned and walked with the two girls, Marjorie and Clara, on either side of him.

The two girls were very sympathetic. They were not able to see that Bunter was playing a part. They might have guessed it, but for his previous attack. But that, as they had known for certain, was genuine enough. They had no reason to suspect that the fat junior was reviving it for reasons of his own.

Bunter enjoyed himself as he was taken back to Greyfriars. He liked being made much of by the girls. It was a gratification that did not often fall to his lot; for the fat junior, who was given to being sulky if he was neglected, and over-familiar if he was treated with kindness, was not popular with the girls. But now that he was supposed to be ill, Marjorie and Clara were as kind as they could be.

They reached the gates of Greyfriars.

As Marjorie and Clara walked in with Billy Bunter, there were many eyes upon them at once.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, who had just come out of the house in his football things, with a coat on. "Marjorie!"

"Here, where are you going?" shouted Wharton, who was heading for the footer-ground with a ball under his arm.

"It's Marjorie!"

"Yes; but you're wanted to play."

"You see—"

"The Upper Fourth are waiting for us!"

"Let 'em wait!" said Bob Cherry.

"Look here—"

But Bob was gone. He rushed down towards the gates to meet the girls of Cliff House.

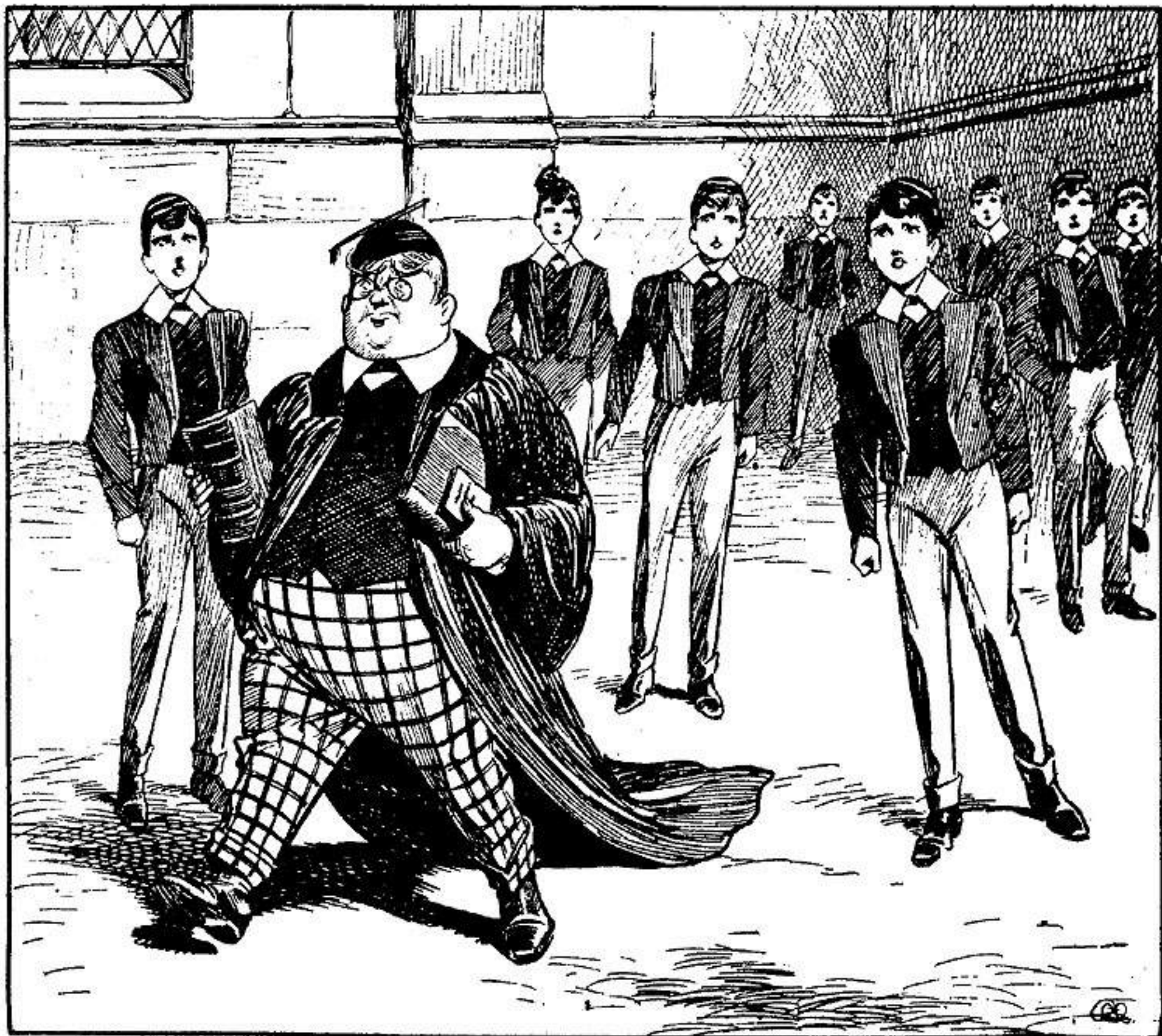
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Billy Bunter was dressed in cap and gown, and was stalking across the Close with great dignity of manner. "My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "He's got into Quelchy's things!" (See page 20.)

They greeted him with sweet smiles.
"So glad to see you!" Bob exclaimed. "Will you come and see the match? Your brother's keeping goal, Marjorie."
"Yes. We have found Bunter—"
"Yes; he's lost his memory again, and was wandering about the lanes," said Miss Clara. "We've brought him back."
Bob Cherry laughed.
"Oh, that's all right," he said. "He's only spoofing."
"Oh, really, Cherry—"
"Ha, ha; he remembers my name!" roared Bob Cherry.
"I—I get flashes of memory now and then," stammered Bunter. "I—oh, I've got an awful ache in my head. Ow!"
"Poor Bunter," said Marjorie softly.
Bob Cherry grew crimson with indignation.
"It's all rot!" he exclaimed. "He's lying—he's always lying, you know. It would give him a pain if he were to tell the truth—wouldn't it, Bunter?"
"Oh, my head!"
"Poor Bunter!" said Marjorie.
Bob Cherry looked at her aghast.
"You—you don't mean to say that you believe him?" he gasped.
"Of course I do!"
"You believe Bunter?" stammered Bob Cherry.
"He is ill!" said Marjorie.
"He's all right!"
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"He's lost his memory!" exclaimed Miss Clara severely.
"How can he be all right if he has lost his memory?"
"But he hasn't!"
"Really—?" said Marjorie.
"He's only spoofing; any of the fellows will tell you so!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, quite taken aback.
Marjorie shook her head.
"I cannot think so!" she exclaimed. "I could not think that Bunter could be so base as that."
Bunter winced for a moment.
"Oh, Bunter's mean enough for anything," said Bob Cherry. "Ain't you, Bunter?"
"Oh, really—"
"Coming to see the match, Marjorie?" asked Harry Wharton, running up. "Bob, you chump, buck up—Temple won't wait any longer!"
"Won't some of you look after Bunter?" asked Marjorie.
"Look after Bunter!" exclaimed Wharton in astonishment. "Bunter doesn't want any looking after, does he?"
"He is ill!"
"Bunter ill! What's the matter with him?" asked Harry Wharton, turning his glance upon the Owl of the Remove, who immediately strove to call up an agonised expression upon his fat face.
"His memory is lost again."
"Ha, ha! Has he been springing that on you, too? He's

been trying to make us believe it," said Wharton, laughing. "It's only spoof."

"I don't think so, Harry."

"You don't believe the young bounder, do you?"

"Yes, I do!"

"Oh, come now—"

"I—I've lost my memory," said Bunter feebly. "I'm feeling very queer."

"Poor Bunter!" said Clara softly.

"Oh, hang it all!" exclaimed Wharton angrily. "This is too rich! He hasn't lost his memory any more than I have!"

"My dear Harry; you can see for yourself. Why should he pretend to have lost his memory if he hasn't really lost it?"

"He's trying to spoof us, you know. He wants to get let off lessons, and to get himself fed up and looked after. He's an artful dodger!"

"I am sure it is genuine."

"But it isn't! He—"

"You had better go and play your football," said Miss Clara severely. "We will look after Bunter, as he seems to have no friends here."

"It is very hard upon Bunter, to have no friends to look after him when he's ill," said Marjorie scathingly.

Wharton and Bob Cherry exchanged glances of dismay. The pretence Bunter was keeping up was so transparent to them that they could not understand the success of the fat junior in imposing upon the girls.

"Look here—," began Wharton.

There was a yell from the direction of the football field; the waiting players were growing very impatient.

"Back up, there!"

"Wharton! Cherry!"

"Temple won't wait!"

"Hurry up!"

"I—I say, we can't stop," said Harry Wharton hurriedly. "You're going to see the match, aren't you? We're playing an Upper Fourth team. Hazel's keeping goal for us."

"But—"

"Hurry up, there!" roared Nugent from the field.

"Back up; you're late!"

"You had better go," said Marjorie. "We will look after Bunter."

"But he's lying—I tell you—"

"Hurry up, there!"

"I do not think Bunter is deceiving us," said Marjorie somewhat coldly. "It is not like you to be so suspicious, Harry. But go—your friends are waiting—we will look after Bunter."

There was no help for it. Wharton and Bob Cherry would have jumped on the fat junior with a great deal of pleasure; but they could not do so in the presence of Marjorie and Clara.

They had to go, and leave Bunter in clover—a successful spoofer. The fat junior grinned after them as they ran towards the football ground.

Billy Bunter felt that he had scored this time.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Minor Looks After Bunter Major.

MARJORIE HAZELDENE turned to Billy Bunter with a sympathetic expression upon her sweet face. The grin instantly vanished from Bunter's fat features, to be replaced with an expression of martyr-like suffering.

"Do you feel any pain now?" Marjorie asked softly.

Bunter passed a fat hand over his head in a dazed, hopeless sort of way.

"There is a dreadful, aching feeling here," he said. "also a pain—a sharp pain as if red-hot needles were being driven in by—by steam-hammers."

"Oh dear!"

"Then there is a sort of—of throbbing in my brain," said Bunter, "as if—as if I were being—being given electric shocks, you know."

"How terrible!"

"But I can bear it," said Bunter bravely. "I have no doubt I am in a very bad way, and that I shall most likely die very shortly. But I am not afraid."

"Oh dear!"

"I feel as if a little food would buck me up," said Bunter feebly. "I have forgotten to eat anything to-day."

"Come," said Marjorie.

She put her arm gently through Billy Bunter's and led him in the direction of the tuckshop.

Miss Clara rapped on the counter, and Mrs. Mible came out of her little parlour. She gave Billy Bunter a far-from-kind look.

Marjorie had extracted a shilling from her little purse.

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and Miss Clara had a sixpence. The girls were willing to spend what they had in looking after poor Bunter.

The fat junior's eyes glistened. Truly he was scoring now.

"What would you like?" asked Marjorie gently.

"Oh, I—I think I could perhaps eat a pork-pie!"

"Give Bunter a pork-pie, Mrs. Mible, please."

"Yes, miss."

Billy Bunter started operations on the pork-pie.

A fat face in spectacles, very like Bunter's own, looked in at the tuckshop. It belonged to Sammy Bunter, Billy Bunter's minor—a worthy minor of a worthy major.

Sammy's eyes glistened behind his big spectacles as he saw his major engaged with the pork-pie. He came into the shop and nudged his brother under the arm.

"Halves!" he whispered.

Billy Bunter looked at him.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Dear me," murmured Miss Clara, "he doesn't know his own brother!"

Sammy chuckled.

"No gammon, Billy!" he remarked. "You know who I am well enough."

Sammy, be it mentioned, knew his major far too well to believe a word he might say on any subject. He had never believed in Bunter's previous attack, which was really genuine. He was not likely to believe in this one.

"Go away," said Bunter. "I don't know you."

"I'm Sammy."

"Sammy what?"

"Bunter!"

"Oh, I've never heard the name before!" said Billy Bunter vaguely. "Another pork-pie, please—I feel as if I could eat another one."

"I'm hungry, too," said Sammy.

"Oh, go away!"

"Halves, you ass!" Sammy whispered in his brother's ear. "I'll give you away, as sure as a gun, otherwise. You'd better recognise me—sharp!"

Bunter's eyes glistened with anger. But he realised that it would be better to "recognise" Sammy. His minor's word against him might raise doubts even in Marjorie's mind, especially after what Wharton and Bob Cherry had said.

"Is this really my brother?" he asked, blinking at Marjorie.

"Yes, indeed it is!"

"Then may I give him a pork-pie?"

"Oh, certainly!"

"There you are, Sammy."

Sammy grinned, and wired into the pork-pie. Sammy had an appetite as unearthly as his major's, and he was always ready and eager to eat.

Bunter finished his pie, and looked round, like Alexander sighing for fresh worlds to conquer.

"I—I feel as if I were reviving a little," he murmured.

"I—I think I could eat a little more."

"So do I," said Sammy, sotto voce. "Halves!"

"You greedy young beast!" murmured Bunter.

"Eh?" said Sammy loudly. "What did you say?"

Billy Bunter did not reply.

Marjorie ordered more tuck, to the extent of her shilling and Miss Clara's sixpence.

Bunter helped himself—and so did Bunter minor. As much as Billy took, Sammy took; and his major did not dare to say him nay.

There was very little brotherly love in the looks Billy Bunter cast upon Sammy. But Sammy did not care. Sammy was after the loaves and fishes, so to speak, and nothing else mattered to him just then.

The tuck was finished.

"I—I feel as if I could eat some jam-tarts," said Bunter faintly. "I have a feeling that they might do me good."

Marjorie coloured.

"I have no more money," she said. "I am sorry. Would you care to come home to Cliff House to tea with us, Bunter?"

"Yes, do!" said Clara.

"Me, too!" said Sammy, under his breath.

Bunter blinked with delight. He had never been asked over to Cliff House by himself before. When he had gone, he had gone with other fellows who were invited—generally adding himself to the party without being asked.

Truly he was scoring now.

"Oh, you're very good!" he said. "I should be delighted."

"Then do come!"

"Perhaps I'd better come, too, to see my brother home again," Sammy Bunter remarked. "It won't be safe for him to be out alone in his—ahem!—his present state."

Bunter glared at him.

"I shall be all right," he muttered.

Sammy shook his head.

"No, you won't, Billy. You won't be all right alone when you've lost your memory. You might imagine you were somebody else, you know, and go off in the wrong direction entirely."

And Sammy grinned.

"I—I shouldn't. I—"

"Billy, old man, you are under my care now," said Sammy seriously. "I'm going to stick to you like a leech."

Bunter breathed hard through his nose. He would gladly have fallen upon his cheerful minor just then and smitten him hip and thigh.

"Yes, Sammy had better come, to see you home," said Marjorie. "We may, as well go now. I should like to speak to my brother before we go, so we will wait till half-time."

"Yes, rather!" said Miss Clara.

They left the tuckshop and walked down to the junior footer-field.

It was close upon half-time now; and a moment or two ere the whistle went Harry Wharton scored the first goal of the match.

There was a roar from the Remove crowd.

"Goal!"

"Bravo, Wharton!"

"Hurray!"

Then the whistle rang out.

The players trooped off the field, most of them coming towards the girls. Hazeldene kissed his sister on the cheek in an indifferent way, like a chap going through a duty, which caused other fellows present to marvel.

"We're not waiting," said Marjorie. "Bunter is ill again—"

Hazeldene chuckled.

"Oh, he's spoofing!" he said.

"Playing the giddy goat!" said Frank Nugent.

Marjorie shook her head.

"I do not think so," she said. "I am sure you are all mistaken. We are taking Bunter back with us to Cliff House to tea."

"Oh, Marjorie!"

"Oh, Clara!"

"My hat!"

"The fat bounder! He's taken you in!"

"There isn't a word of truth in it, Marjorie."

"He's gammoning!"

"It's all rot!"

But Marjorie and Clara were not to be convinced. Feminine minds, as is well known, are quite impervious to argument.

"I know you all dislike Bunter," said Marjorie. "I dare say you have cause, but I think you have let it prejudice you this time."

"Exactly!" said Miss Clara.

"I am sure Bunter speaks the truth now. You yourselves believed him when he lost his memory before," said Marjorie a little reproachfully.

"But it was genuine that time," said Harry Wharton. "It was the result of a biff on the head. He hasn't had any biff this time."

"It's a relapse," said Marjorie.

"It's spoof, my dear girl!"

"He's taking you in!"

"The takingfulness of the esteemed and rotten Bunter is terrific."

"Oh, I say, you fellows—"

"I should not like to believe that, even of Bunter," said Marjorie.

Wharton smiled in a hopeless way. Marjorie would not like to believe that; therefore she would not believe it. That was feminine logic!

"We are taking him home to tea, and Sammy is coming to see him home," said Marjorie. "Good-bye!"

"But—"

"Time, you fellows!" called out Coker of the Fifth, who was refereeing the match.

There was a general movement. The interval was up!

"Well, good-bye, Marjorie?" said Harry Wharton. "You'll find Bunter out in time."

"I don't think so."

"Good-bye, sis!"

The juniors trooped back to the field of play.

Marjorie and Clara turned away with the Bunters, major and minor.

Billy Bunter grinned with satisfaction. He was scoring more than ever. The only blot on his enjoyment was the company of his minor. But at Cliff House there was likely to be plenty to eat for both.

Even Sammy need not be a trouble to him there! Truly the Owl of the Remove seemed to be booked for a good time. He was safe to impose upon the girls, so long as he was careful to play his part well. And Sammy would back

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him up—so long as there was something for Sammy to gain by doing it.

The precious pair walked off with the girls in high feather. Harry Wharton glanced after them from the football-field in great disgust.

"Fancy Marjorie being taken in by that fat spoofer!" Bob Cherry exclaimed, in great wrath. "Oh, won't I punch him presently!"

"The punchfulness will be terrific!"

"We'll—we'll squash him!" said John Bull, with a snort. "The fat bounder! Of course, the girls can't see through him as we can!"

"By Jove, he deserves anything we can do—even to John Bull playing his concertina to him!" said Tom Brown.

"Look here, Brown—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Line up, then!"

"On the ball!"

And the second half of the match commenced, and in the hurry and rush of the footer the juniors forgot about Billy Bunter and the latest example of his artful dodging.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Pigs in Clover.

MISS PENELOPE PRIMROSE, the Head of Cliff House College for Girls, looked surprised.

Marjorie and Clara were coming in at the garden gate, and they were not alone. Miss Primrose would not have been surprised if she had seen Harry Wharton & Co. with the two girls, for Marjorie and Clara were great friends with the chums of Greyfriars. But the companions the girls now had surprised the Head of Cliff House. Billy Bunter was not a desirable companion for anybody, and Sammy was as like Billy as one pea is like another. So Miss Primrose was surprised.

"Dear me!" said Miss Primrose, as the girls came up the path.

Marjorie coloured a little.

"We have brought Bunter to tea, Miss Primrose," she said.

"Dear me!"

"We—we are allowed to have guests to tea, dear Miss Primrose," said Marjorie timidly.

"Yes, certainly; but—" Miss Primrose remembered her courtesy in time. "How do you do, Master Bunter?"

Bunter blinked at her absently. He was getting practised in his part now, and did not forget that he had lost his memory.

"If you please, Miss Primrose, Bunter is ill."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. You remember about his losing his memory, after a shock to his head?"

"Oh, yes."

"He has had a relapse, and has lost his memory again."

"Oh, poor Bunter!" said Miss Primrose, with genuine sympathy.

"The other boys are busy playing football, and we thought we would look after Bunter," said Marjorie. "His younger brother has come to take him home after tea."

Miss Primrose smiled benignly.

"Quite right. Very right and good of you, my dear girls. I hope always to see you ready and willing to succour the afflicted."

"Thank you, dear Miss Primrose!"

"Come in, my dears. I will order a very nice tea for you in the little schoolroom, and perhaps I will join you later," said Miss Primrose graciously.

"Thank you, so much!"

The two Bunters exchanged glances. The glances said that they were in clover, and expressed mutual congratulation. Brotherly love was not a strong point in the Bunter family, but at this moment Billy and Sammy felt for once that they did not dislike one another.

They entered the house, and were taken into the little schoolroom—a cosy room adjoining the large one, and where the girls often had tea to themselves. There was a cheerful fire burning, and the room looked very cosy.

"Sit down, Bunter," said Marjorie, pulling out an arm-chair for Billy Bunter. The fat junior blinked and sank into the chair.

"Do you feel better now?"

"Just a little better," said Bunter faintly.

"The pains are not so bad?"

"Not quite so bad."

"I am so glad," said Marjorie simply.

The girl's kind sympathy would have made anyone but Billy Bunter feel thoroughly ashamed of himself.

But Bunter was not in the least troubled that way. He stretched out his fat legs on the fender, and toasted the soles

of his boots, and blinked at the fire with fat satisfaction. Sammy Bunter sat on the end of the fender. The two girls bustled themselves with preparations for tea.

The Bunters were left alone for a few minutes at a time, while the needful things were being brought in. In one of the intervals Sammy leaned over to his major and whispered to him.

"They always have meringues here at tea-time, I believe, Billy?"

"Yes," said Bunter. "You let 'em alone. I'm fond of meringues."

Sammy grinned unpleasantly.

"Halves!" he replied.

"Look here, Sammy!"

"Halves or nothing," said Sammy. "Mind, if you guzzle up all the meringues, there will be a row. I'm on in that scene."

"You greedy young rotter!"

"What price you?"

"Well, I'm here on a special invitation!" grunted Bunter. "But you—"

"Rats! You're here because you've humbugged the girls," said Sammy coolly. "Blessed if I know how you do it. The Remove chaps don't believe in you this time."

"I'm ill!"

"Rats!"

Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his glasses. The window of the little school-room was open, and Billy Bunter would have given a great deal to pitch his minor head first out of it into the rhododendrons.

"Look here, you young sweep," he said, in a deep, savage whisper. "I'll simply smash you for this when we get back to Greyfriars."

"Rats!"

"I'll—I'll—"

Words failed Billy Bunter. He cast a quick blink round, to make sure that the room was empty, save for the two of them, and then seized his younger brother by the ear. Sammy promptly retorted by clutching him and jamming him back into the chair.

They glared at one another furiously, and at the same moment the door opened and Miss Clara came in with a tray of crockery.

The girl looked at the brothers, and gave a little cry. Sammy recovered his presence of mind in a second.

"Is that better, Billy, old son?" he asked, affectionately smoothing Billy Bunter's hair with a gentle hand.

Billy took the cue immediately.

"Yes," he said. "Thanks, so much, Sammy."

"Is Bunter worse?" asked Clara anxiously, coming towards them when she had deposited the crockery on the tea-table.

"Oh, a slight pain in the head," said Sammy. "I was trying the effect of a little massage, wasn't I, Billy?"

"Yes!" gasped Bunter.

"Do you feel better now?"

"Yes, thank you, Sammy."

Sammy sat down on the fender again, and Miss Clara gave him a bright, approving glance.

"How nice to have such a kind, affectionate brother," she said.

Sammy simpered.

"Yes, it's—it's jolly nice!" gasped Billy Bunter. "Awfully nice! I—I—we get on so jolly well at home, you know. They—they call us the inseparables."

"Might take us for twins, if Billy was a bit better-looking," Sammy remarked.

Miss Clara laughed, and went on laying the tea. Marjorie came in, laden with dainties, which made the two Bunters' open their eyes wide, and made their mouths water.

The table was drawn up nearer the fire, and the two girls sat down to it, Marjorie presiding gracefully, with the teapot in her charge.

"No, don't move, Bunter," she said. "We are going to wait on you, aren't we, Clara?"

"Oh, rather," said Miss Clara.

"You see, you are an invalid—"

"And we're going to look after you," said Miss Clara.

"Good!" said Bunter.

Bunter liked being looked after. To eat without the exertion of helping himself—that was the seventh heaven to Bunter.

The girls helped the two Bunters liberally.

Bunter's loss of memory had evidently not been accompanied by loss of appetite this time. The way he travelled through the good things was amazing. It was not unparalleled, however, for Sammy Bunter paralleled it.

But everything comes to an end, and even Billy and Sammy Bunter had had enough to eat at last.

Then Bunter rolled back in the armchair, with a contented grunt.

He had eaten till it seemed too much exertion to attempt

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to move, and he only wanted to sit in the armchair, and bask before the fire, and talk.

"Feel better?" asked Clara.

"Yes, thank you!"

"One more cake?"

"N-no thanks!"

"Quite sure?"

Bunter cast a longing glance at the cake. It tempted him, and he would gladly have tackled it. But he knew that he could not. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak.

"Quite sure!" he gasped.

"Are you nice and comfy?" asked Marjorie.

"Oh, yes."

"Like a cushion?"

"Well, perhaps a cushion behind my head would be an improvement," said Billy Bunter, with a sybaritic grunt of contentment.

Marjorie arranged the cushions.

Bunter blinked at her. It was borne in upon his mind how fond Marjorie must be of him, though she had never shown a sign of it before. Bunter knew how fond he would have had to be of anybody before he would have taken the trouble to get a cushion.

"This is very comfy," he murmured.

"I'm so glad!"

"I—I feel that I could recover if I had you always to look after me, Marjorie," said Billy Bunter, with a killing look that was rather spoiled by his big, round spectacles.

"Do you really?" said Marjorie simply. "Well, I suppose girls can look after sick and weak people better than boys can. It's more in their line."

"I suppose that's it," said Bunter. "Girls always do like looking after me, as a matter of fact."

Marjorie gave him a changed look.

"Do they?" she said.

"Yes, rather. I fancy I'm rather popular with the girls," said Bunter fatuously. "You know, they don't like long-legged chaps, or dandified chaps like Wharton. It's always one of us well-made, medium-sized fellows."

"Really?"

"Oh, yes."

"Dear me! I think we shall have to say good-bye now," said Marjorie, although five minutes ago she had not thought of saying good-bye. "It is getting quite—quite late."

"Oh, no," said Bunter, with another killing look. "Let's stay a little longer. It's so ripping here in the gloaming!"

Marjorie rose, and lighted the gas.

Bunter blinked like an owl in the sudden light.

"I—I say—" he remarked.

"Time we said good-bye," said Miss Clara. "I hope you will soon be better, Bunter."

"Yes, I hope so," said Bunter.

"Miss Primrose will be expecting us, Marjorie."

"Yes, indeed, Clara."

The two girls looked at one another, and looked at Billy Bunter. The fat junior was still reclining in the armchair, and showed no intention whatever of moving.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Cad!

MARJORIE looked puzzled and annoyed.

It was time for Bunter to go, especially as he had started upon his old caddish ways; that, too, causing Marjorie to suspect, in spite of herself, that his latest loss of memory was perhaps, after all, as Wharton had declared, "spoof."

But Bunter showed no sign of intending to go. He might have been a limpet clinging to a rock by the way he stuck to the armchair.

Sammy Bunter, too, seemed quite comfortable where he was, and prepared to stay as long as his major did.

"Bunter, ahem!" said Marjorie.

"Yes, Marjorie."

"You won't be home before dark."

"Oh, that's all right," said Bunter. "No need to get in before dark, you know. We can stay out after dusk if we like, when we come to Cliff House, you see. Old Quelch knows we're all right here."

"You might lose your way home after dark."

"Sammy will look after me."

"But—but—"

"I'm not going to desert you so soon, after you've stood me such a stunning feed," said Bunter. "Do come and sit down, Marjorie."

"But—"

"I want to talk to you, you know."

Marjorie did not sit down. She cast a helpless glance at Clara. How ever had she been so stupid as to ask a fellow like Bunter to tea? She could hardly understand now.

"Dear me!" murmured Miss Clara. "Won't you be tired if you get in late, Bunter?"

"Oh, you couldn't call it late, you know."

"Are the roads quite safe after dark?"

"Oh, yes, quite safe."

"But—but—"

"Do sit down!" said Bunter. "It's so much more comfy talking if you're sitting down. I say, Marjorie, I've got a proposition to make."

"Yes?"

"I'm thinking of getting up an excursion," said Bunter. "I'm expecting a postal-order this week, from a titled friend of mine, and so I shall be in funds. I was thinking of a picnic on the island in the river—the haunted island, you know."

"Indeed!" said Marjorie coldly.

"Yes. You'll come, won't you?"

"I fear I could not do so."

"Stuff!" said Billy Bunter. "I'm not going to ask the fellows. I'm going just to make a comfy little party of three—you and Clara and myself. We don't want Wharton and Bob Cherry and Nugent and the rest spoiling the afternoon, do we? I'll look after you two girls like anything, and I promise you a ripping time."

"We could not come."

"Certainly not!" said Clara.

Bunter blinked at them with a knowing look.

"Oh, nonsense!" he said. "The other fellows are not here now, so you needn't be so shy about it. Now, confess that you want to come."

"We don't," said Miss Clara.

"In fact, nothing would induce us to come," said Marjorie, with a face like ice.

"Oh, I—I say, you know—"

"We will see you as far as the gate now," said Marjorie. "You must really go now, Bunter. We cannot stay here any longer."

Even Billy Bunter was not proof against a dismissal couched in such plain terms. He rose slowly and unwillingly to his feet.

It was getting dark now, and the shadows of the trees fell thickly in the garden as the girls left the house with the two juniors. Marjorie and Clara walked down the garden path to the gate with them.

They were as polite as they could be, but they were feeling inwardly intensely angry and annoyed. Billy Bunter frequently had that effect upon girls, even while he was, as he believed, simply fascinating them.

They reached the gate. Sammy went out into the road, grinning. Bunter held out a fat hand for Marjorie to shake.

"Thank you so much for a jolly good time," he simpered.

Marjorie barely touched his hand. Miss Clara did not appear to notice it at all. Billy Bunter thought they were very coy.

"Good-bye, dears!" he said.

The girls drew back.

Bunter smiled. In spite of this extreme coyness, he was quite certain that he had effected a thorough "mash," as he would have called it. He made a movement forward, and caught Marjorie's hand again. He approached his fat face to hers, with the evident intention of kissing her good-bye.

Marjorie gave a little cry.

Hardly knowing what she was doing, she struck the fat face with her hand, a ringing smack that sounded like a pistol-shot.

Bunter staggered back.

"Ow!" he gasped.

Even Billy Bunter could not mistake this for coyness.

He realised that he had made a mistake. He blinked in angry dismay at the girl, who was pale with anger.

"You coward!" said Marjorie. "You wretched, cowardly, fat wretch! If Harry were here I would ask him to beat you."

"Ow!"

"Harry is here!" said a voice from the dusk of the lane. Wharton and Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent had just come up. They did not speak to Billy Bunter; they grasped him. Bunter struggled.

"Take the beast away!" said Harry.

"Ow! Yow! Yah!"

Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent whisked the fat junior away into the lane. Sammy did not come to the rescue of his elder brother. He had already taken to his heels.

"I'm so sorry if that cad has been rude to you," said Harry.

Marjorie tried to laugh.

"It was nothing," she said. "He is so stupid, he may have thought that he was making himself agreeable. I am afraid I was very rough myself."

"Serve him right!"

"Don't hurt him, Harry," said Marjorie, a little alarmed by the look on Harry's face. "Don't let them hurt him."

Wharton was silent. Marjorie laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Harry, don't let them."

"Oh, all right!"

"He is only stupid, after all; he does not know how unpleasant he is."

"Very well, Marjorie. We thought you might have some

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ONE
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trouble with the cad, and that's why we came along. I suppose it's no good telling you again that he's only been pretending to lose his memory."

"We have found that out, Harry."

"Oh, you've found it out!"

"Yes; he forgot to keep it up. He has been talking about picnics on the island, just as if he remembered everything. If he had lost his memory he wouldn't have remembered the haunted island, would he?"

"I suppose not."

"He is a very bad boy, I am afraid," said Marjorie. "I shall never trust him again. Good-bye, Harry!"

"Good-bye!"

Harry Wharton raised his cap, and the girls ran up the path to the house, and Wharton followed his chums. Bunter was wriggling in their grasp in the dusky lane, on the verge of a deep-flowing ditch.

"Ow! Wow! Yow!" roared the fat junior. "Leggo! I shall catch cold! Yah!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Shall we pitch him in, Harry?"

Wharton shook his head.

"No."

"Bump him, then?"

"Ow! Yow! I won't be bumped! Yah!"

"No," said Harry.

"What then?" asked Bob.

"Nothing."

Bob Cherry glared.

"Nothing! What do you mean? The fat beast has been rude to Marjorie. He's going to be punished."

"Marjorie asked me to let the beast off."

"But—"

"I said I would."

Bob Cherry grunted, and released the fat junior.

"Cut off, you rotter!" he said.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Bob Cherry raised his boot. Billy Bunter disappeared into the dusk of the lane.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Cannon Off the Cushion.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. did not speak to Bunter again when they saw him at Greyfriars. They would not touch him, because Marjorie had made Harry promise not to do so. But they would not speak to him. They felt that they could not tolerate the Owl of the Remove any more at close quarters.

Bunter blinked at them indignantly several times. Bunter had a long memory for offences against himself, and a short one for offences he committed. He had already satisfied himself, in his own mind, that he had not been to blame in the least. Marjorie, on second thoughts, has only been coy—or, rather, she had been acting, because she knew Wharton was coming up just then. That was how Bunter worked it out to his own satisfaction. Wharton had really appeared at a very awkward moment, and interrupted what would otherwise have been a very tender scene. If Wharton had known the thoughts that were in the fat junior's conceited mind, he would have been sorely tried to keep his promise to Marjorie, not to thrash the Owl of the Remove that night. But he did not know.

Bunter had in all the Remove only one sympathiser, and that was Alonzo Todd. The Duffer of Greyfriars was the only fellow in the school who was confiding enough to believe Bunter at any time. He felt a deep commiseration for the fat junior over his second loss of memory, and he was even sympathetic when he saw that Bunter was in disgrace with Harry Wharton & Co. He approached Bunter on that subject, giving the fat junior a dig in the ribs with a bony knuckle that made him gasp.

"My dear Bunter—"

"You ass!"

"Eh?"

"Groo! You've knocked my breath out! Yow!"

"I'm so sorry! I trust you will recover it soon, my dear Bunter. Probably you would not lose your breath so easily if you were less lazy and plethoric. But I observe that you are not on good terms with Wharton now, Bunter."

"It's all Wharton's fault," said Bunter. "It's sheer jealousy."

"I'm so sorry. I did not think Wharton was of a jealous disposition," said Alonzo, looking at Bunter in great surprise. "What can Wharton possibly be jealous of you about, my dear Bunter?"

Bunter snorted.

"A chap can't help being good-looking, and taking with girls," he said.

"I suppose not," said Alonzo. "Wharton is certainly good-looking, and I have noticed that girls like him, Bunter. But

I do not think they like him wholly on account of his good looks. Wharton has a way of treating girls with proper respect, which you would really do very well to imitate, Bunter. Then, he is not conceited and vain. You see—"

"Ass! I wasn't speaking about Wharton. Wharton's jolly jealous of a good-looking chap, I can tell you that."

"Is he? Are you referring to Nugent?"

"No, I'm not."

"Micky Desmond?"

"Certainly not!"

"Ogilvy, perhaps? He is very good-looking, though I should certainly not imagine that Wharton was jealous of him. I—"

"No, ass!"

"Who, then?"

"Me!"

"Eh?"

"Me!" roared Bunter angrily.

Todd looked at him blankly.

"Pray make your meaning clear, my dear Bunter," he gasped, when he recovered his power of speech. "Do I understand you to make the extraordinary assertion that Wharton is jealous of you on account of your good looks?"

"Yes, ass."

"But your statement is amazing, my dear Bunter. You see, it has no foundation. Wharton is not the kind of fellow to be jealous of another fellow's good looks. Besides, you have no good looks, you know, my dear Bunter."

"Eh?"

"You are a very plain boy, not to say ugly," went on the candid Duffer of Greyfriars. "You do not mind my speaking plainly, do you? My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me never to flatter. Of course, a fellow cannot help his looks, though you could certainly improve your appearance by eating less, sleeping less, taking more exercise, and cultivating a loftier kind of thought. Good meditations lend a very agreeable expression to the countenance, my dear Bunter."

"You—you ass!"

"Your thoughts are continually running upon eating and drinking and bodily comfort," went on Todd. "That is bound to lead to the gross expression of countenance which renders your face so unpleasant to look upon, my dear Bunter."

Billy Bunter glared.

"I am sure you do not mind my speaking thus candidly," said Todd. "My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to be candid."

"You fathead!"

"My dear Bunter—"

"You—you chump—"

"Ahem! I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would not approve of my continuing a conversation couched in such terms, my dear Bunter. I will retire."

And Todd retired.

Billy Bunter clutched up a cushion and hurled it after the Duffer of Greyfriars as he retired.

The cushion caught Todd in the back of the neck, and he went sprawling forward. Loder, the prefect, was just entering the common-room.

Todd pitched right upon the senior, butting him upon his fancy waistcoat with almost the force of a battering-ram.

"Oh!" roared Loder.

"Ow!" gasped Todd.

"Groo!"

"Yah!"

Loder sat down in the passage. Todd dropped on his hands and knees just in front of him, and they glared at one another.

The scene was so utterly ridiculous that the juniors in the common-room burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh!" gasped Loder. "You—you—"

"Ah! Ow!"

"You young scoundrel—"

"I—I—I'm so sorry—"

Loder sprang to his feet with a face like thunder. Todd backed away from him in alarm. The prefect was looking dangerous.

"I—I assure you, my dear Loder—"

"Hold on, Loder! It wasn't Todd's fault," said Harry Wharton. "He was bowled over by a cushion on the back of his head."

"Indeed, that was the case, my dear Loder—"

"Who threw the cushion, then?" roared Loder.

"I didn't!" yelled Billy Bunter, in alarm. "I never did anything of the sort. There wasn't a cushion on my chair, in the first place; and, besides, it's still here, and I'm sitting on it, so— Ow—ow! Yah! Oh!"

Loder boxed the fat junior's ears right and left.

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"There! Now you'll know better than to pitch silly asses at prefects!" he gasped, as he released the fat junior.

"Ow! Ow! Yow!"

"My dear Loder—"

"Shut up, and get to bed!"

"Yow!" roared Bunter. "I'm hurt! Yah! Groo! Oh!"

"You'll be hurt some more if you don't shut up!"

There was no sympathy for Bunter in the common-room. In many cases the juniors would have interfered, prefect as Loder was. But Harry Wharton & Co. were only too pleased to see the Owl of the Remove get the licking he deserved, although Marjorie had made it impossible for them to give it to him.

Loder scowled round the Remove dormitory that night when he turned the lights out. Bunter was grunting and groaning in bed.

Loder closed the door with a slam. Billy Bunter groaned in the darkness of the dormitory in an ear-splitting manner. Bob Cherry sat up in bed.

"Bunter!" he called out.

"Ow! Yes?"

"You're hurt, I suppose?"

"Ow! Yes!"

"Do you want to be hurt some more?"

"Yow! No!"

"Well, you will be if you don't shut up that row. I'll get out of bed and take a cricket stump to you if I hear another sound. I mean it!"

And Bob Cherry lay down again.

There were no more groans from Billy Bunter. He relapsed into indignant silence, and the Remove went to sleep.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not a Success.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"My hat!"

"Look there!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was early morning in the Close at Greyfriars. Most of the juniors were out for a run before breakfast in the bright spring sunshine.

But punting about the footer and leap-frog ceased suddenly as a peculiar sight burst upon their eyes.

There were exclamations of amazement from all sides.

Billy Bunter had issued from the house—but it was a very peculiar-looking Billy Bunter.

The fat junior was dressed in cap and gown, and was stalking across the Close with great dignity of manner.

The juniors stared at him blankly.

They had been accustomed of late to Billy Bunter's freaks, and some of the Remove were of opinion that the fat junior was really going "off his rocker."

But this seemed to be the limit.

"My only hat!" Harry Wharton exclaimed. "He's got into Quelchy's things!"

"No, they're not Quelchy's—they're Capper's!" said Frank Nugent.

"Our Form-master's togs!" exclaimed Temple, of the Upper Fourth. "The cheek! What does the silly ass mean by it?"

"He's mad!"

"Mad as a hatter!"

"Spoofing, you mean!" said Harry Wharton. "It's the old game again—he's lost his memory!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fat fraud!"

"Bunter! Chuck it, Bunter!"

"Cheese it, Tubby!"

"Ring off!"

The Owl of the Remove took no notice. He walked straight on, regardless of the shouts and laughter of the juniors.

"My hat!" exclaimed Temple suddenly. "There's old Capper! If he recognises his duds on Bunter—"

"Phew!"

"Cave, Bunter!"

Bunter took no heed. He was walking directly towards Mr. Capper. Mr. Capper had been out for an early morning walk by the river, and he had a Norfolk jacket and a cap on. He looked at Bunter in surprise.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed. "What does this mean?"

Bunter did not speak.

"Bunter!" rapped out Mr. Capper.

The fat junior walked right on.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Capper, in amazement. "Is the boy out of his senses? Bunter! I command you to stop!"

He caught the fat junior by the shoulder.

Billy Bunter came to a halt then, and blinked at the master of the Fourth Form in a dazed, vacant sort of way. He had practised that look before a looking-glass, and he certainly looked idiotic enough.

"Eh? Did you speak to me, sir?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, Bunter! Have you grown deaf?"

"Deaf, sir? I don't know!"

Mr. Capper gasped.

"You don't know?"

"No, sir."

"What do you mean, Bunter?"

"Mean, sir?"

"Yes, mean!" shouted the Fourth Form-master angrily.

"I don't know, sir."

"What?"

"I've lost my memory again—I—I mean I've lost my memory, sir."

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Capper.

"I don't know who you are, sir," said Billy Bunter, blinking at him. "Are you the Head of Greyfriars, sir?"

"Bless my soul!"

"Perhaps you are my father, sir."

Mr. Capper jumped.

"Bunter!"

"I don't know, sir. I'm sincerely sorry, but, you see, we can't help these things, sir. I've lost my memory, you see, sir."

"I am the master of the Fourth Form, Bunter."

"What's a Form, sir?"

"Eh?"

"What's a master, sir?"

"Goodness gracious!"

"I'm sure I don't know, sir."

Mr. Capper looked very hard at Bunter. As Bunter had lost his memory once, Mr. Capper was willing to believe that he might lose it again, but he did not see how anybody could lose his memory to quite that extent without losing his faculties altogether. Billy Bunter seldom exercised any discretion when he began fibbing, and his lies were always to be detected by their very magnitude.

"Bunter, this is very extraordinary!"

"Yes, sir. I'm sure I'm a very unfortunate fellow, sir," said Bunter. "I've forgotten my own name, sir."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. I have an idea that my name is Capper, sir, and that I'm a Form-master in this school. Is that correct, sir?"

Mr. Capper staggered.

"Bunter! Is this possible?"

"I don't know, sir."

"I am Mr. Capper."

"Then it must be your gown I have on, sir. Your name is on it. I'm sincerely sorry, sir, but I can't remember—"

"Bunter!"

"It's very unfortunate, sir, I know. I think I'm very much to be pitied, sir," said Bunter. "Perhaps if you spoke to Mr. Quelch, sir, he might think fit to let me off some of the lessons, sir, while I'm in this state."

Mr. Capper looked at him hard.

"Mr. Quelch?" he repeated.

"Yes; my Form-master, sir."

"Oh! You remember that your Form-master is Mr. Quelch, do you, Bunter?" asked Mr. Capper, in an extremely unpleasant tone of voice.

The fat junior could have bitten his tongue off. He had given himself away again, almost at the start.

"Yes, sir! You—you see I—I have flashes of memory—"

"Follow me, Bunter!"

"W-w-w-where, sir?"

"To my study, Bunter!"

"But, sir—"

"Follow me at once!"

Bunter blinked, and followed the Form-master. Mr. Capper entered the house, and Billy Bunter followed him in. Mr. Capper went towards his study, and Billy Bunter skirted off towards the stairs.

But the Form-master appeared to have eyes in the back of his head. He swung round as Billy Bunter was slithering off.

"Bunter!" he rapped out.

Billy Bunter jumped.

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"I told you to follow me!"

"Ye-e-es, sir. I forgot!"

"You had better not forget again, Bunter. You had better have one of those flashes of memory you were speaking of," said the Fourth Form-master sarcastically.

"Ye-e-es, sir."

Mr. Capper threw open his study door.

"Go in, Bunter!"

"Yes, sir."

"Remain till I come!"

"Yes, sir," stammered Bunter. "If you please, sir—"

"Enough!"

Mr. Capper closed the door on Bunter.

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The fat junior stood in the study in great dismay. It was evident that Mr. Capper had seen through his trickery; in fact, Bunter's trickery seemed fated to be seen through. What was to happen now?

The Owl of the Remove was not left long in suspense. The door reopened, and Mr. Capper came into the study with Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

The Fourth Form-master pointed to Bunter.

Mr. Quelch's brow grew dark.

"You see for yourself," said Mr. Capper.

"I do!" said Mr. Quelch. "What is the meaning of this masquerade, Bunter? How dare you touch Mr. Capper's property? Explain yourself at once, you wretched boy!"

"I-f-f-f-f you please, sir—"

"Well?" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"If you pip-pip-please, sir, I—I've lost my memory, sir—"

"Take off that gown and cap, Bunter!"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"Now follow me. I'm sorry for this occurrence, Mr. Capper, but I assure you that this foolish and impertinent boy will be adequately punished for this freak."

"Very good, sir," said Mr. Capper.

Billy Bunter followed the Remove-master in fear and trembling. In the passage he made a feeble attempt to escape; but a hand of iron grasped him by the shoulder.

He was marched into Mr. Quelch's study, and the door was closed. A minute afterwards, sounds of anguish were heard proceeding from behind that closed door.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Tit for Tat.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. grinned when they saw Bunter again. They could not help it. The Owl of the Remove was sticking out so courageously to his new wheeze, and he was getting such lamentable failures all along the line that the chums of the Remove could not help seeing the humorous side of it.

Bunter blinked at them savagely. He was squeezing his hands under his arm-pits to assuage the pain.

It was clear that Mr. Quelch had not spared the rod.

"Ow!" groaned Bunter. "Yow! I believe my hands are permanently injured. Yow! Beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Ow! I— Ah!"

"Why don't you leave off spoofing then?" asked Harry Wharton. "You know nobody believes in your silly rot!"

"The sillyrotfulness of the honourable Bunter is terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh. "The dropfulness of the rotten wheeze would be the boonful blessing!"

"Eh? What are you talking about? I don't know you!"

"What?"

"The whatfulness is terrific!"

"I've never seen you before," said Bunter.

He rolled away, grunting. The Removites stared after him blankly. That Bunter should have the nerve to keep his falsehoods up in this way was amazing. But that he should still hope to get anybody to believe him was more amazing still.

"Oh, he's off his rocker!" said John Bull.

"Right off."

"The off-fulness of his esteemed rocker is terrific!"

"I cannot help surmising that you are somewhat hard upon Bunter, my dear fellows," said Alonzo Todd. "My Uncle Benjamin says—"

"Rats!"

"Not at all. I have never heard my avuncular relative use that expression," said Todd, in surprise. "Such a juvenile exclamation would be quite out of place upon the lips of such a venerable gentleman."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not observe the cause of your laughter, my dear fellows; but to resume, I think that our unfortunate friend, Bunter, is suffering from a lapse of memory, evidently a relapse into his former state. You remember that his first illness was caused by a shock to the system, owing to his knocking his head on the floor of the bath, by jumping into it when there was no water. He was restored to himself by means of another shock, which agrees with a theory expounded by Professor Foozler in a book I have studied carefully. He has a theory of counter-shocks, and he has tried something of the sort with many of his patients; and he mentions that if they had lived they would doubtless have been loud in praise of his theory. Unfortunately they all died. However, to come back to Bunter, I have not the slightest doubt that a counter-shock upon his head would restore him to himself, as in the previous case."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I have pointed this out to Bunter, and, indeed, offered

To administer this shock with a soda-siphon, myself to pay for the siphon if damaged, but—"

The chums of the Remove roared. They could not quite imagine Bunter accepting Todd's generous offer.

Alonzo looked at them in surprise. He could see nothing to cause laughter—or, as he would have described it, to excite risibility.

"And did he refuse?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Yes; for some reason he refused. Now, the question is, whether one would be justified in administering that shock to Bunter without his consent?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That is the question," said Alonzo Todd.

"To bash or not to bash, that is the question," said Frank Nugent, quoting Shakespeare with a difference. "To bash—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"To bash or not to bash, that is the question!

Whether 'tis better in the coll. to suffer

The fibs and humbug of outrageous Bunter,

Or to take arms against the Habby bounder,

And, by opposing, end them! To whack! To punch!

And by a licking then to end

The spoofing and the thousand gammoning tricks

That Bunter's heir to!"

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

"Dear me!" said Alonzo Todd. "How very well you express yourself, Nugent! I'm sure my Uncle Benjamin would be delighted to hear such a flow of language."

"Ha, ha!" yelled Nugent. "That's Shakespeare, you ass—only brought a little up to date!"

"Oh, I see. However, to resume: revenong noo oh noh mootong, as Monsieur Charpentier says," remarked Alonzo. "Shall I bestow this favour upon Bunter? I have observed a large coke-hammer belonging to Gosling which would answer the purpose—"

The juniors shrieked.

"It is really not a comic matter, my dear fellows—"

"It won't be for Bunter, if you tap him on the napper with Gosling's coke-hammer!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"I think it an excellent idea."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But what do you think Bunter will think?" asked Todd anxiously.

"I don't think he'll think at all, after you've tapped him!" gasped Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'd better drop the idea," grinned Wharton. "You see, it's so jolly painful to be hanged, and that's what you'd get."

"Oh, no; it is very improbable that I should smite Bunter hard enough to cause serious injury, unless, perhaps, he struggled."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The bell for breakfast called the juniors into the dining-room. Alonzo sat down beside Billy Bunter, and nudged him. Naturally, the Duffer of Greyfriars nudged him as he was raising a cup of tea to his lips. Todd generally happened to do his nudging at some such moment as that.

"My dear Bunter—"

"Gr-r-r-rh!"

Bunter spluttered wildly as half the tea shot into his mouth, and the other half into the neck of his collar.

"Gr-r-r-r-r-rh!"

"My dear Bunter—"

"Y-a-a-a-a-aah!"

"I'm so sorry—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch glanced severely down the table.

"Bunter, how dare you drink your tea in that disgusting manner? I am ashamed of you, Bunter!"

This was really very hard on Bunter. He tried to speak and explain, but only gasps and snorts came forth.

"Groo-oooh-yowp-ah!"

"Bunter!"

"Gr-r-r-r-atchoo!"

"How dare you, Bunter!"

"Ga-a-a-a-atchoo!"

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet.

"Bunter! If you do not cease those disgusting noises instantly—"

"Gr-r-r-r-rh!"

"If you please, sir," said Todd. "Bunter is choking through his tea shooting out of the cup. It may have been due to my nudging his elbow."

The juniors giggled. Mr. Quelch's severe face relaxed into a smile.

"Oh!" he said.

He sat down again. Billy Bunter was left to gasp and

snort to his heart's content. He mopped off the spilt tea with a handkerchief.

"You frabjous ass, Todd!" he gasped at last.

"My dear Bunter—"

"You dangerous idiot—"

"Ahem! I was only drawing your attention, my dear Bunter, because I wished to make you an offer of my services," said Alonzo. "My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to be kind and obliging, and—"

Billy Bunter's expression changed a little.

"Oh, all right," he said more amiably. "Do you mean that you will be able to make me that advance on my postal order? It's certain to come to-day, you know; it's been promised me by a titled friend of mine—"

"I was not referring to your postal order, Bunter. Unfortunately, I have no money, or I would make you a loan with pleasure."

Bunter grunted.

"Oh, ring off then!" he growled.

"But there is another service I can perform, Bunter, in connection with your loss of memory. I can restore you to your right senses."

The fat junior grunted again.

"I have already made the suggestion to you," said Alonzo. "I now urge it upon you, Bunter. Gosling's coke-hammer would be a suitable instrument, and by giving you a rap on the head with considerable force I hope to restore—"

"You—you chump!" gasped Bunter.

"My dear Bunter—"

Billy Bunter glared at him through his spectacles. Alonzo Todd raised his tea to taste it, and Bunter gave his elbow a sharp shove. The tea shot over Todd's face in a hot stream, and he jumped up drenched, with a wild yell.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch irritably. "It is very extraordinary that this should occur twice! Todd, what does it mean?"

"Groo!"

"Todd!"

"Yow! Ah!"

"Leave the table at once, Todd!"

And the Duffer of Greyfriars drifted away. Bunter finished his breakfast with quite a contented expression upon his face.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Call of Duty.

"MY dear Gosling—"

Gosling, the school porter of Greyfriars, looked round with a grunt. Gosling was washing down a trap, and Gosling did not like it. Gosling did not like work of any description. His idea was that his life should be spent in a comfortable armchair, before a cosy fire, with a glass of hot gin-and-water at his elbow. Even for that he thought himself considerably underpaid. But there is no getting one's deserts in this world, which, as Shakespeare reminds us, is fortunate for many of us. Gosling had to work—life could not be all armchairs and gin-and-water. He consoled himself by feeling very ill-used, and bestowing scowling glances upon the universe.

"Oh, get hout!" he exclaimed as he saw Alonzo Todd come into the yard. "Get hout! I hain't going to be worried by you boys!"

"My dear Gosling—"

"Get hout!"

"But, my dear—"

"I'll report yer!"

Todd looked at Gosling in surprise.

"Indeed, my dear Gosling, you are labouring under a misapprehension if you believe that I have committed any indiscretion susceptible of punishment," he said. "There is nothing for you to report, my dear Gosling. I have come to ask you a small favour."

"I hain't doing any favours," said the surly porter. "Get hout!"

"You have a large coke-hammer, Gosling—"

"Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Will you have the great kindness, my dear Gosling, to lend me that hammer for a short time?" asked Alonzo Todd. Gosling looked at him.

"Wot do you want it for?" he demanded. "Some of your pranks, I s'pose. You ain't burning coke in your study?"

"Certainly not, my dear Gosling; but you are quite mistaken in supposing that I wish to play pranks. Those juvenile amusements are far beneath me. My Uncle Benjamin always told me to—"

"Get hout!"

"Certainly not; he never said anything of the sort. But about that hammer—"

"Wot's the little game?"

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"I require the hammer to assist me in doing a good deed, Gosling. Surely that is sufficient for you to know?"

"Wot I says is this 'ere," said Gosling. "It's a dry morning."

"Yes," said Alonzo innocently. "It has not rained for some time now."

"Which I'm dry myself, Master Todd."

"That is very good for your health, Gosling. If you were to get damp, you would probably have rheumatism, especially with your drinking habits."

Gosling snorted. It was pretty certain that Todd would never see a hint.

"You can 'ave the loan of that 'ammer for tuppence, Master Todd," he said.

"Oh, I see," Todd felt in his pockets. "Here is twopence, Gosling. I trust that you will not expend the money in reckless, barbaric extravagance."

Gosling snorted again, and pocketed the twopence without giving any verbal undertaking that he would not expend it in reckless extravagance.

"And now where is the hammer?" asked Alonzo.

Gosling pointed to the heap of coke in the corner of the yard. The coke hammer lay beside it.

"There you are," he said.

"Thank you so much, Gosling."

"Bring it back and put it there when you've finished."

"Oh, certainly."

"Mad as a 'atter!" Gosling murmured, and went on washing down the trap.

Todd walked away with a cheerful face. He had the expression that one wears when one has made up one's mind to do one's duty at any cost.

Todd had made up his mind!

A counter-shock upon Bunter's head would restore his memory, and Todd had made up his mind that, for Bunter's own sake, it must be done.

How dreadful it would be if the fat junior had to go through life without any memory for want of a firm friend to stand by him in the hour of need and give him the tap he required—restoring him at the expense of a little brief pain!

Todd felt a glow of enthusiasm on the subject, as he reflected upon it. Bunter might not like it—he might be ungrateful. But what mattered that? Todd would have the proud satisfaction of knowing that his duty was well done. He would have the approval of his Uncle Benjamin. What more could he want?

The Close was pretty full of juniors; the morning school had been dismissed, and it was not yet dinner-time. Todd looked round for Billy Bunter, but did not see him.

"My dear Wharton—" he called out.

"Hallo, Toddy!"

"Have you seen Bunter?"

"I believe he's in his study," said Harry.

"Thank you so much."

Todd started off to the house. Wharton looked after him curiously. But Bob Cherry was punting a footer to him, and he punted it back, and forgot Todd for the moment.

Alonzo Todd ascended the stairs to the Remove passage, and tapped at Billy Bunter's door and opened it.

The Owl of the Remove started to his feet.

As a matter of fact, Billy Bunter had succeeded in raising a small loan since morning school, and he had invested it in jam tarts, and retired to his study to eat them without interruption, and the terrible risk of someone saying "halves!"

As soon as he saw Alonzo, he naturally imagined that he had heard of the tarts, and had come for a "whack."

"You can get out," said Bunter.

Bunter's manners were not what Lord Chesterfield would have considered polished, especially when he was defending his provisions.

"My dear Bunter—"

"Buzz off!"

"I have come—"

"I can see that. Now you had better go. There's the door!"

"You are scarcely polite, my dear Bunter. But I shall not allow that to interfere with my philanthropic intention. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to be kind and obliging in the face even of personal rudeness on the part of low or ill-mannered people. My dear Bunter, I am going to restore your memory."

"Wha-a-at!"

Todd produced the hammer from under his jacket. Bunter blinked at it through his big spectacles, and then blinked at Alonzo Todd.

"Wha-a-at do you mean?" he gasped.

Todd held up the hammer.

"You see, my dear Bunter, I am quite assured that if you received a rap on the head in the same place as your former injury, you would be cured—"

"Fathead!"

"I have therefore determined to bestow this kindly attention upon you—"

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"But I don't want you to," roared Bunter.

"That makes no difference, my dear fellow," said Todd with a beaming smile. "I shall not allow even reluctance on your part to interfere with my bounden duty. I have the approval of my conscience, and I am certain that my Uncle Benjamin would approve. Therefore, my dear Bunter, I mean business!"

"You—you chump!"

"Please come here, my dear Bunter," said Todd, taking a business-like grip on the handle.

Billy Bunter gazed at the Duffer of Greyfriars with eyes nearly starting from his head.

"You—you dangerous chump!" he panted. "Take that hammer away!"

"Not till I have done my duty, Bunter!"

"But—but I tell you—"

"From a sense of duty, my dear Bunter, I cannot listen to your objections. Pray come here, and get it over. It is really only like having a tooth out."

"You chump!" shrieked the alarmed Owl of the Remove.

"You'll brain me! Get out!"

Todd shook his head.

"It is highly improbable that the shock will seriously injure you, Bunter; but, in any case, surely you would be willing to run a modicum of risk for the sake of having your memory restored."

"Fathead!"

"My dear Bunter—"

"Get out!"

"I must do my duty, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter made a wild rush for the door. He had forgotten even the tarts in his anxiety and terror.

Todd rushed to intercept him.

The Duffer of Greyfriars reached the door first, and Bunter rolled back.

"Now, my dear Bunter—"

Billy Bunter dodged round the table.

"You—you mad ass!" he shrieked. "Keep off! If you kill me, you'll be hanged. Ow!"

"It is highly improbable that the shock will kill you, my dear Bunter. Besides, you need not be anxious about me, even in that case," said Todd reassuringly. "I should certainly not be hanged. It would be considered accidental death. You need have no uneasiness on that score, Bunter. Come here!"

"Help!" yelled Bunter.

"My dear fellow—"

"Help! Murder!"

"Dear me," said Todd. "You will probably suffer more by getting into a state of excitement, Bunter. Perhaps I had better—"

He sidled round the table, hammer in hand. Bunter dodged away, and made a break for the door again, and this time got through into the passage.

Todd rushed after him.

"Stop! My dear Bunter! Stop! I—"

Billy Bunter was not likely to stop. He dashed away down the corridor at top speed, and after him rushed Alonzo, brandishing the hammer.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Quite a Close Shave.

O H! Ow! Help! Hellup! Yow!"

Bunter roared as he ran.

Down the corridor they went, pursued and pursuer, Todd still brandishing the hammer, and calling in vain upon Billy Bunter to stop.

They reached the stairs, and Bunter charged down at headlong speed.

There was a group of juniors at the foot of the staircase, and they shouted to the Owl of the Remove as he came charging down.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's up?"

"What's the matter, Bunter?"

"He's fairly off at last."

Bunter did not reply.

He charged right on, and dashed into the juniors, and scattered them to the right and left. A bull in a china shop was nothing to Billy Bunter at that moment.

Nugent went reeling against the wall, and Ogilvy sprawled on the floor. Bob Cherry sat down on Ogilvy. Morgan clung to the banisters and gasped, and Micky Desmond staggered away, holding on to Russell.

Bunter rushed on.

After him came Alonzo.

"Bunter, stop!"

"Yow! Help!"

Billy Bunter dashed out into the Close on the wings of terror, and Alonzo dashed after him, hammer in hand.

"My only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry, staggering to his feet. "They're mad—both of them! Bunter had it first, and it's catching."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"After them!" exclaimed John Bull. "Todd may do some damage with that hammer."

"I shouldn't wonder."

"Faith, and ye're right!"

"After them!"

The juniors ran out into the Close. Billy Bunter had caught sight of Harry Wharton, and was rushing straight towards him. The lighter and slimmer Alonzo was gaining on the fat junior, and there was no escape.

Billy Bunter dashed up to Wharton, and threw his arms round him.

"Save me!" he gasped.

"Why, what—"

"Help! Keep him off!"

"Eh?"

"Keep him off!" shrieked Bunter.

Harry Wharton looked amazed.

"Keep who off?" he demanded.

"Todd. Ow! Todd!"

"Todd?"

"Yes. Ow! Here he comes. Keep him off!"

Billy Bunter dodged round behind Wharton, but still clinging to the captain of the Remove, so as not to lose his protection.

Alonzo came panting up. He was almost breathless, but still prepared to do his duty at any cost.

"Hallo!" ejaculated Wharton. "Keep that hammer away. Are you off your silly rocker, Todd?"

"Not at all, my dear Wharton!" gasped Todd. "I am about to do Bunter a service, but he shrinks from receiving it because he is afraid of a little pain. Of course, I cannot allow any small consideration of that sort to interfere with my duty."

Harry Wharton grinned.

"Of course not," he assented.

"I am going to restore Bunter's memory by giving him a sharp rap on the head with this hammer, in the same spot where he received his previous injury—"

"Help!" yelled Bunter. "Keep him off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's mad! He's dangerous! Keep him off!"

Alonzo Todd blinked reproachfully at the terrified Owl of the Remove. Bunter kept Wharton between them all the time.

"My dear Bunter, I am not mad," said Todd. "I am about to render you an inestimable service—"

"Yow! Keep him off!"

"By means of this hammer—"

"Ow!"

"I can restore you—"

"Yow!"

"To your full senses, Bunter. Think of that. You will recover your memory, and—"

"Yah! Keep him off!"

"Under the circumstances, as I can do so much good with so slight an exertion, I must refuse to be kept off," said Todd. "Pray stand aside, my dear Wharton!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow! Keep him off!" shrieked Billy Bunter, clinging to the captain of the Remove. "Don't get away, Wharton. Yah! Keep him off!"

"Pray stand aside, my dear Wharton—"

"Oh, let Alonzo go ahead!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, coming up with the other fellows. "Let him do his duty."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wire in, Toddy!"

"Hammer him!"

"It will be kill or cure, anyway."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The carefulness will be small, but the killfulness will probably be terrific, my worthy chums."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Todd made an effort to pass Wharton. Harry jerked the hammer out of his hand. He made a sign to Nugent, who grasped the Duffer of Greyfriars, and sat him down on the ground with a bump.

"Ow!" ejaculated Todd.

"Look here," said Harry, grasping the hammer. "I'll see whether it's likely to be dangerous or not before you treat Bunter, Todd."

"My dear Wharton—"

"I'll give you a swipe on the head as hard as I can with this hammer, and if you're all right afterwards, I'll let you swipe Bunter."

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

"M-m-m-my dear Wharton—"

"Sit still. It will be soon over."

Harry Wharton swung the hammer into the air. Todd gave it one look, and leaped up and fled for his life.

The juniors roared.

"Come back, Todd!"

But Todd did not come back.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Very Forgetful.

THE Remove roared over the story of the hammer. It seemed to have dawned upon Todd at last that the idea was not wholly a good one, and he allowed the matter to drop. The coke hammer was restored to Gosling unused. But the juniors laughed over the joke for a long time, and Bunter was seen to avoid Alonzo Todd in the most careful way. The fat junior declared his opinion that the Duffer of Greyfriars was not safe; and, indeed, Todd was a little dangerous when he really made up his mind to do his duty at any cost to anybody.

"It's all your own fault, you fat fraud!" said Bob Cherry, after school that day. "Why can't you stop spoofing? You've taken Todd in, that's all."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Let it be a lesson to you, Bunter," said John Bull. "Stop telling lies. You never know in what way they'll find you out, you know."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"I guess Bunter can't help it," said Fisher T. Fish. "It's bred in the bone, I guess. But why don't you get a new set of lies, Bunter? Pretend that you've lost your gold watch that you never had, or your wisdom teeth, or something. Say you've left your diamond ring at home on the piano. Anything for a change."

"Who are you?"

Fisher T. Fish stared at him.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Who are you?" asked Bunter. "I don't know you."

"Gee-whiz! If he isn't beginning again!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish, in amazement. The American junior stared at Bunter. "He's off his level, sure."

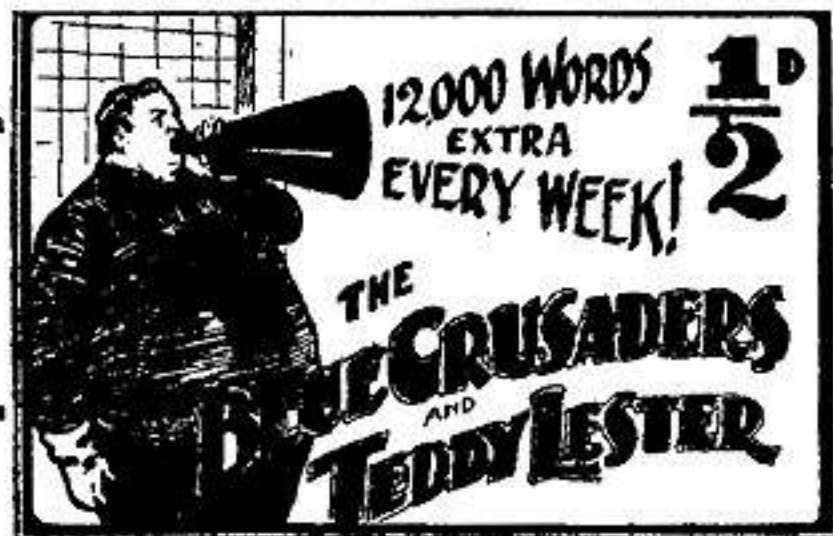
"I don't know you."

"I guess you do, Bunter. And I know you, surely, too."

"I don't remember ever having seen you before," said

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Billy Bunter, blinking at the thin, keen face of the Yankee schoolboy.

Fisher T. Fish grinned.

"Oh, good!" he said. "You don't know who I am—eh?"

"No, I don't."

"And I suppose you don't know what I am?"

"No," said Bunter.

"I'm a vice—a steel vice," said Fish coolly, taking a grip upon Bunter's fat little nose with his finger and thumb. "I hold tight—some!"

Groo!"

"I'm a vice," repeated Fish coolly. "I remain one, I guess, till you remember my other name—some!"

"Yowp!" gurgled Billy Bunter. "Yawp! Yah! Groo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I can keep this up till you recover your memory," said Fisher T. Fish cheerfully, tightening his grip. "What's my name?"

"Yow!"

"Nope. Try again. What's my name?"

"Yaroo!"

"Nope. Try again."

"Groo!"

"Wrong again," said Fisher T. Fish, while the juniors yelled with laughter. "Go it, Bunter. I'll leave off being a steel vice when you remember who I am."

"Gerrooh! Leggo! Ow! You're Fish!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yep," said Fisher T. Fish, releasing Bunter's nose, which had assumed the hue of a newly-boiled beetroot. "That's correct, I guess. Wonderful how suddenly a chap's memory can be restored, isn't it?"

"Ow! Yow!"

Bunter roiled away, caressing his nose, and leaving the juniors roaring with laughter.

It was really surprising that, after being exposed so often, Bunter should keep up the same absurd story, with which the Remove were getting quite "fed up." But that was just like Bunter. He was shortsighted mentally as well as physically. He could never see when a thing was being "run into the ground," as Fisher T. Fish expressed it in his peculiar American language.

The Remove were, in fact, getting quite tired of Bunter's humbug. It was amazing that the fat junior did not stop it; but as he did not stop, various drastic measures were discussed in the Form for putting an end to it.

Even Todd was getting doubtful now about the genuineness of Bunter's affliction. The others had not believed in it for a moment.

Ragging Bunter was the scheme that found most favour. The Remove talked it over, and it was generally agreed that if Bunter did not drop it that day for good, he would have to have a lesson in the dormitory that evening.

"It's making us all look silly asses," Harry Wharton remarked. "The fat chump thinking he can take us in with such rotten humbug makes us look silly. It's as if he took us for a set of fools."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"We'll make him chuck it, that's all, to-night, if he doesn't chuck it to-day of his own accord," Harry Wharton decided.

"Hear, hear!"

But there seemed little likelihood of Billy Bunter dropping his nonsense of his own accord. Either he hoped still to be believed, by persistence, or else he wanted to annoy the other fellows in return for their unbelief. Or perhaps his motives were mixed. At all events, he kept on at the same old game.

He had tea in hall, and affected to forget that the juniors brought in supplies for themselves to eke out the school bread-and-butter. He helped himself to Ogilvy's jam, and to Bulstrode's cake. The owners of the raided articles glared at him across the table.

"Let my jam alone!" Ogilvy breathed.

"Hand that cake back!" hissed Bulstrode.

"Eh?"

"Gimme my jam!"

"Gimme my cake!"

"Who are you?"

"Eh?"

"I don't know you," said Bunter. "Is this jam?"

"What?"

"Is this cake?"

"Hey?"

"I like them," said Bunter.

"They belong to us, you fat thief!"

"Belong!"

"Yes, you fraud!"

"What does belong mean?" asked Bunter. "I've forgotten! I've lost my memory, you know."

Bulstrode glared at him speechlessly. He did not wish to attract Mr. Quelch's attention by making a scene at table. But he mentally promised Billy Bunter things after tea.

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After tea he went out very quickly to see Bunter in the passage. He fastened his thumb and finger on the Owl's fat ear.

"Now then, you young cad——"

"Help!" shrieked Bunter.

"Shut up! I——"

"Help!"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch, coming out. "What is that?"

But Bulstrode was gone.

Mr. Quelch looked curiously at Bunter, who was rubbing his ear, and walked on. The fat junior grinned quietly. He felt that he had scored again.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

The Cold Water Cure.

"BEDTIME!" said Wingate, looking into the junior common-room.

There was a general stir.

Books and chess and draughts were put away, thrilling discussions of football ceased, and the juniors turned out to go to bed.

There was only one fellow who did not move from his chair. Wingate did not notice him, as he had gone out, but Harry Wharton shook him by the shoulder.

"Bedtime, Bunter."

Billy Bunter blinked up at him through his big spectacles.

"Oh, really——"

"Bedtime, you ass!"

"Eh!"

"Bedtime!" roared Wharton.

"I—I don't know what a bed is; I've lost my memory, and—— Yow! Ow! Gerrooh! Don't shake like that, you ass; you'll make my glasses fall off, and if they get broken, you'll have to pay for them. Yow!"

"Are you coming?"

"Groo—ooh! Yes."

And Billy Bunter rose sulkily to follow. He grunted angrily as he went up to bed. In the Remove dormitory, curious looks were cast upon the fat junior.

The whole Remove had entered into the idea of ragging Bunter if he did not stop his nonsense, and it was pretty clear that he did not mean to stop it unless he was compelled to.

"Now then, turn in," said Wingate, looking in at the door of the Remove dormitory. "I shall be back in two minutes."

"Right you are, Wingate."

Bunter sulkily kicked off his boots.

"I say, you fellows," he exclaimed. "I tell you——"

"Oh, go to bed, Bunter!"

"Shut up!"

"I tell you, I've lost my memory, and I don't know which is my bed."

"Rats!"

"Cheese it!"

"Oh, we'll show him which is his bed!" exclaimed Bulstrode, seizing the fat junior. "I'll chuck you on it, Bunter, and then you'll know."

"Yow—ow—ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bump!

Bunter was whirled off his feet, and planted upon the centre of his bed with a bump that made the bedstead crack and creak, and made Bunter gasp and snort.

"There you are, old chap!" said Bulstrode.

"Yaroo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter did not require any more showing. He turned into bed. Wingate looked in a few minutes later, and found all the Remove in, and turned the light out, and bade the juniors good-night.

Then the voice of Billy Bunter was heard in the gloom of the dormitory.

"I say, you fellows, would some of you mind telling me my name? I've lost my memory, you know."

"We'll help you to recover it," said Bob Cherry.

"Hear, hear!"

"We're going to cure you."

The Removites turned out of bed. Wharton turned on the light. Billy Bunter regarded the figures that gathered round his bed in ill-concealed alarm.

"I—I say, you fellows——" he began.

"We're going to help you recover your memory, Bunter," said Harry Wharton grimly. "Get three water-jugs, you fellows—full!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quiet; we don't want a prefect here."

Billy Bunter blinked in great alarm.

"I—I say, Wharton—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I say, you fellows—"

Harry Wharton, John Bull, and Bob Cherry drew near to the fat junior's bed with jugs of water in their hands.

"Look here, I'm going to sleep," said Billy Bunter. "I—Yow! Yah! Gerroch! Yarooch! Ow! Ah! Ow! Oooch!"

Splash! Swamp!

The contents of the water-jugs descended upon the fat junior at one fell swoop.

Swamp!

"Yow—ow—groooch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter was swamped—soaked—drenched. Water descended upon him in a flood, soaking him and soaking his pyjamas and his bedclothes.

He rolled and wriggled and yelled in the midst of the swamping water. But strong hands grasped him, and prevented him from escaping from the bed.

"No, you don't," said Nugent. "Stay where you are! The cold water cure is going to be kept up till you recover your memory."

"Hear, hear!"

"Yow—ow—groo!"

"Have you recovered yet?"

"No—ow—oh!"

"Another jug, you chaps," said Harry Wharton.

"Here you are!"

"Ow!" yelled Bunter. "Stop! I—oh—ow!—I feel that I am recovering now, somehow. I—I feel my memory coming back."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess it's all serene now," said Fisher T. Fish. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure, Bunter?" asked Wharton, poising the jug of water over the squirming, drenched figure of the Owl of the Remove.

Billy Bunter blinked up nervously at the jug.

"Ye-es," he gasped, "I'm s-s-s-sure!"

"You've got your memory all right?"

"Ye-e-es."

"You confess that you were trying to spoof us?"

"No—yes! Yes."

"You admit that you were lying all the time?"

"Ye-e-es!" groaned Bunter.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Alonzo Todd. "Bunter, I am shocked at you! My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked—nay, disgusted!"

Wharton put down the jug of water.

"Well, we've got to the truth at last," he grinned. "Mind, Bunter, if you ever begin the same yarn again, you'll get the same treatment. We're going to keep you permanently cured, if it costs us tons of cold water."

"I guess so."

"Groo! I'm wet—yow—"

"Ha, ha! You'd better towel yourself down," said Harry.

"Yow! I c-c-can't sleep in that bed now."

"You can have some blankets, and snooze on the floor."

"Yarooch! I c-c-can't sleep on the floor!"

"Then you'd better sleep like a horse, standing up; there's nothing else for you to do," said Harry cheerfully.

Bunter towelled himself down with many groans. And when he was dry at last, he accepted the offer of some blankets, and snuggled in them to sleep on the floor. It was all he could do—and there was nothing else for him. Whether it was the discomfort of that night's rest, or the cold-water cure, cannot be said, but the Owl of the Remove had certainly recovered his memory.

The next day nothing was heard in the Remove of Bunter having lost his memory, and the juniors chuckled over the success of the cure. And, as Nugent remarked, Bunter was not likely to lose his memory again, until he forgot the way the juniors had cured the artful dodger.

(Another splendid long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled "The Greyfriars Clon," by Frank Richards. Order your copy of the MAGNET in advance. Price One Penny.)

[Our Readers are informed that the characters in the following Serial Story are purely imaginary, and it contains 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 wonderful 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 reach the French shore, but are compelled to return to England. They take train for Scarborough where the "Lord of the Deep" is being completed. While there, Lord and his diver notice two men attempting to destroy the submarine. They are caught, however, and confess that they are in the pay of Scaroff. Ferrers Lord decides to punish the men by means of the knout, and commands one of them to stand forward.

(Now go on with the story.)

The Terrible Knout.

"I am your judge, Ivan Marovski," Ferrers Lord continued, in Russian. "You are guilty; taken in the very act. Penal servitude for life would be your punishment if I gave you up to the law. It is not my intention to do that. My verdict is the same for both of you. When the sentence is carried out, you can slink back to the fiend that hired you, and tell him how Ferrers Lord pays his debts. Tell him that when he falls into my power I will scar his back with the knout, as I am going to scar yours. Forty lashes each, Field, and do not spare your strength."

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Forty lashes! The horrified Russian went down upon his knees, shivering like a leaf.

"Spare me, my lord!"

"Take them away!" said the millionaire grimly.

The gamekeeper caught them in an iron grip, and dragged them roughly towards the cellar. Both shrieked wildly for mercy, and a look of pity crossed Thurston's face.

"You had better go, Rupert," said the millionaire, "and you, too, Horton. I will see the sentence carried out myself. It is the only way to deal with such, and the knout will frighten the very heart out of them. They will slink back to London, afraid to breathe a word of what has happened. I will see you when it is over."

"It is a terrible thing," said the young man, with a shiver, "but it is only just. Poor wretches!"

Rupert took Horton's arm, and strolled out into the sunlight of the park. The warm breeze seemed to be filled with shrieks of agony.

He could imagine the terrible scene that was being enacted in the cellar—the writhing man, naked to the waist, and chained to the wall; the hiss of the knout, drawing blood at every blow; and the tall figure of Ferrers Lord looking on with grim, black eyes, and calling the number of the strokes with his deep, cold voice.

They sat down on a seat, and watched a flock of browsing deer.

"Mr. Thurston, sir."

"Yes, Horton?" said Rupert, starting.

"How would you like to have my master for an enemy?"

Thurston shivered.

"Not for the wealth of the world!" he answered. "Sometimes I think I am wildly fond of him; sometimes I feel afraid of him. He fascinates me always. He is a mystery, Horton."

The diver smoked in silence, staring dreamily over the park. An hour passed, and Thurston turned his head. Ferrers Lord was coming towards them, followed by a dozen dogs, and puffing at a cigarette. He looked as happy as a schoolboy.

"Hallo!" he cried gaily. "I have had news that will please you through the telephone. She is ready to sail!"

"What, the Lord of the Deep?" shouted both men at once.

"Yes; we sail to-night."

The Vessel Sails—Nathan Trethvick—How Ferrers Lord Tapped the Cable.

The Lord of the Deep was ready to sail as the three men emerged from the gloom of the dark tunnel into the glaring light of the Devil's Cave. The tide was full, lapping high over the concealed door, that was already opened to give the vessel her freedom.

She lay almost flush with the water, the silver ripples washing over her plates, and lapping round her glazed conning-tower.

The workmen who had toiled so hard to finish the vessel stood on the rocks to watch the departure, and a boat was waiting for Ferrers Lord and his friends.

They stepped on board, and went below. A turn of the lever brought the manhole down. Like some strange monster of the deep, the vessel sank.

The voyage had commenced!

Ferrers Lord took the wheel. He was in high spirits.

"It is rather a ticklish job to hit the passage at full tide, Rupert," he said, "and none of the men are capable of doing it. The steersman can bring her in when there is just enough to float her through. We will have some light."

He pressed down a lever with his feet, and two broad beams of light shot from the conning-tower through the glassy gloom of the water.

They felt the beating of the screw, and the Lord of the Deep forged slowly ahead. She gained speed rapidly, and to Rupert and the diver it seemed as if a wall of solid rock were rushing forward to meet them.

It came nearer and nearer, the searchlights gleaming on jagged points festooned with waving seaweed, until the prow seemed almost to strike. Then the rocks disappeared like mist, and the passage had been made.

"Take the wheel, Trethvick," said Ferrers Lord.

A sailor waddled forward to obey. He was a dwarf, with long, muscular arms and tremendous shoulders, but his legs were short and puny. A black pipe was between his lips, and a hatchet hung from his belt.

"This is Nathan Trethvick, Thurston," said Ferrers Lord. "In my absence he is in full command of the vessel. You will remember, I hope, that you are under his authority in all matters relating to the working of the ship."

Thurston bowed, and eyed the man narrowly.

"I am pleased to meet Mr. Thurston," said Trethvick, with a grin. "I'm sure we'll get on well, sir."

They shook hands, and Thurston felt a sudden distrust and dislike.

"I do not doubt it," he answered.

The three men went below into the saloon. Since Thurston had first seen it on his memorable awakening, it had been transformed into a fairy palace.

The walls were draped with pale-blue silk, with a faint pattern of gold as border. It gleamed with mirrors, and the soft light of electric lamps. Cushions and lounges lay about, and his feet sank ankle-deep into the spongy carpet.

"By Jove, Lord," he said, "you have made this into a little paradise!"

"Christopher, that's true!" said Horton. "What an alteration!"

The millionaire smiled.

"There is no reason why we should not be comfortable, even in a submarine-boat, Rupert. Sit down, both of you, and we'll have a chat and a smoke before we turn in for the night. We are not going far, as I am awaiting news."

"News?" said Thurston. "How can you get news at the bottom of the sea?"

"Be patient, and I will show you before very long."

He touched the bell, and a Chinaman Thurston had seen before entered, carrying coffee and cigars. Each took one of the little shell cups.

"As you both understand the position of affairs," went on the millionaire, "I will tell you roughly what I propose to do. It will be weeks before Scaroff can finish his boat, even if he moves heaven and earth to do it. We must discover first of all where he is building it. Personally, I think he will select Kronstadt, that impregnable fortress which

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NEXT WEEK: "THE GREYFRIAR'S CLOWN." A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

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guards the way to St. Petersburg. There are other places, of course, now that Russia has seized Finland-Sveaborg, Borgo, or Siborg. I hope he will choose one of the latter, for in Kronstadt he will be out of my reach."

"What! Cannot even a submarine boat get near the place?" asked Thurston.

"I cannot tell as yet. It is a network of mines and sunk torpedoes. We can wait for him, at least. If I get news tomorrow, I shall know what to do. He may even be building the boat at Archangle or Odessa, perhaps even at Vladivostok, on the Siberian coast. He is as cunning as a fox."

"But this news?" asked Thurston curiously.

Ferrers Lord smiled.

"Wait and see," he answered. "It is time to turn in."

Thurston found his little cabin marvellously snug and comfortable. He had no bunk or hammock, but a neat camp-bedstead. There was no danger of being pitched out, for the Lord of the Deep moved in the silent depths where there was neither tide, wave, nor current. He drew the blanket over his head, and sunk at once into a dreamless sleep.

Ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, ting!

Six bells. Seven o'clock. He woke with a yawn, wondering where he was in the darkness. There was a tap at the door. The light over his head was switched on, and the Chinese servant entered with a cup of delicious tea and his shaving-water.

"By Jove!" muttered Thurston, as he sipped the tea. "This is rather more luxurious than I imagined. Now for a shave. Wonder if I can manage it one-handed?"

He was stropping the razor, when the millionaire's quiet voice said behind him:

"Hallo, Rupert! Up already? What do you say to a swim? Do you think the arm would bear it?"

"Just what I'd like. I guess so, if you'll bandage it up afterwards. I can paddle on my back."

"Come along, then. A wetting won't hurt it."

Thurston followed, expecting to go on deck; but the millionaire passed quietly along a passage that flanked the engine-room.

The huge engines were silent, like sleeping giants, and grimy men were crawling with oilcans among the massive wheels, cranks, and cylinders.

"My swimming-bath, Rupert," said Ferrers Lord, opening a door.

It was a long, oval tank, some ten feet deep, lined with smooth white tiles, and lighted from above with electricity. Horton stood on the diving-board at the further end ready to plunge in, and he shouted a cheery good-morning. A thin steam rose from the water.

Thurston was too surprised to speak.

"I still keep on astonishing you," laughed Ferrers Lord, "but there is really nothing to be astonished at. There is another tank similar to this forward, but I keep it covered up. I turned this one into a swimming-bath merely to make it doubly useful. It is by means of these tanks that I make the Lord of the Deep ascend or descend at will. When the tanks are empty, she floats upon the surface; and, of course, I can regulate either ascent or descent to a nicety."

Rupert stripped in silence, and mounted the diving-board.

"Very good," he said slowly. "But I am afraid this has raised my hopes too high. After a swimming-bath, I shall expect a billiard-table, lifts, a fire-escape, a telephone, and all the other luxuries of a good hotel, with a post six times a day. Look out, Horton!"

He shot downwards, dived the length of the tank, and rose, with a boyish laugh of pleasure, to find the puffing head of Ned Norton beside him. He pushed his head under water, and churned along with rapid strokes, crippled though he was.

"You swim well for a man with a game wing," said the millionaire; "but you've had enough. I'll bandage you in a few minutes."

Breakfast was served in the state-room, as Horton christened it—as dainty a breakfast as ever three hungry men sat down to. Thurston's arm was healing fast, and he could already use the fingers freely. Moreover, he was already learning how to make one hand, aided by his teeth, do the work of two, and to do it fairly well.

"Have you received this mysterious news yet?" he asked, as the stolid Chinaman filled his cup for the third time.

"Not yet," answered Ferrers Lord. "I suppose you imagine I am waiting here for some vessel with letters?"

Thurston nodded, and again attacked the crisp fingers of toast.

"That's just what I did think. How could I think anything else?"

"Then you are mistaken," said the millionaire. "We are about sixty fathoms under water, imprisoned in a shell of steel, and dependant for the very air we breathe on a little machine of my own invention not half the size of this table."

We are going into shallower water presently. And yet, if I wish to send a message to any part of the world I can do it with ease."

Thurston's knife and fork dropped with a clatter, and Norton looked up in amaze.

"How?" cried both the men at once.

Ferrers Lord pushed back his chair, and the watchful Chinaman hastily placed cigarettes and spirit-lamp before him. He blew out a cloud of smoke as he answered:

"Let me tell you—or, rather, give me time to tell you. I am a rich man, as you know, and everything submarine interests me immensely. Probably I have invested more money in submarine telegraph companies than any man, and I have a right to use the cables how and when I choose. Come, and I will show you how the Lord of the Deep sends its messages. Don't let me hurry you, Rupert."

"I have finished, thank you."

Ferrers Lord passed over a cigarette, and then rose.

They entered the engine-room, and the millionaire pointed to a massive door of steel let into the hull of the vessel.

"I am going to tap the cable," he said. "To do that, of course, I must leave the vessel."

"But if you open that door——" began Thurston.

"To be sure, we should be drowned like rats, you were going to say. My dear fellow, nothing of the kind. Except before the state-room, the vessel is built with two shells. See?"

He pulled down the heavy bolts, and dragged open the water-tight door, showing a narrow passage. Bars of steel, only a few feet apart, joined the two shells. Beyond was a second door, and on either side bulkheads of steel.

"Just here is the weakest part of the boat," he went on, "but it is quite strong enough to withstand any ordinary pressure of water. Behind the bulkheads a cushion of air, compressed at six hundred atmospheres, or nine thousand pounds to the square inch, surrounds the vessel. You can imagine that if there were a flaw anywhere such an enormous pressure would burst us into atoms."

Thurston whistled.

"Pretty cheering, isn't it, Horton?" he said, with a smile. "I sincerely hope no flaws exist."

"Not more than I hope so myself. Now, Horton, you understand this work. Give me a hand."

He lifted the lid of a chest, and took out a diving-dress.

Horton examined the helmet, and looked puzzled.

"How does it work, sir?" he asked. "There's no place for the air-tubes here."

"I do not want air-tubes," answered the millionaire. "I carry my own air on my back. Here it is, in this cylinder—enough to last twenty-four hours. The waste gases escape from this valve here. I carry an electric lamp, too, just on the same principle as the small lamps one sees on bicycles. In a dress like this a diver is not hampered, and he is not dependent upon other people."

He pulled on the heavy oil-skin trousers as he spoke, after rolling his legs and waist in yard after yard of flannel. A jersey and woollen cap came next, and then a padded flannel coat.

"The helmet," he said.

"If you want to see me, go back to the state-room."

The helmet was screwed on, whilst Thurston strapped up the cumbersome lead-soled boots. Nathan Trethvick, the dwarf, came waddling down the ladder, and gave them a gruff "Good-morning!"

"Are you ready, sir?" he asked, using the dumb finger language, for the nozzle had been fastened on.

Ferrers Lord waved his hand, and dragged himself heavily through the door. Trethvick closed and barred it behind him, and, standing upon the chest, pulled down a brass lever. From behind the door came the sound of gurgling water. Slowly it rose higher and higher, till it covered the diver's head and filled the compartment.

The light on the millionaire's breast shone out, and

he unbarred the second door. His foot found the topmost rung of the ladder, and the fierce weight that had made it almost impossible for him to walk in the air was gone in a moment. He descended rapidly, and strode forward into the wonderland of waters.

"If you want to see, gentlemen," said the captain of the Lord of the Deep, "the saloon is at your service, and I'll turn on one of the searchlights. Ha, ha, ha! We have queer ways aboard this boat. If you want to telegraph to your best girl, Mr. Thurston, now's your chance, and nothing to pay. We don't charge two shillings a word here. Ha, ha, ha!"

Nathan grinned, and rubbed his hairy hands together. He was still smoking a dirty clay pipe, and he looked uglier and more repulsive than ever.

"Thank you," said Rupert quietly.

As they went back to the saloon, he whispered to Horton:

"What do you think of this fellow, Trethvick?"

"Not much, sir," answered the diver, in the same low tone. "If we're to judge by looks, he's about the ugliest, most villainous-looking reptile I ever clapped eyes on. He's second in command, and I hope I'll have better luck than to fall foul of him."

A hoarse "Ha, ha, ha!" sounded behind them, and Thurston glanced over his shoulder. Nathan Trethvick was sitting on the chest, cutting up tobacco with a murderous-looking knife. He was grinning broadly. He seemed as though he had heard. Thurston hurried on, but the hoarse voice drifted after them. Trethvick was singing:

"The skipper hangs on the yardarm high,

And I'm the skipper now.

He tried to stop the mutiny

Aboard the Sally Howe.

The mate, he's gone to Davy Jones,

I knifed him in the dark——"

They closed the door of the state-room, and the rest of the ditty was lost. It was not a pretty song, but it was far prettier than the singer. But the scene before them banished Trethvick from their minds.

The blind of the saloon had been raised, and through the crystal glass they saw Ferrers Lord standing in the circle of white thrown by the searchlight. He was kneeling beside the submarine cable that came out of the darkness like a snake and vanished again into the glassy gloom a few paces ahead. They saw the bubbles rising from the helmet.

He came towards the window, and, taking down two coils of wire, slowly unrolled them. Then he went back again to the cable, carrying the ends of the wires, and knelt down once more. Hundreds of fish swam round him as he worked. Horton was bending forward eagerly. Suddenly he leapt up, his eyes starting from his head.

"Christopher!" he shouted in horror. "A trawl!"

Out of the darkness, like a ghost, came the huge net, scraping along the bottom, dragged by its wire cable. The diver could hear nothing, encased in his shell, and Ferrers Lord saw nothing, for he was too intent on his work.

Thurston was deadly white, and his heart leapt to his throat. He shrieked out a useless warning, forgetting that the millionaire was deaf to every sound. Nearer came the heavy beam of the trawling-net.

It struck the millionaire upon the shoulder just as he rose to his feet, and in an instant he was dragged into the meshes.

There was a crash as the beam collided with the Lord of the Deep, not twenty feet below the window. The cable attached to the net snapped like a packthread, and the luckless trawler had lost her gear.

Thurston's thoughts were only for Ferrers Lord; but he had no reason for anxiety. The ready knife cut through the meshes, and a shoal of fish scuttled away. The millionaire walked back calmly to finish his work.

(To be continued.)

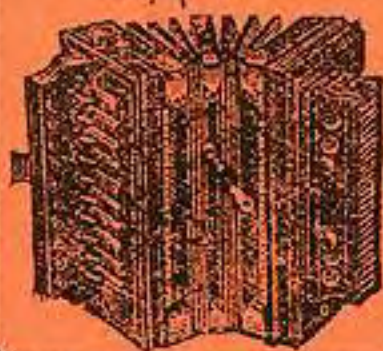


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