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THE GREYFRIARS STRONG MAN!

By Frank Richards

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Any Port in a Storm!

"O H lor'!" groaned Billy Bunter. "Wish you hadn't come, old fat man!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Yes! Beast! Yes! Ow!"

The rain came down in torrents. Billy Bunter was not the only fellow who wished that he hadn't come. There were six other fellows present, and they all wished they hadn't!

Harry Wharton & Co. were trailing by a wet, weary path on Courtfield Common. November mist drifted over the common, and through the mist came the pelting rain. The Famous Five were wet. Peter Todd was wet. Billy Bunter was wet! They were all wet—fearfully wet! And they were still a mile and a half from Greyfriars—and the rain, instead of easing off as they had hoped, was coming down harder and harder. Bob Cherry remarked that they would have to swim for it soon, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh agreed that the swimfulness would be terrific. Johnny Bull proposed taking Peter Todd by the scruff of the neck and swamping him in a puddle—there were plenty available. It had been Peter's idea to picnic on the river that day—and this was the result.

It had been a fine afternoon, amazingly fine for November. It had been clear and sunny and really quite warm. Also, it had been a half-holiday. Toddy had suggested the picnic and the Famous Five, rather against their better judgment, had agreed. Still, it had been a very nice picnic. Bunter, anyhow, had no doubts. He did not give

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a thought to the vagaries of the weather, his fat thoughts being concentrated on the contents of the picnic basket. Fine weather had held out till the picnic was over and it was time to walk back to the school across the common. Then quite suddenly the flood had opened. And seven hapless juniors tramped and squelched through mud and rain and the mist that rolled up from the sea. And they did not enjoy it a little bit.

"I say, you fellows, why didn't one of you bring an umbrella?" groaned Billy Bunter.

"Why didn't you, fatty?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Beast!"

"My hat! It's wet!" said Bob. "The blessed rain's trickling down my neck! Oooogh!"

"I'm drenched!" groaned Bunter.

"The drenchfulness of our esteemed selves is also somewhat terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Beast!"

Harry Wharton came to a halt, peering through the mist and the pouring rain. There was not even an overcoat in the party—so fine and sunny had that treacherous afternoon seemed when they started.

"Look here, we'd better get shelter!" said the captain of the Remove. "This is too jolly thick."

"Hardly time to get in for calling-over," said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, blow calling-over! Quelch wouldn't expect us to walk through this putrid rain."

"I say, you fellows, I can feel pneumonia coming on!" groaned Billy Bunter. "I'm getting it in both legs."

There was a chuckle from the drenched juniors. The idea of Billy Bunter getting pneumonia in his legs seemed to afford a little comic relief in the distressful situation.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" moaned the Owl of the Remove. "I'm getting double pneumonia—treble, I shouldn't wonder—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle!" howled Bunter. "Look here, you beasts, you've got me into this, and it's up to you to find some shelter, see? I'm not going to have pneumonia and plumbago to please you."

"Oh, come on!" said Bob. "There isn't any shelter for a mile."

"Hold on!" said Harry. "There's that old house—it's called the Willows—not far from here. It's been empty for donkeys' years, and the gate's always open. We could get in easily enough."

"Good egg!" said Peter Todd. "Anything to get out of this dashed rain. Lead on, Maeduff!"

"It's not far from this path," said Harry. "We can get there in ten minutes or less—"

"I can't keep on through this rain for another ten minutes, you beast!" howled Billy Bunter.

"Right-ho, stay where you are, then," said the captain of the Remove, and he turned from the path and led the way across the dripping grass.

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

The other fellows followed Wharton, and Billy Bunter followed the other fellows. With a series of deep groans, the fat Owl of the Remove rolled on through the rain. In the rainy mist it was not easy to find the way, but Wharton had often passed the Willows on his bicycle, and he remembered where the old house lay, between the common and the river. He kept on without a pause and reached a lane on the edge of the common. Across the lane a high brick wall loomed in the gloom.

"Here we are!" exclaimed Harry.

They splashed across the lane and followed the wall till they reached a gateway. For donkeys' years, as Wharton expressed it, the Willows had been in the hands of the estate agents to sell or to let, but neither a buyer nor a tenant had been found—at least, the old place had presented its customary dismal and deserted aspect the last time Wharton had passed it, early in the term. The rather extensive grounds within the high brick wall had gone to weeds; the old gates were never fastened, and the mischievous youth of the neighbourhood often trespassed there, especially when there were apples

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in the old, neglected orchard. Wharton groped at the gate.

"Oh, my hat!" he ejaculated.
"Buck up, old bean," said Nugent. "If we're going to cut call-over, for goodness' sake let's get out of the rain. Is the gate stuck?"

"It's locked!"
"It's never locked," said Peter Todd. "Give it a shove."

"Fathead! It's locked now."
"Rot!" said Peter. "How could it be locked when the lock's been broken for dogs' ages? I'll get it open."

Peter Todd grasped the rusty metal bars of the high gate and shoved with all his strength. But he shoved in vain! The gate was immovable!

"Oh!" said Peter.
"Well, aren't you going to get it open?" asked the captain of the Remove sarcastically.

"Hein!" Peter groped over the lock. "It—it—it's locked, after all! What silly ass has come along and locked it? Must be a new lock—the old one was in bits."

"I say, you fellows, if you're going to keep me out in this rain—"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"
"Beast!"

Harry Wharton glanced up at the high gate. It had spikes at the top and did not look easily negotiable. Apparently, after long neglect, somebody had had that gate put right at a most unfortunate time for the rain-soaked Greyfriars fellows.

"Bother!" grunted the captain of the Remove. "Look here, we can get over the wall! No harm in getting in as the place is empty. Half the windows are broken and we can get into the house easily enough. Might get a fire going and dry ourselves while we wait for the rain to stop."

"Go it!" said Bob. "Who wants a bunk up?"

"I say, you fellows—"

"All hands on deck!" grinned Bob, and the juniors grasped Billy Bunter and heaved him up the six-foot wall. There were six of them, and they were all sturdy, but they needed all their beef to heave the fat Owl up. There was a lot of Bunter to lift.

"I say, you fellows—ow—stop pinching me, you beasts—wow!" Bunter clutched at the coping with his fat paws and scrambled up. "Ow! Leggo my legs, you beasts! I'm up!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Johnny Bull, as Bunter's boot, perhaps by accident, caught him on the nose. Possibly it was not by accident. William George Bunter was not in a good temper.

Johnny Bull reached up and smacked at the trousers that were disappearing over the wall. There was a wild howl from Bunter as he went over the top. It was followed by a sound of crashing shrubbery from the inner side of the wall and another and louder howl.

"Ow! I'm killed! My neck's broken! Yarooooooh!"

"Come on!" chuckled Bob, and the juniors clambered over the wall and dropped among the drenched shrubberies inside.

"Ow! I say, you fellows, I'm hurt!" howled Bunter.

"Good!" said the fellows, all together.

"Beasts! My leg's broken!"

"Then you can't move?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ow! No! Not a step! Ow!"

"You'll have to stay where you are, then, old fat bean! Good-bye!"

And the juniors tramped through the

dripping shrubbery, followed by a yell from Billy Bunter.

"Yah! Beasts! Wait for me!"
And the fat Owl of the Remove scrambled up, and came bolting after them, apparently not severely injured, after all.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A House of Mystery!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
"What—?"
"What's that?"

The dripping juniors, pushing through the shrubbery, reached the drive that ran up from the gates to the old house. The drive was long and winding, through rows of ancient beeches and oaks. It was thoroughly neglected—thick with weeds, dotted with muddy puddles. The leaves of autumn covered it like a carpet soaked with rain. Among the trees grew weeds like a jungle. It was said that the Willows had not been occupied since the War, and it looked as if it had not been occupied or taken care of since the Napoleonic wars.

Dark and dismal and gloomy the place looked; but the Greyfriars fellows were not thinking much of its looks: they were thinking of getting out of

THE GREYFRIARS STRONG MAN!

It isn't Horace Coker; it isn't Bolsover major. It's Alonzo Theophilus Todd, the freak of the Remove, who, normally, hasn't the strength of a fag in the Second Form! How does this amazing transformation come about?

the rain. They tramped up the weedy, muddy, puddly drive, and then suddenly Harry Wharton stopped, as there was a rustle in a great, oak branch that jutted overhead.

It was rainy and misty and shadowy, but not quite dark yet. In the dimness the captain of the Remove stared up at the swaying oak branch, and at a figure that clung to it, clambering. A startled ejaculation came from all the party, except Bunter, who saw nothing but the rain. His big spectacles were wet with the rain, and his vision was blurred.

"What the thump?" gasped Nugent.

"Is it a—a—a monkey?"

"Great pip!"

In sheer amazement the juniors stared. The figure was small, if it was a man—hardly larger than one of the schoolboys. But could it be a man, clambering over the branches of trees in the rain? Its movements were wonderfully swift. It seemed to perceive the juniors, and peered down at them, and they were sure that they caught the glimmer of a pair of spectacles. They were sure, too, that the figure was clothed, in which case it could hardly have been a monkey. But it was only for a second that it peered; then it whisked along the branch at an amazing speed, and vanished into the body of the tree.

Heedless of the rain for the moment,

Harry Wharton & Co. stood still staring up at the oak.

A rustling sound told that the strange creature was still in motion, though out of sight. It was swinging from one tree to another, and as they were spaced well apart this showed an agility and a recklessness that seemed scarcely human. But if it was a monkey it was a monkey as large as a human being. And how in the name of wonder had it got there?

"What—what—what was it?" gasped Bob.

"A monkey—"

"But it had specs on! I'm sure I saw specs!" gasped Nugent.

"And it had a coat on," breathed Wharton. "What the thump—"

"It had grey hair," said Johnny Bull. "I'm certain I spotted a mop of grey hair. It was an old man."

"Well, it can hardly have been," said Harry. "An old man couldn't climb trees like that. Blessed if I think a boy could, either!"

"I say, you fellows, come on!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "What are you hanging about for, and gabbling, you dummies?"

Unheeding Bunter, the juniors looked and listened, with a vague feeling of alarm in their breasts. That momentary glimpse of the strange, weird figure in the tree had utterly startled them.

But it was gone, and no further sound was heard from it. Their hearts were beating rather fast as they watched and listened. But there was no sign now of the strange creature.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, come on!" said Bob. "Whatever it was, it won't damage us. And we're getting frightfully wet."

The juniors tramped on towards the old house.

"What did you fellows think you saw?" grunted Bunter.

"Somebody, or something, clambering in that oak," answered Harry Wharton.

"What rot!"

"You fat duffer, we saw it—"

"Rubbish!" said Bunter. "Just like you fellows to be frightened by a shadow. Lot of funks, if you ask me!"

"Who's frightened?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Yah!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's a light in the house!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as, following the last curve of the avenue, they came in sight of the building at last.

From the dim mist ahead, and the following November darkness, a light twinkled out. It came from some window in the black mass of the old buildings.

"Somebody's there!" said Frank Nugent.

"Some tramp camping," said Peter Todd. "That's all right; we can handle him if he gives any trouble. Get on!"

"I suppose that's it," said Harry slowly. "But—"

"Oh, come on!"

The Willows was an old, bay-windowed, double-fronted house. In the centre was a large, stone porch, on which the main door opened. Now that they were close at hand the juniors could see a glimmer of light from the porch, as well as from one of the windows. It was clear that someone was in the house, which they had expected to find utterly deserted. Many times tramps had camped in the deserted old place, and it was probable enough that

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some wanderer had taken refuge there from the rain. But a doubt was growing up in Harry Wharton's mind. It was some weeks since he had seen the place, and he had taken it for granted that it was still unoccupied, as it had been for years past. But it occurred to him now that it might, after all, have found a tenant.

His doubt became rather a certainty as he saw that the window from which the light glimmered was curtained. There had been no curtains at the windows when he had last seen the old house. And though he could not see the light that was burning within, he could guess that it was electric light, in which case the current was no longer out off, as it had long been. He came to an abrupt halt.

"My hat! Hold on!" he said. "The place has been taken. There's people living here."

"Phew!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"That's why a lock's been put on the gate," said Harry. "I never thought that— But it's pretty plain now. And we're trespassing."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Dry up, Bunter!"

"Well, dash it all, we can ask for shelter from the rain!" said Johnny Bull. "There's plenty of sheds, if they don't want us in the house. If there's somebody there, we'd better knock at the door."

"We'd better let them know we're here," said Bob. "Might take us for tramps or burglars. We'll knock."

The juniors went under the high, stone porch. It was windy and damp there, but they were out of the falling rain. There was a great oak door in front of them, with a huge, old-fashioned knocker on it; but they could see now that the door was ajar. A glimmer of light escaped from the illumined hall within.

Harry Wharton reached up to the knocker. There was some shelter in the porch without going in; but the juniors could hardly crowd there without apprising the house owner of their presence. He knocked.

Knock, knock, knock!

The knocking rang and echoed in the old house.

But there was no sound of footsteps within. There came no reply to the knocking, but the echo.

"Nobody at home," said Bob. "Looks as if the house has been taken; but there's nobody in."

"I say, you fellows, I'm going in!" snorted Billy Bunter, as a gust of wind scattered raindrops in the porch. And the Owl of the Remove pushed at the great, heavy, oak door, and it swung wide open.

Bunter rolled in. The juniors, a little dubious about entering without permission, looked into the hall. It was lighted by a single electric bulb suspended from the ceiling, the light glimmering on ancient walls of panelled oak. Nobody was to be seen, but along the walls and about the floor were scattered a large number of boxes and packing-cases—doubtless containing the property of the new and unknown tenant of the Willows. There could be no further doubt that the house was occupied.

Billy Bunter shook off a shower of raindrops, and grunted. There was a deep, old-fashioned fireplace in the hall, but there was no fire in it. But the atmosphere inside was warm, and showed that there was heating somewhere.

"I say, you fellows—"

"I suppose we can step inside!" said Bob doubtfully.

"Of course you can, you ass!" said Bunter peevishly. "There's nobody here! I say, you fellows, let's get a fire going. We can use some of these packing-cases."

"And suppose the owner comes along and drops on you?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Oh, blow him!" said Bunter. "I'm wet!"

"There's a fire somewhere, or the place would be chilly," said Bob. "I wonder if the man, whoever he is, would mind us squatting round till he comes back? He seems to have gone out."

"I'm going too!" grunted Bunter.

There was a streak of light under a door on the left; it came from the lighted room. Billy Bunter blinked round, rolled across to it, and took hold of the door-handle.

"Knock, you fat chump!" snapped Harry. "There may be somebody there!"

"He would have heard you knocking, fathead!" growled Bunter. "There's nobody at home!"

However the fat junior tapped on the door.

There was no sound from within, and Billy Bunter turned the handle and threw the door open. The other fellows were in the hall now, and they glanced into the room. It was a large, lofty apartment, and seemed to be fitted up as a laboratory. They could see that the fittings were new, in contrast to the old, time-worn look of the house.

Glass retorts and flasks, and other things of the same kind, were packed on shelves, and there were several partly unpacked cases, which apparently contained similar things. But what attracted the wet and cold schoolboys chiefly was a bright fire that burned in the grate across the room. A large leather armchair that stood by it looked very inviting.

Harry Wharton & Co. hesitated. Obviously, there was nobody in the house at the moment; but as the front door had been left ajar, it looked as if the owner might return at any moment. The warm fire was tempting; but they could hardly let a stranger discover them making free with his house to such an extent. It was quite probable that he might be annoyed by finding strangers in the hall.

But Billy Bunter had no such hesitation. The glowing fire and the cosy armchair decided the matter for Bunter. After a blink round the room through his big spectacles, Billy Bunter rolled in at the doorway.

The next moment a fearful yell rang out—echoed in a startled cry from the juniors in the hall, as the floor opened under Billy Bunter's feet, and he vanished suddenly from their sight.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Trapped!

"YAROOOOOH!"

That yell left Bunter's lips as he vanished.

He vanished in the twinkling of an eye.

Harry Wharton & Co., rooted to the floor in the hall, stared, with starting eyes, into the room.

For a moment or two they could hardly believe in what had happened.

Bunter was gone!

The floor of the laboratory was intact. The trapdoor through which the fat Owl had fallen had shot up instantly into place. The floor looked as it had looked before—solid oak, firm and solid to the tread. Evidently that trapdoor was worked by some hidden mechanism.

Probably Bunter was still yelling; but, if so, the sound was cut off by the thick oak that had closed above him. Not a sound reached the ears of the juniors.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry, breaking the horrified silence.

"Bunter!" gasped Nugent.

"He—he—he's gone!" almost babbled Peter Todd. Toddy's face was white, as he stared at the spot where Billy Bunter had disappeared.

Wharton drew a deep breath. The thought was in his mind—in the minds of all the juniors—that the trapdoor concealed some deep and dangerous pit, and that the Owl of the Remove might have sustained serious injury in the fall. But what did it all mean? Who was the mysterious tenant of the Willows, who protected his property by this strange means, instead of relying on locks and bolts and bars? Who and what could he be?

"We—we've got to help Bunter!" said Harry at last, and he moved to the doorway of the laboratory.

Nugent caught his arm.

"Look out! No good tumbling in after Bunter."

"I'll be careful!"

Wharton dropped on his hands and knees, and tested the floor carefully with his hands, as he advanced. The other fellows watched him breathlessly. Just within the door a section of the oak flooring stirred, under the pressure of Wharton's hand. The trap had replaced itself, and could not be distinguished by the eye from the surrounding oak; but evidently it was ready to drop under another footstep.

But it was not a footstep on it now, it was a hand, pressing, and the trap sank a few inches under the pressure, while Wharton knelt on the safe side of it. Now that there was an aperture, a voice came from below—the voice of Billy Bunter, on its top note.

"Yarocoh! Oh crikey! I say, you fellows! Help! Gemme out of this! Oh lor'! Help! Rescue!"

It was a relief to hear Bunter's voice again. It was clear that the fall had not much damaged the fat Owl.

"Are you hurt, Bunter?" called out Wharton.

"Yes, frightfully!" came Bunter's prompt reply. "Smashed to pieces! My back's broken in three places—"

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I mean, it's nearly broken! I've dropped my specs."

"Bother your specs, you fat duffer!"

"Beast!"

Wharton pressed the trap harder, till it sank almost vertically on its hidden, well-oiled hinges. Then he could see the Owl of the Remove, and the other fellows, gathering close to him, could see also. Billy Bunter blinked up at them like an owl in the light.

Evidently he was not hurt, though, as the pit was a good ten feet deep, he had had rather a fall. The floor of it was covered with a large quilt, on which Bunter had plumped. It was a huge eiderdown quilt of immense thickness, and Bunter's feet sank deep in it as he stood up. The juniors could only stare at it. Whoever had planned this trap to catch intruders in the laboratory, had desired only to catch them, not to hurt them! Plainly the owner of the Willows was a kind-hearted man, weird as his manners and customs seemed to be.

"I say, you fellows, get me out of this!" yelled Bunter. "I'm fearfully injured! I say, fancy laying a trap like this for a fellow! I'd jolly well like to punch the beast's head! I say, I've dropped my specs—"

"There they are, just behind you, fathead!"

Bunter blinked round him, recovered

his specs, and jammed them on his fat little nose.

"Now get me out!" he hooted, blinking up at the faces looking down.

"How?" asked Bob Cherry.

"The howfulness is terrific!"

"Beasts! You've got to get me out!" roared Bunter indignantly. "Are you thinking of leaving me here, you rotters? Reach down and lift me out."

"We can't reach you, you ass!"

"The reachfulness is not the practical proposition, my esteemed idiotic Bunter."

"Are you going to leave me here?" yelled Bunter.

"Looks like it," answered Harry Wharton. "You'll have to wait till the sportsman the house belongs to comes in."

"Beast!" yelled Bunter. "Find a

be jolly thankful that you're not damaged!"

"I'm fearfully damaged! I've got pains all over—"

"Your pains are all over?" asked Bob. "Yes, you beast."

"Well, if they're all over, what are you grouching about?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly chump!" roared Bunter. "I don't mean that they're all over, I mean that they're all over—"

"The lucidity is terrific!"

"Well, you'll have to wait a bit, old fat man," said Harry. "We'll do the best we can for you."

Wharton jammed his wet cap into the edge of the trap to keep it partly open. It remained a few inches open—space sufficient to allow passage to

Bunter's voice, which went on and on

of servants about the house. The man to whom the place belonged might come in at any moment—on the other hand, he might not; and Bunter had to be got out of his painful predicament as soon as possible. Judging by his yells and howls, Bunter wanted to be got out sooner than was possible.

"I bag the armchair," said Peter Todd, and he sat down in the big leather chair by the fire. The Famous Five looked round for boxes to sit on, to get on with the ropemaking. But a sudden startled howl from Peter Todd drew all their attention to him.

"Yooop! Whoop! What the thump—gerrooogh! Whooh-hooooop!" yelled Peter frantically as the padded arms of the armchair closed in on him, pinning him by either side and holding him a prisoner!



The glowing fire and the cosy armchair attracted Bunter and, after a blink round the room through his big spectacles, he rolled in at the doorway. "Yaroooh!" The next moment a fearful yell rang out as the floor opened under Bunter's feet and the fat junior vanished suddenly from sight!

rope! Very likely there's a rope in the house! Root all over the place, and find one, or a ladder!"

"Might be a ladder in one of the out-houses," said Bob. "But how the dickens could we find it in the dark?"

"Look for it!" howled Bunter. "I can't stay here! Look here! You can get into the room by jumping over the trap. Pitch some of the furniture down—chairs and things—and I can make a stack and climb out."

"Oh, my hat! Do you think we can handle a man's property like that?"

"Serve him jolly well right! What right has he to set a trap like this for a fellow?" yelled Bunter.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Must have been set for burglars," he said. "The jolly old sportsman didn't know we were coming in here out of the rain."

"We'll try to get you out somehow, Bunter," said Harry. "You'll have to stick there till we find a way. You can

and on like the little brook in the poem. But the juniors did not heed it further. With the trap partly sunk, its extent was visible to the eye, and the juniors were able to jump across it and land safely in the room.

But once inside they were very wary in their movements, on the lookout for other traps. Some of the packing-cases standing about the room had been corded as well as nailed; and a good deal of the cord lay about. Harry Wharton began to gather it up.

"That won't take Bunter's weight," said Peter Todd.

"We know how to plait, and there's plenty of it," said Harry. "Three plaited together will bear Bunter, and we'll hook him out."

"Good egg!" said Bob.

And the loose cords having been gathered, the juniors prepared to plait them into a strong rope. There was still no sound and no sign of the tenant of the Willows returning—no sound or sign

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Amazing!

"O H, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five ran towards Peter. But they could not help him. He was gripped in the thick leather arms of the chair, a helpless prisoner—his arms waving, his legs kicking, but his body held fast. Evidently the trap into which Billy Bunter had fallen was not the only one in that strange place. Peter yelled wildly.

"Ow! What the thump—help me out—drag the thing off! Oh crikey! What blessed lunatic has rigged this up? Oh crumbs!"

The juniors grabbed at the arms of the chair—they dragged, and pulled, and lugged and tugged. But it made no difference. Some spring had been set in motion, concealed in the seat of the chair, when Peter sat down—and it

had done its work! There was no escape for Toddy!

"Nothing doing!" gasped Nugent. "My hat! We're in a queer place, and no mistake!"

"The queerfulness is terrific."

"Who can the man be that's taken this place—what can he be?" exclaimed Wharton. "Some scientific johnny, I suppose—the lab looks like it! But it's all fearfully odd."

"Look here, get hold of something and smash up this dashed chair!" roared Peter Todd.

"My dear man, we mustn't smash up a man's property in a man's house," said Bob. "He never asked you to sit in his chair, whoever he is. You'll have to wait for him to roll home. Let's hope he'll be in before the milk in the morning!"

Nothing could be done for Peter. He had to wait—that was clear. He was not hurt—only rather uncomfortable. Uncomfortable or not, he had to stay where he was.

"I say, you fellows," came Bunter's howl from the cellar. "How long are you going to be getting me out of this?"

"Wait and see, old fat bean," answered Bob.

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

"When the thump is the man coming in?" growled Johnny Bull. "We can't clear off, even if the rain stops, and leave Bunter and Toddy here. And we're late for call-over already. Quelch will have his back up."

"The front door was ajar—the owner must be in the grounds somewhere, I should think," said Harry.

"In this rain?" said Bob.

"Well, he seems a queer sort of customer, anyhow! I wonder—" Wharton was thinking of the strange figure he had glimpsed clambering in the oak-tree.

But he broke off! It seemed impossible to imagine, for one moment, that the master of the house was that little strange figure that had been climbing trees like a monkey! Yet the thought lingered in Wharton's mind. He was sure, or almost sure, that the climber in the oak had been a human figure. But if so, was he some lunatic? It was difficult to believe that an elderly man, if in his right senses, could have been clambering about trees like a monkey, in a downpour of rain.

"Look here, what about ringing up Quelch?" said Bob. "There's a telephone on the desk there—and goodness knows when we shall get away from here. We can let Quelch know that we're hung up, before he gets his hair off, and makes up his mind to give us six each."

"Good wheeze!" said Harry at once. "Go it!"

Standing in the big bay of the window was a large, roll-top desk. On top of it stood the telephone.

Bob Cherry crossed to it. Obviously it was a good idea to let their Form-master at Greyfriars know that they could not get back to the school. Bunter might be rescued from the cellar, but there was no rescue for Toddy from the grip of the mechanical armchair; and they had to wait till the owner of the place came in. That, for all they knew, might be hours! And already the roll had been called in Big Hall at Greyfriars School, and they had been marked absent.

Bob Cherry stood at the desk and lifted the receiver from the hook. The next moment he bounded from the floor, yelling at the top of his voice.

"Whooooop! Yooooop! Yaroooooh! Urrrrrgg! Oooooh!"

"What the dickens—" gasped Wharton. The juniors stared at Bob

Cherry in blank amazement. It seemed, for the moment, as if he had taken sudden leave of his senses. Holding the telephone receiver in his hand, he was dancing and jumping and hopping frantically.

"What's the matter?" bawled Johnny Bull.

"My esteemed and idiotic Bob—" gasped the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Ow! Turn it off!" shrieked Bob, still dancing.

"Turn what off?" yelled Nugent.

"I'm electrified!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Ow! Wow! Wow! Ow! Turn it off! Oh crikey! Yarooooh!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Wharton, realising that Bob had inadvertently fallen into another of the mysterious traps in that mysterious apartment. "There—there must be a current of electricity on—"

"Yarooooh! Whooooop!"

"Let it go, you ass!" yelled Johnny Bull. "Chuck it down."

"I can't!" howled Bob.

"Oh crikey!"

"Yooo-hoop! Wow! Wow! Wow!"

Bob Cherry jumped and danced. Evidently that telephone-receiver was a conductor of electricity; and from some hidden source a current was turned on by the action of lifting it. The mysterious tenant of the Willows had taken many and extraordinary precautions against strangers meddling in his laboratory! Certainly nobody who barged in once was likely to barge in again, if he could help it. The current was not strong enough to cause injury, that was clear; but it was strong enough to make Bob Cherry dance, feeling as if millions of pins and needles were passing through him, and to glue his hand to the object he held.

"Who—who—who'd ever have thought of electrifying a telephone?" gasped Nugent. "It must be some giddy lunatic who lives here."

"Yow-ow-ow-wow!" roared Bob. "Smash the dashed thing! Get hold of something and smash it to bits! Wow!"

"I say, you fellows," came Bunter's howl. "How much longer are you going to keep me waiting here?"

"Shut up, you fat freak!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Yah!—Beast!"

"Will you smash this rotten thing?" raved Bob. "Bang it to bits with a chair or something."

"My dear man, you mustn't smash up a man's property in a man's house!" grinned Peter Todd, parodying Bob's remark of a few minutes before. "He never asked you to use his telephone."

"You silly ass! I'll jolly well punch your silly head when I get loose!" roared Bob.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Wharton, as there was a sound in the hall. "That's somebody coming in!"

There was a footstep in the hall without. It came from the front door, towards the open doorway of the laboratory where the Greyfriars fellows stood. They turned their eyes on the doorway breathlessly, to see the strange owner of the Willows when he appeared.

"My only hat!" gasped Wharton, as a figure came into view, moving with a quick agility that was surprising in one evidently of advanced years. But that was not all that surprised the captain of the Remove. He had seen that figure before—he knew that he had!

It was a little old gentleman who stood looking in at the doorway. He

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NO SWAPPING NECESSARY!

was plainly of advanced age, for his thick locks of hair were silvery white, his bushy eyebrows like snow. His eyes, small and round and bright like a parrot's, gleamed through a large pair of horn-rimmed glasses. He was bare-headed, and his silvery locks were wet—rain dripped from him. And Wharton knew, with an amazement beyond words, that this was the figure he had seen in the oak-tree. This silver-haired little old gentleman, sixty-five at the very least, was the figure that had climbed and clambered with the agility of a monkey!

The other fellows realised it, too, and they gazed at the master of the Willows dumbfounded.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Extraordinary!

WHAT are you doing here?" The little old gentleman spoke in a clear, pleasant voice, in which there was no sign of age.

Standing outside the doorway, he looked in on the juniors, with a faint smile on his old face. His forehead, large and expansive, was a network of tiny wrinkles, from his bushy white brows to his mop of silvery hair. But the expression of his face was kindly. He did not seem surprised to see strangers in his laboratory; no doubt he had heard Bob's frantic yelling as he came into the house. His tone was one of polite inquiry.

"Yaroooh!" came from Bob. "Will you turn it off, blow you?"

"I say, you fellows—" came from Billy Bunter below.

"Please excuse us, sir!" stammered Harry Wharton. "We were looking for shelter from the rain, and—and—"

"Ah! You are the boys I saw on the avenue?"

"Oh! Yes!" gasped Harry. If he had doubted before, he knew now that the silver-haired gentleman was the man in the oak. "The—the door was open, and—and we—we—"

"Oh, quite!" said the little gentleman. "I understand! Probably you noticed me taking exercise on the avenue—what?"

"Yes," gasped Wharton. "We—we saw you in the tree—" He hardly knew what to say. The man seemed sane enough; yet his proceedings undoubtedly seemed rather like those of a lunatic.

"Will you let me go?" bawled Bob Cherry.

"Certainly, my boy," answered the master of the Willows. "I will release you at once. You should not have entered my laboratory. I have taken certain precautions against intruders—you seem to have discovered some of them. However, there is no harm done."

He skipped into the room, over the trap. It was a width of six feet—an easy enough jump for the juniors, but they would hardly have expected a man of such an age to skip over it so actively. But the little old man did it without a visible effort. He landed lightly on the inner side of the trap, and walked across to the desk, the juniors watching him breathlessly, wondering in a dazed sort of way who and what he could be.

He leaned over the desk, and touched a hidden button. The current was shut off at once, and Bob dropped the receiver. He rubbed his tingling hands and blinked at the silver-haired gentleman.

"My turn next, sir!" said Peter Todd.

"Quite!"

The little old man bent over the armchair and touched it, and the leather arms flew apart. Toddy rose to his feet.

"I say, you fellows—" came a squeak from the cellar.

"There's a fellow fallen through the trap, sir!" said Harry. "Luckily, he's not hurt, but—"

"You beast!" came a yell from below.

"I'm frightfully hurt!"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"Beast!"

"I will release him!" said the master of the Willows.

He stepped to the trap and pushed it down. Apparently his touch disconnected the spring that caused it to rise into its place, for it hung down from its hinges. He blinked down at Bunter through his big horn-rimmed glasses. Billy Bunter blinked up at him wrathfully.

"Look here, you get me out of this—see?" roared Bunter.

"Certainly, my boy! You should not have entered my laboratory, and you would not have fallen in!" said the old gentleman mildly. "Reach up your hand and give me a hold."

"Eh! You can't pull me out!" said Bunter.

"Do as I tell you!"

"We shall have to have a rope, or a

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ladder, sir," said Harry. "Bunter's awfully heavy—"

"I think I can manage, thanks!"

The juniors could only stare. If that little old gentleman, who looked as if he did not weigh more than seven stone, fancied that he could pull Billy Bunter's terrific weight out of the cellar, he had a surprise in store for him. So it seemed to the schoolboys, at least.

However, he was master in his own house, and they had to let him get on with it. They gathered round him to watch.

The silver-haired old fellow lay down on the floor, and reached down into the cellar, to the full extent of his arm. Billy Bunter, standing on tiptoe and reaching up, was able to grasp his hand.

That he could pull Bunter up was manifestly impossible. It was impossible that, in such a position, he could have pulled up a fellow half, or a quarter, of Bunter's weight.

But it was the impossible that happened!

The thin old hand closed firmly on Bunter's fat fingers, in a grip that brought a yell from the Owl of the Remove. Then the little old gentleman rose on his knees, pulling Bunter up with one hand.

"Oooogh!" gasped Bunter. "Oh crikey!"

A moment more, and the old gentleman was on his feet, and Billy Bunter was swung out of the cellar, and landed beside the group of staring juniors.

They could only stare!

It was difficult to believe their eyes! The strength that dwelt in that slight old figure was more than astonishing, more than amazing—it was unnerving! Who and what was this venerable sportsman who climbed trees with the agility of a monkey for exercise, and who swung Billy Bunter about like a feather-weight?

There was something uncanny in it.

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "I'm not believing this—it's a jolly old dream, and we shall wake up in the dorm!"

Taking no heed of the juniors' breathless astonishment, the little old gentleman closed the trap.

There was a click as it fastened, and they realised now that it was secure, and could be walked on safely. It is only in his absence that the master of the Willows left it in a state to catch unwary intruders.

Then he turned and gave them a smile.

"You are wet!" he said. "You may dry yourselves at my fire, if you wish, before you leave. The rain will not last much longer. You are welcome to remain till it is over, if you wish."

"Thank you, sir!" said Harry. "I hope you will forgive us for putting in as we did, but we thought the house was empty when we came—"

"It's been empty for years," said Nugent.

"I quite understand. I have been here only two or three weeks, and as you see, we are not in order yet." He indicated the packing-cases, with a smile. "My man is absent, in Courtfield, at present, or you would not have found the house unoccupied. I am Professor Sparkinson," he added. "May I ask who you are?"

"We're Greyfriars fellows, sir!" answered Harry, and the juniors gave their names, hoping the professor did not intend to report them to their headmaster for trespassing.

Considering they were strangers who had barged into his house in his absence, he was taking the intrusion very good-temperedly and kindly.

Billy Bunter rolled to the fire, and plumped into the armchair. The mechanism seemed to be disconnected now, for it received him in the usual way of an armchair, and did not imprison the fat Owl as it had imprisoned Toddy.

Harry Wharton & Co. gathered round the fire, still in a state of great astonishment and perplexity, but grateful for the hospitality of the mysterious master of the Willows.

They could not help looking at him, wondering where in that slight figure he packed the enormous strength he had so amazingly displayed.

"You have not, I trust, meddled with any of my apparatus," said the professor, with a blink through his big glasses at a bench stacked with retorts, flasks, crucibles, Bunsen burners, and all sorts of strange instruments and implements.

"No, sir!" said Harry.

"It would scarcely be safe to do so," said Professor Sparkinson. "It is not only to protect my property that I have fitted up so many defences to my laboratory, but to protect any thoughtless intruder from harm. When I am tired with my work I run out to take

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a little exercise in the grounds, and leave things just as they are."

The juniors could not help thinking that the old gentleman took his exercise in a very remarkable way. Apparently, however, it did him good, to judge by the amazing strength he displayed. There was something mysterious, uncanny, superhuman, about that strength. Old, and almost frail, as he looked, he was a stronger man than they had ever seen before—stronger than Larry Lascelles, the games master of Greyfriars, who was a champion athlete. Lascelles could never have jerked Billy Bunter out of the pit with one hand. The juniors had never seen a man who could—until they saw Professor Sparkinson!

Although they assured him that they had not touched the chemistry bench, the little, silver-haired gentleman stepped to it and ran his eye over it. He picked up a small phial, which contained a crimson fluid, and examined the stopper, and was evidently relieved to find it intact. He gave the juniors a quick, suspicious glance over his shoulder as he dropped the phial into a drawer and locked it. Then he smiled again and joined them at the fire and held out his hands to the blaze.

Outside, the rain was still falling down. But it was falling less heavily than before; the worst of it was over. The juniors began to hope that it would stop soon and give them a chance to get back to school. Meanwhile, the warmth of the fire was grateful and comforting. Billy Bunter leaned back luxuriously in the armchair and basked in the heat. The other fellows stood.

"Jolly wet weather, sir!" Bob Cherry remarked, chiefly for the sake of saying something, as the little old gentleman warmed his hands at the blaze.

Professor Sparkinson did not answer. There was a deep and thoughtful wrinkle in his brow, a far-away look in the parrot-like eyes behind the big, horn-rimmed spectacles. Apparently he was deep in thought and had forgotten the presence of his uninvited guests. Possibly some matter of deep scientific import was in his powerful brain, and he was following some deep, deep train of thought.

He left the fire abruptly, and sat down at the desk. The juniors' eyes followed him. He had taken a pencil and paper, which he was covering with algebraic signs—algebra rather too advanced for Remove fellows to make head or tail of it. No doubt it meant something to the old professor, for he bent his silvery head over it, his attitude one of deep concentration, obviously forgetful that he was not alone in the room.

The juniors stood in silence, unwilling to interrupt his deep calculations, whatever they were. The lashing and splashing of the rain grew fainter, and Bob Cherry at last went into the hall to look out. He came back with the announcement that it was nearly over, and that they could get a move on.

"I say, you fellows, what about phoning for a taxi?" asked Bunter.

"Nothing doing," said Bob Cherry.

The professor was still sitting at his desk, immersed in algebra. The juniors looked at him. They were unwilling to interrupt, but they felt that they could not go without saying a word.

"Good-night, sir!" said Harry.

No answer.

"Thanks very much, sir!" said Nugent.

"The thankfulness is terrific, honoured sahib!" said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

No reply—and no movement from the

man at the desk! Evidently he did not even hear! The juniors exchanged glances, and smiled, and trod quietly out of the room.

The rain had almost stopped. Under a few lingering drops they tramped down the drive, clambered over the wall, and took their way across the common to the school. And as they went they wondered, and could not help wondering, about the strange old fellow at the Willows, little dreaming, or guessing, just then of the strange results that were to follow the arrival of Professor Sparkinson in the neighbourhood of Greyfriars School!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Letter from Alonzo!

"ONE for Toddy!" said Bob Cherry.

It was morning break at Greyfriars, and some of the juniors had gathered round the letter-rack—some of them, no doubt, keen on letters from affectionate relatives at home; some, perhaps, still keener on possible remittances from the same quarter.

Billy Bunter blinked over the rack through his big spectacles, and grunted. There was no letter for Bunter! Once more his titled relations had overlooked him; once more his celebrated postal order, so long expected, had failed to arrive.

But there was a letter for Peter Todd, and as Peter was Bunter's study-

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mate, along with Tom Dutton, in Study No. 7, Bunter took a friendly interest in that letter for Peter. If there was, by happy chance, a remittance in that letter, Bunter was prepared to carry his friendliness to the extent of borrowing some of it from Peter!

"I say, hand that letter down, Bob," said the Owl of the Remove. "I'll take it to Toddy; he's not here."

"I've seen that list before," remarked Skinner, glancing at the letter as Bob took it down. "That's from Toddy's cousin, Alonzo, who's been away so long. Let's hope he's not coming back!"

"What rot!" said Vernon-Smith. "I'd be jolly glad to see Alonzo Todd back at Greyfriars. Life isn't half so funny without him."

"Something in that," agreed Skinner. "It's rather amusing to pull his leg. Never was such a born idiot—"

"Oh, rotten!" said Bunter, as he took the letter from Bob. "We're three in the study now; blessed if I want that ass, Alonzo barging in again. There's no room in my study for four."

"Must be," said Bob Cherry. "You count as two, old fat man, if not three."

"Yah!"

Bunter rolled out into the quad with the letter in his hand. If that letter was, as Skinner supposed, from Alonzo Todd, it was not likely that there was a remittance in it. It might contain only the news that Alonzo's expected return to school was to materialise at last. On the other hand, the letter, though addressed in Alonzo's well-

known spidery hand, might not be from him at all. For Alonzo was one of those obliging youths who will do anything for anybody, and it was quite probable that he had addressed the envelope for some elder relative. When Alonzo was at Greyfriars, Billy Bunter frequently got him to address envelopes for him and to stick stamps on them, too, if Alonzo had any stamps. So the fat Owl of the Remove still hoped for the best.

It was rather important for Billy Bunter to raise the wind that morning. Mrs. Mumble had a new supply of jam tarts in the school shop. Bunter was in his customary stony state. For those two good reasons the question of cash was urgent.

Bunter blinked round through his big spectacles in quest of Peter. Peter was not to be seen, but Tom Dutton was in view, walking in the quad, with his hands in his pockets. Bunter rolled up to the deaf Removeite.

"Seen Toddy?" he asked.

"Eh?" asked Dutton. "Who's been odd?"

Tom's affliction of deafness was not only an affliction to himself. It had rather an afflicting effect on fellows who talked to him.

"Oh dear! Have you seen Toddy?" hooted Bunter.

"Whose body?"

"Not body—Toddy!" shrieked Bunter. "I'm looking for Toddy!"

"Don't be an ass," said Dutton crossly. "How can you be looking for a body in the quad? Talk sense!"

"I'm looking for Toddy—"

"If you're looking for the quad, here it is, under your nose. Even a blind owl like you can see it, I suppose," said Dutton. "Do you think you can pull any leg because I'm a little deaf, you silly ass? Not that I'm really deaf, you know. I can hear all right if you don't mumble."

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

"Plums? What plums? I haven't any plums. Look here, Bunter, what do you mean—if you mean anything!"

"Toddy!" roared Bunter. "Where's Toddy?"

"Oh, Toddy! I don't know. If you want Toddy why couldn't you say so, instead of talking about a body, and plums, and such rot?" demanded Dutton.

Without answering that question Billy Bunter rolled on in search of Peter Todd. As Peter happened to have gone up to his study the Owl of the Remove was not likely to find him in the quadrangle.

Precious minutes were passing. Break lasted only a quarter of an hour, and ten minutes out of the fifteen had already elapsed. Bunter came to a halt under the elms and snorted angrily.

There was not much time left. And if there wasn't a remittance in that letter, Bunter had no desire whatever to spend his leisure moments hunting for Toddy! He turned the letter over and over in his fat hands, wondering whether it might come open by accident, if he rumpled and crumpled it long enough!

It did! Alonzo, who was a champion duffer in most things, had left the flap only partly stuck—and it came partly open. Billy Bunter inserted a fat forefinger into the orifice to enlarge it—no doubt also by accident. Bunter, of course, would not have opened another fellow's letter. But if it came open by accident in his hands, that was another matter. And in Bunter's hands, such accidents were very liable to happen. The letter came open—unfortunately,

(Continued on page 10.)

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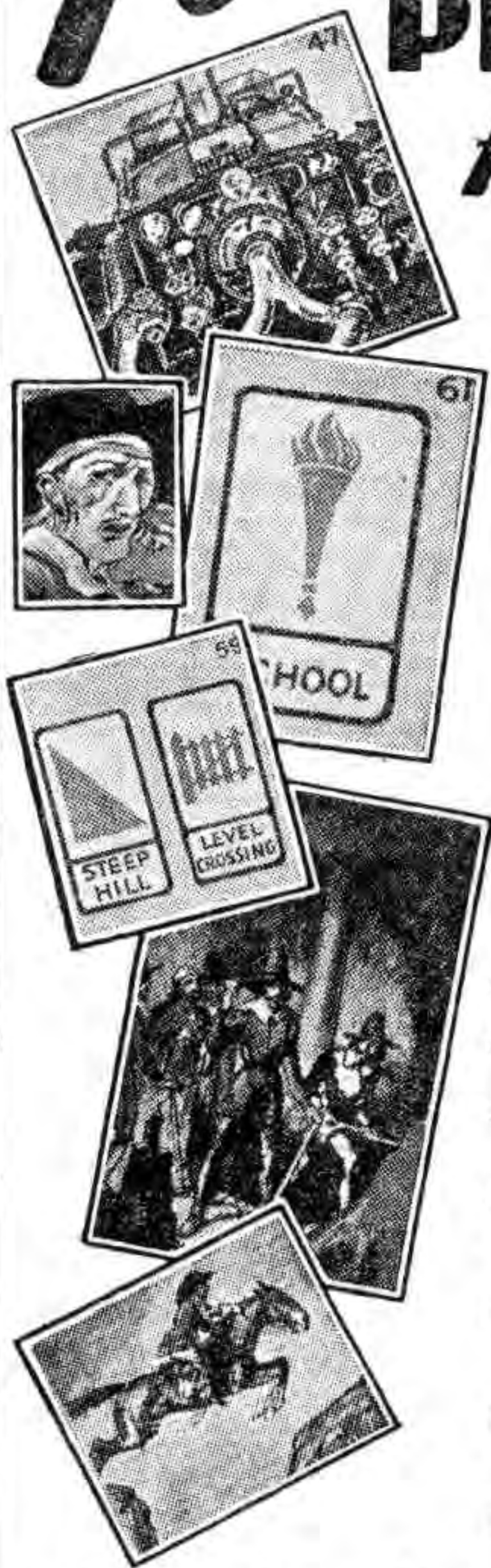
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THE GREYFRIARS STRONG MAN!

(Continued from page 8.)

with the result that the flap was torn before it was quite open.

"Oh dear! It's come open!" said Bunter. "Fancy that! Well, no harm in looking inside before I shut it up again. After all, old Toddy's a pal." Bunter hooked out the letter.

To his deep disappointment, there was no sign of a remittance. And the letter was written in the same spidery hand as the superscription. It was, after all, a letter from Alonzo.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter.

Perhaps on the principle that a fellow might as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb, Bunter blinked at the letter, now that it was open. Or perhaps it was by another accident that he read it from end to end! It ran:

"Dear Peter,—You will, I am convinced, be excessively pleased to hear that Uncle Benjamin has decided that I shall return to Greyfriars without further delay. Although I take exceeding pleasure in the improving society of my elderly relatives, I look forward with considerable satisfaction to resuming my studies at Greyfriars, and to beholding you once more, my dear Peter, a pleasure which I am sure you will fully share. I shall not be displeased even to see Bunter again, little as he conforms to the high-minded principles I have learned from Uncle Benjamin. I shall arrive, my dear Peter, on Wednesday afternoon, by the three o'clock train at Courtfield, and it would be a great happiness to see you at the station, when we could enjoy a walk across the common, and an agreeable—and, I trust, improving—conversation.

Your affectionate cousin,

ALONZO TODD."

Bunter snorted! That long-winded epistle was very like Alonzo. It was a bore to read such stuff; and Bunter had gained absolutely nothing by opening the letter, at the risk of a severe kicking from Peter.

"Silly ass!" growled Bunter.

He shoved the letter back into the envelope, and stuck down the flap. Then he blinked at it rather dubiously.

The flap was torn and grubby finger-marks covered it. It was obvious to the most casual glance that that letter had been opened. Bunter had an uneasy feeling that Peter might not believe that it had come open by accident. Such accidents had happened before, and generally Peter had kicked him.

A bell clanged! It was the bell for third school. Bunter thrust the letter into his pocket, and rolled away towards the House. He was going, of course, to hand that letter to Peter—it belonged to Peter. But if it happened to get lost, by some unforeseen accident, it would save a lot of trouble with Toddy—and save Bunter from a kicking. Bunter was not going to lose that letter intentionally. But he hoped that it would get lost—and, in the circumstances, it was probable that that hope would prove well-founded.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Sit Down!

"PLAYING football, Peter?"

"Yes!"

"Oh, good!" said Bunter.

Billy Bunter grinned. Peter Todd looked at him. It was Wednesday afternoon, and the Remove were playing. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,344.

ing a Form match with the Fourth. Naturally, Peter was playing for his Form, but why Bunter was interested, and why he grinned that extensive grin, Peter did not know.

Peter was not aware that a letter from his Cousin Alonzo had arrived at Greyfriars a day or two ago, and had been—by accident—lost!

For that letter had been lost. It had remained in Billy Bunter's pocket for a considerable time. The fat Owl, whose powers of self-deception were wonderful, had persuaded himself that he was going to hand it over to Toddy—when he thought of it. But he did not think of it—and the letter happened to be used when Bunter was lighting the study fire—entirely, of course, by an oversight. And the missive having thus vanished from existence, Bunter did not see any reason for mentioning it to Toddy at all.

Anyhow, he would know that Alonzo was coming, when Alonzo came! As for meeting Alonzo at the station, Bunter had his own ideas about that. Alonzo, returning to school after a long absence, was fairly certain to return with tips from affectionate relatives—especially from Uncle Benjamin. He was not likely to remain long in funds—Alonzo's pocket-money being at the disposal of any fellow who asked him for a loan, so long as it lasted. Bunter's idea was to get in first and avoid the crush, as it were!

Hence the expansive grin on his fat face, which extended his mouth, naturally rather wide, almost from one fat ear to the other! Peter, not knowing that Alonzo was coming that day, and being occupied with Soccer, would be safe off the scene. While he was safe off the scene, Bunter was going to drop into Courtfield Station by sheer chance, at the time Alonzo's train came in. He was not going to walk across the common with Alonzo, and enjoy an agreeable and improving conversation. He was going to walk Alonzo to the bus-stop in the High Street; and his fat jaws were then going to be too busy for conversation, improving or otherwise.

"Well, what's the joke, fatty?" inquired Peter, staring at the grinning face of the Owl of the Remove. "What are you grinning at?"

"Your features, old chap!" answered Bunter pleasantly. "They have that effect on a fellow, you know. He, he, he! Yaroooh!" added Bunter, as Peter took him by the neck and tapped his head on an elm. "Whoop!"

Peter strolled away, leaving Bunter rubbing his head.

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co., sauntering in the quad, were discussing the afternoon's game. Much to the indignation of Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth Form, the heroes of the Remove regarded that match as merely footer practice, which did not require the first-class players of the Form.

The Boulder was cutting it, and going out with Redwing. Squiff, who kept goal for the Remove in all important matches, was giving up the chicken-run to Hazeldene; and several of the lesser lights were put into the eleven, the greater men kindly standing out, to watch and cheer. Wibley, who fancied he could play footer, was given a chance to show what he could—or couldn't—do, and Kipps was in the half-back line, and Bolsover major was to play back, and Frank Nugent was with the forwards. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Horree Jamset Ram Singh were standing out; and the chums of the Remove were discussing, rather seriously, whether the team hadn't been rather

dangerously weakened; for unimportant as the match was, nobody wanted Temple & Co. to pull it off. Leaving Billy Bunter rubbing his head and yelping, Peter Todd bore down on the Famous Five, and barged into the discussion.

"What about Dutton?" he asked.

Harry Wharton smiled, and shook his head.

"Look here, I'm the only man from Study No. 7 in the team," said Peter warmly, "and I think I remember telling you, more than once, that Study No. 7 is top study in the Remove."

"I sort of remember hearing you say so!" remarked Bob Cherry. "But what about Study No. 13?"

"Oh, don't be an ass! Dutton's a jolly good half," said Peter. "Look here, Wharton, put him in, and chance it, see?"

"Well, he's a good man in his way," admitted the captain of the Remove, "but we've got a lot of duds playing to-day, Peter—"

"Can't leave out any more players to make room for duds, old bean," said Johnny Bull. "Temple would never let us hear the end of it if we let him beat the Remove at Soccer."

"Rot!" said Peter. "You can shift Kipps out of the halves—he can play forward all right—and put Dutton in, see?"

"But that means leaving out a forward to make room for Dutton," said Harry, "and already—Nugent's in Smithy's place, and Wibley's in Inky's, and—"

"Stand out yourself!" suggested Peter.

"Eh?"

"I could captain the team in your place, and that would make room for old Dutton!" explained Peter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Toddy.

"Your little joke, old man," answered the captain of the Remove. "You're not a bad forward, Toddy, but you couldn't skipper a team for toffee."

"You silly, cheeky ass—"

"When's Alonzo coming back?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Eh? I haven't heard yet! Never mind Alonzo—I'm not talking about Alonzo—"

"I am, though!" said Bob. "Let's talk about Alonzo instead of Soccer. Is he still as like you as he used to be?"

"I believe so! Look here—"

"Poor chap!" said Bob, with a sad shake of the head.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly chump!" roared Peter. "Look here, Wharton, are you playing my pal Dutton or not?"

"Not!" answered the captain of the Remove.

"Then I can jolly well tell you you're a cheeky ass, and I can tell you that I'm not going to stand—"

"You're not going to stand?"

"No! I tell you I'm not going to stand—"

"Sit down then!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"I'm not going to—yaroooh! Whoop!" roared Peter, as the grinning five suddenly grasped him and sat him down in the quad.

He sat down quite hard and roared. The Famous Five walked away smiling, and left him to roar.

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter, who had watched that little scene with great entertainment. "He, he, he!"

"Ow!" gasped Peter. "Wow! Ow!"

"He, he, he!"

Peter Todd scrambled up. The Famous Five were gone—but Billy

Bunter was there, cachinnating! Peter wanted to whop somebody—and there was Bunter, asking for it! So he whopped Bunter.

Billy Bunter ceased to cachinnate immediately! He roared instead.

"Ow! Beast! Leggo! Yah! Oh crikey! Whooop!" Bunter fled.

Peter's face was rather morose when he went to Little Side with the Remove footballers. Peter's belief was that Study No. 7 was—or, at least, ought to have been—the top study in the Remove. Nobody else thought so—but Peter thought so, and he had a very keen ambition to get his study the proper and just amount of limelight. He had even made attempts to kick Bunter into being something better than a fat slacker and grub-hunter—but he had to admit that he had had no luck in that direction.

The honour and glory of the study "cut no ice" with William George Bunter—he would have traded all the honour and glory for a couple of jam tarts any day. Peter was rather handicapped in his ambitions—Dutton, though a good fellow, was deaf; Bunter was a slacker and a fat tick, and Alonzo, when Alonzo came back, was likely to be regarded in the Remove as rather a freak, as he had always been. With such unpromising materials it was not easy to make Study No. 7 top study in the Remove.

But a change was coming—if Peter had only known it! It was going to be a strange, startling, and dramatic change! But Peter did not know that, and still less did he dream that it was going to have anything to do with the little silver-haired old gentleman at the Willows—whose existence he had almost forgotten!

So he was morose as he went on the field with the Remove footballers, and he responded to Bob Cherry's cheery grin with a glare, and to Wharton's smile with a snort. But a few minutes later he took the ball away from Cecil Reginald Temple and slammed it into the Fourth Form goal; and then Peter smiled again!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Beastly for Bunter!

"**W**HAT luck!" said Ponsonby of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe.

"Real luck!" said Gadsby.

"Just when we were lookin' for something to do!" grinned Monson.

Pon & Co. made those remarks as they watched a fat figure rolling along a path on Courtfield Common. Even if they had not known that figure by its extensive circumference, they would have known it by the big spectacles that flashed back the rays of the sun. And the nuts of Highcliffe looked quite pleased to see Billy Bunter.

The three slackers of Highcliffe were at a loose end that afternoon. Football was going on at Highcliffe, but they cared nothing for Soccer. They cared a good deal for billiards and banker at the Three Fishers, but they were in a stony state—owing to an overdose of billiards and banker. So they were taking a walk that afternoon, looking for mischief—which, according to the proverb, Satan finds for idle hands to do.

Pon had catapulted Coker, of the Greyfriars Fifth, from behind a bush, and the young rascals had fled before Coker could get near them. They had chanced on Solly Lazarus on the common, and stuffed his cap down his back. Now they were sauntering towards the Willows, the old house between the common and the river. Not having heard that it was now occupied, they were going to root over the place and do what damage they could.

In such pleasant ways did Pon & Co. find amusement on a half-holiday, when time hung heavily on their hands. But at the sight of Billy Bunter they forgot other things, and concentrated on Bunter. Ragging a Greyfriars man appealed to them more than anything else; if that Greyfriars man could not put up much of a scrap. And Billy Bunter couldn't!

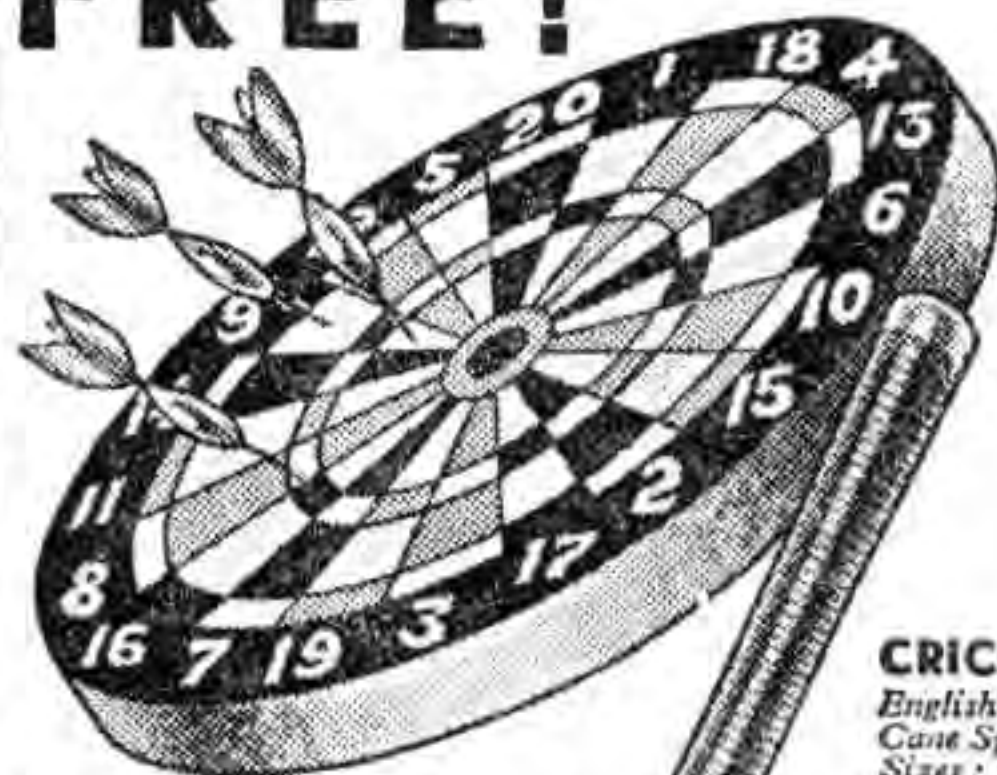
So they stood under the trees by the footpath and watched him approach, with grinning faces, and agreed that it was luck.

Bunter, too short-sighted to see them at a distance, rolled on unsuspectingly. He was taking the short cut across the common to the town to save the distance by the road. It was a fine, clear afternoon—just the day for a walk. But the less walking Bunter did the better he liked it. And his progress rather resembling that of a snail, left him barely time to reach Courtfield Station before Alonzo's train got in. But sometimes a short cut is the longest way round, and so Bunter found it on this occasion.

Pon & Co. stepped out to greet him as he came abreast. And Billy Bunter halted, with a startled blink at them through his big spectacles.

(Continued on next page.)

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"Oh crikey!" he ejaculated in dismay. "Here we are again!" smiled Ponsonby. "Jolly glad to see you, Bunter! The right man at the right moment!"

"Fancy meetin' you, old podgy bean!" said Monson.

"I—I say, you fellows, m-m-m-my friends are just behind!" stammered Bunter. "No larks, you know! Bob Cherry's just coming, and Toddy, and—"

Pon gave a swift glance across the grassy, furzy common. Had Bob Cherry and Peter Todd been in the offing, Pon & Co. certainly would have abandoned their idea of ragging a Greyfriars man on the spot.

But there was no one to be seen; and it was evident that Billy Bunter was—as usual—prevaricating. He was not to escape so easily as all that!

"Bunter, my young friend," said Ponsonby solemnly, "I'm afraid you're a little bit untruthful! I'm shocked to see it, Bunter! Are you fellows shocked at Bunter's untruthfulness?"

"Awfully!" said Gadsby.

"Frightfully!" grinned Monson.

"Think we ought to give Bunter a lesson on the subject?" went on Ponsonby thoughtfully.

"Oh, really, you know—" groaned Bunter.

"I think so!" agreed Monson. "Mind how you punch him, though. He might burst all over the place!"

"You cheeky Highcliff cad!" yelled Bunter indignantly. Then he remembered that he was at the mercy of the Highcliffians. "I—I—I mean—he, he, he! I—I don't mind a little joke! He, he, he!"

"He doesn't mind a little joke!" said Pon. "Well, let's joke with him a little, as he doesn't mind a joke!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Gadsby.

"I—I say, you fellows, I'm rather in a hurry!" gasped Bunter. "I've got to get to the station to meet a chap coming back to school!"

"That's rather awkward!" said Pon. "I'm afraid you'll miss him, Bunter. You see, you're so nice, that we can't part with you yet!"

"You're so entertainin'!" said Monson.

"So amusin'!" said Gadsby.

"I—I say, I've really got to get to the station," mumbled Bunter. "That silly ass Alonzo will be waiting about if he's not met—and very likely he'll lose his way, and—and—"

"Alonzo?" repeated Pon. "Is that jolly old freak coming back? Haven't you enough freaks at Greyfriars already?"

"I expect Bunter's glad!" remarked Gadsby. "When Alonzo Todd comes back, Bunter won't be the biggest idiot at Greyfriars! Only the second biggest."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter feebly. He was willing to laugh at the Highcliffians' little jokes, or do anything else, to get clear of them and escape! But there was no escape!

"Turn round, Bunter!" said Pon. "We're going to race you back to Greyfriars!"

"But I—I'm going to Courtfield!" groaned Bunter.

"I think not!" said Pon, shaking his head. "I think you're going straight back, and that we're going to help you. Feel too tired for a race?"

"Oh, yes! Yes, rather!" gasped Bunter. "I say—"

"That's all right; we'll help," said Pon. "We haven't done our good turn to-day yet, you men—so let's help Bunter! You don't mind helping Bunter?"

"Not at all!" said Monson.

"Pleased!" said Gadsby.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,344.

"You hear that, Bunter? Here's three fellows ready to help you," said Ponsonby. "We're goin' to help you all the way, and I'm sure it will buck you up. Turn round and start!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Turn him round!" said Monson.

Ponsonby, grinning, caught Bunter by the collar. There was a desperate light in Bunter's little round eyes, behind his big round spectacles. He knew the kind of help he was going to get from Pon & Co. As he was going to be ragged, anyhow, the fat Owl of the Remove took his courage in both hands, as it were, and made an effort to escape. Pon, never dreaming of resistance on the part of the fat Owl, grabbed him by the collar, and Bunter desperately smashed out with a fat fist.

That fat fist took Cecil Ponsonby by surprise. It landed on his nose, drawing a spurt of red therefrom.

"Whooooop!" yelled Ponsonby, sitting down suddenly on Courtfield Common and clasping his anguished nose with both hands.

Bunter tore off towards Courtfield as fast as his fat little legs could carry him. He eluded Gadsby and Monson and bolted.

"Owl! Owl! Wow!" spluttered Ponsonby. "After him! Collar him, you fools! Owl! My nose! Wow! Get hold of him, you fatheads! Wow!"

Gadsby and Monson rushed in pursuit. Pon picked himself up and, dabbing his nose with his handkerchief, followed more slowly.

Bunter rushed on at a terrific burst of speed. But his chance was slim because Bunter wasn't! He had too much weight to carry for a foot race. Rapid feet overhauled him. Gadsby and Monson passed him on either side, and swung round facing him.

"Oh lor!" gasped Bunter.

He barged off the path and ran, the two Highcliffians jumping after him. They headed him off from Courtfield, and he ran back the way he had come, dodging Ponsonby and making for distant Greyfriars. He was not thinking of meeting Alonzo at the station now, and leading that gentle and simple youth to the bunshop. He was thinking only of escape from the Highcliff raggers. And he fairly flew, hoping every moment to sight Greyfriars caps; once near the school he was likely enough to fall in with help.

After him rushed Pon & Co.

They had said that they would help Bunter, and they helped him. They dribbled him like a fat football. Gadsby and Monson kicked in turn, playfully. Ponsonby kicked in savage earnest, owing to the damaged state of his nose. How many kicks Billy Bunter collected during that wild race he could never have counted. It seemed to him like millions, if not billions or trillions.

"Ow, ow, ow! Grooogh!" spluttered Bunter, as he raced. "Beasts! Yow-ow! I say, you fellows— Yarooooh! Oh crikey! Whooo hoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter was putting on full speed. But the Highcliff trio did not need to exert themselves to keep pace. They trotted behind Bunter, kicking him in turn, greatly enjoying the rag—which Billy Bunter did not enjoy in the very least!

Greyfriars was in sight at last, and never had Bunter been so glad to see the grey old tower rising over the trees. Panting and gasping, he barged breathlessly onward. Pon & Co. still dribbling him. And a big, burly, beefy Fifth Form man, who was sitting on a fence, beheld the scene and slipped off the fence, very glad to see Pon & Co. Without even seeing Coker of the

Fifth, Bunter tore on, gurgling, and vanished up the road; but Pon & Co. stopped very suddenly at the sight of Coker. Horace Coker grinned as he bore down on them.

"Catapulting a man and bolting!" said Coker. "I rather hoped I'd see you again, and now—"

It was right-about-face for Pon & Co., and they right-about-faced and ran for their lives. After them charged Coker.

Thud, thud, thud! Coker had big and heavy feet. They felt bigger and heavier than they really were as they landed in turn on Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson. The three Highcliffians yelled and howled as they were dribbled in their turn. As they had done unto Bunter, so it was done unto them, but the enjoyment of the proceedings was quite gone.

Not till he was out of breath did Coker of the Fifth cease the pursuit and walk away, grinning.

Billy Bunter, in a winded state, staggered in at the gates of Greyfriars, gurgling. But Pon & Co. when Coker of the Fifth had finished with them, were feeling even worse than Bunter. It was quite an unpleasant ending to a merry rag!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Duffer of Greyfriars!

ALONZO TODD stepped from the train in Courtfield Station.

He picked up an umbrella that belonged to one passenger and a bag that belonged to another, and stepped out with them.

This proceeding was watched with astonishment by the two passengers concerned.

Alonzo, it is true, had left his own bag and umbrella; and exchange was no robbery. But this did not seem to satisfy the two passengers whose property the Duffer of Greyfriars had lifted by mistake.

"Hi!" said an excited voice from the carriage.

"Here!" barked another excited voice.

Alonzo glanced round with the kind and gentle smile that distinguished him.

"Did you address me?" he asked politely.

"What are you doing with that bag?" hooted a red-faced man, warmly.

"What are you doing with that umbrella?" demanded a fat man, with a ginger moustache.

Alonzo gazed at them innocently.

"I am taking them to Greyfriars with me," he answered. "My school, you know."

"You're taking my bag to your school?" hooted the red-faced man.

"You're taking my umbrella to your school?" roared the man with the ginger moustache.

Alonzo started.

"Dear me! Have I made a mistake?" he inquired. "I am exceedingly sorry if that is the case. Yes, I now perceive that the bag is not mine; the initials are not mine. And my umbrella is quite a good one, and this is a very shabby old thing—"

"You young idiot!" said the red-faced man. "Give me my bag!"

"Pray take it!" said Alonzo. "I regret the mistake. In the hurry of the moment—"

"Give me my umbrella!" hooted the owner of the ginger moustache.

"Certainly, my dear sir! I trust you do not imagine for one moment that I had any dishonest intention in inadvertently taking your umbrella," said Alonzo in distress. "Its value can only be



"What are you boys doing here?" asked the master of the Willows, standing in the doorway of the laboratory and looking at the Greyfriars juniors. "Yaroooh!" yelled Bob Cherry, holding on to the electrified telephone-receiver and hopping about frantically. "Wow!" wailed Peter Todd, struggling helplessly in the armchair.

very slight, as it is so very, very old and shabby—"

"You impudent young rascal, give it to me at once!"

Alonzo heaved the bag into the carriage, eliciting a roar from the owner, on whose foot it landed. Then he thrust the umbrella in, unfortunately catching the ginger gentleman under the chin with it. Little accidents like this constantly happened to the Duffer of Greyfriars. Nature had given him a kind and gentle heart, but had been rather mean in the matter of brains. Two loud roars acknowledged the restoration of the property to its owners.

"Stand back there!" called out a porter.

"Will you have the exceeding kindness to hand out my bag and umbrella?" asked Alonzo, addressing the two passengers, one of whom was nursing his foot and the other his chin.

The ginger gentleman picked up Alonzo's umbrella and handed it to him—across his hat! The red-faced man picked up his bag and hurled it forth, and it smote Alonzo on the chest, causing him to sit down suddenly on the platform in a state of great astonishment. A grinning porter slammed the carriage door and the train went on its way.

"Oh dear!" said Alonzo breathlessly.

He picked himself up, and then picked up the bag and the umbrella and set his rather damaged hat straight on his head. He had an impression that the two passengers in the carriage had been very, very bad-tempered, though he did not know why. They had been good-tempered enough during the railway journey, and why they had sud-

denly broken out into bad temper was quite a mystery to Alonzo.

However, puzzling as it was, he dismissed the matter from his mind and looked up and down the platform for his Cousin Peter. As Peter was playing football on Little Side at Greyfriars, Alonzo was not likely to find him on the platform at Courtfield Station, and he didn't. Having roamed up and down the platform from end to end, without finding Peter Todd, Alonzo slowly, but surely, realised that Peter was not there.

"Good gracious!" said Alonzo to himself. "Peter cannot have come to meet my train. That is rather thoughtless, as I told him the time of the train in my letter, and I fear that Uncle Benjamin would strongly disapprove of such thoughtlessness. But perhaps Peter has been detained, or something. I truly hope so, for I should not like Peter to act in such a manner as Uncle Benjamin would regard with disapproval."

And Alonzo, at last, left the station and walked out into Courtfield High Street. Then he stopped, bag in one hand and umbrella in the other, gazing up and down with his innocent eyes, seeking a sign of Peter. It occurred to him that Peter might be late, and might be coming up the street. But there was no sign of Peter Todd, and Alonzo started to walk. A cabman called to him as he started:

"Cab, sir?"

Alonzo glanced round.

"Thank you, no," he answered. "It is very kind—and, indeed, thoughtful—of you to suggest it; but I fear that it would be somewhat extravagant to take a cab to the school. Moreover, on this very fine afternoon I prefer to walk. Thank you all the same, my good man."

The cabman blinked at him.

"My eye!" he ejaculated. "Oh, my eye!"

"Your eye!" said Alonzo. "Is there anything wrong with your eye, my poor fellow? I am exceedingly sorry! Perhaps something has got into it—a fly, or a speck of dust."

"My eye!" repeated the cabman. "I say, does your mother know you're out?"

"Yes, indeed," said Alonzo; "and so does my dear father and my Uncle Benjamin! They are all quite aware that I am returning to school this afternoon—and, indeed, saw me off at the station."

The cabman blinked at him again! He seemed quite surprised by Alonzo Todd. But that was nothing new—Alonzo often surprised people.

"I was expecting to be met at the station, my good man," went on Alonzo. "But my cousin does not seem to be here! Perhaps you may have seen him?"

"What's he like?" asked the cabman.

"He is very like me—indeed, very, very like me," said Alonzo. "We have been mistaken for one another."

"My eye!" said the cabman. "Shouldn't have thought there was two of you! One's more'n enough."

And he turned back to his cab, apparently having had enough of Alonzo. Alonzo gazed at his back for a moment, and then resumed his way down the High Street with his eyes open for Peter. Nothing, however, was to be seen of Peter; and he reached the end of the town and came out on the open common.

(Continued on page 16.)

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THE NEW Greyfriars

No. 59 (New Series).

EDITED BY H.

Who pinched the Porpoise?
All Greyfriars has been asking the question—and it seems likely that all Greyfriars will ask the question for a long, long time before a satisfactory reply is forthcoming.

The amazing affair happened in broad daylight. Bunter went for a walk to Friardale, hoping that a long absence from Uncle Clegg's would have softened the old tuck-shop proprietor's heart sufficiently to enable him to obtain some jam-tarts on "tick."

The next thing we knew was that Bunter had been kidnapped!

A small boy from the village brought the dread tidings. It was in the shape of a letter addressed to Mr. Quelch. The letter, which our Special Investigator was privileged to see, by peering over his shoulder, was in a scrawly hand curiously reminiscent of Bunter's own calligraphy.

But it wasn't from Bunter. That was obvious from the signature at the bottom—"SLIM ALF"! The contents made it even clearer.

"Dear Sir," ran the letter. "I am a desprit carrier, making a living out of kidnapping wealthy skoolboys. I have just kidnapped your pewpil Bunter, and unless I receive Ten Bob cash within One Hour, I shall put this poor

WHO PINCHED THE PORPOISE?

Kidnapped Removite's Return

innocent youth to feendish torcher compared with which the worst efforts of Chinese torcherers will be a meer piknik. If you fail me, his blud will be upon your hands!

Villanously yours,
SLIM ALF.

"P.S.—Leeve the Ten Bob in the hollow oak at the entrance to Friardale Woods, and remember not to wait or inform the perlice. Otherwise, I shall take a terribul vengenze!—S. A."

It was the kind of letter calculated to make the stoutest heart quail, and we must say that Mr. Quelch's face seemed to turn white as he read it—though, judging by the way his lips set, it wasn't from fear!

Mr. Quelch dismissed the village boy, donned his hat, and went out, carrying a stout cane with him—though what possible use that could be in an encounter with a desperate kidnapper—nobody could imagine.

turned to Greyfriars with all speed.

We must tell you the truth. He did nothing of the sort. What he did do was to rummage about in the bushes with his cane, as though he expected to find something. And find something he duly did!

That "something" was Bunter!

The kidnapped junior had returned!

Strangely enough, Mr. Quelch displayed no relief or pleasure at perceiving that Bunter was



unharmd. He simply grabbed Bunter by the ear, and roared: "BUNTER! How dare you!"

We hesitate to criticise Form-masters as a rule, but we must say that, as a form of greeting to a junior who had just escaped the clutches of a desperate kidnapper, it might have been improved on!

You'd imagine he'd at least have asked Bunter a few questions about his escape, and perhaps have sent somebody for the police, with a view to pursuing the miscreant.

'Lonzy's Little Letters

Dear Editor,—In impelling my pedal extremities to quadrangular peregrination this afternoon, I was shocked, nay, disgusted, from the indisputable evidence of my aural appendages, to learn that there exists an impression, supported by the affirmations of juveniles whose intelligence I have not previously had reason to regard with dubiety, that at the last assemblage of the Remove Debating Society I "took the biscuit."

To what biscuit this allegation makes reference I must confess my inability to determine with any degree of certitude. But I take the earliest opportunity of effectuating the most positive asseveration that no edible compound belonging to the category designated nor, indeed, any other article of an esculent nature, introduced itself to my visua organs on the occasion heretofore mentioned, and that, in the circumstances, it is inconceivable that I should have incurred the responsibility of the illicit conveyance of the biscuit in question.

I trust, dear Editor, that this repudiation will eventuate the annihilation of the indefeasible, unauthorised, and entirely unwarranted rumour.

Blamelessly yours,

ALONZO TODD.

(In brief: 'Lonzy, hearing that fellows are saying he "took the biscuit" at the last debate, says: "WHAT BISCUIT?" Oh dear!—Ed.)

Followed at a respectful distance by a crowd of juniors, the Remove beak stalked down to the beginning of Friardale Woods, where stands a well-known landmark—a hollow oak-tree.

Naturally, you think, he placed a ten-shilling note in the hollow of the tree and re-

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



Frank Nugent is devoted to his chum, Harry Wharton, and it was largely owing to his staunch comradeship that Wharton overcame his early unpopularity and won his way to the captaincy of the Form!



Harree Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipar, understands the mysteries of some of the Hindu fakirs—but he's too wise to speak about them, even to his friends. "Inky" prefers football while at Greyfriars!



Fisher T. Fish declares his intention of becoming a successful financier. Bob Cherry warned him that if he adopts the usual "sharp" methods he's more likely to finish up behind prison bars!

But he did neither. He simply marched Bunter back to Greyfriars, and marched him to the Head's study and requested the Head to deal with the matter, placing the kidnapper's letter on the Head's desk as he spoke.

The Head wasted no words, either. For reasons which Bunter says he's still unable to fathom, he produced a birch, and ordered Bunter to adopt a bending position. And for the next five minutes the four walls of the School House echoed with the yelling that proceeded from the Head's study!

Interviewed on the following day, when he had partly recovered from the effects of his interview with Dr. Looker, Bunter said that Quelch was a beast and, if anything, the Head was a bigger beast still! Though it seemed incredible that such suspicious beasts should be about, he felt almost sure that they doubted whether he had been kidnapped at all!

Asked whether there was any possibility that he himself had been mistaken, Bunter said there jolly well wasn't. Pressed for a description of his kidnapper, Bunter said that Slim Alf was a tall man with green, blood-shot eyes, hideous yellow fangs perpetually bared in a fiendish grin, and long talons like those of a hawk.

These, by a strange coincidence, are the precise words used to describe the villain of a "shocker" which Bunter had been reading just before he went to Friardale. Amazing that a fictitious character should have come to life in such a fashion, isn't it?

NOTHING NEW!

After hearing a lecture on "Indigestion," Temple, Dabney & Co. have decided to give up eating baked chestnuts.

It would be quite a mistake, however, to assume that they have only recently gone off their nuts!

is Herald

HARRY WHARTON.

November 18th, 1933.

EXTRA
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EDITION

SNOOP'S SHOOTING SPRINGS

Work Soccer Wonders!

The invention of the age! Snoop's Shooting Springs, fitted in the toecaps of your football boots, make the ball travel like a bullet! "Left-Wing" writes: "Wearing your springs I took a pot shot from 30 yards out. The ball tore through the net and the goalie's still in hospital!" Wear Snoop's Shooting Springs and become a footer star RIGHT AWAY!

FASHION NOTES

Our Fashion Expert writes: After snooping around in the streets a couple of days my opinion is that it's a safe bet, if you want to be a snob this winter!

Some of the innovations are a little skittish. I noticed one fellow, for instance, wearing a paper Union Jack in the crown, and another with a carelessly worn scarf hanging from his shoulders, like the words "KICK ME." Neither of the gentlemen was actually aware of the bright little adjuncts the snobber doesn't matter. They can't be without a scarf on the season's air can they?

Originality in dress is displayed, by the way, by one fellow behind the chapel last night. He strode came away with his jacket inside out, and with his collar fastened inside only, the other being worn round the back of his neck. Fascinating, what?

What reminds me of the in-vogue new style of hairdressing I have not seen displayed in the city is a Shell man who boasts of his always de rigueur. There is a wig on the top of the head, the hair being brushed right down over the forehead and ears. To make up for this, the hair is parted at the back of the neck and arranged in two quiffs, one over each ear.

Of course, it's difficult to do this by yourself at first, but it makes perfect, and, if you try hard, it's surprising what you can do with the back of your neck. Some people can even talk of it.

Next Week's Amusements

The Sixth are having extra foot in Greek at 4.30 on Monday. You can get a good view through their Form-room windows if you climb on another chap's back outside. Their expressions should be excruciatingly funny.

Mr. Hacker has accepted an invitation to hear Hoskins play the piano on Wednesday evening. Line up outside the Music Room early, if you want to see Hacker stagger out.

On Friday, Fisher T. Fish will address the shareholders of the Anglo-American Hot Dog Corporation in the Rag, and explain what has happened to their money. Arrive early or you won't squeeze in!

To wind up the week's amusements, you will be able to see Coker play his own special variety of football on the playing-fields at 2.30. A doctor will be in attendance to deal with all cases of hysteria.

Dicky Nugent's Weekly Wisdom

Sammy Bunter indignantly denies the rumour that he never has a bath, and I'm inclined to think myself that it must be a little exaggerated.

After all, you can't help admitting that he's a regular "sponger"!

DON'T FORGET!

Next week's all-star number of the MAGNET will contain another set of superb pictures. That's a tip from HARRY WHARTON.

Pocket Prefect Resigns

Round Robin Rendered Redundant

Like a bolt from the blue comes the announcement that Coker minor, of the Sixth, is no longer a prefect.

The movement for deposing the "Pocket" Prefect culminated in a mass meeting in the Rag last night, when it was decided to draw up a "round robin," requesting Coker minor's expulsion from the list of prefects. Vernon-Smith, who occupied the chair at the meeting, obligingly wrote out the petition and there was a rush to sign it.

Headed by a comb-and-paper band, the crowd then marched en masse to present the round robin to Wingate, and request him to hand it on to the Head.

Wingate looked grim as he received the petition.

Then, when he read the round robin, he smiled—much to the crowd's surprise.

"Sorry, kids," he said. "I'm afraid I shan't be able to present that petition to the Head!"

There was a menacing growl from the crowd, and several fellows yelled: "Why not?"

Wingate's answer took the wind out of everyone's sails.

"Because there's no need to present it. Coker minor has been to the Head this evening and resigned voluntarily; and the Head has accepted his resignation!"

And that was how it all finished! Such is the fickle nature of a crowd that the fellows who had been booing the name of Coker minor only five minutes before, marched straight to his study and gave him three rousing cheers!

MY WORST AND BEST EXPERIENCE

By Cecil Reginald Temple

It was at a party at Dabney's place last Christmas. Dab had introduced me to a lady, and left me with her while he welcomed other guests. I didn't feel a bit grateful to him, for she was of uncertain age and had thin lips, untidy hair, big spectacles, and highbrow ideas. As a man of the world, however, I pride myself on my ability to entertain all sorts and conditions, so I started a genial conversation about the prospects of skating or some other engrossing topic. The lady didn't seem at all interested in this subject, however, and started discussing politics. Needless to say, a chappie of my intelligence has plenty of views about these things; but I hadn't got them exactly sorted out ready to reel off at a moment's notice. Thus, a sort of barrier sprang up between us. The conversation languished, if you follow me.

Just to get it going again, I remarked: "By the way, I didn't quite catch your name, when Dab performed the intro."

"Muriel Midgley," the lady said.

Now, I happen to know an awfully nice girl named Daphne Midgley and almost instinctively I blurted out:

"Then, I know your daughter Daphne!"

IT TURNED OUT THAT DAPHNE WAS HER ELDER SISTER!

Having regard to the sensitiveness of most girls on the subject of age, I think I can honestly say that that was the most embarrassing experience I have ever had!

As to my best experience, to a man of the world, like myself, who has experienced so much (Help!—Ed.) it is a difficult matter to make the choice. But among recent experiences, the most pleasant to me was the occasion when I led the Fourth to victory against the Remove at footer. The Remove are a cheeky lot of youngsters, and they'd been asking for it for a long time. They duly got it! The way we all played was marvellous, and my own game, in particular, was superb. Goal after goal I registered against our dismayed and demoralised rivals, till the game had become a farce. I forget what the final score was, and nobody else seems to remember, either—in fact, funnily enough, the chaps don't seem to remember the match at all!—but whatever it was, it was something unique in Soccer. Anyway, it was my best recent experience, even though parts of it are hazy in my mind, and I can't remember quite when it happened!

(Let us enlighten you, old bean; it happened three nights ago in your dorm! We heard about it from a couple of prefects who rushed up, fearing a riot—only to find that it was you, playing footer round the dorm in your sleep!—Ed.)

HE WAS SIMPLY "FLOORED"!

"Is Mauly sweet on the instructress at the Lantham Ice Rink?" asks a correspondent.

Well, we must admit that the last time we were there he seemed to be "falling," right enough!



Johnny Bull, the Remove right-back, possesses the hottest kick in the team, and often "punts" the ball from his own half into the enemy goalmouth. Once, with a following wind to help him, he scored!



To raise the wind Bunter held an auction sale of oddments. He raised ten and elevenpence—but the owners of the "oddments" speedily recognised their property—and Bunter had to refund his gains!



One of Skinner & Co.'s favourite retreats for a little "smoke" is the tool shed. When old Mimble, the Head's gardener, caught them he made them help him with some hoeing—on promise of silence!



(Continued
from page 13.)

There he paused. It was two or three miles to the school by the road, but hardly half that distance by short cuts over the common. If Peter was coming late—would he come by the road? If so, Alonzo would miss him by taking the short cuts. On the other hand, Peter was most likely to come by the short cuts, if he came, and Alonzo would therefore miss him if he took the road! It was quite a problem for Alonzo to think out; and he stood in the middle of the road thinking it out for some minutes. He might have stood there longer, still thinking it out, but he was interrupted by something soft butting him in the middle of the back; and he turned, with a start, to find a horse just behind him.

"Oh!" ejaculated Alonzo.

He skipped to the roadside in quite a hurry. The carter glared down at him.

"Trying to get yourself run over?" he bawled.

"Not at all, my good fellow!" gasped Alonzo. "I should have a very serious objection to being run over, I assure you! I was quite unaware that you were approaching behind me, or I should certainly not have remained in the middle of the highway. Yaroooh!" added Alonzo, suddenly and involuntarily, as the carter, passing on, gave him a lick with his long whip, round his rather bony legs; perhaps as a hint to keep out of the way of traffic.

The carter grinned, and drove on. Alonzo blinked after him.

"What a very, very cross and brutal man!" murmured Alonzo. "How very shocked Uncle Benjamin would have been if he could have witnessed that cruel and inconsiderate action! I am very, very glad that my dear Uncle Benjamin was not present."

Alonzo finished his meditations by the roadside, out of the way of the traffic!

He decided on the short cuts, and started across the common. He walked on very cheerfully, for Alonzo was a cheerful fellow. Also, he had pleasant subjects for thought. In his bag was a brand-new copy of his favourite work, "The Story of a Potato: from the Seed to the Saucepan." Alonzo had derived much useful information from that work, and he could not help thinking that it was very, very kind of his Uncle Benjamin to present him with a new copy when he was going back to school. The last copy had been used to light the fire in Study No. 7!

Thinking of his dear Uncle Benjamin, whom he had lately left, and his dear Cousin Peter, whom he was soon to see, Alonzo did not think very much about the way he was going—which was very like Alonzo! He woke up, as it were, at the sight of the River Sark gleaming in the distance ahead of him, and gave quite a start.

"Dear me! This is not the right way!" said Alonzo. "I ought to have turned to the left at the cross-roads,

and I must have kept straight on! This is very, very disconcerting."

Alonzo was feeling rather tired, after a mile and a half. His bag was feeling a little heavy. Physically, Alonzo was not strong. He resembled his cousin Peter in looks to a remarkable extent, but he had none of Peter's wiriness or muscular power. Almost any fag at Greyfriars could have knocked out Alonzo in a scrap. Not that Alonzo ever scrapped, if he could help it, for he was quite, quite sure that his Uncle Benjamin could never have approved of such a thing.

He turned back, and started by the path that led by the Willows—the path that Cousin Peter and Bunter and the Famous Five had followed that rainy evening, a few days ago. It was not rainy now; it was very fine and quite sunny, and it was quite an enjoyable walk, if Alonzo had not been feeling tired. But he was—and presently he laid his bag and his umbrella down on a grassy bank, and sat down on the bag to rest. He did not sit on the grass, because it was November, and Uncle Benjamin had warned him never to sit on damp grass. But he sat on the bag, and rested, and gazed across the common with a gentle, meditative eye.

A little old gentleman came in sight, walking up the lane by the edge of the common. He came from the direction of the Willows. He was a little and rather frail-looking gentleman, with silvery hair under his silk hat—quite venerable in his aspect. He seemed to be very deep in thought, for he walked with his hands clasped behind him, his eyes bent on the ground through a large pair of horn-rimmed glasses. Alonzo, glancing at him, thought what a nice old gentleman he looked—and he was quite surprised when suddenly, without warning, the silvery-haired old gentleman uttered a fearful, ear-splitting yell, and leaped into the air!

Alonzo started up in amazement! Then, from the hedge, within a few feet of him, he heard a chuckle,

"Got him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Alonzo, blinking round, spotted three Highcliffe fellows peering through the hedge, one of them taking aim again with a catapult.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Plucky Alonzo!

PONSONBY chuckled.

Gadsby and Monson grinned. Pon & Co. were still hunting mischief; and they had found some!

After escaping from Coker the three had forgotten mischief for a time, having a good many aches and pains to occupy their thoughts. But now they were on the warpath again. They had come across the common to the hedge bordering the lane, intending to cross to the Willows and trespass in the grounds of the old house. But the sight of the little old gentleman was too much for Pon! He was tempted, and he fell!

Professor Sparkinson did not look dangerous! He did not look as if he could run after a fellow who catapulted him, or as if he could do any damage if he caught a fellow! Any fellow but Ponsonby might have hesitated to make an unprovoked attack on a man old enough to be his grandfather. But the dandy of Highcliffe was a pretty thorough blackguard; and it was the fact that Professor Sparkinson looked old enough to be anybody's grandfather that encouraged him to go ahead. A

young and active man would have been quite safe from Pon and his catapult.

Pon told Gaddy and Monson that he was going to make the old beggar jump; and he proceeded so to do. Quite unaware that Alonzo Todd had sat down to rest by the hedge, on the other side, the three Highcliffians crouched in a gap and watched the little old gentleman till he was within easy range. Then the merry Pon let fly. Pon was a good shot with a catapult—he had had a lot of practice—in safe places, where the official eye of a policeman could not fall on him! He got home with that shot, landing his pebble on the cheek of the unsuspecting old gentleman, and causing Professor Sparkinson to come suddenly out of his deep reflections and bound into the air like a kangaroo, with a terrific yell.

"Good shot!" grinned Monson.

Keeping in cover, Ponsonby took aim again, encouraged by success. Professor Sparkinson stood with his hand to his stung cheek, blinking round him in astonishment through his glasses, evidently not knowing, for the moment, what had hit him. His look was so amazed, and so queerly owl-like, as he blinked round through the horn-rimmed spectacles, that Pon & Co. fairly chortled.

But Alonzo did not chortle.

Alonzo's usually kind and benignant eyes gleamed with anger and indignation. The sight of a young rascal catapulting a venerable old gentleman was enough to make any decent fellow wrathful, and Alonzo was wrathful. It was not like the gentle Alonzo to get wrathful, but circumstances alter cases, and now he was very wrathful indeed! He jumped at the gap in the hedge and, taking Pon quite by surprise, knocked the catapult aside as Pon was letting it go.

It twanged, and the pebble whizzed—not in the direction of the old gentleman! But it is said that every bullet has its billet, and a fiendish yell from Monson announced where that missile had gone! It had landed in Monson's neck, and Monson's voice woke the echoes as he yelled.

"What the thump—" gasped Ponsonby.

"You rotter!" panted Alonzo. "Stop it! Stop it at once!"

"Todd, you meddlin' rotter—"

For the moment Ponsonby took Alonzo for Peter, whom he closely resembled. He gave him an angry shove back, and Alonzo sat down under the hedge.

"Oh!" gasped Alonzo.

Pon stared at him. Peter Todd, certainly, would never have gone down under that shove. And though Alonzo was very like Peter, his expression was much milder in every way. And Pon noted the bag and the umbrella and remembered what Bunter had said. He realised that this was not the fighting man Peter, but his peaceful cousin Alonzo, a fellow of whom even Pon need have no fear! So he followed up his shove with a kick which rolled Alonzo over.

"Now mind your own bizney, you pie-faced freak!" snarled Ponsonby. "Squat on that Greyfriars cad, you men, while I get the old rander again."

And Pon took aim once more with the catapult at the silver-haired gentleman. Alonzo struggled to his feet.

Before Gadsby and Monson could squat on him he grasped Ponsonby and, with a wrench, dragged him out of the hedge into the lane. Alonzo was no fighting-man, it was true, but wrath and indignation lent him unaccustomed energy.

Thump, thump, thump! Three hefty,

thumps landed on Pon as he rolled over in the lane with Alonzo, and he roared: "Ow! Here, I say help me, you fools! Drag him off!"

Gadsby and Monson rushed to the rescue.

"Oh, good gracious!" gasped Alonzo. "Fair play—three to one is not fair play! Yaroooooh!"

Bang, bang bang! The Highcliffians were not bothering about fair play. They were only bothering about giving Alonzo beans!

Alonzo put up a fight. But though the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak. Alonzo really was no fighting-man. He had plenty of pluck, but he had no beef or brawn. Blows rained on him from the three, and he struggled frantically as they rained on him.

The little old gentleman blinked at the scene. He seemed too surprised to act for some moments. But he saw the catapult fly from Pon's hand in the struggle, and he saw that three fellows were pitching into one. Pon & Co. did not heed him—in fact, they had forgotten him, giving all their attention to handing Alonzo beans! They were reminded of his existence in quite a startling way!

The little professor made a bound towards the spot—and had the Highcliffians been looking at him they would have been astonished by the swiftness and agility of his bound! But they were not looking at him, and they did not see him till he reached them. Then a hand fastened on Pon's collar and another hand on Monson's, and they

were dragged off the struggling, gasping Alonzo.

"Wha-a-at——" gasped Pon, astounded to find himself lifted as if he had weighed no more than a few ounces.

He swung in the air in one hand of the professor, Monson swung in the other. Then they were tossed through the gap in the hedge and went sprawling on the grass of the common. Gadsby, staring round, saw that amazing sight with starting, unbelieving eyes. The little old fellow, who looked too frail to handle an infant, had tossed Pon and Monson away like skittles, and as Gadsby blinked at him dumbfounded, he reached at Gaddy, grasped him, and tossed him after his friends. Gaddy bumped on Pon and Monson, flattening them in the grass.

Taking no further heed of them, the little old gentleman turned to Alonzo Todd.

Alonzo was in rather a sad state. Physically, he was not a match for any one of the Highcliffians—and he had tackled all three at once!

Alonzo, punched and thumped into a breathless and dizzy state, lay on his back gurgling, quite unaware whether he was on his head or his heels.

Professor Sparkinson bent over him. "Are you hurt, my dear boy?" he exclaimed.

Really, the question was superfluous! It was quite plain that Alonzo was hurt—very much hurt—frightfully damaged, in fact! He tried to answer, but only a gurgle came.

The old gentleman blinked at him, and then picked him up. Alonzo was not by any means a heavyweight, but even in his breathless and dizzy state he was astonished to find himself lifted so easily by the little old gentleman. Carrying Alonzo on one arm with perfect ease, Professor Sparkinson walked away towards the Willows, bag and umbrella in his other hand.

Pon & Co. sat up. They blinked after the professor through the gap in the hedge. They could hardly believe their eyes.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Pon. And the three young rascals limped to their feet and limped away towards Highcliffe—quite tired of mischief for that afternoon.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

One Good Turn Deserves Another!

ALONZO TODD blinked dizzily. He was hardly more than half-conscious as the little professor carried him up the avenue to the Willows. The hammering from the Highcliffians and the exhaustion caused by his own efforts had quite overcome poor Alonzo. He had to realise—as he had often had to realise before—that he was no athlete.

Scarcely conscious of his surroundings, he was conscious enough to be amazed by the ease with which the little professor carried a fellow very nearly as big as himself. The strength that dwelt

(Continued on next page.)

A treat for "after school"

"THERE'S something to look forward to after history is over," thinks Jones minor. Wrigley's . . . the monster pennyworth that is even more than a sweet. It is the purest pennyworth made—four pellets of delicious chewing gum that buck you up—make your mouth fresh and cool. Wrigley's makes you feel fresh and alert . . . the delightful flavour lasts . . . and lasts.

In two flavours—P.K., genuine peppermint flavour; Spearmint, pure mint leaf flavour. Four generous pellets in every 1d. packet . . . the purest money can buy.

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MEANS BETTER CHEWING GUM

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in that frail-looking form was astounding. It seemed like magic.

Professor Sparkinson, without an effort, walked swiftly on and reached the porch of the old house. The door opened as he arrived, and a broad-shouldered black man, as black as the ace of spades, looked out.

"Golly, massa!" said the black servant, staring at Alonzo.

"This lad is hurt," said the professor. "Open the door of the laboratory, Julius."

"Yes, massa."

Julius proceeded the professor and opened the door of the room in which Harry Wharton & Co. had had such strange adventures. Professor Sparkinson bore Alonzo in and laid him on a settee.

Alonzo lay there and gasped.

Julius Cæsar—that being the full name of the professor's man—retired and shut the door. The professor sat down on a chair beside the settee, watching Alonzo. His look was very kind and sympathetic.

Slowly Alonzo recovered. He ceased to gurgle and gasp, and breathed a little more regularly. He made a movement to sit up, and the kind old fellow slid a cushion behind his head.

"Feel better?" barked the professor.

"Oh! Yes! Much!" gasped Alonzo. "Oh dear! I—I feel a—little queer! I—I am not very strong."

"Apparently not! Yet you tackled three fellows, every one of them stronger than yourself, in defence of an old man!" said Professor Sparkinson. "That was very plucky."

"Do you think so?" said Alonzo. "I think that I acted without thinking. But I am very glad that I stopped him from catapulting you again, sir. Catapulting is very dangerous, as my Uncle Benjamin has often told me. Should a missile strike the optic, blindness may ensue. That would be very, very serious."

The professor blinked at him.

"You are not the boy who was here the other evening with some others—I fancied so for a moment—but you are not the same?" he asked. Like Pon, the professor had been deceived momentarily by Alonzo's resemblance to his Cousin Peter.

"Oh, no!" said Alonzo. "I have only returned to school to-day after a long absence, which was due to impaired health. If you have seen anyone like me, probably it was my Cousin Peter."

The professor nodded.

"My name is Alonzo Todd," added the Duffer of Greyfriars. "My Cousin Peter's name is Peter."

"Eh? Oh, yes!" Professor Sparkinson blinked at Alonzo. "And you are not strong—what?"

"I regret to say no," confessed Alonzo. "I am not, I trust, a coward, but I am not of much use in a personal combat."

"Far from a coward, I should think," said the professor. "Even a strong lad might have hesitated to tackle three reckless young rascals at once. You would like to be strong?"

"Indeed, I should!" said Alonzo, with a smile. "I should like to have something like your strength, sir. You do not look strong, but your strength is very surprising."

"You are not the first that it has surprised," chuckled the professor. "But what you wish may be possible, my boy."

"I fear not," said Alonzo, shaking his head. "I do exercises, but they seem to make me tired, instead of making me fit."

"Suppose I could change all that?"

"Eh?"

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"Suppose I could make you twice as strong, three times as strong, as any other boy of your age?"

"Surely that is not possible, sir?"

"Science has many secrets," said Professor Sparkinson. "I have discovered some of the secrets of science. I have put my finger"—the professor brandished a long, slim forefinger—"on the secret of strength."

"Dear me!" said Alonzo.

"You have heard of the monkey-gland theory?" barked the professor. "Old men turned into young men by the transference of a certain gland taken from a monkey—what?"

"I have heard of it," answered Alonzo. "But I have heard my Uncle Benjamin say that it is all rubbish."

"Your Uncle Benjamin," said the professor, "evidently does not know everything. For years, my boy, I have studied this. And then I made my discovery—a discovery I have kept a secret, and intend to keep a secret. Why do I tell you this? Because you have made a friend of me by your brave conduct—brave and generous conduct. You supposed that I was a frail old man, incapable of self-defence, and you defended me. Why should I not, in return, make your body as strong as your spirit?"

Alonzo blinked.

Certainly, if the old professor could have done anything of the kind, Alonzo would have been very pleased and very grateful. But it sounded to him like nonsense, though he was too polite to say so.

"Julius!" barked the professor.

The black servant entered the laboratory.

"Yes, massa?" said Julius.

"Lift that armchair!" The professor pointed to the big leather armchair by the fireside.

"Yes, massa" said Julius obediently.

The negro was strong and brawny, a mass of thick-set sinew and muscle. But he had to strain every muscle to lift the great, heavy armchair of solid leather. He lifted it, however.

"You see that, boy?" barked Professor Sparkinson.

"Indeed I do!" said Alonzo. "The coloured gentleman must be very strong to raise that enormous chair from the floor."

"Put it down, Julius."

The huge armchair crashed on the floor, and Julius wiped his black brow.

"Now look!" said Professor Sparkinson.

He took the armchair by the back, and lifted it from the floor with one hand. Alonzo gazed at him. The heavy weight that had tested the brawny muscles of the powerful black man was nothing to the little old professor. He swung the great armchair round him in a circle without an effort, and then replaced it on the floor. Julius, grinning, and showing a magnificent set of white teeth, backed out of the room.

"Did you see that?" barked Professor Sparkinson.

"Dear me, yes!" gasped the amazed Alonzo. "Really, it is only with exceeding difficulty that I can credit the evidence of my eyesight, my dear sir. I am quite astounded!"

"No doubt. Do you believe now that I have mastered one of the secrets of Nature—the secret of strength?"

"Certainly! In any case, sir, I should hardly be so disrespectful as to doubt the word of an elderly gentleman," said Alonzo. "Any such distrust would seem shocking to my Uncle Benjamin."

"Would you like me to bestow on you the same strength?"

Alonzo sat silent, thinking it out.

"Well?" barked the professor.

"Undoubtedly," said Alonzo, "it would be very agreeable, and excessively enjoyable, to possess such unusual strength. Yet a fellow so amazingly strong might be tempted to use his strength in an inconsiderate way—like Bolsover major, of my Form at Greyfriars. He is very big and strong, and he is very much dreaded by small boys, whom he bullies. Once, indeed, he struck me a very hard blow, which made me quite ill. I am not sure whether I should, or consideration, care to have power placed in my hands which might cause me to become overbearing and tyrannical."

"You have an excellent heart——"

"Thank you so much——"

"Whatever may be said for your head."

"Oh!"

"You shall think this over," said the professor. "Let me see you again. Come to tea with me next week. In the meantime, you are in an exhausted state, and I will give you a nip. But keep it a secret. Not a word to anyone!"

"A nip!" repeated Alonzo, in alarm. He had heard intoxicating drinks referred to as "nips."

"A nip—a tiny nip—of the New Elixir," said the professor. "It will carry you on for a time. But remember that it is a secret."

"Dear me!" said Alonzo Todd.

The professor opened a drawer in the roll-top desk, and took out a phial containing a thick, crimson liquid. It was the phial he had locked up so carefully when Harry Wharton & Co. were there.

He removed the glass stopper, and dropped a single tiny drop of the sticky fluid on a lump of sugar held in a pair of silver tongs.

"Take that!"

"Certainly, if you wish," said Alonzo; and he opened his mouth, and the lump of sugar was placed therein.

He smiled as the sugar melted in his mouth. He was feeling utterly exhausted and weak, and wondering rather dismally how on earth he was going to get to Greyfriars. It did not seem to him probable that that crimson drop would make much difference.

Professor Sparkinson looked at his watch. He allowed three minutes to elapse.

"Now," he said, "jump."

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Alonzo.

It was amazing! It was miraculous! Fatigue and weakness were gone as if by magic. Alonzo wondered dizzily whether, indeed, it was magic—black magic. At the professor's word he jumped from the settee. He rose lightly as a bird. Colour flushed into his pale cheeks, a bright gleam into his eyes. He felt a new Alonzo!

The professor grinned.

"The effect of that nip," he said, "will last some hours. Come again next week. Good-bye!"

He turned to his chemistry bench, and seemed to forget Alonzo's existence. Alonzo walked, or rather, seemed to float, out of the laboratory. Julius Cæsar, grinning, let him out of the front door. Alonzo walked down the drive. He found himself skipping and dancing in the sheer exuberance of energy. Passing under an overhanging branch, he leaped up and caught it, swung himself over it, and dropped lightly on the other side. Any Greyfriars fellow who had seen him would have been unable to believe what he saw. Alonzo was whistling cheerily as he went out at the gate and walked across the common. It



"Pray take these things," said Alonzo Todd. "I regret the mistake. In the hurry of the moment—" "You impudent young rascal—ow!" Alonzo heaved the bag into the carriage, eliciting a roar from the owner, on whose foot it landed. Then he thrust the umbrella in, unfortunately catching the ginger gentleman under the chin with it. "Ooooh!"

was quite a new Alonzo—a very surprising Alonzo! And he was feeling good—very good indeed!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Alonzo Arrives!

MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove, looking from his study window, fixed his eyes rather curiously on a junior coming up from the gates. He was expecting Alonzo Todd back that afternoon, after a long absence from school.

It was for reasons of health that Alonzo's anxious and affectionate relatives had taken him away for a time. Mr. Quelch was of opinion that he might wisely have stayed away. Alonzo, he considered, was altogether too delicate, both in body and mind, for the rough-and-tumble of a Public school.

As he looked at Alonzo, crossing the quad, he realised that there was a change in him since he had seen him last. His cheeks were red, his eyes bright, his step firm and elastic. He carried a well-packed bag as if it weighed nothing at all. In his other hand he twirled an umbrella, as if in sheer lightness of spirits. Mr. Quelch, watching him, was both surprised and interested. It seemed as if Alonzo's long holiday had done him a lot of good.

The Remove master smiled faintly as Alonzo's twirling umbrella knocked the hat off a Fifth Form man as he passed him. Stronger and healthier he looked, but apparently he had lost none of his clumsiness. The Fifth Form man was Horace Coker—and as his hat went off, Coker spun round at the junior with a snort.

"What's this game?" roared Coker, in wrath. "Knocking a Fifth Form man's hat off, what?"

"Dear me! I am excessively sorry,

Coker!" said Alonzo, in distress. "I assure you that the action was absolutely unintentional on my part! I failed to observe that you were in such close proximity."

Coker stared at him.

"Have you eaten a dictionary this afternoon, young Todd?" he inquired.

"Indeed, no!" said Alonzo, in surprise. It was one of Alonzo's charms that he always took everything with the greatest seriousness. "I have had nothing to eat since my dear relatives saw me off in the train, and I am quite, quite hungry. But if I were ever so hungry, Coker, I should never dream of masticating a dictionary. Far from being edible, it—"

"Oh! You're the other Todd!" said Coker, realising that this could not be Peter. "Waan't there a home for idiots they could stick you in?" Horace reached out at him. "Well, you're not going to knock off Fifth Form men's hats! I'll jolly well tap your head on a tree as a warning, see? I suppose you'd fall down dead if I hit you."

"My dear Coker, please do not be so rough," said Alonzo. "I strongly object to a collision between my head and the trunk of a tree! Please let go my collar."

"I don't think!" said Coker, grinning. With a powerful grip on Alonzo's collar, he jerked him to the nearest of the old Greyfriars elms.

Then the unexpected happened!

Alonzo Todd dropped his bag and umbrella, and laid his hands on Coker! Hitherto, Alonzo's hands laid on Coker would have had about as much effect as a fly crawling on his sleeve. But there was a difference now! Coker, to his vast amazement, felt himself sitting down on the ground, placed there by a force he could not resist.

Bump!

Coker sat!

He just sat and blinked! This was altogether too surprising for Horace Coker to assimilate it all at once.

"My dear Coker," said Alonzo gently, "I regret exceedingly to cause you personal and bodily inconvenience—"

"Oh gum!" gasped the dazed Coker.

"I will refrain from tapping your head on the tree, Coker, though you really deserve it for your inconsiderate and obstreperous conduct," said Alonzo, "and I will certainly pick up your hat, as I was so unfortunate as to displace it by accident."

Alonzo picked up Coker's hat, and jammed it on his dizzy head. Then he picked up his bag and umbrella, and marched on towards the House—Coker gazing after him with an expression that was almost idiotic in its bewilderment.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Quelch. From his study window he had watched that strange scene, as astonished as Horace Coker. No man in the Remove, not even Bob Cherry, or Bolsover major, could have handled Coker of the Fifth! The Duffer of Greyfriars had sat him down like a baby! This was really extraordinary!

Alonzo entered the House, and came at once to his Form-master's study to report his arrival.

"Come in!" gasped Mr. Quelch, as there was a tap on his study door.

Alonzo came in. He came in with a light and springy step. He knocked against a chair on which lay a pile of papers waiting to be marked. The chair rocked, and the papers scattered over the floor.

"Oh! I am so very, very sorry!" ejaculated Alonzo.

"You may pick up the papers!" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

Alonzo plunged after the papers. He knocked over a chair and bumped into the table, and dropped several things

from his pockets. His face was crimson by the time he had finished gathering the scattered papers. Clumsiness was Alonzo's chief characteristic; he really seemed to have reduced it to a fine art! He laid the stack of papers on the table, and Mr. Quelch clutched away his ink-pot just in time to save it from being knocked over.

Then he looked at Alonzo. Much better as Alonzo looked, there were signs on his face of recent punching that caused Mr. Quelch to frown.

"Have you been fighting, Todd, on your way to school?" he demanded.

"I regret exceedingly——"

"Answer me!" Quelch had no time for Alonzo's long-winded orations.

"Certainly, sir! I was about to do so! I trust, sir, that you will not suppose that I entered willingly into an encounter of a fistical nature," said Alonzo earnestly. "Such proceedings run very much counter to my personal inclinations, not to mention that my Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me most seriously——"

"Have you been fighting?" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"I have undoubtedly been involved in a struggle, sir; but I am sure that you will regard my conduct as far from reprehensible when I explain that I intervened to prevent a venerable gentleman from being assaulted with a catapult."

"Very well, we will say no more about it," said Mr. Quelch. "If the matter was as you say, it is very creditable to you, and, of course, I accept your word. I am glad to see you looking so much better for your holiday, Todd."

"Do you think so, sir?" asked Alonzo. "I am very, very pleased to hear you say so, sir! I could scarcely fail to benefit under the very kind and beneficent care of my dear Uncle Benjamin."

"Please do not knock that vase of flowers over, Todd!" hooted Mr. Quelch suddenly.

Crash!

"Oh dear! I was totally unaware that my elbow was in such very close juxtaposition to the vase!" gasped the Duffer of Greyfriars.

Mr. Quelch gazed at the broken vase, the spilt water, the scattered flowers, and clutched at his cane.

"You absurdly clumsy boy! Bend over that chair!"

"I assure you, sir, that the act was absolutely unintentional, and in the circumstances, I think—— Whoooooop!"

A lick of the cane interrupted Alonzo. He roared.

"You may leave my study!" said Mr. Quelch, breathing hard.

Alonzo left it quite gladly.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Astonishing the Natives!

"**B**EAST!" roared Billy Bunter. Bolsover major tramped up the Remove passage, with a scowl on his face. He kicked Billy Bunter as he passed him simply because Bunter was there!

The Form match was over, and Bolsover major, who had played back, had not distinguished himself therein. The other footballers were still in the changing-room; but Bolsover major had left as soon as he could, because he was tired of hearing the other fellows mention what they thought of the way he had played back!

The bully of the Remove was in a bad temper. He was seldom in a very good one, if it came to that. He had hoped that, after showing now he could play back in that game, the captain of the

Remove would pick him to play against Highcliffe, or Rookwood, or St. Jim's. Instead of which, the captain of the Remove had noted the fact that Bolsover was no use even against Temple, Dabney & Co., and had made no secret of his discovery.

The Fourth had been beaten; but all the Remove players agreed that Bolsover major had done a lot to help them escape their doom! Percy Bolsover would have liked to kick the captain of the Form! He couldn't do that—but he could kick Bunter! And he did!

Which elicited a loud, indignant yell from the Owl of the Remove. Bunter's yell awoke the echoes of the Remove passage, and reached all the fellows who were in the studies—except Tom Dutton, who was in Study No. 7 with Alonzo, who was happily deaf to Bunter's unmelodious vocal efforts.

"Take that!" grunted Bolsover. "And if you kick up a row like that, you squeaking toad, I'll jolly well kick you again, see?"

"Beast!" howled Bunter. "Yah!"

HURRAH!

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Rotter! "Tain't my fault that you can't play football, is it?"

That was injudicious! It was precisely because he couldn't play football that Bolsover major had kicked Bunter. Having that fact pointed out to him did not soften his temper. Rather it seemed to intensify it. He turned on Bunter, grasped him by the collar, and banged his head on the passage wall.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter. "Beast! Leggo! I say, you fellows, help! Oh, my hat! Oh, my head! Oh crikey! Whooooop!"

Alonzo Todd looked out of Study No. 7. He was waiting there for Peter to come up to tea. His kind face wore a frown as he looked at the bully of the Remove, and the hapless fat Owl wriggling in his powerful grasp.

"My dear Bolsover!" he exclaimed. "Please do not handle Bunter in that very, very brutal manner."

"Eh, what?" Bolsover glared round at him. "Which idiotic Todd is that? It looks like Peter, but it sounds like Alonzo! Which are you, you long-nosed, mop-headed, pie-faced freak?"

"Yow-owow! Make him leggo, Toddy!" yelled Bunter.

"I'd like to see him do it!" chuckled

Bolsover major. As he had left Peter in the changing-room, he knew that this must be Alonzo. "I heard you were coming back, freak; and I think they might have kept you at home, image, if there wasn't a lunatic asylum handy to shove you into, balmy! Better stick where you are, or I'll give you some as well as Bunter."

Alonzo was coming out of the study!

"My dear Bolsover," he said mildly. "Please release Bunter! I am very, very sorry to observe that you are the same disagreeable, overhearing bully as you always were——"

"What!" gasped Bolsover.

"It is very painful to me to see that you have not reflected upon your erring conduct, and improved, my dear fellow," said Alonzo. "I wish you could have a talk with my Uncle Benjamin! It would be of very great benefit to an unpleasant, aggressive, brutal fellow like you, Bolsover."

Bolsover major stared at him. For a fellow who was no fighting man, Alonzo took a lot of risks!

"You—you—you gabbling, babbling nincompoop!" gasped Bolsover. "Wait till I've banged Bunter's head again, and I'll jolly well bang yours."

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter in anticipation.

Alonzo strode forward.

"I shall not allow you to bang Bunter's head, Bolsover," he said calmly. "Please take your hands off him at once."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter in amazement.

Bolsover major glared at Alonzo, who laid a gentle hand on his arm. He released Bunter, then, and knocked Alonzo's hand off.

"You've asked for it," said Bolsover grimly. "Now you're going to get it, you pie-faced freak."

"My dear fellow—— Yooop!" roared Alonzo as Bolsover major grasped him. Then the surprising thing happened.

Bolsover swung Alonzo to the wall, to bang his head thereon. Alonzo stiffened unexpectedly in his grasp, returned grip for grip, swept the bully of the Remove off his feet, and pitched him over on his back. Bolsover landed on the floor of the Remove passage with a terrific concussion.

Alonzo gazed down at him gently.

"I regret exceedingly, my dear Bolsover, that you have driven me to use rough measures," he remarked. "I trust that you are not hurt."

"Oh crumbs!" gasped the astounded Bunter. He blinked at Alonzo Todd with his eyes almost popping through his spectacles.

Other fellows, drawn to their study doors by the shindy, stared also in amazement. Bolsover major, feeling like a fellow in a dream, stared up at the gentle Alonzo! Alonzo Todd was popularly supposed, in the Remove, to have no chance against a white rabbit in a scrap! But Bob Cherry could not have put the bully of the Remove on his back as Alonzo had done!

"Oh, my hat!" yelled Micky Desmond, from Study No. 6. "Howly mother av Moses! What's come over ye entirely, Alonzo?"

"I guess this is the bee's knee!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish. "I'll say this is the rhinoceros' knickerbockers!"

"Alonzo!" stuttered Monty Newland. "Alonzo! Is it Alonzo?"

"Yes, my dear Newland," said Alonzo, and he smiled—in fact, he grinned! He was feeling the benefit of that "nip" of Professor Parkinson's elixir; there was no doubt about that. He was astonishing the natives, so to speak!

Bolsover major staggered to his feet. He was amazed, but he was still more enraged. He doubled his big fists and came towards Alonzo, with a deadly gleam in his eyes.

"You freak!" he gasped, his voice husky with rage. "You imitation of an organ-grinder's monkey! Put up your hands!"

"Chuck it, Bolsover!" exclaimed Monty Newland. "You're not going to pitch into Alonzo his first day back."

"Sure we'll scrag ye if you do!" exclaimed Micky Desmond.

Alonzo did not put up his hands. He was too mindful of the instructions of his excellent Uncle Benjamin to enter into a scrap if he could help it. He waved Bolsover major off.

"My dear friend—I hope I may call you my friend!" he urged. "Please do not force me to use further violence! I assure you that it was with the very, very greatest reluctance that I pitched you over, and only on account of your brutal and bullying conduct—Yaroooooh!"

Alonzo broke off as Bolsover major's fist reached his nose. Bolsover was about to follow it up with a drive that would have sent Alonzo spinning along the Remove passage, when the unexpected happened again. Alonzo's left came up, knocking the burly Bolsover's fist aside—his right shot out, and landed on Bolsover's jaw.

It was like the kick of a mule! Fellows who saw it gaped! Where the weedy Alonzo got the muscle from was a mystery! But it was there! The bully of the Remove was fairly lifted off his feet—and he went spinning backwards, to crash once more on his back.

There was a roar of amazement in the Remove passage. Billy Bunter fairly squeaked with astonishment! Coker of the Fifth could hardly have put in a drive like that!

"We're dreaming this!" gasped Micky Desmond.

Bolsover major sat up dazedly, with his hand to his jaw. He was feeling whether it was still there. It felt as if it wasn't!

"Oooooooh!" moaned Bolsover.

"I am very, very sorry, my dear fellow!" murmured Alonzo gently.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"Oooogh!" came from Bolsover, nursing his jaw. "Moooooooh!" In his anguish the bully of the Remove moaned like a cow!

"I trust you are not severely hurt—"

"Ooogh! Moooooh! Woooooh!"

"He he, he!" cackled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, Alonzo's been developing his muscles! He can lick Bolsover! He, he, he! I say, the beast kicked me, and I'm jolly well going to kick him! He, he, he!"

Bolsover major was hors de combat! He could not have tackled even Bunter just then—he could not have tackled a Second Form fag! He was utterly down and out! Billy Bunter grinned and rolled down on him to kick. The bully of the Remove could not have resisted.

"Bunter! I am shocked at you!" exclaimed Alonzo. "You must not kick a fellow when he is down! Bunter—"

"Yah!" retorted Bunter. "You mind your own business! He jolly well kicked me, didn't he?"

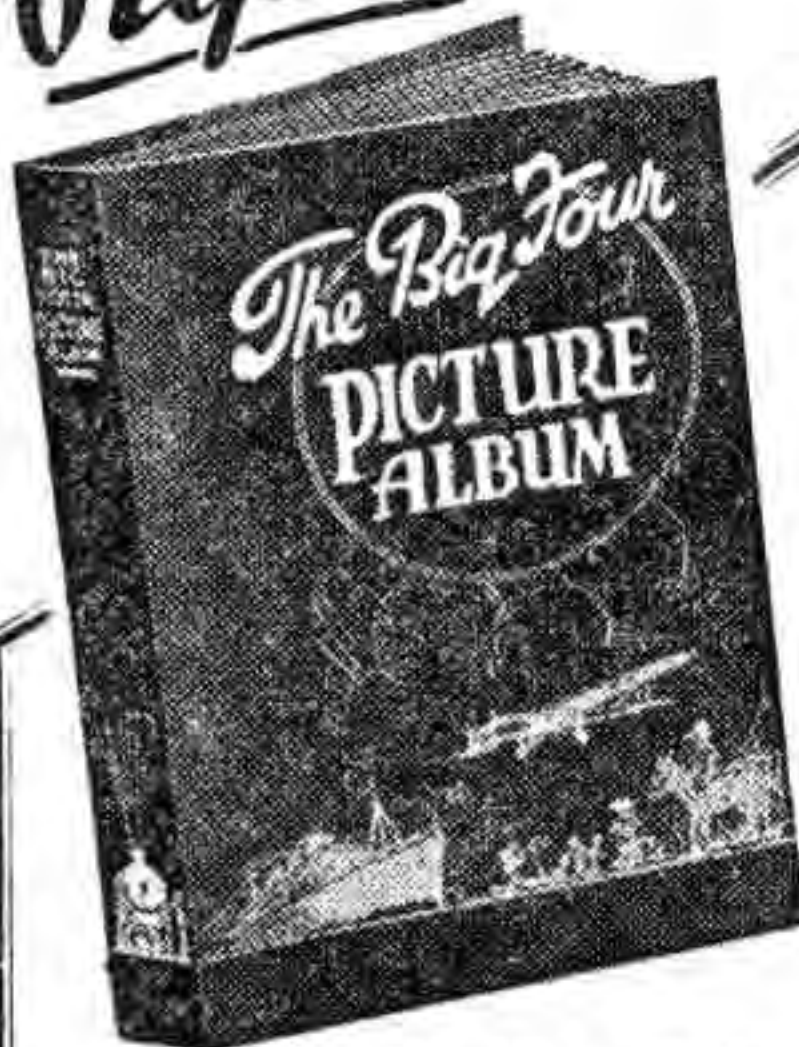
"That is true, my dear Bunter, but—"

"Well, I'm jolly well going to kick him, see!" And Bunter drew back his boot to suit the action to the word.

"I think not," said Alonzo gently. "There is something to be said for

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your point of view, Bunter, but I am sure that my Uncle Benjamin would not approve."

"Blow your Uncle Benjamin!" said Bunter. "Here, I say—leggo, you beast, or I'll back your shins!"

Alonzo took the Owl of the Remove by the collar. To the utter amazement of all beholders, he swung Bunter along to the doorway of Study No. 7 with a single swing of the arm! Bunter tumbled into the study, spluttering.

"Ow! Ow! Grooogh! Wow!" spluttered Bunter. "Why, you beast, you're as strong as that little beast of a professor! Leggo! Keep off!"

He dodged hurriedly round the study table. This new and surprising Alonzo was rather terrifying.

Skinner came along and helped Bolsover major to his feet. The bully of the Remove tottered away, his hand to his jaw, still in a state of bewildered astonishment.

"You'll jolly well lick that freak to-morrow, old chap!" said Skinner.

Bolsover major made no reply to that. He was not thinking of licking that astonishing Alonzo! He would as soon have thought of licking Carnera!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Painting for Peter!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry.

Bob's cheery and ruddy face looked into Study No. 7. Alonzo Todd, who was unpacking books, glanced round at him with a welcoming smile.

"My dear Cherry—" he said. "I heard you'd blown in, old bean," said Bob. "Jolly glad to see you again. Give us your fist."

Alonzo, with a bright and friendly smile, shook hands with Bob Cherry. Bob, who had a grip rather like that of a vice, turned on steam, as it were, to make Alonzo jump! Alonzo gave him grip for grip; and Bob uttered a sudden yell as he felt his fingers crushed.

"Yooop! Leggo! Oh, my hat! What the thump—"

"Dear me," said Alonzo. "I quite forgot, my dear Cherry! I am not accustomed to being so very, very strong! I trust that I have not hurt your fingers."

Bob gazed at him, sucking his fingers with anguish. His friends, who had THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,344.

followed him up, gazed on the scene with wide eyes. Alonzo was astonishing the natives again!

"My only hat!" gasped Bob. "Where did you get that grip, Alonzo? I was going to make you jump, but—Wow! Wow!" He rubbed his numbed hand.

"The gripfulness of the esteemed Alonzo appears to be terrific," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh in wonder.

"Been doing a lot of physical jerks while you've been away, Alonzo?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I have taken a considerable amount of exercise, my dear Wharton. In the summer I played a good deal of croquet with my Aunt Belinda and my Cousin Selina," said Alonzo simply.

"Croquet! Oh! Did croquet bring up your muscles like that?" gasped Bob Cherry. "We'd better chuck footer here, you men, and take up croquet."

"I have also played a good deal of table tennis," said Alonzo; "and I think I can say without exaggeration that I have acquired considerable skill with a yo-yo."

"Must have exerted yourself frightfully," remarked Johnny Bull. "Look here, let's see if you can double me up like you did Bob. I fancy I can stand any grip you can give me."

"Certainly, my dear fellow," said Alonzo, extending his hand, which Johnny Bull grasped with a good, firm grasp.

Johnny Bull had a firm grip, and he exerted all his strength to give Alonzo a hard one. But he jumped almost clear of the floor as Alonzo's fingers closed like a vice. The strength in those fingers was amazing—unheard-of—uncanny. Johnny Bull yelled.

"Leggo! Ow, my fingers! Leggo!"

"Have you finished already, my dear Bull?" asked Alonzo, still keeping his boa-constrictor grip on Johnny's hapless fingers. "If you would like to continue the experiment—"

"Yaroooh!"

"A little longer—"

"Whoop!"

"I have no objection in the world. I am entirely at your service, my dear friend," said Alonzo, beaming.

"Will you let go?" shrieked Johnny Bull, dancing with anguish. "You blithering idiot, you dangerous maniac, let go!"

"Oh, certainly, my dear Bull!" Alonzo let go; and Johnny, like Bob, started sucking his fingers, only rather more frantically.

"Wow, wow, wow!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, this takes the cake!" said Frank Nugent blankly. "Alonzo used to be a jolly weedy specimen. He's changed a lot."

"The lotfulness is terrific."

Peter Todd blinked in at his surprising cousin. Peter was more surprised than any other fellow.

"Dear me!" said Peter. "I heard a fellow say that Alonzo had knocked Bolsover major over. I thought it was gammon. But now—"

"It was with the greatest reluctance that I knocked Bolsover down, my dear Peter. The circumstances, however, were such that I hardly think that

Uncle Benjamin would disapprove of my course of action—"

"Long-winded as ever!" said Peter. "Well, I'm jolly glad to see you, Lonzy, but I won't shake hands with you, thanks."

"I say, you fellows, what about tea?" asked Bunter. "I think we ought to have rather a spread now Alonzo's come. In fact, I was going to stand a spread myself, but I've been disappointed about a postal order—"

"Shut up, Bunter! Look here, Alonzo, why didn't you let me know you were coming?" demanded Peter. "I heard downstairs that you'd come—"

"But I did let you know, my dear Peter," said Alonzo in surprise. "You must have had my letter, in which I requested you to meet me at Courtfield Station this afternoon—"

"Fathead! You must have forgotten to post it!" grunted Peter. "I never had it, anyhow."

"There was a letter for you on Monday in Alonzo's list," said Bob Cherry. "Didn't Bunter give it to you?"

"Bunter! You fat villain, did you bag my letter?"

"Eh? No!" exclaimed Bunter in alarm. "There wasn't any letter for you on Monday, Toddy, and Bob never handed it down from the rack—I never asked him to! All these fellows know; they were present when it happened!"

"You kept my letter!" roared Peter.

"Nunno! I never had it! Besides, there was nothing in it," said Bunter. "I suppose you don't think I'd have kept a remittance, Toddy."

"You opened my letter?"

"Of course not!" roared Bunter. "It may have come open by accident! Accidents will happen. Not that I ever touched it, you know. If Bob thinks he handed it to me he's making a mistake. He must have handed it to some other fellow—Smithy, perhaps. Smithy might open another fellow's letter! I'm not that sort, I hope!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter warmly. "Pretty thick, I call it, accusing a chap of reading a letter! As if I should be interested in Alonzo telling you the time of his train on Wednesday! Besides, I was going to meet him at the station myself, only those Highcliffe cads got after me, and I came back. It's all Pon's fault that I never met Alonzo at the station. As for your letter, I've seen nothing of it, and I don't believe Alonzo wrote at all! If he did, he forgot to post the letter. You know what a silly idiot he is!"

"My dear Bunter," said Alonzo distressfully, "I am very, very sorry to see that you have all your old disregard for veracity."

"Oh, really, Alonzo—"

"Where's my letter?" roared Peter, catching up a fives bat from the bookshelf. "Now, you fat villain, where's my letter?"

"I tell you there wasn't a remittance in it!" yelled Bunter. "So it wasn't any good, was it? I may have used it, by sheer accident, to light the study fire last night. If so, I didn't notice it at the time, and don't remember it. Not that I had it, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I prefer to let the matter drop," said Bunter with dignity. "Accusing a fellow of bagging another fellow's letter! You

shouldn't judge other chaps by yourself, Toddy—it's not right! Look here, what about tea?"

Whack!

"Whooooo!" roared Bunter, as the fives bat got into action. "Wharrer you up to, you beast? Yarooooop!"

Whack, whack!

"Ow! Wow! Help! Fire! Murder!" roared Bunter. "I say, stop him, Alonzo! Whoooooop!"

"My dear Peter—"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Please do not castigate Bunter, my dear Peter. Probably a serious talk would have a more beneficial effect on him," urged Alonzo.

Whack, whack!

Apparently Peter believed in the efficacy of the fives bat. Anyhow, he laid it hard on Bunter's fat trousers. The Owl of the Remove jumped like a kangaroo.

Alonzo laid a restraining hand on his cousin's arm.

"My dear Peter, I cannot permit—"

"Shut up, ass!"

"But, my dear, dear Peter, please allow me to take the bat. I am sure Bunter has had enough. Have you not, my dear Bunter?"

"Yaroooh!"

Alonzo took hold of the fives bat. Peter grasped the handle hard, but, to his surprise, it was whisked away with the greatest ease. Alonzo tossed it on the bookshelf.

"Give me that bat!" roared Peter. Peter liked his Cousin Alonzo, but it was in a rather lofty and patronising way; Peter had always been the protector. The startling change that had come over Alonzo did not—for the moment, at least—please Peter. He had tried his hardest to hold the fives bat, and Alonzo had whisked it away without an effort. This sort of thing was a menace to Peter's leadership of Study No. 7. Peter was not standing for this!

Alonzo shook his head gently.

"Please leave the bat where it is, Peter. Calm yourself, my dear, dear cousin. This excitement—"

"Give me that bat!"

"Is not good for you, and it deteriorates your manners—"

"If you don't hand that bat over this instant I'll bang your silly head on the table!" bawled Peter.

"Order!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"The orderfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed Toddy."

Unheeding, Peter Todd laid his grasp on Alonzo to tap his head on the table. Alonzo sighed. It went very, very much against the grain to exert his newly acquired strength on his dear, dear cousin. Still, he did not want his head tapped on the table. The table was hard, and the head was a little soft, and it would have been very, very unpleasant.

So he grasped Peter's wrists and held them fast. He drew them together and held them with one hand. Peter, wondering whether he was dreaming, wrenched frantically at his hands. But they might as well have been handcuffed, for all the use his efforts were to free them. With a single hand Alonzo held both Peter's, and Peter could not get them loose. Alonzo smiled gently at Peter as he held him a helpless prisoner.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob Cherry blankly. "This takes the jolly old cake! Where did you get all that beef from, Lonzy?"

"Let go!" yelled Peter frantically.

He gave a terrific wrench—and Alonzo obligingly let go at the same moment,

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"Yes, I'd like to see that weedy freak chuck me out!" grinned Coker. "Oh, my hat! What—how—who—yaroooooh!" The Fifth-Former roared with rage as Alonzo Todd picked him up and held him high above his head. With arms and legs wildly whirling, Coker of the Fifth was carried to the door.

The result was that Peter swung backwards and crashed into the Famous Five.

They staggered right and left under the impact. Peter sat down with a bump. He sat and gasped, and stared, and almost gibbered, at his amazing cousin Alonzo.

"My dear, dear Peter!" murmured Alonzo. "Pray do not let your angry passions rise! Let dogs delight to bark and bite, my dear Peter, because it is their nature to, but—"

"Oooogh!" gasped Peter.

"Let me assist you to rise, my dear, dear Peter!" Alonzo took Peter Todd by the shoulder and lifted him to his feet as if he weighed rather less than a feather. "Please do not be cross, my dear Peter! Uncle Benjamin would be grieved—"

"I'm dreaming this!" said Peter Todd, with conviction.

And, really, it seemed like a dream to the other fellows! That new and astonishing Alonzo took their breath away. That evening—much to the detriment of prep—there was only one topic in the Remove studies—the topic of the astonishing Alonzo!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Strong Alonzo!

CECIL REGINALD TEMPLE chuckled. "Here's the silly ass," he remarked.

Prep was over, and Temple & Co. of the Fourth were the first in the Rag. Alonzo Todd was there—Alonzo being excused prep on his

first evening. He was seated in an arm-chair by the fire, perusing, with deep interest, that entrancing work, "The Story of a Potato."

And Temple, Dabney, and Fry exchanged grinning glances. They had heard that the Duffer of Greyfriars was back again; and, naturally, they had looked forward to extracting a little fun from Alonzo. And here he was—all on his own, for the moment, without any obnoxious Removites in the offing.

"Get a box-robe, Dab," murmured Cecil Reginald. "We're going to have a little jape with the dear fellow, and make the fellows chortle when they come in—what?"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

Temple strolled over to Alonzo, followed by the grinning Fry.

"Jolly to see you here again, old bean," said Temple affably.

Alonzo looked up from his book, with a kind smile.

"It is very, very kind of you to say so, Temple," he answered. "I am indeed pleased to re-visit these scholastic precincts."

"Greyfriars isn't half so funny without you!" explained Temple. "It's like a monkey-house with the monkey gone."

"My dear Temple—"

Dabney came in with the box-robe, which he held behind him. Temple had a "googly" ball in his hand, which he dropped. It rolled under Alonzo's chair.

"Bother it!" said Temple, with a wink at his friends. "Did you see where that ball rolled, Alonzo?"

"I think it went under my chair, Temple," answered Alonzo innocently.

"Hook it out for me, there's a good chap."

Any other Remove fellow would probably have told Temple to hook it out for himself, and to go and eat coke in addition! But not the gentle Alonzo! From his Uncle Benjamin, Alonzo had learned to be kind and obliging on all occasions.

He laid down his book, rose from the chair, and went down on his hands and knees to grope after the ball.

It was rather a large chair. Alonzo, groping after the ball, had to put his head under it to reach the ball. It did not occur to Alonzo that that was what the playful Temple wanted.

Alonzo was far from suspicious. Temple made a sign to his friends. A sudden push from behind, and Alonzo sprawled under the chair. Fry and Dabney stood on his legs to keep him there, while Temple handled the box-robe.

"Oooogh!" gasped the startled Alonzo. "My dear fellows—ooooogh—please let me—ooogh—gerrup! Oooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Temple was swift. The surprised Alonzo did not even realise what he was up to. It came as quite a surprise to Alonzo to find that a cord had been rapidly passed round his arms and knotted to the legs of the chair. Alonzo was a prisoner!

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Temple.

He sat in the chair. Fry and Dabney, chortling, sat on the arms of it. Alonzo, face down under the chair, gasped in surprise, only his rather long and rather slim legs in view.

"Dear me!" gasped Alonzo. "My dear Temple, pray release me! This is most uncomfortable!"

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"You don't say so!" chortled Temple.
 "I do, indeed!" asserted Alonzo. "I should be very, very much obliged, my dear Temple, if you would release me immediately."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door of the Rag was flung open, and a crowd of fellows came in.

They stared at the sight of Alonzo's legs protruding from under the armchair.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "What's the game?"

"My dear fellows!" came a stifled voice from under the chair. "Pray release me from this position! It is uncomfortable, and indeed ridiculous!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sit tight!" grinned Temple.

Alonzo's legs thrashed wildly. The sight was utterly absurd, and it caused a yell of laughter to echo through the Rag. What followed, however, caused a gasp of astonishment. Alonzo heaved under the chair, and it rocked again. But this time it did not merely rock. It rose from the floor as Alonzo rose under it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Look!"

"Great pip!"

"Oh, great Christopher Columbus!"

The juniors gazed spellbound. The Removites had already been astonished by the amazing strength displayed by the weedy Alonzo. Now they were astounded. But they were not so astounded as Temple & Co. Up went the chair, as Alonzo rose under it, and up with the chair went Temple, Dabney, and Fry.

Temple was sitting in the chair, leaning back. Fry and Dabney were sitting on the two padded arms, and as the chair lurched they fell inwards on Temple. The three of them were bunched together as the chair rose from the floor. Three pairs of legs wildly thrashed the air, as Temple & Co. bunched together.

"Oh crikey!" spluttered Temple. "What—what—what's happenin'? Is it an earthquake, or what?"

"Ow! Help!" gasped Fry.

"Yaroooo!" roared Dabney. "What the dickens—Whoop!"

Alonzo was on his feet now. He was bending forward the big armchair's seat resting on his shoulders. He did not seem to feel the weight. The swarm of Greyfriars fellows gazed, almost in awe. If this was not magic, what was it?

"Is—is—is this a vision, or what?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Oh crumbs!"

"The crumbliness is terrific!"

"Ow! Let us down!" yelled Fry. "Oh, my hat! What's happening? What's the matter with this chair?"

"My dear fellows," came Alonzo's voice from under the chair. "I am very, very sorry to cause you inconvenience, but—"

"Yaroooo!"

"Whoop!"

"Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites. Alonzo walked across to the door of the Rag, the yelling juniors making way for him to pass. In the doorway he tilted the armchair suddenly, and Temple & Co. shot out of it, and rolled out of the Rag. They landed in the passage, roaring.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo turned back.

"My dear fellows," he said mildly. "I am tied to this chair, and I should be very, very much obliged if somebody

would cut the cord. It is exceedingly inconvenient to be tied in such a position, and it is causing me a considerable amount of discomfort."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd cut the cord with his pen-knife with a dazed look on his face. Was this the weedy Alonzo he had known, whose protector he had been? It really seemed that it couldn't be. But it was—plus a "nip" from the wonderful elixir of Professor Sparkinson. The armchair crashed to the floor. Alonzo smoothed his ruffled hair. The Removites gazed at him.

"He—he—he's as strong as a horse!" almost babbled Bob Cherry. "He's as strong as a dozen horses! How did you do it, Alonzo?"

Alonzo smiled gently. The professor had told him to keep it a secret, and, of course, Alonzo was going to keep it a secret as requested.

"Where do you pack the muscle, Alonzo?" gasped Wharton.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Coker!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What do you want, Coker?"

Coker of the Fifth looked into the Rag, with a fives bat in his hand. He was looking for Alonzo Todd.

"Oh, here you are you cheeky young scoundrel!" exclaimed Coker. "I've been looking for you since you barged me over in the quad. Now—"

"My dear Coker—"

"Look out, Coker!" chortled Bob Cherry. "Alonzo's dangerous—jolly dangerous!"

"The dangerousness is terrific, my esteemed and idiotic Coker," chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Coker did not heed. He was after vengeance. He gripped Alonzo with his left hand, and flourished the fives bat with his right.

"Chuck him out, Alonzo!" yelled the Removites.

"Yes, I'd like to see that weedy freak chuck me out," grinned Coker. "Oh, my hat! What—how—who—yaroo!"

Coker of the Fifth roared with rage and amazement as he was picked off his feet. He had said that he would like to see Alonzo chuck him out. Now he saw it. Still he did not seem pleased.

With arms and legs wildly whirling, Coker of the Fifth was carried to the door. He went whizzing through the doorway.

Bump!

"Yaroooo!"

"I am very, very sorry, my dear Coker," said Alonzo, gazing after him mildly. "But in the circumstances, I—"

"Urrrgh!" gurgled Coker.

An amazed and bewildered Coker staggered away, followed by a roar of laughter from the Rag.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Rough on Alonzo!

ALONZO TODD was the cynosure of all eyes at Greyfriars the next day.

His fame had spread.

Alonzo, the duffer, Alonzo, the weedy, Alonzo, the feeble, was well known; but Strong Alonzo was a surprise packet.

How he did it was a mystery.

But he did it.

Cousin Peter was not perhaps quite pleased at first. Once the sturdy protector, he was now a child in the hands of the astonishing Alonzo. But it occurred to Peter that this was "one

up" for Study No. 7. No other study in the Remove, or in all Greyfriars, could boast a strong man like Alonzo. He was unique. And it was borne in upon Peter's mind that with such an ally as Strong Alonzo, he would be able to realise his old ambition of making Study No. 7 top in the Remove. So, on second thoughts, Peter was pleased.

The amazing news had spread from the Second to the Sixth. Even the prefects were interested, and Sixth Form men looked curiously at Alonzo in the quad that morning. Some of the fellows did not quite believe it. There were plenty of eye-witnesses to the amazing strength displayed by the once weedy Duffer of Greyfriars; but really it was too steep to be easily believed by other fellows. If it was true, there was a junior in the Lower Fourth who could handle any Sixth Form man like a baby—and no Sixth Form man was likely to believe that if he could help it.

Crowds of fellows gathered round Alonzo in break that morning.

Alonzo was pleased.

Modest and unassuming as Alonzo was, perhaps he rather liked the limelight, which had never shone on him before, but of which he had now the full glare.

Certainly it was rather a fine thing to be in possession of remarkable strength—a novel thing for Alonzo, and very agreeable.

Alonzo could not help feeling pleased and satisfied.

In his pleased satisfaction, he rather overlooked what Professor Sparkinson had told him—that the effect of that "nip" of the wonderful elixir would last a few hours. It had lasted a few hours. Alonzo had gone to bed the strong man of Greyfriars. But in the morning, though he did not realise it, he had risen the old Alonzo. The effect of that "nip" of elixir had worn off during the night, and Alonzo's new-found powers had departed—the glory, so to speak, was gone from the House of Israel. But Alonzo was not yet aware of that.

Nobody else was aware of it, either, so far. Alonzo was still, in the general eye, Strong Alonzo. Temple, Dabney & Co. eyed him sourly in the quad, still sore from the unexpected outcome of their jape on the Duffer of Greyfriars. Bolsover major scowled at him savagely; there was still an ache in Bolsover's jaw. Coker of the Fifth regarded him with eyes of angry wrath. But nobody thought of laying a finger on Strong Alonzo. Alonzo walked the quad, monarch of all he surveyed, as it were, and there was no doubt that he enjoyed it.

It was a mere fag—an inconsiderable fag—Nugent minor of the Second Form who burst the bubble, so to speak.

"It's gammon!" said Dicky Nugent to his friends in the Second, after dinner. "Just gammon! And I'll tell you what—I'll jolly well knock his hat off!"

And Nugent minor, greatly daring, knocked Alonzo's hat off in the quad! And as the mild Alonzo stooped to pick it up Dicky Nugent put out a foot and sent Alonzo sprawling over his hat!

"Ow!" roared Alonzo.

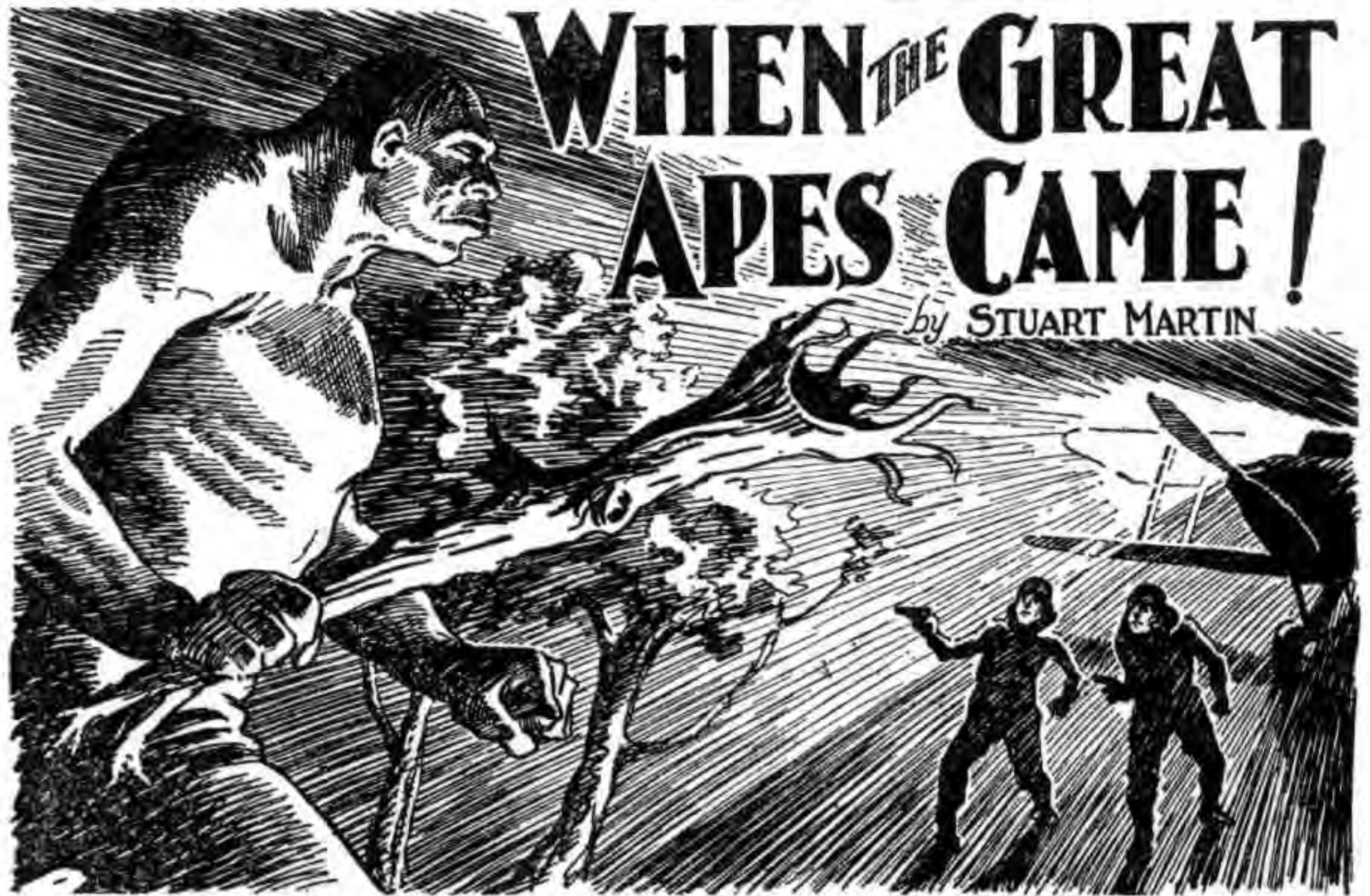
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Dicky Nugent.

And as Alonzo sprawled over the hat the cheeky fag sat on him and pinned him down.

"You young ass!" shouted Frank Nugent. "Stop that!"

"Shift, you little idiot!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

(Continued on page 25.)



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Lord of the Wilds!

"IT'S jolly hot!" said Gerry Lambert, his eyes fixed ahead, and then travelling downward to the tangle of green and dun that was sweeping under the speedy aeroplane.

"It will be hotter yet, old son," replied Billy Murchie, also peering around and below. "There's thunder not far off."

Africa lay below the two young air-men, the great forests stretching for miles fore and aft, and now and then the evening sun flashed on a mighty river threading its way to the distant sea.

Neither time nor space seemed to move to the two lads in the plane. They were on what they hoped to be a record-breaking flight from England to the Cape, a flight they believed would break the record by at least a day. Already they were nine hours ahead of time.

It was the very latest thing in planes they were flying, a pocket edition of the Golden Clipper type, but with every improvement that was possible. Behind the cockpit, which was of specially strong glass, was a cabin worthy of a first-class ocean liner, containing two bunks and space for stores and batteries. Mounted in front of the windscreen was a searchlight, which projected a powerful ray during night flying.

There had been no stop since this marvel of the skies had left England, for her great engines had a capacity of driving her for eight thousand miles without a stop. But there was one element which even this wonder plane could not quite master. That element was the wind.

A gale had caused the young pilots to swing farther inland than they had intended, and now, instead of following the coastline, they were steering by compass over the vast, unknown tract that lies partly in the Belgian Congo, partly in Angola.

Isolated from the world below, Gerry and Billy felt perfectly safe in their air-chariot, slung between firm, unmoving

wings, the blue struts of which were as steady as temple pillars against the clouds on either side. There was no sensation of speed although they were travelling at something approaching two hundred miles per hour.

A thousand or so feet below, the forests lay thick and deep. The air was heady as wine, and Gerry lifted his hand and slid back the glass window beside

STUART MARTIN, who writes this amazing story for MAGNET, has lived an adventurous life. Here are appended only a few of the unique experiences that have befallen this brilliant author, hunter, traveller, and all-round sportsman:

He has searched for pirates' treasure in most of the wonderful islands of the West Indies—Saba, Tortuga, Barbados, etc. Sailed round the Horn in a brig that was waterlogged and given up for lost; half the crew frost-bitten, and ropes iced up so badly that they had to be chopped clear. Claims to be the only Gentile who was ever inside the Holy Temple of the Mormons in Salt Lake City. Lived among the Mormons of Utah. Hoboed across U.S.A. from Chicago to California on the old trail of the pioneers. Was held up twice in Chicago by gangsters, and later had the privilege of seeing one of them being electrocuted in Sing Sing for murder. Served with the Canadians in the War, the biggest adventure of all. Went up the Orinoco after gold and got fever; nursed back to health by Indians who made him chew chinchona bark, and later took him to Trinidad to convalesce. Has now a forty-footer cruiser and hopes of going off on a world cruise.

him, so that he might glimpse below. Peering down through the rush of air, he saw, here and there, where the forest thinned, groups of wild creatures—elephants, deer, and in the great river dark blobs told of hippopotami.

He closed the window as he heard Billy's voice shouting:

"Look! What is that?"

Straight ahead something had come up out of the forest, something that seemed to be thrown into the air as a stone is flung upward. It was something

stranger than anything the young pilots had ever seen. Whatever it was, it ceased to rise suddenly, and hung steady in the sky in front of them, a mile distant perhaps.

Gerry lifted a pair of binoculars and gazed for an instant. His face had a curious expression as he handed the glasses to Billy.

"What do you make of it?" he asked. "Seems rather queer to me."

Billy's eyes were riveted on the strange object that had come within view. And as he gazed, another similar object shot skyward, swayed a moment, and then remained stationary.

No wonder Billy dropped the glasses and stared at his chum. What the glasses had shown was a huge net stretched right across their track, hanging in the air ready to catch them. But, more surprising still, were the holders of the net.

At the upper ends two figures like human beings were hovering in the air, and above their heads floated small balloons.

Then upward swept a third object that gradually disentangled itself and spread across the sky, higher than the previous two, higher than the plane was flying. And after the third came a fourth, a fifth, and a sixth!

Stretched across the heavens at various heights the nets hung, weighted so that their lower ends remained practically steady; and above them, at the outer corners, hung two strange forms in every case.

There was no time for conversation, for the plane was almost upon the first obstruction. Up went the nose of the clipper, zooming steeply to clear these strange nets. The forest slipped from under them. The clipper steadied high above, and then rushed on. As they passed the first net both pilots gazed with astonishment at the holders. They were not men, they were gorillas!

The clipper still zoomed, staggered, so that the pilots had to strain their feet

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against the foot-rests and then flashed past. As they passed the second net both pilots saw, clearly in the setting sunlight, the faces of the gorillas upturned towards them, teeth showing, mouths opened in grins, and hairy arms waving.

Not a sound from the forest below. No warning had come before these strange apparitions had suddenly been tossed high to intercept the plane. And every net had been thrown, with its holders, higher than the previous one. Over the third went the clipper, clearing it by several hundred feet, past the fourth owing to fine steering, then taking the fifth like a racehorse going over a hurdle.

How they passed the sixth neither Gerry nor Billy knew, for at that moment the sun dropped behind the horizon, and darkness was upon them.

The headlight was switched on, piercing the night with its tremendous ray. To and fro it swung slowly, a white finger in the blackness; and then both pilots clutched their joysticks, and the plane pitched and rolled like a ship in a hurricane. Earth, sky, everything was wiped out, the windows became storm-darkened, the wind whistled about the struts and body of the clipper; the lights of the gyroscope winked at them, green as they swung to starboard, red as they went to port.

Watching those lights and the pressure gauges, listening always, the two young pilots strove hard to steer the plane through the storm that had broken upon them as night fell. The clipper corkscrewed, pitched, and rolled, while the searchlight stabbed the night.

"Gerry!" yelled Billy suddenly.

"Billy!"

The gaze of both was glued in front of them, for up through the white glare of the searchlight another net had been thrown, and then another, and a third. The nets hung menacingly right in line with their course.

Round came the plane, in obedience to the dual piloting, making a turn that would have been dangerous in ordinary circumstances. But as the searchlight flung its beams in the new direction, another cry escaped the lips of the two pilots.

More nets hung in front of them, swinging heavily like the others, with gesticulating gorillas treading the air at the corners.

Again the plane edged and flew in another direction—back along the trail it had come, heading northward. Again the searchlight picked out netting.

With set teeth, Gerry and Billy moved their joysticks, and the plane headed east.

Out of the night came other nets as mysterious and as terrible as the others.

Making a turn that nearly tipped the plane upside down, they flashed westward. But still more nets appeared.

From the forest these obstacles had been shot up with such rapidity and accuracy, that at every turn the plane was in danger of dashing into them; and had one of the nets met the propellers it would have been death to the pilots.

The circling movement that the clipper had executed showed the two young airmen that the danger was greater than they had at first thought. For the moment they had no time to think of the origin of the menace; their thoughts were centred on evading it, but as they circled again the full horror of the situation broke upon them.

The nets had closed in on them at the rear!

To zoom above the obstructions was impossible: the wind had forced the plane down somewhat, and there was no room to rise, and as they circled once more within that ever-narrowing barrage a crash caused the plane to tilt dangerously. A missile had torn through one of the wings, carrying struts with it, and leaving a jagged hole where it had passed close to the cockpit.

Rocking and swaying, the plane lost still more height. The damage to the wing was not fatal but it was enough to displace the equilibrium of the clipper. She dipped, rolling in distress, in the fashion of a ship that has been dismasted.

The searchlight, flashing in jerky motion, showed the strangest and most terrible sight—on every side the heavens seemed to be peopled with apes hanging to the netting corners, apes of all sizes, and all of them gaping, red-lipped and fanged, at the clipper as it flashed past.

"Gerry!" yelled Billy quickly. "Let's try a dive. Maybe we can get under them!"

Down came the plane like an arrow—down, down, until it seemed as if it must hit the tops of the swaying trees of the forest, then straight forward it shot. But just in time it banked and slid round sideways, for there in front again were more apes hanging in space above the trees.

Another missile whizzed past the cockpit, a black thing like a cannon-ball that broke its way through the already damaged wing.

"That puts the lid on it!" cried Gerry. "We've got to land somewhere."

The clipper, indeed, was almost out of control. The damage to the wing had made it necessary to land to avoid a crash, and the searchlight streamed downward, picking out the land as the plane fluttered lower and lower.

It came down in a weak spiral, skirted the tops of some mighty trees, staggered onward a few more yards, and finally landed in the centre of some bushes on the edge of a small clearing.

Crack, crack, went more struts! Smash went the other wing against the

branches of trees! And both pilots were thrown from the plane as it came to rest.

There was no explosion, for the engine had been switched off, but both pilots jumped to their feet, bruised and shaken. The searchlight streamed across the clearing, and lit up the forest with a weird light.

"Our guns! Look out!"

Gerry and Billy dashed to the plane and grabbed two revolvers. They were only just in time, for, coming towards them out of the shadow of the forest, were what seemed to be an army of apes, uttering wild cries, brandishing clubs, throwing pieces of rock which they picked up as they advanced, hiding behind trees at times, then crawling forward on all-fours.

Standing back to back, the two airmen levelled their guns, taking aim at the foremost of their attackers.

Two shots rang out simultaneously, and two apes leaped into the air and then dropped dead.

Two more shots followed, breaking the tenseness, and two more gorillas went down.

A tumult of angry cries broke out, howls of rage, and the booming of deep-throated growling, as great, clenched paws beat on chests. But suddenly silence fell as quickly as the storm had risen. A voice, louder than that combined roaring, had filled the forest.

It was no ordinary voice, but a bellow that seemed to strike the eardrums and reverberated under the canopy of foliage like thunder. Inhuman it was, frightful in its staggering savagery, but sharp and clear.

The apes were carved into stone at that roar. Some fell to the ground and lay there, some stood rigid, hairy statues, some crouched on the branches of trees. But all were still.

Not a sound, save the moaning of the wind above. Not a light, save the gleam of the search-beacon from the wrecked plane. The jungle was silent. The lord of the wilds had spoken.

A second or so passed. Gerry and Billy, too, remained motionless, thrilled, their nerves at breaking point.

Then a sudden gasp went up from both boys, as into the white light of the plane's beacon stepped a figure that was monstrous, impossible, beyond belief.

Was it a man or animal?

Imagination reeled before that sight.

Twenty-five feet high if it was an inch, this monster was. From the waist up he was a tawny, whitish colour, with the face of a Chinaman, the narrow eyes, the high cheekbones of a Mongolian. His hair was matted and jet black, and hung in stiff, straight wisps down his brows to his shoulders. From the waist down he was a gorilla, with the skin of an ape, the brown, hairy legs, slightly bowed, similar in every aspect to the other apes, except in size.

In his hand he carried a club that was a young tree. His teeth were not fangs, but strong white teeth; his eyes were not bloodshot, like those of an ape, but clear and piercing, steady and gleaming. About his loins was a girdle of coarse matting.

The weird monster towered above everything living there. His presence dwarfed even the trees around him. He thrust aside branches that were as thick as an ordinary man's body, and

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stood still, facing the wrecked plane and its defenders.

Was there a smile on his Mongol face? It was difficult to say, but there was a curl of the upper lip that might have been a smile or a sneer. Motionless, a perfect giant from the waist upwards, a perfect gorilla from the waist to the huge paw-like feet, he surveyed the scene, the bright beacon flashing full upon him.

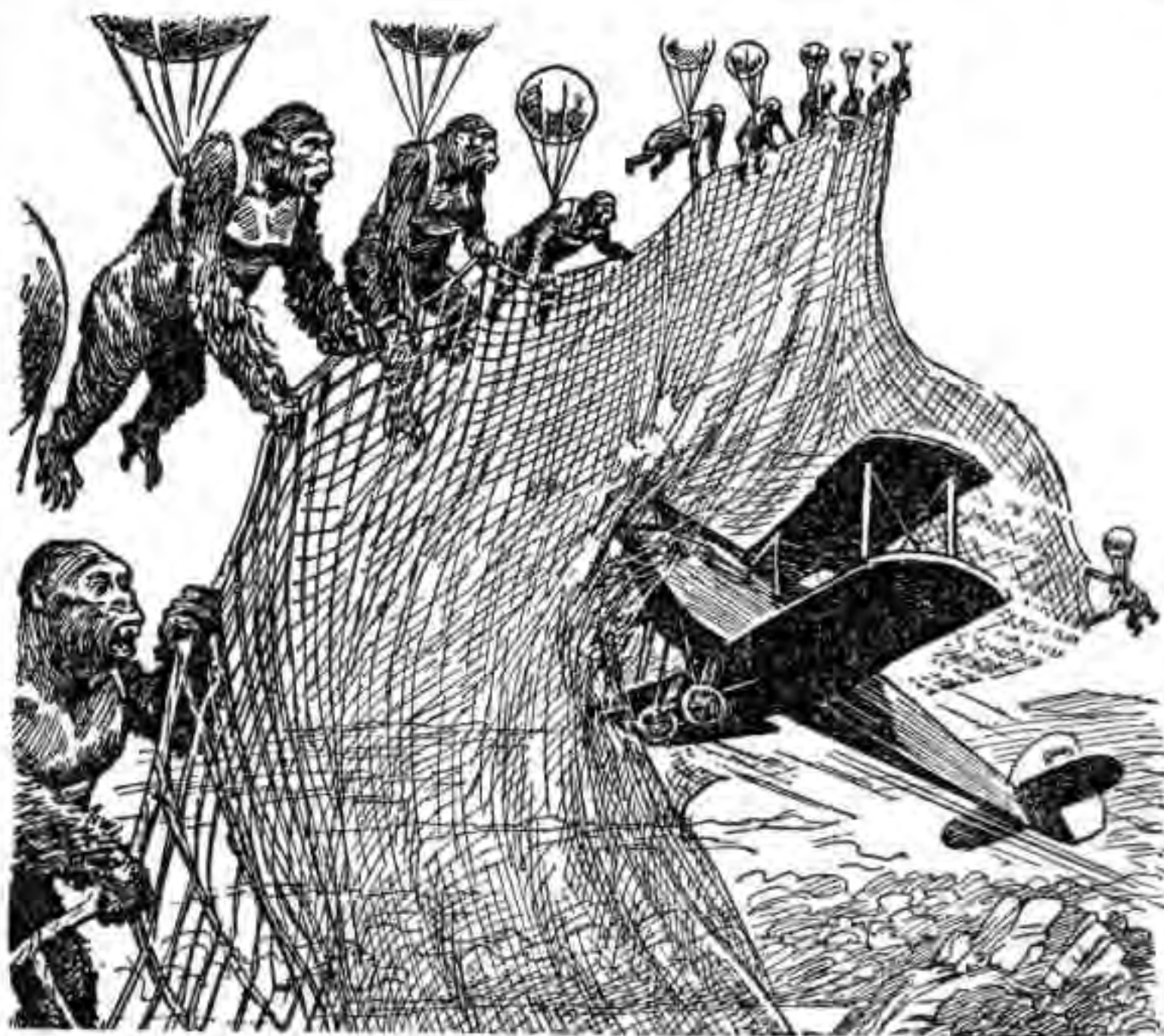
He held out an enormous hand towards the boys. He seemed to be asking for their weapons, which they had no intention of giving up.

Instinctively, both Billy and Gerry raised their guns.

The shots were never fired, however, for with the swiftness of lightning the huge ape-man flung up his hand, caught the large limb of a tree, and swept it down upon them, as one might swat a fly.

The weight of the foliage and minor branches struck them, smothering them in a tangle that blotted out everything; and as they lay breathless under the mass of foliage they heard a sharp volley of jargon thunder out.

A dozen apes pounced on the immense broom, groping with their paws, and next moment Billy and Gerry were seized by hairy hands and dragged to the top, to be finally hurled, like two bundles, from ape to ape, until they were whirled into the darkness of the woods.



As the young airmen circled, the full horror of the situation broke upon them, for the heavens were peopled with apes of all sizes holding up a net which suddenly closed in on the plane!

The Cavern of Apes!

"**W**HERE are we, Billy? Are you awake?"

Gerry was arousing out of unconsciousness to the noise of strange sounds around him.

"Am I awake?" came Billy's reply, as he bent over Gerry. "I've been wondering that for some hours, old chap. A crack on the head knocked you out properly. You've got a lump over your right eye as big as a pigeon's egg. It's good to hear you speak again."

"What hit me?" exclaimed Gerry, struggling to a sitting position and looking around him in wonder, while his hand went up to feel his hurt tenderly.

"A tree hit you, old chap, when you were being tossed from hand to hand." And then, seeing the amazement on Gerry's face, continued: "That's right, have a look round. It's got me guessing every time."

The sight that met Gerry's gaze caused him to forget his injury. The two pilots were lying in a wide cave, the walls of which were rough and of a peculiarly streaky blue colour. In front of them at the entrance to the cave several enormous apes crouched busily eating bananas and other food.

Two dirty earthenware bowls had been placed within the boys' reach, filled with some vegetable mush.

The cave was merely an alcove of an immense cavern, roughly circular in shape, lit by great torches of resinous wood, that flared and sparkled in stone basins hollowed out of the rock. In the centre of this cavern was a large pool of water, from which steam was rising in thin wisps. Around the pool a broad pathway ran, and here and there tunnels led into the face of the rock. A strange rumbling filled the chamber, and from the side opposite the cave came a peculiar hissing sound in constant accompaniment.

"How did we get here? Are we underground?" whispered Gerry.

The apes on guard turned their heads at the sound of his voice, but took no further notice.

"We came down a lift, Gerry, and it was the most primitive lift I ever saw. I was pretty dizzy with the handling I received, and you were unconscious, but I tried to take note of things. Yes, it was a funny lift. And we are underground all right."

"What sort of lift?"

"Bits of timber tied together with lianas; and the lowering was done by apes below paying out the ropes which were slung over two fallen trees lying alongside a hole in the ground. It was primitive, I tell you. There's a regular population here. Have a look at this rock. Can you tell what it is?"

Gerry shook his head.

"All right," said Billy, "I haven't been taught bits of geology for nothing. I've been thinking things out when you were asleep. That rock is cleveite, or I'm a Dutchman!"

"What's cleveite?"

"It's a rare mineral found in Norway, from which helium can be extracted. Helium is one of the lightest gases known."

"Much good it will do us!" interrupted Gerry. "Who left that filthy grub for us?"

"It was left about an hour ago by a girl—"

"A girl?"

"I'm not joking. Possibly a white girl, tanned by the sunshine of Africa. She either can't or won't speak, and ran away when I began to ask questions. But here she comes, Gerry. You can try your lingo on her."

A figure had emerged from one of the dark passages, and was gliding swiftly round the edge of the pool towards the two pilots. A moment later she stood before them.

She may, as Billy had said, have been white, but her skin was as dark as a half-breed's. Her hair, which was fair and luxuriant, fell like a halo around her head and over her shoulders. Her dress seemed to be made of large leaves sewn patchily together. She was about the same age as the two pilots, and the ruddy glare of the torches threw her

supple figure into sharp relief against the background.

The girl looked from one to the other with a slight frown on her pretty face, then, seeing that the bowls of food had not been touched, she picked them up and ran out of the cave.

In a minute or so she was back again, and this time she carried two more bowls of clay, containing a hot kind of soup, coarse and disagreeable to look at, but with an appetising odour.

She presented a bowl to each of the two pilots, and squatted down at their feet, looking eagerly up into their faces and gesticulating to encourage them to eat.

Billy lifted his bowl and tasted the concoction.

"It's not bad, Gerry. Puts new life into you. Taste it!"

"What's your name?" asked Gerry, addressing the girl.

The latter merely shook her head.

"Can you speak?" queried Gerry.

"Understand what I'm saying?" He tried conversing in broken French, and at last the girl opened her lips, pronouncing two words:

"Big Ling."

"What's Big Ling?" demanded Gerry.

"Big Ling," she repeated; and then, with a quick movement, lifted the two bowls, which were now empty, and glided from the cave as quickly as she had come.

"If she's the cook she's all right," murmured Billy, licking his lips; "but what we've got to settle is how to get out of this mess. There are some things I'd like to find out. What about having a look round the cavern?"

"If these apes don't stop us I'm game, but they smell worse than the monkey-house at the Zoo!"

(Here's an intriguing start to one of the most thrilling adventure yarns ever written. Mind you read next week's sensational chapters. Meanwhile, introduce Gerry Lambert and Billy Murchie to your pals—they'll just love to read about their exciting adventures.)

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THE GREYFRIARS STRONG MAN!

(Continued from page 24.)

"Let him shift me, if he's so jolly strong!" grinned Dicky Nugent. "I don't believe a word of it myself. Get up, Alonzo!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Alonzo, squashed face down on the quad, with the fag sitting on his shoulders. "Please get off! This is most uncomfortable."

"Chuck the cheeky little tick off, you ass!" snorted Peter Todd.

A crowd of fellows gathered round, staring, expecting to see Dicky Nugent tossed aside like a toy. Alonzo heaved. But he heaved in vain. It came with a rush into his mind that the effect of the elixir had worn off, and that he was once more weedy Alonzo—poor old Alonzo!—unable to hold his own, even against a cheeky fag of the Second Form!

"Oh dear!" gasped Alonzo.

He made up his mind on the spot to pay that visit to the Willows next week and accept the offer of Professor Sparkinson! Another, and longer, "nip" of the wonderful elixir would set matters right. But that was in the future. For the present Alonzo was the old Alonzo, pinned face down in the quad, with a cheeky fag sitting on his shoulders, and keeping him there!

"Well, why don't you get up, Lonzy?" chortled Nugent minor.

"I—I—I can't! Please, get off!" gasped Alonzo. "You are causing me considerable discomfort, and also my clothes are suffering from contact with the muddy ground."

"Ha ha, ha!"

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Look here, Alonzo, are you gammoning, or what?"

"Ow! Gerroff!" gasped Alonzo. "My dear fellows, pray pull him off! This is very, very uncomfortable."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, this beats Banagher!" said Bob.

He took hold of Nugent minor's ear and hooked him off Alonzo. The Duffer of Greyfriars sat up, gasping for

breath. Peter, in wonder, gave him a hand to get on his feet, and Alonzo stood leaning on him, still gasping.

What it all meant, nobody knew! But it was clear, at least, that Alonzo's wonderful strength, like Samson's of old, had deserted him. Like Samson shorn of his hair was Alonzo, now that the effect of the elixir had worn off.

"Sorry, old bean!" said Dicky, good-naturedly. "I knew it was all gammon!"

"Oooooogh!" gasped Alonzo.

"But what does it all mean?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Oooooogh!"

"Last night you were as strong as a horse, you fathead! And now—"

"Urrrrgh!"

"You'd better get your muscle up again, old bean," chuckled Nugent. "You'll need it!"

Alonzo soon discovered that that was true. In class that afternoon he had a very thoughtful face. Professor Sparkinson had invited him to tea next week, when he was willing to make good his promise to endow him with tremendous strength by means of that mysterious scientific discovery, the New Elixir!

In the meantime there were breakers ahead. After class that day Temple, Dabney & Co. waited to see Alonzo.

"You made rather fools of us last night, old bean," said Temple agreeably. "I don't know how you did it, but you did. Some sort of stunt you can't repeat—what? See that puddle?"

"Eh? Yes," said Alonzo.

"Like to sit in it?"

"Not at all, my dear Temple! I should object very, very much."

"I'm sorry for that," smiled Temple, "for that's just where you're going to sit. Collar him!"

Splash!

Alonzo sat in the puddle. Warming to the work, as it were, Temple & Co. rolled him over in it. Alonzo's feeble resistance gave them no trouble. They walked away, laughing, leaving Alonzo in a parlous condition.

"Urrrrgh!" gurgled Alonzo dismally as he trailed to the House.

Coker of the Fifth met him on the way. Coker had a fives bat under his coat, which he produced with a flourish.

"I've been looking for you!" he remarked genially.

"My dear Coker—Yaroooh!" roared Alonzo as Coker's left gripped his collar and Coker's right applied the fives bat.

"Ow! Wow! Stop it! My dear—ooooh—Coker—wow!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Alonzo.

"Perhaps you won't check the Fifth again in a hurry," remarked Coker, and he tucked the fives bat under his coat again and walked away chortling.

"Oh dear!" gasped Alonzo.

He limped into the House and up into the Remove passage. Bolsover major was waiting for him there. Bolsover grinned.

"You knocked me down yesterday," said Bolsover major.

"My dear—Whooooo!" roared Alonzo, as he went spinning.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bolsover. "Get up and have another."

But Alonzo couldn't. He lay where he was, gasping dizzily. Bolsover major, grinning, bent over him and pulled his nose.

"Wurrrrrgh!" gurgled Alonzo.

Harry Wharton & Co. came along, kicked Bolsover major along the passage, and helped Alonzo into his study. They left him there, gasping and gurgling, in the armchair.

Oh dear! groaned Alonzo.

It was unpleasant. It was, indeed, very unpleasant! But there was a change coming. A startling change was coming! Greyfriars had not seen the last of Strong Alonzo!

THE END.

("ALONZO THE GREAT!" is the title of the second grand yarn in this magnificent new series starring the chums of Greyfriars. It will appear in next Saturday's bumper number, which will also contain another set of COLOURED PICTURES to put in your album. Don't miss it, whatever you do, chums.)

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