

KNOCKOUT FUN BOOK 1955



I'LL HAVE THE LOT!

ALONZO TODD COULDN'T DO GYMNASTICS FOR TOFFEE! BUT WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER WAS READY TO DO ANYTHING—FOR TOFFEE!



"Hold me! Set me straight, dear William!" cried Alonzo. But Billy Bunter had the toffee! "I told you," he said, "I'm in a hurry!"

ALONZO'S KNOTTY PROBLEM

Another Rollicking Greyfriars Story

By **FRANK RICHARDS**

"**T**HAT looks easy!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"I think I could do it," said Alonzo Todd.

If it looked easy to Alonzo, it was not what it looked. Alonzo's statement that he thought he could do it elicited a yell of laughter from the Remove fellows in the Rag.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was giving a gymnastic display. Sitting on the table in the Rag, the slim, lithe, supple Indian had tied himself into what looked like a Gordian knot. His slim limbs seemed almost as flexible as elastic, and how he was able to get his toes behind his ears was quite a mystery to the other fellows. Certainly no

fellow there fancied that he could do the same—excepting Alonzo. Alonzo apparently fancied that he could!

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, let Alonzo try! He, he, he!"

"My dear chap, you couldn't begin to do it," said Bob Cherry. "Bet you ten to one in doughnuts."

"I hardly think that my Uncle Benjamin would approve of a betting transaction, even in doughnuts, my dear Robert," answered Alonzo. "But I certainly think I could do it. It looks quite easy to me."

"Go it, then," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Let's see."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, grinning, uncurled himself and slipped from the table.

Alonzo Todd took his place. The Remove fellows gathered round in a laughing crowd. That the bony Alonzo could curl up like the elastic Indian nobody supposed for a moment; and Alonzo, when he came to begin, found that it was not quite so easy as it had looked to him. He succeeded in getting his right foot over his left shoulder, but at that point he lost his balance and went backwards on the table. Crack!

"Yooo-hooooop!" roared Alonzo as the back of his head established contact with hard oak, a crack almost like that of a rifle-shot echoing through the Rag.

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

"Ow! Wow! I—I— Oooooogh!"

Alonzo sat up again, rubbing the back of his head.

"Ow! Wow! I have given my head a very, very painful knock!" he gasped.

"Nothing in it to damage, you know," said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Try again!" chuckled Frank Nugent.

"Ow! I shall certainly try again," said Alonzo. "My Uncle Benjamin always says, if at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again! Perhaps it needs a little practice to——"

"Perhaps it does!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Now, watch me this time!" said Alonzo.

And he recommenced. But there was no doubt that, as had already dawned on Alonzo, it needed practice. With both legs in the air, Alonzo lost balance again and rolled over. This time he did not crack his head on the table. He rolled over the edge.

"Look out!"

"Catch him!"

Bump! Alonzo Todd landed on the floor of the Rag with a terrific bump. He sprawled there and roared.

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

Kindly hands grasped Alonzo and helped him up. He sagged like a sack, spluttering for breath.

"Ow! Oh! Ow!" spluttered Alonzo. "I have banged my elbow—wow!—and knocked my knee—ow!—and bruised my shoulder—ooooh! Oh dear! I have accumulated most unpleasant aches and pains in all my bones——"

"Trying again?" grinned Frank Nugent.

"Go it, Alonzo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Alonzo shook his head. He was busy rubbing innumerable spots where he had accumulated those aches and pains.

"I—I think it needs a little practice," he gasped. "I shall certainly put in some practice, and then I have no doubt that I shall be able to equal Hurree Singh's performance, if not, indeed, to excel it. But—but at the present moment I—I think I—I will go and look for some liniment."

And Alonzo Todd tottered out of the Rag in quest of liniment to rub in those aching and painful bones; his own face very serious, indeed, solemn, but leaving all the other Remove fellows laughing.

"O H, crikey!" ejaculated Billy Bunter.

He blinked through his big spectacles at a strange figure on the table in the junior lobby. Then he chuckled.

"He, he, he!"

It was Alonzo!

Several days had elapsed since Alonzo Todd's essay to rival Hurree Singh's gymnastic performance in the Rag. During those days Alonzo had not given up the idea. The sage advice of his excellent Uncle Benjamin lingered in Alonzo's mind, and if at first he didn't succeed, he was going to try, try, try again! A crack on the head and a bump on the floor did not discourage him. The other fellows could laugh if they liked; but Alonzo was a stickler—he was going to do it.

He put in practice in secluded spots, and he flattered himself that every day and in every way he was getting better and better! Once he had attained perfection he was going to display his skill in public in the Rag to admiration instead of laughter. But he had not quite attained perfection yet!

Billy Bunter came into the lobby from the quad, and was going on into the House when he sighted Alonzo and stopped to blink at him. Bunter was in a hurry, but he had a moment to spare to chuckle at the weird figure on the table.

Alonzo was, apparently, seeking to tie himself into a knot. His bony arms and legs

were queerly entangled. But one bony leg, having apparently a will of its own, refused to go where Alonzo wanted it to go. With his large hands spread flat on the table to keep his balance, Alonzo strove to push his right leg under his left arm—and it just wouldn't go.

"My dear William——" gasped Alonzo.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Bunter.

"There is nothing to laugh at, my dear William——"

"Ain't there just?" chuckled Bunter.

"He, he, he!"

"Please lend me a hand," gurgled Alonzo.

"I cannot quite succeed in inserting the extremity of my foot under my arm, Bunter, but if you will kindly render me a little assistance——"

"I'm in a hurry——"

"My dear William, I shall not delay you a few moments——"

"Squiff's got some baked chestnuts in his study—I've just heard." Bunter rolled on to the door. He had paused a moment to chuckle at Alonzo, but he was not losing a chance of baked chestnuts.

"But, my dear William," gasped Alonzo, "I have very nearly succeeded in my object, and with a momentary assistance from you I——"

"Can't stop!" came over a fat shoulder.

"I have a packet of toffee in my pocket, William."

"Eh?" Bunter found that he could stop.

"Did you say toffee?"

"Yes, my dear William, and I will present it to you with pleasure if you will give me a momentary aid."

"Oh, all right! Always ready to lend a pal

a hand," said Bunter, coming back to the table. "Where's the toffee?"

"In my jacket pocket. Perhaps you would not mind taking the trouble to extract it, my dear William."

Dear William did not mind in the least. A fat hand extracted the toffee almost in the twinkling of an eye.

"And now, William, please take my right foot in your hand and push it under my left arm."

"Wait a tick!"

Billy Bunter crammed toffee into a capacious mouth. First things came first with Bunter. Having filled that capacious mouth to capacity, the fat Owl of the Remove put the packet into his pocket and was ready for action.

"Now, if you push my right foot very, very carefully under my left arm, my dear William, I shall—— Wow! Wow! You are pinching my ankle! Ow! You are cracking it! Yow-ow-ow! You are causing me considerable pain, my dear William! Ow! Wow! Oooh! Pray take your time and be more gentle, my dear William."

Alonzo yelped in vain. Billy Bunter was in a hurry, and a fellow in a hurry had no time to waste. He grabbed Alonzo's ankle and shoved it where Alonzo wanted it to go—a quite painful process to the bony leg. However, painful as it was, it was successful. Alonzo's left leg was in the air, and his right was successfully insinuated under his left arm as he sat—and he rocked wildly and gasped for breath.

"Steady me, my dear William," spluttered Alonzo. "It would be extremely painful to

MOKO! . . .



fall off the table. Hold me! Set me straight!"

"There you are!"

The fat Owl set Alonzo straight, and he sat swaying. But his position was precarious, and, having with Bunter's aid succeeded in tying himself into a knot, Alonzo decided that it was time to untie himself again.

"Hold me a minute or two, William."

"Oh, really, Alonzo! I told you I was in a hurry."

"My dear William——"

Billy Bunter made no further reply. He rolled on to the door and rolled out of the lobby into the House. Bunter had done

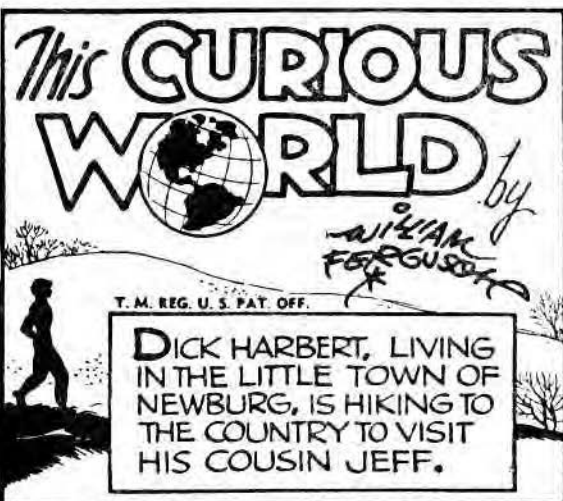
what he had bargained to do, and he was not missing Squill's baked chestnuts if he could help it.

"Oh dear!" gasped Alonzo. "Oh, goodness gracious! I cannot get my foot out. It—it appears to be fixed somehow. Bunter—William—my dear William—pray do not hurry away——"

Slam!

The lobby door closed after Bunter. Deaf to Alonzo's wail, the fat junior rolled away in quest of baked chestnuts before it was too late. Alonzo Todd was left to waste his sweetness on the desert air.

"Oh dear! William—my dear William—"



Bunter—come back!" shrieked Alonzo. "I cannot untie myself—I am a fixture. Do come back, my dear William. I entreat you to return and render me indispensable assistance!"

But answer there came none.

Bunter was gone.

He was just in time in Squiff's study to come in on the baked chestnuts. And with baked chestnuts going, William George Bunter was not likely to bother his fat head about Alonzo Todd, or to remember his existence. Billy Bunter guzzled baked chestnuts and forgot that there was such a person in the wide world as Alonzo Todd.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"What the dickens——"

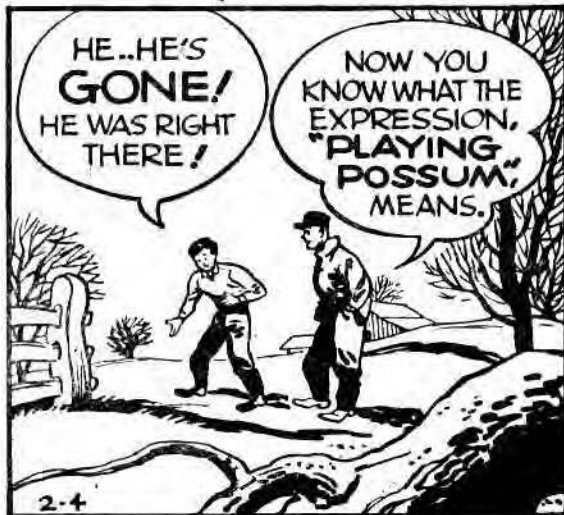
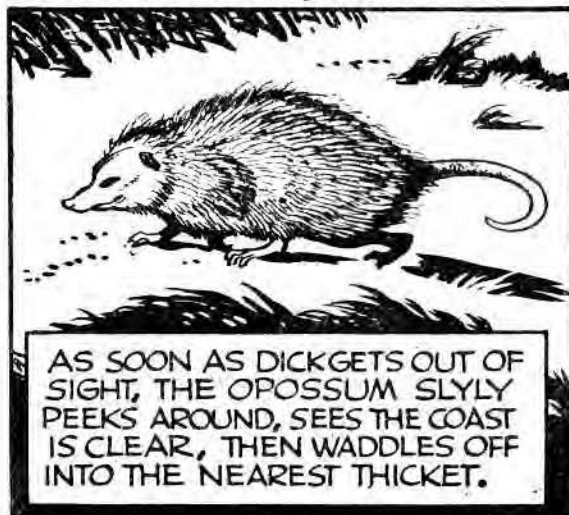
Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry were coming down the passage, passing the door of the junior lobby. They came to a simultaneous halt and stared at the door. From the other side of the door strange sounds reached their ears. It was quite startling.

"Ooooooooooh! Urrrrrrrrrgh!"

"Sounds like somebody in a spot of trouble," remarked Bob. "What the thump's happening in the lobby?"

"Oooogh! Oh, goodness gracious!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That sounds like



Alonzo!" exclaimed Bob. "What the dickens can be the matter with him?"

"Better look in," said Harry.

The two juniors hurried to the lobby door. Alonzo, evidently, was there. What was the matter with him to cause him to emit those strange breathless ejaculations was quite a mystery. But it was clear that something was the matter.

Harry Wharton threw open the door. They stared into the lobby. Their eyes popped at an extraordinary figure tied in an inextricable knot, sitting on the table, and on a woeful face turned towards them in distressful appeal.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "It's Alonzo—at it again! He seems to have done it this time."

"Better not stick like that too long," said Harry. "You'll get cramp or something."

"Snap out of it, Alonzo!" advised Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Oooogh! I—I—I kik-kik-kik-kik-can't!" stuttered Alonzo. "I have been tut-tut-trying for half an hour or more, since Bunter left me like this with what I can only consider an extreme want of feeling! Ow! I—I—I can't untie myself! Ooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear friends, I assure you that it is not a laughing matter," gasped Alonzo. "I—I—I am fixed like this, and—and—Oooogh! I cannot get loose! I—I can't stay like this for ever—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do assure you that it is not a laughing matter," wailed Alonzo. "I am in a very, very painful and awkward predicament. There is no occasion whatever for merriment."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the two juniors. If Alonzo saw no occasion for merriment, it was clear that Wharton and Bob Cherry did, for they almost doubled up with mirth.

"Oh dear! Oh, goodness gracious! Oh, if my Uncle Benjamin could see me now!" gasped Alonzo.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There were footsteps in the passage. The yells of laughter from the lobby doorway drew other fellows to the spot in a crowd.

"What's up here?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "It's old Alonzo! He's tied himself up into a knot and can't untie himself again!"

"Oh, my esteemed hat!" ejaculated Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. His dusky face looked in at the doorway at the distressful figure rocking on the table. A dozen other faces looked in. There was a roar of laughter.

"He's done it!" chortled Bob Cherry. "Alonzo's a sticker—he's done it! But he can't undo it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear friends," wailed Alonzo, "I do assure you that there is no occasion whatever for this outbreak of merriment—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What is all this noise?" It was Mr. Quelch's sharp voice. The Remove master pushed through the crowd of yelling juniors. "Cease this noise at once! Todd! What are you doing on that table? What do you mean by sitting there in that extraordinary attitude? Have you taken leave of your senses, Todd? Descend from that table immediately."

"I—I—I kik-kik-can't! I—I kik-kik-can't untie myself, sir! Oh, goodness gracious me!" wailed Alonzo.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

He rustled into the lobby and grasped Alonzo. Really, it was not easy to disentangle him; he had tied himself up not wisely but too well. Yell after yell came from Alonzo as Mr. Quelch, with vigorous hands, disentangled bony limb after bony limb. Outside the lobby the crowd of juniors were yelling with merriment. But Alonzo's yells inside the lobby indicated anything but merriment.

It was Alonzo Todd's last essay in rivalry of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh in the gymnastic line. Everyone but Alonzo thought it funny—but to Alonzo it was quite a painful episode. Alonzo was a sticker, but he had found it too hard to come unstuck, as it were. After that Alonzo sagely decided to stick to botany.

THE END