

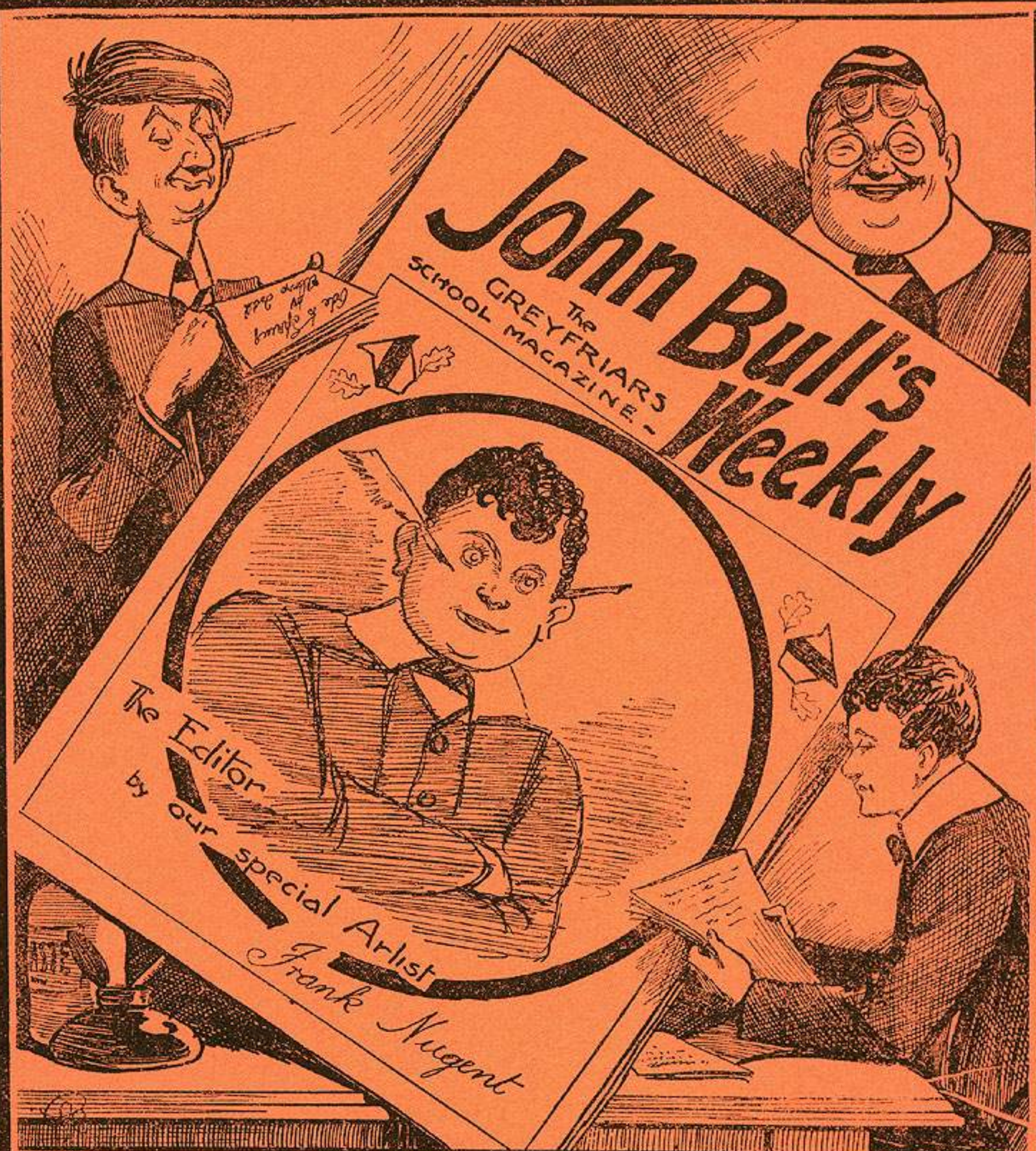
'JOHN BULL JUNIOR'S WEEKLY.'

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Tale of
Harry
Wharton
& Co.'s
New
School
Paper.
Edited by
John Bull

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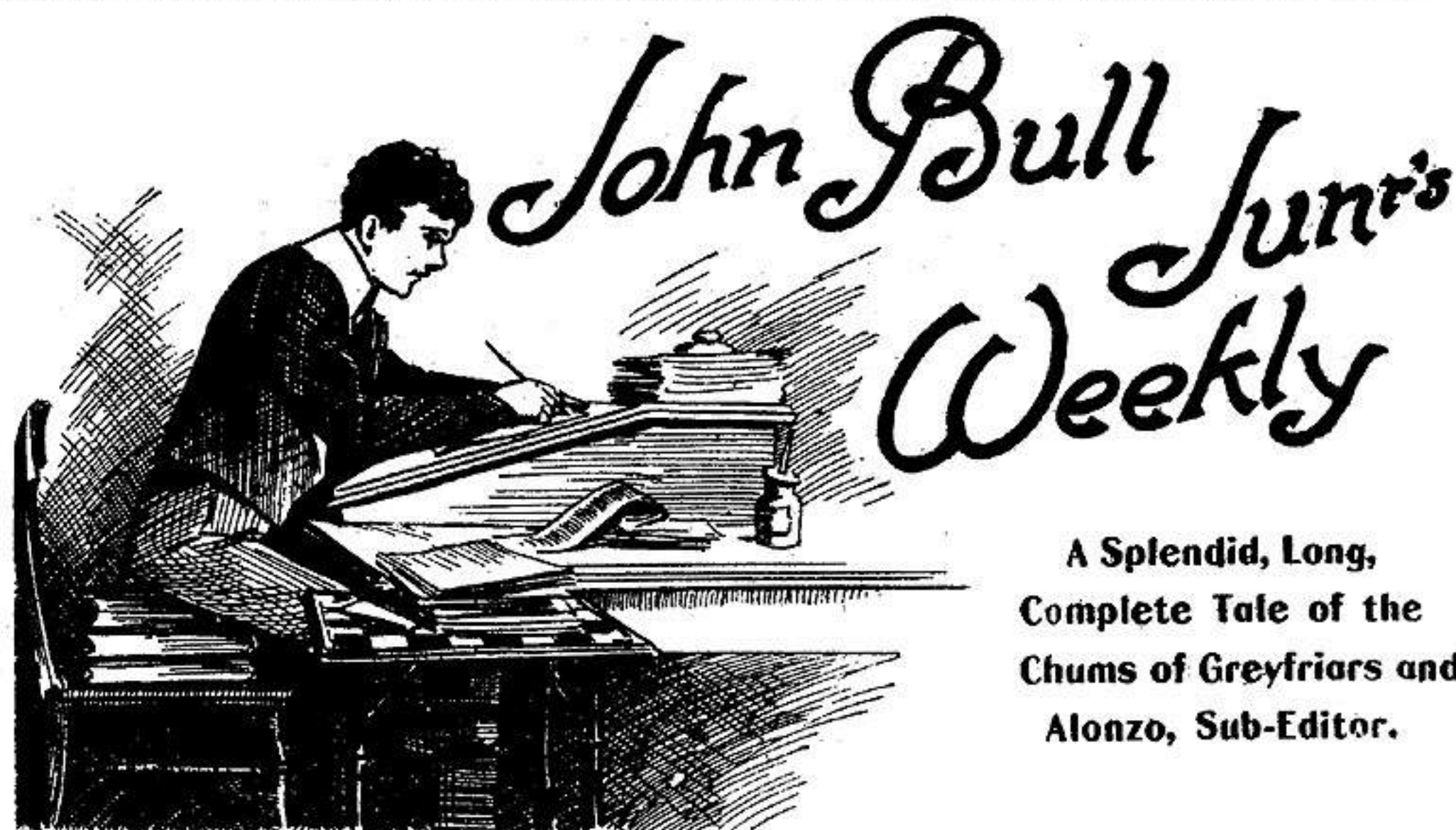
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[Our Readers are informed that the characters in the following Story are purely imaginary, and no reference or allusion is made to any living person. Actual names may be unintentionally mentioned, but the Editor wishes it to be distinctly understood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



A Splendid, Long,
Complete Tale of the
Chums of Greyfriars and
Alonzo, Sub-Editor.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

John Bull has a Great Idea.

JOHN BULL, of the Remove, came down the passage and stopped at the door of Study No. 1. He knocked at the door, and turned the handle to open it.

But the door did not open.

Now, there was no doubt at all that the chums of Study No. 1 were at home. There was a light under the door, and a buzz of voices in the study. John Bull could hear the somewhat deep, musical tones of Harry Wharton, Nugent's higher-pitched voice, and the peculiar intonation of Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur. The Chums of the Remove were at home, but were evidently not open to visits at that moment. There had been no reply to Bull's knock. He knocked again.

Then he kicked.

There was a faint sound of a chuckle in the study, and the voices died away. But no other effect followed the kick.

John Bull kicked again.

This time the kick, from a good-sized, heavy boot, with all the force of a particularly well-developed leg, resounded from one end of the Remove passage to the other. Bulstrode put his head out of the next study and growled. Alonzo Todd looked out into the passage, further up, under the impression that something must be happening, and ready to rush to anybody's assistance. From within Study No. 1 came a chuckle, and that was all. Merely that, as the poet says, and nothing more.

John Bull lowered his head and bawled through the key-hole.

"Wharton!"

"Hullo?"

"Nugent!"

"Hullo?"

"Inky!"

"The hallofulness is terrific, my worthy chum!"

"Open this blessed door!"

"Rats!"

"I want to speak to you."

"More rats!"

"It's important."

"Most rats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

John Bull snorted.

"Look here," he exclaimed, "it's important! It's about a wheeze I'm carrying out, and I want you fellows to have a hand in it."

"Nothar time, old son!" came back Harry Wharton's voice. "We're discussing a matter of fearful importance ourselves, and we can't leave off to speak a single word, can we, you chaps?"

"Ha, ha! No!"

"Oh, all right!" grunted John Bull. "Don't say I didn't give you a chance, that's all."

"My dear chap, we won't say a word!"

John Bull bestowed another resounding kick on the door in relief of his feelings, and walked up the passage. Alonzo Todd shared the end study with John Bull and Fisher T. Fish, the American junior.

"My dear Bull," said Todd, poking Bull with a bony knuckle in the objectionable way he had—"my dear Bull, I could not help hearing what you said to Wharton, as you were shouting with such an extreme loudness. If I can be of any assistance to you instead of Wharton I shall be delighted."

John Bull looked at him dubiously.

"You're such a duffer!" he remarked disparagingly.

"My dear Bull—"

"Still, I'll give you a chance." John Bull closed the door and lowered his voice cautiously. "Look here, I suppose you haven't had any experience of editing?"

Todd stared. He could not have been more surprised if John Bull had asked him if he had had any experience of flying.

"My dear Bull, I certainly have not," he replied. "I have no doubt that I could edit a paper if it were necessary for me to do so. Indeed, I have often thought that I am most suitable for such a post as that of editor of 'The Times.' In fact, I have been told so. But—"

"Do you think you could fill up the post of, say, sub-editor, reporter, advertisement canvasser, and office-boy?" suggested John Bull.

"My dear Bull—"

The Duffer of Greyfriars looked at Bull in blank astonishment. He began to think that the sturdy junior was wandering in his mind. And that was really poaching on Alonzo's preserves, so to speak. Alonzo was a little given to wandering.

"You see," said John Bull, "I've got a wheeze— What was that?"

"What was what, my dear Bull?"

"I heard a noise," said John Bull, looking round the study.

"Dear me! I do not quite understand you, Bull. There is no one in the study but ourselves," said Todd. "Bunter came here a short time ago to ask if you could let him have a small loan, and I went down the passage to look for you, but that was ten minutes ago, and Bunter was gone when I came back." John Bull growled.

"Then I expect our cake is gone, too," he exclaimed, throwing open the door of the study cupboard.

"Oh, dear!"

"No, it's still here," said Bull. "You couldn't have been gone a minute, then. That fat beast came here to scoff anything he could lay his hands on, I expect— What was that noise?"

"My dear Bull, I heard nothing."

"It sounded like a sniff. You've not started keeping a dog in the study, have you?"

"Oh, certainly not! You were saying—"

"Look here, it's a ripping wheeze, and it's a dead secret so far," said John Bull. "You see, I don't want it to get out until we've got the thing fairly going. We might fail to pull it off, you know, and we don't want the school sniggering at us."

"But what is it?"

"The paper."

"Paper?"

"That's it!" said John Bull. "The school paper."

"The school paper?" repeated Alonzo Todd dazedly. "But—but there isn't one."

"Exactly! There isn't one, but there's going to be," said John Bull complacently. "What do you think of 'John Bull Junior's Weekly'?"

"Good gracious!"

"Paper named after me, editor-in-chief," said John Bull. "I was going to offer Wharton the job of sub-editor. Look here! If you like to sub-edit the paper I'll give you the post. Plenty of work and no salary."

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"My dear Bull—"

"We'll simply knock 'em with this wheeze," said Bull, with a grin. "I really wonder Wharton hasn't thought of it. Mind, keep it dark! Not a word outside this study until the first number is ready. You can keep a secret?"

"My Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me never to have secrets to keep, my dear Bull. But under the exceptional circumstances—"

"Hark!"

"Dear me! Whatever is the matter?"

"There's some blessed animal in the study!" exclaimed John Bull. "I tell you I heard it breathing."

"My dear Bull—"

John Bull rushed to the table in the middle of the study and dragged up the edge of the long cover, which reached nearly to the floor.

Then he gave a yell.

"Bunter!"

A fat face, adorned with a big pair of spectacles, glimmered under the table. Billy Bunter, the fattest junior in the Lower Fourth—the Greyfriars Remove—blinked at John Bull in great alarm.

"I—I say, you fellows—" he stuttered.

"Bunter!" roared John Bull.

"Dear me! However did you come there, Bunter?" asked Todd, in great surprise. "Really—"

"Ow! Yow!" roared Bunter.

John Bull stooped and grasped the fat junior.

Billy Bunter was dragged out from under the table. He came out with a wild whirl that took his breath away, and rolled blindly on the carpet.

"Ow! Leggo! Chuck it! Yow!"

"My dear Bull, you will probably hurt Bunter if you kick him like that—"

"I mean to!"

"Ow! Yow! Groo!"

Billy Bunter rolled and squirmed to and fro on the carpet, and John Bull fairly dribbled him up and down the study as if he had been a football. The fat junior dodged into a corner at last, and yelled for mercy.

Then John Bull, who was a little out of breath himself, ceased his exertions, and stood glaring down upon the Owl of the Remove.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Secret.

"YOU worm!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"You fat rascal!"

"Look here—"

"You overfed eavesdropper!"

"Oh!"

Billy Bunter put his glasses straight, and blinked at Bull. The sturdy junior glared at him wrathfully, and seemed inclined to commence operations again.

"I—I—I'm sincerely sorry!" gurgled Bunter. "You—you see, I—I got under the table to—to give you a pleasant surprise, you know. I—I thought I'd just pop out, and—"

"You dodged under there because you were afraid of being caught raiding the cupboard!" roared John Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

John Bull drew back his boot ready to kick.

"Did you, or did you not?" he shouted.

"Ow! Yes! Oh!"

"And you've been listening to what I've been saying to Todd?"

"N-n-no! I—I say, you fellows, I—I hope you don't think I would listen?" said Billy Bunter. "I'm not that sort of chap, I hope. As soon as you began to talk I—I put my fingers to my ears, you know, so that I shouldn't hear."

John Bull glared at him speechlessly. That was the last thing Bunter would ever have dreamed of doing. But Alonzo Todd looked greatly pleased.

"My dear Bunter," exclaimed the Duffer of Greyfriars, "that was very honourable of you! I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would be very pleased to hear it."

"You ass!" roared John Bull. "He's telling whoppers, as usual!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"He's heard every word, and he'll repeat it up and down the Remove passage, and tell every chap in Greyfriars."

"I—I won't!" gasped Bunter. "I—I sha'n't think of mentioning a word! Nobody will hear from me that you are going to start a school paper. Besides, I never heard a word you were talking about."

"You—you fat-head!"

"Not a word," said Bunter, scrambling to his feet, still eyeing John Bull nervously. "I—I don't know what you fellows were saying at all. Look here, if you don't want me



John Bull forced Alonzo's face downwards until his somewhat prominent nose dipped into the inkpot. "Now!" roared John Bull. "Are you going to do as I tell you?" (See page 14.)

in this study I'll retire from the place. I don't want to remain where my company's not wanted, I'm sure."

John Bull lifted his boot, and the fat junior dodged back into the corner again.

"Oh, really, Bull—" he began.

"You've heard every word I said," said John Bull. "You know that I'm starting a school paper in the Remove."

"I—I don't know—I mean I know now you've told me. You see—"

"It's a secret," said John Bull quietly. "I want you to keep it dark, Bunter."

Billy Bunter recovered some of his assurance. He realised that he had a hold upon the sturdy junior now.

"I'm sure I don't mind obliging you in this little matter, Bull," he said off-handedly. "I'll keep it dark. Of course, one good turn deserves another."

"What do you mean?" growled John Bull.

"I—I should like a little loan. That was really what I came here for. You see, I'm expecting a postal-order this evening," Bunter explained. "If you could advance me ten shillings, now, you could have the postal-order when it comes."

"You won't get a penny from me."

"Oh, really, Bull! I could make five shillings do."

"Not five farthings."

Bunter rolled to the door. Bull made no movement to stop him. The fat junior paused with his hand on the door, and a very spiteful expression upon his fat face.

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NEXT
WEEK: "THE RIVAL WEEKLY."

"Look here, Bull, one good turn deserves another, I say. If I keep your secret I think you might oblige me with a little loan."

"Not a penny."

"You've got lots of money you had from your Aunt Tabitha—"

"You won't touch a penny of it, you fat toad!" said John Bull cheerfully.

"Very well, then. If your secret happens to leak out—"

"If my secret happens to leak out," said John Bull quietly, "I shall give you such a whaling with a cricket stump that you will wish it hadn't leaked out."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Mind, I mean bizney," said John Bull. "If I hear any fellow talking about a school paper I shall know that you've given it away, and I'll drop on you. I'll give you the licking of your life, you eavesdropping young rascal!"

Bunter hesitated. He knew that John Bull was a fellow of his word. But it seemed awful to Billy Bunter to have a secret without trading upon it.

"Look here, Bull," he exclaimed. "Make it two bob—"

"Get out!"

"Just a bob, then—"

"Outside!"

"Yes, please go, Bunter!" said Alonzo Todd, with a sorrowful look at the fat junior. "You disgust me, Bunter. You are a most untruthful and unscrupulous boy. My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked at you."

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

"Get out, will you?" said John Bull. "And, remember, a single word about the paper, and you're booked for the biggest hiding you've ever read about."

"Look here, Bull—Yow!"

John Bull slammed the door, and Bunter jumped back into the passage just in time to escape being swept over by it. He gasped and snorted in the passage.

"Lock the door, Todd," said John Bull. "We'll begin now."

"Oh, certainly, my dear Bull!"

The key clicked in the lock. Billy Bunter kicked at the door, feeling himself safe as soon as it was locked, and then bawled through the keyhole.

"Beasts!"

The next moment a knuckly hand grasped Bunter by the collar, and dragged his head up, and knocked it twice against the door. The fat junior yelled, and squirmed round, and blinked at Fisher T. Fish, who had just come up the passage. The American junior held him in his thin hand, and grinned at him.

"I guess—"

"Oh, really, Fish! I—I was only speaking to Bull through the keyhole!" stammered Bunter. "Ow! Leggo! Yow!"

"Travel!" said Fisher T. Fish, releasing Bunter and helping him along the passage with his boot. "Vamoose!"

"Oh! I say, Fish—"

"Vamoose, you fat guy!" roared Fish.

And Billy Bunter "vamooseed."

Fisher T. Fish chuckled, and tried the door. It did not open. He knocked, and called through the keyhole.

"Hallo, there! I guess I want to come in!"

"Can't be did!"

"I guess it's got to be did!"

"Call later!"

"Look here, I guess I'm coming into my own study!" roared the American junior. "What's the little game? What are you giving me?"

"A thick ear, if you don't buzz off!" said John Bull, from within. "I'm busy! You can come back in an hour!"

"My dear Bull—"

"Oh, shut up, Todd!"

"But, my dear Bull, it is surely unjust to keep Fish out of his own study. I hardly think that my Uncle Benjamin would approve of such a proceeding."

"Ass! Dry up!"

Fish kicked at the door.

"I'm coming in!" he roared. "Open this blamed door!"

"Rats!"

"My dear Bull, would it not be more judicious to admit Fish to the secret?" came Alonzo's still small voice from within the study. "You see, as he occupies the same study, he may soon discover that we are starting a school paper—"

"What's that?" yelled Fisher T. Fish, who heard every word.

"You dummy!" shrieked John Bull.

"My dear Bull—"

John Bull unlocked the door and threw it open. Fisher T. Fish entered with a grin on his thin, keen features.

"So you're starting a school paper—hey?" he asked.

"I suppose I may as well say yes!" growled John Bull, slamming the door.

"Dear me!" said Alonzo Todd. "Now that I come to think of it, Fish may have guessed as much from my remark, if he overheard it."

"Yep," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess so. It's all serene, my sons—you can go ahead, and I'll help. I don't mind being editor."

"But we jolly well mind," said John Bull promptly. "I'm editor, and Todd's my sub. and office-boy."

"Where do I come in, then?" demanded Fish.

"You came in at the door, and you'll jolly well go out of the window, if you're not quiet," said Bull crossly. "Look here, you can be chief reporter if you like!"

"I guess that's all O.K." said Fisher T. Fish. "Tea ready?"

"Tea! Blow tea!"

"Well, I'm hungry, you know. Fellow must eat. What have you got all this rotten foolscap sprawling over the table for?"

"I'm beginning the first number. You can't have tea on this table. Take it on the mat if you can't wait."

Fisher T. Fish grinned.

"I guess I can have tea on one half of the table, and you can edit the paper on the other half," he said. "That's a fair div. Look here, if you like to change over, I'll edit the paper and you can have tea."

To which proposition John Bull replied only with a snort, and the American junior chuckled and sat down to tea, while Bull started editing. But the fragrant odour of tea and ham and toast soon tempted the youthful editor away from his task, and ere long he was, as Fisher T. Fish put it, editing with one hand and having tea with the other.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Same Idea.

HARRY WHARTON felt in the inside pocket of his jacket.

"I've got a copy here," he remarked.

"I shall be glad to see it," said Frank Nugent. "I suppose we can run ours somewhat on the same lines. We shall be able to pick up some hints from 'Tom Merry's Weekly,' anyway."

"Yes; that's why I asked Tom Merry to send me a copy," said Wharton. "Here you are!"

He drew a rumple paper from his pocket. He spread it out on the table, and the Chums of the Remove looked at it with great interest. It was a copy of the school magazine published by the juniors of St. Jim's, and edited by Tom Merry, of the Shell, and named after him, "Tom Merry's Weekly."

The Greyfriars' juniors looked through the paper with great interest.

"Not so bad," Frank Nugent remarked.

"The not-so-badfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Well, we want something on the same lines, only—ahem!—better!" he said. "There are no illustrations in this, for instance. Now, you can draw, Frank."

"The drawfulness of the esteemed Nugent is great."

"But I don't know about getting drawings reproduced," said Nugent doubtfully. "That comes expensive."

"We shall see. It will come pretty cheap to get the magazine printed in Courtfield," said Harry. "We can get an estimate from the printer of the local paper, how much he'll turn out so many copies a week for."

"Good egg! Now, what's the paper to be called?"

"Well, Tom Merry's paper is named after the founder," Wharton suggested.

"But it's a good idea, too, to name a paper after the chief artist," Nugent remarked. "What would you say to 'Frank Nugent's Magazine'?"

"Rot!"

"The rotfulness is terrific."

Nugent snorted.

"What would you call it, then, Inky?"

"The Nabob's News," suggested Hurree Jamset Ram Singh blandly.

"Bosh!"

"What about 'Harry Wharton's Weekly'?" Harry suggested.

"Rats!"

Wharton laughed.

"Well, we'll leave over the question of the title," he remarked. "Look here, it's settled that we're going to start a school paper on the lines of 'Tom Merry's Weekly,' isn't it?"

"Oh, yes, certainly!"

"The certainfulness is terrific."

"And we're going to keep the idea dark, till we bring it out?"

"Ratherfully!"

"But how are we going to get in contributions, unless we let the fellows know what's on?" asked Nugent.

Wharton rubbed his nose thoughtfully. That was a point he had not yet considered. "Can't have a paper without some contributors," Nugent went on.

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"I don't see why not," said Harry. "Look here, we'll let Bob Cherry into it, as he's an old chum, and Mark Linley. The five of us could turn out enough stuff to fill the first number."

"But who's going to read it?" asked Nugent. "You know jolly well a chap never will read a school magazine unless his own stuff is in it. And then he jolly well only reads his own stuff!"

"Well, I think curiosity will make the chaps look at the paper, and in the second number we can have all sorts of contributions," said Wharton. "We don't want the wheeze to get out, anyway, or the idea will be pinched. Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, would jump at it. They've got a lot more money than we have, and they'd be able to bring out a paper sooner, perhaps, and in much better style, and knock us all along the line."

"Yes, that's likely enough."

"We'll draw up the first number roughly," said Wharton. "Then we'll walk down to the printer's in Courtfield and ask him about it. Look here, one of you go and fetch in Bob and Mark Linley, while I scratch out a rough idea of the thing. Don't let that boulder Bull get in. He was hammering at the door five minutes ago."

"All serene."

Frank Nugent left the study, and Harry Wharton drew a heap of foolscap over to him, and began to jot down with a pencil. Hurree Janset Ram Singh watched him patiently. In a few minutes Frank Nugent returned with Bob Cherry and Mark Linley. The two juniors were looking considerably puzzled. Frank had told them nothing, excepting that they were wanted in Study No. 1 on urgent business, and he had told them that very impressively. They looked at the table as they came in, expecting to see a feed. Seeing the table covered with foolscap, scrawled on in pencil, they were more and more astonished.

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

Nugent locked the door. Bob looked a little alarmed, and pushed back his cuffs.

"Look here, if this is a jape—" he began.

Harry Wharton burst into a laugh.

"It's all right, Bob," he said. "It's a wheeze—a big wheeze, and we want you chaps in it, that's all!"

"Oh, all right!" said Bob at once. "What is it—something up against the Upper Fourth?"

"Oh, no!"

"Going for the Courtfield chaps?"

"Not just now!"

"Visiting the girls at Cliff House?"

"No!"

"Then what on earth is it?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"You remember Tom Merry—"

"The St. Jim's chap? Yes."

"He runs a school paper, called 'Tom Merry's Weekly,' at his school."

"I know he does."

"He's sent me a copy. We're thinking of running a school mag. on the same lines."

"Oh!" said Bob Cherry.

"We want you two chaps to help."

"Oh, good! You want me to be editor?"

Harry Wharton coughed.

"Well, no, not exactly. But we've room for contributions."

"Decided on the title?" asked Bob Cherry thoughtfully.

"Not yet."

"'Bob Cherry's Weekly' would sound well."

"Bosh!"

"Rats!"

"The ratfulness and boshfulness are terrific."

"Well, it was only a suggestion," said Bob Cherry. "Of course, there are other titles, though none so good. How much have you done of the paper so far?"

"I've been sketching the title-page."

Bob Cherry looked at the pencilled sketch, and grinned. Across the top of the page was inscribed in old English letters:

"Harry Wharton's Weekly."

"Ha, ha! I thought you hadn't decided on the title," he said.

"Ahem!" Wharton coloured a little. "That—that's only—er—tentative! We may decide on something else. Look here, we want to get a rough copy together. You ought to be able to do something about footer, Bob. That's your subject."

"Well, I dare say I could. I've often thought I could write," said Bob Cherry modestly, "and I've got a fountain-pen, too."

Harry Wharton grinned. Bob evidently regarded a fountain-pen as one of the essentials of authorship.

"Linley can put in something classical, to give the paper a tone," Wharton went on. "What can you do, Linley?"

The Lancashire lad smiled.

"Anything you like," he said. "I've never tried to write, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 158.

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ONE
PENNY.

and I don't know how it will turn out; but I'm willing to try."

"Something deep will be the thing," said Wharton. "You're jolly strong on Greek, and we don't know it. Something in Greek will knock the Upper Fourth chaps when they see the paper, and it will impress the Remove, too, as they won't be able to read it."

Mark Linley laughed.

"I could write something in Greek if you like," he said; "but wouldn't it be a little difficult for your printer to set up? I don't suppose local printers here have any Greek type."

"H'm! I forgot that! Never mind, we'll have an article on the Greek tragedy," said Harry Wharton. "You read Sophocles and Euripides, and the rest of 'em, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Marky can do anything in that line," said Bob Cherry proudly. Bob Cherry did not know a Greek letter from an Egyptian hieroglyph, but he was very proud of his chum's knowledge. "Marky can make sense out of the most awful rot you ever saw."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't know about that," said Mark Linley, laughing. "But if you want something on the Greek tragedy, I could do it. But do you think the fellows are likely to read it?"

"Of course not. It's to impress them, like a leading article in 'The Times,'" said Harry Wharton. "People don't read these things, you know, but they are very imposing. Look here, what is that play that's been turned into a blessed opera, that everybody's been talking about—something like electricity, or something?"

"Elektra?" said Mark, with a smile.

"Yes. Who wrote that?"

"Sophocles."

"Well, you give us an article on Elektra," said Wharton.

"If you could put in something about Strauss's music, it would be better, too."

"But I don't know anything about that."

"That makes no difference, old son," said Bob Cherry. "You'll only be in the same position as an ordinary music critic. Just pile it on."

Mark Linley laughed.

"I'll do the article on the tragedy, but I'll leave out any mention of the opera," he said. "It would make the Sixth grin to see the article if they look at the paper."

"My dear chap, it will make 'em squirm," said Nugent. "There are precious few in the Sixth could write it, anyway. Squat down here and begin."

"Good egg!"

Five juniors sat down round the study table and began. Five pens or pencils raced over beautiful blank foolscap, turning its nice blank surface into an artistic representation of spiders' webs with spiders careering in them. At all events, that was what the copy looked like, with its erasures, blottings, interlining, underlining, crossings-out and insertings, after the juniors had been a little while at work.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Inky.

BOB CHERRY sucked the end of his fountain-pen, and jabbed it on the table. Like many a fountain-pen, Bob's was a pretty one to look at, but declined work. Bob had given five shillings for that fountain-pen—a bargain! His friends had asserted that the bargain was on the side of the man who had sold it, but Bob had a touching faith in his fountain-pen. He firmly believed that some day, in the hazy future, it would go right. Meanwhile, he pegged away with it patiently.

But now the pen seemed to have gone definitely on strike. Bob sucked at the nib to induce the ink to flow, but it wouldn't flow. He jammed it on the table with a postman's knock, and the other juniors jumped and glared.

"Don't jolt, fathead."

"Keep quiet, can't you?"

"Ow! You ass! You've made me blot!" growled Nugent.

Bob Cherry snorted.

"Blessed if I can see that one more blot matters!" he exclaimed, looking at Frank's manuscript. "How many have you got there already—a hundred?"

"Oh, rats!"

"I think the pen wants filling," said Bob Cherry.

No one replied. The juniors were all deep in their contributions to the paper. Hurree Singh dreamily read out a paragraph from a story he was composing.

"The redfulness of the esteemed sunset was terrific. On the high mountainful peak the gleamfulness reflectfully

lingered, when a loneful horseman came ridefully over the pass. He——"

"Shut up!" roared Nugent.

"I am sorry, my esteemed chum——"

"I'm just working out my plot!" howled Nugent. "Look here——"

"Blessed if I can get this pen to go," said Bob Cherry.

"Chuck it out of window."

"Look here——"

"And yourself after it."

"Br-r-r! It wants filling, I think. Gimme the inkpot."

Bob Cherry rose from his seat and unscrewed the end of his famous fountain-pen. Then he picked up the inkpot, and essayed to fill the reservoir.

The inkpot was a large round one. It was hardly the thing to pour ink from into the narrow opening of a fountain-pen.

But Bob tried it. It was unfortunate that he held the fountain-pen over Nugent while he was filling it. Nugent was deep in his plot again, and never noticed. There wasn't much room at the table, and Bob really never meant to lean over Nugent.

He carefully manipulated the inkpot. The ink did not come for a moment, and then, as might have been expected, it came with a rush as he tilted the inkpot.

Swoosh!

"Oh!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Yaroo!" yelled Nugent.

The ink came out in a regular swamp over Bob Cherry's fountain-pen, and over his hand, and over Nugent's bent head.

Nugent started up with a wild yell.

"Yaroo! Yow! Ow! What—— Grooch!"

"My hat!"

"Yow! Ow! Sput-t-t-ter! Oh!"

"Phew! Sorry——"

"You—you maniac! Yow! You dangerous lunatic! Ow! Groo!"

Ink was swamping in Nugent's hair. It ran in streams over his face, and down the back of his neck. He screwed it out of his eyes, and spat it out of his mouth. Bob Cherry stared at him in dismay. The other fellows crowded back from the scattering of spots and drops as Nugent mopped his face.

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "I—I——"

"You fathead!"

"Well, you see——"

"You chump——"

"Look here, Nugent——"

"You idiot!"

"I'm sorry—ha, ha! I tell you I couldn't help it!"

"You frabjous ass!"

"Ha, ha! I mean, what a pity! I——"

Nugent gave a furious snort, and rushed at Bob Cherry. He meant to let Bob have some of the ink. Bob might be sorry for the accident, but he could not help laughing, and laughter under the circumstances seemed like adding insult to injury.

"Here, keep off!" roared Bob, dodging round the table.

"Yah! You ass! I'll——"

"Hold him, somebody!" yelled Bob

But nobody seemed inclined to hold the inky junior. Nugent was streaming with ink, and was pretty certain to smother anybody he came in contact with. He rushed round the table after Bob Cherry.

"Keep off, you ass!"

"Here, chuck it!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You'll wreck the study! Chuck it!"

"Yah!"

"Keep off! Oh!"

Nugent clasped Bob Cherry in his arms, in quite an affectionate embrace. He rubbed his inky head over Bob's face, and over his chest, and over his collar.

Bob Cherry roared and struggled, but Nugent would not let go till he had imparted to his chum at least half the ink.

Then he released him, gasping for breath

"There, you ass!" he panted. "You won't fill your blessed fountain-pen over my head again in a hurry, I think."

"Groo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groo! Oh! Ow!"

"Well, you look a jolly inky pair of duffers," said Harry Wharton. "Ha, ha, ha! You'd better go and clean yourselves. You wouldn't be admitted to any respectable editorial office in that state."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Nugent and Bob Cherry, glaring at each other, quitted the study, in search of a bath-room. Wharton and Linley, and Hurree Singh roared with laughter. The editorial proceedings had been interrupted, and Harry Wharton laid down his pen and rose

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"I think we've done enough to get an idea of the size and style of the mag.," he said. "We had better get along to Courtfield now, or we sha'n't be back by calling-over."

"Good!"

"We want to get an estimate from Casey," said Wharton. "We might see something of the Courtfield school chaps while we're over there. That chap Lazarus is employed at the printer's, I believe, for some time every day."

The Chums of the Remove carefully placed the manuscripts in a drawer, and locked it, and then left the study. From a distance could be heard a sound of excited voices and scuffling. Bob Cherry and Nugent seemed to be still continuing their argument which had begun over the unlucky fountain-pen.

The juniors put on their caps and coats to go out. In the doorway they found John Bull with his coat on. Wharton gave him a cheery nod.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "What was it you were hammering at our door about some time ago, Johnny?"

John Bull shook his head.

"It's too late now," he replied mysteriously.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, you see, we were very busy—most important matter," he said. "Going out?"

"Yes, just going for a stroll down to Courtfield," said John Bull carelessly.

"Good! So are we!"

John Bull started a little.

"You're going to Courtfield?"

"Yes."

"Oh!"

"May as well walk down together," said Mark Linley.

"Ye-es."

And the juniors left Greyfriars in company; but John Bull did not talk so frankly and cheerily as usual on the way to Courtfield. There really seemed to be something or other on John Bull's mind.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Wither Bound?

THE dusk was descending on the lanes, and there was a cold wind from the sea. Drifting clouds over the summit of the Black Pike threatened rain. The juniors put up the collars of their coats as they walked on towards Courtfield. More than once Harry Wharton glanced curiously at the silent John Bull.

"Not a nice time for a walk," he remarked.

"No," said John Bull.

"I suppose you've got some business in Courtfield?"

"Yes."

"Oh! So have we."

John Bull seemed to come out of his reverie at this. He glanced at the Chums of the Remove in a questioning sort of way.

"Going to see the Courtfield County Council School chaps?" he asked.

"Oh, no; it's not a school row."

"Fixing up a footer match with them?"

"We're not going to see them."

"Surely you're not going shopping as far as Courtfield?" exclaimed Bull. "Friardale would be a great deal nearer."

"Oh, no, it isn't exactly shopping."

"What the dickens is it, then?"

Wharton coloured.

"Well, as a matter of fact, it's a little secret," he said. "Nothing very serious, you know; it will be explained soon. But for the present we're saying nothing about it. It will be a little surprise for the Remove, that's all."

"Oh, I see!" said John Bull carelessly. He was evidently too preoccupied with his own business in Courtfield to feel much curiosity as to what the secret might be. "Well, here we are, and I'll say good-bye. I go this way."

"Why, so do we!"

"Oh!"

The juniors turned down by the old Courtfield church together. Then they passed the new red-brick County Council School—a hideous-looking building enough, but one of those buildings where the future of England is in training.

Then John Bull paused.

"So long!" he remarked.

"See you later?"

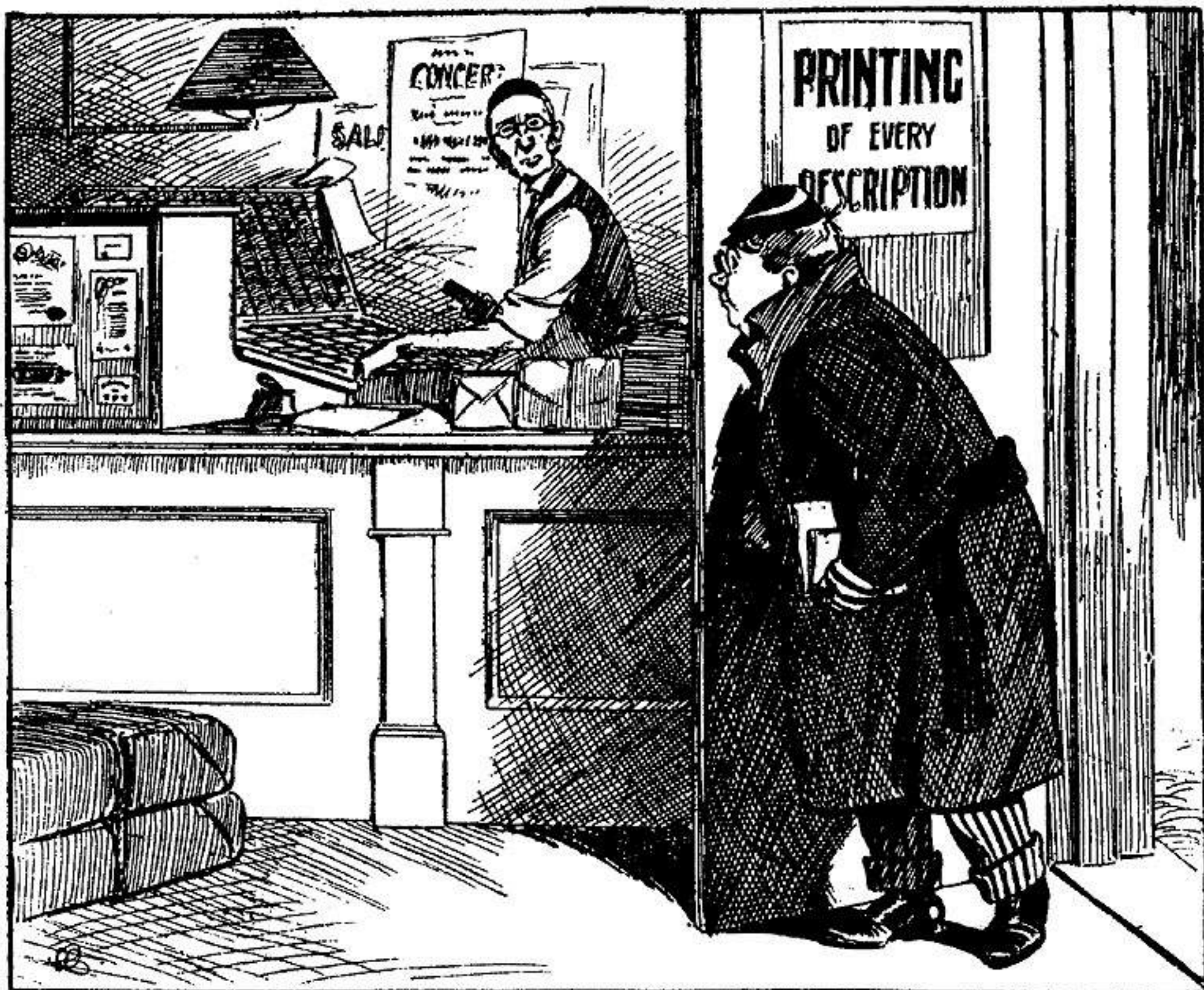
"Yes, at Greyfriars."

And Bull walked away rapidly round the corner of the playground wall of Courtfield School.

Harry Wharton looked after him with a somewhat puzzled expression on his face. He did not understand John Bull at all the evening.

"Bull seems to have something on his mind," he exclaimed.

"He can't have been getting into any trouble, surely, with all that money his Aunt Tabitha sent him?"



Billy Bunter sneaked into the office, and the printer stared at him through his glasses in a very suspicious manner. "Come in!" he said. (See page 26.)

Mark Linley shook his head.

"I'm sure not. It's something else."

"Well, he seems jolly mysterious."

"Perhaps we seem jolly mysterious to him, too," the Lancashire lad suggested, with a smile.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, yes, perhaps so," he agreed. "Come on; we've got to get to Low Street, and we must get there in good time before Mr. Casey closes."

The juniors crossed the High Street of Courtfield, and turned into Low Street. They were within a dozen yards of the printer's office, when Mark Linley uttered an exclamation.

"My hat! There's John Bull!"

"Great Scott!"

Sure enough, there was John Bull. He had entered Low Street from the opposite end, evidently having made a detour to get there.

He caught sight of the chums at the same moment, and stopped, with very visible confusion in his face. He had been trying to dodge them, and had been caught in the act, as it were.

"Bull!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "So you were coming this way?"

"I—I didn't know you were coming to Low Street," said Bull.

The juniors paused. Wharton and his friends did not want to enter the printer's office under John Bull's eyes. That would be giving the game away to Bull. Bull, too, seemed to be very embarrassed.

They looked at each other, neither party making a movement, till the situation became very awkward.

"Well, I—I must be getting on," said Bull.

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"Yes, so must we," assented Harry.

"Good-bye!"

"Au revoir!"

But they did not move. Wharton could not go on without going into Mr. Casey's office under Bull's eyes, and Bull seemed to be chained to Low Street by some hidden fascination.

"Ahem! Jolly cold wind!" said Bull.

"The coldfulness is terrific."

"No good standing still in it."

"Not a bit of good."

"I'll get on."

"All right."

Bull looked dubiously up and down the street, and then started off at a snail's pace.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked on slowly, too.

"Look here," exclaimed Harry, "we'll turn the first corner, to satisfy Bull in case he looks back, and then wait a minute or two for him to get clear, and then we can walk back to the office."

"Good!" said Mark.

"The goodfulness is terrific."

They turned the corner. There they stood up against a shop front, and waited. They allowed three whole minutes to elapse. Then they turned into Low Street again, and walked very quickly in the direction of the printer's office. The street was clear, and they grinned with satisfaction at having got rid of John Bull so cleverly.

But as they entered the entry of the printer's office, a sturdy form came into view there, standing in the entry, and in the very act of ringing the bell.

It was John Bull!

Wharton uttered an exclamation. John Bull had evidently

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

followed their own tactics, only he had doubled back to the printer's door a minute earlier than they had.

His business was evidently with Mr. Casey—and secret, too. He turned his head as the three juniors came up, and turned very red.

"Oh!" he exclaimed. "You!"

"And you!" said Harry.

"I—I came to see Mr. Casey, you see," stammered John Bull.

"Oh! So did we!"

"You've got business with the printer?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Oh! That's queer!"

"Jolly queer!" said Wharton.

The door was opened. It was a dark-skinned youth, with an aquiline nose and very fine black eyes, who opened the door. The juniors knew him well. He was a pupil at the Courtfield Council School, and his name was Solly Lazarus, and he was a leading spirit among the Courtfield fellows in their alarms and excursions against the Greyfriars Juniors.

After school hours, Solly Lazarus did some work for Mr. Casey. He stared at the Greyfriars fellows, with surprise in his good-humoured face.

"Pleathe come in!" he said, in his soft, hisping voice.

In business hours, Solly Lazarus was not the cool, self-possessed, uncommonly cheeky youth of leisure time. He was paid to serve Mr. Casey, and he served him well. His manner, after the first look of surprise, was that of a civil and reserved office-boy.

"Mr. Casey in, kid?" asked Wharton.

"Yeth, thir."

"We want to see him."

"So do I," said John Bull. "First come first served, Wharton."

"Well, we should have been first if you hadn't dodged us," said Harry Wharton. "I don't know that it makes any difference. Only, you see, it's a little secret on our part—"

"And on mine."

"It's jolly curious!" exclaimed Wharton. "Look here, as you're here, we'll take you into the wheeze, and that will solve the difficulty. We weren't going to tell any of the fellows, but, after all, you can go on the staff, and you'll keep it from going any further. We're starting a school paper, and we want to get an estimate from Mr. Casey for printing it."

"What?" yelled John Bull, jumping almost clear of the floor.

"We're starting a school paper, and—"

"So am I!" yelled Bull.

"What!"

"And I've come here to get an estimate from Casey for printing it," roared John Bull.

"My hat!"

"The young villain!"

"Eh?"

"The fat young spoofer!"

"What?"

"The fearful little toad! I'll squash him!" roared Bull.

"What the—"

"Bunter's told you! I know it!"

"Bunter!"

"Yes. I warned him what I'd do if he gave it away. Bunter! The fat toad!"

"Look here, Bull—"

"Oh, I'm off! I'll squash him!"

"But—"

But John Bull was gone. He slammed the door after himself, and rushed off. The chums stared in amazement.

"Off his rocker, I should think," said Harry Wharton.

"What can Bunter have done to get his rag out like that?"

"Blessed if I know," said Mark Linley, equally puzzled.

"The blessedness is terrific."

Lazarus returned from the inner office, whither he had gone to announce the arrival of the Greyfriars Juniors to his employer.

"Will you walk in, pleathe, genth," he said.

The juniors walked in. A little old man in glasses, in a stuffy little room littered from end to end, and almost from floor to ceiling, received them with wheezy politeness, and in a few minutes they were holding an interesting discussion concerning the production of "Harry Wharton's Weekly." Meanwhile, John Bull junior was on his way to Greyfriars, breathing vengeance.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Something for Bunter.

BILLY BUNTER, for once in his life, had kept a secret. John Bull's deadly threats of what he would do if the secret of the new scheme leaked out had had full effect upon the fat junior. He knew that Bull was a fellow of his word, and he thought of the painful application of a cricket-stump to his fat person, and he decided to hold his tongue. He held it; and so, when he saw John Bull again, he was feeling particularly virtuous, and fully expected to be able to extract a small loan from the sturdy junior. He was in the hall when John Bull came in, and he saw Bull at once; but he was too short-sighted to see the stormy expression upon John Bull's face. He rolled up to Bull as he entered.

John Bull gave him a glare.

"I say, Bull," said Billy Bunter, "you remember that little secret of yours—"

"I remember," said John Bull, grimly.

"I've been very careful with it."

"Indeed?"

"Yes," said Bunter, lowering his voice impressively. "I haven't breathed a word to a soul—not a soul, you know!"

Bull's brows contracted.

"Come up to my study!" he said shortly.

"Certainly, Bull! What I think is, that you ought to stand me a feed, you know! One good turn deserves another—don't you think so?"

"I certainly think that!" said Bull. "I also think that one bad turn deserves another!"

"Yes, I dare say! I say, Bull, a titled friend of mine is sending me a postal-order this evening. Could you manage to cash it in advance for me? It's only for a pound, and I know you've got a lot of ready cash that your Aunt Tabitha sent you."

John Bull did not reply. He strode on to his study, and the fat junior rolled after him.

Bunter rolled into Study No. 14, and blinked at Bull as he lighted the gas. He did not quite understand Bull's manner; but he felt that Bull could not do less than stand him a feed, or else make a small loan.

John Bull closed the door and locked it. Billy Bunter viewed this proceeding with some alarm and a great deal of surprise.

"What's that for?" he asked.

"You'll soon see," said John Bull briefly.

"Oh! I suppose it's a feed!" said Bunter, thinking that he understood. "Good! No good getting a crowd in! Where's the grub, Bull? I don't mind doing the cooking. Any of the fellows in Study No. 14 will tell you how I used to cook when I was there."

John Bull made no reply. He was selecting a strong and flexible cane from the cupboard. It was a walking-cane, which the junior used when he was very swagger; but it would answer the same purpose as the Form-master's cane, if required.

Billy Bunter blinked at him in astonishment and growing uneasiness.

"I say, Bull," he exclaimed, "I came up here, you know, because I thought you had something for me! If you haven't—"

"I have!" said John Bull.

"Oh! What is it?"

"What you deserve, you fat rotter!"

"Look here, Bull—I say, what's that? What are you going to do with that cane?" yelled Billy Bunter, in alarm.

"Lick you!"

"I—I say, Bull! I—oh! Help! Yaroo!"

John Bull grasped the fat junior, and bumped him face downwards across the table. He held him there with a grip of iron upon the back of his collar, and Billy Bunter's little fat legs lashed in the air helplessly.

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Yaroo! I—I say, Bull, look here—"

"I warned you what I'd do if you gave away what you learned by eavesdropping!" said John Bull sternly.

"I—I haven't!" roared Bunter indignantly. "I—I haven't said a word!"

"Don't tell lies!"

"I—I'm telling the truth!" roared the unhappy Bunter. "I haven't said a word! I hope you don't think I'd prevaricate, Bull! I—"

"Oh, shut up!"

Billy Bunter squirmed with apprehension. He was in the unhappy case of the habitual liar—he was not believed when he did tell the truth. He could hardly expect to be.

"I—I never said a word!" he wailed. "Oh, really, Bull! Honour bright, you know! On the honour of a—Bunter!"

"Wharton knows all about it!"

ANSWERS

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"I haven't told him! Ow!"
 "He's gone to the printer's in Courtfield to get an estimate for printing a school paper—my paper!" said Bull. "Those chaps have simply lifted the idea! They didn't seem to know it was my idea. You may have told them it was yours."

"I—I haven't told them anything— Ow!"

"Lies!"

"Oh, really, Bull— Oh-ow! Yaroo!"

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

The cane rose and fell.

Billy Bunter roared.

That Bunter was not careful of his clothes was evidenced by the fact that clouds of dust rose as the cane lashed and thwacked.

Bunter squirmed, and wriggled, and roared.

But the sturdy junior held him with a grip of iron, and Billy roared, and wriggled, and squirmed in vain.

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

"Ow! Yow! Yow! Beast! Rotter! I say, Bull, old man! Bull, you know— Yaroo! I say, old fellow— Yoop! Whoop! Beast!"

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

Billy Bunter's roaring was heard the whole length of the Remove passage. As most of the fellows were having tea just then, the studies were full, and the din caused general alarm. Fellows came rushing to John Bull's door to discover what the matter was. They found the door locked.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, hammering on the door. "What's the trouble here? Are you there, Bull?"

"Yes!"

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

"Ow! Yah! Yow!"

"What are you doing?" yelled Tom Brown.

"Thrashing Bunter!"

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you whacking him for?" demanded Ogilvy, through the keyhole.

"Listening under the table and telling tales."

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

"Oh! Help! Fire! Murder! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The cane lashed on. Billy Bunter, who had often escaped lickings when he thoroughly deserved them, was now receiving one he did not deserve. It was what a novelist would call the irony of fate.

Not till John Bull considered that he had had enough, did the cane cease to lash. Then the fat junior slid off the table and rolled on the carpet.

He blinked as he picked himself up, rubbing his aching limbs, and glaring furiously.

John Bull unlocked the door.

"You can clear out!" he said.

"Beast!" roared Billy Bunter. "I'll—I'll complain to Mr. Quelch! I'll tell the Head! I—I'll make you smart! Yow!"

"I guess you've been made to smart!" grinned Fisher T. Fish, looking in. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of the study. He gasped and groaned in a way that ought to have melted the heart of the Sphinx. But it did not melt the hearts of the Removites. They knew their Bunter too well!

They knew that he was not half so much hurt as he pretended to be; and they knew that he deserved a dozen times as many lickings as he ever received. And they replied to his agonised groans with heartless yells of laughter.

"Beasts!" snorted Billy Bunter.

And he rolled away, almost speechless with indignation. And when Billy Bunter was speechless, his feelings were very moved indeed. As a rule, the power of speech was very slow to desert him.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not Dying.

"HALLO! What's that?" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

There was a startled note in his voice. What had happened was, indeed, startling enough. The Chums of the Remove had returned from Courtfield, and they had just come up to their study. The Remove passage was dimly lighted, and their study was quite dark. The gas had not been lighted, and the fire had gone out.

Nugent had just opened the door, when a deep and heavy groan fell upon his ears.

No wonder the junior started back.

Harry Wharton and Hurree Singh, who were following him in, started, too, and paused in the doorway. The study was intensely dark inside, and they could see nothing, and that deep groan was very eerie.

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"What on earth—"

"The whatfulness is terrific!"

Groan!

Deep, and anguished, the sound was repeated from the darkness of the room. The juniors felt their hair stand almost on end.

"G-g-good heavens! What is it?" muttered Nugent. "S-s-somebody's got hurt, or something!"

"There's been an accident, I suppose! I say, who's there?" called out Wharton. "Who's that groaning?"

Groan!

A repetition of the alarming sound was the only reply the juniors received. There was a faint sound of a body moving in an armchair.

"My hat!" muttered Wharton.

"Shall we call for help?" suggested Nugent, nervously.

"We'll see what's the matter first."

Wharton strode into the study, struck a match, and lighted the gas. He looked round for the author of the alarming groans.

A fat form was stretched in the armchair.

Groan!

"Bunter!"

Groan!

"Billy Bunter!" howled Nugent, wrathfully. "That spoofing bounder! I—I—"

"Hold on!" said Wharton. "It may be genuine this time! Look!"

He pointed to the fat junior. There was an ominous red stain on Billy Bunter's forehead, oozing out from under his lank hair, and there were red stains, too, on his ear and his hand.

He groaned deeply, blinking with lack-lustre eyes at the juniors through his big spectacles.

Nugent checked the angry words upon his lips.

He was so accustomed to Bunter's spoofing, that it had not even occurred to him that the fat junior might be really hurt in any way.

"What's the matter, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton, not unkindly.

"I—I think I'm dying!" said Bunter faintly. "I—I've crawled into my old study to die!"

This was really very pathetic. But the juniors knew Bunter when he was in the pathetic vein. As Nugent put it, they had had some!

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Wharton. "Where are you hurt?"

"I forgive him!"

"Eh? Who?"

"John Bull! I—I fractured my skull in falling off his table, after he had brutally assaulted me!" groaned Bunter. "I forgive him! I forgive you fellows for having kept me short of grub! I hope to expire in peace with everybody!"

And the junior finished up with a hair-raising groan.

Harry Wharton and his friends stared at him. It seemed to be almost genuine this time. Bunter's face was white as chalk, and the red stains there were terribly real.

"Do you mean to say that Bull's been damaging you, Bunter?"

"Oh, yes! Oh, I'm dying!"

"Go and call Bull, Nugent."

"Right-ho!"

"I—I say, you fellows! I—I forgive him! I—I shall not even complain to the Head!" said Bunter feebly.

"Look here, Bunter—"

"Ow! Don't touch me!"

"But let me look at your injury!"

"Ow! It hurts! Don't!"

And Bunter gave so fearful a howl that Harry Wharton involuntarily drew his hand away. The fat junior collapsed into the armchair again, groaning.

"Ow! I'm expiring! Oh!"

Nugent re-entered the study with Bull and Fish. Bull was looking suspicious. He glared at Billy Bunter, and, in spite of himself, he stared at the ghastly sight.

"Great Scott! What's the matter with him?" he exclaimed.

"I'm dying."

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Ow! I forgive you!"

"What on earth have you done to him?" asked Nugent.

"Licked him," said John Bull calmly. "He listened under my table, and heard me talking with Todd about starting a school paper."

"About what?" shouted Wharton.

"Starting a school paper!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Yes, certainly."

"My hat!"

"I warned him what to expect if he told anybody about it, as I was keeping it a secret, and he told you——"

"He didn't!"

"What!" exclaimed Bull, in surprise. "He didn't?"

"No."

"Then how did you know?"

"We didn't know."

"But I met you down at the printer's!" exclaimed Bull.

"I went there to get an estimate about printing the paper, and I found you there on the same tack."

"My word!"

"The wordfulness is terrific!"

"But—but Bunter never told us!" gasped Wharton. "We had the idea from Tom Merry—Merry of the Shell at St. Jim's, you know. He sent me a copy of his paper this morning."

"Oh! Then you thought of it yourselves?"

"We've been thinking of it on and off for a long time. Did you think we were waiting for a blessed new boy to come to the school and give us the idea!" exclaimed Nugent indignantly.

"Well, I had the same wheeze, you see—and Bunter's such an awful liar, of course I couldn't believe him. Still, I'm sorry I licked you, Bunter, under the circumstances," John Bull added, as an afterthought.

Bunter groaned deeply.

"It's too late," he said, in a faint voice. "I'm expiring! I fractured my skull in falling off the table! Ow! I forgive you, John Bull. You have murdered me, but I forgive you. I only hope your conscience will let you sleep of a night."

"You fat duffer!"

"Oh, really——"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Nugent. "He's hurt; his head's bleeding!"

The fat junior groaned dismally.

"Well, that wasn't done in my study," said Bull. "He was all right when he left me."

"Ow! I crawled in here to die!"

John Bull bent over the fat junior. Bunter shrank away.

"Ow! Keep him off!"

"Don't touch him, Bull!"

"I'm going to look at that wound——"

"Ow! Don't touch it! I—I'm suffering fearfully! I—I——"

Bull touched the fat junior's stained forehead, and Bunter gave a wild yell. Bull drew away a finger stained with red. He looked at it, and sniffed at it, and looked at it again. Then he gave a shout.

"My hat! The rotten spoofer!"

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"The lying bounder! It's not blood!"

"Not blood!" shouted Wharton.

"No! It's red ink!"

"Ink!" gasped the juniors.

"Yes. And that—that pale complexion is chalk!" yelled John Bull wrathfully. "He's spoofing us as usual. Lend me a cricket-stump!"

"My hat!"

"Get me a stump!" shouted John Bull.

He dragged the fat junior out of the chair. Bunter rolled on the hearthrug with a howl. With surprising activity for one who was on the point of death, he picked himself up, and rushed towards the door.

"Great Scott! The spoofer!"

"Ow! Lemme go! Yow!"

Bull rushed after Bunter. He landed out with his foot as the fat junior reached the doorway. Bunter gave a terrific whoop as the heavy boot struck him behind, and he shot through the doorway like a stone from a catapult.

Bump!

Bunter roared again as he landed in the passage.

"Give me that stump!" yelled John Bull. "I'll teach him to make up to scare us! I'll give him doing stage business on us! Gimme that stump!"

But Billy Bunter did not wait for the stump. He bolted.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

John Bull—Editor.

JOHN BULL turned back into the study with a red and excited face. Nugent had obligingly handed him a cricket-stump, but unfortunately too late for use upon Billy Bunter.

"I guess that fat guy takes the cake," Fisher T. Fish remarked. "We've got some big things over there, but nothing quite so big as Billy Bunter when it comes to lying. No, sir."

Bull tossed the stump into a corner.

"Look here, you fellows," he exclaimed, "it seems that

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we've hit on the same idea; we're both on the tack of starting a school paper."

"It seems so!" said Harry Wharton, with a nod.

"No good rowing over it," said Bull. "Suppose we amalgamate, and go it together. I came to your study this afternoon to ask you if you'd care to join in it. I've taken Todd and Fish into the scheme. I'm editor!"

"Oh!"

"Todd's sub-editor."

"I'm!"

"You chaps can all be sub-editors, too, if you like," said John Bull.

"You propose to call it 'Harry Wharton's Weekly'?" asked Wharton.

"No fear! 'John Bull Junior's Weekly' is the title."

"Oh, come off!"

"That's the title," said Bull firmly.

"Rats!"

"The ratfulness is terrific."

"I guess you'd better let me arbitrate," said Fisher T. Fish.

"What would you suggest, Fishy?"

"Well, perhaps you could both agree upon calling the paper, say, 'Fisher T. Fish's Weekly,' suggested the American junior.

To which the others responded, with great unanimity:

"Rats!"

"I guess that's a sensible suggestion. I'm willing to contribute to the paper, to write all the editorial pars, and fill up half the paper——"

"Oh, ring off! Look here, Bull, it ought to go by seniority," said Wharton. "I've been longer at Greyfriars than you have."

"I've been longer than you have, if you come to that," said Nugent.

"I don't come to that," said Wharton. "Look here——"

"I had the idea first," said Bull.

"Oh, stuff!"

"Had you chaps started on it when I hammered at your study door?"

"Well, no."

"Well, I started it immediately after that."

Wharton rubbed his chin.

"I guess I've got a suggestion to make——"

"Oh, cheese it, Fishy!" yelled the juniors.

"I guess——"

"Shut up!"

"Nope! I guess——"

"Dry up! Ring off!"

"I guess it would be a good idea to toss up for it," pursued the American junior imperturbably.

"Well, that's not so bad," assented Wharton. "What do you say, Bull?"

"I'm willing."

"Chap who wins to edit the paper, name it, and generally boss the show," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess that will save wrangling. It's between Bull and Wharton."

"Very well!"

"Here's a penny," said Nugent resignedly.

Wharton tossed the coin, and Bull named it.

"Head!"

Harry Wharton showed the coin. It was "head." John Bull had won, and he was editor and publisher and general boss, as Fish called it, of the school paper.

"That's settled," said Bull. "Look here, I was thinking of using some of the money my Aunt Tabitha sent me for the paper—I mean, to pay for the printing, and so on. No need to call on anybody for contributions."

"Oh, rats! I suggest——"

"Excuse me; I'm boss," said John Bull, gently but firmly. Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, just as you like."

"The paper's to be called 'John Bull's Weekly'—that is to say, 'John Bull Junior's Weekly,' as I'm John Bull junior. Edited by John Bull. But all you chaps can be sub-editors if you like," said Bull graciously.

"That's all right," said Nugent. "They have a dozen or so sub-editors to the school paper at St. Jim's."

"The all-rightfulness is terrific."

"We'll begin on the business after tea," said John Bull briskly. "I suppose it's no good trying to keep the wheeze dark any longer; Bunter is sure to talk, now. We shall have to buzz the first number out quickly, that's all, before the wheeze is boned by any of the Upper Fourth fellows."

"Good egg!"

"You chaps come into my study after tea, and bring any stuff you may have on hand," said John Bull, and with a nod he left the study, followed by Fisher T. Fish.

The chums of Study No. 1 looked at one another.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Harry Wharton. "That's taking it out of our hands, with a vengeance, and no mistake."



"We can give you a well-displayed advertisement at a very cheap rate," said John Bull, "something in this style: 'Try Our Plak Ribbons at Twopence a Yard!'" The shop-walker stared. (See page 16.)

"Always was a cool beggar," said Nugent. "Well, Bull's editor, and I suppose we shall have to toe the line, or else drop the wheeze altogether."

"No fear; it's too good to drop."

And the Chums of the Remove had their tea, at the same time discussing contributions to "John Bull Junior's Weekly," for that, it was settled, the new paper was to be called. Meanwhile, the youthful editor had returned to his study. There was a sound of the rustling of paper, mingled with mumbling and muttering, as Bull and Fish drew near the door of Study No. 14.

"What's that?" exclaimed John Bull.

Fisher T. Fish chuckled.

"I guess it's Todd!"

And Fisher T. Fish "guessed" correctly. John Bull looked in. Alonzo Todd was seated, writing away at a furious rate. His big, scrawling writing covered the paper very fast, and as fast as a sheet was covered with scrawl, Alonzo tossed it from him and started on another.

Alonzo was evidently working away in a white heat of composition. The divine afflatus had lifted him a little off his usual balance.

"Glorious spring!" mumbled Todd, as he scribbled and scrawled. "Beautiful thing! How very odd! Some persons find it very difficult to write poetry, but it comes to me as easily as anything. My Uncle Benjamin will be very pleased when he sees this poem in print. It will not occupy more

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NEXT
WEEK: "THE RIVAL WEEKLY."

than half the magazine; but I must explain to Uncle Benjamin that the rest of the paper is filled with inferior matter as a concession to the personal feelings of the rest of the staff."

"My hat!"

Alonzo blinked up.

"Ah! Is that you, Bull? Can you give me a rhyme for darkling?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Bull—"

"I guess you're starting a waste-paper shop—oh?" asked Fisher T. Fish.

"My dear Fish!"

"What's all that rot?" asked John Bull unceremoniously.

"You are quite mistaken, my dear Bull. It is not rot. It is poetry. I am writing a poem for the first issue of the paper," explained Todd. "I have chosen the subject of spring—not wholly for the sake of novelty—"

"Ha, ha, ha! I should say not!" roared John Bull.

"But it is a most attractive thought, is it not, how all Nature seems to—to open, and—and to—to liven up, to put it like that, and to—in short, how like spring is to—to spring," said Todd. "You catch my meaning?"

"Perfectly."

"I will read out some of what I have written. A few hundred lines will give you a clear idea of the whole poem."

"My word!"

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

"Spring, oh, lovely, lovely spring!
Is it not a beautiful thing?
How the flowers and birds awake!
'Mid zephyrs sweet as wedding-cake.
How sweet to hear the sparrows sing,
How sweet to watch the skies above!
And young men's fancy in the spring,
Will lightly turn to thoughts of love!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared John Bull. "I've heard something like those two last lines before."

"I guess so. Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo nodded.

"It is quite possible that two great poetic minds may run in the same groove," he said. "You must admit that it is a beautiful thought. To continue——"

"Oh, don't! 'Nuff's as good as a feast!"

"But I'm describing the effect of spring on a schoolboy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And barmy boys are in the mead——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"H'm! That is not correct," said Alonzo, blinking at his manuscript. "I have read the wrong line, I think. I will resume——"

"Oh, ring off!"

"When balmy breezes fan the air——"

"Chuck it, Todd! We want tea!"

"I trust you will not think of satisfying the base wants of the animal side of your nature, Bull, when you may be listening to the divine outpourings of poetical genius," said Todd severely.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"When balmy breezes fan the air,
And schoolboys hasten to the field,
To speed the giddy football high,
While cricket bats they bravely wield."

John Bull collapsed into a chair.

"Oh, my hat! This is the first time I've heard of cricket bats in a footer match!" he gasped. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, some license must be allowed to a poet," said Todd reprovingly. "This is not prose, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"To continue——"

"I guess it had better be continued in our next!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish. "Chuck it."

"My dear Fish!"

Fisher T. Fish gathered up a double handful of scrawled manuscript, and hurled it at Alonzo Todd. Alonzo jumped up, smothered with his own effusions. Bull caught up foolscap in handfuls, and followed Fish's example.

"Ow!" roared Alonzo. "I really—— Oh! You see—— Yah! You are mixing up the papers, and I shall get the football match mixed with the balmy breezes! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo Todd was pelted with crumpled pages of poetry without mercy. He was driven into a corner finally, smothered up with pages of poetry, like the babes in the wood with the leaves.

"Now, will you chuck it?" demanded John Bull.

"Ow, yes! My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked——"

"Cheese it!"

And Alonzo cheesed it at last. While Bull and the American were having their tea, Todd gathered up his precious manuscripts, but he had neglected to number the pages, and the poem did not seem to have any connected meaning, joining one part to another, and from the worried expression on Alonzo's face, it seemed that the poem was hopelessly mixed, and that he had, as he feared, got the football match mixed up with the balmy breezes.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. Against the Stream.

THE next day the new school paper was the one topic in the Greyfriars Remove. All the fellows took a keen interest in it. Most of the Form made generous offers to edit the paper, to which John Bull responded with the ancient and classic monosyllable: "Rats!"

Bulstrode, of course, was clear upon one point—that he must have a hand in the matter. John Bull was equally clear upon another point—that he shouldn't. Whereat Bulstrode shrugged his shoulders, and declared that it was all rot, anyway.

But the greater number of fellows in the Remove Form were only too willing to contribute, and there was certainly no likelihood of the editor running short of copy. Indeed, judging from the number of manuscripts that were taken to Study No. 14, the editors and his staff were likely to be smothered under an overwhelming mass of copy.

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It was surprising what a faculty for writing was developed by the Remove fellows. Some of them had felt for a long time that they really had the faculty divine, and only wanted a chance to show it. They showed it now.

Others were born poets, but had never burst into poetry. Now, so to speak, they burst. Then there were artists who could do wonderful things with the pencil—things so wonderful that no one could guess what they were intended to represent. All of these budding geniuses were willing to keep John Bull junior going with their contributions, and some of them declared generously enough that they wouldn't expect payment. They only wanted to give the thing a buck-up by putting some really good stuff into it.

Harry Wharton & Co., though the paper and the editorship had passed out of their study, were influential members of the staff. As a matter of fact, John Bull knew that all the fellows would have to pull together, if the paper was to be a success, and he laid a very light hand of authority upon his staff. Only irrepressible fellows like Fish and Bulstrode, who wanted to run the whole show, were sat upon without mercy.

"I guess we shall want a sports column or two," Fisher T. Fish remarked. "I could do that first chop, you know. Besides, I'd write out some of my own experiences over there at shooting and fishing and rowing and swimming. You chaps have never seen me row."

"We've seen you play footer, and run, and jump, and it was enough to make a cat grin," said Bob Cherry. "I expect your rowing is much about the same."

Fisher T. Fish snorted.

"You should just see me row," he replied. "I heard you fellows saying the other day that it was blame hard to row against the current on your river here, the Sark. I guess I'd do it without turning a hair, sir—yes?"

"Rats!"

"I guess so! I guess I could show you Greyfriars chaps how to row, and it would make a ripping report to put in the paper, too. 'Rowing—and How it is Done,' by Fisher T. Fish, of New York. That would sound all O.K., I guess."

The Chums of the Remove laughed. They could not help it. If Fisher T. Fish's own account was to be trusted, there was nothing he could not do, and had not done "over there." To do him justice, he was always willing to take on any test; but the comical side of the matter was that he always failed to make good his boasts, and yet his failures had no effect whatever in reducing his swank. He would fail egregiously in the simplest test, at any sport or athletic pursuit; but he strutted not a whit the less, and was none the less full of wonderful stories of his exploits over there, "over there" being his expression for the United States. As a matter of fact, the Greyfriars juniors were tired of putting him to a serious test, and contented themselves with grinning at his claims.

"Yep. I guess we know how to row over there. If it's anything on water, I lay that you can't leave me in the lurch."

And Fisher T. Fish looked as if saying it proved it. He was swanking, as usual, and the Chums of the Remove were fed-up with his boasting. Their only comment was a general shrugging of shoulders. The American youth looked keenly at them for a cue on which to hang a further stream of tall talk. But he got none.

"Say," he broke in, "is this a quakers' meeting, or do you all want some chewing-gum? I thought we were talking about rowing?"

"We were," said Frank Nugent, "talking, but we bar swanking."

"Well, I guess I don't mind you dropping out, Nugent. I'm giving you straight goods."

"Well, of all the rotten cheek!" burst out Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!" said all the chums at once. "He does nothing but swank all day long. Let the beggar do something for a change."

"There's a chance for you, Fish," said Mark Linley, with a grin.

"And I guess I'll take it," said the American. "I guess I always prove what I say."

"Then guess again, Fish," said Harry Wharton, "because I'm jolly well sure that you don't."

"And we've seen on several occasions how clever you are at showing the Old Country how to do things," said Bob Cherry, in a very serious tone for him.

"All right—all right. Guess you've no need to get your wool off, you fellows," said Fisher T. Fish. "I'm on—I'm on. All I want is a boat and a river, you bet."

"Will one river be sufficient?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Or is our stream here big enough?" suggested Tom Brown.

"Maybe—maybe," retorted Fisher T. Fish. "I say again, I guess I can do what I say. It's my show to convince you we lick creation over there."

"Oh, ring off, Fish!" said Harry Wharton. "Let's see you do something."

"I guess I was only explaining," went on the American, as if Wharton hadn't spoken. "I don't want any misunderstandings in the deal. But I say again, that a team of our fellows over there could row against stream faster than your lot with the current."

"Rats!"

"Piffle!"

"Say, you've not lost your tempers, have you?"

The juniors stopped open-mouthed. Fisher T. Fisher's coolness was beyond belief. Whatever was said, for or against him, he took as a mere matter of course.

But Bob Cherry had an idea what might be done on the present occasion. It was all very well for Fish to swank. Bob Cherry was determined not to let it pass. Seeing that Fish was still inclined to brag till further orders, Bob Cherry had no difficulty in drawing Harry Wharton & Co. on one side. Fish rattled on to the other juniors, all unsuspecting. Bob Cherry made good use of his time. In a few minutes Harry Wharton & Co. understood.

Fisher T. Fish was to be made to prove his words before the afternoon closed in. He was to be challenged to row a boat against stream. Bob Cherry was to slip off unnoticed, and tie the boat to a post in the river, in such a way that the line would not be visible. The rest is easily imaginable.

"Ripping!" said Harry Wharton, when Bob Cherry had finished.

"Come on, Fish, and show us how you can row!" exclaimed Wharton.

"But I thought I had convinced you fellows about the rowing," said Fisher T. Fish.

"You're a swanker, Fish," said Harry Wharton. "If you don't go down to the river and show us how you do these wonderful feats we'll bump you, and that's flat!"

"Well, I'm on, as I said before. Get me a boat and a river."

"If you mean that for a knock at our piece of water here you can ring off," said Tom Brown. "And, remember it's quite large enough to duck you in."

"I allow all that, Brown," said Fisher T. Fish. "But I guess I'd rather row on it. Get me the ship, and I'll show how we row over there."

"Right-ho!" said Bob Cherry, rubbing his hands. "Now you're talking, Fish. Shall I get a boat for you?"

"Yep. I was going in for tea. But run along and get me the prize canoe. I've no particular objection to laying you fellows flat with the earth before I stroke up for the afternoon. Say, which is the way to your canal?"

Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent ran off to the river to "get ready" the boat. Harry Wharton assured Fisher T. Fish that he should be brought to the river in good time.

"Over there," began the American youth, "I guess——"

The chums purposely dawdled. Bob Cherry and Nugent wanted time to make their preparations.

"Now then," came a shout from the river-side, as the party drew near. "hurry up! We're all ready! Has the beggar funk'd it? We don't see him!"

"I guess that's not very kind of you, Nugent," came Fisher T. Fish's drawl in reply. "Call that a boat?" were his first words, as he reached Nugent and Bob Cherry. "Why, over there the paper-boys play with bigger things than that in the gutters——"

"And, of course, you've won before you begin, haven't you?" said Bob Cherry sarcastically.

Nearly all the juniors present knew that a jape was formed, and they were enjoying the thing keenly. A score against Fish was what they wanted.

"Guess I laugh last," said Fisher T. Fish, jumping into the boat and taking up an oar. "Say, am I all right?"

"Oh, you're all serene!"

"Then watch me make her rip," said the American youth. And, judging by the way he put his oars deep into the water, it seemed as if he would make her "rip." But the Chums of the Remove knew something about rowing. They knew that a deep dip with the oars was not good rowing, and they laid themselves out for more fun than they had originally expected. They had expected Fisher T. Fish to row respectably. But, by all appearances, he was a mere novice.

Fisher T. Fish nearly "caught a crab" at the first stroke.

"Bravo!" yelled the chums. "That how you do it over there?"

"No hurry! No hurry! Guess I'll come through all right!" retorted the American. "But how's this for moving her?"

The chums stared as, all at once, Fisher T. Fish made the boat leap away. Fisher T. Fish could row, after all. He was indeed getting some speed on.

But Bob Cherry had his eye on Fisher T. Fish. The wily American youth had tried to deceive the other juniors by rowing with the stream. Bob Cherry soon stopped that.

"Turn round, Fish!" he yelled. "You're not going with the stream. You've got to row against the river, like you

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wonderful fellows over there do. You can't take us in, my son. So turn her round, and don't talk."

Fisher T. Fish did not reply. But he turned the boat.

Slowly he began to crawl against the current. Then he got a bit more "way" on. But anything like the brilliant things he talked of seemed to be impossible to the Yankee youth. He tugged until he got about thirty yards or so; then he seemed to be a fixture—as, indeed, he was.

"Go on! That's not the Mauritania you're trying to row up-stream!" shouted Frank Nugent.

Fisher T. Fish had no wind for a reply. He was working like a navvy. But, of course, he could not move the boat.

"Get out and have a drink or something before you go on!" called out Harry Wharton.

Fisher T. Fish's reply was to ship his oars for a moment and take off his waistcoat.

"Now he'll do it," said Tom Brown, grinning—"I don't think!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish took not the slightest notice of the laughter. He was all grit when he did start. There could be no doubt about that. Even if the boat had not been tied the fellows could see, though, that he could not have made his boast good. They knew from experience what it was to row against the current. It really could not be done for any length of time.

But Fish tugged away at his oars, dipping deep every now and then and so giving the boat the appearance of dancing on the water.

"Bravo, Fish!" shouted the chums of the Remove.

"That's it! If you can't row, make her dance! We don't mind, as long as you're funny! Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish shipped his oars again. He was apparently considering what to do next. But a storm of yells came from the bank:

"Get on!"

"Funking it, are you? Why, you haven't made thirty yards yet!"

"All serene!" called out Fish. "I guess I don't know the water well enough. This current is beastly strong. I guess I'll work it, though."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even Fisher T. Fish was not entirely proof against that last yell of laughter.

Then he went to work again with more determination than ever.

The boat could not be moved.

But the Yankee youth was not for giving in yet. The perspiration poured down his face. But still he tugged away.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "That's the letter! Make her rip, Fish. But, I say, when are you going to move on?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The laughing chorus was taken up as Fisher T. Fish was seen to ship his oars once more.

"She's a stiff current!" he called out. "But I guess I'll boss her yet!"

And away to work he went again. But the boat remained in the same spot.

The funniest thing was that the American did not tumble to it. But he did not. And, keeping up his last effort much longer than any other, he at last shipped once more. Then he rested his head on his hands in a way that made every junior roar.

He was clearly puzzled. He stared at the water as if it were bewitched. He rested much longer than he had done on previous occasions.

"Go on! Buck up!" said a junior a bit higher up the bank.

"No hurry! No hurry!" said Fisher T. Fish. "The day's not over yet. I haven't quite cottoned to your one-eyed river——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I'm not the sort to give in, though, Cherry."

"You're not the sort that can do what you boast of either, Fish," said Frank Nugent.

"Plenty of time yet, Nugent—plenty of time," said Fish, in his usual matter-of-course tone.

"Plenty of time," said Bob Cherry, in a capital imitation of the American's voice. "I've got the boat for him by the hour!"

And Fisher T. Fish started once more. The chums laughed till they were quite hoarse. Still the American lad went on.

Bob Cherry had fastened the line under water level. It would take a much harder pull to uproot the pole than if the rope had been tied high and dry above water, and Fisher T. Fish sweated away for nothing.

But at last his efforts got weaker. The chums cheered him on instantly. But he soon stopped altogether.

"I guess she's too much for me," he called out at last. "I can do it on our rivers over there, though."

The juniors yelled with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In another moment he was on the bank. Alonzo Todd was also there. He had come up during the scene on the water and had gathered more or less the business that was on.

"Do you give in, Fishy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yep. But I guess when I know the river better——"

"Dear me! How singular, my dear Fish!" said Alonzo, pressing forward. "Perhaps you could not prove your oarsmanship because of the rope with which Bob Cherry had tied up the boat?"

Fisher T. Fish simply jumped.

"What?" he roared.

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

And the Chums of the Remove hurried off to tea, leaving Alonzo to complete the explanation.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Mutiny!

"MY dear Bull——"

"Ass!"

"My dear John, I really wish you would be a little more courteous in your demeanour. Such manners, I am sure, are not usual in an editorial office. It is a custom for an editor to treat the members of his staff with the most punctilious courtesy."

"Fathead!"

"My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked to hear you use such expressions. He has always impressed upon me never to get excited in argument, and, at the same time, never to take more than my share of the conversation, or to allow myself to become in the slightest degree tedious or long-winded," said Alonzo. "I consider——"

"Chump!"

"I consider that the paper will be greatly improved by the introduction of a long poem dealing with the spring. Not only the novelty of the subject——"

"Duffer!"

"But the masterly way in which it is treated——"

"Burbler!"

"My dear Bull, that is not a word at all—and I trust——"

"Shut up!" roared the exasperated editor of "John Bull Junior's Weekly." "Who's editor of this paper?"

"You are, my dear Bull. But I am sub-editor. I do not desire to encroach upon your prerogatives in any way. But my Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me to stand up for my rights," said Todd firmly.

"Fathead! Spring poems are barred!"

"Not at all! I could, as a concession to your want of taste and judgment, compress my poem somewhat, so that it would not occupy more than a third of the paper——"

"You can have a third of a column."

"My dear Bull——"

"And not a quarter of an inch more!" roared John Bull.

Alonzo Todd shook his head.

Alonzo was the most kind and obliging of youths; in fact, his Uncle Benjamin, as he often said, had always impressed upon him to be kind and obliging. But he could be very determined sometimes—generally at the wrong times. He was very determined now.

"For the sake of the readers—a wholly conscientious motive, my dear Bull—I must insist upon putting some good poetry into the paper," he said.

"Chump! Frabjous ass!"

"Suppose, then, as a final concession, that I occupy only a quarter of the paper with my poem on the fresh and novel subject I have selected?"

"Fathead!"

"Really, my dear Bull——"

John Bull snorted.

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He had always known Alonzo Todd as meek and mild, and was quite unexpectedly brought face to face with the trait of obstinacy in his character. But John Bull was just the fellow to deal with mutiny in the editorial office.

He grasped the Duffer of Greyfriars by the collar and whirled him towards the table. On the table was a big, wide-mouthed inkpot.

Alonzo Todd struggled.

"I—I— Pray release me, my dear Bull!" he exclaimed.

"I—oh!"

"Are you going to obey orders?" roared Bull.

"Certainly not!"

"Now, then——"

"Ow!"

John Bull, exerting his strength, which was about three times that of the Duffer of Greyfriars, forced Todd's head down over the table.

The Duffer of Greyfriars gasped and struggled.

"Ow! My dear Bull, pray cease! What are you doing?"

"I'm shoving your silly nose into the inkpot!"

"Yow!"

"Are you going to obey orders?"

"You see——"

"Yes or no?" roared Bull.

"My Uncle Benjamin——"

"Yes or no, ass?"

"Under the extraordinary circumstances—ow!"

"Here goes, then!"

John Bull forced Alonzo's face lower, and the Duffer's somewhat prominent nose dipped into the inkpot.

Alonzo gave a spluttering sneeze.

"Groo! Atchoo! Ow! Yow!"

He jerked his head violently up, coughing, and sneezing ink in all directions.

"Groo! Ow! Yarooooop!"

"Now then, you boulder, are you going to do as I tell you?" John Bull roared.

"Groo! I really——"

"Yes or no?"

"Ye-es! Under the peculiar circumstances, I feel I should be justified in waiving my extreme rights, my dear Bull. Ow! Groo! Yow!"

John Bull deposited Alonzo in a chair. The Duffer of Greyfriars sat there and sneezed ink.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton looked in at the door. He had his coat on, ready for going out. John Bull looked at him with a grin.

"Ow!" grunted Alonzo. "Groo!"

He mopped his nose with his handkerchief; soon reducing that handkerchief to a state that would certainly have shocked his Uncle Benjamin.

"What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Wharton. "What has Alonzo been doing with his nose?"

"Ow! Groo-o-o-h!"

"Sampling the ink," said John Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Wharton— Groooooh!"

"You see, I've been pointing out to him that there must be some discipline in an editorial office," John Bull explained. "Todd couldn't see it till he got his nose in the inkpot. Then he saw it."

"My dear Bull——"

"Ready to go down to Friardale?" asked Bull. "I won't keep you a minute. Are you coming, Toddy?"

"Groo! Yes!"

"Then get that ink washed off. We can't take a sub-editor of 'John Bull's Weekly' about in that horrid state."

"Groo!"

"Oh, change the record!"

Alonzo gave John Bull a deeply indignant look, and hurried out of the study. He sneezed ink all the way along the passage. It was ten minutes before Alonzo was ready to go out. Billy Bunter sidled up to the three juniors as they were leaving the School House.

"I say, you fellows, I'll come with you," he remarked. "I'm going to the tuckshop in Friardale, too."

NEXT WEEK.

Do not miss

"The Rival Weekly!"

A Capital Tale of the Duffer of Greyfriars and Billy Bunter's Wiles.

"We're not going there," said John Bull brusquely. "Buzz off!"

"Where are you going?"

"To Walker's."

"The draper's?" exclaimed Bunter, in surprise.

"Yes."

"What for?"

"Advertisements for the 'Weekly.'"

Billy Bunter snorted.

"Oh, rats! Then I'm jolly well not coming with you! If you think I'm going to walk all the way to Friardale just for—"

But the rest was lost as the chums walked away towards the gates. They turned into Friardale Lane, and walked away quickly towards the village. Billy Bunter went back into the house, with a grunt. He would have walked miles and miles with a tuckshop at the end of the walk; but not a yard, if he could have helped it, for any other object.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Canvassing for Ads.

"HERE we are!" exclaimed John Bull.

The editorial party stopped before Walker's, in Friardale.

Mr. Walker was a draper, and he kept the largest shop in Friardale. Mr. Walker had many departments in his establishment, and several assistants. But the chief glory of Mr. Walker's establishment was the shopwalker.

The shopwalker was a great man, and knew it. His walk was a wonder to behold, and the wave of his hand, when showing a customer the way to a department, was princely. Mr. Corney carried his head very high in the air; possibly because the earth was not good enough for him to look at, and possibly because he could not have lowered his chin without danger of beheading himself with his own collar. Mr. Corney's tie was tied as only a real, genuine shopwalker can tie a tie. His frock-coat had seen service, and was developing shiny traits, but Mr. Corney often glanced at his figure in a glass, and wondered whether such a slim, aristocratic form was ever seen at a Court function. The natives of Friardale admired Mr. Corney immensely. To the simple natives, Mr. Corney was the very glass of fashion.

Walker's was the only big shop in Friardale—the only one that had more than one department—and above all, the only one that had a shopwalker. In the eyes of the natives, Whiteley's and Harrods and Selfridge's might hide their diminished heads in comparison with Walker's.

"I don't know how it will work," Harry Wharton remarked, as he stopped in front of the only plate-glass window in Friardale.

"Oh, it's all right!" said John Bull. "It stands to reason that it must pay tradespeople to advertise in a school magazine. They get heaps of customers among the fellows, you know. And we're going to charge a moderate rate."

"I think the idea is excellent," said Alonzo Todd. "I wish we had had time, of course, to consult my Uncle Benjamin. But—"

"Come in, then."

The three juniors entered the shop.

There was a stuffy odour, two assistants, and three customers in the shop. Walker's was the only shop in Friardale that ever had three customers in at one time. Sometimes it had as many as six. Seven or eight constituted a rush of business. Nine or ten meant great pressure, and then Mr. Corney was in his element. It was inspiring to see him keeping a cool head in the midst of flurried assistants. This sort of thing only happened on market days, however.

"Walk this way, please!"

It was Mr. Corney's voice as the juniors entered.

Mr. Corney was directing an old lady to the fancy goods department. He half turned on one leg, made a magnificent stride, and waved his princely hand.

"Walk this way, madam, if you please."

"My hat!" murmured Harry Wharton. "I couldn't walk that way if I were paid for it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Corney's magnificent eye lighted upon the juniors. He swam up, so to speak. His motions could not be described as walking.

"And what can we do for you to-day, young gentlemen?" he asked.

"Business," said John Bull.

"Hem! You require—er—cricket-caps?"

"Yes, we're likely to require cricket-caps in winter," said John Bull.

"Ahem! Football hose, perhaps."

"Thanks, no."

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"Glorious spring!" mumbled Todd. "Beautiful thing! How very odd. Some persons find it difficult to write poetry, but it comes to me as easily as anything. My Uncle Benjamin will be very pleased when he sees this poem in print." (See page 11.)

"What can we do for you, then?"

"We've called to see if you can give us an advertisement for our school paper," said John Bull calmly.

The shopwalker stared at him.

"W-w-what!" he gasped.

"Advertisement!" rapped out John Bull. "Advertisement for our school paper."

"Oh!"

"We can give you an inch in a column for sixpence," said Bull.

"An—an inch?"

"Yes. How do you like the idea?"

"Ah!"

"Displayed advertisements by arrangement," added Harry Wharton.

"Oh!"

"My Uncle Benjamin says that advertising is a very important branch of modern business," said Alonzo Todd. "At one time people depended upon the quality of their goods to attract future custom. Nowadays, they advertise instead. It is a change not for the better, my Uncle Benjamin says, and he suggests that the cost of advertisements might well be put into the production, thus enabling manufacturers to pay their employees a decent wage, and at the same time—Yow!"

Todd broke off as John Bull stamped on his feet.

"Yow—ow! Yah!"

"Shut up, you ass!"

"My dear Bull—"

"Ring off! Now, my dear sir, what about that advertisement."

The shopwalker gasped.

"I am afraid we cannot give you an advertisement," he said when he finally comprehended. "It is not in our line."

"That's just where you make a mistake," said John Bull calmly. "We can give you a splendid advertisement at a very cheap rate, and I predict that there will be a rush of fellows from Greyfriars to buy your football socks and cricket-caps."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Wharton. "Something in this style—'RUSH TO WALKER'S FOR CHEAP SOCKS!'"

"Good! Or 'TRY OUR PINK RIBBON AT TWO-PENCE A YARD!'"

"That's splendid! Or, 'WHY GO BAREFOOT WHEN OUR SPLENDID SOCKS ARE ONLY ONE-AND-SIX A PAIR?'"

The shopwalker stared.

"I fear it could not be done," he replied.

"Oh, rats! Where's your manager?"

"The manager," said Mr. Corney haughtily, "is absent!"

"Where is your proprietor, then?"

"He is absent."

"Look here, you'd better think of it. A well-displayed line in the school paper, such as 'BUY OUR FIRST-CLASS PYJAMAS,' would bring you a rush of custom."

A lady came into the shop, and Mr. Corney seized the opportunity to escape.

"Yes, madam! Lace fronts, madam! This way, madam! Lace fronts, forward! Walk this way, if you please, madam!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Wharton. "I should like to take a snapshot of him walking that way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It appears to me, my dear Bull, that your idea of securing advertisements for the 'Weekly' is somewhat of a failure," Alonzo Todd remarked.

"Oh, rats!" said John Bull. "We'll try the butcher's."

"My dear Bull—"

"Shut up, and come on!"

And they quitted the shop.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

No Go.

HARRY WHARTON and his companions felt a little less hopeful as they turned down the old High Street of Friardale towards the butcher's shop. Advertisements from the local tradesmen in the school magazine seemed to them a ripping idea; but it appeared that the Friardale tradespeople were not likely to see it in the same light. John Bull remarked that the shopkeepers of a blessed little village were not to be expected to know anything about real business. But that was little comfort. The editorial staff of "John Bull Junior's Weekly" had set their minds upon raising half the cost of production of the paper by means of local advertisements.

They entered the butcher's shop, and the jolly, red-faced butcher of Friardale came forward to meet them with a genial smile.

"What can I do for you?" he asked pleasantly. "A nice rump-steak, I suppose, to cook in the study—eh?"

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"Well, no, not just now."

"Some really prime mutton-chops?"

"Oh, no!"

"I can do you some beautiful sausages very cheap to-day," said Mr. Steele, clinking his knife. "I know you young gentlemen are very fond of sausages."

"We hadn't really come for sausages, though," said John Bull. "We're looking for some advertisements."

"Some w-w-what!"

"Advertisements!"

"I—I don't quite understand."

"We're starting a new school paper," began Harry Wharton.

"And we want some ads. for the advertisement columns."

"We can do them very cheap."

"And they'll bring you a rush of custom."

The butcher laughed.

"But I serve Greyfriars already, sirs," he said, "and I don't suppose you boys will ever want very much in my line."

"H'm! You see—"

"Well, we want beefsteaks sometimes, when we get a black eye," Wharton remarked.

"Hardly enough to pay for an advertisement."

"My dear sir," said Alonzo Todd, "advertising is the soul of modern business. You cannot get good business without advertising. My Uncle Benjamin says—"

"Oh, ring off Uncle Benjamin!" said John Bull. "Look here, Mr. Steele, you'd better try us with a column advertisement. We'll display it something like this—TRY OUR RUMP-STEAKS, FRESH CUT, or LOOK AT MY CHOPS."

"My dear Bull, you are scarcely polite to Mr. Steele."

"Hey?"

"Mr. Steele certainly has a very red face," said Todd, "but to allude to it as chops is vulgar, and to incite persons to stare at it is—Yow!"

Bull stamped on the unfortunate Alonzo's foot. Mr. Steele's red face grew perceptibly redder, and some of the geniality departed from it.

"I'm afraid I can't do anything," he said quite shortly.

And the juniors retired. Outside the shop, they glared at Alonzo.

"You ass!" growled John Bull.

"You fathead!"

"My dear fellows—"

"You frabjous chump!"

"But I—I—Really, Bull, it was very disrespectful to allude to Mr. Steele's face as his chops, and to suggest looking at it—Yarrooh!"

Bull knocked Alonzo's hat over his eyes, and walked on with Wharton. Todd put his hat straight, and followed them, very much surprised.

Mr. Gunn, the hatter of Friardale, was the next person visited. Mr. Gunn did a pretty good trade with Greyfriars, and he was very civil to the juniors. Mr. Gunn had a special school topper at seven-and-sixpence, and he sold a great many of them to the Greyfriars' fellows. Silk hats frequently met with accidents at Greyfriars.

The little hatter came forward from the dim and musty regions at the back of his shop, rubbing his hands with a swishing sound, when the juniors entered.

"Yes, young gents! Yes, sirs! Nice afternoon, my dear sirs! Three new toppers, of course, at the old price. Yes, sirs."

And he began taking down handboxes.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We haven't come here for any toppers."

"Ah! School caps, I suppose. Accidents will happen, of course."

"We don't want any caps."

"No?" said Mr. Gunn. "New hat-box, eh?"

"No, thanks."

"Then—ahem—what can I do for you, young gentlemen? I suppose you really require a superior class of hat. You should try my silk topper at fifteen-and-six. No, you don't want it? Say a guinea?"

"We're not after hats at all."

"Dear me! What is it, then?"

"We want you to advertise in our school paper," said John Bull. "We'll send you an advance proof copy, so that you can see what it's like. We do whole column advertisements very reasonably."

"Oh, dear!"

"Advertising," said Alonzo, "is the soul of modern business. It is not necessary to put any quality into one's goods if one advertises to a sufficient extent. My Uncle Benjamin says—"

"Shut up, Todd!"

"My dear Wharton—"

"We can display you a splendid advertisement facing the first page," said John Bull. "Illustration of a bowler hat

by our own artist, Nugent, and something like this—IN THIS STYLE, 3s. 9d., or GUNN'S HATS ARE ON TOP!"

Mr. Gunn grinned.

"I don't know whether it would do me much good, young gents," he said.

"My dear sir, advertising is the soul of— Yow!"

"It would bring you a rush of custom," said John Bull.

"I can see the Greyfriars chaps simply tearing off, you know, to lay in a supply of Gunn's hats at three-and-nine."

"Ahem!"

"You would very likely have to enlarge your premises, and take on extra hands," said Wharton. "That would be splendid for local trade."

"H'm!"

"Moreover," said Alonzo, "under modern conditions, if you advertise sufficiently, you need not trouble to sell an article of good quality, and— Yarrah!"

The hatter rubbed his chin thoughtfully. He certainly didn't want to advertise in the school paper. But at the same time, he didn't want to displease three customers.

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do, young gents!" he exclaimed. "I'll try the advertisement in the paper—"

"Hurrah!"

"Free of charge—"

"What—"

"And I'll pay for it when the rush of business sets in," said Mr. Gunn cheerfully.

The juniors looked at one another.

"Well, you see—" said Wharton.

"You see—" said John Bull.

"My dear sir," said Alonzo, "that is not business. In cases of this kind we have the cash in advance. My Uncle Benjamin says that you should always get the money in advance in business, in case your goods are not of the quality expected. Now—"

"Coming!" called out Mr. Gunn, in answer to an imaginary call from the misty regions at the back of the shop. And he disappeared.

The three editorial youths quitted the hatter's shop in dismay.

They stood in the street to consult. They had several other tradespeople on their list, but under the circumstances, it seemed hardly worth while to go on with the canvassing.

Friardale tradespeople, as a matter of fact, seemed to be blind to the tremendous advantages offered by advertisements in the Greyfriars' school paper.

"Well?" said Harry Wharton.

"Well?" said John Bull.

"Not much good going on."

"No good."

"My Uncle Benjamin says that if at first you don't succeed, you should try, try, try again," said Alonzo Todd.

"Under the circumstances—"

"You ass! It's your fault!" said John Bull.

"My dear Bull—"

"Of course it is," said Wharton. "Todd has mucked it up every time."

"My dear Wharton—"

"Oh, bump him!"

"My dear— Oh! Ow! Yoop!"

Bull flattened Alonzo Todd's hat over his eyes. Wharton seized him by the shoulders and sat him down with a bump on the pavement. Then, somewhat relieved in their minds, in spite of their disappointment, the two juniors walked away towards Greyfriars.

They left Alonzo Todd sitting on the pavement, blinking, and surrounded by a spirited and highly-interested concourse of the youth of Friardale.

"Dear me!" gasped Alonzo. "How very rough! My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked at this—nay, disgusted."

And Alonzo Todd picked himself up and toddled after Wharton and Bull; but he took care to keep out of their reach until they arrived at Greyfriars. He did not know whether that unaccountable disposition to violence might not seize upon them again.

And Alonzo Todd followed the clumps at a cautious distance till they passed in at the school gates, and then he followed them in slowly. As he entered, a heavy hand clapped him upon the shoulder, and he jumped back.

"Hallo, Todd!"

"My dear Bulstrode!" exclaimed Todd, in great relief. "It is you! I feared that it was Wharton, who had just treated me in the lane with extraordinary and unaccountable violence. I—"

"You're just the fellow I wanted to see!" exclaimed Bulstrode.

"Then how fortunate that you met me as I came in," said Todd simply.

It did not cross the mind of the Duffer of Greyfriars that Bulstrode had been waiting in the gateway specially for him.

"Yes," said Bulstrode. "Come on."

"But what—"

"I'll explain. Come to my study."

"Oh, certainly, my dear Bulstrode."

And Alonzo Todd walked into the house with Bulstrode.

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NEXT WEEK: "THE RIVAL WEEKLY."

EVERY
TUESDAY.

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Alonzo Is Ready to Oblige.

SKINNER, of the Remove, was in Bulstrode's study when he ushered Alonzo in. Skinner rose to his feet, and bowed very politely to Alonzo. The Duffer of Greyfriars bowed back to Skinner with a beaming smile.

Todd's Uncle Benjamin had always impressed upon him to be very polite, but Todd had found Remove manners at Greyfriars very far below the standard set by his Uncle Benjamin. He was very pleased indeed to receive that polite bow from Skinner.

"Here you are!" said Skinner.

"Yes, certainly," said Alonzo Todd cheerfully. "What is it you want, Bulstrode?"

"We want your aid in standing the fellows a treat," said Bulstrode seriously. "Skinner and I have been talking it over, and we've come to the conclusion that you are the very fellow for such an occasion."

"That's it," said Skinner.

"My dear Bulstrode—"

"Not a word, Todd. You're the fellow. You owe it to your Uncle Benjamin, I know. I never had an Uncle Benjamin," said Bulstrode sadly, "and I know that my manners are not what they might be, Todd."

"Quite so," agreed Skinner.

Bulstrode glared at him.

"You can shut up, Skinner!" he growled.

"But Skinner is right," said Todd simply. "Your manners certainly are lacking in polish, Bulstrode, but I should be the last to blame you, for, as you say, you never had the inestimable advantage of being brought up by a thoroughly respectable and painstaking gentleman like my Uncle Benjamin. I feel for you, Bulstrode, and I should not think of judging your shortcomings too severely."

Bulstrode turned red.

Alonzo Todd was in great danger that moment of suffering a severe concussion on the nose, as he would have called it in his language. But Bulstrode restrained himself. He had not brought Alonzo Todd there to punch his nose.

"You know John Bull is starting a school paper?" he remarked.

"Yes, indeed. I am the sub-editor."

"Oh, my hat—I mean, they couldn't have a better sub-editor," said Bulstrode hastily. "Now, our idea is, to stand a feed to celebrate the occasion."

"That is really a very generous thought, Bulstrode."

"My dear chap, my intention is to be generous," said Bulstrode. "But instead of standing the feed among the Remove, I was thinking of asking the Upper Fourth chaps, and some of the Fifth, and some of the prefects—making it a regular stunning affair, you know. Now, we want a really graceful and well-mannered chap at a feed like that, to help us keep up appearances, you know. You'll come?"

"My dear Bulstrode, you flatter me."

"Not at all. You'll come?"

"Oh, certainly. I shall be delighted. I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would be delighted, too, to hear an invitation to me couched in such terms."

"Then it's settled," said Bulstrode, looking at Skinner. "We can count on Alonzo. So long as we are sure of him, it doesn't matter much who disappoints us."

"Not at all," agreed Skinner.

"I've got a list of the guests here," said Bulstrode. "I was thinking of Loder and Carne, of the Sixth, and Blundell and Bland, of the Fifth, and Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth."

"Good!" said Skinner.

"Skinner and I will get the grub in, and prepare the tea," said Bulstrode. "We thought that you might go round and ask the fellows, Todd."

"With pleasure, my dear Bulstrode."

"You are sure you don't mind the trouble?" asked Bulstrode, with an amount of consideration that would have aroused the suspicions of anybody but the Duffer of Greyfriars. But Alonzo Todd never suspected anybody or anything.

"Quite sure, Bulstrode. I shall be delighted!"

"You can tell them now how the feed will be," said Bulstrode. "Ham and eggs to begin with, and cold chicken, and mince-pies."

"How nice!" said Alonzo.

"Then there will be a Christmas-pudding, that Skinner has just had sent by his—his Uncle William—a really ripping Christmas-pudding, isn't it, Skinner?"

"What-ho!" said Skinner.

"Then there will be several pots of home-made jam, sent to me by my Aunt Georgiana," said Bulstrode. "My Aunt Georgiana makes ripping jam!"

"It's splendid!" said Skinner.

"And a hundred of Mrs. Mumble's best tarts."

"How very nice!"

"I say, you fellows——"

The juniors swung round to see a fat face with large spectacles blinking in at the door.

"Get out!" rapped out Bulstrode angrily.

Billy Bunter did not stir.

"I say, you fellows, I don't mind coming to the feed," he said. "Look here, I'll cook the eggs for you, if you like!"

"Get out!" roared Bulstrode.

"Oh, really, Bulstrode——"

"Buzz off, you fat bounder!"

"Look here, I'm willing to do the cooking. Then I suppose you'll have the mince-pies warmed up," said Bunter. "I'm a dab at warming up mince-pies. Have you got the things here?"

Bulstrode snapped his teeth. As there were no preparations at all for a feed, and Bulstrode did not intend to make any, Bunter might have given the whole show away to Alonzo by his awkward inquiries.

Bulstrode reached for a ruler.

"I—I say, Bulstrode——"

"Buzz off, you fat toad!"

Bunter blinked at him, watching the ruler warily.

"Look here, Bulstrode; considering how I've always stood your friend, I think you might ask a chap—— Oh!"

Crash!

The ruler crashed on the door, and Billy Bunter dodged into the passage and fled.

"Yaroo!"

Fisher T. Fish was coming along the corridor. The fat junior had rushed right into him. The slim American junior was not of a weight to stand a charge from Billy Bunter. He went simply flying.

"Oh!" he roared. "Great snakes! Whoop!"

"Yaroo!"

Fisher T. Fish rolled on the floor, and Bunter rolled over him. Bulstrode looked out of the doorway of his study and roared with laughter.

"Ow!" groaned Bunter. "Groo! I—I'm injured."

Fisher T. Fish picked himself up slowly.

"I guess you're going to be more injured, some," he remarked.

"Groo! Yow!"

Biff, biff, biff!

Fisher T. Fish's boots came into active play upon the ample person of the Owl of the Remove. Bunter roared.

"Ow! Yow! Yah! Stop! Chuck it! Yaroo!"

He rolled along the passage, and picked himself up, and bolted. Fisher T. Fish charged after him, kicking briskly, and they disappeared down the passage amid a wild uproar. Bulstrode chuckled and came back into the study.

"My dear Bulstrode," said Alonzo Todd. "I trust Bunter has not been hurt."

"Oh, blow Bunter!" said Bulstrode carelessly. "Now, about the feed. It will be a bit too big to give in the study here, I think, and as I have old Quelch's permission to use the Form-room——"

"Have you really, Bulstrode?"

"Certainly! I am going to hold the feed there. Now, it may take us some time to get in the grub, Alonzo, and to do all the necessary cooking, and so on. Can we depend upon you to take those invitations round, and to receive the guests in the Form-room as soon as they arrive, if we should not happen to be quite ready?"

"Oh, certainly, my dear Bulstrode!"

"We'll wire in, and get the grub ready," said Bulstrode.

"Of course, it will take some time, for such a jolly big feed."

"Yes, I have no doubt it will."

"In the Form-room at seven, then," said Bulstrode. "You had better get there at a quarter-to-seven, to make all sure."

"I will certainly be there at a quarter-to-seven, my dear Bulstrode. My Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me to be punctual, as procrastination is the purloiner of time. It is better to be too early than too late, Bulstrode, for it is the early bird that effects the capture of the worm, as my Uncle Benjamin has observed to me."

"Quite right, Todd! Of course, you'll put it carefully to the fellows, and make them understand that it's a real, splendid, first-class bust-up!"

"Oh, certainly!"

"Then I think you may as well buzz off now, Todd, if you're going to be so kind. We'll buck up at once with getting the feed ready."

"I will not lose a moment, my dear Bulstrode."

And the Duffer of Greyfriars quitted the study. Bulstrode and Skinner contained themselves until the door had closed behind the obliging Alonzo. Then they burst into a wild yell of laughter that might have been heard at the end of the passage.

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THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Kind Invitations.

ALONZO TODD started on his errand with a beaming smile on his face. He turned it over in his mind as to who he should call on first as he went. He decided in favour of Loder. There were other Sixth-Formers that he liked better.

"But Loder is sometimes not nice to me," thought Alonzo. "And when he finds out that I called on him first, he is sure to be much nicer to me in future."

And in a few minutes Alonzo Todd stood outside the prefect's study door. He knocked.

"Come in!" shouted Loder testily.

Alonzo entered timidly. Loder was reading a paper at his desk.

"Oh," he said, hastily cramming the paper into a drawer, it's you, is it? What's the row?"

"Row, Loder?" asked Alonzo hesitatingly. "I'm not aware of any disturbance within the precincts of the school at the present moment, Loder. And if you will be so kind——"

"Oh, cut that, and get on!" snapped Loder. "Can't you see I'm busy, you young idiot!"

"Oh, I'm so sorry, Loder——"

Loder interrupted Alonzo again, with a gesture of impatience.

"You will be very sorry, if you don't get on," he said harshly. "Come on. Out with your business!"

"Business, Loder?" asked poor Alonzo, utterly mystified. "I have no business. My Uncle Benjamin told me to have nothing to do with business. He said it is the medium through which the best of people usually get some taint in their morals, let alone those who are generally alluded to as outsiders——"

Alonzo dried up of his own accord. Loder's stare of bewilderment could not be borne any longer. The prefect continued to regard the Duffer of Greyfriars for a least a minute, leaning back in his chair with his hands in his pockets.

"Well, ass?" he said at length. "Go on. I suppose the only way to get at your meaning is to let you go on long enough. But take warning. I shall use my boots off you if you don't get it off your chest in one minute. What the dickens did you come to my study for?"

"Oh," said Alonzo, "we understand one another quite well when you speak plainly. But it isn't business," went on the Duffer of Greyfriars, with an angelic smile.

"What!" roared Loder, leaping from his chair.

Alonzo was terrified. He had never seen Loder look quite so furious as this.

"Oh, pray, Loder!" he said. "Please not to be alarmed. But I meant to give you to understand that I come about a pleasure——"

"Out with it!" shouted the angry prefect.

"It's a convivial gathering of commendable proportions, Loder," said Alonzo. "And it's at seven this evening in the Remove Form-room."

Loder stared.

"I am doing the honours, you see, Loder. At the fellows' request, I am bound to say, as I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would advise me to do. There will be plenty of comestibles, Loder, and I come to request the pleasure of your company?"

Loder was simply speechless for a minute. Then he burst out laughing. But he was not above a Remove feed.

"You're the funniest kid on the earth, Todd," he said, in the gentlest tone Alonzo had ever got from him. "I will come with pleasure. But see that you do me well. Now, trot off!"

"Thank you, Loder!" said Alonzo. "You may rest assured——"

But Loder did not want to rest assured. He had a paper to read, and Alonzo found himself in the passage outside, in a sitting position, sooner than he expected. Picking himself up it dawned on the Duffer of Greyfriars that he had really taken up a lot of Loder's time, and he trotted off to find Carne.

Pausing outside that gentleman's door, he thought out a new plan of procedure. He would not waste Carne's time. The idea that Carne might have something to say about that never occurred to Alonzo. He went in.

"Will you come, Carne?" he said, in his blandest tones.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Carne. "Will I come where, you jay?"

"Oh, I'm so sorry, Carne! I'd quite forgotten that. It's to the Remove Form-room, at seven this evening——"

"Feed?" asked Carne brusquely.

Alonzo nodded in the affirmative.

"Right-ho!" went on Carne, taking up a pen. "I'd better give you a little list of things I like. You'll want to do it well, of course, and if you'll take my tip, this will save you being scalped if you get things like what I put down here. The chaps are awfully particular, you know."

And Carne proceeded to write down the things he would prefer to have put before him at Alonzo's feed. Alonzo was very doubtful as to which way he ought to treat a prefect under such circumstances. He had invited Carne, to be sure. But this was his first experience of a guest who "drew up a schedule of entertainment" before he accepted an invitation.

Alonzo coughed. But Carne took no notice. Then Alonzo took the bull by the horns.

"I am afraid I cannot wait for that, Carne," he said mildly. "I have other fellows to call on, and if you don't let me go now, I'm of opinion that the feed might be spoiled through an insufficiency of time for our preparations—"

"Here you are, then, Todd—it's finished. Buzz off!"

"Thank you so much, my dear Carne!"

And Alonzo "buzzed." He had resolved on Blundell and Bland of the Fifth for his next call. They were not "at home." But Alonzo Todd was equal to the occasion. He left a polite note on the table. Incidentally, it read that Blundell and Bland were invited to a "Form" in the "feed-room."

But the Duffer of Greyfriars was well pleased with himself. His next mission was to Temple, Dabney, and Fry, of the Upper Fourth. Their gaping study door revealed that they, too, were not within the parent fold. Alonzo was on the point of leaving them a note, when the idea of delivering the message orally appealed to him as advisable in their case. And after much trouble and misdirection by "funny people" and others, Alonzo at last came upon Temple, Dabney, and Fry in the Close.

"How do you do, Temple, Fry, and Dabney?" said Alonzo politely. "You will come, of course."

Temple, Dabney & Co. were merely slacking about when Alonzo appeared round the corner; but when his still small voice awoke the echoes of the Close, they were all alert for fun.

"Will we come?" said Temple.

"I take it that you mean where the feed is to be, Temple, Dabney, and Fry?" said Alonzo simply.

The grins on Temple, Dabney & Co.'s faces changed to broadest smiles of satisfaction. A feed was distinctly a new role for Alonzo Todd. In a trice their position with regard to Alonzo Todd was what cricketers sometimes call "a close field."

"What time?" said Fry.

Alonzo specified the hour of the spread once more. Dabney grasped his hand in deep, silent satisfaction. Temple said he would come with the greatest pleasure. Fry said he would kiss Alonzo on his lily brow.

"I appreciate your expressions of esteem, I assure you, Fry," said Alonzo; "but my Uncle Benjamin told me that it is not manly for boys to kiss one another."

"Oh, no offence, Todd, really!" said the three.

And they sped Alonzo on his way, rejoicing his simple heart very much by their lavish laying of hands upon his shoulders as they did so.

"Oh, thank you so much, you fellows!" he said. "I think it will be a very nice evening."

And it was. Punctually at a quarter to seven, Alonzo Todd was waiting to receive the guests in the Remove Form-Room. There was not the least sign of a feed, or any preparation for the same. Alonzo had supposed that Bulstrode would look after all that. Bulstrode would be sure to come at seven o'clock, and he would, of course, bring everything with him. And the Duffer of Greyfriars sat down to wait.

"Here he is!" said Alonzo, as he heard the sound of approaching footsteps a few minutes later. I'm so glad! It's really nice of him to save me all possible embarrassment!"

But it was Temple, Dabney and Fry who came in. They looked very blankly round the room. Temple noted that there wasn't even a fire lighted. Dabney asked what the game was. Fry put it bluntly to Alonzo, in demanding grub at once, with promises and dire threats attached to non-fulfilment of contract. But Alonzo managed to stave off the evil hour, so to put it.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, you fellows!" he said. "But Bulstrode has not yet arrived with the provisions. But he'll be here in a minute. Oh, I'm so sorry! Pray sit down!"

Temple, Dabney & Co. sat down, grumblingly. It was lucky for Alonzo they came in first.

Hardly had they sat down to wait, when Blundell and Bland burst into the room. Blundell was holding Alonzo's note. He made straight for Alonzo.

"What d'you mean by writing your rotten jokes on us like this?" he demanded, waving the paper in front of Alonzo. "If you haven't got a satisfactory answer we're going to skin you!"

Loder came into the room.

"Where's the feed?" he demanded.

Alonzo began to have doubts about Bulstrode.

"If you don't mind, Loder," he said, "I'll attend to Blundell first—"

"No you won't!" said Loder. "But I will. What's the row?" he continued, turning to the two Fifth-Formers.

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ONE
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"Oh, it doesn't matter, Loder, thank you!" said Bland, apologetically.

"Your mistake!" said Loder, sarcastically. "Hand over the paper you were making such a fuss about, Blundell!"

Blundell coloured. But he had nothing else to do but give the note to a prefect. And Loder smiled as he read the note, nodding to Carne, who arrived on the moment.

"Todd's been inviting Blundell and Bland to a form in the feed-room," he said, winking at the other Sixth-Former.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blundell and Bland snorted.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, Blundell and Bland!" began Alonzo.

"Where's the feed?" said Loder tersely. "Never mind them! What's this?"

Alonzo looked scared as he followed Loder's arm as it swept round the room.

"But it's all right, I assure you, Loder!" he said, in his most encouraging tone. "Bulstrode will be here presently. Won't you sit down?"

Loder and Carne exchanged glances. Blundell glared at Alonzo. Temple, Dabney, and Fry looked like Patience on a monument. Reluctantly the two prefects sat down. They waited in silence. But there was no sign of Bulstrode. After another ten minutes, dark looks were cast at Alonzo Todd. But that unfortunate youth needed no reminders of his predicament. He mildly suggested that they gave Bulstrode another ten, which would make it half-past seven. There was a growl for response, and the clock ticked off "doom" for Alonzo Todd. Half-past seven struck. Then Alonzo precipitated the end.

"If you don't mind, Loder, I think I had better go and find Bulstrode!" he said.

For answer, Loder and Carne, with Blundell and Bland, approached Alonzo in a deadly, deliberate fashion.

Alonzo made for the door. But it was no use. Temple, Dabney, and Fry held it shut.

"It's a jape!" exclaimed Bland.

"Sold!" said Fry.

"Collar him!"

Not in the least needing Blundell's recommendation, Carne laid hold of Alonzo by the collar.

Then, in common parlance, Alonzo Todd "went through it."

"Really, you fellows," he said, "it is not my fault! Bulstrode has played me false!"

But all his expostulation could not save his head from being vigorously rolled in the ashes of the grate.

"Ow!" yelled poor Alonzo. "Loder, as a prefect, I appeal to you—"

Alonzo did not get any further. Loder and Carne were not hindering the others from bringing Alonzo to book now, and Blundell's heart was rejoiced in emptying a large bottle of ink all over Alonzo Todd. The Duffer of Greyfriars gasped and spluttered, but down into the ashes he went again.

Carne rolled Alonzo unmercifully. Temple added a bottle of red ink over the Duffer, and Alonzo spluttered.

But even Loder at last stepped in. Alonzo was roaring like a bull, and Carne was dragged off.

The Duffer of Greyfriars staggered to his feet. He was one mass of soot, and ink, and ashes.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Oh! Ow!"

And Alonzo, looking very much like a victim who has escaped a cannibal's cooking-pot, made a wild rush for the door and disappeared from view.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER. The Japers Japed.

MY only hat!"

"What's that?"

"Great Scott!"

"The great Scottfulness is terrific!"

The editorial staff of "John Bull Junior's Weekly" were busily engaged in the editorial office—Study No. 14 in the Remove.

John Bull was penning the leading article for the first number; Frank Nugent was drawing the picture for the title-page; Bob Cherry was jotting down football notes; Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was writing a romantic story of adventures in India, in the most fearful and wonderful English; Mark Linley was doing the article on the Greek tragedy that was to paralyse the Sixth-Formers when they saw "John Bull's Weekly." The whole staff were busy, and deeply engrossed in their business, when the door was flung open, and a wild figure dashed into the study.

The editorial staff of "John Bull's Weekly" started up in alarm.

"What on earth——"

"Who is it?"

"The wild man from Borneo!"

"Ow!" gasped the wild figure. "Yow! Yaroo!"

"Alonzo!"

Alonzo Todd sank into a chair and gasped.

The juniors stared at him, their alarm changing to merriment. Alonzo certainly presented a most alarming figure. He was smothered with soot, and ashes, and ink, and his clothes were sooty, and dirty, and torn. His collar was gone, and half his buttons were missing, and his face was unrecognisable under ink and ashes.

He sat in the chair and pumped in breath.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the editorial staff.

"My dear fellows——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I have been treated in a manner that would shock and disgust my Uncle Benjamin!" exclaimed Alonzo.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is really no subject for laughter. Bulstrode must have been deliberately deceiving me! After getting me to invite a number of fellows to a feed in the Form-room, he failed to appear, and they were naturally very annoyed!"

The juniors yelled. They began to understand the jape, of which the unfortunate Duffer of Greyfriars had been a victim.

"There was no feed, and I was treated most rudely and disrespectfully!" panted Alonzo. "I fear that my clothes are seriously damaged."

"They look it! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am feeling very untidy and dirty!"

"Ha, ha! You look that, too!"

"Oh, dear! What would my Uncle Benjamin say?" gasped Alonzo.

"I expect he would yell!" said Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Cherry——"

The juniors shrieked. There was a yell of laughter from the passage, and Bulstrode and Skinner looked in at the open doorway. At the sight of Alonzo Todd in his fearful disarray they shrieked.

"Alonzo, here?" gasped Bulstrode. "Oh, there he is! We wanted to see him! Ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!" shrieked Skinner.

"My dear fellows—— Groo!"

Alonzo spat out ashes and ink.

"Ha, ha, ha! Was the feed a success?" roared Bulstrode.

"Did the fellows enjoy it?" shrieked Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was rather rough on Todd, though," said Harry Wharton.

Bulstrode snorted.

"Oh, Todd's fair game!" he exclaimed. "Blow Todd!"

"My dear Bulstrode, you are a most untruthful person!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked—nay, disgusted!"

"Oh, my hat! Hold me! Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode clung to the doorpost, gasping with laughter. Skinner doubled up in the doorway. Bob Cherry stepped quickly out into the passage, and with a sudden shove sent both the practical jokers staggering into the study.

"Collar them!" he shouted. "If it's so funny to rag Alonzo, let them have some of the fun. We mustn't encourage Alonzo to be greedy."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the editorial staff.

They collared Bulstrode and Skinner in a twinkling. The two humorists of the Remove left off laughing at once. They guessed the intentions of the Chums of the Remove, and they did not want to be brought into contact with Alonzo in his present terrible state.

"Hold on!" roared Bulstrode, struggling furiously.

"All serene—we're holding on!"

"Yow! I mean let go! Leggo!"

"You can't have it both ways!" grinned John Bull.

"We'll hold on!"

"Yow! Leggo!" yelled Skinner.

"Rats!"

"Lemme go! I—— Yah!"

"Hold him!"

"We've got him!"

"Come here, Alonzo!" shouted Wharton. "Come on—this way!"

"My dear Wharton——"

"Oh, come on, you ass!"

Harry Wharton seized Alonzo by the shoulders and rushed him up to Bulstrode.

Bulstrode was rolled on the carpet, and Alonzo Todd was rolled over him.

A considerable quantity of the ink, and soot, and ashes

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adhering to Alonzo was immediately transferred to the burly Removite.

Bulstrode roared and struggled; but the odds were too great. He had to go through it, and he did!

"Go it!" roared Bob Cherry. "Skinner's turn now!"

"Yah!" roared Skinner. "Stop it! Yow! Yaroop!"

"Roll him over!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner was rolled on Alonzo. He struggled frantically, but without avail. He was rolled and rubbed on Alonzo till he was in as terrible a state as the Duffer of Greyfriars himself. Then the juniors, shrieking with laughter, released him.

Bulstrode and Skinner staggered to their feet. They looked as wild and unkempt and inky and ashy as Alonzo.

"You cads!" roared Bulstrode.

"Yow! You beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode, too furious to care for the odds, made a wild rush at the editorial staff of "John Bull's Weekly."

He was promptly collared by half a dozen pairs of hands and hurled forth from the study. He slid wildly along the linoleum for five or six yards before he stopped.

"Now for Skinner!" shouted Bob Cherry.

But Skinner was wiser in his generation. He bolted.

Bulstrode picked himself up in the passage, and came charging back into the study. The juniors lined up to receive him, and he was hurled forth again.

This time he stayed outside!

He limped away painfully down the passage, and as he went he was followed by a yell of laughter from the editorial office of "John Bull's Weekly." Then the door was slammed.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

One for Nugent!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The editorial staff of the "Weekly" yelled with laughter. Even Alonzo Todd had to join in it. John Bull was the first to come back to business. He seated himself at the table, and took up his pen.

"Work!" he said.

And the sub-editors followed his example.

"Dear me!" said Alonzo Todd. "I see you are at work, my dear fellows. Perhaps I had better go and get some of this cleaned off before I join you."

"Perhaps you had!" grinned Wharton.

"The porphapsfulness is terrific."

"You had better leave off till I come back," Todd suggested. "You see, you will hardly be able to manage it without my assistance, and——"

"Scat!"

"Buzz off!"

"My dear fellows——"

Harry Wharton opened the door. Bob Cherry picked up an inkpot. Alonzo took the hint. He had had some painful experiences with that inkpot already.

The Duffer of Greyfriars departed, and Wharton closed the door. He sat down at the table again and dipped his pen in the ink.

"We shall jolly soon have plenty of copy for the first number," he remarked. "How much have you had sent in by the fellows, Bull?"

John Bull grinned.

"About a ton!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Any good?"

"Some of it—not much. Outside contributors aren't much class, you know. But we'll do what we can for them. One thing's certain—the paper will go with a swing. All the fellows in the Form are anxious to see the first copy."

The door opened.

"Go away!" roared Wharton, thinking that it was Alonzo Todd returning. "Buzz off! We're fed up with you! Scatter!"

"Who's as mad as a hatter?" demanded Dutton, the deaf junior of Greyfriars, coming into the room with a very red face.

Wharton looked round.

"Oh, sorry! I thought you were Todd!" he explained.

Dutton snorted.

"Oh, you thought I was odd, did you? If you think a fellow's odd because he's slightly deaf you're a silly fathead, that's all!"

"I didn't say you were odd——"

"Eh? Fishing for cod? Don't talk rot!"

"My hat! Look here, Dutton——"

"Me! I'm not a butcher."

"Eh?"

"I've not got any mutton."

"Who's talking about mutton?" ejaculated Wharton. "Look here, what do you want? I'm sorry you're deaf, but my constitution's not strong enough for a conversation with you. What have you come for?"

"I hear you're starting a school paper here," said Dutton.

"It's about the only thing you could hear, then. We're starting a school paper, all right. Good-bye!"

"Eh?"

"Good-bye!" roared Wharton.

"Which eye?" asked Dutton.

"Oh dear!"

"And I can't feel it, anyway. I don't see how I could have something in my eye without feeling it there," said the deaf junior suspiciously.

Harry Wharton groaned. He was sorry for Dutton's affliction, and he would not have made fun of the deaf junior for worlds. But Dutton certainly was trying.

"However, never mind my eye," said Dutton. "Let's come to business. You seem to be starting a school paper here. And I suppose you want contributions?"

"That depends on the contributions."

"Eh?"

"That depends on the contributions!" bawled Wharton.

"Speak a little clearer. Not louder—clearer."

"Oh, blow! Look here, Bull, you're editor—you talk to him!"

"You're chief sub-editor——"

"I'm jolly well not going to usurp the place of my chief! You talk to him!"

"Stuff! As chief editor, I order you to."

"Bosh! As sub-editor, I decline!"

"Look here, Wharton——"

"Look here, Bull——"

"I'm waiting for some of you dummies to speak," said Dutton. "Can't you talk? Is this a giddy Quakers' meeting—or what?"

The juniors could not help grinning. Wharton and Bull had been shouting at each other, but Dutton, apparently, had not heard them.

"Look here, you cut!" shouted Frank Nugent.

"Eh?"

"Buzz off!"

"Who's a toff?"

"My hat! Clear out! Vamoose—bunk—git—absquatulate!"

"I'm not too late! Rot!"

"Oh dear! You try him, Bob!"

"We don't want any contributions, Dutton," roared Bob Cherry. "We've got too many already. We're fed up with copy."

"I don't know whether I could write a poem about a poppy," said Dutton. "Still, I'll try, if you think it would do for the paper. I'm willing to write anything that the editor considers suitable, of course. I'm not one of those writers who want to run the paper."

"We don't want any poems!" shrieked Wharton.

"Eh?"

"No poems wanted!"

"Take what for granted?"

"Oh, my hat! Kill him, somebody!"

"I'll try the subject, as you seem set on it," said Dutton.

"Blessed if I know what I shall write about a poppy, but I'll see if I can think of something."

"We don't want you to."

"Eh?"

"Oh, get out!"

"I don't want you to shout. Just speak clearly, and I can hear all right. I'm not deaf—just a little hard of hearing."

"Go away!"

"Eh?"

"Go away!"

"What did I say? I said I wasn't deaf, and that it wasn't necessary to shout. Just speak clearly, and enunciate what you say—that's all that's necessary. I hate to see silly chumps shouting at me as if I were deaf. Eh?"

"Buzz off! Get out! Go away! Clear!"

"Beer? Of course not! I'll have some tea if you've got any going."

The juniors looked at one another helplessly.

"And about that poem," said Dutton. "I dare say I can manage a poem on a poppy, as you seem to think it's the thing; though I'm blessed if I think the fellows will read it. How long do you want it?"

"Not at all!"

"I shan't scrawl; you needn't tell me that. My writing will be as plain as yours, anyway, for the printer. I asked you how long you wanted the poem."

"We don't want it!"

"Eh?"

"All together," gasped Harry Wharton. "You take bass, Bob, and I'll take tenor. And you other chaps put in where you can. Now, when I raise my hand."

"Right you are!"

"Go!"

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WEEK

"THE RIVAL WEEKLY."

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ONE
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Wharton raised his hand as if he were conducting a choir. From all the juniors burst a simultaneous yell:

"Get out!"

"Eh?"

"We don't want any copy!"

"Eh?"

"Get out of this study!"

"Who's muddy?"

"Clear! Bunk! Slide!"

"I'd like to see you take it out of my hide!" said Dutton, looking warlike. "I don't care whether I do that poem about a poppy or not; but I'm not having any of your cheek. Understand that! You're not going to take a rise out of me."

"Oh, my only hat! This chap will be the death of me!" said Nugent.

"Yell in his ear."

"Oh, all right!"

Nugent approached Dutton, and leaned towards him. The deaf junior watched him in surprise. Nugent leaned over to bring his mouth close to Dutton's ear.

"We don't want any copy!" he shrieked. "When we want it we'll ask for it. Will you oblige us by clearing out?"

Biff!

"Yow!"

Nugent rolled on the study floor. Dutton's fist had caught him on the nose, and he had sat down with a sudden shock.

"Yaroooh! Yah! Ow!" roared Nugent, holding his nose.

"Br-r-r! By dose iz squashed! Oh!"

Dutton glared down at him.

"I'll teach you to call me a beery lout!" he exclaimed wrathfully. "I jolly well won't do the poem for you at all now, so there!"

And he stamped out of the study and slammed the door.

The juniors burst into a yell of laughter. There was no fear of Dutton hearing it.

Nugent staggered up, clasping his nose. He dabbed it with his handkerchief, and the handkerchief came away red.

"Ow!" gasped Nugent. "By dose! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared. But Nugent did not join in the merriment. He dabbed his nose.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter's Original Poem!

HOW are you getting on with your story, Inky?"

The Nabob of Bhanipur looked up with his quiet, patient, good-tempered smile. He had been writing away busily for a long time, sticking to his task as if it were an impot he had to get finished before he could go out.

"Famously!" he replied.

"What's it called?"

"The Adventures of an Esteemed Sahib."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is not a comic story," said Hurree Singh. "I have also written it in the esteemed English, as I fear that the boys would not understandfully comprehend the honourable Hindustani, and besides, it would be difficult to print it without possessing the Nagari characters, which moreoverfully would not be comprehended by the honourable printer. Hencefully it is written in the august English, the honourable language of your great poet Shakespeare, and the esteemed comic writer, Darwin."

The juniors yelled. They had never read Darwin, it is true; but they had never heard him spoken of as a comic writer before. But Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's views of English literature were almost as weird and wonderful as his pronunciation of the English language.

"I will readfully say over the beginningfulness," said the nabob. "I have changefully altered it from the first copy. I open with a description of the city of Notzobad. Hear!" And the nabob read: "In the deep and duskful evening, when shadowfully of death the mighty clouds descended, there was honourable stillness. The great city of Notzobad lay buryfully calm in the honourable bosom of the night. No sound brokefully pealed upon the venerable stillness, save the roundful tread of the sentinel of honourable John Company on the gunful rampart."

"Good!" said Wharton faintly. "Did you say it wasn't comic?"

"Not at allfully, my worthy chum."

"Well, I expect the readers will hold a different opinion. Is there much of it?"

"I have written only about twenty thousand words so far, altogetherfully."

"Ahem! That will last us ten years or so as a serial," John Bull remarked. "Now, what have you done, Bok?"

"Report of a footer match, and——"

"I guess I could do that," said Fisher T. Fish, coming into the study. "Yep! You can leave your reporting to me. Yes, sir."

"Rats! You can do a column of American news," said John Bull. "Latest mysteries of Chicago packing-houses, and that sort of thing. Startling discovery of missing fingers in Chicago beef-tins, and——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess——"

"Then I'm doing a rowing report," said Bob Cherry calmly. "Full report how a champion American oarsman rowed against the current on the Sark, with the boat roped to a post in the river."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors yelled, and even Fisher T. Fish turned pink. In spite of his coolness and his sublime swank, Fisher T. Fish had not quite got over that little experience on the river. The juniors never referred to it without yells of laughter.

"Oh, ring off!" growled Fish. "Nuff's as good as a feast, I guess."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Say, if you want any American copy, I'll put it in, first chop," said Fisher T. Fish, taking a seat at the table. "What do you say to a story of New York? I knew a man in New York who——"

"Order! No tall stories now," said Harry Wharton. "We're busy. There's paper and ink—write, and don't jaw! That's the law of the editorial office. How's the picture getting on, Frank?"

"First rate," said Frank Nugent, looking up from the sheet of cardboard he was engaged upon with a pencil. "Portrait of John Bull, editor, for the cover. It will be ripping. I've made it good-looking, but in other respects it's very like our editor."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Get out, Bunter!" roared the whole editorial staff with one voice.

"Oh, really, you know——"

"Can't you see we're busy?"

Billy Bunter blinked at the busy staff. He did not budge from the doorway. Billy Bunter had come there on business.

"You see, you fellows, I'm willing to help you out with the paper," he explained. "I know you will be putting a lot of piffle into it, and I'm willing to give you some really decent stuff."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Piffle! Get out!"

"I say, you fellows, you'd better listen while I read some. I'm willing to do it at a guinea a column."

"What?"

"A guinea a column! Of course, that's dirt cheap——"

"No payment for contributions, especially rotten ones," said John Bull sententiously. "Get out, Bunter. Shut the door after you."

"Look here, this is jolly good, and it's entirely original, from start to finish," said Billy Bunter. "You'd better let me read it out to you. You don't often get a chance to read a thing like this, you know."

"Ass! Buzz off!"

"I say, you fellows, you might give me a chance. A splendid poem like this isn't to be had for the asking, as a rule."

"Poetry is barred."

"But this is an extra special one," urged Bunter. "Look here, I'll let you have it for nothing if you'll publish it, and put my name in a prominent place. You might listen to a few lines, anyway. Don't be a cad."

"Oh, go ahead!" said John Bull resignedly.

Billy Bunter opened a scrawled mass of foolscap, and began to read out in a jerky voice, blinking all the time through his big glasses.

"Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn——"

"My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, in surprise. "That runs off very well! Did you write that, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Did you write it, you ass? It seems to sound familiar."

"Of course I wrote it. I hope you wouldn't be suspicious enough to think I would pass off another fellow's work as mine?" said Bunter indignantly.

"Well, I should think that even you would be hardly mean enough for that," assented Wharton. "But get on with the washing."

Billy Bunter continued:

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

"Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn."

"That's all right."

"Get on, Bunter."

Billy Bunter grunted and continued:

"'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old the curlews call,

Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall——"

Harry Wharton jumped up.

"Locksley Hall!" he shouted.

"Oh, really, you're interrupting me, you know, and——"

"You fat spoofer!"

"I—I say, you know——"

"Locksley Hall!" shrieked Wharton. "No wonder the blessed lines sounded familiar! He's copied out Tennyson's 'Locksley Hall!'"

"My hat!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

Harry Wharton made a grasp at Bunter's manuscript. He jerked it away from the fat junior, and glanced at it.

"Yes," he shouted, "here it is—all the rest of it!"

"In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove;
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love!"

"My hat! He was going to try and palm that off on us as original."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The spoofer!"

"The fat fibber!"

"I—I say, you fellows," stammered Bunter. "You—you see, there may be some slight resemblance between my work and Tennyson's, b-b-but you've heard about great minds running in grooves, you know, and——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Slight resemblance! You've got the thing word for word, you fat spoofer!"

"I—I really wrote that poem some time ago. Tennyson may have seen it and—and plagiarised, you know," said Bunter feebly.

The juniors yelled.

"I—I say, you fellows, it's really original, and——"

"Well, my hat! I guess that fat boulder takes the cake!" said Fisher T. Fish. "If we had a guy like that over there, we'd scalp him!"

Harry Wharton grasped the fat junior and whirled him into the study. Bunter gasped, and rolled into John Bull. Bull gave him a push, and he sat down.

"Oh, really, you fellows!" he gasped.

"Make him eat it!" said Nugent.

"Good egg! Eat it, you fat boulder?"

"Oh, really——"

Wharton crumpled up the manuscript, with a determined expression upon his face. Billy Bunter watched him apprehensively.

"Now, you plagiarising swindler, you'll own up you stole this, or you'll eat it," said Harry Wharton grimly. "Which do you prefer?"

"I—I say, it—it was a j-j-joke, of course."

"Oh, it was a j-j-joke, was it?"

"I—I was going to tell you, of course," said Bunter, trying to grin. "It—it was only a jape, you know."

"What is the punishment for trying to pass off plagiarised stuff on the editor?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Death!" said John Bull solemnly. "Hold him while I get the chopper!"

In a second Billy Bunter was outside the study, and the door had slammed, and the fat junior's footsteps were dying away down the passage. And the staff of the "Weekly," laughing, returned to their work.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER

"No Hands Wanted."

"JOHN BULL JUNIOR'S WEEKLY" was fast becoming an accomplished fact.

The copy was progressing excellently, and the youthful editors hoped to have enough ready by Saturday to hand to Mr. Casey, for setting up, the paper to be delivered complete in the following week.

The number of fellows who offered to contribute was nearly equal to the number of the Remove Form. But now offers were accepted. The best Bull could do, he said, was to keep stuff by him, and perhaps use it later. Some of the fellows grumbled, but it was of no use. John Bull held grimly on his way, and there was no moving him.

It was not only from the Remove that the editor had generous offers of contributions. Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, offered to give the paper a helping hand.

They stopped John Bull outside the Form-room in the morning, after lessons, to make that obliging offer, their manner indicating that they had not the slightest doubt that it would be accepted gladly.

Temple began by tapping Bull on the shoulder, in a very friendly, not to say patronising, manner. Bull stared at him.

"Hallo!" he said.

"I hear you're starting a school rag, or something of the sort, you kids in the Remove," said Temple, in quite a fatherly tone.

"We're starting a school magazine," said John Bull.

"Ah! Who's editing it?"

"I am."

"You might like to have an older—I won't say cleverer—chap," suggested Temple. "I shouldn't mind helping you out."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"I'm sure I shouldn't mind helping myself," said Fry. "Of course, I shouldn't like my name to appear on the thing. That would be infra. dig. But I'm willing to help."

"Exactly," said Temple. "I could do a serial story, too."

"And I would do some poetry," said Dabney.

"Have you finished?" asked John Bull.

"Eh? Why?"

"Well, I'm going out to the footer."

"Look here, young Bull, I suppose you want our help with that paper?"

"Something wrong with your supposer, then," said John Bull cheerfully, "for I don't."

"You cheeky young ass!"

"All contributions may be submitted to the editor," said John Bull calmly. "Addressed envelope should be enclosed for the return of manuscript if unsuitable."

"You—you young cheeky bounder—"

"Otherwise the editor cannot guarantee the return of copy," said John Bull imperturbably.

"You—you cheeky young sweep! I'll—"

But John Bull dodged out of the doorway, and joined Harry Wharton, and Temple, Dabney & Co. walked away in great wrath. They did not submit any contributions to the editorial office, with an addressed envelope enclosed for return if unsuitable.

Blundell and Bland, of the Fifth, were equally obliging. It was very condescending of Fifth-Formers to take any notice of a paper issued by the Removites, but of that amount of condescension Blundell and Bland and some others of the Fifth were apparently capable. Three of them came along to the editorial office, and found Alonzo Todd there. Blundell and Bland, and Coker, walked in without knocking, and Alonzo Todd looked up from a sea of scribbled foolscap.

The Fifth-Formers scowled at him. They had not forgotten the feed in the Form-room, or the Form in the feed-room, as Todd had worded it in his written invitation. Todd, however, smiled blandly.

"Can I do anything for you, my dear fellows?" he asked.

"Yes," said Blundell. "You're starting a school rag, I believe."

"Yes; I am sub-editor," said Todd proudly.

"Hum! Well, we don't mind doing some stuff for it," said Blundell. "Of course, we should want the prominent pages, and, in fact, we should want to have most of the limelight, if we give the thing a leg-up."

"Exactly," said Bland.

"You see," said Coker, who had been lately removed from the Shell, and so was more Fifth-Formy, as Nugent had expressed it, than older fellows in the Fifth—"you see, Todd, it's a jolly big honour for you to have seniors doing stuff for your rag."

"Indeed, I thank you very much," said Todd. "It is so kind of you to wish to confer honour upon me. I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would be very pleased to hear you say so. But I am afraid we have no room for your contributions."

"What!" roared Blundell and Bland and Coker together.

Alonzo blinked at them.

"You see, my dear fellows, I am not chief editor, or I would shove some of your stuff in just to oblige you, you know. But John Bull is so very particular about the quality of the contributions, and about their being written by sensible chaps, that I am afraid it cannot be arranged."

The Fifth-Formers stared at Todd speechlessly.

"I'm so sorry," said Todd innocently. "I understand your natural desire to rush into print. But I assure you that you would probably find brain work a very fatiguing thing, like most unaccustomed exercises. I—"

"Why, I— We— I—"

"Pray do not be angry, my dear Blundell. You see— Oh!"

Blundell seized the paste-pot from the table, gouged out most of the contents with the brush, and dabbed it over Alonzo's face.

The Duffer of Greyfriars jumped up with a yell.

Bland added the inkpot—that inkpot with which Todd had already had some very painful experiences.

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NEXT WEEK: "THE RIVAL WEEKLY."

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Coker uncorked a bottle of red ink, and inverted it over the head of the sub-editor. Alonzo gave a war-whoop.

"My dear fellows— Ow! My dear Coker— Yow! Yaroo!"

He made a wild rush to escape. The Fifth fellows let him pass; they had no desire for him to shed ink and paste over them. Alonzo tore down the passage, and the Fifth-Formers grinned cheerfully.

"They don't want our giddy contributions," remarked Blundell. "We'll jolly well wreck the editorial office, then."

"Good egg!"

"Hurrah!" said Coker.

And they started. The editorial office of "John Bull's Weekly" was not a very tidy place. But the Fifth-Formers soon reduced it to a state of untidiness that would have made even a Remove junior despair.

They overturned the table, they upset the bookcase, they tumbled the chairs and the fireirons and the fender into a heap in the middle of the room. They pulled out the drawers of the table, and scattered them.

Books and papers and fragments of the unfortunate "Weekly" lay in all directions like a new fall of snow.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blundell. "I think that will do."

And Coker and Bland chuckled assent.

The Fifth-Formers left the study. As they passed the Remove bath-rooms, they heard Todd gurgling under a hot-water tap, and chuckled again. They felt that they had avenged the dignity of the Fifth Form.

Alonzo Todd was in a very flushed and flustered state when he came down at last, and met John Bull and Harry Wharton as they came in from footer practice. The two editors stared at him in surprise.

"My dear Bull—"

"What's happened?" demanded John Bull tersely.

"Nothing gone wrong with the 'Weekly'?"

"I'm so sorry—"

"Ass! What's the matter?"

"I have not been able to progress as I wished with the copy," said Todd. "I was interrupted in an extremely brutal manner by Blundell and Bland and Coker, who wasted a considerable quantity of ink and paste by pouring them over me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is no laughing matter, I assure you, my dear Bull. I was reduced to a state of unbounded discomfort. However, I trust that if we show those Fifth-Form fellows a kind and forgiving spirit, it will have its due effect upon them, and they will repent of their unprovoked and really entirely unjustifiable violence."

"My hat!" chimed in Fisher T. Fish. "What a flow of language! I guess Todd beats the giddy gramophone every time—some."

"My dear Fish—"

"Lots of the fellows are wild because there are no hands wanted in editorial office of the 'Weekly,'" grinned John Bull. "Let 'em rip! We're not having our paper run by Fifth-Form swankers. I guess not."

"Rather not," agreed Harry Wharton. "I suppose they haven't done any harm to the copy, have they, Todd?"

"I trust not, Wharton."

"Fathead! Haven't you kept an eye on it?"

"You see, I went away to escape further unpleasant personal violence, and also to subject my soiled person to necessary ablutions."

"You chump!" exclaimed John Bull. He ran up the stairs, followed by the other juniors, and burst into the editorial office.

He gave a roar as the sight burst upon him—wreck and disaster.

"Look here!"

"My hat!"

"I guess that about takes the whole cake. Yep!"

The juniors glared at the wreck. They rushed upon Alonzo, and seized him, and jammed him against the wall.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER. Fish to the Fore.

"YOU ass!"

"You've let them wreck the place!"

"You chump!"

"Groo!" gasped Alonzo. "I—I—I was really unaware of their violent intentions with respect to the—groo—editorial office, my dear Bull."

The juniors released the Duffer of Greyfriars. It was no use bumping Alonzo. They wanted to bump Blundell & Co.—bad.

"The blessed place is a wreck," said Wharton, in dismay. "It will take us some time to get the copy written out again."

Lots of the sheets are torn, and most of them smothered with ink. Oh, you ass, Todd!"

"My dear Wharton—"

"I guess we ought to make Blundell and Bland and Coker clean this up," drawled Fisher T. Fish. "That's what we should do over there, I guess."

"Good egg!" said Harry Wharton. "But how are we to do it, ass? It's not so easy to make three Fifth-Formers do as you tell them."

Fisher T. Fish shrugged his shoulders.

"I guess I could work the riddle, if it's left to me," he said.

"You think you could do it?"

"Yep."

"Then go ahead!" exclaimed John Bull. "You know jolly well you're swanking, and you haven't got an idea in your head, you silly ass!"

Bull's temper had not been improved by the state he found his study in. But he was always a plain speaker, and Fisher T. Fish frequently received some plain truths from him when he mounted the high horse.

"I guess I'll make 'em clean it up, or clean it up myself, surely," said the American, undaunted.

"We'll hold you to that!"

"Yes, rather."

"Now, buck up, Fish! What are you going to do?"

"May I make a suggestion?" said the still small voice of Alonzo. "I am sure that under the circumstances, my Uncle Benjamin would recommend putting it in a peaceful and pleasant manner to Blundell and Bland and Coker. They should have it pointed out to them that they have caused us a considerable amount of inconvenience, and that we expect them as kind schoolfellows to put the study in order again."

"Ass!"

"My dear Bull—"

"Go ahead, Fishy. It's up to you now," said John Bull grimly.

"I guess it will be all O.K."

Wharton was collecting up some of the defaced sheets.

"We sha'n't get the copy in to the printer's by Saturday," he said. "The thing will have to fall through, as far as the date of publication is concerned."

John Bull shook his head.

"That's all right," he exclaimed. "I've arranged with Mr. Casey that we can send in late copy up till closing time on Saturday. I expect we shall get it all in before then, though. We shall all have to turn to and copy the stuff out."

"I say you fellows—"

Billy Bunter blinked in at the doorway.

"Oh, get out, Bunter!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "No time for your rot now. Buzz off!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Look here, I've been doing a new recitation for the 'Weekly,' and you can have it for nothing. It's entirely original, and very jingling. It's a military piece, and it's called 'The Charge of the Light Brigade.'"

"What!"

"It begins like this," said Bunter. "Listen—"

"Oh, dry up!"

"Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward—"

"What!"

"All in the valley of death

Rode the six hundred!

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"

The juniors stared at Billy Bunter with a stare that made even the Owl of the Remove pause. That even Billy Bunter should attempt to palm off 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' upon them as original poetry, took their breath away. The most reckless plagiarist might have let that alone. But Billy Bunter seemed to have an unfortunate knack, when he plagiarised, of picking out the thing that would be most easily recognised by everybody.

"Well, of all the silly chumps!" roared Wharton, at last. "You ass! I was brought up on that poem!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Look here, I've been doing a new

"Original, is it?" shrieked John Bull.

"Quite original," said Bunter, blinking at him. "It came to me quite suddenly, you know. I was strolling under the elms, thinking of—the greatness of the British Empire and things, and—and martial glory, you know, and those lines rushed into my mind. I wrote them down at once on an old envelope. If you don't believe me, here's the envelope."

And Bunter held out a scribbled envelope, which certainly was old, and very dirty. The juniors stared at him.

Words were useless with Bunter. John Bull rushed at him, and seized him, and bumped him on the floor with a terrific bump.

"There!" he gasped. "Now get out, you lying young rascal!"

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"You! Look here, Bull, if you don't accept that splendid original poem, I'll refuse to write a single line for the 'Weekly.' Yow!"

"You won't write a single line in any case," said John Bull. "Even if you were capable of writing down anything you hadn't stolen, we wouldn't put it in."

"Get out!"

"I—I—oh! Yah!"

Bunter rolled out of the study as John Bull began to kick him. He was in the corridor in an amazingly short time. The fat junior could move very quickly when he was subjected to this sort of persuasion.

"Beasts!" he yelled from the passage. Then he vanished.

"I guess I'll be going down," said Fisher T. Fish. "I remember I promised to show Ogilvy how to play hockey."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Bull. "How about making the Fifth chaps clear up this muck?"

"Oh, I guess—"

"I guess you'll keep your word, or clean it up yourself," said Bull.

"Wnat-ho!" said Harry Wharton.

"My dear Fish, that is only just. You see—"

"Now, then, Fish—"

"I guess you don't dictate to a free American," said Fisher T. Fish. "No, sir. I decline to take a hand in the proceedings. You hear me!"

"And we decline to let you crawl out of it on any terms," said Harry Wharton. "You'll do as you've agreed, or you'll get such a bumping you'll ache for weeks."

"I guess—"

"Pile in," said John Bull. "It's up to you now."

Fisher T. Fish hesitated. He had a way of saying that things would be well done if they were left at him; but nobody ever took him at his word. Now he was fairly caught. And there seemed to be no way of escape.

"I guess I'll see it through," he remarked. "Of course, you guys will have to back me up. That's understood."

"We'll back you up."

Fisher T. Fish rubbed his long nose thoughtfully. As a matter of fact, he had not an idea in his head. Nugent remarked that American heads were very much like drums—very loud-sounding, but with nothing in them. This was a little hard, perhaps; but Fisher T. Fish certainly talked more than he acted.

"Well, come on," said Fisher T. Fish, at last. "No good wasting time, you chaps. We never waste time over there, I guess. We'll take a dozen chaps, and collar them in their study, and hustle them along here whether they like it or not. Yes, sir."

"Oh, all right!" said Wharton. "If you like to lead a raid on the Fifth, we'll back you up!"

The juniors left the study. It was easy enough to gather a dozen fellows who were willing to join in a raid on the Fifth—though raiding the seniors was a very different matter from raiding the Upper Fourth or the Shell.

Fisher T. Fish led the way.

The Removites followed him, grinning. The American, in spite of his coolness, could hardly conceal the fact that he was very uneasy. He had bitten off more than he could chew, to use one of his own expressions, but the juniors were not inclined to let him off. He had to keep his word, or to clean up the wrecked editorial office.

Blundell was standing in the Fifth-Form passage, talking to Coker and Bland and Higgs when the juniors arrived. There were other Fifth-Formers about, too. The seniors stared at the band of Removites.

"Hallo! What do you kids want here?" demanded Blundell.

"I—I guess—"

"Speak up, Fish!"

"You're leader, you know."

"Give it to him straight."

The whispers from the fellows behind were very encouraging. But Fish did not seem, somehow, to be encouraged.

As a matter of fact, Blundell looked so big, and the other Fifth-Formers looked so big, that Fish realised the utter hopelessness of the task he had set himself. He felt more inclined to talk than to act.

"I—I guess—" he began again. "You see, Blundell—"

"What is he jabbering about?" said the captain of the Fifth.

"You—you see, I guess you've wrecked our editorial office," explained Fish haltingly. "I—I guess you'd better come and clean it up, some."

Blundell & Co. roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I guess, you see—I guess—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fish's remarks appeared to appeal to the Fifth-Formers as

numorous. They roared, and other fellows looked out of the studies and roared. It seemed to be quite a field-day for the Fifth. They yelled with merriment.

Fisher T. Fish grew very red. His comrades behind him were urging him on, but the American junior did not know how to act.

There were more than a dozen Fifth-Formers on the scene now, so the odds were on Blundell's side in the event of a scrimmage. And each of the big seniors was as a rule quite able to knock to pieces two or three of the Lower Fourth. A combat was, in fact, quite out of the question. But the Removites was not inclined to let Fisher T. Fish escape. They knew that he was least inclined of all to charge the Fifth.

"Go it, Fishy!" murmured Bob Cherry. "This is the time to show that you're the true descendant of the chaps who bunked at Bunker's Hill."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wire in, Fishy!"

"You see," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess—I—upon the whole, you chaps, I think we had better leave this racket over for a time. No good bucking against odds, you know."

The juniors grinned. They followed Fisher T. Fish back to their own quarters, leaving the Fifth-Formers still shouting with laughter.

Fish looked rather pink, but he seemed still to hope to be able to carry off the matter by swank. But there were grim looks on the faces of the other fellows as they marched into the Remove passage.

"I guess it's good strategy, to keep off at present," said Fish. "We'll catch Blundell in his study some other time, you see—"

"Time not specified," remarked Nugent sarcastically.

"I guess we'll find a time. Yep!"

"Come on, Fishy!"

"I guess I'm going down—"

"You've guessed wrong, then," said Harry Wharton coolly. "You're not going down until you've cleaned up the editorial office."

"I guess—"

"Come on!"

"I guess not! Nope! Rats! I tell you—"

"Come on—shove him along!"

Fisher T. Fish, in spite of his objections, was hustled along to the end study by the grinning juniors. He was pushed into it.

"Look here," he exclaimed, "I guess I'm going to deal with the Fifth later. Can't do these things too suddenly. You see—"

"And my study's to remain in this state till you find a time" grinned John Bull. "Not much! You undertook to make the Fifth chaps clean it up, or to clean it up yourself. Go ahead! We'll watch you!"

"Look here, if you chaps care to help—"

"Rats! We never undertook to help!"

"My dear Fish, I will lend you my aid. I am sure that my Uncle Benjamin would approve of my making the offer, under the circumstances—"

"No, you won't Todd!" said Wharton. "Fish will do as he said, one way or the other. Get out of the study, duffer!"

"My dear Wharton—"

"Push him out!"

Alonzo Todd was pushed out. The juniors blocked up the doorway, and cut off the escape of Fisher T. Fish, who would gladly have followed Alonzo. The American junior grinned in a sickly way.

"I guess you're only joking," he remarked.

"I guess you'll find it a serious joke. You'll clean up the study at once, or you'll be bumped and rolled in the ink and paste. Take your choice."

And Fisher T. Fish decided to clean up the study. And he did it, with the grinning juniors watching him from the doorway and the passage all the time. The American junior was in a considerably tired and soiled state by the time he had finished. And for at least two hours afterwards Fisher T. Fish was not heard to swank.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

"The Editor Regrets."

IF the Greyfriars fellows had been in the habit of giving Billy Bunter much notice, they would certainly have observed something unusual about the fat junior during the next day or two. Bunter was rather given to pushing himself into notice, and it was hardly possible to dwell within the ancient walls of Greyfriars without being painfully conscious all the time of the existence of William George Bunter. Just now Bunter was being unusually quiet, and so escaped general attention. Nobody ever paid Bunter attention unless he drove them to it, as Nugent had put it. His unusual quietness therefore escaped remark. But if the juniors had observed it, they would have guessed that something was "on."

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ONE
PENNY.

Bunter had ceased to urge that his original and brilliant contributions should be inserted in the columns of "John Bull Junior's Weekly." He contented himself with dark hints that somebody would make somebody sit up, if somebody didn't do somebody justice. But the youthful editors of the Greyfriars paper had no time to unravel the mysterious allusions of Bunter. His cryptic hints were entirely lost on them. He sulked in silence, and they never noticed it. He took no notice of the editorial staff, and they forgot his existence. As a matter of fact, nobody cared twopence for Bunter, or wanted to be bothered with him. He might have sulked for a whole lifetime, and nobody would have noticed whether he was sulking or not. That was really hard on Billy Bunter. It was distinctly exasperating that fellows should not even notice whether Bunter was on his dignity or not. The more they failed to take cognisance of his existence, the more exasperated and spiteful the fat junior became.

His dark hints as to what would happen if somebody were not done justice to passed like the idle wind.

But Billy Bunter had a scheme in his mind. If he could not figure in the "Weekly," at all events he had a trick for getting something into its columns, and he intended it to be something that should be decidedly unpleasant to the editorial staff.

Bunter had overheard what Bull had said about sending late copy in to the printer. And Bunter did not forget. Bunter had a bad memory for his work; but he never forgot anything that might be of advantage to him.

By Saturday that week all the copy of the "Weekly" had been sent in. The staff had worked hard at copying and correcting. Nugent had finished his picture for the cover, and it had long ago gone in to the printer, and a proof of the reproduction had been seen, and approved of by the staff.

Proofs of a great deal of the matter printed in the "Weekly" had also been seen. It was only the "late copy" that would appear without the proofs being sent in.

But John Bull had bucked up his staff to such an extent that there were only a few columns of late copy, and they were unimportant—sale and exchange advertisements, and the like.

It was not essential to read over those proofs, and Bull did not want to delay the promised day of publication.

On Saturday afternoon the juniors were in high spirits. All the copy had been sent off, and they solaced themselves for long labour in the study by a football match.

In their satisfaction at getting the "Weekly" off their hands, Harry Wharton & Co. relented even towards Billy Bunter. They encountered the fat junior in the Close as they were going down to the footer-field, and Wharton slapped him on the shoulder.

"Ow!" ejaculated Bunter. "Oh, really, Russell—"

"Hallo, Billy! Going out?" asked Wharton, noticing that Billy Bunter had a coat on.

"Oh, really, Wharton! Yes, I'm going down to Courtfield—I—I mean to Friardale."

"Well, as they're in opposite directions, you'd better make up your mind which you're going to, before you start!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"You see, I—I think there must be a registered letter waiting for me at the post-office," Bunter explained. "I was expecting a postal-order to-day, but it hasn't come."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really you fellows—"

John Bull extracted a half-crown from his pocket, and tossed it to the fat junior.

"Catch!" he exclaimed.

Bunter caught it on his nose. He gave a yelp.

"Ow! Thank you, Bull! I shall be able to take the train to Courtfield now—I mean Friardale—instead of walking—I mean—"

"Train to Friardale!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "First time I've heard of a train along Friardale Lane. What are you talking about?"

"Well, you see, I—I—"

"Oh, he's lying, as usual!" said Nugent. "He's going to Courtfield, but for some reason he wants us to think he's going to Friardale."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Come on, you chaps!" said Bull. "Temple's on the ground already, and we're keeping the Fourth waiting."

The juniors went on, and Billy Bunter rolled away towards the gates.

He walked down the lane to Friardale, and there took the train for Courtfield. He did not save very much walking by so doing; but every yard saved was a consideration to Billy Bunter.

Arrived in Courtfield, the fat junior rolled away towards

Mr. Casey's printing office. There was a determined expression upon his spiteful fat face.

Solly Lazarus admitted him at the office. Solly Lazarus was at work there on some Saturday afternoons. Bunter gave him a grunt in reply to his polite greeting.

"I want to see Mr. Casey," he said. "It's very important."

"Pleathe wait a minute," said Solly.

Billy Bunter grunted again, and waited.

In a few minutes Mr. Casey was visible. Billy Bunter sneaked into the office, and the printer stared at him through his glasses in a very suspicious manner.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Late copy," said Bunter.

The printer looked at the little bundle Bunter carried.

"Master Bull said it was the last he sent in this morning," he said. "I think it's too late for any more copy, unless you want the paper later."

"But it's very important——"

"Besides, the formes are full."

"Some of the advertisements are to be left out to make room for this," explained Bunter. "This is a very important paragraph—a special notice from the editor to the readers. You can leave out anything you like to put this in."

"Oh, very well! Give it to me."

Bunter handed over the late copy.

"You're sure it'll be in?" he said.

"Yes, it's all right."

"I can tell John Bull so?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Thank you!" said Bunter.

And he rolled out of the office. There was a malicious grin on his face as he returned to the railway-station.

"I rather think they'll be sorry for leaving me out of the number," he murmured. "I'm bound to make them sit up for it, from a—sense of duty. Boasts!"

About an hour later Bunter rolled in at the gates of Greyfriars. A smear of jam on his fat face showed how he had disposed of the change of the half-crown after purchasing his ticket.

The juniors were coming off the footer-field.

"Been to Courtfield?" asked Bob Cherry, as he caught sight of the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, no, Cherry! I've been down to Uncle Clegg's, in Friardale."

"You haven't been to Courtfield?" asked Morgan, of the Remove.

"Certainly not!"

"What a fearful whopper! I saw you there, look you!" exclaimed Morgan indignantly.

"Oh, really, Morgan——"

"I went there to call on Grahame about that skating match," said Morgan, looking at the footballers with great indignation. "I saw Bunter turning into Low Street."

"Low Street!" exclaimed Wharton. "Have you been to the printer's, Bunt?"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Have you been to Casey's?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, shaking the fat junior. "Why can't you tell the truth for once? I'm blessed if I can see anything to lie about!"

"I—I just looked in to see how they were getting on with the 'Weekly,' that's all," said Bunter. "I—I——"

"Then why did you lie about it?"

"I—I wasn't going to tell you. I have already stated that I decline to take any interest in the 'Weekly' since you have excluded me from the staff out of sheer personal jealousy," said Bunter loftily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors walked on, leaving Bunter unquestioned further—much to his relief.

The staff of "John Bull Junior's Weekly" did not suspect Bunter's real motive in visiting the printer's office in Courtfield. His lying about it did not excite their suspicions, for Bunter always lied.

The juniors were looking forward to Tuesday, the earliest date upon which Mr. Casey had been able to promise copies of the new "Weekly."

It seemed a long time to Tuesday to the eager editorial staff. But Tuesday, like everything else, came at last.

During morning lessons the juniors heard the carrier in the Close, and they knew that a consignment had arrived for somebody. They had no doubt that it was the consignment of printed "Weeklies" from Mr. Casey. The attention they gave their lessons after that was very slight, and during last lesson Mr. Quelch distributed impositions in the most liberal way. But the juniors cared little. Their first effort in the publishing line had reached success—their own effusions were glowing in print—and they could think of nothing else.

As soon as the Form was dismissed there was an eager

inquiry for the packet delivered by the carrier. They were informed that it was addressed to John Bull, and had been placed in his study.

Up to the Remove passage went a wild rush of juniors. They crowded into John Bull's study till there was scarcely breathing space, and even then the passage was crammed outside.

On the table lay a neatly-tied parcel. John Bull opened it.

The "Weekly" lay in full view.

There were fifty copies, and the juniors snatched them up eagerly.

The title-page caused a buzz of admiration. Frank Nugent's picture had come out splendidly. There was a portrait of John Bull—"By our own special artist, Frank Nugent"—and a most imposing title—"John Bull Junior's Weekly, the Greyfriars School Magazine."

"Splendid!"

"Ripping!"

"First chop!"

"The first-chopfulness is terrific!"

"Bull's mug looks almost good-looking, doesn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Then the juniors opened the magazine and looked inside. Exclamations of satisfaction broke out on all sides as the contributors recognised their own contributions. They looked better than ever in print.

"Good!"

"Ripping!"

"I say, you fellows, I could have beaten all that easily. My poem——"

"Never thought I could write like that, you know."

"Blessed if Bull's leading article doesn't read just like a real one!"

"Faith, and ye're right. I can't understand a word of it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who's doing this rotten serial?" asked Billy Bunter.

"You ass——"

"What prize idiot perpetrated that short story?" the fat junior continued to inquire.

"You chump!"

"I say, my limerick looks well, doesn't it?" said Tom Brown.

"Glad you're satisfied with it."

"Fathead!"

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

"Eh?"

"What?"

"What's Bob yelling about?"

"Look here!" roared Bob Cherry.

He held up the paper excitedly in one hand, and with the other pointed to a paragraph on the last column of the last page.

There was a general craning of heads to see it on the part of the juniors who had no copies. Those who had copies turned to the last page to see what it was that had so excited Bob Cherry.

Then there was a chorus of yells.

"The cheek!"

"Nerve!"

"Cheeky rotter!"

"My hat!"

"What is it?" roared excited voices from the passage.

"Listen to this!" shouted Harry Wharton. "I'll read it out."

"Go ahead! Silence!"

There was no silence. Amid a buzz of excited voices Harry Wharton read out the offending paragraph:

"Notice to Readers.

"The Editor regrets that owing to personal jealousy on the part of the staff, the fellow who could have written really good stuff for the paper has been left out. Under the circumstances, the readers are asked to excuse the awful piffle with which the magazine is filled. The Editor regrets that he has been unable to obtain anything really worth printing, and hopes that W. G. Bunter may be induced to write for the next number."

"My hat!"

"You fathead, Bull!"

"Awful piffle"—eh?"

"My word! Collar him!"

"Bump him!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Bump the cad!"

There was a wild scramble towards John Bull.

Bull was looking utterly astounded as he listened to that remarkable paragraph. He seemed to wake up as the juniors closed round him wrathfully.

He jumped on the table.
 "Collar him!" rose the yell.
 "Hold on!" shouted John Bull.
 "Yah! Collar him!"
 "Stop, I say! I never wrote that paragraph! I never put it in! I never knew anything about it till Wharton read it out!"
 "My hat!"
 The juniors paused! They knew that John Bull never lied. If he had played that joke on his staff he would have owned up to it and taken the consequences, whatever they were.
 "Then how did it get in?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.
 "The printer couldn't have made it up."
 "How did it get in?"
 "The howfulness is terrific."
 "My hat!" roared Bob Cherry. "Let Bunter explain what he was doing at the printer's office on Saturday afternoon!"
 "Bunter!"
 "Bunter!"
 "I—I say, you fellows, it's awfully warm in this study!" stammered Billy Bunter. "You're so jolly crowded here. I—I think I'll get out."
 Bob Cherry's grip closed like iron on the fat junior's collar.
 "No, you don't!" he said.
 "Oh, really, Cherry—"
 "Bunter!" roared the juniors. "It was Bunter!"
 "I—I say, you fellows—"
 "Of course it was Bunter!" roared Harry Wharton.
 "Nobody but Bunter would want to put such rot in! Nobody but Bunter would think that Bunter ought to write for the 'Weekly.' It was Bunter, of course. He's mucked up the first edition. These copies are no good. We shall have to get a fresh lot printed."
 "The fat bounder!"
 "The worm!"

EVERY TUESDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

"The funny ass!"
 "Oh, really, you fellows, I didn't—I never—I wasn't—ow!"
 Many hands seized upon the fat junior.
 The contributors whose work had been classed as awful piffle were furious. And, as copies had already been whisked away and were in the hands of the Fourth and the Fifth by that time, the joke was on its way all over Greyfriars, and there was no doubt that there would be one yell of laughter from the whole school to greet the editorial staff when they appeared in public again.
 "Bunter!"
 "Collar him!"
 "Squash him!"
 "Bump him!"
 "Rag him!"
 "Ow! I—I say, you fellows, I didn't do it! I only did it for a joke! I never even went to the printer's office—it was only in fun—ow! You! Yaroo!"
 Bunter rolled on the floor.
 Then and there Bunter received a record ragging. He was smothered with soot and ashes. He was drenched with ink. He was rolled and bumped till he did not know whether he was awake or in the grip of some dreadful nightmare.
 When the juniors left him finally he was gasping on the floor of the study, and he gasped and gasped there long after they had left him. He felt that life was not worth living as he crawled away; and one thing was quite certain—that William George Bunter would never appear at the printer's office again with "late copy."
 (Another splendid, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Tuesday, entitled: "THE RIVAL WEEKLY," by Frank Richards. Order in advance. Price One Penny.)

GRAND NEW ADVENTURE SERIAL JUST STARTED.

Wolves of the Deep.

The Story of a Great Conspiracy, introducing Ferrers Lord and Ching-Lung.
 By SIDNEY DREW.

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord is the possessor of a powerful submarine, called "The Lord of the Deep." One night the model is stolen from him by Michael Scaroff, a Russian. Lord declares that he will catch Scaroff, even if the pursuit takes him twenty years. He obtains the promise of Rupert Thurston to accompany him, and is one day visited by Edward Horton, a diver. "I will give you twice your present salary if you will accompany me," says Ferrers Lord.

(Now go on with the story.)

Horton Decides to Accompany Ferrers Lord.

Horton rubbed his big, red hands together, and gasped with delight.

"Submarine boat—eighteen quid a week—grub free—long voyage—private yacht kind of game," he drawled slowly. "Come, sir? Why, I'd come, if I had to walk on my head twenty miles to get the job. It's not the money that tempts me, sir, for before now—what with regular screw and my share of salvage—I've often had nice little hauls. It's the idea of being under water, sir, and being able to eat and drink and smoke there, like I saw you to-day. I love being under water, and I'd live there altogether if I could eat and smoke. Very often I have a quiet nap there, as it is. It's real home to me."

Thurston laughed outright.

"You must have a good nerve," he said.

"Not a bit of it, sir," answered the brawny diver promptly; "it's just habit. Wait till I take you down with me and show you round. Of course, a man wants a bit of nerve to tackle a big wreck where a lot of lives have been lost, when he finds odds and ends bobbing round him. Last year I came across a skeleton—"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 158.

NEXT WEEK: "THE RIVAL WEEKLY."

He paused abruptly, and blushed as Ferrers Lord rose lazily from his chair.

"I am sorry I have no time to listen to your anecdote just now, Horton," he said, "but we will find you an opportunity of spinning it before long. I am delighted you are going to join us. Let us drink success to the cruise of The Lord of the Deep, but drink it silently."

The champagne cork popped merrily, and the wine hissed into the glasses. The three glasses clinked together, and the silent toast was drunk.

"We must leave you, Horton," said the millionaire, "and my servant will give you full instructions what to do. I want you to superintend the finishing of the vessel. You had better finish the wine and smoke a cigar while you are waiting. Good-night! Come, Thurston!"

A glance showed the young man that the body had been removed. The millionaire took a revolver from the safe, loaded the chambers, and slipped it into his pocket.

"Write your letters quickly," he said. "There will be no necessity to change, as we can do that at Dover."

"At Dover? What makes you think the thief has gone to Dover?"

"My telephone and my spies. A special train left Charing Cross a quarter of an hour ago. It was ordered before noon to-day, I find, by a certain wealthy American named Mr. Webster G. Lloyd. Special trains are not too common even in these days of wealth, my friend."

"But what has this American to do with it?"

Ferrers Lord smiled.

"It is just as easy to change one's name as change one's mind," he said quietly. "Why should not Webster Lloyd be Michael Scaroff? We have heard stranger things than that. Do not delay, Thurston, or he may slip through our fingers like an eel."

The Pursuit.

As the two men drove towards Charing Cross Station a hansom drawn by a foaming horse stopped for an instant before the door of Ferrers Lord's house. A bearded face looked out, and then a voice called to the cabman:

"They've just gone. Turn down Brook Street, and drive like mad!"

Ferrers Lord had raised the leather flap that covered the circular window in the cushioned back of the brougham. He saw the flying hansom drawing rapidly nearer. It caught them up, and the bearded face again looked out.

"Well?" asked the millionaire.

"There's no doubt about it," said the man quickly. "I saw the stationmaster. A tall man, wearing a light macintosh with a heavy cape. No luggage, but one bag. He had a girl with him and a big wolfhound. Paid for train by draft on Anglo-Russian Bank."

"Good!" said Ferrers Lord.

The driver pulled the horse round, and the hansom vanished into the gloom of the square. Ferrers Lord saw Thurston's eyes fixed inquiringly on him, and smiled.

"You get your information in strange ways," said the young man. "How do you manage it?"

"Money," answered the millionaire, jingling the gold in his pocket. "It works miracles, my friend."

No more was said until the brougham drove into the busy station. A curious crowd had gathered on the platform to watch the special train go out. It consisted only of an engine, a first-class saloon, and a van for the guard. Ferrers Lord bought half a dozen papers, lighted a cigar, and stepped into the carriage, followed by Thurston.

The guard's whistle uttered a shrill peal, the wheels revolved, and the train moved slowly away.

"The chase has begun in earnest now, my friend," said the millionaire. "There is one thing I have forgotten, but it is too late to worry about it now. We ought to have had a pilot engine."

Thurston stared.

"A pilot engine? What on earth should we want one for? I thought such luxuries were reserved for Royalties."

"One never knows," said Ferrers Lord strangely. "Have something to read."

He turned over the pages of his newspaper lazily, but his words had made Thurston uneasy. Why should he have spoken about a pilot engine, above all things? The train was gaining speed, and its light weight made it rock unpleasantly. He tried to read, but could not concentrate his attention, and gave up the attempt in despair. He saw the lights of station after station flash by, until the train was flying between green fields and fresh spring hedgerows far from the smoky town.

"A cigar?" said the millionaire suddenly.

"No, thanks, if you will excuse me. I smoke very little."

"You are wise, my friend. I love tobacco, but I take care not to abuse it. Here is something useful that you might slip into your pocket. I meant to give it you before."

It was a little revolver, and Rupert Thurston took it silently, for he was almost afraid to ask any more questions. He was slipping it into his hip-pocket, when the millionaire checked him.

"There is a handier way of carrying a barker than that,"

he said, pulling up his coat-sleeve and revealing a second revolver. "If you happened to be wearing an overcoat, and got into a hot corner, you would be bowled over before you could unbutton your coat. A Yankee card-sharper in 'Frisco showed me this dodge. You see, the ring of the weapon is fastened to the ring of elastic, and the elastic to this little strap above my elbow. I have only to give my arm a sharp downward jerk, and there you are."

He swung his arm downwards, suiting the action to the words, and the deadly little weapon glistened in his hand. He opened his fingers, and it vanished just as quickly.

Thurston laughed.

"No doubt it is a pretty trick for a man who lived in one of the

old mining-camps," he said, "where so much depended on shooting first, but I fail to see its advantages in this law-abiding country."

The same strange smile crossed Ferrers Lord's lips.

"One never knows," he said again. "Look at London, for instance—the greatest, richest, most law-abiding city in the world. How many men stroll out of their offices or clubs and vanish like a puff of smoke? How many battered bodies does the grim Thames swallow in a short twelve-month? If you only knew half the tragedies and hidden crimes of the mighty city, you might not despise that little knack of carrying a revolver."

With a shrill hoot, the train dashed into a tunnel, and the roar of flying wheels drowned his deep voice. He leaned back lazily, with his slippers upon the table, and blew a dozen smoke-rings cleverly.

"We are making excellent time," he said, as the noise lessened.

"So it seems," answered Thurston. "I expect we shall have to wait at least an hour before the boat starts at midnight."

"Not at all, my dear fellow. The boat will start the moment we get aboard her. My yacht will be waiting under full steam. I wired long ago. We shall be almost landing before the mailboat pulls in her gangways."

The train was swaying and lurching terribly. The lamps of a long station platform vanished like a single light as it tore through. A bright moon had risen, and Ferrers Lord crossed to the window.

"I will see where we are," he said. "I think I know every inch of the route between London and Dover."

He brushed the moisture from the glass with his handkerchief, and peered out. The train was rushing through a steep cutting, topped by a dense wood. He lowered the window a few inches. A tongue of red flame leapt from the dark trees ahead of the train, and a report, deadened by the crash of wheels, hung upon the air.

Ferrers Lord sprang swiftly back, and Thurston uttered a cry.

"What is that?" He was pointing to the table. "Didn't you hear a crash?"

With a quick jerk the millionaire tugged down the blind. He turned quietly, and lifted the cloth from the table. Something had passed through the mahogany, splintering the wood into a star-shaped patch.

"I should imagine," said Ferrers Lord calmly, "that the only thing to make a hole like that is a bullet, and the man who fired it was either a very clever or a very lucky shot. It came unpleasantly close to my head. Luckily I had opened the window, or the broken glass might have blinded me."

Thurston was as brave as any lion, but he turned pale. It is one thing to face a danger that can be seen, but it is very different to be fired upon by a hidden assassin. He sprang to the window, intending to stop the train, but he was caught in an iron grasp.

"My dear fellow," said the millionaire drily, "please do not be hasty. What is the good of wasting time by alarming the driver and guard? The man who fired that shot is miles away—or a good mile, at least—and has made his escape. Do be sensible, Thurston."

"But—"

"But what? Listen to what I have to say, my friend, and blame me for nothing. I acted fairly and squarely with you when I asked you to join me. I told you it would be no picnic, and I told you our path would be full of danger. Much as I like you, I am willing to give you back your word. The moment we reach Dover you are free to leave me if you wish it."

"I did not mean that," he stammered; but a man must have strong nerves to stand a thing of this kind. Surely it must have been an accident? Some poaching fellow, I suppose."

(Another splendid instalment of this thrilling serial story next week.)

For Next Week



"The Rival Weekly."

Not to be outdone, Billy Bunter and the great Alonzo Todd put their heads together and plot and plan to start a rival weekly. But plots have sometimes a way of going crooked, and B.B. and Alonzo reap the full result of their attempt to outdo "John Bull Junior's Weekly."

The Editor

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