

**BUNTER LOSES HIS MEMORY!** (SEE INSIDE.)

The **Penny** **1½<sup>D</sup>**  
**Popular**

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New Series.

Three Complete Stories of—  
**HARRY WHARTON & CO.—JIMMY SILVER & CO.—TOM MERRY & CO.**



**BUNTER DIVES INTO THE EMPTY BATH!**



# POOR OLD BUNTER!

A Magnificent Long, Complete Story, dealing with the  
Early Adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., the  
Chums of Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS:

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Hurt!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

Harry Wharton & Co., of the Remove at Greyfriars, grunted in chorus. They were just making for the swimming-bath, when Billy Bunter came ambling after them.

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you know—"

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

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

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

"I suppose I can do as I like."

"Yes; but—"

"Oh, rats!"

Bunter stamped away.

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

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

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

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

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

"Well, I suppose he can see!"

"I don't know—"

"Bunter!" called out Wharton. "Bunter!" He ran towards the fat junior.

Bunter had reached the door. He blinked round at Wharton, and went in.

The fat junior imagined that the chums of the Remove were going to stop him, and he could be very obstinate when he liked.

He hurried in, and threw off the cloak, and took off his spectacles. He could not, of course, keep his glasses on in the water, as they became opaque when wetted.

But without his glasses Bunter was terribly short-sighted. The atmosphere became as a fog to him, and the things he could see he could not see clearly.

He ran to the swimming-bath.

Harry Wharton & Co. came running in. Wharton was really alarmed about the fat junior.

It seemed hardly possible that Bunter would not notice that the bath was empty and plunge down on the tiles; but there was no accounting for what Bunter might do.

"Bunter!" called out Harry.

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

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

Crash!

"My hat!"

"Good heavens!"

"Poor old Bunter!"

There was one cry from the swimming-bath—and silence.

The juniors' hearts stood still for a moment. They advanced with faltering steps to the side of the bath and looked in.

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

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

"Bunter! Bunter!"

There was no reply from the fat junior.

He lay quite still, without a sound.

The Greyfriars fellows were accustomed to Billy Bunter's "spoofing." He could pretend to be seriously hurt on the slightest occasion. But this time they felt instinctively that it was not spoof. Bunter was hurt!

Harry Wharton jumped down into the bath.

He bent over Billy Bunter, and raised his head.

Billy Bunter was deadly pale, and there was a large bruise on his head, and his eyes were closed.

"Bunter, old man!"

But Bunter could not speak. Bunter was insensible. It was genuine this time!

"Is it very bad?" called out Nugent.

"Yes; he's stunned!"

"Oh!"

"Poor old Bunter!"

"We must get a doctor to him!" exclaimed Harry. "Or, rather, it will be quicker to take him to the doctor. Tell Gosling to get his trap ready!"

"Right-ho!"

Nugent dashed out. Bob Cherry joined Harry, and they carried Bunter up out of the swimming-bath.

The fat junior neither moved nor spoke.

"One of you had better call in Mr. Quelch," said Harry, in a low voice. "He—"

"I am here!"

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, came quickly up.

His face was dark and concerned.

"I have just met Nugent," he said. "He says that Bunter has been hurt—that he jumped into the bath without noticing that it was empty—"

"He dived in, sir."

"Poor lad! But how—"

"He had his glasses off, and I suppose he couldn't see," said Harry, in distress. "I never knew the poor chap was so short-sighted as that, sir. Shall we take him down to the doctor's? It will be quicker than sending for Dr. Whirter."

"Yes, yes, by all means!"

Nugent came dashing in.

"The trap's ready!"

"Let me help you carry him," said Mr. Quelch. "So far as I can see, he is simply stunned, and there is no great injury done. But I will come with you."

"Yes, sir."

Bunter was carried out to the trap. As he was placed in the vehicle Bunter's eyes opened, and he gave a groan.

"Oh, my head! Ow! It aches! What's the matter?"

"It's all right, old son," said Harry softly. "You've had a bump, but we're looking after you."

"Lemme alone!"

"We're not going to hurt you, old chap. Just lie on the cushions."

"Who are you?"

"Eh?"

"Who are you?" said Bunter peevishly. "Lemme alone!"

"He does not recognise you without his glasses," said Mr. Quelch. "Lie quiet, Bunter, you have bruised your head, and we are taking you to the doctor's."

Billy Bunter did not reply.

His eyes were closed, and he seemed to be unconscious again. Harry Wharton and Nugent sat with him in the trap, and Mr. Quelch took the reins.

The vehicle dashed out of the gates of Greyfriars.

A crowd of juniors stood round, and while some of them were touched and sympathetic, the general feeling was one of suspicion and scoffing.

Billy Bunter's humbug was too well known. There were few among the fellows who heard of the accident who believed that Bunter was really hurt.

But the fat junior was not spoofing this time. Bunter was hurt, and his injury was destined to have peculiar consequences, for himself and for others.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Bunter Loses His Memory.

TEN minutes later, Billy Bunter was in Dr. Whirter's surgery, and the little medico was leaning over examining him.

"Do you feel much pain, my lad?" asked the physician.

Bunter blinked at him.

"He wants his glasses," said Harry.

"Eh? What's that?"

"I've got your glasses here, old chap."

"Glasses?"

"Yes; here they are."

Bunter blinked at the pair of spectacles that Wharton held out to him. He was sitting up, with a somewhat wild expression on his face.

He made no motion to take the spectacles.

"Look here, none of your larks!" he exclaimed. "I'm not going to wear those things!"

"But—but they're yours!"

"Rats!"

Harry Wharton stared at him. He could not understand Bunter in the least now. Some strange and inexplicable change seemed to have come over the fat junior.

Dr. Whirter took the spectacles and placed them on Bunter's nose.

The fat junior blinked through them, and evidently found himself seeing better with the aid of the glasses, for he allowed them to remain there.

Dr. Whirter drew Mr. Quelch into the next room. The master of the Remove was looking a little anxious.

"Well, doctor?" he said.

"The boy has had a severe shock, and he has a very large bump on his head, which must be kept bandaged for some time," said Dr. Whirter. "Otherwise there is little the matter with him. Had he been in good condition he would have stood the shock much better. But he is in a low state from over-feeding and want of exercise. He will not be able to take his place in the class for a week, at least; but I see no reason why he should be confined to the sanatorium. But you will use your own judgment about that." "But he seems very strange in his manner."

"That is because he is still dazed from

the shock. I have no doubt that his manner will become normal in a few hours."

Mr. Quelch nodded.  
"Then I may take him back to Greyfriars with me?"

"Certainly!"  
Mr. Quelch rejoined Bunter.  
"Do you feel strong enough to move?" he asked.

Bunter blinked peevishly.  
"I'm all right!" he said.  
"Does your head ache?"  
"Of course it does! There's a big lump on it!"

"You shall have a good rest when we get back to Greyfriars," said Mr. Quelch.  
The fat junior stared at him.

"Greyfriars?"  
"Yes, Bunter."  
"Where's that?"  
"What!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, quite staggered.

"I don't know what you are talking about. Who are you?"

"I! Surely you know me, Bunter—your Form-master, Mr. Quelch?"  
"Form-master?"  
"Yes."

Bunter blinked at him, and then closed his eyes. He seemed to be grappling with some mental problem. Mr. Quelch seemed very much perplexed.

"He is still suffering from shock," said Dr. Whirter. "It will pass off."

Billy Bunter was taken out to the trap. He did not speak a word while he was placed in it.

During the drive to Greyfriars he looked round him curiously several times, as a new boy might have looked round upon wholly new scenery.

Wharton and Nugent watched him. They were vaguely uneasy, and vaguely alarmed.

Bunter's manner was strange. It would have been like the fat junior to talk on in an endless stream, and make the most of his injury. But he did not.

He did not open his lips, but only looked about him, with that strange expression upon his face, as if thoughts were passing in his mind that he could hardly grasp, and could not utter.

What was the matter with Bunter?  
Wharton felt that the injury had gone deeper than Dr. Whirter imagined. There was something odd, something alarming, in Bunter's look.

The trap arrived at Greyfriars, and stopped outside the School House.

Billy Bunter looked at the grey old building, and at the crowds of fellows in the Close, with a new and startled look.

"Here we are again!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as cheerfully as he could.

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

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

"Bunter!"  
"What's this place, I say?"

"Don't you know Greyfriars again?"  
"Greyfriars!" said Bunter, with a puzzled look.

"Yes, your old school, Billy?"  
Bunter looked round vacantly.

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

Bunter blinked at the burly Removeite without speaking.

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

He led the fat junior towards the door.  
Bunter resisted.

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

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

Bunter's words took their breath away.  
"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.  
"He's lost his memory!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.  
Not Spoof!

**P**OOE old Bunter!  
That was what Bob Cherry said as the fat junior passed into the house, with his arm linked into Harry Wharton's.

His words were echoed by several fellows, but Bulstrode burst into a laugh.  
"You surely don't believe him!" he ex-

claimed contemptuously. "He's spoofing! I think we've had enough of Bunter's spoof to know it when we see it."

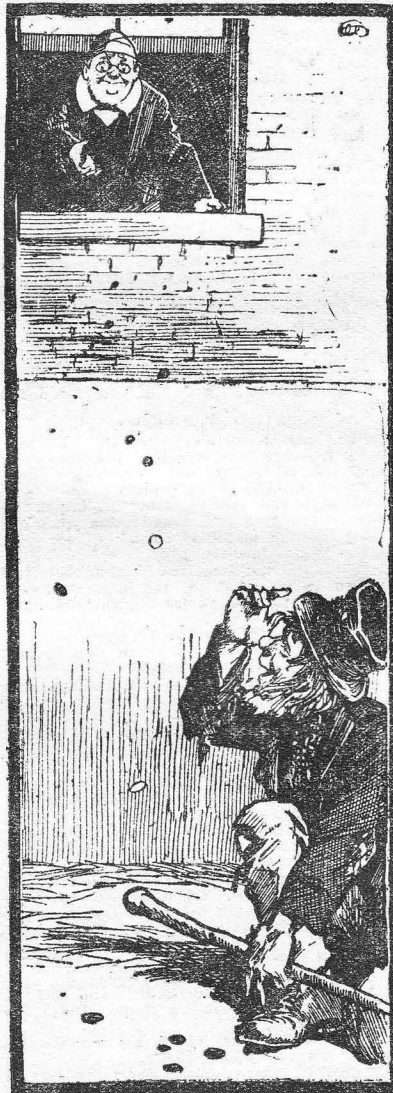
"What-ho!" said Skinner.  
Bob Cherry shook his head.

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

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

And Bulstrode put his hands into his pockets and walked away, whistling. Bulstrode's opinion was shared by more fellows than was Bob Cherry's. They knew Bunter. Meanwhile, Billy Bunter was taken into the house by Harry Wharton.

With his head bandaged up, and a still dazed and bewildered expression upon his



BUNTER'S GENEROUS MOOD!

face, the fat junior looked very curious, and it was evident that he could not quite get his bearings.

Familiar objects seemed new to him, and he did not seem, even, quite sure of his own name, for on more than one occasion he paid no attention when addressed as Bunter or Billy.

If the fat junior was spoofing and acting all the time, he was doing it remarkably well. But Wharton did not think so. He was

convinced that the unfortunate Owl of the Remove was sincere this time.

The bump on his head had done it, and for the present, at least, the terrible shock had shattered Bunter's memory.

It was not an uncommon occurrence, and the question was—would it last? Would the Owl of the Remove ever be himself again?

"I can leave him to you, I think," said Mr. Quelch. "Under the circumstances, he will require looking after, Wharton."  
"Yes, sir, I'll look after him."  
"Very good!"

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

Bunter blinked at him.  
"No, I wouldn't!" he said.

"Will you come into the study?"  
"No, I won't!"

"H'm! Will you have something to eat?" asked Wharton, playing what he considered to be a trump card.

Billy Bunter had never been known to refuse an invitation of that kind.

"I'm not hungry," said Bunter.  
Wharton almost staggered.

"W-w-what!" he gasped. "Not hungry?"  
"No."

"Sure, Billy?"  
Bunter made a peevish gesture.  
"I suppose I ought to know whether I'm hungry or not?" he exclaimed.

"Ye-e-es, but—but—"

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

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

"Oh, did I?"  
"Don't you remember, Billy?"

"No, I don't."  
"My word, it's genuine enough!" said Nugent, as he joined them. "What are you going to do with him, Harry?"

Harry Wharton rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

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

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

"Well, that's his own fault—I mean," added Wharton hastily, "we should have been his chums if—if things had been different. Still, we'll look after him. I think we'd better get him to bed. He may be better after lying down for a time. Then you and the fellows can clear up the study a bit, and get a fire going, in case he wants to come down."

"Right you are!" said Nugent cheerfully.

The chums of the Remove were giving up their half-holiday to the Owl, but they did not even think of that.

They were quite willing to make any sacrifice for a fellow in poor Billy Bunter's state.

Bunter was taken up to the dormitory. He made no resistance as Wharton put him to bed.

As a rule, Bunter was always prepared to go to sleep. After eating, his greatest pleasure lay in sleeping.

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

Several juniors came into the dormitory, impelled by curiosity or sympathy.

When they looked at Bunter their doubts as to the genuineness of his malady were dispelled.

He could never have acted like this if he had been shamming.

"I say—what's your name?" said Bunter.  
"Wharton!" said Harry quietly.

"I've heard that name before," said Bunter.  
"Yes, I dare say, old fellow," said Harry cheerfully. "I'm an old friend of yours, you know. I've known you a long time."

"Have you?" said Bunter doubtfully.  
"Yes, quite a long time, kid."

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

"Yes; it's the dorm."  
"The dorm?" repeated Bunter.

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

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

"Yes, rather!"

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

### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Amazing!

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

"Is he any better?" asked Frank Nugent. Wharton shook his head. "He doesn't seem to be in much pain," he replied, "but his memory's gone. He doesn't know me. He doesn't even know the dorm."

"Poor old Bunter!"  
"I say, you fellows—"  
"Yes, Bunter?"  
"—I—I—"  
Bunter broke off. A gleam of intelligence had flashed into his dazed face, but it was gone again. Had it been a momentary glimmer of returning memory? If so, it was gone, and it did not recur.

Nugent stepped to the bedside. "How do you feel, Bunter?" he asked. "Eh?"  
"Don't you know me?"  
Bunter blinked at him.  
"No, I don't! Who are you?"  
"Jim Nugent!"  
"Oh, don't be funny!" said Bunter peevishly.

"I—I'm not being funny," said Nugent, rather taken aback. "I'm Frank Nugent, you know! But never mind that. I've brought you something to eat, Bunter."

"I'm not hungry!"  
"Eh?"  
"I'm not hungry!" said Bunter.  
"Oh, draw it mild!" murmured Bulstrode.  
"We can't quite swallow that!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Shut up, you chaps!" said Wharton, frowning.

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

"Here's a beautiful saveloy!" said Ogilvy. "Look at this plum-cake!" added Bob Cherry.

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

He shook his head and turned away. "I don't want any!" he said.  
"But—but they're ripping!"  
"I'm not hungry!"  
"Look at these tarts!"  
"And these doughnuts!"  
"Oh, take 'em away!"  
"What?"

"I don't want them!"  
"My hat!" ejaculated Bulstrode.  
"The hatfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh. "The esteemed Bunter has completely changed his spots, like the Ethiopian leopard!"

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

"Hush-a-bye, baby!" sneered Snoop. Wharton's eyes gleamed, and he stepped towards Snoop.  
"Get out, you cad!" he said, in a low voice.

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

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

"No, I wouldn't!"  
"But—but—"  
"I'm not sleepy!"  
"Look here,"

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

"You're—you're ill, you know!" said Wharton feebly.  
"I'm not ill!"  
"Well, you see—"  
"Who says I'm ill?"

"You—you've got a lump on your head, you know, and—"  
"Well, I'm getting up!"  
"Better lie down a bit," said Wharton urgently. "It will do you good, Billy, old

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chap! Lie down and go to sleep a bit, and I'll stay with you in case you wake up, and— and then we'll go and have a feed in the study."

"I don't want a feed in the study."  
"Oh!"  
"I'm going to get up!"  
"Well, if you really want to—" said Harry hesitatingly.

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

"Where are my clothes?" he exclaimed. Wharton handed him his clothes and helped him to dress. He did not utter a further word of remonstrance.

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

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

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

### THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Must Be Ill.

**S**IT down, Billy!"  
Harry Wharton drew the armchair towards the fire in Study No. 1. Bunter had not forgotten that an armchair was comfortable. He sank down into the well-padded armchair with great comfort.

"Comfy, old son?"  
Bunter grunted. The grunt could be taken to mean that he was comfortable.

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

"Eh?"  
"Getting peckish?"  
Bunter seemed to consider.  
"Oh, I don't know!" he said. "I've no appetite."

"Poor old Bunter!"  
"Suppose we chat with him," suggested Bob Cherry.

"Oh, don't jaw!" said Bunter. Bob smiled a sickly smile. Bunter's peculiarly gracious manners had evidently undergone no change.

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

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

"My only hat!" murmured Nugent.  
"Bunter, old man—" began Bob Cherry, but his voice fairly failed him.

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

"Eh?"  
"Any of you care to have the armchair?"  
"My hat!"  
"Great Scott!"

"Can't you answer?" asked Bunter.  
"It's all right, old chap!" gasped Wharton. "The armchair was brought here for you, because you're rocky. That's all right."

"Oh, all serene!"  
"Ready for tea, Bunter?"

"Well, I'm getting peckish, I think," said Bunter, rubbing his fat hand over his forehead, as if he were not quite certain of it.

"I don't know. Is this my study?"  
"Yes."

"See if there's anything in the cupboard."  
"Oh, we're standing treat!"  
"You're not standing treat," said Bunter.

"If you're coming to tea in my study, I'm standing treat."

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

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

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

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

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

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

The chums of the Remove stared at him blankly.

Billy Bunter, all unconsciously, was telling the truth for once in his life.

The juniors knew that Bunter was not himself just now, but they had never expected this, or anything like this.

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

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

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

"Not to me."  
"B-b-b-but why not?"

Bunter shook his head. The juniors gazed at him, and then at one another.

Billy Bunter picked up the poker and stirred the fire. Even that slight action added to the amazement of the chums.

Bunter had never poked the fire before of his own free will. He had always left that task for somebody else to do.

He would never replenish the fire even; and even if he were the only fellow in the room, he would sit calmly by it and let it go out, unless somebody else put on coals.

Bunter had become considerate; Bunter had become independent; Bunter was thinking of others instead of wholly of himself.

Certainly, Bunter must be very, very ill. That was how the Greyfriars' juniors looked at it.

"No, Bunter; this is our treat," said Wharton. "You can return the compliment some other time."

"Oh, very well!"  
And Billy Bunter sank back in the armchair.

The juniors prepared tea, and, to their surprise, Bunter hardly glanced at the food on the table. Moreover, he showed no desire to start on the meal. Even when he did sit up to the table he ate very little.

His usual custom was to eat sufficient for five or six healthy fellows, but on this occasion he ate barely sufficient for one.

Which was all very puzzling to the juniors.

They were convinced that Bunter was really ill, after all.

### THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Another Surprise from Bunter.

**H**ALLO, hallo, hallo! Who's that?"  
Bob Cherry asked the question an hour or so later.

"That" was a ragged tramp who was walking up to the School House across the Close of Greyfriars.

He was decidedly dirty and unkempt, and had evidently been on tramp for a long time, but what he wanted at Greyfriars was not clear, unless he had come in to beg.

And in that case he must have been very keen to dodge the vigilance of Gosling, the porter.

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

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

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

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

Bulstrode & Co. glared at him.  
"Who'll stop us?" demanded Bulstrode belligerently.

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

"Look here, Cherry—"  
"And I'm ready to back you up, Cherry!" exclaimed Tom Brown, of New Zealand.

"Nobody is going to bump or rag that poor boulder while I'm here!"

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

"It's my business, too," said Harry Wharton, coming out. "Hands off that kid, Bulstrode, or there will be a row! I suppose he has no right here; but he's not going to be ragged! He looks as if he's had a hard time of it, anyway."

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

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

Bulstrode turned crimson.  
"I don't want to hurt the chap—" he began.

"Let him alone, then!"

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

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

"What do you want here?" demanded Snoop.

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

"Rats! Buzz off!"

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

"Here!"

It was a voice calling from a window.

The beggar looked up, and so did the Removites. The fat face of Billy Bunter appeared at the window.

The fat junior blinked down at the beggar. "This way!" he called out.

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

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

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

During tea Harry Wharton had generously slipped a shilling and some coppers into Bunter's pocket, in case he should feel inclined to partake of a feed at the tuckshop.

Billy Bunter, in a state of health, had never been known to give anything away.

In losing his memory, Billy Bunter seemed to have lost his original nature as well.

He was feeling in his pockets for money.

The tramp looked up eagerly.

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

Bunter threw out a coin.

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

Another and another coin followed.

"Thank you, sir!"

Bunter blinked at the beggar.

"I'm sincerely sorry I can't give you any more," he said. "That's all I have about me. And I'm not expecting any, either, unfortunately."

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

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

Bulstrode made a movement to follow him.

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

"It's only a few pence."

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

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

Wharton compressed his lips.

As the beggar neared the gates, Gosling had come out of his lodge, with a big stick in his hand.

Gosling had been careless in allowing the tramp to enter, but he evidently meant to make up for it as the intruder went out.

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

The beggar halted.

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

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

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

"I never side with you!" said Wharton.

And there was a laugh at Snoop's expense.

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

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

The beggar stood ready to dodge.

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

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

The school porter looked across at him.

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

"Rats!"

"Hey?" said Gosling.

"Let him alone!"

The school porter stared blankly at Wharton. Why the handsome, well-dressed captain of the Remove should interfere on behalf of a ragged tramp was a mystery to the porter.

Gosling's principle was to "chivy" anybody who had the misfortune to be at his mercy, and any other course of conduct he was wont to regard as "humbug."

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

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

"Look 'ere!"

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

The tramp looked at him queerly.

"Thanky, young master!" he said. "You're a good sort!"

And he cut off towards the gates.

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

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

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

"You were here before I came."

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

Harry Wharton hesitated.

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

"Oh, I see."

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

"Money, do you mean?"

"Yes; a few bob!"

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

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

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

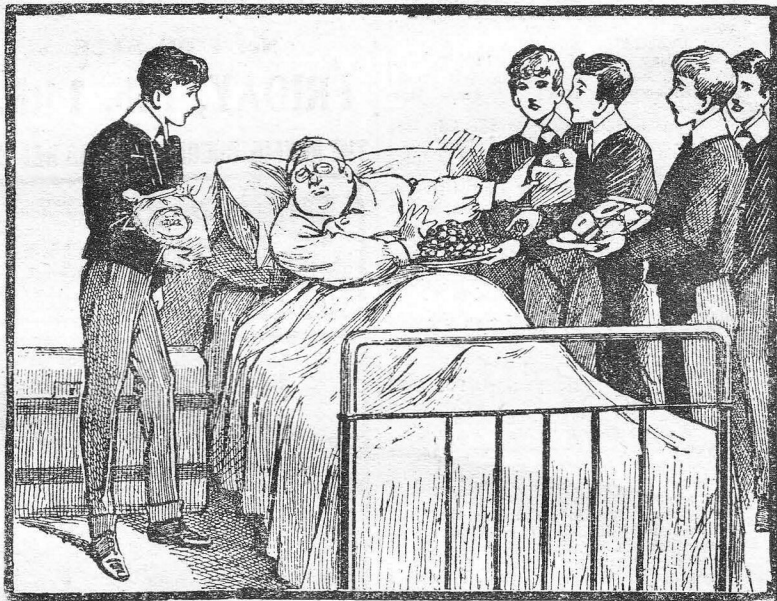
"I'm not expecting one."

"Oh!"

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

Hazeldene of the Remove looked in at the door.

He watched Billy Bunter curiously, and the



## BILLY BUNTER REFUSES FOOD!

"Oh, report, and be hanged!"

"Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Rats!"

The tramp had vanished. Harry Wharton walked back to the School House, leaving Gosling staring after him, dumbfounded.

### THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

#### Bunter Does Not Know Marjorie!

HARRY WHARTON looked in at Study No. 1 a little later. Billy Bunter was still staring vacantly out of the window.

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

"Feel better, Bunter?" asked Harry.

"I'm all right."

"Hungry?"

Bunter blinked at him.

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

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

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

"It's your study, Billy."

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

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

"Yes, rather!"

fat junior blinked at him with equal curiosity.

"Who's that?" he asked.

"That's Hazeldene."

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

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

Wharton shook his head.

"My sister's come over to see me with Clara," said Hazeldene. "Look here, Bunter knows her. He's a rotten little cad, and I never liked him speaking to Marjorie, but under the circumstances I think perhaps she may help to recall his silly memory."

"Good!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

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

"You know Marjorie, Billy?" he said.

Bunter looked strangely perplexed.

"Marjorie!" he repeated.

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

"N-n-o."

"You don't remember?"

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

"Let him see her," said Hazeldene.

"Good! Where are they now?"

"In my study."

"Come on, Billy!"

Wharton linked his arm through Bunter's, and led him down the Remove passage.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 3.

Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara were in Hazel's study.

Bulstrode and Tom Brown, who also shared that room, had left it to Hazeldene for the occasion, as was the general etiquette among the Greyfriars fellows when a fellow had lady visitors.

The two girls looked very fresh and rosy after their walk in the cold wind from Cliff House. There was a kettle singing on the fire, and a cloth on the table.

Marjorie and Clara had been told about Billy Bunter's misfortune. They looked curiously at the fat junior as Wharton brought him in.

They knew the untruthfulness of the Owl of the Remove so well that, without being suspicious, they did not believe in his sincerity this time, unless it was made clear to them that it was genuine.

Miss Clara, indeed, was smiling with open scepticism.

"So poor Bunter is ill?" she said.

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

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

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

"Doesn't he remember anything?"

"Nothing."

"Poor Bunter!"

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

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

He shook his head.

"Is that—Marjorie?"

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

Another shake of the head.

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

"No. I'm sincerely sorry."

Miss Clara's eyes danced.

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

"Oh, Clara!"

But Bunter shook his head still.

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

Miss Clara was nonplussed, if not convinced. The old Bunter would have claimed those five shillings without scruple, whether they were due to him or not.

It was quite clear that a great change had come over Bunter.

"It's genuine enough," said Hazeldene.

"It looks like it," admitted Miss Clara.

"But Bunter was always such a—a—a—"

"Liar!" said Hazeldene cheerfully.

"Story-teller!" said Miss Clara.

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

"Thank you," said Bunter.

"Tea will be ready in a minute," said Hazeldene. "You fellows are staying?"

"Well, we've had tea," said Wharton.

"Have another one then," said Hazeldene. "Sit down!"

A very cheerful party sat down to tea in Hazeldene's study. Billy Bunter was looking very cheerful, quite as much so as the others.

There was still a bewildered expression lingering in his eyes, but the pain was almost gone, from his damaged head, and he was cheering up wonderfully.

Nevertheless, Billy Bunter ate very little. His lack of appetite astonished the Cliff House girls, and although they tried every possible device to bring back Bunter's memory, they did not succeed.

Bunter was not shamming. His memory was nearly gone. But would he recover it?

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### A Sudden Surprise.

**A**FTER morning school the next day Harry Wharton & Co. took Billy Bunter in charge when they came out of the Form-room.

There had been a fall of rain, and the ground was not in a fit state for footer practice.

Billy Bunter had shown little sign of improvement during the day, and the chums of the Remove felt that they had to look after him.

"Hungry, Billy?" asked Nugent

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 3.

"Yes, rather!" said Bunter.

It was clear that the Owl of the Remove was recovering, although his memory had not come back. The juniors had begun to think that it would never come back.

Bunter had been in this strange state now for some time, and his Form-fellows were ceasing to expect a change.

And, as several of the Remove observed, it wasn't wholly desirable that Billy Bunter should recover.

Bunter now was a much more decent fellow than the Bunter of old, and by losing the memory of what he had been he was enabled to make a fresh start, and to turn over an entirely new leaf.

Certainly he was much easier to get on with now that he was not trying to borrow money of every fellow who had any, and to insinuate himself into every feed that was stood in the Lower School at Greyfriars.

"Come to the tuckshop?" said Wharton.

"Right you are!"

Billy Bunter sat in Mrs. Mimbles's shop and consumed quite a fair amount of food.

The rain was falling fast as the juniors were about to leave the little shop, to cut across the Close to the School House.

No. 4 ON SALE

FRIDAY, Feb. 14th.

THE ARTFUL DODGER! WHO IS HE? See Inside



A BARROW-LOAD OF BUNTER!

ORDER YOUR COPY AT ONCE!

They turned up the collars of their coats. Billy Bunter blinked out into the rain and drew back his head like a snail withdrawing its horns.

"It's jolly wet!" he remarked.

"Yes; we shall have to run."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Go on, Billy!"

"I don't want to get wet, you know."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"None of us do," he replied. "But we sha'n't get very wet, Billy. We can run. Come on, and make a dash for it!"

"Yes; but I say, couldn't one of you cut across first and get an umbrella?" said Billy Bunter.

The chums of the Remove looked at him.

This was the old Bunter with a vengeance! It did not matter if they went out into the rain and were wetted, so long as an umbrella was fetched for him. It was the Billy Bunter of old with a vengeance! His memory was not coming back, but his original nature was.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob Cherry.

"Come, make a run for it!" said Harry Wharton briefly.

"Oh, really you know, I don't feel fit to run, just after eating, and I've had a good blow out, too," said Billy Bunter.

"I'll get an umbrella, then," said Wharton quietly. "You fellows may as well stay, and I'll bring yours at the same time."

"Oh, rats!" said Bob Cherry. "Let Bunter stay here till the rain's over. He can go on feeding."

"Well, perhaps I could go a few more tarts," said Billy Bunter thoughtfully.

"Go it, then," said Harry. "Give him whatever he wants to-day, Mrs. Mimbles, and charge it to me."

"Yes, Master Wharton."

Bunter resumed his seat on the stool at the counter, and recommenced operations upon the tarts.

The chums of the Remove dashed across the Close with their collars turned up, and ran into the School House.

There were a crowd of juniors in the House, looking out disconsolately at the rain. The days were lengthening now, and they were looking forward to a run out after school. But the rain stopped all that.

"Why not get up a game of footer in the Common-room?" remarked Russell.

"That's not a bad idea," said Wharton, "if we don't make too much row and bring in the prefects."

"I've got a ball," said Ogilvy.

"Good egg!"

Ogilvy brought down a footer, and the juniors closed the door of the Common-room and lined up for sides.

As nearly all the Remove were there, and a great many of the Upper Fourth, the teams were very strong in numbers, like the old-fashioned sides at Rugby.

It was the fun the juniors were after, not scientific football.

The game was soon going strong.

The fireplace was one goal, and the window at the opposite end of the Common-room was the other, and goals were frequently kicked, with disastrous results to the diamond panes of the window.

But as breakages were always charged to the juniors responsible for them that was not a serious matter; it meant items on bills, but not lickings.

The game was getting fast and furious when the door of the Common-room was opened.

Billy Bunter entered.

The fat junior stood and blinked in surprise at the scene of the uproar.

As he stood there the ball had been passed across with a whizz, and it was shooting straight for Bunter.

There was a yell of warning as Nugent, for whom the ball was intended, missed it by yards.

The ball had bounced high, and before Bunter understood what the yell meant it had struck him on the chin with a violent shock.

The fat junior staggered back and fell.

"Stop play!" shouted Wharton.

The juniors crowded round Bunter.

Harry Wharton was the first. He raised the fat junior in his arms. The concussion of the footer had not been hard enough to hurt anybody, but Bunter, always clumsy, had struck his head against the wainscot as he fell.

The Owl of the Remove lay quite still.

"My hat!" said Nugent in dismay. "He's hurt!"

"Just like Bunter to come in and catch the ball with his head!" growled Bulstrode.

"Oh, shut up, Bulstrode!"

"He's hurt!" said Wharton.

There was concern in every face. Under ordinary circumstances no one would have cared much, for the Remove were a tough crowd, and accustomed to giving and receiving hard knocks.

But Bunter was not well now. Bunter already had a big bump on his head, and had lost his memory, and there was no telling what harm a new shock might do to him.

"Billy!" said Harry, as he raised the fat junior's head. "Billy, old man!"

Billy Bunter did not reply.

He was unconscious.

"My word!" said Nugent. "It was only a tap, too. It wouldn't have sent anybody else off. Poor old Bunter!"

"The poorfulness of the old Bunter is terrific!"

"Help me get him up to the study," said Wharton. "We'll look after him there, and bathe his head. It's only a tap, but if he

doesn't come to at once we shall have to send for the doctor."

"Right you are!"  
The three juniors took up the Owl of the Remove.

In the midst of a crowd of them he was carried up to the Remove passage without exciting attention, and put in the armchair in Study No. 1.

Nugent fetched a bowl of water and sponge, and Bunter's collar was loosened, and Harry began to bathe his face.

"Give him room!" said Wharton, pushing back the crowding juniors. "We don't want to suffocate him. Keep back!"

The juniors crowded out of the study. Some of them waited in the passage to hear how Bunter went on.

Wharton bathed the head of the Owl of the Remove. Bunter's eyes opened, and he blinked at Wharton dazedly without his spectacles.

Harry drew a deep breath of relief.

"He's coming to!"  
"Thank goodness!"

Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove. He did not seem to be able to make out where he was, or what had happened to him.

"I—I say!" he gasped.  
"Lie still, Billy! You're all right!" said Harry Wharton gently. "You've had a bump on the napper, but you'll be all right!"

"I—I—it was your fault!"  
"Eh?"

"It was all your fault. I suppose there wasn't any water in the bath!"

"The—the bath!"  
"Yes," said Bunter peevishly. "I shouldn't have come such a cropper if there hadn't been any water there, I suppose. I should have seen it was empty if you rotters hadn't been chasing after me."

The juniors stared blankly at Billy Bunter. Had he lost his memory again, or was he mad—or what?

#### THE NINTH CHAPTER. A Shock for Bunter.

**H**ARRY WHARTON was silent for a full minute, looking steadfastly at the fat junior. He was too surprised for words.

Billy Bunter was growling, and feeling the bump on his head. He, too, seemed to be in a dazed state, but his wits were returning. "What's all this water over me for?" he demanded.

"I—I've been bathing your head, to bring you round!" stammered Wharton.

Bunter grunted.

"Well, you might give a chap a towel, then," he said disagreeably.

Nugent silently handed Bunter a towel. The fat junior mopped his face and head, and threw the towel aside.

"Where are my glasses?"  
"Here you are!"

Bunter replaced the glasses on his little fat nose. He blinked discontentedly at the juniors.

"I've got an awful bump on my head!" he growled. "It aches fearfully. The pain won't be gone for days. Yow!"

"The bump hurts?" asked Harry.  
"Yes, awfully! Ow! Do you think you wouldn't be hurt by bumping your head on the floor of a bath?" demanded Billy Bunter.

"But—but—"  
"I—I say, how did I come to have these clothes on?" exclaimed Bunter, looking down at his fat person in astonishment. "I was in my swimming things when I dived into the bath."

"You—you—"  
"Do you mean to say that you dressed me, while I was off?" demanded Bunter. "What a silly trick! More sense to shove me in bed, I should think."

The juniors exchanged glances.  
Amazing as it was, there was no doubt as to what had happened.  
Billy Bunter had woke up from his second insensibility with his memory restored.  
He had taken up his life again, as it were, from the point where it had broken off, when he was stunned by his fall into the bath.  
What had happened since was lost.  
It was amazing, but the fact.  
The juniors hardly knew how to explain. But that there must be some explanation was evident, for Bunter was beginning to look alarmed.

"Look here, you fellows," he exclaimed, "what does this mean? I suppose I was stunned when I fell into the bath, wasn't I? I don't remember anything since."

"Yes," said Wharton.  
"What did you dress me for?"  
"You see—"  
"Why didn't you get a doctor?"  
"You see—"

"Nice chaps you are to look after a chap. I must say!" snorted Bunter, in quite his old manner. "I might have been brained, I suppose, and you wouldn't care twopence. Look here, have any letters come for me while I've been lying here?"

"Letters?"  
"Yes; I'm expecting a postal-order."

The juniors could not restrain a chuckle. It was the old Bunter, quite himself again; there was no mistake about that.

Bunter blinked at them indignantly.  
"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" he growled. "I'm expecting several postal-orders, as a matter of fact, one of them from a titled friend of mine—a chap I'm very chummy with."

"Good old Bunter!"  
"Look here, you fellows, how long have I been lying here?" demanded Bunter, with a vague uneasiness in his manner.  
"Only a few minutes," said Wharton.  
"Oh! It seems longer somehow," said Bunter. "Some duffer has put that calendar on to Wednesday. It's Tuesday."  
He was blinking at the little movable cardboard calendar on the mantelpiece, just in front of him. Wharton glanced at it.  
"It is Wednesday," he said, as gently as he could. "You've been ill!"  
"Ill?" repeated Bunter.  
"Yes. After that bif in the swimming-bath, you lost your memory."  
Bunter stared at him.  
"Lost my memory?"  
"Yes."  
"What rot!"  
"Look here, Bunter—"  
"I know jolly well I never lost my memory," said Bunter peevishly. "You're trying to pull my leg. What rot!"  
"You did lose it," said Harry quietly, though the unpleasant manner of the fat junior was putting a great strain upon his temper. "You forgot all of us, and even your own name. You have been going about the school knowing nothing of what happened before that bump in the bath."  
Billy Bunter looked incredulous.  
"Oh, draw it mild!" he exclaimed.  
"Look here, fathead," said Harry Wharton, "it's perfectly true. You've forgotten everything that's happened since you dived into the swimming-bath."  
"I—I—"  
"Do you remember Marjorie and Clara coming here?"  
"Of course I do!" said Bunter. "It was a week ago, and—"  
"Ha, ha!"

Bunter snorted.  
"What the dickens are you fellows laughing at?" he demanded.

"Marjorie was here yesterday," explained Wharton, "and you didn't recognise her."

"Oh, that's rot!" said Bunter disdainfully.  
"Well, do you remember us putting you in bed?"

"You put me in bed?"  
"Yes. And we offered you a plum-cake."  
"P-p-plum-cake?" stammered Bunter.

"Yes. We also offered you some dough-nuts and tarts," said Wharton.

"Eh?"  
"And buns and biscuits."  
"Did I eat them?"

"No; you refused them."  
"I refused tarts and buns and biscuits?" exclaimed Bunter, with emphasis.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "It sounds funny doesn't it?"  
"I don't believe it!" said Bunter. "You're pulling my leg!"

"We're not!"  
"Then where are the tarts and buns?" asked Bunter. "If I didn't eat them—"

"We had to polish them off," said Wharton.  
"We couldn't let them get stale, you know."  
"You haven't saved me any?"

"What was the good? You refused them when we offered—"  
"I should be jolly glad of something to eat now!" said Bunter. "I'm starving!"

"Well, you can't be ill now," said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "He's the same old Bunter, you fellows."

"Look here," said Bunter. "I suppose what you say is true?"  
"Quite true."

"Of course, you're glad I'm better?"  
"Well—er—er—"  
"You wouldn't have liked me to have remained ill for the rest of my life?"

"Not exactly. But—"  
"Well, I reckon you ought to stand me a big feed, just to commemorate my recovery."

"Some other time, Billy."  
"You won't do it?"

"Money's a bit tight," said Bob Cherry. "Ask us again in a week's time."

Bunter glared; but gradually a strange expression came over his face.  
But the juniors knew what was coming.  
Bunter gradually worked up an expression of intense suffering.

"I—I say, you fellows," he said, "I—I feel very strange! I—I think I'm having a relapse. I—I think I'm losing my memory again!"

The juniors roared:  
"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Oh, really, you fellows—"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I forget who you are!" said Bunter.  
"I—I don't recognise you, Wharton! I don't even know your name—I mean—"

The juniors simply shrieked.  
"Look here, you beasts!" roared Bunter. "I tell you—"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors walked away, still laughing. Billy Bunter glared after them and snorted. But he did not lose his memory again. He might keep it up his sleeve, as it were, as a card to be played on some more favourable occasion in the future—but for the present it was useless.

There was no sympathy left now for poor old Bunter!

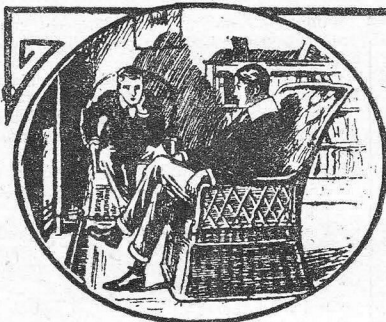
THE END.

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# HEALING THE BREACH!

A Grand Long, Complete Story, dealing with the Early Adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co. at Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER. Trouble for Three.

**T**HERE was trouble in the end study in the Fourth Form passage at Rookwood.

Excited voices could be heard proceeding from that famous apartment.

Apparently four fellows were talking at once, and each doing his best to drown the voices of the others.

Grimacing Fourth-Formers came along the passage, and listened to the row.

"It's that new-kid," remarked Topham of the Fourth. "Lovell & Co. can't stand him at any price. He's got too much nerve. Gather round, my infants, and see him come out on his neck!"

And quite a crowd of Fourth-Formers gathered round to wait for that interesting event.

They fully expected to see Jimmy Silver, the new junior, come out of the end study "on his neck."

For a whole week, ever since Jimmy Silver had arrived at Rookwood, in fact, there had been more or less trouble in the end study.

And it had evidently reached a head at last.

Inside the study, Jimmy Silver was seated on the corner of the table with his hands in his trousers-pockets. He was the coolest there.

Lovell and Newcome and Raby, his study mates, were highly excited.

Lovell, in fact, was brandishing a clenched fist in the air, to lend additional emphasis to his remarks.

Not that they needed emphasising. They could be heard at the other end of the passage.

"I tell you—" Lovell was shouting.

"And I say the same!" exclaimed Newcome. "A new kid that hasn't been a week in the school—"

"I tell you it won't do!" vociferated Raby. "And we're not going to stand it. And we're not going to stand you! We're fed up!"

"Fed right up to the chin!" roared Lovell. "And the long and the short of it is, we won't have you in the study—"

"And if you don't get out—"  
"We'll make it too hot to hold you—"  
"And we'll begin now—"

Jimmy Silver took his hands out of his pockets. It looked as if he would need the use of his hands soon.

"Oh, draw it mild!" he protested. "You can go and dig with somebody else!" shouted Lovell. "Go over to the Modern side if you like! I dare say they'd take you in! You're their sort!"

"Yes, you'd just suit the Modern idiots!" chimed in Raby. "Anyway, you're not staying here. We're not taking any. Now, what do you say?"

Jimmy Silver grinned. He did not seem very much put out by the excitement of the Fistical Three.

He was as cool as a cucumber. "Oh, I say rats!" he replied. "What?"

"Rats!" said Jimmy Silver. "That's done it!" howled Lovell. "Out he goes!" And outside the study Topham and his companions chorused: "Now watch!"

Lovell & Co. made a rush at the cool new junior sitting on the table.

Jimmy Silver's hand was resting on the inkpot.

His hand came up as the three exasperated juniors closed in on him.

The inkpot was full, but it was empty in a second, as a stream of black fluid met the oncoming three.

Lovell caught the first splash with his mouth, which was open, and he staggered away gurgling frantically.

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 3.

Raby caught it with his eyes, and Newcome with his nose.

Then the inkpot was empty, and the three warlike juniors were coughing, spitting, gurgling, and gasping hysterically, smothered with ink.

"Groooooooh!"  
"Gurrrrrrrh!"  
"Oh, crumbs! Yow!"

Jimmy Silver slid off the table. He made a quick step to the door.

The end study was not a salubrious spot for him after that.

"Ta-ta!" he said cheerily. "See you later, and I hope you'll be a little more reasonable. I'm sticking to the study!"

"Gurrrrrh!"  
Jimmy Silver opened the door, and stepped out into the passage.

There was a murmur of expectation among the crowd as the door opened.

They stared as Jimmy Silver came coolly out and walked down the passage.

Then they roared at the sight of the three inky juniors in the room, dabbing wildly at the streaming ink on their faces.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Groo-o-gh! Oh, I'll slaughter him!"  
"Yow! My eye! I'll massacre him!"  
"Oh, crumbs! Let's get after him and smash him!"

The inky trio rushed out of the study, showing their way through the laughing crowd, in pursuit of the new boy.

But Jimmy Silver had not lingered. He was already downstairs.

If they had been a little calmer, the Fistical Three might have hesitated to show themselves in public with their faces and collars streaming with black ink.

But they were not calm. They wanted vengeance, and they wanted it at once.

They rushed furiously down the passage, and as they caught sight of Jimmy Silver in the Lower Hall they rushed down the stairs.

A yell of laughter from a crowd of Modern juniors greeted their appearance.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tommy Dodd. "Look at those Classical niggers! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Lovell & Co. did not heed. They hardly saw their old rivals of the Modern side.

They had eyes only for Jimmy Silver, who was sauntering out coolly into the quad. They dashed after him at top speed.

In their hurry they almost dashed into Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of Rookwood, who was in the doorway.

Bulkeley stared at them, and gave a shout. "Stop! Do you hear? Come in at once!"

The inky three reluctantly stopped. There was no gainsaying Bulkeley. The big Sixth-Former glared at them.

"You young sweeps! A pretty state to come out in! What do you mean by it—what?"

Lovell & Co. blinked at him through the ink.

"Oh, don't mind them, Bulkeley," chirped Tommy Dodd. "These Classical kids never wash themselves! I dare say it's a week since they spilled that ink on their chivvies!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Go in at once!" said Bulkeley, frowning at the dismayed three. "Go in and wash yourselves, you mucky young rascals! And take fifty lines each, and show them up by tea-time. Do you hear? Not a word! Get out of my sight, you sweeps!"

Lovell and Newcome and Raby went disconsolately in. Vengeance on the new boy evidently had to be postponed.

The Modern juniors sent a volley of laughter and chipping after them, as they sneaked upstairs and got out of sight.

In the Fourth Form dormitory there was a

sound of splashing, as the heroes of the end study proceeded to remove the ink.

It was not easily removed. There was plenty of it, and it clung.

By the time they had cleaned it off and changed their collars, Lovell & Co. were crimson with exertion, and stuttering with rage.

"That—that new boy!" gasped Lovell. "We'll slaughter him for this! We'll boil him in oil!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Topham, as they came back to their study. "Have you slaughtered the new kid? Why—what—yaroo!"

Topham, to his surprise and indignation, was collared by the exasperated three, and bumped in the passage.

The three badly wanted to bump somebody, and Topham had come along just in time with his awkward question.

They went on to their study, leaving the Fourth-Former sitting on the floor and spluttering with indignation.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER. Run Down!

**L**OVELL & Co. did not see Silver again, however, till dinner-time, when they met at the Fourth Form table.

Lovell dropped into the seat beside Jimmy Silver at the dinner-table, and gave him a black look.

"I want you after dinner," he muttered. "Sorry!" murmured Silver. "I'm going out."

"You can stay in. I'm going to lick you!"

"I'm not looking for a licking, thanks." "You'll get it without looking for it. If you're not a rotten funk, you'll come behind the gym this afternoon."

"My dear chap, I'm going out to have a look at the Coombe Quarries this afternoon. You can't expect me to give that up simply for a licking, now can you?"

"Rotten funk!"  
"Bow-wow!"

"Look here, you've got to fight me!" hissed Lovell.

"What are we going to fight for?" "Because you're a cheeky new kid. I'm going to thrash you!"

"That's all very well. But suppose I thrash you—what then?"

"You—you silly ass—"  
"Look here! Will you agree to make it pax and be a decent pal if I thrash you?" asked Jimmy Silver, in a businesslike tone.

Lovell almost choked. "You—you worm! I—I—I'll mop up the ground with you! As for palling with you, I'd sooner pal with a hyena!"

"Then I'm not going to thrash you," said Jimmy Silver determinedly.

"You howling jaberwock!" exclaimed Lovell. "Do you think you could stand up against me for two ticks?"

"Lovell, you are raising your voice," said Mr. Bootles, blinking along the table. "You seem to be quarrelling. You will go to the Form-room for an hour this afternoon, Lovell, and write out a verb of the first conjugation, both active and passive voices."

Lovell gurgled. His luck was out. If he was to spend an hour writing out the active and passive voices of a verb of the first conjugation, the new kid would be able to dodge him.

That licking would not come off. And Lovell felt that he couldn't wait.

But he had to wait. After dinner, when he made a move to follow the rest into the quadrangle, Mr. Bootles shepherded him off to the Form-room, where he was planted with a Latin grammar and a sheaf of impot paper.

As soon as Mr. Bootles was gone Lovell jumped to the Form-room window.



He saw Jimmy Silver sauntering away, evidently bent on the visit to the Coombe Quarries that he had spoken of.

Lovell shook his fist from the window after the unconscious junior.

"You wait a bit, you blessed funk!" he growled. "Oh, won't I give you a hiding presently!"

And then Lovell sat down to the joys of the active and passive voice.

An hour later he crawled wearily out of the Form-room.

The Classical juniors had a tremendous contempt for the Moderns and all their studies.

They held that the study of the dead languages was the "thing."

They prided themselves upon mugging up Virgil while the Modern cads were busy with bookkeeping or "stinks."

Lovell might therefore have been expected to enjoy his hour with the active and passive voices of a verb of the first conjugation.

But he hadn't.

At all events, he did not look as if he had been enjoying himself when he came out from his detention.

He looked as if he were in a mood for homicide—or manslaughter, at least.

Raby and Newcome were waiting for him. They were sympathetic.

"Where's that new kid?" was Lovell's first question. "Has he come in?"

"No," said Raby. "Never mind him now. We've been waiting for you to go down to footer practice, old chap."

"Hang footer!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Newcome indignantly. "We've waited an hour, and I want to get to the footer, for one!"

"Get to it, then," said Lovell. "I'm going to look for that new kid!"

"Oh, let him alone!" said Raby uneasily. "If he didn't want to fight you, Lovell, don't pile it on him. He—he isn't such a bad chap, you know."

"Are you standing up for him?" bawled Lovell.

"Don't shout, old chap. I say he isn't a bad sort. Look how he dished the Modern cads—"

"Like his cheek!"

"Well, yes; but—"

"And he's a measly funk. I told him I was going to fight him this afternoon, and now he's sneaked off somewhere by himself."

"He didn't strike me as a funk," said Newcome. "It does look a bit like it, though. But if he's a funk, he ain't worth bothering about."

"I'm going to lick him!"

"Come down to footer, there's a good chap!"

"Blow the footer! I'm going after that new kid, I tell you! I know where he's gone."

"Well, I'm going down to the footer," said Raby. "See you later, Lovell! We're going to have a feed at tea, you know. I've had a postal-order."

"Blow the feed!" growled Lovell.

Evidently he was not in a reasonable mood.

"Must say you're agreeable this afternoon," said Raby. "As you're so jolly plain-spoken, I'll follow your example. I think we've been too much down on that new kid—or, rather, you have. He's not a bad sort at all, and it would be more sensible to make it pax with him. He could help us no end against the Modern cads."

"So you're backing him up against me!" snorted Lovell. "That's the kind of pals you are, is it?"

"Oh, don't get your rag out over nothing!" remonstrated Raby. "Blessed if you don't fly out at a word! What's the blessed matter with you? You used to be a good-tempered chap once upon a time."

"Well, if you prefer that chap to me you can back him up and leave me alone!" snorted Lovell. "But he'll come back to you with a beautiful set of features, I can promise you that!"

And Lovell strode away towards the school gates in a towering rage.

Raby and Newcome looked after him in something like dismay.

"My hat! Old Lovell's got his back up, and no mistake!" said Newcome. "Shall we go after him, Raby?"

"Let's get down to the footer. He'll feel better when he's licked the kid," said Raby. "All the same, that chap Silver is decent, and I don't quite see being down on him like this. Come on!"

They went down to footer.

Lovell strode out of the gate, and took the road towards Coombe.

Jimmy Silver had told him that he was going to see the Coombe Quarries, so Lovell knew where to look for him.

He strode on with a set brow and tight lips.

The fellows who knew Lovell for a good-tempered and amiable fellow would hardly have known him now.

His "down" on the new boy seemed to have quite changed him.

He strode along the lane at a good speed. Half-way to the village he turned off by the footpath that led to the quarries.

The old chalk quarries were abandoned now, and the spot was a very lonely one.

The great, yawning pits left in the earth where the quarry-men had worked years ago made the vicinity dangerous to a stranger.

But Lovell knew the ground well.

He came out from the footpath amid the bracken and gorse that grew thickly over the wide expanse and covered up in some places the openings of the deep old pits until one was very close.

And his eyes glittered as he caught sight of a junior in Etons at a distance.

"That's the cad!"

He started towards the junior. It was Jimmy Silver.

The new boy at Rookwood was spending a very cheerful afternoon exploring the old quarries on the upland near the sea.

"Will you wait for me there till I get round?" shouted Lovell.

Silver laughed.

"No fear! I'm going for a stroll."

"Wait there, you funk—you rotter—"

"Rats!"

"Then I'll jump it!"

Lovell retreated from the side of the pits, to take a run for the jump.

Jimmy Silver stared at him in alarm.

"Don't be a mad idiot!" he shouted.

"Why, it's sixty feet deep at least!"

"Bah! Mind your own business! I can clear ten feet, I suppose!"

"But suppose you don't? Stop, I tell you! Lovell, don't be a silly ass!" yelled Jimmy Silver, really alarmed now.

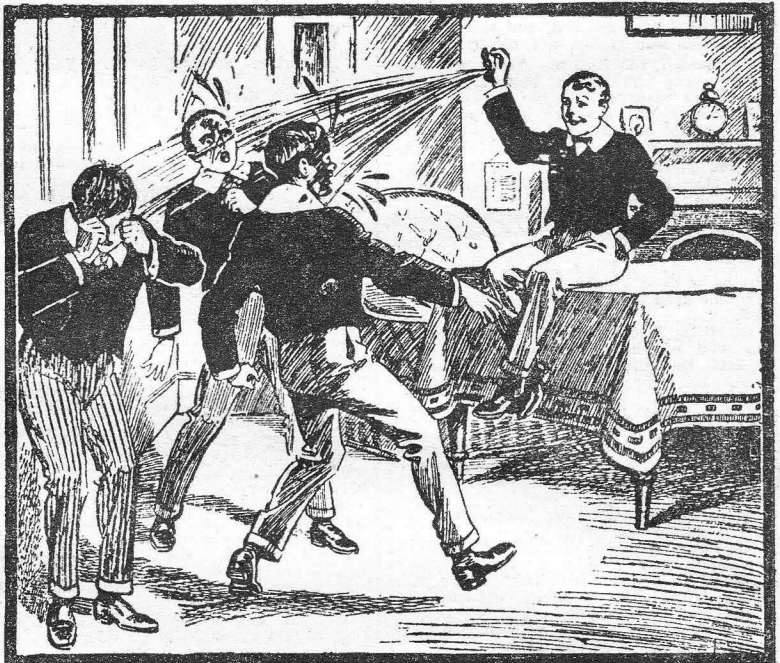
But Lovell did not stop. He took a rapid run, and bounded across the cleft.

Jimmy Silver watched him stonily.

The leaping figure came soaring across, and Lovell's feet landed, but the crumbling edge of the pit yielded under his feet.

He flung himself desperately forward, clutching with his hands. Roots came out in his desperate clutch.

Jimmy Silver bounded towards him, white as death. Before he could reach the unfortunate junior Lovell had slipped back.



**TROUBLE FOR THREE!**

But the cheerful expression faded from his face as he caught sight of Lovell dashing towards him through the long grass and bracken.

He looked worried.

"Stop!" shouted Lovell.

Jimmy Silver stood still watching him.

Between him and the oncoming junior lay a wide pit, which extended for a great distance in each direction.

Lovell had not observed it, but the pit barred him off from Jimmy Silver.

He came on at a run.

"Hallo!" called out Jimmy Silver. "Looking for me?"

"Yes, you funk!"

"Mind where you're running to!"

Lovell halted, gritting his teeth with rage. The deep cavity in the earth yawned at his very feet. It was ten feet wide, and the sides sloped steeply down.

At the bottom there was a splash as Lovell's foot detached a stone, and it whizzed down into the depths.

There was water there, but in the gloom of the pit it could not be seen.

The Classical junior halted, simply raging. Jimmy Silver smiled across at him.

"You funk!" exclaimed Lovell. "You've been dodging me!"

"Guilty, my lord!"

"I'm going to lick you!"

"Bow-wow!"

Jimmy Silver halted on the very verge of the pit.

Far below came the hollow echo of a splash.

Lovell had disappeared!

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.**

By Sheer Pluck.

JIMMY SILVER stood paralysed on the crumbling edge of the pit. His face was white with horror.

But it was only for a moment that he stood thus.

Then he flung himself on his hands and knees on the dizzy verge, and peered down into the darkness below.

"Lovell!"

Jimmy's voice was hoarse and strained; he hardly knew the sound of it as he called: "Lovell! Are you hurt? Answer me!"

Only the echo of his voice replied.

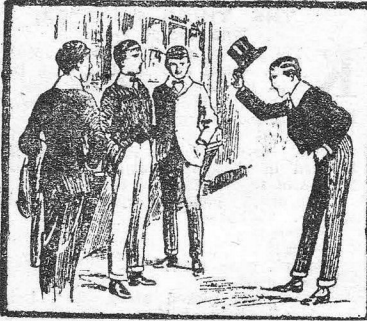
From the junior who had disappeared into the depths of the old quarry came no word, no sound.

Jimmy Silver staggered to his feet and cast a wild look round him.

"It's my fault!" he groaned. "I—I've got to get to him! But how—how?"

Jimmy Silver looked over the dizzy verge and shuddered.





### THE FIRST CHAPTER. Sudden Insanity.

**Y**OU chaps goin' to do your pewp?" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, asked the question, as his chums, Blake, Herries, and Digby, came into Study No. 6.

"Yes," said Blake, puzzled. "Nothing funny in that, is there? We generally do do prep in the evening, don't we?"

"Yaas, deah boy."

"Then what are you grinning at?"

"Was I gwinnin', deah boy?"

"Yes, you were. Where does the joke come in?"

"There isn't any joke, deah boy. Only I hope you won't be disturbed while you're doin' your pewp."

"Why should we be disturbed?" asked Herries. "Those New House bounders planning a raid?"

"Not that I am awah of. But—but you might be disturbed by—a dog in the studay."

Herries looked round quickly.

"Has Towser got loose?" he asked.

"Towsah! Nevah mind Towsah."

"Your minor's beastly mongrel knocking about, then? If the mingy little beast comes in here, I'll jolly soon boot him out!" said Herries.

"Wally's beastly mongrel is not heah, Hewwies."

"Then what do you mean by babbling about a dog in the study?" demanded the mystified Herries. "My bulldog and your minor's rotten mongrel are the only two dogs about the place, excepting Taggles' mastiff, and I suppose he won't come into the studies."

"My impression is," said Digby, "that Gussy is going off his dot. He's talking out of the back of his neck."

"Weally, Digby—"

"Well, don't talk any more," said Blake, sitting down. "I can't do my prep while you're wandering in your mind, Gussy, unless you do it quietly."

And the chums of the Fourth began their preparation. Once or twice they glanced at Arthur Augustus uneasily.

Often and often it had been suggested, by way of a joke, that the noble youth was a little bit off his aristocratic rocker.

But really it seemed to the Fourth-Formers now that there was something in it more than a joke.

Arthur Augustus' remarks were utterly incomprehensible, regarded as the utterances of a sane person.

And that peculiar smile that flitted at intervals over his face—without any apparent cause—it really did seem very queer.

"Gr-r-r-r-r!"

The sound broke suddenly from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the silence of the study, interrupting the labours of the Fourth-Formers. It was a kind of imitation of the growl of a dog.

Blake and Herries and Digby suspended their labours to stare at their study-mate in astonishment. Arthur Augustus' face was twisted up into a fearful expression, as if he were on the point of choking. Blake jumped up and patted him on the back.

"Gussy, what's the matter?"

"Are you ill?"

"Certainly not!" said D'Arcy peevishly. "Stop thumpin' me on the back, you silly ass! It hurts, and you are wumplin' my jacket."

"I thought you were choking."

"Wats?"

"What did you go 'Gr-r-r-r-r' for, then?" exclaimed Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Is it a new trick, trying to imitate Towser?" asked Herries blankly.

"Wubbish! Are you fellows sure that there isn't a dog under the table?"

# D'ARCY, THE VENTRILOQUIST!

A Magnificent Long, Complete Story, dealing with the Early Adventures of Tom Merry & Co., the Chums of St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"A what?"

"Where?"

"My hat!"

"A dog undah the table, deah boys," said D'Arcy firmly.

He had made that horrible sound in the firm belief that it sounded as if it proceeded from under the table.

"Gussy, old man, you'd better go and lie down a bit," said Blake soberly. "Go and lie down in the dorm for a bit, and you'll feel better."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Perhaps it runs in the family," said Herries. "Are any of your relations potty, Gussy?"

"You fwabjous ass, Hewwies!"

"Well, if you're not potty, what are you doing it for?" exclaimed Blake.

"Weally, you duffah—"

"Well, shut up, and let's get on with the washing!" said Blake, sitting down again.

"Don't make that horrible row in your neck again, that's all."

Arthur Augustus sniffed disdainfully.

Blake and Herries and Digby glanced at D'Arcy several times after that covertly. They were really uneasy about him. However, preparation was finished without any further sounds of alarm.

Then D'Arcy rose.

"Will you come with me to post a lettah, Blake?" he asked.

"Certainly!" said Blake. "I'll take it for you, if you like."

"No; I want you to come with me," said D'Arcy, that inexplicable grin breaking over his face again.

Blake nodded shortly.

He felt that it was better not to let Gussy go anywhere alone, under the circumstances.

Arthur Augustus picked up a letter he had written earlier for the purpose, and they quitted the study together.

The House was closed, but they slipped out into the quadrangle to post the letter. The school letter-box was in the wall near the gate.

They cut across the quad and reached the box. Arthur Augustus halted there, but he did not seem in a hurry to drop the letter into the orifice.

He coughed to clear his throat.

"Groan!"

Blake jumped almost clear of the ground. That sudden terrible groan from the junior at his side startled him almost out of his wits.

"Great Scott!" he gasped. "Have you got a pain, Gussy?"

"No! I haven't a pain."

"What did you groan for, then?"

"Oh, wats! Put that lettah in the box, will you?"

Blake took the letter from him and dropped it into the box. Then a voice—which D'Arcy fondly imagined to proceed from the letter-box—exclaimed:

"Ow! You've drowped that on my head!"

Blake jumped away, his jaw falling, and his eyes opening wide.

"On your head?" he stammered.

"Yaas!" went on the amateur ventriloquist, still believing that his voice proceeded from the letter-box. "Ow! I'm suffocatin'!"

"You look as if you were!" exclaimed Blake, scanning the elegant junior's twisted and anguished face. "Good heavens, Gussy, what is the matter with you? Are you going to have a fit?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Do you feel as if you were suffocating?" asked Blake anxiously. "Come over here to the fountain. I'll swamp some cold water over you."

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. Didn't it seem to you, Blake—did you not think there was someone in the lettah-box?" asked D'Arcy anxiously.

Blake almost fell down.

The opening in the letter-box would not have admitted a rabbit, let alone a human being. D'Arcy's question was proof positive—to Blake's mind, at least—that he was not right in his head.

"Someone in the letter-box!" said Blake faintly.

"Yaas."

"Come indoors, Gussy," said Blake, very gently, taking his chum's arm. "Come on, old chap!"

"You uttah duffah! I tell you—"

"Yes, yes," said Blake soothingly; "I know—I know! Come on, Gussy; come in, there's a good chap! This way. I'm your old pal Blake. Don't you know me?"

"Of course I know you, you fwightful ass! But are you quite sure there was no one in the lettah-box, deah boy?"

Blake groaned inwardly.

"Well, well, perhaps there was," he said cautiously. "You never can tell, in—in these pillar-boxes, you know. Some—some chap may have crawled in for a joke, you know."

"You uttah chump, Blake! You know that is imposs."

"Of course it is," said Blake, determined to agree with everything his insane chum said. "Quite impossible. You're quite right."

"Weally, Blake, I think you are a bit off your chump, the way you talk wot!"

"Yes, a little," admitted Blake. "I can't help it, you know. It takes me like that. Now come indoors, old fellow!"

Arthur Augustus grunted, but he submitted to being led into the School House again. Blake marched him upstairs, but he declined to go back into Study No. 6.

"I'm goin' to see Tom Mewwy," he remarked.

"I'll come with you," said Blake.

"Wats! You stay where you are!"

And D'Arcy walked up the passage.

Herries and Digby joined Blake, and the chief of Study No. 6, in great distress, confided to them that there was no further doubt that Arthur Augustus was quite "potty."

"He gave a horrible groan in the quad," said Blake, in an awed whisper. "And when I dropped the letter in the letter-box, he said I had dropped it on his head."

"Great Scott!"

"Then he said he was suffocating," groaned Blake; "and his face was twisted up very queerly. But that isn't all. He asked me whether I thought there was somebody in the letter-box."

Herries and Digby staggered.

"In the letter-box?" said Digby faintly.

"Yes."

"Must have been pulling your leg," said Herries.

"No; he was in deadly earnest. He's simply as mad as a hatter. What on earth's to be done?" said Blake, in deep distress.

And the chums of Study No. 6 consulted in troubled whispers upon that knotty point.

### THE SECOND CHAPTER.

#### The Lunatic.

**T**OM MERRY had finished his preparation when Arthur Augustus dropped into the study.

Monty Lowther had finished, too, and he was roasting chestnuts. Manners was cutting films—he generally was cutting films.

Tom Merry gave the swell of St. Jim's a cheerful nod as he came in.

"Just in time for the chestnuts," he remarked. "Lowther's standing chestnuts."

"Thank you, very much; but I have not come to pewuse Lowther's Comic Column for the 'Weekly,' deah boy," said Arthur Augustus innocently.



overwhelmed with astonishment. "I weally believe you fellows have all gone pottay!"

"That's it—lunatics always think other people are mad," said Lowther. "It's one of the well-known signs!"

"You silly chump—"  
"I think there's some mistake!" said Kildare, laughing. "D'Arcy will have to explain. What have you been talking like an idiot for, D'Arcy? Is it your idea of a joke?"

"As a mattah of fact, I've been takin' the fellows in—"  
"Pretending to be mad?"

"Certainly not!" said D'Arcy indignantly.  
"Then what have you been making queer noises for, and talking out of the back of your neck?" demanded Blake.

"I wefuse to explain!"  
"I'll take him to the Housemaster," said Kildare. "He certainly seems not quite himself, whether he's mad or not. He can't have been doing all that for nothing."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I—I'd wathah not go to the Housemastah. I'll explain if you like."

"Buck up, then!"  
"The fact is—"  
Arthur Augustus paused impressively.

"Well?"  
"The fact is, deah boys, I am—"  
Another impressive pause.

"Mad!" said Blake.  
"No, you ass; I wasn't goin' to say that! The fact is, I am a ventriloquist!"

"A-a-wha-a-at?"  
All the juniors gasped out the word together. It was the very last explanation they would have thought of.

The crowd of fellows in and around the doorway stared at Arthur Augustus dumb-founded. Kildare and Darrel burst into a loud laugh.

"I am a ventriloquist!" said Arthur Augustus loftily. "I made my voice pwoceed fwom up the chimney, and made a gwowl like a dog pwoceed fwom undah the table. Do you compwehend now, you duffahs?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
A yell of laughter rang through the passage and the study. The juniors seemed on the point of convulsions.

Arthur Augustus was not mad, after all. But that he should fancy that he was a ventriloquist, and that his voice had proceeded from anywhere but his own mouth, was still more astonishing.

"Oh!" gasped Blake. "My only summer hat! So that's it, is it?"

"Yaas, you duffah!"  
"A—a—a ventriloquist! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the juniors.  
"There is nothin' to laugh at, exceptin' the way you fellows have been taken in—"

"Taken in! Ha, ha, ha!"  
"If you like to listen to me, Kildare, I will give you a sample. Dawwel, old man, just listen while I make my voice pwoceed fwom the chimney—"

But Kildare and Darrel were staggering away, convulsed. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked round indignantly at the throng of grinning faces.

"You uttah asses! I twust you are not wotten enough to be jealous of my powahs?"

"You idiot!" shrieked Blake. "Do you think you were ventriloquising? You frabjous ass! It was plain all the time that you were making the row! Oh, my hat!"

"Wats!"  
"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors clung to the walls and to one another.

The swell of St. Jim's sniffed disdainfully, and walked away with his noble nose high in the air.

He left the juniors howling like hyenas.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

"Sweet Are the Uses of Advertisement."

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY were a very thoughtful expression the next morning in the Form-room.

It was not his lessons that caused the thoughtful expression—indeed, Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, found him so inattentive that he rewarded him with fifty lines.

But Arthur Augustus gave no thought to the impot.

He had a more important matter than lessons and impositions to think about.

He breathed a sigh of relief when the Fourth were dismissed.

"I've been thinkin', deah boys," he remarked to his chums, in the Form-room passage, when the Fourth came out.

"So have I," said Blake. "I've been think-

in' that we'll get some footer practice before dinner. Come on, you fellows!"

"I was goin' to say—"  
"This way!" said Blake, unheeding; and he walked off with Herries and Digby.

Arthur Augustus sniffed, and joined the Terrible Three, who had just come out with the rest of the Shell.

Tom Merry & Co. were also thinking of football, but they politely paused to hear what Arthur Augustus had to say; but Tom Merry held up his hand in warning.

"No more ventriloquism," he said. "You gave me a pain in my ribs last night. It isn't good for the health to laugh too much. So keep off the ventriloquism, there's a good chap!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"  
"Chuck it up, and come along to footer practice, Gussy," advised Manners.

"Wats! All I wequire is some pwactice," said Arthur Augustus. "I want a weally good instwuctah to develop my gift, you know!" "They ought to have it in the curriculum here, instead of Latin or German," said Lowther gravely.

"Yaas, that would be a weally good ideah. Pewwaps you chaps can suggest a way of gettin' a ventwiloquial profwessah's services?"

They could see plainly enough that Monty Lowther was inwardly planning some jape upon the swell of the Fourth, though they could not guess what it was.

They walked off, and Lowther accompanied D'Arcy to Study No. 6.

Arthur Augustus was feeling very pleased. Being left in the lurch, as it were, by his own chums, it was very grateful and comforting to find a Shell fellow who took his aspirations seriously and was willing to lend a helping hand.

"Let me see!" said D'Arcy, dipping a pen in the ink. "Something like this: 'Wanted.—A professional ventriloquist to give instwuctions. State terms.—A. A. D'Arcy, School House, St. Jim's.' That all wight, deah boy?"

"Better make it a bit plainer," said Lowther thoughtfully. "Better put in 'apply personally.'"

"But they could communicate with me by lettah."

"Yes; but then you might make arrangements with some chap who was only spoofing," said Lowther. "Better have the man here and see him, and make him give you a sample of what he can do."

Arthur Augustus nodded assent.



GUSSY SURPRISES HIS CHUMS!

asked Arthur Augustus. "There are probably a lot of them wound about, if one could get at them. It would be wathah expensive to have one down fwom London!"

"Go hon!"  
"I was thinkin' of advertisin' for a pwofwessah," said D'Arcy. "What do you think of that ideah?"

"Sweet are the uses of advertisement!" said Lowther. "Shakespeare says so, so it must be true!"

"You ass! Shakespeare said, 'Sweet are the uses of adversary, not advertisement!'"

"Did he? Well, of course, he was rather behind the times," said Lowther blandly.

"Shove the advertisement in the 'Rylcombe Gazette,' or the 'Wayland Times,' Gussy, and you'll have a whole host of answers. You'll have ventriloquial professors warming in on you as thick as the giddy leaves in Valambrossa!"

"You really think it's a good ideah?" asked Arthur Augustus, much comforted.

"It's the only way," said Lowther solemnly. "I'll tell you what, I'll do, Gussy. I've got to go over to Wayland after dinner about my footer-boots—I'm going over on my bike—and if you like, I'll take the advertisement to the office of the 'Wayland Times,' and ask them to put it in the paper this week. The 'Times' comes out to-morrow, you know!"

"I say, that's awfully decent of you, Lowthah," said Arthur Augustus gratefully.

"Not at all," said Lowther. "I shall be pleased. You fellows can go down to footer. I'm going to help Gussy draw up his advertisement."

Tom Merry and Manners grinned.

"Yaas, that's vewy thoughtfoul of you, Lowthah. I'll make 'em apply personally, then."

"And put in 'Saturday afternoon,' as that's a half-holiday, and you'll have plenty of time to attend to them," said Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! I shall have to cut the footah again, and that's wathah wotten, as we are playin' the New House."

"Never mind. It will give the School House a chance to win."

"What!"  
"I—I mean it will give the New House a chance," said Lowther hastily. "You can't set a matter of this importance aside simply to play football."

"Yaas, quite so. 'Apply personally on Satadahday aftahnnoon,'" said Arthur Augustus.

"That's all wight, Lowthah."

"Yes, write it out, and I'll take it over."

"Oh, don't mench!"  
And Monty Lowther left the study with the advertisement in his pocket. Arthur Augustus called after him:

"What about payin' for it, deah boy?"

"Only about a bob or two; we'll settle that afterwards," said Lowther.

"Wight-ho!"  
And Arthur Augustus proceeded to practise ventriloquism until dinner-time.

He was very pleased that Lowther was going over to Wayland.

It would have taken up his own time, which he preferred to devote to ventriloquial practice.

Had he known the thoughts that were in the



He caught the light of D'Arcy's face in the doorway of the School House, and hurried away to the ga School House, and hurried  
 "Sure, the professor hasn't stayed long, Gussy darling!" Reiff hadn't stayed long, Arthur Augustus remarked.  
 "Oh, wats!" he said. "The man is mad; I'm jolly glad he's gone. The man is mad; D'Arcy waited until he had recovered his breath. Then he turned on his heel, and returned to Study No. 6.

**THE SIXTH CHAPTER.**  
**Still They Come.**

**A** FAT little gentleman, with a silk hat and a white beard, made appearance a few minutes later. Lowther, who had just arrived on the scene, approached him, raising his cap with much politeness.

"You wish to see D'Arcy, sir?"  
 "Eh?" The old gentleman put his hand to his ear and bent his head. "I am a little deaf. Pray speak louder."  
 "You want to see D'Arcy?" bawled Lowther.

"Yes, yes. I am Professor Krammer—professor of languages," the old gentleman explained. "I have called in reference to an advertisement."

"This way!" said Lowther.  
 "To-day? Yes, I think it was to-day the advertisement said," replied Professor Krammer. "Yes, certainly it was to-day!"

"Will you follow me?"  
 "No, I have not had tea," said Professor Krammer, again misunderstanding. "However, that is of no importance. Is Master D'Arcy here?"

"I'll take you to him, sir!" shrieked Lowther.

"Oh, yes! Quite so! Thank you!" said the old gentleman, blinking benevolently through his spectacles. "Thank you, my lad!"

Monty Lowther led him into the School House a to Study No. 6.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jumped up to receive his visitor.

Lowther showed him into the study, and vanished.

"Pwofessah Kwammah!" said Arthur Augustus. "Glad to see you, pwofessah! Will you take a seat?"

Professor Krammer sat down, with a benevolent smile.

"I have called in reference to the advertisement in the 'Wayland Times,'" he explained. "You are—ahem!—rather young to be taking up so serious a study."

"I twust I shall be able to learn, all the same, sir."

"Eh?"  
 "I twust I shall be able to learn!" yelled D'Arcy.

"Oh, yes; decidedly! The earlier the better, really, for such a difficult study," said Professor Krammer. "Of course, it will be many years before you are proficient. I will not conceal that from you."

"Bai Jove!"  
 "What languages do you study here, in the ordinary curriculum?"

"Languages?"  
 "Yes. French, I suppose; and German and Latin, of course?"

"Yaas."  
 "But not Greek?"

"They used to have Gweek," said Arthur Augustus. "But it was dropped for German. It's an extwa now for those who want it. I don't. But what has that to do—"

"You say you study Gweek?"  
 "No; I say I do not!"

"Ah! And you have no grounding in the language?"

D'Arcy shook his head. He found that an easier way of saying no than with his voice to the deaf old gentleman.

"And in Sanskrit, Hebrew, and Chinese—nothing as yet, I suppose?"

"Bai Jove! No!"

"Very well. Everything must have a beginning," said the professor benevolently. "I must say it is very meritorious indeed a young gentleman of your years to take up such difficult studies. I will make a suggestion, I should recommend beginning with only one of them—say, Greek at first."

"Gweek!"  
 "Yes; you will find that the easiest of the four."

Arthur Augustus stared at him blankly.

"But I don't want to study Gweek!" he gasped.

"This week? Certainly; to-day, if you

like!" said the professor, who apparently was a little deaf. "In fact, I am quite prepared to give you your first lesson now."

There was the sound of a chuckle from the passage. The professor did not hear it, but Arthur Augustus did, and he guessed that Tom Merry & Co. were there, listening to that peculiar interview with enjoyment.

Arthur Augustus was not enjoying it. "You have some books, I suppose?" asked the professor, drawing his chair up to the table.

"I have no books on ventwiloquism," said D'Arcy.

"Eh?"  
 "I haven't any books about it."

"Ah, then, you must obtain some," said the professor. "However, we can commence without books."

"Good!" said Arthur Augustus, much relieved, feeling that they were getting to business at last. "I suppose the first lesson will be in the—'in' the voice?"

"Eh? The voice? We shall study both the active and the passive voice, of course. But that will come later."

"I should have thought the voice was active all the time, sir."

"Chora—land. Xwpa—hee chora," said the professor, pronouncing it for D'Arcy's benefit. "Hee chora—the land! You see?"

"B-b-but—"

"That is a feminine noun, nominative case, singular number, and therefore it takes the article—"

"Yaas, but—but I'm not studyin' Gweek!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "What has that got to do with ventwiloquism? Bai Jove, you're worse than the othah chap!"

"Eh?"  
 "I weally do not undahstand."

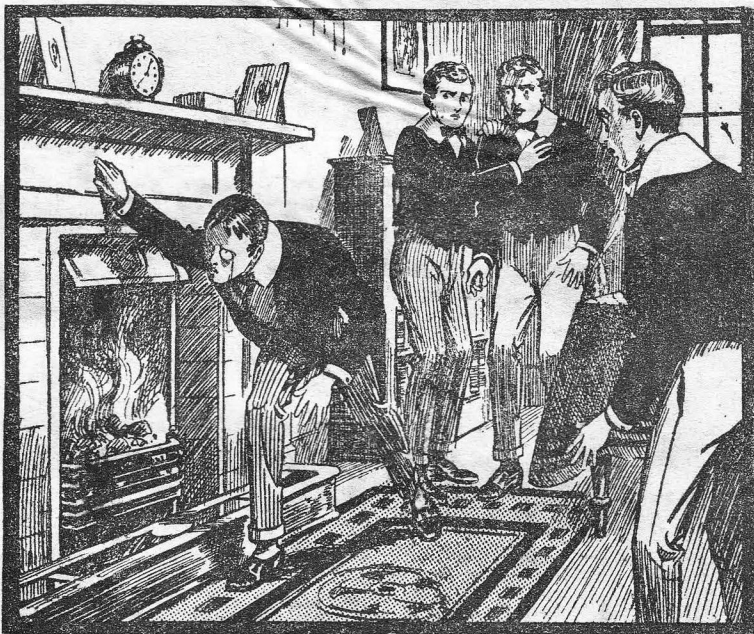
"You will understand me in time," said the professor. "It is naturally a little difficult at first, owing to the difference in the alphabet. But in a short time you will find yourself able to make the Greek letters as easily as the Roman, and to read them as easily. It is merely a question of custom. When you get to the Chinese you will find your difficulties begin."

"Chinese! Gweat Scott!"

"But we are doing Greek at present. I will send you a list of books you had better obtain—"

"Books on ventwiloquism?"

"Eh?"



**"IS GUSSY OUT OF HIS SENSES?"**

"Eh?"  
 "Isn't the voice always active?" shrieked D'Arcy.

"My dear boy, of course not! It is the same as in Latin—indeed, in any language—there is always an active and a passive voice," said the professor. "For instance, luo—I loose—that is active."

"Oh, er, crumbs! Bless if he isn't teachin' me Gweek!" muttered Arthur Augustus. "I suppose ventwiloquists are all mad. That is the only explanation. It's uttably impos that it should be necessary to learn Gweek in ordah to be a ventwiloquist. I say—he shouted again—"is that weally necessary, pwofessah?"

"Not now—not now," said the professor soothingly. "We shall come to the verbs later on. We must begin at the beginning, of course. Are you acquainted with the Greek alphabet?"

"Gweek alphabet! My deah sir, I lettahs," said Arthur Augustus. "I know more than that, and I forget them. But is it necessary—"

"Good. We will commence with the first article," said the professor. "There are thirty forms of the definite article in Greek; but that is not so difficult as it sounds, as many of them are merely repetitions of the others. We will take a simple noun of the first declension for a beginning"

"But—"

"Xwpa—the professor wrote it down.

"Are you goin' to send me a list of books on ventwiloquism?" shrieked D'Arcy.

"Certainly not! What do you mean? What has ventwiloquism to do with learning Greek?" the professor exclaimed in astonishment.

"What I want to know is what has learnin' Gweek to do with ventwiloquism?" groaned the unfortunate student. "I don't know what you're dwin' at. Will you explain?"

"Eh?"  
 "I should like you to explain what you mean."

"Certainly, certainly! Now, for your first exercise, until you obtain your books, we will take the noun 'chora,' and decline it."

"I shall certainly decline it! I shall decline the whole bizney!" howled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I decline to have anythin' to do with it! I weally think you must be off your wockah!"

"Eh?"  
 "You must have come to the w'ong place. I wasn't advertisin' for a teachah of beastly Gweek. I haven't the faintest ideah what you have come heah for, unless you have escaped f'rom a lunatic asylum!" Arthur Augustus exclaimed, utterly exasperated, and rising to his feet. "I wufuse to listen to any more of this on any terms!"

"Terms!" exclaimed the professor, catching only the last word. "Dear me! I quite forgot to mention about terms. Shall we say half-a-guinea a lesson?"

THE PENNY POPULAR.—No. 3.

"But I tell you," gasped D'Arcy—"I tell you I don't want to learn Gweck! There's no need for you to stay now."

"Certainly. I have no objection to your paying now—in fact, I generally receive my fees in advance," said the deaf gentleman. "If you prefer, you can pay for each lesson separately, or for a whole term in advance. I leave that entirely to you, Master D'Arcy."

"I wish you would leave my study to me." "Yes, undoubtedly it will be a valuable study for you," agreed the professor. "Oh, cwumbs! I didn't say anything of the sort. I say—"

"Very well, if you wish to pay—half-a-guinea, please! But we have not finished the lesson yet."

"Will you go away?" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

The professor heard that, and he rose to his feet in astonishment and indignation. He glared at the junior over his spectacles.

"I fail to understand you. Am I to understand that you do not require these lessons, Master D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then you have brought me here for nothing, and wasted my time?"

"You've been wastin' my time, I think," said the exasperated swell of St. Jim's. "Blow your beastly old Gweck! Go and buy it!"

"Under the circumstances, I shall refuse to give you any lessons!"

"Thank goodness!" "But you will not be allowed to waste my valuable time like this, young gentleman!" thundered the indignant professor. "I shall accept payment for this lesson."

"Bai Jove! Will you?"

"Pay up, Gussy!" chortled Monty Lowther at the door. "Better let him go. There are three chaps downstairs waiting their turns."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Thwee ventwiloquial professors!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Yes; and one's got a cornet."

"My hat!"

"And the other two have sets of golf-clubs!"

"Great Scott!"

"And there's a man coming across the quad with a 'cello!" yelled Reilly up the stairs.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They're all insane!" gasped Arthur Augustus, utterly dismayed. "All as mad as giddy hattsahs!"

"Sir, you owe me half-a-guinea!" said the professor sternly. "Unless you hand me that sum, and apologise for your extraordinary behaviour, I shall go at once to your head-master!"

"Pay up, Gussy!"

"But weally—oh, vewy well! The old johinnie has made a mistake, but he is an old chap, and he can have ten-and-six if he wants it," said Arthur Augustus. "And he generously handed out a half-sovereign and a sixpence. "There you are, sir. There has been a mistake. I'm sorry!"

The professor snorted, pocketed the coins, and marched out of the study. Toby put his head in at the door.

"Four gentlemen to see you, Master D'Arcy," he sniggered.

"D-d-don't let them come up!" stuttered D'Arcy, feeling as if his head was turning round. "I can't stand any more of it! I weally can't! Dwife them away!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jack Blake and Tom Merry came hurrying along to the study.

"Getting your visitors, Gussy?" inquired Blake, looking into the study. "Hallo, what's wrong? You don't look happy!"

Arthur Augustus groaned.

"I'm fed-up! I—I think I shall chuck up ventwiloquism!" he panted. "They're all mad—mad as March hattsahs—I mean, hares!"

They want to teach me ventwiloquism with violins and Gweck exabises!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's a chap crossing the quad with a book under his arm!" yelled Manners. "I can't see whether it's Hebrew or Sanskrit!" "And here comes a chap with a cornet!" said Monty Lowther.

Arthur Augustus sank down in a chair and gasped.

As the afternoon wore on, more and more answers were coming to the advertisement.

In the Lower Hall there were now six gentlemen waiting to see Augustus D'Arcy, in various degrees of shabbiness, with violin, and violoncello, and golf-clubs, and big volumes.

Arthur Augustus was in a very peculiar predicament.

"I can't stand any more of it!" he gasped. "That old chap nearly turned my hair grey! I won't see them! They can go and dwoon themselves!"

"But you must see them!" yelled Tom Merry. "They've come in answer to your ad, and they will want their expenses, anyway. Better take the opportunity and learn the violin, the 'cello, the piano, the cornet, and golf, and Sanskrit, and Greek!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They're all doltay! Pway dwife them away! Give them their expenses—give them anything they ask for—only don't let them into this studay!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "It's imposs for me to deal with that cwoad. Dwife them away!"

### THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Saved!

"D WIFE them away, deaf boys!" The juniors shrieked with laughter. But it was no laughing matter to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The unfortunate swell of St. Jim's felt as though his brain was in a whirl.

The Greek professor had worn him out, as it were. He had not nerve enough to face the rest of his callers. And they were increasing in numbers.

A glance from the study window showed him another long-haired and shabby gentleman crossing the quadrangle with a violin-case under his arm.

Arthur Augustus fairly collapsed into the study armchair, and groaned in anguish of spirit.

"They must be pottay!" he gasped. "How can you teach ventwiloquism with a beastly violin?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or with Gweck exabises and things, and cellos and—an— Bai Jove, one of them will be bwingin' along a gwand piano next!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"A chap with a cornet's coming upstairs!" chuckled Blake.

"Keep him out!"

"But—"

"Master D'Arcy here?" said the seedy gentleman with the cornet, looking in surprise at the almost hysterical juniors gathered round the doorway of Study No. 6. "I've called in answer to an advertisement in the 'Wayland Times.'"

"Don't let him come in!"

"What's that?" ejaculated the cornet-player.

"Ahem! Master D'Arcy is seeing a good many callers this afternoon!" gasped Lowther.

"Just wait downstairs a bit, will you?"

"My time's valuable."

"Yes, yes! But wait a bit."

The gentleman with the cornet discontentedly retreated downstairs. He was met on the stairs by an equally seedy individual with a 'cello.

"I've called in answer to an advertisement—"

"Yes, yes!"

"In the 'Wayland Times.'"

"Yes; but—"

peristed the "Is Master D'Arcy here?" brought my gentleman with the 'cello. I had to bring instrument with me, a'f'isement stated that it in a cab. The ad."

expenses would be jyn and wait a bit," said "Yes, yes. G'choking. And he fairly Blake, almost the gentleman with the 'cello.

"shooed" av' em come in!" groaned Arthur. "Don't let a weally cannot stand any more of it! I feel as if my brain will turn!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I had to see anythin' whatever to laugh at. The 'ares are all mad—mad as hattsahs and at. The 'ares welded together, bai Jove! It's Mare' dangewous to have all these feabih 'antsahs in the house at once!"

"Blake clung to the doorway, in danger of an attack of hysterics.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Gussy!" he gasped. "I'll get rid of the giddy cwoad of them if you'll give up ventwiloquism. Otherwise, I'll bring the whole gang in here on you at once."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Is it a go?" demanded Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! I was thinkin' of givin' up the beastly thing, anyway!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "I am convinced that all ventwiloquists are off their giddy wockahs, a'fah this. It must have some peccahiah effect upon the brain, I suppose. It's a go! Only get wid of them, deaf boy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll save you!" chuckled Tom Merry. "We'll have a whip round to raise the exes for them, and Gussy shall stand us a big feed in the study to compensate."

"Yaas, wathah! Anythin' you like!" "Prust to us!" said Monty Lowther nobly. "We'll rescue you, Gussy. Quite sure, though, you wouldn't like to interview personally the lunatic with the 'cello?"

"Yaas, yaas!"

"Or the maniac with the golf-clubs?" "Yaas, yaas!" shrieked D'Arcy. "Dwife them away!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake, nearly choking, dragged the study door shut. Then the grinning juniors hurried downstairs to deal with the crowd of applicants for the post of instructing Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in so many varied arts.

The crowd of seedy gentlemen received by unsatisfactory explanation that the advert did not require their services. Whereupon there was a general indignant howl for expenses, and when it was admitted that the claim for expenses would be met, it was remarkable how expensive a thing it seemed to be for a seedy gentleman to walk over from Wayland to St. Jim's.

However, terms were arranged at last, and the visitors departed with their various instruments, Arthur Augustus watching them go from his study window.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not become a ventwiloquist.

He was quite fed up on that subject. For some considerable time he remained firmly convinced that ventwiloquism had a deleterious effect upon the brain.

He received sudden enlightenment, however, when a copy of the famous advertisement in the "Wayland Times" came before his eyes one day.

Then he understood. His indignation was great, but it only evoked chuckles in the School House.

Fortunately, by that time Arthur Augustus was very keen about football, and he confided to Blake, on reflection, that, upon the whole, he'd decided that he'd better stick to football and let ventwiloquism alone." And he did.

And so Study No. 6 was troubled no more with the weird and wonderful efforts of D'Arcy, the ventwiloquist.

THE END.

Next Friday's Splendid, Complete Tale of the Chums of St. Jim's is entitled

## CAUGHT NAPPING!

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