

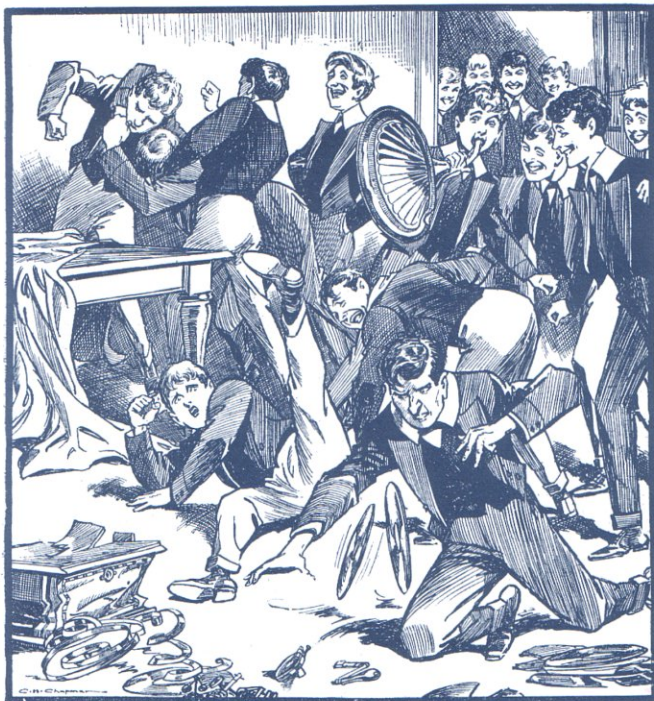
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THE END OF FISH'S GRAMOPHONE!

(An Exciting Scene in the Magnificent Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.)

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Alonzo's Agency!

A Magnificent Long, Complete School Story of Harry Wharton : & Co. at Greyfriars School. :

BY
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Deceiving the Duffer.

"**D**EAR me!"

Thus spake Alonzo Todd, generally known as the Duffer of Greyfriars.

Alonzo was strolling down Friarade Lane, his nose deeply immersed in a book.

"The Story of a Potato," still held charms for the meek and mild Removite. Alonzo was taking a solitary walk this afternoon, and was deriving much enjoyment from the all-absorbing pages of Uncle Benjamin's gift.

But Alonzo, happening to glance up for a brief second, had chanced to see somebody on the stile by the wayside.

Alonzo stared.

"Good gracious!" he murmured.

The person who had thus attracted Alonzo's attention was a seedy-looking gentleman in drab clerical garb. Upon his head was a dilapidated top-hat, from beneath which a mop of sleek, gingery hair protruded in a straggly mass. His nose and cheeks were extremely red—an art shade in scarlet, in fact—and his coat, which had once been black, was exceedingly rusty.

His trousers literally fitted where they touched, and, being very short, displayed at the bottoms a liberal length of dirty white sock, which gave way to a pair of large boots, very dirty and, like the remainder of their possessor's raiment, very much the worse for wear.

The gentleman's dress, although in an advanced state of dilapidation, proclaimed him to be a clergyman.

His manners and actions, however, seemed to indicate otherwise.

It was his manner, indeed, that had made Alonzo Todd halt in his perambulation and stare.

The seedy-looking gentleman was, in fact, in the act of raising a green glass

bottle to his lips, whilst a white-gloved hand clasped the lower part of his waist-coat.

Alonzo blinked.

"How—how extraordinary!" he murmured.

The sight of a clergyman imbibing from a bottle a liquid that looked suspiciously like intoxicating liquor was truly a sight to make the guileless Duffer stare.

It did not occur to Alonzo that it was rude to stare so hard.

At that moment the object of Alonzo's attention lowered the bottle and smacked his lips.

Then his eye lighted upon the Removite.

The gentleman on the stile returned Alonzo's stare with a pair of bleary, blue eyes.

"Hallo, young shaver!" he called.

Alonzo Todd jumped.

The red-nosed man beckoned to Alonzo with a long, gloved hand.

Wonderingly, Alonzo Todd walked over to him.

He blinked at the stranger.

"Good-afternoon!" said the clerical gentleman affably. "Were you wishing to speak to me?"

"Ahem!" coughed the Duffer, going rather red. "I—I thought—"

"Eh?"

"Er—er—er—" stammered Alonzo.

"I—I was thinking that—er—you were a clergyman—"

The seedy gentleman slapped his breast with a majestic motion.

"So I am!" he declared. "The Reverend Jeremiah Slagg—that's me!"

"Oh!" gasped Alonzo.

The Rev. Jeremiah Slagg looked hard at the Duffer.

He was taking stock of Alonzo, and mentally voting him an extremely soft youth.

Alonzo's gaze inadvertently wandered

to the green bottle in the reverend gentleman's hand.

"The Rev. Jeremiah Slagg grinned.

"Tonic," he said, a pathetic note in his voice. "A nerve-tonic, you know!"

"A—a tonic!" murmured Alonzo Todd, blinking at the bottle.

The reverend Mr. Slagg nodded and groaned.

"Yès!" he said. "The exigencies of my labours among mankind tell very heavily upon my frail system. Believe me, my dear young friend, I should most likely be in the realms above by now were it not for this tonic which I always carry with me."

"Indeed!" said Alonzo.

"Yes, indeed!" said Mr. Slagg pathetically, raising his bleary eyes unto the heavens. "I suffer for the sake of my labour. Verily, the path the righteous tread is a hard and thorny one!"

Alonzo Todd's susceptible heart instantly went out towards the pathetic Mr. Slagg.

Alonzo Todd was the most guileless youth in the whole of Greyfriars, and so guileful that he had earned for himself the nickname, "The Duffer of Greyfriars."

Indeed, Alonzo's cousin Peter had very often remarked that Alonzo was as green as a lettuce.

The Reverend Jeremiah Slagg, seeing Alonzo's eyes soften, groaned dismally and laid a hand upon his heart.

"Yes, my dear young friend," he went on. "My labour is the labour of love, I toil for degenerate humanity, for the lower races of mankind. Mine, however, is a thankless task!"

Alonzo looked commiseratingly at the Rev. Jeremiah Slagg.

"May I—er—enquire the nature of your labour, Mr. Slagg?" he faltered.

"Ah!" said Mr. Slagg, with a pious sigh. "Would that there were others to take such an interest! My dear Mr.—Mr.—"

"Todd," replied Alonzo, furnishing his surname.

"My dear Mr. Todd," said the reverend gentleman, "I am District Treasurer for the Cannibals' Conversion Society."

Alonzo's eyes opened wide.

"The 'C.C. Cannibals' Conversion Society!" gasped the unsophisticated Duffer. "Oh!"

"My work," continued Mr. Slagg, looking craftily at Alonzo, "is to collect subscriptions for the society. The object of the Cannibals' Conversion Society is to buy hymn-books and chewing-gum for the cannibals of the South Sea Islands!"

"Chewing-gum!" exclaimed Alonzo.

"For what purpose do cannibals require chewing-gum?"

Mr. Slagg gave him a pitying look.

"Why, my dear young friend, with chewing-gum in their mouths, they would not wish to eat each other!" explained the red-nosed clergyman. "The only cure for cannibalism is chewing-gum—and money is wanted to provide the man-eating tribes of the South Sea Islands with chewing-gum."

The glibble Alonzo's eyes opened wide.

"Dear me!" he said. "It is indeed a worthy and deserving object. Years ago I used to subscribe to the Society for Providing South Sea Islanders with Tracts and Trousers—"

The Rev. Jeremiah Slagg's eyes gleamed.

"Did you really?" he exclaimed.

"Heartily congratulations, my dear young friend. I see your heart is soft, and that you have an interest in our cause!"

"Yes, indeed I have!" replied Alonzo Todd, beaming. "I—I hadn't thought of chewing-gum as a remedy for cannibalism, but as you point out, it would be effective. I am deeply interested in your society, and—"

"Will you render assistance, Mr. Todd?" asked the Rev. Mr. Slagg.

"Yes, most willingly," responded the meek and mild Duffer. "I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would approve."

"Agents are badly needed," said Mr. Slagg sorrowfully. "Unfortunately all the work of raising subscriptions for the society in this district devolves upon my shoulders. It is a hard task, Mr. Todd—a very hard task. I have found that there are many men of wrath in the community, and their hearts are so hardened that even thoughts of the heathen cannibals will not soften them. They are ruthless creatures, and I have found that in my work I receive more kicks than halfpence."

Here Mr. Slagg gave a hollow groan, and took a swig at the green bottle.

"My poor, dear sir!" exclaimed Alonzo, his tones showing deep sympathy with the reverend sufferer. "No wonder it becomes necessary for you to partake of tonic—"

"Ah!" sighed Mr. Slagg, looking steadfastly at the bottle. "Without my tonic I would be nowhere!"

He drew a grubby pamphlet from his pocket and handed it to Alonzo.

"That," he said, "is a pamphlet describing the aim and object of the society more fully. You will perceive that I am treasurer, and my address is on the front."

Alonzo blinked at the pamphlet. His glibble soul opened out towards the Cannibals' Conversion Society.

Mr. Jeremiah Slagg laid a gentle, persuasive hand upon Alonzo's arm.

"Would you become an agent, my dear young friend?" he purred. "Will you undertake to collect funds for such a worthy and deserving object?"

Alonzo beamed.

"Certainly, my dear sir!" he said. "I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would

approve. I shall be most happy to do all within my power to assist you in this work."

Mr. Slagg grasped the hand of Alonzo and wrung it.

"I am deeply indebted to you, my dear friend!" he said. "Will you promise to collect as much cash as you can, and forward it to me at the end of every week?"

"Yes, I promise," replied the sublime Duffer. "I shall ask all my schoolfellows to subscribe—and—Why, here are some of them!"

Alonzo had caught sight of seven Greyfriars fellows approaching.

They were Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, Hurree Singh, Squiff, and Peter Todd.

Peter Todd stared as he beheld his cousin in conversation with the eedy-looking Mr. Slagg.

The Removites glanced curiously at the Rev. Jeremiah Slagg, and were evidently far from favourably impressed.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry in an undertone. "Who is this merry jossor our Alonzo is jawing to?"

"He looks like an out-of-work parson!" growled Johnny Bull. "I expect he's pitching some plausible yarn to Alonzo, and the fathead is taking it all in."

Peter Todd's eagle eye caught sight of the green bottle in Mr. Slagg's hand, and his brows knitted.

Alonzo Todd blinked at his schoolfellows, and beckoned them over.

They went, regarding the red-nosed cleric in a far from amiable manner.

"My dear fellows," said Alonzo gently, "pray allow me to introduce you to the Reverend Jeremiah Slagg, district treasurer of the Cannibals' Conversion Society—"

"Wha-a-at!"

Mr. Slagg nodded pleasantly, and took an opportunity to have a pull at the green bottle.

The Greyfriars juniors stared dumb-founded.

"I—I say!" blurted out Peter Todd, surveying his cousin grimly. "What's the idea?"

"M-my dear Peter," stammered the Duffer, looking rather worried upon observing his cousin's stern brow. "Mr. Slagg is seeking subscriptions for the society, and—"

"Oh!" said Peter. "So that's the game, is it?"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Lonzo's been plucked, I reckon!" he murmured. "Good old Alonzo! Behold the lion and the lamb!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd did not laugh. He strode up to Mr. Slagg and laid a heavy hand upon him.

"Look here, my man!" he said gruffly. "What yarn have you been pitching this fathead to?" Have you collected any money from him?"

"Nunno!" gasped Mr. Slagg, thrusting the green bottle into his tail-pocket and sliding off the stile. "My dear young gentlemen—"

"Pray desist from this rough treatment of a reverend gentleman, Peter!" implored Alonzo gently. "He is a good, righteous, honourable—"

"Rats!" snorted Peter Todd expressively. "Have you given him any money, you ass?"

"No," said Alonzo. "Indeed, my financial position is such that—"

"Oh, cut that!" snapped Peter. "Good job you haven't!"

He turned to the blinking Mr. Slagg.

"Clear off!" he said grimly. "Let me see you trying to rook this fatheaded cousin of mine again, or stuffing him up

with any of your bosh about cannibals, and I'll—I'll—"

"My dear Peter—"

"Shut up, Alonzo!" growled Peter.

"I'm going to see that you don't make an ass of yourself!"

The Rev. Jeremiah Slagg glared banelfully at Peter.

Now that he was off the stile, he seemed to find some difficulty in standing up straight.

"You interfering young wretch!" he snarled, shaking his fist. "Depraved—scoundrel! Degenerate youth! You would lead an innocent astray—Ooooh!"

This last remark burst from his lips as his knees suddenly gave way and he tottered.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Harry Wharton & Co.

"He's half squiffy!" growled Peter Todd. "Calls himself a clergyman—bah!"

"He's—he's weak, my dear Peter!" protested Alonzo. "He—"

Peter Todd wasted no more time on words.

He grasped the Rev. Jeremiah Slagg by the coat-collar, and propelled him along the grassy bank of the road.

Mr. Slagg roared, but in the grasp of the sturdy Removite he was like wax.

With a shove, Peter let him go.

"Yaroooogh!" wailed the Rev. Jeremiah Slagg.

He staggered along for a few yards, and then his feet gave way.

With a wild lurch he went sideways. His legs smote the air with an upward motion, and the Greyfriars juniors were treated to the edifying spectacle of the red-nosed clergyman whirling down into the ditch at the side of the lane.

Splash!

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Harry Wharton & Co.

The Rev. Jeremiah Slagg had gone headlong into the slimy waters of the ditch.

Next minute his shaggy head appeared, minus the dilapidated top-hat.

"Gerugh! Gug, gug!"

Mr. Slagg gouged slime and weeds out of his eyes, mouth, and ears.

His eyes blinked open, and, if looks could kill, Harry Wharton & Co. would have crumbled up, perished, on the spot.

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

Alonzo Todd looked distressed.

He hastened over to the unfortunate cleric to assist him from the ditch.

He caught Mr. Slagg's hand and pulled.

"You ass, Alonzo!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Chuck it!"

Gradually, however, Mr. Slagg staggered up the bank.

As he stood, bedraggled and dripping, something fell out of his back pocket and tinkled to the ground.

It was the green bottle, containing the "tonic," and the bottle was broken!

"You-ow! Gerrugh!" spluttered the muddy Mr. Slagg. "Help!"

He clutched Alonzo in loving embrace, pulling him closely to him.

"You-ow! Leggo! Oh dear!" gasped Alonzo.

Much of the slime and mud originally on Mr. Slagg's person became transferred to Alonzo.

Alonzo squirmed and wriggled in the Rev. Jeremiah Slagg's embrace, and finally wrenched himself free.

Peter Todd grasped him by the coat-collar and dragged him away.

Peter was choking with laughter.

"Come away, fathead!" he said.

"Leave that rotter alone!"

"Oh dear!" gasped the Duffer, wiping

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the slime from his collar. "I—I am severely flustered. Peter, my dear fellow—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Come along, you chortling duffer. Serves you right!"

Mr. Slagg, after having cleared his eyes of mud, blinked homely at the Greyfriars juniors.

"Vipers!" he hissed. "I'll have you looked up! I—"

"Sheer off!" said Johnny Bull curtly. "I'll—"

Peter Todd made a threatening movement in Mr. Slagg's direction, and that worthy changed his tactics instantly.

With a glare like that of a basilisk, he clutched for his top-hat, and set off down the lane, walking very unsteadily.

Squelch, squelch!

Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled as they made their way back to Greyfriars, with the sorrowing Duffer in their midst.

"I reckon that beery merchant will give us a wide-berth in future!" grinned Bob Cherry. "How are you feeling, 'Lonzey?!"

"Grooogh!" gasped the Duffer of Greyfriars, blinking sorrowfully at his schoolfellows. "You have treated Mr. Slagg very roughly—"

"Strikes me he treated you a bit roughly!" remarked Bob Cherry. "You look a perfect mudlark, 'Lonzo!!"

"The mudlarkfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Serves the cilly chump right!" granted Peter Todd, yanking his cousin along. "He shouldn't mix up with shady clergymen!"

Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, frowned.

"He's not a clergyman!" said Harry flatly. "A spoofer—that's what he is!"

"Hear, hear!"

Alonzo Todd blinked morosely at Harry Wharton.

"Kim on, Alonzo!" growled his cousin Peter.

"And Alonzo went.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

"PENNY for 'em!" Alonzo Todd looked round with a start.

He was standing beneath the old elms in the quadrangle at Greyfriars, and there was a thoughtful frown on his placid countenance.

Alonzo was in a reverie, and the sound of that stentorian voice close to his ears made him jump.

"He turned, and beheld Bob Cherry. "Penny for 'em!" repeated Bob, with a grin.

"Eh?" stammered Alonzo. "A penny for what?"

"For your thoughts, old son!" chuckled Bob. "Wherefore that frowzy brow and doleful chivy? Uncle Benjamin cut you off without a shilling?"

Alonzo Todd blinked at the cheerful Bob.

"Really, Cherry, I fail to see why my Uncle Benjamin should cut me off without a shilling," said the Duffer mildly.

"I—I was thinking how I could raise a subscription."

Bob's eyes opened wide. "A subscription!" he echoed. "What for?"

"For the Cannibals' Conversion Society."

"Eh?"

"For providing the South Sea Islanders

with hymn-books and chewing-gum," pursued Alonzo Todd. "My dear Cherry—"

"Wh-what the merry thump do South Sea Islanders want chewing-gum for?"

"To prevent them eating each other," responded the Duffer.

"Wh-what?"

"With chewing-gum to chew, their craving for carnal nourishment would be annulled."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pray do not scoff, Cherry!" said Alonzo Todd, blinking at the convulsed Bob. "I fail to see—"

"Oh, you chump! Oh, you jabbering jabbercock! Ha, ha, ha!" gurgled Bob Cherry, holding his sides. "Chewing-gum for cannibals! Oh! Ha, ha, ha!"

The Duffer of Greyfriars stared in astonishment at Bob Cherry.

"Why, you—you howling Duffer!" gasped Bob. "You want me to subscribe to— Oh, it's too rich! Ha, ha, ha!"

And Bob Cherry staggered away, shouting with merriment.

"Dear me!" murmured Alonzo.

The simple-hearted Duffer blinked after Bob Cherry like one in a dream.

He could not understand Bob's hilarity.

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"My only Sunday topper!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, staring at Alonzo aghast.

To Alonzo it was a serious matter. He had given his word to the Rev. Jeremiah Slagg, and the sublime Duffer did not dream of breaking his promise.

Although his cousin Peter had delivered unto him a long lecture the previous evening, Alonzo could not be convinced that the Rev. Mr. Slagg was a "spoofer," and that his precious society was all "bunkum."

Peter had admonished Alonzo for his gullibility, and forbidden him to have any more truck with the Rev. Jeremiah Slagg.

Peter had his suspicions on the score of the red nosed clergyman.

But Alonzo, like Baalam's ass, heeded not his master.

He had promised to become an agent of the Cannibals' Conversion Society, and it was "up" to him to raise as many subscriptions as he could for the good, or otherwise, of the cause.

In the sublime fullness of his heart Alonzo Todd thought he was doing all that was right and good and proper.

Uncle Benjamin would be sure to

The Duffer left the elms, and wandered abstractedly towards the School House steps.

Wun Lung, the Chinese junior, was standing on the steps.

His almond eyes twinkled at the sight of Alonzo.

A ray of hope lit up Alonzo's soul. "One moment, my dear Wun Lung," he said, stopping. "Would you care to subscribe to a society, of which I am an agent, for the purpose of converting South Sea Islanders from cannibalism?"

Wun Lung smiled blandly at the Duffer.

"So savvy?" he said.

"I assure you, my dear fellow, that the cause is good and noble and deserving. Would you contribute?"

"So savvy?" said Wun Lung again.

"Just a small sum—say sixpence."

Wun Lung shook his head.

"No savvy!" he repeated, and ambled placidly away.

Alonzo Todd blinked at the retreating form of Wun Lung, and sighed.

Wun Lung was evidently not having any.

At that moment, a lank, bony form came up.

It was Fisher Tarleton Fish, the Yankee Removite.

Alonzo Todd buttonholed Fish.

"Ah, my dear Fish!" he began. "I am an agent of the Cannibals' Conversion Society, the object of which is to provide South Sea Island cannibals with hymn-books and chewing-gum. I—"

"Waal, I s'wore!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

Alonzo took out a notebook.

"May I put you down for a small subscription, my dear Fish?" he asked. "No more deserving fund ever—"

"I guess you've gone plumb crazy!" said Fisher T. Fish, in his truest American slang.

"Eh?"

"I calculate you'd better hike slick for the doctor, Toddy!" said Fish. And with that enlightening remark the Yankee schoolboy went his way, leaving Alonzo Todd standing on the steps, gasping.

Collections towards Alonzo's society were proving difficult to get.

The fellows of Greyfriars seemed hardened against cannibals.

With a forlorn look upon his face, the Duffer wandered into the Common-room.

Quite a number of Removites were congregated there, and they all grinned when Alonzo came in.

Kipps walked up to Alonzo, an enthusiastic welcome on his face.

"Oh, here you are, Toddy!" he said. "We hear you are raising a subscription for providing the merry South Sea cannibals with hymn-books and amusee-balls—what?"

"Chewing-gum," mildly corrected the Duffer.

"Oh, my mistake!" said Kipps blandly. "I thought it was amusee-balls."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really, my dear fellow—"

"Never mind them; they're laughing at me!" grinned Kipps, the schoolboy conqueror. "Now, look here, Alonzo! We'll stand by you, won't we, you chaps?"

"Hear, hear!" chorused the juniors.

"We'll start a subscription straight away!" said Kipps generously. "Gimme that toffee-tin when you've finished with it, Bunter! Good!"

Kipps took the empty toffee-tin from Billy Bunter, jammed the lid on, and with an old penknife he made a slit in the top large enough to admit a coin. He dropped a shilling in, and

"There!" he said. "I've started the ball rolling! Dub up, you chaps!"

Alonzo Todd beamed with delight as Kipps handed round the tin.

He seemed to have struck lucky at last.

Money rattled merrily into the tin at a great rate.

"Good!" said Kipps, when he had gone the round of the Common-room.

"Any more?"

"Here, take this ha'penny!" grinned Billy Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter's halfpenny tinkled into the tin.

"That's the lot!" said Kipps, rattling the box. "Now let's see how much we've collected, Alonzo! Here's the tin!"

and then at the crowd. "The tin is—almost empty!"

"Gammon!"

"Tell us another!"

"I am not prevaricating!" said Alonzo. "Look!"

The fellows looked.

"Whow!" whistled Bulstrode. "You've wangled that somehow, Alonzo!"

"I haven't!" stammered the Duffer. "I—

I cannot understand—"

Kipps, the conjurer, who had manipulated the tin, winked slyly at the crowd.

"I believe old Alonzo is a spoofer!" he said. "You all put money in, didn't you?"

"Yes, rather!" howled Skinner.

"Where's my bob, Toddy?"

"I—I—I—"

to Study No. 7, which he shared with his cousin Peter, Billy Bunter, and Tom Dutton.

Arriving there, he sat down in the arm-chair, and sat for half an hour in deep cogitation.

He could not, for the life of him, make out where the money had disappeared to from the tin.

"I am sure I saw the money go into the tin," murmured the unsophisticated Duffer. "B-b-but —"

Still perplexed, Alonzo gave it up at last.

The fact remained that not one single subscription had been roped in towards the Cannibals' Conversion Society.

Alonzo, being an agent, felt that it behoved him to do something to remedy this state of affairs.



"Yarooogh!" wailed the Rev. Jeremiah Slagg. His legs smote the air with an upward motion, and the Greyfriars juniors were treated to the edifying spectacle of the red-nosed gentleman go whirling down into the ditch at the side of the lane. Splash! "Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 1.)

He handed the Duffer the tin. Alonzo took it and proceeded to take the lid off, amidst breathless interest on all sides.

Suddenly the lid of the tin came off, and Alonzo's eyes eagerly sought the contents.

He gave a gasp of amazement as he blinked into the interior of the tin.

There reposed inside it but one single halfpenny.

"Dud-dear me!" ejaculated Alonzo.

The fellows in the Common-room gathered round.

"Count out the merry dibs, Alonzo!"

"How much is it?"

"Mum—my dear I-fellows," stammered Alonzo, gazing blankly first at the tin

Kipps wagged an admisory forefinger at Alonzo.

"It grieves us all to have you deceive us, Alonzo," he said, in pained accents.

"We will, however, forgive you. Take the money, and may it do you good!"

"But I—!" began the Duffer, almost tearfully. "It is inexplicable—"

"Get thee hence, before we change our minds!" said Kipps solemnly. "Hook it, Alonzo!"

And he bundled the Duffer out of the Common-room.

A roar of laughter followed him.

"Yaroooh!" wailed the Duffer, dropping the tin.

Alonzo Todd made his way distressfully

So he took pen and paper, and wrote an epistle to his Uncle Benjamin.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Uncle Benjamin Pays Out!

"LETTER for Alonzo!"

The Duffer, who was standing by the fireplace in the hall, pricked up his ears, and went over to the letter-rack.

Harry Wharton grinned as he handed a letter to Alonzo.

The captain of the Remove recognised the scrawl of Alonzo's Uncle Benjamin.

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Alonzo Todd's face brightened up considerably when he saw the letter, and he made straight for his study.

Nobody was at home, so Alonzo sat in the armchair and opened his letter.

He gave an exclamation of delight when he pulled out a postal-order for ten shillings.

The accompanying letter from Uncle Benjamin was a lengthy screed, but Alonzo devoured it eagerly.

Uncle was pleased to hear that Alonzo was doing his best to propagate the Cannibals' Conversion Society, and forwarded ten shillings as a small subscription.

Uncle Ben said that it was not a large sum, but perhaps Alonzo could utilise it in such manner as to make it more.

Like the good and faithful servant in the parable, Alonzo resolved there and then that ere he placed the ten shillings into the Rev. Mr. Slagg's hands he could see if he could not increase the amount considerably.

His massive brow wrinkled with thought.

"I'm!" murmured Uncle Benjamin's dutiful nephew. "I wonder what would be the most profitable course to take? I—I couldn't think of lending it and exacting usury. Uncle Benjamin would not approve. Dear me! The problem of making money seems distinctly difficult. However, I must cogitate."

And Alonzo settled down to cogitate. A while afterwards the door opened and a fat form entered.

William George Bunter glanced curiously at the Duffer.

Alonzo was sprawled in the armchair, his head resting on his hands, and his forehead wrinkled in thought.

Uncle Benjamin's letter lay upon his lap, and the postal-order for ten shillings protruded from the envelope.

Bunter's little, round eyes gleamed covetously behind his spectacles when he saw the postal-order.

"I say, Toddy, 'old fellow," he commenced, approaching the abstracted Duffer, "just a minute!"

Alonzo looked up.

"Ah, Bunter!" he said mildly. "Have you come to subscribe—"

Bunter snorted.

"Nunno!" he said, his eyes upon the postal-order. "I—I say, Alonzo, could you do me a favour?"

"Certainly, my dear Bunter, if it is

within my power to do so," answered the Duffer gently.

"Ahem!" coughed the Owl of the Remove. "I—I am in need of cash, Alonzo. I was expecting a postal-order this morning, but, somehow or other—ahem!—it didn't come. Could you advance me a few bob, old chap?"

Alonzo Todd looked worried.

"I am extremely sorry, Bunter," he replied, "but I am afraid I cannot spare any money. You see—"

"Why haven't you just had a postal-order from Uncle Benjamin?" demanded Billy Bunter warmly.

"Ye-es; but—"

"Then lemme have five bob till my postal-order arrives," said Bunter eagerly. "You shall have it back as soon as it comes, Alonzo."

The Duffer shook his head.

"I much regret—"

"Pehaw!" snorted Bunter. "Look here, Alonzo, I want this cash for a very important matter. With a few bob capital I can make quids!"

Alonzo's eyes opened with a new interest.

"Really!" he said. "In what manner, Bunter?"

Bunter gave a sly smirk.

"Ah, that's telling!" he said mysteriously. "A pal of mine has let me into this, but I'm keeping it to myself, I am. Fishy wouldn't like it if I told, I—"

"Oh, Fish has a scheme!" said Alonzo, pricking up his ears.

"Eh? No. Certainly not!" exclaimed Bunter, blinking at Alonzo very wrathfully. "Look here, Alonzo, are you going to advance me a few bob?"

"I am afraid I must refuse, Bunter," said Alonzo Todd firmly. "My cousin Peter has frequently exposed your fraudulent ways to me, and I am afraid you are unscrupulous, Bunter. I am sorry—"

"Why, you—you—you—" spluttered Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove was speechless with wrath.

Before he could make comment, however, the door opened, and Peter Todd strode in.

"Hallo, Bunter!" he said. "What's the matter with your face?"

"N-n-nothing, Toddy!" stammered Bunter hastily, changing countenance directly. "N-nothing at all!"

Peter looked at him hard, and turned to Alonzo.

"Well, 'Lonzo," he said grimly, "had any more truck with that spoofer Slagg?"

"No, Peter," replied Alonzo mildly. "Pray do not allude to him as a spoofer. He—"

"Rats!" snapped Peter. "He's no more a clergyman, nor fit to be a clergyman, than Bunter is!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—" expostulated Billy Bunter.

Peter grinned, and sat down to write an inset. Alonzo thrust the postal-order into his pocket, and left the study.

He went to Study No. 14, and tapped at the door. The nasal tones of Fisher T. Fish bade him enter.

The business man of the Remove regarded Alonzo with an unwelcome stare.

"Look hyer, Alonzo," he began, "if you've come for subscriptions—"

"Alas!" said the meek and mild Duffer dolefully. "Subscriptions are all too hard to get! However, that is not my errand. I have come, my dear Fish, to—er—inquire the nature of a scheme to—er—make money, which, I gathered from Bunter's remarks, you have on hand."

Fisher Tarleton Fish looked narrowly at Alonzo.

"I guess you'll require some capital, Alonzo, if you enter in with me," he remarked. "Got any splash?"

"Eh?"

"Durocks—dibs—money!" jerked the American junior impatiently. "If not, I guess you can get right out of hyer, Alonzo. This is not a talking establishment."

"I have ten shillings which my Uncle Benjamin sent me," said Alonzo Todd. "My uncle sent it as a subscription towards the Cannibals' Conversion Society, but I contemplate investing it somehow, however. If you could suggest a way whereby I may increase this ten shillings, my dear Fish—"

Fisher Tarleton Fish, from New York, U.S.A., rubbed his bony hands and grinned.

"Now you're talking, Alonzo," he said. "I begin to see the drift of your remarks. I guess you want to make money—eh?"

The Duffer nodded.

"For the benefit of the Cannibals' Conversion Society."

Fish chuckled.

"I guess I've got you, Alonzo," he remarked. "Now, just listen right here, and I'll explain to you a real gilt-edged proposition. I'll let you in on the ground floor, I reckon. Have you ever sold goods on a commission basis?"

"Nunno!" stammered Alonzo, looking astonished.

"Nix? Waal, I guess you'd better enter into this stunt with me right now," said Fish. "It's a real cinch, Alonzo, and the durocks will soon romp in, I calculate. Out there in the States there are Americans who make fortunes out of the commission line of business. All it needs is a little capital, and you are right on to the goods. Am you willing to advance that ten bob of yours?"

"Most willingly, my dear Fish, if I can profit by the transaction."

"Profit!" cried Fish. "That's just the real beauty of the scheme, I guess. Look hyer, Alonzo, I'll let you in. I'm with an American firm of merchants in London town who provide goods to be sold on a commission basis. Fifteen bob brings a consignment of useful articles to your door, which you have to palm off on the inhabitants. I guess that will be easy work at a school like this. When you've sold the goods, you send the

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"Dud-dear me!" gasped the Duffer, endeavouring to lift the end of the bulky case. "It is extremely heavy. My dear fellows, pray— Yarooogh!" He let the crate go, and it crashed upon his foot. "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Greyfriars fellows. "You jay!" snapped Fish. (See Chapter 4.)

durocks on to the firm, after deducting your first outlay of fifteen bob, and commission at the rate of thirty-three and a third per cent. of the total."

Fisher T. Fish brought his fist down on the table with an emphatic thump.

Alonzo Todd looked impressed.

"Do you get me, Alonzo?" queried Fish. "If so, I guess you can hand me over that ten bob, and I'll plank five to it, and we'll send straight away for a consignment."

"Are you sure, my dear Fish, that this affair is not a swindle, as, I fear, some of your previous projects have been?" asked the Duffer timidly.

Fish snorted.

"Swindle!" he roared. "I guess nix! I kinder reckon these slabsided jays around hyer don't recognise a business proposition when they see it. But, Alonzo, take it right from me, this is a sure cinch and the real goods. Are you goin' to turn over that ten bob?"

Alonzo took Uncle Benjamin's postal-order from his pocket and laid it on the table.

Fisher T. Fish's horny palm closed over it.

"That's the stuff!" he chuckled. "Now, Alonzo, we'll get right on to business. You and I will work this stunt between us, I guess!"

"B-b-but," said Alonzo doubtfully, "will the business prove remunerative, my dear Fish?"

"Oh, you make me tired!" groaned the

alert Yankee. "Of course there's money in it! I guess I'm a business man—yep, sir!—straight from the word go, and I keep my eye-teeth skinned—some! I wouldn't spot this child marvellin' around on a lame proposition! Nope, sir, I guess not! I never get left. I'll write a letter right now, I reckon, and the goods will arrive by next Tuesday. Of course, the transaction will come through you, Toddy, as you're providing the larger capital."

"Ye-es, certainly, Fish," said the Duffer. "If you think that the proper course."

Fisher T. Fish smiled craftily. If anything did happen, and trouble ensued—as it generally did when Fisher T. Fish exploited a "business" scheme at Greyfriars—then the trouble would devolve on Alonzo's shoulders.

Fish drew forth his fountain-pen and a piece of notepaper.

Alonzo Todd blinked earnestly at the Yankee schoolboy as he wrote down the required order.

That done, Fish handed the pen to Alonzo.

"I guess you sign at the bottom, Alonzo," he remarked.

Alonzo, in the innocence of his heart, did not see through Fisher's little scheme, and he cheerfully appended his signature to the missive.

Whilst he was doing so, Fish addressed the envelope to the Eureka Bazaar Company, Ltd., Houndsditch, London.

Alonzo, having completed his part of the transaction, Fish placed the letter and Uncle Benjamin's ten shillings inside the envelope, and placed it in his pocket.

"I guess that's done!" said Fish cheerfully. "I'll run down and get another postal-order for five bob, and post this letter, Alonzo."

"And, my dear Fish, everything is quite straightforward? My uncle Benjamin would be shocked—nay, disgusted—if this should be an imposture upon our schoolfellows!"

"Pshaw!" snorted Fish, opening the door. "Haven't I told you it's a sure, sound business proposition? It's all on the level, I guess. But"—added Fisher T. Fish cautiously—"I guess you needn't let your cousin Peter on to this, Alonzo. He might—"

"Ahem!" coughed Alonzo. "You are quite right, my dear Fish. It grieves me much to say that Peter seems utterly devoid of sympathy towards the cause of the heathen cannibals. In fact, he becomes quite hostile whenever I mention the subject."

"Then don't mention it!" grinned Fish. "So-long, Toddy! I'm going to post this letter."

The Duffer and the American Removito parted outside Study No. 14.

Fish went down to post the letter, chuckling.

Alonzo Todd repaired to his study to seek further entertainment from the immortal "Story of a Potato."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Goods!

"MY here!" Gosing, the school pector, rubbed his eyes and blinked at the van that had just come up to the gates of Greyfriars. "This 'ere Greyfriars?" queried the burly driver of the van. "Which it is!" replied Gosing. "Mister Alonzo Todd 'ere?" "Ye-es!"

"Good! There 'ere goods are 'im. Better unload, Nibby," said the carman to the van-boy.

The van rumbled through the gates, came to a standstill, and the driver and the van-boy between them took a huge crate from the interior of the van. A crowd gathered round as the crate bumped upon the ground.

"Mister Alonzo Todd!" said the carman, reading from his book. "Where is 'e?"

"My hat!" ejaculated Harry Wharton, gazing wonderingly at the crate. "Surely there's some mistake! That can't be for Alonzo!"

At that moment Hazeldene spotted Alonzo Todd coming out of the Cloisters. "Todd! Alonzo!" he yelled. "There he is!"

Alonzo, in answer to the call, came over to the gates.

He blinked at the crate, and at the carman.

"Dear me!" he remarked. "These 'ere goods is for you, sir," said the carman, with a grin. "From the Bureka Bazaar Company, Limited!" "Great Scott!"

Fisher T. Fish pushed his way through the crowd.

"I guess that's kerret!" he drawled. "You can leave those goods right here, my man. Don't wait. Carriage was prepaid, I calculate."

The carman looked hard at Fish.

"Look 'ere, young shaver!" he growled. "You jest talk when ye're talked at! My business is with Master Todd 'ere!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "That was a wery 'eavy load, sir," remarked the carman, touching his hat to Alonzo. "Which me and the van-boy is gasping for a drink!"

"Look hyer!" said Fish. "There's water in the fountain—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo Todd, realising what was wanted, groped into his trousers-pocket.

He withdrew two pennies, and placed them into the grimy paw of the carman.

That worthy blinked in amazement at Alonzo's munificent gift.

"Bust me!" he muttered. "Can you spare it?"

"Oh yes, indeed!" chirped the Duffer, beaming. "I should be pleased to offer you a more substantial gratuity, but, unfortunately, I am—er—somewhat financially restricted at the moment. However, I am very, very much obliged to you!"

"Oh!" gasped the carman.

"Now, I guess you can drive off!" broke in Fisher T. Fish. "Come on, Alonzo. Help us in with this crate!"

The flabbergasted carman looked at the Duffer as if he would eat him.

Then, muttering under his breath, he guided his horses round, climbed into the van, and drove away, amidst the grins of the onlookers.

Fisher T. Fish and Alonzo tackled the crate.

"Dud-dear me!" gasped the Duffer, endeavouring to lift the end of the bulky thing. "It is extremely heavy. My dear fellows, pray— Yarooogh!"

Ho let the crate go, and it crashed upon his foot.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Greyfriars fellows.

"You jay!" snapped Fish, struggling with his end. "Why don't you look what you're at? Wow! Ooooh!"

Fish did exactly as Alonzo had done—he dropped the crate.

"Yah! Ow, ow, ow!" yelled Fish, dancing about on one foot, and clapping the other in agony. "You slab-sided duffer, Todd!"

"Gooogh!" growled Alonzo. "I assure you it was quite accidental!"

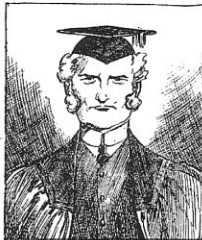
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the onlookers, immensely tickled.

Fish surveyed the bulky crate and growled.

"I guess we'd better unpack it hyer," he said. "Then we'll carry the things indoors. Lend a hand, Alonzo!"

"Certainly, my dear Fish," faltered the Duffer.

No. 9.—THE REV. HERBERT HENRY LOCKE, D.D.



The Rev. Herbert Henry Locke, D.D.—Headmaster of Greyfriars. In every way an ideal Head; a fact that is realised by most of those who work and study under his guidance. Kind-hearted, lenient, and lovable, though he can be stern and severe when occasion arises. Form-master of the Sixth.

The Greyfriars fellows looked on and grinned.

"I kinder reckon, guess and calculate that Fishy and Alonzo have got some job on!" chuckled Bob 'erry. "Put some beef into it, 'Lonzey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fish pulled out a massive pocket-knife, and jabbed at the cords binding the crate.

Alonzo lent a hand dragging off the brown paper.

At last the crate was uncovered, and Fish proceeded to bring forth the articles within.

One by one they came out. A gramophone appeared first, with a box of records attached. Then Alonzo pulled out a football and a violin.

"Ye gods!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "What the merry dickens does Alonzo want those things for?"

"I say, Fish," said Harry Wharton, in perplexity. "Are those yours, or are they Alonzo's?"

"I guess Toddly and I are rumming this joint between us," said Fish, dragging forth a box labelled, "Alarm-clocks!"

The Greyfriars fellows gasped. Sundry smaller packages were brought forth, but their contents were unknown.

"Good!" said Fish, surveying the various parcels that bestowed the ground. "Now, I reckon we can lift these in. Any of you guys like to lend a hand?"

"Where to?" grinned Bob 'erry.

"I guess they can go in my study—"

A roar of wrath proceeded from Johnny Bull.

"I guess they can't!" howled Fish's study-mate. "Let me find that rubbish in my study, Fish, and I'll spifficate you!"

Fish growled.

"Look hyer! Listen to reason, Bull, you mugwump!"

"Rats!" snorted Johnny Bull. "I've had my study turned into a money-lender's office, a pawnbroker's establishment, an insurance agency, a fag agency, and—and I'm not having any more. That's flat!"

"Oh, you make me tired!" growled Fish sulkily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Alonzo!" coughed Alonzo Todd. "Perhaps you had better convey them into my study, Fish. That will solve the difficulty."

Bob 'erry grinned.

"I wonder what Peter will say," he murmured.

"I guess you're talking!" said Fish.

"Take as many as you can, Alonzo. Careful with that gramophone! I guess you fellows might lend a hand."

Harry Wharton & Co. languishingly lent a hand. They didn't mind carting the goods up to Study No. 7. Indeed, as Bob 'erry remarked, it would be interesting to see what Peter Todd did when they got there.

Quite a little procession went upstairs to the Remove passage, each one carrying a parcel.

Alonzo opened the door of Study No. 7, and the procession entered.

The numerous parcels were dumped down on the table and on the floor.

Peter Todd was in there, and he stood dumbfounded.

Then at last he found his voice.

"My giddy aunt!" he ejaculated.

"What the thump does this mean?"

"My dear Peter," began Alonzo timidly. "I and Fish have purchased these goods to be sold on a commission basis. Bull has raised an objection to having them deposited in his study, so I—"

"You're trying to palm them off on me!" roared Peter Todd wrathfully.

"Well, of all the confounded cheek, I reckon this takes the biscuit! I'm blessed if I'm going to have my study lumbered up with all that rubbish. I—I'll—"

"But, my dear Peter—" remonstrated Alonzo.

"Dear fiddlesticks!" snorted his cousin. "You can cart them all out again, Fish—and yourself, too! Alonzo, you burbling dummy, I—I'll—"

"Pray do not become excited, Peter," said Alonzo sadly. "Remember, Uncle Benjamin always said—"

"Blow Uncle Benjamin!" snorted Peter Todd. "Are you going to take those things away, Fishy, or are you not?"

"I guess Alonzo has a right—"

"Alonzo is a bigger fool than you are!" retorted the incensed Peter. "If those things are not out of here in five minutes I'll scrag you, Fish!"

"Oh, Jehosaphat!" growled Fish. "Kim on, Alonzo, we'd better cart these hyer goods up to the box-room."

"But, my dear Peter, pray listen to reason—"

"Take 'em away!" howled Peter Todd.

The Duffer blinked sorrowfully at his

enraged cousin, and, seeing that to plead further would be in vain, he took the gramophone off the study table, and staggered with it to the door.

Fisher T. Fish followed with the records, a football, and the violin.

"Five minutes, mind, Fishy!" said Peter Todd dryly.

The two hapless commission agents staggered upstairs under the weight of their merchandise.

Having deposited the first cargo in the box-room, they descended to Study No. 7 again.

Peter was waiting with a cricket-stump, in case Fish demurred.

Fish did not demur. He grabbed another armful of parcels, and crawled up to the box-room.

Alonzo did likewise.

In this manner did they convey their goods to their repository.

When the last parcel was removed from his study, Peter Todd slammed the door.

"That ass Alonzo will be the death of me yet!" he groaned. "What with him and Bunter, I shall go off my rocker presently."

Meanwhile, up in the box-room, Fisher T. Fish and Alonzo were holding a consultation.

All their goods had been stacked against the walls, and an inventory was in progress.

"Lemme see," said Fish. "We've got half a dozen alarm-clocks—they ought to sell at ten bob each. There are a dozen luminous wrist watches, ten tie-pins, half a dozen penknives, a gramophone and fifteen records, two footballs, five fountain-pens, a tweed suit, a pair of footer boots, a camera, a telescope, an air gun and a violin. I guess that's the lot."

"Dud-do you really think we shall sell all those, Fish?" queried the Duffer.

"Trust this galoot!" said Fisher T. Fish. "My first hunch was to open up a bazaar, but I guess that jay Bull, and that slab-sided guy Peter Todd have put the tin-hat on that. I sorter reckon, guess and calculate, however, that we can get rid of these goods by private tender."

"By p-p-private tender!" stammered Alonzo.

"I guess so," replied Fish, making a few shrewd calculations in his notebook.

"You and I will do business right off the reel, Alonzo. We'll start after ten."

"Ye-es, my dear Fish," replied the Duffer, as he wandered downstairs.

He was beginning to wish he had stuck to Uncle Benjamin's postal-order, after all!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Fish Gets to Business.

FISHER T. FISH followed Fisher T. Fish into the box-room at Study No. 1.

Harry Wharton & Co. were at home.

They grinned at Fish as he entered. He had a violin tucked under his arm, and his pockets bulged. There was a business-like look on his hatchet face.

"I guess I've come to talk business, you fellows," said Fish. "I'm going to give you the offer of a lifetime."

He dragged forth a wrist-watch from his pocket.

"Look hard at that!" he said. "You can't beat that little article for a wrist-watch. I guess that's the real goods."

"How much?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"I guess I'll sacrifice that wrist-watch at a quid," said Fish.

"Cheap at ninepence!" said Bob Cherry, looking critically at the watch.

"I'll give you a tanner for it, Fishy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, don't talk rot!" growled Fish.

"Look hyer, you fellers, I'll take fifteen bob for it. It's a bargain. Keeps good time. It's a fully-tested, real English lever, jewelled in every movement. Solid silver case, and fully luminous dial. I guess you could see the time by that watch a mile off in the dark!"

"What offers!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Two bob!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I guess you will have your little joke," said Fish feebly.

Harry Wharton took the watch. He scrutinized it carefully.

"It's only a cheap metal thing, made in Switzerland," he said. "It's worth ten bob—not more."

"I guess you're talking out the back of your neck, Wharton," growled Fish.

"That's a real English lever watch. Guaranteed for five years."

Frank Nugent looked curiously at the watch. He rather fancied a wrist-watch.

"I'll give you five bob for it, Fishy!" he said.

No. 10.—THOMAS DUTTON.



Thomas Dutton—a member of Study No. 7 of the Remove. His study partners are Peter Todd, Alonzo Todd, and Billy Bunter. Suffers from the handicap of being very deaf. Good at footer, and a skater of speed. Has a firm belief in Peter Todd, and an equally firm disbelief in Bunter. Appreciates Alonzo's good points, and has, like him, a taste for reading.

"Not much!" said Fish. "Ten bob."

"Split the difference and make it seven and a tanner, Franky," grinned Bob Cherry. "If the watch doesn't go, ram it down Fishy's neck."

"Right-ho!" said Frank Nugent.

"Seven-and-a-tanner, Fishy!"

"I guess I'm simply giving it away!" growled Fish. "But I reckon you can have it, Nugent!"

Nugent's seven-and-six and the wrist-watch changed hands.

"Now, give a glimpse at these hyer goods," said Fish, raking out a handful of articles. He displayed a fountain-pen, a tie-pin, and a penknife. He also laid the violin and bow on the table.

"There you are!" he said. "That violin is going cheap at two quid. Who'll buy it?"

Bob Cherry took up the violin, placed it awkwardly on his shoulder, and drew the bow across the strings.

Screech!

"Groogh! Stoppit, Bob, you ass!" gasped Harry Wharton, clasping a hand to his ear.

Bob just grinned, and scraped away energetically at the violin.

A weird medley of shrieks and grunts and unearthly wails arose.

"Chuck it!" howled Johnny Bull.

"Bob, you duffer, give it a breeze!"

Bob ceased operating upon the violin.

"I was just trying it," he said. "What do you think of it?"

"Awful!" growled Johnny Bull.

The study door opened just then, and the Bounder poked a startled countenance inside.

"Who's that killing cats in here?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chortled Harry Wharton. "It's Bob having a go on Fish's violin!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"What do you think of it, Smithy?" asked Bob. "Did that violin sound nice?"

"Nice!" gasped the Bounder. "Why, the noise was simply like nothing on earth. I thought you were murdering somebody!"

"Oh!" said Bob. "This violin's no good, then, Fishy! Take it away and bury it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look hyer, you guy—"

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"I'm not going to buy an instrument that won't play music," he said. "No go, Fishy!"

Fish gave a wrathful snort, tucked the violin and bow beneath his arm again, and thrust a penknife under the Bounder's nose.

"I guess you want to buy a good penknife, Smithy," he said. "Look at that! It's real Sheffield steel, two blades, and a corkscrew. Five bob!"

"Rats!" said Vernon-Smith, and he withdrew.

Fisher T. Fish looked furiously round him.

"Waal, I sww!" he groaned. "You played-out old islanders make me tired! Look hyer at this fountain-pen! You can have it for eight bob, Wharton!"

"No, thanks!" said Harry.

"The fountain-pen would be a useful thing, my ludicrous Fish!" said Hurree Singh softly. "Let me have a lookful examination!"

Inky took the pen and "lookfully" examined it.

"I will give you a shilling for the worthless and esteemed-pen," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Will you takefully accept?"

"Gimme the bob!" growled Fish. "I guess you guys don't understand business!"

Inky chuckled, and took the pen.

"Say, Wharton, what about a gramophone?" asked Fish desperately. "A real good instrument, with a tone as clear as—"

"Mud!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Go and bury your gramophone along with the violin, Fishy! I kinder reckon there's nothing doing!"

"Waal, what do you say to an alarm-clock?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jerusalem crickets!" ejaculated the Yankee schoolboy in sorrowful accents. "You galoots don't know what's good! How about a camera—"

"Eat it!"

"Or a telescope—"

Harry Wharton rose to his feet.

"Look here, Fishy!" he said curtly.

"You've palmed off a rotten wrist-watch and a fountain-pen in this study, so now you can hop it. We don't want any more of your rotten goods!"

"I tell you—"

"Clear off!" howled the Famous Five.

"Look hyer—"

At a signal from Harry Wharton, they arose and bore down upon Fish.

Five pairs of hands were laid upon him, and he was propelled to the door. "Yarooogh!" roared Fish.

Clutching his wares to him, the Yankee Removite went whirling through the doorway.

He staggered into the passage, and the door of Study No. 1 slammed upon him.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Alonzo Scores.

FISHER T. FISH groaned dismally, and shuffled up the Removite passage.

He had proceeded about two yards when the door of Study No. 10 opened, and a tall, lanky form came bounding forth, followed by an immense foot.

It was Alonzo Todd, and the boot belonged to Percy Bolsover, the heftiest fellow in the Removite.

The Duffer collapsed upon the linoleum with a howl of agony.

"Come in here again, bothering me with your rotten footballs and air-guns and gramophones and telescopes," said Bolsover, in sulphurous tones, "and I'll throttle you, you howling idiot! Here, take your rotten stuff!"

Bolsover hurled a football and various articles belonging to the agency at Alonzo Todd.

"Yarooogh! Wow!" shrieked Alonzo, as the football landed on his prominent nasal organ.

A shower of penknives, wrist-watches, fountain-pens, and an air-gun followed. "Go and get coke, Toddy!" growled Bolsover, striking up the prostrate Duffer with his boot. "H-r-r-r!"

And the irate Removite slammed the door of his study.

Fisher T. Fish beat down and helped Alonzo scramble to his feet.

"Well, you are a slab-sided mug!" he roared. "What have you sold?"

"N-n-nothing!" stammered Alonzo, sinking at his scattered wares. "Ow! I have been treated most brutally, and —"

"You boob!" growled Fish. "Don't stand there growling—pick up the goods! You don't know the way to go about business!"

Alonzo picked up the penknives, the wrist-watches, fountain-pens, the air-gun, and the football.

"Grooogh!" he groaned. "Bolsover is an arrogant fellow! I asked him to buy a football, and he smote me with his boot. Ow! My Uncle Benjamin —"

"Rats on Uncle Benjamin!" snorted Fish. "I guess we've got a tweed suit to dispose of. Come up to the box-room. Toddy, and you can take it to Coker. It's a big size, and I guess it would just fit him."

"Ye-e-es, my dear Fish!" said the Duffer, with a manful effort.

Under ordinary circumstances, even Alonzo might have "rucked," but thoughts of the sanguinary cannibals in the South Sea Islands, and the urgent need of hymn-books and chewing-gum as a means of salvation, prompted the Duffer to carry on with the good work.

Truly he was suffering for righteousness sake!

Up in the box-room Fisher T. Fish uncarted the suit of tweeds from among the sundry parcels. He handed the suit to Alonzo.

"Take these to Coker," he said. "Ask him five quid for 'em—ho's dead sure to beat you down. See—if you can plant 'em on the galoot, but don't let 'em go for less than two pound ten. Got that?"

"Ye-e-es!" stammered the Duffer. "Suppose he refuses to buy?"

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"Pitch him a yarn!" snorted Fish, with a shrewd look at the hesitating Duffer. "Tell him they're made of real Harris tweed, and they're cut in the latest West End style. And one'd thing will do, so long as you stuff him up!"

"Ahem!" coughed Alonzo. "I am afraid my Uncle Benjamin would not approve of those methods. It appears to me to be false representation, and a dishonest means—"

"Oh, don't get on that tack—don't!" growled Fish, with a pitying look. "You ought to understand that it's business, Alonzo? You don't always tell the hard truth in business!"

"D-d-don't you?"

"Nope! I guess not!" said Fish. "You've got to put the colour on to make a sale. Now, go ahead, Alonzo, and remember, nothing less than two pound ten!"

With the sports suit tucked under his arm, Alonzo Todd made his way towards Coker's study in the Fifth Form passage.

He tapped timidly at the door, and Coker's gruff voice bade him enter.

Alonzo went in.

"Ahem!" he coughed, blinking at Horace Coker. "My dear Coker, I—er—ahem!"

Do you read the "GEM"?

If not, you should commence now! There is a splendid long story of Tom Merry & Co. in this week's issue, entitled:

"THE SCHOOLBOY EMPLOYERS!"

Horace Coker stared.

"What on earth is the kid talking about?" he said to Potter. "What have you got there, Toddy?"

"It's a—tweed suit, Coker!" faltered Alonzo Todd, somewhat at a loss for words. "I thought perhaps you might care to purchase it. Ahem! It is only five pounds!"

"Five quid!" gasped Horace Coker. "Let's have a look at it!"

The burly Fifth-Former took the tweed suit from Alonzo, greatly wondering what the Duffer wanted to sell it for, and where he got it from.

"H'm!" he said, looking the suit over critically. "It's not a bad pattern, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Potter. "It's a bit loud, isn't it, Coker?"

"You shut up, George Potter!" growled Coker. "What do you know about tweed suits? I rather fancy myself in a suit like this, you know. Etons are all right in school, but when you're out for a walk a nice tweed knicker-bocker suit is the thing. How much did you say, Toddy?"

"Five pounds!" said Alonzo hesitatingly, following Fish's instructions. "Do you really think it is worth five pounds, Coker?"

"H'm! Hardly!" said Coker. "I should say—"

"Five bob's nearer the mark, Cokey!" grinned Greene. "I reckon the inhabitants would see you coming in that merry rig-out!"

"I didn't ask for your opinion, Greene!" said Coker loftily.

Any antagonism on the part of his study-mates always put Horace Coker on the high horse.

Alonzo Todd blinked doubtfully at Coker.

"I wonder if you would care to accept the offer of four pounds, my dear Coker?" he asked. "I am sure I do not wish to swindle you!"

"Well," said Coker graciously, "I'll give you four quid for it, Toddy. You're a funny young beggar, but I don't believe you are a spoofer. There's the cash!"

Alonzo's face brightened up as Horace Coker withdrew four rustling pound-notes from his wallet and handed them to him.

"Really, my dear Coker, I am much obliged!" said the Duffer, in delight. "I sincerely trust the suit will give you every satisfaction, and that you will have no cause to regret your purchase."

"Oh, that's all right, kid!" said Coker magnanimously. "Shut the door after you!"

And Alonzo walked away from Coker's study with a heart as light as a feather.

He sought Fish in the Removite passage, to break the good news to him, but Fish was not to be found.

Dick Russell smilingly informed him to look for Fish in the box-room.

Alonzo mounted the stairs, and the sundry groans and gasps that proceeded from the box-room indicated that Fisher T. Fish was inside.

Fish blinked morosely at the Duffer as he entered.

The business man of the Removite was in a dishevelled state, and seemed to have been going through the mill. His hair was ruffled, his nose seemed to be growing larger, and was distinctly red. A bump showed on his forehead, his jacket was ripped up the back, his collar was torn from its stud, and Fish was making frantic endeavours to extract a football bladder from down the back of his neck.

"Good gracious!" gasped Alonzo, lifting his hands in horror. "My dear Fish, what ever has happened?"

"Ow!" groaned Fish: "That rotter Skinner and his set—yow!—stuffed the dashed penknives and fountain-pens down my neck, and the football bladder as well! Grooogh! Then they booted me out, the guys! Oh Jeeerooslem! A good, slick business man is wasted in this hyer played-out old country!"

Fish proceeded to dive down the back of his neck for the fountain-pens and penknives that had been consigned there by the tender hands of Harold Skinner & Co.

In that operation Fisher T. Fish performed some weird and wonderful evolutions on the box-room floor.

"Pray do not be disheartened, my dear Fish!" said Alonzo gently. "Coker purchased the suit for four pounds!"

At that information Fisher T. Fish ceased to grope down the back of his neck.

"Ek? What's that?" he exclaimed. "Four quid!"

"Four pounds," said the Duffer. "Really, I was most fortunate!"

"Waal, carry me home to die, somebody!" gasped Fish admiringly. "How the blazes did you manage it?"

"I don't understand! I—"

"Well, you must have pitched him some pretty yarn!" said Fisher T. Fish, with shining eyes. "Anyhow, you managed to fool old Coker nicely. Blessed if I thought you were such a deep galoot, Alonzo! Where's the rhino? I guess I'll look the rags up!"

Alonzo Todd, without a suspicion in the world, handed over the four pound-notes.

Fisher T. Fish placed them in his wallet with considerable satisfaction.

"Good biz!" he said. "I guess we're warming up, Toddy!"

And as Alonzo Todd departed to get on with his preparation, with visions of unlimited commission before his inward eye, Fisher Tarleton Fish proceeded with the operation of salving the penknives and fountain-pens from down his back, in a considerably brighter frame of mind.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Great Calamity!

"SISTER ANNE, Sister Anne! Do you see anyone coming?"

Bob Cherry of the Remove shaded his eyes as he uttered these words.

knickerbocker tweed suit of a vivid and startling pattern, and they blinked.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry suddenly. "It's Coker!"

"Coker! My word!"

Horace Coker, hearing his name mentioned, turned and glared at the grinning Removites.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Old Coker's rigged up in that merry suit of tweeds that Alonzo sold him!" he murmured. "I say, Coker darling, do you find enough room in those trousers?"

"Why, you—you cheeky young monkey!" snorted Coker wrathfully. "What's wrong with my trousers—eh?"

"Oh, nothing!" grinned Bob.

Horace Coker went red. He shook his fist at his hilarious Form-fellows.

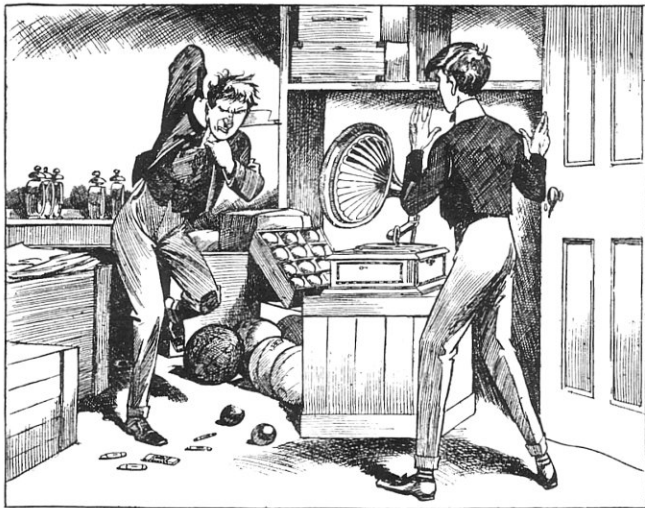
"You—you cackling dummies!" he howled. "You're wild because you haven't a suit like it! Bah!"

And Horace Coker lifted his nose into the air and strutted away in high dudgeon towards the school gates.

Harry Wharton & Co. and Blundell & Co. blinked after him, and howled with merriment.

"Well, our old Coker takes the biscuit!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Fancy appearing in public in that merry get-up! My giddy aunt!"

Coker heeded not the taunts and the cut-thats that were levelled at him. He strode out of the gates and down Friar-



The business man of the Remove was in a dishevelled state. A bump showed on his forehead, his jacket was ripped up the back, his collar was torn from its stud, and Fish was making frantic endeavours to extract a football bladder from down the back of his neck. "Good gracious!" gasped Alonzo. (See Chapter 6.)

Harry Wharton & Co. were standing by Little Side, and a goodly number of Removites were there also.

It was Wednesday, and a half holiday at Greyfriars, and Harry Wharton had called the Remove Form Football Club unto him in order to enjoy an afternoon's practice.

They turned from their conversation and looked as Bob Cherry made his remark.

"My hat!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Wh-wh what is it?" gasped Frank Nugent, staggering back.

A burly figure was striding across the quadrangle in the direction of the gates. The Removites caught sight of a

"They're a bit roomy, though, aren't they, Coker?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whilst Coker was spluttering in wrath, Potter and Greene, his henchmen, came up with Blundell and Fitzgerald and Bland.

"There he is!" chortled Potter, indicating his burly study-mate. "Did you ever see anything like it in all your life?"

"Great cats! Is that Coker?" gasped Blundell, the captain of the Fifth. "Oh—ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, Coker darling, where did ye get them from—entirely?"

The Remove juniors sent up a shout of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

dale Lane, leaving the quadrangle in a delirium of merriment.

Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled, and repaired to their football.

The practice had been in progress about half an hour when the sky became overcast, and it commenced to rain.

"Oh crumbs! That's put the tin-hat on footer for this afternoon!" growled Harry Wharton, as he and the Remove team tramped off the field. "It's beastly!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific!"

"Anyhow," grinned Bob Cherry, "old Coker's out in it! If his natty tweed suit gets wet I reckon it will be interesting to see him when he comes in."

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"By this time the rain was coming down in torrents, and the quadrangle was soon deserted.

Harry Wharton & Co. stood by the hall door, regarding the inclement weather morosely.

"No more footer to-day!" said Bob Cherry glumly.

"Oh, it's rotten!"

Fisher T. Fish ambled in just then, and his eyes had a keen look in them. Evidently a new train of thought was running through the prolific mind of the Yankee schoolboy.

He went up to Study No. 7, and found Alonzo Todd absorbed in "The Story of a Potato."

"Chuck that rot!" said Fish. "It's raining, and all the fellows are indoors. I guess we'll do business this afternoon!"

Very reluctantly the Duffer left his book, and together the two Remove commission agents went up to the box-room.

Fish regarded the gramophone shrewdly.

"I guess we won't find a buyer for this, Toddy," he said slowly. "But I kinder reckon we could let it out on hire—some!"

"L-I-let it out on hire!" stammered the Duffer, blinking at the gramophone.

"Yep, sir, I guess so!" chuckled Fish. "And, Alonzo, I guess we've got to get rid of those alarm-clocks. You take a couple down to Lord Maulverver, and plant one on him if you can, while I write out a notice and do business with the gramophone."

"Ye-e-es, my dear Fish!"

Alonzo Todd took two alarm-clocks, and went downstairs after Fish, who carried the gramophone and the records.

Ten minutes later the Greyfriars fellows were astounded to read the following notice on the board:

"SPEND A WET AFTERNOON IN DOORS IN COMFORT!
A GRAMOPHONE'S THE THING!

Fisher T. Fish, of Study No. 14,
Remove Passage,
is open to loan a First-class Gramophone at

A SHILLING FOR HALF AN HOUR!
A real top-notch instrument, with fifteen

of the latest records, for hire right now!
ROLL UP! HIRE A GRAMOPHONE!
A SHILLING HALF AN HOUR!"

Harry Wharton & Co. and a crowd of Removites read this notice and stared.

"Whew!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Is this Fish's latest stunt?"

"Great pip!"

The Greyfriars juniors chuckled. There seemed to be no limit to the cheek of the enterprising Fish.

"Faith!" exclaimed Micky Desmond, who was there with Morgan and Dick Rake, his study-mates. "That's not a bad idea, bejaysus! If Fish's got 'Killarney,' we'll have a bob's worth!"

Morgan and Rake grinned. They had nothing to do, and so long as Micky paid the shilling, they didn't mind a gramophone entertainment in their study for half an hour.

Micky Desmond and his chums went up to Study No. 14.

Fish was at home, and the gramophone, which seemed to consist mainly of a little wooden box with a huge horn, was standing on the table.

"I guess you want to hire a gramophone," said Fish, rubbing his bony hands. "Bob for half an hour, and if it's broken you'll have to pay for it, I guess."

"Faith, an' p'what records we've got, Fishy darlint?" inquired Micky Desmond. "Ye don't happen to have 'Killarney,' I suppose?"

"Ye don't have 'Killarney,' I suppose?"

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"Yep," said Fish, turning over a record. "I guess I have, Desmond. There are thirty tunes altogether. Comic songs, ballads, marches—"

"Good!" said Desmond. "There's your bob, Fishy. Gimme the gramophone!"

Fisher T. Fish smiled as the chums of Study No. 6 bore off the gramophone. Desmond took the gramophone, Morgan the horn, and Dick Rake the records.

Five minutes later loud sounds of music proceeded from Study No. 6, and a shrill, feminine voice screeched forth a murderous rendering of "Killarney," to the accompaniment of a very faint band, and a very loud scraping as the needle of Fish's gramophone plied the record.

Quite a crowd of Removites gathered outside to listen to the alleged music.

"By gum! Is that 'Killarney'?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "I guess it will kill somebody if that row goes on much longer!"

No. 11.—PETER TODD.



Peter Todd—the leader of Study No. 7. In some ways the cleverest fellow at Greyfriars. Great at devising schemes, and hardy in carrying them out. A fine, all-round athlete, in spite of his slender figure. Reads law in his spare time. Has an ambition to make a man of Billy Bunter—a great proposition! Remarkable for his curious resemblance to his cousin, PPOD OTOYD

With a shriek and a loud scrape, the record finished, and Micky Desmond changed it. This time a very gruff and hollow voice roared forth a tune that made the Removites open their eyes in wonder.

"What on earth is that dreadful thing playing now?" exclaimed Vernon Smith. "It—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chirruped Bob Cherry suddenly. "It's 'K-K-K-Katey!' Oh e-e-crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd in the passage chortled. Micky Desmond and his chums continued to play the hired gramophone.

It was quite a novel entertainment for a wet afternoon.

Bolsover major, Skinner, and Stott approached Fisher T. Fish in his study. Bolsover slammed a shilling on the table.

"Here, Fish, let's have a bob's worth!" said the burly Removite. "It's a scratchy old 'bus, but I reckon we can have some sport out of it!"

"I guess you can hire the gramophone when Desmond's done with it," replied

Fish, pocketing the shilling. "His half an hour's not up yet."

Bolsover growled, and left the study. Skinner and Stott followed, grinning.

The burly Removite pushed his way through the crowd, and hurried open the door of study No. 6.

The gramophone was playing "Boiled Beef and Carrots" in a very jerky and scratchy manner.

"Time's up, Desmond!" growled Bolsover major. "We've paid Fishy our bob, and we've come for the gramophone."

"Faith, an' ye can't have it, begorra!" retorted Micky Desmond. "We've only had it twenty minutes!"

"I don't care!" snapped Bolsover surlily. "I want the old 'bus now! Are you going to hand over that gramophone?"

"Shure, I don't think! I—"

Bolsover did not allow Desmond time to finish. He dashed into the study and grabbed at the gramophone.

"Hi, hands off, Bolsover!" yelled Dick Rake. "Clear out!"

"Rats!" panted Bolsover. "I— Yarooogh!"

Morgan had landed out with his boot and tripped Bolsover up.

The bully of the Remove crashed to the floor.

In doing so he clutched at the tablecloth, and dragged it down with him.

Crash!

The gramophone, still energetically scraping away at "Boiled Beef and Carrots," hurtled on top of Bolsover, and the records came with it.

"Look out!" yelled Desmond, making a frantic clutch for the gramophone.

"Howly smoke! That's done it, begorra!"

"Yarooogh!" wailed Bolsover, who had received the heavy instrument on his head. "I—I'll smash you!"

He leapt to his feet and sprang at Desmond. The two closed, and locked in each other's arms, they struggled desperately.

"Rescue!" roared Morgan, and he and Rake joined in the fray.

"Tramp, tramp, tramp!"

Scrumch!

Bolsover's large boot crashed upon the gramophone, and there was a metallic jingle as the works rolled out upon the floor.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the crowd in the passage. "Go it, ye cripples!"

Smash!

The records, beneath the heavy tramping of the combatants' feet, were ground into little pieces.

Bob Cherry darted into the room and rescued the horn. He placed it to his lips and hellowed down the Remove passage, using it as a megaphone.

"Fishy! Fishy! Come and fish for your singing apparatus! I guess it's going west!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The tousled head of Fish appeared at the door of Study No. 14, and his startled face looked at the crowd.

"Back up, Fishy, and rescue the gramophone!" chortled Peter Todd. "I kinder reckon, guess and calculate they're making a mess of it—some!"

"Oh, Jehosaphat!" groaned Fish, and he darted to the door of Study No. 6.

The fray was in full swing, Micky Desmond and Dick Rake had got Bolsover's head in chancery, and were pommelling away for all they were worth.

"Jumping Jerusalem crickets!" moaned Fish. "My gramophone!"

"Better pick up the little bits, Fishy," suggested Bob Cherry, with a chuckle.

Fish darted amongst the combatants and groped for the gramophone.

"Alas! As a gramophone it was no more."

Fisher T. Fish blinked up almost with tears in his eyes.

"Look hyer, you mugwumps!" he howled. "Who's going to pay for this? I guess you've done for this gramophone!"

"I guess you've guessed right this time, Fishy!" grinned Harry Wharton.

A commotion was heard in the passage, and then there came a lushed

Mr. Quelch, his eyes gleaming with annoyance, strode up the passage and glared upon the scene of the disturbance.

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated. "Boys! What does this mean?"

The fighting ceased as if by magic, and the five unhappy Removites blinked at their master.

"I guess they've busted my gramophone!" hooted Fisher T. Fish. "Look hyer at these bits, sir!"

Mr. Quelch fixed his gimlet eyes upon Fisher.

"What!" he exclaimed. "A gramophone!"

"Yep, sir," groaned Fish. "It was mine, and—"

"How dare you bring such a noisy and loud instruments into this school, Fish?" rapped Mr. Quelch in a voice that made the Yankee schoolboy tremble. "How dare you, sir?"

"I I guess—"

"I perceive that it has been wrecked in this—this disgraceful rough-and-tumble," granted the Remove-master. "Bolsaver, Desmond, Rake, and Morgan, you will take five hundred lines each! Fish, come with me!"

"Oh, Jehoshaphat!" moaned Fish. "I tell you, sir—"

"Not another word, Fish!" rapped Mr. Quelch. "Follow me!"

And, groaning dismally, his long, hatchet-face the picture of dismay, Fisher Tarleton Fish followed the Remove-master to his study.

Five minutes later sounds of weeping and wailing proceeded from that apartment, and when Fish emerged he was doubled up like a penknife, and he was gnashing his teeth.

He staggered limply to his study, moaning.

The remains of the gramophone were left to the tender mercies of the chortling Removites, who gathered up the bits and threw them away.

And for the rest of that afternoon Fisher Tarleton Fish, like Rachel of old, mourned over that which was lost, and would not be comforted.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Coker Gets His Rag Out!

"BRR-RRR!" growled Coker. The mighty Horace was sorely out of temper, and in a savage mood.

He had set out for a ramble over the cliffs in the hope of seeing some of the Cliff House girls, and showing off his new tweed suit.

Coker was very proud of that suit, and rather fancied himself in knickerbockers. But the rain had come on, and Coker was on the cliffs, and could not find shelter. The rain beat down upon him, and he soon got drenched.

He pushed on through the rain back to Greyfriars.

By the time he reached the gates he was feeling very uncomfortable.

The rain had stopped, and the quadrangle was again full of fellows.

Coker growled uneasily as he plodded into the Close.

Cecil Temple, Dabney, & Co., of the Upper Fourth, were standing near by, and when they saw Coker their eyes opened wide.

Then they yelled with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Temple. "I say, Coker, what have you been doing with yourself? Your clothes have shrunk!"

"Wha-a-a-at?" stuttered Coker, his uneasy fears increasing tenfold.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A crowd quickly gathered, and a roar of laughter went up as the fellows beheld the comical spectacle. Horace Coker presented.

The trousers, once so roomy, were now shrivelled up so that they fitted Coker's legs almost like a glove.

They were stretched right above his knees, and Coker looked like an overgrown schoolboy. The coat, too, was in a truly remarkable condition. The sleeves had shrunk to a startling degree, and were half-way up his arms. The

No. 12.—GEORGE BULSTRODE.



George Bulstrode.—Once Wharton's deadly foe and resolute rival. Did not scruple then to play tricks worthy of the biggest rotter. A different fellow now, still a trifle rough, perhaps, but scoring meanness. A good goal-keeper, and no duffer at cricket. Also a hefty fighting-man. (Story No. 2.—Remove.)

back of the coat had shrunk to about fifty per cent. of its original size, and the bottom barely reached to Coker's waist.

No wonder Horace Coker of the Fifth had felt uncomfortable!

He was a sight for gods and men and little fishes!

"Poor old Coker!" sobbed Bob Cherry. "I hope he'll be able to get 'em off. I say, Cokey, that coat looks tight!"

"I—I—I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chortled Frank Nugent. "Gaze at him and weep!"

The crowd gazed at Coker, and wept with laughter.

Coker bent down as far as he dared, and surveyed his knickerbockers.

His eyes opened wide with horror.

"Gug-good lor!" he gurgled. "That villain Todd, I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How ever did you get into that bad-fate suit, my worthy Coker?" inquired Hurree Singh. "The shrinkfulness of the esteemed clothes is truly terrific!"

"I'll slaughter that young scoundrel!" muttered Coker. "I—I—I— Ah!"

He broke off as he caught sight of a

lank, weedy figure emerging from the cloisters.

The Duffer, having found Lord Maulveover asleep, had postponed the tender of the alarm-clocks, and, when the rain had ceased, had gone into the Cloisters to meditate.

He stopped when he saw Coker.

Coker ground his teeth. "You young scoundrel! I—I'll murder you! Lemme get hold of you!"

He made a dash at Alonzo.

"Dnd-dear me!" gasped Alonzo in amazement. "Coker seems upset over something. I—I— Oh dear! Help!"

As Coker, with battle in his heart and the flame of fury in his eyes, came up, Alonzo Todd turned on his heel and fled.

He streaked across the quadrangle like lightning, for all the world as though he were on the cinder-path.

"Come back!" bellowed Coker, stumbling along, and splitting all the seams of his shrivelled coat. "I'll sorag you!"

Alonzo did not wait to be scragged. He bolted for dear life in the direction of the gates.

Coker came pounding after.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Greyfriars fellows. "Go it, Alonzo!"

"Put a spurt on, man!" yelled Bob Cherry.

As Alonzo whisked through the gates he crashed into somebody, and both went flying.

"Yaroooh!" shrieked the Rev. Jeremiah Slagg, for it was he.

Then Coker came up, and, in an endeavour to stop, he skidded on the wet stone flags, and hurtled on top of the struggling pair on the ground.

In a moment a wild and whirling scramble took place outside the school gates.

Alonzo Todd was the first to his feet, and, like a hunted hare, he about turned and scudded across the quadrangle, leaving Coker and the Rev. Mr. Slagg struggling.

Alonzo dodged the chortling crowd that was rushing for the gates, and sought sanctuary in the Cloisters.

"Oh, my goodness!" panted the Duffer, stopping at last, and rubbing his swollen nose, where Coker's boot had smitten it. "Coker has taken leave of his senses! Groooogh! What would Uncle Benjamin say!"

Meanwhile, there was wild strife and turmoil at the gates.

The Rev. Benjamin Slagg, fondly imagining Coker to be an enemy, hurled himself upon the burly Fifth-Former, and belaboured him most energetically.

Coker awoke from the throes of amazement like one in a dream.

"Yow ow!" he roared, as Mr. Slagg's fist crashed upon his nose.

Coker, in a fury, lashed out with his fist, and sent Mr. Slagg flying back, with a well-planted jab on the jaw.

"Yarooogh!" wailed the reverend, collapsing. "Murder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Harry Wharton, dragging Coker away.

"Cluck it, Coker, you aas! That's not Alonzo!"

"Where is he, then?" roared Coker, brandishing his fists in the air. "I'll spiffiate him! I—"

Potter and Greene came up, choking with laughter, and dragged their irate chum away.

Otherwise, Coker would have sought high and low for the Duffer, and it would certainly not have gone very well with that unsophisticated youth if Coker had been successful in finding him.

The Rev. Jeremiah Slagg picked him.

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sell up, and, giving the Greyfriars fellows a baleful glare, he tottered down the lane, mopping his nose, which was streaming clear.

"That Johnny again!" exclaimed Peter Todd grimly, as he watched the unfortunate clergyman depart. "Serves him right for what he got! Perhaps he'll leave Alonzo alone after this!"

And the crowd dispersed, chuckling.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Head Chaps In.

"FISII! Where's Fish? I'll murder him!"

Frank Nugent's face wore a grim look, as he sought Fisher T. Fish along the Remove passage.

Harry Wharton was grinning, so were Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull.

The dusky face of Hurree Singh was as wrathful as Nugent's.

The Famous Five strode into the Common-room, and Frank Nugent gave a howl of satisfaction when they saw Fisher T. Fish standing by the fire.

"Hallo!" said Fish, looking up, with a start. "What's the rumpus?"

Frank Nugent strode up to Fish, and thrust a wrist-watch under his nose.

"Look at that!" he snarled. "Call that a watch? I set it right at nine this morning, and the right time is now six o'clock. Look at that watch! It says half-past nine!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish blinked nervously at Frank, and backed away.

"Waal, I guess that's not my fault," he jerked. "You've been knocking it about—"

"Why, you—you Yankee swindler, I'll knock you about!" roared the incensed Nugent furiously. "I've been done out of seven and a tanner! I—"

"And I have been donefully swindled out of one esteemed bob!" put in Hurree Singh, displaying the fountain-pen he had purchased from Fish the day before. "The ink comes out in a messful stream, and the leakfulness of the rotten pen is terrific!"

"Oh, Jehosaphat!" groaned Fish. "I guess I'm giving no money back. I reckon—"

"I reckon you're going to have a jolly good bumping!" snorted Frank Nugent wrathfully. "Collar him, Inky!"

"What-ho, my worthy chum!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Fish. "Leggo! Yah! Oh! Ow!"

Bump, bump, bump!

Fish's lanky body smote the floor, and a cloud of dust arose.

The business man's two disappointed customers continued to bump him right heartily, and the crowd in the Common-room looked on and roared.

Fish also roared, though not with laughter.

"Yaroooh! Yow! Ow!"

"There!" panted Frank Nugent, letting him drop to the floor for the last time, and releasing him. "Now, bunk, you swindling rotter, or you'll get some more!"

Fish picked himself up, and blinked furiously at Nugent. He made no other remark than a groan, however, and limped painfully to the door.

"Poor old Fishy!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Jever got left, old bean?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The groans of the hapless Greyfriars business man echoed down the passage.

"If he starts selling anything else in this school," said Frank Nugent darkly, "I'll boil him in oil!"

"Hear, hear!" said Harry Wharton.

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with a laugh. "This is getting a bit too thick! I shall have to put my foot down if Fishy doesn't chuck it."

Meanwhile, Fisher T. Fish had crawled to his study, thinking that life, on a played-out old island like England, was not worth living.

"Yow!" moaned Fish. "These tarnation Britishers ain't got no business instincts, I guess! Yow—nope! A real, sick business man is wasted in a slow old hole like this!"

He sat down gingerly in the arm-chair, and commenced to think things out.

So far, the sale of goods on a commission basis had not exactly proved a roaring success.

Four pounds, ten shillings and sixpence was the net total of the takings, and the stock of goods forwarded by the Eureka Bazaar Company, Limited was depleted to the tune of one suit of tweeds, one gramophone, with fifteen records, one fountain-pen, and one wrist-watch.

There were still quite a lot of things to dispose of, and an account had to be rendered to the Eureka Bazaar Co. at the end of the month.

"Ow!" moaned Fish. "Never say die until your light's put out, I guess! They can't gay this infant—nope! I kinder reckon I've still got some pep left. Oh, hallo!"

Dicky Nugent of the Second poked his inky face into the room.

HARRY WHARTON & CO.,

The Chums of Greyfriars,

appear every Friday in

THE PENNY POPULAR.

There are also long stories of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's, and Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood.

"Head wants to see you, Fishy!" grinned the hero of the Second. "And I guess he's in a raving temper—some!"

"Oh, Jerusalem!" groaned Fish, rising to his feet. "What's the racket now, I wonder?"

He made his way to the Head's study and knocked.

The stern voice of Dr. Locke bade him enter.

Fisher T. Fish entered the dread apartment and beheld, besides the Head, Loder of the Sixth.

Loder was grinning, but the Head looked stern.

"Fish," he said, "Loder has brought to my notice a large collection of goods that are stored in the box-room. Are they yours?"

"Ahem!" coughed Fish, an uneasy feeling creeping up within him. "I I guess they belong to Alonzo Todd as much as me, sir."

The Head lifted his eyebrows in surprise.

"Indeed!" he said. "I understand also, Fish, that you have stored these goods in the box-room for the purpose of selling them in this school. Is that not so?"

"I—I guess that was Todd's idea, sir!" replied Fish, squirming beneath Dr. Locke's searching gaze.

The Head of Greyfriars turned to Loder.

"Will you kindly fetch Alonzo Todd here, Loder?" he asked.

"Certainly, sir!" said Loder, with alacrity.

Five minutes later Alonzo Todd came into the Head's study, a startled expression on his face. Loder had previously given him a highly-coloured description of the Head's displeasure, and of the wrath to come.

"Ah, Todd!" said the Head, looking fixedly at the trembling Duffer. "Does that collection of articles stored in the box-room belong to you?"

The Duffer blinked confusedly at the Head, and then at Fish.

"My dear sir, I fail to understand how—"

"Are they, or are they not yours, Todd?" said the Head tersely.

"They—they do not actually belong to me, sir!" stammered Alonzo. "Fish and I obtained them from—from—"

He turned imploringly to Fish.

"I guess Alonzo ordered them from the Eureka Bazaar Company!" growled Fish, with inward qualms.

"Ahem!" coughed Alonzo, with a doubtful glance at Fish. "I—that is to say, we—obtained them from the Eureka Bazaar Company."

"For what purpose, Todd?" inquired Dr. Locke, in a stern voice.

"To—to sell on a commission basis, sir!" replied Alonzo. "Really, my dear Fish, I am still rather confused as to the exact nature of the transaction! I think perhaps you had better explain."

Fish groaned, and his knees began to knock together as the Head's searching gaze became fixed upon him.

"Go on, Fish!" said Dr. Locke quietly.

"I—I guess it was Alonzo's idea from the start, sir!" said Fish desperately.

"He wanted to collect subscriptions for some all-fired foolish society, and came to me for my advice. He—he sent ten shillings to the Eureka Bazaar Company, and ordered the goods to be forwarded for sale. I guess he wanted the commission!"

"B-b-but, my dear Fish," murmured Alonzo Todd, blinking distressfully at Fisher T. Fish, "I was not prompted by notions of personal gain, as I told you. The Cannibals' Conversion Society—"

"W-h-a-a-t!" gasped Dr. Locke, in sudden amazement.

"The Cannibals' Conversion Society," repeated Alonzo, blinking at the Head.

"Pray allow me to explain, my dear sir! The Reverend Jeremiah Slagg entrusted me to become an agent of the society, and I consented. I am sure you will see that it is a very good and noble object. My Uncle Benjamin approved most heartily, and subscribed ten shillings. In my capacity as agent I have to collect as much money as I can, and hand it to the Reverend Jeremiah Slagg, who is treasurer of the Cannibals' Conversion Society."

"The—the Cannibals' Conversion Society!" murmured the Head, like a man in a dream. "Pray what are the objects of this—this society, Todd?"

"To provide cannibals of the South Sea islands with gum-books and chewing-gum!" explained Alonzo innocently.

"With chewing-gum to eat, the cannibals' craving to eat each other would become extirpated. Thus, you will perceive—"

"Todd," rumbled the Head, "are you mad?"

The Duffer blinked at Dr. Locke.

"Is it possible, Todd," said the Head, in biting tones, "that you allowed a man who calls himself a reverend to—to delude you with such a story?"

"Really, my dear sir, the Reverend Jeremiah Slagg—"

"Whoever the man is, he is a dishonest rogue!" said the Head. "He has played upon your simple nature, Todd, and taken advantage of your amazing stupidity!"

"Oh!" gasped Alonzo.

He was floored.

"Fish!" exclaimed Dr. Locke, turning to the American Removite. "I recollect several occasions in the past when you have been engaged on similar money-making enterprises, and I have no doubt that you duped this unsophisticated youth into ordering those goods for purposes of your own. You must return the goods to their owners at once!"

"Oh glory!" moaned Fish, in misery. "I— I guess half of those goods are gone, sir, and they've got to be paid for!"

"Indeed?" said the Head, a frown passing over his stern brow. "What is the value of the goods you have sold?" "Four pounds, ten and six, I reckon!" mumbled Fish reluctantly. "And the value of the whole consignment was about fifteen pounds."

The Head's stern brow became darker. "And have you the money to make good the discrepancy, Fish?"

"Nope, sir! I'm stony!"

"And you, Todd?"

"I am grieved to say that at present my financial resources amount to fourpence, sir!" replied Alonzo Todd mournfully. "However, my Uncle Benjamin will—"

"You will kindly leave your Uncle Benjamin out of the affair!" snapped the Head. "It seems that you have involved yourself and this stupid boy in a pretty tangle, Fish. As for the matter of this absurd society, Todd, into which you have been inveigled by this unscrupulous Mr. Slagg, I shall telephone to the police to keep a watch for him, and arrest him for posing as treasurer of a bogus society. Loder, you will kindly take charge of those goods in the box-room until I see a way of returning them to their owners with the value of the missing articles."

"Yes, sir!" said Loder, with a subdued chuckle.

The Head turned majestically to Alonzo.

"Todd," he said, and his voice cut deep into the guileless heart of the Duffer. "I have always regarded you as a boy of somewhat less than the average common-sense, but I had no idea that you were such a stupid, unsophisticated youth. Fish, who is more responsible for his actions, and whom I know to be a dishonest and crafty boy, will be punished severely. I regard him as having lead you astray, Todd, together with that other rascal who poses as a clergyman. Let this be a lesson to you, my boy, that you will never again suc-

cumb to the wiles of the unscrupulous. Fish, hold out your hand!"

The Head took a stout aspirant from beside his desk, and faced the trembling Fish grimly.

The subsequent five minutes were painful ones for the business man of the Remove. Alonzo Todd looked on distastefully, whilst Loder's gleaming eyes showed the keen satisfaction he felt.

"You two boys may go!" said the Head. "I shall now proceed to put the police on the track of the Reverend Jeremiah Slagg!"

Alonzo Todd and Fisher T. Fish went. Fish's eyes were sombre and hollow as he regarded the Duffer.

"My dear Fish—"

"You slab-sided, all-fired mugwump!" snarled the Yankee Removite, in tense accents. "You greenhorn! I guess, if my hands weren't so infernal painful I'd mop up the ground with you!"

"Pray accept my sincerest consolation, my dear Fish!" implored Alonzo gently.

"Really, you know, you—"

"Br-r-r-rr!"

And Fisher T. Fish limped away.

Peter Todd smiled grimly when Alonzo unburdened his soul to him.

When Alonzo had finished, the worthy Peter delivered unto him a long lecture, and, after that, that a piece of his mind. The phrases Peter used were not elegant ones, but decidedly emphatic.

Next day, news came through to Dr. Locke that the Reverend Jeremiah Slagg had been arrested in Friar-dale, whilst under the influence of drink. The authorities recognised him as a man who had been "wanted" by the London police for months. An adept at the confidence trick, he had carried off numerous swindles in the metropolis, and a reward of ten pounds was offered, for his capture. He was generally known as "Parson Pete."

The worthy inspector at Friar-dale congratulated Dr. Locke upon his astuteness, which had led to the capture of Parson Pete, and promised that the reward of ten pounds should be forwarded next day.

Dr. Locke smiled grimly at this, but on second thoughts decided to accept the ten pounds. Part of it was devoted to the discharge of Alonzo's debt with the Eureka Bazaar Company, and the remainder placed in the hospital-box.

The remainder of the goods were returned to the Eureka Bazaar Company, Limited, next day, and that was the end of Alonzo's Agency.

THE END.

(Don't miss next Monday's Grand Long Complete Story of Greyfriars School, entitled "BUNTER ON THE BOARDS," by FRANK RICHARDS.)

NOTICES.

Back Numbers, etc.

F. Sugarman, The Hall, Kingsbury Road, Dalston, London, N., has for sale "Magnets" from 561. 3d. each, postage included.

H. Hawthorne, Wandella, Mount Mea, D'Agulair, Queensland, Australia, wants Christmas numbers of "Magnet" for 1910 and 1912, also No. 20. 4d. each offered.

George Crawford, 51, Gateside Street, Laris, has for sale 50 back numbers of "Magnet" and "Gem," from 530 to current issue. 2d. each.

N. C. Bird, 57, Gordon Mansions, Gover Street, London, W.C., has for sale back numbers of the Companion Papers.

J. Hardy, 16, Bayswater Terrace, London, W. 2, wants back numbers of the Companion Papers before 100, also "Nelson Leas," 2d. each offered. Christmas Numbers, 3d.

G. E. Story, Witham Villa, Tattershall Road, Boston, Lincolnshire, has for sale back numbers of the "Magnet" and "Gem."

A. Chamberlain, 39, Darlington Street, Wolverhampton, Staffs, wants Christmas Numbers "Gem" and "Magnet" for 1917. 3d. each offered. Write first.

W. P. Lomax, 19, Fleet Lane, Parr, St. Helens, Lancs, has back numbers of the Companion Papers for sale.

B. P. Langston, the Rectory, Margaret Road, near Dunmow, wants "Nelson Leas," Nos. 208 and 209, must be clean. 3d. each offered.

Jack Tweedale, 8, Canan Street, Rochdale, Lancs, wants a complete set of "Greyfriars Herald's" (old series). Write first, stating price.

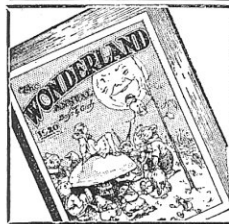
David Anderson, Reekie Row, Sauchie, by Alloa, Scotland, has for sale back numbers of the Companion Papers.

S. Boaler, 13, Shepherd's Bush Road, Shepherd's Bush, London, W., wants "Bob Cherry's Barring Out," and "Figgin's Fig Pudding." Write first.

R. Batten, 502, Elizabeth Street, South Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wants "The Toff," 6d.; "School and Sport," 4d.; "Bob Cherry's Barring Out," "School-boys Never Shall be Slaves," "After Lights Out," 3d.

Donald Cottee, Le Chalet, Spofforth Street, Cremorne, Sydney, Australia, wants "Magnets" and "Gems" before 1912. 3d. each offered.

L. Lilley, 31, Appollo Road, Rook End, Oldbury, near Birmingham, wants "Gems," Nos. 566, 568, 569, 570, 571, and 572. 2d. each offered.



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FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.

There have been shoals of letters this last week, about the MAGNET in particular, about the Companion Papers in general, to say nothing of the "Holiday Annual"—which, as a Christmas book, can face all comers—and the "Greyfriars Herald."

Everybody seems to have written about the latest member of the group of papers. Everybody likes it. Some people want it to be a daily, but that sent a shiver down the spine of the editor, and caused the office cat, Thomasia by name, to set up her fur.

By the way, some of my friends think things are done like lightning, and ask for photos to appear "next week." That is impossible. Press day is far in advance of publication. Consequently, it is out of the question to oblige with such amazing celerity as that.

You will have gathered from all this that the correspondence has been heavy. Yes, it has, but not too heavy. Don't, for a fraction of a second, imagine it.

MESSAGES FROM EVERYWHERE.

I dare say you will think what I am going to say is on the prosy side. It can't be helped. One must take some risks. I was just thinking of my correspondence—from where it came, and all that kind of thing. It is almost as good as a bout of travelling to read the letters—letters from the South, where the lucky inhabitants have plenty of sunshine, and can pick flowers all the year round.

There are hosts of readers in the English West. They make one think of Tresco and all the Scillies, where the climate is mild all the year round—no shivering—balmy breezes, bright days, cruising trips amidst the islands, and no worries at all.

At least, that is how Sir Walter Besant used to describe the place, though I am inclined to think the worries cannot be shaken off so easily. They sit like black care behind the busman. It all shows how much wiser it is to wait. Then there should be no seat for "Atracura," which is Julius Caesar for the aforesaid Black Care.

WHERE THE COMPANION PAPERS ARE READ.

Mind, you will stop reading this page if it bores you. Don't be bored. Leave that to the bigwigs in the City who, as we read, "join the bored"—though they

spell it board, but that would spoil the sentence, so one can let it go.

The letters made me think of the war—not that I am going to write about the war. Leave that to Ludendorff. He seems to know as little about it all as anybody, so, of course, he must be the very man for the job.

It was just concerning some of the letters that blew in from all quarters while the hammering was going on. A Manchester chum told me about his home in the neighbourhood of the big city of the Irwell, though it is little enough one sees of the river during a run through Cottonopolis.

If you have to know towns, well, you know them, and there is the end of it. I had many pleasant chats with soldiers serving about their home places—the Black Country, Chorley—yes, good old Chorley!—and Tipton, which has its admirers, and I am not surprised at that. If you get a letter from Belfast and Dublin—and I am always receiving messages from those places—naturally think of Royal Avenue, and Donegal Place in Belfast, and Larne, and County Down, and the way the North of Ireland trains rattle south past Newry, or of Dublin, and Merrion Square, and the bright scene by the Liffey, with the wharves so busy, and Ball's Bridge looking its very best.

That reminds me that I think that poor old, much-abused, cruelly misjudged Bunter—well, you of the MAGNET all know W. G. B., so why say more?—would be a first-rate companion to have on a world jaunt. I know that tours have been declared unnatural.

I read a letter the other day saying that schoolboys did not go on tours. Do they not?

But to Bunter. He would appreciate things. I am taking it—not Bunter—that the Food Controller would go easy, the same as he does in dear old Devonshire, where, a friend tells me, you can buy three pounds of butter—butter, not margarine!—over the counter.

Now, with Bunter you would be sure of getting plenty to eat. He would look after that. If a landlord tried to be mean, Bunter would see that he was not. But you will say that a world tour is a dream—with or without the porpoise. Perhaps it is, but a word in your ear. Dreams are not so bad. You can travel that way. Of course, I mean the real dreams—sometimes dubbed day-dreams. There is no fuss about passports then, no bother at the termini, nothing of that kind.

And to a man like myself, who, sometimes, for whole days on end, lives amidst letters with foreign postmarks to them—letters from busy Sydney, or up country—letters written in fine old countryside in the tropics—the notion of starting off and seeing all these places

is tempting. Alas! there are lots of journeys one can only do by the Day Dream Route. The tickets are cheap, but you get back home again too soon.

I get letters about the aborigines of Australia, up Port Darwin way. I don't suppose the aborigines read the Companion Papers, but the Companion Papers get right up into that part of the tropical world. Then, on the other hand, there are letters from up North in Scotland, round about Killin Junction, Callander, Fort William, and Inverness, to say nothing of Thurso. You cannot get much further than that. You would walk off and find yourself wading for the Shetlands, or Russia. But keep off Russia until it settles down.

Please remember this is only a chat column. Ring off, take an omnibus, do anything you like, if it worries you. It is no use sighing for the South when winter comes. I know a man who always does. Every winter that comes he grouses fit to turn your hair grey. He hates the cold. He goes round muffled up, and his face, like every picture, tells a story. But it is no good.

I really believe there is merit in the British winter. There are days when I have looked for it—the merit—and failed to spot it. I was thinking the other day of my cold friend. He suffers horribly. He ought to be rolled up in cotton wool, labelled "One Briton; to be kept warm and dry," and despatched to the tropic of Capricorn, or somewhere else sunny and bright. But this British winter! What about it? Grumble at it! Call it unkind names! Catch the 'flu in it!

"Just say what you will;

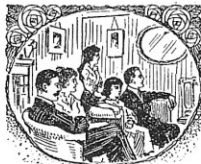
The frost and the fog will worry you still!"

And that's that. And the British winter does some of us—I fancy the majority—a lot of good; makes fellows hard and strong.

The chap who is never cold does not know half the pleasure of feeling well thawed and comfortable. A hard winter makes one admire the fellows who work out in the open at worrying, finger-nipping jobs, and carry on just the same. The world was never conquered by fellows who went inside because it was cold!

Not that it is wrong to grumble at bad weather. That is one of the reasons why there is bad weather! It is something to growl at, and we all of us require to indulge at times in a health-giving growl; yes, even—

Your Editor



VENTRILOQUISM IN A MONTH.

A GRAND ARTICLE EXPLAINING
HOW YOU MAY BECOME A
VENTRILOQUIST.



"LEVEL" SOUNDS.

Of the three "distant" voices the "level" is, perhaps, the most useful and the most generally successful, because the mere fact of the entertainer being on the same plane as the door and the windows, from behind which people are supposed to converse with him, provides him with opportunities for using the facial muscles and for distorting sounds, and so heightening the illusion.

For instance, whereas he must turn full or three-quarter face when using the "roof" voice, he can carry on a dialogue on the "level" sideways to the audience, or in the case where the stage possesses a door at the rear, he may often be permitted for a moment to turn his back.

Practise as before in the "bee drone" voice, without endeavouring to any great extent to shut off the sound in the throat. This may be done by curling up the tongue so that its tip presses against the back of the upper teeth.

If you are practising by the side of the door, as you open it towards you the ventriloqually uttered sounds must be raised in tone and made more distinct by lifting the shutter from the throat; or, in other words, by allowing the tongue to resume its normal position, and the sounds to issue forth on the principle of the "bee drone."

THE "FLOOR" VOICE.

This voice is extremely useful for such illusions as "the man in the cellar attending to the gas-meter," etc. It calls particularly for a display of hisionic powers, and the mere fact of bending down, as the sounds appear to come from below, helps to give it the necessary subdued and "distant" effect. Whilst speaking very slowly in the "bee drone" thrust the chin forward, contracting the larynx as much as you possibly can; roll back the tongue to stifle the sound in the throat, and the illusion will be complete. Immediately you change from the "floor" to the natural voice, resume the standing position, and speak with unusual distinctness. The contrast cannot fail to escape the notice of the audience, who will be quite convinced that you have indeed carried on a conversation with someone below.

VENTRILOQUAL IMITATIONS.

Although imitations can hardly be classed under the heading of pure ventriloquism, yet they may be pressed into the service of the entertainer to promote variety in his performance. They serve, too, another very useful purpose, inasmuch as they provide a relief from what must inevitably prove a strain on the vocal chords. As has already been said, ventriloquism necessitates the placing of the vocal chords in a somewhat unnatural position, and the result is that the exponent, particularly

in the early stages of the work, is apt speedily to become tired.

As a break between an exhibition of "near" ventriloquism—that is, with the automata—and an exposition of distant effects, one or two vocal or instrumental imitations will prove welcome both to the entertainer and the entertained.

A witty person once remarked that the secret of success lies not so much in what you can do, as in what you can induce other people to think you can do. In other words, a little knowledge in the hands of a ready-witted and competent ventriloquist can be turned to great advantage and become a valuable asset in his undertakings. For successful imitations, self-confidence is perhaps of even greater importance than the possession of real ventriloquial powers. Self-confidence is a trump card that the ventriloquist should always hold in his hand, because it will take all the tricks. Success is impossible without it, and easy with it!

Perhaps there are few branches of entertaining in which self-assurance is so necessary as in ventriloquial mimicry. The border-line between a successful imitation and a ludicrous failure is oftentimes so narrow that a sensitive soul would soon be disheartened.

The only difference between the efforts of the ordinary and the ventriloquial mimic is that the latter, when giving expression to sounds vocally produced, should place the chords in the same position as for the "bee drone" and the "distant" voice.

A very good study is that of a hen as she cackles immediately before laying an egg, and again after having done so. You will notice that the first sounds are mostly of a guttural nature, and they should come from well back in the throat, starting moderately high and descending four or five notes. Of course, the lips will have to be kept slightly opened, and for the final jubilant crow considerably extended. To avoid the necessary facial movement, it is as well when uttering the "crow" to turn sideways to the audience. Again, while the first note of the cackling should be loud, the successive notes grow quieter.

A DOG-FIGHT.

An imitation of a dog-fight will form a spirited item in your programme. By your actions you may suggest, for instance, a small cur yapping vigorously until a larger and more ferocious animal endeavours to quieten him.

To produce the higher notes of the dog-bark, the falsetto or "thick" voice must be used, while the deeper guttural tones, already explained for use with the "nigger," serve for the larger dog.

It is a little difficult to intersperse the two sets of sounds without expressing facial contortion, but you may obtain for yourself a certain amount of license by pretending that the dog-fight is taking

place beneath a covered table, behind which you may stoop in your supposed endeavours to stop the tumult.

It is but natural to turn from dogs to cats. Whereas you have just given an imitation, perhaps, of a fierce duel, your next effort should endeavour to portray a feline courtship. This should be made as funny as possible. The lady's "marr-r-r-ows" and "mia-a-a-ows" are easily copied after you have been kept awake a night or two listening to the genuine article, whilst the deeper tones of Mr. Tom are included in the repertory of every well-educated schoolboy.

The mouth should be kept fairly wide open, and a kind of sideways motion given to it, whilst the cry should be drawled until the lips form for the final "ow." The spittings and growlings necessitate the bringing together of the lips and teeth, a freedom which your audience on this occasion must permit you. The doleful moans with which our feline friends endeavour to solace one another can be produced by making the mouth very hollow, the lips into the form of a large O, slowly contracted to a very small one.

For the die-away, distant effect, moaning more or less in the throat must be resorted to.

A variation can be made by giving an imitation of pouring out a glass of wine. To produce the illusion of drawing the cork from the bottle, turn slightly round, thrust the forefinger into the mouth against the cheek, close the lips around the finger, slowly bring the end of the finger round inside the cheek, and force it smartly through the lips. The result will be a loud pop. By moving the tongue from the back of the mouth quickly backwards and forwards, making it strike against the inside of the gums, the "glug-glug" of the wine being poured out will be plainly heard.

THE LION AND THE COW.

Under the cover of a screen the roaring of a lion is simple of accomplishment. Use an ordinary lamp-chimney, and give vent to a series of deep-throated roars from this. The effect will both be natural and startling. With the same instrument the deep lowing of a cow can be perfectly imitated, the lips producing the familiar "moo," the sound being gradually drawled through the glass chimney.

To copy a saw at work is quite easy. Get a ruler or some similar article to represent the saw, and draw it backwards and forwards as though cutting a piece of wood. The sound is best made by clenching the teeth, placing the tongue a little forward between the upper and lower teeth, quickly inhaling and exhaling the air. The resultant noise will be an exact imitation of the saw cutting its way through the wood.

(To be concluded next week.)



THE MINERS' CHAMPION

A Stirring New Tale of the Ring.
By PERCY LONGHURST.

Harry Rhodes, a miner and amateur boxer, of Lexborough, a mining village, meets Joshua Martin, the manager and principal backer of Anthony Hanu—Cast-Iron Tony—a wonderful Scottish light-weight boxer, who has come to Lexborough to train. Harry lives with an uncle, James Rhodes, who has trained him, and who had himself been a boxer years before. He had left the Ring through some tragedy of which Joshua Martin knows the facts, much to James Rhodes' alarm.

Hanna, who is a thorough scoundrel, becomes Harry's sworn enemy.

A strike at the pit where Harry works is settled by means of a boxing contest between Harry and Bob Durham, the mine-owner's son. Bertram Godfrey, a friend of Mr. Durham's, interests himself in Harry Rhodes.

Hanna returns to Lexborough that night, and makes an attempt on Harry's life.

Harry learns that James Rhodes is his father, and that he was responsible for the death of a boxer some years previously.

Harry, his father, and Bertram Godfrey go to London, where Godfrey attempts to get Harry introduced in the highest boxing circles. His first effort, however, is unsuccessful.

(Now read on.)

Godfrey Plans Again.

"YOU'RE right, Rhodes," returned Godfrey. "That's no good at all. What we want is something that will make a big sensation. Something that even Mr. Bowman, manager of the National Boxing Club, won't be able to overlook."

"What if I wait for a night when the club has got something big on, and challenge the winner?" suggested Harry.

"Hold on, there!" Godfrey interrupted. "How're you going to get in? There's no slipping past the doorkeeper there. And no one, not even if he's the son of a duke, or the duke himself, can get inside the National without showing his member's ticket. That's no go!"

"But couldn't a member introduce me?"

"That's a privilege holding good only on special occasions. At other times a member isn't able to introduce anyone. You don't know the National, Harry."

"A challenge in the 'Sporting Daily'?" suggested Rhodes.

But Godfrey shook his head.

"Scores do that every day, and no one takes any notice of 'em."

"And another thing is that Harry's neither an American nor a Frenchman, nor from Timbuctoo," said his father.

"Might be easier if he were."

"Suppose you couldn't fall across one of the shining lights, engineer a squabble with him, and then lay him out before an admiring crowd of a few hundreds?"

asked Godfrey. "No, that won't do. Might end in a police-court charge, which would be anything but a good advertisement. Wish I could think of something! Think it's any good my approaching Lord Shorthill? I know him fairly well, and he's great on sport—boxing in particular. I could ask him to get up a private show. Bring down a good man to stand up to you, Harry. It might work. There are one or two others who might consider the notion, even if he wouldn't."

"That sounds more promising, Mr. Godfrey. It would suit Harry all right, though I don't see how it's going to help you, sir, to take the rise out of Mr. Bowman."

"Neither do I, Rhodes. Still, it's how to give Harry a shove into the lime-light is what is most wanted. The opportunity of making Bowman eat his words may come along, later. Shall I see what I can do with Lord Shorthill?"

"I am willing, Mr. Godfrey, and I think it's very kind indeed of you to go to such trouble on my account," Harry said.

Twelve hours later Godfrey was back at his Highgate home, and waked up Harry to tell him that he had succeeded in fixing matters up. Lord Shorthill had taken to the suggestion like a duck to water.

"It'll be just a private show," Godfrey explained. "A small West End hall will be hired, and the spectators will be just a party of Lord Shorthill's friends. I'm to have the stage-managing of the show. I know where to lay hands on half a dozen decent boys who'll make a display. And now, whom shall we have as your opponent?"

"I'm quite ready to leave that to you," replied Harry.

"Amateur or pro?" mused Godfrey.

"There are half a dozen good amateurs who'd be willing enough, just for the sport of the thing; especially if they haven't heard what you did to Bob Durham. There's the Guards Brigade Officer who won the Guards Brigade Officers' middle-weights. He's a lot heavier than you are. He'd take it on like a shot. Or there's Cunningham, the winner of the last Olympic Games light-weight event. Or—Here, Harry! What d'you say to having a turn-up with a Frenchman?"

"I have no objection at all," answered Harry readily.

"All right; though I'll have a word with your father in the morning. There's your young Jules Meunier, the

Parisian light-weight, who thinks he's cock of the walk, and that all the English boys are scared stiff of him. He's a sportsman, too, as well as not too high and mighty to turn up his nose at the chance of picking up an easy twenty-five pounds or so. What d'you say? It's trying you a bit high, I know, for Meunier's top-hole."

"The better man my opponent the less discredit to me if I get beaten," said Harry. "I'm willing."

"Beaten! Not on your life. Meunier's good, but I can't see him getting any verdict with you but a losing one. Right you are, then! Next Saturday will be the evening, if I can arrange it."

And Harry went back to bed and fell asleep almost at once. But maybe he couldn't have slept so peacefully had he been able to foresee what the next Saturday evening was going to bring forth.

A Private Show.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HALL, in a small street on the north side of Piccadilly, was the venue selected by Bertram Godfrey for the private boxing show Lord Shorthill was giving for the entertainment of his friends, and thither a closed taxi quickly carried Harry Rhodes and his father. Ten o'clock was the time for which the bout with Jules Meunier was fixed, and the taxi left Highgate in time to allow of Harry getting three hours' rest before he was due to appear.

That it was a stiff ordeal facing him Harry fully realised. His opponent, one of the most brilliant of that ever-increasing army of boxers that France has turned out with a success almost incredible since she took seriously to the study of the "noble art," was a man to be reckoned with.

In three years he had fought forty-two contests in the ring, and each had proved a victory for him. Even the men at the top of the light-weight tree in England and America were beginning to take exercise in side-stepping a meeting with him. According to repute he was smarter than greased lightning, and full to overflowing with pugilistic energy, as well as possessing an inexhaustible stamina.

Each of his forty-two victories had been gained by the knock-out route. And when a boxer shows such consistency as that it is small wonder if he finds it difficult to make matches.

His manager, Adrien Champlain, had accepted Godfrey's offer with an airy

indifference that spoke volumes for his confidence in Meunier's ability.

"A good man, but a novice," Harry had described Harry Rhodes. "He has taken part in no public match up to the present. He is anxious for a trial."

"From Jules he shall have it!" Champlain had smiled. "Jules will try him, and the verdict will be—innocent. Ha, ha!"

"We'll see," Godfrey had told himself. "Maybe it'll be Jules who'll be innocent—as to how he lost—by the time Harry has done with him!"

For all that, Godfrey was more than a trifle excited when Saturday evening arrived and the half-hundred padded seats around the ring began to fill up with men in evening-dress, some direct from their clubs, others who had been Lord Shorthill's guests at dinner. And when nine o'clock came and the first pair of boxers entered the ring, and Harry and his father had not yet arrived, his excitement grew into downright anxiety.

Why hadn't they come? What had happened? A telephone call to his house at Highgate brought the answer that both had left the house at six o'clock. Where, then, could they be? Was it possible that at the last moment Harry's nerve had failed him?

Godfrey would not believe the suggestion.

As he looked into the dressing-room for the tenth time he was buttoned by Mr. Champlain.

"And our friend, Jules' young enemy, where is he, Mr. Godfrey?" the Frenchman wanted to know. "If you do not make objection, I would like to see him—Jules likewise—to take stock, before the gloves go on."

"Haven't seen him. I've been busy," Godfrey replied.

"Eh?" The Frenchman's eyes went up in surprise. "Is it then that he is not here?" he asked.

"He'll be here all right when the time comes," said Godfrey, wishing that he had warrant for saying so.

He hurried away, to make inquiry of the doorkeeper for the twentieth time. But without result. Harry Rhodes had not arrived.

Lord Shorthill came across to him as he returned to the hall.

"How goes it, Godfrey?" asked his lordship cheerfully. "Where's this youthful Tom Sayers of yours? I've seen Meunier. He seems quite pleased with himself."

"The bout is not due until ten o'clock."

"No; that is so. Hope it's a good contest. It ought to be from what you've said of this Yorkshire youngster. He must have some pluck to be willing to take on such a fellow as the Frenchman. I'm eager to see him. More than that, Godfrey, I'm particularly anxious it should prove a good bout, because there'll be an extra spectator to-night—one whom I wouldn't care to know had gone away disappointed."

"Who is that?" asked Godfrey, but without much interest.

Lord Shorthill leaned forward, lowering his voice to a whisper.

"Say nothing about it. It's Prince—"

—His coming in, of course. Promised to be here just before ten o'clock. He heard about the show through O'Reilly, and insisted upon coming. So you can understand why I hope this bout is going to be a good one. But say nothing about it, there's a good chap!"

Godfrey nodded. Again he rushed off to the doorkeeper, taking the dressing-room—empty, alas!—on his way. He glanced at his watch. A quarter to ten!

What, in the name of Fate, had happened? What was he going to do?

A fiasco! And the prince—who on more than one occasion had given a clear proof of his liking for the sport—coming specially to witness it!

"For two puds I'd make a bolt for it myself!" groaned Godfrey.

Once more he rushed to the entrance. Two taxis had pulled up almost together. From one two figures descended; from the other a single person—a tall, slightly-built lad. Up the steps came the three as though in a violent hurry. Half-way the third figure, wrapped in a big cloak, tried to pass the leader. There was a slight collision, and the one in the cloak was thrown off, his balance, and would have come down but for the ready support of the third man. The other man had continued on his way unheeding.

"I beg your pardon, sir! Are you hurt?" exclaimed the one who had prevented the fall; and Godfrey's heart gave a great leap.

The voice was that of Harry Rhodes. "No, no; not at all, thank you! I'm afraid the fault was mine!" replied the lad in the cloak, quickly recovering himself. "I am much obliged to you for your prompt help."

And then James Rhodes was beside Godfrey, telling him that the delay in arriving was due to a bad accident to the taxi. It had broken down in a collision. Harry was a bit cut and bruised, but had insisted upon coming on.

"But not until after I'd made him see a doctor, sir!" cried James Rhodes. "Keep us an awful time. I feared we'd surely be late. He said Harry ought to lie down and rest; but th' lad refused point-blank."

"Because I don't really feel any the worse for the accident," said Harry, joining them. "Just a cut or two from the broken glass. But it's nothing to interfere with my boxing."

"Thank Heaven for that!" breathed Godfrey, as they hurried along a corridor. "I thought we were done in. Here's your room. You'll be as quick as you can, won't you?"

He whispered in Harry's ear, and the lad started back with surprise.

"Fact!" nodded Godfrey. "That was he when you saved from falling down the steps. Come here specially to see your fight!"

M. Champlain met him as he returned to the hall, feeling as gay and light-hearted as he had been miserable five minutes before.

"So your English boy not come—eh?" smiled the Frenchman.

"Hasn't he?" and Godfrey laughed aloud. "First I've heard of it. Jules will know whether he's here or not in about five minutes."

And Jules did.

He had had little time wherein to "take stock" of his opponent, but what he did see of him as they sat in their corners waiting for the gong was not causing him any undue apprehension.

"Slow!" the Frenchman summed up Harry, noting the roundness of his arms.

And, withdrawing his own gloves from the mere touch which did duty as a handshake, he went in at once to demonstrate the marvellous quickness with which Nature had endowed him.

He was the kind of boxer—typically French—that gives his friends reason to believe that the fight would be over within the first round. But until now he had not come up against an opponent who had cultivated the art of actual defence as Harry—thanks to his father's tuition—had done.

Meunier found his fists hitting nothing more than the air, and the faster he bore in and hit, the less chance there seemed

to be of his landing any effective blow. And when a quick, straight left-hander, with a simultaneous half-step forward to assist it, took him squarely on the end of the nose, he was as much bewildered by the surprise of the thing as by the force of the blow itself.

It stopped him dead; his eyes filled with water so that he could see nothing, and his whirling arms ceased to move. Measuring him carefully, Harry drove in right and left at the body. Both blows went home, to the tune of an uncontrollable outburst of cheering. The on-lookers had been as much surprised as Jules Meunier himself.

The rest of that first round was made up of Meunier's frantic efforts to get himself going again, an intention that Harry, by a ceaseless and well-directed attack, was most careful to prevent.

"I don't think there are many boxers who could have done what that lad did," whispered Harry to his neighbour the tall lad whom Harry had saved from a fall.

The cloak had been thrown aside, revealing correct dinner-dress, and he was sitting in the until then vacant chair at the right hand of Lord Shorthill.

"The youngster knows his business," the latter agreed. "I think, sir, this will be a good fight."

It was a good fight, but it didn't go the way the Frenchman had intended it should. More than once he found himself wholly at sea, wondering what to do with an opponent who simply refused to allow the slaughtering blows slung at him to land. Who always had a left hand ready. Who refused to fall into clinches, and took very good care not to allow the Frenchman to do any clinching either.

Only once did Meunier's hopes really rise. That was when, by a sudden feint, he deceived Harry into dropping his left arm for an instant. At once the Frenchman's dangerous right crashed in. His glove took the English boy between the ear and the chin, but it was too high up to do any real damage. But the force was sufficient to send him almost off his balance.

In leaped Meunier to push his advantage. Two blows he sent in; the second was evaded, and by rapid footwork Harry was out of distance and back into position again. And when Meunier tried to follow him up, he caught a nasty one—a stiff upper-cut—that reminded him that a lowered head carried with it certain disadvantages.

Stepping to the right, and slightly forward, Harry drove his right beneath Meunier's upraised left arm, and he went down on the floor with a bang.

Adrien Champlain's face was a study. Jules Meunier knocked down! He had never before seen such a thing happen.

During the minute interval he had an earnest talk with his man; and, coming up for the eighth round, Meunier attempted a change of tactics. But a boxer who tries to play a game foreign to his temperament and training is playing a dangerous game—as Jules found out.

Harry was not to be caught a second time by the same trick, and the Frenchman's would-be cunning feints, his pretences of being tired, availed him nothing.

Realising this, he gave up the attempt at clever fighting, and reverted to his natural style. By his mad rushes were met and checked with a deadly straight left, and every time the glove met his face or body he winced. His vicious swings expended their force on the air, again and again laying him open to damaging retaliation as the impetus of his own movement threw him momentarily off his balance.

Jules Meunier was a gallant fellow, filled with all the fiery courage of his

rance and rumour had not exaggerated the extent of his superb endurance; but physical courage and enduring energy lose their value when the mind becomes impressed with a sense of the hopelessness of trying.

And little by little this feeling of despair was being impressed upon the brave Frenchman.

There was nothing in the fight to encourage him. He had not failed to

observe a fresh and ugly-looking cut above his opponent's left eyebrow—souvenir of the accident to the taxi that had so nearly proved disastrous—and, like a good general, he had played for that spot. More than once he had landed, and a plentiful flow of blood had restarted. It seemed, however, to bother Harry not at all, although its plentiful distribution about his face gave him the appearance of having been badly punished.

In the middle of the ninth round an

abrupt silence fell upon the hall. A hard cross-counter had landed upon the Frenchman's jaw, and he had dropped in a huddled heap.

"C'est fini!" whispered Adrien Champlain.

And he burst into tears.

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