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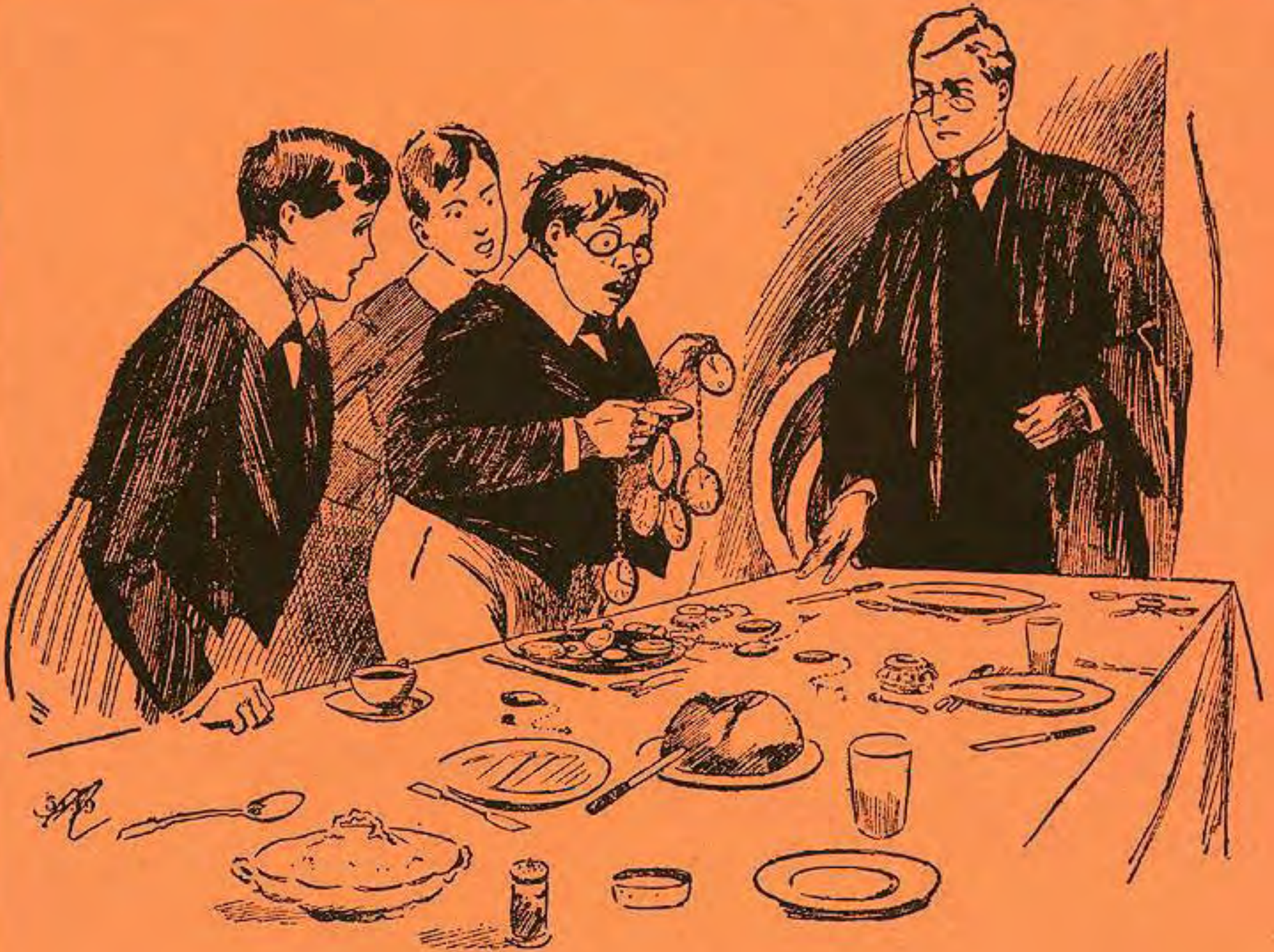
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COMPLETE
STORY
FOR ALL.

**THE
GREYFRIARS CONJURER.**

By
**FRANK
RICHARDS**



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TALE OF HARRY WHARTON & Co.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Mysterious Affair.

HAVE you seen my watch?" It was Harry Wharton who asked the question in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars. The chapel-bell had ceased to ring, and the boys were tumbling out of bed. Wharton, who was always an early riser, was almost dressed,

and for some minutes he had been looking about him with a puzzled expression.

"Has anybody seen my watch?" Bob Cherry turned a red and dripping face round from his washstand.

"Eh? What's the matter?"

"I can't find my watch!"

"Look under your pillow."

"I have looked there."

"Look in your pocket, then."

"I have. I don't see what can have become of it—"

"I say, Wharton," said Billy Bunter, sitting up in bed, and blinking as he groped about for his spectacles—"I say—"

"It was in my hand a few minutes ago," said Harry Wharton. "I took it from under my pillow, and laid it down for a minute while I got my things on. Now—"

"I say, Wharton!"

"Have you seen it, Billy?"

"No; I haven't seen it," said Billy Bunter. "I thought that perhaps you might have pawned it and forgotten all about it."

"Oh, cheese it!"

"Well, you know, you do pawn your watch sometimes, Wharton. You can easily get into a habit like that. You remember you pawned it to pay Vaseline's debt once—"

"Shut up!" said Hazeldene.

"Certainly, Hazeldene; I should be sincerely sorry to

mention any matter you'd rather have kept dark, but as I was saying—"

"By Jove!" suddenly exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"What's the matter with you, Nugent?"

"Where's my watch?"

"Your watch?" said Harry Wharton.

"Yes. It's not here!"

"Where did you leave it?"

"In my waistcoat-pocket; I always do. I'll swear it was in my pocket, too, when I put the waistcoat on. Now it's gone!"

"Rats!" said Bulstrode. "Do you mean to say there's a pickpocket in the dormitory?"

"Well, it's gone!"

"Look in your trousers-pocket," suggested Levison.

"Oh, don't be an ass! I tell you it's gone."

"I say, you fellows—"

"I suppose this is a lark of some of you chaps," said Harry Wharton. "I can't say I see where the fun come in; but, anyway, the joke has gone far enough now. I'll be glad to have my watch."

"And I to have mine," said Nugent. "Who's got it?"

There was no reply.

"Come!" exclaimed Harry Wharton impatiently. "Whoever has taken the watch may as well own up. There's no sense in keeping up a joke like this."

"I say, you fellows, perhaps there's been a burglary, and—"

"Oh, ring off, Billy! Who's got that watch?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Have you found it?"

"Found it!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, who was groping in his pockets. "No; I've lost it!"

"Lost what?"

"My watch!"

"Hallo, this is getting interesting!" exclaimed Levison. "I suppose, as a matter of fact, Cherry is at the bottom of the lark—"

"Then you're wrong, as you usually are," retorted Bob Cherry. "I don't know anything about it. I know that my watch is gone."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Bulstrode, feeling in his pockets.

"Mine's gone, too! What rotter has taken my watch?"

"My hat!" said Nugent, with a whistle of amazement.

"There's been a regular raid. Anybody else lost any watches?"

There was a general anxious investigation. Exclamations from various quarters announced the discovery that articles

were missing. Skinner, Russell, Trevor, and Grimes missed their watches.

"Eight watches gone," said Nugent. "Well, it was a harvest for somebody, and no mistake. I suppose it is a lark, but a rotten sort of a lark I never struck, in all my natural."

"I should say not!" exclaimed Wharton. "The fellow who has taken those watches had better own up, or else look out for trouble."

"But who is it?"

"Own up, you rotter, whoever you are," said Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Was it you, Billy?"

"Me!" exclaimed Bunter. "Really, Cherry—"

"Well, then, don't jaw. Now, you fellows—"

"But I have a suggestion to make," said Billy Bunter. "Very likely one of you fellows has been walking in his sleep, and collaring all the watches—"

"You're the only chap here who walks in his sleep," said Levison.

"Yes, but—"

"It wasn't done in the night," said Harry Wharton impatiently. "My watch was in my hand five minutes ago."

"And mine was in my pocket," said Nugent.

"It's a rotten silly lark of some rotten silly ass!" said Bob Cherry.

The larkfulness is rotten, and the rottenfulness is terrific," said the Nabob of Bhanipur, in his purring voice. "The thrashfulness would be the proper caper."

"Who's got those watches?"

"Own up, you rotter!"

The rotter, whoever he was, did not own up. The Remove proceeded to dress themselves with puzzled and angry looks. At first it had seemed that the abstraction of the watches was merely an absurd practical joke. Now matters began to take on a more serious aspect.

The joke, if it was a joke, had gone quite far enough. If the watches were not restored, it looked as though the purloiner did not intend to restore them.

The thought that there might be a thief in the Form sent a painful shock through the whole of the Remove.

It seemed too bad to be true, and yet if it were not, why did not the individual who had taken the watches own up and restore them?

Harry Wharton's face was very dark. He did not want to lose his watch, which was a valuable one, and a present from his uncle. But worse than the loss of the watch would be the disgrace to the Form, and the sneers of the other fellows at Greyfriars. It was intolerable to think that there might be a thief in the Remove.

"Look here," exclaimed Harry Wharton, when he was ready to go down, "before we leave the dormitory, this matter ought to be settled. If it gets out, the other fellows will jump to the conclusion that there is a thief in the Form. The chap who has taken those watches ought to own up at once. I think it was a rotten, stupid joke, but I'm willing to say nothing more about it if the matter is finished up now."

"That's fair and square," said Bob Cherry. "Own up, you silly ass, whoever you are!"

"The fairfulness and squarefulness are terrific, and the ownupfulness should be immediate," said Hurree Singh.

But there was no reply to Wharton's appeal.

"Oh, I'm going down!" said Levison. "We shall be late for breakfast if we wait here listening to Wharton's orations."

And the new boy in the Remove quitted the dormitory.

The others slowly followed him.

"What do you think of it, Wharton?" Bob Cherry asked, as they went down the stairs.

Harry shook his head.

"I don't know what to think. It looks like a lark."

"I suppose it's no worse than that?"

"I hope not, at any rate."

The Remove entered the dining-hall. They had been delayed by the strange affair in the dormitory, and Mr. Quelch, at the head of the Form table, gave them a somewhat severe glance as they came in. They took their places.

"You are late," said the Form master sharply.

"Sorry, sir," said Wharton. "It is not our fault."

"Indeed!" The keen eye of the master noted the signs of disturbance in many faces, and he saw at a glance that something was wrong. "Has anything happened?"

"N-nothing of any consequence, sir."

"Indeed! Was it a matter of no consequence that made you all late for breakfast?" said the Remove master, with a frown. "In that case, I shall see what will be the effect of a hundred lines a-piece in hastening your movements another time."

Harry Wharton bit his lip.

He would rather not have acquainted the Form master

with what had occurred, but a general impot. of a hundred lines for the whole Form was not to be thought of.

"If you please, sir—"

"Well, what is it?"

"Someone has been playing a joke on us, and a lot of watches have been taken," said Harry. "We were delayed by that, that is all, sir."

"A very foolish sort of joke," said Mr. Quelch. "You are excused, under the circumstances; but do I understand that the watches have not been restored?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Indeed! That looks to my mind a more serious matter than a joke," said Mr. Quelch, with a frown. "I warn the jester, whoever he may be, not to let the joke go any further, or I shall inquire into the matter again."

There was a buzz on one side of the table, where Billy Bunter sat, and Mr. Quelch glanced in that direction with a frowning brow.

"Silence there immediately!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"It's Bunter!"

"He's got them!"

"I haven't! I say, you—"

"You have!"

"Why, I can hear them ticking!"

"It's Bunter."

Mr. Quelch rose in his place. He fixed his eyes upon Bunter and the excited juniors round him.

"Bunter!" he rapped out.

"Yes, sir," stammered Billy Bunter. "I really—"

"Stand up!"

"Yes, sir. I really—"

"Now, then, some of you appear to think that Bunter has the watches. I think I heard you saying so, Hazeldene?"

"So he has, sir. I can hear them ticking in his pocket," said Hazeldene.

"I say, Vaseline, that's a whopper—"

"Why, you can hear them ticking yourself! You haven't a watch of your own, either."

"It does sound like it," said Bunter. "But it can't be, because—"

"Turn out your pockets immediately!"

"Eh?"

"Turn out your pockets immediately!"

"But, sir—"

"Turn out your pockets this instant!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Certainly, sir. But, I— Very well, sir."

Billy Bunter turned out his pockets. His jaw dropped, and he looked the picture of amazement and dismay when a handful of watches came out first.

"That's my watch!" exclaimed Bulstrode.

"And mine!" said Nugent.

"I—I—I say, you fellows—"

"So you are the perpetrator of this absurd joke, Bunter?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sternly.

Billy Bunter looked utterly bewildered.

"I, sir? Certainly not, sir! I should be sincerely sorry—"

"You will be sincerely sorry if you play a joke like this again!" said the Remove master angrily. "Restore those watches to their owners immediately!"

"But, sir—"

The watches were seized quickly enough by their owners. Several more were turned out of Bunter's pockets, till the whole eight were recovered. Bunter watched them in utter dismay and astonishment.

"I hope," said Mr. Quelch, in cutting tones, "that you intended to restore them to their owners, Bunter."

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"BUNTER, THE HYPNOTIST."

Another School Tale by
FRANK RICHARDS.

NEXT
TUESDAY.

"I, sir? Certainly not, sir!" stammered Billy Bunter, who hardly knew what he was saying in his bewilderment.

"What!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Do you know what you are saying, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir. I wouldn't have done anything of the sort."

"Bunter, you will come into my study before first lesson."

"Yes, sir; but—"

"Silence, sir! You have said quite enough."

"But, sir—"

"Another word, Bunter, and I shall send you to my study at once, and you will miss your breakfast."

That threat was more than sufficient. Bunter would not have missed a meal for any consideration the wide world could offer. He relapsed into silence, and the Remove fell to at their breakfast.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Levison the Conjuror.

"WHAT the dickens does it all mean?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, when the Remove came out into the Close.

"Bunter! Where is Bunter?"

"Here I am, Wharton," said Billy Bunter, blinking. "What do you want?"

"What did you take those watches for?"

"I didn't take them."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Harry. "They were in your pockets."

"I can't help it," said Bunter. "I didn't take them. I told Mr. Quelch that I wouldn't have done anything of the sort."

"You young ass!" exclaimed Nugent. "You told him that you didn't mean to give the watches up."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"That was what you said, anyway."

"Of course, I didn't mean that. I meant—"

"Did you take the watches or not, Bunter?"

"No, I didn't."

"Then how did they come into your pockets?"

"Ask me another," said Billy Bunter. "I don't know. I hadn't the faintest idea they were there till Hazeldene said he could hear them ticking. And then I thought he must be mistaken, you see, because I knew they weren't there. I mean, I knew I thought I knew—that is to say—"

"Do you mean that somebody put them in your pocket for a joke?"

"I suppose so."

"Weren't they in your pockets when you put your jacket on?"

"I don't know. I didn't look, you see."

"Ass! You'd have felt the weight of them, I should think—eight watches—"

"And some of them big silver turnips," said Nugent.

"Well, I didn't notice the weight; and, besides, I banged my jacket against the wall to knock the dust off, and if the watches had been in the pockets they would have been damaged."

"Then somebody slipped them in as you came downstairs?"

"I don't see how they could without my knowing it."

"Ass! Is there any other explanation?"

"Not that I know of. But I don't see why you should call me names, Wharton, just because somebody played a joke with your watch. I—"

"I'm blessed if I see how it could have been done," said Bob Cherry. "It would want a conjuror to perform a trick like that."

Harry Wharton started.

"By Jove, you've hit it!"

"What do you mean?"

"It was a conjuror!" exclaimed Harry Wharton excitedly.

"This is another trick of that confounded Levison!"

"My hat!"

"You know he has played conjuring tricks before—played one on us once, and nearly got licked for it."

"Then he'd better get quite licked this time," said Bob Cherry. "I don't like this kind of conjuring trick."

"The trickfulness is great, and the rottenfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Let's go and look for Levison," said Harry Wharton, knitting his brows. "The fellows will be saying that Billy Bunter stole the watches—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You young thief," exclaimed Bulstrode, striding up to the Owl of the Remove, and shaking him violently by the shoulder, "you'd have had my watch for good if Vaseline hadn't heard it ticking, wouldn't you?"

"P-p-please don't shake me, Bulstrode! You disturb my nervous system, and you might make my spectacles fall off, and if you do, and they get broken, you'll have to pay for them, and—"

"You young rascal—"

"Let him alone, Bulstrode!"

"You mind your own business, Harry Wharton! The

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young rascal stole those watches, and he admitted to Quelch that he wasn't going to give them up—"

"It's all a mistake."

"Rot! He's a young thief!"

"N-n-nothing of the s-s-sort, Bulstrode. I—"

"Let him alone!"

"Sha'n't!"

Harry Wharton grasped Bulstrode by the shoulder, and jerked him savagely away from the fat junior.

"You'll let him alone, you bully!" he exclaimed. "I believe you know perfectly well all the time that Bunter did not intend to steal the watches."

Bulstrode jerked himself free.

"Keep your hands off me, Wharton, or you'll repent it!"

"Keep yours off Bunter, then."

"What was he doing with the watches? He had the whole shoot in his pockets, and he wasn't going to give them up—"

"It was a trick, and I believe Levison was the one who played it," said Harry Wharton quietly. "I'm going to see."

"Oh, rot!"

"You'd better come along with us, Billy."

"Certainly, Wharton. If you will be passing the school-shop, I've no doubt Dame Mimble would open if you knocked, though she doesn't usually open so early—"

"Oh, come along! I want to find Levison."

Levison was found strolling by the cricket ground alone, as he usually was. He looked a little surprised as the famous four came up, with half a dozen fellows following them.

"Anything wrong?" he asked, in his usual unpleasant, half-sneering tone.

"Yes," said Harry shortly. "Did you put those watches in Bunter's pockets?"

Levison laughed.

"What put that idea into your head?"

"I know you can perform conjuring tricks, and I believe you are the only fellow who could have done it."

"I don't see why I should be called over the coals like this—"

"Will you answer my question?"

"Not unless I choose."

Harry Wharton's fingers tingled to knock him down; but he restrained himself. Harry had been learning of late to keep his temper in control; but it was not easy to be patient with Ernest Levison.

"I have asked you a civil question," he said, as quietly as he could; "I expect an answer. Did you play the trick with those watches?"

"Better own up!" growled Bob Cherry.

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"Are you going to answer?"

"Perhaps."

"There is no perhaps about it. You are going to own up, or you are going to be licked!" said Harry Wharton.

Levison's eyes gleamed.

"I will fight you, if you like."

"I don't want you to fight me!" said Harry, with a disdainful smile. "I could knock you out in one round, if I liked, and you ought to know it."

"You are welcome to try."

"I am not going to try. If you don't tell the truth about this matter of the watches, you'll be licked with Hurree Singh's cane, like the mischievous young fool that you are!"

"You'd better not—"

"Now, then, that's enough talk! Are you going to own up?"

"No, confound you!"

"Then we'll jolly soon make you. Collar him!"

Levison struck out savagely. Bob Cherry received a nasty blow on the mouth. But the chums had the new boy pinioned in a few seconds, and Hurree Singh took a businesslike grip upon his cane.

"Shove him across your knee, Cherry."

"Right-ho!"

"Let me go!" screamed Levison, struggling frantically.

"Yes, when we've done with you."

"Let me go!"

"Hold the rotter tight! Hand me your cane, Inky."

"Certainly, my worthy chum, though I should have terrific pleasure in administering the castigation myself."

"Don't touch me with that cane, Wharton."

"You'll get a dozen if you don't own up. Did you play the trick with those watches—yes or no?"

"Suppose I did?" growled Levison, helpless in the grasp of Cherry, Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "What then?"

"I only want to know."

"Well, I did. It was a conjuring trick, getting them into

that young ass's pockets without his knowing anything about it; there was no harm in it."

"Let him go, chaps"

Levison was released. He pulled himself together, and set his collar straight. His expression was not pleasant to see.

"Well, now you know it, you cads!" he snarled. "You wouldn't have made me speak if you hadn't been four to one."

Wharton smiled contemptuously.

"If you hadn't been a cad you would have owned up at the breakfast table," he said. "If you've got any decency you'll go to Mr. Quelch's study instead of Billy Bunter."

"Certainly," said Bunter, "Levison ought to go. Quelch is going to use his cane—I could see that in his eye—and

"I shall certainly not go!" said Levison, turning on his heel.

"Do you mean to say that you'll let Bunter be caned?" exclaimed Harry Wharton hotly.

"Bunter can say what he likes."

"Well, I don't want to sneak, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "but I think it's only fair to let Mr. Quelch know how matters really stand."

"That would be sneaking."

"But really, Wharton—"

"It's all right, Billy, I'll go!" said Harry, laughing.

"You won't get your caning—I promise you that."

"Oh, that's all right, then!" said Bunter, considerably relieved. "Of course I don't care who gets it so long as I don't. Did you say you were thinking of coming to the tuckshop, Wharton?"

"No, I didn't!" said Harry; and he walked away.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Levison Conjures Once Too Often.

"COME in!" said Mr. Quelch.

The master of the Lower Fourth had taken down his cane, and laid it upon the table ready for use.

He glanced up as the door of his study was opened, and looked surprised as Harry Wharton entered.

"Wharton! What do you want?" he asked, laying down the cane.

"I have come instead of Bunter, sir, because—"

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch drily. "I shall be very glad to know your reason for coming instead of Bunter."

Wharton flushed at the master's tone.

"Please allow me to explain, sir. Bunter was the victim of a joke. A fellow in our Form who does conjuring tricks had collected up the watches, and put them in his pocket without his knowing anything about it."

"Ah, I see!"

"I thought I ought to explain that to you, sir. Bunter hardly knew what he was saying when you questioned him; he was too frightened to do himself justice."

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"I know I can take your word, Wharton, and it is very right of you to tell me this. It was very wrong of the boy in question not to own up when he found that Bunter was to be punished."

"He isn't a good-natured fellow, sir."

"And I suppose you don't want to tell me his name?"

Wharton shifted uneasily.

"I'd rather not, sir, if you don't mind."

"And," continued Mr. Quelch, with a slight smile, "part of your reason for coming here instead of Bunter was that you thought Bunter might give away the name of this practical joker."

Harry turned scarlet.

"I—I didn't want him to sneak, sir. Bunter is rather dense at times, and might easily do something that would get the other fellows down on him, without intending it."

"I understand, Wharton. Well, the matter is at an end now. You may tell Bunter that he need not come."

"Thank you, sir."

"And as for this boy with a taste for ill-natured, practical jokes, whose name you do not wish to tell me, you may warn him that such tricks may get him into trouble," said Mr. Quelch. "This matter, if not cleared up, might have placed Bunter under an unpleasant imputation. You may go, Wharton."

Harry Wharton left the study. Levison and Bulstrode were in the passage when he came out, and the former stepped into his path, with a sneer on his face.

"I suppose you have given me away to Quelch?" he exclaimed.

Harry looked at him steadily.

"I have done nothing of the kind."

"You haven't mentioned my name?"

"No."

"What about Bunter?"

"It's all right. I've explained to Mr. Quelch that it was a joke, and Bunter isn't to go."

Levison drew a breath of relief.

"That's all right!" he said. "You mayn't believe it, but as a matter of fact I was going to own up if Bunter was to be caned."

"I'm glad to hear it."

"You don't believe me?"

Wharton hesitated.

"I hope it's the truth," he replied, after a moment. "I dare say you have some good points, though you've never shown them, to my knowledge. Only a rotten cad would have let Bunter be caned, and I suppose you're not that."

"Thank you," said Levison, with his sneering smile. "I don't care whether you believe me or not; you can suit yourself."

"Mr. Quelch says—"

"I don't want to hear what he says," interrupted Levison curtly; and he walked away, leaving Harry with his blood tingling with anger.

"By Jove, I don't know how long I shall be able to keep my hands off that fellow!" Harry muttered, as he made his way towards the chapel for morning prayers.

It was strange enough that Harry Wharton should be patient with the provoking new boy in the Remove.

He had a hasty and passionate temper, and he had come to Greyfriars one of the most difficult of fellows to get on with.

Perhaps it was a consciousness of his own former shortcomings to which his eyes had latterly been opened, that rendered him patient with one in whom some of his own early faults seemed to be repeated.

When the Remove assembled for morning lessons, Mr. Quelch glanced sharply once or twice at Levison. The amateur conjuror of the Lower Fourth noticed it, and he looked at Wharton very significantly. He saw that the Form master suspected him, and in his suspicious way he attributed that fact to Wharton's interference. It was probably out of sheer bravado that Levison chose that inopportune time for a further display of his ability as a conjuror.

In the Latin lesson Mr. Quelch had stood by Billy Bunter for five minutes, patiently trying to drive some faint comprehension of the lesson into his head, Billy submitting with the resignation of a martyr. Mr. Quelch had laid down his book on the desk, and when he had finished with Billy—not because Billy understood, but because he was too fatigued to continue—he put out his hand for his book again. It was not there. He glanced along the desk, but the desk was bare.

"Did I not lay my book there, Skinner?" he asked.

"I think so, sir," said Skinner.

"Have you seen it?"

"I saw you lay it there, sir, a few minutes ago."

"I suppose it must have fallen on the floor. Look for it, some of you."

Skinner, Levison, Bunter, and Nugent looked for the book under the form. But there was no trace of it there. There was a slight grin on Skinner's face, which he was careful, however, not to let Mr. Quelch see.

"Can't find it, sir," said Nugent.

"Dear me! What can have become of it?"

Mr. Quelch looked on his own desk, and on the chair, and round about. There was no sign of the book. He glanced at the boys sitting at the desk where he had laid it.

"Have one of you boys purposely removed it?" he asked. There was no reply.

"Come! Have you my book, Nugent?"

"No, sir."

"Bunter—Levison—Skinner?"

"No, sir," replied all three.

Mr. Quelch was puzzled. His glance rested upon Levison very suspiciously. He beckoned to the amateur conjuror of the Remove.

"Stand out here, Levison."

Levison stepped out before the class, with a nonchalant air.

"My book must have been removed purposely from the desk," said Mr. Quelch. "I have known you to play absurd tricks before, Levison. Turn out your pockets."

"Very well, sir."

Levison turned out his pockets quietly. There was no trace of the little book in them. Mr. Quelch bit his lip.

"You may take your place, Levison. I am sorry I suspected you."

"Yes, sir."

Levison sat down again. Skinner was grinning, and this time unfortunately his grin caught the eye of Mr. Quelch.

"Skinner!" rapped out the Form master.

Skinner jumped.

"Yes, sir! Did you speak to me, sir?"

"What is it that you find so amusing, Skinner?"

"I, sir? Nothing, sir."

"Then you were laughing for nothing. That is a bad habit to get into, Skinner. You will take fifty lines for laughing in class, and fifty more for having done so for no reason."

"Ye-es, sir," gasped Skinner.

"It is very curious that my book has disappeared," said Mr. Quelch. "I shall look into this matter further. Meanwhile, we will continue."

About ten minutes later Mr. Quelch had occasion to use the chalk on the blackboard, and he felt in his pocket for a piece he usually carried there. A very curious expression came over his face.

His hand came out of the pocket, and there was a murmur in the Remove as they saw that there was a book in it—the missing book.

Mr. Quelch's face was a study as he looked at the book.

Perhaps it was the blank amazement in the master's face, perhaps it was the absurdity of the fact that the book had been all the time in the pocket of the man who was looking for it. The whole Remove burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Facing the Music.

"**H**A, ha, ha!"

The shout of laughter rang through the Form-room, and the noise startled the Form master out of his blank astonishment.

Mr. Quelch turned to the class with a frown upon his brow that speedily stifled the laughter.

The roar was followed by a dead silence.

Mr. Quelch looked at the book again, as if to make sure that his eyes had not deceived him, and then turned towards the class. The look upon his face left the Remove no desire to laugh now. They waited in painful and intense silence for what was to follow. The dullest could not fail to see that the matter was serious.

"Someone in this class has had the unheard-of audacity to play a trick upon his Form master," said Mr. Quelch, in a voice which was low, but which seemed to cut like a knife. "I call upon that boy to stand out here."

Dead silence.

"I will not speak of the unparalleled insolence of a conjuring trick played upon a master in the Form-room," said Mr. Quelch. "I hope that most of you, upon reflection, will realise the insolence and bad form of such an action. I call upon the culprit to stand out."

No one stirred.

Mr. Quelch's expression was not inviting, and it was hardly to be wondered at that the culprit preferred to sit where he was.

"Very well," said the Remove master, "I shall sift this matter to the bottom. I shall administer an exemplary punishment to the culprit, which, I think, will teach him that his Form master, during school hours, is not a proper subject for practical jokes. Levison, stand up!"

Levison turned a trifle pale as he obeyed the order.

He had succeeded in the object of his audacious trick, in making the Form master look absurd in the eyes of the class, and raising a laugh at Mr. Quelch's expense. But after the feast came the reckoning, and that was what he had to face now.

"Levison, I think I have heard of you as an amateur conjuror," said Mr. Quelch.

"Have you, sir?"

"Yes. Did you play this trick upon me?"

Levison was silent.

"Answer me, sir!" thundered the Form master.

"Is it quite fair to ask me to condemn myself?" said Levison, with a glint of half-defiance in his eyes.

Mr. Quelch's brow was like a thundercloud.

"Levison, I command you to answer me!"

The new boy in the Remove was silent, and his face set obstinately. Mr. Quelch waited some moments, but Levison did not speak. The class waited, with breathless anxiety, for what would follow.

The Remove had the reputation of being the most unruly Form at Greyfriars, but there was no one in the Form who would have cared to confront Mr. Quelch when he had his "back up," as they expressed it.

He certainly had his back up now, and Levison's obstinacy was ill-timed. Skinner ventured upon a friendly whisper.

"Own up, you ass! It'll make it lighter for you."

Levison took no notice.

"What have you to say, Levison?" said Mr. Quelch, in an ominously quiet tone.

"Nothing, sir."

"Very well. Come with me."

Levison started.

"What do you— Where, sir?"

"To the Head."

Levison changed colour. He had not expected that, and the bravado faded out of his manner. A caning, however

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severe, he could have faced, supported by his sullen obstinacy and the knowledge that he would appear as a kind of hero in the eyes of some of the more timid boys. But to be "sent up" was another matter. Obstinate as he was, he had no mind to face being either publicly flogged or expelled from the school.

"I—I— If you please, sir—" he faltered.

Mr. Quelch, who had already turned towards the door, looked back.

"Well, Levison?"

"I will answer you, sir."

"Ah, you will find that the wiser course," said Mr. Quelch. "If you were not a new boy at Greyfriars, I should not allow you the chance at this last moment. However, you may speak."

"I—I did it, sir."

"I thought you did. You took the book off the desk, and conveyed it to my pocket?"

"Ye-es, sir. I only meant it as a joke."

"I am quite aware of that. But a joke played upon a Form master, in the class-room, is a more serious matter than you appear to think. I suppose I shall not be wrong in assuming that it was you who also played the trick with the watches this morning, and almost caused an innocent lad to be caned?"

"I know Wharton has told you—"

"Wharton told me nothing," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Nothing that could give me a clue to the culprit in that case. He shielded you, which you did not deserve at his hands. Go to my study."

"But, sir—"

"Go to my study, and wait there till I come."

Levison, with a scowl in the direction of Wharton, quitted the class-room. The lessons were resumed, but there was a very painful feeling in the class, and all were under constraint. All knew that Levison would receive a severe punishment, and many sympathised with him. His accusation against Wharton, too, had taken root in the minds of some of the fellows.

All were glad when morning classes were dismissed. The Remove crowded out into the Close, and Mr. Quelch, with a very stern brow, made his way to his study, where Ernest Levison had been cooling his heels for the last hour.

Levison was sitting down in Mr. Quelch's armchair when the Form master entered the room. He did not rise, and Mr. Quelch's dark brow grew darker.

"Stand up, Levison!"

Levison rose slowly to his feet, his eyes upon the angry master. Mr. Quelch took the cane which had been intended for Billy Bunter's palms that morning.

"If you think to improve your position by this studied insolence, Levison, you are under a great mistake," said the Form master. "It is my duty to punish you severely, and I can only hope that the lesson will not be lost on you. Hold out your hand!"

Six strokes Levison received on each hand, and each stroke was laid on with a powerful arm, and by the time the punishment was over, Levison's face was as white as chalk.

He had not uttered a cry, however, and his lips were quivering but silent when Mr. Quelch laid down the cane.

"You may go," said the Form master sharply.

Levison turned to the door. He left the study quietly, and closed the door. Outside, in the passage, he gave first expression to the pain that racked his nerves. He clasped his hands under his armpits, and squeezed them there in a vain attempt to assuage the smart of the stinging cuts he had received. In spite of his courage, a warm gush came to his eyes.

But he gritted his teeth and forced the tears back. He would not show a sign of weakness that should afford his enemies a triumph over him. No one wished to triumph over him, as a matter of fact, but Levison's nature was suspicious. As he came out into the Close, the famous four were standing near the steps, and their glances seemed to Levison so many taunts.

He walked unsteadily towards them.

"Well, you've had your way, Wharton," he said thickly.

Harry looked him calmly in the face.

"I don't pretend not to know what you mean," he said.

"But you are utterly in the wrong. I didn't wish you to get into a row, and it was your own fault for playing a fool's trick like that on a Form master."

"You gave me away this morning."

Wharton's eyes burned for a moment. But he saw how much the other was suffering, and he controlled his temper, and answered quietly:

"I did not give you away, Levison. All I told Mr. Quelch was that the trick with the watches had been played by an amateur conjuror. I could not say less, to get Bunter off his licking."

"Quelch knew that it was I."

"That was your own fault. You have played conjuring

tricks before—generally ill-natured ones—and I suppose Quelch had heard something about it."

"That's all very well."

"If you mean that you doubt my word, Levison, you had better clear off. I can't hit you, at present at any rate, and I have no other reply to make to a fellow who calls me a liar."

"Well, I call you a liar."

Wharton clenched his hands. Bob Cherry pulled him back.

"Keep your wool on, Harry. The young ass has had a big licking, and he doesn't know what he's saying."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Right-ho, Bob! I'm not going to touch him."

"You dare not!" said Levison, between his teeth.

"Oh, don't be a silly ass," exclaimed Nugent angrily. "You know, as well as we do, that Wharton could lick you all round the Close, if he liked."

Levison sneered.

"He shall have the chance, then. He's got to fight me or confess that he's afraid."

Harry laughed contemptuously.

"I'm not likely to do that," he replied. "And as for fighting, you are in no condition to think of anything of the kind now."

"Oh, I know that; but later——"

"Later I hope you will have cooled down, and have more sense. Come on, chaps, let's get down to the cricket. No good arguing."

The chums of the Remove walked away, leaving Levison to nurse his injuries, real and imaginary. He was still standing under the elms, rubbing his aching hands, when Bulstrode joined him.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Has a New Idea.

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"Can't stop, Billy; we're going to the nets, for some practice."

"I suppose you can spare a minute?" said Billy Bunter, blinking at the chums of the Remove through his big glasses. "It's a rather important matter."

"Oh, go ahead," said Bob Cherry resignedly. "But do cut it short, there's a good fellow."

"I've got an idea."

"Go and boil it, then."

"Really, Cherry——"

"The rottenfulness of the idea is probably only equalled by the fatfulness of the head of the esteemed Bunter," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Look here, Inky, if you'll listen a minute——"

"Cut it short."

"I don't see how I can cut it short when you keep on interrupting me. It's rather complimentary to you fellows for me to bring my ideas to you. I might go and tell them to Bulstrode or Skinner or Trevor."

"I wish you would."

"It would serve them right."

"Oh, really, Nugent! But this idea is a regular ripper. The only thing is, that it will require a certain amount of money to carry it out. That's really what I'm wasting time on you at all for, because I happen to be stoney."

"Such a rare state for you to be in, too!" said Bob Cherry.

"Well, I'm not really stony, you know, because I have ten shillings coming to me this evening in a postal-order!"

"Same old postal-order?"

"Really, Cherry, if you're going to cast doubt upon a fellow's word, this discussion had better cease!" said Billy Bunter, with great dignity.

"Sooner the quicker," said Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows, don't go yet. I haven't finished. I have a postal-order coming this evening; it ought really to have come this morning, but there has been some delay in the post. When it comes——"

"When it comes it belongs to Inky," said Bob Cherry. "Don't I remember he lent you some tin the other day on the strength of that postal-order?"

"This isn't that postal-order, this is another one," said Billy Bunter, in a tone of patient explanation.

"Did that one come?"

"No. Unfortunately there was a lot of delay, and it never came at all; but directly it comes I shall, of course, hand it over to Inky."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see that there's anything to laugh at! But, as I was saying, this postal-order has nothing whatever to do with that one, and Inky wouldn't want me to hand over to him a postal-order that didn't belong to him."

"Especially as the esteemed postal-order is a nevercomeful one," remarked the nabob.

"Oh, this one is coming all right, Inky! If it had come by the morning's post, I shouldn't have been under the necessity of bothering with you fellows; but, as it is, I must trouble you for five bob."

"You needn't trouble, Billy; you won't get it."

"Really, Nugent, I must have it, you know! I've got a ripping idea! I'm thinking of taking up hypnotism!"

"Taking up what?" shrieked Nugent.

"Hypnotism," said Billy Bunter modestly. "I've felt for a long time that I had a gift that way. You've heard of the wonderful power of the human eye to quell the savage breast?"

"I thought it was music that had charms to soothe the savage breast."

"I shouldn't wonder. But, as I was saying, the power of the human eye is wonderful, and some fellows have the gift of mesmerism, you know. You make passes with your hands, and hold a chap with your glittering eye, and he goes off into a sort of doze and does idiotic things."

"Any hypnotists in your family, Billy?"

"No, I don't think so."

"Thought you might be under the influence of one, if it makes a chap do idiotic things."

"Oh, really, Cherry! I know I've got a gift that way; I've proved it!"

"How have you proved it?" asked Nugent, with interest.

"There's Farmer Jones's dog—you know, that beast that always runs after you and barks if you pass the gate—he ran after me yesterday, and I turned round and looked at him. I made a face like this——"

Nugent covered his face with his hands.

"Oh, don't—don't!"

"I tell you I made a face like this, and fixed my eyes upon him sternly, concentrating all my powerful will into a steady glare, and he——"

"Dropped down dead?"

"Well, no, not so bad as that; but he set up a howl, and ran away!"

"I'm not surprised at that, Billy! If you could have seen your face in a mirror just now, when you were concentrating your powerful will in a steady glare, you would have howled and run away—if it hadn't cracked the mirror first!"

"I say, you know, I'm not joking! Having discovered myself to be the possessor of this remarkable gift, I really think I ought to cultivate it. I've got a cutting here of an advertisement of Professor Foozleum, and he sends you his book on hypnotism for five bob, post-free. Post-free, mind!"

"Ass!"

"I don't think you ought to call me names, Bob Cherry, because I'm trying to develop a great natural gift. When I once get that book, I shall make some of you fellows stare! It will be awful fun to hypnotise old Quelch in the classroom, and make him dance, for instance!"

"You utter ass!"

"Of course, you think I couldn't do it! You just wait till I've got Professor Foozleum's book, that's all! I'll show you, then! But the matter to settle now is, which of you is going to lend me five bob? You can have it back out of my postal-order this evening!"

"Better wait till your postal-order comes."

"Well, you see, I'm in a hurry to get to work, and I want to catch the afternoon collection with my letter to Professor Foozleum," explained Billy Bunter. "It's all the same to you fellows, I suppose, if I let you have it back this evening out of my postal-order?"

"My dear Billy, you must be a little more moderate! When you want tin, you must keep to tanners!" said Harry Wharton. "Five bob is a little too big a pull on a Remove purse, you know!"

"Yes, but if I settle up this evening——"

"Oh, rats!" said Bob Cherry.

"If you doubt my word, Cherry——"

"Cheese it, Billy! When we see that postal-order, we'll believe it! And the amount of hypnotism you will ever learn wouldn't be worth five bob!"

"I don't see that it matters to you how I spend my own money," said Bunter, with great dignity.

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Only it isn't your own money, it's our money you want to spend," he returned.

"It's rather mean to make a fuss about a trifle like that!"

"I say, kids, we shall never get any cricket if we wait till Bunter's done talking!" said Nugent. "Billy, take a little run!"

"But, I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, cut off!"

"Yes, but I say——"

The chums of the Remove put their fingers to their ears and walked off. Billy Bunter blinked after them indignantly through his glasses.

"Well, of all the rotters!" he muttered. "Fancy not trusting a fellow for a few hours with a paltry five bob—and the

money's as safe as if it were in the Bank of England! It's rather hard cheese that I should have to put off developing my great powers as a hypnotist because of their meanness over a few bob! I wonder whom I can borrow it off?"

Billy Bunter walked away, turning over that weighty problem in his mind. He was still thinking it out when he sat down on a seat under one of the shady old elms, his brow wrinkled with thought. He had not come to a satisfactory conclusion when his reverie was interrupted by the sound of voices near at hand.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Black Treachery.

"LEVISON, old chap——"

It was Bulstrode's voice. The bully of the Remove was speaking in a very friendly tone, different from the bullying one he usually adopted in speaking to smaller boys. Bunter listened idly. Bunter had more than once played the eavesdropper, but it was not from any evil in his nature; being more from dullness than anything else. He simply did not think enough to have a clear conception of the distinction between right and wrong.

"What do you want?"

Levison's voice was by no means good-tempered. He had retired to a quiet spot under the thick trees so that no one should see his white face and the tears that he could not keep from his eyes. His castigation had been severe, and the ache in his hands seemed to be growing worse instead of better.

Neither of the juniors were visible to Bunter, two or three big trunks intervening between them and the seat upon which the fat junior was reclining. Neither could see him, nor had the remotest idea that he was there. This did not occur to Bunter at first, but he realised it as the talk went on.

"I want to speak to you, Levison."

"Well, you can speak, I suppose?"

"You have had a licking from Old Quelch——"

"I know that without your telling me!"

"Don't get ratty! I can tell you a way of getting even with Wharton."

Levison's manner changed. He ceased rubbing his aching, smarting hands, and looked quickly at the bully of the Remove.

"What do you mean, Bulstrode?"

"It was Wharton gave you away to the beak, wasn't it?"

"I suppose so."

"Depend upon it, he gave you away! Anyway, whether he did or not, what he said made Quelch jump to the right conclusion!"

"That's certain enough."

"I suppose you want to get even with Wharton? You're not going to take this lying down?" said Bulstrode, with a half-sneer in his voice.

Levison gritted his teeth.

"No, I'm going to fight him as soon as I'm fit."

"Fight him!" Bulstrode laughed scornfully. "What the dickens do you think you can do against Wharton? Do you know he licked me—and there's not a fellow in the Remove I couldn't lick, and not half try, either!"

"Well, I'm going to tackle him, at any rate!"

"And get knocked into a cocked hat, and become the guy of the Remove!" said Bulstrode contemptuously. "I can show you a better way than that!"

"Show it me, then."

"That is, of course, if you're game!"

"I'm game for anything, confound you! What do you mean?"

"There's an easy and certain way of getting level with Wharton," said Bulstrode, lowering his voice a little. "How would you like to see him expelled from Greyfriars?"

Levison started up, and his eyes sparkled.

"Is it possible?"

"Quite possible."

"What has he done? Do you mean to say he's done anything that would lead to his being expelled if he were found out?"

Levison's tone left no doubt as to his eagerness in the matter.

"Pretty pair of rotters!" murmured Billy Bunter to himself. "Wharton can hardly do less than stand me the five bob when I tell him this!"

And the Owl of the Remove was listening with all his ears now.

Bulstrode laughed shortly.

"It doesn't matter whether he has done anything," he replied. "He can be made to appear to have done something, and that's enough."

"I don't understand."

"You are jolly clever as a conjuror!"

"What has that to do with it?"

"Lots. You know, a lot of the fellows jumped to the con-

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clusion that Bunter was a thief over the affair of the watches. Some of them have a lingering idea in their minds now that there was something fishy about it, though it's been explained."

Levison laughed.

"Well, you see, it would be perfectly easy to work off a trick of the same kind on Wharton. You could plant him with something belonging to somebody without his knowing it, and then raise a hue-and-cry——"

Levison stared at the bully of the Remove blankly. He was a trickster himself, and sometimes there was an unpleasant vein of impish ill-nature in his tricks, but it was plain that such a piece of rascality as this proposed by the Remove bully had never crossed his mind.

"What do you mean, Bulstrode?"

"I'm speaking plain English, I think. You can plant something on Wharton, and make all the fellows think he's a thief. He'll be sent to Coventry, and if he isn't expelled, he'll have no choice but to get out of Greyfriars."

Levison bit his lip.

"Are you joking?"

"Of course I'm not," said Bulstrode testily. "I'm showing you an easy way of getting rid of a confounded high-and-mighty fellow who is a thorn in the side to both of us."

"You cad!"

"What's that?"

"You cad!" said Levison. "I always knew you were a rotter, but I never thought you were such a rotter as this! Let me alone!"

Bulstrode almost gasped with rage.

"You refuse, then?"

"Yes! Get out of my sight!"

"After what you played on Billy Bunter——"

"That was a joke."

"It might have been a serious joke for Bunter. Now you are putting on virtuous airs—to me! You young scoundrel——"

"Oh, shut up, and don't bother me!"

Bulstrode gritted his teeth.

"I'll bother you!" he said, pushing back his cuffs. "I'll give you the biggest hiding you ever had in your life. I'll teach you to try on the high moral business with me, you young hypocrite."

"Keep back!"

Bulstrode was advancing with clenched fists and inflamed face. There was no doubt as to his intentions. Levison faced him with a sneering smile upon his face. The new boy in the Remove had a most uncomfortable nature, but he did not want for pluck.

"Don't touch me, Bulstrode," he said quietly. "If you do, I'll go straight to Mr. Quelch and tell him what you've just proposed to me."

Bulstrode stopped as if a bullet had struck him.

"Sneak!"

"Are you the sort of fellow to call anybody names?" said Levison contemptuously.

"Quelch wouldn't believe you."

"I'll give him the chance, anyway."

Bulstrode's hands dropped to his sides. He glared at Levison for a few moments, as if undecided whether to spring upon him or not, and then turned on his heel and swung away.

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

Billy Bunter rose quietly from the seat and slipped away unseen.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Imparts Information.

"WELL hit!"

Bob Cherry rapped out the words as the round red ball flew from Harry's Wharton's bat. And the Nabob of Bhanipur chimed in:

"The wellfulness is great, and the hitfulness is terrific."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Bravo!"

"I want to speak to Wharton. Call him off the field, will you, Cherry?"

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Yes; I think I can see him coming off, for the pleasure of a chat with you, Billy," he remarked. "Play up, there!"

Hazeldene was bowling. Hazeldene was coming along very well with his cricket. Wharton was coaching him, and helping him on, as much for the sake of his sister Marjorie as for any other reason. The boy who had once been known as the cad of the Remove was showing that he had the makings of a cricketer in him, and looked like becoming one of the best fast bowlers in the junior eleven. But his bowling could not touch Harry Wharton's wicket.

Clack! went the bat again, and the ball went on its journey, and Bob Cherry clapped his hands and yelled.

"BUNTER, THE HYPNOTIST."

Another School Tale by
FRANK RICHARDS.

NEXT
TUESDAY.

"Well hit! Well hit, sir!"

"I say, Cherry——"

"Go it, kid!"

"I want to speak to Wharton on a most important matter."

"Oh, cheese it, Billy!"

"Oh, very well, I will cheese it if you like!" said Bunter, with great dignity. "Perhaps you'd be more interested in the matter if you knew that Levison and Bulstrode were plotting to make out that Wharton is a thief, and to get him expelled from Greyfriars."

Bob Cherry jumped.

"What's that you're saying, Bunter?"

"Oh, nothing!" said Billy, making a show of turning away. "It doesn't matter."

Bob Cherry gripped him by the arm, and jerked him back.

"Now then, you young ass——"

"Lemme alone!"

"Explain what you said just now!" exclaimed Bob, shaking the fat junior vigorously. "Do you hear, you young porpoise? Explain yourself!"

"I wish you wouldn't shake me like that, Cherry. You might make my spectacles fall off, and if they break——"

"Will you explain——"

"Hallo! What's the matter?" exclaimed Nugent, coming off the field with his bat under his arm. "Anything wrong, Bob?"

"Yes. This young ass has been yarning some rot about Bulstrode and Levison plotting against Harry——"

"Let 'em plot," said Nugent cheerfully. "They won't hurt anybody!"

"That's all you know!" said Billy Bunter.

"He says they're plotting to make him out a thief, to get him expelled from Greyfriars."

"Rot! How could they do it?"

"Oh, very well!" said Bunter. "Let 'em run on, that's all, and you'll see. Don't say I wasn't willing to warn you."

"The warnfulness is good if the factfulness is genuine," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "But I am thinkfully persuaded that the esteemed Bunter is making up the yarn out of his fat head."

"You'll see jolly soon," said Billy Bunter.

"You can tell us all about it, anyway."

"What about that five bob?"

"Eh?"

"If I put you up to a plot like this, you ought to stand me that five bob to get Professor Foozleum's book on hypnotism. You don't discover a plot like this every day, you know."

"Oh, it's all bunkum!" said Nugent. "Billy can go and tell his story to the Marines!"

"My opinion is samefully that of my esteemed chum."

"I suppose you're right," said Bob Cherry. "You can go and take a little run, Billy, and tell your yarn to anybody who will listen."

"I'll tell it to Wharton when he comes off the field," said Bunter. "Now, what about that five bob you were going to lend me——"

"Oh, get away!"

"Here comes Harry," said Nugent. "Perhaps it would be better to let him hear Billy's yarn. There may be something at the bottom of it."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Come here, Harry, will you?"

Wharton came towards the group. He looked very handsome in his cricketering flannels, with a flush of health in his cheeks. The practice had terminated without the batsman being out.

"What is it?" asked Wharton. "You all seem to be looking as serious as judges. Anything amiss?"

"I don't know," replied Nugent. "Bunter has a yarn to tell, as usual, and you can judge for yourself whether there's anything in it."

"Go ahead, Billy!" said Harry Wharton tersely.

"Oh, I don't know that I have anything to say!" said Bunter loftily. "If you say I'm yarning, that's enough. If you want to be expelled from Greyfriars——"

Wharton started.

"Eh? What?"

"I'm quite willing to put you up to their plot if you like, only——"

"Whose plot?"

"Bulstrode and Levison."

"What are they plotting?"

"I heard them talking under the elms," explained Bunter. "They didn't know I was there, and they jawed on like anything."

"You young rotter!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Look here, Cherry, if you're going to call me names——"

"You oughtn't to have listened."

"Well, perhaps I oughtn't, now I come to think of it; but I declare it never crossed my mind until this moment," said Bunter. "You can't think of everything at once, can you, and I'm very much occupied just now taking up hypnotism——"

"Oh, get on with the washing!"

"Well, Bulstrode suggested to Levison to do some more of his rotten conjuring, you know. He said I had been made to look like a thief, and it would be easy to make Wharton look like one, and get him expelled from Greyfriars."

Wharton laid his hand upon Bunter's shoulder.

"Are you telling the truth, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter looked extremely injured.

"Well, I say, Wharton, that's a rotten question to ask a fellow, you know. It implies that you doubt my word."

"You are such a confounded little romancer," growled Wharton. "Still, I suppose you are telling the truth. Did Levison agree to do what Bulstrode proposed?"

"He didn't exactly agree," said Bunter. "He did a lot of jaw; but I haven't the least doubt that he's going to do it. After the trick he played on me, he's cad enough for anything!"

"That's not clear enough. What were his exact words?"

"How could I possibly remember his exact words, Wharton? I haven't got a gramophone recorder in my brain. Levison said he was going to fight you, because you sneaked to Mr. Quelch about him——"

Wharton coloured angrily.

"Are you sure he said that?"

"Yes, I am sure," said Bunter obstinately; "and Bulstrode said you could lick him, and that it would be safer to follow his plan, and then they would both be rid of you. Levison simply jumped at the idea when Bulstrode suggested that you could be expelled from the school."

Wharton's brow was very moody. The chums of the Remove wore gloomy expressions. Billy Bunter had a bad memory, and had never been particularly veracious. He did not mean to be untruthful, but he would relate the parts of a story that remained in his mind, or that suited his object, and forget the rest. But there was evidently something in his story; he was not, as we have said, untruthful, and he had not imagination enough to concoct such a story.

"I say, this is rotten," said Bob Cherry, at last. "I'm not so much surprised at Bulstrode, but I didn't think Levison was such a cad."

"I don't quite know what to do," said Harry Wharton slowly.

"It's perfectly simple," said Bunter. "You will lend me five bob, and I shall be able to get Professor Foozleum's book."

"Oh, shut up a minute!"

"But I've got a brilliant suggestion to make," said Bunter eagerly. "You can't very well question those rotters about it, because they would be certain to tell whoppers to get out of it. But I could make them own up before the whole Form, and give the whole game away from start to finish."

"How could you?" asked Nugent.

"By hypnotising them——"

"By what?"

"When I've got Professor Foozleum's book, to set me on the right track, I shall be able to hypnotise anybody. The wonderful power of the human eye——"

"Oh, ring off!"

"The wonderful gift I have received from Nature——"

"Cheese it!"

"Well, it's a splendid idea. I could hypnotise them, and make them own up, and then——"

"Take a little run, Billy. We want to talk this over."

"What about my five bob?"

Wharton made an impatient gesture.

"Oh, let him have five bob, somebody. Make it a bob each, and I'll put in two, and then we shall be done with his jaw, at all events."

"That's hardly a polite way of putting it, Wharton, but it's so necessary for me to have Professor Foozleum's book that I can overlook it. I'm sincerely sorry if you can't spare the tin. I'm going to repay you in full when my postal order comes this evening, so I really don't see what there is to make such a fuss about. It isn't as if I was a fellow you couldn't trust."

"There you are. Now cut!"

Bunter jingled the five shillings in his pocket.

"Thank you very much. Now I come to think of it, the postal order is going to be for ten shillings, you know, and you may as well cash it in advance. Make it another five, and you can have the whole of the order when it comes."

"Cut!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, very well——"

"And don't say a word about this," said Harry Wharton,



"There's Farmer Jones's dog," said Billy Bunter; "you know, that beast that always runs after you and barks if you pass the gate—he ran after me yesterday, and I turned round and looked at him. I made a face like this." Nugent covered his face with his hands; "Oh, don't, don't!" he cried.

frowning. "Mind, if Bulstrode hears you have been talking about him, he'll lick you, and serve you jolly well right, too! Not a word to anybody."

"Just as you like, Wharton. But about that ten bob? It's only another five, and you can have the postal order—I wish you wouldn't push me like that, Cherry; it disturbs my nerves, and besides, you might make my spectacles fall off, and if they got broken you would have to pay for them— Well, I'm going. But look here, I'll tell you what I'll do. Make it up to eight bob now, and you can have the whole of the postal order when it comes. That will be two shillings interest; that is to say, interest at the rate of— Ow-wowow!"

Bob Cherry, losing all patience, gave the fat junior a drive behind with his boot, and Billy Bunter took his departure in a rather hurried manner.

The chums of the Remove were left to discuss the matter in peace, but the discussion brought them little light. Exactly what to do they could not decide, and dinner-time came before they had come to any decision. Their faces were overcast as they went into the hall with the rest of the Remove.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. Forced to Fight.

HARRY WHARTON wore a troubled look during afternoon lessons. Levison glanced at him once or twice, and grinned quietly to himself.

He had not the faintest idea that Harry knew anything about the talk with Bulstrode under the elms, and he fancied that Wharton was looking worried for a very different reason.

"He doesn't want to meet me," Levison said to himself. "He has carried things in the Remove with a high hand, but it's all gas—I've never seen any of his great exploits; I know that. He's afraid."

And this thought afforded much satisfaction to the new boy in the Remove. He was fully determined to force matters to a climax with the captain of the Remove after school, and he had informed a good many of the fellows of his intention.

Although Harry was generally popular in the Form, there were a good many fellows who would have been glad to see him pulled off his "perch," as they put it, and Levison found plenty of backers to encourage him in his project. Wharton might be licked, but at all events, a "mill" would be an interesting entertainment, and it did not matter much to these disinterested friends which party received the licking.

Levison did not venture upon any more conjuring tricks in

class. The lesson he had received had been severe enough even for his obstinacy.

Afternoon school passed off very quietly for the Remove, but there was a general expectancy among the boys, which reached its height when the Form was dismissed at half-past four.

In the hall Levison was surrounded by a crowd of fellows who were eager to egg him on in the perilous enterprise he had undertaken.

Harry Wharton, who had as a matter of fact, almost forgotten Levison's threats, walked out with his chums, and they went down towards the cricket field.

But Harry was not thinking at that moment of cricket. What Billy Bunter had told him was weighing on his mind.

"It's no good worrying about it," said Nugent, with a side glance at Harry's face. "It's pretty rotten that a Greyfriar's chap should fall so low, but thinking about it won't alter it."

"It's rotten!" said Harry.

"Still, there's one point," Bob Cherry remarked. "We shan't be taken by surprise now, whatever happens. If that precious pair try to carry out the scheme, we shall know how to deal with them."

"Ratherfully!" said the nabob.

Wharton nodded.

"Yes, I am not afraid of anything they can do. It's not that. But to think that a fellow is plotting such a piece of dirty treachery—I can't get that out of my mind. I don't like Levison, but I should never have thought he was such a cad as that. It's too rotten for words!"

"A licking might do him good," suggested Bob Cherry.

"No, I'll let him alone. It's no good saying a word about this affair. Better keep it dark. If they try on the scheme—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here comes Levison, and he looks as if he means business!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Levison was coming up, with a crowd at his heels. The juniors were all looking excited and expectant. Harry Wharton's brow darkened, and he walked on towards the cricket field.

Levison quickened his pace, and planted himself in Wharton's path, a sneering smile upon his lips.

"Stop!" he said.

Wharton had no choice but to stop.

He halted, and the juniors gathered round.

Wharton and Levison faced one another, and half the Remove formed a circle round them.

"Well, what do you want?" said Harry testily. "I've no time to waste on you, Levison!"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"You'll have to waste some time on me, whether you like it or not," he said. "I've got a bone to pick with you."

"Get to the point!"

"Very good! I've had a licking to-day from Quelch because you gave me away to him—"

"I did nothing of the kind."

"Anyway, you put him on the scent, so that he jumped on me, you know that. I'm not the fellow to take a licking lying down. I owe it to you, and I'm going to pay my debts. Are you ready?"

"Ready for what?"

"To stand up like a man and answer for what you've done."

"I've done nothing to answer for; and I won't fight you, Levison. You're not fit for a decent fellow to soil his hands on."

Levison flushed crimson.

"You'll either fight, or take a licking without!" he said, clenching his hand. "Which is it to be?"

Wharton did not reply.

Levison waited for a moment, and then, stepping forward, struck out.

Bob Cherry knocked his hand aside with a sharp blow.

"'Nuff of that!" said Bob gruffly. "If you're looking for trouble, you'll find it. If Wharton doesn't lick you, I will!"

"He's afraid!"

"Come Wharton," said Skinner, "you can't refuse a challenge. If you're going to remain captain of the Remove you can't allow a new boy to go round gassing that you're afraid of him."

"That's so!" chimed in Russell. "What's the matter with you, Wharton? You used to seem to be always hunting for trouble, and now you're showing the white feather."

Wharton coloured.

"Very well," he said quietly. "I don't want to fight Levison—because he's no match for me, for one thing; and because he's a rotten cad, for another. You can all see that I'm driven into this. Follow me over here behind the elms, Levison, and I'll let you have your way."

"I'll follow you fast enough!"

The Removites walked over to a shady spot screened by the thick trees from the view of the school windows, and partly shut off from the Close. There they halted, and Harry Wharton stripped off his jacket and vest, and handed them to Bob Cherry.

"Buck up, old son!" said Bob. "This won't mean more than a round or two to you."

"I know that, Bob. It won't last long."

The Removites formed a ring round the adversaries. Skinner acted as Levison's second. The new boy in the Remove took off his jacket and vest, and pushed back his cuffs. There was an expression of sullen determination upon his face. He meant to put up a good fight whether he won or lost.

"I say, you fellows, I'll keep time if you like," said Billy Bunter, coming forward, blinking through his glasses. "I say—"

Nugent took him by the shoulders, and slung him back out of the ring.

"You take a run, old chap," he observed.

"Oh, I say, Nugent—Don't push me, Russell—I wish you wouldn't tread on my toes, Martin. I want to stand in the front row, you know, and—"

Now Billy Bunter stood in the back row, and his expostulations were not listened to.

Nugent was to keep time, and he had taken out his watch.

"We ought to have a basin of water and a sponge here," Skinner remarked.

"We shall get a prefect here about the same time, I suppose," said Nugent. "Let's get to business. You can mop down your principal with your hanky."

"That's right; get to business!" exclaimed Russell. "You may have a master or a prefect down on you any minute. Go it!"

And the two principals faced one another, and did "go" it.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Levison's Licking.

LEVISON led off with a sharp and fierce attack, but before he had been engaged a minute he realised that he had greatly under-rated his adversary. Not one of his blows reached the face—for which they were savagely aimed.

Wharton's guard was very good, and Levison's knowledge of boxing was indifferent. He could not touch his foe, and that knowledge added to the bitter rage that was burning in his breast.

Harry's counters came home, moreover, and Levison received several smart taps, which did not hurt him very much, but helped to infuriate him.

When Nugent called "time!" at the end of the round, neither combatant showed many signs of having been engaged in a fistical encounter. There was a slight smile on Wharton's face. He had taken his enemy's measure, and felt that he could deal with him.

"Better chuck it," said Skinner, as he fanned his baffled principal with his handkerchief. "He's better than you in every point."

Levison gritted his teeth.

"Don't talk rot!" he growled savagely.

"My dear chap, every fellow on the ground but yourself can see it plainly. You have bitten off more than you can chew."

"Mind your own business!"

"Oh, keep on if you like; but, look here, your only chance is to get to close quarters, and get through his guard. Push him as hard as you can!"

Levison nodded, and stepped up to the call of time.

In the second round he took Skinner's advice, and pressed Harry hard. It required some nerve to do it, for Harry, put upon his defence, hit out again and again, and Levison received blow after blow. But he pressed on, with a kind of savage determination, and now some of his blows came home.

Harry Wharton's nose showed swollen and red at the end of the round, and there was a trickle of red from the corner of his mouth.

Levison had received a far severer punishment. Harry rubbed his mouth as he joined Bob Cherry.

"You're all right," said Bob; "but it's no good playing with him. He's getting better, and he's got doggedness enough for anything. You don't want this to last an hour. Go for him, and finish!"

"I will."

And Harry did.

In the third round he threw all he knew into the combat, and Levison found that the fighting was in deadly earnest at last.

He scarcely got in a single blow, and he received a shower that made him sick and dizzy. Twice round the ring he went under drive on drive, and almost on the call of time a terrific right-hander laid him upon his back with a bump.

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath as Nugent called time. Levison did not rise. Skinner raised him up, and made a knee for him, and mopped his red and perspiring face, and fanned him. The brief intervals ticked away.

"Time!"

Levison made an effort to rise, but sank again on Skinner's knee.

"You can't go on," said his second.

"I'm going on."

"Well, try."

Levison did try. He stood up, and staggered, and leaned against a tree for support. He was completely knocked out, and he had to realise it.

"Time!" repeated Nugent.

Skinner threw his handkerchief into the air, in lieu of a sponge.

"We're done!" he said.

Levison leaned back against the tree, his face white, save where bruises or blood darkened it, his eyes baleful.

"I—I'm done!" he stammered. "But—but I'll make you sorry for this yet, Wharton."

Harry Wharton smiled contemptuously.

"You forced me to this," he replied, "and you've got a licking, as you deserve. You deserve worse."

"Oh, cheese all that," said Russell. "What's the good of bearing malice? You've had it out, now shake hands and be friends."

"I can't shake hands with Levison."

"Why not?"

"Because he is a cad, and not fit to shake hands with a decent fellow," said Harry quietly. "I don't bear malice, either. I only want him to let me alone."

"You needn't bother," said Levison savagely. "I don't want to shake hands with you, and I wouldn't be your friend at any price. As for what you've said about me, it's a lie!"

Harry Wharton drew a quick breath.

"It's safe for you to say that just now," he said.

"It's a lie! Wharton has nothing up against me except that trick on Bunter, and I was going to own up over that if Bunter really risked getting a caning."

"You can't think of anything else, can you?" said Wharton scornfully.

"No; if there's anything else, say it out yourself."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't want it noised all over the school, and it's not the kind of thing to jaw about, anyway," he said. "I dare say you know what I mean. Anyway, it doesn't matter. Only before you begin any of your treachery, bear in mind that I am on my guard now."

And Harry Wharton put on his vest and jacket, and walked away.

Levison stared after him. Skinner gave a low whistle.

"What's all that about?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"I mean, what has Wharton got up against you, that he's so jolly mysterious about?"

"I don't know."

"Oh, you can tell that to the Marines," said Skinner, walking away.

Levison slowly put on his things, and turned away from the spot. He crossed the Close towards the house, and unfortunately encountered Mr. Quelch en route. He averted his face, and hurried on, hoping to pass unnoticed; but his hope was vain. The master of the Remove called to him.

"Levison, what is the matter with your face? You have been fighting?"

"Yes," said Levison sullenly.

The Form master frowned.

"That is not the way to speak to me, Levison. You will take fifty lines for fighting, and fifty more for impertinence to a master. You will bring them to me to-morrow morning. You may go."

Levison hurried on, with his breast full of bitterness.

It seemed to the boy that he was like an Ishmael at Greyfriars, and that everybody was banded against him. His thoughts, as he bathed his aching face under a bath-room tap, were only of revenge upon Harry Wharton. Yet the cowardly scheme Bulstrode had proposed to him did not recur to his mind.

Wharton had been very little damaged in the fight. He went down to cricket practice, and the chums came back to Study No. 1 in time for tea.

An appetising smell of cooking bacon and chips was wafted from the study as the famous four approached it.

Bob Cherry sniffed appreciatively.

"Bunter's getting a good tea, this time," he remarked. "Blessed if I know where he's got the grub from. There wasn't much in the cupboard."

"There wasn't any bacon, to my knowledge," said Nugent. "Bunty is a marvel at getting up a feed out of next to

nothing, but I don't see how he could have manufactured the bacon."

"Perhaps his postal-order's come."

"Perhaps he's discovered a hidden treasure; it's just about as likely."

"The unlikelihood is terrific!"

"Well, it smells jolly nice, anyway. Hallo, hallo, hallo, Billy! How did you manage it?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, entering the study, and looking in admiration at the table, covered with excellencies in the comestible line, and then at the frying-pan, in which Billy was cooking tempting rashers over the fire.

Bunter beamed through his spectacles.

"It's my treat, you fellows."

"I suppose it is. But whom have you been robbing?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"The amazement would be great if the honourable postal-order had come this time," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Has the postal-order come, Billy?"

"No, I don't really expect it till this evening's post," said Billy Bunter. "There, the bacon's done, and you can begin. The kettle's boiling, and I'll have the tea made in a jiffy."

Billy Bunter was too busy to talk. But the hungry juniors were not inclined to waste time on inquiries. They had healthy appetites, and the festive board was spread with a tempting feed. That was enough for them.

"My hat," said Nugent, "this is all right! Billy is a genius, and I don't care who hears me say so. Fall to!"

And the chums of the Remove fell to, with a right good will.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Discovery.

BILLY BUNTER made the tea, while Nugent was serving the bacon, eggs, and sausages. He beamed round on the chums of the Remove as he poured it out.

"How do you like the bacon, kids?"

"Ripping," said Bob Cherry. "Pass the sausages this way, Nugent!"

"First rate!" said Harry Wharton.

"There's some bananas and raisins for you, Inky; I know you don't like bacon. Though why a chap shouldn't like bacon," said Bunter reflectively, "puzzles me."

"Get on with the washing, Billy, and don't stop to think."

"Certainly, Nugent! Pass up your cup, Wharton. This is ripping tea, and has stood exactly long enough to make it perfect. I really think this is a decent spread."

"The decentfulness is terrific."

"And, now, Billy, where did it come from?"

Billy Bunter grinned.

"I say," broke out Harry Wharton abruptly, "there's nothing fishy about it, is there? I mean, nothing like that other treat of yours, when you extorted the tin from Bulstrode?"

"Really, Wharton, that is a rather brutal way of putting it. Bulstrode gave me some tin out of friendship, because I kept a little secret for him, that time—"

"Well, is this something of the same sort again?"

"No, it isn't."

"Honour bright, Billy?"

"Honest Injun. I've stood this treat because I've saved five bob to-day."

"Borrowed five bob, you mean!" grinned Nugent.

"Saved it, I said, and that's what I mean. You know I was going to send for Professor Foozleum's famous book on hypnotism?"

"Yes. Haven't you?"

"I found that young Clegg of the Third was interested in hypnotism, and he had had a remittance from home, and was thinking of sending for Professor Foozleum's book. It was no good getting two copies of the same book, of course."

"So you told Clegg you were getting one, and advised him to save his five bob?" suggested Nugent.

Bunter blinked at the speaker.

"No, I didn't, Nugent. I declare I never thought of anything of the kind. I told him it would be a jolly good book to get, and that I would help him to go through it, and learn up the subject, if he liked, and I went with him to get the postal-order, and sent it off!"

"You young sharper!"

"I don't see anything sharp in that, Bob Cherry. He wanted the book, and it would have been stupid to have two copies when one was enough. I'm going to learn hypnotism from young Clegg's book, and so I've saved my five bob. I thought I couldn't do better than stand a treat with it, and here you are!"

"Well, as the money was devoted to a noble purpose,

perhaps we can forgive you," said Bob Cherry. "It's a good spread."

"The goodness is great, but the artfulness of the esteemed Bunter is terrific."

"It wasn't artfulness," explained Bunter. "It was only business. Clegg wanted the book, and he's going to have it. We wanted a feed, and we've got it. We're satisfied all round."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, Billy, it's a good feed, anyway, and as you say it was no good having two copies of the book. Not much good having one copy, as far as that goes."

"Oh, yes; it will be very useful to me, as I want to learn the technique of the thing, so to speak. As far as natural gifts go, I am all right already. The wonderful power of my eyes—"

"Doesn't equal the wonderful power of your tongue," Bob Cherry remarked. "Pass the sausages!"

"Certainly, Cherry! I shall be able to do you a service, too, Wharton, when I am a practised hypnotist, as I shall put Bulstrode and Levison under the 'fluence—"

"The what?"

"The influence, you know. And make them own up before the whole Form about that plot of theirs. I'll teach Levison to hide watches in my pockets, and make the chaps say I priggled them! I don't call that a joke. And I'm jolly sure he was going to plant something on you, as Bulstrode suggested, for all his rot."

Harry Wharton looked at Bunter quickly. The last words had struck him.

"For all what?" he asked.

"For all his rot," said Bunter. "Of course, I could see through that. I knew he meant to do it all along. I am sharper than most fellows, you know."

"Do you mean to say that Levison refused to do as Bulstrode suggested?" asked Harry, with a quick breath.

"Oh, he gassed some bosh about it, you know; but he didn't really refuse. I could see through him, though Bulstrode couldn't."

Wharton laid down his knife and fork.

"You didn't tell us this before, Bunter."

"Yes, I did," said Billy Bunter. "I told you I was jolly certain, from what I heard, that Levison meant to carry out the scheme, didn't I?"

"Something of the sort; but you didn't say that Levison refused."

"That was only gas, you know."

"How do you know it was?"

"Oh, I'm a pretty sharp fellow! It wouldn't be easy for any chap to take me in!"

The chums of the Remove exchanged glances. They did not think so much of the sharpness of Billy Bunter as the fat junior himself did. Wharton looked worried as the thought forced itself into his mind that through Bunter's stupidity he had been led to do Levison an injustice.

"Billy, will you explain exactly what Levison said?"

"I can't remember. What does it matter?"

"I want to know."

"Blessed if I can remember! You see, I didn't take much notice. I knew he was only humbugging, especially when he said he would go to Mr. Quelch."

Wharton started.

"Did Levison say he would go to Mr. Quelch?"

"Yes, if Bulstrode licked him, you know."

"What was Bulstrode going to lick him for?"

"I can't remember— Oh, yes; it was because Levison was pretending that he wasn't going to carry out the scheme."

"How do you know he was pretending?" asked Nugent.

"Oh, I'm jolly sharp, and—"

"You young ass!"

"Really, Nugent—"

"So Levison told Bulstrode he wouldn't be a party to the scheme?" said Wharton, the troubled look deepening on his brow.

"No, he didn't."

"But you just said—"

"He didn't use any of those words. So far as I remember, he called Bulstrode a cad, or something of the sort—a cad, or a rotter, or something. Of course, it was all humbug! I'm jolly sharp, and—"

"Levison called him a cad because he proposed to plant something on me by a trick, and make me out a thief?"

"Yes, that's it. He said he didn't know Bulstrode was such a rotter. Of course, he was trying to throw dust in Bulstrode's eyes."

"Why should he try to do so?"

"Well, you see, as it was all humbug—"

"You cannot know it was humbug. Suppose he was in earnest?"

"Of course, he might have been. You see, I couldn't see

his face, and I don't really know anything about it," said Bunter, helping himself to another sausage. It doesn't matter much, does it, anyway?"

Wharton bit his lip.

"Yes, confound you, it does!"

"Then I'm sincerely sorry if I was mistaken; but I don't see very well how I could have been, because I'm jolly sharp, and—"

"What else did they say?"

"I don't remember."

"The lickfulness with the honourable cricket stump might refreshfully assist the esteemed Bunter's memory," suggested the nabob.

"Look here, Inky—"

"The young prevaricator!" said Nugent. "This is a very different yarn from the one he told us before."

"I say, you fellows, that's putting it too strong! I can't see any difference myself. I don't see that—"

"And Levison threatened to tell Mr. Quelch about it if Bulstrode touched him?"

"Yes; though, of course, he didn't mean it."

"But if Bulstrode was going to lick him, that shows he thought that Levison was in earnest in his refusal."

"I suppose he did. Bulstrode's not very bright, you know."

Harry Wharton cast a troubled look at his chums.

"We have been in the wrong," he said quietly—"at least, I have. I can't exactly blame myself; it was all Bunter's fault—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"But I ought to have known better than to attach much importance to what Bunter said. I ought to have known him better by this time."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Levison refused to do what Bulstrode asked. It wasn't humbug. If he had intended to carry out the scheme he would have done it with Bulstrode's assistance, and he couldn't have any possible motive for throwing dust in Bulstrode's eyes."

"I never thought of that," said Bunter. "Never mind. He deserves the thrashing you gave him, you know, for playing that trick over the watches."

"I have wronged him," said Harry Wharton. "There's no getting out of it. Levison seems to have acted like a decent chap over the matter, and we set him down for a thorough-paced rascal. Bunter ought to be licked—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"But that wouldn't alter the circumstances, and the confounded young fool can't help being a silly ass, I suppose."

"If you call a fellow a confounded fool and a silly ass when he's standing a feed, Wharton, I don't think much of your manners."

"I can't call you anything else, Bunter; and it's lucky for you that you are a silly ass. If I thought you had got me into this position from anything but stupidity, I'd wipe up the study with you!"

"I don't see anything wrong with the position. Levison deserved a licking, and you gave him one. I'd have given him one myself, only it's some time since I gave up physical culture, and I don't feel quite up to it."

Harry Wharton rose to his feet.

"Where are you going?" asked Bob Cherry, rather uneasily.

"To see Levison."

"To explain?"

"Yes, and to apologise. I can't do less, after what I've said to him."

"I say, you haven't finished your tea," said Bunter anxiously. "Leave it till after tea, anyway. The tea will be cold, and the sausages and bacon—"

Wharton crossed to the door.

"Better think over it, Harry," said Nugent quickly.

"Levison isn't a pleasant chap to make an apology to. He is certain to misunderstand and misjudge your motives."

"Very likely; but I must explain to him, anyway."

The prospect was not a pleasant one to Harry Wharton. It was not gratifying to his proud nature to confess himself in the wrong. But he had been in the wrong, and he felt that he could do no less. He left the room, and went slowly along to Levison's study.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Harry Wharton's Resolve.

LEVISON was doing his imposition when Harry Wharton knocked at the door and entered his study. The new boy in the Remove did not look very happy. One of his eyes was closed, his nose was swollen, and his face bore plain traces of the fight in the Close.

He looked up with a scowl from the lines through which he was wearily travelling.

"What do you want?"

The words were not polite or inviting. Wharton flushed a little, but he came on into the study.

"I want to speak to you, Levison."

"I want to have nothing to say to you. I'm busy, too. I'm doing the lines I got for fighting," said Levison savagely.

"I didn't know you had an impot."

"Well, you know now. You haven't one, of course. I know you are one of Quelch's favourites."

"Nothing of the sort. Mr. Quelch doesn't happen to know that I was fighting, that's all. I don't—"

Wharton paused.

Levison laughed spitefully.

"Oh, go on!" he exclaimed. "You don't show so many signs of it as I do; that is what you were going to say. It's true enough. Perhaps the next time you may not come off so well."

"I hope there will be no next time."

"I dare say you do; but you will be disappointed. There will be a next time, as soon as I feel up to tackling you again. Meanwhile, I've got my lines to do, and I'd be glad if you'd leave me to do them."

Wharton bit his lip. His reception was most unpromising; but he did not flinch from the path he had marked out for himself.

"I must speak to you, Levison. I've come here to—to apologise."

Levison stared.

"What are you talking about? Is this some more of your rotting?"

"No," said Harry quietly. "I owe you an apology. You did not understand some of the things I said to you to-day—"

"You needn't trouble to explain them."

"I must explain them. I was speaking under a misapprehension. As a matter of fact, your talk with Bulstrode to-day was overheard, and reported to me incorrectly."

"I suppose you mean you were listening yourself, and jumped to a wrong conclusion?" sneered Levison.

Harry's hands tingled to be at the sneering face; but he kept himself well under control.

"No," he said; "I did not listen. Your words were reported to me by one who believed that you meant to carry out the scheme Bulstrode suggested. I thought you meant it, too. I have since learned—"

"If you think I believe all this—"

"I have since learned that you refused Bulstrode's suggestion—"

"From the same source?"

"Yes."

"Two different yarns from the same tale-bearer—eh?"

"He was wrong in the first place—"

"I don't know what you mean by all this gammon," said Levison; "but it doesn't impose upon me a little bit. I suppose you know something about Bulstrode's suggestion, or you couldn't mention it to me; but I rather think you were listening yourself, and it suited you to believe what you did. Now you've changed your plans for some reason—a reason I don't know. I'd be glad to hear what axe you have to grind by all this?"

"Amazing as it may seem to you, I have no axe to grind," said Harry coldly. "I have come to tell you this from a feeling of simple justice—"

Levison laughed scoffingly.

"Oh, draw it mild!"

"I owe you an apology for having misjudged you, that is all," said Harry Wharton, still keeping his temper. "I have come here to make it."

"And now what do want of me?"

"Nothing."

"Then I don't see what all this humbug is for."

"You—you confounded cad!" broke out Wharton.

"Ah, we've come to that at last!" sneered Levison.

"That sounds a little more candid, and a little more like your real feelings. I'd rather have that out open and honest than any of your hypocrisy."

"Then you can't give me credit for being sorry for a mistake?"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"You seem to have been in a mighty hurry to fall into the mistake. Bulstrode proposed a dirty trick that no decent fellow would have thought of for a moment. You might have given me credit for refusing it."

"I didn't know—"

"The chap you learned all this from seems to have known all the facts, as you say he has told you the truth now. You might have inquired a little more closely in the first place."

Wharton coloured.

"Perhaps I might. I can only say that I am sorry."

"Well, if you're sorry, that's all right," said Levison, with a sour grin. "My belief is that you are humbugging, though for what reason I can't imagine. I suppose you and your chums have been planning to take a rise out of me somehow. Well, you won't succeed, you can count on that."

"I don't quite know what to say to you."

"Don't say anything. Leave my study, and let me get on with my lines," said Levison. "That's about the best thing you can do, I think."

Wharton stood looking at him. Never had he been so inclined to push back his cuffs and give the new boy a sound thrashing. Considering the hasty and passionate temper which had often brought trouble to Wharton, it was surprising how well he held himself in hand.

"I'm sorry for this, Levison," he said, somewhat thickly. "I—I thought you would understand—"

"I do understand," said Levison impatiently, "and for the last time I tell you that I'm not to be taken in with this gas. Is that plain enough for you?"

Harry Wharton's eyes blazed, and he made a step forward, his hands clenched. Levison half-started to his feet, his hands tightening, his teeth set.

But Wharton restrained himself in time.

"You are not worth it," he muttered, and his hands dropped to his sides.

"Are you going?" said Levison mockingly.

Harry turned towards the door.

"Yes, I am going. I am almost sorry I came here."

Levison laughed.

"Yes, it wasn't much good, was it? Shut the door after you, please."

Harry went out of the study, and shut the door. His face was darkly set as he walked slowly back towards his own quarters. Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh had gone out with Billy Bunter after finishing tea, but Nugent had stayed to wait for Harry. He looked inquiringly at his chum as he came in.

Harry's gloomy look was sufficient to indicate how matters had gone in Levison's study. He forced a smile as he met Nugent's glance.

"It wasn't much good," he said. "I shall never get on with that chap, Nugent. He suspects double-dealing at every word—he seems incapable of trusting anybody for a moment."

"Suspicious beast," said Nugent. "Yet there are good points in him, too."

Wharton nodded thoughtfully.

"That's what I was thinking; that's why I went to him. He was in a beastly temper about what happened with Quelch, and Bulstrode showed him an easy way of revenge; yet he refused it, at the risk of quarrelling with Bulstrode. That shows that he's not such a rotter as he makes himself out to be by his ways."

"Oh, I dare say he has his good points, but they want getting at," Nugent remarked. "If somebody took him in hand and gave him a course of education, not too gently, it would improve him, and might make a decent fellow of him yet."

"I thought of that, too."

Nugent laughed.

"You're not thinking of taking it on, Harry?"

"Why not?"

His chum stared at him.

"Why not? A thousand reasons! You're not going to waste time trying to bring to reason the most suspicious and ill-conducted rotter in the Greyfriars Remove, I suppose?"

"He has shown that he has good qualities in him. If someone could get through the outer crust, as it were, he might turn out a decent chap. I think he would."

"Not an easy task, nor a very grateful one," said Nugent, with a careless shrug of the shoulders.

"I can't help remembering, Nugent, that there was a time when I was a difficult subject," said Wharton abruptly. "There was a chap then who stood a lot of nonsense from me, and never lost his patience, and put up with a lot more than was to be expected of him."

Nugent turned red.

"Oh, you're talking rot now, Harry."

"I'm talking facts. Now that I look back, I can see that I should never have got on at all at Greyfriars if you hadn't stood by me, like the brick you were. I'm not much of a talker, Frank, but there are some things I feel and shall never forget—and that's one of them."

"That's all right, Harry."

It was all true. Nugent had made things possible for Wharton in his first coming to Greyfriars, when he came there a hasty, passionate, sulky lad, determined not to be content, resolved to take offence at anything and everything. There had been a great change in Harry; but no one realised more clearly than himself how much of it he owed to the true and steady friend who had stood by him in good times and bad, and had never left his side till he had fought his battle and won it—won it against himself!

"And that's what's put this into my head, Nugent," said Harry Wharton slowly. "What you did for me, why shouldn't I do it for him? I'm going to try, at any rate."

Nugent smiled in a dubious way.

"But—but I'm an easy-going sort of chap, you know," he

said. "It comes natural to me to be good-tempered, and I never lose patience. But with you it's different. You'll fly out into a temper a dozen times a day at Levison's insolence if you start taking him in hand."

Harry's lips set firmly.

"I can do a thing if I make up my mind to it, Frank."

"What I mean is, he'll provoke you sooner or later, and there will be a row—and another fight," said Nugent. "Then the last state of affairs will be worse than the first. Better than that would be to have nothing to do with him at all."

"I know; but I can keep my temper better than you think. Nugent, I've made up my mind."

"It will end in a row."

"You think I sha'n't be able to keep up my good resolutions?" said Harry, with a faint smile.

"Well, to be quite frank, old chap, I know you won't," said Nugent. "It was different with me. You could never stand it."

"We shall see."

"Then you've made up your mind?"

"Yes."

"Well, I will back you up, at any rate," said Nugent, "and, as you say, we shall see!"

THE END.

(Next Week's School Tale—"Billy Bunter, Hypnotist." Please order your copy of THE MAGNET LIBRARY in advance Price, One Halfpenny.)

GRAND TALE OF ARMY LIFE.



READ THIS FIRST!

The story opens with a review of the Redminster Cadet Corps, led by young Lieutenant Jack Dashwood. The proceedings are interrupted when the Headmaster receives a telegram asking him to send Jack home at once, as his father—Colonel Sir Harry Dashwood—is dangerously ill. Dick Vivian goes with his chum, and soon after their arrival at the house the Colonel passes away. Finding he has been practically disinherited in favour of his Uncle Dominic and Cousin Leonard, Jack enlists in the 25th Hussars under the name of Howard, and is soon promoted to corporal. He fights Bill Sloggett, a recruit, and defeats him. Through this act he incurs the hatred of Alf Sligo, who swears to champion Sloggett. Jack has a shock when he hears that his cousin, Leonard, is attached to the 25th, as second lieutenant. Before long the latter succeeds in getting Jack deprived of his corporal's stripes. Soon after, the regiment is ordered abroad, and Jack is surprised to hear, just as they are about to sail, that Leonard Dashwood will not come with them, as his father has died suddenly. The troopship "Himalaya" starts away, and Jack experiences that travelling on such a boat is not "all honey." (Now go on with the story.)

Outward Bound!

If the troop-deck had been intolerable the night before, it was worse now, and the air was so thick that one might almost have cut it with a knife. Tom Howard beat a hasty retreat and came to the foot of the ladder again, almost stifled, and encountered a friendly bluejacket, who was cleaning the wash-house.

"What, can't you stick it in there, mate?" said the sailor, smiling, as he saw Tom's face. "You wait till we get into the Red Sea. Now, if you'll take my advice, you'll have a wash and a brush-up before your mates start. I tell you, the sight of a couple of thousand men, all making for one wash-house, that only holds about twenty at a time, is worse than the pit door of Drury Lane on Boxing Night. Besides, there's another thing," said the sailor, with a twinkle in his eye. "Water is rather precious, and they only get one dose for the lot, so I'll leave you to guess what it looks like when they've all finished with it, and the last man takes his turn."

This statement Tom found to be absolutely correct, and it is a little fact which hardly bears reflection.

As Tom came out of the wash-house, they were sounding "reveille," and there was nothing for it but to enter the troop-deck once more, and pack up his kit.

Hammock and blanket had to be rolled up and returned into store, and, this done, each mess set to work to clean up that portion of the troop-deck for which they were responsible.

By the time that was finished, the orderlies brought in breakfast—bread and tea, with no milk or sugar.

Then everyone went on deck while the quarters were thoroughly cleaned before the ship's captain made his inspection. At ten o'clock the roll was called and orders read out, the daily duties being detailed by the sergeant-major.

There were "swabbers" and "sweepers," guards, sentries, and regimental police, while bugles and the boatswain's whistle was going all day long.

Tom found himself warned for the third watch, which musters at eight o'clock and was relieved at the end of twelve hours, and his party were told off to act as "reelers."

When the boatswain's whistle piped "reelers," they marched aft, in charge of a naval warrant-officer, who promptly slung the reel overboard.

A sailor stood by with a sandglass, and when a certain quantity of line had paid out, the reelers hauled it in again, the warrant-officer comparing the knots on the line with the time shown by the sandglass, and arriving at a rough estimate of the vessel's speed thereby.

One day was very much like another, varied only by cries of "Land!" or "Sail in sight!" when everyone not on duty would rush to the side and gaze his fill until the particular object had passed astern.

At 9.30 the crew paraded for roll-call, and marched down to the quarter-deck, forming up in sections of four, cap in hand, while the captain read out prayers; and sometimes the whole of the troops would be drawn up on deck, to be solemnly inspected by the ship's captain, followed by the colonel and the other officers.

It was evident, from the moment of setting foot on deck, that the seamen ruled the roost, and in some cases they showed their authority pretty smartly.

Sligo was very slow to grasp the fact that there were seven warrant-officers who had to be "sirred," and he was continually being "told off" by one or other of them; but Tom Howard, thanks to an amiable colour-sergeant of the Marines, who acted as canteen steward, and who tumbled at once to the fact that our hero was a gentleman, made no blunders, "Stripey" posting him thoroughly before they had been twenty-four hours at sea.

True, he found the salt "junk" and the "Fanny Adams" monotonous tack, and the fact that soup and tea were served in the same utensil was not pleasant, but he was able to liven up the menu of his mess with "soft tommy" from the ship's baker, and many unaccustomed luxuries purchased from the aforesaid canteen steward at prices quite prohibitive to the rest of them.

Jim Clavering, having got on the right side of that first-class petty officer, the "captain of the hold," had secured quarters there, and Tom spent much of his spare time with him, enjoying a peace and quietness not to be found on the upper troop-deck.

"Keep your heart up, old man," said Sergeant Clavering, stroking the yellow moustache that was the pride and glory of "B" Squadron. "I'll stake a month's pay that you are wearing three stripes under a year, in spite of that set-back. Middleton's dead keen on it, between ourselves, and we're all anxious to have you."

Tom smiled a little wearily, knowing things of which Clavering was necessarily ignorant; but he set his square jaw, and resolved, in military phrase, "to watch it."

But it was in the evening, when the band played on the quarter-deck, that Tom Howard felt his position most keenly.

When he stood in some out-of-the-way corner, his sea cap drawn down, listening to the strains of familiar melodies, and watching the officers in their mess jackets, with the electric light gleaming on the gold lace; when the colonel smoked his cigar, and looked on with a smile, just as his father must have done in the old days; and he, his father's son, had to peep at it all, as it were, in stealth, then would the brow of Trooper Sir John Dashwood contract gloomily, as he thought of the trickery that had driven him into the ranks, and the malice that, even when there, had robbed him of his hardly-won honours.

It was a bitter pill to swallow, and it was not to be wondered at if sometimes, when the sound of "Last Post" called him below, a tear shone on the boy's cheeks as he answered to his new name and clambered into his hammock.

Tom Howard looked through the porthole, and found that the Himalaya had come to a full stop. They were inside the breakwater at Port Said, and along the canal-side, strange figures walked in strange garments. A row of two-storeyed houses, with gay shutters and verandah railings, ran parallel with the canal, and before them moved turbaned figures, and here and there the red Turkish fez. Arabs, in flowing raiment, stalwart Soudanese, here and there a blue-coated guardian of the peace, and not a few Europeans, made up the population of the canal-side; and soon the native boatmen rowed out to the troopship and clamoured for fares.

Young Blennerhasset, the junior major, and the adjutant went ashore, and the men of the 25th, heartily sick of ship-board, crowded the gunwale and looked at the somewhat monotonous town, which is currently reported to be the most wicked in the world.

Trooper Bill Sloggett was up on deck that morning for the first time. His conduct at Aldershot had been so outrageous that the colonel had given him fourteen days' solitary confinement. With a certain amount of bluster he made his way to the bulwarks, sniffing the hot air.

The first person he encountered was Trooper Tom Howard, and, strange to say, Sloggett became a little shamefaced under his white helmet.

"I am glad to see you, Sloggett," said Tom Howard.

"D'yer mean it?" said Bill Sloggett, looking at him quickly.

"I never say anything I don't mean," said Tom, handing him a cigarette, which Bill took almost greedily, and smoked with evident gusto.

"Things all right since I've been away?" he queried, jerking his head in the direction of the cells.

"Yes, all right," said Tom Howard. "We've only lost five horses, but one of your mares among that lot."

"I'm not sorry to hear it," said Mr. Bill Sloggett. "She was a rotter. 'Ow's the lieutenant? Had any more trouble with 'im?"

"If you mean Mr. Dashwood, he's not with us," said Tom, freezing a little. "He's remained behind on leave!"

"As 'e?" said Sloggett. "Then what do yer call that?" And he pointed with a brown hand to the quayside.

Following the direction of his finger, Tom started, and bit his lip, for there, sure enough, standing beside a pile of luggage, was the unmistakable figure of his cousin, at that moment shaking hands with the junior major, who had just landed.

Bill Sloggett saw the change in Howard's expression, and then turned his crafty eye and glanced at Alf Sligo, who had been the first to greet him after his release from imprisonment, and had followed him like a shadow to the bulwark-side. Alf Sligo started, too, and an uncontrollable sneer started over Sloggett's face, and he chuckled quietly.

Mr. Dashwood's luggage was conveyed to the troopship, and Leonard, having spent several days in Port Said waiting for the Himalaya, had evidently volunteered to show his brother officers round, and the little party disappeared down the long, straight street which runs past the Cafe Continental. Then the men broke up into little groups, and went to their various fatigue parties, brass cleaning, swabbing, "up-ashes," and the rest of it; and Tom Howard, having no particular duty, had leisure to watch the work of coaling performed by gangs of Arabs, who wailed monotonously as they worked. He stood with Sergeant Clavering, watching the Arab boatmen, buying bananas and fruit for the mess, and was, on the whole, disappointed with his first glimpse of the Orient.

EVERY TUESDAY, The "Magnet" ONE HALFPENNY. LIBRARY.

About an hour later, the shore party came aboard, and as Leonard Dashwood came on deck, he beckoned to his cousin. "I want to have a word with you, Howard," he said. "Sling hold of that kit-bag and bring it along to my cabin. This is honest Injun; I'm not putting it on to you." And Leonard Dashwood's voice, though stern, was perfectly natural.

Trooper Howard picked up the kit-bag and followed the lieutenant to his quarters. He shared a cabin with young Blennerhasset, and when they reached it, it was fortunately empty, and the two cousins for a few moments found themselves alone.

Tom set the bag down, and looked squarely at Leonard Dashwood.

"Have you heard that my father is dead?" said Leonard Dashwood, a curious look on his face.

"Yes; I heard it from Dick Vivian the morning we left Aldershot. Do you wish me to express regret, Leonard? For I'm hanged if I feel any, to be perfectly straight with you."

"I wish you to express nothing of the sort," said Leonard sharply. "But I wish you to tell me what you know of the matter. I found him dead in his chair a few minutes after you passed me coming out of his office."

Jack Dashwood's eyebrows went up.

"The dickens, you did?" he said.

"What happened between you and my father?"

"Very little that was not straight to the point, Leonard Dashwood," said Jack, returning his cousin's gaze. "I went to see your father on business, and I told him what I thought of him."

"You were aware that he had a weak heart?" said Leonard, his eyes flashing.

"I am aware that he had a bad one," said Jack, very quietly. "What do you mean to imply?"

"That your violence killed him!" said Leonard, clenching his fists.

"You were always a liar, Leonard Dashwood!" said Jack, flushing hotly. "I have several times contemplated buying myself out in order to stand equal with you once more, and give you the thrashing that I most certainly shall give you one of these days."

"Then it is still to be war between us?" said Leonard.

"If it is war, it is of your own seeking," said his cousin.

"Is this all you wish to say to me?"

"That is all. You can go, Trooper Howard!" said Leonard, with a sneer.

Trooper Sir John Dashwood laughed outright.

"Very well, sir," he said, saluting pointedly. "May I ask you one question before I go, sir? You examined your father's cheque-book, I have no doubt. Did you notice the last counterfoil, and did you not wonder why he had paid me fifty pounds?" Leonard grasped the edge of his bunk, and grew very white. "You wish to imply," said Jack, "that I am a murderer. I would venture to suggest that you are a thief. I need not tell you that I did not cash that cheque. It's in very safe hands, Leonard Dashwood. Perhaps one day we will see it again when we have found that last receipt."

And, laying peculiar emphasis upon the words, Trooper Howard left the cabin, and closed the door behind him.

When Mr. Blennerhasset came in a moment after he found his brother subaltern staring wildly through the porthole, and even Mr. Blennerhasset, who was not very observant, saw that he was unusually white.

"Something wrong, Dashwood?" he said. "This place is rather stuffy. Better come and have a whisky peg."

And Leonard followed him without a word. On the way to the saloon he passed Trooper Alf Sligo, doing one of those unnecessary sentry-goes that are inflicted upon the troops at sea, and Trooper Sligo tried hard to catch his officer's eye, not knowing that Lieutenant Leonard Dashwood had a great deal too much on his mind at that moment to pay any attention to so insignificant a being as Trooper Alf Sligo.

However, by a stealthy touch on the sleeve as he went by, Alf Sligo managed to accomplish his end, and Leonard, stopping abruptly, came back and glared at him with fire in his eye.

"Beg pardon, sir!" whispered Sligo, winking very knowingly. "Thought you'd like to know that he's in my mess. Is there anything you want me to do?"

"Confound your impudence!" said Leonard haughtily. "What the dickens do you mean by touching me? Haven't you any sense in your head?" And then, seeing from the look in Sligo's unhealthy face that perhaps he had spoken unwisely, he rattled the money in his pocket. "Remember that there are eyes all over the ship," he said. "When I want you I will give you the old sign."

"Oh, it's like that, is it?" muttered Trooper Alf Sligo,

"BUNTER, THE HYPNOTIST."

Another School Tale by FRANK RICHARDS.

NEXT TUESDAY.

looking after him. "You reckon you can do without me, do you? But hold hard, my buck. I'll watch it. An' wait till my blessed seven's in. Maybe I sha'n't stick it that long, either. I'm never goin' ter leave yer, Mr. blessed Leonard Dashwood, whatever 'appens!"

There was a very peculiar glitter in Leonard Dashwood's eye as he followed young Blennerhasset into the saloon. The whisky peg multiplied itself by six in almost as many minutes, to Mr. Blennerhasset's surprise and dismay.

"I say, you know, Dashwood," he remonstrated, in his hesitating manner, "it's all very well at home, but you can't drink like that under this sun."

"Never mind what I can do!" said Leonard Dashwood fiercely. "When I want your advice, Blennerhasset, I will ask it. Until then, have the goodness to keep your preaching to yourself."

Young Blennerhasset, who, in spite of his smooth face and pink cheeks, was a "good plucked" youngster, felt his temper rise; but, not wishing to have any unpleasantness with the man who shared his cabin, he set down his glass and left the saloon, leaving Leonard sitting there with his arms folded, apparently quite oblivious of his comrade's departure.

"Hang him—ten thousand times, hang him!" he muttered to himself. "Shall I do it? Is it altogether too risky, or shall I chance my arm like a man?" A strange look of dogged determination crept into his face, and, drawing a coin from his pocket, he tossed it into the air and let it fall on to the table. "Heads I do, tails I don't!" he whispered, devouring the coin greedily with his eyes. "It's heads, by gad!"

And, emptying his glass, he set it down with a bang which shattered it to fragments, and left the room.

He made his way to the deck, where the men were still leaning over the gunwale, or bartering with gaily-clad natives that swarmed about with their baskets of fruit. One native, a coal-black Nubian, stood motionless, his face gleaming in the sunshine, his expressive eyes glancing hither and thither as if in search of somebody.

As Dashwood approached, the Nubian's thick lips parted in a smile of momentary recognition, and, pausing beside him to light a cigarette, Dashwood muttered some quick words in French.

"Get into your boat, you black son of iniquity!" said the lieutenant. "What was going to happen is going to happen now!"

And, with a grin of mysterious intelligence, the Nubian went over the ship's side and entered a boat, in which an Arab and another Nubian, in a blue tarboosh, sat looking upwards as if expecting something.

The lieutenant walked forward, and meeting one of the ship's officers, offered him a cigar, and inquired casually how long it would be before they started again.

"We shall be off in a quarter of an hour," said the ship's officer. "They are clearing away now; the bunkers must be full by this time."

Leonard went on, apparently with no more object than to gaze at the moving throng of figures and all the busy bustle of the troopship's deck. Then, wheeling round, he came aft again, glancing right and left until he found the object of his search.

Tom Howard, who had been below, came up and gained the head of the companion-way at the same moment as his cousin reached it.

"I want you to do something for me, Howard," said the lieutenant, in a tone of authority. And poor Tom came to attention, though, with the memory of their recent meeting, a red spot came at the same time on each cheek. "I have left my cheque-book at the hotel yonder, and want someone I can depend upon to go and fetch it for me. You have just time. I have got permission from the colonel to send you. See, there is a boat here. These black fellows will pull you over in a brace of shakes. That fat fellow yonder on the quay-

side is the dragoman belonging to the hotel. Tell him what you want, and go with him."

Jack looked him keenly through and through, resenting this errand, which he had not the power to disobey, and, saluting, he went down the ship's side, and into the boat. The two Nubians and the Arab immediately pushed off, and a few strokes of the long oars brought Trooper Howard to the quayside.

Irritated as he was, it was an experience to set foot on shore, if it were only for five minutes, and, climbing up, he addressed the dragoman, an olive-eyed Turk, who bowed gravely, and immediately led the way past the Grand Cafe Continental into the street which runs away at right angles there.

It was all novel and strange, the gaily-painted house, the Turks, Jews, Christians, soberly-clad Frenchmen, all the mingled throng that makes up the life of Port Said; and, almost forgetting his annoyance, Jack strode on in the wake of his guide, who shouldered his way through the crowd with some air of authority.

"You speak French?" said the Turk, looking over his shoulder.

"After a fashion," said Jack.

"That is well. I have very little English myself. Have the goodness to come this way."

And he dived down a narrow turning, full of the colour of the East, and not deficient in true Oriental odour, which is not exactly attar of roses. The alley seemed to grow narrower and the houses higher, and Jack, knowing that the troopship would start in a very short time now, grew first anxious and then suspicious.

"Look here," he said, "where are you going to?"

And, stopping short, he laid his hand on the shoulder of the dragoman. For the second time the olive-eyed Turk looked back at him, and Jack had just time to detect a curious expression of villainous double-dealing on his face, when he experienced a terrific shock which deprived him of all sense and feeling, and Trooper Thomas Howard sank senseless to the ground.

The Nubian in the blue tarboosh, creeping noiselessly in his wake, had clubbed him over the head and dropped him in his tracks. The Turk, after one glance at the prostrate figure, drew forth a key, unlocked a door, and, stooping down, gripped the unconscious man by the legs, and, with the help of the Nubian, dragged him quickly inside.

When a moment later a blue-coated gendarme came down the alley, it was empty, and the door securely fastened on the inside.

When Leonard Dashwood had seen his cousin reach the quay, he returned swiftly to his cabin, and, gazing through the porthole which looked out on the other side of the ship, stood motionless, his eyes riveted on the water. His mouth was set and hard, and his nostrils dilated.

He heard the tramping on the deck. He heard a bugle-call from a distant part of the ship. Men passed and re-passed the cabin door, and still he stood there looking at the water. Then there came a long blast from the siren, and a responsive throb from the engine-room. The screw revolved astern, and the Himalaya glided slowly on her way. Leonard Dashwood's mouth opened, and he gasped like a fish.

"I wonder if it's all right?" he muttered to himself. "I must let some little time elapse before I inquire for him. The colonel is quite capable of getting the ship stopped and sending a search-party ashore."

And Leonard Dashwood, drawing out his watch, glared at the dial for ten solid minutes, which seemed more like ten hours to him. Then he looked at himself in the mirror hanging on the wall, and was surprised to find that his face betrayed so little of the tumultuous emotion that surged in his bad heart.

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