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School Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co., at Greyfriars

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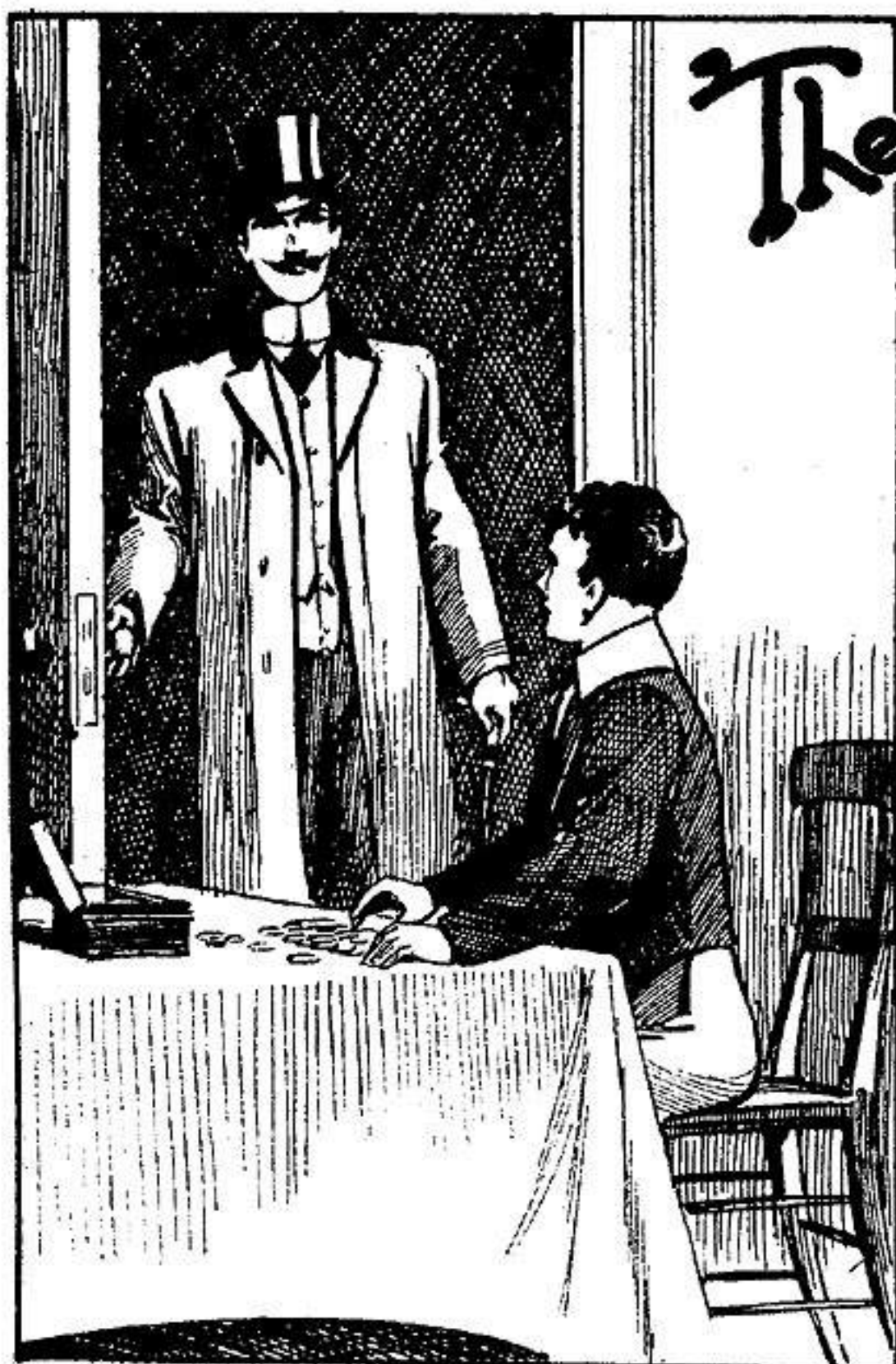
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The Tempter!

A
SPLENDID LONG,
COMPLETE SCHOOL TALE
OF
HARRY WHARTON & CO.
AT GREYFRIARS.
BY
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Willing to Oblige.

"HERE he is!"
John Bull, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, came downstairs with his hands in his pockets. Bull generally had his hands in his pockets, and he walked with a firm, heavy tread that was quite in keeping with his strong, sturdy build and his determined character. He looked

round lazily as he heard the general exclamation that greeted his appearance.

"Here he is!"

"Here's Bull!"

"Hallo!" said John Bull. "Anything up?"

"Letter for you, Bull!"

John Bull grinned.

As a rule, a letter arriving for a junior did not cause anything like excitement in the House. There were at that

moment half a dozen letters in the rack which the owners had not yet taken the trouble to claim. Letters from kind uncles and affectionate aunts did not excite the recipients—unless, of course, they contained tips. But a letter for John Bull was another matter.

The postman might have brought a whole bagful of letters for the other fellows, and nobody would have noticed it—but a letter for John Bull!

That was quite different.

For Bull was a great man in the Remove now. Since his Aunt Tabitha had taken it into her head to test the steadiness of his character by presenting him with a large sum of money, Bull had been the cynosure of all eyes in the Lower School. Even the seniors had paid him some attention. A junior who carried a wad of banknotes in his pocket was a little out of the usual run. A fellow who could lend you twenty pounds if you asked him—and if he chose—was a fellow to be cultivated. A chap who could stand unlimited treat at the tuckshop was a chap whose acquaintance was a boon and a blessing to anybody who could make it.

Hence the interest of the fellows when the letter was seen in the rack addressed to Master Bull, at Greyfriars School.

For who knew what that letter might contain? It might be banknotes—it might be a cheque for a thousand pounds. The mere sight of it made Billy Bunter's mouth water. Even fellows who did not want Bull's money were greatly interested in the letter. They wanted to know what it might be about.

"Letter for you, old man!"

"From your aunt, I expect."

"Ain't you going to read it, Bull?"

John Bull laughed.

"You can hand it over," he said.

Billy Bunter reached up for the letter, but the fat junior was too short to reach it. Bulstrode lifted it over his head and handed it to John Bull. Bunter blinked at the burly Removite indignantly through his big spectacles.

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—" he began.

"There's your letter, Bull."

"I say, you know, you might leave me to hand the letter to my friend Bull," said Billy Bunter. "I hope it's good news, Bull. I'm sure you won't forget your greatest friends."

"Greatest in girth, at all events," Bob Cherry remarked.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"And greatest in cheek," said Harry Wharton.

"Look here, Wharton, I know you're jealous of Bull's friendship for me—"

"Rats!" said John Bull, in his painfully frank way.

"Don't talk piffle, Bunter!"

"Oh, really—"

"This is the first I've heard of our friendship," said Bull.

"You can go and eat coke! Scat!"

"Yes, get away; and don't bother Bull, Bunter," said Snoop, with virtuous indignation. "It's simply sickening to see you sucking up to Bull for his money. I suppose you're going to open the letter now, Bull?"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"Look here, Bunter, if you don't stop bothering Bull I'll bump you!" exclaimed Snoop. "Shall I bump him over for you, Bull?"

Bull grinned.

"Please!" he said.

"Right-ho!" exclaimed Snoop.

Bunter was about the only fellow in the Remove whom Snoop, the cad of the Form, would have cared to tackle. But he wasn't afraid of Bunter. He rushed at the fat junior, only too glad of a chance of obliging Bull on such easy terms.

"Here, hands off!" yelled Billy Bunter. "Help! Rescue! Fire! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter went rolling on the floor.

"Yow! Yaroo! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Snoop rolled the fat junior over as far as the doorway, and there he kicked him out. Bunter roared, and rolled down the steps.

"There, he's settled!" exclaimed Snoop, coming back red with exertion. "Always glad to do anything to oblige you, Bull."

John Bull grinned his quiet grin.

"Any other fellow here willing to oblige me?" he asked.

There was a shout of assent at once.

"I will!"

"And I!"

"And I!"

"Right, then! Skinner, you're the man!"

"What can I do for you, old chap?" asked Skinner affectionately.

"Send Snoop after Bunter."

"Here, I say—" exclaimed Snoop, in alarm.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 156.

"THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S,"

A Grand New School Tale, by Charles Hamilton, is in THE "EMPIRE" LIBRARY this Week. Price One Halfpenny.

"Certainly!" said Skinner.

He advanced upon Snoop. Snoop backed away, but Skinner was not to be eluded. He was as keen to oblige the youth who was rolling in money as Snoop himself had been.

"Out you go!" roared Skinner. "I'm not surprised at Bull being disgusted at the horrid way you try to suck up to him, Snoop!"

"Look here—"

"Out you go!"

Skinner grasped Snoop by the shoulders and whirled him to the door. Snoop resisted, and whirled Skinner back again. Then they waltzed round John Bull—at all events, it looked like waltzing. Finally Skinner got his prisoner to the door, and hurled him forth.

"Yow!" yelled Snoop.

He crashed into Billy Bunter, who was picking himself up on the steps. There was a roar from the fat junior, and a yelp from Snoop, as they rolled down the steps together.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"There!" exclaimed Skinner breathlessly. "That cad's chucked out! I never could stand Snoop! I say, Bull—"

"I say, Bulstrode," said John Bull, without taking any notice of Skinner, "will you do me a favour?"

"With pleasure!" said Bulstrode. Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove, was not much given to doing people favours. But John Bull was an exceptional person. A fellow who had had five hundred pounds given him in a lump sum by an eccentric aunt was the kind of fellow the grumpiest person would have yearned to oblige.

"Sure you don't mind?"

"Quite sure!"

"Then chuck Skinner out for me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode looked dubiously at John Bull, and Skinner backed away in alarm. Bulstrode seemed to be thinking it out.

"Well?" said John Bull.

"Oh, I'll chuck him out!" said Bulstrode.

"Hands off!" yelled Skinner. "I—"

"Outside!"

Skinner had no chance against the burly Bulstrode. In a trice, as a novelist would say, he was whirled to the door and sent whirling out. He joined Bunter and Snoop at the bottom of the steps.

"Going—going—gone!" roared Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

John Bull grinned serenely.

"Now, if any of you fellows want to oblige me; please chuck Bulstrode out!" he exclaimed.

There was a yell of laughter. The juniors had caught on to John Bull's little joke by this time.

"You'd better not try!" roared Bulstrode angrily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And then chuck yourselves out, my dear friends!" said John Bull.

And putting the letter unopened into his pocket, John Bull walked away whistling. He left most of the juniors laughing, and some of them scowling—Bulstrode among the latter.

Three angry faces looked in at the doorway.

"Where's that beast, Bull?"

"I guess he's gone," said Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "Jevver get left?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Bumping for John Bull.

THE juniors gazed after John Bull.

That cool individual had walked away with the letter in his pocket without even opening it. He was not curious himself, and he did not seem to realise that anybody else was curious. Perhaps he thought it was cheek to be curious about his business.

But the juniors were not disposed to stand the coolness of John Bull.

They rushed after him down the passage.

Six or seven excited youths surrounded him, and John Bull was forced to stop. He stood with his hands in his pockets, looking at them unruffled.

"Well, what's the row?" he asked.

"That letter—"

"What's the news?"

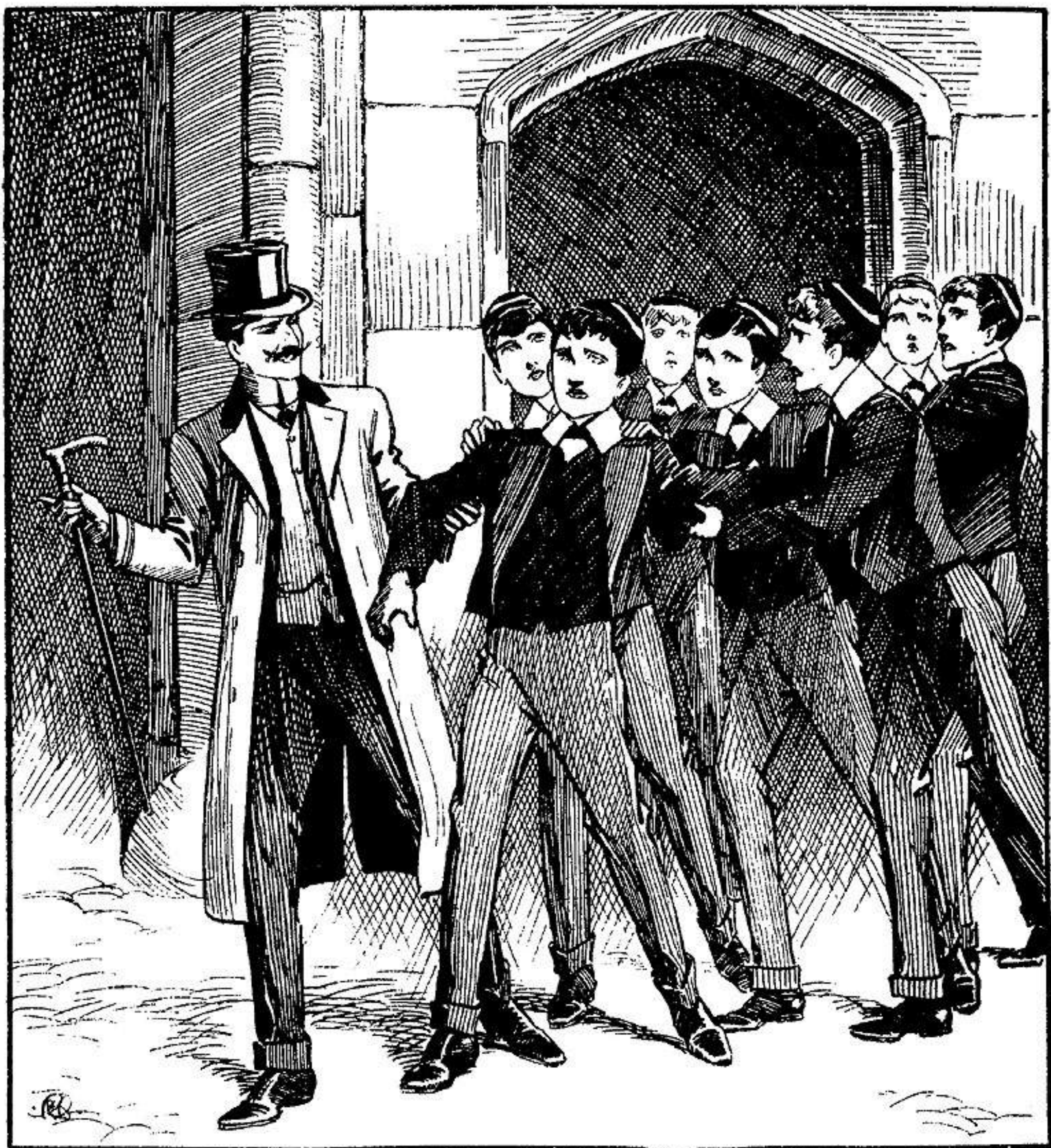
"Is it a cheque?"

"Is it another five hundred quid?"

John Bull grinned.

"It's my letter," he said. "Private correspondence isn't public property at this school, is it?"

"Rats!" said Bulstrode. "You see, you're a little out of the common. Juniors don't have five hundred pounds planked down on them every day. We want to know all about it. Hang it all, you've been swanking enough lately,



"Let my cousin go!" exclaimed Lucas Crane, pulling John Bull by the arm. "Let him go, or I'll——"
"Rats!" replied the juniors, keeping a firm hold on John Bull junior. (See page 25.)

and you can't be a public character without owing something to the public."

"Just so!" said Stott.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"Now, then, Bull——"

"Open that blessed letter!"

"Tell us if there's any news!"

"Go ahead!"

Excited juniors were gathering round John Bull, and their aspect was growing threatening. The sturdy junior grinned, and drew the letter from his pocket.

"Well, I don't mind reading it now," he remarked. "Blessed if I see what it's got to do with you fellows, all the same."

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NEXT
TUESDAY: THE GREYFRIARS HYPNOTIST.

"I guess we want to know, you know," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

"Rats!"

"I guess I'll read the letter aloud if you like," the Yankee junior suggested, with the cool cheek that was peculiarly his own.

"I guess you won't!" said John Bull.

"Say——"

"Rats! Shut up while I read my letter!"

"Yes, shut up, Fish!" said Billy Bunter. "Let Bull read his letter. Please be a little more considerate, you fellows. I don't think that a chap like Bull ought to be interrupted when he's reading letters from home."

"Oh, cheese it, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Ogilvy——"

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums
of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

John Bull gave a low whistle. The juniors fixed their eyes upon him hungrily. John Bull had read his letter, and the contents of it surprised him.

"What is it?" howled half a dozen voices.

"What's the news?"

"Out with it!"

"I say, Bull, old man, you can confide in me, you know."

"Oh, really, do let Bull alone, you fellows! Bull wants to confide in me. Would you care to step into my study, Bull? We shall be alone there."

"No, I wouldn't!" said Bull.

"Oh, really——" murmured Billy Bunter feebly.

"What's the news, Bull?"

"Is it a big cheque?"

"Is it a thousand pounds this time?"

"No, it isn't! It isn't from my Aunt Tabitha at all," said Bull.

"Who's it from, then?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, shut up, you chaps!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, in disgust. "Blessed if the whole Form doesn't seem to have turned into a lot of Peeping Toms!"

"The peepfulness of the honourable Toms is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Oh, rats!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "You mind your own bizney. Bull hasn't any right to excite our curiosity in this way."

"Blessed if it's my fault!"

"You ought to get your aunt sent to an asylum or something," said Skinner. "Look here, we've got a right to know what's in that letter."

"I guess so."

"My dear friends," exclaimed Alonzo Todd, the Duffer of Greyfriars, "pray allow me to remonstrate with you! It is a besetting sin of small minds to pry into the affairs of others. My Uncle Benjamin always cautioned me to beware of the small sin of inquisitiveness. My Uncle Benjamin says——"

But Todd was pushed aside before he could get any further. The juniors were in no humour to listen to the homilies of Alonzo Todd.

"Read out the letter!" yelled several voices.

"My dear fellows——"

"Shut up, Todd!"

"Go it, Bull!"

"Read out the letter!"

"Oh, I don't mind!" said John Bull, with a shrug of the shoulders. "There's nothing of any importance in it, and if you're curious——"

"I'm not," said Bulstrode, "but I think you ought to read the letter out to the fellows. Some of them are."

"Well, here goes."

Bull read out the letter.

"Dear Johnny,—I am coming down to Greyfriars to see you on Wednesday afternoon, which, I believe, is a half-holiday at your school. It is so many years since we met that I am very anxious to see you, and having a little time to spare, I thought I could not employ it better than in looking you up. I am sure you will be glad to see me. You will be pleased to hear that your Aunt Tabitha is in excellent health.—Your affectionate cousin,

"LUCAS CRANE."

Bulstrode snorted.

"Not much in that, anyway."

"Rot!" said Skinner.

"Rubbish!"

The Removites were very free in their comments upon that letter from John Bull's cousin. Bull only laughed.

"Well, you asked me to read it out," he said.

"There's a footnote," said Billy Bunter, who was blinking through his big spectacles over John Bull's shoulder.

There was a shout at once.

"Read it out!"

"Very well," said Bull.

"P.S.—I shall arrive at Friarale by the train at three o'clock to-morrow afternoon. Perhaps you might care to meet it."

The juniors sniffed.

"Is that all?"

"That's all."

"What rot!"

"I say, Bull, is that cousin of yours rich?" asked Billy Bunter.

"Blessed if I know," said John Bull. "I don't know the chap."

"Don't know him!" exclaimed several voices.

"No. I haven't seen him since I was a kid of two, and I don't remember him in the slightest, and I don't suppose he has the least recollection of me," said Bull. "I've heard that he's a giddy man-about-town, and I know my mother doesn't like him. But I dare say he'll be all right. Blessed

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if I know what he's coming to see me for. It's jolly odd to dig a chap up like this after so long."

"Perhaps it's the quids?" suggested Ogilvy.

John Bull nodded.

"It might be," he said. "I know Crane had some expectations of being Aunt Tabitha's heir, though whether he will be, I don't know. I think I'm making all the running at present, not that I care twopence either way."

"He may bring you down another box of banknotes from your aunt," Tom Brown suggested.

John Bull shook his head.

"He doesn't say anything about it, then."

"Perhaps your aunt's dead, and you've inherited all her money, Bull," suggested Billy Bunter eagerly.

"Ass! He says she's in excellent health."

"That may be only a way of breaking it to you gently."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fathead!" said John Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Look here," said Bulstrode, "it seems to me that we've been done. There wasn't anything in that letter worth reading out."

"Well, you would have it," said Bull.

"It's rot!"

"Rubbish!"

"Bosh!"

"I guess so!"

"Like Bull's cheek to read out such stuff?"

"Wasting our time!"

"Well, I like that!" exclaimed John Bull indignantly.

"You made me read it out. You wouldn't give me any peace until I did."

"Rot!"

"Bosh!"

"Rats!"

"Bull's been wasting our time reading out his rotten private correspondence in the passage," said Bulstrode. "I don't see that we're called upon to put up with it. Bump him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good egg! Collar him!"

"Bump him!"

John Bull put up his fists.

But the rush of the juniors pinned him against the wall, and he was collared and dragged out into the middle of the passage, struggling violently.

"Leggo!" he roared. "Ow! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bump him!"

Bump!

John Bull smote the floor with a mighty bump, and then the juniors, laughing, crowded off, leaving him sitting there dusty and breathless, with the torn letter in his hand.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Vernon-Smith Sits Down.

HARRY WHARTON picked up the dusty, breathless junior. The Famous Four were laughing heartily. John Bull did not seem inclined to laugh. He grunted.

"You do look dusty," Harry remarked. "Sorry! Ha, ha, ha!"

"The sorrowfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Too bad!" said Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"So sorry," said Nugent. "Ha, ha, ha!"

John Bull snorted.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bull swung away with his hands in his pockets. Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, met him on the stairs.

"I want to speak to you, Bull!" he exclaimed.

"Well, it's all on your side, then," said Bull curtly. "I think I've told you once before what I thought of you."

The Bounder set his teeth for a moment.

"It's about your cousin," he said.

John Bull stared at him.

"My cousin?"

"Yes; the chap who's just written to you."

"I don't see what you can know about him."

"I know the man."

"You know my cousin?" exclaimed John Bull, staring at the Bounder of Greyfriars in great astonishment.

Vernon-Smith nodded coolly.

"I didn't know Lucas Crane was your cousin until you read the letter out," he said. "But I know Lucas Crane. I know him well, and——"

"Wait for me in my study," said John Bull. "I've got to get some of this dust off. I'll join you in a few minutes."

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"Right-ho!"

Vernon-Smith walked away to Bull's study whistling. There was a peculiar smile upon the Bounder's face. The evil-disposed lad, who had covered himself with disgrace since he had been at Greyfriars, had never shown any desire to cultivate John Bull's acquaintance till the windfall from Bull's rich aunt. Then the Bounder had considered that Bull might be worth his while; but Bull had received his advances very cavalierly. John Bull had no desire to break bounds at night, or to play cards at the Cross Keys in Friardale—little relaxations which the Bounder of Greyfriars allowed himself.

Vernon-Smith entered Bull's study and sat down. Alonzo Todd and Fisher T. Fish, who shared that room with Bull, were not in, and the Bounder had the study to himself. He leaned back in the arm-chair, put his feet on the fender, and lighted a cigarette. Smoking was another of the little relaxations of the Bounder.

The cigarette was half-finished when John Bull came into the study, looking his usual neat and clean self again.

He started, and sniffed at the smoke, as he came in, and then turned a dark frown upon the Bounder.

"What do you mean by smoking in my study?" he explained angrily.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"I had to pass the time," he yawned.

"Well, you won't pass the time with your filthy cigarettes here!" said John Bull. He threw the window open angrily, and waved an exercise-book in the air to dissipate the smoke. "Suppose someone came along the passage now and found the study like this."

Vernon-Smith sneered.

"Are you afraid of the prefects?"

"No, I'm not afraid; but I don't want a prefect or anybody else to think I'm a blackguard. If you want to smoke, get out of my room!"

"I want to speak to you first."

Vernon-Smith threw the remainder of the cigarette into the fire. John Bull kicked the study-door shut, and came over to the table.

"Well, what is it?" he asked ungraciously.

John Bull could be very courteous to people he liked, and civil enough to strangers; but no one could accuse him of hypocrisy. He disliked and distrusted Vernon-Smith, and he would not affect to feel otherwise.

The Bounder's eyes glinted a little. But he maintained an outward suavity of manner.

"I know Lucas Crane," he said.

"So you've told me already."

"I met him in Switzerland," said the Bounder.

John Bull looked directly at him.

"I've heard about that!" he exclaimed. "You used to go into the gambling casinos, and take that duffer Hazeldene in with you, and lead him into your own rotten ways!"

"I suppose Wharton's been telling you!"

"I didn't have it from Wharton!" said John Bull curtly. "It's true, though."

"I dare say I had a little fun while I was abroad," said Vernon-Smith, with a shrug of the shoulders. "If you want to know, it was in the casino at Geneva that I met your cousin."

"Oh!"

"At all events, he is your cousin, I suppose?" said Vernon-Smith. "His name is Lucas Crane, and it's not a common name. The man I mean is about thirty, with a black moustache, and wears an eyeglass."

John Bull nodded.

"My cousin will be about thirty," he said. "I don't know about the moustache and the eyeglass, as I've never seen him to recognise him."

"Oh, he's the same man!" said Vernon-Smith. "Why is he coming down to see you?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"Sudden burst of family affection, I suppose?" the Bounder suggested sarcastically.

John Bull stared at him.

"No bizney of yours, anyway," he said. "I don't suppose it's that, though. There's no love lost between his branch of the family and mine."

"Both after the old lady's money, I suppose?"

"You'd better not suppose too much, Smith, if you don't want to take a thick ear out of this study with you."

The Bounder grinned faintly.

"Well," he said, "your Cousin Crane is what you would call a bounder—a regular goer. The fellows here consider me a bit doggish, but I'm nothing to him. He's a high-flyer, and knocks me right into the shade."

"I sha'n't believe that unless I see it."

Vernon-Smith laughed impatiently.

"Look here," he exclaimed, "I know you're pulling my leg. Since you've had more money than you know what to do with, you must have got sick of the humdrum life here. I know jolly well that Crane is coming down to help you see life a little."

"Ass!"

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NEXT TUESDAY: THE GREYFRIARS HYPNOTIST.

"Isn't it the case?"

"No!"

"You don't intend to go on the batter, after lights out?" Bull's lip curled.

"That's not in my line," he said. "You suggested it to me once before, and I thought I answered you pretty plainly."

"I knew you were spoofing, of course."

John Bull's eyes glittered.

"Well, I wasn't spoofing," he said; "and if you can't take my word, I don't want to talk to you. I don't want to hit a chap in my own study. Get out, please."

Vernon-Smith kept his temper.

"Look here," he exclaimed, "come off! I can see through you as clearly as I please, and I know your game from end to end. You're a fool if you think it will hurt you to take me into your confidence. I can show you and your cousin both round the houses, I can tell you."

John Bull threw open the study door.

"Will you kindly get out?" he asked.

"No, I won't!" shouted the Bounder angrily. "You can't take me in. You can't pull the wool over my eyes, as you do over Wharton's, you confounded hypocrite—"

Biff!

John Bull's fist caught the Bounder of Greyfriars fairly and squarely on the nose, and Vernon-Smith dropped, as if he had been shot.

"Oh! Ow!"

Bull stood with his hands in his pockets, looking down at him, but his hands were ready to flash out at once if they were needed.

But they were not needed.

Vernon-Smith staggered to his feet, and, giving the sturdy junior a look of deadly hate, he walked from the study without a word. John Bull closed the door after him.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. The Descent of Bunter.

"I SAY, Bull!"

It was the evening, and John Bull, having done his preparation, had come down into the common-room. As the sturdy junior walked into the room with his hands in his pockets, Bunter sidled up to him, with a very ingratiating expression upon his fat face.

"No!" said Bull.

Billy Bunter blinked at him.

"Eh? What?"

"No!"

"What do you mean, Bull?"

"I mean that I haven't any money for you," said John Bull calmly.

Bunter glared indignantly.

"Do you think I want to borrow your rotten money?" he exclaimed.

"I know you do!" said Bull tersely.

Bob Cherry roared.

"Ha, ha! He knows you, you see, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

John Bull walked on towards the fire, and the Owl of the Remque rolled after him.

"I say, Bull, you know, I want to do you a favour."

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, Bull, I'm in earnest, you know! I think I shall be able to do you a favour to-morrow afternoon."

"Bosh!"

"You want to play footer, don't you?" demanded Bunter.

"Yes."

"Well, then, who's going to meet your cousin at the station?"

"I am."

"But how can you, if you're playing footer?"

"I shall give up the footer."

"It's a pity," said Harry Wharton. "I think you're shaping all right for a place in the Form team, Bull. But I suppose you must show some attention to your relation."

"Must!" said Bull.

"I say, that's where I can help you," said Bunter eagerly.

"Rubbish!"

"I was going to suggest—"

"Bosh!"

"To suggest going to meet him instead of you," said Billy Bunter persistently. "I could meet him at the station, you know, and look after him, and—and stand some refreshment. I'm expecting a postal-order this evening, so I don't suppose that I shall have to ask you for any money."

"And supposing the postal-order doesn't come?" demanded Frank Nugent, with a grin.

"Oh, it's really bound to come!" said Bunter confidently. "You see, it's from a titled friend of mine. But, in case of accidents—I know there is a delay in the post sometimes—Bull could make me a small loan, say, ten shillings, to be repaid out of the postal-order as soon as it arrives."

"Rats!" said Bull.

"Look here, Bull, do you want me to go and meet your cousin, or don't you?" roared Bunter.

"I don't!"

"Oh, really—"

"Shut up!"

And the juniors chuckled. Bunter was the most disobliging fellow in the Lower Fourth, and his desire to oblige Bull was comical. The fat junior could not see that his motives were as clear to everybody else as they were to himself—or clearer.

"I think you might be civil to a relation, Bull!" he snorted.

Bull stared at him.

"A relation?"

"Certainly. I've suspected for some time that we were related," said Bunter. "There's the resemblance, in the first place—"

"Resemblance!" roared Bull indignantly. "Do you mean to say that my face is anything like your chivvy, you cheeky young sweep?"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites.

"Well, besides the resemblance," said Bunter, "there's the name. My grandfather was a Bull."

The juniors shrieked.

"His grandfather was a bull!" howled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rats!" said Ogilvy. "I know jolly well that if his grandfather was an animal at all, he was a pig!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or a donkey?" suggested Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My grandfather was a Bull, so—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The roars of laughter stopped even Billy Bunter. He blinked at the juniors in great indignation. John Bull sat down and took up a book, grinning. Bunter's claim to relationship did not impress him very much.

But Billy Bunter returned to the charge.

"I say, Bull," he remarked, dropping into a seat beside John Bull—"I say, you know, I'm quite willing to keep to my offer of going to the station to meet your cousin, if you'd rather play footer to-morrow afternoon."

"Go and eat coke!"

"I say, Bull—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Is it a fact that you haven't seen your cousin since you were two?" asked Bunter.

"Oh, yes!"

"Then he won't recognise you when he sees you."

"Well, I shall tell him who I am, fathead!"

"You won't recognise him."

"There are not many passengers by the three o'clock train at Friardale. What the dickens are you bothering about it for, anyway? What's your little game?"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Do leave a fellow in peace!"

"But really—"

John Bull put out a foot and kicked Bunter's chair from under him. The fat junior was too short-sighted to see the action, and he did not see the chair going until it went.

Then he sat down with a mighty bump on the floor.

There was a roar of laughter from the juniors in the common-room as Billy Bunter sat on the floor, and blinked round dazedly and wrathfully.

"Ow! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter scrambled furiously to his feet.

"Who did that?" he roared. "Who knocked my chair away?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Was it you, Skinner?"

"No, it wasn't."

"Jolly lucky for you. I'd have—"

"Well, what would you have done?" asked Skinner.

"Well, it wasn't you, anyway," said Bunter, rather hurriedly. "Was it you, Snoop?"

"No," said Snoop.

"Was it you, Cherry, you beast?"

"Suppose it was?" asked Bob.

"Well, I—I—I think it's most inconsiderate," said Bunter, all his warlike ardour fading away as Bob Cherry pushed back his cuffs.

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"THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S,"

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"Ha, ha, ha! Well, it wasn't I, Bunter."

John Bull sat quietly grinning. Billy Bunter blinked at him, and caught the expression on his face. Then he understood.

"Bull, you beast, it was you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did you kick my chair away on purpose?" roared Bunter threateningly.

Bull looked at him calmly.

"Yes, I did," he replied. "What about it?"

"Oh, n-n-nothing!" said Bunter. "Of course, it was a joke?"

"No; it wasn't a joke."

"Well, as you didn't intend to hurt me—"

"But I did."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" said Billy Bunter peevishly. "You're a beast, Bull! You're a beast, Cherry! You're all beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Billy Bunter rubbed his fat limbs and grunted. He did not condescend to address any more remarks to John Bull that evening.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Nice Relations.

THE room was very quiet, save for the monotonous ticking of the clock. A cheerful fire burned in the grate, casting reflections upon the old furniture. There was a glimmer of old mahogany and brass fireirons. The old lady seated in the easy-chair by the fire, with her feet on a cushion, was very quiet. Once or twice she glanced, with her eyes that were as keen as any young woman's, at the clock. Miss Tabitha Bull was evidently expecting someone.

The door quietly opened.

Miss Bull did not look round or rise from her chair. She knew that it was a man's step, and she knew that it was the man she was expecting.

"Is that you, Lucas?"

"It is I, my dear aunt."

"Close the door—"

"Certainly, my dear—"

"And come and sit down where I can see you."

The tabby cat stretched on the hearthrug rose, and licked its whiskers, and glanced at the new-comer. As he advanced towards the fire, the cat moved away and took refuge in the skirts of the old lady. A grim smile curled the lips of Miss Tabitha Bull. She glanced sharply at the young man who stood before her.

He would have been called a handsome man. His face was well outlined. The somewhat prominent nose and black moustache were the chief drawbacks. His eyes had a very keen glitter. Young as he was, there were traces in his face that told of late hours and a reckless life—traces which the man did his best to conceal, but which were quite clear to the old lady's sharp eyes.

Lucas Crane had a most affectionate smile upon his face now.

But there was no answering smile upon the face of Miss Bull. She was grim and cold.

"Well, auntie!" said Crane, taking the old lady's hand.

He would have kissed her, but she drew back her head.

He bore the rebuff quite calmly.

"No nonsense!" said Miss Tabitha.

Crane smiled.

"Is it nonsense for an affectionate nephew to kiss his oldest and dearest friend," he asked—"the most generous of aunts?"

"Nonsense!"

"Ahem!"

"I have been very generous to you," said Miss Bull calmly, "but you do not think so. You are spiteful and ungrateful." Crane's smile died away.

"Like most people who receive favours," went on the old lady mercilessly, "you are only expectant of more. All you receive you regard as a right, and you are angry and annoyed if more is not done for you."

"You are hard on me, aunt."

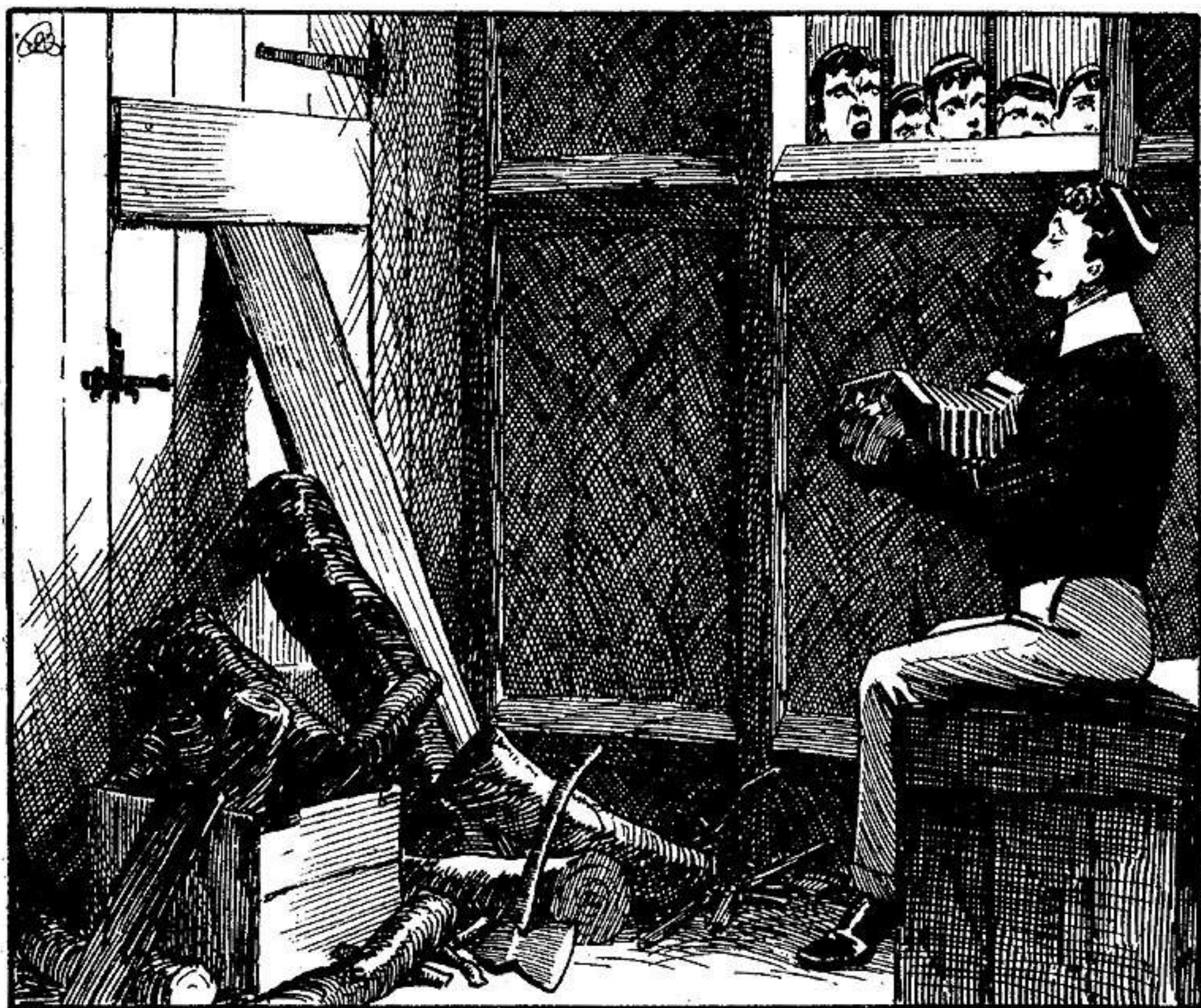
"I know you."

"This is not a kind greeting to a nephew you have not seen for years."

"And why have you not seen me for years?" asked Miss Tabitha shrilly. "Because you have been wasting time and substance in a wickedly reckless life."

"I have wished to come—"

"To ask for money—yes! But I did not choose to see you for that reason."



"Now then, chuck it!" howled the crowd of juniors from outside the woodshed. "Do you hear?" John Bull heard nothing but his own playing, apparently. (See Page 20.)

Miss Tabitha's grey old curls rustled as she fell silently. The young man bit his lip till the blood almost came through the skin.

Miss Bull was terrible when she was frank. But Lucas Crane could not afford to quarrel with Aunt Tabitha.

"I think you are hard on me," he said. "I have always wished to be a most affectionate nephew. But you do not trust me."

"Does anybody?"

"Really, Aunt Tabitha—"

"Did you see my cat shrink away from you when you came in?" said Miss Bull. "A man from whom dogs and cats shrink away is a man to be avoided."

The young man gave Aunt Tabitha's cat a far from pleasant look.

"Did you let me come and see you, aunt, so that you could speak to me in this way?" he asked, in a low voice.

"I let you come because you mentioned my nephew Johnny in your letter," said the old lady, looking squarely at him.

"What do you know about Johnny? You have never seen him since he was a child. I have never wished you to. I should have been sorry to see him grow anything like you."

"I have not seen him, but—"

"Well?"

"You have made a favourite of my cousin Johnny," said Lucas Crane. "I do not complain of your injustice, aunt. You have told me, in your frank way, that I am not good enough to be your favourite. I cannot make you think that I am as good in every way as your other nephew."

"You cannot deceive me, if that is what you mean."

Lucas Crane coughed.

"Ahem! But what if Johnny is no better than I am? I have been reckless, I admit it, but I am a man at least."

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What if your favourite Johnny had the same ways—and worse—before he is fifteen?"

The old lady sat bolt upright in her chair.

"Have you come here to slander your cousin?" she asked, in a trembling voice.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I put it to you as a matter of justice, aunt. Suppose it were so?"

"It is not."

"But suppose it were?"

"It is impossible. I have tested his character, Lucas, since the last time you made insinuations against him. I have placed a sum of money in his hands—an enormous sum for a boy—five hundred pounds. I have waited to hear whether it tempted him into an excess which was inconsistent with the estimate I had formed of his character. I have been in communication with his head-master, Dr. Locke."

"Well, aunt?"

"Well," said Miss Tabitha, "Johnny has wasted a great deal of the money, as I fully expected. He has stood treat to everybody, lent money to all sorts of persons, behaved, in fact, like the kind-hearted, generous lad he is. But not one hint of excess, not a whisper of any bad conduct. A lad with money at a public school has plenty of temptations. Johnny has passed them over. His conduct has proved that he is what I have always believed him to be. He is fit to put my money to good use when I am gone. Johnny is my heir."

Crane's teeth came hard together. But he worked up a smile under his black moustache.

"You trust, then, to the careless observation of a head-master?" he said.

"Dr. Locke is not careless."

NEXT
TUESDAY: THE GREYFRIARS HYPNOTIST.

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"But he would naturally have little to do with a boy in a junior Form."

"Perhaps. But I trust to his report."

"You would not trust to mine?"

She gave him a scornful look.

"Yours! No."

"But suppose I gave you proof?" he said.

"Proof! Proof of what?"

"Proof that Johnny was not what you believed—that he has used his money to plunge into reckless dissipation; that the laxity of a public school has been taken advantage of, by him, for his own bad ends; that he gambles, smokes, drinks."

"Impossible!"

"What if I prove it?"

Miss Bull gazed at her nephew with wide eyes.

"You cannot prove it! How could you prove it?"

"In one way only," he said. "By going down there, by entering his haunts, mixing with his company. But then you would say I had led him into it."

"That would make no difference," said the old lady. "If Johnny allowed himself to be led into wickedness, by you or by anybody else, he is not the lad I take him for. I would disinherit him at once."

Crane's eyes sparkled.

"You mean that?"

"Of course I mean it. But you cannot do it. You are welcome to try if you like," said Miss Tabitha, with a scornful smile.

"I shall not try anything of the sort, but I shall investigate. I will bring you proof."

"I should not take your word."

"I said proof."

"Well, very well," said Miss Bull. "Bring me proof that Johnny is as bad as you are, and I alter my will to-morrow. Now go! My cat does not like you."

Lucas Crane murmured something under his moustache, but his eyes were triumphant as he left the house. He had a free hand, and surely there was no lad of fourteen or fifteen who could withstand his cunning? He would be able to lead his cousin into some excess that could be blackened for Miss Tabitha's ears, surely!

"The game's in my hands!" he muttered. "Once disgust her with that young rascal—once make her believe he is ungrateful for her affection—and I have won. A hundred thousand pounds for me when she dies—and she can't live much longer—and—and I hope she will leave me her cat. I'll wring its neck with my own hands!"

And Lucas Crane went on his way in a very satisfied mood.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Trapped.

"ROTTER for you, Bull!" said Nugent, the next day, as the juniors came out after lessons. Bull nodded. He was always a fellow of few words.

It was a half-holiday, and a glorious winter's afternoon. The juniors were looking forward eagerly to the football practice.

As the chums of the Remove came out, Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, were going down to their ground. There was to be a Sixth Form match, and the Remove were playing a scratch team of their own Form. Football was everywhere that afternoon; but John Bull was out of it.

"I suppose you're bound to meet the chap?" Bob Cherry remarked.

And John Bull nodded again.

"Bother his coming down now!" said Tom Brown. "It wouldn't be a bad idea to let Bunter or somebody go and meet him."

John Bull laughed.

"Must be civil to a relation," he remarked.

"I suppose so."

"The supposefulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Singh.

"I guess I'll go if you like," said Fisher T. Fish. "I reckon I could take the guy under my wing and show him round—some."

"I shall have to go," said John Bull.

"Well, you may get some footer when you come back," said Harry Wharton. "You'll have to leave here about half-past two, if you're going to walk, and you want to make sure of getting to the station in good time."

"Thanks!"

Before half-past two, Harry Wharton & Co. were on the footer ground, hard at it. John Bull looked at them rather wistfully. But he was a quiet and resolute fellow, and never chose the easier path in preference to the right one. He went into the House for his overcoat.

Billy Bunter blinked at him in the hall.

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"I say, Bull, old man——"

"No time to jaw now," said John Bull.

"But it's important."

"Bosh!"

"Look here, if you don't want the concertina——"

John Bull stopped suddenly.

Billy Bunter had touched the right chord. Concertina was a word to conjure with with John Bull junior. John Bull had his weakness, and it was a touching belief that he was musical. He would extract the most agonising strains from a concertina and apparently enjoy it, while all within hearing fled in pain and dismay. The Greyfriars juniors had stood Bull's concertina for some time. Then they had risen in wrath, and smashed it. Since then Bull had been minus a musical instrument. He had been plainly warned that if he purchased another it would follow the first. Not even Bull's sudden accession to wealth could make the fellows stand his concertina.

"Concertina!" repeated Bull, dropping his hand eagerly upon Bunter's shoulder. "What do you mean?"

"I mean the new concertina."

"What new concertina?"

"Isn't it yours?" asked Bunter. "It came here by the carrier, addressed to you, so I thought——"

"My hat!" exclaimed Bull excitedly. "It must be a present from my Aunt Tabitha. I told her something had happened to my old one. Where is it?"

"Some of the fellows have hidden it, but I watched them," said Bunter glibly. "Out of pure friendship, I'll show you where it is, if you like."

Bull hesitated. He glanced at his watch. He had half an hour to get to the station to meet his cousin. He reflected that a quarter of an hour would be enough if he walked quickly and ran part of the way. He was strongly desirous of getting that concertina safely into his possession, and extracting one tune from it before he started.

"Buck up, then!" he exclaimed.

Billy Bunter led the way upstairs with alacrity. It was a little suspicious that the fat junior did not attempt to extract a loan from Bull for his services, but Bull did not think of that for the moment.

"Where on earth have they hidden it, Bunter?" he exclaimed, as the fat junior led him up the second flight of stairs.

Billy Bunter gave a fat chuckle.

"I'm taking you to the top box-room, Bull," he replied.

"You don't mean to say they've hidden it there?" exclaimed Bull.

"At the very top of the house. You see, they were afraid you might find it and make an awful row—I—I mean, play one of your ripping tunes——"

"Get on!" said John Bull.

Bunter clambered on. Bull followed him up the last flight of stairs, and Bunter opened the door of the top box-room.

The room was in the oldest part of Greyfriars, and had been a bed-room at some distant date. It was used as a box-room now, and was very remote from the inhabited part of Greyfriars. Only a few old empty boxes and broken articles of furniture were stacked in it. Bull glanced into the room, which was dimly lighted by a small window high in the wall, thick with cobwebs.

"Look under the box in the far corner," said Billy Bunter.

"All right."

Bull went into the room.

Billy Bunter watched him with eyes that fairly glittered with anxiety through his big spectacles.

Bull reached the box at the end of the room. Billy Bunter pulled the door of the garret shut.

The key was in the outside of the lock. Bunter turned it. John Bull was locked in the garret.

The junior heard the click of the key. He turned quickly round, and saw the shut door, and came back towards it. He had turned over the box in the corner, and seen at once that there was no concertina there.

"Bunter!" he called out.

There was no reply from the fat junior. Bull tried the door of the garret. The handle turned, but the door did not come open.

"My only hat!" ejaculated John Bull. "The young villain! He's locked me in!"

He wrenched at the door.

"Bunter! Billy Bunter! Unlock this door!"

There was no answer save the echo of his own voice from the empty walls. He heard a faint sound as of a footstep dying away down the stairs.

Billy Bunter was gone.

John Bull fairly gasped in amazement. That the fat junior should dare to play such a trick on him was astounding. And why?

Unless Bunter returned and unlocked the door, Bull certainly wouldn't be able to go down to the station to meet his cousin.

Bull hammered furiously at the door. But even as he did so he realised that it was useless. In that perched-up corner of the old building he was too far away to be heard.

His voice and his hammering on the door would reach no ears but his own.

"Bunter—Bunter!"

He had a faint hope that Bunter might return, that the fat junior intended to make terms for letting him out. John Bull would willingly have handed over half-a-sovereign in order to get out, to go down to the station.

But the Owl of the Remove did not return.

John Bull desisted at last, breathless and with aching hands. The door was too strong for him to hope to shake it.

He glanced at the window, with the thought of climbing out. But the window was small and barred across. He dragged a box to it, and mounted. He could look out and see a patch of grey sky far above the tree-tops.

Outside was a sheer descent.

Bull stepped off the box again. He was a prisoner. No one would hear him there, and he had to remain till Bunter chose to let him out.

Clearly through the frosty air came the sound of a clock striking.

One! Two! Three!

It was three o'clock!

The train was arriving at that moment in Friardale Station, and it was too late to meet it, even if he had succeeded in getting away. John Bull gritted his teeth. He promised all sorts of things for Bunter in the near future.

But for the present his threats were empty words. He was safely locked in the box-room, and he could only stalk to and fro like a wild animal, mutter threats, and wait for the time of release to come.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Wharton Drops a Goal and Bunter a Hat.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Whither bound?"

Bob Cherry came out of the School House, with a footer under his arm. Bob had succeeded in wrecking the old footer the juniors had been playing with, and he had gone in for Harry Wharton's new one. As he came out, he came upon Bunter. The fat junior had his coat on, or, rather, a coat. A second glance showed that it was not his own. He was also wearing a silk hat. That certainly was not his own, either; it was in far too neat and tidy a condition.

Bob Cherry stared at the fat junior. Bunter was so unusually neat and clean, with his fat face newly washed, and gloves on his hands, that Bob could not help seeing that there was something "on."

"What's the matter, Bunter?" he asked.

Billy Bunter blinked at him a little nervously.

"N-n-nothing," he replied.

"Where are you going?"

"Oh, I'm just going out for a walk!"

"Meeting somebody's best girl, I suppose?" grinned Bulstrode, coming up. "You'll mash them in that topper, Bunt. Whose is it?"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode——"

"It's jolly well not yours."

"Of course, it's mine!"

Bulstrode jerked the hat off Bunter's head, and looked at the name written on the lining.

"J. Bull," he said. "Why, it's Bull's Sunday topper!"

"He—he lent it to me."

"Rats!"

"You mean he's gone out, and you've borrowed it," said Bob Cherry. "Is that Bull's best coat, too?"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Yes; I can see it is," said Bob. "Do you mean to really say that Johnny Bull lent you those things?"

"I guess he was queer if he did," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh, really, Fish——"

"Buck up with that ball, Cherry!" shouted half a dozen voices from out of doors.

"Here I am! Here's Bunter, too!"

"Blow Bunter!"

"But look at him. Solomon in all his glory wasn't arrayed like this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter snorted, and rolled out of the School House. The footballers had waited for Bob Cherry outside, and they all stared at Bunter.

"Oh, gorgeous!" roared Nugent.

"Where are you off to, Bunt?"

"You haven't got the cheek to go to Cliff House without an invitation, I suppose?" asked Harry Wharton sharply.

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ONE
PENNY.

As a matter of fact, knowing Bunter as he did, he thought it very likely that the fat junior had the cheek. Bunter had cheek enough for anything, as a rule.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"He's going to Cliff House!" exclaimed Hazeldene. "The cheek! Bump him!"

"Look here, Hazel, you know jolly well that the girls are always glad to see me. As for an invitation, I've got a standing invitation there. I——"

"Bump him!" exclaimed Linley.

"I—I—— Hold on! I'm not going to Cliff House," exclaimed Bunter hurriedly. "I—I'm going for a walk."

"What for?"

"Oh, exercise, you know!"

"Rats!"

"Perhaps he's trying to bring down his fat," remarked Russell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You are going for a walk, Bunter?" asked Alonzo Todd.

"I shall be very pleased to come with you. Wharton, for some reason, does not wish to play me in the football team, although I have assured him that I shall undoubtedly pick up the rules after playing a few games. My Uncle Benjamin told me that a quiet walk and talk are very good for a studious nature."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Bunter.

Alonzo stared at him.

"My dear Bunter, would you not like my company?"

"Rats! Bosh! No!"

"My dear——"

"What I like about Bunter is his polished manner," said Bob Cherry. "So free-and-easy and courteous, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter snorted, and rolled off towards the gates. Alonzo stood blinking after him, evidently very much wounded by Bunter's rude refusal of his society. Wharton tapped the Duffer of Greyfriars on the shoulder.

"Fat boulder!" said Harry Wharton. "Don't mind him, Todd."

"I do not," replied Alonzo. "I am only sorry that Bunter should entertain no predilection for my society, when I could probably greatly improve his moral character by repeating to him some of the exordiums of my Uncle Benjamin. My Uncle Benjamin——"

"Exactly!" said Wharton. "Gimme that ball, Bob!"

"Here you are. What are you going to do?"

"Drop a goal!"

"Eh? We ain't playing Rugger."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I am, just now," he said; "and Bunter's topper is goal Look!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Go it!"

Wharton took the ball in his hand. Wharton was a very good kick, at either Soccer or Rugger, and he could drop a goal with anybody. Bunter, rolling slowly along towards the gates, had just reached a convenient distance when Wharton delivered the drop-kick.

He dropped the ball to the ground, and as it rose he kicked.

Whizz!

Right at Bunter the leather flew, and it smashed right upon his silk hat from behind, knocking the topper over his eyes.

There was a yelp from Bunter, and a roar from the footballers.

"Yow!"

Bunter sprawled forward after his hat. He dropped on his hands and knees with a heavy bump and a grunt. The hat reposed in a puddle.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Remove.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Mistaken Identity.

HARRY WHARTON ran after the ball and picked it up, and the whole crowd of footballers rushed off towards the footer field. They left the Owl of the Remove sitting on the ground, blinking dizzily over his glasses, which had slid down his nose.

Alonzo Todd came to his aid. Alonzo Todd was always willing to oblige anybody, and even Bunter's ingratitude could not freeze him off.

"My dear Bunter, pray take my hand and rise," said Alonzo.

"Yow!"

"I will willingly assist you, in spite of your rudeness and ill-nature, Bunter. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me——"

"Oh, rats!" growled Bunter, rising with Alonzo Todd's assistance. "Don't you spring your silly uncle on me. Gerrout!"

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"My dear Bunter—"

"Somebody knocked my hat off—"

"It was Wharton with a football, Bunter. I think he probably inflicted that penalty upon you as a punishment for your rudeness to me. It was very just, though I deplore the incident as much as you can do, my dear Bunter."

"Look at my hat! It's muddy!"

"Dear me! I'm so sorry!"

"Lend me your handkerchief to wipe it on!" said Bunter angrily, as he picked up the hat. "There's no time to go back and change—I shall miss the train."

"Dear me! Are you about to make a train journey, Bunter? You told us you were going out for a walk."

"Lend me your hanky."

"But why cannot you use your own, Bunter?"

"It would make it dirty."

"But it would make mine dirty, too, Bunter."

"Oh, don't jaw!" said Bunter.

He jerked Alonzo's handkerchief from his pocket and wiped the hat. He certainly wasn't able to restore its former gloss, but at least he removed the worst of the mud. Alonzo watched him speechlessly.

"My dear Bunter—" he burst out at last.

"Oh, bosh!" said Bunter.

He tossed Todd's handkerchief on the ground and walked away. Todd picked up the handkerchief, and he was still staring alternately at the handkerchief and at Bunter when the fat junior disappeared out of the gateway.

Billy Bunter looked at his watch as he came out into the lane.

"Quarter to," he muttered. "Those beasts have delayed me, but I shall be in time."

Bunter was not a good walker. Three o'clock was striking as he entered the village. He panted on to the railway station. Trains were generally a few minutes late at Friardale.

"The three o'clock in yet?" Bunter gasped to the porter, as he entered the station vestibule.

"Just coming in, sir."

"Good egg!"

Bunter rolled on to the platform. The train was steaming into the station, and he was in time to meet it after all.

Bunter blinked along the train through his big spectacles. Four or five passengers alighted from it.

Two of them were country farmers, the rest, with one exception, women. The exception was the one upon whom Bunter fixed his uncertain gaze.

He was a man of thirty, with a black moustache and a monocle stuck in his right eye. The moustache was of a deep black, and even Bunter guessed that it was dyed. The man's hair was greying on the temples, not from age, but from dissipation. He gave a cold, hard glance up and down the platform.

He was expecting someone to meet him.

He caught sight of Bunter, and started. He looked at the fat junior a second time, and then jammed his monocle into his eye afresh, and looked again.

An expression of great surprise came over his face. Up and down the platform he glanced again, to see if any other schoolboy was present. But Bunter was quite alone.

Bunter's heart was beating fast. He was about to carry out the scheme he had hatched, and for the sake of which he had locked up John Bull in the box-room at Greyfriars. But now that the crucial moment had arrived he was feeling nervous and uncomfortable.

But he did not draw back. He had a licking to expect from John Bull in any case, and so he thought he might as well go through with the scheme.

But there was something in the dyed moustache and the coldly glittering eyes of the stranger that made him feel very uneasy.

He rolled nervously over towards the new-comer.

He stopped in front of the staring man, and nervously raised John Bull's silk hat.

"You are my Cousin Lucas?" he asked.

The man drew a quick, deep breath.

"You are Johnny?" he asked.

"Didn't you recognise me?" asked Bunter, with a feeble grin.

"No. I haven't seen you since you were two years old, you know," said Lucas Crane, eyeing Bunter narrowly. "A boy changes a lot from two to fifteen."

"I suppose so. You haven't changed much," said Bunter. Crane looked astonished.

"You don't mean to say that you remember what I looked like when you were two years old?" he exclaimed. "Why, I was a lad of only seventeen then!"

"N-n-no!" stammered Bunter, realising that he had put his foot into it at the very start. "I—I mean, from—from your portrait Aunt Tabitha has."

"My portrait?"

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"I mean photograph."

"Aunt Tabitha has my photograph?"

Crane asked the question with such amazement that Bunter could have bitten his tongue out for making such a blunder. He knew nothing of the circumstances of the Bull family except the few hints he had gleaned from John Bull. He had naturally supposed that Miss Tabitha would possess her nephew's photograph, but apparently it was not the case. It was too late now, however, to withdraw the statement.

"Yes," said Bunter boldly. "She showed it to me last vacation."

"Well, I sent her one once, but I understood that she had destroyed it," said Crane, looking very perplexed. "She certainly said so."

"A—a—a joke of hers, perhaps," suggested Bunter.

Crane smiled involuntarily at the idea of Miss Tabitha making a joke. Jokes were not in her line at all.

"Well, I'm glad she's kept it," he said. "It's curious she should show it to you, Johnny. She has never shown me a photograph of you."

Bunter turned cold for a moment. He had never thought of that possibility, simple and obvious as it was. But he breathed again as Crane concluded.

"Oh, she has lots of them!" he exclaimed.

"Has she?" Crane looked very curiously at Bunter.

"Look here, I suppose you are really my Cousin Johnny, and not a friend of his having a little joke?" he exclaimed.

Bunter jumped.

"W-w-what?" he exclaimed.

"I mean, I never knew that Johnny wore glasses," said Crane. "I know I haven't seen you, but you're not the kind of lad I imagined you to be."

"If you doubt my word this conversation may as well cease," said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

Crane looked uneasy. He had come down there specially to make himself agreeable to his schoolboy cousin, and this certainly wasn't a good beginning.

"Besides, you mayn't be my Cousin Crane, for that matter!" exclaimed Bunter.

Crane laughed.

"I suppose you are Johnny," he said. "I thought it might be a joke, that's all. Johnny might have asked another fellow to come and meet me if he was detained."

Billy Bunter took off his hat.

"Look there!" he said.

Crane read "J. Bull" on the lining of the hat.

"Oh, it's all right!" he said.

"I'd rather convince you before I take you to Greyfriars," said Bunter, in a very dignified tone. "Any of the fellows there, of course, will tell you who I am at once. But look here!"

He drew an old envelope out of the coat-pocket. It was addressed to "J. Bull, Greyfriars," in the handwriting of Miss Tabitha Bull. Crane knew his aunt's hand at once—he had seen it many times in curt notes declining to send him money.

"It's all right, Johnny!" he exclaimed, familiarly, passing his arm through the junior's. "I spoke only in jest."

Bunter frowned over his glasses.

"Oh, very well!" he said. "I can't say I like the kind of joke that reflects on my truthfulness and my personal honour, that's all."

"Well, I'm sorry!" said Crane.

"That's all right!" said Bunter magnanimously. "Come on; let's forget all about it. I'll show you round the town, shall I, before we go to Greyfriars? The fellows are playing footer, and I don't want to get in till they've finished."

"Anything you like," said Crane. "I've come down to see you, Johnny, and improve our acquaintance. I'll go anywhere you please."

"There's a ripping tuckshop in Friardale—"

"Let's go there!"

"Yes, rather! Come on!" said Bunter, in a great hurry.

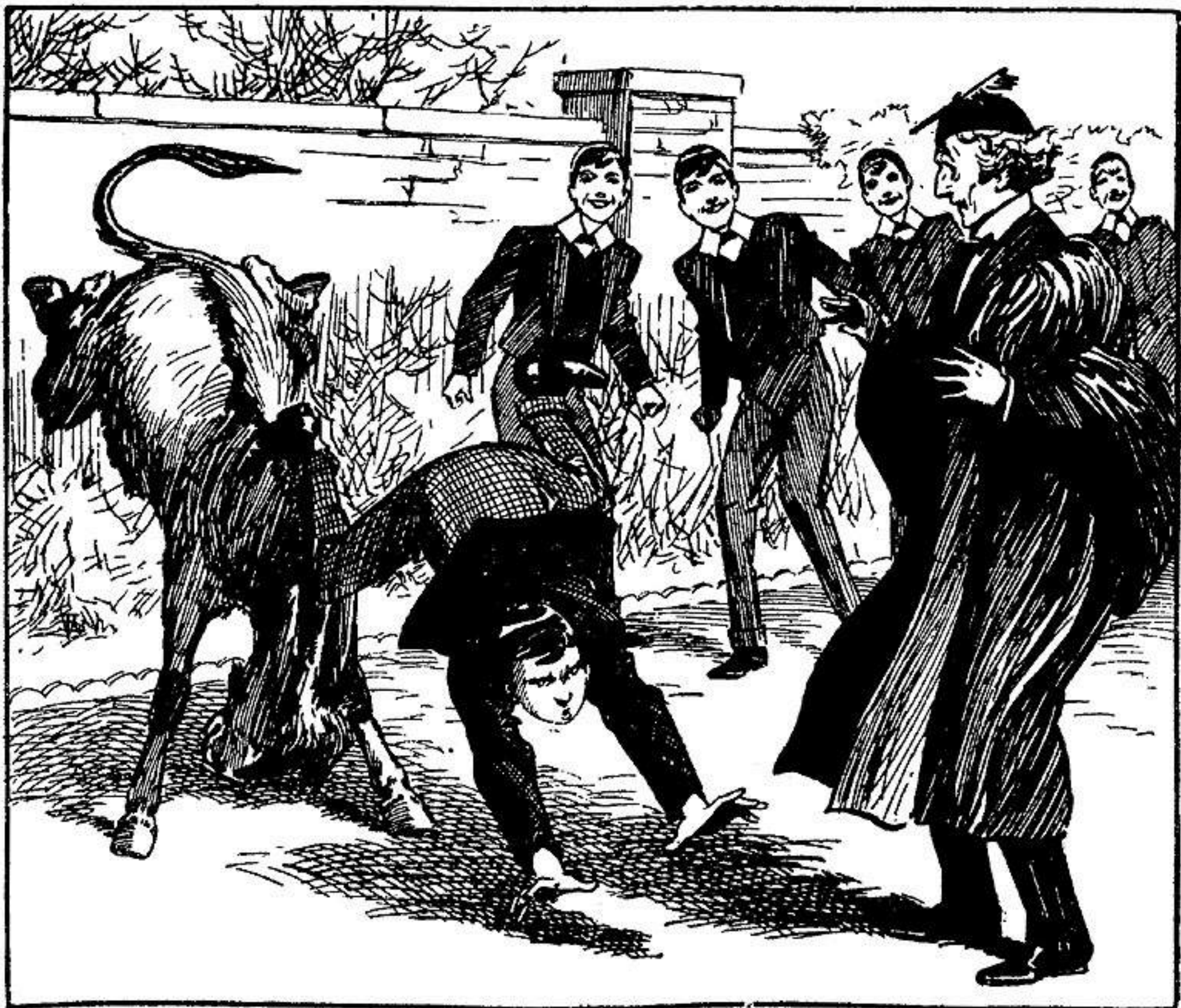
And he simply rushed his newly-found relation out of the station.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Feeding the Brute.

LUCAS CRANE walked beside Bunter, keeping an agreeable and affectionate smile upon his face. His smile hid his real feelings. He was, as a matter of fact, feeling utterly amazed and disturbed. He had imagined his cousin to be something entirely different from this.

What John Bull was like he did not know in the least, but he had vaguely expected a hearty, healthy-looking lad of sturdy build. True, he had probably conjectured as much from the junior's name, which naturally called to the mind a picture of sturdy British strength and health. Now that he reflected upon it, he admitted that he knew nothing of John Bull excepting his name, and the name might have belonged



The halt was so sudden that Fish's hold was torn loose, and the American junior was shot over the donkey's head, and fell at the feet of Dr. Locke, gasping. (See page 18.)

to the fattest or the leanest boy at Greyfriars, to the handsomest or the plainest. Only what was there about this fat, unwieldy junior to make Aunt Tabitha so fond of him? But in reply to that question the young man said to himself that there was no accounting for the affections of women, which were frequently bestowed upon the most unworthy objects. And, besides, Miss Tabitha might only be assuming that affection for Johnny as a blow in the face for the rest of her expectant relations. She was of a sardonic turn of mind, as he well knew.

Johnny was a surprise to him, and Johnny upset all his calculations, but the task he had set himself, which he had expected to present some difficulty, seemed ridiculously easy now.

Unseen by the short-sighted junior, he scanned Bunter's fat face.

The fat, ruddy countenance, with its gross, greedy lines, gave Bunter's nature away completely. Here was a boy who was greedy, unscrupulous, and ready to yield to flattery—ready to swallow it however thickly it was piled on—just the boy for Crane's purpose; and as he recovered from his first astonishment, Crane congratulated himself upon the ease with which he would be able to accomplish his work.

"There is no fool like an old fool!" he murmured. "This young cad has taken in old Tabitha. He seems to have fooled her completely. But he won't fool me. I rather think that I shall do the fooling here."

Billy Bunter paused at the tuckshop door. He had suddenly remembered that Uncle Clegg, who kept THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 156.

the shop, knew him well, and would be certain to address him in greeting as Master Bunter.

"Is this the place?" asked Crane.

"Ye-es," said Bunter. "I say, wait a minute, will you, and I'll see if Uncle Clegg's at home?"

Crane nodded, and Bunter went into the shop alone. Uncle Clegg was sitting behind his little counter reading a newspaper a week old. He looked up at Bunter, but did not rise. When Bunter looked into the village tuckshop, it was generally to ask for credit; and Uncle Clegg did not believe in credit—to Bunter, at all events. Besides, Uncle Clegg had recently had trouble with some of the Greyfriars' chums, and it had left him feeling very unamiable.

Bunter, after a hurried blink back at the figure standing outside the shop, leaned over the counter and whispered to the astonished Uncle Clegg.

"I say, Uncle Clegg, I've got a rich cousin come down with me."

"Ho!" said Uncle Clegg.

"He always calls me Johnny," said Bunter hurriedly. "It's a nickname he's got for me. Will you call me Master Johnny when he comes in?"

"Hey?"

"No harm, you know," said Bunter. "Only a kind of—of joke! He's going to spend a lot of money here."

"Orlright," said Uncle Clegg. "Only a joke, of course."

"Of course."

Bunter remembered how Uncle Clegg had swindled Alonzo Todd on a famous occasion, and he knew the kind of appeal

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to make to the wily old fellow. Uncle Clegg knew that there must be something more than a joke in the matter, but what it was he did not know or care, so long as he secured a good customer. If the stranger did not pay well, then Uncle Clegg would have given Bunter away without the least concern.

Bunter rolled back to the door. Crane was looking in through his glimmering eyeglass.

"It's all right, Cousin Lucas," said Billy Bunter. "Uncle Clegg's at home, ain't you, Uncle Clegg?"

"Yes, I'm at 'ome," said Uncle Clegg. "Always at 'ome to customers, Master Johnny."

Bunter grinned.

Uncle Clegg had brought out the name in the most natural way in the world, and if Lucas Crane had had any suspicion left, it must be banished now.

"I say, I suppose you're hungry after your journey?" Bunter suggested, blinking at the visitor.

"No," said Crane; "but if you are—"

"Well, I don't usually get hungry," said Bunter. "I have a very poor appetite, as a rule. Fellows at school remark upon my eating so little. But I suppose the walk to the station has given me a keener appetite than usual. I really do feel rather peckish."

"Then eat, by all means," said Crane.

"The fact is, I've been disappointed about a postal-order," said Bunter. "I was expecting a remittance to-day from a titled friend of mine—I mean from Aunt Tabitha, you know, but it hasn't come."

Crane stared at him.

"You don't mean to say that you've got through all your money already?" he exclaimed. "You had five hundred pounds!"

"I—I—you see, the Head has taken charge of that," said Bunter. "He thinks it's bad for a junior to have a lot of money like that in his possession."

"Oh!" said Crane.

"If you could lend me half-a-sovereign," said Bunter persuasively.

Crane's eyes sparkled. He was only too anxious and willing to lend money to his cousin as a first step towards getting him into the toils.

"Why, of course!" he exclaimed. "Call upon me for anything you like. I came down here specially to see you, and to give you a good time if I could."

"Oh, I say, that's ripping!"

"Order anything you like," said Crane. "It's my treat."

Billy Bunter did not wait to be twice bidden.

He ordered things right and left; and Uncle Clegg, after assuring himself by a keen glance that Crane was in a position to pay, served out his good things with great alacrity.

Uncle Clegg did not attempt to "spoo" Billy Bunter as he had Alonzo Todd. Billy Bunter knew as much about eatables as Mr. Clegg himself did, and he would never have been taken in. Bunter always had his money's worth in that line.

He sat on a stool at the counter and ate.

When he left off eating, it was to drink; and then he would recommence eating.

Billy Bunter could do great things when he really set himself to it in this line. Lucas Crane watched him in growing wonder.

He had never seen anybody quite like this before. When Bunter had had enough, and more than enough, he still went on eating.

"And this greedy boy was his rival for Aunt Tabitha's hundred thousand pounds," Crane said to himself bitterly. "Surely it would not be difficult to bring such a fellow to disgrace through his own greed?"

Billy Bunter ceased at last with a sigh of deep content.

He had eaten as much as he could, and there came a time when even the Falstaff of Greyfriars had to call halt.

"You'd better give my cousin the bill, Uncle Clegg," he said.

"Yes, sir."

Uncle Clegg had never spoken so very respectfully to Billy Bunter before. He had never had so considerable an order from him. Bunter cast a longing eye over the cakes and buns and tarts, but he could eat no more.

"I suppose I might take a few of these things to the school with me?" he suggested, blinking at Lucas Crane.

Crane nodded at once.

"Certainly," he said. "Anything you like."

"Good! I'll have a couple of dozen tarts, Uncle Clegg, or, say, three dozen—two open ones, of course—and a pound cake, and two dozen buns, a dozen of ginger-pop, a bottle of sweets, two boxes of chocolate—"

Bunter rattled on cheerfully. Uncle Clegg took it all down in straggling pencil.

"You'd better send them," said Bunter. "I couldn't carry them. Direct them to William George Bunter's study at Greyfriars."

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"Yes, sir."

"You see, that's the study I'm in at Greyfriars," Bunter explained to Crane. "We go three or four to a study there. How much is the lot, Uncle Clegg?"

"Three pounds fifteen and six, sir."

"That's all right."

Crane made a slight grimace. He was not a generous man. He had expected Bunter to feed to the extent of four or five shillings. But it was his cue to make as favourable an impression upon the junior as he could.

He laid a five-pound note upon the counter.

Bunter's eyes glistened behind his big spectacles. By this time Bunter almost believed that Crane really was his cousin. He gave him a most affectionate grin.

"I hope you'll often come down and see me at Greyfriars," he remarked.

"I hope so," said Crane agreeably. "Shall we go for a little walk now?"

"Certainly, old man."

They quitted the tuckshop.

Crane gave the fat junior a hard, searching look.

"Do you want to get back to the school now?" he asked.

Bunter shook his head. It came into his mind that as soon as he came to the school with Crane the deception would be exposed, and there was a thumping from John Bull to be faced.

"Oh, no!" he exclaimed. "I'm not in a hurry at all. I've got plenty of time—in fact, I'd rather not get back to the school just yet."

"Shall we have a walk round?"

"Oh, good!"

"I could introduce you to a very agreeable chap," suggested Crane. "I have an acquaintance staying in Friar-dale, at the Cross Keys. Do you know the place?"

"Oh, yes! It's out of bounds."

"I suppose you don't care for that?" said Crane jocularly.

"Not I!" said Bunter.

"Then come along, and I'll introduce you to Banks, and we might knock up a little game," said Crane.

"Banks! Do you mean the bookmaker chap?"

"Yes, I believe he is connected with the turf."

"Oh!" said Bunter.

And he paused.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Little Game.

CRANE paused, too, and looked long and anxiously at the fat junior. He had shot his bolt now; the question was whether the junior would fall to it. He had judged from Bunter's looks and ways that he was a greedy and unscrupulous young rascal, and that it would be the easiest thing in the world to lead him into crooked paths. Believing the fat junior to be his cousin, John Bull, the tempter was already congratulating himself on his certain success.

Bunter paused, in doubt. Bunter was not particularly keen or observant, but he could not help thinking that it was peculiar that Crane should want to take his young cousin to such a disreputable place as the Cross Keys, there to meet such a man as Banks, the bookmaker. Bunter, as a matter of fact, had no honourable scruples on the subject; but he had a very lively fear of punishment. It was that that made him pause.

"Oh, you're coming, surely!" said Crane. "You don't mind the place being out of bounds. I suppose a sharp, adventurous fellow like you breaks school bounds often enough?"

"Oh, yes!" said Bunter. "I'm a regular dab at that. The chaps in my Form know what a reckless, daring fellow I am."

"Just what I thought," said Crane. "Now, we're out for a bit of fun, aren't we?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Then let's look in at the Cross Keys. I'll make you some claret-cup—stuff that will cheer you up without any fear of consequences—and we'll have a little game of nap."

"But, Banks—"

"Well, he's a very decent chap."

"Chap was expelled from Greyfriars for chumming with him."

"But no one will know. Besides, I'd take all the blame if it came out," said Crane. "I'm your elder, and you're in my hands, you see."

"I haven't any money," said Bunter. "I've been disappointed about a postal order, and—"

"Oh, I'll lend you some!"

"I've never played cards for money. I've got some nuts in my pockets."

Crane laughed. He could not help it, at the idea of his playing cards for nuts, with Banks, the bookmaker, too.

"My dear kid, be a man!" he exclaimed. "You can draw on me for tin. I'll lend you a couple of pounds to start with, and if you win, you may go back to school with twenty pounds in your pocket."

Billy Bunter caught his breath.

Twenty pounds! How he would swell, how he would swank, if he could strut into the Close at Greyfriars with such a sum of money!

"I might lose, you know," he remarked.

"Oh, that's all right! I should stand the loss."

It seemed to Billy Bunter that he would score either way. He broke into a trot again, and Crane strode on.

"Oh, I'll come!" said Bunter. "I like a bit of fun. But the chaps say that fellow Banks is an awful bounder. I know jolly well that he's a friend of Smith's—Vernon-Smith, of our Form."

Crane started a little.

"I met a Vernon-Smith, belonging to Greyfriars, when I was abroad," he said. "Is he in your Form, Johnny?"

"Yes; we call him the Bounder. I remember the time he was in Switzerland, and—"

"You do!" exclaimed Crane, in surprise. "Was not that before you went to Greyfriars?"

Bunter caught his breath. He was one of the most unscrupulous of liars, and at the same time one of the most unskilful.

"Yes," he stammered—"ye-es. I mean I remember hearing the fellows talk about that time, you know. Smith used to take Hazeldene into the gambling casinos. Vernon-Smith is an awful outsider, you know. Here's the Cross Keys."

Bunter halted at the inn, which lay back from the road, towards the river, on the outskirts of the village.

A fat man, with a fat cigar, was lounging in the wooden verandah, and he grinned and nodded to Lucas Crane. Bunter knew the man at once; it was Mr. Banks, the bookmaker.

Bunter began to feel nervous.

He knew that Mr. Banks must know him by sight, having seen him in the village before, but whether the bookmaker knew—or remembered if he did know—his name, Bunter could not tell.

He had to risk it.

If he was presented to Mr. Banks as John Bull, he could only brazen it out, and bolt if he was not able to keep up the deception.

Crane nodded to Banks, then the two passed in under the verandah. If Crane was a stranger to Friardale, he had been told a great deal about the Cross Keys, for he seemed to know his way quite well.

He went into a passage, passed down it, and opened a door which gave him admittance to a parlour behind the bar.

"Come in, Johnny!" he exclaimed.

"I'm coming!"

Bunter blinked anxiously about the room. Mr. Cobb, the landlord of the Cross Keys, was sitting in an armchair smoking a cigar and reading a newspaper. He looked up and nodded to Crane; the two men had evidently met before.

"Nice goings hon!" said Mr. Cobb, referring to the news he had just been reading in the paper: "Anarchists besieged in a 'ouse in Stepney, and settin' it on fire. Wot's the world coming to—hey?"

Crane did not reply to that question. Probably he did not care what the world was coming to.

"I've just looked in to see you, Cobb," he remarked. "I dare say you have seen my Cousin Johnny before."

Bunter shivered. He knew that he was even better known by sight to Mr. Cobb than to Mr. Banks, yet there was no reason to suppose that Mr. Cobb knew his name. Mr. Cobb had seen most of the Greyfriars fellows at one time or another about the village, but he could not possibly know a couple of hundred names.

But he stared at Bunter in a way that made the fat junior fear that his name was really known. Bunter trembled inwardly. He was calling himself all sorts of names for not bolting immediately after the feed in Uncle Clegg's shop. Why could he not have been satisfied with that, without running further risks? But Billy Bunter never was satisfied.

"By hokey!" said Mr. Cobb. "I've often seen this young gent about, sir; I ain't likely to forget such a—a distinguished—young gent, but I never thought as he was any relation of yours, sir."

"It's my Cousin Johnny."

"Very 'appy to make your acquaintance, young sir," said Mr. Cobb, ducking his head.

"I'm sure I'm very pleased," said Bunter, breathing freely again. It was clear that, although the landlord of the Cross Keys recognised him, he did not know, or recall, that his name was Bunter.

"Banks is here?" said Crane.

"Yes; he's 'aving a smoke outside."

"You might ask him to step in."

"He's expecting a friend," said Mr. Cobb, with a significant wink.

"Safe, I suppose?"

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ONE
PENNY.

"Oh, quite safe!"

"Then that's all right."

Mr. Cobb quitted the room, and in a few minutes Mr. Banks came in. He greeted Lucas Crane in a very friendly manner.

"I'm expecting a young friend of mine," he remarked. "P'raps we could get up a little game together, nice and cosy and privit 'ere."

"Just what I was thinking," said Crane. "My cousin wants to see a little life, and I've told him I couldn't introduce him to a better man than you to show him round the houses."

"Very pleased to be of any service to the young gent," said Mr. Banks.

"Time's passing," Crane suggested. "Suppose we begin now, and your friend comes into the game as soon as he gets in?"

"Just my idea."

They sat down at the table. Mr. Banks produced a pack of cards. Billy Bunter's heart was beating fast. In spite of his assumed doggishness, he was almost frightened at the idea of playing cards for money. But the thought of the possible twenty pounds, and the knowledge that it was not his own money that he was risking, urged him on.

A series of signals had passed between Mr. Banks and Crane. The short-sighted junior did not see them, and would not have understood them if he had seen them.

And indeed—as he was Billy Bunter and not John Bull—he would not have been dissatisfied if he had seen the signals and understood them. For Crane was conveying to the bookmaker the intelligence that the junior was to be allowed to win, in order to encourage him in the evil path he was entering upon. It was an old dodge with Mr. Banks, of course, to allow a novice to win, and he understood Crane's object perfectly. Crane, of course, was to stand the loss in cash.

Bunter knew how to play nap, though he played it badly, as he did everything else. But with such opponents, and with such intentions, he could not fail to win.

He won, and won again. In ten minutes he was able to repay Lucas Crane the two pounds he had lent him to start with, and was still a sovereign to the good.

Bunter was very excited now.

The gambling fever was fairly in his blood. The greed for money added to it. He was more eager to go on than either of his opponents could be.

Crane and Banks exchanged a grin. Never in all their experience had they come upon a gull who flew into the net so easily.

"You'd like to be off now, I suppose, Johnny?" Crane remarked. He knew the opposite well enough, but he wanted to put "Johnny" in the position of urging on the play.

Bunter shook his head.

"Oh, let's keep on!" he exclaimed.

"If you have to get in—"

"I needn't get in till calling-over!"

"You're sure you'd like to go on?"

"Yes, yee!"

"You might lose, you know."

"I hope I'm a sportsman," said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Sir," said Mr. Banks, showing some emotion, "your 'and! I 'ave never 'eard nobler words on the lips of any sportsman of my acquaintance. Your 'and, sir."

And he shook hands with Bunter.

"Your deal," said Billy Bunter.

Then they went on playing. Bunter continued to win, and four sovereigns lay on the table before him, and a heap of silver, when the door opened, and a junior from Greyfriars, in coat and silk hat, came in.

Mr. Banks looked round.

"Just in time for a little game, Mr. Smith!" he exclaimed heartily.

Bunter started.

Vernon-Smith, with his silk hat in his hand, was standing quite still in astonishment, regarding the Owl of the Remove,

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bowled Out.

MR. BANKS looked at Vernon-Smith, and then at Bunter. He saw the confusion in Billy Bunter's face, without understanding it.

Bunter was struck quite motionless for a moment. He knew that all must come out now; Vernon-Smith would not think of sheltering him for a moment. Bunter's fat hand groped in all the money he had won. With a quick movement he slid it into his trousers'-pocket, and picked up his hat.

"Hallo, Smithy!" he exclaimed feebly.

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Vernon-Smith stared at him.

"I never expected to meet you," he said.

"Oh!" said Mr. Banks. "The young gent is Mr. Crane's cousin. You ought to know him, Mr. Smith—a real young sport!"

"I certainly never knew that," said Vernon-Smith. "I didn't expect to meet you here, Crane." He came forward and shook hands with Crane. "I last saw you in Geneva. How did you come to know this fellow Bunter?"

"Bunter?" said Crane.

Billy Bunter had gained the door by this time, and had his hand upon the handle. As Vernon-Smith was speaking, Bunter opened the door.

"Yes, Bunter," said Vernon-Smith. "I suppose you knew his name was Bunter?"

"Bunter!"

"I don't know where he's got the money to play. He's the poorest beggar at Greyfriars, and he's always cadging off somebody."

"You're dreaming—that's my cousin, Bull—John Bull!"

Vernon-Smith burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha! You don't mean to say that he's been spoofing you into thinking that! Don't you know your own cousin by sight?"

"No," stammered Crane, "I—I don't! I haven't seen him since he was a kid of two! But—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

Vernon-Smith leaned back against the door and yelled with merriment. Bunter was scuttling down the passage to the doorway. He heard Smith's shouts of laughter, and he knew that the Bounder of Greyfriars had given him away.

Lucas Crane was standing dazed.

He knew the sardonic nature of the Bounder of Greyfriars, and his suspicion was that Vernon-Smith was trying to deceive him. But Bunter's flight did not leave much doubt on the matter.

"You say he's not my cousin!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha! Not unless your cousin's named Bunter!"

"I mean John Bull!"

"He's no more like John Bull than he's like Julius Cæsar!"

"But how—how—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Vernon-Smith. "I remember now, Bull read your letter out to the fellows. Bunter heard it with the rest. That's how he came to think of spoofing you. But didn't Bull meet you at the station?"

"Not unless that chap is Bull."

"Ha, ha! I suppose the other chaps wouldn't let him away from the footer—or else Bunter has contrived to shut him up somewhere. I remember he locked a chap in a study once while he borrowed his silk hat."

"Oh!"

Lucas Crane stood still, dazed.

That he, the clever and unscrupulous man of the world, the man who knew life on its seamy side as thoroughly as any man could know it, should be so easily taken in by a mere schoolboy, was astonishing—and it enraged him terribly.

Not only had he wasted time and money; not only had he been made a fool of; it was worse than that!

Bunter knew his objects now—to lead Bull into gambling and other rascalities. Bunter would most probably chatter—John Bull would know beforehand what Crane's game was. He would be on his guard. And if he were really the honest, straightforward lad Aunt Tabitha believed him to be, the tempter's task would be doubly hard now. It was like a player being compelled to show his hand in advance.

"Oh!" muttered Crane. "Oh! I—I—"

He cursed savagely.

"He's got the money, too," stuttered the stout bookmaker. "Are you going to let him get away with that, Crane? Mind, it's your loss."

Crane started. Besides the money he had expended in the tuckshop, Bunter had more than five pounds that he had been allowed to win at nap.

The rascal made a dash for the door.

"Come on!" he exclaimed.

He rushed down the passage. But Mr. Banks did not follow him. The fat, unwieldy bookmaker had no inclination to run. Neither did Vernon-Smith quit the room. He was not inclined to put himself to any trouble on Crane's account. He sat down at the table, and Mr. Banks dealt the cards, and they resumed the game without either Crane or Bunter. Meanwhile, Crane was chasing after Bunter at top speed, his face white with rage, his breath coming in quick gasps, his silk hat on the back of his head, and his eyeglass streaming at the end of its cord.

Billy Bunter had a good start. He was clear of the village, and well on his way to Greyfriars, when he heard pattering footsteps behind. If Bunter had been in anything like form for running, he would have escaped quite easily. But the

fat junior, panting for breath, had already dropped into a walk.

He blinked back over his shoulder, and shivered as he saw the furious man dashing after him. Crane was not in good condition, but he was able to cover the ground three times as fast as Billy Bunter could.

His look showed the deadly rage that was burning in his breast, and one glance was enough to show Bunter what he was to expect if he was caught.

He broke into a desperate run.

"Stop!" yelled Crane.

Bunter did not stop. He pounded on desperately in the direction of the school. But Greyfriars was yet far away.

"Help!" gasped Bunter as he ran.

But there was no one to help. The lane was lonely, deserted by all save himself and his pursuer. Ahead of Bunter was the turning in the lane, and when he was past that he would be able to see Greyfriars.

The footsteps behind were closer now.

Crane was gaining on him rapidly. Bunter went careering round the turning in the lane at top speed, and there was a shout.

Four juniors were coming down the lane, and Bunter had careered right into the midst of them.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, grasping the Owl of the Remove by the collar, and bringing him to a halt. "What do you mean by cannoning into me like that, you young chump?"

"Ow!"

"The chumpfulness of the esteemed Bunter is terrific!"

"Ow! Oh, really—you! Rescue!"

Bunter gasped and panted like a bellows. He could hardly believe in his good luck in running into the Famous Four this way. He clung to Wharton's sleeve.

"Stop him!" he gasped.

Wharton gazed at him in astonishment.

"What do you mean, Billy? Are the Courtfield chaps after you?"

"N-n-no!" stuttered Bunter.

"Who is it then?"

"Crane."

"Crane! Do you mean John Bull's cousin?"

"Yes."

"John Bull with him?"

"No."

"But what—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!"

Crane came dashing round the corner, and he stopped just in time to avoid rushing into the Greyfriars juniors. He paused for a moment, panting, and then advanced furiously towards the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter clung to Wharton, dodging behind him at the same time.

"Keep him off!" he yelled.

Harry Wharton faced Crane coolly.

"Hands off!" he said quietly.

"Get out of my way!"

"Rats!"

"Get out of my way!" roared the infuriated man. "I'll smash you!"

Wharton's eyes gleamed dangerously.

"Line up, you chaps!" he said. "We'll see about that!"

Crane muttered an oath, and ran straight at Wharton. But as he grasped the lad, the other fellows grasped him, and the next moment Mr. Lucas Crane was rolling in the dust.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Shell Out!

HARRY WHARTON looked down at the adventurer with gleaming eyes.

"You'd better be a little more careful," he said. "I don't want to handle John Bull's cousin, because he's a chum of mine. But you can't put your paws on us."

Crane staggered slowly to his feet. He was dirty and rumpled. His eyes were fairly sparkling with rage. But he did not venture to attack Wharton again. The ease with which the juniors had thrown him off showed him that it would not do.

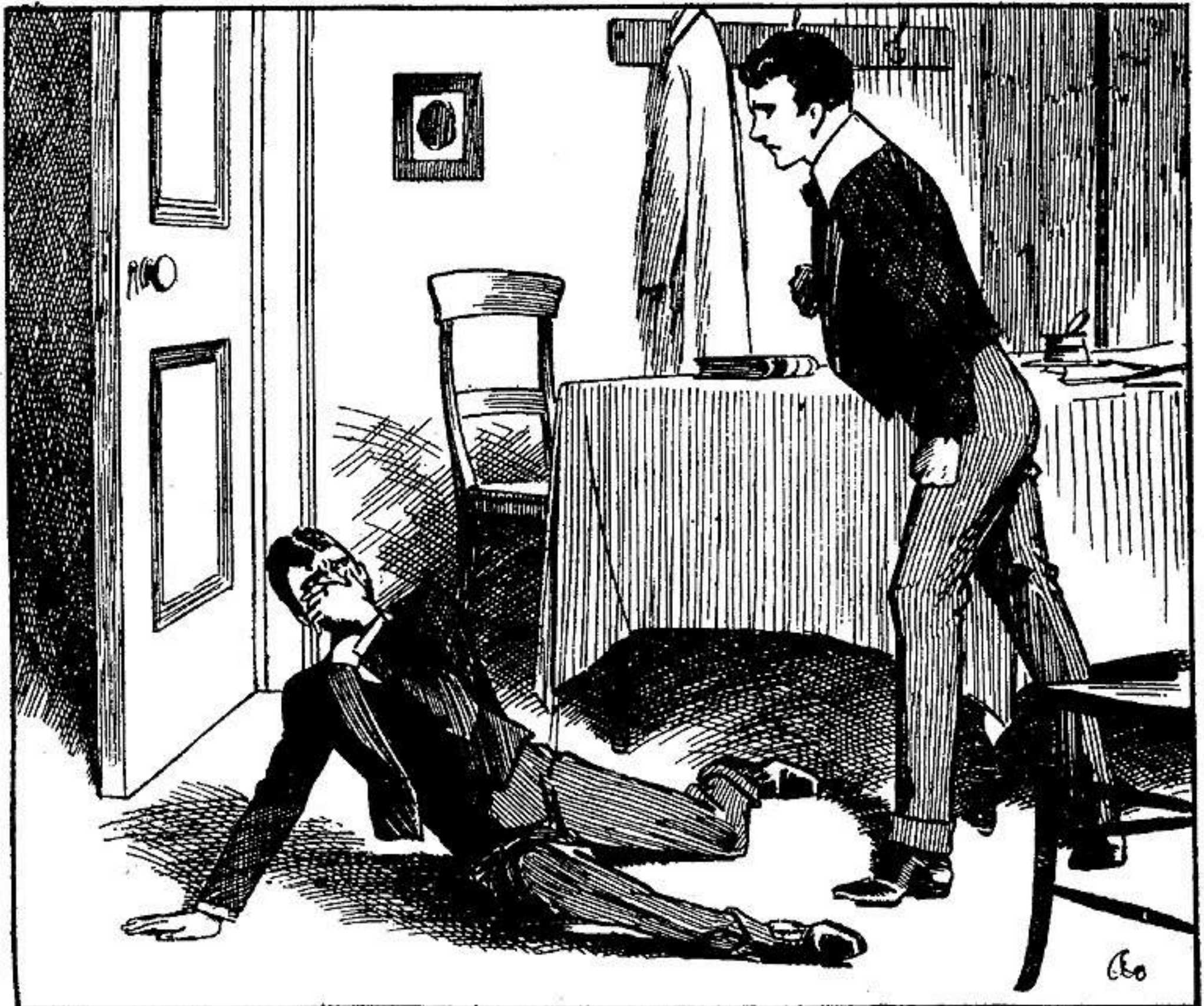
"You—you young hounds!" he gasped.

"Better language, please," said Nugent sharply.

"I—I say, you fellows, keep him off! He's dangerous! He's a rotten gambling beast!" said Billy Bunter. "He plays cards for money, and—and he's a friend of Banks, the bookmaker. He's been trying to make me gamble."

Wharton's brow grew very dark.

Lad as he was, and a schoolboy, he had keen eyes and plenty of intelligence. He could see that Crane, with his dyed moustache and flashy clothes, was a doubtful character.



John Bull's fist caught the Bounder of Greyfriars fairly and squarely on the nose, and Vernon-Smith dropped as if he had been shot. "Oh! Ow!" he gasped. (See page 5.)

There was that about him which told of late hours, of the Turf, and the billiard-room. He was as unlike John Bull as one cousin could possibly be unlike another.

"Is that true?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"That young villain met me at the station!" gasped Crane. "He pretended to be my cousin, John Bull, and made me give him money, thinking he was my cousin."

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"It's a lie!" roared Bunter. "I didn't."

"Have you had any money from him?" asked Wharton quietly.

"No, I haven't—well, he lent me some, but I paid it back."

"How much?"

"Two pounds."

"Where did you get two pounds from, then, to repay him?" asked Nugent.

"I won it!"

"What?"

"I won it," repeated Bunter. "I'm a regular dab at nap. I won it, and paid him back, and he can't say I didn't."

The juniors looked at each other. Bunter would lie and lie, till it was scarcely possible to disentangle the truth from the falsehoods in his statements. But at the same time, he was so dense that he would allow the truth to escape him by accident, and it was evidently the truth that he was now revealing unintentionally.

"So you have been playing nap?" said Wharton.

Bunter remembered himself. He knew how Harry Wharton

& Co. were down upon the members of the Remove who distinguished themselves in that way.

"No, certainly not," he replied.

"But you said just now you had."

"Well, you see—"

"You'd better tell the truth, Bunter—"

"That young villain has five pounds of mine," said Crane, between his teeth. "He doesn't go until he's handed it back."

"I won it!" howled Bunter. "I—"

"You won it, Bunter?" asked Wharton.

"Yes. I—"

"Hand it back to this man!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Hand it back!" thundered Wharton.

"Look here, it's my money—"

"It's not your money. Money won at cards does not belong to the winner," said Harry Wharton coldly. "Money doesn't belong to anybody unless it's earned. Hand it back! If you don't, I'll bump you on the road till it drops out of your pockets, you young blackguard!"

"I—I say, you fellows—"

Wharton grasped the fat junior. His expression was so angry and determined that Billy Bunter yelled in anticipation.

"Ow! Oh, really, Wharton— Leggo—leggo! I'll shell out!"

"Buck up, then!"

Bunter slowly extracted two sovereigns and some silver from his pocket. He extended it sullenly to Wharton.

"Is that all?"

"Yes," snorted Bunter. "It's fair winnings."
 "Give me the rest."
 "There isn't any more."
 "Go through his pockets, Bob."
 "Yow—ow! There may be another shilling—yow!"
 "Shut up!"

Wharton held the fat junior, while Bob Cherry turned out his pockets. The whole of Billy Bunter's winnings were brought to light.

"You young rotter," said Harry. "There's over five pounds here."

"Yow! Some of it's mine! I've been having some postal-orders—"

"Don't tell lies."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You said you were stony this morning," grinned Nugent. "You tried to borrow a bob of me. So you couldn't have had any tin of your own this afternoon."

"There's your money, Mr. Crane," said Wharton, throwing it into the road. "I won't say what I think of you, for playing cards for money with a boy. I suppose you know what any decent fellow must think."

Crane gritted his teeth.

"I don't want any of your impertinence!" he snarled.

He gathered up the money from the dust. Billy Bunter blinked at it ruefully through his big spectacles. The juniors watched Crane as he went back towards the village. He disappeared without another word to them.

Then Nugent gave a low whistle.

"Well, I must say that Bull's cousin is a pretty shining specimen," he remarked.

"The shiningfulness is terrific!"

"You made him think you were Bull, did you?" asked Harry Wharton, turning a stern glance upon the Owl of the Remove.

"Well, that was only a joke, you know."

"But how was it Bull did not meet him at the station?" demanded Harry. "He stayed out of the footer on purpose."

"I—I don't know—I—"

Wharton seized his ear between finger and thumb.

"It's some dodge of yours!" he exclaimed. "I know that jolly well. Where is John Bull?"

"Yow!"

"Where is he, then?"

"Yarrah! I—I believe he's at Greyfriars."

"Why didn't he come to the station?"

"I—I don't know."

Wharton compressed his grip upon the fat junior's ear, and Billy Bunter wriggled like an eel.

"Think!" said Harry pleasantly.

"I—I—ow—yow—I think he got shut up in a box-room, somehow," said Bunter. "Yow! I think the key must have got turned in the lock on the outside, somehow. Yoop!"

The juniors looked aghast.

"Do you mean to say that you've shut Bull up in a box-room, and he's been there all the afternoon?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"I—I didn't exactly shut him up. I—I made a little joke about a concertina having come for him, and he went to the box-room to look for it. I—I just turned the key for a lark, you know! Ow!" wailed Billy Bunter.

"I won't lick you," said Harry Wharton. "Bull will do that fast enough! Let's get back to Greyfriars, you fellows, and let Bull out. We can go down to the post-office another time."

"Right you are!"

And the chums of the Remove walked back to the school. Billy Bunter accompanied them, in fear and trembling. Bunter seldom looked ahead, and he would play the most outrageous tricks without considering the consequences. But the near prospect of John Bull's release from the box-room made him realise that there was trouble in store. After three or four hours in the box-room John Bull was likely to be what Bunter called "waxy." And the looks of the chums of the Remove showed Billy Bunter plainly enough that he had no help to expect from them.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Two of Them.

TRAMP—tramp—tramp!

The steady march of footsteps to and fro greeted Harry Wharton's ears as he came up the stairs to the top box-room.

"He's there!" he exclaimed.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"My hat! He will be ratty! Where's Bunter? Bunter!"

But Billy Bunter was gone. The fat junior intended to give John Bull a wide berth as long as he possibly could.

Harry Wharton unlocked the door of the box-room.

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There was an exclamation from within.

"Bunter! You young— Oh, it's you, Wharton!"

Wharton looked into the room. Bull had long ago given up the idea of getting out till he was released by someone from outside. He had been tramping to and fro to keep himself warm.

"How long have you been here?" asked Harry.

"Since about half-past two," said Bull quietly. "Bunter tricked me into coming here, and then locked me in. I wasn't able to go to the station to meet my cousin. Do you know whether Crane has arrived at Greyfriars?"

"He arrived in Friardale."

"Have you seen him?"

"Yes."

"He isn't at the school?"

Wharton shook his head. He felt a little awkward about the explanation he had to give to John Bull. It was not pleasant to have to explain to a fellow that his cousin was a gambling blackguard, and that he had lured a Greyfriars junior into a disreputable public-house to play cards there. But John Bull would have to know about the Bunter story.

"What's happened?" said John Bull, in his direct way. He could see by Wharton's look that there was something to tell.

"Bunter met your cousin at the station——"

"By Jove! Bunter did?"

"Yes. He made Mr. Crane believe that he was Bull—was you, you know—and Crane believed it."

John Bull gave a long whistle.

"The young sweep! That's why he locked me in here, then. Did he get any money out of Crane? I shall have to make it good. I suppose his object was to borrow money."

"He got a treat out of him at Uncle Clegg's," said Bob Cherry. "And then——"

Bob paused.

"Well, what then?" asked Bull.

"Better tell him," said Nugent.

"The betterfulness is terrific!"

"Hang it all, what's the matter?" exclaimed John Bull. "What are you so jolly mysterious about?"

"Well, I hardly like to tell you," said Wharton; "but you'll soon know, anyway. Lucas Crane took Bunter into the Cross Keys."

"My hat!"

"He made him play cards for money, and then somehow he found out that Bunter wasn't his cousin, and he tried to get back the money Bunter had won. He was chasing Bunter up the lane when we met them, and stopped him. I'm afraid we've been a bit rough with your cousin, Bull, but—well, it couldn't be helped."

Bull's face grew very grave.

"I'm not exactly surprised to hear that about Crane," he said. "I've heard some things about him; but he must be an awfully reckless ass to think of letting a kid gamble with him. And he thought Bunter was me?"

"Yes," said Harry. "It looks to me—if you don't mind my saying so—that your cousin is a rotter, and he wanted to lead you into his own ways. You know best what his motive may have been."

John Bull nodded.

"But I suppose this is certain?" he asked. "You know what Bunter is—you can't believe a word he says."

"Crane did not deny having gambled with him, and he was chasing Bunter to get back the money. It's pretty clear that Bunter had been allowed to win—to draw him on, of course. We made him give the money back."

"Where's Bunter now?" asked Bull abruptly.

"About as far as he can get from you," said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "I last saw him in the Close."

"I must find him. Thank you, chaps, for letting me out."

John Bull descended the stairs.

The Famous Four followed him more slowly.

"I shouldn't care to be Bunter when Bull drops on him," grinned Nugent.

"I fancy Bull is thinking more about his cousin than about Bunter," said Harry thoughtfully. "It's a curious thing! This man Crane seems to have come down to the school for the special purpose of getting Johnny Bull into trouble. Not that Bull would have gone into the Cross Keys and gambled—he's too decent for that."

"I can't understand it! The man's his relation, and I suppose he must have some regard for him, or he wouldn't come and see him," Bob Cherry said, with a puzzled look. "He must be mad to think of leading a mere kid into temptation like that."

"It's amazing, unless——"

"Unless what?"

"Unless Crane wasn't acting from mere wicked carelessness. He may have had a deep motive. His letting Bunter win—that must have been intentional. Bunter is too big a duffer to win unless he were allowed."

"But surely a chap couldn't want to lead his own relation into bad ways?"

"Unless there was something at stake. It might be that he wants to disgrace Bull with his aunt. It may be a question of Aunt Tabitha's money."

"My hat! He must be an awful scoundrel if that's the case."

"Well, he doesn't look a decent man."

"Quite right; he doesn't."

"I guess you're chewing something over," said a cheery, nasal voice, as the chums of the Remove came out of the School House. "Anything wrong?"

"Oh, we're all right, Fish!" said Wharton, with a nod to the Yankee schoolboy. Fisher T. Fish was never slow to "chip in" to a conversation. He had a really American idea that private affairs ought not to be allowed to exist.

"I guess I could have showed you something at footer," said Fish. "But you're afraid of being shown up, eh?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You've shown us that you can't play already," he remarked. "What else do you want to show us, Fishy?"

The American junior sniffed.

"I guess we can lay over anything you can do, over there," he said. "Play footer, shoot, swim, cycle, ride—"

"And swank!" roared Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess—"

"Well, we've seen you walk and play footer," said Bob Cherry. "We've never seen you ride yet. I suppose you can ride anything on four legs—anything from a racehorse to a sofa?"

"I guess there's no horseflesh in this country I can't ride," said Fisher T. Fish. "If you have got any critter, trot him out. I'll ride him—some!"

"I'll take you on," said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "I'll find the critter if you'll ride him."

"I guess I'm on! What's the critter, and where is he?" said Fish carelessly.

"It's Farmer Dobb's donkey, Fish," he said. "But I advise you not to try. He's a very vicious brute."

"So! Guess I will, though! I once rode a bob-tailed mule that bucked like a switchback in eruption—"

"Oh, ring off tall stories!" said Bob Cherry. "Let's see you do something. We've heard you talk. It might be like your walk from the station, you know."

"Yes," said Harry Wharton quietly. "You licked us hollow, in talk. But we licked you off the earth when it came to walking."

The juniors, used as they were now to Fisher T. Fish, did not expect him to take this so easily. But he did.

"Say, where's the boss mule? Jevver get left?" he retorted airily.

"Oh, yes, many a time!" said Bob Cherry sweetly. "When we leave an American chap on the road to coll., for instance, because he couldn't stay the pace."

But Fisher T. Fish was as thick-skinned as he was sharp-witted. He appeared not to notice the laughter that followed Bob Cherry's sally.

"Guess we're wasting time," he said. "Show me the old hoss. Say, what do we have on this match? I wouldn't like to hurt the hoss for nothing—"

"We don't bet," said Harry Wharton; "and if you can't go on without a stake on the performance—"

"Nope!" interrupted Fisher T. Fish. "Your mistake, Wharton. I ain't a circus. Guess I drum business, every time. That's all. I'd go on with the lay, anyhow."

Bob Cherry nodded as the American pointed to a turning down the lane. The chums were laughing as they got nearer and nearer to Farmer Dobb's field. Billy, the farmer's donkey, was an animal with a very bad past. No one about the district would have cared to attempt to ride him, and Fisher T. Fish was likely to have a painful experience if he attempted it.

"That him?" said the American youth to Bob Cherry, as he caught sight of Billy, the donkey, in the field.

Bob Cherry grinned. He knew that Billy always took people in by his appearance. The American lad was evidently congratulating himself on an easy thing already.

"Guess I've seen a more dangerous mule in a toyshop," he said confidently. "I lay that old hoss couldn't go unless you put wheels on him."

"Talk, Fish!" said Frank Nugent softly. "Why don't you begin?"

"Yes, rather!" shouted the juniors.

"Surely! I wade right in here, boys. Whip in the mustang."

"Well, I like that!" said Harry Wharton. "Do you mean that you want us to bring Billy to you?"

"You've guessed it, my festive friend," replied Fisher T. Fish. "I want to see just how much he can kick. We allow that all unnecessary risks are taken by the other side."

The chums of the Remove were completely taken aback at the American junior's coolness.

"A kick before the show starts, ain't in my contract. Don't stare at me, boys! Vamoose, and lead up the engine. I'm ready!"

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NEXT TUESDAY: THE GREYFRIARS HYPNOTIST.

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ONE
PENNY.

The juniors were simply speechless at Fisher T. Fish's cool nerve.

"You'll jolly well do the whole thing yourself!" burst out Bob Cherry, a little hotly. "You said you could ride the beast. Buck up, or we'll chip you until you'll be sick of yourself!"

"Bravo, Bob! Come on, Swank! Get on with the washing!"

"Your mistake, sonnies!" said the American, as coolly as ever. "I ain't afraid. Come on! Guess I'd be on if Billy was a grizzly bear. Jevver get left?"

And without any more talk, Fisher T. Fish walked towards the famous, or rather infamous, donkey. The chums of the Remove followed cautiously, Harry Wharton leading.

"Hallo, old hoss! Gee!" said Fisher T. Fish, as he approached Billy's immediate vicinity.

Billy "geed." Lifting his haunches slightly in the air, he intimated his dislike to company, so to speak. Then, stretching out his neck, he greeted the American youth with a fearfully discordant bray. But Fisher T. Fish walked straight on. All donkeys were alike to him apparently.

"He's a song-and-dance artiste, sonnies!" was all he said. "But guess I'll take him on. Come on, mule!"

The last remark was accompanied by the American lad holding out his hand to Billy. And Billy, accepting the invitation, rushed at the hand with all his teeth showing. But Fisher T. Fish was ready. The chums were electrified as they saw the American leap nimbly on one side. Flinging his arm around Billy's neck, he caught the donkey above the fetlock with his boot. Down came Billy's arched back in an instant, and Fisher T. Fish, seizing his advantage, vaulted neatly upon the donkey's back.

"Bravo!" cried Harry Wharton & Co. "Well done, Fishy! Ride it out! Stick to him!"

"Jevver get left, old hoss!" shouted Fish, in return.

"Gee, boys! Ain't he a live wire?"

"My hat! He does look like a live wire, too. What does he feel like, Fishy?"

"Ow! Bones!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stick to him, Fishy!"

"Ow! Yow! Yaroo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Greyfriars juniors roared with laughter as the donkey kicked up his heels, and Fisher T. Fish threw his arms wildly round the animal's neck to hold on.

Fisher T. Fish may have been able to ride a quiet pony with a saddle, but to ride that donkey barebacked was as much as Harry Wharton could have done—if he could have done it. Fisher T. Fish had no chance at all.

The donkey pranced to and fro, bucking and jumping, and the American junior held on for dear life.

"My word! Look at him!" gasped Nugent. "He'll break his neck!"

"Jump off, Fishy!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Yow! Groo!"

"Clear the line!"

"Jump off, Fishy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fish did not venture to jump off. He would have had a nasty fall if he had done so. But it was almost as bad to stay on. The donkey was rearing and jumping at a terrific rate, and Fish was bumped and bounced till his very teeth seemed to rattle.

Suddenly Billy the donkey made for the gate, which had been left open. He dashed out into the lane, with Fisher T. Fish still clinging wildly to his back.

"My hat!" gasped Wharton. "He's off!"

"No—he's still on!"

"I mean the donkey—he's off! Dobb will make a row."

"Ha, ha, ha! He's heading for Greyfriars!"

"My word!"

"The wordfulness is terrific!"

The juniors dashed after the donkey, and raced after him down the lane. The donkey's course would take him past the gates of the school, and unless he was stopped there, there was no telling where he might go. All England, really, lay before him.

The juniors panted on his track.

Outside the gates of Greyfriars they caught sight of several juniors, and Wharton shouted a warning to them.

"Stop him!"

ANSWERS

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER. A Fall in Fish.

"STOP him!"

"Look out!"

"Stop the donkey!"

Bulstrode and Mark Linley rushed out into the road to stop the donkey. Billy the donkey came to a halt.

He let out a most unmusical bray, and backed away from the juniors. Then he caught the footsteps of the pursuers, and blinked round at them. Fisher T. Fish was clinging wildly to his back. Fish's jacket had burst, his collar had been torn out, his cap was gone, his hair was a tumbled mass. He was covered with hairs from the donkey, and pouring with perspiration, cold day as it was. Never had the juniors seen Fisher T. Fish in so deplorable a condition.

But he still clung frantically to the prancing, bucking donkey. The road looked too hard and uncomfortable to fall upon.

"Groo!"

"Slide off!"

"Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Collar him, Linley!"

Billy the donkey made an attempt to prance past the gates. Linley made a catch at him, and he backed away, snorting. Wharton ran at him on the other side. The donkey snorted again, and lashed out with his heels. Then he backed into the gateway of Greyfriars, and there was a shout from the juniors.

"Stop him!"

"Great Scott!"

"Collar the beast!"

They rushed in after the donkey. But the beast flung up his heels and dashed off across the Close. Fisher T. Fish clinging wildly to his neck. There was a roar.

"Look out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's Fish—Fish showing us how they ride over there!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Fisher T. Fish was insensible to jeers. He would have given all the dollars his "popper" had made by canning mysterious things in Chicago, to be safely off the back of that dreadful donkey.

The donkey seemed tireless. He pranced and bucked round the Close, and even looked into the School House. Wingate of the Sixth made a clutch at him there, and Billy decided to seek other quarters.

With a yelling crowd of juniors on his track, he careered round the Close. The whole school entered into the chase with great glee and excitement. It was not often that anything so thrilling as this happened at Greyfriars.

But the more the juniors chased and shouted, the more scared and excited the donkey became, and the harder to catch. He was rounded in at last against the little gate leading to the Head's garden, but he bumped it open. There was a yell of dismay as he trampled into the garden.

For the Head's garden was sacred. Prefects walked there sometimes, feeling awfully select. Juniors, and certainly donkeys, were barred. But Billy the donkey seemed to have no more respect for the garden than if it belonged to Trotter, the boots, instead of the Head of Greyfriars.

"My hat! He's in the Head's garden!"

"He'll squash the flowers!"

"The squashfulness will be terrific."

"Faith, and there'll be a row!"

"After him!"

"Stop him!"

"Hurrah!"

A crowd of fellows rushed into the garden after the donkey. Billy the donkey careered round the paths among the shrubberies at a spanking speed. It was really an exciting ride if Fisher T. Fish had been in a position to enjoy it.

But he wasn't. Sprawling over the donkey's back, holding on with an anguished clutch to his neck, was not exactly enjoyable.

"Oh, help!" panted Fisher T. Fish. "Help! Yow! I'm falling! Oh, Jerusalem! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear me! What is that?"

It was the Head of Greyfriars who uttered the exclamation. The Head had stepped out of the French windows upon his lawn with a book under his arm. The Head had a habit of walking up and down the secluded shrubby paths, with a book, when he was studying. But as he stepped out of the House, the trampling of Billy the donkey startled him out of his studious abstraction.

"Dear me! What—oh!—extraordinary!"

The Head stared blankly as the donkey came charging towards him.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 156.

"THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S," A Grand New School Tale, by Charles Hamilton, is in the "EMPIRE" Library this week. Price One Halfpenny.

Billy the donkey was too excited to see him for the moment. The Head was too astounded to move.

It looked as if he would be charged down, but fortunately the donkey perceived him in the way, and halted at the last moment.

The halt was so sudden that Fish's hold was torn loose, and the American junior was shot over the donkey's head, and fell at the feet of Dr. Locke, with a bump.

The donkey threw up his heels and careered away, leaving the American junior sprawling at the feet of the doctor, gasping.

"Ow! Yow! Yaroo!"

"Boy!"

"Yoop! Whoop! Oh!"

"Fish!"

"Groo!"

"What does this mean?" thundered the Head. "Boy! Fish! Boy! How dare you, sir, ride that—that animal in my garden, sir?"

"Yaroo!"

"Fish! Boy!"

Fisher T. Fish staggered up. He put up his hand to raise his cap to the Head, but his cap was gone.

He blinked dazedly at the Head.

"I guess I slipped up on that, sir!"

"How dare you, Fish!"

"I couldn't help it, sir. He ran away with me. It was owing to having no bridle. I always used to ride the wildest buck-jumpers over there."

"Fish—"

"I'm sorry he brought me in here, sir."

"Oh!" said the Head, his face clearing. "You did not enter the garden on purpose?"

"Nope, sir!"

"You should not have attempted to ride that animal," said the Head. "You will take a hundred lines for doing so."

"Yep!"

"Now, go at once."

"Certainly, sir," said Fisher T. Fish cheerfully. He had already recovered his cheerfulness. He walked out of the garden with his usual jaunty manner.

Outside a crowd of grinning juniors surrounded him.

"Where's that critter?" demanded Fish.

"Gone! He's bolted!"

"I guess his owner will want to know."

"Oh, he'll go back to his field!" said Wharton. "Are you going to ride him again?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess not. You see, I—I—"

"Yes, we see!" roared the juniors. "You can't ride!"

"I guess—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I reckon—"

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

And Fisher T. Fish was fairly laughed out of court. He walked off as jauntily as ever, quite unruffled by his absurd failure; and within ten minutes he was telling somebody how he had ridden in steeplechases, and won over there!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Gets His Due.

"BUNTER!"

"Ow!"

"Bunter!"

"I'm not here! I—I mean I'm ill!"

John Bull knocked at the study door—not a loud knock, but a hard, determined one. Bull meant to get into that study.

It was Bunter's study. Bunter had a study to himself in the Remove passage now, a little room where there really was room for two, but nobody showed any desire to share it with Bunter. Bunter had shared several studies in the Remove, but when he ceased to tenant a study, he was never asked to return. Fellows who had tiffs with their study-mates sometimes changed, and then changed back. Billy Bunter was never allowed an opportunity of changing back.

"Open the door, Bunter!"

"I can't!"

"Why not?"

"It's locked!"

"Unlock it, then, you fat duffer!"

"I can't! I—I—I've lost the key!"

"Don't tell lies, Bunter," said John Bull quietly.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Look here, Bunter," said John Bull, through the key-hole, "you can't stay locked up in your study for ever. Besides, I'm not going to lick you."

"Eh?"

"I won't lick you if you tell me the exact truth about what happened between you and my cousin. The exact truth, mind."

"I—I'm sure I've no objection to telling you," said Bunter. "Your cousin treated me very badly, and if you feel inclined to make any little compensation—"

"Open the door!"

Bunter opened the door. He knew that he could trust to John Bull's word.

The sturdy junior entered the study. His face was very serious, but not angry. He had reason enough to be angry, but he did not look so.

"I—I say, Bull," said Bunter nervously, "I—I'm sincerely sorry, you know. It—it was only a lark. I—I really think the fellows ought to buy you a new concertina, and—"

"Tell me what happened to-day."

"I—I'm feeling a little faint," Bunter remarked. "I—I think we might be able to talk better in the tuckshop, perhaps."

John Bull took the fat junior by the collar and shook him till he roared.

"Now, then," said Bull, dropping him into a chair, "tell me exactly what happened to-day, or you'll get squashed."

"Ow!"

"Go on, I tell you!"

And Bunter blurted out the story. John Bull listened attentively. It was easy for so keen a lad to see where Bunter strayed from truth to falsehood, and to distinguish the false from the true.

"That will do," he said, when he had heard the whole story. "You were a mean cad to play such a trick, and to enter the Cross Keys at all."

"It was that chap's fault. I—I really went in to persuade him not to gamble, and—"

Bull went to the door.

"I—I say," said Billy Bunter, "I suppose you're going to compensate me for the money Wharton made me give your cousin."

John Bull left the study without replying.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter.

But he was very glad, upon the whole, to have got off without a licking. He had certainly deserved one.

John Bull went downstairs. There was a sombre shade upon his face. Some of the juniors, as they saw it, grinned.

Bull was thinking of his cousin, and of what his conduct might mean; but the general impression was that he was thinking of his concertina. Since Bull had lost that instrument of torture, he had been like Rachel—he refused to be comforted. But as it happened, Bull was not thinking of that now.

His cousin had not arrived at Greyfriars. Why had Crane not come? Since he had discovered the deception that had been practised on him, he must guess that the real John Bull had been detained somehow from meeting him at the station. Why did he not come to the school?

If Bull wanted to see him, he did not know where to look for him now; unless, indeed, he went to the Cross Keys in Friardale to visit him.

Why did he not come? It was evidently a guilty conscience that prevented him. He had intended to lead John Bull into temptation. Believing that the fat, greedy Owl of the Remove was Bull, he had shown his hand too soon. Now he had given his game away completely, and Bull was on his guard. There would be no chance of deceiving the junior, of gradually leading him astray. His hand was shown, and John Bull knew what to expect.

That was why Crane did not come. He probably did not know what to do, what to say to his real cousin when he met him.

Bull thought it out, and wrinkled his brows over it. Bull was a keen fellow, and he knew the competition there was among Aunt Tabitha's relatives for places in her will. He could not help the suspicion forcing itself into his mind that Lucas Crane had deliberately intended to cause him to enter into disgraceful pursuits, for the sake of doing him injury with Miss Tabitha.

Bull smiled grimly at the thought.

He was the last fellow in the world to be led into such conduct; and now that he was forewarned, Crane's task would be more difficult than ever.

"I wish I had a concertina," he muttered. "I can think things out ever so much better when I'm playing."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, slapping him on the back. "What's that about a concertina?"

"Ow! Don't be an ass!"

"You don't mean to say you've got another, eh?"

"No, ass."

"Can't be did, you know. It would be cruelty to animals."

"Oh, rats!" said John Bull.

He walked away with his hands in his pockets, leaving Bob Cherry grinning. As he passed the tuckshop, a fat form detached itself from the wall, and rolled towards him.

"I say, Bull—"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"But I say, it's important," said the fat junior, blinking at him. "It's about that cousin of yours."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 156.

EVERY
TUESDAY.

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

Bull started.

"You haven't seen him again, Bunter?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, no! Look here, he owes me five pounds—"

"Oh, ring, off!"

"I don't see why I should be done out of five pounds. You're rolling in money. I know you've got lots of bank notes."

"And I'm going to keep them," said John Bull grimly.

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do," said Bunter, with an air of great frankness. "I'll take five pounds from you as a loan, and repay it out of some postal-orders I'm expecting this week."

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Bull! The postal-orders can't be later than to-morrow morning; they're from some titled friends of mine."

"Oh, cheese it!"

John Bull swung away, but the fat junior broke into a trot and ran beside him. He puffed and panted to keep up with Bull's vigorous strides. Bull was trying to shake the fat junior off; but Bunter was not easily shaken.

"I say, Bull, look here! Gimme two-pound-ten, and we'll call it even. I don't mind helping your relations a little, but you can't expect me to hand out fivers to them."

Bull did not reply.

"I only want what's fair," said Bunter. "Give me what's due to me, and I jolly well won't ask you for anything else."

John Bull stopped and faced him.

"You want what's due to you?" he asked.

"Yes, certainly. I don't see why I shouldn't have my due," said Billy Bunter, blinking at him. "I'm sure I deserve it."

"I know you do, and I'm quite willing to give it to you," said John Bull. "Where will you have it?"

"Eh?"

"Where will you have it?" demanded Bull.

"I—I don't understand."

"You want me to give you your due. Here you are!"

Bull's right shot out, and his knuckles crashed on Bunter's chin. The fat junior gave a fearful yell, and sat down with a bump on the ground. John Bull walked away with his hands in his pockets, whistling.

Billy Bunter sat up and gasped. He adjusted his spectacles, which had slid down his fat little nose, and snorted.

"Beast!" he murmured.

And for some minutes Billy Bunter sat there, rubbing his fat chin, and sincerely wishing that he had not received his due.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Melodious!

"MY hat! Bull does look down in the mouth!" said Frank Nugent. "He's going about the coll. like Shakespeare's 'moody Dane,' since that rotten concertina of his was done in."

"Serve the beggar right," said Bob Cherry. "He nearly drove us dotty with it."

"Well, I suppose he did," agreed Harry Wharton. "But it does seem a pity the fathead couldn't see that what he took for music was only a fearful row."

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry. "Bull is a good name in musical annals, I've heard the governor say. There was a chap named Ole Bull who used to do very decent things on the fiddle once. But the row our John Bull made here was enough to earn the death sentence for him."

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent laughed.

"Hallo," said Nugent, "there's Alonzo!"

Alonzo was apparently out of earshot. As a matter of fact, he had just caught the tail end of Bob Cherry's remarks. He, too, was thinking that John Bull, to use a popular expression, was not looking very rosy.

Alonzo was sorry for Bull. He quite understood that Bull's concertina playing was a fitting torture for a revived Inquisition. But it was his idea that people ought to bear with one another, and as he had got more "concertina" than anyone, being Bull's study-mate, he thought the other fellows might have done the same.

"Besides," he said to himself, "Bull's getting on my nerves. I must do something to comfort him, because my Uncle Benjamin would certainly like me to take the part of a fellow in distress."

And Alonzo turned the matter over as he went.

He must do something for Bull, he was convinced. But what? Visions of a feed presented themselves. But he reflected that it would hardly be a novelty to Bull. It would have been all right for a fellow like Bunter.

"But with Bull it's quite another thing," he mused. "It must be that he suffers from lack of opportunity to give expression to his soul."

Alonzo's thoughts in that direction soon stopped. He remembered the awful effect Bull's concertina had on the chums of the Remove. Bull's "expression of soul" had resulted in them jumping on the concertina, and nearly on Bull.

"And yet," thought Alonzo, "Uncle Benjamin used to impress upon me that music had power to soothe the savage breast."

But he could not hit on the thing to do for Bull.

Alonzo thought of buying Bull some chocolates. But he soon forsook that idea. Bull was a boy with almost unlimited pocket-money, and probably sick of all sorts of sweets.

Then he came across Bulstrode, Skinner, Ogilvy, and one or two other juniors grinning as Bulstrode enlarged on something that had recently occurred. Alonzo caught the word concertina. Then he started as he heard Bulstrode laughing over what might occur if Bull got another concertina.

"Dear me," thought Alonzo, "how stupid of me not to think of it!"

Alonzo was wishing most earnestly that they would not see him and detain him. The idea had come to him at last. He got out of their sight as quickly as he could. Once indoors he gave himself up to reflection.

"Yes," he thought, "my Uncle Benjamin would be proud of me, I'm sure. Poor Bull is really very disconsolate. But I think if I buy him another concertina, he'll buck up like anything."

And Alonzo's face was the very picture of happiness as he reflected on his new resolve.

He strode along like a giant refreshed with wine.

"Yes," he concluded, "I'll do it. It is plain to anyone that music is food for the mind to Bull. I'll go down to the village at once."

And Alonzo Todd did.

Slipping up to his study, he got into his overcoat.

Todd set out for the village with a face as happy as summer.

He counted up his money, and concluded that he could afford it. Alonzo's idea of an instrument for Bull's expression of soul was something for half-a-crown.

"Splendid," he muttered. "I find I could even go to a little more, if necessary."

Which was fortunate. The music-dealer had heard of Alonzo. He had not the least idea of letting him off so cheaply.

Arrived at the shop, Alonzo selected the most expensive one in the window, which had no price marked on it. He entered, explained that he really wanted a good one, had made up his mind to two and six, but in view of the beauties of the one exhibited would go to three and six.

"Will you pay for it weekly, or take it on the thirty-three years system, sir?" said the music-dealer, with soft sarcasm.

The coin dropped from Alonzo's hand. He had always regarded concertinas as very cheap things.

"That one's thirty shillings. I sell those they put in stockings at Christmas-time for half-a-crown," continued the dealer, with a smile. "How's this?"

Alonzo looked at the one he proffered. It was certainly very nice. But he had set his heart on the other. Bull should be comforted properly, he had thought. But how could he go to thirty shillings?

"Seven and six," said the man, executing a lightning-like scale on the instrument.

Alonzo's face was a picture. The rippling notes sounded like a silvery laugh after Bull's mournful squeaking. His mind was made up in a moment.

"Thank you," he said. "That will do nicely."

And two minutes later Alonzo started his homeward journey, carrying a German concertina worth exactly half-a-crown.

"What a much better one than poor Bull had before," he thought, in his good-natured way. "The fellows will be quite pleased with Bull this time."

Which showed clearly that Alonzo was no person to judge the signs of the times.

In the comparative seclusion of his study Todd untied his parcel and surveyed his purchase with delight. Strong temptation came upon him to play it. That would be a splendid way of showing the chums, if they were within hearing, that all concertinas were not alike. But he forbore. It would not do to have Bull's "comforter" jumped on like its predecessor—not before Alonzo had made the presentation, anyway.

"I'll leave a little note of explanation, and Bull shall rejoice to find it on the table," he said.

And as good as his word, Alonzo took pen and paper and did so.

"With every good wish that this will soothe your sorrow and fill up the aching void. From a friend," he wrote.

He walked away to the door. But the impulse to try just one note on it was too strong.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 156.

"THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S,"

A Grand New School Tale, by Charles Hamilton, is in THE "EMPIRE" LIBRARY this Week. Price One Halfpenny.

Alonzo turned back, pressed the wind-key, jerked the instrument backwards and forwards, and, of course, got no sound from it. Great goodness, had the dealer done him, after all! Then the memory of Bull playing on the "wind-key" of the old one for an hour before he found out what it was for flashed through his mind. Pressing one of the other keys, he elicited one tiny squeak. Then he went away flushed with pleasure.

Shakespeare has told us that "Orpheus with his lute made trees, and the mountain tops that freeze" do some wonderful things. But what about the magic powers of Bull and a cheap German concertina in the woodshed?

Ten minutes after Alonzo had left the study, Bull had come. Hardly able to believe his eyes, he pounced on the new concertina like a cat on a bird. To play in the study would be fatal—to the concertina. And away went Bull with a lump under his coat.

Then did a doleful strain float over the quadrangle. It reminded one of Hiawatha's people, "Sweeping westward wild and woeful." The chums of the Remove were puzzled.

Surely Bull had not had the cheek to "start another." But there could be no doubt that the mournful moaning was of Bull's making. They knew the "brand."

"The cheeky lunatic!" said Bob Cherry indignantly. "It's simply awful! The cheek's as awful as the music!"

"Yes, rather!" agreed Frank Nugent. "I've a good mind to make Bull eat the thing when we do find him."

Harry Wharton laughed. But the search for Bull was not so easy. They could tell by the "row" that he was not up in his study. But where was he? Suddenly a gust of wind blew the sound right at them, so to speak.

Then it dawned on them all at once, and a wild rush was made for the woodshed.

"Now, then," cried Frank Nugent, "chuck it! D'you hear?"

But Bull heard nothing but his own playing, apparently. In any case, he had taken the precaution to bar the door with chunks of wood.

All notes were alike to Bull, and the dismal droning of his concertina continued. Harry Wharton hammered on the door.

"Squak! squak!" went the concertina.

"Come on!" said Nugent. "It's no use, I suppose? We can't break the door down. Let's get away from that awful grind!"

And the chums, stopping their ears, rushed away.

"Great chapeau of my father!" cried Bob Cherry, as they got in the study passage. "What's that lunatic doing there?"

Alonzo Todd was bent double, his ear to the keyhole, at his own study-door.

"Sh!" he said, holding up a warning finger as the chums approached.

They stared at Alonzo. He was too comic for anything. What on earth was he doing?

"Sh!" he said again. "I'm waiting for him to begin."

"Begin! Who?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Bull, Nugent," he said. "Thanks to the munificence of my Uncle Benjamin, I have been able to provide poor Bull with the means of restoring his fallen spirits—"

Alonzo Todd wasn't allowed to get any farther. Like a flash the chums of the Remove saw how their new trouble had originated. With one accord they seized Alonzo, and catapulted him to the head of the stairs. Then they rolled and bumped him to the bottom.

Alonzo Todd pulled up on the mat at the foot of the stairs, minus his collar, some hair, and looking generally like a golliwog after a rough experience in the nursery.

"Ow! Yow!" he gasped. "Oh, whatever would my Uncle Benjamin say! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! I am considerably hurt, and very breathless! Ow! My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked, not to say disgusted—"

But Harry Wharton & Co. moved off without waiting to hear any more about Uncle Benjamin.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Tempter!

"JOHNNY!"

John Bull started.

He was sitting in his study. He had finished playing the concertina, having ground away at that terrible instrument till even he was satisfied, in his secure fortress in the woodshed. No one had remained within earshot of the woodshed, with the exception of Bull himself, while the concert was going on. Bull felt very much cheered up when he finished, and he had hidden the concertina away in a secure place. He knew that if any of the juniors found it, it would be fatal to the concertina.

The sturdy junior had gone into his study, and he was sitting at his table when there was a tap at the door, and it opened. John Bull was counting up some of the money his aunt had so recklessly sent him. He did not know how much he had left to within twenty pounds, so well was he supplied with cash.

He looked round quickly as the door opened, and a voice said "Johnny!"

It was not an agreeable voice, though the speaker was doing his best to make it very pleasant.

A man with an eyeglass screwed into his eye, and a silk-hat in his hand, and a cane under his arm, stood in the doorway.

Bull rose to his feet.

"Crane!" he exclaimed.

Lucas Crane nodded.

"Yes. You are Johnny?"

"I am John Bull."

"I have inquired for your study," said Crane, "and a master has directed me here, so I suppose there was no mistake this time. I have been taken in in a most outrageous manner by one of your schoolfellows."

"Yes, I've heard about it. Come in and sit down," said Bull, placing a chair near the fire for his visitor. "It was Bunter."

"Yes, I think that was his name."

"He's an awful cadger," said Bull. "He wanted to get something out of you. He locked me up in a box-room, and I couldn't get out to meet your train. I'm very sorry; but after you found Bunter out, I expected you to come up to the school."

"Well, here I am," said Crane. "I had a little refreshment in the village. I'm very glad to see you, Johnny."

"Thank you," said Bull.

He did not say he was glad to see his cousin. He was not glad; and John Bull never told an untruth.

"You look very comfortable here," said Crane, glancing round.

"Yes, we're pretty well fixed up, considering."

"But I suppose things are a little dull at times?" Crane suggested, with a keen glance at his cousin.

Crane had placed his silk-hat on the table, and he had stretched out his feet to the fire, nursing one knee with his hands. He seemed to be quite at his ease; but, as a matter of fact, he was very troubled inwardly.

"Dull?" said John Bull inquiringly.

"Yes. I mean, you get sick of lessons, and football, and so on, and want a little change and excitement."

"Oh, I don't know!"

"I know I did when I was at school," said Crane. "I used to get out sometimes, and have a really giddy time. But I dare say you do the same."

"I don't!" said Bull.

"No? Then you must be bored to death."

"I don't see why you should think so. Greyfriars is a splendid place, and the fellows are splendid. I dare say our tastes differ," said Bull quietly. "I've heard that you don't care for quiet pursuits."

"I hope you haven't formed any prejudice against me," said Crane. "I should very much like to be on friendly terms with you, Johnny."

"I'm willing enough, and I don't know that I'm prejudiced," said John Bull. "But there's one matter I want to speak to you about. That chap Bunter, who spoofed you—you took him into a public-house and made him play cards."

Crane drew a quick breath. He had been expecting this, and it had come.

"The whole thing was only a joke," he explained. "I thought he was you, of course, from the tale he told me."

"Then you would have made me gamble?"

"That is a harsh word. The fellow was cadging money from me, and I let him win some money instead of giving it to him. Thinking he was you, I naturally was willing to give him a tip, don't you see? When I found out he had deceived me, I made him return the money."

John Bull's face cleared a little.

"Then it was not really gambling?" he asked.

Crane laughed.

"Of course not."

"I'm glad to hear you say so. I'm glad if you've come down to see me for my own sake, Crane, but I couldn't do anything of that sort; and if you were thinking of it, it would be better for us to part, and not see each other again," said John Bull, in his direct way. "Nothing would induce me to get mixed up with gambling and that sort of thing. I think it's blackguardly."

"Quite so," agreed Crane. "I'm glad to see that you've got such firm principles, Johnny."

Bull looked at him.

"Very well," he said. "That's all right, then."

Crane smiled agreeably.

"My call has been left rather late, owing to Bunter's rascality," he remarked. "I wanted to see something of you."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 156.

EVERY
TUESDAY.

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ONE
PENNY.

I've arranged to stay at Friardale over the night. Could you come out with me to-morrow afternoon, Johnny?"

Bull looked doubtful.

"It's classes as usual to-morrow afternoon," he said.

"I could get you leave from the Head, perhaps," Crane suggested. "I am sure he would give leave if I asked him. I was thinking we might have a car, and get round the country a little, and get a feed out somewhere."

Bull brightened up.

Such a prospect was naturally enticing enough to a lad who had no particular liking for grinding Latin in a classroom. An extra holiday is generally welcome to any boy.

"Well, that would be ripping," he said.

"Then I'll speak to the Head."

"Good! Shall I come and show you the way?"

"It's all right—I know it. I was shown in to the Head when I arrived. I'll come back here after I've seen him."

"Very well."

Crane left the study. He left his hat and stick and gloves on the table. John Bull remained with a very thoughtful expression on his face.

He did not trust Crane. He could not trust him. Yet he did not wish to be too hard upon the man, or to risk judging him too harshly.

The lad was thinking the matter over when several juniors looked into the study. John Bull looked towards the doorway, and met the eyes of Harry Wharton & Co.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "We've come to save you."

"What?"

"We've come to save you," said Nugent.

"The savefulness is terrific," murmured Hurrree Jamset Ram Singh, with a broad grin upon his dusky features.

"What on earth do you mean? What's the little game, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"We've come to save you," he said.

"Look here—"

"To save you from the giddy tempter," explained Nugent. "I see that Mephistopheles has left his props behind."

And he nodded towards the hat and stick and gloves on the table. John Bull coloured.

"Are you calling my cousin Mephistopheles?" he demanded.

"Exactly."

"Well, it's like your cheek!"

"My dear chap," said Wharton, "it suits him to a T. He is a giddy Mephistopheles—the tempter to the life! You know how he did Bunter in, thinking that Bunter was you. That chap has come down to Greyfriars to initiate you into bad ways."

"Why?"

"Because he's a rascal, I suppose. Sorry to call a relation of yours fancy names, but you can see it for yourself."

Bull flushed more deeply.

"You're speaking pretty plainly, Wharton."

Wharton nodded.

"Because I'm a chum of yours, and I want to prevent you from being done in," he said. "You know what Crane did with Bunter. Bunter would be expelled from the school if the Head knew he had gambled at the Cross Keys."

"I know that."

"Well, if it had been you instead of Bunter—"

"I shouldn't have gone in."

"But Crane wanted you to—his object was the same, whether he succeeded or not. He wants to get you into that way—probably for some reason of his own. He may have something to gain by disgracing you. Suppose your aunt were to disinherit you?"

"She would—if I were expelled from Greyfriars for anything of that sort."

"And then Crane might score?"

"Possibly."

"It looks to me as if that's his object, then. What other object could a grown man have in inducing a mere lad to take up such pursuits?"

"I hardly know; he says it was really a joke. I don't want to think worse of him than I can help. But I shall see."

"You're not going out with him?"

"Not to-day."

"To-morrow?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Look here, Bull, you're playing the giddy goat, you know. The man has shown as clearly as he possibly can that he means to lead you into mischief. Whatever his motive is doesn't matter much; he means mischief. That's plain."

"The plainfulness is terrific!"

"I can look after myself," said Bull.

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"The boshfulness is——"

"Now, look here, you chaps," said John Bull. "I'm much obliged to you for taking an interest in me. But I can look after myself."

To which the Famous Four replied in a kind of chorus:

"Rubbish!"

Then they walked out of the study, leaving John Bull looking half amused and half angry. In the passage the chums of the Remove stopped.

"The ass will run his head right into the trap that boulder has ready for him," said Frank Nugent. "He ought to be looked after."

"The oughtfulness is terrific, but what is the howfulness?"

"Look here," said Wharton resolutely. "That scoundrel has got to keep away from Greyfriars. If Bull won't give him the order of the boot, we'll make the place too hot to hold him."

"Good egg!"

And the Famous Four put their heads together and plotted a plot.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Kind Attentions.

"BULL—my dear Bull——"

Alonzo Todd put his head into Bull's study, where the sturdy junior was standing with his hands in his pockets, and a wrinkle in his brow.

"Hallo!" said Bull.

"Will you do me a slight favour, Bull? There is a large package for me at the porter's lodge, and Wharton suggested that you might help me carry it in——"

"Eh? Why can't Wharton help you?"

"He seems very busy in his study. He was getting a jar of treacle out of the cupboard, and so I suppose he is getting ready for somebody. He suggested——"

"I'm expecting my cousin," Bull explained. "But I suppose I can get away for a few minutes. All right."

"Thank you so much——"

"Oh, rats! Let's get a move on."

The two juniors went down the passage to the stairs. As they passed No. 1 Study, Todd looked in.

"It's all right, Wharton; Bull has kindly consented to help me with the parcel."

"Right-ho!" said Wharton.

"You are sure the parcel is at the porter's lodge?"

"Quite sure."

"It is very odd that Gosling should not have carried it here."

"I know he doesn't mean to."

"But that is a distinct dereliction of duty on his part. My Uncle Benjamin——"

"Oh, come on!" said Bull.

"Oh, certainly, my dear Bull."

And Todd went on. The Famous Four grinned at one another. There certainly was a parcel in the porter's lodge for Alonzo; Harry Wharton had taken one there himself. The parcel contained nothing but an old box packed with disused rubbish, such as boots and old clothes. Wharton had tipped Gosling a shilling to keep it there till Todd came for it, and to delay Todd and Bull as long as possible when they came. The Famous Four wanted to get rid of John Bull from the Remove passage for a few minutes.

"Ready," said Harry Wharton.

"Quite ready."

"The quitefulness is terrific, my worthy chum."

"Then come on!"

The juniors hurried out of the study. The passage was clear; John Bull had gone downstairs with Alonzo, and he certainly could not return for some minutes at least.

"Coast's clear!" grinned Nugent.

"Good! Hurry up!"

In a few seconds they were in Bull's study. Crane's hat, stick, and gloves were still on the table, and his overcoat was hanging on the door. The Famous Four did not lose a moment. They knew that Bull might be back any minute.

Wharton tilted his jar of treacle over the silk hat, letting the sticky fluid flow into the topper in a thick stream.

Nugent carefully filled up the fingers of the gloves with red ink and gum.

Bob Cherry knelt before the fire, heating the metal handle of the stick in the coals. It was soon glowing at a white heat.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a darning-needle and rapid stitches, fastened up the sleeves of the coat so that Crane's hands would not come out when he tried to put the coat on.

The work was quickly done.

The juniors grinned gleefully as they worked.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 156.

"THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S,"

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"That will be so nice, when the chap puts his hat on," Wharton remarked. "Sweets to the sweet, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm sure he'll like these gloves," said Nugent. "They're ripping—by gum!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the handle of this cane will give him a warm reception," said Bob Cherry.

The juniors roared.

"The sleeves of the esteemed coat will also be warmly receptive of the worthy beastly person," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Wharton glanced into the passage.

"You chaps finished?" he asked. "Bull may come in——"

"I'm finished."

"Just a minute," said Bob Cherry. "I must make this hot enough to last."

"Cave!" muttered Nugent, looking out. "Here he comes?"

"John Bull?"

"No; Crane."

"I'm off."

Bob Cherry hastily laid the cane beside the hat on the table. He carefully placed the head of the cane over the edge of the table, so that it would not scorch the cover, and betray the trick by a smell of burning. It is to be feared that Bob Cherry was not thinking of the table-cover.

The four juniors quitted the study rather hurriedly. Crane looked at them as he came up the passage, with a darkening brow. He had not forgotten the violent encounter in Friar-dale Lane.

But it was his cue to get on good terms, if he could, with the friends of the lad he meant to make a victim of. He forced a smile to his face.

"Ah! You have been to see my cousin?" he remarked.

"He's not there," said Wharton.

"I thought he was waiting for me. You are friends of his?"

"Jolly good friends," said Bob Cherry.

"Then I hope you will be my friends as well," said Crane agreeably.

Wharton looked him steadily in the eyes.

"That's impossible," he said. "We couldn't be your friends, while you're trying to do harm to Johnny."

Crane changed colour.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed, beginning to bluster. "What do you mean by saying that I am attempting to do my cousin harm? Are you mad?"

"You wanted to make him gamble with Banks, the book-maker, at the Cross Keys," said Wharton. "You took the wrong chap in, but you meant it for Bull. You'd have got him expelled if you'd had your way."

"You—you cheeky puppy——"

"Hallo! What's the matter?" exclaimed John Bull, coming along the passage.

"Only your friends have been amusing themselves by insulting me, that's all," said Crane.

"Just a little plain English," said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

John Bull frowned.

"Look here, you chaps——" he began.

"Oh, we're off!"

The Famous Four walked away; and Bull went into his study with Lucas Crane. Crane's face was very dark.

"Did you get leave from the Head?" asked Bull.

"Yes. I shall call for you at the school at half-past one to-morrow—after you've had your dinner. You are allowed the afternoon."

"Good!" said Bull heartily.

"I'll be off now." Crane stretched out his hand for his cane. "I—— Oh! Ow! Yow! Yaroo! Yah! Oh!"

His fingers had closed on the handle of the cane. They unclosed again with startling rapidity.

Crane dropped the cane, and fairly jumped into the air, yelling:

"Ow! Ow! Yaroo! Groo! Yaroo!"

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Not Nice!

JOHN BULL stared at his cousin in blank surprise.

Lucas Crane was sucking his hand, and fairly dancing with pain.

"What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Bull.

"Ow!"

"What is it?"

"Yow!"

"What's happened?"

"Yaroo!"

Crane stood, with a brow like thunder, licking his hand. A

red mark showed on the fingers, but he was not badly burned. The chums of the Remove would not really have hurt him, bad as they believed he was. It was the shock more than anything else that had made him yell out.

"The handle of the cane was hot!" he growled.

"Hot? The handle of the cane?"

"Yes. If this is a joke of yours——"

"I suppose you don't think I should treat a visitor in that way?" said Bull. "I suppose that's what those fellows were doing here."

Crane gritted his teeth.

"Hang them!"

"I hope you're not badly burnt——"

"Oh, never mind! It's nothing! I'll go now!"

Crane, with an angry jerk, jammed his silk hat on his head. The treacle flowed down at once upon his hair.

He gave a start as the stickiness clung to his hair, and jerked the hat off again.

His hair was running with treacle!

It rolled down over his forehead and cheeks and the back of his head, and clung in sticky masses to his collar and tie.

He passed his hand in amazement over his head, and it came away thick with treacle.

John Bull burst into an involuntary chuckle.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "It's treacle!"

"Treacle! Oh!"

"I say, I'm sorry! Ha, ha! Very sorry!"

"The—the young hounds!" shouted Crane furiously.

"I'll make them suffer for this! I'm smothered! Yow! It's running down my neck! Ow!"

"I'm sorry——"

"I—I— Yow! Groo! Oh!"

"Here, come along to the bath-room, and get it washed off!" gasped Bull. "It's horrid! I'm sorry it happened! I'll speak to those bounders about it."

Crane, speechless with fury, followed him to a bath-room.

While he was washing the treacle off his head he was murmuring things to himself, and Bull caught a few words that made his brow grow dark.

He made no remark, however. He could make allowances for the state of fury Crane was in; but he liked the man none the more.

The Famous Four watched them go to the bath-room, and at the sight of Crane's treacly head they roared.

It was some time before the visitor was cleaned. Then he mopped his head dry, and at last returned to Bull's study. His collar was sticky with treacle, and he had to borrow a collar of Bull.

Wearing a collar of a boy's size was not pleasant. In fact, it was very uncomfortable. The man scraped the treacle out of his silk hat, with muttered words of fury.

Bull looked on as seriously as he could.

He was sorry that his visitor had been treated in such a way, but for the life of him he could not help seeing the comical side of the matter.

Crane picked up his gloves. He had learned wisdom by this time, and he looked at them before putting them on.

Streams of red ink mixed with gum ran out of the gloves as he held them up.

"My hat!" ejaculated John Bull.

"The—the young hounds!"

"It was a lark, you know."

"Hang them! I will make them smart for this! I—I——"

Words failed Lucas Crane. He hurled the gloves into the fire, and wiped his inky fingers on his pocket-handkerchief.

"I'll report this to the Head!" he panted. "I'll have the young scoundrels flogged for it!"

Bull looked uncomfortable.

"Well, the story about the Cross Keys is sure to come out if you do," he said. "The Head would be very annoyed about that, and I'm afraid he'd ask you to get away from Greyfriars and never come back again."

Lucas Crane gritted his teeth.

"Help me into my coat," he said, taking it down.

"Certainly!"

John Bull held the coat while his cousin thrust his arms into the sleeves.

Crane's hands came as far down as the ends of the sleeves, and there stopped. They could not get out of the ends.

"What's the matter?" he howled. "Are you holding my sleeves?"

"No! I don't—— My hat!"

"What is it?" roared Crane.

"They're sewn!"

"Sewn?" yelled the man.

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

Crane dragged off the coat again in a fury.

"It's all right!" exclaimed Bull. "I'll get the stitches out in a few minutes."

Crane stood glowering while Bull unfastened the stitches. Then he donned his overcoat successfully at last.

"Good-bye, Crane!" said John Bull. "To-morrow at half-past one at the gates."

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ONE
PENNY.

"That's right!" muttered Crane.

He shook hands with his cousin, and strode from the study. He passed the Famous Four as he went to the stairs. He grasped his cane—by the cool end—and almost yielded to the temptation to rush at them. But he restrained himself and passed on.

A roar of laughter followed him from the chums of the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crane strode from the house.

John Bull came out of his study, and stopped to speak to the Famous Four. He gave them a reproachful look.

"You might let my visitors alone," he said. "It's not like you chaps to play this kind of jape on a stranger."

"The man's a rotten outsider!" said Harry Wharton.

"We're going to make Greyfriars too hot for him."

"Exactly!" said Nugent.

And Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh murmured softly that the exactfulness was terrific.

John Bull frowned a little.

"Look here, I can look after myself all right!" he exclaimed.

"You're mistaken; you can't."

"I'm jolly well——"

"You ought to be jolly thankful you've got friends to stand by you and rescue you from Mephistopheles!" said Nugent severely.

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Is that chap coming back again?"

"He's calling for me at half-past one to-morrow," said Bull.

"You're going out with him?"

"Yes. I've got leave for the afternoon."

"Don't do it. He'll lead you into some mischief—the same as he did Bunter. Give him a wide berth, Bull, there's a sensible chap!"

"Oh, rats!"

John Bull thrust his hands into his pockets and walked away.

The chums of the Remove looked at one another.

"Obstinate beggar!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It's as plain as you could wish that that cousin of his is a wrong 'un, and trying to make him a wrong 'un, too. But——"

"Bull must know it. But I suppose he tries to think the best he can of a blood-relation," said Wharton thoughtfully.

"He oughtn't to go out with the man to-morrow."

"Right-ho! Look here," said Harry Wharton, "we'll be on the look-out at half-past one to-morrow, and meet that rotten bounder."

"And stop Bull from going with him?"

"Yes."

"Good egg!"

And it was settled.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Quite a Surprise.

"DEAR me!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the matter, Toddy?"

"This is most astonishing!"

"What is?"

"This!" said Alonzo Todd.

He pointed to a large box that he had unfastened on the table in the passage.

Bob Cherry grinned.

He recognised the parcel for which Todd had been sent to Gosling's lodge for the purpose of getting John Bull away from his study.

Todd blinked at Bob Cherry in surprise.

"I do not see anything to excite risibility in the matter, Cherry. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me that laughter without cause was the infallible sign of an empty and probably idiotic mind."

"What?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Nugent. "He's got you there, Bob!"

"Look here, fathead——"

"It is very remarkable—I may say extraordinary—that anybody should send me this parcel," said Todd, in bewilderment. "You see, it contains a pair of disused boots——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And a pair of old trousers—very old indeed——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And a broken kettle, and a broom devoid of hair——"

The juniors yelled, and walked away yelling. Todd gazed after them in great surprise. He did not understand the matter in the least.

What to do with the extraordinary consignment that had reached him was a puzzle to Todd. The articles certainly

were of no use. He decided to wrap the paper round the box again and bestow it in one of the box-rooms. There it would be out of the way.

He had finished tying the string, and was carrying the box up the passage when Billy Bunter came upstairs.

The fat junior blinked at him inquiringly. Bunter had heard that Alonzo had fetched a box from the porter's lodge, and a box arriving at the school meant only one thing to Bunter's mind—a feed of some sort.

As he saw Todd ascend the upper staircase carrying the box, the suspicion immediately came into the fat junior's mind that Todd had received a consignment of good things and was taking them away to a quiet place to eat.

Bunter's round, little eyes glistened behind his spectacles. "Beast!" he murmured. "Fancy getting a big box of grub like that, and not asking a fellow to share in the feed!"

Bunter cautiously followed Todd. Bunter was expecting a consignment from Uncle Clegg's himself, but in the meantime he was very hungry.

He tracked Todd up the stairs, and the Duffer of Greyfriars entered a box-room without thinking of looking back.

Bunter watched him through the crack of the door, and saw him place the box in a corner behind a large trunk.

Then he came out of the room.

Bunter's heart beat fast.

Todd was evidently bestowing his treasure in a safe place till he should have leisure to deal with it, Bunter thought. What an opportunity for the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter drew back into the next doorway, and Todd, coming out of the box-room, passed him and went downstairs without suspecting that he was there.

Bunter waited till he was gone, and then hurried into the box-room.

In a moment he was looking at the box.

He lifted it. It weighed heavily. Visions of cake and tart and buns and all sorts of comestibles floated before Bunter's mind. He was strongly tempted to open the box there and then.

But he refrained. Todd might return at any moment, and it would not be safe. Bunter picked up the box, and carried it out of the room.

The box was heavy for Bunter, but he hardly noticed that in his excitement. He glanced down the stairs. Todd was not in sight. Bunter bore the box down, intending to get it into his own study, and lock the door before he started operations.

Just as he reached the Remove passage, Bulstrode and Hazeldene came into sight. They stared at the fat junior.

"What have you got there?" asked Hazeldene.

Bunter turned red.

"Only—only a new hat," he stammered.

"Ha, ha, ha! Is that a new thing in hat-boxes?" roared Bulstrode.

"Well, you see—"

"It's a feed, of course," said Hazeldene, "and the fat cad doesn't want anybody to take a whack with him."

"Oh, really, Hazeldene—"

"Why, I know that box," Bulstrode exclaimed, looking at it. "It's the one Todd and Bull were carrying in from the lodge. It's Todd's."

"Oh, really—"

"You've stolen it, you fat young fraud!"

"Oh, I say—"

"It's Todd's!"

"I—I—I've raided it," Bunter confessed. "Todd hid it in the box-room. Look here, I was looking for you fellows, to ask you—"

"Liar!"

"I—I mean I hoped I should meet you, so that I could ask you to the feed," said Billy Bunter. "Come into my study, you know, and—and take your whack."

Bulstrode and Hazeldene chuckled.

"We're on!"

"This way, then," said Bunter. "Lend a hand. The beastly thing's heavy. It must be simply crammed with grub. I didn't know Todd had relations who sent him supplies like this. I suppose it's his Uncle Benjamin."

"Ha, ha! Good old Benny!"

The three young rascals ran the box into Bunter's study. Bulstrode closed the door, and Bunter looked for a knife, to cut the string.

The string was severed, and Billy Bunter commenced to undo the brown paper wrappings.

"I—I say, you fellows," he remarked, "it's understood that you have a feed and leave the rest to me, you know, and—and keep it dark."

"Rats!" said Hazeldene. "We take equal shares, of course."

"Oh, really—"

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"THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S,"

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"Fair play all round," said Bulstrode. "If I have any of your cheek, I'll sling you out, and keep the lot!"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—"

"Shut up, and get it open!"

Bunter unwrapped the paper.

Bulstrode eagerly opened the lid of the box.

Then he started back.

Instead of the expected array of tempting and appetising eatables, his glance fell upon a heap of boots, old trousers, damaged kettle and broom, and crumpled newspapers and other rubbish.

He stared blankly at the curious collection.

Hazeldene uttered an exclamation.

"Spoofed, by George!"

"Spoofed by Bunter!" yelled Bulstrode furiously.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He was even more astounded and dismayed than Bulstrode and Hazeldene, but they did not give him credit for it.

Bulstrode turned on him furiously.

"You fat rotter!" he roared. "So you're playing one of your rotten japes on us, are you? Do you think we're going to be japed like Todd?"

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—"

"Collar him!"

"Oh—oh! I— Ow!"

"Bump him!"

"Yow! Help! Yaroo!"

The two angry juniors seized upon the Owl of the Remove. Billy Bunter was swept off his feet, and bumped heavily upon the study floor.

"Ow! Yow!"

"Now let him have his blessed rubbish!" roared Bulstrode. "Shove it over him!"

"Ha, ha! Good wheeze!"

Bulstrode and Hazeldene seized the box by the ends. With a swing they brought it off the table, and inverted it over Bunter.

The fat junior roared as a shower of boots and trousers and newspapers and things rained down upon him.

The two ragers roared, too—with laughter. They dumped the box itself down over Bunter's head, crowning him, and, leaving him struggling under that novel extinguisher, they left the study.

Billy Bunter pitched the box off, and gasped:

"Beasts!"

He sat gasping in the midst of the rubbish. Alonzo Todd looked in at the door.

"My dear Bunter, I heard a noise— Dear me!"

Todd gazed on the scene in utter astonishment. Billy Bunter blinked at him furiously.

"My dear Bunter, that is the same box— Dear me! How did that receptacle and its surprising contents come to be in your personal possession, my dear Bunter?"

"You—you chump!" gasped Bunter, grasping up the old boots. "I'll teach you to jape me, you blithering ass!"

"My dear Bunter— Ow! Yow!"

Alonzo staggered back into the passage as a boot, hurled with terrific force, caught him on the chest.

"Ow! Yow! My dear— Yaroo!"

Bunter rolled to the door with the other boot in his hand and vengeance in his fat face. Alonzo saw it coming, and bolted. Bunter hurled the boot with deadly aim after Alonzo, and it caught him on the back of the knees. Alonzo sat down in the passage with a suddenness that took his breath away.

"Yow!" he roared. "Oh!"

And Bunter crawled back into his study, feeling a little comforted.

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"BULL!"

"Hullo!"

"Where are you going?"

Four voices asked that question at once—the voices of Harry Wharton & Co. John Bull was walking down to the school gates. It was half-past one, and afternoon classes commenced in half an hour, but John Bull was dressed for going out.

Bull grinned.

"Out!" he replied.

"You're going out?"

"Yes. I've got leave. I told you yesterday."

"With that cousin of yours?"

"Yes. He's waiting at the gates for me now. So-long!"

And Bull strode on to the gates.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at each other. They caught sight at the gates of the silk hat, the dyed moustache, and the eyeglass. Lucas Crane—the tempter—was there! John Bull, according to the arrangement made the previous day, was going out with him.

"It won't do!" exclaimed Wharton.

The others shook their heads seriously.

"The won't-do-fulness is terrific!" remarked Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

"It's too rotten!"

"Bull's just looking for trouble, I guess," remarked Fisher T. Fish. The American junior knew the story. The whole of the Greyfriars Remove had heard it from Billy Bunter by this time.

"That's it," said Tom Brown. "Let's stop him!"

"The man is a blackguard!" said Mark Linley. "Bull ought to be stopped from going out with him."

"He means mischief."

"Of course he does."

"Let's collar Bull!"

"Good!"

"The goodfulness is terrific!"

"Come on, then!" exclaimed Wharton, starting towards the gates.

The juniors followed him in a crowd.

John Bull had reached the gates, and met his cousin. Lucas Crane was looking very neat and natty and extremely good-tempered. He had apparently quite got over his unpleasant experience at Greyfriars of the previous day.

He shook hands very cordially with John Bull.

"So glad you can come out," he exclaimed. "We'll have a really ripping time this afternoon, Johnny."

"I hope so, I'm sure," said Bull. "You're very kind."

"Not at all. I—I suppose you're coming alone?" added Crane hastily, as the juniors came crowding up.

"Of course," said Bull.

"What do these boys want, then?"

"Blessed if I know!"

The juniors looked very businesslike. Alonzo Todd was in the crowd. Todd was very earnest about the matter. He had been thinking of what his Uncle Benjamin would do under like circumstances.

He wagged a bony and admonitory forefinger at John Bull.

"Stop!" he exclaimed.

"What?"

"Pause in time!" said Alonzo. "Oh, my young friend, be warned by me!"

"Ass!"

"My dear Bull——"

"Oh, buzz off, and don't play the giddy goat!" exclaimed Bull.

"My Uncle Benjamin——"

"Bless your Uncle Benjamin! I'm off!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Bull, old man, don't go! That fellow doesn't mean you any good. You know he doesn't."

"The knowfulness is terrific, my esteemed chum, Bull."

"He's a rotter!" said Nugent.

"A howling cad!" said Bob Cherry.

"A rotter, you know!"

"A rank outsider!"

Lucas Crane turned livid with rage. The Greyfriars juniors, in their eagerness to save John Bull from the tempter, were putting things with painful frankness.

Bull turned red.

"Look here, mind your own bizney, you fellows!" he exclaimed. "I suppose I can look after myself all right."

"That's just where you suppose wrong," said Bob Cherry.

"Rats!"

"Look here, stay in!"

"I'm going out!"

"You're jolly well not!" exclaimed Wharton determinedly.

"Hold on, kids!"

"What-ho!"

Wharton grasped hold of John Bull as the sturdy junior would have joined Crane. Nugent held on to Wharton, and

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NEXT TUESDAY: THE GREYFRIARS HYPNOTIST.

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PENNY.

Bob Cherry to Nugent, and Tom Brown to Bob. The rest, laughing, laid hold in line, so that there was a long line of juniors all holding on, and John Bull would have had to drag six or seven fellows after him if he had gone out.

"Leggo!" roared Bull.

"Rats!"

"Let me get away!"

"Bosh!"

"Look here, Wharton——"

"Rubbish!"

"We are acting, my dear Bull, in a way that would be approved of by my Uncle Benjamin, I am sure!" exclaimed Alonzo Todd.

"Chump!"

"My dear Bull——"

"Leggo, you asses!"

"Let my cousin go!" exclaimed Lucas Crane, grasping his cane hard. "I'll——"

Harry Wharton looked at him steadily.

"If you touch us with that cane, Mr. Crane, we'll wipe up the dust with you," he said coolly. "You'd better think twice about it."

The man lowered the cane, gritting his teeth.

"You young hounds——"

"Oh, dry up!"

"Look here, Bull——"

"Bull, old man——"

"Leggo, you dummies!"

"Hullo! What on earth's the matter here?" exclaimed Wingate of the Sixth, coming up. "What sort of a game do you call this? New kind of tug-of-war?"

The juniors released John Bull. They didn't want to explain to the captain of the school; it might have led to trouble for John Bull.

"Oh, it's all right!" said John Bull, with a grin. "These chaps are so fond of my company that they don't want me to go out, that's all. Good-bye all!"

And he walked away with Crane.

Wingate gave the juniors a curious look, and turned away. Harry Wharton & Co. growled. They were disappointed and annoyed.

"Bull's gone looking for trouble, and I guess he'll find it," said Fisher T. Fish, with a sage shake of the head.

"The findfulness will be terrific!"

"Well, we've done all we could," remarked Bob Cherry.

"I wonder what my Uncle Benjamin would advise, under the circumstances?" said Alonzo Todd, blinking round at the juniors. "Perhaps it would be a good idea, Wharton, to go down to the village, and despatch a wire to him, acquainting him with the circumstances and requesting his opinion. The telegram would have to be a long one, but I am sure you fellows would not object to subscribing a sovereign or so for the purpose."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear fellows——"

"Hullo, hallo, hallo! There's the bell!"

The juniors went in for afternoon classes. But as the lessons of the afternoon went on their way, the chums of the Remove could not help thinking of John Bull, alone in the company of the tempter. What was he doing—and what would be the result of it?

But if the juniors had been a little better acquainted with the strong and sturdy character of John Bull, they need not have been uneasy on that subject. John Bull junior knew how to take care of himself.

THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER.

The Last of the Tempter.

HARRY WHARTON & Co. came out of the Remove Form-room when classes were dismissed, still thinking of John Bull junior, and Lucas Crane. John Bull had not yet returned. The juniors could not help being concerned about him.

John Bull was a quiet, steady-going fellow, with as kind a heart as any fellow at Greyfriars, and in a quiet way he had made himself very popular while he had been at Greyfriars.

The chums of the Remove would have felt the blow very sincerely if trouble had come upon him; and they knew very well that Lucas Crane was there to bring trouble to his cousin.

His conduct with regard to Bunter had betrayed him. What his motive might be they could guess, though they could not be sure. But there was no doubt what his object was. What puzzled Wharton was, that John Bull must know it as well as the others did, or better; yet he had gone out with the tempter.

Was it possible that they had been mistaken in their

estimate of Bull's character—that he was at bottom the same kind of fellow as Vernon-Smith?

Harry Wharton was very reluctant to think anything of the sort. Yet John Bull's conduct certainly needed explaining.

Wharton was feeling very anxious to see him again. It was possible—and Wharton hoped that it was true—that Bull was simply pulling his cousin's leg in affecting to fall in with his plans. As the dusk of evening fell upon the old Close of Greyfriars, Wharton and his chums strolled down to the gates to look for the return of John Bull. But he was not in by dark, and they returned to the School House feeling puzzled, and considerably uneasy.

Bunter looked into No. 1 Study, where the Famous Four were discussing the matter. He blinked sagely at the chums of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows," he remarked, "I think I know what's become of Bull!"

"Well?" said Wharton.

"You know, that cousin of his will very likely inherit his cash if he's done in," said Bunter. "I know it's usually an uncle who murders his nephew for his cash, but I don't see why a cousin shouldn't work the same wheeze. It stands to reason that there are wicked cousins as well as wicked uncles."

"You utter ass!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You chump! Don't you start reading newspaper serials and working the bosh off on us," said Wharton, in disgust. "Buzz off!"

"But I think it's a jolly good theory! Suppose Crane has murdered John Bull and hidden his body in the fields somewhere—"

"Shut up!"

"Or he may have poisoned him in a ginger-pop—"

The chums of the Remove made a rush at Billy Bunter. His cheerful suggestions as to the probable fate of John Bull were not welcome, in their present uneasy frame of mind. The fat junior hopped out of the study, and Wharton's boot caught him as he did so.

Bunter gave a yell, and sprawled forward, bumping into someone who was just coming along the Remove passage.

"Hallo!" said a well-known voice.

The juniors gave a shout.

"Bull!"

John Bull grinned quietly.

"Yes, here I am," he said.

Harry Wharton & Co. seized the junior, and rushed him into the study. He was bumped breathless into the armchair. Then the juniors gathered before him, with stern looks.

"Now you just jolly well explain yourself, you boulder!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "My hat! There's a smell of brandy!"

They gazed at John Bull speechlessly. There was no mistake about it—there was an unmistakable scent of brandy about him.

"Good heavens!" gasped Wharton at last. "Then you've done it!"

"Done what?"

"You've let that villain lead you into what he was leading Bunter into—you've let him make you—"

"Hold on," said John Bull quietly. "I've no objection to telling you what's happened."

"Go ahead, then. By Jove! What's the matter with your knuckles?"

John Bull held up his hands and glanced at his knuckles. They were red and raw, as if the junior had hit some hard object with very great force. Bull grinned slightly.

"I went with Lucas Crane," said Bull quietly, "because I wanted to make sure of him—what he was, and what he wanted. I gave him his head, you see. I let him have rope enough, and he hanged himself nicely."

"What's he done?"

"We have had a drive in a motor-car, and Crane gradually led up to the idea of having refreshments at a hotel, and a game of cards to pass away the time, and so on," said John Bull. "I lay low, and let him talk."

The juniors grinned. They began to understand what John Bull's little game had been, and how he had made the tempter show his hand.

"He wanted to persuade me and banter me into drinking and smoking and gambling," said Bull. "I was so easy in his hands, that he came right out into the open, and let me see what he wanted. We stopped at the King's Arms, at Courtfield, where we met Mr. Banks. Then I talked to Crane. He had been doing most of the talking, but when I started, he didn't seem much inclined to talk any more. I told him what I thought of him, and then I told Mr. Banks my opinion of him. They were looking quite green by the time I had finished."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But what's happened to your knuckles?" asked Nugent.

"That's coming! They saw the game was up, and I knew them through and through, and would have nothing to do with them, and they went for me. Crane threw his glass of brandy at me; my clothes are still niffing of it. I shall have to give them a jolly good airing," said John Bull, with a grin. "Then I let him have my left, on the jaw. Banks got the right, on the ear. Then I walked out. They were still sitting in the sawdust when I last saw them."

"My hat!"

Wharton glanced again at Bull's knuckles.

"I think they'll remember those whacks for some little time," he said, with a grin. "You're all right, Bull, and I'm sorry we doubted you for a minute. But—"

"Oh, it's all serene!"

"You won't see your cousin again?"

John Bull laughed.

"I don't think he's likely to pay me any more visits," he replied. "If he does, you're free to handle him as you like."

"Good egg!"

And the juniors in their exuberance, thumped John Bull on the back till he was out of breath, and began to hit out. Then they left off.

"Jolly good!" said Harry Wharton. "We've seen the last of that awful boulder, and a jolly good thing, too!"

But was Wharton right? Had the chums of Greyfriars seen the last of the Tempter?

THE END.

Next Week:

THE GREYFRIARS HYPNOTIST.

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Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.

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"THE RIVALS OF ST. WODE'S," A Grand New School Tale, by Charles Hamilton, is in THE "EMPIRE" LIBRARY this Week. Price One Halfpenny.

GRAND NEW ADVENTURE SERIAL JUST STARTED.

Wolves of the Deep.

The Story of a Great Conspiracy, Introducing Ferrers Lord and Ching-Lung.

By **SIDNEY DREW.****READ THIS FIRST.**

Ferrers Lord, while on board his powerful submarine the Lord of the Deep, rescues Rupert Thurston from the River Thames, and then begins to explain to him the powers of his vessel. Thurston is astonished at the sights he sees while below the surface. Ferrers Lord tells him that when he perfects his submarine he intends to visit every sea in the world, and study the wonders that are hidden there. He then goes on to praise the capabilities of the British workman,
(Now go on with the story.)

At the House of the Millionaire.

"You seem to have studied the question, sir," said Thurston, busy with his fourth cutlet.

"Perhaps I have. I study many things, and I know that the British workman, the British soldier, and the British sailor are the kings of the world!"

Breakfast was over at last, and Thurston indulged in a cigarette.

"We are going to the surface," said the millionaire, "and then back to London. Are you ready?"

"Quite."

"Then follow me."

They passed out of the lower room together, and mounted a steep companion; as they ascended, the boat began to rock and pitch. Ferrers Lord went first, and as he reached the head of the ladder, he wrenched down a brass lever.

An iron door slid noiselessly aside, and a flood of brilliant sunlight poured in. Thurston glanced up. Above him was a rounded dome of glass and steel, with the polished reflectors of two searchlights gleaming on either side. Behind the searchlights was the wheel, with a brawny sailor clinging to the spokes; around him danced the sunlit waves, specked here and there with brown sails and patches of smoke.

A second door was opened, and he stood upon the glistening deck of the Lord of the Deep, with the fresh salt breeze in his nostrils. The low deck, tapering to a point at either end, was flush with the water, and the waves dashed over it in hissing surges. He caught the rail, and looked away towards the misty outline of the Essex shore.

"Where are we?" he asked.

"About eighteen miles east of the Blackwater. We shall be just in time to catch the 2.20 from Burnham back to town. The launch is quite ready."

The deck-plates near the prow of the little vessel gaped open before Thurston's astonished eyes. Two huge doors fell softly back, and a trim little steam-launch rose into sight. The lift that raised it tilted, and the launch slid slowly into the water, and danced away to the full length of its cables.

Two giant sailors drew it alongside, and Ferrers Lord stepped in. Thurston followed. The little funnel spat out a cloud of smoke, the little screw thrashed the water. Thurston turned his head to look back. The Lord of the Deep had disappeared, and only a whirlpool of dancing foam marked the place where she had floated a moment before.

Ferrers Lord marked his glance, and smiled.

"I must hide my doings," he said, "as I do not wish to see the papers filled with rumours and all kinds of sensational stories. I wish to keep this a secret as long as I possibly can. All the men I employ are thoroughly trustworthy and pledged to me. Even this launch left Burnham early this morning, so no one will be surprised to see her again. It is as well to be cautious."

The launch churned into the harbour and the two men boarded the London train.

The train steamed into Liverpool Street with praiseworthy punctuality, and a footman in livery opened the door of the THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 156.

NEXT TUESDAY: THE GREYFRIARS HYPNOTIST.

first-class carriage reserved by Ferrers Lord. An elegant carriage drawn by a pair of superb bay horses was waiting.

"Home!" said Ferrers Lord.

The carriage swept westward through the buzzing streets. It was a glorious May evening, and even the smoky City looked bright and cheerful. The swift, untiring trot of the mettled horses brought the carriage rapidly to the Marble Arch. It turned down Park Lane, the home of the millionaires, and halted before a princely mansion. Ferrers Lord sprang out, took Thurston's arm, and they mounted the wide steps together.

A silk-stockinged servant flung open the door, bowing low. The huge hall was a museum of wealth and wonder-treasures of East and West, of every age and every land.

"We will go into my snugery," said Ferrers Lord pleasantly. "It is a good hour to dinner-time, and I will show you the working model of my vessel, and explain its mysteries to you. Well, Hilton?"

The last words were spoken to the valet, who had hastened to meet him.

"There has been a gentleman to see you, sir. He would not give his name, and I did not like his looks. I told him you would be back at six, and he said he would wait. I showed him into the library, sir, and, not liking his looks, as I said, sir, I set one of the footmen to watch the door."

"Well?" said Ferrers Lord sharply, as the valet paused.

"Well, sir, he's vanished, like a puff of smoke."

"Vanished?" The dark eyes flashed. "What do you mean, Hilton? What was he like?"

The servant pondered for a moment.

"He was a tall man, sir," he answered, "with a long, grey beard, and a queer habit of catching hold of his left wrist with his right hand. I saw him do it a dozen times in five minutes. He wore riding-breeches, and carried a crop. That's all I know, sir, except that he's gone, and that he wouldn't give any name."

Ferrers Lord's black eyebrows knitted. The French windows of the library opened upon a flower-grown verandah, and the only way of escape was a drop of at least thirty feet into the garden below. What was this man, and what did he want? The valet's meagre description offered no clue, and he puzzled his brain in vain.

An elegant lift brought the millionaire to the door of what Ferrers Lord had called his snugery. It was more a laboratory than a snugery, though half a dozen roomy chairs were littered about, and a spirit-case and a cigar-cabinet stood upon the table. Lines of shelves crammed with bottles, retorts, and strange scientific instruments covered the walls. Near the window, with the golden evening sunlight shining through it, was a deep tank of crystal glass, in which fish were lazily swimming; beside it was a massive safe.

Ferrers Lord sank into a chair, and stared at the crackling fire. Though it was late in May, the evening was chilly, as May evenings often are, and a fire was not to be despised.

"This affair has rather got on my nerves," he said. "What could the fellow have been after? The only way he could have got out is by the front door. I suppose the servant forgot all about him, and, getting tired of waiting, he went away unobserved. A crank of some kind, I expect, or else somebody begging. It is a millionaire's fate to be pestered by such people. Come, I will show you the boat."

He took out his key-chain, and, unlocking the safe, produced a wonderful model of the submarine boat, and placed it in the tank. His bronzed face flushed with enthusiasm as he looked at it.

"Look, my friend!" he cried. "There is the triumph of ten years of weary toil, and the expenditure of more than a hundred thousand pounds! I am a young man, but my hair is already turning grey with sleepless nights, and days of

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

doubt and despair. I have given my very heart's blood to this morsel of aluminium, and I do not regret it. Look, Thurston!"

He reached down a wired box, and opened it. Three common white mice, such as schoolboys love, ran out eagerly and nestled in his hand. He clicked back the manhole of the model, and one by one embarked the queer, long-tailed passengers.

"That is the crew," he said, smiling. "The voyage commences now."

Down sank the little boat like a stone, sending the lazy fish scattering in all directions. A foot from the bottom it came to a halt, the baby screws beat the water, and it moved swiftly round the tank.

"Wonderful!" cried Thurston, clapping his hands. "Marvellous!"

"Wait, and I will show you something else," said the millionaire. "As we are playing at ships, we might as well finish the game. Here is an exact model of his Majesty's ship *Powerful*, whose gallant lads and 4.7 guns saved plucky Ladysmith. The plates upon her hull are a good eighth of an inch in thickness, and very tough."

He placed the beautiful model in the tank, and lighted the methylated spirit under her miniature boilers. After a time the gauge showed a working head of steam, the helm was set to carry her in a circle, and she steamed merrily round the tank.

"What are you going to do?" asked Thurston eagerly.

"Ram her," answered Ferrers Lord.

As he spoke, the model of the submarine vessel leapt upwards like a flash. Full and true it struck the little iron-clad a good five inches below the water-line. The spiked ram cut through her plates as a knife cuts tissue paper. She heeled over as the other model drew back with screws reversed, filled, and sank. With a sharp report her boilers exploded, deluging the room.

"I hope you are not scalded, my friend?" laughed Ferrers Lord. "In the excitement of the moment I quite forgot that hot water and cold do not agree."

Thurston wiped his face, and laughed in return.

"I got a few warm splashes," he answered, "but nothing to harm. I would have willingly spent a month in hospital to see what I have seen to-day. What a marvel! What a triumph! And you think the Lord of the Deep could annihilate an ironclad with such ease as that?"

"I do not think it, my friend; I am certain of it."

Like a thing of life, obeying every unspoken order of the man whose brain had created it, the model had risen to the surface. Again Ferrers Lord opened the manhole, and released the mice.

"You see, they are none the worse for their trip," he said.

He relocked the model in the safe, and Thurston sat down.

"It is marvellous!" he said again. "Wonderful in the extreme! I have dabbled in mechanics a little, and there are two things that trouble me immensely—the air and the motive-power. I suppose the latter is the coming power of all—electricity?"

"That is my secret," said Ferrers Lord, smiling still. "Perhaps, when we know each other better, I will tell you. The motive-power is nothing in a submarine boat, as far as short voyages are concerned, for it is easy nowadays to store electricity in a small way. What has baffled all scientists so far has been how to overcome the pressure of the water at great depth. A hollow cylinder of steel sunk a thousand fathoms will be crushed as flat as an opera-hat. This is what I have struggled with for ten long years, and I have won! Will you dress for dinner?"

"I have no clothes."

"Bah! That does not matter. If you like, I will send a servant to your rooms. Will that suit you? You had better give him a note."

Thurston scrawled a note, and a footman was despatched in a hansom. They chatted together until he returned, and then separated to dress. The gong boomed just as he had arranged his tie to his satisfaction. Hilton, the valet lent to him by

Ferrers Lord, gave his well-fitting coat a last brush, and he entered the lift.

Ferrers Lord was not alone. Standing with her back to the window, the jewels nestling in her dark hair and flashing upon her neck, was a tall girl. She turned languidly, and the sight of her face thrilled Thurston through and through.

"My niece, Lady Lestermore," said Ferrers Lord; "Mr. Rupert Thurston."

She answered Thurston's bow with a nod and a smile.

"I am pleased to meet you, Mr. Thurston," she said sweetly. "Come, uncle, let us get this tiresome dinner over! What a boring institution it is!"

Rupert Thurston did not think so. He sat opposite her, hardly able to keep his eyes from her face. She was marvellously beautiful, he thought, a veritable artist's dream. Almost before he knew it, the coffee and liqueur were at his elbow, and the footman was holding a silver box filled with cigars and cigarettes before him. Ferrers Lord's deep voice roused him from his dreams.

"A moment, Thurston!" he said. "I had a present of some marvellous cigarettes from the Khedive the other day, and I have not smoked one yet. Fritz!"

The footman hurried to his side.

"Go to my room, and take this key. Bring a box of cigarettes you will find in the left-hand drawer of the cabinet."

The footman vanished, and Thurston sipped his coffee. They talked for five minutes.

A frown appeared on Lord's handsome face. He turned to a second attendant.

"Go and see what that idiot is doing!" he said sharply.

The frightened man hurried away. He returned, white-faced and panting.

"The door is locked, sir," he gasped, "and I can't get no answer."

"Locked?"

Ferrers Lord sprang from his chair, Thurston close at his heels. They tried the door, but it was fastened upon the inner side.

"Stand back!" cried Ferrers Lord.

He flung himself madly against the door. The sturdy panels split, the screws bulged from the hinges. A second pressure of his shoulder sent the door crashing inwards. He leapt over it, and then reeled back.

The footman lay face downwards upon the carpet, his arms stretched out before him. Thurston stepped forward, and raised the prostrate figure. The eyes were glazed and staring, the face was ashen white and hideously distorted.

"By Jove!" cried the young man, in horror. "I believe he's dead—dead as a rat!"

Ferrers Lord did not hear. Like a man transfixed, he was gazing at the safe. The door was wide open: a bunch of keys hung from the lock. With a mad cry he darted across the room. Then his hand went to his head.

"Stolen!" he shouted. "Stolen!"

"What is stolen?"

"My model. The model of the Lord of the Deep."

Thurston let the dead man fall with a thud. He could hardly credit his ears; he could hardly believe his eyes. Ah! What was that?

He staggered towards the gruesome thing—a severed human arm. The light was brighter there, and a glance

showed him it was not the hideous object he had thought. It was artificial, and on one of the pink, waxen fingers a diamond ring gleamed and sparkled.

Ferrers Lord snatched it from him.

"The man who held his wrist," he panted—"the one-armed man! Spy, traitor, thief! I know him now, Thurston—Michael Scaroff, the Russian!"

With a second cry of rage and hate, he dashed the arm into the grate. The wax hand broke into fragments, a brilliant blaze hissed up, and the priceless diamond disappeared into the glowing ashes.

(Another thrilling instalment of this grand serial next Tuesday.)

For Next Week



"THE GREYFRIARS HYPNOTIST."

Quite a sensation is caused at Greyfriars by a certain Fourth-Former's new idea. Billy Bunter, not to be outdone, comes to the front with his ventriloquism and as Bob Cherry expresses it, "gets it in the neck!"

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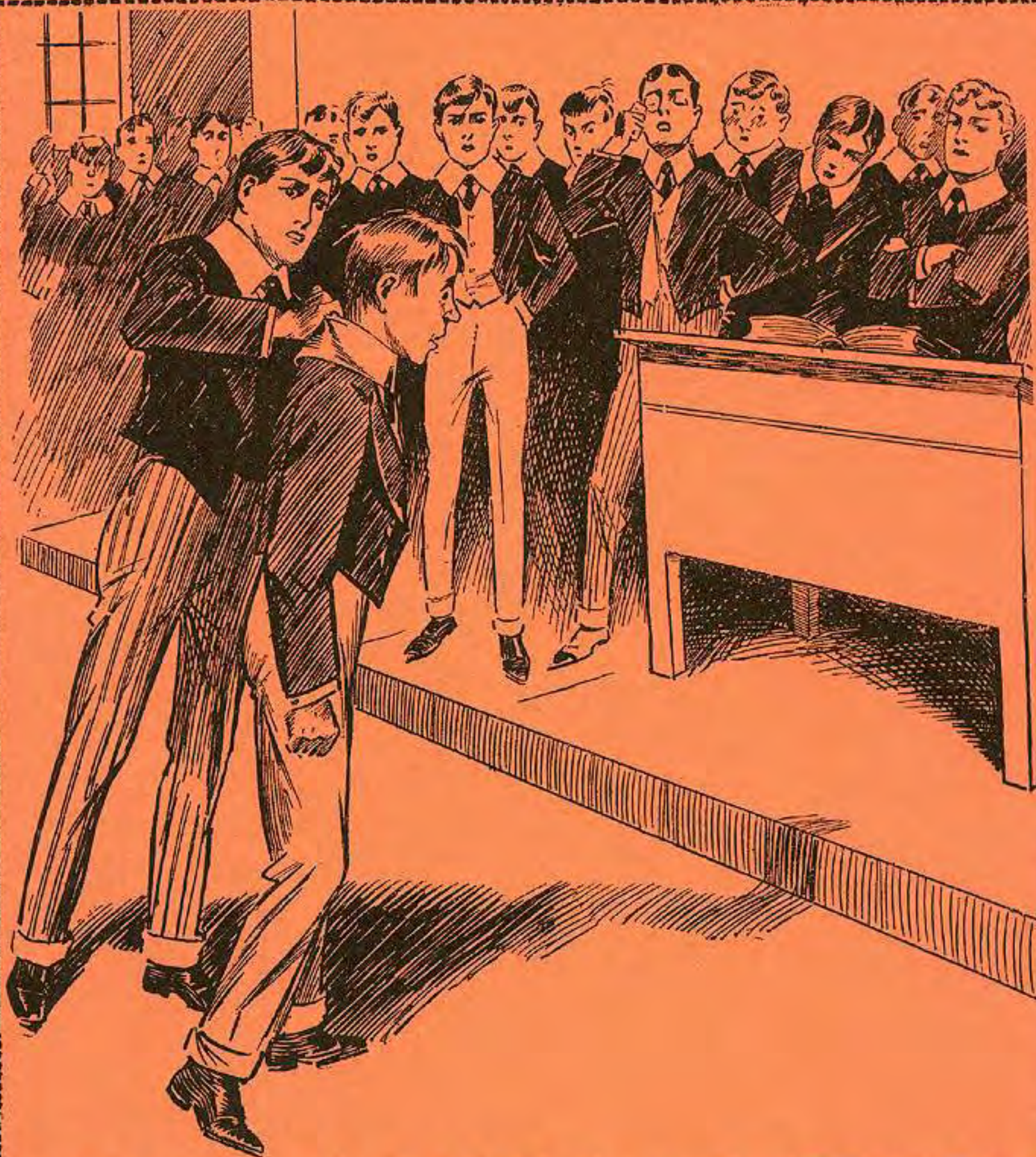


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"Now, you blessed Turncoat!" said Tom Merry sternly. "What have you got to say for yourself?"