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The Greyfriars Hypnotist

A Splendid,
Long, Complete School Tale
of
HARRY WHARTON & Co.,
at Greyfriars.

BY
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Not Wanted.

THE Bounder of Greyfriars stood in the doorway of his study, in the Remove passage. It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and a fine, clear, bright spring afternoon. Bright sunshine in the old Close seemed to be awakening the green on the trees after the long winter sleep. Nobody was staying indoors that afternoon, if he could possibly get outside.

Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, was not looking so cheerful as the rest of the juniors. Somehow or other, the Bounder felt his isolation that afternoon more keenly than he had felt it before.

Most, if not all, of the fellows were going out. They had made up jolly little parties to go up the river, or down to the seashore and the caves, or over the Black Pike. The

junior team would be playing footer. But whether walking, or rowing, or cycling, or playing footer, no one showed any desire for the company of Vernon-Smith.

And he did not like it.

It had always been the Bounder's boast that he was sufficient to himself—that if Greyfriars did not like him, Greyfriars could go its way, and he would go his.

But he could not always keep to that. On this sunny, keen afternoon, when all Nature seemed to be calling the boys out of doors, Vernon-Smith wished that he had been a little more like the others—that he had made their interests his.

He could play footer, if he liked, but he had made it impossible for Wharton, the Form captain, to play him in the Remove team. He could row, but no one wanted to row with him. He could walk with anybody in the Remove, but

when a party was made up to tramp over the Black Pike, Vernon-Smith was not asked to join it.

He had chosen his own path, and he was left in it.

The Bouncer was thinking of these things as he stood in his study doorway, and watched the juniors going out. Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came out of their study in football garb, with long coats and caps on. Vernon-Smith made a step into the passage.

"Going to play, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton looked round.

"Yes," he said.

"Do you want a man?"

"Thanks, no."

Vernon-Smith bit his lip.

"It's a scratch match, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yes, two Remove teams; but we don't want a man."

"Are you full up?"

"No," said Wharton. "We're playing nine a side; the other fellows are off. But I can't play you, Smith, if that is what you mean."

"Why not?" demanded the Bouncer fiercely.

Wharton looked steadily at him.

"Because long ago I gave you the choice between giving up your blackguardly ways and giving up Form footer. You chose to give up footer."

Vernon-Smith did not reply. The three chums of the Lower Fourth went down the passage, and down the stairs. Vernon-Smith leaned against the study doorpost and frowned.

It was quite true; he had not given up his blackguardly ways, and he did not intend to give them up. He had made his bed, and must lie upon it.

"Hang them!" he muttered. "After all, footer is a rotten tag!"

It was the case of the fox and the sour grapes over again. Vernon-Smith would very gladly have played footer that bright afternoon.

Two youths came down the passage from No. 13 Study. They were Bob Cherry and Mark Linley, of the Remove. Bob Cherry had a footer under his arm. The two were evidently going down to join Wharton. They gave Vernon-Smith a nod in passing, but did not stop to speak.

Vernon-Smith watched them go downstairs with a face that grew more clouded.

"I guess we shall have to hustle, some."

Vernon-Smith looked round quickly at the sound of that keen, crisp voice. It was the voice of Fisher T. Fish, the American junior at Greyfriars.

He was coming down from No. 14 Study with his study-mates, John Bull and Alonzo Todd.

The three juniors seemed to be in a hurry.

"It is due to your procrastination, my dear Fish," said Alonzo Todd. "If you had been a little more swift in your movements—"

"Oh, buck up, Toddy!"

"My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to—"

"I guess we'd have lynched your Uncle Benjamin if we had him over there," said Fisher T. Fish. "Over there" meant the United States. "We hear too much about your Uncle Benjamin, I guess."

"My dear Fish—"

"You fellows going out?" asked the Bouncer, with the most agreeable smile he could work up to his features. He was not accustomed to looking agreeable.

"Yes," said John Bull.

"What are you doing this afternoon?"

"I guess we're exploring the sea-caves," said Fisher T. Fish. "Not much in the way of caves, after what I've seen over there. But we're going to size them up, I guess. Come on, you chaps!"

The three walked on, leaving the Bouncer in his doorway. They did not ask him if he would care to go with them.

Vernon-Smith set his teeth hard together.

Bulstrode came out of the first study in the passage, with Tom Brown, the New Zealander. Vernon-Smith went down the passage towards them.

"Playing footer?" he asked.

"No," said Tom Brown shortly.

"Going out?"

"Yes."

Bulstrode looked another way. Bulstrode sometimes chummed with Vernon-Smith, when he had nothing better to do. But he did not like him. No one liked him, in spite of his wealth and his freedom with money. Bulstrode was going out with Tom Brown that afternoon. Bulstrode, in fact, had what Nugent called one of his decent fits on, and was being quite exemplary. When he was in that humour, Tom Brown was willing to go about with him; but Tom could not stand Vernon-Smith. Tom Brown knew very well that before they had been in company a quarter of an hour,

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Smith would be proposing a little game of nap with penny points, or something of the sort. And Bulstrode knew that if he asked the Bouncer to join him, the New Zealand junior would not stay. He preferred Tom Brown's company of the two.

And so he walked on, and Tom Brown, having completed his monosyllabic conversation with the Bouncer, followed him. They went downstairs and went out.

The Bouncer's eyes glittered.

Although he never would "play the game," as the other fellows considered it, he had a fancy for being in the best set in the Remove. He did not like to have to fall back on fellows like Snoop or Billy Bunter for company. But it was clear that few, if any, of the fellows wanted to be bothered with him that afternoon.

Vernon-Smith went slowly downstairs. In the hall two or three fellows of the Sixth were chatting. There were Loder, and Carne, and Ionides, all three, as the Bouncer well knew, greater "sports" and blackguards than himself. They went out as he came down, and he watched them across the Close.

He could have joined them if he liked, he knew that. They would have taken a junior in their company, if he had plenty of money. He knew that he could have shared with them the honour of playing cards with Mr. Banks and Mr. Cobb at the Cross Keys. But he knew, too, that he would have had to be willing to play and lose, and pay up cheerfully, and be openly cheated and patronised at the same time. That was the price he would have to pay for the company of the black sheep of the Sixth. And Vernon-Smith thought the price a little too high.

He stood in the School House doorway, looking out into the sunny quad. A fat junior came rolling along the passage, and he paused and blinked at the Bouncer through his big spectacles.

"I say, you know—" he began.

Vernon-Smith nodded to him. He seldom if ever wasted a nod upon Billy Bunter. But he was feeling now as if he were glad that there was somebody for him to nod to.

"Hallo!" he said.

"I say," went on Bunter, encouraged by Vernon-Smith's manner, "I wonder if you'd do me a little favour, Smithy?"

"Well?"

"I'm expecting a postal-order this afternoon," Bunter explained. "It's rather annoying, but it hasn't come early enough for me to have the money to take out with me. It's rather rotten going about on a half-holiday with nothing in your pockets. Would you care to advance me the ten shillings, Smithy, and have the postal-order when it comes? It will be only cashing it in advance, you know."

Vernon-Smith grunted.

If Loder and Carne's company wasn't worth paying for, certainly Billy Bunter's wasn't. The Bouncer of Greyfriars stretched out his hand to grip the fat junior by the collar, with the intention of pitching him down the steps.

But Billy Bunter was on the watch.

Bunter, short-sighted as he was, always managed to keep alert when he was trying to borrow money. Fellows had a way of cutting up rough at such times.

He dodged quickly out of the Bouncer's reach.

"I say, you know, chuck it!" he exclaimed. "My postal-order will be here by the afternoon delivery, at latest, and —"

"You cadging young cad!" said Vernon-Smith. "You won't get twopence out of me!"

Bunter blinked at him.

"Oh, really, Smith—"

"Cut off!"

"I'll cut off with pleasure," said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "I don't know that I care to be seen talking to you. You're barred by most of the decent chaps, and I shall get talked about if I am seen with you, anyway."

"Get out, you young cad!"

"You're no account in the Form; nobody minds you," went on Bunter, who could hit hard when he liked, though not with his fists. "You know jolly well you're going around alone this afternoon because nobody wants you. I— Oh!"

Bunter bolted as Vernon-Smith made a rush at him.

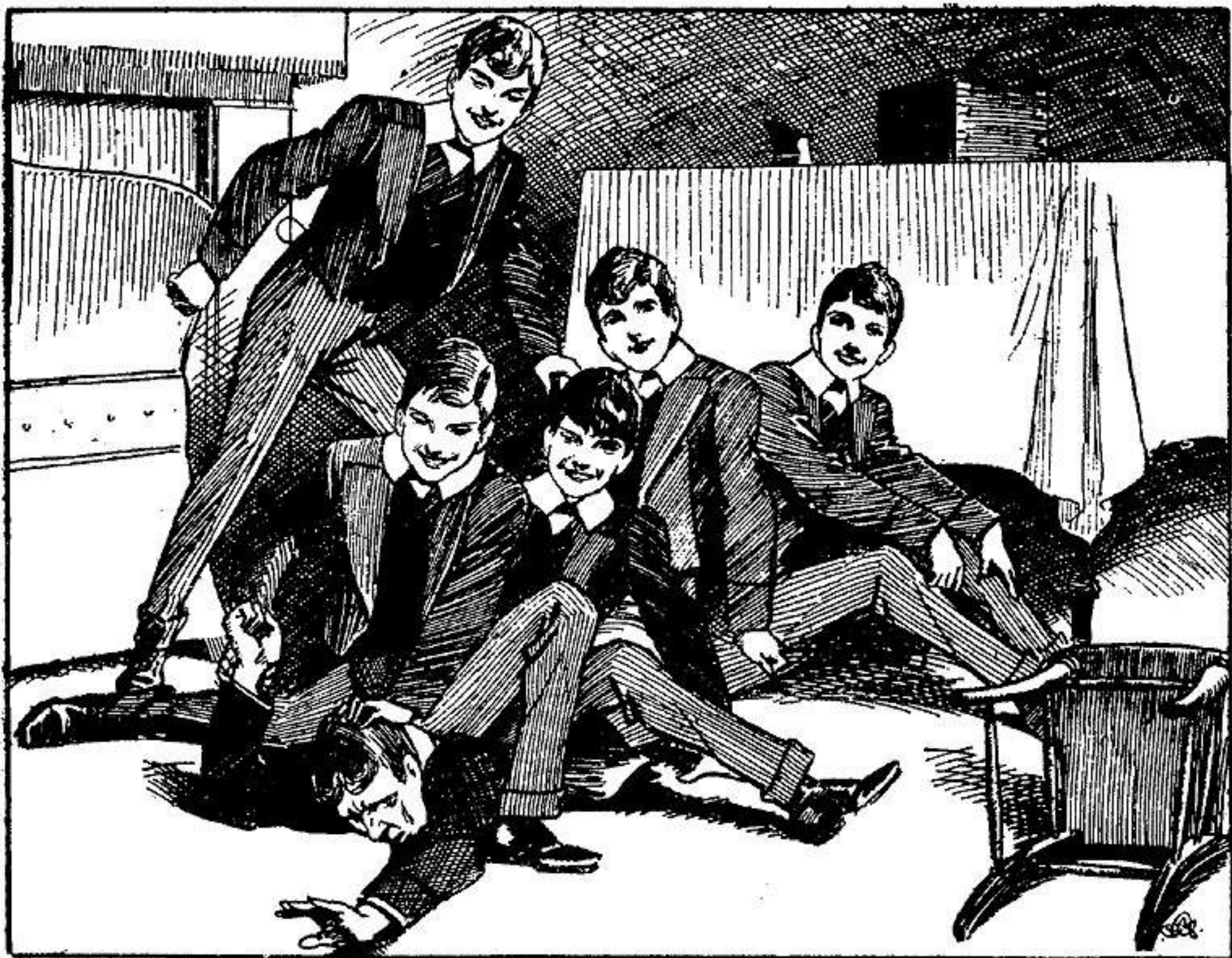
But this time he was not quite quick enough. Vernon-Smith's boot crashed behind him as he ran down the steps.

"Ow!" roared Bunter.

He rolled down the rest of the steps, and sat in a puddle left there by yesterday's rain. He sat and blinked and gasped.

"Groo! I'm wet! Yow! Boast!"

Vernon-Smith laughed, and walked away. He was feeling a little relieved. If he could not be contented himself, he could at least inflict discomfort upon somebody else, and that was some consolation.



The sham hypnotist went down heavily and a crowd of juniors sprawled over him. Vernon-Smith disappeared under the sprawling mass of juniors and was squashed. "Ow!" he cried. "Leggo! Yah!" (See page 27).

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Billy Bunter Is Scared.

VERNON-SMITH ascended the stairs slowly, and went into his study. He closed the door, and threw himself into his armchair. It was an easy and luxurious chair; everything in Vernon-Smith's study was luxurious. The fellows at Greyfriars furnished their studies themselves, and Vernon-Smith did not spare money in making himself comfortable. His father, Samuel Vernon-Smith, the Cotton King and millionaire, made him a princely allowance, and he spent it lavishly. Lavishly, that is to say, when he could himself derive pleasure from his extravagance. Charitable expenditure was not much in the Bounder's line.

The Bounder threw himself back in his chair, and put his feet on the fender, and lighted a cigarette, one of the forbidden luxuries he allowed himself.

"The rotters!" he muttered.

With that word he would gladly have dismissed the matter from his mind; but he could not do it.

He could not help thinking of his exclusion. Why was he of no account in the Remove? Fellows like Alonzo Todd, who were popularly supposed to be too stupid to live, could find comradeship, even affectionate regard. Vernon-Smith was cleverer and richer than Todd, but nobody liked him as Todd was liked. Even Billy Bunter was seldom thrown entirely upon his own resources, though it is true that Bunter had a thickness of skin which Vernon-Smith did not possess.

His wealth, and his father's strange influence over the Head, had made Vernon-Smith feel once that if he were not liked, he could make himself feared.

But even that consolation was not his. No one feared him. Even Hazeldene, who owed him a great deal of money, wanted to have nothing to do with him. Even Hazeldene was "fed up" with him.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

"Cads!" growled the Bounder.

If there were only some means— And as the thought crossed his mind, the Bounder felt in his pocket, and drew out a small book in a cloth cover. He opened it, and glanced over the pages.

The book was entitled "Hypnotism, the Secret of Power." It was a catch-penny pamphlet, sold for ten times its value, if indeed it had any value at all. The author professed to be able to teach hypnotism; and Vernon-Smith, who had always had a leaning towards that in his mind, had bought the book to study it, as many a simpleton had done. To possess power over others, to make those he disliked bend to his will, that was a great ambition with the Bounder.

He had gone through and through the book, and studied all the shabby woodcuts indicating the mysterious passes that should be made. He could make all the passes; he knew most of them by heart.

But he did not believe that he could hypnotise. Yet, why not?

The ambitious hypnotist had to have a strong will and a strong personality, and Vernon-Smith believed that he had both.

By the exertion of strong will-power, and the use of the passes indicated in the engravings, he was supposed to be able to hypnotise favourable subjects.

He had never tried yet.

But if he tried, who knew whether he might not succeed? He could try upon someone who had a weak will, or a weak character—some flabby specimen like Bunter, for instance.

"I'll jolly well try!" muttered Vernon-Smith.

He was almost dazzled at the idea of becoming a hypnotist—of wielding irresistible power over the other fellows at Greyfriars.

How splendid it would be to hypnotise Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, for instance, and make them fight one

NEXT WEEK: ANOTHER Splendid, Long Complete Tale of **HARRY WHARTON & CO.** at Greyfriars, entitled— (See page 14.)

another; or to hypnotise Bob Cherry, and make him stand up in class, and insult the Form-master, and get a flogging!

That was the Bounder's idea of what would be splendid. No thought of showing scruples or anything of that sort crossed his mind.

He rose from his chair, and paced the study for a few moments. Then he stopped and looked in the glass, and began to make the passes he had learned in the book.

He had most of them correctly. They did not seem to have any effect upon his own face in the glass; but that was not to be expected. Who could tell what effect they might have upon Billy Bunter, for instance?

Billy Bunter, at that moment, was sneaking along the Remove passage to Vernon-Smith's study. Bunter had gone down to the footer field with the hope of raising a loan off the players, and had been promptly kicked off the ground. He had even descended so far as to cadge a loan from fags of the Third Form, and had been chased across the Close by the Third-Formers.

The run had left him breathless, and hungrier than ever. Billy Bunter was always hungry, and his unruly appetite seemed to get worse and worse, whenever he was out of money. And since he no longer lived in Wharton's study money had been alarmingly short. He had only a shilling a week pocket-money of his own, and the postal-orders he talked so much about never seemed to arrive.

Bunter felt that he simply must raise a loan somewhere that afternoon, or else raid the tuckshop. In his extremity he thought of Vernon-Smith again, and he was coming there to try the Bounder as a last resource. He was turning over in his mind all the various forms of flattery he might use, in order to extract a shilling or a half-crown from the Bounder.

But when he reached the study door he hesitated.

He knew the Bounder's bad temper, and he knew that as soon as he knocked and went in, it was quite likely that a heavy dictionary or a cricket-stump might be buzzed at his head. He waited a couple of minutes, listening. The study was strangely still. He wondered if Vernon-Smith had fallen asleep in his chair.

Bunter finally ventured to open the door silently, and peep in through the aperture. He was ready to bolt at a sign of hostility.

But there was no sound or movement, and he blinked in again in surprise. The Bounder must be asleep. No, Bunter caught sight of him suddenly.

Vernon-Smith was standing before a looking-glass, making mysterious passes at his own reflection.

Bunter stood rooted to the spot.

That the Bounder had taken up the study of hypnotism he did not know. That a fellow could amuse himself by grimacing and gesticulating at his own reflection in the glass, seemed to point to the fact that his reason was unseated.

Was Vernon-Smith mad? That, indeed, would account for the fact that a fellow rolling in money should decline to lend a chap a few shillings in advance upon a postal-order.

Bunter drew the door close, trembling.

The fellow must be mad! Good heavens! What a risk had been run by every fellow in the Remove! Suppose that Smith's madness should take a violent turn at any moment?

Bunter shuddered at the thought.

He had nearly entered the study alone with the lunatic, who might be dangerous, and there might be a knife lying about.

"Groo!" murmured Billy Bunter.

In his nervousness he clicked the door shut. There was an exclamation inside the study. Vernon-Smith had caught his reflection in the glass, and had heard the click of the door. In a moment the Bounder had stepped to the door, and thrown it open.

"Bunter!"

The fat junior was rolling away as fast as his weight would allow him. Vernon-Smith shouted after him down the passage.

"Bunter, stop!"

Bunter dashed off madly.

The Bounder, having already determined to try the effects of his hypnotism on Bunter, thought it a favourable opportunity now, while the other fellows were all out.

But Billy Bunter was in too terrific a state of alarm to stop. He rushed for the stairs at top speed.

Vernon-Smith ran after him, calling to him to stop. He knew that Bunter must have seen him making those mysterious passes before the glass, and he did not want the secret to be given away.

"Bunter! Stop, I say, Bunter!"

"Ow!" gasped the fat junior. "I know he means m-m-murder! Ow! Oh! I know I sha'n't get out of the house alive! Ow!"

He missed his footing half way down the stairs, and rolled

to the mat at the bottom. Picking himself up with unusual activity, and scarcely stopping to put his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, Bunter tore for the doorway.

Vernon-Smith was close behind now. Bunter's frantic flight surprised the Bounder of Greyfriars. His previous treatment of the fat junior had not been gentle; but it had hardly been sufficiently rough to justify this wild terror.

"Stop, Bunter! I want to speak to you!"

"Ow!"

"Stop, I say!"

"Yow! Ow!"

Bunter fled wildly from the house, and the Bounder dashed after him. The Bounder was angry now, and it would have gone hard with Bunter if he had been caught. But fear lent wings to the Owl of the Remove.

He dashed away towards the footer field. There Harry Wharton & Co. were at play, and there Bunter hoped to find safety from the dangerous lunatic.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Interrupted Footer.

"LAY up!"

"Go it, Wharton!"

"On the ball!"

It was only a practice match that the Remove were playing, but it was going very strong, and a number of idlers had gathered about the ground to watch. Harry Wharton was in fine form.

He had captured the ball, and had dribbled it through the opposing halves in a masterly style. He had a straight run to goal, only the goalie being in a position to trouble him.

Billy Bunter dashed upon the footer-field, hopping over the rope, amid shouts from the spectators.

"Keep back, there!"

"Keep off the grass."

"Outside!"

Bunter dashed on wildly.

Right into Harry Wharton he ran, taking him in flank, and the captain of the Remove staggered under the unexpected attack.

Bunter, hurled back by the shock, fell gasping upon the ground.

"Ow!" he yelled. "Help!"

"You ass!" roared Harry Wharton, as a back rushed up and cleared. "You silly ass!"

"Ow! Murder! Help!"

Phip! went the whistle. Temple of the Upper Fourth was refereeing the match, and he was curious to know what Bunter's antics might mean.

"What's the matter, Bunter?" exclaimed Mark Linley.

"Ow! Help!"

"What's happened?" called out Temple.

"Murder!"

"What!"

"Help—madman—murder—help!" gasped Billy Bunter incoherently.

"What on earth—"

"What is he babbling about?"

"The babblefulness is terrific!"

"What has happened, Bunter?"

"Help! Keep him off! Murder!" shrieked the fat junior. "He's after me! I believe he's got a knife—I mean, I know he's got a knife! Help!"

Harry Wharton grasped the fat junior by the shoulders, and dragged him to his feet. Billy Bunter gave a fearful blink round through his spectacles.

Vernon-Smith was not in sight. He had dropped the pursuit short of the footer field. Bunter was a little relieved, but still suspicious.

"He—he isn't here!" he gasped.

"Whom do you mean?"

"Smith—"

"Eh! Smith's here."

"What!" yelled Bunter, clinging to Wharton. "Keep him off! Yow! Keep him off! He's mad!"

"Mad, am I?" roared Smith minor, of the Remove, a sturdy and red-faced young junior. "I'll jolly soon show you—"

"Ow! I—I meant Vernon-Smith."

"Oh, the Bounder!"

"Yes. Is he here?"

"No," said Harry Wharton. "But look here, explain yourself. What does this mean? What has happened? You'll have to have a jolly good excuse for interrupting a game of footer in this way, or you'll be about smashed!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The smashfulness of the esteemed Bunter will be terrific."

"He—he's mad!"

"Who's mad!"
 "Vernon-Smith—the Bounder."
 "Oh, he's been japing the silly ass!" said Bob Cherry impatiently. "That's all."
 "Yes, that's it."

"I tell you he's mad!" shrieked Bunter. "I—I looked into his study, and—and he was raving and dancing like a—a wild dervish, and making faces at himself in the mirror—"

"My hat!"

"Then he saw me, and came for me with a knife—"

"A knife?"

"Yes, a fearful long knife, that glittered like—like a knife. I rushed away at top speed, and he rushed after me, yelling like a Red Indian."

Billy Bunter never related a story without allowing his vivid imagination to supply a few additional details, and he was giving his fertile fancy free rein now.

"My word!" said Nugent, with a start. "Even Bunter can't be inventing that altogether. I suppose Smithy's been after him."

"I tell you he's mad—dangerous!" yelled Bunter. "He dashed after me downstairs, and as I reached the bottom he made a cut at me, and nearly hit me. The poker was bent nearly in two on the banisters."

"The poker!" yelled Bob Cherry. "You said a knife just now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I didn't!"

"Wasn't it a knife a minute ago, you chaps?" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Yes, yes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He—he had a poker in one hand, and a knife in the other," said Bunter. "He made a fearful lick at me with the poker and barely missed. You'll find the place where the banisters have been smashed. Then he sprang at me like—like a tiger, brandishing the knife—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm telling you the truth!" yelled Bunter indignantly. "He's mad—mad as a hatter! I believe he's got a revolver. In fact, I remember now I heard a shot as I ran out of the School House door."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It whizzed close to my head."

"Which hand did he have the pistol in?" shrieked Bob Cherry. "The same one with the poker, or the same one with the knife?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He—he had put the knife between his teeth then," said Bunter. "He was snarling like a wild beast. His face was convulsed like that of the chap we were reading of the other day in the newspaper serial, and his eyes gleamed like lightning. He—"

"My word!"

"You ought to be a reporter, Bunter!"

"Or a novelist!"

"Or a lawyer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, shut up your blessed lies!" said Bob Cherry, in disgust. "You've made out the Bounder to have three hands already, and if you go on you'll say he had four, and a machine-gun in the fourth. Get out!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Buzz off!"

"Kick him off the field!"

"Lam him!"

"Ow! Yow! I—I say, you fellows—ow!—lemme alone! I—I'll go—ow! Yah!"

Many feet joined in the good work.

Every fellow who had room to kick kicked; and Billy Bunter got off the footer-ground even more quickly than he had got on to it.

He roared and howled and hopped and tumbled over the rope among the lookers-on. They joined in the good work and kicked and bumped the fat junior till he escaped.

The Owl of the Remove, by the time he had got clear, almost wished that he had remained to take his chance with the Bounder of Greyfriars.

Billy Bunter crawled away, and the whistle rang out again on the footer-field, and the game was resumed.

Bunter, with a separate ache in every bone in his body, crawled off, and, blinking back at the footer-field, he apostrophised all the players, and Greyfriars generally, with the expressive epithet:

"Beasts!"

Then he rolled away to the tuckshop. He had no money, but there was a melancholy pleasure in feasting his eyes upon the good things he might not touch, and that pleasure was all that was left to the Owl of the Remove.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

NEXT WEEK: ANOTHER Splendid, Long Complete Tale of HARRY WHARTON & CO. at Greyfriars, entitled—(See page 14.)

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

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The 'Fluence.

BILLY BUNTER put his head into the tuckshop, and the next moment he jerked it back with a gasp of terror. For a hand was extended from behind the door, and it closed upon his collar.

It was the Bounder's hand!

Vernon-Smith had not cared to pursue Bunter as far as the playing-fields and explain matters there. He had strolled into the tuckshop. He knew that sooner or later Billy Bunter would turn up in that favourite haunt.

He was right. From the doorway he had seen Bunter approaching without the short-sighted Owl seeing him. He had drawn back behind the door as Bunter came up. Now his knuckles were grinding against the back of Bunter's neck, and there was no escape for the fat Remove.

Bunter gave a howl of terror.

"Lemme go!" he roared.

"Look here, Bunter—"

"Help! Murder! Gro-o-o-o!"

Bunter finished up with choking gasps as Vernon-Smith shook him savagely. The Bounder's face was very savage.

"Stop your row, you stupid young cad!" he exclaimed angrily. "I'm not going to hurt you!"

"Ow! Groo! Hel— Grooo!"

"Come with me!"

Bunter struggled violently.

"I—groo!—won't! I—I know you mean murder! I— Oh! Ow!"

Vernon-Smith stared at him in blank amazement.

"Are you mad?" he exclaimed.

"Groo! No! But you are! Yow!"

"I? What do you mean?" exclaimed the Bounder angrily.

"Yow! I saw you in your study—capering like a lunatic—yow! Yah! I know you're mad—ow!"

Vernon-Smith burst into a laugh.

"You young fool!" he exclaimed.

Bunter blinked at him. He was somewhat reassured by the laugh. According to all the newspaper serial stories he had read, dangerous maniacs never laughed. They gnashed their teeth, or ground them, or gritted them, as suited the author's fancy, or they scowled blackly, or dark lightnings darted from their eyes. But they were never known to laugh.

"You duffer!" said Vernon-Smith. "I was practising."

"Eh? Practising?"

"Yes, you silly ass! I'm a hypnotist."

"W-w-what?"

"I was making hypnotic passes when you saw me," Vernon-Smith explained.

"Oh!" said Billy Bunter, greatly relieved, though somewhat suspicious that this might be a story invented by a maniac's cunning.

"I want you to help me," said the Bounder.

"Oh! How?"

"I'm a hypnotist, and I want a subject," the Bounder explained. "If you care to be my subject I'll stand you a jolly good feed."

Bunter brightened up.

"Now you're talking!" he said.

"Come to my study and we'll try it on," said Vernon-Smith more amiably.

Bunter's terrors revived at the suggestion. In his mind's eye he saw himself shut up in the study with a cunning maniac, and Vernon-Smith suddenly producing a large knife from up his sleeve, and— Ugh!

"I—I don't care about the study," stammered Bunter. "I—I'd prefer the open air, if you don't mind. It—it's just as good, and—and more healthy, you know."

The Bounder laughed scoffingly.

"You cowardly fool!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"But just as you like! Look here, I'm going to make some passes and hypnotise you."

"I—I— Does it hurt?" stammered Bunter.

"Of course it doesn't!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith impatiently. "It's a process of will-power. It couldn't hurt."

"Oh, I know as much about hypnotism as you can tell me!" said Bunter. "I dabbled in it once myself. I hypnotised Mrs. Mimble once."

The Bounder sneered.

"Let's see you do it now," he said.

"I—I've forgotten the trick of it," said Bunter. "Look here, I'm willing to be your subject, only—ahem!—you settle up whether you succeed or fail?"

"Certainly!"

"How much?" asked Billy Bunter, with businesslike abruptness.

"Two bob!" said the Bounder equally tersely.

"Money down?"
 "Immediately after the seance."
 "Look here, it's only business to have cash in advance—"
 "You young ass! Do you think I would trust you?"
 Vernon-Smith exclaimed contemptuously. "Come on, let's get to business! You can have the two bob when we're finished. Come back this way so that we sha'n't be seen by everybody."

"All r-r-right!" stammered Bunter.
 As a matter of fact, Bunter had no faith in hypnotism. He had dabbled in it sufficiently himself to doubt it very much.

He could not rid his mind of a fear that Vernon-Smith was really insane and was seeking to take him at a disadvantage in a secluded spot.

Only his greed for the promised reward prevented him from taking to his heels at once, without the experiment having been tried.

But Billy Bunter wanted that two shillings very much, and he followed Vernon-Smith with slow and hesitating footsteps.

"Now then," said Vernon-Smith, "stand there."

"All right!"

"Keep still!"

"Ye-e-es."

"Fix your eyes on mine."

"Ye-e-es."

"You'd better take those silly goggles off, I think."

"I—I'd rather keep them on!" stuttered Bunter. "I—I want to see the knife—I mean, I want to see whether—that is to say—"

"Oh, leave them on, then!" said Vernon-Smith impatiently. "Now, remain quite still, looking straight at me, your hands down to your sides."

"Like that?"

"Yes, that will do. Fix your thoughts on vacancy."

"On w-w-what?"

"Vacancy, ass!"

Billy Bunter rolled his eyes to and fro, as if in search of vacancy.

"Look at me, ass!" roared Vernon-Smith.

"Ye-e-es!"

"Now fix your thoughts on vacancy."

"I—I haven't any. I—I mean—"

"Think of nothing—nothing at all!"

"Oh, I see! I can do that!"

"Yield yourself to the influence when you feel it creeping over you," said the Bounder of Greyfriars. "Don't try to resist the 'fluence. That would put any hypnotist off the mark."

"All serene!"

"Then I'll make the passes. Steady!"

"Ye-e-es!"

Billy Bunter blinked nervously at the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith raised his hands to make the hypnotic passes.

He came closer to Bunter, his hands sweeping mysteriously before his face.

To the startled eyes of the fat junior the scheme of the dangerous maniac was clear. He meant to make a sudden grab at Bunter's throat under pretence of making hypnotic passes. Billy Bunter saw it all.

His knees knocked together, and he blinked wildly around. As the waving hands came reaching towards his face Billy Bunter, without waiting for the 'fluence, fled!

He dashed off at top speed, leaving the amateur hypnotist standing there, with his hands waving in the air.

Vernon-Smith turned red with rage.

"Come back!" he roared.

But Billy Bunter did not come back. He fled frantically, and dashed into the School House, and did not pause even to take breath until he was safe in his study in the Remove passage and had locked the door behind him.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Shaken Up.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came in ruddy and breathing deep, after the footer match. They were hungry as hunters, as Bob Cherry elegantly put it, and quite ready for tea. They had forgotten about the absurd adventure of Billy Bunter, but the sight of Vernon-Smith in the Remove passage brought it back to their minds.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, giving the Bounder of Greyfriars one of his mighty slaps on the shoulder. "I hear you're off your rocker!"

Vernon-Smith turned round with a growl.

"Keep your paws off me!" he exclaimed angrily.

"Rats!" said Bob, with undiminished cheerfulness. "Is the rumour true, my son, or is it only exaggerated?"

"Ass! Has that fool Bunter—"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

"He said he found you in your study capering and gibbering," said Nugent, laughing. "Is it a new amusement you've found instead of footer?"

"It was that fool Bunter's nonsense," said Vernon-Smith, who was far from wishing that a rumour should gain ground that he was what the juniors elegantly termed "potty."

"He saw me at practice."

"What on earth were you practising, then?" asked Wharton.

"Passes!"

"Passes?" exclaimed the Famous Four together.

"Yes."

"What sort of passes—not Alpine passes, I suppose?" Bob Cherry queried.

"Hypnotic passes," said Vernon-Smith loftily.

The chums of the Remove stared at him. Bob Cherry gave a long whistle.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "Do you mean you've taken up hypnotism? I hope it will be as comic as Bunter's variety! Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors roared.

"You'll see what you will see," said the Bounder, with a snort.

He turned away. The chums looked after him curiously. Vernon-Smith was a fellow of a different calibre from Billy Bunter, and there was much more likely to be something in his claims. But hypnotism! They did not credit that!

"It's spoof!" said Nugent.

"The spooffulness is terrific, my worthy chums!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's that?"

"That" was a wail from up the Remove passage. It came from little Wun Lung, the Chinese junior. Harry Wharton ran up the passage. Wun Lung was in the window recess, and Bulstrode, the Bully of the Remove, was twisting his ear.

"You bully!" exclaimed Harry Wharton angrily. "Let him alone!"

Bulstrode scowled at him.

"The young heathen beast has been putting mustard in my jam-tarts!" he roared.

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

"You can cackle if you like!" snorted Bulstrode. "But I'll make the young scoundrel squirm for it!"

"Ow! Me no puttee!" wailed Wun Lung.

"Did you do it, Wun Lung?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Me no do."

"Who did, then?" demanded Bulstrode.

"No savvy."

"You young liar!"

"Did you see him do it, Bulstrode?" demanded Wharton.

"No, I didn't."

"Then how do you know he did it? He says he didn't."

"You know what a liar he is!"

"Well, yes, I do," admitted Wharton. "Still, if you have no evidence—"

"I don't want any. It was just one of his rotten Chinese tricks, and if he didn't do that, he's done a dozen others he's never got licked for."

"That won't do," said Wharton. "Let him alone!"

"I won't!"

Harry Wharton stepped forward. Bulstrode gritted his teeth with rage. It was clear that the sturdy captain of the Remove meant to take up the quarrel for the little Chinese. Bulstrode, with a scowling brow, swung up a cricket-stump, which he had evidently brought with him for the purpose of thrashing the heathen.

"Stand back, Harry Wharton," the Remove bully said, between his teeth, "or I'll lay you on your back!"

Wharton did not stand back.

"You'll let Wun Lung alone?" he said.

"I won't!"

"Then you'll handle me instead."

"Stand back!"

"Rats!"

Bulstrode's hand swung back, and in another moment a fearfully reckless blow would have been struck.

But in that moment a hand grasped Bulstrode's wrist from behind, and the cricket-stump was jerked away and flung along the passage.

Bulstrode swung round with a fierce exclamation, and as he did so, the grip was transferred from his wrist to his neck, and he was shaken like a rat.

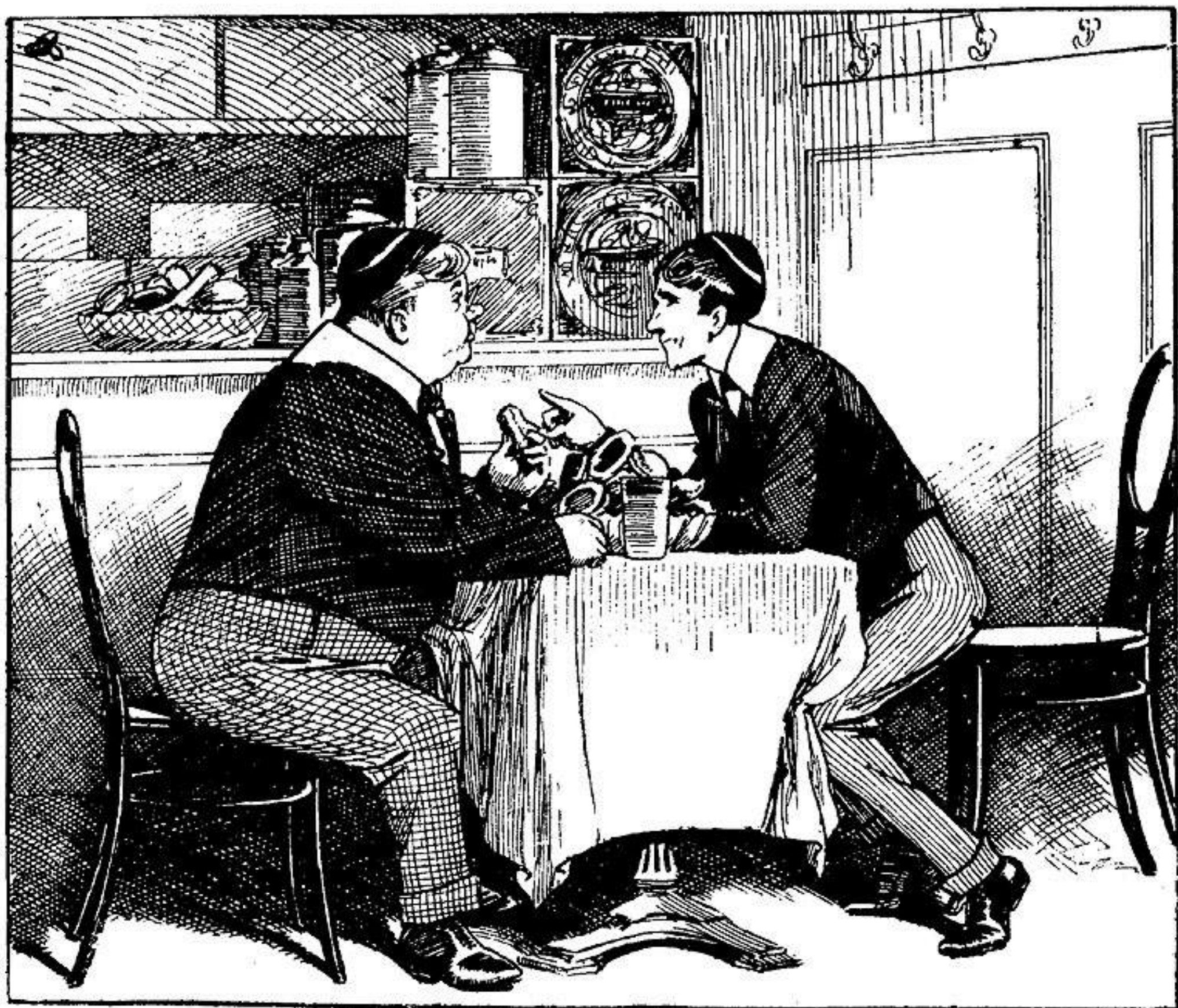
"Ow!" gasped Bulstrode. "Leggo! Bull, you beast! Leggo!"

John Bull did not let go.

His face was hard and grim.

"You brute!" he exclaimed, giving the Remove bully a heavy shake with every word. "You brute! You know you might have injured Wharton if that stump had struck him!"

"I don't care! I—"



"I want you to be my subject," said Vernon-Smith, "but you'll have to fake it—put it all on, you see, to convince the other fellows it's the real thing. You must do everything I tell you!" "You could make me eat things," suggested Bunter. "Make a show of how much a chap can eat under the 'fluence.'" (See Page 10.)

"I'll make you care!"

John Bull shook the Remove bully as a dog might shake a rat.

Bull was a slighter lad than Bulstrode, and younger; but he was very sturdy and strong, and seemed to be a mass of muscular strength from head to foot. Bulstrode seemed to be quite helpless in his hands.

"Thank you, Bull," said Harry Wharton quietly.

Bull did not reply. He was devoting all his time to Bulstrode. The Remove bully struggled fiercely, but he could not escape.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Go it, Bull!"

The chums of the Remove looked on and laughed. They liked John Bull; he was very popular in the Remove, excepting when he was playing the concertina. John Bull's concertina was a terror. The juniors had smashed up the one he had brought to Greyfriars, and although John Bull had obtained another since then, he played it by stealth in secret places, and kept it carefully hidden from his Form-fellows.

"Ow! Leggo!" panted Bulstrode. "I—I give in!"

John Bull released him.

Bulstrode staggered against the wall, gasping for breath.

"If you want to take the affair any further, I'll meet you in the gym., with or without gloves," said John Bull quietly.

Bulstrode gasped and scowled.

"I'll make you pay for this!" he said thickly.

John Bull shrugged his shoulders.

The Remove bully went unsteadily down the passage, and went into his own study. John Bull nodded to the Famous Four, and went into his study.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

"Strong, that chap!" said Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Yes. A good many fellows in the Remove are anxious to know whether he could lick me, and some of them would bring about a tussle if they could. It won't ever come to that if I can help it."

"Rather not. Bull's all right when he's not musical. By the way, I'm coming in to tea with you," Bob Cherry remarked. "Marky's gone to tea with the Head, and Wun Lung is going to feed with his minor in the Second Form-room. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where's that blessed young heathen got to?"

"He's gone!"

"I shouldn't wonder if he did put the mustard in Bulstrode's tarts," said Nugent. "It's just one of his tricks. But Bulstrode's always bullying him."

"I rather think Wun Lung keeps his end up, upon the whole," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Come on, Bob, lend a hand getting the tea."

The Famous Four went into No. 1 Study. As Bob Cherry remarked, it seemed like old times, when he had been a member of that study, before he joined Mark Linley and Wun Lung in No. 13.

Harry Wharton lighted the fire. The weather was very cold, and they needed a fire after the warmth gained on the footer field. He put the kettle on the boil, and Bob Cherry laid the tea-cloth, cheerfully knocking over an inkstand and a pile of books in the process. Bob Cherry very seldom did anything at all without knocking something over.

"Shove the frying-pan this way," said Harry Wharton. "There's bacon!"

"Ripping."

A fat face was put in at the doorway, and Bunter blinked cautiously into the study.

"I—I say, that mad chap Smith isn't here, is he?"

"No," said Harry, laughing.

"You fellows going to have tea?"

"Yes."

"Good! I'll have tea with you. W-w-w-what—"

Bunter broke off with a howl of amazement as Bob Cherry seized a bread-knife, and, flourishing it in the air, made a rush towards him.

"Ow! Oh! He's mad—they're all mad! It's catching! Ow! Help!"

Billy Bunter slammed the door and bolted frantically along the passage.

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

Bob Cherry flung the knife on the table, and flung himself into a chair, gasping with laughter. Billy Bunter was not likely to return to tea in No. 1 Study that evening.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Music Hath Charms.

"GREAT Scott! What's that?"

"Some rotter in the passage trying on some jape, I should say, Wharton," said Bob Cherry, rising, and walking to the study door.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a smothered laugh from outside.

Harry Wharton & Co. were in their study when Wharton thought he heard the door handle rattle suspiciously.

"He, he, he!"

As they heard the laugh repeated, Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton made a dive at the door. But it refused to open. Wharton's suspicions were correct. Someone was fastening it on the outside.

"Oh, oh! So it's like that, is it?" said Bob Cherry warily. "Come on, kids. Lay hold. Grip the giddy handle, Wharton. We'll grab you and yank the door open in two twos."

"Right-ho!"

In a moment Harry Wharton had taken a firm grip of the door handle. The chums threw their arms round each other's waists one behind the other.

"Now, kids," sang out Bob Cherry, "all together!"

But the door still refused to yield. It was securely fastened. Again the chums tugged. But it was no use. They were prisoners in their own study.

"Now, then, you rotten wasters!" Nugent bawled through the keyhole. "Don't act the goat! Open the door, or it'll be worse for you!"

And Harry Wharton & Co. emphasised their words by hammering on the door with their clenched fists.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the Remove strained their ears to catch the accents of the voice, but they could not tell whose it was.

"We'll skin you, you dummies!" yelled Bob Cherry, thumping the door viciously. "We're bound to get out soon!"

The only reply was the echo. The chums continued to tug at the door. But it was of no avail. Whoever had tied it had done it well.

"Are you going to unfasten this door?" demanded Harry Wharton.

But he got no more answer than Bob Cherry. As a matter of fact, Skinner, who was watching, could have replied had he liked. But he thought a better reply could be made by waiting for Bulstrode's return.

The japing of Harry Wharton was a risky thing for anyone. Skinner wasn't too brave. He was suddenly called to a sense of his risk as one piece of the rope with which the door was tied nearly gave way. The chums of the Remove were making tremendous efforts to regain their liberty. Skinner managed, however, to make the rope taut again. Then, to his infinite relief, Bulstrode appeared in the passage, carrying a concertina under his arm.

Harry Wharton & Co. heard his footsteps. Instantly they began to shout for assistance.

But no answer came.

"Now, then, you rotter!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Can't you see that some rotter has been playing a trick on us? Get the door open somehow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The mocking laughter exasperated the chums. But there was no help for it. The hope from the footsteps in the passage died at once. Whoever he was, he was clearly an accomplice.

"Let's make a row!" said Harry Wharton. "Someone will be sure to hear us."

And the chums of the Remove set to it with fists on door, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

kicks, shouts, yells, for full five minutes. But after they had finished came a dead silence—for about half a minute. Then they were horrified to hear the terrible squeaking of a concertina just outside the door.

Drawl! Squak! Squake! Squake! came the horrid noise.

Harry Wharton & Co. were thunderstruck. There was only one known concertina in the whole school.

"My hat! That must be John Bull!"

Groan! Groan! Grurrrn! Squak! came the concertina, in fitful gusts.

"Chuck it!" roared the chums in a body. "Chuck it, for mercy's sake!"

But the horrible instrument went on. Bulstrode held it nearer to the keyhole.

"Ow! Oh! You rotter, John Bull! Chuck it! Haven't you got any ears?" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Rather!" said Skinner, to his accomplice on the outside.

"But we've stuffed cottonwool into them!"

The chums of the Remove heard Skinner; but in the terrible wailing of the concertina the voice was unrecognisable.

Grooz! Squak! Groan! Groan! Squak!

"Oh, I say, kids," said Harry Wharton indignantly, "this is too rotten, you know! Something must be done—"

Groan! Groan! Gruuuur! Greeeeez!

"Chuck it, you rotter," yelled the chums, "or we'll smash you when we get out!"

But still Bulstrode persisted, and dark thoughts passed through the minds of the chums. John Bull was in for a warm time of it had he known. Harry Wharton's idea that something must be done was acted upon. But how to get out? Bob Cherry ran to the window and opened it. There was apparently nothing much to be gained that way. They were turning away, when Nugent's eye caught the rain-pipe on the wall outside.

"How's that, Wharton?" he cried. "It's only twenty feet or so to the ground."

"Good old Frank!" shouted Harry Wharton. "It's the very thing if it'll stand the strain."

"Better try it than be tortured with that diabolical strain outside the door, Wharton!" said Bob Cherry, trying to raise a laugh, but ending up with an exasperated gesture.

The concertina was making an awful din. Bulstrode simply pumped noise through the keyhole of the study. Skinner did his best to tantalise the chums by making more noise with his feet in the passage. He couldn't dance.

Harry Wharton tried the rain-pipe with his hand. Several of the juniors followed his example, and all agreed that it would certainly stand them—one at a time. Urged on by the dreadful "music" in the passage, they were not long in getting down to the quadrangle.

The concertina had stopped for one brief second as Harry Wharton threw up the window. But it was still going—very much so, in fact, Wharton & Co. being compelled to put their hands to their ears as they waited their turn to go down the rain-pipe.

Harry Wharton went down first, Bob Cherry waiting till last, and seeing each one safely off, so to speak. Then the concertina stopped, but Bob Cherry was now gone.

Down the rain-pipe went Bob Cherry. Without a moment's delay Harry Wharton and his friends beat off round the college so as to come in again by the steps that led to the Remove passage. Vengeance was in every eye. John Bull was in for it this time.

"Just look at my nice big boots waiting for the beast!" said Bob Cherry, as they ran.

Bob Cherry's feet were proverbial at Greyfriars. But he did not get a laugh. The slaughter of Bull must be done first.

"Here we are, kids!" said Harry Wharton, as they got in the Remove passage. "But I don't hear the rotter! Don't make a row! He'll bolt, and then we might have some trouble to get at the beast! Hush!"

The chums halted for a moment. But there was no concertina to be heard. The Remove passage seemed quite innocent of wandering minstrels. All was as quiet as if there were a perfect watching every study.

"He can't be far away, anyhow!" said Harry Wharton.

And he dashed up the stairs, with the juniors close at his heels.

Into the Remove passage they burst. But John Bull was not there, or anyone else. The chums were astounded. They had certainly left the "concertinist" in full swing as they went down the rain-pipe. It had not taken them more than a minute to get round.

Keen disappointment was in every face for a moment, then it gave place to something of a very different nature.

"The beast is hiding somewhere, of course!" said Bob. "I vote we do something in the Mahomet and the mountain business, with a little variation. And that is, that the mountain falls on Mahomet in our version."

The juniors understood well enough what Bob suggested.

Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton dashed off in the direction of John Bull's study.

"It must have been Bull, you see," said Frank Nugent. "We heard his rotten concertina, and he's the only fellow that has such a thing."

They crept cautiously up to Bull's door. Wharton and Bob Cherry made a dive at the door, intending to burst it open if it were locked. To their surprise it was not. Bull was just sitting down to tea.

"Hallo, you chaps!" he said, not knowing what to make of the threatening looks that were cast at him. "Hallo! What's the game?"

"Unhallowed melody merchant!" said Bob Cherry, in a loud voice. "Your time has come—"

"Oh, ring off that rot, Cherry!" said John Bull. "I've had enough of your rotten japes at me over my concertina."

"Ah!" yelled the chums en masse. "Did you hear him? The beast admits it!"

John Bull looked startled. He was just about to speak again when a determined rush was made at the table.

"Here! Stop that— Oh! Here! Stop! Oh!"

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry charged the table about as gently as a mad bull might have. There was a mad "bull" in this case—it was John Bull, as he went flying on his back.

Bob whipped up the teapot. In a twinkling he had poured the contents over Bull's trousers. John Bull bellowed.

"What the— What on earth are you doing? Ow! You ass! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha! We'll teach you to play concertinas!"

Despite the hot tea, that made him writhe, John Bull looked mystified. He grabbed the edge of the table to get himself up. Bob obligingly pushed the table on top of him.

"Ha, ha, ha! You'll come outside our study making your horrid din again, won't you?" said Nugent, as he helped Bob to plaster Bull's face with butter.

"Play? Ow! Chuck that, Cherry! Why, I haven't—"

"You can reserve that yarn for someone a bit more simple than us," said Bob, sprinkling tealeaves on Bull's hair. "You haven't played, eh?"

"No—no!" howled John Bull, gaining his feet with a tremendous effort. "I haven't been anywhere near your rotten study! I haven't been out of this study since I saw you. I've been looking for my concertina. It's lost!"

The ragging of Bull ceased like magic. For a second Harry Wharton & Co. stared at Bull.

"You—you haven't been out of this study?" Wharton gasped.

"No!" roared Bull.

"You haven't played the concertina outside our door?"

"No, you silly ass!"

"You didn't fasten our door from the passage?"

"No!" yelled Bull.

"Well, my hat!"

"The hatfulness is terrific!"

John Bull glared at the chums. Then he glared at the clothes he stood in. Their state was not enviable.

"You—you fearful chumps!" he exclaimed. "You frabjous asses! You fat-heads!"

"Ha, ha, ha! We're sorry!" gasped Bob Cherry. "We're

—ha, ha, ha!—we're sorry!"

"You silly bounders!"

"Ha, ha! Sorry!"

"The sorryfulness is terrific!"

"You dangerous lunatics!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's too bad!" said Harry Wharton, gasping. "But—but it's your own fault, Bull. You're the only chap at Greyfriars who's got one of those fearful instruments, so we naturally thought it was you."

"You frabjous chump!"

"How were we to know you'd lost your wretched concertina, and that some other silly owl had found it?" demanded Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

John Bull glared at them. Then he made a rush for the poker. The chums of the Remove crowded out of the study, still laughing, and slammed the door.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Compact.

"MY hat!" gasped Bob Cherry, as they went down the passage. "My only summer hat! We were a little too previous!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But it was Bull's own fault—he shouldn't bring such a horrid instrument into the coll."

"Of course he shouldn't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's the Bounder up to?"

Vernon-Smith was tapping on the door of Bunter's study, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

NEXT WEEK: **ANOTHER** Splendid, Long Complete Tale of **HARRY WHARTON & CO.**

EVERY TUESDAY, **The "Magnet"** LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

and calling in through the keyhole. He did not see the chums of the Remove for the moment.

"Bunter—Bunter! Billy Bunter!"

"Go away!" called back Bunter. "I—I'm not coming out! I know you're mad—I know you've got a knife! Bob Cherry's mad, too—he's got a knife! I believe it's catching! Go away!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. Vernon-Smith looked round quickly.

"Will you speak to the fat fool!" he exclaimed. "I want to talk to the chump, but I can't reassure him."

Harry Wharton laughed, and knocked at the door.

"Bunter!"

"Oh! Is that you, Wharton?"

"Yes."

"I—I'll come to tea if you like. Make that mad villain go away! Look out for his knife!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"It's all right, Bunter! Smithy's not cracky—he's only a giddy hypnotist," said Harry Wharton. "You're quite safe."

"Are you sure of that, Wharton?"

"Yes; it's all right!"

The chums of the Remove walked on, and Bunter opened his door. Scared and stupid as he was, he knew that he could rely upon Harry Wharton.

Vernon-Smith scowled at him.

"You young ass!" he exclaimed. "Look here, would you care to come and have a feed in the tuckshop?"

"Yes, rather!" said Billy Bunter promptly. "B-b-but you're not mad, are you? Honest?"

"You utter ass, of course not!"

"Then I'll come."

"This way, then."

Vernon-Smith went downstairs. Billy Bunter followed him willingly enough in the direction of the tuckshop.

He would have followed anybody there. And even if Vernon-Smith was mad—and Bunter still had a lingering uneasiness—he could hardly do any harm in the tuckshop.

The Bounder walked into Mrs. Mimble's little shop. It was lighted, and Mrs. Mimble was behind the counter, looking very fat and comfortable.

Mrs. Mimble was always glad to see Vernon-Smith, who was a swanking and very magnificent customer; and sorry to see Bunter, who never paid for anything if he could help it. She was rather in the position of Mr. Facing-both-Ways in Bunyan's wonderful story, when she saw the two of them coming in together. How to beam upon Vernon-Smith and frown upon the Owl was a problem.

But as soon as Mrs. Mimble saw that the Bounder intended to stand treat, the problem was solved. She beamed all over.

"What would you like, Bunter?" asked the Bounder.

He rattled his money in his pocket as he spoke. The Bounder had plenty of money, and he liked to make a display of it.

"Tarts!" said Bunter eagerly. "Say a dozen."

"What kind?"

"Twopenny ones."

"Anything else?"

"Dozen cream puffs."

"That all?"

"Ginger-pop!"

"Yes?"

"And doughnuts and cake."

"Good! Hand them out, will you, Mrs. Mimble. I'm paying."

"Certainly, Master Vernon-Smith," said the good dame obsequiously.

Billy Bunter smacked his lips.

"I say, Smithy, you're awfully decent!" he exclaimed.

"You're the kind of chum I've been looking for. I don't care about the other fellows not caring to talk to you. I'll take you up, and make a friend of you, if you like."

Billy Bunter was nearer, at that moment, to being knocked down on the spot, than he had ever been in his life before. And he never knew it. For the Bounder restrained the impulse. He had an axe to grind at present; and Bunter could be kicked and cuffed at any time.

"Well, I was thinking it would be jolly to make a friend of you, Bunter," he said. "I like a really fine honourable chap like you. And as I have heaps of tin, I should be able to stand little feeds from time to time."

Billy Bunter's eyes glistened.

He could have hugged Vernon-Smith on the spot. How could he ever have dreamed that such a splendid, generous chap was insane?

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

"Of course, you'll perform any little friendly services for me?"

"Yes, rather! I'll use my influence with the fellows, if you like, to induce them to take you up," said Bunter fatuously.

"You know I'm taking up hypnotism," said Vernon-Smith, without replying to Bunter's observation.

"Oh, yes! Buck up with those things, Mrs. Mimple."

"Steady!" said the Bouncer coolly. "You're not eating anything at my expense till we've come to an arrangement."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

The Bouncer lowered his voice.

"Look here, I've got a scheme on, Bunter. I can't hypnotise. I've tried, and it's no good. I can make the passes all right, but the 'fluence doesn't come, somehow."

"I'll give you some tips—"

"Cheese that! Look here, I want you to be my subject."

"But if you can't hypnotise—"

"Not so loud! Look here, you can keep a secret? The tarts are coming."

"Yes—yes, of course."

Then Vernon-Smith divulged the plot.

"I want you to be my subject, but you'll only have to fake it—put it all on, you see, to convince the other fellows that the thing's real. If you fake it well, they'll take it in. Savvy?"

"I—I understand!"

"You'll go to sleep just when I tell you, and do everything I order you to."

"H'm!"

"However unpleasant it is—"

"Oh!"

"And after each seance I'll stand you a feed, and you can order pretty much what you like," said Vernon-Smith. "You know I've heaps of money. Is it a go?"

"You won't make me do anything fearful—like—like missing a meal, or anything of that sort?"

"Of course not."

"You could make me eat things," suggested Bunter. "Make a show of how much a chap can eat under hypnotic suggestion."

"That's all right. Is it a go?"

Billy Bunter glanced at the tarts, the cake, and the ginger-pop.

"Yes," he said.

"Good! That's settled."

And Bunter started on the tarts.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Vernon Smith, Hypnotist.

JOHAN BULL came downstairs, with a paper in his hand, and stopped at the notice-board. As he proceeded to pin the paper on the board, he attracted general attention. The fellows gathered round to see what John Bull might be putting up a notice about. The paper was written on in Bull's big, bold handwriting.

"NOTICE:

"Lost, a concertina—lost or stolen! Anybody giving information leading to the recovery of the same, will receive a reward of One Pound. Apply No. 14 Study, Remove."

"J. BULL."

There was a general laugh.

"Anybody giving information leading to the recovery of the same, will get a Form ragging," said Ogilvy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a jolly good loss, Bull; let it go."

"Let it be buried."

"Oh, rats!" said John Bull, and he walked away with his hands in his pockets.

Most of the Remove knew of the jape that had been played upon Harry Wharton & Co. by means of the concertina, and some of them guessed the author of it. Bulstrode and Skinner said nothing. The concertina was hidden away safely in Bulstrode's study. It might come in useful another time; and at all events, John Bull could not play it now, which was a great advantage to everybody.

Billy Bunter blinked at the notice on the board.

"I say, you fellows, I think I'm going to have that pound!" he exclaimed. "I rather think I can guess—Ow!"

A finger and thumb closed on Bunter's ear.

He gave a wail of anguish.

"Ow! Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You rather think you can guess what?" said Bulstrode, as he compressed his grip upon the fat ear of the Owl of the Remove.

"Ow! Is that you, Bulstrode? Look here—Yow!"

"You'll mind your own business, Tubby."

"Ow! Of course! Yes! Yow!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

Bulstrode grinned as he released the fat junior. Billy Bunter rubbed his reddened ear ruefully, and rolled away.

Bob Cherry came up and looked at the notice.

He took a pencil from his pocket, and calmly crossed out the words "reward of one pound," and substituted "A thick ear," so that the notice now read: "Anybody giving information leading to the recovery of the same, will receive a thick ear."

There was a shout of laughter. Bob Cherry surveyed the alteration in the notice with a great deal of satisfaction.

"That meets the case better, I think," he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith came in. He glanced at the notice carelessly, and looked round for Billy Bunter. The fat junior was still rubbing his ear.

"Are you ready?" the Bouncer said, in a low voice.

"I—I'm feeling rather rotten," said Bunter. "I think perhaps I'd better have another little feed to buck me up."

Vernon-Smith frowned.

"Look here, you've had feeds enough. You'll have another one after the seance."

"That's all very well, but—"

"Mind, you'll get nothing if you don't play the game. And we mustn't be seen talking to one another too much, either."

"I say, Smith—"

"There'll be a feed afterwards. Just get into your study."

Billy Bunter grunted.

"Oh, all right!"

He rolled away. Vernon-Smith went into the common-room. His eyes were gleaming with a peculiar light. Exactly how his experiment would turn out he did not know, but he had planned it carefully. All his arrangements were made with Bunter, and the fat junior was hardly likely to fail him.

Vernon-Smith would much rather have been a real hypnotist. He longed to possess power over others.

But if he could not be a real one, he could be a "spoof" one. If he could not possess power, he could appear to do so. He could make himself of more consequence in the form; he could make himself, if not liked, at least feared.

It all depended on how the experiment worked out.

He walked into the common-room, and found most of the fellows there. The Remove had mostly finished their prep., and were chatting before bedtime.

Smith glanced at the clock. It indicated ten minutes to nine.

He idled about near the fire for some minutes, and Bob Cherry, catching sight of him, chuckled and called a question across the common-room.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Smithy! Got any 'fluence about you?"

There was a loud laugh. Vernon-Smith's hypnotism was taken about as seriously as Billy Bunter's attempt in the same line had been.

The Bouncer smiled his sneering smile.

"Yes," he replied.

"Ha, ha, ha! Let's see you work the oracle."

"Yes, do," grinned Bulstrode. "It will fill up time before bed nicely. Let's have a seance."

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"I shall want a subject," he said.

"Me?"

"I!"

"Here you are!"

"Take your choice!"

There was evidently no lack of subjects. Vernon-Smith glanced over the fellows who offered themselves.

"Do you believe in hypnotism, Cherry?"

"Not much!"

"Then you're no good for a subject."

"What?"

"An unbeliever hasn't the right kind of mental organisation for a subject. You have to throw yourself into the thing, as it were. Do you believe in it, Ogilvy?"

"No fear!"

"Then you're no good, either. You, Desmond?"

"Faith, and I think it's a spoof entirely."

"You're no good. Where's Bunter? I've hypnotised him once already. He'd do."

There was a general exclamation.

"You've hypnotised Bunter!"

The Bouncer nodded.

"Certainly."

"My word!" said Nugent. "Do you mean to say that you've really put the 'fluence on Bunter—made him do as you like?"

"Yes."

"When—and where?"

"In the Close this afternoon," said Vernon-Smith easily. "It is some time ago, but the influence will be still remain—"



Vernon-Smith was standing before a looking-glass, making mysterious passes at his own reflection.
(See page 4.)

ing, and I can renew it at any time. Bunter is a favourable subject. He hasn't a strong character."

The juniors looked amazed. Vernon-Smith made his statement with such precision and coolness that they were fairly staggered.

"And do you mean to say that you can make Bunter obey your will?" asked Harry Wharton incredulously.

"Certainly."

"Without his knowing it, or being able to resist it?"

"Exactly."

"Well, I'll believe that when I see it."

"You can see it now, if you like," said the Bounder coolly.

"Bunter is still under the 'fluence, as I said."

"Let's find him, and see," suggested Tom Brown.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

"No need to find him," said Vernon-Smith. "I can make him come."

"You can make him come—without seeing him?"

"I have only to will for him to come into the room here, and he'll have to come, wherever he is, and whether he likes it or not."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"Draw it mild!"

It was pretty clear that the Remove did not believe in the Bounder's claims. But Vernon-Smith never turned a hair.

"Shall I prove it to you?" he asked.

"Yes, rather."

"Go ahead!"

"Make Bunter walk in now."

"We'll believe it if he comes in."

Vernon-Smith had the corner of his eye on the clock. It indicated exactly the hour of nine—the hour he had arranged with Bunter. It was all very simple, if the juniors had only known it.

The Bounder of Greyfriars raised his hand.

"Silence, then!" he exclaimed.

"Rats!"

"Silence, please!"

"Oh, shut up, you chaps!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Give him a chance!"

"Order!"

There was a silence in the common-room now. The juniors were really very interested, and very curious.

Vernon-Smith made a mysterious pass in the air with his hands, his eyes fixed upon the open doorway. One word fell from his lips:

"Come!"

The juniors felt quite a thrill. Every eye was fixed upon the doorway. There was a sound of slow and heavy footsteps in the passage.

The juniors gave a start, almost of stupefaction.

They knew those heavy footsteps. The steps came slowly closer, closer. A fat figure rolled into view in the doorway. It was Billy Bunter.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Under the 'Fluence.

BILLY BUNTER was walking with his hands outstretched before him, like a fellow walking in the dark. His gaze was fixed and staring; he glanced neither to the right nor to the left.

He walked steadily into the common-room, and walked right on, and would apparently have walked into the opposite wall, but Vernon-Smith rapped out the order:

"Halt!"

Billy Bunter halted.

"Wake up!"

Bunter gave a dramatic start, and stared about him, apparently in the greatest astonishment.

"Oh! I say you fellows—How—how did I get here?"

"You walked!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Of course, you might have been blown in by the wind, being such a light weight," Tom Brown suggested sarcastically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I don't understand it," said Bunter. "I sat down in my study to have a nap in the armchair, and now I'm here. It's uncanny."

"You just walked in."

"Oh, don't you try and take me in!" said Bunter. "I know jolly well I fell asleep in my chair, and you fellows carried me down. The wonder is I didn't wake up while you were doing it."

The juniors stared at Bunter.

This was a testimony to Vernon-Smith's hypnotic powers, if one were needed. The Remove did not know what to think.

"You're spoofing, you fat bounder," said Bob Cherry, at last.

"I don't understand you, Cherry."

"Blessed if it doesn't look real enough," said Ogilvy. "We all know what a liar Bunter is, of course—"

"Oh, really, Ogilvy—"

"But I don't see why he should walk in at this special moment, and tell this special sort of lies. It looks as if there was something in the 'fluence."

"My word—it does."

"Try it again, Smithy!" exclaimed Russell. "Let's see Bunter under the 'fluence."

"Oh, all right!"

"I—I say, you're jolly well not going to hypnotise me!" exclaimed the fat junior. "I had enough of that this afternoon! I haven't felt the same chap since. I feel as if something had been taken out of me somehow. Look here, you're jolly well not going to hypnotise me again!"

"Did he hypnotise you to-day, Bunter?" asked Wharton, with a very keen look at the fat junior.

"Yes, and I don't like it," said Bunter peevishly.

"Well, a second dose won't hurt you," said Micky Desmond encouragingly.

"That's all very well, but I feel as if I—I hadn't any will-power left, and I shall always have to do what that chap tells me," said Bunter. "It's awful! It makes me feel nervous. Suppose you try it."

"Faith, no fear!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

"You then, Ogilvy."

"Not much."

There was no eagerness on the part of the juniors now to come forward as "subjects." Bunter's description of his experiences was positively creepy. Billy Bunter, in his own particular line as the champion liar, ought really to have been a shining light in the Junior Dramatic Society.

"You're the proper chap, Bunter," said Morgan. "You've been through it once, look you, and a second time won't hurt you."

"Oh, really—"

"Buck up, Bunter!"

"Go it, Smithy!"

"Put the 'fluence on!"

"It won't hurt you, Bunter," said Vernon-Smith reassuringly. "I'll take the 'fluence off afterwards."

"Yes, but can you do that?"

"Of course I can."

"You can take it quite off—right off?"

"Completely."

"Well, perhaps. Look here, I shall very likely be hungry afterwards," said Bunter. "There's still time to get some things from Mrs. Mimble's. Shall I have a bit of a pick-me-up afterwards?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Bunter!"

"Yes," said Vernon-Smith, "I'll stand you a feed if you like. Look here, Todd will fetch the things for you now, I'll make it five bob."

"Oh, certainly!" said Todd. "I should like to see the seance, but I am very glad to be able to oblige you, my dear Bunter. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to make myself useful and obliging on all occasions."

"Off with you, then."

Todd departed with the five shillings, and a list from Bunter. Then the fat junior showed a more contented frame of mind.

"Well, I don't mind going through it again to oblige you fellows," he remarked. "Of course, I'm not doing it for the feed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Sit down!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Right you are!"

"Fix your eyes on mine."

"Good!"

"Remain in a state of mental abeyance—think of nothing at all."

"I'm doing it."

Bunter sat quite still. Vernon-Smith stood before him, making hypnotic passes with his hands before the face of the fat junior.

Bunter's eyes closed; his fat eyelids slowly dropping.

His fat hands lay listless, his fat legs stretched out. He certainly seemed to be fully under the hypnotic influence.

The juniors watched in silent wonder. There was scepticism in some faces yet. But if this was spoof, it was very clever spoof.

"He is under the 'fluence," said the Bounder.

"My word!"

"And can you make him do anything you like, Smithy?"

"Certainly."

"Stand on his head, for example?" asked John Bull, with a grin.

"Anything physically possible to him, of course," said Vernon-Smith, "and anything that wouldn't hurt him. That would be mean."

"Make him sing."

"Oh, don't!" sang out Bulstrode. "You know what Bunter's singing is like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Never mind; let him give us a song," said Bob Cherry.

"Sing 'On the Ball,' Bunter," said Vernon-Smith.

The fat junior's mouth opened.

"Here's a cheer for the grand old game,

And a cheer for the men who play!

Here's a shout for the boys at home,

And a yell for the lads away!—Hurray!"

"Stop!" roared Nugent, putting his fingers in his ears. "Switch him off that, Smithy. I can't stand Bunter's voice!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Ha, ha!" yelled Nugent. "That's woke him up!"

Bunter dropped back into the hypnotic trance at once. He saw that he had given himself away.

"The effort of singing it did it," said Vernon-Smith. "I'll soon put the 'fluence on again."

"Oh, go it!"

Vernon-Smith made some more passes. Bunter seemed to settle down more deeply into the hypnotic trance.

"Make him dance!" said Bob Cherry.

"But he could do that, if Smithy told him, if he was spoofing," said Ogilvy.

"Quite right; he could."

"Make him tell the truth," suggested Harry Wharton.

"That's a thing Bunter could never do, unless he were hypnotised."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good!" said Vernon-Smith. "Bunter."

"Yes," said Bunter, in a dreamy voice.

"You are to tell the truth."

"Yes."

"Ask him any questions you please," said Vernon-Smith, with a wave of the hand. "I have commanded him to tell the truth, and he cannot help it."

"Right-ho!" exclaimed Nugent. "I'll ask him! Bunter!"

"Yes!"

"Do you really expect to get any of those postal-orders you are always talking about?" demanded Nugent.

There was a chuckle from the juniors, and then a breathless silence. What would Billy Bunter reply to that question. It was a crucial test.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Tarts all Round.

EVERY eye was fixed upon the fat face of the Owl of the Remove, as he sat in the chair with his eyes closed.

The fat face twitched a little.

"Answer!" said Frank Nugent, with a grin. "Do you really expect to get any of those postal-orders? The truth, mind!"

"Tell the truth!" repeated Vernon-Smith.

Bunter's lips moved. There was a hush.

"He's speaking."

"Hush!"

"Yes," said Billy Bunter.

"My hat!"

"He's lying!"

"He's not hypnotised!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do really expect to get the postal-orders."

"Rats!"

"Have you got any titled friends?"

"Lots!"

"Are your people rich?"

"Rolling in money."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's jolly well not hypnotised," said Harry Wharton, in disgust. "He wouldn't roll out the same old lies, if he were."

"No fear!"

"I guess it's all bunkum," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

Vernon-Smith's face was black as thunder. He was evidently deeply chagrined by the failure of his effort.

"I suppose the fluence isn't strong enough to make him tell the truth," he confessed. "You know very well that it would have to be awfully strong for that."

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"Of course, I'm not in full practice yet," said Vernon-Smith. "By to-morrow I shall be in full swing."

"Ahem!"

"Rats!"

The Bounder coloured angrily.

"Very well," he said. "Who's willing to be my subject to-morrow? I'll guarantee to make him tell the truth about himself and his people, and give away any humbug he's been keeping up."

"Ha, ha, ha! Any offers?" yelled Bob Cherry.

"If you don't believe I can do it, where's the risk?" demanded the Bounder. "Any takers?"

There were no takers.

The Bounder knew his audience well. They did not believe in him, perhaps; but there was a risk that his claims were well-founded. And nobody wanted to run the risk of being made to babble out all his private affairs.

So the Remove was silent.

"No offers!" said the Bounder sarcastically. "Yet you say yourselves that there's nothing to be afraid of. Well, look here. I'll tackle Bunter again to-morrow, and I'll make him tell the truth; and that's a big order, if you like."

"Well, if you make Bunter tell the truth, I'll believe in you," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Well, wait till to-morrow."

Alonzo Todd re-entered the common-room with a basket in his hands. Billy Bunter suddenly woke up from his hypnotic sleep, without being bidden to do so by the hypnotist. There was a fresh roar of laughter. Billy Bunter was a most intractable subject for a spoof hypnotist.

"That's mine!" said Bunter, making a dive for the basket.

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ONE
PENNY.

"Oh, certainly, Bunter! Have you been hypnotised?" asked Alonzo Todd.

"Yes, rather! Hand over the grub!"

"I should like to see you hypnotised, Bunter! Perhaps you would not mind going through it again for me," said the Duffer of Greyfriars.

"Oh, rats! I'm hungry."

Billy Bunter wired into the provisions. He evidently considered that he had earned them. The other fellows drew round, and kindly helped him to get through with them, without going through the formality of asking permission.

"Oh, I say, you fellows," protested Billy Bunter, "you might let a chap's grub alone, you know. Being hypnotised makes me awfully hungry!"

"Watching you hypnotised makes me hungry, too," said Bulstrode blandly.

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—"

Vernon-Smith left the common-room. He was but half pleased at the result of the seance. Bunter had not been quite a satisfactory subject. But the Bounder had certainly made some impression upon the Form, and that was something. And on the morrow, when he had Billy Bunter in better order, he intended to do more.

"I suppose it was all spoof, Billy," said Skinner, as he helped himself to jam tarts. "You weren't hypnotised at all, were you?"

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Weren't you spoofing?"

"If you make imputations upon my personal honour, Skinner, I can only reply that this discussion had better cease," said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Personal honour!" grinned Skinner. "I didn't know you had any. You've never shown any signs of it here. I jolly well know that."

"Oh, really—"

"I'll have some doughnuts," said Snoop.

"Tarts for me," said Stott.

"Marmalade tarts here."

"Cream puffs, this way!"

"I—I say, you fellows, you're scoffing the lot!" exclaimed Billy Bunter, in alarm and indignation. "Look here—"

"This way for the grub!"

"I can recommend these tarts!"

"They're cheap, too!"

"Ha, ha! Quite a bargain!"

"You—you rotters! Let my grub alone!" roared Billy Bunter. "Lemme alone! Chuck it! Look here, beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear me!" said Alonzo Todd. "My dear fellows, it seems a little unjust to despoil Bunter of his property in this way. My Uncle Benjamin always said—"

"Have a tart, Toddy?"

"Certainly not—wow, yow!"

Todd ceased speaking as the tart jammed on his mouth. He retired, spluttering, to wipe off the jam with his handkerchief.

Billy Bunter's protests were not listened to by the humorous Removites. They finished up the basket of provisions to the last crumb. Billy Bunter was eating all the time, but he felt as if he had had next to nothing by the time the consignment was finished.

He glared in wrathful indignation at the grinning juniors.

"Beasts!" he growled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You shouldn't be such a blessed pig," said Treluce. "Why don't you ask a fellow to take his whack when you've got a feed?"

"Beasts!"

And with that parting remark, Billy Bunter retired from the room. He went upstairs to look for Vernon-Smith in his study.

The Bounder of Greyfriars was studying the little book when Bunter entered. He hastily thrust it into an inner pocket. He did not want even Billy Bunter to be able to trace his knowledge of hypnotism to its source.

"I say, Smithy!"

"What do you want?" growled the Bounder.

"Look here. The fellows have been collaring my grub," said Bunter, in a deeply injured tone. "They've taken nearly the lot."

"That's not my business."

"Well, I want some more."

ANSWERS

Vernon-Smith turned his back on the fat junior. "I say, I want some more!" bawled Billy Bunter. "Do you think I'm going through all that rotten silly seance for nothing?"

"You should have taken care of it when you had it," said Vernon-Smith carelessly. "I'll give you exactly what's agreed upon, and no more."

"Then you can jolly well look out for a fresh subject."

"Very good!" said the Bouncer quietly.

Billy Bunter started. He had not expected to be taken at his word in that way.

"Look here, I shall want some more grub, anyway," he said threateningly.

"You'll get nothing out of me."

"Suppose I tell the fellows you were spoofing?"

The Bouncer smiled contemptuously.

"I expected that!" he said.

"Oh, you expected that, did you?"

"Yes, of course," said Vernon-Smith. "I expected you to try to extort money from me, like the dirty, dishonest cad you are, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Smithy?"

"And I'm ready for you. Keep to the agreement, and you'll get what we've agreed on. If you break it, you'll get nothing—nothing but the biggest hiding you've ever had in your life."

"If—if you touch me, I'll—I'll speak to Mr. Quelch."

The Bouncer laughed.

"That won't undo the hiding."

"Look here, Smithy—"

"Get out of my study! I've had enough of you! Get out! Do you hear?"

And the Bouncer looked so dangerous that Billy Bunter thought he had better get out.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Nocturnal.

JOHN BULL looked in at Vernon-Smith's study a few minutes after Billy Bunter had left it. There was a thoughtful expression upon Bull's face. There was a surprised look on Vernon-Smith's, as Bull came in. The two of them did not get on well together. When John Bull had received a liberal gift of ready cash from his Aunt Tabitha, Vernon-Smith had done his best to draw him into reckless courses, and the Bouncer of Greyfriars seemed still to feel the weight of John Bull's knuckles.

"I want to speak to you," said John Bull.

"Go ahead!" said Vernon-Smith tersely.

"Is there anything in this hypnotism business?"

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you want to be a subject?" he asked.

"Not much."

"Well, there is something in it—a great deal. It's a great power, and I have only recently discovered that I possess it," said the Bouncer, with perfect calmness.

Bull looked at him.

"I don't know what to think about it," he said. "But if there is anything in it, I think you could help me."

"In what way?"

"Somebody's boned my concertina to play silly tricks with. Whoever it was has hidden it somewhere."

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"Do you want me to find it?" he asked.

"Exactly! If you can hypnotise people, why shouldn't you be able to hypnotise the chap who took my concertina and make him bring it back?"

"Do you know which fellow it was?"

"Well, no."

"Well, I can't hypnotise the whole school," said Vernon-Smith. "If you think it was Bunter—"

"I hardly think so. It's more likely to have been Snoop or Skinner or Bulstrode," said John Bull.

Vernon-Smith wrinkled his brows thoughtfully.

"Well, I may be able to help you," he said. "People

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

have been made to find hidden things simply by hypnotic suggestion."

"Have they, by Jove?"

"Certainly! I may be able to put the influence on Bunter, and will him to find the concertina."

"Phew!"

"I'll try to-morrow if you like."

"Good! If you find it you can have the pound reward."

Vernon-Smith sniffed.

"I don't want your rotten money. I'll find the concertina if I can so as to prove to the fellows that I'm a real hypnotist. If I find it through Bunter you can let Bunter have the money."

"All right!"

John Bull quitted the study; and a sneering smile curled the lips of Vernon-Smith. He had been scoffed at by a great many of the Remove, and John Bull had looked as sceptical as anybody. Yet the sturdy junior was quite willing to try his hypnotism when it served his ends. The Bouncer realised that he had little more to do to make the Remove firm believers in his powers. And then—

Then, so long as he was careful, there was a wide field open before him. He would be feared, at all events. A fellow who could hypnotise you and make you babble out all your business, or who could make you walk into a pond, or punch the Form-master's head—such a fellow would be a powerful person anywhere.

And—who could tell?—the power he now pretended to have might with time and practice become real! And then—

Vernon-Smith went up to bed in the Remove dormitory in a very satisfied frame of mind.

Billy Bunter gave him a reproachful look, but Vernon-Smith did not even glance at the Owl of the Remove. He turned in, and was soon, to all appearances, asleep.

It was appearance only. Loder, the prefect, put out the light, and, after the usual amount of chatter, the dormitory sank into silence.

Vernon-Smith's eyes were wide open now, looking sleeplessly into the darkness. He had work to do before he slept.

He waited patiently till the talk had died away and deep breathing announced that the juniors were asleep. Billy Bunter's unmusical snore echoed through the Remove dormitory.

Vernon-Smith stepped quietly out of bed.

He drew on his trousers, jacket, and slippers, and quitted the dormitory, closing the heavy door after him without a sound.

The passage was dark, but the Bouncer knew his way very well. He descended to the Remove quarters, and went into Bulstrode's study.

He closed the study door and turned on the light of a small electric lantern.

The ray of brilliant white light glimmered through the darkness of the study. The Bouncer of Greyfriars looked like a burglar at work.

But it was not his intention to burgle. He was looking for something, but he did not mean to take it away with him.

He rapidly looked through the study, the cupboard, the bookcase, the boxes. Then he stopped before a locker which belonged to Bulstrode. It was locked up, and the key had been taken away. Bulstrode always wore that key on his watchchain.

The Bouncer grinned slightly. He drew a key from his trousers-pocket and fitted it into the lock. The locker in the Bouncer's study had a lock of the same size and make as Vernon-Smith had happened to discover by seeing the key on Bulstrode's chain.

In a moment the locker was open.

Vernon-Smith flashed the light into the interior, and uttered a low ejaculation of satisfaction.

There was the concertina glimmering in the light.

It was John Bull's concertina—Vernon-Smith knew that, because there was no other at Greyfriars. He had guessed that it was Bulstrode who had played that trick upon Harry Wharton & Co.

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with the concertina, and if that suspicion was correct; it followed that the concertina was in Bulstrode's possession.

And the spoof hypnotist particularly wanted to know where that concertina was—he required that knowledge for use on the morrow.

He had found it now! With a grin he closed the locker again.

He replaced the key in his pocket, and turned off the light of the lantern. As he did so he heard a footstep outside the study, and a hand tried the door.

Vernon-Smith turned cold all over.

He remembered the late attempt at burglary at Greyfriars, and that sudden, stealthy sound in the darkness made him thrill with uneasy fear.

If it was the burglar—

The study door opened, and he heard a hurried breathing. Acting rather from terror than courage, Vernon-Smith rushed upon the unseen figure and hit out savagely and dashed past it into the passage.

The unknown reeled against the door with a gasp.

"Ow! Oh dear! This is very painful! Ow!"

It was the voice of Alonzo Todd.

"My hat!" muttered Vernon Smith, as the familiar tones fell upon his ears. "Todd!"

He was fleeing up the passage, but he halted now.

Did Todd know who it was that had smitten him so suddenly in the darkness?

"Ow!"

"The silly ass!" muttered the Bounder. "What is he doing out of bed? He must have followed me, so he knows

"Ow! Smith! Smithy! Why did you strike me in that brutal manner?"

"Hallo, Todd!"

"My dear Smith, I—I was afraid there was something wrong when I saw you leave the dormitory," said Todd's voice from the darkness. "I woke up just then, you see, so I followed you. I thought it might be the burglar again. What have you been doing in Bulstrode's study, Smithy? Was the burglar there?"

Vernon-Smith silently ground his teeth.

It seemed as if continual pitfalls were opening in the path of the spoofer. The way of the transgressor was very hard.

If Todd mentioned on the morrow that he had followed Vernon-Smith into Bulstrode's study there would not be anything very impressive in making the hypnotic subject discover the concertina on the morrow. The Removites would know very well that Vernon-Smith had ascertained over night that it was there. He would be laughed at, instead of making the impression that he desired. But how to keep the talkative Alonzo from chattering—that was the problem.

"I suppose you came down to see if there was a burglar?" asked Todd innocently. "You must have taken me for a burglar, I suppose, or you would not have smitten me in such an exceedingly rough and brutal manner. It is very odd."

"Yes, that's how it was," Vernon-Smith agreed. "You see, I—I heard a noise."

"Dear me!"

"And—and when I heard you coming I—I dodged into that study—I think it was Wharton's study—"

"Oh, no, Smith; it was Bulstrode's study—the end door, you know!"

"Er—yes! Just so! I dodged in to avoid you, thinking—thinking that you might be the burglar! Look here, Todd, don't say anything about this. If the—the burglar does come I want to catch him, and—and you and I will get all the credit."

"Oh, certainly, Smith!"

"Not a word to the fellows about my coming down, Todd."

"But—"

"Now, do oblige me in this."

"Oh, very well! My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me that I should be obliging to everyone, even persons whose characters I do not esteem," said Alonzo simply. "I will do as you wish."

"Now come back to bed."

"But the burglar—"

"It was a—a cat, that's all. Come on!"

"But how do you know it was a cat, Smith?" persisted Alonzo. "Would it not be better to call Wharton and Cherry and Bulstrode, and—"

"No, you ass!"

"And make a search—"

"No, I tell you! It was only a cat."

"But how—"

"I—I trod on it, you see. That's how I know," muttered Vernon-Smith, struggling with a desire to seize Alonzo and bang his head against the wall.

"Dear me! Was it hurt?" asked the tender-hearted Alonzo.

"Blessed if I know or care!"

"You should always care for dumb animals, Smith. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me—"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.



Down the stairs tumbled the Bounder, with Billy Bunter rolling wildly after him, while the juniors on the landing burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!" (See page 24.)

"Come back to bed!"

"Isn't it very odd that the cat did not cry out when you trod on it?"

"It did cry out. It—it howled like anything!"

"Dear me! How singular that I did not hear it when I was close behind you," said Alonzo, in wonder.

The Bounder ground his teeth. He seemed to be getting deeper and deeper into the tangle every fresh lie he uttered. It was curious how the simplicity of Alonzo baffled the cunning and falseness of the Bounder.

"Yes, it's very curious you didn't hear it," said Vernon-Smith. "But perhaps I—I was startled, and it seemed louder to me than it really was."

"Perhaps you mistook some other sound for the howl of a cat?" the Duffer of Greyfriars suggested.

"Yes, that's it!" assented the Bounder, in great relief.

"That must have been the case. You've got it right, Toddy. Come—"

"In that case, it was probably not a cat that you trod on, but some article, such as a cap, lying in the passage?"

"Yes, I shouldn't wonder. Come on!"

"My dear Smith, do you not see that if it was some other object it would not have been a cat—"

"Yes, yes!"

"And if it was not a cat," said Todd, with a power of deduction worthy of Sherlock Holmes—"if it was not a cat, Smith, the noise that alarmed you could not have been made by it, so it was probably burglars, after all."

The Bounder breathed hard through his nose. His lying and Todd's simplicity had brought them back just to the point where they had started.

"Look here, I'm sure about it!" he said. "It was a cat. There aren't any burglars. Do come back to bed, Todd! I'm catching cold."

"But, in case of danger—"

Vernon-Smith dragged the Duffer of Greyfriars up the stairs. Alonzo Todd resisted, but the Bounder was too strong for him. They reached the door of the dormitory.

"My dear Smith—" stuttered Todd.

"Shut up!"

"But I must insist—"

"Come into the dorm."

There was a glimmer of light at the further end of the passage. It came from a lamp carried by Mr. Quelch, who was making a round before going to bed.

"Cave!" muttered the Bounder. "Quick!"

Even Alonzo realised that it would not do to let the Form-master catch them outside the dormitory at that time of night. The two juniors ran in, and Vernon-Smith quietly closed the door.

"Dear me!" said Alonzo thoughtfully. "It was probably Mr. Quelch whom you heard in the first place, Vernon-Smith, and not a burglar at all."

"Shut up, you ass!" whispered Vernon-Smith fiercely.

"My dear Smith—"

"Oh, go to bed!"

Vernon-Smith turned in. Alonzo Todd, feeling very much surprised and a little hurt at the Bounder's tone, turned in, too; and fortunately for the spoof hypnotist, none of the other juniors had awakened.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

Quite Successful.

THE next morning the Remove seemed to have forgotten, for the most part, both Vernon-Smith and his hypnotism. But it was brought back to their minds by a question that John Bull was overheard asking the Bounder after breakfast.

"Any chance of finding the concertina, do you think, Smithy?"

"My hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's that?"

"Smithy thinks he may be able to find my concertina by means of a subject under hypnotic influence," Bull explained. Bob Cherry glared at the Bounder.

"He'd jolly well better not!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, rats!" snorted John Bull. "I want that concertina!"

"If you find that concertina, Smith, we'll—we'll make you eat it!" exclaimed Bob Cherry wrathfully. "We've been fed up with that concertina."

The Bounder laughed.

"I'm going to do my best," he said. "My object is to prove that there's something in hypnotism, and if I find the concertina—"

"If you find the concertina, there'll be something in your eye," said Bob Cherry. "It will be my fist!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Nugent. "And mine to follow."

"Oh, cheese it!" exclaimed John Bull. "I'll undertake

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

not to play it in the house, as you chaps have no ear for music."

"Nor within a mile of Greyfriars," said Bob Cherry impressively. "I don't think I could stand it under a mile. At that distance I could bear it."

"Oh, rats!" said John Bull.

And the subject dropped. The juniors did not take Vernon-Smith very seriously in the matter. Bulstrode grinned when he heard of it. The concertina was safely locked up in his locker, and he defied any hypnotist to discover it there.

After morning school, John Bull joined the Bounder as they came out of the class-room. John Bull was evidently taking the matter seriously. The chance of finding his concertina might be very small, but however small it was, Bull meant to make the most of it.

"Going to begin now?" he asked.

"Yes, if you like."

"Same subject?"

"Yes, Bunter. I've asked him if he's willing," said Vernon-Smith, with a grin; "he's willing to be a subject at any time for the sake of a feed."

"If he finds the concertina, he can have the feed," said John Bull. "I'll stand it—that's only fair. But—"

"Well, we'll try."

"Bunter! Where's Bunter?"

"Better come up to my study," said Vernon-Smith. "We shall be safe there from being interrupted."

"Right-ho!"

"Bunter! Bunter!"

"I'm here!" said the fat junior. "I say, you fellows, I'm hungry. I—"

"Come up to my study, Bunter."

"Anything to eat there?"

"No. We're going to have a seance, and John Bull will stand you a feed afterwards, if you find his concertina."

Billy Bunter grunted. Having received full instructions from Vernon-Smith that morning, he had little doubt about being able to discover the concertina.

"Oh, very well!" he exclaimed. "I don't mind, only buck up!"

"Come on, then."

A good many juniors followed them up to Vernon-Smith's study. They were very curious to see how the experiment would turn out.

"This is indeed interesting, my dear fellows," said Alonzo Todd. "It is quite scientific. I am so glad to see Smith taking an interest in scientific matters instead of drinking and playing cards as he used. My Uncle Benjamin—"

"Oh, shut up!" growled the Bounder.

"My dear Smith—"

"I guess it's all bunkum," drawled Fisher T. Fish. "If you want to see real hypnotism, you should see how we do it in New York. I've seen fellows hypnotised over there, and—"

"Rats!"

"I guess—"

"Bosh! No tall stories, please."

"Ring off, Fishy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The American youth snorted. The wonderful things he had "seen over there" found few believers among the scoffing youths of Greyfriars.

"You can't all come in," said Vernon-Smith. "I must have some room—"

"And some witnesses, if you want us to believe in you at all," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"I suppose about a dozen of you can cram in," said Vernon-Smith. "The rest can wait in the passage. Sit down, Bunter."

"All right."

Bunter plumped into the armchair.

Vernon-Smith proceeded to make the mysterious passes, as he had done the previous evening in the common-room.

Billy Bunter's eyes closed. He was getting used to the business now, and he performed his part quite naturally.

"Bunter!"

"Yes," murmured the fat junior.

"Rise!"

Bunter rose.

"Think!" said Vernon-Smith solemnly. "Think of Bull's concertina! You know John Bull's concertina by sight?"

"Yes."

"Think of it."

"I am thinking of it."

"Picture it in your mind's eye."

"Yes."

"You have done so?"

"Yes."

"Can you tell me where that concertina is?"

There was a hush among the juniors. It seemed quite uncanny—if there was anything in it. They waited breathlessly for Bunter's reply.

"Yes."

"My hat!" muttered Harry Wharton. "He can't! It wasn't Bunter who had the thing last night—I know that!"

"More likely Bulstrode," murmured Nugent.

"Yes. And he wouldn't tell Bunter where it is."

"Not much!"

"Silence, please! Bunter!"

"Yes."

"Guide me to the concertina's hiding-place."

"Yes."

Bunter opened his eyes wide. Staring straight through his big spectacles, he roiled towards the door.

The juniors made way for him.

Walking with fixed gaze, like one in a trance, Bunter walked down the Remove passage, the juniors following him with growing excitement.

"Dear me!" murmured Alonzo Todd. "This is marvellous! My Uncle Benjamin will be very interested in this when I write to him."

"I guess it's spoof."

"Oh, shut up, Fishy!"

"Silence, please," said Vernon-Smith. "You might wake the subject up from his hypnotic trance, and all the labour would be wasted."

The juniors followed Billy Bunter in silence. He stopped at the door of Bulstrode's study, and there he seemed at a loss.

"Keep right on to the stairs," Bulstrode suggested, beginning to feel a little uneasy himself. "It's downstairs, of course."

"Is it downstairs, Bunter?" asked the hypnotist.

Bunter shook his head.

"Is it in a study?"

Billy Bunter nodded.

"Which study?" asked Vernon-Smith, amid a breathless hush.

"Bulstrode's study!"

"Oh, rot!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "Look here, you're not going into my study, messing the things about. This is all rot!"

"Do you deny that the concertina is in your study?" demanded Vernon-Smith, fixing his eyes upon the bully of the Remove.

"Oh, rats! What I say is——"

"I leave it to the fellows," said the Bounder.

"Go in!" roared the juniors. "Shut up, Bulstrode."

"Look here——"

"I'm jolly well going to have my concertina, if it's there," said John Bull. "Come on."

He opened the door of the study. Bulstrode bit his lip. He did not care to tell a lie direct, by denying that the concertina was there, especially as it might now be found. After all, no one could have looked into his locker—he did not know there was a second key to it. Vernon-Smith must be only bluffing.

"Oh, go in if you like!" he growled. "It's all rot."

"I guess so."

"The rotfulness is terrific."

The juniors crowded into the study.

Billy Bunter walked on with fixed gaze, and his hands outstretched before him. He paused in the study, and blinked round him.

"Bunter!" rapped out the hypnotist.

"Yes!"

"Place your hand upon the hiding-place of the concertina."

Bunter walked across to the locker, and placed his hand on it. There was a murmur of amazement among the juniors.

"That looks like real bizney!" said Bob Cherry, half-convinced in spite of himself.

"The concertina is there, Bunter?"

"It is there!"

"Will you open the locker, Bulstrode?"

"No, I won't!"

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"Very well, I can do no more, of course. The concertina is there, if there is anything in hypnotism!"

"There's nothing in it, you fraud!" snarled Bulstrode.

"Prove it, by opening the locker."

"Rats!"

"Why won't you open it, Bulstrode?" asked John Bull, quietly.

"Because I won't! I won't have any hand in this foolery!"

"Will you open it, just to satisfy us?"

"No, I won't! What are you up to?"

John Bull did not reply. He had stepped to the grate and picked up the poker, a heavy iron one. He stood before the locker, poker in hand.

"You will open this, or I shall smash it open!" he said.

"Don't you dare to touch my locker!" yelled Bulstrode.

John Bull looked round at the other fellows.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

NEXT WEEK: "JOHN BULL JUNIOR'S WEEKLY."

EVERY
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"What do you chaps say?" he asked. "Isn't it up to Bulstrode to open the locker, so that we can see whether there's anything in this or not?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Open the locker!"

"Open it, Bulstrode!"

"Smash it open if he won't, Bull!"

"I intend to! What will you do, Bulstrode?"

Bulstrode, with a muttered word of rage, threw the key on the floor.

"Open it yourself, hang you!" he exclaimed. And he strode savagely from the study.

John Bull picked up the key. He quietly inserted it in the lock, and unlocked it. There was a craning forward of necks to see what was inside. Then there was a shout of surprise.

"The concertina!"

John Bull took the concertina from the locker.

"It's yours?" asked Wharton.

"Yes."

"My hat! Bunter's done it, then!"

Vernon-Smith made some passes before Bunter's face, and the fat junior came out of the hypnotic trance. He blinked at the Bounder.

"Where am I?" he asked dreamily.

The Bounder laughed.

"You're going to have a feed," he said. "You've got your concertina, Bull. You owe Bunter a pound and a feed."

"I'll pay up both," said John Bull. "Come on, Bunt!"

"What-ho!" said Billy Bunter.

And he followed John Bull to the school shop. The Removites dispersed, discussing the strange matter with excited interest. One thing seemed pretty certain now—that the Bounder's claim to be a master of hypnotic power must be admitted.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Horticultural.

"THE question is," said Bulstrode thoughtfully, "who's going to do it?"

"Yes, undoubtedly that is the point to be settled," agreed Skinner.

Bulstrode, Skinner, and Ogilvy were ensconced in a window seat of the Remove passage. To all appearances they were discussing something of great importance. An observant on-looker would have known in a moment they were speaking with the sole object of letting some person coming along the passage hear every word.

Bulstrode started it just as a footstep had sounded at the other end of the corridor. Skinner announced with a broad grin that it was "the fellow."

"Well, I'd do it with pleasure," went on Bulstrode, in a loud voice, "but I've got an impot to do, and you know what that means——"

"Rather!" said Ogilvy. "I'm sure I wouldn't mind doing it either, only I'm afraid my heart is weak——"

Skinner was on the point of breaking into a titter, but Bulstrode gave him a warning look.

"I'd oblige the Head with pleasure, but I'm sure I'm developing a cold, and it's simply fatal to dig with a cold——"

"And I was going to offer to do it, too," growled Skinner, "but I feel as if I had got housemaid's knees after those beetle-crushers of yours, Bulstrode——"

"Oh, ring off, Skinner!" said Bulstrode testily. "It was only a tap. Besides, if you're all so disobliging, I suppose I shall have to dig up the Head's lawn myself——"

"My dear Bulstrode, what can the Head want with his lawn dug up?"

The owner of the footsteps had arrived. Bulstrode, Skinner, and Ogilvy expressed great surprise at Alonzo Todd coming upon them like this.

"Just the very fellow we want!" said Skinner, smacking Alonzo on the back. "You can advise us, Todd——"

"But pray let Bulstrode answer my question, Skinner, if you please," said Alonzo.

"I was just coming to that," said Skinner. "It's this way, Todd. The Head wants to grow his own vegetables, and the lawn is the only available space in his garden for the purpose. He would have had it dug up long ago but for the expense——"

"And we were just discussing——"

"Ah, yes, Ogilvy! I'm sorry, but I couldn't help but overhear you just now. I'm very sorry you have a weak heart, really!"

"Yes," said Bulstrode. "And it's hard lines the Head should not be able to grow his own cabbages and things. I say."

"I agree with you, Bulstrode, my dear fellow! But

wouldn't the Head let you off that impot. of yours if you did the digging for him?"

Bulstrode almost gasped. Alonzo Todd had an unearthly facility in putting posers to people. But Ogilvy came to the rescue.

"Quelch is simply death on shirkers just now," he said gravely.

The others nodded as if they had permitted themselves to lose sight of the fact.

"Then, of course, I withdraw my suggestion," said Alonzo obligingly. "And I suppose Skinner will also be unable to take up the duty? I'm sorry you have contracted housemaid's knee, Skinner—"

Skinner interrupted the Duffer of Greyfriars with a heart-rending sigh.

"But you are well advised to adopt the course of refraining from violent exercise. My Uncle Benjamin once told me that housemaid's knee sometimes developed into rheumatism—"

"I hope you'll excuse me, Todd," broke in Bulstrode, "but what would you do under the circumstances?"

Alonzo stared bewilderedly at Bulstrode.

"Me, Bulstrode? I think I should rub it with embrocation. My Uncle Benjamin always—"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner and Ogilvy. "We should like to see Bulstrode rubbing the doctor's lawn with embrocation! Ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for such strident cachinnation, you fellows," said Alonzo, rather huffed.

"Yes! Chuck cackling, you asses!" said Bulstrode.

"Oh, rats!" exclaimed Skinner. "It's no use you trying to bluff us, Bulstrode. You know very well that even before we spoke you thought Todd was going to tell us what his Uncle Benjamin did when he had housemaid's knees—"

"Indeed, you are mistaken, Skinner!" said Alonzo, in mild wonder.

"Oh! Then you were talking about the Head's garden, Todd?"

"Of course we were, you giddy ass!" snapped Bulstrode.

"Not at all, my dear Bulstrode!" Alonzo hastened to say.

"How could you think I would advise you to rub the Head's lawn with embrocation? Pray what is the matter, Bulstrode—"

Alonzo paused. The burly Removite looked as if apoplexy were setting in.

Skinner and Ogilvy were in various stages of suppressed convulsions.

"I understood you were asking my advice as to what you should do, Bulstrode, if you had housemaid's knee," replied Alonzo, "but it seems to me you have been confusing the issue."

Skinner and Ogilvy tried to laugh, but they gave it up. In a state of collapse they sat on the stone floor of the passage and gave themselves up to deep, silent mirth.

Bulstrode put his hands in his pockets and regarded Alonzo Todd as if he were a being from another world.

"You do take the biscuit, Todd!" he said slowly.

"Do I, Bulstrode?" returned Alonzo pleasantly. "I'm afraid I do not quite understand. But shall we return to the question of the Head's lawn, Bulstrode?"

"Send for Uncle Benjamin!" said Skinner, gurgling.

"Ow! Here, I say, Bulstrode, chuck it!"

Bulstrode, losing his temper at last, had let go at Skinner and his friend, but at Skinner in particular. In an incredibly short time they were on their feet again, rubbing their battered bodies and emitting sundry howls.

"You appear to be in the best condition for the work, I'm sure, Bulstrode."

The still, small voice of Alonzo restored Skinner & Co. like a charm. They began to chuckle more than ever.

"It's judgment on you, Bulstrode," said Ogilvy laughing.

"If you hadn't been so ready to interfere with our little laugh, Alonzo would not have seen how fit you were."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode glared at his friends. It was clear if they were not stopped all would be spoiled.

But Alonzo Todd came forward, unconsciously, as usual, and helped him out.

"Is digging very hard work, Bulstrode?" he asked quietly.

"Not that sort of digging, Todd," said Bulstrode.

"And you're sure you could not get out of that impot., Bulstrode?"

"Certain, Todd."

"Then if you still would like my opinion, Bulstrode, I think I must consider it my duty to dig up the Head's lawn myself."

Bulstrode made a gesture of dissent. He saw with satisfaction that Skinner & Co.'s laughing fit was over. They pressed round Alonzo.

"We couldn't think of it, Todd, really!" said Ogilvy and Skinner.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

WATCH THE BACK PAGE of "EMPIRE" LIBRARY.

"But my Uncle Benjamin said I was to make myself obliging whenever I could," said Alonzo, smiling; "and I'm sure I should not like to disobey him."

"I don't want to throw cold water on your scheme," said Bulstrode, "but you understand how it is, Todd, don't you?"

"Perfectly, thank you, Bulstrode! I think I'll borrow a spade off Gosling—"

"And it'll soon be over," suggested Skinner. "By Jove, Todd, if it wasn't for my sore hands, I'd—"

"But I thought your reason for not partaking in this exertion was housemaid's knee, Skinner?" said Alonzo.

"So it is," said Skinner barefacedly; "but the pain has got up into my hands as well."

"Oh, I'm so sorry, Skinner! Can I be of any assistance—"

"Oh, that's all right, Todd!" said Ogilvy. "Skinner's quite equal to a little light work, such as—"

"Bringing you a drink of water during the digging," said Skinner, with owl-like gravity.

"You're very kind, I am sure," said Alonzo, beaming on them, "but I think I can manage unassisted, thank you! I must go and catch Gosling."

"Hurry up! By the way, the Head wants that part opposite the drawing-room windows dug up."

"All right, Bulstrode; you may rely on me. I shall be happy to do this. My Uncle Benjamin always used to say honest work of any kind was better than idling about. Thank you very much!" And Alonzo departed, and Bulstrode & Co. yelled.

Alonzo Todd sought Gosling, the school porter of Greyfriars.

"An' what would you be wantin' a spade fur, Mester Todd?" said he.

"I'm so sorry, really, Gosling, that I cannot enter into the details," replied Alonzo; "but I may go so far as to inform you that it is important, and for the Head."

This had some effect on Gosling, but he naturally went on growling.

But Alonzo had said it was for the Head, and he gave Alonzo the spade.

"Thank you, Mr. Gosling!"

"Go on with yer!" said Gosling, thinking Alonzo was "getting at him" by using the prefix.

And wondering what was the matter, Alonzo "got on."

"Hallo, Todd! Been committing a murder, and going to bury the body?"

It was Snoop who accosted Alonzo as he went to the Head's garden.

"Certainly not, Snoop!" said Alonzo seriously. "I'm going to dig up the Head's lawn for him. He's going to grow his own vegetables, you know. Bulstrode was to have done it, if he had not unfortunately got an imposition to do. Why? What is the matter, Snoop?"

Snoop had buried his face in his hands, and Alonzo could not make out whether he was laughing or crying. As a matter of fact, he was grinning, as he recognized that Alonzo Todd was being "had" again. But at that moment he happened to catch sight of Loder approaching, and he disappeared, leaving the Duffer of Greyfriars looking after him in a most puzzled fashion.

"Where are you going, Todd?" asked the prefect.

Alonzo jumped round to find Loder addressing him.

"Oh, you gave me such a start, Loder!" he said.

"Then perhaps you'll explain where you are going with that spade?" said Loder.

Alonzo looked alarmed. He earnestly hoped that Loder wasn't going to send him on an errand to the village.

"I'm so sorry, Loder," he began. "But I'm afraid I must answer you as I did Gosling. It's a private matter."

"Oh, is it! Then out with it! Come on!"

Alonzo was alarmed. But for once his luck was in. Holding the spade in front as if it were a stick, he was about to assure Loder that "it was for the Head," when the spade slipped from his nerveless grasp and fell right on the prefect's toe.

Loder uttered a howl that echoed all round the quadrangle. Holding his foot up and dancing about on one leg, he called Alonzo all the names he could think of.

"Clear out of this!" he cried. "I'll smash you! I'll squash you! I'll—"

"I'm so sorry, Loder," began Alonzo, with much feeling.

"Sorry!" roared Loder, rubbing his foot, hard. "You clumsy lunatic! I'll make you sorrier! I'll—"

And Alonzo, with a discretion for which he was not usually credited, scooted.

He complimented himself on achieving his object at last. But resolved to run no risks of interruption, he crept into the Head's garden through the hedge, unseen.

In a few minutes he had quietly installed himself in front of the drawing-room windows.

(Continued on page 20.)

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THE MAGNET, 11/2/11.



[Photo by Warwick Brookes]

This is a photograph showing the beautiful physical development of Mr. Eugen Sandow who has done more than any other man to encourage others to emulate his example in securing perfect health and strength.

Taking off his coat and rolling up his shirtsleeves, he looked round, and finding that to all appearances he was unobserved, he began to delve.

In ten minutes he had made quite respectable depredations in the Head's lawn. Soon he had a small pile of turf on his right. He thought it strange that Dr. Locke did not come out to compliment him on his task. But he was resolved to go on nevertheless.

Then Alonzo's depredations began to assume serious proportions. All along the strip of lawn farthest from the windows was a black patch where he had turned up the earth.

Still no one came out of the Head's house. But Alonzo contented himself that his Uncle Benjamin had once said that the best work is done in silence and unseen.

"The Head will be able to grow some lovely vegetables in soil like this," he said to himself. "How thoughtful of him to use it for the purpose, instead of for lawn-tennis!"

And his spade was busier than ever.

But suddenly he was startled by a loud scream. He could not see who made it. But he thought it sounded like little Molly, the Head's daughter.

He was not long in doubt. Hardly had he put the spade into the ground again when he heard from within the house a voice that few at Greyfriars ever mistook. It was the Head himself.

And Alonzo, with some misgivings reflected that he didn't seem pleased either.

The Duffer of Greyfriars stood with the spade in the ground petrified. The Head had opened the French windows, and burst upon him like an angry lion.

"Great Heavens, boy!" exclaimed Dr. Locke. "What are you doing?"

Alonzo was too surprised to utter a word. This was not very grateful language, even from the Head, he thought.

"Do you hear me, boy!" thundered the Head coming towards Alonzo. "What is the meaning of this?"

Alonzo assayed a reply once or twice, opening and shutting his mouth like a goldfish. But at last he managed to get it out.

"I understand you are going to grow your own vegetables, sir," he said feebly. "I am preparing the lawn for the sower of the seed."

"You—you what?"

Dr. Locke was simply stuttering.

He had had more than one surprise from Alonzo Todd during the latter's adventurous career at Greyfriars, but never a surprise so great as this.

"What?" he stuttered. "What?"

"I—I understood that you intended to grow your own vegetables, sir," stammered Alonzo Todd. "I intended to dig up the ground ready, sir, to oblige you."

"My—my lawn! Vegetables! Todd! The boy must be demented!"

"Oh, sir! Demented, sir!" stammered Alonzo, beginning to repeat the Head's words, in the curious way he had when he was frightened.

"Mad!" exclaimed the Head. "Quite mad!"

"Mad, sir!"

"You—you have utterly destroyed my lawn!"

"Lawn, sir!"

"Todd! This astounding—this wicked impertinence!"

"Impertinence, sir!"

"Boy! Oh! Wait, Todd—await—till I get a cane! Wait here!"

Todd had always been cautioned by his Uncle Benjamin to obey his masters. But Uncle Benjamin, certainly, could never have foreseen a conjuncture like this. Todd could not help feeling that if he waited for the Head to return with that cane, there would be a very bad time in store for him.

"Oh, dear!" he murmured. "I—I think that under the peculiar circumstances, my Uncle Benjamin would excuse me for departing hurriedly."

And Alonzo Todd departed hurriedly. When the Head emerged again, all he saw of Alonzo Todd was a leg rapidly disappearing over the garden wall.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Alonzo Returns Good for Evil.

HARRY WHARTON stared as Bulstrode came into the School House almost weeping. Skinner was with him, and he was on the point of tears, too. But they were tears of laughter. The two humorists were almost convulsed with mirth. Snoop followed them in, apparently also in a state bordering upon hysterics.

"What's the matter?" demanded Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's happened?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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The three staggered on into the common-room. A crowd of juniors followed them, curious to know what had happened. Bulstrode sank into a chair and roared. Skinner extended his form on the hearthrug and sobbed. Snoop shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What on earth's the matter?"

"Faith, and what's the joke intirely?"

"Out with it, Bulstrode!"

"I guess they're spoofing."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bulstrode. "It's the joke of the term! It's the catch of the season. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" gurgled Snoop and Skinner.

"But what is it?"

"Alonzo!"

The juniors began to grin. They were always prepared to grin when Alonzo was mentioned. The exploits of the Duffer of Greyfriars considerably increased the gaiety of Greyfriars.

"What's Alonzo done?" asked John Bull.

"I guess he's played the giddy goat, as usual," remarked Fisher T. Fish; "but what has he been doing this time, Bulstrode?"

"Ha, ha! Taken up gardening."

"Gardening!"

"Yes. He's dug up the Head's lawn for planting potatoes."

"My hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"He's mad—he'll be flogged!"

"Or expelled!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Alonzo!"

The juniors roared. The consequences of Todd's desire to oblige were likely to be serious for the Duffer of Greyfriars in this case. But they could not help laughing. It was only too evident that the unsuspecting Alonzo had been spoofed again.

"I guess that chap takes the biscuit!" remarked Fisher T. Fish, wiping away his tears. "So he's dug up the Head's lawn!"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"To plant potatoes!"

"That's it! Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites roared. Harry Wharton laughed as loudly as any. He simply couldn't help it, sorry as he was for Alonzo Todd.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Here he comes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"See the conquering hero comes!"

"Good old Alonzo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo Todd came into the common-room. He looked very red and breathless. His hands and his boots were covered with mud, and his clothes were considerably stained.

He blinked at the yelling juniors in great surprise. He did not seem to know that there was a joke on.

"My dear fellows—" he began.

"Seen the Head?" roared Bulstrode.

"Yes, my dear Bulstrode."

"Was he pleased?"

Alonzo rubbed his chin in a puzzled sort of way. He had not yet elucidated to his own satisfaction the mystery of the Head's ungrateful conduct.

"Well, no, Bulstrode, he did not seem pleased," Alonzo confessed slowly. "On the contrary, he seemed to be annoyed and upset about something."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear fellows, I do not see any cause for laughter. I have striven to oblige the Head, as my Uncle Benjamin told me I should always do. It is a very painful shock to me to find him angry and ungrateful."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The only thing I can think of is to ask my Uncle Benjamin to write to the Head, and point out to him what should really be his conduct in such a case. Meanwhile, I fear that the Head has some intention of caning me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton wiped his eyes.

"Oh, you champion ass!" he exclaimed. "You champion dummy! Do you mean to say that you really believed the Head wanted his garden dug up?"

Alonzo Todd jumped. For the first time it occurred to him that Bulstrode might have been pulling his leg.

"My dear Wharton—"

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

"My dear Bulstrode, is it possible that you were prevaricating, and that it was your intention to deceive me?"

Bulstrode shrieked with merriment. Todd gazed at him more in sorrow than in anger.

"My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked, nay, disgusted, at your conduct, Bulstrode," he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Trotter, the page, put his head in at the door. Trotter was grinning. He evidently knew all about Alonzo's gardening exploit.

"Master Todd is wanted in the 'Ead's study," he said, and vanished, chuckling.

Todd looked dismayed.

"Oh, dear! This is most unfortunate! I suppose I must go."

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes, rather!"

"And Bulstrode had better go with you, and own up that he was japing you," said Wharton.

"Oh, rats!" said Bulstrode uneasily. "Bosh! I'm not going to do anything of the sort! Todd shouldn't have been such an ass!"

"Vernon-Smith! Where's Smith?"

"Here I am," said the Bounder.

"Look here, if you're a genuine hypnotist, just hypnotise Bulstrode, and make him do the decent thing!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Good!" yelled the juniors. "Make Bulstrode own up!"

Bulstrode jumped up in alarm.

"Here, you keep off," he shouted. "If you start putting the 'fluence on me, I'll dot you in the eye, so look out."

"Put the 'fluence on, Smithy!"

"We'll hold him!"

"We'll look after you."

"Hands off!" yelled Bulstrode furiously.

But four or five fellows had seized him, and his struggles were unavailing. The Remove had roared over the joke, but they did not see why Alonzo Todd should take all the punishment. It was "up" to Bulstrode to own up to the Head, and if he wouldn't do it, it was quite justifiable to make him do it under hypnotic influence.

Vernon-Smith was nonplussed. He could no more have hypnotised Bulstrode than a wild bull or hedgehog. But his brain worked quickly.

"Look here, can you do it?" demanded John Bull.

Vernon-Smith nodded.

"Of course I can!" he exclaimed.

"Then go ahead!"

"We're holding him: put the 'fluence on!"

"I'll leave it to Todd to decide," said Vernon-Smith coolly. "Do you want Bulstrode to be punished as well as you, Todd?"

Vernon-Smith was pretty sure of his ground in asking that question. He knew the gentle and forgiving nature of the Duffer of Greyfriars.

Alonzo Todd shook his head at once.

"Oh, certainly not!" he exclaimed. "If Bulstrode cares to own up to the Head, I shall regard it as a very honourable action, and I am sure my Uncle Benjamin would approve of it. But if he does not choose to do so——"

"I don't!" roared Bulstrode.

"Then I prefer to leave him to his conscience," said Todd. "I will now go and see the Head. Bulstrode, I regard you as being untruthful and dishonourable, and I must say that my Uncle Benjamin would be shocked at you."

And the Duffer of Greyfriars quitted the room, to make his way to the Head's study, with the most dismal anticipations.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Noble Fellows.

BULSTRODE cast a glare of defiance at the Remove fellows round him. He knew that he was not "playing the game," but he did not intend to own up to the Head. Neither did Skinner. The only difference between them was, that Bulstrode's conscience pricked him, and Skinner's didn't.

"You're going to let Todd go through it alone, then, Bulstrode?" said Harry Wharton scornfully.

"Mind your own business!"

"I guess this is the bizney of every fellow in the Remove," said Fisher T. Fish. "It's up to you to own up."

"Oh, ring off!"

"What do you say, Skinner—what are you going to do?" asked John Bull.

Skinner shrugged his shoulders.

"Nothing," he said.

"And you, Ogilvy—you were in the game, weren't you?"

Ogilvy turned red.

"Well, I didn't foresee this," he remarked. "You see——"

"But it's happened, whether you foresaw it or not," said Harry Wharton curtly. "It was a funny jape enough, but now Todd's got into a row——"

"Come on, Bulstrode," said Ogilvy.

"What do you mean?" Bulstrode demanded.

"I'm going to the Head."

"What for?"

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NEXT WEEK: "JOHN BULL JUNIOR'S WEEKLY."

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ONE
PENNY.

"To own up that we japed Todd into digging up his lawn."

"Oh, rats!"

"Aren't you coming?"

"No."

"You coming, Skinner?"

"No fear!"

"I'll go alone, then," said Ogilvy.

"Good for you," said Harry Wharton. "As for these two rotters——"

"Oh, rats! I'll go if Ogilvy does," said Bulstrode, who was not to be put in the shade. "I don't care if I go. You'd better come too, Skinner."

"Sha'n't!" said Skinner.

"You jolly well will, if I do," said Bulstrode, in his most bullying tone. "You're not going to get out of it. Besides, it will look better for a whole gang to go—like the good little boys in the good-little-Georgy books, owning up to save a dear schoolfellow from being caned. Come on."

"Look here——"

"Take his other arm, Ogilvy, and we'll help him along."

Bulstrode slipped his arm through Skinner's. The Scottish junior, with a grin, took Skinner's other arm. Skinner hadn't much choice in the matter after that. He was walked along to the Head's study by the other two fellows.

Bulstrode knocked at the door and opened it. The Head looked round with a frown as the three juniors came in. He had a cane in his hand, and was evidently going to begin operations on the Duffer of Greyfriars.

"You should not enter like that, boys!" he exclaimed. "Wait outside, if you have business with me, until I tell you to enter."

"If you please, sir," began Bulstrode, in his silkiest tones. Bulstrode could play the meek and dutiful junior excellently well when he chose. The Head cut him short.

"Wait outside, Bulstrode, till I have finished with Todd."

"It's about Todd, sir, we've come."

"Oh, in what way?"

"About his digging up your lawn, sir," said Bulstrode. "It was a jape, sir."

The Head frowned.

"Todd has assured me that he believed that I wished my garden to be dug up for vegetables, and that it was not a joke on his part, Bulstrode."

"I mean Todd was japed, sir."

"Oh, indeed!"

"Some—some fellows japed him, sir, and stuffed him up that you wanted the garden dug up, sir."

"Who were they?"

"Us, sir!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Dr. Locke, somewhat taken aback. "You!"

"Yes, sir! Of course," said Bulstrode mendaciously, "we didn't know Todd would be such an ass as to take us seriously. We were just stuffing him up."

The Head looked at the three juniors, and then at the Duffer of Greyfriars. Alonzo Todd gave Bulstrode a reproachful look.

"I certainly took your statements seriously, Bulstrode," he said. "My Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me to make myself useful and obliging, and I was very eager to oblige Dr. Locke, whom we all respect so highly."

The Head coughed.

"Besides, you remember you said you couldn't dig up the garden, because you had an impot. to do, Bulstrode. Skinner could not do the digging, because he had housemaid's knee."

"What!" gasped the Head.

"He had housemaid's knee in his wrist, sir."

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

The Head seemed about to choke.

"Silence!" he gasped. "Todd, you are a most ridiculous boy. Bulstrode, I do not approve of these jokes upon a simple lad."

"We're sorry, sir, as it's turned out."

"Ahem! I have no doubt of that, Bulstrode—as it has turned out. Todd, you state that you firmly believed that you would oblige me by digging up my lawn."

"Oh, certainly, sir! I felt that I was acting in a way of which my Uncle Benjamin would fully approve," said Alonzo earnestly.

"Then you are the stupidest boy in the school," said the Head.

"Oh, sir!"

"If anything of the kind happens again, I shall not take your simplicity as an excuse," said the Head. "You may leave my study."

"Thank you so much, sir."

And Alonzo Todd quitted the room, very thankful indeed. He left the three practical jokers feeling very uncomfortable.

Bulstrode had an inward hope that the Head would regard his owning up as very noble conduct indeed, and would pardon him, as happened in the good little story-books. Indeed, he would not have been surprised if the Head had grasped him by the hand, and said, with tears of honest emotion in his eyes, that he had been to blame, but that he had atoned for all by his honourable and manly conduct. But somehow or other the Head did not play up according to programme.

He frowned very severely at the three juniors.

"I disapprove very much of these practical jokes," he said, "and I think that a mistaken sense of humour is carried altogether too far when it leads to the destruction of my lawn. The damage that has been done will be repaired, and the cost of renewing the lawn will be charged in your bills this term. Your parents will be called upon to make the damage good. You may go!"

And they went.

Outside the Head's door they paused to glare at one another, and to say things. All three were feeling very much exasperated.

"I'd rather have had a licking," said Ogilvy wrathfully. "My pater is always wild if there are any extras at all. It spoiled a whole vac. for me once when he had to pay for a broken window."

"It's rotten," said Skinner. "Still, I'd rather my pater had to pay, than have a licking. After all, what are paters for?"

"Oh, hang!" growled Bulstrode. "I had an idea that we should get clear, owing to our manly conduct in owning up."

Skinner chuckled.

"I know; you've been reading 'Georgy, or Bit by Bit,'" he said. "The kind teacher placed his hand upon Georgy's golden curls, and in a voice trembling with emotion, said—'This atones for all. Georgy, you have committed grave wrong, but your noble conduct in owning up to your fault atones for everything. Henceforward, you may stand as a shining example to your schoolfellows. Georgy, I respect you more, even more than I did before you tied the kettle to the cat's tail. Boo-hoo!'"

"Oh, cheese it!" grinned Bulstrode. "I think the Head might have seen that our conduct was awfully manly and noble, and played up to it. But these blessed school-masters never play the game."

And the three heroes went on their way discontentedly.

But if they had no appreciation of their noble conduct from the Head, they had plenty from Alonzo Todd. The Duffer of Greyfriars met them on their return, and gave them a look of the most touching gratitude and affection.

"My dear schoolfellows," he exclaimed, "how can I thank you! You have acted nobly! I wish my Uncle Benjamin were here to thank you for your exemplary conduct."

"Oh, rats!" said Ogilvy.

"My dear Ogilvy—"

"Br-r-r!"

And Ogilvy walked away. Todd turned to Bulstrode and Skinner.

"Bulstrode, your noble conduct—"

"Oh, bosh!"

"My dear Bulstrode—"

But Bulstrode was gone, and Skinner followed him.

Alonzo Todd gazed after them in astonishment. Then a smile broke upon his face.

"Ah, truly noble natures dislike being praised!" he murmured. "I am so glad to find that Bulstrode and Skinner have noble natures, contrary to all appearance. I must write to Uncle Benjamin and tell him all about it. He will be so pleased!"

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Too Obliging.

"I SAY, Smithy—"

"Well?" snapped Vernon-Smith.

"I'm hungry!"

"Go and eat coke!"

Vernon-Smith swung away angrily. The Remove had just come out after lessons, and Billy Bunter had sidled up to the Bounder at once.

Bunter blinked after Vernon-Smith indignantly as he departed. Then he hurried after the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"Look here, Smithy, about that seance?" he said. "You said you wanted it for this evening, and if I'm to be the subject—"

"Hold your tongue, you fat fool!"

"Well, I'm hungry, and—"

"Look here, Bunter," said Vernon-Smith, in a lower voice, as they went into the Close, "you'll get nothing till after the seance, according to arrangements. What have you done

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

with the pound John Bull gave you for finding the concertina?"

The fat junior gave a discontented grunt.

"Oh, that's gone!"

"Stuff! Even you cannot have eaten up a pound's worth of tommy so soon!" the Bounder exclaimed.

"I haven't had more than five shillings' worth."

"Then where's the rest of the money?"

"I've been done out of it."

"What do you mean? Who's done you? You don't mean to say that Wharton or any of his lot have taken your money?" asked Vernon-Smith eagerly.

"No. It was Mrs. Mimble. She's kept it."

"Oh, rats! She wouldn't dare to keep your money."

"Well, she has!" growled Bunter. "She said something about an old account when I changed the sovereign with her. Of course, that old account was run on the understanding that it was to be paid when I had a certain remittance. That remittance hasn't come. This sovereign, of course, had nothing whatever to do with it. But women never can understand business."

Vernon-Smith grinned.

"You can't expect anybody to understand your system of business, Bunter. You've been trying to swindle Mrs. Mimble, and she's stopped you."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"And you'll get nothing out of me but what's agreed upon. And if you give me any trouble I'll get another subject."

"Look here—"

But Vernon-Smith strode away without replying.

Bunter stared at him furiously. He was greatly inclined to betray the spoofer at once to the Remove fellows. But he reflected that it would not do to imitate the gentleman in the fable who killed the goose that laid golden eggs. He would certainly be able to show Vernon-Smith up in the Remove, but it would mean the complete stoppage of supplies.

As a matter of fact, Vernon-Smith was already thinking of extending his operations. He had a lingering hope that his hypnotism, spoofer as yet, might develop into a reality with more practice. And he had thought of Alonzo Todd as a likely subject.

Simple and weak-natured persons are peculiarly susceptible to hypnotic influence, so far as there is anything in hypnotism at all. And Todd certainly was simple enough, and Vernon-Smith thought him a great deal weaker in nature than he really was.

The Duffer of Greyfriars was in the Close when Vernon-Smith came up and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Will you come into my study, Todd?" asked the Bounder affably.

"Oh, certainly!" said Todd. "Can I do anything for you, Smithy?"

"Yes, I want you to do me a little service."

"With the greatest pleasure, Smithy. I do not approve of your character, and I have grave doubts about whether I ought to associate with you, but my Uncle Benjamin has always told me that I should seek to exercise an improving influence over bad boys. I will therefore come with you."

The Bounder compressed his lips for a moment. Alonzo Todd's way of putting things could not be considered tactful.

But the Bounder needed Todd's assistance just then, and he was not disposed to quarrel with the Duffer of Greyfriars for anything he might say.

Todd followed him to his study.

"You know, I am a hypnotist," Vernon-Smith remarked, as he closed the door and pushed a chair towards Alonzo Todd.

"I know you say you are, Smith."

"I am—really."

"I trust you are speaking correctly. But I have observed, if you will excuse my remarking on it, that you are not always truthful."

"Look here, Todd, I want you to be my subject."

"Oh!"

"Will you let me hypnotise you?"

"I do not like to refuse, Smith. But I trust that if I fall under the hypnotic influence you will not make me do anything ridiculous or anything of a nature of which my Uncle Benjamin would not approve?"

"Oh, that's all right!"

"I suppose it does not hurt to be hypnotised?"

"Not at all."

"Very well, then, Smith, I am ready."

The Bounder stood in front of Alonzo. Todd watched him a little nervously. In spite of his desire to oblige, Todd would rather not have been hypnotised. But he was in for it now.

"Sit quite still," said the Bounder.

"Oh, certainly!"

"Fix your eyes on mine."
 "With pleasure."
 "Detach your thoughts from everything—render your mind a blank."
 "I fear that that is not possible, Smith. You see, owing to the organisation of the human brain, it—"
 "Now close your eyes."
 "Oh, certainly!"
 The Bouncer made his hypnotic passes. Whether they had any hypnotic effect upon Alonzo Todd he could not see; but the Duffer was certainly sitting very quiet, and appeared to have fallen asleep.
 "Todd!"
 "Yes?"
 "You must obey me."
 "Yes."
 "You must do everything I tell you."
 "Yes."

Vernon-Smith's eyes gleamed with triumph. This certainly looked as if the Duffer was completely under the 'fluence.

"Todd, rise!"
 Alonzo Todd rose.
 "Open your eyes."
 Todd opened them.
 "Now stand on your head."

That was an order which the Bouncer did not expect to see obeyed unless the subject were really under hypnotic influence. But he did not know the boundless desire to oblige that animated Alonzo Todd.

The Duffer of Greyfriars, hypnotised or not, made no demur. He bent down and placed his hands on the floor and then the top of his head. Then he reared his long legs into the air.

"It's worked!" muttered Vernon-Smith, in delight. "It's worked! That's the 'fluence, and no mistake! Oh, my hat!"

Alonzo Todd was not accustomed to gymnastic exercises of this sort. He was no sooner standing on his head than he fell over.

His feet crashed against the table, sending it flying, and then he rolled heavily upon Vernon-Smith, catching against his legs so suddenly that the Bouncer was hurled over.

He crashed down into the grate, with a wild clatter of fire-irons and fender. Todd sat up among the wreck he had made and blinked at him. Books and papers and ink and a burst bag of pastries mingled round him on the floor.

"Oh dear!" gasped Todd.
 Vernon-Smith struggled out of the grate.
 "You dangerous idiot!" he roared.
 "Oh, really, my dear Smith—"
 "You—you fathead!"

"My dear Smith, I was only trying to oblige you!" said Todd, in great distress. "You asked me to stand upon my head, and, although it certainly seemed to me a most extraordinary request, I was willing to do so. Unfortunately, I have had no practice, and—"

The Bouncer glared at him as if he would eat him.
 "You—you ass!" he roared. "Weren't you under the 'fluence?"

"Dear me, no!"
 "You weren't hypnotised?"
 "Certainly not!"
 "Then—then why did you stand on your head?" gasped Vernon-Smith.

"Because you asked me to," said Todd simply.
 Vernon-Smith staggered to his feet. He made a wild grip at the poker.

Todd jumped up and bolted for the doorway.
 He did not understand why his excessive obligingness should have exasperated Vernon-Smith so much, but he could see that the Bouncer's study was a dangerous place to stay in. He tore open the door and dashed out.

Vernon-Smith made a furious lunge at him with the poker as he went. The disappointed hypnotist would willingly have brained him.

"Yow!" yelled Todd.
 The end of the poker caught him in the ribs with a very unpleasant poke. He staggered, and dashed away, yelling.
 "You ass!" roared Vernon-Smith, brandishing the poker in the doorway. "You chump! You fathead! I'll—"
 But Alonzo Todd was gone!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER. Not to be Done.

"SMITHY!"
 "Hold on, Smith, you're wanted!"
 Vernon-Smith tossed the poker into the study and turned towards the juniors who were coming up the passage with as agreeable a smile as he could work up. He was beginning to be in request already, evidently.
 "Hallo!" he said. "What's wanted?"
 "Listen!"
 Vernon-Smith listened.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.
 NEXT WEEK: "JOHN BULL JUNIOR'S WEEKLY."

From the end study in the passage came the mournful strains of a tuneless concertina.

"It's John Bull!" explained Harry Wharton. "He's at it again! He agreed not to play the deadly thing in the house unless somebody asked him, and Bunter's asked him. Bull gave him a bob to ask him."

"Well, what do you want me to do?" asked the Bouncer.
 "Why, it looks as if you can really hypnotise," Wharton explained. "So we want you to hypnotise Bull, and make him chuck the concertina out of the window."

"That's the wheeze," said Bob Cherry.
 "The wheezefulness is terrific."
 "If you can hypnotise a chap, you can do it through a keyhole, I suppose?" Tom Brown remarked.

"I—I don't know."
 "Oh, come off!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish. "Over there, our hypnotists can hypnotise you down a telegraph-wire."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I guess!"
 "Oh, rats, Fishy! Come on, Smithy, and see if you can put the fluence on!"

Vernon-Smith looked very doubtful. As a matter of fact, he could not have mesmerised John Bull under any circumstances. To put the fluence on through a keyhole was a difficult task, even if he could have done it at all.

But the Remove were not to be denied.
 The spoofer was in for it. He could not have the credit without earning it—that was the general idea.

"Come on!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "You jolly well found the thing for him, after I had hidden it away; now you can make him stop playing it."

"Hear, hear!"
 "Quite right!"
 "Play up, Smithy."
 "I guess—"
 "Rats! Come on, Smithy, there's a good chap. Turn on the fluence!"

And Vernon-Smith was walked along the Remove passage whether he wished to go or not. Outside the end study, Wharton hammered on the door.

"Bull! I say, Bull!"
 "Hallo!"
 "Stop that ghastly row!"
 "Rats!"
 "We'll smash the concertina!"
 "Bosh!"
 "And we'll smash you!"
 "More bosh!"
 "Hang it all! Turn on the fluence, Smithy!"
 "Buck up, Smith!"
 "Hypnotise the beast!"

Groan, growl, grind, crash! came from within the study. John Bull was extracting deadly strains from the concertina.
 "I can't hypnotise a chap through a door," said Vernon-Smith. "It's all rot! Get the door open, and I'll hypnotise him fast enough."

Bob Cherry snorted.
 "If we had the door open, we could stop him fast enough ourselves," he growled.

"Well, I can't—"
 "Then you're a spoofer."
 "Look here—"
 "I don't see why the fluence can't be turned on through a keyhole," growled Tom Brown. "That is, of course, if there's anything in it."

"I guess it's all bunkum," grinned Fisher T. Fish.
 "Jevver get left?"
 "It's all spoof!"

"Get the door open, and I'll put the fluence on," said the Bouncer. "It's impossible to hypnotise a chap through an oak door."

"Rats!"
 "I say, you fellows—"
 "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Bunter! Look here, put the fluence on Bunter, and make him butt the door in with his head," suggested Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, blinking at the juniors, "I'm hungry!"

"Oh, buzz off!"
 "Look here, I want justice done. You're captain of the Remove, Wharton, and you oughtn't to let Smith swindle me!"

"What's that?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.
 "Smith owes me money—"
 "Let's get away from that horrid grinding, if Smithy can't stop it!" exclaimed Nugent. "I can't stand it."
 "Same here."
 "The samefulness is terrific."

The juniors crowded along the passage to the stairs. The grinding of the concertina from the study went on unremittingly. John Bull was making a field day of it.

"Look here, Wharton, Smith owes me money——"

"It's a lie," said Vernon-Smith fiercely.

"You know you do! I was going to have a good feed for being subject, and——"

"Shut up!"

"Come and stand me the feed, then!"

The juniors began to look curious. If Billy Bunter was a real hypnotic subject, it was quite natural that he should try to extort feeds from Vernon-Smith for the trouble he was put to. But there was a threatening tone in Billy Bunter's voice that seemed to hint that there was something more in it.

It really seemed that Bunter's tone implied that unless Vernon-Smith stood him the feed demanded, he would have something to say that would be exceedingly unpleasant for the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith understood him clearly enough.

Although Billy Bunter was a great deal given to boasting of his abilities as a business man, he had no sense of business at all, as a matter of fact. He had no idea of keeping to an arrangement unless it suited him, and he regarded a promise much like a pawn in chess. Bunter had been thinking over the matter with growing wrath, and the prospect of a dozen feeds in perspective did not console him for not having one at the present moment. His arrangement with the Bounder was eminently profitable to himself, but he was too greedy to be faithful to it. Bunter's theory was that a bird in hand was worth any number in the bush.

Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth with rage.

If he allowed Bunter to blackmail him, for that was what it really amounted to, he knew there would be no end of it. And he did not want Bunter to betray him there and then to the Remove.

Bunter blinked at him threateningly through his big spectacles. He had chosen a moment when the Bounder was surrounded by a crowd, to spring this on him.

"Am I to have the feed you promised me?" he demanded.

"You greedy young hound——"

"Oh, really, Smith——"

"You can come into my study," said Smith.

Bunter sniffed.

"Yes, thank you, and be walloped with a cricket-stump! Not much! We'll settle up before the fellows, and Wharton's going to see justice done. Look here, you'll stand me the feed now, or I'll——"

Bunter got no further with his threat.

Vernon-Smith, losing his temper completely, made a rush at him.

His hands fell upon the fat junior, and Billy Bunter was whirled round and slammed against the head of the banisters, and the Bounder boxed his ears savagely.

"Ow!" yelled Bunter. "Help! Rescue! Yow!"

"Here, stop that, Smith!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Ow! Yow! Yaroo! Oh!"

Bunter made a wild effort to hurl his assailant off. Vernon-Smith staggered back under the weight of the fat junior, and, losing his footing, tumbled down the stairs.

"Oh!" he gasped.

Down he went, with Billy Bunter tumbling wildly after him.

The juniors on the landing burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Terrific.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. roared as the hypnotist and the Owl of the Remove disappeared down the stairs.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They landed on the mat, both of them looking considerably the worse for wear.

Billy Bunter sat up and groaned. Vernon-Smith staggered to his feet, dishevelled and dusty, and considerably bruised.

"Oh!" he gasped. "You fat fool!"

"Ow!"

"You dummy!"

"Yow!"

"I hope you've broken something," said Vernon-Smith viciously. "I wish it were your neck, you dummy!"

"Groo! I've broken my leg!"

"Good!"

"I've sprained both my ankles!"

"Splendid!"

"My ribs are busted!"

"I'm jolly glad!"

"Yow! I've broken my—my spine!"

"I wish you had!"

"Beast!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

Vernon-Smith stamped away. Billy Bunter rose slowly to his feet, with amazing activity, however, considering that his legs, ankles, ribs, and spine were broken. But perhaps the fat junior had exaggerated the damage done.

The juniors crowded down the stairs after him. The sweet strains from John Bull's study were growing louder and more terrible, and the Remove passage was really uninhabitable. As the juniors wanted to have tea in their studies, this was rather hard on them, and they were exasperated.

There was no getting at John Bull. He was safely locked in behind a strong oak door. But Nugent had remarked that Vernon-Smith and Billy Bunter were responsible for the finding of the hidden concertina.

"It was your fault, too," growled Bulstrode. "I had it locked up safely enough."

Wharton stopped his ears.

"I'm going to have tea in hall!" he exclaimed. "I can't stand that!"

"Those rotters who discovered the blessed thing shall stand it, though!" said Russell. "Let's shove 'em outside Bull's study, and tie 'em there."

"Hurrah!"

"Good egg!"

"Oh, I don't know——" began Wharton.

"I do," interrupted Nugent. "Come on, you fellows."

And the juniors rushed downstairs. Billy Bunter was collared as he sat on the lowest step, groaning.

"Bring him up!"

"Collar him!"

"Some of you go for Smithy!"

"Good egg!"

"Here, I say, you fellows," bellowed Bunter, "what's the row? What do you want? What are you up to, eh?"

"We want you."

"Yow! What for? Ow!"

"Come on!"

"Yank him along!"

Billy Bunter was bundled upstairs, in spite of his struggles and protests. He was rushed along the corridor to John Bull's study door, and there he was planked against the door, and his wrists were tied to the door-handle with a whipcord.

"I—I say, you fellows!" stammered Bunter. "I——"

"Shut up!"

"Here they come with the Bounder!"

"Bring him here!"

Vernon-Smith was not resisting, but he looked furious as a crowd of juniors dragged him along the Remove passage to the door of John Bull's study.

From within the study the unmusical, ear-splitting strains were still proceeding. John Bull was putting his beef into it, so to speak.

"Look here, what are you playing the giddy goat for?" demanded Vernon-Smith. "What are you up to?"

"You found John Bull's concertina," said Bulstrode.

"Well, the fellows wanted me to."

"I didn't want you to! You and Bunter found it, and now you can stand the racket."

"The racket is terrific."

"Shove him alongside Bunter."

"Look here, you're not going to tie me there. I——"

"Here's a cord!"

"Fasten him up!"

And the Bounder was fastened up beside Billy Bunter.

Then the juniors crowded away. The dreadful strains of the concertina had driven them away, and they all went down to have tea in hall, making an unusual rush at the Form table there.

Vernon-Smith and Bunter were left to enjoy the music.

"I—I say, Smithy——" began Bunter.

"Oh, shut up!" growled Vernon-Smith. "This is all your fault!"

"Oh, really, Smith——"

"Shut up! How can we make that fool stop that row?" snarled the Bounder of Greyfriars. "Kick at the door! That may make him open it."

They kicked at the door.

But John Bull did not even take the trouble to speak. He ground away at the concertina unheeding.

"Bull!" roared Vernon-Smith through the keyhole.

"Bull!"

"Hallo!"

"Those rotters have tied us to the door-handle——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Open the door and cut us loose, there's a decent chap."

"Rats! I'm not opening that door."

"We can't stand the row."

"Bosh!"

"Look here, Bull——"

"It will musically educate you," said John Bull calmly.

"Stick it out, my sons, and your musical taste will be improved."

"You fathead!"

Grind! Groan! Crash! Squeak!

The concertina was in full swing again. Vernon-Smith and Billy Bunter kicked at the door until they were tired.

But it did not open, and the noise did not stop.

It was not until John Bull was tired of his practice that he ceased the melodious strains, and then the door of the study was opened.

The key clicked in the lock, and John Bull pulled the door open, pulling the two prisoners into the room as he did so. They gave him furious looks.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared John Bull.

"Cut me loose!" howled the Bounder.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

John Bull opened his penknife and cut the cords. The Bounder stood trembling with rage. Gladly he would have flung himself upon the sturdy junior, but he knew that he would have no chance at fisticuffs with John Bull.

"You can buzz off," said John Bull. "Get out of my study, Bunter. There's nothing for you to eat here."

"Oh, really—"

"Where's the rotten concertina?" roared Vernon-Smith, glaring round the study.

"Locked up, where you can't get at it," grinned John Bull.

"I'll smash it."

"You jolly well won't! There's the door, Smith."

And Vernon-Smith, with a snort of rage, tramped out, followed by Billy Bunter. He did not care to go for John Bull. But Bunter was a safe person to go for. The Bounder of Greyfriars turned upon Bunter in the passage.

"Now, then, you fat toad—"

Bunter yelled and ran. After him rushed the Bounder, kicking him as fast as he ran, and Bunter went roaring down the length of the Remove passage. Then he dodged into a study and locked himself in.

Vernon-Smith returned to his own quarters, somewhat relieved by the kicking of Bunter, but still in a state of rage and spite. He was beginning to wish that he had not taken up the business of a "spoof" hypnotist.

It had not led to much else beside catastrophe, so far. But if only the power to hypnotise became real—then he would make the fellows pay, and more than pay, for all they had done.

But that, after all, was only an elusive hope. The Bounder's hypnotism was "spoof" from beginning to end, and was never likely to be anything else.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

The 'Fluence Does not Work.

WHEN Vernon-Smith appeared in the junior common-room that evening, he was greeted by a general grin. There was a dark cloud on the face of the Greyfriars hypnotist. Things had not worked out as he wished, by any means. But he had not given up the hope of impressing the Remove with a sense of his power.

The seance arranged for that evening in the common-room was to come off, all the same. He had carefully-instructed Billy Bunter in his part, and in spite of the rough passages between them, Bunter had acquiesced.

Vernon-Smith had the lowest possible opinion of Bunter, and he had not the slightest doubt that Bunter would forget all that had passed, for the sake of the feed that was promised after the seance.

In this, however, he showed less than his usual keenness. The worm, as the old proverb assures us will turn!

Billy Bunter certainly was a worm. And he had turned at last.

Bunter was still aching in every bone from the kicking Vernon-Smith had given him, and when the Bounder, before going to the common-room, sought him, the fat junior was in the vilest of possible tempers.

"You'll be ready at seven o'clock?" asked Vernon-Smith.

Bunter grunted.

"Come, I'm sorry I handled you so roughly!" the Bounder said. "I was wild, and it was really all your fault in the beginning. Look here, you're expecting a postal-order this evening, ain't you?"

Bunter brightened up.

"Yes," he said.

"For how much?"

"Five bob."

"Would you like me to cash it in advance?"

"Yes, rather!"

"There you are, then."

Bunter slipped the five shillings into his pocket, and his clouded face became a little more cheerful.

"I say, Smith," he remarked, "I'm expecting two postal-orders, as a matter of fact. One's for five shillings, and the other's for ten. I—I'd rather you cashed th—the other, if you don't mind."

Vernon-Smith did not appear to hear.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

NEXT WEEK: "JOHN BULL JUNIOR'S WEEKLY."

EVERY
TUESDAY.

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ONE
PENNY.

"I want you at just seven," he said.

"I say, Smithy—"

"Oh, don't talk rot, Bunter! Look here, come into the common-room at seven, same style as before. Mind, I'm going to question you, and you're to answer truthfully this time."

"How do you mean?"

"I'm going to ask you about your postal-orders, and you're to own up that it's all rot."

"Oh, really, Smith—"

"And about your titled friends—you'll admit there's nothing in that."

"Oh, really—"

"It won't hurt you," said Vernon-Smith. "You can tell lies again afterwards, if you like. But if I don't make you tell the truth once, the fellows won't believe in my hypnotism."

"But really—"

"You understand? And look here, you can have as much as you like to eat at Mrs. Mumble's afterwards, if the seance goes off quite successfully."

"But I can't—"

"Yes, you can," said the Bounder coolly. "And you must!"

"But—but I say—"

"Nuff said. I shall want you at exactly seven."

And with that the Bounder left the fat junior. He had no doubt whatever of Billy Bunter. But, as we have said, even the worm will turn.

Billy Bunter gave him a look of deadly spite as he departed. Bunter would do many things for money and feeds, but there were some things he would not do. He would not stand being kicked till he ached all over, if he could help it. He would not admit in public that he was an habitual liar.

It was expecting too much, even of Bunter; but Vernon-Smith, in his over-bearing way, never thought of that.

While Vernon-Smith was going to the common-room, Billy Bunter made his way to the tuckshop. There was a chance that Vernon-Smith might take his five shillings back, if matters went wrong—and Bunter meant that they should go wrong. Billy Bunter meant to make sure of that advance of cash, at least.

It was soon disappearing down his capacious throat in the form of jam, and cake, and lollipops.

Meanwhile, Vernon-Smith, quite unaware of his subject's secret intentions, was in the junior common-room, preparing for the seance which was to establish fully his claim to be considered as a real and genuine hypnotist.

The juniors grinned at the sight of him, and there were many remarks on his joyful experience outside John Bull's study. But at the same time, the juniors were keen enough to see the promised seance.

Most of them had open minds as to whether there was anything in Vernon-Smith's hypnotism or not. They meant to watch very closely this time, and discover for themselves.

"Going to begin soon, Smithy?" asked Bob Cherry.

The Bounder sniffed.

"I don't know whether I shall begin at all," he replied. "You've treated me pretty rottenly over what I've done already."

"Oh, that was for finding Bull's concertina! You couldn't expect the form to stand that patiently."

"Rather not!"

"The rathernotfulness is terrific."

"Faith, and ye're right! But we want the seance all the same, Smithy, darling. Sure and I've missed tea with a prefect to see it."

"I guess we're going to have the show, after we've come in to see it," said Fisher T. Fish. "I know it's all spoof; but we're here to see it, I guess."

"Yes, rather!"

"Play up, Smithy!"

"On the ball, you know!"

The juniors were keen for Vernon-Smith to begin. The Bounder glanced over the room. He had the attention of all present. But it still wanted several minutes to seven, and it was not till seven exactly that Bunter had been timed to enter.

A few minutes had to be dawdled away without exciting suspicion; and then the mystic "fluence" was to draw Bunter to the common-room.

"What do you want me to do?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Make Bunter tell the truth."

"Hear, hear!"

"We'll believe anything then."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, very well!" said the Bounder negligently. "I'll do that. Of course, I shall have to put a jolly strong 'fluence on to get the truth out of a chap like Bunter."

"Ha, ha! That's true enough."

"A thought has occurred to me," said Alonzo Todd. "I think your wonderful gift might be made very useful in this way, Smithy. Suppose you were to hypnotise the burglar who tried to break into Greyfriars, and influenced him to lead an honest, sober, and industrious life. That would be splendid! My Uncle Benjamin—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm sure my Uncle Benjamin would approve of that idea," said Todd. "It would be most praiseworthy and seemly. Don't you fellows think so?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How am I to hypnotise the chap when he isn't here?" demanded Vernon-Smith, with a snort.

"Ah! Undoubtedly that presents a difficulty," admitted the Duffer of Greyfriars. "But he will probably burgle the school again, you know. Suppose, for instance, you had found him in Bulstrode's study last night."

"Sh!"

"Oh, I'm so sorry, Smith; I forgot that you asked me not to mention that you were in Bulstrode's study last night. But—"

"So you were in my study last night, were you?" said Bulstrode, looking dangerous. "May I inquire what you were doing there, Smith?"

Vernon-Smith gave the Duffer a deadly look.

"I—I thought I heard a noise, and I went down to see if it was burglars," he stammered.

"And what made you select my study?"

"I thought the noise came from there."

"Dear me! Your memory is sadly deficient," said Alonzo. "Don't you remember, Smith, you told me that you had mistaken me for the burglar when I came down, and you dodged into the study to get out of my way?"

"Oh!" said Bulstrode. "One yarn for Toddy, and one for us. I think I can see light. You blessed spoofer! You went into my study last night to find out if the concertina was there, so that you could pretend to discover it to-day by hypnotising Bunter."

"I—I—"

"My hat!"

"Bowled out, by Jove!"

"Nothing of the sort," exclaimed Vernon-Smith desperately. "How should I know what was in a locker when it was locked?"

"You might have a key, for that matter."

"Dear me! That would account for the click I heard as I approached the study," said Alonzo Todd.

"Oh! So it's true; he had a key!"

"I—I hadn't!"

"Rats!"

"Spoofer!"

"Liar!"

"Look here," said Vernon-Smith savagely, "I've no time to waste on this rot. If you fellows want the seance, I'm willing to go ahead. If not, say so."

"Oh, you can go ahead!" said Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather!" chimed in Bob Cherry. "I fancy it's all spoofer, but we'll see."

"Make Bunter roll in," grinned John Bull.

"Silence, then!"

"Rot!" said Bulstrode. "You knew—"

"Oh, shut up, Bulstrode, and give the chap a chance!"

"Order!"

Vernon-Smith made some passes in the air. The clock indicated a few minutes after seven.

"Come!" said Vernon-Smith.

The juniors waited.

According to programme, Billy Bunter should have walked in, in response to the command of the hypnotist.

But he didn't!

They waited, and watched the doorway. It remained vacant. The subject did not come.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Given Away!

FIVE minutes passed, and Billy Bunter had not appeared. Vernon-Smith was gnawing his lip with rage. He did not think yet that Bunter was playing him false. But he had no doubt that the money he had given the fat junior as a peace-offering was being spent in the tuckshop, and that so long as it lasted Bunter would forget all about the programme.

The Removites were laughing now. The fluence was evidently "off," and so was their belief in the hypnotist.

"I guess I said it was spoofer," grinned Fisher T. Fish. "You fellows have been taken in. Jevver get left? He, he, he!"

"I've not been taken in," said Tom Brown. "I never believed the rot."

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"Of course, it's all rot!" said Nugent.

"I—I think, perhaps, Bunter's too far away to feel the fluence," stammered Vernon-Smith. "It may have grown weaker with time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rats!"

"If he's a great distance away, I shouldn't be able to call him in like this," said Vernon-Smith. "If he's as far as the tuckshop, for instance."

"Stuff!"

"Look here, some of you fellows go and fetch him. As soon as he's within sight, I'll make him do anything you like."

"You'll make him tell the truth?"

"Yes."

"About his postal-orders and his titled friends?"

"Certainly!"

"Well, we'll believe in you if you can do that."

"Go and fetch Bunter, some of you. I'm pretty certain you'll find him in the tuckshop," said Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, we'll fetch him!"

Bob Cherry and Tom Brown departed in search of Bunter. The rest of the juniors waited. In a few minutes Bob and Tom reappeared, and they brought the Owl of the Remove with them.

Billy Bunter was in a capulous humour. There was a smear of jam on his fat face, showing how he had been employed. As a matter of fact, he had not yet got to the end of his cash, and he was very much annoyed at being taken away from the tuckshop. But Tom Brown and Bob would take no denial. They had taken hold of the fat junior and marched him off without going through the formality of asking his consent.

"Here he is!" exclaimed Bob, as Bunter was marched into the room.

"I say, you fellows, I—"

"Sit down, Bunter."

"Oh, really—"

"Sit down, and shut up."

Vernon-Smith waved his hand to Billy Bunter with a commanding gesture.

"Sit down, Bunter!" he exclaimed.

The fat junior grunted. He was in for it now, and the continuation of his feed was evidently put off till after the seance. Billy Bunter intended to make the seance as brief as possible.

"Are you ready, Bunter?"

"Yes," growled Bunter.

"Close your eyes."

"Oh, all right!"

"Endeavour to detach your mind from all thoughts, and—"

"Oh, all right!" growled Billy Bunter. "I had all that last time. Let's get to business. I told Mrs. Mimble I'd be back in a few minutes."

Vernon-Smith snapped his teeth.

But he did not enter into an argument with the fat junior. It was not a judicious time or place for an argument.

He began to make the hypnotic passes before the fat face of the Owl of the Remove. The juniors gathered round to watch him.

The discontented expression upon Bunter's face was not very promising. But Vernon-Smith had no choice but to go ahead.

"Now, Bunter! You are under the fluence; you are the slave of my will," said Vernon-Smith, in very impressive tones.

Bunter grunted.

"Rise, Bunter!"

Bunter rose.

"Sit down again!"

Bunter sat down again.

Vernon-Smith waved his hand.

"You see, he is completely under my control," he remarked. "I can do as I like with him. Now you can put any questions you like, and I will him to tell the truth. Bunter, you are to tell the fellows the exact truth."

The "subject" opened his eyes.

"I'm to tell them the exact truth?" he asked.

"Yes."

"The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?"

"Certainly!"

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter, with a grin. "In the first place, you fellows, I ain't under the hypnotic influence at all."

Vernon-Smith turned quite pale.

There was a gasp from the Remove. It was followed by a roar of laughter.

Bunter blinked gloatingly at the spoofer hypnotist.

It was his turn now, and he did not mean to spare Vernon-Smith one atom of what it was in his power to inflict upon him.

"I'm not under the fluence," he went on, "and I never have been under the fluence. There isn't any fluence. It's all humbug."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I said so all along. Ha, ha! Jevver get left?"

"My hat!"

"Look here, you young fraud, what have you been playing this game for, then?" demanded Harry Wharton.

Vernon-Smith stood silent, overwhelmed, and biting his lips with rage and chagrin.

"I say, you fellows, I—I did it for a joke at first, and—and Vernon-Smith promised me all sorts of things, and—and he threatened me, too," said Bunter. "But when I found that he was really trying to deceive, of course my conscience stepped in, and—"

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"I suppose Smith hasn't paid up, or you've tried to extort more than he'd pay, or else you're getting even with him for licking you to-day," said Wharton, in disgust. "Don't pretend you've got a decent motive, Billy. We sha'n't believe you."

"Not much!"

"The not-muchfulness is terrific."

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"But Bunter's telling the truth, anyway," roared Bob Cherry. "Vernon-Smith's made him do that, at all events. Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was all spoof from beginning to end," said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What have you got to say, Smith?"

Vernon-Smith had nothing to say.

What could he say? Now that his confederate had given him away utterly, he had not a leg to stand on.

The game was up. No amount of humbug, though ever

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so skilful, was likely to make the Remove believe in his powers as a hypnotist again.

The Bouncer bit his lip till the blood almost came. Then, as he caught the triumphant grin of Billy Bunter, he made a sudden rush at the fat junior.

Billy Bunter rolled out of the chair with extraordinary activity, and dodged behind Wharton.

"Keep him off!" he roared. "Ow! Yow! Keep him off! You fellows stand by me, you know. I've told you only the truth."

"Collar the spoofer!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Collar him!" roared the juniors. "Bump him!"

Vernon-Smith drew back, clenching his hands. But the Removites were swarming round him.

They had been "fed up" with the humbug of the Bouncer, and those who had been led to place faith in him were more angry than those who had scoffed at his hypnotism all along. He was seized by many hands, and bumped over.

"Ow!" he roared. "Ow! Leggo! Yah!"

The sham hypnotist went down heavily, and a crowd of juniors sprawled over him. Vernon-Smith disappeared under a sprawling mass of juniors.

The hypnotist was squashed.

When Vernon-Smith crawled out of the common-room, he felt that life was not worth living. After that day he did not talk hypnotism, nor did he ever attempt to put the "fluence" on.

(Another splendid, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Tuesday, entitled: "JOHN BULL JUNIOR'S WEEKLY," by Frank Richards. Order in advance. Price one penny.)

GRAND NEW ADVENTURE SERIAL JUST STARTED.

Wolves of the Deep.

The Story of a Great Conspiracy, introducing Ferrers Lord and Ching-Lung.

By SIDNEY DREW.

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord, while on board his powerful submarine the Lord of the Deep, rescues Rupert Thurston from the River Thames, and takes him to his house in Park Lane. There he shows Thurston the model of his submarine. While at dinner the same night Lord sends his footman to his room for some cigarettes. The footman does not return, and Ferrers Lord finds the man murdered in his room. His model is stolen, and upon the floor is an artificial arm. "I know the thief," Ferrers Lord cries, turning to Thurston, and throwing the arm in the fire, "Michael Scaroff, the Russian."

(Now go on with the story.)

War to the Knife.

Rupert Thurston felt a thrill of pity run through his heart as he glanced at Ferrers Lord. The splendid secret, that this man had spent years of bitter toil in discovering was no longer his own—the conquest of the unknown realms of the ocean. The thief, with the priceless model in his possession, could have a vessel similar to the Lord of the Deep built without any difficulty, though it would cost an enormous sum.

"Is this miserable robber rich?" he ventured to ask.

"A modern Croesus—a Monte Cristo!" said Ferrers Lord between his clenched teeth.

Thurston shook his head sadly, and knelt down again beside the footman. The poor fellow was dead beyond a doubt, but there was no sign of any outward wound. The distorted face and the petrified look of staring horror in the glazed eyes made him shudder. What had those eyes seen before the everlasting darkness had fallen upon them?

"We must have a doctor," Thurston said; "and we shall have to face an inquest. What on earth killed the man? I cannot find a single mark upon him. Surely it could not have been fright?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 157.

NEXT WEEK: "JOHN BULL JUNIOR'S WEEKLY."

The girl was standing in the doorway, frozen with fear. Ferrers Lord, grey to the lips, laughed grimly.

"My friend," he said steadily, "you are young and inexperienced. This Michael Scaroff comes from the East, and the East has always been the land of mystery. Even the Great White Tsar, Autocrat of All the Russias, dare hardly call him a vassal, for Scaroff can summon a hundred thousand fierce Tartar horsemen to his banner with a wave of his hand. Rich? He is lord of a million acres and a thousand villages. Let me show you how my servant died." Bending, he forced open the clenched hand of the murdered man. "There is his death-wound, Thurston."

"What! That tiny mark?" cried the young man, in amazement. "Impossible! Why, I can hardly see it. It seems a mere pin-prick!"

"Small as it appears, it is his death-wound," Ferrers Lord had grown strangely calm. "As I told you, this man is a son of the mysterious East, and a traveller in many lands. They brew horrible poisons there, and use strange weapons. I have known death lurk in a hand-clasp or the prick of a thorn. What! Are you still here, Violet?"

All this time the girl had been standing in the doorway, her eyes dilated with terror. She started as he spoke.

"Is—he really dead—murdered?"

Ferrers Lord turned upon her almost roughly.

"Go to your room!" he said sternly. "Remember, you know nothing, and have seen nothing, of what has happened here to-night. This has been all a dream, Violet. Forget it."

"Yes, uncle; I understand. Good-night, Mr. Thurston!"

She held out a tiny white hand sparkling with jewels. Thurston felt it tremble as he took it. Then she vanished into the gloom of the corridor, and they were alone with the dead man.

"You mentioned a doctor," said Ferrers Lord, "and I suppose it is our legal duty to have one. Be careful, if you

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

are present, to hold your tongue about the tiny wound I showed you. This thing must be kept a secret between us, for I do not wish it to come to the ears of the police. It would hamper our movements too much. I will send for my doctor, Sir Anthony Helder, and I would wager my last penny that his verdict will have no hint of foul play in it."

"But Sir Anthony is the cleverest physician in London."

"Were he ten times more skilful than he is he would never dream of murder," said Ferrers Lord.

The body was laid upon a couch and covered up. Ferrers Lord opened the cabinet, and calmly produced a box of the cigarettes that had cost the poor fellow his life. He lighted one with unshaking hand, and his voice was amazingly steady.

"The air of this room stifles me, Thurston," he said. "The night is fine enough, and not too chilly, for a lounge on the verandah. I will join you in a moment, when I have sent for Helder and despatched a few telegrams."

Thurston nodded, and passed out through the open French window. The flower-scented breeze blowing from the park cooled his burning forehead. He paced up and down, his thoughts full of Ferrers Lord. What great strength of will this man must have to take his terrible loss so calmly! Why, if he knew the thief, did he not warn the police, and have the whole country ransacked to find him? A one-armed man would find it difficult to hide for long.

But Ferrers Lord said "No." Thurston was puzzled. How had the thief escaped so quickly, and why had there been no pursuit? It could have only been by the window, for they had found the door locked on the inner side. A glance over the balcony showed him that nothing but a cat could have dropped from such a height without a broken limb or a broken neck. He looked up the leafy vine covering the house.

The vine was one of the treasures of Park Lane, and some of its gnarled branches were thicker than his leg. A clever climber might have scaled it, though not without difficulty, and gained the roof or one of the windows; but for a man hampered by the loss of an arm it was utterly impossible. Besides, the lane was thronged with people, and the climber could not have escaped notice.

As he sank into a chair, the millionaire joined him, so noiselessly that Thurston was startled.

"You quite frightened me," he said, with a laugh. "You came like a ghost. I did not hear you."

"I suppose not," answered Ferrers Lord, "for you were in a brown study, wondering, most likely, why on earth I have not got the house swarming with detectives from Scotland Yard. Is that so?"

It was not difficult to guess that, and Thurston nodded.

"Well, I will tell you why. An inquest is a short matter, and a murder trial takes a long time. I know Michael Scaroff, and I know that he has not only planned all this with a cunning that would baffle the smartest detective in the world, but also that he has taken care to cover his retreat. How he learned of my invention I cannot imagine, but I know that the Lord of the Deep has been spied upon by a strange yacht. I first met Scaroff at Marseilles, when we were both present at the trials of that miserable tub the French papers went mad over and called a submarine boat. He is an ambitious man, Thurston, and so am I; he is a rich man, and so am I." The dark brows knitted, the grim eyes flashed. "I will have no go-between, Thurston, for now it must be man to man. For what has happened to-night I claim a heavy price—Michael Scaroff's life!"

He flung his cigarette down, and crushed it viciously under his heel.

"I tell you," he went on more fiercely, "that I will make him pay for this with his life, or I will lose my own in attempting it! In robbing me of the model, he has robbed me of my very heart's blood. The whole world is not large enough to hide him from me. If the pursuit lasts twenty years, if I have to spend the last penny of my wealth, I will find him! You have to choose now for good and all. Either you must throw in your

lot with mine, or we must say farewell. Time is precious, so choose quickly. In an hour I leave for France."

Thurstone rose slowly from his seat, and hesitated.

"This quarrel is none of yours," said Ferrers Lord coldly, "and you have known me only for a day. Do not speak before you have thought, one way or the other. I warn you it will be no child's play, but a quest full of danger and hardship. You have no cause to join in this battle of vengeance, and perhaps it is wrong of me to ask you. I like you, and would be glad to have you with me nothing more."

The young man stood in thoughtful silence, staring across the gloomy Park. Had anything so strange and incredible happened to a man before? Had such a startling series of adventures ever been crowded into so brief a space of time? The wild dive into the seething water, the fierce battle against the tide, the strange awakening, the submarine vessel, the murder, and, strangest of all, this offer to league himself with Ferrers Lord in his weird man-hunt and terrible vendetta.

The very thought of it fascinated and thrilled him. He turned, his eyes sparkling with excitement:

"I will go," he said. "I accept your offer."

The millionaire smiled and held out his hand.

"I knew what your answer would be before I spoke, Thurston. After all, you may not regret that you have thrown in your lot with Ferrers Lord. We must not delay, for every moment wasted makes our lot the harder. You have barely an hour, and if you have any particular friends, you had better write to them at once to say you are going abroad for a time. My servant will arrange about your rooms, and pay any debts you have. Well, what is it?"

A footman stood beside him, holding a salver, on which lay two cards. Ferrers Lord glanced at them by the light that streamed from the window, and tossed one of them back.

"I do not wish to see Sir Anthony," he said; "and I cannot attend the inquest. Let him examine the body and make his report. Show the other gentleman up, and bring champagne and cigars. Here is our friend of the diving-dress, Thurston, the fellow we saw at work on the sunken liner."

Thurston took the big business card, and read:

"Edward Horton, chief diver, International Salvage Company."

Mr. Edward Horton looked more like a prosperous City merchant than the most fearless and skilful diver in the world as he stepped upon the verandah. He was faultlessly dressed in an elegant frock-coat, well-creased trousers, and patent boots, and carried a glossy hat and a pair of grey suede gloves. In size and build he was a giant, and his voice was like the bellowing of a bull.

"Good-evening, gentlemen!" he said, bowing.

"Good-evening, Horton!" said Ferrers Lord. "I see you are punctual. Sit down, please, and let us have a brief chat. You are not married?"

"No, sir; but I thought I was pretty well buried when I saw you smoking your cigars and drinking your wine at the bottom of the sea. It nearly frightened me to death at first. I thought I'd run right into the arms of old Davy Jones."

No, sir; I'm a single man."

"So much the better. My letter told you that I wished to employ you, and that I had arranged for your discharge from the company. The matter is simply this. I own the submarine vessel that startled you so much this morning, and I am going for a long cruise in her. I want to take an experienced diver with me, and I knew I could find no better than Edward Horton. I have your discharge here, signed and sealed. I will give you twice your present salary if you care to accompany me."

(Another thrilling instalment of this grand serial next Tuesday.)



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"John Bull Junior's Weekly."

Our next issue will contain the tale of the NEW GREYFRIARS WEEKLY. Alonzo Todd gets in as Sub-Editor, and — you will laugh!

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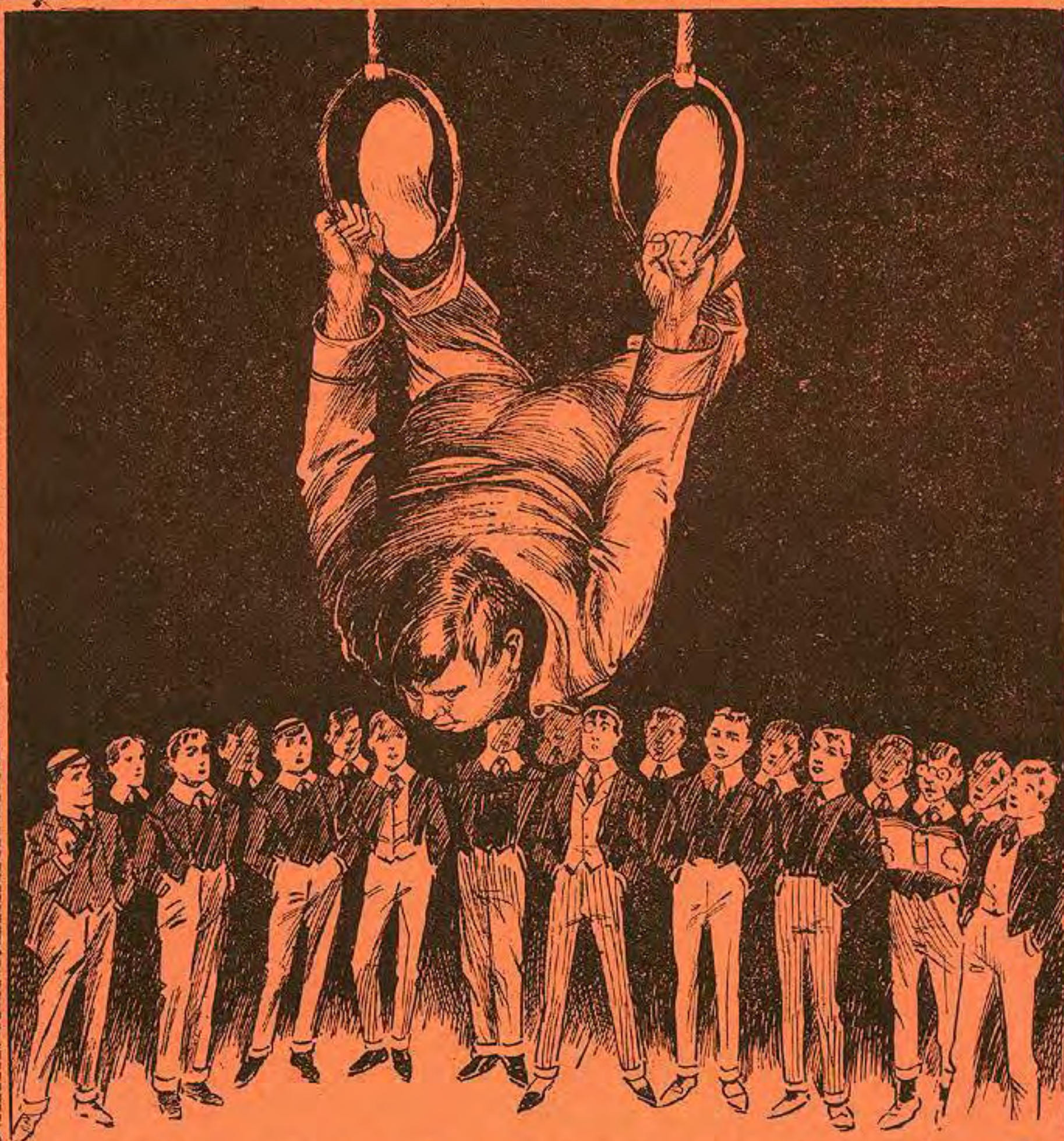
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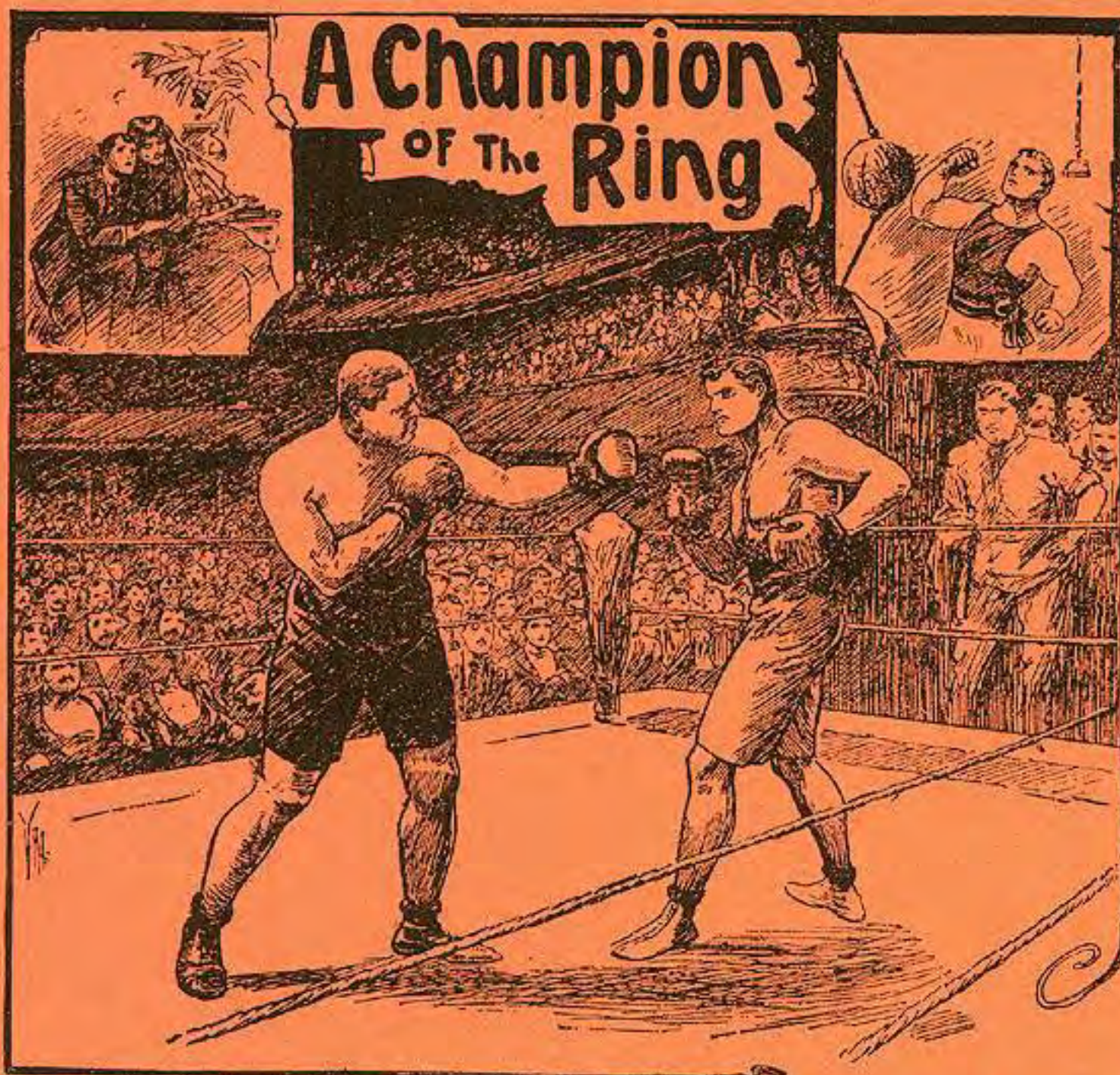
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Both boxers ran to the centre of the ring, touched hands lightly, then sprang apart again. The silence was breathless as Tom Marsdon's first fight commenced!

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