

AMAZING ESCAPADES OF SCHOOLBOY HYPNOTIST!

(See the special school story inside.)

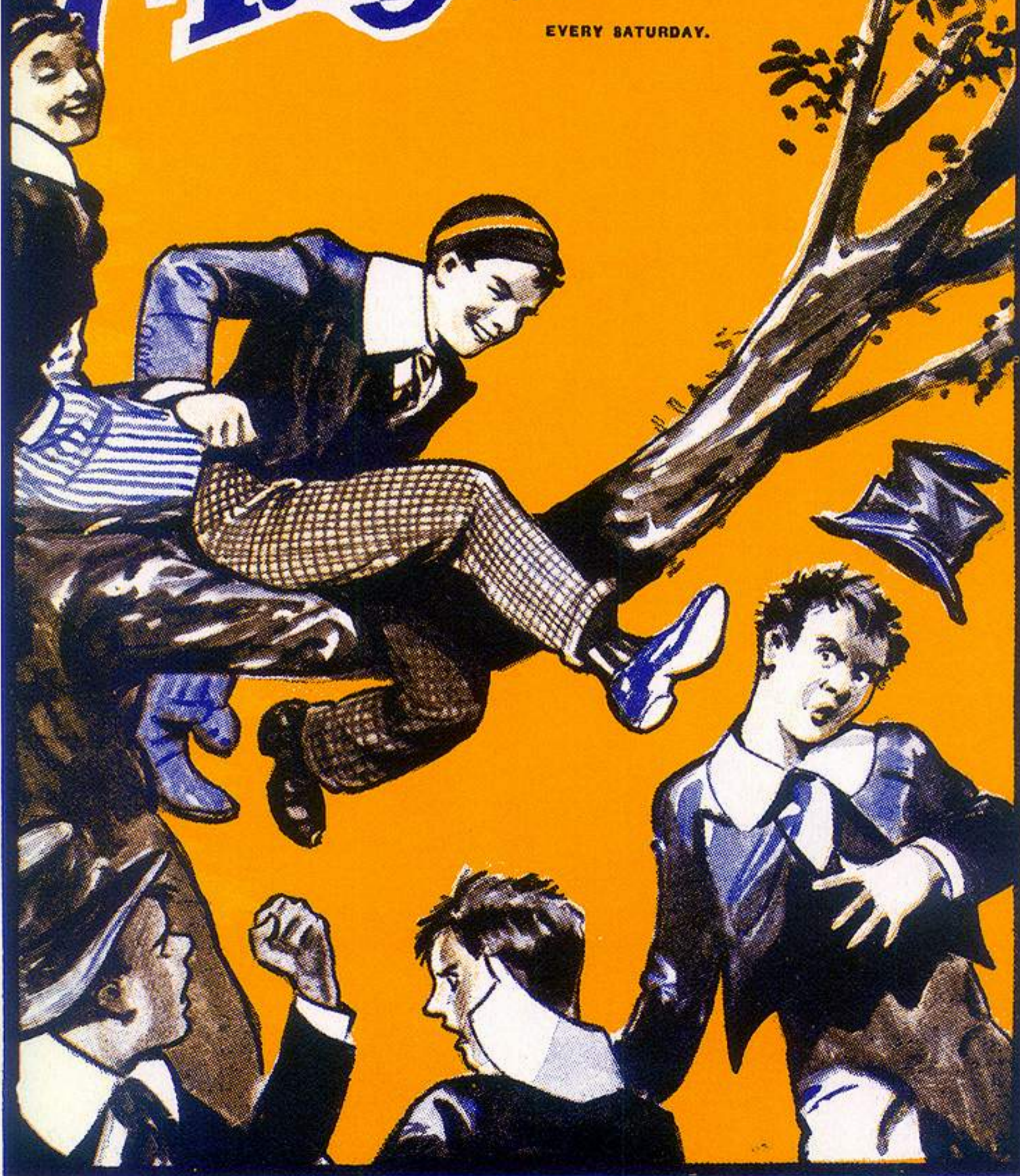
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Week Ending April 14th, 1928.

The Magnet 2nd

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EVERY SATURDAY.



KEEPING THE ENEMY AT BAY!

(A vigorous incident from the grand long complete school story of Harry Wharton & Co.—inside.)



WHEN the cartoonists depict the Notts Forest club they draw a bold, bad forester, coming out of the wood, duly armed with a "shooter," and looking to the right and to the left for possible victims. The picture is a fitting one, too—one to which the Foresters of Nottingham tried hard to live up to during the present season.

They have adopted a bold policy, gone out looking for victims, and some of those victims have been made to realise how deadly was their shooting. Last week we dealt with one of the dark horses of this season's Cup competition. There haven't been many, but we deal this week with another of the dark horses—the only survivors, bar Stoke, from the Second Division left in the Sixth Round. Of course, they went out of the Cup in that Sixth Round, but to stay in so long and against such mighty opposition, was no mean feat on the part of the Foresters.

I must tell what they did among other things—made it quite certain that this English Cup wouldn't go to Wales again. They knocked out Cardiff City, who won last year, at a time when everybody in Wales was quite confident that the trophy would be won by the Cardiff team for the second time in succession. That was one fine feather in the cap of the bold Forester.

Football Thinkers!

You may not know it, but I'm telling you now that the Notts Forest football club has about as many claims to distinction as any other football club in the country. In fact, I don't know any ground on which more actual history has been made than on the ground of the Notts Forest club. In the first place, the first time a game of football was controlled by a referee who had a whistle was on the ground of the Notts Forest club.

In the old days all football teams played with two half-backs and six forwards. It was the Forest club which was the first to try the experiment of playing three half-backs and only five forwards. That shows there were football thinkers connected with these Nottingham Reds in the old days, and there have been thinkers connected with the club ever since.

Another point. They used to have in their ranks a famous International forward named Widdowson. Now, this fellow took such a lot of stopping that opponents were not always too gentle in the methods they adopted. They went for his legs. So Widdowson had the idea of using shin-guards, and was the first footballer to wear them.

And as a last story from the past, before I deal with the Notts Forest players of to-day, I must just tell you that the club has played so-called "English" Cup-ties in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, as well as in England, of course.

A Cheap Team!

Forest are now in the Second Division, and I am afraid must stay there for another season at least. But they have known the sweets of the top class, and will do so again in the future, because they have the sort of fellows at the head who won't be denied. Mixed with their Cup exploits this season they have also done fairly well in the struggle for Second Division points. Their team is a mixture of youth and experience, but is, generally speaking, a cheap team, because Notts have not been among the fortunate clubs which have been able to spend money without having to wonder where it was coming from.

Dexterity is wanted in a goalkeeper, and the custodian of the Forest should have this quality at least. His name is Dexter. He is a Nottingham fellow, too, and I might tell you that when he first signed on for the Forest it was agreed that he should carry on his

This Week:

Notts Forest F.C.

An interesting survey of the plucky Second Division team which fought its way into the Sixth Round of the F.A. Cup.

trade until such time as he was wanted regularly in the Notts team. They know what a good goalkeeper means at Nottingham, for the Forest have had Sam Hardy in the team. And they also know that young Dexter is a good one.

In front of this fine goalkeeper are two fine full-backs who take a bit of passing. On the right is Bill Thompson—a full-back by adoption, as it were. When he was at Derby, and playing for Derby County in the Victory League just after the War, he was an outside-right. Now, at Nottingham, they have made him into a full-back, but he can still shoot. He was called up to take the penalty kick when the Forest met Cardiff City in the Fifth Round of the Cup. He took it and won the match for his side. That's the sort of fellow he is—without nerves, and a draughtsman off the field, as well as on the field. Thompson's partner, Percy Barratt, first went into the premier eleven a matter of five years ago. He was then on the right, but has moved to the left to make room for Thompson. Barratt is the younger brother of the cricketer who plays for the county of Notts. A well-built lad, and a worker for ninety minutes. These two full-backs of the Forest still try the off-side move at times, just to show Nottingham, the original home of the off-side trick, that it can still be carried out with success.

A Fine Half-Back Line!

For some time as centre-half Forest have had one of the finest footballers
(Continued on page 28.)

CARDIFF CITY'S CONQUERORS IN THE F.A. CUP.



Reading from left to right, photo shows: Back row: Morgan, Thompson, Dexter, Barratt, McLachlan, Harrison, D. Willis (trainer). Front row: Belton, Burton Gibson, Wallace, Jones, Wadsworth.

THE BOUNDER AT HIS WORST! Once Herbert Vernon-Smith gets his "knife" into anyone, he never rests content until he has humiliated him. But for all his astuteness and rascality, the Bounder finds in young Crum, the school-boy hypnotist, a victim with a trump card up his sleeve, so to speak!

The New Boy's Enemy!



A Rousing New and Extra-Long Story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars, with Crum of the Remove well in the limelight. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Nice for Mauly!

"MAULY!"

Lord Mauleverer sighed. He sighed deeply.

The voice of Crum, of the Remove, calling him in the Remove passage, seemed to have a dispiriting effect upon his lordship.

He did not answer.

He was sitting on his sofa in Study No. 12 in the Remove, his noble head resting lazily against a cushion.

He had a view of the wall of the study. By moving his head a few inches he might have had a view of the green quadrangle, the old elms of Greyfriars, and the shady old Cloisters beyond. But moving his noble head meant exertion: not much, it is true, still, it meant some exertion. So Lord Mauleverer did not move his noble head. It remained where it had happened to fall on the cushion.

It was a sunny spring afternoon. It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars. Mauly had been thinking of taking a walk abroad.

He was still thinking of it when Crum's voice called in the passage. No doubt he would have gone on thinking of it till tea-time had he not been interrupted.

Now he wished that he had gathered his noble energies for the effort of detaching himself from the sofa and walking abroad.

He knew that Crum was going to ask him to go out.

He had been thinking of going out. But he did not want to go out with Crum.

Any other fellow in the Remove who did not want to go out with Crum would have said so plainly—probably very plainly. They did not mince their

words, as a rule, in the Greyfriars Remove. They called a spade a spade, and would not have dreamed of referring to it as an agricultural implement. But Mauly was not quite like the rest of the Remove. His manners were unexceptionable. This placed him rather at a disadvantage in dealing with his Form-fellows. He was polite even to Billy Bunter. To Crum he was unvaryingly courteous—chiefly because he could not stand Crum.

"Mauly!"

Crum's voice was neither musical nor cultivated.

It worried the sensitive Mauly a little.

Not for worlds would he have let Crum know it. But it did.

He answered not. Perhaps hoping that Crum would pass the study by, and conclude that he was not there.

If that was his hope, it was ill-founded. The door flew open, and the face of Henry Christopher Crum looked in.

"Oh! 'Ere you are!" said Crum cheerily. "Didn't 'ear me tooting, what?"

Crum, the showman's son, had been two weeks at Greyfriars now. He had improved in many respects. In others, he hadn't.

Sometimes, in a careful mood, he would not drop a single aspirate for hours together. Sometimes he would be so very careful with them that his h sounded like two or three ordinary h's rolled into one. But sometimes he forgot the aspirate entirely, and spoke in the variety of English that he had been accustomed to use when travelling the road with Crum's Show.

That morning, in class, he had been very careful. Mr. Quelch, the Remove master, had noted with satisfaction that Crum was improving. Perhaps the long-sustained effort had tired Crum

Or perhaps he felt entitled to let himself go on a half-holiday. At all events, he let his aspirates go.

"Tired, old chap?" he asked, looking in at Mauleverer.

"Yaas."

"Feeling up to a walk?"

Lord Mauleverer suppressed another sigh.

"Yaas, if you like."

"Come on, then, old pippin."

"Yaas."

Lord Mauleverer detached himself from the sofa.

Had it been any other fellow, Mauly would have answered in the negative. But he was very punctilious about hurting Crum's feelings.

Crum had a lot of ways that were not Greyfriars ways. He dropped his h's with reckless profusion. He used such adjectives as "blooming"—and even "bally." He whistled through his teeth. He wore a necktie with purple spots. He jingled money in his trousers' pocket. He even talked about money—an awful offence. Almost every nerve in Lord Mauleverer's sensitive nervous system was jarred by Crum. And for that very reason Mauly was unvaryingly kind and courteous to Crum. Fellows like Skinner, and Snoop, and Bunter, and Angel of the Fourth, sneered at the showman's son, and turned up their noses at him in snobbish scorn. Lord Mauleverer could not have borne to be classed with Skinner, and Snoop, and Bunter, and Aubrey Angel. Anything was better than that—even Crum.

Crum was largely unconscious of his defects, but not unconscious of the estimation in which many fellows held him. The consequence was that he was suspicious and touchy. He wore his heart upon his sleeve, as it were, for daws to peck at.

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To any other fellow Mauly could have said "No! Blow away, old bean!" But he knew that Crum would have taken that personally. He would have thought at once that Mauly was looking down on him—like a snob of Skinner's sort.

So Lord Mauleverer smiled as cheerily as he could, and walked out of Study No. 12 with Crum.

Three or four fellows glanced at them in the Remove passage. Some of them smiled. The contrast between Crum, with his purple-spotted necktie, his quick, jerky manner, and the placid Mauly, was striking. Vernon-Smith was in the doorway of Study No. 4, and he called to Mauly as the two juniors came along.

"Hold on a tick, Mauly."

"Yaas, dear man?"

Lord Mauleverer stopped. He was always more willing to stop than to move on. With all his good qualities, there was no doubt that Mauly was the slackest slacker at Greyfriars. He had reduced laziness almost to a fine art.

Crum stopped, too, but the Bounder took no notice of him. Smithy did not like Crum; and when Smithy did not like a fellow, he never left any doubt on the subject. Smithy's opinion was that it was sheer cheek on the part of a fellow like Crum to shove himself into a school like Greyfriars; and Smithy had stated that opinion aloud more than once. He saw no reason for concealing it.

"We're havin' a boat out this afternoon, Redwing and I," said the Bounder. "Reddy's gone down about it now."

"Yaas?"

"Well, come with us, old bean," said Vernon-Smith. "We won't make you row. You shan't even steer. Comin'?"

Lord Mauleverer was interested. Sitting in a boat gliding along a sunny stream appealed to him more than walking.

"Not a bad idea, Smithy," he assented.

"Right-ho! It's a go, then?"

"Yaas, if Crum would like a boat instead of a walk. What do you say, Crum?"

Lord Mauleverer's own manners were so good that he always seemed taken by surprise by other fellows' bad manners. He was obviously with Crum, so Smithy could not possibly have asked him without including Crum; so it seemed to his lordship. Smithy promptly undeceived him.

Before Crum could speak, the Bounder interjected:

"We don't want Crum."

Crum flushed angrily.

"Eh?" ejaculated his lordship.

"We don't want Crum, I say."

Lord Mauleverer gave Smithy one look, linked his arm in Crum's, and walked on down the passage with the showman's son.

Vernon-Smith flushed crimson.

Some of the fellows in the passage laughed. The Bounder, crimson with mortification, cast an angry glare round, stalked into his study, and slammed the door.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Fallen Among Foes!

"**R**ACE you men!" said Bob Cherry.

"Too warm!" said Johnny Bull.

"My esteemed chums, the warmth is not really terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Not to you, Inky," said Harry

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Wharton, with a laugh. "Not quite so warm as Bhanipur. But warm."

"Slackers!" said Bob.

Bob Cherry was full of energy that afternoon.

In that respect, the afternoon resembled every other afternoon and morning in Bob's exuberant existence.

It was undoubtedly very warm for a spring afternoon. There was indeed a breath of summer in the air. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh did not notice it—he found August rather chilly, in comparison with his native land, and in the spring, Hurree Singh was not likely to complain of the heat, but of the cold. Bob Cherry noticed it, but Bob did not care whether it was warm or cold, so long as he was in motion.

The chums of the Remove were walking to Courtfield, and taking a cut across the wide, green common. Walking was rather too slow for Bob Cherry. Walking did not use up ten per cent of the superabundant energy within him. Had it been a blazing midsummer day, Bob would probably have suggested a race across the common. And it was only warm.

"Slackers!" repeated Bob. "Look here, I'll give any man ten yards, and beat him to the copse on the other side of the ridge."

Three of the juniors shook their heads. But Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh nodded cheerily.

"You on, Inky?" asked Bob.

"The answer is in the esteemed affirmative," said the Nabob of Bhanipur, "but I shall beat you hollowfully if I start ten-yardfully in advance."

"Two to one in doughnuts that you don't!"

"Done!"

"You slackers can crawl along after us, and you'll find us in the copse," said Bob.

"Right-ho!" said Harry Wharton.

"Get on, Inky!"

The Famous Five halted. Frank Nugent paced off ten yards for the nabob's start. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh walked to the starting-place, stopped there, and glanced back.

"Ready, my esteemed Bob?" he called out.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"The readiffulness is terrific," he answered, in playful imitation of the nabob's remarkable English. "Drop your hat for the signal, Wharton."

"Right-ho!"

The captain of the Remove gave the signal, and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh and Bob Cherry started.

Like a deer, the lightly-built and fleet-footed Indian junior raced away through the grass. His feet hardly seemed to touch the earth as he flew.

After him came Bob Cherry, at a good speed; but his comrades grinned as they saw him go. Bob was a good sprinter; but in a footrace he was not likely to beat Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh; and the long start made it a certainty for the nabob. Not that Bob cared much one way or the other; what he wanted was a race.

"Two to one on Inky!" said Frank Nugent, as the Co. walked cheerily on behind.

"No takers!" grinned Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry was going strong. But the nabob's start of ten yards had drawn out to fifty, by the time he topped the ridge in the distance. Hurree Singh disappeared over the grassy ridge, while Bob Cherry was still breasting the rise in the full view of the following juniors.

There was a cheery grin on the nabob's dusky face as he went over the ridge and ran fleetly down the slope

on the other side, heading for the thick copse at a little distance.

Under the trees ahead of him, sitting in the grass in the shade from the sun, were three fellows, and Hurree Singh caught sight of them suddenly as he neared the goal.

He recognised three Highcliffe fellows—Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson, of the Highcliffe Fourth.

The next moment he sighted two more fellows—Vavasour and Drury—leaning against a tree and smoking cigarettes.

For a moment the nabob slackened speed.

Ponsonby & Co. were staring towards him, apparently surprised to see the Greyfriars fellow tearing towards the copse at top speed, for no reason that they could see.

It was only for a second that Hurree Singh paused. The copse was the goal of the race, and it made no difference to him that the Highcliffe nuts had selected that secluded and shady spot to play nap that half-holiday. Harry Wharton & Co. were generally on fighting terms with Ponsonby and his friends; and any member of the Co. who fell in with the Highcliffians was likely to be booked for trouble, if the odds were heavily against him. But the rest of the Co. were not far behind, in this instance, in case of trouble. So the dusky nabob ran swiftly on, towards the group of staring Highcliffe fellows.

"It's that Greyfriars nigger!" said Ponsonby. "What the thump is he tearing up here for?"

"All on his own, too!" said Gadsby, with a grin, laying down his cards.

"Understudying Daniel, and putting into the lion's den!" chuckled Monson.

"We'll give him a reception."

"What-ho!" grinned Drury.

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour.

Ponsonby jumped up.

"Collar him as soon as he gets here," he exclaimed. "We'll give him the ragging of his life, and he can tell the other cads about it when he gets home."

"Make a giddy example of him," said Gadsby.

Ponsonby & Co. were all on their feet now, waiting for the nabob to come up. They were astonished to see him racing towards them, fairly throwing himself into their hands. But they were glad to see it. To catch one member of the Famous Five "on his own," and make an example of him, was an idea that appealed to Ponsonby & Co. very strongly.

The nabob came sprinting up, panting after his dash across the common.

He stopped under the shady branches; and as he stopped, the five Highcliffians closed round him, grinning.

"Glad to see you!" chortled Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" simpered Vavasour.

"This is really kind of you!" said Ponsonby. "Dropping right into our hands, and saving us the trouble of looking for you! I was just thinkin' that it would pass the time pleasantly if we could drop on some Greyfriars cad and rag him."

"My esteemed Ponsonby—"

"Collar him!"

The five Highcliffians closed in on the nabob with a rush. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh's hands went up like lightning; and Ponsonby gave a yell, and Vavasour a howl, as he hit out. But the odds were too heavy; in a few moments the nabob was sprawling in the grass, with the Highcliffians sprawling over him, clinging to him like cats.

"Got him!" panted Drury.

"Sit on the cad!" shouted Ponsonby,



"This is really kind of you!" said Ponsonby. "Dropping right into our hands and saving us the job of looking for you."
 "My esteemed Ponsonby——" "Collar him!" The five Highcliffians closed in on the nabob with a rush. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh's hands went up like lightning, and he hit out. (See Chapter 2.)

rubbing his nose. "Squash him! Bang his head on the ground!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared the nabob, as his hapless head was banged, with a mighty bang.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him another!"

"Yaroooop!" roared the nabob. "You esteemed and ridiculous rotters, give a chap a chance! Fair play, you ludicrous outsiders!"

"There's a deep puddle in the copse, a bit back," said Ponsonby. "Yank him along! We'll smother him!"

"What-ho!"

And the nabob, yelling wildly, his arms and legs flying in the air, was rushed bodily into the trees.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Catching Tartars!

BOB CHERRY came over the grassy ridge at top speed, and came charging down the slope towards the copse. The little scene going on under the trees burst upon him quite suddenly.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob.

Bob had been going strong, still hoping to overtake the nabob on the slope before goal was reached. But he redoubled his speed now; it was not a

race to win, but a chum to rescue from the hands of the enemy. Bob Cherry's long legs fairly twinkled as he flew down the slope.

Ponsonby & Co. did not find the nabob easy to hold; and they had no eyes for Bob. They had not the slightest idea that he was coming, till he burst on them like a thunderbolt.

Bob did not stop to talk. He charged at the five Highcliffians like a bull, hitting out right and left.

His right caught Ponsonby on the ear, his left jammed into Vavasour's neck. Pon and Vavasour went down yelling.

"Oh gad!" exclaimed Drury.

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh was dropped as suddenly as if he had become red-hot to the touch. He sprawled, panting, in the grass, while his captors turned to defend themselves.

"It's that beast Cherry!" gasped Drury.

"Down him!"

"Come on, you rotters!" roared Bob.

The Highcliffians came on fast enough. Five fellows closed in on Bob Cherry, and he was hard beset till the nabob scrambled up breathlessly and came to his aid. But the odds were still five to two, and the two Greyfriars fellows were hard put to it.

Harry Wharton, Nugent, and Johnny Bull reached the top of the ridge at a

walking pace. But as soon as they had a view of the copse, and what was going on there, their leisureliness dropped from them like a cloak.

"Highcliff cads!" exclaimed Wharton. "Come on!"

The three juniors fled down the grassy slope as if they were on the cinder-path.

"Oh gad! Here's some more of them!" panted Drury.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Hook it!" muttered Monson.

But it was not easy for the Highcliffians to hook it. In catching Bob Cherry and the nabob they had caught a pair of Tartars. Ponsonby & Co. were willing to retreat now—in fact, eager—but retreat was cut off. As they backed away, Bob Cherry charged at them, the nabob following him up, and the Highcliffians were still hotly engaged when the rest of the Co. arrived on the scene.

"Give 'em socks!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Back up, Greyfriars!"

"Here, you keep off!" yelled Vavasour. "Only a joke—absolutely! Oh, by gad! Oh, my hat! Yaroooh!" Vavasour crumpled up in the grasp of Frank Nugent, yelling.

Ponsonby made a rush to escape, and landed in the arms of Johnny Bull. And Johnny proceeded to put Pon's head in
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chancery, with awful results to Pon's handsome features.

Wharton had tackled Gadsby, and Gaddy was putting up a losing fight, watching all the time for a chance to run.

Monson and Drury had to face Bob and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, and on equal terms they found themselves simply nowhere.

The copse rang with wild howls and yells, and the Highcliffe nuts received what was coming to them.

"Oh gad! Keep off!"

"Leggo!"

"Help!"

"Pax! Leggo! Help!"

Five hapless Highcliffians sprawled in the grass. Five Greyfriars fellows looked down at them and panted for breath and grinned.

"Is that all?" demanded Johnny Bull gruffly. "Call that a scrap? Look here, you fellows, get up and have some more!"

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"The morefulness is ready and terrific!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"You're not finished yet, Pon?"

"Moooooooh!"

Apparently the Highcliffe quintette were finished. They lay in the grass and gasped and groaned and moaned, and nursed their streaming noses and caressed their shaded eyes. Ponsonby & Co. felt as if they had been under a traction-engine, and they did not want any more.

"Look here, are you getting up, you worms?" demanded Wharton.

"Ow! No! Yow-ow!"

"Go away!" moaned Vavasour. "Go away! Wow! Go away, please! Wow-wow!"

"My esteemed chums," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "the excellent and disgusting rotters banged my elegant napper on the ludicrous earth. The painfulness is terrific. Who is saucy to the goose must be saucy to the gander, as the English proverb says. The bangfulness of the esteemed nappers is the proper caper!"

"Hear, hear!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"How many bangs did they give you, Inky?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"My esteemed napper was banged twicefully."

"Then their esteemed nappers are going to be banged twicefully!" chuckled Wharton. "Collar the cads!"

"Keep off!" yelled Ponsonby savagely.

"You shouldn't ask for these things, old bean," explained Bob Cherry, as he grasped Pon. "If you don't want them, why ask for them?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a feeble resistance from Ponsonby & Co. as they were seized. Then five heavy bangs happened, and five fearful yells floated through the copse and across the common.

"Once morefully!" chuckled the nabob.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Ponsonby & Co. sprawled in the grass and roared. They had asked for it; but never were five festive youths so dissatisfied at receiving what they had asked for.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked cheerily on their way and disappeared across the common in the direction of Courtfield. But Pon and his nutty crowd did not stir. They lay or sat in the grass, moaning; and it was quite a long time before they picked themselves up, still mumbling dismally, and trailed drearily away.

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THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Treed!

"O T!"

Crum made that remark. He did not notice Lord Mauleverer's wince, but he added at once:

"I mean hot, old covey."

Lord Mauleverer smiled.

Crum had pursued and captured the missing h, as it were: but he might as well have left it alone, if he was going to follow it up with "old covey."

"O—I mean hot!" repeated Crum cheerily. "You're looking a bit fagged, Mauly."

"Yaas."

"Like a rest?"

"Yaas."

Crum was full of energy, but he was a considerate fellow. If Lord Mauleverer wanted to rest, Crum was willing to rest. He liked Mauleverer's company. Crum rather liked the sound of his own voice—perhaps because he hadn't a musical ear. He talked a great deal. Lord Mauleverer was willing to talk, too, so far as that went. But if a fellow interrupted Mauly, Mauly rang off immediately. If a fellow wanted to go on talking, Mauly let him without demur. The result was that Mauly never got his half of the conversation—and generally did not get a quarter. With Crum, he did not get more than a tenth.

He did not mind. Lord Mauleverer never seemed to mind anything. Only he was bored.

Still, as Mauly's beautiful manners made it impossible for him to reveal the fact that he was bored, it did not matter to Crum.

The suggestion of taking a rest was very welcome to Mauleverer. There was a possibility that he might be able to get a little nap while Crum went on talking. Thus both parties would be satisfied.

The two juniors were a mile from Greyfriars, and had been strolling across a rather secluded part of the common. Crum looked round for a favourable spot for a rest. An ancient tree, with a long, low, thick branch looping towards the ground, caught his eye, and he stopped.

"Ere," he said—"I mean here."

"Yaas, old bean."

Crum swung himself actively on the branch. He sat there and swung his feet a couple of yards from the ground.

Lord Mauleverer followed in a more leisurely manner, and ensconced himself where the branch joined the trunk. Between the jutting branch and the trunk was quite a cosy corner, into which his fatigued lordship settled very comfortably. He leaned his noble head back on another branch behind him, and half closed his eyes.

Crum's tireless voice ran cheerfully on. Crum did not know that he was boring the dandy of the Remove, and Lord Mauleverer would not have let him know it for worlds. Besides, Mauly did not mind being bored very much. He was used to being bored. Most things bored his lazy lordship. Crum was a bore, but not so bad as Billy Bunter, for instance. Matters might have been worse; and it was Mauly's way to look on the brighter side of everything.

Crum's talk ran chiefly on himself, and his life before he had come to Greyfriars—when he had been "Young Crum," playing his part in the House of Magic with his father, "Old Crum."

Nobody at Greyfriars, excepting Lord Mauleverer, knew that Crum had been engaged in a hypnotic show, and

that he was a hypnotist of weird and remarkable powers.

That was Crum's secret; and Mauleverer never thought of giving it away in the Remove.

Keeping that secret, Crum had to exercise rather a restraint upon his desire to talk about himself and his adventures; but with Lord Mauleverer, who knew the secret, there was no need of such restraint. So Crum let himself go; and had Lord Mauleverer listened to him attentively he would have learned the whole history of Young Crum's life from the first day he could remember, until the present date when they sat together on the swaying branch of the tree on Courtfield common. He would have learned the history of Crum's Show, and the marvels of the House of Magic, in which the two hypnotists, father and son, had travelled far and wide gathering in the shekels, as Crum described it.

Many shekels had been gathered in, and the Crums were rich now—one of the results being that Old Crum had become ambitious to place Young Crum at a famous public school, and "make a gentleman" of him. The process of being made into a gentleman, as Old Crum expressed it, worried and bored Young Crum, who longed for his old exciting life on the road.

All this, and more—much more—Lord Mauleverer would have learned had he listened attentively to Henry Christopher Crum.

But he didn't.

Mauly's polished politeness constrained him to listen; but he did not listen with attention.

Crum's long narrative entered one of Mauly's noble ears, and passed out of the other noble ear, leaving little if any impression upon his noble memory.

It really did not matter. Crum did not, like Brutus, pause for replies. Perhaps he was afraid he might get some if he did. He rattled on, and Lord Mauleverer, resting peacefully in the fork of the tree, gazed dreamily across the sunny common, and gradually dozed.

Five dusty, untidy fellows, rubbing swollen noses, appeared in sight, tramping wearily along by a path that led by the old tree. Lord Mauleverer did not see them, and Crum, who saw them, did not heed them. He had heard in the Remove of Ponsonby & Co., but he had never seen those bright youths, so far, and, apart from grinning at their dilapidated looks, he gave them no heed.

But Ponsonby gave heed to the two fellows sitting in the tree.

He recognised Mauly at once, and recognised him as a pal of the Famous Five. Crum he did not know; but he knew from his cap that he was a Greyfriars man.

Pon's eyes gleamed evilly.

He had made a grievous mistake in setting upon Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, under the impression that the nabob was alone on the common. But there was no mistake this time. For a mile on every hand, the common was deserted. There was absolutely no one in sight; and the two Greyfriars juniors were at the mercy of the savagely exasperated Highcliffians. It was true that these two juniors had given no offence; and were not even aware of the scrap that had taken place in the copse an hour before. But any fellows in the Greyfriars colours were game to Ponsonby & Co. The Highcliffe nuts had been defeated, licked, and severely punished; and they were yearning for vengeance. Here was vengeance ready to their hand.

"Greyfriars cads!" said Ponsonby, between his teeth. "That drowsy ass Mauleverer—a pal of Wharton's. This is where we come in."

Monson cast a searching eye around. Monson did not want to make another lamentable mistake.

"It's all right," said Gadsby. "The coast's clear. Come on."

"We'll give those cads all that we've had, and a little over," said Drury vengefully.

"Absolutely," grinned Vavasour.

And the five Highcliffians marched up to the old tree, and halted, and looked up at the two juniors six feet over their heads.

Crum stared down at them.

"You'll know me again!" he remarked derisively.

"Get down!" said Ponsonby.

"What for?"

"Because I tell you to."

"And who may you be when you're at 'ome?" asked Crum contemptuously.

"My hat!" said Gadsby. "Who's this merchant? I say, young shaver, where did you drop your h's?"

Crum's eyes flashed.

"Mind your own business, you 'og, and go and eat coke!" he retorted. "Take your blooming face away with you. It worries a bloke."

Ponsonby & Co. stared. In their surprise at this elegant flow of language they almost forgot the aches and pains from which they were suffering.

"My hat!" said Pon. "This must be the merchant that Skinner's told us about—fellow named Rum, or Chum, or somethin'. They let in a queer lot of blighters at Greyfriars."

"Crum!" said Gadsby. "I remember Skinner telling us. Some sort of a circus clown, or somethin'."

"Clown yourself, ugly mug!" retorted Crum.

"Wha-a-t?"

"Ugly mug!" said Crum.

"Oh, my hat!"

Lord Mauleverer opened his eyes. He blinked at Ponsonby & Co. and became very wide awake all of a sudden.

"Oh gad! Highcliffe cads!" he ejaculated.

"Ighcliffe!" said Crum. "Oh, I've 'eard of the blokes. 'Orrible set of blackguards, I've 'eard."

"Ave you really 'eard that?" asked Gadsby, in playful imitation; and there was a chortle from the Nuts.

"Look 'ere—" roared Crum.

"Get down!" rapped out Ponsonby.

"Sha'n't!"

"You fellows walk on," suggested Lord Mauleverer placidly. "It's really too hot for scrappin'. Leave it till next winter."

"Are you gettin' down?"

"No, dear man. Too much trouble."

"We'll jolly soon have you down," said Monson.

"Precious set of rotters you are," said Crum. "More'n two to one. Is that what you call fair play at 'Ighcliffe?"

"Pull that cad down, Gaddy."

Gadsby made a jump to catch at Crum's legs. Had he succeeded in catching hold, and dragging Crum to the ground, the showman's son would have had an extremely unpleasant fall.

But Gadsby did not get hold. What he got was a sudden drive of Crum's boot which caught him on his ear.

Gadsby gave a fearful yell, and staggered away, claspng his head in anguish.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Crum, while Lord Mauleverer grinned. "Come and 'ave another, matey."

Gadsby did not apply for another. One seemed to be enough for Gaddy. Ponsonby made a stride forward, but stepped back again hastily.

He gritted his teeth with rage. Once on the ground the two Greyfriars fellows would have no chance against the crowd of Highcliffians. But attacking them where they were was another matter.

"Come on!" invited Crum.

"Yaas, come on!" drawled Lord Mauleverer. "Waitin' for you, old beans, if you insist upon trouble this warm afternoon."

Ponsonby's eyes glittered.

"Find some stones for me, you men," he said. "I've got my catapult in my pocket. I fancy that will shift them."

"I—I say, that's dangerous," muttered Vavasour.

"Shut up, you fool."

Vavasour shut up. Gaddy and Monson and Drury immediately began searching among the grass roots for suitable stones, while Ponsonby took his catapult from his pocket. Catapulting fellows with stones was an exceedingly dangerous game, and damage might have been done which would have landed Cecil Ponsonby in a reformatory; but when the evil in Pon was roused, he was utterly reckless of consequences. Pon's nose was swollen, and one of his eyes was darkening, and his handsome mouth had a list to port. Somebody had to pay for those damages, if Pon could manage it.

"My 'at!" said Crum, staring at the catapult, and Lord Mauleverer's face became very grave.

As soon as sharp stones began whizzing at them, with almost the force of bullets, it was obvious that the position in the tree would become untenable. There was nothing for it but to jump down and put up the best fight they could against heavy odds. And that, as both the juniors knew, meant an unavailing struggle and a record ragging. Lord Mauleverer made up his noble mind to it.

"Come on, Crum," he said. "We've got to fight a way out, dear man. Pluck does it."

"'Old on," said Crum.

"My dear chap, when a thing can't be helped, it's better got over," said his lordship. "I don't want a raggin'—but still more I don't want an eye knocked out by that hooligan."

"'Old on, I tell you," answered Crum. "Leave it in my 'ands, Mauuly, and I can fix it. You know 'ow."

"Oh!" ejaculated his lordship.

He had forgotten Crum's weird hypnotic powers.

Crum's eyes were already fastened on Ponsonby's, with the strange gleam in them that was always visible when the schoolboy hypnotist was putting on the "fluence."

"I—I say, Crum—" stammered Mauleverer.

Crum did not heed, and Mauuly was silent. Whizzing stones from the catapult were rather too much of a good thing, and justified the use of Crum's strange gift in defence. So Lord Mauleverer held his peace and left the matter in Crum's hands. He watched in silence, and saw the dazed, perplexed look that came into Ponsonby's eyes, a hint that he was passing, all unconsciously, under the power of the schoolboy hypnotist.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Under the 'Fluence!

"HERE you are, Pon!"

Gadsby came up with a handful of stones. Monson and Drury followed him with another supply. Ponsonby, standing with the catapult in his hand, was staring hard at Crum.

He made a movement, as if to turn his eyes to Gadsby; but did not turn them. They were held by Crum, as if his strangely-gleaming, magnetic eyes fascinated the Highcliffe fellow. Like a helpless rabbit under the gaze of a serpent, Ponsonby stood motionless, staring dazedly at the junior in the tree.

Crum gave a sardonic grin.

"You, Ponsonby!" he rapped out.

"Yes, Crum!" whispered Ponsonby, in a voice strangely unlike his own.

"Throw that catapult up to me."

"That's likely!" grinned Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" chuckled Vavasour.

"Here, what are you up to, Pon?" roared Monson. To the utter amazement of his comrades, Ponsonby tossed the catapult up to Crum.

Crum caught it and promptly broke it into pieces, throwing the fragments at the Highcliffians.

"What do you mean by that, Pon?" shouted the amazed Gadsby. "Have you gone off your rocker?"

Ponsonby did not heed him. His eyes were still fixed on Crum, and he stood as if waiting further orders. His comrades stared at him almost in stupefaction.

"He's potty!" muttered Drury.

"Absolutely!" gasped Vavasour.

Crum grinned.

"You, Ponsonby! You go for them blokes and punch as 'ard as you jolly well can!" he called out.

"Yes, Crum!"

If the Highcliffe nuts had been astonished before, they were almost petrified now.

Ponsonby obeyed the order of the junior in the tree as if he were some sort of cunning mechanism set in motion by Crum's voice. Indeed, with the hypnotic influence on him, Pon was little more.

He swung round on Gadsby and struck him full in the face.

There was a wild yell from Gadsby.

The sudden, unexpected blow, with all the strength of Ponsonby's arm behind it, fairly up-ended Gadsby and sent him spinning. He crashed down in the grass a couple of yards away, gasping.

Before he had touched the ground, Ponsonby had hit out at Monson, sending that youth staggering backwards.

Drury and Vavasour sprang back just in time to escape Pon's attack, but he followed them up, hitting out furiously. The two astounded Highcliffians put up their hands in feeble defence, too amazed and unnerved by Pon's outbreak to guard themselves against his fierce drives. Vavasour took to his heels and sprinted away across the common, and Drury, after a few moments, joined Gadsby and Monson on the grass.

"Oh, gad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer, in wonder—almost in horror.

Crum chuckled.

"Go for them!" he shouted.

"Crum! Chuck it—"

"Rats! Ain't they asked for it?" grinned Crum.

"Yaas; but—"

"My eye! This 'ere is a show!" chortled Crum. "Go for 'em, you rotter—give 'em jip!"

Ponsonby obeyed: he could not help it. He was amazed at himself, but disobedience was not possible to him. He rushed at his three comrades as they scrambled up, attacking them fiercely.

"He's mad!" panted Gadsby. "He's mad! Mad as a hatter! Collar him!"

"Mad or not, I'll smash him!" yelled Monson.

There was a terrific scrap under the tree, Ponsonby fighting hard with the three of them attacking him like tigers.

"This is where we come in, Mauly!" grinned Crum.

"Yaas, dear man."

The two juniors slipped from the tree and rushed into the conflict. Gadsby and Monson were driven off under their attack, and Drury was left to Ponsonby. The three amazed Highcliffians retreated fast. They could scarcely believe their eyes at seeing Ponsonby lined up against them with the Greyfriars fellows.

"Hook it!" panted Monson.

And the three hooked it, tearing away after Vavasour, who was already vanishing in the distance.

"Stop!" shouted Crum, as Ponsonby was rushing in pursuit of the fugitives. Ponsonby stopped.

"Yes, Crum!" he breathed.

"Let him off, Crum!" muttered Lord Mauleverer. "I know he asked for it, and deserved it; but it's too thick. This sort of thing is outside the giddy limit, you know."

"I'm going to make 'im crawl through a puddle," said Crum.

"As a favour to me, old bean, don't."

"I jolly well will!"

Lord Mauleverer set his lips.

"You won't!" he said quietly.

Crum gave him a glare. He was an obstinate youth, and he did not like contradiction. The strange power that he held in his hands had given a very domineering tendency to Crum's character—a domineering tendency that had been a good deal resented in the Remove, though the fellows did not understand its cause. Crum's temper was very easily roused, and it was rousing now.

"You telling me what I won't do!" he exclaimed. "For two pins, I'd do the same to you that I've done to that covey, and chance it!"

"You couldn't!" answered Lord Mauleverer calmly, "and I don't think you're rotter enough, Crum, if you could. You've got to let that fellow off now!"

"I won't!" roared Crum.

"You will!"

Crum stared at him fixedly. Lord Mauleverer's well-cut lip curved in a contemptuous smile. He was not afraid of the 'fluence; he did not believe that the hypnotic power could be exercised on any fellow who know what was coming and was on his guard against it. Apparently he was right, for Crum's fixed stare lowered at last, and his lordship smiled again.

"I ain't putting it on you—I don't want to!" growled Crum, unwilling to admit defeat. "But I'm going to make that covey crawl on his 'ands and knees, and so I tell you!"

"You're going to let him off, and at once!"

"Who's going to make me?" roared Crum.

"I am!"

"You!" Crum snorted. "Think you can lick me?"

"Yaas. But, apart from that, I shall give away your secret if you use it in a blackguardly way. You've stopped those cads raggin' us, and that's enough. Now chuck it!"

Crum's eyes gleamed.

"You'll tell on a bloke?" he snarled.

"I shall certainly give you away, if you step over the limit," said Lord Mauleverer calmly. "I shan't keep a secret that is used for rascally purposes, you may be sure of that."

Crum breathed hard.

"Ave your own way, and be blowed to you!" he snapped; and he called to Ponsonby and made strange passes before his eyes.

The dandy of Highcliffe seemed to wake up as from a dream. He stared round him, seeming astonished to find himself alone on the common with the two Greyfriars fellows.

"Oh, gad! What—" Pon backed away. "Where are my pals? What—what has happened? I—"

He broke off, stammering.

"They've cleared off to Highcliffe," said Lord Mauleverer quietly. "You'd better clear off after them, Ponsonby."

Ponsonby, mystified and perplexed as he was, seemed to think that good advice. He promptly cleared off.

Lord Mauleverer glanced at Crum.

"Time we got back to tea," he remarked placidly.

"Go and eat coke!" growled Crum.

And he drove his hands into his pockets, and slouched off by himself. Lord Mauleverer gazed after him for a few moments, shrugged his noble shoulders, and then turned in the direction of Greyfriars, and ambled away. Possibly it was not a blow to his lordship to be deprived of Crum's company in the walk home to Greyfriars.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Smithy Hunts for Trouble!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" sang out Bob Cherry.

Vernon-Smith glanced round sourly.

The Famous Five, coming back from Courtfield, came on Smithy and Tom Redwing, walking up to the school from the boat-house. Bob Cherry hailed them cheerily.

"Had a good time on the river?" asked Wharton, with rather a curious glance at the clouded faces of the chums of Study No. 4. Redwing looked worried and Vernon-Smith decidedly bad-tempered.

"Oh, all right!" said Smithy. "Not so bad. Seen Mauleverer?"

"Mauly? No. I don't think he went out of gates," said the captain of the Remove. "He was snoozing in his study when we cleared."

"Oh, yes! He went out with Crum," said the Bounder, with a smouldering gleam in his eyes.

"Crum! I didn't know Mauly was chummy with Crum!"

"He isn't. The rotten outsider fastened on him, and Mauly is too soft to shoo him off!" sneered the Bounder. "You know Mauly."

Harry Wharton made no reply to that. The Bounder's look and tone were exceedingly disagreeable; and it was easy to see that something had happened to ruffle him seriously. Redwing looked uncomfortable.

The juniors walked back to the school together, the Bounder tramping along with his hands in his pockets, his brows knitted, and his eyes glinting. It was not Vernon-Smith's way to forgive any offence, real or fancied, and he had been bitterly offended that afternoon. That the blame had been entirely his the wilful Bounder did not consider for a moment.

Mauly had cut him, in the most direct manner, on account of that rank outsider Crum; and the Bounder had brooded over it through the sunny afternoon, his temper growing more and more bitter with every passing moment. Tom Redwing had not had a happy afternoon on the river. When Herbert Vernon-Smith was in this mood his best friend was not safe from his snarling temper; and Redwing had had to exercise all his patience to keep from a quarrel with his chum.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's his

nibs!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the juniors were crossing towards the House.

Lord Mauleverer had just come in—alone.

He gave the juniors a nod and a smile, and joined them. The Bounder's eyes glinted at him, but Mauly did not observe it.

"Tired, old bean?" grinned Bob.

"Yaas!"

"Walked half a mile, I suppose?" said Bob sympathetically. "Must have worn you out, poor old chap!"

"More than that," said Lord Mauleverer. "Two miles, at least!"

"Great pip! All in one day!" exclaimed Bob incredulously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And he still lives to tell the tale!" ejaculated Nugent. "Wonders will never cease!"

"You seem to have got rid of your new pal, Mauleverer?" said the Bounder, with a sneer.

Mauleverer glanced at him.

"Crum and I parted on the common," he answered briefly.

"Did his accent get on your nerves?"

Lord Mauleverer did not answer that. He was not a particularly observant youth, but he could see that the Bounder was ripe for a quarrel, and he did not want a row with the Bounder.

"I asked you a question, Mauleverer," said Vernon-Smith, in a low, distinct tone.

"Did you, old bean?"

"I did!"

"Time we got in to tea," remarked Mauleverer. "I hope Vivian's got in first and got tea going. You men seen anythin' of Jimmy Vivian?"

The Bounder was not to be put off so easily as that.

"Will you answer my question, Mauleverer?" he asked.

"No," said Mauleverer, driven to a direct reply at last. "Like your cheek to ask such a question, Smithy, when you know I walked out with Crum on friendly terms!"

"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry stared from one to the other.

"Anything up?" he inquired. "What's the matter with you, Smithy? Keep your little temper, old bean!"

"Mind your own business!"

Bob Cherry coloured.

"I can see you're in one of your rotten tempers, Smithy!" he said curtly. "You're picking a row with Mauly. Shut up!"

"Yaas, shut up, Smithy, old bean!" said Mauleverer. "What's the good of rowin'!"

"I'll do as I like, Bob Cherry!" said the Bounder. "No business of yours if I row with that slackin' fool, I suppose?"

"Smithy!" muttered Redwing.

The Bounder took no heed of his chum. He came to a halt, standing directly in Mauleverer's path and forcing his lordship to come to a halt also. Mauleverer looked at him with undisturbed calmness.

"What did you call me, Smithy?" he inquired.

"A slackin' fool."

"Is that your opinion?"

"Yes."

"Thanks!" said his lordship. "Anythin' to add to it?"

The Bounder, rather nonplussed by that placid question, did not reply. The other fellows smiled.

"If you're done, then, old bean, would you mind steppin' aside?" asked Lord Mauleverer. "I'm goin' in to tea."

The Bounder's lip curled.



"I wanted to pal on to Mauleverer this afternoon," said Vernon-Smith. "You fellows know why—because he's a lord." "Great pip!" gasped the astonished Removites. "My pater's been waxy with me more than once because I had a chance of making friends with a lord, and never did it," continued Vernon-Smith. (See Chapter 9.)

"You've nothin' to say in answer?" he sneered.

"Nothin', exceptin' that I don't like your manners," said Lord Mauleverer cheerfully. "But I never did, you know."

"If a fellow called me names I should hit him," said Vernon-Smith.

"Yaas, no doubt you would," agreed his lordship. "But at the present moment, old bean, I'm not holdin' an inquiry into the objectionable manners and customs of the Vernon-Smith tribe. I'm goin' in to tea."

"Funk!"

"Thanks! Anythin' more?"

Lord Mauleverer's tone was mildly contemptuous. That Lord Mauleverer was not a funk, all Greyfriars knew—indeed, it was only a few weeks since he had stood up to the Bounder in combat and defeated him. Mauly was amiably indifferent to Smithy's opinion on that subject.

The Bounder gave a jeering laugh.

"Well, if you'll let a man call you a funk, that's the limit!" he said. "You can take that along with it."

And the Bounder with his open hand struck at Lord Mauleverer's placid face.

The blow did not reach Mauly.

Bob Cherry, with a gleam in his eyes, reached forward in time and struck the Bounder's arm aside.

Vernon-Smith gave a yelp of pain. The rap on his arm was vigorous and it hurt.

"You meddling cad!" he yelled.

And in his rage he turned on Bob and struck at him furiously. The next moment he was on his back in the quadrangle, gasping.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

To Fight or Not to Fight?

"WELL hit!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

The Bounder sat up dazedly.

A drive from Bob Cherry's powerful right arm was no light matter. The Bounder had been fairly swept off his feet, and he had hit the earth with a resounding bump.

Bob looked down at him, with a gleam in his blue eyes. It was seldom that Bob was angry, but he was angry now.

"You rotter, Smithy!" he said. "If you want this to go further, I'm your man—now, or any time you like!"

"My dear chap," murmured Lord Mauleverer, "I rather think I'm the man Smithy wants."

"Oh, rot!" said Bob. "Leave him to me, Mauly. You licked Smithy at High Oaks, and everybody knows you can do it. So don't make yourself tired for nothing, old slacker. Leave him to me."

Tom Redwing stooped to help the Bounder to his feet. Vernon-Smith thrust him savagely aside and scrambled up unaided. His eyes fairly burned at Bob Cherry.

"You rotten, meddling cad——" he hissed.

"Cut it short!" interrupted Bob. "No good talking! You've got into one of your tantrums, and you want a scrap. Go ahead with it! You're not going to pick on old Mauly; you're going to tackle me. It will be a pleasure to me to knock some decent manners into you."

"So that funky cur is hiding behind you, is he?" sneered the Bounder.

"He wasn't hiding behind anybody when he thrashed you at High Oaks," said Bob scornfully. "Mauly hates ragging, as you know jolly well. I've no objection in the world—in fact, I thrive on it. You want a scrap with somebody—well, I'm your man."

"Yaas, there's somethin' in that," said Lord Mauleverer thoughtfully. "We had a fight once, Smithy, and you must admit that you didn't get the better of it, as you threw up the sponge. What's the good of fightin' it out over again?"

"That was a fluke!" snarled the Bounder. "I'd give you the licking of your life if you dared to stand up to me again!"

"But think of the exertion," said his lordship plaintively. "I had to go all out to wallop you, Smithy. I don't want all that trouble over again. Haven't you any consideration for a fellow?"

The Bounder gritted his teeth.

"You're not putting it on Bob Cherry," he said. "I'll deal with that meddlin' rotter another time. You're going to fight me, Mauleverer, or I'll kick you into it some time when Cherry isn't by to protect you."

"Oh, shut up, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton, in disgust.

"Mind your own business, confound you!"

"My esteemed Smithy——" murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Shut up, you nigger!"

The nabob's eyes flashed.

"Looks to me as if Smithy is going to have a whole procession of scraps,"

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grinned Johnny Bull. "Like to put me on the list, Smithy?"

"Mauleverer's my man," said the Bounder, his eyes fixed malignantly on the schoolboy earl. "He got the better of me once by a fluke. I challenge him to try it over again."

"Well, I've got the better of you more than once," said Bob. "Challenge me to try it over again, instead."

"I'm speakin' to Mauleverer."

Lord Mauleverer sighed deeply. "You really think it was a fluke that time I walloped you at High Oaks, Smithy?" he asked.

"I know it was."

"You may be right," assented Mauleverer. "There's no tellin'. But I'd rather not try it over again, if you'd keep the peace. It was a frightful exertion, I remember. Still, if you're set on it, I suppose a wilful man must have his way. Let's see. I can't thrash you now, because I want my tea. After tea do?"

"After tea, in the Rag," said the Bounder.

"Yaas, all serene."

"That's settled, then," said Herbert Vernon-Smith, and he stalked away to the House, Redwing following him slowly.

Lord Mauleverer sighed again.

"What a life!" he murmured.

"You're an ass, Mauly!" said Bob crossly. "Why couldn't you leave him to me?"

"Well, he seems keen on it, and a fellow hates to say 'No,'" said Lord Mauleverer. "Much obliged, all the same. Much rather you than I. But never mind. Perhaps Smithy will lick me this time, and then he will be satisfied, and let a fellow rest."

"Fathead!"

"Thanks, old bean!"

"But what's the row about?" asked Harry Wharton, puzzled. "It's not that old trouble at High Oaks; Smithy has got over that long ago. You've been friendly enough since then. Something else happened since?"

"I suppose so."

"You've put Smithy's back up?" asked Nugent.

"Yaas, I must have."

Lord Mauleverer evidently did not intend to go into particulars, so the subject was dropped, and the juniors went in to tea. Mauleverer, as placid as ever, ambled along to Study No. 12. Mauly had done more than any other fellow would have done to avoid a scrap, but now that it was inevitable, obviously it did not perturb him in the least. If he was dismayed at the prospect, it was on account of the exertion involved in a scrap with so hefty an opponent as the Bounder. Fear had been entirely left out of his lordship's composition.

Wharton and Nugent went to Study No. 1, both of them frowning. They liked old Mauly, and they were irritated at the Bounder fastening a quarrel upon him. There was not one member of the Famous Five who would not gladly have taken the quarrel upon himself had it been possible.

The two juniors had started tea when Crum came in.

Crum, too, was frowning as he dropped into a chair at the tea-table. Frowning brows seemed to be the order of the day just then.

"You know what the row's about, Crum?" asked Frank Nugent.

"What row?" grunted Crum.

"Mauly and the Bounder."

Crum looked up.

"Rowing, are they?" he asked.

"They're going to scrap in the Rag after tea," said Harry. "It's a rotten shame fixing a row on a peaceable fellow like Mauly. I don't know what's happened, but I jolly well know it's Smithy's fault."

Crum grinned.

"I jolly well know what's happened," he said. "Smithy's got his back up 'cause Mauly set him down afore a lot of fellers this arfternoon."

"What about?" asked Nugent.

"Me!" said Crum.

"You!" repeated Wharton and Nugent together.

"I was goin' out with Mauly, and Smithy asked him to go in a boat," explained Crum. "He said he didn't want me, and Mauly turned his back on 'im and cut 'im."

"Serve him jolly well right," said Nugent. "Smithy has rotten manners sometimes."

"I knew it was all Smithy's fault," said Wharton, knitting his brows. "I've a jolly good mind to interfere, as captain of the Form. Mauly's as plucky as any man at Greyfriars, and he's licked Smithy once. He hates scrapping, and it's rotten to drag him into a fight. Quelchy will be down on both of them if he hears of it, too; and Mauly may get detentions." He frowned deeply. "If Smithy wants detentions, that's his business, but I don't see letting him land Mauly, too."

"Put a stop to it," said Nugent.

"I'll think it over, anyhow."

And the captain of the Remove was still thinking it over when the juniors went down to the Rag after tea.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Crum Intervenes!

HENRY CHRISTOPHER CRUM remained in Study No. 1 after Wharton and Nugent had gone down.

He seemed in a worried mood. Crum had walked back to Greyfriars by himself, still nursing his anger against Mauly. But Crum was at heart a good-natured and good-tempered fellow; and in the fresh spring air he had walked his anger off. By the time he came into the study Crum was worried, not by what Mauly had said and done, but by his own rudeness and bad manners towards Mauly. Of all the Remove fellows, Mauleverer was the one whom the rather queer new junior expected to look down on him most of all; and Mauly was the one who had never looked down on him, and who seemed utterly unconscious of any inequality between them. And Mauly's friendly kindness had been repaid with sheer arrogance and domineering bad manners, as Crum realised when his irritation passed.

Now he learned that Mauly was booked for a fight with a redoubtable opponent, as a result of his loyalty to the fellow he had taken up for the afternoon—loyalty that Crum had rewarded in a way that it made him blush to remember. The new junior was in a state of great discomfort, and he moved restlessly about Study No. 1 after the other two fellows had gone down to the Rag.

"He's a gentleman, he is," Crum muttered miserably. "And I ain't—that's the blooming trouble! Why couldn't you keep your silly temper, you blinking hass?" he went on, addressing himself angrily. "Jest swank—like any common feller! You're a blooming outsider, that's what you are, jest a Skinner and Bunter says you are!"

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That's what's the matter with you, young Crum!"

Having come to that conclusion, Crum seemed a little relieved in his mind.

He quitted the study at last, and went along to Study No. 12. Outside that study he hesitated a few minutes, but he knocked at the door at last and went in.

Lord Mauleverer and his relative, Sir Jimmy Vivian, were at tea together. Vivian gave Crum a grin, and Mauleverer nodded benignantly.

"Skuse me butting in, Mauleverer," said Crum, very red in the face.

"Not at all, dear man. Take a pew," said Mauly amiably. "Jimmy, trot out a cup for Crum."

"I've had my tea, thanks," said Crum hastily. "Look 'ere, Mauly—I mean, look here, ain't you waxy with me?"

"Waxy?" repeated his lordship. "Dear man, why should I be waxy?"

"Then you ain't?"

"Not in the least."

"I treated you 'orrid," said Crum.

"Did you? Never mind."

Crum had a flash of perception.

"You ain't waxy with me; 'cause you think I can't 'elp being a bounder and a blooming outsider!" he ejaculated.

Lord Mauleverer coloured a little. He had not expected Henry Christopher Crum to read his thoughts—his inmost thoughts—in that quick way.

"My dear chap—" he protested.

"I ain't denyin' it," said Crum. "I'm rather a beast, I know. I ain't good enough to speak to a bloke like you."

"Stuff and nonsense!"

"Then you'll be friends agin?" asked Crum anxiously.

Lord Mauleverer did not reply for a moment or two. He had been kind to Crum, kind and friendly; but he had not exactly contemplated being "friends" with the strange new junior. Mauly, with all his easy ways, was a reserved fellow at heart; he was friendly with all the Remove, yet he was not any fellow's chum. If he had what could be called a "pal" in the Remove it was Harry Wharton; yet they could hardly have been called pals. Crum had rather misunderstood the cordial kindness of the schoolboy earl; but Mauly was not the man to let any fellow down.

His hesitation was very brief.

"Certainly, old bean!" he said.

"Jolly glad to 'ear it," said Crum; "I mean, to hear it. I was feeling blooming down in the mouth—I mean, awfully down in the mouth. I know I was a blooming—I mean, a bally—that is, an awful beast."

Mauleverer grinned.

"Not a bit, old man. Won't you stay to tea?"

"Thanks, no. I got to see a chap," said Crum. And with a much brighter face he left the study, leaving Lord Mauleverer looking thoughtful—very thoughtful indeed.

The chap that Crum had got to see was apparently the Bounder, for he stopped at the door of Study No. 4, tapped, and entered. Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing were at tea there; both of them looking gloomy. The Bounder had been speaking of the fight that was to take place in the Rag, and Redwing had stated his opinion of the Bounder and his proceedings in the plain language that the sailorman's son sometimes used to his chum; not so often as it was needed, however.

Redwing was deeply and intensely annoyed by the whole affair, and he had not minced his words. The deliberate picking of a quarrel with so quiet and inoffensive a fellow as Mauleverer excited Redwing's disgust,

and he told the Bounder so in unequivocal terms.

The Bounder's eyes glittered at Crum as he entered.

"Yes?" said Redwing inquiringly.

"Who asked you here, you rank outsider?" snapped the Bounder.

"Nobody," answered Crum.

"Get out, then!"

"Riled, ain't you?" sneered Crum.

"You didn't like Mauly treating you as you deserved, did you, Smithy? Call me an outsider! I reckon I ain't the only blooming outsider in this 'ere study."

The Bounder laughed harshly.

"That's the fellow that Mauleverer turned me down for, Redwing," he said.

"That uneducated slum rotter!"

"If he's uneducated it's no fault of his," said Redwing. "If he came from a slum, which you don't know any more than I do, that's not his fault, either. Fellows are not born in slums from choice."

"I might have expected you to back him up," sneered the Bounder. "You call yourself my friend, and you'd back up any cad against me."

"That's rot, and you know it, Smithy! You can't expect me to back you up when you pick a quartel with a decent chap like Mauly for nothing, and call a fellow rotten names from sheer rotten bad temper!"

"Oh, shut up!"

Redwing coloured. He rose quietly from the table, leaving his tea unfinished.

"That will do, Smithy," he said.

"I'll get out for the present; and you needn't speak to me again till your temper's improved a little."

"Are you going to be my second in the Rag?"

"No!"

"You rotter! Go and eat coke, then!" snarled the Bounder. "Get out as soon as you like; I'm fed up with you!"

Tom Redwing passed Crum, and left the study without reply. Crum closed the door after him, and stared curiously at the Bounder, who gave him a dark look.

"I've told you to get out, Crum!" he snarled.

"I know you 'ave," assented Crum. "But I ain't getting out yet, all the same. My eye! 'Ow that bloke stands you 'without bashin' you in the dial beats me 'oller!"

"I'll give you what you're asking for, when I'm through with Mauleverer," said the Bounder savagely. "Now clear out of my study, you slummy rotter."

"You're fighting Mauly, are you?" said Crum.

"Yes; and thrashing him!"

"From what I 'ear, Mauly thrashed you, afore I come to this 'ere school," said Crum. "He don't look as if he could do it; but the fellers say he did. I dessay he can do it agin all right, but he'll get 'urt doing it, that's a cert."

"He will—if he does it!" said the Bounder, between his teeth. "If Mauly licks me, it won't be till I've given him about as much as he can stand. I'll give him a prize face to take home with him to Mauleverer Towers for the Easter holidays, at any rate."

"I reckon you could do it," assented Crum, eyeing the Bounder. "Even if Mauly wallops you agin, you'll give him nearly as bad as he gives you. You look that sort." His jaw set grimly. "Well, you ain't going to do it, Vernon-Smith. When Mauly goes 'ome for the 'olidays, he ain't going to take the marks of your paws with him."

"Who's going to stop it?" sneered the Bounder.

"You'll find that out!"

The Bounder stared at Crum. A strange feeling of something like fear—a feeling hitherto utterly unknown to the Bounder—came over him, under the steady, magnetic stare of the school-boy hypnotist's eyes. Crum advanced towards him, his eyes still glued on those of the Bounder of Greyfriars. His hands weaved imperceptible patterns in the air, but Vernon-Smith was hardly conscious of it. Crum's voice broke the tense silence at last, in low, distinct tones.

"Vernon-Smith."

"Yes!" whispered the Bounder.

"You're going down to the Rag, and when you're there, you're going to do jest what I tell you."

"Yes, Crum."

The Bounder spoke mechanically; it seemed to be some other voice than his own that was speaking. Crum grinned sourly.

"Now you jest listen to your orders," he said.

"Yes, Crum!"

Five minutes later, Skinner and Snoop looked into the study. They looked surprised at seeing Crum there. The showman's son lounged out of the study without taking any notice of them,

"Time, Smithy," said Skinner.

"What?"

"The fellows are expecting you in the Rag."

"Oh!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith rose to his feet. He passed his hand over his brow, as if to collect his dazed thoughts.

"Who's your second?" asked Skinner.

"Redwing, I suppose?"

"Eh! No."

"Got a second yet?"

"No."

"Well, I'll act for you, if you like," said Skinner.

"I don't want a second!"

"Oh, all right, please yourself," said Skinner huffily. And he walked away with Snoop, leaving the Bounder to follow at his leisure.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Clean Breast of It!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were in the Rag, talking together in a group, when Lord Mauleverer came in. His lordship loafed in amiably with his hands in his pockets and joined the Famous Five, Squiff and Peter Todd, Tom Brown, and Mark Linley, and half a dozen other fellows, joined the group.

It was easy for anyone to see that in the Remove the feeling was all on Mauleverer's side in the trouble, and that the whole Form wished him good luck in the coming encounter.

The brows of the captain of the Remove were deeply knitted. That Lord Mauleverer had heaps of pluck; that, kind and amiable as he looked, he was quite capable of standing up even to so hefty a fighting-man as the Bounder, all the Remove knew. But that he would receive savagely severe punishment, even if he defeated the Bounder, was a foregone conclusion. The Bounder was a fellow to fight till he could no longer stand; and even Bob Cherry could not have defeated him without a stiff struggle, and without getting considerably damaged in the process. That a peaceable fellow like Mauly should be dragged into such a scrap, merely for a bad-tempered whim, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1052.

did not strike the leading spirits of the Remove as in accordance with the fitness of things.

The Bounder affected a desire to try over again the fight at High Oaks, a few weeks before, which he declared Mauly had won by a fluke. But all the Remove knew the real reason of the trouble—half a dozen fellows had witnessed the incident in the Remove passage. And the thing was, as Johnny Bull said emphatically, altogether too thick.

"Look here, Mauly," said the captain of the Remove, "we've been talking this over, and we think this scrap had better not come off."

"Yaas, dear man!"

"We're just on the Easter holidays, and you're not going home looking as if you've been in a prizefight," said Harry.

"Rather rotten, I admit," assented Mauleverer.

"Well, then, leave the matter in my hands, as captain of the Form," said Harry. "I'll see that it comes to an end."

Lord Mauleverer considered.

"'Fraid there's nothin' doin'," he said. "You see, I've given Smithy my word now. He will expect me to keep it."

"Look here—" began Bob Cherry hotly.

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Billy Bunter. "Here comes Smithy!"

There was a general movement, as the Bounder entered the Rag. Crum, seated at a distance by the window, had a book in his hands—but over the book he watched the Bounder curiously.

Vernon-Smith did not glance towards Crum. He seemed unaware of Henry Christopher's presence in the room. Yet it was Crum's will, and not his own, that was actuating the Bounder of Greyfriars now.

Bob Cherry made a stride forward, with a grim frown on his face. Lord Mauleverer gently pulled him back.

"My bizney, old bean," he said amiably. "Awf'ly obliged, and all that; but I'm Smithy's man."

"You're an ass!" growled Bob.

"Yaas; I've been told that before."

"And a fathead!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I seem to have heard that before, too!" smiled Lord Mauleverer. "You're tellin' me things I knew."

Vernon-Smith came up to the group. Harry Wharton drew a deep breath. He was captain of the Remove, and entitled to intervene; and he made up his mind on the spot that he would stop the fight. If Mauly would not listen to persuasion, he would have to listen to his Form-captain's order; and as for the Bounder, the Famous Five were willing—and keen to overrule his objections with a drastic ragging. A ragging, and not a scrap, was what the Bounder wanted, in their opinion.

Wharton made a step forward.

"This fight is not going to take place, Smithy!" he said curtly.

The Bounder nodded.

"I know."

"Eh?"

"I've come here to apologise to Mauleverer."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton, quite taken aback.

All the fellows stared at Smithy. That the Bounder of Greyfriars suffered from "cold feet" was not to be thought of; he was too well-known for that. But this unexpected change of front astonished all the Remove. There was a murmur of surprise; and Skinner scowled.

"Redwing's been talkin' him over,"

Skinner whispered to Snoop. "That cad is always buttin' in."

And Snoop nodded. It was the only explanation he could think of.

All eyes were fixed on the Bounder.

"My dear chap," said Lord Mauleverer amicably, "no need for an apology. Nothin' of the kind. If the fight's off, I'm jolly glad."

"I want to apologise," said Vernon-Smith. "I've acted like a rank outsider and rotter!"

"Not at all, old bean!"

"It's because I'm a low blighter, you know," went on the Bounder. "I'm a rank outsider really, and not fit to black your shoes."

"What-a-at?"

"Oh, my hat!"

The Removites stared blankly at Vernon-Smith. An apology from the arrogant Bounder was surprising enough. But this was simply amazing!

But the Bounder was not finished astonishing the natives yet. He went on in the same quiet, matter-of-fact tones:

"All you fellows know it! You know I'm a swanking ass, putting on all sorts of airs because my father's a millionaire. You know I should have been kicked out of the school long ago if the Head knew as much about me as you fellows know!"

"Phew!"

"Open confession is good for the soul!" said Hazeldene. "Tell us some more, Smithy!"

"I wanted to pal on to Mauleverer this afternoon," pursued the Bounder. "You fellows know why—because he's a lord."

"Eh?"

"Great pip!"

"My pater's been waxy with me more than once because I had a chance of making friends with a lord and never did it," continued Vernon-Smith. "Mauly's rather too soft an ass for my likin'—still, I thought I'd go it, as the pater wanted me to."

"Oh gad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"You see," said the Bounder, amid a dead silence, "I was really fishin' for an invitation to Mauleverer Towers. That's why I was so wild when Mauleverer turned me down."

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

"Go it, Smithy!" exclaimed Skinner, greatly interested now. "Tell us another funny story!"

"I—I say, you're owning up to a lot you needn't get off your chest, Smithy!" said Bob Cherry, in utter wonder. "Hadn't you better ring off, old chap?"

"Let him keep on," chortled Snoop. "This is jolly interestin'! Go it, Smithy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith showed no sign of anger at being derided. His manner was quite calm and matter-of-fact.

"I wanted Mauly to come out in that boat this afternoon, so that I could fix him for the hols," said Vernon-Smith, while the juniors hung breathlessly on his words. "I know he didn't want me; but I expected to be able to wind him round my finger, as he is too soft to say No' to anybody."

"Well, you're putting it plain," said Nugent. "Haven't you said enough, Smithy?"

"Cut it short, old man!" said Harry Wharton, greatly perplexed, and wondering whether the Bounder might be ill. "That's more than enough!"

"The enoughfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Well, now I've owned up," said the Bounder.

"You have—and no mistake!" said Peter Todd. "Blessed if I ever expected you to own up to that tune!"

"I beg your pardon, Mauly."

"Not at all, old chap," said Lord Mauleverer, deeply pained by the humiliation the Bounder had brought on himself. "I'm sorry to hear you talkin' like this, and I know it's all rot—just one of your queer old jokes, dear man. Look here, don't say any more. I'm jolly glad the row's over—I'm sure you would have licked me this time; I had a feelin' all along that it was only a fluke before."

Tom Redwing, with a strange expression on his face, came forward and slipped his arm through the Bounder's. Redwing had listened almost in stupefaction to Vernon-Smith's amazing words.

"Come up to the study, old chap!" he whispered.

He drew Vernon-Smith from the room, leaving the Removites in a buzz of amazed discussion. The Bounder went quietly up to Study No. 4 with his chum. He seemed a good deal like a fellow in a dream. In the study, Redwing regarded him anxiously.

"Feeling ill, old fellow?" he asked.

"Eh? No."

"You've surprised all the fellows."

"Have I?" said the Bounder carelessly.

"You jolly well have."

"Well, I had to tell the truth," said Vernon-Smith.

"I suppose every fellow's bound to tell the truth—but you needn't have put in so many details, surely?"

"I had to."

Redwing eyed him very uneasily.

"I'm afraid you're ill, Smithy. Why had you to, if you come to that?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know?" exclaimed Redwing, amazed.

"No—no! I know I had to, that's all." The Bounder seemed perplexed himself. "No good talkin' about it—it's done now. I'm not goin' to fight Mauleverer."

"I'm glad of that, at all events," said Redwing.

And that, at least, was a satisfaction to the Bounder's chum, sorely as he was puzzled and perplexed by the strange episode.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Chumming with Crum!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH, during the next few days, was probably the most thoroughly miserable fellow at Greyfriars.

Such a scene as that in the Rag was not likely to be soon forgotten in the Greyfriars Remove.

It was a nine days' wonder.

Had the Bounder simply apologised to Lord Mauleverer, and called off the fight, it would have been a surprise. But what he had actually said took the Removites' breath away.

Skinner & Co. made endless jests on the subject. The Bounder, proud and arrogant and overbearing, had certainly never been suspected of "fishing" for invitations for the holidays, in the manner of Billy Bunter. For no apparent reason, he had owned up before a crowd of fellows that he had done so. That he had been, for some inexplicable reason, telling the truth, was clear enough. Old Mr. Vernon-Smith's desire that his son at Greyfriars should "pal" with a lord became a standing joke in the Remove. That snobbish desire on the part of the City millionaire afforded endless entertainment to Skinner & Co., and to many other fellows as well. Why had the Bounder owned up to it?

Nobody knew—least of all the Bounder himself.



Crum rose unsteadily to his feet. In one of his hands was tightly crumpled a sheet of paper. Tom Redwing glanced at the Bounder, and then his eyes rested on Crum, and he read the almost dazed expression of pain in the new boy's face. "What have you been doing, Smithy?" asked Redwing, very quietly. "What's the matter with Crum?" (See Chapter 12.)

When the hypnotic influence was over the Bounder woke up, as it were, to a consciousness of what he had done.

His cheeks burned with shame.

He had not the faintest suspicion that he had been hypnotised; his recollection of the interview with Crum in his study was dim and almost forgotten.

Why had he done it?

Why had he told all the Remove what could only cover him with shame and humiliation as with a garment?

He could not understand.

But he understood the ceaseless jeers and whispers, the grinning looks of Skinner & Co., the unconcealed amusement of the other fellows.

Lord Mauleverer made it a point to forget the whole occurrence. So far as his looks and remarks conveyed, the episode had been completely blotted out of Mauly's memory. That was like Mauleverer; but the rest of the Lower Fourth rather lacked Mauly's sensitive delicacy. Some fellows would ask him, in the Bounder's hearing, whom he had invited home to Mauleverer Towers for the holidays, and there would be a howl of laughter. The arrogant Bounder had always made more foes than friends, and even fellows with whom he was friendly were often irked by his bitter and sarcastic tongue. Now the Bounder had delivered himself into their hands—delivered himself bound hand and foot, as it were.

Every day that passed added to

Smithy's bitterness and humiliation; his only consolation was that the Easter holidays were at hand, and he could only hope that when the fellows came back after the holidays they would have forgotten the matter—or, at least, that some other occurrence would distract their attention from it.

Meanwhile, he writhed.

Why had he done it? He asked himself that question a hundred times, without being able to find an answer.

In his rage and bitterness, he was tempted to pick a fresh quarrel with Lord Mauleverer, and force on the fight that had been abandoned. But he realised very clearly that that would only give a new lease of life to the miserable episode. Even as he thought of it, he could, in his imagination, hear the laughter and derision of all the fellows at the spectacle of a man scrapping with Mauly, because his lordship refused to ask him home for the holidays. That was how it would be looked at, he knew; he would be covered with such a load of ridicule as would be unendurable. If he wanted the affair forgotten, obviously the way was not through a fight with Lord Mauleverer.

Bitter as he was, the Bounder had not lost his cunning and keenness. The best thing he could do, in the circumstances, was to let the apology stand, and treat Mauleverer with civility—not too much civility, lest it should be misconstrued as

fighting for an invitation to Mauleverer Towers, but enough civility to show that he no longer harboured a grudge against his inoffensive lordship. His grudge, nevertheless, was deep and bitter, though he was careful to betray no sign of it.

Still more bitter were his feelings towards Crum.

Crum, in the Bounder's view, had been the cause of all the trouble in the first place; and Crum he had always disliked, though not very actively. Now his dislike was more than active—it was hatred. The mere fact that his rage could not be wreaked on Mauleverer, for reasons of prudence, made him turn his savage thoughts more and more on Crum.

Perhaps, somewhere deep in his subconsciousness, there lurked a realisation that Crum was the cause of the humiliation that made his cheeks burn whenever he thought of it.

At all events, he was under no compulsion to conceal his enmity towards Crum, and he made his enmity very clear.

Crum did not seem to mind.

During the days that were so bitter to the Bounder, Crum was happier than he had ever been since he had come to Greyfriars.

Some fellows had looked down on him and sneered at him from the start, and

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(Continued from page 13.)

if one more was now added to the number it did not trouble Crum very much.

Other fellows had been kind enough, especially Harry Wharton & Co. and their friends.

But Crum had not made a chum in the Form; nobody cared specially about him. Some fellows were friendly enough, some indifferent, some inimical; nobody wanted to 'pal' with Crum—till now. Now he had a chum, and that chum was the fellow he would have picked out of all Greyfriars had he had his choice from the Sixth to the Second. It was Lord Mauleverer.

Mauly had drifted into it carelessly, and he was undoubtedly taken aback when he found that Crum was taking it with great seriousness. But letting a man down was impossible to Mauly. Crum would wait for him after class; Crum would drop into his study; Crum would join him in the quad or for a Sunday walk. Without quite knowing how it had happened, Mauly found that he was Crum's chum.

They were oddly assorted chums, there was no doubt about that. But Mauly rather liked Crum, and under Mauly's influence Crum was dropping many of the objectionable ways he had.

"Blooming" was almost banished from his speech; "bally" was quite gone; the purple-spotted necktie was a thing of the past; he no longer jingled money in his trousers' pocket.

All this had been effected without a word uttered by Mauly. Crum was quick on the uptake. Crum modelled himself upon Mauly, and the result was really surprising. For the first time, Crum was content to be at Greyfriars, and almost regretted that he had written to his father begging to be allowed to rejoin Crum's Show and not to return to the school after the Easter holidays.

Fellows who asked Mauly to tea now asked Crum as well. It was understood that he was Crum's chum.

Mr. Quelch, the Remove master, observed the friendship, and approved of it. Mauly's character was too sterling for any acquaintance to do him harm, and his friendship was the best thing that could have happened to Crum. Crum's manners and customs were improving out of all knowledge.

The Bounder eyed that friendship with sardonic bitterness.

When he heard, in the Rag, that Mauleverer had asked Crum home to the Towers for the holidays, Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth.

"One in the eye for you, Smithy!" grinned Hazeldene; and never knew how narrow an escape he had had of being knocked off his feet.

It was not "one in the eye" for the Bounder, as Hazel expressed it. Smithy really did not want to go to Mauleverer Towers for the holidays. He would have been bored to extinction there.

It was to please his father that he had endeavoured to "fix" it, to gratify Mr. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1052.

Vernon-Smith's desire to see his son "among the nobs," as the City gentleman expressed it.

There was a great deal of swank about the Bounder, but there was very little snobbishness, and on his own account he certainly never would have "sucked up" to a lord. The Bounder was quite satisfied with himself, and certainly would not have exchanged his own personality, had it been possible, for that of any "tenth possessor of a foolish face."

But he was deeply chagrined by Crum's success where he had failed. He did not think that Crum had "wangled" it somehow, as Skinner and Snoop suggested. The Bounder was too keen to be blinded even by his own prejudices.

"Fancy that outsider pullin' old Mauly's leg to that extent!" Skinner remarked to the Bounder.

"How the thump did he manage it?" said Snoop. "Blessed if I wouldn't ask him if I thought he'd tell me! I'd like the vac at Mauleverer Towers no end."

"He didn't wangle it!" grunted the Bounder. "Mauly's taken him up out of silly softness, and asked him home because he thinks it's up to him, as the fellow has fastened on him."

"But he must like the fellow, or he wouldn't fasten on him," remarked Snoop. "I don't see anything in him to like—a low rotter, a fellow that used to give shows on the road!"

"He likes Mauleverer," said the Bounder.

"Sucks up to him, you mean!" sneered Skinner.

"And thinks him an ass!" agreed Snoop.

The Bounder said no more on the subject, but he was thinking hard.

He knew that Crum not only liked Mauleverer, but admired him greatly, and indeed felt a dog-like fidelity to his magnificent chum.

The change that had taken place in Crum since Mauleverer had chummed with him was proof enough of that.

The Bounder gave that subject a great deal of thought.

When Smithy's resentment was aroused he was absolutely unscrupulous. All his good qualities—and he had many—seemed to be in abeyance at such a time.

It wanted only a few days now to the break-up of Easter, and the Bounder said to himself that, if he could contrive it, the showman's son should not go home with Mauleverer for the holidays, neither should the friendship survive till the following term at Greyfriars.

And the Bounder thought that he could contrive it.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Black Treachery!

"YOU ain't got it, old man."

"Eh, what?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"The 'Oliday Annual'—I mean, the 'Oliday Hannual'—I mean, the 'Holiday Annual,'" said Crum.

"Dear me! I forgot again!"

The Bounder, loafing in the Rag at a little distance, did not look round. But he heard.

Crum was in the Rag. He had been chatting with some of the juniors when Lord Mauleverer strolled in. He grinned as he addressed the schoolboy earl. Crum had a quick memory himself, and Lord Mauleverer seldom remembered anything. This rather amused Crum; though he was quite willing to believe that whatever Mauly did was right, and that a defective

memory was rather a distinction—at least, in Mauly's case.

Lord Mauleverer was going to lend his "Holiday Annual" to his friend. He was going to bring it down from the study with him. Naturally, he appeared in the Rag without the volume.

"Oh, begad!" sighed Mauleverer. "A fellow's always forgettin' somethin'! But I'll cut back and fetch it, old bean."

"You won't!" said Crum. "I can fetch it all right!"

"Not at all, dear boy. I'll fetch it."

"Bosh!" said Crum, and he gently pushed his lordship into a chair. "You sit down, old feller."

Lord Mauleverer sank into the armchair and remained there. He was willing to negotiate the staircase a second time, but he was not eager.

"Well, if you don't mind, Crum—" he murmured.

"'Course I don't," said Crum.

"All serene, then."

And Lord Mauleverer remained in the armchair, while Crum walked to the door of the Rag.

Vernon-Smith left the Rag quickly, before Crum went out.

There was a glint in the Bounder's eyes.

It was his chance at last!

As Henry Christopher came out of the Rag the Bounder called to him casually.

"Here, Crum!"

"Hallo!" said Crum, looking round.

"Quelchy wants you in his study."

"Oh, blow!" growled Crum. "What the dickens does Quelchy want?"

"He forgot to mention that to me," answered the Bounder.

Crum grinned.

"All right. I s'pose I've got to go."

And Crum made his way towards Masters' passage.

The Bounder hurried up the stairs.

Prep was over, and nearly all the Remove were in the Rag, chatting or reading in the hour before dorm.

Vernon-Smith walked towards Study No. 12, opened the door, stepped in quickly, and closed the door after him. Both Lord Mauleverer and Jimmy Vivian were in the Rag, so he knew that the study would be unoccupied.

In Mauleverer's study the Bounder looked round him quickly.

The "Holiday Annual" lay on the study table, where Mauleverer had left it, having intended to pick it up when he left the study and take it down to the Rag with him.

Herbert Vernon-Smith took a morocco letter-case from his pocket, opened it, and drew out a sheet of paper.

On that sheet some lines were written, as if a fellow had begun a letter and carelessly left it unfinished. The lines ran:

"Dear Uncle Reginald,—I quite understand your objection to this fellow Crum, but I'm in a rather difficult position. The fellow has fastened on me, I know that, and I wish he would keep his distance. But I hate to have to hurt any fellow's feelings, and he really means well—"

That was all. It looked as if the writer had been interrupted, and had left off the letter at that point, intending to finish it later.

But what was remarkable about that unfinished letter was that it was written in Lord Mauleverer's hand.

Mauly had rather a distinctive hand, with the horizontal strokes rather deeply impressed. Mauly's habitual carelessness did not extend to such matters as handwriting; and his "fist" was

the best in the Remove, and always recognisable at a glance. It was also extremely easy to imitate, had any fellow thought of taking the trouble to imitate it.

The Bounder had thought of it! That such a letter as this, in Mauly's fist, falling into Crum's hands, would wound the hapless junior to the very heart, the Bounder was quite well aware.

It was certain to wound Crum deeply; with all his queer ways he was a sensitive fellow; in fact, extremely touchy.

Not only would it wound him, but it was very likely to cause some outbreak of vulgar resentment on his part, which would disgust Lord Mauleverer.

For days the Bounder had had that wretched forgery in his letter-case, waiting for an opportunity to get it into Crum's hands in a manner that would excite no suspicion of its genuineness.

That was a difficulty; but the difficulty was overcome now.

Vernon-Smith opened the "Holiday Annual," and slipped the sheet into the pages of the volume, as if it had been used as a bookmark.

Lord Mauleverer was carelessness itself; but he never turned down a page in a book to mark his place. But he used all sorts of things as bookmarks; he had been known to use a five-pound note for that purpose. It was quite like Mauly to catch up the nearest paper, without even looking at it, and stick it in a volume to mark a place. If Crum found that very peculiar bookmark in the "Holiday Annual," he could not have the slightest suspicion that it had been placed there by an enemy hand, purposely for him to find it.

Vernon-Smith closed the volume, and hurriedly left the study.

The Bounder of Greyfriars felt satisfied with himself. All he wanted now was for the letter to fall into Crum's hands, which it was almost certain to do sooner or later.

And when the blow fell—

He strolled away down the Remove passage with an air of carelessness, whistling as he went.

On the Remove staircase he met Crum, coming up with a red and angry face. Crum gave him a glare.

"You silly chump!" was his greeting.

The Bounder glanced at him.

"What's biting you now?" he asked.

"I've been to Quelch, and he didn't want me!" snapped Crum. "You made a fool of me! What do you mean by sending me to Mr. Quelch for nothing, you fathead?"

The Bounder laughed.

"Only pulling your leg!" he answered.

"Well, I don't call that a joke!" said Crum angrily.

"Call it what you like, old bean."

The Bounder went on down the stairs, leaving Crum staring after him, with angry brows. He was naturally annoyed—and he was puzzled, too, at a fellow like the Bounder having played so childish a trick.

Vernon-Smith disappeared from his sight; and Crum, with a snort, went on to the Remove passage, and entered Mauleverer's study.

There he picked up the "Holiday Annual," put it under his arm, and left the study with it.

By the time he reached the Rag he had forgotten the Bounder's offence, and his face was quite cheery as he settled down in a corner to read the "Holiday Annual" until bed-time.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Blows Falls!

WINGATE of the Sixth put his head in at the doorway of the Rag.

"Dorm!" he said laconically.

And there was a general move.

Only one fellow did not stir.

Crum remained seated where he was, as if he had not heard the prefect's voice.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Gone to sleep over your giddy book, Crum?"

"Eh?"

Crum started and looked up.

Bob glanced at him rather curiously. Crum's face was pale, and there were deep lines in his brow, and his mouth drooped.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Anything up, old chap?" asked Bob.

"No."

"You're looking quite queer."

"Rot!"

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Been reading something awfully tragic?" he asked.

Crum muttered something indistinctly.

He had been reading something that was tragic to him, at all events, though it was not printed in the book he held in his hands.

He rose unsteadily to his feet, and closed the volume. In one of his hands was tightly crumpled a sheet of paper.

From across the room the Bounder's eye was on him; and the Bounder smiled sardonically. Crum had found the "bookmark," Vernon-Smith knew that. Tom Redwing, seeing that expression on the Bounder's face, followed his glance, and Redwing's eyes rested on Crum, and read the almost dazed expression of pain in Crum's face. Redwing's eyes returned to the Bounder, sharply, searchingly.

"What have you been doing, Smithy?" asked Redwing, very quietly.

"Nothin', old bean!"

"What's the matter with Crum?"

"How should I know what's the matter with the cad, if there's anythin' the matter with him?" yawned the Bounder. "I'm not interested in the fellow."

"I think you know, all the same."

"You think too much, Reddy."

Redwing compressed his lips, but he said no more. He knew that it was useless to question the Bounder; but he was feeling extremely uneasy.

Something was wrong with Crum—something was very much wrong with him—that was clear; and that grin of sardonic satisfaction on the Bounder's face haunted Redwing. Only too well he knew what Vernon-Smith was capable of when his

bitter temper was roused. Smith's enmity for Crum was no secret to Redwing.

The Bounder lounged out of the Rag with the other Removites, still smiling. Redwing followed him slowly. Crum brought up the rear, more slowly still. Lord Mauleverer glanced round, and dropped back to join Crum.

Then Crum moved hastily.

He passed Mauleverer without appearing to see him, close as he was, and hurried out of the Rag.

Mauleverer raised his eyebrows a trifle.

Had it been possible to suppose that Crum was deliberately avoiding him, Mauly would certainly have supposed so at that moment. But Mauly was not suspicious or touchy, and he dismissed the thought from his mind.

The Remove went into their dormitory.

Fellows were not accustomed to taking any special notice of Crum; but more than one fellow could not help remarking that he looked "queer."

Lord Mauleverer noticed it, and called across cheerily to his chum.

"Anythin' wrong, old bean?"

"No."

"Not catchin' a cold?"

"No."

"You're not lookin' merry and bright."

"Ain't I?"

Mauleverer looked rather fixedly at Crum and said no more. Even the unsuspecting Mauly could not help seeing that Crum's manner was abrupt, and that he answered unwillingly. If Crum was in a temper about something, Mauly was only too willing to let him alone till he had got over it.

Crum went to bed without another word.

The crumpled sheet of paper was still clutched in his hand. After lights out, Mauly called out:

"Good-night, Crum."

He concluded that Crum had fallen asleep immediately, as he did not answer.

Crum was not asleep.

Long after the rest of the Remove had dropped into slumber, the showman's son was still wide awake, his unhappy eyes staring into the darkness.

There were tears in his staring eyes—tears of anger and bitterness and pain.

The words written on the paper in his hand seemed to dance in letters of fire before Crum's eyes.

So that was what his chum thought of him!

He had "fastened" on Mauly! So he had—he realised it now. Mauly's uncle, Sir Reginald Brooke, regarded him as "objectionable." What else could he have expected? Mauly had allowed him to fasten on because he hated to hurt a fellow's feelings. Only too well Crum knew that trait in Mauly's character; he had seen him tolerate even Billy Bunter because he would not rebuff the fat junior.

What could there be in common, after all, between a showman's son, a rough-and-ready fellow who had dropped his

(Continued on next page.)



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h's, and a magnificent fellow like Mauleverer—a rich fellow, a lord, highly-connected, admired by all the other fellows, popular in his Form and in other Forms?

What a fool he had been to think that a fellow like Mauly could ever be friends with him.

That was Crum's bitter thought now. He had asked for this, and he had got it.

And, but for the accidental discovery of that unfinished letter, he might have gone on—worrying and boring Mauleverer, tolerated by the schoolboy earl because he hated to hurt a fellow's feelings! It was not on those terms that Crum wanted a fellow's friendship.

Mauly's carelessness had opened his eyes.

Crum could easily imagine how Mauleverer had started to write to his uncle, doubtless in reply to a letter from Sir Reginald raising objections to his nephew bringing Crum home to the Towers—how he had left the letter unfinished, as he often left letters; how he had put it carelessly into the book to mark a place, without even glancing at it. Certainly Mauleverer did not know that the letter was in the volume he had lent to Crum.

Crum was glad that he had found it there.

Bitter as it was to learn the estimation in which he was held by the fellow he had regarded as a friend, it was better to know it, than to go on, making a fool of himself—despised by the fellow he had attached himself to—perhaps laughed at by him and his friends.

Crum's cheeks crimsoned at the thought of it.

For a long time the unhappy boy was conscious only of pain and grief and shame.

But anger came at last. Resentment welled up in his heart as he pondered over it.

He had been a fool. He had fastened on the easy-going Mauleverer. But that was no excuse for treachery like this—for it was treachery. Mauly could have given him a hint that he was not wanted—could have put it delicately enough, if he hated to hurt a fellow's feelings. He had no right to let Crum go on thinking that they were friends, while he looked on Crum as a pushing outsider who had fastened on him.

It was hard, cruel, unfeeling, to treat any fellow like that—especially a fellow who was in new and strange surroundings, unaccustomed to the manners and customs of the people among whom he found himself. If it was good manners—public school manners—Crum did not want those manners. He would have preferred the plain speaking of his old associates on the road—even if they dropped their h's and said "blooming" and "bally."

Crum's first feeling, on reading that letter, had been to hide his hurt; like a wounded animal creeping away to a dark place. Now he was sorry that he had not taxed Mauleverer with it—shown him up, as he expressed it to himself in his queer language, before all the "blokes." Mauly thought him low and common: and low and common he might be; but he would never have taken any fellow in like this—he would never have pretended a friendship he did not feel—he would never have given a chap fair word, and written about him in terms of contempt. He was tempted to turn out of bed now and awaken Mauleverer, and "have it out" with him. The sound of three o'clock striking from the Greyfriars clock-tower deterred Crum.

That thought passed. Still he could

not sleep; still his restless eyes stared into the shadows. Blacker and more bitter grew his thoughts. Suppose Mauleverer—tired of him, wishing to get rid of him and yet "hating" to hurt a fellow's feelings by word of mouth—had placed that letter in the "Holiday Annual" on purpose for him to find it? Mauly hated to say anything unpleasant, even to a fellow he could not endure. He might have chosen that method instead.

It was late in the small hours when Crum slept at last.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Parted!

"I SAY, you fellows! Look at Crummy."

Billy Bunter made that remark, when the Remove turned out at the clang of the rising-bell in the sunny spring morning.

Many fellows looked at Crum. Crum's face, after a sleepless night and long torment of mind, was almost ghastly.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You're looking jolly seedy, Crum," said Bob Cherry, with real concern.

Crum did not answer. "Sleep badly, old bean?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

No reply. "Anything wrong, Crum?" inquired the Bounder, with a malicious smile.

"Mind your own business." The Bounder laughed.

"Is that meant only for me, or for the other fellows as well?" he asked.

"All of you," growled Crum. "Can't you let a bloke alone? 'Ang the lot of you."

"Oh, my hat!" Every fellow in the Remove dormitory stared at Crum then. Like a cloak that had been dropped, all the improvements in Crum's speech had fallen away from him at one fell sweep. Something evidently had happened to disturb Crum very deeply, and Lord Mauleverer made a step towards him, his face full of concern.

"Crum old chap—"
"Oh, shut up!"
"Wha-a-at?"

"Swallow it!" snarled Crum. "Can't you let a covey alone?"

Lord Mauleverer stared at him in blank astonishment. He was accustomed to unusual manners and customs from Henry Christopher Crum. But this really was the limit.

"Old bean!" he ejaculated.
"Shut it!"
"Begad!"

"Let a bloke alone, can't you?" Lord Mauleverer compressed his lips.

"Certainly!" he answered in a tone of ice. And he let Crum severely alone after that.

The Removites could only wonder. Skinner & Co. were quite puzzled. According to Skinner & Co., Crum had cunningly "wangled" his friendship with Mauly. Now he was throwing away, as a thing of no value, the friendship he had so cunningly contrived to bring about, in the opinion of Skinner & Co. Why he was doing so was a deep mystery to them.

Crum had not been accustomed to much in the way of ablutions when he came to Greyfriars. He had improved in this respect, as in others. That improvement was gone now; he scarcely washed that morning, and was the first fellow down from the dormitory.

There was a buzz of voices in the room after he had gone.

"What on earth's the matter with Crum?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Got out of bed the wrong side!" grinned Skinner.

"Been rowing with Crum, Mauly?" asked Snoop.

"No!" answered Mauleverer curtly. "He's rowing with you, anyhow!"

grinned Snoop. No answer from his lordship.

"I say, you fellows, what manners, you know!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I say, Mauly, you ain't taking Crum home for the holidays after that, are you?"

"Any objection to mindin' your own bizney, Bunter?" asked Lord Mauleverer politely.

"Oh, really, Mauly—"
"The dear fellow's got his back up about somethin'," chuckled the Bounder.

"Perhaps he's noticed Mauly shudderin' when he dropped his h's."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Lord Mauleverer left the dormitory as soon as he could. He was puzzled and perplexed by Crum's strange conduct, and certainly he was offended.

He did not desire to hear the comments of the Removites.

In the quadrangle he sighted Crum, and, after a little hesitation, walked across towards him.

Crum stared at him, turned his back, and walked away.

Mauleverer halted, the colour coming into his cheeks.

He was cut—cut in the quad by the showman's son! He shut his lips very hard as he went back into the House.

At breakfast that morning Mauleverer and Crum did not exchange a glance. When the Remove went to their Form-room the two former friends did not go together, and in the Form-room they took no notice whatever of one another.

"End of a touchin' friendship, you men!" sighed Skinner to his friends; and his friends grinned.

When the Remove came out in break Harry Wharton joined Crum as the showman's son was slouching away sulkily by himself. Wharton had been surprised, like all the Remove, by Mauly chumming with Crum, but he had thought that it was a good thing for Crum, and he was sorry to see it end like this.

As Crum was his study-mate, the captain of the Remove had had plenty of experience of Crum's suspicions and uneasy touchiness, and he wondered whether some mischief-making fellow—like Skinner, for instance—had been playing on the feelings which Crum wore on his sleeve. If that was the case, Wharton considered that a friendly word might set the matter right. So he joined Crum and walked in the quad with him. Henry Christopher gave him a dark look. His bitter resentment towards Mauleverer seemed to include the whole of the Form—indeed, all Greyfriars.

"Don't think I'm butting in, Crum," said Harry quietly. "I'm sorry to see you off with Mauly. If some fellow's been making trouble, you don't want to be led by the nose into losing a good pal."

Crum laughed harshly. "A good pal!" he repeated. "That feller Mauly! I'm done with 'im!"

"But Mauly can't have done anything, old scout."

"That's all you know!" "Well, what has he done, then?" asked Wharton directly. "I've known Mauly longer than you have, and you can take my word for it that there isn't a better fellow at Greyfriars."

"I dessay!" assented Crum bitterly. "I don't think much of Greyfriars."

"Oh!" said Harry.



"Can it, Mauleverer!" said Crum. "I'm tired of your blessed lies. Look 'ere—this 'ere bit of a letter was in the 'Oldday Annual' you lent me last night—and I found it there. Look at it, and stop telling lies. You know you wrote it!" (See Chapter 14.)

"I'm done with 'im, 'cause he ain't good-enough for me, if you want to know!" said Crum. "I think he's an out-and-out rotter—and you can tell him I said so!"

"I'm not likely to tell him so," said Wharton, with a curl of the lip. "Sorry I spoke!"

And he left Crum with that. Crum stared after him moodily and sullenly, drove his hands deep into his pockets, and slouched away.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

In Black and White!

BILLY BUNTER stood in the Form-room passage when the Remove were dismissed after third lesson and blinked through his big spectacles at Lord Mauleverer and Crum. Bunter was grinning all over his fat face, but he looked puzzled, too.

Lord Mauleverer, leaving the Form-room, had gone towards Crum. Crum had walked away.

Mauleverer, after a few moments' hesitation, had followed him.

The two of them disappeared into the quadrangle together; and Bunter blinked after them, puzzled and entertained.

"I say, you fellows, it beats me!" he remarked.

"What does?" asked Bob Cherry. "Quechy's cane?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I mean Mauly and Crum," said the Owl of the Remove. "Of course, I expected Mauly to throw that outsider over sooner or later. But what beats me is Crum throwing Mauly over. That beats me hollow!"

Bunter was by no means the only fellow who was puzzled. Had Mauleverer dropped the showman's son, the fellows would have been surprised, because such a proceeding would not have been in accordance with Mauly's loyal character. But Crum throwing Mauly over was a much greater surprise. The fellow who had everything to gain and nothing to lose by such a friendship was the fellow who was ending it in a rough and rude manner—a manner as rough and rude as it well could be.

It was so surprising, that other fellows as well as Wharton suspected that some ill-disposed meddler might have been making mischief, playing upon Crum's well-known touchiness. And that was the idea that had come into Lord Mauleverer's mind; and that was why his lordship, offended as he was, was now following Crum into the quadrangle, to speak to him and obtain an explanation if there was one to be had.

Crum walked across to the elms and threw himself into a bench there under the trees. A minute later Lord Mauleverer's elegant figure was standing before him.

Crum scowled at him. He had resolved that he would break off with Mauleverer and say nothing of the injury that had been done him. He shrank from letting the Remove know anything about it. He could imagine the smiles and jeers if the other fellows knew. His desire to quarrel with Mauly about it had passed; he only wanted to be let alone.

"Old bean," said Mauleverer gently, "just a word with you. Sorry if I bore you really."

"Oh, shut it!"

Greyfriars School
 Dear Uncle Raginold
 I quite understand your objection to the fellow Crum but I'm in a rather difficult position. The fellow asked has fastened on me, I know that, and I wish he would keep his distance. But I hate to hurt any fellow's feelings and he really means well.

Mauleverer winced. That revival of Crum's earlier manners and customs jarred on his noble nerves. But he had his duty to do, and he did it. He could not let the strange affair rest where it was.

"I'm bound to speak," he said. "If you're fed-up with me I shan't mind your tellin' me so."

"Well, I tell you so, then, and chance it!" growled Crum. "I'm fed-up with you, right to the blooming back teeth! 'Ook it!"

"May I ask why?"

"Oh, give a bloke a rest!"

"If it's simply because I bore you, old bean, surely you might have put it a little more civilly," suggested Mauleverer. "It's because I believe you're not such a rotter as you appear to be at the present moment that I'm askin' you about it. Has anybody been buttin' in and makin' trouble? If it's that, speak out and let a man know. I dare say I can clear it all up."

Crum gave him an almost venomous look.

This fellow who had befooled him was not satisfied yet. He did not like being thrown over. He was willing to fool Crum again—willing to fool him to the top of his bent; and doubtless would have done so had not Crum possessed proof of his duplicity in black and white. Mauly, obviously, did not know, as Crum had half suspected, that the tell-tale paper had been in the book. Had he known that he would not have been "trying it on" again, as Crum expressed it.

The showman's son did not answer, and Mauleverer scanned his face attentively. He could see the signs of pain,

of deep pain, as well as sullen anger there. More and more he was convinced that some mischief-maker had been at work, taking in poor Crum—who, with all his knowledge of the world gained "on the road," was a mere greenhorn, after all, in Greyfriars ways. The thought of the Bounder came into Lord Mauleverer's mind. He was well aware of the Bounder's bitterness towards Crum. Yet, so far as he knew, Crum never had anything to do with Vernon-Smith; if they even spoke to one another at all, it was rarely and by chance.

"Ain't you going?" demanded Crum at last, as Lord Mauleverer still stood where he was.

"Not till you've explained."

"What do you want me to explain?" jeered Crum. "I'm done with you, because you ain't good enough for me—lord as you are! I've knowed fellers on the road, down on their uppers, what was better fellers than you, Lord Mauleverer. Fellers what never pronounced a blooming 'h' in their lives. They wouldn't go back on a bloke like you done."

There was enlightenment in the bitter speech, ungrammatical as it was. Mauly knew now that someone had caused trouble; that Crum had been led by the nose somehow.

"What have I done, Crum?" he asked quietly.

"You know well enough," grunted Crum.

"I don't!"

"That's a lie!"

Lord Mauleverer quivered. Sorely was he tempted at that moment to turn his back and walk away, and have done with the fellow who could use such terms to him. But the very coarseness of the word was a proof of Crum's deep sense of injury, to Mauly's discerning eyes. He knew that the queer new junior had been bitterly hurt; and he knew that he himself was not to blame. He meant to know.

"Oh, get on with it!" jeered Crum. "Tell me they don't use such language at Greyfriars! Tell me I'm a low outsider! I ain't like the other blokes 'ere, and I'm glad of it. I ain't never took a feller in and made a fool of 'im and laughed in my sleeve, anyhow. That ain't my sort, even if I'm a low outsider, Lord Mauleverer!"

"I think I see," said Mauleverer. "Whoever has told you such a thing of me, Crum, has taken you in."

"Nobody's told me nothing of the kind."

"But you think it?"

"I knows it!" snapped Crum savagely.

"Somebody must have put it into your head."

Crum laughed harshly.

"Tell me this," said Lord Mauleverer very quietly. "Has Vernon-Smith had anythin' to do with this change in your opinion of me?"

"No, he ain't."

"Smithy's a good chap, in his way," said Mauleverer. "But when he's malicious he doesn't seem to have a limit. There was a fellow here once named Dallas—but never mind that; it was before your time. You are sure the Bounder has nothing to do with it?"

"I ain't spoke to him since last evening, when he told me a blooming lie about Mr. Quelch wanting me in his study," growled Crum. "I dessay I'll begin to tell lies, too, when I've been a bit longer at Greyfriars; I dessay I'll pick up Greyfriars ways in the long run."

Lord Mauleverer was perplexed.

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"I know Smithy's got it agin me," went on Crum. "He disliked me from the first, swanking rotter; and he was wild at bein' turned down for me a week or two ago, when he wanted you to go on the river; and I know he's wild about the way he owned up in the Rag—"

"I don't see why he should be wild about that. He did that of his own accord."

Crum laughed sneeringly.

"That's all you know, with all your blooming cleverness."

Mauleverer started.

"Crum, you don't mean to say—"

He broke off. That amazing owning-up of the Bounder was explained now; Mauleverer knew now that he had done it under the schoolboy hypnotist's influence. His face became very grave.

"You ought not to have done that Crum," he said.

"Well, I did it for you, to keep you out of a blooming scrap," said Crum.

"I was a fool for my pains, I know that. You wasn't worth the trouble."

"Never mind that now, anyway," said Lord Mauleverer. "Let's keep to the matter in hand. You've practically accused me of makin' a fool of you and laughin' in my sleeve. That's rather unpleasant, you know. Won't you tell me why you think so?"

"I got it in black and white, if you want to know!" snarled Crum, goaded at last into speaking out.

"I don't understand."

"Well, jest try to remember what you've written to your uncle about me, and then you'll blooming well understand, you double-dealin' rotter!"

"I've written to my uncle that you're comin' home with me for the hols," said Lord Mauleverer, still patient. "That's all."

"Oh, can it!" said Crum. "I'm tired of your blessed lies! Look 'ere! This 'ere bit of a letter was in the 'Oliday Annual' you lent me last night; and I found it there—a blooming bookmark! Look at it and stop telling lies!"

And Crum dragged the crumpled paper from his pocket and shoved it into Lord Mauleverer's hand.

In great surprise, Mauleverer unfolded the sheet and read what was written on it. For the moment he supposed that it was in his own handwriting, and he gazed at it blankly. Then his brows knitted. Crum watched him with sneering eyes, expecting to see the schoolboy earl overwhelmed with confusion. But he saw nothing of the kind. Lord Mauleverer's eyes glinted, and he set his lips.

"I never wrote that, Crum," he said quietly.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

In Doubt!

C RUM stared at Lord Mauleverer. He had expected Mauleverer to look confused, but he would not have been surprised to hear some more duplicity from him. But that blank denial of what seemed a certain fact to Crum took the showman's son by surprise. He was silent for long moments, staring at Mauleverer, and finally he burst into a scoffing laugh.

"Well, that beats it!" he exclaimed. "Denyin' your own 'and now! My eye! I got a lot to learn at Greyfriars! I never thought of a bloke denyin' his own 'andwriting."

"I never wrote it, Crum."

"P'r'aps I wrote it?" said Crum, with jeering humour. "P'r'aps I wrote it in your list—what?"

"Someone wrote it in my list," said Lord Mauleverer; "some sneakin' cad, I'm afraid! Where did you get it?"

"You'd used it as a bookmark in the 'Oliday Annual' what you lent me, and left it there."

"I never did, Crum."

"Oh, rats!"

"I've never seen it before."

"Can it!"

"If I'd written these lines about a fellow I was friendly with I should deserve all you've thought of me, and more," said Lord Mauleverer quietly. "But I never did, Crum. Surely you can take my word."

For a moment or two Crum wavered. His rough, untutored heart yearned for the friendship he had cast aside; he was tempted to believe, or to affect to believe, to force himself to believe against his own common-sense. Then anger welled up in his breast.

"You never wrote it!" he jeered. "It's in your 'and! It got into your book all by itself, I s'pose? What are you giving me? I've been a blooming fool, but I ain't fool enough to believe that."

Lord Mauleverer stiffened.

"Who imitated my fist, and who shoved this into my book, I don't know," he said very quietly. "But I give you my word that I never wrote it, and have never seen it before. We'll go into this together, Crum, and find out who did it—if you take my word."

"Take your word!" sneered Crum.

Mauleverer's face hardened.

"I expect my word to be taken, Crum!"

"You can expect."

Lord Mauleverer drew a deep breath. He had reached the limit of his patience and forbearance.

"Very well, Crum. Here's your paper. It's yours, not mine. You've asked me to leave you alone. I ask the same of you now. That's all."

With that, Lord Mauleverer walked away, his head very erect.

Crum, crumpling and twitching the paper in his hand, stared after him as he went.

There was black bitterness in his face, but his heart was as heavy as lead.

He did not believe Lord Mauleverer. He could not. But his heart ached as he watched the slim, elegant figure of the schoolboy earl disappear across the quadrangle. When Mauleverer was gone, he seemed to leave a dreary blank behind him.

Crum glanced at the paper in his hand. Savagely he tore it into shreds, and scattered the fragments under the trees with a sweep of his hand.

A bell clanged across the quadrangle.

The Greyfriars fellows went in to dinner, and Crum dragged himself from the bench under the elms, and followed them.

He stole a glance at Mauleverer at the Remove table. Mauleverer was calm and sedate, as nonchalant as usual to the view. If the breaking off of a friendship troubled him at all, he was not the fellow to wear his heart upon his sleeve, like poor Crum. He did not catch Crum's eye; he seemed totally unconscious of Crum's existence.

The heart of the showman's son sank lower. Even had he resolved to forgive Mauleverer, to like him in spite of his duplicity, it was too late now. He had said that he was done with Mauleverer, and it was clear now that Lord Mauleverer was done with him.

And then suddenly Crum caught the Bounder's eyes fixed on him.

The look in Smithy's eyes startled him. There was a malicious triumph, a gloating satisfaction, in the Bounder's

eyes, that struck him strangely. Vernon-Smith dropped his glance at once; but what he had seen haunted Crum's memory.

That afternoon was a half-holiday. Crum went out of gates by himself.

He tramped away to Courtfield Common alone. It was very different from his pleasant walks with Mauleverer. Nobody else was keen on Crum's company, though there were fellows who would have joined him for the afternoon, without enthusiasm certainly. But Crum did not want any company excepting his own bitter reflections.

He had lost Mauleverer. He had found out that his chum was a false friend. And he was not disposed to make any further experiments in friendship at Greyfriars. He had had a letter from his father, and old Crum had consented to allow him to rejoin the show. He was not to return to Greyfriars after Easter. He was glad of it.

Only a few more days now, and he would be done with Greyfriars, done with fellows who were too polite to tell a chap what they thought, and, under a cloak of friendship, laughed in their sleeves at a chap who trusted them. He loathed Greyfriars now, and yet somehow he realised that he did not loathe Mauleverer. Deep down at the back of his mind was a lurking doubt—which he would not admit to himself. He had had the proof in black-and-white. How could he doubt after that, because a fellow chose to pile one lie on another?

Crum sat and rested on the low, swaying bough, where he had sat with Lord Mauleverer on the day of the encounter with Ponsonby & Co. of Highcliffe. It was only a week or two since, but it seemed ages ago to Crum now. He wondered, with a sour grin, how Ponsonby was getting on with his friends at Highcliffe, after his inexplicable outbreak that day under the 'fluence.

He remembered that he had quarrelled with Lord Mauleverer that day, and he had made it up—eaten humble pie, as he expressed it to himself. And all the time the fellow had been fooling him, making a butt of him, thinking of him with contempt!

But had he? Somehow, the quiet earnestness of Lord Mauleverer's manner, under the elms in the quad that morning, came back to Crum's mind, came back to him with a strange sense of conviction.

But it was not a case of touchiness, as in the case of his quarrel with Harry Wharton in his first days at Greyfriars. He had had the proof in black-and-white! Suppose—only suppose—that some evil fellow had imitated Mauly's hand—any fellow could do it if he liked. It was easy enough for any fellow to get a sample of Mauly's fist, easy enough, perhaps, with patience, to imitate the distinctive hand. But the sheet had been in Mauly's book—used as a book-mark.

Suppose, further, that a fellow had put it there. Mauly was more likely to find it than Crum. Unless the fellow knew that Mauly was lending the book to Crum. After all, any fellow might have heard Crum speaking of it. Plenty of fellows had been in the Rag when he had asked Mauly for the volume which his forgetful lordship had forgotten to bring down. But he had gone direct to Mauly's study for the book. Nobody had had time to write out that forged letter and place it there.

Two incidents flashed into Crum's mind at the same moment—the

BILLY BUNTER IN THE LIMELIGHT!

As a general rule, William George Bunter gets more kicks than ha'pence from his Form-fellows—and justly so. Yet even Bunter, fat freak though he is, has his uses. In next week's *extra-long* story of Greyfriars, Billy Bunter's wonderful gift of ventriloquism plays a very important part in the adventure in which Colonel Wharton and his nephew find themselves involved.

If you miss reading:

"IN MERCILESS HANDS!"

you'll be losing the finest treat of the week, for this grand story shows Frank Richards at the top of his form.

Order next Saturday's
MAGNET now, boys!



Bounder's look of malevolent triumph at the dinner-table, the Bounder's false message from Mr. Quelch the evening before.

Crum started so violently that he almost fell off the branch.

The Bounder! Mauly had suggested that the Bounder might have been the cause of the trouble. Why had the Bounder sent him on that fool's errand to Mr. Quelch's study? Was it to give him time to nip up to Mauly's study, after hearing in the Rag that Crum was going there for the "Holiday Annual"? Had the fellow had that forged paper in his pocket all ready, waiting for a chance to plant it on Crum?

Crum trembled. It was impossible, he told himself—wildly impossible. It was a coincidence that Smithy had played that fool trick on him that evening, just at that time. Mauleverer had written that sheet, and used the unfinished letter as a book-mark, in his well-known careless way.

But—"If I've been took in!" groaned Crum.

If he had been taken in, it was past all forgiveness now. He had called Lord Mauleverer a liar: he had refused to take his word. Lord Mauleverer had done with him. And if the wild suspicion that was now in his mind was well founded, there could never be any proof. In his anger he had even destroyed the forged paper. Vernon-Smith would never own up—nothing would induce the Bounder to admit that he had done it.

And then another thought came to Crum. He remembered that he had the power to make the Bounder speak. He had but to lift his hand to exert his strange power, and the Bounder would tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Crum slipped from the tree, and

tramped away across the common towards Greyfriars.

He did not believe Mauleverer—yet. He did not believe that the malicious Bounder was guilty—yet. But he was going to know; and he had the power to learn. If the Bounder, under the hypnotic influence, told nothing of the forged letter—and no power could make him tell of it if he was innocent and knew nothing of it—then Mauleverer was the double-dealer that Crum believed.

If the Bounder was guilty, however, he should tell the story of his guilt before all the Remove, and be covered with shame as with a garment. And if that was indeed the state of the case, surely Mauleverer, learning how Crum had been deceived, would relent! Crum remembered the cold, set look on Mauleverer's face, and had little hope. But as he walked back to Greyfriars in the spring afternoon, his mind was made up. If the Bounder had anything to tell, he was going to tell it in the Rag in the hearing of all the Lower Fourth, and be shamed for ever in the eyes of his Form-fellows.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder Speaks!

"MAULY!" Bob Cherry's voice boomed in the Remove passage.

"Yaas?"

"Come on, you slacker!"

"What's on?" yawned Mauleverer.

"Meeting in the Rag, old bean."

Lord Mauleverer yawned again.

"Leave me out, old chap. Tired."

"Been exerting yourself this afternoon?" asked Bob cheerily.

"Yaas."

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"What have you done?"

Lord Mauleverer considered.

"Well, I've had tea."

"Poor old chap—must have worn you out!" said Bob sympathetically. "Feel that you can't get off that sofa?"

"Yaas."

"Well, I'm the chap to help a pal when he's too tired to move."

"Yaroooooh!"

Lord Mauleverer roared as Bob Cherry grasped him and hooked him off the sofa. His lordship landed on the study carpet with a bump.

"Feel that you can walk down to the Rag now?" asked Bob.

"Ow! No."

"I'll help you along."

"Ow! Yaas—I mean yaas!" gasped Mauleverer.

"Come on, then, old scout!" chuckled Bob; and Lord Mauleverer detached himself from the study carpet and came on.

"You see, old pippin," explained Bob, as they went down to the Rag, "you're specially wanted. Smithy's 'callin' a meeting, and he specially asked us to see that you came."

"Look here, bother Smithy! I don't want to hear anythin' from Smithy!" protested Lord Mauleverer.

"But he says it's something important, and specially concerns you," said Bob. "Nobody knows what's on, and everybody's jolly curious, I can tell you. Smithy won't say a word till you come."

"No need for him to say a word. Smithy says too many words."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Well, he won't begin till you're there, and so you've got to come. We're simply wild with curiosity. Smithy's looking as solemn as if he'd committed a murder and wanted to make a clean breast of it. I suppose he hasn't—and you haven't hidden the body for him?"

"Fathead!"

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as Bob entered the Rag with his arm linked in the reluctant arm of Lord Mauleverer.

"Yes, here we are," said Bob. "Smithy started yet?"

"No—waiting for Mauly," said the captain of the Remove, laughing. "Blessed if I understand what's on! Smithy's as solemn as an owl, and jolly mysterious!"

"I say, you fellows, what's it all about?" demanded Billy Bunter breathlessly. "I say, Mauly, do you know?"

"No!"

"I say, Crum, do you know?" asked Bunter.

"P'raps!" said Crum, with a sour grin.

"Well, tell a pal, then!" said Bunter cagerly.

"Ain't got a pal 'ere that I know of," answered Crum.

"Oh, really, Crum—"

"Shut it!"

"Beast!"

Lord Mauleverer passed Crum without a glance. All the Remove were in the Rag; Mauly was the latest comer. Most of the fellows looked very curious indeed. It was extremely unusual for any fellow but the captain of the Form to call a Form meeting, and some fellows remarked that it was like the Bounder's check. But all were curious to hear what he had to say—especially as nobody had forgotten that strange scene of Vernon-Smith "owning up" in the Rag on a previous occasion. If Herbert Vernon-Smith had any more startling confessions to make, a good many fellows were ready to listen with interest.

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The Bounder was standing by the fireplace, his hands in his pockets, looking much the same as usual. But Redwing, standing by his chum, was watching him with anxious uneasiness. To the keen eye of friendship, there was some subtle change in the Bounder—a change that Redwing could not understand; that his mind could hardly seize upon, but which he knew was there. He was uneasy as to what the Bounder was about to say to the assembled Form, and twice he had attempted to induce Smithy to leave the Rag, but without success. The Bounder, always obstinate, was now inflexible.

The door of the Rag was closed, and the captain of the Remove glanced round over the assembled Form.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows," said Wharton, "this meeting has been called by Vernon-Smith, of this Form, who states that he has something to say to the whole Form. It's a bit unusual; but we're here to give Smithy a hearing. Ready, Smithy?"

"Yes, now Mauleverer's here," answered the Bounder.

"I say, you fellows—"

"A SHOCK FOR THE HEAD!"

(Continued from page 15.)

"Well, my friend," said Sir Frederick, "how would you like to be headmaster of St. Sam's?"

"Wot I says is this 'ere: I don't like 'avin' my leg pulled," growled Fossil sleepily.

"But, my dear fellow, you're not having your leg pulled," said Sir Frederick amiably. "I don't know who you are, but you've got a nice honest face, and I think you'd do the work well."

"Wot I says is this 'ere: I'm the blinkin' porter, and I don't want to be 'ead. I ain't no scholar—"

"But you don't need to be," interrupted the chairman persuasively. "So long as you can spell a few simple words and know your twice times table."

"Crums! Is this the trooth, then? Hain't you a-jokin', like?" asked Fossil in grate surprise.

"Certainly not! I am offering you Dr. Birchmall's post. Strangely enuf, I have already appointed him skool porter, so all you will do is simply change plaices with him. You will take up your dooties immejately in the Head's study, and Dr. Birchmall will start work at the porter's lodge!"

Fossil grinned as he saw Dr. Birchmall nashing his false teeth with rage in the background. He began to see how things were.

"Ho!" he remarked, after a paws.

"Wot I says is this 'ere: If that's the case, count me hin!"

"You axsept?"

"Sertingly!"

"Then," said Sir Frederick, beaming all over his dile, "I am pleased to make the appointment. Boys, allow me to present to you your new headmaster."

Fossil surveyd the assembly with a very cheerful grin.

"Wot I says is this 'ere: Now I'm 'ead I'm going to 'ave me own back on some of you!" he announced. "I'll give you warnin', now that I'm 'eadmaster, look hout!"

"Oh crums!"

"The skool is now dismissed!" said Sir Frederick kerty; and with that the hysterical gathering broke up.

(You'll laugh loud and long over "VICE VERSA!" next week's amusing yarn of St. Sam's. Don't miss it, chums, whatever you do.)

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Cough it up, Smithy!" said Peter Todd encouragingly. "You've got us all as inquisitive as Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"We are all on the tender hooks, my esteemed Smithy," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Lend Smithy your ears!" said Bob Cherry. "Go it, Smithy!"

"I've got to tell you fellows—and especially Mauleverer," said the Bounder, in a calm, even tone. "Yesterday you noticed that Crum was rowing with Mauly. I dare say some of you thought that some fellow had butted in and made trouble. Well, I did."

"You did?" ejaculated Wharton.

"Yes; that's what I'm going to tell you men. I imitated Mauly's handwriting in a letter to his uncle—"

"Smithy!"

"I did that a week ago, waiting for a chance to plant it on Crum. The letter referred to Crum in an insulting way. Last evening I heard Crum ask Mauleverer about his 'Holiday Annual.' I saw my chance then. I sent Crum on a fool's errand to Quelchy's study, while I cut up to the Remove passage and slipped the forged paper into the 'Holiday Annual' lying on Mauly's table."

The Bounder paused, amid a breathless silence.

Every eye was fixed on him; even Bunter was silent. What the Bounder had said stupefied the whole assembly.

That he had done it was extraordinary. That he admitted having done it, apparently of his own accord, was amazing.

"I knew Crum would think that Mauly, like a careless ass, had slipped an unfinished letter into the 'Annual' to use as a bookmark," the Bounder went on. "I knew he would find it, and think—what any fellow would think in the circumstances. Being a low rotter, he would think worse than any other fellow, and lose his rotten temper and rag Mauly. That was how I figured it out."

Another pause.

Harry Wharton broke the silence.

"And why did you do it, Smithy?" he asked, with a tone of contempt in his voice that brought a dull flush to the Bounder's cheeks.

"To dish both of them," answered Vernon-Smith; "to pay out that cad Crum chiefly. I know it was thick—but he asked for it, the low rotter! I'm not sorry I did it. It worked."

Wharton stared at him.

"You're not sorry?"

"No."

"Yet you're telling the whole Form about it, and undoing what you've done by dirty trickery."

"I know."

"Why are you telling us, then?"

"I don't know. I felt that I had to own up, that's all," answered the Bounder, in the same even, lifeless tones. "I believe Crum's making me tell you, though I don't know how."

"I suppose you know you'd be sacked if this came to the Head?" said the captain of the Remove.

"I know that."

"Is the fellow out of his mind?" asked Bob Cherry, in wonder. "This is the second time he's owned up to a dirty trick in this room."

"Smithy!" whispered Redwing.

While all the Remove shrank away from the Bounder—even Skinner & Co. feeling a repugnance for the fellow who admitted an act of despicable treachery—Redwing stood by him. What the Bounder had said was certainly a greater shock to him than to any other fellow in the room; but even under that



"Poor old chap—must be worn out," said Bob Cherry, sympathetically. "Feel that you can't get off that sofa?" "Yaas." "Well, I'm the chap to help a pal when he's too tired to move." "Yaroooooh!" Lord Mauleverer roared, as Bob Cherry grasped his foot and pulled. (See Chapter 16.)

trial Redwing's loyal friendship with the wayward, unscrupulous fellow stood firm.

Redwing slipped his arm through the Bounder's. Every other fellow moved away from him as from a leper.

"Well, have you done?" asked Wharton, at last.

"I've done!"

Lord Mauleverer stood silent, his face a little pale. He, alone of the Remove, knew why the Bounder had owned up to that act of treachery; knew under what potent influence he had spoken, against his will. Mauleverer's eyes turned on Crum, for a moment, and then he walked out of the Rag.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Mauly Tries Again!

"MAULY!" Crum's voice was little more than a whisper.

Mauleverer was alone in his study; he had not turned on the light, and his face glimmered pale through the gathering dusk.

He did not answer.

"Mauly! You don't blame me for putting the 'fluence on him and making him own up."

"No."

"Look what he did!" muttered Crum. "Why, a feller could be sent to prison for what he done."

"I know."

"I was took in, Mauly. I know I ought to 'ave believed you, when you give me your word," muttered Crum humbly. "I know that. But—"

"Oh, never mind," said Mauleverer, in a tired voice. "Never mind all that now."

"I'm sorry, Mauly."

Mauleverer did not speak.

"I'll do anything you like," whispered Crum. "I know I'm a rough, uneducated bloke, Mauly—that's why I wouldn't take your word, I s'pose. I ought to 'ave knowed better, I know that. Can't you look over it?"

There was silence in the study.

"I s'pose you can't," muttered Crum. "I know what you're thinking, Mauly. You wouldn't 'ave put the 'fluence on Smithy, even to make him own up to what he done. You think me a blooming outsider for doing it."

"Yaas!"

"I know!" said Crum humbly.

"I don't blame you," said Lord Mauleverer. "But—it's no good talkin'."

"Not to a rough bloke like me, what can't understand 'ow a gentleman like you looks at things!" muttered Crum miserably.

Lord Mauleverer winced.

"I didn't mean that, Crum. But—well, I'll speak. Using hypnotism isn't playing the game. What Smithy did was vile—though I've no doubt whatever that he would have been sorry afterwards, and jolly ashamed of himself—that's Smithy's way. He's not so bad as he makes out. I promised to keep your secret if you never used that trickery in the Remove."

"And I've broke my word," mumbled Crum. "I know! Look 'ere, Mauly, if you like I'll tell all the fellers—I won't keep it a secret any more."

"That's what you ought to do."

"I'll do it!"

There was another pause. Crum's face stared at Mauly, white in the dusk. His eyes were wet.

"Can't you look over it, Mauly?" he muttered huskily. "I never liked a bloke before—and I never liked you because you was a lord, and you know that. Lots of fellers would have kep' on with you arter what you did—I mean arter what I believed you did—because you was a lord and a big gun. But you know I never cared about that."

"By gad! That's true!" said Lord Mauleverer. "You're a jolly queer fish, Crum—an aw'ly queer fish! But how can we be friends, old bean, if you can't take my word when I give it?"

"You tell me to jump out of the winder, Mauly, and I'll take your word for that, and do it."

"We'll try again, if you like, Crum."

"Mauly, old chap, you mean it?" gasped Crum. And then he added hurriedly. "Course, I know you mean it—I ain't doubting your word, Mauly."

Mauleverer chuckled.

"It's a go, old bean!"

And a "go" it was.

Vernon-Smith was the most surprised fellow in the Remove when Crum, true to his word, revealed the strange secret he had so long kept from all but Lord Mauleverer.

Since making that bitter confession in the Rag, the Bounder had been perplexed, troubled, almost doubting whether he was losing his senses.

He knew the truth now.

It was a relief to him; though it made him grit his teeth with rage.

In the Remove, Crum's secret, when it was told, was a nine days' wonder. Fellows asked Crum to give them a "seance"; which Crum steadily refused to do. He was done with hypnotism now, as far as Greyfriars was concerned; on that point Mauleverer's wish was law to him; and, indeed, now that his secret was told, he had placed it out of his own power to use his hypnotic influence again without detection. The schoolboy hypnotist was a hypnotist no longer—until, at least, he should reappear as "Young Crum" in Crum's Show and House of Magic.

In the meantime, he was one of the cheeriest fellows in the Greyfriars Remove—a state of affairs wholly due to the fact that Lord Mauleverer was once more Crum's chum!

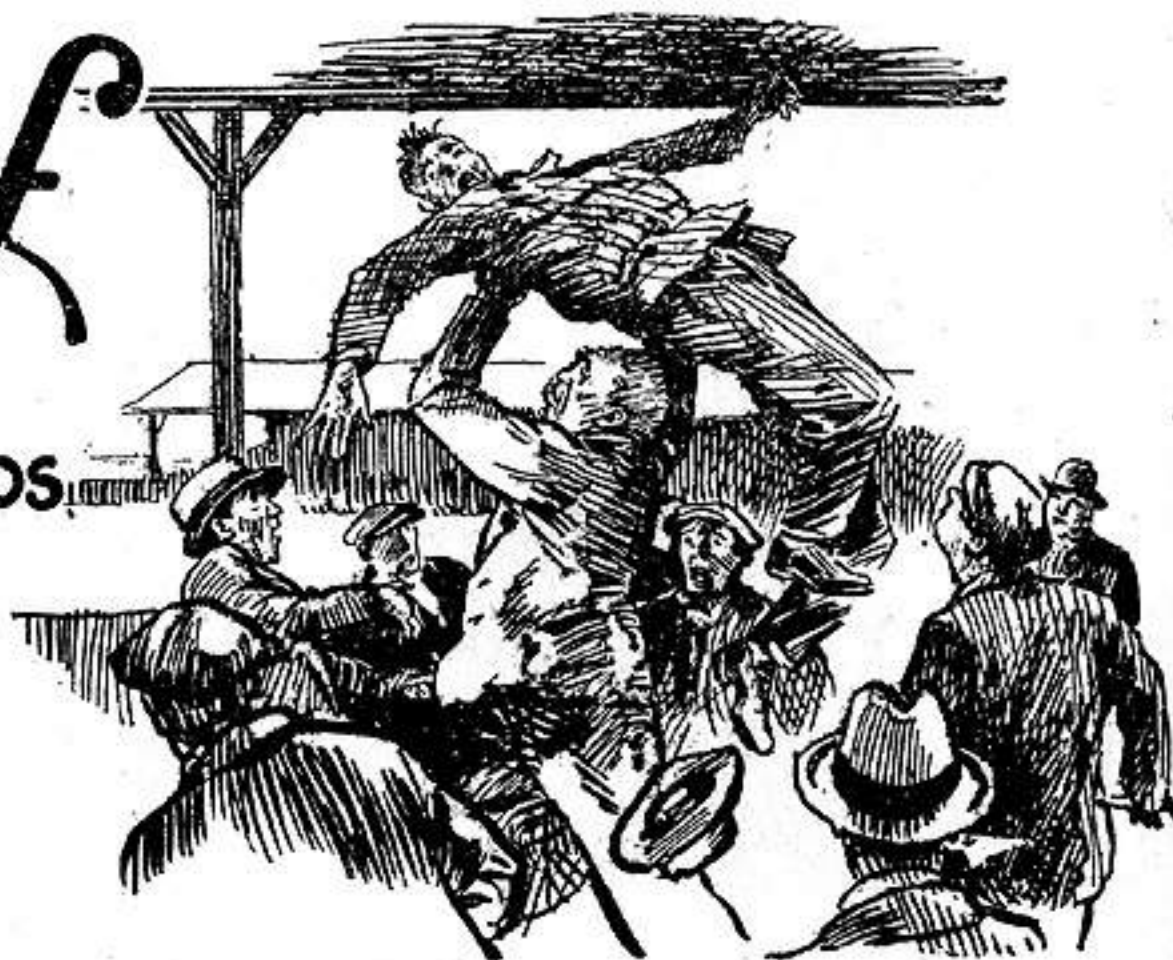
(There will be another grand long story of Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's MAGNET, chums, entitled: "IN MERCILESS HANDS!" Make sure you read it by ordering your copy WELL IN ADVANCE!)

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"**PULL GINGER 'EM UP!**" So declares *Tiny Scannan*, the new boss of the *Storrydene Eleven*. But when he introduces a dog-whip into his "gingering" methods, *Tiny* gets gingered up himself!

The Man of IRON

By WALTER EDWARDS



A thrilling story dealing with the adventures and misadventures of the *Storrydene Villa F.C.*, introducing "*Tiny*" Scannan, who turns the scale at eighteen stone, and packs a punch that a world-beater would envy!

The Man Eater!

YOU'RE going to fight with the gloves or not at all," the young *Storrydene* centre-forward declared doggedly, his lean jaw set, and then Scannan muttered savagely and made a quick grab with his great paws, meaning to swing the youngster off the floor.

And what happened immediately after that was never quite clear to either the onlookers or *Tiny Scannan*, for things moved with lightning speed.

Tiny swayed forward as he snatched at the lean-limbed youngster, and Terry, in some uncanny manner, managed to wriggle free of the groping fingers; and then, in a flash, round came a hard fist to connect with Scannan's heavy jaw.

Crack!

The sound of contact echoed through the dressing-room and brought a stifled gasp from the footballers, but *Tiny Scannan* made neither noise nor fuss.

Sagging like an empty sack, the mountain of flesh and muscle swayed perilously sideways; and slowly—very slowly—it crumpled up into a huddled, unlovely heap and rolled over, its eyes closed, its ugly mouth gaping.

It seemed impossible, farcical, but *Tiny Scannan*, the man of iron, was "out!"

The players gazed at each other in speechless amazement, for it seemed incredible that Terry Carson, the slim schoolboy, could have put the giant down for the count.

Yet *Tiny Scannan* was "out" right enough!

He remained still—curiously still; he seemed scarcely to breathe; and a strange light of horror dawned in Hefty Hebble's eyes.

He moved towards the door.

"I'd better hurry, you chaps," he said, shooting a quick glance at the still form upon the floor. "There's no time to lose; every moment counts!"

"What is it?" asked the white-faced Grace. "Are you going to fetch a doctor?"

"No," returned Hefty; "I'm going to fetch my pipe."

The players were still in the dressing-room when *Tiny Scannan* uttered a hollow groan, rolled over like a water-logged hulk, and opened his red-rimmed, listless eyes; and the first thing

he saw was a picture of sweet contentment—Mr. Hefty Hebble.

Perched on the top of a packing-case, Hefty was swinging his legs and pulling luxuriously at his big briar pipe, and he nodded cheerily as *Tiny* gave another hollow groan and struggled up into a sitting position.

"Good-morning, Mr. Scannan!" said the big back. "I hope you feel refreshed after your nap!"

The man of iron was still dazed, but the mist began to clear somewhat as he raised his hand and caressed a badly-swollen jaw. And, little by little, it all came back to him. He remembered the pipe incident and the row with Hebble, and then—What had happened, then? Didn't somebody hit him with a mallet? Yes, that was it! Or was it a lump of iron that had laid him out? Somebody had behaved in a most unfriendly manner; somebody—

Tiny's face became ugly as he found the brown eyes of Terry Carson smiling across at him; but it was Hefty Hebble whom he addressed.

Getting to his feet, the giant stretched his mighty limbs and lunged once or twice at the air; then, his massive jaw thrust forward, he walked across the dressing-room and glared into Hefty's clear eyes.

"Come on!" he growled, tapping the other man's chest with a thick fore-finger. "We're going along to the gym! I promised you a hiding, and you're going to get it, and you won't have a bit of a kid to take your part this time!" His thick lips parted, showing his yellow teeth. "Are you going to walk, or do you want me to carry you? It makes no odds to me!"

Hebble blew a smoke-ring before he replied.

"Oh, I'll come along, lad," he answered easily. "D'you mind waiting until I've finished this pipe?"

Mumbling angrily, *Tiny Scannan* thrust the players aside and strode out of the room, and the eyes of Hefty's team-mates held an anxious expression as they turned to the smiling young man upon the packing-case.

"I'm hanged if it's fair," said Craye, the left-half. "He's not a man, at all; he's a gorilla! He'll eat you, Hefty!"

"I can't help that, lad," said the burly back. "Somebody's got to stand up to him—if only for a few seconds—otherwise he'll think he's cowed us! And there's always a sporting chance that I may get one home! Come along, or

he'll think I'm scared! As a matter of fact, kid," he said, dropping his voice and speaking to Terry, "this is not the happiest moment of my life!"

Chatting easily—although he felt like a martyr being taken to the stake—he led the way to the spacious, well-appointed gymnasium; and the heart of Hefty Hebble was heavy as he looked upon the herculean superman with whom he was to do battle.

Hefty was no coward, but no man living would have looked forward to a fight with *Tiny Scannan*. The fellow was abnormal, an abysmal brute; he would fight for the sheer love of fighting.

And Hefty was a man of peace.

Clad only in his trousers and vest, with his bright red braces wound round his thick hips, *Tiny* looked terrible, a formidable picture of menace, and he treated the players to a neat exhibition of shadow-boxing as he waited for his man to strip.

Hefty was a young man who did not believe in prolonging the agony, and in less than a minute he was inside the ropes, his jaw set, his broad features unusually pale; but there was no sign of fear in his clear eyes.

Terry Carson was in his corner, whilst Coyne had volunteered to look after the Man of Iron.

"Is there anything you want, Mr. Scannan?" asked Coyne, one of Sir Aubrey's sycophants, who had long since decided that it would be as well to keep on the right side of the new skipper.

"Yes, get me a dustpan and broom," grunted Scannan. "I shall want you to sweep this feller up in a minute or so!"

Coyne tittered. "I must tell Sir Aubrey that one, Mr. Scannan," he said, fixing the giant's gloves. "He's a rare one for a bong note!"

Scannan was scowling as he turned his little eyes upon the French scholar.

"What's bong note?" he asked. "A mouthwash—or the thing you put round castles?"

Again Coyne tittered. "You are a one, Mr. Scannan," he declared. "French is so—er—expressive, don't you think?"

Scannan nodded his bullet head. "And you'll find me so expressive if you c'n't hold your silly jaw!" growled the Man of Iron.

"What's it going to be?" asked Gordon, producing a big metal watch. "Three minutes each round—"

"It won't go three minutes," said *Tiny*

Scannan, "so you can put that clock away! Now then, Hebble! Are you ready for the slaughter?"

Hebble nodded, his eyes steady, his lips tightly closed.

"Come on, then!" grinned Scannan; and he leapt out of his corner and stepped briskly across the ring.

The unequal contest did not go the full three minutes, for Hefty Hebble was overwhelmed and out-fought from the striking of the first terrible blow; and from that moment he was no more than a chopping-block, pitiable in his impotence, splendid in his dogged determination to keep upon his legs.

Scannan, it seemed, knew not the meaning of mercy, and time and again he sent his game opponent crashing to the canvas; yet, Hebble, battered and beaten, kept staggering up for more.

As Tiny had predicted, it was a case of the lamb going to the slaughter, and the end of the first round was still fifty seconds distant when Scannan measured his man with his right, and then brought a left hook into play; and Hebble, with a groan, crumpled up and pitched forward on to his face, his heels waving and his arms outstretched.

"Stand back!" roared Tiny Scannan, his face flushed, his eyes glinting; and the players, who were on the point of leaping into the ring, stood as persons transfixed. "I've got something to say to you people," declared the Man of Iron—"something that can't wait! Hebble's the biggest fellow in the side, and you've seen me whip him with ease, so you can guess what is going to happen if I start on the rest of you! I'm boss here, and I mean to remain boss, and if there's anybody who's got anything to say against the arrangement I shall be obliged if he'll step into the ring.

"And I'll go further than that," he continued, glaring at his audience. "I'm willing to fight with one arm strapped behind my back! No takers, eh? I thought not! You're all talk! Come along! I'll take on two, three, four of you at one time! I'll fight the lot of you! What about that?" He gave an ugly laugh. "Then you admit that I'm master, do you? You admit that I'm boss? Good! I've come to Storrydene to buck things up and stop the rot, and I'm the type of man who always succeeds when he sets out to do a thing!"

"Always?" queried Terry Carson.

"Always!" thundered the Man of Iron.

"Have you ever tried to scratch your ear with your elbow?" asked the youngster, slipping into the ring.

"You've got too much to say!" shouted the giant; yet he did not move as Terry dropped beside the still form of Hefty Hebble and began to use a sponge and bottle. "There's a whole lot of trouble coming your way, Carson, so I give you due warning! It's not my habit to stand a lot of lip from a cheeky schoolboy! I'm skipper—see?—and skipper I'm going to remain as long as I'm with this team! My word is law; my slightest order has got to be obeyed! I'm BOSS, and I'm going to rule with a rod of iron!" He glared round at the set faces of the footballers. "Anybody got anything to say?"

"Yes," said Terry Carson, in a still, small voice. "I hope it keeps fine for you, Mr. Scannan, but the barometer points to stormy weather ahead!"

The Mystery Player I

STORRYDENE folk take their football very seriously, and it was not long before rumours of Sir Aubrey Ailen's latest "find" began to percolate through the town. No one seemed to know anything

definite, yet it was common knowledge that drastic changes were taking place up at the Bedwell Park ground.

Letters were addressed to the local papers, suggesting that it was up to Sir Aubrey to make a statement, and a special meeting of the Storrydene Villa Supporters' Association was held on the evening preceding the Villa's game against Bosworth United.

And Saturday morning found a deputation of supporters and a small army of newspaper men encamped in the corridor outside the baronet's private office.

The great man himself arrived at ten o'clock, and no sooner did he catch sight of the invaders than he uttered a fierce snort and turned a deep shade of purple. Jamming his gold-rimmed monocle into position, he glowered round at the assembly.

"And who are you—er—persons?" he demanded, adopting his most pompous air.

It was left to the leader of the fans' deputation to answer the question.

A stockily-built, honest-eyed mechanic, his manner was respectful without being fawning.

"We're here on behalf of the Villa Supporters' Association, Sir Aubrey," he said, flushing slightly at Ailen's offensive tone, "and we wish to put a few questions to you, if you don't mind!"

"Huh! So that's it, is it?" The baronet grunted and toyed with his little waxed moustache. "Want to put a few questions to me, do you?"

"Yes, sir," answered the mechanic stolidly. "We represent hundreds of supporters—"

"I don't care a fig if you represent millions of supporters!" broke in Ailen angrily. "All I know is that it's like your dashed cheek to come here and force yourselves upon me! What's more, my man, I'll see the lot of you to blazes before I'll answer your impertinent questions! I never heard of such a thing—never—never!"

"But, Sir Aubrey," protested a studious-looking young man, with horn-rimmed glasses, "surely you can spare a few minutes for the Press? A number of us are newspaper men—"

"Newspaper men!" echoed Ailen, bristling. "I don't wish to have nothing—er—anything to do with your tribe! I hate the sight of reporters—loathe 'em! So get out, the lot of you, before I have you kicked out! 'Ear that?"

"But listen—"

"I refuse to listen!" snorted Ailen, working himself into a fury. "Get out of my sight, you impudent hounds!" He glared round at his unwelcome visitors. "That includes all of you!" he added, his beady eyes glinting.

INTRODUCTION.

After a sequence of wins which has placed them at the top of the league, the boys of Storrydene F.C. strike a bad patch and lose nine matches right off the reel. Dissatisfied with the state of affairs, Sir Aubrey Ailen, a purse-proud baronet and chairman of the club, thinks it high time the club was gingered up. He is ruminating thus when "Tiny" Scannan, a tough customer turning the scale at eighteen stone, puts in an appearance. Tiny boasts that he can stem the rot which has set in. Tiny is engaged on the spot. That life at Bedwell Park is to be anything but a bed of roses during the regime of the tyrannical Tiny Scannan is made apparent when the newcomer snatches Hebble's pipe from his mouth and flings it out of the window. Thoroughly roused, Hebble, who is little more than a light-weight compared with the burly Scannan, plants a snappy punch in the region of the giant's waistcoat. Realising his ex-captain's peril at the hands of the infuriated Scannan, Terry Carson, a fair-haired youngster and centre-forward, steps between the two men.

(Now read on.)

Jim Rivett, leader of the deputation, stepped up to the portly little baronet.

"I reckon that ain't the right way to talk to the club's supporters!" he said, a hard expression creeping into his honest countenance. "Me and the other members of the association have been loyal to the old Villa through thick and thin—"

"Well, what about it?" rasped Ailen, testily. "Am I supposed to fall on your neck because you spend a shilling at our turnstiles every Saturday afternoon? Does the fact that you support the club give you the right to come here and butt into my affairs?"

"I think we've a right to know something about this new man o' yours!" returned Jim Rivett doggedly. "You can't run a club without supporters, y'know!"

"Hear, hear!" came from the other visitors.

"What do you know about running a club, anyway?" demanded Sir Aubrey, with a show of childish petulance. "And whose club is it?" he rasped. He drew himself up to his full height, pouted his chest, and smote it with his clenched fists. "The Villa belongs to me—lock, stock, and barrel—and don't you people forget it! And that being so, my Nosy Parkers, I shall run it on my own lines! I'll engage who I like and make what changes I like—"

"Then you admit that you are making changes, Sir Aubrey?" asked one of the newspaper-men.

"I admit nothing!" cried the little baronet fiercely. "Why should I?"

"Why shouldn't you?" growled Rivett. "I maintain that you can't run a professional football club without the support of the public, and I further maintain that if you snap your fingers at the said public you will soon find yourself in Queer Street!" He coughed a trifle nervously as he unburdened himself of this eloquence; then: "Anyway, that's my firm opinion!"

"And who asked you for your opinion—firm or otherwise?" snapped Sir Aubrey. "As I've said before, the club belongs to me, and, as owner of the concern, I refuse to answer questions or be dictated to by any Tom, Dick, or Harry who thinks he'll push his nose into my affairs! What's more, if our supporters don't like the way I manage the Villa they can dashed well do the other thing!"

"That's your final word, Sir Aubrey?"

It was the young man with horn-rimmed glasses who put the question.

"Absolutely!" rapped out the baronet.

"Not a bad morning's work, boys!" observed the youthful reporter, smiling round at the other newspaper-men. "Mean to say, Sir Aubrey's few illuminating remarks are going to make interesting reading!"

"His kind words will make a fine splash in the midday edition of the 'Argus'!" agreed a big-limbed man in tweeds.

"He'll find himself more popular than ever with the crowd!" smiled another reporter. "And the 'gates' won't fall off, of course! Not a bit of it!"

"They'll probably be torn off, old man!" said the fellow in tweeds, with a whimsical side-glance at Sir Aubrey.

The scribes appeared to be well pleased with themselves as they prepared to take leave of their scowling host, and it gradually dawned upon Ailen that he was playing a losing game in refusing to disclose any information with regard to Tiny Scannan.

For Ailen, despite his bluff and bluster, did not run the Storrydene club as a hobby; gate-money was the only

thing that really interested him. As to the question of Tiny Scannan, he found himself in a quandary, and the real reason for his reticence could be traced to the fact that he knew absolutely nothing about that enterprising gentleman.

It was all very difficult, thought Sir Aubrey, glaring round at the smiling scribes, and there would have been a wave of mortality amongst newspapermen had his pious wish come true.

"Look here, you ink-slingers," he rasped, "if this is a dirty conspiracy to harm me and the club in the eyes of our supporters—"

"You've 'armed yourself!" growled Jim Rivett, in his stolid way. "And you'll know all about it after I've made my report to the Villa Supporters' Association, I give you my word! You're goin' to 'ave a pain where you'll feel it most—in the pocket!"

Sir Aubrey was not slow to appreciate the full meaning of the words, and his manner changed in characteristic fashion as he creased his flat features into the semblance of a smile. He was no fool, and he realised that the only thing for him to do was to make the best of a bad job.

"I meant no offence to you gentlemen," he said, in oily tones, "and if my manner was somewhat—er—brusque, I hasten to apologise! Come inside, will you?"

His visitors exchanged meaning glances as he opened the door of his comfortably furnished office and waved them across the threshold, for they found it difficult to believe that their smooth-tongued host was the scowling little blusterer of a moment before.

"Well, gentlemen," said Sir Aubrey, "I am afraid I cannot find seating accommodation for all of you, so you will have to scramble for chairs and take pot luck! Now, then"—he sat back in his armchair and clasped his hands upon his rotund waistcoat—"what can I do for you?"

Jim Rivett looked across at the scribe with the horn-rimmed glasses.

"I leave it to you, sir," he said, with a slow smile.

"Splendid!" beamed the newspaperman. "All we want, Sir Aubrey," he ran on, turning to the baronet, "is a crumb of information about your latest 'find'—if such a person exists! You see," he explained, "all kinds of wild and woolly rumours are going round the town, so I think it will be in the interests of the club if you make a statement and clear the air a bit!"

"Insolent pup!" muttered the baronet. And aloud: "It is true that a new man has signed forms for the Villa," he said, "but I have good reasons for not wishing to disclose a great deal about him!"

"Is it true that you're dropping old Hefty to make room for this new feller?" asked Jim Rivett.

"Quite untrue!" returned Ailen tersely. "Hebble retains his old position, but the new man will skipper the side. Scannan—that is the new man's name."

"Where does he come from?" asked Rivett, something very like suspicion in his gruff voice.

"That," said Ailen, a tinge of hot colour creeping into his flabby cheeks, "is a question that I do not wish to answer!" He omitted to mention that it was a question that he couldn't answer, even had he desired to do so. "My reason for making Scannan, captain," he ran on, before Rivett could ask any more awkward questions, "is

an unusual one, perhaps, but that, after all, is my own affair. Scannan, gentlemen, is one of the finest all-round footballers in the country, and his ideas about running a team—original ideas—make a great appeal to me. His methods, I predict, will make a hundred per cent difference to our team!"

"In what way, sir?" asked Jim Rivett stolidly.

"What d'you mean, in what way?"

"Well, is it going to be a hundred per cent. improvement or—"

"Of course it is, you idiot!" snapped the baronet, losing his suavity of manner. "Talk sense, my man, if you know how!"

Jim Rivett nodded and allowed the insult to pass.

"What about telling us something about his wonderful new methods?" he suggested.

A murmur of approval broke from the others, and the only person who did not fall in wholeheartedly with the suggestion was Sir Aubrey Ailen.

"I would not dream of disclosing Scannan's original methods of training a team," declared the baronet; "but there can be no harm in my telling you that he depends a great deal upon his own powerful personality. Scannan, gentlemen, is a born leader of men, a genius who has a knack of getting the last ounce out of the people who are put in his charge. Incidentally"—he smiled pleasantly—"he has already endeared himself to Hebble and the other players, for beneath his rugged exterior there is a great sportsman and a great gentleman!"

He stood up and rubbed his podgy hands together.

"I am afraid that is all I can tell you at the moment," he said, addressing the newspaper men, "for this is my busy day."

"Is the new man turning out this afternoon?" asked Jim Rivett.

"Yes," answered Sir Aubrey; "he'll be playing in place of Gordon."

"Good!" grunted Rivett. "Cause I'm real eager to 'ave a look at this great sportsman and great gentleman who 'as endeared himself to the heart of old Hefty and the other lads. Well"—he looked round at his grinning companions—"I think we'll be getting along."

The rest of the deputation nodded, and Rivett was leading the way to the door when a stentorian bellow echoed through the building and caused Sir Aubrey's visitors to look at each other in wide-eyed amazement. Very soon that thunderous voice was accompanied by the sound of heavy footfalls, and Rivett was about to say something when the door was flung open and a gibbering, wide-eyed giant stood gesticulating upon the threshold.

That the newcomer was almost demented with fury was plain for all to see, for his broad features were working, and he was showing his ugly teeth in a snarl; and in one of his massive leg-o'-mutton fists he brandished a wicked-looking whip.

"The trash have defied me, Ailen!" he shouted throatily. "Defied me, I say! Told me I ought to be dealing with niggers; said I should have a gun and a whip. Well, I've got a whip, by heck, and I'm going to use it!"

Snarling like a wild animal, he turned swiftly and raced away down the passage, and no word was said until his throaty bellow died away in the distance. Then:

"By the way, Sir Aubrey,"

remarked one of the newspaper men in a tone of polite interest, "who is your delightful friend?"

The baronet hesitated, but only for a moment.

"Oh—er—that's Scannan, you know," he answered, looking flushed and uncomfortable.

"The born leader of men?"

Ailen nodded.

"He's inclined to be a bit excitable. I fear, but he means well."

An eloquent grunt came from Jim Rivett.

"You bet he means well," he growled, glancing round at his mates. "Now I know how he's managed to endear himself to old Hefty and the other lads!"

Treat 'Em Rough!

SCANNAN, meanwhile, had reached the billiards-room, and he looked as companionable as an angry gorilla as he rushed into the place and cracked his whip with a report which threatened to shatter the windows.

Terry Carson, who was about to take a shot, turned in leisurely fashion and looked across at the figure of menace.

"What's the idea, old man?" he asked quietly. "Going to turn lion-tamer or something? Or perhaps you're trying to lash yourself into a fury," he added, still in that quiet voice.

Tiny Scannan snorted and ran his tongue over his thick lips, and his little, close-set eyes were glinting in ugly fashion as he ran his gaze over the assembled players.

"Do you lot still defy me?" he grated, giving the whip another vicious crack.

"It isn't a matter of defiance, Scannan," said Hefty Hebble; "it's just a question of common sense. We've always made it a rule to take things easy on the morning of the match—"

"And that's a rule that I'm goin' to alter!" shouted the new skipper. "My word is law in this outfit, and if I tell you that you've got to eat lumps of old iron on the morning of the match you've got to obey that order—and lively! I say there shouldn't be any loafing about on Saturday morning, and when I say a thing I mean it. You're coming out now, and you're going to put in a couple of hours of ball practice!" He looked round in his usual provocative manner. "Anyone got anything to say to that?" he demanded.

"Yes, I have," answered Terry Carson at once. "Personally, Scanny, I think it's a jolly stupid idea of yours! Surely even you can see how silly it is for us to fag ourselves out just before a hard game, and—"

"We've already gone into that point," cut in Scannan, "and all the talking in the world won't shift me! I'm boss here, and I mean to get my own way in everything! And I'm not the type of man to stand a lot of lip from anyone!" He bore down upon Terry and gripped the youngster by the shoulder. "You told me I ought to have a whip, didn't you?" he growled, increasing the numbing pressure of his steely fingers. "Well, you little toad, I've got it, and I'm going to use it on you and the others if you're not outside this room in about ten seconds! Savvy?"

"Me no savvy!" declared the youngster, shaking his head.



Terry managed to wriggle free of Tiny's groping fingers; and then—in a flash—round came a fist that connected with Scannan's heavy jaw. Crack! The sound of contact echoed through the dressing-room and brought a stifled gasp from the footballers. (See Page 24.)

"Then you blamed soon will!" shouted Scannan, losing his last vestige of self-control.

He was permitted to strike only one blow, however, for no sooner did the first lash of the whip bite into the youngster's shoulders than Hefty Hebble and the other players made a rush for the tyrant. But they were not quick enough, for it was a stockily-built, tousle-haired man who rushed through the open doorway and gave a panther-like leap that landed him full upon Tiny Scannan's broad back.

"Not so fast, lad!" growled Jim Rivett, gripping the big fellow round the neck and bringing him crashing to the floorboards. "Not so fast!"

Tiny Scannan was underneath as they fell, and so severe was the shock that he seemed to be stunned for a moment or so; and it was during that short space of time that Rivett snatched the whip out of his grasp and scrambled to his feet.

"H'm! So you're a great sportsman and a great gentleman, are you, lad?" growled the secretary of the Villa Supporters' Association, stroking his chin. "And a born leader of men, eh? And you've endeared yourself to old Hefty and the other boys, have you?" He made a comical grimace. "I wouldn't allow you to endear yourself to my dustbin, you lop-eared, skate-faced galoot!"

Vaguely, in a dazed kind of way, it suddenly dawned upon the Man of Iron that someone was being rude to him, and deep, rumbling noises came from him as he rolled over and levered himself into a sitting position. He was never a thing of beauty at any time, but he looked even more unlovely than usual as he thrust his bullet head forward and fixed his snouldering gaze upon the score of strangers who had crowded into the room.

Slowly, deliberately, he rose to his feet, and stretched his mighty limbs, and a tense silence settled upon the apartment as he placed his hands upon his hips and twisted his thick lips into an ugly grin.

"And what happens to be your name,

little man?" he asked, addressing himself to the leader of the deputation.

"Jim Rivett," answered the mechanic, "at your service."

"Married?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Then I suppose I ought to inform you that Mrs. Rivett will be a widow within the next ten minutes or so!" grinned Tiny Scannan. "Got anything to say to that?"

"Well, I'm not keen on dying just yet," returned Rivett, in his stolid way, "cause I want to see how you shape against the United this afternoon. What's more, lad, I warn you that you'll be asking for all sorts of trouble if you try any rough stuff on me!"

"Hear, hear!" growled his mates, closing round him and glaring defiance at the Man of Iron.

"There are a dozen of us, lad!" warned Rivett.

"Do you think I care a hang if there are a hundred of you?" shouted Scannan, thumping his massive chest with clenched fists. He crouched low, prepared for a spring. "Look out, you—"

"Scannan!"

It was the authoritative voice of Sir Aubrey Ailen that echoed through the room, and the Man of Iron muttered fiercely as he straightened himself up and scowled across at his employer.

"What's up with you?" he snarled.

"In the first place," said Sir Aubrey, flushed and pompous, "I shall be obliged if you will treat me with respect; and, in the second place, I would remind you that this joke has gone too far!"

Tiny Scannan opened his capacious mouth and gasped.

"Joke!" he breathed. "Did you say—"

"You know that the whole thing's a joke!" cut in Sir Aubrey, with a forced laugh. "I'm referring to the whip business, you know! These gentlemen"—he waved a hand towards the reporters—"are representatives of the local newspapers, so I think we ought to let them into your secret, in case they take you seriously and

imagine that you run the team with the aid of a whip. Scannan, gentlemen," he ran on, "is an incurable practical joker, and I think you will agree that he succeeded in pulling your legs this morning."

The Man of Iron was quick to take his cue, and the next moment he threw his bullet head back and roared with laughter.

"This is too rich for anything!" he shouted. "Do you really mean that these people fell for my bit of acting, Sir Aubrey?"

"I feared that they might do so, my dear fellow," chuckled Ailen; "otherwise, I wouldn't have interrupted your excellent performance!" He beamed round at the newspaper men. "I'm afraid I have robbed you of some very interesting 'copy,' gentlemen," he said.

"I'm afraid you have, sir," agreed the big-limbed man in tweeds. "I must say that Scannan's acting was most realistic and convincing!"

"Specially that bit where he slashed young Terry across the shoulders," put in Jim Rivett. "I shall have to tell the members of the Supporters' Association about that. Come on, lads"—turning to his companions—"I reckon it's time we was pushing off! 'Morning, all!"

The reporters exchanged smiling glances as the deputation marched out of the room, and no sooner did the last man disappear than Tiny Scannan muttered angrily and followed the departing visitors into the passage.

"Hi, Rivett!"

The mechanic turned slowly and waited for the big-limbed fellow to bear down upon him.

"Well, lad?"

"This is mine, confound you!" snarled Scannan, snatching the whip out of Rivett's grasp. "And before you go I want to give you a word of warning. I'm boss here, and I'm going to run this outfit on my own lines, and if I have any trouble with you and your Half-Wits' Association you'll know all about it!" He glared down into the mechanic's honest countenance. "Got

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anything to say to that?" he demanded fiercely.

"I have that, lad," answered Jim Rivett stolidly. "I'm going to warn you that our association's going to keep an eye on you, and if you try any monkey tricks with the team it'll be you that'll know all about it! Got anything to say to that?"

"You bet I have!" snarled Tiny Scannan, his massive frame quivering. "I allow no one to dictate to me, and I'm certainly not scared by the threats of your Half-Wits' Association. If you want war, Rivett, you can have it, for if there's one thing I like it's a fight!"

Jim Rivett nodded and rubbed the side of his chin.

"The lads are a bit partial to a scrap themselves," he said in a quiet voice, "so I reckon we'll declare war on the spot. Come on!" he added, beckoning to his mates. "Guess our bread and cheese is getting cold!"

Giving Scannan a parting nod, he turned slowly and led the way down the passage, leaving a very angry Man of Iron to gaze after them with a puzzled light in his close-set little eyes.

It is extremely doubtful whether a Marquis of Ganby ever resided in Little Smith Street, Storrydene, but the fact remains that an old-fashioned inn of that name stands on a corner of the modest thoroughfare. It was in the Marquis of Ganby that the Storrydene Villa Supporters' Association had their headquarters, and it was towards the inn that Jim Rivett and his companions made their way on leaving the Bedwell Park ground.

They found a dozen other members waiting for them in the comfortable bar-parlour that served as a meeting-room, and the eager expression in the eyes of the fans made it plain that they were thirsty for news.

"Out with it, Jim, me boy!" urged a jovial-faced old party, with a florid complexion and a bald head. "Let's hear all about it!"

The old party was known to the Bedwell Park crowd as Uncle George, and it was his boast that he had not missed a home fixture for fifteen years. Every Saturday found him seated in the front row of the grandstand, an enormous bloom in his buttonhole; and so powerful was his voice that he somehow managed to make himself heard above the general din. Uncle George was a "card" and president of the Villa Supporters' Association.

Jim Rivett did not say anything until the landlord had placed a mug of cider and a plate of bread and cheese before him, and his opening remark told the others that he was in anything but an amiable mood.

"That pie-faced galoot isn't going to insult the Association and get away with it!" he announced, chewing steadily. "He's asked for war, lads, and he's going to get it!"

"Who's this pie-faced gent that you're referring to, me boy?" asked Uncle George.

"Scannan," returned Rivett. "Ailen's latest 'find'!" he snorted in disgust. "'Find,' mark you! Why, anyone but Ailen would be dashed glad to lose it!"

"Go on, me boy!" urged Uncle George, his jovial old face alight with interest. "Tell us all about it! You'll feel better after you've wrapped yourself round that hunk of bread and cheese."

Wasting no more time, Jim Rivett told the story of the morning's happenings.

"So we're the Half-Wits' Association, are we, me boy?" asked old Uncle George, thrusting his lower lip forward in truculent fashion. "Looks to me as though there's a peck of trouble in store for this Scannan! Seems to be a regular man-eater, Jim!"

"That's so, lad," agreed Rivett, with a stolid shake of the head. "He lashed young Terry Carson right enough, the bully, and from the look of old Hefty's face I should say that he's been through the mill as well. Somebody's made a mess of him, and I'll lay it's Scannan! Regular giant is Scannan, and I'll bet my boots that he means to rule his men by brute force."

"And he actually had a whip, Jim?" asked a youthful chauffeur, a trifle breathlessly.

"And he actually had a whip!" repeated Rivett, with solemn emphasis. "What's more, he used it on young Carson. He thinks he's a blessed little tin idol on wheels, so the sooner he's taken down a peg or two the better it will be for everyone. And don't forget that he insulted the gents of this Association."

"What are we going to do about it, me boy?" asked Uncle George, taking his face out of a pewter tankard of refreshment.

"It's hard to say off-hand, lad," returned Rivett cautiously; "but the opportunity is bound to arise. And when it does arise we will grab it with both hands, just to let this Scannan know that he's not going to have matters all his own way. As I've said before, he's a dirty bully, and I'll bet the boys wouldn't stick it for another day if they weren't so bound up in the old club—heart and soul!"

(By the look of things Scannan is going to get it where the chicken got the chopper! Look out for a heap of thrills in next week's grand instalment of this great footer serial.)

FAMOUS FOOTBALL CLUBS.

(Continued from page 2.)

in the game in Gerald Morgan. He came from Linfield some time ago, and has often played for Ireland. The sort of fellow Morgan is may be judged from the fact that on one occasion he dislocated an elbow during a match, had it set temporarily, and went back on the field to finish the game. Unfortunately, Morgan has not been fit for part of the season, but fortunately the Forest found a fine youngster in Harrison to take his place.

On his right is Jack Belton, one of the most consistent players any football club ever had.

From time to time the Forest have shown a partiality for Irishmen, and there is another in the ranks at left-half in Bob Wallace, who is also skipper of the side. He, like Morgan, came from Linfield.

Cardiff City's Loss!

The Forest are like many other great teams in this respect—they have a fine schemer in an inside-forward position. Charles Jones is the genius of the line—a regular diddler of opponents. Jones, who is Welsh, represents one of the biggest mistakes ever made by Cardiff City. They had him on their books, and let him go, little realising his worth, little dreaming that the day would come when this same Jones would help Wales to beat England in an International match. That is what Jones has done.

At outside-right is a little fellow of five-foot-seven—Sydney Gibson—but a goer, believe me; while Cyril Stocks, his partner in many a fine game this season, can see to it that Sydney gets the chances to show his pace. Stocks was at one time with Bradford City. When he is not available a young Scot in McLachlan jumps into the side. He can play anywhere in the forward line, and I have an idea that if he got a regular place he would take some moving. He's a real footballer, with the game in every toe.

Noah Burton is the centre-forward at the present time, but Noah is never very particular as to what position he occupies. Many years ago I saw him playing as a half-back for Derby County, and he has been with the Forest some seven years, or so. He is a fine dasher and a good shot.

On the extreme left is little Harold Wadsworth—"our kid," as they used to call him when he was with Leicester City. This is Wadsworth's first season with the Forest, but he has certainly made good. He cuts in and gets goals. He is one of five footballing brothers.

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