

"THE BUNTER HUNTERS!"

NOVEL
INDOOR TABLE
GAME

FREE INSIDE!

The Magnet

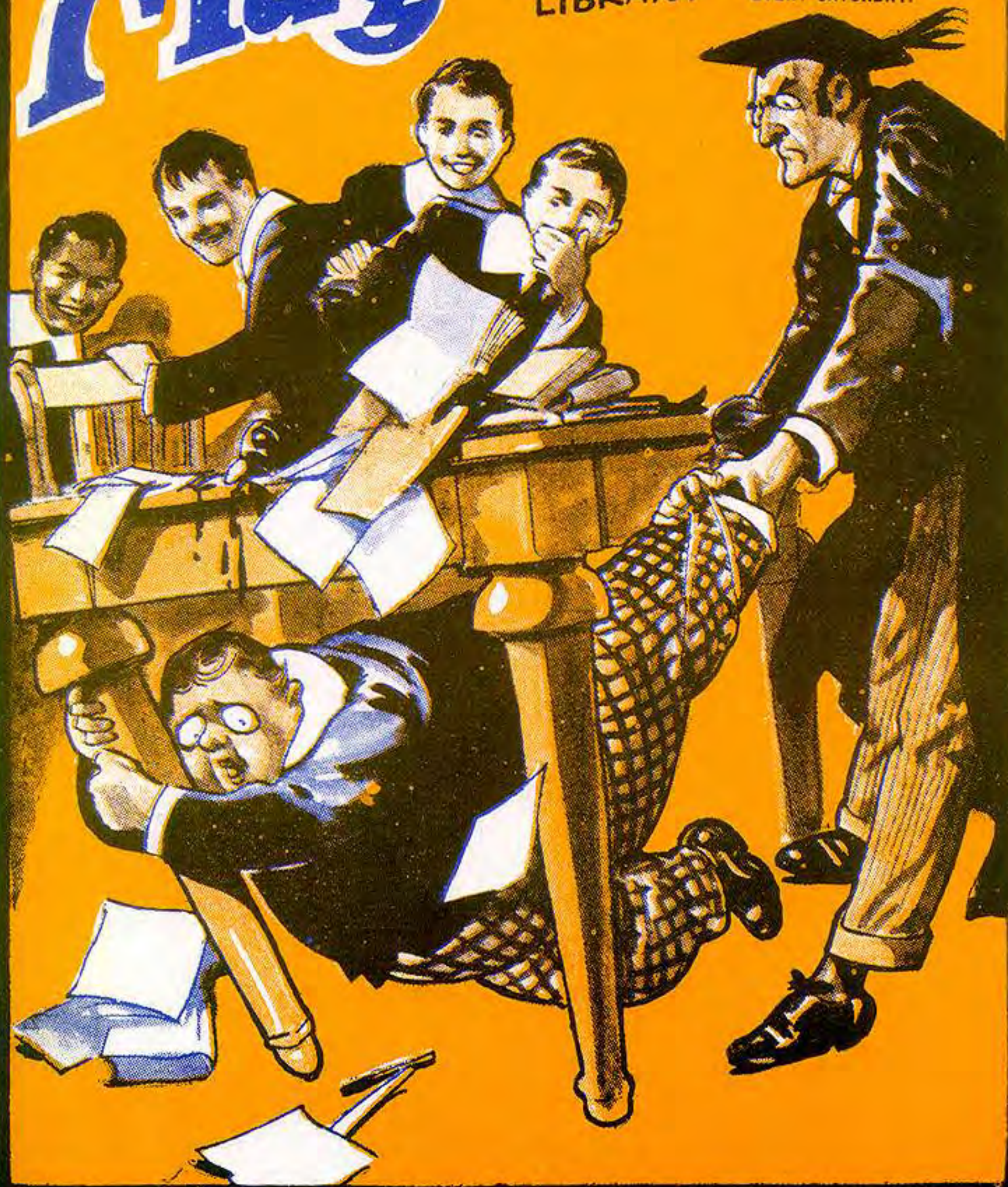
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Week Ending April 7th, 1928.

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EVERY SATURDAY.

2nd



A LONG PULL—AND A STRONG PULL!

(See the humorous complete school story, featuring Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars inside.)

**This Week:****Stoke City F.C.**

One of the original twelve clubs which started the Football League.

DIDN'T the exploits of Jack, the giant killer, thrill you when you were—well, a bit younger than you are now? They certainly used to thrill me. This Jack going out to kill the mighty giant, it made my blood chase through my veins a bit faster, and my heart beat thirteen to the dozen, as they say.

Just in the same way does little Jack, as the giant killer in modern football, appeal to us. And the giant killers of the Cup competition this season have been Stoke City. Nobody thought of the team as likely to do well in the Cup competition. They were expected to be knocked out in the early rounds. But they stuck it, slew one giant after another to the surprise of everybody. And don't we love the valiant? Don't we applaud the "dark horse"? Of course we do!

Old Stagers!

But it was just like Stoke to confound us all and spring those surprises by staying in the Cup and knocking out the giants who were expected to "send them to sleep." Right to the sixth round the "Stokers" stayed in, and then were put out by the guns of the Arsenal. And they went out fighting. There is no club which has done quite such a comprehensive circular tour through the Leagues as Stoke. Perhaps you don't remember it—of course you don't—but it is a fact that Stoke were among the original twelve clubs which started the Football League. They were called Stoke then; the dignified title was added quite recently.

If the truth must be told, Stoke didn't pull up many trees in those early days. Instead of the other clubs proving like clay in the hands of the potter, it was the Stoke club which was twisted and turned by varying fortune. They soon had a turn in the Second League, and later fell into the Third Division. Once they dropped out of the big Leagues altogether, but managed to get back. A couple of seasons ago they finished at the bottom of the Second Division, and, of course, had to make "Paddy's rise" and go into the Northern Third. They forthwith proceeded to win the championship of the Northern Third.

and this season saw them back again in the Second Division, and making a bit of a noise, I can assure you. At one time they were at the top of the Second Division, and the supporters of the club began to dream dreams of First Division football in the Potteries once more. But they did not maintain their early season form. However, about the middle of the season they "came back" with a vengeance, and when somebody whispered the word Cup to them they immediately sat up and took notice.

Wonderful Achievements!

It was a fine performance to beat Bolton Wanderers, twice winners at Wembley since final ties were played there. It was an even better performance to go to Manchester in the following round and beat the City by a goal to nothing, in front of seventy-odd thousand spectators. It was a cheeky victory, worthy of the club, and achieved by team spirit more than individual brilliance.

Now let us examine some of these "Stokers" who have made Cup history for the club this season. They are a mixed lot, but the blend is a good one. Goalkeeper Bob Dixon is one who knows how to snatch his chance. He is a miner, who first played for Sunderland, but when they could not find a place for him in their premier eleven he moved to Stoke. In 1924 an emergency goalkeeper was wanted to fill

an International's place—that of Kenneth Campbell. Dixon jumped in, and satisfied. In front of Dixon there plays another "Bob"—surname McGrory. You are quite right, he is of Scottish birth. He is also captain of the side, a great defender, and to him as much as to any one man did Stoke owe their remarkable Cup progress. Burnley brought McGrory from Dumbarton in 1920, but let him go to Stoke after a season. Burnley's loss has been Stoke's gain. No finer full-back in football than the popular "Bob."

Successful Experiments!

At left-back there is William Spencer, rather on the light side for a full-back, but certainly all there. He went to Stoke from a Sunday-school League club at Hebden Bridge, which is in Yorkshire. And there is all the grit of Yorkshire in Spencer's make-up.

Mr. Tom Mather, the secretary-manager of Stoke, has made some highly successful experiments in moving men from one position to another. Both the wing halves, who have done so well, for instance, were previously forwards. On the right is Len Armitage, once a centre-forward of The Wednesday, and later with Leeds and Wigan. His grandfather used to play cricket for Yorkshire; now Len plays fine football at right-half for Stoke.

At left-half there is another ex-for-

(Continued on page 28.)

MIGHTY MEN OF STOKE!

Reading from left to right, photo shows: Back row: Armitage, McGrory (captain), Dixon, Spencer, Williamson, Wilson. Front row: Cull, Bussey, Johnson, Davies, Archibald, Sellars.

UNDER THE 'FLUENCE! Young Crum's hypnotic powers come in extremely useful when Harry Wharton & Co. fall foul of Sir Hilton Popper, a governor of the school. Certainly Crum's amazing gift gets them off a flogging at the very least, which surprises no one more than Sir Hilton Popper himself!

The Schoolboy Hypnotist!



An Amusing New Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., and Crum—the amazing new boy in the Greyfriars Remove. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter Looks for Trouble!

HENRY CHRISTOPHER CRUM, the new fellow in the Greyfriars Remove, stood at the window of Study No. 1 and looked out. His face was not bright.

It was a sunny spring day, and in the quadrangle below he could see many cheery faces. The echo of cheery voices floated up to him as he stood at the window of the Remove study.

He could see Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove—five cheery-faced fellows who evidently found life worth living.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars School that afternoon, and Crum could guess that the Famous Five were discussing what they were going to do with the afternoon.

Wharton and Nugent were his study-mates in Study No. 1; but, apparently, they did not recall his existence that bright afternoon.

Crum could really hardly blame them for that.

He had not made himself very agreeable to his study-mates—in fact, he had made himself rather disagreeable in many ways.

But he had a feeling of being left out. He wished that he had a friend among the crowds of fellows that passed under his gaze.

Crum had arrived at Greyfriars in extremely peculiar circumstances. He was, in many respects, a very peculiar fellow—only Lord Mauleverer, in all the Remove, being aware of the full extent of Crum's peculiarity. He had arrived

with a store of self-satisfaction, a considerable amount of conceit, and not a small quantity of impudence.

But even a week at Greyfriars had made a difference to Crum.

He was no longer so self-satisfied. His conceit had diminished. He was not so cheery.

And he felt lonely.

When he had travelled the road in Crum's Show and House of Magic with his father he had had a busy time. Old Crum and Young Crum had done well—so well that Young Crum was now at Greyfriars, though the whole school was amazed to see him there. Young Crum had never felt lonely "on the road." At Greyfriars he was alone in a crowd.

He scowled down at the unconscious heads of the Famous Five.

They seemed so pleased and so jolly, so satisfied with themselves and one another, that the sight of them accentuated Crum's feeling of being left on the beach.

Crum felt as if he would have liked to punch their unoffending heads.

"He, he, he!"

That fat cachinnation in the doorway of the study caused Henry Christopher Crum to turn round from the window.

A fat face, adorned by a pair of extensive spectacles, grinned into Study No. 1 at him.

"He, he, he!" chuckled William George Bunter. "Left on your own, what?"

Crum scowled.

It was a fact that he was left on his own, but he did not like being reminded of the fact by Billy Bunter.

Indeed, if he was not particular as to his friends, here was a friend ready-made for him; for Billy Bunter would have become his bosom pal on the spot, on the trifling condition that Crum cashed—in advance—his celebrated postal-order, which had not yet arrived at Greyfriars, though long expected.

But if Crum was feeling his solitude he did not want that solitude to be relieved by the company of Billy Bunter.

There were things that were worse than loneliness. William George Bunter was one of them.

"Feeling it a bit, what?" went on Bunter agreeably.

"Shut it!" said Crum.

Bunter chuckled.

At Greyfriars they often said "Shut up!" but they never said "Shut it!" Henry Christopher Crum had brought his own variety of the English language to school with him.

It really did not matter very much whether a fellow said "Shut up!" or "Shut it!" But Bunter chuckled with lofty scorn. Whatever was unlike what Bunter was used to was inferior.

"Stow the cackle!" growled Crum.

Bunter fairly chortled.

"Stow it!" was an expression never heard or dreamed of at Greyfriars till Crum came.

"Oh, my hat!" said Bunter. "Where on earth did you learn English, Crum? I mean where didn't you learn it? He, he, he!"

"Where did you learn to go off like a cheap alarm-clock?" counter-questioned Crum.

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Bunter frowned.
 "Anyhow, get out!" said Crum. "I ain't lending you anything, if that's what you're arter. So sling your 'ook!"
 Billy Bunter controlled his wrath, indignation, and disgust with a great effort. He felt all these emotions, but he repressed them. He had not come there to quarrel with Crum. He had come with quite a different object.

"Draw it mild, old chap!" said Bunter. "Don't fly out at a chap, you know. You see, old fellow—"

"Not so much of your old feller!" said Crum.

"I didn't say old feller; I said old fellow!" retorted Bunter, unable to resist that lunge.

"And I said git out!" snapped Crum. "I said git out, and I blooming well meant git out!"

It was one of Crum's ways to lapse into a rather untutored pronunciation when he was angry or excited. He really knew that there were five vowels, different from one another. Usually he put the second vowel into "get." When he was angry he changed it for the third vowel. They never said "git" at Greyfriars. They might have done so, perhaps, without the skies falling. Still, they never did. This was one more trifle that distinguished Henry Christopher Crum from the rest of the Lower Fourth. Neither did they ever say "blooming." It was an unknown adjective. Fellows had been heard to say "blinking." Really they might just as well have said "blooming." But, again, they never did.

Billy Bunter opened his mouth to explain this to Crum as offensively as he could. But he checked himself in time.

"Well, old chap—" said Bunter, instead.

"Stow it!"

"I looked in to speak to you—"

"You needn't 'ave took the trouble."

"You mean I needn't have taken the trouble." Bunter simply could not help that.

"'Ave they made you a blooming Form master?" inquired Crum unpleasantly.

"Eh? No!"

"Then don't you begin teaching a cove lessons. You may get a buzzer on the boko if you do!"

Billy Bunter's brain was not a specially active one; but he guessed at once that a buzzer on the boko implied a punch on the nose, and he became still more circumspect. He did not want a "buzzer" on the boko!

"Don't get waxy, Crum," he said soothingly. "I looked in to speak to you. I wondered if you'd like to walk down to Friardale with me."

"No, I wouldn't."

"Uncle Clegg gets in fresh tarts to-day," remarked Bunter casually. "His jam-tarts are jolly good! I'm standing treat, of course."

"Of course!" mimicked Crum. "I know 'ow you stand treat—I've seen you at it. Comes rather expensive to the blokes you treat."

"Look here—" roared Bunter.

"'Ook it!"

Crum turned to the window again.

Billy Bunter glared at him with a glare that was almost potent enough to crack his big spectacles.

Here was a gentleman wasting his half-holiday on a low boulder, and the low boulder only told him to 'ook it—not even to hook it!

Bunter realised that there was nothing doing.

Crum, who had plenty of money in his pockets, evidently intended to keep it there. Even the fascinating society of

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William George Bunter was not, in his eyes, worth the necessary expenditure.

Bunter's wrath, hitherto prudently restrained, now burst all bounds.

"Haven't you dropped something, Crum?" he asked.

Henry Christopher glanced round again.

"Not as I knows on!" he grunted.

"I thought I heard something drop!" jeered Bunter.

Crum, puzzled, glanced round the floor. He saw nothing there that he might have dropped.

"Well, what was it?" he snapped.

"An aspirate!" explained Bunter.

"What?"

"We generally say 'hook' at Greyfriars," the Owl of the Remove explained. "'Ook may do for Crum's Show—whatever that is—a circus, I suppose? We say 'hook' here."

Crum glared at him.

"You say 'ook 'ere, do you?" he exclaimed.

"He, he, he! No; we say hook here—not 'ook 'ere! He, he, ho!" cackled Bunter.

Crum made a stride towards him. But he checked himself. His first intention had been to collar Billy Bunter and toss him into the passage. Crum was not much of a fighting-man; but anybody could have handled William George Bunter. But another idea occurred to Crum, and he grinned.

"So you think it jolly funny to chivy a bloke what never had your chances about dropping his blinking h's," he said. "Awfully funny, ain't it? Well, what's sauce for the blinking goose, is sauce for the blooming gander!"

Bunter stared at him.

Crum's eyes were fixed on the Owl of the Remove, his keen, dark, magnetic eyes, with a strange glint in them, holding the eyes of the fat junior as if by an irresistible power.

William George Bunter, vaguely surprised and alarmed, would have backed out of the study. There was something in the powerful gaze of the showman's son that frightened him.

But he did not back out. He did not move.

A will stronger than his own was holding him. A drowsy look came over Bunter's fat face. His mind and brain—such as they were—were in the grip of the schoolboy hypnotist.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Under the 'Fluence!

YOUNG Crum grinned unpleasantly.

In his days on the road with Crum's House of Magic, Young Crum had been the valued assistant of Old Crum in the exercise of the weird trickery of hypnotism.

Young Crum's powers in that peculiar line far exceeded those of Old Crum. That strange power seemed to have been born in Henry Christopher.

Lord Mauleverer had found out Crum's power; but he had not talked of it. His lordship was not a fellow to give any fellow away. So long as the schoolboy hypnotist did no harm, Mauleverer considered that it was none of his business. No other fellow had any suspicion of it; least of all, William George Bunter, or certainly he would not have ventured to taunt the showman's son.

"Now, you fat noodle," said Crum, "you're under the 'fluence, as we used to call it at the 'Ouse of Magic. You don't catch on, and you won't remember nothing about it afterwards, you fat

chump. You're going to 'ave a lesson, you are!"

Bunter only blinked at him. His fat mind seemed to have gone to sleep.

"Now, you'll clear out of this study," said Crum, "and, until I tell you to stop, you'll drop your h's, same as I do. See?"

"Yes, Crum."

"Every word that's got an h on the front of it, you'll drop that h off."

"Yes, Crum."

"P'raps the blokes will chivy you same as you've done me," said Crum, with a jeering chuckle.

"Yes, Crum."

"Now git out!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of Study No. 1.

To all appearance, Bunter was normal—that is to say, as normal as ever he was. His circumference could not be called quite normal. He looked, and felt, and even thought, the same as usual. But his fat brain was in the grip of the hypnotist. He did not know it, but there it was. Peter Todd, strolling along the Remove passage to the stairs, playfully tapped Bunter on the head as he passed. Bunter jumped.

"Ow! Leave my 'ead alone, you ass!" he exclaimed.

Peter stopped to look at him.

"Eh? What did you say?" he asked.

"Leave my 'ead alone, you fat 'ead!"

Peter's gaze grew more concentrated.

"What's this game, Bunter?" he inquired.

"Eh? What game?"

"Are you mimicking that chap Crum, or what?"

"I don't know what you're driving at, Toddy," said Bunter crossly. "'Ook it, and let me alone!"

"What?" ejaculated Peter.

"'Ook it!" snapped Bunter.

And he rolled on his way, leaving Peter Todd, staring. Peter stared hard, in great surprise. He was accustomed to all sorts of vagaries from Billy Bunter; but this was really surprising. Why Bunter was deliberately dropping his h's was a mystery to Peter. Bunter was slovenly in his speech, as in most things; but he had never been guilty of that particular kind of slovenliness before.

"Gone potty, I suppose," concluded Peter. "After all, he hadn't far to go." He caught a chuckle from Crum, in the doorway of Study No. 1, as he went on towards the stairs, and glanced at the new junior.

"Funny, ain't it?" grinned Crum.

"Caught it in your study, what?" asked Peter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Crum. "Jest that. He caught it in this study, and no giddy error! Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled down the Remove staircase with a discontented frown on his fat face. Crum had failed him, as a horn of plenty, and Bunter was in his usual stony state. It was more than an hour since dinner, and as Bunter had eaten only enough for three, he was already hungry. He rolled away in search of Lord Mauleverer, but with little hope of finding him. His lordship was elusive when Bunter was looking for him.

But as he reached the big door of the House, Harry Wharton & Co. came in. Bunter fixed his attention upon the captain of the Remove at once.

"I say, 'Arry, old chap!" he exclaimed.

The Famous Five stopped.

"What!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Dropped something?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, don't be an ass, you know,"



"So you're 'urt, and you want a 'elping 'and up, Bunter?" said Skinner. "I suppose this is some awfully deep joke? I'll lend you a 'elping boot." "Same here," said Bolsover, raising his foot. "Ow! Wow! 'Elp!" yelled Bunter. "Yaroooh! Fire! Murder! 'Elp!" The Owl of the Remove found that he could get up without a " 'elping 'and," and he fled for his life. (See Chapter 2.)

said Bunter. "I say, 'Arry, my postal-order 'asn't come!"

"What the thump do you mean by calling me 'Arry?" demanded Harry Wharton, staring at the Owl of the Remove.

"Eh? Because it's your name," said Bunter, blinking at him. "What the thump do you mean?"

"My name's Harry, fathead!"

"Well, I said 'Arry, didn't I?"

"Is this a new game?" said Frank Nugent. "Are you following Crum's example, Bunter, and chucking your h's all over the shop?"

"What do you mean, you fathead?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Fathead yourself!" retorted Bunter. "I'm not speaking to you, Bull; I'm speaking to Wharton. I say, 'Arry, old fellow, I've been disappointed about my postal-order. It ought to 'ave come this morning, but for some reason it 'asn't. Look 'ere! You might oblige a pal with 'arf-a-crown."

The Famous Five fairly blinked at Bunter. What this extraordinary style of speech might possibly mean they could not guess. Certainly they were not likely to guess that the Owl of the Remove was under the influence of hypnotism and unconscious of what he did!

"Potty, I suppose," said Johnny Bull, after a pause.

"Look 'ere, Bull—"

"What do you mean by it?" demanded Wharton. "What are you doing it for?"

"I don't know what you're driving at!" said Bunter peevishly. "Will you lend me 'arf-a-crown till my postal-order

comes? A fellow don't like being stony on a 'arf-oliday."

"He's pulling our leg, I suppose," said the captain of the Remove, utterly mystified. "It's some sort of a joke, though I can't catch on to it. Cheese it, Bunter, and roll off."

"Look 'ere, 'Arry—"

"If you call me 'Arry again, fathead, I'll jolly well bump you, and bump a little sense into you," exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"Well, Wharton, then," said Bunter. "Look 'ere, Wharton, will you lend me 'arf-a-crown—I 'aven't a brown about me. Do you 'ear?"

That did it! That Bunter was deliberately mystifying them, seeking in some occult way to pull their leg, was the only explanation the Famous Five could think of. So they collared William George Bunter and sat him down on the floor. Leaving him spluttering, the Famous Five went up the stairs.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Beasts! 'Orrid beasts! Ow! I say, you fellows—yah! Rotters!"

Bolsover major came along with Skinner, and stopped to stare down at Bunter and grin.

"Taking a rest, old fat bean?" asked Skinner. "Find your weight a bit heavy to carry about?"

"Ow! I'm 'urt!" gasped Bunter.

"You're what?" yelled Bolsover major.

"'Urt."

"Do you mean hurt, you frabjous fathead?"

"Yes, that's what I said—'urt,"

gasped Bunter. "You might give a fellow a 'elping 'and up."

"A 'elping 'and!" said Bolsover major, quite dazedly. "Has the fat idiot gone off his rocker?"

"Oh, really, Bolsover—"

"You're 'urt, and you want a 'elping 'and up?" said Skinner, staring at the Owl of the Remove. "I suppose this is some awfully deep joke. I'll lend you a 'elping boot."

"Same here," said Bolsover.

They did!

"Ow! Wow! 'Elp!" yelled Bunter. "Yaroooh! Fire! Murder! 'Elp!"

Bunter found that he could get up without a helping hand. He got up quite quickly, and fled for his life.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Sir Hilton Asks For It!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry's cheery and powerful voice boomed into Study No. 1.

Crum turned round from the window, and stared gloomily at the Famous Five. In his glum meditations, watching the cheery Greyfriars crowd from the study window, he had forgotten Bunter.

"Allo!" he said glumly.

"Doing anything this afternoon, Crum?" asked Harry Wharton amicably. "Anything special, I mean?"

"No!" growled Crum.

"We're going for a ramble up the river. Like to come?"

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Crum's face brightened involuntarily. The Sark rolled bright and shining between green banks and woods that were glowing with the green of spring. Crum had already thought of taking a walk there; but he had felt disinclined to go alone. In the cheery company of the Famous Five it was a different matter.

"I'd like to come," he answered, "if I ain't butting in."

"What rot! Come along."

"The pleasuredness of your esteemed company will be terrific, my worthy and ludicrous Crum!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh solemnly.

Crum grinned.

"I'll be jolly glad to come," he said. "I was feeling rotten lonely this afternoon. You ain't bearing me any grudge, Wharton?"

"Why should I?" said Harry.

"We 'ad a scrap," said Crum. "You got the upper 'and, I know—but I drove you into it, and you didn't want it."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"That's all right—I shouldn't bear a grudge, I hope, if you'd got the upper hand. We don't remember a scrap long at Greyfriars."

"You're a decent sort of covey, you are!" said Crum. "My father said so when he was 'ere, but I 'ad it up agin you, and I was wrong. Jest wait a minute while I get my 'at."

Crum was looking very cheery when he walked out of the House with the Famous Five. There were two or three snobbish fellows in the Remove, like Skinner and Bunter, who made ill-natured fun of old Crum and young Crum; but Henry Christopher had been so very bumptious that there was perhaps some excuse for them. Still, he had never had anything of the sort from Harry Wharton & Co., yet he had been "up against" Wharton from the beginning. His opinion was that Wharton carried his "ead" too "igh," as poor Crum expressed it; and Wharton did not know how near he had been to having his colours lowered in that fight in the Rag. It was Lord Mauleverer's intervention that had prevented the schoolboy hypnotist from putting the "fluence" on and winning the fight hands down.

To do Crum justice, he had repented of having planned that exceedingly shabby trick, and was glad that he had been stopped in time. He had had a rough life on the road, and had not learned there to be scrupulous; but Greyfriars was doing him good. Mr. Quelch had placed him in Wharton's study, hoping that the influence of the captain of the Remove would be beneficial to the queer new boy, and undoubtedly it was turning out like that at last.

"Whither bound?" asked Vernon-Smith, meeting the little crowd of juniors as they walked down to the gates.

"Up the river," said Harry.

"Coming, Smithy?"

The Bounder looked at Crum.

"Taking your crummy friend along?" he asked sarcastically.

Crum flushed.

"Oh, chuck that, Smithy," said the captain of the Remove sharply. "Crum's coming with us, and if you don't like his company, you can leave it alone, and ours, too."

"Thanks—I will!" drawled the Bounder.

The Famous Five and their companion walked on. Crum cast a vengeful glance back at the grinning Bounder.

"That bloke's got too much neck!" he grunted.

"Oh, Smithy's all right," said Bob Cherry cheerily. "He's got his little ways—but, bless you, we've all got our little ways."

"Cheeky 'ound!" muttered Crum.

The Co. did not answer that. That epithet was not used at Greyfriars, though they did not like to tell Crum so. They were rather more particular on such points than William George Bunter.

"I could make 'im eat dirt, if I liked!" muttered Henry Christopher vengefully.

"Bottle it up, old bean," said Bob Cherry. "Brag isn't really a good dog, you know."

"I ain't bragging. I could do it."

"Oh, cheese it, Crum," said Johnny Bull. "You were saying the same about Wharton, till you had the scrap in the Rag. What's the good of swanking?"

"Look 'ere—" began Crum.

"Well, how could you do it, if you come to that?" demanded the plain-speaking Johnny. "You couldn't touch one side of Smithy in a fight."

"Couldn't I?" growled Crum. "That's all you know. If I chose—" He broke off abruptly.

"Peace, my infants, peace!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Why argue? Who's going to race me down to the river?"

"Go it!" said Harry cheerily. And the Famous Five and Crum raced down to the green, sloping bank of the Sark, and the argument ended.

But Crum's rugged face was still clouded. The Bounder's careless insolence evidently still irked him, and he was brooding on it. Bob Cherry's cheery voice broke in on his meditations. Bob had no use for glum looks, or for brooding over petty grievances.

"We're trotting as far as the island," he said. "We can take the short cut back through the woods."

"What about old Popper?" asked Nugent.

"Bless old Popper."

"Who's old Popper?" inquired Crum, his thoughts coming from the impertinent Bounder to the matter in hand, as Bob intended that they should.

"Sir Hilton Popper," explained Bob, "Lord High Emperor of Popper Court, up the river, and a governor of Greyfriars, worse luck. A terrific old Pooh-Bah who would shut everybody else out of the county of Kent if he could, and feels sore because he can't."

"Oh, my eye!" said Crum. "And we're going trespassing on his land, are we?"

"No fear! Trespassing is wrong—and being the nice fellows we are, we wouldn't think of such a thing for worlds—not for whole universes," said Bob Cherry. "There's a public right-of-way through the woods from the island in the river to the Courtfield road. If old Popper closes up a right-of-way, it's up to the public to open it again. We're members of the public—and we're not taking any!"

"Talk of angels!" ejaculated Nugent. "Here's the jolly old bird himself!"

A tall, angular gentleman came striding along the tow-path.

He was a thin gentleman, extremely angular, and his riding-clothes set off his angularities to great advantage.

An eyeglass gleamed in his eye, and there was a riding-whip under his arm. The eyeglass turned at once on the juniors.

Sir Hilton Popper frowned at them.

He had had some little troubles with the Famous Five of the Remove.

Sir Hilton, being a member of the governing board of the school, he really might have conceded a point, to

Greyfriars men, at least, about the disputed right-of-way across his extensive lands. But concession of any kind was not in the old baronet's nature. Greyfriars men, as well as common mortals, were excluded from the estates.

Many local inhabitants felt very sore about the closing of the right-of-way, which had existed from time immemorial, and was clearly marked on old maps of the district, and was rumoured to be actually specified in Domesday Book itself. But Sir Hilton was a great man locally—a great landowner, a magistrate, and all sorts of important things; and his will was law in such matters. Greyfriars fellows who wanted a short cut to the island in the river, and were barred from using it, said many unpleasant things about the lord of Popper Court. Dr. Locke had placed that disputed path out of bounds, in order to avoid friction. Naturally, the Greyfriars fellows did not like that.

Harry Wharton & Co. capped the old baronet quite respectfully as he came striding up. As a governor of the school he was entitled to that salute.

Crum did not follow their example, apparently not thinking of it. He stared at the baronet, perhaps not having seen one before, and being curious to know what one was like.

Sir Hilton stopped.

His eyeglass gleamed at Crum.

"Unroof, old bean!" whispered Bob Cherry. "He's a governor of the school, you know."

But it was too late.

Sir Hilton's eyes glittered through the monocle at Crum. Sir Hilton's most precious possession was his dignity, and he was easily offended. Indeed, he seemed to spend a good deal of his time looking for offences.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" said Wharton meekly. "Nice afternoon, Sir Hilton."

"Is that a Greyfriars boy?" asked Sir Hilton, with a gesture at Crum.

"Yes—new chap named Crum."

"Crum! Good gad! Crum, if that is your name, do you not know that you should raise your hat to a governor of the school to which you belong?"

"Never thought of it, sir," said Crum. "I don't mind raising my 'at."

And he unroofed, as Bob expressed it.

"Your what?" ejaculated Sir Hilton.

"My 'at!"

"Good gad!" repeated Sir Hilton.

He stared hard at Crum, evidently astonished to hear a Greyfriars man allude to a hat as an 'at.

Crum returned his stare coolly. Crum had as much impudence as Sir Hilton had dignity, and he was not to be stared out of countenance, even by so great a man as the lord of Popper Court.

"Don't stare at me like that, boy!" snapped Sir Hilton, rather disconcerted by Crum's steady gaze.

"You're staring at a bloke yourself!" retorted Crum.

"At a—a what?"

"Bloke."

"Good gad!" said Sir Hilton, for the third time. "Wharton, who is this boy?"

"A new fellow in the Lower Fourth, sir."

"I mean, where does he come from?"

"I haven't asked him, sir," said Wharton demurely. "I didn't think it was my business, sir."

The juniors smiled, and Sir Hilton frowned more portentously. Wharton's reply was quite respectful; but it certainly hinted that Sir Hilton was exceeding the limits of his own business.

"Don't be impertinent, sir!" snapped Sir Hilton.

"Oh, sir!"
"Boy! Crum, if that is your name—"

"It's my blooming name, right enough," said Crum surlily. "What's the matter with it, if you come to that?"

"It—it—it is your—your what?"

"My blooming name."

"Good gad!" said Sir Hilton, for the fourth time. "Where do you come from, Crum?"

"Ome!"

This reply seemed to petrify Sir Hilton. He jammed his monocle a little more tightly in his eye, and fixed it on Crum with the glare of a basilisk.

"Ome!" he repeated. "Ome! Do you mean home?"

"I mean wot I say—'ome."

"And where is your home?"

"Crum's Show," answered Crum.

"I don't understand you. Who is your father?"

"Old Crum."

"Good gad! I mean, who and what is he?"

"He's a man," explained Crum, with cool impudence. "Showman by trade, and a better man nor you any day."

Harry Wharton & Co. stood silent. There was nothing for them to say, and they could only wonder how this peculiar interview was going to turn out.

"Do you seriously tell me that your father is a showman?" demanded the baronet.

"Jest that."

"And you are at Greyfriars?"

"Not 'arf!" assented Crum.

"Good gad! What is my old school coming to?" ejaculated Sir Hilton Popper. "Upon whose recommendation, boy, were you admitted to Greyfriars by Dr. Locke?"

"Nobody's."

"Good gad! I must look into this," said Sir Hilton Popper. "It is beyond my comprehension."

"You don't catch on, what?" asked Crum.

"I certainly do not understand your presence at Greyfriars School, if that is what you mean. I do not understand it at all."

"I don't s'pose you understand anything much, from the look of you," said Crum deliberately. "You don't look what I should call a brainy bloke, old codger."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Wha-a-t?" gasped Sir Hilton.

"You've been asking me a blinking lot of questions," grunted Crum. "S'pose I ask you a few. Who are you, anyway?"

"Good gad!"

"What did your father do for a living?" continued Crum.

Sir Hilton could only gasp.

"What sort of a cheeky old codger do you call yourself?"

"Here, chuck it, old bean!" gasped Bob Cherry; and he grasped Crum by the arm and fairly dragged him away. That sort of talk, to a governor of the school, was a little too unnerving.

Sir Hilton stood staring after the juniors for some minutes, motionless, as if rooted to the tow-path. Then, with a purple countenance, he strode away—heading for Greyfriars. Harry Wharton & Co. continued on their way up the river—Crum grinning, and the famous five looking very serious. No doubt Sir Hilton Popper had asked for all he had received from Crum; but it was not always possible to give a governor of the school all that he asked for. That Sir Hilton had gone to lay a complaint before the Head, the juniors did not need telling; and they

anticipated serious trouble for Henry Christopher Crum.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for the Head!

BILLY BUNTER blinked through his big spectacles at a tall, angular figure that strode in at the gates of Greyfriars and grinned.

"Ere's old Popper!" he remarked.

Two or three fellows glanced at the newcomer—more glanced at Billy Bunter.

Bunter, still under the strange spell that the schoolboy hypnotist had laid upon him, had been dropping h's right and left that afternoon.

The fellows had supposed at first that it was some sort of weird joke on the part of the Owl of the Remove.

But it was clear that Bunter did not realise what he was doing. He dropped his aspirates as if to the manner born.

He dropped them as Crum dropped them, unconsciously. Want of training made Crum apparently unable to distinguish between the different sounds of "home" and "ome." Bunter was now in the same state.

That he had "caught it" from Crum seemed the only explanation. It is a fact that slovenly speech is "catching," like a disease.

Fellows who heard Fisher T. Fish talking in his native language, sometimes found themselves involuntarily "guessing" and "reckoning." Wharton and Nugent, who were in Crum's study, had been heard to say "blooming," from continually hearing that weird adjective on the lips of Henry Christopher. Many fellows dropped their final g's, because Lord Mauleverer always said "huntin'," and "shootin'," and so forth.

Dropping h's was a much more serious matter, and much more curious. A fellow might drop a final g, and no harm was done; but if he dropped an

initial h he was liable to be booked for trouble with his Form master. Really, the one offence against the King's English was not much more serious than the other; but it was a matter of custom, and custom rules everywhere, and especially at a school does it rule supreme.

"Look here, you fat chump, you'd better chuck that," said Squiff. "You'll get into trouble with Quelchy if you do it in class."

"Eh? What 'ave I done?" asked Bunter.

"Can't you say have?" demanded Hazeldene.

"I said 'ave," answered Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Don't you even know that you're dropping h's all over the shop?" asked Squiff, staring at him.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Bunter.

"Oo's dropping h's?"

"You are, you fat idiot!" said Hazeldene.

"Oh, really, 'Azel—"

"He's got it from Crum," said Peter Todd. "That must be it."

"Oh, cheese it!" snapped Bunter.

"You know jolly well that I never drop my h's. It sounds 'orrible when Crum does it—simply 'orrible!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter snorted, and rolled away from the grinning Removites. Sir Hilton Popper, striding up towards the House, beckoned to Bunter.

"Boy!"

"Yes, sir," said Bunter.

"Is the headmaster within?"

"Yes, sir, the 'Ead's in 'is study," answered Bunter.

Sir Hilton started almost convulsively.

"What—what did you say?"

"The 'Ead's in 'is study, sir," answered Bunter, wondering why Sir Hilton was staring at him in such amazement. "I saw 'im go in there, sir. 'E's usually in 'is study on a 'arf-holiday, sir."

(Continued overleaf.)



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"Good gad!"

Sir Hilton's expression was so alarming that Bunter backed away. But the old gentleman signed him to stop.

"Bunter—I think your name is Bunter—"

"Yes, sir. William George Bunter, sir."

"Do you belong to the same Form as a now boy named Crum?"

"Yes, sir. 'E's in the Remove."

"You have been a long time at Greyfriars, I think?"

"I've been 'ere quite a long time, sir."

"Has your Form master never corrected your speech?"

"Eh? No, sir. 'E's never 'ad any reason to that I know of, Sir 'Ilton," answered Bunter indignantly.

"No doubt you have picked up the horrible pronunciation of that boy Crum, perhaps unconsciously," said Sir Hilton. "Come with me."

"Eh? Where to, sir?"

"To your headmaster."

"I—I'd rather not see the 'Ead, sir," stammered Bunter. "The 'Ead don't like being interrupted, sir, when 'e's in 'is study."

"Come with me!" snapped Sir Hilton; and Billy Bunter quaked, and followed the baronet into the House.

Dr. Locke laid aside Sophocles with a sigh when Sir Hilton Popper was announced. Parents and governors were the clouds on a headmaster's horizon.

To decline to see a governor of the school was impossible. Sir Hilton was shown into the Head's study. Sophocles had to be given a rest, and the Head came back unwillingly from ancient Greece.

To his surprise, William George Bunter of the Remove followed Sir Hilton into the study, looking very uneasy. Bunter did not know what he had to fear, but he felt the natural disinclination of any Lower boy to enter the awful presence of his headmaster. Headmasters—in fact, all masters—were safer at a distance, in the opinion of the Lower School.

Dr. Locke rose politely to greet his visitor, and begged him to be seated, with one surprised eye on Bunter. Sir Hilton did not seat himself. He stood and towered ominously.

"Dr. Locke, I have a complaint to make."

Dr. Locke really did not need telling that. He seldom or never saw this particular governor of Greyfriars without hearing a complaint of some sort about somebody or other.

"Indeed, Sir Hilton."

"I have been treated with the grossest discourtesy by a Greyfriars boy, a—a—a person of the extraordinary name of Crum. Crum!" repeated Sir Hilton, with biting contempt, as if the name itself were an offence.

"The boy can scarcely help his name, Sir Hilton," remarked the Head, with a faint smile.

He did not add that Popper was a name rather out of the common run. That certainly would not have had a pacifying effect on the lord of Popper Court. Still, he could not help thinking that if a gentleman bore the remarkable name of Popper, it did not lie in his mouth to decry even so unusual a patronymic as Crum.

"Perhaps not, sir," snapped Sir Hilton. "But I am surprised—astounded, in fact—to see that such a—a—a person is admitted to the school to which I once belonged. As a governor of the school, sir, I have a right to ask how it is that this boy is here?"

The Head coloured.

Sir Hilton indubitably had a right to ask that question, but no right whatever to ask it in the presence of a Lower boy. He seemed to have forgotten that Bunter was there.

"If you desire to discuss that matter with me, Sir Hilton, or any matter, it will be best left until we are alone," said the Head icily.

"This boy is concerned in the matter, sir," grunted Sir Hilton. "I find a boy who treats me with discourtesy, who tells me that his father is a showman, and who speaks the most uneducated English, admitted to this school. I find that his horrible mispronunciations are imitated by the other boys."

"Nothing of the kind has come to my knowledge, sir."

"Then it is my duty to bring it to your knowledge, Dr. Locke, and for that purpose I have brought this boy Bunter to your study. I spoke to this boy in the quadrangle, sir, and found him speaking in the same manner as Crum. The boy's horrible language—"

"His what?" ejaculated the Head, horrified.

"Perhaps I should say his horrible pronunciation."

"Certainly you should say so, if that is what you mean," said the Head tartly.

"His horrible pronunciation," said Sir Hilton, "is spreading among the other boys, as is proved by this boy Bunter."

"I cannot think so—"

"Hear the boy speak, and judge for yourself," said Sir Hilton. "Bunter, speak to your headmaster."

"I—I—I 'aven't anything to say to the 'Ead, sir," stammered Bunter.

"There! You hear him, sir!"

Dr. Locke fixed his eyes on Bunter.

"Bunter, what do you mean by speaking in that manner?" he demanded sternly.

"In—in what manner, sir?" gasped the bewildered Bunter.

"How dare you drop your aspirates in speaking to me?"

"I—I 'aven't, sir."

"What! You are doing so now!"

"I—I didn't mean to, sir. I don't 'ear it myself, sir. So far as I can 'ear, I'm speaking the same as usual," stammered Bunter. "I think it's 'orrible to drop h's, sir, like that 'orrid fellow Crum, sir."

"The wretched boy has evidently got into the habit of it, and does not even notice it himself," said Sir Hilton, with a snort.

"I 'aven't, sir," gasped Bunter. "I should be very careful indeed, sir, not to get into such a 'orrible 'abit."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head blankly.

"You hear him!" snorted Sir Hilton.

"I hear him," said the Head.

"I'm sure you don't 'ear me dropping h's, sir," said Bunter anxiously. "I've never dropped an h, sir, all the time I've been 'ere. Why, sir, my Form master would be 'orrified if 'e 'eard anything of the kind, and 'e would give any fellow a jolly good 'iding, sir, except Crum, 'oo can't 'elp it!"

"Bless my soul!"

"C-c-can I go now, sir?" ventured Bunter. "It's a 'arf-'oliday, you know, sir, and I was going out with 'Azeldene."

"You may go, Bunter."

Bunter went—promptly. He felt a good deal like Daniel getting safe out of the lion's den.

Sir Hilton remained ten minutes longer, in irate discussion with the Head. His statements certainly seemed to be borne out by the facts, so far as Billy Bunter was concerned, at least.

Neither was the Head able to give any satisfactory explanation—even to himself—as to why he had admitted an unknown, untrained, uneducated stranger to Greyfriars School, being blissfully unconscious of the fact that "Old Crum" had hypnotised him on that occasion.

The two gentlemen parted at last with mutual dissatisfaction; but that was not at all a new experience. Nobody ever felt any satisfaction in an interview with Sir Hilton Popper.

After the baronet was gone, Dr. Locke remained in deep thought for some time—Sophocles lying unheeded on his table.

Finally the Head rose and went along to Masters' Passage to call on Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, who, as Crum's Form master, was chiefly concerned in the matter.

In putting the 'fluence on Billy Bunter, Crum had certainly not foreseen all this, and it seemed likely that his extraordinary prank at Bunter's expense would recoil upon his own head.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Out of Bounds!

"**S**PIFFING!" said Crum heartily. They did not say spiffing at Greyfriars, though often they said ripping, or topping.

But the Famous Five did not heed Henry Christopher Crum's original mode of expressing himself. They did not, like Bunter, consider it their business to set Crum right unasked.

Had he requested their kindly assistance in the matter it would have been different. But Crum never thought of doing so—he was quite satisfied with himself as he was.

The juniors had enjoyed their walk up the sunny bank of the Sark, and now they were resting on the green grass, gazing idly across the shining river to the island in the stream.

It was a warm, spring afternoon, and the woods were green, the birds singing. The Sark flowed with a ripple and a murmur through the whispering reeds; overhead the sky was of deep blue, dotted with fleecy white clouds.

No wonder Crum had pronounced that it was "spiffing." Bob Cherry had produced a packet of toffee, which was passed round the group, and duly disposed of.

In the pleasant shade of the trees, by the sunny river, it was agreeable to linger, especially after a long walk; and the juniors were in no hurry to start for home. They had to be back for tea; but there was plenty of time—if they took the short cut through the Court woods. They had not quite decided to take this short cut; all of them realised that, even with undoubted right on their side, it was wiser to keep from exasperating a governor of the school to which they belonged.

Probably they would not be seen taking the path; on the other hand, they might be seen, and that meant more trouble with Sir Hilton Popper. For that crusty old gentleman himself they cared not two straws; but for the Head they did care, and still more did they care for the Head's cane.

The matter really was decided for them against their will. They chatted of all sorts of things as they rested by the river, and awoke suddenly to the fact that time had passed more rapidly than they had supposed.

The Famous Five were booked for tea in Squiff's study; and Sampson Quincy Ifley Field would be expecting them at



Sir Hilton Popper, who had completely lost his temper, was thrashing Crum without mercy, and the hapless junior was yelling and wriggling and struggling. "Governor or no governor," said Wharton, his eyes gleaming, "he's not going to lick a chap like that. Come on, you fellows!" The next moment the Famous Five were rushing on the scene. (See Chapter 6.)

tea-time. And even by the short cut they were likely to be a little late now.

Bob Cherry looked at his watch and jumped up.

"Get a move on, you slackers!" he exclaimed. "We're late!"

"The lateness is rather terrific!" remarked Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh, rising and stretching himself. "The esteemed Squiff will be waiting for us if we walk back to the tow-path."

"That does it!" said Nugent. "It's the short cut now, and blow Sir Hilton Popper and his giddy keepers and the whole bag of his knavish tricks!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Hold on, though!" said Harry Wharton, hesitating. "Crum's got himself into a row with old Popper already, by checking him. I'm jolly certain the old scout has been to the Head and yarned about it already. Crum doesn't want any more trouble than he's landed already."

"Rot!" said Crum. "Think I care for the old codger? He checked me afore I checked 'im, I s'pose!"

"Greyfriars governors can check anybody they like," said the captain of the Remove, laughing. "Greyfriars men are supposed to take it smiling."

"That don't suit me," said Crum. "I ain't taking lip from 'im, I can tell you! Crusty old codger! Look 'ere, I'm going back by that short cut, and chance it, and you fellers can please yourselves!"

"That settles it, then!" said Harry. "Come on!"

Crum's face was thoughtful as he walked on with the chums of the Remove.

He had enjoyed his afternoon, there was no doubt of that. But a ramble up the river, and a packet of toffee shared out sitting on a grassy bank, seemed to him, all the same, a tame way of spending time.

Crum's life, before he had come to Greyfriars, had been full of movement, bustle, and excitement. He had seen more of life than any Greyfriars man—indeed, more than most Greyfriars masters.

He had done his "turn" in Crum's Show before crowded houses, he had listened to cheers, he had been stared at by a sea of eyes. Certainly that kind of excited life was not good for a lad of his years; but there it was—that had been his way of living, and he missed it sorely.

Even had he been able to take his place in Greyfriars School as a normal member of a Form there, he would have missed the excitement and glitter of his old life. As it was, he missed all that he had lost more than ever.

In Crum's Show he had been Young Crum—he had been somebody. At Greyfriars he was nobody.

A dozen or more people employed by his father had treated him with great respect. At Greyfriars he was patronised even by a fellow like Bunter.

He was still outside the ordinary work of the Lower Fourth, and under special tuition from Mr. Quelch. He had a vast leeway to make up; and though he was quite clever enough to make it up if he liked, he certainly did not like.

Indeed, the prospect of spending whole terms at Greyfriars, away from the

bustle and glitter of a public performer's life, dismayed him. It had been his father's wish to place him at the school to "make a gentleman" of him, as Old Crum expressed it.

Young Crum had one good quality, at least—he was an affectionate and respectful son. His father's wish was law to him. But he wished from the bottom of his heart that Old Crum had not made so much money with the House of Magic as to cause him to desire to "make a gentleman" of his son, who felt as if he were likely to be bored to death in the process.

It was an odd situation enough; for every Greyfriars man who noticed Crum's existence, felt that he was remarkably lucky to get into the school; while Crum felt that, whatever he might have deserved for his sins, he hadn't quite deserved that!

"Penny for 'em, old bean!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, clapping the thoughtful Crum on the shoulder.

"Only jest thinking," said Crum colouring.

"You liked coming up the river?"

"Oh, yes! It's spiffing round 'ere!" said Crum. "Only——" He paused. Then he laughed. "Course, you blokes are used to this sort of thing. You don't feel like screaming when you're shut up in the class-room."

"Oh, my hat! No, do you?" asked Bob.

"Sometimes," confessed Crum. "Mind, I'm going to stand it! I ain't going back on father. But—but it's rather 'orrid. Father wants me to stick

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Greyfriars—and I'm going to stick it, if it kills me!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob blankly.

To the Famous Five, Greyfriars was one of the most delectable spots on earth, if not the very most delectable.

It was rather surprising for them to hear that this fellow was heroically "sticking" it simply for his father's sake.

"Tastes differ," said Harry Wharton, with a laugh.

"They does!" agreed Crum.

"The differfulness of tastiness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "My esteemed chums came with me once to visit my native country, but they did not recognise its terrific superiority over this excellent and ludicrous island."

"Oh, draw it mild, Inky!" said Johnny Bull. "You don't mean to say that you think India a patch on England."

The nabob of Bhanipur chuckled.

"My esteemed Johnny, the patchfulness is a boot on the other leg," he explained gently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Way in!" said Bob Cherry, as he stopped at a fence by the towpath, which barred off a green and shady wood from the river bank.

Once there had been a stile at this spot; but the stile had been removed by the autocratic orders of Sir Hilton Popper, and the high fence had replaced it. Over the fence showed a large board which warned the public that trespassers would be prosecuted.

"Cheek!" remarked Wharton, with a glance at the board. "Come on!"

The juniors clambered over the fence and dropped on the inner side. The footpath was still in existence, though overgrown with thick grass, it could still be traced through the old beeches and oaks. The juniors followed it, keeping a wary eye open for keepers.

That they were not "trespassing" on a public footpath, though it had been closed by a local autocrat, was certain. It was extremely unlikely that such trespassers would be prosecuted, in spite of the warning painted on the big board. Nevertheless, the chums of the Remove hoped to get through unseen. The Head had placed that footpath out of school bounds, simply to keep the peace with Sir Hilton Popper. Still, the fact remained that he had placed it out of bounds. A report to the Head meant a caning.

For a quarter of a mile the juniors followed the woody path without meeting a soul. Then, in a sudden turn of the woods, they came on—and also ran into—a tall, angular figure that was striding along—and they and Sir Hilton Popper stopped dead and stared at one another.

Wharton compressed his lips with annoyance. The juniors had guessed that Sir Hilton had gone to Greyfriars; and really, they might have guessed that he was likely to walk back to Popper Court by way of the short cut through his own woods. It was quite a likely thing; had they thought of it. But they hadn't.

"So I find you here!" said Sir Hilton Popper, at last. "Trespassing in my woods, begad!"

"We're not trespassing, sir," said Bob. "It's a public footpath."

"Silence!" hooted Sir Hilton. "How dare you bandy words with me? You saw the board, I presume—you can read, I suppose. Greyfriars is going to the dogs—but I suppose Greyfriars boys still learn to read? Did you read the board, or did you not?"

"Oh, yes!" said Wharton carelessly.

"Esteemed sahib, let the frown of wrathfulness be averted by the voice of sweet reasonableness," suggested Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Being in a terrific hurry to return to school—"

"You are out of bounds, as well as trespassing!"

Sir Hilton was right there, and the juniors made no reply. It was not of much use, after all, to talk to the angry old gentleman. They knew that he was going to report this fresh delinquency to the Head; and all the talking in the wide world would have made no difference to that. So the Famous Five said nothing; but Crum, the irrepressible, took up the tale.

"Look 'ere, old codger, you come orf it!" he said. "You may be a 'igh and mighty old covey when you're at 'ome; but we don't want any more of your old buck, see? Come orf it!"

"Good gad!" gasped Sir Hilton, staring at Crum as if fascinated by his remarkable flow of language.

"You're too blinking 'igh and mighty, that's wot you are," said Crum. "You think too much of yourself, old covey. If you ask me, you've got the manners of a 'og!"

"Shut up, you ass!" breathed Bob Cherry, aghast.

"Rats!" retorted Crum. "I tell you I've 'ad enough of his old buck! I ain't taking no more, and that's that!"

Sir Hilton gasped.

"You young rascal—"

"Swaller it!" jeered Crum.

"You impertinent young scoundrel, I'll—"

"Oh, chuck it, long-legs!" said Crum.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Long-legs!" said Crum.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five involuntarily. The expression on Sir Hilton Popper's face was too much for them. It was true that Sir Hilton's lower limbs were of rather unusual length; but it was absolutely certain that no one had ever ventured to address him as "long-legs" before.

"Good gad!" Sir Hilton spluttered, and grasped the riding-whip he carried under his arm. "I intended to report you to your headmaster! But you, Crum, if that is your name, I shall chastise personally. I shall thrash you, sir, for your insolence!"

Possibly Crum had had some idea of putting the 'fluence on Sir Hilton, as he had done with Loder of the Sixth on one occasion when a licking impended. If so, he had no time for anything of the sort. The baronet fairly jumped at him, and grasped him by the collar with his left hand, and with the right lashed the whip across his back.

There was a wild howl from Crum.

"Ow! Yow! You old fool you, leggo a bloke!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Yaroooh! 'Elp!" yelled Crum.

The Famous Five hesitated. Their natural impulse was to go to Crum's help; but the bare idea of laying hands on a governor of the school was appalling. That it meant a flogging was certain; it was very probable that it might mean expulsion.

But Sir Hilton, who had completely lost his temper, was thrashing Crum without mercy. The hapless Crum yelled and wriggled and struggled.

It simply was not to be stood without intervention.

"We've got to stop him!" said Bob breathlessly.

"Go it!" said Wharton, his eyes gleaming. "Go it, and chance it! He's not going to lick a chap like that!"

It was neck or nothing now. The Famous Five made a rush, and the tall baronet went over before that rush, sprawling on the grassy path.

"Oh, gad!" he gasped, as he sprawled.

Crum tore himself loose, panting for breath.

"Hook it!" exclaimed Nugent.

Sir Hilton was sprawling and gasping; but he was likely to get on his feet very quickly; and the juniors assuredly did not want a battle-royal with him. They started up the path at a run.

But Crum did not "hook it" with the others. He turned on the sprawling baronet, his face red with rage.

"Crum!" yelled Bob.

Crash!

Crum's clenched fist crashed down on Sir Hilton's hat, smashing it over his ears.

Crash! went his fist again, fairly jamming the hat down over the bewildered baronet's head.

Bob grabbed him by the arm.

"You fathead! Come on!"

"Leggo! I'm going to give him a oner! I'm going to give him beans!" howled Crum.

"Come on, you frabjous chump!"

Crum was dragged away.

Sir Hilton Popper sat dizzily up. The juniors, glancing back from a distance, saw him struggling wildly with his hat.

They ran on; Bob keeping hold of Crum's arm. They were glad enough to reach the fence on the Courtfield Road and clamber over it, and leave the lands of Popper Court behind.

"My hat! We've fairly done it now!" groaned Bob Cherry, as they started down the road to Greyfriars. "That's put the jolly old lid on."

"You thumping ass, Crum!" growled Johnny Bull. "What did you want to cheek him for?"

"Didn't he cheek me?" demanded Crum.

"Oh, rats!"

"What can the old covey do, anyway?"

"Report us to the Head, and get us flogged, if not sacked," growled Johnny Bull. "We may be bunked from Greyfriars for this."

"The bunkfulness is terrifically probable."

"I don't care a tuppenny straw if I'm bunked," said Crum. "I'd be jolly glad to get back to the show."

"Very likely," grunted Nugent. "But it's different with us."

"I dessay it is," assented Crum. "Look 'ere, I'll try and fix it for you. I'll fix it so's it's all right. I'll make that old bloke let you alone."

"You will?" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Jest me," said Crum.

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" snorted Johnny Bull. "I'm fed up with your bragging. Chcese it!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Handling a Great Man!

SIR HILTON POPPER stared. He screwed his eyeglass more firmly into his eye, and stared again.

He seemed scarcely able to believe his eye, or his eyeglass, as he beheld the Greyfriars juniors on the forbidden path.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Nugent in dismay.

"We've done it this time!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"The donefulness is terrific."

It was—and the expression on Sir Hilton Popper's face was growing terrific also.

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"Look 'ere—" roared Crum.
"Oh, don't let's rag," said Harry Wharton hastily. "That won't do any good. The harm's done now. Come on!"

The juniors tramped on to Greyfriars in silence, the Famous Five deeply troubled and Crum sulky. Both parties were glad when they reached the school and parted company.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Tea in Squiff's Study!

"O H, 'ere you are!"
That was Billy Bunter's greeting to the Famous Five when they came into the Remove passage.

They did not seem pleased by the greeting.

The prospect of a terrific row for handling Sir Hilton Popper was weighing on their minds, and at any time William George Bunter's presence was not particularly grateful or comforting. In the circumstances, his absurd joke, as they regarded it, of dropping his h's, had an irritating effect.

"I've been waiting for you fellows to come in," said Bunter reproachfully. "I say, you fellows, did you know Sir 'lton Popper 'as been 'ere to see the 'Ead?"

"You burbling chump!" growled Johnny Bull. "Chuck it!"

"But 'e 'as," said Bunter, in surprise. "I went with 'im to the 'Ead. 'E was in a 'orrible temper."

"Cheese it!"
"Look 'ere—"

Bunter was brushed aside, and the Famous Five went on to Study No. 14. Squiff was there, and tea was ready. No. 14 belonged to Squiff, Johnny Bull, and Fisher T. Fish; but Fish was, fortunately, absent. Fishy was "teasing" out with a fellow in the Fourth who owed him money.

"Trot in, old beans!" said Squiff hospitably. "You're a bit late. Anything happened?"

"Lots of things," said Harry ruefully. "We've handled Sir Hilton Popper, and he will come along about it in the morning."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Field.

"I say, you fellows"—Bunter blinked in at the door—"Toddy's gone out."

"What about it, ass?"

"I mean, there's no tea in my study," explained Bunter.

"Tea in Hall," growled Johnny Bull.

"I've 'ad my tea in 'All," said Bunter peevishly. "What's the good of tea in 'All to me?"

"You priceless chump!" said Bob. "That idiotic trick of yours is beginning to get on my nerves. Crum can't help it, but you can. Drop it!"

"I don't think Bunter can help it, either," chuckled Squiff. "He's been at it all the afternoon. He must have caught it from Crum, like measles."

"What rot! He can help it if he likes," grunted Johnny Bull.

"Blessed if I know what you're talking about," said Bunter, blinking at the juniors. "What can I 'elp?"

"Dropping your h's, you foozling dummy!"

"Oo's dropping 'is h's?"

"You are!" hooted Johnny.

"Oh, don't be an ass, you know," said Bunter. "That's just what old Popper told the 'Ead; and the odd thing is that the 'Ead seems to think I was doing it. You know, though I told 'im I wasn't likely to fall into such a 'orrible 'abit."

"Great Scott!" said Bob, staring at the fat junior. "I really believe he can't help it. But a thing like that can't really be catching."

"Look 'ere, don't play the goat," said Bunter crossly. "If I'm dropping h's I can't 'ear it, and I suppose I should 'ear them drop, same I 'ear Crum's. I'm not deaf. Look 'ere, I didn't come 'ere to 'ear your rotten joke; I came to tea."

"Potty, I suppose," said Bob.

Bunter rolled into the study. The fact that Peter Todd was gone out, and

THE BUNTER-HUNTERS!

RULES OF THE GAME.

(See pages 14 and 15.)

1. The game is a pursuit of Bunter by the Famous Five, Bunter having stolen a cake from the tuck shop, on the pretext that he will go to the post office, cash a postal order, and return and pay for the cake. If during the chase he manages to eat the cake, cash the order, etc., and return to the tuck shop without having been caught, Bunter has won.

2. Moves are decided by throws of a dice, each player throwing in turn, Bunter starting first. The players are represented by counters. Bunter sets out from the tuck shop, thus gaining a start over the "Co.," who start from the shaded square by the school buildings, and follow along the path to the tuck shop as a preliminary to getting on the trail of Bunter.

3. If another of the Famous Five, while still on the path to the tuck shop, throws a number which brings him to a square already occupied by another player, he can move only to the vacant square behind him.

4. Bunter, and each of the Famous Five, must visit the numbered squares in numerical order. A throw of the exact number necessary to reach these squares is required; if a higher throw is made, the player must travel beyond the numbered square, or in whatever other direction is allowed by the rules, whichever is preferred.

5. For any one throw of the dice Bunter can move in any direction into the adjoining squares; i.e., he may move horizontally, vertically, or diagonally in one throw, or in any combination of these directions, but may not pass over any square more than once in so doing. His final move to reach the finishing point must, however, be made horizontally or vertically.

6. For any one throw of the dice the Famous Five may move horizontally or vertically; i.e., in one direction only.

7. When a throw made by any player would carry him over the edge of the board, he may turn in either direction along the outer row of squares. Players can move on any square, irrespective of paths, etc., but the river can only be crossed by the shaded bridge squares. If any of the Famous Five throws a number which carries him beyond the bank, he falls into the river, and must return to the starting-point.

8. If Bunter throws a number which brings him to a square already occupied by another player, that player must return to the starting-point. If two of the Famous Five land on a square already occupied by Bunter before he can move to another, Bunter is caught, and the Famous Five win. If Bunter reaches the tuck shop finishing point uncaught, he is the winner. If two of the Famous Five, having duly visited all the numbered squares in order, arrive at the tuck shop, and Bunter arrives later, still uncaught, the "Co." and Bunter dead-heat.

consequently could not stand tea in Study No. 7, seemed to Bunter a sufficient reason for teasing in Study No. 14. Whether his company was desired there was a trifle light as air that did not worry William George in the least. He did not particularly want an enthusiastic welcome; what he wanted was a spread.

"Another fellow to come yet," said Squiff. "But we won't wait for him. Mauly may have gone to sleep and forgotten all about tea."

"More for us!" said Bunter, with a fat grin.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

There was a tap at the door, and Lord Mauleverer's mild and pleasant countenance looked in.

"I hope I'm not late," he remarked.

"What a hopeful nature!" grinned Bob Cherry. "We're late, and you're later."

"Awfully sorry, dear men," said his lordship. "I seem to have dozed off on my sofa."

"Better late than never, old bean," said Squiff cheerily. "Take a pew. Don't take all the table, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Squiff, look 'ere—"

Lord Mauleverer glanced rather curiously at Bunter and sat down. This was his first experience of Bunter's new style of pronunciation, which he had indeed caught from Crum, though not in the way the juniors surmised.

"Pass the 'am, old chap," said Bunter. "I say, Squiff, this is good 'am. I like 'am, old fellow."

Lord Mauleverer looked bewildered.

"Is that a new game?" he asked.

"Oh, Bunter's been at it a long time," said Squiff. "Either he thinks it's awfully funny, or else he's caught it from Crum and can't help it."

"Oh gad!" said Mauly.

"Don't take any notice of their silly rot, Mauly," said Bunter. "They're making out that I'm dropping h's like that 'orrible bounder Crum. Of course, I 'aven't ever dropped an h in my life. I'm not likely to do such a thing, I 'ope."

"You what?" ejaculated Mauly.

"'Ope," said Bunter. "Why, only this afternoon I was chipping Crum about it. I thought it was only kind to put the 'orrid bounder right, you know, the way 'e was dropping h's all over the 'ouse. 'E didn't like it. 'E's ungrateful."

Lord Mauleverer stared fixedly at Bunter. That the fat junior was unconscious of the h's he dropped was clear, and that was very remarkable—very remarkable indeed. The other fellows couldn't account for it; but Mauleverer, who knew more about Crum than the other fellows, had a strong suspicion that he could account for it.

"You'd been chippin' Crum about droppin' h's had you?" he asked.

"Yes. Felt it my duty, you know, to 'elp the poor brute to pick up the way we talk 'ere," explained Bunter.

"And it was after that you began dropping h's?"

"Eh? I 'aven't begun dropping h's. Nobody's ever 'eard me drop an h, and nobody's ever likely to 'ear me do it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" howled Bunter. "Look 'ere, I'm fed up with this joke, if it is a joke, so don't let's 'ear any more of it. Pass that 'am again, will you?"

Lord Mauleverer seemed very thoughtful during tea. More than once his glance rested curiously on Bunter. William George Bunter, as usual, annexed the lion's share of the conversation, which made the absence of his aspirates still more noticeable. He avoided the h's so deliberately that it seemed impossible that he could be unaware of what he was doing, yet obviously he was unaware of it. Lord Mauleverer had his own thoughts on the subject; but the other fellows really wondered whether Billy Bunter's fat intellect had taken a turn for the worse.

Lord Mauleverer left the tea-party before the others, and he went down the Remove passage looking very thoughtful. He inquired for Crum, only to learn that Crum had gone out.

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again soon after coming in with the Famous Five. Lord Mauleverer waited for Crum to come in again, and there was a rather grim expression on his face as he waited. Mauly had undertaken to keep Crum's peculiar secret, on the express condition that Crum played no hypnotic tricks in the Remove; and Crum had broken that compact—his lordship was pretty thoroughly convinced of that. And Mauly had a bone to pick with Henry Christopher Crum when that extraordinary youth came in.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Whip Hand!

SIR HILTON POPPER snorted. The butler of Popper Court coughed deferentially.

"A young gentleman of the name of Crum!" ejaculated Sir Hilton. "He has the impudence to call on me here! Good gad! Turn him out!"

The butler made a backward step. "Or stay! No; admit him!" snapped Sir Hilton.

The butler retired to admit the young gentleman of the name of Crum.

Sir Hilton snorted again.

It was near the time for Sir Hilton's dinner, and at that time of day Sir Hilton was never very good-tempered. Just now his temper was at its worst. What had happened in the Court Wood had exasperated him to an extent that was quite terrific. Not only had his land been trespassed upon, not only had he been answered back with impudence; but hands had actually been laid upon him—the hands of common mortals had been laid upon Sir Hilton Popper, Baronet!

When such things occurred it was time for the skies to fall—time for the whole universe to give a shudder. The skies had not fallen—the universe had given no perceptible shudder. The stars in their courses rolled on their way as if the handling of Sir Hilton Popper was a trifle light as air. But a whole active volcano of wrath was boiling within Sir Hilton Popper.

If the indifferent universe paid no heed to such a happening, at least, Sir Hilton himself knew how cataclysmal it was. Punishment, of course, had to fall heavily on the offenders. Boiling in oil, no doubt, would have met the case. Whipping at the cart's tail would have been, if not adequate, at least appropriate. Six months' hard labour would not have satisfied the baronet, but would have relieved his feelings.

These punishments were, unfortunately, out of his power to inflict. But he had resolved to demand the expulsion of all the fellows concerned in the outrage—outrage was a mild word for it. And if Dr. Locke refused, Sir Hilton was determined to place the matter before the governing body.

He was surprised—but, on reflection, not surprised—for a young gentleman of the name of Crum to be announced at Popper Court.

The young scoundrel had come to apologise, to beg for mercy, to plead for pardon, of course. Well, he could apologise, beg, and plead; but it would not avail him. When he cringed at the baronet's feet he should be told to pack his box in readiness for a prompt departure from Greyfriars. Sir Hilton was inflexible on that point. The young gentleman of the name of Crum was "for it," and so were the other young gentlemen of the names of Wharton, Cherry, Bull, Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ramp Singh, if Sir Hilton had his way.

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"Master Crum!"

The young gentleman of the name of Crum entered the library.

Sir Hilton screwed in his eyeglass and transfixed the young gentleman of the name of Crum with it.

The butler softly retired, leaving the young gentleman of the name of Crum alone with the baronet. Below stairs, the butler confided to the first footman that the old blighter was in one of his worst tantrums. The language of the butler below stairs differed considerably from his language above stairs.

"I have ordered you to be admitted here, boy!" grated Sir Hilton, his eyeglass gleaming at Crum. "I will hear what you have to say! But I warn you that it will be useless to ask for pardon. You will be expelled from the school which you disgrace, and to which you ought never to have been admitted!"

"That's rather 'ard on a bloke, ain't it?" asked Crum.

He stood before the baronet—not cringing, as Sir Hilton had expected. But there was something a little stealthy and furtive in his manner, and his eyes scanned the baronet's red, angry face curiously. Sir Hilton, as he met the deep, powerful eyes of the young gentleman of the name of Crum, felt a peculiar sense of uneasiness, which surprised him. He cast it angrily aside.

"'Ard! Bloke!" he repeated after Crum. "Good gad! What language for a Greyfriars boy! Some wretched denizen of the slums!"

"And 'spose I was!" growled Crum. "I suppose no covey is born in the slums of his own blooming choice, is he?"

"Silence!" rapped out Sir Hilton. "Do not dare to argue with me! If you have anything to say, say it! Not that you can have anything to say in extenuation of your pernicious conduct! That is impossible. Still, I will hear you."

Again that strange thrill of uneasiness under the steady, potent eyes that seemed to have a strange power and fascination in their glimmering depths. Sir Hilton made an angry movement. Overbearing, autocratic, Sir Hilton had never feared any man in his life—unless it was the moneylender who held mortgages on a considerable part of his property. Yet the strange and disturbing feeling was on him that he was fearing—what? A boy—a schoolboy—a disreputable young rascal who did not respect his betters, who could not even speak the King's English correctly. It was absurd! What was the matter with him?

What was the matter with him, indeed?

He made a movement to rise from his chair, but he did not rise. Something was coming over him, he knew not what.

It seemed to him that the steady, staring eyes dilated and grew strangely larger; that strange fires burned in their depths. Again he made an effort, and again he failed. He seemed glued to his chair.

A smile passed over Crum's face—a smile so sardonic that it was like a disfigurement on a face so youthful.

Crum's hands were moving now, weaving strange patterns in the air before the baronet's starting eyes.

"I've got you where I want you, I reckon!" grinned Crum. "Shut your eyes, you blinking old codger!"

Sir Hilton closed his eyes.

"Open them agin."

Sir Hilton opened them.

"That's the style!" jeered Crum. "You're a tough old game-bird, you are; and if you'd knowed what was

coming, I dessay I wouldn't 'ave got away with it. But you're fixed now, you old image you! You're going to do jest what I tell you! Got that?"

"Yes!" whispered Sir Hilton.

It seemed to be some other voice that had spoken as the hapless baronet sat and stared at the schoolboy hypnotist.

"You're going to the school in the morning," said Crum.

"Yes."

"'Ave you let 'he 'Ead know?"

"I have telephoned to Dr. Locke to expect me."

"And told 'im what's 'appened?"

"Yes."

"I thought you might 'ave," agreed Crum. "Mischief-making old codger, you are! Ain't you?"

"Yes, Crum."

Crum chuckled.

"Well, when you call to see the 'Ead to-morrow you're going to tell him that it was all a mistake."

"Yes, Crum."

"You're going to tell 'im you're very pleased with all the fellers you met in the wood to-day, and specially with me."

"Yes, Crum."

"You're going to tell 'im you was mistook about me, and you think I'm a credit to the school, and jest the kind of chap that Greyfriars wants."

"Yes, Crum."

"That'll do, old covey. Now, order the car to take me back to Greyfriars. I've walked 'ere, and I ain't walking back."

"Yes, Crum."

Sir Hilton rang the bell.

An astounded butler received the order for the car to take Master Crum back to Greyfriars School. In a dazed state of mind, the butler transmitted that order to the chauffeur.

Crum lounged out to the car, a good many eyes upon him as he went. The chauffeur touched his cap, eyeing him oddly.

"Greyfriars School, and get a move on, cocky," said Crum.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Sir Hilton's chauffeur.

He got a move on.

Crum alighted at the gates of Greyfriars, and walked in whistling. He strolled across to the House, and as he entered, a light touch fell on his shoulder.

"Waitin' for you, dear man," said Lord Mauleverer.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Mauly Chips in!

LORD MAULEVERER linked his arm in Crum's, and walked him away quietly. Crum gave him a quick, suspicious glance, but he went without demur. In a window recess, out of the hearing of other fellows, his lordship stopped, and released Crum's arm.

"Well, what's the blinking trouble?" inquired Crum. "Looking for a row with a bloke?"

"Yaas!"

"Oh!" said Crum. "Well go a cad. Give it a blinking name!"

"You've been playin' tricks on Bunter."

Crum started, and then grinned.

"Ow do you know it?" he asked.

"You've got to chuck it," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Got to?" growled Crum.

"Yaas," said his lordship placidly.

Crum eyed him, a good deal like a cheeky, bristling terrier eyeing a placid St. Bernard.

Crum turned on the sprawling Sir Hilton Popper, his face red with rage. Crash! The junior's clenched fist crashed down on Sir Hilton's hat, fairly jamming it down over the bewildered baronet's head. "You fathead!" cried Bob Cherry. "Come on!" "I'm going to give him beans first!" howled Crum. (See Chapter 6.)



"You buttin' in?" he snapped.

"Yaas!"

"Can't mind your own blooming business?"

Lord Mauleverer skilfully concealed a shudder. That adjective, which Crum used so liberally, had a painful effect upon his noble nerves. He really wondered what a fellow's sense of hearing could be like, when his own ears were not offended by it. He never dreamed of saying so, however. Lord Mauleverer's manners were polished, and, in fact, rather unique in the Lower Fourth Form of Greyfriars.

"This is my bizney," he explained. "I told you I wouldn't give away your trickery if you kept off the grass in the Remove. You're not keepin' off the grass. You've got to let Bunter alone."

"What does the fat idiot matter?"

"Nothin' at all," said his lordship thoughtfully. "I don't see how any number of Bunters could possibly matter anythin' at all. But there's such a thing as playin' the game."

Crum snorted.

"I've 'eard a lot about playing the game since I come to this 'ere school," he said. "Call it playing the game to chip a covey about dropping his h's?"

"Certainly not!"

"Well, then, Bunter asked for it, I s'pose?"

"Yaas. All the same, you mustn't play these tricks—they're barred in the Remove. You agreed to that, you know, on my undertakin', on my side, to say nothin' about your hypnotism."

"Well, Bunter riled me, with his sneaking rot," said Crum. "But I don't mind lettin' 'im off, if that's what you mean."

"Yaas, that's what I mean. Let him off, and leave him alone, and that will be all serene."

"It's a go," grunted Crum surlily. "I ain't any objection, fur as that goes. But"—his eyes glittered—"you've got a nerve talking to me like this, you 'ave! You know what I could do if I liked."

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"You couldn't hypnotise me," he answered calmly. "You couldn't hypnotise anybody who knew what you were up to, I'm jolly sure of that! You can try it o., if you like," added his lordship cheerily, looking Henry Christopher straight in the eyes.

"Oh, rats!" said Crum. "You're a queer bird, you are. All the blokes think you a silly ass, and yet you're the only feller here that's spotted me and found me out. There's a lot more in you than meets the eye."

Lord Mauleverer smiled faintly.

"Why don't you give me away?" asked Crum abruptly. "You don't want me 'ere. If the 'Ead knew my father put the 'fluence on him to make him take me in, he'd jolly soon boot me out. You're a lord, you are, and I'm a blinkin' showman. You could get me shifted out of the school. Why don't you do it?"

"I don't want to, old bean."

"Why not, then?"

"Why should I do you an ill turn?" asked Mauleverer, in surprise. "I've never willingly done any fellow an ill turn, that I know of."

"Fellows of your own class," said Crum. "But I ain't your class. You look down on me."

"What rot!"

"Mean to say you don't?" demanded Crum, staring at him.

"Certainly not! Why should I?"

"Even that fat duffer Bunter does," said Crum.

"I hope you don't imagine that I have anythin' in common with Bunter," said Lord Mauleverer, rather stiffly.

Crum nodded thoughtfully.

"I s'pose, being a lord, you're above it," he said. "It's jumped-up blokes like that Bunter that go in for snobbery. You're a good sort, Mauleverer, you are! I'll do jest what you want. I'll see that fat chump at once and put him right. Look 'ere! I know I'm a rough sort of covey beside you. I know I keep putting my foot in it. If you'd give me a tip occasionally, I'd take it kindly."

"My dear chap," said Lord Mauleverer gently, "I'd be ever so willin', if there was anythin' I could do."

"I wouldn't be riled, whatever you was to tell me," said Crum.

"You wouldn't think it a check?"

"No fear!"

Lord Mauleverer paused.

"You got something on your mind now," said Crum, with a grin. "Got it off your chest?"

"Yaas. But—"

"No good telling me not to chuck my h's around," said Crum. "When I forget to shove 'em in, they get left out sort of natural. Anything else?"

"If you really wouldn't mind—"

"Go it."

"You're quite sure?"

"Yes, yes."

"Well," said his lordship hesitatingly,

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(Continued from page 13.)

"I'll risk it. If you'd find some other adjective to use instead of—hem—blooming—"

"What's the matter with blooming?" "Nothin', really. Only a matter of form," said Lord Mauleverer hastily. "Don't think me impertinent. You asked me, you know."

Crum grinned. "I'll take your tip," he said. "I don't see anything wrong with blooming, myself, but I'll be blooming careful in future."

"That's right, old bean." "You jest tell me if you 'ear me use the blooming word agin," said Crum.

"Oh, begad! You've just used it!" "My 'at! So I have! It's a blooming habit," said Crum ruefully. "I'll try to break it off. But you know how blooming hard it is to break off a blooming habit."

"It must be," agreed his lordship. "And now, about Bunter—"

"Oh, I'll set that silly ass right in a brace of blooming shakes!" said Crum, and, with a nod to his amiable lordship, he walked away, leaving Lord Mauleverer smiling, and doubting whether Crum's conversation would not continue to be in a blooming condition.

Crum went up to the Remove passage, and met Bunter as he came away from Study No. 14. The Owl of the Remove blinked at him through his big spectacles, and grinned.

"I 'ear you've got the fellows into a fearful row with Sir 'Ilton Popper," he said.

"Oh, you 'ear that, do you?" grinned Crum.

"They're expecting a 'orrid time to-morrow, when the old ass comes along to complain to the 'Ead," chuckled Bunter. "What are you staring at me like that for, Crum? What the thump are you waving your 'ands about under my nose for, you ass?"

Bunter blinked in amazement at the schoolboy hypnotist. Crum did not answer him—he was concentrating his strange power on the Owl of the Remove. The door of Study No. 14 opened again, and Harry Wharton & Co. came along the passage in a cheery crowd.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" chirruped Bob Cherry. "You've got back again, Crum? Feeling happy about to-morrow?"

"Appy enough," answered Crum. "There ain't going to be any trouble to-morrow, you blokes."

"I wish I could believe that," said Harry Wharton.

"Believe it or not, there it is," answered Crum. "You'll find to-morrow that old Popper has taken quite a fancy to you lot."

"What the thump do you mean?"

"Jest what I say."

"Talking out of the back of—your neck won't make matters any better," said Frank Nugent tartly.

"I ain't talking out of the back of

my neck!" grunted Crum. "I knows what I'm talking about. I've been over to see the old bloke, and squared it with him."

"You've squared it with Sir Hilton Popper?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Jest that."

"I'll believe that when we're let off," said Bob Cherry.

"That'll be to-morrow," said Crum; and he walked away.

"The silly ass is talking out of his hat," said Bunter. "How could he square it with Sir Hilton Popper?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Have you been going round picking up those h's you dropped?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"I knew it was a silly prank!" grunted Johnny Bull. "He's chucked dropping them now."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Well, if it was a joke, I'm blessed if I see it," said Nugent. "Where did the joke come in, Bunter?"

"Look here, you fellows, don't play the goat!" said Bunter peevishly. "I've told you I'm fed-up with it. I haven't dropped an h in my life, and you jolly well know it! Go away and eat coke, the lot of you!"

And Bunter rolled away, leaving the Famous Five staring. Whatever was the cause of Bunter's mysterious affliction, evidently he was cured now. Crum was once more the only fellow at Greyfriars who dropped his h's.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Alarming!

"COME in!" snapped Mr. Quelch. The master of the Greyfriars Remove was looking cross.

He was looking very cross.

His talk with the Head on the subject of William George Bunter had annoyed the Remove master.

Complaints concerning the boys in his Form annoyed him. Complaints from Sir Hilton Popper specially annoyed him. He did not like that particular governor of the school, and had little patience with the irascible old gentleman. At the present moment most of his crossness was concentrated on Billy Bunter. He had sent for the Owl of the Remove to come to his study.

That Crum's slovenly pronunciation might prove "catching" among careless fellows Mr. Quelch knew was possible; but he was a firm believer in the cane as a corrective for such carelessness. That a fellow might pick up slovenly speech without being able to help it, he did not believe for a moment. A fellow could help it if he liked; and Mr. Quelch was prepared to help him to help it, with the help of his cane.

The Head had asked him to look into the matter, as was his duty. Mr. Quelch had sent for Bunter after tea, to look into it; and his cane was lying ready on the table.

If Bunter dropped h's in Mr. Quelch's hearing, Bunter was likely to hear something drop, so to speak, himself.

The Head had stated that Bunter seemed unaware of this curious defect, and unable to perceive it or correct it. Mr. Quelch had his own opinion about that. He was convinced that after Bunter had been made to bend over he would correct his speech on the spot.

Billy Bunter entered the study uneasily. He blinked apprehensively at the Remove master.

Bunter did not know why he had been sent for. But he naturally expected trouble of some sort. Even

Bunter could not suppose that he had been sent for because his society was pleasing.

As for the topic of his aspirates, that did not enter his mind at all. Under the 'fluence he had, as it were, picked them up again. He had not the remotest suspicion that this was what Mr. Quelch wanted to see him about.

As he came to the Form master's study he revolved in his fat mind a series of sins that might have come to Mr. Quelch's knowledge—and wondered which of them it was. H's never entered his mind at all.

Mr. Quelch fixed his eyes on the fat junior. Not believing for a moment that Bunter had dropped aspirates unconsciously, he was annoyed at being put to this trouble. He intended to dictate a sentence full of h's to Bunter, to be repeated by the fat junior; and if Bunter dropped a single one of the h's the cane was to be featured in the next scene.

What would have happened had Bunter been still under the 'fluence, and still dropping aspirates, cannot be said. No doubt it was fortunate for both Bunter and Crum that Lord Mauleverer had chipped in in time.

"Bunter!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir, it—it wasn't me, sir!" ventured Bunter.

That seemed to Bunter a safe opening, whatever the accusation was going to be.

"What! What was not you, Bunter?"

"I—I mean, I didn't do it, sir?" said Bunter.

"You did not do what?"

"Anything, sir. I—I wasn't there!" stammered Bunter.

"Where?" demanded Mr. Quelch, mystified.

"Anywhere, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"I do not understand you, Bunter."

"No, sir. I mean, yes, sir! M-may I go now, sir?" inquired Bunter nervously.

"Remain where you are, Bunter. Listen to me."

"Yes, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"You will repeat this sentence after me, Bunter—'Henry Herbert Higgins had a happy holiday.'"

Bunter fairly jumped.

He gazed at Mr. Quelch, his little round eyes bulging in amazement behind his big glasses.

Had Mr. Quelch told him that a pie had been missed below stairs, Bunter was prepared to advance the theory that it had been taken, dish and all, by the housekeeper's cat. Had Mr. Quelch told him that Wingate of the Sixth had missed a cake from his study, Bunter was ready to suggest that it was one of those daylight burglars you read about in the papers. Had Mr. Quelch informed him that Mrs. Mimble, at the tuckshop, had complained about an over-due account standing to Master Bunter's debit, the Owl of the Remove might have attributed it to the good lady's imagination, or even to the stout which Mrs. Mimble took, not because she liked it, but because the doctor ordered it.

Had Bunter been accused of anything, in fact, he was ready to deal with the matter with a disregard for veracity as complete as if he had been specially trained for the diplomatic service.

But when Mr. Quelch told him that Henry Herbert Higgins had had a happy or an unhappy holiday, or whether he had had a holiday at all, Bunter was fairly flabbergasted.

He blinked almost dazedly at Mr. Quelch.

"You hear me?" snapped the Form master.

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter. "Yes, sir."

"I am waiting."

"W-a-waiting, sir?"

"Yes, waiting! 'Henry Herbert Higgins had a happy holiday,' said Mr. Quelch. 'You understand, I presume?'"

"Nunno, sir! I—I don't know the chap—"

"What?"

"Never heard of him, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"You utterly obtuse boy!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Do you suppose that I am telling you that Henry Herbert Higgins is a real person?"

Bunter gazed at him. He did not suppose that Mr. Quelch was telling him that Henry Herbert Higgins was an unreal person. He could not account for Mr. Quelch's remarks at all, except on the supposition that the Remove master had gone out of his mind. Involuntarily the Owl of the Remove backed a little farther away as that alarming thought entered his fat brain.

"Repeat the words after me," snapped Mr. Quelch. "Repeat after me—Henry Herbert Higgins had a happy holiday."

It was merely a test of aspirates, had Bunter only understood it. But he did not understand it.

"Repeat that sentence at once, Bunter."

"Oh, dear! Henry Herbert Higgins had a happy holiday, sir," gasped Bunter.

Mr. Quelch bent his head a little, to listen with deep attention. Every aspirate came out quite clearly.

"I thought so!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

His remark referred to his fixed opinion that Bunter could pronounce aspirates if he liked. To Bunter it seemed that he was referring to the happy holiday enjoyed by Henry Herbert Higgins. He blinked at his Form master in growing alarm.

"I thought so—in fact, I was certain," snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Were you, sir?" gasped Bunter.

"Yes. You have dared to delude your headmaster—to deceive Dr. Locke!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "You deliberately gave him a false impression, Bunter."

"I—I didn't sir," gasped Bunter. "I—I never told the Head anything about Henry Herbert Higgins, sir."

"What!"

"On my word, sir!" stuttered Bunter. "I—I never heard of him, sir, before you mentioned him. I never spoke of him to the Head, sir."

"You utterly stupid boy."

"Oh, sir! I assure you—I didn't know the chap had had a happy holiday, sir, and I never told the Head he hadn't, sir," groaned Bunter.

"Silence, you absurd boy! Bless my soul, this boy's obtuseness is past all understanding," exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "I repeat, Bunter, that you have deluded your headmaster on this subject."

"I—I haven't, sir," stuttered Bunter. "I never said a word to Dr. Locke, sir, about any chap having a holiday—"

"Silence! You are perfectly well aware of the matter to which I am alluding, Bunter, and these contemptible attempts at prevarication will not serve you. I will test you once more. Say after me—"

"After me!" gasped Bunter.

"Will you be silent until I have finished?" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Stand where you are, Bunter! What do you mean by backing away towards the door while I am speaking to you? Say after

me—Horace hung his hat on a hook in the high hall."

"Wha—a-t, sir?"

"Are you deaf?"

"Nunno, sir."

"Horace hung his hat on a hook in the high hall!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"D—d—did—he, sir?" gasped Bunter.

"I—I daresay he did, sir. Do—do you mean Coker of the Fifth, sir?"

"What?" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"Horace Coker, sir—I suppose you mean Coker, sir, but I—I don't know anything about his hat, sir."

"Bunter!"

"It—it wasn't my fault if he hung it up in the hall, sir," pleaded Bunter. "I—I can't help what Coker does, sir."

It was too much for Mr. Quelch. With a glare like a basilisk, he jumped up and grasped his cane.

"Bunter—"

"Yarooooooh!"

Fully convinced now that his Form master had gone mad, Billy Bunter tore open the door, and fairly leaped into the passage.

"Bunter!" cried Mr. Quelch.

Like the ancient gladiator, Bunter heard but he heeded not. As fast as his fat little legs would carry him, he flew down the passage—leaving Mr. Quelch standing staring at the open doorway, the cane in his hand, and an expression of petrified amazement on his face.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

'Dangerous!'

"H E'S mad!" gasped Bunter.

"Dangerous! Help! Hide me! He may be after me this minute! Help!"

Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, and Henry Christopher Crum stared blankly at the fat junior.

The three were in Study No. 1. Wharton and Nugent beginning prep, and Crum engaged upon a paper set him by Mr. Quelch. Bunter bolted into the study like a fat rabbit into a burrow.

Perspiration bedewed his fat face, and his eyes seemed almost bulging through his spectacles. Never had the Owl of the Remove been seen in so terrified a state.

He slammed the door of the study, and spluttered.

"Keep him off, you fellows."

"Keep who off?" yelled Wharton.

"Quelchy!"

"Quelchy!" shouted the three juniors together.

"Yes—he's after me I believe. Hide me somewhere!" gasped Bunter. "He may have a knife."

"A—a—a—knife?"

"Yes—or a pistol!"

"A pistol!" gasped Wharton.

"I shouldn't wonder—you know what madmen are!" gasped Bunter.

"Madmen?"

"Yes: he's gone mad."

"Who has?" roared Nugent.

"Quelchy!"

"You fat chump!"

"Mad—as a hatter," gurgled Bunter. "I tell you, I've been frightened out of my wits! Think of me, alone in his study, and Quelchy suddenly going mad! Oh, dear! I say you fellows, where can I hide? If he's after me, he may have a chopper or something."

"You frabjous, footling, footling (Continued overleaf.)"

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chump!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "What do you mean, if you mean anything?"

Bunter did not answer. His head was bent at the door, listening with painful intensity.

"I—I believe I can hear him coming," he whispered. "Creeping along, you know—stealthily—like a madman, you know. Suppose he's got a chopper? Suppose he's got a poker? Where can a chap hide?"

Hiding-places for frightened juniors were not provided in junior studies at Greyfriars. Bunter blinked round despairingly: and finally plunged under the study table. From beneath that article of furniture, his voice came in thrilling tones.

"Don't tell him I'm here! I say you fellows, keep it dark! He's dangerous! I just escaped with my life."

"Well, this beats it," said Frank Nugent. "What on earth is the fat idiot burbling about? What has happened, Bunter?"

"Keep an eye on the door," said Bunter. "Better take the poker to him if he comes in."

"Take the poker to our Form-master!" said Wharton, dazedly.

"He's mad, you know. You're allowed to brain a maniac, if he goes for you with a chopper or something," gasped Bunter. "Very likely he's got a chopper. He sprang at me like a tiger. I nipped out of his study just in time to escape his clutches."

"Somebody's mad, I think," grinned Crum. "I fancy it's Bunter."

"Oh, really, Crum—"

"Come out from under that table, you frabjous ass," exclaimed Wharton.

"No fear! He may pop in any minute. I say, you fellows, stand by a chap! He's mad, you know—raving!"

Wharton stared at the fat figure crouching under the table. He was utterly mystified.

"What has happened, you chump?" he asked. "Have you been to see Mr. Quelch?"

"Yes," groaned Bunter. "Of course, I didn't know he'd gone mad then, or I wouldn't have gone. Oh, dear! He began to babble—"

"Babble?"

"Yes, like a lunatic, you know, as soon as I got into the room. Babbling of all sorts of queer things."

"Well, what did he say?" asked the amazed captain of the Remove.

"You'd hardly believe it, not having seen him," said Bunter. "First of all he told me that a fellow named Higgins had had a happy holiday."

"What?" yelled the juniors.

"He did!" gasped Bunter. "Those very words."

"Well, my hat!"

"Then he made me say it after him, as if it were a lesson, you know, made me say that that chap, Higgins, whoever he is, had had a happy holiday. What do you think of that?"

The three juniors in Study No. 1 did not state what they thought of it. Indeed, they did not know what to think.

"Then he said that I'd deceived the Head about this chap Higgins," went on Bunter. "I told him I'd never spoken to the Head about Higgins, and he grew excited—just like a lunatic, you know. Glared at me like a tiger."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Then he began talking about Coker of the Fifth!" breathed Bunter.

"Coker of the Fifth?"

"Yes—spoke of him as Horace, too. Form masters never speak of fellows by their front names, like they do in

a girls' school, you know—but Quelch did—he called him Horace."

"Great pip!"

"He said that Coker of the Fifth had hung his hat up in the hall," continued Bunter. "Nothing to do with me if he did! I told Quelch so, and he sprang at me."

"Sprang at you!" gasped Wharton.

"Like a tiger!"

"Phew!"

There was a footstep in the Remove passage; and Bunter gave a squeal of terror.

"I say, you fellows, keep him off."

The study door opened. Peter Todd looked in, with a puzzled expression on his face. Bunter, crouching under the table, making himself as small as possible, scarcely breathed.

"You fellows seen anything of Bunter?" asked Toddy. "Quelch wants him. He's come up to my study after him."

"Anything the matter with Quelch?" asked Wharton, without answering Peter's question.

"Well, he looks rather wild," said Peter. "Bunter seems to have got his rag out. Looks in a rare bato."

"Not potty?" asked Nugent.

"Eh? What?" Peter stared at him. "Not more than usual, that I noticed. But in a frightful wax. He wants Bunter, and wants him bad."

"Oh dear! I say, you fellows, keep him off."

Peter Todd jumped, as that plea proceeded from under the study table. It rather startled Toddy.

"Is Bunter here, then?" he exclaimed.

"Ow! No!" howled Bunter. "I'm not here—I mean, don't let that lunatic know I'm here. Be a pal, Toddy—keep him off. Look out for his knife!"

"His what?" yelled Peter.

"Knife!"

"Is Bunter mad?" stuttered Toddy.

"He says Quelch is," said Harry. "Blessed if I can make head or tail of it. From what he says, Quelch must have been talking jolly queerly, at least. I can't make it out."

There was a footstep in the passage behind Toddy.

"Todd! Have you found Bunter?" Without waiting for an answer to his question, Mr. Quelch pushed Peter aside and looked in Study No. 1. "Wharton! Have you seen Bunter? I fear that there is something wrong with the boy—he has acted very strangely—I fear that he requires medical attention. Can you tell me where Bunter is? I must find him immediately."

"Ow!"

"Bless my soul! What—who—where—Bless my soul, the boy is under the table! Bunter, come out at once!"

"Ow!"

"Do you hear me, Bunter?" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Emerge from your hiding-place at once, Bunter! I command you to emerge!"

Mr. Quelch commanded in vain.

Billy Bunter did not emerge.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Not a Lunatic!

"BUNTER!"

"Ow!"

"Boy!"

"Keep him off!"

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch. "This is too much! The boy must be ill—mentally afflicted, I fear. That would account for the absurd prank he played upon the Head, in affecting to be unable to pronounce the aspirate. Bunter, calm yourself."

"Oh dear!"

"You will be taken care of, Bunter. A doctor will be telephoned for immediately. Emerge!"

Still Bunter did not emerge. Not for worlds would he have emerged. Mr. Quelch seemed calm now, certainly; but Bunter was not at all assured that he might not break out again at any moment, neither did he feel sure that Mr. Quelch hadn't a knife or a chopper hidden under his scholastic gown.

"Emerge at once, Bunter!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"Ow! Keep off!"

Mr. Quelch, under the wondering stare of Study No. 1, stooped, and reached under the table for Bunter.

"Yaroooh!"

Bunter yelled in panic as his fat ankle was grasped and Mr. Quelch began to pull.

He held on to the leg of the table.

Mr. Quelch pulled, and Bunter held on; and the table began to rock.

"Leggo!" shrieked Bunter. "I won't be murdered! Yaroooh! Help! Murder! Fire! Police! Help!"

"The unfortunate boy seems quite insane," ejaculated Mr. Quelch. "Bunter, calm yourself! Come!"

He tugged. Bunter held on like grim death. Mr. Quelch exerted his strength, and Bunter clung to the table leg like a limpet to a rock.

Something had to go. It was the table that went.

Crash!

Bunter came out like a fat winkle out of a shell, bringing the table leg with him, and naturally up-ending the table in the process. Over went the table, scattering books and papers and inkpot and pens far and wide.

"Oh crumbs!" ejaculated Nugent.

"Help!" roared Bunter.

"Bless my soul! Stand up, Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

Bunter stood up—as soon as his fat ankle was released. He made a frantic jump to get behind Wharton.

"Keep off!" he yelled. "I tell you I won't be murdered! I'm not going to be murdered by a raving maniac! Yaroooh!"

"Shut up, you silly owl," breathed Wharton.

"Shan't! Keep him off! Call the Head! Call all the fellows! Seize him!"

Mr. Quelch gazed at Bunter.

"Have you boys seen Bunter like this before?" he gasped.

"Nunno, sir," stammered Wharton. "He—he—he seems to be—be frightened about something, sir."

"It has come on very suddenly," said Quelch aghast. "The poor boy's brain seems to have failed him all of a sudden, and entirely."

"Oh!" gasped the juniors.

"Keep him off," breathed Bunter, keeping carefully behind the captain of the Remove. "Mind he doesn't spring at you! Madmen always think other chaps are mad, you know! Look out for his chopper—I believe he's got a chopper under his gown! Get hold of the poker. Nugent!"

"Bunter seems—seems afraid of you, sir," stammered Wharton. "He—he—he thinks you've gone mad, sir, for some reason."

"I noticed that he was very strange in his manner when he entered my study a short time ago," said Mr. Quelch. "He spoke in a very disconnected way, stating that he had done nothing, and had not been anywhere—most odd statements. Then, when I gave him an exercise to repeat, to test his pronunciation of aspirates, he developed excitement—and finally flew from my study. It is extraordinary that he had never

"Repeat this sentence after me, Bunter: 'Henry Herbert Higgins had a happy holiday.'" The Owl of the Remove fairly jumped. He gazed at Mr. Quelch as though he feared the master of the Remove had gone out of his mind. "Oh dear!" he gasped. (See Chapter 10.)



shown any symptom before of this complete mental breakdown."

Wharton started.

"You—you gave him an exercise in aspirates, sir?"

"Yes; a sentence to repeat—in fact, two sentences," said Mr. Quelch. "Thinking that he was affecting not to understand me, I was about to cane him, when he fled from my study in a positively frantic manner."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Wharton.

"What—what? This is not a laughing matter, Wharton!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "How dare you, sir?"

"Ha, ha—I mean, sorry, sir!" gasped Wharton. "Bunter misunderstood you, sir! He's the biggest ass in the Form, sir! He—he—he thought you were wandering in your mind, sir—"

"Nonsense!"

"So he was!" yelled Bunter. "He told me a chap named Higgins had had a holiday, and told me to say it after him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He told me Coker of the Fifth had hung his hat in the hall," gasped Bunter. "Then he was jumping at me simply because I said I couldn't help what Coker did. Oh dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" boomed Mr. Quelch, in great wrath. "How dare you laugh! Is it possible—is it barely possible—that this absurd boy is so utterly stupid as he affects to be? I made no mention of Coker of the Fifth Form, Bunter!"

"You did!" shrieked Bunter. "You called him Horace."

"Bless my soul! The boy is not insane, but his stupidity is really alarming! Bunter—"

"Keep off!"

"Listen to me, you obtuse, stupid boy!" roared Mr. Quelch. "I sent for

you because you affected, in the Head's presence, to be unable to pronounce the aspirate. I gave you an exercise on aspirates to repeat, to test you. Cannot you understand?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!"

"I didn't—I never did—I wasn't!" gasped Bunter. "It was a joke of these fellows making out that I dropped h's, and I'd forgotten all about it. Oh dear! I—I thought you'd gone mad, sir—"

"How dare you!"

"Oh dear!"

Even upon Bunter's stodgy brain it was dawning that there had been a misapprehension, and that his Form master was not, after all, mad.

"Evidently, this incredibly obtuse boy misunderstood me," said Mr. Quelch, breathing hard. "I will be more explicit, Bunter. Dr. Locke informed me that you had imitated the slovenly pronunciation of this boy Crum, and requested me to look into the matter."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"That is why I ordered you to repeat a sentence in which most of the words began with an aspirate."

"Oh!"

"Do you understand now?"

"Oh! Yes! I—I thought you were barmy, sir!"

"What!"

"I—I mean potty, sir—that is to say, dotty—I mean, mad, sir!"

Mr. Quelch breathed hard and deep. The Removites dared not laugh again; the expression on Mr. Quelch's face did not encourage merriment. But they had hard work to control their emotions.

"Bunter, I will excuse your stupid misapprehension, on the ground that you are the most obtuse boy in the

school. Stupidity such as yours amounts to a disease, I fear! Come out from behind Wharton at once!"

"If—if you don't mind, sir, I—I'd rather stay here!" stammered Bunter.

"Obey me at once!"

Bunter still hesitated, and Wharton grasped his fat shoulder and slung him towards Mr. Quelch.

"Now, Bunter, say after me Henry Herbert Higgins had a happy holiday."

Even William George Bunter understood now. His fat intellect worked slowly. Still, it worked.

"Henry Herbert Higgins had a happy holiday!" mumbled Bunter.

Crum grinned. He was glad that he had taken the 'fluence off now.

"Horace hung up his hat on a hook in the high hall!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir."

"Repeat the words!" rumbled Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Horace hung up his hat on a hook in the high hall!" mumbled Billy Bunter.

"Precisely!" Mr. Quelch's eyes glinted. "You have pronounced every 'h' without difficulty, Bunter. Evidently you were deluding the Head. I shall not punish you for your stupidity, Bunter—that would be unjust."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"But I shall punish you for deluding your headmaster."

"Owl!"

"Fortunately, I have brought my cane with me," said Mr. Quelch, taking it from under his arm.

Bunter did not see anything fortunate in that circumstance.

"Bend over that chair, Bunter!"

"Oh dear!"

William George Bunter slowly and reluctantly bent over the chair. Mr. Quelch proceeded to feature the cane.

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Whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"I think that will do," said Mr. Quelch.

For once Billy Bunter was in full agreement with his Form master. He thought so, too.

Mr. Quelch tucked his cane under his arm again, frowned at the juniors—probably guessing that they were only restraining their mirth with great difficulty until he had gone—and walked out of the study.

Harry Wharton closed the door after him. Then there was a yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Nugent. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Study No. 1 rang with merriment. Billy Bunter groaned deeply; the entertaining side of the matter was quite lost on him. But his groans were drowned by the peals of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, my hat!"

The study door suddenly reopened. A grim face looked in. Sudden silence fell on the study.

"May I inquire?"—Mr. Quelch's voice was like ice and steel mixed—"may I inquire the cause of this unseemly merriment?"

Mr. Quelch paused, like Brutus, for a reply. Like Brutus, he did not get one. The juniors stood dumb. The sudden reappearance of Mr. Quelch had upon them rather the effect of the grisly figure that drew Priam's curtains at dead of night.

"What has just occurred is not a matter for merriment," Mr. Quelch proceeded.

His pupils did not agree with him there. But they did not say so. From of old they knew that Mr. Quelch had to be given his head.

"Wharton, you are head boy of the Remove! Have you any explanation to offer?" inquired Mr. Quelch.

"Nunno, sir! We—we—we were just—just laughing!" stammered Harry.

"No doubt! A more serious mood would be more fitting!" said Mr. Quelch. "It is my duty to make that clear to you, Wharton. Hold out your hand!"

Swish!

"Ow!"

Mr. Quelch tucked his cane under his arm once more, and once more departed. The juniors in the study waited till they were sure that he was at a safe distance before they laughed again. As for Wharton, he did not want to laugh any more. He was as serious as Bunter now.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Sword of Damocles!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. did not look their brightest the following morning.

That morning, they knew, Sir Hilton Popper would call at the school.

There was no doubt about that.

They had no doubt that the old baronet had already let the Head know of the terrific outrage that had occurred in the Court woods. They had no doubt that he had warned Dr. Locke of his forthcoming call, upon a matter of unusual seriousness.

It was an awful prospect.

The juniors had handled the baronet. There was no denying it. They had laid hands on him—hard, too! True, he had been thrashing a Greyfriars fellow, but the Head was sure to see at a glance that Sir Hilton would not have been

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thrashing Crum, had not Crum been on his land. True again, it was a public right-of-way across the Court woods from the river. But, on account of the dispute, the Head had placed that path out of bounds. Could the juniors deny that they had been out of bounds? Evidently they couldn't. The whole affair was their own fault.

There was the rub!

A governor of the school had been bumped over in his own grounds, and the bumpers had practically nothing at all to say in their own defence.

"You see, it was our own fault!" Bob Cherry remarked ruefully, as the Famous Five strolled in the quad after breakfast. "We asked for it!"

"The askfulness was terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "We ought not to have transgressed the esteemed boundfulness!"

"It would have been all right if that fool Crum had been civil to that other fool Popper!" growled Johnny Bull.

"That's so," agreed Wharton. "But he wasn't. Perhaps we ought to have let old Popper thrash him! But he was laying it on too thick!"

"We had to stand by Crum," said Bob Cherry decidedly. "He was one of us for the afternoon, and we had to see him through. But he's landed us in a fearful row, and no mistake about that!"

"Flogging, at least!" muttered Nugent.

Wharton made a grimace.

"I only hope we shall get off with a flogging all round!" he said.

"Oh, my hat!"

The outlook was serious enough. All the Remove knew that it was serious. Friends sympathised; others fellows seemed amused. Skinner said how sorry he would be to see five fellows sacked all at once, but he did not look very sorry; he looked quite amused. Billy Bunter told the captain of the Remove that he was going to have Study No. 1—when Wharton and Nugent and Crum were gone. Bunter seemed to take it for granted that they were going.

Indeed, the serious view taken by the other fellows made the Famous Five realise, much more clearly than on the previous day, what an extremely grave state of affairs it was.

Bumping over a governor of the school might be a delightful dream for happy moments, but actually doing it was something awful—quite outside all known limits.

Indeed, now that they pondered over it, the Famous Five hardly knew how they had found the nerve to do it at all.

In the quad they caught a glimpse of the Head coming away from the chapel, and Dr. Locke glanced in their direction.

He did not speak or beckon to them, but his glance was enough. He had heard from Sir Hilton Popper.

He was leaving the matter over till the baronet called. That was all. His glance showed how grave it was.

They had seen the same expression on Mr. Quelch's face at the breakfast-table. Mr. Quelch knew, and was taking a frightfully serious view of it. In fact, all the school knew, and every one took a serious view. Wingate of the Sixth gave the chums a commiserating glance; Loder of the Sixth gave them a sardonic grin; Temple of the Fourth asked them what train they were catching, with a cheery smile. It was some satisfaction to sit Temple down in the deepest and muddiest puddle that could be found at short notice, but the satisfaction was slight.

As for Crum's assurance that it was "All right," and that he had "squared"

it with Sir Hilton Popper, the chums of the Remove did not heed that at all. It was so obviously impossible, so far as they could see, that they put it down to sheer nonsensical brag.

It was not a happy morning to the hapless delinquents.

They wished that the ireful baronet would come along and get it over, so that they would know the worst. But the lord of Popper Court seemed in no hurry. He had not arrived at Greyfriars when the bell rang for classes, and the Famous Five went into the Form-room with the rest of the Remove.

All eyes turned on them in the Form-room.

Mr. Quelch gave them a grim look, but did not speak to them. He, like the Head, was leaving the matter over till Sir Hilton should call and lay his formal complaint. Skinner smiled at the chums of the Remove, the cheery smile that usually haunted Skinner's face when other fellows were in trouble.

"You chaps not gone yet?" he inquired, as if in surprise.

"Oh, shut up, you rotter!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Cheese it, you cad!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows," murmured Bunter, "do you think you will be flogged as well as sacked, or just sacked?"

The next moment a wild yell rang through the Remove Form-room.

"Yaroooooh!"

Mr. Quelch stared round angrily.

"Bunter, what—"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"How dare you, Bunter!"

"Yow-wow! Some beast stamped on my foot!" wailed Billy Bunter. "Ow! Wow! I'm hurt! Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow! Oh, you beast, Toddy!"

"Todd, did you tread on Bunter's foot?"

"Hem—yes, sir!"

"Take fifty lines for your clumsiness! Silence, Bunter!"

Peter Todd had not been clumsy; he had stamped on Bunter's foot with malice aforethought. The expression of anguish on Bunter's face made Peter feel that it was worth fifty lines. Skinner drew his feet hastily away from the vicinity of Peter. He suspected that Toddy was going to be clumsy again. But like the ancient mariners who escaped Scylla to fall into the perils of Charybdis, Skinner escaped Peter's stamp, only just in time to receive a hack on the shin from Squiff.

Skinner gave a howl.

"Bless my soul! Skinner—"

"Ow! Field hacked my shin!" howled Skinner.

"Field, take fifty lines! Silence in the class!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

Any other fellow who had felt disposed to chip the Famous Five on the subject of their misfortunes decided to hold his peace. Most of the Remove considered that it was no subject for chipping.

In first lesson that morning there were five clouded faces in the Remove. Crum, who was equally "booked" with the Famous Five, if not more so, looked as cool and contented as usual, and evidently had no apprehensions whatever.

Looking at Crum, the Co. wondered whether, after all, there might be something in his boast that he had "squared" it with Sir Hilton.

Certainly he did not seem apprehensive in the very least.

But how was it possible?

Lord Maploverer could have told them had he known what was in their minds. Crum could have told them, but he was keeping his strange secret very carefully. They decided that there

could not possibly be anything in it; yet they could not understand the obvious confidence of Henry Christopher Crum.

First and second lesson elapsed, and there was no summons for the Famous Five to repair to the Head's study. Sir Hilton had not called yet. The Remove were dismissed for morning break, and still nothing had happened, and the sword of Damocles was still suspended over the heads of the chums of the Remove.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

HORACE COKER of the Fifth Form grinned as he spotted five thoughtful-looking juniors in the quadrangle. Coker of the Fifth bore down on them, the grin still on his rugged features.

"For it—what?" he asked agreeably. Five separate and distinct glares were turned on Horace Coker. Harry Wharton & Co. were not in a mood for any of Coker's "rot."

Every hour that had elapsed had added to and intensified the trouble on their youthful minds. Every fellow who mentioned the matter seemed to take it for granted that they were going to be sacked. It was not consoling or comforting. The topic was painful, even from sympathetic friends. From Horace it was intolerable.

"What did you expect?" queried Coker. "From what I hear, you've assaulted a governor of the school—thumped him! Is it true that you gave Sir Hilton Popper a black eye?"

"No, it isn't, you silly chump!" snapped Bob Cherry.

"But you bumped him over in his own park?"

"Yes, and serve him right!"

"Well, my hat," said Coker, "I always knew you were a cheeky gang of young rascals, but that's the limit—the absolute giddy limit! You'll be bumping over the Head next, I suppose, if you're allowed to stay at Greyfriars!"

"We shall be bumping over a silly ass if he doesn't shut up and sheer off!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Don't be cheeky, Bull! I don't want to thrash you, considering what you've got coming," said Coker magnanimously. "You'll be sacked, of course. I suppose the Head's waiting for old Popper to blow in before he bunks you. I'm rather sorry. Still, you can't deny that you're the cheekiest fags at Greyfriars. You've checked me more than once."

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged a glance, and then started on Coker.

If they were really going to be sacked from the school they would never have a chance of ragging Coker of the Fifth again; and the present opportunity, therefore, was not to be lost. Coker had specially come up and asked for it, and the Famous Five proceeded to give Coker what he had asked for.

There was a roar from Coker as he went down, sprawling, under five exasperated juniors.

He struggled wildly.

"Give him jip!" growled Bob Cherry.

"The jipfulness is terrific!"

"Rag the silly ass!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Coker. "Leggo! Gerroff! I'll smash you! I'll jolly well slaughter you! Ow! My nose! Oh, my hat! Yooop!"

Fellows gathered round in a laughing crowd to watch Coker of the Fifth going through it. Some Remove fellows kindly lent a hand. Coker, in a dizzy state, hardly knowing whether he was on his head or his heels, or in this world or

THE BOUNDER'S FEUD!

Herbert Vernon Smith, better known as the Bounder of Greyfriars, doesn't like young Crum of the Remove, and makes no bones about telling him so. What's more, the Bounder, in his pigheaded way, is convinced that Crum has come between him and Lord Mauleverer. Once Smithy allows that thought to take root, all that is evil in him comes to the surface. Crum has got to be taught a lesson—a lasting lesson—Smithy is determined upon that. Read how the Bounder sets out to do this in next week's grand story, entitled:

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the next, struggled and roared and bel-lowed. In the midst of the excitement, Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, came rolling up.

"What is this?" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "Cease this at once. At once, do you hear?"

Mr. Prout stared almost in horror at Coker, when that youth was released. Coker seemed to consist chiefly of mud and dust and a powerful voice.

"Coker! Silence! Go and make yourself tidy, sir! As for you Remove boys," boomed Mr. Prout, "this is in keeping with the rest of your conduct. I understand that you have assaulted a governor of the school!"

"Do you, sir?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I do!" boomed Mr. Prout.

"Well, my hat! Fancy Mr. Prout understanding anything, you fellows!" said Bob.

"What?" roared Mr. Prout, purple with wrath. "Upon my word! You are impudent, Cherry! Doubtless because you are aware that you are about to be expelled from the school. A very proper measure, in my opinion—a very proper measure indeed!"

And Mr. Prout stalked wrathfully away.

"You fellows are asking for it, and no mistake," remarked the Bounder. "Haven't you got enough on hand already?"

"May as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb," said Bob. "Let's go and rag Loder of the Sixth, you men. If we're going to be bunked, we may as well give Loder what we owe him first."

"We'll wait till we're sure we're going to be bunked," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"No doubt about that," said Skinner. "And I must say that there will be a lot of dry eyes at Greyfriars when you go. Here, keep off, you rotters! Yaroooh! Yooop! Yow-wow-ow!"

And there were wild yells as Skinner suffered for his sins.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly. "Here comes the old bird!"

"Ere he comes!" grinned Crum.

The tall, angular figure of Sir Hilton Popper had appeared in the offing. He glanced at the crowd of juniors as he stalked towards the House.

They capped him. A governor of the school had to be capped. Crum kept his hands in his pockets and grinned impudently. His eyes were fixed on Sir Hilton Popper, with a very curious expression in them.

Sir Hilton paused, and came over towards the group. He came slowly, with a slightly perplexed expression on his face, as if he did not quite know himself the reason of his own action.

"Good-morning, boys!" he said.

"Oh, good-morning, sir!" gasped Wharton.

"I think I met you in my woods yesterday, Wharton?" said the baronet, in a genial tone.

"Yes, sir," stuttered the captain of the Remove.

"I trust you had a pleasant walk there?" said Sir Hilton Popper.

Wharton gazed at him blankly.

If the stone dryad that adorned the fountain in the quadrangle had stepped down from its stone pedestal and made that remark Wharton could scarcely have been more astonished.

"I have called to speak to your head-master about you," went on Sir Hilton, as Wharton did not answer.

Wharton really could not answer. The baronet had taken his breath away.

All eyes were fixed on the lord of Popper Court. Never had the Remove fellows been so astounded.

To the best of their recollection, they had never seen Sir Hilton in a genial temper before. Now he was more than genial. His crusty face was smiling—breaking up into a million wrinkles under the unaccustomed relaxation.

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"I am going to tell Dr. Locke what I think of his boys," resumed the baronet. "A splendid set of lads, in my opinion—a credit to my old school."

"Oh, sir!" gasped Wharton.

"I have the honour to be a governor of this school," went on Sir Hilton Popper. "I am proud of it, chiefly on account of the Remove boys—the finest set of lads I have ever seen!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I shall tell Dr. Locke so," said Sir Hilton. "I am very pleased with you and your friends, Wharton—very pleased indeed!"

"Are you, sir?" gasped the captain of the Remove, wondering whether he was dreaming this.

"Certainly. Very pleased indeed," said Sir Hilton. "You are a credit to the school, Wharton."

"Oh! Yes. Oh!"

Crum lounged forward.

"Pleased with me, too, sir?" he asked, with a cheeky grin.

Sir Hilton gazed at him. He seemed perplexed for a moment, as if seeking to gather his thoughts. Then he nodded.

"Perfectly, Crum," he answered.

"Think I'm a blooming credit to the school, sir?"

The juniors waited in breathless amazement for Sir Hilton's reply. They were still more amazed when it came.

"Undoubtedly. I am glad to see you at Greyfriars, Crum. I regard your presence here as a distinction to the school."

"Ear, 'ear!" said Crum, grinning.

Sir Hilton, raising his hat slightly, turned and walked away to the House. He left the juniors dumb with astonishment.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER!

Sir Hilton Popper Astonishes the Natives!

"MR. QUELCH!"

"Sir!"

"You will kindly remain," said the Head.

"Certainly, sir."

Dr. Locke was glancing from his study window.

From that window he had a view of the angular figure of the lord of Popper Court approaching the House with long strides.

The Head was worried and perturbed. No interview with Sir Hilton Popper ever brought him any satisfaction. The coming interview was likely to be even more unsatisfactory than usual.

For once, the irate old gentleman had a really serious complaint to make, as he had told the Head on the telephone the day before. Had it been merely a complaint that Greyfriars boys had invaded the disputed right-of-way across the woods, the matter would have been a light one. But Sir Hilton had stated that he had been roughly handled by Greyfriars boys—that they had actually assaulted him as well as answered him back with unexampled insolence.

That was not a light matter. He had demanded the expulsion of the guilty parties. He had stated that, when he arrived at the school to place the matter formally before the Head, he expected to see the delinquents expelled in his presence. He had hinted very plainly that if the headmaster disagreed he would place the matter before the governors of Greyfriars officially. The whole matter of Crum's presence in the school would then come up for inquiry.

It was a dismaying prospect to the Head.

He was deeply angry with the juniors who had brought this trouble upon

him. Flogging them all round was a foregone conclusion. But sacking six Greyfriars fellows in a bunch was another matter. Five of the fellows, at least, were among the best fellows in the school, even if a little unruly at times. Yet an assault—an actual assault—upon a governor of Greyfriars was an offence that could hardly be expiated by any lesser punishment.

No wonder the Head was worried. And no wonder he desired Mr. Quelch to stand by him during the interview, which looked like being a rather stormy one. There was a certain grimness in Mr. Quelch's character which the Head's character lacked; Mr. Quelch, undoubtedly, was much more fitted than the headmaster to deal with a gentleman like Sir Hilton Popper.

The Head's brow was clouded and troubled; Mr. Quelch's was grim. To see half a dozen fellows belonging to his Form "sacked," was rather too much for the Remove master. Apart from his concern for the fellows themselves, and the reputation of the Form, Mr. Quelch dreaded the comments that would be passed in Masters' Common-room—the keen remarks of Mr. Hacker, the obtuse sympathy of Mr. Wiggins, the ponderous patronage of Mr. Prout. He almost shuddered at the thought of facing the Common-room after six fellows in his Form had been expelled from Greyfriars.

"A most painful matter, Mr. Quelch," said the Head, with a sigh.

"Very!" said the Remove master. "I think, however, that expulsion is much too severe a punishment."

"Yet if the boys have actually assaulted a governor of the school—"

"I have no doubt that Sir Hilton's statement is exaggerated. His statement concerning Bunter yesterday was absurdly exaggerated, as I have proved. The boy was playing a foolish prank, sir, in affecting to drop his h's—I have proved it. Indeed, I can hardly blame the boy for playing even a foolish trick on a man so excessively interfering as Sir Hilton Popper."

The Head sighed again.

"I agree with you, Mr. Quelch; but if Sir Hilton is not satisfied, the matter must go before the governing board."

"Let it go before them, sir, rather than allow a single governor to dictate your policy," said the Remove master warmly.

"Quite so; but—the boy Crum—"

Mr. Quelch was silent.

There was the difficulty. How was the Head going to explain his action in admitting young Crum to the school?

In that, Mr. Quelch could not help him; for Mr. Quelch himself was still in a state of wonder on the subject. Obviously, Henry Christopher Crum was not a fellow of whose presence at Greyfriars the governors would approve.

Sir Hilton Popper was announced, and he entered the Head's study with his heavy tread.

The Head greeted him courteously as usual. Mr. Quelch stood grimly silent with an inimical countenance, only bowing his head very slightly.

"Pray be seated, Sir Hilton," murmured the Head.

Sir Hilton sat down.

To the surprise of the two masters, he was not frowning. The expression on his face was so genial that the Head was relieved.

"I have just spoken to some of your boys in the quadrangle, sir," said the baronet. "Boys in your Form, Mr. Quelch. A splendid set of lads!"

"Eh?" ejaculated the Head.

"What?" stuttered Mr. Quelch.

"Greyfriars is not deteriorating, sir," said Sir Hilton Popper, almost beaming. "The old school still has the good stuff in it—what?"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

Mr. Quelch could only stare. This certainly was not what the two masters had been expecting from Sir Hilton Popper.

A remarkable change seemed to have come over the baronet. He seemed to be acting under some unusual benign influence this morning.

Benign or not, he was certainly under the 'fluence. It was the schoolboy hypnotist who was speaking through Sir Hilton's square jaw. The hands were the hands of Esau, so to speak, but the voice was the voice of Jacob. But none of the gentlemen in the Head's study had the slightest suspicion of that state of the case—least of all Sir Hilton Popper himself.

"I—I—I—" The Head fairly stammered. "I—I was under the impression, Sir Hilton, that you had called this morning to lay some—some complaint before me."

"Concerning boys in my Form!" said Mr. Quelch.

"With regard to some occurrence in your woods yesterday afternoon," said the Head.

"Some alleged assault by Remove boys," said Mr. Quelch grimly.

Sir Hilton looked puzzled.

"Good gad! I—I seem to remember that I had some such intention," he admitted. "Really, I had quite forgotten it, Dr. Locke!"

"Forgotten it!" The Head spoke almost dazedly. When Sir Hilton Popper forgot that he had a complaint to make, it was time for the skies to fall.

"Yes, quite!" Again a queer, perplexed look came over the baronet's face, as he made an effort of thought. "Yes—there was certainly something—yes, certainly. But, after all, a trifle! Boys will be boys, Dr. Locke. Boys will be boys, Mr. Quelch."

"Quite so!" gasped the Head. "I—I am glad to hear you take this—this lenient view, Sir Hilton."

"Not at all, sir," said Sir Hilton. "I have no complaint to make! Far from it. I do not precisely remember what I said to you on the telephone yesterday, Dr. Locke—but if it was anything in the nature of a complaint, please dismiss it from your mind."

"I shall do so with great pleasure, Sir Hilton," said the Head in wonder. "May I assume that the matter is at an end, then?"

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"I am very pleased with you and your friends, Wharton," said Sir Hilton Popper, "very pleased indeed!" Crum lounged forward. "Pleased with me, too, sir?" he asked, with a cheeky grin. "Think I'm a blooming credit to the school, sir?" The Removites waited in breathless amazement for Sir Hilton's reply. "Certainly!" said Sir Hilton. (See Chapter 14.)

"Absolutely!" said the baronet. "I did not call here this morning to make any complaint, Dr. Locke. I simply desired to express my opinion, sir, that, under your rule, Greyfriars is never likely to fall below the very best of its traditions."

"Bless my soul!"

"And to say to Mr. Quelch that I think very strongly that his Form is a credit to this school, sir!"

"You are very kind, Sir Hilton!" gasped the Remove master.

"Not in the least, sir! As a governor of Greyfriars, I am bound to express that opinion. A finer set of lads I have never seen. I would particularly mention five boys named Wharton, Nugent, Bull, Cherry, and the Indian boy, whose name I forget. With such boys as these in the school, sir, Greyfriars is not likely to deteriorate."

Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch gazed at Sir Hilton as he enumerated the juniors whose expulsion he had demanded the day before. They could not speak. Astonishment overcame them.

"There is one other lad I would mention," added Sir Hilton Popper. "A young gentleman of the name of Crum."

"Crum?" repeated the Head.

"Crum?" murmured Mr. Quelch.

"A fine lad!" said Sir Hilton.

"Oh!"

"I seem to remember," said Sir Hilton, with another curious effort of thought, "that I expressed some unreflecting disapproval of this boy's presence in the school, Dr. Locke."

"You did, sir!" articulated the Head. "In a—a—a somewhat emphatic manner, sir!"

"We all make mistakes," said Sir Hilton genially. "This boy Crum called on me at Popper Court yesterday, and—and explained the whole matter. I do not seem to remember all that was said, but he explained the whole circumstances to my entire satisfaction. I have the greatest admiration of that lad, sir."

"Oh!" stuttered the Head.

"A splendid boy!" said Sir Hilton, with enthusiasm. "A credit to Greyfriars, if any boy can be said to be a credit to the school. Almost, if not quite, a perfect character, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

Sir Hilton rose.

"I will not waste your time further, sir. I felt bound to call and express my favourable opinion of these boys, and of Greyfriars in general, sir. Splendid lads—splendid lads!"

And, shaking hands very cordially with the Head and Mr. Quelch, Sir Hilton Popper took his leave.

When he was gone, the two scholastic gentlemen looked at one another. For a long minute they looked at one another in silence.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head at last, in a faint voice.

"Extraordinary!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Sir Hilton Popper seemed to—to have changed considerably, Mr. Quelch."

"For the better, sir," said Mr. Quelch.

"Undoubtedly for the better—very much for the better. We have had quite a—a pleasant chat. Sir Hilton can be very agreeable. Mr. Quelch."

"Very agreeable indeed, sir."

"As Sir Hilton desires the matter to be dropped, I presume that nothing more need be said about it," said the Head. "Since he expressed himself as very pleased with Wharton and the others, there can scarcely be any occasion for punishment."

"None at all, sir."

"A very happy ending, Mr. Quelch, to an episode that might have been very disagreeable indeed."

"Undoubtedly, sir."

Mr. Quelch left the Head's study, wondering. He left the Head wondering. The change in Sir Hilton Popper was a change for the better. But it was very surprising.

The bell rang for third lesson.

Harry Wharton & Co. came in with the Remove. They had seen Sir Hilton Popper depart, and what was to happen next was as yet unknown. From what the baronet had said to them in the quad, they drew hope that matters would not be so bad as they had expected, that the sword of Damocles was not, after all, to descend upon their devoted heads. But they came into the Form-room very uneasily.

To their amazement and relief, Mr. Quelch did not speak to them, or even look at them specially. Evidently there was going to be no trouble. The

(Continued on page 28.)

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BOSS OF THE TEAM! Directly "Tiny" Scannan, the new captain, drops in amongst the Storrydene boys things begin to hum, for "Tiny" declares that he's going to ginger up the team from the very beginning—and he does!

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Sir Aubrey Means Business!

"GOOD shot, Sir Aubrey!" cried a laughing voice from the doorway. "What will you have, sir? Cigars or nuts? A pipe-cleaner or a row of houses?"

The baronet flushed and started violently as he realised that his show of childish petulance had not passed unnoticed; he jammed his gold-rimmed monocle into position and scowled across at the knot of young men who were grinning at him from the open doorway.

The newcomers were greatly amused. "H'm! Ha!" began the portly baronet, adopting that heavy, pompous manner that he reserved for trying occasions. "H'm! I suppose it will surprise you people to hear that it is customary to knock at a door before bursting in upon a gentleman's privacy! You seem to add deliberate rudeness to your other failings!"

The latter part of the remark was addressed to Terry Carson, the Villa's youthful centre-forward.

The brown-eyed youngster flushed. "Pardon me, Sir Aubrey," he said, looking straight at the baronet, "but we did knock—twice—"

"You are now adding deliberate lying—" began Sir Aubrey bitingly.

"The kid's telling the truth," put in Hefty Hebble, the burly skipper, taking a quick step across the carpet. "You were so absorbed in your game of Aunt Sally that—"

"No impertinence, sir!" shouted Ailen, going red about his prominent ears and thumping the top of the desk. "I ordered you people to be here at ten o'clock—"

"And we're here," grinned Hefty, "with the fresh morning dew still moist upon our flowerlike faces!"

A deep chuckle broke from the other footballers, making a noise like a damp squib.

"The only flower you resemble is a sunflower, Hebble," said the baronet.

"Oh, how do you make that out?" growled the burly back, suspicion in his tone.

"A sunflower is big, ugly, useless, and—er—seedy!" answered Sir Aubrey.

The insult brought a hot flush to Hefty's broad features, but he was not

quick-witted enough to frame a suitable retort.

The baronet, an unpleasant smile creasing his fleshy features, ran on, not altogether displeased at having scored off Hefty Hebble.

"I have one or two things to say to you people this morning," he said, sinking into his armchair and feeling for his cigar-case. "Come inside and close the door; you have plenty of time for lounging about with your hands in your pockets when you're on the field of play!"

There was no mistaking the sting in the words, and the tight-lipped players exchanged glances. They guessed what was coming.

Sir Aubrey, meanwhile, was regarding the footballers through a haze of cigar smoke, his dark eyes narrowed, his whole manner offensive.

"Contrary to your expectations, I have not summoned you for a wholesale distribution of medals," remarked the baronet, with heavy sarcasm; "though I am the first to admit that you, as the world's worst footballers, are entitled to some form of recognition! I need hardly tell you that I am anything but satisfied with the manner in which you have been playing of late, for during the past two months you have played nine matches, and lost them all in masterly fashion! This state of affairs won't do; there has got to be an alteration! We've got to stop the rot! I employ you people to win matches, not to lose them; but you are inclined to lose sight of that unimportant fact! You get your wages each Saturday, and that is where your interest ends!"

This was a cowardly blow below the belt, of course, and Hefty Hebble looked positively dangerous as he rose from his chair and walked across to Sir Aubrey's desk.

The big fellow fixed his hard, honest eyes upon the portly little baronet; and Ailen, shifting uneasily, felt anything but comfortable.

"I'm a straightforward, ordinary kind of chap, Sir Aubrey," said Hefty, "and I call a spade a spade, so I want to know exactly what you mean by that last remark!"

The baronet smoked in silence for some seconds, his mocking gaze upon Hefty Hebble's broad features.

"I dislike your tone, Hebble," he re-

marked at length; "I fear you are apt to forget yourself when you address me! I am the chairman of the club, a baronet, and a gentleman of some standing in—"

"What exactly did you mean by that remark?" demanded Hefty, his heavy jaw jutting forward in uncompromising fashion, his mighty fist thumping the top of the highly-polished desk.

He looked as companionable as a rattlesnake, and the baronet decided that the moment for evasion had arrived.

"Maybe I spoke lightly; without weighing my words," said Sir Aubrey, somewhat hurriedly; "but I shall not try to hide the fact that I am anything but satisfied with the present state of affairs! As I have already pointed out, I pay you fellows to win matches; yet you have lost nine games in succession—a performance of which you are justly proud, no doubt! Our opponents are delighted, of course; but I am afraid I cannot add my voice to the chorus of adulation! You are all very handsome and ornamental, but I cannot afford to keep eleven expensive pets!"

Sir Aubrey was grinning gloatingly as he glanced round at the set faces, for he knew that he had touched the footballers upon the raw. Also, he knew that they were young enough to wince beneath the lash of sarcasm, crude though it might be.

Terry Carson was tight-lipped as he gazed straight at the baronet.

"We've certainly lost a few games of late, Sir Aubrey," he said, speaking quickly; "but you mustn't forget that there isn't a team in the country that doesn't strike its bad patch some time during the season. It's inevitable; it's to be expected! What is more, Hoppy Hawkins has been out of the team for over a month, whilst Crayo and Battle have been down with a bad go of flu! Every club has to take the rough with the smooth; and you won't improve matters by trying to be funny at our expense!"

"Exactly!" put in Sir Aubrey, waving a podgy hand. "I admit all that, my dear Carson; but I had hoped that a young man of your peculiar talents would be able to hold the side together by sheer force of personality! Yet your displays have been singularly inept, if I may say so!"

This was a lie, of course, and the youngster flushed. He made no remark, however.

"Also, my eloquent young friend," continued the baronet, thoroughly enjoying the youngster's discomfiture, "permit me to remind you that I am addressing my remarks to Hebble. I did not ask for your immature opinion upon the matter that is under discussion. H'm! Ha!"

It was only with the utmost difficulty that Terry managed to hold himself in check, and had Sir Aubrey been a younger man he would have been treated to a most interesting five minutes.

"I have decided upon a drastic reform, Hebble," continued the baronet—"a reform that is long overdue! Nominally, you are the captain of these—er—incompetents, but I have found in you none of those points and qualities that make a leader! You are too easy-going, Hebble; you know nothing of discipline—that iron rule, without which any team must surely go to the dogs! Your word should be law; you should give orders, and see that they are carried out—by force, if necessary! Force! Do you hear? In a word, Hebble, you lack the supreme gift of leadership; you are no general. You are no more qualified to skipper a side than is an overgrown hobbledohoy of a schoolboy—your Carson, for instance!"

Hefty Hebble grunted, Terry swallowed hard, the other players scowled and looked dangerous.

"Go on!" growled the burly back, nodding his head. "I can guess what's coming! You're going to drop me and appoint one of the other fellows! Well, good luck to you! Being captain under you is a pretty thankless task, anyway! You mean to drop me?"

The smiling baronet inclined his sleek head.

"Your perspicacity does you infinite credit, Hebble," he observed suavely; "it is most acute of you to have got the drift of my few veiled remarks! H'm! Ha! Yes, I have decided to appoint another skipper in your place, my dear fellow, but I am compelled, most reluctantly, to overlook the claims of these—er—leaders of men!" He nodded towards the scowling players. "I am going to appoint a man of iron, who is a born master of men, a man of iron, who will be obeyed—even if he has to get his way by sheer physical force!"

Eleven faces were alight with interest, of course.

It was Terry Carson who spoke.

"That sounds interesting," said the brown-eyed youngster, a trifle grimly. "And who is this little Bismarck on wheels?"

"One moment!" smiled Sir Aubrey. "I feel sure he will be charmed to make your acquaintance!"

His podgy fingers were already pressing the ivory bell-push on the desk, and a moment later the door opened, and a scared-looking office-boy entered the room.

"Send Mr. Scannan in!" snapped the baronet. "And look sharp!"

The door closed again, and the youngster scuttled away down the corridor like a frightened rabbit.

"And where did you bump up against this superman with the mailed fist and the cast-iron teeth, Sir Aubrey?" asked Terry Carson quietly.

A tinge of angry blood crept into the football magnate's fleshy features, and he was about to make a blistering retort when there came the sound of heavy footsteps from without.

"This is my Man of Iron!" announced Sir Aubrey, with an unpleasant grin.

A moment later the door was kicked open with a vicious force that threatened to wrench it off its hinges, and Hefty Hebble and his men gasped in amazement as they caught their first glimpse of Mr. Tiny Scannan.

"My only hat!" burst out Terry Carson.

The Boss!

"COME inside, my dear Tiny!" said Sir Aubrey, his heavy features alight with evil glee.

"Allow me to introduce you to the other members of the side! Boys, this is Tiny Scannan, your new captain!"

"The Man of Iron?" queried Terry Carson.

The baronet nodded.

"The Man of Iron, with brass knobs on!" grunted Hefty Hebble, studying the stranger with shrewd eyes.

Coming to an abrupt halt, Mr. Scannan placed his hairy paws on his hips and looked the players up and down, and what he saw did not seem to impress him.

He grunted.

"A bright lot, I must say!" he growled, his voice welling up from the interior of his boots. "Morning!" he added grudgingly, nodding his bullet head.

The players murmured a reply to the belated greeting, and continued to stare at the man of iron.

Tiny Scannan was a man of six feet three, but he was able to carry his height because he was almost perfectly proportioned. His massive shoulders were broad and his chest was of remarkable depth, and his head, which was close-cropped, was square and enormous.

His mighty limbs were encased in a light tweed suit of pronounced sporting cut, and his grey bowler-hat, which was a shade too small for him, was tilted over one eye, giving him a rakish appearance.

The Man of Iron had not thought fit to remove his hat on entering the room.

Terry Carson and Hefty exchanged glances.

"I'll bet you a tanner it's a fixture!" growled the latter, producing a coin.

"I'll bet it isn't!" said Terry, taking his cue. "D'you mind holding the stakes, sir?"

Without waiting for a reply, the youngster placed two coins in Scannan's big paw.

"What's the game—ch?" growled the Man of Iron, a black scowl upon his indeterminate features.

Terry ignored the question.

"Excuse me, sir!" he said, smiling sweetly; and he reached up and removed the little grey bowler. "There you are!" he said, turning to Hefty.

"The bob's mine!"

"Look here, you cheeky young hound—" shouted Scannan throatily, suspecting that he was having his leg pulled.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

After winning match after match with a regularity which has placed them at the top of the league, the boys of Storrydene F.C. suddenly strike a bad patch and lose nine matches right off the reel. Dissatisfied with the state of affairs, Sir Aubrey Ailen, a portly, purse-proud baronet and chairman of the club, thinks it high time the team is gingered up. He is ruminating thus when "Tiny" Scannan, a tough customer, turning the scales at eighteen stone, steps into the breach and guarantees to stem the rot that has set in at Bedwell Park. The following Monday morning just prior to the arrival of the Storrydene boys at his office at ten o'clock, Sir Aubrey, in a burst of childish impatience and anger, hurls an inkwell and a ruler at the inoffensive clock on his wall. Just at that moment the office door opens to admit the players.

(Now Read On.)

He was short-tempered and touchy, and he did not take kindly to being the victim of a practical joke. His fellow-men usually cringed before him, but Terry and the others merely grinned.

It was a new experience, and the Man of Iron did not like it.

"Your hat, sir!" smiled Terry, returning the bowler and bowing low before the scowling giant. "You didn't take it off, so one or two of us thought it was a fixture!"

"Soldered on, y'know!" put in Hefty Hebble brightly.

The new skipper's little eyes held an ugly, red glint as he glared down into Terry's upturned face. He looked a very tough customer at that moment, and he it was who was going to rule Storrydene Villa with a rod of iron!

"All I hope," mused Hefty, scratching his ear thoughtfully, "is that it keeps fine for him!"

And, strangely enough, the other players were thinking likewise. They would not be compelled to put up with a bullying tyrant—if tyrant Scannan were—for they could ask to be placed on the transfer list, of course; but most of them liked Storrydene, and had become part of the happy family at Bedwell Park. They had no desire to seek a new club, even though Sir Aubrey threatened to make drastic changes; also, it looked as though there were stirring times ahead.

Tiny's heavy jaw was jutting like the toe of a boot as he grunted, strode across the carpet, swept some papers aside, and seated himself upon the top of Sir Aubrey's desk, thus giving the baronet an uninterrupted view of a broad back.

He then narrowed his eyes and glanced round at the eleven smiling faces.

"Perhaps it will be as well if we get to know each other at once!" said Scannan, his deep voice reverberating through the room, his manner truculent. It was obvious that he meant to put the footballers in their place once and for all. "I signed forms for this club over a week ago, and I signed on the understanding that I was to be skipper. Well, I'm here, and you'll probably notice a few changes within the next few hours! I'm used to being obeyed, and every time I give an order, every time I speak—"

"You say something!" remarked Terry Carson quietly.

Tiny Scannan gulped noisily, his prominent Adam's apple shooting downwards like a lift.

"Shut your mouth!" he growled, half rising from his perch and thrusting his face forward. "I shan't tell you again! I don't allow insubordination! Let's see! Where was I?"

"You were telling us what a fine fellow you are!" said Terry helpfully.

Sitting perfectly still, Tiny Scannan tried to sear the youngster with a blistering stare; but Terry merely smiled like a cherub.

"I'm used to being obeyed," continued the new skipper, avoiding Terry's brown eyes; "I'm used to giving orders, and having 'em obeyed at the double! I'm BOSS! That's what it amounts to! I'm boss of the team, and as boss I mean to have my way in everything!"

"Hear, hear!" murmured Terry. "What did Mr. Gladstone say in 1066?"

Muttering savagely, Scannan swung round upon Sir Aubrey Ailen.

"What's the matter with this kid?" he shouted, very red in the face. "Is he up the pole?"

"I have, on occasions, detected unmistakable signs of insanity," answered the baronet.

"Well, I advise him to get sane at once," growled Tiny, "for I've got a special treatment for idiots!" There was a threat in the words, but Terry continued to smile. "There's something wrong with this side," continued Scannan, "and I know what it is! You're slack! You want gingering up! What's more, I'm just the feller to do the gingering! Got that?"

The players nodded, and Sir Aubrey grinned and rubbed his hands.

"We may as well start as we mean to go on," concluded Scannan, looking at his watch. "It is now four minutes to eleven; I expect to find you fellows in the dressing-room, and ready for practice, on the stroke of the hour! That gives you four minutes in which to change. Scatter!"

A Slight Misunderstanding!

THERE is a comfortable billiards-room in the clubhouse up at Bedwell Park, and at half-past eleven the door of this apartment was kicked violently open. The kicker was Tiny Scannan.

The vicious kick split one of the panels; the sharp report disturbed the quiescent air of the room.

Standing statuesque upon the threshold, Scannan glared round the room, and what he saw appeared to increase his displeasure.

Terry Carson, Hefty Hebble, and two or three others were playing snooker, but nobody took the slightest notice of the fuming figure in the doorway. Indeed, his noisy arrival seemed to have passed unnoticed.

Tiny Scannan licked his lips and struggled for speech; then:

"Hi!"

Terry, who was in the act of potting a ball, straightened himself up and cupped his right hand round his ear.

"Did you fellows hear anything?" he asked, a puzzled light in his brown eyes. "Can it be the cuckoo, or is it a charabanc calling to its young? As a student of human nature and animal life, I am deeply interested—"

"Hi!"

The long drawn-out roar, which must have been heard in the street, threatened to crack the ceiling; yet still the players were deaf to it.

"There it is again," declared Terry, shaking his head. "I'm sure I heard something! It was a mournful cry, gentle and caressing, the song of the hedgehog in full bloom! It must be, for—"

Terry was allowed to say no more, for a muscular hand closed round his neck and jerked him bodily from the floor. Wriggling, he screwed his head round and smiled up into the blazing eyes of the new captain.

"You heard me!" roared Tiny Scannan, dropping the youngster and thrusting him across the carpet.

"Dear me," smiled Terry, "if it isn't Mr. Cannon! And how is Mrs. Cannon and all the little air-guns?"

"Cut that out!" roared the skipper, his queer assortment of features going purple. "Didn't I tell you fellers to be in the dressing-room on the stroke of eleven? Didn't I give that order?"

The players exchanged glances of pain and amazement.

"You certainly said eleven o'clock, sir," smiled Terry Carson, "but we thought you meant eleven o'clock to-morrow morning! You see, we always have a lazy day on Monday! It's the rule up here!"

Tiny Scannan breathed hard.

"Oh, is it?" he asked. "Well, it's a rule that's going to be altered—and quickly! You fellers are going to change and get on to the field, for I want to see how you shape! That's an order, and it has got to be obeyed to-day—not to-morrow! Scatter!"

Sighing sadly, the players replaced their cues in the rack and made their way to the dressing-room, and less than a quarter of an hour found them kicking a ball about upon the smooth playing pitch.

Scannan, also, had changed, and he looked a mountain of a man in his black and white jersey and white shorts. Physically, at any rate, he was undoubtedly the greatest player in the country.

Standing apart, he watched the other fellows as they tested Gordon, the reserve goalie; then, Gordon having muffed an easy drive from Terry Carson, the Man of Iron muttered fiercely and strode across to the goal.

"Out of it!" he growled, giving Gordon a vicious shove. "You call yourself a goalkeeper, but you should try your hand at keeping white mice! We're up against a hot side on Saturday, so I shall drop you and take your place!"

Gordon was a very surprised young man as he removed his cap and ran his fingers through his tousled hair.

"You!" he gasped. "I didn't know you were a goalie!"

"I'm everything," grunted Tiny Scannan, "and I can do most things better than the other feller! For instance, I know more about 'keeping' than you'll ever learn! Let her go, Carson!"

Smiling a grim little smile, Terry worked himself into his favourite angle and sent a tricky oblique shot across the goal-mouth; and a roar of ironical laughter broke from the other players when Scannan, taking matters in leisurely fashion, let drive with a mighty fist—and missed the twirling ball by fully six inches!

It had been Tiny's amiable intention to treat the shot with spectacular contempt, so Terry, guessing that such was the case, had put any amount of spin into the shot.

"Well saved, sir!"

"Oh, pretty play!"

"Isn't little Scanny clever!"

The professionals were all schoolboys at heart, and they thoroughly enjoyed the mild "rag."

Scannan, however, was scowling as he fished the ball out of the net and hugged it against his thick chest.

He fixed his smouldering eyes upon the cherubic countenance of Carson.

"I suppose you could do that again?" he asked, a sneer in his deep voice.

"Of course he could," put in Hefty Hebble. "He could do it on his head! Try him!"

Still scowling, Tiny threw the ball out to Terry, and the lean-limbed youngster ran forward and took a rasping first-time drive; and another roar of laughter burst from the onlookers when the leather caught the Man of Iron full between the eyes and sent him reeling backwards into the yawning net.

"Goal!"

Hefty and the other fellows were not callous, but they could not help thinking that this was a case of poetic justice. Tiny Scannan had done nothing but throw his weight about from the moment they had set eyes upon him, and now he was being taken down a peg or so by the very youngster he had tried to humiliate.

"Sorry, old man!" shouted Terry. "Quite an accident, you know!"

Looking somewhat dazed, the new skipper scrambled to his feet and steadied himself against an upright; and he was an unlovely spectacle as he glared round at the smiling faces.

"Go on—grin!" he growled, passing the back of his hand across his soiled features. "Maybe I'll give you something to grin about one of these days!"

He was looking straight at Hefty Hebble as he made the remark, and the burly back coloured.

"You can please yourself about that, Scannan," he said; and the quietly-spoken words amounted to a challenge.

A tense silence followed, all eyes being upon the new skipper; but nothing happened.

"That'll be all to-day," said Scannan. "I shall expect you here in the morning on the stroke of nine-thirty!"

"But we never get here till ten, old man," put in Grace, the right back.

Scannan grinned—unpleasantly.

"Don't you?" he asked. "Just turn up at ten o'clock to-morrow and see what happens! I'm boss now, you know, and I'm going to run the team on my own lines! Half-past nine is your time, so I advise you to be here to the tick! Anybody got anything to say?"

There was another tense silence, another battle of wills.

"Yes, I have, sir," said Terry Carson, speaking with quiet deliberation.

A wave of angry blood overspread the scowling features of the man of iron.

"Huh! You have, have you?" he asked. "And what have you got to say? Come on; out with it!"

"I really don't like to ask you," said the youngster, "but have you got any cigarette pictures?"

A yell of laughter echoed round the ground, and it was a very angry Scannan who detached himself from his men and strode away towards the clubhouse.

"Wh-what can you do with a blighter like that?" asked Gordon, a few seconds later. "Are we going to stick it?"

Hefty Hebble grinned.

"Course we are," he said. "We're going to get a lot of fun out of Sir Aubrey's Man of Iron!"

Iron Rule!

TINY SCANNAN had taken his cold shower by the time Hefty Hebble and the others clattered into the dressing-room, and the manner in which he greeted his men was anything but effusive.

"Why the blazes don't you move yourselves?" he demanded. "You're professional footballers—not a crowd of rheumatic slugs! No wonder you can't win matches; you're too dashed tired to move! Still, I'm going to alter all that, my beauties! The Hefty Hebble rest-cure is at an end!"

Nobody said anything, although Terry Carson had the greatest difficulty in checking the hot words that rose to his lips. The players, as a matter of fact, found plenty to think about, for it was already obvious that life at Bedwell Park was going to be anything but a bed of roses during the Tiny Scannan regime; and Hefty, for one, was wondering what would be the outcome of this arbitrary rule.

Tiny Scannan was a bully and a tyrant—there could be no two opinions about that, and the question was—how long would the boys stand this despotic business? Hebble himself was all for staying with the Villa and fighting the matter to a finish; and



"I'm sure I heard something," said Terry. "It must be——" He got no further, for a muscular hand closed round his neck and jerked him bodily from the floor. Wriggling, Terry screwed his head round and smiled into the blazing eyes of the new captain. (See page 26.)

he meant to air his views at the first possible moment.

Very little was said as the players changed, for it was impossible to carry on an ordinary conversation while Scannan was nosing about the dressing-room, his little eyes missing nothing; and the footballers wondered why, seeing that he was dressed, he did not clear out and leave them to themselves.

They were soon to know.

It was Hefty Hebble's habit to smoke three pipes a day, and none smoked so sweetly as the one that followed the morning kick-about, so his broad features were wearing a smile of contentment as he thumbed tobacco into his seasoned French briar and prepared to light up.

"No, you don't!" grunted Scannan, striding across the dressing-room; and the next moment he snatched the pipe from Hefty's lips and flung it through the open window. "I don't allow smoking!" he declared.

The incident happened with such startling suddenness that even Hefty could scarcely appreciate what had actually taken place; but his heavy features became as hard as granite as he felt a warm trickle of blood flowing from his lacerated under lip.

He looked from the open window, through which the treasured pipe had disappeared, to the grinning face of Tiny Scannan, and there was a strange expression in his clear eyes that should have told the new skipper to tread warily.

"Is that your idea of a joke, Scannan?" asked Hefty.

"No," he answered; "that's my idea of discipline! You fellows have got a lot to learn, and the sooner you get to know my ways the better it'll be for you! I don't allow drinking, and I don't allow smoking—anyway, not when I'm about, and you'll find that I'm about a good deal! As a matter of fact, it was in order to impress my views upon you

that I chucked your pipe through the window, Hebble! I'm boss——"

"Yes, you've said that before," put in Hefty quietly. "And now I suggest that you take a little walk and fetch my pipe, Scannan."

"If you take my tip, Hebble, you'll leave your pipe where it is, for I don't allow——"

"I'll put it another way," said Hefty. "Are you going to fetch my pipe or aren't you? That's a fair question!"

"Am I blazes!" grunted Tiny Scannan. "What do you take me for?"

"I'll tell you," returned Hefty. "I take you for the most poisonous, ill-bred apology for a man that I've ever run up against, and I've met some real bad 'uns in my time! Just because you're big and ugly, Scannan, you think you can chuck your weight about and frighten everybody stiff, but you're going to find out that——"

"Stow it, you hound!" roared Tiny, towering above Hefty with upraised fist; and Hefty, thoroughly roused, planted a snappy punch in the region of the giant's watchchain.

"O-o-o-o-ch!" wheezed Scannan, swaying backwards; and Hebble helped him on his way by planting a swift punch to the thick-lipped mouth.

Smack!

A right and a left followed in quick succession.

Smack, smack!

Hefty felt vicious, for he prized that pipe, a birthday present from Carson.

Crashing against the door, Tiny Scannan swayed from side to side and glared across at Hefty Hebble; and even then he could not believe that any human being had dared to strike him.

"Had enough?" asked Hefty, glancing at his knuckles.

The quiet question seemed to rob the new skipper of every vestige of sanity, for he spluttered and grimaced as he thrust his massive head forward and

padded across the floor, his little eyes fixed upon the man who had hit him.

"Have—have I had enough?" he breathed, showing ugly, yellow teeth. "No, I've not had enough, so I'm coming up for more! I'm almost afraid of myself at this moment, you fool!"

"Good!" grunted Hefty, watching his man as a cat watches a mouse. "That's where we differ, Scannan, for I'm not afraid of you!"

This defiant attitude was very heroic, of course, but the other players feared for the burly back. Hefty Hebble was no weakling, but he was little more than a light-weight compared with Tiny Scannan. Hefty was in great peril at that moment, for one punch from Scannan's mighty fist was capable of doing permanent injury—or worse. Also, it was quite likely that Tiny did not know his own terrible strength.

Torry Carson saw Hebble's peril, and he was quick to act.

"You're not going to scrap in here," he said, stepping between the two men. "Go into the gym if you want to fight. Settle it with the gloves!"

Scannan gave a mirthless, unpleasant laugh, and looked down into the youngster's brown eyes.

"Huh, so you're going to lock after your pal, are you?" he asked. "You think you'll save him from a hitting, eh? Well, you little rat, let me tell you that no man ever hit me twice and got away with it! I'm boss of this show, and I'm going to let you see exactly what happens to any fool who gets on the wrong side of me! Hebble's asked for it, and Hebble's going to get it; and you're going to follow Hebble's pipe through the window unless you move in double quick time! Got that?"

(There will be another thrilling instalment of this great footer serial in next week's MAGNET, chums. Make sure of reading it by ordering your copy well in advance.)

FAMOUS FOOTBALL CLUBS.

(Continued from page 2.)

ward in Harry Sellars. This player is thought by some to be the most polished footballer in the side, and these folks are not very far wrong. Harry has not known any other first-class club apart from Stoke, as he joined the club as an inside-forward from Ledgate Park. Having plenty of forwards and not too many half-backs, Manager Mather tried Sellars in the middle line. The experiment was an immediate success.

Even Tom Williamson, the centre-half, has been a forward in his time, though he had already been turned into a half-back before Stoke secured him from Blackburn Rovers. Thus in the Potters' middle line there are three fellows who have all been forwards, so it ought to follow that they know how to give the right sort of passes. They do. Tom Williamson is also Scotch, but the speedier football in England doesn't find him wanting.

Sure-footed Wilson!

Already it will be seen that Stoke, not having too much money, have been compelled to look for players whom other clubs did not particularly want to keep. And some extremely wise choices have been made. A case in point is Charlie Wilson, the centre-forward who smiles all the time, and shows a gold tooth.

Wilson has had rather a remarkable career, and there is no man in present-day football who has a record equal to his. Tottenham Hotspur's manager found him just after the War. He was with the Spurs when they won the championship of the Second Division. Somehow or other it was decided that he might fit Huddersfield Town better than the Spurs' attack, so to Huddersfield went Wilson for a big fee. He made good, and helped the side to win two First Division championships in succession. Then Huddersfield thought that they could do without him, so Wilson packed up his kit-bag and went

to Stoke, to help them to win the championship of the Northern Third Division. So you see that within the few years since the War Wilson has been with three different teams which won the championship of three different Leagues.

Wilson is great at the goalscoring business, and though some say that he has only one foot for shooting purposes, that doesn't matter much if he gets as many goals with that one foot as most players get with two, does it?

Worthy Pupils!

On his right Wilson has a young pair of raiders in Cull, the outside man, and Bussey, the inside-right. Both of these were found as lads by the Stoke club, and were developed by them.

On the left there is rather more experience, for Robert Archibald—there is almost a team of "Dobbies" at Stoke—has played for many clubs, and in many countries. He is a wee mite of a footballer who used to play for the Wolves and Hull City. He has been with the club for six years. A capable reserve forward is Richard Johnson, who was once with Liverpool.

These "Stokers" have a ground of which they have a right to be proud. A few months back the purchase of the land on which the club has played for fifty years was completed. Formerly it belonged to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the club only had it on lease. Now it is theirs, but there is one thing they can't do with it—play football or other games on Good Friday. There was a clause in the purchase agreement forbidding Good Friday games on the ground for all time.

There used to be a similar embargo concerning Christmas Day football, but this has now gone. The ground will accommodate fifty thousand people, and is capable of being enlarged to hold even more. The capacity is not often tested in these days, of course, but the time may come when Stoke will need all the accommodation they possess—when they get back to the First Division!

"THE SCHOOLBOY HYPNOTIST!"

(Continued from page 23.)

thunderbolt had passed without hitting them, as it were.

The matter was ended. It was not the "sack"—it was not a "flogging"—it was not even a "jaw."

It was all over!

The Famous Five were still wondering when they came out with the Remove after third lesson. So were the rest of the Form.

"I say, you fellows, how did you manage it?" inquired Billy Bunter.

But Harry Wharton & Co. could not answer that question. They had not the faintest idea how it had been managed. But a little later they cornered Crum in the quad and asked him questions.

"We're let off," said Harry. "That's all right! But how did you know, Crum? You told us yesterday it would be all right. How did you know?"

Crum grinned.

"Well, I knowed!" he answered.

"We know you knowed," grinned Bob Cherry. "But how?"

"The howfulness is a terrific mystery," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"How did you know, Crum?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Didn't I tell you I'd squared it with the old dodger?" grinned Crum.

"Yes; but how?" exclaimed Nugent.

Crum chuckled.

"That's telling!" he answered.

"Well, tell us, fathhead!" said Wharton impatiently. "You seem to have got us off somehow—that seems clear. We're obliged. But how did you do it?"

"That's telling!" was Crum's only answer.

And that was all the satisfaction that the Famous Five could obtain from the Schoolboy Hypnotist.

THE END.

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss the next magnificent yarn in this topping series: "THE NEW BOY'S ENEMY!" You'll vote it a real good 'un!)

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BUNTER START AND FINISH

FAMOUS FIVE start here, for Truck stop.

READ THIS FIRST.

Going to the truckshop the Famous Five discover that Bunter has bagged a cake, promising to cash a postal order and come back later and pay for it. Knowing Bunter's methods Wharton & Co. forthwith go in chase. Bunter has ample opportunity to dodge about and elude his pursuers, and if he can outwit them and get back without at least two of them catching him at the same moment, he has won. If not, Bunter loses, and gets a bumping! (The Rules of the Game are on page 11.)

5

Bunter P for breath and eats last bit of cake before in for truck stop.

4

Bunter reaches bookhouse and eats 3rd quarter of cake.

2

Bunter hides behind bushes and eats 2nd quarter of cake.

Cross bridge only by shaded squares.

Cross bridge by shaded squares.

1

Bunter hides behind trees and eats 1st quarter of cake (exact throw in any direction only required to land on numbered squares).

3

Bunter cashes Postal Order.

