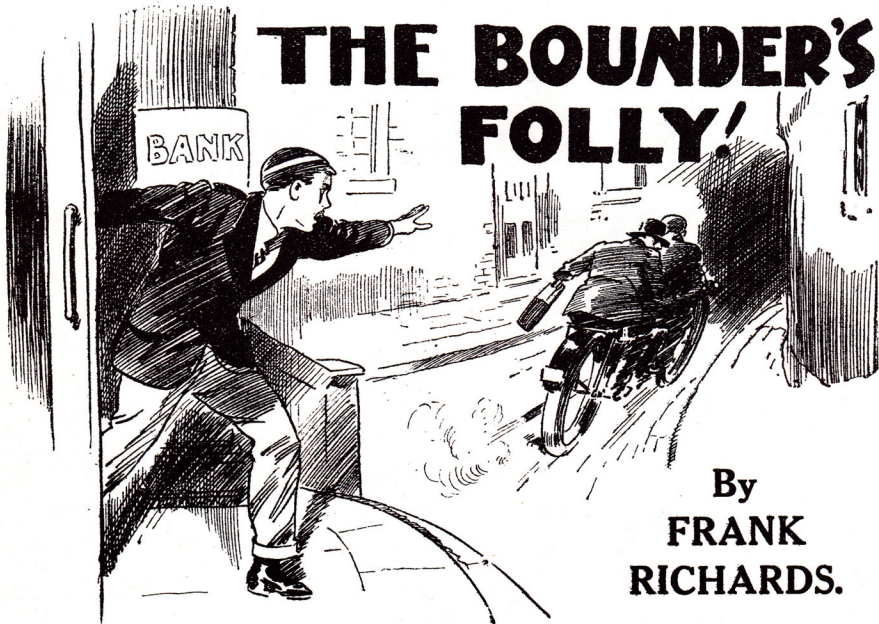


Harry Wharton & Co.'s Easter Holiday Thrill!

# The MAGNET 2<sup>D</sup>



# THE BOUNDER'S FOLLY!



By  
**FRANK  
RICHARDS.**

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### A Picnic for One!

"**H**ARRY, old chap!"  
"Come on, Bunter!"  
"That basket's heavy, old fellow!"

"I know that, ass. Are you going to offer to carry it?" asked Harry Wharton sarcastically.

"That's it, old thing. Just what I was going to say."  
"Oh, my hat!"

Harry Wharton stopped, and stared at the Owl of the Remove. He was astonished.

Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh stared at Billy Bunter also. They were equally astonished.

There was no doubt that the picnic-basket was rather heavy. It was packed with lunch for six—or, rather, for seven, as Bunter had to be counted as two in such matters. Harry Wharton & Co. had carried it, in turns, since leaving Wharton Lodge; but Billy Bunter had not taken a turn. Nobody expected Billy Bunter to lend a hand in anything. Besides, Billy Bunter had his own weight to carry, and on a warm April day he found that quite enough.

Indeed, he seemed to find it rather more than enough. The chums of the Greyfriars Remove had walked a mile from Wharton Lodge. A mile was not much to the Famous Five. But it reduced William George Bunter to a state of perspiration and puffing. His fat face was crimson; perspiration trickled down it in little streams, and

he puffed and he blew. A dozen times, at least, Bunter had suggested stopping for a rest; but the Famous Five walked on, and the fat junior rolled and puffed and blew in their wake.

So his offer to carry a heavy basket, in addition to his own unusual avoirdupois, was astonishing.

"I mean it," said Bunter, blinking at five surprised faces through his big spectacles. "Why shouldn't I take a turn?"

"No reason why you shouldn't, except that you're so jolly lazy!" said Frank Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent! I'm offering to carry the basket!" said Bunter, with dignity. "We shall get on quicker, too. It won't be so much to me as to you fellows. I'm fit."

"Oh crumbs! You look it!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Well, hand over the basket and let's get on!" said Bunter. "We're wasting time, you know. And I'm hungry already."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I shan't be sorry to hand it over, old fat man!" he said. "Here you are! I'll take it on again when you're fed-up."

"That's all right," said Bunter cheerily.

The Famous Five walked on again, Billy Bunter labouring behind with the basket.

They were following a footpath through the wood that lay between Wharton Lodge and the Surrey town of Wimford. Bright April sunshine flickered through the green branches overhead.

The chums of the Remove were

spending the Easter holidays at Harry Wharton's home. Billy Bunter was, for once, a welcome, though perhaps not a delightful, guest.

A picnic in the woods, on a sunny spring day, appealed to Bunter. But it had its drawbacks. It was a mile and a half to the spot on the river bank that had been selected for the picnic. A yard and a half would have been enough for Bunter.

Having covered a mile, Billy Bunter was feeling as if wild horses would hardly have dragged him the remaining half-mile. That made his offer to carry a heavy basket all the more surprising. He lagged behind.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry looked round and hailed him. "Buck up, Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter. "Like me to take the basket again?" asked Harry Wharton.

"No fear! I mean, no, that's all right! But I say, you fellows, let's stop here for the picnic. This is all right."

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Wharton!"

"We're going to picnic by the river, ass!" said Johnny Bull. "It's a lovely spot—beautiful scenery!"

"Oh, blow the scenery!" said Bunter. "A fellow can't eat scenery."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get a move on, old podgy pippin!" said Bob Cherry. "It's lunch in that basket, you know, not supper."

"All right!" gasped Bunter. "I'll keep you fellows in sight. Don't dawdle!"

The cheery five sauntered on. They were not hurrying, and certainly, Billy Bunter was not. The fat junior lagged

farther and farther behind; and on the winding footpath through the wood he was soon out of sight of the Famous Five when they looked back.

Billy Bunter, once safely out of sight behind, stopped.

He mopped his streaming brow with his handkerchief, and puffed for breath. "Boasts!" he gasped.

Bunter was tired! He was also hungry. Bunter had no intention whatever of negotiating that other half-mile.

Really, it was not necessary when the lunch-basket was now in his possession.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came Bob Cherry's powerful voice, ringing through the green woods. "Come on, Bunter!"

"Coming!" yelled Bunter. He picked up the basket again.

He restarted after the interval. But he did not follow the footpath by which the Famous Five had gone.

He had offered, fair and square, to have the picnic on the spot; and those beasts, who had no mercy on a fellow's legs, had refused. Now they could go and eat coke!

Billy Bunter turned from the footpath into the wood. He wound his way through thickets and beeches and oaks. He grinned as he plugged on—a happy grin. Sooner or later, those beasts would guess why he had offered to carry the basket. But knowledge would come too late! If they liked to search for him through the wood they were welcome; it would be like searching for a needle in a bundle of hay. They would have to miss their lunch, but that could not be helped; besides, it was all right, because there would be all the more for Bunter. Deep into the wood went the fat Owl, leaving the footpath farther and farther behind.

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton & Co. walked on cheerily. They slackened pace more and more, to give Bunter a chance to come up. But Bunter did not come up, though they did not guess yet that he had taken a different direction.

"Here we are!" said Harry Wharton, as the juniors came out of the wood on the river bank, and the gleaming, sunny river burst on their view.

Bob Cherry looked back. "That fat ass isn't in sight," he said. "Well, he can't be far behind," said Harry. "He will roll in soon. Jolly here, isn't it?"

"Ripping!" "The ripfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

It was, as Johnny Bull had said, a lovely spot. The sunny stream rippled and sang between green, grassy banks, backed by the shady woods, the green Surrey downs looming against the blue sky in the distance. Farther along the river a thin spiral of smoke rose from an unseen chimney belonging to some bungalow nestling among the woods by the stream. It was the only sign of a human habitation.

The chums of the Remove threw themselves down on the bank, to wait for Bunter to come up.

They waited. They went on waiting. But there was no Bunter! "That silly ass can't have missed the way, surely!" said Frank Nugent, at last.

"Couldn't possibly," said Harry. "Well, he doesn't seem to be coming."

"The arrivfulness is not terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh,

with a dusky grin. "Perhapsfully the esteemed and idiotic Bunter does not mean to arrive at all-fully."

"Wha-a-at?" "Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Let's go back and find the rotter!"

The chums returned to the wood, but there was no sign of Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove, as a matter of fact, hidden in a secluded recess close at hand, was making hay of the contents of the luncheon-basket.

"The fat villain!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "He's not coming!"

It dawned on the Famous Five all at once.

"That's why he offered to carry the basket!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"The—the fat rotter!" "The frabjous Owl!"

"Oh crumbs! And what about our lunch?" ejaculated Bob, in dismay.

"The lunchfulness will not be terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed lunch will be a boot on the other leg!"

There was a splash of an oar on the water, but the Famous Five did not heed it. They stared blankly into the woods, watching for a sign of the lagging Owl. But there was no sign. There was no Bunter—and there was no lunch! And there was no doubt that,

**Not for nothing was Vernon-Smith nicknamed the Bounder by his schoolfellows. . . In the vacation, with no school rules and restrictions to keep his waywardness in check, Vernon-Smith becomes the lawless Bounder with a vengeance!**

when they saw Bunter again, an X-ray apparatus would be required to find out what had become of the lunch! The picnic for six had turned out a picnic for one—and there was no doubt that that one was enjoying it, if that reflection was any comfort. Judging by the looks of the Famous Five, it wasn't!

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Bounder's Guests!

**S**MITHY, old man!" Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, removed the cigarette from his mouth and blew out a little stream of smoke. The Bounder was stretched at ease in a long garden chair on a green lawn, facing the sunny stream, under a shady beech. He looked up at Tom Redwing, and grinned through the haze of cigarette-smoke.

Back from the bank of the Wyme lay the green-shuttered bungalow. Behind it rose the woods and the Surrey downs. Tom Redwing had come out at the french windows that looked on the lawn. The brightness of the April morning was not reflected in Redwing's face. He was looking very serious and a little dogged as he came over to the tree under which his chum was sprawling in the long chair.

"Nice mornin', Reddy!" drawled the Bounder. "Like this better than the Form-room at Greyfriars, old bean?"

"It's ripping here!" said Redwing. "It's a topping place for a holiday, But—"

"There's always a 'but,' isn't there?" yawned Smithy. "Not sorry already that you camp with me for the hols, are you?"

"I rather think I am!" answered Redwing bluntly.

The Bounder sat up. "What rot!" he said. "What's the row now? I know you don't like my other jolly old guest. But you can leave him alone. You haven't been rowing with Freddy Paget, have you?"

"No. But—"

"There'll be some more company here later. I've told you that I've asked some of the Highcliffe chaps."

"I'm not friendly with the Highcliffe chaps," answered Redwing. "And it's not long since you were ragging with them, Smithy."

"My dear man, we don't want to keep up school rags and rows in the hols," answered the Bounder. "Pon and his friends are lively company."

"Too lively for me!" grunted Redwing. "Look here, Smithy, I'll put it plain! I don't like that pal you've picked up—Mr. Paget—and he's doing you no good! I don't think your father would like you asking him here."

"Tats!" said the Bounder. "The pater lets me do exactly as I like. He's taken this place for me for the hols, and I've got carte blanche. I can ask anybody I jolly well like."

"You picked up the man at the races," said Redwing. "You don't know anything about him, yet you've asked him here."

"He's good company."

"Oh, rot!" growled Redwing.

"If you want something a bit more circumspect, you can trot across to Wharton Lodge!" said the Bounder sarcastically. "I've no doubt the fellows there would be glad to see you—and you'd be glad to see them!"

"Oh, don't be an ass, Smithy!" said Redwing. "I can't see those fellows when you left Greyfriars at break-up on fighting terms with Wharton. It's rather rotten to be pitched so near them for the holidays."

"That's Wharton's fault," said the Bounder. "Everybody at Greyfriars believed that he was staying at the school over the holidays to swot for a scholarship exam. He seems to have changed his mind and come home, after all, to his jolly old uncle's house. I was quite surprised when I heard that that gang were there. I intend to keep clear of them. But you can please yourself."

Vernon-Smith's eyes glistened as he spoke, however. He was on the worst of terms with Harry Wharton, whose place he had taken as captain of the Greyfriars Remove. Certainly the Bounder would have been bitterly offended had his guest established friendly relations with the party at Wharton Lodge—which was rather hard on Redwing, who had never entered into the Bounder's feud, and never meant to enter into it, if he could help it.

Redwing was about to speak when a man came out at the french windows of the bungalow. Redwing's glance turned on him with strong disfavour. Mr. Paget was a young man of about thirty, rather handsome, and extremely well dressed. But a less keen eye than Redwing's would have seen the traces of reckless dissipation in his face.

Paget was yawning as he came across the sunny lawn. He had been up late the previous night, and so had the Bounder. Redwing had gone to bed at his usual time, but he knew that his chum had stayed up hours later, card-playing with his sporting guest. Smithy's face, indeed, betrayed plenty

of signs of late hours and feverish excitement.

Redwing could not help feeling troubled. Mr. Vernon-Smith, the millionaire, gave his son a free hand, and unlimited supplies of that useful article cash to enjoy his holiday his own way. But even Mr. Vernon-Smith would have looked grave, Redwing thought, had he seen that particular guest whom Smithy had carelessly asked to stay with him.

"Oh, here you are, kid!" drawled Mr. Paget. He fished for an eyeglass at the end of a cord, wedged it into a rather watery eye, gave Redwing a glance, and nodded to the Bouncer. "Takin' it easy?"

"Squat down!" said Smithy, waving his cigarette towards an empty chair. Mr. Paget shook his head.

"I'm walkin' over to Wimford," he said. "I've got to see a man." "You can have the car."

"I'd rather walk; good for me after our strenuous exertions last evenin'." See you later in the day, Smithy.

"Right-ho!" Mr. Paget strolled away and disappeared.

Tom Redwing frowned after him, and the Bouncer grinned.

"You're an old ass, Reddy!" he said good-humouredly. "I know that fellow's sort better than you do. But he's jolly company. He will get on all right with Pon & Co. when they come."

"I've no doubt he will!" answered Redwing dryly. "How much did he stick you for at cards last night, Smithy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Bouncer. "So you've guessed that that was what he was after?"

"Of course it was!" snapped Redwing. "Do you think he's a man to care for schoolboys' company unless he could make it pay?"

"Possibly not. But he hasn't made it pay!" grinned Smithy. "I'm not exactly the innocent duck he may have taken me for. I had the better of the game, Reddy, though I admit he's rather a deft hand at dealing from the bottom of the pack."

"Smithy!" exclaimed Redwing. "And that's the kind of man—"

"What's the jolly old odds, so long as you're 'appy?" said the Bouncer, shrugging his shoulders. "We're not at Greyfriars now, under old Quelch's eye, and the prefects on the watch! Why shouldn't a fellow kick a loose leg when he's got the chance? If you weren't such a sober old judge—"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Redwing restively. "I don't know what you asked me here for, Smithy."

The Bouncer chuckled as he threw away the stump of his cigarette, and rose from the chair. There was no doubt that the Bouncer liked Tom Red-

wing, the only friend he had ever made at Greyfriars School, and a fellow utterly unlike himself in every respect. And there was no doubt that Tom's presence at the riverside bungalow restrained the wild and wayward Bouncer from many reckless excesses; which was chiefly the reason why Tom stayed on, for the company in which he found himself was far from agreeable. But much as the Bouncer liked Redwing, he liked to shock him, too; and it amused his peculiar nature to see the dismay in Tom's honest face.

"Let's get on the river, old bean!" he said, and Redwing's clouded face brightened; as Smithy knew that it would. "Can't say I'm sorry to miss Freddy Paget for the day—a fellow can get fed-up on geegees and cards and smokes! What about a strenuous pull up to Wimford, to get an appetite for lunch?"

"Jolly good idea!" said Redwing. "You'll have to pull, though," said Smithy, grinning. "I'm seedy, after stayin' up late to beat Freddy at his own game."

They walked down to the boathouse together, the Bouncer yawning. The sturdy sailorman's son ran out the boat, and Vernon-Smith dropped on the cushions in the stern, while Tom picked up a pair of oars.

Redwing looked much more cheerful as he pulled at the oars. The boat glided along the sunny stream. Riverside Bungalow disappeared behind them, woods and meadows alternated on the gliding banks. In the distance a blur of smoke against the blue sky indicated where the town of Wimford lay.

Redwing, with his clear, steady eyes and healthy complexion, was a contrast to the tired, pallid Bouncer; and he thoroughly enjoyed the pull up the river, while Smithy slacked on the cushions.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" It was a sudden hail from the bank.

Redwing glanced round, in surprise. He knew that powerful voice—a voice that Stentor of old might have envied.

Five fellows stood on the bank. One of them—Bob Cherry—was waving his hat to Redwing.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" bawled Bob. "Fancy seeing you here, old bean! Pull in, Reddy!"

Redwing hesitated a moment. He was glad enough, on his own, to see Harry Wharton & Co., but he was doubtful about his chum.

Smithy sat up, and stared at the fellows on the bank.

"That crew!" he sneered. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Smithy!" roared Bob. "Pull in, old bean!"

Bob Cherry had apparently forgotten that there was bitter blood in the Remove at Greyfriars.

"What about it, Smithy?" asked Redwing. "Might as well be civil; no good keeping up rags on a holiday."

He was resting on his oars. The Bouncer nodded, and Tom Redwing dipped one oar, and turned the boat into the bank, where the Famous Five stood.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Asking for Trouble!

**H**ARRY WHARTON'S face was a little grim. He was surprised, and he was not pleased to see Vernon-Smith in the neighbourhood of Wharton Lodge. They had parted enemies at Greyfriars, and Wharton could not help thinking that the Bouncer might have chosen some other locality for his Easter holiday. Still, if Smithy was prepared to forget the feud, Wharton did not want to remember it.

"Reddy, old man, you've rolled along just at the right time!" said Bob Cherry, as the boat rocked against the rushes.

"How's that?" asked Redwing, with a smile.

"We're stranded." "The strandfulness is terrific, my esteemed Redwing," said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "The esteemed and rascally Bunter has walked off with our execrable lunch—"

"It was a jolly old picnic," explained Frank Nugent. "Bunter offered to carry the basket, and we never guessed why."

"We might have guessed!" grunted Johnny Bull. "But we didn't! We've been waiting for him to come up with the grub, and the fat villain hasn't come—and doesn't mean to come!"

"So here we are, Redwing!" said Harry Wharton. "As we've told them at home not to expect us to lunch, we're not going back. We're going on to Wimford for it."

"And it will save half the distance if you ferry us across the river," explained Bob. "Save us going a mile round by the bridge—see?"

"Oh, good!" said Redwing. "Jolly glad we came along, then!"

"If Vernon-Smith doesn't mind," said Harry, with a look at the Bouncer, who had not spoken, but who sat with a sarcastic and quite disagreeable smile on his hard face.

Lunch was already late, and the picnicers were hungry. They had already decided to walk on to Wimford for lunch, when Bob sighted the boat on the Wyme. Crossing the river at that point would save half the distance to the town, though Wharton would have hesitated to ask any favour of the Bouncer. That, however, had not occurred to the exuberant Bob, or to the other fellows.

"Shove in, Smithy!" said Tom. The Bouncer had picked up a boat-hook, but he used it to fend the boat off from the rushes.

"Hold on a minute!" said Vernon-Smith coolly.

Redwing looked at him uneasily. The Bouncer's eyes were fixed on Harry Wharton, with an unpleasant glint in them.

"What the dickens are you doing here, Wharton?" he asked.

"I think I might ask you that," answered Harry. "I never expected to see you in this part of the world, Vernon-Smith."

"We're at the bung, down the river," said Redwing. "Smithy's father has taken it for him, for the ho's."

"But I should have given it a miss if

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"Stop, you cad!" roared Bob Cherry, as Vernon-Smith began to pull up-stream. The Bounder sneered. Bob loosened a turf from the grassy bank, and took careful aim. Crash! "Take that!" he roared, as the turf crashed in Vernon-Smith's face and sent him reeling backwards.

I'd known that you were around, Wharton!" said the Bounder deliberately. "I've seen enough of you at Greyfriars—a little too much, in fact. When we broke up you were staying on at the school, swotting for a schol. You seem to have chucked it, and come home, after all."

"I've chucked it, and come home, after all, if it interests you, Smythy," answered Wharton quietly. "I don't see that it need concern you, though."

"Well, it does, rather," said the Bounder. "I shouldn't have come here if I'd known you were around. It's pretty rotten to be landed almost next door to you for the hols!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Wharton. "I suppose Surrey's big enough for both of us, though I'm no more pleased to see you than you seem to be to see me! Come on, you men; let's walk round by the bridge!"

"For goodness' sake, Smythy, don't rag!" exclaimed Redwing sharply. "Look here, you fellows, we'll take you across with pleasure."

"The pleasurefulness of the execrable Smythy does not seem to be terrific, grunted Hurree. Jamset Ram Singh. "Perhaps the walkfulness is the proper caper."

"That's rot!" growled Johnny Bull. "Never mind Smythy's manners—he never had any to speak of. Let's get across."

Vernon-Smith laughed. "My dear men, I'll take you across," he said. "The boat's not big enough for the whole crowd. Two at a time." He hooked on to the bank. "Jump in, Inky; jump in, Bull!"

Harry Wharton set his lips.

"Look here, you fellows," he said. "I'd rather walk—much rather!"

"Jump in!" said Redwing.

Johnny Bull settled the master by jumping into the boat. Hurree Singh, after a moment's hesitation, followed him. The skiff was not large, and four fellows fairly filled it.

"Back in a few minutes," said Redwing, and he put out the oars, and toiled the boat swiftly across to the opposite bank.

Hurree Singh and Johnny Bull landed there, and Redwing pulled back to the waiting three.

"Cherry and Nugent next!" said the Bounder.

Bob and Frank stepped into the boat, and were ferried over. Harry Wharton waited for it to return. There was some delay this time as the Bounder took the oars from Tom Redwing, and it was Smythy, who pulled back, Redwing sitting in the stern at the lines.

Vernon-Smith rowed slowly back. There was a mocking, sardonic grin on his face.

Harry Wharton came down to the water's edge, to stop in. But the boat did not reach the rushes.

"Sorry, I've no more time to lose!" said the Bounder. "You said you'd rather walk, I think. Well, you can get on with it."

And instead of pulling the boat in, Vernon-Smith shoved an oar into the rushes and sent it rocking out into the middle of the stream again.

"Smythy!" exclaimed Redwing. The Bounder laughed.

"Didn't he say he'd rather walk? If he doesn't care to ask a favour, I'm not the man to bung it at him."

Harry Wharton stood staring at the boat. He was taken quite by surprise. Certainly, he did not desire to ask a favour of the Bounder. But his friends were across the river now, and he was left behind.

"You rotter!" he shouted. "Look here, Smythy—" exclaimed Redwing angrily.

"My dear chap, you heard what he called me. He doesn't want a rotter to row him across. We're going on."

"We're not!" roared Redwing. "Pull in to the bank at once!"

"Rats to you!" answered the Bounder coolly.

"I tell you—By gum, I'll jolly well take the oars from you, Smythy, if you don't pull in!" Redwing's face was crimson with anger and mortification. "Pull in, and don't be a cad!"

Without replying, the Bounder bent to the oars, and the boat shot away up the river. Wharton stared after it grimly. Had the Bounder been within reach, he would have been in danger of another darkened eye. But he was safely out of reach.

On the farther bank four juniors stared at Vernon-Smith in amazement. "Hallo, hallo, hallo, Smythy!" roared Bob Cherry. "What's this game? Hold on, you fathead! You're leaving Wharton!"

"My esteemed and idiotic Smythy—" skouted Hurree Singh.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "It's a rotten trick! He's leaving Wharton stranded on the other side—"

"Smithy!" roared Bob. He ran along the bank, keeping pace with the boat as Smithy pulled upstream. Redwing was arguing angrily with his chum, utterly unheeded by the Bounder. Vernon-Smith pulled steadily on

"Smithy," yelled Bob, "what the dickens are you up to? Go back for Wharton, you ass!"

"Rats!" called back the Bounder. "Are you leaving him behind, you rotter?"

"Just that!"

"Why, you—you sneaking cad!" yelled Bob. "I'd jolly well mop you up if I could get at you!"

"But you can't!" grinned the Bounder. "Go and eat coke, dear man! Wharton's too jolly proud to ask a favour. Well, he can take his jolly old pride for a walk round by the bridge, see?"

"Make him stop, Reddy!" yelled Bob, panting along the ragged bank.

Redwing made a movement, and the Bounder's eyes gleamed at him.

"You'll have a fight on your hands, Reddy, if you try it on!" said the Bounder in a low, tense voice. "Better not, old chap!"

"Will you stop, Smithy, you cad?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Not to-day, old bean!"

Bob came to a halt. His face was red with wrath. The Bounder was out of reach, and never had Bob desired a fellow to be within reach so keenly.

He stopped and loosened a turf from the grassy bank.

"Take that, you rotter!" he roared. Crash!

The turf crashed in Vernon-Smith's face, and he went backwards in the boat as if a cannon-ball had hit him.

"Oh, my hat! Ow!"

The Bounder sprawled in the boat on his back, the oars dropping from his

hands. Redwing caught one of them; the other floated away on the stream. The boat rocked violently and shipped water as the Bounder scrambled up. He was claspng the back of his head, which had hit the bottom of the boat with a resounding crack.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob, as the Bounder, claspng his damaged head with one hand, shook the other at him, clenched. "Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder's face was distorted with rage.

"You rotter!" he yelled. "Wait for me to get ashore! I'll smash you!"

"Jolly glad to give you the chance, you sneaking worm!" retorted Bob.

Redwing reached after the floating oar and captured it.

The Bounder yelled to him.

"Pull in, Reddy! Do you hear, you fool! Pull in to the bank, and let me get at that rotter!"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Redwing, and, unheeding the furious Bounder, he pulled away up the stream. He was anxious now to avoid any further contact with the Famous Five.

"Will you pull in and let me get at that rotter?" hussed the Bounder.

"No, I jolly well won't!"

"Then I'll make you!" yelled the Bounder.

Redwing gave him a grim look.

"You've played the fool enough, Smithy! Sit down and keep quiet, or I'll chuck you into the water to cool your temper!"

"Why, you—you—" stuttered the Bounder.

"Shut up!"

"Redwing, you rotter—"

"Shut up!" roared Redwing.

And the Bounder, in sheer astonishment, stared at him and shut up. The boat pulled on and disappeared from the sight of the Famous Five.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### The Hold-Up at Wimford!

**F**IVE exasperated fellows stared after the boat as it vanished, and then stared at one another across the stream. Four of them had only a short walk to reach Wimford, but Wharton, left on the other bank, had to walk back to the road and follow it to the bridge—three times the distance.

"What's the programme, old bean?" Bob Cherry snouted across the water. "I'll spitkate Smithy when I see him again." Bur—

"Can't be helped," answered Harry. "I'll walk round by the road. You fellows get on to Wimford, and wait for me there. You know the place."

"Nothing else to be done, I suppose!"

Evidently there was nothing else to be done. Harry Wharton turned from the bank and walked back into the wood by the toopath.

"Kick Bunter if you see him!" bawled Bob Cherry after him. And Wharton disappeared into the wood.

"Come on!" said Johnny Bull; and the four juniors walked across the meadows towards Wimford, all of them in an exasperated frame of mind.

Bob was the first to recover his equanimity. It was seldom that a frown lingered long on his cheery face.

"After all, no harm done," he remarked. "Smithy's rather a rotter. Silly ass to keep up school feuds on a holiday. I fancy Reddy can't be enjoying his hole a tearful lot. It's really all Bunter's fault for bagging the lunch. We'll all kick Bunter when we see him again!"

"The kickfulness will be terrific!" agreed the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I'm jolly hungry!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Bob chuckled.

"Well, think of Bunter tucking into lunch for six—"

Snort from Johnny Bull. The thought of Billy Bunter's atropic lunch in the depths of the wood did not comfort him.

"Smithy might have asked us to lunch in his jolly old bung if he hadn't been on fighting terms with Wharton," remarked Bob.

Another snort from Johnny Bull.

"Who wants to lunch at Smithy's bung, fathead? I'll see we see of him while we're staying here the better!"

"Passed nem. con.!" said Bob cheerily. "All the same, it's a pity. Greytriers men oughtn't to rag on a holiday. Smithy's an ass, and I'm jolly glad I got him with that turf. Did you see him roll over?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

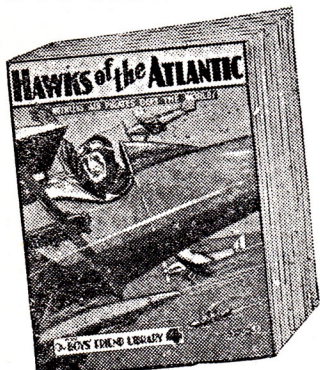
The remembrance of Smithy rolling over in the boat was grateful and comforting in the circumstances. The juniors sauntered on at an easy pace.

They were all more than ready for their belated lunch. But they had to wait for Wharton when they reached the town, so there was no hurry. They walked into the little country town at last, and strolled into the old market-place.

On market day Wimford was a busy little place. But it was not market day, and its aspect was sleepy. It looked as if nothing ever happened there, as Bob Cherry remarked, little dreaming of the exciting events that were destined to happen that very afternoon. On one side of the market-place was the railway station, with a restaurant and tea-shop adjoining it, next to which was the Wimford and County Bank.

It was the middle building of the three that was the destination of the schoolboys, and, having reached it, they

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loitered on the pavement to wait for their chum. In the distance, across the market-place, they could see the bridge by which Wharton would arrive when he came. But he was not likely to be in sight yet.

"Never wait for Wharton—what?" asked Johnny Bull a little dubiously.

Johnny had a healthy, youthful appetite, and it was long past the usual time for lunch.

"Oh, he won't be long!" said Frank. "Let's wait."

"And watch the uproarious life of this jolly old place!" grinned Bob Cherry. "It's rather exciting, isn't it?"

Really, it did not look very exciting. A taxi stood deserted outside the station, the driver probably indulging in some light refreshment elsewhere. A farmer's cart joggled slowly across the square, its driver meditatively chewing a straw. A small boy—the liveliest object in sight—was extracting sweet music from a tin whistle. A middle-aged gentleman came down the granite steps of the bank, blinked at the juniors through his spectacles, and passed into the teashop.

A butcher and a baker, at their respective ship docks, were exchanging desultory remarks, evidently having no rush of custom to deal with. A youth on a bicycle plugged by. Three or four pedestrians passed; not in a hurry. It could not be denied that Wimford was a somewhat sort of place, it seemed to fall into a sort of doze between one market-day and another.

Chug-chug-chug!  
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's somebody alive!" grinned Bob.

It was a motor-bike that came chugging across the bridge from the country road beyond, and chugged on into the market-place.

The four schoolboys watched it idly. It was, as Bob said, something alive, in a place where everything else seemed to be half-asleep.

There were two men on the "jigger." The motor-cyclist was so covered by his goggles and cap that it would have been difficult to tell what he was like. The man on the pillion wore a light overcoat and a soft hat pulled down over his brows, and there was a small attache-case in his hand. A thick, black moustache, with waxed ends curled up, gave him a foreign look, which was added to by a pointed black beard.

"Jolly old beaver!" murmured Bob. The man on the pillion was really a pronounced "beaver," the black beard was the most noticeable thing about him.

The motor-bike came across the square and halted by the pavement outside the bank. There the man with the black beard alighted, and crossed the pavement, attache-case in hand, went up the steps, and disappeared into the bank. The motor-cyclist remained with the machine.

The juniors gave him no further attention.

It was almost time now for Wharton to come into sight on the bridge, especially if he had trotted, as probably he had. Bob Cherry and his companions transferred their attention to the distant bridge once more, watching for their chum to appear.

Bang!  
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"  
The juniors fairly jumped. The sudden report of a firearm in the sleepy old market square was startling. "What the thump—" exclaimed Nugent.

"What the dickens—"  
Bang!  
It was a second shot. This time the

schoolboys realised from where it came. The shots had been fired in the bank, hardly a dozen paces from them.

There was a shout in the square. Several people stopped and stared; the butcher and the baker ceased their conversation; the small boy stopped extracting sweet music from the tin whistle. There was a buzz of startled voices. Windows and doors became suddenly populated.

"Great pip!" yelled Johnny Bull. "It's a hold-up! They're holding up the bank!"

"Oh, my hat!"  
It seemed incredible for the moment. Bank hold-ups, once known only in the United States, had become common enough since the War. But a bank hold-up in Wimford was amazing. Evidently Bob had been mistaken in supposing that nothing ever happened there. Something had happened at last—with a vengeance.

**A TOPPING PENKNIFE**  
goes to Harry Griffiths, of  
6, off Leonard Street, Oakengates,  
Shropshire, for sending in this  
joke:



Railway Porter: "We'll never  
get this box out of here!"  
Guard: "Well, I'll be hanged—  
I thought you were tryin' to get  
it in!"

Several people started running towards the bank, across the market-place.

"Here, come on!" exclaimed Bob, as he realised what was happening. He dashed towards the bank steps.

His comrades followed him at a run. For the moment they did not think of the danger of getting in the way of a desperate man with a deadly weapon in his hand.

The swing doors above them swung open, and the man with the black beard, the attache-case in his hand, came running out. He almost ran into the schoolboys, who were the first to reach the steps.

"Help!" he shouted. "Help! A man's been shot! Help!"

"Come on!" panted Bob. The juniors dashed into the bank.

The man with the black beard crossed the pavement to the waiting motor-bike with the swiftness of the wind.

"Help!" he shouted again. "Where's the police? A man's been shot in the bank! Help!"

Three or four people, the Wimford constable among them, passed him at a run, and dashed into the bank.

Chug, chug, chug!  
The motor-bike shot away across the

square, towards the bridge in the distance. The man with the black beard was on the pillion, clutching the attache-case. From the open doors of the bank came a roar:

"Stop that man!"  
"Stop that thief!"

But it was too late to stop the bank-robber. The people at hand had supposed, for the moment, that he was an alarmed customer of the bank, running out to call for help. And he had got away with the cool trick. The motor-bike, going almost like lightning, roared away across the bridge, and vanished into the leafy country road beyond, leaving the market-place—anything but sleepy now—in a wild uproar behind.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### What Wharton Saw!

**Y**OU fat villain!"  
"Oh!" gasped Billy Bunter.  
"By gum! I—I'll—"  
"Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter bounded to his feet. He was feeling like anything but bounding. Lunch for six or seven was packed away inside Bunter.

Bunter had been having the time of his life.

Sitting at the foot of an old beech, leaning more or less gracefully on the trunk, with the lunch-basket open at his elbow, the fat junior had travelled methodically and conscientiously through the contents of that basket.

Where he put it all was a secret known only to Bunter. Ample as his circumference was, it really seemed impossible for even Bunter's circumference to surround that lunch.

But he had done it! In the gastronomic line, Billy Bunter had wonderful powers. He had done it—and he felt that he had done well—in fact, rather a little too well. Having packed away the foodstuffs, what Bunter wanted was a rest—a long rest after his exertions.

But there was no rest for the wicked! Harry Wharton, coming back through the wood towards the Wimford road, had followed the footpath for some distance, and then taken a short cut through the trees. Had he kept to the footpath, certainly he would have seen nothing of Billy Bunter. As it was, he came on the fat junior just at the end of his extensive lunch, happy and sticky and loaded far beyond the Plimsoll line.

Never had Billy Bunter felt less inclined to move swiftly. But he moved with great swiftness. He bounded. There was no doubt that Bunter was, in many respects, a good deal of a bouncer; but certainly he would not have bounded now if he could have helped it. But the look on Harry Wharton's face made him bound.

"I—I—I say, old fellow!" gasped Bunter. "I say, keep off, you beast! I—I was just coming on. I mean, I stopped for a snack. I—I was going to leave you fellows something. I—I—Yaroooh! Keep off!"

The fat Owl dodged into the thickets, with a yell of terror. Harry Wharton was striding at him, and Bunter guessed only too well what would happen if he reached him.

"You fat villain!" roared Wharton. "Come back and be kicked!"  
"Yaroooh!"

Bunter did not come back. Apparently he did not want to be kicked. He vanished with a crashing and rustling of thickets, leaving the lunch-basket and an

ocean of crumbs and other debris of the feast behind.

Harry Wharton rushed in pursuit. He was not feeling in a good-humour, after the encounter with Vernon-Smith, and undoubtedly William George Bunter deserved to be kicked. It was true that he was a guest at Wharton Lodge; but a guest who bagged the lunch of his host and his leucoguests was a rather unusual guest, and called for rather unusual treatment. Perhaps Wharton forgot, for the moment, that Bunter was his guest—at all events, he plunged through the thickets after the fat Owl, with the fixed intention of kicking him—hard!

"Bunter— you fat scoundrel —" roared Wharton.

"Oh crickey!"

Bunter plunged on as fast as his fat little legs would carry him. Branches rustled and twigs snapped as he careered on through the wood.

Harry Wharton stopped after a few minutes' chase.

Certainly, the fat Owl had little chance in a foot-race, but Wharton remembered that his chums would be waiting for him in the market-place at Wimford by this time.

Leaving the Owl of the Remove to his own devices, therefore, Wharton turned back and hurried on to the road.

Billy Bunter, still under the impression that he was being pursued, and in momentary dread of feeling the impact of a boot on his tight trousers, plunged and panted on.

Wharton came out of the wood into the wide, sunny road.

Chug, chug, chug!

As he scrambled down the grassy bank from the wood into the road, he heard the chugging of a motor-bike, from the direction of the town.

He glanced up the road.

The motor-bike had come out of Wimford at a great speed. But it was slowing down, and a man who was on the pillion jumped off without the machine stopping, ran up the grassy bank, and vanished into the wood.

The motor-bike, gathering speed again, chugged on, and rushed past Wharton in a cloud of dust.

Probably the motor-cyclist did not see the schoolboy emerging from the trees on the high bank beside the road. At all events, he did not glance at him.

He was going at a terrific burst of speed, and he vanished down the road like a streak of lightning.

Wharton walked on towards the town.

He gave the incident no special attention, though it was soon to be recalled to his mind.

Apparently the motor-cyclist had given a lift to a man coming out of the town, and had dropped him on reaching the wood bordering the road. That was all Wharton had had a glimpse of the man who had left the bike and gone into the wood; and without giving him any particular attention he had noticed that he had a black beard, and carried a small attache-case in his hand. The man had completely disappeared by the time Wharton passed the spot where he had alighted.

Wharton had forgotten the matter by the time he reached the bridge over the Wyme, and walked across it into Wimford.

He looked about him curiously as he came into the town.

Wimford was in a state of unusual excitement. It was not market-day, but the little town appeared to be more lively than even on market-day. Wharton wondered what was up, as he walked

on into the square, crossed it, and looked for his chums.

Outside the Wimford and County Bank there was a large crowd. All were staring towards the bank, and there was a buzz of voices. In the bank doorway a policeman could be seen. Evidently something had happened.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Wharton sighted his friends. They were on the edge of the crowd, staring at the bank.

"Oh, here you are!" said Harry.

"The helpfulness is terrific, my esteemed Wharton," said Hurree Singh.

"The excitiveness has been preposterous."

"I can see that something's happened—but what—"

"A jolly old bank hold-up!" said Bob.

"Oh, my hat!"

The chums of the Remove had quite forgotten lunch.

"Not ten minutes ago!" said Nugent.

"If you'd been ten minutes earlier, old man, you'd have seen it."

"Sorry, I missed it," said Wharton, with a smile.

"And we were right on the scene," said Bob. "First in the field, old bean! We heard the shots while we were waiting here for you—"

"Great pip! Is anybody hurt?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Luckily, no! The man fired two shots in the bank, but both missed—may have meant them to miss, of course. But he got the stuff. From what they say, he grabbed whole wads of currency notes and things. There were two men in the bank, and they dodged into cover when the bandit fired at them, and he got hold of the loot, and got away with it."

"Jolly cool customer!" said Johnny Bull.

He ran out of the bank calling for help, and nobody knew he was the bank robber till he got on the motor-bike.

"On a motor-bike!" repeated Wharton.

"That's it! We saw the whole jolly show!" said Bob. "The bobby's asked us to hang on to give a description of the man and we can jolly well do it; I'd know that Johnny again in a hundred. He came up riding pillion on the stink-bike, and we saw him go into the bank. Jolly glad Smithy played that trick on us, old bean—or we should have tussled this."

"Which way did the man go?" asked Harry quickly.

"Across the bridge—must have passed you on the road, if he kept on the way he went."

"Two men on a motor-bike?"

"That's it."

"What were they like?" Wharton's face was full of excitement now.

"The man who drove the bike was all goggles and cap—shouldn't know him again—but the other man—the bank robber—was a foreign-looking fellow with a beard—"

"A black beard?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, did you see him, then?"

"Yes, rather, if he had a black beard—and an attache-case—"

"That's the bean!"

"They'd pass you on the road if they kept straight on," said Johnny Bull with a nod. "But they're far enough away by this time. The jigger was going like lightning."

"Somebody's bagged the taxi from the station, and gone after them," said Nugent. "But they haven't an earthly—"

"They'll be stopped on the road somewhere," said Bob. "The phone is going already—everybody on the roads will

be watching for a motor-bike with two men on it—"

"Two!" said Harry. "Yes—but one—"

"There were two—the motor-cyclist, and the man on the pillion—the man who raided the bank—"

"Yes, but—" Wharton broke off.

He understood it all in a flash. Obviously, the telephone would have been set to work at once, and warnings given in every direction for the motor-bike carrying two men to be watched for and stopped. But it was a motor-bike carrying only the driver that was rushing on—the bank robber had dropped off and taken cover in Wimford Wood. The man on the bike would escape unsuspected—and the man who had raided the bank was lying doggo in the wood less than a mile from the town.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob. "Where are you going?"

Wharton did not stop to reply. There was no time to lose. He ran across the square to the police station to report at once what he had seen on the Wimford road, and his chums, in wonder, followed him.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### The Man in the Wood!

"EAST!" breathed Billy Bunter.

The fat Owl quaked.

He had dodged Wharton in the wood and stopped to take breath, which he needed badly. His fat face was streaming with perspiration, and his breath came in gasps. That Gargantuan lunch was telling on Billy Bunter—he had not intended to follow it up with such exertions. He really wished that he had packed away only lunch for five, instead of six, in the circumstance.

Deep in a thicket of hawthorns, Bunter gasped and gasped for breath, and listened for a sound of Wharton's footsteps in pursuit. For some minutes he heard nothing, and he panted in peace. Then there came a sound of brushing twigs, as someone unseen moved hurriedly along in the thick wood.

Bunter suppressed his panting breathing, and quaked. He had no doubt that it was Wharton looking for him, and prudence dictated flight, but there was not a run left in Bunter. He had altogether too much to carry. Billy Bunter did not want to be kicked, very much indeed he did not want that. But further exertion was futile, at the first sound of movement, the beast would spot him, and run him down. The fat Owl remained perfectly still, hoping against hope that the beast would pass him unseen.

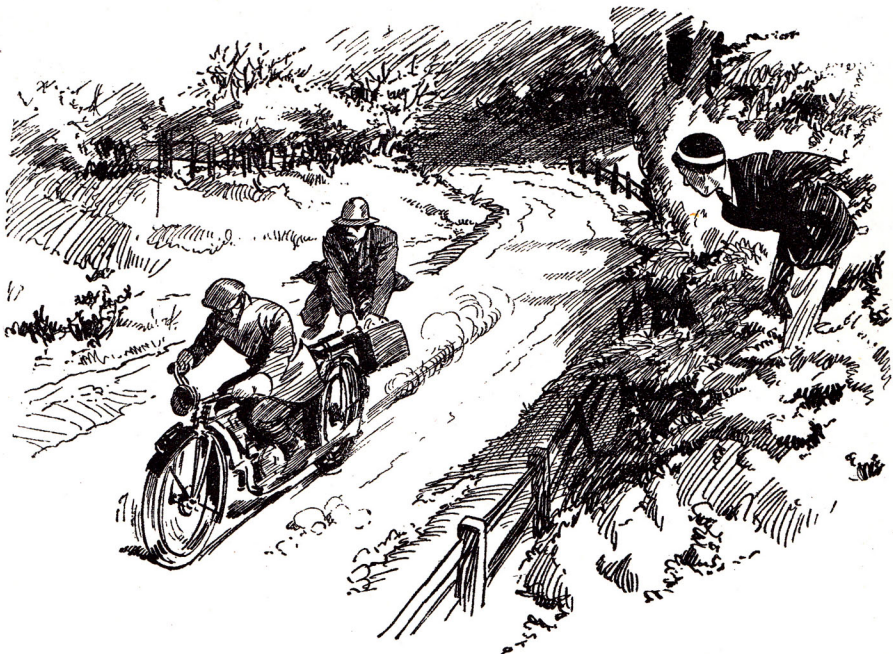
He was in cover, not likely to be seen unless the beast came very close. He had thrown himself down to rest on a bed of ferns in the midst of the hawthorns. He tried to still his breathing as the footsteps and the sound of brushing twigs came nearer. Evidently—to Bunter—the beast was searching for him; but there was a good chance, at least, that the beast would not find him, so long as he kept perfectly still.

Bunter lay as quiet as a mouse, listening with all his fat ears.

Whoever was coming seemed to be making for the hawthorns in which the fat Owl lay hidden.

Bunter quaked, and barely suppressed a yelp, as the bushes close by him swayed. The beast, unseen as yet, was close at hand; but Bunter drew hope from the fact that he did not speak. If the beast knew he was there, Bunter





As Wharton scrambled down the grassy bank the motor-bike slowed up, and the man who had been riding pillion jumped off. He glanced round furtively before vanishing into the wood!

expected to hear his voice. But he heard nothing but the brushing of the bushes.

The sounds ceased.

Bunter's fat heart thumped. Had the beast passed him unseen?

He had not passed—he had stopped. Bunter could hear faint sounds which showed that he was still at hand.

The fat junior squatted silent in the ferns. The hawthorns round him were thick with the green of spring, but they had not their summer leafage, and it was possible to see through them, and if a fellow peered through the interstices.

Bunter wondered if that was what the beast was up to. Certainly, he had stopped—not more than two or three yards from the hidden Owl.

But he did not approach—and there were only faint sounds from him. Unless he was peering into the hawthorns for Bunter, it was difficult to imagine what he was up to.

Billy Bunter raised his head at last, and peered. This suspense was too painful, and he wanted to know.

Through the lower stems of the hawthorns, as he lay in the ferns, Bunter had a glimpse of a figure.

His little round eyes opened wide behind his big spectacles.

It was not Wharton!

It was not, after all, that beast hunting for him. The figure he saw was that of a man.

Bunter's first feeling was one of relief. But that was brief. His eyes almost bulged through his spectacles at what he saw, and his fat heart almost ceased to beat.

The man who had stopped in the hawthorn thicket was dressed in a light overcoat and wore a black beard and

curling black moustaches. He had set a small attache-case on the ground at his feet.

The attache-case was open.

From it the man was taking bundle after bundle of currency notes, fastened together with elastic bands, as Bunter had sometimes seen them in a bank.

His coat was open, and he was stacking the notes in the pockets of his lounge jacket and trousers.

The sight almost took Billy Bunter's breath away.

He blinked almost dazedly at the strange scene.

Billy Bunter was not remarkable for his intelligence. His fat brain did not work rapidly. Indeed, there were fellows in the Remove at Greyfriars who declared that it did not work at all. But even Bunter could understand that there was something unusual, something rather alarming, in the sight of a man, hidden in a wood, transferring bundle of notes from a case to his pockets.

Even Bunter did not need telling that the man with the black beard could hardly have come honestly by that amount of money. And he realised that he was gazing at a man who could scarcely be anything but a thief disposing of his plunder, terror ran down Bunter's spine like an icy chill!

If that awful villain spotted him—found out that he was watching him—it really was a wonder that the fat Owl did not faint at the thought. This was worse than Wharton!

He lay still, hardly breathing, his eyes, distended behind his big spectacles, watching the man through the stems of the hawthorns.

The man was not looking towards

him; was obviously utterly unaware of his presence. But a sound would have put him wise to the fact; and the terrified Owl was careful to make no sound.

The profile, very distinct with the pointed black beard and curling moustaches, was turned to Bunter. The man's whole attention was concentrated on the attache-case, and the transference of its precious contents to his pockets. He was working swiftly, and Bunter's fat ear caught his hurried breathing.

Bundle after bundle of currency notes, and crisp, rustling banknotes, were stacked away in his pockets. The attache-case was emptied.

Then the black-bearded man, who had been stooping, rose upright, his head bent a little, evidently listening. But the silence of the wood, broken only by the twittering of the birds, reassured him. He looked round, but it was in the direction of the road, away from Bunter.

Only for a moment was he inactive. Then he stripped off the overcoat, folded it, and crammed it into the attache-case. Then, to Bunter's utter amazement, he jerked off the black beard and curling moustache—making a change in his appearance that was astounding.

He had been, at first, a foreign-looking man of about forty, in an overcoat. Now he was a young man, about thirty, clean-shaven, dressed in a well-cut and expensive lounge suit, which fitted him perfectly. Certainly, no one who had seen the black-bearded man would have recognised him in this rather handsome young fellow in lounge clothes, with his clean-shaven face.

Bunter fairly blinked at that face.

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The man had been in disguise—an impenetrable disguise. Bunter, however, saw him as he was naturally—and he saw a young man, with a reckless, dissipated face, a square chin, and eyes that were very keen, though a little watery from late hours. In one of them he jammed an eyeglass, which he extracted from his pocket. He replaced the soft hat with a cap, and then, taking out a pocket-mirror, stared at his reflection in it. Bunter saw the sardonic grin that glided over his face. Evidently the mysterious man was satisfied with the complete change in his appearance.

Little dreaming of the eyes, and the spectacles, that were glued upon him only a few yards away, the young man with the eyeglass crammed the hat into the attache-case with the coat. The case clicked shut. The young man picked it up and stood with it in his hand, as if hesitating.

It dawned on Billy Bunter that he wanted to get rid of the bag containing his disguise before he quit the woods. He moved at last, and for one dreadful moment Bunter feared that he was coming deeper into the hawthorn thickets, to hide the attache-case there—in which circumstances he could scarcely have failed to discover the terrified Owl.

But to the fat junior's immense relief the man strode away, the attache-case still in his hand. He did not go back towards the road, but in the opposite direction, towards the river. Possibly his intention was to sink the attache-case, with its tell-tale contents, in the water. Whatever his intention was, Bunter was immensely relieved to see him go.

The whole scene had not lasted five minutes, though it had seemed an age to the frightened Owl. The footsteps and the rustling of the underwoods, died away in the distance towards the river.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter.

He did not dare to stir.

That the man who had entered the wood as a black-bearded man, and left it as a clean-shaven young man, was some sort of a criminal, escaping with his plunder, was perfectly clear.

Billy Bunter wondered, with a shudder of terror, what would have happened if the villain had spotted him. He had seen the man without his disguise. He could identify him, if he saw him again, beyond the possibility of error. That reckless face, with its square chin and sharp eyes, was not easily to be forgotten. The fat junior realised, with a chill of terror, that that knowledge might have cost him his life, had the man discovered him.

Minute followed minute—and there was no sound in the wood but the twittering of birds.

Billy Bunter ventured at last to drag himself from his hiding-place. The man with the eyeglass had long since disappeared towards the river, and Bunter promptly disappeared in the opposite direction.

He came out on the road, stumbled down the bank, and with his fat heart still thumping with terror, started for Wharton Lodge at a run. His run soon dropped to a walk, and his walk to a crawl, but Billy Bunter did not halt till he had reached Wharton Lodge and rolled in, perspiring, panting, and puffing, but feeling safe at last!

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### After the Raid!

INSPECTOR STACEY, plump, red-checked, and alert, listened to Harry Wharton quietly, but with a gleam in his eyes.

Wharton was a little breathless, and he panted out what he had to say. His chums, who had followed him into the police station at Wimford, listened with as much interest as the police-inspector.

The inspector had been busy on the telephone when Wharton came in, and the juniors had to wait a few minutes. But Mr. Stacey, who was well acquainted with Colonel Wharton's nephew, gave him his attention as soon as he could; and it was plain that he was deeply interested in what the schoolboy had to say.

"As soon as my friends told me about the bank raid, and a man with a black beard getting away behind a motor-cyclist, I guessed that it was the same man I'd seen on the Wimford road," concluded Wharton. "I feel sure of it, sir."

Mr. Stacey nodded. "Looks like it. They'll be watching for twenty miles round, for two men on a motor-bike—" He broke off. "How far out of Wimford?"

"Less than half a mile."

Mr. Stacey turned to Bob Cherry and his companions. He was aware that they had seen all there was to be seen of the bank raid. A description of the black-bearded man had been received from the bank manager and a clerk in the bank, and already telephoned far and wide. The juniors were able to add nothing to that description, except that Johnny Bull remarked that the black-bearded man, though he looked middle-aged, had moved with a quickness and agility more like a young and active man—a remark that drew a nod, and a faint smile from Mr. Stacey.

"Thank you very much, young gentlemen," said Mr. Stacey. "What you have told me, Master Wharton, is very useful indeed."

And the juniors left the station.

All the Famous Five were highly excited; still, they remembered that they had not yet had their lunch. They walked across to the restaurant near the bank, where a crowd was still gathered, staring curiously at the building. According to the gossip that was passing from mouth to mouth, the bank raider had got away with a very considerable plunder—variously stated from a thousand to five thousand pounds. It was certain that, after driving the two men in the bank into cover with his reckless shooting, he had grabbed bundles of currency notes and banknotes, crammed them into the attache-case, and got clear with them.

"But they'll get him," said Bob Cherry confidently, as the Famous Five sat down to a late lunch, for which they were more than ready. "You've put the salt on his tail, Harry. That man you saw get off the stink-bike was the bank-robber, of course—"

"No doubt about that!" said Harry. "Well, they cleared off together on the pigger, and gave the impression that they were trusting to the motor-bike to get them clear. Everybody was thinking of two men on a motor-bike. But now they know that they've got to look for one man on a motor-bike, and one man on foot, cutting across country, down the river. It makes it easier for old Stacey."

Harry Wharton nodded.

There was no doubt that the information he had been able to give was of great value to the police.

Three or four cars had raced out of Wimford on the track of the motor-bicycle; but it was clear that they must have gone whizzing past the wood where the man with the plunder had taken cover.

Even if they overtook the motor-bike, there was nothing to identify its rider as the man who had carried the bank-robber on his pillion.

By separating as soon as they were out of sight of the town, the confederates had thrown dust in the eyes of the pursuit—but for the lucky chance that Wharton had seen them as he came out of the wood.

Now, whether the man on the motor-bike was stopped or not, there certainly was a good chance of running down the man who had taken to the woods on foot.

Obviously, Inspector Stacey and his men would be searching that wood without loss of time, and if the bank-raider was lying "doggo" there, it was probable that he might fall into their hands with his plunder still in his possession.

More likely he had cut through the wood and gone on his way without loss of time; but in that case it was known what direction he must have taken. Pursuit would be close on his track, and there were plenty of people along the river who might have noticed a black-bearded, foreign-looking man carrying an attache-case.

Indeed, by the time the chums of Greyfriars had finished their belated lunch, and left the restaurant, they were in hopes of hearing that the hold-up man had been captured.

There were still crowds in the market-square, excitedly discussing the thrilling event—an epoch-making event in the sleepy old town of Wimford. People in the little Surrey town had heard and read of bank hold-ups, as they had heard and read of earthquakes and cyclones; but they had never expected to experience one. They really seemed to be enjoying this. It was a topic that was likely to last Wimford for a very long time.

The juniors heard a great deal of talk on the subject as they strolled across the square, but they could hear no news of a capture. So far, it seemed, the bank-raiders had got clear.

They walked out of Wimford across the bridge, and sauntered down the country road in the direction of Wharton Lodge. As they came along by the wood, they sighted a policeman's helmet among the hawthorns, and heard calling voices at several points. A good many local inhabitants seemed to have joined in the search.

"Not much good looking for him here," remarked Bob Cherry. "If he'd stayed in the wood, they'd have roted him out before this. But look here—if he cut through the wood and went on down the river, he must have passed Smithy's bungalow, either on the tow-path, or the road behind."

"Must have," agreed Wharton. "Well, somebody at the bung may have seen him," said Bob.

"Possibly!" agreed Wharton. "What about dropping in and asking?"

"Mr. Stacey must have done that already, ass!" said Harry. "And I jolly well don't want to drop in on Smithy." "Smithy isn't anxious to see us!" grinned Johnny Bull. "Least of all

(Continued on page 12.)

Read the Splendid School Stories  
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THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,260.

# FOOTBALL FAVOURITES!



No. 23.  
**Syd**  
**Puddefoot,**  
 a local  
 product and  
 idol of  
**WEST HAM**  
**UNITED**  
**F.C.**

## The Wanderer Returns!

**A** FEW weeks back, in the offices of the West Ham United Football Club, I was present at a touching little scene. On one side of the big desk was Mr. Sydney King, the manager of West Ham, while on the other side was Syd Puddefoot, the International footballer. Between them was a Football League transfer form which Puddefoot had just signed. It was the sort of scene on which the curtain is rung down at a play—a happy reunion, and it marked the end of one chapter, and the beginning of a new one, in the amazing career of Syd Puddefoot, footballer.

The remarkable part about this scene in the offices of the West Ham United club was that it had been staged, in essentials, nineteen years previously, when this great footballer first signed forms to play for West Ham United as an amateur. What amazing events have happened in the history of the nation, and in the career of the footballer concerned, in the intervening years. No wonder the fatted calf was killed, metaphorically, when the wanderer returned a few weeks back. And no wonder every supporter of West Ham sent his hat into the air—metaphorically—when he heard that the wandering Syd had returned!

Listen to this story of one of the most famous footballers ever discovered by the West Ham club—a wonderful story, the like of which cannot really be told of any modern player. The boy Syd Puddefoot was one of a family of several brothers, and he was born within a mile or two of the West Ham ground. I told you in my story of Ruffell, published a few weeks back, how the schools of the West Ham district encouraged the scholars to play football; how games were organised for them, and how much interest the masters take in the play of the boys. Well, it was so in those long-ago days when Syd Puddefoot, as a boy, went to the Abbey Road school. The boys of that school played football, and Syd played with them.

Now although Puddefoot's father had been a professional cricketer, the mother of this boy was not very keen on her son getting too interested in football. Playing the game interfered with lessons was an idea of hers. Perhaps it was a sound idea. I don't know. It is so long since I went to school that I have forgotten whether football interfered with lessons or not. But you probably know. Anyway, the boy Syd was moved from the Abbey Road school to a near-by seat of learning, the Park School. This, however, was a case of out of the frying-pan into the fire, for the master of the Park School was just a little bit keener on football for his lads than the master at the Abbey Road School. The result was that instead of Syd playing less football he played more football, developing so rapidly, that he became a schoolboy International.

## Very Nearly a Tragedy!

**N**OW the officials of the West Ham club have always been ready to lend their ground on Saturday mornings for the important games played by the boys from the neighbouring schools, and thus it happened that, while he was yet a lad, Syd Puddefoot played football on the West Ham ground.

"It was there that I got the inspiration," he told me, "and it was there that I made up my mind that one day I would play for West Ham." In due course the chance came. A match in which Puddefoot played as a member of a London Junior team was witnessed by officials of the West Ham club, which included the manager. After the game was over, the manager asked Syd if he would call round at the office during the week. The boy agreed, and there was the first touching scene in the West Ham office in

which the two Syds—the manager of West Ham and the boy player—were concerned. And over that selfsame desk Puddefoot signed amateur forms to play for West Ham.

He got his chance to play for the reserves very quickly, getting an urgent message one Saturday morning to travel to Watford to appear in the second team. The message was so late in arriving that this was very nearly a tragedy—Puddefoot missed the train. His father was with him and the two travelled by a later train to Watford. At the station a conveyance was secured to take father and son to the ground. In the conveyance young Syd changed into football attire, and was just ready to dash on the field, out of breath, in time for the start. But he was not too much out of breath to score three goals for the Hammers' reserves in that first appearance. His foot was on the ladder of football fame. The West Ham boy soon realised his dream of playing for West Ham.

He had only just settled down in the first team, however, when the War came, with its interruption of ordinary football. But even in the 1914-15 season young Syd scored eighteen goals for West Ham. The War had its effect on Puddefoot as on most of the people who lived through it. While he was doing military training he went to Scotland, where he managed to get some games with the Falkirk side, and this led to important events, which later made Puddefoot's football career notable.

After the war he returned to play for West Ham, and was in such good form that immediately he was chosen as England's centre-forward in the Victory Internationals. But away in Falkirk there was a football club manager who never thought of Puddefoot without wishing that he was again playing for that club. And so, as the fame of Puddefoot grew and grew, so the manager of Falkirk made greater and greater efforts to sign on Puddefoot as a regular player for the Scottish side.

One day in 1922 this Falkirk manager, Mr. Nicoll, called at West Ham to ask them to transfer Puddefoot. Of course, you know that it is not the habit of Scottish clubs to pay big transfer fees for English players. The process is usually the other way round. The manager of West Ham knew this, and, more or less as a joke, he said to Mr. Nicoll: "You can have Puddefoot for five thousand pounds," never dreaming that Falkirk would pay a price like that for any player. But so keen was the Falkirk manager, that he immediately replied: "We'll pay the five thousand pounds." And pay it they did. That was how Puddefoot left West Ham to play in Scottish football. The original of the cheque which was handed to West Ham can still be seen in the offices of the London club—it was duly framed as a permanent record of a unique transaction.

## The "W" Formation!

**F**OR nearly four seasons Puddefoot played for Falkirk in the Scottish League, but the team did not do exceptionally well, and the player himself became less and less satisfied, because he was moved about from one position to another. In 1925 Puddefoot came back to England, to play for Blackburn Rovers, who paid for his services a fee practically the same as that which Falkirk had paid to West Ham.

You may remember that it was just about then that the offside rule was changed, and I can assure you that it was Puddefoot, playing in the forward line of Blackburn Rovers, who was responsible for the adoption of what has become known as the "W" formation of the attack. The idea started with Puddefoot at Blackburn, and many other clubs copied it because they thought it was good.

Football, undoubtedly, is Puddefoot's first and last love. He cannot hope to stay in the game much longer. But what more ideal than that he should spend his closing days at football with the club which first introduced him to the game. What a romance!

## THE BOUNDER'S FOLLY!

(Continued from page 10.)

you, old chap, after you got him with that turf."

"Well, he asked for that," said Bob cheerily. "Look here, it's only a short walk through the wood to Smyth's bung, and—"

"Oh, out Smyth out!" said Wharton, rather impatiently. "It's rather rotten for him to be here at all, and the less we see of him the better."

"The betterfulness is terrific."

"Well, I suppose even Smyth can answer a civil question civilly," said Bob, "and the bobbies may not have gone to the bung. If you fellows don't want to go there—"

"I certainly don't!" said Wharton curtly.

"Well, I jolly well will!" said Bob. "I think it's worth while to ask them at the bung if they've seen anything of that beaver. Might be able to give old Stacey another tip."

"Oh, rot!" said Wharton.

"Better come on," said Nugent. "You're more likely to dig up a row with Smyth than anything else."

"Well, I don't know that I've got any particular objection to a row with Smyth," answered Bob cheerfully. "If he waxes his nose punched, I'm the man to punch it for him. But I don't see why he shouldn't be civil. Anyhow, I'm going."

And as the juniors had now reached the spot where the footpath turned off the Wimford road through the wood, Bob Cherry turned into the footpath, leaving his friends to walk on to Wharton Lodge.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Smithy Asks for More!

HERBERT VERNON SMITH sprawled in a garden-chair on the lawn of Riverside Bungalow, smoked a cigarette, and scowled. His sporting friend, Mr. Freddy Paget, sat rather more elegantly in another chair, also smoking a cigarette, glancing occasionally at a racing paper, and occasionally at the Bounder, with a faint smile.

Mr. Paget seemed to be in a cheery good humour that sunny April afternoon; the Bounder, on the other hand, was in the very worst of tempers. When Smyth's temper had the upper hand, he had very little regard for decorum. What his sporting friend might have thought of his scowling ill-humour did not matter a straw to Smyth. But Mr. Freddy Paget did not seem to mind.

Smithy, as a matter of fact, had a contempt for his sporting friend, which he was at no great pains to conceal at any time. Mr. Freddy Paget affected to be a well-to-do young man-about-town, and he dressed the part; but Smyth, who had a keenness far beyond his years, saw through Mr. Paget pretty clearly.

He was quite aware that Mr. Paget was nothing better than a well-dressed racing tout and card-sharper; he was quite aware, too, that Mr. Paget regarded him as a schoolboy with vicious propensities, with more money than was good for him; and, in fact, a pigeon worth the trouble of plucking.

It amused the Bounder's sardonic nature to let Freddy Paget get on with it. The fellow was amusing, at least, until Smyth's friends from Highlife

came along. When Smyth visited the races, he wanted a companion, and Tom Redwing certainly was not available for such pursuits. He had picked up Paget—or, rather, he had let Paget pick him up—not in the least deceived, but finding the man a useful companion in many ways. And the evening games of nap, banker, and poker, at the bungalow, had turned out very differently from Mr. Paget's anticipation. The Bounder was by no means an innocent pigeon to be plucked, he was, in point of fact, as hard a nut to crack as Mr. Paget himself, or harder.

It entertained the sardonic Bounder to beat the sharper at his own game. At the same time, he was conscious of the degradation of such an association; but there was a kink in the Bounder's nature which made him naturally prone to such associations. Yet he was unwilling to part with his Greystriars chum, and if Tom had made a point of it, Smyth would have kicked Mr. Paget out of the bungalow without ceremony. Redwing, however, was not the fellow to interpose—except by advice, at which the Bounder laughed.

Mr. Paget, at the present moment, was idly wondering what was the matter with the young cub. Smyth, for his part, had almost forgotten Paget. He smoked his cigarette, stared at the sunny river, and scowled.

Redwing was not there; where he was Smyth did not know. After the row with the Famous Five, Redwing had pulled up the stream for some distance in glum and angry silence, the Bounder equally angry and more resentful.

Smithy had left the boat and walked back to the bungalow without speaking a word to him. He had not seen him since.

His chum, apparently, was making a day of it on the river. No doubt he liked that better than the company of Mr. Paget at the bungalow, and the talk of horses, and the sight of cards and cigarettes. Probably he intended to return when the Bounder had got over his temper, and go on as if nothing had happened; that was rather his way. On the other hand, it was possible that he was fed-up—which would not have been surprising—and that he did not intend to come back at all. Whether he would return later, or whether he would send the boat back with a note that he was going home, the Bounder could not feel sure, and the doubt worried him.

Had Redwing appeared then, as likely as not the Bounder would have pursued the quarrel, in his present savage and irritable humour. Still, he did not want to lose Redwing, the only fellow he had ever liked; he would rather have given up his blackguardly pursuits than have parted with his chum.

At the bottom of his heart Smyth preferred boating or cycling or rambling with Tom to smoking and card-playing with the sportive Freddy. The doubt that he might not see Redwing again till the new term at Greystriars worried him and, at the same time, added to his sullen resentment.

Mr. Paget, while wondering what was the matter with the cub, as he called Smyth in his own mind, did not ask him. He could see that the Bounder was in the mood for a row, and it was not his cue to have a row with the millionaire's son. He smoked in silence and yawned over his racing paper, and left Smyth to himself.

There was a footstep on the tow-path that ran at the bottom of the garden, and the Bounder sat up. A cap showed over the low hedge, and he thought for a moment that it was Redwing coming back.

But it was not Redwing. A sturdy figure appeared at the gate on the tow-path, and a cheery, ruddy face looked over.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

The Bounder stared blankly at Bob Cherry.

After what had happened that morning he certainly was not expecting a visit from any member of the Famous Five.

Bob gave him a cheery nod and a grin.

It was difficult for a fellow of Bob's cheery, sunny nature to understand a frown like the Bounder. Bob had never nursed a grudge in his life, and he never could get it into his head that other fellows might do so. The Bounder had played an ill-natured trick on the Famous Five that morning, and Bob had bowled him over with a turf—and that was that. There was no need, so far as Bob could see, for a fellow to be stuffy about it. And if the Bounder was stuffy, Bob did not care. He had good humour enough for two.

Bob swung the gate open and walked cheerily in. Mr. Paget gave him a stare without the slightest interest. The Bounder fixed his eyes on him with a glint in them. He had not forgotten being bowled over in the boat, if Bob had.

"What the thump do you want here, Cherry?" he snapped.

"Cheerio, old bean!" said Bob. "I haven't dropped in for the pleasure of your company or just to see that jolly old smile of welcome on your face, Smithy."

Mr. Paget hid a grin behind his newspaper. The Bounder scowled blackly.

"Haven't you heard the exciting news?" demanded Bob.

"What news, you silly ass?" grunted the Bounder.

"Bank raid at Wimford, old bean—jolly old gunman popping off a jolly old automatic in the local bank!"

"What rot!"

Mr. Paget glanced over the top of his paper.

"Good gad! Is that true?" he asked.

He jammed his eyeglass into his eye and stared at Bob.

"Official" grinned Bob. "We were right on the scene—saw the whole jolly old entertainment!"

"Anybody hurt?" drawled Mr. Paget.

"No. The gunman seems to have popped off with his gun to scare them. Nobody hit. But he got away with tons of money."

"Time somethin' was done about these bank raids!" said Mr. Paget, while the Bounder sat in scowling silence. "Did they get the man?"

"No fear! He bunked on a motor-bike."

"Then I dare say he's a hundred miles away by this time," yawned Mr. Paget; and he dropped his eyes to his newspaper again.

"He jolly well isn't," answered Bob. "They're looking for him about here—"

"About here?" exclaimed Mr. Paget, his attention off his newspaper again at once.

"Yes, rather! And as Inspector Stacey doesn't seem to have dropped in on you yet, you may expect a call from him."

"What the dickens do you mean?"

"I mean that the jolly old bank-raider came in this direction," grinned Bob. "A pal of mine was coming out of the wood at the time, and saw him leave the motor-bike and dodge into the wood—t'other side from here. Well, the bobbies are rooting through the wood after him—"

"Great Scott!"

"If he's still there, they'll get him."

"If he's still there!" repeated Mr. Paget.

"Yes; he may be lying doggo in the woods, waiting for dark, perhaps. If he is, they'll snaffle him all right."

"Do they know what he's like?"

"What-ho!" said Bob, rather complacently. "I tell you we saw him, and we gave a description of him from the toes to the eyelashes. I'd know that sportsman again anywhere in a crowd."

"That's good!" remarked Mr. Paget, with a rather curious glance at Bob.

"What was he like?"

"Foreign-looking johnny, with a black beard and long moustaches, in a light overcoat and a soft hat. Looked about forty or forty-five. But he was jolly

the rotter I've described, you're bound to say so at once—"

"Certainly!" said Mr. Paget. "I can't say I've seen anything of the man; but some of your servants, Smithy—"

"The police can come and question the servants if they like," said the Bounder. "The gardener or the chauffeur may have seen something of the man if he passed this bung. I don't know, and I don't care!" He rose to his feet, his eyes gleaming at Bob. "You've butted in here, Cherry, after knocking me over this mornin' in my boat—"

"Dear man, didn't you ask for it?" said Bob. "Didn't you beg for it, in fact? Don't you ever want what you ask for?"

Vernon-Smith pushed back his cuffs.

He turned on the Bounder like lightning. Nothing loath, Vernon-Smith met him half-way. They closed in furious combat.

"Good gad!" ejaculated Mr. Freddy Paget, and he laid down his newspaper and rose to his feet, staring over the hedge at the two Greyfriars fellows fighting furiously on the towpath.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Ducked!

**B**OB CHERRY, his blue eyes glinting, met the Bounder with left and right, and Smithy gasped as the heavy taps came home. But he pressed on savagely,



Bunter's eyes opened wide behind his big spectacles, and his fat heart almost ceased to beat as the man stooped down by the open attache-case, extracted bundle after bundle of currency notes, and stacked them in his pockets!

spry, and I fancy he wasn't so old as he looked. So that's why I've dropped in, Smithy," added Bob amicably to the scowling Bounder. "If the rotter cut through the wood, he must have gone on down the river, and somebody here might have seen him pass—see?"

"Have you taken the job on for the police?" asked Vernon-Smith, with a sneer.

"Well, every little helps, you know," said Bob. "Wharton saw the man dodge into the wood from the Wimford road, and that's brought the bobbies along this way. They'll be asking questions of everybody along this side of the river. They'll be dropping in here sooner or later for a cert. I'm first in the field—see?"

"Can't mind your own business?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, don't be an ass, Smithy! It's everybody's business to lend a hand if he can to snaffle a gunman!" said Bob warmly. "If you've seen anything of

"Don't be a fool, Smithy!" said Bob. "What's the good of rowing? I'm going along the towpath to look after that beaver. I don't want a scrap, old bean. Keep your silly temper!"

And Bob Cherry backed away to the gate. The Bounder followed him up, his hands clenched and his eyes glinting. He was in the mood for a row, and Bob Cherry had come along at the right moment, when he was longing for someone on whom to wreak his savage temper. There was still a twinge at the back of his head where it had crashed, in the boat.

"Put up your hands, you rotten funk!" he snapped.

"Oh, rats!" said Bob, as he swung open the gate, and stepped out on the towpath.

Smack!

The Bounder's hand came hard across his cheek as he did so.

There was a roar from Bob.

"Why, you cheeky rotter—"

forcing Bob to give ground for a few moments. Twice his knuckles crashed on Bob's flushed face, each time leaving a mark, and then Bob, rallying, came at him hard and fast.

In his savage and reckless temper, the Bounder cared nothing that he was provoking the best fighting-man in the Greyfriars Remove—a fellow for whom he certainly was not a match in a determined scrap. But he had to realise that he had asked for too much, when Bob drove him back to the gate, with blow on blow, finally sending him spinning against the gate with a crash.

The Bounder reeled there, panting. "There, you sulky sweep!" panted Bob. "Now chuck it, and keep your paws to yourself."

"Good gad!" murmured Mr. Freddy Paget. He grinned over the hedge. He seemed rather amused at seeing his

(Continued on page 16.)

SECRETS OF SUCCESS!

Be a personality! Be a force! Be the most popular guy in the Form! I'll show you how! I taught myself! Now let me give you the benefit of my experience—in return for some of your dollars! —FISHER T. FISH, Success Institute, Study No. 14.

Greyfriars Herald

No. 92.

LAUGH AND GROW FAT.

Edited by HARRY WHARTON, F.G.R.

LATEST EXTRA GOOD EDITION

PREPARE FOR SUMMER!

Spring is here and summer is on the way! Why not be prepared to meet it? We have the finest selection of umbrellas, waterproofs, fur-lined gloves, and sou'-wester in the district. Pay us a visit and get ready for the real summer weather that's bound to arrive soon!—CHUNKLEY'S, Courtfield.

universal appeal; the title alone will tell you that! Send at once to W. G. BURTON, Proprietor, "The Crab Pansiers' Gazette," Study No. 7. Remove.

Free Shoot for Rubbish Remove the contents of their waste paper baskets are invited to take them along to Temple's study. Take them while he's out, for preference.

Journalist's Little Slip

Hearing the surprising news that Bolsover major had won the Chess Championship, our Chess Correspondent went to interview him. Bolsover was discovered in the gym, amusing himself by using the wall as a punch-ball. When asked if it were true that he was Chess Champion of the Remove, he smiled grimly. "Quite right," he said. "Got anything to say about it?" "Certainly! I should like to offer you my congratulations." "Granted!" growled Bolsover, thumping the wall with his bare knuckles with great enthusiasm. "Anyway, you didn't think anyone stood an earthly against me, did you?" "Ahem! Well, as a matter of fact, to tell you the truth, I must admit I'm a little surprised!" "Don't be a silly ass! It was obvious from the start that I should come out on top!" snorted Bolsover. "I've developed a lot lately!" "You must have! Yet I never see you practising with the rest in the Rag!" Bolsover stared. "Fat lot of good it would be practising in the Rag—I don't think! This is where I come for practice!" "B-but, my dear old bean, surely you don't come to the gym to practise chess?" Bolsover's punching activities came to a sudden stop. "Chess? Who the thump's talking about chess?" "Why, we are—aren't we?" Bolsover burst into a roar of laughter. "Chess? Ye gods! I thought you were talking out the back of your neck! Me chess champion! Why, I wouldn't touch a blessed chessboard with a bargepole!" "But you admitted—" "I didn't hear you quite right!" grinned Bolsover. "And you got it wrong before you came to see me, anyway! What I won was not the Chess Championship, but the Chess Championship!" "Eh?" "To settle an argument, the biggest chaps in the Remove have had their chests measured. And I've won—easily!" No wonder our correspondent vanished without saying another word.

'LONZY'S LATEST LUNACY

ABOLISH CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Alonzo Todd, prize funniosity of the Remove, strolled into the Form-room the other day, immersed in a massive volume, entitled "A New Theory of Education," by Christopher Crank.

In response to inquiries, 'Lonzy briefly explained the idea of the book.

"Professor Crank, my dear fellows," he



said, "is of opinion that boys should be encouraged by kindness and consideration. He is completely opposed to corporal punishment, which, he believes, creates inhibitions and works irreparable harm to the mental outlook of many youths."

Before we had time to ask him what all that meant, Quelch strolled into class, and the lesson began.

Quelch was in one of his most dangerous moods, and before five minutes had passed, Skinner and Bolsover were ordered out to the front to receive "two" each. As they marched out, there was a sudden

commotion, and 'Lonzy leaped out in front of them, and addressed Mr. Quelch. "Sir!" he gasped. "Pause and consider before you proceed with this drastic and—" "What!" "Cast your eyes on the unhappy wretch whom you have condemned to the bare punishment of a cane!" urged 'Lonzy dramatically. "Think of the unhappy consequences that may follow! Remember your tender years and your innocence, sir!"

"My hat!" said Bolsover, while Skinner seemed to turn quite dizzy and had to hold on to a desk for support. "Two strokes of the cane, sir, may mean nothing to you!" went on Alonzo. "To me, however, it may mean everything. My passions may be stimulated within me, thwarted desire for revenge may find its expression in a complete nervous collapse or insanity!"

"Great pip!" murmured Skinner and Bolsover.

"Reconsider the matter, my dear Mr. Quelch, I entreat you!" babbled 'Lonzy.

While he paused for breath, Mr. Quelch suddenly found his.

"Todd!" he roared.

"My dear Mr. Quelch—" "Wretched, foolish, misguided youth! So you are questioning the right of your Form master to administer corporal punishment?"

"Let me inform you, sir, that I have every faith in the corrective power of the cane! So that you may have no doubt about it, stand out!"

Alonzo stood out, looking extremely pale. About five seconds later, he was being extremely pained.

Mr. Quelch left the Duffer of the Remove under no illusion as to what kind of fate he put in the corrective power of the cane.

When 'Lonzy limped back he was certain that ever that corporal punishment was a barbarous institution.

Reaction Follows Remorse

SKINNER'S ONE-DAY REFORMATION

When a "Greyfriars Herald" Representative called at Study No. 11 recently, he found Skinner calmly placing a box of cigarettes, two packs of cards, and a pink sporting paper on the fire.

Skinner looked up. It was at once obvious that he had undergone a change. Skinner has always been thin-lipped, pasty-faced, and furtive-eyed. But now, as if by magic, his face had swollen, his face had turned a vivid scarlet, and his eyes shone with a clear and honest light.

"So you have reformed!" remarked the "Greyfriars Herald" Representative, drawing the obvious inference from these signs.

Skinner gulped, blushed, and sobbed. Then he smiled.

"Yes, old fellow—I've reformed! I've chucked up the life of a black old chappie. In future, old bean, I'm going to lead a decent life, old man!"

The "G.H." Representative could tell that something remarkable had happened to Skinner. He made a shot in the dark.

TOFFEE MADE FREE

Just bring along the following to the second Form room: 1 lb. sugar, 1 lb. butter, 1 lb. nutmerralls, 1 lb. koko, 1 lb. treacle. Entirely Free of Charge. I will then make you 1 lb. of delicious toffy! This jennenerous offer remains open for limited period only. Moral—Step in and snapp up while you've got the chance.

NOTE THE ADDRESS: 3, NUGENT, TOFFEE KING, Second Form Room.

"Fallen for the young lady in the bunshop, Skinner?" he asked. Skinner started.

"My dear old fellow, how did you guess, old man?"

"Inspiration!" grinned the "G.H." Representative. "Anyway, Skinner, I wouldn't think too much about her, if I were you!"

"My dear old thing," said Skinner earnestly, "am I going to do my level best to be worthy of her!"

"But it's useless! She's engaged to be married!"

"Is that so?" "Honest Injun!"

Skinner's face underwent a sudden transformation. His lips became fearfully thin, his cheeks changed from a healthy scarlet to a pasty colour, and the honest light in his eyes was replaced by a furtive glitter.

He regarded the "G.H." Representative with a sneering smile.

"Have a cigar?" he asked, selecting a couple from the ashpan.

"My dear Skinner—" protested the "Herald" Rep.

A Paying Propersition

SKINNER'S ONE-DAY REFORMATION

"Like a game of nap—or banker?" leered Skinner. "By the way, I suppose you don't know whether Dirty Dick won the two-thirty?" Our Representative shook his head, and came away a saddened man. It was quite evident that Skinner's reformation had come to a sudden end.

Would you like to invest some capital in a kousern which will probably return you interest at the rate of about 100 per cent per week? If so, send along as much cash as you like, before the grate new periodical—which is going to stagger Greyfriars—is issued. Investors can rely on it that this new paper is going to have a

COKER'S HEROIC ACT —RECEIVED WITH INGRATITUDE

Coker was strolling down Courtfield High Street, last Wednesday, with Potter and Greene. When there was a startling occurrence. A powerful car drew up outside a building marked "BANK"; two men, armed with a machine-gun, jumped out and started blazing away at the doorway; and finally when they stopped, a couple of others ran up the steps and disappeared into the building.

Coker stood rooted to the pavement in surprise and indignation.

"Well, of all the nerve—" he gasped. "See that, you men?"

"Yes; pretty good, wasn't it?" yawned Potter.

"Good?" yelled Coker. "Why, it's daylight robbery—daylight robbery of a bank, with machine-guns! The rotters must think they're in Chicago; but I'll show 'em!"

Without another word, Coker dashed across the street, braved the menacing machine-guns, and ran up the steps of the bank—where he came into violent collision with the suspected bank-robbers.

There was a fearful crash, and all three rolled down the steps together. At the bottom, Coker started hitting out furiously.

"Reb banks, would you?" he yelled. "I'll show you how I think bank-robbers ought to be treated! Take that—and that—and that!"

"Whooooop!"

The two suspected bank-robbers managed to stagger to their feet.

A policeman hurried up. He gave one glance to see how matters stood, then grabbed Coker by the scruff of the neck.

"Now, then, young fellow, you come along o' me!" he said sternly. "You're goin' to be charged with committing a breach of the peace!"

"Don't be a fool!" yelled Coker. "Nab those men, quick—before they get away! They were just going to rob this bank!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

"It's true! Scores of people were looking on—any of them will tell you the same!"

"Haw, haw, haw! You took it all in them!" said the officer of the law, who was apparently not in the mood to take Coker's statement seriously. "Didn't you notice the cameras?"

"Kik-kik-camerae!"

fellow, that you must 'ave been in a hurry, if you didn't notice 'em! Haw, haw, haw!" "Then—then, it's only a picture?" stammered Coker. "Where are those idiots, Potter and Greene? Why the thump didn't they tell me?" "They wanted to, old bean!" spoke up



Greene. "But you didn't give 'em time to do it!"

"M-m-my hat!" said Coker.

Coker is not very often at a loss for words. But it can definitely be stated that he has been on one occasion at least. This was the occasion in question.

It cost ten bob in tips to get Coker safely away from Courtfield that afternoon.

Coker has sworn a solemn oath not to interfere with bank-robberies in future—even when they are genuine.

TEMPLE'S SOCIAL RISE

GUEST OF SIXTH-FORMERS

We are always glad to see deserving and ambitious young men making social eminence, so we hasten to congratulate Cecil Reginald Temple of the Upper Fourth, who has recently become a welcome visitor in several Sixth Form studies. Temple has had the good fortune to win £25 in a Crossword competition. Since that little stroke of fortune came to him there has been no holding Cecil Reginald. Two nights after he received the prize Temple was seen walking into the study of Carnie, of the Sixth. He didn't reappear till bed-time, when he confided to

Pressmen that he had been spending the evening with Sixth Form friends of his. On the following evening, Temple spent a couple of hours in Loder's study, Carnie being his fellow-guest. Passers-by noticed clouds of blue smoke drifting out of the keyhole, and heard a low buzz of conversation, accompanied by a metallic chinking. Temple came out looking a little worried. He explained that he had been spending a social evening with some Sixth Form friends who found his company particularly fascinating. The night after that, another

little social affair cropped up in Loder's study, Walker being present in addition to Carnie and Temple. Later on in the week, the same four had yet another little evening together. Temple was observed to be looking slightly worried at the termination of the evening's enjoyment. When Dabney asked Temple for the loan of five bob next morning he was surprised to learn that Temple didn't possess five bob! Dabney had difficulty in believing that twenty-five pounds could have gone so quickly. Dabney hasn't much idea of what it costs to mix in high society, of course. That evening, Temple again presented himself at Loder's study. For reasons which are not yet explained, he came out extremely quickly, about ten seconds later,

colliding with considerable force with the wall opposite. We do hope there isn't a fire in the lute. It would be just to say if some little difference has cropped up between Temple and his important friends, just as they were getting on so well together, wouldn't it? Loderites are the steet and greatest fuel on the market. Look just like coal! Burn to the last particle! My fat intended them for pieces of toast, but it would be a shame to eat them!—Apply to Loder, Sixth Form.

KEEP THE HOME FIRES BURNING Buy Loderlites

Loderites are the steet and greatest fuel on the market. Look just like coal! Burn to the last particle! My fat intended them for pieces of toast, but it would be a shame to eat them!—Apply to Loder, Sixth Form.

Why Throw Your Boots?

The big drawback to throwing boots across the dorm at night is that you have the trouble of finding them in the morning. Use Brown's Brickbats, and obviate all bother. Guaranteed to make the most persistent taker close down! Sample, price 3d., from TOM BROWN, Study No. 2.

## THE BOUNDER'S FOLLY!



(Continued from page 13.)

young friend handled like this. Probably the Bounder's temper had not endeared him to Freddy.

Bob stepped back.

He hoped that he was done with the Bounder now. But he was very far from done with him.

Vernon-Smith, gritting his teeth, rushed at him again. Bob was turning away, but he turned swiftly back as the Bounder rushed, and his hands came up again.

"Chuck it, you silly ass!" he shouted. The Bounder came on like a tiger. Headless of a blow on the chest, and a jolt on the jaw that rattled his teeth, he grasped hold of Bob, and they struggled together.

"Paget!" yelled the Bounder.

"Oh gad!" said Mr. Paget.

"Lend a hand here, you fool!"

"Why, you rotter!" panted Bob. "Is that what you call fair play?"

The Bounder was not thinking of fair play. He was thinking of vengeance. He yelled again at the racing-man.

Paget hesitated a few moments. But he did not hesitate long. Bob was a stranger to him, and he cared nothing about him; he had no liking for Smithy, the millionaire's son. And the idea of fair play was not likely to trouble the card-sharper and racing swindler. He shrugged his shoulders, and came out at the gate on to the towpath, throwing away his cigarette.

"Collar him, can't you?" yelled the Bounder.

"Any old thing!" yawned Paget.

Bob Cherry made an effort to break away. He was more than a match for the Bounder; but he was nothing like a match for a grown man, with the Bounder thrown in. But Vernon-Smith clung to him like a cat, and he could not get loose. Freddy Paget's grasp closed on his collar.

"Hold him!" panted Smithy.

"I've got him, buddy!" yawned Mr. Paget.

"Now chuck him into the water."

"Oh gad!"

"Do you hear?" yelled the Bounder savagely. "Duck him!"

"You rotter!" roared Bob.

"Look here, let him loose, and let him run, kid!" suggested Paget.

"By gum, if you don't help me to duck the rotter, I'm done with you, Fred Paget!" snarled the Bounder.

Paget gave him a look. There was little doubt that at that moment, he would have preferred to duck the Bounder. But he was there to keep in the good graces of the millionaire's son.

He grasped Bob hard and helped to drag him towards the water's edge.

Bob Cherry struggled fiercely.

Even with the two of them he was not easy to handle. Vernon-Smith was grasping his right arm, but he dragged it loose, and dashed his fist into the Bounder's eye, sending him sprawling on his back.

For the moment he had only Paget. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,260.

to deal with, and his clenched fist came swinging in an upper-cut, which caught the sporting-man fairly on the point of the chin, like a hammer.

There was a gasping howl from Paget. He felt for the moment as if his head had been very nearly knocked off. He staggered, howled, and released the scoundrel.

Bob jumped away.

But the Bounder was up again, springing at him, and Bob had no time to get clear. Vernon-Smith closed with him again, yanking to Paget.

Paget was clasping his chin, which ached horribly. This time he was not slow to heed the Bounder. That terrific jolt had hurt him and it had roused his temper. His face was red with rage as he joined in the struggle again. With runaway recklessness, he struck blow after blow, and Bob crumpled up on the grass.

"Now chuck him in!" panted the Bounder.

"In he goes!" snarled Paget, with an oath.

Freddy Paget, at that moment, was no longer the lounging man-about-town that he generally affected to be. He was the race-course rough pure and simple.

Between them, Bob was dragged through the grass and through the rushes. He put up a last struggle on the water's edge, but it was in vain. He was nung bodily into the river.

Splash!

He went into four feet of water, well out from the bank, and disappeared from sight. He was up the next second, gasping.

The Bounder watched him, with a savage grin.

Bob came splashing to the bank.

"Kick him off, if he tries to land here," said the Bounder.

"Leave it to me!" said Paget.

Bob, scrambling into the rushes, backed quickly as Paget aimed a kick at him. He went foundering into the water again.

"Grooogh!"

"Swim for it!" jeered the Bounder.

"Swim for it, you cad!"

Bob Cherry, standing with the water flowing round his shoulders, glared at the two on the bank.

"Smithy! You rotter! I'll—I'll—"

"Come ashore if you like!" mocked the Bounder. "We'll jolly well kick you into the water again."

Bob did not approach the bank again. He turned away, and swam, letting the current take him down the stream.

The mocking laugh of the Bounder followed him.

Not till he was at a little distance from the bungalow, did Bob scramble into the rushes and drag himself ashore.

He was drenched and dripping, his cap was gone, his shoes full of water. He gasped and panted for breath.

He did not linger on the towpath. The Bounder was the fellow to follow and pitch him in again; and Bob was no use against the two of them. He left the towpath, and cut across to the road that ran behind the bungalow, and turned along it to get back to the wood.

Once clear of the bungalow, he stopped to squeeze water out of his clothes, and take off his shoes and shake the water out of them.

Then he went on into the footpath through the wood at a trot. He was more than a mile from Wharton Lodge. He was soaked to the skin, and he was already sneezing. Only by keeping in rapid motion could he hope to escape catching a bad cold; and he soon

realised that he was not going to escape that affliction. Again and again a sneeze caught him as he trotted dimly through the wood. Here and there, among the hawthorns and bracken and beeches, he caught sight of the searchers in the wood, who were still hunting for traces of the bank-raider. But Bob had lost all interest in the black-bearded man now. He was thinking only of getting in at Wharton Lodge and getting dry.

He did not slacken pace all the way along the country road to Harry Wharton's home. He was still on the trot when he came up the drive towards the house—and his progress was punctuated by sneezes. And his feelings towards Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greifriars, and his sporting friend, Mr. Freddy Paget, could not have been expressed in any known language.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter Astonishes the Natives!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Kick him!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"The kickfulness is the proper caper and the sine qua non!" said Hurroo Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, really, Inky—"

Billy Bunter blinked at the four juniors who had come in. He blinked warily. But he was not really alarmed. Colonel Wharton was in the library; Miss Amy Wharton was in the drawing-room; Wells, the butler, was hovering in the hall; and Billy Bunter sagely considered that the juniors could not very well startle all those three personages by a shindy in Wharton Lodge. He was prepared to yell at the top of his voice if a boot landed on him.

"You fat villain!" said Harry.

"You jolly well ought to be kicked."

"If that's how you talk to a visitor, Wharton—"

"Visitors, as a rule, don't scoff all the lurch," said Frank Nugent. "It's not done in the best circles, Bunter."

"He, he, he!" said Bunter. "The fact is, you fellows, I've been waiting for you to come in. I'm rather sorry about the lurch; but, after all, it was your fault. If you'd stopped for the picnic when I asked you—"

"I suppose we can't kick him here," said Johnny Bull thoughtfully. "Will you come for a walk in the grounds, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you know! I say, you fellows, it was all your fault, and I'm willing to say nothing more about it," said Bunter. "You haven't treated me fairly—well, you never do—but I'm prepared to let the whole matter drop. After all, I don't expect good manners here."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Considering all that I've done for you, Wharton—"

"Pathead!"

"Well, you jolly well wouldn't have been home for the holidays at all if I hadn't chipped in," said Bunter warmly. "You had a row on with your uncle—"

"Dry up, you ass!" said Wharton, frowning.

"Well, you had, hadn't you?" demanded Bunter. "And who was it set the matter right and cleared up the misunderstanding by his tact?"

"Cheese it!"

"Well, if I hadn't chipped in you'd still be on bad terms with the old fossil."

"What?"

"The old fossil—and you'd be sticking at Greyfriars, snotting for that rotten schol, with your silly back up," said Bunter. "Just a few tactful words from me cleared up the trouble and set it right."

"Are you wound up?"

"Well, you might be grateful!" said Bunter.

Harry Wharton did not look grateful. He looked as if he was going to kick Bunter, in spite of the fact that he was a visitor, and that his uncle and aunt were within hearing.

But he restrained that natural impulse. It was, after all, true that Wharton had been on bad terms with his uncle, owing to an unfortunate misunderstanding; and that Bunter, butting into what did not concern him, with his usual fatuous impudence had inadvertently been the means of clearing up that mutual misunderstanding. The outcome of Billy Bunter's cheeky intervention had been so fortunate that Wharton was very tolerant with the fat Owl these days. And a great deal of tolerance was needed with so very peculiar a guest as William George Bunter.

"But that isn't what I was going to speak about," went on Bunter, blinking at the chums of the Remove through his big spectacles.

"Thank goodness!" said Harry. "Look here, why not give your chin a rest and not speak at all?"

"Good idea!" exclaimed Johnny Bull heartily. "Have you ever thought of that, Bunter?"

"I say, you fellows, I've got something to tell you. If you knew that I'd been nearly murdered in the wood, —"

"Wha-a-t?"

"I might have been murdered, you know—I nearly was—"

"The quietfulness would have been the boonful blessing!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Why, you black beast," roared Bunter. "I can jolly well tell you that if that villain had seen me—"

"What villain, you howling ass!" exclaimed Wharton. "What idiotic yarn are you spinning now?"

"I don't know who he was," said Bunter; "but he was some awful villain. I know that. Must have been a thief of some kind. It couldn't have been his own money."

"What the thump—"

The juniors stared blankly at Bunter; and Wells, hovering in the distance, hovered a little nearer.

"Well, it stands to reason," said Bunter argumentatively, "if it was his own money, why should he hide in the wood while he was taking it out of the attache-case and stacking it in his pockets?"

"Who?" yelled Wharton.

"Him!" explained Bunter.

"You frabjous owl, who was 'him'?"

"That man in the wood."

"You benighted bandersnatch, was there a man in the wood?"

"Don't I keep on telling you that he nearly murdered me?" howled Bunter. "I mean to say, he might have done if he'd seen me. Of course, he was a villain, an awful thief—stacking hundreds of pounds away in his pockets and taking that black beard off!"

Four juniors jumped almost clear of the floor.

"A-a-a black beard!" gasped Wharton.

"Hundreds of pounds!" stuttered Nugent.

"My only hat!" gasped Johnny Bull. "Bunter must have been in the wood the time you saw the beaver dodge into it, Wharton! Does this mean that he's seen him?"

Wharton grasped the fat Owl by the shoulder.

"Look here, you fat ass—"

"Ow!"

"If you saw anything in the wood, tell us at once, and cut it short!" snapped Wharton. "There's been a bank robbery at Wimford this afternoon—a hold-up at the Wimford and County Bank—and a man with a black beard got away with a lot of money in an attache-case. I saw him nip off a motor-bike and dodge into the wood soon after I saw you there. Did you see—"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

His eyes opened wide behind his big spectacles.

"Was he a man with a black beard and moustaches, in a light overcoat, with a soft hat?" demanded Wharton.

"He jolly well was, when I first saw him," said Bunter. "But if that's the man they're looking for they jolly well won't find him—and I can jolly well tell you why. Because I saw him take off the beard and moustaches and stack them away in the attache-case, see?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Then he wasn't a real 'beaver'?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

HE SENT US A LIMERICK,  
WE SENT HIM A LEATHER  
POCKET-WALLET!

A. Bates, of 29, Winn's Avenue,  
Walthamstow, E.17, is the winner's  
name.

Alonso, the Greyfriars duffer,  
Many sneers and jibes has to suffer.  
But where courage is needed  
It must be conceded,  
He may be a fool, but no bluffer!

"No fear!" grinned Bunter. "I say, if there was a bank raid at Wimford, that's the man! Hundreds of pounds were—"

"Tell us what you saw—sharp!"

And Bunter—swelling with importance now—related, with many details, what had happened in the wood.

Harry Wharton & Co listened breathlessly.

It was seldom, indeed, that Billy Bunter found such attentive hearers, but on this occasion the chums of the Remove fairly hung on his words.

"My hat!" said Harry, at last. "It was the man—no doubt about that! Why, this may make all the difference in nailing him! They're looking for the man we described—a middle-aged man with a black beard—and according to Bunter—"

"What a deep card!" said Nugent. "Of course, he was in disguise when he raided the bank. Why, he may have walked back to Wimford after he got his beard and things off. Might be one of the people who are searching the wood now, for all we know."

"Some jolly old local inhabitant, perhaps," said Johnny Bull, with a nod. "Not a genuine beaver at all."

"No fear," said Bunter. "He looked about fifty at first—and not more than thirty afterwards. And, I can tell you, I should jolly well know him again anywhere. Nobody else would!" added Bunter complacently. "Nobody but mo

has the faintest idea what he really looks like."

"Come in and tell my uncle," said Harry. "He will know what to do about it."

And Wharton almost dragged the fat Owl into the library.

Colonel Wharton was busy at his writing-table, but he looked up with a kind smile as his nephew came in. Then, as he noted the excitement in Harry's face, he rose to his feet.

"What has happened, my boy?" he asked.

Wharton quickly told of the bank raid at Wimford, of which the colonel had not yet heard. Then Billy Bunter—almost bursting with importance by this time—told his thrilling tale again.

Colonel Wharton listened, with astonishment; but with the deepest attention.

"This may be very important," he said at last.

"I should jolly well think so!" grinned Billy Bunter. "I'm the only chap who really knows anything—"

"Shut up, you ass!" breathed Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton—if you're trying to make out that I'm not the only fellow who knows anything important you—"

"I will get Mr. Stacey on the telephone at once and ask him to call," said the colonel quietly. "Remain in the house to see him when he comes, Bunter. Don't go out."

"How could I be going out?" asked Bunter, blinking at him. "It's nearly tea-time."

"Oh!" ejaculated the colonel. Evidently, it was unlikely that Bunter would be thinking of going out when a meal was almost due.

Colonel Wharton went to the telephone at once. Billy Bunter rolled out of the library fairly strutting with importance. Billy Bunter was the "goods" now, in his own estimation, at least; and he told the other fellows so, not once, but many times.

## THE ELFVENTH CHAPTER.

Feastily for Bob!

"A TCHOOOOH!"

"What—"

"Atehoo-choooh-choooh!"

"Bob—"

"Grough! Atehoooh!"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton blankly.

He stared at the hapless Bob.

Bob Cherry, hatless, soaked with water, thick with dust that had stuck to his wet clothes in his long tramp down the Wimford Road, made rather a surprising picture. In such a state, Bob had not cared to present himself at the front door to be admitted by an astonished and scandalised Wells. He had a natural desire to clean up a little before he was seen; for which reason he got into the house by a door at the back and scuttled up the stairs to his room, to escape observation. He had nearly reached it, when he almost ran into Wharton.

"What on earth's happened, old chap?" exclaimed Harry. "Did you have a row with Smithy?" He guessed, as soon as he had asked the question.

"Grough! Yes! Ducked—caught a cold—gough!" yurled Bob, and he hurried into his room.

Wharton followed him in, to lend a hand. Bob was sneezing and his eyes streamed; he had evidently caught a cold, and a rather bad one.

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"You'd better turn into bed, old bean," said Harry. "You're going to have a jolly old cold—"

"Oh, rot!" gasped Bob. "I'm not going to turn in! I'd better stay in my room, though—I don't want to spread this all over the house. Oh gum! I'll smash Smyth!"

A brisk rub down and a change into dry clothes and a dressing-gown, made Bob feel a little better. Wharton stacked logs on the fire and made a cheerful blaze. He dragged an armchair before the fire, and pushed Bob into it. He ran downstairs to ask Miss Wharton for "something for a cold," and Aunt Amy came up, personally, much concerned, and administered essence of cinnamon; and warned Bob to be very, very careful not to get into a draught. Bob had to explain to the old lady that he had tumbled into the water, but he did not mention Smyth.

The news of the disaster brought his comrades to his room to see him. Miss Wharton, repeating her injunctions to be very, very careful, left the unfortunate sufferer with his friends. Aunt Amy being out of hearing, Bob explained what had happened at Riverside Bungalow—with many sneezes and sniffs and gurgles.

"Well, you asked for trouble, going there, after what happened this morning," said Johnny Bull. "You could have handled Smyth alone all right! But two men to one—that's awfully thick."

"The rotters!" said Harry Wharton. "Redwing wasn't there, I suppose—he wouldn't have stood by and seen foul play."

"No, I never saw Redwing—only Smyth and that fellow he called Paget—some sort of a racing man by his looks," said Bob. "Oh, my nose! My beastly nose! Ow!"

"The sort of man Smyth would have staying with him!" said Johnny Bull, with a grunt.

"The terrific rotters!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh indignantly. "The esteemed and execrable Smyth ought to be mopped up."

"I'll jolly well mop him up, as soon as I can get out again!" groaned Bob.

"Ducking a fellow—two to one! But I shall have to stay in with this putrid cold—two or three days, perhaps—oh lor!"

Bob groaned. Two or three days indoors was a dismaying prospect. Still, it was evident that he had to take care of that cold.

"We'll deal with Smyth, and with his precious racing friend!" said Harry Wharton quietly. "It would have been better to keep clear of him; but the end isn't getting away with this."

"No fear!" agreed Nugent.

"The terrific ragfulness is the proper caper!" agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

There was deep indignation in the Co. Bob Cherry's dismal state roused their wrath. They had more than half-expected to hear that Bob had collected trouble, in visiting Smyth's bungalow; they were not surprised to hear that there had been a scrap. But ducking a fellow, two to one, was altogether outside the limit. The Co. had already settled that they were going to deal with Smyth, and his friend, Paget, at the very first opportunity.

"I say, you fellows—" Billy Bunter blinked in at the door. "I say—Oh! He, he, he!"

Bunter blinked at Bob's crimson face and watery eyes, and chuckled. He seemed to find the sight amusing.

"He, he, he!" cackinated the fat Owl. "Oh crickey! He, he, he!"

Bob gave him a glare.

"You fat, frabjous idiot—" "He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at, you under-headed dummy?" roared Bob.

"He, he, he! You look a jolly old picture!" chuckled Bunter. "Been catching a cold? He, he, he! I say, you fellows, tea's ready! I came up to tell you. He, he, he!"

"I'll send your tea up here, Bob," said Harry.

"Right-ho! Sling Bunter downstairs!" growled Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry! He, he, he! You're going to be laid up, poor old chap! He, he, he!"

"Is there anything funny in that, you frabjous ass?"

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter.

Apparently Bunter thought there was something funny in it, for he chortled loud and long.

Bob Cherry grasped one of the cushions that Wharton had thoughtfully placed in the chair for him. He took aim.

Billy Bunter ceased to chuckle suddenly, and jumped to the door. The cushion flew, with deadly aim, as he reached it.

"Crash!" "Ooooooop!" roared Bunter.

He had intended to depart quickly when Bob took aim with the cushion. He departed more quickly than he had intended. The cushion landed on the back of his fat neck; and Billy Bunter took a header through the doorway, nose-diving into the passage outside. There was a bump and a roar.

"Goal!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Beast! I'll jolly well come in and lick you!" roared Bunter. "Beast! Yah! Rotter! I'm jolly glad you've got a cold! Yah!"

"Come in again, you fat frog—" "Beast!"

Bunter's retreating footsteps were heard in the passage. He did not seem to want to see any more of Bob Cherry, in his present frame of mind.

Harry Wharton & Co. went down to tea. Bob, in his present dismal state, did not want to show up, and his tea was sent up to his room. After tea, his friends came up to keep him company. Billy Bunter did not come; he sent a message by Wharton, that the beast could keep his beastly cold all to himself; a message which was not delivered. A little later, Inspector Stacey arrived in a car from Wimford, and the fat Owl was called into the library to see the inspector.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### A "Perfect" Description!

**B**ILLY BUNTER rolled into the library, with his fat little nose in the air, and a self-satisfied grin on his podgy face. Bunter, at present, being "the goods," did not leave any doubt, by his manner, that he realised that he was the goods. Colonel Wharton gave him rather a grim glance; but grim glances had no effect on the Owl of the Remove. Inspector Stacey fixed a rather disconcerting stare on him; but Bunter was not to be disconcerted. He gave the official gentleman a cheeky nod and a cheery grin.

"Is this the boy, sir?" asked Mr. Stacey with a grunt.

"This is Bunter," said Colonel Wharton. "Bunter, you will tell Mr. Stacey exactly what happened—"

"Leave it to me, sir!" said Bunter breezily. "I'm the fellow to help you, sir! Glad to help! I've no doubt I shall be able to put your hands on that hold-up man!"

Grunt—from the inspector. "Tell me what you saw—if you saw anything—in as few words as possible."

Colonel Wharton had already explained the matter over the telephone, and Mr. Stacey was undoubtedly very keen to get hold of such useful and valuable information. But he did not seem pleased with Bunter personally. But Mr. Stacey was only one of the many, many people who were not pleased with Bunter personally.

Indeed, after looking at Bunter, he seemed to entertain a doubt as to whether the fat Owl had anything useful to tell him at all. Bunter gave him the

## 'Ware Whistling DAN!



A mournful whistle breaks the silence of the hills. A snarling bark; a low whinny—and any law breaker within hearing knows that he'd better vamoose pronto, or look out for a pile of trouble. For that whistling portends the approach of Dan Magee, the youngest Marshal out West. And with him are Satan, the horse, and Guv'nor, the dog—a

formidable trio who make it their job to keep law and order in the lawless cow country. They are on the trail of a gang of bank bandits this week. Follow them in this rip-roaring complete tale of the Wild West. You'll also enjoy the five other thrilling stories which appear in this bumper issue of

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ADVENTURE—THRILLS—COLOUR!

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"Lend a hand, Paget," panted Vernon-Smith, "and we'll duck the rotter!" Bob Cherry put up a last struggle on the water's edge, but it was in vain. He was flung bodily into the river. Splash!

impression of being a fat ass who was likely to say almost anything to make himself of importance.

However, he listened attentively as the fat junior unfolded his tale. He uttered a sharp question every now and then when the fatuous Owl wandered from the point. Bunter never could tell a plain, unvarnished tale. But with all his wanderings and exaggerations and lapses of memory, it was clear that the story was substantially true, and that the information was extremely valuable.

By the time he had finished, Bunter was feeling rather indignant. He was aware that Mr. Stacey was glad to hear what he had to tell. But it was clear that Mr. Stacey thought very little of him—William George Bunter—and did not seem to realise what an important fellow he was. Just like a fatheaded country police-inspector, Bunter thought.

"The boy is forgetful, wandering, and a little foolish," said Mr. Stacey, said Colonel Wharton, with a ruthless disregard for Bunter's feelings. "But I thought you would like to hear—"

"Certainly, sir!" said Mr. Stacey. "This information is undoubtedly of value, though I wish it had been one of the other boys who had been on the spot—or that this boy was a little more intelligent."

Bunter glared.

"Look here—" he began warmly.

"It seems assured," went on the inspector, just as if Bunter was not speaking at all, "that the man was the bank-raider. Your nephew saw him enter Wimford Wood—so there was no doubt that he left his confederate on the motor-cycle at that point. From the activity the man displayed in the raid, I had already decided that he was not so old as he appeared to be—and Bunter's statement bears this out. The black beard and moustache were undoubtedly a disguise."

"I watched him taking them off—"

"If this boy could give us an intelligent description of the man without his disguise it would help us materially. It is quite possible that he may be a local resident—perhaps walking the streets of Wimford at this very moment. Now, Bunter"—Mr. Stacey fixed his keen eyes on the Owl of the Remove—"give me the best description you can. You say that the man was clean-shaven after removing his disguise."

"Yes, I do," grunted Bunter sulkily.

"How old did he look?"

"Might have been thirty—or, perhaps, only twenty-five," said Bunter thoughtfully. "Or thirty-five, perhaps."

"Was he tall?"

"I—I think he was rather tall. Still, perhaps he wasn't. He was stooping most of the time—"

"Was he fat or thin?"

"Well, I never noticed—"

"Had he any specially unusual features?"

"Not that I noticed."

"What was his nose like?"

Bunter stared.

"Eh? It was like a nose, of course."

"I mean, was it large or small—a pug nose or an aquiline nose—"

"Well, it was a—a—a nose," said Bunter. "Just a nose, you know."

Mr. Stacey breathed rather hard.

"Did you notice the colour of his eyes?"

"Nunno!"

"The shape of his mouth?" said Mr. Stacey encouragingly. "What was his mouth like?"

"Well, it—it was like—like a mouth, you know," said Bunter.

"His chin?"

"Just a chin, you know!" said Bunter cheerfully.

"The colour of his hair?"

"His—his hair?"

"Yes. You have said that he changed his hat for a cap. He must, therefore,

have been bareheaded for a few

moments at least. What was the colour of his hair?"

"Blessed if I thought about it!" said Bunter.

"You did not notice it?"

"Nunno!"

"How was it parted—right, left, or middle?"

"Never thought about it—"

"His complexion?"

Bunter cudgelled his brains. The number of things he had not noticed about that man in the wood was really remarkable.

"Well, he was rather red—" he said at last.

"You mean that he had a ruddy complexion?"

"Well, he had been hurrying, and I dare say that made him rather red. May have been that."

"His teeth?" said Mr. Stacey, almost in despair. "Did you observe his teeth?"

"Never thought about them."

"His ears—round, pointed, large, small—"

"I never looked at his ears."

"His hands—smooth or rough, clean or discoloured?"

"I didn't notice his hands."

"Try to remember anything you may have observed about the man, Bunter," said Colonel Wharton gently.

"I remember everything perfectly, sir," answered Bunter cheerfully. "I should know him again anywhere. Put that man under my eyes and I'll pick him out of a hundred!"

"No doubt!" yapped the Wimford inspector. "But he is not likely to be put under your eyes without being arrested—and not likely to be arrested without a description. Did you notice even his clothes? I suppose you observed that he wore clothes?" added the inspector, with bitter sarcasm.

"Oh, yes!" agreed Bunter. "You

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see, I should have noticed at once if he hadn't." Sarcasm was wasted on Billy Bunter. "I think he wore a lounge suit under that overcoat."

"You think? You are not sure?"  
"Well, I wasn't thinking about his clothes, you see—"

"What colour was the suit?"  
Bunter reflected.  
"Might have been grey," he said, "or—orange—or—something."

Inspector Stacey drew a deep, deep breath. He did not look obliged to Bunter for all this useful information. Bunter had an indignant impression that the man wanted to shake him.

Mr. Stacey asked a few more questions, which Bunter answered with the same remarkable intelligence and precision. He closed his notebook with a snap.

"I hope you'll get him now, sir!" chirruped Bunter. "Now that I've described him to you from head to foot—"

"Here is Bunter's description, Colonel Wharton," said Mr. Stacey. "The man may have been any age from twenty-five to thirty-five; he may have had any kind of short or tall; he may have had any kind of features, hair of any colour, eyes of any colour, and he wore clothes that may have been of any colour or cut. A remarkably intelligent and accurate description of a man seen at the distance of a few feet!" almost yapped Mr. Stacey.

"Yes, I'm rather a good hand at describing things," said Bunter. "I notice things, you know—eye for detail, and all that."

"Please go!" said Mr. Stacey. He was feeling that he would not be able much longer to resist his keen desire to shake Bunter. "Say nothing about this outside this house, boy. That is important!"

"That's all right," said Bunter. "Leave it to me! I'm not one of those talkative chaps!"

"Now go!" grunted Mr. Stacey.  
"Well, I hope you'll get him," said Bunter. "You ought to, you know, now I've put you on the track. It's as easy as pie now, isn't it? It's up to you now, Mr. Stacey."

"Please go, Bunter!" said Colonel Wharton hastily.

Bunter rolled out, followed by a glare from the inspector.  
"The boy is a fool, sir!" grunted Mr. Stacey. "I am glad to say that I have never seen so utterly stupid a boy before. His description may apply to any one of five million persons in this country."

"Certainly Bunter is not very bright," said Colonel Wharton. "But you have, at least, learned the fact that the man was in disguise; that you have to look for a young man, not a man of fifty—a clean-shaven man, not a man with a beard."

"That is undoubtedly useful," said the inspector, his frowning brow clearing a little. "We know, at least, the kind of man we have to look for, though we cannot get his description. It is something. But if the boy had had any intelligence, any powers of observation; if he had been anything but a self-satisfied noodle—"

Colonel Wharton smiled.  
"After all, every little helps," he said soothingly.

"Oh, quite!" the inspector rose. "I am very glad you called me here. You will help me, sir, by seeing that that foolish, obtuse, talkative boy does not chatter this all over the neighbourhood. As the matter stands, the bank robber is in ignorance of the fact that he is

known to have been in disguise. His present impression is that the police are hunting for a black-bearded man who was seen at the bank. You see how important it is that no hint of this should possibly reach his ears and place him on his guard."

"I see that, of course," assented the colonel, "especially if he should be a resident in the neighbourhood—"

"In that case, one careless word might place him on his guard. Can you keep that chattering young donkey silent?" Mr. Stacey was evidently anxious on that point.

"Most certainly!" said the colonel. "I will speak to my nephew on the subject, and warn him to keep Bunter under his own personal observation, and see that he is not even left alone. I undertake that the foolish lad shall not be allowed to impede your work by his chattering."

"Very good!" said Mr. Stacey.  
And the Wimford inspector took his leave.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Sauce for the Gander!

**B**OB CHERRY was not happy the next day.

It was necessary for him to keep to his room; and he was made as comfortable as possible, with a big fire, and a warm dressing-gown, and plenty of cushions in the easiest of easy-chairs.

Everybody in the house was willing to come up at his beck and call. Bob was popular with the whole household, and even Wells, the portly butler, was happy to mount the stairs to do him any little service.

Colonel Wharton dropped in to give him a cheery word; Miss Wharton gave him much attention and many remedies; his chums were quite assiduous. But from early morn till dewy eve Bob was in a state of intense exasperation.

He loathed staying indoors at the best of times. And it was a fine April day, and the sunshine called to him. He longed to be out; and it was quite impossible for him to get out. The morning seemed to him to last a week, the afternoon dragged to an endless length. Even Bob's sunny temper suffered a little.

Billy Bunter looked in about eleven o'clock, that being the hour that Bunter turned out, after breakfasting in bed. He looked in and sniffed.

"Slacker!" he said.  
Bob glared round.  
"Frowning indoors, a fine day like this!" said Bunter. "Why not make an effort? Dash it all, buck up, you know!"

Billy Bunter retired rather hastily after making those cheery remarks. Bob was getting out of his chair and reaching for the poker.

Bunter did not look in again. Which was rather fortunate for Bunter, for certainly some missile would have landed on the fat face had it been inserted in Bob's room.

If there was anything Bob loathed more than staying indoors, it was being an invalid, or being treated as one. And he was unwilling to keep his friends indoors, though they were more than willing to keep him company. He almost drove them out.

But the Co. never left him alone for long, and they comforted him a little with plans for making the obnoxious Bouncer and his sporting friend, Mr. Paget, sit up in their turn.

Bob certainly was very keen on

making Smithy and his sporting friend sit up; but even that prospect was of little comfort to a fellow sniffing and sneezing and snuffing and snorting, and shut up indoors on a fine spring day.

His chums were deeply concerned about him; but their sympathy was not of much practical use to a fellow with a bad cold. For once in his life Bob was rather like a bear with a sore head.

Harry Wharton was the member of the Co. who saw least of him that day. Wharton was busy keeping an eye on Bunter.

The colonel had told his nephew of Inspector Stacey's request, and impressed on him the importance of keeping the fat Owl from chattering of what he had seen in the wood.

Wharton quite understood the importance of that, and he quite understood, too, the difficulty of keeping Billy Bunter's tongue from wagging.

Except when he was eating or sleeping, Billy Bunter's tongue seemed to have solved the problem of perpetual motion. And the fat Owl was full of his consequence, as the only fellow who could identify the bank raider.

Bunter was disposed to relate his thrilling tale to everybody who would listen; and the hold-up at Wimford had caused such intense excitement in the neighbourhood that there was no doubt that he would have found plenty of eager listeners. In which case it was fairly certain that the hold-up man, if he was still in the vicinity, would have learned enough to put him on his guard.

The fat Owl proposed a walk down to Wimford in the morning, to see how "old Stacey" was getting on and to gather in the news generally.

As that meant that Bunter would relate all he knew to at least a dozen persons, Wharton diplomatically headed him off to the tennis court.

Bunter fancied that he could play tennis, and, in the kindness of his fat heart, was willing to give instruction to others. Wharton, manfully suppressing his feelings, received instruction till lunch-time, after which Bunter was safe.

After lunch Bunter went to his room for a nap; and for once Wharton was glad to hear him snore.

Once asleep, the fat Owl was safe for an hour or two, which was a great relief, though the prospect of keeping an eye on him and bottling him up for the remainder of the day was rather dismaying.

Harry Wharton went along to Bob Cherry's room. He found Hurree Jamset and Ram Singh there, taking his turn at keeping Bob company.

"Feeling better, old chap?" asked Harry.

"Gurrrrrgh! No!"  
"It's rotten, old fellow!"  
"Oooooohh! I know it is, fathead! I'll smash Smithy! I'll pulverise that scoundrel Paget! Oooooohh!"

"My esteemed and idiotic Bob, the pulverisation will be simply terrific!"  
"Oh dear! Oh crumbs! Where's my hanky? Grooooooh!"

Bob Cherry gave his chums a watery blink.  
"Look here, you men, get out! What's the good of sticking indoors? Shove that 'Holiday Annual' this way, and clear!"

"My venerable and absurd chum—" "Rats! Buzz off!" grunted Bob. "If you want something to do go over to that bung, and bash Smithy's nose through the back of his head! Urrghh!"

(Continued on page 22.)



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**NESTLÉ'S**  
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## THE BOUNDER'S FOLLY!

(Continued from page 20.)

Wharton and Hurree Singh left him with the "Holiday Annual." Bob was not in his usual good temper; and he did not want to keep other fellows indoors. They left him snorting.

"It's rotten!" said Harry, as the Co. gathered at the window-seat at the end of the passage. "Poor old Bob—"  
"That cad Smithy—" growled Johnny Bull.

"The poorfulness of the absurd old Bob is preposterous!" said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "And the bashfulness of the esteemed Smithy—"

"The what?" ejaculated Nugent. "The esteemed bashfulness of the idiotic Smithy—"

"Blessed if I ever heard that Smithy was bashful!" said Frank.

"You do not catch onfully, my venerable Franky. The bashfulness of the esteemed Smithy is the proper caper," explained the nabob.

"Bob suggested that we might go over to the bung and bash his nose through the back of his head!" said Harry, laughing.

"Jolly good idea!" said Johnny Bull. "We're not letting the cad get by with this! He's got Bob laid up with a putrid cold—chucking him into the river—two to one. My idea is to go over and call on Smithy, and give him a ducking, too, and see how he likes it!"

Harry Wharton nodded. "I was thinking about it," he said. "If they'd only scrapped, it would be different. But getting a man to help him duck poor old Bob—"

"Whoever is saucy to the goose must be saucy to the gander, as the English proverb remarks," said the Nabob of Dhanipur. "Let the absurd and rascally Smithy have a dose of his own esteemed medicine."

"Only we've got to keep an eye on Bunter," said Harry. "If that fat idiot gets loose and goes cackling up and down Wimford—"

"Look him in his room!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Fathead!"  
"Well, we can take Bunter along with us, if it comes to that," said Frank. "Only don't mention that there may be a scrap. He wouldn't come."

"The fat dummy would be in the way!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Well, he's always in the way."  
"Look here," said Wharton. "It's up to us to make that rotter Smithy sit up for knocking poor old Bob out like this, and that ruffian who seems to be staying with him, too. We don't want a row with old Redwing, but—"

"Blow Redwing! We're jolly well going to make Smithy sorry for chucking Bob into the river!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"We shall have to take Bunter. The fat idiot will be cackling all over the place if we give him a chance."

"Oh, blow Bunter!"

"It's settled," said Harry. "We'll go after tea, and perhaps it will make poor old Bob feel better when we tell him we've ducked Smithy."

"Hear, hear!"

And so it was settled. Whether ducking Vernon-Smith would make Bob feel better or not, there was no doubt that the Bounder had asked for it, and he was going to get what he had asked for. It was all that the Co. could do for their unfortunate chum, and they were yearning to give the Bounder of Creyfriers what was due to him. It

was, in fact, quite a happy prospect, and they looked forward keenly to making that call on Smithy.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Not a Friendly Call!

**B**ILLY BUNTER came down after his nap—in time for tea. Tea to Billy Bunter was no trifling affair. It was a serious business, to which he devoted serious and businesslike attention. After tea, however, Bunter's powerful intellect came down to lesser matters. He inquired whether there was any news of the capture of the bank raider, and the answer being in the negative, the fat Owl gave a sniff of contempt.

"These rural bobbies are no good!" he remarked. "I've given old Stacey a description of the man he wants, and he can't get him. Shouldn't wonder if the man walked by right under his nose without Stacey recognising him."

"Shouldn't wonder—after your description of him," agreed Johnny Bull. "The way you've described him to us he might be anybody. If you had the sense of a bunny rabbit—"

"Oh, really, Bull—"  
"Coming out, Bunter?" asked Harry. The fat Owl had taken his cap, and was evidently going out.

"Well, I'm going down to Wimford to see if there's any news," said Bunter. "You see, I'm rather interested in this affair, being the only fellow who really knows anything about it."

"You mean you're going to cackle to everybody who will listen to your cackling!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Look here, you beast—"  
"Well, let's get out," said Harry hastily. "Lovely afternoon for a walk!"

"If I were at Bunter Court I should have the choice between two or three cars!" remarked Bunter. "Your uncle doesn't seem to be keeping a car now, Wharton. What about ringing up for a taxi?"

"Nothing about ringing up for a taxi, old fat man! Come on!"

"I'll pay for the taxi!" said Bunter scornfully. "We'll drop in at the pictures, too, at Wimford. I'll pay! One of you fellows can lend me a pound or two—"

"You're too generous, old bean!" said Nugent gravely.

"Well, I've got a generous nature," answered Bunter, blinking at him. "Thoughtless generosity—that's my long suit. I shouldn't care to be one of those fellows who's always thinking about himself."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'll pay all round, of course," said Bunter. "It's going to be my treat, from start to finish. Taxi there and back, pictures and all. I suppose you can lend me a pound, Wharton?"

"Come on," said Harry, seeming suddenly deaf.

He went out, followed by his chums, and Bunter rolled after them in a state of considerable irritation.

"I say, you fellows," he hooted. "Aren't you going to wait for the taxi?"

"We're not going to stick you for a taxi, old chap!" said Johnny Bull, shaking his head.

"I don't mind in the least. You needn't bother about the expense to me," answered Bunter.

"I wasn't. I was bothering about the expense to Wharton."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Beast!" roared Bunter. He rolled sulkily after the juniors as

they went out at the gates on the Wimford road.

"Look here, you rotters, it's a jolly long walk to Wimford!" he grunted.

"What about calling on Smithy?" said Harry Wharton, closing one eye at his chums.

"Oh!" said Bunter. He had heard the talk of the juniors, about Smithy and his bungalow on the river. "That's not a bad idea! I don't suppose Smithy would care to see you fellows after Cherry kicking up a row with him. But he would be glad to see me, of course!"

"Of course!" said Nugent. "Who wouldn't?"

"Exactly! I've done a lot for Smithy. It was really my vote that got him in as captain of the Remove at the election. I fancy Smithy's having rather a high old time in the hole. He's the chap to make the fur fly when there's no masters or prefects about!" Bunter grinned. "Smokes, and cards, and going to the races, and all that, you bet. Look here, Wharton, if Smithy asks me to stop, you needn't expect me to come back with you. I shall feel bound to give Smithy a bit of my time."

"But that means that we should lose you, old chap!" said Johnny Bull, with a deep sarcasm that was a total waste on Billy Bunter. "Think of us!"

"That's all very well, Bull. But a fellow must think of himself sometimes," said Bunter. "You can't expect to take up my time for the whole vacation. Be reasonable!"

"Oh crickey!"

"Well, turn off here for Smithy's bung," said Harry, as they came to the footpath. "If Smithy wants you to stay, Bunter—which, of course, is frightfully probable—we'll try to bear your absence for a time."

"It will cause us deep grief!" said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh solemnly. "The deepfulness of the grief will be terrific, and we shall feel like putting on sackcloth and rashers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled quite cheerily along the footpath that led to Smithy's bungalow. Certainly, he had not the remotest suspicion of the Co.'s real intentions there. Evidently he was under the impression that the Bounder might seize this opportunity of asking so fascinating and delightful a fellow to stay. This happy anticipation brought quite a cheery grin to Bunter's fat face. If Smithy did not think of it, Bunter was prepared to give him a hint. And though Billy Bunter preferred Wharton Lodge to Bunter Court, he would have preferred Smithy's bungalow to Wharton Lodge.

There was no doubt that the Bounder, free from check and control, was having an uproarious time and making the fur fly, as Bunter expressed it. And the fat Owl was more than willing to help him make the fur fly.

"I say, you fellows," remarked Bunter, as they came in sight of the river, rolling bright in the sunset, "perhaps you'd better not come, after all."

"Eh?"

"You're on fighting terms with Smithy, Wharton, and I don't suppose he wants to see Nugent, or Inky, or Bull. Why should he?" argued Bunter. "I rather think I'd better drop in by myself. You see, I'm calling on Smithy as a friend, and I don't want any unpleasantness."

"Oh!"

"Smithy's not in your line, either, you know. You're a set of noodles and nincompoops, if you don't mind my mentioning it—"

"Not at all, old man. Go on!"



Bunter gave a jump, and his little round eyes almost popped through his big spectacles as he stared at Mr. Paget. "It's him!" he shrieked, pointing an accusing forefinger at the astonished Paget. "The man I saw in the wood—the bank-robber!"

"Well, Smithy will be painting the town red. You know his style. We may find a game of banker going on. And smokes, you know. Well, that's all right for me. I'm a bit of a dog myself, you know, in holiday time. But it wouldn't suit you fellows," said Bunter, shaking his head. "You fellows had better keep clear."

Harry Wharton & Co. grinned. Evidently the fat Owl was keen to join in Smithy's doggish proceedings and lend a fat hand at painting the town red. Certainly the Co. would be rather out of place if that was the programme.

"Well, what about it?" asked Bunter impatiently. "Better turn back here, what? We don't want a row at the bung."

"Don't we?" grinned Johnny Bull. "No, we jolly well don't!" said Bunter warmly. "Look here, you fellows, if you force me to put it plain, I'd rather go on alone. I don't want your company, so there!"

"Dear me!" said Nugent. "As likely as not, there'll be a row if you butt in—"

"More likely than not, I think." "The morefulness is terrific." "Well, just chuck it and turn back!" snapped Bunter. "I'm not going to have you kicking up a shindy with my pal Smithy!"

"Here we are!" said Harry, as they came out on the towpath.

"That's not the way!" grunted Bunter. "Better go round to the front and knock at the door."

"My dear old fat bean, we're dropping in on Smithy quite unconventionally," grinned Johnny Bull. "It's barely possible that he might tell them

not to let us in if we knocked at the front door."

"Just possible!" grinned Nugent.

"You silly asses!" roared Bunter.

"It looks to me as if you've come here just to kick up a row—"

"What a brain!" said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

Harry Wharton threw open the gate.

"Pull up your socks, Bunter, old bean," said Johnny Bull. "You've got to back us up, you know. You know what a terrific fighting man you are!"

"Look here, you beast—"

Four juniors walked coolly into the garden, on which the french windows at the back of the bungalow opened.

Billy Bunter rolled after them in a state of great uneasiness. It was dawdling on his fat brain now that this was not a friendly call.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Smithy's at home," remarked Johnny Bull. "I can see him in the room yonder, with a cigarette in his mouth—the awful bunder!"

"Good!"

"Look here, you fellows—"

"You look here, you fat chump!" said Harry Wharton. "We've come over here to give Smithy beans for ducking Bob in the river—"

"What?" gasped Bunter.

"We're going to duck him, same as he did Bob—"

"Why, you—you—you—"

"You can lend a hand if you like—"

"Why, you silly fathead—"

"Or you can stand around ornamenting the landscape. Anyhow, shut up!"

"Beast! Look here—"

Not heeding Bunter, the four juniors crossed the lawn towards the open french windows. Billy Bunter rolled after them in a state of utter dismay.

Obviously, it was not a friendly call.

"Wharton, you beast—" gasped Bunter.

"Dry up!"

"I say—" Bunter clutched at Wharton's sleeve.

"Rats!"

Harry Wharton shook off the fat paw and stepped through the open french windows.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Something? Like a Surprise!

TOM REDWING laid down his book and rose from a settee. His eyes were on the Bunder, and his lips compressed a little.

Herbert Vernon-Smith sat at a little green-covered card-table, with a cigarette in his mouth. On the other side of the card-table sat Mr. Freddy Paget, also with a cigarette, shuffling a pack of cards. It was quite a usual sight in Smithy's bungalow. Tom Redwing had got used to it, but that did not make it please him any the more.

"I think I'll get the boat out, Smithy," he said quietly.

Vernon-Smith glanced round at him.

"Do!" he said carelessly.

Mr. Paget glanced at Redwing, with our taking the trouble to conceal a smile of contempt.

"Why not take a hand, kid?" he asked.

Redwing did not answer.

He did not want to quarrel with Smithy's sporting friend, while he was a guest in Smithy's bungalow. But he had found it difficult, many times, to refrain from telling Mr. Freddy Paget what he thought of a man who played cards for money with a schoolboy.

"Won't you come along, Smithy?" he asked, affecting not to hear Mr. Paget's question. "It's ripping on the river!"

"Thanks! Not!" yawned the Bounder. Vernon-Smith seemed to have got over his sulky temper of the day before. He was quite good-humoured now. But he had no intention whatever of departing from his own dingy manners and customs on his chum's account. Yet his present good-humour was chiefly due to the fact that the quarrel of the previous day had not, after all, caused Redwing to leave the place.

Tom had remained out till nearly bed-time with the boat, and when he had come in, he had found Smithy gone out with Paget. They had gone off in the car for the evening, and it had been an hour after midnight when Redwing had been awakened by the car's return. Smithy had been enjoying—more or less—an uproarious evening in London with his sporting friend, and Tom had not seen him again till late in the morning.

He had almost made up his mind to go; but Smithy had been so evidently and genuinely pleased to see him again that he had relented. They had gone on, as if there had been no dispute. Tom had noted the signs of recent combat on Smithy's face; but the Bounder had given no explanation, and Redwing knew nothing of the affair with Bob.

Redwing did not want to leave his chum. He had enjoyed the holiday in the riverside bungalow till Freddy Paget came. But he felt that he would not be able to stand the sportive Freddy much longer.

He stood hesitating now, unwilling to leave his friend in the company of the professional blackguard, yet well aware that the wilful and obstinate Bounder was not to be turned from his own wilful way.

"Look here, Smithy, I wish you'd come!" he said at last.

"How can I, when I've promised Freddy his revenge at poker?" grinned the Bounder.

Redwing opened his lips and closed them again. It was useless to speak, unless he made up his mind to leave the place, and he did not want to leave his chum to go from bad to worse. But he had to get out of Freddy Paget's company, and he crossed the room to the french windows, with the intention of going down to the boathouse.

A group of figures appeared outside, and one of them stepped into the open doorway. Redwing stared at Harry Wharton.

Behind him were his chums and Billy Bunter.

"What—" began Redwing. He would have been glad enough to see the chums of the Remove, on his own account; but he knew that a call on the Bounder could hardly be a friendly one.

Wharton stepped in coolly. "We've called to see Smithy," he said.

Herbert Vernon-Smith jumped to his feet. Mr. Freddy Paget rose also, jammed his eyeglass into his eyes, and stared at the crowd of schoolboys.

"Friends of yours, Smithy?" he asked. The Bounder scowled savagely.

"Not! What do you want here, Wharton? Get out!"

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"We want you, old bean!" said Johnny Bull.

"You're Paget, I suppose?" said Harry Wharton, looking at the man.

"If so, we want you, too!"

"Honoured!" drawled Mr. Paget.

The Bounder gritted his teeth.

"So you've come here to kick up a shindy, you gang of dashed hooligans!" he exclaimed.

"We've come here to give you what you gave Bob Cherry, yesterday!" answered Harry Wharton. "Bob's laid up with a bad cold—"

"Serve him right!"

"Look here—," repeated Redwing.

"I don't know whether that cad's told you, Redwing," said Harry.

"Yesterday Bob came along here, and Smithy and that fellow Paget ducked him in the river—two to one!"

Vernon-Smith burst into a savage, scuffling laugh.

"By gum, if you've come here to ask for trouble, I'll give you all you want!" he exclaimed. "Stand by me, Paget!"

"You bet!" grinned Paget.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"But, I say, you fellows, you chuck it!" exclaimed Billy Bunter indignantly.

"I came over here to see Smithy as a friend—"

"You fat chump!"

"I say, Smithy, I'm not in this, you know!" exclaimed Bunter anxiously. "I say, I'm your pal, you know—"

"You fat idiot!" answered the Bounder ungratefully.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

Billy Bunter broke off suddenly as his eyes fell on Mr. Freddy Paget. He gave a jump, and his little round eyes almost popped through his big, round spectacles.

He stared at Mr. Freddy Paget like a fellow in a fearful dream. The amazement and terror in his fat face caused every eye to turn on the fat Owl in astonishment, and Mr. Paget stared at him in as great surprise as the rest.

He had never seen her Bunter before, but it looked as if Billy Bunter had seen him.

"V-you!" stuttered Bunter. "You!"

"What the dooce—" began the astonished Paget.

"Oh crickey! Look out, you fellows!" shrieked Bunter. "I say, you fellows, keep him off! It's him!"

"What—"

"The man I saw in the wood—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"The bank-robber!" yelled Bunter.

"Oh crickey! That's the man who robbed the bank—the man who had a black beard! It's that villain! Oh crickey! Lemme get out of this!"

Bunter made a jump to escape. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh grabbed him by the collar and swung him back, and shut the french windows at the same moment.

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Bagging the Bank-Raider!

**H**ARRY WHARTON & CO. stood dumbfounded. The Bounder and Tom Redwing stared at Bunter, as if hardly comprehending. But it was upon Mr. Freddy Paget that Bunter's amazing words had the most startling effect. His eyeglass dropped from his eye and the colour vanished from his cheeks. For a long moment, while the juniors stood dumb, rage and terror distorted the face of the racing man, and it was with a visible effort that he pulled himself together and burst into a laugh—a laugh that rang so false that it struck jar-ingly on every ear.

"Is the fellow mad?" Paget tried to

speak nonchalantly, but his voice came huskily, in spite of himself. "Is this a joke, or what?"

"Lemme go!" yelled Bunter. "Inky, you beast, lemme go! Keep him off!"

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh had a grasp of iron on Bunter's collar. The dusky nabob seemed the only fellow who retained a clear presence of mind in those moments of amazement.

"My esteemed idiotic Bunter—"

"It's him!" shrieked Bunter. "Oh lor! I—I want to get out! I wish I hadn't come here! Lemme gerout!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, finding his voice. "What—what does this mean? Bunter—"

"It's him!" yelled Bunter.

"What does the fat fool mean?" asked the Bounder. "I've heard of a bank robbery at Wimford. Is that benighted idiot saying that Paget knows anything about it?"

The imminent shindy was forgotten now. Bunter's astounding words had driven it from all minds.

"The boys' mad, I think," Paget drawled. He was cool again now.

"What on earth—"

"Bunter, do you mean to say that this man Paget is the man you saw in the wood yesterday?" demanded Wharton.

"Oh lor! Think I don't know him again?" gasped Bunter, blinking at the racing man in such evident terror that there could be little doubt that he was speaking the truth. "Oh crumbs! I say, you fellows, let me get out of this—"

"Don't be a fool!" snapped the Bounder, though his own expression was strange and startled. "That fat idiot knows nothing of the bank robbery—"

"That's not so," said Harry quietly.

"Bunter has seen him—"

"I believe a crowd of people saw him," drawled Paget. "He's described as a middle-aged merchant with a black beard—"

"Bunter's seen him without his beard," said Harry, watching Paget as he spoke. "He saw him yesterday afternoon in the wood, after he had robbed the bank, taking his beard off."

Paget gave a convulsive start. It was an utterly unexpected blow, and it knocked out his self-possession.

"Bunter watched the man removing his disguise," went on Wharton. "He was hidden only a few feet away, watching him."

"And he can identify him!" said Johnny Bull grimly. "And he's jolly well done it, too! Your precious pal's a bank-robber, Smithy!"

"Paget!" exclaimed the Bounder.

The truth was written in the man's face. Even the Bounder, unwilling as he was, could read it there.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged quick glances. If this man was the bank-raider, he was not getting away—that was the immediate thought of the Greyfriars fellows. And they had no doubt of it. Bunter knew the crook without his disguise, and Bunter had recognised him at once. There could be no doubt.

Paget gritted his teeth. He was still cool, but his lips were white; his eyes had a glare like those of a hunted and cornered animal.

"Smithy, old bean," he tried to draw, "this may be very amusing to you and your schoolboy friends, but I'm fed up with it! If this is how a man is treated in your house, I'm gone!"

He swung towards the french windows, where the nabob stood as firm as a rock.

"Stand aside!" roared Paget.

(Continued on page 27.)

# WINGS OF WAR!

BY HEDLEY SCOTT.



## A Pleasant Surprise!

"GOOD show!" said Captain Oakley, of 256 Squadron. "That's the best landing I've ever seen an observer make."

"Absolutely!" agreed Daniels. "Hallo—he's hit!" gasped Ron Glynn, as Locke staggered and would have fallen, but for three outstretched arms.

"Fainted!"  
Gently they laid him down, whilst Oakley jerked off his helmet and goggles, and an orderly ripped up the flying-suit with a keen-bladed knife, the quicker to deal with any wound.

"He's a Hun!"  
There was no need for Daniels to voice that amazed ejaculation, for all those around Locke's unconscious figure had seen with goggling eyes the uniform of the German Imperial Air Service revealed.

"So's the other bloke," grunted the orderly. "The sawbones can't make it out." He jerked a thumb in the direction of the ambulance. "Ses as 'ow if he didn't know Mr. Thorburn was dead he'd swear he'd come back to No. 256 again!"

"Thorburn—"  
Daniels and Glynn eyed each other with questioning glances, and both their faces went a deathly pallor. Next second they were tearing pell mell for the ambulance.

Inside it a very puzzled medical officer was bending over a very British-looking youngster in a very German-looking tunic. Captain Travers had

only been with 256 Squadron a day longer than the two pals, and he had hardly caught more than a glimpse of Thorburn on the night he had joined the squadron. Yet Captain Travers prided himself on never forgetting a face.

"What's this about Thorburn?" asked Jim, grabbing the M.O. by the arm. "Let's have a look—Great jumping cats!" His eyes lit up with a wild excitement. "It is—it is—"

"By Heaven and all that's wonderful, it is Bruce!" yelled Glynn, studying the oil and blood splattered features of his chum for something no more than a second. "Doe! Doe! You old fool! He's alive, isn't he?"

"Doe," began Jim, gripping the M.O.'s arm with unintentional force, "he's alive?"

But before the flabbergasted doctor could make reply a familiar voice settled the matter quite definitely.

"Very much alive, you bokes. But, for the sake of old times, give me a fag!"

Only for a moment or two Thorburn's eyes flickered open and smiled a greeting at his two astonished chums. Then they closed, and his form shrank a bit.

"Doe—" began Jim anxiously. "Now look here, you two youngsters," said the M.O. severely, "if you want Thorburn to live, clear out and leave me to it!"

"You think—" Glynn's words were

## WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

Shot down over German territory, Bruce Thorburn, a young British flying officer of 256 Squadron, finds himself befriended by Adolph Menille—a peasant—who is, in reality, Ferrers Locke, a British Secret Service agent in Locke's farmhouse the youngster overhears two German flying officers discussing plans to fly a captured plane over the British lines and blow up the British headquarters. The two Germans are made prisoners, however, and Locke and Thorburn, impersonating them, set off in the British plane. Before long they are intercepted by fifteen enemy planes and a dog-fight ensues. After accounting for four of the enemy, Thorburn is badly wounded. The plane, out of control, is plunging to disaster, when Locke takes charge of the controls and succeeds in landing it safe and sound on the aerodrome of 256—Thorburn's own squadron—the members of which believe him to be dead!

not complete, but the meaning was obvious.

The doctor smiled.  
"He's not in a bad way, if that's what you mean," he said. "Far as I can tell at this stage it's his foot that stopped a bullet or two. Nothing worse! Fainted—loss of blood! Clear out!"

Jim and Ron stepped out of the ambulance, making room incidentally for the stretcher-party bearing Ferrers Locke.

"Am I dreaming all this, Ron?" asked Jim, passing a hand across his brow. "Bruce alive—dreaming—"  
"Well, if you are, I am," said Ron, with a faint grin. "But isn't it just the best news we've ever had? Hurrah! Hurrah!"

In a burst of boyish enthusiasm Ron Glynn flung his helmet and goggles in the air, saw the latter crash to splinters as they struck a stone on the ground, and laughed still more. Not quite so demonstrative, but equally excited, was Jim. Captain Oakley, who had gone over to inspect the De Havilland plane, beckoned them both.

"See here, you fellows," he said. "I've just been counting the bullet-holes in this bus. If I tell you that there are exactly eighty, plus two gaping shrapnel-holes, I expect you will call me a liar, for it's a miracle that anyone could live through it."

"And if we tell you that one of the chaps who lived through it," smiled Jim, "was none other than our pal Bruce Thorburn you'd probably call us liars."

Captain Oakley's face darkened.  
"Don't like that sort of joke about a pal who's gone west!" he protested. "Cut it out!"

"But we're not joking, skipper."  
"Then you are indeed liars," retorted Oakley, striding off, "with a brand of humour that doesn't appeal to me!"

He turned and frowned as a peal of boyish laughter floated after him, then clambered into his own machine and taxied over to the waiting hangar. From there to the mess for a refreshing drink was a short cry, and on the threshold Captain Oakley pulled up short.

Lieutenant Wallace was the centre of a group of brother officers, and Wallace was "shouting his mouth."



"It's true!" he roared. "It's young Thorburn, back from the dead!"

Captain Douglas Oakley greeted his teeth and ordered a liberal "tonic." He was drowning his disgust in a second tonic when the C.O. entered the mess and announced the good news. Oakley then went hot foot for the hospital but to see for himself, and found it was true!

### Rough on the General!

**T**WO-FIVE-SIX Squadron were making merry in their own way.

After a particularly good "show" against the enemy that morning, in which four aces of the German Imperial Flying Service had bitten the dust, 256 Squadron had repaired to the squadron mess for some sort of celebration. They were enjoying themselves with true boyish abandon, when of a sudden the mess-room door burst open, and a tall, raw-boned youngster in flying tunic entered the room. Immediately there was a howl from 256 Squadron:

"Collar the blighter!"

It was obvious that the newcomer was regarded as an enemy of sorts, which, according to the lights of the boisterous spirits of the Royal Flying Corps, was right and proper. He came from an adjacent squadron of Camel Fighting Scouts, and between this squadron of "Camel blighters" and the members of 256 Squadron a state of perpetual warfare existed. It was war on a friendly scale, however, nothing more or less than good-natured ragging, and the laurels rested fairly evenly. Yet it wasn't often that one solitary Camel blighter would have the nerve to step into the lions' den.

Brandishing anything that came to hand, from a stray haversack to a few well-soiled chair cushions, 256 Squadron descended on the "enemy" like a pack of wolves.

"Rub his nose in the mud!"

"Throw him out!"

"Send him back to his nursery!"

The intruder seemed quite unperturbed at his reception. He waited until the leading members of 256 Squadron were upon him, then he brought his right hand, which had hitherto been out of sight behind his back, into view. And in that hand was the long nozzle of a fire-hose!

Whooooooosh!

A sudden gush of water swept from the nozzle and embraced with watery effection every single member of 256 Squadron in sight. They tried to dodge the deluge of water, but their efforts proved of little avail.

"Naughty, naughty!" roared the Camel blighter. "You mustn't make all this fuss about a bath. Have some more!"

"Grooooooough!"

Like a chorus rose the gasping chant. Then, suddenly above it, from just behind the Camel blighter, to be precise, came a spluttering roar—with outraged authority echoing in every note of it.

"Hey! What in thunder do you think you are doing? Hey? What—Gugggggggggg!"

It was unfortunate that the newcomer with the authoritative voice out so much beef into it, for he quite startled the Camel blighter. That reckless young fellow—who knew the voice only too well—started wildly, swerved in the

direction of the door, and quite inadvertently directed a full stream of water at the owner of the voice.

"Jumping whiskers!" The Camel blighter, horrified, realised his mistake too late. "It's the general himself!"

But the general wasn't himself—far from it! He collapsed like a punctured balloon, drenched to the skin, in a sloppy puddle, and gasped and gasped and gasped.

Seizing his opportunity, the Camel blighter took one long, reckless dive through the nearest open window, and beat it back to his own quarters, across the aerodrome, just as fast as his long legs could carry him. The startled and bedaggléd members of 256 Squadron speedily followed his example through the window exits that lay to hand. So speedily did they follow, in fact, that when General Cartwright recovered his wits, his wind, and some control of his temper, the mess was deserted.

Squelching water out of his long jack boots, his collar, his tie, and everything that was his, the general stared about him in open-mouthed astonishment. Then his red face grew mottled, his moustaches bristled, and, with a snort, he squelched off in the direction of the squadron office.

"Ho!"

Major Pedant, the commanding officer of 256 Squadron, jumped to his feet. So did Ferrers Locke, who had been deep in consultation with him.

"My dear general!" began Pedant, full of solicitous concern, "have you fallen in the river?"

Locke said nothing, but there was a twinkling smile playing about the corners of his lips which he hid his best to conceal.

The general glared.

"River! River! Pah! Likewise bah!" he trumpeted. "I've been treated to a childish exhibition by your officers, sir! From the nincompoops with officers' jackets on their backs! From irrepressible children who are wasting public money instead of serving their country! Ugt!"

"But—" began Major Pedant.

"Don't 'but' me, sir!" stormed the general. "Here I look in for a friendly chat with the officers, and this is how I am treated! Disgraceful! Monstrous!"

He broke off to grip down a glass of liquor, which Locke carefully poured out for him.

"It will keep a cold away, sir."

"Cold?" barked General Cartwright. "I never catch cold! I—" His face screwed up into weird contortions. "Atishoooooocoo!"

Locke and Major Pedant waited.

Both of them knew the irate general. In fact, it was known all across the front that he had first started "his tricks" on "Baldy's Angels"—that crack light-sewer fighting squadron on the Western Front. But the Angels had gradually tamed him until now he was almost likeable. It looked now as if General Cartwright, reformed of his tyrannical bullying and unreasonableness, was going to backslide.

The sneezing continued at intervals, and the general dabbed frantically at his nose. But though his nose grew fiery his temper cooled.

"Count 'em!" he barked. "I suppose it was my own fault. Those boys"—his face broke into a rueful grin—"couldn't have meant to swamp me."

Major Pedant hastened to give his weight to that good impression. Two-

five-six Squadron were Nature's gentlemen, and, although they were undoubtedly fond of a boyish rag at times, they would never dream of laying hands, wittingly, at any rate, on the person of so august a visitor as the general.

"Durn it!" growled the general. "I'm doing my best to believe you." He turned to Locke. "Glad to see you up and about, sir. How's the wound?"

"Practically healed," answered Locke, and he squared his shoulders to prove it.

Three weeks had gone by since the memorable occasion he and Thorburn had landed on 256 Aerodrome, and although Thorburn was still convalescent in a near-by hospital, Locke was practically little the worse for the experience. Orders from headquarters kept him to 256 Squadron, and there was already a rumour going the round of the flying officers that Major Pedant was about to go home on leave, and that Ferrers Locke—Major Locke, D.S.O., to be precise—was to reign in his stead.

"Well, I wanted to talk to you two gentlemen," said the general at length, "but it will have to keep. I must change out of these drenched things first. Pedant, send an orderly for a change of uniform for me. Thanks!"

He looked about him and espied a blanket. With a grim smile at Locke, he discarded his sodden tunic and shirt, draped the blanket round him, and seated himself heavily in the arm-chair.

Locke thoughtfully stoked up the office fire—an improvised stove, with a length of chimney that thrust its head through the corrugated roof of the hut—then poured out another measure of spirit.

The general was in the act of draining the glass when there came a hesitant tap at the door. Before any invitation, or otherwise, could be barked out, the door opened, and the Camel blighter appeared.

The general glared at him, conscious of the somewhat ridiculous figure he cut in the blanket.

"What the devil do you want?"

The Camel blighter cleared his throat. "I'm sorry about the drenching, sir," he began. "Really, sir, I had no intention of swamping you—"

"What? Quite so!" coughed the general.

"I thought I'd own up, sir," went on the culprit, "in case you took it out of 256 Squadron. They had nothing to do with it, you see."

"The dickens they hadn't! Then if 256 Squadron had nothing to do with it, young man, who in blazes are you?"

"I'm Tregellis from thirty-two—" "Camel Squadron, sir, on the north side of the aerodrome," volunteered Locke.

"Drummmmm!" barked the general. "No, sir!" said Tregellis. "A rag!"

"Very well, Tregellis," said the general at length. "I hope you will show as much power with your shooting when you meet the Hun as you did with the fire-hose when you met your general. Dismiss!"

The Camel blighter murmured his thanks and dismissed, and went back to tell 32 Squadron that Cartwright was a trump.

"Boys will be boys," grunted the general, "even in war-time, what?"

*[Look out, chums, for some more startling situations in next week's instalment of this powerful flying story.]*

# THE BOUNDER'S FOLLY!

(Continued from page 24.)

"Stand where you are, Inky!" said Harry. "Smithy, this man is identified, by one who knows him, as the man who robbed the bank yesterday. He must be kept here till the police can come. You've got a telephone here—ring up the police station at Wimford. If Bunter's made a mistake, Mr. Paget can have no objection to seeing Inspector Stacey."

"Paget, you fool, hold on!" panted the Bounder. "If you clear now, you know what it will look like!"

"Let her cares, now he's found out!" grunted Johnny Bull. "He doesn't want Inspector Stacey to search his pockets."

Paget did not heed the Bounder. "Will you stand aside?" he snarled at the nabob.

"The answer is in the esteemed negative!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh cheerfully. "The proper caper is to await the arrival of the esteemed and idiotic police—"

He broke off as the man leaped on him. "Rescue!" yelled Nugent—and the three juniors rushed at Paget and collared him as he collared the nabob.

He was dragged back by main force. "Oh gad!" gasped Vernon-Smith. "Paget, if this is true— Anyhow, you're staying here till the police come—I'll hold you myself!"

"Look out!" yelled Johnny Bull. Paget had thrown all pretence to the winds now. His face blazed with ferocity. His hand slid to his hip pocket and came out with a weapon in it. The automatic glimmered in the sunshine from the window as it was lifted.

"Stand aside, or—"

The ruffian's voice was hoarse with fury.

Crash!

Tom Redwing had grasped a golf club from the corner of the room as the desperate rascal dragged out the automatic. He leaped forward and struck, and the weapon went spinning from Paget's hand. He was only in time, for there was no doubt that the desperate man would have fired

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Nugent. "Pin him!"

"Hold the brute!"

"Bag him!"

There was a crash as the man went down, five juniors grasping him. The Bounder stood staring on; Billy Bunter made himself as small as possible in a corner, almost gibbering with terror. But the Co., with Tom Redwing's sturdy aid, fairly crumpled the rascal on the floor, and held him securely there. If there had been any doubt before, the sight of the automatic had banished it. Even the Bounder could not doubt now.

The man fought and struggled like a wild beast, but the five juniors were much too much for him. They pinned him on the floor, breathless and exhausted, panting out oaths, and a twisted handkerchief was knotted round his wrists.

"Keep him safe while I phone!" said Harry Wharton.

"What ho!"

"You don't mind if I use your phone, Smithy?" added Wharton, with sarcastic politeness.

The Bounder gave him a black look by way of reply. A moment later, Wharton was calling Wimford Police Station; and within five minutes Inspector Stacey was heading for Riverside Bungalow in a car that exceeded all speed limits.

Bob Cherry sat up and sneezed. The dusk was falling as the Co. came into his room at Wharton Lodge with smiling faces. Bob gave them a watery blink.

"You're looking jolly chippy!" he grunted.

"We're feeling chippy, old bean," said Harry. "We've been over to the bungalow to call on Smithy—"

Bob grinned.

"I thought perhaps you had!" he remarked. "Did you mop the cad up and that rotter Paget?"

"Well, we were going to, but the jolly old unexpected happened," said Harry. "We took Bunter with us, and he recognised Paget as the man he saw in the wood—"

"The giddy bank-raider!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob.

"And we bagged him—and kept him safe till the police came," went on Wharton. "A lot of the stolen money was found on him—and the automatic he used at the bank, and—"

"Great pip!"

"So, in the jolly old circumstances, we've let Smithy off the ducking," said Harry. "It's pretty rotten for him—"

"He seems to have met the man at the races, and asked him to stay with him, without knowing anything about him except that he was a blackguard," said Nugent.

"That was enough for Smithy!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob. "I hope Smithy thanked you nicely for calling and getting his pal snaffled by the police."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I suppose he ought to be pleased," said Harry. "He didn't look frightfully pleased."

"And he forgot to thank us!" grinned Nugent.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Well, I shan't be able to punch Paget now," he remarked. "I can't call at the police station to punch him, I suppose. I'll give Smithy enough for two when I get over this beastly cold. Atchoooooh!"

But by the time Bob got over the cold he quite forgot his intention of punching Smithy. With the trouble and disgrace that his disreputable associate had brought on him, the Famous Five agreed that Smithy had had enough; and they agreed to keep carefully clear of the Bounder for the remainder of the Easter holidays. It remained to be seen whether the Bounder would leave it at that.

THE END.

(Be sure you read "HARRY WHARTON'S ENEMY!" the next yarn in this splendid new series featuring the chums of Greyfriars. You'll agree that Frank Richards is absolutely in tiptop form when you've finished it.—Ed.)

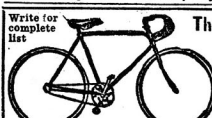
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