

# GRAND SCHOOL & WAR TALES!



## A MOBBER FOR BUNTER!

Published by Howard Baker Press Ltd, 27a Arterberry Road, Wimbledon, London, S. W. 20.



The EDITOR'S WEEKLY CHAT WITH HIS READERS.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"LOOKING FOR ALONZO!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

In next week's grand, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, Peter Todd receives some very bad news concerning his cousin, Alonzo, who is on holiday with his Uncle Benjamin in Switzerland. They are stranded, penniless, and Peter thinks it is "up to him" to go out and help them. When Harry Wharton & Co. hear of his determination they all want to go with him, but it is Vernon-Smith, the one-time Bounder, who ultimately leaves Greyfriars with Peter. The Bounder turns out to be a very useful companion, too, and they have to undergo many terrible experiences before they are at last discovered by two persons whom they thought to be miles away in England. Alonzo and Uncle Benjamin are found, and they return to Greyfriars, where the juniors' adventures while

"LOOKING FOR ALONZO!"

are listened to with bated breath.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

E. G. Greenwell (Jeamond).—The best boxer of the Remove is considered to be Bob Cherry.

"Hastings Grammar School Chums."—Vernon-Smith of Greyfriars is 15 years old. Gerald Cutts of St. Jim's is 17.

G. W. S. (Bayswater).—I am afraid space will not allow me to carry out your suggestion.

D. Hamilton (Skellingthorpe).—I know of no readers wishing to purchase guinea-pigs.

E. J. Williams (New Cross).—The characters you mention are purely fictitious. Greyfriars is situated in Kent, and St. Jim's in Sussex.

A FEAST OF FICTION!

Speaking on the topic uppermost in our minds at the present time—the Great War—a celebrated doctor remarked that the man who could provide boys and girls with wholesome, light-hearted reading matter, in order to divert their minds from the horrors of warfare, was rendering an incalculable service to the nation. I am sure my vast body-guard of readers are of the same opinion. War is a very terrible thing, we know, but we shall not minimise its terrors by giving way to useless brooding or fits of melancholy.

To my mind, nothing helps to keep up one's spirits more than a good, rousing yarn, and to obtain this it is not necessary to look farther than this Wednesday's issue of our famous companion paper, the "Gem Library."

Mr. Martin Clifford enjoys the reputation of being able to produce a really inspiring yarn, packed with humour, and containing at the same time a sound moral. As a writer of school stories he is in a class by himself.

"THE KING'S PARDON!"

is the title of this Wednesday's story, and a rattling good yarn it is! Mr. Clifford has a happy knack of drawing very fine characters, and Talbot of the Shell ranks among the finest he has yet produced. In fact, so enthralled did many "Gem" readers become with Talbot's adventures, that they clamoured for more, and in

"THE KING'S PARDON!"

their wish has been fully gratified.

While I am on the subject of our companion papers, I should like to draw the attention of my chums to next Friday's number of "The Penny Popular," which is replete with ripping stories, none of which you should miss.

In conclusion, let me urge you all, in the words of Harry Wharton, to "keep a stiff upper lip," and face the present situation cheerfully. In times like this every honest laugh is a tonic. Long faces and hushed voices are not the best means of showing sympathy, and a fixed determination not to enjoy anything can only have a depressing effect upon the nation as a whole.

It behoves you, then, by continued brightness to lessen the burdens of those who can least bear them. There is more merit in enduring suffering cheerfully than in giving way, even gloating over misery.

Keep smiling!

*The Editor*

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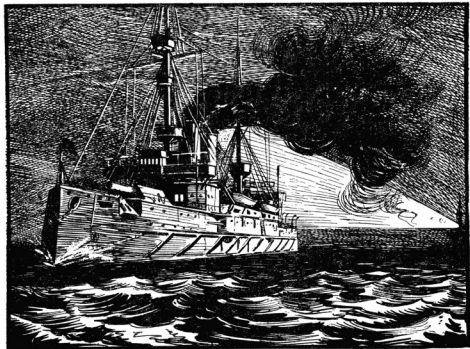
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A SPECIAL WAR SERIAL!

START IT TO-DAY!

## A WORLD AT STAKE!

A Stirring Story of the Supreme Struggle between the  
British Empire and its Hated Foe.

## READ THIS FIRST.

A wonderful airship, named the Falcon, is constructed by two brothers, Thorpe and Dick Thornhill. It is offered to the British Government; but they remain indifferent to the Falcon's qualities. Major Seigner, a German officer, endeavours to purchase it for his Government, but the offer, magnificent though it is, is refused. The German, however, manages to steal the Falcon, taking with him Dick Thornhill and a young man named Tom Evans. The Britishers are taken before the Kaiser, who orders them to be imprisoned, after Dick has refused to explain any of the secrets which the Falcon holds. Thorpe Thornhill, in the Night Hawk, a sister ship to the Falcon, gives chase to the German officer, his intention being to fly to the outskirts of Berlin, from whence he could make his attempt to liberate his brother, and regain possession of the Falcon. Meanwhile, little Tom Evans and Dick Thornhill, by swimming a river, manage to escape from the fortress. They clamber into a ship, and make friends with a dwarf named Bjorn; but soon after, the ship is wrecked, and the three are cast ashore. Bjorn's leg is broken, and he is unable to accompany Tom and Dick when they set out for England. Landing at Hull, they immediately report to the police, but their story of an intended German air invasion is laughed at, and the chums have to tramp to London. Meanwhile, Thorpe Thornhill returns to England, and hears that an airship has sunk H.M.S. Formidable. Dick Thornhill misses Tom in a crowd, and while looking for him, is suddenly pounced upon, and rushed down

a side street into a thieves' kitchen, where he is gagged and bound.

(Now go on with the story.)

## A Brief Reunion.

In the room were many people, low-browed, evil-faced scoundrels.

"Who have you there?" cried one, dressed in the habiliments of a gentleman, approaching the man who appeared the leader amongst Dick's captors.

"One who recognised Herr Stromitz, and as by his words he seems also to know Major Seigner, we thought it best to bring him here."

"You did quite right. Wait a moment! His Excellency will see you."

"It is well, Herr Count. How goes the plot?" asked the other.

"Splendidly! Nothing could be better! These blind, foolish British play into our hands at every turn. What an awakening for them on the morrow! London ours, Britain falls, and with Britain the Empire will crumble to dust!" returned the other, in a hoarse voice. "But see, an aide-de-camp beckons you!"

The coat which had been used to muffle his cries having been removed, Dick was able to take in every detail of the strange scene around him.

"Ah, Baron von Graubstein, you have a prisoner!" was the general's greeting.

"Yes, your Excellency. He was—" began Dick's captor.

"One moment, baron!" interrupted the general. Then, turning to a group of officers seated on his right, he continued: "Your Kaiser expects you to follow to the letter. I will reiterate what I have already said, that there may be no mistake. Ere dawn, Liverpool Street, with all the rolling-stock we can seize, must be in our hands. Five battalions will be necessary for that work. They will rendezvous in the station. Count Heindels, your battalion will rendezvous in North Woolwich, seize the ferry-boats, destroy the Arsenal and the ships in the dockyard, then retreat upon Liverpool Street. Remember, gentlemen, your object is to strike such terror into the hearts of the millions of this teeming town by killing all you meet, military or civilians, that they will not dare to offer the slightest resistance. If we can but hold Liverpool Street, the terminus of the Harwich line, for twelve hours, the advance guard of a German Army, which, guarded by our new fleet of airships, has already sailed from Cuxhaven, will be here. Gentlemen, to your posts!

"Now, Graubstein, give your report first, then we will deal with your prisoner!" continued the general, turning to Dick's captor.

"It is soon made, general. The aliens in the East End are with us to a man, so are thousands of the English in the slums. When the British Government send soldiers to Liverpool Street to oust our battalions, they will find the road blocked by a howling, screaming mob. They will not dare to send help to the City or Woolwich until after the rich West End is protected from the scum of the gutters."

"It is well!" replied the general. "The dirty ruffians will be shot down like rats, but they will keep the soldiers employed whilst we seize the points I have previously mentioned. Now, boy, what is this I hear? How came you to connect the name of Herr Stromitz with Major Seigner?"

"By the same process of reasoning as I connect the six torpedo-boats in Kiel Harbour with the flying ships which are already winging their way towards England," replied Dick, eager, if possible, to persuade his interlocutor that he was in the confidence of the German Government.

But to his dismay the general sprang to his feet, and dragged him towards the light. Then Dick knew to whom he had been speaking. It was the officer with the Iron Cross at his collar whom he had seen during his interview with the German Emperor.

"Ah, Mr. Richard Thornhill, it is you!" he said, after regarding the boy steadfastly for some minutes. "Had not my Imperial master ordered that you should be recaptured alive, I would put an end to your tale-bearing at once!"

"At that moment a door opened to the right of the general, and Dick caught a brief glimpse of a large room filled with tables, on which were spread parcels of clothing, rifles, bayonets, and ready-filled bandoliers.

Like a flash the truth dawned upon him. The battalions of which the German general had spoken were to be provided from amongst the thousands of time-expired foreign soldiers who have lived amongst us, enjoying England's hospitality as peaceable citizens for so many years.

"There was the material ready to hand; it needed but to place weapons in their hands, and an army could be produced at a day's notice.

"At that moment a man hastened into the room, and, saluting the general, said something in a low whisper the prisoner could not hear.

A swift, deep flush of anger crossed the other's face. Evidently something had gone wrong. He was about to stride from the room when Von Graubstein asked what he should do with his prisoner.

"Trouble me not with trifles, Von Graubstein," replied the other angrily. "Sparely you can find a cupboard or a cellar strong enough to hold a heat like that!" And the next moment he had left the room.

For a few moments Von Graubstein hesitated. This was a busy night for the Germans in London, and it annoyed him to think that he, one of the leading members of the movement which was to humiliate Britain, should be idly guarding a ragged boy, whilst others were doing their utmost to forward the plans of their Emperor.

Presently a look of relief swept over his face as a man entered the room and saluted.

"Ah, Sergeant Max," he cried, "you know this house; shut the prisoner up somewhere where he will be safe till to-morrow."

Probably deeming it impossible for the youngster to escape, Sergeant Max considerably removed the ropes from his limbs ere turning the key in the lock, and leaving him to his own reflections.

Nothing but a Briton's unconquerable pluck had hitherto sustained Dick Thornhill; but now, weakened in body and THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 351.

mind by the terrible experiences of the last few months, he flung himself on the coals, and the next moment his body was shaken by the sobs he strove in vain to suppress.

But the weakness was only temporary. Suddenly his sobs ceased, and he sprang to his feet. He must, he would escape. Surely Heaven would not desert him now?

Fortunately he had in his pocket a box of matches. Cautiously striking one, he held it above his head and looked around him.

Then he struck another match. Bricks to right and left of him met his gaze—bricks covered with black coal-dust, and at his feet a floor of nobly coal.

Again the match flickered out, and again the tiny gleam of a third lightened the darkness. Eagerly he scanned the ceiling. Again hope filled his heart. Immediately above his head was a round manhole.

Working as he had never worked before, he piled the coal in a heap until he could reach the bar with which the iron plate was secured.

"This he easily slipped on one side; then, with swiftly beating heart, pressed against the circular iron above his head. But, alas! it was rusty, for, push as he might, he could not open it, and yet it was evident that in that direction only lay the path to liberty.

Grasping his hammer in both hands, he struck with all his might at the plate; then, scarce daring to breathe, listened with bated breath, fearful lest the clang of metal upon metal had been heard.

But his fears were groundless. Perhaps the Germans outside the house deemed it wiser to pay no attention to what was going on within.

Anxiously Dick tried the iron plate. It was as firm as ever, and, grasping his hammer once more in both hands, he prepared to strike again.

Then his heart almost stood still, as, on the iron above, came a distinct tapping.

For some moments he listened, scarce daring to move or speak, until something familiar in the sound struck him, for with the tapping was blended a peculiar shuffling, and he recognised the tap, tap, tap, scrape, tap, tap, which he had so often heard in his German prison, when his little companion, to cheer the long, weary hours, had performed a step-dance for his master's special behalf.

Tapping the iron with his hammer, Dick listened. The clatter ceased. Then, very indistinct, came the words:

"Is it you, Master Dick? Be steady, there's a lot of chaps passing in and out of the house."

"Tom, wrench off this iron, quick. It's rusty; I can't move it!"

"Right ho!" was the answer.

Five minutes later—five minutes that seemed like so many hours to the excited prisoner—he heard a scratching above his head. This went on for several minutes; then he heard Tom say:

"Now, Master Dick, shove like a good 'un!"

With both hands on the iron, Dick thrust upwards with all his strength. As he did so, the cover of the coalhole flew off, and he saw shining far above him the bright, starlit heavens. Thrusting his way through the excited crowds, who, late though the hour, still paraded the streets, they hastened on, not daring to slacken their speed until the Strand was reached.

But even here men, evidently of foreign extraction, were loitering about the streets.

"You're all right now, Master Dick. I'm a-going back," said Tom. "Don't know what kind o' tricks them German gents may be up to. It'll be as well to have somebody with brains in their head at hand!"

And before Dick could object he turned on his heels and retraced his steps, leaving Dick to continue on his way to his brother's chambers.

But here another disappointment awaited him, for, having with much difficulty called up the porter of Thorpe's chambers, he discovered, to his dismay, that his brother was passing the night with Captain Horsham.

"Is my brother here, Denton?" he cried of the man who, half-dressed, had come down to answer his hasty summons.

"Good gracious, Master Dick! Is that you?" gasped Denton.

And, leaving the man gapping on the threshold, Dick rushed upstairs.

"Thorpe, Thorpe, thank Heaven I have found you at last!" he cried, bursting into the room, and seizing his brother's hands.

Horsham and Thorpe Thornhill sprang to their feet.

"Dink, my dear old brother, you returned and well! This is good news! But, my poor little chap—" began Thornhill.

"No, no, Thorpe; never mind me. I am all right. A wash, a change of clothes, and some food is all I require. Be

quick—there is not a moment to lose! Fly to the Prime Minister!" cried Dick.

"The Prime Minister!" ejaculated Thorpe and Horsham in a breath.

"Yes, yes!" cried Dick, almost beside himself with agitation and anxiety. "Good heavens, man, don't stand idly there! Britain is betrayed! Every moment is of consequence! To-morrow morning will see England in the hands of the Germans, as London is at this moment!"

Then, in quick, succinct sentences, he related to the dumb-founded men all he had overheard and seen.

When he had concluded the two men looked at each other, dismay and apprehension depicted on their white faces.

"Thorahill, we must do the work of ten men this night!" cried Horsham at last. "I will see the Prime Minister and rouse the Government. Thank Heaven Lord Roberts is in town! Hasten to Woolwich, and get the Night Hawk in commission as quickly as possible. Dick, old man, you have gone through a great deal, but I must call upon you for a still greater effort. Courage, my lads; it is for Britain's sake!"

Dick, who had been eagerly devouring some cold viands which had been placed before him, unwilling to lose valuable time by speaking, nodded his head; but the eager light in his eyes told Horsham he would not call upon him in vain.

"Thorpe's motor-cycle is in the hall; overhaul it, be ready for a start, then get a few minutes' sleep, if you can, during my absence," continued Horsham. "I fear the Germans will have cut the wires between London, Colchester, and Harwich. If so, I shall want you to ride thither and put them on the alert!"

"Good-bye, Dick! It is hard to be parted the very moment we are reunited!" cried Thorpe, laying his hand affectionately on the other's shoulder. "Heaven knows when we shall meet again, but we must hope for the best! Never in the whole course of her history has Britain needed the devotion of her sons as she will do within the next twenty-four hours!"

"Good-bye, Thorpe, old man! Whoever else fails, be sure the Thornhills will do their duty by their King and country!" returned Dick confidently.

The next moment, with a farewell clasp of the hand, Thorpe Thornhill rushed from the room.

### A Wild Ride!

Dick was temperate in all things, but on this occasion he both ate and drank more than he ever remembered to have done before; then, descending to the hall, he speedily overhauled Thorpe's splendid five horse-power motor, and, finding it in thorough working order, followed Horsham's final instructions by sinking on a doormat and dropping off to sleep.

It seemed that he had barely closed his eyes ere he sprang up and grappled with a man who was shaking him violently.

"Gently, Dick—gently! It is I!" cried a voice, which he recognised as Horsham's.

"Sorry, captain!" returned Dick, laughing. "What is it?"

"It is as I feared. The wires are cut between Colchester and the General Post Office. Lord Roberts, who has known me since I was a boy, believed at once, but I had a great deal of difficulty in persuading the Prime Minister that I was anything else but an irresponsible madman. However, enough of that. Mount this machine, and ride as fast as its engine will take you to Colchester to give the alarm. Stop at nothing, risk everything; and, if accident befalls you, even a death, do not think of another word in my message. This note, signed by Lord Roberts and the Prime Minister, will act as a passport everywhere. Stop!" he added, as Dick moved towards the machine. "You cannot go like that. I have a cyclist's uniform belonging to my young brother which will about fit you!"

Exactly nineteen minutes later Dick Thornhill was speeding through the streets on his brother's motor-cycle. He was no longer tired. The weariness which had clogged his limbs had vanished; fire, not blood, seemed coursing through his veins. The importance of his errand gave him renewed strength, and as he sped through the cool night air a wild exhilaration filled his heart.

On, on he dashed, the road seeming to slide from under him. Presently, on the summit of a hill, he was obliged to rest. For the excitement was almost more than he could bear, and his brain reeled until the whole moonlit landscape seemed to swim round him.

But a few moments later he was mounted again, and sped on with redoubled vigour, pedalling his utmost at the slightest rise, and only resting when he found the machine working quicker than he could move his feet, its constant tap, tap, tap sounding like music in his ears.

Almost immediately afterwards he was dashing through a maze of streets, then the open country was again reached, and Chelmsford was passed.

But, rapid though his passage through the town, he had

been able to catch a glimpse of an illuminated clock upon some tall building—town-hall or post-office, he could not tell which—and a cheer startled a strolling policeman, for he had come the thirty miles well under the hour. There was only about twenty miles more to be negotiated, but already the eastern horizon was turning from black to grey.

On he flew, faster and faster, for now he did not cease to pedal for a moment. The moon disappeared from the starlit heavens; but his eyes, accustomed to the dim light, could easily pierce the darkness, and he slackened not his speed.

Suddenly a score of white forms sprang from out of a hedge, and threw themselves across the road.

It was a flock of sheep escaping from a neighbouring field. Dick could not stop; he could not even turn aside to avoid this unexpected interruption of his hitherto prosperous run. Then he felt his bicycle rise, as though eager to spring over the intervening obstacle. The next moment he found himself flying through space, to alight upon the soft fleeces of a flock of closely-packed sheep.

Then consciousness fled.

Twenty minutes later he struggled to his feet and looked confusedly around him. It was some minutes ere he could quite grasp all that had occurred, but as with aching head and trembling limbs he lifted his machine to examine it, low, but clear and distinct, from the distant barracks came the notes of a bugle.

"The reveille! The reveille!" he gasped, his hands flying to his aching head. "Curse the farmer whose neglected fence may spell ruin to Britain!"

He looked round him helplessly. Across the field, a hundred yards to his right, was a small station, near which an engine was noisily puffing as it shunted some trucks on to a siding.

A ray of hope illuminated the despair which filled his heart, and he commenced running across the fields as he had never run before.

Ere he met those unlucky sheep the chances had been twenty to one on his reaching his destination in time; now they were a hundred to one against. For that one chance he must strive. But already the first dull streaks of morning light were filtering through the clouds.

"Clear the line! In the name of the King!" he cried, springing forward to where the stationmaster was superintending the shunting.

"Eh—what?" gasped that official in astonishment. But Dick paid no further heed to him.

Jumping on the footplate of the engine, he gave the astounded driver a shove which sent him headlong from the cab, then pushed the starting-lever to its utmost limit.

The huge mass of iron sprang forward like a thing of life, and with but two milk-vans behind it—for the rest had been detached to take on a loaded truck—it dashed forward at momentarily increasing speed, whilst the astounded stationmaster rushed to his office and telegraphed Colchester that a madman had run away with an engine and two trucks.

Dick knew but little about driving a locomotive, but he had, as we know a more than common acquaintance with engines of various kinds, and managed to slow down as the engine approached Colchester Station.

Well for him was it that he had done so, for, warned by the alarm stationmaster's telegram, a pointsman shunted the runaway on to a dead end, and the engine came to rest actually touching the buffers.

Springing from the cab, Dick jumped literally into the arms of the law, for the next moment he found himself seized by a constable and four military police, who had been summoned to aid the civil authorities.

"Unhand me, madmen, fools, idiots!" he cried, scarcely knowing what he said in his excitement, and laying the policeman on his back with a clever cut beneath the chin. "I am the bearer of a message of life and death to the general commanding the Colchester Division. See! This note is signed by Lord Birmingham and Lord Roberts!"

Impressed by his earnestness, one of the military police, who wore on his arm the chevrons of a sergeant, took the paper, whilst his comrade held a patrol lantern for him to read it by.

"Has my hide if he isn't right, Bill?" cried the sergeant.

"Let him go! What is he doing?"

"The Germans are landing! Run for your lives to the barracks, and turn out the garrison!" cried Dick, as, without waiting to see whether his orders were being carried out, he darted towards the house of General Smythe, who was in command of the Army Corps stationed at Colchester.

"Is it true, or is it D.T.'s?" asked the M.P. of his superior.

"Hanged if I know. Perhaps a little of both. Anyhow, I'm going to obey orders. If they're wrong he'll get the blame; if they're right, and we don't do it, we'll get colked," returned his comrade, running in the direction of the barracks.

In the meantime Dick reached the general's house, and scared a housemaid almost out of her life by dashing past her through the open door into the hall, where, as the quickest way of calling the general's attention, he seized a jowl, and beat loudly upon a Chinese gong.

"What is the meaning of this noise? Are you mad, sir?" shouted General Smythe, appearing at his study door, for he was an early riser.

"Put yourself into communication with Landguard Fort at once, sir," cried Dick, too excited to remember that his wild appearance and his still wilder actions were those of a lunatic.

"You are drunk, sir! Return to your quarters, and consider yourself under arrest!" said General Smythe.

"I beg pardon, general, but had you been, through what I have this night, perhaps you would not be more calm or more collected than I am. But think of me what you will, only, for Heaven's sake, do not lose a minute in doing what I say! See—here is my authority, signed by the Prime Minister and— What is that? Heaven help Britain! I am too late!" he cried, breaking off abruptly, and leaning against a wall to support himself, as low, dull, and threatening, like a roll of muffled thunder, came the distant detonation of a tremendous explosion.

Another and a lesser one followed. Then, as the two men stood at the open door, pale, and scarce daring to breathe, the sound that the elder man knew so well fell upon his ears—the roar of heavy guns!

Dick Thornhill's long ride had been of no avail. The invasion of Britain had commenced!

#### The Attack on Woolwich Arsenal.

More than once during his hasty ride to Colchester Dick Thornhill had smiled complacently to himself at the good luck which had put him right into the middle of the fighting, leaving his brother and Tom Evans in the humdrum atmosphere of London and its surroundings.

Had he known it, at the very moment he was dashing on his stolen engine over the lines to Colchester, Tom Evans and Thorpe Thornhill were being mixed up in the stirring scenes of those black days.

Clad in the uniforms Dick had seen served out the previous evening, a battalion of Germans had, almost without attracting attention, seized the first big ferryboat which had got up its steam preparatory to its voyage across the water.

With pistols at their heads, the engineers, stokers, and crew were compelled to work the vessel, and a crowd of workmen assembled on the pier were astonished to see the ferryboat straining from the shore, laden with a regiment of soldiers in strange, squat, spiked helmets and dark overcoats; but instead of crossing the river, the ferryboat paddled slowly downstream until abreast of Woolwich Arsenal, when her head was turned shorewards, and she was run alongside the landing-stage.

On her deck stood four hundred armed Germans, ready to shoot down all who resisted their landing, whilst five hundred, armed with chemicals of a highly combustible nature, had directions to rush through the building, scattering their fearful load in all directions. A hundred others had been told off to rush through the streets, shoot down all whom they met, irrespective of age or sex, and seize the Night Hawk on her stocks in Woolwich Dockyard.

"Steady, my children!" cried the German colonel, as the ferryboat came to rest beside the pier. "Remember, use the bayonet in preference to shooting. We do not want to bring the garrison upon us before our job is completed. These fools of British will—Thunder and lightning! We are betrayed!" he added, breaking off, as the steady rays of powerful searchlights were turned upon the boat, showing the mouths of a dozen pieces of artillery frowning upon the would-be invaders, backed up by battalion after battalion of khaki-clad infantry, with their rifles at the "present."

"Throw down your arms, or, by Heaven, we will blow you out of the water!" commanded a stern voice from the shore, as a man clad in the undress uniform of a British general stepped forward.

There was no need to repeat the summons. With loud cries of terror the Germans dropped their magazine-rifles upon the deck of the ferry-boat; then, in obedience to the British general's second order, filed sheepishly across the plank, and were marched through the dark streets of workshops, to the utter amazement of thousands of workmen, who were about to commence their day's toil, all unconscious of the momentous events taking place around them.

When the troops and their prisoners had departed a bugle sounded, and the workmen were summoned to an open space, where the general, mounted on his charger, awaited

"Men of his Majesty's Arsenal," he cried, holding up his hand for silence, "we have thwarted a treacherous attempt to seize and destroy this arsenal, but—" He paused and listened, as a distant sound of musketry was borne to the ears of the excited crowd. "Those shots tell that another and stronger party of German spies are attacking in Woolwich itself. But worse is to come. Five hundred thousand German soldiers are within striking distance of Harwich. Perhaps at this very moment our beloved country is being invaded. Now is the time of Britain's need. At any moment you may be called to take an active part in the defence of your wives, your children, and your homes. Courage, my lads—courage! Britain has been called upon to face even greater dangers than confront her now; and, when the summons comes, let us go against the foe with the grand war cry on our lips of 'For Britain and our King!'"

As the last words left his lips, the grey-haired old soldier, moved by an irresistible impulse, drew his sword, kissed its blade passionately, and waved it above his head.

A louder, fiercer, nearer roar of musketry fell upon their ears. The general remained with his sword uplifted in the air, as though turned to a living statue. The cheers were hushed. Men looked pale-faced but determined into each other's eyes.

Could the foe have already reached Woolwich in force? Had the attack on the Arsenal been but a ruse to draw the defenders from the town?

The unspoken question rose in every heart; then, as though at the word of command, the workmen dispersed in all directions. Some rushed to the workshops, some to the scrap-heaps where old arms are thrown.

Then, as with one accord, they streamed out of the Arsenal gates, armed with sledge-hammers, iron bars, old swords, disused pikes, anything they could lay their hands upon, to meet, thus ill-prepared, the disciplined forces of Germany.

"Ride to the sound of the guns!" is a maxim in all cavalry regiments, and the huge, angry mass of British workmen instinctively obeyed as they poured through the streets towards the dockyard, which was already in possession of the hundred men the German colonel had detached to seize the Night Hawk, save for that portion where Thorpe Thornhill and a dozen men had been working, like slaves to get the vessel ready to cope, single-handed, with the fleet of airships Seigner's treachery had given to Germany.

The first notice of danger that had fallen upon Thornhill's ears was the fusillade with which the Germans shot down the unarmed workmen, police, and men of the Army Service Corps who were in the dockyard.

There had been no resistance; there could have been none. Although the men of the Army Service Corps had received orders to hold themselves in readiness for something, they knew not what danger threatened, and were consequently unarmed.

But, for all that, the Germans poured a merciless fire upon everybody they met; an act of cruelty which brought its own retribution, for it was the reports of their rifles which had called the roughly-armed mechanics from Woolwich Arsenal, and had also given Thorpe Thornhill time to close and barricade the door in the Night Hawk lay.

This Thornhill's men had done to the best of their ability; but the shed had not been built for defensive purposes. And, after a vain attempt to clamber in at the window, which had cost them several men, the Germans looked about for a battering-ram with which to force open the door of the building.

A bulk of timber lay near a wall close at hand. Slinging their rifles, a score of soldiers carried it slowly towards the building, although man after man fell, struck by the deadly fire from the windows of the Night Hawk's shed.

"Pick off the men on the right of the timber!" yelled Thornhill. "We must stop this at any hazard!" Barely had he spoken the words ere the defenders' rifles roared out his angry challenge; but the volley was fired a second too late.

Stricken to the ground, six Germans fell, but they had done their work. The huge bulk of timber crashed with irresistible force through the door; and the next moment, careless of the fact that not only those whom the British had shot, but also half a score of the men carrying the bulk of timber, were pinned to the ground by its enormous weight, the German captain waved his sword about his head, and led the way into the building.

But the airship was not yet won. Thorpe Thornhill, with cladded rifle, stood in the doorway, prepared to die rather than allow an alien hand to touch his treasured invention.

"Back, you dogs! I'll brain the first man who dares to set foot within this building!" he cried.

(Another splendid instalment of this grand serial next Monday. Order your copy Now.)

# THE PHOTO PRIZE!

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete Tale dealing with the  
Adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Instead of bending over the camera as the Famous Five posed, Billy Bunter tilted the camera up to his face, with the result that the lens was pointing somewhere in the heavens! Click! "That's number one!" said Bunter. "The finest cloud picture on record!" murmured Bob Cherry. (See Chapter 2.)

## THE FIRST CHAPTER. Ten Pounds Offered!

"I SAY, you fellows—"  
Billy Bunter entered the common-room, and sidled up to a group of juniors who were chatting together. There were Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh, the black-complexioned member of the Famous Five, as they were always termed.

Lord Mauleverer, the aristocratic member of the Remove, Vernon-Smith, Bolsover, and a half a dozen others were also present. Nobody looked round, for they knew the voice of the Owl of the Remove only too well, and Bunter's absence was, as a rule, much preferred to his company.

"I say, you fellows—"  
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NEXT MONDAY—**"LOOKING FOR ALONZO!"**

"Buzz off, Bunter!" cried Harry Wharton impatiently.

"Can't you see we're busy!"

"But it's important!" continued Bunter plaintively.

"It's—it's urgent, you know!"

The fellows stopped talking, and all eyes were turned upon Bunter. The fat junior had an eager expression on his countenance, and in his hand he was clutching a newspaper.

"What's the matter now, Bunter?" demanded Bob Cherry. "What is it that's urgent, you fat spoofer? Up to your old games, I suppose—trying to cadge a bob from somebody or other!"

"Oh, really, Cherry!" exclaimed Bunter, with a good deal of injured dignity. "I hope you don't think me capable of such a thing!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"That's where you're wrong, then!" promptly retorted Bob Cherry, more direct than polite. "In fact, there are not many things I don't think you capable of! Then it's not money this time?"

"No, of course not—er—that is to say— You see, it's this way," explained Bunter. "Can any of you chaps lend me five pounds?"

There was a gasp of astonishment from the assembled juniors. Bunter often asked for money; in fact, he spent most of his time doing so, although not with much success—for everybody knew Bunter and his little borrowing ways.

But five pounds! The amount was stupendous. What could Bunter want with such a sum?

"Five what?" cried Harry Wharton incredulously. "Five pounds! Five giddy golden quidlets! You must be off your rocker, Bunter!"

"Absolutely potty!"

"Well, make it three, then!" went on Bunter. "I'll take three pounds to go on with!"

"My dear Bunter, you won't take three pence, let alone three pounds—from me, at any rate!" cried Wharton.

"Nonsense here!" added Cherry.

"The samfulness is terrific!" exclaimed Hurree Singh, in that quaint English of his. "I would respectfully suggest that the esteemed Bunter had been innocently in the sun!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, it would be only for a few days," went on Bunter eagerly. "Say, a week at the outside. I shall be sure to repay you out of the ten pounds."

"The—the ten pounds?" repeated Wharton weakly.

"What ten pounds is this, Bunter?"

"Ah! Wouldn't you like to know?" said Bunter, with a knowing grin, and the others stared at him harder than ever. "You needn't worry where the ten pounds is coming from. I shall have it, sure enough."

"Going to rob a bank?" suggested Bob Cherry casually.

"Or has one of your titled relations really sent you a fat remittance?" The one who keeps a fried-fish shop, I mean!"

"Oh—really, Cherry! You know very well that none of my relations keeps a fish shop!"

"Well, rag-and-bone shop, then?" went on Bob relentlessly. "I always forget which it is!"

"You—you beast, Cherry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're jealous, that's what it is!" booted Bunter. "You think I can't take photos, and—"

"Hallo! What's this about photos?" cried Wharton quickly. "You were talking about borrowing quids just now, and now it's photos!"

"I—I—er—that is to say—" stammered Bunter. "It was a slip of the tongue, you know!"

"Nothing of the kind!" rapped out Wharton sternly.

"You're lying, as usual, Bunter! Come on, out with it! What's all this about photos, and why are you talking about getting quids?"

Bunter backed away in alarm. He gave a hurried glance round at the door. The fellows saw it, and two or three of them edged up so as to place themselves between Bunter and the means of exit.

"Now then, Bunter, explain yourself!" cried Harry Wharton authoritatively. "There's some giddy mystery here, and we want to know what it all is. What's more, we're going to be told. Come on, out with it! The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, mind!"

"Here, steady on!" cried Johnny Bull. "Don't make it too difficult for him!"

"It's not too difficult; it's impossible!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The whole group of fellows gazed at Bunter with interest and expectation. Bunter, seeing that escape was cut off, decided to blurt it out.

"I decline to answer you!" he said, with a show of great dignity. "Since you choose to doubt my word, I decline to discuss the matter at all!"

There was a second's pause. Then Wharton gave the others a meaning glance.

"Bump him!" he said tersely.

Willing hands instantly grasped the Owl of the Remove, and before the fat junior quite realised what had happened he was swung off his feet into the air.

"Ow! Leggo, you beasts!" he howled. "I decline to talk to you at all, and I— Wow! Yow!"

Bump, bump, bump!

Bunter's fat person smote the floor, not once but many times, and the fat junior yelled as though he were being killed. The others took their work quite seriously, although there were grins on their faces as they bumped the unlucky Bunter with gusto.

"There! Perhaps now you'll tell us!" cried Wharton, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 351.

stopping the bumping process and letting Bunter fall on to the floor, where he lay gasping and squealing. "What do you want to borrow five quid for? And where's this ten pounds coming from, you fat rotter?"

There was no answer from Bunter. He lay where he had been dropped, groaning as though in mortal agony.

"Yow! Wow! Fin killed!" he moaned. "My back's broken, and I shall never be able to walk again! This is your doing, you beasts! Wow!"

But although Bunter was so terribly injured, according to his own account, at any rate, he didn't get much sympathy from the juniors who surrounded him.

"I'll give you five seconds to tell us!" cried Wharton. "If at the end of that time you don't, you'll get bumped again, only worse! One—two—three—four—"

"Hold on a minute!" suddenly cried Bob Cherry excitedly. "I believe I've got the solution to the giddy mystery! What's this?"

As he spoke Cherry eagerly scanned the newspaper which Bunter had left fall in the scrimmage, and which Bob had picked up. The fellows looked wonderingly at Cherry, while Bunter suddenly forgot his pains and looked up quickly.

"That's my paper, Cherry!" he roared. "Give me my paper, you beast!"

Bunter reached up and tried to snatch the newspaper out of Bob Cherry's hand. But Cherry avoided him, and Johnny Bull pushed Bunter down again by the simple expedient of planting his boot in a soft portion of Bunter's anatomy.

"I believe this is what the fat porpoise is chattering about!" exclaimed Cherry. "He's got a copy of the 'County Gazette'—you know, the local, weekly paper. They're offering a prize of ten pounds for the best six photos of local views, to be taken by amateurs."

"Is that what it is, Bunter?" asked Wharton, looking down upon the prostrate junior.

"Er—yes—that is to say—no!" replied Bunter. "As a matter of fact, it isn't my paper at all, and I haven't looked at it. I—I had it given to me in the Close just now by—by Bolsover."

"What's that?" roared Bolsover, whom the shortsighted Bunter had not noticed standing by. "I never did anything of the sort, you ungrateful toad!"

"I—I—mean to say—that it is—"

"Oh, give it up, Bunter!" cried Harry Wharton disgustedly. "You make me feel sick with your lies! You know very well that this is the ten pounds and the photos you have been talking about, although what you want to make a giddy mystery of it all for I can't for the life of me make out!"

"I see what it is!" cried Nugent. "The ass is evidently going in for it himself, and he thought to keep it dark, so that we wouldn't go in for it, and he would have a better chance."

"That's it without a doubt," agreed Johnny Bull. "Bunter all over! As if that fat toad would stand an earthly! Why, he doesn't know a plate from a pickle-fork!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't!" howled Bunter, scrambling to his feet. "That's all you know about it, Bull! As a matter of fact, I'm a dab at photography, and I don't care if you do try for the prize. I shall win, anyway. You don't stand an earthly! Yah!"

Two or three of them made a rush at Bunter, but the fat junior was too quick for them this time. Seeing the coast clear, he made for the door and dashed down the corridor, his fat little legs going like clockwork.

"We needn't trouble ourselves about him!" exclaimed Wharton. "We've found out what we want to know, and if the fat fool had only told us in the first place, he would have escaped that bumping."

"Oh, it won't do him any harm, anyway!" cried Nugent. "But it's a bit of luck we found out about this photographic competition, isn't it?"

"Why, what d'you mean?" asked Wharton, in surprise.

"Because we're going in for it ourselves, aren't we?" replied Nugent, in tones that showed that he thought there was no doubt about the matter.

The juniors looked questioningly at each other. Nugent's idea evidently hadn't occurred to them.

"It's open to all comers, so long as they are amateurs," continued Nugent. "We're amateurs, aren't we?"

"Very much so!" laughed Wharton. "Some of us don't know the right way round of a camera, I'll bet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That doesn't matter: we can soon learn!" exclaimed Nugent confidently. "Some of us have cameras already, and the others can easily get one quite cheaply. I don't mind giving a few tips to anybody who wants expert advice. Anyway, ten pounds is worth trying for. What do you say?"



"I for one think it's a good idea!" cried Cherry. "I'm going to run for it. It'll be a bit of fun, anyway."

"No, too!"

"And I!"

"And I!"

There was a chorus of assent to the proposition, and it was evident that the majority of the fellows thought the idea a good one, and intended having a shot at the prize of ten pounds offered for the best six photos depicting happy scenes.

The fellows fell to discussing the idea, and soon worked themselves up to an enthusiastic pitch. As Nugent had remarked, some of them were already possessors of cameras, and they one and all offered to put the others in the way of learning to manipulate them.

"Well, I for one don't possess a camera," announced Wharton. "There's no time like the present, and I'm going to cycle down to Courtfield and buy one. Who's coming with me?"

"Let's all go!" suggested Nugent. "I've got a camera, but I'll be pleased to come with you. The ride will do us good, and I can put you up to what to get, and what not to get."

"Good egg!" cried half a dozen voices.

A move was made to the bicycle-shed, and a few minutes afterwards a number of juniors, suddenly keen in amateur photography, were pedalling along the lane to Courtfield.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Way of the Transgressor!

**B**Y the following day most of the Remove had got the photographic fever badly. Nine-tenths of them possessed cameras, and it was almost impossible to meet a Removite anywhere without a camera in his hand.

If Bunter's idea had been to keep the knowledge of the ten-pound offer to himself, he had completely failed. The news was all over the school, and members of the Fifth and even of the Sixth were seen intently scanning the conditions of the competition in copies of the "Gazette" that they had purchased. The Remove had made the one copy do for themselves.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" sang out Bob Cherry. "Here's Bunter coming across the Close. He's got a camera, too! I wonder whose it is? Not his own, I'll bet my boots!"

"Well, I don't know whose else it would be, then," said Harry Wharton. "Nobody would be chump enough to lend Bunter anything."

The fat junior was making straight for the Famous Five. Suddenly he sighted them, and stopped short.

"I say, you fellows, you're just the ones I'm looking for!" he exclaimed.

"Sorry, Bunter, but it can't be done!" said Bob Cherry affably. "We're stony ourselves!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry?" expostulated Bunter. "I say, you know, I was going to ask you if you would pose for me."

"Oh, is that all?" exclaimed Wharton, with a grin. "Well, I don't suppose we mind obliging Bunter as far as that, do we, chaps?"

"You see, I—I may be a bit out of the way of it," explained Bunter. "Of course, I'm a dab at it really, only—I thought I'd just try a few experiments first, you know, before sending in for the prize."

"I think it would be advisable!" grinned Nugent. "Do you know which is the right way round of the thing, to begin with?"

"Just stand over there by that wall," continued Bunter, ignoring Nugent's question. "I think that would be best."

"That shows what a lot you know about it, fathead!" roared Bob Cherry. "That wall is right in the shade, and you'd never get anything on the plate at all!"

"I—I mean to say," hurriedly went on Bunter, "perhaps if you stood just just where you are, you know. That's what I meant to say."

"Oh, anything for peace and quietness!" cried Wharton, with a grin. "After all, they're your own plates you're spoiling!"

"By the way, whose camera is it?" asked Nugent curiously. "Not your own, I'll be bound!"

"Yes—no—er—that is to say, I borrowed it!" hurriedly exclaimed Bunter. "Now, are you ready?"

The Famous Five posed themselves, and kept still. They put cheerful smiles on, which rapidly broadened into grins as they watched Bunter.

The shortsighted junior had difficulty in seeing into the view-finder. Instead of bending over it, he tilted the camera up to his face, with the result that it was pointing somewhere in the heavens.

Click!

"That's number one!" announced Bunter, dropping the plate. "I reckon it ought to be jolly good!"

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NEXT MONDAY—**"LOOKING FOR ALONZO!"**

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

"Splendid, I should think!" chuckled Cherry. "The finest picture of a cloud on record, I should say!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, Cherry—"

"Of course, if you point the camera at the sky," went on Cherry, "you must expect to get a view of it on the plate!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter glared at the laughing juniors. Then it suddenly dawned on him that perhaps he had made a slight mistake.

"Perhaps I'd better take another one, so as to—to make sure!" he exclaimed hurriedly. "Keep as you are; it won't take a sec."

The laughing juniors posed again, and Bunter made a fresh attempt. This time he was satisfied with the result—so much so, in fact, that he promptly took four more photos of the Famous Five, getting them to change their positions each time.

"That makes the half-dozen!" announced Bunter, looking very pleased with himself. His fat, smiling face positively beamed with pleasure. "I'll pop along and print the plates."

"You'll do what?" roared Bob Cherry. "That must be a patent process of your own, Bunter. Plates are usually developed."

"I—I meant developed, of course!" hurriedly exclaimed Bunter.

"A fat lot you know about photography!" snorted Bob Cherry. "I wonder you have the sauce to go in for that competition. There isn't any booby prize, is there? And I think you'd better return that camera as soon as possible. How a chap could have been mug enough to trust you with it gets over me."

"By the way, whose is it?" asked Wharton interestedly. "You haven't told us that."

"Well, you see, I don't exactly know," explained Bunter. "You see, I had to have a camera, and I haven't got one of my own. I'm going to buy one out of my postal-order as soon as it arrives, but there's been some delay in the post. I asked several fellows to lend me theirs, and they refused. In fact, they were quite rude about it the beasts! So, as I saw this on the table in one of the studies, I—I borrowed it for the time being!"

"Better take it back again, then," advised Nugent. "I must go in and get mine, too, by the way. I left it on the table in the study. You chaps coming?"

The other members of the Co. accompanied Nugent back to their study, following Bunter, who for once seemed rather in a hurry. Cherry kicked open the study door, and the Famous Five entered. Immediately there was a howl from Nugent.

"Where's my camera?" he yelled. "It's gone! I left it on that table a few minutes ago, and now it's disappeared. Somebody's boned it! I'll scalp him, whoever it is!"

The juniors looked at each other blankly for a second, then it suddenly dawned on them who the culprit was.

"Bunter!" they shouted with one unanimous voice.

"Where is he?" howled Nugent, rushing from the study. "My new camera, and I gave a guinea for it! Where's Bunter? I'll I'll slaughter him, the fat foal!"

Nugent just caught sight of Bunter scampering into his own study, and he darted after him, followed by the rest of the Co. Dashing into the study, he caught hold of Bunter by the coat-collar, and swung him round.

"What's that in the matter?" gasped Bunter breathlessly. "Look here, Nugent, you beast, don't you sh-shake me—like th-that, or you'll m-make my sp-spectacles fall off!"

"Where's my camera, you fat thief!" howled Nugent wrathfully, shaking Bunter as though he had been a rat.

"And if you b-b-break them, you'll have to p-pay for them!" went on Bunter.

Nugent seized the camera Bunter was holding, and looked closely at it. It was a new one, and, there being so many new cameras knocking about the school, Nugent hadn't suspected anything amiss.

But he recognised that the camera was his property by one or two scratches on it. Placing the camera on the table, he turned wrathfully on the unhappy Bunter.

"You—you fat burglar!" he yelled. "You knew jolly well that was my camera!"

"I—I didn't," stammered Bunter helplessly. "I—I borrowed it without knowing whose it was!"

"You took it out of my study!" cried Nugent wrathfully. "Yes—that is to say, no!" exclaimed Bunter. "It was in Bolsover's study, and I thought it was his, you know, Bolsover's one of my pals, and I thought he wouldn't mind if I borrowed it!"

"You lying worm!" yelled Nugent. "Bolsover hasn't got a camera, and you know jolly well he hasn't!"

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"Ahem! I meant to have said Vernon-Smith's study!" hastily exclaimed Bunter. "Yes, now I come to think of it, I'm sure it is in Vernon-Smith's study!"

"Vernon-Smith hasn't a camera, either!" roared Nugent. "You prevaricate purpose! I'll teach you to help yourself to my property, and go and do in half a dozen plates! Pass me that cricket-stamp, Harry!"

"Certainly; anything to oblige!" grinned Harry Wharton, handing Nugent the stamp.

"Don't you dare touch me with that!" howled Bunter, as Nugent doubled him over his knee—that is to say, as far as Bunter's fat carcass would permit of doubling. "I'll scream for help! I'll tell Mr. Quelch, and—Ow! Yow! Wow! Yaroooh!"

Spank! Spank! Spank!  
The stamp rose and fell with monotonous regularity, and loud yells rose from Bunter's lips simultaneously with dust from his pants. Not till he had given the fat junior a dozen good strokes did Nugent desist.

"Now, you fat toad," he cried, panting from his exertions, and letting go his hold on Bunter, who promptly slid to the floor, "let that be a lesson to you not to bone other chaps' cameras in future?"

"Ow! Yow! I'm dying!" moaned Bunter, lying in a heap on the floor. "You've broken every bone in my body! I'm poisoned—I mean, my back's broken! Ow! Yow!"

"Poor chap!" exclaimed Wharton sympathetically. "Perhaps he's right, you chaps. Let's give him a helping hand along to the dorm!"

The others, grinning broadly, grabbed Bunter, and between them they lifted the fat junior off the floor. They carried him out of the door and along the passage, Bunter groaning all the way.

"We won't come all the way to the dorm with you, Bunter!" cried Wharton, giving the others a wink. "We've carried you this far, and you ought to be able to do the rest yourself. What do you think, you fellows?"

"Hear, hear!" chorused the others.

"Right-ho! Let him down, then!" cried Wharton. Bunter was promptly let down—not by being placed tenderly on the floor, however. The fellows simply released their hold, and Bunter bumped on the floor, letting up a loud yell.

"You—you beasts!" he yelled, struggling to his feet with surprising agility, considering his terrible injuries. "You—you did that on purpose!"

"Well, of all the ingratitude!" cried Harry Wharton, in injured tones. "After we carried him all this way, too!"

"You're bullying me, that's what you're doing!" hooted Bunter. "You know it's not allowed, and I shall jolly well tell Mr. Quelch!"

"Hallo!—What's this about telling?" cried the voice of Peter Todd, coming up just then. "Ah, Bunter again! I might have guessed it! So you're going to snook, are you?"

"Yes, I am!" yelled Bunter.

"No, you're not! You're coming along with me instead, and I'm going to knock some of those ideas about sneaking out of your fat head!"

And, grasping Bunter firmly by the ear, Peter Todd led him, squealing and squirming, along the passage back to No. 7 Study, followed by the laughter of Wharton & Co.

The door was shut, and the next minute loud howls proceeded from the study. Bunter was being taken in hand by Peter Todd, as promised, and the process was evidently far from enjoyable.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Snapped!

IT was Wednesday afternoon, and a half-holiday. Usually the Remove had a football match on for that afternoon, but this time they had none.

But they did not mind that fact at all, for it gave them the whole afternoon free to wander about with their cameras, and by now a fellow in the Remove without a camera was as rare as the philosopher's stone.

Even Bunter possessed one of his own. He had been down to the village, and succeeded in getting one. How he obtained it was a mystery to the other fellows, and one which Bunter declined to explain.

One thing was certain, and that was that he had not paid for it; for Bunter's pocket-money was extremely limited, and was always spent in the tuckshop as soon as ever it arrived. Bob Cherry declared that Bunter must have helped himself to it while the shopman wasn't looking, but it was generally agreed amongst the others that he had obtained it on tick by some plausible tale.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" cried Bob Cherry, seeing Bunter

coming across the Close with his new camera in his hand.

"I didn't know you'd got nice in your study, Bunter!"

"Wh-what— I don't understand!" stammered Bunter blankly. "Who's talking about nice!"

"Of course, you haven't any in our study!"

"Then what are you doing with that mousetrap?" inquired Bob. "That thing in your hand, I mean!"

"It's not a mousetrap; it's a camera, and you know jolly well it is, too!" roared Bunter. "It's a jolly good one, too! Why, the shopkeeper wanted fifteen bob for it!"

"I reckon he's still wanting it, too!" chortled Bob. "I'll bet my boots you haven't paid for it, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're jealous, that's what it is!" snorted Bunter. "You know jolly well you don't stand an earthly for that prize! But I don't take any notice of what you say. I'm not going to drop out of it just because you're all jealous of my ability as a crack photographer! Yah!"

And Bunter rolled away in disgust, followed by a yell of laughter from the Famous Five. They watched him as far as the school gates, through which he disappeared, and then started talking of more interesting things than Billy Bunter.

"My word, the craze seems to have caught on properly!" cried Harry Wharton, as fellows passed, all of them with a camera of some sort. "It strikes me the judges are going to have a busy time of it if all this lot go in for it!"

"Hallo! Here's a chap actually without a camera!" cried Nugent. "Wonder of wonders! Who ever would have thought it possible!"

"It's the Bounder!" cried Harry Wharton. "I don't believe he's taking up the idea!"

"Hallo, you photo fiends!" cried Vernon-Smith, or the Bounder, as he was always called, coming up to the group of juniors. "You've all got the craze, I see. I think the whole school's gone potty!"

"Well, ten pounds is worth trying for, isn't it?" asked Johnny Bull. "Aren't you going in for it, Smitty?"

"No, me, thanks!" cried the Bounder, with a sneer. "I leave those tricks to you kids. Catch me fooling around taking snapshots of wooden fences and haystacks!"

"I suppose you prefer the manlier sport of pub-hunting down at the Cross Keys?" cried Harry Wharton quickly.

"You can suppose what you like!" retorted the Bounder, with the same sneering smile. "I can't stand about all day talking to you. I'm off."

And away he went towards the school gates, with the same smile on his face. The fellows watched him go in silence.

"I don't think I should have said that, if I were you, Harry," said Bob Cherry, as soon as the Bounder disappeared out of sight. "About his going to the Cross Keys, I mean."

"Well, we all know Smitty and his ways," retorted Harry Wharton. "It's common knowledge that he has been down there a lot, although I admit that he hasn't done so lately."

"No, that's it," said Bob Cherry. "For some time he's been quite a different chap. He's getting quite decent, and I feel sure that he leaves the Cross Keys alone nowadays."

"Well, if I've said anything to upset him, I'm sorry," said Wharton.

"Oh, you haven't upset him, don't you fret!" cried Johnny Bull. "The Bounder's far too thick-skinned for that."

"Well, blow the Bounder!" exclaimed Nugent impatiently. "We're not going to stand here all the afternoon discussing him, are we? Let's come along out and see if we can get any decent photos suitable for the competitish."

"Come along, then!" cried Wharton. And the Famous Five tramped down to the gates and out into the road.

A hundred yards in front of them was the unmistakable figure of Vernon-Smith. They watched him picking along, and then suddenly he turned into the woods and was lost to view.

The Bounder threaded his way through the woods with quick steps. Gone was his smile, and on his face was an anxious expression.

"I wonder what he wants?" he muttered. "Why the dickens did he write to me? If anybody else had seen the letter, I should be sacked!"

He took from his pocket a note, and read it through for the hundredth time that day. As he read, he clenched his teeth hard.

"Dear Smitty," the note ran, "I haven't seen anything of you for some time lately. What's happened to you? You're not going to give your old pals the go-by, are you? Meet me on Wednesday in the glade by the pond. I've got something important to tell you, and you absolutely must come.—Yours, to a cinder, JOE BANKS."

"I wonder what he wants with me?" exclaimed the Bounder aloud. "Something important, he says. I suppose



"One, two, three—in with him!" shouted Harry Wharton. With a heave-ho, the juniors swung the struggling bookmaker into the air. Up he went, to fall with a resounding splash into the slimy water. (See Chapter 12.)

I'd better go and see what it is. But I shall have to be careful, with all the fellows in the woods scattered about, fooling about taking photos. I'll make sure of this, at any rate."

And, tearing the note from Banks, the rascally bookmaker, into shreds, he tossed the fragments into a thicket near by. Then he walked on again.

He passed several Removites on his way. One and all had their cameras, and they called out to him. But the Bounder gave no reply.

But after he had gone some distance he found himself alone. A few minutes more, and he came to the glade mentioned in the note as the rendezvous.

Seated on the grass, smoking a short clay pipe, was a middle-aged man in a loud check suit. His face bore evidence of not having had a razor near it for quite a week, and his eyes were red and watery. It was Banks, the bookmaker.

"Hallo, no old pal! Here you are at last!" he cried, getting up at seeing the Bounder arrive. "I was beginning to give you up as a non-runner. Where 'ave you bin to all this time?"

"Never mind about that," exclaimed the Bounder impatiently. "I got your note, and you said you wanted to see me about something important. What is it? I can't stop here more than a few minutes. It's too risky."

"Too risky!" echoed Banks, elevating his eyebrows in THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 351.

surprise. "Why, we're miles from anywhere. That's why I chose the place. Where's the risk come in?"

"Why, the fellows are in the woods all over the place," said the Bounder. "They've got the photographic craze, all of them, and they're knocking about after pictures for some idiotic competition. It wouldn't do for one of them to come along and see me talking to you."

"No, p'raps it wouldn't," agreed Banks. "But there ain't much fear o' that, Mr. Smith."

"I don't want to run any risks, anyhow," cried the Bounder. "What is it you wanted to see me about?"

"Don't be in such a hurry, old pal!" cried Banks. "I'm coming to that. Why 'aven't I 'ad the pleasure of seeing my old pal Mr. Smith lately?"

"Because there was no cause to," exclaimed the Bounder impatiently. "I've chucked up that gambling business for good. And the night visits to the Cross Keys, and all that. It's too risky, and the game's not worth the candle."

"Wot! You ain't turned into a good little Georgie!" cried Banks, in tones of great surprise.

"No, no; don't be a fool!" snapped the Bounder. "I'm not such a mug as that, thank you."

"I thought that was a bit too much to believe," cried Banks. "But sit down on the grass, and I'll tell you what I want to see you about."

The bookmaker flopped on to the grass. Vernon-Smith gave a quick glance round and then followed suit.

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"We may as well talk in comfort," went on Banks.

"Have a drink!"

"No, thanks!" hastily cried the Bounder, pushing back the flask that Banks offered him.

"Have a cigarette, then?"

"No, nothing at all in that line."

The bookmaker stared at the Bounder as though he could hardly believe the evidence of his senses. Then he put the flask and the cigarettes on the ground beside him.

"Perhaps you don't fancy 'em just now," he said. "There they are when you feel like it. Just help yourself."

Banks relit his pipe, which had gone out, and, having got it going to his satisfaction, gazed keenly at the Bounder.

"Now for what I wanted to see you about," he said. "You've not given up the gee-gees, amongst other things, I suppose?"

"As a matter of fact, I have," said the Bounder.

"Oh, come off it!" guffawed Banks. "You're pulling my leg, that's what you're doing! Now, look here! You've been one of my best customers, and I like to be a pal to a chap what's a pal to me. I'm going to put you on a good thing. To-morrow the Dingville Stakes are running, and Stacking Plaster is going to win it. It's an absolute cert, although it's being kept dark. But the horse will win, and it'll be not less than ten to one against. How would you like to have five pounds on it?"

"Thanks, not for me!" said the Bounder decisively. "I tell you I don't want to have anything more to do with the business."

"But just think!" cried Banks. "Five pounds at ten to one! It's fifty pounds, and an absolute cert. It simply can't lose. Of course, I shall put it on with another bookmaker, so as to cover myself. I don't want to lose fifty quid, but I want to give an old pal a chance of making it. What'd you say?"

"I tell you I don't want it," cried the Bounder. "Was this all you had to say to me?"

"Was this all!" repeated the bookmaker, in nettled tones. "A jolly good all, I should think. Why, I'm putting a cert fifty pounds in your way, and you won't take it. Talk about gratitude!"

"I'm not ungrateful; don't think that," cried the Bounder, in hesitating tones that Banks was quick to notice. "Only—only I'm not at all keen on this sort of thing just now. Thanks for putting me on to it, but I don't think I'll have anything to do with it. And now, if you don't mind, I'll be getting back to the school."

"You don't know what you're missing!" exclaimed Banks eagerly, seeing that the Bounder was weakening, and following up his advantage. "Of course, you've been out of it for some time. Here, think it over. I don't mind waiting here a bit. And have a drink and a smoke while you're thinking. It'll help you."

It was more likely to clog the Bounder's brain than to assist him to think clearly, not that such an offer required much serious thought. But the Bounder was wavering.

He had been going straight for some time, simply because he had been keeping away from temptation. Now the tempter was by his side, using all his arts to capture his prey.

"Come on, show your pluck!" cried Banks. "There's nobody about, I tell you. Have a drink! Or are you afraid?"

It was that taunt that finally decided the Bounder. Whatever his faults, fear was not one of them. He had been through many escapades in his time, but he had never feared the consequences of any of them.

Picking up the packet of cigarettes, he selected one and lit it, while Banks watched him, with a triumphant glint in his eyes. Then, holding the burning cigarette in one hand, with the other he seized the whisky-flask and put it to his lips.

And just at that moment the silence was broken by a click that made Vernon-Smith's heart stand still.

Vernon-Smith let fall his hand holding the flask, and swung round as though he had been shot, and, iron-nerved as he was as a rule, he gave a gasp at what he saw.

Standing on the edge of the clearing was William George Bunter, peering into the view-finder of his camera, which was pointed directly at the Bounder and his companion!

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### In the Woods!

"BUNTER!"

Vernon-Smith hissed out the name, and sprang to his feet. The bookmaker gave a grunt, and, hastily grabbing the whisky-flask and the cigarettes, got up and darted out of sight through the bracken.

The Bounder was left alone with the interloper.

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"You spying hound!" cried Vernon-Smith, in a voice tense with passion. "You rotten toad! You—you—"

He broke off, and words seemed to fail him. With his features distorted with passion, he darted forward, and grabbed Bunter fiercely with both hands. He shook the Owl of the Remove as a dog shakes a rat, and seemed to have lost all control of himself.

"So you're spying on me, were you?" he went on. "You followed me here, and you've taken a photograph of me sitting there with—"

"I—I—I d-d-didn't!" howled Bunter, who seemed as though he were not yet recovered from the shock himself. "I—I—I w-w-wanted to take the view f-f-for the c-c-competition, and—"

"Don't deny it, you lying toad!" yelled the Bounder passionately. "You followed me here, and thought you had a good chance to take an interesting photograph. But it won't come off if I can prevent it. Give me that camera!"

He tried to seize the camera from Bunter's grasp. But the fat junior swung his arm back out of reach, and commenced to struggle violently, yelling lustily for help the while.

"W-w-w! Help! Rescue! Remove!" yelled Bunter. "W-w-w! Callhimself! He's killing me! Help! I'm being murdered!"

There was not much likelihood of there being any assistance forthcoming from any source in that quiet spot. But Bunter was as frantic with terror as the Bounder was with rage. Vernon-Smith's face had gone absolutely white with passion.

"Give me that camera, you worm!" he yelled, making desperado endeavours to wrench the thing from Bunter's grasp.

The struggle was an uneven one, for Bunter was not renowned for his fighting prowess—in fact, had he not been in such a state of panic, he would have given in at once and taken to his heels. As it was, he was soon overpowered.

Being his foot behind Bunter, the Bounder tripped him, and the fat junior fell to the ground with a heavy thud. With a cry of satisfaction, the Bounder possessed himself of the camera.

"Now, you rotten, spying worm, you can say good-bye to this thing and everything in it!" panted Vernon-Smith.

"I'll smash it to little bits, and then I'll smash you. I'll teach you to follow me about, you rotten, spying hound!"

"Help! Murder! Fire! Police!" howled Bunter loudly.

"I'm being murdered by a dangerous lunatic! You! Help!"

"You may call for help till you're black in the face!" cried the Bounder. "I've got you here alone, and after I've smashed this wretched thing, I'll simply pulverise you!"

In a frenzy of passion, Vernon-Smith raised the camera above his head with one hand, intending to smash it on the ground. But that hand never descended.

A sudden, firm grasp was laid upon his wrist, and, with a smothered gasp, the Bounder was swung round to find himself face to face with Wingate, the captain of the school.

"Wingate!" he gasped huskily.

"Yes, it is I!" replied Wingate sternly. "What is the meaning of this, Vernon-Smith? What are you ill-treating Bunter for? What has he been doing?"

"I haven't done anything, really, I haven't, Wingate!" broke in Bunter tearfully, struggling to his feet. "I was just—just taking a photo, and this beast rushed at me and half-killed me. I hadn't done anything—in fact I didn't even know he was there."

"Is that so, Smith?" asked Wingate, turning a stern gaze on the Bounder.

"I suppose so!" replied the Bounder bitterly. "Better ask Bunter everything; he'll be only too pleased to tell you all about it."

Wingate looked at the Bounder curiously. Then his gaze turned to William George Bunter, but the expression showed that he hadn't much sympathy to waste upon him, for he knew the Owl of the Remove and his little ways.

"Now, then, Bunter, what's this all about?" he asked. "Why did I find Vernon-Smith treating you like that, and trying to smash your camera?"

"He's—he's the jealous, that's all!" whined Bunter, gently rubbing his injured anatomy and emitting sundry groans and grunts as he did so. "He knows I've gone in for this photo competition, and he knows that I shall jolly well win it, and he's trying to prevent me doing so. That's why he was trying to smash my camera, the rough beast! I shall complain to Mr. Quelch about it."

"You'll do nothing of the sort, Bunter!" rapped out Wingate sternly. "I'll have no sneaking. You can leave this matter to me, and I shall do any punishing necessary. So you think this was all due to Vernon-Smith's jealousy of your photographic powers?"

"Yes, I jolly well do!" howled Bunter. "I'm a dab at photography, and none of the others stand an earthly against me. Of course, if my camera gets smashed, I shall be out of it, and that's just Smith's little game."

"I can hardly believe that that was really the cause of

Smith's outbreak just now," said Wingate, with an amused smile. "Personally, I should have thought that you knew as much about photography as a Cheshire cat; but perhaps Smith is better informed than I am as regards your wonderful abilities in that line. In any case, I won't stand bullying. You will take a hundred lines, Smith, and bring them to me to-morrow morning before lessons.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders, while Banter darted a gleam of triumph at him. There was nothing William George Banter liked better than to see others getting into trouble, although he was a little disappointed that the punishment was not more severe.

"As for you, Bunter," went on Wingate, "I want you to fag for me. Go down to the village and see if they've finished the repairs to my cycle. If it's ready, bring it along to the school. Cut along, now."

But Billy Bunter showed no signs of stirring. Instead, he looked uneasily from the Bounder to Wingate.

"Do you hear me?" cried Wingate sharply.

"I'm—I'm afraid to go!" stammered Bunter uneasily.

"As soon as you've gone, the Bounder will set about me again, smash my camera. He would have done it already if you hadn't come on the scene and stopped him."

"I don't think there's much fear of that," replied Wingate. "He would catch it jolly hot if he did. If he tries anything of that sort, come and tell me immediately."

"Yes, but the damage will be done then!" hooted Bunter.

"Oh, give the thing to me!" cried Wingate impatiently. "I'll take charge of it, and carry it up to the school. You can fetch it away from my study when you come back from the village. Now, scuttle off, and look lively!"

"Th-thanks very much, Wingate," said Bunter, a little relieved. "I suppose you wouldn't care to keep Vernon-Smith here with you for, say, ten minutes, so as to give me a start. Then I shall be safe."

"I'll give you a start with my boot if you don't buzz off!" cried Wingate impatiently.

But Bunter didn't wait for the proffered assistance. He darted off, and was soon lost to view, his fat little legs working like clockwork.

"You will return to the school with me, Smith?" cried Wingate, turning to the Bounder. "And, mind, if I hear anything of you interfering with Bunter or his camera after this, it'll mean severe trouble for you!"

The Bounder made no reply, and the pair walked along in silence through the woods. They had some distance to go to the school, and not a word was spoken all the way. The Bounder was too busy with his thoughts for words.

He was still a trifle dazed by the turn of events. The hundred lines imposed did not trouble him in the least. He had expected much more than that.

His feelings at first were of great relief that Bunter had not betrayed him. If Wingate had been informed of the presence of Banks, the bookmaker, of the cigarette and the whisky, he would have been compelled to inform the Head in turn.

And that would have meant but one thing for the Bounder. He would have been instantly expelled.

"Of all the cruel luck!" he muttered to himself, as he walked along beside Wingate. "After keeping away from it all this time, to give away, and then be caught by that fat worm. And he's got a photograph of it all. Why did I ever keep the appointment? Fool—fool that I've been!"

But he had not been betrayed, so far, that was one consolation. Perhaps even now he could devise some means to smooth it all over, and make everything as though it had never been. He buoyed himself up with the hope.

But why had not Bunter told the truth? That was what troubled him. He knew Bunter's ways, and that nothing would have given him greater pleasure than to have got him into trouble, even to the extent of getting him kicked out of the school in disgrace.

And yet Bunter had not done so. Instead, he had told lies—nothing unusual for Bunter, by any means.

But to what purpose, and with what object? The Bounder parted from Wingate at the entrance to the school, and walked slowly to his own study. He entered it, and sat down heavily in a chair, his brain in a whirl.

"Bunter's the biggest ass in the school," he muttered, staring before him. "But he's no fool when there's a chance of turning something to his own advantage. He's got some cunning scheme on."

He passed his hand wearily over his forehead. Bitter thoughts and regrets filled his mind. If only he had not gone to meet Banks! He had kept away from all his former haunts for so long now, and it seemed cruel hard luck to him that he should have been discovered the first time he fell back into his old ways. And he had not wished to do it.

"He saw me, the fat toad, I'm positive of that!" he muttered. "And he's got a photo of the whole scene on that plate. Yet, with all that evidence, he goes and tells Wingate all those lies! I wonder what his game is?"

Whatever Bunter's idea was, if he had any cunning, ulterior motive, was beyond the Bounder's powers of divination.

He was soon to know.

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## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter in Luck!

IT was early evening when Bunter rolled into the Close on his return from the errand on which Wingate had sent him. Bunter was lazy—far too lazy for very much exertion—and Bunter was not in the habit of hurrying himself at the best of times.

But he had not been longer than he could help. He was anxious as to the safety of his camera, and, although he had handed it over to Wingate's care before departing, he was fearful of what might have happened to it since he had left.

A quick glance round showed him the familiar form of Wingate a few yards away. Bunter hurried up to the captain of Greyfriars.

"I say, Wingate, how about my camera?" he began.

Wingate broke off talking to Courtney and turned to Bunter.

"Hallo! It's yours, is it?" he asked. "Did you get my cycle?"

"N-no. It wasn't ready," replied Bunter. "I say, how about my camera, you know?"

"Oh, blow your camera!" cried Wingate impatiently. "When did they say the bike would be finished, you young sweep?"

"I—I forgot to ask," said Bunter, who was too anxious about his camera to worry himself over Wingate's bike. "You've put my camera in your study, I think you say, Wingate?"

"I said nothing of the sort," replied Wingate. "As a matter of fact, it is there, on the table. Come along this evening and take it away. I don't want my study littered up with your rubbish. And now cut off."

And Bunter cut off as requested, feeling somewhat relieved.

Wingate had kept his word and taken the camera back to his study right enough. But would it still be there? Bunter conjured up visions of the Bounder having already broken into Wingate's study and removed it.

He broke into a run, and darted up the school steps. A quick glance over his shoulder showed him Wingate still engaged in conversation, and Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles.

"I'll jolly well make sure of it!" he muttered. "I'm not taking any risks. I'll go along and get my camera now."

He hurried along to Wingate's study, turned the handle of the door and calmly walked in. There, on the table, sure enough, was his camera, and he quickly seized it.

He turned and made for the door. Then he suddenly stopped short.

"On second thoughts, I don't think I will take it away," he muttered. "I'm going to take jolly good care of this. The Bounder will be trying all he can to get hold of it, and if I take it to my study, he's sure to get it. Here, in Wingate's study, it'll be as safe as houses, only I mustn't leave it lying about for Wingate to see. Lemme see, where would be the best place?"

He looked round the room quickly, and his eyes rested on a cupboard in the corner. He walked over to it and flung it open. A grunt of satisfaction escaped him.

"The very place!" he muttered. "It doesn't get much used, judging by the dust inside. I'll shove it in this corner, behind these old books."

In a few seconds the camera was safely stowed away in its hiding-place. Then, with another grunt of satisfaction, Bunter hurried across the room and left the study.

"Just in time!" he muttered, as the voice of Wingate was heard approaching. "I don't suppose Wingate will remember anything more about it. If he does, he will simply think that I've come along and taken it away, as he ordered me to do. And now to see Vernon-Smith."

Bunter made for the Bounder's study, outside which he paused for a minute or two. Then, turning the handle, he threw the door open, and, without the ceremony of knocking, walked boldly into the study.

"I say, Smithy—" he began, blinking round the study.

"Oh, there you are! I want to speak to you."

"The wast is all on your side, then," returned Vernon-Smith, scowling at Bunter. "Clear out of it!"

But Bunter did not clear out. Instead, he rolled still farther into the study and sat himself heavily in a chair beside Vernon-Smith.

"I—I say, Smithy," he began, "I—I hope you don't bear any malice over what occurred this afternoon, you know. It wasn't my fault that Wingate came along, was it?"

"It was a bit of luck for you, at any rate, you fat worm!" replied the Bounder savagely. "He saved you from getting the hiding of your life. And now that you are here, you can just tell me where your confounded camera is."

"Ah! Wouldn't you like to know?" retorted Bunter, with a knowing wink. "It's in a safe place, don't you worry."

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"Safe place or not, you're going to tell me where it is before you leave this room!" muttered the Bounder fiercely between his clenched teeth.

He got up from his chair, walked quickly to the door, and turned the key in the lock. Then he turned round and faced Bunter, who had watched these proceedings with growing alarm.

"Now then, you spying toad!" cried the Bounder. "Where's that camera of yours? You're going to tell me before you leave my study, if I have to knock it out of you with this!"

As he spoke he picked up a cricket-stump and grasped it firmly.

"I say, you know," hurriedly stammered Bunter, getting as far away from the Bounder as possible, "don't you dare to hit me, or I'll tell Wingate! You know what he promised you if you touched me again. And I should tell him about something else at the same time."

Bunter's cunning little eyes gleamed as he made that last remark. He was a craven coward, and against Vernon-Smith, especially in the Bounder's present frame of mind, he stood a very poor chance.

But the recollection of that scene in the woods, and the snapshot he had taken of it, gave him courage. He was master, and he knew it.

Vernon-Smith held his arm drop to his side. He glared at the Owl of the Remove without speaking. Then, throwing the stump into a corner, he went to his chair and sat down again.

"It's about that snapshot I took. I wanted to have a little chat with you," began Bunter, gaining confidence as he proceeded. "Of course, I had no idea that you were there, or I should never have dreamed of intruding. I'm not the sort of fellow to go about peering into other chaps' private affairs."

"Oh, no; never let it be said!" cried the Bounder scornfully.

"I'm glad you agree with me, Smithy," went on Bunter, on whom the Bounder's sarcasm was utterly wasted. "But the fact remains that I did see you with Banks, the book-maker, and you were smoking fags and drinking whisky. Of course, if the Head knew, you know what that would mean?"

The Bounder knew quite well what would be the result if the Head of Greyfriars were informed—instant expulsion from the school.

"So that's your game, is it?" he cried. "You're going to sneak? Well, do your worst! After all, I was caught, and I suppose I must put up with the consequences."

"I hope you don't think me capable of telling tales, Smithy!" exclaimed Bunter, with a great show of offended dignity. "Of course, the Head ought to be told, and I should only be doing my duty in telling him."

"A fat lot you know or care about duty!" exclaimed the Bounder.

"Ahem! I mean to say, I really ought to tell him, but I don't like the idea of getting one of my old pals expelled," went on Bunter magnanimously. "I want to save you from it if I can. That's why I told Wingate those whoopers when he caught you trying to do in my camera."

Vernon-Smith listened attentively. He felt that now he was on the track of the mystery.

"You see, I'm on the horns of a dilemma," went on Bunter grandiloquently. "On the one hand, I have my duty, my bounden duty, to perform. But it will mean getting you expelled, so I thought we might come to some arrangement and compromise."

"You want paying to keep your mouth shut, I suppose?" snapped the Bounder.

"Really, Vernon-Smith, if you are going to talk in that strain, then there's nothing for me to say!" exclaimed Bunter, drawing himself up indignantly.

"Oh, don't try to pull the wool over my eyes!" snorted the Bounder contemptuously. "I'm willing to come to terms. You've got me under your thumb, and I admit it. How much do you want?"

"Well—er—you see, it's this way," went on Bunter. "I'm rather short of funds at present, as it happens. A titled relative of mine has sent me a postal-order, and it must have got lost in the post."

"Well, there's one thing, it won't be lonely," retorted Vernon-Smith. "There'll be hundreds of others to keep it company!"

"Of course, it's rotten being without funds," went on Bunter hastily, ignoring

the Bounder's remark. "So I thought you might see your way to advance me a little off the postal order. Of course, it would be regarded strictly as a loan, to be repaid out of the postal order when it turns up."

"Yes, when?" cried the Bounder, who now saw what Bunter's game was. "So that's the idea, is it? Do you know what it is? It's blackmail, that's what it is!"

Bunter jumped up as though he had been shot.

"It's nothing of the sort!" he exclaimed. "I'm really only doing it to save your skin. I've a good mind to go even now and tell the Head everything. There's the honour of the school to think of, and all that. Yes; on second thoughts, I'll go."

But, although Bunter said this, he showed no signs of carrying out his threat, but remained where he was. Vernon-Smith was not surprised, for he knew Bunter of old.

"Oh, give it up, Bunter!" he exclaimed. "You make me tired. What do you care about the honour of the school or anything else, so long as you can find means to stuff your fat, ugly carcass?"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"How much were you thinking of?" went on the Bounder tersely.

"Ahem! Now you're talking!" said Bunter, his manner becoming friendly again immediately. "Lemonade see, the postal order will be for a good bit. Shall we say ten bob?"

"You can say ten bob till you're black in the face, but you won't get it!" retorted the Bounder promptly. "There's five."

"Oh, really, Smithy!" protested Bunter. "What's the good of a measly five bob to me?"

"I know it won't buy enough grub to satisfy your gorging appetite," replied the Bounder outspokenly. "But that's all you'll get from me. Five bob. Take it or leave it."

"Make it seven-and-six, Smithy!" exclaimed Bunter, in tones almost of appeal.

"If you haven't got out of my study inside three seconds, I'll kick you out!" cried the Bounder, getting to his feet.

That settled Bunter. Making a hurried grab for the money on the table, he sprang to his feet, rushed to the door, and bolted down the corridor to the tuckshop, where he promptly proceeded to blue his ill-gotten gains.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Fish Gets Left!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were chatting in the Cloak, when Fisher T. Fish, the American junior in the Remove, bore down upon them. He was chewing a straw, and in one hand he was swinging a camera.

"I guess I've been looking for you galoots," he remarked, shifting the straw over to the other corner of his mouth. "I'm out to take a few photographs, and I reckon one of you lot will about do me."

"Going in for the competitish, of course?" cried Bob Cherry. "You certainly ought to stand a good chance with a picture of our noble selves as one of the attempts."

"Absolutely romp home!" cried Harry Wharton, laughing. "So you're after the ten pounds, too, Fishy?"

"I guess you've hit it," replied Fish. "You're quite willing for me to take you, of course?"

"Certainly!" agreed Harry Wharton. "Stand in line, you chaps."

The fellows posed themselves in a line, and Fish got his camera ready. He pointed it at the group, and, after some time spent in fiddling about with various pointers and screws, at last pressed the catch that released the shutter.

"Taken it!" cried Bob Cherry, as Fisher T. Fish looked up and led the camera drop to his side. "Oh, good! When can we have a copy, Fishy?"

"I guess that'll be a day or two," replied Fish. "And now I'll trouble you for a bob each."

The Famous Five started, and for several seconds they regarded the Yankee junior without speaking.

"Gone potty all at once!" politely inquired Wharton, being the first to recover his powers of speech.

"It must be a softening of the brain!" cried Bob Cherry.

"I guess I know quite well what I'm talking about!" exclaimed Fish coolly. "I've just taken your photos, and I guess you'll all be wanting a copy."

FOR NEXT WEEK:

## "LOOKING FOR ALONZO!"

Another Splendid Long Complete Story of the Chums of Greyfriars.

—By—

FRANK RICHARDS.

Order in Advance.

PRICE ONE PENNY.



Raising the camera—Coker's beautiful camera—above his head, the bookmaker brought it down with resounding force. There was the sound of smashing glass, and the back burst open. Banks jumped heavily on the camera, reducing it to splintered wood and broken glass! (See Chapter 11.)

"We certainly shall expect it," cried Wharton.

"Very well, then, my charge is a bob!" went on Fish.

"I'm not out taking people's chivvies for nothing. No, sir! With me it's business right from the word go!"

"You burbling jabbercock—"

"You frabjous duffer!"

"I guess it's no good getting your mad up at it!" went on Fish, with perfect coolness. "Look here, I'll tell you what I'll do. There's five of you, and you'll each want a copy. Well, I'll let you have five for the price of four. That'll be one dollar, or four shillings in your queer money. What d'yer say?"

For several seconds it seemed as though none of the Co. were capable of saying anything. Fish's cheek fairly took their breaths away.

"Of all the cool cheek!" gasped Bob Cherry at last. "Bump him, you chaps!"

Fish backed away in alarm. He saw nothing out of the way in his demand. He had done the work, and expected to be paid for it. It was purely a matter of business with him, as he had said. But somehow the other juniors did not seem to see it in that light. They gave angry snorts, and laid violent hands on the object of their wrath.

"Here, let up, you silly jays!" howled Fish, struggling to free himself. "I reckon I'm open to talk sense. I'll let you have 'em for three-and-six, all nicely mounted."

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But Fish's hurried reduction in price availed him not at all. He was swung off his feet, and bumped on the hard ground with resounding bumps.

"Wow! Leggo! Help! Yaroop!" roared Fish.

Bump, bump, bump!

Not till they had given him half a dozen bumps did the wrathful juniors release their hold of the Yankee junior. Then, letting him fall to the ground with another bump, they departed, leaving Fish loudly complaining about the lack of business instinct in this slow, worn-out old country.

Fish slowly picked himself up, emitting sundry groans as he did so. But in a few minutes his spirits revived. He had drawn a blank so far as the Famous Five were concerned, it is true, but that did not prevent his looking for fresh worlds to conquer.

"I guess I can take photos as well as any galoot in this hyer place!" he muttered, as he walked along. "But I'm not out doing it for nothing. No, sir. With me it's business."

Fish looked round, and his eyes glittered as he saw the familiar form of Lord Maulveverer reposing on a seat. The elegant junior was in an attitude of utter weariness. But Lord Maulveverer always was weary. The slightest exercise tired him considerably.

Fish walked over to Maulveverer, whose eyes were closed. He opened them a little to see who approached, and then wearily closed them again.

"I say, Mauly, I guess you'd like your photo taken," began Fish eagerly.

"Yass!"  
"Oh, good! Of course, I'm not doing this for nothing, as some galoots seem to think. No, sir. I guess it's a matter of business with me from the start."

"Yass!"  
"You make a splendid picture like that," went on Fish. "The British nobility in complete repose. I guess I'll have a dozen done on my own account, and send 'em over to Noo York. Are you ready? Keep quite still."

Mauleverer needed no injunction as to his keeping still. His head had sunk back, and he was nearly asleep. Fish got his lordship into focus, set the shutter for a time exposure, and the plate was exposed.

"Good! That makes number one!" he announced. "I guess you'd like another in a different attitude."

"Yass!" sleepily responded his lordship.  
Pleased with his success, Fish changed his position, as Lord Mauleverer showed no disposition to change his, and another photograph was taken.

"That'll be the lot, I reckon," cried Fish. "Shall we say two dozen of each?"

"Yass!"  
"Good. You'll want them nicely mounted in the best style, of course. That'll be five bob."

Snore!  
"I'll trouble you for the money now, if it's all the same to you," went on Fisher T. Fish, holding out his hand invitingly.

Snore!  
"Money down's my terms, I guess," went on Fish. "I don't make any difference for anybody, not even a lord. No, sir!"

Snore!  
"Look here," began Fish, in another tone, seeing that he was getting no response. "Well, I'm jiggered. If the silly jay isn't fast asleep."

Fish grabbed Mauleverer by the shoulder and shook him. The languid junior opened his eyes a little.

"Whassermarrer?" he sleepily inquired. "Don't worry me now, there's a good chap."

"But I want my money!" howled Fish. "I've taken your picture as per esteemed order, and I want the cash, I guess!"

"Ask me some other time!" drowsily replied Mauleverer, closing his eyes again. "I'm tired, begad!"

"But, I say, look here!" howled Fish.

"Hullo, hullo, hullo!" came the cheery voice of Bob Cherry. "What's the matter with you, Fish? Why, here's his lordship, and we've been looking all over the place for him."

"Come along, you lazy slacker!" cried Harry Wharton, shaking Mauleverer roughly. "We want you to come out with us."

"Oh, do leave me alone, you fellows!" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer plaintively. "I'm tired."

"You always are!" hooted Bob Cherry. "And we've got to come you up to it. Come along now."

He heaved the tired one to his feet, and Wharton took a hold of him on the other side.

"What about my money?" howled Fish excitedly. "Look here, you leave Mauly alone. He owes me five bob, and I'm going to have it before he leaves here."

"Is that right, Mauly?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"Of course it's right!" yelled Fish. "I've just taken his photo, and he's ordered two dozen in the best style. And I guess I want the money."

"And I guess you can go on wanting it!" cried Wharton. "You tried to play the same trick on us, but it didn't come off, you rotten swindler! Buzz off, and take your precious photos with you. Why, you don't even know if they'll come out all right, and you have the saucer to demand the money in advance. Come on, Mauly!"

"I tell you—"

But Fish's remark was abruptly cut off. Exasperated with the Yankee junior, Bob Cherry gave him a hearty push that sent him sprawling on the ground. Then away went the Famous Five, bearing in their midst the unwilling and expostulating Lord Mauleverer. By the time Fish had picked himself up they were out of sight.

"Well, if that isn't the limit!" exclaimed Fish disgustedly, wiping the dust off his clothes. "The unbusinesslike jays! The—the sblaided mugcrumps!"

As Fish finished dusting himself down the form of Mr. Quelch was seen approaching. A smile crossed the Form-master's face at perceiving Fish with the eternal camera.

"So you have got the craze, too, Fish?" began the master pleasantly. "What chance do you think you stand of winning the prize?"

"I guess it'll be a walk-over!" replied Fish confidently. "I

kinder reckon that when it comes to photography I'm the goods—just a few! This is another thing where this sleepy old country gets left."

"You really must be very expert to talk like that," said Mr. Quelch, with an amused smile, for he knew the American junior and his ways. "I should like to see some of your work, if you would care to show me."

"Delighted, sir!" replied Fish. "Of course, all my best stuff is over in Noo York. But I could take your photo, and then you'd see what good work really is."

"I'm sure I shall be very pleased to be your sister," replied Mr. Quelch pleasantly.

"Right-ho! Stand just where you are for a minute, sir," said Fish, realising that he had got another client.

In a few seconds the picture was taken. At any rate, there was the click of the shutter being released, although what would be on the plate the developing alone would show.

"And when may I expect to have a copy, Fish?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"I kinder reckon you can have it to-morrow some time, sir," replied Fish. "First come, first served with me. It's a matter of business, you see. You're my first customer, sir, so you get the first attention."

"Customer!" repeated Mr. Quelch blankly. "What do you mean, Fish?"

"I reckon I mean just what I say, sir," replied Fish. "As I've already explained to those other galoots, I'm not out doing this for love. No, sir. My time's worth money; and, besides, there's the cost of the materials."

"If you will let me know what expense I am putting you to," exclaimed Mr. Quelch coldly, his smile disappearing. "I shall be pleased to reimburse you."

"Two shillings a dozen is my charge," went on Fish. "Or you can have the same quality in a better mount for half-a-crown. I leave it to you, sir. Those are my terms—and money in advance."

And Fish held out his hand for the cash. But none was forthcoming. Mr. Quelch could only stare blankly at the amateur photographer.

"I'm afraid I shall not require a dozen," said Mr. Quelch at length, in cold tones. "And I can only describe your demand as impertinent."

"I reckon there's no impertinence about it, sir," replied Fish. "It's a matter of business. I've done the work, and I guess I ought to be paid for it!"

Mr. Quelch glared at Fisher T. Fish with eyes like gimlets. Any other junior would have seen that there was trouble in store, but not so Fish.

"You will take a hundred lines, Fish!" rapped out Mr. Quelch. "I have never heard of such impudence!"

"I reckon—"

"Another word, and I shall cane you!"

"But it's business, sir, and—"

Mr. Quelch wasted no more words on the American junior. With a snort, he grasped him firmly and hurried him away to his study, from which a few seconds later came loud howls of anguish.

Fish was having some of the business instinct knocked out of him.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### A Little Ventriloquism!

VERNON-SMITH came along the corridor leading to his study. The fat, ungainly figure of Bunter was approaching him, and before the short-sighted Owl of the

Remove had time to escape the Bouncer was upon him.

"I want to see you, Bunter," said Smith tersely.

"I'm afraid I'm in a hurry!" exclaimed Bunter nervously.

There was a gleam in the Bouncer's eye, and a tone in his voice that Bunter did not like. The Owl of the Remove gave a quick glance up and down the corridor, but there was no sign of anybody who could possibly give him assistance.

"Never mind about the hurry!" cried Smith, taking a firm grasp on Bunter by the coat-collar. "Whatever it is will have to wait."

He threw open the door of his study and dragged Bunter inside, shutting the door after him.

"I—I say, you know," stammered Bunter uneasily, "no larks, Smithy, mind!"

"Sit down!" ordered Vernon-Smith coldly. "I want to talk to you."

There was no help for it. The Bouncer was between Bunter and the door, so the fat junior sat down.

"It's about that photo you took of me," began Vernon-Smith. "I've got that continually hanging over my head, and I'm tired of it. It means for me the perpetual fear of



expulsion. You might at any time go and take it to the Head. That's just the dirty sort of action you'd love to do!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Apart from that," went on Smith, in cold tones, "there's the danger that you might unconsciously blurt it out. You're such a fool!"

"I say, you know—" began Bunter feebly at this outspoken statement.

"Well, as I say, I'm tired of it, and I can't stand the suspense," continued Smith. "Besides which, it puts me under your thumb, and I've got to give you five bob a day to keep your mouth shut."

"Look here, Smithy, it's nothing of the kind!" howled Bunter. "You're not giving me anything at all! It's all a loan, to be regarded as such, and to be repaid as soon as my postal-order arrives. I'm only keeping dark about that—that photo for the good name of the school, and because you're—you're an old pal of mine."

"Yes, we know all about that!" retorted Smith sarcastically. "I don't care to be counted as one of your friends, thank you, Bunter."

"Very well; just as you like," said Bunter, with a resigned air, getting up off his seat. "And now I must be going, if you don't mind."

"But I do mind!" cried the Bounder. "Sit down! You don't leave this study till I let you do so—and that won't be till I've settled with you."

"I—I say, Smithy," began Bunter feebly, "what—what are you going to do?"

"I'm going to have that plate!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith decisively. "You're going to bring it along here and destroy it in my presence. I don't mind paying for it, but I'm jolly well going to have it somehow!"

Bunter sat thoughtful for some moments without replying. Evidently he was thinking over the Bounder's offer. At last he spoke.

"How much will you give me for it?" he asked.

"I'll give you a sovereign!" announced the Bounder. "You will come along with me to wherever the camera is, and bring it into this study. Then I will open the thing and smash every plate inside to make quite sure."

"And supposing I don't agree?" inquired Bunter.

"Then in that case I shall thump you with this cricket-stump till you do!" replied the Bounder coolly, arming himself with the weapon mentioned. "You can choose which you like. Hand it over peacefully and get a quid, or decline and get a thumping. In each case you'll get something, and I shall have that plate."

"But look here," howled Bunter, "I can't do that, you know! I—I've got some other plates in the camera waiting to be developed, besides that one. They're ones I've taken for the competition, and you'll jolly well spoil my chance of getting the ten pounds prize."

"Yes, you need worry a fat lot about that!" sarcastically exclaimed the Bounder, coming nearer to Bunter, with the cricket-stump held menacingly. "Now then, which is it to be? You'll get well paid in either case, only one way will be more painful than the other."

Bunter's cunning little brain worked rapidly. He was in a tight fix, and he knew it. There was nobody about, for all the juniors were out of doors, and it seemed as though he would have to relinquish that plate which was bringing him in such easily-obtained revenue each day.

He was determined not to let it go without a struggle, and, almost imperceptibly, he edged round the Bounder towards the door.

"Well, which is it to be?" cried Vernon-Smith, with gritted teeth.

"All right, Wharton, I'm coming!" yelled Bunter, hearing an imaginary call from the corridor.

Almost before the Bounder realized his purpose, the Owl of the Remove had scuttled towards the door as fast as he could go. But Vernon-Smith recovered from his surprise, and darted after him. Just as Bunter grasped the door-handle and pulled the door open, the Bounder caught him by the shoulder and swung him back into the room again.

"No, you don't!" he hissed fiercely. "Come on, you fat rotter; are you going to let me have that plate?"

"I—I say, Smithy," protested Bunter almost tearfully, "can't we talk this over in—in a friendly way? I don't know where to put my hand on the camera for the moment. I—I've forgotten where I've put it!"

"I don't want any of your lies, you fat toad!" hissed the exasperated Vernon-Smith. "I give you ten seconds to tell me where your camera is. If you don't do what I ask, I'll wallop you with this cricket-stump till you can't stand!"

Bunter's position was desperate. He looked at the

Bounder, who stood before him, staring at his watch as he counted off the seconds. Then he looked eagerly at the door, which had been left open—so near, and yet so far.

The window of the study was open, and the draught coming in was blowing the door to. If Bunter had any ideas of making a sudden bolt, it looked as though they would be frustrated by the door slamming to. Already it was moving slowly, almost imperceptibly, but surely none the less.

Bunter made his mind up quickly. He had the reputation of being the biggest fool in the school, as he undoubtedly was. But in some things he was more clever than anybody would give him credit for.

"I—I agree, Smithy!" he exclaimed quickly. "You can have the plate. Give us the quid!"

"There you are," said Vernon-Smith readily. "There's fifteen shillings. You've had five bob already to-day, you know. That comes off it."

"I say, you know!" expostulated Bunter.

"That's all you'll get, so you needn't argue the point!" cried Vernon-Smith. "A good job you had the sense to see it too. The time was just up!"

Bunter grabbed the fifteen shillings, and put them in his pocket. His eyes were on the door all the time, and he saw that it was on the verge of slamming. It was now or never.

"What are you doing with that cricket-stump, Vernon-Smith? Come to my study at once!"

The words came from the corridor outside in the unmistakable tones of Mr. Quelch.

The Bounder gave a gasp, and swung round as though he had been shot. At that same moment the door slammed.

"Hang it—it was Quelchy!" exclaimed the Bounder. "What does he want me for?"

"I don't know, Smithy," said Bunter. "Better go and see. I expect he saw you holding the stump over my head and thought you were bullying me. He—he looked jolly ratty."

"I suppose I shall have to go," said the Bounder. "As for you, wait here till I come back. If I find you gone, it will be the worse for you when I do see you again."

And the Bounder departed and made for Mr. Quelch's study.

Bunter tiptoed to the door, and watched him open the Form-master's study door and go inside. Then, with a gurgle of glee, the fat junior dashed along the corridor in the opposite direction.

"Done him!" he chuckled, as he dashed along, and down the school steps. "He thought it was Quelchy right enough. There's no mistake, my ventriloquism comes in jolly useful at times. I've dodged Smithy, and I've got fifteen bob, too!"

Delighted with the success of his scheme, and overjoyed at having got away from the Bounder, Bunter made straight for the tuckshop, and proceeded to gorge himself to the full with his ill-gotten gains.

It took the Bounder some minutes, on entering the study and finding it empty, to realise that he had been tricked by Bunter's ventriloquism. With a howl of wrath he dashed away on the warpath, looking for Bunter with a wild gleam in his eye.

When he came across him in the tuckshop, there was not much of the fifteen shillings left. And as there was a goodly crowd of juniors present, he realised that it was neither the time nor the place to take summary vengeance on the cunning Owl of the Remove. He could only save it up for him, and promise it for another time, with interest.

Leaving Bunter stuffing himself, and surprising those round him by the sudden amount of wealth the notoriously impecunous junior was displaying, Vernon-Smith returned to his study. His plan had misfired, and he threw himself heavily in a chair to think out what he should do.

For quite an hour he remained in the same position without moving. Then there came a tap at the door, and, in response to his invitation to enter, Trotter, the page, came in, bearing a letter in his hand.

"A letter for you, Master Smith," said Trotter. "It's just come, and I've hurried up here with it immediately."

The Bounder took the missive, glanced at the handwriting on the envelope, and elevated his eyebrows. Then, seeing that Trotter still hung about, he threw him two coppers, and the page retired.

"It's from Banks," muttered the Bounder, as soon as he was alone once more. "I wonder what on earth he wants?"

He opened the envelope and took therefrom a note. The paper was much begrimed, and the writing was in an illiterate scrawl.

"Dear Smith," the note ran,—"I'm sorry we were inter-

# ANSWERS

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NEXT MONDAY—"LOOKING FOR ALONZO!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

raptured the other day, and I hope that everything is all right. I've been worrying a good deal about it ever since. Of course, it quite spoilt our little business, and you missed a good thing. Meet me at the same spot to-morrow afternoon; I've got something else for you. And if you're in any trouble over what happened the other day, perhaps your old pal Joe Banks will be able to help you."

The Bounder read the note with mixed feelings. His first impulse was not to go. He was already in trouble enough over the last time he kept the appointment. Then he re-read the note.

"Perhaps he can help me," he muttered, tearing the note to very small pieces, and putting them in the grate. "I'll go, and chance it!"

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### The Plotters!

IT was the following day, and morning lessons were over. The Remove came pouring out of the class-room, glad to be free.

There was even more than the usual amount of talking. There was only one subject, and that was the competition. In two days' time all attempts had to be sent in to the newspaper office to be judged.

All the fellows in the Remove who had gone in for it—and that comprised practically the whole Form—had taken the pictures from which they were going to select the best six with which to compete. There would not be much more time or opportunity for further snaps to be taken.

Each fellow felt convinced in his heart that his and his alone stood the best chance of carrying off that prize of ten pounds. A box-room had been fitted up as a dark-room, and such had been the run on it that enthusiastic photographers had to take their turn to have the use of it.

"I've developed all mine!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, coming along with the other members of the famous Co. "I don't wish to brag, but if I don't romp home with the prize, then all I can say is that the judge must be either blind or prejudiced."

"Or else he knows a rotten photo when he sees it!" interrupted Bob Cherry. "Now, when it comes to mine, there's no question about it."

"You're right!" cried Harry Wharton. "No question at all. They'll be dropped straight in the waste-paper basket."

"You silly ass—"

"You burbling duffer—"

"Peace, my infants!" broke in the voice of Johnny Bull, pouring oil on the troubled waters. "Let dogs delight to bark and bite!"

"Well, he said—"

"The ass had the impudence to suggest—"

"Oh, chuck it!" cried Bull. "It's no use fighting about it, like a lot of inky faces. Wait and see, my sons! What would you say if after all the prize were awarded to Johnny Bull?"

"I should say that the clump who said the age of miracles is past didn't know what he was talking about!" broke in Nugent. "Don't talk piffle, Bull!"

"The piffleness of the ostedemed Bull is terrific. Now, my photos are the best, and—"

"Oh, rot! You're talking out of the back of your neck, Inky! I've seen some of your plates when you were developing in the dark-room, and they all looked the same. You couldn't tell one from the other."

"Pictures of a black cat in a coal-cellar!" cried Wharton. "You showed me one as being a view in the woods, and I had to turn it upside-down and point out that it was a horse and trap!"

"Well, ha, ha!"

"Well, look here, it's no use wrangling about it, as I said just now!" exclaimed Bull. "We're all competing, and we all stand the same chance. We shall know on Saturday, in any case."

"Hallo, here comes the Bounder!" cried Wharton, seeing Vernon-Smith approaching. "He's not looking very cheerful. I haven't seen much of him lately, but each time he's been down in the dumps over something or other."

The Bounder came across the Close to where the fellows stood, making for the school gates.

"Hallo, Smithy!" cried Wharton cheerily. "Don't you wish now that you'd gone in for the competition?"

"Not if it would have had the same effect on me as it evidently has on you!" grinned the Bounder. "I could hear you all quarrelling amongst yourselves just now over it."

"Oh, that was only—only our fun!" said Wharton, going a trifle red.

"Well, I wish you luck, and hope one of you will win."

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went on the Bounder. "I shall be glad when it's all over, too. This camera craze is getting on my nerves."

And he passed on, going out of the gates, and turning down the road leading to the woods.

He strode along, making for a spot where he was to meet Joe Banks, the bookmaker. All the while he was busy with his thoughts. He remembered the last time he had come along that way, and what it had brought, and bitterly did he regret it.

At last he reached the spot, having passed not a soul on the way. Banks was waiting there, and he came forward with a grin of welcome.

"Good-afternoon, Master Smith!" began the bookmaker. "I thought as how you'd come. Got my note, of course, or you wouldn't be here. I was in two minds about writing, but I thought I'd better risk it!"

"You said in your note that you'd something else for me," said the Bounder. "Another tip, I suppose?"

"Yes, an absolute cert, too!" replied the bookmaker eagerly. "It's money for nothing, and—"

"I don't want it!" interrupted the Bounder. "As I told you last time, I've given all that up. So you need not waste any time in snoring on that."

"But, I say, you don't know what you're missing!" began Banks. "I tell you—"

"There's no more to be said," broke in the Bounder. "I've finished with that for good and all. What I came about was quite a different matter. You said you might be able to help me if I had got into trouble over last time. Well, I am in trouble, and I want to know if you can possibly help me."

"In a trouble, eh?" said Banks. "What's the row?"

In a few words, Vernon-Smith explained. He told Banks how Hunter had photographed the scene, for the bookmaker had dodged off in such a hurry that he had not seen what had occurred.

"He's got the whole scene on a plate," went on the Bounder. "Of course, with evidence like that, it would mean only one thing for me if it came to light—the sack."

"But isn't he a pal of yours?" asked Banks. "Can't you put up with him in that position it puts you in, and ask him to destroy the plate?"

"You don't know Hunter, or you wouldn't talk like that," exclaimed the Bounder. "The fat cat is holding it over my head—blackmailing me. I have to give him five bob a day to keep his mouth shut. I don't mind the money so much, but it's pretty galling to be under the thumb of that cad, and, besides, there's the perpetual suspense. He can go and show it to the Head at any time."

"Well, if he won't give it to you of his own free will, I should make him," suggested Banks. "Threaten him with a good hiding."

"I've already tried that," replied the Bounder, recollecting the attempt, and how Hunter had fooled him with his ventriloquism. "But it didn't come off. He's as cunning as they make 'em."

Banks gave a grunt, and relapsed into silence. His eyes narrowed and glittered, and the Bounder, who was watching him intently, could see that he was thinking deeply.

"You said something about a competition," said Banks, at length. "I know the one you mean. It's been advertised in the 'County Gazette.' And this cub Bunter's gone in for it?"

"Yes. That's how he came to be out in the woods taking photos that day," replied the Bounder. "I don't know whether it was by accident or design that he caught me, but anyhow, the fact remains that he did catch me."

"H'm! And the prize is ten pounds," went on the bookmaker. "A tidy little sum, that, for a schoolboy to win. Do you think he stands any chance?"

"About as much as I have of flying to the moon!" said the Bounder. "He thinks he has, the conceited ass!"

"Good! That's the ticket!" cried Banks. "Whether he stands a good chance, or only thinks he does, it suits my purpose all right."

"What's your idea, then?" asked the Bounder interestedly.

"Has he developed his plates yet?" inquired Banks, answering one question with another.

"No, I don't think so."

"Good again! Very well, this is what I suggest. Get pally with him, and ask him how he thinks he's done as regards his photos for the competition. If he still thinks he's done all right, point out to him that he ought not to run any risks by developing the plates himself. Tell him that he might easily spoil them, and that he ought to send them to the photographer's to be developed."

"But what good would that do me?" asked the Bounder.

"You leave the rest to me," rejoined Joe Banks. "To-morrow's a half holiday, and he'd come down to the village then, if he comes at all, that is. I'll be hanging about in a



Picking up the packet of cigarettes, Vernon-Smith selected one and lit it, while Banks watched him with a triumphant glint in his eyes. With the other hand the Bounder lifted the flask, and put it to his lips. Snap! Billy Bunter had taken a photograph of the scene, and the click of the shutter came to the Bounder's ears. (See Chapter 3.)

quiet spot on the road. I know the chap when I see him, and it won't be much trouble for me to take his camera from him and smash it to smithereens."

"It's a grand idea!" cried the Bounder enthusiastically. "I'll do my part all right, and persuade him to take his plates to the photographer's in the village to be developed, and I'll leave the rest to you. Now I must be getting back. It's getting on for time for afternoon lessons. Thanks very much, Banks."

Vernon-Smith hurried away from the spot, almost before the bookmaker had realised he was going. As a matter of fact, Banks had much more to say to the Bounder. He wanted to get back to the subject of the "good thing" he had mentioned, and coax Vernon-Smith into coming in.

The Bounder made his way back to school with a much lighter heart than he had had for days. The bookmaker's plan struck him as being a good one. He knew Bunter's conceit, and he had only to flatter him to get him to agree to taking his plates down to the village to be developed, he thought.

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NEXT  
MONDAY—

"LOOKING FOR ALONZO!"

It was almost time for afternoon lessons when he got back, and there was no opportunity of speaking to Bunter. But there was no immediate hurry; that would do just as well after school. In fact, it might be better, for, had he got Bunter to agree, he might have gone down that same evening, for which, of course, Banks had not arranged.

All the same, he was glad when lessons at last were over. He made a bee-line for Bunter as the fellows trooped out of the class-room, and linked his arm through that of the Owl of the Remove before Bunter was aware of his presence.

"I say, you know—" began Bunter, in alarm, trying to free himself.

This was his first encounter with the Bounder since the incident of the ventriloquism. He had promptly blined the fifteen shillings he had then obtained, without any qualms of conscience, although he was aware that there would come an inevitable day of reckoning. To his mind, it had come.

"Doing anything particular, Bunter?" asked Vernon-Smith pleasantly.

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& Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"No—cr—that is to say, yes," replied Bunter. "I've—  
I've got to do some lines for Quelch, you know."

"Oh, lines can wait!" exclaimed the Bounder. "You can  
do those any time. I was wondering whether you'd care  
to come along to my study and have a little snack."

Bunter pricked up his ears at this. His little eyes glistened  
behind his spectacles. With Bunter a feed was a feed, and  
worth going through fire and water almost to obtain.

All the same, he recollected that he was not exactly on  
good terms with the Bounder. In fact, his present affability  
made him wonder.

"I say, Smithy, honour bright!" he asked. "No larks,  
you know!"

"Of course not!" responded the Bounder affably. "When  
I ask a chap to a feed I mean it. I suppose you're worrying  
about that—that little episode of the other day?"

"It was only—a joke, you know!" stammered Bunter,  
whose arm was still firmly held by the Bounder. "I didn't  
mean any harm, and you'll have the fifteen bob back again,  
of course."

"Of course!" agreed Vernon-Smith. "Don't worry about  
that; there's no hurry. As a matter of fact, I think it was  
jolly neat the way you diddled me. I've often laughed at  
it since."

"Yes, it was clever, wasn't it?" cackled Bunter, his vanity  
flattered. "Of course, I'm a dab at ventriloquism, and I  
took you in properly."

"Yes, it was very funny!" agreed the Bounder, with a  
grin. "Well, here we are. Come in and make yourself at  
home. I haven't got anything in special for the occasion,  
but the cupboard's pretty well stocked, and you can help  
yourself. Wolf the lot, if you like!"

"That's the way to talk!" gurgled Bunter greedily. "I  
wish there were a few more like you, Smithy. Most of the  
fellows are such greedy beasts here, and won't let me have  
a thing. And you know what rotten grub we get at meal-  
times here. Not anything like enough for me. I've got a  
delicate constitution which wants well nourishing."

"Of course you have, Bunt!" agreed the Bounder.  
"Are you having that chair? Why not try this easy-chair?  
It's much more comfy."

"Thanks, I will!" replied Bunter, flopping heavily into  
the armchair, and drawing it up to the table.

"There are sardines and steak-pies, jam, and honey!"  
explained the Bounder, going to the cupboard, and fetching  
therefrom the eatables it contained. "Then there is some  
Swiss roll, some jam-tarts, and a few bottles of ginger-  
pop."

"Thanks, Smithy, old man; these'll do to go on with,"  
said Bunter. "I'll let you know when I want any more."

The Bounder's eyes glittered, and his brows contracted.  
He felt sorely tempted to kick Bunter across the room,  
but he restrained himself. Bunter was too short-sighted to  
notice the change in the Bounder's expression, apart from  
which he was already wading into the feed.

"This is prime, Smithy!" he grunted, smacking his lips  
with satisfaction. "It's quite like old times for us to be  
feeding together, isn't it?"

"Oh, quite," agreed the Bounder, politely refraining  
from pointing out that it was Bunter alone who was doing  
all the feeding. "But don't waste time in talking. Pile in,  
and we'll do the chattering afterwards."

And, without waiting for the Bounder's invitation, Bunter  
piled in to the best of his ability. In face of the invasion  
the comestibles rapidly disappeared, and still Bunter was  
not satisfied.

"I think I could just do with another snack, Smithy,"  
he said, looking up, with smears of jam on his fat, shining  
countenance.

Vernon-Smith got up, and brought out the rest of the  
things from the cupboard, which he set before the insatiable  
Bunter. The fat popoise made those, too, disappear,  
although a little more slowly than the first consignment.

Vernon-Smith watched him as a cat watches a mouse all  
the time he was eating. He was dying to broach the  
subject for which he had invited Bunter, but he bided his  
time. At last, with a contented sigh and a last look round  
to see if by chance he had overlooked something eatable,  
Bunter sat back heavily in his chair, looking and feeling  
almost unable to move.

"Finished?" asked the Bounder. "Good! Now we'll  
have a little chat."

### THE NINTH CHAPTER.

#### Developments!

VERNON-SMITH drew his chair up nearer to Bunter,  
and crossed his legs in an easy attitude.

"How's the photography business going?" he asked  
casually.

Bunter gave a slight start, and came a little out of his  
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lethargic state. The mention of photography brought back  
to his mind one photo in particular—the one of the Bounder  
taken in the woods.

He stared at the Bounder, without giving any answer.

"Of course, you're thinking of that—that—you know,"  
went on Vernon-Smith. "I'm not referring to that at all,  
so don't alarm yourself. What I meant was the photo com-  
pete. You've gone in for it, of course?"

"Yes, and I reckon I've done jolly well," replied Bunter,  
relieved at finding that the conversation was not going  
to take an awkward turn. "I've taken a dozen photos;  
my camera holds a dozen, you know. Some of the chaps  
have taken I don't know how many. But I've no need to do  
that. Twelve is all that is necessary; in fact, I hardly need  
have taken so many. I shall just choose the best six and  
send them in. I've no doubt as to the result."

"Neither have I!" promptly returned the Bounder  
ambiguously, although his true meaning was lost on the  
conceited Owl of the Remove. "So you've taken a dozen,  
and they're still in your camera, of course?"

"Yes, I shall be developing them to-morrow afternoon.  
It's a half-holiday, you know, and I shall have plenty of  
time."

"What! You don't mean to say you are doing your own  
developing?" exclaimed the Bounder, inwardly delighted  
that the conversation had got round to the right quarter,  
so easily. "I shouldn't run any risks if I were you, Bunter,  
old man."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Bunter. "I tell you,  
I'm a dab at developing!"

"I didn't know you'd ever done any," said the Bounder  
casually. "I was under the impression that this is your  
first camera, and you bought it especially to enter the com-  
petition."

"E—yes—that is so," hastily agreed Bunter. "But it's  
not difficult, you know. Not to a chap like me, at all  
events."

"I shouldn't run the risk if I were you, all the same,"  
said the Bounder, with a wise shake of his head. "Just  
think, after taking all that trouble and counting upon  
winning, you might go and spoil everything in the  
developing. Take my advice, Bunt. Don't you develop  
your own plates."

"But what am I to do?" said Bunter. "The things have  
got to be developed, haven't they?"

"Yes, of course they have. But why don't you take  
them down to the photographer's in the village? They do  
developing, you know, and they'll make a much better  
job of it than you will."

"I don't see that it's necessary," replied Bunter. "I can  
do it just as well myself. Besides, it'll cost money, and I'm  
broke."

"Don't let that worry you!" exclaimed the Bounder,  
leaning over Bunter eagerly.

Already he saw that Bunter was half won over to the  
idea, and he was anxious that he should fall in with it  
completely. Certainly he would not let the cost of the  
developing stand in his light.

"I'll give you the money," he went on, feeling in his  
pocket, and fetching out a coin, which he threw on the  
table. "There you are, there's a half-a-crown. That ought to  
be enough."

"Thanks, I'll take it, in—in case I require it," said  
Bunter, his hand closing greedily over the coin, which was  
soon transferred to his own pocket. "It's a good idea,  
Smithy, and thanks for putting me up to it. I think I'll  
go down to-morrow about it; it's a half-holiday, you know.  
After all, it'll save me messing about in the dark-room all  
the afternoon."

"Well, just as you like, of course," said the Bounder,  
affecting a disinterestedness he was far from feeling.

"I'm only telling you, that's all. Only it seems a pity, after  
all the trouble you've taken, and counting on winning the  
prize, to hand up your chances, by doing your own  
developing. I shouldn't risk it, old man."

"Well, I'll think it over," said Bunter, getting up. "And  
now, if you don't mind, I'll be getting along. I've got those  
lines to do for Quelch, you know. He was in a ratty temper  
this afternoon, and gave me a hundred lines, just because I  
said that Boadicea was the first king of England."

"Hard lines!" sympathised the Bounder.

"Of course, I know jolly well Boadicea was the first  
king of Scotland," went on Bunter. "It was only a slip  
of the tongue!"

"Of course! Don't forget what I told you about that  
developing!" exclaimed the Bounder, as Bunter reached the  
door. "It'll be the best plan, and you've got the money  
to pay for it."

"Yes, I think you're right," replied Bunter. And he  
rolled out of the study.

"Good! He'll go, I reckon!" muttered the Bounder

exceedingly. "And when Banks meets him—well, I hope he'll smash Bunter as much as he smashes the camera!"

But if the Bounder had followed Bunter he would have had some misgivings as to the success of his scheme. Instead of making for his study to do lines, Bunter rolled out of the school, and steered for the tuckshop, the half-crown tightly clutched in his hand, and a greedy gleam in his eyes.

For the question of developing his plates for the competition did not worry Bunter in the least. As a matter of fact, he had long since given up all thoughts of competing. In spite of his bombastic utterances as to his marvellous photographic powers, he knew full well that he did not stand an earthly.

Instead of trying for an impossible ten pounds, he had five shillings coming in regularly every day. And although the amount was small by comparison, Bunter knew full well which suited him best.

His camera was still where he had left it, hidden in the corner cupboard in Wingate's study. And there it was likely to stop till further orders to suit Bunter's purpose, for he knew it was safe.

Almost at the trot he arrived at the tuckshop and rolled inside. Although he had not long since gorged himself in the Bounder's study, he was ready for more, and the half-crown was soon squandered.

That night up in the dormitory the Bounder continued his affability with Bunter. Without betraying his anxiety he managed again to refer to the developing idea, and, to his inward joy, found that Bunter seemed practically determined on accepting it.

The other fellows noticed the Bounder's sudden display of friendship with William George Bunter, and marvelled greatly thereat. Usually there was no love lost between them.

As for Bunter, obtuse as he was, he realised that there was something behind it all. But what it just was he was quite unable to fathom.

He could not for the life of him make out why Vernon-Smith should become affable all at once, and especially after what had occurred. He could understand the Bounder's keen interest in one plate in one particular, but not in them all.

Besides, it was to the Bounder's advantage that they should not be well developed, and yet he was counselling Bunter not to run any risks, but to entrust the task to professional hands. Bunter wondered considerably as to what it all meant. But he could not make head nor tail of it, and, still wondering, he fell asleep.

The following morning most of the Remove fellows were up by times. The day was fine and clear, and the amateur photographers had plenty to do.

Most of them had developed their plates, and now the printing had to be done. More than one print of each picture would be necessary, in case of accidents, and there was hardly a corner of the Close that hadn't got several printing frames in position, with anxious, careful owners hovering over them, continually inspecting the progress of the prints.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Fagging for Coker!

THE day was fine, and the afternoon quite brilliant, for which the juniors were heartily glad. A wet half-holiday with its consequent staying indoors was never welcome at any time. But now, with photography on the board, a fine day was more than merely welcome, it was absolutely necessary.

Most of the competitors had their attempts practically completed. One or two, owing to the run on the dark room, were a bit behind, while Harry Wharton had still another one to take.

"Come on, you chaps!" he sang out, as he strode across the Close, followed by the rest of the Famous Five. "A good job your photos are all done and you are free, or I'd jolly well have to trot along on my lonesome."

"Well, it can't be helped," said Bob Cherry cheerily. "And we may as well be out in the woods, in any case."

"Hallo, here's the illustrious Coker!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, as the Fifth Former hove in sight. "Whither goest thou, Horace, old man?"

"Still carrying that camera about with you, I see!" said Nugent. "One of these days you'll probably be taking a photo with it, if you're not careful!"

"Cheeky young rotters!" cried Potter, who, together with Greene, were accompanying Coker, as they invariably were. "Oh, absolutely!" added Greene. "Why don't you bump them over, Cokey?"

"Simply because that's a little beyond his powers!" chuckled Wharton. "Coker couldn't bump over anybody higher than the Third Form."

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MONDAY—"LOOKING FOR ALONZO!"

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"And then only if the poor chap wasn't looking at the time!" added Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky rotters!"

"You frojulous lunatics!"

"Oh, don't take any notice of them!" cried Coker, in lofty tones, addressing his two outraged companions. "What else can you expect from a set of cheeky fags?"

"Done your developing yet, Coker, old man?" inquired Bob Cherry. "We'll give you a hand, if you like."

"Or a foot!" added Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Thanks! I don't bother about doing my own developing!" replied Coker haughtily. "I'm not going to fag for an hour or more in a stuffy dark-room, like you silly asses. I'm having my developing done down at the photographer's in Courtfield."

"Won't be any good, Cokey!" said Wharton solemnly, with a shake of the head. "Not all the experts in the world could make anything of your attempts. You've wasted several good plates. Why not let it go at that!"

"Clear off!" roared Coker. "If you don't shift, I'll come and shift you!"

"Rats!"

"The ratfulness is terrific, my esteemed and ludicrous Coker!" purred Hurree Janset Ram Singh, in his weird English.

"Look here, I don't want any of your cheek!" roared Coker. "As a matter of fact, I want one of you to fag for me."

"Then you can jolly well go on wanting!" said Wharton amiably. "Fagging by the Fifth ain't allowed, Coker, and you know it. It's against orders!"

"I can't help that!" replied Coker. "I want this camera taken down to Courtfield to the photographer's. There are twelve plates in it to be developed. But I'm jolly well not going to fag down there myself with it. One of you chaps will have to fag down there for me."

"Not this time, Cokey!" said Bob Cherry sweetly. "Some other time, perhaps!"

"Look here, you cheeky rotters, are you going?"

"Yes, we are!" said Harry Wharton. "We've been hanging about here talking to you quite long enough, and we can't waste any more time listening to your twaddle. So we're going. Come on, chaps!"

And Wharton marched on. Coker was right in his way, but Wharton did not mind that. He gave Horace Coker a sudden and unexpected push that sent the illustrious member of the Fifth Form sprawling.

"You cheeky fags!" howled Greene.

And he and Potter rushed to Coker's assistance. But the Famous Five lined up, and the next minute Potter and Greene were sent flying on top of the recumbent Coker.

Bump! Bump!

"Ta-ta, Cokey, old son!" sang out Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five walked on towards the gate. "Don't lie about on the ground like that, it's so unhealthy! You might catch your death of cold!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the five juniors disappeared through the gates, roaring with laughter.

Coker and his two cronies picked themselves up, and, needless to say, Coker was not in a good temper by what had occurred. He dusted himself down viciously, complaining loudly at the others for not coming to his assistance.

"Why didn't you help me?" he roared.

"Well, of all the ingratitude!" cried Potter. "We waded into the rotters at once!"

"Only they were too many for us," added Greene. "Besides, they took us by surprise."

"Cheeky young rotters!" cried Coker wrathfully. "It's all rot their not being allowed to fag for the Fifth. The Fifth have as much right to have fags as the Sixth."

"Better put it to the Head, old man!" suggested Potter. "He's the one that decides these things."

"Well, I know I'm jolly well not going to take this thing into Courtfield myself," cried Coker. "I wouldn't trouble to go any further with the rotten competition, only as I've started I might as well go through with it and get that ten pounds."

"Yes, might!" murmured Greene.

"What did you say?" asked Coker quickly.

"I—I said you're right, old man!" hastily replied Greene. "Of course, you'll get the prize like—like anything, you know!"

"Hallo, here's somebody who'll fag for you!" cried Potter, seeing the fat form of William George Bunter approaching. "He won't refuse, he wouldn't dare to. We'd knock the stuffing out of the fat porpoise!"

Bunter approached, blissfully unconscious of what was in store for him. He was made aware of Coker's presence by the latter leaving a firm hold on his arm.

"I want you, Bunter!" exclaimed Coker. "I want you to run into Courtfield for me."

"I'm jolly well not going!" roared Bunter, to whom the exercise attached to a long walk did not appeal. "You know jolly well you're not allowed to have fags!"

"I don't care about that!" cried Coker decisively. "All I know is that you're going to do as you're told. Do you hear?"

"I s-say, you know," stammered Bunter, as Coker shook him to impress his meaning the more clearly. "Don't you s-sh-shake me l-like that, or you'll m-make m-my s-spectacles fall off—"

"You're going to the photographer's in Courtfield, do you hear?" roared Coker.

"And if y-you b-break them, you'll h-have to p-pay f-for them!"

"Listen to me, you fat toad!" went on Coker impatiently, ignoring Bunter's fears as to the safety of his spectacles. "You're to take this camera to the photographer's, and tell him to develop the twelve plates inside. And he's to have them done by to-morrow. I'm going to buzz down on my bike for them to-morrow after morning lessons."

"But I can't go. I—I've got something important to do this afternoon!" protested Bunter, anxious to avoid that long walk, if at all possible. "Besides, you don't suppose I'm going to fag right down there for nothing."

"I'll give you a bob," said Coker magnanimously. "Here you are."

Bunter's eyes glistened greedily, and he snatched the coin. The state known as "stony." And he knew that he could soon be back shilling at Uncle Clegg's tuckshop.

"Of course, I don't mind going for you, Coker," he said, his tone changing at once. "As a matter of fact, I'm only too pleased to go. I'd do anything to oblige a decent chap like you, Coker."

"You didn't say that a minute ago."

"Ahem! that was a— a slip of the tongue, you know."

"Well, all right. Now you know what to do. Don't forget, they're to be finished by to-morrow midday. And mind you take jolly good care of that camera, you young sweep. Now buzz off!"

"I—I say, Coker—" began Bunter, with an anxious look.

"I suppose—"

"Well, what is it?"

"I suppose you wouldn't like to make it a couple of bob?" went on Bunter.

"No, I wouldn't!" was Coker's firm response. "Cut off, or I'll help you along with my own!"

But Bunter did not wait for the proffered assistance. He cut off as requested, and was soon lost to sight through the school gates.

He had not been gone more than two minutes when Vernon-Smith came out into the Close. He had been looking out of his study window, and had just caught sight of Bunter as he turned out of the gates.

"I say, Coker, was that Bunter went out just now?" he asked.

"Yes, he's gone down to Courtfield," replied Coker.

"Did you want him?"

"Oh, no! He had a camera with him, didn't he?"

"Yes, he's taken some plates down to be developed."

"Oh, all right, thanks! I only wanted to know. I wanted to speak to him. But there's no hurry. It will do when he comes back."

And the Bounder walked away. His eyes were glittering with satisfaction.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "He's fallen in with my suggestion, and gone to Courtfield with his precious camera. I can leave the rest to Banks."

And Vernon-Smith returned to his study, feeling happier than he had felt for many days.

Meanwhile, Bunter rolled along the road leading to Courtfield. The roads were muddy, and Bunter found walking irksome. He never walked very fast, but he was doing his best now. He had a shilling that he was dying to expend on tuck at the earliest moment, and that was impossible before Uncle Clegg's shop at Courtfield was reached.

Bunter intended making that his first place of call, leaving the business of Coker's camera till afterwards. The prospect of the tuck was the only thing that filled his mind, and he also had hopes of being able to get another bob from Coker on his return. Of danger he had not the slightest suspicion.

He was a solitary figure on the road, and nobody passed him. Occasionally came the voices of some of the juniors, but they were evidently some distance away in the woods that skirted the side of the road.

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He had covered about half the distance to Courtfield, and was already puffing and blowing with his exertions. His pace had slackened a little, in spite of Uncle Clegg's being now so much nearer.

Suddenly a face peered out of a thicket near by, a rough, unshaven face. It was followed by the rest of a body, and Bunter suddenly stopped and gave a gasp, as a man rushed out and barred his way.

It was Joe Banks.

"I want to see you, young shaver," said Banks in a gruff voice. "Your name's Bunter, isn't it?"

"Y-y-yes. Wh-what do you w-want?" stammered Bunter, trying to back away.

But Banks laid a rough grip on his arm.

"You're going down to Courtfield with that camera, ain't you?" he asked. "I believe you've got some plates in there to be developed?"

"Y-yes."

"Well, they ain't going to be developed—see?" continued Banks, with a fierce scowl. "I'm going to put the finishing touches on them there plates myself. Hand over that camera!"

Bunter was ready to collapse with fright. Who the man was, or why he should thus address him and demand the camera he could not get for the life of him tell. He was too numbed with fright to obey the bookmaker's request.

"Come on, give us it!" cried the man, roughly snatching the camera out of Bunter's hand. "Do you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to smash this thing—see? And then I'm going to smash you, my beauty! And I'll bet you can jolly well guess the reason why."

Raising the camera—Coker's beautiful camera—above his head, the bookmaker brought it down on the ground with resounding force. There was the sound of smashing glass, and the back burst open. Out tumbled a dozen opaque plates of glass.

Fury seemed to have seized Banks. He jumped heavily on the camera, not once, but many times. In a very few seconds the thing, which had cost so much money, was a mass of splintered wood and broken glass.

Bunter had not got over his fright enough to be able to do more than stare in a bewildered fashion at the man. He saw Coker's camera speedily reduced to wreckage. Satisfied with what he had done, the man gave a grunt and turned to Bunter.

"And now, young shaver, I'll give you what I promised you!"

He grasped Bunter roughly. But the feel of the man's hand upon him suddenly roused Bunter to a sense of his position. He was in a desperate plight, and he knew it.

Before Banks could bring down the hand he had raised, Bunter's voice rang out in frantic terror.

"Rescue, Remove! Rescue, Remove!"

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### A Ducking for Banks!

"HALLO, what's that?" It was Harry Wharton who spoke. He was in the woods with the other members of the Co., and he was feeling very cheerful. He had taken another photograph of the same spot, and he felt sure it would quite replace the one broken by Fish.

"What's what?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Sounded like a cry for help," said Wharton, listening intently. "Yes, there it goes again."

"Rescue, Remove! Ow, help! I'm being murdered!"

"It's Bunter!" gasped Wharton. "He's in trouble of some sort. Come on, you chaps, sharp's the word!"

The whole five dashed from the spot, and made for where the sounds were coming from. A minute's quick run, and they burst into the roadway.

"Great Scott, it's Bunter, right enough!" cried Wharton, taking in the scene at a glance. "And he's being half-killed by that great hulking brute. Come on!"

Without waiting another instant, the Co. dashed forward, and threw themselves upon Banks. The rascally bookmaker had been too busy with Bunter to notice their arrival, and he was taken completely by surprise.

A well-placed blow right between the eyes by Harry Wharton bowled him over like a ninepin. Then the Famous Five threw themselves on top of him, and united in their efforts to overcome the kicking, struggling rascal.

After a short tussle, Banks was subdued. Two juniors, kneeling in the roadway, held down his wrists, while another couple held his feet. Bob Cherry sat himself serenely on the prostrate bookmaker's back.

"Got him!" he cried cheerfully. "That's what I call short and sweet."

"He dotted me on the boko!" yelled Johnny Bull, dabbing

at his nose with a handkerchief, which was speedily dyed a crimson hue.

"What was it all about, Bunter?" asked Wharton. "Why was this blackguard pommeling you like that?"

"I don't know!" sobbed Bunter. "The brute suddenly pounced on me unawares. He snatched this camera, smashed it to smithereens, and then set about me! Wow! He's half-killed me, the beast!"

"But what on earth for?" demanded Wharton. "Why should he smash your camera?"

"Tain't my camera!" howled Bunter. "It's Coker's. I was taking it down to Courtfield to have his plates developed for the competi-hi! Yow! Why didn't he take the wretched thing down himself? I'm nearly murdered! I believe that beast's broken my back! Yow!"

"I can't make it out!" exclaimed Wharton. "Of course, you know who he is? He's Banks, that blackguard of a bookmaker. But why he should set about Bunter like that gets over me!"

"Well, now we've got him, the question is what to do with him!" said Bob Cherry. "We ought to hand him over to the police."

"Better not do that," suggested Wharton. "It wouldn't do the school any good. We'll deal with this gentleman ourselves."

"The boys' frogmarch him along and heave him into the pond!" suggested Bob Cherry. "It ain't far from here."

"Good egg!" cried several voices.

Firm hands were laid on Banks in various parts of his person, and he was lifted off the ground. Then, face downwards, he was frogmarched along the road, struggling and cursing all the way.

"You young rips!" he yelled. "Let me get at yer, that's all!"

"Not much, old son!" grinned Bob Cherry. "We're top dog, and we feel it would be sorter safer to remain so. You're going to have a nice cold bath—and I must say you don't look as if it would do you any harm!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This way!" cried Wharton, as they turned into the woods. "The pond's only a few yards now."

The pond in question was soon reached. It was not very big, and it was not very deep. But it was very green and slimy at the top, with plenty of mud at the bottom.

"One, two, three! In with him!" sang out Harry Wharton.

With a "Heave-ho!" the juniors swung the struggling bookmaker into the air. Up he went, and then fell with a resounding splash into the slimy water, and for a few seconds was lost to view.

At last his head bobbed up again, but he was completely unrecognisable. Green weed filled his hair and ran down his face, which was covered with mud of a particularly evil-smelling nature.

"Phew! Sound the retreat, Wharton!" cried Bob Cherry, holding his nose. "Don't get too near; he's far too nifty for my liking!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The bookmaker stood in the middle of the pond, spluttering and shaking his fist at the laughing juniors. That was the utmost he could do. He dare not speak, for if he had opened his mouth he would have promptly got it filled with the muddy water.

"Let that be a lesson to you!" cried Wharton. "And if ever we catch you bullying one of our chaps again you'll get the same, only worse! Come on, you chaps!"

And, laughing till the tears coursed down their cheeks at the sight of Banks, the juniors left the scene. Even Bunter forgot his woes so much as to join the others in their mirth.

"So that was Coker's camera—eh?" said Wharton, as they walked along. "Poor old Coker! That does in his chance of winning that ten quid. You've got the remains of the camera, Bunter?"

"Fat lot of good carrying the wreckage back!" said Bob Cherry. "They'll come in handy for firewood, and that's about all!"

"I say, you know," said Bunter anxiously, "Coker will be jolly mad about what happened to his camera!"

"I should about what?" grinned Cherry. "It cost three quid of his loving Aunt Judith's money, and it was his pride and joy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You chaps'll back me up, won't you?" went on Bunter nervously. "Coker told me to take particular care of it. You'll be able to back me up that it wasn't my fault."

"Oh, that'll be all right, Bunter!" cried Bob cheerily. "Besides, if he doubts our word, you can show him your broken spine. It think it was your spine you said was broken. Or was it only just a couple of legs?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you beast, Cherry," hooted Bunter indignantly, "it's nothing to laugh at! That brute's seriously injured me, I shouldn't be at all surprised if I'm crippled for life. I've— I've got awful pains in my inside!"

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"That's only overfeeding, Bunter!" said Cherry soothingly. "It's nothing of the sort! L—"

"Here we are! And there's Coker!" exclaimed Wharton, as the party turned in at the school gates. "Now to break the giddy news to him!"

Coker was a little way away, chatting to Potter and Greene. He suddenly looked up and observed the Removites bearing down upon him, with Bunter in their midst.

"Hallo! You're back jolly quick, Bunter!" he exclaimed, in surprise. "Been hurrying yourself for once? How about my camera?"

"Here it is!" cried Wharton, holding up the remains. "It's had a sort of accident, you know."

The Fourth-Formers grinned, while Coker looked as though he were going to have a fit.

"My—my camera!" howled Coker wildly. "I gave three quid for it! Look at it! What's happened to it, Bunter, you scoundrel!"

"It—it wasn't my fault!" stammered Bunter nervously. "I—I was attacked and nearly killed by some rough blackguard. He suddenly pounced on me, snatched your camera away, and did it in. Then he started on me, the beast!"

"You lying young toad!" howled Coker frantically. "I don't believe you! You've done it yourself, and invented this tale to take me in!"

"I—I—I—"

"It's no good going on at Bunter, so you may as well keep your good on," broke in Wharton. "He's telling the truth—for once. We were in the woods when we heard his call for help and rushed to the rescue. We found him being set upon by that bookmaker blackguard—Banks."

"But—but why should he smash my camera?" yelled Coker wildly. "What good did that do him?"

"Blat if I know!" answered Wharton. "Better ask him next time you meet him!"

"I'm done in for the competition now!" howled Coker. "And that camera cost three quid only a few days ago."

"Better send the bill in to Banks," suggested Cherry.

"Only don't be in a hurry. He's got to dry himself first. He's just had a bath."

"Yes, we slung him into the pond!" grinned Wharton.

"That was the best we could do to make it quits for you, Coker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors walked away and entered the school, leaving Coker in a state of mingled wrath and dismay. The juniors had kindly left the remains of his camera on the ground beside him. As they entered the school they turned round and were just in time to see the furious Coker take a flying kick at what was left of his camera, scattering it in all directions.

"Ha, ha, ha! Poor old Coker!" almost sobbed Wharton.

"He's out of the running now, and perhaps that'll give us poor chaps a chance!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And they passed on to their study, while Billy Bunter, suddenly remembering that he had not yet spent the shilling, scuttled back to the tuck-shop to repair the omission as soon as possible.

The news of Coker's loss soon spread all over the school, and far from getting the unfortunate Horace any sympathy, it only excited hilarious mirth. Fourth-Formers would stop him and ask him the price of firewood, while even fags of the Second and Third boldly approached him and asked if they could get up a subscription towards buying him a new camera.

The news reached Vernon-Smith, and he could scarcely believe his ears. He felt sure that there must be some mistake as to the ownership of the ruined camera. But a few inquiries soon confirmed the fact that it was Coker's camera that had been smashed, and not Bunter's.

The Bouncer's brow clouded. He could not make it out. Something had gone wrong with his scheme, after all. Banks had done his share of the bargain, and it was only owing to circumstances beyond his control that he had smashed the wrong camera by mistake.

"He's taken me in, the fat toad!" muttered the Bouncer, striding to and fro across his study. "He never meant to take his own camera down to the village all along. Thank goodness he got a pasting; that's one consolation! But that doesn't do me any good. I'm still under his thumb!"

He suddenly stopped pacing the floor, and stood, with fists clenched, thinking rapidly. Suddenly his eyes glittered.

"I see his game!" he went on. "He never meant to go in for that competition, once he had the good luck to get that snapshot of me in the woods. He knows it's better to dun me for five bob a day till further orders, than potter about going in for a ten-pound prize that he has no more

chance of winning than flying. But where has he left his camera? He's hidden it in some safe place, I'll swear; and I've got to find out where!"

But that was easier said than done. There were dozens of places where Bunter might have hidden his camera had he wished, as the Bounder had to admit to himself. He searched in all the box-rooms, but drew a blank each time.

For a long time he hung about Bunter's study. But Bunter shared it with three other juniors—the two Todds and Dutton—and one or other of them was always there, rendering the Bounder's attempt to search the study impossible.

Thursday came and went, Friday passed, and still the Bounder had been unable to find what he was searching for. He very much wanted to interview Bunter. The Owl of the Remove was not likely, of course, to gratify the Bounder's request for information outright. But he was so obtuse that the Bounder knew that, by a little close questioning, he would be more than likely to blurt out the truth in his endeavours to try and hide it.

But even in that respect there was no luck for the Bounder. Bunter seemed to have a sort of suspicion that, now the competition was practically done with, the Bounder would be more than ever anxious to have that incriminating plate destroyed. Anyhow, he kept out of Vernon-Smith's way all the time.

It seemed as though the Bounder's luck was right out.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### The Destroyer!

AT last the great day arrived. It was Saturday morning, and all the juniors were in a state of restless excitement. Cameras had disappeared to a great extent, it is true, for all the competitors had sent in their attempts at least a couple of days ago.

But now the fellows were feverishly impatient to learn the result, which was to be published in the "County Gazette" issued that afternoon. Each one was confident, and yet each one wondered whether, after all, he would be the winner.

Of course, the competition was not confined to members of Greyfriars School and it was more than likely that a number of outsiders had also gone in for it. But none of the juniors gave a thought to that.

Morning lessons dragged terribly, and Mr. Quelch had to come down heavily more than once on some delinquent or other. More than one Removite had lines to his credit during the morning.

But at last lessons came to a welcome close, and the juniors rushed pell-mell out of the class-room. Even then there were two or three hours to wait before the supply of the "County Gazette" arrived, for every competitor had ordered a copy. But it was something to be free from Mr. Quelch's stern gaze.

"I'd give anything to know the result," said Harry Wharton, as soon as the Famous Five were out in the Close. "Of course, I know jolly well I've won, only it's—it's so nice to see your name in print, don't you think?"

"Yes, it is nice," agreed Bob Cherry. "Only, as your name doesn't happen to be Robert Cherry, Esquire, I don't see what you've got to worry about."

"Yes, I don't think!" laughed Wharton. "Still, it's no use our arguing the matter; we shall have to possess our souls in patience, as some learned johnny or other put it."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, here's Bunter!" cried Cherry. "How goes it, Bunter? Got over that wallowing yet? I see you can walk without a crutch, so you must be nearly convalescent!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you beast——"

"Well, that's a nice thing to call a chap after he's shown his sympathy!" exclaimed Cherry. "Baz! ingratitude, I call it! What do you think, Smithy?"

"I agree with you!" said Vernon-Smith, who strolled up just then. "But Bunter always was an ungrateful beast!"

"By the way, Bunt, what happened to your photo?" asked Wharton. "You didn't send 'em in after all, did you?"

"Er—no—that is to say, yes!" replied Bunter. "What do you want to know for?"

"All right, keep your wool on! I was only wondering, that's all. I hadn't seen you doing any printing, and I don't believe you went near the dark-room."

"That's all you know, then?" exclaimed Bunter loudly. "As a matter of fact, I developed the whole lot myself yesterday."

"Then there's no hurry for your lot!" said Bob Cherry. "The last day for sending in was two days ago, so if you only did your developing yesterday, you can take your time

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over them and send them in for next year's competition—if they have one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean to say Wednesday!" hastily corrected Bunter. "Of course, I meant Wednesday all along. It was a— a slip of the tongue, you know."

"But Wednesday was a half-holiday, and you were going through it with that bookmaker chap," pointed out Cherry. "How could you have done your developing on Wednesday?"

"I—I did it afterwards," said Bunter hurriedly. "I went straight to the dark-room as soon as I got back."

"Jolly plucky of you, then, that's all I can say," said Bob admiringly. "I'm jiggered if I'd bother about developing plates when I was suffering from a broken back, or whatever it was you had!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, Cherry, you beast, you're only jealous!" howled Bunter. "And you needn't doubt my word. I tell you I did my developing on Wednesday, and they all came out jolly well. One of them especially. It's as clear as daylight, and I wouldn't part with it for— for any money!"

But he spoke he gazed keenly at the Bounder. Vernon-Smith coloured ever such a little. He knew quite well what Bunter was driving at.

"Well, even assuming that you're speaking the truth, and I, for one, don't believe you," said Bob Cherry candidly. "Low about printing? I'm jolly well sure you haven't done any or some of us would have seen you at it."

"I expect he got up in the middle of the night to do that!" suggested Wharton, with a grin. "He thought we might have designs on his precious plates, and waited till we were fast asleep and out of harm's way!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, if you choose to doubt my word," said Bunter, with a great show of dignity, "I refuse to discuss the matter with you. After all, it's my business, I suppose?"

And he walked away, leaving the juniors grinning broadly. Vernon-Smith followed him, and he was thinking deeply. He had heard all that had taken place, and he guessed therefore that Bunter had been lying.

"That settles it!" he muttered between his clenched teeth. "He's not developed those plates at all. He's simply saving that one up against me. I've got to get at it."

He followed Bunter into the school, and endeavoured to overtake him. But Bunter heard his footsteps, and gave a hurried glance over his shoulder. Seeing who was behind him, he quickened his pace into a run, and hurried along to his study, slamming the door behind him.

The Bounder quickly followed, and arrived outside the closed door. He was about to enter, when he heard the sound of several voices within, and he stopped. There were others in the study beside Bunter evidently, and the subject on which Vernon-Smith wished to interview the Owl of the Remove was hardly one that could be discussed before company.

He continued along the corridor to his own study, which he entered. Voices floated in through the open window, for most of the juniors were in the Close. But the Bounder took no heed; in fact he hardly heard them. He sat down in a chair, his head resting on his hand. He was thinking out a fresh plan of campaign.

A few minutes passed, and the door of Study No. 7 opened, and out came Alonzo Todd and Dutton. They were followed by William George Bunter, who peered quickly each way to see that the coast was clear. Seeing no signs of Vernon-Smith, he promptly scuttled along the corridor and out into the Close.

A crowd of juniors was gathered round the gates, talking incessantly. All were peering down the road, along which at any moment might come the carrier on his cycle with the supply of papers ordered.

"He can't be long now," exclaimed Wharton impatiently. "And when he does arrive, he looks like being torn to bits in the scrumage!"

"Well, that's his look-out!" growled Bob Cherry. "I don't mind what happens, so long as he comes soon. This suspense is beginning to get on my nerves!"

Half an hour passed, and still the papers did not arrive. Up in his study sat the Bounder, still in the same attitude. Although Bunter had taken such precautions before leaving his study, it had been totally unnecessary, for the Bounder had not heard him.

Suddenly a loud murmuring that rapidly rose into a shout was heard from the direction of the school gates. The noise aroused the Bounder, and he smiled a little. He knew what it meant. The papers had arrived.

At the same moment footsteps came along the corridor outside, and the wrathful voice of Wingate was heard calling:



"Bunter, Bunter! Where's that young sweep?"  
The Bounder got up, and, crossing to the door, threw it open. Outside was the captain of the school, a wrathful expression on his face, and a camera in his hand. At the sight of the latter the Bounder's eyes gleamed.

"What's the matter, Wingate?" he asked. "Anything I can do?"

"Yes, find Bunter!" ordered Wingate. "Where is he?"  
"I expect he's out in the Close now with the others," replied the Bounder. "That is if he's not in his study."

"He's not there, for I've just looked in," said Wingate. "I want to see that young gentleman when he comes back. I'll teach him to take liberties in my study, the cheeky young sweep!"

"What's he been doing?" asked the Bounder, with a grin.

"He's been raking about in one of my cupboards," replied Wingate. "I was looking in it just now for something, when I came across this camera there. I wondered what it was, and then I remembered that it's Bunter's. He must have shoved it there for some reason or other—to hide it, I suppose. I remember now that I brought it back to my study that day I came across you bullying him in the woods, and I told him to come and take it away. He must have shoved it in the cupboard instead, for it's covered with dust."

"Like his cheek!" exclaimed the Bounder, although his eyes were gleaming. "I'll take it along to him, and tell him you want him, if you like, Wingate."

"Yes, do. If that cheeky rascal thinks he can use my study as a store-room for his rubbish he's got to have it knocked out of him."

And Wingate went back to his study, leaving the Bounder standing there as if glued to the spot. For several seconds he was unable to move. He could not believe his luck. At last, after all his scheming to get at Bunter's camera, it had to come to him as a gift.

There came a roar of cheering from the Close, but Vernon-Smith paid no heed. He re-entered his study, and closed the door behind him, his eyes gleaming with fierce satisfaction.

"At last!" he cried. "This means good-bye to Bunter's hold over me. The cunning toad! I knew he was lying when he said he had developed the plates. He hid this in Wingate's study as a jolly safe place, knowing that if at any time he wanted it he could always get it. The plates are still inside, but they'll never be developed!"

He set the camera on the table, and started fumbling with the catches that secured the back. The door opened, and a fat face peered round it, but the Bounder was too engrossed to notice the new-comer.

"Yes, Smithy—"

The Bounder swung round, the camera still unopened. He saw the Owl of the Remove before him and a grin of triumph spread over his face.

"Come in, Bunter!" he said grimly. "You're just in time. I'm just going to smash some of your property. Do you recognise this?"

He pointed to the camera on the table. Bunter gave one look at it, and then emitted a fierce yell.

"That's mine, you thief!" he howled, springing forward frantically in an endeavour to rescue his property. "You swindling rotter! Where did you get that from? It's my camera, I tell you! Don't you dare touch it, you beast!"

"We'll see about that!" replied the Bounder grimly.

"I'm afraid you've got no say in the matter, Bunter. I've had my hands hanging over my head long enough, and you've done pretty well out of it. But that's all going to stop. I'm going to smash every one of the plates inside there, and the camera, too. Then I'm going to smash you! You understand?"

"You—you dare, you villain!" shrieked Bunter. "You leave my camera alone! Help! Rescue! Murder! Rescue, Remove!"

"You can yell till you're black in the face!" exclaimed the Bounder, easily keeping Bunter at arm's length with one hand. "There's nobody about; all the fellows are in the Close."

"Help! Rescue, Remove! Wow! Help!"

There was the sound of footsteps in the corridor outside, and the Bounder's face suddenly set hard. With a quick movement he opened the back of the camera, and viciously shook the contents out to the table.

"There was a loud yell from Bunter, a clatter as the camera rapidly emptied, and then a loud gasp from Vernon-Smith.

Out of the camera fell twelve empty sheaths.

"You—you blackmailing swindler!" hissed the Bounder, turning round on Bunter with a savage expression on his face, his features contorted. "You contemptible toad! You've been fooling me all this time! There isn't a solitary plate in the camera!"

In uncontrollable fury the Bounder hurled himself upon the yelling Bunter, and the pair crashed heavily to the

ground. Over and over they rolled, Bunter howling for help, and the Bounder muttering incoherently.

But just at that moment the door was flung open, and in dashed Wharton & Co., in response to Bunter's yells for help. Wharton stopped short as the sight met his eyes. Then he bounded forward.

"Stop that, Smith, do you hear?" he cried, throwing himself upon the Bounder, and wrenching him away from Bunter by main force. "Don't be a fool! What's the matter here?"

"That—that swindling blackguard—" began Vernon-Smith.

Then he stopped short. Panting with his exertions, he stood there silent, held firmly by Harry Wharton.

"What's the little game, Smithy?" asked Bob Cherry.

"You were half killing Bunter. What's he done to you?"

"Wow! He's nearly killed me," the beast!" howled Bunter, who was still lying on the floor. "I shall complain to the Head, I'll catch him the other day up to his old tricks, smoking and drinking, and I've been keeping it dark ever since so as not to get him into trouble, and to save the—the honour of the school. And this is how he repays me!"

"Smoking and drinking—eh?" cried Wharton, turning on Vernon-Smith. "Is that right, Smithy? I thought you'd given that up for good. You've been going straight now for some time."

"Of course, we all know what a liar Bunter is!" added Cherry. "We wouldn't take his bare word. But we know that if what he says is true, you won't deny it. That's where you're such a queer mixture, Smithy."

The Bounder looked from one to another without speaking. He had almost a hunted look that was painful to see. Footsteps were heard coming along the passage, accompanied by many voices.

"Where's Wharton?" somebody shouted. "Come on, Wharton, come and show yourself!"

Vernon-Smith crossed to the door, closed it, and turned the key in the lock, just in time before the others arrived. Then he came back and faced Wharton & Co. again. His face was quite calm.

"Yes, it's true," he said quietly. "I may as well own up. And now I'll tell you all about it. I know I can trust you chaps."

And Vernon-Smith recounted the whole affair right from the beginning. He told them how Bunter had written to him, and that, much against his will, he had gone to keep the appointment. He recounted how Banks had taunted him into what he had done, and Bunter's accidental taking of a photograph of the whole scene.

"Whether it was by accident or design he was there I don't know," continued the Bounder, in quiet, even tones.

"But the result was the same, and he's been blackmailing me ever since. I've been paying him five bob a day to keep his mouth shut under penalty of the place being developed and taken to the Head."

"It's a lie!" shouted Bunter, who had scrambled to his feet, and was a trembling listener of Vernon-Smith's confession.

"I never blackmailed him at all. He only advanced me money, which is to be regarded as a loan, and to be repaid out of my next postal-order."

"Shut up, Bunter!" shouted Bob Cherry, giving the Owl of the Remove a push in the chest that sent him flying back into a chair.

"I made him an offer to buy the plate and have it destroyed," continued the Bounder calmly, "but he wouldn't hear of it. The other arrangement was the more profitable to him. In fact, he was doing so well out of it that he let the competition idea drop, not that he would have stood any chance."

"No, there was no booby prize," interrupted Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"He even had the audacity to tell me that he had developed the plate, and that it had come out all right," continued the Bounder. "As a matter of fact, the day he took that snap, Wingate brought the camera back to his study for Bunter, who had gone down to the village to fag for him. When he got back he must have gone to Wingate's study to fetch his camera away, and then changed his mind. Anyhow, Wingate came across it stowed away in the bottom of one of his cupboards, where Bunter must have hidden it for safety."

"It's a lie!" howled Bunter. "I never hid it in Wingate's study at all. Besides, you must have been nosing about there, or you'd never have found it, you thief!"

"As a matter of fact, Wingate brought it along the passage a short while ago, and gave it me to give to you," said the Bounder. "That's how I got it. He also wants to see you about taking liberties in his study."

"I shan't go!" howled Bunter. "And it's all lies you're

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telling, Vernon-Smith. I'm going straight to the Head to complain about the way you've been treating me!"

"You're going to do nothing of the sort!" ordered Wharton sternly. "Sit down where you are, or you'll get it in the neck!"

"Well, I've explained all and admitted everything," said the Bounder. "I've been a fool, and I've regretted it, and I've had to suffer for it. Well, I'm in your hands, and you can go straight and tell the Head everything if you think it's best. I know what that would mean for me, but I'm not afraid. Only—only it does seem a bit rotten, after I've tried to run straight all this time."

The Bounder's voice broke a little, and the others were touched by his manner. Vernon-Smith was a queer mixture, a Bob Cherry had said, and he had done some black-guardly tricks in his time.

But nobody is all bad, and Vernon-Smith had his better side like anybody else. And there was no getting away from the fact that he had been going straight for some considerable time.

"Well, what are you going to do?" he asked.

### THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

#### Bunter Goes Through It!

HARRY WHARTON looked Vernon-Smith straight in the eyes, and his gaze was met fearlessly. Whatever the Bounder's faults, cowardice was not one of them.

"There's one thing I'm not going to do," replied Wharton, "and that is to tell the Head. I believe you, Smithy, and while there is no excuse for your doing what you did, still, it's not for me to judge. I really believe you've been the victim of circumstances more than anything, and, anyhow, you've had the pluck to own up to it like a man."

"Hoar, hear!" cried Bob Cherry.

"Look here, Smithy," went on Wharton, "we haven't always hit it, and we don't see eye to eye on a good many matters. But I'm not the sort to kick a chap when he's down. You have told us everything, and you know you can trust us to keep your secret. And you'll give me your word that you'll steer clear of this sort of thing after this, won't you?"

"Rather!" exclaimed the Bounder heartily, seizing Wharton's hand. "Wharton, you're a brick!"

"I suppose you were just attending to Bunter's camera when we came in," grinned Bob Cherry. "Of course, you've busted every plate he had so as to make sure?"

The Bounder reddened a little and gazed at the pile of sheaths on the table.

"Yes, you're right. That's what I was doing," he replied.

"But that's the funny part, if there is anything funny in it at all. Bunter had nothing in his camera but empty sheaths all the time!"

"What?" roared Bob Cherry. "You told us just now he'd taken your photo out in the woods?"

"Yes; I was under that impression, of course, or I should never have been taken in as I was," said the Bounder. "I didn't know till I got at his camera just now and emptied it. This is what was inside all the time. Look at them—just the plain, empty sheaths."

"But—but—"

"I don't know whether he was aware of it and deliberately fooling me," went on the Bounder, "or whether he is such an ass that he doesn't know anything whatever about photography. Either might be possible with Bunter."

"But do you mean to say—oh, crumbs, this is too funny for words!" laughed Wharton. "You've been in a panic, and Bunter's camera was unloaded all the time!"

"Yes, it's rather comical now it's all over!" confessed the Bounder.

"I've been swindled!" howled Bunter, dashing forward. "I never knew there were no plates in it. That photographer chap has done me! I'll go and jolly well get my money back."

"And I can see you getting it!" chortled Cherry. "Why, I don't believe you've paid for it in the first place, and you can't expect the chap to pay back what he hasn't received!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's jolly well swindled me!" shrieked Bunter. "I paid him a guinea for that camera, and I expected it to be in full working order! Why, none of my photos will have come out!"

"Of course not!" cried Cherry, almost weeping with laughter. "You can't produce pictures without plates, and you don't suppose the chap was going to make you a present of a dozen, do you? Plates are not included with a camera; they're extra. Bunter. And you're such a dab at photography! Oh, my hat!"

Bob Cherry showed signs of rapidly going into hysterics.

It struck him as indescribably funny that Bunter should have imagined his camera all ready for use when purchased, and should have been carrying it about empty all the time.

"I don't care what you say, Cherry; I've been swindled!" yelled Bunter. "And I'm going down now to that photographer chap to tell him exactly what I think of him!"

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Nugent. "I hope he's made his will!"

"Half a mo, Bunter, don't be in a hurry to go!" said Wharton. "We haven't decided what we're going to do with you yet."

"I tell you I'm going—"

"And I tell you you're not. Sit down. I want to tell you what I think of you first. You're a rotten, sponging, blackmailing cad, and you ought to be jolly well horse-whipped!"

"Look here, Wharton—"

"Unfortunately, we haven't got a horsewhip here," continued Wharton. "So we'll have to do the next best thing. You're going to run the gauntlet!"

"I'm jolly well not—"

"Line up, you fellows!" said Wharton, cutting Bunter short. "One of you open the door and let those chaps in. They'll be glad to assist, no doubt. Don't tell 'em what it's for, of course!"

The door was opened, and in came a body of the Remove. They had been banging on the door and calling for Wharton all the time without anyone inside taking the slightest heed of them.

"Look here, Wharton, you lucky bounder!" cried Peter Todd. "What do you mean by hiding yourself when you've just won ten pounds, and—Hallo, what's going on here?"

Bunter's going to run the gauntlet!" announced Wharton. "Care to take a hand?"

"Rather!" cried several voices. "What's he been doing?"

"Up to his old tricks again! We won't go into details!"

The fellows promptly got into line, and knotted their handkerchiefs. Bob Cherry had a firm grasp on the shivering Bunter, who was loudly protesting.

"So you've won the prize, Wharton?" said the Bounder. "I'm glad to hear it. Congratulations!"

"Thanks! Now let us attend to Bunter!"

Two rows of grinning fellows faced each other, and Bob Cherry at one end gave the unwilling Bunter a push. He staggered forward a few steps, and the knotted handkerchiefs fell thick and fast.

"Wow! Help! Yow! Yaroooooh!" howled the unfortunate Bunter.

"Better hurry along, Buntty!" sang out Bob Cherry. "The quicker you go, the sooner you get it over!"

And Bunter found Bob's advice worth following. He quickened his pace to a run, and reached one end. Then he was turned round and made to return. At last, with a loud howl, he broke loose, and made for the door.

"Yow! Yaroooooh! Beasts! Yah!"

And down the passage he fled, his fat little legs going like clockwork.

"That's got that over!" panted Cherry, with a grin. "I quite enjoyed it while it lasted."

"That's more than Bunter did. I'll bet!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"By the way, what has he done?" asked Peter Todd. "He's a member of my study, you know, and I don't sallow members of my study, not even Bunter, to be lapped without cause."

"Rather late in the day to think of that, Toddy, old man!" laughed Bob Cherry. "But don't worry about that. He deserved it, and a lot more, take my word for it. Now I've got something to say. Our worthy friend, Harry Wharton, as you are all aware, has captured the prize of ten pounds in the photographic competition."

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Wharton!"

"Halves!"

"Lucky dog!"

A pandemonium of yells was raised, and Wharton bowed his acknowledgments.

"Silence in court!" yelled Cherry lustily above the rest.

"How can a chap make himself heard when you're all kicking up that silly row?"

"You seem to make your feghorn voice heard easily enough, old man!" exclaimed a voice.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've got a proposition to make," went on Cherry. "As Wharton has won ten pounds, which is far too much money to be good for him, I propose that he spends part of it, at any rate, in standing a feed!"

(Continued on page 111 of cover.)

"Hear, hear!"  
 "Well done, Cherry!"  
 "On the ball!"  
 "Carried unanimously!"  
 "What do you say, Wharton?" asked Bob, turning to the lucky prizewinner.  
 "Well, to tell the truth, I'm rather sorry you made that suggestion," replied Wharton. "I—"  
 "Oh, come off it!"  
 "Don't be mean!"  
 "We want a feed!"  
 "Play the game, Wharton!"  
 "I was going to say," continued Wharton, "that—"  
 "We won't take no!"  
 "Look here!" yelled Wharton.  
 "We're looking, and we still want that feed!"  
 "In fact, the very sight of your face gives us an appetite!"  
 "Buck up, Wharton!"  
 "If only you silly cuckooes will let me get a word in edge-ways," howled Wharton, "perhaps you'll let me explain. I was going to say that I was sorry Bob Cherry made that suggestion—"  
 "Yes, we've heard that before!"  
 "Because I was going to suggest it myself, and you took the wind out of my sails!" went on Wharton, finishing his sentence at last.  
 "Bravo, Wharton!"  
 "Three cheers for Wharton!"  
 "Hip, hip, hurrah!"  
 "Why didn't you say so before?"  
 "Because you didn't give me a chance, you silly jays!" roared Wharton. "Well, there you are! There will be a

grand feed in the Common Room on Monday night. I'll get permish from Mr. Quelch right enough. I see in the paper that the cheque is posted to-day, so funds will be all right. Everybody is invited."

"Hurrah!"  
 "Good old Wharton!"  
 "We'll have the feed of our lives!"

And they did. The spread was laid in the Common Room, permission for which was readily granted. Everybody turned up—at least, everybody in the Remove did. Fags from the Second and Third came in full force, and even Horace Coker & Co. of the Fifth graced the proceedings by their august presence.

Bunter was there, of course, eating enough for six. He had recovered from his ordeal, and the invitation included him. But he was thoughtfully placed well away from Vernon-Smith.

Bunter informed those near to him, in the intervals of stuffing himself, that he could easily have won the prize if he had liked. As a matter of fact, he had only stood aside to give the others a chance and avoid a walk-over for William George Bunter.

But nobody took any notice of Bunter. The feast proceeded merrily, toasts were drunk in foaming ginger-pop; and the toast that brought forth more enthusiasm than any of the others was that of Harry Wharton, the founder of the feast, and winner of The Photo Prize.

THE END.

(Another Splendid Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton and Co. next Monday, entitled "Looking for Alone!" by Frank Richards. Order Early!)

### Our Grand Ferrers Lord Serial Story.



## THE UNCONQUERABLE.

A Magnificent Story of Thrilling Adventure.

By SIDNEY DREW.

### The Man in Command!

"Job!" called Barry gently.  
 "I'm still here, and darn wide awake," responded Sanday, "and likely to be!"

"Faith, then, look at that, and don't shoot. That's gunpowder, my boy, and we've got more of it. Here's the proof that ut's the right stuff!"

A powdering of dark grains fell on the iron plates, and a lighted match dropped down. The powder flizzed up brightly.

"Well, what o' that? I don't want to see your fireworks!" growled Job; but his voice was slightly uneasy.

"By honey, you'd better not stop to see 'em!" put in the steersman. "We've got a lovely brass doorknob, Job, full of 'em. If you do care to stop, you'll never bother about seeing any more like 'em; but we're a bit doubtful about the fuse, which is 'ome-made by an amsteur. Look out! Here she comes! Bolt, you idiot!"

Barry sent the shining knob with its fixing fuse rolling gently over the smooth plates. It curved like a bowl on a lawn. They caught a glimpse of Sanday's retreating feet, and then shut the door.

"Bang! Prout flung open the door, and sprang over the chair and away, concealed by the thick smoke.

Barry remained where he was, chuckling. He could hear Sanday using violent language, for Sanday knew well enough that at least one prisoner had given him the slip.

"Be aisy, Job—be aisy!" cried Barry O'Roonoy. "O'f've got more fireworks left, Job, and this dure has another knob left, too, loike a decent dure ought to have. Tum'll be aising for ye, O'm thinkin' Faith, pwat a merry game of hoide-and-take ut is! Keindly ax Misher Mart to stop the

cub and turn the horse round afore Tom chucks a crowbar or something into the machinery, and stops us too suddenly!"

Sanday uttered a wild yell, and came tumbling down the ladder. The gun exploded, pitting the door of the store-room with pellets.

Barry was thrown against the wall, and Prout, who was creeping over the engine-room bridge to take Sanday in the rear if he could do so, just managed to grasp the guard-rail in time to keep himself from a headlong dive into the machinery below.

The engines had kept from third-speed to full-speed, and the vessel was shaking from stem to stern. Sanday sat up, with blood streaming from his nose.

Prout had secured the gun, which still held one unexploded cartridge. He saw Prout, and shouted to him, but his voice was deadened by the wild roar of the machinery. Careless of the danger, he looked up the ladder. The steel manhole was closed.

"Has the ould man gone mad, Sanday?" Barry bellowed. "Is he goin' to wreck us!"

With the blood streaming down his face, Sanday climbed the ladder, and beat at the steel covering with his fists.

"Mart—Mart, you'll murder us all!" he howled. "Slow down! She can't do the pace! Stop the engines, Mart!"

Tom Prout ran back, and stared at the lashing pistons and flying wheels helplessly. The next moment, thoroughly frightened now, Job was beside him. It seemed obvious that the machinery could be controlled from the engine-room as well as from the conning-tower, but he had never seen engines of such a type. A mistake might bring the Unconquerable down like a stone, and break her back as she struck the water.

"Can't you stop her, Prout, before the mad fool smashes her up?"

"By honey, I might smash her up quicker if I tried!" said Prout, pointing to the rows of puzzling levers. "Which am I to pull?"

"Let them alone!" thundered Barry. "O'm goin' on deck, for O'd loike to be able to look at the skoy wance afore O' chucked ut up!"

They followed him. Every lamp on the vessel was burning with unusual brilliancy. Barry opened the aft manhole, and put out his head.

A chill, mist-laden wind blew fiercely in his face. He crawled out, and made his way forward across the slippery, shaking deck. The conning-tower shone out. Martin Arkland was standing at the wheel. Barry placed his face close to the glass.

"Crawl round and try the dare, while O' distract his attention, Tum," he whispered.

"I can see it's fast," said Prout, from behind; "and, by honey, I don't think an axe would smash the panes! Hallo! He's scented us!"

Martin Arkland turned and looked at them. He evinced no sign of surprise as he blinked at their faces.

"He don't look any darn madder than usual," said Job, it

(Continued on page iv of cover.)

tones of relief, "and Mart knows a thing or two. He's gone to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for us all on his own job, but he gave me a shock! He'll get through yet, will Mart, the cunning old rogue!"

The Unconquerable slowed down perceptibly, proving that Arkland had full control over the machinery. Barry called and whistled for the dog.

"Overboard," said Sanday, who had recovered from his fright, "and I'm durn sorry. Must have gone over when Mart fetched the boat out of the water. It wasn't my fault, neither. I'm real sorry about it!"

"O'il settle that point up wid ye another toime, Job," said O'Rooney grimly.

"And, by honey, I'll help!" added Proust. Arkland turned again, with a gesture they all understood. It meant "Hold fast." They seized the grating that protected the lower half of the glass dome, and the aero-submarine dipped her nose and glided downwards into a clearer atmosphere.

"We're still over the sea," said Barry, as he saw the gleam of grey water. "Faith, O'il stop his fun wid the half-nelson av Oi was in there!"

But the dauntless little freebooter and modern pirate was safe in his citadel of glass. The great propeller hummed throatily.

Arkland seemed to have ferreted out the secret, and the winged vessel answered each touch of the wheel as a well-trained horse responds to the reins.

"We win," grinned Job, "and I don't mind a durn dog-bite and a broken nose! Mart's done it, arter all. Good old Mart! I gave you top-dog, but I reckon you'll 'ave to take bottom-dog now. Mart's as safe in there as a wink in a shell. Shako 'ands, and take your licking. I like you both, and I know you're sportsmen, even if you did chuck a bomb at me, as a ain't quite British to sting bombs; but, bless you, I don't mind now!"

"By honey, I don't give in till I've had a go at that glass with a hatchet!" said Proust. "Look after Job, Barry, and take him down and treat him kindly. I'll come back and do some chopping!"

"Maybe you didn't notice he's got a gun, Tom!" grinned Job. "We've won the game, my lad, so give in. They're waitin' for us, and we must be gettin' close to the place. I could dance without music, I'm so pleased!"

Barry closed the manhole carefully. A second later he was lying on his back at the bottom of the ladder. The whole earth seemed to have split asunder in one terrific crash of sound. All around him was one great dazling, crimson flame.

Then came another crash, and Barry was struggling in a torrent of icy water, with blackness on every side.

#### The Empty Conning-Tower—A Yain Search—On the Sand-bank—Proust Makes a Startling Discovery.

Barry threw up his hands blindly, and found a support. The chill water was up to his waist, and dragging his legs from under him. There was a cool, fresh draught blowing from above, and an incessant roaring sound. Through a great, ragged tear in the darkness overhead shone one clear star. Suddenly Barry felt himself seized, and saw a dim face close to his own. It was Proust's.

"Howlid up—howlid up afore ye swamp me!" yelled the Irishman. "Get a grip, or we'll both be washed away!"

The steersman understood, even if he did not hear. They hung together, swaying in the rush of water. The thunderous roaring went on, and the ragged tear seemed to creep closer to them. The water was deepening, and they were rising with it. Barry lifted his right arm, and tried to find a hold on the side of the rent. He was still some inches too far away. Then his fingers found a grip, and, throwing up his other hand, he swung his elbow over, and pulled himself through and dragged up Proust.

They stood together in a smother of spray, deafened by the tumult of tumbling water. Wiping their eyes, they peered about them. With their backs to the spray, they could see fairly well, for there was little mist close at hand, though it lay densely further away. A yellow torrent was boiling past the Unconquerable. Her name was an utter mockery, for she was conquered at last. She lay in about six or seven feet of water, her shattered bows under a waterfall that leapt down the face of a towering cliff. It was the waterfall that caused the incessant roar and the incessant spray. Thirty yards away was a sandbank, and beyond that a stretch of sea and a line of black rocks. In the mist Martin Arkland had either misjudged his position, or else the steering gear or machinery had failed him, dashing the vessel to her doom.

The conning-tower still remained apparently intact. Without warning, Job, Tom and Barry hastened towards it, expecting to find Arkland lying there either lifeless or stunned. To their astonishment, the door was wide open.

"Gone!" gasped both men.

Martin Arkland had disappeared! The conning-tower had not been flooded. The floor was wet, but only wet by the dash of the spray. Proust closed the door, and at once the thick glass deadened the roar of the cascade, making conversation possible.

"By honey, Barry, the old rogue has bolted, instead of breaking his neck!" said Proust. "Has he got the lives of twenty cats?"

"Bedad, we must have the same, or we'd be as dead as boiled shrimps!" answered the boy from Ballybunon. "Thru enough, he's gone, av we're not both aslape or dhrainin'. Maybe he had the dure open, and got foired clean out and overboard loike a rocket. Good luck to us that we're standin' here on our fate. Where's Job, anyhow? O! wouldn't give much for the poor chap's chance. More's the sorrow!"

They raised the manhole, and the faint light shone on the water below. They shouted, and listened.

"He was ahead of ye, wasn't he?"

"Yes," said Proust; "and I can't make out how he got washed past both of us without us knowin' it. By honey, what wouldn't I give for a light?"

"Phwat's wrong wid this?" said Barry.

One of Arkland's home-made lamps still hung on its hooks. The chimney had been shattered, but the lamp was still serviceable, and there were matches in the locker. Proust secured a lifebuoy and one of the brass rods of the sun-blind, and tied a handful of waste soaked in oil to the rod, and the rod to the buoy.

"Let her float along steady, Barry," he said, "and perhaps we'll get a sight of the poor chap!"

Barry went down the ladder, and, setting fire to the waste, let the lifebuoy drift along. Proust had gone astern to the other manhole. The buoy came sailing slowly close as Barry pushed the line. It came to a halt in a jam of floating furniture, kegs, baskets, and cases. Then the steersman procured a boathook, and, at no little risk to himself, prodded and poked at the mass of flotsam, but failed to stir it. If Job Sanday lay beneath that, he was beyond all human aid. The flare burnt itself out, and the two castaways returned to the conning-tower.

"We can't do any more, ould bhoy," said Barry mournfully. "Av Mart Arkland went overboard he's a moule out to say by this, and av Job is down there, ur's little he'll be throbbin'. O! ve lost all count and dates and toime and toise, and we've the toide that manes most to us. Is it low or hoigh water?"

"It was a question of grave importance to them both, and one that neither of them as yet could answer. Nor had they the remotest idea in what neighbourhood they were. The first sounding gave a depth of a fathom and a quarter. The pounding of the cascade would hardly hurt the wreck in a month, but there was an angry thrash of surf away in the mist that warned them to be prepared.

"Av ur's hoigh toide," said Barry, "we can wait till mornin', Tom; but O'im thinkin' it wouldn't hurt for me to swim across, if ye see, and explore the locality. O'im as scared as a bell, O! thank my brought lucky athar, and they always told me O'd never drown whole there was a rope left to hang me wid. So now, we bould comrade, hitch a couple of limes together, and av O! yell out haul your ould darlint back again!"

Barry stripped to shirt and trousers, and plunged in gallantly. The current was not so strong as he had feared. Presently his toes struck the bottom, and he gained his feet in only three feet of water. To make sure that there were neither holes nor quicksands, he splashed on. Then he sat down and dug his heels into the sand, holding the line tighly.

Proust came along with the boathook on his shoulder.

"Piver's the for, Tommy?" asked Barry.

"Why, to faster the line to, thumhead," explained the steersman politely, "so that we can get aboard again easy if we want to!"

"Faith, you aren't such a useless merchant, after all!" said O'Rooney, forcing the boathook into the soft sand. "Wance in every ten years or so you show a gimmerin' of intelligence. Bedad," he added, his teeth chattering, "O! duinn where we are, Tom, but O'il b-b-bet more than two if gardens we're not in the Terrid Zone. Why didn't ye bring my fur overcoat as well as the boathook? Ur-r-r! Ur's sickenin' c-o-o-cowld!"

The mist spread over the sandbank, hiding both the wreck and the cliffs. They trotted to and fro, grunting and swinging their arms. At last the blood began to circulate once more. Proust took a final turn as they waited for the mist to clear. He stopped dismayed as his foot splashed into water.

"Barry!" he yelled. "By honey, the tide's comin' up! It's lappin' round the boathook, and nigh on a yard above it!"

(Another Grand, Thrilling Instalment Next Week.)

