

"THE MYSTERY OF THE MILL!" By Frank Richards.

Thrilling Yarn of Schoolboy Adventure—Inside.

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



Poor  
Old  
Bunter  
TRIES  
TO  
WINFORD



# THE MYSTERY OF THE MILL!



BY  
**FRANK RICHARDS.**

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### The Agreeable Guest!

"COMING, Bunter?" Harry Wharton asked that question cheerily. It was a bright April day, and Wharton's face was as bright as the weather.

In fact, the captain of the Greyfriars Remove looked quite bucked. So did his chum, Hurree Janset Ram Singh. Seldom had the two juniors looked more merry and bright.

Billy Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles in surprised inquiry. There was not, so far as Billy Bunter could see, any special reason for looking merry and bright.

True, it was holiday-time. Greyfriars and lessons, Form masters and prefects were far away. No rising-bell clanged out in the mornings, and Billy Bunter was at liberty to snore till ten or eleven o'clock. The grub was good at Wharton Lodge—a rather important matter. On the whole, Bunter was satisfied with the Easter vacation so far; especially as Wharton, who had seemed rather restive when Bunter first arrived, had apparently made up his mind to make the best of him.

Still, Bunter could see no special reason for feeling specially bucked on this special afternoon. Having disposed of an ample lunch, Bunter was taking a rest in a wicker chair on the terrace and thinking about tea. He was not

hungry again yet, as it was only an hour since lunch; but it was pleasant to sit in the spring sunshine and let his thoughts dwell with agreeable anticipation on the next meal.

"You're looking jolly chirpy," said Bunter. "Anything on?"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter."

"Well, if it's a picnic——"

"It isn't!" said Wharton, laughing.

"Well, if you're going out in the car, I'll come," said Bunter.

"We're not! My uncle's gone out in the car."

Sniff, from Bunter.

"If we were at Bunter Court, I should have the choice of two or three cars," he remarked. "In fact, four or five."

"Well, there's nothing to keep you away from Bunter Court, old fat man," said Wharton cheerily.

Billy Bunter decided not to hear that remark. Bunter Court, with all its attractions, did not seem to attract Bunter in the "hols."

"What's on, then?" he demanded. "I'm not going to play tennis. Your game isn't good enough for me."

"Oh, my hat! We're walking to Wimford——"

"Oh, the pictures," said Bunter, showing some interest. "Still, I don't see walking. If you want me to come, you'd better phone for a taxi."

"It isn't pictures, fathead. Have you forgotten that Bob and Johnny and Frank are arriving to-day?"

"What about that?" asked Bunter.

The impending arrival of Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Frank Nugent did not seem to make Bunter "enthuse."

"We're going to meet them at the station, fathead."

"Is that what you're looking so chirpy about?" asked Bunter in astonishment.

"Just that!"

"Well, you silly ass!" said Bunter, in disgust. "Catch me walking to the station to meet them. I see enough of them at Greyfriars. Too much, in fact. I don't really see what you wanted to

ask those fellows here for, Wharton. You've got me."

"Oh crumbs!"

"I really wish you hadn't asked them," said Bunter peevishly. "But that's you all over, Wharton. You never consider a guest."

"You howling ass!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! What do you want a noisy ass like Bob Cherry about the place for?" demanded Bunter.

"My esteemed idiotic Bunter——"

murmured Hurree Singh.

"And a hoodigan like Johnny Bull."

"Look here——"

"And a nauby pamby noodle like Nugent! I can tell you, I see more than enough of them at school. I think you might consider me a little, Wharton," said Bunter warmly.

There was a soft chuckle from the Nabob of Bhanipur. Harry Wharton looked fixedly at the fat junior in the wicker chair. He was considering Bunter—to the extent of debating in his mind whether to roll him out of the chair and mop up the terrace with him. That, of course, was not the way guests were treated in the best circles. But William George Bunter was a very peculiar guest, with his own peculiar manners and customs. Billy Bunter would have put a heavy strain on the politeness of the great Lord Chesterfield himself.

But the captain of the Remove restrained his natural impulse. He was in a particularly cheerful mood that day. He was looking forward to the arrival of his chums; though why that should make him feel bucked was a mystery to Bunter.

"Well, are you coming, fathead?" he asked. "A walk would do you good. You've been frowsting ever since break-up."

"No fear!"

"Right-ho! Come on, Inky."

Harry Wharton turned away, apparently not greatly downcast by the loss of Bunter's fascinating company on the walk to Wimford.

"Hold on, though," said Bunter.



sitting up. "I'll tell you what! I'll come if you'll get a taxi—"

"We're walking!" answered Wharton briefly.

"I'll pay for the taxi," said Bunter sarcastically. "You needn't worry about that. You can leave the taxi to me. I'll stand treat."

"Can't afford your treats, old man!" said Wharton, shaking his head.

"If that means that you're too jolly mean to lend a guest a taxi-fare—"

"You've got it."

"Well, I'll walk," said Bunter. "I'm a better walker than you fellows, anyhow. Of course, I'm not going to the station. You fellows can go on to the station, while I drop in at the pictures. See? I suppose you will lend me five bob for the pictures."

"I'll lend you one bob!"

"That's no good!"

"Good-bye, then—"

"I don't mind a bob seat. Wait till I get my hat."

Billy Bunter rolled away from Wharton Lodge with the two juniors. In the bright April weather even Billy Bunter felt equal to a walk of a mile, with the prospect of the pictures at the end. As for getting back, it would not be necessary to walk. Taxicabs were available at Wimford; and the great advantage of travelling by taxi—an advantage the railways did not possess—was that a passenger did not have to pay till the end of the journey. When Bunter turned up at Wharton Lodge in a taxi, somebody would have to pay the fare, that was certain; and it was equally certain that it would not be William George Bunter. Outward bound, Bunter had to walk; but homeward bound, there was no reason why he should not take a taxi, so far as Bunter could see.

So the Owl of the Remove plugged quite cheerfully along the country road and did not grouse more than two or three dozen times about the dust, the passing motors, and the flies that settled on his fat little nose.

There was a blaze of sunshine all the way, but by the time the juniors reached Wimford, that bright April day was proving as unreliable as most April days. The sunny sky was overcast, and a few drops of rain fell. Billy Bunter blinked up at a cloudy sky.

"It's going to rain!" he said accusingly.

"Go hon!"

"Just like you fellows to bring a fellow out in the rain, without even a coat or an umbrella. Just!" said Bunter bitterly.

Fortunately, the picture palace was close at hand now. Billy Bunter dodged into its shelter. It was some distance farther on to the station, and the rain was falling faster.

"I say, you fellows, you'll get jolly wet!" grinned Bunter. "He, he, he! I say, Wharton, gimme that bob—"

"Here you are, Fatty!"

"I say, you fellows, hold on a minute—"

"Well, what is it?" asked Wharton impatiently. "We're getting wet."

"I say, I shall want a bob for chocolates! I always get hungry in a cinema! I say, you fellows, don't walk off while a fellow's talking to you!" roared Bunter.

But the fellows did walk off. Somehow they did not seem to want to linger in the rain, even to listen to William George Bunter's entrancing conversation.

"I say, you fellows!" hooted Bunter.

But answer there came none. Harry Wharton and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh were hurrying on up Wimford High Street towards the railway station.

"Beasts!" growled Bunter.

And he rolled into the cinema, where, as Wharton's shilling had to be expended on admission, he was driven to expending one of his own shillings on the necessary chocolates.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Man-Hunter Again!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Sunshine or rain made little difference to the exuberant spirits of Robert Cherry of the Greyfriars Remove. Bob was leaning from the carriage window, heedless of falling raindrops, as the train steamed into Wimford Station, waving his cap to two fellows on the platform. And his powerful voice floated over a considerable portion of Surrey.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here we are again!" bawled Bob.

Wharton and Hurree Singh waved back cheerily.

"Old Bob seems lively," remarked the captain of the Remove, with a laugh.

"The liveliness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "The sight of his esteemed and absurd chivvy is gratefully comforting."

The train stopped, the carriage door flew open, and Bob Cherry landed on the platform with a bound. The next moment he grasped Wharton and

**Legend has it that the Wimford Mill is haunted. But Harry Wharton & Co. are not daunted by "ghost" talk. . . . Their visit of exploration puts the kybosh once and for all on the Mystery of the Mill.**

Hurree Singh, and waltzed them round a stack of luggage, rather to the astonishment of a porter and several passengers. There was no doubt that Bob was in high spirits. Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull followed him from the carriage, laden with bags.

"Here, hold on!" gasped Wharton.

"I mean, let go, ass!"

"My esteemed fatheaded Bob—"

gasped Hurree Singh.

"Glad to see you, old pippins!" chortled Bob, still waltzing. "In fact, the gladfulness is terrific and preposterous."

"Leggo, fathead!"

"Order!" chuckled Nugent.

Bob crashed into a stack of luggage and ceased his gyrations at last. Wharton gasped for breath, and the Nabob of Bhanipur backed out of reach.

"The joyfulness of beholding your absurd countenance is great," he gasped; "but the moderation of the esteemed transports is the proper caper."

Bob chuckled, and glanced round.

"I half expected to see Bunter here! Not seeing him makes a fellow feel frightfully bucked, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wonder whom he's sticking this vac?" grinned Bob.

"Us!" said Wharton. "Only he's packed into a cinema now."

"Bunter!" said Johnny Bull. "I didn't know Bunter was staying with you this Easter, Wharton."

"Neither did I," answered Harry ruefully. "Bunter settles these things for himself. But come on—we want to bag a taxi; looks like a lot of rain coming."

The Famous Five of Greyfriars hurried along the platform. A light rain was falling, and the sky was still blue; but there were thick clouds over the downs, and it looked as if there was going to be something more than an April shower.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where's the jolly old taxi?" asked Bob Cherry, as they came out at the station entrance.

No taxi was to be seen. The little Surrey town boasted only three taxicabs, and on a rainy day they had a rush of custom. No taxi was to be seen now.

Harry Wharton looked round and made a grimace.

"There wasn't one in when we got here," he said. "I left word for the first in to be bagged for us. None in yet, I suppose."

"What's the matter with walking?" asked Bob. "Jolly weather for a walk."

"Looks like a lot of rain coming—"

"Oh, a little rain won't hurt us! What's the odds so long as you're 'appy?"

Harry Wharton glanced at the sky. It was plain that there was a storm coming; but as yet there was only a shower.

"Chance it!" he said.

"Come on, old beans!" said Bob, swinging his bag.

And the Famous Five of Greyfriars started to walk. Under pattering drops they walked down the old High Street of Wimford, past the cinema, where Billy Bunter had been left, and turned into the open country road.

It was only a mile to Wharton Lodge by taking the shortest route, and the chums of the Remove were good walkers.

On the open road, however, at a distance from the town, they wondered a little whether it would not have been wiser to wait for a taxi. The sky grew blacker and the rain thicker.

"It's going to be damp!" remarked Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"The dampfulness will be terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"We turn into the wood in a few minutes, though," said Harry; "that will cover us most of the way."

"Good egg!"

The juniors were glad enough to get under the trees in Wimford Wood. Thick branches extended over the footpath, and little of the rain came through.

As they entered on the footpath they noticed a man standing under a big oak, leaning on the trunk, lighting a cigarette.

Apparently it was some pedestrian who had taken shelter from the rain. The juniors gave him a casual glance in passing; but after that casual glance Harry Wharton's eyes fixed sharply on the man, and he uttered an exclamation:

"That rotter!"

He came to an abrupt halt.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What—"

exclaimed Bob.

"That esteemed and preposterous merchant again!" ejaculated Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"The man under the oak looked at them. He was a man of about thirty, with black hair and a square jaw. His face was rather handsome; but the expression on it was not pleasant as he looked at the Greyfriars juniors.

"Who is it?" asked Nugent. "I've seen that johnny before somewhere."

"I know him," said Johnny Bull, with



a grunt. "It's the sportsman we saw on Popper's Island, the last half-holiday at Greyfriars."

"That's the man!" agreed Bob. "What the thump's he doing here? What's the row, Harry?"

Harry Wharton's face was dark with anger, and his eyes were glinting at the man under the oak. His chums looked at him in surprise.

"What's the trouble?" asked Nugent. "We had a row with the fellow near Greyfriars; but—"

"I'll tell you what the trouble is," said Harry, compressing his lips. "You remember that that fellow was hunting for an American named Poindexter—a share-pushing swindler—"

"I remember," said Bob; "and we helped the jolly old bird to get clear of him when he was skulking on Popper's Island. What about it?"

"Well, he's got it into his head that that swindler Poindexter is a connection of mine," said Harry. "He's still after him; and he's been hanging about Wharton Lodge ever since I got home, thinking that he can get on the man's track here."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bob, in astonishment. "What on earth put that into his silly head?"

"He said that he got it from a Greyfriars man when I asked him. This is the third time I've seen him hanging about here!" said the captain of the Remove. "Last time Inky and I chucked him into a ditch, as a warning to sheer off. If he sheered off, he's come back again."

"But haven't you told him that you don't know anything about that swindler?" asked Nugent.

"He doesn't believe me; somebody has stuffed him that the man is an uncle of mine," said Harry. "He's been asking the keeper of Wharton Lodge, and other people, about that swindler Poindexter. It will be the talk of the neighbourhood soon that that American sharper is some connection of ours. I'm going to stop him."

The captain of the Remove, with set lips, strode towards the man under the oak. His chums glanced at one another rather dubiously, and then followed him.

"So you're here again!" said Wharton savagely.

The black-haired man gave a cool nod.

"As you see!" he drawled.

"What do you want here?"

"I think you know!" said the black-haired man. "I am hunting for Elias J. Poindexter, the sharper who robbed me. But for your meddling, I should have nailed him that day on the island in the river near Greyfriars."

"You threatened the man's life, and we chipped in to prevent a crime!" said Wharton. "That's no reason why you should fancy that the man is a connection of mine, and hang about here, prowling round my home in search of him. I've told you I know nothing of the fellow."

The black-haired man's lip curled.

"I am not asking you to tell me anything," he said. "Poindexter is a thief and a villain, but as he's your uncle—"

"He is not my uncle!" roared Wharton.

The man-hunter shrugged his shoulders.

"He is no connection of mine—I have never seen him since that day on the island, and never expect to see him again!"

Another shrug.

"Look here, Mr. Wilmot, if that is

your name," said Wharton, "I'm not standing this! I've warned you off before, and now I warn you off again. For the last time, I tell you I know nothing of that man Poindexter."

"Yet you seized on me, to allow him to escape?" sneered the black-haired man.

"Because you threatened his life! He was a stranger to me—to all of us."

"That is false."

Wharton clenched his hands.

"Who told you that the man was a relation of mine?" he demanded.

"A Greyfriars boy."

"He was pulling your leg, whoever he was!" said Bob Cherry. "We can all tell you it's not true. Who was the chap?"

"One who knows, as he is a friend of yours," sneered the black-haired man.

"The fat boy in the spectacles who was on the island with you that day."

"Bunter!" exclaimed Wharton in amazement.

"Is his name Bunter? I do not care about his name. I questioned him the day you broke up at Greyfriars, and he told me."

"The fat idiot!" gasped Wharton. "I can't imagine why Bunter should have pulled your leg. But it's not true."

Wilmot puffed carelessly at his cigarette. But his eyes were warily on the Greyfriars fellows.

"I don't know why Bunter should lie to you," said Harry, "except that he's always lying. Anyhow, he was lying when he told you that that rogue Poindexter was a relative of mine. Will you take my word for that?"

"No!" answered Wilmot coolly.

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"Then you're keeping on this game—prowling round my home, asking people questions about that absconding share-pusher, and giving them the impression that he's related to me?"

"I am my own master, my boy! Pass on your way, and do not hunt for trouble," said the black-haired man coldly.

"You are not your own master to that extent! You've had one lesson, and now you're going to have another!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You fellows are going to back me up in this?"

"What-ho!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!"

"The back-upfulness is terrific."

"Hands off, you cheeky young rascals!" exclaimed Wilmot. He threw away the cigarette, and slipped into his hand a heavy malacca cane from under his arm. "I warn you—"

"Collar him!" shouted Wharton.

"Stand back!"

The black-haired man swung up the heavy malacca, his eyes glinting fiercely. Bob Cherry swung up his suitcase at the same moment and it whizzed through the air.

Crash!

"Oh!"

The suitcase crashed on Wilmot's head, and he went spinning, the malacca flying from his hand.

The next moment, Harry Wharton & Co. were upon him, and the black-haired man-hunter was struggling desperately in the grasp of five pairs of vigorous hands.

Twice Wilmot had found himself in hot water with members of the Famous Five, and on each occasion he had been roughly handled. It has been said that the third time is lucky, but it is to be doubted whether Wilmot would find it so in the next few hectic minutes!

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

"Six!"

"HANDS off!" yelled Wilmot furiously.

"Bag him!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Collar him!"

The black-haired man struggled furiously. He was a powerful fellow, strong and sinewy. But he had little chance against the five sturdy schoolboys. He kept them very busy for several strenuous minutes, but then he was down on his back, with Bob Cherry kneeling on his chest, and the other fellows grasping him on all sides.

Bob grinned down at the infuriated face.

"Take it calmly, old bean! We've got you!" he remarked.

"The gotfulness is terrific."

"Let me go!" yelled the black-haired man, heaving desperately under the juniors. "Let me go, you young scoundrels."

"Dear me! He seems quite excited!" remarked Bob. "Bang his napper on the ground, Inky! That will calm him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hurree Janset Ram Singh grasped the thick black hair with both his dusky hands and jammed the man-hunter's head on the hard earth. There was a fearful yell as contact was established.

"Now are you going to keep quiet?" asked Bob cheerily.

"I—I—I—you young hounds—you—you—"

"Give him another!"

Bang!

"Oh! Oooooh!"

The black-haired man ceased to struggle. Apparently he realised that it was not good enough. He lay panting in the grasp of the Greyfriars juniors.

"Well, we've got him!" remarked Johnny Bull. "But what are we going to do with him? He ought to be run in for threatening to shoot Poindexter, but I suppose we can't run him in."

"I suppose we can't," said Harry. "Poindexter must be afraid of the law, or he would have the man arrested for threatening his life, instead of skulking away like a cowardly cur. But the cheeky rotter is not going to prowl around here."

"Well, what shall we do with him?" asked Bob. "Boil him in oil, or strew the hungry churchyard with his bones?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can do nothing!" hissed Wilmot. "Poindexter dare not appeal to the police, and you cannot. You can do nothing. Let me go."

Wharton looked down at him grimly.

"Once more," he said quietly, "I tell you that I know nothing of that swindler, and these fellows will tell you the same."

"Once more, I tell you that I do not believe you!" snarled the black-haired man.

"Then you will not clear off?"

"I will not!"

"That does it, then! Sooner or later we'll make you tired of prowling round Wharton Lodge! You've taken the law into your own hands in dealing with that American sharper. I'm going to take it into my own hands in dealing with you. I'd give you into custody, if I could—but there's no law against a man prowling about making a fool of himself, I suppose. Turn him over, you men." Wharton picked up the malacca.

"Oh, my hat! What—"

"I'm going to give him six—Greyfriars style."

"Ha, ha, ha!"



"If you dare——" shrieked Wilmot. "You'll jolly soon see that I dare!" said Wharton contemptuously. "Turn the brute over!"

The black-haired man struggled frantically. For a full minute he was hard to hold. But the odds were too heavy and he was jammed in the grass of the footpath, face down, still wriggling spasmodically in the grasp of the Co. The malacca swished in the air.

"If you dare——" panted the man-hunter, his voice muffled by grass.

Whack!

The malacca came down with a terrific swipe. There was a yell from the struggling man, and a chuckle from the juniors.

Only Wharton's face was set and angry. To some extent he sympathised with the man, who had evidently been a victim of the American share-pusher's trickery, and had, according to his own statement, which the juniors believed, been robbed and ruined by the fugitive. It was

beef into a "six" administered to a junior.

The black-haired man wriggled frantically. A torrent of threats poured from his lips till Hurree Jamset Ram Singh jammed his head down in the grass, and his voice died away in a muffled gurgle.

Whack, whack, whack!

"That's the lot!" said Harry Wharton rather breathlessly, and he tossed the malacca away. "That's the second lesson, Mr. Wilmot."

A gasping gurgle was the only reply.

"Now take my tip, and clear off!" said Harry. "If you had any sense you'd see that I've told you the truth,

and left. But he restrained his fury. He had already learned that a struggle with the Famous Five was a hopeless proposition. Panting for breath, and gritting his teeth, he turned away.

"Come on!" said Harry.

The juniors picked up their bags, and walked on by the footpath. The black-haired man was left leaning on the oak, panting. In a few minutes he was lost to sight as they followed the winding footpath through the wood.

The rain was coming down thickly when the Famous Five left the wood behind and came out into the road again. They hurried on, breaking into a trot, and reached Wharton Lodge at last.



As the black-haired man swung up the heavy malacca, Bob Cherry let fly with his suitcase. Crash! "Oh!" The case crashed on Wilmot's head and sent him spinning.

clear, too, that the idea of vengeance on the swindler was an obsession in the man's mind, and that on that subject he was scarcely sane, though normal in all other respects. But Wharton was fed up with the man-hunter and his methods. Whatever he had suffered was no excuse for his desperate intention of hunting the man who had wronged him to his death. And the idea of gossip spreading over the countryside, of a connection between Wharton Lodge and a notorious sharper, was intensely exasperating. Reginald Wilmot had to clear off, and if he would not go, he had to be made to go. Certainly he was likely to get tired, in the long run, of methods like this.

Wharton put his beef into it. Seldom had a Greyfriars prefect put so much

and that you'll learn nothing of Poindexter here. Anyhow, it's not your business to punish the man, and I wouldn't help you to find him if I could. Let him go, you men."

The black-haired man was released. He staggered to his feet, white with fury, and panting for breath. He clenched his hands, and glared at the captain of the Greyfriars Remove with blazing eyes.

Wharton eyed him coolly.

"I advise you to clear off," he said. "If we meet you again, we'll handle you again! We'll keep up this game as long as you do, Mr. Wilmot. And if you want any more trouble now, come on; we'll give you all you want."

"And a little over, dear man!" grinned Bob Cherry.

For several seconds the breathless, dishevelled man glared at the juniors, his hands clenched. It was evidently in his mind to rush on them, hitting out right

There was a rumble of distant thunder as Wells opened the door to them. A fresh torrent of rain dashed down. The storm was coming on now in earnest. The juniors were glad to get in.

"Bunter's not back yet, Wells?" asked Harry.

"No, sir!" answered the butler.

"The dear old fat man will get wet!" remarked Bob Cherry, as the juniors went up to their rooms.

"He will get something worse than that when he comes in!" growled Wharton. "It was that silly idiot put the idea into Wilmot's head that I know something about Poindexter—goodness knows why! I suppose Bunter can't help telling lies, but I can't imagine why he told that one. I'll jolly well scrag him when he comes in!"

"The scragfulness is the proper caper!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.



By the time the juniors had changed their wet things, and come down to tea, Colonel Wharton and Aunt Amy had returned in the car. To the colonel and Miss Wharton nothing was said about the black-haired man. Wharton did not want to trouble them with the strange state of affairs brought about by Billy Bunter's reckless fabrications, especially as Bunter was a visitor in the house.

But he was very anxious for Bunter to come in. Kicking a guest—even a guest like William George Bunter—was not quite the thing; but if Billy Bunter had rolled in just then, it was very probable that he would have received the kicking he richly deserved.

But Bunter did not roll in.

There seemed no doubt that he would arrive in time for supper. It was extremely unlikely that Bunter would miss a meal.

But when supper came, there was no Bunter.

"Where on earth has the fat idiot got to?" asked Harry Wharton, staring through a wet window into pouring rain.

But to that question there was no answer. Billy Bunter, for the first time on record, was missing a meal, and the why and the wherefore was a deep mystery.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### No Lift for Bunter!

"O crumbs!" said Bunter.

He stood under the porch of the picture palace, and blinked into falling rain.

It did not look attractive.

Bunter had been having quite a good time. He had revelled in the films. He

had expended all his available cash resources on the purchase of chocolates. He was happy and sticky till he rolled out to take his homeward way. Then, although still sticky, he was no longer happy. He did not like the rain.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter.

He was thinking of Harry Wharton. Bunter had to get home, and it was for his host to see that he got there dry. Instead of which, it was very likely that Wharton had forgotten his fat existence. His attention, in all probability, was taken up by the arrival of his friends—after all Bunter had done for him!

It was useless to stand and blink into the rain, and think of the beastliness of ungrateful beasts. Bunter realised that, so he borrowed an umbrella from a sympathetic commissionaire, turned up his jacket-collar, and rolled up the street towards the station, where taxicabs were to be had.

Arrived there, Bunter blinked round in utter dismay.

Taxicabs, apparently, were not to be had! There was a run on the few that existed in Wimford.

Inquiry of a porter elicited the interesting information that the cabs were out, and that it was quite unknown when they would come in.

Bunter waited and watched.

A financial shortage did not prevent him from taking a cab. He was more than willing to leave the question of the fare to be settled at Wharton Lodge. He had counted on a taxi as a cert. But even Billy Bunter could not take a cab when there was not a cab to be taken.

He waited in vain.

No taxi rolled up. It was already near tea-time. Billy Bunter's fat face grew longer and longer. The awful

realisation forced itself into his mind that he would have to walk, after all. And it was raining!

It was not much use waiting for the rain to stop. Even Bunter could see that it was not going to get better, but worse.

He made up his fat mind to it at last. Had he made that fat mind up to it immediately on leaving the pictures, it would have been better for Bunter. The rain had grown heavier while he waited. But it could not be helped, and Bunter plunged out at last into the falling drops, and set his fat little legs into their swiftest motion.

So long as he was in the town it was not so bad. But when he got out on the wide country road, it was very bad indeed.

A high wind had risen and was sweeping over the downs. It smote Bunter, and lashed him with raindrops.

He puffed and panted on. He blinked continually round him, hoping to sight a car that would give him a friendly lift. He was a quarter of a mile out of Wimford, and the rain was coming down heavily, when he heard a car behind him, and stopped. He was about to enter the footpath through Wimford Wood, the route which Harry Wharton & Co. had followed a couple of hours earlier. But a lift in a car, if he could get it, was much more attractive; and he blinked round through the misty rain and waved a fat hand to the driver of a little dark two-seater.

"I say!" yelled Bunter. "Stop!"

He rolled into the road, waving his hand. The driver applied his brakes, and the little car slowed down.

The man was muffled up against the rain, a soft hat pulled down low over his brows. But Bunter, as he blinked at him, saw something familiar in the face under the low hat-brim. He had seen that man before somewhere.

"You!" said the man in the car.

Bunter jumped.

He knew the man now. It was the black-haired man with the square jaw, the man who had questioned him on break-up day at Greyfriars, and whom Bunter had so cleverly "diddled" into giving him a lift to Wharton Lodge from the school.

Bunter had almost forgotten that extremely clever proceeding. He had rather prided himself, at the time, on its cleverness. This fellow, whoever he was, was frightfully keen to get on the track of the elusive swindler, Poindexter, and suspected that the man was somehow connected with Harry Wharton.

It had seemed to Bunter quite a masterly piece of strategy to pull his leg. The man was so keen to believe what he wanted to believe, that it was as easy as falling off a form. Indeed, had Bunter told him the truth, he would not have believed it; while Bunter's statement that Elias J. Poindexter was Wharton's uncle had been swallowed like bait by a gudgeon.

Often and often had Billy Bunter found his whoppers disbelieved. But this particular whopper had gone down whole. Bunter had bagged the lift he wanted, from Greyfriars to Wharton Lodge, and then had cheerfully dismissed the matter from his fat mind.

Now he remembered it.

There was a dark scowl on Wilmot's brow, and a glint in his eyes that made the fat junior uneasy.

He had stopped the two-seater to ask for a lift home; but he abandoned that idea now. He did not like the man's looks at all. Now that he recognised



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him as the man whose leg he had pulled, the Owl of the Remove backed away.

"Stop!" rapped out Wilmot. "I—I'm in rather a hurry," stammered Bunter, backing farther off. "It—it's r-r-raining."

"Why did you signal me to stop?" "I—I—I—"

"If you want a lift you can get in." Bunter did want a lift. He wanted one badly. But he did not want a lift in that car, now that he recognised the driver. He had "diddled" the black-haired man for a long lift on break-up day; but he did not want another. The glint in the man's eyes scared him. He wondered whether the fellow had discovered that his leg had been pulled. The fact that he was still in the vicinity looked as if he had been prowling about Wharton Lodge in the hope of picking up some trace of Poindexter—in the belief that the elusive gentleman was related to Harry Wharton. And he certainly looked like a man to cut up very rusty if he discovered that he had been trifled with.

"Get in!" repeated Wilmot. He threw the door open.

Instead of getting in, Bunter backed farther off. The black-haired man shut off the engine, and jumped down.

"Stop!" he rapped out. "I want a word with you."

"I—I—I—" stammered Bunter.

He was quite unaware of the meeting that had taken place that afternoon between Wilmot and the Famous Five, and of the handling the black-haired man had received. But he could see that the man was in a black and bitter mood, and could read anger and suspicion in his glinting eyes. The fat junior wished, from the bottom of his fat heart, that he had not signalled the two-seater to stop.

He backed farther towards the opening of the footpath in the wood. Wilmot strode after him.

"Stop, you fat fool!" he snapped. "Oh, really, you know!" gasped Bunter.

He came to a halt, his fat knees knocking together. Wilmot eyed him grimly and savagely under the brim of the low-pulled hat.

"I'm glad I've met you again, Bunter—I think your name is Bunter," he said. "I intended to find you and question you. I have seen the boy Wharton twice, and he denies what you told me."

"D-d-does he?" gasped Bunter. "He denies that Elias Poindexter is his uncle, or any relative at all."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bunter. He blinked at the man. It had never occurred to his obtuse brain that his statement would reach Wharton's ears. He could imagine the feelings with which the captain of the Remove had heard it. He could almost feel already Wharton's boot on his tight trousers.

"Did you tell me the truth, you young scoundrel?" demanded the black-haired man, his eyes gleaming at Bunter.

"Oh, yes! Rather!" gasped Bunter. "Certainly!" If Billy Bunter had been inclined to own up to the deception, the look on the man-hunter's face would have frozen the confession on his lips.

"I—I say, I—I hope you don't doubt my word."

"You repeat that Poindexter is the uncle of the boy Wharton?"

"Yes, rather!" gasped Bunter. "Oh, yes—quite! If—if Wharton says he isn't, he—he's an awful fibber, you know."

"He looked truthful!" muttered the black-haired man. It was clear that, in spite of his determination not to be convinced that he was on a false track, he found it difficult to doubt the word

of the captain of the Greyfriars Remove.

"Oh, he's an awful fibber!" gasped Bunter. "He—he couldn't tell the truth if—if he tried, you know. I—I've often spoken to him about it at Greyfriars—remonstrated with him, you know."

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"He denies it," said the man-hunter, with a black look at the Owl of the Remove. "If I thought you had lied to me—"

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. "I—I wouldn't, you know! I—I—I—"

"If you have lied to me—deceived me—caused me to waste precious time on a false scent—"

The black-haired man clenching his hands, made a stride towards Bunter.

"Yaroo!" The fat junior yelled, and jumped back in sheer terror.

"Stop, you fat fool!"

But Billy Bunter did not stop! He made a wild bound into the footpath, and tore away.

"Stop!" roared the black-haired man. "You fat fool, you are in no danger! Stop, I tell you!"

Bunter was not likely to stop. He ran up the wet, grassy footpath as if he were running for his life.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. Oh crikey! Oh lor'!"

He tore along the path, his fat little legs fairly flashing as he flew. From the footpath he turned into another path, and then into another. Where he was going, Bunter neither knew nor cared, so long as he got to a safe distance from the black-haired man. In his terrified state of mind, he half expected to hear the crack of a revolver behind him. The pattering of the rain on the leaves was, to Bunter's scared ears, the pattering of pursuing footsteps.

He ran, and ran, and ran, till his fat little legs refused to run any longer.

Then he came to a halt, gasping, and leaned on a tree, spluttering for breath. There was no sound of a pursuer. For long, long minutes, Billy Bunter leaned helplessly on the tree, gasping and gasping as if he would never leave off gasping.

**THE FIFTH CHAPTER.**  
**Mysterious I**

**S**PLASH, splash, spleas! The rain was coming down heavily now. The sky, so blue a few hours ago, was almost black; and the roll of thunder echoed over Wimford Wood. Through the thick branches the rain splashed and dashed—unheeded by Billy Bunter, till at last he had recovered his lost wind. There was no sign of the black-haired man—apparently he had not followed Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove detached himself from the tree at last and blinked round him through his big spectacles, in search of a way. Bunter was wet; and he was getting wetter. From a heavy downpour, there was little shelter in the wood; and the fat junior was anxious to get under a roof. Relieved at last of his fears of the man-hunter, he started on his homeward way—or what he supposed to be his homeward way. But the winding paths in the woodland were something like a jigsaw puzzle to the Owl of the Remove.

He tramped on drearily, wetter and wetter. To add to his woes, he was getting frightfully hungry. It was long past tea-time; and Bunter had had nothing but a box of chocolates since lunch. It was true that at lunch he had eaten almost as much as the Famous Five together. But he was getting famished now. Wet and weary and hungry, the fat junior plugged on, and emerged from the wood at last.

He came out into a deep lane, with woodland on the other side. He blinked round him, in search of landmarks. The lane was steep, rising to the downs; and it was unfamiliar to Bunter's eyes. There was no sign of Wharton Lodge, or any other habitation. Billy Bunter groaned deeply as he realised that he had lost his way. Wet and hungry and tired, the hapless Owl blinked into the falling rain, and groaned.

But it was useless to remain where he was. The darkness of the stormy sky was deepening in the dusk of evening. The thought of being lost on that trackless countryside, after the fall of night, was terrifying—almost as terrifying as the black-haired man. Bunter plugged out into the middle of the lane, and blinked this way and that way, in search of a landmark or a building. The poorest hovel would have been a welcome shelter then.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. Looking up the lane, he discerned the arms of a windmill in the rainy distance, high over the weeping woods. He knew where he was now, though the knowledge did not bring comfort. He remembered that windmill; it was five miles from Wharton Lodge, standing on a little eminence over the woodland, where the old sails creaked to every wind that blew. The long arms of the windmill were turning in the wind that blew over the downs.

Several times Bunter had seen that windmill in the distance, sometimes from a car, sometimes when cycling; but he had never been near it. He knew it at once; and knew that he was long miles from Wharton Lodge—miles that his little fat legs were quite incapable of covering until he had had a rest.

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But a windmill meant—or should have meant—a miller; and Bunter turned up the lane, and plugged up the rather steep ascent towards the mill.

There was shelter at least at the old mill, and the miller could hardly refuse him something to eat; perhaps might even provide a conveyance to take him home. Bunter was wet and woeful and weary; but there was hope in his fat breast as he plugged on through mud and wind and driving rain towards the mill.

He came out of the woodland, upon the grassy hillock where the mill stood, and tramped through an open gateway in a broken fence. There was no sign of life about the mill; its surroundings were dismal and desolate; what had once been a garden was wild and weedy and uncultivated; and there were no wheel tracks in the muddy lane that led to it. Back into Bunter's mind came a recollection that he had been told that that old mill was deserted, and had long been uninhabited.

He remembered now that Harry Wharton had pointed it out one day from the colonel's car, and told Hurree Janset Ram Singh that it was abandoned, and falling to ruin. The fat junior groaned in anguish of spirits. If there was nobody there, there was no help for him at the mill.

He stopped, in the gathering darkness and the falling rain, blinking dismally at the desolate building. There was shelter from the rain there, at all events; and Bunter's fat legs were almost giving way under him now. He remembered that the road where the cars passed was nearly a mile from the mill, and to reach it he would have to plug through steep, winding, muddy lanes. To take shelter in the old mill meant getting a much-needed rest out of the rain; but it left the food problem unsolved. And that problem was growing pressing now.

Bunter groaned as he blinked at the old building, black against the darkening sky.

From a little window, broken and patched, there came a gleam of light. Bunter started, and stared at it.

A lamp or candle had been lighted in the mill.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

A light in the building meant that someone was there. Once more hope was renewed in the podgy breast of the Owl of Greyfriars.

He tramped on towards the building. The light from the little window twinkled like a beacon of hope.

Someone was there, that was certain. The mill, after all, was inhabited. Possibly it was being taken into use again, after years of disuse. At all events, somebody was there. Bunter reached the crazy steps that led up to the door, and mounted them. The door was shut, and he knocked on it loudly.

Thump, thump, thump!

The sound of his knocking echoed eerily in the building. There was no answer, no movement, from within. Bunter knocked, and knocked, and snorted with angry impatience. He tried the door; but it was fastened within, and did not open. He resumed thumping, and then began to kick at the door.

"Beasts!" gasped Bunter. "Why the thump don't they open the door? Beasts! Leaving a fellow out in the rain! Rotters! Oh dear!"

Bang, bang, bang!

That someone was within the mill was certain. A movement caught Bunter's listening ears; a soft and stealthy

sound. Someone was there, though why he did not open the door was a mystery.

"I say, let me in!" yelled Bunter. "Do you hear? I want to get out of the rain? Let a fellow in!"

There was no answer. But again he heard that stealthy sound, as of someone creeping softly on the inner side of the door. The occupant of the mill, whoever he was, was there, listening to Bunter. But the door did not open.

Thump, thump! Kick, kick!

"Will you let me in?" yelled Bunter. "Why can't you let a fellow in out of the rain, blow you?"

Thump, thump! Kick!

But there came no reply, though Bunter was well aware that on the other side of the door was someone listening to him. He was deeply exasperated and he thumped and kicked savagely. He backed down the creaking steps at last, and blinked up at the little window. It was dark; the light had been extinguished within. Whoever was the mysterious occupant of the lonely mill, it was clear that he did not want to be disturbed, and that Bunter had no hospitality to expect there.

"Beast!" groaned Bunter.

He blinked round in the rain, picked up a heavy stone, and hurled it up at the little window. It crashed through a pane already cracked and patched, and there was a clatter of falling fragments of glass. Bunter's idea was that that would make the man in the mill open the door, if anything would. But the door did not open.

"Oh, the rotter!" gasped Bunter.

He stood in the heavy rain, blinking up at the window with an infuriated blink. The window was dark; but it seemed to Bunter that he could see a face pressed to a dirty broken pane. The man in the mill was watching him from the window. It even seemed to Bunter that he could discern the outline of a pair of spectacles pressed to the pane—big, horn-rimmed spectacles. He waved a fat hand and shouted:

"Can't you let me in! I say, let a fellow in out of the rain? Can't you hear me, you beast?"

Whether the man heard him or not, he gave no sign. And Bunter, as he stood in the rain blinking up at the window, puzzled and enraged, began to feel a tremor of uneasiness. Obviously, if it had been a miller, or any ordinary occupant, he would at least have opened the door. And it came into Bunter's mind that the occupant of the mill was probably some tramp, who had camped in the deserted building. Alarming thoughts of tramps, footpads, and escaped lunatics chased one another through Billy Bunter's fat brain; and he gave a squeak of alarm, and beat a retreat to the broken fence.

There was no shelter to be had in the lonely mill, that was certain now; and now that he had realised what the occupant was probably like, Bunter was not anxious for shelter there. He was, indeed, anxious to get away from the vicinity. In that solitary spot it would not have been agreeable to come into contact with some desperate character.

With aching legs and dismal fat face, the Owl of the Remove plugged away. He squelched through mud and falling rain, following the steep lane through the woodland, and the dark and mysterious mill disappeared behind him. Bunter, weary and woebegone, tramped on dismally through rain and gloom. And as Bunter tramped, his hunger became more acute. It was not so long since he had eaten, but to the miserable, bedraggled Owl it seemed like an age.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### The Wanderer's Return!

"MASTER HARRY!"

"Has Bunter come in, Wells?"

"No, sir! Master Bunter desires to speak to you on the telephone."

"Oh!"

It was close on bed-time, and Harry Wharton & Co. were wondering what had become of Billy Bunter. Whether he was waiting at Winford till the rain stopped; whether he had started to walk and lost his way, or whether some accident had happened to the fat Owl, they could not guess.

It was seldom that news of Bunter was received with pleasure; but on this occasion, Harry Wharton was undoubtedly relieved to hear that the Owl had called him on the phone. He hurried at once to the telephone.

"Are you there, you beast?" came a familiar fat voice, as he put the receiver to his ear.

"Is that you, you fat chump?" asked Harry.

"Beast!"

Wharton grinned over the instrument. "Is that what you rang me up to say?" he asked.

"Yah! I want you to send the car for me."

"Where are you, you benighted fat-head?"

"I'm phoning from the Cart and Horses Inn, on the Redford road."

"My hat! That's six miles away! What on earth are you doing there?"

"Waiting for you to send the car, you brute! Lot you care if I've lost my way, and walked hundreds of miles, and got drenched to the skin! After all I've done for you—"

"What did you lose the way for?"

"Why, you beast—"

"Haven't you the sense of a bunny rabbit?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You silly ass!"

"So that's all the sympathy I get!" hooted Bunter. "After being nearly murdered by that black-haired beast, and wandering miles and miles, and being nearly murdered again by a tramp in a beastly mill, and walking my legs off, and—"

"You've had a jolly time, old fat bean!"

"Yah! I should have perished on the road, if I hadn't got to this inn. I was dying of hunger when I got here."

"Rot! You've got enough fat to live on for three years at least, like a polar bear."

"Beast! Are you going to send that car?" hooted Bunter. "I can tell you, I should have fallen down and perished in another minute if I hadn't got to this inn."

"Then I jolly well wish you'd sighted it sixty seconds later."

There was a gurgle of wrath on the telephone, as Bunter received that heartless reply.

"I'll ask my uncle if he will let us have the car," said Harry. "I suppose you've got to be fetched home."

"You—you rotter! I've a jolly good mind not to come back at all!" gasped Bunter. "You beast! I've a jolly good mind to telephone to Bunter Court for the pater's Rolls, and go home."

"Good! Stick to that!"

"Oh, really, Wharton!"

"Good-bye, old bean! See you next term at Greyfriars."

"I say, Harry, old chap! Send that car! I say—"

"My dear porpoise, telephone to



Bunter Court for the Rolls. It's an ever so much better car. You've told me so lots of times."

"Beast! I mean, I say, old chap—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! The fact is, I forgot the pater's away on the Riviera—I mean, the Rolls has gone to be repaired."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you send that car?" shrieked Bunter.

"Yes, you fat ass!"

"I say, I'm having my clothes dried, and staying in bed while they dry. I got a good supper here, luckily. I say, there will be a bill to pay. Don't forget to bring some tin."

Harry Wharton rang off and went to seek his uncle. Colonel Wharton immediately gave instructions for the car to fetch Bunter from the Cart and Horses, with additional instructions to the chauffeur to pay the bill Bunter had incurred there. After which, Harry Wharton & Co. went to bed, not feeling any desire to wait up till the Owl of the Remove arrived home.

They were fast asleep when the car returned to Wharton Lodge, with a fat and frowning Owl. Colonel Wharton met the fat junior as he rolled in. Billy Bunter blinked round the hall. Apparently he had expected an anxious party to be waiting there for him. But there was no anxious party.

"Where are those beasts?" he asked.

"What?"

"I mean, where are those fellows?"

"My nephew and his friends have gone to bed, long ago!" grunted the colonel.

Snort from Bunter.

"They didn't even stay up for me! Just like them!"

"And I think you had better go to bed, too, Bunter," said Colonel Wharton, with a rather grim look at the indignant Owl, and he turned on his heel and walked back to the library.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter.

However, the advice was good, even if it came from a beast, and Billy Bunter rolled off to bed. His snore was soon awakening the echoes, and he forgot his woes and grievances in balmy slumber.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

It seemed to Billy Bunter that he had only just closed his eyes when the powerful voice of Bob Cherry awakened him. He opened his eyes and blinked. Bright spring sunshine was streaming in at the window. Bob Cherry grinned down at him.

"Staying in bed all day, Fatty?" he asked.

"Beast! I'm not getting up early, after all I've been through—"

"Fathead! It's ten o'clock."

"Well, you can tell them to send up my brekker at twelve. Then I shall have time to get up for lunch."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now shut up and let a fellow go to sleep!"

Bunter turned his head on the pillow and closed his eyes again.

"Turn out, you fat slacker!" said Bob. "It's a lovely morning, after the rain."

Snore!

"Like me to help you out?"

"Beast!"

"Wharton wants to see you."

"Wharton can go and eat coke!"

"He's going to kick you."

breakfast-table through his big spectacles at the Famous Five. The chums of the Remove had breakfasted long ago, and they had come in from a ramble and helped Bunter to make up his mind to turn out at ten. Outside, it was a fresh, bright April morning—fresh and sweet after the heavy rain of the previous day.

It was not the attraction of Bunter's company that kept the juniors indoors, or the entertainment of seeing him pack away several breakfasts, one after another; though, as Bob Cherry remarked, people paid to see such things at the Zoo. Bunter had to be called to account.



"Stop, you fat fool!" roared the black-haired man. "You are in no danger—stop, I tell you!"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Oh crikey! Oh lor'!" He tore along the path as fast as his little fat legs would carry him.

"Yah!"

"In fact, we're all going to kick you!"

Snore!

"Now, look here, old fat man," said Bob, "we can't kick you while you're frowsting in bed."

Snore!

"Are you asleep again?"

Snore!

"Wake up, old fat man! We can't hang about all the morning waiting for you to come down and be kicked."

Snore!

"Here is an esteemed jug of water, my worthy Bob. Pour it over the absurd head of the ridiculous Bunter."

"Yaroooooooh!"

Billy Bunter turned out. It was only ten o'clock, and Bunter did not like early rising. But there was no help for it, and he turned out.

**THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.**  
Bunter Thinks It Funny!

"NOW, you fat villain!"

"Now, you frabjous fabricator!"

"Now, you fat frump!"

Billy Bunter blinked across the

"Now, you unspeakable fat fozzler!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Ring for Wells, will you, and tell him the same again, only twice as much. I'm frightfully hungry. I'll tell you all about it afterwards."

"Can't wait till you've done feeding," said Bob. "It will be lunch-time then and you'll be starting again."

"I'm glad you're interested," said Bunter, with his mouth full. "I can tell you, I had some fearful escapes yesterday. The wonder is, that I never caught an awful cold. I might have been laid up, and you fellows might have seen nothing of me for days and days."

"No such luck!" said Johnny Bull, shaking his head. "These lucky things never really happen."

"Beast! Pass the kidneys! I'll tell you everything that happened—"

"Never mind that!" said Harry Wharton. "That isn't what I was going to ask you, fathead."

"Eh? Isn't it?" said Bunter. "Pass the toast!"

"We met that man Wilmot yesterday," said Harry. "He told us he got



from you that that American swindler, Poindexter, was an uncle of mine."

"He, he, he!"

"You told him so?"

"Well, what was I to tell him?" demanded Bunter. "He fairly asked to have his leg pulled. You fellows left me behind when Greyfriars broke up. You needn't say it was an accident—it wasn't! You let me down!"

"Well, that black-haired man had a car. He was willing to drive me all the way from Greyfriars here. He was keen, in fact, for me to show him where you lived when I told him that Poindexter was your uncle. I had to get here, hadn't I, after you fellows let me down? Be reasonable."

The juniors gazed at Bunter. Bunter went on eating. Evidently the fat Owl saw nothing reprehensible in the amazing trick by which he had obtained a lift from Greyfriars School to Wharton Lodge.

"Besides, he wouldn't take 'No' for an answer," explained Bunter. "He had it fairly fixed in his head that Poindexter was connected with you somehow, because you protected him on Popper's Island. He took hold of my collar! Actually had the nerve to lay hands on me, you know, not a hundred yards from the school gates!"

"Looked jolly savage, I can tell you! But after I told him Poindexter was your uncle he was quite good-tempered."

"He, he, he! You see, he thought he had only to come nosing round here to find the man. So I got the lift in his car from the school, see?"

"You—you fat rascal!" gasped Wharton. "So that was it?"

"That was it, old chap! Rather neat, wasn't it?"

"Neat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!" said Bunter. "I told him the man he was hunting for was Wharton's uncle, because I was coming here. If I'd been going to Cherry Place, I'd have told him Poindexter was your uncle, Bob."

"Mine!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Certainly! He would have swallowed it!" said Bunter cheerfully. "I should have told him that if I'd wanted a lift to Cherry Place. And if I'd wanted to get to Nugent's place—"

"You'd have told him that the man was my uncle, I suppose?" said Frank Nugent, staring at the Owl of the Remove.

"Just that, old chap!" assented Bunter. "But as I happened to be coming to Wharton Lodge for the hols, I made it Wharton's uncle. You needn't thank me, Wharton—"

"Thank you!" stammered Wharton.

"Well, if I hadn't pulled that fellow's leg and got him to drive me here, I shouldn't have got here," said Bunter. "You wouldn't have had me here for the hols, in that case. Think of that!"

"You—you—you—"

"You needn't thank me; still, you mightn't have seen me these hols but for my presence of mind, you know," said Bunter. "Pass the ham, will you?"

"You prevaricating porpoise," said Wharton. "Do you know that the fellow is prowling round here—ever since the hols started—because of the whoppers you told him?"

"He, he, he!"

"He's asking people right and left about that man Poindexter—"

"He, he, he!"

"And making people believe that that American swindler is a connection of my family—" roared Wharton.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"Grooogh! Oooooogh! Owl! D-d-don't make me laugh while I'm eating, you ass! Groooooogh!"

"So you think it's a laughing matter, you frabjous idiot?"

"Well, it's rather funny, isn't it?" said Bunter. "Look here, I came on that rotter yesterday, on the Wimford road; I fancy he was prowling about looking for a chance to see me. He was in a frightfully bad temper. He seems to have a suspicion that I was pulling his leg, you know. From what I could make out, you've been telling him that Poindexter isn't your uncle at all—"

"Of course I told him so, idiot!"

"Well, I think you might have considered me," said Bunter warmly. "You've made that man doubt my word now; and he's a frightfully bad-tempered beast. He sprang at me like a—a—a tiger, and I only got away in time. That was how I came to lose my way. I can tell you, he's a jolly dangerous beast, and I don't want him on my track."

"I wish he had given you a jolly good hiding!" growled the captain of the Remove.

"Beast! Pass the jam, Bob, old chap!"

Harry Wharton gazed at the Owl of the Remove. Bunter continued to eat cheerfully. Jam disappeared at a great rate.

"I—I suppose I can't kick the fat villain!" said Wharton at last.

"Oh, really, Wharton—if that's how you talk to a guest—"

"I'll kick him, if you like," offered Johnny Bull. "He's not my guest."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"The kickfulness is the proper caper," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, "and my esteemed boot is at your absurd service."

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"Well, the harm's done now," said Wharton. "But that fat idiot will have to see the man and confess that he was lying to him. That may make him give up playing the goat and clear off."

"Why, you silly ass!" gasped Bunter. "Catch me! I tell you, he's a dangerous beast! He was going for me yesterday—"

"He can go for you as much as he jolly well likes, and the more the merrier. You're going to own up that you were telling him lies, you fat fraud," growled Wharton. "I've a jolly good mind to give you the licking of your life. If we were at Greyfriars I'd kick you from one end of the Remove passage to the other."

"Beast!"

"Let's get out, you chaps," said Wharton, and the Famous Five left William George Bunter gobbling jam.

They did not see Bunter again till lunch, so it was not till then that they heard his tale of his previous day's adventures. Bunter's tale of the mysterious happening at the old mill rather excited their interest.

"That's the haunted mill," remarked Harry Wharton. "I pointed it out to you, Inky, from the car the other day."

Hurree Janset Ram Singh nodded.

"A haunted mill?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "That sounds jolly! Who haunts it, and why?"

"Well, I suppose nobody haunts it, as a matter of fact," said Wharton, laughing. "But the miller hanged himself there a good many years ago, and the story goes since that it's haunted. It's never been occupied so long as I remember."

"It is certainly not occupied now."

said Colonel Wharton. "It has been for sale for a dozen years at least without finding a buyer. Probably Bunter fancied the face at the window."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Or perhaps it was the jolly old ghost!" said Bob. "What price trotting over there this afternoon and calling on the ghost?"

"Good egg!" said Nugent.

"It's a dismal old place," said Harry. "I've been in it once when I was a kid. But if you fellows would like to explore it, it's a jolly afternoon for a walk, and it's only five miles."

"I say, you fellows, I'm jolly well not going to walk five miles! If you're going to walk to that mill, you can jolly well leave me out."

"That settles it," said Bob. "We'll go."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And after lunch, while Billy Bunter rolled away for his usual lengthy nap, Harry Wharton & Co. started cheerily in the April sunshine to walk to the old mill.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### The Man of the Mill!

"My hat!"

"What—"

"That fathead again!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were swinging along cheerily by a shady woodland path, when Bob glanced back and uttered an exclamation.

The juniors looked back.

At a distance behind them a figure had appeared from the trees. It was distant, but all the juniors recognised the black hair and the square jaw of the man-hunter.

"That prowling rotter!" exclaimed Wharton.

His eyes gleamed with anger.

"It's getting too jolly thick!" said Johnny Bull. "That fellow must have been hanging round your house, and he's followed us."

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

The juniors stared at the man. He stood at a distance, having halted when they turned, watching them. Wharton compressed his lips hard. But angry as he was, he was half-inclined to laugh at the man's pertinacity. Evidently he still believed, or half-believed, Bunter's story, and was keeping the Greyfriars juniors under observation.

"The silly chump!" said Harry. "I suppose he's found out by this time that his precious Poindexter is not at Wharton Lodge, and thinks that he's hidden somewhere about here. Does the fathead suppose that we're going to see him?"

"Looks like it!" grinned Nugent.

"Well, he's jolly well not going to shadow us," said Wharton. "He's had one lesson, and if he wants another we can spare time to give him one. Come on, you fellows."

"What-ho!" chuckled Bob.

Harry Wharton ran back along the path, his comrades at his heels. The black-haired man stood for a few moments watching their approach, and then turned and plunged into the wood.

By the time they reached the spot where he had been standing, he had completely vanished.

"He doesn't want another six!" chuckled Bob.

Evidently the man-hunter was not anxious for another handling from the Famous Five. Wharton stared into the

(Continued on page 12.)



# "Half-Time" Gossip!



It'll take a wise footer fan to catch "Old Ref" napping. Try him on any intricate Soccer problem you like. Ten to one in doughnuts you won't get him groggy.

**T**HIS Easter week-end there is the last big over-time rush of football matches—three games in four days for the majority of the players of the big clubs. By the time these Easter games are over many of the problems of promotion and relegation will be decided; we shall know the names of some clubs to go down, and of some which will go up to the higher class.

In connection with this relegation business, one of my correspondents has noticed that the Southern clubs have not done very well in the Second Division this season. Indeed, at the time when he wrote to me it looked extremely likely that at the end of the season two clubs with their homes in the south of England might finish in the last two places in the Second Division. This is still a possibility.

My regular reader wants to know what would happen if two sides from the south had to be relegated to the Third Divisions? As he very properly points out, it would be most unfair to put either Plymouth Argyle or Cardiff City, say, into the Northern Third Division, and if they were both put into the Southern Third then there would be one club too many in that section, as only one gets promoted at the end of each season from each of the Third Divisions.

**T**HE way out of the difficulty—and it is one which has had to be taken in the past—would be to

*transfer the most northern club now in the Southern Third, to the Northern Third, and then put both Plymouth Argyle and Cardiff City into the Southern Third.*

This would keep the number of clubs in the two sections even, though I am not at all sure that Coventry City, for example, would relish being switched from the Southern Third to the Northern Third. There is a feeling that the quality of the football is better in the Southern Third than in the Northern Third, and that on the whole the attendances at the Southern Third matches are greater.

Of course it is difficult to say, definitely, which section of the Third Division provides the better football, because the evidence is so conflicting. The fact that Exeter City did so well in the Cup this season seems to suggest that the Southern Third is the better. Also, consider the experiences of Notts County and Hull City. These two clubs were relegated from the Second Division at the end of last season, Notts going into the Southern Third and Hull into the Northern Third. Notts are running off with the championship of the Southern Third, but Hull City have only made an ordinary show in the Northern Third.

**T**ALKING for a moment about this geographical question, the funniest thing I remember in this connection happened just before the War. The Bradford Park Avenue club could not gain admission to the Second Division, so they applied for a place in the Southern League, and were duly elected and played in that section. It takes a strong imagination to call Bradford in the Southern part of England, doesn't it?

Grimsby Town, another club with a home certainly getting towards the North, have also played in the Southern Third Division. Indeed, I think I am right when I say that

*Grimsby are the only club to have played in all the four divisions since the War.*

Some more queer questions have reached me; incidents which must have greatly puzzled the referees in charge of the particular games in which they occurred. There was, for instance, some trouble at a recent Charity Cup-tie in Lancashire between Clitheroe and Darwen. The game was played under very difficult weather conditions, but the referee did not think the conditions were so bad as to justify a stoppage.

One by one the Clitheroe players were so completely beaten by the weather that they retired until only four members of the team were left to struggle on against the eleven players of

Darwen. Eventually the referee declared the game abandoned, and I am asked to solve two different questions connected with that game. The first is whether the Clitheroe players were justified in going off owing to the weather being so bad, and the second is whether the referee was right in abandoning the game merely because it had been reduced to a farce—four men against eleven.

**I**N regard to the retirement of the Clitheroe players, that will be a matter for investigation by the Lancashire F.A. authorities.

*They will have to decide whether the Clitheroe players who retired were really incapable of carrying on, or whether they retired merely as a protest.*

Theoretically, of course, if one set of players find it possible to carry on, and the referee also thinks it possible to carry on, then the other set of players should also be able to keep going. But that does not necessarily follow. One lot may be better trained than the other lot.

Concerning the question of whether the referee should have abandoned the game, my information was that he did not do so merely because it had become a farce—four men against eleven—but because he considered that the conditions were then too bad.

*Actually the referee cannot concern himself with the different number of players on the two sides. It is not the referee's fault if the game develops into a farce, and the club responsible must be dealt with in due course.*

**T**HERE is a curious story told of the early days of football when the only man to take the field against a full eleven was a goalkeeper. The story goes that immediately the match started the goalkeeper claimed offside against the other fellows, and that the game was then abandoned. As we know the rules in these days that seems a peculiar development, but football forty years ago and now were two very different things.

My readers who have attended at the big football grounds will probably remember occasions when the original ball has been kicked over the stand or out of the field, and another ball has been substituted. I believe that at the West Ham ground they employ a man who has a very quaint job. It is his duty to stand out in the street when matches are being played and to redeem the ball when it is kicked into the street.

When the new ball has been put into use in place of the one which has been kicked out of the field it frequently happens that the original ball comes back, and it is in connection with this that an interesting question arose not long ago. The second ball was in use, and there was a hot attack on one of the goals. Just then the original ball was kicked on to the field of play, and the referee noticing this, and believing that it might lead to complications, immediately stopped the play. He then threw the original ball down quite near to the home goalkeeper, and as it happened a goal was scored. There was a row over this goal, as the supporters of the home side felt that it was unfair that the ball should have been dropped so near to their goalkeeper.

I can well understand the feelings of the supporters of the home club. It is impossible, however, to say definitely that the referee was wrong.

*If the sudden return of the original ball to the field of play was likely to interfere with the game then the referee had no alternative but to stop play.*

And also, of course, having stopped the play because there were two balls on the field at the same time, he had to restart the game by dropping the ball at the place where it happened to be when the play was held up.

"OLD REF."

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## THE MYSTERY OF THE MILL!

(Continued from page 10.)

disk of the trees, with a frowning brow. He would have been glad to give the prowler another lesson, but Wilmot was taking care of that. The deep woods had swallowed him from sight.

"Well, I suppose it's no good hunting him," said Harry at last. "If he's cleared off, all the better. Let's get on."

And they retraced their steps and resumed the walk to the old mill. Many times as they went they glanced back, but nothing more was seen of the black-haired man. If he was still following them, he was keeping carefully out of sight.

They reached the lane at last which passed the broken fence of the old mill, and stopped at the tumble-down gateway. Even in the bright spring sunshine the place had a dark and deserted and forbidding look. There was no sign of life about it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Somebody's been here, old things." He pointed to the track of boots in the muddy earth.

The day was bright and fine, but the earth was still wet and muddy from the heavy downpour of the previous day. Here and there on the soft ground were very plain traces of footprints.

"Bunter's hoofs, perhaps," said Nugent. "He was here last night."

"No fear!" answered Bob. "There was a lot of rain after that, and it would have washed out the trail of the porpoise. Besides, these are a man's hoof marks. Too big for Bunter."

"That's so," agreed Harry Wharton. "Perhaps there was somebody in the mill, after all," remarked Johnny Bull. "It's a place where a tramp might camp out."

"Well, it's rather off the beaten track for a tramp," said Wharton, rather puzzled. "But somebody's been here since the rain, that's a cert."

Bob Cherry bent over a foot-track that was clear and distinct in the mud on the path between the gateway and the mill.

"Not a tramp," he remarked.

"How do you know, fathead?"

"Because I'm a jolly old Scout," said Bob. "Look at it. Tramps don't wear such jolly neat boots as that. Whoever has been walking about here had a jolly good pair of boots on. Tramps are generally down at heel."

"Good old Sherlock Holmes!" grinned Nugent.

"Somebody else exploring the place, perhaps," said Harry. "Let's look into the mill. The door's open. According to Bunter, it was fastened last night, and he couldn't get in. Somebody's been since."

The juniors, rather curious now, walked up the muddy path towards the building. The arms of the windmill were turning slowly in the wind, with a heavy, creaking sound. In several places they could see the tracks of boots, and they were evidently the tracks of a well-shod man. Harry Wharton mounted the crazy steps to the doorway, and looked in. Within all was dusky and silent.

"Nobody at home now, anyhow," he remarked.

The juniors followed him in. The apartment in which they found themselves was bare, and almost festooned with cobwebs. But that someone had been there recently was clear, for there were muddy footmarks on the floor, which led to the shaky old stair that

gave access to the upper room of the mill.

"It wasn't the jolly old ghost that left those footprints," remarked Bob Cherry. "I don't believe we shall find the ghost at home, after all. Let's look upstairs."

There was no trace of human presence, except for the muddy footmarks, in the lower apartment. The chums of the Remove mounted the creaking stairs into the upper room.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Wharton.

He stared round him in astonishment.

The small window let in plenty of the spring sunshine. Every now and then it was shadowed by the passing of the ragged old sails of the windmill, slowly turning. But the upper room was light enough, and the juniors stared in astonishment at what they saw. At a glance it was evident that the old mill was occupied.

In one corner of the room was a camp bed, with blankets on it. A suitcase of fibre stood in another corner. On an old box, which served as a table, were the remains of a meal. Plates and knives and forks lay as they had been left.

On another box was a basin and a jug of water and shaving materials. A paraffin cooking-stove stood near it, with several cooking utensils. A number of packages were ranged along the wall, and several of them were open, revealing stores of canned foods. There were a number of bottles of spirits, glasses, and siphons.

"My only esteemed hat!" ejaculated Hurree Janset Rain Singh. "My worthy chums, I thinkfully opine that we must be trespassing in this absurd abode."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"Somebody's living here, that's a cert," he said. "And it isn't a jolly old tramp. Whoever he is, he's spent a lot of money laying in grub and things. Looks as if he expected to stand a siege!"

"Who the dickens—" said Harry Wharton, quite puzzled.

"Somebody must have taken the place," said Nugent. "Whoever it is, he lives in the mill, that's pretty plain. And—and he mayn't be jolly pleased if he comes in and finds us here."

"Very likely," grinned Bob Cherry. "Bunter didn't find him very hospitable last night. But what jolly old Robinson Crusoe can have camped in a lonely place like this?"

"Blessed if I can make it out!" said Wharton. "The place has been for sale ever since I can remember it. Of course, it may have been sold lately. Anyhow, it's pretty clear that it's occupied now. I suppose the owner, whoever he is, has gone out for a walk. Must be somebody with a taste for solitude if he really lives in a place like this."

"Hark!" breathed Nugent.

There was a sound of a footstep below. Someone had entered the mill-house.

The juniors looked at one another, startled and uneasy. They heard the lower door close and the sound of a bar being placed in position. The man of the mill evidently had been absent when they arrived, and had not seen them come. Now he had returned and had barred the door after coming in. The sound of footsteps on the creaking stair followed.

He was coming up, obviously in ignorance that the juniors were there. Heavy footsteps, the steps of a man of considerable weight, made the old stair creak and groan.

"Better let him know we're here, I think," muttered Wharton. "It will rather startle him. He doesn't know—"

"Yes, rather!"

Harry Wharton stepped towards the

stair. The ascending footsteps stopped suddenly. The man of the mill had heard him. He was not yet in sight, but from below the juniors heard a gasping sound. It was the gasp of a man startled and frightened, though why he should be frightened was rather a mystery.

"It's all right!" called out Wharton hurriedly. "We—"

He was interrupted by a cry—a cry full of terror. There was a crashing of feet on the creaking stair as the unseen man rushed down again.

"What the thump—" gasped Bob.

"Who—what—" stuttered Nugent.

Crash!

It was the sound of a heavy fall. The man of the mill, in his frantic haste, had missed his footing and fallen at the bottom of the stair.

"Come on!" panted Wharton.

He ran down the steep stair, his chums fast behind him. A fat figure in an overcoat lay sprawled at the bottom, and a face white as death was turned towards them, and two terrified eyes stared at them through a large pair of horn-rimmed spectacles. They heard a gasping, choking voice in nasal accents.

"Keep off! Keep off, Wilmot! I'll shoot! I'm armed, and I'll shoot!"

Harry Wharton gave a yell of amazement.

"Poindexter!"

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Hunted Down!

"POINDEXTER!"

The juniors repeated the name in blank astonishment. They stared with almost bulging eyes at the fat, beaky-nosed man who lay sprawling on the floor. That fat, sly face, with its big, horn-rimmed glasses, was familiar to their eyes. It was a face they had seen before but never dreamed of seeing again—the face of the American share-pusher, Elias J. Poindexter, the man who had hidden on Popper's Island, near Greyfriars, and whom they had saved from the man-hunter. It was the face of the fugitive swindler, of whom the black-haired man was in pursuit.

"That rotter!" exclaimed Bob.

The sprawling man was groping in his overcoat pocket, as if for a weapon. But his face was ghastly with fear. His hand was trembling so violently that it did not seem likely that his weapon would have helped him much had it been needed. But almost immediately he realised that it was not his enemy who was upon him. He staggered to his feet, set the horn-rimmed glasses straight on his fleshy, beaky nose, and stared at the Greyfriars fellows. The meeting was a surprise on both sides.

"Search me!" he gasped. "I guessed it was that hoodlum Wilmot, I surely did, when I heard you. Say, I'm sure a piece nervy!"

"More than a piece, I should think!" said Johnny Bull.

Poindexter gasped for breath. But the sight of the schoolboys had reassured him, and he was recovering.

That his nerves were in a frayed state was clear. At the sound of a movement in the upper room of the mill he had jumped to the terrifying conclusion that it was his enemy there who had run him down. Yet in that lonely spot, buried out of sight in the solitary downs, he could have had little real cause to fear that Wilmot had tracked him. Obviously, his nerves were on the jump.

"Say, what you young guys doing here?" he demanded. "I guess I know you—you're the guys I saw a week and



more ago, on that island in the river near the school. Ain't that so?"

"That's so," said Harry Wharton.

"Wal, that was in Kent, and nigh a hundred miles from here!" exclaimed the horn-rimmed man. "What are you doing here? This spot ain't anywhere near your pesky school."

"The school's broken up for Easter," said Harry. "I'm home for the holidays, and my friends are with me."

"Aw!" grunted the horn-rimmed man. "And you hang out around here?"

"About five miles away."

The man peered at him suspiciously through the horn-rimmed glasses.

"I guess five miles is a good step, and this is a lonely spot," he said. "What d'you walk five miles here for, say?"

"We came to see the jolly old ghost!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Blessed if the ghost would have surprised us more than seeing you here!"

"You never knew I was here?"

"How the dickens should we know?" snapped Wharton. "If we'd known you were here, we certainly should not have come near the place."

"No fear," said Nugent. "You may be considered awfully good company in New York, Mr. Poindexter; but you're not the sort of man we want to see!"

"I guess there was a fat guy nosying around here last evening," said the horn-rimmed man. "I reckoned I'd seen him before, though it was too dark to place him. I guess I know now who he was—that fat guy who was on the island with you that time. Say, I reckon he spotted me and told you I was here."

Wharton gave the man a contemptuous look.

"Bunter thought he saw a face at the window," he said. "He never dreamed of recognising you, and he does not know you are here. It was because he saw somebody here that we came over to explore the place this afternoon. But we never dreamed of seeing you here, and should not have come if we had known. You can believe that or not, as you like."

"Aw, don't go off on your ear!" said the horn-rimmed man pacifically. "I guess I'm nervy! Say, nobody else knows I'm here?"

"Nobody, so far as I'm aware."

"And you guys are goin' to keep it dark? You ain't going to let on and risk a man's life for him?"

"Do you mean to say that you're hiding here, and are going on hiding



Harry Wharton & Co. raced down the steps of the mill, to find a fat man in an overcoat lying sprawled at the bottom. "Keep off! Keep off, Wilmot!" cried the terrified man. "I'll shoot—I'm armed." "Why, it's Poindexter!" yelled Wharton in amazement.

here, to keep away from that man Wilmot?" exclaimed Bob.

"Sure! I got to keep doggo till I get a chance of hitting a steamer and getting back to New York. I guess if I keep low that guy will figure that I'm out of the country, and will let up. I tell you, he's after my scalp! I'm telling you, he would plug me as I walked on the steamer, if he saw me! You don't know that guy like I do!" The horn-rimmed man shivered. "I guess, once he's right off the track, I'll have a chance of getting clear. But I got to lie doggo for weeks—I sure don't want to stop a bullet."

"You must have injured the man pretty badly to make him feel like that," said Bob Cherry.

Elias J. Poindexter made no reply to that.

"I'm telling you I got the wind up when I heard you in the place," he said. "I figured that it was that bloodhound got me at last! But I reckon I'm safe here if I lie close. I dropped him off the trail in Kent, and he ain't no call to look for me in Surrey. I guess I had this hide-out all ready long ago; and I hit a roundabout trail to get to it, and I guess it's thrown him off, bloodhound as he is!"

Wharton started a little and

exchanged a glance with his companions. The horn-rimmed man's words brought the man-hunter back into their thoughts. He was not so far away as Elias J. Poindexter supposed.

"Then you're camping here?" asked Wharton slowly.

"Yep! I guess it's a safe hide-out!" "But anyone might come along—just as we did—" said Harry. "The place has an answer—it might be sold—"

"I guess it has been sold," answered the horn-rimmed man. "I guess it was sold to me, bub, when I figured that a hide-out would be wanted."

"Oh!" exclaimed Wharton.

The juniors hardly needed telling more. They could guess that the swindler, running a share-pushing business in the City, barely within the edge of the law, had been aware that any day he might have to run from the police; though certainly he had never foreseen that he might have to run for his life from a private avenger.

All through his unscrupulous career as a swindler of "mugs," Elias K. Poindexter had been prepared, at any moment, to cut and run. In such circumstances, a "hide-out" in a solitary spot was extremely useful to him;

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(Continued  
from page 13.)

a hidden place where he could lie "doggo" while waiting for a chance to escape out of the country. It was to elude the law that he had prepared that "hide-out," as he called it; but he had had to make use of it to escape private vengeance.

Yet, even in his cunning, the rascal had over-reached himself. Evidently, when he fled from London, he had been too wary to head direct for his "hide-out." He had gone a long way round; that was how he had happened to come into the vicinity of Greyfriars, in Kent. There, it was true, he had thrown the pursuer off the track, though his escape had been narrow, and only owing to the intervention of the Greyfriars juniors. Yet that intervention, though it had saved his miserable life, had been the means of putting the pursuer on the track again. For Bunter's deception, and the man-hunter's belief that the fugitive was connected with Wharton, had brought Wilmot to this very neighbourhood.

And the juniors, remembering that Wilmot had been following them when they came to the old mill, realised that, utterly unconsciously, they had been leading the man-hunter to his intended victim.

It was a discomfiting thought. Certainly they could not blame themselves; for they had never dreamed that Poindexter's "hide-out" was anywhere near Wharton Lodge, or in the same county at all. They were amazed to find the man there. But there he was—and the avenger was not far away.

Elias J. Poindexter had recovered his composure now. He had no doubt that the schoolboys, who had saved his life on Popper's Island, could be trusted to keep his secret. Probably he did not understand the contempt and aversion with which they regarded him; but at all events he knew that they were to be trusted not to endanger his life. He bit off the end of a cheroot and lit it.

"Say, you made me jump, you surely did!" he remarked. "But I guess it's O.K. You guys ain't talking about what you seen here. I guess that hoodlum won't be horning in around these parts; but if you saw him you wouldn't let on."

"No," said Harry. "But—" "I guess it's O.K., sure! But you surely did make me jump!" said the horn-rimmed man. "I guess I don't go out of this shebang a whole lot; but a guy can't keep in all the time. I guess I never go far—only a leetle walk around—and you jest happened to horn in while I was moseying around. No harm done, I guess. S'long's you keep it dark."

"The darkfulness will be terrific, my esteemed, swindling friend!" said Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh. "But—" "But—" murmured Bob.

The juniors' faces were grave. They could not help thinking of the man with the black hair and the square jaw, who had followed them that afternoon. Had he followed them all the way to the mill? They could not help thinking so, for it was certain that he suspected Wharton, at least, of being in communication with the fugitive swindler. And if that was the case, he might be watching the place at this very moment.

Poindexter peered uneasily at the grave faces of the schoolboys. He was quick to take alarm.

"Say, what's biting you?" he demanded. "You ain't seen anything of that hoodlum in these parts, say?"

"Yes," answered Harry quietly. The colour ebbed again from the fat, sly face. The narrow eyes bulged behind the horn-rimmed glasses.

"You seen him?" muttered Poindexter huskily. "You mean to say he's in these parts?"

"Yes; and not far away," said Harry.

"Aw, search me! How'd he know? I guess I blinded my trail and beat him to a frazzle! How'd he know?" panted Poindexter.

"It's because we helped you that day on Popper's Island," answered Harry. "He fancies from that that we have some connection; and he has been prowling round my home ever since I came home for the holidays."

The cheroot dropped from the fat man's lips.

"Then—he knows—" "He doesn't know you're here. He cannot have the faintest idea of it, or you would have seen him before this. But—"

"But what?" breathed Poindexter hoarsely. "Give it a name, you young gink! I'm a dead man if he runs me down!"

"But he was following us when we came here this afternoon," said Harry. "He suspects me, if not the others, of being in touch with you. If he has followed us to the mill—"

There was a groan from the wretched fugitive. He reeled against the wall, the sweat thick on his bald brow.

"He may not have followed us so far," said Harry. "I hope not! But if—"

"Even if he has, he doesn't know you're here, Mr. Poindexter," said Bob, taking pity on the wretched man's terror. "You can keep out of sight."

"We'd better clear off!" muttered Nugent. "If the man's after us still he may follow on without looking into the mill at all. He may never know that—"

"No reason at all why he should guess," said Johnny Bull. "We—"

Johnny Bull was interrupted. There was a sound outside the barred door, a creak of the old wooden steps. It was followed by the stealthy sound of a hand groping over the door.

The juniors gazed at one another in silence. A low groan came from the miserable man leaning on the wall. Only the wooden bars on the door stood between him and his relentless tracker. For all knew whose hand it was that groped over the barred door.

The groping sound ceased. It was followed by a sharp, imperative knocking that echoed eerily through the mill. Knock! Knock! Knock!

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### The Attack!

**K**NOCK! Knock! Knock! Loud and sharp, the knocking rang through the silent old building.

Harry Wharton & Co. stood in silence with beating hearts. The man-hunter was there, with only the door between. What was to happen now?

Knock! Knock! It was not a hand that was rapping at the door. It was something hard and heavy; and the juniors guessed that it was the butt of a weapon.

Knock! Knock! "He's there!" whispered Poindexter. "He's there! I'm a dead man! You've brought this on me—you've given me away to that bloodhound! I'm a dead man!"

Wharton glanced at him, but did not speak. It had been in his mind to endeavour to persuade the hunted man to accompany the juniors to Wimford, and place himself under the protection of the police. But it was too late for that now! The enemy was at the door. And it was not likely that the wretch, great as was his fear, would have consented. He had reason to dread the police, as well as the man-hunter. The way of the transgressor was hard.

Knock! Knock! Knock! Harry Wharton made a step towards the door. The horn-rimmed man leaped towards him, grasped his arm, and tore him back.

Wharton shook off his hand roughly. "Keep that door shut, you gink!" hissed Poindexter.

(Continued on next page.)

## CANADIAN CHUM WINS A PRIZE—WHY DON'T YOU?

All you've got to do is to compose a Greyfriars limerick. If it catches the judge's eye you're sure of a wallet or a topping book. Herewith one of this week's winning efforts sent in by George Reed, 176, Woodward Avenue, London, Ontario, Canada, illustrated by our artist. A pocket wallet has been forwarded to George.



Said Coker, with a gleam in his eye,



"The world's greatest detective am I."



"Don't be a fool!" snapped Wharton. "I'm not going to open the door. I'm going to speak to the man—he knows we're here!"

"Keep your mouth shut! He may go away—"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders. "You've brought this on me," hissed the haggard man. "You—"

"It's your own fault!" answered Wharton coldly. "Nobody asked you to be a scoundrel, I suppose. If you had not wronged that man, he would not be hunting you. And he would have got you that day on Popper's Island, if we had not been there—so it comes to the same thing. Pull yourself together! He hasn't got you yet."

"Listen!" breathed Nugent. The knocking at the door ceased. It was followed by a calling voice.

"Are you there, Wharton?"

"I am here," answered Harry.

"Why have you fastened the door?"

"You're not wanted here, Mr. Wilmot!"

"You young rascal!" came the voice of the black-haired man, in bitter tones. "You almost made me believe that I had been deceived—that you knew nothing of my enemy. I had almost made up my mind that that fat fool lied to me, and that I was wasting my time here. But it was you that lied—"

"It is you who are a fool," answered Wharton contemptuously. "I've told you, and I tell you again, that I have no connection whatever with the man Poindexter."

"I will believe that, if he is not here! Open the door and let me search this place for him; and if he is not here I will believe you and go my way and seek for him elsewhere."

Wharton compressed his lips.

"That's a good offer—if the sportsman didn't happen to be here!" murmured Bob Cherry, with a faint grin.

"Will you answer me, Wharton?" The angry voice rang louder. "You say you have told me the truth—"

"I have told you the truth!" snapped Wharton.

"I will believe you if the man is not here! If he is not here, why should you not let me in?"

There was no answer to be made to that. By a fateful chance, the man was there! Chance, or Fate, had led the man hunter to the hiding-place of his enemy; by following a false scent he had struck upon the right trail. There was nothing to be said.

"Answer me, boy! I tell you I will take your word! I ask only to search this old building; if the man is not here, I will take it as proof that you have told me the truth and I will go my way and you will never see me again! If you have told the truth, that is what you want!"

"I've told you the truth!"

"Then admit me!" Wharton made no answer. There was a long pause; and then Wilmot's voice was heard again, in bitter, savage tones.

"You will not admit me?"

"No!"

"Then you have lied, and the man is here!"

"I have not lied!"

"Do you deny that Elias Poindexter is here?" came in hoarse tones through the door.

Wharton did not speak. Even if he had been disposed to lie, it was futile. Only a search of the old mill would have satisfied the man-hunter; and that was death to the hunted man!

"He is here—I know he is here! Open this door, or I will beat it to fragments!" came a yell from the man without.

"I shall not open the door!" answered Wharton steadily. "Listen to me, Mr. Wilmot! I told you the truth—I have no connection with Poindexter and knew nothing of him. Bunter lied to you, as you would have known if you had had any sense. Until this afternoon, I never knew that Poindexter was in this part of the country at all. I had not the remotest idea that he was here when I came here this afternoon. But now that I have found him here, I shall do my best to protect him from you, and my friends will help me."

"I knew he was here!" It was a yell of triumph from the man outside the door. "I knew it!"

"You have followed a false scent; but it happens to have led you to the right place," said Wharton. "You will not be allowed to harm the man so long as we can stop you."

"That will not be long, you young fool!"

"We shall see! There are five of us here and we have handled you before, and can handle you again, if you ask for it."

There was a mocking laugh without.

"You have handled me, that is true, you young fool! But you will not keep me from that scoundrel. I have a weapon in my hand and I shall use it!"

"I think you must be mad!" answered Wharton scornfully. "Weapon or no weapon, you will not be allowed to commit a crime."

"Better clear off, old bean," called out Bob Cherry. "We shall handle you all right, if you want it."

"The handlefulness will be terrific."

"Will you open this door?"

"No!"

Bang! The juniors started, their hearts thumping. It was the roar of a fire-arm outside the door; the man had fired at the lock. They heard the crash of the bullet.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob.

"That's to frighten us," said Wharton contemptuously. "He will not frighten us so easily as all that."

"No fear!"

"Somebody may hear that shot—"

said Nugent hopefully.

Wharton shook his head. The place was lonely; Elias J. Poindexter had selected it carefully for its loneliness. His cunning caution was likely to be his undoing now. There was no other habitation within a great distance; and the steep, muddy lane led to nowhere but the old mill. It was not likely that anything happening at the deserted mill would attract attention.

"Now will you open the door?" came the shouting voice.

"No!"

"I tell you, you are risking your lives! I am here for that scoundrel! He has escaped me before—but he shall not escape me again! Will you risk your lives to defend a man whose pockets are stuffed with stolen money? I tell you, he has robbed me and I could send him to prison if I chose."

"Send him there, and we will not raise a finger to stop you," answered Harry Wharton. "Prison is the place for such a rogue. Bring the police here to take him and we shall be glad to see them."

"Jolly glad, and no mistake!" murmured Nugent.

"The gladfulness would be terrific, in the esteemed circumstances!" grinned the Nabob of Bhanipur.

There was a savage laugh without.

"That is not good enough for me! Three years in gaol would not punish that scoundrel as he deserves! There are a hundred families in this country whom he has ruined by his swindling! There are old people who have lost their all—there are children who have been robbed of their inheritance. Such a man is not fit to live."

The juniors looked at the wretched man leaning on the wall, breathing in gulps of terror. In some measure the words of the man-hunter found an echo in their own breasts. The mere presence of the swindler sickened them. Gladly enough they would have seen him led away by the police, with handcuffs on his wrists. Gladly enough they would have seized the wretch and handed him over to justice. But it was their duty to protect him, if they could, from the lawless vengeance of the man-hunter.

"You hear me?" went on the hissing voice. "I tell you, the scoundrel has lived for years by robbery, and always so cunningly that the law could not touch him. His victims have no remedy. He has always kept barely within the law, except in one case—my own! In my case he overstepped the limit, and added forgery to his other villainies! I tell you I could send him to prison!"

(Continued on next page.)



Should a crook be about,



He had better look out,



For I'll bag him as easy as pie!"



"That is your duty, then!" answered Wharton.

"It is not enough!"

"Tell him!" muttered the horn-rimmed man huskily. "Tell him I'll square—tell him I'll hand over five thousand pounds in banknotes——"

Low and husky as was his voice, the keen ears of the man outside the door heard.

"You will hand over your plunder to save your life, Poindexter! You dog, your plunder belongs to all whom you have robbed, not to me alone. You could not buy your life with a fortune."

The miserable man groaned.

"Now will you open this door?" shouted the man-hunter.

"No!" answered Wharton steadily.

"Then I shall break it in, and if you intervene you will take your chance of sharing the fate of that scoundrel!"

There was a sound of receding footsteps. Silence reigned, broken only by the gulping breath of the shuddering fugitive. But it did not last long. The returning steps of the man-hunter were heard.

Crash, crash! A heavy beam of wood, taken from some dismantled outbuilding, was in his sinewy hands. It crashed on the door with terrific force.

Crash! Crash! Crash!

The door creaked and groaned. It was old and weatherbeaten, and it was plain that it could not long resist such an attack. A gleam of sunshine came through as it split.

"My hat!" breathed Bob Cherry.

The juniors' faces were pale now. The door was giving—a few minutes at the most and it would be down. A terrible struggle impended, with a man grasping a deadly weapon—a man whose frenzied state of excitement and vengeance was little short of madness. Wharton made a sign to his comrades, and grasped the shivering swindler by the arm and pointed to the stair. To defend the lower room was impossible; but there was a chance of holding back the attack at the top of the steep stair.

The stair creaked under the heavy tread of the fat man. The juniors followed him up. Below, sounded crash on crash, as the heavy beam struck the door again and again.

A louder crash and the door was down. Bright sunlight streamed into the dusky, cobwebby room. And Harry Wharton & Co., with beating hearts, heard below the swift footsteps of the man-hunter.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Face to Face!

"WHERE are you, Poindexter? You scoundrel, where are you hiding?"

The voice of the man-hunter rang through the old mill.

Elias J. Poindexter, in the upper room, crouched in a corner. His shaking hand groped in his pocket, and came out with an automatic in it. But the weapon sagged in his hand. He was shaking from head to foot, and his fat face was livid and drawn.

The juniors hardly looked at him.

Hurriedly they had dragged three or four boxes, and a number of packages, to the top of the steep stair, to stop a rush from below. Behind that flimsy barricade they stood, with pale faces and beating hearts, but quietly determined.

To stand aside while murder was done was impossible. And terrible, almost unbelievable as it seemed, that

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was the intention of the man who was shouting below. Bitter wrong—and brooding over it—had unhinged him, and for the time, at least, he was scarcely sane. Unless the juniors could protect the man who could not protect himself, Elias Poindexter was a dead man! Each of the Greyfriars fellows had caught up something to serve as a weapon, though only too well they knew that such weapons could not help them against a firearm in a desperate hand. If the man below proceeded to such an extremity, the lives of the Famous Five were in deadly danger. And they realised now that there was little at which he would hesitate.

"Poindexter!" his voice came up in an exultant shout. "You dog, I've found you at last! Show yourself, you hound!"

A moan of terror came from the miserable man in the corner. Elias Poindexter—cool, unscrupulous, hard as a rock in dealing with the hapless victims of his trickery and treachery—was reduced to a flabby lump of trembling fat by a danger that threatened his worthless skin. The automatic in his hand was shaking like a leaf.

There was a trampling footstep on the stair. A fierce face rose into view over the stack of boxes and bags—a face white with passion, under the thick, black hair, the square jaw jutting, the lips drawn back in a snarl. The fierce eyes glittered at the juniors, and the hand came up with a revolver in it.

"Keep aside, you, or——"

Crash!

It was a can of beef, hurled by Bob Cherry with accurate aim, that interrupted the man-hunter. It struck him full on the chest with terrific force, and sent him spinning backwards.

There was a rolling and crashing on the stair, a heavy bump below. Wilmot had rolled to the lower floor.

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Wharton.

There was a yell of rage from under the juniors. Again the trampling footsteps on the stair! But each of the Famous Five was ready now; and as the face rose into view every right hand hurled a missile. Crash, crash, the missiles landed on the black-haired man, and he dodged below the line of fire, panting with fury.

His voice came up in a furious shout.

"I've warned you! I've warned you! Your fate will be on your own heads if you do not stand aside! I've warned you!"

"You can save your breath!" retorted Harry Wharton. "You will not commit a murder while we can stop you."

"I am coming—and I shall shoot! I warn you——"

"Save your breath!" repeated the captain of the Greyfriars Remove.

"Oh, crikey!" murmured Bob. "What a day out! But we're jolly well going to stop him!"

"Stick to it!" murmured Johnny Bull.

The juniors waited tensely. Poindexter, crouched in his corner, watched them with haggard eyes behind the horn-rimmed glasses. He had sunk to the floor, and the automatic in his trembling hand lay on the planks. Every rag of nerve was gone from the fat and flabby carcass of the swindler. The weapon in his hand was useless; he had not the courage to use it. A low moaning of dread came from his palsied lips. Looking at the wretch the juniors might well have doubted whether it was worth while to risk their lives to save him. Yet they had no choice in the matter. They could not see murder done.

There was a pause before the man-

hunter stirred again to the attack. Frenzied as he was, scarcely sane, he hesitated to harm the schoolboys. But his footsteps came on again at last.

Bang!

The revolver roared on the dusky stair, the bullet whizzing high and spattering on the roof above.

Crash, crash, crash! The missiles rained on him. He had fired to miss—the juniors knew that, hoping to scare them aside. But now he came desperately scrambling at the flimsy barricade, his eyes blazing, the revolver gripped in his hand. Wharton sprang to thrust him back, and the muzzle bore full on the captain of the Greyfriars Remove.

"Stand aside!" panted Wilmot hoarsely. "Aside, or——"

Hurree Janset Ram Singh had caught up Poindexter's suitcase. With both hands, with all his force, the dusky junior hurled it. It crashed on Wilmot, and swept him back. The revolver roared, the bullet whizzing away to the roof as the man-hunter went backwards down the stair, the suitcase tumbling and crashing after him.

Wharton panted.

"Good old Inky!"

"My hat!" breathed Nugent. "How's this going to end?"

The man below was muttering and panting. It was clear that the fall had hurt him, though the juniors could not hope that he was disabled. For the moment he had been beaten off, but only too well they knew that he would come on again, and the desperate climax was coming.

Wharton, setting his teeth, stepped towards the shrunken wretch in the corner. He stooped and took the automatic from his hand. Poindexter gave him a haggard look, but did not resist.

"Harry——" breathed Nugent.

Harry Wharton's face was white and set.

"We've got to stop him!" he said between his teeth. "The man's practically mad—we've got to stop him! Our lives are at stake now."

He stopped towards the stair and called in a firm voice:

"Mr. Wilmot! I have a weapon here! If you come up the stair again, I shall shoot, and you will take your chance!"

"Good egg!" breathed Bob. "That's the stuff to give 'em!"

A savage laugh answered from below. "I am coming! If you would save your lives, stand aside from what does not concern you! I am coming!"

"Then I shall fire!" said Harry steadily.

"If—if you could get him in the arm or the leg——" muttered Bob.

Wharton nodded.

There was a trample on the steep stair. The black head of hair, wildly ruffled, rose into view. The maddened eyes glared up.

Wharton, with a steady hand, fired twice. Crack, crack! The first bullet grazed the black-haired man's shoulder, and he did not heed it. His right arm swung up into view, the revolver in the gripping hand. And the second bullet, steady as the first, struck the arm as it came up. Wharton's face was white; but he did not falter. If only for the maddened man's own sake, he had to prevent his deadly purpose, and it was no time to falter. The upraised arm sagged down, and the revolver went clattering to the floor below. The black-haired man stood, staring almost stupidly, while his injured arm sagged to his side, and the blood ran down his fingers.

There was a shout, or, rather, a howl, from the shrunken wretch in the corner.



"Shoot! Shoot him dead! You've got him now—shoot!"

"Shut up, you cur!" yelled Bob Cherry savagely.

"I tell you, shoot!" screamed Poindexter.

"Silence, you rotter!"

The black-haired man disappeared down the stair. Harry Wharton breathed hard and deep. Footsteps, and a muttering voice, sounded from below. They heard the man-hunter groping for his fallen revolver, and waited in tense anxiety for another attack. But it did not come.

"He's hurt!" breathed Nugent.

Wharton nodded, in silence. His bullet had struck the man's arm—the man was hurt, though not seriously. The juniors could only hope that the hurt would deter him from another attack.

It seemed so. For many minutes he was heard stirring below. Then there

"Stop!" As Bob Cherry plunged through the gap in the fence, Wilmot ran into his path, his revolver in his left hand half raised. "Stop!" he repeated. Bob paused, his eyes gleaming.

any sign that the fracas at the mill had attracted attention, he was disappointed. The muddy lane that trailed away through the woodlands was deserted. There was no sign of life to be seen—only too carefully had the fugitive swindler selected his "hide-out" for its loneliness. Nothing living stirred in the vicinity, till suddenly the black-haired man came in sight, moving in the enclosure below the window.

He looked up, and his eyes met those of the Greyfriars junior looking down.

Wharton could see that the man's right arm was bandaged, and that it

turned away at last, and disappeared round the building.

Wharton drew a hard breath.

"He's still there?" asked Bob, in a low voice, as the captain of the Remove turned from the window.

"Yes—prowling round like a wild beast!" said Harry. "We're in a thumping scrape, you men!"

"The scrapefulness is terrific!" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Bob Cherry grinned faintly.

"What a jolly afternoon!" he murmured. "We never expected a picnic



was silence, and they knew that he had left the mill. But that he was gone for good they could scarcely venture to hope. And looking at one another's pale, tense faces, the chums of the Greyfriars Remove wondered how this was to end.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Bob Cherry's Venture!

**H**ARRY WHARTON looked from the window.

The sun was setting over the Surrey hills, though there were hours of daylight left yet. From the window he could see the green woodlands stretching on all sides. Far in the distance rose the smoke from the chimney of a farmhouse. Once he thought he heard the knock of a motor-horn, on the wind, from the distant high-road. But if he had hoped to see

hung stiffly. It was a relief to see it, for it meant that Wilmot could not use his revolver with his right hand, at least.

The slowly revolving sail of the windmill passed the little window, and shut the black-haired man off from view for a few moments. It passed, and he was still standing there, staring up with gleaming eyes.

Wharton wondered what thoughts were passing in his half-crazed mind. In the set, grim face he could read relentless determination. The man-hunter had been baffled for the moment; and it seemed that he had abandoned the attempt to get at the defenders of the mill in the upper room.

But if he was beaten, he was not beaten off. Only too clearly was his determination to be read in his grim face.

For several minutes he remained where he was, staring up. Once he made a motion towards his pocket with his left hand, as if with the savage thought of firing up at the window. But he did not draw the revolver. He

like this when we started on our little walk."

Wharton glanced at Poindexter. The wretch was seated now on a box, leaning back against the wall. He seemed in a dazed state with haunting fear.

"We can't desert him!" said Harry, in a low voice.

Bob shook his head.

"We can't!" he agreed. "But how's this going to end?"

"Goodness knows!"

"We could clear off if we liked," said Frank Nugent. "That fellow wouldn't stop us—he would be glad enough to see us go. But we can't."

"If one of us could clear, and get the police here——" said Johnny Bull.

"He wouldn't let one of us clear. He would be glad to see all of us go; but if one tried it on, he would know what it meant. He doesn't want the police on the scene."

"What about collaring him?" suggested Bob. "We collared him before, and we could——"

"He would use his weapon if we tried



to collar him now," answered Wharton quietly. "There's no doubt about that."

"I—I suppose not."

"We've got to stand by that cringing cur," said Harry, with a glance of contempt and dislike at the man of the mill. "We can't let a man be murdered—even a vile scoundrel like that. But goodness knows how it's going to end."

"If we're not back by dark—" said Nugent.

"It's a long time to dark. Even if we're not back by dark, I don't suppose my uncle will guess that anything has happened. Why should he? He hasn't the faintest idea that there's anybody in this old mill. He will think we're late—that's all!"

"Well, we're for it!" said Bob. "Anyhow, we've kept off the jolly old enemy so far, and he won't be able to use one of his fins again in a hurry. That will rather cramp his style with that gun of his!"

Wharton looked from the window again. He started a little at the sight of the black-haired man, moving away by the broken old gateway into the lane. Was the man going, after all, admitting defeat. From the bottom of his heart, Wharton prayed that it might be so.

In the lane, outside the shattered fence, the black-haired man stopped, and looked back at the mill. For a long minute he stood there, staring at the building, and then he turned again, crossed the lane, and plunged into the wood on the other side.

Wharton caught his breath.

"He's gone!" he said.

"Gone?" repeated Bob Cherry.

"Yes—but—" The captain of the Remove shook his head. "He's not gone for good. That's too much to hope for, I'm afraid."

"Well, the more he leaves us alone the better," said Bob. "Even in a lonely place like this he can't keep up this game too long. He seems to fancy that he's in the wild and woolly west, but he jolly well isn't! Don't I wish I could see a bobby coming along that lane!"

"The sight of an esteemed and ridiculous bobby would be a boonful blessing," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Perhaps, now he has bunkfully departed, there is a chance for one of our esteemed selves to sneak quietly away and fetch an absurd policeman."

"I—I wonder—" said Wharton doubtfully.

He stared from the window. The man-hunter had vanished from sight; but Wharton could not help feeling that he was not far away. He had a certainty that the keen eyes were watching the mill from the trees across the lane. It was more likely that Wilmot hoped to give the schoolboys the impression that he was gone, and so induce them to leave the mill.

Only the Greyfriars fellows stood between him and his lawless vengeance, and it was certain that he would have been glad to see them go, if they all went together. Long before they could return with the police, he would have finished with the fugitive swindler.

The long minutes passed slowly, on leaden wings. There was no sign from the man-hunter, if he was still there. A hope was growing in the hearts of the juniors that he was indeed gone. Perhaps the wish was father to the thought to some extent.

"Well, what about trying it on?" asked Bob at last. "If one of us could get to Wimford, his game would be up. The others could stay here and protect that crawling worm. After this, I fancy

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even that rotter would be glad to see a policeman's uniform."

"We shan't consult him, at all events," said Harry. "But I can't help thinking that Wilmot is watching. Only—if we could only get the police here—" Never had the captain of the Remove imagined that he would ever feel so anxious for the sight of a blue uniform.

"I—I guess I'm willing for you to get the cops, if you can!" came the quavering voice of Poindexter. "I'm sure willing now. Now that hoodlum has found my hide-out, I guess I'm a dead man if he ain't cinched. Say, I guess I'll be some pleased if you can get the cops here." He gave a groan. "Though I reckon it means the stone jug for me! If that hoodlum can't get my scalp, he will sure do the next thing."

"And a good thing, too!" snapped Wharton. "If he can send you to prison, he ought to have done it long ago. It was his duty, only the man seems to be half-cracked. I shall be glad enough to see you get what you deserve, you miserable worm!"

Elias J. Poindexter only mumbled dismally. It was evident that he was very unwilling to let Wilmot set the law in motion against him, and that, so long as he had a chance of eluding his enemy, he preferred the black-haired man to hunt him and leave the police out of the matter. But his chance of eluding the man-hunter was gone now, and even a prison-cell was preferable to the deadly vengeance that threatened him now that he was tracked to his hide-out. The wretched man had made up his mind to the lesser of the two evils.

"Let's try it on," said Bob. "Look here! I'll try to get through, and even if he's on the watch I may dodge him. You can keep guard here while I try to get through."

Wharton hesitated.

"The man's desperate!" he muttered. "If—if he should shoot— And he might, for if he sees you, he will know what the game is."

"Chance it!" said Bob resolutely. "Once I get in the wood I shall dodge him all right. Look here—we've simply got to get the police. We can't stay here besieged by a giddy lunatic with a gun in his paw."

And it was agreed that it should be tried on. Leaving his comrades in the upper room, Bob Cherry descended the stair quietly. The doorway was open. The shattered door lying in fragments, with the heavy beam that the man-hunter had used to beat it in. Bob looked out of the doorway, scanning the open ground in the sunlight, and the shady wood beyond. He stepped from the doorway, his heart beating. He would not have been surprised to hear a shot ring from the shadow of the trees across the lane.

He was in sight now, if the man was watching. He lost no time. Once he was out of the mill, he ran for the broken fence at a little distance from the gateway. There were many gaps in the fence through which he could force a way.

He reached the fence at breathless speed. But as he reached it there was a sound of running feet outside.

Bob gritted his teeth.

The man-hunter was there! He had not gone, after all! He had seen the junior leave the mill, and had emerged from his cover, and cut along the outside of the fence, to head him off.

Bob Cherry did not pause. He was close to a gap in the fence, and he plunged headlong through.

"Stop!"

It was the shout of the man-hunter. Wilmot, panting, ran into his path, his revolver in his left hand, half-raised. His eyes blazed at the Greyfriars junior.

"Stop!" he repeated.

Bob paused. His hands were clenched.

"Get back! Go, all of you, if you choose!" snapped the man-hunter. "I shall be glad to see the last of you! Go, the whole gang of you—all except Elias Poindexter! But you do not go singly!" His lip curved in a sneer. "I do not want the police here, my boy. Not yet. Go back; or take the consequences!"

Bob's eyes gleamed at him. It was as Wharton had supposed—the man-hunter had hoped that the schoolboys would go; he wanted them to go. But not a single messenger for the police, while the others guarded the man of the mill! The half-raised revolver threatened Bob Cherry, the man-hunter's eyes glinting over it.

"Go back! All or none!" said Wilmot savagely.

Bob Cherry, without a word, backed through the gap in the fence. Inside the yard of the mill, however, he did not head for the building. He ran swiftly along the inner side of the fence, towards the gateway. For a moment or two he was out of Wilmot's sight. Then, as the man-hunter put his face to the gap in the fence, and stared through to watch him, he gave a shout of rage:

"Stop!"

Bob raced on.

He heard the running feet of the man-hunter in the lane outside the fence. Wilmot was dashing to cut him off at the gateway.

But the junior, running like a deer, reached the gateway, leaped through, and raced across the lane to the wood. Wilmot was still a dozen paces distant as Bob crossed the lane and plunged into the trees.

"Stop! Stop, or I shoot!" yelled Wilmot.

The revolver was raised. A thrill ran through the junior, but he did not stop. With a desperate bound, he reached the trees. The man-hunter's eyes were blazing over his levelled weapon. But he did not pull the trigger. He lowered the revolver and dashed fiercely in pursuit of the junior.

Bob panted on. For a fearful instant his nerves had thrilled with the anticipation of a bullet crashing through flesh and bone. But he was safe now. Desperate as the man was, he had not fired on the schoolboy. Bob heard his panting breath, his trampling footsteps, in the wood, in fierce pursuit; but he ran like a hare among the trees, winding among gnarled trunks and brambles and bracken, and in a few minutes the sounds of pursuit died away behind him.

But the junior did not pause. He ran on swiftly, and did not slacken speed till he was beyond the wood, and in a lane that led to Wimford. And then he swung on at a steady trot.

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Desperate Measures!

"THANK goodness!" panted Wharton.

"The thankfulness is terrific!"

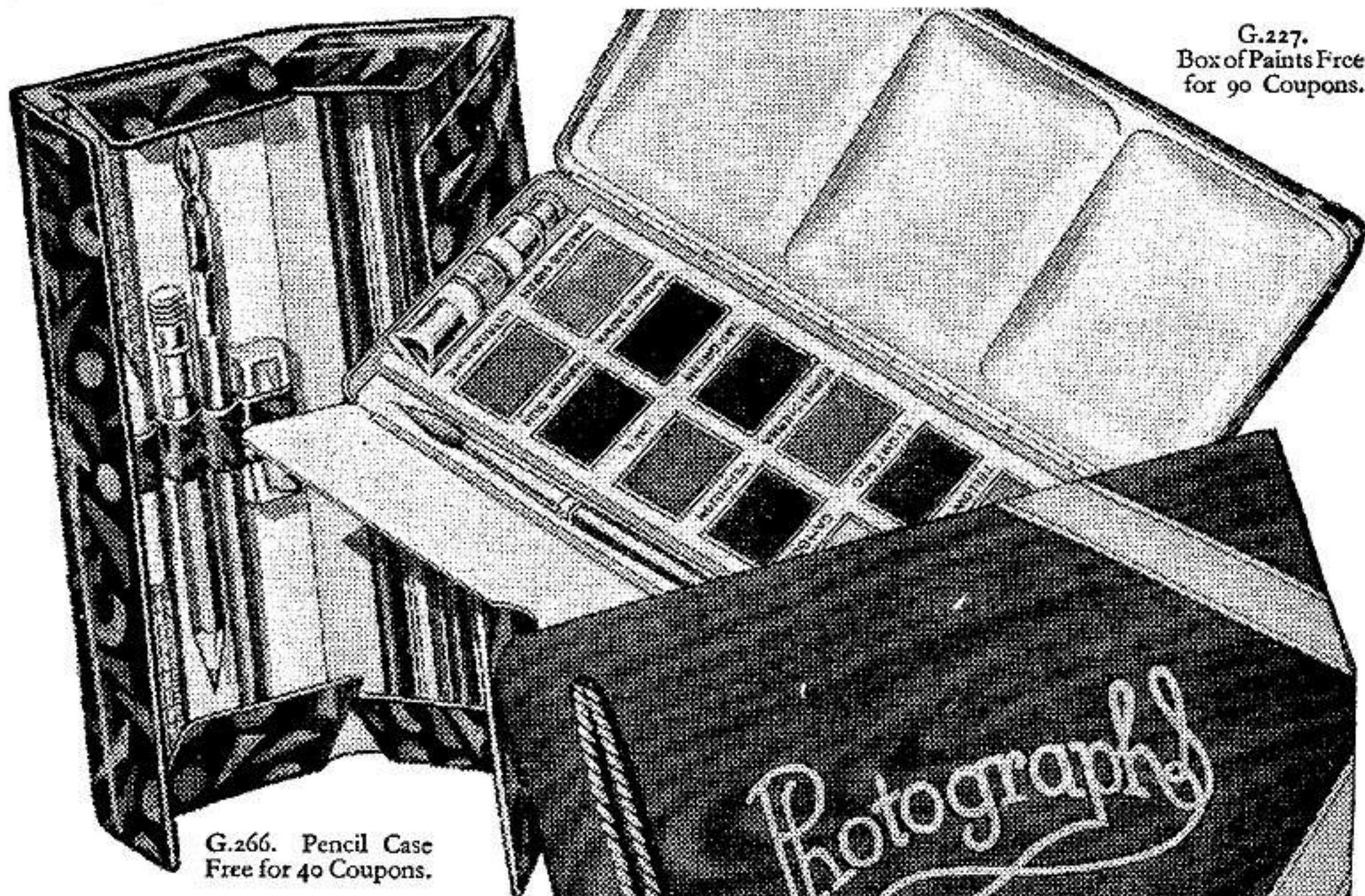
"He's clear!" said Johnny Bull.

From the window in the upper room of the mill the four juniors had watched, their hearts throbbing—almost ceasing to beat when they had seen the revolver lifted in the man-hunter's hand. With

(Continued on page 22.)



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## THE MYSTERY OF THE MILL!

(Continued from page 20.)

deep relief, they saw Bob vanish into the wood. But they listened, with painful intensity, for the sound of a shot from the wood, into which the man-hunter had plunged in pursuit of the junior. No sound reached their ears, and at last they saw Wilmot emerge from the trees into the lane, alone. They breathed freely, with the certainty that Bob had won through.

The man-hunter came through the gateway, towards the mill, his face set and his brow black. He disappeared from the sight of the juniors at the window, and they hurried at once to the head of the stair. They had little doubt that an attack was coming now.

Wilmot's voice came up hoarsely from below:

"Wharton! You are there—you hear me?"

"I hear you!" answered the captain of the Remove.

"You have sent for the police?"

"That is so."

"They will not be here yet!" hissed the man-hunter. "But you have forced my hand! If you are willing to follow your friend, the way is open to you."

"We cannot go and leave a man to be murdered!" answered Wharton quietly.

"That is impossible!"

"If you choose to go, I will not bar your path," said Wilmot hoarsely.

"You cannot save Poindexter."

"We shall try!"

"Fool! I tell you that you cannot save him; but I have no time to lose now that information will be given to the police. For the last time, will you go?"

"We cannot go!" answered Harry. "And if you are wise, Mr. Wilmot, you will go yourself. When the police get here you will be arrested."

A savage laugh echoed up the stair.

"I have ample time. I shall finish with Poindexter long before the police arrive—and with you, if you remain."

The stair creaked.

"Stay where you are!" said Wharton. "You know that I am armed now, Mr. Wilmot; I have Poindexter's revolver. I shall fire if you show yourself!"

The creaking of the stair ceased. The four juniors stood waiting and listening in the silence that followed. It was a full minute before Wilmot's voice was heard again.

"I am unwilling to harm you; but nothing shall stand between me and the man I want. I will give you a few minutes to reflect. After that, if you remain, you take your chance!"

"We are ready to take it!" answered Harry.

"The readiness is terrific, my esteemed potty friend!" said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

There was dead silence below.

The juniors waited, grouped at the top of the dusky stair, by the flimsy barricade. Their hearts throbbed unpleasantly while they waited and watched. No sound came from below; but at every instant they expected to hear the stair creak under a sudden rush.

Minute followed minute, and still the silence was unbroken.

Frank Nugent passed his hand across his brow, wiping away the perspiration. The strain was telling on the Greyfriars juniors. Johnny Bull set his teeth hard. Even a fierce attack would have been preferable to this; but the juniors could only wait, on the alert, watching for the desperate rush that might come any moment from below.

They strained their ears to listen; but

no sound reached them, and they began to wonder whether the man-hunter had left the mill. But it was more likely that he was keeping silent, in order to throw them off their guard when the rush came suddenly.

They could not hope that he would leave them unassailed till Bob Cherry had had time to reach Wimford, and bring the police to the rescue. In an hour, perhaps, help might come; the man-hunter had no time to lose. In the dead silence, broken only by the dull sound of the turning windmill, the Greyfriars juniors could almost hear the throbbing of their own hearts.

The silence was suddenly broken; but not from the direction that the juniors had expected. A sudden hoarse scream of terror came from Poindexter, whose existence they had almost forgotten as they watched the stair for the expected attack.

Harry Wharton spun round, startled.

"What——" he panted.

The fat man was crouched against the wall, his shaking finger pointed at the little patched window, his eyes almost starting through the horn-rimmed glasses.

Wharton's startled glance followed the direction of the trembling finger. At the same instant there was a crash, and the window burst in in clattering fragments.

A head and shoulders showed in the opening. The juniors stared at it, almost stupefied.

The window was at a great height above the ground, and not for an instant had they dreamed that the enemy could reach it.

But an arm was flung through the aperture, two hands were grasping hold, and a fierce face glared in. Behind the clambering man the sail of the windmill rolled over and onward.

"Oh!" gasped Wharton. "The sail——"

It was the revolving arm of the windmill that had carried the desperate man up, at the risk of life and limb. His long silence was explained now. While the juniors had watched the stair, the attack was coming from another quarter.

Harry Wharton rushed towards the window.

With desperate determination the man-hunter had quitted the sail as it swept past the window and clutched hold. One crashing blow from a heavy butt had driven in the window, and the man-hunter was already clambering through.

Half through the window, his legs dangling in space, head and shoulders thrust through the broken sash and glass, the man-hunter gripped the revolver in his left hand, and glared round for his enemy.

A second more and he would have fired.

But in that second Harry Wharton reached him, with the spring of a tiger. The barrel of the automatic crashed on the revolver, and sent it spinning from the desperate man's hand. It flew through the air, and thudded on the earth far below.

### THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

#### In the Shadow of Death!

**H**ARRY WHARTON panted. He had struck the revolver away in time, and the man-hunter was disarmed.

A moment more and he had thrown the automatic aside, and grasped the man at the window.

"Back up, you mon!" he panted.

His comrades rushed to his aid.

Four pairs of hands clutched at the struggling man.

"Drag him in!" panted Wharton.

Now that the desperate man was disarmed, the juniors' fears were for his life. A fall from the high window of the mill meant instant death. And now that his weapon was gone they welcomed the chance of handling him.

To drag him in at the window and make him a prisoner was the instant thought of the Greyfriars juniors.

The man struggled fiercely in their grasp, heedless of the terrible danger of his position.

"Keep hold of him!" gasped Nugent, "If he falls——"

"Drag him in! We've got him now!" panted Johnny Bull.

"The gotfulness is terrific, my esteemed potty friend; the gamefulness is up!" chuckled the Nabob of Bhanipur breathlessly.

With a powerful wrench the man-hunter tore himself from the grasping hands. He hung to the narrow sill, dangling over space, his eyes blazing at the juniors.

"You mad fool!" shouted Wharton. "Do you want to be killed?"

"You potty chump——" gasped Johnny Bull.

Wharton reached out to grasp the man's collar. Every instant the juniors dreaded to see him fall from his hold, to be smashed on to the earth below.

With a snarl, the man-hunter released one hand and struck Wharton's hand savagely away.

The next moment he had flung himself from the window.

The juniors caught their breath with horror. It seemed to them for that fearful moment that Wilmot had flung himself to death.

But the next instant they saw him clutching the descending sail of the windmill.

He had taken a desperate chance, but he had succeeded. He gripped hold, and the descending sail swept him earthward.

They saw him leap clear, land on the earth, and roll over.

"Oh!" stuttered Wharton, his face white as chalk. He stared down from the broken window at the fallen figure.

The fall had been a heavy one, and for some minutes the man lay where he was, though he was stirring. Then he rose slowly to his feet. His face turned upward to the staring faces at the window, convulsed with rage for a moment. Then he stared round for his fallen weapon, and caught it up, and the muzzle swung up, aimed at the window.

"Get back!" said Wharton hastily, and the juniors retreated from the window.

Crack, crack!

The man was firing, in blind rage; the bullets crashing into the roof above the window. But there was no danger from the lead fired at such an angle, and the juniors hardly heeded it as it crashed.

"The mad fool!" muttered Wharton. "Thank goodness he was not killed! Oh, if the police would come!"

"Bob must be near Wimford now," muttered Nugent. "He may have got a lift on the road, too——"

"Oh, crumbs! What a day out!" said Johnny Bull.

There was a footstep below, and the juniors rushed back to the head of the stair. Wharton caught up the automatic. But the stair did not creak under the expected tread. The voice of the man-hunter, hoarse with fury, came to their ears, but he did not attempt to ascend.

"This is the finish. You hear me? I





The window suddenly burst in and a head and shoulders showed in the opening. "Oh!" gasped Wharton. "Look out . . . it's the man-hunter!"

have tried to spare you—I would not willingly harm you. But this is the finish. I give you ten minutes to leave the mill. Ten minutes—or die where you stand."

The juniors made no answer. The savage words seemed to them an empty threat. By the stair the man could not attack successfully, and now that they were on their guard, he could not reach the window again. All they feared was a desperate attempt which would force them to do him injury. They were not yet aware of what was in his desperate mind.

"You hear me?" he shouted.

"I hear you!" said Harry.

"You have ten minutes. After that you take your chance. In ten minutes I shall fire the mill."

Wharton started.

"You villain!" he gasped.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Johnny Bull.

"I give you a chance to go. Take your chance while you have it," came the hoarse voice from below. "I mean every word. In ten minutes I fire the mill, whether you are gone or whether you remain. Take your chance while it lasts—for the fire will drive you out if you do not go."

"We shall not go," said Wharton between his teeth.

"Then your fate will be on your own heads. I have warned you, and for ten minutes the way is open."

They heard the man move away from the stair. The juniors looked at one another with startled eyes.

"That does it!" muttered Johnny Bull.

"He—he can't mean it!" breathed Nugent. "He couldn't—" Nugent did not finish. He knew that the man-hunter would carry out his terrible threat.

"He means it," said Harry quietly. "The man is half mad—or more than half. And—if he sets fire to the mill—"

He crossed to the shattered window and stared out. In the lonely lane that ran through the woods there was no sign of life. No chance passer-by—no sign of help. Had Bob reached the police station at Wimford? But even if he had, help could not come in time to prevent the man-hunter from carrying out his purpose.

There was a husky mutter from the horn-rimmed man, hunched against the wall. Elias Poindexter had heard the savage threat shouted up the stair, and he knew that the end was near.

"I'm a dead man," he muttered. "I guess I'm a dead man." He slumped against the wall, dazed with terror.

The juniors waited. Wharton's eyes swept the woods and the lonely lane hopelessly. No one was in sight—no one was likely to come into sight. The cunning caution of the fugitive swindler had sealed his own doom.

The minutes passed—on leaden wings, as it seemed to the schoolboys. Yet the interval seemed terribly short. They could hear the black-haired man moving about below. Again and again he came and went, and they knew that he was carrying fuel into the mill; fragments from the dismantled outbuildings, dry boughs from the hedges. They knew that the stack of fuel was growing in the lower room. And the mill itself was dry, after weeks of sunshine. Once the fire was started—

Wharton looked at the wretched man slumped against the wall. He was doomed, and his defenders were doomed if they still stood by him. He was not thinking of them. His fat, flabby face was livid; his eyes sunken and hollow

behind the horn-rimmed glasses. Wharton wondered that even this wretch did not urge the schoolboys to go, while there was yet time, and leave him to take his chance. But he was thinking only of himself. Not that they would have abandoned him to his fate. His haggard eyes met Wharton's as the junior turned from the window.

"You don't see them coming?" he breathed huskily. "You don't see anything of the cops?"

Wharton shook his head.

Ten minutes had passed—more than ten minutes. Still the black-haired man was moving below. His voice rang suddenly.

"Are you going?"

There was no reply from the Greyfriars fellows. They heard the man-hunter moving again; they knew instinctively that he was hesitating. But if he hesitated, he resolved at last. In the silence they heard the scratching of matches. A spiral of smoke rolled up the stair. It was followed by a thick volume.

The mill had been fired!

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### A Rush to the Rescue!

COLONEL WHARTON stared from the window of his car, and signalled to the chauffeur to halt. His eyes were fixed in astonishment on a dusty, panting figure in the lane. Bob Cherry, swinging on at a steady, rapid trot, was tired and dusty, and the perspiration trickled down his crimson face; but he did not slacken till he saw the colonel's car. And then he ran into the middle of the road, and waved his hand frantically.

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The car halted, and Bob came panting up to the door, under the colonel's astonished stare. Wimford was close at hand now; a quarter of a mile more and Bob would have arrived at the police station. But every minute saved was a minute to the good, and never had he been so glad to see the colonel's bronzed, brown face.

"What has happened?" rapped the colonel.

Bob panted, and as he panted, he scrambled into the car.

"Get to the police station—quick. I'll tell you as we go—quick, sir, for goodness' sake!"

"Harry—" The colonel's voice was sharp with sudden anxiety.

"All right—so far, I think. But—"

Colonel Wharton rapped a word to the chauffeur, and the car rushed on into Wimford. Bob Cherry leaned panting on the cushions. It was a swift run into the town; but swift as it was, Bob had time to pant out the story of what was happening at the old mill.

"Good gad!" breathed the colonel.

The car stopped, and the old military gentleman sprang out.

"Wait here!" he said, and vanished into the police station.

Bob Cherry leaned back on the cushions, and breathed hard and deep. That long, hard run had taken it out of him; but he was hardly conscious of his fatigue. He was thinking of his chums at the old mill; wondering what had happened since he had left them—what might have happened.

It was less than two minutes before Colonel Wharton came striding back to the car, accompanied by Inspector Stacey, of Wimford, and a constable. The latter mounted beside the chauffeur; the inspector entered the car with Colonel Wharton, and it rushed away. Almost in a flash, as it seemed, Wimford was left behind, and the car was speeding along the country road. Fast as it was, it seemed slow to Bob.

"Now tell me what has happened, my boy," said the police inspector, his eyes curiously on Bob's flushed, perspiring face.

He listened intently, and Bob saw a grin of satisfaction dawn on the plump, rosy face of the country inspector.

"You're sure the man is Poindexter—Elias J. Poindexter, director of the Solid Nugget Mining Company?" he asked.

"No doubt about that," answered Bob.

Inspector Stacey rubbed his hands.

"Is the man wanted by the police Mr. Stacey?" asked Colonel Wharton. "I have seen a great deal of mention of his name in the newspapers of late, but I was not aware—"

"He is wanted, sir!" said the inspector.

"When he first disappeared from his offices in the City, it was doubtful whether a charge could be laid against him. He has lived by roguery for years—ever since he came over from New York, in fact; but he has had amazing luck—amazing cunning, I should rather say. Even after he ran, it was doubtful for a time whether he had rendered himself amenable to the law. But a good deal has come out since then; and for the past two days a warrant has been out for his arrest, on several charges of embezzlement, and obtaining money by false pretences."

"Then—then you're going to bag him, sir?" exclaimed Bob.

Mr. Stacey smiled.

"I am going to bag him, as you express it, Master Cherry, and I am very glad of the chance," he replied.

"The general belief is, that he is making a secret attempt to get out of the country; the latest information is that he was seen in Kent over a week ago. Certainly, no one suspected that he had a hiding-place in a remote corner of Surrey. If it is certain that this man of the mill is Elias J. Poindexter—"

"That's quite certain," said Bob.

"I presume that the man Wilmot is one of his many victims," remarked the colonel.

"That is the case," answered the inspector. "The name is known in connection with some of his transactions; indeed, a warrant would have been out earlier for Poindexter, had Wilmot

come forward to help the police. He seems to have preferred to take the law into his own hands. A very foolish proceeding on his part, which will cause him trouble."

"Heaven grant we arrive before mischief is done!" muttered the colonel, tugging at his grey moustache.

The car was fairly flying. It left the country road and turned into a rutty lane, and rocked and bumped wildly as it flew.

Far away, over the tree-tops, the windmill was in sight now, in the far distance. But the lanes were winding. The mill disappeared from view again behind sweeping woods.

Bump, bump, jolt, clatter! Over muddy ruts and ridges the car rocked and roared.

Trees and hedges flashed by in a blur. Bob Cherry held on, to keep from pitching out of his seat. Still he longed for the whizzing car to go faster. By narrow, steep lanes, where probably no car had ever passed before, they rushed and rocked on.

Inspector Stacey gave a sudden start, staring from the window. Thick woods hid the windmill; but against the blue of the sky, in the bright sunset, a trailing column of smoke rose on the wind.

Colonel Wharton, following his glance, clenched his hands.

"That is—fire!" he muttered.

"A fire at the mill!" said the inspector.

"Good gad!"

The colour seemed drained from Bob's ruddy face.

"A fire—at the mill." He hardly breathed. "What—what has happened? What has that demon done?"

He shouted to the chauffeur to drive faster, hardly conscious that the words were leaving his lips. The colonel, with a set face, sat like an image of bronze. The car rocked and raced on.

"A minute more!" breathed the inspector. His ruddy face was pale.

The car shot out into the lane that ran by the gateway of the mill. It tore on to the gateway, and roared to a halt.

The windmill, in full sight now, was bursting with smoke. Smoke poured from the broken window, and rolled out of the shattered doorway, and eddied in wisps and spirals from a thousand crevices in the old timbers. Through the rolling smoke came here and there a red tongue of flame, and the crackling sounded like rifle-fire.

The chauffeur jumped down, the constable after him; but, before they were on the ground, Bob Cherry had leaped headlong from the car, and was running towards the mill.

The colonel and the inspector were out the next moment. Inspector Stacey's eyes were on a black-haired man, who had turned from staring at the burning mill to stare in startled rage at the car and the new arrivals. He shouted to the constable.

"Seize that man!"

Wilmot stood as if rooted to the ground, his eyes blazing, his left hand gripping the revolver in his pocket. For the moment it seemed that the desperate man would resist, that he would enter into furious conflict with the officers of the law, rather than abandon the vengeance that was now within his grasp. There was a glimmer of the half-drawn revolver in the sunset.

But it would have been hopeless, and he knew it; and, even in his fury, he was perhaps incapable of so desperate an act. Even when he had fired the mill he had counted on the schoolboys rushing down through the smoke and



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saving themselves while there was yet time.

Lawless and desperate as he was, he would shed no blood but that of his enemy, and his enemy was saved from him now. For a moment he lingered, enraged, uncertain; then he thrust back the revolver into his pocket, turned, and bounded away.

"Seize him!"

The black-haired man leaped the fence and vanished into the wood.

At a sign from the inspector, the constable ran in pursuit, while Inspector Stacey hurried after the colonel towards the burning mill.

Bob Cherry had already reached it. "Harry!" he shouted. "Frank, old man! Johnny! Inky!" And from the swirling smoke an answering shout came back.

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Only in Time!

"**W**E'RE saved!" panted Wharton.

The smoke was thickening in the old mill. The upper room was thick with it, and it rolled out in a volume from the smashed window. But, from the window, through the swirling smoke, Wharton had sighted the car as it came rocking down the lane, and he knew that help had come.

It had only come in time!

The mill had not yet caught, but the stack of fuel was burning fiercely in the room below. It was only a matter of minutes now before the flames would be clambering the walls and licking the roof. Already the juniors had determined on a desperate dash down the stair, and a hand-to-hand grapple with the man-hunter, at the risk of the revolver. It might be death; it was only too likely to be death for one or two of them, but it was death for all to remain in the burning mill.

From Poindexter there was no aid to be expected; even as the smoke thickened and eddied in the upper room of the mill, the wretched man remained slumped against the wall, mumbling in a palsy of fear.

The juniors had only themselves to depend on, and they had nerved themselves for the last desperate struggle when that last glance from the window showed Wharton the car—and his uncle, the inspector, and Bob Cherry, tumbling out of it, at the gate.

"We're saved! They're here!" shouted Wharton. "The police at last—and Bob!"

"Thank Heaven!" panted Nugent.

"Let's get out of this!" gasped Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton caught Poindexter by the arm.

"Come!" he shouted.

The narrow eyes, glazed with terror, turned on him behind the horn-rimmed glasses. The man did not move.

Wharton dragged at him savagely.

"Come! It's the police—we're saved! Will you stay here and burn to death? Come, I tell you."

The wretched man seemed to understand, and he staggered towards the stair, Wharton grasping his arm. But for the junior's aid, he would have fallen.

"Quick!" panted Wharton.

The stair was a mass of blinding smoke. A wave of heat came from below, and they heard the crackling of flames. Through the crackle came the voice of Bob Cherry shouting. Wharton shouted back. He plunged down the

stairs, half-dragging the helpless man after him.

The lower room was black with smoke. A huge stack of fuel piled against one of the walls, was burning, and the flames were already catching the nearest wall. But between the fire and the other wall there was ample room, though in the dense smoke the juniors could see nothing. They held together, Wharton still holding on to Poindexter, and plunged through the blackness, Bob Cherry's voice guiding them. It was only a few moments, but they were fearful moments, and then they were through the doorway and plunging out into the April sunlight, breathing great gulps of pure air.

"Oh, you fellows!" panted Bob. "I—I—all safe—all safe—thank Heaven we got here in time."

"All safe!" gasped Wharton. He rubbed the smoke from his eyes, and stared round. "Uncle—you're here—thank goodness you came—"

The colonel grasped his arm. "Come, my boy! The building is catching—it will be falling soon—"

They hurried to a safe distance from the mill. Smoke in black mases was

### ANOTHER TOPPING PRIZE WON!

One of this week's handsome books goes to: John Ritchie, of 1a, Austin Street, Newtownards Road, Belfast, Ireland, who submitted the following winning ribtickler:



Waiter: "Don't you like your college pudding, sir?"  
Diner: "No; I'm afraid there's an egg in it that ought to have been expelled!"

**MORE EFFORTS WANTED, CHUMS!**

pouring out of every opening now, rolling away black against the blue. Flames licked from the walls, and caught the old sails as they turned. The windmill was doomed.

"All of you are safe, what?" said Inspector Stacey, cheerily. "You've had a narrow escape, young gentlemen."

"Wilmot—has he gone?" asked Harry.

"The rascal has run for it; we shall get him later," said Mr. Stacey. "But we've got the man we want more—much more." And he smiled at the fat, haggard face of Elias J. Poindexter.

In the presence of the police, and with the knowledge that the man-hunter had fled, Elias J. Poindexter pulled himself together. His wretched life was saved, but his liberty was another matter. The juniors, glancing at him, saw that the handcuffs were already on his wrists,

They were glad enough that Poindexter was taken by the police. And they were not sorry that Wilmot was gone. Desperate as the man had been, terribly as he had endangered their lives, they could feel compassion for the man whose mind had been unhinged by wrong, and they would have been glad to hear that he had escaped. He could do no further harm now. For many a long year, Elias J. Poindexter would be where no private vengeance could reach him.

It was a crowded car that rolled away to Wimford. There the fugitive swindler—a fugitive no longer—was walked into the police station, to be lodged in a cell, and passed from the sight of the chums of Greyfriars for ever. And glad enough were Harry Wharton and Co. to see the last of him.

"I say, you fellows!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Been frightfully anxious about us, Bunter?"

"Eh? No! I haven't waited to have supper—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I thought I wouldn't, you know," said Bunter. "You're jolly late! But I'll tell you what, you fellows! Now you've come in, I'll have another supper with you."

It was quite a merry party at supper. The Famous Five had been through a wild time; but now that it was over, they were not feeling much the worse for it. Indeed, they were glad that their visit to the old mill had led to the arrest of a rascal who was wanted by the police.

Billy Bunter had a second supper with the Famous Five, and to judge by the amount of foodstuffs he packed into his fat circumference, his first supper had not taken away his appetite.

"Pity I wasn't there!" he remarked, when he heard what had happened at the old mill.

"Why, you fat ass—" said Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"What would you have done if you'd been there?"

"Well, I should have collared that man-hunting merchant," said Bunter. "I shouldn't have been afraid of his revolver. But there it is—you fellows haven't my pluck, as I've told you. And was that Johnny at the mill really Poindexter, the American we saw on Popper's Island?"

"He was, fathead."

"I say, you fellows, do you think there will be any reward?" asked Bunter anxiously.

"Ass! We don't want any reward."

"Eh? I wasn't thinking of you! I was thinking of me," said Bunter warmly. "I spotted him there, didn't I? You fellows would never have gone to the mill at all if I hadn't spotted him. If there's any reward, it ought to come to me, of course."

"Oh crumbs!"

"I say you fellows, do you think anything's coming to me?" asked Bunter.

"Yes rather," said Bob Cherry, picking up a juicy cream puff.

"I say, what do you think I shall get?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"This!"

And Bunter got it.

THE END.

(There will be another peach of a yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's MAGNET, entitled: "COKE'S HOLIDAY CAPTURE!" Make sure of reading it, chums, by ordering your copy WELL IN ADVANCE!)

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# The ISLAND of SLAVES!

By STANTON HOPE.



Guy landed feet first among the astounded feasters, and his boots struck against the edge of a great bowl, upsetting its contents of oil and mutton over the Arabs.

## The Terrible Ras Dhin!

**A**N Arab with a long rifle was squatting lazily by the main entrance of the lighted tent, but no one else was near. From inside the marquee came the sound of monotonous Eastern music—reed pipes, cymbals, and soft-toned drums. There seemed no difference in the tune, but the music rose and fell, and its crescendo stage drowned the confused rumble of conversation of the assembly.

Guy rose in the darkness near one end of the marquee.

"Take your knife, Chota," he whispered, "and gently cut a small slit in the canvas."

The babu did so, very gingerly, but no further light shone through the rent as he widened it. There was a second wall of tent inside.

"My hat, I badly want to see in there!" Guy said. "I'd wager a

month's pay against a blank cartridge that the sheikh's giving this giddy spree, and I want to see if Ras Dhin is there with him."

Chotajee shuddered at the dreaded name. Once he had fallen into the hands of that inhuman fiend with the cold, yellow eyes of a tiger, and he had no wish to repeat the experience.

"Perhaps, sahib," he suggested, "we had better regretfully depart. Should the debased sentry—"

"Ah! That pole!" Guy breathed. "I'll take a chance."

He had noticed on his approach toward the big striped tent that there was a space open at the slanting end through which, if he were high enough, he might see what was going on inside. At each end of the tent was a high pole with ropes supporting the long canvas roof of the marquee.

"My honourable aunts!" the little

Bengali gulped. "If you thus emulate feat of monkey-up-a-stick, sahib, I must with reluctance suspect you of acquirements of bats in honourable belfry!"

"You stay here," Guy muttered. "You don't jolly well think I've come here for nothing. I'm going to see into that giddy tent!"

Hand over hand, in seamanlike manner, he made his way up the pole, which bent over dangerously as he neared the top. Through the aperture he could glimpse the native orchestra at one end of the tent, and some Arabs seated round great bowls which contained a dreadful-looking mess of what seemed like chunks of mutton wallowing in hot oil. Arabs were dipping their right hands into the bowls, handing one another titbits, and pausing ever and anon to drink cups of arak—an intoxicating brew made from dates—which retainers brought to them on trays of beaten brass.

Still Guy could not see either the sheikh or discover whether Ras Dhin, the giant Abyssinian, was present.

Inch by inch, he crept upward, at greater risk of being seen, and caught a glimpse of the black-bearded sheikh with his hawk-like nose over a huge mutton bone to which was attached chunks of fat, and looking as if he were using the prized titbit as a mouth-organ.

Another inch or two, Guy thought, and he might be able to see the guest at the sheikh's right hand.

The pole whipped over more, slightly sagging the double rope which held one of the ends of the canvas roof. He put out his hand and clutched the rope itself, leaning farther over the large square hole in the sloping end of the canvas in his effort to see better.

Then, with a report like a gun, the pole, which must have had a flaw in it, snapped off short, and Guy uttered an involuntary cry as he went hurtling downward through the aperture!

His shoulder struck against the edge of the canvas and the blow partly straightened him, so that he went feet-first down among the astounded feasters. His boots struck against the edge of a great bowl, upsetting it and flinging its hot contents of oil and mutton over the astonished Arabs.

Guttural cries arose on every side as the Arabs leaped up and instinctively reached for the curved knives in their belts. Among the exclamations Guy thought he heard Chotajee's horrified voice.

"My honourable aunts!"

Scrambling up from among the overturned and oil-soaked Arabs near him, Guy took a leap toward the exit of the marquee—and promptly stopped dead.



Immediately blocking his path was a bulky figure, garbed in robes like the others, but with a face as black as ebony. In the right hand of the man was a grim, blue-barrelled automatic pistol.

Guy took all this in at a glance, and, as violent hands seized him from behind, he transferred his gaze from the pistol barrel to the jet-black face of the man and found himself looking full into two eyes like yellow disks.

No longer was he in any doubt that among the sheikh's guests was the terrible Ras Dhin!

### From the Tiger's Clutches!

"W HOOH!"

Guy Easton drew a deep breath. He knew he stood within one inch of the edge of eternity.

Everything had taken place with such suddenness that Sheikh Haji, of the Arabs, in the big marquee erected in the village of Khoof, was flabbergasted. Only Ras Dhin, the terrible Abyssinian with eyes like those of a tiger, was in control of himself and ready to deal with the amazing intruder who had come hurtling through the roof of the tent after the pole had snapped.

Guy's path to the exit was blocked. He took a swift glance into the short, grim barrel of the heavy automatic-pistol, and then into those yellow eyes, inhuman as fragments of discoloured ice. There he read his sentence—death, swift and irrevocable!

In that moment of stress, the whole mechanism of his mind worked a hundred times faster than normally. He wore dark overalls and his face and hands had been stained with oil that his skin might not be easily visible in the inky darkness. Ras Dhin could not possibly recognise him as the naval officer who had outwitted him before. That he would find out too late, after he had pressed the trigger, and fiendishly regret that he had not preserved him for the bastinado and other torture.

In a poignant moment Guy realised all this. It seemed that when he had held a winning hand in the game, Fate had trumped his trick. Neither he nor the little babu, Chotajee, who was outside the tent, would get back to the waiting submarine to report what they had discovered, and young Sub-Lieutenant Tony Dunn, his second in command, would temporarily have to play a lone hand.

"Feringhee!" Ras Dhin roared.

The use of that word, meaning "foreigner," showed that he had recognised that the disturber of the peace was no village Arab.

Sheikh Haji himself, the huge, fatty mutton-bone gripped in his right hand like a club, made a step toward the Abyssinian's side, bristling with fury in every hair of his black beard.

"Kill! Kill the pig-dog!" he spluttered in Arabic.

Crack!

To Guy's amazement, the mutton-bone shattered in fragments from the sheikh's hand, and the knobby end of it smote Ras Dhin on the side of the jaw.

Crack!

The second shot came from the Abyssinian's own pistol, but the bullet missed Guy's head by inches and hammered metallicly from a suspended lantern of wrought brass.

"Sahib!" shrieked the voice of Chotajee. "Idhar no!"

In moments of excitement the Bengali often relapsed into Hindustani, and

Guy knew enough of the language to know that he meant "come here!"

What had happened was that Chotajee, after the first vain attempts to see through the tent by cutting small holes in it with a knife, had found a place where the canvas wall was single instead of double. During Guy's short sojourn on the top of the pole, he had made a hole and, in desperation, had fired his pistol through it in the effort to save his young commander's life. Never having had pistol practice at Whale Island or anywhere else, he had managed to miss entirely the huge target presented by the Abyssinian, but had severely dislocated the sheikh's dinner.

Flinging aside the Arabs who had gripped him, Guy leaped toward the side of the tent, for the main exit was effectually blocked by too many of the roused feasters. He saw the lower part of the tent wall open out to the frantic slashing of the babu's knife, and hurled himself out into the night, followed by another shot from Ras Dhin's gun that drilled a neat hole in the canvas near his head. Chotajee, looking sick, was clinging to one of the tent ropes for support.

"Vamoose!" Guy snapped.

Arabs were pouring out of the tent, among them the sentry, who had crept inside to find out the reason for all the uproar. The babu recovered the strength of his limbs and sprinted round the back of the marquee by Guy's side.

"Which way, sahib?" he gasped. "Wither shall we vamoosefully depart?"

Babel arose from the interior of the tent. Among the confusion of voices could be heard that of the giant Abyssinian, Ras Dhin, roaring like an infuriated bull. Then someone started hammering on a brazen gong.

Shadowy figures of villagers moved among the date-palms. Some began to slither away for their homes, fearful lest too much of the intoxicating arak had aroused the visitors to murderous frenzy.

Unfortunately, Chotajee was no great shakes as a sprinter. Any of Haji's Arabs could have given him fifty yards in a hundred and licked him. Guy knew it, and rightly judged that in a straight-forward hunt he and the Bengali would have no more chance than a couple of tame rabbits hunted by a pack of hounds.

"We must go to ground!" he decided.

They had just enough start to get them among the resting camels, and Guy dragged the little babu down between the beasts.

Near some of the pack-camels were odd bales of dates, and a few of the

### THE OPENING CHAPTERS RETOLD.

LIEUTENANT GUY EASTON, SUB-LIEUTENANT DUNN and CHOTAJEE, a Bengali interpreter, of H.M.S. *Falcon*, having been ordered to board a suspicious-looking dhoo heading a southerly course out of the Red Sea, are cut adrift during a storm and cast ashore on the Island of Khoof. Gathering information that slave-trading is being carried on between Sheikh Haji of Khoof and Ras Dhin, a giant Abyssinian, the trio, disguised as Arabs, board a mahalla bound for Aden. The mahalla is attacked by a villainous crew of cut-throats in the pay of the slave-traders, but Guy proves equal to the occasion, and the enemy are made prisoners and handed over to Captain Knox of the *Falcon*. Subsequently Guy is put in charge of the *Vireo*, the fastest submarine in commission. Leaving the *Vireo* on guard out at sea, Guy and Chotajee land on Khoof Island and make for the direction of a big striped marquee from whence come sounds of revelry.

(Continued)

animals had merchandise in pannier fashion over their backs, as they knelt with their great jaws moving horizontally. In some cases a covering had been slung over both the camel's back and the merchandise. In quick time Guy saw his opportunity and rolled Chotajee under a loose cover, followed hurriedly, and pressed his own body against the camel's mangy flank. By drawing the covering outward and downward, he completely screened themselves from view.

Scarcely daring to breathe, the two crouched there, hearing the confused shouting of the Arab feasters and, from immediately to hand, that most extraordinary bubbling from the camel's interior which is so unpleasant to European ears. This bubbling, which sounds rather like the gurgling of water leaving a bath, is due to the swelling uvula in the camel's throat, and is heard at its worst in the courtyard of a caravanserai, or inn, full of camels in the early morning. This camel was a noisy brute, but apparently more placid by nature than many of the species.

Arabs began to run among the camels, seeking to discover which way the fugitives had taken. Some passed so close that the dust from their sandalled feet swept under the covering into the nostrils of the fugitives.

Chotajee stirred slightly.

"A-a-tish—"

"By heavens!" Guy gulped. "Sneeze, and I'll—"

By pressing his face against the musty flank of the camel Chotajee suppressed that sneeze, and they gained another respite from certain death!

The plan of Guy in "going to ground" proved its sound sense, for the pursuers never dreamed that the quarry had paused to lurk within a few yards of the marquee. They were confused, too, by the moving figures of villagers, and chased off in all directions in vain pursuits.

Some of the camels began to stir and squeal. The fugitives heard a bowl of pain as one passing Arab received a vicious bite. That biting habit, as Guy knew, was characteristic of the camel. By luck, the animal against which they pressed had neither attempted to rise nor to twist its ungainly neck and use its powerful square teeth.

Cautiously, Guy peered out.

"The coast's clear," he muttered in Chotajee's ear, as he withdrew again. "but I think that we can crawl among the camels to those date-palms. By steering a course round that well on the edge of the village we might be able to get clear and dodge back to the coast."

Chotajee gave a hollow moan like a man who hears a last exhortation before he leaves the condemned cell.

"I am ready!" he mumbled resignedly. "Lead on, Macduff Sahib!"

Emerging from the precarious shelter, they crept on hands and knees between the camels, darted into the deep shadows of the date-grove and sidled along by the well Guy had mentioned. From there they slithered through some cultivated land, past a herd of goats, and among scrub and rocks.

Time and again they had breathless escapes of being discovered by some searcher. As though in approval of Guy's pluck and wit in seeking a sanctuary so close to the sheikh's marquee, the goddess of fortune smiled on them and they reached the coast safely, though it took them the best part of two hours to accomplish the journey.

There was still considerable time



before Tony would need to carry out his instructions about sending a search-party after them, but for an hour they had to lie up among the rocks, for Arabs came to the coast and searched that neighbourhood as well. At last, however, the pursuit died down.

"May the badmashes dance on air with ropes round their debased necks!" Chotajee growled bloodthirstily.

Guy laid a hand on his arm.

"Quiet, my hearty!" he whispered. "You've forgotten there was a band of negro slaves waiting on that rocky ledge along the coast. Before we shunt off I am going to take a dekho to find out if they're still there."

"My honourable aunts!" Chotajee groaned.

In sheer despair he crouched in a niche between the rocks while his companion set off.

Within half an hour, by careful scrambling over the rocks, Guy got round the coast until he was able to recognise the place he had visited before. The ledge where the slaves had rested was covered by the tide, which was higher at Khoof than anywhere else in the Arabian Sea, and there was not a sign of a single negro or Arab to be seen!

"By Jove!" he muttered to himself. "Some dhow must have picked 'em up."

There was no point in waiting, and Guy returned to Chotajee, who received him like a long-lost brother. Together they launched the collapsible boat, and Guy took the oars. Rowing strongly out to sea they soon discerned the shadowy shape of the waiting submarine, and, on drawing alongside, were welcomed joyfully by Tony and other members of the crew.

"What luck, sir?" Tony inquired

Guy rapidly narrated their adventures while spying out the land.

"What happened to those slaves?" he demanded of his junior. "How long since a dhow came to take them off?"

The sub looked blankly at him.

"Dhow!" he echoed. "There hasn't been a single sail along this coast since you went to the beach!"

(Where have the slaves been taken? It's a mystery that needs solving. But you can be sure Guy will get to the bottom of it! Don't miss the next full-of-thrills instalment.)

# COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of "The Magnet," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

**A** VERY interesting query comes this week from a Liverpool reader who is anxious to know if I can tell him which is the hottest place in the world? Well, most of the travellers I have met tell me that the Red Sea is!

Going from the sublime to the ridiculous, as it were, here's a curious fact. Would you believe it is possible to make

## ICE IN THE SAHARA?

Well, it has been done! Some time ago a traveller in the desert was seriously ill, and ice was needed. In the cool of the evening a deep pit was dug, and some water poured into it. Before long it had frozen into ice—and the traveller's life was saved!

It might also interest you to know that fish can be caught in the desert. Arabs have been known to dig very deep holes, and then to catch fish in them! It seems unbelievable—but there are any amount of people who will vouch the truth of it!

**I** HEARD a curious story concerning a well-known speedway rider recently. He was riding in Spain, and put up a fine show. But, to his surprise, when he had finished,

## THE CROWD HISSED HIM!

Naturally, he was very annoyed about it—until things were explained to him. In Spain, hissing means applause, and popular bullfighters are always hissed when the audience is pleased with them! The Spaniards, of course, were trying to show their appreciation of the rider's prowess—but you can't blame him for wishing they had done it in some other manner!

Now for some

## RAPID-FIRE REPLIES

to various questions sent in by readers.

Where was Alsatia? (H. H. D., of Whitley Bay.) This is the name that was given to a district of London between

Fleet Street and the Thames. It was the haunt of criminals and highwaymen in the seventeenth century, and it was exceedingly dangerous for anyone else to enter the precincts. It was eventually suppressed in 1697.

Why do some steamers fly the Blue Ensign instead of the Red? (Tom Burke, of Grimsby.) Merchant vessels which are commanded by officers of the Royal Naval Reserve are allowed to fly the Blue Ensign if they have ten men of the crew who are Naval pensioners or who belong to the various Naval Reserves. The same ensign is also flown by certain auxiliary vessels of the Navy.

How is calcium carbide made? (R. K., of Hendon.) By heating a mixture of quicklime and coke in an electric furnace, which causes the carbon of the coke to combine with the quicklime. The slightest amount of moisture in the air causes calcium carbide to give off acetylene, which accounts for the odour.

Can men grow horns? (M. J., of Welshpool.) Yes. Many men have been known to grow horns, and a little while ago a horned Kafir was on show in London. A case has been known of a man who grew horns on his head to the length of twelve inches.

Black book forward, please! There will be another first-rate issue of the MAGNET next week, chums. Frank Richards starts the ball rolling with

## "COKER'S HOLIDAY CAPTURE!"

in which you will find all your favourite characters well up to scratch. There are laughs galore in it—and thrills, too!

Then there's another ripping instalment of Stanton Hope's serial, "The Island of Slaves," and a rib-tickling "Greyfriars Herald," together with more jokes and Greyfriars limericks and my usual weekly chat.

**Your Editor.**

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# Greyfriars Herald

LAUGH AND GROW FAT.

April 11th, 1931.

**KRICKET ON THE WEIGH, BOYS!**

Seeze This Chance!

FIRST-CLASS KRICKETER, excluded from First XI, on account of Wingate's rotten jollity, wants volunteers for a new team to be known as COCKERS XI. Records will have to be obedient and respectful, will call their captain "sir," and must submit to being kicked and buffed when their captain feels like it. Fool details on application to "HORACE," Box 13, Herald Office.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE SPEECHLESS EARL

A Leaf from Det.-Insp. Russell's Diary.

### ANOTHER UNSOLVED CRIME

Of all the cases I have ever had to tackle, the Case of the Speechless Earl can be set down as the most intriguing and baffling.

It was a bright Spring day and I was peering the quad, musing on the Mystery of the Disappearing Collar-stud which was at that time engrossing the attention of the World's crime specialists, when a fellow-Romovite rushed up and grabbed me conversationally by the arm.

His hair was ruffled, his face was ashen grey, and there was a wild light in his eyes. On consideration, I deduced that something had excited him.

My deduction was correct. On entering the study of Lord Maudslaver a few minutes before, he had discovered the noble Earl sitting in an easy chair, apparently unable to speak. Immediately suspecting some nameless tragedy, he had come straight to me. I hurried to the scene of the crime. Nothing had been disturbed. The Earl still sat back in his easy chair, his eyes closed, and a look as of sleep in his features.

I spoke to him and shook him.

There was no answer, save for an unintelligible murmur sounding something like "Yav-aw-aw!"

Leaving the body, I made a microscopic examination of the room. I was rewarded by finding an ink-stain on the desk.

It was a slender enough stain, but I followed it up. Proceeding to the upper part of the House, I looked at all the windows. As I expected—one of them was cracked. This development in the case led me to conduct an exhaustive search among the shrubs near the porter's lodge at the School gates.

Here I was confronted by an amazing circumstance. I expected to find a revolver bearing the initials "X. Y. Z." Instead, I found—nothing!

Feeling a thrill of excitement at the remarkable trend of events, I returned to the study of the Speechless Earl.

An astounding thing had happened during my absence. The body of the Earl, which I had certainly left in the easy chair, was now stretched out on the sofa! This mystery had indeed deepened!

I took the precaution of leaving an assistant to guard the body and spent several hours among my crime records, trying to find a case which bore some resemblance to the amazing affair.

Bed-time came and I had to admit defeat. In all the annals of international crime, nothing quite like this seemed to have happened before.

I went back to Lord Maudslaver's study. Then came the crowning surprise to a most surprising case.

Lord Maudslaver returned to consciousness. His exact words were: "Oh, God! I'd better move or I'll be late for bed!" But his words are not of such importance as the fact that this speechless seion of the aristocracy was speechless no longer.



So Manly went to bed and the Mystery of the Speechless Earl remains a mystery to this day.

The strange thing is that he suffered no ill-effects and is himself under the impression that he had merely been to sleep!

What was the real solution? Was it hypnotism, drugs, some occult influence? Who knows? And thus another page was added to the list of unsolved crimes. Ah, well!

### WINGATE NOT WANTED

**New Skipper Proposed at "Enthusiastic" Meeting**

### DAWN OF A NEW ERA—PERHAPS

How long is George Wingate, our celebrated School Captain, likely to remain in office?

About five minutes, if the resolution passed at an "enthusiastic" meeting in the Fifth Form room is to be taken as a guide!

The meeting, which was described as a "Mass Meeting of the Greyfriars Public," was called by Horace Coker, Esq.

The attendance was fully up to expectations. It consisted of Mr. Coker and the "Greyfriars Herald" Reporter.

Mr. Coker himself took the Chair and rose promptly at the advertised time, amid loud cheers from Mr. Coker. He said that the meeting had been called to ask whether the time hadn't arrived when that silly ass Wingate should go, and Horace Coker be appointed to reign over Greyfriars in his place.

After a few references to the merits of the proposed new skipper, he called on Mr. Coker to address the meeting. He then sat down and rose again to more cheers from himself.

In a long and vitriolic speech, Mr. Coker showed that under Wingate, Greyfriars had sunk to abysmal depths of stinkiness and that the only logical thing to do was to make a new start with a fresh skipper. He enlarged on the amazing natural gifts possessed by Horace Coker—his intelligence, his wisdom, his prowess at games and his phenomenal ability at work. Greyfriars under the rule of Coker, he explained, would rise to dizzy heights of glory previously undreamt-of. He felt sure that Greyfriars, true to her ancient traditions, would rise to a man



### HOW TO SUXCEED AS AN ORTHER

#### Professional Advice from Dicky Nugent

The first thing to do if you want to become an orthier is to obtain a typewriter. You can borrow a good one from Penfold or a slightly inferior one from Lemmy. Make sure the old fogys are out, of course, before you get it!

Next obtain some good typing paper. Mr. Quelch keeps some excellent stuff, but it's hard to obtain as he's so seldom out. If you can't get his, use Remford's or Ladbey's. Whatever you do, don't use wallpaper, as it's not considered the right fipe. (foak!)

Having obtained your typewriter and a good paper, you then proceed to obtain notes in your Form-room. This is obtained by wallopping all those who won't shut up until they're all contorted and their lifeless bodies beset the Form-room floor.

At this stage you are able to sit down and think out your plot. Always draw a plot with plenty of blood in it. You are then bound to appeal to the modern person of refined and refined tastes.

Don't neglect the yewverous side of your story. Every reader likes a laugh, now and again. My own idea is that it's best to kick off in a yewverous fashion. This, for instance, is what I should call an ideal beginning to a story: "Yarwood! Yeloped the Dook of Slopater, as his pet Alabastun bit a penne out of his calf." There's just that jinking, whimsical touch about it that gets the reader interested at once.

Always make right triumf over zright. For example, if the villain of the piece is just creeping up behind the hery to nite him in the back, make him slip on a banana-skin just in the nick of time. This story will then go down well in addition to the villain!

Finally, don't be discouraged by setbacks. When the unsympathetic Editor has pored ink over your paper, squeezed him over your dille and hooded you out? his sanktum, keep smiling and go and write another story. The time will come when the writer of this article will be proud to ring you by the hand and acknowledge you as his equal!

### KEEPING FIT

#### How They Do It At Greyfriars

Not everybody at Greyfriars keeps fit by doing a daily dozen in the gym. Some have quite different ideas on the subject. Mr. Quelch, our respected Form master, for instance, has a peculiar method of his own for retaining that youthful, athletic figure of his. It consists of bringing a long, thin, pliable instrument known as a cane into violent and painful contact with his pupils. He is said to have remarked with a grim smile on one occasion that his the Shell is piano-playing. He can be heard beating the ivories at all hours of the day and night and he lo be beaten!

Billy Bunter, on getting our note asking how he keeps fit as a fiddle! informs us that piano-playing keeps him as fit as a fiddle!

Mossie Charpottier rolls on dooling for good health. He fought his last duel while at college forty years ago and says he has been fit ever since!

Peter Todd, our amateur lawyer, is a whale for wrestling. He spends most of his spare time wrestling with legal problems.

Mr. Proude's form of exercise is shooting. By this means he gives himself fitness and gives other people fits!

Nowhand, who is a bit of an artist, keeps fit by drawing deep breaths!

### OUR ADVERTISEMENTS CORNER.

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**BOYS OF GREYFRIARS!** Dress with distinction and discrimination! Don't go about in ill-fitting garments which make you look like scarecrows! Our Eltons are perfectly priceless. (This does not mean that they are free!) Prices range from Three guineas to Ten guineas per suit. Come and see our splendidly selected selection of tweeds and serges. Give your old moth-eaten suit to the ragman, and COME AND BE GLAD AT THE COURTFIELD CLOTHING COMPANY, High Street, Courtfield. (We have recently secured the services of an experienced cutter, who was for fifty years with Messrs. Fittam & Kiggem, the well-known Lord Street Tailors.)



you for a moment! Simply scrape off some rust from that old drampipe outside the window and add boiling water and everybody will compliment you on your excellent brew!

Of course it goes without saying that you will keep everybody talking. Conversation is awfully helpful in carrying you through those awkward moments when an odd guest is carried off ill on a stretcher or when two guests making a simultaneous grab for the Swiss roll find that it's merely a picture of one painted on the table-cloth!

So keep the flow of conversation going, dears, and hand round the bread-and-butter for all your worth. Your party will be voted a huge success by the survivors and you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that you can do the same thing every day at the modest figure of something like tuppence a week!