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BILLY BUNTER AT ST. JIM'S.



A PIG IN CLOVER!

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WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER

BILLY BUNTER AT ST. JIM'S.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

A Magnificent, Long, Complete Story of Tom Merry & Co.

CHAPTER 1.

Up to Study No. 6.

"**A**HEM!"

"Well?"

"Ahem!"

Blake and Herries and Digby looked rather curiously at their noble chum, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth.

Arthur Augustus' face was very serious; and he looked as if he were about to utter something of the greatest importance. But there was a curious hesitation in his manner. Apparently he feared for some reason the effect of his forthcoming remarks upon his study-mates.

"What have you got on your chest?" asked Jack Blake.

"Ahem!"

"Got a cold?" asked Digby.

"Wats! No."

"You seem to be coughing a lot," said Herries suspiciously. "If you're getting the 'flu, Gussy, you'd better buzz off to sunny at once. You don't want to give it to the whole study."

"I am not gettin' the 'flu, Hewwies. I was about to say somethin' wathah important to you chaps."

"Well, say it, old scout, and get it over," suggested Blake. "What is it?"

"Ahem!"

"Wake me up when you begin," yawned Digby.

"Ahem! I—I say, this studay is wathah a good size for a juniah studay, don't you fellows think so?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Not bad," said Blake, in great wonder. "Is that what you were going to say? Sapient remarks on the size of the study."

"N-no—no! We weally have a lot of space heah, more than they have in some of the studies."

"None too much space, with your dashed hatboxes and necktie-boxes and things about."

"Wats! I admit that it was wathah a cwowd when Twimble was put in heah—he's such a fat boundah—when he first came to St. Jim's. I admit that it was much more comfy when we got wid of Twimble."

"Passed unanimously," agreed Blake.

"What about it?"

"Howevah, we could weally make room for five, at a pinch."

"We could, I dare say, but we're jolly well not going to!" said Blake. "None of the studies has five in it. And you can bet your Sunday hat that this study isn't

going to. What are you driving at, anyway? Do you want to ask Clive or Roy-lance to dig in here? If so, no's the answer. They're charming fellows, but a good deal more charming outside than inside."

"Hear, hear!" said Herries and Dig together.

"Weally, Blake—"

"So that's what you're hemming and hawing about!" exclaimed Blake warmly.

"You want to stick another fellow in the study along with us. You must be off your rocker!"

"Silly ass!" commented Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Nothing doing!" said Blake. "Go home and think it out again. Besides, I don't suppose any fellow is keen on changing into this study, and crowding us out. What rot!"

"A new fellow—"

"Well, of all the cheek, to think of planting a new fellow here!" exclaimed Blake, in great exasperation. "There's No. 2, with only Trimble and Mellish in it. There's No. 3, with only Bates and Macdonald. Let the new fellow go there!"

"But—"

"Rot!" said three voices together.

"But this new fellow is somethin' wathah special!" pleaded Arthur Augustus. "I am alludin' to Buntah—"

"Bunter?"

"Walter Buntah, you know—the chap we met at Gweyfwhals. You wemembah him—a cousin of that fat boundah Billy Buntah."

"I remember him," said Blake. "We were a man short, owing to Tom Merry playing a Shell duffer when he might have had a Fourth Form chap—and Wally Bunter was there, and he played for us."

"And kicked the winnin' goal, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus persuasively.

"I dare say somebody else would have kicked it if he hadn't," said Blake. "Besides he didn't kick it—he headed it."

"It comes to the same thing, deah boy."

"I dare say it does; but that's no reason why he should come into this study when he comes to St. Jim's. You can ask him to tea if you like!" added Blake liberally.

"If he brings his own rations," said Digby thoughtfully.

Arthur Augustus paused. He polished his eyglass carefully, jammed it into his noble eye, and resumed the attack.

"Wally Buntah is a weally good sort, Blake, and he did me a gweat service while we were at Gweyfwhals. I was set on by a pair of young wuffians while I was out walkin', an' they were goin' to stick me in a ditch, an' wuin my clobber. Wally Buntah wushed to the wescue."

"And saved your clobber at the risk of his life?" grinned Herries.

"He saved my clobber, at all events. It was a genevous action. We became gweat fwends."

"No reason why you shouldn't be friends; but you're not going to plant your new friends on your old pals," said Blake. "Five in a study is too much of a good thing. No takers!"

"He is a wippin' footballah—"

"We don't play footer in the study."

"He will be vevy useful in the team

against the New House," said D'Arcy. "We have agweed that we are goin' to give the New House the kybosh at footah this season. Young Buntah will help."

"He can help without digging in this study."

"The New House would be glad to bag him, to play for their wotten old show," said D'Arcy. "It is weally a stwoke of luck for us that he is goin' to be a School House chap."

"Room for him in the School House without invadin' this study," answered Jack Blake inexorably.

Herries and Digby nodded assent. They were prepared to be quite cordial to the new fellow at St. Jim's.

True, they did not think much of Billy Bunter of Greyfriars; but they were ready to believe that his cousin Wally was the real white article, so to speak.

But they were not willing to extend hospitality to the point of being crowded in their study by a new-comer. Four was enough; indeed, Blake had remarked that what with Gussy's toppers, and Herries' boots, four was too large an allowance.

Certainly there was no room for five. Arthur Augustus, in his desire to be obliging to the new fellow, was really not displaying his usual tact and judgment.

The swell of St. Jim's surveyed his inflexible study-mates through his celebrated monocle more in sorrow than in anger.

"Then you wefuse to have my fwend Wally in the studay?" he asked.

"I'd as soon have your young brother Wally—and that's saying quite a lot," replied Blake. "These Wallies are a nuisance."

"Wats!"

"Let it go at that!" said Blake. "Now, speaking of the House match next Saturday, we've got to persuade Tom Merry, somehow, to put in enough of the Fourth. We want to make a sure thing of it."

"Yaas; but about young Buntah—"

"Give us a rest, old chap! We're pretty certain to beat Figgins & Co., anyway," continued Blake. "They can't really make up an eleven to stand against us. But if Tom Merry persists in playing a crowd of the Shell—"

"About Buntah—"

"Give Bunter a rest!" roared Blake.

"I wefuse to give Buntah a rest, Blake," answered Arthur Augustus firmly. "I weally think it is up to us to invite him to dig in this studay, and I am goin' to persuade you somehow to agweed."

Blake glared at his noble chum. Gussy was displaying once more the firmness which his chums likened unto the obstinacy of a mule.

"That means that you're going to wag your jaw till you've talked us silly?" inquired Blake.

"I wegard that as a beastlay way of puttin' it, Blake; but I am certainly not goin' to let the mattah dwop. I wegard it as bein' up to us. Now, about young Buntah—"

"Will you let Bunter drop?"

"Certainly not!"

"Well," said Blake, "you won't persuade us, but we shall persuade you. If you say Bunter once more—only once, mind—your head goes into the cinders!"

"Good egg!" said Dig and Herries,

"Woolly, Blake, I am bound to mention Bunter, as— Yawwooh!"

"That does it!"

Arthur Augustus' chums seemed fed up with the subject of Bunter. They jumped at Gussy as if moved by the same spring. Arthur Augustus leaped for the door, but three pairs of hands yanked him back. The next moment his noble head was exploring the fender.

"Yawwoh!" roared Arthur Augustus, struggling frantically. "You howwid wottahs! Yawwoh! Weleace me!"

"Will you dry up on Bunter?"

"Ow! No! Yooop! Leggo! Oh deah! Bai Jove! Ow!"

"Rub his head in the cinders," said Blake. "Rake out some more ashes for him, Dig! Lucky for him the fire's not alight!"

"Gwoogh! Yooop!"

"Will you let Bunter drop?" grinned Blake.

"Gwoogh! No! Yaas! Yaas, wathah! Oh, cwumbs!"

Arthur Augustus scrambled away, his noble head of hair streaming ashes. He shook his fist at his grinning study-mates.

"You uttah wottahs!" he roared.

"About the House-match—"

"I have a great mind to give you a fearful thwashin' all wound—"

"We'd better point out to Tom Merry that he can't do better than play, say, eight or nine of the Fourth. That leaves two or three places for the Shell; quite enough, in my opinion."

"You feahful wuffians—"

"Hallo, there's Gussy still wagging his chin! Collar him, and we'll put his head into the coal-locker next!"

But Arthur Augustus did not wait for the coal-locker. As his chums started towards him he hastily retired from Study No. 6, and the door of that celebrated apartment closed with a bang.

Blake & Co. grinned, and resumed the interesting football discussion which had been interrupted by the mention of Wally Bunter. It appeared to be settled that Wally would not become an occupant of Study No. 6 in the Fourth!

CHAPTER 2.

Kerr Thinks It Out!

"A NYHOW, we're jolly strong in goal!"

George Figgins made that pronouncement in his study in the New House at tea.

His chums, Kerr and Wynn, nodded assent.

Fatty Wynn, especially, had no doubt on the point. For Fatty Wynn was goalkeeper for the New House Junior Eleven.

"They can't dig up a goalie anything like ours," went on Figgins. "That's one comfort. Mind you're at the top of your form on Saturday, Fatty!"

"Rely on me!" said Fatty Wynn. "Pass the pilchards, old chap!"

"Of course," went on Figgins reflectively, "taking it all in all, we're better footballers in this House than they are in the School House."

"Hear, hear!" smiled Kerr.

"I don't think there's any getting around that," said Figgins.

"I say, Figg—"

"I suppose you agree with me, Fatty?"

"Yes; but—"

"But what?"

"You haven't passed the pilchards!"

"Oh, bother!" grunted Figgins. "I'm talking about the House match, not about dashed pilchards!"

"You pass them, Kerr, old chap," said Fatty Wynn. "Don't you fellows think I'm greedy! I'm simply thinking of keeping myself in form for the House match. You can't do better than lay a solid foundation."

"A week ahead?" grinned Kerr.

"Well, suppose a chap gets run down, how's he going to keep goal?" asked Fatty Wynn warmly. "I think that Figgins, as skipper, ought to be grateful to me for thinking so much about keeping in form for the match."

"Oh, rats!" said Figgins ungratefully. "As I was saying, we're better footballers than they are; but where the rub comes in is this—they're a bigger House, and have more men to pick from. We're limited in numbers."

"Little but good!" suggested Kerr.

"That's it! And I don't deny," said Figgins, "that I wish we were a bit stronger in the front line."

Kerr looked thoughtful.

"They have all the luck, really," went on Figgins. "There's a new chap coming to St. Jim's on Monday, who's a regular corker on the footer-field. You remember that chap, Wally Bunter, at Greyfriars—he played for our side when we were there. He's coming on Monday, and I hear that he's going into the School House. If he were coming into the New House I'd be glad to play him next Saturday. It's really too bad!"

"I think—" began Fatty Wynn.

Figgins turned to his plump chum.

"If you've got a suggestion to make, Fatty, go ahead!" he remarked cordially.

"Well, I have, Figg, if you won't jump on a chap."

"I like that!" exclaimed Figgins. "Haven't I asked you both for advice every time I make up a team? Why, you fat bouncer, you know I'm always willing to listen to advice, and act on it, too! What do you think, then?"

"Well, I really think—"

"Go ahead!"

"I think we might as well have the sausages for tea—"

"What?"

"What's the good of keeping them for supper?" said Fatty Wynn argumentatively. "Lots of things may happen before supper-time. Let's have them to finish up tea, and chance it."

Figgins glared at Fatty Wynn, while Kerr chuckled.

"You—you—you're thinking about sosses!" roared Figgins. "I thought you were going to make suggestion about the eleven!"

"Blessed if you're not always jawing footer, Figg! Now, about those sosses. If we have them for tea—"

"Dry up!" howled Figgins. "Here am I, trying to make up a team to beat Tom Merry's crowd, and you think of nothing but pilchards and sosses, and Kerr sits like a graven image without saying a word!"

"I've been thinking," said Kerr mildly.

"Well, what's the good of thinking if nothing comes of it?" demanded Figgins gruffly.

"Something may come of it, old top," said Kerr placably. "I've been thinking about that new kid, Bunter."

"No good thinking about him—he's going into the School House. He'll play against us next Saturday most likely."

"It's certain he's going into the School House?" asked Kerr.

"D'Arcy says so; he knows pretty well, I think. They made friends when we were over at Greyfriars for the match."

"I suppose the chap doesn't know much about this school," remarked Kerr. "He can't know that New House is cock house of St. Jim's, or he'd try to squeeze in here. From what I've seen and heard of him he's a really good sort, and plays a splendid game of footer, though he's fat as Fatty—"

"Fatter!" grunted Fatty Wynn.

"Fatter!" agreed Kerr amiably. "But he's a topping sort, and the New House is just the place for him. Why shouldn't he change his mind and come into the

New House? We could bag him for our eleven then."

Figgins stared.

"I suppose his people have arranged his House for him," he answered.

"Yes; but if he specially wanted to come into this House his people couldn't object, I should think. Suppose he settled down here, and wrote his pater a very earnest letter, saying how much nicer it was in the New House. That would work the oracle, I think."

"But he wouldn't!"

"He might! He's coming on Monday," said Kerr. "Suppose he was met somewhere on the way here, and persuaded. Three very nice fellows might meet him, with their best manners on—us, for example—"

"May come during lesson-time," said Figgins doubtfully.

"Then we should have to get off lessons somehow. We'll find that out. We'll talk to him all the way to St. Jim's. We'll put it to him nicely. He's a bit of a gormandiser, I believe, like his cousin. Well, we'll spin him a yarn about this House being a land flowing with milk and honey, and so forth. We'll get something decent to feed him on, as an example. We'll make him as happy as a Hun with a dish of sauer-kraut, and swear eternal friendship. And we'll bag him for this House, and spring him on Tom Merry next Saturday at footer—what?"

Figgins grinned.

"It might work!" he said.

"Jolly good idea!" said Fatty Wynn heartily. "Especially the idea of standing him a feed. That's bound to touch any fellow's heart if he's at all decent!"

"You remember when that fat bouncer Trimble came," said Kerr. "They didn't want him in the School House, and they tried to plant him on us, and very nearly succeeded. Well, one good turn deserves another; we'll bag Bunter, by way of a Roland for an Oliver."

"Kerr, old man, I give in!" said Figgins. "You've really got a brain on you. That chap kicked the winning goal for us at Greyfriars, playing as a raw recruit. After a week's practice in our front line he would be worth no end to us. It's a go!"

"After all, he's bound to prefer this House when he knows what's what," said Kerr.

"Yes, rather!"

"We'll even let him share this study with us, if he likes!"

"Oh!"

"I—I say!" murmured Fatty Wynn, in dismay. "If he's got an appetite anything like his cousin Billy's, I'd rather he was in some other study. We're on rations, you know."

"Rats!"

"It's a go!" said Figgins, rabbing his hands, and quite unheeding Fatty Wynn and his misgivings. "If he'll come, we'll bag him. And why shouldn't he? It's an honour to him to be asked into the New House. We've got to find out exactly when he's coming, and wangle to met him somewhere."

"We can get that out of Tom Merry."

"Mind he doesn't suspect what you're up to, Kerr!" exclaimed Figgins, in alarm. "If those bouncers smell a rat—"

"They won't!" said Kerr, rising from the table. "I'll cut across and see Tom Merry now. Nothing like striking the iron while it's hot."

And George Francis Kerr left the study and the New House, and strolled across the quadrangle in the dusk.

Figgins remained in thought for some moments, and Fatty Wynn watched him with a peculiar expression on his face.

Figgins strolled out of the study at last; and then Fatty Wynn jumped up. A minute later there was an appetising savour of frying sausages in the study.

The question of the footer eleven for the House match was not quite settled yet, but the more pressing question of the sosses was settled beyond recall.

CHAPTER 3.

Tact!

TOM MERRY came into his study on the Shell passage in the School House with a slight frown upon his sunny face.

Manners and Lowther looked at him inquiringly.

"Anything doing?" asked Lowther.

"No."

"Rotten!?" remarked Manners.

"Linton is a hard old case!" growled Tom Merry. "For some weird and mysterious reason he sticks Form work before everything else."

"Perhaps because he's a Form-master!" suggested Monty Lowther. "These Form-masters are trying."

"Br-r-r-r!" I pointed out to him that Wally Bunter is coming along with his tutor man on Monday afternoon, when we shall be at lessons. I said as persuasively as I could that, in the circumstances, we should like to meet him at the station. I said it would be polite."

"And what did Linton say?"

There was a snort from the captain of the Shell.

"He said that if I could meet Bunter at the station without infringing upon the time devoted to Form work I was at liberty to do so."

Lowther grinned.

"Linton's a dry old bird!" he remarked. "He was pulling your leg, Thomas."

"I suppose he was," agreed Tom. "But I didn't give in at that. I mentioned that Wally Bunter was a total stranger in the locality, and might miss his way to St. Jim's."

"And he said—"

"He asked if Bunter was dumb."

"Dumb!" repeated Manners and Lowther.

"Yes. He said that unless Bunter was dumb he would doubtless be able to inquire his way to the school."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry joined in the laugh. Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, was humorous in his dry way, and he had received Tom Merry's modest request in a mildly sarcastic humour.

"We sha'n't get off lessons on Monday afternoon, then," said Lowther. "I dare say old Linton guessed that we were thinking more about that than about Bunter."

"Bet you he did!" grinned Manners. "He's a downy old bird. It's rotten, though. I was going to take my camera out."

"But I'd really have liked to show Bunter some attention," said Tom. "Of course, you sha'n't see much of the kid, as he's going into the Fourth. But I liked him at Greyfriars, when we met him there, and I'd like to give him a welcome here. But Linton's a hard-shell old Hun. He doesn't see it."

"Well, I never really expected him to," said Lowther. "It was only a chance. Lathom may be a bit more amenable to reason, and some of the Fourth may get off to meet Bunter."

There was a tap at the half-open door and Kerr of the Fourth came in.

The Terrible Three nodded to him cheerily.

Although the School House and New House juniors were deadly rivals, they managed to keep on very good terms

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 57L

with one another when there was not a House row going on.

"Trot in, old scout!" said Tom Merry. "We were just talking about that chap Bunter. You remember meeting him?"

"Yes; ripping chap," said Kerr. "Not very like that cousin of his."

"Well, they're as alike as two peas to look at," said Tom. "Blest if I could tell 't'other from which! But they're not alike in anything else. I've just asked Linton to let us off on Monday to meet him at Wayland, and Linton has been giving me some of his sarc."

"I was going to speak about him," said Kerr blandly. "It would be only civil to show him some attention. Pity you fellows can't get off—a great pity! Some of us in the Fourth might manage it. Is he coming while lessons are on, then?"

"Yes. I've asked Gussy, who seems to know all about it. He's getting to Wayland by the three train on Monday afternoon," said Tom unsuspectingly.

"Coming alone?" asked Kerr carelessly.

"Oh, no; there's a tutor wallah with him, a chap named Shinbones or something—"

"Slimson," said Manners.

"That's it, Slimson. It seems that this chap Wally Bunter hasn't been to a public school before, and he's been prepared by a tutor for the Fourth here. His father's on war work somewhere, and the tutor man is bringing him to St. Jim's, this side up, with care."

"Well, he ought to be met at the station," said Kerr decidedly. "It's up to us to be a bit civil, as he played for our side at Greyfriars when we met him there."

"Just what I was thinking."

"I was going to take my camera!" said Manners regretfully.

"Lathom is a good little beast," remarked Kerr thoughtfully. "I don't see why he shouldn't give permission. If a fellow with some tact pitched it to him nicely—"

"You try!" said Tom, smiling. "You've got lots of tact. Of course, he ought to be met by School House chaps, as he's coming into this House."

"He certainly ought to be met by fellows belonging to the House he's going to belong to," assented Kerr. "That's settled."

"Well, try it on Lathom," said Tom.

"I will!"

Kerr left the study, having thus easily discovered what he had come to learn. He made his way at once to Mr. Lathom's study. The master of the Fourth had his quarters in the School House.

The Terrible Three, having been disappointed in that little scheme for getting an extra half-holiday on Monday, settled down to prep, and dismissed Wally Bunter from their minds; while Kerr of the Fourth proceeded to interview his Form-master.

"Come in!" said Mr. Lathom's mild voice, as the Scottish junior tapped at his study door.

Kerr entered, and the Fourth Form-master blinked at him kindly over his spectacles. Kerr was persona grata there; he was one of the keenest pupils and hardest workers in Mr. Lathom's Form, and a Form-master naturally liked a pupil who liked study for its own sake, and did not merely grind through it as a painful duty. Not that Kerr was a swot merely; he played as hard as he worked, and he was one of the best men in the New House eleven.

"If you please, sir—" began Kerr meekly.

"Yes, my boy," said Mr. Lathom benevolently.

"I—I was going to ask you a favour,

sir," said Kerr, with becoming hesitation.

"Proceed, Kerr."

"There's a new fellow coming to St. Jim's on Monday afternoon, sir—"

"Yes, Walter Bunter; he will be your Form-fellow; Kerr," said Mr. Lathom, with a nod.

"I happen to know him, sir; some of us met him at Greyfriars, where he was visiting his cousin, while we were there for a football match. He's a very good fellow, sir."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Lathom, rather puzzled.

"We—we thought, sir," said Kerr submissively, "that as he's a—a new-comer we—"

"A new boy is naturally a new-comer, Kerr."

"Ye-e-es, quite so, sir—yes, of course! But—as I mean, if you would give us permission, sir, we should like to meet him at the station on Monday afternoon."

"I am afraid that that will be impossible, Kerr, as he arrives while lessons are in progress."

"Ahem! We—we thought, sir, that, under the—circumstances—"

"I was not aware that there were any unusual circumstances in connection with this new boy, Kerr."

"There—there are, sir," murmured Kerr. "He's a really splendid chap, and—and he has worked in an office as a clerk or something. It's possible, sir, that he may feel a little—a little diffident, thinking perhaps that some fellow might be inclined to be a bit snobbish on account of his having been at work as a boy. If some of us met him at the station in a friendly way, it would put him at his ease to begin with. Don't you think so, sir?"

Mr. Lathom beamed at Kerr over his spectacles.

"My dear lad, that is very, very thoughtful of you!" he exclaimed.

Kerr coloured a little. But, in fact, Kerr was quite sincere in what he said. That consideration had been in his mind before he had thought of bagging Wally Bunter for the New House Junior Eleven. There were fellows at St. Jim's, like Racke and Crooke of the Shell, and Trimble and Chowle of the Fourth, who were quite likely to display snobbishness towards Wally Bunter, and make him uncomfortable if they could; and if Wally's first experience of St. Jim's happened to be with Racke & Co., certainly he was likely to be made to feel discomfort. Kerr was very thoughtful for others, and he really deserved Mr. Lathom's commendation.

It was evident that he had gained his point.

"You wish to be excused lessons on Monday afternoon, then, is that it?" asked the Form-master.

"Yes, sir, if you would let Figgins and Wynu and myself go—ahem!—"

Mr. Lathom looked thoughtful for a moment.

"Very well," he said. "It is certainly very thoughtful of you, Kerr; and you are so conscientious a pupil that I cannot suspect you of wishing to avoid Form-work. I will grant leave to the three of you for Monday afternoon."

"Thank you, sir!" said Kerr, delighted.

"Not at all, my boy," said Mr. Lathom graciously.

And Kerr left the study in a mood of great satisfaction, and returned to the New House with his good news. He found George Figgins waiting for him in the doorway, and he imparted his news, which made Figgins chortle with satisfaction, too. Then they went up to the study to inform Fatty Wynn.

They found that plump youth reclining in the armchair, with a very shiny look on his face. There was a scent of recent cooking in the room, and half a sausage lay on a plate. It was all that remained. "We've got leave to meet Bunter on Monday, Fatty!" announced Figgins.

"Oh!"
"All three of us!"
"Ow!"
"And we're going to bag him."
"Groogh!"
"What on earth's the matter with the image?" asked Figgins.

"Gurrig!"
"He's bolted the sosses!" exclaimed Kerr wrathfully.

"Not all the lot, surely?" said Figgins. aghast. "My only hat! No wonder he looks like a prize porker!"

"Groogh!"
"Is this how you keep fit for footer?" roared Figgins.

"I—I was so jolly hungry!" moaned Fatty Wynn. "There's n-n-nothing like laying a s-s-solid foundation. I—I get so jolly hungry at this time of the year. Ow! I—I never meant to bag the lot! I just went on without noticing them. Groogh! I—I think perhaps I've overdone it. Ow!"

"I think perhaps you have!" grunted Figgins. "And I think you're jolly well going to be bumped for overdoing it, too!"

"Ow! D-d-don't touch me!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "D-d-don't touch me! I—I say, I—I wish I'd left the last three, I do really! Ow!"

Fatty Wynn was left unbumped; he was evidently not in a state for it. His chums left him to his sufferings. When they came up later to prep, they expected to find Fatty Wynn pale and worn and languid. But they didn't. As they came into the study, his first remark was:

"I say, Figgins, what are we going to have for supper?"

"Supper!" yelled Figgins.

"Yes. There's no sosses now. What are we going to have?"

Figgins stared at him a moment, and then he said:

"I know what you're going to have, Fatty; you're going to have that bumping! That's what you want, and what you're going to get!"

"I—I say! Here, hold on! Leggo! Yooop!"

Bump!

CHAPTER 4.

The Wrong Bunter.

BILLY BUNTER sat in the corner of the railway-carriage and grunted. His fat face expressed discontent.

In the opposite seat was Mr. Slimson, the tutor, and they had the carriage to themselves on the train that was running on to Wayland Junction.

Mr. Slimson was perusing a pocket edition of Horace, from which he glanced across at Bunter occasionally with disapproval.

He was not pleased with Bunter, and Bunter was not pleased with him.

Mr. Slimson was a gentleman of great attainments in the scholastic line, and he was accustomed to the work of cramming hapless youths, and he had found Wally Bunter a very apt and bright pupil, and his work had been unusually easy up to the time that Wally visited his cousin Billy at Greyfriars School.

From that time Mr. Slimson's task had not been an easy or a pleasant one.

What had come over his pupil he did not know, but he was only too painfully aware that there was a great difference.

Walter Bunter was being sent to St. Jim's by his former employer, Mr.

Penman, of Canterbury; a reward for the courage Wally had shown in defeating the designs of burglars who had broken into his office. Wally had visited Greyfriars full of the good news, to tell his cousin Billy. And Billy Bunter had then been struck with the tremendous idea he was now carrying out.

Unlike as the cousins were in nature, in appearance they were as alike as two peas from the same pod. Only Billy's spectacles distinguished him from Wally.

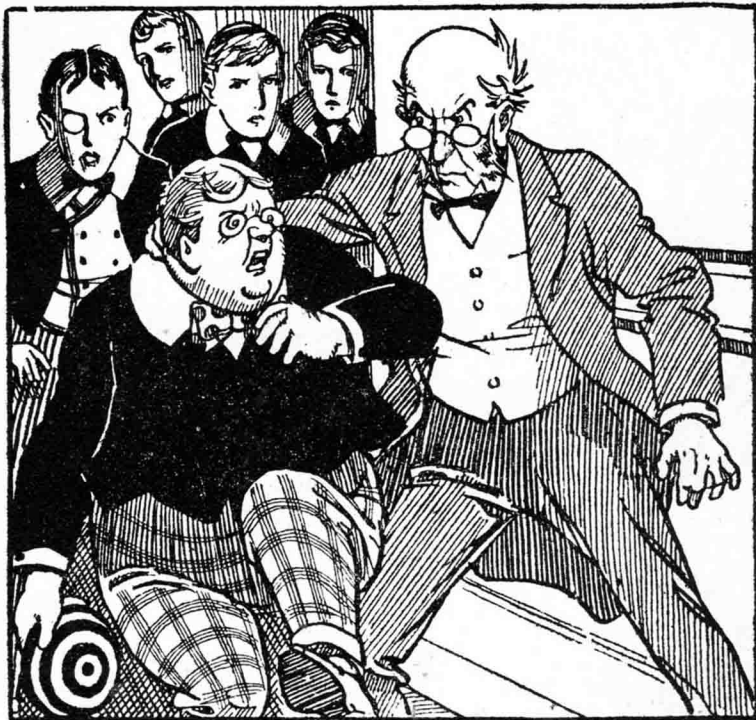
Billy was in hot water at Greyfriars in many ways. He had earned the wrath of his Form-master for slacking; he had earned lines from the prefects; he owed money to nearly every member of his Form; and he had landed himself in trouble with a racing sharper owing to his desire to have a little flutter. And it seemed to Billy Bunter a tremendously good idea to change places with his cousin Wally and go to St. Jim's, leaving the

Instead of a bright pupil, he found that Bunter had become excessively dense. Instead of a keen, alert fellow, he found a slow, obtuse, and short-sighted fellow, for Billy had given up his glasses to carry out the imposture. There had been a visit to an oculist, and glasses were ordered for Bunter, the professional gentleman expressing surprise that he had not been ordered glasses before.

Mr. Slimson had rather liked Wally; but after a day or two of Billy he became exceedingly anxious to land his pupil at St. Jim's and wash his hands of him. His former good opinion of Wally was quite gone now.

Indeed, the worthy tutor had confided to his wife that the boy really did not seem the same boy at all since his visit to Greyfriars, little dreaming how near to the facts his remark was.

Bunter repaid his aversion with interest. Billy Bunter hated work, and his



Bunter Gets It In the Neck.

(See Chapter 9.)

hapless Wally to shoulder all the troubles he left behind at Greyfriars.

It was impossible for the trick to be detected so long as the two fat juniors kept their own counsel. And Wally, who was friendly with the Greyfriars fellows, was keen to stay there, and so he had agreed at last to Billy's remarkable suggestion.

A change of clothes was made on the way to the station, when Wally's visit at Greyfriars terminated, and the trick was done.

Wally had returned to Greyfriars as Billy; Billy had left by the train as Wally.

As Wally was passing the last few days, before going to school, at his tutor's house in London, Billy had not had to meet Wally's family, though he would have done so with perfect confidence. At Mr. Slimson's house he was received without the slightest suspicion as Wally.

Mr. Slimson had noticed a change, but he never dreamed what that change really was.

feelings towards people who wanted him to work were Hunnish. Besides, he didn't need preparing for the Fourth Form at St. Jim's; he had been in the Remove at Greyfriars, and knew the Form-work well enough to pass. The Remove was the Lower Fourth at Greyfriars; but the standard of work was higher there, and it corresponded to the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. Bunter was quite content with his attainments, such as they were, and he was not looking for scholastic distinction, as Mr. Slimson soon found.

Mr. Slimson found other things, too. Wally had had a formidable appetite, but compared with Billy's it was as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine.

Bunter scoffed everything he could lay hands on in Mr. Slimson's house. He robbed the pantry, and he haunted the precincts of the kitchen at every opportunity, like a lion seeking what he might devour.

Now that they were on the way to St. Jim's Mr. Slimson was looking forward with great keenness to landing his hopeful pupil, and having done with him; and so he was trying to keep good-tempered.

But Bunter was very trying. At every station he wanted to get out and scout in the buffet, and twice he had nearly lost the train. He sucked aniseed-balls, he chewed bulls'eyes, he produced eatables from all his pockets, and he was sticky. Mr. Slimson wondered how he could ever possibly have liked his pupil.

Mr. Slimson put away his book at last. "Wayland is the next station, Bunter," he said.

"Is it?" grunted Bunter.

His manner was not very respectful. Unlike Wally, Billy Bunter did not see any reason for wasting respect on a "blessed tutor."

"It is!" said Mr. Slimson quietly. "Please don't suck your thumb, Bunter!"

"Grunt!"

"And wipe that stickiness off your mouth," said Mr. Slimson. "You must have been eating toffee again!"

"I'm hungry."

"You had a very substantial lunch, Bunter."

"That was over an hour ago."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Slimson.

Bunter blinked out of the window through his big spectacles, and grunted. He was more than fed up with Mr. Slimson, and anxious to get rid of him. He wondered if Arthur Augustus D'Arcy would be at the station to meet him. D'Arcy had made friends with Wally Bunter, and he had a deep aversion towards Billy; but that did not matter, as he was going to receive Billy as Wally.

Billy Bunter was looking forward to a great time at St. Jim's. Wally had made an excellent impression upon Tom Merry & Co., and Billy was going to reap the fruits of it.

"I—I say, Mr. Slimson——" began Bunter, after a pause.

"Yes?"

"I—I was expecting a postal-order before starting for school," said Bunter, blinking at him. "Somehow it didn't come. I—I suppose you could let me have the ten shillings, Mr. Slimson, and I'll send you the postal-order when it comes?"

Mr. Slimson's face was like unto that of a graven image.

"I understand that you have received your first week's allowance from Mr. Penman," he replied.

"That's gone!"

"If it has gone, Bunter, you can only have expended it upon indigestible comestibles!" said Mr. Slimson severely.

"I'm rather hard up, as it happens," said Bunter. "I don't want to arrive in my new school without a brown in my bags. Of course, I should send the postal-order on immediately!"

Mr. Slimson looked at him fixedly.

He had never been to Greyfriars, and he had never heard of Billy Bunter's celebrated postal-order, which was always expected, but never arrived.

After some thought, he extracted a ten-shilling note from his purse.

"Very well, Bunter. Take this. I shall expect to be reimbursed before the end of the week."

"To-morrow!" said Bunter. "My postal-order's sure to come to-morrow! It's from one of my titled relations, you know."

Mr. Slimson looked hard at him.

"I will give you a word of counsel before you begin at your new school, Bunter," he said quietly. "You have, I understand, worked in an office, and it

is by the kindness of your late employer that you are sent to St. Jim's. This is all to your credit. It is very creditable of you to have supported yourself at so early an age, and relieved your parents, whose means are straitened. But you must not forget the facts."

"The—the facts?" murmured Bunter, suppressing a grin. Mr. Slimson's "facts" were only facts in regard to Wally Bunter, to whom he supposed he was speaking.

"You have several times," resumed Mr. Slimson, "spoken to me of your titled relations during the past few days. Now, you certainly have no titled relations, Bunter!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I repeat that it is all to your credit that you have supported yourself at an early age, Bunter. But it is a clear proof that you do not possess the wealthy and influential connections, all on cordial terms with you, that you would claim."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"I have only noticed that absurd snobbishness in you since your visit to Greyfriars. I conclude that at that school you picked up some of the ways of speaking of some more wealthy boy. This is ridiculous in a lad in your position, Bunter, and if you persist in it it is likely to bring you into ridicule in your new school. I am speaking entirely from kindness, Bunter, in order that you may not bring yourself into discredit."

Billy Bunter gave the tutor a glare that bade fair to crack his spectacles. Evidently he did not appreciate Mr. Slimson's kindness in the least.

"You have nothing to be ashamed of, unless you indulge in foolish brag, which is something to be very much ashamed of indeed," added Mr. Slimson. "I trust you will bear this in mind, Bunter."

"Well, of all the cheek!" ejaculated Bunter.

"What?"

"Cheek!" retorted Bunter independently. "Sheer cheek! That's what I call it—cheek! Neck, in fact!"

Mr. Slimson gazed at him speechlessly. He had given advice to pupils before, but he had never heard it characterised as neck before. His hand wandered to his umbrella. Billy Bunter came very near at that moment to getting what he had really been asking for ever since he had been with the tutor.

But Mr. Slimson restrained his wrath, comforted by the reflection that he would soon be rid of his hopeful pupil for good. They sat in grim silence, while the train ran on to Wayland, save for an occasional snort of indignant contempt from Bunter.

The train stopped at last.

"Wayland Junction! Change for Rylcombe and Abbotsford!"

Billy Bunter threw open the door, and, taking no heed of his elderly companion, jumped out on to the platform. Then he blinked this way and that way, in the hope of beholding the elegant figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, whose best pal he was going to be at St. Jim's—perhaps!

CHAPTER 5.

No Chance for Gussy.

"WOTTEN!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that remark after dinner that day at St. Jim's. He spoke in tones of deep indignation, and several fellows kindly inquired what it was that was rotten.

"Wotten!" repeated Arthur Augustus. "I have asked Mr. Lathom for permish to meet my friend, Wally Buntah, at the station. He has refused."

"Well, Mr. Linton refused us!" said

Tom Merry cheerily. "It's rotten, but there you are! Can't be helped."

"Yaas; but he has already given permish to othah fellows—New House boundahs!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus wrathfully. "Now, as Wally Buntah is comin' into the School House, oughtn't he to be met by School House fellows, if at all? I appeal to cwevy gentleman pwsent."

"Yee, rather!" said Blake. "I'd have been glad of an afternoon off myself."

"Hear, hear!" chimed in Herries and Dig.

They weren't specially interested in Wally Bunter, perhaps; but they would have been very glad to spend that clear, sunny afternoon outside the Form-room.

"Who's got leave?" asked Dick Julian.

Figgins & Co. of the New House."

"Cheek!" said Roylance.

"Awful nerve!" exclaimed Manners.

"Why, that bounder Kerr——"

"So that's why he was so jolly interested in the new chap the other day!" exclaimed Monty Lowtner. "Why, he said himself that Bunter ought to be met by chaps from his own House!"

"The blessed poofer!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "So those three bounders have got an afternoon off!"

"I wogard it as wotten! I was not thinkin' in the least of an afternoon off. I was thinkin' of Buntah. I got vevy friendly with him at Greyfriars, and he will expect me to meet him if poss. But Mr. Lathom says he has already given leave for Figgins and Kerr and Wynn, an' he cannot release the whole Form from lessons. I tried to point out to him that I did not constitute the whole Form, but he intewrupted me quite sharply."

"Go hon!"

"He did, weally, deah boys! Now, I wogad this as wotten. The New House boundahs are wedgin' in where they have no wight. There is only one thing to be done," said Arthur Augustus firmly.

"And what's that?" asked Levison.

"Figgins & Co. must wesign in my favah. I wogard it as bein' up to them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see no weason whatever for laugh-tah! I am goin' to put it to Figgins, an' if he does not agree I shall express my opinion vevy strongly!"

"And that will do the trick, of course!" remarked Cardew of the Fourth. "Fix him with your glittering eye, you know, and——"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus, in great indignation, started in search of Figgins & Co. It was not till close on time for afternoon classes that he found them; and then they were on their way to the gates.

Figgins & Co. looked very cheerful, as was natural in the circumstances. Even apart from their little scheme of bagging Bunter, it was very pleasant out of doors on that clear, cold day; certainly a great improvement on the Form-room.

They smiled sweetly as Arthur Augustus bore down on them, with stately wrath in his aspect.

"Pway stop, you fellows!" began Gussy.

"Certainly, old top!" answered Figgins affably. "We're off to meet a train; but we'd risk losing it for the sake of hearing your beautiful accent! Pile in!"

"I wogard that warnak as asinine, Figgins! I undahstand that you are goin' to meet Buntah at Wayland!" said D'Arcy loftily.

"Do you?" exclaimed Figgins in astonishment.

"Yaas, watahah!"

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated George Figgins.

"Is it not the case, Figgins?"

"Oh, yes, it's the case!"

"Then I fail to see anythin' to be surprised at in my makin' the remark?"

"My dear man, you said you understood it!" explained Figgins. "You'll admit yourself that there's something very surprising in your understanding anything. Now, be candid!"

"You uttah ass——"

"Eh?"

"You cwass duffah——"

"Go it!"

"You—you feahful chump——"

"Ain't he eloquent?" said Figgins admiringly. "This is how he is going to pitch it at them in the House of Lords some day! But look out, Gussy; there'll be ladies in the House of Lords by the time you get there, and you'll have to use much nicer expressions. That's a tip!"

"I wegard you——"

"I say, we've got to call in at Mrs. Murphy's on the way," said Fatty Wynn anxiously. "Come on!"

"Right-ho! Walk out of the way, Gussy!"

"I wefuse to allow you to pwoceed, Figgins, until this mattah has been settled. Buntah is a School House fellow, and therefore he ought to be met by me, who am his friend. Therefore——"

"Ergo!" said Kerr encouragingly.

"Therefore I wquest you to wesign in my favah, an' to go to Mr. Lathom an' tell him so!"

"What a nice afternoon!" said Figgins.

"What?"

"It doesn't look like rain, does it?"

"I am not talkin' about the weathah, Figgins!"

"But I am, old scout!"

"You are delibawately beggin' the question, Figgins, an' I wefuse to weply to iwwelevant remarks. You are not goin' to meet Buntah. I wegard you as baggin' my leave."

"He regards us as bagging his leave!" said Figgins sorrowfully. "Do you really mean that seriously, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He means it seriously, you fellows! And if we bag your leave, will you regard us with terrific scorn?"

"Yaas!"

"He will regard us with terrific scorn!" said Figgins sadly. "And if you regard us with terrific scorn, Gussy, will it matter in any way?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Kerr and Wynn, quite entertained by the expression on Arthur Augustus' noble countenance.

"Figgins! You—you jokin' wottah, I'll——"

"There goes the bell for classes!" said Fatty Wynn. "You'd better cut, D'Arcy!"

"I wefuse to cut——"

"Gussy!" roared Blake.

"I wepeat, Figgins——"

"You'll be late!" hinted Kerr.

"Lathom will comb your hair!"

"Figgins, I wepeat——"

"Gussy!" raved Blake. "Get a move on! Do you want to be detained, you ass?"

"Undah the cires, Figgins——"

"We mustn't keep Gussy any longer, or Lathom will be wrathy with him!" said Figgins considerably. "Sit down, Gussy, and we'll go on!"

"I wefuse to sit down! I—— Yawoooooh!"

Gussy refused; but his refusal did not count for much, as the three chortling New House juniors seized him and sat him down gently in the quad. Then they hurried on to the gates, leaving the swell of St. Jim's gasping.

"Gwoogh! You feahful wuffians! Yooop!"

"Gussy, you ass!" Jack Blake rushed

up and helped D'Arcy to his feet, taking hold of his ear to do so. "Come on——"

"Yawooop!"

"Come on, you duffer! You're late already!"

"I wefuse to come on, Blake, until I have thwashed Figgins!"

"This way!"

"Leggo! Blake, you feahful wuffian, I—— Oh, cwumbs!"

Arthur Augustus, with a grip of iron on his arm, was rushed away to the School House. He turned up in the Fourth Form-room only a minute late; and Figgins—unthrashed—proceeded merrily on his way with Kerr and Wynn.

Arthur Augustus' noble brow wore a cloud that afternoon in class. He was indignant, and he was wrathful. He was heard to murmur several times dark hints concerning a "feahful thwashin'." Apparently something very serious was impending over the devoted head of George Figgins after lessons.

And Figgins, quite regardless of the impending storm, was proceeding cheerily on his way to Wayland with his chums, to meet Wally Bunter, as he thought, and to bag a first-rate footballer for his eleven—and, as a matter of fact, to meet Billy Bunter, and bag the worst footballer that ever muffed a kick. If he had only known! But, fortunately, he did not know! It was a case where ignorance was bliss!

CHAPTER 6.

Bagging Bunter.

"HALLO, Bunter!"

"How do you do, old scout?"

"Jolly glad to see you,

Bunter, old top!"

Those three cordial remarks, fired off at once, greeted William George Bunter as he blinked round the station platform at Wayland. Three cheery juniors were waiting on the platform, and they rushed up as soon as they saw Bunter. A podgy hand was shaken thrice.

Billy Bunter blinked at Figgins & Co. He remembered them as members of Tom Merry's eleven in the Greyfriars match—Fatty Wynn especially. He understood that they had come to meet him, but he was disappointed. It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy he wanted to see. The wealthy and elegant swell of St. Jim's was marked down, as it were, as his prey.

"Hallo!" said Bunter, rather off-handedly. "Is D'Arcy here?"

He was so accustomed, by this time, to playing the part of Wally Bunter that he almost believed he was Wally, and there was not the slightest hesitation in his manner.

"D'Arcy!" repeated Figgins. "Ahem! He—he would have come, but he wasn't able to get off lessons!"

"Rotten!" said Bunter discontentedly. Figgins coughed.

Bunter's manner was not gracious. Figgins & Co. did not know him very well, certainly; but they had not expected Wally Bunter to act quite like this. And they were right. Wally wouldn't have acted like that.

"Blessed if I see why he couldn't get off, if you got off!" said Bunter, with a grunt. "I expected him."

"Ahem!"

Mr. Slimson had stepped from the train by this time. The St. Jim's juniors raised their caps to him respectfully. They were aware that Bunter was to be accompanied to St. Jim's by his tutor.

"We're friends of Bunter's, sir," explained Kerr. "We've come to meet him and see him to the school."

"That is very kind of you," said Mr.

Slimson. "Perhaps you can direct us to the platform for Rylcombe."

"Certainly, sir! Half an hour to wait," said Fatty Wynn. "There's a buffet at this station, if you'd care to step into it."

Billy Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles; but Mr. Slimson seemed impervious to the attractions of the buffet. He shook his head.

"I say, you fellows, I think I'll look in at the buffet," said Billy Bunter eagerly. "I'm famished!"

"You had better come with me at once, Bunter," said Mr. Slimson, with asperity.

Bunter looked obstinate.

"Plenty of time," he said. "I want something to eat."

"Half an hour before the train, sir," murmured Figgins.

Mr. Slimson tightened his lips.

"Very well. Follow me to the local platform in time for the train, Bunter."

"Oh, certainly!" said Bunter carelessly.

The tutor marched off towards the bridge over the line, probably glad to be rid of the Owl of Greyfriars for a time, though annoyed by Bunter's want of respect.

Bunter was glad to see him go.

"Awful crusty old stick, that blessed old fogey!" he confided to the St. Jim's juniors. "Nagging a chap all the time!"

"Hard lines!" muttered Kerr.

"I'm fed up with him," said Bunter, with a sniff. "Blessed if I see what he wanted to come to the school with me for at all! I suppose I can find my way about without him."

"I should think so," said Figgins.

"I say, you fellows, we might leave him on the platform, and get off without him," suggested Bunter. "Rather a lark to leave him mooching about the station looking for me—what?"

And he chuckled a fat chuckle at the idea.

Figgins & Co. exchanged a quick glance.

As a matter of fact, the presence of the "tutor-wallah" was rather a difficulty in their path. If Bunter arrived at St. Jim's in charge of Mr. Slimson it would not be easy to inveigle him into the New House, and land him there like a fish, so to speak.

Figgins had already been turning over in his mind the question whether there was any means of dropping the tutor en route.

Bunter's suggestion came as a way out of the difficulty.

"What a ripping idea!" said Figgins. "Jolly good wheeze, I think! After all, it won't hurt him to catch the next train."

"He, he, he!"

"Topping!" said Kerr.

"I say, you fellows, where's the buffet?"

"This way," said Fatty Wynn.

The four juniors went along the platform. Figgins relieved Bunter of the bag he carried. His box, being labelled for Rylcombe, did not need looking after.

Outside the buffet Figgins paused.

"If we're going to dodge the tutor man, we'd better hop out of the station and walk," he suggested.

"Much of a walk?" asked Bunter.

"Oh, a short cut through the wood, you know."

"Good idea, then."

"Then we'd better not stop here," suggested Figgins.

Bunter gave him a freezing look.

"I'm hungry," he answered.

"Yes, we'd better drop in, Figgys,"

urged Fatty Wynn, quite agreeing with Bunter. "I can do with a snack myself just now."

"Is there any time when you couldn't do with a snack?" grunted Figgins.

"Well, Bunter's hungry, too, you know."

Bunter settled the matter by rolling into the buffet, and the St. Jim's trio followed him. There was only a wartime display in the buffet, and Bunter gave a disparaging glance round.

But Fatty Wynn, who was well acquainted with the resources of the place, gave the orders, and Bunter was soon tucking in at a great rate. Fatty Wynn followed his example, while Figgins and Kerr looked on and waited.

After a quarter of an hour George Figgins became restive.

"The tutor man will be looking for you soon, Bunter," he remarked.

"Nother quarter of an hour," said Bunter, glancing up at the clock.

"But he'll expect you on the local platform."

"Oh, bother him! These buns ain't bad," said Bunter. "I'll have some more."

And he had some more.

Five minutes more passed, and Fatty Wynn was ready to move; but the Owl of Greyfriars was not. He was still going strong, in the happy knowledge that Figgins & Co. were going to settle the bill.

"Look here, Mr. Slimson will be coming back for you," said Figgins at last. "We sha'n't get out of the station, Bunter, if we don't get a move on."

Bunter gave in at last. His snack had assumed, and exceeded, the proportions of a square meal, but he condescended to slide off the stool at the counter at last.

"I'm ready," he remarked.

Figgins footed the bill, after a hasty collection from Kerr and Wynn to help him out. Then they left the buffet. On the opposite platform Mr. Slimson was seen, and he waved his umbrella across at Bunter.

"Bunter, make haste!" he called out across the line. "The train is due in a few minutes."

"I'm coming!" called back Bunter.

He rolled along the platform with the three St. Jim's juniors, but not in the direction of the bridge. Mr. Slimson called out again.

"That is not the way, Bunter. Cross by the bridge. Bless my soul! Bunter! Bunter!"

Bunter & Co. disappeared among a crowd of passengers, and Mr. Slimson did not see the Owl again.

Figgins & Co. emerged from the station with the prize, and started walking at a good rate, fearful of seeing the tutor dodge out of the station in pursuit.

Fortunately, Mr. Slimson had no suspicion that Bunter had left the station, with the amiable intention of leaving him stranded, and he waited on the local platform, with growing anxiety and impatience, till the local train came in. The train came, but Bunter did not. While Mr. Slimson fumed, Bunter was rolling out of Wayland with Figgins & Co., and starting on the walk to St. Jim's through the wood.

CHAPTER 7.

Bunter Makes Up His Mind.

BILLY BUNTER'S fat face wore an expression of satisfaction now.

He had satisfied—or almost satisfied—his unearthly appetite, and it had not cost him anything, which was all to the good. And he had left Mr. Slimson stranded.

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He cordially disliked Mr. Slimson, and he was much entertained at the idea of the unhappy tutor searching up and down the station for a fellow who was not there.

He chuckled several times as they started through the wood.

"When's the next train to Rycombe, you fellows?" he asked.

"An hour," said Kerr.

"He, he, he! That old bounder will have to wait, then."

"Ahem! I suppose so."

"Serve him jolly well right!" said Bunter.

"H'm!"

Figgins & Co., to tell the truth, were rather remorseful about the trick that was being played on Mr. Slimson. It was only because the success of their little scheme demanded it that they had made a sacrifice of the unoffending gentleman. They were far from sharing Bunter's satisfaction, and they did not sympathise with it.

"Find that bag heavy, old scout?" asked Bunter, as Figgins changed it from one hand to the other.

"Nunno! Not very."

"There's some tommy in it," said Bunter. "I bagged a cold chicken last night."

"D-d-did did you?"

"Yes. And you should have heard Mrs. Slimson after it this morning," grinned Bunter. "She couldn't guess what had become of it."

"Oh!"

"There's a cake, too," said Bunter. "A jolly good cake! Mrs. Slimson could make cakes. I'll say that for her, though she was rather a cat."

"Nice of her to give you a cake, anyway," remarked Fatty Wynn. "That's what I call a real womanly action."

Bunter chuckled.

"He, he! She didn't give it to me; I bagged it."

"Oh!"

"I felt entitled to bag anything I could, you see," explained Bunter. "I never had enough to eat at Slimson's show. If he takes in pupils for cramming, he ought to feed them, oughtn't he?"

"Certainly!" said Fatty Wynn warmly.

"What's a crammer if he doesn't cram?" asked Kerr.

"I never had enough to eat at Greyfriars, either," said Bunter incautiously.

"I hope it's better at St. Jim's."

"At—at Greyfriars!" repeated Figgins. Did you stay long at Greyfriars?"

"Oh! Ah! Ahem! I—I mean my—my visit there," stammered Bunter.

"I see."

"I'm a bit anxious about the feeding at St. Jim's," went on Bunter. "What is it like, you fellows?"

Figgins & Co. smiled at one another. This was an opening.

"Well, that depends a good deal on the House you enter," said Kerr. "In the New House we rub along all right. But I've heard Trimble, of the School House, say that he's half starved."

Bunter looked alarmed.

"I—I say, you fellows, I'm booked for the School House!" he exclaimed. "That's rather rotten. Are you New House?"

"Yes, rather!" said Figgins, with proud emphasis.

"And they feed you well?"

"Quite as much as we want," said Kerr.

"I wish I'd been put down for the New House, then," grunted Bunter. "I was glad it was School House, because my old pal Gussy is there. But I suppose I could chum with D'Arcy just the same if I was in the other House."

"Quite easily," said Figgins. "Is D'Arcy an old friend of yours?"

"Bosom pals," said Bunter.

"Well, you'd see as much of him as you wanted to if you were in our House. Speaking as a friend," said Figgins solemnly, "I should advise you to get into the New House if you could."

"You see, it's the cock house of St. Jim's," explained Kerr. "There's a certain amount of distinction in belonging to the New House."

"My hat!" said Bunter. "Isn't the New House the place the other chaps speak of as an old casual ward?"

"Ahem!"

"I heard Lowther speaking about it at Greyfriars; he was arguing with a chap named Redfern, I think," said Bunter. "He said the New House was a home for idiots."

"Oh!"

"That—that was only School House swank," said Kerr. "Poor old Lowther is School House, and he pretends to like it—they all do. But the New House is IT. For instance, we practically win all the footer matches for the school, and in House matches we walk all over that crowd."

"We'd like you to play in the Junior House Eleven, if you belonged to our House, Bunter," remarked Figgins. "Of course, a new chap never is given his cap for the eleven; but we'd make an exception in your favour."

Bunter nodded.

"I expect that, of course," he said. "A football like me would make the fortune of any junior side."

"Oh!"

"Rather hard cheese on Tom Merry's lot, though," grinned Bunter. "They'll be beaten to the wide if I play against them."

"Oh!" murmured Figgins again.

He was puzzled.

Conceit, as he knew very well, was not usually an attribute of a really good player; and on Bunter's words alone he would have set down the fat junior as a pretentious ass. But he remembered how he had seen Wally Bunter play in the match at Greyfriars, and his play had been simply first class. Naturally he was puzzled.

"Will Gussy be playing for the School House?" asked Bunter.

"Yes; he generally plays in House matches."

"H'm! I don't know whether I could agree to playing against my old pal Gussy, and putting the kybosh on him," said Bunter thoughtfully.

"D'Arcy wouldn't mind—he's a real sportsman."

"But, of course, the grub question comes first. I'm jolly well not going to be starved. I know that! Who's this Trimble you spoke of?"

"A School House chap," said Figgins. "I've certainly heard him say a dozen times that he's half starved."

"Ever heard a fellow in your House say so?"

"Never!"

"We often have little feeds in the study," remarked Kerr. "Wynn here is a topping cook. You should see the sosses he turns out!"

Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles.

Those spectacles had attracted the notice of the St. Jim's juniors, as they remembered that Wally Bunter had not worn glasses like his cousin. But they had made no remark on the subject, from motives of politeness. It was easy enough to conclude that Wally was taking after his cousin in the matter of defective sight.

"Sosses!" said Bunter. "I'm rather fond of sosses."

"My dear chap, you can't do better than come into the New House," said Figgins. "A letter to your people will be enough—"

"Oh, that's all right; they wouldn't care either way!" said Bunter carelessly. "Never mind them. Do you get anything over the rations in your House?"

"We don't need to," said Kerr diplomatically. "We get plenty, and plenty is enough, isn't it? Look at Wynn here! He looks as if he has enough, doesn't he?"

"He does, and no mistake," said Bunter. "He's fat!"

Fatty Wynn breathed hard. He was not so fat as Bunter, at all events. But he made no remark. It was no time to tell Bunter what he thought of his manners.

"I suppose I could come into the New House if I liked," said Bunter thoughtfully. "In fact, I think I shall. What sort of a dinner do you get?"

"Well," said Kerr, "I don't know whether you care for sirloins——"

"Yes, rather!"

"And steak puddings——"

"Oh, good!"

"And puddings and pies and preserved fruits——"

"Phew!" gasped Bunter.

"And a Housemaster who keeps on urging you to take another helping," said Kerr recklessly.

"My dear chap, I'm coming into the New House!" gasped Bunter. "Not another word—I'm your man!"

And so it was settled.

What Bunter was likely to think the next day, when Kerr's attractive picture was put to the test, was another matter; by that time he would be installed in the New House.

Kerr, certainly, had not said that all those nice things were to be obtained in the New House; but that was the impression Bunter received from his remarks, and it made his mouth water.

He even quickened his pace a little, as if anxious to get to the delightful quarter where there were sirloins and steak puddings, and pies and preserved fruits galore, and a Housemaster who was so considerate as to urge fellows to take fresh helpings.

Figgins & Co. smiled serenely. They had bagged their game!

Fortunately, they were not aware yet of the variety of game they had bagged.

CHAPTER 8.

A Pig in Clover.

"HALLO! That merchant looks rather excited!" remarked Tom Merry.

The Terrible Three of the Shell were strolling in the quad after lessons, when a gentleman entered at the gates; no other than Mr. Slimson.

If he did not look excited, he certainly looked disturbed and angry.

He came along with great strides; but he stopped as he saw the Terrible Three, and spoke to them.

"Can you tell me whether a boy named Bunter has arrived here this afternoon?" he asked.

"Bunter!" said Tom Merry. "I know he's expected; but I don't know if he's come; we're only just out of the Form-room."

"He was in my charge," said Mr. Slimson. "Somehow, he disappeared at Wayland Station. He must surely have come on to the school. There were three boys with him from this school, who met him at the station."

"I know them," said Tom. "They belong to the New House. I'll cut in and see if they brought Bunter here, if you like, sir."

"Thank you very much!" said Mr. Slimson. "I am most anxious about the boy. He is so stupid that he may have lost himself somewhere."

Tom Merry ran into the New House,

leaving Mr. Slimson with Manners and Lowther.

He hurried up to Figgins' study, to discover whether the Co. were there, rather puzzled by the tutor's story of the happening at Wayland.

There was a savoury smell proceeding from Figgins' study, though it was not yet tea-time. Tom Merry tapped at the door and looked in.

Figgins & Co. were there with their guest.

They had arrived at St. Jim's before lessons were over, and had entered the New House quite unobserved.

Bunter was landed in Figgins' study, which was the first step in the carrying out of the little scheme.

The fat junior was seated at the table, with a plate of sausages and chips before him.

It was necessary for him to see the Housemaster as soon as possible; but

Merry came in. To tell the truth, they had forgotten all about the unfortunate tutor stranded at Wayland Junction, and they were hoping to keep Bunter dark till his name was entered as a regular inmate of the New House, which could only be done by Mr. Ratcliff, the Housemaster.

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Here we are," said Figgins, rather gruffly. "Anything wanted?"

"Yes; Bunter's wanted."

"Oh!"

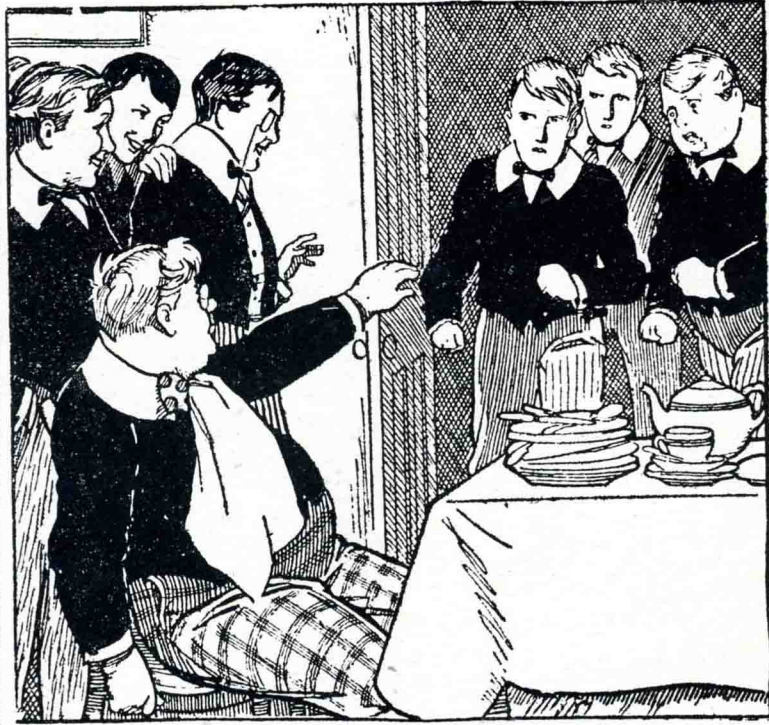
"Is that Wally Bunter?" asked Tom, perplexed.

"Of course it is!"

"Oh!"

Tom Merry had wondered for a moment whether it was Billy Bunter, at sight of the big glasses.

The Owl of Greyfriars looked up with an agreeable grin.



The Lordly Bunter!
(See Chapter 11.)

Mr. Ratcliff was in the Fifth Form-room at present, and could not be seen till he returned to his quarters. Figgins & Co. were improving the shining hour by feeding Bunter. They had taken his measure pretty accurately in one respect at least, and they knew that the best way to appeal to him was through his inner Bunter.

They were doing it in great style. All the resources of the study were at the disposal of the guest. Piles of toast surrounded him, and the scones and chips were done to a turn. Fatty Wynn, who could have cooked the head of a French chef, as Figgy put it, had done nobly, and the result was very pleasing to Bunter.

The Owl of Greyfriars was enjoying himself.

Figgins & Co. were enjoying themselves, too, in their own way; in the satisfaction of having secured that valuable prize, and dished the School House once more.

They looked rather warlike as Tom

"I'm the man!" he said. "Glad to see you, Tom Merry! You haven't forgotten me—what? I kicked goals for you—eh?"

"I've not forgotten you, old son!" said Tom. "I—I wasn't aware——"

"Oh, the specs," said Bunter calmly. "I found I had to have 'em, you know. Put it off as long as I could; but it had to come. Runs in the family, you know, as a matter of fact. My cousin Billy's just the same."

Tom Merry nodded.

It was not surprising that another Bunter had taken to glasses; but certainly this youth looked the living image of Billy Bunter as he remembered him.

"Well, Wally, old son, you seem to have lost your tutor at the station," said the captain of the Shell. "He's just arrived, in a state of flutter."

"Oh, old Slimson!"

"Yes; I'll tell him you've arrived all right. How did you come to miss him?" asked Tom.

Bunter chuckled.
"Left him waiting for a train, while we walked," he answered. "Never mind him. He's a silly old ass. Tell him to go and eat coke!"

"Wha-a-at?"
"No need to waste politeness on him," said Bunter. "He's only a paid tutor, you know."

"Oh!"
"He can tell the Head I've come, and take himself off," said Bunter. "Bother him! Tell him I said so."

"I don't think I could give him a message like that, Bunter," said Tom Merry quietly. "You'd better come to him, hadn't you?"

"How can I, when I'm having tea?"
"He will expect—"
"Let him expect, and be blowed!"
"But, really, Bunter—"

"Look here," said Bunter. "I'm jolly hungry—I've only had a snack at Wayland since lunch. I'm having tea, and I wouldn't leave this spread if there was an air-raid. That's flat! Bother the man!"

"B-b-but—"
Bunter settled down with knife and fork again, evidently with no intention of stirring.

"These sosses are prime," he said. "What a bit of luck that you can get sosses without coupons now! I say, Wynn, you can cook!"

"Can't I?" said Fatty Wynn, beaming.
"You ought to have the O.B.E. for it," said Bunter. "They give the O.B.E. for much lesser things."

Fatty Wynn grinned an appreciative grin. Next to eating the sosses himself, it was enjoyable to see them thoroughly enjoyed by a fellow who knew what good cooking was. He felt quite chummy towards Bunter just then.

Tom Merry stood undecided. He liked Wally Bunter; but it was only too clear that the new junior's manners left much to be desired.

"Well, what am I to say to the tutor man?" he asked at last.

"Pass the salt!" said Bunter.
"Couldn't you keep him busy a bit, while Bunter's finishing his tea?" asked Figgins. "Mr. Ratcliff will be back in a few minutes—"

"Eh? What's Mr. Ratcliff got to do with it?"

"Ahem! Ah! D-d-did I say Mr. Ratcliff?" stammered Figgins. "I—I mean that Bunter's hungry, you know, and he's simply got to finish his tea. Take the tutor man for a walk."

"I can't, you ass!"

"Take him into the School House, and tell him Bunter's coming," said Kerr.

"Well, I suppose I can do that," said Tom Merry.

And he left the study.

"I'm jolly well not going yet, though, you fellows!" said Bunter.

"No fear!" said Kerr. "The man can wait a bit."

"He's paid!" said Bunter. "Let him wait!"

"Ahem! Another cup of coffee?"
"Yes, rather!"

"Try the cake next?"
"Thanks; I'll finish the sosses first. Lots of time for the cake."

And Billy Bunter went on with his gastronomic performances, which Figgins and Kerr watched almost with awe—and even Fatty Wynn with growing amazement.

CHAPTER 9.

Bunter of the New House.

"COME in!" snapped Mr. Ratcliff. Figgins opened the door of his Housemaster's study, and ushered William George Bunter into his presence.

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Mr. Horace Ratcliff glanced at Bunter, and glanced at Figgins.

Figgys's manner was very meek. He knew that this was a matter that required tact.

"Well, Figgins?" said Mr. Ratcliff acidly. His tone generally was acid.

Figgins & Co. had warned Bunter that Mr. Ratcliff's manner was against him, and that his good qualities were not to be seen on the surface. They did not consider it judicious to add that a microscope would have been required to see his good qualities at all.

"If you please, sir, this is the new boy in the Fourth Form," said Figgins—
"Walter Bunter, sir."

"I do not see why you have brought him here, Figgins."

"As he is coming into this House, sir—"

"You are mistaken, Figgins. I have not been informed that a new boy is expected in this House."

"No, sir?" exclaimed Figgins, looking surprised.

"Probably Bunter is intended for the School House," said Mr. Ratcliff. "You had better take him there."

"But—but he really is coming into this House, sir—aren't you, Bunter?"

"Certainly!" said Bunter promptly.

"It's a mistake about my going into the School House, sir. I really don't know how such a mistake could have arisen—it's very extraordinary. My father—h'm!—is very particular about my being in the New House."

Mr. Ratcliff thawed a little.
"Dear me!" he said.

"I have a letter from my father to the Head, sir, specially mentioning that he desires me to be placed in the New House."

"That should certainly settle the matter," said Mr. Ratcliff. "Pray, show me the letter."

"Certainly, sir!"

Bunter began to go elaborately through his pockets.

Figgins watched him, dumbfounded. As Bunter certainly was intended for the School House, Figgins could not see how he could have had such a letter in his possession. It did not occur to Figgys's simple mind for the moment that Bunter was lying.

Bunter went through one pocket after another.

"Did you see what I did with that letter, Figgins?" he asked.

"Nunno!" stammered Figgins.

"I read it out to you in the study, you know."

"D-d-did you?" stammered the amazed Figgins.

"I must have lost it," said Bunter.

"It's very annoying. I'm very sorry indeed, sir, that I've lost my father's letter."

"It was very careless of you, Bunter!" said Mr. Ratcliff snappishly. "However, I will speak to the House-dame, and you may take up your quarters in this House for the present."

"Thank you, sir!"

"May Bunter come into our study, sir?" asked Figgins meekly. "We can make room for four."

"Certainly!"

"Perhaps you'd speak to the Head, sir," suggested Bunter. "There seems to be a mistake about my House."

"I will mention the matter to Dr. Holmes. Have you seen your Form-master yet?"

"Not yet, sir."

"You had better take Bunter to Mr. Lathom, Figgins!"

"Yes, sir."

Figgins left the study with Bunter, very pleased at the result of the visit. The matter had gone more easily than he had anticipated; partly, perhaps,

because he had not anticipated barefaced lying on Bunter's part.

In the passage Bunter gave him a fat wink.

"I pulled his leg, a treat—what?" he remarked.

"Did you?"

"Yes—about that letter! He, he, he!"

"You haven't got a letter from your pater?"

"Of course not!"

"You—you only pretended to have lost it?" ejaculated Figgins, understanding at last.

"He, he, he!" was Bunter's reply.

"You'd better come and see Lathom," said Figgins abruptly. He was not so pleased with his prize now as he had expected to be.

"Who's Lathom?"

"Our Form-master."

"Oh, all right!"

Figgins righted Bunter across the quad to the School House, feeling sure of him now. There was an exclamation as he came in with him.

"Bai Jove! Heah you are, Buntah!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy advanced to meet h's old friend of Greyfriars.

"Hallo, Gussy, old top!" exclaimed Bunter, shaking hands very heartily with the swell of St. Jim's. "Jolly glad to see you!"

"It is a great pleasuah to meet you heah, Wally!" said Arthur Augustus.

"It appeahs that your tutah awwived without you, he!"

"He, he, he! I stranded him at the station!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

Tom Merry came up.

"Your tutor's in Mr. Railton's study," he said. "You'd better go in, Bunter. He's a bit ratty!"

"Bother him!" answered Bunter.

"You will have to see Waiton, Wally, to weport yourself," said Arthur Augustus. "He will give you a study heah, you know!"

Arthur Augustus would have liked to add that he wanted Bunter in Study No. 6; but Blake & Co. had already settled that matter. They were present, and they gave him significant looks.

The swell of the Fourth gave his chums a reproachful glance. He was failing to keep up the high standard of hospitality he had marked out in advance, and it was due to their objection to being crowded in No. 6.

"Bunter's got his study already!" remarked Figgins casually.

"Bai Jove! What studey, deah boy?"

"Mine!"

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon Figgins in great surprise.

"Weally, Figgins, I do not see how Buntah can share your studey, as it is in the New House!" he said.

"Quite easily," said Figgins. "Bunter's a New House chap."

"Wata!"

"Fact!" grinned Figgins. "He's reported to Ratty, and it's settled."

"Wubbish! Buntah's a School House chap!"

"Nothing of the kind!"

"Look here," exclaimed Tom Merry, "you're making a mistake, Figgins! Bunter certainly was coming into this House; I heard so from Mr. Lathom."

"Even Form-masters make mistakes sometimes!" answered Figgins cheerily.

"It turns out that Bunter's booked for the New House."

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Well, ask the kid himself!" said Blake. "I suppose he knows!"

"Yaas, watah! You are comin' into the School House, Buntah?"

The Owl of Greyfriars hesitated. It was very flattering to be sought after in this way; though, as a matter of fact, it

was not he who was being sought after, but his cousin Wally. Bunter took it all to himself; and he began to doubt whether he had done so wisely as he had supposed in planting himself in the New House.

Figgins noted his expression, and he caught the Owl of Greyfriars by a fat arm.

"Come on!" he said. "You've got to see Lathom!"

"Weally, Figgins——"

"This way, Bunter!"

"I—I say, you fellows——" began Bunter.

There was a step in the passage, and Mr. Slimson's voice broke in.

"Oh, you are here, Bunter!"

Bunter blinked at him.

"Here I am!" he answered.

"You left me at the station!" exclaimed Mr. Slimson sharply.

"Did I? Sorry!"

"You deliberately left me there, while you walked to the school, leaving me to suppose that you had lost yourself!" exclaimed the tutor.

"Ahem! Not at all, sir!"

"Then why did you leave me?"

"Forgot all about you!" said Bunter coolly.

Mr. Slimson stared at him, and seemed to swallow something with difficulty. The juniors looked hard at Bunter. Arthur Augustus murmured "Bai Jove!" under his breath.

"Follow me, Bunter!" said Mr. Slimson, at last. "I will take you to your Housemaster, and wash my hands of you!"

"I've seen my Housemaster!" answered Bunter. "You needn't bother any further! The fact is, I don't want you any longer!"

"Buntah!" murmured D'Arcy, in distress.

Mr. Slimson blinked at Bunter, and then took him by the collar. His temper was failing—which was not surprising in the circumstances.

"Come!" he snapped.

And Bunter had to go. The tutor led him into Mr. Railton's study.

"This is the lad Bunter, Mr. Railton," said the tutor. "I place him in your charge; and, with your permission, I will now take my leave."

The School Housemaster gave him a rather curious look. He did not fail to note the signs of suppressed wrath in the tutor's face. He then glanced at the fat, self-satisfied face of Bunter.

"Ah! This is Bunter?" he said.

"Where have you been all this time, Bunter?"

"Having my tea, sir."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"Are you aware that Mr. Slimson has been waiting for you for upwards of half an hour?"

"Never thought about it, sir!"

"You should have thought about it, Bunter!" said Mr. Railton, frowning.

"Have you never learned to treat your elders with respect?"

Bunter grunted as a suitable reply to that.

"And how comes it that you missed Mr. Slimson at the station, and left him under the impression that you were lost?" asked the Housemaster.

"I decided to walk."

"Without informing Mr. Slimson?"

"I forgot him."

"You must learn to have a better memory, Bunter, and a great deal less impertinence!" said Mr. Railton sternly, and his hand strayed to a cane.

Mr. Slimson interposed.

"Pray do not pursue the matter on my account," he said. "You will excuse me now; I have little time to spare for my train. Good-afternoon, Mr. Railton!"

Mr. Railton accompanied the tutor to the door, where he shook hands with him, and Mr. Slimson went his way. The Housemaster returned to the study, where Bunter was waiting.

He fixed his eyes upon the fat junior.

"Bunter, you have treated Mr. Slimson very disrespectfully!" he said.

"Have I?" said Bunter.

"You have, boy!"

"He's paid!" said the Owl of Greyfriars.

"What?"

"He's paid for it all, you know, sir!" explained Bunter.

"Boy! I am sorry, Bunter, that your first experience here should be a caning, but you leave me no other resource," said Mr. Railton. "Such impertinence as this cannot pass unpunished! Hold out your hand!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

He blinked at the Housemaster in

Cadet Notes.

During the last three years the lads who have reached military age have shown themselves as a whole anxious to join the Army and do their bit. We do not believe that they needed any compulsion to bring them in; and many, we are sure, regretted that the Military Service Act prevented their joining earlier. The younger boys have been looking forward to the time when they would be called, but now that it is suspended. If a boy joins the Regular Army under the new peace conditions, or the Volunteers, he has to give all his time to it and to be bound for a certain number of years. For the boys between 14 and 18 there is a great chance. They can join Cadet Corps, which are to be found in every part of the country, under the most favourable conditions.

There are no whole-time workers. They attend on a few evenings in the week. The cost to them is nominal, and if, having joined up, they do not like it, they can resign. No doubt many boys would be only too pleased to get some military instruction and discipline in a way which did not interfere with their regular work. A boy can join a Cadet Corps, and then, if he finds he likes the work, he can join the Regular Forces later, knowing to a certain extent what to expect. Most of the Cadet Corps are infantry, but R.A.F. Instructional Corps are being formed, at present chiefly in the neighbourhood of London. A few corps have machine-gun companies, and in one or two places outside London there are Artillery Cadet Corps. Any boy who wants advice as to his nearest corps should write, stating his age, etc., to the C.A.V.R., Judges' Quadrangle, Law Courts, Strand, London, W.C.2.

alarm as Mr. Railton picked up a cane. Mr. Railton was really angry. The Owl of Greyfriars was a new experience to him, and not an agreeable one.

Bunter did not hold out his fat hand. The interview with the Housemaster had quite fixed his desire to belong to the New House; he had already taken a cordial dislike to Mr. Railton.

"You hear me, Bunter?" rapped out the School Housemaster.

Bunter backed away a step.

"Oh, really, sir!" he exclaimed. "As I don't belong to this House——"

"What?"

"I'm a New House chap!" said Bunter. "Figgins says the chaps are only punished by their own Housemasters!"

"That is the case," said Mr. Railton, looking at him. "But you are under a mistaken impression, Bunter; your name has been given me by Dr. Holmes, as an inmate of this House."

"That's a mistake, sir," said Bunter cheerfully. "I've already put down my name in the New House, and Mr. Ratcliff has given me a study there."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Railton, perplexed.

He laid down the cane.

"Mr. Ratcliff told me I was to go to my Form-master, sir," said Bunter, pursuing his advantage. "I'm bound to do as Mr. Ratcliff tells me, as he's my Housemaster. Can I go now, sir?"

"Figgins!" called out Mr. Railton, catching sight of the New House junior hovering outside the doorway.

"Yes, sir?" said Figgins.

"You heard what Bunter said. Are you aware——"

"Oh, yes, sir," said Figgins. "Bunter's been to Mr. Ratcliff already, sir—he's for the New House."

"A mistake has apparently been made," said Mr. Railton. "If Mr. Ratcliff has made arrangements to receive this boy in his House——"

"He has, sir."

"Very well! You may go, Bunter!" And Bunter went.

CHAPTER 10.

Diplomatic.

"WOTTAHS!"

Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the Fourth Form, in the School House junior Common-room.

Arthur Augustus was wrathful.

His noble eye gleamed behind his eye-glass, and his countenance expressed the loftiest indignation; and Monty Lowther was moved to inquire what was biting him.

"Nothin' is bitin' me, Lowthah," answered Arthur Augustus. "I wegard the question as widdy. I wepat that they are wottahs!"

"Who are, dear man?" asked Manners.

"Those New House wuffians. I was goin' to give Figgins a feabul thwashin' for twacin' me with gwoss diswespct this aftahnoon; an' I let him off because Buntah was with him, an' I did not want a wov in the presence of a new fellah. And what is my weward?"

"Echo answers what?" grinned Blake.

"The feabul wottahs have bagged Buntah!" continued Arthur Augustus. "That is why they went to the station to meet him! They bagged Buntah for their wascally old House!"

"There seems to have been a mistake of some sort," remarked Tom Merry.

"There was no mistake, Tom Mewwy. Those boundahs have induced Wally to change his mind an' go into the New House instead of comin' heah!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Monty Lowther. "That's what Kerr was after the other day. The bouncer actually said that Bunter ought to be met by fellows belonging to his own House. They had planned it, then?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, what does it matter?" asked Herries. "If the chap prefers the New House it shows he's an ass; but it doesn't matter, that I can see."

"Wats! It mattahs a gwreat deal. Hewwies. What do you think they have bagged him for?"

"Blessed if I know, unless it's to melt him down into tallow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"Well, they do seem to have bagged him," said Tom Merry. "But they're welcome, so far as I can see. What did they want him for?"

"They have bagged him to spwing him on us in the House match, because he is a wipin' footballah!" said Arthur Augustus, with conviction.

"My hat!"

"Good old Gussy!" exclaimed Clive. "Gussy's hit it! They've bagged our new recruit!"

Tom Merry wrinkled his brows. He had been rather perplexed by the happenings of that afternoon; but he saw light now. Already, in his own mind, he had assigned Wally Bunter a place in the School House Junior Eleven; and he had reflected with satisfaction what a rod in pickle he would prove for the enemy.

The case was altered now. It was the enemy who had bagged that brilliant forward. As a New House fellow, Bunter would play for Figgins' team—which, as it happened, specially needed strengthening in the front line.

"The awfully deep rotters!" exclaimed Manners indignantly. "We're not going to stand this, you fellows!"

"Wathah not!" said Arthur Augustus emphatically. "I wufuse to allow my friend Wally to be bagged in this unscupulous mannah! He is entitled to the honah of belongin' to the cock house of St. Jim's—su' that is the School House. I wufuse to have him pwactically kidnapped in this way!"

"Hear, hear!"

"But he must be a silly ass to let those New House bounders pull his leg like that!" said Monty Lowther.

"The howah! boundahs have influenced him or wifshow. Lowthah. But we cannot take this feahful injahwy lyin' down!"

"No fear!"

Tom Merry nodded.

"I wanted Bunter for our eleven," he remarked. "We can beat the New House without him, of course; still, we're entitled to him, as he's our man. We can't have our players collared like this!"

"No feah!"

"And it's up against the School House," continued Tom. "The New House bounders will be cackling no end over dishing us in this way. We've got to get Bunter back, for the honour of the House!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, wathah! Follow me, deah boys, and we will waid the New House, and cawwy him off!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see anythin' to cackle at in that suggestion!"

"Fathead!" said Blake politely. "Look here! What about asking him to supper in Study No. 6? Send him a polite note by a fag, and he's bound to come. Then we'll talk to him like Dutch uncles, and make him change his silly mind again."

"Yaas, wathah! That is not a bad ideah! Anyhow, I wufuse to allow the New House boundahs to bag him!"

Blake's suggestion was acted upon; and Tom Merry sat down to indite a very polite invitation to supper, addressed to W. Bunter. D'Arcy minor of the Third Form was requested to take the note over to the New House—in order not to excite suspicion on the part of Figgins & Co. D'Arcy minor cheerfully undertook the task, and scuttled over to Mr. Ratcliff's House on his errand.

Tom Merry & Co. waited with keen interest for his return.

Even fellows who were quite indifferent as to which House the new boy might join were keen on bagging him in turn from Figgins & Co. If the New House wanted him, that was a good reason why they shouldn't have him—from the point of view of their rivals in the School House.

D'Arcy minor looked into the Common-room in the New House, and, as neither Bunter nor Figgins & Co. were there, he went up to Figgins' study. There he

found the new junior in company with the Co.

Bunter was talking; and Figgins & Co. were listening with expressions of great interest. Their object was to keep Bunter quiet and contented in the New House, so as to get him established there, as it were; and also to keep him out of reach of temptation from the School House side. As a matter of fact, Bunter's conversation was boring them almost to tears; but they endured it nobly.

Bunter's remarks consisted chiefly of self-satisfied references to himself and his exploits; the kind of praise, in fact, which according to the proverb is no recommendation.

He was quite charmed with Figgins & Co.; he had never been allowed to run on like this, with attentive and respectful listeners, at Greyfriars.

D'Arcy minor put his head in at the door.

"Hallo, Falstaff! Letter for you!" he called out, and he tossed Tom Merry's note to Bunter, and departed whistling.

Bunter caught the note, in some surprise, and opened it. A fat smile of satisfaction overspread his face as he read it, and Figgins & Co. regarded him with some anxiety.

"You fellows will excuse me?" said Bunter, rising.

"Ahem! Going somewhere?" asked Figgins.

"Yes; my friends in the School House have asked me to an early supper."

Figgins' eyes gleamed. He did not need telling that supper in the School House was only the bait that was being used to land this fat fish.

"But you're going to have supper with us," he urged. "Fatty's been making no end of preparations."

Bunter nodded.

"My dear man, I can do two suppers!" he answered. "I'll have supper with you when I come back."

"Oh, my hat! I—I mean—"

"Tom Merry says I'm expected at once, and there'll be all my friends at supper to meet me," said Bunter. "I'll get off. I'll be back in time for supper here—don't worry!"

"But—but—but—I—I say!" stammered Figgins.

Bunter was moving to the door, and Figgins & Co. looked at one another. It was settled, certainly, that Bunter was a New House fellow, and it would not be easy for him to change back. But it was perfectly clear that Tom Merry & Co. meant to attempt to induce him to do so, and the result was uncertain.

Yet to keep Bunter in the New House by force was hardly feasible. While the Co. were debating it in their minds Bunter rolled out of the study.

"He—he's bound to come back!" said Figgins hesitatingly. "He's got his name down in this House now, and a House-master can't be played with like that. Even if he changes his mind, he'll have to stick here now."

"We'll call for him before bed-time, and make sure!" said Kerr.

"Good!"

Figgins & Co. felt confident; but their confidence was mixed with uneasiness. But they could only hone for the best. At all events, if Tom Merry & Co. attempted to bag their new recruit, they were determined that Bunter should be recaptured by hook or by crook—there was no doubt at all about that.

CHAPTER 11.

Won from the Enemy.

STUDY No. 6 was looking quite festive when Billy Bunter rolled into it in company with the Terrible Three.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther had

met him at the door of the School House, and they escorted him to No. 6 with great satisfaction.

Blake & Co. met him there with equal satisfaction.

As a matter of fact, the juniors should have been at prep just then, and it was not time for supper; but it was agreed on all hands to "blow prep," for the important purpose of foiling the knavish tricks of the New House.

Rations had been pooled, and every possible addition made to the festive board; and Bunter's eyes glistened at the sight of the spread table. How he was able to tackle that early supper after his feed in Figgins' study was a mystery; but it was clear that he was quite ready to try.

"I say, you fellows, this is really ripping of you!" said Bunter, as he took his seat at the table. "So glad to see you all again, too!"

"The pleasure's all on our side, old chap!" said Tom Merry solemnly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We've got lots of things to say to you, Bunter!" continued Tom Merry. "We'd like to settle about the footer, for one thing. We want you in our eleven, of course."

Bunter did not answer.

He was eating.

When he was eating all other matters faded into the background. But the chums of the School House were only too glad to see him contented, and they waited on him with great assiduity.

Even Bunter slacked down at last, however, and lay back in his chair with a fat grin of contentment.

Beaming faces surrounded him. Billy Bunter had the unusual feeling of being popular and sought after. It was very flattering and very pleasing, and he enjoyed it.

"There seems to have been a mistake made about your House here," remarked Tom Merry pleasantly. "You're really coming into th's House, of course."

Bunter shook his head.

"Sorry, old scout; can't be done!" he said. "I couldn't stand the grub, you know!"

"The grub?" repeated Tom.

"Yes! Otherwise, of course, I'd have been glad to be with my old pals! But I'm bound to think of my health first."

"But the grub here is just the same as in the New House!" said Blake, rather puzzled.

Bunter stared at him.

"Eh? Ain't you half-starved here?" he exclaimed.

"Certainly not!"

"But—but Figgins said, and Kerr said that—"

"Bai Jove! The spoofin' wottahs!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly. "That is how they did the trick, then!"

"They said a School House chap named Trimble told them he was half starved in this House!" exclaimed Bunter.

"Trimble's a fat pig, and always grousing about the rations!" explained Tom Merry. "The truth is, we do better in this House than they do; our House-master is a good sort, and Ratcliff is a crusty old Hun. He glares at a chap who asks for a second helping."

"Like a tiger!" said Lowther.

"He's got a temper like Von Tirpitz!" said Manners.

"And he never sees a junior without caning him or giving him lines!" said Digby.

"Hardly ever!"

"Oh, crumbs!" said Bunter, in dismay.

"They were takin' you in, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "But it's all right! All you've got to do is to change back!"

Bunter swelled.

"This is what comes of being so much sought after!" he said. "It's the same wherever I go, especially with girls, too! They can never take their eyes off me!"

"Oh!"

"And you say the grub here is as good as in the other House?" asked Bunter cautiously.

"Better!"

"Well, this is a rather nice study," said Bunter, blinking round. "I could be comfortable here!"

Blake & Co. looked rather queer.

"Of course, my original intention was to dig with my old pal Gussy!" said Bunter. "Blessed if I don't do it!"

Blake and Herries and Digby opened their lips—and closed them again. Arthur Augustus gave them a stern look. The Terrible Three eyed them significantly.

If Bunter was to be bagged, and the New House foiled, it was no time for Blake & Co. to raise objections about crowding in No. 6. It was, in fact, a time for self-sacrifice; and Blake felt it. He gulped something down.

"Do!" he gasped.

"Oh, d-d-dol!" mumbled Herries and Digby.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, with a grin. "Pway wemain and share this studay with us, Buntah!"

Bunter nodded affably.

"It's a go!" he said.

"Bravo!"

"I shall have to step back to the New House, though—"

"Eh? Why?"

"I've arranged to have supper with Figgins—"

"S-s-supper?"

"Yes! Can't break an engagement, can I?"

Tom Merry & Co. blinked at him. It really looked as if Bunter had determined to commit suicide by the painful method of bursting.

"Oh! Supper!" gasped Tom, at last. "B-b-but we're going to have another supper here! This—is only a—a—a snack to go on with! We—we have supper after prep."

"My dear fellow, say no more!" said Bunter genially. "I'm staying! Rely on me!"

There was a tap at the door, and it opened, to display three rather grim faces. Figgins & Co. had arrived.

Grim looks met them.

"Just called in for Bunter!" said Figgins, as affably as possible. "Supper's nearly ready, Bunter!"

"Tell those boundahs what you think of them, Buntah, deah boy!" advised Arthur Augustus.

Bunter did not move. He was feeling rather too heavy and over-fed to want to move, in fact. He blinked loftily at the New House juniors through his big

glasses, and merely waved a fat hand at them.

"You can cut!" he said.

"Wha-a-at?"

"I'm a School House chap!" said Bunter. "You spoofed me—took me in! I'm disgusted with you!"

"Why, you—you—"

"In fact, I rather despise you!" said Bunter. "You can cut! That's all!"

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

Figgins & Co. stood transfixed for a moment. Then there was a roar from George Figgins.

"Why, you fat rotter—"

"Ordah!"

"You belong to the New House now!" exclaimed Kerr. "Come on, Bunter!"

Tom Merry made a sign to his comrades. He did not mean Bunter to be assailed by more temptations.

There was a sudden rush at Figgins & Co., and they went whirling out into the passage.

There followed a sound of yelling and of bumping on the stairs as the heroes of the New House departed.

And Billy Bunter, in Study No. 6, chuckled a fat chuckle!

THE END.

(Don't miss next Wednesday's Great Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's—"BUNTER OF THE NEW HOUSE!"—by Martin Cifford.)

Extracts from "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD" and "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

GRUNDY TO THE RESCUE.

By Tom Merry.

I.
"Why is it wet?
Because it's Wednesday!
Why is it Wednesday?
Because it's wet!
Brrrrrrrrrr!"

THIS extraordinary specimen of poetry was furnished verbally, and on the spot, by Monty Lowther.

At last, I suppose it's poetry. It doesn't rhyme. The metre's out. The reasoning is fallacious. Therefore, I have hopes that it will go down to posterity as classic poetry.

But its use now is to make clear that the day was Wednesday, and the weather was wet.

It had rained all the morning during lessons—which didn't matter. But it was raining harder still now, and looked like keeping it up all the afternoon—which mattered much. For a rather important practice match had been arranged for that afternoon, and now had to be abandoned.

"Never mind; it'll do the crops good!" I said philosophically. (My ankle was strained, by the way, and I wouldn't have been able to play in any case.) "Good for the crops, you know!"

"In the middle of winter?" snorted Lowther. "Down it comes! Blow it! 'Tain't fit for a dog to play footer in!"

"Even old Grundy wouldn't be as strong enough to go out into it!" remarked Manners.

Cardew sauntered up. And when Cardew has nothing to do—which is often the case—there is generally trouble brewing for someone.

"I rather think Grundy would, if he were asked nicely," he said easily, more for the sake of argument than anything else.

"Rats!"

"Think I couldn't persuade him to take a little walk—say, for four or five miles?"

"I'm jolly sure you couldn't!" said Manners emphatically.

"Then we'll make a bet on it," said Cardew pleasantly. "Here, Levison!"

Levison was standing by with Clive, and came up on being addressed.

"Well, Cardew?"

"Bear witness to this little bet of mine, old bean! When peace is finally declared, and all of us, of course, are old, old men with white beards and bald heads, we are to gather round a festive board groaning under the good things of the earth. And if I don't succeed in sendin' Grundy out into the wet to-day, I'm to pay for that future spread. If I do succeed, then I'm to gorge myself to the full at these fellows' expense."

Levison grinned.

"I bear witness to that!"

"But without telling Grundy an actual whopper, though," I put in. "For instance, you could say that his uncle was having a fit in the road. That would send him out like a shot, but—"

"I'll spin him no whoppers, old son!" promised Cardew. "But I'll want your help, Levison. You're rather pally with Grundy, aren't you? I hear he's been lookin' after you lately."

Levison frowned, and then laughed.

"The silly old ass! He means well enough, I dare say. But I wish he'd mind his own dashed business!"

"Anything on this afternoon?"

"Not now that footer's off," answered Levison. "By the way, though, I've some lines to do for Lathom before tea. I forgot those."

"Never mind them! Just trot along with me! Ta-ta, you fellows!"

And Cardew lounged out of the Common-room with Levison.

When he left the room he left our minds also. We took his bet with a pinch of salt, so to speak, and remained at the window watching the rain, and listening to Lowther's worst jokes—if any of them can be called worse than the rest.

Cardew and Levison, however, were not long in making their plans. The result was that a few minutes later they sought the study of George Alfred Grundy.

That remarkable man was busy hammering huge studs into a pair of huge footer-boots.

Cardew viewed this operation with great interest until it came to an end.

"If you haven't studied footer, Grundy,

old bean," he remarked. "I can see that you've studied footer-boots!"

"Eh?" said Grundy.

Cardew didn't trouble to explain that very obvious pun. He felt he hadn't energy enough.

Levison drew a cigarette-case from his pocket, and proffered it to Cardew.

"Have a whiff, old man? Ahem!"

Seeing Grundy's questioning eyes upon him, he hastily put back the case with a great show of confusion.

"Hallo! Sliding back again, Levison?" exclaimed Grundy. "I thought you'd chuckled that game, like a sensible chap!"

"Well, so I have," said Levison uncomfortably. "I— Can I have a word with you in private, Grundy?"

"Certainly!" said Grundy magnanimously. "Speak out!"

His great mind overlooked for the moment the fact that private speaking is scarcely possible in the presence of company.

Levison turned to Ralph Reckness.

"Will you clear out, Cardew?"

"With pleasure, as you put it so very nicely!"

And Cardew went, apparently rather huffy. Grundy looked approvingly at Levison.

"That's the way!" he said. "Don't get too thick with that chap! I don't think much of him! Now, what's the trouble?"

"I'd like to have your advice—"

Grundy beamed.

"Go ahead!"

"In fact, it's more than advice I want! It's help—active help. You remember how Selby was imprisoned in the Moat House, don't you?"

"I remember that."

"Well, Lathom, he's—he's—"

"Collared at the Moat House?"

"Nunno! Another place altogether. I'll tell you how to get to it in a minute. But he—he's locked in a room—"

"Eh? Who locked him in?"

"It was done by a—a man I knew," said Levison cautiously.

Grundy stared at him.

"Then why didn't you stop him, you ass?"

"You—you see," said Levison desperately, "he's got a kind of hold over me—"

Grundy snorted.

"One of your shady acquaintances?"

"I don't see why you should call him shady," said Levison sulkily.

"Cut that! Who is he?"

"Never mind his name!" said Levison hastily. "If I give him away he might—well, he's already reported me to the Head for visiting the Green Man. I just scraped out of it with a licking!"

"Precious friend!" sniffed Grundy.

"He isn't a friend, really. But I'm under his thumb, in any way I've had to do a lot of jobs for him that I haven't altogether liked—in fact, haven't liked at all. This afternoon I've something to do for him, and if I refuse it's ten to one he'll report me to the Head, and—"

Levison shrugged hopelessly.

"By Jove! He's locked Latham in a room, you say?"

"Without food," said Levison miserably. "But the key's in the lock—I know that! It's just a matter of turning it, and Latham's free. But I've this beastly job to do this afternoon—for—you know, the fellow who locked him in—a job I detest; but—but I'm in his power—"

Levison paused.

"Where is this place?" demanded Grundy.

"And what is it?"

"I can give you directions on a bit of paper. I'll mean a walk of four or five miles if you follow them. But if you think your legs could stand it—"

"My legs stand it!" exclaimed Grundy. "If there's a fellow at St. Jim's who's a patch on me at walking—beastly wet, though!" he said suddenly.

His spirits seemed damped for the moment. Then he asked:

"What kind of a place is it?"

"It's a kind of board-residence show, in a way, and people live there at a specified charge. I know the place well enough, and I think you will when you see it before you. It can't be missed if you follow these directions."

"Look here, then. If you'll promise me that you'll have no more shady transactions with this man—no gambling, smoking, drinking, and that rot—"

"Never, in future!"

"In spite of his power over you?"

"In spite of that," said Levison firmly.

"Then I'll free Latham!" said Grundy magnificently. "That rotter ought to be imprisoned. I—"

"No!" broke in Levison. "Not that! I don't want him punished. But set Latham free, and I promise you that he'll have nothing further to fear from the man who locked him in."

"Just as you like, so long as you keep your own promise."

"I'll keep that. In fact, I'll—Ugh! I'll visit him this evening, and—give him something, I can tell you!"

"Be advised by me, and break off with him," said Grundy encouragingly.

"But—but don't let it get about that I sent you. That—that fellow—"

Levison shuddered as he spoke, and broke off dramatically.

"He must be a Hun!" exclaimed Grundy. "I wish I could put my fist against his nose!"

"I'll scribble out the directions," said Levison quickly. "Lemme see!"

After a few minutes with the pencil, he handed the sheet of paper he had been working on to Grundy.

The latter read, and nodded approvingly. The directions were lucid enough:

"Follow Rylombe Lane.
Take footpath across moor.
Reaching lane, turn to right.
At the end, again turn to right.
First turning on left.
First on right.
Second on right.
First on right—building in front."

"And then—" explained Levison, "it's all quite simple. At the gates of the house you'll find a porter—one of the Taggles breed, you know. Take no notice of him, for the gates are open. Straight ahead is the door of the place—also kept open for the convenience of inmates, of course. Whether Latham's gagged and bound—well, you can depend upon it he won't be making much noise. He's locked up in the end room

of the first passage on the second floor. Remember that!"

"Second floor, first passage, end room," repeated Grundy, jutting it down on paper.

Then he looked dubiously at Levison.

"Look here, this is the solid truth you're giving me, ain't it? Latham is locked up in this room?"

"I know it for a dead cert!" exclaimed Levison desperately. "How I know doesn't matter. But it's the truth."

"Right-ho! Then I'll be off. Lucky you asked my advice, young Levison."

"You're the only fellow I felt I could rely upon to do a job of this kind, Grundy!"

And Grundy departed upon his errand, greatly gratified.

Gardew lounged into the Common-room, with Levison, grinning, behind him.

"Still here, old beans!" he remarked.

"What behold ye, Sister Ann & Co.?"

"Rain!" snorted Monty Lowther. "Rain, rain; nothing but—Hallo, Grundy!"

"Not really?" yawned Gardew.

Cap pulled down over his eyes, coat buttoned up to his ears, George Alfred Grundy squelched across the quad.

He stopped in the gateway, with the rain beating down upon him, and pulled a piece of paper from his pocket.

After referring to it for a moment he thrust it back again, and swung out of sight—behind a curtain of falling rain.

"When the pipin' times of peace come," Gardew reminded us, "I'll expect that spread. So don't squander your old-age pensions away!"

II.

GRUNDY set his jaws grimly as he strode down the road.

"Chaps like Levison were made to get into the clutches of scoundrels," he muttered. "I can't imagine anyone taking me in to that tune. He ha! Ugh! What a beastly day! I wonder what the waster's like? Poor old Latham!"

This, and much more, Grundy said to Grundy, as he tramped on through the wet and mud.

He was crossing Wayland Moor by now. This bleak and desolate expanse worked upon his imagination, and the abducting of Latham seemed quite likely.

A hulking figure, roughly dressed, and carrying a huge stick under its arm, loomed up.

Grundy looked at the man suspiciously in passing.

The man evidently resented being looked at suspiciously. He returned the look with redoubled suspicion.

Grundy became more suspicious. He spun round when the man passed, and stared intently.

Then the man slung round, and returned the stare in a very aggressive manner.

A sudden thought struck Grundy. Suppose the man had had something to do with the imprisonment of Latham? For, although there was no reason why he should have, there was still no reason why he shouldn't. Thus reasoned Grundy.

"I'll throw out a few hints," he thought. "He may let something drop unawares."

He looked harder at the man.

"When you've seen enough of me I'll pass on!" growled the stranger.

"I want no impudence from you, my man!" said Grundy sharply. "As a matter of fact, I'm not so sure that I haven't seen you before!"

The stranger stared at him unpleasantly.

"Aye, you?"

"Mind," said Grundy, eyeing him narrowly. "I don't say that you've committed a robbery, or a murder, or anything like that—"

The man scowled.

"But there's such a thing as locking people in rooms," said Grundy meaningly. "Not to mention gagging and binding them!"

"Who's locked people in rooms?" exclaimed the man.

"Never mind! I make no accusations! But I hope I know a criminal when I see one!"

"Young 'ound!"

The man grasped his cudgel furiously.

"Look here! Blustering won't do any good! I've done a bit of detective work in my time—"

"Take that!"

"Yarooooogh!" roared Grundy, as the stick descended sharply upon his head. "My hat! Ow!"

"And that?"

Whack!

Grundy fled, howling, and the stranger shook his fist after him.

Grundy met many equally suspicious-looking characters after that, but he did not accost them. He had had enough.

In the lane he made further reference to the paper.

"Turn to the right!" he murmured.

Grundy trudged along the muddy lane, getting wetter and wetter.

At the end, according to the instructions, he again took the road to the right.

"This seems to be a roundabout way of Levison's," he grumbled, when at last he came to the turning on the left. "It would have been much shorter to have taken the road behind the school."

He went quite a long distance now before he came to a road shooting off from the right.

Grundy walked on.

The roads became worse, but he plodded on manfully.

Grundy frowned when the time came to act upon the direction "Second on the right."

"It strikes me," he exclaimed, "that I'll pass jolly near to St. Jim's! That fool Levison—"

He didn't finish, but plodded on, his frown deepening.

Twenty minutes' further walking, and Grundy came to the "first on right."

The "building in front" was St. Jim's!

Gradually, very gradually, it dawned upon Grundy's great mind that something was wrong. It had, in fact, been dawning upon his mind for some time.

Going through the gates he passed the porter, indisputably of the Taggles breed, and set off across the quad, bewildered and bedraggled. As yet he hadn't quite grasped the situation.

A few of us were on the steps of the School House now, for it had almost ceased to rain at last.

"Hallo!" yawned Gardew. "Didn't expect Grundy back so soon, by gad!"

Levison made himself scarce. But Grundy didn't seem to want him.

As if in a dream, he was murmuring, "Second floor; first passage; end room!"

He followed these directions, and we followed him.

They brought him to Latham's study.

What prompted him to try the door I don't know. Even his slow brain must have grasped the fact that the "abducting" bizney was off.

Anyway, he tried it; and it was locked. But Latham was inside, and he unlocked and opened the door.

"Well?" he snapped. "I am very busy! What is it, Grundy?"

"I—I—You're not kidnapped, sir?" stammered Grundy.

"What?"

"I—I mean, not gagged and bound—that is—I—I—a rotter hasn't locked you in this room—a room—Oh, crumbs!"

"Is this a joke, Grundy?"

"Nunno, sir! I—"

"You ridiculous boy! Come into the room!"

He dragged poor Grundy in as he spoke. Let us draw a kindly veil.

"You rotten liar, Levison!"

George Alfred Grundy, his hands tucked under his armpits, glowered at Levison.

"I say, go easy, Grundy!" I exclaimed. "You can't call a fellow a liar for nothing, you know!"

"For nothing!" hooted Grundy. "He told me Latham had been locked in a room by—"

"By himself!" said Levison calmly.

"By a chap whose power you were in!" roared Grundy.

Levison nodded.

"So I am, in a sense. I said he makes me do jobs that I detest. Well, he gave me some lines to do this afternoon, and that ain't pleasant, is it?"

"You—you— Grundy was almost speechless. "You said he was locked in a room miles from St. Jim's!"

"Not at all! I merely showed you one way of getting to Latham's room. It was rather a long way round, I admit. But it was a walk, you know!"

Grundy rushed at him. But we collared him promptly, and held him back.

"Well, I give you best, Levison!" he said ruefully. "But to bamboozle me, you know! Me! My hat! You're cleverer than I thought, Levison!"

"Thanks awfully!"

THE ST. JIM'S GALLERY.

No. 32.—Richard Henry Redfern.

DICK REDFERN is quite one of the hottest fellows among the St. Jim's juniors, and popular exceedingly. Richard is brash, but he is muscular also. Among the best of Mr. Lathom's pupils, he is also among the most prominent members of the Fourth Form on the playing-fields. He ranks with Figgins and Kerr and Fatty Wynn in the New House elevens. Those four are worth very nearly as much as the other seven, though there are good men among the seven.

Redfern came to St. Jim's as a scholarship boy, and with him came his chums Owen and Lawrence. They were all from a County Council school, and the attitude of the juniors generally towards them was not entirely a welcoming one. The first St. Jim's fellow they met was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Now, Gussy has not an ounce of snobbery in him, and when he let out the fact that his chums were rather expecting to see three doubtful specimens he had no intention at all of hurting the feelings of Redfern & Co. Gussy offered to protect them. They did not feel that they wanted protecting; but what he had said gave Redfern an idea.

The fruit of that idea was the appearance at the old school of three awful ragamuffins. If that was the kind of thing St. Jim's expected, let St. Jim's have it! Mr. Wiggs, at Wayland, supplied the necessary clobber, and Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence supplied a Cockney accent that one might have cut with a knife, and remarks, that did not represent the real tone of their minds. They were thicker than anything the juniors had dreamed of. "If you coves are goin' to put on any side there will be trouble," said Redfern. "We ain't goin' to be put on because we came from Slum Alley." That, of course, is not Redfern's usual language. It fairly took aback Figgins & Co., for it was to the New House that the three new fellows came. Gussy gave the game away, and the fellows who had been just a little inclined to be snobbish felt a bit ashamed of themselves. They had certainly been fairly scored off.

Reddy & Co. were up against Figgins & Co. from the outset. They were the New Firm, they said, and they meant to make the New House cock House at St. Jim's.

"I'm sorry to ruffle his Majesty King Figgins, but we've decided to start an independent republic in the new study," Redfern told Tom Merry & Co.

Figgys and his chums got in the Terrible Three to help them handle the New Firm after the New Firm had scored very distinctly in a wheeze which had to do with pies and sawdust and things. But even with such illustrious aid Figgys & Co. failed to pull it off. It was plain that the New Firm was followed of more than common resource.

It was Redfern who led the revolt against Mr. Ratcliff which culminated in a barring-out. Other things had happened before the New House juniors took that very drastic step, however.

The trouble arose over the food question. There is no getting away from the fact that Mr. Ratcliff is mean. For a long time before this complaint had been made of the quality and quantity of the grub—the official grub—in the New House, which compared very unfavourably with that in the School House. Fatty Wynn found it less bearable than ever when the Housemaster confiscated his private supplies and called him a greedy young rascal. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, always sympathetic, helped Fatty to recover the stuff from the pantry. If it was not precisely the same stuff, it was equally good stuff, anyway; and a fair robbery is no exchange—no, that's wrong. It was a fair robbery, and it was an exchange—at least, so Fatty Wynn thought.

Mr. Ratcliff did not agree with Fatty. He put the prefects on to inquire about what he called the robbery. They were not keen on the job. Monteith and Baker and Webb all checked it after a bit; but Sefton held on—he liked anything with a touch of bullying in it. Before Monteith had gone out of the game Redfern had had him quite nicely. The three new boys were questioned as to what they had had for tea. Redfern confessed to

having had a tongue at tea. Asked where he got it, he said he had brought it to St. Jim's with him. Monteith said that it could not have kept good so long unless it was a tinned tongue. But Reddy said it wasn't tinned. He had kept it in a safe place. Monteith asked him where, and his reply was "In my mouth!"

As nothing definite was discovered by Sefton, the juniors were put on short commons. Now, this was plainly unfair. Many were to suffer for one or two, and to suffer in a way that is not fair punishment. It may be a very effective way of getting at a growing boy to cut his food supply down; but it is a wrong way—bad for the boy.

Figgins got up a protest against it. Every New House Fourth-Former stood up at the tea-table to protest, and every one of them got five hundred lines of Virgil for his audacity.

Then Redfern did something much more audacious. He took all the New House juniors down to the bunshop at Rylcombe for the biggest spread that the place could provide—and he had the bill sent in to Ratty!

There was trouble, of course. Redfern was



sent for by the furious master. The rest would not let him go alone. At least twenty followed him—Owen and Lawrence, of course, and Figgys & Co., and also Pratt and French and Thompson and Clarke, among others. The Housemaster said that the bill would be sent to Redfern's parents. Reddy told him coolly that his father could not possibly pay it. Then Mr. Ratcliff ordered that each boy who had taken part in the "disgusting orgy" should pay his share—or, rather, that their parents or guardians should do so. Kerr stepped forward at that. If it was attempted, he said, his father would certainly make a counter-claim against Mr. Ratcliff for food charged for in the term's bills and not supplied. All the juniors were willing to go to the Head; but Ratty did not want that. Dr. Holmes is the last man to agree with starvation as a penal measure. So they were ordered into Hall, and the angry master came down with a birch in his hand. Hall was empty! It was open rebellion now.

Monteith and Sefton were summoned, and told to fetch the six ringleaders—Redfern, Owen, Lawrence, Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn. They were authorised to use force if neces-

sary. Monteith did not care about doing that. Sefton rather liked it—until he found what the results were.

He got handled then, and at dinner he got it worse. The juniors were completely out of hand. They collared grub meant for the senior table; they pelted the unpopular Sefton with vegetables. Ratty did not show his nose. But during the afternoon he sent for Redfern, and Mr. Lathom, who knew nothing of the trouble, told the junior to go. Reddy did not go to Mr. Ratcliff; he was discovered by that gentleman walking the quad, and informed that he would be expelled. He was captured with Sefton's aid, and cruelly birched by the master while the bullying prefect held him. Figgys led an attempt at rescue; but the juniors could not get in to save Reddy, and the upshot of it all was that Mr. Ratcliff was hustled out of his own House, and it was barred against him.

Then the Head stepped in. He dealt with the rebels himself; but he dealt with Mr. Ratcliff also. That gentleman had to take a holiday of several weeks' duration. He came near to resigning in his wrath; but, unluckily, he thought better—or worse—of that.

Redfern's leadership in this affair naturally increased his prestige among the juniors of the New House. But the New Firm, hefty as they were, never quite got on top of Figgys & Co., and, though they may fry again, are never likely to.

The rivalry led to at least one big row, however. The New Firm were informed by Figgins that they had to toe the line; and they did so—in seeming. But it was only in seeming, and the results of the pretended obedience were not welcome to Figgys & Co. Mr. Ratcliff sent for Redfern and his two chums, and told them, before he eaned them, what amounted to a direct lie. It is true that his words could have been so construed as to avoid the implication that Figgins had sneaked to him; but that was the only construction any boy would have put upon them, and one can have no doubt that it was the construction Ratty meant to have put.

Redfern was in a fury. He went straight to Figgins and accused him of sneaking. That accusation is one that a fellow of Figgys's type—honest as the day—is sure to resent hotly. They got to blows at once, and, though separated by Kildare, fought it out later behind the chapel.

It was a tough fight. Figgins was on top when Ratty intervened. He might have had Redfern knocked out but for his chivalry. It was not in Figgins to go for a fellow as he staggered up from a nasty fall. The laws of the Ring allow it; but George Figgins has a higher sense of fair play than that. He stood aside and let Reddy rise unhampered—waited for him to get breath and start again. Good old Figgys! But just so would Redfern have done had the positions been reversed.

The Head had to clear up this mess, too. And again he had to rebuke Mr. Ratcliff. It was obvious to the Head that Ratty had been at least careless in his handling of the truth: Probably Dr. Holmes did not suspect that behind that seeming carelessness lay meditated spite. But we know Ratty, and I, for one, have no doubt whatever that he meant to make bad blood between those two, both of whom he hated.

On the whole, with occasional squabbles and some constant rivalry, Redfern and Figgins have been the best of friends since that.

But Redfern has had one other big fight. Quite lately we found him, through the machinations of Racke and Crooke, hard up against Tom Merry. Tom carried too many guns for him, and he was licked. But Reddy can take a licking. The nasty suspicions hurt him far more than that did; but a few words from Tom made amends for them. Two fellows of so much the same type as Richard Henry Redfern and the junior captain of St. Jim's could not be at feud long after there had been a fair chance of clearing up matters.

How thoroughly popular Dick Redfern is was well shown when Cardew displayed the snobbishness of which mention was made a couple of weeks ago. Not only the New

House Juniors invited to Cardew's spread, but those of his own House, too, walked out when they heard him insult the three scholarship boys. He made amends later; but one need not tell that story over again.

Redfern's journalistic proclivities have not been mentioned. He means to be a journalist when he leaves school; but that did not quite justify him in running away to be one, as he did once. He got a job, and did very well at it, too. But he had to come back to St. Jim's, and was glad to come. Do you remember how, later on, he was asked to report a

meeting at Wayland, and found Mr. Ratcliff getting up to make an anti-war speech, and turned out the gas to save St. Jim's the disgrace which he considered would have been brought upon the school by such a speech from one of its masters?

Dick Julian owes something to his New House namesake. There was a time when Julian was accused by Hake, the rascally New House Sixth-Former, of theft; and the evidence against him seemed very strong. Redfern was certain of Julian's innocence, and set out to prove it. The fact that it must

have been a fellow from his own House, if not Julian, did not choke him off. By a clever ruse he showed Hake to be the dishonest rotter he was, and eventually Hake confessed the earlier theft—for Redfern's ruse had involved tempting him to another—and Julian was completely cleared.

One of the very best, Redfern, frank, honest, full of fun, full of mischief, too, but never wicked mischief; an all-round athlete of rare calibre, cricketer, footballer, runner, swimmer; with first-class brains in addition. Floreat!

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Wednesday:

"BUNTER OF THE NEW HOUSE!"

By Martin Clifford.

You know Bunter now, all of you. How do you like him?

Nice, unselfish, sportsmanlike, winning kind of chap, isn't he?

But he really is funny—you cannot deny that.

And the stories dealing with his doings at St. Jim's are some of the very best I ever read.

Quite a lot of the St. Jim's fellows know Billy Bunter. They don't know him quite as Greyfriars knows him, of course. But they know him to be greedy and vain and untruthful.

They don't know, however, that the fellow who has come to St. Jim's is Billy Bunter. They think he is Wally, Billy's cousin. And Wally is a decent fellow in every way—one of the very best.

So Billy makes a start at St. Jim's with a clean slate; and we see how soon he begins to make it dirty.

And poor old Wally—at Greyfriars, with all Billy's misdemeanours piled on his poor, innocent shoulders!

But if you want to know—as I am sure you do—what happened to Wally, you must get the "Magnet."

"FALKIRK'S" CRITICS.

I have had scores of letters about my Falkirk correspondent's last communication. Not one of the writers agrees with him! He was greatly incensed because I did not take much notice of the one Scot who did. But that particular Scot was so very un-Scottish.

So is "Falkirk." Most of those who write about his communications are of his own race; but their tone is as different from his as anything can be. They don't talk rot about Bannockburn; their blood does not boil because George Francis Kerr has red hair and freckles; they don't hate the English or feel sure that I hate the Scots; they don't say silly things about Americans.

My own experience is that very few Scots have any dislike for England, or for English things and people. There is much of this in Ireland; it is fostered artificially by Sinn Féin and such movements. But Scotland is so very different. In the great old fighting days England and Scotland learned mutual respect. I can think of Bannockburn in exactly the same way as of Flodden, say that there was none dead at Bannockburn whom one could regret as one finds it easy to regret that gallant, knightly Scots James who died on Flodden field with all his nobles around him. Do you know Aytoun's "Edinburgh after Flodden"? Do you remember how the man who came back alone to Edinburgh told of those stark Scots warriors?

"Of the brave and gallant-hearted

Whom ye sent with pride away

Not a single man departed

From his monarch yesterday!"

But they all died round their King, who lay there "keeping royal state and semblance still," with two of his bravest lords at his head and at his feet a slain English knight.

There are thousands—many thousands—of English people who are as full of pride in the deeds of the Highland regiments as any Scot can be. For myself, brought up as I was on Sir Walter Scott's ringing verse and many stories, I am as keen as any Scot can be. The average Englishman, I am sure, is not a man who has any of this feeling of sectional jealousy. He is ready to consider Scot or Irishman or Welshman as a brother; it is hardly his fault if they feel otherwise. But I do not believe, and I will not believe, that

the Scots or the Welsh, or, indeed, many of the Irish, do feel otherwise.

AN ISSUE THAT WILL BE REMEMBERED.

I hope every reader of the GEM has ordered his copy of the "Penny Popular," which will reappear on Friday, January 24th. If you have not done so you would be well advised to place an order with your newsagent immediately, as failure to do so is liable to bring you bitter disappointment.

With this magnificent issue of the "Penny Popular"

A MAGNIFICENT PLATE

of Billy Bunter will be given free, whilst in the issue dated February 1st, and on sale the previous day, a splendid plate of

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY

showing the swell of St. Jim's in various positions, will be

GIVEN FREE.



The above is a small reproduction of this plate. When I tell you that the size of each of these plates will be 10in. by 6in. you will see that there will be nothing cheap about them, and that they will be well worth framing.

In the issue of the "Penny Popular" dated January 25th there will be a long complete tale dealing with the early adventures of the chums of St. Jim's, and entitled "D'Arcy's Delusion!" In this story Gussy falls in love with the girl at the tobacconist's, and—Well, I do not think I need say more to prove that the story will be one of the very best.

There will be two more stories in this number. One is entitled "Billy Bunter's Postal-Order!" by Frank Richards; and the other is "Rivals of Rookwood!" by Owen Conquest.

There is going to be a big demand for this Bumper Number of the "Penny Popular," so take my advice and

PLACE AN ORDER

with your newsagent at once. Don't leave it until the end of the week. Do it now!

NOTICES.

Correspondence, etc., Wanted by—

G. R. Abraham, 110, Silverleigh Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, wants members for correspondence society.

J. W. Mayer, 558, Oldham Road, Bardsley, Ashton-under-Lyne, wants members for Book and Exchange Club.

J. Saxton, 98, Sneinton Road, Nottingham, wants writers, over 14, for amateur magazine.

H. Swindells, 10, Vernon Street, Buxton Road, Macclesfield, wants to correspond with readers anywhere. He is willing to supply all information as to names and numbers of Companion Papers. He would like to hear from readers who are interested in ventriloquism. Stamped addressed envelope.

YOUR EDITOR.

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF A RAG.

MONDAY.—Rising-bell? Oh, 'tain't right! Why can't they let a chap sleep on for a few hours? Somebody'll catch it, though, to-day. The fellows are calling from the quad—no time to get washed. I'll see about it in the morning—if I've time. Just-kicked football through old Ratty's window. New for fireworks! The old rotter's always ratty in the morning, so I expect I shall catch it. Curly Gibson says it serves me right; he says it stops the game. Perhaps it does, but I'll settle with him soon, though. Just "intervened" that old beast Ratty. Oh ain't life worth living!

TUESDAY.—Just had a wash. That's worth putting down here. It wasn't exactly a bath. But what's the use? Chap'll only get dirty again, so it's a waste of soap, and it ain't patriotic to waste anything, they say. I always was a patriotic chap. Darrel has just told me I'm to lag for him to-morrow. That's good! Plenty of tuck now. Hurrah!

WEDNESDAY.—Just brought a herring away that Darrel doesn't want. Jolly funny! He says its smell is strong enough to stop one of our tanks. I s'pose he doesn't know what a nice-flavoured herring is like. He's a good chap, though, old Darrel! I'm having a fine time!

THURSDAY.—Just made a booby-trap for that rotter Knox. When he walks into his study down it'll come right on the top of his napper. Serve the beast jolly well right! What's he want to come me for, anyhow? Just for sliding down the banisters and bumping into him at the bottom and knocking him spinning, that's all, the rotter! Ha, ha, ha! It was funny, though. I mean his sitting on the floor, not my being caned. That booby-trap has just acted. What a row the rotter's making! He'll never know who's done it, though. Three cheers for the Third!

FRIDAY.—Just had four fights. Won 'em all. Nothing much the matter with me, though. Only a few teeth missing, and a swollen eye, and a nose like too. But the other chaps are in the sanny—for good, I think. Can't write any more to-day. I feel a bit queer, though not from the fights, mind you.

SATURDAY.—We play a footer match to-day. I'm centre-forward. It's been raining like billy-ho all the morning, and the ground's like a giddy pond; we're kicking with the tide, though. Just finished the match. We've won, eight to six. But ain't we in a lovely state! We'll all be in the sanny soon. Wally D'Arcy says that doesn't matter at all, though, because he says we shall jolly well be out for next Saturday's match. Old Wally knows that for sure, because he's just whispered that if we're not better we're jolly well going to do a bolt. Good old Wally! Football is a grand game, ain't it?