

"BUNTER'S VERY LATEST!"

A Screamingly Funny Tale of Greyfriars Inside.

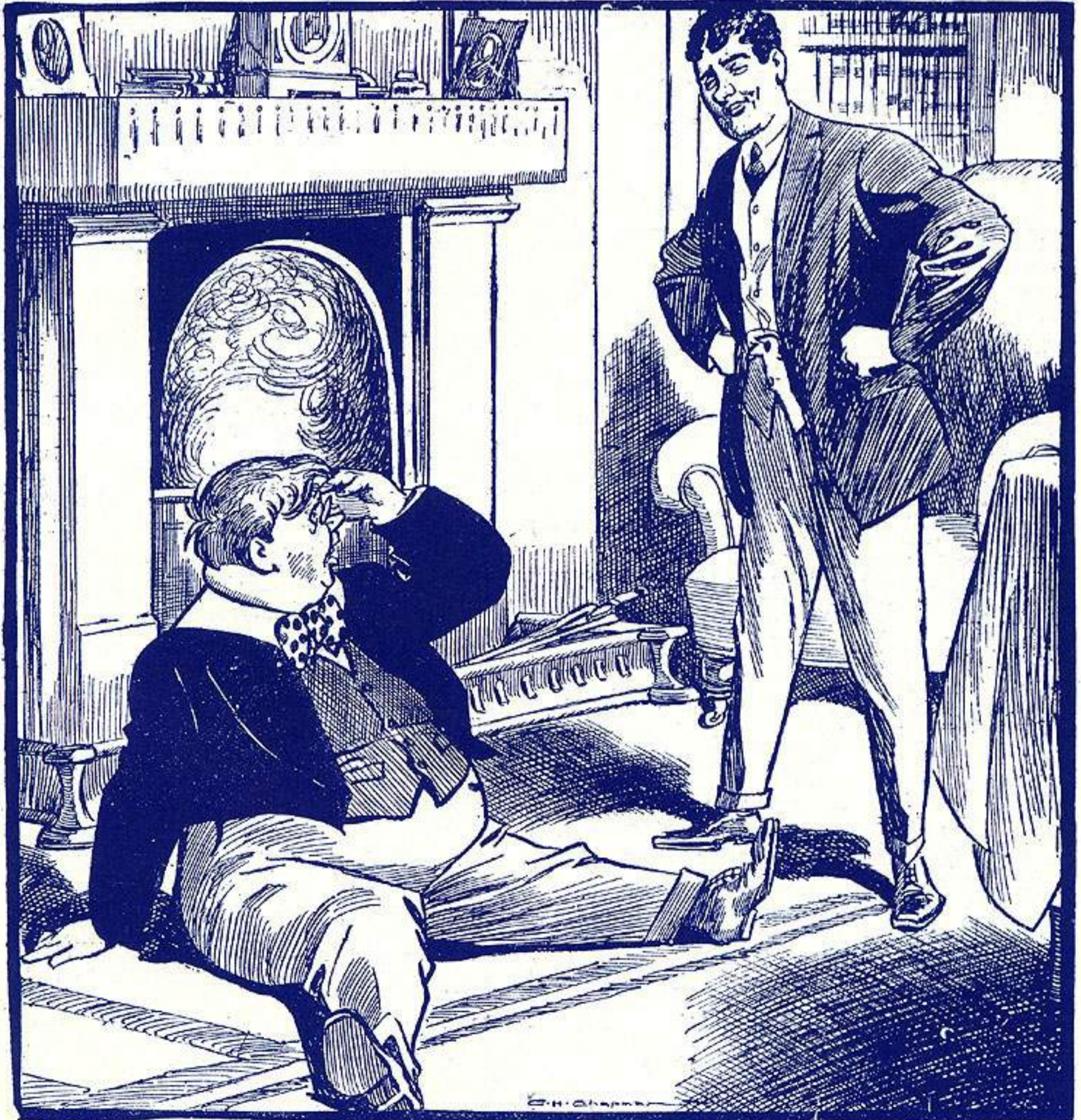
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BILLY BUNTER GETS A SHOCK!

(The incident which leads to a sensational discovery.)



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FOR NEXT MONDAY.

"THE PLOT AGAINST THE SCHOOL!"

By Frank Richards.

That is the title of next week's story of Harry Wharton & Co., which deals with a character who has for some time kept in the background. We have not heard much of Dick Russell—who is the junior who plays so prominent a part in this story.

In the story, Dick's father is robbed of a great deal of money, which puts the family into a very awkward position, financially. Mr. Russell is unable to send his son any money for school expenses and pocket, and Dick begins to feel it very badly.

Then a stranger—an old boy—arrives at the school, and it is through his kindness that Dick is saved from a great temptation. Quite by chance Russell makes an astounding discovery, and overhears a plot to rob the whole school of its valuable possessions. What comes from this discovery, and of the series of subsequent events which puts Dick Russell and his family back in their old position, you will read all about in

"THE PLOT AGAINST THE SCHOOL!"

the finest story ever written.

THE SUPPLEMENT.

To follow this grand story will be another four-page supplement of the

"Greyfriars Herald," edited by Harry Wharton, of Greyfriars. Harry tells me it will be a SPECIAL INVENTION NUMBER, and I am sure he will give us some very fine stories and articles. I will not spoil the issue by telling you all about it here, but will leave it for you to find out for yourselves what it will be like next week.

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Thomas V. Weir, c/o Brunswick P.O., Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers in America.

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Your Editor.

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A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Story, dealing with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. and Billy Bunter at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Tribulations of Bunter!

"WILL you lend me——"

"No!"

"Lend me——"

"Nix!"

Five voices replied each time to Billy Bunter; and they replied in unison, and with considerable emphasis.

Harry Wharton & Co., of the Greyfriars Remove, seemed at one mind in the matter. Billy Bunter had not yet stated what it was he wanted to borrow; but the Famous Five, apparently, weren't lending Bunter anything.

"I say, you fellows—you might lend a chap——" recommenced Bunter, in a tone more of sorrow than of anger.

"Rats!"

"If you think I want to borrow any money of you——" Bunter started again, warmly.

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Don't you?"

"No!" roared Bunter.

"What is it, then?" demanded Bob Cherry. "If it's a boot, I'll lend you a boot, with pleasure. Where will you have it?"

Bunter dodged back.

"Yah! Keep off, you beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a book!" howled Bunter. "I want you to lend me a book."

"A book!" ejaculated the Famous Five together.

"Just that!" said Bunter.

"Well, my hat," said Wharton, in surprise, "if it's a book, we can lend you a book! What the thump do you want a book for?"

"To read, of course."

"Taking up reading?" asked Bob.

"Well, I dare say you can improve your mind that way; and goodness knows it needs improving. I can lend you my new Latin dictionary."

"I want something interesting, of course, you ass," said Bunter. "You see, I'm detained this afternoon."

"You don't want a book to read in detention," said Wharton. "Mr. Quelch will set you something to do."

Bunter snorted.

"I know he will, the beast; but I jolly well ain't going to do it. I'm not going to mug up filthy deponent verbs on a half-holiday; not if I know it. I shall have to stay in the Form-room; but it won't be so bad if I've got a book. Squiff's given me some toffee, and Smithy's stood me some bullseyes——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "With toffee and bullseyes and a book you ought to be able to get through detention all right."

"Just what I was thinking," said Bunter, blinking sagely at the Famous Five through his big spectacles. "I can spin Quelch a yarn about not getting the dashed detention task done—I can pull his leg somehow. But I've got to get through the afternoon from three to five. So I want a book a fellow can read. A 'Herald' would do."

"I've lent my 'Herald' to a chap in the Fourth," said Johnny Bull. "I can lend you Todhunter's Algebra!"

"Ow!"

"I've got a Greek lexicon!" said Nugent.

"Wow!"

"We've got some books in the study," said Harry Wharton thoughtfully. The captain of the Remove was quite kind and interested, now that it turned out that Bunter only wanted to borrow a book. It was really a very mild request, especially for William George Bunter. W.G.B. was not often so moderate.

"Something exciting, with murders in it," said Bunter. The fat junior's taste in literature was evidently rather lurid.

"Oh, my hat!" said Wharton. "I haven't anything with murders in it. Some good school stories——"

"Rot!" said Bunter.

A deep voice called from the direction of the School House, and Billy Bunter spun round.

"Bunter!"

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was standing in the doorway, beckoning to the fat junior.

"Yes, sir."

"It is time you were in the Form-room. Bunter."

"Oh dear!"

Billy Bunter rolled away to the School House; and the Famous Five, for once, regarded him sympathetically.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Coker Shows How!

BILLY BUNTER followed Mr. Quelch to the Remove-room, with a frowning fat brow and a discontented face.

An afternoon's detention was a heavy blow; all the heavier if it was accompanied by exercises in deponent verbs, as it was in this case.

Bunter didn't care a rap about verbs, deponent or otherwise; and he cared very much about a half-holiday.

All his usual occupations were knocked on the head. True, he wasn't keen on footer, and he didn't care much about a cycle spin, and nothing would have dragged him out of gates for a walk in the woods or a ramble on the cliffs. But he might have spent the time happily enough in scouting through the studies while the other fellows were out on the quest for stray tarts or remnants of cake. He might have dunned the whole Remove and Fourth for a loan, and succeeded in raising the wind sooner or later for a visit to the tuck-shop.

Instead of which, he was to sit in the Form-room for two hours, and devote his attention more or less to that troublesome variety of Latin verb, the deponent.

His only consolations were Squiff's toffee and Smithy's bullseyes. He had not even a book to while away the weary hours.

Bunter felt himself a much-injured youth as he followed the Remove master into the Form-room.

He sat down heavily at his desk, and produced his school books wearily. School books were not what he wanted. Certainly there was nothing exciting in them. In his history there were murders enough, undoubtedly, but not the thrilling kind that Bunter liked when he devoted his valuable attention to literature. There was nothing thrilling in Romulus knocking out Remus; and even Henry the Eighth's exploits were not thrilling, though no doubt exciting enough at the time they happened.

Mr. Quelch grimly set him his task.

"I shall return here at five o'clock, Bunter," he said. "I shall expect you to have made considerable progress by then."

"Yes, sir," said Bunter dismally.

"I am sorry you are detained this afternoon, Bunter——"

"So am I, sir!" said Bunter, with deep feeling.

The Remove master coughed.

"Doubtless it will impress upon your mind, Bunter, the necessity of bestowing a little attention on your work."

"I—I think it would impress it better on my mind, sir, if—if I was in the quad!" said Bunter.

"That will do," said Mr. Quelch. "No doubt after your detention this afternoon, Bunter, you will remember

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"Now I've got you fairly locked!" said Coker. "Now try and get loose!"
 "Right-ho!" said Potter. He made a swift and rather powerful movement, and to Coker's great surprise, he—Coker—sat down with a sudden bump on the floor of the Form-room. (See Chapter 2.)

that a deponent verb is passive in form but active in meaning."

"Oh, yes, sir! Certainly!"

"Remember that this is for your own good, Bunter!" added Mr. Quelch, as he withdrew.

Bunter snorted when the Form-master was gone.

Possibly it was for his good, but Bunter did not want Mr. Quelch to look after his good in this assiduous way. He would have preferred his Form-master to let him go to the bad a little.

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter. "Rotten Latin, rotten verbs, rotten bosh! I wish I had a good murder story!"

He dipped his pen in the ink, wrote half a line, adorned it with a blot and a smudge, and then rested from his labours.

He started on the toffee, and found solace in it. The toffee disappeared in record time.

The bullseyes followed. By that time Bunter was feeling a little happier and looking a great deal stickier.

He was turning a dreary eye on his Latin grammar again, when the door suddenly opened, and Coker and Potter and Greene of the Fifth Form appeared in the doorway.

"This room will do," said Coker of the Fifth. "There's nobody here. More room here than in the study—"

"I say—" began Potter and Greene simultaneously.

Horace Coker interrupted them with a wave of the hand.

"Don't jaw, you fellows," he said. "I've always said that you talk too much. I'm going to show you that jiu-jitsu trick. You first, Potter—"

"But—"

"You first!" rapped out Coker.

Coker of the Fifth prided himself on having what he called a short way with fags. Sometimes he had a short way with his fellow-formers in the Fifth, too. Potter and Greene were looking very restive.

As a matter of fact, Potter and Greene

wanted to be on the footer-field; but the great Horace was quite indifferent to that. He wanted to show them a jiu-jitsu trick he had mastered, and he was going to show it to them.

"There's somebody here," said Greene.

Coker glanced carelessly round towards the fat junior sitting in solitary state amid the empty desks.

"Only a fag!" he said. "He doesn't matter!"

"Doesn't he!" said Billy Bunter warmly. "Don't you come playing the goat in this Form-room, Coker! Go into your own Form-room!"

"Prout's there," said Coker. "Besides, I'll come into any Form-room I like! Shut up, Bunter!"

"Look here—"

"If you want a thick ear, Bunter, you've only got to say so."

Bunter sniffed, and was silent. He did not want a thick ear; and Coker was only too liberal in the way he handed out those adornments.

"Come on, Potter!" said Coker impatiently.

George Potter unwillingly submitted to the ordeal. He wasn't interested in the developments of Coker's wrestling, but it was no use arguing with Coker.

"You see, I take a grip on you like this," said Coker, "and then I get you with my left like that—see?"

"I see," assented Potter.

"Now I've got you fairly locked, with scarcely any exertion on my part!" grinned Coker. "Catch on?"

"Not quite."

"Well, try to get loose, that's all!"

"Right-ho!" said Potter.

He made a swift and rather powerful movement, and to Coker's great astonishment he—Coker—sat down with a sudden bump on the floor of the Form-room.

Potter did not wait for Horace Coker to recover. He joined Greene at the door, and the two Fifth-Formers scuttled away down the corridor. Somehow or

other they were keener on football than on Coker's jiu-jitsu demonstrations,

"Here, come back!" roared Coker.

He scrambled up rather dazedly.

"Come back, you duffers! I haven't finished yet!" he roared.

But it was clear that Potter and Greene had finished. They had disappeared from view down the passage.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

Coker, who was striding out in pursuit of the deserters, turned back. That "he, he, he!" seemed to annoy him, somehow. He strode across to Bunter.

"What are you cackling at?" he demanded.

"Well, you looked such an awful ass, you know," said Bunter.

"What?"

"You can't wrestle for toffee!" said the fat junior. "You don't know anything about jiu-jitsu, Coker!"

Coker's reply was not in words. Words were quite inadequate to express his feelings. He reached across the desk and took hold of Bunter's fat ear with a sudden grasp.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter. "Ow! Leggo!"

"Don't I know anything about wrestling?" asked Coker grimly, compressing his finger and thumb like a vice.

"Yow-ow! Yes!" gasped Bunter.

"Lots! No end! Yow-ow-ow! Beast! Yah! Oh, my ear! Leggo!"

Coker grinned and released the fat ear, and strode out of the Form-room in search of Potter and Greene. Billy Bunter rubbed his ear, which was crimson in hue, and ejaculated:

"Beast!"

And then he turned his attention once more dolorously to deponent verbs.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Good Gilbert!

SKINNER of the Remove looked into the Form-room a few minutes after Coker was gone. Bunter blinked up drearily at him.

"Nice here?" asked Skinner, with a grin.

"Rotten!" groaned Bunter.

"It's too bad!" said Skinner sympathetically. "I heard you asking Wharton about a book in the quad, Bunter, so—"

"The beast might have brought me one!" said Bunter. "I suppose he's gone down to the footer and forgotten all about me."

"Lucky for you I'm such a kind and thoughtful chap!" said Skinner agreeably. "I've brought you a book, old top!"

"Eh?"

Bunter blinked at him suspiciously. Skinner of the Remove was a youth of very humorous proclivities, but his jokes were not generally good-natured. It was quite unlike Skinner to bother himself about a fellow in distress.

"What's the game?" asked Bunter suspiciously.

Skinner smiled blandly.

"No game!" he said. "I knew you wanted a book to read in detention, so I've brought you one. I call that kind, Bunter."

"If you're not pulling my leg—"

"Here it is!"

Skinner drew a volume out from under his jacket and held it up to view.

"It's a jolly good book," he said. "My Aunt Selina sent it to me for a birthday present. I haven't read it

myself; Aunt Selina's taste in books isn't exactly the same as mine. But I'm sure you'll like it no end, Bunter. It's a real good thing!"

"Hand it over," said Bunter. "Here you are, old fellow!" Skinner tossed the book on the desk, and quitted the Form-room hurriedly—perhaps to escape Bunter's grateful thanks, or perhaps to escape the danger of being spotted there by Mr. Quelch.

Billy Bunter's fat face looked quite hopeful as he picked up the volume. He felt that it was uncommonly kind of Skinner to think of a fellow in distress like this.

But the next moment Bunter gave a snort of disgust.

The volume was a gilt-edged one, with a coloured picture on the front representing a schoolboy, who seemed to be understudying, in expression, an expiring duck in a thunderstorm. The title, in gilt letters, was: "Good Gilbert, the Blind Schoolboy."

Bunter did not want to read any farther.

The adventures of Good Gilbert did not seem to him much more attractive than deponent verbs. And his gratitude to the humorous Skinner was summed up in the one word:

"Beast!" He found a momentary consolation in shying the volume across the Form-room.

Then he turned to his exercises again. But deponent verbs could not hold Bunter's attention. He quitted his desk, and stared out of the window.

He found himself staring at the back of Mr. Quelch's head. The Remove master was standing in the quad talking to Monsieur Charpentier the French master. Bunter popped back quickly.

"Oh dear!" he groaned. He wandered round the Form-room like a caged animal and at last, in sheer desperation, picked up Skinner's attractive volume.

He sat down on a form and opened it. The leaves were still uncut, which seemed to show a lack of appreciation on Skinner's part. But the title-page had apparently been used as a pen-wiper. And several leaves were gone from the interior, possibly having been used to make "spills" to light Skinner's secret cigarettes in the study—which certainly had not been the intention of his kind Aunt Selina in sending him that biography of Good Gilbert.

Bunter yawned over a few pages dimly. It was not exhilarating reading. Possibly it was edifying. But by no stretch of the imagination could it be considered exhilarating.

"Gilbert was very happy. The affliction of his blindness sometimes caused him to weep. But the serenity of his cherubic face soon returned. His schoolmates vied with one another in showing him acts of kindness. His goodness had won over to the path of virtue many naughty boys. His greatest grief was that his lack of sight interfered with his lessons. The joy he felt in mathematics was cruelly dashed. No longer could he see the beloved Greek characters or the algebraic symbols. This was the hardest to bear."

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Bunter, and once more he shied Good Gilbert across the Form-room. "What a silly owl! I wouldn't mind being blind if I could cut lessons, and everybody would give me things. I jolly well shouldn't find it hard to bear if I had to miss prep, I know that."

Bunter roamed round the Form-room

again. It was barely four o'clock, and his detention was till five. He groaned in anguish of spirit. The deponent verbs remained unattended; it was bad enough being shut up in the Form-room, without worrying over rotten Latin verbs, Bunter felt. In blank boredom he picked up the volume again, and opened it by chance, and read:

"Naughty Georgie, whose cruel and thoughtless blow had caused poor Gilbert's affliction, wept bitter tears of remorse and repentance."

Bang! The volume went to the floor again, to remain there this time. Deponent verbs were better than that!

Billy Bunter sat at his desk, and tried to fix his thoughts upon those dreadful verbs which were not only passive in form, but active in meaning. He rested his head on his fat arms at last, and slumbered.

He was awakened suddenly by a shake. "Ow!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked up. It was five o'clock, and Mr. Quelch stood frowning before him.

"You have not finished your task, Bunter!" said the Remove master, in a voice that resembled the rumble of distant thunder.

"Oh, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Really, you incorrigibly idle boy—"

"Not at all, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I—"

The fact is, sir, the—the—I—I—I felt asleep, sir—"

"I can see that, Bunter."

"The—the fact that I—I haven't done my task, sir, is—is the hardest to bear,"

said Bunter, with a dim recollection of Good Gilbert in his hazy mind.

"What!"

"My—my sight is—is very bad to-day, sir," said Bunter, astutely putting to profit what he had just read in "Good Gilbert."

"I—I felt that I ought to be careful of it, sir. It would be my greatest grief if lack of sight interfered with my lessons, sir."

Mr. Quelch gazed at him.

"If it is true that you have felt a

strain upon your eyesight, Bunter, I will excuse you—"

"It—it was fearful, sir—"

"Nonsense!"

"Oh, sir—"

"I will excuse you this time," said Mr. Quelch.

"I shall take measures for your sight to be properly examined, Bunter.

If I find that you have been deceiving me, I shall cane you very severely."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"You may go now!"

Billy Bunter went. His chief regret was that Good Gilbert was only a character in a book. Bunter would have given a great deal just then to be able to kick Gilbert.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Latest!

"HE, he, he!"

That sudden cackle from the Owl of the Remove sounded loud in the junior Common-room that evening. Several fellows glanced round at Billy Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What the thump have you got an alarm-clock in your pocket for, Bunter?"

"Eh? I haven't!"

"Then what was that row?" asked Bob, looking puzzled.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"What's the merry joke?" asked Peter Todd, looking in surprise at his fat study-mate.

Bunter's sudden merriment was really a little mysterious. The Owl of the Remove had been sitting for some time in deep thought, oblivious of the fellows round him. And the outcome of his deep cogitations had been that sudden unmusical cachinnation.

And Bunter was still grinning. Evidently something of an extremely humorous nature was working in his fat brain.

"Whack it out, Bunter," said Squiff.

"What's the screaming joke? Think-

ing of something awfully funny?"

"He, he! Yes."



Billy Bunter felt an inward tremor as he was marched into Mr. Quelch's study. "Why have you brought Bunter here, Blundell?" asked the Form-master. "He says he's blind!" said Blundell. "He says it was the shock he received in Coker's study!" (See Chapter 7.)

"Your face?" asked Squiff innocently.
 "Oh, really, Squiff—"
 "Well, what is it, Bunt?" asked Bob Cherry. "You oughtn't to go off suddenly like that, without giving a reason. What little game have you been playing now?"
 "I was just thinking," said Bunter.
 "Gammon!"
 "It was his greatest grief—"
 "Eh?"
 "That he couldn't do his lessons," said Bunter. "It wouldn't be much of a grief to me."

The juniors stared at Bunter. He seemed to be rather following some hidden train of thought, than making a communication. But his mysterious remarks naturally caused surprise.

"What are you burbling about?" asked Hazeldene.

Bunter rose from his chair.
 "Perhaps I've thought of a stunning stunt, and perhaps I haven't—"

And the Owl of the Remove rolled out of the room, apparently to avoid further questioning.

"Silly owl!" commented Bob Cherry.

And with that Bob dismissed from his mind Billy Bunter and his mysterious "wheeze," whatever it was.

But it wasn't dismissed from Bunter's mind. Bunter was grinning as he went down the passage, and he was grinning in his study when Peter Todd came along to Study No. 7 for prep. And Peter inquired the why and the wherefore of the broad grin on Bunter's fat face.

"Only your features, old chap," said Bunter. "Can't think of you without grinning. Look in a looking-glass, and you'll grin, too."

Peter asked no more questions. He

sat down to work; and Bunter, after a time, broke the silence.

"It would work!" he said.

"What would work, ass?"

"Never mind."

Peter Todd stared at him.

"Are you off your rocker, Bunter?" he asked.

"Oh, really, Peter—"

"You seem to be," said Peter Todd.

"If you can't talk sense, old turnip, dry up! Dry up, anyhow!"

Bunter dried up; but only for a time. He grinned and chuckled, and soon started talking once more.

"Easy as falling off a form," he said.

"Of course, you wouldn't think of it, Peter. It takes a chap with brains."

"Of what?" shrieked Peter Todd.

"Oh, nothing!"

Another interval of silence. Peter Todd and Tom Dutton worked at their prep.

Bunter sat at ease while his study-mates worked. Evidently he intended to "cut" prep again, in spite of the serious results of his last transgression.

Bunter was rather given to "chancing it with Quelchy," in the matter of prep; and he seemed to have decided to chance it again. Peter Todd finished his work, and rose, and yawned.

"That's done," he remarked.

"You're a silly ass to cut prep, Bunter. You'll get a frightful ragging in the morning from Quelchy."

"I don't think so," said Bunter.

"Quelchy's rather a beast, but he's bound to be a bit sympathetic."

"Sympathetic because you've cut prep?" asked Peter, mystified.

"Nunno; I mean on account of my fearful affliction."

"What affliction?" roared Peter.

"Oh, nothing!"

"Mad as a hatter!" said Toddy, in amazement.

"Really, Bunter, you

ought to see a doctor if this goes on! Have you felt it coming on long?"

"Rats!" answered Bunter.

Peter gave a shrug of the shoulders and left the study. Billy Bunter stretched himself luxuriously in the armchair, and again he grinned.

Apparently he felt quite safe in cutting prep that evening. A little later he rolled out of Study No. 7, and made his way along the Remove passage to Study No. 1.

Prep was over there, and the Famous Five had gathered in that celebrated study for a chat on the interesting topic of football. Billy Bunter blinked in, and Bob Cherry waved a hand at him.

"Pass on!" he said. "No free suppers here!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Bunter rolled in.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Horace Coker Obliges!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. continued to talk football. There was no supper "going" in the study; so it was not clear what

Bunter wanted. But the Owl of the Remove evidently wanted something.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Haven't I told you there's no supper?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Go and call on Smithy. He's generally got a bone over for a stray dog!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact is, I want you to do something for me, Cherry."

"My dear Owl, I know you're expecting a postal-order by the very next post, and I know I'm not going to lend you anything on it," said Bob.

"Roll away!"

"It isn't that! I want you to punch me!"

"Wha-a-at!"

Bob Cherry blinked at the Owl of the Remove. The Co. regarded him with astonishment. Billy Bunter had succeeded in surprising Study No. 1!

"Punch you!" howled Bob.

"Yes, that's it."

Bob doubled a large fist.

"Anything to oblige," he said.

"Where will you have it? I don't often find pleasure in obliging you, Bunter; but this time it will be a real treat!"

Bunter jumped back.

"Hold on—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Changed your mind already?"

"Nunno. I—I want you to punch my head—not hard. Not hard enough to hurt me," explained Bunter anxiously.

"Only hard enough to give me a fearful shock."

"I'm blessed if I understand," said Bob Cherry, staring at the Owl of the Remove blankly.

"If you're not potty, Bunter, what are you pretending to be potty for?"

"The pretendfulness is not terrific," said Hurree Singh. "The esteemed Bunter is realfully potty."

"Blessed if it doesn't look like it," said Frank Nugent, in wonder.

"You fellows are awfully dense," said Bunter impatiently.

"Gilbert had a shock caused by a punch, and that caused—ahem!—"

"Who on earth's Gilbert?"

"Oh, nobody you know!" said Bunter hastily.

"Great Scott!"

"What I really want is a pretended



Billy Bunter rose from his chair and walked over to the doctor. He bumped into a small table before the window and swept the jar of flowers off on to the floor. Crash! "Oh dear! Have I knocked anything over?" he ejaculated.
 (See Chapter 8.)

punch," said Bunter thoughtfully. "Of course, I don't want any real damage done. Then, when I tell the Head—"

"Tell the Head?" said Bob dazedly.

"Yes; when I tell the Head, I can say the calamity was caused by a brutal blow from you, Bob Cherry—"

"My hat!"

"What calamity?" yelled Wharton.

"Oh, nothing!"

Bob Cherry rose to his feet, a rather grim look on his face.

"I don't know what you're driving at, Bunter," he said. "I suppose you're trying to pull our leg, somehow. But you've asked me to punch you, and I'll do it—"

"Soft, you know," gasped Bunter.

"Hard as I can do it!" answered Bob.

"Stand steady."

Bob Cherry drew back his powerful right arm. Before he had time to do more William George Bunter had hopped actively into the passage.

"Come back and be punched, you fat goat!" roared Bob.

"Yah!"

Evidently Bunter had decided not to risk it. He rolled on down the Remove passage, with a frown of deep thought in his fat brow. He left the chums of the Remove deeply puzzled. Bunter's mysterious words really seemed to hint that he was not quite right in his head.

"Silly ass!" muttered Bunter discontentedly. "I've got to work it somehow, though. No good asking Toddy; he would punch me hard. So would any other beast in the Remove, I suppose. But it's got to be worked somehow."

Bunter went down the Remove staircase, still deep in thought on the subject of the strange and mysterious stunt that was working in his fat brain.

On the lower landing he found Potter and Greene of the Fifth leaning on the window, and chatting. Potter and Greene were Coker's study-mates in the Fifth, but they were far from their study now, possibly not yearning for the great Horace's company that evening. It was Bunter's usual inquisitiveness that caused him to slacken pace as he passed and hear what the two Fifth-Formers were saying. They paid no heed to Bunter.

"Keep out of the study, for goodness' sake!" said Potter. "That howling ass will be giving us jiu-jitsu if we go in. The silly owl don't know anything about it, and never will; but he'll take up the rest of the evening in showing us what he can do."

"What he can't do, you mean!" chuckled Greene.

Potter chuckled, too.

"He jabbed his silly elbow into my eye showing me what he calls jiu-jitsu an hour ago," said Potter. "I'm fed up!"

"Same here," said Greene. "The silly owl banged my napper against the mantelpiece. We'll give Coker a miss this evening."

"Yes, rather!"

Billy Bunter rolled on his way, and went down the lower stair. His round eyes were glimmering behind his big spectacles.

That little talk between Potter and Greene, which he had overheard, seemed to have put a new idea into Bunter's head. His steps took him in the direction of the Fifth-Form passage.

He tapped at the door of the study that was honoured and distinguished by sheltering the great Coker.

"Come in!"

Bunter went in. Coker was at the



Wingate came in to see the juniors off to bed. "Wait a minute, Wingate!" said Billy Bunter peevishly. "I want to finish the last tart!" "How do you know there is only one tart left, Bunter?" asked Wingate curiously. (See Chapter 9.)

table, studying a volume in which were depicted athletic figures in all the stages of wrestling. He glanced up, and frowned at the sight of Bunter.

"You ass, I thought it was Fitzgerald!" he grunted. "Here, Bunter, cut along to Fitzgerald's study, and tell him to come here! I want to show him a jiu-jitsu trick."

Bunter blinked at him.

"That's what I've come about, Coker!" he said meekly. Coker of the Fifth never had much politeness to waste on anybody, and least of all upon a fag of the Lower Fourth.

But Coker's leg was easy to pull, even by a fag—in fact, it was the easiest leg to pull in all Greyfriars! And William George Bunter was well aware of that fact.

"I'm awfully interested in jiu-jitsu, Coker," went on Bunter, with some meekness.

Coker laughed.

"Lot of good you'd be at wrestling, Japanese style or any other style!" he said. "You'd burst!"

"Well, I thought you might be willing to show me a trick or two, as you know the whole thing from start to finish," said Bunter. "Temple of the Fourth thinks he knows something about jiu-jitsu; so does Hurree Singh. But I told them I wasn't going to waste time with them if Coker would give me a show. Always best to come to the fountain-head, don't you think so, Coker?"

Coker regarded Bunter more amicably. "Of course, it's wasting your time," said Bunter. "But you could show me in a few minutes what would take any other fellow hours."

"That's so," said Coker. "There's precious few things I couldn't show you in jiu-jitsu, Bunter, if it was worth my while. Dash it all, I don't mind showing

you a trick or two! Come into the study."

Horace Coker rose to his feet, looking quite amiable. Coker could always be softened by flattery, and he liked his flattery in chunks. Bunter had administered it in chunks, and so everything in the garden, so to speak, was lovely.

"I'll show you the arm-lock that I was showing that duffer Potter in your Form-room this afternoon," said Coker, with a smile. "Just stand there, Bunter."

Bunter stood there.

"Now I hold you like this—see?"

"I see," said Bunter.

"Then I get a grip like that," said Coker.

"Yes?"

"Now you're absolutely helpless," smiled Coker. "I'm not exerting my strength—not in the least! But I've got you quite helpless."

"Have you?" gasped Bunter.

He did not feel helpless, but he was willing to take Coker's word for it.

"Quite!" said Coker. "Now, with the slightest turn of my right arm I could lay you on the floor on your head."

"I—I say, do it!" gasped Bunter. "It will be all right on the hearth-rug, and—and I don't mind getting a—slight shock—"

"Sure you don't mind?" asked Coker.

"N-n-not at all!"

"Then I'll show you."

Bump!

Billy Bunter went down on the hearth-rug, and his head banged on the rug with a loud knock.

The rug softened the blow, however, and Coker looked down on him with a smile, expecting to see Bunter scramble up.

But Bunter didn't scramble up.

He lay with his eyes closed behind his big spectacles, and Coker of the Fifth stared at him.

"Tumble up!" he rapped out. "You can't go to sleep on my study carpet, Bunter!"

Bunter sat up. He put his hand to his eyes and blinked dazedly.

"I—I've had a shock!" he gasped. "Not much of a shock!" grinned Coker. "Tumble up, and I'll show you again, if you like."

"Where are you?"

"Eh?"

"Where are you?" repeated Bunter. "I can't see you."

"Can't see me?" repeated Coker blankly. "What do you mean? You're blinking straight at me with your blinking goggles, you owl!"

"Have you turned the light out?" asked Bunter.

"The light? No! You know I haven't!" said Coker, puzzled, and beginning to be angry. "What the thump are you driving at, Bunter? Get up before I kick you, you silly owl!"

"I—I can't see the light!"

"Eh!"

"I—I'm blind!"

"Blind!" stuttered Coker.

"Yes. Oh dear!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Awful!

"**B**LIND!" Horace Coker repeated the fearful word, blinking at the Owl of the Remove in blank astonishment.

Bunter rose slowly to his feet. His eyes were blinking behind his big spectacles, and they certainly looked the same as usual. But, according to his own statement, Billy Bunter was blind—like Gilbert in the volume presented to Skinner of the Remove by Skinner's Aunt Selina.

"Are you trying to pull my leg, Bunter?" asked Coker angrily.

"Nunno! Where are you?"

"Here I am," snapped the irritated Coker. "Standing just in front of you."

"I can't see you."

"Gammon!"

"Will you lead me back to the Remove passage?" demanded Bunter hotly. "I should think you might have a little sympathy, Coker, when you've made me blind."

"I haven't, you silly owl!" hooted Coker. "I'll kick you back to the Remove passage, if you like."

"Oh, really, you know—"

"I give you one minute to get out of my study," said Horace Coker, in great exasperation. "I'll teach you to spin me yarns about being blind, you silly young ass! Get out!"

Bunter groped his way to the door. If he was not blind, he certainly played his part very creditably. He bumped into a chair, and then into the table. He groped over the table, and sent an inkpot spinning.

There was a yell from Coker.

"Look out, you idiot!"

"Did—did I touch something?" gasped Bunter.

"You—you—you—" panted Coker.

He rushed to rescue the inkpot, which was streaming over a pile of papers. Then he turned on Bunter, who was groping blindly to the door.

"Get out!"

Coker's boot swung up, and was planted fairly behind Bunter. The fat junior did not need to grope his way to the doorway then. He flew through it, headlong.

"My hat!" gasped Coker.

Bump! Bunter landed in the passage, and roared.

"Now, clear off!" shouted Coker. "If I have to come out to you, I'll kick you all the way to the Remove staircase."

"Help!" shouted Bunter.

"Shut up!" hissed Coker. "I'll help you, you fat fraud! Will you hop along, or shall I kick you along the passage?"

"Help!"

"That does it!" growled Coker. And he rushed out of the study, to kick Bunter along the passage, as he had promised.

But Bunter's yells had brought several fellows out of the Fifth Form studies, as the Owl of the Remove had sagely calculated. Blundell and Bland and Fitzgerald came on the scene.

"What on earth's the matter?" demanded Blundell, the captain of the Fifth.

"Help!" yelled Bunter. "I'm blind!"

"What?"

"Blind!"

"Only some of his rotten spoofing!" snorted Coker. "He makes out he's been knocked blind by bumping his silly

head on my study carpet. I'll blind him! A few kicks will set him right."

"Yaroo! Help!"

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Blundell, pulling Coker back. "If there's anything wrong with the kid—"

"There isn't!" snapped Coker.

"Well, let's see."

"Rot!"

"Keep back!" said Blundell authoritatively.

And Horace Coker fumed and kept back.

Blundell stooped over Bunter and raised him to his feet. The Owl of the Remove blinked at him.

"Now, what does this mean?" demanded the captain of the Fifth. "Do you mean to say that you can't see me, Bunter?"

"No. Are you Bland?"

"I'm Blundell."

"Yes. I know your voice now," said Bunter. "Would you mind leading me back to the Remove passage, Blundell? I can't see, and I might fall over the stairs. I don't blame Coker. He was showing me a jiu-jitsu trick when he banged my head and blinded me. It wasn't his fault. I think he ought to buy me a dog to lead me about."

"My hat!" gasped Coker.

Blundell of the Fifth regarded Bunter very doubtfully.

"Do you really mean to say that you can't see your way, Bunter?" he exclaimed.

"All is dark!" said Bunter.

"There's a light on in the passage, as usual."

"I—I can't see it."

Blundell whistled.

"My hat! That's jolly serious, if it's true," he said. "I don't see why he should say so if it wasn't. I'd better take you to your Form-master, Bunter."

"Yes, do," said Bunter feebly. "I'd be ever so much obliged to you, Blundell. Don't think I blame Coker. He couldn't help it."

"I believe he's spoofing!" growled Coker. "He'll bunk before you get him to his Form-master."

"I'll take jolly good care he doesn't," said Blundell grimly. "Come with me, Bunter."

He took a firm grip on Bunter's arm and led him away. The Owl of the Remove walked by his side without hesitation. If he was "spoofing," it was clear that the fat junior was prepared to carry out the spoof even in the terrific presence of the Remove master.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Harry Wharton & Co. were coming down to the Common-room, and they met Blundell and his charge on their way to the Remove master's study. "What's the matter with Bunter?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"What's he buzzing along here with his eyes shut for?"

"He says he's blind," said Blundell shortly.

"Blind!" yelled Bob.

"Bunter—blind!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"I say, you fellows, don't worry about me," said Bunter faintly. "Coker did it. He gave me a terrible shock bumping my head on the floor, showing me a jiu-jitsu trick. He didn't mean it. I don't blame Coker. But I'm blind. It's awful! My greatest grief is that I sha'n't be able to do my lessons."

"Come on!" said Blundell.

He marched Billy Bunter on, leaving the Famous Five standing rooted to the passage floor, staring.

"Bunter—blind!" repeated Harry Wharton. "If—if it's true—"

"It's some new spoof," said Johnny Bull suspiciously. "You remember the time once when he made out he was deaf—"

"The blindfulness is not terrific," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh, with a shake of the head.

Bob Cherry looked very serious.

"He always was a short-sighted owl," said Bob, in a low voice. "I—I suppose he might go blind. If it's true—poor old Bunter!"

"I think we'd better find out whether it's true before we waste a lot of sympathy on him," said Harry Wharton, rather drily. "He says Coker gave him a shock, and that caused it. He was asking you to give him a shock half an hour ago, Bob."

Bob Cherry started.

"My hat! Was that—"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"If Bunter's blind, we'll stand by him, and do everything we can to help," he said. "But I want a little proof first; and I rather think I sha'n't believe in it till a doctor's seen him, at least."

And the Famous Five waited in the passage, watching the closed door of

(Continued on page 13.)

A SPLENDID TALE OF GREYFRIARS. ::

:: By FRANK RICHARDS.

FOOTBALLS FOR READERS OF THE "POPULAR"



See Special Announcement on Page 2.

The Greyfriars HERALD

SUPPLEMENT No. 43.
Week Ending Oct. 22nd, 1921.



Assisted by BOB CHERRY (Fighting Editor), VERNON-SMITH (Sports Editor), MARK LINLEY, TOM BROWN, and FRANK NUGENT.

Address all letters to HARRY WHARTON, c/o The Magnet Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

FOOTER FACTS AND FANCIES!

By H. Vernon-Smith.

The following is the programme of matches for next Saturday. The probable winners are indicated in capital letters. Where a drawn game is anticipated, both teams are printed in ordinary type. (Matches are being played on the ground of the first-named club):

- Courtheld United v GREYFRIARS FIRST.
- GREYFRIARS REMOVE v Highcliffe.
- Rookwood v St. Jim's.
- Horace Coker's XI. v FRIARDALE ATH.
- Second Form v Third Form.

Greyfriars First have a stiff task at Courtheld, but under the good generalship of George Wingate they should get through. We understand that the First Eleven will be assisted by Mr. Larry Lascelles, a goalkeeper who is not likely to give anything away.

Greyfriars Remove—our noble selves—are at home to Highcliffe. I have marked the Remove to win, but it will be no walk-over. Highcliffe are bringing over a more than useful side, and that brilliant wing pair, Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar, will want watching. Barring accidents, however, the Remove should find themselves on the right side at the finish.

The match between Rookwood and St. Jim's will furnish a stirring tussle. I have a sneaking regard for the chances of the Saints, but we must not forget that Rookwood possess ground advantage, and they will be a difficult side to overcome on their native heath. A draw is the most likely result.

Coker of the Fifth has got up an eleven to entertain Friardale Athletic. The villagers are no great guns at footer, but as Coker is bound to put the leather through his own goal—a little habit of his—the Athletic will no doubt win.

The babes of the Second are indulging in a mudlarking match with their rivals of the Third. The latter are the heftier side, but the Second-Formers, fearlessly led by Dicky Nugent, are bound to show up well, and I should not be surprised to see them make a draw of it.

Supplement i.]

EDITORIAL!

By HARRY WHARTON.

October is a great month for sport. There is a keenness and a crispness in the air that make one long for the footer field and the running track.

This is in many ways one of the finest months of the year. As the poet sings:

“October! October!
March for the grave and gober,
The suns of May for the schoolgirls' play,
But give to the boys October!”

It is rather early to write of snowflights and tobogganing and skating. The autumn leaves have scarcely finished falling. We still see a fresh crop of them on Gosling's doorstep in the morning.

We must wait until November—or, mayhap, December—before we can produce a number dealing with snow and frost and ice. But there is football, and also cross-country running and hockey; and I have asked my contributors to send in the stories and articles dealing with these popular sports. They have responded in no half-hearted manner, with the result that I am able to place before my readers a grand Winter Sports Number of the “Greyfriars Herald.”

Dick Penfold contributes another of his popular parodies, and Tom Brown is also to the fore with a humorous article.

Our corpulent rival, Billy Bunter, has been allowed—at the express wish of my readers—to contribute to this issue.

You will notice that Billy's spelling is not nearly so shocking as of yore. He has been made to take himself in hand, and every evening, after prep, you may see him swotting at a dictionary. It will be a long, long time before he can spell with perfect accuracy; but he has recently shown a marked improvement, and we heartily congratulate him.

I have recently received many letters from my chums in connection with the “Holiday Annual,” now on sale. The general verdict is that this particular “Annual” is the best which has yet appeared; and praise could not go higher than that.

Perhaps the most interesting feature in the “Annual” is that which gives comprehensive details concerning Greyfriars School and its pupils. The view of the school from an aeroplane is not the least of the “Holiday Annual's” many attractions.

HARRY WHARTON.

ODE TO A PUNCTURED FOOTBALL!

By Dick Penfold.

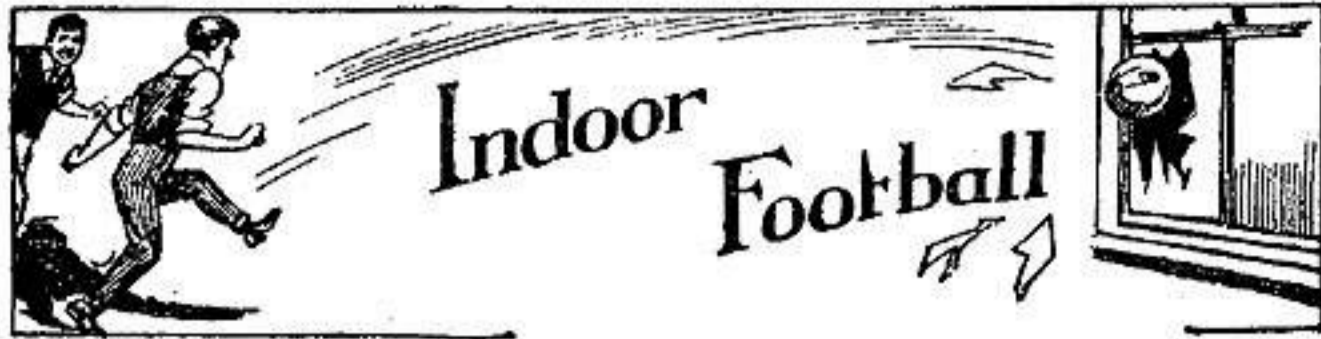
Take it up tenderly,
Lift it with care,
Fashioned so slenderly,
Hissing forth air!
Take it up skilfully,
Panting for breath;
Bolsover wilfully
Kicked it to death!

Had it a father?
Had it a mother?
Would it have rather
Been kicked by another?
Sec, it lies clammily,
Oozing with mud!
Had it a family?
Had it blue blood?

The bleak winds of March
Make it tremble and shiver;
And Bolsover's hoot
Made it wobble and quiver.
How stark and still it is,
Stretched on the grass!
All its abilities
Ended, alas!

“Take it up carefully,”
Inky would say,
“Let us despairfully
Bear it away.”
See! In submission
It gives up the ghost,
Toll the musician
To sound the “Last Post”!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 715.



A GREAT RAG IN THE RAG!

By Monty Newland.

OWING to the unpropitious state of the weather—I'm not quite sure what unpropitious means, but it sounds good—we are unable to adjourn to the football field on Wednesday afternoon.

Harry Wharton held a meeting of Removies to discuss what should be done.

"I proposefully suggest," said Hurree Jamses Ram Sligh, "that we play the esteemed and ludicrous game of chessfulness."

Hoots of derision arose.

"Bah!"

"Make it ludo!"

"Or snakes and ladders!"

"Why not a nice, exciting game of noughts and crosses?" suggested Bob Cherry.

Then up spake Dick Russell.

Russell is rather a quiet fellow, who doesn't say much; but what he does say is worth listening to.

"Why not indoor football?" he said.

"Eh?"

"We can shift the furniture in the Rag, and have a match between Wharton's eleven and Smithy's. It'll be great sport!"

"But—but things will get broken!" protested Peter Todd.

"So long as the 'things' don't happen to be our necks, it doesn't matter," said Russell cheerfully. "Come along, you fellows! Will you have me on your side, Smithy?"

"Yes, rather!" said Vernon-Smith, with a grin.

We all moved off in the direction of the Rag.

Harry Wharton and Vernon-Smith selected their teams, and the desks and tables were ranged round the room, affording a clear space.

Vernon-Smith spun a coin.

"Heads!" said Wharton.

"Heads it is!"

"We'll kick towards the fireplace!" said the captain of the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The players removed their coats, and lined up with the same enthusiasm as if they were on the football field.

Vernon-Smith kicked off, touching the ball to Dick Russell.

Russell sped away towards the goal, which happened to be the door. He sent in a terrific shot, but speed was sacrificed to accuracy, with the result that the ball shot off at a tangent, and went clean through one of the windows.

Crash!

There was a shattering of glass, and a huge, jagged hole appeared in one of the panes.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Russell. "That's done it!"

"Never mind!" said Vernon-Smith cheerfully. "Losing side pays for all damages, and the losing side won't be us!"

Micky Desmond clambered through the window, and recovered the ball. Then he climbed back again, after the manner of Tarzan of the Apes, and the game was resumed.

You never saw such an exhibition!

Dust rose in clouds from the floorboards. Players rolled over and over on the floor, and over and over came the sound of a hefty kick, followed by the more ominous sound of a pane of glass being shattered to smithereens, or an ornament being dashed to the ground.

It had been arranged to play a quarter of an hour each way.

Vernon-Smith's side pressed hard, and scored a couple of brilliant goals. At half-time they led by two to nothing.

This roused Harry Wharton & Co., who fairly ran riot in the second half.

The players grew so excited, and so flushed

with the joy of battle, that they did not realise the terrific havoc they were causing.

Every window in the Rag was by this time punctured. Every ornament had been swept off the mantelpiece, and many had been broken.

There would be a colossal bill for damages, and Harry Wharton & Co. were determined to win, and thus avoid paying the piper.

Wharton himself put in a brilliant run, and sent the ball crashing past Bulstrode—who kept goal for Vernon-Smith's side—into the fireplace.

"Goal!"

After this play became fast and furious.

The din could be heard all over Greyfriars.

Again Wharton & Co. attacked, and they were so keen on scoring an equalising goal that they failed to see the door open, and the lanky figure of Loder of the Sixth came striding on the scene.

The players became mixed up in a sort of Rugby scrum, each fellow making frantic efforts to gain possession of the ball.

The scrum moved like a powerful wave towards Loder, and swept the prefect clean off his feet.

Loder went down like a ninepin, hitting the floorboards with a terrific impact.



Wharton put in a brilliant run, and sent the ball crashing past Bulstrode, who was in goal.

"Yaroooooh! You—you cheeky young hooligans! You shall pay for this! Stop it! Stop it, I say!"

But the merry game went on, and in the closing stages Harry Wharton's side scored twice, thus gaining a narrow victory.

The amount of the damage was afterwards assessed at four pounds, and it was jolly lucky that Vernon-Smith happened to be the son of a millionaire!

In addition to having to pay for damages, the members of the losing side received five hundred lines apiece from Mr. Quelch, to whom Loder reported the affair.

As the winners received an equal dose of lines, all the triumph was knocked out of them like stuffing.

"Where's the hare-brained lunatic who suggested indoor footer?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Here he is!" said Peter Todd, his hand descending upon Dick Russell's collar.

"Bump him!"

"I say, hold on! I mean, leggo!" panted Russell.

But his protestations went unheeded. He was bumped severely and soundly on the floor of the Rag. And many moons will rise and wane ere Dick Russell again suggests indoor football!

SUGGESTIONS FOR WINTER SPORTS!

By Tom Brown.

It has been said that we take our pleasures sadly.

We do—and no wonder!

There is nothing so wretched, to my mind, as to play a strenuous game of footer on an October afternoon, with the sun flaring down from the heavens as it should have done in mid-July.

By the time the game is half-way through, you feel like a grease-spot. By the time it is over you actually are a grease-spot!

Footer, under such conditions, is not a pleasure. It's an ordeal—a torture more cruel than any that was ever devised by the Spanish Inquisition.

Our scene changes, as a novelist would say.

Accompany me, please—in your mind, of course—to the Greyfriars cricket-ground.

The month is July. The conditions are like those of January. A cutting wind bites across the ground—or a biting wind cuts across the ground, if you prefer it that way. The blue-nosed spectators are shivering as with ague.

It's the English climate that's to blame, of course. We now get sweltering winters and freezing summers.

It is up to us to adapt ourselves to the new conditions. We must take things easy in the winter, and exert ourselves in the summer. Otherwise, we shall soon undermine our constitutions.

The football season should commence in May and finish in September. Hockey should be played in June, and snow-fights should take place in July and August. Skating and tobogganing should also be summer pastimes.

And the winter?

As I have already remarked, we must take things easy at this season of the year.

The day should begin with a refreshing dip in the sea or the River Sark. After this, one should lounge about on the bank, attired in light flannels.

Games that do not require much exertion—such as ludo, dominoes, snakes-and-ladders, and draughts—may be played in winter. But they should always be played indoors, the risk of sunstroke being too great out in the open.

Games of a more violent character, such as leap-frog, "Chase-me-Charlie," and kiss-in-the-ring, should only be played in summer.

By the way, summer attire should be warm and thick. Woollen mufflers should be worn, also heavy overcoats. Disregard of this rule may lead to a serious chill.

I have just seen my name on the notice-board to play footer for the Remove versus Highcliffe. I sha'n't turn out; I shall go on strike. The October sunshine would shrivel me up.

Instead of playing footer, I shall rake out my yellow-and-green bathing-costume, and sample the cooling waters of the Sark.

If Harry Wharton really wants me to play footer for the Remove, he should ask me next July, when the air is keen and frosty, and everything favours football.

But during the winter I shall take things very quietly, and all sensible readers of the "Greyfriars Herald" will do likewise.

[Supplement ii.]



By DICK RUSSELL.

NO, this is not a story of the Civil War, and of that fierce encounter on Marston Heath between Royalists and Roundheads.

There happens to be another Marston Moor only a few miles from Greyfriars, and I'm going to tell you of a pitched battle which took place there.

Marston is a small village on the far side of Courtfield. It is a place of no importance, and it rarely appears on any map of Kent. It has only one shop, which combines the functions of a post-office, a hair-dresser's, a tobacconist's, a florist's, and an undertaker's.

We have never played football or cricket against Marston. True, the village boasts a splendid recreation ground, but the only people who patronise it are small infants riding in state in their perambulators.

The Greyfriars fellows had come to regard Marston as a place of no consequence—a one-eyed, sleepy, old-fashioned village which had not taken the trouble to keep abreast of the times.

One day, however, we had a shock.

In the sports column of the "Courtfield, Friardale, and Wapshot Gazette" (with which is incorporated the "Pegg Chronicle" and the "Marston Mail") appeared the following challenge:

"TO THE REMOVE FORM, GREYFRIARS SCHOOL.—The Marston Hockey Club (average age 15) hereby challenge you to a hockey match, to take place on Wednesday next, on Marston Moor, at 3 p.m. R.S.V.P."

"My only aunt!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "These merchants are throwing down the gauntlet with a vengeance! It's a direct challenge, straight from the shoulder, and we can't get out of it."

"I don't think any of us wants to get out of it," said Harry Wharton.

"No jolly fear!" said Johnny Bull. "We can play hockey almost as good as we can play footer, and we shall be more than a match for Marston, anyway!"

"What does 'R.S.V.P.' mean?" inquired Hurree Singh, who was not yet familiar with the abbreviation.

"Remove Shall Victorious Prove!" said Bob Cherry promptly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was in the school gateway that this conversation took place.

Bolsover major bore down upon the famous five.

"What's the excitement?" he asked.

"The Marston Hockey Club have challenged us to a match on their ground," explained Wharton.

"And you're going to accept the challenge?"

"Of course!"

"What sort of team will you send over?"

"The same team that represents the Remove at footer. Any objections?"

"None whatever!" said Bolsover, with a grin.

And he was chuckling to himself as he strolled away.

"Bolsover seems to be mighty pleased about something," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Blow Bolsover!" growled Wharton. "Let's go and reply to this giddy challenge."

It didn't take long to complete the arrangements. And Wednesday afternoon came round very quickly.

A special charabanc was chartered to convey the Remove players to Marston. They looked very fit and confident as they clambered into the vehicle with their hockey-sticks.

"Hockey will make a pleasant change from footer," said Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, rather!"

"We ought to wallop Marston easily enough," said Peter Todd.

But when the charabanc slowed up at Marston Moor, and the Remove players came in sight of the ground, they received a rude surprise.

Supplement iii.]

The Marston team were ready for the fray. They were indulging in some preliminary practice.

"Great jumping crackers!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "Look at the size of those fellows! They advertised their average age as fifteen, but there's not a chap there who'll ever see twenty-one again!"

Bulstrode's remark was perfectly correct.

The members of the Marston hockey team were strapping fellows, burly of figure, and with heavy, scowling faces. It wasn't too strong a term to style them hooligans. Harry Wharton & Co. were mere Lilliputians by comparison.

"This is a bit too thick!" said Johnny Bull warmly. "These bounders have deliberately deceived us. We thought they were about our own size and weight, and we find they're giddy giants!"

"Never mind," said Wharton. "We won't back out now. We'll play them."

"And all the more honour to us if we lick them," said Mark Linley.

"There's a pretty big 'if' about that, I'm thinking!" growled Bulstrode.

The captain of the Marston team was a burly lout named Barker. He made no apology for putting such a hefty team into the field. He merely exchanged curt greetings with Harry Wharton, and then tossed with him for choice of ends.

Wharton won the toss, and the Removeites lined up with grim, set faces.



One of the Marston defenders brought his stick down with brutal force across the Bounder's shin. "Ow!" gasped Vernon-Smith.

They had a stiff task before them, but they were not dismayed. What they lacked in size and weight they hoped to make up for in agility and speed.

The ball was set in motion, and the handful of spectators sent up a cheer.

In the first minute Vernon-Smith raced away, going through the opposition like a knife through butter. He was steadying himself to shoot, when one of the Marston defenders raised his hockey-stick above his shoulders—a palpable foul—and brought it down with brutal force across the Bounder's shin.

"Ow!" gasped Vernon-Smith.

And he hopped about on one leg, clasping his injured shin.

"Foul, there!" roared Bob Cherry, in his stentorian tones.

"Play on—play on!" said the Marston skipper impatiently.

Vernon-Smith's chance of opening the score was lost. The ball was cleared, and play proceeded at a terrific pace.

The home team played with no regard whatever for the rules. And as there was no referee they did pretty much as they liked. Their idea was not so much to score goals as to maim their opponents.

Harry Wharton & Co. were fairly in the wars.

Casualties were numerous. Wharton and Nugent and Bob Cherry were limping, and Vernon-Smith was a mere passenger.

In vain the Removeites appealed to their opponents to play the game.

The Marstonites seemed to have not the slightest conception of fair play. They were rough, bustling, and aggressive.

But the Greyfriars fellows never once lost their heads. Never once—though they had sufficient provocation, goodness knows!—did they attempt to retaliate, and to play their opponents at their own game. They carried on gamely and doggedly, and were leading by five goals to three at the interval.

"We've dropped into a hornets' nest this journey!" said Bob Cherry. "Those bounders seem to think this is a slaughter-house instead of a hockey ground. My shins are a mass of bruises!"

"Same here!"

"We all seem to be pretty well crocked," said Harry Wharton. "But we'll stick it out. We'll win this match, if we have to crawl back to Greyfriars on crutches!"

It was in this spirit that the Removeites lined up for the resumption of the tussle. They had taken many hard knocks in the first half. But that was a picnic compared to the second.

Barker and his burly companions wielded their hockey-sticks with great vigour.

It was more like a battle royal than a hockey match.

But Harry Wharton & Co. stuck to their guns.

Barker, by sheer brute force, managed to score twice for Marston, thus bringing the scores level. But towards the close Frank Nugent, though limping painfully, sent in a glorious shot, and scored the winning point for the Remove.

As soon as the game was over, Harry Wharton & Co. told the Marstonites, in simple, honest language, exactly what they thought of them. Then they returned to Greyfriars.

They were all crocked—every man-jack of them—and so badly that they would be unable to entertain Highcliffe on the football field on the following Saturday. It would take them at least a week to recover from their injuries.

All of which seemed to please Bolsover major mightily.

It was Bolsover who had been responsible for the whole business. He had cycled over to Marston, and arranged everything with Barker.

"Play a rough game," he had said, "and send them back to Greyfriars looking as sorry a set of crocks as you ever saw!"

Barker had undertaken to do this, and he had kept his word.

What was Bolsover major's motive in adopting this caddish course?

Why, he knew that if the regular Remove eleven became crocked, a fresh eleven would be necessary to meet Highcliffe on the Saturday. And Bolsover intended to captain that eleven!

The bully of the Remove hoped, by defeating Highcliffe, to win for himself great power in the Form.

But the best-laid schemes of mice and men—and bullies—gang aft a-gley, as the poet says.

So far from defeating Highcliffe, Bolsover's team was soundly thrashed to the tune of seven goals to nil. And Bolsover himself, when his caddish trick had been brought to light, was made to run the gauntlet in the Remove dormitory.

There are few things more painful, from the victim's point of view, than running the gauntlet, and Bolsover major received such a grueling that I fancy it will be a long time before he does any more plotting against the Remove eleven!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 715.



Impertinent Interviews

By our Special Representative.

This Week: H. VERNON-SMITH.
(Sports Editor of the "Greyfriars Herald.")

"VERNON-SMITH'S the next fellow on the list!" said the editor. "Buzz along and see him in his palatial mansion, and have a heart-to-heart chat with him about winter sports. He's the son of a giddy millionaire, so you can expect a jolly good tea when you call on him!"

But, alas!

When I insinuated my somewhat scraggy frame into the doorway of Vernon-Smith's study, I found him in the act of clearing the table. He had just finished tea.

"Got a cup of tea to offer a parched and perspiring journalist?" I asked.

"Sorry, old top, but you're too late! Had you dropped in half an hour ago, you could have had half a dozen cups of tea and as many buttered scones and pastries as you could devour at one sitting."

"I am always just too late," I said sadly. "Every morning I turn up in the Form-room at two minutes past nine, instead of nine o'clock. And Quelch's given me a hundred lines for every minute I've been late. I'm simply snowed under with impots. To-morrow morning I shall be about an hour late, and that'll mean a further six thousand lines! Such is life!"

"Hope you haven't blown in simply to tell me your troubles," said Vernon-Smith.

"No, no! Far from it, dear boy! I come in the capacity of special representative of the 'Greyfriars Herald.'"

"I seem to have heard of that paper before," said Vernon-Smith thoughtfully.

"Well, as you're the sporting editor of it, that's hardly surprising!" I said, with a laugh. "What are your views on winter sports?"

"I think they ought to be encouraged more," said Vernon-Smith. "At present football is all the rage, and other sports—indoor games, and all that sort of thing—are being sadly neglected."

"Are you any good at indoor games?" I asked.

"I'll undertake to lick you at any game you care to mention."

"Then let's have a game of chess!" I said eagerly.

"All serene!"

We sat down at the table, and Vernon-Smith produced the chess-board and its accessories from the drawer.

Now, I have always considered myself a past-master at chess. I have thought of challenging Capablanca, the world's chess champion (no connection with the boy who stood on the burning deck. His name was Capabianca, I believe).

Vernon-Smith, however, took command of the game at the outset, and won easily.

"I give you best, so far as chess is concerned," I said. "But if it comes to draughts—"

"I can lick you just as easily," said my companion, with a grin.

And he did. I hardly had a look-in.

"You're an absolute dud at indoor games," said Vernon-Smith.

And he proved it by proceeding to beat me, in turn, at dominoes, cards, and blow-football.

I rose to my feet with a sigh.

"I confess I'm a bit of a duffer, so far as indoor games are concerned," I said. "Leap-frog is more in my line."

"You claim to be a leap-frog expert?"

"Yes, rather!"

"I'll wager you a dish of doughnuts that you won't leap over the backs of fifty fellows without stopping," said Vernon-Smith.

"Done!"

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Vernon-Smith stepped out into the passage, and raised a stentorian shout.

Study doors opened up and down the passage, and fellows looked out.

"What's the rumpus, Smithy?"

"I want fifty fellows to form up in a row in the Close!" explained Vernon-Smith. "This clever merchant says he can leap-frog over the whole jolly lot of them!"

"He's welcome to try, then!" said Bob Cherry. "Come along, kidlets!"

A big crowd of Removites swarmed out into the Close, and a number of fags completed the fifty.

At Vernon-Smith's word of command, they all touched their toes.

I then started on my task.

It was not nearly so easy as I had imagined.

I cleared the backs of the first dozen fellows with ease. Then progress became painful and slow. I grew dizzy, and my legs became heavy as lead.

I could hear Vernon-Smith's ironical laugh, and it caused me to pull myself together.

Bolsover major loomed before me like a huge mountain, but I cleared his back with a desperate spring.

Then I went on and on, until there were only half a dozen crouching forms to clear.



I crashed into Mr. Prout, and bowled him over like a skittle.

I was in such a state by this time that I could scarcely see where I was going.

When I came to the last man of all I had no "spring" left. I crashed right into him, and bowled him over like a skittle.

There was a wild yell of anguish, which sent icy shivers down my spine. For the victim was no other than Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth!

Needless to state, Mr. Prout had not been taking part in the game. He had merely halted at the end of the row of fellows, in order to tie his bootlace. And I had barged straight into him without knowing who he was!

Slowly the master of the Fifth sorted himself out, and tottered to his feet. His face was purple with rage.

"Boy! Depraved young hooligan!" he spluttered. "How dare you collide with me in such a manner?"

"Sorry, sir! It was a pure accident—"

"You will accompany me at once to your own Form-master, who will doubtless deal with you!"

Breathless and exhausted, I limped away in Mr. Prout's wake, until we reached Mr. Quelch's study.

Quelch didn't lick me. He saw that I was in no fit condition to stand a licking just then. He contented himself by giving me another five hundred lines, which brings the total, to date, up to seventeen thousand two hundred and fifty!

WILLIAM THE WRESTLER!

By Billy Bunter.

Winter is now with us, and I have already taken up two winter pursuits. One is spelling—notiss how carefully every word is spelt in this artikle!—and the other is wrestling.

It was Treluce of the Remove who first drew my attention to the manly sport of wrestling.

Treluce hails from Cornwell, where wrestling is very popular. The whole country is in the grip of the wrestling craze. From Truro to Penzance, from Newquay to Land's End, people are constantly chucking each other about, and putting what they call the $\frac{1}{2}$ -Nelson on each other.

Treluce tapped me on the sholder the other day, when we came out from afternoon lessons.

"Care to have a wrestling-match with me in the gym, Billy?" he inkwired.

"I would, like a shot!" I replied, "only—"

"Only what?"

"I'm afraid I should hurt you."

"Rats!"

"And I shouldn't like to see a hansom fellow like you crawling about in splints, and bandaged from top to tow!"

"That's all rot!" said Treluce. "You won't stand an earthly against me, in spite of your sighs. How much do you way?"

"I turn the skale at fourteen stoan," I replide. "If you try to throw me over your sholder, you'll crack all your mussels!"

Treluce laughed.

"Come along to the gym, and let's try konklusions!" said he.

A big crowd followed us to the gym, and they watched us with baited breath, as a fisherman would say, while we took off our jacksits.

"Time!" said Bob Cherry.

"Go it, ye kripples!"

Treluce immediately made a spring at my legs, and tried to up-end me.

But I was as firm as a rock. He might as well have tried to uproot the stoan pillars in Big Hall.

Panting and gasping from his eggser-tions, my opponent slipped down on to the floor.

And then—then, dear readers—I sat on him!

There was a noise like wind escaping from a tire—a loud, hissing noise, as if a soda-water siphon had been brought into action.

Fourteen stoan is no light weight; and if Harry Wharton & Co. hadn't dragged me off, Treluce would have been flattened out like a pancake.

"Ow-ow-ow! I've had enuff!" he groaned. "I feel like a punctured bellows!"

I stood over my fallen opponent, folding my arms like Nappoleon.

"Bah! I thought you Cornish people could wrestle!" I said skornfully. "You don't even know the ruddyments of the art! Is there anybody else here who would care to take me on? Don't all speak at once!"

They didn't! They had seen the way I dealt with Treluce, and they had no desire to share the same fate.

My fame as a wrestler has spread abroad.

I can't find anybody to wrestle with—they all fight shy of me—so I suppose I must devote the winter to wrestling with myself!

[Supplement iv.

"BUNTER'S VERY LATEST!"

(Continued from page 8.)

Mr. Quelch's study. And as other juniors came along, and inquired what they were waiting for, the news soon spread. In ten minutes more than half the Greyfriars Remove were waiting in the passage in an excited crowd—waiting for news of blind Bunter!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Facing the Music!

BILLY BUNTER felt an inward tremor as he was marched into Mr. Quelch's study. The Remove master was a very keen gentleman; his pupils often compared his eyes to a pair of gimlets on account of their penetrating qualities. To keep up a "spoo" in Mr. Quelch's presence required nerve; and Bunter had more "cheek" than nerve. But he comforted himself with the reflection that Quelch wasn't a dashed doctor or an oculist, and couldn't know anyhow whether a chap was blind or not. Besides, Bunter calculated a great deal on touching Mr. Quelch's heart. Rusty and crusty as he was considered, it stood to reason that Henry Quelch had a heart somewhere—it couldn't possibly have been left out of his anatomy. If he had a heart, surely it must be touched by so terrible a tale of woe. Bunter had observed, in glancing through Skinner's birthday book, that Good Gilbert's kind teachers had been deeply touched by Gilbert's misfortune. There was no reason why Mr. Quelch shouldn't be equally touched. Yet the Owl of the Remove felt a tremor run through him as he found himself standing under the steady gaze of Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eyes.

"What is it?" asked Mr. Quelch. "Why have you brought Bunter here, Blundell?"

"He says—" began Blundell.

"One moment! Why are you staring in that peculiar manner, Bunter?"

"Am I, sir?" asked Bunter, in an expiring voice.

"You are! What is the meaning of it?"

"I—I'm blind, sir."

Mr. Quelch jumped. Whether his heart was touched or not, undoubtedly he was startled and astonished.

"Blind!" he repeated.

"Yes, sir! It—it's awful, isn't it, sir?"

"Bless my soul!"

"He says it was caused by a shock he received in Coker's study, sir," said Blundell. "Coker was showing him some jiu-jitsu tricks, and his head knocked on the floor. I understand. He says that brought it on."

"You speak as if you doubt his statement, Blundell."

"Well, sir—"

The Fifth-Former hesitated.

"Quite so," said Mr. Quelch, with a nod. "I also doubt Bunter's statement, very much indeed. I am not a surgeon, but I apprehend that it is very unlikely that blindness should be caused by knocking one's head on the floor. It would certainly be very unusual."

"All is dark, sir!" said Bunter, with dramatic effect. "I—I shall never gaze upon the blessed sunshine, sir—"

"What?"

"I—I shall never hear the little birds

singing in the woods, sir," continued Bunter pathetically.

"Why not, Bunter? I presume that this concussion has not caused you to become deaf also?"

Bunter started. He was over-doing it, as usual.

"I—I mean I shall never see the little birds singing, sir," he stammered.

"You would scarcely see them singing in any case, I should imagine," said Mr. Quelch drily. "Will you be kind enough not to talk nonsense to me, Bunter?"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"When did you find that you could not see, Bunter?"

"On the spot, sir; as—as soon as my head banged. Coker had to help me out of his study, sir."

"And you cannot see me at the present moment?"

"No, sir!" said Bunter, staring direct at the Remove master, and summoning up all his nerve. "I—I shouldn't know it was you, sir, excepting for your voice. It—it might be the Head, or—or Gosling, sir, for all I can see. I know your voice, sir, of course—it's so musical, sir, and—"

"That will do, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

He regarded the fat junior in perplexity for some moments.

It was possible, of course, that Bunter's statement was well-founded, and in that case, such a tragedy as the loss of sight was deserving of the deepest sympathy. Mr. Quelch was quite prepared to be sympathetic and considerate—if there was need. But he knew his Bunter. He was open to conviction; but he wanted convincing.

Billy Bunter, who never could let well alone, recommenced:

"It's awful for me, sir. I'm afraid it will interfere with my Form work. I don't see how I can do lessons without sight, sir!"

"I shall have to send for the doctor at once, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, certainly, sir. I—I want to see him, of course," faltered Bunter.

"It will be very inconvenient for Dr. Pillbury to come up to the school at this late hour, Bunter."

"I—I wouldn't mind leaving it till to-morrow, sir."

"Not a moment must be lost, if what you state is really the case, Bunter. For the last time, I ask you whether you are telling me the truth, or whether you are playing some unscrupulous trick with a view to escaping lessons."

Bunter shivered inwardly. What on earth made Quelch think of such a thing as that, he wondered. He was sure that Good Gilbert had never been suspected in this way by his kind teachers.

"Oh, sir," he murmured, "I—I never thought of such a thing, sir. It's my greatest grief that—"

"Very well, Bunter. I will telephone to Dr. Pillbury, and he will come to see you at once. You had better remain here. You may go, Blundell, my boy."

Blundell of the Fifth quitted the study, looking very grave. Outside, in the passage, a score of voices addressed him as he emerged, and closed the door behind him.

"How's Bunter, Blundell?"

"Is he really blind?"

Blundell of the Fifth shrugged his shoulders.

"Blessed if I know," he said. "Mr. Quelch is keeping Bunter in his study, and is going to ring up Pillbury to come and see him."

"He's keeping up the yarn before Quelch, then?" exclaimed Skinner.

"Yes."

"Phew! What a neck!"

Blundell went his way; but the Remove fellows remained crowded in the corridor. Harry Wharton & Co. were very grave now—it looked more and more as if there was truth in "Bunter's latest." They were not convinced, but they were beginning to feel that there was probably something in it. Surely the fat Owl of the Remove would not venture upon such a "spoo" with so exceedingly dangerous a customer as Mr. Quelch! Certainly there was no other fellow in the Remove who would have had the required nerve. They did not remember, for the moment, that according to the proverb, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Sticking To It!

"YOU may sit down, Bunter." Mr. Quelch spoke kindly enough.

"Thank you, sir!" said

Billy Bunter.

He looked round for a chair.

Fortunately—for Bunter—he remembered in time that, being blind, he couldn't possibly see where there was a chair. And it came into his mind at the same moment that possibly "Quelch" was trying to "catch" him out. If Bunter had walked to a chair and sat down, certainly the Form-master would not have believed that he was blind.

So Bunter put out his fat hands and began to grope. He groped over Mr. Quelch's writing-table, and knocked over an inkpot. The Remove master uttered a sharp exclamation as a stream of ink shot across the table.

"Take care, Bunter!"

"D-d-did I touch anything, sir?"

"You have knocked over my inkpot!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh dear! Sorry, sir! I—I can't help being blind, sir!" said Bunter pathetically.

Mr. Quelch suppressed his feelings. He rose to his feet, took Bunter by the shoulder, and led him to a chair.

Bunter sat down.

Mr. Quelch was busy for the next few minutes, mopping up spilt ink. There was a twinkle in Bunter's eyes as he watched him. Considering that he was blind, he derived a remarkable amount of entertainment from watching Mr. Quelch mopping up ink.

The Remove master went to the telephone, and rang up Dr. Pillbury in Friardale, and requested him to come up to the school as speedily as he could. Then he returned to his table, took up his pen, and plunged into his work again.

Bunter sat still, not in a very happy mood now. It was likely to be at least half an hour before Dr. Pillbury arrived; and sitting in the Form-master's study for half an hour was not an exhilarating occupation. So far as Bunter knew, this sort of thing had not happened to Good Gilbert. Good Gilbert was loved by his kind teachers, and his loving schoolfellows were always bringing him little gifts. That would have suited Bunter; but sitting in Mr. Quelch's study was not pleasant at all. Bunter shifted and squirmed and groaned inwardly. Mr. Quelch glanced across at him.

"Kindly keep still, Bunter."

"Oh, yes, sir!"

Bunter resigned himself to his fate.

It was a good half-hour before there was a sound of wheels, and Dr.

A SPLENDID TALE OF GREYFRIARS. ::

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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Pillbury's voice was heard in the corridor. Mr. Quelch rose and opened the study door. The stout medical gentleman came bustling in; and for a moment Bunter had a view of a crowd of Remove fellows in the passage. Then the door closed again.

Mr. Quelch shook hands with the school doctor, and proceeded to explain to him what had happened. Dr. Pillbury listened with evident surprise, his eyes fixed on Bunter.

"Extraordinary!" he commented.

"I cannot, of course, pass an opinion on the matter myself," said Mr. Quelch; "I have no scientific knowledge of the subject. I think I should mention, however, that this boy Bunter is exceedingly lazy, and has often been guilty of tricks to escape his lessons. On one occasion at least he affected illness."

"Quite so," said Dr. Pillbury. "I will examine the boy. If the matter is serious, of course, a specialist must be called in."

"Certainly."

"Come here, Bunter," said Dr. Pillbury.

Billy Bunter rose from his chair, and was about to cross over to where the medical gentleman was sitting; but he remembered in time, and walked in the wrong direction. He bumped into a small table before the window, upon which stood a jar of flowers.

Crash!

The table reeled, and the jar went to the floor, and there was a smashing and a splashing.

"Oh dear!" ejaculated Bunter. "Have I—have I knocked something over, sir?"

"You have!" said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice.

"I—I'm so sorry, sir! Being blind, you know—"

Mr. Quelch took Bunter by the shoulder, and led him to the doctor. The fat junior stood before Dr. Pillbury, who fixed a very penetrating gaze on him.

"Let me see your eyes, Bunter!"

"Yes, sir."

"Remove your glasses, please!"

Bunter removed his big spectacles.

The doctor examined his eyes very keenly. Billy Bunter winked and blinked under his inspection. There was growing disbelief in Dr. Pillbury's face.

"Where did you receive this concussion you speak of, Bunter?" he asked.

"Oh, on the back of the head, sir!"

"And it was immediately followed by the loss of sight?"

"Immediately, sir."

"You have seen nothing since?"

"Nothing, sir."

"You cannot see me at the present moment?"

"No, sir."

Dr. Pillbury coughed. His expression showed that he did not believe Bunter's statement; but he seemed a little perplexed.

"A more thorough examination will, of course, be necessary," he said, rising. "Bunter suffers from astigmatism, but otherwise his eyes are very strong. If he is actually blind at the present moment, it is very surprising to me—very surprising, indeed. If you desire it, Mr. Quelch, I will telephone for a London specialist the first thing in the morning."

"I suppose that is essential, if Bunter persists in his statement," said Mr. Quelch.

"Undoubtedly!" Dr. Pillbury turned to the fat junior again. "If you are exaggerating for any reason, Bunter, I recommend you to tell your Form-master the truth now."

"Oh, sir!" said Bunter.

"The specialist's fee for a visit to Greyfriars will be ten guineas, which your father will be called upon to pay," said Dr. Pillbury. "You realise that that is a serious matter."

Bunter's fat brain swam for a moment. He could imagine the feelings of William Samuel Bunter, Esquire, when he was presented with a bill for ten guineas.

But it was really too late for retreat now. Like other great men mentioned in history, Bunter had burned his boats behind him. To own up now meant at the least a flogging from the Head. He had deceived his Form-master, or attempted to deceive him; he had knocked over Mr. Quelch's inkpot; he had smashed a jar of flowers; he had brought the busy doctor up to the school at nine in the evening. That list of sins would call for a flogging at the very least.

A flogging in hand was worse than a bill for ten guineas in the bush, so to speak.

So Bunter stuck to his guns. He had really left himself no choice in the matter.

"You understand?" snapped the school doctor.

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"You have nothing to say to Mr. Quelch?"

"Only—only that I'm much obliged to him, sir, for his kind sympathy to me under this terrible affliction."

Mr. Quelch coughed; and Dr. Pillbury made a grimace.

"Very well!" said the medical gentleman. "I will make the appointment with the eye specialist at as early an hour as possible, Mr. Quelch."

"Thank you, Dr. Pillbury!"

And the doctor took his leave.

Mr. Quelch surveyed Bunter with a very keen gaze, when the medical gentleman was gone. Even the keen Remove-master's suspicions were shaken now. His voice was kinder as he addressed Bunter:

"I shall accept your assurance, for the present at least, Bunter. If this affliction has really fallen upon you, you may count upon the utmost kindness and consideration. I will ask Wharton to take you in his charge."

Mr. Quelch opened the study door. Nearly all the Remove were crowded in the passage now. There was a buzz of voices, which died away as the Remove master appeared.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir?"

The captain of the Remove stepped forward.

"Bunter is apparently blind, Wharton, and, if this is actually the case, he is in need of care. He will be seen by a specialist to-morrow, when the matter will be placed beyond the shadow of a doubt. May I ask you, my boy, to take charge of Bunter in the interval?"

"Certainly, sir!"

Bunter made a step towards the door, and remembered again, and began to grope. Mr. Quelch caught him by the collar just before he was able to knock the clock off the mantelpiece.

"This way, Bunter!"

Harry Wharton led the fat junior down the passage, amid a puzzled, perplexed, but sympathetic Remove.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Poor Old Bunter!

"POOR old Bunter!"
"Poor old rats!" murmured Skinner.

"Shut up, Skinner!"

"I say, you fellows," said Bunter, "I don't mind Skinner! He can't help being a rotten cad, can he?"

"Why, you fat cheeky chunk of lard," exclaimed Skinner wrathfully, "I'll jolly well—"

Bob Cherry jerked Skinner back with a grip of iron on his collar.

"Let go!" yelled Skinner. "Ho's only spoofing, you silly owl!"

"Give him a jolly good hiding, Bob!" said Bunter. "I think even Skinner ought to be decent, at such a fearful time—"

Bob Cherry jerked Skinner away, and he brought up against the wall with a bump.

"Look here—" gasped Skinner.

"Shut up!"

"How did Bunter know it was Bob Cherry that collared me, if he can't see?" howled Skinner.

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob. "That's so! How did you know, Bunter?"

Bunter gasped.

"I—I—I—"

"Yes, how did you know, you boulder?" demanded Vernon-Smith.

"I knew Bob would stand by me, now I'm blind," said Bunter. "Bob Cherry isn't the chap to let Skinner bully me now I'm blind and can't stand up for myself!"

"Well, that's so!" said Bob.

"I guess that won't wash!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I kinder calculate that Bunter can see as well as any other galoot here!"

"You shut up, Fishy!"

"Come on, Bunter, old chap!" said Wharton.

Wharton was perplexed; but the bare possibility of Bunter being blind was enough to make him gentle and kind to the fat junior.

"Where—where are you taking me?" murmured Bunter.

"To your study, old fellow."

"Mind how you get me up the stairs!" said Bunter.

"I'll be jolly careful!"

Wharton led the Owl of the Remove away, and very carefully piloted him up the staircase. Half of the Remove followed them. The juniors were very much interested in blind Bunter.

Wharton led him into Study No. 7, and Peter Todd placed him in the armchair. Half a dozen fellows crowded into the study, and a dozen more crowded round the doorway. Most of them were quite keen to do anything they could for blind Bunter, though probably every fellow there was afflicted with a lingering doubt.

Bunter sat down very comfortably in the study armchair, with a fat smile of satisfaction on his face.

To-morrow and the specialist he dismissed from his fat mind. For the present he felt himself in clover. From being the most insignificant fellow in the Remove, he had suddenly become that Form's most considered member. The benefits that had accrued to Good Gilbert in his affliction, were going to accrue to Bad Bunter, if he could contrive it—and he thought he could.

"Anything we can do for you, kid?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I feel a bit hungry," said Bunter.

"The—the shock seems to have brought it on."

"My dear chap, we'll have some supper in two ticks!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Bagging a supper, is he?" said Skinner, in the doorway. "Looks as if he's blind—I don't think! He bags the supper, anyhow!"

"Shut up, Skinner!"

"I forgive Skinner," said Bunter gently. "He can't help being a rotten suspicious cad! Some fellows can't help having low, suspicious minds! Skinner's one of them!"

"You fat spoofer—"

"Kick Skinner out!" said Bob Cherry.

Harold Skinner retired without waiting to be kicked. Peter Todd pulled the arm-chair, with Bunter in it, to the table. A dozen fellows went to their study cupboards to collect tit-bits to grace the supper-board.

In a very short time Billy Bunter was spreading himself in enjoyment for such a supper as did not come his way once in a term.

He was still going strong when Wingate of the Sixth came along the Remove-passage, with the announcement that it was bed-time.

"Let Bunter finish his supper, Wingate," said Bob Cherry. "He's blind, you know."

"Is he?" said Wingate, with a grunt. "He seems to be helping himself pretty easily for a fellow who can't see."

"Oh, really, Wingate—"

"Anyhow, it's bed-time," said the Greyfriars captain. "Cut off!"

"I say, Wingate, let me finish the last tart—"

"The what?" asked Wingate.

"The last tart," said Bunter, reaching out to the dish that had contained a dozen jam-tarts when his supper started.

Wingate smiled grimly.

"How do you know there's only one more tart, Bunter?" he asked.

"I—I—"

"Because he can jolly well see it!" said Skinner, from the passage.

"I—I—" stammered Bunter.

"Well, get off to bed," said Wingate.

"Now, then, get a move on, the lot of you!"

Bunter grabbed the last tart, and munched it as Harry Wharton led him out of the study. But Wharton was certainly feeling very suspicious now. So were the other fellows. Bunter had helped himself during that ample supper without a mistake—he had not taken salt for sugar, or sugar for salt, as a blind man might have done. And undoubtedly it was extraordinary for a blind fellow to know that only one tart remained on the dish.

The thought of being swindled out of their sympathy, as it were, was rather exasperating to the Remove fellows. But they felt that they ought to give Bunter the benefit of the doubt, so long as a vestige of doubt remained, at least.

Wharton led him very carefully to the Remove dormitory. Bunter sat on a bed while Bob Cherry took off one boot for him and Frank Nugent took off the other. The Owl of the Remove rather liked being waited on; and assuredly he was not likely to exert himself so long as sympathetic fellows were prepared to wait on him.

Skinner watched the proceedings, with a sarcastic grin. Skinner was a rather cynical youth, and probably would not have believed Bunter's story if it had been true. Certainly he did not believe it now.

"Rather rotten, that poor old Bunter

shouldn't have been let finish his supper," said Skinner. "Have some toffee, Bunter?"

"Yes, old chap!" said Bunter at once.

"Here you are!" Skinner extended a cake of soap to the fat junior.

Bunter glared at him.

"You rotter! What do you mean? Take it away!" he snorted.

"Take what away?" smiled Skinner.

"Don't you like toffee? You said you'd have some. It's jolly good toffee, Bunter!"

"I guess Bunter can see jolly well for a blind man!" chortled Fisher T. Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Bunter started. Once more he had given himself away. Rather too late, he reached out for the soap.

"Thank you, Skinner—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner. "You silly owl, can't you see you've just given yourself away now?"

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"He—he knew it wasn't toffee! How did he know?"

"I—I smelt it was soap!" gasped Bunter.

Skinner chortled.

"Smell this soap, you fellows," he said.

"It's unscented, and I wasn't holding it within a yard of Bunter. If anybody here can smell it's soap at a foot off, I'll eat it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, then, tumble in!" said Wingate of the Sixth, appearing in the doorway.

And the Removites turned in, most of them sceptical by this time as to the genuineness of Bunter's blindness.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Washing Bunter!

CLANG!
The rising-bell sounded in the autumn morning, and the Removites of Greyfriars awoke and yawned. Bob Cherry was usually

the first out of bed after the first clang of the rising-bell. But on this special morning Harold Skinner preceded him.

Generally, Skinner remained in bed as late as possible. Doubtless he had his own reasons for hopping out actively as soon as the rising-bell clanged on this occasion.

He came over to Billy Bunter's bed, and shook the fat junior. He was careful not to speak; but he shook him vigorously.

Bunter's round eyes opened, and he blinked sleepily.

"Leggo!" he murmured. "I'm not going to get up this morning! I can't go in to lessons, as I'm blind! Besides, I feel weak."

Shake, shake, shake!

"Leggo!" yelled Bunter. "Skinner, you rotter—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner.

"I say, you fellows, make Skinner leggo—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! How do you know it's Skinner?" roared Bob Cherry.

"The—the beast said—I—I heard his voice—"

"He didn't speak!" shouted Squiff.

"I—I—"

"I was jolly careful not to speak," chuckled Skinner. "I wanted to show up the blessed spoofer!"

"So your sight's come back suddenly, has it, Bunter?" demanded Wharton sarcastically.

"Eh? Certainly not!"

"Then how did you know it was Skinner?"

"I—I recognised his voice—I—I mean, I—I recognised his touch," said Bunter.

"His bony claws, you know—"

"Too thin, I guess!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish.

"The thinfulness is terrific!"

"For goodness' sake chuck up that silly gammon now, Bunter," exclaimed Nugent. "You've given yourself away!"

"I think it's pretty clear now," said Harry Wharton in great disgust.

"What put the stunt into your silly head, Bunter?"



The Owl of the Remove was captured and yanked along to the wash-stand, yelling. There he was washed thoroughly, and when he opened his mouth to yell a lather of soap was crammed into it, and he spluttered and gasped wildly.

(See Chapter 10.)

"Oh, really, Wharton—"
 "Why, this must be the stunt he was thinking out when he started cackling in the Common-room yesterday!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.
 "Oh, really, Cherry—"
 "It's as plain as anything!" exclaimed Bob. "He got the idea from somewhere yesterday, and—"
 "I didn't!" roared Bunter. "I—I never thought of such a thing. You fellows might be a bit sympathetic in my fearful affliction."
 "There isn't any affliction!" howled Bob.
 "I keep on telling you I'm blind. Some blind chaps' schoolfellows are kind and sympathetic, and bring them little gifts," said Bunter. "Fat lot of that here, I must say. Beasts!"
 "Spoofer!"
 "Who's going to put my boots on for me?"
 "Nobody, I fancy!" said Wharton, laughing.
 "I say, we'll wash him, though!" said Bob Cherry. "It's time he had a good wash. He hasn't had one since we ducked him that time when we were caravanning!"
 "Hear, hear!"
 "We'll all lend a hand at that!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.
 There was a roar of protest from Bunter.
 "Beasts! I don't want to be washed! Keep off, you rotters!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Bob Cherry shook his head.
 "We're bound to help a blind chap," he said. "You can't see to wash yourself, can you, Bunter?"
 "Nunno!"
 "Then we're bound to wash you!"
 "Yes, rather!"
 "The washfulness is very necessary, Bunter, and it shall be terrific!"
 "Beasts! Yarooooogh!"
 Billy Bunter dodged round the beds as half a dozen of the Remove made for him. If any further proof was needed that Bunter's blindness was "spoofer," it was afforded now. Bunter dodged round one bed and scrambled over another and dodged round a third, and then doubled back along the dormitory, with the yelling juniors after him. Certainly a blind fellow would have met with disaster in that hot chase up and down the Remove dormitory; and most certainly Billy Bunter could see where he was going.
 But there was no escape for Bunter. If he was blind, he needed washing by his kind schoolfellows; and they were going to wash him. If he wasn't blind, it was his own fault.
 The Owl of the Remove was captured, and yanked back to his wash-stand, yelling. There he was washed—thoroughly. It was the most thorough wash Bunter had had for a long, long time. When he opened his mouth to yell, a lather of soap crammed into it, and he spluttered and gasped wildly.
 The Removites washed him, with howls of laughter, and howls of a quite different kind from Bunter.
 When they had finished, the fat junior was certainly much cleaner than he had been at any time during that term. He clutched up a towel—seeing where it was quite easily in spite of his blindness. He was spluttering with wrath when he rolled out of the dormitory.
 "Hold on, Bunter!" shouted Bob Cherry. "You want to be helped downstairs, don't you, now you're blind?"

"Oh! Ah! Yes! Of—of course!" stammered Bunter.
 "Hold on a minute—I'm going to lead you down by your ear!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I'll take the other ear," said Johnny Bull. "We must see Bunter safe—now he's blind. Don't be afraid we'll let go, Bunter—we'll hold on jolly tight!"
 "Beasts!"
 Billy Bunter rolled out.
 "After him!" shouted Bob.
 Bunter broke into a run, and escaped to the stairs. Not till he was out of the reach of the merry Removites did he begin to grope around and feel his way, step by step, in order to make a proper impression upon anyone who might observe him. The game was up, evidently, so far as the Remove were concerned; Bunter's schoolfellows were not likely to shower kind attentions upon him, and bring him little gifts, as Good Gilbert's schoolfellows had done.
 But Bunter still hoped to share Good Gilbert's luck, so far as getting out of lessons was concerned. The "stunt" had not "panned out" as well as the Owl of the Remove had hoped; but he felt that there was still something in it—and even one day of slacking was so much to the good, from Bunter's point of view. And so, when he caught sight of Mr. Quelch in the distance, Billy Bunter stared straight before him, and felt his way along with his fat hands—and made it a point to run into Trotter the page, who was carrying a tray to Mr. Prout's study. There was a gasp from Trotter, and a crash as the tray went down.
 "Oh dear!" said Bunter. "Have I run into somebody?"
 "My heye!" gasped Trotter.
 "Bunter!"
 "Oh, yes, sir! Is that Mr. Quelch?"
 "Why did you run into Trotter like that, Bunter?"
 "I'm blind, sir," said Bunter meekly. Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.
 "Why is not Wharton taking care of you, as I directed?"
 "I'm afraid Wharton's rather selfish, sir."
 "You must not wander about in this way, Bunter. Ah, here is Wharton! Wharton, I asked you to keep Bunter under your care for a time."
 "Ye-e-es, sir; but—but—"
 "But what?" snapped Mr. Quelch.
 "Oh, nothing, sir!" stammered Harry.
 He did not feel disposed to give Bunter away to the Form-master.
 "You will kindly take care of him, Wharton; at least, until the oculist has seen him."
 "Very well, sir."
 Mr. Quelch rustled away; and the Owl of the Remove grinned at Wharton.
 "You fat fraud—" said Harry.
 "Lead me into the quadrangle, please!"
 "You fat rotter! You can see your way as well as I can!"
 "You heard what Mr. Quelch said," grinned Bunter. "Lead me into the quad, and if you ain't jolly careful with me, I shall have to complain to Quelchy. I don't want to get you into trouble with Quelchy, Wharton, but if

you ain't jolly careful, I shall have to complain."
 And the captain of the Remove, suppressing his feelings, led Billy Bunter into the quad, and remained in charge of him until the bell rang for breakfast.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.
The History of the Mystery!

BILLY BUNTER came into the Form-room with the rest of the Remove that morning. Harry Wharton led him there. When Mr. Quelch came in he glanced very sharply at Bunter.
 "You do not feel any better this morning, Bunter?" he asked.
 "No, sir! Worse!" said Bunter promptly.
 "Do you feel any pain in your eyes, Bunter?"
 "Yes, sir—awful! Something like burning hot daggers, sir—"
 "What?"
 "And something like red-hot gimlets, sir."
 Mr. Quelch breathed hard.
 "You will be excused lessons this morning, Bunter. You may sit in your place and listen."
 Bunter grunted.
 He might almost as well have been doing lessons as sitting in his place unoccupied, while the other fellows did theirs. This was not the way a blind chap ought to be treated.
 "If you please, sir—" he began.
 "Well, Bunter?"
 "I—I think I should feel better out of doors, sir—"
 "Nonsense!"
 "I don't want to cut the Form-work, sir," said Bunter. "It's my greatest grief that I shall have to miss lessons—"
 "That will do, Bunter!"
 "But I think, sir—"
 "You will kindly be silent!"
 Lessons commenced in the Remove-room, Billy Bunter sitting in a state of great discontent, and looking on. He heard the other fellows construe in turn, and it was some comfort not to be called on. But he was dreadfully bored. A really sympathetic Form-master would have allowed him to walk in the quad, instead of sitting there; Bunter felt that. Good Gilbert, evidently, had had a much kinder Form-master than Bunter had.
 The Owl of the Remove began to wonder whether the "stunt" was worth while, after all; certainly it showed no signs of "panning out" profitably. He had bagged one supper on the strength of it; while over his mind was hanging the uneasy prospect of an interview with the specialist, and a bill for ten guineas to be sent to his father—which would cause something like an earthquake at home. Bunter had plenty of time for reflection during the morning lessons, in which he did not share; and his reflections were by no means wholly of a pleasant nature.
 During the morning Mr. Quelch was called from the Form-room to answer a call on the telephone. And when the Remove were dismissed, he called to Bunter.
 "The specialist cannot get here before six, Bunter. You will be ready to see him at that hour."
 "Very well, sir!" gasped Bunter.
 "You will take Bunter out, Wharton."
 "Yes, sir."

ANSWERS
 EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

The captain of the Remove led Bunter from the Form-room. In the quad he gave the fat junior a very expressive look.

"You fat, spoofing bounder!" said Harry, in concentrated tones. "How long are you going to keep this up?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"The specialist will bowl you out when he comes."

"Rot! I—I say, Wharton, can you lend me five bob?"

"No!" roared Wharton.

"I'm expecting a postal-order tomorrow morning," said Bunter, blinking at him. "I think you might lend me five bob on it, now I'm blind. Of course, I'll hand you the postal-order immediately it comes!"

"I'll hand you a thick ear, you fat fraud!" growled Wharton.

"You might be a bit sympathetic! Gilbert's schoolfellows—"

Bunter stopped in time.

"Who the thump is Gilbert? You've mentioned him a dozen times," said Harry impatiently. "What are you driving at?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar from a dozen Removites, who were standing in a group round Skinner, in the quad under the elms. Skinner had a book in his hand, and was reading aloud from it. Bunter gave a jump as he recognised the gilt volume which Aunt Selina had presented to her hopeful nephew. Evidently Harold Skinner had remembered it, and had put two and two together.

"Hallo! What's the joke?" called out Wharton.

Skinner roared.

"I lent Bunter this book when he was detained yesterday. It's called 'Good Gilbert, the Blind Schoolboy'—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"That's where he got the wheeze from!" howled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I didn't!" roared Bunter. "I've never seen that book until this very minute."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "You see it this minute, do you?"

"Nunno! I mean—"

"It's all about a blind schoolboy, whose greatest grief was that his affliction caused him to miss his lessons," chortled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, Bunter's very words!" exclaimed Wharton.

"I say, you fellows—"

"So now we've got to the bottom of it," grinned Vernon-Smith. "That book ought to be shown to Quelchy!"

Bunter jumped.

"D-d-don't let Quelchy see it!" he gasped. "I—I say, you fellows, Quelchy would—would misunderstand."

"You mean, he would understand!" grinned Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Beasts!"

Billy Bunter rolled away, leaving the Removites yelling. But Bunter did not heed their yelling. He had caught sight of Coker of the Fifth in the quad—a rather remarkable circumstance, considering that he was blind and he bore down upon Coker. Billy Bunter had business with Horace Coker.



Mr. Quelch selected a cane and rose from the table. He seemed to tower over the hapless Owl of the Remove. "You wretched boy! It is now clear to me! You have grossly deceived me! You have attempted to make me believe that you had lost your sight!" (See Chapter 12.)

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Paying the Piper!

"I SAY, Coker!"

Horace Coker stared grimly at Bunter. Potter and Greene, who were with their chum, grinned.

Coker had been rather worried that day. Since the misadventure of Bunter in his study he had not been showing off any more jiu-jitsu tricks. Indeed, Coker wished that he had never heard of jiu-jitsu. Certainly, he could not have foreseen the calamity that had happened to Bunter—no fellow could have. But it was awful, all the same.

And Coker, who was a good-hearted fellow, repented him that he had kicked Bunter out of his study—after he was blind! Of course, he hadn't believed it; but now it looked genuine. Bunter had gone before his Form-master; a specialist was coming down. Coker was convinced, and he was sincerely sorry. He was just remarking to Potter and Greene that he thought he ought to do something for Bunter, when the Owl of the Remove astonished him by coming up to him in the quad, with the greeting: "I say, Coker!"

It was said of old that liars should have good memories. And it was Bunter's weakness that he had a very bad memory. He had forgotten, for the moment, that blind fellows couldn't see!

"I've been looking for you," continued Bunter.

"Looking for me?" gasped Coker.

"Yes. I've got a bone to pick with you," said Bunter. "You see, you made me blind. I don't blame you; you couldn't help it, in the circumstances. But that's how it stands. A specialist is coming, and he's going to charge ten guineas. I think you ought to pay it, Coker. You've got plenty of money."

Horace Coker breathed hard. "I've got plenty of money," he assented.

"You could pay it, if you liked," said Bunter.

"I could—if I liked."

"Well, I think you ought to," said Bunter. "There'll be a fearful row at home if that bill goes to my father."

"I dare say there will," assented Coker.

"As you did it, you ought to pay," argued Bunter. "You've got the money. It's up to you, Coker. You see that?"

"If I did it, I ought to pay, certainly," said Coker, with unusual self-restraint. "I was just saying to Potter that if you were really blind, I'd see you through, somehow."

"Oh, good!" said Bunter. "Well, if you stand the money for the specialist it will be all right. I don't want to worry them at home by letting them know that I'm blind. I may recover, you know."

"You may!" said Coker.

"I think you will!" grinned Potter.

"If you like to hand me the money, I'll pay the man when he comes, and it will be all right," said Bunter.

Potter and Greene chuckled. Horace Coker was breathing harder and harder. He seemed to be on the verge of a volcanic eruption.

"You're sure that you're quite blind, Bunter?" he asked, in a suppressed voice.

Bunter nodded cheerfully.

"Oh, quite sure!" he answered.

"You can't see anything?"

"Nothing at all."

"You can't see me, frinstance?"

"Nunno!"

"Then how"—Coker's voice began to resemble thunder—"then how did you know me just now?"

"Eh?"

"You marched right up to me, and spoke to me by name," said Coker. "How did you do it, if you were blind?"

"I—I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Potter and Greene.

Bunter back away. He did not like the expression on Horace Coker's face.

"I'm waiting for your answer, Bunter!" said Coker grimly.

"I—I—I— You see—"
"The question is, whether you see," said Coker, with grim humour. "I think you do."

"Oh, no! Not at all! All is dark!" said Bunter. "I can hear voices, but I can't see anything—nothing at all! I couldn't tell how you were dressed, to save my life! If you asked me, I couldn't say you were wearing a grey waistcoat—"

"What?"
"You see, I can't see it's grey," said Bunter. "Blind, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from Potter and Greene.

Billy Bunter blinked at them indignantly.

"I call it rather unfeeling, to cackle at a fellow who's blind," he said warmly. "You might be a bit sympathetic to a chap suffering under a fearful affliction— Yaroooh! Leggo, Coker!"

Horace Coker had laid a sudden, powerful grasp on Bunter's collar. His rugged face was crimson with wrath.

"You fat villain!" he gasped.

"Ow! Yow! Help!"

"Come along!" roared Coker.

"Yaroooh! I won't! W-w-where are you going?" gasped Bunter.

"I'm going to take you to your Form-master, and tell him just how blind you are, you spoofing rotter!" said Coker grimly.

"I—I won't go! Yaroooh! Help!"

Bunter struggled, but he was an infant in the grasp of the powerful Fifth-Former. Coker of the Fifth marched him directly towards the School House, heedless of his struggling and wriggling and spluttering. Right into the School House he marched him, and on to Mr. Quelch's study.

Coker banged at the door with his disengaged hand.

"Come in!"

Coker threw the door open.

Mr. Quelch was in his study, and he raised his eyebrows at the sight of Bunter squirming, with Horace Coker's iron grip on his collar.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed the Remove master, in amazement.

Coker gasped for breath.

"That fat fraud, sir—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, Bunter—Bunter makes out that he was blinded in my study last evening, sir."

"I am aware of that, Coker. A specialist—"

"It's all spoof, sir!" roared Coker.

"It is what?"

"I mean, Bunter was pulling your leg. I— That is to say, it's all lies, sir!" stammered Coker.

"He can see as well as ever he did. He came up to me in the quad, and spoke to me by name. He was twenty yards away when he saw me, and he came across—"

"I—I didn't!" gasped Bunter.

"Potter and Greene were with me, sir, and they saw him. It's all spoof!" howled Coker.

Mr. Quelch's jaw set grimly.

"You may release Bunter," he said.

"Now, Bunter!"

"If—if you please, sir—" gasped Bunter.

"I have very strong doubts, Bunter, as to the truth of your statements," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "I suspected from the first, Bunter, that it was a trick to escape lessons."

"Oh, sir! My greatest grief—"
"Silence! It now appears to be proved, Bunter, that you have deceived

me, or attempted to do so!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "You—you ask any chap in the Remove, sir, and—and they'll tell you I'm utterly incapable of deceit, sir. I've often got into rows by being so truthful. I—I say, wha-a-at are you going to do with that cane, sir?" spluttered Bunter.

"How did you know that I had picked up my cane?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I—"

"Answer me, Bunter."

"I—I saw—I—I mean, I heard you, sir."

"You heard me pick up my cane?" exclaimed the Remove master, scarcely able to believe his ears.

"Oh dear! Yes, sir," gasped Bunter, desperately. "I—I—I'm awfully keen of hearing, sir. Blind people are, you know."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "This boy's impudence passes all bounds! I have never heard such wicked prevarication in my life."

"Oh, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I hope you don't think I'm telling an untruth, sir. I—I'd scorn it, sir."

"You saw me pick up my cane, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I don't know that you've got the cane in your hand at the present moment, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"If—if you asked me, sir, I—I shouldn't know whether it was a cane or—or a fishing-rod, sir!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch, quite dazed.

Coker grinned, and sidled to the door.

Coker of the Fifth felt that he could safely leave Bunter in Mr. Quelch's hands now.

"Oh, sir, I—I—I'm afraid I'm wasting your time, sir!" stammered Bunter. "I—I feel that I ought not to waste your time, sir, when you're writing a letter!"

"And how, you wretched boy, do you know that I am writing a letter, if you cannot see?"

"Oh dear!" moaned Bunter.

Mr. Quelch rose from his table. He seemed to tower over the hapless Owl of the Remove.

"Bunter!"

"Oh dear! I—I— If you don't mind, sir, I—I'd prefer to let the whole matter drop."

"I shall telephone to Dr. Pillbury, Bunter!"

"Oh, good, sir! I—I'd like to see the doctor, sir, as—as I'm blind and—and afflicted!"

"I shall telephone to him, Bunter, to cancel the appointment with the specialist. Fortunately there is yet time. It is now clear to me, you wretched boy, that you have grossly deceived me. You have attempted to make me believe that you had lost your sight, for the miserable and contemptible motive of avoiding your lessons. This miserable cheat, Bunter, would have been discovered as soon as you were examined by a specialist. Did you hope to deceive the oculist, you unscrupulous boy?"

"Yes, sir. I—I mean no, sir."

"Dare you assert to me, at this moment, that you are blind?" thundered Mr. Quelch, swishing the cane.

Bunter jumped back.

He was not a bright youth. But he could see that it was not much use keeping up the "stunt" any longer.

Bunter's blindness was now a chicken that would not fight, so to speak.

"I—I say, sir!" he said feebly.

"Well?"

"I—I believe I can see now, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I've recovered my sight, sir. I—I can see you quite plainly. Ain't—ain't it wonderful, sir?"

Mr. Quelch gazed at him. He was not so much surprised by the fat junior's humbug as by Bunter's absurd belief that such obvious humbug could impose upon anyone—especially Mr. Quelch!

"Bunter, if I did not believe that you were too stupid to realise the—the turpitude of your conduct, I should take you to the Head, and request him to administer a severe flogging!" exclaimed the Remove master.

"I—I say, sir, d-d-don't do that! I—I shouldn't like to interrupt the Head. He—he will be going to dinner now, sir—"

"I shall cane you myself!"

"Oh!"

"Severely!"

"Oh dear!"

"With the utmost severity, Bunter!"

"Wow!"

"Hold out your hand, Bunter!" thundered the Remove master.

"Oh dear! I—I say, sir, I—I—I'm not blind now—really! I've had a wonderful recovery, and—and I—I don't think a chap ought to be caned, sir, for going blind and then making a wonderful recovery! It—it ain't just, sir!"

Mr. Quelch took Bunter by the collar. Then the cane rose and fell, with heavy swishes, across the Owl's fat shoulders.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yaroooh—oooh—oooop!"

"Bunter's asked for it," gasped Bob Cherry, "and now he's got it! He really begged for it! And he's got it!"

"The gotfulness is terrific!"

"Now you may go, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch. "And if ever you should attempt to deceive me again—"

Mr. Quelch did not finish. He left the rest to Bunter's imagination.

The Owl of the Remove limped out of the study. A yell of laughter greeted him as he blinked at the crowd of juniors there.

His next few hours were not happy ones. When he turned up in the Form-room that afternoon, however, he appeared to be able to see his way about quite well. The Remove heard nothing more of Blind Bunter.

THE END.

(Full particulars of next week's story will be found in page 2.)



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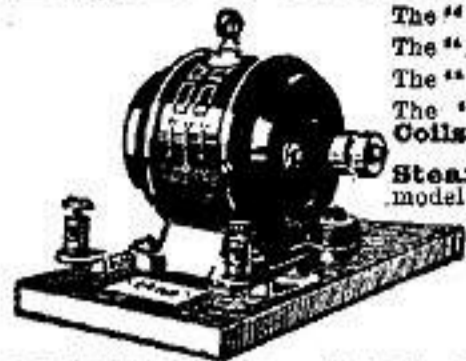
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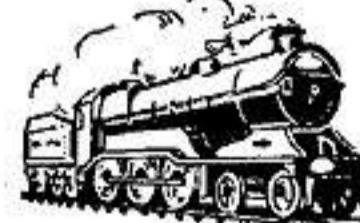
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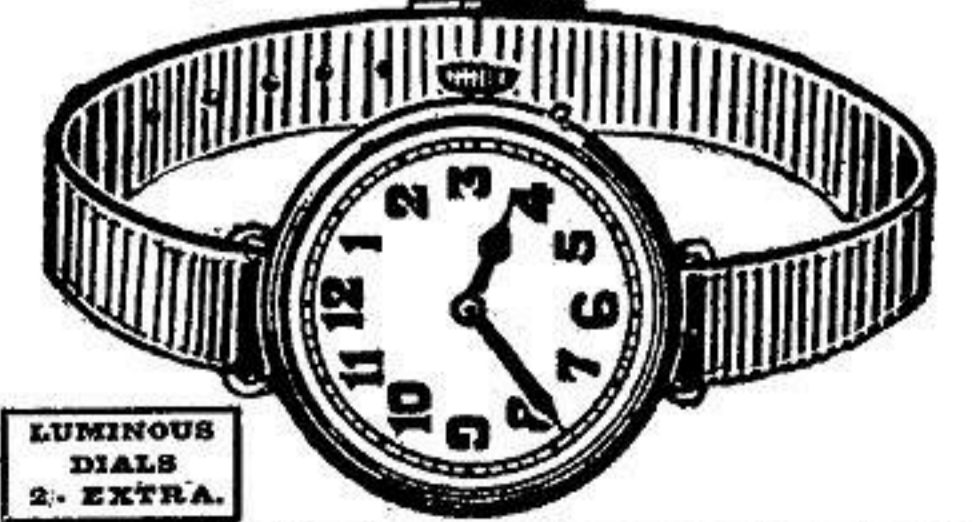
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