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LOOK!

IN THIS ISSUE: **FREE PLATE OF BILLY BUNTER!**

Week Ending January 25th, 1919.

No. 1.

The Penny Popular

Three Complete Stories of—
HARRY WHARTON & CO.—JIMMY SILVER & CO.—TOM MERRY & CO.



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WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER

CHAPTER 1.

Billy Bunter of St. Jim's.

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter sat up in the armchair in Study No. 6 in the School House at St. Jim's.

He had been asleep, and for some time his unmelodious snore had resounded through the study.

Blake & Co., who were at their prep round the table, had worked to that unmusical accompaniment.

Bunter rubbed his eyes, and set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and blinked round him.

He had been dreaming of Greyfriars as he snored in Blake's armchair, and he expected for a moment to find himself in his old Greyfriars study when he awakened.

But the sight of Blake and Herries, Digby and D'Arcy, working at the study table, recalled him to himself.

He remembered that he was no longer Billy Bunter of Greyfriars, but Wally Bunter of St. Jim's; that, at all events, St. Jim's had accepted him as Wally Bunter without a suspicion.

Bunter grinned a fat grin as he looked at the four busy Fourth-Formers.

He had no prep to do, as it was his first day at St. Jim's, and he had improved the shining hour by taking a nap in the armchair.

When he was not eating Billy Bunter was always ready to sleep.

"I say, you fellows!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy glanced up as the snore ceased to resound.

He met Bunter's blink, and nodded affably.

"Hallo! Wakin' up, deah boy?" he remarked.

"Had a good nap?" asked Blake. "I suppose you were tired after your journey down, old fellow?"

Bunter nodded.

He was not so much tired after his journey to St. Jim's as after his exertions at an early supper in Study No. 6. His performances at that early supper had amazed the study. But Bunter had awakened, refreshed by sleep, ready for further efforts, like a giant refreshed with wine.

"Yes," he said. "What about supper?"

"Eh?"

"Must be getting towards bed-time," remarked Bunter. "I suppose you have some supper here?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh, yes; certainly," said Jack Blake

BUNTER OF THE NEW HOUSE!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

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

hastily. "In fact, the Shell bounders are coming in to supper, and they're going to bring some supplies. I suppose you're pretty sharp set?"

There was a hidden sarcasm in this remark which was quite lost on William George Bunter.

"Yes," he said, "I've a fairly good appetite, you know. That chap Figgins asked me to supper in the New House—"

"Oh, never mind Figgins!"

"Fatty Wynn has been making some preparations," remarked Bunter. "Perhaps I ought to go over."

"My dear chap, you can't pay visits to the New House at this hour," said Blake. "Only half an hour to bed-time. Besides, we're going to have supper here."

"Kerr was very pressing, too—"

"You fellows done your prep?" asked Blake, looking round. "Tom Merry will be here in a minute or two."

"Neahly, deah boy."

"Buck up, then!"

"I'll get the fire going, if you like," said Bunter. "It's gone out. Don't mind me; I'd like to make myself useful."

Blake hesitated a moment. Coal rations were very short in junior studies. But he nodded. Politeness to that distinguished guest came before all other considerations.

"Go ahead, old nut!" he replied

Bunter detached himself from the armchair.

How he could possibly be hungry again in so short a time was a deep mystery to Study No. 6; but it was evident that Bunter was keen on supper.

He looked round for materials for a fire.

Firewood was lacking, but fortunately there was some of Jack Blake's fretwork at hand, and Bunter proceeded to crack it up and build a fire.

Paper seemed short, too, but some pages from a Latin grammar supplied the deficiency.

Bunter was not particular

The fire was soon going strong, and he heaped on it what coal remained in the locker.

It was quite a successful fire. Blake & Co., having finished their prep, rose from the table, and surveyed the fire with some satisfaction. It was a cold night.

"Good!" said Herries, warming his hands.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Vewy good indeed."

"Oh, I can light fires," said Bunter.

"I can do pretty nearly anything, if you come to that. At Greyfriars—" He paused in time. "Time those chaps were here for supper. Hallo! Anything wrong, Blake?"

Jack Blake was gazing with a stony gaze at some fragments of fretwork in the fender. Busy with prep, he had not observed Bunter gathering the materials for the fire.

"That—that—that's part of my letter-rack!" he gasped. "And—and where's the photo-frames, and—and—"

"You didn't mind my using that rubbish for the fire, Blake?"

"Rubbish?" repeated Blake faintly.

"And I suppose that old book was no good?"

Herries' expression became quite extraordinary as he looked at what was left of the "old book."

"That's my Latin grammar!" he said, in a grinding voice.

"Bai Jove!"

"Here they come!" said Bunter cheerfully, as the door was thrown open and Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, of the Shell, made their appearance.

The Terrible Three came in with cheery smiles—and parcels.

Tom Merry & Co. were in high feather that evening.

For had they not triumphed over the New House, and beaten Figgins & Co. to the wide? Had not Figgins & Co. planned to bag Bunter for the New House, on the score of his football reputation—a reputation which, by the way, belonged to his cousin Wally—and had not the School House fellows frustrated their knavish tricks, and bagged Bunter in their turn? Naturally, the Co. were feeling very pleased with themselves.

True, they did not yet know exactly the kind of prize they had bagged. Had they known their Bunter better they would probably have made the New House fellows very welcome to him.

But for the present they were triumphant, and they were satisfied, and everything in the garden, so to speak, was lovely.

"Here we are again!" said Tom Merry cheerily. "You fellows finished prep? Good! Ready for supper—what?"

"Yes, rather!" said Bunter. "Anything to cook? I'm rather a dab at cooking, you know, and I've got a good fire going."

"Ahem! It's a—cold collation," said Tom Merry. "Ham and hard-boiled eggs, and a cake."

"My dear chap, don't mench!" said Bunter. "Almost anything is good enough for me. So long as the stuff's good, and there's plenty of it, I'm easily satisfied."

Bunter's earlier performances had exhausted the resources of Study No. 6, but the Terrible Three had come to the rescue. The fat junior's little, round eyes glistened behind his glasses as he surveyed the contents of the packages. Books and papers were cleared away, and the study table laid for supper.

Blake's glance wandered occasionally to the remnants of his fretwork, and Herries seemed a little thoughtful, perhaps on the subject of his Latin grammar. Study No. 6 had accepted Bunter as an inmate, to keep him out of the clutches of their old rivals of the New House. But they were beginning to think already that they had paid too high a price for the baffling of Figgins & Co.

However, so far, all was cheery politeness. They had to take Bunter as they found him; and if they did not find him quite as they had expected it could not be helped.

Supper was going strong when there came a tap at the door, and Talbot of the Shell glanced in.

"Bunter here?" he asked. "That new chap? Oh, here he is!"

"Here I am," said Bunter, blinking at him.

"Pretty nearly time Bunter got to his own House," said Talbot. "Mr. Rat-

cliff has just come across looking for him."

"Oh!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Ratty seems rather cross," said Talbot. "Bunter had better slip out before the old bird nails him."

"Can't!" said Bunter. "I haven't finished supper. Besides, I'm a School House chap, you know. I was sent here for the School House."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Oh!" said Talbot, puzzled. "I understood that that was a mistake, and that you have been entered at the New House."

"I've changed my mind," said Bunter.

"Figgins & Co. bamboozled him into entering in the New House," explained Tom Merry. "They wanted to bag him for their House Eleven, you know. We've put it to Bunter, and he's sticking to us, after all."

Talbot whistled.

"Ratty will have something to say about that," he remarked. "I don't think a fellow can change after a House-master's put his name down."

There was a step in the passage.

"Here comes Kildare!"

The captain of St. Jim's came along to the door of No. 6.

"Talbot, have you seen that new kid Bunter?"

"Ahem!"

"Oh, here he is! Bunter, get back to your own House; you're not allowed to stay here so late."

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Cut off!" said Kildare.

Tom Merry & Co. exchanged glances. This was a new complication, and it began to look doubtful whether they would succeed in bagging Bunter, after all. Blake glanced at the fragments of his fretwork, and took comfort.

"The—fact is, Kildare—" began Tom.

"Well?"

"Bunter belongs to the School House," explained Tom. "It—it was a—mistake his name being put down in the New House—"

"Better explain that to his House-master," said Kildare. "Mr. Ratcliff is in Mr. Railton's study. You can go there with Bunter, if you like."

"Oh, all right!"

"I haven't finished my supper," said Bunter.

"Ahem! Housemasters can't wait while you finish your supper," said Tom Merry. "Better come along, Bunter."

"But there's the cake—"

"Get a move on!" snapped Kildare. "Do you want me to take you by the ear?"

Bunter blinked at the captain of St. Jim's, and decided to get a move on. With a discontented grunt, he followed Tom Merry from the study and down the stairs.

CHAPTER 2.

Mr. Ratcliff Puts His Foot Down.

MR. RATCLIFF, the master of the New House, wore a frown, as he often did.

He was in Mr. Railton's study, and he had declined the School House master's offer of a chair.

He was annoyed.

His sharp little eyes glittered as Tom Merry entered the study with the Owl of Greyfriars.

"Here is the boy!" he snapped.

"Bunter, you should not have stayed so late in this House," said Mr. Railton mildly. "You have given your House-master the trouble of coming over for you."

"For which you will be duly punished,

Bunter!" snapped Mr. Ratcliff. "Follow me!"

"If you please—" began Tom Merry. "You have nothing to do with this matter, Merry," grunted the New House master. "Follow me at once, Bunter!"

Bunter stood where he was. He did not like the look in Mr. Horace Ratcliff's greenish eyes.

"Bunter is a new boy, Mr. Ratcliff," remarked the School House master. "Doubtless he is unacquainted with House rules, so far—"

"Merry is perfectly well acquainted with them, and he appears to have kept Bunter here," said Mr. Ratcliff sourly. "Perhaps you are right, and the punishment should fall upon Merry instead of Bunter."

"Will you let me explain, sir?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Bunter belongs to the School House!"

"Nonsense!"

"It's a fact, sir," said Tom, addressing Mr. Railton. "His father sent him here for the School House. The Head knows."

"I was under that impression, Merry," said Mr. Railton. "But Bunter himself explained to me that it was a mistake, and he applied personally to Mr. Ratcliff to have his name entered at the New House."

"Oh!" ejaculated Tom.

"That—that was a mistake, sir," stammered Bunter, liking less and less the look in Mr. Ratcliff's eye.

"Indeed! Another mistake, Bunter?"

"I was spoofed, sir," said Bunter.

"Figgins spoofed me—Yaroooooh!"

"Bunter, what do you mean by shouting out in that manner?"

"Yow-ow-ow! That idiot Merry stamped on my foot! Yooop!"

Tom Merry's face became crimson as Mr. Railton gave him a stern look.

"Merry, are you attempting to keep Bunter from explaining the matter to me?"

"I—I—ahem!"

"You may rejoin, Merry; your presence is not required."

"But, sir—"

"Go!"

There was no possible answer to that, and Tom Merry went.

He haunted the passage, however, in a troubled state of mind. Evidently Bunter was going to give away the little game Figgins & Co. had played; which was against all the rules from the junior point of view.

Tom hardly liked to believe that Bunter was a sneak; he had liked and respected Wally Bunter, and he believed Billy to be Wally. He waited in the passage in a state of great uneasiness.

"Now, Bunter, explain yourself!" said Mr. Railton severely.

"I was spoofed, sir," said Bunter. "Figgins spun me yarns about chaps being half-starved in this House—"

"What?"

"So I joined the New House, sir, under a—a—misapprehension," said Bunter. "But I'm a School House chap, sir. It's not my fault that I'm so much sought after. It comes of being so popular."

"Then your statement to me that a mistake had been made was a falsehood!" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"Ahem! Numo!"

"Then what was it?"

"It—it—it was a figure of speech, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"After the pervasiveness you have been guilty of, Bunter, I shall certainly refuse to rely upon any statements you make," said the Housemaster. "The matter must be settled by reference to your father. For the present you belong to Mr. Ratcliff's House, as your name is

entered there, and you will go to your House at once!"

"I am waiting for you, Bunter!" said Mr. Ratcliff, in a voice that Von Tirpitz might have envied.

Billy Bunter blinked in dismay.

"But—but I don't want to go!" he spluttered. "I—I mean—Yoooop!"

A loud howl escaped Bunter as Mr. Ratcliff's finger and thumb closed on his ear like a vice.

"Come!" said the New House master.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Silence!"

Mr. Ratcliff led Bunter from the study. In the passage he blinked dismally at Tom Merry as he was led away.

"I—I say, Merry—"

"Come!" rasped Mr. Ratcliff.

The dismayed Owl of Greyfriars was led out of the School House into the darkness of the quadrangle.

"Well, my hat!" murmured Tom Merry.

He returned rather dismally to Study No. 6, where he found his chums anxious for news.

"Where's Buntah, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Ratcliff's taken him away."

"Bai Jove! But he has no right to take away a School House chap!" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's warmly.

"Can't say I'm sorry," remarked Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Look at my Latin grammar!"

"Bothah your Latin gwammah, Hewwies! I wefuse to allow Buntah to be kidnapped in this way by old Watty!"

"Well, it's his own fault," said Tom Merry. "He let Figgins spoof him, and—"

"He is wathah inexperienced, Tom Mewwy."

"And he seems to have told Railton a lot of thumping lies!" said the captain of the Shell grimly.

"I wefuse to think so!"

"He's burned my Latin grammar," said Herries.

"Bai Jove! I weally think we shall nevah heah the end of that Latin gwammah. Buntah was vewy kind to light the fiah for us, and he was bound to use somethin'."

"Well, I'll change with you," said Herries. "I'll have your Latin grammar, and you can have mine—what's left of it."

"Pway, don't be an unweasonable ass, Hewwies!"

"Sq the New House has bagged Bunter, after all," said Manners. "He'll be playing against us in the House match on Saturday. That's what those New House bounders wanted all along."

"It's going to be settled by the Head writing to Bunter's pater," said Tom Merry.

"Good!" said Arthur Augustus. "That means that he will come into the School House, aftah all! Vewy good indeed!"

"Well, we'll be glad to have him," said Tom. "I liked him well enough when I met him at Greyfriars, when he was visiting his cousin Billy at the time of our footer-match there. We don't seem to have seen him at his best today."

"He is a weally wippin' fellow," said Arthur Augustus. "I made friends with him, an' I am not goin' back on a fwyend."

"He's given Figgins & Co. away to the Housemasters."

"Bai Jove! I am suah he did so inadvertently, Tom Mewwy; he could not have meant to give them away."

Tom Merry laughed.

"All serene, Gussy; we'll think the

best we can of him. Hallo! Here comes Darrell to rout us out to the dorm!"

Tom Merry & Co. went up to bed rather puzzled about Bunter, and not quite knowing what to make of him. Certainly, so far he had not borne out their previous high opinion of Wally Bunter. But they were willing to be charitable, and to think the best they could of him; and that was all they could do.

Meanwhile, the Owl of Greyfriars was not having a happy time in the New House!

CHAPTER 3.

Going Through It.

"FIGGINS! Kerr! Wynn!" Monteith of the Sixth looked into the Common-room in the New House, and rapped out those three names in succession.

Figgins & Co. looked round, ceasing a rather excited football argument with Redfern and Lawrence. Monteith was looking grim.

"Yes, Monteith?"

"Mr. Ratcliff wants you three in his study," said Monteith. "Cut off at once!"

"Oh! Anything up?" asked Kerr. "To judge by Mr. Ratcliff's expression, something certainly is up," said the prefect drily. "I advise you to hurry."

"Right-ho!" The three juniors started for the Housemaster's study not in a happy mood. Nobody in the New House enjoyed being called on the carpet by Mr. Ratcliff.

"What the dickens is the row?" murmured Fatty Wynn uneasily. "We haven't trodden on Ratty's corns that I know of. He can't have heard of the rabbit-pie in the study, I suppose? If he has, it's not his bizney. 'Tain't over the rations."

"It isn't the rabbit-pie, fathead!" said Kerr. "May be something to do with that new kid Bunter."

"I don't see how it can be," said Figgins. "He's gone into the School House, after all. We could spring Ratty on them, and get him to claim the fat founder as a New House fellow, only—only—"

"Only we can't!" said Kerr, with a grin. "That's not in the game. It looks as if we've lost Bunter, after all. But I wonder what's the matter with Ratty?"

Kerr rubbed his hands with painful anticipation.

The three juniors presented themselves in Mr. Ratcliff's study. Bunter was already there. He was standing with an expression of mingled indignation and apprehension on his fat face. He blinked wrathfully at the Co. as they came in. He attributed his present plight to them and to their little scheme of bagging him for their House.

Mr. Ratcliff eyed the juniors grimly. "You—you sent for us, sir?" faltered George Figgins.

"I sent for you, Figgins, to question you with regard to this boy Bunter. It appears that the matter has been misrepresented to me—"

"Oh, sir!"

"Bunter, it appears, was sent here to the School House, and he spoke falsely in informing me that a mistake had been made."

Figgins & Co. were silent.

It was not their fault that Billy Bunter had departed from the strict line of veracity. They had not wanted him to.

"Bunter spoke falsely owing, apparently, to your persuasions," said Mr. Ratcliff. "You induced him to come into this House when he was intended for the other."

"We—we wanted him here, sir."

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"You were aware that he was intended for the School House?"

"Ahem! Yes, sir! But—but we thought he might as well suit himself, our House being the—the best House," explained Figgins.

"You had no right whatever to interfere, Figgins!"

"Ahem!"

"I was deceived by this boy, who certainly uttered a falsehood."

"Oh, really, sir—" came from Bunter. "I must say, sir—"

"Silence! The boy's name has been entered in this House, and the House-dame has been given the trouble of making arrangements for him," said Mr. Ratcliff. "I also have been put to trouble. He is now to remain here till his father has been written to. All this trouble, Figgins, has been caused by your reckless deception!"

"Ahem!"

"According to Bunter's statements, you deceived him—"

"What?"

"So you did!" exclaimed Bunter, blinking at Figgins. "You spoofed me! You were entirely to blame! You don't deny that. It was your fault all along!"

Figgins stared at him.

"You can't deny it!" hooted Bunter.

"I don't want to!" said Figgins contemptuously. "If I'd known you were a sneaking cad I wouldn't have troubled my head about you!"

"Oh, really, Figgins—"

"Figgins! How dare you use such expressions!" thundered Mr. Ratcliff. "I shall punish you three juniors for the trick you have played."

He picked up his cane.

Figgins & Co. said no more.

The little scheme they had played was really a harmless one, due to their rivalry with Tom Merry & Co. of the other House; but it was useless to attempt to explain all that to Mr. Ratcliff. They had been sent for to be punished, and they had to go through it.

They went through it in the next few minutes, with all the fortitude they could muster.

Swish, swish, swish!

Billy Bunter blinked on, wondering whether his turn was coming. He was soon enlightened.

"Now, Bunter!" said Mr. Ratcliff.

Bunter started back.

"If—if you please, sir—"

"Hold out your hand!"

"I—I should like to point out, sir, that I wasn't to blame!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I was Figgins all the time, sir, and—and Kerr, and—and Wynn. I'm shocked at them, sir; in fact, disgusted that—"

"Hold out your hand, Bunter!"

"I—I despise them, sir! I believe they're thoroughly bad," said Bunter. "I—I wasn't to blame in the least! They'll bear me out in that!"

"Do you hear me, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir! Certainly! But—"

"If you do not hold out your hand at once, Bunter, you shall be flogged instead of caned!" thundered Mr. Ratcliff.

"Oh, dear!"

Billy Bunter's fat hand came gingerly out.

Mr. Ratcliff's expression was quite Hunnish as he took aim with the cane. Evidently it was going to be a terrific swish, and the acid-tempered master was putting his beef into it.

Bunter's heart failed him as he saw it coming. Without stopping to think, he jerked back his hand as the cane descended.

Whack!

Naturally, as the cane met with no resistance, it continued its career, and was stopped by Mr. Ratcliff's own leg.

"Yoop!" roared Mr. Ratcliff, as he

caught it. And he hopped on the other leg in anguish.

Figgins & Co. gasped.

Billy Bunter blinked at the Housemaster in utter dismay. He had certainly not intended that to happen, and he was too terrified to move as he saw the Housemaster hopping on one leg.

"Oh, dear!" he gasped.

"Ow! Oh! Yaw-woop! Ugh! Oooooop!" came from Mr. Ratcliff. "You—you young rascal! Oooooop! You young scoundrel! Yooop!"

"I—I say, sir—I—I— Oh, crumbs! Leggo! Yaroooooh!"

Mr. Ratcliff's left hand fastened on Bunter's collar. The cane rose in his right, and descended.

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

Bunter's yells rang through the study. Figgins & Co. retreated into the passage, not wishing to catch Mr. Ratcliff's eye again. But the Housemaster was not thinking of them. All his attention was devoted to Bunter, and the unhappy Owl of Greyfriars was going through it with a vengeance.

The terrific yells that rang from Mr. Ratcliff's study drew fellows to the passage outside, and they listened in awe—without venturing too near the door, however.

Billy Bunter came forth at last.

He came at a run; and the study door closed behind him with a slam.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow-woooooop!" roared Bunter.

"Had it bad?" asked Redfern sympathetically. It was rather an unnecessary question.

"Yoop! Yah! I won't stay here!" howled Bunter. "Oh, dear! I wish I was at Greyfriars! Ow-ow-ow!"

"Shut up that row, Bunter!" said Monteith, coming along the corridor.

"Bed-time, you fags! Get off to your dormitory!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"This way, Bunter!" said Figgins.

"Yah! Beast! Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Billy Bunter gave the Co. a glare, and rolled away. He was not feeling friendly towards Figgins & Co. just then.

In the dormitory he turned a deaf ear to words of consolation. He was still grunting and snorting when Monteith put the light out, and he grunted and snorted himself to sleep at last.

CHAPTER 4.

Well Matched.

TOM MERRY & CO. looked for Bunter when they came down the following morning. They were rather curious to know how he had got on with Mr. Ratcliff. But they did not find the fat junior in the quad before breakfast. They found Figgins & Co. taking a brisk walk; but the new junior was not to be seen.

"Where's Bunter?" asked Tom Merry.

Figgins gave a grunt.

"Still in the dorm! He didn't turn out at rising-bell."

"Lazybones!" explained Fatty Wynn.

"Did he catch it from Ratty?"

"Yes; can't say I'm very sorry," said Figgins candidly. "He isn't exactly the fellow I thought him."

Tom Merry smiled. That was exactly his own impression of Bunter.

"He seemed a really decent chap when we met him at Greyfriars," remarked Monty Lowther.

"He seems to have changed a bit," said Kerr. "He doesn't seem to have the faintest idea of playing the game. I can't understand how we were so taken in by him."

"Sorry you bagged him?" grinned Manners.

Kerr laughed. His little scheme had turned out a success in a way, after all. Bunter had been bagged—at least for the

present. But the Scottish junior was beginning to doubt whether the prize was worth the trouble.

"You can have him back, so far as I'm concerned," he answered.

"Keep him, old chap!" said Tom Merry affably. "I make you a present of him."

And the Terrible Three strolled on, smiling.

"After all, we've got him," said Figgins. "He seems to be a bit of a worm in some respects, but he's a footballer; we know that, because we've seen him play at Greyfriars. And he's a rod in pickle for those School House bounders on Saturday."

"Yes, there's that!" agreed Kerr.

"After all, we must remember he's a new kid, and—and he dropped in under rather unusual circumstances," said Figgins tolerantly. "We ought to make allowances for him."

"Oh, certainly!" said Kerr, rather drily.

"He's got his good points," said Fatty Wynn. "He knows how to cook, and he's a judge of cooking. He doesn't eat a thing without looking at it or caring what it is, like you, Figgy."

Figgins chuckled.

"Well, as he's got his good points, we'll make the best of him," he said. "At least he's a good forward, and he will be no end of use in the House Eleven on Saturday. Make the best of him, and keep friendly with the chap, and he may turn out all right, after all."

Kerr nodded without speaking.

He was not so sure of the possibility of making friends with a fellow like Bunter; but he was loyally prepared to back up Figgins, and see what could be done.

After all, Bunter could not very well be dropped like a hot potato, after being taken up with so much enthusiasm. It was only fair play to give him a chance.

At breakfast in the New House, therefore, Figgins & Co. smiled genially at the Owl of Greyfriars.

They received a glare in response.

Apparently Bunter wasn't prepared to receive their friendly overtures in a friendly spirit.

He had not forgotten his licking yet; and he could not forgive Figgins & Co. for having landed him, like a fat fish, in the New House.

True, he owed his punishment to his own untruthfulness, for which Figgins & Co. certainly were not responsible; but he visited it all upon their heads. Moreover, he was separated from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and he had looked upon that wealthy youth as a prospective goldmine.

After breakfast Figgins & Co. joined him, and walked out with him, Bunter wearing a lofty and disdainful expression.

He was going out to look for D'Arcy, as a matter of fact, and he had no use for the New House chums.

"Like to come and see my rabbits, Bunter?" asked Figgins affably.

Bunter thayed a little.

"I don't mind cooking rabbits for you after lessons," he said.

"Ahem! I don't meant that. White rabbits, you know."

"They can be eaten all right," said Bunter.

"Mine can't!" answered Figgins shortly.

Bunter sniffed.

"We'll show you round the school a bit," said Kerr amicably. "You haven't really seen St. Jim's yet."

"You needn't trouble."

"Ahem!"

"The fact is, I'm going to speak to my old pal D'Arcy," said Bunter. "You fellows needn't worry about me!"

And he rolled away, leaving Figgins

& Co. staring. Figgins breathed hard through his nose.

Figgy was not accustomed to wasting much attention upon a mere new kid; and to have his friendly attention turned down in this way was rather a facer for him.

"Never mind; he's got his back up," he said. "We must make allowances."

"Hum!" said Kerr.

Bunter succeeded in discovering Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He attached himself to that noble youth until lessons, and came into the Form-room with him.

It is possible that the noble Gussy did not find himself so much at ease with the new fellow as he had expected to be with Wally Bunter; but if that was so, he would not admit it even to himself. Loyalty was Gussy's strongest trait; he

"I've been going to speak to you, Bunter," he remarked. "I hear that you're quite a terrific footballer."

"That's me!" said Bunter cheerfully.

"Well, I'll tell you what I was thinking," said Baggy. "At home—at Trimble Hall—"

"Where?"

"Trimble Hall—my home, you know," said Baggy affably. "At Trimble Hall we're going to do rather big things this Easter. The pater's keeping open house for a lot of wounded officers, chiefly generals, and we're doing a lot to entertain them. Among other things, the pater's asked me to bring a crowd of fellows home."

"Has he?" said Bunter.

"He has! We're going to get up two footer elevens, and play matches, and all



Taking a Pig by the Ear!
(See Chapter 2.)

had made a friend of Bunter, and he was going to stick to him—so long as he could, at all events.

Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, eyed Bunter a good deal in class that morning. Even Baggy Trimble was not denser than Bunter; and the fat junior's denseness was accompanied by a self-satisfaction which was a little exasperating. However, Mr. Lathom was very lenient with a new boy, and Bunter got through the morning.

Tom Merry & Co. rushed Arthur Augustus away to footer-practice the moment the juniors were dismissed, and Bunter was not able to nail him. He did not feel any inclination whatever to follow the juniors to the footer-ground.

He was blinking about him in the doorway when Baggy Trimble came up, with a friendly grin on his fat face.

Bunter eyed him.

Baggy Trimble was a youth whose rotundity of figure rivalled Bunter's own, and, indeed, he resembled Bunter in a good many other respects.

But Trimble had his sweetest smile on now.

that—sort of football week, you know," said Baggy. "Hearing that you were a great gun at footer, I determined to ask you."

Bunter blinked at him. This was really flattering, and the Owl of Greyfriars began to swell.

"I'd like to ask you to captain one team, if you would," said Trimble. "Of course, there's not only footer. There'll be a lot going on, in one way or another. Care for shooting?"

"I'm a dab at it."

"Then you'll like Trimble Hall. Skate?"

"Like a bird!"

"I—I've never seen a bird skate!" said Trimble, staring.

"I mean, I skate jolly well. Precious few things I don't do well, if you come to that," said Bunter.

"I can quite believe it," said Trimble cordially. "You're a dancing-man, I can see that. A fellow with your figure would be bound to dance. Care for it?"

"Yes, rather! You should have seen me when they gave a dance at Cliff

House!" said Bunter. "The girls couldn't take their eyes off me."

"I'm not surprised at it—not at all. Shall I put you down on my list, then?" asked Trimble. "I've only got fifteen fellows down so far—D'Arcy and Tom Merry and Blake, and Talbot and Cutts of the Fifth, and some others."

"Put me down, by all means," said Bunter. "If you give parties and so on, you can depend on me to make them go."

"I will! The pater will be delighted to see you!" said Trimble heartily. "You'll meet some fairly decent people at my place—Lord French, you know, and Robertson. I don't know if you care for military men—"

"Certainly!"

"And some rather big political johnnies," said Trimble carelessly—"Asquith and Lloyd George, and that lot, you know. We bar Lansdowne. I don't care much for them myself. I find Asquith rather a bore."

"D-d-o you?"

"He talks too much," said Trimble. "I suppose you won't feel nervous if you meet Royalty?"

"N-n-not at all!" gasped Bunter.

"We're rather expecting King George for a few days at Easter. I'm so glad you're coming, Bunter!"

"Rely on me."

"By the way," said Trimble confidentially, "my remittance hasn't come to hand yet—a tenner I was expecting from my pater."

"Oh!" said Bunter, his manner changing a little.

"It's rather a nuisance, because I've lent D'Arcy my last quid. Could you lend me half-a-sov till the next post, old chap?"

Bunter blinked at him.

Trimble had come down to facts at last.

"Certainly," said Bunter. "I'm expecting a postal-order, and as soon as it comes just remind me, will you?"

"The fact is," said Trimble, "I'm actually hard up at the present moment. It's rather absurd—ha, ha!—but there you are. These things happen."

"They do!" agreed Bunter.

"If you could lend me a bob till the post comes in—"

"Certainly!" said Bunter.

He drove his hand into his pocket, and Trimble's eyes glistened. But the fat hand came out empty.

"I remember now," said Bunter calmly. "I left my purse in Figgins' study. So sorry!"

He rolled out into the quadrangle, leaving Baggy Trimble staring after him. Trimble could not make up his mind whether Bunter was the biggest fool he had ever met, or whether he wasn't!

He determined, at all events, to be on hand when Bunter's postal-order arrived. He was not aware that his schooldays were likely to be over and forgotten by that time.

CHAPTER 5.

Making Himself at Home.

"COMING down to footer, old fellow?"

Figgins asked that question after dinner, tapping Bunter on the shoulder quite cordially.

Bunter blinked at him through his big glasses.

"No!" he answered.

"Ahem!" murmured Figgins.

"I don't care for racing about after a ball just after dinner. It's not good for the inside."

"Oh, it's not regular practice, you know—just punting the ball about a bit."

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"Well, I'm not coming! You haven't treated me well," said Bunter distantly. "You told me fellows were half-starved in the School House—"

"I told you Trimble said he was half-starved there," corrected Figgins. "So he did. He says so every day."

"Twice a day!" remarked Kerr.

"More like a dozen times!" said Fatty Wynn, with a grin. "Trimble's a fat, greedy boulder!"

"You told me the New House master always asked a fellow to take a second helping, and a third," pursued Bunter warmly. "That was you, Kerr."

"Not at all!" answered Kerr. "I asked you what you thought of a House-master who did so. Quite a different thing."

Bunter snorted.

"Old Rateliff is a stingy beast!" he said. "He sticks an eye like a gimlet on a chap who wants enough to eat."

"You didn't do badly."

"Why, I'm simply famished!" said Bunter indignantly.

"My dear man, the grub's the same in both Houses, so you'd be famished anyway," said Figgins. "Besides, you can get things at the tuckshop to eke it out if you like."

Bunter brightened up.

"Well, that's a good idea," he said.

"But I'm in rather a difficulty there. My postal-order hasn't arrived."

"Were you expecting one?"

"Of course! It ought to have been here by the first post this morning; in fact, I dare say it has come, and hasn't been handed out yet. If you'd care to lend me the ten bob, Figgins—"

"What ten bob?"

"The postal-order's for ten. Then I'd hand it to you as soon as I get the letter. It comes to the same thing, doesn't it?"

"Quite!" agreed Figgins. "Only I—"

"Only what?" grunted Bunter.

"Only I haven't got ten bob," explained Figgins.

Grunt.

"Half-a-crown any good?" asked Figgins.

Smile.

"My dear chap, you're a Briton!" said Bunter affectionately. "I'll settle this out of my postal-order."

"Right you are!"

With half-a-crown in his podgy paw, Bunter started for Dame Taggies' little shop. At Greyfriars Bunter spent a portion of each day trying to obtain extra supplies of rationed food at the school shop, never daunted by continual failure. He was wondering whether he would have better luck at St. Jim's.

But Dame Taggies uttered that disagreeable word coupons at once when Bunter demanded a tin of beef and a pot of jam, and the Owl of Greyfriars had to come down to unrationed articles.

However, he found considerable satisfaction in expending Figgins' half-crown, and he looked rather shiny and smug when he turned up for afternoon lessons.

After lessons, as there was still light enough for some footer practice, most of the juniors were on Little Side, whither Bunter did not follow.

With his football reputation it was rather odd that he did not seem in a hurry to touch the game; and Figgins, who was anxious to see the form he was in, was getting rather impatient about it. But Bunter declined, and the Co. left him to himself.

Baggy Trimble joined him as he was making for the New House, with a genial smile, but a suspicious eye.

"The post's in," he remarked.

"I know."

"Did your postal-order come?"

"There's been some delay in the post,"

said Bunter, with a grunt. "For some reason it hasn't turned up. To-morrow morning, I expect. Did you get your remittance from Trimble Hall?"

Trimble nodded.

"Oh, yes!" he answered carelessly.

"A tenner?" exclaimed Bunter, his round eyes growing rounder behind his spectacles.

"Yes," assented Trimble. "I rather expected a pony, but the pater made it a tenner after all. He's getting rather close with money."

"I—I say, Trimble!" Bunter almost gasped. "My postal-order's sure to come in the morning. Could you lend me—"

"How much, old fellow?"

"Ten bob!"

"Why didn't you ask me ten minutes ago?" said Trimble regretfully. "I've just settled my bill at the tuckshop, and then Tom Merry borrowed what I had left—cleared me right out. It's really too bad, isn't it?"

Billy Bunter grunted, and rolled on to the New House without replying. As a matter of fact, Bunter and Trimble were well matched, and both of them were beginning to realise it.

Bunter found his study—Figgins' study—empty, which did not displease him. He intended to have an early tea before Figgins & Co. came in.

He blinked into the study cupboard, and his face brightened.

In five minutes he was seated at the table, and the cold rabbit that was intended to furnish a tea for four was furnishing a tea for one.

Figgins' supply of sardines followed it, and Fatty Wynn's cake.

The cupboard was in the state of the celebrated Mrs. Hubbard's when Bunter had finished.

He was feeling a little better now, though still, like Alexander, sighing for fresh worlds to conquer, when Figgins & Co. came tramping in, ruddy and hungry from footer.

"Hallo, here you are!" exclaimed Figgins cheerily. "Ready for tea, Bunter?"

"Yes, rather!" assented Bunter. "I was wondering when you fellows would come in."

"Well, here we are! Not a jiffy now," said Figgins, going to the cupboard. "Are you hungry, old chap?"

"Famished!"

"You might have taken a snack," said Fatty Wynn, who could feel for a fellow who was famished.

"Well, I have," said Bunter. "I've had a snack, but I'm ready for tea."

"Hallo! Where's that rabbit?" exclaimed Figgins, staring into the empty cupboard.

"And the sardines?" asked Kerr.

"And my cake?" boomed Fatty Wynn, staring over Figgins' shoulder with quite a horrified expression. "Some awful rotter has boned our grub!"

"I—I say, you fellows—"

Figgins & Co. looked at Bunter. They remembered that he had had a snack.

"D-d-did you—" stuttered Fatty Wynn.

"I finished the rabbit," said Bunter calmly. "It was a rotten small one."

"And the sardines?"

"Yes; I thought I'd better, as I was going to wait for tea till you fellows came in."

"You—you—you've scoffed my cake?" gasped Fatty Wynn.

"Well, it wasn't much of a cake," said Bunter. "But I managed to get it down. I'm not a particular chap."

"You—you—you—" stuttered Fatty Wynn, at a loss for words.

There were no words in the English language, or even the Welsh, that could have expressed his feelings at that

moment. Even German would not have done justice to them.

Bunter blinked cheerfully at the petrified Co. They were hungry from footer, and there was nothing for tea. Even the war-bread had vanished, almost to the last crumb.

"Well, what are we going to have for tea?" asked Bunter.

"You've scoffed our tea!" roared Figgins at last.

"You—you—you fat Hun!" howled Fatty Wynn.

"Fat!" repeated Bunter. "Well, I like that! I suppose you weigh about a ton!"

"Well, it can't be helped now," began Figgins pacifically. "But you'll have to learn not to bag all the grub in the study, Bunter. That's a bit too thick."

"I'm going to scalp him!" hooted Fatty Wynn.

"Shush!"

Bunter's lip curled in disdain.

"If you're worried about a measly old rabbit and a tin or two of sardines, I'll pay for them!" he said scornfully.

"Oh, dry up! You're not wanted to pay for them," growled Figgins. "Only go easy on other fellows' grub."

"As you make a fuss about such a trifling matter, I shall insist upon paying for the things!" said Bunter loftily.

"Let him do it, then!" hooted Fatty Wynn.

"We can get something or other at the shop, and we're all stony!"

"Oh, rats!" said Figgins uneasily. "The fat bounder's not going to pay us anything!"

"Rot! Let him stand a tea, as he's bagged our tummy!" exclaimed Fatty. "I'm hungry! Hungry. I tell you! We've missed tea in Hall!"

"Yes, let him pay up!" said Kerr, who was looking very keenly at the Owl of Greyfriars. "Why not?"

"What's the amount?" asked Bunter contemptuously. "Will five bob cover it?"

"Make it five bob," said Kerr quietly.

"Then I'll settle up—as soon as my postal-order comes."

"I guessed that was coming," said Kerr. "That's why I spoke. You don't intend to settle up, Bunter. You're not expecting a remittance at all; and you're a fat, lying, spoofing bounder!"

"Kerr, old chap—" murmured Figgins.

"I won't lick you, Kerr—" began Bunter.

"Oh, do!" said Kerr.

"But I shall certainly decline to remain in this study if I'm not treated with civility."

"Get out of it, then!" hooted Fatty Wynn.

"Oh, really, Wynn—"

"Shush!" said Figgins. "Look here, Bunter—"

Bunter gave him a lofty blink.

"You needn't speak to me, Figgins!" he said. "As you're not having tea in this study, I shall go to tea with my old pal D'Arcy. I must say I think this is a rotten House, and I shall be glad to change over!"

With that Bunter rolled out of the study, and slammed the door after him.

"I—I—I'll go after him and pulverise him!" hissed Fatty Wynn.

"You won't!" grinned Figgins. "Let's go along and see if Reddy's got anything for tea. After all, the chap's going to play footer for us on Saturday, and help us beat the School House!"

"Oh, blow footer!" growled Fatty Wynn. "I want my tea! Besides, the fat bounder has been fighting shy of footer, and I shouldn't wonder if he's no good at all!"

"Rats! You saw him play at Greyfriars."

"Well, he's a fat rotter, and doesn't

look like a footballer!" said Wynn. "He's too jolly fat to put up much of a game!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at now?" demanded the Falstaff of the New House.

"Nothing, old soul! Come and see Reddy!" grinned Figgins.

And Figgins & Co. started on a voyage of discovery in quest of tea, what time Billy Bunter was calling on his friends in the School House with the same object in view.

CHAPTER 6.

Very Short Commons.

"TWOT IN, dear boy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy smiled genially as a fat face and spectacles glimmered in the doorway of Study No. 6.

Blake and Herries and Digby did not look enthusiastic, but they contrived to smile.

Study No. 6 were about to have tea, and Blake & Co. did not need telling that that was why Bunter had given them a look-in.

Supplies were short in Study No. 6, however, the state of the money market being tight.

Blake wondered what Bunter would think of the tea.

"I thought I'd drop in, old nuts!" said Bunter affably. "I'm really a School House chap, you know. I feel more at home here. Kindred spirits, you know."

"That's right!"

"Figgins & Co. pressed me to stay to tea, but I felt bound to decline," said Bunter. "I told Figgins I was sorry, but I couldn't leave my pals in the lurch."

"Good man!" said Arthur Augustus approvingly. "I wish we had somethin' bettah to offer you, Buntah; but war-time, you know. I'm suah you don't mind."

"Not at all!" answered Bunter. "So long as there's good stuff, and plenty of it, you won't find me complaining."

"Oh, hai Jove!"

Blake & Co. wore rather curious expressions as they laid out the frugal tea-table.

There was bread; fortunately, no shortage of that. There was one tin of pilchards—a small tin. There was coffee—rather weak—plenty of water, but a limited supply of the stimulating bean. Such as it was, Bunter was welcome to share it.

Supplies might be limited, but the hospitality of Study No. 6 was unbounded. The question was, how Bunter would enjoy the hospitality without the supplies? Arthur Augustus felt a little concerned; though his concern would probably have been relieved if he had been aware of how exceedingly well Bunter had already done himself in the New House.

Bunter's expression, too, became rather odd as he blinked at the tea-table. He had led himself to expect that Study No. 6 was a land flowing with milk and honey.

War-time restrictions could be got round by a fellow with plenty of money, and as D'Arcy was the son of a wealthy nobleman Bunter did not see why there should be frugality in No. 6. Guss's great maxim of "Noblesse oblige" did not appeal to the Owl of Greyfriars in the least.

"Short commons—what?" remarked Bunter, as he took the tin-opener from Dig and started on the pilchards.

"Yaas, old fellow, wathah!"

"War-time, you know," remarked Blake.

"Oh, all serene!" said Bunter.

"Luckily, I'm not what you'd call a

hungry chap. I've always had rather a delicate appetite."

He opened the tin quite deftly, and turned out the pilchards into a plate. He sat before that plate, and took up a fork.

The Fourth-Formers watched him with curious looks.

"Pass the bread, Blake!"

"Oh, yes! Here you are!"

"Any butter?"

"Nunno."

"Never mind. I can rough it," said Bunter. "These pilchards are not bad. What are you fellows going to have, though?"

"Eh?"

"Not at all bad," went on Bunter.

"Is that coffee? I'll take a cup, please. I take both sugar and milk—plenty of sugar, please."

"Oh!" gasped Blake.

There were five lumps of sugar in the mustard-tin, which was all that remained of the study's supply. Bunter blinked at them.

"Sugar limited?" he asked.

"Yes-es."

"Then I'll have only one cup of coffee, please."

And Bunter cheerfully ladled the five lumps into his one cup of coffee, somewhat to the consternation of Study No. 6.

"You fellows don't take sugar?" he asked affably.

"Oh! Ah! Nunno!"

"Not to-day, at all events," grunted Herries.

"You're really better without it," said Bunter comfortably. "Sugar isn't what it used to be. Besides, you don't need sugar if you have plenty of honey."

"But we haven't any honey," said Herries.

"Ah! That's a mistake," said Bunter. "You should get it, you know."

"All sweetstuffs are rationed now."

"But you had time to lay in a supply before that," said Bunter. "It's only a question of money."

"Bai Jove!"

"That's hoarding," said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—" murmured Arthur Augustus, in distress.

"Well, isn't that hoarding?" demanded Herries, who was getting very restive, and had an expression on his rugged face that reminded his study-mates of Towser.

"What do you call it?"

"I am suah Buntah was only jokin'," said Arthur Augustus.

Bunter gave him a quick blink.

"Oh, of course!" he said. "I suppose you could see, Herries, that my remark was simply a joke?"

"Oh, was it?" grunted Herries.

"If you think I would hoard—" began Bunter warmly.

"Hewwies does not think so, old chap," said Arthur Augustus soothingly. But Herries did not speak. He gave a subdued snort.

"You fellows ain't eating anything," said Bunter, when the pilchards were gone. "Not hungry—what?" He rose from the table. "If you'll excuse me, I'll look in on Tom Merry. I'm really sorry I can't stay longer; but a chap has to portion out his time, as it were, when he's a great deal sought after. Ta-ta!"

And Bunter rolled out of Study No. 6, leaving a deep silence there—a silence that was more expressive than words.

The fat junior rolled along to the Shell passage, and looked in at Tom Merry's study.

The Terrible Three were at tea, and they gave Bunter a genial welcome.

"Trot in, old scout!" said Tom Merry.

"Had your tea?"

"Not yet," said Bunter. "I don't mind joining you fellows."

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"Sit down, kid," said Manners.

Bunter sat down. The study table was rather well supplied, as it happened, and Bunter blinked over it with great satisfaction.

He did not waste much time on conversation. He travelled through the provisions at express speed, and the Terrible Three, constrained by politeness, did not enter into competition with him.

The pot of home-made jam, from Tom Merry's old governess, Miss Priscilla, was untouched when Bunter arrived, and after he arrived nobody else had a chance of touching it. Quite odd expressions grew on the faces of the Shell fellows as the Owl of Greyfriars proceeded. He finished when a single crumb did not remain on the table.

"Time this blessed war ended, I think!" said Bunter at last. "I'm getting fed up with rations. Short commons once in a way ain't so bad; but short commons all the time get on a fellow's nerves. It's bad for the health. Don't you think so?"

"Ye-es!" gasped Tom Merry. "I—I suppose so."

"Not that I complain," said Bunter magnanimously. "I'm patriotic, I hope. A snack like this will see me through, if there's nothing better going."

"Oh!" said Lowther.

"You fellows finished?" asked Bunter.

"Ye-es."

"Well, I'll be getting along," remarked the Owl of Greyfriars, as it became clear that no fresh supplies were to be produced. "I've got to see Talbot."

He gave the Terrible Three a gracious nod, and rolled out, leaving them blinking at one another.

"Mum-mum-my hat!" murmured Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry burst into a laugh.

"Come to think of it," remarked Manners, "I don't envy Figgins & Co. their prize! I rather think it will be a good thing for this House if Bunter stays over there."

"I wonder how he gets on with Fatty Wynn?" grinned Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! What's that?" exclaimed Manners a minute later, as a loud roar came from the passage.

"Yaroooh!"

"You fat rotter! That's my marmalade!"

"Yoop!"

Bump!

The Terrible Three rushed into the passage.

CHAPTER 7.

Arthur Augustus Receives a Shock.

BILLY BUNTER was sitting on the floor clutching at his glasses, which had slid down his fat little nose. Over him towered George Gore of the Shell, his face red with wrath.

"What's the row, Gore?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Look at him!" roared Gore furiously. "Just caught him coming out of my study with my marmalade under his arm!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Lowther.

"Bunter, my fat pippin—"

"Yoop! Keep him off! Yaroooh!"

"My marmalade!" roared Gore. "The very last lot! And that fat pig—"

"Shush!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Here's your blessed marmalade. Don't make such a terrific row, old scout!"

The jar of marmalade had rolled along when Bunter sat down. Tom Merry picked it up.

"I say, you fellows, that's mine!" howled Bunter.

"What?" shouted Gore, in amazement and wrath. "You just brought it out of my study!"

"I—I say, you fellows—" Bunter scrambled up. "Look here, that's mine! I hope you don't think, Tom Merry, that I'd touch another fellow's marmalade?"

Tom Merry stared at him.

"Gore says you brought it out of his study," he answered.

"I happened to have it under my arm, because I'd stepped in to speak to Talbot," explained Bunter.

"You—you had it with you!" ejaculated Manners.

"Yes; exactly."

The Terrible Three fairly blinked at Bunter. It was only a few minutes since he had left their study, and they had seen no sign of marmalade about him while he was there.

Cadet Notes.

Did you make any resolutions for New Year and, if so, have you kept them? If you have not, I am going to suggest some resolutions for you. Let those boys who have not yet joined a Cadet Corps find out where the nearest Corps is, and if they are eligible, let them become members. If a boy joins now he will be able to make himself efficient during the winter months, so as to take his share of the larger duties in the summer. He will probably get a holiday in camp somewhere in the country, and is certain of some good exercise in the open air.

Some boys still appear to confuse the Cadets with the Regular Army. For their benefit we will repeat that a Cadet Corps is only for boys between the ages of 14 and 18, and takes up a little of their spare time only, and requires but a small subscription from its members. Most Corps teach Infantry Drill; some also give Machine-Gun and Engineering Instruction. Members wear uniform and learn to shoot. In the winter most of the training is done indoors in the evening, with occasional outdoor parades at the week-ends. In the summer most of the work is out of doors, and most Corps go away to camp for a short time. Any lad who does not belong to a Cadet Corps is missing a great opportunity of making himself healthy, smart, and efficient. It costs practically nothing, and its advantages are enormous, and we believe that it is only ignorance which keeps so many lads from joining. Any boy who would like to know the nearest Corps should write, stating age, etc., to the C.A.V.R., Judges' Quadrangle, Law Courts, Strand, London, W.C. 2.

Gore seemed speechless.

"You had it with you!" repeated Tom Merry blankly. "But you hadn't it with you in our study, Bunter."

Bunter started a little.

"Yes, I—I had," he stammered. "The fact is, I brought it over to—to offer you fellows for tea, but—but I forgot it."

"You lying Hun!" roared Gore.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Look here, Bunter—" began Tom.

"I say, you fellows, it's mine, you know! Gimme my marmalade, Tom Merry!" howled Bunter.

"But—but you couldn't have had it when you were in our study!" roared Monty Lowther. "We should have seen it if you had."

"I—I had it in my pocket."

"In your pip-pip-pocket?"

"Yes, of course!"

"A three-pound jar of marmalade in your pocket!" yelled Manners.

"I—I—I mean, I hadn't it exactly in my pocket!" stammered Bunter. "I—I really meant to say I should have had it

in my pocket if my pocket had been big enough. See?"

"Oh, my hat! And where did you have it, then, while you were in our study?" demanded Manners.

Bunter paused a moment. That really required thinking out.

"I—I left it out in the passage, now I come to think of it," he replied. "I dropped it, and forgot it."

"You didn't hear it drop?" asked Lowther sarcastically.

"Exactly—I didn't! I—I saw it as I came out, and picked it up again. See? Give me my marmalade, Tom Merry!"

"Well, my only sainted Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "Here's your marm, Gore."

George Gore grabbed the jar.

"It's mine!" howled Bunter.

"Don't be funny, old scout!" said Tom Merry. "I suppose this is some sort of a joke of yours, Bunter. Chuck it!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Bai Jove! What's the maffah?" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came along the passage. "I trust you fellows are not waggin' Buntah?"

"He jolly well ought to be ragged!" snorted Gore. "A chap who bags a fellow's marmalade, and tells lies about it—"

"Weally, Goah—"

"I appeal to Gussy!" said Bunter.

"Gussy, you remember that I had a jar of marmalade under my arm when I came into your study?"

"Bai Jove, I don't, Buntah!"

"You must have noticed it!" urged the Owl of Greyfriars.

"I should have noticed it if it had been there, Buntah," said Arthur Augustus innocently. "But it wasn't, deah boy!"

"Are you asking D'Arcy to tell lies for you?" howled Gore.

"I wegard that weinark as uttably wotten, Goah!" said the swell of St. Jim's severely. "Buntah is incapable of such a thing."

"He's capable of stealing grub and lying about it, anyway!" growled Gore. And he marched into his study with his recaptured jar.

Bunter gave it a mournful blink as it vanished from his sight. That marmalade was gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream.

Arthur Augustus gave him a rather doubtful look. Bunter was surprising him again.

"I say, you fellows, is that chap going to be allowed to keep my marmalade?" asked the Owl of Greyfriars reproachfully.

"Br-r-r-r!" was Tom Merry's reply. And the Terrible Three went back into their study. They had had enough of Bunter.

The fat junior went down the passage with Arthur Augustus, who was still looking puzzled and uncertain.

"You were an ass!" grunted Bunter discontentedly.

"Weally, Buntah—"

"Why couldn't you back me up?"

"B-b-back you up, Buntah!"

"Yes. The fellows would have taken your word if you'd said it was my marmalade."

"Vewy pwobably, Buntah; but I couldn't say it was your marmalade when it wasn't your marmalade, could I?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in blank astonishment.

"Oh, you're a duffer!" grunted Bunter. And he rolled away down the stairs, leaving the swell of St. Jim's staring.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. And then, after a moment or two, he murmured again, "Bai Jove!"

Then he returned to Study No. 6, with a very, very thoughtful expression upon his face.

CHAPTER 8.

No Footer for Bunter.

"CERTAINLY not!"

W. G. Bunter spoke in a tone of finality.

It was Wednesday, a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and a clear, cold afternoon, and naturally most fellows' thoughts were turning to football.

That afternoon Figgins' eleven was going to be put through its paces, and Figgins, of course, wanted Bunter in the ranks.

Bunter had been bagged by the New House chiefly as a rod in pickle for the School House when the House match came off on Saturday. Figgins had not forgotten the great form Wally Bunter had displayed in the great game at Greyfriars.

But, good as his new recruit was supposed to be, Figgins wanted him to practise as much as possible with the team. He looked on his new man as a tower of strength, and that consideration made him more patient with Bunter than he would otherwise have been.

But the fat junior's dislike to footer practice puzzled and irritated him. Wally Bunter had been as keen as mustard, but he seemed to have changed, somehow.

Figgins was pointing out to Bunter now that he was expected to turn out with the team that afternoon, and show what he could do. The fat junior's reply was a most emphatic negative.

"I don't care about it this afternoon," he went on, while Figgins & Co. glared at him. "Besides, I'm not at all sure that I shall play for you on Saturday, Figgins."

"What?" roared the New House leader.

"I haven't been treated well in this House," said Bunter. "I'm not treated well in the study. A fuss is made over a measly rabbit. There's a lot of jaw over a tin of sardines. I despise that kind of thing. It's mean!"

"Never mind the rabbit now," said Figgins. "I've got you down for my eleven on Saturday."

"Well, I may play," said Bunter. "I don't say I won't. But if I'm going to win matches for you I've got to be treated a lot more civilly. I tell you that plain."

"Look here——"
"As for practice," pursued Bunter, "I don't need it. Without any practice I could play the heads off anybody you've got here. I don't think much of St. Jim's footer."

"Wh-a-a-a-t?"

"Not in my style, you know; in fact, it's fumbling. You don't mind my mentioning it, I'm sure, but really, you know, your footer here is enough to make a cat laugh!" said Bunter agreeably.

"To mum-mum-make a kik-kik-cat laugh?" stammered Figgins dazedly.

"Yes; not at all the sort of game I'm used to. I play it, you know—not fool at it!"

"My hat!"

"If you don't mind my speaking plainly, Figgins, you're a pretty rotten player!"

"Am I?" gasped Figgins.

"Oh, yes; and Kerr is a dud—simply a dud!"

"I—I'm a dud!" breathed Kerr.

"And look at Wynn in goal!" said Bunter disparagingly.

"Well, what about me in goal?" asked Fatty Wynn, with an expression on his face that was quite extraordinary.

"Poor—very poor!" said Bunter cheerily. "You're too fat, for one thing!"

"Fuf-fuf-fat!"

"Yes; and clumsy!"

"Clumsy!" breathed Fatty Wynn.

"Like a blessed hippopotamus, if you want me to be quite candid!" said Bunter. "You'll have to improve, you know. If I join your eleven I can't be let down in the game. I shall want you to play up."

"Oh!" gasped Figgins.

"Stick to practice," said Bunter encouragingly. "If I have time I'll look in and give you some coaching. I may not have time, though. A fellow with so many engagements——"

"You're coming down to practice this afternoon?" gasped Figgins at last.

"Sorry; can't be done!"

Billy Bunter rolled off with that, and the Co. looked at one another.

"Don't play that fool at all, Figgy," advised Fatty Wynn. "I've told you already that he's too podgy to play."

"But we've seen him play!" exclaimed Figgins. "Didn't he play for us that

bagged him from the School House; and we should look asses if we didn't play him after all. Goodness knows, he's got no recommendation excepting his footer! If we've got to put up with the fat beast, it would be silly not to make use of him where we want him."

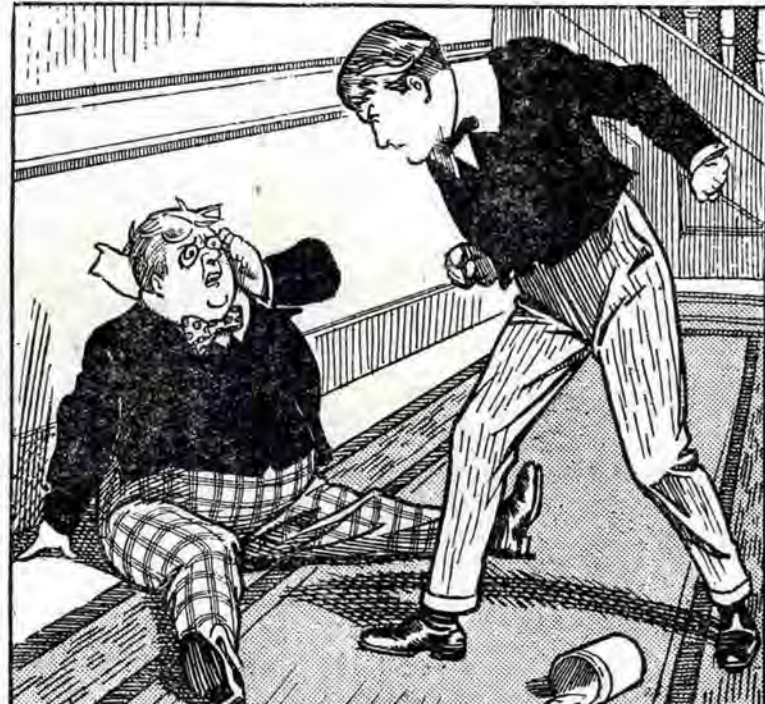
"That's so," agreed Kerr. "But it's queer how he steers clear of footer since he's been here."

"I'll jolly well make him practice!" exclaimed Figgins wrathfully. "Of all the conceited chumps——"

"Conceited chumps don't usually play good footer," remarked Fatty Wynn sapiently.

"He does," answered Figgins. "I wouldn't believe it if I hadn't seen him; but I have seen him do it, and that settles it."

"Well, I suppose it does. All the same——"



Gore the Bully!
(See Chapter 7.)

time at Greyfriars when Tom Merry was a man short for the match? He played up like a giddy international!"

"Well, so he did; but, all the same, I dare say that was only a fluke. Look at the fat idiot now!"

"Fathead!" answered Figgins. "It wasn't a fluke, and couldn't have been. He played up splendidly from start to finish, and practically won the match for us."

Fatty Wynn grunted.

He could not deny that Wally Bunter had played a wonderful game on that great occasion; and yet he felt he was right, and that the fat, self-satisfied Owl was no footballer.

How to reconcile those two things was rather a puzzle, though there would have been no difficulty in the matter if he could have guessed that Billy Bunter had taken his cousin Wally's place at St. Jim's.

But nobody at St. Jim's dreamed of that.

"We've got to play him," said Figgins decidedly. "That's why we

"A lot of the chaps have been growling at me about putting him in this eleven," growled Figgins. "They think he's no player, to look at him; and, goodness knows, he doesn't look like a footballer! But a chap can believe his own eyes, I suppose? He's going to play in the House match if I have to yank him to Little Side by his fat ears. After that he can go and eat coke!"

Figgins was in an exasperated mood, which was not surprising under the circumstances.

The New House chums had taken no end of trouble to bag Bunter for their House, and it had earned them a licking. They found him mendurable in the study, yet they put up with him. But all would have been in vain if he did not turn up trumps on the footer ground in the House match.

On that point Figgins was determined. Bunter had to play for his House.

There would never be another opportunity, so far as they went; for Figgins was aware that Bunter would be shifted

to the School House after a time. So long as the New House had him they were going to get the benefit of him.

And after that the School House could have him as soon as they liked; and certainly Figgins & Co. were not likely to weep when he shook the dust of their study from his feet.

But it was easier to determine that Bunter should practise with the team than to make him do it. When the New House footballers were ready to begin the Owl of Greyfriars had vanished.

Bunter was the biggest duffer at football that ever muffed a kick, but he was firmly persuaded that he was a first-class man.

The fact that he had been excluded from the Remove Eleven at Greyfriars he attributed to jealousy of his great prowess.

Still, he could not fail to be aware that fellows who saw him play had no desire to avail themselves of his services. Along with his conceit he had a great gift of cunning. He was fully resolved to enjoy the distinction of playing in a House match; and, in spite of his conceit, he realised that if Figgins saw him play Figgins would never have him in his eleven.

That was the chief cause of his disdainful attitude. Nobody at St. Jim's was going to see him play football till they saw him in the New House team for the big match, when it would be too late for Figgins to change his mind. For, whether it was jealousy of his powers or not, Bunter was aware that Figgins would drop him like a hot potato if he once saw him play.

It was necessary, therefore, to avoid the practice game of that afternoon, and Bunter avoided it by going out of gates. He had another attraction out of gates. Racke & Co. of the School House were going out, and the Owl of Greyfriars had calmly decided to attach himself to them.

In his few days at St. Jim's Bunter had learned something of Racke and his set.

In fact, there were few things that the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars did not nose out sooner or later.

Bunter wasn't shocked at the black sheep of the School House. The Owl rather prided himself on being a blade. It was the disastrous result of playing the gay dog that had made him so anxious to get away from Greyfriars, and leave the penalty for his cousin Wally to pay. But the fatuous Owl was ready to play the gay dog again.

When Racke and Crooke and Scrope strolled out of gates Bunter strolled after them, and he had been gone half an hour when the New House footballers went down to practice, and Figgins sought for him to round him up.

Figgins, naturally, sought him in vain.

The chief of the New House juniors was in a rather excited and wrathful frame of mind when he came down to Little Side without Bunter. He called to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was there with Study No. 6.

"Seen Bunter, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Figgins, in relief. "I believe he's dodging the footer. Where is he?"

"I weally do not see why he should dodge the footah, Figgins. Wally Buntah is wathah a keen footballah."

"Well, where is he, anyhow?" asked Figgins.

"I am sowwy I do not know his pwe-sent whereabouts, Figgins."

"You said you'd seen him!" roared the exasperated Figgins.

"Yaas, so I have. In class, you know."

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"Ass!" shrieked Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"I saw him in classes, fathead!" howled Figgins.

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"I have no doubt you did, Figgay, as you are in the same Form."

"Oh, you—you chump! Have you seen him since lessons?"

"I wufuse to be called a chump, Figgins."

"Have you seen that fat boulder since lessons?" yelled Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins, I wish you would not woaht at me. It thwows me into quite a fluttah when a fellow woaht at me."

"You—you—you—"

"Howevah, I have not seen him since lessons," added Arthur Augustus. And he walked away.

"Come on, Figgay," said Kerr, with a grin. "We'd better begin without the fat boulder. He's gone out, I expect."

"I—I'll burst him when he comes in!" growled Figgins.

"Fancy, a new kid, only came on Monday, and he's offered a place in the House team, and he turns up his fat nose at it! If he tries to dodge us on Saturday I'll—I'll—I'll—"

"Are we ever going to begin?" asked Redfern, with an air of martyr-like patience.

"Oh, get going, and be blowed!" snapped Figgins.

And the New House footballers got going without Bunter. That valued youth was otherwise engaged just then—very otherwise.

CHAPTER 9.

A Gay Time.

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Racke & Co. looked round. They had left Rycombe Lane, and crossed a field and entered an old barn, where the sportive youths expected to be free from observation.

Since Racke's man had cleared out of the neighbourhood the festive Aubrey had lost the headquarters where he had been accustomed to resort for a little game. But a little game was a necessity to a fellow of Racke's shady tastes. While the other fellows were more strenuously engaged, Racke & Co. were planning to enjoy a quiet game of poker in the barn.

Aubrey had introduced poker to his cheery set. It had the advantage that it was a much more reckless form of gambling than nap or banker.

The three black sheep stared grimly at Bunter as his fat form was framed in the doorway of the old barn. They were not glad to see him.

"Well, what do you want, barrel?" asked Crooke surlily.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Fourth Form fags not wanted here!" growled Scrope. "Cut it!"

"I'm not talking to you," said Bunter with dignity. "I simply wanted to ask Racke if he could change a banknote for me."

"I could," said Racke; "but I want my change. Ask somebody else."

"Well, you see, I've asked at the tuck-shop, but Mrs. Taggles couldn't change a ten-pound note," said Bunter. "I could ask my Housemaster, but old Ratty would be down on me, as likely as not, for having a tenner at all."

Racke & Co. exchanged a quick glance.

They had come there to gamble among themselves, but they were not at all averse from devoting some little time to relieving a new fellow of his pocket-money. If Bunter had a tenner he was quite welcome in that select circle so long as the tenner lasted.

Three agreeable smiles were turned on Bunter as if by magic.

"Well, I don't know that I could change it," said Racke. "I'm rather short of money to-day—only about seven or eight pounds about me."

Crooke and Scrope sneered. It was like Racke to remark that he was short of money when he had twice as much as either of them.

"Well, I dare say I can get it changed in the village," said Bunter. "You fellows going that way?"

"Well, you see—"

"I say, are they cards you've got there?" asked Bunter, blinking at Racke's hand. "I'll tell you what, you chaps! If you care for banker, or nap, I'm your man!"

Bunter's fat face did not betray that he knew perfectly well that the shady trio had come there for the especial purpose of playing cards. He preferred to let them suppose that he was an unsuspecting new fellow, with tastes like their own.

"Well, mum's the word," said Racke. "We were going to play poker."

"Ripping game!" said Bunter.

"Oh, you play it?" asked Crooke.

"Yes, rather! I learned it from Angel of the Fourth. He's a goey chap at Greyfriars," said Bunter.

"Never heard of him," yawned Crooke. "But if you'd like to take a hand, Bunter, you're welcome."

"Quite welcome," said Scrope. "I can see that you're a sportsman, Bunter."

"That's me all over!" answered Bunter. "I hope you fellows don't play for bob stakes, though. I'm accustomed to something rather big."

"No limit?" asked Racke.

"That's my style."

"We'll see you through, then."

Another quick glance was exchanged among the young rascals. It was tacitly agreed that they were to skin Bunter before their own game began.

The fat junior sat down on a beam, and Racke upturned an old bucket to serve as a card-table. Deal fell to Aubrey, and he handed round the cards, five to each.

Billy Bunter blinked at his cards. He knew the rules of poker, though he was a hopeless duffer at that game as well as at more manly games. His eyes glistened behind his glasses as he found himself in possession of four queens and an ace.

"Draw any?" yawned Racke.

Crooke and Scrope drew cards, but Bunter shook his head. With such a hand as that he knew it was best to "play pat."

The betting began with shillings, and Bunter dropped in one shilling. It belonged to Redfern, from whom he had borrowed it that morning.

The stake was raised to half-a-crown, and again Bunter came in, with a half-crown that had formerly been the property of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. After that Racke put in four shillings with a flourish. The three looked at Bunter.

The fat junior half-drew a pocket-book from his inside pocket, but let it slip back again.

"Can't cut up a tenner," he grinned. "I'll put in F.O.U.'s till the finish, and redeem them afterwards."

Racke nodded assent.

Billy Bunter scribbled "10s., W. G. B." on a fragment of an old letter and dropped it into the pool.

"My hat! You're going it!" remarked Crooke. "But I'll see you!"

And Gerald Crooke dropped in a red ten-shilling note.

His comrades followed his example, and Bunter followed on with a pound in paper.

Scrope passed, but Crooke and Racke continued. They grinned at one another.

Anyone less obtuse than W. G. Bunter would have divined that Racke had planted a good hand on him with the intention of drawing him on, having provided himself with a better one. But Bunter was too busy with his own game of spoof to realise that he also was being spoofed.

Pounds dropped freely into the pool, and Crooke passed out of the game, still grinning. The three were to recover their stakes and share the plunder afterwards, and Crooke and Scrope had only passed to keep up appearances.

Pound after pound dropped in, till Bunter had written paper to the value of ten pounds in the pool.

Then Racke called.
"Four of a kind," he remarked carelessly as he laid four kings and an ace face upward on the old bucket.

Bunter stared at the cards, and gasped.

Four kings, of course, beat four queens, and Racke had won the pot.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"What's yours?" smiled Racke.

"Quick - quick - queens!" stammered Bunter.

"Well, that was a near thing," said Racke agreeably. "You're a real sport, Bunter, to go in so deep on four queens. I rather think I take the pool."

"Oh, dear!"

Racke turned out the pool and counted up Bunter's paper.

"Nine-pounds-ten," he said coolly.

"Chuck over the tenner, dear boy, and I'll give you ten shillings change."

"The - the tenner!" stammered Bunter.

"Yes."

"Oh, I—I say, you fellows, I think that's D'Arcy calling me!" exclaimed Bunter hastily.

He jumped up and made for the door.

With a spring a good deal like that of a tiger Racke of the Shell was after him, and he grasped the fat junior by the shoulder and yanked him back.

"No, you don't!" he said grimly.

"You settle up first, my pippin!"

"Oh, really, Racke—"

"Trot out that tenner!" said Racke roughly.

"I—I say, you know, the - the fact is—"

"You fat swindler, pay up!"

"If you call me names, Racke, I shall decline to pay up!" said Bunter, with dignity.

"We'll see about that!" said Aubrey Racke.

"Now, then, are you going to hand over what you've lost, you dashed fat thief?"

"Be a sport, Bunter!" urged Crooke.

"You've lost, you know!"

Billy Bunter cast a longing look towards the doorway.

"I—I say, you fellows," he gasped, "I—I'm going to settle, of course. The - the fact is, I'm expecting a postal-order, and the—"

"What?"

"The minute it comes I'll settle up!" gasped Bunter.

"I—I mean, I'm expecting a tenner, you know, from one of my titled relations. The minute it comes I'll hand it over—"

"You'll hand over the one you've got about you, you fat rotter!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Crooke, as a sudden light dawned on him. "He hasn't got a tenner at all! He's been spoofing us!"

"What?" yelled Racke.

"Oh, really, you know—" mumbled Bunter feebly.

The truth dawned upon Aubrey Racke. That innocent question of Bunter's, as to whether he "could change a tenner," had been intended to give him the im-

pression that Bunter had a ten-pound note when he hadn't!

All the cash he had possessed—Redfern's shilling and D'Arcy's half-crown—was in the pool, and the fragments of paper with figures scribbled on them were worth their weight as wastepaper, and no more!

Racke of the Shell, who prided himself on being the sharpest customer and keenest bird at St. Jim's, had been taken in by this fat Owl as easily as a baby!

Indeed, if he hadn't taken the precaution of cheating Bunter he might have had to hand over hard cash, while Bunter was risking in the game nothing but fragments of old letters!

For a full minute Racke stared at Bunter with wrath gathering in his face, hardly able to believe that he had been taken in like this.

Then the storm burst.

"You—you—you fat thief!" he howled.

"You—you've got no money at all!"

"Oh, really, Racke! I—I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"I—I'll smash you!" roared Racke.

"Yaroooooh! Help! Fire! Murder! Yooooooop!"

Bunter hardly knew what happened in the next five minutes. In that brief space of time—which did not seem brief to him—he paid for all his sins.

He sat up in the barn and blinked after Racke & Co., who were walking away. He gasped and sputtered, and sputtered and gasped, and groped down his back for his spectacles, and groaned deeply.

When the enterprising Owl of Greyfriars tottered out of the barn he was feeling that life was not worth living. He limped home to St. Jim's with a gasp and a groan at every step.

Billy Bunter had set out for a sportive afternoon. He was not feeling sportive when he limped in, at last, at the gates of St. Jim's. The way of the transgressor had turned out to be hard!

CHAPTER 10.

Not Popular.

TOM MERRY & CO. had the pleasure—or otherwise—of seeing a great deal of Billy Bunter during the next few days.

Figgys's determination to get him along to footer practice gave the Owl a great deal of dodging to do.

He bestowed the honour of his company upon the chums of the School House to a considerable extent. As he confided to them, he was going to be a School House chap—as soon as his father was heard from.

His father, as a matter of fact, hadn't the faintest idea that William George was anywhere near St. Jim's. It was Wally's father Bunter referred to.

Wally Bunter's father was away from home on war-work, and it was some days before the Head received a reply from him. And that reply was only to refer Dr. Holmes to Mr. Penman, of Canterbury, who had sent Wally Bunter to school. So the Head had to write again; and, meanwhile, Bunter remained an inmate of the New House—heartyly sick of it, in truth, though not so sick of the House as the House was of him.

Mr. Ratcliff, when he deigned to notice Bunter's existence at all, generally did so with a snap, and the fat junior's podgy fingers were often smarting. Figgins & Co. barely tolerated him in the study; but the saving grace of being a good footballer—or being supposed to be one—saved Bunter from complete contempt there. What they would think of him after the House match was a very interesting question.

With Study No. 6 open to receive him, Bunter was quite anxious to be trans-

ferred, but for the present he was New House. Blake & Co. did not view the prospect with any joy. Even Arthur Augustus, perhaps, had some slight doubts as to whether Bunter would be enjoyable company in No. 6. But Arthur Augustus was not a fellow to go back on his word.

Meanwhile, Bunter spent a good deal of time in Study No. 6, which, as it happened, had the effect of making that study less and less keen to have him there permanently.

"That fellow Figgins is after me for footer!" he said, as he dropped in after lessons on Friday. "I've told him it's too dark."

"There is some light, Buntah!" remarked Arthur Augustus, who was getting tea. "Blake and Hewies and Dig have gone down."

"Let 'em!" replied Bunter. "I don't need all that practice, you know. You—ahem!—you've seen me play footer!"

"Yaas, wathah; and it was wippin'!"

"Footer's my strong point!" remarked Bunter, blinking at him. "Cricket, of course, I play well, and other games; but I must say I'm a dab at footer. It's really my game!"

"Yaas?"

"I'm not at all sure I shall play for Figgins on Saturday," said Bunter loftily. "His team ain't up to my form!"

"But weally, Buntah, you are bound to play for your House if you are wanted!"

"Well, I dare say I shall be good-natured!" said Bunter. "That's a fault of mine—I'm always too good-natured; always thinking of others, you know! Are you going to have tea now?"

"When Blake comes in, Buntah!"

"May as well begin now!"

"Blake is goin' to bwing in the gwulb, dear boy! There isn't much!"

"Blessed if I see what you go short for!" said Bunter. "You've got plenty of tin, and a chap with plenty of tin can always get round the rations, with a bit of gumption!"

"I twust, Buntah, that I shall nevali have that kind of gumption!" said Arthur Augustus sternly.

"Ahem! I—I mean, of—of course, you—"

"Bai Jove! I weally think I'll go down to the footah befoah tea! It is weally quite light!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Will you come, Buntah?"

"No fear! Figgins will nail me!"

"But why not do some pwactice, deah boy?"

"I don't need it!"

"Pwactice makes perfect, you know!" suggested D'Arcy.

"Oh, yes; but I'm perfect already, so far as footer goes!" explained the Owl of Greyfriars.

"Oh!"

And Arthur Augustus went alone. And he did not admit, even to himself, that he had gone in order to escape from Bunter's fascinating society.

Billy Bunter blinked round the study discontentedly. He blinked into the cupboard, found a jar of calves'-foot jelly there, and ate it—the jelly, not the jar; though really he looked as if he could almost have eaten the jar, too.

Then he went along to Tom Merry's study. The Terrible Three were out, and the cupboard door was locked.

"Suspicious beasts!" muttered Bunter in disgust. "Just as if they're afraid that a chap might be after their grab! Pah!"

He looked into Racke's study next, and found Racke and Crooke there. They scowled at him over the tea-table.

"Get out!" snapped Racke, reaching for a missile.

Bunter eyed him warily as he came into the study.

"I'm sorry to say, Racke, that you're booked for trouble!" he remarked.

"What do you mean, you fat chump?" growled Aubrey uneasily. Racke lived under a constant dread of his shady exploits coming to light. That was one of the drawbacks of being a merry blade.

"I've been thinking over what happened on Wednesday!" said Bunter. "I'm shocked at you, Racke!"

"What?"

"You were gambling, and you drew me into it—me, an innocent new chap!" said Bunter. "It was really disgusting, Racke! I wonder you can look me in the face afterwards!"

"Why, you—you—"

"I feel bound to ask the House-master's advice about it!" said Bunter. "You fat worm!" hissed Racke. "Does that mean that you are going to sneak?"

"I'm afraid it's my duty, Racke!"

"Well, go and sneak! And I shall deny the whole yarn!" said Racke. "Crooke and Scrope will bear me out!"

"I don't want to be unfriendly, old scout!" said Bunter. "The fact is, I'm prepared to stand by you as a pal! But I must explain how the matter stands! I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"A postal-order! It's been delayed in the post. Now, as a pal, I think you might lend me the ten bob, and take the postal-order when it comes. What do you think of the idea?"

Racke stared at him.

"If you treat me as a pal, of course, I'm prepared to stand by you," said Bunter. "But, mind, I expect to be treated well! That's only fair! If you like to lend me the fifteen shillings—Yaroooh!"

Whiz!

A cushion flew across the study, and caught Bunter under the fat chin.

The Owl of Greyfriars spun back into the doorway with a yell, and sat down there, hard.

"Give me that hassock, Crooke!" shouted Racke.

"Here you are!"

But Billy Bunter did not wait for the hassock; the cushion had been enough for him. He flew.

The hassock whizzed out into the passage after him. But Bunter was first, and he just escaped.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bunter, as he scuttled down the staircase. "Oh, crickey! The beast! Oh! Ow! Oh, my hat!"

Crash! The Owl of the Remove rushed into Grundy of the Shell, who was coming upstairs.

Grundy gave a gasp, and grasped the Owl by one fat ear. There was a dismal yell from Bunter.

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo, Tom Merry, you beast! Yow-ow!"

"Where are you running to?" demanded Grundy. "I'm not Tom Merry, you blind owl!"

"Yaroooh! Leggo!"

Grundy sat him down on the stairs, snorted, and went on. Bunter shook a fat fist after him.

"Yah! Beast! Come back, and I'll lick you!" he howled.

George Alfred Grundy swung round, and started back. According to the proverb, second thoughts are best; and on second thoughts Bunter decided not to lick Grundy. He scudded out of the School House instead.

His fat face wore a frown when he came into Figgins' study in the New House and found the Co. at tea.

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"Is that all there is for tea?" he snorted.

"That's all!" snapped Fatty Wynn. "There'd be more if you stood your whack, as any decent fellow would!"

"Oh, really, Wynn—"

"You could have tea in Hall, you know," suggested Kerr.

"I've had tea in Hall," grunted Bunter.

And he sat down to take the lion's share of what was going in the study. After tea Figgins referred to the subject of football.

"You've dodged footer practice all the week, Bunter," he said.

"Oh, don't worry!"

"You're playing for the House tomorrow," said Figgins, controlling his wrath. "I want you to put up a good game."

Bunter sniffed.

"There won't be a fellow there to touch me," he said. "I'll play—just to show you fellows what footer's really like."

"Well, if you can show us anything we don't know, we'll be glad to learn," said Figgins mildly. "But no dodging off after dinner! I may as well say that I shall keep an eye on you."

Figgins did keep an eye on Bunter after lessons the next day. But as it happened it was not needed.

The Owl of Greyfriars was quite ready to spread himself in a House match. When the junior footballers went down to Little Side Bunter went with them; and he rolled on to the field with an air of supreme self-satisfaction in his footer rig—looking as if he were on the point of bursting through at all quarters.

CHAPTER 11.

Bunter's Goal.

PHEEP!

Lefevre of the Fifth blew the whistle.

Two good junior teams were in the field. Tom Merry's eleven was good all through; and Figgy's eleven, like the egg in the story, was good in parts. The New House had a smaller number of players to choose from; but that deficiency, Figgins hoped, was made up by the bagging of that distinguished player Bunter. If Bunter put up such a game as Wally Bunter had played at Greyfriars he would certainly be a tower of strength to his side; and Figgins felt that, in that case, he could forgive him all his faults and failings.

There was a good crowd round the field to see the House match, and Bunter drew a good many glances. Fellows who had seen Wally Bunter play expected great things of him. Other fellows wondered what made Figgy so crass an ass as to play the Owl in the match at all. Certainly, as he stood blinking in the front line, he did not look much like a topping footballer.

Bunter had demanded the place of centre-forward, and Figgins had conceded it. The Owl of Greyfriars had a fixed belief that he looked the very thing, as he stood there, with his podgy nose elevated and a lofty expression on his fat face.

Figgins had suggested that he should remove his glasses for the match, in case of accidents; but Bunter declined. As a matter of fact, the Owl of Greyfriars would have been quite helpless without them—though probably that would not have made much difference to the quality of his footer.

The New House got away with a rush from the whistle, and Figgins' forwards bore down through the enemy—with the exception of the centre man. He laboured after the rest, puffing and blowing.

There was a yell from New House fellows round the ropes.

"Get a move on, porpoise!"

"Roll on, barrel!"

"Yah! Wake him up!"

"Bai Joro!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I weally thought Wally Buntah was a footballah! This is vewy remarkable!"

There was a long and hard tussle in the School House half, in which Bunter did not take part—excepting for one effort to take the ball away from Kerr, which fortunately failed. School House rallied, and drove the enemy back into their own territory, and a fat figure was strewn on the field behind them as they advanced.

It was Billy Bunter, gasping and grunting, and clutching around for his spectacles.

The School House pressed on, and the ball went in from Tom Merry's foot, and there was a delighted roar from School House partisans.

"Goal!"

Billy Bunter scrambled to his feet with the help of a grasp from George Figgins. Figgins was looking at him as if he would eat him.

"Bunter!" he gasped.

"Yow! Leggo!"

"Why don't you play up?" howled Figgins.

"Why don't you?" retorted Bunter.

"How can a chap play up in a gang of fumbler-like this? Call this football?"

"You—you clumsy, fatheaded Hun!" roared Figgins. "You've taken us in somehow! You can't play footer!"

"Fat lot you know about footer! Why, the Second Form at Greyfriars would cackle at this!" snorted Bunter.

"You—you—you—"

"Line up!"

Figgins controlled his feelings. He was amazed as well as enraged. For it was evident to the veriest tyro on the field that Bunter could not play footer—and it was on his football reputation that Figgins & Co. had bagged him.

And this was a House match—and Figgins had put that hopeless dud into the centre of his front line expecting huge things of him there!

The ball was kicked off again, Figgins suppressing feelings that were too deep for words. Bunter did not kick off; Redfern was shifted to centre.

Billy Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his glasses. The New House players had dropped him out of account; they played as if he were not there. But that did not suit Bunter. He was going to distinguish himself.

He rushed into the fray.

Tom Merry & Co. had brought the ball up to the New House goal. Redfern bagged it from D'Arcy, and was about to clear, when Bunter took him in flank.

As Reddy was not expecting an attack from one of his own side he was naturally taken by surprise. Bunter captured the ball, leaving Redfern in a dazed condition, and rushed it for goal—but, unfortunately, owing to short sight and general obtuseness, he mistook the goals, and rushed for the New House citadel. Before Fatty Wynn could realise that a New House forward was kicking for the New House goal, the ball shot in.

There was an almost hysterical yell round the field.

"Goal! Goal!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bravo, Bunter!"

"Well kicked! Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn seemed frozen. So did Figgins, for a moment or two. Then, as the whole field yelled, he rushed upon Bunter and grasped him by the back of the neck.

"Yaroo! Leggo!" howled Bunter. "There's a goal for you, you fumble! That's the way to play footer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cwikey!"

"It's our goal!" shrieked Figgins. "You've kicked a goal against us! You—you unspeakable toad! You fat villain! You cringing Hun! You—you—Get off the field! You—you yahoo, bunk!"

"I—I say, you fellows— Yow-ow-wooop!"

The enraged Figgins, with an iron grip on Bunter's neck, fairly ran him off the field, finishing with a powerful drive from a rather large football boot which landed the fat junior among the howling spectators.

Bunter did not appear on the field of play again; and the School House won the game, although the New House fellows played up desperately.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A terrific burst of merriment greeted Billy Bunter when he put his fat face into Study No. 6, where Tom Merry & Co. were celebrating their victory over their old rivals.

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, Buntah, you are a corkah, you know!"

"Oh, really, Gussy—"

"What a stroke of luck that the New House bagged you, Bunter!" roared Tom Merry. "Otherwise, I should have put you in my eleven! What an escape!"

"I shall be able to play for you now, Merry," said Bunter, blinking at him. "I'm not, going back to the New House—"

"I shouldn't think your life would be safe there if you did," chuckled Blake.

"I've just seen Railton," went on Bunter. "That blessed letter has come at last; and the Head says I'm to be in the School House. I'm jolly glad to have done with Figgins & Co. They're a rotten lot."

"Weally, Buntah—"

"I can't say I think much of their footer, either."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So you can put me down for your eleven, Tom Merry!"

"I'll put you down fast enough, and hard enough, if you come anywhere near my eleven!" grinned Tom Merry.

"Not taking any, my pippin! You've

played in your last House match here, Bunter."

"I hardly expected this jealousy from you, Tom Merry—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A roar of laughter drowned Bunter's further remarks. It was pretty certain that the Owl of Greyfriars would never figure in Tom Merry's eleven—but, at least, he was to be an inmate of Study No. 6 in the School House; there was no help for that.

Blake & Co. wondered how they would be able to stand him—and even Arthur Augustus wondered a little.

But Billy Bunter had no doubts. He fully expected to be popular—being a fellow of so much charm!

That evening his belongings were transferred to the School House; and he confided to Arthur Augustus that from that date they were going to be simply inseparable—to which Arthur Augustus replied, in faltering tones:

"Yaas, wathah!"

THE END

(Don't miss next Wednesday's Great Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's — "SPOOF!" — by Martin Cliford.)

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

THE MYSTERY OF CLIVE. By Ernest Levison.

C ARDEW'S an ass—an awful ass! Oh, I know very well it's been said before—lots of times. I don't claim any originality for the statement.

And I know he's a clever ass. All of us in No. 9 have brains, for that matter.

Clive's are the ordinary sort of brains—good enough, but not remarkable.

Mine are—well, if I said what mine really are I might be accused of swank.

But Cardew's are extraordinary. I don't mean in quantity, or yet exactly in quality, but in kind. They aren't a bit like those of anyone else I ever met.

It was a kind of shock to both Cardew and me when Clive got mysterious.

You see, he is not that sort of chap. Cardew can make mysteries out of almost nothing. But Clive is generally as easy to see through as a pane of glass.

So I was no end surprised when Clive answered my query as to whether he was coming along to the Grammar School ground to see us play Gay's crowd by saying that he had an engagement elsewhere.

He almost blushed when he said it, and looked quite confused. Cardew stared at him hard. Cardew says he has the eyes of a lynx, you know.

It was only as a matter of form I had put the question. I really had not felt any doubt about the answer. Clive and Cardew always do come along when I am playing, unless the match is too far off for followers of the team to be allowed.

Study No. 9 is not quite as well represented in the St. Jim's Junior Eleven as I consider it should be.

I am a fixture in the team, so I can't grumble personally. Cardew slacks, so he has no right to grumble; but I maintain that he might be in the first half-dozen if he would only take the game seriously.

But Clive—well, I know that Tom Merry honestly considers Lowther a shade better than our man; but I honestly don't. And there are one or two others about whom I have my doubts.

Clive never grumbles; he is not that sort. But I know that he does feel sometimes that watching a game in which he might be playing is rather dull work.

All the same, I was surprised when he said he was not coming along to see us put it over the Grammarians.

"Got an engagement, Sidney?" said Cardew sweetly. "Oh, good! I'm tired of spectatin', y'know. I'll toddle along with you."

Clive really blushed then.

"Sorry, old chap!" he mumbled. "But—Oh, well, I can't take you, and that's all about it."

Cardew wagged a reproving finger at him. "Naughty, naughty!" he said.

"You silly fathead! What do you mean?" roared Clive.

"Cherchez la femme!" replied Cardew, looking ever so knowing.

"You potty idiot! You may trot round looking for girls—"

"I am glad you say 'may,' Sidney, for you must admit that, as a matter of fact, I don't. It is true that they sometimes pursue me. But my fatal beauty, my extraordinary fascination—these things are misfortunes, not faults. And it is hard to be reproached with one's misfortunes—hard, indeed!"

"You chump! I'm not reproaching you with your beauty or your fascination—never knew you had them, and don't believe it now. And if you don't run after girls I believe it's only because you're too slack and lazy—"

"Not because he has your extremely proper views on the subject, Clive," I put in, grinning.

"Well, I do think it's rot for chaps of our age. Look at Gussy, now—"

"But you an' I an' Gussy are not all the same age, dear boy," said Cardew, looking quite serious.

"Ass! There isn't six months' difference between any two of us!"

"Years, old gun—decades! Gussy is about twelve, for any practical purpose. You are—shall we say a rather youthful thirteen? I—I am forty, at least, an' beginnin' to feel old age creepin' upon me like a giddy thief in the night, y'know."

"Rot! You know what I mean. All that sort of thing is all very well at its right time; but I don't expect to have any time to spare to fall in love before I'm twenty-five at least," said Clive.

"An' the image thinks that fellows fall in love in their spare time!" gibed Cardew. "Why, Sidney, dear, innocent lad, a chap in love positively hasn't any spare time! It's all taken up with runnin' after the fair one an' meditatin' upon her extraordinary perfections—see?"

"Rot!" snapped Clive again.

"But I really—"
"Succumbed to the shafts of the archer," Cardew said to me later, when Clive had gone out.

"Eh? Succumbed to what?" I asked, not catching on.

"Don't you ever read the classics, dear boy?"

"Only when I have to."

"Even that should have been enough to put you wise to Cupid with his bow—Cupid, son of Venus—called Eros by the Greeks."

"Oh, that piffle!" I said. "Chuck it, Cardew! Clive is about the last chap I know to get potty about a girl."

"Ernest, ingenious youth, are you not aware that it is just the very last chap likely to fall in love who does it—souses in right up to his giddy neck?"

"Rot! Why, by that I might go doing it!"

"I can think of nothin' more extremely probable!" drawled that silly ass.

He was all wrong, of course. Don't I fancy I can see myself? Not much!

And Cardew did not really believe it of me. But he stuck to his notion about Clive.

II.

"I DESIRE the inestimable privilege of your company this afternoon, cousin George," said Cardew to Durrance an hour or two later.

Durrance is a level-headed chap in most ways; but Cardew can lead him into playing the fool sometimes. Durrance is no end fond of Cardew—partly, I suppose, because he had no people of his own till it was found out that he was Commander Durrance's son, and our silly ass's cousin.

"Right-ho?" said Durrance. "Are we going to see our chaps smash up the Grammarians?"

Cardew yawned.

"Nothin' so dull an' trite, dear boy," he answered languidly.

"I don't call that dull, you know."

"Tot homines, tot sententia," said Cardew.

He will trot out this classical stuff when the fit takes him, though he's always getting into rows with Latham for not preparing his constricts. When we have Cicero to do he will stick his head into the "Æneid," and gas about old Publius Virgilius Maro being a great poet; but when it's the Virgil that ought to be done he reads O. Henry or Mark Twain.

"Eh?" said Durrance.

In the Fourth we don't let on that we understand any Latin at all outside the hours of classics and Latin. Of course, Cardew is an exception to that, as to all other rules. But I've known him to pretend that he could not translate "Homo sum" when it happened to suit him to take the usual attitude.

"Let every galoot think as he durned well

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pleases. That's an up-to-date translation," Cardew explained.

"Well, where are we going?" inquired Durrance.

"My dear man, I don't know in the very least!"

Durrance stared, as well he might.

"But—"

"I know what we are going to do. Whither it will lead us is another matter, oh, my cousin!"

"I see," said Durrance.

But he didn't, and Cardew saw that he didn't.

"We are going to follow the dear Clive, cousin George."

"Eh? Follow him where? Do you mean go with him?"

"Cousin, cousin, there have been times when I have suspected you of intelligence! I regret to say that those times must now be consigned to the limbo of the past."

"You do talk such silly rot, Ralph!"

"On the contrary, all my utterances are concise, perspicuous, and—"

"Now you're talking like Skimmy!"

"Am I, by Jove! That won't do. Let me try a fresh line. How, cousin George, could we follow Clive an' at the same time go with him?"

"Ask me another! What ticks me is what you should want to follow the chap for."

"That is an easy one. Clive confesses to a mysterious engagement this afternoon."

"I say, you know, Cardew, we can't go butting in like that!"

"For Sidney's own good, dear George—for his own good, y'know. Hang it all, man, what's the good of your bein' named George if you can't be pious an' interferin'?"

Durrance stared again.

"George is a good boy's name—I don't know why. I can't argue the matter. I should find myself up against Georgius Quartus, some time the Prince Regent, who was not the very cleanest of potatoes. But there were George Washington an' George Herbert—holy George Herbert—you've heard of him, old bean?"

"I haven't, and I don't want to. I want to know what all this rot about spying on old Clive is."

"Don't call it spyin', George dear! Let us say scelin' that the dear youth doesn't get into mischief."

"Rot! Clive isn't that sort."

"Should you be surprised to hear, cousin George, that the innocent Sidney was in love?" yawned Cardew.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chorled Durrance.

It struck him as funny for the moment.

But then he saw the other side of it.

"If you mean that he's going to meet a girl, I'm dashed if I'm going to dog him!" he said.

"But surely you don't agree with his doin' such things, George? Our Sidney—our sweet, ingenuous youth, who might almost be a George himself, so high does he—"

"Oh, cut out all that rot, Ralph! It's a jape you're after, I know; but somehow I can't quite see it your way."

But in the long run Durrance was induced to see it Cardew's way. Of course, he knows how really chummy Cardew and Clive are; but I fancy the real reason why he gave in was because he was jolly sure Cardew was wrong.

III.

"LOOK here, Cardew, I must go," said Clive impatiently.

We had already gone off to the Grammar School ground, and most of the Fourth and Shell had gone with us. Skimmy was left behind, likewise Baggy and Mellish, and a few more slackers and rotters. But Clive must have been rather surprised to see that Durrance had not gone, and he may have felt so about Cardew, though by this time he ought to have given up being surprised at anything Cardew does or doesn't.

Cardew had kept him talking—about nothing in particular. Now the cool boulder asked:

"Go? Where to, old top? You're not playing, are you?"

"Tom Merry asked me to be reserve, but I told him I'd rather not," replied Clive.

He flushed slightly as he spoke, and it occurred to Durrance that he rather evaded the question whether he was playing footer.

Durrance is pretty keen, you know.

"You amaze me, Sidney! Why, if you had taken on that honourable position there might have been—let's see—perhaps one

chance in ten thousand of gettin' a game. The dear Levison might break his neck on the way there—"

"I don't want Levison to break his neck just to give me a game, you cheap ass!" snorted Clive. "Besides, if that happened, the match would be off, of course."

"Don't be so dashed literal, Sidney, old gun! A minor accident, now—"

"I'm not keen on one chance in ten thousand," grunted Clive. "It's hardly good enough. I'm going, Cardew, so leave go of my jacket!"

"But where to?" persisted Cardew.

"Didn't I tell you I had an engagement for the afternoon, dummy?"

"Oh! Ah! Yes, now that you mention it, you did casually refer to somethin' of the kind."

"Casually refer! Why, we argued about it for ever so long, you maniac!" hooted Clive.

"That's a fallin' of yours, my boy—that tendency to unnecessary argument," said Cardew sweetly. "You should try to overcome it. It may grow upon you."

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Clive only grunted at that.

"Would you care for the company of myself an' cousin George?" asked Cardew.

"No, I jolly well wouldn't!" roared Clive. "No offence, Durrance, old chap; but this lunatic knows already that I don't want anyone with me."

And with that Clive hurried off.

"Clear case, eh, Georgie?" said Cardew.

"Hang it all, don't call me Georgie, ass! I draw the line at that," said Durrance.

"Clear case of what?"

"Goin' to meet a charmer—eh, what?"

"I don't a bit believe it."

"Well, well! Nous verrons. Anyway, I've made the dear Sidney so late in startin' that he will ride at a breakneck pace an' never give a glance behind. Which, as the sleuth-hounds will be upon his trail, is all to the good—eh, dear cousin George?"

Clive rushed for the bike-shed, ran his machine up to the gates, jumped on, and was off in the direction of Wayland in about two twos.

But Durrance thought that it was queer he should carry a bag on his handle-bars if he were really going to meet a girl.

Cardew and Durrance got out their bikes and pursued Clive over Wayland Moor.

Clive never once looked round. So far Cardew was right.

But Durrance felt pretty sure that he was wrong otherwise.

Cardew always pretends that he doesn't like riding hard; but he rode hard enough then. It was about as much as Durrance could do to keep up with him.

When they got to Wayland Cardew made out that he was frightfully pumped; but he wasn't a bit really, Durrance says.

"By Jove! This is worse than my blackest dreams!" exclaimed Cardew.

And even Durrance was rather taken aback. For Clive had wheeled his machine into the yard of a pub, and they saw him go into the place by a side door in the yard!

I say a pub, but that's not quite fair. It was a highly respectable hotel, and within a minute Durrance had seen through it all.

For a small crowd of other fellows, from fifteen to eighteen or so, all with bags, passed into the hotel by the front door.

"Footer team, gone in to change," said Durrance. "Same with Clive, I'll bet. He's playing footer here this afternoon, though why he wanted to make a mystery about a simple thing like that ticks me, I'll own."

"What an unimaginative mind you have, cousin George!" said Cardew, in scornful sorrow.

"Right-ho, chappie! We shall see," said Durrance.

Two or three more fellows went in, all ready togged for the game.

"Somp of the local team," said Durrance. "The others would be the visiting side, and this place is the team's headquarters. Nothing in that. But I suppose your theory is that Clive is spoony on some barmaid here. Got gifts for her in that bag—ha, ha!"

"Wait an' see, my infant!" said Cardew oracularly.

"Meanwhile, we might put up our bikes," Durrance remarked. "If old Clive's playing in a game here we may as well watch it, though I'd rather have seen the Grammar School match, I'll own."

IV.

CLIVE came out with a good-looking fellow two or three years older than himself just as the two returned from stabling their machines.

He did not see them. They followed.

And within three minutes something happened that made Durrance doubtful, and Cardew even more cocksure than ever.

A very pretty girl, fair-haired and blue-eyed, stopped and greeted the two—or, rather, greeted Clive, for she shook hands with him, while she only gave his companion a nod.

"The charmer! Nice, too, cousin George!" said Cardew. "Ah, see! The other fellow feels himself in the way. He's going on."

It was even so. Clive's companion quickened his pace, and left the two, while Clive and the girl walked on more slowly.

"Now, what saith the sapient cousin George?" asked Cardew.

"Well, it looks a bit like it," admitted Durrance. "But I wouldn't be dead sure, even now. A fellow can walk by the side of a girl without being in love with her, I suppose?"

"Can he, by gad?" returned Cardew sceptically.

"Well, can't he?" said Durrance impatiently. "You couldn't. I dare say—you're a bit of an ass, Ralph—but I could."

"Clive couldn't though—not a girl like that," said Cardew solemnly. "It would be worse for him than for Gussy. Gussy's had the disease before. Georgie, I have an idea!"

"It's sure to be something mad," said Durrance doubtfully.

"You disappoint me. I thought you were an admirer of mine."

"Oh, rats! What's the brilliant idea, anyway?"

"I am going to save Clive!" replied Cardew dramatically.

"Chump! I can't see what he needs saving from."

"From that siren, dear boy."

"Well, what's the gadget?"

"That you will see presently."

Durrance was interested—and mystified. He remonstrated when Cardew led him in the

opposite direction from that which Clive and the fair lady had taken.

"We don't know where they are going," he said. "And I want to see Clive play. That will be better value than your fat-headed ideal!"

"They are going to the Sports Ground, of course!" answered Cardew. "I am not a stranger in Wayland. Come on, Georgie-Porgie!"

"Oh, you blithering idiot!" groaned Durrance. But he followed.

Cardew led him to a shop where theatrical costumes were sold or let on hire.

"Could you—er—transform me into a fairly presentable young lady?" he asked the proprietor.

The man looked him over critically.

"With a little make-up, sir, I could turn you into quite a handsome one," he said, without the quiver of a muscle in his solemn face.

"An' my friend here?" asked Cardew. "Of course, in his case there are natural disadvantages to contend with, y'know, but—"

"Not for Joseph!" snapped Durrance.

"You mean for Georgie, don't you, dear boy? Well, I let you off. You shall be my devoted escort. But in that capacity, I warn you, you will have to fade out of the picture the moment I say 'Vanish'! For you, Georgie dear, would give the giddy game away."

"We'll see about that," said Durrance.

He waited in the shop while Cardew went into a back room.

He had been there twenty minutes or so when a girl came out, and stopped before him.

"Oh, you duck!" she said. "I really must kiss you!"

Durrance admits that he very nearly cut and run at that. But before he could make up his mind the drawing voice of Ralph Reckness said:

"On second thoughts, no! Cousin George, was your washin' this mornin' quite on the customary scale of thoroughness?"

"You awful ass!" gasped Durrance. "You don't think I'm coming along with you like that, do you?"

"No, Georgie—no! You will come as the very ordinary schoolboy you are. I have given up hope of any transformation of you into the nice, modest sort of maiden you see before you!"

"That's as well," said Durrance, "for I wouldn't make a fool of myself like that for an admiral's pension! And as for the modest—haug it all, Ralph, you look beastly fast, if you ask me. That chap's overdone the paint-and-powder bizney."

But Cardew was quite satisfied with himself—habit of his, by the way. And, somehow, he persuaded Durrance to come along with him to the Sports Ground. I fancy the curiosity Durrance felt helped to make the persuading easier.

Cardew would not say what he intended to do. It was easy to guess that it would be something pretty wild; and Durrance seemed to remember having heard that there were penalties for male persons who wore female clobber in public.

But Durrance went along. And I think that I should have done the same had I been there.

— — —

WAYLAND SWIFTS were the team Clive was playing for, and their opponents were a side from Westwood. It was a good, clean, fast game, and Clive, at centre-half, put up a first-class show.

But all that does not matter much to the story. I am not going to describe the match. It would be more to the purpose for me to tell you just exactly how, some miles away, we put it across Gordon Gay & Co. to the tune of four to two.

(Yes—I think not! But Levison kicked the last two goals for us—jolly good ones, both of them; and I suppose this is really what he wanted to get in.—T. M.)

At half-time the score was two all—at Wayland, that is, not at Rylecombe—and when Clive came off the field he went straight to the young lady with whom he had walked to the ground.

Durrance really thought then that it was a case!

"Vanish!" said Cardew, in a stage-whisper. Durrance did not exactly vanish; but he hung back. He would have done that, anyway, without being told.

Cardew, with a flutter of skirts—Durrance says—and a ghastly leer—I should say—swept up to Clive and the girl.

"Oh, Sidney, Sidney, my own, have I found you at last?" he squeaked.

(He denies soacking. He says he didn't

leer—it was a look between smiles and tears that he gave Clive. He was playing the part of the deserted sweetheart, you know.)

Clive went as red as a beetroot.

"Look here, you know, you're making a silly mistake!" he said confusedly. "I don't know you from Adam!"

"The young lady seems to know you, though," said the fair girl.

She smiled, as if a good deal amused. But Clive wasn't amused at all.

"Oh, Sidney—darling Sidney—"

"Gerraway!" howled Clive.

Then if that ass Cardew didn't fall on his neck before everybody!

"Oh, my hat! Stop it! You're making a mistake! You must take me for someone else! Look here, I don't want to be rude to a girl, but—"

"No mistake at all, Clive, old bean!" breathed Cardew in his ear. "But I fancy the fair charmer will be rather off you after this, y'know."

"Cardew! Oh, you silly ass!"

And then Clive burst into a roar of laughter. The people round must have thought him hysterical. But he wasn't—not a bit of it!

Our Sidney is not a dull person, for all Cardew may say when he is ragging him. He saw through the game directly Cardew said that.

And he turned to the girl.

"Mrs. Wilnot," he said, "you're partly responsible for this. Let me introduce my chum Cardew, who has been idiot enough to dress up as a girl to—well, I suppose it was to—er—to—thought he could make me out as a kind of a gay deceiver, you know, and choke you off me!"

Durrance came up in time to hear the girl's silvery laugh and to catch her reply.

"Really, your chum Cardew seems to have taken a lot of trouble quite needlessly, Mr. Clive!" she said. "I wonder what my husband would say! But Mr. Cardew makes such a charming girl that in your place I should insist upon his maintaining his role until the end of the match, at least."

But that did not suit Cardew. No, he wasn't taken aback. You don't know him, if you think that likely—anyway, if you think it likely he would show it. But he hurried off to the pavilion, and got out of his girl's clobber, and made it all up in a parcel. He had his own things on underneath, of course.

And I'm hanged if he didn't go back to Mrs. Wilnot as bold as brass, and stand by her side during the whole of the second half, and talk to her as if he had known her for years! Durrance said he seemed to forget that he had neither cap nor overcoat in his enthusiasm. But I fancy it was not really so much enthusiasm as his way of brazening the thing out.

Wayland Swifts won by three goals, and Clive showed up well from first to last. And on the way home he told Cardew and Durrance all about it.

"You remember we played against them last term?" he said. "Gray—that's their skipper—chap you saw me with—and I happened to get yarling, and I let out that I was only playing as a reserve, and he said that they'd be glad to have me in their team when I had nothing else on. So I played for them a fortnight ago—when Levison was at Westwood with the team, and you'd gone off on some potty bizney of your own, ass! And I was keen to play to-day, because the return with our fellows is next week, and if I don't play for St. Jim's I want to play for the other side."

"On your form to-day," said Durrance, "you ought—"

"Oh, I'm not grumbling! I know Merry's absolutely fair. But I should like to show him I'm a trifle better than he thinks me."

"But all this doesn't explain the charmin' Mrs. Wilnot," said Cardew.

"She? Oh, there's no need to explain her, is there? Gray took me home to tea with him last time. She's Gray's married sister; her husband's in the Army, and married in France. She was interested in me because I'm South African, and so's he, and after the war she's going back with him to live there. You potty idiot! She's ten years older than I am!"

"That's no odds!" drawled Cardew. "Ask Gussy! An' she doesn't look it!"

"Married, too!" snorted Clive.

"H'm! That's not much odds, either!" replied that ass Cardew.

But, of course, he did not mean that. He only wanted to shock Clive and Durrance. That's Cardew's way.

We called him "Miss Cardew" for a week or two afterwards. But it fell flat. The bouncer didn't mind a bit!

THE END.

NOTICES.

Correspondence, etc., Wanted by—

S. Inglis, 29, Tinsley Street, Liverpool, wants members for correspondence club. Stamped addressed envelope. New system.

S. P. Hannan, 6, Bell Street, Newsoms Road, Huddersfield—with readers, 15-17, preferably in Yorkshire.

Edward H. Edwards, 117, Constantine Road, Hampstead, N.W. 3, wants readers, about 17, to co-operate in amateur magazine.

Ernest T. Acott, 57, White Lion Street, Angel, Islington, N.1, wants to hear from readers anywhere to form a club, take charge of foreign branches, etc. Stamped addressed envelope.

D. Rutter, 38, Charnminster Road, Bournemouth, Hants, with readers abroad re illuminating and travelling.

C. Poscia, 75, Glenferrie Road, Glenferrie, Victoria, Australia—with readers, 11-13, will join correspondence club.

Miss P. S. Gardner, Beverley, Victoria Street, Roseville, New South Wales, Australia—with another girl of different country, 15-16.

E. A. Fridmore, Main Road, Misterton-cum-Walcote, near Lutterworth, Leicestershire—members wanted to start a club with Colonial branches.

Miss Edna McGrath, Yarunga, O'Sullivan Road, Woodlaura, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia—with girl readers, 18, in United Kingdom, America, and Canada.

Wm. Forsyth, 23, Friars Close, Felling-on-Tyne—with readers, 16-18, keen on going on stage.

A. P. Wyfrow, 417, York Road, Waudsworth, S.W. 15—with readers interested in chess—lamps.

A. E. Duncan, 25, Beechfield Street, Chesham Hill, Manchester, wants more members for stamp exchange; overseas readers specially invited.

M. Bagnor, 25, Salisbury Street, Long Eaton, Derbyshire, England, asks Dave Duncan, Albert Park, Australia, to write. No reply came from last letter, which must have been lost.

Harry Gibson, 1, Eleanor Street, Hall Lane, Armley, Leeds—with readers interested in Meccano.

Patrick Moore, 7, Artane Cottages, co. Dublin—with readers anywhere.

T. H. Brazier, 54, Institution Street, Woodhouse, Leeds, wants cigarette-cards—Gallagher's War Series, giving Roy. Capt. Addison, V.C. S.C.F. 1s. offered.

H. M. Norris, 221, Westcombe Hill, Blackheath, S.E. 3—with readers anywhere.

Miss Gladys Dove, Chandog Lodge, Ellenborough Park, Weston-super-Mare—with girl readers, 17-18.

Thomas Newson, 50, Laburnum Street, Kingsland Road, London, E. 2—with any reader with foreign stamps for sale. Best prices for stamps in good condition.

G. W. Blamphin, care of James Bacon & Sons, 17-19, Baanett Street, Liverpool—with readers, 14, anywhere.

Wm. Leechman, 25, Park Lane, London, W. 1—with readers interested in amateur theatricals.

F. Wirtly, 12, Tavistock Place, W.C. 1, wants members for his correspondence club—amateur magazine. Stamped addressed envelope.

Basil G. W. Bailey, 24, Reynard Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester—with foreign and Colonial readers.

W. Stubbs, 13, Sandmere Road, Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W. 4, wants members, 14-16, for stamp club; Colonialists specially invited. Stamped addressed envelope.

Miss Ailsa Hay, Blackwood Road, Bunbury, Western Australia, will be glad to hear again from the driver in the R.E.A., France.

J. W. Connolly, 203, Westgarth Street, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia—with readers, 14-15, in England.

Eddie Davidson, Elmfield, Haydon Bridge, Northumberland—with readers, 12-13, anywhere.

C. B. Arahall, 30, Louis Street, Redfern, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia—with readers anywhere. Wishes to obtain back numbers.

F. Paweusk, care of Messrs. J. W. Jagger & Co., Main Street, Port Elizabeth, South Africa—with readers in England.

G. Duckett, 33a, Edgwick Road, Foleshill, Coventry—with readers anywhere.

Max Nochimovitz, P.O. Box 129, Onitshoorn, Cape Province, South Africa—with readers, 12-14, anywhere.

G. H. Blewett, 1, Balsam Street, St. John's, Newfoundland—with readers in New Zealand, Tasmania, Australia, and Africa. All letters answered.

BUNTER OF THE NEW HOUSE.



BUNTER AND BAGGY.

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Wednesday:

"SPOOF!"

By Martin Clifford.

Next week's story is positively gorgeous. I laughed over it till I almost cried.

Bunter plants himself upon No. 6, thanks to the weakness of Gussy.

No, that's hardly fair.

There is something much higher than weakness in Gussy's politeness.

Billy Bunter is Wally to St. Jim's; and Wally had done Gussy a service, and Gussy liked Wally very much.

So Billy gets into No. 6, though already he had shown pretty plainly the cloven hoof.

And Billy is got out of No. 6—got out by one of the most elaborate games of spoof ever played at St. Jim's.

I am not going to tell you all about it here; but I don't mind letting you know that Baggy Trimble and Mellish come into it on one side, and on the other, besides Blake & Co., the Terrible Three and the chums of No. 9.

The game is a game after Cardew's own heart, and he takes a most effective hand in it.

Don't on any account miss this story!

WALLY BUNTER AT GREYFRIARS.

And don't miss, either, the fine stories appearing in the "Magnet," in which you can read how Billy's cousin, Wally Bunter,

who ought to have gone to St. Jim's, fares at Greyfriars, loaded down, like the scapegoat of old, with sins not his own!

We have never had anything in the two papers quite like this double Bunter series—never, to my mind, anything better, if anything as good.

AN UNFOUNDED COMPLAINT.

A Welsh boy, signing himself "Cymro Glan," writes from Manselton, Swansea, to complain that there is no Welsh boy at St. Jim's. He has been reading the GEM for over two years, and not once has he seen a Welsh name appear in it!

Rub your eyes, "Cymro Glan," and look out for the name of David Llewellyn Wynne!

YOUR EDITOR.