



The Bunter Cup!

A New and amusing complete story of the Chums of Greyfriars, specially written for the "Holiday Annual"

By FRANK RICHARDS

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Bunter Takes the Risk!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"Scat!"

"I'm expecting——"

"Bosh!"

"A postal order——"

"For goodness' sake, Bunter, chuck it!" urged Bob Cherry.

"By the very next post!" said Billy Bunter firmly. "Now, which of you fellows is going to lend me five bob till the post comes in? Don't all speak at once!"

Harry Wharton and Co., of the Greyfriars Remove, did not all speak at once. They did not speak at all.

The Famous Five were gathered in No. 1 Study, discussing a subject of far greater importance than William George Bunter.

It happened—as it had happened before, and might happen again—that the finances of the Remove Football Club were at a low ebb.

This was a matter that required discussion, attention, and adjustment; and naturally Harry Wharton and Co. were not interested in Billy Bunter and his celebrated postal order.

Billy Bunter stood in the doorway of No. 1 Study and blinked at the juniors through his big spectacles. As no reply was forthcoming, Bunter went on:

"I say, you fellows, I hope I'm not interrupting you——"

"You are!" said Harry Wharton.

"Sorry! But this is rather important, you know. You see, my postal order will be here by the next post. In the meantime, I'm hard up—and I want my tea. Which of you fellows is going to lend me five bob?"

"The whichfulness," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "is terrific."

"Oh, really, Inky——"

"You fat duffer!" exclaimed Bob Cherry impatiently. "Don't you really know that that postal order is a chicken that won't fight?"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Shut the door after you, Bunter," said Harry Wharton.

"Yes, old chap—but I'm not going yet," said Bunter, blinking at the captain of the Remove. "I think I mentioned that I'm expecting a postal order——"

"Buzz off!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

Harry Wharton burst into a laugh. Bunter's postal order, which was always expected and never arrived, was known from end to end of Greyfriars. It was a standing joke in the Remove—it was chuckled over by the fags. Great men in the Sixth Form had heard of it and smiled. Of all the fellows at Greyfriars, there was only one that took Bunter's postal order seriously—and that was W. G. Bunter himself. Bunter, by some mental process inexplicable to the rest of the Remove, contrived to believe in that postal order—or to believe that he believed in it.

"Now, look here, Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "We're fed up with your postal order, and fed up with you personally. Are you leaving on your feet or your neck?"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"You've got the biggest feet, Bob," said Johnny Bull. "Kick him out!"

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Buzz!" roared Bob Cherry. "We're busy!"

"Well, I'm busy too," said Bunter. "I've got to think of tea. Toddy's gone out, and there's nothing in the study. I can't find Lord Mauleverer anywhere. Smithy's refused to cash my postal order in the most brutal way. I'm actually hungry!" said Bunter, pathetically.

"Why didn't you have tea in the hall?" demanded Bob.

"I did. What's tea in the hall to me?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I was really expecting that postal order this morning——"

"Give us a rest!"

"But it's absolutely certain to come by the next post. Did you say you were lending me five bob, Wharton?"

"No!"

"Did you, Nugent? You're not so mean as Wharton, Franky, old man."

"More!" said Frank Nugent, with a chuckle.

"I say, Bob, you're not a selfish beast like Nugent——"

"Just like!" denied Bob Cherry.

"Inky, old man——"

"My esteemed chums," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gravely, "the worthy and execrable Bunter assures us that his never-to-be-forgotten postal order is to arrive by the next honourable post. If I may make a suggestive remark——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Do you mean a suggestion or a remark, Inky?"

"Both, my esteemed and uproarious Bob. I suggest that we should stand the esteemed and disgusting Bunter a shilling each, and take the remarkable postal order when its come——"

"But it won't come!" howled Bob. "Does it ever come?"

"You shut up, Cherry!" hooted Bunter. "Inky can take my word. Inky's a gentleman. He's a blessed nigger, I know; but he can take a fellow's word."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Inky," said Bunter encouragingly. "You were saying——"

"And if the esteemed postal order does not come——!" resumed the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur.

"No 'if' about it!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull, I wish you wouldn't interrupt Inky——"

"If it does not come," resumed the nabob, "each of us will give the excellent Bunter a terrific kick, one after anotherfully."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

"The fat and execrable Bunter will be taking no risk if the postal order is certain to arrive," grinned Hurree Singh; "and if

it does not come he will have a terrific kick from each of us, as hard as we can put it on!" "Hear, hear!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"I—I—I say, you fellows——"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Done!" he said. "We'll give you a chance, Bunter. We'll be with you when the post comes in, and if the remittance doesn't materialise you'll get the boot—hard!"

"The hardfulness will be terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha! That's a go!" roared Bob.

Billy Bunter blinked dubiously at the Famous Five. Deep down in his fat breast, perhaps, lingered a doubt in the reality of that postal order which he had expected so long and so patiently. And he saw that the chums of the Remove were in deadly earnest. They were, in fact, fed up with Bunter and his postal order. If Bunter agreed to the terms, the terms would be carried out to the very letter.

"Is it a go, Bunter?" grinned Nugent.

"I—I say——"

"Is there some doubt about the postal-order, after all?" chuckled Bob.

"Nunno! But——"

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"Shut the door after you!"

"I—I say—I—I—I agree!" gasped Bunter desperately. The prospect of five shillings in hard cash, and all the tuck it would purchase, was too much for the Owl of the Remove. He simply couldn't resist it.

"You agree?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Ye-e-es."

"Mind, we mean it," said the captain of the Remove. "If the remittance doesn't turn up, each of us takes a free kick—hard!"

"I know mine will be jolly hard!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Yes," gasped Bunter. "You—you see—it's fairly certain——"

"Only fairly?"

"Quite certain, I mean! It—it's from one of my titled relations!"

"Cut that out!" said Wharton. "It's agreed—and there's my bob! Look out for a goal-kick, Bunter, if that postal-order doesn't turn up."

"Oh, dear!"

For a moment hesitation came on the fat junior. The chums of the Remove were all footballers, and Bunter had seen them kick. There was no attraction whatever in the idea of taking the place of the Soccer ball while five juniors in turn took goal-kicks.

But Bunter was hungry! He had had only one tea that afternoon, so he was, of course, almost in a state of famine.

When Bunter was hungry, lesser considerations vanished. It was really time for the stars in their courses to sit up and take notice when Bunter was hungry. Nothing else mattered—and the Owl of the Remove recklessly took his chance.

"Hand it over!" he gasped.

Five shillings were handed over. Bunter's fat fingers closed on them.

He rolled out of the study. Then he turned in the doorway.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Buzz!" roared five voices.

"But I say——"

Whiz!

A cushion flew—and Bunter flew! Cushion and Bunter disappeared into the passage together.

"Yoooop!"

"Come back, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry. "I've got the inkpot ready."

Bunter did not come back. Evidently he did not want the inkpot; he was more than satisfied with the cushion.

"Beast!"

Bunter scudded away to the stairs. Bob kicked the door shut; and the Ways and Means Committee in No. 1 Study resumed their discussion of ways and means.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

After the Feast, the Reckoning!

PETER TODD gave a start.

Toddy came into No. 7 Study, in the Remove, with a letter in his hand. The post was in, and there was a letter for Toddy; and Peter had retired to his study for the perusal thereof. And as he came in, there was the sound of a hurried movement, and then stillness. And Peter, looking round the study and finding that it was vacant, was naturally surprised.



Two pairs of hands were laid on the study table, and it was lifted aside. Billy Bunter was revealed, sitting on the carpet. "It-it-it was only a joke, you fellows," said Bunter dolorously. "Come on! If the postal-order hasn't arrived, it's five free kicks!" chuckled Bob Cherry (See Chapter 2)

"What the dickens!" murmured Peter.

He looked round again. Nobody was to be seen in the study—but there was a sound of a hurried breath.

"My hat!" said Peter Todd. "Some blessed dog's got into the house. Shoo, you brute!"

There was a suppressed grunt, and it came from under the table.

It was rather dusky in the study, and there was a cover on the table, and Peter could not see the animal that grunted. He put his hand to the cover, and then pulled it back. If there was a strange dog under the table, Toddy did not want to be bitten.

"Shoo!" he exclaimed again.

"What's the row?" asked Tom Dutton, coming into No. 7. Dutton, the deaf junior,

shared No. 7 Study with Peter Todd and William George Bunter.

"There's a dog——"

"What rot!" said Dutton. "Nothing of the kind! It's a perfectly clear afternoon. No fog that I can see."

"Not a fog—a dog!" howled Peter.

"Who's a hog?"

"Oh, dear!"

"If you mean Bunter, all right," said Dutton. "But it's rather a strong expression. I should call him a pig!"

"There's a dog under the table!" roared Peter.

"I know there is."

"Oh! You know it, do you?" asked Toddy, in surprise.

"Certainly! There's always a dog in th

stable," answered Dutton. "Gosling keeps his dog there."

"Oh, my hat!" said Peter. He gave up the attempt to explain the situation to Dutton. Deafness was a great affliction; not only to the deaf person.

Peter Todd sorted a wooden foil out of the study cupboard, and approached the table.

"Shooo! Gerrou, you brute!" he shouted.

There was no sign from the hidden animal. Peter bent down and shoved the foil under the table.

His supposition was that that would shift the brute. He was right! A fiendish yell came from under the table.

"Yaroooooh!"

Peter jumped.

"Oh, my hat! It isn't a dog——"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"It's Bunter!" roared Toddy. "Bunter, you fat idiot, what are you doing under the table, you chump?"

"Yow-ow! I'm not here."

"What?"

"I—I mean——"

"Come out!" shouted Peter. "I'll give you another poke——"

"I—I say, Peter——"

"Like that!"

"Whooooop!"

Billy Bunter rolled out from under the table. He sat on the study carpet and roared.

"Ow! Beast!"

"Now what's this game?" demanded Peter. "Have you been bagging tuck from some fellow's study?"

"Ow! No!"

"Then what were you hiding for?"

"I—I wasn't——"

"What?"

"I—I mean, I—I thought some of those beasts might be with you, Toddy——"

"What beasts?"

"Wharton or Bob Cherry. I—I say, Toddy, if they come along, tell them I've gone home for the week-end, will you?"

"In the middle of the week?"

"I—I mean, tell 'em I've gone home for the middle of the week!" gasped Bunter.

"I—I don't want to see them! I—I don't

like them! I say, Toddy, you could lick any of that gang. I'll hold your jacket, old fellow, if you pitch into them."

"Have you gone quite off your rocker?" inquired the amazed Toddy. "Bob Cherry was asking after you a minute ago, downstairs."

"Oh dear!"

"The post's in, and he said you wanted to see after a letter you were expecting——"

"Ow!"

There was a sound of footsteps and voices in the Remove passage, and Billy Bunter made a sudden dive under the table. A fat and anguished face peered out under the cover at the astonished Peter.

"I—I say, Toddy, don't tell 'em I'm here. They—they're going to kick me if my postal order hasn't come, and—and there may have been some delay in the post!"

"What on earth——"

"Keep it dark!" gasped Bunter, and he vanished from sight as the footsteps reached the door of No. 7 Study.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" It was Bob Cherry's powerful voice. "Is that fat spoofer here?"

Five grinning faces looked into the study. The post was in, and the Famous Five were ready to keep their compact with Bunter. But Bunter, it seemed, was not so ready. Now that the psychological moment had arrived, Bunter was smitten with dreadful doubts and misgivings. The hour had come—but had the postal order?

It was said of old that after the feast came the reckoning. Bunter had had the feast, but he had no desire to have the reckoning.

"Where is he?" demanded Wharton.

"Who?" asked Peter Todd.

"Bunter!"

"What do you want Bunter for?"

The captain of the Remove explained. Peter Todd chuckled; and Bunter, under the study table, quaked.

But Peter was not disposed to betray the quaking refugee. He assumed a thoughtful expression.

"Well, you'd better look for him," he said. "He's a fat boulder, and he ought to be kicked. Give him an extra one for me when you find him."

Press Day at the Office of a Famous Weekly!



The Editorial Staff of that famous publication "Billy Bunter's Weekly" consists of the great William George Bunter himself, assisted by his brother Sammy, Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble of St. Jim's, and Tubby Muffin of Rookwood. On "Press Day" all is bustle in the Editorial Office, and would-be contributors by the score have to be gently but firmly repelled

Harry Wharton looked round the study.
"Not here," he said. "Let's draw the box-rooms."

"Come on!"

"I say," Tom Dutton, who had heard only a few syllables of what was said, without comprehending them, broke in. He was surprised, and he wanted to know. "I say, what's this game? What is Bunter under the table for? Is it a new game?"

"What!" Bob Cherry turned back into doorway. "Under the table, is he? Come out, Bunter!"

"I'm not!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Roll him out!"

"Turn them out, Toddy!" yelled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Two pairs of hands were laid on the study table and it was lifted aside. Billy Bunter was revealed, squatting on the carpet, with his fat knees drawn up under his podgy chin.

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

"Bring him along!"

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, I can take a joke! He, he, he!" cackled Bunter dolorously. "He, he, he!"

"This way!"

"Of—of course, it was only a joke, you fellows," mumbled Bunter. "You—you ain't going to kick an old pal?"

"Not at all! We're going to kick you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not if the postal order's come!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Why didn't you turn up for the post, Bunter? We were waiting for you."

"You—you see—"

"The seefulness is terrific," grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Come alongfully."

"There may have been some delay in the post!" wailed Bunter. "I ain't responsible for the delays in the post, am I? It's the way the Government manages things!"

"Come on, old fat bean! There may be a postal order, or a cheque, or a bag of gold!" chortled Bob Cherry. "One's as likely as the other, in fact."

"I—I say—"

But the wild expostulations of Billy Bunter were not listened to. Bob Cherry and Johnny

Bull took his fat arms and linked them with their own, and Bunter was walked out of the study. Hurree Singh walked behind, and thoughtfully helped Bunter with his boot when the Owl of the Remove lagged. In a laughing crowd, the juniors marched Billy Bunter along the Remove passage to the stairs, and marched him down. Peter Todd joined the crowd, and several other Removites, catching on to the joke, followed on.

The hapless Owl of the Remove resigned himself to his fate. Five free kicks had to be taken—unless the celebrated postal order at last had arrived at Greyfriars. And even Bunter now did not believe in his own postal order. Only the postal order could save him; and the general opinion of the hilarious Removites was that, when the matter was put to the test, Billy Bunter would bag more kicks than halfpence.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

The Unexpected!

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"Here you are, Bunter!"

"But I—I say—I've got to see the Head—the Head wants to see me specially—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Any letters for Bunter?" bawled Bob Cherry.

Skinner of the Remove was looking over the rack. He glanced round and nodded.

"Yes."

"An unpaid bill, most likely," remarked Johnny Bull. "Bunter owes money to everybody who's ass enough to trust him."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"It's his pater's fist," said Skinner handing over the letter.

"Here you are, Bunter!" grinned Bob.

Billy Bunter took the letter in his fat fingers. It was addressed to him in the well-known hand of his father, Mr. William Samuel Bunter. The Owl of the Remove blinked at it dismally. Now that the matter came to the test, he had simply no hope that the letter contained a remittance.

True, he had recently written to his pater, pointing out that money was scarce, and that a remittance would be thankfully received.

But many a time and oft had he written in the same strain without receiving even an answer; and when an answer did come it generally came in the form of a lecture on economy.

Lectures on economy were of no use to Bunter now.

The Owl of the Remove stood with the unopened letter in his fat hand, blinking at it, and blinking at the grinning faces around him. He longed for an avenue of escape; but there was no way out. The Famous Five encircled him, and a dozen Remove fellows had gathered round, chuckling, to see how the peculiar affair would turn out. Nobody believed for a moment that the long-expected postal order had arrived at last. That was too much to expect.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Open the letter, old top!" said Bob Cherry encouragingly. "The jolly old postal order may be in it; although somebody has said that the age of miracles is past."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I think I'll open this letter in my study," mumbled Bunter. "I'll let you fellows know later—"

"You jolly well won't!" grinned Nugent. "You'll let us know now, old fat top!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Open it!" roared Johnny Bull. "Shell out the postal order!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

"Get on with it, fatty!"

"Let's see the postal order!" chortled Peter Todd. "It will be worth seeing after all this time. My belief is that it will have grown whiskers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"Bump him!"

"Hold on!" gasped Bunter. "I—I'm opening the letter, ain't I, you awful beasts."

I—I say, it won't be my fault, will it, if the postal order has somehow dropped out in the post?"

"It won't be your fault—it will be your misfortune," said Wharton. "You'll get the kicks."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter desperately jabbed a fat thumb into the envelope. He hoped against hope that, somehow or other, miraculously, unexpectedly, there might be a postal order in that letter. After all, his pater did send a remittance sometimes—

rarely, but it had happened. Indeed, once in the dear dead days beyond recall, when Mr. Bunter had had great good fortune on the Stock Exchange, he had sent actual fivers to his hopeful sons at Greyfriars—real, genuine fivers. That period of prosperity in the Bunter family had been brief—to William George it now seemed like a happy dream. Still, it had happened once, and might happen again.

Bunter's fat thumb gashed the envelope, which was Bunter's usual elegant way of opening a letter.



Skinner picked up the postal-order with an amazed ejaculation. "Great Scott!" Bunter blinked at it, more amazed than Skinner. It was a postal-order for a pound. Bunter could scarcely believe his own eyes! (See Chapter 3)

Surrounded by grinning faces, the Owl of the Remove drew a folded letter from the envelope.

So faint now was his hope of a remittance that he was in no hurry to unfold the letter. He held it in his fat fingers and blinked dismally at the Famous Five.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Buck up, Bunter!"

"The fact is, this letter is from my papa. It was from a relation I was expecting a postal order——"

"Get a move on!"

"One of my titled relations, you know——"

"The duke or the marquis?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

"Walk him along the corridor," said Bob Cherry. "I take first kick. This way!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter.

In desperation Bunter unfolded the letter. He had no hope now. But it was the unexpected, the amazing, that happened.

From the letter, as he unfolded it, a slip of flimsy paper fluttered.

Skinner picked it up, with an amazed ejaculation.

"Great Scott!"

Bunter blinked at it, more amazed than Skinner. For it was undoubtedly a postal order, and on it the figures "20s." appeared prominently. It was a postal order for a pound!

The Owl of the Remove could scarcely believe his eyes or his spectacles. He was so astounded that he did not even take the postal order that Skinner was holding out to him. He stood rooted to the floor, staring at it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"What—what—what—what—what is it?"

"The whatfulness is terrific!"

"Is it—is it—is it——" stuttered Peter Todd.

"Great Scott!"

"Phew!"

And from all the Removites came gasps and exclamations of amazement. The unexpected had happened; the age of miracles was not past! Billy Bunter's celebrated postal order had arrived.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Happy and Glorious!

"BUNTER's postal order?"

"Twenty shillings!"

"One quid!"

"Well, that beats the band!"

Slowly the Owl of the Remove recovered. His fat fingers closed on the postal order, and he jerked it away from Skinner. Apprehension in his fat face gave way to satisfaction.

It was a postal order—and it had come! At the most opportune moment it had come—and Bunter was saved!

"Congratters, old man," said Skinner, quite civilly.

Skinner, as a rule, did not waste much civility on Bunter. But Skinner was a youth of much worldly wisdom; and he believed in being civil to a fellow who had a pound—so long as the pound lasted, at all events.

Bunter smiled.

"I say, you fellows, I think I owe you a few shillings," he said loftily. "What was it—four or five?"

"Five, you fat bounder," said Bob Cherry.

"Was it five?" said Bunter carelessly.

"I never can remember these small sums. Well, give me fifteen bob change, will you, and you can take the postal order."

"Don't change it, Bunter," said Peter Todd. "Better have it framed and hung up in the study."

"Oh, really, Toddy."

"Do I sleep, do I dream, do I wonder and doubt—are things what they seem, or are visions about?" quoted Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a real, genuine postal order, I guess," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "I guess this has got me beat."

"Oh, really, Fishy."

"Don't you take any notice of their rot, Bunter, old chap," said Skinner. "Come along to the tuck-shop and change it."

"Good egg!" said Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove rolled away with Harold Skinner. He gave the Famous Five a parting blink over his shoulder.

"I'll settle with you fellows presently."

And he disappeared. Snoop, Stott, Fisher T. Fish, and Micky Desmond followed.

Now that Bunter was in funds for once, there were not wanting fellows who were prepared to pick up the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, that happened luckily for Bunter," he said. "There is such a thing as fool's luck, after all."

"The luckfulness was terrific."

"Old man Bunter must be in funds," grinned Vernon-Smith. "If this goes on Bunter will be quite popular."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Heedless of the comments of the Remove fellows, Billy Bunter rolled away to the tuck-shop with his friends. In Mrs. Mimble's little shop in the shady corner of the quad, a number of Second Form fags were making merry. Prominent among them was Samuel Bunter of the Second Form, the younger brother of William George. Bunter minor, apparently, was in funds too.

"Hallo, Billy!" said Bunter minor, blinking round from the high stool upon which he was seated.

"Hallo, Sammy!"

"You got one, too?"

"One what?" asked Bunter.

"I've had ten bob from the pater, by the last post," said Sammy. "Didn't he send you something?"

Bunter held up the postal order.

"Look!"

"Oh, good," said Sammy. "Now then, young Gatty, don't you bag all the dough-nuts."

Both the Bunters were in luck, and both were expending their unexpected remittances in the same way. Billy Bunter's pound very rapidly followed Sammy Bunter's ten shillings.

Bunter sat on a stool at Mrs. Mimble's counter and enjoyed himself. In refreshments, liquid and solid, the pound took unto itself wings and flew away.

Skinner and Co. shared in the good things. On the rare occasions when Bunter was in funds, he liked to see other fellows enjoying tuck as well as himself. He gave his orders royally, and Mrs. Mimble—first having put on her glasses and examined the postal order with

great care—handed out the good things with a smiling face.

In the happy enjoyment of tuck, William George Bunter quite forgot that five shillings out of the twenty were due to the chums of the Remove.

It was not till exactly twenty shillings had been expended, and Mrs. Mimble called a sudden halt in her activity, that the Owl of the Remove realised that his debt was still unliquidated.

He slid off the high chair.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Thanks, old man," said Snoop, strolling away.

"I say, Skinner—hold on a minute—lend me five bob, will you," said Bunter.

"Bless my hat, I've forgotten my lines for Quelchy!" exclaimed Skinner, and he hurried off.

"Beast!"

Bunter's postal order having melted away, his comrades melted away also, like snow in the sunshine. Looking rather jammy and sticky, and very thoughtful, William George Bunter rolled back to the school-house. His pater's letter was in his pocket, and Bunter had not thought of reading it yet. The postal order had engrossed the whole of his attention. He did not think of reading it now—he was thinking of the shillings due to the Famous Five.

He mounted slowly to the Remove passage; after that gorgeous feed in the tuck-shop, Bunter was a little short of breath for stair-cases. He blinked in at the doorway of No. 1 Study, and found Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent there.

"I say, you fellows," began Bunter cautiously. "My postal order came all right, didn't it?"

"It did," assented Wharton, looking up with a smile. "Jolly lucky for you, Bunter."

"Of course, I knew it was coming! I told you fellows so, didn't I?"

"You told us so, certainly," said Harry, laughing.

"About the five bob," went on Bunter. "I'll settle that later."

"Why not now?" demanded Nugent.

"I'm expecting another postal-order——"

"What?"

"Shortly," said Bunter. "Leave it over till then, will you? The fact is, I've been treating some of my numerous friends, and the money's run out. You know my thoughtless generosity."

"Oh, my hat!"

"But it comes to the same thing," said Bunter airily. "I'm expecting several postal orders, as a matter of fact, from some of my titled relations. I'll settle up out of one of them. Make a note of it, will you, and remind me—you can't expect me to remember these trifling sums."

And Bunter rolled on up the Remove passage just in time to escape a whizzing Latin grammar.

He rolled into No. 7 Study, where Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were beginning their prep. Bunter sank down in the armchair and breathed hard. He felt that he needed a rest after his exertions in the tuck-shop.

"Time you got on with your prep, Bunter," said Peter Todd, looking up.

"Blow prep! I've got my pater's letter to read," said Bunter, remembering the existence of the paternal missive.

The fat junior jerked the letter from his pocket and blinked at it. He blinked at it without much interest. He expected it to contain maxims of economy, and injunctions to make the pound last a long time—injunctions which it was no

longer in Bunter's power to carry out.

But as he read, Bunter's expression changed.

"Phew!" he murmured.

And he read on eagerly.

"Good news?" asked Peter, who had been watching the changing expressions in Bunter's fat face with considerable entertainment.

Bunter blinked up.

"Well, rather! My pater's coming down to Greyfriars on Wednesday——"

"Call that good news?"

"In his new motor-car," said Bunter. "The Rolls-Royce, you know."

"I don't know," said Peter.

"Well, you do now I've told you," snapped Bunter. "The pater's rolling in it—fairly rolling in it!"

"Rolling in his motor-car?" ejaculated Peter.

"No, you ass!" hooted Bunter. "Rolling in money."

"Good! You'll be able to settle the eighteen pence you've owed me all the term," said Peter cheerfully.

Bunter's fat face beamed.

"Something's happened on the Stock Exchange, I suppose," he said. "I remember last holidays hearing the pater say he was a bear, and was going to be a bull, or something—Stock Exchange terms, you know, Peter, that you don't understand. I suppose it's turned out well, and he's made a lot of money—I—I—I mean, of course, that the pater's a very wealthy man, with a big rent-roll—he



The leather flew, and Hazeldene, who was keeping goal for Wharton's side, fairly jumped as the ball whizzed in. "Goal!" gasped Bunter. "You-you burbling jabber-wock!" shrieked Wharton. "It's our own goal!" "Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 5)

dabbles in stocks and shares merely as a hobby——”

“Fathead!”

“If you call me names, Peter Todd, I shall have to think seriously about dropping your acquaintance,” said Bunter. “I’ve mentioned before that I don’t like familiarity.”

“Oh, my hat!” ejaculated Peter.

“The pater says—very rightly—that he wishes to see me take a more prominent part in the school,” said Bunter. “He says it is due to his position—and mine, of course. I shall have to see about it. I’ve always been too easy-going—I see that now. Properly speaking, I ought to be captain of the Remove. Do you think the fellows are likely to elect me form-captain, Toddy?”

“Ha, ha, ha!” roared Toddy.

“Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. Anyhow, I shall expect to be given a show in the footer,” said Bunter. “I shall put it straight to Wharton. I’m entitled, on my form, to play in the Remove eleven—precious few fellows in the Lower School here of my form.”

“None!” said Peter. “You’re the only jolly old barrel at Greyfriars. Your minor runs you pretty close, though.”

“I mean my football form,” roared Bunter.

“That’s so—you’re much the same form as a football,” agreed Peter. “But you’re more like a rugger ball than a soccer ball.”

“Beast! I shall put it plain to Wharton, and if he refuses to give me a chance in the eleven I shall appeal to Wingate of the Sixth, as Head of the Games. I say, Peter, I expect to have a lot of money shortly.”

“Go hon!”

“Do you think Wingate would order Wharton to put me in the eleven if I lent him some money?”

Peter Todd shrieked.

“Ha, ha, ha! Better try it on! Insure your life first. Sign the coupon in the ‘Daily Mail’ before you ask Wingate.”

“Beast!”

Peter Todd resumed his prep. Bunter did not bother about prep. He read the paternal communication through again, with a keen and close attention that he seldom bestowed on paternal communications. Then he lay

back in the armchair, with a fat and fatuous smile on his face, and dreamed golden dreams. Fortune was smiling on the Bunter family, the future was rosy! Billy Bunter, generally regarded as the most unimportant fellow in the Remove, was going to be a fellow of some importance. He was going to take his rightful place in the Remove—like the king coming into his own again, as it were!

This was Bunter’s lucky day!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

Bunter the Footballer!

“HALLO, hallo, hallo!”

Bob Cherry was surprised.

It was Saturday afternoon, and games practice was on. Properly speaking, all juniors who were not fortified behind a medical certificate were bound to turn up for games practice on Saturday afternoon. But there were many exceptions to the rule; and Billy Bunter generally contrived to dodge games practice, as he dodged most things that called for exertion. Yet here he was, on this particular Saturday afternoon, in football jersey and shorts, looking as if he were just going to burst out of them.

“Bunter,” Harry Wharton chimed in, “what’s this game?”

“Football,” said Bunter.

“I mean, what are you doing here?”

“It’s games practice, isn’t it?” snapped Bunter.

The captain of the Remove laughed.

“I’ll let you off, old fat bean. Roll out of the way.”

“Shan’t!”

“Wha-a-at?” ejaculated Wharton.

Billy Bunter wagged a fat forefinger at the captain of the Remove, and blinked at him severely.

“There’s such a thing as duty, Wharton,” he said. “It’s your duty as captain of the Form to see that fellows don’t cut games practice.”

“A hit—a very palpable hit!” grinned Vernon-Smith.

“You fat bounder!” roared Wharton, righteously indignant. “When I want to round you up for games practice, I generally have to rout you out from under a table or somewhere!”

"That's all very well," said Bunter. "But here I am, quite keen. Are you picking up sides?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Put me in," said Bunter.

"What on earth are you after, Bunter?" asked Harry, puzzled. "You don't play footer, and you don't want to."

"I happen to be the best player in the Remove."

"Eh?"

"Or in the whole Lower School, for that matter."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I haven't cared much for games practice," went on Bunter, blinking at the astonished juniors. "That's because I'm always left out of matches from jealousy."

"Phew!"

"It's rather disheartening," said Bunter. "Here I am, a born footballer, a fellow with great pace and a wonderful eye for a goal. I'm left out owing to you fellows hating to be put in the shade by a better player—you especially, Wharton."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton.

"It's disheartening; in fact, sickening," said Bunter. "But I'm not standing any more of it. I'm fed-up! My pater says he expects me to take my proper place in Form and School. I'm going to insist upon my rights!"

"Go it, Bunter!" said Peter Todd. "Gather round, you fellows, while Bunt does his funny turn."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going to play up in the games practice and fairly shame you, Wharton, into putting me into the Remove eleven," said Bunter. "That's why I'm here. The pater expects to see me play for Greyfriars. He's said so; in fact, he says he insists upon it."

"Oh, my hat!"

"He knows what's due to me. We've got some good fixtures—Rookwood, and Highcliffe, and St. Jim's. I shall expect to be played in all of them."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Remove fellows.

The idea of William George Bunter playing in the biggest football fixtures of the season

took them by storm. They shrieked and they roared.

Billy Bunter blinked round indignantly through his big spectacles. Apparently he could see nothing in his observations to excite merriment.

"You can cackle!" he snapped.

"We will! Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I mean it! This afternoon I'm going to show you how I can play," said Bunter. "Put me in, Wharton. I've a right to play in the pick-ups, and if you leave me out I'll appeal to Wingate!"

"You silly ass!" said Harry. "If you want to take up footer, I'll find time to give you some coaching—"

"Coach your grandmother!" said Bunter. "How the dooce are you going to coach a fellow who knows the game ten times better than you do?"

"Oh, my hat! But you're really no good in the pick-ups, old chap," said Wharton patiently.

"Yah!"

"Now look here, Bunter——"

"Cut it out!" said Bunter. "I mean business! Now, if you've picked up sides, where do I play?"

Harry Wharton looked at his comrades and smiled. Strictly speaking, Bunter was within his rights—rights that certainly he had never insisted upon before. As a rule, Bunter dodged football practice, though undoubtedly he had always been willing to figure in a prominent match. He was firmly convinced that he was the best junior footballer at Greyfriars, though, for that matter, he was equally convinced that he was the cleverest fellow in class and entitled to the top place—which never by any chance did he reach.

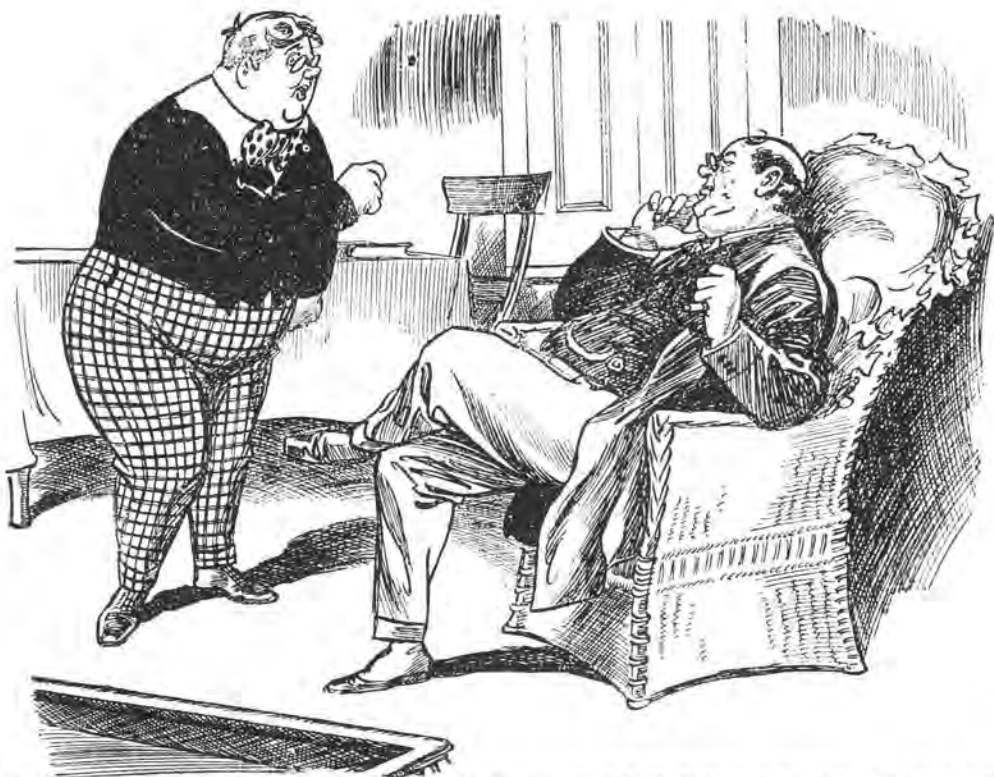
"Oh, stick him in!" said Bob Cherry. "It will be funny while it lasts, and after he's winded we'll roll him off."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! Put me in as centre-forward, Wharton."

"But I'm centre-forward myself, old nut," said Wharton mildly.

"Can't you get aside just for once?" demanded Bunter. "Blessed if I ever saw such a conceited chap!"



Mr. Bunter looked very good-natured and fat and prosperous. "Well, William," he said. "I have not heard a good report of you from your form-master!" "The fact is, you know, I go in chiefly for games," said Bunter, rather anxiously. "Why, only the other day I scored a goal when I was playing for Wharton!" (See Chapter 6)

"Righto!" said Harry, laughing. "Form up, you fellows; roll into the middle, Bunter."

The junior footballers chuckled as they formed in line. Vernon-Smith, the Bounder, was captaining one side in the pick-up game; Harry Wharton the other. There was not a full team on either side; it was only practice, and very informal. Billy Bunter was allowed to adorn the centre of Wharton's front line with his podgy person, and Harry went on the wing.

"Play up!" roared Bob Cherry. "Bunter kicks off! Kick off, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bump!

Even the Owl of the Remove might have been expected to kick off without disaster.

But William George Bunter had his own ways of playing the great game of Soccer.

There was a roar as Bunter sat down.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What on earth are you sitting down for, Bunter?" demanded Wharton.

"Yow-ow! My foot slipped—ow!"

"Roll him off!" exclaimed Redwing.

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter scrambled up, to find the ball kicked off and the game in progress.

"I say, you fellows——"

Nobody heeded Bunter. He was interesting as a comic interlude; but the Removites were there, after all, for football practice. Vernon-Smith's merry men were rushing the ball towards Wharton's goal, and the defenders

crammed in to the defence, and the game waxed hot and fast. But Billy Bunter, having resolved to shine as a footballer, was not to be denied.

He rushed valorously into the game.

Round the field a number of fellows had gathered on the news that Bunter was playing in the junior pick-ups. It was felt that Bunter on the football field was worth watching. Not even the great Coker of the Fifth excited more interest from a humorous point of view.

Extreme short sight was a handicap in the Soccer game. It was not Bunter's fault that his sight was short, certainly; and no doubt it was not his fault that he was a duffer. Both were his misfortune. But certainly these little drawbacks handicapped him as a footballer. Nevertheless, he charged into the mêlée; and Bunter's charge was by no means to be despised, with his weight in it. Bunter's idea of a charge was, apparently, to hurl himself at the nearest player, regardless of the side that player belonged to. His charge caught Harry Wharton in the back, and stretched the astonished captain of the Remove on his face on the muddy ground. Wharton lay and gasped, feeling as if an earthquake had happened; and Bunter, gasping too, charged victoriously on. His own side did not expect to be charged from behind, even by Bunter, so the Owl of the Remove looked like carrying all before him.

"On the ball, Bunter!" yelled Skinner from behind the goal. "Ha, ha! On the ball, old fatty!"

Bunter was on the ball!

He kicked!

Smithy and Co. were quite ready to see that Bunter did not send the ball up the field. But Bunter did not even attempt to send it up the field. He kicked for goal—in the excitement of the moment, being oblivious of the fact that it was his own goal he was kicking at.

Whizz!

By a miracle, the kick told. The leather flew; and Hazeldene, who was keeping goal for Wharton's side, fairly jumped as the ball whizzed in.

"Goal!" gasped Bunter.

"Why, what——"

"What—what——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a wild yell round the field. The spectators roared, the footballers shrieked. Harry Wharton, scrambling up breathless, rushed at Bunter and grasped him by the shoulder.

"You silly owl!"

"Yaroooh! Leggo!"

"You crass ass!"

"I've kicked a goal!" roared Bunter. "More than you could do. There's the ball in the net! Yah!"

"You—you burbling jabberwock," shrieked Wharton, "it's our own goal!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter started. Even Bunter realised that that masterly goal was not in accordance with the very best traditions of the Soccer game.

"Oh! Is—is it?" he gasped. "I—I didn't see——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anyhow, it's a goal!" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd rushed up to Bunter. He was on Wharton's side in the pick-up, and therefore Bunter's fellow-player, and he had been almost winded by a charge from Bunter. He grasped the Owl of the Remove by his fat ears and shook him.

"Yooop!" roared Bunter.

"What did you charge me over for?" shrieked Peter.

"Yow! Leggo! It was a fair charge!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Take him away!" gasped Wharton.

"Roll him away! Burst him! Bury him somewhere!"

"I—I say, you fellows—— Yooooop!"

Peter Todd led Bunter's fat ears off the field in an iron grip. Bunter, naturally, had to accompany his ears; a parting would have been too painful. Bunter was led off, and dumped down in a breathless heap.

Peter glared down at him.

"You get across the touch-line again and you'll be squashed!" he said. "Keep off the grass! Go and eat coke! Disappear!"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter, sitting up. "Look here, Toddy, you beast——"

An Editorial Banquet !



Their work completed, and "Billy Bunter's Weekly" having been safely "put to bed," the worthy Editor and his four fat subs invariably regale themselves with a glorious feed. Needless to say, the distinguished amateur journalists prove themselves at least as handy with the knife and fork as with the pen!

"Are you going?" roared Teddy, drawing back his right foot for a terrific kick.

"Ow!"

Bunter went.

The pick-up game finished without Bunter.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Mr. Bunter at Greyfriars

"SOMETHING like style!" grinned Skinner. It was Wednesday afternoon, and Mr. William Samuel Bunter had arrived at Greyfriars. The little portly gentleman, with his gold-rimmed glasses gleaming on his little fat, purple nose, had been shown in to the Head. The car in which he had arrived was open to the inspection of all Greyfriars that cared to inspect. And quite a number of fellows gave it admiring glances.

It was a big car, and it was an expensive car. It was the first time the car had been seen at Greyfriars, which indicated that it was a new possession of Mr. Bunter's. Fisher T. Fish, of the Remove, guessed and opined that Old Man Bunter had been doing well on the Stock Exchange. Whether that was so or not, undoubtedly Mr. Bunter had "done himself" well in the way of motor-cars.

"I guess Bunter isn't half a bad guy, take him all in all," said Fisher T. Fish.

Skinner nodded assent.

"I always liked old Bunter," he remarked.

"I was just thinking the same," observed Snoop. "There are worse fellows than Bunter knocking about."

"There are!" chimed in Bob Cherry. "Take yourselves, for instance——"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Skinner.

The fact was that Skinner and Co. were feeling that they had never really valued Bunter at his proper value. Bunter had had several remittances of late, following the unexpected arrival of his celebrated postal-order. He had been seen changing a five-pound note! A fellow who had fivers to change was not a fellow to be lightly disregarded, in the opinion of Skinner and Co. Skinner took the view that Bunter had never had justice, especially in games. He declared that if every fellow had his rights, Bunter would be found playing in the Remove eleven

on great occasions. Which was like honey to William George Bunter, who fully agreed with Skinner. Harold Skinner further declared that if he ever became captain of the Remove eleven, he would play Bunter on the spot—which was quite a safe offer, as Skinner was never likely to become football captain. In the meantime, No. 7 Study was a land flowing with milk and honey, and Skinner's new-born admiration of Bunter made him a welcome guest there.

Billy Bunter was carrying his fat little nose high in these days. He had fallen into a way of jingling money in his trousers' pocket, and instead of seeking to borrow "bobs" and half-crowns up and down the Remove, he was willing to lend them to any fellow who duly and properly acknowledged his importance. This made a great difference in the popular estimation of Bunter. He had even offered to make a handsome contribution to the funds of the Remove football club, on the modest condition that he should be played in all important fixtures. Needless to say, his generous offer was declined, without thanks.

But Bunter was a sticker, and his fat mind was made up. Somehow or other, he was going to take his proper place in the Form. Somehow, all Greyfriars was going to be made to acknowledge what a really important person he was.

Bunter was waiting now at the corner of the Head's corridor for his father. Skinner and Co. joined him there, and chatted amicably with the Owl of the Remove till Mr. Bunter came along. They saluted the stout little gentleman very respectfully. Mr. Bunter gave them a friendly nod, and walked away with William George. Bunter conducted him to No. 7 in the Remove.

Mr. Bunter sat in the study arm-chair and put his thumbs into the arm-holes of his waistcoat. He looked very good-natured and fat and prosperous. Fortune had evidently been dealing kindly with the portly gentleman of late. Whether he had been a "bull" or a "bear" or a "stag," or any other of the fearsome beasts that haunt the pulchres of the Stock Exchange, undoubtedly fortune had smiled on him.

"Well, William," he said, "I have not heard a good report of you from your Form-master."

"Not really?" asked Bunter.

"Mr. Quelch thinks you idle," said Mr. Bunter, shaking his head.

"The fact is, you know, I go in chiefly for games," said Bunter, rather anxiously.

"Games, after all, are what a chap comes to a public school for, father. When a fellow's distinguished in games, it doesn't matter much about swotting."

"But you're not distinguished in games, William."

"You see, there's a lot of jealousy about," explained Bunter. "It's at Greyfriars, as at a lot of schools; the games get into the hands of a clique, and they're very cliquey, you know. Sometimes a first-rate man doesn't get a chance at all."

Mr. Bunter eyed his hopeful son dubiously.

Bunter, to do him justice, spoke in perfectly good faith. Nature had not been kind to him in all respects; but, at least, she had endowed him with a remarkably good opinion of himself.

Not all his extraordinary performances on the football field could convince Billy Bunter that that was not the right place for him. When the Remove lost a match, Billy Bunter had no doubt whatever that it was because he was left out of the team. When they won

a match, they won it in spite of having left him out. On this topic Bunter was not open to argument—if anybody had cared to argue the point with him.

"Only the other day, in games practice, I bagged a goal," said Bunter. "In the pick-ups, you know."

"Oh! ah! yes!" said Mr. Bunter, who had a very vague idea of what the pick-ups were.

"Put the ball right in and beat Hazel all along the line," said Bunter. "I wish you'd been there to see it, father. But it makes no difference. Wharton wouldn't dream of playing me in a school fixture. He's not a bad chap, you know," went on Bunter considerably. "A bit lofty, but he's got his good points. But my style isn't his style, you see, and he thinks his own style is IT. Lots of fellows like that."

"No doubt," assented Mr. Bunter. "Still, if you are a good player, William, you ought to be

given a chance in the cricket."

"It's football now," murmured Bunter.

"Oh! Ah! Yes! Exactly! And what was it you took—a wicket?"

"Nunno! A goal!"

"Of course—a goal, certainly!" said Mr. Bunter, with a nod. "Well, this is not as it should be, William. It is my desire to see you take a more prominent place in your school



"I'm simply going to knock your head upon the wall—like that!" said Bob Cherry. "And like that—" "Yaroo!" roared Bunter. "Stoppit! I'm coming with you as fast as I can, ain't I?" (See Chapter 8)

I should like to see you make better progress in class; but, above all, I desire very much to see your name in the games lists. I see no reason why my son should not become captain of the school."

"No reason at all, father; only, as I said, there's a lot of jealousy and envy about," said Bunter. "It's really disheartening."

"This must be altered," said Mr. Bunter decidedly. "I shall speak to Wharton on the subject."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter, in some dismay.

"Certainly," said Mr. Bunter firmly.

"I—I don't think that would do much good, father," stammered the Owl of the Remove. "You—you see—"

"I have not yet told you, William, my purpose in coming to the school to-day," said Mr. Bunter. "I have mentioned my intention to the Head, and he approves. It is my desire to associate the name of Bunter permanently with Greyfriars in—in sports and—and pastimes, and so forth," said the plump gentleman, rather vaguely. "I am going to found a Cup!"

"To—to find a Cup?" ejaculated Bunter.

"To found a Cup."

Bunter blinked at him.

"A Football Cup!" explained Mr. Bunter.

"It will be known as the Bunter Cup, and will be competed for, on certain conditions to be laid down."

"Oh!" exclaimed Bunter.

His fat face brightened. He realised that the son of the founder of a Cup would be a fellow of some importance. There would be room for swank—and next to tuck, it was swank in which William George Bunter found the greatest delight.

"Jolly good idea!" he exclaimed.

"A handsome silver cup, costing fifty guineas!" said Mr. Bunter impressively.

"Phew!"

"I can afford it," said Mr. Bunter, with a wave of his plump hand. "That is nothing! Now, I want to consult you on this subject, William. It is a long time since I was at school, and to tell the truth, in my school-days I gave little attention to games. Probably you know more about cricket—"

"Football."

"Football, I mean, than I do," said Mr. Bunter.

"I fancy there isn't much about the game that I don't know," said Bunter complacently.

"Very good. Now, in a Cup competition, there are a certain number of ties, I think they are called—"

"Cup-ties," assented Bunter.

"Just so! Various teams are drawn to play against one another for the Cup, or something of the kind."

Bunter grinned.

"That's it," he said. "Of course, there would have to be an age limit. No good putting up the Remove to play the Sixth, for instance."

"N-no, I suppose not. A certain number of—of fixtures—you call them fixtures, I believe?"

"Yes."

"A certain number of fixtures will be arranged, and the winners play one another till only one is left, what?" said Mr. Bunter. "These details can be settled. Only junior elevens, of course, will compete. Are you in the Remove eleven, William?"

"Not—not as a regular member," murmured Bunter.

"That is not as it should be," said Mr. Bunter, frowning. "I shall make it a condition that you play in each match."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"If that condition is not agreed to, I shall not bestow the Cup!" said Mr. Bunter firmly.

Billy Bunter's eyes twinkled behind his big spectacles. It was clear that Mr. William Samuel Bunter did not know much about the great game of Soccer or the rules governing Cup competitions. Nevertheless, a handsome silver cup costing fifty guineas would be a trophy worth struggling for; the Remove fellows were certain to be very keen about it.

"Jolly good idea!" said Bunter, heartily.

"Make it a condition, and they can't possibly leave out the best junior footballer at Greyfriars. And if I play in all the ties, that means, of course, that the Cup will stay in the Remove—we're bound to win."

"Then let us arrange the details," said Mr. Bunter cheerfully.

And they proceeded to the arrangement of details.

By the time the big Rolls-Royce bore Mr. William Samuel Bunter away from Greyfriars all details had been arranged. And William George Bunter, of the Remove, seemed to be walking on air as he came in after seeing his father off. At long last, Bunter the footballer was to shine in the public eye, and to take his rightful place as the champion exponent of the great game—by means of the peculiar conditions governing the competition for the Bunter Cup!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

Bunter in the Limelight!

"CHEEK!"

"Awful cheek!"

"The cheekfulness is terrific!"

"Rot!"

"Bosh!"

Quite a number of comments were made by the Remove fellows who stared at the notice on the board, a week or so after Mr. Bunter's visit to Greyfriars.

The notice was written in the sprawling hand of Billy Bunter, and it was couched in Bunter's own original variety of spelling. And it ran:

NOTIS!

THE BUNTER CUP!

A Meating of the Remove Football Club is called for 7 p.m. this eavening, to diskuss the abuve. W. G. Bunter will make an announce-meant. The hansom silver cup pressented by Mr. Bunter will be on vne in the form-room.

Sined,

W. G. Bunter."

"Bunter—calling a meeting!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "Bunter—calling a meeting of the football club! Who ever heard of such cheek?"

"What's this rot about a Bunter Cup?" said Harry Wharton, puzzled. "There isn't such a cup."

"Never heard of it," grinned Bob Cherry.

"You heard anything of it, Toddy? You're his keeper, you know."

Peter Todd looked perplexed.

"Bunter's been gassing some stuff in the study about his father founding a Cup competition," he said. "I thought it was his usual rot."

"I suppose it is," said Harry.

"I don't know, though," remarked the Bounder, with a grin. "Old man Bunter seems to be rolling in wealth these days. Perhaps he's going to spread himself in the form of a Challenge Cup. Wharton's uncle put up a cup to be played for once."

"That's so," assented Harry, "but——"

"It's all right," said Skinner, joining the group. "The genuine goods, my sons. Old Bunter——"

"Billy Bunter, do you mean?"

"Yes. Old Bunter's told me all about it. I've seen the Cup."

"You've seen it, Skinner?" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"Seen it!" assured Skinner. "It's the genuine article, and it never cost less than fifty pounds."

"Great pip!"

"Pulling our leg?" asked Bob Cherry suspiciously.

"Not at all; it's the goods," said Skinner. "You'd better turn up to the meeting, if you want a chance at the Cup. Bunter's got the whole thing in his hands, and if the Remove don't take it on, he's going to put it up to Temple of the Fourth. You know that Temple and Co. claim to be the official junior eleven of Greyfriars——"

"Which is rot!" said Bob.

"Well, I fancy they'll take on Bunter and his Cup, if the Remove turn him down," grinned Skinner. "You don't pick up a fifty-quad silver cup on every bush, you know."

"We'll go to the meeting, and hear what the fat duffer has to say, anyhow," said Wharton, greatly astonished. "But if Mr. Bunter is offering a Cup, this isn't the way."

"It's the Bunter way, though," said Skinner. "Bunter's looking after himself."

"Dash it all, if Mr. Bunter's putting up a decent Cup, it's jolly good of him," said Bob Cherry. "I shouldn't have thought

he took much interest in footer. We'll give the Owl a chance to explain, anyhow."

"Yes, rather," assented Nugent.

"The ratherfulness is terrific," concurred Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But as for the Cup, the seefulness is the believfulness."

Before seven o'clock, most of the Remove had arrived in the form-room. By that time, the news of Bunter's Cup was known far and wide, and there was general curiosity on the subject. It was agreed on all hands that it was like Bunter's "cheek" to call the meeting; nevertheless, there were very few fellows in the Remove who thought of missing it. Bunter was getting his full share now of the limelight that he loved.

Seven was tolling from the clock-tower when the Famous Five arrived in the form-room.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" boomed Bob Cherry. "Where's Bunter?"

"Not turned up yet," said Peter Todd. "I left him in the study, giving the final touches to his speech."

"My hat! Is he making a speech?"

"We're not bound to hear it," grinned Ogilvy. "I've brought an old apple for Bunter, if he's pulling our legs. I shall let him have it on the boko."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's the jolly old Cup?" asked Johnny Bull. "The notice says it's to be on view in the form-room."

"Not on view yet," said Harry.

"All gammon, I fancy!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well, Bunter generally hands out gammon," said the captain of the Remove thoughtfully. "But I fancy there must be something in it this time. Skinner says he's seen the Cup."

"Anyhow, it's time he was here, as he said seven in the notice," said Vernon-Smith. "Dash it all, it's like his cheek to call a meeting at all—and to keep the meeting waiting is too thick."

"If it's all spoo, we'll give him the ragging of his life," remarked Squiff.

"Hear, hear!"

Nearly all the Remove were in the form-room by this time, but there was as yet no sign of Billy Bunter. Either the Owl of the Remove had not yet finished composing his speech to his satisfaction, or he was impressing his importance on the Remove by keeping them waiting.

"Let's go to his study and have him out,"

suggested Tom Brown, at last.

"Good egg!"

"Give him till a quarter past," said Harry Wharton. "After that, we'll fetch him out by the neck!"

So the juniors waited. It was a quarter after the hour, when the form-room door was opened, and there was a general shout:

"Here he is!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Bunter!"

"Roll in, old tub!"

Billy Bunter had arrived.

The fat junior came into the form-room with his fat little nose high in the air. He



There was a general grin when Billy Bunter rolled on to the field. Bunter's football rig was amply planned, but he looked as if the least exertion would cause him to burst out of it! (See Chapter 9)

rather strutted than walked, and the Removites grinned as they watched him. Bunter, in his new sense of consequence, was swelling like the frog in the fable.

"You've kept us waiting, Bunter!" hooted Hazeldene.

"Have I?" said Bunter carelessly.

"Yes, you have, you fat bounder!"

"That's all right—you can wait!" said Bunter coolly. "Why the dickens shouldn't you wait?"

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Hazel, quite taken aback by that reply.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter's going strong!" grinned Bob Cherry.

Skinner and Snoop were following Bunter into the form-room. In the sunshine of Bunter's new prosperity, Skinner and Snoop had become his loyal friends and followers; they were prepared to do anything to oblige "old Bunter." They bore into the Remove room a large object covered by a cloth—upon which all eyes were immediately fixed.

"Put it on Quelch's desk," said Bunter.

The object, with the cloth still over it, was placed upon the form-master's desk. Billy Bunter blinked round at the curious and interested crowd, and waved a fat hand.

"Show it up!" he said.

Skinner jerked off the cover. There was a gleam of silver in the light. The Bunter Cup was revealed to the surprised gaze of the Removites.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

A Cup Competition on New Lines!

"The Cup!"

"Phew!"

"My hat!"

It was a handsome Cup! It was an expensive Cup! That much could be seen at a glance. It was a Cup that it was worth any club's while to compete for.

Mr. Bunter had done it, and done it well! Undoubtedly the plump gentleman had drawn quite a large cheque for that Cup.

The Remove fellows stared at it. There was admiration and astonishment on all sides. Billy Bunter blinked round him, enjoying the sensation he had caused.

"So that's the Cup!" exclaimed Wharton, at last.

"That's it!" said Bunter.

"The Bunter Cup!" said Skinner impressively. "Presented by Mr. Bunter, through his son, my pal Billy."

"Three cheers for Bunter!" exclaimed Snoop.

"Lots of time for the cheers, when we know what it's all about," said Bob Cherry. "Suppose you explain, Bunter."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Speech!" shouted Skinner.

"Go it, Bunter!"

Skinner pulled forward a chair, and Billy Bunter mounted on it. From that commanding position the Owl of the Remove blinked over the assembly through his big spectacles. All eyes were fixed on him, and William George Bunter was enjoying life at that moment.

"Gentlemen——"

"Hear, hear!" from Skinner.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows!" said Bunter. "You see before you the Bunter Cup! This Cup cost——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It cost——"

"Leave out the costfulness, my esteemed Bunter."

"It cost fifty guineas!" roared Bunter, evidently resolved not to leave out that important item. "And I'd jolly well like to see any other chap's pater hand out a Cup costing fifty guineas!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. This Cup cost fifty guineas. It's worth it! It's a jolly good Cup!"

"The Cup's all right, old chap," said Bob Cherry. "Get on with the washing!"

"The Cup is presented by William Samuel Bunter, Esquire, of Bunter Court, to be competed for by junior elevens at Greyfriars," said Bunter, referring to a crumpled paper in his fat hand—evidently the notes of his speech.

"Hear, hear!"

"The Cup will be placed in charge of the Head, who will present it to the winning team after the final tie."

"Good!"

"Certain conditions have been laid down governing the Cup competition. These conditions will have to be agreed to."

"That's all right."

"First condition—three matches will be played for the Cup——"

"Three!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Three!" said Bunter firmly. "The Remove eleven will play Highcliffe, Rookwood, and St. Jim's, in turn, for the Cup!"

"My hat!"

"But—but——"

"Second condition—the matches will be played on the Greyfriars ground, arrangements being made accordingly with the competing teams."

"B-b-b-but——"

"Third condition, the best players available will be selected for the Remove, including the best junior footballer at Greyfriars—W. G. Bunter!"

"What!"

"Phew!"

"Great Scott!"

"That is the most important condition," said Bunter, blinking at the astonished Removites. "Without that the whole thing is off."

"You cheeky porpoise!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"What a neck!" gasped the Rounder.

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

"The neckfulness is terrific!"

"But you can't play footer, old man!" said Harry Wharton, staring blankly at the self-satisfied Owl of the Remove.

"I didn't come here to listen to your cheek, Wharton."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Quite right," said Skinner. "Stand up to him, Bunter!"

"You silly ass, Skinner——"

"If a fellow stands a Cup," said Snoop, "a fellow has a right to play for the Cup, I should think. Stick to it, Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dates will be arranged for the three matches, and all that," said Bunter, glancing at his paper again. "These details will be left to Nugent as secretary. The conditions

being officially accepted by the Remove Football Club, the competition will be arranged forthwith."

"But——" stuttered Wharton.

"In the event of the Remove Club declining to accept the conditions, the same offer will be made to the Fourth Form Club," went on Bunter.

"Oh, rats!"

"But——" yelled Wharton.

"I'm willing to discuss the matter," said Bunter, with dignity, "so long as I'm not asked to alter the conditions. I'm open to argument."

"But look here," exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "If we're to play Highcliffe, Rookwood, and St. Jim's in turn for the Cup——"

"That's right."

"Suppose we lose the first match. Then the Cup goes to Highcliffe, and the other two matches won't come off."

"That's impossible."

"How?"

"I shall be playing for the Remove."

"Wha-a-at?"

"I don't want to brag about my footer——"

"Brag about it!" said Wharton dazedly. "Brag about your footer! It's not a thing to be bragged of, I should think."

"I don't want to brag about it, as I say; but it's no good denying the fact that I play the game better than any other Lower School chap at Greyfriars."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"With me in the team, every match will be practically a walk-over——"

"Oh, dear!"

"The arrangements are made for the Remove to keep the Cup, you see," explained Bunter.

"Keep it?"

"Yes—three wins, and the Cup remains in the Remove."

"Three wins—with you playing every time?"

"Yes—three dead certs."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Remove room rang with laughter. Even Skinner and Snoop grinned. Whether

the Remove eleven could beat their rivals, with Bunter as a passenger in the team, was a problem. But it was quite certain that Bunter would not be a help but a handicap. That was quite clear to everybody but William George Bunter.

"Order!" hooted Bunter. "Give a chap a chance to speak!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

"Gentlemen, the conditions have been stated. If these conditions are agreed to, the Bunter Cup will be competed for by the Remove Club. If they are not agreed to, the Remove Club can go and eat coke!"

"But——"

"The butfulness is terrific!"

"The conditions are simply idiotic!" said Harry Wharton.

"Who ever heard of a Cup competition on those lines?" demanded Bob Cherry

"Possibly not," said Bunter coolly. "But there are the conditions, and you can take them or leave them. The Cup's worth fighting for."

"That's so. But——"

"But we couldn't beat St. Jim's with you in the team, Bunter!" urged Peter Todd.

"Don't be cheeky, Toddy! You couldn't beat St. Jim's without me in the team."

"Oh, dear!"

"The Remove Club can take it or leave

it!" said Bunter loftily. "This Cup won't go begging, I can tell you."

"But——"

"You'd better hold a committee meeting and talk it over," said Bunter. "Let me know what you decide to-morrow. But it's no good talking to me—the conditions are fixed."

And with that Billy Bunter stepped down from his rostrum. The meeting in the form-room broke up; and that evening there was only one topic in the Greyfriars' Remove—the football Cup offered by Mr. Bunter.

Harry Wharton and Co. discussed, and again discussed, the Bunter Cup and the peculiar conditions attached thereto. For a couple of days the matter remained undecided. In the meantime, a great deal of argument was wasted on Bunter. It was a



Bunter kicked, and dropped the ball right into the press of players in front of the home goal. There was a tussle, and the ball came out right for the goal. "There!" gasped Bunter, obviously pleased with himself. (See Chapter 10)

sheer waste; Bunter was adamant.

He explained with perfect coolness that the whole thing was planned to give him his rightful show in the games. For that reason he was to be played in every match; for that reason he had selected St. Jim's, Rookwood, and Highcliff—those schools being the important fixtures. In the regular fixtures with the three, Bunter had no more chance of being played than had the man in the moon. But he was determined to play St. Jim's, to

play Rookwood, and to play Highcliffe. That his assistance would probably lose the first match, and so prevent the others from coming off at all, was an argument that did not worry Bunter. He simply couldn't see it.

No doubt three extra matches could be fixed up with the three schools. No doubt Tom Merry, St. Jim's, Jimmy Silver of Rookwood, and Courtenay of Highcliffe, would be quite keen to play the Remove for such a prize as the silver challenge cup. That was not the difficulty—the difficulty was that the Remove players had to go into the matches carrying Bunter on their backs, as it were.

To face keen footballers, with such a flaw in their armour, was a serious matter.

Bunter regarded himself as a tower of strength in any team; but Bunter was quite alone in so regarding himself.

But as the Owl of the Remove declined to listen to reason, the matter simply came to this: to accept the offer as it stood, or to refuse it. And when it came to that, there seemed no special reason for refusing it. With luck—and there is a great deal of luck in the Soccer game—the Remove might win the matches, even with Bunter on their backs. Every other member of the eleven should be in top-hole form—Bunter could be placed where he would do least damage—the thing might be pulled off. At the worst, if the Remove failed to win under such a handicap, they would be no worse off than if they refused to enter the competition at all.

On these grounds, Harry Wharton, after a great deal of thought and discussion, counselled accepting the offer as it stood.

"We shall be up against it," said the captain of the Remove. "With Bunter in the team, it's a heavy handicap. But we're in great form—we've got some really good men—we may pull it off even with a passenger in the team."

"We may!" assented Bob Cherry.

"Bunter's a silly ass, of course!"

"A crass ass!" said Nugent.

"A conceited dummy!" said Johnny Bull.

"The crassfulness of the execrable Bunter is terrific," said Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh. "Notwithstanding, I think we should accept the esteemed and idiotic offer."

"And it's a jolly good Cup!" said Bob.

"No doubt about that—a jolly good Cup," said Vernon-Smith. "And if we pull it off, with a fat fool like Bunter in the team, it will show that we're great footballers."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's settled, then?" said Harry Wharton, at last.

"Settled!" assented the rest.

"Then Nugent had better write to Tom Merry and Jimmy Silver," said Wharton. "We can go over and see Courtenay about it, as Highcliffe is near us. We can fix up the matches easily enough, though goodness knows what they'll think when they see Bunter in the team! I'm pretty sure they'll like to go in for the Cup, anyhow."

The decision was conveyed to Billy Bunter. He received it with lofty dignity.

"You've done the sensible thing," he said. "I'm glad to see that you're not such an ass as I supposed, Wharton."

"Hem!"

"The Head's taken charge of the Cup," said Bunter. "He's going to present it to us in Big Hall after the last tie."

"Or to Highcliffe after the first," said Harry.

"Oh, that's rot! We shall beat Highcliffe. I think it's very probable that I shall put the ball in four or five times."

"Into which goal?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!" was Bunter's elegant and crushing rejoinder.

The Cup competition being settled, Nugent, as secretary, proceeded to fix up the arrangements. A reply was soon received from Tom Merry, at St. Jim's, cheerily assenting. The date was soon fixed. The answer from Rookwood was also quite satisfactory. Jimmy Silver and Co., undoubtedly, were surprised to hear about the Cup, but they were quite keen to come over to Greyfriars and annex it.

Highcliffe School being in the vicinity of Greyfriars, the Famous Five rode over on their bicycles to see Frank Courtenay about the matter. In Courtenay's study they told the whole story of the Bunter Cup, and Courtenay and his chum the Caterpillar roared.

"Dear old Bunter!" said the Caterpillar. "It's generous of him. We've bagged some pots and things since Franky became junior captain at Highcliffe, but we've room for another on the giddy old oak shelf. It's quite kind of Bunter to stand us this silver Cup."

"You haven't won it yet; you know," reminded Bob Cherry.

De Courcy nodded.

"Not yet," he agreed. "When's the date?"

"We've got a vacant date next Saturday, Wharton, if that will suit you?" said Frank Courtenay, with a smile.

"That's all right."

"Then it's goin' to be on Saturday," said the Caterpillar. "Saturday evenin' we'll be swankin' about Highcliffe with that Cup. Give Bunter our best thanks in advance."

Harry Wharton and Co. rode home from Highcliffe, leaving, as they knew, a conviction behind them that the Bunter Cup would soon be standing with other trophies won by Courtenay's team. But that knowledge had rather the effect of putting up the backs of the Remove fellows. They determined that somehow or other, by sheer hard play and resolution, they would beat Highcliffe, even with the egregious Bunter in the team.

"We've got to do it," said Bob Cherry. "It's practically playing ten men against eleven. Well, ten of Greyfriars are worth eleven of any other school—what?"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Nugent.

"Let us hope so, at least," said Harry Wharton. "At any rate, we'll do our level best to keep the cup in the Remove, Bunter or no Bunter."

"And he might fall ill!" suggested Johnny Bull hopefully.

"Ha, ha! No such luck."

"Anyhow, we'll keep the fat boulder hard at practice, and see if we can ram the rudiments of the game into him," said Bob. "Even Bunter's brain ought to be able, with plenty of tuition, to grasp the difference between a goal and a goalpost!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the following day, when the Remove fellows went down to Little Side for games practice, Bob Cherry looked for Bunter. If

The Greyfriars MASTERS' GALLERY



No. 1.—THE HEAD

HATS off to worthy Dr. Locke!
Far famed for deeds scholastic;
Although we oft receive a shock
When punishments are drastic,
We all admit that, as a rule,
Our Head is kind and lenient;
The merry japers in the school
All find it most convenient.

Attired in gown and mortar-board
The Head's a fearsome figure;
He wields the cane just like a sword,
With energy and vigour.
But only deeds of deepest dye
Receive such castigations;
The victim's voice is shrill and high,
And loud his lamentations.

The Head is growing old and grey,
Though still alert and clever;
For Heads of schools don't fade away,
They seem to live for ever.
Like Gosling, keeper of the gate,
The Head is hale and hearty;
And he will never join, they state,
The "old-at-seventy" party

We would not wish a worthier man
To reign in justice o'er us;
"Find his superior if you can!"
The fellows chant in chorus.
Long may "His Reverence" reign and rule
In wisdom and in honour;
To bring fresh fame to Greyfriars School
And shed new lustre on her.



Bunter, in a breathless state, was reposing on the earth, gazing at the sky, seeing more stars there in the daytime than any astronomer ever saw there by night! (See Chapter 14)

Bunter was going to play for the Remove, Bunter was going to be as fit as possible. That was not much to ask, in Bob's opinion. But it appeared that, in Bunter's opinion, it was much too much to ask.

"Come on, fatty," said Bob: "jump into your things. Footer practice."

Billy Bunter blinked at him from the comfortable depths of the armchair in No. 7 Study.

"Football practice!" he repeated.

"Just that. Come on!"

"That's all right. I'm not coming."

"You jolly well are!" exclaimed Bob warmly. "Aren't you sticking to playing against Highcliffe on Saturday?"

"You bet!"

"Then you're jolly well going to put in

steady practice 'every day from now to Saturday!"

"Rot!"

"Look here, Bunter!" roared Bob.

Bunter waved a fat hand at him.

"You see, it's like this," he condescended to explain. "You fellows stick to practice; that's all right. You need it; I don't. And that makes all the difference. See?"

"I see," assented Bob. "Are you ready?"

"Don't I keep on telling you I'm not coming?" hooted Bunter.

"Your mistake; you are!"

Bob Cherry laid wrathful hands on the back of the chair and tilted it forward. There was a bump as William George Bunter rolled out on the carpet.

"Whoop! Beast!"

"Coming now?" grinned Bob.

"Ow! No! Wow!"

An iron grip fastened on the back of Bunter's collar.

"Ow! Ow! Leggo!"

"Please yourself," said Bob. "I'm simply going to knock your head on the wall till you come—like that."

"Yaroo!"

"And like that."

"Oooop!"

"And that."

"Stop it!" shrieked Bunter. "I'm coming, ain't I? I'm coming as fast as I can. You beast! Ow!"

And Bunter came.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

The Match with Highcliffe!

HARRY WHARTON wore a somewhat worried look on Saturday morning.

That afternoon was to be played the first tie in the Bunter Cup competition, with Billy Bunter in the Remove eleven, and Wharton simply could not help feeling worried.

Bob Cherry's energetic methods had kept Bunter hard at practice during the week. Certainly he had improved. He could run three yards without gasping, four without sitting down to take a rest. He could kick a Soccer ball without missing it, if the ball lay quite still and nobody bothered him. This was an improvement on Bunter's customary form, but it could not be said that it entitled him to play Highcliffe on his merits.

Harry Wharton had hoped, perhaps, for further improvements. He was prepared to take any amount of trouble coaching Bunter and helping him on, since the eleven was landed with him; but the trouble was that Bunter couldn't, or wouldn't, see that there was any room for improvement.

Such as he was, he was quite satisfied with himself, and he did not conceal his opinion that he was the only really first-class man in the team.

On Saturday, Bunter looked very bright and cheery, in contrast to the captain of the Remove. He had no doubts about the after-

noon—not Bunter! He did not even doubt that the Bunter Cup would remain at Greyfriars. With Bunter in the team, victory was a foregone conclusion; that was how he looked at it. Highcliffe were simply coming over to afford Bunter an opportunity of showing what a masterly player he was. If Bunter had any doubts, it was about his fellow-players. Still, even with those duds, as he cheerfully called them, in the team, he did not doubt his ability to pull the game out of the fire.

"Not too much of your bargaining about, Cherry," he said to Bob, after dinner on Saturday.

Bob gave him a basilisk look.

The Owl of the Remove did not even see it, however, and he rattled on cheerfully:

"You're a bit of a bargee on the footer field, you know. You don't mind my mentioning it, do you?"

"You fat ass!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! And you be a bit careful with your passing, Inky. Your passing is a bit wild."

"My esteemed fatheaded Bunter—" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Lucky you're not in the team, Nugent! I couldn't have agreed to a dud like you being put in!"

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Nugent! By the way, none of your skylarking at back, Bull! Take the game seriously!"

Johnny Bull breathed hard.

"As for you, Wharton—"

"Not quite satisfied with me?" asked the captain of the Remove, with deep sarcasm.

Bunter shook his head.

"Not quite! You take rather too much of the game on yourself! Keep your eye on me and play up to me! That's the idea."

"Oh, my hat!" said Wharton.

"As for you, Smithy—"

"Do you want your silly, fat nose knocked through the back of your silly fat head?" asked the Bounder pleasantly. "If not, don't give me any chin!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Dry up, Bunter!"

"I think I ought to warn you, Toddy."

to keep in your place in the half-way line. Don't barge into the forwards."

Peter Todd drew back his foot, apparently with the intention of acknowledging this good advice with his boot. Bunter rolled hastily away, and made no more criticisms.

"What's a fellow to do with such a born dummy?" said Harry Wharton. "I begin to think we were rather asses to take on this Cup business at all. Still, we're in for it now, and there's a lot of uncertainty in footer. Let's get down to the ground."

There was already a crowd on Little Side. Most of the Remove fellows who were not in the team intended to witness the game. Temple Dabney and Co. of the Fourth came along, too, and some of the Third and Second, interested in the first tie for the Bunter Cup.

There was a general grin when Billy Bunter rolled into the field in a glaring shirt of blue hoops. Bunter meant that he should not be missed—that everybody at Greyfriars should recognise the junior who was playing the best game. He needn't have troubled! Bunter's football rig was amply and widely planned, but he looked as if the least exertion might cause him to burst out of it.

Apart from Bunter, the Remove team was a strong one. Harry Wharton had selected it with the greatest care, and every man he had picked was at the top of his form.

Hazeldene was in goal; Johnny Bull and Mark Linley were the backs; Peter Todd and Tom Brown at half, with Bunter; and the front line was a powerful one—Bob Cherry, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, Harry Wharton, Herbert Vernon-Smith, and Dick Penfold. But for Bunter's presence in the team, Bob would have played at half, and Nugent would have been in the front line. But with the valuable addition of Bunter, there was no room for Nugent, and Bob was almost as good a forward as a half. For goal, it had been a toss-up between Hazel and Squiff; but the latter was not at his best, and Hazel was in great form.

Harry Wharton felt that he had reason to be satisfied with his team, with the one awful exception. How that exception was to tell in the match remained to be seen.

(Continued on page 81.)

GREYFRIARS IN "THE GOOD OLD DAYS"

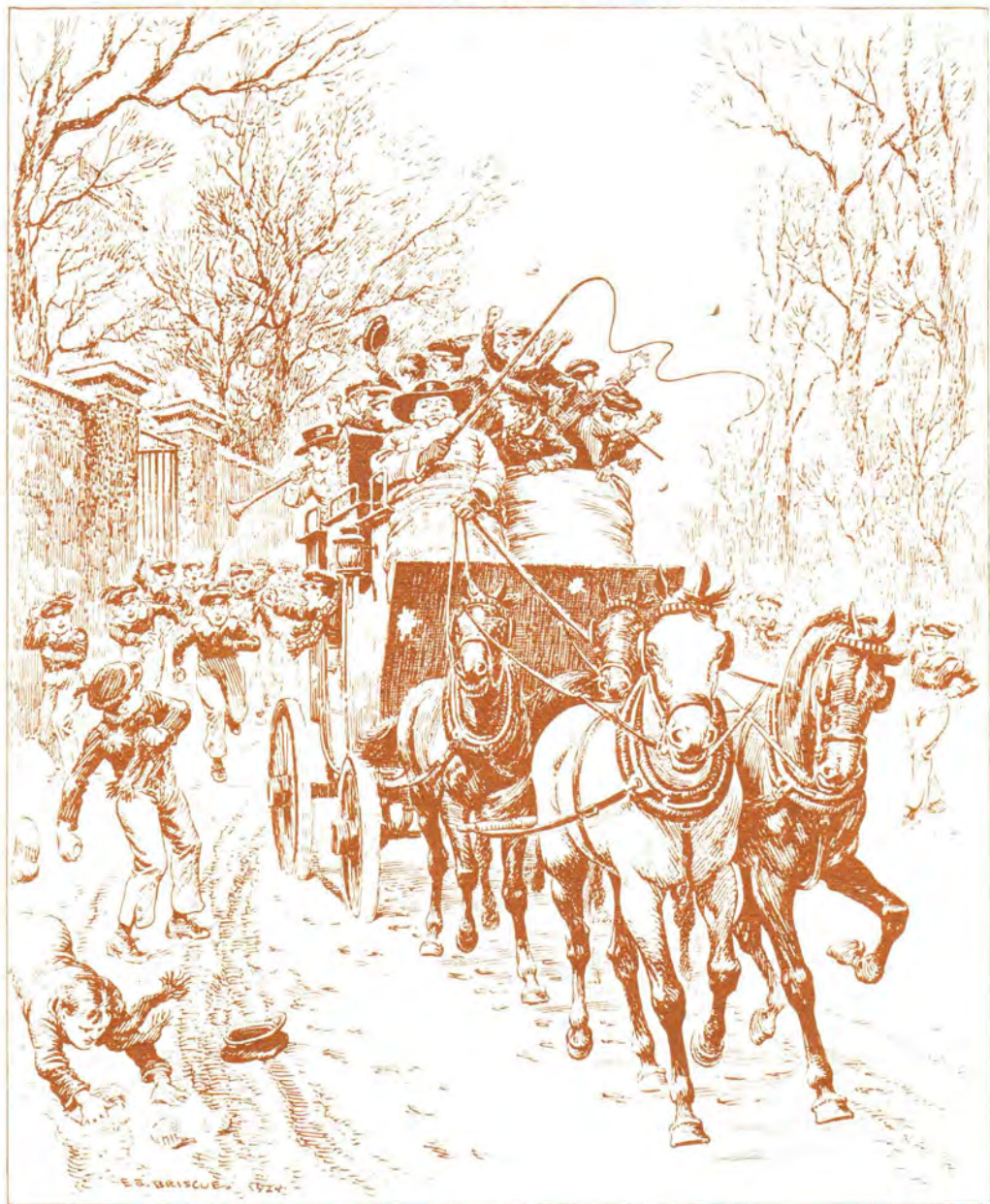
THE jolly picture which you see opposite gives a splendid impression of Breaking-up Day at Greyfriars, a hundred years ago.

The old-fashioned "coach-and-four," at which we smile in these days of swift cars and char-a-bancs, is laden with a merry party of Greyfriars juniors, about to start off for the Christmas Vacation. Members of a rival Form have come dashing out of the gates in order to "see them off," which they proceed to do very effectively by firing a volley of snow-balls at the coach party. The air is thick with the round white missiles; and we should imagine there were some "compliments" flying around, apart from the usual compliments of the season! One of the inside passengers is seen leaning from the coach, flourishing his fist at the enemy, and exclaiming, "Wait till next term, you cheeky varlets! We'll get our own back then!"

The plump little coachman, heeding nothing of the clamour—he is doubtless well accustomed to such scenes—is flicking his steeds into action, and the coach rumbles away on its journey. Its destination is not Friardale railway station—which was non-existent in those days—but London. The boys on board all have their homes in the metropolis. Those who live elsewhere will have to wait until their respective coaches come along. One does not envy those who happen to live in the Far North. They will spend several days and nights on the road; but what with their being buried in snow-drifts, and having possible encounters with highwaymen, there will be no lack of excitement for them! The London coach, which we see in the picture, will reach its destination the same day, barring accidents.

Whether "the good old days" were really so grand and thrilling as the writers of historical romances would have us believe, is open to question. But we may be certain that the Greyfriars boys of that generation enjoyed more than one "crowded hour of glorious life," and plunged into the Christmas festivities with all the enthusiasm and whole-heartedness of the boys of to-day.

GREYFRIARS IN THE OLD COACHING DAYS



To face page 80

BREAKING UP FOR THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here come Highcliffe!" sang out Bob Cherry.

The Highcliffe brake had arrived. For reasons best known to themselves, the Highcliffians smiled when they observed Billy Bunter on the field with the Remove footballers.

Bunter rolled hurriedly to Wharton while the captain of the Remove was speaking to Courtenay.

"There's still time, old chap——"

"Eh? What?"

"I've told you several times that I'm best as centre-forward——"

"Oh, dry up, Bunter!"

"It means making a cert of it, you know."

"Do cheese it!" urged Wharton.

"Oh, really, you know——"

"Hallo! It's jolly old Bunter!" smiled the Caterpillar. "So kind of you, Bunter!"

The Owl of the Remove blinked at him.

"What's kind of me?" he asked.

"Givin' us that jolly old Cup!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you cheeky ass——" said Bunter warmly.

"Shut up, Bunter!" shouted two or three voices.

"Get into the field."

Wingate of the Sixth had kindly consented to referee the first tie. The big, broad-shouldered captain of Greyfriars came into the field, and the footballers prepared for business. Frank Courtenay won the toss, and gave the Remove the wind to kick off against. The ball rolled, and the game started.

"Now look out for a jolly old circus!" said Temple of the Fourth to his comrades. "Watch Bunter. Bunter's worth watchin'!"

And the Greyfriars' fellows grinned, and watched Bunter.

Cecil Reginald Temple was undoubtedly right; he was worth watching.

THE TENTH CHAPTER

The First Half!

HIGHCLIFFE came up the field with the wind behind them, and there was a hot attack on the home goal to begin with. As a rule, the Remove half-way line

was difficult to get through—but though centre-half and left were in great form, there was a weak spot—occupied by William George Bunter. That weak spot gave the enemy the opening they wanted, and the Highcliffe forwards left Bunter gasping on his back as they ran down on goal.

Johnny Bull and Mark Linley defended well; but Courtenay came through with the ball, and he passed to the Caterpillar as he was tackled. Rupert de Courcy sent the leather whizzing in, and there was a gasp round the field. But Hazel, in goal, was equal to the shot; his fist met the ball, and sent it whizzing back. Courtenay's foot was ready for it, and the ball shot forward, but fortunately—for the Remove—struck the cross-bar and rebounded. It was a narrow escape, and the backs rushed to clear. Mark Linley lifted the leather out of the press, and a fat figure in blue and white, scrambling up, spotted and rushed for it. Bunter could have sent it tearing right up the field—but it did not seem to occur to his powerful brain that it was necessary to speed the ball in any special direction. He kicked, and dropped the ball right into the press of players in front of the home goal.

"There!" gasped Bunter, obviously pleased with his performance.

So were the Highcliffians.

There was a tussle for the ball, and it came out of the tussle like a pip from an orange, right for the goal. Hazel did not succeed in stopping it this time, and it landed.

"Goal!" chirruped Highcliffe.

Smithson, who had taken the goal for Highcliffe, grinned.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Temple of the Fourth.

"Some game!" remarked Fry.

"Oh, rather!" chuckled Dabney.

"Goal!"

Billy Bunter blinked in scorn at his hapless comrades as they lined up again.

"I say, you fellows, this won't do!" he said.

"Won't it?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"It won't! You'll have to play up a bit better than that! What's the good of my taking the trouble to play up, if you

fellows are going to muck up the game in that style?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Practically giving away the Cup," said Bunter. "For goodness' sake, pull yourselves together. Keep an eye on me."

"Kill him, somebody!" gasped Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Line up!"

The game went on, and the Greyfriars' men attacked. With the struggle in the visitors' half, Bunter was not able to do so much damage—he was always hopelessly behind. And fortune smiled on the Removites—there was a brilliant goal from Harry Wharton, and the score was equal.

By that time, Harry had realised that, good as the Highcliffe men were, his own team out-classed them—with one terrible exception. The usual Remove side would have won—with a struggle; but they could have counted on a win. But for that un-

happy flaw in their armour, Harry Wharton and Co. could have considered the Cup a safe thing so far as Highcliffe were concerned. Unfortunately, there was Bunter to be reckoned with, and Bunter was not in the least inclined to be a quiet passenger. If only he would have slacked through the game it would have been something. But Bunter, imbued with the firm belief that victory depended almost entirely upon himself, was bucking up amazingly.

By the time the whistle went for the interval, Bunter had distinguished himself—there was no doubt about that. He had charged Wharton over in the act of kicking for goal, thereby depriving his side of a certain score; he had stumbled over Mark Linley and landed with his whole terrific weight on that unfortunate youth, nearly flattening Mark into the shape of a pancake; he had landed a kick on Bob Cherry's ankle, and sent

poor Bob limping away almost crippled. He had done other things, but these were his chief performances.

The score was level at half-time, and ten members of the Remove eleven were longing to suffocate Bunter.

The Caterpillar grinned breathlessly as he sucked a lemon.

"We're lucky, Franky," he said to Courtenay. "They're above our weight, these merry men of Greyfriars; and if Bunter wasn't helpin' us in that thorough-goin' way——"

Courtenay laughed.

"They're in great form," he admitted.

"Especially Bunter!" said the Caterpillar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What kindness of heart!" murmured De Courcy. "Standin' a Cup, and playin' up hard for the other side. We must bag that Cup, Franky, if only to show Bunter that we're grateful for his generous help."

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton was having a heart-to-heart talk with William George Bunter.



There was quite a peculiar expression on Vernon-Smith's face as he watched the sleeping beauty. "If only he'd keep like that until after the Rookwood match!" said Smithy (See chapter 13)

"You crass ass——" he began.

"Cut it out!" said Bunter.

"You charged me——"

"You barged in my way, you mean——"

"You fat villain!" hissed Bob Cherry.

"You prevented a certain goal by butting into Wharton."

"I should have kicked that goal if Wharton hadn't blundered in my way like a clumsy ass!" said Bunter calmly. "That's one off our score, owing to Wharton and his clumsiness. I really must say that it's time Wharton learned to play footer."

"You must be more careful, Bunter," gasped Wharton. "Keep in your place——"

"My place is where I am needed."

"We don't want a half charging at the Highcliffe goal, and butting forwards out of the way!" shrieked Wharton.

Bunter nodded.

"You may not want it," he assented. "I understand that. But you need it. I'm going to win this game, if it's possible to win with a crowd of duds getting in my way. I'm not risking the Cup just to let you sky the ball for fluff, Wharton. I must say that I never saw such a rotten lot of footballers—never. But rely on me to pull the game out of the fire."

"You—you—you——"

"Cheese it, old chap; keep your breath for the game. You're not much good, but you may as well do your best—such as it is."

"No good talking to him," said Johnny Bull. "One of us had better lay him out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I don't think it's the only way," growled Wharton.

"Oh, really, you know——"

"Bunter, do try to have a little sense," urged the captain of the Remove. "Just keep in your place, don't try to show off; leave the game to us——"

"Likely, isn't it?" grinned Bunter. "And what about the Cup?"

"We want to save the Cup, you fathead."

"Only you can't do it," said Bunter. "That depends entirely on me, as you'd see if you weren't blinded by conceit, Wharton."

"Oh, dear!"

"Now, I'll give you a tip," said Bunter, blinking at the infuriated footballers. "Leave

the game to me. Keep round me and watch me, but give me plenty of room. Play up to me. Play second fiddle yourselves, and let me win. See?"

It was fortunate, perhaps, that the call of time came, or something like manslaughter might have happened on Little Side at Greyfriars.

The teams lined up again, and Billy Bunter, pumped, almost breathless, but still determined to distinguish himself, looked, like Alexander, for fresh worlds to conquer.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

The Second Half!

"PLAY up, Bunter!"

"On the ball!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Temple of the Fourth wiped his eyes.

"Isn't this too good to be true?" he appealed to Fry and Dabney. "Jevver see anythin' like it off a comic film? Why, that fellow Bunter is a prize packet; he's worth his weight in postal-orders; he's worth a guinea a box!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Bunter!" yelled the Fourth-form fellows.

Bunter was going it.

His late attention to football practice had done him good—it was turning out too well, in fact. It would have been fortunate for the Remove had Bunter collapsed into a breathless state, and had to be assisted off the field. That would have been a stroke of great fortune. But the Owl of the Remove was displaying unusual endurance. True, he took a good many rests. Much of his time was spent in lying on his back, gazing dizzily at the blue sky. Many minutes he spent sitting down; many more, in looking for his spectacles.

But he found time enough, and energy enough to play a game that made the spectators howl.

Exactly where he was not wanted, there Bunter was sure to be. If he kicked the ball and hit it with his elephantine foot, he was sure to land it just where the enemy wanted it. If he kicked it and missed it, he was sure to land a kick on an ankle or a knee belonging

to a fellow-player. It was, indeed, wonderful that any fellow could play football quite so badly as William George Bunter played it. Really it amounted almost to genius.

Even when he fell down—which was the most useful thing he could do for his side—he was sure to fall down in somebody's way, in the most awkward place possible. And if a fellow was down, Bunter was certain to plump over him, and knock out what breath remained in the hapless victim.

The Remove fellows soon fell into the way of shouldering Bunter ruthlessly aside, careless of what happened to him. But it was rather a handicap to have to play Bunter and the Highcliffians as well. And Bunter was not to be shouldered away with impunity. He would rise in wrath and charge—and a charge with Bunter's weight behind it was like unto the charge of a particularly hefty battering-ram.

More and more during the second half it became clear that the Removites, if not handicapped by Bunter, would have walked all over the Highcliffe team. As it was, they kept the enemy from scoring, and that was a great feat in the circumstances. They felt that if the game ended in a draw, it would be more to their credit than many previous victories.

Temple of the Fourth looked at his handsome gold watch.

"Five minutes to go!" he remarked. "Lots of time for Bunter to win the game for Highcliffe."

"Oh, rather," chuckled Dabney.

"Highcliffe ain't up to much form," said Fry sagely. "If they'd been anywhere near the Remove style, they'd have won hands down. Looks like a draw now."

Cecil Reginald chortled.

"What will it be like when they play St. Jim's—with Bunter?" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If I were a bettin' chap," said Temple, "I'd back St. Jim's, or Rookwood either, to pile up ten goals to nil, with the fat duffer barging about the field."

"It's good-bye to the jolly old Cup, anyhow," said Fry. "Highcliffe may not bag it, perhaps: but the next match does it."

"And that's a shame—it's a good Cup, and ought to stay at Greyfriars," said Temple,

"If I were Wharton, I'd manage to boot that fat duffer out of the eleven."

"He can't; it's a giddy condition, laid down and agreed to. Bunter's wide—in more ways than one," chuckled Fry.

"There he goes!" roared Squiff. "Oh, look at that chump!"

"What a game!" chuckled Coker of the Fifth, who had been drawn to Little Side by the roars of laughter. "Jevver see the like?"

"Never!" said Potter and Greene of the Fifth together. And they roared.

The Removites were attacking hotly, and they had the Highcliffe defence fairly beaten, and in the last few minutes of the game Bunter, in a breathless state, had been reposing on the earth, gazing at the sky, seeing more stars there in the daytime than any astronomer ever saw there at night. But Bunter was not done with. Far from that! He sat up and pumped in breath, and blinked round him, and staggered to his feet. He set his glasses straight on his fat little nose, and charged into the fray.

Vernon-Smith was kicking for goal—and it was a fairly sure thing, for the Highcliffe goalie had slipped over and was down after punching out the ball. And right into Smithy's back came Bunter like a charging bull.

Crash!

The Bounder very nearly shot into goal himself, under that terrific impact.

A Highcliffe back lifted the ball the next moment as the hapless Smith rolled over, and dropped it in midfield. Wharton ran to pick the Bounder up as the game swayed away.

"I'll slaughter him!" muttered Wharton. "I'll order him off, anyhow—I'll—I'll—"

"I say, you fellows, where's the ball?" squeaked Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell.

"Where's that ball—I say, where's my glasses—mind you don't treat on my glasses!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going to kill him after the whistle's gone," said the Bounder ferociously. "He's nearly broken my back! Ow!"

"Come on!"

Vernon-Smith limped into the fray again.

Courtenay and Co. had carried the ball up to the home goal, but Johnny Bull sent it whizzing back with a tremendous kick.

Bob Cherry was on it in a moment more, and Bunter—regardless even of his spectacles—made a rush. Harry Wharton was just in time to give Bunter his shoulder, and the Owl of the Remove spun three yards away and collapsed.

"Kick!" roared the crowd.

Bob was taking the ball up the field, and Wingate was about to blow the whistle.

"Kick!"

And Bob Cherry kicked, a long shot, which by good fortune grazed the fingertips of the custodian and landed.

"Goal!"

It was a tremendous roar. On the very stroke of time Bob Cherry had landed the winning goal, in spite of Bunter and all his works.

Wharton clapped his chum on the back.

"Bob, old man—good! Good! Good!"

"Hurray!"

"Bravo, Cherry!"

"Goal! Goal! Goal!"

"Well, my hat!" said Bob Cherry. "We've pulled it off! We've won a match with Bunter on our backs! Oh, my hat!"

"Goal! Goal!"

"Remove wins!" roared Nugent. "Bravo! Good old Bob!"

The whistle was hardly heard in the roar. Billy Bunter staggered up and blinked round him.

"That wasn't a fair charge!" he howled. "Eh?"

"Referee—where's the referee! I claim a penalty!" howled Bunter. "Wingate—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly chump!" roared Wharton. "It wasn't a Highcliffe fellow—it was I who pushed you out of the way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

"Well, I don't think I've ever seen a game like this before," said Wingate of the Sixth, laughing. "And I can't say that I want to see another like it."

"I say, you fellows, get going!" shouted Bunter.

"What?"

"Oh, the ball, you know," urged Bunter. Apparently the Owl of the Remove was unaware that the game was over.

"You burling bandersnatch," gasped Johnny Bull. "It's over, and we've beaten Highcliffe."

Bunter blinked at him.

"Then we've won?"



The Owl of the Remove clasped both hands to his plump circumference and yelled. "I want the masters here! I want the Head! I want the doctor—I—Yaroooh!" he yelled. (See chapter 13)

"Yes, es!"

"I told you we should, with me in the team!" said Bunter.

"Ch. my hat!"

The Caterpillar came up to Billy Bunter with a whimsical smile on his face. He tapped the fat footballer on the shoulder.

"Sorry, Bunter, old man," he said.

"Eh! What?"

"Horrid disappointment for you," said the Caterpillar sympathetically.

"Eh! How?"

"You were intendin' to give us that Cup, and now we haven't bagged it," said the Caterpillar. "I assure you, old man, that I sympathise deeply with your disappointment."

Bunter blinked at him in perplexity.

"I wasn't intending to give you the Cup," he said. "What—"

"Oh, my mistake!" said the Caterpillar gracefully. "I thought, from your style of play, that you were."

And De Conrey walked off with Courtenay, leaving Bunter blinking, still perplexed, and the other fellows chuckling.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

Bunter is Satisfied!

AFTER the Highcliffe match, the Bunter Cup was a more discussed topic than ever at Greyfriars. By the skin of their teeth, as it were, the Greyfriars Remove had saved the Cup in the first tie. Mr. William Samuel Bunter's silver Challenge Cup still reposed safely at Greyfriars; but the Remove had two more matches to play to win it—in the peculiar conditions of the competition. Highcliffe having been beaten, Rookwood came next on the list; and Rookwood had notified their willingness to fix a date. But it was generally felt that it was not of much use to arrange a later date with St. Jim's. Fortune had favoured the Remove in the first tie, but they could not expect fortune to favour them to the same extent in the second. For Rookwood were certain to send over a team that could not fail to beat the Remove if Bunter persisted in claiming his right to play.

And Bunter did!

Argument, expostulation, and obijuration were exhausted on Billy Bunter in vain.

He simply could not see what was perfectly clear to everybody else. And there were, as Smithy remarked, none so blind as those who would not see!

Bunter's view was that he, the best footballer ever turned out by Greyfriars, had been prevented from winning the match hands down by the rotten play and cheeky interference of the rest of the team.

That view was firmly fixed in his fat mind. A surgical operation would scarcely have removed it.

Bunter pointed to the undoubted fact that the match had been won with Bunter playing in the team. He stated that he had said that the Remove would win if they played him, and that certainly was true; he had said so, not once, but many times.

That the Remove had won in spite of his presence in the team was a circumstance that Bunter couldn't or wouldn't see.

"We had luck—heaps of luck!" Bob Cherry told him. "Highcliffe were not in great form, for one thing."

"Rot!" said Bunter.

"We ought to have beaten them by four or five goals, on their form," said Nugent.

"So we should have—if the fellows hadn't got in my way," said Bunter.

"And the winning goal was a stroke of luck," said Bob. "It was ten to one against my bringing it off as I did."

"Very likely," assented Bunter. "But it would have been a dead cert if you'd let me have the ball."

"Oh, dear!"

"Next match, don't be a selfish player," admonished Bunter. "Let me have the ball, and play up to me. That's what we want."

Evidently it was not of much use arguing with the Owl of the Remove.

"Best thing you can do," continued Bunter, "is to persuade Wharton to take a back seat and let me play centre-forward. Then we shall walk all over Rookwood, and St. Jim's after them. See? But, of course, I shall expect you fellows to play up to me, and not keep on getting in my way as you did in the Highcliffe match."

Words were wasted on Bunter; so Bob Cherry sat him down, with a bump, and left it at that.

There was deep discussion in No. 1 Study. The question was: Could Bunter, somehow or anyhow, be left out of the team in the subsequent matches? That question had to be answered in the negative.

"We've agreed to the conditions," said Wharton. "We took the risk, though I must say I didn't quite realise what an absolute idiot Bunter could be, and I've never experienced before how much one dangerous maniac can do to muck up a whole side. We can throw up the whole thing if we like, and tell Mr. Bunter to take his blessed Cup away and bury it in his back garden. But if we play for it, we're bound to play on the terms agreed."

"We were fools to agree!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Well, if we throw the thing up now, it comes to the same thing," said Harry. "Are we throwing it up?"

But there was general reluctance to decide upon that. The Remove footballers wanted to win the Bunter Cup, especially now that they had taken on the job.

"After all, football's an uncertain game," said Bob. "We've seen good teams beaten by rotten teams—with luck on their side. And we're a top-hole team excepting Bunter. Somehow or other we may beat Rookwood."

"They might be off colour or something," said Nugent.

"That's too much to expect. Highcliffe weren't up to the mark, and the same thing wouldn't happen twice," remarked Peter Todd.

"Still, you never know."

"I think we may as well play on and hope for the best," said the captain of the Remove. "There's always a chance, too, that Bunter may fall ill; he's got lots of money these days, and he spreads himself every day in the tuck-shop. Even Bunter can't keep on cramming doughnuts and jam tarts without something happening, I should think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then we fix it up with Rookwood?" asked Nugent.

"I think so."

Vernon-Smith nodded thoughtfully.

"Lots of things might happen," he said. "Lots of things might be made to happen —"

Wharton gave the Bounder a rather sharp look.

"Cut that out, Smithy!" he said. "It's hard cheese on us, and that fat duffer has got us pinned down. But we're bound to give him fair play—either to throw up the whole thing, or to keep to the conditions."

"Oh, of course," said the Bounder. "But if Bunter had a terrific attack of indigestion on Rookwood day—"

"I suppose we may hope for that, at least," said Wharton laughing.

"And you never can tell," said Bob Cherry, hopefully. "Fix it up with Rookwood, and hope for the best."

And so it was decided.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

Awful!

JIMMY SILVER AND Co., of Rookwood School, were booked to arrive at Greyfriars on a Wednesday afternoon; and Harry Wharton and his comrades looked forward to that date with a mixture of hope and misgiving—in which mixture misgiving predominated. William George Bunter was the only member of the team who had no misgivings. In these days William George, lived and moved, and had his being, in swank. No more was heard at Greyfriars of Bunter's celebrated postal order. Bunter had plenty of cash in his pockets now; his expected postal order was not likely to be heard of again so long as this new prosperity lasted in the Bunter family. Possibly it would not last for ever. There were ups and downs on the Stock Exchange, and Mr. Bunter might encounter some of the downs after a happy experience of the ups. But for the present Billy Bunter fairly exulted—currency notes, and Skinner and Co. were loyal in their devotion, whatever other fellows thought. But it was not only as a wealthy fellow that Bunter swanked—he swanked still more as a footballer—a fellow who was great on games.

He was never tired of pointing out that,



Bunter was stretched upon the sofa, groaning deeply. Mr. Quelch stood over him, puzzled and alarmed. "He's in my team, sir!" said Harry Wharton. "I can't very well ask the Rookwood fellows to wait. Come on, Bunter, pull yourself together and come along!" "I'm dying!" groaned Bunter (See Chapter 14)

the very first time he had played for the Remove, the Remove had won—a very important match, too, with a silver Cup at stake!

What could you want plainer than that, Bunter would inquire. And Skinner and Co., revelling in jam tarts and dough nuts "stood" by the generous Owl, agreed that it was plain enough.

Bunter, indeed, declared that, after he had helped to beat such tough opponents as Rookwood and St. Jim's, it was very likely that Wingate would ask him to play for the Greyfriars First Eleven. And Skinner and Co., with their tongues in their cheeks, agreed that it was very likely indeed.

So, in these happy days, Bunter came very near understudying the ancient classical

gentleman, and striking the stars with his sublime head!

Bunter was all the more satisfied, because he was no longer urged to show up at games practice. Rather the Remove fellows liked to see him stuffing in the tuck-shop. For if Bunter played in the Rookwood match, the sooner he was winded the better. The only hope of the Removites, indeed, was that Bunter would collapse early in the game, and leave them to play a man short.

So Bunter, who was not at all keen on football excepting when there was "swank" to be earned, kept quite clear of Little Side, and had hardly touched a football before the date of the Rookwood visit came round.

On that Wednesday morning, Bunter was eyed almost wolfishly by some of the Remove

fellows. He seemed fatter and shinier than ever; but they had to admit that he showed no signs of illness. How the inner Bunter dealt with all that was crammed into it by the outer Bunter, was a mystery. But the Owl of the Remove really seemed to thrive on unlimited tuck.

After lessons that morning, Harry Wharton made a last attempt to reason with the fat junior.

"Feeling fit, Bunter?" he asked.

"Fit as a fiddle," assured Bunter.

"You don't feel like standing out of the match this afternoon?"

"Not in the least!"

"Bunter, old man, be good," urged Wharton. "You want us to win the Cup for Greyfriars, don't you?"

"Yes—that's why I'm going to play."

"You'll lose us the match, old man."

"That's only your conceit," said Bunter cheerfully. "If you'd like me to make a suggestion, I suggest that you should hand the captaincy over to me for this match."

"Eh?"

"After all, we want to keep the Cup," argued Bunter. "That would make it a cert. What do you think?"

Wharton did not state what he thought. He suppressed his feelings and walked away. It was evident that there was nothing doing.

The hopes of the Remove team were very nearly at zero now. They were going to do their best; but there seemed little to hope for.

Some of the fellows went to meet Jimmy Silver and Co. at the station; the Rookwood crowd were coming by train from Hampshire. Billy Bunter did not worry about honouring the expected guests in that way; he repaired to the school shop after dinner for further supplies. Skinner and Co. joined him there, and shared the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

Then Bunter rolled away to No. 7 Study for a nap, which he felt that he needed after his exertions in the tuck-shop.

He disposed himself in the arm-chair in No. 7, and his deep and resonant snore echoed along the Remove passage.

A little later the Bounder of Greyfriars

looked into No. 7. There was quite a peculiar expression on Vernon-Smith's face as he watched the sleeping beauty.

"Looks a real bute, doesn't he?" remarked Wibley, glancing over the Bounder's shoulder.

"If he'd only keep that up till after the Rookwood match!" said Smithy.

"He jolly well won't! Besides, Wharton would send for him at once and wake him up."

"Wharton's an ass," grunted the Bounder.

"Well, he's bound to give the fat duffer fair play," remarked Wibley, judiciously. "An agreement is an agreement."

Vernon-Smith nodded.

Billy Bunter's eyes opened. He rubbed them, and set his spectacles straight on his little fat nose, and blinked at the two juniors in the doorway.

"Hallo! Silver's lot here yet?" he yawned.

"Not yet! Wharton's gone to meet them at Courtfield," said the Bounder. "They're not here yet."

"Good! Time for a snack."

"Hungry?" asked Wibley, sarcastically.

"Well, just a little peckish, you know! I've had nothing since dinner but a few dough nuts, and a cake and half-a-dozen jam tarts and some nuts and bananas."

"Great pip! You must be famished!" ejaculated Wibley, still more sarcastically.

"Not famished—just peckish," said Bunter.

"Trot along to my study," said the Bounder, with a peculiar glimmer in his eyes. "There's a cake in my cupboard—a jolly good cake, with marzipan on top."

"Good old Smithy!" said Bunter, "I will."

And he detached himself from the arm-chair, yawned, and rolled along to No. 4 Study. Smithy and Wibley watched him disappear into No. 4, and then looked at one another.

"Will it work?" murmured Wibley.

Smithy shrugged his shoulders.

"If it doesn't, the Rookwood match is a goner," he said. "Hallo, there comes the football crowd." He gave a nod towards the corridor window,

Billy Bunter did not heed the arrival of the footballers. He was busy on the cake.

He sat in Smithy's armchair, with the cake on his knees, and shifted it in bulk, so to speak.

It was assuredly a very nice cake, rich in fruit and aromatic in odour, with a thick layer of marzipan on the top.

Vernon-Smith appeared in the doorway with Wibley, and found him busily engaged. Bunter gave him a fat grin, with his mouth full.

"I say, this is a jolly good cake, Smithy."

"Glad you like it, old bean."

"Won't you have some?"

"Not just before footer."

"Rot!" said Bunter, "I play better on cake! What's the matter, Smithy?" he added.

Vernon-Smith was staring into the open study cupboard, with a startled expression on his face.

"Did you get hold of the right cake, Bunter?" he asked.

"Eh! I suppose so."

"You didn't take the one I got ready for the rats?"

"The—the what?"

"It's all right—you'd have tasted the rat poison, if there was any in that cake."

Bunter jumped.

"Rat poison!" he said faintly.

"Dash it all, that's careless, Smithy!" exclaimed Wibley. "You shouldn't leave such a thing in your study cupboard!"

"Lot of good saying that now—if Bunter's got hold of it by mistake," growled the Bounder. "But it's all right if Bunter took the cake off the second shelf—"

"I took it off the top shelf!" said Bunter, faintly.

"The—the top shelf!"

"Yes!" gasped Bunter.

"Good heavens!"

The remnant of the cake slid from Bunter's fat knees to the floor, unheeded. He lay back in the chair and blinked in horror at the Bounder.

"Smithy!—oh, dear—ow——!"

"It's all right," said Vernon-Smith, hurriedly. "If you don't feel any ill-effects, it can't have hurt you."

"Ow!"

"How much did you put into it?" exclaimed Wibley.

"Not so much as a quarter of a pound, I'm certain."

Bunter gave a wild yell.

"A quarter of a pound of rat poison! Ow! I'm killed! I'm dying! Yaroooh."

"Shut up—you'll have the masters here!" exclaimed the Bounder, "I—I'm sure you're not poisoned—"

"I am!" yelled Bunter. "I want the masters here—I want the Head—I want a doctor—I—I—yaroooh!"

"But I tell you it's all right if you don't feel any pain—"

"I do!" howled Bunter. "Frightful pain—awful agony! Ow, ow, ow!"

The Owl of the Remove clasped both hands to his plump circumference, and yelled. Bunter had a fertile imagination. The bare idea of rat poison in the cake made him believe that the pains were coming on.

"Real pain?" ejaculated the Bounder.

"Awful! Ow! Like burning daggers! Wow! Help!"

"You've done it now, Smithy," said Wibley. "I—I say, it will be brought in accidental death, I hope, at the inquest."

Bunter gave a fearful yell at that word.

"Inquest! Yoooop!"

"You'll bear witness it was accidental, Wib," gasped the Bounder. "You know I never knew there was any rat poison in the cake."

"You did!" yelled Bunter. "You've done it on purpose! You'll be hanged! Help! Doctor! Whoooop!"

Ogilvy of the Remove looked in.

"You're wanted, Smithy," he said, "Bunter, too, if he's playing. The Rookwood chaps are ready! Why, what's the row here?"

"Yarooooop!"

"Look after him!" gasped Vernon-Smith, and he hurried out of the study.

"Yow-ow! Help! Doctor! Help!" roared Bunter.

Vernon-Smith arrived on the football ground. Harry Wharton called to him.

"Do you know where Bunter is, Smithy?"

"In my study," said the Bounder.

"Why doesn't he come?" exclaimed the

captain of the Remove crossly. "Bad enough to have to play him, without having to wait!"

"He thinks he's ill."

"Ill!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Only fancy, I think," said the Bounder calmly. "But I hardly think he will come."

"Hurray!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Oh, what a little bit of luck!" sang Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton gave the Bounder a penetrating look. He was glad enough to hear that Bunter was likely to stand out of the match; but a compact was a compact, and Bunter was to be given his rights if he claimed them and chose to exercise them.

"Look here, Smithy, is this straight?" asked the captain of the Remove bluntly.

"Perhaps you'd better see Bunter," said Smithy. "Perhaps I had."

And the captain of the Remove sprinted away to the schoolhouse, leaving the footballers in excited discussion of the unexpected turn of events.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

Not Fatal!

"Ow-ow-ow!"

"Bunter!"

"Wow-wow-ow!"

"My dear boy——"

"Groooooogh!"

The voices of Billy Bunter and Mr. Quelch,

the master of the Remove, alternated in No. 4 Study as Harry Wharton came running up the Remove passage from the stairs.

Wharton looked into the study.

Bunter was stretched on the sofa now, groaning deeply. Mr. Quelch stood over him, puzzled and alarmed. Wibley and Ogilvy were in the study, both grave and quiet.

"Is Bunter ill, sir?" exclaimed Harry.

"He seems so, Wharton."

"Whooooooop!"

"He's in my team, sir," said Wharton. "We can't very well ask the Rookwood fellows to wait——"

"Beast! Ow!"

"Are you playing, Bunter?" demanded Wharton.

"Ow! I'm dying!"

"Oh, rot! He's always fancying himself ill, sir," said Harry.

"Look here, Bunter, pull yourself together and come along!"

"I won't!" roared Bunter.

"Hang your silly footer! I tell you I've been poisoned——"

"What?"

gasped Wharton. "That beast Smithy has poisoned me!"

"Ow! Wow!"

"You silly ass!"

"I tell you he has!" shrieked Bunter.

"He put rat poison in a cake, and I've eaten it! He said so!"

"Do you feel any pain, Bunter?" asked Mr. Quelch.



Billy Bunter arrived breathless on the field. His fat face was crimson and he panted. "I'm ready to play!" he gasped. "Have you started?" "Started?" exclaimed Wharton blankly. "The game's half over! This is the interval, fatty!" (See Chapter 15)

"Ow! I'm suffering fearfully! Ow! Ow! Wow! Send for a doctor!" yelled Bunter.

"I have already given instructions for the doctor to be telephoned for, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch. "Calm yourself."

"Ow! Ow! Wow!"

"Dr. Pillbury will be here soon," said Mr. Quelch soothingly.

"Wow!"

"I must see Vernon-Smith," said the Remove master. "Doubtless he can explain this. It looks to me like some foolish jest on Bunter."

"Ow! I'm dying!"

"Where is the pain, Bunter?"

"All over! Like burning daggers——"

"Bunter!"

"And red-hot knives!"

"Really, Bunter——"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Where's that doctor? Ow!"

"Bunter obviously cannot play football this afternoon, Wharton. You had better fill his place. Ogilvy, please find Vernon-Smith at once and send him to me."

"Very well, sir."

The captain of the Remove and Ogilvy left the study together. Billy Bunter's resounding groans followed them down the passage.

"What on earth does it all mean, Ogilvy?" asked Wharton.

"Blessed if I know! Only I fancy there's something on between Smithy and Wibley," said Ogilvy.

"I can't make it out. I'll ask Smithy, anyhow. He's on the football ground," said Harry.

The two juniors hurried down to Little Side. A shout from the Remove footballers greeted them.

"Where's Bunter? Is Bunter playing?"

"No!"

"Hurrah!"

"Smithy's wanted," said Ogilvy. "Isn't Smithy here?"

"He's cleared off," said Squiff. "He told me to ask you to play me instead, Wharton."

"That's all right," said Harry. "But

Smithy's wanted. Mr. Quelch wants to know what he's done to Bunter."

"Perhaps that's why he's cleared off," grinned Peter Todd.

"The perhapsfulness is terrific."

Harry Wharton knitted his brows in perplexity. He was unable to make head or tail of the puzzling affair. But one thing was clear—whether Bunter was ill, or fancied that he was ill, he was standing out of the Rookwood match.

That much was clear, and it was a great relief to all concerned. Ogilvy hurried away to look for Vernon-Smith—but without much expectation of finding him. He had to return finally to No. 4 Study and report to Mr. Quelch that Vernon-Smith could not be found.

"He's run away!" howled Bunter. "He knows he'll be hanged for this——"

"Nonsense, Bunter!"

"Where's that doctor?"

"He will be here very quickly, Bunter——"

"Ow!"

On Little Side, the game was beginning. But William George Bunter was not giving a single thought to the Rookwood match. All his thoughts were concentrated on himself.

It seemed an age to Bunter, before the medical gentleman's car was heard on the drive, and Dr. Pillbury, the school doctor, was shown up to the study.

Mr. Quelch hurriedly explained the circumstances, so far as he knew them.

Dr. Pillbury looked far from impressed.

Bunter's howls and groans certainly seemed to indicate that he was in a very serious state; but there was no other indication.

"My own impression is," added Mr. Quelch, "that this foolish boy has been frightened by some foolish joke."

"Very probable indeed!" grunted the medical gentleman.

"However, if you examine him——"

"Quite so."

Dr. Pillbury took Bunter in hand at once. The Owl of the Remove did not enjoy the process. It seemed to him that the heartless medical man, deaf and blind to his awful

sufferings, took a fiendish delight in pinching and punching him. The proceedings were still proceeding, when the study door opened, and Vernon-Smith walked in.

The Bounder seemed surprised to see Mr. Quelch and the medical man there. At all events, he looked surprised.

"Oh! Here is the boy!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Vernon-Smith, Bunter declares that you gave him a cake in which rat-poison had been placed——"

"Does he?" ejaculated Smithy.

"You did nothing of the sort, I presume?"

"Certainly not, sir."

"Have you so dangerous a thing as any kind of poison in the study, Vernon-Smith?"

"No, sir! Never had, that I know of."

Bunter ceased to groan suddenly. He sat up on the sofa.

"Smithy, you beast—— Oh, you rotter——"

"Kindly moderate your expressions, Bunter, in my presence and that of Dr. Pillbury!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch severely.

"He said he put a quarter of a pound of it in the cake!" yelled Bunter.

"I certainly did not," said the Bounder coolly.

"He did!" shrieked Bunter.

"Kindly tell me what your exact words were, Vernon-Smith," said the Remove master sternly.

"Wibley asked me how much I had put in the cake, sir," said Vernon-Smith. "I said not so much as a quarter of a pound."

"Then you did put some?"

"Oh, no, sir—I put none. None is not so much as a quarter of a pound, isn't it?"

Mr. Quelch stared at Vernon-Smith; and a faint sound resembling a chuckle came from the medical gentleman.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Vernon-Smith, you—you appear to have kept within the bounds of the truth; yet what you said was calculated to give Bunter the impression that there was a quantity of rat-poison in the cake."

"Was it, sir?"

"Certainly it was! In fact, it is perfectly clear to me that you deliberately gave Bunter that impression in order to play upon his foolish fears."

"Oh, sir!" murmured the Bounder.

"There is nothing wrong with the boy," said Dr. Pillbury. "My time has been wasted."

"I apologise most profoundly, doctor," said Mr. Quelch. "Your time has been wasted by Bunter's folly, and by the misdirected humour of Vernon-Smith! Both will be punished, you may be sure."

"Ow!"

Dr. Pillbury hustled away to his car. Mr. Quelch fixed a very stern glance on the Bounder.

"Vernon-Smith, you will go at once to the form-room, and write out three hundred lines of Virgil."

"Very well, sir!" said the Bounder submissively.

"You have played a foolish jest on Bunter, Vernon-Smith—with the serious result that you have wasted your form-master's time, as well as Dr. Pillbury's. I am sorry to punish you severely; but I cannot do less. Go to the form-room at once."

"Yes, sir."

The Bounder went.

Billy Bunter slid off the sofa rather apprehensively. All his fearful pains and agonies had vanished now, having existed only in his fat imagination.

"You will take a hundred lines, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch. "On another occasion I shall cane you, if you do not learn to reflect a little, before causing so much trouble for nothing."

"I—I——!" stammered Bunter.

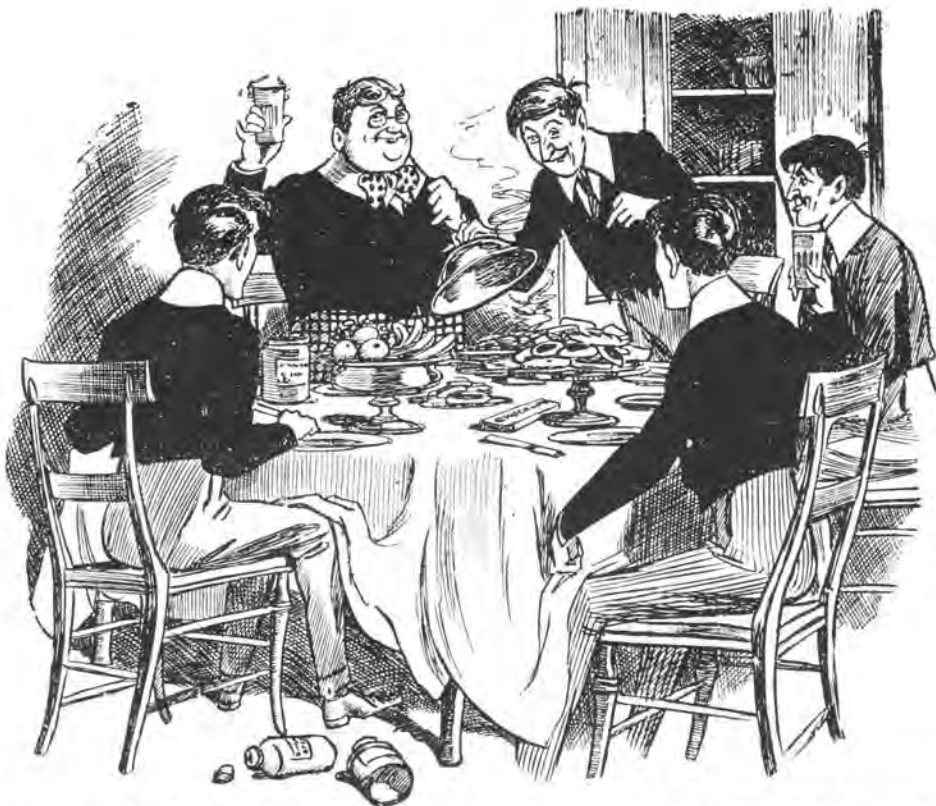
"That will do, Bunter! I shall expect the lines this evening," said Mr. Quelch, and he rustled out of the study, very cross indeed.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter.

Bunter was feeling well again—quite well. Feeling well, he remembered the Rookwood match. He blinked at his watch—it was nearly a quarter to four, and the kick-off was timed for three o'clock.

"They—they—they wouldn't have the check to play without me!" gasped Bunter.

And he scudded out of the study and headed for Little Side.



Bunter was doing the honours, and the table almost groaned under the good things that were stacked on it. It could not be denied that Bunter, when in possession of ample funds, spent them royally (See Chapter 17)

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

The Rookwood Match!

JIMMY SILVER and Co. were quite pleased to hear the whistle, at the end of the first half. It had been a gruelling game, and the visitors at Greyfriars had been given plenty of work to do. There were two good teams in the field, and both were playing hard; and no goal had been taken on either side when the whistle went for the interval.

At the start, a good many fellows had gathered round the ground, to grin at Bunter's expected performances. It was quite a disappointment to some, to find that the Owl was not in the Remove team.

"Oh, gad!" said Temple of the Fourth, "Bunter's standin' out! No comie turn to-day."

"Good luck for the Remove, what?" said Fry.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"They've got Squiff in Bunter's place, and Nugent instead of Vernon-Smith!" remarked Hobson of the Shell. "I wonder they've left out the old Bounder! He's a good man."

"Nugent's good in the front line," remarked Temple. "And that chap Field is toppin' at half! These Remove kids are playin' pretty good footer to-day."

The Remove fellows were under the impression that their footer that day was some-

thing more than pretty good; but Cecil Reginald Temple was a lofty youth.

In the interval, the Remove eleven looked and felt very well satisfied, though they were feeling the effects of a hard first half. The fact that Bunter was not in the team had a remarkably invigorating effect on them.

If Bunter really was ill, they were, of course, sorry! But they were undoubtedly more pleased for themselves than sorry for Bunter.

The team was as good as on the occasion of the Highcliffe match. Nugent, perhaps, was not quite up to the Bounder's form, but he was at his best, and he had a great turn of speed. And the absence of Bunter more than compensated for any difference there. Vernon-Smith had had to sacrifice his own game that afternoon to carry out his curious scheme; but he had felt that it was worth it. And, Bunter being out, Squiff as half-back added a tower of strength to the Remove eleven.

The game had been hard; Jimmy Silver and Co. were in topping form. And all the Remove realised that, had Bunter played, the margin of goals against them would have been already heavy. A weakness in their defence would have been found out at once. A flaw in their armour would have handed them over to the Philistines.

Wharton hardly dared to think, indeed, of what the game would have been like, against the Rookwooders, had Bunter been barging and charging about the field as on the Highcliffe occasion.

It really did not bear thinking of. Undoubtedly it would have meant certain defeat.

Fortunately, Bunter was not there.

It was anybody's game, so far; but at all events the result depended on good football and hard play; and Wharton could count on every one of his followers to put up a good game.

"Well, Rookwood's giving us our money's worth," Bob Cherry remarked, as he sucked a lemon. "I think we're going to win——"

"You always do!" grinned Nugent.

"Still, if we're licked, we're licked on our giddy merits," said Bob. "That's better than being let down by a fat bandersnatch."

"Yes, rather," said Johnny Bull.

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"I wonder how Bunter's getting on," said Toddy.

"Oh, blow Bunter!"

"Bless Bunter!"

"I hope he isn't really ill," said Wharton. "But it's a blessing to have him standing out of the team, and there's no denying it. We've got a chance of keeping the Cup at Greyfriars now."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Talk of angels! Here he comes!"

"Bunter, by Jove!" exclaimed Temple of the Fourth. "A little late—but better late than never."

"Too late to play, thank goodness," said Mark Linley.

Billy Bunter arrived breathless on the field. His fat face was crimson, and he panted.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Bunt! All serene again?"

"Yes," gasped Bunter. "I'm ready to play."

"Eh! What?"

"I'm ready! Have you started?"

"Have we started?" exclaimed Wharton blankly. "The game's half over! This is the interval, fatty!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"Time!" sang out Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows!" roared Bunter, in great wrath. "Look here, I'm going to play! I——"

"Keep off the field, Bunter!" called out Gwynne of the Sixth, who was referee in the match.

"Look here, Gwynne! I——"

"Keep off, you fat duffer."

"I tell you——" roared Bunter.

"Roll him away," said Gwynne; and Ogilvy and Russell and Wibley took hold of Bunter and rolled him away.

The whistle went, and play was resumed. Behind the Remove goal, Billy Bunter's voice could be heard—in tones of wrath and expostulation, mingled with loud laughter from the Remove crowd. That Vernon-Smith had played a jest on him—that he hadn't really intended to stand out of the match—that he wanted the game to be restarted from the

Mysterious!

beginning. All this became clear. But it only seemed to afford entertainment to the fellows who listened to Bunter. The footballers, certainly, did not listen to him. They were too busy even to remember the existence of William George Bunter.

The game was hard and fast. Jimmy Silver, centre-half in the Rookwood team, held his men together well, and directed a masterly game. Mornington and Erroll, among the forwards, were dangerous customers—thrice was a deadly shot from Morny only narrowly saved by Hazel in goal. But a miss was as good as a mile. Tommy Dodd, at inside right, very nearly got the leather through—but not quite. Arthur Edward Lovell, at half, was a great man that day. Good men all were the Rookwooders, in fact; but they found equally good men at Greyfriars. And the game went on, ding-dong, without a score, with many a narrow escape on either side.

It was Frank Nugent who drew first blood, putting the ball into the Rookwood goal; and as it turned out, that was the only blood to be drawn in the hard-fought match.

There were ten minutes to go when Nugent scored, and those ten minutes were filled up with hard tussling. Thrice the Rookwooders swept up to the home goal in formidable array, and each time they found the defence too tough for them—Peter Todd and Tom Brown and Squiff seemed an almost unbreakable line; Johnny Bull and Mark Linley were like a last ditch that could not be passed; behind them, Hazel in goal was all eyes and hands. Gallantly the Rookwooders strove to equalise, and it was not their fault that they failed.

Pheep!

The whistle shrilled.

"Remove wins!" roared the crowd.

"Bravo!"

"Well," said Bob Cherry, as he mopped his perspiring brow, "I think we deserved it. We've earned it, anyhow."

Two thoroughly gruelled teams came off the field; the Rookwood match had been lost and won, and the Bunter Cup was still to repose at Greyfriars—until the date of the St. Jim's match.

HOMER of old sang the wrath of Achilles—to Greece the direful spring of woes unnumbered. But even Homer could scarcely have done justice to the wrath of William George Bunter after the Rookwood match. The wrath of Achilles was simply "not in it" with the wrath of Bunter. His wrath and his indignation were, as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh justly said, terrific.

He had been done! After all his careful, not to say cunning, planning, he had failed to figure in the second tie for the Bunter Cup. Rookwood had come and gone, and Bunter had not been in the field. Loud and long were the complaints of the Owl of the Remove.

And nobody sympathised with him, and nobody heeded his wrath. In the well-known case of the Jackdaw of Rheims, "never was heard such a terrible curse, but nobody seemed a penny the worse." And so it was with the objurgations of Billy Bunter. The Removites listened to him with chuckles and chorles—or they did not even listen at all. Certainly, terrific as his wrath was, nobody seemed a penny the worse.

Smithy, according to Bunter, had deliberately pulled his leg, made him believe himself ill, so as to keep him out of the match. To which the juniors rejoined that if Bunter was ass enough to have his fat leg pulled so easily, it was his own look-out—and that he shouldn't have been so funky, anyhow. Bunter could not aver that he had been officially left out of the eleven; the captain of the Remove had known nothing of the affair, and had indeed given Bunter every chance to play up to the latest moment. Wharton had kept to the agreement to the very letter.

Whatsoever the Bounder had done was Smithy's own affair, and even Bunter could scarcely have expected the match to be restarted on his account, after the first half had been played. That would have been too much for even Bunter to require.

But he did demand that the match should be cancelled and played over again, thus causing more merriment in the Remove. Rookwood had played for the cup, and the

Rookwood match was now a thing of the past, and all Bunter's indignant wrath could not make it a thing of the future again.

So Bunter raged, and raged in vain—a closed chapter was not to be reopened for Bunter. There was still the St. Jim's match in which he could distinguish himself, and when that date came round it was certain that Bunter would be very wary of the Bounder. Certainly he was not likely to walk into the spider's parlour again so fatuously.

Not that Smithy was likely to try the game again, or indeed any game. On that subject the captain of the Remove spoke very plainly to the Bounder.

"No more larks of that sort, Smithy," he said. "A compact is a compact, and we're bound to play up."

"I agree."

assented the Bounder, cheerfully.

"Keeping

Bunter out of the match would have been breaking the compact. But there was no reason why he shouldn't keep himself out if he liked."

"That's so. All the same——"

"Are you sorry he wasn't in the eleven?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I'm jolly glad he wasn't! Rookwood would have walked all over us, and walked off with the Cup."

"Then what are you grouching about?" asked the Bounder.

"I'm not grouching—I'm not blaming you," said Harry. "You were not even a member of the eleven that day, as it turned out, and nobody can say that you shouldn't jape Bunter if you liked. All the same, don't do it again, old man. For one thing, I simply

must have you in the St. Jim's match—can't spare you, Smithy. And a member of the eleven can't take a hand in shutting Bunter out—even by a jape, and letting him make a fool of himself."

"If Bunter plays, Tom Merry's crowd will bag the Cup."

"Most likely, I know. Still, the Cup's stood by Bunter's father, and he seems to have stood it chiefly to give Bunter a chance to show off in soccer. He's entitled to his money's worth."

"Well, anyhow, I don't suppose Bunter would be caught twice," said Vernon-Smith, laughing. "Once bit twice shy. I'll keep off the grass, at any rate."

"Good!" said Wharton, feeling relieved.

Billy Bunter came rolling along the Remove passage, where the two juniors were talking. He stopped, and fixed his big spectacles on Smithy with a wrathful glare.



Shortly before the brake from St. Jim's appeared, Billy Bunter rolled up to Vernon-Smith, an insinuating grin on his fat face. "Smith, old man," he said. "Come for a stroll, will you, before the match?" (See chapter 19)

"You rotter!"

"Hallo!" said Vernon-Smith cheerfully.

"You worm!"

"Go it!"

"Yah!"

"Hear, hear!" said Smithy.

"You did me over the Rookwood match!"

"You did yourself, you mean," amended the Bounder.

"I've a jolly good mind," went on Bunter, "to give you the thrashing of your life, Smithy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Bounder, and Harry Wharton chuckled.

"Mind, I mean it!" howled Bunter. "I'd mop up the Remove passage with you, Smithy, only—only——"

"Only?" grinned the Bounder.

"Only I don't want to go scrapping just before the St. Jim's match. After that, we'll see."

"Let's!" assented Smithy.

"I hear that St. Jim's are in great form," went on Bunter. "I shall have to keep myself perfectly fit for that game—it will depend chiefly on me."

"You—perfectly fit!" ejaculated Smithy. "How many tons of tarts have you scoffed to-day?"

"Yah! But you look out!" said Bunter darkly.

"After the St. Jim's match," said the Bounder gravely, "I will make my will at once, and sign the 'Daily Mail' insurance coupon. Then I shall be prepared for all eventualities."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Perhaps you won't be in the St. Jim's match," sneered Bunter.

"No perhaps about that," said Harry Wharton. "We're going to have Smithy in the front line, Bunter! Can't spare him."

"You can have me in the front line," said Bunter. "Squiff or Nugent can play half instead."

"Don't be funny, old man! You do less damage at half than you would do in the giddy forefront of the battle."

"That only shows your ignorance of football, Wharton. You don't mind my putting it plainly?"

"Not at all," said Harry, laughing.

"My opinion is that Smithy shouldn't play."

"Thanks for your opinion."

"Then you'll leave him out?"

"No; I'll put him in."

"Look here, Wharton——"

"Ta-ta, old bean!"

And the captain of the Remove strolled away. He was bound to have Bunter in his eleven; but really he did not want any advice on football matters from the Owl.

Bunter blinked at Smithy.

"You look out, that's all," he said mysteriously. "You may play in the St. Jim's match. You may not! We shall see."

"Blessed if I see where there's any doubt in the matter," said Smithy, perplexed. "If I'm fit I shall play. And I shall take jolly good care to be fit."

"One good turn deserves another," said Bunter, "the same applies to a bad turn."

"Eh?"

"You got me out of the Rookwood match. Perhaps I shall do the same for you in the next."

The Bounder stared at him.

"Are you going to try to pull my leg and make me fancy myself ill?" he chuckled. "Go ahead! It doesn't seem likely, to me."

"I know what I know!" said Bunter, still more mysteriously.

And he rolled away, leaving the Bounder very puzzled. Apparently, some deep scheme was working in Bunter's powerful brain—some scheme for retaliating Smithy's little jape on himself. Bunter, apparently, had decided upon a policy of tit-for-tat—a Roland for an Oliver. He had decided to do it—but how he was going to do it was a deep mystery.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

No Mistakes!

"Good old Bunter!"

"Hear hear!"

"What I like about Bunter," said Skinner, with deep gravity, "is his generosity. Old Bunter's got a lot of good qualities——"

"Yes, rather!"

"But, after all, any fellow might be sturdy,

handsome, wealthy, and well connected," said Skinner. "That's really luck!"

"Oh!"

It was a little party in Bunter's study. Skinner and Snoop, Stott and Fisher T. Fish were there. Bunter was doing the honours, and the study table almost groaned under the good things that were stacked on it. It could not be denied that Bunter, when he was in the possession of ample funds, spent them royally. Any fellow was welcome to share in Bunter's gorgeous spreads, so long as he took the trouble to pull Bunter's fat leg a little, and give him a good allowance of "butter." Skinner and Co. had not the slightest objection to "buttering" Bunter—they would have buttered anybody on the same terms.

Skinner, perhaps, was laying it on a little "thick." But Skinner knew what he was about—Bunter liked his flattery, like pincapple, in chunks.

"Any fellow might be all that," went on Skinner. "It's Bunter's luck that he's the best-looking fellow in the Remove——"

"Ah! Oh! Yes!" gasped Snoop.

"It's his luck that he's the wealthiest fellow——"

"Ah!"

"It's his luck that he's the most highly connected——"

"Um!"

"In a way, it's his luck that he's the best footballer in the lower school—I may say, in the whole school, upper and lower."

"Mmmmm!"

"But his generosity, what I might call his princely hospitality, is a quality of his own!" said Skinner. "And I must say that that's what I like most about Bunter."

Billy Bunter beamed over the festive board. He liked this—he liked it very much. Until quite a recent date, nobody had taken the trouble to butter Bunter. But the King had come into his own at last!

"I say, you fellows——"

"I guess——" began Fisher T. Fish.

"Dry up, Fishy," said Skinner severely. "Bunter's speaking."

"Oh, sure!" gasped Fishy.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Go on, Bunter."

"I'm going to ask you to do something for me."

"Give it a name!" said Skinner. "We're all your friends here, Bunter. Any old thing."

"Good," said Bunter. "Next Wednesday."

"That's the date of the St. Jim's match," said Snoop. "You want us to turn up and cheer your goals. Of course, we shall come! We wouldn't miss it for anything."

"Catch us missing it!" said Skinner.

And in that, at least, Skinner was quite sincere. He did not intend to miss the show when Bunter played football. It would be, as he had privately confided to his comrades, better than a comic film at the Courtfield picture palace.

"I'm not satisfied with the team," said Bunter.

"Well, there's at least one good man in it!" said Stott.

"That's so," assented Bunter, "but I'm not satisfied with Smithy. I've asked Whar-ton to leave him out, and he refuses."

"Cheek!" said Skinner.

"Besides, you know the trick Smithy played on me," said Bunter. "I was dished out of the Rookwood match. Well, I'm going to dish Smithy out of the St. Jim's match—tit for tat, you know."

"Oh!" said Skinner.

"I've thought it all out."

"You're the fellow for thinking things out," said Snoop. "Brain, you know! Pass the doughnuts, Fishy."

"You fellows are going to help," said Bunter.

"Oh!" said Skinner again, looking rather grave.

"I've got it all out and dried. Just before the match, Smithy's going to disappear."

"Disappear!" ejaculated Skinner.

"That's it," said Bunter, with a nod.

"There'll be a taxi-cab waiting in the road."

"A—a—a taxi-cab!"

"Yes. I shall stand all the exes, of course, and arrange with the driver, and tip him. That will be all right. You fellows get Smithy to walk out before the match, somehow—or I'll do that, and you'll be waiting by the cab. Then you'll mop him up——"

"Mop him up?" gasped Snoop.

"Chuck him into the taxi, and—and sit on him," said Bunter, triumphantly. "The taxi buzzes off—takes you anywhere you like—fifty miles if you choose—and you don't come back with Smithy till the first half is played, at least—same as he served me, you know."

"Oh, great Scott!"

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

"I can rely on you?"

"There was a unanimous silence on the part of Bunter's guests. The Owl of the Remove had almost taken their breath away.

"Just like a stunt you see on the films," said Bunter. "In fact, I got the idea from a film."

"I—I fancy you must have!" stut-tered Skinner.

"I—I say, those things are easier on films than in real life, you know," murmured Snoop.

"Easy enough," said Bunter, cheerfully.

"I'm relying on you fellows, of course."

"I guess I'd let Smithy off, if I were you, Bunter," said Fisher T. Fish.

"No fear!" said Bunter, firmly.

"Well, let's finish tea, and then talk it over!" suggested Skinner.

Skinner felt that it would be injudicious to get to the end of the spread before telling Bunter that he couldn't, wouldn't, and

shouldn't dream of taking a hand in any such enterprise. The consequences of tricking a valued member of the eleven into missing the match, would have been a little too serious for Skinner to contemplate with equanimity.

"Right-ho!" said Bunter.

And it was not till the table was cleared that the plot was discussed. The discussion on the part of Skinner and Co. consisted of arguments and expostulations. They argued with Bunter—

they almost pleaded with him—but Bunter was adamant. His fat little mind was made up; and he was obstinate. Skinner and Co. did not want to refuse Bunter—their thoughts dwelt lovingly and regretfully on the fleshpots of Egypt. But it had to come to that.

"You see," said Skinner, at last, "if Smithy's kept out of the match, the fellows will be awfully wild."

"Let 'em!" said Billy Bunter.

"Hem! Yes! But they'll rag us bald-headed."

"You can risk that."

"Can we?" said Snoop, warmly.

"Then there's Smithy—he's got a jolly bad temper," said Stott. "He would make us put up our hands all round, afterwards—and Smithy's got a jolly hefty punch."

"I'll protect you!" said Bunter.



Temple and Dabney laid hands upon Bunter, and before he knew what was happening, the Owl of the Remove was sprawling in the bottom of the car (See Chapter 20)

"Oh, my hat!"

Apparently, Skinner and Co. did not feel like placing much reliance on Bunter's protection.

The Owl of the Remove blinked suspiciously at his friends. There was such a plentiful lack of enthusiasm on the part of Skinner and Co., that Bunter could not help observing it.

"Look here, are you taking it on?" he demanded.

"You—you see——!"

"Yes or no!" snapped Bunter.

"Well, no, if you come to that!" said Skinner, desperately. "You can't expect us to stand a form ragging, Bunter."

"I guess not!" said Fisher T. Fish, emphatically.

Billy Bunter blinked at them wrathfully.

"So that's what your friendship's worth!" he said. "You can go and eat coke, the lot of you! I'm fed up with you! Yah!"

"I say, Bunter, old man——" murmured Skinner, still thinking of the fleshpots.

"Oh, get out!"

The happy party in Bunter's study broke up. There was a rift in the lute; even flattery in chunks could not placate Bunter now. He had expounded his wonderful plan for "getting even" with the Bunder, and there were no takers.

But Billy Bunter was a sticker. His podgy mind was made up: Skinner and Co. had failed him, but there were others! At all events, Bunter supposed that there were!

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER

Temple takes it on!

"It's hard cheese on those kids!" said Cecil Reginald Temple.

"Oh, rather!" assented Dabney.

"Of course, they're cheeky fags, those Remove chaps."

"They are," agreed Fry.

"Still, it's hard cheese!"

It was Tuesday, the day preceding the final tie for the Bunter Cup, and Temple and Co. were talking it over in their study after tea. Cecil Reginald Temple, as became the captain of the Fourth, took a lofty view of the Remove and of Remove affairs—the Remove

being the Lower Fourth Form of Greyfriars. But Temple was a good-natured fellow—in a lofty, patronising way, he sympathised with the Remove in the matter of the Bunter Cup. Temple was not a first-class footballer himself—though he nourished a secret belief that he was. Still, he played footer—he was captain of the Fourth Form team. So, naturally, he could feel for a football skipper in Harry Wharton's predicament.

Undoubtedly it was "hard cheese," that a football captain should be driven to play a fellow like Bunter, in a match where a single weak spot meant defeat. Tom Merry and Co., of St. Jim's, were great men at the game; and the Remove needed eleven good men and true for the fixture. With ten good men and one rank "rotter," they were placed at a terrible disadvantage.

"I'd put in a word for them, if it would do any good," said Cecil Reginald. "But it's no good talkin' to Bunter! The fellow simply can't see that he's a hopeless ass."

"Strange, but true!" remarked Fry.

"If I were in Wharton's place," observed Temple, thoughtfully, "I should be tempted to lock the fat duffer up in a box-room till the match was over."

"I wonder he doesn't."

"Well, he can't very well, after agreein' to play him!" said Temple. "The fact is, Bunter's got him tied hand and foot!"

"That's so. It's hard cheese."

"And the fat duffer can't see that the Cup was saved last time by Smithy's little jape—and that it's quite certain to go to St. Jim's this time," said Temple. "I suppose if he could see that, he would stand out of the team. But he can't."

"He can't," said Fry. "Lots of fellows have pointed it out to him. But he can't see it."

Tap!

"Come in!" yawned Temple.

Billy Bunter's fat face and big spectacles glimmered into the study. The three Fourth-formers stared at him. They had not been expecting a visit from the Owl of the Remove.

"Hallo!" said Temple. "Where did you roll from? Wherever it was, roll back again, will you?"

"Oh, really, Temple——"

"Shut the door after you!" said Fry.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Don't!" said Dabney. "No need to say anything! Just bunk."

Instead of "bunking," William George Bunter rolled into the study, and closed the door after him. Evidently he had something to say to the chums of the Fourth before taking his departure.

"I say, you fellows, no larks," said Bunter. "I suppose you know it's the St. Jim's match to-morrow?"

"Just discussin' it," said Temple lazily. "Don't say you've come here to talk football, Bunter! Don't."

"It's a half-holiday, of course, to-morrow," said Bunter, blinking at the Fourth-formers. "How would you fellows like a free drive in a car—no expense, and as far as you like, and as long as you like?"

"Eh?"

Temple, Dabney, and Fry sat up and took notice, so to speak, at that. They were astonished. Certainly, they had heard that, of late, Billy Bunter had been spreading himself royally, expending right and left his unusual cash resources. But they had not expected him to come to a Fourth-form study with the offer of an expensive treat.

"Is that a jest?" asked Temple.

"Honest injun!" said Bunter.

"But what the thump——"

"I'm ordering the car," said Bunter. "I'm standing the whole exes. You can get a run along the coast—Folkestone, Dover, Deal, Brighton if you like!"

"Well, I should like that," said Temple, staring. "Can't say I specially want you to stand in. Bunter—but I should like it."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"And how are you going to pay for the car, Bunter?" asked Fry, sarcastically. "Are you expecting a postal order?"

Billy Bunter sniffed, and took out a little leather purse. He opened it, and showed several currency notes.

"That's all right," he said.

"But what are you drivin' at?" demanded Temple. "Why the merry thump should you

stand us an expensive motor trip—even if we wanted you to?"

"Of course, I should want a quid pro quo," said Bunter. "One good turn deserves another."

"You'd want us to take you, and let people suppose that you know us?" asked Temple.

Bunter glared.

"You cheeky ass!" he roared.

"Well, if it's not that, what is it?" asked Temple, while his comrades grinned.

"It's Smithy!"

"Eh! Smithy! What about Smithy?"

"He's a rotter!"

"Well, all you Remove fags are rotters, more or less. I wouldn't give twopence-halfpenny for the whole Form!" remarked Temple. "But——"

"He diddled me out of the Rookwood match."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He doesn't think much of you, Temple," said Bunter.

"Oh, doesn't he?" said Cecil Reginald rather warmly. "Not that I care a straw what a Remove fag thinks."

"I've heard him say that you look like a tailor's dummy, and play football like an organ-grinder's monkey——"

Temple crimsoned.

"And he says Fry is a silly ass who thinks himself clever, and he can't guess how Fry ever came to think that——"

"Oh, shut up!" said Fry.

"He says that Dabney is just a parrot, who says 'Oh, rather!' whenever Temple opens his mouth."

"Does he?" said Dabney, showing signs of excitement.

"So, you see, it will serve him jolly well right if you pull his leg on St. Jim's day."

"On St. Jim's day?" repeated Temple.

"That's it. I get Smithy to walk along to the car before the match, and you fellows mop him into it——"

"Oh, gad!"

"And clear off with him. Keep him away till the match is half over, at least. See?"

Temple and Dabney and Fry stared fixedly at Billy Bunter. They could scarcely believe their ears.

Bunter blinked at them with a self-satisfied smirk. He was, in his own fat opinion, being exceedingly diplomatic. The offer of a free car ride for a half-holiday was tempting. The information regarding Smithy's unflattering opinion of their noble selves might be expected to put up the backs of Temple and Co. And their natural desire to jape the Remove was to be counted upon—for in the many little troubles between the Remove and the Upper fourth, Temple and Co. generally had the worst of it.

So Bunter had little doubt of success in dealing with Temple and Co—or, rather, no doubt at all. It was only necessary to put it to them for them to jump at it. That was how Bunter looked at the matter.

That was not quite how Temple looked at it. But he controlled his impulse to take the Owl of the Remove by the collar and sling him out of the study. He made Dabney and Fry a sign to keep quiet.

"So Smithy's to miss the St. Jim's match, is he?" said Temple.

"Just that!"

"Won't he be wanted in the game?"

"Oh, that makes no difference! I shall be there, and one dud more or less won't affect the result."

"Great pip!" murmured Fry.

"Let's have it clear," said Temple. "The car's to be waiting somewhere near Greyfriars before the match?"

"Yes; I'll see to that."

"You'll bring Smithy along to it?"

"I can manage that. I'm pretty diplomatic, you know," said Bunter, with a fat smirk. "Fairly deep, you know."

"And we're to carry him off like a character in a film—once aboard the lugger, and the rest of it?"

"That's it," said Bunter. "You ain't afraid of Smithy, Temple? That cad Skinner's afraid Smith would punch him afterwards."

"Oh, you've asked Skinner to work the oracle, have you?"

"Not at all. I wouldn't!" said Bunter fatuously. "I've dropped Skinner; nothing to do with the fellow. Now, is it a go, you fellows?"

Fry made a movement to pick up the poker. Temple made him a sign, and Fry reluctantly relinquished his intention.

"Look here, Temple—" he began.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. "I think —"

"Leave it to me," said Temple. "Who's top of this study? You fellows shut up and leave it to me. Now, this seems a jolly idea, Bunter."

"Isn't it?" said Bunter. "I've thought it out, you know. Takes a fellow with some brains to think out a thing like this. But that's me all over."

"Let's have it quite clear. On Wednesday afternoon, say an hour before the St. Jim's match, we're hangin' around a car on the Friardale Road. You walk along with Smithy. We shove a passenger into the car and buzz off with him, whether he likes it or not, and keep him away from Greyfriars till the match is over?"

"That's it! He, he!"

"If the passenger objects, we sit on him—what?"

"He, he! Sit on him hard!" chuckled Bunter. "That's all right."

"It doesn't matter if we hurt him a bit?"

"Not at all."

"And we're not to take any notice of anythin' he says?"

"None at all."

"Well," said Temple thoughtfully, "I think we can accept that offer, Bunter."

"Good!"

"Look here, Temple—" shouted Fry and Dabney together.

"Shush!" roared Temple. "Leave it to me, I tell you! I'm ruinin' this show. Leave it to me. Can't you trust your Uncle Cecil?"

"Oh!" said Dabney and Fry, beginning to comprehend at that.

"It's a go!" said Temple. "Rely on us, Bunter, to do exactly what I've said. Exactly that—no more and no less."

"Good man!" said Bunter; and he rolled away from Temple's study in a state of great satisfaction.

Fry shut the study door.

"Now, Temple, you ass!" he said. "If it's a jape, all right; but if you think we're

going to play a rotten trick on Smithy, or any other blessed fag——”

“Do you want me to punch your nose, Edward Fry?” inquired Temple politely. “If not, don’t talk like a goat. We’re going to carry out the programme.”

“But——” howled Dabney.

“Bunter walks Smithy down to the car,” said Temple, “and we take an unwilling passenger away for a motortrip——”

“We jolly well don’t!” roared Fry.

“We do! Only the passenger won’t be Smithy——”

“Eh?”

“What?”

“Got it now?” asked Temple blandly.

Fry and Dabney stared at Cecil Reginald for a moment or two blankly. Then there was a yell in Temple’s study.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Apparently Temple’s chums had “got it.”

Vernon-Smith came on to the field. His rather hard face was very bright and cheery. “Haven’t kept you waiting, what?” he said. “I had to see Bunter off——” “Off!” repeated Wharton. “Yes, he’s gone for a motor ride with some Fourth Form fellows!” (See chapter 21)

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER

Awfully Deep!

“St. Jim’s to-day!” said Bob Cherry.

It was Wednesday—clear and cool and sunny. It was a day for enjoying a football game, especially a match with so good a team as Tom Merry’s from St. Jim’s.

But the heroes of the Remove, keen footballers as they were, did not expect to enjoy that match.

For, like the Old Man of the Sea on the shoulders of Sindbad the Sailor, there was the Owl of the Remove on the backs of the Greyfriars eleven.

Luck had befriended the Remove team

in the first tie, Smithy’s jape had saved them in the second. But in the third and final tie for the Bunter Cup there was little left to hope for. Chance might help them—but all the chances were against Harry Wharton and Co., and they realised it. Man for man, team for team, they were every bit as good as St. Jim’s—they flattered themselves that they were a trifle better. But Bunter made all the difference. They couldn’t get rid of the

Old Man of the Sea. Nevertheless, they still nourished hope, chiefly in the glorious uncertainty of the great game of soccer. Anyhow, as Bob Cherry remarked, a game wasn’t lost till it was won—and Tom Merry and Co. hadn’t won it yet.

That Wednesday Billy Bunter strutted complacently. There was no chance this



time of the Bounder "dishing" him. On the other hand, Bunter had made masterly arrangements to dish the Bounder. On that subject he gave Wharton a hint that rather puzzled the captain of the Remove.

"Still thinking of playing Smithy?" Bunter inquired.

Wharton nodded.

"Better keep Squiff handy."

"Eh! Why?"

"You may want him, you know, or Nugent. Smithy might get left out at the last minute."

"How on earth could Smithy get left out?" demanded Wharton.

"Well, you never know, you know."

"Are you wandering in your mind, Bunter?" inquired the captain of the Remove.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Well, what are you driving at?" demanded Wharton impatiently.

"That's telling!" said Bunter mysteriously. "I know what I know. If Smithy stands out you'll want Nugent or Squiff. Keep 'em handy. That's a tip."

"Smithy isn't going to stand out."

"He might."

With that Bunter rolled away, feeling that he had said enough—or perhaps a little too much. Harry Wharton looked for Vernon-Smith after dinner.

"You're fit, Smithy, I suppose?" he asked.

"Fit as a fiddle."

"You're not thinking of standing out of the match to-day?"

"No fear!"

"Bunter's got some potty idea in his head that you might. I suppose it's only his rot."

The Bounder grinned.

"I know. I've heard him burbling on the subject. Some idea of giving me what I gave him."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"If that's all, all right," he said.

"Right as rain!" said the Bounder, laughing. "If dear old Bunter plays any little game on me, I fancy he will find me awake—wide awake! Just a few!"

And the Bounder was very wide awake indeed when a little later, shortly before the

St. Jim's fellows were booked to arrive in their brake from Courtfield Station, Billy Bunter rolled up to him with an insinuating grin on his fat face.

"Smithy, old man——"

"Cough it up," said Vernon-Smith.

"Come for a stroll, will you, before the match?"

"Thanks, no."

"I'd really like you to, Smithy."

"Probably," assented the Bounder. "My society, I believe, is worth cultivating. Yours isn't. Roll off."

Billy Bunter's little round eyes glinted behind his spectacles. A short distance down the road towards Courtfield a motor-car was waiting, and three fellows of the Fourth Form were waiting along with it. Bunter relied on his diplomacy to get Smithy to the fatal spot. But Smithy did not seem to be taking any.

"I—I say, Smithy——"

"Buzz!" said Vernon-Smith briefly.

"I—I was going to say——"

"Dear old barrel, I don't want to hear you say anything, except that you're going to stand out of the St. Jim's match."

"You silly ass——"

"Good-bye!"

"Hold on, Smithy, the fact is—let's talk it over. I say, Smithy, suppose I stand out of the match——"

"Good man," said Vernon-Smith, cordial at once. He was quite willing to waste his time on Bunter, if it should lead to such a very desirable result. "Do that, old bean, and we'll all pass a vote of thanks."

"Suppose," said Bunter, with deep cunning—"suppose I went for a motor drive instead."

"Jolly good idea."

"Well, come and see me off, like a pal," said Bunter.

The Bounder stared at him.

"See you off!" he repeated.

"Yes. I've got the car!"

"You've got the car!" stuttered Vernon-Smith in amazement. "You're really going to let us off this afternoon! Bunter, old man, you're worth your weight in tuck! I'll see you off with pleasure—never been so pleased in my life. Where's the car?"

"Waiting down the road, with some friends

of mine who are going," said Bunter. "Come along, Smithy."

"What-ho!"

In great amazement, mingled with a natural satisfaction, Herbert Vernon Smith strolled out of gates with Bunter. It seemed too good to be true—and, in fact, Vernon Smith did not quite believe it till he saw the car waiting by the side of the road—the engine running, the chauffeur in his seat, and Temple, Dabney, and Fry lounging round the car.

After that there seemed no room for doubt.

"You're really going?" ejaculated the Bounder.

Bunter grinned.

"There's the car!" he said. "Come on!"

Vernon-Smith walked towards the car with him, briskly. Bunter rolled on with the Bounder, grinning. The hapless Bounder was walking right into the trap—and Billy Bunter felt that he was deep, very deep indeed!

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER

The Passenger!

CECIL REGINALD TEMPLE smiled.

Fry and Dabney smiled.

Even the chauffeur smiled. The chauffeur had been given to understand that he was taking part in a schoolboy lark; and he had also been given a handsome tip. Three merry schoolboys were going to take a fourth for a long drive, unasked—just for a lark. That was how Bunter had put it, and the motorman did not see any harm in such a lark, especially as Bunter's hint was accompanied by a ten-shilling note over and above the hire of the car.

So there were smiles all round as Billy Bunter rolled up to the car with Vernon-Smith.

"I say, you fellows, ready?" said Bunter cheerily.

"Quite!" said Temple.

"Oh, rather!"

"Waitin', old fat bean," said Fry.

"Good luck," said the Bounder, cheerily.

"I hope you'll have a ripping run! Good old Bunter says he's going for a motor run instead of playing in the St. Jim's match."

"Does he?" ejaculated Temple.

"Oh, gad!" said Fry.

Bunter bestowed a fat wink on the Fourth-formers, conveying thereby that this was the deep diplomacy by which he had induced Vernon-Smith to enter the danger zone.

"I see!" said Temple, in reply to the wink. "You're an awfully deep old bird, Bunter."

"Just a few, what?" smirked Bunter.

"A fellow would have to get up very early in the mornin' to pull the wool over your eyes, Bunter," said Temple, with great gravity.

"I fancy so!" grinned Bunter.

"Well, I wish you a jolly drive, and lots of fun," said Vernon-Smith. "The fellows will simply love you, Bunter, when I tell them this! And I can tell you we'll play up our jolly hardest to keep the Bunter Cup in the family! Get back in time to see the Head make the giddy presentation to the victors."

"He, he, he!"

Bunter signed to the Fourth-formers. It was time for them to hurl themselves upon Vernon-Smith, seize him, and pitch him into the car.

But the Fourth-formers showed no sign of doing it.

Vernon-Smith gave them a cheery nod and turned to walk back to the school. Bunter blinked in amazed wrath at his confederates.

"Collar him!" he breathed.

"Eh! Collar whom?" asked Temple.

"Smithy, of course!"

"Collar Smithy?" repeated Temple, as if not understanding.

"You silly ass—after him!" gasped Bunter. "If he gets away, you won't have another chance. Quick!"

"All serene," said Temple cheerfully. "We're not runnin' any risk of losin' our passenger. Are we, you fellows?"

"Rely on us, Bunter," said Fry.

"Oh, rather!"

"But he's going!" howled Bunter. "After him!"

"What was the arrangement?" said Temple with a leisurely drawl that was quite exasperating to Bunter in the circumstances.

"You were to bring Smithy here——"

"Quick——"



it was from the foot of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy that the ball went in. Seven minutes to go, and the visitors were one goal down! "A good game—a good game!" said Dr. Locke. And the game went on hard and fast (See Chapter 22)

"And then we were to put our passenger in the car——"

"Quick, I tell you; he'll get away!"

"But I never specified the name of the passenger," said Temple. "That was a trifling point you overlooked, Bunter."

"Wha-a-at?"

"In with him!" said Temple.

Vernon-Smith was at a good distance by that time. He did not think of looking back; he was hurrying to the school with the glad news that Bunter had decided to stand out of the match. Had he looked back, he would have seen a startling sight.

Temple and Dabney and Fry laid hands on Bunter together, and before he knew what was happening the Owl of the Remove was sprawling in the bottom of the car.

"Get off, driver!" shouted Temple.

"Yooop!" roared Bunter.

"Sit on his head, Fry."

"Groooogh!"

"Buck up, driver!"

"Mmmmmmm!"

For a moment or two the chauffeur stared blankly. Why Master Bunter should have tipped him for this was a mystery to him. Why Master Bunter should have hired the car in order to be carried off like this by his schoolfellows perplexed the chauffeur. If it was a "lark," it was a lark beyond the chauffeur's understanding. However, he concluded that Master Bunter knew his own business best.

So he started the car, and it ripped away on the Courtfield road at a great rate.

Temple and Dabney sat down, prepared to enjoy a spanking run in the fine, clear weather. Fry, for the present, sat on Bunter's head. From underneath Fry came a succession of frantic howls.

"Gerroff, you beast! Stop the car! Put me down! I shall miss the match! You potty duffers, I wanted you to bung Smithy in the car—not me! Can't you understand? Groooogh! Lemme gerrup!"

"Keep that passenger quiet, Fry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm not the passenger," shrieked Bunter. "Smithy's the passenger, you ass."

"Your mistake," said Temple blandly.

"You're the passenger, old bean, and this is your reward for askin' us to play a dirty trick. Catch on?"

"Beast!"

"If you remember the arrangement, fat old bean, we were to shove a passenger—name not specified—into the car, and keep him away from Greyfriars till the match was over."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're doin' it," continued Temple. "If he objected, we were to sit on him. Fry's doin' that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It wasn't to matter if we hurt him," continued Temple. "Well, I don't see that it matters. I'm not worryin' anyhow."

"And we were not to take notice of anythin' he might say. Well, we're not takin' any notice."

"Beast!"

"I don't think you ought to keep on grumblin' like that, Bunter, when we're carryin' out the arrangement to the very letter."

"Ow! Wow!"

"Are you hurt?" demanded Fry.

"Ow! Yes!"

"Well, that doesn't matter—accordin' to the arrangement."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Beast! Lemme up! Help!"

"If that passenger makes any more row, Fry, knock his head on the floor," said Temple.

"You bet!"

"Beast! Help! Fire! Yaroooooh!"

Bang!

"Whooooooooop!"

"Have some more?" asked Fry.

"Ow! No! Wow!"

And Billy Bunter relapsed into infuriated silence while the car ate up the miles.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER

Too Good to be True!

"WHERE'S Bunter?"

Tom Meiry and Co., of St. Jim's, were on the football ground at Greyfriars, looking very fit and cheery.

They chatted amicably with the Remove footballers, what time Harry Wharton was inquiring where Bunter was.

As a rule, when the St. Jim's footballers came over to Greyfriars for a regular fixture they came prepared for a stern struggle. But on this occasion a smiling confidence might have been detected in the looks of the Saints.

For they knew the peculiar condition of the Bunter Cup competition—they knew that Bunter was entitled to play for the Remove—and they knew Bunter.

That any team could win a match against anybody, playing Bunter, seemed incredible. That it would win a match against St. Jim's, playing Bunter, was impossible.

So Tom Merry and Co. had no doubt about the result; and, in fact, they sympathised with their opponents. Naturally, they had no objection to walking off with a handsome trophy. They were quite prepared to take the Bunter Cup home to St. Jim's, to be added to trophies already won. But, as good sportsmen, they would have preferred to see Wharton put his team in the field unhandicapped. They would have preferred a struggle with the home team at their best, and to win the cup by sheer good football.

"It's wuff on them!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked. "Vewy wuff indeed. Buntah ought not to make such a wotten sillay condition. If his fathah can't pwesent a cup without attachin' sillay unsportsman-like conditions, it is up to him not to pwesent a Cup at all."

"Right on the wicket," agreed Jack Blake. "But there it is—and Bunter's in the eleven! And, from what I've seen of Bunter, I fancy they might as well hand us the Cup without a match at all."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I fancy they know it, too," Tom Merry remarked. "It's rough, and no mistake."

"I wondah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy thoughtfully—"I wonder if it would be any use my speakin' to Buntah."

The swell of St. Jim's looked inquiringly at his comrades through his celebrated eyeglass.

"Suppose I point out to him that he is actin' in a wotten unsportin' way? Suppose I mention that he is weally makin' a widiculous

exhibish of himself? Do you think it would do any good, Tom Mewwy?"

"Probably not!" said Tom, laughing.

"Pewwaps, as a visitah, it would be scarcely polite, howevah, to tell him what I think of him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I couldn't tell him what I think of him, in polite language," said Monty Lowther. "But I say, we're close on time, and the chaps don't seem to be ready. Are they hanging it out in the hope that Bunter may burst at the last moment?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Where's Bunter?" Harry Wharton's voice was heard. "Where's Smithy? Dash it all, they might be on time."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, there's Smithy!" called out Bob Cherry.

Vernon-Smith came on the ground. His rather hard face was very bright and cheery.

"Haven't kept you waiting, what?" he asked. "It's not time yet."

"Jolly nearly," said Bob.

"Well, I had to see Bunter off. Blessed if I know what he wanted me to see him off for, but he made a point of it, and you bet I was jolly glad to see him go."

"See him off?" repeated Wharton.

"Yes. He's gone."

"Gone?"

"Gone for a motor-ride with some Fourth-form fellows—he's standing out of the game."

"What?" roared Bob.

"Standing out!" gasped Nugent.

The Bounder chuckled.

"Just that! Isn't it ripping?"

"Hurray!"

"Good old Bunter! He's let us off!"

"What a giddy escape!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"The escape is terrific."

"I rather thought you'd be pleased to hear it," grinned the Bounder. "Some news—what?"

"Yes," said Harry dubiously; "but——"

He paused.

"But what?"

"Look here, Smithy——" Wharton paused again.

"Well?" grinned Smithy, guessing what was coming.

Harry Wharton looked at him very keenly. That the captain of the Remove was glad to hear that Bunter had changed his mind about claiming his right to play in the match went without saying. But a compact was a compact, and Wharton's word was his bond.

"If this is another jape, Smithy, it won't do," said Wharton quietly. "I don't say I blame that jape over the Rookwood match; it was Bunter's own look-out if he chose to make a fool of himself. But if you've bunged him into a car——"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob.

"Dash it all, that won't do!" said Peter Todd. "Look here, Smithy——"

"Keep your wool on, my sons," said the Bounder coolly. "It's nothing of the sort. Bunter came up to me and asked me to see him off on his drive: he said he was going motoring with some Fourth-Form chaps. I suppose you can take my word? Anyhow, you can ask some fellows who must have heard him; Hobson, of the Shell, was standing near."

"Of course we take your word," said Harry. "But——"

"I went out to the car with him," continued the Bounder. "Temple and Dabney and Fry, of the Fourth, were there. I left Bunter with them."

"Did you see them start?" asked Wharton, much perplexed.

"I didn't stay for that; I was in a hurry to get back."

Wharton wrinkled his brows. He did not doubt Smithy's statement, but he was quite puzzled. After all that Bunter had said, up to almost the last moment, it seemed impossible that he had changed his fat mind and let the Remove team off. It was, at least, utterly unlike Bunter.

"I—I hope he wasn't just pulling your leg, Smithy," said the captain of the Remove at last. "Of course, you know I should be glad if Bunter let us off. But he's got to have his rights. I think we'd better make certain that he's cleared off before I fill his place in the team. He's entitled to that."

"Fair play is fair play," said Johnny Bull. "Still, I wouldn't stretch a fine point too far, Wharton."

"Still, I think——"

"I tell you there's no doubt about it!" said the Bounder impatiently. "Bunter's chucking money about lately, but I suppose he wouldn't hire a car from Courtfield just to pull my leg."

"I suppose not. But——"

"Anyhow, he will have to be left out if he isn't here in time for the game," said Peter Todd. "You can't ask the St. Jim's fellows to wait for Bunter."

"I shouldn't," said Harry. "Still, it's not time for kick-off yet. Look here, we can easily see whether Bunter's gone. If not, the car will be still where Smithy saw it."

"That's so," said Smithy.

"If it's gone, we must take it that Bunter's gone in it," said Harry. "I'll go and see myself. You come with me, Smithy, and tell me just where you left Bunter."

"I don't mind."

Wharton called to Tom Merry.

"You don't mind hanging on a few minutes?"

"Not in the least," answered the St. Jim's skipper cheerily.

Harry Wharton left the football ground with Vernon-Smith. The other fellows gathered in a group and discussed the matter earnestly. They hoped from the bottom of their hearts that the captain of the Remove would return without Bunter, and with the news that he was gone. But it was really too good to be true, they felt; it was too much to hope for.

Tom Merry and Co, of course, heard the talk on the subject, and they heartily entered into the feelings of the Remove footballers. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was confident that Bunter would not turn up. He had a touching faith in human nature.

"You see, deah boys," said D'Arcy, "Buntah has realised that he was actin' in an unsportin' mannaah. Natuwallly, as soon as he realised it, he decided to dwop it. Any fellow would."

"Any fellow but Bunter," said Johnny Bull.



"Temple spoofed me! He mopped me into the car, instead of Smithy!" gasped Bunter. "And I had to pay for the car—as I'd ordered it!" "Ha, ha, ha!" Billy Bunter was the only one in the room who did not think it was a laughing matter! (See Chapter 23)

"Let's hope for the best," said Toddy. "But if Bunter decided to let us off, it's queer that he never told us so. He told Smithy, but he ought to have told Wharton."

"I quite undahstand that, deah boy; he gwacefully wetired fwom the scene, not wishin' to be embawwassed by your gwatitude."

"Oh, my hat! Not Bunter!"

"Yaas, and it shows that Buntah has some vewy fine feelin's—which is all the more gwatifyin' because it is so surpwisin', you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I hope D'Arcy's right," grinned Bob Cherry. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they come! Without Bunter!"

"Oh, good!"

"What's the news?" yelled a dozen voices as Harry Wharton and the Bounder came back.

"All serene!" said Harry cheerfully.

"The car's gone, and Bunter seems to have gone in it. He's let us off, though I can't understand it. He might have mentioned it to me."

"Yaas, wathah! But pewwaps he wished it to be a joyful surpwise to you, deah boy," said D'Arcy.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, if that was his wish, he had it all right," he said. "It's a surprise, and a jolly joyful one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll play, Nugent," said Harry. "Bob goes in at half, and Smithy in the front line, and you, old chap. I hope Bunter comes back in time to see the Cup presented, whoever wins it."

"Yes, rather. Good old Bunter!" said Bob.

Bob was feeling quite affectionate towards Billy Bunter just then.

And the footballers went into the field.

THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER

Winning the Cup!

IT was a great match.

Tom Merry and Co. were in fine form, and now that the Remove team was up to its full strength the visitors realised that they had to put their best foot foremost, and they did.

But the Remove also were in great form, and the relief caused them by Bunter's amazing departure had an invigorating and exhilarating effect on them. With that dead-weight gone from the team, with the Old Man of the Sea off their back, with the good man put in the place of a shockingly bad one, the Removites felt "bucked" to such an extent that they felt equal to encountering a league team.

Good as the St. Jim's men were, they found it hard to hold the home team. Harry Wharton and Co. were simply not to be denied.

The first half was a hard struggle, but it ended with the Remove one goal up.

The Greyfriars footballers took that as an augury of success, and in the interval they exchanged happy anticipations.

"We're going to win," said Bob Cherry. "One goal to nil is good enough for me. We'll pass a vote of thanks to Bunter. He's winning this match for us by going on a motor drive this afternoon."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It will be Bunter's win if we pull it off," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Good old Bunter! Never dreamed that I should ever like the fellow so much," said Bob. "But he's really a good sort—sometimes. They say that absence makes the heart grow fonder—it certainly does in Bunter's case."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass on the cheery Remove footballers and smiled.

"Those chaps are awfully bucked," he remarked. "They think they are going to win the Cup. Of course, they're not. Still, they have a sportin' chance now."

Monty Lowther chuckled.

"Bunter's bucked them by dropping out,"

he remarked. "What a chance for you to buck us in the same way, Gussy!"

"I do not quite follow, Lowthah."

"By following Bunter's example," explained Lowther.

"I wedard you as an uttah ass!" said Arthur Augustus witheringly. "An uttah cwass ass, Lowthah!"

"Time!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

The footballers lined up for the second half. Wingate, of the Sixth, referee in the final tie, blew the whistle.

Hard and fast went the game.

Tom Merry and Co. fought hard for goals, but goals did not come their way. It really seemed as if the Remove, in their intense relief at getting rid of Bunter, had been "bucked" to such an extent that they were irresistible.

Certainly they seemed to have the upper hand, in spite of the good football that was put up by the St. Jim's fellows.

"Goal!" came in a roar round the field.

The goal came from Vernon-Smith, and it was the second for Greyfriars.

"Oh, good old Smithy!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Bravo!"

"Goal! Goal!"

"Bai Jove," said Arthur Augustus, as the players walked back to the centre of the field, "you fellows will weally have to pull up your socks if we are goin' to win the Buntah Cup to-day."

"Play up!" said Tom Merry. "We've got fifteen minutes, and a jolly lot to do. Play up!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

St. Jim's played up heroically. They were attacking the home goal in great style when the Head and Mr. Quelch walked down to the field. After the match the Cup was to be presented to the winning team in Big Hall, by the Head in person, and it was to be a great occasion. The Head took a kindly interest in the matter, likewise Mr. Quelch. So they came down to see the finish.

"Goal!"

"Yaas, wathah—goal!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

It was from the aristocratic foot of Arthur Augustus that the ball had gone in for St.

Jim's. The visitors were one to two with seven minutes to go.

"A good game—a good game!" said Dr. Locke. "How does it go, Hobson?"

"Greyfriars two to one, sir," said Hobson, of the Shell.

"Good—very good!"

Hard and fast was the game after the St. Jim's goal. Tom Merry and Co. scarcely hoped to do more than equalise in the short space of time left to them; but a draw meant a replay, and that—although the footballers did not know it—would have meant a triumph for St. Jim's. For if the match had been replayed, certainly Billy Bunter would have claimed his right to figure in it. No doubt Harry Wharton and Co. thought of that dreadful possibility. At all events, they played up in the last minutes of the match as they had seldom played before, and St. Jim's, with all their efforts, could not get through.

Hard and fast, harder and faster, till the shrill blast of the whistle cut the air.

Sheep!

"Bai Jove," gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "this is weally vewy wuff. I am suah I should have taken anothah goal in anothah minute or so. Vewy wuff indeed!"

"Greyfriars wins!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Hurray for us!" gasped Nugent.

"Hurray for Bunter, you mean," chortled Smithy. "Bunter's done it, done it all. Good old Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jolly good game, old man," said Tom Merry, smacking Harry Wharton cheerily on the shoulder. "You've got the Cup, but I think we made you earn it."

"I think you did," said Harry, laughing. "We've been lucky to win. Good game, anyhow."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The footballers, feeling pretty thoroughly gruelled, trooped off the field. Throughout the Remove there was keen satisfaction; even Skinner and Co. rejoiced in the victory. Three matches the Remove had played for the Cup, and, by luck and pluck, they had won them all three; and they rejoiced accordingly

There was a great spread in the Rag after the historic match, the St. Jim's footballers being entertained by the victors. Bunter was not forgotten. The Removites were feeling so kindly now towards Bunter that they missed him from the spread; they felt that he would have enjoyed it so much. But Bunter had not yet returned, and when the crowd gathered in Hall for the great presentation, even then Bunter had not returned. Harry Wharton and Co. looked for him and inquired for him, anxious that he should not miss the impressive scene. But he was not at Greyfriars, so the presentation had to proceed without him. And he had not turned up by the time Tom Merry and Co. left to catch their train.

It was not till close on lock-up that the hoot of a car was heard at the gates of Greyfriars.

Billy Bunter had returned at last.

THE TWENTY-THIRD CHAPTER

Bunter is not Satisfied!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, old chap!"

"I—I say——"

Breathless, Billy Bunter burst into the junior Common-room, crowded with fellows discussing the late match and admiring the handsome silver cup that reposed in state on the sideboard.

There was a chorus of welcome as Bunter rolled in. He was, in a way, one of the most popular fellows in the Remove—for the moment! For had he not practically won the Cup for his Form by standing out of the final match?

"Trot in, old chap!"

"Had a good time?"

"Sorry you weren't here to see the Cup handed out."

"It's all right, Bunt; we won, old man!"

"Thanks to you, Bunter," said Vernon-Smith.

"The thankfulness is terrific, my esteemed, ludicrous Bunter."

Billy Bunter glared at the Removites. He glared with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles

* * *

"I—I say, you fellows, have you played St. Jim's?"

"You bet! And beaten them," said Bob Cherry.

"I'm not having it!" roared Bunter.

"What?"

"I shall insist on a re-play."

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"I was going to play in the match!" howled Bunter.

Harry Wharton stared at him blankly.

"But you stood out," he said.

"I didn't!" shrieked Bunter.

"But you did," said Vernon-Smith, as puzzled as Wharton. "You went for a motor drive instead of your own accord. You told me so, and asked me to see you off. What are you driving at?"

Bunter gasped.

"Those Fourth Form rotters spoofed me!" he stuttered.

"Eh—who?"

"Temple and his gang!" gasped Bunter.

"I—I arranged with them to mop up Smithy and take him away in the car."

"What?" yelled the astounded Removites.

"I was going to jape him like that because he japed me on Rookwood day."

"Why, you cheeky villain," yelled Wharton, "if you'd kept one of my men out of the game, I'd have—have—have burst you!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Was that the game?" ejaculated the Bonder. "Bless my hat! I don't think Temple would have found it very easy to

get me into the car, if he'd tried! And I'm jolly certain he never meant to try."

"He spoofed me!" gasped Bunter. "He mopped me into the car instead of Smithy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That beast, Fry, sat on my head for miles and miles—"

"Oh, dear!"

"They've taken me all round Kent for hours and hours—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"At my own expense!" shrieked Bunter. "I've had to pay for the car, as I engaged it!"

The Removites yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And that beast, Fry, sat on my head—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's not a laughing matter!" yelled Bunter.

But the Removites evidently thought that it was. It was said of old that 'tis sport to see the engineer hoist by his own petard. Undoubtedly, William George Bunter had been hoist by his own petard. Bunter was the only fellow who did not regard it as a laughing matter. The other fellows did, and the room almost rocked with laughter.

* * *
Billy Bunter, for days and days, was eloquent on the subject. His indignant eloquence, indeed, seemed to have no limit.

But Bunter's eloquence could not alter facts. The Cup competition was over and the Greyfriars Remove had won the Bunter Cup!

THE END

