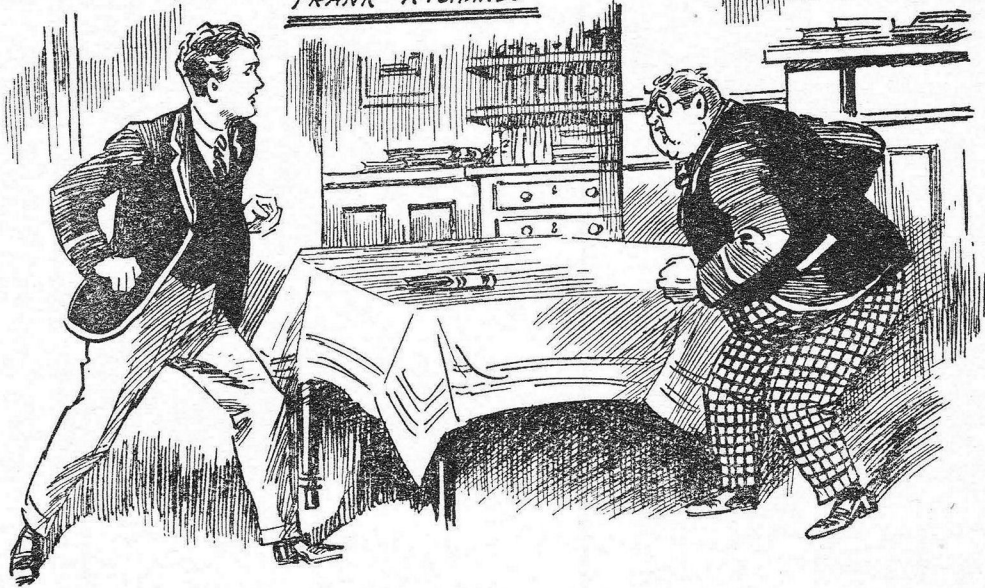


BILLY BUNTER OWNS UP!

—By—
FRANK RICHARDS



The fat Owl dodged round the table

CHAPTER I

BUNTER WISHES HE HADN'T!

BILLY BUNTER caught his breath.
“Oh, lor’!” he breathed.

The fat Owl of the Remove was alarmed.

It was after third school: and most Greyfriars fellows were out of the House, enjoying the open air on a cold and frosty morning, in the interval before the bell rang to summon them to “tiffin”.

Bunter, never very keen on the open air, but very keen indeed on a spot of tuck, to tide him over till dinner, was not out of the House. He was in a Remove study—not his own.

His own study had no attraction for him: there was nothing in the cupboard in that study. It was otherwise in No. 1—for Bunter, with his usual remarkable nose for tuck, was aware that a parcel had arrived for Frank Nugent that morning.

It seemed—to Billy Bunter—quite a simple and natural thing to sample the contents of Nugent's parcel, while the proprietors of the study were out of doors.

Nobody was likely to come up to the studies just then. The Famous Five, according to their usual manners and customs, were certain to be out: most likely punting a footer in the quad.

So it seemed to Bunter that opportunity knocked! He couldn't have chosen a safer moment for investigating the contents of the study cupboard in No. 1. And then—

He had found the parcel. He had extracted a cake therefrom. He had taken one bite at that cake—an extensive bite, which left quite a gaping gash in it. And then—footsteps and voices in the passage outside impinged upon his fat ears.

“Coming down for a punt-about, Wharton?” It was the voice of Herbert Vernon-Smith.

“No: I'm going to my study!” came the answer in Harry Wharton's voice. “Okay!”

The startled Owl, inside the study, heard the Bounder's footsteps receding towards the stairs. And he heard Harry Wharton's, as the captain of the Remove came along to the study approaching!

Bunter forgot even the cake at that moment.

Harry Wharton was coming into the study, and Billy Bunter did not need to be told what was going to happen if Wharton found him there. It was Billy Bunter who was the original cause of the spot of trouble that had arisen between Harry Wharton and his kind old uncle, Colonel Wharton at Wharton Lodge. And—although Wharton was unaware of it—it was Bunter with his knavish tricks of ventriloquism who had caused that spot of trouble to grow till it was like a dark shadow over the captain of the Remove. Wharton knew enough, at all events, to make it certain that he would boot Bunter if he found him surreptitiously in No. 1 Study. Instinctively, forgetful of cake, the fat Owl hunted cover. Before those approaching footsteps reached the door, the fat Owl backed behind the armchair in the corner, and ducked a fat head out of view.

A moment later, Harry Wharton came in. Behind the armchair, Bunter hardly ventured to breathe. The cake was still in his fat hands: but he did not take another bite. He waited breathlessly for Wharton to go. The beast couldn't have come to stay, at that time of day, surely. No doubt he had come up for a book or something, and would go at once. Bunter fervently hoped so.

Then he heard the door close.

It looked as if the captain of the Remove, had, after all, come to stay—or

why should he have closed the door? Billy Bunter could really have groaned—if he could have ventured to make a sound at all! If Wharton looked into the cupboard and noticed that the parcel had been raided, he might guess that the raider was still on the spot, and then—! The hidden Owl trembled.

But Wharton did not go to the cupboard. Bunter heard a sound of slow footsteps. Wharton was pacing the study.

Billy Bunter began to be as much puzzled as alarmed. Why on earth had the captain of the Remove come up, just to walk about his study! The open air was the place for a walk, if he wanted to walk about! Yet for long minutes those regular pacing footsteps came to the fat ears.

Then, to Bunter's utter amazement, he heard another sound—a wholly unexpected sound. It was a sigh!

Bunter could hardly believe his fat ears. A sigh—from Harry Wharton! Certainly no such sound ever would have escaped him, had he known that there were ears to hear. But there was no mistake about it—it was a sigh that told of a heavy heart.

What was the matter with Wharton? Something was—Billy Bunter could



Behind the armchair, Bunter barely ventured to breathe



Harry and Nugent only in study. "I've thought it over and I've changed my mind"

understand that. Something troubled him deeply. Was it because he had been "dished" over the Christmas holidays? Or what?

Then Bunter heard the door open, and footsteps in the doorway. And again the fat Owl could have groaned. Instead of the beast going, as he had hoped, another beast was coming!

"Harry, old man—!" It was Frank Nugent's voice. "You're here!"

"Yes, Frank. Come in, old fellow."

Harry Wharton smiled faintly as he spoke. There had been something very like a rift in the lute, and his chum was determined to disregard it—but he could guess that Nugent had come up with some inward misgivings.

But if Frank Nugent had any misgivings, they were dismissed by Harry's quiet, friendly tone. His face brightened as he came in.

"Harry! You didn't come up to write that rotten letter over again, did you?" Nugent's voice was almost pleading. "That letter to your uncle—?"

"No!"

"Thank goodness for that."

"I was going to," said Harry, quietly, "but—I've thought it over, in third school. I've changed my mind."

"I'm glad," said Nugent, simply.

"We came rather near a row in this study, old chap, in break. But—you, and the other fellows, will forget all about that—I've had a pretty hard knock, as you know, if that's any excuse for a rotten temper—"

"That's all right, old fellow! And—and—" Nugent hesitated. "Johnny's a bit rough-and-ready, perhaps, but—but—"

"I'm glad he butted in—though I didn't feel like it at the moment. I shall not write to my uncle at all." Harry Wharton's lips quivered a little, "I've got to remember, Frank, that he's always been kind and generous to me, even if he has changed, and turned me down all of a sudden. It's left me at a loose end, and I've got to think it out—but I think I've got it pretty clear now. I shall never set foot in Wharton Lodge again."

Behind the armchair in the corner, a fat Owl gave quite a jump, as he heard that. Once more Billy Bunter could hardly believe his fat ears.

"But—!" said Frank, uneasily.

"That's fixed and settled," said Harry, his lips setting a little. "I've been told not to go home for Christmas. I don't need telling twice! That's not my home any longer, and I shall never enter it again."

"But—" muttered Nugent.

"Nothing will change that," said Harry. "If Colonel Wharton changes his mind again, I shall not change mine. I think I can pull through here. I'm going to consult Quelch about putting in for a scholarship, like Linley, and if I'm lucky that will see me through school. It's a chance, at least." He smiled again, "I shall be swotting hard, old chap, while you fellows are festivating at Cherry Place in the hols."

"You're coming too—"

Wharton shook his head.

"No!" he answered. "That won't do. I've no time on my hands for hols now. I can get leave to stay at the school over the holidays—no difficulty about that. And I shall be working hard all the time, swotting for a schol. After all, why shouldn't I? I've been luckier, so far, than lots of other fellows—but now the shoe pinches, I can face up to it. I'm not afraid of work, I hope."

"But—but!" muttered Nugent, miserably.

"But I'm not going to feel bitter about it, Frank, and I'm not going to complain," said Harry, quietly. "Johnny calls it sulks—and I daresay he's right. Anyhow, that's all over now. I'm going to face it, and try not to feel down in the mouth."

"Harry, old man," said Nugent, earnestly, "I believe Johnny's right, and that if you got in touch with your uncle—"

Wharton's face hardened.

"That's all over," he said. "I shall never see Colonel Wharton again, and never enter his house. I'm not going to reproach him, Frank. I owe him too much for that. But—it's the end."

Nugent was silent.

"Now, if you don't mind, old fellow, I'd rather be left alone—cut down and punt that footer with Bob."

Nugent nodded, and left the study. The door closed after him. Harry Wharton was left alone—as he believed, at last. Fat ears behind the armchair heard him resume that tireless pacing. And again, to the fat ears, came that sound of a deep sigh, that somehow sent a pang to the fat Owl's heart.

"Oh, crikey!" breathed Bunter, inaudibly.

Dimly, it was coming into his fat mind what he had done. "Dishing" Harry Wharton for the hols had seemed, to Bunter, tit for tat, a Roland for an Oliver: a remarkably clever joke at Wharton's expense. That it might have serious consequences had not even occurred to him. Now it was borne in upon him that the consequences were serious—terribly serious—that what, to his fatuous mind, had seemed a comedy, was a tragedy. Never for an instant had he dreamed of anything like this. From the bottom of his fat heart, he wished that he had never played that trick on the telephone. For the first time in his fat career, Billy Bunter was feeling the twinges of remorse!

CHAPTER II

LIGHT AT LAST!

"**B**UNTER!"

"Oh!"

Harry Wharton had ceased to pace the study. He was standing at the window, looking out into the quadrangle below, and a crowd of Greyfriars fellows there. Perhaps he was wondering whether, the next term, he would be among them as of old. And Billy Bunter, peering out from behind the armchair, blinked at his back, and wondered too—whether he had a chance of tiptoeing out of the study while that back was turned. And then suddenly, Wharton turned from the window—and uttered a startled ejaculation, as his eyes fell on a fat face staring at him from the corner of the study.

He stared at Bunter.

Not for a moment had he dreamed that anyone was in the study with him, And there was Bunter—blinking at him from the corner like a startled and terrified fat Owl.

As it came into his mind that Bunter had been there, must have been there, ever since he had entered the study, and that the fat Owl must have heard all that he had said to Nugent, a flash of anger came into his eyes—and he made a step towards the corner. There was a yelp of alarm from Bunter.

"Here, you keep off, you beast!"

Wharton breathed hard.

"You fat sweep, what are you doing here?"

"Oh! Nothing! I—I wasn't after anything—nothing at all, especially a cake!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I—"

"Get out of it."

"I—I say, old chap—" Bunter would have been glad to get out of it. But he could not get out of it without coming within range of a foot.

But the anger faded out of Harry Wharton's face. He was not in a "rotten temper" now. He was past that. What had happened was like the shattering of his little world: it left him with a heavy heart, but no longer angry or resentful. Only sadness remained: and in that softened mood, Bunter was, if he had known it, quite safe from the kicking he richly deserved.

"You fat ass, get out." Wharton's tone was mild. "Cut."

"You ain't going to kick a chap?" asked Bunter, cautiously.

"No, you ass! Just get out! Leave that cake alone—it's Nugent's. But get out."

Bunter gave him a very cautious blink. But he was reassured, and he emerged from the corner. Reluctantly, he laid the cake on the table: then, with his eyes and spectacles still warily on the captain of the Remove, he edged towards the door.

Harry Wharton turned to the window again.

Bunter reached the door. At the door he stopped. Had the captain of the Remove booted him out of the study, as he had fully expected, the fat Owl would have fled yelling up the passage. But that unlooked-for mildness made a difference. Stopping at the door, Bunter blinked back at Wharton, and hesitated. Quite unusual thoughts were passing in Billy Bunter's fat mind.

Wharton seemed to have forgotten him. No doubt he supposed that Bunter was gone. But Bunter was not gone: and for several long minutes, he stood there, uncertain, blinking at Harry's back. Then, as if suddenly making up his mind, he spoke.

"I—I—I say, old chap—"

Harry Wharton looked round.

"You fat ass, are you still there! What do you want!"

"Oh! Nothing! But—" stammered Bunter.

"Well, travel, fathead."

"But I—I—I say." Bunter stammered again, "I—I say, old chap, I—I—I wouldn't row with your uncle, if I were you. I—I say, I—I heard what you said to Nugent—"

"I know that! Get out."

"But—but—but—perhaps it ain't so bad as you think," stammered Bunter. "Perhaps there—there's some mistake—I—I say, I—I wouldn't do anything in a—a—a hurry—you might be sorry for it afterwards, you know."

Harry Wharton stared at him. He had had that advice from his chums, and had had no use for it. He did not expect it from Bunter, whose fat thoughts, as a rule, were wholly concentrated on one person: William George Bunter of the Remove. He frowned: and then, as he saw that there was a look of real concern on the fat face, his brow relaxed, and he smiled faintly.

"Don't bother your fat head about it, Bunter," he said. "Just cut."

"But—but I say—" Bunter did not "cut". He stood blinking at the captain of the Remove like a distressed Owl. "I say, suppose—suppose—suppose—"

"Suppose what?"

"Well, suppose there was a mistake—suppose you've got it all wrong, and the old bean ain't ratty with you as you think. I—I'm jolly sure that he ain't."

"You don't know anything about it."

"I jolly well do," said Bunter, desperately. "I—I never thought you'd take it like this—never dreamed of it! It was just a—a—a joke, really—how was I to know you'd go off the deep end like this? I wouldn't have, myself. But you get your back up and make all this fuss about nothing—"

"Nothing?" repeated Harry.

"Yes—just nothing! You think your uncle slanged you on Quelch's telephone—and you go off like fireworks, when a fellow was only pulling your leg—"

"What?"

"Mind, I don't know anything about it," exclaimed Bunter, in a great hurry. "It wasn't me."

"What wasn't you?"

"Oh! Nothing! I never knew anything about it, of course. I never went down to Friardale for the telephone at the post-office, or anything of the sort. I couldn't speak like the old bean if I tried, and I never practised his voice in my study, and Toddy never heard me and fancied he was there. Besides, it was only a joke. Just a spot of ventriloquism for a—a—a joke."

Harry Wharton gazed at him.

"I don't know anything about it, of course," said Bunter. "But if you

fancy it was your uncle slanging you on Quelch's telephone, you're barking up the wrong tree, see?"

Wharton gasped.

"What do you mean? It was my uncle—I know his voice well enough—Oh! You fat villain—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Was it you?" shrieked Harry Wharton. "One of your potty ventriloquial tricks? No! No! It can't have been—it was Colonel Wharton. What are you spinning me this silly yarn for, you fat idiot?" He made a step towards the fat Owl.

Bunter half-opened the door. He did not like the look on Harry Wharton's face just then: and he was prepared to dodge.

"You jolly well keep off!" gasped Bunter. "I didn't have to tell you, did I? I'm only telling you because you're landing yourself in trouble and there ain't anything for you to make a fuss about. I think you might be grateful to a chap for telling you when he didn't have to."

Harry Wharton paused.

His mind was in a whirl. He had forgotten all about Bunter's ventriloquism, and his trick of imitating voices, though he had quite lately had a sample of it. But now the fat Owl's stammering confession was enlightening him.

"Bunter." His voice was quiet and calm. "Tell me the truth—for once, if you can. Did you play a rotten trick on the telephone—?"

"Well, that's a rotten way of putting it, when a fellow was only pulling your leg," said Bunter.

"Was it you or not?"

"Yes, it was," gasped Bunter. "I was going to dish you over the hols, like you dished me, and how was I to know that you'd make such a fool of yourself about it? Your uncle doesn't even know that you fancy he phoned you—it was me all the time, so you can put that in your pipe and smoke it."

"I—I can't believe it—I—I—"

"Perhaps you will when you read his letter—"

"His letter? He hasn't written—"

Bunter groped in a sticky pocket.

"I—I was going to give you this, but I—I forgot! You can have it now. I wasn't going to keep it till break-up—here, you keep off!" yelled Bunter, as Harry Wharton ran towards him. It was only to snatch the letter from the fat sticky hand: but Billy Bunter did not stay for more. He bolted out of the study and raced for the stairs.



"Are you still there? What do you want?"

Harry Wharton was left with the letter in his hand—his uncle's letter. His fingers were trembling a little as he opened it. And the expression on his face was extraordinary as he read it.

CHAPTER III

THE CLOUDS ROLL BY!

"STOP that ball, Bunter!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter, quite unintentionally, stopped the whizzing football—with a podgy chest. It was quite a bang, on the most extensive waistcoat in the Remove. Bunter roared, and sat down in the quad.

"Ow! wow! wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They were punting the footer before dinner, enjoying the exercise in the keen, frosty December air. It whizzed quite a distance from Smithy's foot, as Bunter rolled along—just in time to stop it!

"Ow! wow!" roared Bunter.

A laughing crowd came up after the ball. Billy Bunter sat up, set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and gave them an infuriated blink. They rushed on with the ball: but Bob Cherry stopped.

"Hurt, old fat man?" he asked, kindly.

"Beast!" howled Bunter. "Of course I'm hurt! Knocking a chap over with a football! I'm fearfully hurt. Pains all over."

"Well, if they're all over, you needn't worry about them," said Bob.

"You silly ass! I don't mean they're all over—I mean they're all over—" Bob, however, did not remain to learn precisely what Bunter meant—he ran on after the punters.

The fat Owl heaved up his weight. He rolled off to the House. After his sudden exit from No. 1 Study, Bunter had rolled out, to keep at a safe distance from Harry Wharton. Now he rolled in again, to seek an armchair by the fire in the Rag—with a wary eye open for the captain of the Remove as he rolled. It was upon a good impulse—rather rare with Bunter—that he had owned up to the trick on the telephone, and handed over the letter from a sticky pocket. But he did not expect Wharton to be in a good temper about it.



"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Hurt, old fat man?" Bob asked

His best guess, in the circumstances, was to keep at a safe distance. But alas for Bunter—even as he rolled into the House, he came on Harry Wharton, face to face, coming out.

“Oh, crikey!” gasped Bunter.

He revolved on his axis immediately, and dashed back into the quad. Harry stared after him.

“Bunter, you ass—” he called out.

Bunter did not stay to listen. He flew. Harry Wharton stared, laughed, and went on his way. Not till a good five minutes later, did Billy Bunter, blinking about him like a very cautious owl, approach the doorway again. But this time, the coast was clear, and the fat Owl rolled in, rolled to the Rag, and at long last reposed his fat limbs in an armchair by the fire: hoping that that unspeakable beast, the captain of the Remove, would stay out till the bell rang for tiffin.

Harry, if Bunter had only known it, had dismissed him from mind. He was not looking for Bunter—he was looking for his chums, with news for them. And—if Bunter had only stayed to ascertain the fact—there was no sign of a “rotten temper” about him. His face was bright and cheery—much brighter than it had been for some time of late.

“Hallo, hallo, hallo!” came a roar from Bob Cherry. “Here you are, old man! Come and help us punt this footer.”

“Come on, old boy!” called out Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton smiled. There had been a rift in the lute, in break that morning, but his friends, evidently, were passing it over like the idle wind which they regarded not. There was not going to be trouble in the Co. if they could help it. But Harry Wharton’s mood for trouble had passed away as if it had never been.

“Leave that footer alone for a bit,” he called back. “I’ve got something to tell you chaps.”

“Okay!” answered Bob: and the Co., leaving the footer to Smithy and the rest, joined him; rather wondering what was coming. Johnny Bull’s face was just a little expressive.

“You haven’t written that letter again!” he asked.

Harry Wharton coloured.

“No!” he answered.

“That’s good, anyhow,” said Johnny.

“More so than you think, Johnny,” said Wharton, quietly. “But for you, old chap, that rotten letter would be in the post now, on its way to my uncle—” His voice trembled. “Thank goodness you did what you did. You’ve always been a good pal, but you never did a fellow a better turn than that.”

"Oh!" said Johnny, quite taken aback.

Bob Cherry whistled.

"Glad you've thought it over, old fellow," he said.

"I'm glad, too, that I changed my mind about that, as I told Franky, before I knew that it was all a mistake," said Harry. "But I've found that out now, and I can tell you fellows, it's like a ton weight off my mind."

Johnny Bull grunted.

"So there was a mistake?" he said.

"Yes, as I know now."

"I told you so!"

Harry Wharton winced. Johnny had told him so: there was no doubt about that. He knew now that had he taken Johnny's advice, all would have been well: and it was not pleasant to remember that stubborn pride had stood in the way. But the next moment, he smiled.

"You did, Johnny," he said. "But it's no use talking sense to an obstinate ass with his back up, and I'm sorry for it."

"Oh!" said Johnny, taken aback again.

"But what's happened, Harry?" asked Frank Nugent. "You say you've found out that there was a mistake—how and what!"

"What was the idiotic and absurd mistakefulness, my esteemed and ridiculous chum?" asked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"That phone call from my uncle—"

"What about that?"

"My uncle never phoned at all."

"Wha-a-a-at?"

"Colonel Wharton knows nothing about it," said Harry. "Goodness knows what he'd have thought if I'd posted that letter—thank goodness Johnny saved me from that. He never phoned at all—"

"But—but—but—!" stuttered Bob, blankly. "You didn't dream it, did you?"

"That fat ass Bunter—"

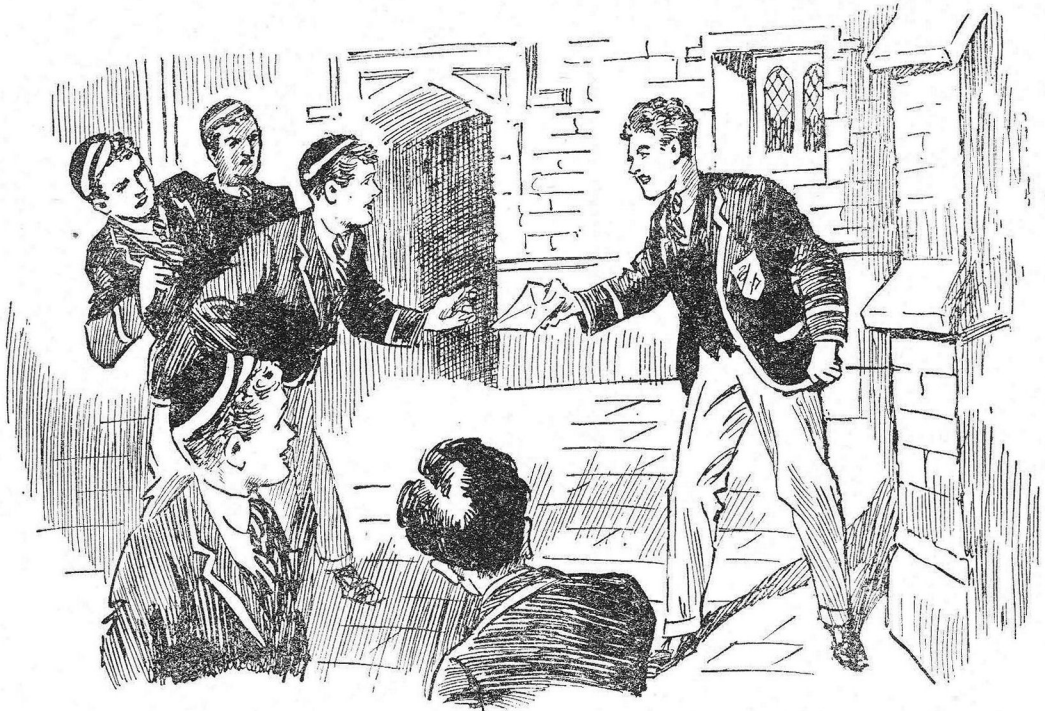
"Bunter?"

"You know his potty ventriloquism, and his potty trick of imitating voices. It was Bunter on the phone that time, pulling my leg."

"Great pip!"

"Of course, the fat ass never knew the harm he was doing," said Harry. "It was his fatheaded idea of a leg-pull. He's owned up to it. I—I couldn't quite get it down that he had taken me in like that, but—but—it turns out that my uncle had written—"

"You never had a letter—"



Harry drew a letter from his pocket. He held it out for his friends to read

“That blithering, blethering, benighted fathead must have taken it out of the rack before break this morning—anyhow, he had it, and he gave it to me after owning up to his potty trickery—”

“You’ve got the letter?” exclaimed Bob.

“Here it is.”

Harry Wharton drew a letter from his pocket. He held it out for his friends to read. The envelope bore Thursday’s post-mark, and the letter had, evidently, been delivered at Greyfriars that morning, though Wharton had known nothing of it. The letter, written in the old Colonel’s firm hand, ran:

Dear Harry,

Your aunt has explained the whole matter to me, and I understand, of course, that you were not to blame for missing me on Wednesday afternoon. Forget all about it, my dear boy. I am looking forward to seeing you, with your friends, in a few days now, and we shall all have a merry Christmas.

Your affectionate Uncle,
James Wharton.

Bob Cherry gave a long, long whistle. Johnny Bull gave a grunt. Frank Nugent looked like a fellow who had come into a fortune: and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh smiled all over his dusky face.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob.

"So, you see, it's all right—right as rain!" said Harry. "All a rotten mistake, owing to that fat chump's potty tricks. I was all set for making a priceless fool of myself—and all the while there was nothing the matter—as I might have found out for myself if I'd been a bit more reasonable, I suppose—"

"I told—!" began Johnny Bull. But he stopped, at that. Even Johnny, perhaps, realised that he had made that remark often enough!

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, it's all clear now, and we're all going to Wharton Lodge for the Christmas hols, after all, and everything is going to be jolly," he said. "And the sooner we forget all about this, the better."

"There's one thing beats me," said Bob, slowly.

"What that?"



"Well, my hat!" said Bob. "So you see, it's all right"

"Why did Bunter own up? You never found him out—he owned up! Why?"

"The whyfulness is terrific."

"Not like Bunter," said Johnny Bull.

"No!" said Harry, slowly. "Not like Bunter! But—well, he heard me talking to Nugent in the study, and that put him wise to the harm he had done, and—and I suppose he's got a spot of conscience somewhere under his fat—anyhow, he did own up, and put it right. He ought to be jolly well booted, but—but I feel more like giving him your cake, Franky."

Frank Nugent laughed.

"Do!" he said.

CHAPTER IV

BUNTER TOO!

"**B**UNTER—"

"Beast!"

"Here you are—"

"You keep off!"

"I've been looking for you—"

"Keep off!" yelled Bunter.

He had hoped that Harry Wharton would stay out till "tiffin". That hope proved unfounded, as the captain of the Remove walked into the Rag. The fat Owl bounded out of the armchair, and dodged round the table.

"You fat ass—"

"Beast!"

"I tell you I've been looking for you—"

"I know that! Keep off."

Harry Wharton stared at the fat Owl across the table, and burst into a laugh.

"Fixed up for Christmas yet, Bunter?" he asked.

"Eh?" Bunter blinked at that unexpected question. "Have you been looking for me to ask me that?"

"Just that!"

"Oh!" said Bunter, reassured. "Well, I ain't exactly fixed up for the hols yet, old chap. A lot of fellows have asked me home, of course—"

"Hundreds, I expect," said Harry Wharton, gravely.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"But if you feel like turning the lot of them down, and coming to Wharton

Lodge for the hols, I'll make it all right with my uncle," said Harry, laughing.

Billy Bunter blinked at him. He had expected a booting. This was ever so much more agreeable than a booting. His fat face beamed.

"My dear chap, that's all right," he said, affectionately, "I'll come! I'll come with pleasure. Rely on me."

"I will!" said Harry, "and if you feel like a cake before tiffin—"

"Eh?"

"There's one in my study—as I think you know. Cut up and scoff it."

"Oh, crikey!" said the astonished Owl.

It was quite near time for tiffin. But that made no difference to William George Bunter. Billy Bunter had room for a cake, with as many helpings at dinner to follow as he could venture to ask for under a gimlet-eye. Bunter lost no time in cutting up to the study and scoffing that cake.

THE clouds had rolled by. Most faces were merry and bright when Greyfriars School broke up for Christmas, and Harry Wharton's as bright as any—with one exception. Brightest of all was the fat face of Billy Bunter—safely landed, at last, for a merry Christmas.

THE END