

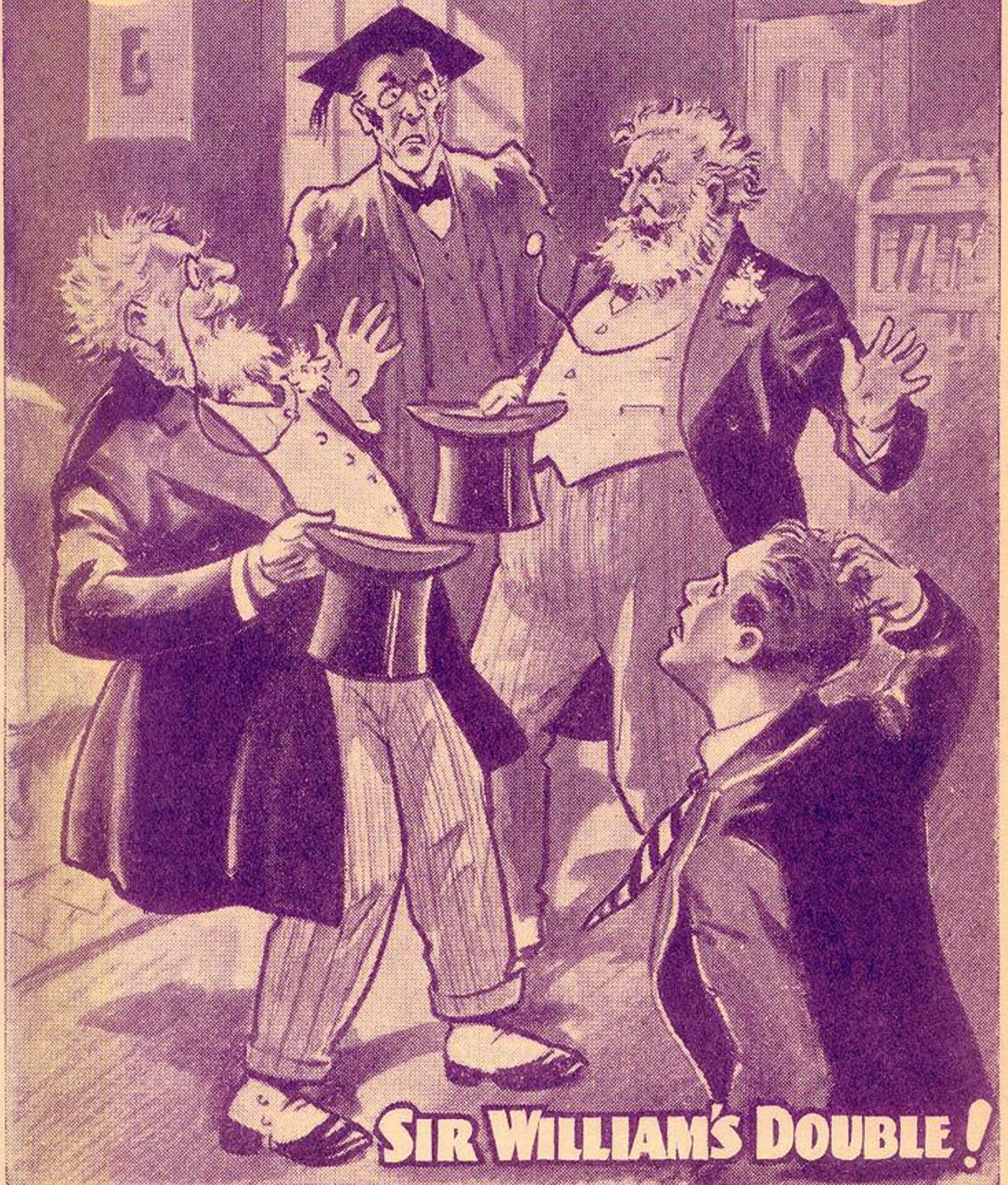
THE
MAGNET

SCHOOLBOY ACTOR'S AMAZING JAPE!

See
Inside.

The Magnet

2^D



SIR WILLIAM'S DOUBLE!



The GREYFRIARS HERALD

STOP
PRESS
NEWS

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON

BIRCHEMALL the BEAUTIFUL!

Short St. Sam's Story

By DICKY NUGENT

"WHAT'S happened to the Head?"

The question was on everybody's lips.

It was morning assembly at St. Sam's. Dr. Birchermall walked on to the platform—and a mermer of amazement promptly ran round Big Hall.

The Head was different—you could see it at a glance. The crafty egg-spression he usually wore was missing, and there was no skowl on his face. In some strange, misterious way, he had grown quite good-looking!

"It's—it's amazing!" wispered Jack Jolly, of the Fourth, to his pals, Merry and Bright and Fearless. "He's not a bit ugly this morning. What's happened to him?"

"Perhaps he's had beauty treatment!" grinned Fearless. "Nobody could say he didn't need it. His face would have stopped a trolley-bus!"

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather!"

"Silence!" cried the Head, from the platform; and, as he spoke, the St. Sam's fellows notissed another thing. His voice had changed, too. It sounded muffled and distant, just as though he was wearing a gag.

"There's a big change in the Head—no doubt about it!" remarked Fearless. "I've never heard him speak so softly before!"

"Quite right, old chap!" said Merry. "But it's his face that gets me. Compared with what it always has been, it's positively beautiful now!"

"Silence!" repeated Dr. Birchermall,

in the same pekuliar, distant voice. "This morning, boys, we are going to have an A.R.P. lesson!"

"Good egg!"

"I dare say, boys," went on the Head, "you have notissed something different about me this morning?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Couldn't miss it, sir!" called out Jolly, with a larf. "You've grown ever so much better-looking!"

"Eh?" cried the Head sharply.

"Your face used to be quite painful to look at, sir," rattled on the kaptin of the Fourth cheerfully. "But, compared with how it used to be, it's quite handsome now!"

"You—you disportinent yung raskal!" yelled Dr. Birchermall. "How dare you insult my face?"

Jack Jolly stared.

"I'm not insulting it, sir—I'm praising it! It's much better now!"

"Hear, hear!"

"You silly yung idjuts!" hooted the Head. "It's just the same as it always has been!"

"Then what makes you look so different?"

For answer, Dr. Birchermall put his hands up to his face and pulled away the front part of it.

"That's what makes it look so different!" he roared, in his natcheral voice once more. "I was wearing my gas-mask—that's what!"

"Oh, grate pip!"

The St. Sam's fellows saw daylight at last.

"Well, who ever would have thought it, sir?" gasped Jack Jolly. "We thought you'd grown good-looking, and it was only your gas-mask after all. Sorry, sir!"

"Awfully sorry!" grinned the Fourth.

"Bust you!" snapped the Head; and he began the A.R.P. lesson, skowling feercely and looking quite his old self again.

and made him help me with my potatoes for being so fearfully funny.

Later, I mentioned the matter to Bunter, as an expert in the tuck line. After pondering deeply for some time, Bunter said he thought it could be done.

"It's a question of working out what you want and setting out to get it," he said. "Mind you, it would mean ploughing up the playing-fields."

"My hat! Do you think so?" I asked, somewhat taken aback.

"Positive," said Bunter decisively. "But given that, it could be done. Without planning the thing in too much detail, I should say one should aim at keeping, say, a couple of hundred chickens for eggs and killing, you know."

"As many as that, old sport?"

"That's the minimum," Bunter said firmly. "Then, of course, one would want a small herd of cows for milk, and bullocks for meat; and, of course, a small flock of sheep for mutton, with perhaps a few dozen pigs as a reserve."

"Great pip!"

"Probably a few acres of wheat for flour, and, say, a small field of oats," went on Bunter calmly. "And, of course, an orchard for fresh fruit and preserves. A field for herbs and salads, another for beets to make sugar from, a dozen beehives for honey—"

"Here, half a minute, old fat man!" I broke in. "Remember we're only planning for a school—not for a giddy army!"

Bunter blinked at me.

"Planning for a school?" he gasped. "Oh, really, Cherry! I was only thinking of what I should need myself!"

I sat the fat Owl down on the carpet and abandoned the discussion. Greyfriars obviously can never grow its own grub, so long as there's an appetite like Bunter's to satisfy!

CAN GREYFRIARS GROW ITS OWN GRUB?

Asks BOB CHERRY

If any of you chaps wants an object lesson in how to beat the blockade, trot round to the Greyfriars allotments any "halfer" and see us digging for victory. It's a sight for sore eyes!

As head cook and bottle-washer of the Remove section, I can answer for it that we are going to produce a crop of eatables that will astonish the natives. Our spuds will be spiffing, our carrots corkers, our greens great, and our artichokes hearty jokes. Our mustard and cress will be really hot stuff, and our onions will bring tears to your eyes!

If I have my way, Greyfriars will be living on its own garden produce by the summer. I really don't see myself why we should have to buy anything outside. But I admit that not everybody sees eye to eye with me on this point.

Wingate, for instance, told me he thought he could do with a slice of bread now and again, preferably not made entirely with potatoes. I hope the old bean was not pulling my leg!

Skinner said I could count on him as an enthusiastic supporter of the idea, provided we allowed him to grow the things he liked best. When I said he had only to name them, he said his chief fancies were kippers, currant cakes, dates, and bananas.

I ran him down to the allotments

WE MUST ECONOMISE!

By DICK PENFOLD

The Law with patriots now combines To punish those who waste with fines. Then why not do away with "lines"?

WE MUST ECONOMISE!

To fight the foe needs lots of pep, So every chap must watch his step. Stop wasting precious time on prep!

WE MUST ECONOMISE!

In class we learn of ancient Greeks, Sheer wasted work except to freaks, I think we should abolish Beaks.

WE MUST ECONOMISE!

WILLIAM WIBLEY, OF THE GREYFRIARS REMOVE, IS NOT MUCH OF A SCHOLAR. BUT AS AN ACTOR AND AN IMPERSONATOR, WIBLEY HAS NO EQUAL!

SIR WILLIAM'S DOUBLE!

By FRANK RICHARDS



UP A TREE!

BANG!
Clang!
"Oh!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

He was taken quite by surprise. A fellow walking under the wide-spreading branches of an ancient elm-tree naturally did not expect an object to fall suddenly upon his head. Least of all would he have expected that object to be a toffee-tin.

But that was what had happened. From the branches overhead, thick with the green of spring, that toffee-tin suddenly shot, banged on Bob's head, and then clanged on the ground.

The Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove came to a halt. Bob Cherry rubbed his head. A school cap was a poor protection against a toffee-tin whizzing down on a fellow's head. The chums of the Remove stared blankly at the tin.

They had been discussing the Easter holidays as they sauntered in the quad after class. But they forgot the Easter holidays for the moment.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"What silly ass—" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry, still rubbing his head, turned his glance upward. Obviously, someone was in that elm-tree. The toffee-tin could not possibly have got there on its own!

"Bunter!" roared Bob.

An extensive and extremely tight pair of trousers met Bob's view as he stared up. Then he glimpsed a fat

"What do you think of this?" asked the disguised Wibley, with a grin. "I think you'll get the Head's birch, you fat-head," said Wharton, "if you're spotted playing the goat!"

face looking down, two little round eyes blinking through a big pair of spectacles.

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked Bunter from the tree.

"You fat chump!" roared Bob. "What the dickens are you doing up that tree?"

The Famous Five all stared up at Billy Bunter!

Bunter's ample form was lodged on a branch over their heads. A fat paw was holding on to another branch. But the Owl of the Remove did not seem to feel very secure.

Billy Bunter's remote ancestors, perhaps, had been accustomed to climbing trees. But that ancestral gift had not descended to Billy Bunter. Bunter was no climber. Indeed, it was rather a puzzle to Harry Wharton & Co. how the fat Owl of the Remove had heaved his weight up

Super School Story of HARRY WHARTON & CO., of GREY-FRIARS, with WILLIAM WIBLEY, the Schoolboy Impersonator, taking the leading role.

into the tree at all. Now that he was there, he looked likely to come down any minute—in a heap!

"Don't yell, Cherry!" squeaked the fat Owl above. "I shall get into a row for climbing this tree if a beak or a pre spots me here."

"You benighted chump!" roared Bob. "What do you mean by squatting up in a tree and chucking a toffee-tin on a fellow's napper?"

"I didn't!" hooted Bunter. "I dropped it! I jolly nearly fell down! It was jolly lucky I only dropped the tin on you."

"You thumping chump, I've a jolly good mind to buzz it back at you!"

"That's what I want you to do, old chap! Chuck it up so that I can catch it, and then walk away quietly, and don't get fellows looking this way, see? Especially Smithy."

"Smithy?"

"Well, if Smithy has missed a tin of toffees from his study he may be looking for it. I don't mean that that tin is Smithy's, of course—but Smithy might think it was, if he saw it. You know how jolly suspicious he is! I say, chuck it up, will you?"

Billy Bunter blinked down anxiously.

The Famous Five grinned.

They understood now why the fat Owl was parked in the elm. If Smithy

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of the Remove was looking for a missing toffee-tin, it behoved the fat Owl to hunt cover while he disposed of the toffees.

Having found that safe cover, Billy Bunter had been just about to begin on the toffees when the tin slipped from his fat paw and went.

"I say, you fellows, don't stand there grinning like a lot of Cheshire cheeses—I mean cats!" hooted the fat Owl. "Chuck up that tin of toffees, will you?"

"I think you'd better chuck it up, if it's Smithy's!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"The chuckfulness-up is the proper caper, my esteemed fat Bunter," grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, don't be cads!" howled Bunter. "I can't get down—and get up again—I'm out of breath! Besides, Smithy might spot me, and you know his rotten temper. I say, pick up that tin, Bob, old chap!"

Bob Cherry picked up the tin.

It was fairly weighty. Bunter had not started on the contents yet. In the circumstances, he was not going to start on them. As that toffee-tin belonged to Herbert Vernon-Smith, it was Bob's idea to convey it back to the owner.

"That's right!" said Bunter, blinking down. "Now, chuck it up carefully, so that I can catch it! Don't be a clumsy ass! You know what a fool you are, old chap! I say, what are you putting that tin under your arm for, Bob Cherry? You can't chuck it up, under your arm."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"I can see Smithy in the quad," he answered. "I'll ask him to chuck it up, Bunter!"

Yell, from Bunter!

"You silly ass! Stop! Gimme that tin! Don't you let Smithy see that tin! He might think it was his——"

"He might!" agreed Bob.

"The mightfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You fat scrounger!" said Frank Nugent. "That toffee belongs to Smithy, and it's going back to him."

"It's mine!" roared Bunter in alarm. "I say, you fellows, I never bagged that tin from Smithy's study. It wasn't on the table when I went into the study, and besides, I never went in. I never saw a toffee-tin in Smithy's study—and I left it there, too—never touched it! Not that I went to Smithy's study, you know—I haven't been near it! I say, you fellows——"

Five fellows strolled on—Bob with the tin of toffees under his arm.

There was a frantic yell from the elm.

"I say, you fellows——"

Bob Cherry stopped and looked back.

"Shut up, you ass!"

"Beast! Gimme my toffee——"

"Loder of the Sixth——"

"Blow Loder! Gimme my toffee!"

"Loder's coming this way! If he spots you up that tree, you'll get six! Shut up before he hears you!" hooted Bob.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked round through his big spectacles. Loder of the Sixth was

coming towards the spot, with his prefect's ashplant under his arm, and an aggressive expression on his face.

Loder had spotted that something was going on under the elms, and he was coming to look into it—not so much because Loder was fearfully keen on his duty as a prefect, as because he had a special down on the Famous Five, and was rather keen on catching them out, if opportunity offered.

Billy Bunter squatted silent on his branch.

There was no chance to slither down and escape: Loder would have seen him. And there was the strictest of strict rules about clambering up the old elms in the quad. Fellows did so, at times, but there was always trouble to come if they were spotted.

"Now, then, what's going on here?" asked Gerald Loder, in his most bullying tone, as he arrived on the spot.

"We are!" answered Bob Cherry meekly.

"What?"

"We're going on—if you'll step out of the way, Loder."

And the Co. grinned.

Loder glared at them suspiciously. He did not look up, and was unaware of a big pair of spectacles fastened anxiously on him.

"Have you been climbing the trees?" he demanded.

"Not at all, Loder!" answered Harry Wharton politely.

"You've been up to something."

"Only snuff!" said Bob.

"Snuff!" repeated Loder blankly.

"Yes; we're always up to snuff!" said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky young ass!" exclaimed Loder. "I——"

Loder of the Sixth was suddenly interrupted. Bunter, on his branch, had slipped, and nearly dropped. He clutched hold and saved himself—at the same time emitting a breathless gasp.

"Ooooooogh!" gasped Bunter.

Loder jumped, and stared up. The most extensive trousers in the Greyfriars Remove met his gaze, and then the fattest countenance. The Owl of the Remove was spotted.

ONE FOR HIS NOB!

"BUNTER!" exclaimed Loder.

"Oh crikey!"

Loder of the Sixth strode towards the elm. He stood below Bunter's branch, staring up at Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on! Bunter, had he kept silent, might have escaped discovery! But he was discovered now! Loder slipped the ashplant down into his hand.

"Bunter!" he snapped.

He was sorry that it was not one of the Famous Five in the tree. Had it been, Loder would have administered a full six with the ash well laid on. A couple of swipes would do for Bunter. Loder was not thinking of letting him off. He rather liked exercising the ash

"Tain't me!"

"What?"

"I—I—I mean, I—I—I——"

"Get down at once!" said Loder sternly. "Come down out of that tree, you young rascal! Get a move on!"

He swished the ash.

Billy Bunter, squatting on the branch, and clinging hold with both fat hands, blinked down at him apprehensively. Bunter did not like the look of that ash! Loder was not, perhaps, going to give him what he would have given one of the cheery Co. in similar circumstances. But Bunter didn't want any at all!

"Do you hear me?" hooted Loder.

"Oh! No! I mean, yes! I—I say, Loder, I—I think I can hear Wingate calling you!" gasped Bunter. "Had—had—hadn't you better go and—see what he wants, Loder?"

"Get down!"

"I—I—I mean, your uncle's come, Loder——"

"My uncle!" repeated Loder blankly.

"Yes; he's come to-day instead of to-morrow. I—I saw him going into the House!" stuttered Bunter. "I—I shouldn't keep him waiting if I were you, Loder, or—or you may not get a tip from him after all."

Loder stared up at the fat Owl in the tree. The Famous Five stared also. This was the first they had heard of Loder's uncle!

"You young scoundrel!" exclaimed Loder. "How do you know that my uncle's coming to the school to-morrow?"

"Oh! I—I don't——"

"What?"

"I—I don't know anything about it," stammered Bunter. "I never heard you talking to Walker about him, and—and I never heard you say that the old blighter would be good for a tip, Loder."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Still, if he's come, you—you'd better go in!" stuttered the fat Owl. "I—I saw him going into the House, Loder! I—I knew who he was, because of the—the likeness you know."

"You eavesdropping young rascal!" said Loder, staring at him. "My uncle's nothing like me. He's an old bean with white whiskers, a foot shorter than I am."

"Oh! Is he?" gasped Bunter.

"I—I—I mean, that—that's the man I—I saw! An—an old bean with white whiskers, a—a foot shorter than you, Loder! He—he's in the House now, waiting for you——"

Loder of the Sixth was really not likely to believe that statement. No doubt he would have cut off without delay, had he believed that his rich uncle, who was good for a tip, had arrived! But he didn't!

"Will you come down?" he roared.

"Oh! Yes! No! I—I say——" gasped Bunter, and then he added, in a wild roar: "Yaroooooh!"

Loder, reaching up, made a cut with the ashplant. Just the tip of the ash reached Bunter, catching him on a fat leg.

Bunter roared.

"Now get down!" hooted Loder.

"Do you think I'm going to wait here for you, you fat young ass? Get down at once!"

"Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter clung to his branch, and blinked down. But he did not get down.

The tip of Loder's ash was enough for Bunter. He did not want to sample the rest of it.

"I—I say, Loder, the—the Head gave me a message for you!" he gasped. "You're to go to his house at once—he's waiting for you."

"Get down!" bawled Loder.

"I say, you can't keep Dr. Locke waiting—"

"Will you get down?"

Loder reached up and made another swipe. Loder was not a patient prefect, and what patience he had was exhausted.

Bunter barely dodged that swipe. The ash crashed on the branch, and the fat Owl very nearly slipped off. But he clutched hold desperately, and remained on his perch.

"Ooogh!" gasped Bunter.

"Will you come down?" howled Loder.

"Oh lor'!"

Loder glared up and made a jump, and swiped again. That jump brought him within easy reach of Bunter. The ashplant fairly banged on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars School.

That did it!

Bunter gave a fearful yell, and rolled off the branch.

Crash!

It was fortunate for Bunter that Loder was just underneath him. He landed on Loder's head. Loder's head broke his fall, and, judging by Loder's frantic yell, Bunter's fall had also broken Loder's head!

"Whooooooh!" yelled Loder.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Famous Five.

Bunter was not a light-weight. The bully of the Sixth crumpled up under the fat Removite. He staggered backwards and went down, crashing, his shoulders and the back of his head tapping hard on the cold, unsympathetic earth. Billy Bunter sprawled headlong over him.

"Oh scissors!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ooogh!" spluttered Bunter.

He bounded up.

He gave Loder of the Sixth one blink—but he stayed only for one! Then he flew! How Billy Bunter shifted his weight at such a speed was a mystery, but a flash of lightning had simply nothing on Bunter as he streaked for the House.

Loder, fairly knocked out by that terrific crash, sprawled gasping on the earth! Billy Bunter vanished like the ghost of a fat Owl.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five.

They departed from the spot, yelling as they went. It was not judicious to remain. Loder, for the moment, was hors de combat; but when he got up it was perfectly certain that he would get up in a very bad temper. Billy Bunter was already gone—and Harry Wharton & Co. lost no time in following his example.

Loder sat up dizzily.

He gasped for breath. He rubbed the back of his head. He rubbed several other places where he had sustained hard knocks. And the expression on Gerald Loder's face was like unto that of a demon in a pantomime.

He picked himself up at last. He leaned on the trunk of the elm, gasping for breath. He was dusty, he was damaged, and he was in the very worst temper ever.

Finally, he picked up his ashplant. Then he went to look for Bunter!

WIBLEY COMES IN USEFUL!

"WIBLEY, old chap—"
"Forget it!" said William Wibley.

"But I say, Wib, old fellow—"

"Am I last on the list?" grinned Wibley. "You've tried every other man in the Remove, I think."

Billy Bunter blinked at him.

William Wibley was in his study, in the Remove passage, when the fat Owl rolled in.

Wibley was busy.

After tea that day there was going to be a show in the Rag. It was going to be a one-man show—and Wib was the one man. The president of the Remove Dramatic Society was going to give some of his celebrated impersonations—and Wib could impersonate almost anybody. His elastic features could twist into almost any shape.

Wibley was sorting over his property-box. Table and chairs were almost hidden in theatrical props.

When Bunter rolled in Wib was standing before the glass, trying on a moustache that looked like a black-lead brush, and twisting his features to suit—apparently having Adolf Hitler on his list of coming impersonations.

"Look here, you ass, wharrer you mean?" demanded Bunter. He seemed puzzled by Wibley's remarks. "I've come here specially to ask you—"

"Nothing doing!" said Wibley cheerfully. "I've got nothing on for Easter, old fat man. I'm going to be shifted off on an old aunt in Derbyshire. You wouldn't like it, even if I should—and I shouldn't."

"Eh—who's talking about Easter?" yapped Bunter.

Wibley looked round at him.

"Aren't you?" he asked.

"No!" roared Bunter.

"Oh! My mistake!" grinned Wibley. "I thought you'd got me on the list."

Billy Bunter gave him a glare.

Perhaps it was a natural mistake on Wib's part. During the last week or two Billy Bunter's chief topic had been the Easter hols, but it was a topic that, somehow, he had found other fellows reluctant to discuss.

Lord Mauleverer had never dodged round so many corners as he had dodged round during the last few days. Harry Wharton & Co. generally waved Bunter off like an intrusive chicken. Even Peter Todd, his study-mate in Study No. 7, had threatened to burst him all over the study if he mentioned Easter again.

But, as it happened, Bunter had not arrived in Wibley's study to talk about the hols. Other and more pressing matters were worrying Bunter. Just now the fat Owl of the Remove was thinking more of Loder and his ash than of the Easter holidays.

"You silly ass!" hooted Bunter. "I wasn't going to speak about Easter. Look here, will you listen to a chap?"

"Yes—if it's not about Easter!" grinned Wibley.

"Beast—I—I mean, what a jolly clever chap you are at making-up, Wib, old fellow!" said Bunter. "Member that time when you nearly got bunked for making-up as the French master?"

"Don't I!" assented Wibley.

"It's wonderful!" went on Bunter, blinking at him. "I mean to say, it ain't only commonplace persons you can impersonate; you can make yourself up as a handsome and distinguished-looking chap."

"I don't know so much about that," said Wibley, shaking his head. "That's not so easy. It's easier to impersonate any fellow who's a bit odd or queer—"

"But you've done it," said Bunter. "You made yourself up as me once and took all the fellows in."

"Eh," gasped Wibley—"what?"

"You did, old chap—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Wibley.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Don't you remember making yourself up as me, and everybody thought it was me—"

"I remember!" chuckled Wibley. "Handsome and distinguished—oh, my only spring bonnet and parasol! Handsome—ha, ha!—and distinguished! Ha, ha, ha! You ought to go on the talkies, Bunter! You'd make 'em laugh!"

"I don't quite see how you do it," said Bunter. "I mean to say, you ain't good-looking, yet you made yourself up just like me. I suppose it's the make-up does it. I say, Wib, it's frightfully clever!"

"Stony!" said Wibley, shaking his head.

"Eh? Think I want to borrow anything off you, you ass?"

"Don't you?"

"No!" howled Bunter.

"Then what are you calling me frightfully clever for?"

"You silly idiot!" yelled Bunter. "I—I mean, do listen to me, old chap! I've always admired the way you make up! It seems to me wonderful!"

William Wibley looked at William George Bunter. He perfectly agreed that it was wonderful—in fact, marvellous; for Wibley's opinion of himself was by no means an over-modest or diffident one. Still, he had not expected such a tribute from Billy Bunter.

But, really, this seemed a genuine and sincere tribute. If Bunter was not fishing for an invitation for the Easter holidays, and did not want to borrow anything, it was difficult to imagine what motives he had for coming to Wib's study and handing out flattery—unless it was due to

genuine admiration of Wib's great gifts in the theatrical line.

"I mean it, old chap," asserted Bunter. "Wharton was head of the Remove Dramatic Society before you came. He had to step down. Is he in the same street with you?"

"Not even round the corner!" admitted Wibley.

"Smithy thinks he can act; but can he act like you?" continued Bunter.

"Not in his life-time!" agreed Wibley.

"Why, even I can't!" said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wish you wouldn't keep on cackling when a fellow's talking to you, Wib! I mean it—you're absolutely unequalled!" said Bunter. "You could beat any professional on the stage—easy!"

Wibley smiled and nodded. He swallowed this whole. He was in absolute agreement with Bunter's opinion. All this enthusiastic admiration from Billy Bunter was a little unexpected, but it was, in Wib's opinion, quite well-founded. Wibley began to think that Bunter was not such an ass as he had always supposed. Bunter, it was clear, had some judgment.

"Toddy doesn't think so," went on Bunter.

"Toddy's an ass!" said Wibley.

"I've bet him two to one in doughnuts that you could take him in," went on the fat Owl. "Got up as me, you know."

"You'd win!" said Wibley.

"Well, look here, just try it on, then!" said Bunter. "It doesn't take you long to make up—you're so jolly clever. You've got all the things—"

"I've got them here—I'm going to give you, in my show after tea!" grinned Wibley. "You're one of my funniest impersonations, old fat man."

"You cheeky beast—I—I—I mean, that—that's good! Well, look here, you make up as me, old chap, and sit in my study—and see if Toddy spots you when he comes up," suggested Bunter. "Make him look no end of an ass, if he took you for me, after making out that you couldn't take him in."

Wibley laughed.

"I'm on!" he said. "You'll win that doughnut. You keep out of sight, of course."

"Oh, rather!" said Bunter promptly.

Bunter was quite certain to keep out of sight while the schoolboy actor was impersonating him in Study No. 7. Bunter had excellent personal reasons for that.

"If Toddy doesn't come up for a quarter of an hour, he will find your jolly old double in his study," said Wibley. "If he isn't taken in, I'll eat the padding!"

"What-ho!" said Bunter. "I—I say, can I help you make up, old chap?"

"Only by getting out of the way!" answered Wibley.

"Oh, really, Wib—"

"Shut the door after you!" said

Wibley. He had already thrown down the Hitler moustache, and was sorting out padding—a good deal of which was required to render his slim figure anything like Bunter's ample form.

Bunter rolled out of the study and shut the door after him.

In the passage he grinned.

He cast one blink along the passage towards the stairs. The coast was clear so far. Loder was not after him yet. Loder was likely to take some little time to recover from that terrific crash under the elm-tree, Bunter thought. He hoped that it would be a quarter of an hour before Loder came up, ashplant in hand. Loder, he was sure, would head for his study like a homing pigeon. If he found Billy Bunter's double there it would be all right for Bunter—if not for his double. Wibley, for once, would come in very useful.

Bunter rolled away to the Remove box-room. He was going to keep doggo in that secluded quarter for the next half-hour and hope for the best.

QUITE A SUCCESS!

"LAZYBONES!" yapped Peter Todd. "Look here, Bunter, I'll—"

Wibley grinned.

Toddy was in Study No. 7 when Wibley arrived there.

Wibley arrived looking nothing at all like Wibley. He was about three times his usual circumference. His face was—or looked—fat. Big spectacles were perched on his nose. His now ample form was clad in garments exactly like Bunter's. He was, in fact, Bunter from top to toe.

How Wibley did these things nobody in the Remove really knew. But he did them. Such impersonating stunts were done on the stage, of course. But Wibley was the only fellow at Greyfriars who could do them. And really, he did them wonderfully well.

Peter Todd had not the faintest suspicion that it was the double of Billy Bunter who rolled into Study No. 7. He had seen Wibley made up as Bunter, once or twice; but he was not thinking of Wibley now. He was thinking of tea.

"Couldn't you get the kettle boiling?" he demanded.

"Oh, really, Toddy—" squeaked Wibley. He had even Billy Bunter's fat squeak to perfection.

"You're too jolly lazy to live, Bunter!" grunted Peter Todd. "If you want any tea, though, you'd better lend a hand getting it ready."

"I say, Toddy, about Easter—" squeaked Wibley.

"Shut up!" roared Peter Todd.

"But I mean to say, we break up soon, old chap—"

"Do you want me to burst you all over the study?" demanded Peter Todd. "If you do, say Easter again!"

"Beast!"

"Now get out the tea-cups!" snapped Peter. "If you fancy you're an ornament in this study, Bunter, you're making a mistake! You're

not! Make yourself useful, see!"

"He, he, he!" gurgled Wibley.

It was Bunter's fat cackle to the life.

Peter stared at him.

"What are you cackling at, Bunter?" he demanded.

"You, old chap!" said Wibley. "I say, is that cake for tea?"

"Isn't that why you're here, instead of scrounging in Mauly's study?" asked Peter sarcastically.

"Oh really, Peter—"

"Shut up, and get the crocks out of the cupboard!"

"Well, I've got something to tell you!" grinned Billy Bunter's double.

"But if that cake's for tea, I'll tell you after tea, 'oddy! I like cake!"

"Don't trouble to tell me at all!" said Toddy. "You talk too much, Bunter. Get out those crocks!"

Wibley, with a cheery grin, sorted out the tea-things.

There was quite a nice cake on the table. Bunter, it seemed, was missing that cake, for the sake of pulling Toddy's leg. That, really, was remarkable. Wibley did not know what a very powerful reason Bunter had for missing that cake! Bunter was willing to miss even a cake, if he also missed Loder of the Sixth!

But that cake had not yet been cut when there was a heavy tread in the Remove passage. A voice was heard calling—the voice of Gerald Loder of the Sixth Form.

"Mauleverer!"

"Yaas, Loder?"

"Is Bunter up here?"

"Bunter! Haven't seen him, Loder!"

There was an angry snort! Then the heavy tramp of feet came up the passage.

"Looks as if Loder wants you, old fat man!" said Peter Todd, glancing at Billy Bunter's double. "What have you been doing to Loder?"

"Eh? Nothing that I know of!" answered Wibley.

He glanced round uneasily at the door. Loder's voice sounded as if Loder was angry and excited. If Loder, for some reason, was on Billy Bunter's trail, it was rather an unlucky moment for the schoolboy actor to be playing the part of W. G. Bunter!

The study door was hurled open, and Loder of the Sixth stared in.

His voice had not belied him; he was both excited and angry.

Loder was damaged! He had a collection of bumps and bruises, and aches and pains! He had spent some time in rubbing embrocation on his bumps and bruises. This had made them a little better; but it had not made his temper any better. His temper was at its very worst.

Loder wanted Billy Bunter—and he wanted him badly! Bunter, when Loder found him, was booked for the whopping of his fat life! Loder's ash was in his hand, ready for use.

"Oh! Here you are!" roared Loder, as he stamped into the study. "I've got you, you fat young scoundrel!"

"I—I—I say—" stammered Wibley.

He backed away in alarm as the

bully of the Sixth strode at him. But Loder had him by the collar the next moment.

It was a tribute to Wibley's wonderful skill in impersonation. Loder took him for Bunter, just as Peter Todd had. But Wibley could have done without that tribute.

Loder did not tell him to bend over! He wasted no time! Gripping the fat junior by the collar, Loder tipped him over the armchair and began laying on the ash.

Swipe, swipe, swipe!
"Ow! Ow! Yow!" roared Wibley. He struggled frantically.

"Ow! Yow! Oh! Ow! Wow! Yow-ow-ow!" roared Wibley. "Oh crikey! Ow!"

"Poor old Bunter!" gasped Peter Todd. "Hard cheese, old fat man—but if you fall on Loder's head off a tree—"

"Ow! I didn't!" raved Wibley. "Yow-ow-ow! Bunter did! Ow! Pulling my leg all the time; yow-ow-ow! I jolly well know why he put me up to this, now—yow-ow-ow! He jolly well knew Loder was after him—yow-ow-ow! I'll spificate him! Ow! Wow! The fat scoundrel—ow!"

Newspapers, as a rule, did not interest the juniors; but a good many fellows had looked at that particular picture, which was the photograph of an old gentleman with a white beard, a white moustache, and a thick mop of white hair.

Loder of the Sixth had first drawn attention to that picture on the back of the newspaper. Loder was rather glad for it to be seen about. It was the picture of Loder's uncle—the uncle who was coming to visit Gerald Loder that day.

Loder's uncle, it seemed, was



Unaware of the fact that Harry Wharton & Co. were watching him, the man in the thicket concentrated on the document in the old gentleman's hand!

The padding took off the edge of the swiping. But those terrific swipes told, all the same. They came down like carpet-beating.

"I'll teach you to climb up trees in the quad, and fall on my head!" roared Loder.

Swipe, swipe, swipe!
"Ow! Yaroooh! Leggo! I didn't!" yelled Wibley.

Swipe, swipe!
"Ow! Wow! Stoppit!"

Swipe, swipe!
"Yaroooooh! Oh crikey! I say—Yaroooooop!"

Swipe, swipe, swipe!
"There!" gasped Loder. He was rather out of breath with his exertions. "There! That will do for you, Bunter!"

Loder, feeling better, tucked his ash under his arm and stalked out of the study. Wibley, feeling anything but better, rolled off the armchair, roaring.

Peter Todd blinked at him.

"What—" he gasped.

"I'm not Bunter, you idiot! I'm Wibley, you fathead! Bunter got me into this, you blitherer—Yow-ow-ow! I'll spificate him! I'll squash him! I—I—I—I'll—"

Words failed William Wibley! He squirmed and wriggled out of Study No. 7, and squirmed and wriggled away to his own—leaving Peter Todd staring blankly.

BOOT FOR BUNTER!

"I SAY, you fellows—" gasped Billy Bunter.

Billy Bunter seemed rather out of breath.

It was the following day—a Wednesday, and a half-holiday. The Famous Five were in the Rag; looking, with several other Remove fellows, at a picture on the back of a newspaper.

rather a distinguished old sportsman. Under the photograph was the name "Sir William Bird," followed by any number of initials—nearly half the alphabet, in fact. Sir William, it was clear, had gathered many distinctions in the course of his life—rather a long one, to judge by his venerable looks!

Nobody thought much of Loder himself—still, fellows were interested in the uncle of any Greyfriars man being such a distinguished old nut.

"Looks a decent old bean!" remarked Bob Cherry. "I wonder what he's done to bag all those letters after his name?"

"Secret Service!" said Vernon-Smith. "I've heard about that old nut before—he was a big gun in the Secret Service donkeys' years ago. He was in Germany in the last war—right in the middle of the Huns."

Bob Cherry whistled.

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"Some nerve!" he said. "I dare say Loder's prouder of him than he is of Loder!"

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

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry looked round. "Want to squint at Loder's uncle, Bunter?"

"Blow Loder's uncle! Blow Loder! It's all Loder's fault that that idiot Wibley is after me——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" howled Bunter. "Look here, you fellows, you stop him, see? I ain't going to be kicked by that beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites. Billy Bunter glared at them. If they were amused, Bunter was not.

The Remove had roared when they heard of Billy Bunter's masterly stunt for landing Loder's licking on William Wibley. Billy Bunter had chuckled over his success. But after the feast came the reckoning. Bunter was safe from Loder—but not safe from Wibley.

Wibley, perhaps naturally, was fearfully exasperated. He had had the thrashing of his life—on Bunter's account. He seemed to yearn to pass it on to Bunter.

Bunter had led rather a hunted life since. Twice the previous day Wibley had run him down and booted him. In the morning Wibley had kicked him in the dormitory before the Remove came down—kicked him in the quad after breakfast—kicked him in break, and kicked him before dinner.

Now, it seemed, he was bent on giving him more. Bunter was tired of it—more than tired. It really seemed as if Wibley had set himself the task of keeping on booting Bunter till the school broke up for Easter.

Two or three bootings were better than a whopping from Loder. But if Wibley was going to make a habit of it, Bunter really wished that he had taken that whopping from Loder instead.

"You can cackle!" roared the wrathful Owl. "Look here, that beast Wibley is after me again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, you collar him when he comes in, will you, and rag him!" urged Bunter. "Make him stop it, see?"

"Didn't you expect Wib to be waxy when you landed him in that whopping?" asked Skinner.

"Well, I don't mind him being waxy. But I ain't going to have the beast booting me! I say, Bob, you could lick Wibley easy. I say, will you punch him in the eye as soon as he comes in?"

"No fear!" chuckled Bob.

"I say, Smithy, you tackle the beast, will you? I say, Wibley says it's rather rotten that you weren't sacked a week or two ago when you came jolly near it!" said Bunter, blinking eagerly at the Bounder of Greyfriars. "I say, I'd jolly well smack a chap's head for saying that, Smithy!"

"So I will!" said Smithy.

Smack!

"Yaroooh!"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you silly idiot, wharrer you up to?" yelled Bunter. "I didn't mean smack my head, you silly chump!"

"I did!" said Smithy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! I jolly well wish you'd been sacked!" howled Bunter. "I say, Toddy——"

"Look out!" grinned Peter Todd, as the door of the Rag opened.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

The fat Owl of the Remove ducked and dodged under the table round which the juniors were standing. He vanished from sight, as the door flew wide open and William Wibley walked in.

A crowd of laughing faces were turned towards Wibley. He stared at them, and stared round the Rag.

"Isn't Bunter here?" he asked.

"Looking for Bunter?" asked Bob, chuckling.

"I'm going to kick the fat brute!" said Wibley. "I've only kicked him four times to-day, so far. I'm going to kick him a dozen times a day till we break up!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I can still feel Loder's ash!" said Wibley. "I can tell you, he laid it on. That fat spoofer told me he had a bet on in doughnuts with Toddy, and made me agree to make up as him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And all the while it was because Loder was after him—and he wanted to side-track Loder on to me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

"Well, you can cackle, but Bunter won't cackle when I'm through with him!" declared the vengeful Wib. "I'm after him now, instead of Loder, and I'll make him wish it was Loder! Where is he?"

"O where and O where can he be?" sang Bob Cherry.

"The wherefulness is terrific!" grinned the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I believe he came in here!" snapped Wibley. "He cut down the passage when he spotted me! I'll give him pulling my leg! I'll give him getting me his whopping from Loder! Know where he is?"

"Let him rip!" said Bob soothingly. "Come and have a squint at Loder's uncle—we've got his mug in the newspaper here—fearfully distinguished old sportsman in the Secret Service!"

Wibley glanced round the Rag again; but Bunter was not in sight. He looked at the newspaper photograph on the table.

"By gum! What a chivvy for making up!" he remarked. "Easy as falling off a form with all those bushes growing over his mug!"

The juniors chuckled. Wibley looked at everything from the point of view of his beloved theatricals. The distinguished Sir William, in his eyes, was chiefly interesting as offering an easy subject for an impersonation.

"By gum! I could do it!" said Wibley. "Rather a lark to make up as that old bird and visit Loder as his jolly old uncle—what?"

"I shouldn't do it this afternoon,"

chuckled Bob Cherry. "The old bird's coming to see Loder to-day!"

Wibley gave the photograph another glance and left the group at the table. He glanced into the lobby opening of the Rag—and the juniors watched him, grinning. They stood close round the table to screen Bunter from view; evidently, it did not occur to Wibley that the fat Owl was there, though he suspected that he was not far away.

However, he was not to be seen, and Wibley went back to the door at last. He had nearly reached it, when a fat squeak came from under the table.

"I say, you fellows, is that beast gone?"

Wibley spun round.

"That's Bunter!" he howled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You swabs, you were hiding him under the table!" roared Wibley. He rushed to the table. "Come out, you fat porpoise! Hop out, you foozling frog!"

"Oh crikey! I—I ain't here, Wibley!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wibley reached under the table with a foot.

There was a sudden fearful yell from an invisible Owl.

"Yaroooooooh!"

Bunter rolled out—on the other side of the table. Wibley cut round the table after him. Bunter shot doorward.

"Go it, Bunter!" yelled Hazeldene.

"Put it on, old fat man!" encouraged Peter Todd.

"After him, Wib!" howled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Thud!

Wibley's foot landed on tight trousers as Bunter reached the doorway. There was a yell as Bunter disappeared.

Wibley disappeared after him, leaving the Rag in a roar of merriment.

THE SPY!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Know that chap?" grinned Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five were about a mile from the school, following a path across Courtfield Common.

They were walking over to Highcliffe that afternoon to see their old friends—Courtenay and the Caterpillar—before the two schools broke up for the holidays.

It was a glorious afternoon in spring, with a bright sun shining from a blue sky. The chums of the Remove were enjoying the walk—but it was rather a long one, and they intended to take a rest before going farther on a seat provided by a thoughtful rural district council under a clump of trees by the foot-path.

But as they came in sight of the wooden seat, half screened by the trees that grew round it, they saw that it already had an occupant.

An old gentleman sat there, taking a rest, as the juniors had intended to do. He was a small old gentleman—no taller than the juniors

themselves—indeed, rather less so than Bob Cherry. He was very well dressed, and he had taken off a handsome silk topper, displaying a perfect mane of silver hair, which shone in the sunshine, over a very healthy-looking pink face.

Harry Wharton & Co. had never seen him before. But they knew him at once, for only about an hour ago they had been looking at his picture on the back of a newspaper.

"Loder's uncle," said Harry.

"The jolly old bird himself!" said Johnny Bull. "Walking from the station to the school, I suppose—a long walk for such an old bean!"

Sir William Bird—for it was evident that this was Loder's uncle—did not glance towards the juniors, who were still at a little distance. He had a document of some kind in his hand, at which he was looking with great attention with an eyeglass screwed into his right eye.

Like the juniors, he had been taking a short cut across the common, though in the opposite direction, and, like them, he had decided on a rest when he arrived at the wayside seat.

The Famous Five came to a halt, looking at him from a little distance. Sir William had placed his silk hat on the seat beside him, and Sir William and his hat occupied most of the available space on the seat.

"May as well not disturb the old bean!" remarked Harry Wharton. "We can keep on!"

"There's another seat at the end of the path!" said Frank Nugent. "Let him have that one to himself!"

"The politeness to an esteemed jossor of venerable years is the proper caper!" agreed Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

And the chums of the Remove, having decided to pass on, and leave the old bean in undisturbed possession of the wayside seat, were about to resume their way when Bob Cherry uttered a suppressed, startled exclamation.

"Oh, my hat! Look!"

There was a stirring in the bush that grew high and thick behind the wooden seat on the edge of the path. From the thicket a head looked out, just behind the old baronet.

Sir William evidently was quite unaware of it. Not a sound had come from the man behind him. He continued to gaze at the document in his hand. And the man in the thicket, leaning forward, gazed at it also, over his shoulder.

Harry Wharton & Co. stood for the moment as if petrified.

The man in the thicket behind the seat did not glance in their direction. He was unaware of anyone coming up the path. He was concentrated on the document in the old gentleman's hand. Obviously, he was reading it, or trying to read it.

His profile was turned to the juniors—they had a clear view of a sharp-cut face, with blond eyebrows, and a close mouth, that seemed shut like a rat-trap. It was a hard face, rather foreign in look to their eyes. Whoever and whatever the man

was, it was plain that he was spying into that document—whatever that document might be. From what the Bounder had said in the Rag the juniors knew that Sir William was, or had been, connected with the Secret Service, and it came into their minds that the document in his hand might be some official paper.

They stared in surprise at the sudden scene, taken quite aback. But they realised that the man with the blond eyebrows was spying into the document, unsuspected by its owner, and it was, evidently, up to them to put the old gentleman on his guard.

"Look out!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Look out!" echoed the Co.

That shout reached both men at the seat. Sir William, lowering the paper, stared round through his eyeglass.

The man behind him made a sudden snatch at the document, reaching swiftly over the back of the wooden seat.

But as he did so Sir William rose to his feet. His mop of white hair came into sudden contact with the face of the man behind him. Even at the distance the juniors could hear the sound of a crack, as the top of his head came into violent contact with a prominent nose, under the blond eyebrows.

"Oh!" gasped Sir William.

"Ach!" yelled the other man.

Sir William Bird spun round in astonishment, the document still gripped in his hand. The man behind the seat staggered back, his hand to his nose, which seemed hurt.

"Good gad!" ejaculated the old baronet.

With an activity surprising in one of his years, he threw himself across the seat, grasping at the man behind it.

But the man with the blond eyebrows jumped back in time. Eluding Sir William's grasp, he leaped back into the thicket, tore through it, emerged on the farther side, and ran.

Harry Wharton & Co. had a glimpse of him, cutting across the common with the fleetness almost of a deer. But in a few seconds he vanished among the furze, and was gone.

"Good gad!" repeated Sir William.

He rubbed the top of his head, which seemed to have been rather hurt in the collision, though probably not so much as the other man's nose.

Then he turned his eyeglass on the schoolboys. They came up, the little old gentleman scanning them as they came. He slipped the document into an inner pocket of his coat.

"We thought we'd give you the tip, sir!" said Bob Cherry, with a cheery grin. "That sportsman was trying to read something over your shoulder."

"Thank you very much, my boy!" said Sir William. "You are Greyfriars boys?" he added, with a glance at their caps.

"Yes—we're in the Remove!" said Harry Wharton. "I'm glad we came along just then, Sir William—if there's anything private in the paper that rascal was spying at."

"There is!" said the old baronet briefly. A rather grim look came over his face for a moment, and his brows knitted. Then he gave the juniors a smile. "You seem to know me?"

"Your picture's in the papers, sir—we know you're Loder's uncle," answered the captain of the Remove.

"Yes—I am on my way to visit my nephew at the school," said Sir William. He picked up his hat and adjusted it on his silvery mop. "Thank you very much, my boys—very much indeed! I am greatly obliged to you."

"Not at all, sir!" said Harry Wharton politely.

They capped the old baronet respectfully as he went, and watched him stride away up the footpath—with a vigorous and springy step, old as he looked. Then, the seat being now vacant, they sat down for a rest before resuming their way to Highcliffe.

Harry Wharton & Co. had little liking for Loder of the Sixth; but they rather liked Loder's uncle, on his looks. They were glad that they had happened along in time to render him that little service. But they had almost forgotten the incident by the time they arrived at Highcliffe School—though they were destined to remember it later.

BUNTER ALL OVER!

"LET him look out!" said Billy Bunter.

"I can see him coming!" grinned Vernon-Smith.

"Let him come!" said Bunter.

Billy Bunter's little round eyes gleamed through his big round spectacles. His fat brow was knitted. Bunter was wrathful.

The Owl of the Remove was in the quad—chiefly because Wibley was in the House.

It was some time since Wibley had booted him—but, according to Wibley, there was more to come. Bunter was fed up with this. He might as well have had Loder on his track. It was not much good passing that whopping on to Wibley, if he was going to lead this sort of a hunted life in consequence.

Bunter was ready for Wibley now.

In his fat hand was a paper packet. That packet contained a quantity of electric snuff. The fat Owl put the hand containing that little packet behind him, as Wibley was seen coming into the offing.

Bunter was no fighting-man. As a matter of choice, he would have preferred to give Wibley a jolly good hiding, and thus put a stop to his booting operations. But that was not practical politics.

Hence the packet of electric snuff. That was what Wibley was going to get if he recommenced booting after the interval.

That, Bunter thought, would jolly well stop him. If that packet was buzzed at Wibley, and burst on his nose, Wibley would be too busy sneezing for the next five minutes or

so to have time to think about booting Bunter.

"Hook it, Bunter!" chuckled Skinner. "He's coming!"

"He's looking for you!" grinned Bolsover major.

"Cut out of gates while there's still time!" advised Hazeldene.

"Shan't!" retorted Bunter. "Let him come! I'll jolly well make him sorry for himself, if he begins again, blow him! You watch me catch him on the boko with this packet of snuff!"

"Oh gum!" ejaculated Vernon-Smith. "If you're goin' to chuck snuff about, old fat man, I'll take a back seat!"

"Same here!" grinned Skinner.

"Safety first!" chortled Peter Todd.

There were five or six fellows round Bunter—all interested in the next booting due. But they did not remain round him when they learned what was in the packet in his fat paw.

Bunter's marksmanship was well known. Bunter could have hit the side of a house—if it was a large house, and he was near enough to it. That was about the limit of his powers as a marksman.

If Bunter was going to chuck electric snuff about, every fellow wanted to be out of range—there was no telling where the missile might crash—except that it was fairly certain not to hit the target. If Bunter was going to aim at Wibley, nobody within range would be safe—excepting Wib.

"I say, you fellows, where are you going?" asked Bunter.

The fellows did not stay to explain where they were going—they went. They preferred to watch Bunter's exploits as a snuffchucker from a safe distance.

Bunter had no doubts, however. He was relying on that packet of snuff, and he was going to land it right on Wibley's boko. He stood his ground, and blinked defiance through his big spectacles at William Wibley, as he came over from the House.

"Oh! There you are!" called out Wibley.

"Yah!" retorted Bunter.

With his fat hand behind him, he watched Wibley. He was too busy watching Wibley to notice a newcomer who had come in at the gates.

Had he noticed him he would have noticed that he was an old bean, with a mane of silvery white hair showing from under his shining silk hat, and, having seen the picture in the newspaper, he would have guessed that this was Loder's uncle, Sir William Bird.

But he did not notice him. He watched Wibley, with intent eyes and spectacles.

Wibley, however, noticed the old gentleman as he came in, and he paused. He was going to boot Bunter; but, naturally, he did not desire to carry out the booting operation under the gaze of a visitor to the school—especially a distinguished visitor who was a baronet with a string of letters after his name, and

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who was, or had been, a big gun in the British Intelligence Department. Wibley was prepared to wait till Sir William had walked on to the House.

Billy Bunter, however, went into action.

Wibley was not expecting action from Bunter—unless it was in the form of flight, in which case he was ready to cut after him.

But Bunter was not thinking of flight. Bunter was going to take the offensive this time!

Wibley had stopped within six or seven feet of him. At that distance, any fellow who was not absolutely cack-handed could have got Wibley with a missile. Bunter never realised how cack-handed he was!

His fat hand came out from behind him.

"Now, you beast, you've got it coming!" he squeaked.

Whiz!

The packet flew.

Wibley was quite off his guard. He was expecting nothing of the sort! Had Bunter's aim been good, there was no doubt that he would have scored. That paper packet would have crashed and burst on Wibley's nose, and enveloped him in a cloud of snuff—and Bunter would have rolled off rejoicing, while Wibley woke the echoes with sneezes.

But Bunter's aim was not good!

The packet whizzed by Wibley about a yard from his head! That was not a bad spot—for Bunter! It might have been two or three yards!

Bang!

Passing Wibley, the packet shot on for about ten feet farther—and banged on an object that stopped it in transit.

That object was the bearded chin of Sir William Bird.

Sir William was passing at an unlucky moment. The packet hit him fair and square on his silvery beard, and—as per programme—burst when it hit!

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. Sir William dawned on him, for the first time, as the packet of snuff banged and burst.

Sir William jumped.

In fact, he bounded.

For a silver-bearded gentleman, Sir William was very active. That bound showed how active he was! He cleared the quad by a foot or more.

"Woogh!" spluttered Sir William.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Wibley.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from the juniors who were looking on from a safe distance.

"Atchooooooh! Aytishoo!" From Sir William Bird came a terrific sneeze. It roared—it almost thundered. "Aytishoo! Woogh!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"You mad porpoise—" stuttered Wibley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Atchooh! Aytishoooh! Chooop!" Sir William sneezed and sneezed! His silk hat fell off. His silvery locks flew wildly in the wind of March. He was almost doubled up. He sneezed, and sneezed, and sneezed.

Billy Bunter gave him a terrified blink. Then he revolved on his axis and flew! What Loder's uncle would do when he got over the sneezing

Bunter did not know; and he did not think of staying to ascertain! Bunter departed from the spot as if he were on the cinder-path.

"Atchooooh-oooh-oooh!" sneezed Sir William. "Aytishoooh! Oooooogh! Good gad! Oooooch! Atchooooh-atchooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Atchooooooh! Atchooooooh! Oooh!"

Sir William jerked a handkerchief from his pocket. He blew his nose with a report like a rifle-shot. But he could not stop the sneezing! He sneezed, and sneezed, and sneezed, and sneezed.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, came hurrying up. He had not seen what had happened; it was the sneezing that drew his attention.

"My dear sir—" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Atchooooooh!"

"My dear Sir William—"

"Aytishoooh!"

"What ever is the cause of this? What ever—"

"Ooogh! Oooooch! Woogh! Atchooooh! Good gad! Urrrrrggh!" Sir William's eyeglass dropped to the end of its cord, and he mopped streaming eyes with his handkerchief, and sneezed, and coughed, and coughed, and sneezed. "Ooogh! Upon my—ooogh—word! Some young rascal—ooogh—threw something—woogh—I—I think it was sis-sis-sis-snuff—woogh! Urrrrrggh!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Wibley, did you—"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Wibley.

"Vernon-Smith—"

"Oh gad! No, sir!"

"Sir William! Did you see which boy—"

"Grooogh! Ooogh! Atchooooh! No, I did not—atchooh—I mean I did not—aytishoo—ooooh! I did not see which—grooogh—which boy—ooogh! But someone—grooogh—it is snuff—woogh—aytishoooh!"

Sir William mopped eyes and nose, and sneezed, and coughed, and gasped. Mr. Quelch picked up the fallen topper.

"This is shocking!" he exclaimed. "I shall inquire most strictly—here is your hat, Sir William—perhaps I can assist you to the House—"

"Aytishoooh! Atchooooooh!"

Mr. Quelch kindly guided the sneezing, snorting old gentleman to the House. Sir William's sneezes died away in the distance.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Wibley.

"That fat idiot—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lucky for Bunter the old bean never spotted him!" grinned Smithy. "Where's Bunter now?"

He looked round. But there was no fat figure in view!

Bunter was not to be seen! For the present, Billy Bunter was understudying the shy violet. Bunter was not seen—and he was not likely to be seen again in a hurry.

SIR WILLIAM WIBLEY!

HARRY WHARTON jumped. "What the thump—" he gasped.

The captain of the Remove stared, hardly able to believe his eyes. He

blinked at the startling vision before him.

The Famous Five had returned from Highcliff, and Wharton, as he walked down the Remove passage, was not thinking of Sir William Bird, the distinguished uncle of Gerald Loder of the Sixth Form.

It was quite a surprise to him when the pink old face, with its mane of white hair, looked at him from a study doorway—Wibley's study.

That alone was surprising. Still more surprising—in fact, amazing and unnerving—was the circumstance that that pink old face and mane of white hair surmounted a schoolboy's figure and clothes.

It looked, for an astounding moment, as if Sir William, while remaining sixty-five years old above the neck, had dropped fifty years from the rest of his person, and become a schoolboy again from the neck downwards.

Which, of course, was impossible—so it was no wonder that the captain of the Remove stared at the startling apparition with popping eyes.

Then he understood.

"Wibley, you howling idiot!" he gasped.

He did not recognise Wibley! Wibley's nearest and dearest relative would not have dreamed of recognising him.

But he knew that it must be Wibley at his impersonating game again! He remembered Wibley's interest in the picture in the newspaper, and his remark thereon. Wibley, it seemed, was trying it on; and he had tried it on with amazing success—so far as head and face went! The rest was Wibley in a normal state.

"Step in!" said Wibley hastily.

"You utter ass—"

"Come in, I tell you."

Wharton stepped into the study.

Wibley closed the door.

The study table was laden with various props from the property-box. Wibley had been sorting out garments to suit his new stunt. He had an almost inexhaustible store. Almost all Wibley's pocket-money went the same way—in new supplies for that property-box.

The picture of old Sir William—evidently cut from the newspaper in the Rag—was pinned up beside Wibley's looking-glass. It seemed that he had been using it to work from in the make-up process.

"What do you think of this?" grinned Wibley.

"I think you'll get the Head's birch if you're spotted playing the goat, you fathead!" said Harry. "If you're seen like that—"

"I'm not going to call on the Head like this!" grinned Wibley. "I'm going to call on Bunter—when I've finished."

"Bunter!" repeated Harry.

The Famous Five, since they had returned, had heard of Billy Bunter's exploit with the electric snuff. It was, indeed, the chief topic in the Greyfriars Remove that afternoon.

"He hasn't been copped for chucking that snuff at the old bean," said Wibley. "They don't know it was Bunter."

"Lucky for the fat ass!" said Harry. "But what—"

"You know how he pulled my leg yesterday and got me a whopping from Loder of the Sixth—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cackle!" snapped Wibley. "The whopping wasn't funny, I can tell you! I can still feel Loder's ash!"

"Well, you've booted him for it, old chap!" said the captain of the Remove, soothingly. "Forget all about it."

"Yes—when I've put him through it!" said Wibley. "I'm not going to boot him any more! Old Bird is going to wallop him with his stick for snuffing him."

"You ass! You can't give him away to Loder's uncle—"

"I'm old Bird!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.

"That fat chump pulled my leg and made me make up as him and get a whopping," said Wibley. "Now, as he's keen on my doing an impersonation, I'm going to do another—for his benefit, see? Fancy his feelings when old Bird taps him on the shoulder—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You can do it," he said. "You can make up as anybody, I think—from Hitler to Bill Sikes! But—"

"Don't start butting like a billy-goat! I'm going to do it! But I don't want to risk it while the old bean is around! Know whether he's gone?"

"I heard that he tea'd with Loder in his study!" answered Harry. "I don't know whether he's left the school yet."

"Well, go and find out, and come back and tell me."

"Oh, all right."

Wharton understood now why Wibley had called him into the study. Wibley wanted to know whether the genuine article was safely off the scene, before he played old Bird for Billy Bunter's benefit.

The captain of the Remove was willing to oblige. He left Wibley in his study—getting on with his transformation—and went down the passage and down the stairs. He found the Co. at the foot of the staircase.

"Heard whether Loder's uncle's gone yet?" he asked.

"He hasn't!" answered Bob Cherry. "I saw Loder showing him round the quad ten minutes ago."

Harry Wharton looked out into the quad.

Loder's uncle, evidently, was not gone. He spotted the pink-checked, silver-haired old gentleman walking with his nephew, Gerald Loder of the Sixth.

Loder was very dutiful and attentive to his avuncular relative: possibly because, as he said to his pal Walker, Sir William was good for a tip.

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, rolled up, and Sir William stopped to speak to him—Loder hovering patiently and dutifully in the offing. Both Prout and Loder seemed almost to tower over the little old gentleman. Prout was not a tall man, but

he was taller than Sir William—while Loder was a head taller—Loder and his uncle were the long and the short of it.

"I hear," Wharton heard Prout boom, "I hear that you are remaining to dine with the Head, sir! I also shall be having that pleasure with—"

"I am glad to hear it, Mr. Prout!" said Sir William in his pleasant way.

Harry Wharton turned back into the House and went up to the Remove passage again. Not only was Sir William not gone, but he was not going! If he was dining with the Head that evening, clearly he would not leave till late—and Wibley had to be warned off.

The captain of the Remove had another surprise when he looked into Wibley's study again. While he had been downstairs Wibley had got on with dressing the part.

In figure, as well as in face, he was now like unto old Bird. He was as tall as Sir William, which made it easier. He had sorted out garments very closely like those worn by the old baronet; and a little padding here and there filled him out.

Harry Wharton gazed at him. Had he not just seen old Bird in the quad below, he would have fancied that Loder's uncle had come up to the Remove studies. Wibley was the old Bird to the very life now.

"Well?" asked Wibley. He jammed an eyeglass—of plain glass—into his eye and looked round at the captain of the Remove.

"He's not gone!" said Harry.

"Bother him!" said Wibley.

"And he's not going yet—I've just heard that he's dining with the Head this evening with old Pompos—"

"Blow him!"

"Chuck it, old man!" said Harry. "You can't play the goat like that with the old Bird about. The Head would—"

"Oh rot!" said Wibley. "I'd rather he was gone—but after all, he won't come up to the Remove! Why should he?"

"Look here, you ass, don't play the goat!" exclaimed Wharton warningly. "You know the awful row you got into when you were spotted got up as Froggy—"

"I'm not going down!" said Wibley. "I shall get Bunter on the Remove landing! That's all right!"

"It's not safe, you fathead! You'd get a flogging, at least—the Head would think you were guying the old bean—"

"The Head don't come up to the Remove! Don't jaw!" said Wibley. "I'm not going to take all this trouble for nothing, simply because that old ass is hanging about to feed with the Big Beak."

"If you're spotted—"

"I said don't jaw!" Wibley, it was clear, was not going to give up his stunt. When Wibley started on a theatrical stunt, he got his teeth into it, as it were; and there was no stopping him. "Look here, where's Bunter?"

"The fat chump's down in the Rag. But—"

"Well, go and tell him to come up!" said Wibley. "I'd rather not go down to the Rag if the old Bird's still about. I'll be sitting on the settee on the Remove landing when Bunter comes up."

"But——" urged Wharton.

"Are you impersonating a billy-goat?" snapped Wibley. "Do leave off butting! Go and get Bunter to come up to the studies!"

"How?" asked Harry. "Catch Bunter coming up two flights of stairs, if he can help it!"

"Ask him if he left a tin of toffee on the landing."

"Eh? He didn't!"

"No reason why you shouldn't ask him if he did!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Oh, all right—I'll ask him. But you're an ass, Wib!"

"Same to you: cut off!"

Harry Wharton went downstairs once again—to seek Billy Bunter in the Rag and ask him whether he had left a tin of toffee on the Remove landing. Bunter, certainly, hadn't; but it was fairly certain that if he fancied that there was a tin of toffee lying around loose, he would head for that tin of toffee if it were up ever so many flights of stairs.

And when the captain of the Remove was gone, Wibley gave a few finishing, masterly touches to his disguise, grinned at his reflection in the glass, and left the study.

A minute later, fellows passing on the landing glanced at the pink-cheeked, silver-haired figure that sat on the settee by the banisters and wondered what the dickens Loder's uncle was there for!

THE OLD BOY!

MR. QUELCH started a little. The Remove master came up the staircase with a stern, indeed grim, expression on his expressive face.

Quelch, as a matter of fact, was in search of the snuff-chucker. Somebody—nobody seemed to know whom—had been chucking electric snuff about in the quad that afternoon, and a very distinguished visitor to the school had got the benefit of it. Quelch hoped that it was not a member of his Form who had done this—but if it was, that member of his Form was going to have an exciting time, if Quelch could spot him. He had been making some inquiries on the subject without any result—now he was coming up to the Remove studies to make some more.

But the grim frown faded from his face and was immediately replaced by a polite smile, at the sight of the silver-haired gentleman sitting by the banisters of the Remove landing.

Quelch was rather surprised to see Sir William Bird there. It was not the spot where he could have expected to see the distinguished visitor. He was aware that Loder had been showing his uncle about the school. Now he supposed that Sir William was taking a ramble round on his own, as Loder was not to be

seen. Sir William was an Old Boy of Greyfriars, and no doubt interested in his old school. At a date which would have seemed prehistoric to Remove fellows of the present day, he had been a junior in the Remove—and had probably larked on that very landing!

Banishing the frown and postponing the search for the snuff-chucker, Mr. Quelch advanced towards the silver-haired old gentleman, with a polite smile.

He little guessed the dismay that his unexpected appearance caused in that silver-haired old gentleman's breast! Wibley was waiting for Bunter—and his heart sank almost into his boots at the sight of his Form-master.

He rose hastily to his feet.

His first thought was flight. But flight was impossible. Quelch was mildly surprised to see Sir William there at all. He would have been astounded to see him suddenly take to his heels and vanish into a Remove study! That, evidently, would not do!

Wibley wished that he had heeded Wharton's warning now. A flogging was the very least he could expect for this if he were spotted. He remembered, only too clearly, the awful row that had happened when he had impersonated Monsieur Charpentier and had been caught in the act.

Beaks did not seem to understand or appreciate a fellow's keenness on amateur theatricals. He had narrowly escaped expulsion over that affair of Mossoo. He realised that he was in similar danger now. This stunt, which was a lark to Wibley, would be called disrespect by the beaks—especially as Sir William was so very distinguished an old sportsman.

"My dear Sir William," said Mr. Quelch genially, "I trust you feel no further ill effects from the snuff?"

"Oh!" gasped Wibley. "N-n-not at all, Mr. Quelch. I—I—I have quite recovered. Quite!"

Wibley pulled himself together.

There was no immediate danger! Quelch was taking him for Sir William Bird as a matter of course. Where Sir William was at that moment Wibley did not know. Neither, apparently, did Mr. Quelch; so that was all right.

"A shocking occurrence, Sir William!" said the Remove master. "I hope and trust merely an accident. I cannot think that any Greyfriars boy would have intentionally——"

"Oh! No! Not at all, sir!" stammered Wibley. "Quite an accident, I am sure. Pray say no more about the matter."

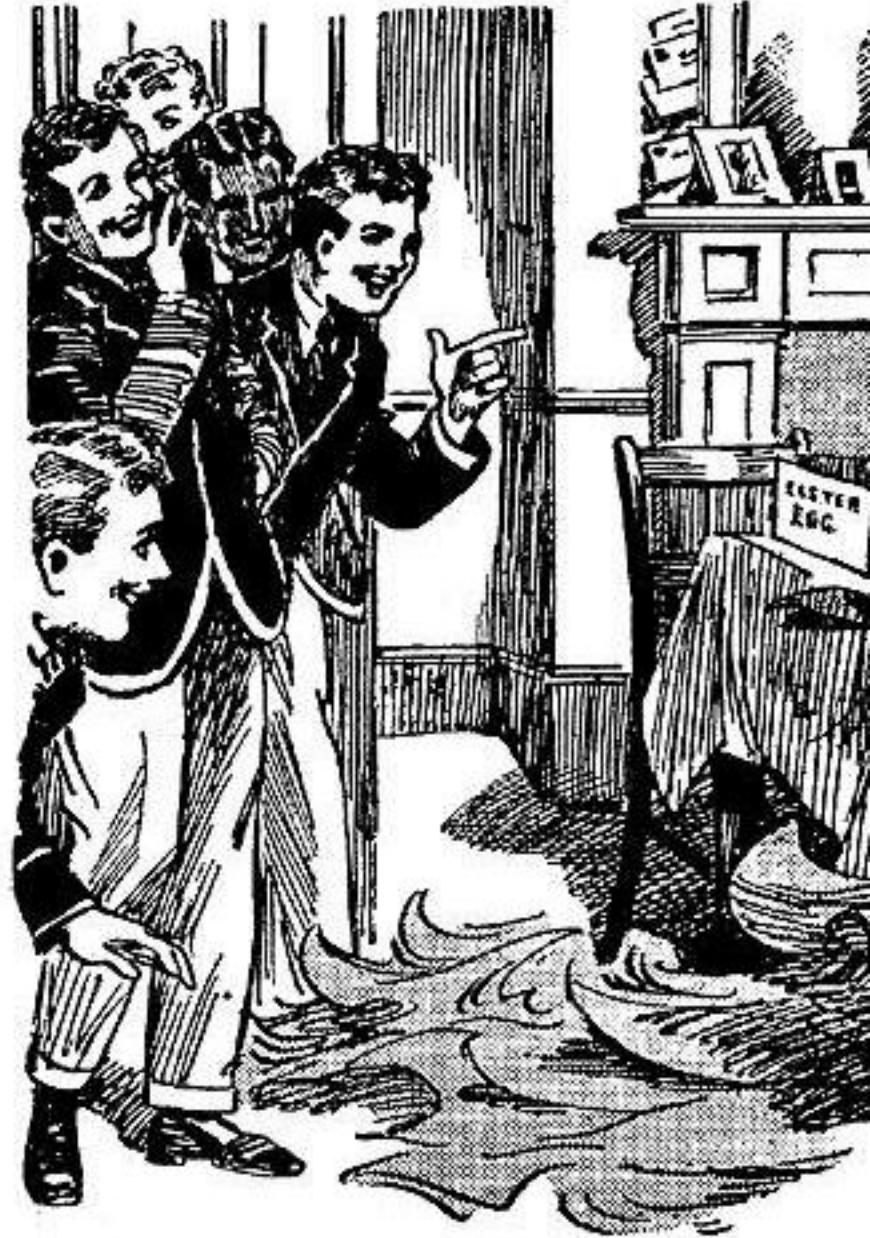
"No doubt you have come up to

glance at your old study," remarked Mr. Quelch. "You were in the Remove here—before my time—'hem!'"

"Oh! Yes! But please do not let me detain you."

"Not at all," said the polite Remove master. "I am entirely at your service, Sir William, if you would like to look round your old quarters. There have been some changes here, of course, in the last half-century—though, really, the old school does not change very much."

Sir William Bird might very likely have liked to be shown round the Remove quarters by the Remove master. William Wibley was not at



Billy Bunter grabbed the egg out of the box a "Beasts!" he roared. "You jolly well

all keen on it. But there was no help for it. He walked up the Remove passage by the side of Mr. Quelch.

"It was before my time," remarked Mr. Quelch pleasantly. Quelch was no chicken, but he had not been at Greyfriars when Loder's uncle was Bird of the Remove! "Which was your study, Sir William?"

"Study No. 6, sir," answered Wibley, without thinking. That was the number of his own study. What might have been the number of Sir William Bird's study in those prehistoric days Wibley had not the faintest idea.

Mr. Quelch tapped at the door of Study No. 6 and opened it. Three fellows used that study, but it was empty at the moment.

"The boys are not here, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "Pray walk in!"

Wibley walked in.

"You do not see many changes," smiled Mr. Quelch, "though I hope that the study was not in such an untidy state in your time, Sir William."

Wibley certainly did not see many changes; but that study certainly had been in an untidy state in his time! Wib, in fact, was responsible for its untidiness. His property-box was open and most of the contents sprawling over table and chairs and floor. It was, in fact, as he had left it not ten minutes ago.

"The—the—the same old study!" murmured Wibley. Wibley was a born actor, and his confidence was returning. "The dear old study!



n turned to the grinning faces in the doorway. "I this cardboard egg and sent it to me!"

Just the same as it was fifty years ago, Mr. Quelch! Looking round me, I can hardly believe that fifty years have passed since I last stood in this study."

Wibley certainly would have found it very difficult to believe that—as not more than ten minutes had passed!

"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch, glancing at the newspaper picture pinned up by the glass. "Your own photograph, Sir William. It must have been cut out of a newspaper by one of the boys in this study!"

"My own picture—begad!" said Sir William Wibley, turning his eyeglass on it. "How very odd to find it here! I—I wonder who could have pinned it up in this study?"

"This study belongs to three boys—Wibley, Morgan, and Desmond," said Mr. Quelch. "All this theatrical stuff belongs, I think, to Wibley—a

rather foolish and thoughtless boy, and—"

"Eh?"

"Very clever in his own way," said Mr. Quelch, "but much too addicted to theatrical amusements. I have had to reprimand him on several occasions for it. He has some skill in disguising and impersonating various characters—indeed, on one occasion he actually impersonated the French master."

"Did—did he?"

"He was actually taken for the French master, and Monsieur Charpentier, of course, was very much offended," said Mr. Quelch. "But a clever boy—very clever, though extremely unthinking and reckless, and somewhat conceited."

"Oh!"

"I shall speak to him very severely for leaving his study in this untidy state," said Mr. Quelch. "You must not suppose, my dear Sir William, that Remove studies are all like this. I shall speak to Wibley very severely indeed," added the Remove master. And the compression of his lips seemed to indicate that, in his next interview with that untidy junior, he would not confine himself to speech!

"My dear sir, please do not let the boy suffer in any way because of my visit here!" said Sir William hastily. "I should be very much distressed if—"

"Oh! Certainly!" assented Mr. Quelch. "I quite understand your feeling in the matter, Sir William. Wibley's untidiness shall pass unpunished this time."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Quelch!"

Sir William was glad to hear that—gladder than Mr. Quelch guessed!

"The dear old study!" said Wibley. He was an Old Boy now, playing his part as if in one of the Remove shows. "The dear

old school. Fifty years is a long time, yet, standing in this study, Mr. Quelch, I could believe that I was still a schoolboy!" And Wibley, looking round the dear old study that he had quitted only ten minutes ago, gave a sentimental sigh!

"Quite!" agreed Mr. Quelch. "Now, no doubt you would like to visit the Junior Day Room. Was it called the 'Rag' in your time, Sir William?"

"The—the Rag? Oh, yes! I—I think I—I always heard it called the Rag, Mr. Quelch."

"Such names cling," said Mr. Quelch. "Schoolboys are very conservative. Pray come with me, Sir William."

He led the way back down the Remove passage.

Sir William Wibley followed him, in a state of considerable trepidation. He would have preferred to remain

upstairs, which was safer—unless, indeed, the genuine Sir William had a fancy for giving his old study in the Remove the once-over. But Mr. Quelch led, and Sir William had to follow. He hoped fervently that Loder's uncle was still safe outside the House, as he accompanied the polite and courteous Remove master down the stairs.

TWO OF THEM!

"YES, I did!" said Billy Bunter promptly.

Harry Wharton laughed.

Nobody, so far as he knew, had left a tin of toffee on the Remove landing. Certainly he had seen nothing of the kind there. But Billy Bunter, when he was asked the question, answered with a prompt affirmative.

Bunter was not thinking of the truth. Truth did not worry Billy Bunter very much. Bunter was thinking of toffee—a much more important thing, in Bunter's estimation, than veracity.

"You left a tin of toffee—"

"Yes!"

"On the Remove landing—"

"Yes!"

"Sure?" asked Wharton.

"Yes, quite sure! Did you bring it down with you?" asked Billy Bunter eagerly. "It's mine, you know!"

"No, I didn't bring it down," chuckled the captain of the Remove. "If you really left it there, Bunter, it—"

"I jolly well did! I say, cut up and get it for me, will you?"

"No; I couldn't do that," answered Wharton, shaking his head. And he joined the Co. by the window of the Rag, leaving Billy Bunter to go after the tin of toffee which—according to Bunter—he had left on the Remove landing!

Billy Bunter gave a grunt. He was seated in a deep armchair. He was unwilling to stir. He wanted that toffee, but he did not want to clamber up the stairs if he could help it. Bunter disliked stairs. He had so much to carry up. As a last resource he was going up after that imaginary toffee. But not if he could get any other fellow to go.

"I say, Toddy, will you cut up to the Remove landing and get my toffee?" asked Bunter, blinking round at Peter.

"You can't go yourself?" inquired Peter.

"I'm sitting down!" said Bunter, with dignity.

"I'll tip you out of that chair if you like!"

"Beast! I say, Fishy—"

"Forget it, big boy!" answered Fisher T. Fish.

"Hazel, old chap—"

"Rats!"

"I say, you fellows, one of you might cut up and get that tin of toffee I left on the Remove landing!" urged Bunter. "I say, Smithy, would you mind—"

"Quite a lot!" answered the Bounder.

"Beast! I say, Redwing—"

"Fathead!"

"Well," said Billy Bunter, with a scornful blink through his big spectacles, "I don't think I ever saw such a lazy lot! I think——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes the jolly old bean!" murmured Bob Cherry, as the door of the Rag opened and Loder and his uncle appeared there.

"After Bunter, perhaps!" grinned the Bounder.

"Oh crikey!"

"Look out, Bunter!" chuckled Skinner.

"Oh lor'!"

Billy Bunter had been about to heave his weight out of the armchair and go after that toffee—the other fellows being too lazy so to do! But at the sight of Sir William Bird in the doorway of the Rag Bunter forgot the toffee.

So far, the snuff-chucker had not been spotted. But Billy Bunter was very anxious not to meet the gaze of the old baronet. The old bean might remember having seen him on the spot when the snuff was chucked! It was safer to keep out of view.

The fat Owl dropped back into the armchair and grabbed up a newspaper. He held that newspaper directly in front of his fat face—not for the purpose of perusing it, but to conceal the fat face from the eye and the eyeglass of the old bean whom Loder was piloting into the Rag. Behind that screen the fat Owl palpitated with uneasiness.

"This is the Junior Day Room, uncle," Loder of the Sixth was saying. "I dare say you remember it."

"My dear Gerald, I remember it perfectly!" answered Sir William. He cast a kindly glance over the crowd of juniors who were all looking towards him, a cheery smile on his pink old face. "I trust I am not intruding, my boys—what?"

"Not at all, sir," said Lord Mauleverer, on his feet at once. "Please come in, sir. Very glad to see an Old Boy here, sir."

"The gladfulness is terrific, honoured sahib!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, a remark that made Sir William blink at him—the nabob's beautiful flow of English perhaps surprising him a little.

"Welcome as the jolly old flowers in May, sir!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Harry Wharton.

Looking at Sir William, the captain of the Remove could not have told whether he was the genuine article, or Wibley in his guise! The two were as like as peas from the same pod. But as this Sir William was in company with his nephew, Loder of the Sixth, evidently he was the real goods.

Harry Wharton was glad, for Wibley's sake, that the schoolboy actor had arranged to stay up in the Remove quarters till Bunter came up! It would have produced rather a sensation had he walked into the Rag just then!

All the fellows in the Rag assumed their politest smiles, as that distinguished Old Boy came in with Loder—except Bunter, who re-

mained buried behind his newspaper.

"Ah! You are the boys I met on the common this afternoon," said Sir William, with a nod and a smile to the Famous Five, as he came across to the window.

"Yes, sir," answered Harry.

Loder gave them a stare. He was not aware that the heroes of the Remove had met his distinguished uncle.

Sir William looked out of the window of the Rag into the quad—a view that had been familiar to his eyes, if not to his eyeglass, fifty years ago.

"The same old scene, Gerald!" he remarked. "Hardly a change in all these years. The gymnasium has been partly rebuilt since my last visit, I think."

Loder suppressed a grin. It was thirty years since the alterations had been made in the gymnasium; but that was a mere nothing to Sir William!

"I have not been able to revisit my old school of late!" remarked the little baronet. "Let me see—was it twenty years ago—or thirty—or forty? Time passes very quickly, Gerald. Hardly a familiar face left—except Gosling's."

"Was Gosling here in your time, sir?" asked Bob.

"Yes, he was quite a young man then," said Sir William—"quite a young fellow."

The Remove fellows listened to that with interest. They could hardly imagine Gosling, the grarled old school porter, as quite a young fellow. Still, it was an undoubted fact that Gosling must have been young—once upon a time.

"Dear me! There he is now!" said Sir William, as Gosling passed in view of the window of the Rag—and he bestowed a very kind smile on old Gosling, who touched his ancient hat respectfully in response.

At the same time the door of the Rag reopened.

Mr. Quelch's voice was heard.

"This is the Junior Day Room, Sir William. But no doubt you remember it?"

"Certainly, Mr. Quelch!"

Every fellow in the Rag who heard those words jumped. Even Billy Bunter lowered his newspaper and blinked over it.

"Oh crumbs!" breathed Harry Wharton, in utter dismay.

Every other fellow was dumb with amazement. Mr. Quelch and Sir William walked in together—and the juniors stared at the new Sir William, and then round at the other Sir William, petrified.

The little baronet, looking out of the open window, did not turn his head for the moment—he was the only one in the Rag who remained unconscious of the astonishing new arrival.

"My boys," said Mr. Quelch genially, "this is Sir William Bird, an Old Boy of this school——"

Loder of the Sixth almost fell down.

He stared at Mr. Quelch's companion—he stared at his uncle—and

he gasped. His uncle was not, so far as Loder knew, twins! But really it seemed as if he was!

"The old familiar room," said Wibley, not noticing the silver-haired figure at the window for the moment. "The old——" His eyes fell on the little baronet and he jumped. "Oh, my hat!" he stammered.

Sir William looked round.

He was about to speak—but the words died on his lips at the sight of his double. He gave a jump and his eyeglass fell from his eye. He grabbed it, jammed it into his eye again, and gazed at Wibley.

Mr. Quelch looked at him. His eyes popped. He looked at Wibley and his eyes popped again. He stood dumb.

There was a moment's awful silence. Then Sir William spoke.

"Who is this?" he asked.

WHICH IS WHICH?

WIBLEY groaned.

He was fairly caught!

Not for a moment had he supposed that Sir William might be in the Rag. He had been anxious to get safe inside the Rag, lest Sir William might be encountered in one of the passages. And there was Sir William—standing in front of him, gazing at him with bulging eyes.

Everybody gazed at him.

To Sir William it almost seemed that he was standing in front of a pier glass, looking at his own reflection! Still, he knew that he was not, so he could only gaze at William Wibley in bemused astonishment.

"Who is this?" he repeated.

"Who?" repeated Mr. Quelch dizzily. "Bless my soul! Who—who—who are you, sir?"

"I?" ejaculated Sir William. "I presume that you know who I am, Mr. Quelch, as I have already met you!"

"Then who——" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Twins!" said Bob Cherry, in utter wonder. "But did you ever see even twins so jolly like one another?"

"The likefulness is terrific."

"Is—is—is this your brother, or—or what, Sir William?" stammered Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master felt as if his head was turning round.

"What? I have no brother!" snapped Sir William. "I am amazed—astonished—I do not understand this! I have never heard of anyone bearing so close a resemblance to myself! I might fancy that I was looking in the glass, by gad! Who are you, sir?"

"Oh crikey!" mumbled the wretched Wibley.

"I presume you know who this gentleman is, as he came here with you, Mr. Quelch?" said Sir William.

Mr. Quelch passed a hand across a dazed brow.

"I—I am quite at a loss!" he stammered. "This—this gentleman

"I—I supposed—Sir William Bird—"

"I am Sir William Bird!"

"Then what—what—how—"

Quelch stuttered helplessly.

"Do you know who this is, Gerald?" exclaimed Sir William, as his unhappy double did not speak.

Loder gasped.

He stared at one, and he stared at the other. Loder of the Sixth did not know which was his uncle!

Neither did any fellow in the Rag, excepting Harry Wharton. And Harry Wharton would not have known, had he not seen Wibley in the process of transformation in his study in the Remove. In height, in build, in clothes, in pink face and silver hair, the two were exactly the same! Wibley was a pastmaster at this game: he was Sir William from top to toe.

"Oh crikey!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, which is which?"

"The whichfulness is terrific."

Wibley cast a longing glance at the door. Wibley would have given anything in the wide world—even his theatrical props—for a safe retreat. He made a step towards the door.

"This—this—this is most extraordinary!" Quelch almost babbled, in his amazement. "This—this man has certainly represented himself to me as Sir William Bird—"

"I am Sir William Bird!" roared the little baronet.

"Then this man is some impostor!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Stop, sir! You will not quit this room until this matter is explained! Todd, close the door at once."

"Yes, sir!" gasped Peter.

He closed the door.

"Oh scissors!" murmured Wibley.

"Loder!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Which of these is your uncle?"

Loder blinked from one to the other.

"I—I—I don't know, sir!" he stuttered. "I—I thought this was my uncle, but—but that—"

"Gerald, you young ass, do you not know your uncle?" demanded the little baronet. "Good gad! If that man has represented himself as me, he is an impostor—this is a matter for the police! It is fortunate that I am present when he has attempted to carry out this imposture. Keep this man here, Mr. Quelch, and let someone telephone to the police station."

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Harry Wharton.

"Who are you, sir?" The little baronet, his pink face now red with wrath, pranced up to his double. "Explain yourself! Give your name! Who are you?"

"Oh dear!" groaned the schoolboy actor. "I'm Wibley."

"Wibley!" repeated Sir William blankly. The name was new to him. "Do you mean that your name is Wibley?"

"Oh dear! Yes!"

"Wibley!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

There was a yell in the Rag. The juniors understood now! This was one more of Wibley's impersonations.

"That ass Wibley!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Oh crumbs!"

"The esteemed and idiotic Wibley!"

"That ass—"

"That goat—"

"That chump—"

"Wibley!" roared Sir William.

"Who is Wibley? The name seems to be familiar here! Who is this man Wibley?"

"You young rascal!" roared Loder.

"Wibley!" stuttered Mr. Quelch. "Bless my soul! This—this, then, is the boy I described to you, Sir William—"

"What! You have never mentioned him to me!"

"Oh! No! I—I mean, I described him to—to—" The confused Remove master realised that it was to Wibley himself that he had described Wibley. "Upon my word! Wibley—if it is indeed Wibley—how dare you—how dare you play such a prank as this?"

"Did you say boy, Mr. Quelch? Are you dreaming? What do you mean by boy, in reference to a man of at least sixty-five?"

"This—this is Wibley—a boy in my Form, sir—"

"A boy in your Form, sir, sixty-five years old!" gasped Sir William. "What do you mean, Mr. Quelch? Kindly tell me what you mean, if indeed you mean anything."

"I'm Wibley of the Remove, sir!" groaned the unhappy impersonator. "I—I'm made up to look your age, sir."

"Made up! Nonsense! No such thing is possible!" snorted Sir William. "Do you suppose for one moment that you can deceive me with such a story?"

"He's Wibley, sir!" stuttered Harry Wharton. "In—in the Remove—"

"Nonsense!"

Mr. Quelch stretched out his hand, grabbed the silvery beard of Sir William Wibley, and wrenched. The beard came off in his hand. Another jerk, and the silvery mop of hair followed.

Sir William gasped.

"Good gad!"

Wibley, crimson under his make-up, removed his white eyebrows and moustache.

Sir William's eyes popped at him.

Even now, Wibley was not recognisable. But it could be seen that he was a boy, and certainly not a man of sixty-five.

"Good gad!" repeated Sir William faintly.

Loder of the Sixth gave Wibley an expressive glare. Mr. Quelch gave him a look that the fabled basilisk of old might have envied. Most other faces in the Rag wore a grin.

"Good gad!" said Sir William, for the third time.

"I can only beg you, Sir William, to be assured that this boy will be severely, drastically punished, for this act of disrespectful trickery." Quelch's voice came like a grinding saw. "On a previous occasion, this boy was very nearly expelled from the school for a similar disrespectful imitation of the French master. On this occasion he will not be pardoned! I shall take this boy to the headmaster,

Sir William, and you may be assured that he will be expelled from Greyfriars this very day."

"It—it—it was only a lark, sir!" groaned Wibley.

"Silence!"

"One moment, sir!" said Sir William. The wrath had faded out of the old pink face, and there was a glimmer of a smile there now. "One moment, sir. This is—is a very extraordinary occurrence—such skill in impersonation is very rare—no doubt the boy acted thoughtlessly—"

"I—I never meant—" mumbled Wibley.

"Probably the boy meant no disrespect, sir!" said Sir William. "A lad possessed of such skill must be under a very strong temptation to exercise it! May I beg you, sir, to take a lenient view of this boy's action?"

"Good old sport!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"After all, it is only a thoughtless prank, Mr. Quelch!" said Sir William. "It would be very painful to me, sir, if my visit to my old school were the cause of severe punishment to a Greyfriars boy! May I beg you, sir, to pardon this boy—I assure you, sir, that I take no offence at an unthinking prank."

Mr. Quelch breathed hard.

"If you desire this foolish boy to be pardoned, Sir William—" He paused. "It shall, of course, be as you wish! Wibley, you have Sir William Bird to thank for it that you are not sent away from this school."

"Thank you, sir!" said Wibley. "I—I—I assure you, sir, I—I meant no—no harm! It was just—just a lark! It's awfully kind of you to forgive me, sir—you're a real sport, sir—"

"You may go, Wibley!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "If anything of this kind should occur again—"

Wibley did not wait for the rest, he went!

"After all, only a schoolboy jest!" said Sir William. "A clever boy—a very clever boy!"

Sir William left the Rag with Loder and Mr. Quelch, a smile on his pink old face.

"Three cheers for the Old Boy!" called out Bob Cherry. And there was a roar of cheering in the Rag as Sir William's silvery mop disappeared.

BILLY BUNTER'S EASTER EGG!

"MASTER BUNTER—"

"Oh, don't bother!"

"But—"

"Get out!" yapped Bunter.

Billy Bunter was not in a good temper that afternoon.

It was a couple of days since the old Bird's visit to Greyfriars. The Easter hols were getting nearer and nearer. Billy Bunter had not yet made his arrangements for those hols and the matter was getting urgent.

But that was not all. On this particular afternoon, Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were teasing out, and Bunter had Study No. 7 to himself.

That would not have disconcerted Bunter, except for the fact that it

was tea-time. There was nothing in the study for tea! Bunter had had tea in Hall—provisionally, as it were. Now he was ready for tea in the study. But tea in the study was not ready for Bunter!

It is proverbial that it never rains but it pours. Bunter had looked in at Lord Mauleverer's study, but Mauly was teeing with the Bounder. He had looked in at Study No. 1, but the Famous Five had gone over to Cliff House on their bikes. He had looked into several other studies—but so far from receiving a hearty and hospitable welcome, he had received, in turn, a book, a cushion, and a boot—buzzed at the fattest head in the Remove.

Now he was in his own study, searching diligently through the cupboard in the hope of discovering overlooked provender—and discovering no more than the celebrated Mrs. Hubbard, when that good lady went to the cupboard to get the poor dog a bone!

So Bunter was disgruntled, and not in a mood to be very civil to Trotter, the House page, when he tapped at the door and opened the same.

There was bread, there was a spot of margarine, but that was all—not a ghost of a spot of jam, not a spectre of a spot of marmalade, not the phantom of a spot of anything else. So it was no wonder that William George Bunter yapped at Trotter.

"Get out!" he repeated. "If Quelch wants me tell him to go and eat coke! Take your face away, and be blowed to you!"

"But, sir——" persisted Trotter.

"Shut that door!" roared Bunter.

"But there's a parcel——"

"Eh?"

"A parcel for you, sir——"

"Oh!"

"And Mrs. Kebble sent me up with it——"

"You silly ass, why couldn't you say so?" yapped Bunter. Now that he gave the House page his attention, he saw that Trotter had a parcel in his hand. "Give it to me, you idiot, and clear off!"

"Yes, sir—thank you, sir!" said Trotter, and he handed over the parcel and departed.

Billy Bunter's disgruntled expression changed as he laid that parcel on the table and blinked at it through his big spectacles. He wondered happily whether it was an Easter egg.

Some fellows had had Easter eggs from thoughtful relations. It looked as if some kind relation had remembered Billy Bunter. He could feel a cardboard box inside the wrapping-paper. What could it contain but an Easter egg?

He grabbed out his pocket-knife and sawed at the string. His pocket-knife, of course, was blunt, and he sawed and sawed.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Five cheery faces looked in at the doorway.

The Owl of the Remove blinked round at them. His fat lip curled at them.

"You fellows needn't barge in!" said Billy Bunter contemptuously.

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"You've found out already that I've got an Easter egg, I suppose? I dare say you saw Trotter bringing it up! If you think you're going to have any——"

"Aren't you whacking it out?" asked Bob.

"I'll watch it," said Bunter, with emphasis. "If you fellows can't be civil to a fellow when he mentions the hols——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cackle!" sneered Bunter. "But you jolly well ain't having any of this, I can tell you! Yah!"

Bunter snapped the string, unwrapped the paper, and disclosed a large cardboard box. He removed the lid of the same, and a large Easter egg dawned on him. It was a cardboard egg—Bunter would have preferred a chocolate one—but cardboard eggs, of course, were made to contain chocolates and other toothsome things, so that was all right. There was no doubt that it was an Easter egg.

The fat Owl beamed at it.

"I say, you fellows, look at that!" he ejaculated. "I ain't giving you any, you know. You can't expect it, after being such beasts. But look at it! I fancy this is from my Uncle George—he's fearfully rich——"

"Looks to me as if it's been used before," grinned Bob.

"Eh, what?" Bunter blinked at the cardboard egg. On a closer inspection that cardboard case certainly looked as if it had seen previous use. It really looked as if it had knocked about unregarded for some time before it had been taken into use again. "Well, suppose it has been used before—that don't matter so long as it's full!" grunted Bunter.

"Is it?" asked Bob.

"Yes, it jolly well is! Look!"

Bunter removed the upper half of the cardboard egg. It was packed full—full to the very brim.

"By gum, what a cargo!" said Johnny Bull. "Sure you ain't whacking it out, Bunter?"

"No fear!" answered Bunter emphatically. "You can watch me unpack it if you like, and make your mouths water—he, he, he!"

"Let's watch!" said Nugent.

"The watchfulness will be terrifically enjoyable," remarked Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh.

"Quite a treat," agreed Harry Wharton.

The Famous Five watched, with grinning faces, as the fat junior proceeded to unpack that well-packed egg.

A rather puzzled look came over Bunter's fat face.

His podgy fingers turned out crumpled paper—which he uncrumpled, expecting to reveal chocolates or other comestibles within. He uncrumpled chunk after chunk, growing more and more puzzled. Nothing was revealed within the crumpled chunks. They had been put in, apparently, for packing, and to fill the egg! That big egg had been well filled, but Billy Bunter really had no use for a collection of waste-paper.

The study table, and a considerable part of the study floor, were covered

with scattered crumples of paper, as the fat Owl went on.

There was a chuckle from the doorway. The Famous Five seemed to be enjoying watching Bunter.

"Blessed if I make this out!" ejaculated the perplexed Owl. "It seems to be jolly nearly all packing-paper——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure you won't whack it out?" chortled Bob Cherry.

"Yah!"

Bunter unpacked and unpacked. There was quite a sea of waste-paper round him when he got to the bottom of that well-packed egg at last. Then——

"Oh crikey!" stuttered Bunter.

His eyes and his spectacles fastened on an egg! It was a small egg! It was not a chocolate egg—it was not a marzipan egg—it was not of the Easter variety at all! It was just an egg!

Bunter gazed at it! He blinked at it! He goggled at it!

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from the doorway. "Sure you won't whack it out, old fat man?"

Then it dawned on Bunter. He turned his spectacles on the Famous Five with a glare that almost cracked them.

"Beasts!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pulling a fellow's leg!" howled Bunter. "You jolly well packed this old cardboard egg and sent it to me——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And there's only this beastly little egg in it——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter glared wrath. He grabbed the egg out of the cardboard case and turned to the grinning faces in the doorway.

"Hook it!" gasped Bob; and the door slammed, and the chums of the Remove scampered down the passage, yelling.

"Beasts!" roared Bunter.

He stood with the little egg in his fat hand, glaring at it.

That was all the big Easter egg had contained—except packing-paper! Still, on second thoughts, the fat junior was glad that he had not hurled it at the practical jokers in the passage. An egg was an egg! It was not much—but it was something.

Billy Bunter breathed hard—he breathed deep. But he had had only one tea, so far, and an egg was an egg! He sorted out the saucepan, and set the fire going, and put the egg on to boil.

He boiled it three minutes. Then he turned it out and jammed it into an eggcup, and sat down to an egg for tea.

Crack!

Quite a loud crack sounded as he tapped the top of that egg with a spoon. But the eggshell did not break! Bunter gave it another tap!

Crack!

Still, to his astonishment, the egg seemed to have an uncommonly hard shell!

Bunter, with a grunt, shoved the spoon at it! To his astonishment, the spoon slid off the egg instead of penetrating.

He blinked at the egg. Even if he had boiled it hard, very hard, it did not account for this. It was quite a puzzle.

He lifted the spoon and brought it down with a bang on the egg. He put plenty of beef into that bang.

Still, to his astonishment, the egg did not crack.

"What the thump——" gasped the amazed Owl.

He bent over that extraordinary and obstinate egg, and blinked at it more closely. It did not show a sign of a crack. Then, as the awful truth penetrated his fat head, the Owl of the Remove gave a roar of fury.

"Beasts!"

He grabbed the egg and hurled it into the fender.

It crashed! Still it did not crack. It was a china egg!

BUNTER KNOWS HOW!

"WIBLEY!"

Mr. Quelch rapped out that name in the Remove Form Room on Saturday morning.

Since the distinguished Old Boy's visit on Wednesday, Mr. Quelch had been somewhat liable to rap and snap at Wibley. The schoolboy actor had been pardoned for his prank, as Sir William had requested; but Mr. Quelch made it clear that he did not approve of such pranks.

"Yes, sir!" murmured Wibley meekly.

"I have received a communication from Sir William Bird!" rapped the Remove master.

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

Wibley blinked at his Form-master. He could not quite see why Mr. Quelch was informing him of that circumstance. Neither could the other Remove fellows, and they all gave Mr. Quelch attention.

"Sir William will call at the school this afternoon!" resumed Mr. Quelch. "He desires to see you, Wibley, when he comes here."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" stammered Wibley.

"You will, therefore, go to the visitors' room at three o'clock, Wibley, when Sir William will be here and will see you."

"Oh! Certainly, sir!"

That was all! Mr. Quelch did not state why the Old Boy wanted to see Wibley—probably he did not know.

Certainly Wibley did not know, and could not guess. The little baronet had forgiven him for his escapade; so it could hardly mean trouble. What else it could mean was a mystery to Wibley.

Mr. Quelch dismissed the Remove, and Wibley went out of the Form-room in a state of wonder.

"What the dickens can he want, you fellows?" asked Wib, as the Remove went out. "He took it like a real sport—he can't have got his back up since."

"Not likely!" said Bob Cherry, shaking his head.

"Might be interested in amateur theatricals, perhaps!" said Wibley thoughtfully. "He looked a very intelligent old sportsman."

"He, he, he!" from Billy Bunter.

Wibley gave the fat Owl a glare.

"The mightfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

And the Famous Five grinned as they went out into the quad. An interest in theatricals, from Wibley's point of view, was the hall-mark of intelligence. But the other fellows did not think it probable that Sir William shared Wib's interest in such matters.

Still, it was certain that the old bird must have some very special reason for wanting to see Wibley again, as it seemed that he was coming down to the school for that purpose on a half-holiday.

It was all the more curious, because they had heard that Sir William was going away, and had, in fact, called at the school on Wednesday chiefly to say good-bye to his nephew, Gerald Loder, before he went. Evidently he had not gone yet.

So there was a good deal of curiosity on the subject.

Most curious of all was Billy Bunter.

Curiosity was the most highly developed among Billy Bunter's many attractive qualities. Anything that did not concern Bunter always aroused his very deep interest.

Really, it was very surprising that Sir William wanted to see Wibley again. Had he wanted to see Bunter it would not have been surprising—Bunter being one of those attractive, agreeable fellows, whose acquaintance anyone might have been expected to want to improve. But why anybody should want to see Wibley was a puzzle.

Billy Bunter gave a lot of attention to that problem. Other fellows were rather curious, but did not bother their heads about it. Bunter bothered his fat head very considerably.

He wanted to know. He always wanted to know. And when Bunter wanted to know, he had his own methods of acquiring information.

At dinner that day there was a fat grin on Billy Bunter's face, which was not wholly caused by the satisfaction he derived from steak-and-kidney pie—great as that satisfaction was.

Bunter wanted to know—and he was going to know—and he knew how! It was, indeed, quite simple—for a fellow like Bunter.

Wibley was going to see the old baronet in the visitors' room at three o'clock. Any fellow could walk into the visitors' room if he liked. What was to prevent the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars from walking in, say, at half-past two, before the distinguished visitor arrived?

Certainly he could not remain visible during the interview at which his fat presence was not required. But could he not remain invisible? He could.

Wibley might or might not tell the fellows afterwards what the old bean had wanted. But if other fellows were left in the dark, Bunter was not going to be left in the dark. Bunter

was going to know the whole bag of tricks.

Harry Wharton & Co. had fixed up a pick-up game for the afternoon, and, soon after two, most of the Remove fellows were in the changing-room. Wibley, Bunter noted, went up to his study. He was not wanted till three. Nobody was taking any heed of Billy Bunter—anyone seldom did.

Nothing could have been easier. Before half-past two the fat Owl strolled away to the visitors' room—in so very casual and careless a manner that he would certainly have excited suspicion—had anyone happened to notice him. But nobody did.

The room at the moment was vacant.

Bunter shut the door and grinned round the apartment. There was plenty of cover for a fat Owl—he had only to select it.

He selected a big settee, which stood along the wall near the window. Behind that settee there was room for Bunter to squeeze in, and remain unseen. He proceeded so to do.

Ensnared in that hidden corner the fat Owl grinned. It did not occur to Bunter's fat brain that there was anything reprehensible about this. When Billy Bunter was inquisitive he forgot other considerations—and he was always inquisitive.

The fat Owl was careful to make no sound when the door opened again.

He could not see who came in—but he could hear. Footsteps came across to the settee, and someone sat down on it—hardly a yard from the hidden Owl. Under the settee he had a glimpse of a pair of feet—not Sir William's. It was Wibley—a few minutes early to wait for the distinguished visitor.

A few minutes later the sitter on the settee rose to his feet, as the door opened once more.

"Please walk in, sir!" said Trotter's voice.

"Let Master Wibley know that I am here at once!" came the rather deep voice of Sir William Bird.

"I'm here, sir!" called out Wibley.

"Oh! Very good!"

Trotter closed the door, and the little silver-haired baronet came across and shook hands with Wibley. Then both of them sat down on the settee.

The fat Owl curled up behind it, close to the wall, suppressed his breathing. Undoubtedly Bunter was going to know.

PIE FOR WIBLEY!

SIR WILLIAM BIRD sat silent. For a long minute, his keen old eyes fixed on Wibley's face, scanning it intently.

Wibley waited.

He was more and more surprised. For the life of him he could not make the remotest guess at what the little old baronet had to say. Sir William's expression hinted that it was something of a serious nature. Wibley was curious but intently puzzled.

"You look an intelligent lad!"

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said Sir William at last, apparently satisfied with his scrutiny of Wibley's face.

"Thank you, sir!" murmured Wibley.

"And there is no doubt that you are extraordinarily skilful in playing a character part," said Sir William. "I should not have believed it possible that anyone, especially a mere schoolboy, could have done what you did—but I have the evidence of my own eyes."

He scanned Wibley again.

"Everyone took you for me the other day—boys who know you in daily life, even your Form-master!" he said.

"Yes, sir!" stammered Wibley. "I—I'm sorry——"

"You have nothing to be sorry about!" said Sir William. "It is in your power, my boy, to do me a very great service, if you choose to do so."

"Anything, sir!" said Wibley eagerly. "I should jolly well have got sacked if you hadn't spoken up for me. I'd be jolly glad to do anything."

"Have you arranged your Easter holidays yet?" asked Sir William.

Wibley blinked. It was an utterly unexpected question.

"Yes—no!" he stammered. "My father's in France, helping to entertain the boys at the Front—he's an actor, sir. I'm going to be planted out on an old aunt for the vacation."

"Would she miss you very much if you did not go?"

"Not at all, sir! I've got to go somewhere, that's all."

"You would be willing to change your plans?"

"Eh? Yes, if anything turned up!" said the mystified Wibley. He wondered dizzily whether the old bean was going to invite him for Easter!

"Very good!" said Sir William, with satisfaction. "Then there is nothing in the way, so far as that goes. Would you be willing to pass the Easter holidays at Eastcliff Lodge—my place on the south-east coast?"

"Oh, my hat! Yes, sir, I suppose so—if you wanted me there!" stammered Wibley, quite astounded.

"I shall not be there," said Sir William. "But your comfort would be looked after in every way."

Wibley could only blink.

"But the circumstances," pursued the old baronet, "would be very unusual and peculiar. Can you keep a secret?"

"I—I think so, sir." Wibley was utterly bewildered.

"Before I proceed," said Sir William, "I must ask you for your word to keep the matter an absolute secret. Not a whisper must be uttered on the subject, even to your best friends. I am not in a position to explain fully, but I must impress upon you that the matter is one of the greatest importance—it may even be a matter of life or death for me!"

"Oh!" gasped Wibley.

Sir William rose from the settee and stepped to the door. He opened it, glanced out, and shut the door again.

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Wibley watched him, dizzy with surprise.

The little old gentleman was making sure that no one was at hand to hear the communication he was about to make.

He came back, and sat down again, little dreaming that a fat Owl was hidden behind the settee, breathless with curiosity.

"I have your promise of secrecy?" he asked.

"Certainly, sir—I can keep a secret."

"Very good!" said Sir William. "Now I will explain, so far as I am at liberty to do so. I am about to leave England on a certain mission—never mind what. My success, and perhaps my safety, depend upon the deepest secrecy. I may tell you that I am watched. You will realise, my boy, that it will be a great advantage to me, in these circumstances, if it is supposed that I have not left Eastcliff Lodge at all."

"I—I suppose so, sir," stammered Wibley.

"What I saw here a few days ago put this plan into my mind," went on Sir William. "In thinking over the matter, it occurred to me how useful you could be if you consented to play the part."

"The—the part?"

"The part you played a few days ago, when I was here," said Sir William. "Even my own nephew did not know which of us was his uncle. You will play that part at Eastcliff Lodge."

"Oh!" gasped Wibley.

"Everyone will believe that Sir William Bird is still at his home so long as you play the part successfully——"

"Oh crikey!"

"I shall be far away," continued Sir William. "I shall change my own appearance very considerably—that is an old experience for me."

"Oh!" breathed Wibley. "Secret Service?"

"Precisely."

Wibley's eyes danced.

He understood now. It was that trick of impersonation that had caused this second visit from the old baronet.

The old bean was going away on Secret Service—and the schoolboy actor was to play his part at Eastcliff Lodge while he was gone. That he could do it, Sir William knew, as he had said, from the evidence of his own eyes.

"Oh gum!" exclaimed Wibley. "I'll do it like a shot, sir! I can do it all right—you can bank on that!"

"That you can do it, I am well aware!" said Sir William. "I have seen you, and that is sufficient proof for me. If you consent——"

"Yes, rather, sir!"

"You understand the need for secrecy now?" said Sir William. "Eastcliff Lodge is watched by certain parties who suspect that I have been called upon for a certain service. They must see me there—after I am gone! You understand?"

"I understand, sir!"

"It will do you no harm if they

keep watch upon you—and while they are watching you I shall go my way unsuspected," said Sir William. "This means success, and, as I have said, may also mean safety."

"I'd do anything, sir, after you were so jolly decent the other day," said Wibley earnestly. "You can trust me, sir."

"I am sure of it, Wibley! You will, I think, find yourself comfortable at the Lodge," said Sir William. "My man, Jermyn, will remain there—he will be in the secret—no one else. Not another member of the household will know—they will all accept you as myself. You think you can play the part?"

"I'm sure of it, sir!"

Wib never was in any doubt that he could play any part.

"If you wish to have any of your school friends about you, there is no objection whatever," went on Sir William. "A schoolboy party might make it more of a holiday for you. But not a word to them of the real state of affairs, of course—no one must know."

"You're very good, sir," said Wibley. "There's some fellows I'd like to ask—could I ask five fellows?"

"Certainly," said Sir William, with a smile.

"They're the fellows you met that afternoon on the common, sir—Wharton, Nugent, Bull, Cherry, and Hurree Singh."

"I will note those names," said Sir William. "Now, my boy, if you have made up your mind to oblige me in this matter——"

"What-ho!" said Wibley, beaming. "I shall enjoy it no end, sir."

"I shall hope so," said Sir William, smiling. "I am a pretty good judge of character, I think, and I am sure that I can rely on you. Now for your instructions. When the school breaks up you will leave in the ordinary way—without a word on the subject of your change of plans. But you will proceed to Rose Bungalow, at Broadstairs, where you will see me again. You will bring with you all that you require for playing your part."

Wibley nodded.

"At Eastcliff Lodge, Jermyn will help you in every way," said Sir William. "He is an intelligent and reliable man. He will supply you with everything you need—including cash——"

"I don't want——"

"You will be playing the part of a wealthy man, my boy; naturally, without expense to yourself," said Sir William. "Jermyn will have full instructions. Now, I will tell you all I can that will help you in the part you have to play."

For the next quarter of an hour, Wibley listened to Sir William, almost like a fellow in a dream.

It was all pie to Wibley. If Wib had been asked what sort of a holiday he would like, this was what he would have chosen. For some weeks he was going to play a part—keeping up an impersonation day after day—the most gorgeous theatrical stunt he could ever have dreamed of. At the same time, he



"I must impress upon you, my boy, that the matter is one of the greatest importance," said Sir William, little dreaming that Bunter was hidden behind the settee, breathless with curiosity.

"It may be a matter of life or death for me!"

would be paying his debt of gratitude to the kind-hearted old bean who had saved him from getting sacked. It was sheer joy to William Wibley.

Sir William rose at last.

He was evidently in a very pleased and satisfied frame of mind—though hardly so pleased and satisfied as Wibley.

He shook hands with the schoolboy actor again, and left the visitors' room. When he was gone, Wibley pirouetted round the room, gloating.

"Gorgeous!" he said aloud. "Topping! Tip-top! Oh, my hat! What a catch! What a scoop! Hurrah!"

Wibley seemed to be walking on air when he came out. When the door shut after him a fat figure crawled out from behind the settee.

Billy Bunter blinked at the door that had closed on Wibley. He gasped.

"Oh crikey!" said Bunter.

LODER DOESN'T LIKE IT!

LODER of the Sixth stared. Then he frowned.

Loder was surprised, and, plainly, he was annoyed—he looked very much annoyed indeed.

On Monday morning, Loder was looking in the rack for letters. Some juniors who had come along to do the same stood back to wait for Loder to get through. Among them were the Famous Five and some other Remove fellows—including William George Bunter. Bunter, perhaps, was hoping that his celebrated postal

order might have arrived, and he blinked impatiently at Loder through his big spectacles.

There was, as it happened, no letter for Loder. His eyes had fixed on one that was sticking in the rack, addressed to Harry Wharton.

He stared at that letter—he glared at it! Not that Gerald Loder, as a rule, was interested in the correspondence of juniors. But he knew the hand in which that letter was addressed. It was the handwriting of his distinguished uncle, Sir William Bird.

He glanced round, saw Harry Wharton among the juniors, and called to him, frowning.

"What the dickens does this mean, Wharton?" he snapped.

The captain of the Remove looked at him.

"What and which?" he inquired politely.

"This letter is for you!" snapped Loder. He took it down from the rack. "I'd like to know what the dooce it means."

"Eh? What? Why?" ejaculated the astonished junior. "I don't see that it matters to you, Loder! It's from my uncle, I suppose—"

"It's not! It's from my uncle!" snapped Loder.

"Wha-a-t?"

"You weren't expecting to hear from my uncle?" asked Loder, staring at Wharton's astonished face.

"No; why should I?" said Harry blankly.

"I never knew you knew him at all."

"We met him last week, when he was here," answered Harry. "Blessed if I know why he's written to me, though."

"He, he, he!" from Bunter.

Billy Bunter fancied that he knew! Bunter knew more than the Famous Five were likely to guess!

Sir William had said, on Saturday, that Wibley could have those five fellows with him for the holiday at Eastcliff Lodge. They had to be asked—and clearly Wibley could not, in the circumstances, ask them! The fat Owl did not doubt what was in that letter.

Loder scowled over the letter.

He had, as a matter of fact, hoped that there would be a letter for himself in that handwriting; and there was not! Gerald Loder cultivated that wealthy uncle very assiduously.

Sir William had been, as Loder had hoped, good for a tip the previous week. But that tip had taken unto itself wings and flown away, Loder having put it on a horse that he fancied, which had, unfortunately, come in eleventh.

Loder had written his uncle a very, very affectionate letter since. He had hoped that that would be good for another of the same. Apparently, it hadn't been, as there was no letter for Loder. Which annoyed the sportsman of the Sixth, who had several little bills to meet, and the sight of a letter for Wharton, instead of himself, added to his annoyance.

"Well, I don't catch on to this!" grunted Loder. "I don't see why my

uncle should write to you, Wharton. You can open the letter—and you'd better tell me what's up."

"I don't mind, in the least," answered Harry.

He took the letter and opened it, his friends gathering round, quite curious to know what the old Bird had to say to the captain of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows, perhaps it's to ask you for Easter!" grinned Billy Bunter.

"You fat ass!" said Bob Cherry. "Sir William doesn't even know our names."

"He, he, he!"

Harry Wharton's eyes opened wide as he looked at the letter. They opened wider and wider in astonishment.

"My only hat!" he ejaculated.

"Well?" grunted Loder angrily. "If you've been greasing up to my uncle, you young rotter—"

"Don't be a fool!" answered Wharton unceremoniously.

"What?" roared Loder.

"Don't be a fool!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "I've hardly spoken to your uncle. Do you think I'm after tips from him, the same as you are yourself?"

"Harry, old man—" murmured Nugent.

Loder's face was a picture.

"Tell me what's in that letter at once!" he snarled.

Perhaps Loder really suspected that a tip might have got to the wrong address.

"This letter concerns my friends and myself," said Harry. "If you're curious about it you can hear me read it out to them."

"We're in it?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes; listen!"

Harry Wharton proceeded to read out the letter, his comrades listening with great interest, and Loder with a surprised and angry face.

"Eastcliff Lodge,
Kent.

"Dear Wharton,—I had the pleasure of making your acquaintance, and that of your friends, when I visited Greyfriars on Wednesday. I have not forgotten the service you rendered me that day. If you and your friends—Cherry, Nugent, Bull, and Hurree Singh—would care to pass the Easter holidays here, you would all be made more than welcome. I should be very glad if you can all come.—Yours sincerely,

"WILLIAM BIRD."

"Well, my only hat!" said Bob Cherry. "Bunter hit it. He's asking us for Easter!"

"He, he, he!"

"I—I suppose it's because of what happened that day on Courtfield Common," said Harry Wharton blankly. "Jolly decent of him, anyhow. We haven't fixed up anything for Easter, and this—"

"This looks good!" grinned Bob.

"The goodness is terrific!"

"Give me that letter!"

Loder snatched it from the hand of the captain of the Remove without waiting for it to be handed over.

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"Look here—" began Wharton angrily.

"I don't understand this," snarled Loder. "My uncle's going away—at least, he intended to go away; he said so when he was here. He can't want a party of fags about the place while he's away; and still less when he's there, I should think! Is the old ass going potty, or what?"

Loder glared at the letter. But he could not glare into it anything but what Harry Wharton had read out of it.

"The old ass!" he snapped.

Loder's dutiful affection for his distinguished uncle did not seem able to stand much of a strain!

"Is that what you called him when he was here, Loder?" asked Harry Wharton contemptuously. "Give me my letter, please!"

Loder tore the letter savagely across, and across again, and flung the fragments at him!

"I'm not having this!" he snarled. "You'll answer that letter with a 'no'—see? I won't have you sneaking round the place! I may be going there myself in the hols, and I don't want Remove fags about. You'll write and tell the old ass that you don't want to come."

Harry Wharton looked steadily at the bully of the Sixth.

That invitation for Easter, as far as he could see, could only have been founded on the incident on Courtfield Common, when the man with the blond eyebrows had been spying, and the chums of the Remove had given the old baronet warning. It seemed to him a kind thought on the part of a kindhearted old bean. Whether to accept the invitation or not was a matter for discussion—till Loder snapped out his orders on the subject! Then Wharton made up his mind at once. If Loder of the Sixth fancied that he could dictate in this matter, it was time Loder was told where he got off!

"Do you hear me?" snarled Loder.

"I'm not deaf!" answered Harry. He glanced round at his friends. "You fellows like the idea? I do!"

"What-ho!" said Bob.

"We'll go!" said Johnny Bull.

"Yes, rather!" said Nugent.

"The likefulness is terrific!"

Loder breathed hard, and he breathed deep! This was defiance, pure and simple; and the bully of the Sixth was not to be defied—if he could help it!

"I've told you that you're to refuse that invitation, Wharton!" he said, between his teeth. "I won't have you there—a crew of fags!"

"You can go on telling me till you're black in the face, if you like," retorted Wharton. "I'm going up to my study now to write a letter accepting the invitation."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Bob Cherry. Loder's eyes glinted.

"You won't go to your study, Wharton—you'll follow me to mine and take six, to begin with!" he snarled. "Follow me at once!"

And Loder stalked away.

"He, he, he! You're for it, old chap!" giggled Billy Bunter.

Harry Wharton did not heed the

fat Owl of the Remove. Neither did he heed Loder of the Sixth.

"You fellows coming up to help write the letter?" he asked. "We may as well get it done."

"What about Loder?"

"Nothing about Loder!"

"Oh, all right!"

And the Co. followed the captain of the Remove up the stairs to the studies.

Loder, in his study in the Sixth, picked up his ashplant and waited for Wharton. He had to go on waiting!

A FACER FOR LODER!

MR. QUELCH frowned. The Remove master was sitting on a bench under one of the ancient Greyfriars elms, after third school.

On that bright and sunny spring morning, Quelch had taken a pile of Form papers under his arm into the quad and sat down in that shady spot to enjoy the fresh air while he corrected the papers.

So he was not pleased when a bunch of juniors strolled towards the spot and came to a halt on the other side of the massive trunk of the old elm.

Really, the Famous Five of the Remove might have selected some other spot for a chat, as their voices reached the Form-master round the elm and rather disturbed his concentration on those Form papers.

However, Quelch concluded that they did not know that he was there; the thick trunk of the elm hid him from their sight. Certainly he did not guess that those five members of his Form had planted themselves on one side of that big elm because they knew that he was on the other! He could not have imagined any motive they might have had for so doing.

Moreover, after exchanging a few words, the juniors were silent. They seemed simply to want to stand there and gaze over the quad towards the House. That did not worry Quelch, and he resumed pencilling Form papers, and almost forgot that they were there.

But he frowned again as a fat voice came to his ears:

"I say, you fellows!"

"Buzz off, Bunter!" came Harry Wharton's voice.

"I say, old chap, Loder's looking for you!" chuckled Bunter. "I say, you never went to his study in break."

"I had a letter to write, fathead!"

"I say, hadn't you better dodge?" asked the fat Owl. "Loder can see you standing there, and he's sure to spot you."

"Run away and play, Bunter!" said Bob Cherry.

"Well, I can jolly well tell you Loder's after you!" said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, are you really going to old Bird's place for Easter?"

"We have written to accept Sir William Bird's kind invitation for Easter, if that's what you mean."

"I say, Loder don't like it."

"Loder can lump it!"

"Well, you'll get six," said Bunter. "Loder don't want you there. He

wouldn't want Wibley, either. He, he, he!"

"Wibley!" repeated Harry Wharton. "Has the old bean asked Wibley, too?"

"He, he, he!"

"You cackling cackinnating octopus, what's the joke?"

"That's telling," grinned Bunter. "I'm not saying anything. I can keep a secret, I hope."

"What secret, blitherer?"

"Oh, nothing!" said Bunter hastily. "There ain't any secret, old chap, and I'm not going to tell it to you. No fear!"

The Famous Five stared at Bunter. Bunter was shaking his fat head. Even Billy Bunter realised that what he had overheard in the visitors' room on Saturday was not an item of news to be spread all over the school. It was clear even to Bunter's fat brain that the matter was serious.

Generally, anything that went into Bunter's fat ears ran off the end of his lengthy tongue. But the fat Owl had kept that lengthy tongue muzzled, so to speak. Bunter was going to keep that secret.

But Bunter had his own ways of keeping secrets.

"A fellow knows what he knows!" said Bunter. "A fellow may have found out something, or he may not. I'm not telling you anything. The old bean would be fearfully shirty if he knew I knew."

"If who knew you knew what, owl?"

"Oh, nothing! I don't know anything—not a thing!" said Bunter hastily. "And it's got nothing to do with Wibley, either."

"Do you mean that Wib's told you what the old Bird wanted to talk about the other day?" asked Bob. "He's told nobody else."

"He, he, he!"

"You cackling ass——"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, Wharton, here comes Loder! You'd better cut!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "He's got his ash. And look at his face! Ain't he shirty! He, he, he!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at Loder of the Sixth as he came over from the House.

Loder had spotted them at last, standing under that elm. But they did not cut. They had their own reasons for remaining where they were for that interview with Gerald Loder.

"Oh, here you are, you young scoundrel," said Loder, as he came up, happily unaware that his words reached the ears of a Form-master on the other side of the big elm. "I told you to come to my study, Wharton. You did not come. Now bend over and touch your toes!"

"What am I to be whopped for, Loder?" asked Wharton calmly.

"Have you refused that invitation from my uncle to his place for Easter?" demanded Loder.

"No. I've accepted it for self and friends."

"You cheeky little sweep! I've told you that I shall drop in there during the hols. Think I want a crew of fags about?"

"I don't think you matter," said Harry cheerfully. "I suppose Sir

William Bird has a right to ask any guests he likes. We're certainly going."

"We are!" agreed Bob Cherry.

"We is!"

"We'll see about that," said Loder grimly. "Now bend over, Wharton, and touch your toes. Sharp!"

Loder swished his ashplant.

He could not understand the lurking grins on the faces of the Famous Five. But they knew, if Loder did not, that every word reached Mr. Quelch.

Loder, in fact, had walked into a trap. The chums of the Remove had been waiting in that spot—with Quelch in the offing—for Loder to spot them. Now he had done it. Loder certainly would not have ventured upon stretching his powers as a prefect to such an extent had he known that a master was within hearing.

The next moment, however, he knew.

There was a rustle of a gown on the other side of the big elm. A lean and angular figure emerged into view round the massive trunk.

"Loder!" barked Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" gasped Loder.

He ceased to swish the ash, and stared at Quelch in dismay.

Quelch's gimlet eyes fixed on him with a petrifying glare.

"Loder," he thundered, "what does this mean? You, a prefect, were about to administer punishment to a junior—a boy of my Form—for no offence—none whatever—but for personal reasons which have nothing to do with school discipline! What does this mean, Loder?"

"Oh, I—I——" Loder stuttered.

Mr. Quelch raised his hand.

"Go!" he snapped. "You certainly will not administer any such punishment, Loder. I shall speak to your headmaster on this subject. I am surprised at you, Loder! I am disgusted with you! I shall mention this to Dr. Locke. Go!"

Loder went.

He almost crawled away. His face was crimson, and his feelings were deep—very deep. But he dared not utter a word in reply. Never had the bully of the Sixth looked so utterly crestfallen as Gerald Loder did as he sneaked away from Quelch's uplifted hand and gimlet eye.

Mr. Quelch gave an angry snort, returned to his seat, and continued to correct Form papers.

The Famous Five exchanged a grin and sauntered away. They were finished with that spot now—now that Loder had walked into the trap.

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter rolled after them, grinning. "I say, did you know Quelch was there?"

"Did we?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Famous Five chortled.

MORE BOOT FOR BUNTER!

"GOOD hols, old chap!" "Same to you!" grinned Wibley.

It was the day before breaking-up.

William Wibley was going early. Wibley had leave to go a day before the rest, and the Famous Five were seeing him off at the gates. They did not expect to see Wib again till next term, little dreaming how soon they were to see him, and in what guise.

"Have a good time at Eastcliff Lodge," said Wibley, grinning. "Tell me all about it next term. I shall be really interested. Ta-ta!"

And Wibley departed, grinning from ear to ear, leaving the Famous Five rather puzzled. They did not see what there was specially for Wibley to grin at.

Wibley had rather a peculiar sense of humour; but there was nothing to amuse him, so far as they could see, in their coming holiday at Eastcliff Lodge.

The chums of the Remove walked back to the House. Class was over for the day, and they had some packing to do. As they came up to the Remove landing, a fat figure sitting there turned towards them, and a large pair of spectacles fixed on them inquiringly.

"I say, you fellows, seen Wibley?" asked Billy Bunter. "I'm waiting here for him to come up, but he hasn't come."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said the fat Owl, blinking at them. "I want to see Wibley specially as we break up to-morrow. I say, about Easter——"

"Nothing about Easter, old fat man," said Bob. "We're booked for the old Bird's show. Try next door."

"We might as well travel down together," said Bunter.

"What?"

"I've heard Loder talking about his uncle's place. Tain't a mansion like Bunter Court, but it's a decent show. A chap could have good hols there."

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob. "The old Bird asked us, because we did him a little service. Think he will ask you, because you chucked snuff at him?"

"Well, he doesn't know I did," answered Bunter. "Besides, even if he did, he won't be there, so it's all right."

Billy Bunter grinned—a complacent grin. The hols were often a problem to the Owl of the Remove. But Bunter had been doing some thinking, and on this occasion he fancied that he had solved that knotty problem.

"He won't be there!" repeated Harry Wharton. He stared at the fat Owl. "He has asked us there, fat-head! Think he's asked us to stay there while he's away?"

"He, he, he!"

"The old bean was going away, I heard!" remarked Frank Nugent. "I heard that he came to see Loder because he was going! I suppose

(Continued on the next page.)

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he's put it off till after Easter."

"H, he, he!" chortled Bunter.

"What is that fat gargoylo gurgling about?" asked Bob. "I suppose you don't know anything about what the old Bird's doing, Bunter?"

"Don't I!" grinned Bunter. "I—I mean, of—of course not! How could I? He, he, he! Not a thing, of course! But I say, you fellows, I fancy I shall see you in the hols. It's rather a jolly place, from what I've heard Loder say, and a fellow might do worse."

"Just walking in and mentioning to Sir William that you've come?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"I fancy I can fix it up all right! I mean to say, I don't see how Wibley could let a fellow down in the circumstances."

"Wibley! What's Wib got to do with it?"

"Oh, nothing! Nothing at all!" said Bunter hastily. "Don't you fellows get it into your heads that Wibley's got anything to do with it! He hasn't—not a thing! How could he?"

"What the thump——"

"Nothing of the kind, of course!" said Bunter breezily. "Still, at the same time, a fellow knows what he knows! A fellow can't expect a fellow to keep a fellow's secrets, unless a fellow is civil to a fellow, what?"

"What a lot of fellows!" said Bob. "Do you happen to mean anything, or are you just talking out of the back of your neck?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! What I mean is, if Wibley wants five fellows, I don't see why he shouldn't make it the round half-dozen!" argued Bunter.

"Does Wibley want five fellows?" asked Harry Wharton, mystified. "I heard that Wib was going to his aunt in Derbyshire. She must be a jolly hospitable aunt if she wants him to take five fellows along with him."

"He, he, he!"

"Anyhow, we shan't be with Wib these hols," said Nugent. "So what do you mean, you bleating blitherer?"

"Won't you?" grinned Bunter.

"No, ass; we're going to Eastcliff Lodge. We shan't see any Greyfriars fellows there, unless Loder pushes in some time."

"That's all you know!" chuckled Bunter. "Mind, I'm not telling you anything. There isn't anything to tell, see? I'm not keeping secrets, or anything of that sort! Absolutely nothing of the kind. Still, I think Wibley might like a chap to come. I mean to say, I'm the sort of fellow that makes a party a success—as you chaps know. I fancy Wibley will ask me, when I mention the matter to him."

"To his aunt's in Derbyshire, do you mean?" asked Bob blankly.

"Eh? Catch me going to his old aunt's in Derbyshire! I'll watch it!" grinned Bunter. "No fear!"

"Then where—and what——"

"That's telling!" chuckled Bunter. "I ain't telling you fellows anything! Not that there's anything to tell, you know. Still, I've been

thinking it over, and I think I'd better see Wibley as we're breaking up to-morrow. I say, you fellows, shall we travel down together?"

"We're going to Eastcliff, fat-head——"

"Eh? So am I, if I can fix it up with Wib—and I rather think I can," said Bunter.

"What has Wibley got to do with it?" shrieked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, nothing! Nothing at all!" said the fat Owl, realising that the secret was in danger. "Absolutely nothing. I don't know anything about it, of course—I never heard the old Bird talking to Wibley, naturally. How could I, when they were in the visitors' room all by themselves, and I certainly wasn't in the room at the time! Nowhere near it."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Did that fat fozzler play Paul Pry when the old Bird was talking to Wibley that day? Wib's never told anybody what it was all about."

"He's not likely to!" grinned Bunter. "Catch Wibley saying a word! I'm not going to say a word, either! I wasn't there, you know—and as for hiding behind the settee. I never thought of such a thing! Not the kind of thing I would do!"

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter! Wibley had said nothing about that interview with the little old baronet, though a good many fellows had been curious. But they could see now that Bunter knew.

"You fat villain!" said the captain of the Remove. "You ought to be jolly well kicked!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Mean to say you parked yourself in that room and heard what the old Bird had to say to Wib?" exclaimed Bob.

"Eh? No! Nothing of the kind! I was in my study at the time. I never heard a word, and I'm not going to tell you what I heard, either, so you needn't ask me! I can tell you the old Bird would be shirty if he knew I knew anything about it!"

"About what, you fat ass?"

"Oh, nothing! Nothing at all! I say, you fellows, where's Wib? I've been sitting here an hour or more, and he hasn't come up—know where he is?"

"In his train by this time!" answered Bob Cherry.

"Wha-a-t?"

"He's gone——"

"Gone!" yelled Bunter. "You silly ass! We don't break up till to-morrow!"

"Wib's gone a day early——"

"Oh! The beast!" howled Bunter. "They never said anything about that—they must have arranged it since—the beast!"

"So you heard what they said, you fat eavesdropper?"

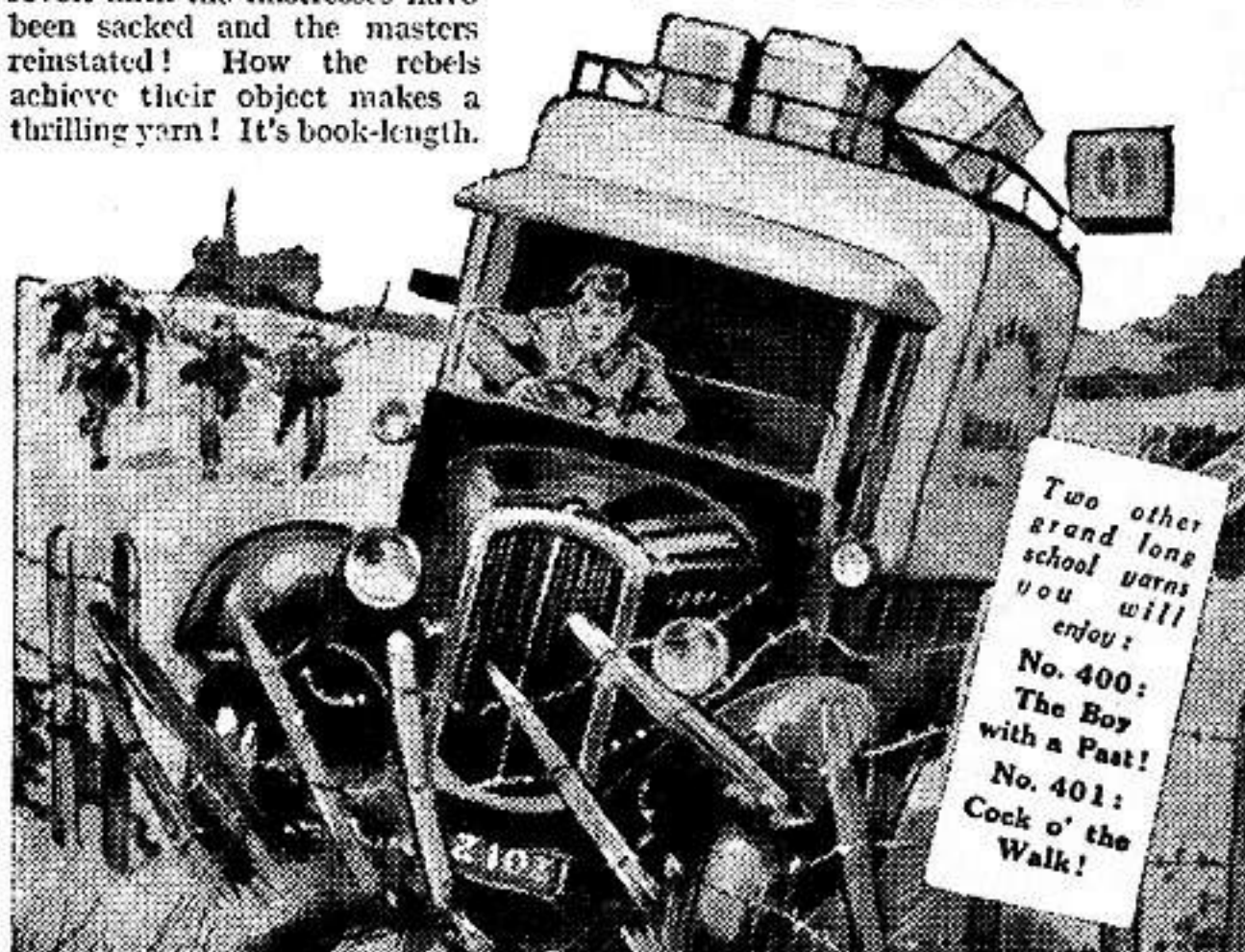
"Oh, no! I say, sure Wibley's gone? Perhaps I can catch him up!" Billy Bunter heaved himself up from the landing seat. "I say——"

"Gentlemen, chaps, and beloved 'earers," said Bob Cherry, "goodness knows what the old Bird had to say

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to Wib—and nobody wants to know but Bunter! Bunter knows! As Wib's gone, he can't boot him! Let's boot him for Wib!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows— Yaroooh!" roared Billy Bunter. "I say, you beasts, stoppit! I say, I've got to get after Wibley, and say— Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Billy Bunter forgot all about Wibley and holidays at Eastcliff Lodge as he flew up the Remove passage with the Famous Five in pursuit. He roared as he flew.

Five boots, in turn, landed on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars; and every thud elicited a fiendish yell from the fat Owl.

"Ow! Oh! Yow! Wow! Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter hurled open the door of Study No. 7 and bolted in! A final lift from Bob Cherry's foot landed him in that study—and Bunter rolled and roared.

And the Famous Five, leaving him to roll and roar, walked away to get on with their packing!

AND BUNTER!

"THAT ass!"

"That chump!"

"That fooling fathead."

"That bloated bandersnatch!"

"That terrific idiot!"

The Famous Five uttered all those remarks together, in various tones of surprise and exasperation.

It was the following day. A train had landed the chums of the Remove at the little station of Eastcliff, on the south-east coast.

They alighted from the train with bright and cheery faces. From the station platform they had a glimpse of the blue sea, rolling in the distance, under the bright spring sunshine. They had been told that Sir William's car would be waiting at the station to carry them to the lodge, and they were about to start for the car when an unexpected sight dawned on them.

It was the sight of a fat figure descending from another carriage along the train.

They gazed at Billy Bunter.

Bunter, it seemed, had caught the same train. They had not noticed him at it, but they noticed him now.

The fat junior blinked round through his big spectacles, spotted the five staring juniors, and rolled up to them with a fat grin wreathing his fat face.

"I say, you fellows—" he squeaked cheerily.

"You pernicious porpoise!" roared Bob Cherry. "What are you doing here?"

"He, he, he!"

"Bump him!" said Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter backed promptly.

"I say, you fellows, no larks! It's all right—I mean, it will be all right when I see Wibley—"

"Wibley!" howled Bob.

"I—I mean Sir William!" stammered Bunter.

"You mean Sir William!" repeated Harry Wharton. "When you say Wibley, you mean Sir William! Potty?"

"He, he, he! I mean to say, I

missed Wibley yesterday owing to the beast going off early. But when I see him here—"

"Wibley's not here, you fat chump!"

"Oh! No! Of—of course not! I mean, when I see Sir William—"

"Mad as a hatter!" said Bob Cherry in wonder. "Look here, you fat ass, the old Bird's in the car, waiting for us. He said over the phone that he would be here to meet us when we came—"

"I know all that!" grinned Bunter. "I heard you fellows talking about it! It's all right! I can fix it with Wibley as soon as I see him—"

"The blithering owl seems to have Wibley on the brain!" said Johnny Bull. "You won't see Wibley again till next term, you dithering dummy!"

"Eh? Oh! Yes! No! It's all right—I mean as soon as I see Sir

BACK-CHAT!

By Skinner, the joker of the Remove.

"HUMORIST" (Shell).—"Is it true that Loder may be barred from First Eleven cricket this year because he's such a 'bad hat'?"

Nearly true; the real reason, we learn, is that he's such a rotten "bowler"!

"KEEN ON GRAMMAR" (Third).—"What is wrong with this sentence: 'Bunter said he were not hungry.'"

Easy! "Bunter said he WERE hungry," of course!

R. R. (Remove).—"How still Greyfriars seems in the black-out! Not a sound from the School House, not a whisper from the lodge, not a murmur from the tuckshop—"

Exactly! Not even the Cloisters!"

S. J. S. (Remove).—"Quelch dishes us a lot of tripe."

And apparently takes us for the "onions"!

William— He, he, he! He will ask me to hop into the car. You'll see! I can tell you that Sir Wibley—I mean Sir William—will be jolly civil as soon as I speak to him. He, he, he!"

"You howling ass—"

"Yah!"

The Famous Five walked out of the station, with their suitcases.

Billy Bunter rolled after them, with no suitcase to carry. Bunter was travelling light—as usual. Perhaps he felt that he could rely upon Sir William to see him through—in the peculiar circumstances.

Outside the station was the car, the chauffeur standing by, and, sitting in the car, an old gentleman whom the Famous Five knew at a glance—or thought they did.

A pink face, with a rim of silvery hair under a silk hat, was turned towards them, and an eyeglass gleamed in the sunshine.

The old Bird stepped from the car, with a smile of welcome.

"Glad to see you, my boys! Tumble in! Good gad! What's this?"

The eyeglass gleamed at Bunter. Bunter blinked at the pink old face.

For a moment a horrid doubt smote him. If this was Wibley, he was playing the part to the very life. To the chauffeur, obviously, he was Sir William Bird; to the Famous Five he was Sir William Bird. Was he?

Billy Bunter wondered, for an awful moment, whether he had gone to sleep behind the settee in the visitors' room at Greyfriars and dreamed it all.

"What is this?" repeated Sir William, scanning Bunter. "Did you boys bring this with you? What is it?"

It was Sir William's deep and rather throaty voice to the last tone. If it was Wibley, he was not merely playing his part—he was living it.

"What is it?" repeated Sir William. "What is it doing here? What?"

The Famous Five grinned. Really, Bunter might have been something out of the Zoo by the way the baronet spoke.

"Roll off, Bunter, you fat ass!" said Johnny Bull.

"Shan't!" hooted Bunter. He blinked at the pink old face, and blinked again, and he could not be sure. But he was going to try it on. "Look here, I can jolly well tell you that I jolly well know the whole game, and if you can't jolly well be civil I'll jolly well give you away—so yah!"

Sir William gave a start. The Famous Five looked on in wonder. They could not begin to make head or tail of this. They did not understand Bunter in the least; but Sir William, it seemed, did.

He looked at Bunter! And the fat Owl—quite sure now—grinned and gave him a fat wink.

Sir William breathed hard. "Get in, my boys!" he said.

"What about me?" grinned Bunter. "Get in!"

Sir William stepped in. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at him—and looked at the grinning fat Owl. They were simply dumbfounded.

What it all meant they could not begin to understand; but one thing, at least, was clear—Billy Bunter was going to be a member of the Easter holiday party!

That, at least, was clear, and, as the car rolled away, the fat Owl of the Remove grinned with happy satisfaction—safely landed for the Easter hols! Though, if Billy Bunter could have foreseen all that was to follow, he might not have been so happily satisfied. Fortunately, Bunter couldn't!

THE END.

(An amazing holiday adventure lies before Harry Wharton & Co. and Billy Bunter! In next week's story, they have evidence that they are up against a secret foe who is watching their every movement. Don't miss "The Mystery Man of Eastcliff Lodge," whatever you do, in next week's MAGNET.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1.676.



COME INTO the OFFICE, BOYS—AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

WELCOME LETTERS!

I HAVE been running through a huge batch of letters from my readers, and I must say that this occupation gives me a great deal of pleasure. Without exception, every letter is couched in such a friendly tone that I feel that it is from a genuine pal; even where there are criticisms—and these are rare—these are of a very minor description, and the writers invariably end up on the friendliest of notes. The only trouble is, that it is extremely difficult for a busy Editor to find time to send a personal reply to the writer of every letter.

THAT MAP!

There is a chorus of praise for the map of the Greyfriars neighbourhood which was published in our issue of March 2nd. Many readers report that they have pasted it up on a sheet of cardboard for future reference. One reader points out that it would have been helpful if the position of Sea View, the bungalow which figured so prominently in the last series of stories, had been indicated on the map. I agree. The artist had been at work on the map for so long—for it was a long and painstaking task—that he evidently neglected this opportunity of bringing it right up to date. However, I should place the position of Sea View as being on the Cliff Road, just about in the position of the "C" in the word Cliff.

STILL GROWING!

The circulation of the MAGNET is still growing apace. As many of you readers have recently remarked, the old paper in all its thirty and more years of life has never been so good or so universally appreciated as now. And that in itself brings a big problem in its train. Every week new readers are picking up the MAGNET, and that means that some of the

regular readers have to go short. We are ready to print as many MAGNETS as are required each week, but we are not allowed to print more than are ordered by the newsagents. There must be no wasting of precious paper in wartime. That means that each of you must give a regular order for the paper to be reserved for you each week, if you want to be certain of your weekly copy. If you don't, you are sure to "get left," and that would spoil your whole week, wouldn't it? I have to refer to this matter at frequent intervals because of the number of complaints I continue to receive of the difficulty of obtaining the MAGNET.

Tell your newsagent to save you a copy regularly, and all your difficulties will be solved. If you have trouble, write to me at once.

NEXT WEEK'S STORY!

Harry Wharton & Co., light-heartedly enjoying their Easter holidays at Eastcliff Lodge, have embarked upon one of the most exciting adventures of their career, although they are as yet far from realising the fact. Old Sir William Bird is up to his bushy eyebrows in Secret Service intrigue, and certain parties are well aware of this. Hence the close watch that is kept upon his house. In the next story, entitled:

"THE MYSTERY MAN OF EAST-CLIFF LODGE!"

Frank Richards in his own happy style gives you a taste of what is in store for you as this grand holiday series runs its course. You will vote it the real goods—or I'm a Dutchman!

One final word to each of my pals—make up your mind that before the end of the week you will obtain at least one new reader for the good old MAGNET, and thereby earn the best thanks of

YOUR EDITOR

"MAGNET" PEN PALS

A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging views on matters of mutual interest. If you wish to reply to a notice published here you must write to the Pen Pal direct. Notices for publication should be accompanied by the coupon on this page, and posted to the MAGNET Pen Pals, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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