

THE
MAGNET

PACK UP YOUR TROUBLES—BILLY BUNTER'S HERE!

GRUNTER OF GREYHURST!

by
FRANK
RICHARDS



The
MAGNET
*Billy Bunter's
Own Paper* **2^D**



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That Daring Young Man on THE FLYING TRAPEZE

(By Our Own Representative)

Between prayers and breakfast the other day, I went along to the gym to have ten minutes on the bars. To my amazement, the door was locked! Other fellows were there, telling the world about it. It isn't often that the gym is used before breakfast, but as soon as the news spread that it was locked, there were loud yells for Gosling.

"Wake up, you old image! The door's still locked!"

"Wot I see is this here," replied Gosling sourly, "the gymnasium ain't open now till arter breakfast. 'Ead's orders."

"But what's the idea?" we demanded angrily.

"Durno! I b'lieve Mr. Prout suggested it. Now 'op it before I report yer."

There were some complaints, but not many; for, as I say, the gym is seldom used, and, anyway, orders are orders when they come from the Head. But as the special representative of a world-famous journal, I was not to be satisfied with words. I had to resolve the mystery or perish in the attempt.

Strenuous inquiry met with no response, except to confirm that the gym could not be used at that hour without permission. So next day I cut "preggers"—and bagged 100 lines—in order to climb through the window and hide in the gym. But it was worth it, for soon a key turned in the lock, and who should come in, but Prout and Twigg!

Prout was attired in singlet and shorts. I nearly collapsed at the sight. Twigg was wearing a flannel suit and a dubious expression. Prout locked the door and then proceeded to swing a pair of ponderous clubs. Twigg took exercise by looking on.

"I am really too stiff this morning, Prout," he explained. "I am aching all over from those dumb-bells yesterday."

"Persevere, my dear fellow!" panted Prout. "The doctor made a special point of it when I consulted him about my health and—hem—my weight. 'Weight-reducing medicines are useless,' he said. Exercise is the only way to obtain a slim figure—

physical training, my dear Twigg. Come, commence!"

But Twigg—whose waistline is striving to follow Prout's—shook his head.

"I agree with you that the masters should have the use of the gymnasium for a while every day," he said, "but I am really aching in every joint, Prout."

"Nonsense! Why, look at me! I intend to try the—hem—yes, the trapeze. Watch this, Twigg!"

"Goodness gracious, Prout," gasped Twigg in alarm, "pray do no such thing! Your age and—er—your weight—Really, Prout, I implore you—"

"Absurd!" boomed Prout. "I was a tremendous athlete in my day, sir. There is no occasion whatever for alarm."

And Prout, using a ladder instead of the ropes, mounted the trapeze.

Have you ever seen an elephant performing on a rope swing? Well, I have—as good as. The roof itself sagged inwards under Prout's weight, and he fumbled and stumbled and fell backwards. A moment later he was oscillating wildly in mid-air, hanging downwards with his legs over the swinging bar.

"Help!" he bawled. "Help me, Twigg! I cannot pull myself up! I shall fall on my head, Twigg, if you do not assist me. Help!"

Twigg was gasping helplessly. There was only one thing to do. Heedless of the row that would follow, I shinned up the rope, caught the trapeze and drew it across to the ladder, to which Prout hung like grim death. He managed to get his feet on the ladder and pull himself out of the trapeze. Then I helped him down.

The daring athlete was so shaken that he did not even notice my presence. He was helped out of the gym by Twigg. Next day the gym was open after prayers as usual. It's open still!

And Prout is taking weight-reducing medicine!

ARE YOU THERE? BY THE EDITOR

I wonder how many people have sighed: "Life would be much better without the telephone?" I'm sure

George Wingate, our school captain, is one. For if Sir Hilton Popper, or Colonel Griffiths, or the vicar, or the dozen other local friends of Dr. Locke had to fag up to the school to report Greyfriars fellows—well, they just wouldn't bother.

But as it is, if any of these old gentry see a Greyfriars man dropping into the Three Fishers, or landing on Popper's Island, or buying cigarettes in the village, he says to himself: "Hem! I'll just give my friend Dr. Locke a call on the telephone when I get home. He'll be glad to hear about this!" And the result is that George Wingate is called into the Head's study and asked, a little frigidly, if the prefects ever do anything but look ornamental.

Three times last week a junior was seen sneaking out of the Three Fishers, and Wingate is now boiling over. He and his band of prefects have practically lived at the Three Fishers this week. They pine and yearn to get hold of that sinful junior and make him cringe.

But what a hope! We know—and they suspect—that the culprit is Aubrey Angel of the Upper Fourth. They eye him almost wolfishly when he strolls out of gates. He doesn't worry—why should he? The dingy sweep backs his fancy just the same. No matter how many prefects are clustered round the Three Fishers, Angel's voice can travel right through them on the telephone wire. He has only to use a call-box in Friardale or Courtfield to do all his business with Mr. Bill Lodgey. You can't bag a fellow for using a public telephone.

If he loses, he posts the money to Lodgey. If he wins, Lodgey sends his winnings to the post office—to be called for.

No wonder Wingate would be glad to hear that the telephone had been abolished. The only thing that would give him more pleasure would be the news that Angel had been abolished, too.

See you next week, you chaps!
HARRY WHARTON.

Personal

Mr. Peter Todd, of Study No. 7, gives PUBLIC NOTICE that he will not hereafter be responsible for any debt, charge, or contract incurred by or on behalf of his study-mate, WILLIAM GEORGE HUNTER, and that any person claiming such debt, charge, or contract, should take its value out of the offender's fat hide.
—BY ORDER.

(Continued on page 27.)



A DOUBLE IN TROUBLE! ONE BILLY BUNTER IS ENOUGH IN THE GREYFRIARS REMOVE. NOW COMES A SECOND EDITION—IN THE SHAPE OF—

GRUNTER *of* GREYHURST!



IN THE NECK!

SWOOOOOSH!

"Oh!" howled Bob Cherry. He was taken quite by surprise. The very last thing that Bob Cherry of the Greyfriars Remove expected at that moment was a sudden neck-full of ink!

That was what he got!

Bob had cut down from the House to post a letter before tea. The letter-box was in the school wall, near the gate. Near the box, one of the old Greyfriars elms grew close to the wall. Between the tree-trunk and the old stone wall was a narrow space. From that narrow space shot, suddenly, a stream of ink from a squirt.

Just as Bob dropped his letter into the box, that sudden stream shot at him, catching him under the right ear. It streamed down his neck. It drenched his collar. Bob clapped his hand to his inky ear and howled.

"Oh! What—Who—"

He glared round.

Bob Cherry had a good temper—one of the best in the Remove. But it quite failed him now. He glared round for the fellow who had so suddenly inked him, with the intention of collaring that fellow, and smiting him hip and thigh.

No one was to be seen—for a moment—anywhere near at hand. Fellows were to be seen at a distance

Pushing the ancient porter of Greyfriars out of the way, Billy Bunter careered on towards the school gates!

—nobody near enough for squirting. Whence that sudden jet of ink had come was for a moment a mystery.

But only for a moment! Then Bob rushed round the big elm near the letter-box. And there was a startled squeak!

"It wasn't me! Keep off, Coker, you beast!"

"You mad porpoise!" roared Bob.

Lurking behind that tree—out of sight till Bob came round it—was a fat figure. A pair of large spectacles were turned on Bob in alarm.

Billy Bunter had not apparently expected to be discovered!

There was an inky squirt in one fat hand. In the other was a bottle of ink. There was a smudge of ink on the fat little nose under the spectacles.

"You balmy bloater!" howled Bob.

Amusing and Amazing Story of Schoolboy Adventure, Starring HARRY WHARTON & CO., of GREYFRIARS.

"What have you done that for, you potty porpoise! By gum, I'll—"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Billy Bunter. "Is that you, Cherry? I thought it was Coker of the Fifth!"

"You thought it was Coker of the Fifth!" gasped Bob. "Am I anything like Coker of the Fifth, you benighted bloater?"

"Well, you know I'm a bit short-sighted," said Bunter. "Besides, I wasn't looking—I just heard you come, you know, and let fly! I heard Coker tell Potter that he was coming down to post a letter before tea, and so—"

Bob Cherry dabbed at streaming ink, and glared at the fat Owl of the Remove as if he could have eaten him.

"You blithering owl!" he gasped. "Are you going to stick there and ink everybody who comes down to post a letter till you get Coker of the Fifth?"

"I'll look next time," said Bunter. "I wish you hadn't barged in, Cherry. You've made me waste that ink!"

"You—you—you—" gasped Bob. "Still, it's all right!" said Bunter. "I've got some more."

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"All right, is it?" howled Bob.

"Yes. I brought the bottle with me," explained Bunter. "I've wasted that lot, but I can fill the squirt again. So it's all right."

And Billy Bunter, uncorking the bottle, proceeded to refill the squirt, ready for the right victim when he came along.

Bob Cherry gazed at him. He was inky, and he was fearfully exasperated. But he resisted the temptation to strew William George Bunter in small sections all over the Greyfriars quad.

"You potty owl!" he said. "Look what you've done!"

"He, he, he!" Billy Bunter looked, and seemed to think it funny. "I say, old chap, you want a wash! I say, cut off, will you? I don't want Coker to know there's anybody here when he comes down to post his letter."

"I won't slaughter you, Bunter!" said Bob Cherry, breathing hard. "You'll get enough slaughtering if you get Coker of the Fifth with that squirt. But—"

"He kicked me!" said Bunter. "I can't kick Coker—he's too jolly big! I can get him with a squirt, and I'm jolly well going to, see? You wait till he comes down to post that letter! I'll get him all right!"

Billy Bunter gave a reminiscent wriggle! Apparently the weight of Coker's boot lingered in his memory.

"You're not going to do anything of the sort!" roared Bob.

"I jolly well am!" declared Bunter.

"You fat ass!"

"Yah!"

"I've a jolly good mind——"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I wish you'd cut off and not hang about here jawing, when Coker may come along any minute!" expostulated Bunter. "If he sees you talking, he'll guess that there's somebody behind this tree."

"Yes—I think even Coker would guess that one!" agreed Bob, dabbing at ink with his handkerchief.

"Well, cut off!" urged Bunter. "Look here, you want a wash—you're in a filthy inky state! You're always telling me I want a wash! Well, look at you!"

"Chuck that squirt over the wall!"

"Tain't mine—it's Toddy's! Toddy would kick up a row if I chucked his squirt away! Besides, I want it for Coker!"

"And suppose you get the wrong man again?" hooted Bob.

"Well, I shall be jolly careful—I've only got ink enough for one more go. I say, I wish you'd clear off, Cherry!"

Bob Cherry breathed hard, and he breathed deep!

Had the squirter been anybody but the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove, Bob would have been punching him before this. He was not going to punch Bunter—but he was not going to let him carry on with his squirting stunts. A short-sighted and fatheaded Owl with an inky squirt was altogether too dangerous to be left at large.

"Will you chuck it?" demanded Bob.

"I'll watch it!" retorted Bunter.

"Well, I'll stop you, then, you blithering owl!" said Bob Cherry; and he stepped up to Bunter, and jerked off his big spectacles.

There was a howl from Bunter.

"Beast! Gimme my specs!"

The fat Owl blinked frantically.

With his spectacles, Bunter's vision was not good. Without them, he was all at sea! He saw Bob Cherry through a mist.

"Will you gimme my specs, you beast?" he howled. "I can't tell Coker from any other beast, without my specs."

"You couldn't tell me from Coker with them!" retorted Bob. "Call in Study No. 1 for them when you want them."

"I shall miss Coker!" howled Bunter.

"That's all right. A miss is as good as a mile!"

"You silly idiot, gimme my specs!"

"You're safer without them at present, old fat man! Come after them, if you want them!"

"Beast!" yelled Bunter, as Bob Cherry marched off towards the House with the captured spectacles. "Bring those specs back, you beast! Do you hear?"

Bob Cherry heard, but he heeded not. He had generously refrained from slaughtering Bunter, as Bunter richly deserved. The next fellow who got the ink, it was certain, would not be so merciful. Without his specs, Bunter could not carry on—and if he followed Bob into the House for them, he would have to give up his squirting stunts. So Bob, heedless of the exasperated howls of the fat Owl of the Remove, marched off with those spectacles, and disappeared into the House with them.

ON THE NOSE!

BILLY BUNTER breathed wrath. Never had the fat Owl of the Remove been so intensely exasperated.

Coker of the Fifth had kicked him—hard. He could not, as he had stated, kick Coker of the Fifth—Coker was too big for a Remove man to kick—especially Bunter. Bunter would have needed to mount on a step-ladder, or a chair, for the purpose—obviously an impracticable proposition.

Getting Coker with a squirt full of ink was the next best thing. And there was Bunter, with the ink and the squirt, all ready—and it would have worked like a charm, if that fathead, Cherry, hadn't cut down to post a letter and caused Bunter to waste half his supply of ink—and then bagged his specs, thus making it practically impossible for him to use the other half!

Billy Bunter almost made up his fat mind to chuck it.

On the other hand, Coker of the Fifth might be on the spot any minute—Bunter had distinctly heard him tell Potter that he was posting a letter before tea. And Bunter still had a painful twinge where Coker's boot had landed.

Bunter resolved to carry on.

His coign of vantage was not more than six feet from the letter-box. He was in good cover. He had only to wait till he heard Coker at the box, and then let fly. He could peep round the tree-trunk, and even without his specs he could see whether it was a big fellow at the letter-box—not some fatheaded junior again.

Bunter waited.

He had not long to wait!

Only a few minutes had elapsed when he heard footsteps approaching the letter-box from the direction of the House.

Safely parked behind the tree-trunk, close to the wall, the fat Owl listened with all his ears!

It was a heavier tread this time—certainly not a junior's!

Coker all right this time!

Bunter's little round eyes gleamed.

The footsteps stopped at the letter-box.

The fat Owl, squirt in hand, peered cautiously round the massive tree-trunk. He did not want to make another mistake. He had only enough ink left for one more go.

He glimpsed a figure—much taller than a junior's.

Even as he glimpsed it, he let fly with the squirt.

Swoooooosh!

Splash!

Billy Bunter suppressed a giggle of merriment, as he blotted himself out of sight behind that tree. He did not want Coker to discover him there, as Bob Cherry had done! Still, he was ready for instant flight, if Coker did!

"Ooooooogh!" came a gasping howl from the victim who had got the ink.

Bunter grinned from ear to ear.

The beast had got it—right in the chivvy! Serve him jolly well right for kicking Bunter!

"Gurrrrrggh! Bless my soul! What—who— Goodness gracious, what——"

Bunter ceased to grin. The grin vanished from his fat face, as if wiped off by a duster.

That was not Coker's voice!

It was a voice Bunter knew—knew only too well! It was the voice of his Form-master, Mr. Quelch!

Bunter tottered against the trunk of the elm, overcome with horror.

He had got the wrong man again—and the wrong man, this time, was a beak—his own beak!

By the unhappiest of chances, Mr. Quelch had stopped at the box to post a letter. Coker, it seemed, was never coming. But Quelch had come! Bunter's fat knees knocked together, and almost let him down.

"Bless my soul! Ink!" came the excited voice from the other side of the elm. "Ink! Goodness gracious! I am drenched with—with ink! What—who—upon my word!"

Bunter's blood froze.

Quelch—he had got Quelch! He had got his own Form-master, right in the chivvy, with a squirt-full of ink! It made Bunter quite dizzy! This meant a flogging—this meant the sack! If Quelch found him out—

Bunter could only hope that Quelch

would not think of looking round that tree! If only he didn't, it was all right! If only Quelch would go back to the House! He needed a wash, as much as Bob Cherry had! If only he would go and get that wash—

Mr. Quelch did need a wash! His scholarly face was simply streaming with ink.

Bob Cherry had got it in the ear. Quelch had got it on the nose. Quelch's face was splashed and streaked with ink. Ink ran down his classic features, and penetrated into the corners of his mouth!

Nevertheless, Mr. Quelch, badly as he needed a wash, was thinking less of a wash than of discovering who had inked him! That was to Quelch, at the moment, the most urgent matter in the universe.

He came round that tree. As there was no other cover at hand, and as the inker was not in sight, it did not take Quelch long to guess that he was parked behind that tree.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter, as the tall, angular figure of the Remove master loomed round the tree and towered over him.

Bunter gazed in horror at Quelch. He did not need his spectacles to reveal the awful state into which he had put his Form-master.

"Bunter!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"Bunter! You young rascal! You——" Quelch pounced.

Bunter bounded.

The trouble had to come. Trouble was not to be avoided when a fellow had inked his Form-master. Bunter knew that!

Nevertheless, he bounded like a kangaroo to escape the clutching hand. The look on Quelch's inky face was altogether too terrifying.

Bunter bounded out of reach.

"Bunter!" roared Quelch.

Bunter flew.

"Bunter! Stop! Stop this instant!" shrieked the Remove master.

Bunter vanished.

MEETING OF THE R.D.S.

"WHERE'S the other ass?" asked Wibley.

William Wibley of the Remove came into Study No. 1.

He had a wad of closely written paper in his hand, a trace or two of grease-paint on his face, and—as he looked round the study—a frown on his brow.

There were six juniors in the study. Four of them were Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh—the fifth member of the famous Co. being missing at the moment. The other two were Peter Todd and Herbert Vernon-Smith.

It was a meeting of the principal members of the Remove Dramatic Society, of which William Wibley was the president.

"Where's the other idiot?" inquired Wibley, as his first question was not answered.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Bob went down to post a letter

about a quarter of an hour ago," he answered.

Snort, from Wibley!

Wibley's time was of value—immense value. And when Wibley spared a little of his immensely valuable time for lesser lights of the Remove Dramatic Society, he expected them to be on the spot.

Bob Cherry was not on the spot.

"Does it take him a quarter of an hour to post a letter?" snorted Wibley.

"He won't be long now, old bean!" said the captain of the Remove soothingly. Wibley being an artist, with an artistic temperament, had to be soothed like a baby. "Something's delayed him, I expect. You can give out the parts——"

"What's it about?" asked the Bounder. "Shakespeare this time?"

So far, the humbler members of the R.D.S. did not know what play was going to be put up this term. These matters were settled by Wibley. All they knew was that William Wibley would take the fattest part—they knew that much by experience.

"Shakespeare's rather a back number," answered Wibley. "There's an old proverb that if you want a thing well done, you have to do it yourself! So I've written the play."

"Oh!" said the R.D.S., all together.

"It's a comedy," Wibley proceeded to explain. "A bit brighter and snappier than Shakespeare's comedies."

"Oh!"

"The whole play revolves round one central figure," continued Wibley.

"You needn't tell us who will take that part, then!" remarked Peter Todd. "We can guess that one!"

And the Remove Dramatic Society grinned.

Wibley found great advantages in writing his comedies himself. Not only could he beat Shakespeare at that game, so far as making them snappy went; but he could make sure that the best actor in the Remove had plenty of "fat"—the best actor being William Wibley!

So, though the juniors did not know yet what the play was about, they could guess that the central character would be played by W. Wibley, and that Wibley would come on in every scene, the rest of the cast being merely also rans.

However, that was quite as usual; and Wibley, after all, was a wonderful actor—almost a hundredth part as good as he thought he was.

"What do you think of Bunter as a character?" asked Wibley.

"Bunter?" repeated Harry Wharton.

"Yes; Bunter!"

"Bunter can't act!" said Vernon-Smith. "He can't do anything but eat and tell whoppers!"

"I mean a Bunter part, fathead—not played by Bunter! The fat ass will be in the audience—not on the stage! This comedy is written round a schoolboy character named Grunter—modelled on Bunter! I take the part, of course! It needs a fellow who can act."

"Thanks!" said the R.D.S., in chorus.

"The part," said Wibley impressively, "is a real scream. I've often thought that Bunter is wasted at school. He ought to be on the films. Well, we're putting him on the stage! I can make up as Bunter; I've done it before, for a lark; now I'm going to do it for the play."

The R.D.S. nodded assent.

Wibley could make up as anything or anybody, and he could make up as Billy Bunter. Nobody else in the R.D.S. had a chance in that line.

How Wibley did these things they did not even know; but Wibley could do them. He seemed to have elastic features that could be twisted into any required shape. He could turn on Bunter's fat squak as easily as he could turn on Monsieur Carpentier's shrill squeal. When Wibley played a part he did not merely play it—he lived it. If Wibley made up as Billy Bunter he was going to be Billy Bunter!

"Now, here's your parts," went on Wibley. "I've got them written out, and I'll take you through them. I've got my own part word-perfect already, of course. But you fellows are rather dense."

"The thankfulness is terrific, my esteemed Wibley," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"If that ass Cherry doesn't come in——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a cheery roar at the door of Study No. 1.

Bob Cherry tramped in, almost making the study shake.

"You're late!" snapped Wibley.

"Had tea?" asked Bob.

"Tea!" roared Wibley. "Who's thinking about tea?"

"Well, it's jolly nearly tea-time," said Bob. "Sorry I'm late, old beans—a potty porpoise squirted ink over me, taking me for Coker of the Fifth, and I've had to get a wash. I——"

"Don't jaw now you're here," said Wibley. "I'm doing the talking!"

"You generally are, when you're around," agreed Bob. "Can't you talk over tea, though?"

"Blow tea!" roared Wibley.

"This is a meeting of the Remove Dramatic Society, old chap," said Harry, laughing. "Forgotten?"

"Oh! Blessed if I hadn't!" admitted Bob. "All right, Wibley—carry on! I'm frightfully keen! What are we doing—Hamlet? There's some good stuff in Hamlet! Look at those lines:

"How many thousands of my poorest subjects, Are in six parts, and every part a duent!"

"Is that right?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Remove Dramatic Society—all except Wibley.

Wibley glared at the cheery Bob.

"You blithering idiot!" he exclaimed. "You howling ass! You utter barbarian! You—you—you Goth! You vandal!"

"Anything biting old Wibley?" asked Bob, glancing round.

"Those lines aren't from Hamlet!" shrieked Wibley. "One of them's

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from 'King Henry the Fourth,' and the other from the 'Merchant of Venice.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Have I got 'em mixed?" asked Bob. "Never mind—I'll sort 'em out—it'll be all right on the night."

"We're not doing Shakespeare this time," grinned Frank Nugent. "Wibley's written something better, specially."

"The betterfulness is probably terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Are you fellows going to let a fellow speak, or are you fellows not going to let a fellow speak?" demanded Wibley.

"Carry on, old man!" said the R.D.S., all together, soothingly.

"The play's called 'Grunter of Greyhurst,'" said Wibley. "The part of Goggly Grunter is taken by me. I've been studying Bunter to get it right! That's O.K! You're going to be a schoolmaster, Wharton—you're an usher, Nugent. Smithy's the boy with a bad character. I'm making the parts fit as well as I can, of course—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly owl!" grunted Vernon-Smith.

"The part will suit you all right," said Wibley. "You can't act, but, to a certain extent, the part coming natural to you, you know, that will make it all right. What are you glaring at?"

"Fathead!"

"I wish that cousin of yours was still here," said Wibley. "He could act—that chap who was here last term—what was his name?—Vernon—the chap who was so like you to look at—not in brains, though! He could play your head off at acting, same as he could at cricket. Do you remember?"

Herbert Vernon-Smith looked fixedly at William Wibley.

Smithy had been on scrapping terms with his cousin and double when Bertie Vernon had been at the school. They had parted at the finish on more or less friendly terms. Still, Wibley's remarks could not be considered tactful.

But Wibley had no time for tact.

"He would have come in jolly useful," said Wibley. "I really wish you'd left instead of him, Smithy!"

Wibley was looking at the matter wholly from the point of view of theatricals. That was Wib's usual point of view.

"You silly chump!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith. "You gabbling, babbling, burbling idiot!"

The Bounder rose from his chair.

"It's all right, Smithy," said Harry Wharton. "Wib's only potty, as usual!"

"Don't mind Wib, old man," said Bob.

But the Bounder, apparently, did mind. He walked out of Study No. 1 and shut the door after him with a bang.

Wibley stared at the door.

"What the dickens has Smithy walked off for, when I was just going to explain his part to him?" he ex-

claimed irritably. "Is anything the matter? Is the silly ass offended about something or other?"

The Remove Dramatic Society grinned.

"I'll wash out his part if he wastes my time!" exclaimed Wibley wrathfully. "Look here—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he comes back, old bean," said Bob Cherry, as the study door opened again.

But it was not Smithy who came in—it was Billy Bunter.

And the look on Billy Bunter's fat visage quite startled the juniors in Study No. 1. Even William Wibley almost forgot that great comedy, "Grunter of Greyhurst," as he looked at Billy Bunter's dismayed, woe-begone, horror-stricken visage—not at the moment adorned by his big spectacles.

Bunter blinked at the startled company. Then he sank into a chair and groaned.

"I say, you fellows, I'm done for! Oh lor'!"

A CHANCE FOR WIBLEY!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stared at Billy Bunter.

Billy Bunter was the man to make a big fuss over a small spot of bother. But this time it looked as if Bunter had struck a big spot. He gazed at the juniors with sagging jaw and lack-lustre eyes.

"What on earth's the row?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Oh lor'!"

"Coker after you?" asked Bob.

"Oh crikey!"

"Quelch on your track?" asked Peter Todd.

"Oh dear! I'm done for!" groaned Bunter. "I'm going to be flogged, and sacked, and— Oh lor'!"

"What have you done?" demanded three or four voices at once.

"Quelch!" moaned Bunter. "It was all Cherry's fault!"

"Mine?" gasped Bob.

"Yes; I might have seen that it was Quelch if you hadn't snaffled my specs. As it was, I—I—I didn't!" Bob gave a jump.

He had taken it for granted, as a matter of course, that, deprived of the specs, the Owl of the Remove would not carry on. He had had no doubt that he had saved Bunter from a terrific whopping from Coker of the Fifth—or some other fellow whom he might have got in mistake for Coker.

Now it dawned on him that the fatuous fat Owl had carried on all the same—with results more direful than getting Coker, with the rest of the Fifth Form thrown in.

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "Oh crumbs! You mad porpoise—"

"But what—" exclaimed Harry.

"I told you the blithering Owl got me with a squirt of ink," said Bob. "He was waiting for Coker, and got me, the blind owl! So I took away his specs to stop him from trying it on again."

"That did it!" groaned Bunter. "I thought it was Coker at the letter-box, and let him have it. But—but it was Quelch."

"Quelch!" gasped the whole study.

"Right in the chivvy!" moaned Bunter. "Bang on the beezer! Ink all over his ugly mug! Oh lor'! He spotted me! Oh crikey! He yelled to me to stop—of course, I didn't!"

"Well, you mad ass," said Johnny Bull. "You got Quelch in the chivvy with a squirt of ink! You're done for, and no mistake."

"The donefulness is terrific."

"I say, you fellows, he was fierce!" moaned Bunter. "He yelled at me like—a Red Indian! I—I cleared off! I—I suppose he's washing off the ink now. But—but what's going to happen when—when he gets after me?"

"That's an easy one," said Johnny Bull. "Head's flogging!"

"I don't want to be flogged!" wailed Bunter.

"Might be the sack!"

"Beast! I don't want to be sacked. My pater would make a fearful fuss if I went home in the second week of the term! He doesn't expect to see me till the hols! I—I hardly think he wants to!"

"It's a bit late to think of these things!" remarked Johnny Bull. "You should have done that before you squirted Quelch."

"I—I thought it was Coker—"

"He thought I was Coker, with his specs on!" gasped Bob. "He might have taken the Head for Coker, with his specs off! Lucky the Head wasn't posting a letter about that time!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"I say, you fellows, what's a fellow going to do?" asked Bunter. "I say, think it would be any good saying it wasn't me?"

"Not a lot!" said Nugent. "If Quelch saw you, and called to you, he would want a lot of convincing that it wasn't you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I mean, Quelch had some of the ink in his eyes, and I think, perhaps he didn't see very clear!" suggested Bunter. "If all you fellows say that I was in this study at the time—"

"What?"

"You're Quelch's head boy, Wharton, and a beak has to take his head boy's word! You swear that I was here when I did it—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"All the other chaps can back you up, see?" said Bunter. "Quelch may believe it! He can't make out a whole crowd of fellows to be liars, you know."

"You blithering Owl—"

"I'd do more than that for a pal!" urged Bunter. "You all swear I was here at the time—you'll swear, won't you, Toddy?"

"You're enough to make a fellow swear—if a fellow knew any words!" admitted Peter Todd. "But you can wash that out, you frumpious ass!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Well, look here," said Wibley. "Wib had been very patient, so far—for Wib! But Wib was in that study on business. This is all very well, but we've got to get on, you know! Now, your part, Toddy—"

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

"Don't talk any more, Bunter!"



"Oh!" gasped Bunter, as the angular figure of the Remove master loomed round the tree.

This is a meeting of the Remove Dramatic Society. You shouldn't have come into this study! Go to some other study!"

"I'm going to be sacked, very likely!" howled Bunter. "Think your rotten play matters, you chump?"

"Your being sacked won't make any difference—you're not in the cast," said Wibley. "One fellow won't be missed from the audience. That's all right."

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Bunter.

"Don't interrupt any more! Now—"

"Shut up!" roared Bunter. "Blow your silly play! Bother your silly play! Like your cheek to put me in a play, and think you could make up to look like me—as if you could! It would need a good-looking chap! I say, you fellows, don't listen to Wibley's silly rot—try to think out what I'm going to do."

"Look here!" howled Wibley.

"Shut up!" roared Bunter.

"You fat, foozling, frabjous, footling freak!" roared Wibley, justly incensed. "I can make up to look like your twin! When I'm made up in my part of Grunter of Greyhurst, anybody would think it was you—if he didn't think it was a pig got loose from Courtfield Market—which would be much the same thing."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter suddenly.

A new idea seemed to strike the fat junior.

"Oh!" he repeated. "So—so you could, old chap! You're a fearfully

clever chap, Wibley—wonderful! The way you make up would make professional actors green with envy, old fellow!"

Wibley stared at him. This was true, in Wib's belief, at least; but it was rather a startling change of front.

"That's the idea!" went on Bunter. "I saw you in your study with your make-up on, Wib, and it was—was wonderful! I—I say, suppose you tell Quelch that it was you at the letter-box—"

"What?"

"In your stage get-up, you know!" said Bunter eagerly. "Then—then Quelch would believe that it wasn't me, see?"

Wibley blinked at him.

"You burbling bloater!" he gasped. "I dare say he would—but what would happen to me, if he did?"

"Oh!" said Bunter.

Apparently he hadn't thought of that!

Wibley had!

"I can see myself doing it!" said Wibley.

"Well, you can stand a licking, old chap!" said Bunter. "And if you were sacked, it wouldn't matter so much, you know! After all, nobody would miss you!"

If Bunter hoped to convince Wibley by that argument, it showed that Bunter had a very hopeful nature.

Wibley glared at him like a Gorgon.

"You see, you're always playing silly tricks in your fatheaded make-up!" continued Bunter. "Look at

the row you got into once, for making up as Mossoo! You were jolly nearly bunked, then! Quelch would believe it all right—I mean, knowing what a fool you are, you know! And as it happens, I never had my spees on when Quelch saw me—that would help! Gimme my spees, Bob Cherry, you beast!"

Bob handed over the spectacles.

Billy Bunter jammed them on his fat little nose, and blinked eagerly at William Wibley through them.

This scheme seemed to Bunter a really masterly way out of the difficulty—if only Wibley would play up.

Wibley did not look as if he would. He was really looking as if he was going to bite Billy Bunter!

"Quelch thinks it was you, see?" went on Bunter. "All you've got to do is to say so. See?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're so—so jolly clever at—at make-up and all that!" said Bunter.

"I—I don't think you're a silly fool at it, Wib, old chap! If I've ever said so, it was only my little joke! You're—you're wonderful, you know! When you've got that stage rot on, as me, you're as like me as—as Smithy's cousin was like him last term—see? So all I've got to say is—yaroooooh!"

Why Wibley suddenly grabbed him by a fat neck, and banged his head on the study table, Bunter did not know.

But he knew that Wibley did! It was quite a hard bang!

"There, you fat chump!" hissed Wibley.

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"Yaroooh!"

"Now, if you don't shut up and get out—"

"Whoo-hoop! Beast! Ooogh!"

There was a knock at the study door, and it flew open.

Wingate of the Sixth looked in.

"Is that young ass Bunter here? I've looked in his study—"

"Oh! No! I'm not here, Wingate!" gasped Bunter.

"Quelch wants you in his study at once, Bunter!"

"I—I say, Wingate, I—I've been here for hours!" gasped Bunter. "Will—will you go and—and tell Quelch that I've been here ever since class, talking to these fellows?"

The Greyfriars captain stared at him.

"You young ass! You can tell Quelch that yourself, if you want him to know. He's waiting for you in his study."

"Oh lor'! I—I say, is—is anything the matter, Wingate?" moaned Bunter.

Wingate laughed.

"Quelch looked as if there was!" he answered. "Cut off! Or do you want me to take you down by your ear?"

"I—I say, you fellows, will you all come with me, and—and tell Quelch that I've been in this study ever since class?"

There was no answer to that request.

Harry Wharton & Co. sympathised with a fellow who was so awfully up against it. But, really and truly, they were not prepared to go to Quelch's study and make that statement.

Billy Bunter gave a blink round the study—a beseeching blink!

"I'll do the same for you fellows, another time!" he urged. "I—I say—Ow! Leggo my ear, Wingate!"

The Sixth Form man did not let go till he had led Billy Bunter out of Study No. 1 by a fat ear.

"Now go down to Quelch!" he said.

"Oh lor'!"

And Billy Bunter, in the lowest possible spirits, went.

BUNTER TRIES IT ON!

MR. QUELCH had washed off the ink.

He no longer looked like a nigger minstrel. He looked, indeed, like that Alpine young man in the poem—his brow was set, his eye beneath flashed like a falchion from its sheath.

Seldom had the fat Owl of the Remove seen his Form-master looking so grim.

There was no cane in Quelch's hand. But even that was not reassuring. It probably meant that the matter was to be referred to the headmaster.

Billy Bunter limped into the study.

He blinked at Henry Samuel Quelch through his big spectacles. He tried to pull himself together. He realised that he needed all his

nerve, all his presence of mind, if he was going to make Quelch believe that he hadn't inked him.

Bunter was not handicapped by any regard for the truth.

Truth and Bunter had long been strangers, and this, Bunter felt, was no time for striking up an acquaintance.

Bunter's fat mind was concentrated on one thing, and one thing only—getting out of the awful whopping that was due to him.

Whether it was a caning from Quelch, or a flogging from Dr. Locke, was really immaterial; in either case, Bunter wanted to get out of it! That was the urgent, the important thing. Nothing else mattered, so far as Bunter could see—even with the aid of his specs.

"Now, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, in a voice that was like the filing of a saw, "I do not intend to deal with you myself—what you have done is too serious for that. I shall take you to your headmaster. Whether Dr. Locke may decide to administer a flogging, or to expel you from Greyfriars, I cannot say. That you will soon learn. Now—"

"Has—has—has anything happened, sir?" asked Bunter.

Mr. Quelch looked at him.

He was, in the circumstances, surprised by that question.

"What do you mean, Bunter? You have not, in so short a time, forgotten what you have done, I presume?" he snapped.

"Have I done anything, sir?"

"Have you done anything?" repeated Mr. Quelch blankly.

"Wingate said you wanted to see me, sir! I—I came at once! I—I hope I haven't done anything, sir!"

Quelch gazed at him.

"Is it possible, Bunter—" Quelch almost gasped. "You are the most utterly untruthful boy in this school! But is it possible—is it barely possible—that you are thinking of denying your own action—when I saw you with my own eyes with a squirt in your hand?"

"I haven't got a squirt, sir. Has anything happened with—with a—a squirt, sir?"

"Upon my word!" Quelch was used to prevarication from that member of his Form. But this seemed to him the limit. "Bunter, I begin to doubt whether you are in your senses! You squirted ink over me from behind the tree near the letter-box when I was posting a letter, not half an hour ago—"

"It wasn't me, sir."

"What?"

"I—I wasn't there, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I've been up in the Remove studies ever since class, sir—"

"How dare you make such a statement, Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "I saw you—I spoke to you—on that spot, by the letter-box—"

"I—I haven't been anywhere near the letter-box, sir! Perhaps—perhaps you took another fellow for me, sir! Fellows are much alike, sir," faltered Bunter.

Quelch's gimlet eyes almost bored into Bunter!

Fellows might, or might not, be

much alike, but certainly there was no other fellow at Greyfriars School who could, at the hastiest glance, have been mistaken for Billy Bunter.

The only fellow who resembled Bunter was his minor, Sammy, of the Second—and Sammy was on a smaller scale—certainly never to be mistaken for his major.

"Upon my word," said the Remove master, "this—this—this is unprecedented! Even so untruthful a boy—"

"Last term, sir—"

"What?"

"Last term, sir, when Smithy's cousin, Vernon, was here, you sometimes took him for Smithy, and Smithy for him," ventured Bunter. "It—it's not a fellow's fault if he has a—a double!"

"A double!" repeated Mr. Quelch, like a man in a dream.

"Yes, sir! If—if you think you saw me at the letter-box—"

"If I think—Bless my soul!"

"If—if you think so, sir, it—it's like Smithy and Vernon over again—I—I—I've got a double, sir!" gasped Bunter.

Quelch continued to gaze at him.

He had not, of course, forgotten Smithy's double of last term, who had caused a lot of confusion by his likeness to the Bounder, while he had been at Greyfriars. He knew, of course, that it was that that had put this idea into Billy Bunter's fat head. But that even the fatuous fat Owl should think of spinning such a yarn was amazing.

It seemed rather plausible, to Bunter. Smithy had had a double. Everybody knew that! Well, if one fellow had a double, why shouldn't another?

It is said that every man has his double somewhere in the world—if he happened to come across him. So why shouldn't Bunter have a double?

"I—I hope you won't think it—it was me!" pursued Bunter, as his Form-master gazed at him in stony silence.

"You—you remember Smithy's double, sir? You—you remember you saw him at Courtfield one day before he came to Greyfriars, and—and took him for Smithy, and—and there was a row! It—it's something like that, sir!"

"You utterly stupid boy!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Eh?"

"Cannot you see, you absurd and untruthful boy, that I am perfectly aware that this ridiculous story has been suggested to you by the circumstances that Vernon-Smith and his relative were sometimes mistaken for one another last term?" thundered Mr. Quelch. "That is perfectly clear to me."

"Oh! Is it?" gasped Bunter.

"Certainly it is! I shall now take you to your headmaster, and I warn you not to utter such absurd falsehoods to Dr. Locke!"

"But—but—but it's true, sir!" howled Bunter, in terror. "I—I—I've seen him, sir! I—I saw him only yesterday, sir—"

"Bunter!"

"I—I did, sir!" gurgled Bunter.

"He—he was just like me, sir, except that he wasn't good-looking!"

"Bless my soul!"
 "I—I—I can find him, sir! I—I'll make him show up, I—I will, really, sir. If—if you'll wait till you see him, sir—"

"Bless my soul!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

He did not, of course, believe a word of it. He never believed Bunter, even if the fat Owl made a more or less probable statement. And this statement was wildly improbable—indeed, it was not merely wildly improbable, it was the absurdest yarn that even Billy Bunter had ever told. But the fat Owl had yet a card to play.

"If—if you saw a fellow like me, sir—" pursued Bunter.

"I saw you, Bunter!"

"Was—was he wearing specs, sir?"

"What?"

"That—that fellow, my—my double, doesn't wear specs!" gasped Bunter. "I—I always do. If he wasn't—"

"Bless my soul!" said Quelch again.

He remembered that the fat youth parked behind the elm with the squirt had worn no spectacles. He had, of course, noticed that Bunter's specs were rather a prominent feature. Bunter always had his specs on—and Quelch had to admit it was rather singular if he had left them off on the occasion when he was handling a squirt, and obviously needed them.

There was a long, long pause in the Remove master's study.

Was it possible?

Was it barely possible?

Billy Bunter was never seen without his spectacles. The fellow behind the elm had had no spectacles.

That introduced, at least, a remote spot of possibility into Billy Bunter's most amazing yarn.

Quelch did not believe him—he really couldn't. But—a Head's flogging was a serious matter. He could not send a fellow up for a flogging if there was a spot of doubt! And there was a small spot.

"Bunter," said Mr. Quelch at last, "I do not believe a word you have uttered—"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"You are the most untruthful boy in my Form. I believe that you have on this occasion exceeded even your usual untruthfulness," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Nevertheless—"

Bunter gasped with relief at the word "nevertheless."

There was a spot of doubt in Quelch's mind. That was all that was needed. Quelch was a beast—but he was a just beast.

"Nevertheless," said Mr. Quelch, "I will postpone the matter while I make some inquiry, Bunter. If I discover that anyone has seen such a boy as you mention—a boy who could possibly be mistaken for you—I shall reconsider the matter. I do not expect it for one moment. Your punishment is merely postponed. Nevertheless, I shall make inquiry. For the present, you may go!"

Billy Bunter did not need telling twice!

He was hardly able to believe in his good luck as he scuttled out of his Form-master's study. He was feeling like Daniel of old, when Daniel got out of the lions' den.

Often and often had Billy Bunter's powers as an Ananias let him down! His whoppers, of various sizes, never seemed to be believed! Now he seemed to have got by with the biggest ever!

It was a happily relieved Owl that rolled away down the passage—leaving a very angry and puzzled Form-master behind him.

BUNTER IS WANTED!

"SOCCER!" said Harry Wharton.

"Soccer!" repeated Wibley. If the word "Soccer" had been a deadly insult, William Wibley could not have hurled it at the captain of the Remove more scornfully.

"Soccer!" he repeated. "Soccer! Ye gods! Soccer!"

It was Wednesday afternoon. On Wednesday afternoon the Remove were booked to play the Shell at the great and glorious game of Soccer.

Every fellow in the Remove knew that, except—apparently—William Wibley. Greater matters were in Wib's mind.

A half-holiday was a great opportunity for a rehearsal. It was not easy for the Greyfriars actor-manager to get his whole cast together at other times.

On a half-holiday it was all right. On a half-holiday nobody could make out that he hadn't time. So Wibley was going to call his cast together for the first rehearsal that afternoon. He had not even noticed the football list posted in the Rag—and if he had

heard that it was the Shell match that afternoon, he had forgotten.

"We're playing the Shell, old man!" said Bob Cherry.

"Playing the goat, you mean!" snorted Wibley. "How are we going to pull off this play if we don't rehearse?"

"How are we going to beat the Shell if we don't play them?" asked Bob.

"Blow the Shell!" roared Wibley.

"My dear chap—"

"Wash it out!" said Wibley.

Bob Cherry blinked at him.

"Wash out a football match!" he ejaculated. "Mad?"

"The madfulness must be terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "It is the esteemed and ridiculous rehearsal that must be washed out, my absurd Wibley."

"Look here—" roared Wibley.

"Look here, I tell you—"

"Come along to the changing-room and tell us!" suggested Harry Wharton. "You see, we kick off at three."

"We rehearse at three!" howled Wibley.

"Do we?" grinned Bob.

It seemed that they did not! They trooped off to the changing-room, leaving Wibley in a state similar to that of Vesuvius on the eve of an eruption.

The juniors were keen, more or less, on amateur theatricals. But they did not live, and move, and have their being in theatrical stunts, like William Wibley. The idea of washing out a football match on account of a rehearsal made them smile.

"I'll cut you all out of the cast!" howled Wibley as they went.

Even that dire threat did not produce results! Actually, the fellows would rather have been out of Wibley's cast than out of the Remove eleven! It was rather unimaginable to Wib—but there it was!

Neither, really, could Wib proceed to such extremities. A play was not a one-man show! It very nearly was, it was true, when Wib took the principal part! But not quite! Even an actor-manager who took all the fat had to have a supporting company.

Wibley, snorting, went to his study! While those silly asses were wasting time booting a silly ball about, Wib, at least, could put in the

(Continued on next page.)

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time usefully. He could make a few improvements in the script of "Grunter of Greyhurst"—making his own part a little fatter. He could practise his make-up before the big glass in his study—a never-failing source of entertainment to Wibley.

"Here, Bunter!" He called to the fat Owl on the Remove landing. "Come to my study, will you?"

Billy Bunter blinked round through his spectacles anticipatively.

"Is it a feed?" he asked.

It was more than an hour since dinner! So a feed, if a feed there was in the offing, was naturally welcome to William George Bunter.

Snort from Wibley.

"No, you fat ass! Think I've got nothing better to do than to feed pigs on a half-holiday?"

"Oh, really, Wibley——"

"Come on, fathead!"

Bunter was sitting on the settee on the Remove landing. He did not seem disposed to move. It was true that he was ready for a feed, if there was a feed going; but it was true also that he had done remarkably well at dinner, and he was disinclined to carry the cargo about unnecessarily.

Moreover, Bunter had rather a worry on his fat mind.

The previous day Quelch had said that he would inquire into the truth—if any—in Bunter's tale of a double.

Bunter was very uneasy as to the result of that inquiry.

That somebody just like Bunter had dodged into the precincts of Greyfriars School and squirted ink all over Quelch, wanted some believing!

Bunter could not help feeling that the result of Quelch's inquiries might be the whopping he had narrowly escaped the previous day.

It was a worrying thought.

If Bunter was going to have that whopping, it would obviously have been better—on Wednesday—to have had it on Tuesday and got it over!

By this time the pangs and twinges would have subsided! Now the pangs and twinges were still to come, if Quelch finally decided that the fat Owl had been trying to pull his leg.

And what else, really, could Quelch decide, when he ascertained that nobody had seen anything of that double?

Only the fact that Bunter's spectacles had been missing on that occasion gave the merest spot of probability to the tale.

Bunter realised that that was a very feeble leg to stand on!

"Are you coming, you fat chump?" snapped Wibley. "I suppose you're not playing Soccer?" he added, with deep sarcasm.

"Eh? No!" grunted Bunter. "Look here, if it's a feed I'll come! If not, don't bother! Think I want to sit in your study hearing you tell a chap how thumping clever you are?"

"You pie-faced porker!" said Wibley. "I want you for a model! You know I'm making up as you for my part as Goggly Grunter in this play——"

"You cheeky ass!"

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"Now come and sit in my study while I make up!" said Wibley. "There's a lot of details I want to study. I want the thing to be exact! It's not so jolly easy to make a human face look like yours, I can tell you."

Billy Bunter gave him a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"You cheeky idiot!" he roared. "Think you can make your ugly mug look like mine? You'd have to be about a billion times as good-looking as you are before you had a chance of getting anything like it."

"You silly ass, I've got to wash out any good looks I've got, entirely, to make up as you!" hooted Wibley.

"Yah!"

"I want to study your nose specially," went on Wibley. "I'm pretty good at this game, but making one's nose look like a pimple chucked at a face and sticking on anyhow isn't easy! It means careful work."

Billy Bunter glared ferociously at Wibley. Bunter was absolutely unaware that his nose looked like a pimple chucked at a face and sticking on anyhow! He did not believe it now that Wibley told him!

"I won't come!" roared Bunter. "Like your rotten cheek to make up as me—not that you can do it! You can't make up! You can't act! I could act your silly head off! Yah!"

"Are you coming?" snapped Wibley impatiently.

"No, you cheeky beast!"

"You jolly well are!" declared Wibley, and he grabbed Bunter by a fat neck and hooked him off the settee. "You can't be ornamental, but there's no reason why you shouldn't be useful! Come on!"

"Leggo!" roared Bunter.

"This way!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter wriggled and struggled, almost bursting with indignation.

It was, perhaps, rather high-handed of William Wibley. But he did not see why Bunter should not make himself useful for once. As he had said, the fat Owl had no chance in the ornamental line.

"I say, you fellows, make that mad ass leggo!" roared Bunter, as they passed Skinner and Snoop in the Remove passage, on the way to Wibley's study.

"Hallo, who are you?" asked Skinner, staring at Bunter.

"Eh? You know who I am, you chump!" hooted Bunter.

"I mean, is it you, or your double?" asked Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Snoop.

Bunter's double was already a standing joke in the Remove. Used as they were to the fat Ananias, the Remove fellows wondered that even Bunter had had the extraordinary neck to try such a yarn on Quelch! Yet he seemed to have got by with it, so far!

"You silly ass!" howled Bunter. "It's me!"

"Not your double?" grinned Skinner.

"Double-width, at any rate!" chortled Snoop.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, make him leggo!" wailed Bunter, as he was hooked to Wibley's door. "It's me, you silly idiot——"

"How's a fellow to know, when you're so exactly like the chap who got Quelch with the ink?" asked Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no help for Bunter.

He rolled into Wibley's study, leaving Skinner and Snoop chortling.

Wibley slammed the door.

"Now stand by the window, where I can see you!" said Wibley. "Sit down, if you like!"

"Shan't!" roared Bunter.

Wibley picked up the shovel from the fender.

"What did you say?" he asked.

"I—I mean, I—I don't mind sitting by the window for a bit!"

"All right! Don't move till I tell you!"

Billy Bunter cast a longing blink at the door. But Wibley remained between him and the door.

Wibley unpacked a property-box and a make-up box. And Billy Bunter, in a state of indignation that could not have been expressed in words, sat by the window and glared at him with a glare that almost endangered his spectacles.

— — —

BILLY BUNTER'S BIG IDEA!

"O H crikey!" murmured Billy Bunter.

He grinned.

There was no escape for Bunter. He had been impressed into the service of the Greyfriars actor, and he had to go through with it. In the cause of art, Wibley was prepared to use press-gang methods or any other methods.

Bunter did not believe that Wib could make up to look like him. Good looks, obviously, were required, to begin with—and Wib hadn't any! He might work up some sort of a general resemblance with padding and all sorts of weird theatrical gadgets. But he could not make himself into a handsome, distinguished fellow—that was impossible!

But as he watched Wibley, Bunter's fat brain began to work. He had seen Wibley trying on that make-up a few days ago, and certainly he had thought that it was good enough for Quelch, if Wibley would only have agreed to take the part of the fellow with the squirt!

Now, as he watched the schoolboy actor and his reflection in the tall glass, Bunter was thinking—hard.

Thinking was not Bunter's long suit. It was an unaccustomed exercise for his podgy brain! But a Head's flogging hanging over him like the sword of Damocles was enough to spur the fat Owl on to mental efforts.

Wibley had a pier-glass in his study which he had bought with his own cash. Nearly all Wibley's cash went the same way, in theatrical gadgets of some sort or other. He was the best customer at Mr. Lazarus' shop in Courtfield, where second-hand theatrical outfits were sold.

In that tall glass, Wiley was reflected from head to foot. And



"Bunter!" gasped the Remove master. "Stop!" Mr. Quelch grabbed at the fleeing junior, but he was a fraction too late!

Bunter, blinking at the reflection, could hardly believe that it was not his own.

It wasn't—because Bunter was sitting down and the reflection was standing up. But the resemblance was marvellous. It was uncanny.

Wib had provided himself with clothes exactly like Bunter's. He was padded to precisely Bunter's extensive rotundity.

His tallow-coloured hair had disappeared under a wig which was Bunter's mop over again.

But the amazing part was his face. It was a miracle of make-up. How Wibley did it was amazing. But there it was. He seemed to be able to twist his features into any shape required. The make-up was really marvellous. Actors do these things on the stage—but Wibley was the only fellow at Greyfriars who could do them.

Looking into the glass, Billy Bunter saw a face and figure that were absolutely his own. Wibley had, somehow, made himself as good-looking as Bunter.

Wherefore did Billy Bunter grin. Any fellow looking into that study, and not seeing Bunter in the window-seat, would have taken Wibley for Bunter. That was a cert!

Bunter was in want of a double. The Remove fellows knew about this stunt. Quelch, naturally, did not. Suppose Wibley was got out of that study somehow, in his present get-up, where Quelch could see him? That would work the oracle; that would solve the problem. Suppose the new Bunter was seen in one

place, while the old Bunter was seen in another?

Would Quelch, then, have to admit that Bunter had a double?

He would!

That whopping would be off—definitely off. It would be demonstrated, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Billy Bunter actually had a double lurking about the place, just like Smithy last term.

Not only would that whopping be off, but a double was a jolly useful sort of thing to have.

Suppose a pic was missing from the larder and Bunter was seen on the kitchen stairs? Such incidents had more than once led to lickings. But it was all right if a fellow had a double.

Smithy, last term, had landed a lot of things on his double. Bunter could do the same—and his double wouldn't be able to deny it, not having a real existence!

So Bunter grinned, quite happy at the thought.

This seemed good to Bunter.

Wibley was quite unaware of the thoughts passing through Bunter's fat mind. Wib was concentrated on his own game.

He had kept Bunter quite a long time in the study. He did not notice that Wib, at times like these, forgot time and space.

Having finished his task, Wibley surveyed himself in the glass with great satisfaction. He grinned at his reflection. He was Bunter to the life. He had even picked up the fat Owl's fatuous grin.

All that was lacking was the

spectacles. Wibley had a pair of plain-glass spectacles for the play.

Now he adjusted them on his nose. It was the final touch.

He was Bunter's twin!

"Oh crikey!" repeated Bunter. "I say, Wibley, old chap, you're really like me!"

"Of course!" said Wibley. "Come and stand beside me here!"

Bunter rolled off the window-seat and stood beside him. Side by side, they looked into the glass. Really it was difficult to say which was which.

"Can I make up?" said Wibley, with pardonable pride.

"It's a wow!" said Bunter. "It's a real wow, old chap! You're a miracle! If you walked out like that, I believe the fellows would take you for me!"

"Of course they would!" said Wibley.

"Only you wouldn't have the nerve to do it!" said Bunter, shaking his head.

Wibley fell blindly into the trap. "Wouldn't I, you silly ass? I'd walk into Quelch's study like this! I'd walk into the Head's study!"

"I'd like to see you do it!" grinned Bunter. "Bet you you wouldn't have the nerve to go into Quelch's study and make out you were me! Think Quelch would be taken in?"

"I know he would!"

"Well, try it on! I've got lines for Quelch, and I haven't done them!" said Bunter. "I was going to ask him if I could leave them till Saturday. You go and ask him."

Wibley paused.

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He had absolute confidence in his disguise. He had plenty of nerve. But Quelch's eyes were very sharp. They were like gimlets! Wib paused. "I jolly well knew you wouldn't!" jeered Bunter. "You haven't the nerve to let Quelch see you like that. Own up!"

Wibley gave an angry snort.

"I'll go straight down to Quelch now!" he snapped. "You stay here—Quelch won't believe I'm you if you're on view! I suppose even you have sense enough to see that! Stick here, and I'll ask Quelch about your lines, and bring you his answer!"

"I'll believe that when you've done it!" said the astute fat Owl.

"Fathead! Ass! I'll be back in ten minutes!" snorted Wibley.

And William Wibley, quite unconscious of the fact that the wily fat Owl was pulling his leg for his own purposes, threw open the door of the study and stalked out.

Bunter blinked after him from the doorway.

Skinner and Snoop were loafing on the Remove landing. Both of them glanced at Wibley, and grinned.

"Well, which are you now?" asked Skinner. "You or your double?"

Evidently Skinner did not doubt that this was Bunter.

"Oh, really, Skinner—" squeaked Wibley, reproducing Billy Bunter's fat squeak to the very life.

He rolled on with Bunter's roll.

"Look out, Bunter!" called out Snoop, as Wibley went down the Remove staircase. "Coker's on the next landing!"

Billy Bunter, as he heard that, popped back into Wibley's study, grinning.

Bunter knew—which Wibley naturally did not—that a cake was missing from Coker's study in the Fifth!

The previous day, Coker had kicked Bunter because he had found him suspiciously near his study. It was quite likely that he would kick Bunter again when he saw him, if he had missed the cake!

If that was so, William Wibley was welcome to get the benefit of it.

Billy Bunter, grinning, lay low in Wibley's study, quite amused to think of what might happen when his double met Horace Coker of the Fifth.

A SURPRISING BUNTER!

"It was Bunter!" growled Coker of the Fifth.

"I shouldn't wonder!" agreed Potter, of that Form. "But it—"

"I know it was!"

"Did you see him?" asked Greene.

"I saw him yesterday hanging about the study!" snorted Coker. "I jolly well kicked him, too! Now I'm going to kick him again!"

"But suppose it wasn't Bunter?" suggested Potter.

"It was!" said Coker. "Anyhow, a booting never does a Remove fag any harm! They don't get booted enough!"

"But—" said Potter and Greene.

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"It's no good butting at me like a pair of billy-goats!" said Coker. "I know it was Bunter, and I'm going to boot him for it—and if it wasn't, I'm going to boot him all the same, in case it was! Anyhow, I'm going to boot him, and if he's in the Remove studies, I'm going to do it now. And why, here he comes!"

Wibley came down the Remove staircase, which was only a few steps to the study landing.

Coker of the Fifth eyed him with a deadly eye.

"Got him!" he said grimly.

And he strode across to intercept Bunter's double!

"Here, you fat young sweep—" hooted Coker.

Wibley backed away promptly. It was flattering to his self-esteem, as an actor, to be taken for Bunter, as a matter of course. But he did not want Coker at close quarters. Wibley's resemblance to Bunter was wonderful—but it was only superficial! Most of it was likely to come off, if there was a tussle! Wibley had to be wary.

"Oh, really, Coker—" he squeaked.

"Where's my cake?" demanded Coker.

"Eh? What cake?"

"The one you pinched from my study, you grub-raiding young scoundrel!"

"Oh crikey!" ejaculated Wibley. He realised that playing Bunter's part was going to land him with Bunter's sins, so long as he was taken for Bunter. "I—I say, I never—"

Coker made a grab.

Wibley jumped back actively.

Padded as he was, he jumped back with an activity never displayed by Billy Bunter!

"Look here, keep off, you silly Fifth Form ass!" he exclaimed. "I never had your silly cake—blow your silly cake! Go and chop chips!"

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Coker in astonishment. "You're getting jolly cheeky all of a sudden, you fat frog!"

It was really surprising. The previous day, Billy Bunter had fled yelling from Coker's boot. Now he seemed full of beans!

"But I'll give you something to cure all that!" added Coker grimly, and he rushed.

Wibley bounded.

With an activity amazing—in Bunter—he dodged Coker's rush. He dodged to the right—he dodged to the left—and then, suddenly whipping in, he hooked Coker's clumsy leg, and the mighty Horace stumbled over and came down on the landing with a tremendous bump!

"Ooooh!" roared Coker, as he bumped.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Skinner, staring down from the Remove landing.

Snoop simply goggled in astonishment. Billy Bunter had never before been seen putting up deeds of derring-do in this style. It was amazing.

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer. Mauly was taking a rest on the settee on the Remove landing—but he jumped to his feet at that

remarkable sight on the lower landing. "Good old Bunter!"

"Wooogh!" spluttered Coker.

He bounded up.

Wibley was cutting across to the lower staircase.

Horace Coker was after him like a shot.

His fierce grab barely missed, as Wibley twisted out of reach. Another grab would have caught Wibley—and probably dragged off some of his resemblance to Bunter!

But, to Coker's amazement, his grabbing paw was knocked aside, with quite a hefty bang, and Wibley dodged again.

Wibley was nothing like a match for the big Fifth Form man, even if he had not dreaded damage to his disguise. But he was at least twice as nimble as the heavy-footed Horace. He dodged again and again.

"Stop him, will you, you silly chumps?" roared Coker to Potter and Greene.

"Oh, all right!" said Potter.

Wibley was making for the lower staircase again.

Potter cut in and intercepted him.

"Now then, stop!" he said, holding up his hand.

The next moment Potter of the Fifth had a surprise.

Wibley did not stop! With Coker behind him, Wibley was rather desperate now. He charged straight at George Potter, hitting out as he charged.

Potter did not expect that. It happened without Potter expecting it! Two fists landed together on Potter's waistcoat. He gave a gasping gurgle, and went over backwards, crashing on the landing.

"Oh gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer, hardly believing his noble eyes. "Did you men see that? Oh gad!"

"Bunter!" gurgled Skinner. "Bunter's knocked a Fifth Form man down! Oh, my only Aunt Sempronina!"

Wibley bounded for the lower staircase.

Coker, bounding after him, caught his foot in the sprawling Potter.

Wibley went down the stairs three at a time.

Coker went down on Potter. Coker was no lightweight!

There was an agonised howl from George Potter as Horace Coker crashed on him.

"Ow!" howled Potter. "Wow!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Coker. "You silly ass, wharrer you getting in the way for?"

"Gerroff!" shrieked Potter.

"You silly chump!"

Coker scrambled off Potter, picked himself up, and charged on to the stairs. Potter sat up and gasped for breath. Coker charged down the staircase after the fleeing fat junior.

But he had no chance!

Billy Bunter, as a rule, would not have been backed to win a foot-race with a tortoise. But this particular Bunter was putting on tremendous pace!

He jumped from stair to stair—and, at the foot of the staircase, narrowly missed Mr. Preut, the master of the Fifth, who was standing there in conversation with

Hacker, the master of the Shell. Wibley just managed to dodge round Prout.

"Bunter!" boomed Prout wrathfully. "Bunter! Stop at once! How dare you race down the staircase in that disorderly manner, Bunter?"

"Quelch's boys!" said Mr. Hacker, with his sour, sardonic smile.

"I will not allow this! Bunter, I shall report you to your Form-master!" boomed Prout. "Why—what—who—"

A wild trampling on the staircase seemed to indicate that a hippopotamus, or at least a rhinoceros, had got loose in Greyfriars.

Prout gazed up the stairs.

"Coker!" he gasped.

"Oh!" stuttered Coker. He clattered to a halt at the sight of his Form-master.

"Coker! Is this how a Fifth Form senior boy behaves?" boomed Prout. "Am I to understand that you, a Fifth Form boy, have joined in a foolish game of racing about the staircases with a Remove boy? I am ashamed of you, Coker!"

"I—I—" stuttered Coker. "I—I—"

Prout raised a portly hand.

"Take two hundred lines, Coker!" he boomed. "Go to your study immediately and write them out! Not a word! Go!"

"I—I—"

"Go!" boomed Prout.

And Horace Coker, suppressing his feelings with difficulty, went!

He disappeared up the staircase, followed by Prout's baleful eye!

Then Prout cast that baleful eye round for Bunter. But he discerned no fat figure in the offing. William Wibley had disappeared while Prout's attention was taken up by Coker; and he was now tapping at his Form-master's door.

QUITE A SUCCESS!

"BUNTER!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!" squeaked Wibley.

There was a slight tremor in Wibley's heart as he entered his Form-master's study.

Really and truly, great as was Wib's confidence in his disguise, and unlimited as was his faith in his powers to play a part, he would have preferred not to put it to this test.

Quelch was a very keen man. This was the severest test to which Wib could have been put.

And if he was spotted the result was likely to be very painful. Pulling Quelch's majestic leg was an awfully serious matter.

What Quelch would say—and do—if he found out that he was being taken in was awful to think of.

But Wibley was reassured, as his Form-master addressed him. Obviously Mr. Quelch had not the faintest doubt that he was Bunter—did not dream of having any!

"You may come in, Bunter!" said the Remove master. "I intended to send for you this afternoon."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" mumbled Wibley. "I—I came about my lines, sir! If—if I might leave my lines till Saturday, sir—"

"In the circumstances, Bunter, you may leave your lines till Saturday," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Thank you, sir!" squeaked Wibley. And he backed to the door.

Successfully as he had passed this test, he was anxious to get away.

But he was not getting away yet!

Mr. Quelch raised his hand and signed to him to remain where he was.

Wibley's heart sank. In taking up the fat Owl's challenge to present himself in Quelch's study in his Bunter disguise, he had forgotten all about the fact that Bunter was in trouble with his Form-master, owing to that inky episode. He remembered it now!

"You may remain, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch. "I had intended to send for you, as I have said. The headmaster will see you at five o'clock!"

Wibley caught his breath.

"The—the headmaster, sir!" he stammered.

"You may remain in this study till I take you to Dr. Locke!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" gasped Wibley.

"As I told you yesterday, Bunter, that I should do, I have made inquiries on the subject of your extraordinary statement to me!" said Mr. Quelch quietly. "I was unwilling that there should be the remotest risk of injustice. But my inquiries have satisfied me that your statement was untruthful, as I had, indeed, no doubt at the time."

"Oh, sir!" mumbled Wibley.

"The fact that the boy who squirted ink all over me was not, at the moment, wearing glasses, made it, perhaps, barely possible that there was some grain of truth in your statement," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "I have therefore made inquiries. That such a boy could have entered the precincts of the school unobserved was impossible. Inquiries have proved that no such boy was seen."

Wibley said nothing.

He was conscious chiefly of a desire to kick Bunter, hard, for having landed him in this!

"Your statement," went on Mr. Quelch, with intensifying sternness, "was a fabrication from beginning to end. It was, I have no doubt, suggested to your foolish mind by the circumstance that a boy closely resembling Vernon-Smith was at Greyfriars last term. You will now tell me the truth, Bunter." The gimlet eyes gleamed at the schoolboy actor. "Was it you who squirted ink over me at the letter-box yesterday?"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Wibley.

"Do you still deny that you were there?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"I—I wasn't there, sir!" stammered the unfortunate Wibley.

Certainly that was true; Wibley hadn't been there!

"I am amazed," said Mr. Quelch, "that you—even you, Bunter—should persist in this futile prevarication! It will serve you no purpose! I shall take you to your headmaster at five o'clock, and you will receive a flogging:—You may remain in this study, Bunter, until I am to take you to Dr. Locke."

He picked up his pen and resumed work on Form papers.

Wibley blinked at him in utter dismay.

He was going to be taken—as Bunter—to the headmaster! He was going to be flogged—as Bunter—for what Bunter had done the day before! This was a very unexpected and dismaying outcome to his visit to Quelch's study.

There was one way of escape—to own up that he was not Bunter!

But that was not an attractive way! It was likely to make his last state worse than his first.

Certainly, if he owned up that he was not Bunter, he would not be flogged for Bunter's squirting exploit. But it was quite certain that he would be flogged for this trick on his Form-master. Having his leg pulled in this way was likely to exasperate Quelch even more than the ink! Wibley was, in point of fact, making a fool of Quelch—by coming to his study as Bunter! The bare idea of Quelch getting wise to it made Wibley feel a cold chill down his back.

Quelch's pen was scratching. He was taking no further notice of Bunter.

Wibley backed quietly to the door.

Wib objected to a flogging, quite as much as Bunter! He did not want to be flogged, either as Bunter or as William Wibley! He did not want to be flogged at all. The name in which he was flogged was a minor point—it was the idea of the flogging that mattered.

Backing out of the study and cutting off down the passage was the big idea in Wibley's mind.

But though Quelch's eyes were not on him, he looked up once as Wibley made that strategic movement towards the door.

"Where are you going, Bunter?" barked Quelch.

"Oh, nowhere, sir!" gasped Wibley.

"Go and stand by the window!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning.

"Yes, sir!" groaned Wibley.

Dismally he crossed over to the window and stood by it.

Mr. Quelch gave him a grim frown. He suspected that that junior had actually thought of getting out of the study instead of waiting to be taken to the Head! Such a suspicion was more than enough to get Quelch's goat.

"Bunter!" he rapped.

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"If you stir from that spot I shall cane you before taking you to your headmaster!"

Mr. Quelch resumed his Form papers with a knitted brow.

William Wibley stood by the window, his eyes on the clock! It was twenty minutes to five!

Those minutes ticked by rapidly—too rapidly.

Wibley glanced from the window. He was not going to the Head if he could help it! Wibley was getting desperate!

Outside there were a good many fellows in the quad. The football match was over; he could see the Famous Five in a cheery group—no

doubt discussing the match with Hobson & Co. of the Shell. Prout and Hacker were pacing in the quad. Loder and Walker of the Sixth could be seen. There was Vernon-Smith with Tom Redwing. There were Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth. Wibley would have preferred the coast to be clearer.

But that could not be helped!

He looked at the clock again! It was a minute to five!

Wibley breathed hard and deep, and moved closer to the window.

Mr. Quelch also looked at the clock! He laid down his pen and rose to his feet. It was time to get a move on.

That settled it for Wibley. He was not going to the Head!

With a sudden grab at the window he threw up the sash! The next moment he was scrambling headlong out of the window.

"Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Stop!"

He rushed! He grabbed! It was too late!

The fat figure dropped into the quad, escaping the clutching hand by inches.

ON THE RUN!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Johnny Bull. "Look!"

"Bunter!" spluttered Harry Wharton.

The Famous Five, up to that moment, had been interested in Soccer. They had drawn with the Shell. And it was rather a burning question whether, if Smithy had passed instead of keeping the ball, a winning goal might not have been secured.

But Harry Wharton & Co. forgot that question, burning as it was, at the extraordinary sight that suddenly met their gaze.

With Soccer on hand, they had, naturally, quite forgotten the fat and unimportant existence of Billy Bunter. Now they were suddenly reminded of it.

Mr. Quelch's window suddenly banged open! From that window shot a fat figure, and a pair of spectacles flashed in the autumn sunshine.

Bunter—nobody doubted that it was Bunter—shot out of that study window into the quad, stumbled, recovered, and ran!

At the open window behind him appeared the face of Henry Samuel Quelch, with an expression on it that was positively terrifying.

"Bunter!" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

There was a roar in the quad!

Fifty pairs of eyes at least turned on the amazing scene!

Quelch waved a frantic hand from the window.

"Stop that boy!" he roared.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Bunter—"

"The terrific fathead—"

"Stop, you ass!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Wharton! Nugent! Cherry! Stop Bunter at once!" shrieked Mr.

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Quelch. "Bring him back to the House! Bring him to my study! Loder—Walker—stop that boy! Mr. Prout—Hacker—"

Quelch fairly bawled.

The fat figure was cutting off to the gates. Bunter, it seemed, was seeking the open spaces, after his amazing and dramatic escape from his Form-master's study by the window.

Dozens of fellows rushed at him. But most of them had no intention of stopping him.

Loder and Walker, however, as prefects, were bound to do so—and they cut across quickly to stop him.

Loder of the Sixth rushed at him from one side. Walker of the Sixth rushed at him from the other.

The fat figure, between the two, seemed to be booked. Had Bunter rushed on, he would have been pinned between the two.

But the fat junior seemed to have his wits uncommonly about him—for Bunter. He stopped suddenly, just as Loder and Walker rushed in from either side and grabbed.

He backed swiftly.

The result was that the two Sixth-Formers just in front of him grabbed at one another instead of Bunter.

Leaving them grabbing, the fat Removite cut round them, and careered on towards the gates, with a wonderful turn of speed—for Bunter.

"Put it on, Bunter!" yelled the Bounder.

"Stop, you ass!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fat figure charged on.

Quelch, at his study window, waved and almost raved. Mr. Prout got into motion—but Prout was slow and stately as a Spanish galleon, and he hadn't a chance. Mr. Hacker, thin and active, cut after Bunter. But the fat figure was well ahead.

"Stop him!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The mad porpoise—"

"The howling ass—"

"Come back, Bunter!"

"Look out, Bunter—the Acid Drop's just behind!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a wild uproar of voices—some calling to Bunter to stop, some cheering him on. Loud laughter echoed up and down the Greyfriars quad.

Nobody would have dreamed that Billy Bunter had a chance in a sprinting match. But that fat figure was keeping ahead of Hacker.

In front of him was the open gateway. But in that gateway stood the stocky figure of old Gosling, the porter—staring blankly at the fat junior as he came.

"Stop that boy, Gosling!" shouted Hacker.

"My eye!" gasped Gosling, in amazement. "Ere, Master Bunter,

you 'old on! Wot I says is this 'ere—yurrrroooooop!"

The fat junior did not stop.

He could not dodge Gosling.

Gosling was grabbing at him. He crashed into Gosling!

The ancient porter of Greyfriars School gave a gasping, breathless howl, and tumbled over backwards in the gateway.

The fat junior staggered for a moment from the shock. But only for a moment. Then he bounded over the sprawling form of Gosling and dashed out into the road.

"Bunter—"

"Come back, Bunter!"

"Hook it, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



"'Tain't me smoking, sir," gasped Bunter. "It—"

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Quelch, at his study window. "Is the boy insane? Upon my word! Bunter!"

"Mad as a hatter!" gasped Bob Cherry, in the quad. "Must be right off his rocker—fairly off his onion!"

"The madfulness must be terrific!" exclaimed Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"Wharton!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!" Harry Wharton hurried to his Form-master's window.

"Wharton, follow that—that extraordinary boy at once! I fear that Bunter must be out of his senses! Follow him at once, and bring him back to the school. I am very anxious for him!"

"Oh! Certainly, sir!"

Harry Wharton called to his friends, and the whole Co. cut down to the gates. Their impression was the same as Quelch's: unless Billy

Bunter was off his rocker, there was no accounting for his amazing antics.

In the distance, on the Courtfield road, they sighted a fat figure—going strong.

"There he is!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Come on!"

And the Famous Five cut in pursuit of that fat figure.

They left the quad in a roar behind them.

"Stop, Bunter!" yelled Wharton, as he raced ahead of his chums.

But the fleeing junior heeded him not.

Billy Bunter—not generally an important personage—was in all thoughts—his name on every tongue! It was Bunter first, and the rest nowhere. Bunter had the house!

that was not the astute fat Owl's idea at all.

Having succeeded in getting Wib, in his Bunter outfit, to go down to Quelch, Bunter was going to show himself in another spot at the same time.

That was the big idea!

That would be proof, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Billy Bunter had a double—just like Smithy last term.

Members of the Remove Dramatic Society, of course, would guess. But that did not matter—they would not tell Quelch. It was only Quelch that Bunter was worrying about—only Quelch that he wanted to convince that he had a double.

So Bunter's game was to go down two or three minutes after Wibley!

But Coker, on the study landing, kept him bottled up, as it were, in the Remove passage!

Anxiously, impatiently, Bunter waited for Coker to clear.

"Two hundred lines!" Coker was saying to Potter and Greene. "Two hundred lines! Do you hear? Old Prout—"

"Hadn't you better go and do them?" suggested Potter.

"Yes, that's a good idea!" agreed Greene.

"That old ass, Prout!" said Coker, unheeding. "I don't mind the lines so much—but making out that a man—a Fifth Form man—was playing games on the stairs with a Remove fag—the old ass—the old goat!"

Coker of the Fifth was eloquence on that subject. His eloquence seemed inexhaustible—altogether too inexhaustible to Billy Bunter, who was anxious to go down before Wibley left Quelch's study.

If Coker kept him bottled up much longer, the chance would be lost—Wibley would have left Quelch. And it really seemed that Coker was going on talking for ever!

Still, even Horace Coker could not talk for ever! It often seemed to Potter and Greene that he did—but, actually, even Coker left off at last!

Coker, at least—perhaps short of breath—gave a final snort and tramped away into the Fifth Form passage to his study to get going on those lines.

Potter and Greene went downstairs. Bunter, at last, emerged from the Remove passage—hoping that Wibley was still with Quelch, and that there was still time to carry out his deep-laid scheme.

Skinner and Snoop had gone down. But Lord Mauleverer was still on the landing settee; and at sight of Bunter coming out of the Remove passage, his lordship fairly bounded.

Bunter—so far as Manly knew—had passed him once and gone down—with Coker of the Fifth raging after him. Yet here was Bunter!

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Manly.

Bunter gave him a blink in passing and rolled on.

"Is that you, Bunter?" gasped Lord Mauleverer, his noble eyes almost popping from his amazed face at the fat Owl.

"Eh? Yes!"

"Oh gad!"

Billy Bunter rolled on, leaving Lord Mauleverer petrified with astonishment. Manly rubbed his eyes. It seemed to him that they must have deceived him—unless there were two Bunters about!

The fat Owl hurried down the stairs. Some sort of a row was going on in the quadrangle, and Bunter wondered what was up.

He rolled out of the House. Everybody seemed to be in the quad—and there was a roar of voices and echoing sounds of laughter. Something, undoubtedly, was up!

Bunter hoped that Wibley was still with Quelch! If he was, it was still all right! He hadn't come back to the Remove studies, anyhow! Bunter, so far, had no idea of the exciting happenings in Quelch's study.

As he rolled out, he passed Mr. Prout and Mr. Hacker—the latter looking a little breathless.

"Amazing!" Hacker was saying.

"Unprecedented!" said Prout.

"Unparalleled!"

"Only Quelch's boys are capable of such—Goodness gracious me!" Hacker broke off, with a gasp, at the sight of Bunter.

He stared at him. Prout stared at him. A few minutes ago they had seen Bunter scudding out of the school gates at top speed, leaving Gosling for dead, as it were! He could not possibly have got back unseen. That was impossible! Yet here he was—walking out of the House!

"Bless my soul!" said Prout.

"What—what—what—" stuttered Hacker.

Bunter gave them a blink, and rolled on. He rolled over to a group of Remove fellows. He wanted to know what was up.

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked Bunter.

There was a yell—a yell of utter amazement!

Fellows jumped almost clear of the ground at the sound of that fat, familiar voice! Their eyes almost popped from their faces at the sight of that fat, familiar face!

They stared at Bunter. They goggled at him. Had he been the ghost of a fat Owl he could not have startled them more, in the circumstances! A grim, ghastly, grisly spectre could not have caused a greater sensation on the Greyfriars quad—at that moment!

"Bunter!" yelled Skinner.

"Bunter!" gasped Vernon-Smith.

"Bob-bob-bub-Bunter!" stuttered Snoop.

Bunter blinked at them.

"I say, you fellows, what's up?" he asked. "Has anything happened? What—"

"How did you get back?" yelled the Bounder.

"Back?" repeated Bunter blankly.

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—it's my double!" "What!" roared Mr. Quelch.

GETTING BY WITH IT!

"BEAST!" breathed Billy Bunter. Bunter's eyes gleamed with wrath through his big spectacles.

He was peering through those spectacles round the corner of the Remove passage, across the landing.

On the next landing, Coker of the Fifth was visible.

Bunter wanted to go down. But he did not want to pass Coker of the Fifth. Coker had chased the wrong Bunter—and the fat Owl did not want him to get after the right Bunter! The wrong Bunter did not matter—the right Bunter did, a lot!

But there was Coker—a lion in the path. It was fearfully exasperating to the fat Owl.

Wibley had taken it for granted that Bunter was going to remain in his study till he came back. But

"How did you get in?" howled Hazeldene.

"In?" repeated Bunter.

"Tain't five minutes since you butted Gosling over, and cut out of gates!" exclaimed Tom Brown. "How did you get here?"

"Eh? I've just come down from the studies!" said Bunter.

"What?" yelled Vernon-Smith. "Think we didn't see you jump out of Quelch's window, you fat ass?"

Bunter gave a jump.

"Quick-quick-Quelch's window!" he stuttered.

"Yes—and scoot out of gates——"

"How did you get back?"

"Is that you, or your ghost?" exclaimed Squiff. "This is enough to make a fellow think he's seeing things!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He grasped it!

If they fancied they had seen him get out of Quelch's window, of course they had seen Wibley! Why Wibley had done that Bunter did not know—but evidently he had!

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He grinned.

His big idea was, after all, working out, in spite of the unexpected delay caused by Coker! It was working out better than he could have anticipated. Not only had his double been seen, but he had been seen by nearly all the school! There were now innumerable witnesses that Billy Bunter, like Smithy last term, had a double.

"Oh crikey!" repeated the fat Owl. "Did he get out of Quelch's window? What did he do that for?"

"He? You! What do you mean, you fat ass? You——"

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "I say, where is he now?"

"Mad!" gasped Skinner.

Loder of the Sixth strode up. His eyes were popping at Bunter. Loder, like the rest, had seen Bunter scud out of gates! He knew that he was, and must be, still out of gates. Yet here he was!

"Bunter—is that Bunter?" exclaimed Gerald Loder. "I don't understand this. How did you get back into the school, Bunter?"

"I haven't been out!" answered Bunter.

"Wha-at?"

"I've just come down from the studies—I've been up there for hours——"

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"Loder!" Mr. Quelch's voice came from his study window. "Is—is—is that Bunter? Please bring him here at once!"

Bunter was marched across to his Form-master's study window.

From that window, Mr. Quelch gazed at him like a man in a dream! A hundred fellows crowded round the spot, staring at him.

"It's Bunter!"

"Or his ghost!"

"Then how——"

"And who——"

"Great pip!"

"How—who—which——"

There was a buzz of amazed voices. Billy Bunter stood blinking up at his Form-master at the study window.

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Bunter was feeling good. Nothing, so far as Bunter could see, could have happened better! His double had been seen—by his Form-master and a hundred others—and that double was now safe out of the school—and certainly would not be looking anything like Bunter when he came back. This was real pie!

"Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch, at last. "I—I—I fail to understand this! You ran out at the gates——"

"I didn't, sir!" said Bunter cheerfully. "That must have been my double, sir."

"What?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"I've been up in the studies, sir!"

"You were in my study ten minutes ago, Bunter, and you——"

"I wasn't, sir!"

"What?"

"It—it must have been my double, sir! That—that fellow who's just like me, and—and sneaked in yesterday and—and inked you, sir!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

He gazed at Bunter. Bunter had been in his study, he had jumped from the window, he had scudded out of gates, and he was still out! Yet here was Bunter, standing under his eyes!

This Bunter was not the Bunter who had floored Gosling and fled out of gates, with Harry Wharton & Co. after him. It was impossible! The fellow who had fled out of gates was still out of gates. It was not this Bunter! It was another Bunter! It was—it must be—it could only be—the fat junior's double. He had had specs on this time! But he was not Bunter!

That was certain. It was amazing—it was almost unbelievable—yet it was certain! Bunter could not be in two places at once! The junior who had walked out of the House into the quad could not possibly be the junior who, only a few minutes earlier, had fled out of gates at top speed!

"Bless my soul!" repeated Mr. Quelch faintly.

He turned from the window.

Billy Bunter grinned round at a circle of astonished faces.

Bunter had got by with it! Billy Bunter's double was now an established fact—beyond the shadow of a doubt!

NOT BUNTER!

"STOP!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Bunter, you ass—stop!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"You potty porpoise—stop!" bawled Johnny Bull.

The Famous Five were running quite hard up the Courtfield road—after the fat figure that flew ahead. But, amazingly to the Famous Five, that fat figure kept ahead. They gained—but they gained slowly. How Billy Bunter kept his distance like this was quite a mystery.

That it was Bunter they did not think of doubting. It looked like Bunter—and they were not thinking of Wibley and his weird theatrical stunts. Had they thought of Wibley and his character-part as "Grunter of Greyhurst," they would not have supposed that even Wib was ass

enough to walk about the school got up as Bunter.

But they almost wondered whether they were dreaming at the speed the fat fellow put on! Bunter had never been seen to put on such speed. Really, Wibley might have got quite clear had not his padding slowed him down—for the Famous Five were not at their freshest, just after a football match.

But they gained on him, though the pattering footsteps behind caused Wibley to make great exertions.

"Stop, you silly ass!" roared Bob.

As that shout reached the fat junior's ears, he looked round. Then he discerned that his pursuers were Remove fellows.

Probably he had thought that Sixth Form prefects were after him—if he had thought at all. Now he saw that they were Remove fellows—from whom there was nothing to be feared. Once out of sight of the eyes of authority, Wibley was safe—and, to his relief, he saw no one on the road behind him except the juniors.

He slowed down, panting and gasping for breath. Swerving off the road, he ran under the trees that bordered it.

"Stop!" shouted Frank Nugent.

"You terrific fathead, stop!" yelled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

It looked for the moment as if Bunter intended to lead them a chase through the woods by the river. But Wibley was only getting out of the public view.

A dozen yards deep in the wood he came to a halt.

There he leaned on a tree and pumped in breath.

The Famous Five came breathlessly up.

"You fat chump!" gasped Bob.

"You pilfering porpoise!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

Wibley was nearly winded. But he grinned while he gasped.

Even yet the chums of the Remove did not guess that he was not Bunter.

"Oh, really, Cherry——" he squeaked.

"Are you potty?" demanded Bob.

"Oh, no! Are you?" squeaked the fat junior.

"Why, you silly fat ass——"

"I say, you fellows, what did you come after me for?" asked Wibley, still in Bunter's fat squeak.

"Quelch told us to, you chump!" answered Harry Wharton. "He thinks you're off your rocker and want looking after! Are you?"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"He doesn't look potty—not pottier than usual!" said Bob, staring at the fat junior leaning on the tree. "But he must be——"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"What did you jump out of Quelch's window for?" demanded Nugent.

Wibley chuckled.

"He was going to take me to the Head about that inking job!" he explained. "I didn't want to see the big beak."

"You'll have to see him, ass!" said the captain of the Remove. "Whether we take you back or not, I suppose

you're not going to wander about outside the school for the rest of the term?"

"He, he, he!" chuckled Wibley—Bunter's fat cachinnation to the life.

The Famous Five stared at him. They were quite perplexed. Bunter had not, apparently, gone off his fat chump as they had feared. But if he hadn't, his extraordinary antics were still more surprising.

"I'm not going to see the Head—that's all right!" chortled Wibley. "Not now I've got clear! If Loder or Walker had got me—Oh crumbs!"

"You've got to come back!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"I'm coming back all right!" agreed Wibley. "But I'm going to make a few changes first!"

He glanced round. The trees screened him from the road. He put his hand to his head and, to the dumbfounded amazement of the Famous Five, took his hair off!

Their eyes fairly popped at him as he did that!

Then he took his spectacles off. Then, while they gazed at him with popping eyes, he stripped off jacket, waistcoat, and trousers—with the padding packed therein that had made him so plump.

He had his own clothes on underneath.

The Famous Five fairly gaped at this extraordinary transformation scene. They almost wondered if this was some amazing dream.

But it dawned on them when they saw a slim figure in the place of the podgy one.

"Spoofed!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Is—is—is—it—" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Is it that fathead Wibley playing his potty tricks?"

They remembered "Goggly Grunter of Greyhurst." They understood at last.

Wibley grinned at them.

"Got it now?" he asked.

"Wibley!" said Bob Cherry, like a fellow in a dream. "It's not Bunter at all—it's that lunatic Wibley got up—"

"You—you—you went to Quelch as—as—as Bunter, and—and you're Wibley!" stuttered Nugent. "Why, Quelch will skin you if he finds this out!"

"He isn't going to!" said Wibley cheerfully. "That's why I cut out of gates. I shan't look like Bunter when I go back. There's a pond in this wood where I can get a wash. You fellows are going to keep it dark."

The Famous Five gazed at him.

"Think I shall go down all right in the play?" grinned Wibley. "Can I act? Can I make-up? What? Is Goggly Grunter Bunter to the life, or isn't he?"

"Well, if this doesn't take the cake!" said Bob. "If Quelch ever spots this, look out for the biggest licking ever!"

"He won't!" said Wibley cheerfully. "Not now I'm clear!"

"Of all the mad asses—" said Harry.

"Of all the terrific lunatics—" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I shall have to make a bundle of these things and sneak them back into the school somehow," said Wibley. "Now I want a wash! I—"

"Where's Bunter all this time?" asked Harry.

"I left him in my study! Blessed if I know whether he's still there. You fellows had better get back! You can tell Quelch you never caught Bunter! You needn't tell him you caught Wibley! Ha, ha!"

Wibley chuckled! He was quite amused now that the danger was over.

"But Quelch thinks it was Bunter!" exclaimed Nugent.

"He won't when he finds that Bunter was up in the studies," grinned Wibley. "Bunter's all right! I'll tell you what Quelch will think—Bunter's been spinning him a yarn about a double, and Quelch will think that he's seen Bunter's double! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob.

"I don't care—so long as he doesn't think it was me!" chuckled Wibley. "The old bean would get his hair off! What?"

"You potty ass—"

"You blithering idiot—"

"You terrific chump—"

"Bow-wow!" said Wibley. He bundled together his Bunter outfit and strolled away to the pond to get the wash he needed.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked back to the school.

They arrived there to find one topic on every tongue—Billy Bunter's double!

Bunter was, as Wibley had said, all right! Everybody knew that it was not Bunter who had jumped from Quelch's window and fled out of gates. It was Bunter's double! Who that double was, and how he had got into Greyfriars, and why, was a mystery—a mystery that the Famous Five could have elucidated. But they were very careful to keep their own counsel.

WHICH?

MR. QUELCH started.

His eyes fixed on the fattest member of his Form with a deadly glint.

It was the following day, after class. The October afternoon was fine and warm, and the Remove master was taking a walk on the towpath by the Sark.

Plenty of Greyfriars fellows were out of gates, in the fine weather. Among them, evidently, was Billy Bunter.

Quelch was thinking of Bunter as he paced on the towpath between the river and the woods of Popper Court. He was worried about Bunter. He was perturbed about Bunter! He was in a state of perplexity!

Bunter had not been, after all, sent up to the Head! How could he be, when it had been proved that he had a double to whose account his sins could be laid?

Quelch had not believed in that double! But he had seen him! He had not believed that, even if Bunter had a double, the fellow would butt into Greyfriars! But he had seen him in Greyfriars!

Having seen him with his own exceedingly sharp eyes, how could Quelch doubt? Yet he did doubt!

Certainly he never thought of Wibley. He never dreamed that a schoolboy actor had been made up as Bunter! Wibley, the previous day, had walked back to Greyfriars—in his own proper person—without attracting a glance. No such suspicion occurred to Quelch! But, though the matter seemed to have been proved, a lingering doubt remained.

It worried Quelch! He had a vague feeling that he had, somehow, been made a fool of, though how, he could not tell. It was an uncomfortable and irritating feeling.

Now, suddenly, he saw the fat junior who was in his thoughts.

Billy Bunter was seated on a log on the edge of the wood by the towpath, smoking a cigarette! And Quelch's gimlet eyes glinted at him.

Smoking, of course, was strictly forbidden at Greyfriars. A junior caught with a cigarette in his mouth was booked for six of the best.

Not only was Bunter smoking! He had a packet of cigarettes on his fat knee! He was well provided with smokes!

Not that Bunter, ass as he was, was ass enough to spend money on cigarettes. Bunter's money, when he had any, went direct to the tuckshop. That establishment drew Bunter's cash like a magnet.

Bunter had found those cigarettes!

He had found them in Herbert Vernon-Smith's study!

They had not been lost, but they had been found!

Bunter would rather have found jam-tarts, or cream-puffs, or toffee. But all was grist that came to his mill! Bunter rather fancied himself as a rorty sort of bad hat who would smoke cigarettes when he could get them for nothing—not otherwise.

So there was Bunter—smoking the Bunder's smokes, and trying hard to imagine that he was enjoying the same. Half a mile from the school, he did not expect to be spotted by a beak. Two burnt stumps, and several burnt matches, lay round him as he smoked his third smoke.

Quelch paused, at a little distance, and looked at him.

It was Bunter!

At that distance from the school, of course, Bunter's double, if he had one, might have been hanging about. But Quelch, in spite of convincing proof, did not wholly believe in that double. Still, the thought occurred to him that this might not be Bunter, but the fellow, so exactly like him, who had interviewed him in his study on Wednesday afternoon. If there were, indeed, two Bunters, exactly alike, it was not easy to say which was which. Which Bunter was this?

At the bottom of his heart, Quelch did not believe that there were two

of them! Yet he had to admit convincing proof. It was quite a perplexing and distressing position for any Form-master to be in.

"Oh crikey!" came a sudden ejaculation from the fat smoker, as his eyes fell on the Remove master.

He jumped up from the log. The box of cigarettes tumbled from his fat knee, and Smithy's smokes scattered on the ground, unregarded.

Mr. Quelch strode forward. His gimlet eyes glittered at the dismayed fat Owl. He had no doubt now.

"Bunter!" he thundered.

"Oh lor!" gasped Bunter.

"You are smoking!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! No!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I wasn't! I—I—I—I—I mean—" Bunter remembered that he had a double. He had calculated that a double might be frightfully useful to a fellow when he was caught out. He was caught out now. "I—I—I mean, it—it ain't me, sir."

"What?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Tain't me, sir—it—it's my double!" gasped Bunter.

Bunter was taken by surprise by the sudden apparition of his Form-master in that unexpected spot! He was rather confused. Otherwise, probably even the fat Owl would not have put it quite like that.

"It—it—it is not you!" repeated Mr. Quelch, almost dazedly. "Upon my word! Bunter, I shall cane you severely—"

"I—I—I mean—" Bunter tried to collect his fat wits. If he ever was going to make use of his double, now, evidently, was the time. He realised that he had put it rather unfortunately. "I—I mean, sir, I—I ain't Bunter! That's what I really meant to say, sir!"

"You are not Bunter!" howled Mr. Quelch.

"No! I—I don't know the chap! Never heard of him, sir! I don't even know the name!" gasped Bunter.

"Bless my soul!"

"I—I'm not Bunter at all, sir!" said the fat Owl, gathering courage. "I—I don't know who you are, sir! Who—who are you?"

"Who am I?" articulated Mr. Quelch. "Bunter, is it possible—is it barely possible—that you are so incredibly stupid as to imagine that you can deceive me like this?"

"Yes, sir. I—I mean, I—I ain't Bunter! I never was, sir! My—my name's Thompson!" gasped Bunter.

"Upon my word!"

Mr. Quelch gazed at Bunter.

Bunter blinked at Mr. Quelch.

After all, he was half a mile from the school! Quelch jolly well knew that he had a double! So why shouldn't Quelch believe that this was the double? Bunter saw no reason why he shouldn't!

"Bunter! I shall take you back to the school immediately!" said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice. "I shall cane you for smoking, and I shall cane you still more severely for your absurd attempt at prevarication and deception! Come with me at once, Bunter!"

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"Oh, really, sir! I—I ain't Bunter at all—you see, sir, I'm his double!" gasped the fat Owl.

"Come!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

He grabbed the fat junior by the shoulder. He jerked him along the towpath, in the direction of the school.

"Oh crikey!" gasped the hapless fat Owl.

Bunter had hoped to make Quelch believe that he was that double. But if Quelch walked him back to the school, it was clear, even to Bunter, that there was no possibility of that.

He had to get away from Quelch.

Then, if only he had the luck to get back to the school before Quelch did, there was a chance yet!

Bunter was desperate. It was neck or nothing!

As the Remove master walked him along the towpath, he gave a sudden jerk, and got his fat shoulder loose! He made one wild bound into the wood!

"Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

Bunter vanished in the wood.

"Bunter!"

Echo answered "Bunter." But there was no other answer.

Mr. Quelch stood staring into the wood that had swallowed the fat junior from sight. He gasped with wrath. Quelch was rather too elderly, and too dignified to hunt an elusive junior dodging among trees and underwoods. Bunter was gone!

Mr. Quelch breathed hard and he breathed deep. Then, with long strides, he started down the towpath to return to the school. Bunter, he had no doubt, was heading for Greyfriars. But the towpath was a shorter way than cutting through the wood to the Courtfield road. Mr. Quelch would be back at Greyfriars before Bunter. He would be ready for Bunter when he got in! And his stoutest cane would be ready, too!

QUICK WORK!

SMITHY!

Herbert Vernon - Smith stared round.

Smithy was on his bike, riding at a leisurely pace towards Courtfield, when a fat and breathless figure tumbled out of the wood by the road.

Billy Bunter waved and howled frantically to the Bounder.

In sheer surprise, Vernon-Smith jumped down.

"What on earth's the matter?" he exclaimed. "Mad bull after you, or what?"

"Worse than that!" gasped Bunter.

"I say, lend me your bike, old chap!"

"What?" howled the Bounder.

"Lend me your bike!"

"I'll watch it!"

"I say, Quelch is after me!"

Bunter grabbed the Bounder's arm, with a grubby fat hand. "I say, I've got to get back to the school quick! See? I say, he caught me smoking on the towpath—"

"You blithering ass!"

"They weren't your cigarettes, old chap!"

"What?"

"I never got them in your study!"

I haven't been in your study, old fellow. I never saw any smokes there, and never touched them!"

"You fat scoundrel!"

"Oh, really, Smithy! I say, do help a fellow out of an awful scrape!" gasped Bunter. "If I get back quick it's all right!"

"You howling ass, how is it all right?" demanded the Bounder. "If Quelch saw you smoking, it doesn't matter if you dodge him back to the school—he's got you all right, you fathead!"

"I'm going to make him think it was my double!" gasped Bunter.

"What?" yelled the Bounder.

"You see, if I'm in the school when he gets in, he'll know it wasn't me on the towpath, see?"

"He'll know it wasn't—when it was?" gasped Smithy.

"I mean, he'll think it wasn't! See? I say, let me have your bike! You'd like to pull Quelch's leg, old chap!" said Bunter persuasively. "You like pulling a beak's leg! If I get in first, I can say it was my double he saw on the towpath—you see that?"

"Where's Quelch now?"

"On the towpath! I shall get in first, on a bike, easy! I say, Smithy, old chap, be a sport!" wailed Bunter.

The Bounder laughed. It was true that pulling a beak's leg appealed to him. And if there was a chance of getting the hapless fat Owl out of his scrape, Smithy was willing to help.

He whirled his machine round in the road.

"Get on behind," he said. "You can stand on the foot-rests, and I'll give you a lift! Hold on to my shoulders! Don't drag me over, fathead! Don't choke me, blitherer! Keep steady, dunderhead!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Steady, ass!"

Vernon-Smith sped back down the road on his bike, with Bunter standing on the foot-rests, clutching his shoulders.

He put on speed. Bunter hung on for dear life.

The bike fairly whizzed.

It was hardly two or three minutes before the Bounder stopped again at the corner of the school wall, a good distance from the gates.

"Get down!" he snapped.

Bump!

"Wow!"

Bunter sat on the county of Kent. That was his way of getting down! He sat and spluttered.

"You clumsy ass!" gasped the Bounder.

"Ow! Beast!"

"Get up, you fat chump!"

"Wooh! Beast!" gurgled Bunter.

"Are you going to sit there till Quelch comes in?" asked the Bounder sarcastically.

Bunter scrambled up.

The Bounder had stopped where a narrow lane ran from the road, bordering the old Greyfriars Cloisters.

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

"I say, why didn't you keep on to the gates, you fathead?" he gasped. "I've got to get on, you idiot!"

"Do you want to let Gosling see

you roll in, ass? I'll give you a bunk over the Cloister wall!" said Smithy.

"Oh, good! Buck up!"

It was not easy to bunk Bunter over the Cloister wall. Any other Remove fellow could have clambered over that wall easily enough. But William George Bunter had more weight to lift than other Remove fellows.

He scrambled and clambered, and the Bounder bunked and heaved and shoved, and the fat Owl had his podgy chest over the wall at last.

"Now roll in, you potty porpoise!" said Vernon-Smith. "And look here, I'll give you a tip! Get to Quelch's study!"

"What?"

"Be waiting there for him when he comes in, so that he will know you got in first! Ask him something about Latin verbs."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"Good luck!" grinned Smithy. And leaving Bunter scrambling over the wall, he went back to his machine, mounted, and rode away for Court-field.

Billy Bunter dropped breathlessly on the inner side of the Cloister wall. He was out of breath—but he did not linger.

The Bounder's advice, he realised, was good.

Quelch had half a mile to walk back by the towpath. It was a much longer way by the road. But the bike had done it almost in a twinkling. Bunter was in well ahead of Quelch.

If he was in the Remove master's study when Quelch came in, what was Quelch going to think? He knew nothing of that fortunate lift on the Bounder's jigger. He would find Bunter waiting for him when he got in. Could there be a more conclusive proof that that fellow on the towpath was Bunter's double? It looked good to Bunter!

He fairly scudded into the House. He rolled into Masters' Passage.

Mr. Prout was standing there, at Hacker's doorway, talking to the master of the Shell in the study. He glanced at Bunter as he passed.

Bunter rolled on to Quelch's study. He tapped at the door—for Prout's benefit! It was not Bunter's game to know that his Form-master had gone out!

He rolled into Quelch's study.

That study was vacant.

Billy Bunter dropped into a chair by the window, to rest his weary fat limbs and to keep an eye open for Quelch. From that window there was a view of the school gates, though Billy Bunter's vision was hardly equal to the distance.

But in a few minutes he spotted a tall, angular form, and knew that Quelch was coming in.

Mr. Quelch, with long strides, crossed to the House and disappeared from Bunter's view.

A few moments later, there were steps in the passage.

Mr. Quelch came into his study.

Not expecting to see anyone there, he did not, for the moment, notice the fat junior in the chair by the window. He crossed to the bell by

the fireplace, with the intention of ringing for the House page, and giving him instructions to send Bunter to the study, immediately Bunter returned to the school.

Bunter rose from the chair, blinking at him.

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

Mr. Quelch jumped and spun round towards him.

Billy Bunter's fat voice was a startling sound to him at that moment. Even if Bunter had headed straight back to the school, Quelch did not expect him to have covered half the distance yet.

Quelch's gimlet eyes seemed to bulge from his face as he looked at the fat figure by his study window.

"Bunter!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I've been waiting for you, sir! I—I hope you d-d-don't mind my waiting in your study, sir, as—as I wanted to ask you something about the—the ablative absolute, sir!"

— — —

SIX EACH!

MR. QUELCH stood looking at Bunter.

There he was!

Quelch had left him half a mile away. Quelch, a quick walker, had covered that distance in quick time. Yet here was Bunter—waiting for him in his study when he got in!

Mr. Quelch did not speak. He just gazed at Bunter. Really, he did not seem quite able to believe his eyes, sharp as gimlets as they were.

Bunter's fat heart was palpitating. It was a risky game, pulling Quelch's leg. But he was landed in it now. A whopping was a certainty, if Quelch believed that he was the fellow on the towpath with the cigarettes. And he could see that Quelch was doubtful now.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch at last. "Bunter! How long have you been in this study?"

"About a quarter of an hour, sir," said Bunter.

Bunter had been in the study about four minutes. But the trammels of truth had never been a worry to Billy Bunter.

Mr. Quelch drew a deep, deep breath. His gimlet eyes almost bored into Billy Bunter's fat face.

He was certain that it was Bunter whom he had seen on the towpath. Yet Bunter was here. He could not have walked, or run, the distance in the time. For a moment, Quelch was baffled. Then a possible solution flashed into his mind.

A bicycle! He had seen no bike. But Bunter's bike might have been at hand in the wood. That was it!

"Bunter! Have you been out on your bicycle this afternoon?" asked Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice.

"Oh, no, sir! My bike won't go, now the chain's broken!" answered Bunter. "I can't get it mended, either!"

Mr. Quelch was baffled again.

He stood regarding the fat junior in silence. Was it possible, after all, that that fellow on the towpath had been Bunter's double? What had happened in that very study the previous day proved, or seemed to prove, that the fat junior had a double.

"Why were you waiting for me here, Bunter?" asked the Remove master at last.

"I—I wanted to ask you about—the ablative absolute, sir," said Bunter. He could see that he was getting by with it again, and he was encouraged. "You know, we had it in Form this morning, sir, and—and I—I can't make that bit out about—about Teucer— If—if I might ask you, sir—"

"You may ask, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, breathing hard.

Really, Quelch did not know what to think. Obviously, there was a doubt. Bunter had to have the benefit of it!

"That—that verse you gave us, sir—Teucer duce, et—something or other—what's its name!" said Bunter lucidly.

"Teucer duce, et auspice Teucro," said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir—that's it!"

Mr. Quelch set his lips.

"Very well, Bunter. You may sit at my table, and I will explain it to you," he said.

"Oh, thank you, sir!" gasped Bunter.

Billy Bunter was not in the least interested in Teucer, and as for the ablative absolute, he loathed it. But even the ablative absolute was better than a whopping!

Bunter sat at Mr. Quelch's table.

Quelch, in a sorely puzzled and perplexed frame of mind, gave him some patient instruction on the subject of the ablative absolute—which went in at one fat ear and out at the other!

Bunter, really, was not there to acquire knowledge of Latin grammar. He was there to get out of a whopping. However, as he could not possibly explain that to Quelch, he gave as much attention as he could to the ablative absolute.

He was glad, however, when Quelch dismissed him.

He left a worried and puzzled Form-master in the study. But it was a jubilant fat Owl that rolled away down the passage.

The fat Owl was grinning all over his fat face as he rolled into his study—Study No. 7 in the Remove—where Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were sitting down to tea.

"I say. Toddy—he, he, he!"

(Continued on next page.)

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chuckled Bunter. "I say, what do you think—he, he, he!"

The joke was, Bunter considered, much too good to keep to himself. Likewise, Bunter liked to let fellows know how frightfully clever he was! Few fellows, Bunter thought, could have saved such a situation in such a masterly manner.

Peter Todd always made out that he had all the brains in that study. What would Toddy say to this? If this was not brainy, Bunter did not know what it was!

"He, he, he! I say, Toddy—he, he, he!" chortled Bunter.

"Take that alarm clock out of the study!" said Peter.

"Eh? I haven't got an alarm clock!" said Bunter, blinking at him.

"Wharrer you mean, Toddy?"

"Oh! My mistake! It sounded like one!"

"Oh, really, Toddy! But I say—he, he, he—I say, old Quelch was fairly flummoxed! He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

Peter Todd stared at him.

Bunter, evidently, was fearfully pleased with himself. He seemed to think that he was in possession of the joke of the term! He was breathless with merriment.

"What the dickens——" asked Peter.

"It's a scream!" gurgled Bunter. "You can't pull Quelch's leg, Peter! Can I? He, he, he!"

"You've been pulling Quelch's leg?" asked Peter, mystified.

"What do you think? I say, he copped me on the towpath smoking Smithy's cigarettes, Peter. He, he, he!"

"Is that the record you put on when you've had six?" asked Peter, staring. "It's not your usual one!"

"He, he, he! I haven't had six! I ain't going to have six!" chuckled the happy fat Owl. "I've made him believe it was my double!"

"Your whatter?" yelled Peter.

"My double!" gasped Bunter. He almost wept with mirth. "You see, Smithy gave me a lift on his bike and I got back to school first—he, he, he!—and I was waiting for Quelch in his study when he came in—he, he, he!—so he thinks it was my double he saw on the towpath—he, he, he!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And I haven't got a double, except Wibley when he's got up in his theatrical rot!" gurgled Bunter. "But Quelch thinks—he, he, he!—and he said—he, he, he!"

"Quelch said he, he, he?" ejaculated Peter.

"Eh! No! I said that! I say, though, ain't it funny?" gasped Bunter. "I say, Toddy, I'm jolly well going to work that double for all it's worth!"

"Are you?" said Peter Todd. He rose from the table and went to the cupboard—for something that was kept there!

"Yes, rather! I say, I've got Quelch fairly fooled, you know. You couldn't do it, Peter! Leave it to me to stuff a beak! I've got the brains

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in this study, Toddy! He, he, he! I say, Peter, what are you looking for?"

"A cricket stump!" answered Peter.

"What do you want it for?"

"You!"

"Eh?"

Peter Todd found the cricket stump. With the cricket stump in his right hand he grabbed Bunter's collar with his left.

There was a roar from Bunter.

"I say! Leggo! What do you think you're up to?" roared the fat Owl, wriggling in Peter's grasp.

"Didn't you say that you hadn't had six from Quelch?" demanded Peter.

"Eh? Yes!"

"Well, then, here they are!" said Peter. "You're going to have six for smoking—that's six for yourself—and six more for your double—six each, see?"

"Why, you beast!" roared Bunter. "Leggo! Think you're a prefect, you cheeky beast? Leggo my neck! Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter plumped over the armchair! He roared and wriggled thereon, while Peter got busy with the cricket stump.

Bunter was not a credit to that study. Peter's idea was to make him as creditable as possible with the assistance of the cricket stump. He was willing to wear out that stump in the good cause.

Whop, whop, whop!

"Ow! Wow! Ow!" roared Bunter.

Whop, whop, whop!

"Oh, you beast! Yaroooh! Leggo!"

"That's six for smoking!" said Peter. "We don't smoke in this study! You can leave Smithy's cigarettes for Smithy! And now——"

"Leggo!" raved Bunter. He roared and wriggled in the armchair as Peter's bony but sinewy hand pinned him down by the back of his fat neck.

Whop, whop, whop!

"Yaroooooop!"

Whop, whop, whop!

"Oh crikey! Wow! I say, Peter—wow! Leggo, you beast! Oh crumbs! Ow!"

"That's double-six!" said Peter cheerfully. "Six for you, and six for your double! See?"

"Yow—ow—ow!" roared Bunter. "Beast!"

"Now you've had six each!" said Peter, putting the cricket stump back in the cupboard. "If I hear anything more about your double, old fat man, I'll give you six each again! Now, stand steady——"

"Beast!"

"And I'll see if I can land you across the passage with one kick! Steady!"

Bunter did not stand steady! He made one bound out of Study No. 7 into the Remove passage.

Billy Bunter had rolled into that study grinning from ear to ear. He was not grinning as he departed. There were drawbacks, after all, to having a double, when Billy Bunter and his double got six each!

NOT LIKELY!

"BETTER chuck it!" said Harry Wharton

"Don't be an ass!" said Wibley irritably.

"But——" argued Bob Cherry.

"Have you fellows come here to jaw, or to rehearse?" asked Wibley.

"Look here!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Dry up!"

"Quelch——" said Frank Nugent.

"Never mind Quelch!"

They were in Wibley's study on Saturday afternoon. There was going to be a rehearsal in the Remove box-room of that great play "Grunter of Greyhurst." Wibley was making up in his study all ready.

It was only a rehearsal, not even a dress rehearsal—and the other members of the cast were prepared to go through it in a rather casual manner. Wharton, who was going to be a schoolmaster in the play, was content to put on an old mortar-board for the rehearsal. Not so Wibley!

Other fellows were more or less keen, but did not want to take a lot of trouble. Indeed, some of them were thinking more of a pick-up game that was to follow the rehearsal than of the rehearsal itself.

But Wib took these matters seriously. It was no trouble to Wib to dress and make up for his part—it was a pleasure! He enjoyed it! So, although all other members of the cast were in their proper persons, Wibley was made up as Goggly Grunter—the life-like reproduction of Billy Bunter of the Remove.

The Famous Five were arguing with Wibley. They might as well have addressed their arguments to a wall of solid brick!

In theatrical matters Wibley was deaf to argument. He did not merely turn a deaf ear, he turned two deaf ears—both stone deaf!

"Do have a little sense, Wib!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "After what's happened, that part will have to be cut."

"If you must talk rot," said Wibley, "try not to talk such awful rot! Isn't there a limit?"

"If Quelch sees you in that outfit," said Harry, "he will tumble to the truth at once about that fat chump's double. He's only got to spot you made up as Bunter to know that it was you in his study on Wednesday. What do you think will happen then?"

"Quelch won't spot me in it! Quelch doesn't come to see our plays," answered Wibley. "We're giving it in the Rag—he doesn't butt into the Rag. Have you fellows all got your script?"

"He might butt in——" said Bob.

"I hope you've been learning up your parts! I want you word-perfect for the final rehearsal next week."

"Will you talk sense?" roared Johnny Bull. "Even if Quelch doesn't see you in that outfit, he will hear about it after the play's been given! Quelch is as keen as a razor! He will tumble——"

"He can tumble all over the shop,



Billy Bunter clutched Vernon-Smith's shoulders and hung on for dear life, as the Bounder put on speed.

if he likes!" said Wibley. "I'm not bothering about Quelch! Are you fellows ready?"

"Cut the part——" said Harry.

"Idiot!"

"Or let's do another play——" said Nugent.

"Fathead!"

"Now, look here, Wib——" said all the Famous Five together.

They were really alarmed for Wibley.

So far the Remove master, puzzled and dubious as he was, had not the remotest suspicion of the real identity of that mysterious double of Billy Bunter's. And, in such a case, ignorance was bliss; and it was folly to put Quelch wise!

The prudent thing was to cut the part of Goggly Grunter of Greyhurst out of the play. That would leave the mystery of Bunter's double where it was—an unsolved mystery, which would be forgotten in time.

That was only prudent! But William Wibley had absolutely no use for prudence. The bare suggestion of cutting the part of Goggly Grunter made him snort!

It would be like "Hamlet" with the Prince of Denmark left out! It would be simply gutting the play! There would be only the trimmings, as it were, left!

The play was written by Wibley, round Wibley's part. It was Wibley first, and everybody else nowhere. With Wibley's part cut, the whole thing fell to pieces! A mere skeleton would remain. And Wibley had put a lot of concentrated thought into

that part. That part was a real shriek! It was going to bring down the house! There were going to be roars of laughter—roars of applause! William Wibley would almost as soon have cut off his head, as cut out his part.

It was no use reasoning with Wibley!

Wibley was an actor, with an artistic temperament; and, therefore, beyond the powers of reasoning.

Shakespeare has remarked that "the play's the thing." On that point at least William Wibley agreed with William Shakespeare. Nothing else mattered.

He did not even listen to the expostulations of the Famous Five! They could say "Look here" till they were tired—Wib refused to look there!

"Ready?" he asked.

"It will mean trouble with Quelch!" said Harry.

"Yes—ready?"

"I tell you——"

"Let's get up to the box-room," said Wibley. "You're wasting a lot of time."

"My esteemed and idiotic Wibley, you——"

"Come on!" said Wibley.

And he walked out of the study, to head for the Remove box-room at the upper end of the passage, where the rehearsal was to take place.

In the Remove quarters it did not matter much if Wibley was seen in his Goggly Grunter outfit; all the Remove knew about it by that time.

But as Wibley walked out, he came

to a sudden dead stop in the Remove passage.

Coming up that passage, from the stairs, was an angular figure in gown and mortar-board!

"Oh!" gasped Wibley.

It was too late for retreat!

A pair of gimlet eyes were on him. Mr. Quelch was about to stop at the door of Study No. 7—Bunter's study. Apparently, he had come up for Bunter. But seeing Bunter, as he supposed, in the passage, naturally he did not bother about entering Bunter's study. He came on.

"Oh gum!" breathed Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five, following Wibley out, saw Quelch coming up the passage.

They stood still.

Bunter himself, fortunately, was not in sight!

Where the fat Owl was just then, the juniors did not know; but he was not, at all events, in the Remove passage, which was a stroke of luck.

Quelch evidently took Goggly Grunter for Bunter, without thinking of a doubt.

Harry Wharton & Co. could only hope that Wibley would be able to carry it off.

"Bunter!" called out Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Wibley.

"You have not brought me your lines, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch severely.

"My—my lines, sir!" stammered Wibley.

"Your lines!" said Mr. Quelch. "I allowed you, Bunter, till Saturday to

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hand me your lines! They have not been handed to me. I am here to inquire, Bunter, why you have not brought your lines to my study."

"Oh! I—I—I—"

"Have you written your lines, Bunter?"

"I—I—no, sir!" gasped Wibley.

Whether Bunter had written those lines or not Wibley did not know. But he knew that he hadn't; and the chances were that Bunter hadn't!

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Very well, Bunter!" he said grimly. "I will give you one hour to complete your lines and bring them to my study. If they are not handed in to me in exactly one hour, Bunter, I shall cane you."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Wibley.

"I will not allow this dilatoriness—this idleness—this laziness, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Let those lines reach me in exactly one hour from now, or the consequences will be very serious for you."

"Oh! Certainly, sir!"

And Mr. Quelch turned and walked back to the Remove staircase, and—to the relief of the juniors—disappeared.

"Oh crikey!" murmured Wibley.

"That's a tip, you ass!" said Bob Cherry. "Go back into your study and get that outfit off—and don't ever put it on again!"

"Talk sense!" said Wibley.

"You howling ass—"

"I said talk sense!"

"For goodness' sake, Wib, don't be such a goat!" urged Harry Wharton.

"You've just had a fearfully narrow escape—"

"A miss is as good as a mile!"

"If Quelch—"

"Blow Quelch!"

"Will you cut that part, you dummy?"

"Not likely! Come on!"

Wibley started up the passage towards the box-room stair.

Harry Wharton & Co followed him. Evidently, Wibley was not going to do the sensible thing! It was not likely!

A DOUBLE IN TROUBLE!

MR. QUELCH almost fell down the Remove staircase!

Having crossed the Remove landing and arrived at the few steps that led down to the big study landing, Quelch suddenly became aware of a junior coming up.

There was nothing unusual, of course, in a junior coming up to the Remove studies. But in this case it was amazing! For that junior was William George Bunter, the fat Owl of the Remove!

Mr. Quelch blinked at him.

A minute ago, or less, he had left Bunter behind him in the Remove passage. And here was Bunter in front of him—coming up from downstairs.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch in his amazement. "Bunter! Is—is that you, Bunter?"

Bunter blinked at him.

He wondered whether Quelch was wandering in his mind. It was rather extraordinary for a Form-master to ask a fellow whether a fellow was himself!

"Eh? Oh! Yes, sir!" stammered Bunter.

"You are Bunter?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. He grabbed the fat Owl by the shoulder and stared, or rather glared, at him.

Bunter jumped.

"Oh! Yes! Leggo!" he gasped. "I—I say— Oh crikey!" Bunter was getting rather alarmed.

"Remain here!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"I—I'm going to my study, sir—"

"If you stir from this landing till I return, Bunter, I shall cane you!"

"Oh crikey!"

Mr. Quelch turned back and shot into the Remove passage again.

This—the fellow on the landing—was Bunter! It was, evidently, the other Bunter in that passage—the double.

Even yet, Quelch did not quite believe in that double—yet once more he had seen him with his own eyes! This time he was going to see that that fellow, whoever he was, did not escape!

An arrow from a bow had nothing on Quelch as he shot up the Remove passage after that double.

At the farther end of the passage a group of juniors were about to go up the box-room stair. The Famous Five, Peter Todd, and Herbert Vernon-Smith were there—and the fat junior who was the twin of Billy Bunter!

"Wharton!" Quelch almost roared, as he hurried up the passage.

All the juniors looked round in alarm. They had supposed that they were done with Quelch, as he had left them and gone to the staircase. It seemed that they weren't!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob. "What's up? What—"

"Seize that boy, Wharton!" roared Mr. Quelch. "Hold him till I reach you! Do not let him escape! It is not Bunter—it is some impostor! Seize him at once and hold him!"

"Oh crumbs!"

William Wibley stared along the passage at the rapidly advancing figure of his Form-master.

Quelch was coming back—and Quelch knew that he was not Bunter!

For a second Wibley was petrified. Then he made a bound for the box-room stair!

It was the only way of flight open to him, with Quelch in the passage.

Wibley bounded up that narrow stair.

"Wharton! Will you seize that boy?" roared Mr. Quelch. He was coming on fast, but he was still at a little distance.

Harry Wharton obediently made a grab at Wibley as he fled—missing the grab!

Wibley shot up to the box-room.

Mr. Quelch arrived panting.

"Why did you not seize that boy, as I directed you, Wharton?" he thundered.

"I—I—" stammered the captain of the Remove. "I—"

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"Is—is—is anything wrong, sir?" gasped Bob Cherry.

The juniors could all guess what was wrong! There was only one reason why Quelch should have shot back in that manner, after Wibley—he must have seen Bunter somewhere. It was dismaying.

"That boy is not Bunter!" rapped Mr. Quelch. "Bunter is on the landing! I have just spoken to him."

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

"The boy here is some impostor—some young rascal who is in this school without permission—undoubtedly the boy who came to my study on Wednesday and escaped by the window!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Do—do—do you think so, sir?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

"I have no doubt whatever of it! He must be secured at once, and punished for his trickery! However, he cannot escape now!" Mr. Quelch set foot on the box-room stair, to ascend after the fleeing impostor. "See that he does not escape, all of you, if he should elude me and run down this stair—"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"But—but are you sure he—he—he's not Bunter, sir?" stammered Peter Todd.

"Bunter is on the landing, Todd! There is no doubt about it! The boy, whoever he is, has deceived you all, as well as me."

"Has—has he?" gasped the Bounder.

Mr. Quelch rustled up the box-room stair.

Harry Wharton & Co. were left at the foot of that stair, looking at one another in utter dismay.

"That mad ass!" breathed Bob.

"Quelch will get him!" muttered Johnny Bull. "The potty chump—he's asked for it! By gum, Quelch will take his skin off when he finds out that he's Wib!"

"He keeps on asking for it!" said the Bounder. "If he had a spot of sense he would chuck up this Bunter game, after—"

"He hasn't!"

"Hark!" exclaimed Nugent.

There was a sound of a slamming door above, and the juniors caught the click of a key. The next moment there was a sound of a fist hammering on a door.

"Oh gad!" whispered the Bounder. "The ass has locked himself in the box-room."

Thump, thump, thump!

"Great pip! What's going to happen now?" groaned Bob.

"Something to Wib!" grinned the Bounder.

Harry Wharton & Co. followed on, up the box-room stair. There was a small landing at the top. On that landing stood Quelch, outside a shut door on which he was thumping. His face was expressive.

Thump, thump!

"Unlock this door at once!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "I know you are there, you young rascal! Will you unlock this door immediately?"

There was no answer from the box-room.

William Wibley had had time to dodge into the box-room and lock the

door. He was not likely to open it again, with his Form-master outside.

Only that locked door stood between the schoolboy actor and the most tremendous whopping that was ever whopped.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "The young rascal has had the audacity—the effrontery—to lock himself in this box-room! It is amazing to me how he obtained admission to the House at all! Do you know how he came to be in the House, Wharton?"

"I—I—I suppose he—he walked in, sir!" stammered Harry.

"Do not be stupid, Wharton! Where did you first see him? You were with him when I saw him, and supposed that he was Bunter—"

"He—he—he was in a—a Remove study, sir—"

"Extraordinary! I cannot fathom his motive for coming here—unless, indeed, he has some dishonest purpose! Has anything been missed from the studies, Wharton?"

"Oh, my hat! I—I mean no, sir! Not that I've heard of!"

"Boy!" Quelch thumped on the door again. "Will you admit me instantly to that room? How dare you lock me out of a room in this building? I command you to unlock this door and admit me instantly!"

Quelch's commands fell on deaf ears!

But there was a sound from within the box-room. It was the sound of a window creaking as it opened.

Mr. Quelch gave a start as he heard it.

"Upon my word! Wharton, do you know whether it is possible to descend from this box-room window?" he exclaimed.

The Bounder, behind Mr. Quelch, winked.

Smithy could have answered that question easily, as he had descended from that box-room window a good many times, after lights out!

"I—I—I think so, sir!" stammered Harry. "I—I suppose a fellow could get out on the leads and climb down, sir."

Mr. Quelch breathed hard.

"Then he is escaping! He must not escape! He must be made to give an account of himself—it may be necessary to hand him over to the police! Wharton, remain here, and see that he does not escape this way, while I go—"

Mr. Quelch thundered down the box-room stair.

"Oh, my only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Vernon-Smith stooped to the keyhole of the box-room door as soon as Quelch had disappeared.

"Wibley!" he breathed through the keyhole. "Quick! He's gone! Come out this way, you mad chump—quick—and get back to your study!"

There was no answer.

"Wibley, you potty freak, do you hear me?" hissed the Bounder. "There's a chance for you now—Quelch is gone round to watch under the window! Quick!"

But there was still no answer.

The Bounder put his eye to the keyhole, and looked through. He

saw an open window within. Wibley was gone—by that window!

"Is he there?" gasped Bob.

"No! He's gone!"

"Oh crumbs! The game's up now!"

"The upfulness is terrific!"

"I say, you fellows." Billy Bunter blinked up the box-room stair. "I say, what's up? Quelch has just rushed past me like a maniac, and gone bolting downstairs. I say, what's up?"

"Your number!" answered Bob Cherry.

"Eh?"

"Quelch is after your jolly old double, old fat man, and your number's up if he gets him!" said Bob. "If you have tears, prepare to shed them when Quelch finds out that you've been spoofing him!"

"Oh crikey!"

Harry Wharton & Co. descended to the Remove passage.

The rehearsal in the box-room that afternoon was off—very much off! William Wibley, in his character of Goggly Grunter, was putting up an entirely unrehearsed performance, and they could only wonder how it would end.

A HAIRSBREADTH ESCAPE!

MR. HACKER smiled—a sardonic smile.

"Quelch's boys!" he murmured satirically.

Hacker had no very high opinion of Quelch's boys. The Remove, on their side, had no very high opinion of the Acid Drop. But really, what Hacker now beheld was a flagrant infraction of the rules.

Greyfriars fellows were not allowed to clamber about roofs and rainpipes like monkeys. Besides being against the rules, it was rather a risky proceeding. And there was a Remove junior, right in front of Hacker's eyes, doing that very thing.

Mr. Hacker was taking a little stroll round about that afternoon. That was how he came to spot that unexpected sight. From a high window that looked over the kitchen gardens, a fat figure emerged—and dropped to the leads below.

It was a Remove fellow.

Hacker, of course, knew him at a

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glance. He was well acquainted with Billy Bunter, of Quelch's Form.

Billy Bunter was about the last fellow at Greyfriars who might have been expected to put up Tarzan stunts like this. He was not built or planned for climbing! But there he was—clambering out of a high window, rolling across the leads, and making for a rain-pipe that led down to the ground. An active fellow was required to swarm down that rain-pipe!

The one and only genuine William George Bunter would never have dreamed of it. But the fellow who looked exactly like him, and whom Hacker supposed to be Bunter, was going to do it.

Wibley had not delayed in the box-room! His one idea was to get away—and once safe on the ground, he was all right! It would be easy to dodge into the gardener's shed and, unseen and unnoticed, get rid of his Bunter outfit there. All was plain sailing—if he was not intercepted!

He clambered down the rain-pipe, hand below hand. He had not, for the moment, noticed Hacker, at a little distance, staring at him.

Mr. Hacker strode towards the spot. Then Wibley, looking down to see how far he had yet to go, became aware of him.

"Oh crumbs!" breathed Wibley.

He ceased to descend. He hung on the rain-pipe, and blinked down at Hacker, over the property spectacles that slanted on his nose.

Hacker looked up at him sardonically.

"You may come down, Bunter!" he said, in his sarcastic tones. "I shall take you immediately to your Form-master! Descend at once!"

Wibley did not descend at once. He did not descend at all. He hung where he was, just out of Hacker's

reach, and stared down at the master of the Shell in utter dismay.

"Will you descend, Bunter?" rapped Mr. Hacker. "I am waiting for you!"

The hapless Wibley did not answer. It was not lines for climbing out of an upper window that worried him. If he was taken to Quelch, the game was up! Hacker did not know that Quelch was after Bunter's double. But Quelch was—and if Wibley was taken to Quelch, immediate discovery would follow. And the thought of what would happen when Quelch discovered that Billy Bunter's double was a fellow in his own Form, named William Wibley, made Wibley feel a cold chill run down his back!

Hacker stood below, watching him—rather like a cat watching a mouse! If the young rascal did not choose to descend, it made no difference—he could not hang there for ever! He had to come down sooner or later, and as soon as he came, Hacker had him!

Wibley could have groaned.

He was as well aware as Hacker that he could not hang on there for ever. Already his arms were aching under the strain. He doubted whether he could have climbed up that pipe again; but if he could have, it was useless to climb back to the box-room, with Quelch outside the door.

Wibley glared down at the Acid Drop. Desperate diseases, as Shakespeare has remarked, require desperate remedies—and Wibley was wondering whether he had a chance, if he dropped on Hacker's head, and floored him.

"You had better come down, I think, Bunter!" said Mr. Hacker. "I shall certainly wait here till you do so!"

Wibley calculated the distance. He had almost made up his mind,

when there was a hurried patter of footsteps.

An angular figure came round a corner of the building, at a run!

"Oh scissors!" moaned Wibley. "Quelch!"

Quelch, he had supposed, was still at the box-room door! Evidently, however, he wasn't—for here he was! He had come round to intercept the fat Owl's double in his flight!

Mr. Hacker glanced round at him with a sour smile.

"One of your boys, Quelch!" he said. "It was my intention to take Bunter to you—but as you are here—"

Quelch came up, gasping for breath. He had put on unusual speed!

"That is not Bunter, Hacker!" he gasped.

"Eh?"

"It is the impudent boy who was here on Wednesday—you may remember that he ran out of gates and was not seen again—this is the boy!"

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Hacker, staring up at Wibley on the rain-pipe. "That boy—"

"That boy!" panted Mr. Quelch. "I am glad, Hacker, that you were on the spot—that you have intercepted him. Otherwise, he might have escaped again! Boy! Come down at once!"

"The boy is remarkably like Bunter, Mr. Quelch!" said the master of the Shell. "You are sure that it is not Bunter?"

"I have just left Bunter on the Remove landing! This is the impostor—the miserable trickster—but he shall not escape this time!"

"But who—" ejaculated Mr. Hacker.

"I have no idea, Hacker; but once he is in our hands, he shall be made to give an account of himself! Quite possibly he may be known to the police—perhaps an old offender! Boy, will you descend at once?"

Both masters stood below Wibley, staring up at him, ready to clutch him as soon as he descended.

Wibley blinked down at them. He had not much choice about descending—his arms were fairly cracking under the strain, and he could not hold on much longer.

"Come!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Descend!" barked Mr. Hacker.

Wibley descended—suddenly! He had not quite made up his mind what he was going to do! But it was made up for him, as it were—as the strain on his arms caused him suddenly to lose his hold.

He shot down like a plummet.

"Oh!" roared Mr. Hacker, as a boot clumped on his chin.

He went backwards as if that boot had been a cannon-shot!

"Oooogh!" gasped Mr. Quelch, as a lashing elbow landed on his majestic nose, and he spun over.

Wibley crashed.

Three figures sprawled on the earth. Quelch, clapping his nose. Hacker clapping his chin, sat up dizzily.

Wibley bounded up.

He was almost winded, but, winded

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or not, he dared not linger. He bounded to his feet, and shot away.

"Stop him!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" gurgled Mr. Hacker. "My chin! Ow! Goodness gracious—wow!"

Quelch leaped up. Hacker staggered to his feet, still clasping his chin.

Quelch, heedless of a pain in his nose, shot after the fugitive. His long legs covered the ground fast.

Wibley darted round the corner.

Quelch, fairly leaping after him, clutched at him as he went! His clutch closed on the fugitive's hair! He dragged him back!

Or, rather, it was his intention to drag him back! But there was a sudden and unexpected parting.

Quelch, having hold of the fat junior's hair, naturally supposed that he had him! But he hadn't!

The hair came off in his hand!

Mr. Quelch staggered back! The fat junior vanished round the corner, leaving his hair in his Form-master's keeping!

Wibley had, of course, his own hair on, under the wig he wore in imitation of Billy Bunter's mop. It was rather fortunate for him that Quelch's clutching hand had fastened on the wig! He tore on, leaving the wig to Quelch!

Quelch tottered! He leaned on the wall, gasping! Never had a Form-master been so utterly dumbfounded! He gazed at the wig in his hand—he goggled at it—he almost gibbered at it.

"What"—Hacker came limping up, still holding his chin—"what in the name of goodness, Quelch, what is that?"

"It's his—his—his—" Mr. Quelch babbled. "His—his—his hair!"

"His—his hair!" gasped Hacker.

"It—it—it came off!"

"A—a—a wig!" gasped Hacker.

"Upon my word! A—a—a wig!"

"Bless my soul!"

They rushed round the corner. But they had lost too much time! Bunter's double had vanished. All that remained of him was his wig—in Quelch's hand!

THE FAT IN THE FIRE!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Scoot!"

"But I say—"

"Bunk!"

"Shan't!" roared Billy Bunter. "Look here, I jolly well object to this, see? Got that? I object to it!"

Billy Bunter was annoyed. He was wrathful. He was indignant. It was, in Billy Bunter's opinion, altogether too thick!

Bunter stood in the doorway of the Rag, his little round eyes gleaming indignation through his big round spectacles.

In the Rag were the Remove Dramatic Society. And they had no use for Bunter. So they urged him to scoot and to bunk.

Bunter declined either to scoot or bunk.

It was several days since Wibley's

hairsbreadth escape. During those days, every member of the R.D.S. had argued with Wibley, urging him, almost beseeching him, to cut Goggly Grunter out of the play.

After that narrow escape, it might have been supposed that even Wibley would listen to reason on the subject. But reasoning, bestowed on William Wibley, was a sheer waste.

Wibley was carrying on—and the R.D.S. gave it up at last—only hoping that Quelch would never learn anything about Goggly Grunter—and thus be enlightened on the subject of Billy Bunter's double.

If Wibley would not listen to the expostulations of the R.D.S., he was hardly likely to heed Bunter! Billy Bunter's objections to that caricature of himself passed by Wibley like the idle wind which he regarded not.

It was a dress rehearsal this time, taking place in the Rag, where later on the performance was to be given of "Grunter of Greyhurst."

Props had been brought down to the Rag, where the making-up and dressing were to be done. Everybody was busy, getting ready. Bunter was superfluous.

"Do you hear?" roared Bunter. "I object!"

"Go and object somewhere else, for goodness' sake!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Beast!"

"Better lock the door!" suggested Peter Todd. "We don't want anybody to walk in and see Wibley in that rig!"

"By gum! No!" agreed Harry Wharton. "Get out, Bunter—we want the door locked!"

"Shan't!" roared Bunter. "I tell you I object! I jolly well won't have Wibley guying me like that! See?"

There were, perhaps, some grounds for Bunter's indignation. No fellow could have liked being picked out as designed by Nature to be a real shriek. Bunter was quite unaware of being a real shriek, or any kind of a shriek at all!

To be put on the stage as something at which fellows would, as a matter of course, howl with laughter, was no compliment.

Wibley, heedless of Bunter, was getting into his Goggly Grunter outfit.

Bunter watched that process with intensifying indignation.

Bunter had to admit that Goggly Grunter was himself over again. But that only made it all the more exasperating. Bunter objected to being guyed in this very disrespectful manner.

"Buzz off, old fat man!" said Wharton soothingly. "Roll away like a good barrel!"

"I tell you I object!" hooted Bunter. "If Wibley wants to guy somebody, he can guy one of you fellows. You're a lot of freaks, anyhow! Am I?"

"Oh crikey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here, get that door shut!" said Vernon-Smith; and he pushed the door.

Billy Bunter faded out of the doorway as the door closed on him.

Smithy turned the key in the lock. It was not likely, of course, that Quelch would wander into the Rag during the dress rehearsal. Still, in the peculiar circumstances, it was impossible to be too careful.

"Beasts!" came a howl through the keyhole.

"Buzz off!" snapped the Bounder.

"Shan't! Beasts! I say—"

"Give me that inkpot! I'll chuck the ink through the keyhole—"

There was a sound of retreating footsteps in the passage outside. Billy Bunter did not wait for the ink to come through the keyhole!

In the Rag, the Remove Dramatic Society got on with it. Bunter and his objections were dismissed from mind. Wibley, indeed, had not even heard his objections. Wibley, standing before a glass near the window, was giving the final touches to his make-up as Goggly Grunter; and, thus occupied, Wibley was not likely to heed indignant squeaks from an angry fat Owl.

Billy Bunter rolled away in great wrath.

He rolled out into the quad and arrived at the window of the Rag. The Remove Dramatic Society supposed that Bunter and his objections were done with. That was an error. They were not done with!

There was a long, broad window-sill to that big window.

The Owl of the Remove clambered on the sill. He glared in through his big spectacles.

Nobody for the moment heeded him. All within were busy.

The fat Owl tapped on the pane.

"I say, you fellows—" he roared.

Then the Remove Dramatic Society looked round—except Wibley.

Wibley, his eyes on his reflection in the glass, giving final artistic touches that made him Bunter to the life, was blind and deaf to everything else. Wibley, at such moments, was lost to the world.

"Buzz off, you fat frog!" roared Bob Cherry, pausing with a stick of grease-paint in his hand, and glaring at the fat figure on the sill outside.

"Yah! Beast!" roared Bunter.

"Chuck it! I tell you I'm not having it, see? If you think you're going to guy me in your silly play, you're jolly well mistaken, see? You jolly well ain't!"

"Buzz off, bluebottle!"

"Yah!" roared Bunter.

"That howling ass will bring half the school here at this rate!" exclaimed the Bounder. "I'll jolly well shift him!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith ran to the window and threw it open. He reached out at Bunter.

Bump!

"Yaroooooh!" came a terrific roar as the Owl of the Remove sat on the earth under the window.

"Now buzz off, you fat foozler!" snapped Smithy.

"Wow! Ow! Beast!"

"Bunter! You should not climb on the window-sills! Vernon-Smith, you should not push Bunter off in that rough manner!" snapped a sharp voice.

"Oh!" gasped Smithy.

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Mr. Quelch was walking in the quad after class. Naturally his attention had been drawn by the sight of the fat Owl clambering on the window-sill of the Rag. He was striding to the spot, when Smithy opened the window and pushed the fat junior off the sill.

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Bunter, sprawling at his Form-master's feet. "Vernon-Smith! You—"

Mr. Quelch, looking in at the open window, broke off suddenly. His eyes popped at a figure standing before a glass, dabbing grease-paint. He stood staring in at that figure.

"Oh!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bob Cherry.

All eyes—except one pair—turned in horror on Mr. Quelch's face at the window.

Only Wibley did not look round. Wib was still blind and deaf to his surroundings.

Quelch's gimlet eyes fixed on Goggly Grunter. They almost bored into Bunter's double.

In the midst of a dead and deadly silence, Mr. Quelch glanced round the interior of the Rag. He beheld the whole Remove Dramatic Society in various stages of make-up. Then his glinting gaze returned to Goggly Grunter. And Quelch, at length, understood!

This fellow—Bunter's double—who was making up before the glass, was obviously no unknown intruder who had unaccountably butted into Greyfriars. Quelch got it at last!

The mystery of Billy Bunter's double was a mystery no longer!

It was an awful silence. But it did not last long. Quelch's voice broke it—in tones like the filing of a particularly rusty saw.

"Who is that? It is a boy of my Form! I cannot recognise him in that disguise! Wharton, who is that?"

Wharton stood dumb with dismay. He had warned Wibley, again and again, that it might happen. Now it had happened!

"Boy!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

Even Wibley looked round at that. He jumped.

"Oh!" he gasped, at the sight of Mr. Quelch's speaking countenance framed in the window.

A stick of grease-paint dropped from his nerveless hand. He goggled at Quelch. Quelch glared at him. For a long, awful moment, they goggled and glared at one another.

"Who are you?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Wibley, sir!" gasped the hapless Wib.

"Wibley! Oh, yes, I remember now! I might have guessed—Wibley, how dare you? It was you—you—you—I understand now! You have dared to play such pranks on your Form-master! Upon my word! Last week—Wibley, do you dare to deny that it was you?"

Wibley didn't. He stood dumb.

"Bunter!"

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

The fat Owl had scrambled up. He stood blinking on in dismay.

"Bunter! It was this boy—this—"

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this Wibley! This is the boy that you pretended—"

"Oh crikey!"

"You have deceived me, Bunter—or rather, you have attempted to deceive me! This is the boy—Wibley of my Form—"

"Oh scissors! Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "N-n-not at all, sir! I—I never knew Wibley was—was making up as me, sir—I never knew anything about it! Besides, I told him I objected, sir. All the fellows heard me. Not that I knew anything about it, sir. This—this is the first I've heard of it!"

"Bunter, go to my study!"

"Oh lor'!"

"Wibley, take off that ridiculous disguise! As soon as you have done so, go to my study!"

"Oh crikey!"

Quelch swept away from the window like a thunderstorm.

The Remove Dramatic Society

looked at one another with sickly looks.

"You idiot, Wib!" said Bob Cherry at last. "The fat's in the fire now!"

"You chump!"

"You fathead!"

"You've done it now!"

"I suppose," remarked the Bounder, "that this rehearsal is off?" It was!

The rehearsal was off. So was the play. "Grunter of Greyhurst!" was a thing of the past!

Billy Bunter and William Wibley were both personally conducted to their headmaster by Mr. Quelch. The interview was a painful one. It lingered in their memories for days and days afterwards.

After which even Wibley was ready to wash out Goggly Grunter. It was a painful memory both to Billy Bunter and Billy Bunter's double!

THE END.



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.

SPECIAL NOTICE!

TO make quite sure that every reader gets his copy of the MAGNET regularly each week, you can do one thing to help.

Wood pulp, from which paper is made, comes from overseas. Ships bringing it may be sunk, or available cargo space may be needed first for more urgent things, such as food. In order to avoid any wastage of paper, we have had to tell newsagents to order only the exact number of MAGNETS that they want from us every week, and no more. If more are ordered than are actually required they will remain unsold, and will be a dead loss to the newsagent.

So, if you haven't already given a regular order for the MAGNET, will you please do so at once? Your newsagent will deliver it, or keep a copy for you each week. By giving an order you will make quite sure of your MAGNET, and will greatly help your newsagent. There is an order form which you can use immediately on page 23 of this issue. ORDER YOUR MAGNET TO-DAY.

Having got that over, I'd like to give you another word of warning, chums. Never put off until to-morrow what you can do to-day. Make a point right now of securing a copy of the "HOLIDAY ANNUAL." You will absolutely revel in the budget of ripping school yarns to be found in the latest volume, now on sale. This jolly book, guaranteed to delight the hearts of boys and girls of all ages, contains splendid tales of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, and Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, etc., etc.

There are other interesting features, too. Get your "Holiday Annual" while the going's good! There's going to be a record sale for the "HOLIDAY ANNUAL" this year. Don't say you haven't been warned.

Heard the great news about the Greyfriars yarns in the "Gem" chums? A ripping series is just starting. Treat yourself to our companion paper and read: "The Study-Jumpers!"—it's a winner!

"Ted" Sloan, of Barnstaple, and numerous other readers, who have been asking for another yarn featuring Billy Bunter, the Greyfriars ventriloquist, will have their wish gratified next week in:

"THE BOUNDER'S DUPE!"

By Frank Richards.

Vernon-Smith is on vengeance bent, and in order to get even with Mr. Quelch and Wingate, he enlists the aid of the Remove ventriloquist. Take it from me, chums, you're booked for a real good treat next Saturday. You'll enjoy the "Greyfriars Herald," too, with its snappy contributions written by the Greyfriars boys themselves.

To those of you who have shifted away from your home districts, I advise you here and now to call on the nearest newsagent and hand him the form (which appears on page 23 of this issue) duly signed. You'll feel like kicking yourself if you fail to get your copy of the MAGNET regularly.

My space has come to an end, so here's wishing all you "Magnetites" all you wish yourselves.

YOUR EDITOR.

The GREYFRIARS HERALD

(Continued from page 2).

H. J. C.—A hamper has arrived for you. Please come home, and we will never be cheeky again.—POTTER and GREENE.

NOTICE.—Under the Companies Act, notice is hereby given of the **COMPULSORY LIQUIDATION** of the Fish Moneylending Co. upon the strong request of Mr. H. S. Quelch. Owing to the temporary absence of Mr. Fish, who has gone to the Head's study on matters connected with the business, all guys having accounts with the company are advised to hand them to Mr. H. Wharton, or to put them on the fire, or to stuff them down Mr. Fish's neck at the first opportunity. Sure!

Chocklit Eklairs wanted in any number for Starving Savviges. Also Donuts. Please give jennerosly to W. G. B., Studdy 7, who will forward them to the proper 1.

SIR GUY DE GREYFRIARS!

BY TOM BROWN

'Twas in the age of chivalry, when knights were bold. At the Round Table, Good King Wen—Arthur, I mean—and his gallant knights feasted merrily. Ginger-pop flowed like water. Doughnuts vanished by the score, especially when Sir Galahad started. He had spent that morning killing dragons, and there's nothing like dragon-killing to give a fellow an appetite.

So Sir Galahad said, but young Sir Guy de Greyfriars scoffed at him.

"Dragons!" he snorted. "Rats! Anyone can kill a dragon! I prefer giants. When it comes to killing giants, I'll show you a thing or two."

"Why, thou saucy young malapert," gasped

Sir Galahad, "thou hast never killed so much as an earwig in thy life! Beshrew me, thou'rt but fifteen years old, and would'st do a bunk at the very sight of a giant."

"Sayest thou?" returned the youngster, with spirit. "All right! Show me a giant, and see what I'll do!"

As if in answer to these audacious words, the doors of Camelot opened, and a fair young maiden came in, weeping. She threw herself at King Arthur's feet.

"Grammercy, sire, I am undone!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the King. "Is there any way in which we can do you up again?"

"I need a brave knight to fight a fearsome giant, your worship. I come from the far country of Fryardale, and we are terrified by the fierce armour-clad giant named

Hocus de Pocus. He lives in a grim castle, and always wears black armour. And, alas, he has seized my poor uncle, a peasant named William de Goslynge, and heaved him into the lowest dungeon 'neath the moat. What I says is this here, sire, I am sore distressed!"

"Ha!" cried Sir Galahad, in triumph. "Here is thy chance, you young perkin! Go forth and kill this giant, and we'll come and watch you do it! Won't we, boys?"

"You bet!" chuckled Sir Lancelot. Young Sir Guy changed colour. He had never even seen a giant, much less killed one. But he wasn't going to climb down in front of the scoffing knights.

"It's O.K. by me," he said stoutly. "Lead the way, miss! I'll soon obliterate your old giant for you!"

The whole party thereupon caught the first train, changing at Courtfield Junction. When they came in sight of the castle, Sir Guy felt a sinking feeling below the breastplate. But he marched boldly forward, to the ironical cheers of the knights.

"Is Mr. Hocus de Pocus at home?" he asked of the ugly looking churl who opened the postern gate.

"Yus, he's at home, but yer can't see 'im, 'cos he's having his bath!"

"Out of my way, knave!" said Sir



Guy, jabbing with his dagger. "I may as well kill him in his bath as anywhere else!" With this he marched boldly upstairs.

Turning the corner, he saw the giant just ahead of him, and his blood turned to ice. The giant was about fifteen feet high, clad in thick armour all over. He strode towards the bath-room and opened the door.

With trembling feet, Sir Guy crept after him and peered through the keyhole.

At the sight that met his eyes he let out a squeal of amazement. For a door in the giant's armour had opened, and a puny little man, about four foot six, emerged. He had a sandy moustache, shifty eyes, and muscles the size of a pimple.

"What's all this?" thundered Sir Guy, who felt very bold all of a

sudden, striding into the bath-room. "Beshrew me, villain, where is Hocus de Pocus?"

The little man, who was wearing a bath-robe, spun round in fright.

"If you pip-please, I'm Hocus de Pocus!" he gasped. "At least, I mean, my real name's Blenkinsop. There's the giant!" He pointed to the suit of armour. "You see, I was born poor and no one would give me any land or cattle, so I saved up and bought this giant and then helped myself. Nobody knows I ain't fifteen feet high, except you. Oh, sir, spare me!" And he wrung his hands until they were dry.

Sir Guy was nonplussed. On the one hand, he was jolly glad the giant had boiled himself down to this shrimp Blenkinsop. On the other, he could imagine the roars of laughter of Sir Arthur's knights when they heard the news. His brain worked furiously.

"Here, you—scat!" he snapped, turning to Blenkinsop. "And if you ever come here again, or say a word about this, I'll pull you to pieces—see?"

Then he turned to the suit of armour, lowered the visor, shut the door in the thing's tummy, and began to fight it tooth and nail.

Far and wide rang the clamour of the battle. Faces turned pale. The knights outside held their breath in wonder. All eyes were turned to the great staircase, down which rolled the giant, with Sir Guy battling furiously.

Watched by a sea of eyes, the youngster threw the giant to the floor and began to slosh him with a mace. The knights cheered wildly. They hoped the intrepid youngster would win through. The giant seemed rather limp. Perhaps he was stunned!

Yes—he was definitely knocked out!

Sir Guy, breathing hard with his exertions, hammered him out flat with the mace, and then threw him into the moat.

"There you are, miss!" he panted, wiping his brow. "He gave me a pretty stiff fight, gadzooks; but he won't trouble you again."

It was a great triumph. The knights seized the youngster and chaired him round the castle. King Arthur publicly embraced him, and gave him the castle as a present. A cheap sort of present, but it was the fashion in those days. And never after did Sir Galahad and the rest scoff at a young knight of fifteen.

Sir Guy called the castle Greyfriars, and that's how it got its name. As for William de Goslynge, he was brought out of the dungeon and installed at the castle as porter.

And behold he is there even unto this day!

BOB CHERRY Discovers that CRIME NEVER PAYS!

Hallo; hallo; hallo! Well, I'm still ferreting out the secrets of the Greyfriars Underworld, and this week I'm hot on the trail of a desperate Pork Pie Pincher.

I first got my nose to the trail by the astonishing appearance of the school cook, who seemed to be wearing a wig. She has nice brown hair as a rule, but now it is light grey, verging on white. I asked her why the wig?

"Ah, Master Cherry, this ain't no wig! Would that it were!" wailed the cook. "My 'air 'as been drove grey by theft. Not a pie nor a cake can I put in that there larder, but what it takes unto itself wings as soon as a body's back is turned and flies away."

I whipped out my notebook and asked for particulars.

"And 'appy I am to give 'em, sir," said the cook. "Take yestiddy morning, f'rinstance. I made a steak-and-kidney pie. It was a luscious pie, though I says it as shouldn't. I left it on that there table as is before your eyes. Master Bunter 'ad come down and told me the 'ouse was on fire, and being, I don't deny, a little worried by the noos, I dashed upstairs. When I come down, the pie was gorn!"

"Have you any idea of the criminal?"

"Well," admitted the cook, "I did see Master Coker with a pie, but he said he bought it at the school shop. Last night I made a pork pie—a beauty. A peach of a pie, Master Cherry, and I left it in the larder while I went upstairs about the earthquake."

"Earthquake?"

"Yes, Master Bunter said there 'ad been an earthquake and the building was on the point o' collapse. 'Owver, he was mistook, bless 'is kind 'eart, and when I got back, the cupboard was bare!"

"Ha! And did Coker have a pork pie last night?"

"Master Cherry," said the cook, lowering her voice, "he must 'ave 'id it, because it wasn't seen."

I pondered a moment.

"Have you ever made a mustard tart?" I asked. "It's like a custard tart, but the first letter's different. You mix the mustard with a little milk and cover it with grated nutmeg. I believe it's good for pie pinchers. Why not try it?"

"Master Cherry," said the cook, "I will."

And she did!

Beware, Coker! Crime never pays! Wait till you sink your fangs in that tart, my lad! That'll teach you!

P.S.—Coker hasn't eaten it yet. The only casualty to-day has been Bunter, who was taken with a kind of fit. I saw him rolling downstairs, gurgling, sneezing, and foaming at the mouth. Perhaps he was bitten by a mad dog or something. Anyway, he doesn't matter. Wait till Coker eats the mustard tart!

DICK PENFOLD Says

CHEER UP, CHAPS!

Life is mostly froth and bubble,

Smile, boys, smile!

Don't be overcast by trouble.

Smile, boys, smile!

Why let trouble start you whining?

Why start grumbling and repining?

It is not worth while.

Your clouds will have a silver lining,

Somewhere still the sun is shining,

Smile, boys, smile!

(AUTHOR'S NOTE. I had just finished the first stanza of this poem when I had to go to Quelch's study about some lines I should have done, but hadn't. Life somehow looked different when I came back. I can't make it out. Anyway, let's get on with it.)

Life is grim and unforgiving,

Groan, boys, groan!

Life is simply not worth living,

Groan, boys, groan!

Every fellow should be tearful

At a life so fierce and fearful,

Let a man alone!

Where's the chump who's always

cheerful?

I'll soon give the ass an earful!

Groan, boys, groan!

SHORTS from the COURTS

Prisoner at the Box-room Sessions:

"Oh, really, your worship, I am expecting a postal order to-morrow!"

The Judge: "It is very rare to impose a life sentence, but I shall send you to prison till it comes."

Utter collapse of prisoner.

The Judge (to a witness, named Dabney): "Can you say anything except 'Oh, rather'?"

Witness: "Oh, rather!"

The Judge: "Tell me, would you like a thick ear?"

Witness did not reply.

A witness named Wingate: "The prisoner Coker came to me and demanded to be put in his proper place."

Counsel: "What did you do?"

Witness: "I communicated with the Home for Idiots, but it was full up." (Laughter.)

A prisoner named Desmond: "Sure, yer worship, he's the kind o' spalpeen that pats a fellow on the back before his face and then hits him in the eye behind his back!" (Loud laughter.)

H. VERNON-SMITH on

BLUNDELL'S BLUNDER!

George Blundell is a good fellow, but he occasionally gets a little "too big for his boots." The first Form match of the footer season, Fifth versus Sixth, was an example of this. The Fifth naturally take this match very seriously, and when they found that Wingate had left out three of his best men, they were pretty mad.

"Dash it all, does he think we're a gang of fags?" demanded Blundell.

"He's restin' Gwyne and Sykes and

Faulkner, as though he could beat us with any old team. Well, I'll show the Sixth that we don't think so much of them, either!"

And when the Fifth Form list went up, it was embellished with the name of H. J. Coker. It was a mad thing to do, and if Blundell had cooled down first, he would never have thought of it. But there it was. They were landed with Coker!

Coker was quite pleased to play—in fact, delighted. He turned out and gave an amazing exhibition. In the first minute he charged Bland off the ball, tried to boot it in the wrong direction, and saw it skid off his foot into the Sixth Form net.

Had Coker been satisfied with this, all would have been well. But ten minutes later he handled the ball in his own penalty area, and the score was one-all. Shortly afterwards, Coker himself gave the Sixth the lead by booting the ball past Tomlinson in goal. The Fifth made a rush at him, and he had to keep off the field for some time until their wrath died down.

He came back when they were busy on a corner up at the Sixth Form goal. Greene sent the ball over. Blundell made a leap for it and fell over Coker. Horace staggered headlong, met the ball with his head, and sent it into the net.

So far, Coker had done all the scoring for both sides—if you count the penalty. He carried on the good work by barging Tomlinson into the back of the net with the ball, giving the Sixth another goal. However, he equalised soon after, when a kick from Potter bounced on his back and went in. After that, he gave up scoring, and concentrated on laying the players out.

Here again, however, he was quite impartial. He fell over Bland and flattened him, and then plumped on Walker of the Sixth and squashed him. He charged Fitzgerald like a battering-ram, and then put Loder out of action for weeks. He was finally chased off the field by both teams, and had to hide in the crypt for the rest of the evening. Final score:

SIXTH (Wingate, Coker 2).....3

FIFTH (Coker 3)3

Do You Know That—

Peter Todd took Tom Dutton for a three-mile walk into the country yesterday. Evidently he had something to say to him in private.

Dick Russell recently built a light canoe something in the shape of a submarine. It submerged splendidly on its trial trip.

A souvenir book of their Majesties' recent trip to Canada talks about the grizzly bears in the Rocky Mountains. We seem to have heard them mentioned before somewhere, but we can't think where. We'll ask Mr. Prout!