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Amazing Adventures of A Schoolboy Impersonator.

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THE ACE OF JOKERS!



BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Wet!

"HE, HE, HE!"

It was a sound that might have been the creaking of rusty hinges, or the whir of a cheap alarm clock, or a mixture of both. But it was neither; nor was it both. It was the cachinnation of Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Greyfriars Remove.

Bunter evidently was amused.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter, as he rolled into Study No. 1 in the Remove.

"I say, you fellows— He, he, he!" It seemed that Bunter was in possession of a joke—a tremendous joke! His fat face was irradiated by grins, and his cackle was irrepressible.

But the five fellows in Study No. 1 were not interested in Bunter or his jokes. Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, was looking rather cross. Only a short time before, Wibley of the Remove had barged into that study to ask—or, rather, demand—of the captain of the Form whether he was down to play football on Saturday. Wibley, who was a wonderful man at theatricals and such things, was a dud at football, and, unhappily, in complete ignorance of the fact. Wharton's answer being in the negative—an emphatic negative—Wibley had proceeded to tell the captain of the Remove exactly what he thought of him; getting warmer and warmer, and wrathier and wrathier, till the argument ended by Wibley quitting the study on his neck.

Which rather worried the Famous Five of the Remove; for they really liked old Wibley, though he was an extremely exasperating fellow at times.

After that little row, Harry Wharton & Co. were in no mood for Billy Bunter and his unmusical cackle. So, instead of inquiring what the great joke was, the chums of the Remove said, with one voice:

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

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"I say, you fellows— He, he, he!" chortled Bunter.

"Hook it!" said Bob Cherry.

"I say, Wibley— He, he, he!"

"Oh, my hat! Haven't we finished with Wibley yet?" groaned Frank Nugent. "What about Wibley?"

"Bother the fellow!" growled Harry Wharton. "Why can't he have a little sense? He can play Hamlet, but he can't play Soccer."

"The playfulness of the esteemed Wibley is not terrific," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"He, he, he!"

"Oh, cut the cackle, Bunter!" grunted Johnny Bull. "If you think that gurgle is nice to listen to, you're making a big mistake."

"Beast! I say, you fellows, Wibley is— He, he, he!" Billy Bunter's very spectacles glistened with merriment. "I say, he's going to make you sit up! I heard them talking in his study. Desmond's helping him to make up—"

"Let him make up all he likes," said Bob. "That's his long suit! If he's going to give one of his theatrical shows, we'll all stand round and cheer."

"Which is more than anybody would do if he played football for the Remove," said Johnny Bull.

"He's making up as Mossco!" said Bunter. "I squinted through the keyhole and saw him. He, he, he!"

Harry Wharton & Co. laughed. Wibley could make himself up as almost anybody, within limitations of size. He was as tall as Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, and more than once he had got himself up as Mossco, as like the little French gentleman as a twin. It was quite a relief to the chums of the Remove to hear that old Wib had already got over his football ambitions and returned to the job he could really do well.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "You don't know what his game is! He's going to make you take him for Mossco—"

"No harm in that," said Harry,

laughing. "Let him rip! We've taken him for Mossco more than once when he was rigged up."

"He, he, he! He's going to cane you—"

"What?"

"And give you long French impositions—"

"Eh?"

"I heard it all through the keyhole. He was telling Desmond. He seems wild about something; I don't know what!"

Harry Wharton & Co. knew what. They stared at Bunter.

"Waxy as anything," grinned Bunter. "Wild with rage, you know! He says he's simply going to make you fellows cringe! He, he, he!"

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"The silly ass!" growled Johnny Bull.

"He's coming along to this study when he's ready," chuckled Bunter. "You can expect him in about ten minutes. He, he, he! There was rather a rag in the French class to-day, you know, and Wib's going to make that the excuse for pitching into you; you taking him for Mossco! He, he, he!"

And Billy Bunter cackled loud and long.

Harry Wharton knitted his brows. Evidently William Wibley, instead of forgetting Soccer ambitions and getting back to his own job, was taking up the trail of vengeance.

The exasperating thing was that, but for Bunter's tip, he could have got away with it quite successfully.

The idea of being caned by a trickster got up as a master, and chained to their studies by long French impositions, was intensely exasperating to the Famous Five.

Forewarned was forearmed, and Wibley was not going to succeed this time. As the Famous Five looked at one another the same thought was expressed in all their wrathful and indignant faces. William Wibley had

to learn not to play these tricks on his Form fellows.

"The cheeky ass!" said Bob. "When he comes in we'll jolly well scrag him!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"The scragfulness will be terrific."

"I say, I've given you the tip because we're pals, you know," said Billy Bunter. "You needn't think it was because Wibley kicked me for taking his butterscotch. As a matter of fact, I never took it; Wibley's suspicious, you know! Besides, I thought it was mine. But I say, I've been disappointed about a postal order—"

"And you'd like to raise a little loan in this study?" grinned Frank Nugent. "Well, you're going to be disappointed about that, too!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Scat, you fat oyster!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Beast! I say, you fellows, my postal order will be for a pound—"

"That's rather a pity," remarked Harry Wharton. "If it was for a bob I could manage it."

"I mean to say, I'm expecting a postal order for a shilling, old chap—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, Harry, old chap, I've got just time to get down to the tuckshop before lock-up!"

Billy Bunter grabbed a shilling and rolled out of the study. The information he had imparted was worth that small sum. Billy Bunter departed in haste; like Iser in the poem, rolling rapidly!

"When that silly fathead Wibley comes along to play his silly tricks," said Harry Wharton, "we'll all be ready for him, and we'll give him a lesson that will do him good."

"Hear, hear!" assented the Co.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"We've got time," he said. "I'll cut along to the tap at the end of the passage and get a pail of water. We'll turn out the light in the study and have it ready for him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

No time was lost. Bob Cherry fairly shot along the Remove passage. He came back with the pail of water and landed it in the study, grinning.

"They're at it," he remarked. "I heard Wib as I passed his study. He was speaking French to Micky Desmond; practising ready for us. Well, we'll be ready for him by the time he's ready for us. What?"

"What-ho!"

The light was turned off in the study. Bob Cherry stood ready with the pail of water. The other fellows suppressed their merriment while they waited. The surprise of his life was ready for Wibley of the Remove when he came.

"Hark!" breathed Nugent suddenly.

There was a footstep in the passage. It was not a schoolboy's footstep; but that, of course, was Wibley all over. When he played a part, he played it to the life. If he came to Study No. 1 as Monsieur Charpentier, he would come with the slow and stately tread of a "beak," thus causing his victims to expect to see a master when he arrived. The Famous Five knew their Wibley, and were up to all his tricks.

"Ready!" whispered Johnny Bull.

"You bet! Quiet!"

The tread stopped at the door of Study No. 1. There was a tap on the door, and it was opened.

Swoooooosh!

The pailful of water flew!

Splash!

"Urrrrrrgh!" came a wild splutter.

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

"Got him!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"The gotfulness is terrific!"

"How do you like that, you silly ass?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Urrrgh! Wurrgh! Gurrgh! What—what— How dare you? I repeat, how dare you? Upon my word! I am drenched—dripping—soaking! You shall be expelled for this dastardly outrage! Urrrrgh!"

The sounds of laughter died away in Study No. 1. Five fellows stood rooted to the floor, petrified with horror. The empty pail dropped with a crash. For the voice that spoke was not the voice of William Wibley. It was the voice of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove! It was the Remove master who stood there spluttering, drenched to the skin!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Going Through It!

FLOGGED—expelled! Grooogh! Thrashed! Urrrgh! Young rascals! Wurrgh! I am drenched! Gurrrrgh!"

Mr. Quelch's remarks were almost incoherent. There was no doubt that he had been taken by surprise; and that he was in a state that the juniors might have described as flabbergasted.

The finest actor in the world, in the opinion of William Wibley, is William Wibley! But whether you will agree with him or not you will be bound to admit that where wigs, grease-paint, and colossal "nerve" are concerned there's no one at Greyfriars to touch him!

Drenched, dripping, breathless, Henry Samuel Quelch gurgled and gabbled in the doorway of Study No. 1.

Harry Wharton was the first to recover sufficiently to turn on the light. What was revealed added to the horror of the Removites.

A drenched Form master was an uncommon sight. It was a terrifying sight! Quelch was soaked—smothered—dripping! Water ran down him, and formed in a pool at his feet. His mortar-board dripped water; his face glistened with it. It ran down his neck, and all over him. Considering that it had been dark, Bob Cherry's aim with that pail of water had been remarkably good. He wished now that it hadn't been!

Up the passage, the door of Study No. 6 opened, and a face with a little black moustache and a pointed beard looked out. Anyone who had seen that face might have sworn that it was Monsieur Charpentier's. It was, as a matter of fact, Wibley's, wonderfully got up. The schoolboy impersonator was ready. But at the sound of Mr. Quelch's voice down the passage Wibley popped back into his study, like jack into the box, and shut the door. He did not want to meet Quelch's eyes in that rig.

Other doors opened, however, and fellows came out, to see what the row was. Vernon-Smith and Redwing came out of Study No. 4, Peter Todd out of Study No. 7, Lord Mauleverer out of

Study No. 12, Fisher T. Fish from Study No. 14; other fellows after them. Quite a little crowd gathered to stare at the dripping Form master in the doorway of Study No. 1.

"Quelch's had a wash!" murmured Smithy to Redwing, and he grinned. But nobody but the Bounder grinned. The matter was too awfully serious for grinning.

Mr. Quelch collected himself a little. He became less incoherent. But his wrath seemed to intensify. His eyes glittered like steel.

"Wharton, you are head boy of my Form. You have done this—"

"I did it, sir!" gasped Bob Cherry. "But I never knew—"

"Silence! All of you are concerned in this!" barked Mr. Quelch. "I find you all here, the light turned out—evidently in order to take me by surprise when you committed this ruffianly, this rascally, this disrespectful assault."

"We never meant—" stuttered Nugent.

"We didn't know—" groaned Johnny Bull.

"We thought—" stammered Wharton.

"I came here," said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice, "to speak to you, Wharton, as my head boy, on matters connected with the Form. How you knew that I was coming at this particular moment, I cannot say—"

"I didn't know, sir. I never dreamed—"

"Silence! I shall take you all to the headmaster immediately," said Mr. Quelch. "You, Wharton, will be expelled from Greyfriars this very hour, as ringleader in this dastardly outrage. The others will be flogged with the utmost severity. Follow me!"

"Oh, sir," gasped Wharton. "If you will listen a minute—"

"I will listen to nothing! Follow me to Dr. Locke's study instantly!" barked the Remove master.

He whisked out of the study, scattering drops of water as he went. In deep, utter dismay, the Famous Five followed him. Fellows in the Remove passage stared at them as they went.

"Well," said Skinner, "if ever a set of silly asses asked for the sack, it's that lot! Fancy mopping a pail of water over Quelch!"

"Must be mad!" said Hazeldene, in wonder.

"Mad as hatters!" said Peter Todd.

"I guess this is the bee's knee!" remarked Fisher T. Fish. "I'll surely say this is the elephant's side whiskers!"

"What on earth did they do it for?" asked the Bounder. "What's Quelch done?"

"Whatever he's done, we can guess what he's going to do!" said Skinner, with a chuckle. "He's going to give that mob the time of their lives."

There was no doubt about that. The Famous Five were only too well aware of it as they trailed after Mr. Quelch to the Head's study. On the stairs they met Billy Bunter, coming up with exactly a shilling's worth of jam tarts packed in his capacious inside. Bunter blinked at his drenched Form master, his little round eyes almost popping through his big, round spectacles at the sight.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

Downstairs, the procession met many eyes. Prout, the master of the Fifth, rolled up in amazement, with Hacker, master of the Shell, equally amazed.

"Quelch!" exclaimed Hacker.

"My dear Quelch!" boomed Prout.

Mr. Quelch whisked on, without

pausing to reply. He was rather too wet to linger for conversation. He needed a change; but still more he needed to hand over the delinquents to condign punishment. That came first—though, had Quelch been a little less wrathful he might have realised that a change was the more important of the two!

Wingate and Gwynne, of the Sixth, near Head's corridor, jumped at the sight of the Remove master.

"Has—has anything happened, sir?" exclaimed Wingate—rather a superfluous question, for it was clear that something had!

But Quelch did not stay to answer the captain of Greyfriars. He whisked on to the Head's study door, followed by the dismal five.

Tap! Quelch opened the door and marched in, and Dr. Locke, starting up from his chair, gazed at him. Seldom had the headmaster of Greyfriars School been so astonished.

"My—my dear Quelch!" articulated the Head: "What—what—what has happened?"

"Dr. Locke! Sir! You—you see me!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Drenched, sir—soaked to the skin! An outrage, sir—"

"Bless my soul! Surely no Greyfriars boy—"

"These boys, sir—these boys of my Form!" Quelch waved a watery hand at the dismayed juniors, who followed him in. "I went to Wharton's study, sir, to speak to him, as my head boy. And I was received, sir, with a bucket of water, full in my face, sir—the light, sir, having been turned out, in order to trap me, sir—"

"Upon my word!" Dr. Locke's face, generally kind and benign, set like iron. "Mr. Quelch, I leave it to you to name the punishment of these boys. If you require the expulsion of every one of them I shall accede at once!"

"May we speak, sir?" gasped Wharton, in utter dismay.

"You may speak, Wharton, if it is to express your regret to your Form master, before you are expelled in ignominy from the school," exclaimed Dr. Locke.

"We never meant, sir—"

"We didn't know—"

"The knowfulness was not terrific—"

"We're sorry—"

"We thought—"

"Do not speak all at once!" snapped the Head. "Wharton, if you have anything to say, say it, and be brief."

"Yes, sir!" gasped Harry. "We never knew that Mr. Quelch was coming to the study. We never dreamed it was he, sir. We—we—we'd never have done anything of the kind, sir. We respect Mr. Quelch too much, sir!"

"The muchfulness is terrific!"

"We thought it was a Remove fellow coming larking, sir, and we had the pail of water ready for him, and the light turned out," groaned Wharton. "Being dark, we didn't see it was Mr. Quelch, sir."

"We never dreamed—" gasped Nugent.

Wharton turned to the gasping Remove master.

"Mr. Quelch, you can't believe we would have done it if we had known it was you!"

"Do you believe this, my dear Quelch?" asked the Head.

Mr. Quelch calmed down a little. He was beginning to reflect. No Form master liked to have to own up, in Masters' Common-room, that he had been assaulted by members of his Form. No Form master was anxious to have

members of his Form expelled! Added to that consideration, Quelch—on reflection—realised how very improbable it was that these boys would have committed such a wild and reckless assault on a beak—had they known! The dismay and horror in their looks were convincing, too. Mr. Quelch paused before he replied; but his reply, when it came, brought immense relief to the five juniors in danger of the sack.

"I believe it, sir! Foolish and unthinking as these boys seem to be, I have always known them to be truthful. Possibly a mistake was made in the dark—that did not, for the moment, occur to me."

"We give you our word, sir!" said Wharton earnestly. "A Remove man was coming to our study, larking—and we were watching for him."

"I believe you," said Dr. Locke. "Mr. Quelch will exonerate you from intentionally assaulting him—" He glanced at the Remove master, who nodded assent. "But that does not excuse your action! Such a prank, even on a junior boy, is inexcusable! You have drenched your Form master—he is in danger of catching cold—"

"Atchoo-chooh-chooooo!" came a sudden, prolonged sneeze from Mr. Quelch, as if to confirm the Head's words.

"Nothing can excuse your reckless, thoughtless, utterly irresponsible action," said the Head sternly. "Again I request you to name the punishment of these foolish and unthinking boys, my dear Quelch."

"A caning, sir—a very severe caning!"

Quelch, fortunately, was not thinking of expulsions now!

"Very well, sir; I shall make it very severe, indeed!" said Dr. Locke. "I suggest that you should change, without further delay."

"Atchooo-chooooo!"

"I fear that you may catch a cold."

"Urrrgh! Cho-cooh-ooop! I—I will retire at once, sir!" gurgled Mr. Quelch. "Atchooooooooh!"

Obviously, Quelch was catching a cold! He left the study in haste, to dry himself and change, rather wishing now that he had done so at first. The Famous Five remained—for execution!

Dr. Locke selected his stoutest cane!

Before using it, he talked to the juniors for a good five minutes! It was an impressive lecture, on the subject of thoughtlessness, of foolish pranks, and so forth. No doubt they deserved it, and they listened very respectfully; and, in fact, they did not mind the lecture very much. But they minded what followed—very much indeed!

After that heart-to-heart talk, they had to "bend over" in turn! For many minutes there was a sound of swishing in the Head's study. Six swipes each for five juniors was a fairly hefty task for a gentleman of Dr. Locke's years, especially as every swipe had heaps of beef in it. The juniors had never realised before that their venerable headmaster was such an athlete. Where he packed the muscle was rather a mystery to them.

The five were quite pale when their headmaster had finished with them.

"Now you may go!" said Dr. Locke.

And they went—gasping!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Rough Justice!

WILLIAM WIBLEY grinned at his reflection in the glass in his study.

That reflection was nothing whatever like William Wibley's. It was absolutely like the French master's;

and Wibley grinned with complacent contentment, in admiration of his own wonderful gift of impersonation. Micky Desmond had left the study to see what the row was about in the passage, and Wibley was alone.

He did not want to begin his little game till Quelch was safe off the scene, and he was waiting for Micky to come back and tell him that the coast was clear. Meanwhile, he admired his own cleverness—there being no false modesty about Wib of the Remove. Whether he could play football or not, in the amateur theatrical line he was a past-master, and he knew it. But he ceased to grin, and turned from the glass, as the door opened and Micky Desmond's excited face looked in.

"Sure they've been whopped!" gasped Micky. "Quelch's taken them to the Head, and they've been whopped!"

"Eh! What—who?" demanded Wibley. "Wharton and his lot—they mopped water over Quelch—goodness knows why—and now they're coming after you intirely. But sure they'll never know ye in that outfit!" added Micky, with a chuckle. "And sure it's lucky for ye if they don't."

"But what?" gasped Wibley.

There was a trampling of feet in the passage. Harry Wharton & Co., fresh from their whopping in the Head's study, had arrived! And they had arrived in a state of wrath and vengeance! If they had been determined before to give William Wibley a lesson they were doubly determined now. They had enraged their Form master—Quelch had caught a cold—and the Head had whopped them with unusual severity—and it was all Wibley's fault! And Wibley was going to suffer for his sins.

Secure in his disguise as the French master, Wibley faced the five juniors as they crowded in at the doorway, with a mob of excited Removites looking in after them. Wib was not yet aware that the Famous Five knew that he had been adopting exactly that disguise, and that that was the cause of the whole trouble.

"Eh bien!" exclaimed Wibley, ready to play his part. "Pourquoi—vy you rush into zis study in zat noisy vay? Je suis ici—I am here to speak to Desmond—I vill come to you plus tard—later, and—"

For a second the juniors paused, wondering whether it really was Monsieur Charpentier, and not Wibley at all! But there was a make-up box open on the table, all sorts of theatrical things lying about from Wib's property-box—and, besides, they knew! So Bob Cherry made a jump across the study, and grabbed hold of the little pointed black beard on the disguised junior's face. He gave a jerk, and it came off! That was proof, if the Famous Five had wanted proof!

"Bag him!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Here, look out—leggo!" roared Wibley, in alarm. "I say—Yaroooh! What are you up to? Don't you spoil my clothes, you silly ruffians! Ow!"

"I'll tell you what we're up to, you tricky fathead!" bawled Bob Cherry. "We mopped a pail of water over Quelch, thinking it was you coming to play your silly tricks on us—see? And we've had six each from the Head, and we shan't be able to sit down to prep this evening! And you're going to be made to sit up, see?"

"Mop him up!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Ow! Gerroff! Gerraway!" howled Wibley frantically.

Bob jerked the little black moustache from his upper lip. It was stuck there

with a rather strong gum, and Wibley howled with anguish as it went.

"Yow-ow-woop!" Wibley descended on the study carpet! The shock split the tight frock-coat he wore in imitation of Mossop, from the tail to the collar. Wibley yelled as it went to pieces. Wib was really more concerned about his theatrical props than about his own person.

"Ow! You villains!" he roared. "You're spoiling my props! I—I'll smash you! I—I'll—"

"Sure they've found ye out!" said Micky Desmond, grinning. "You were going to whop them, old chap; sure, it's only the other way round."

"You silly idiot! Ow! Leggo!"

Fellows crowded in the passage outside, roaring with laughter. Nobody had any sympathy to waste on poor Wib! Everybody felt that he had taken his trickiness altogether too far! Impersonating a master, for a joke, was all very well; but impersonating a master to "whop" the captain of the Form for refusing to put him into the Form eleven, where he had no right to be, was altogether too "thick." Wib, perhaps, in his wrath, had not realised how "thick" it was—but he was learning!

"I think," gasped Wharton, at last, "that that will do—for the present. I think that will teach the silly ass not to play silly tricks—"

"The teachfulness will probably be

mattered little to Wib. What mattered was that his precious "props" were strewn about also—in a shocking state of disrepair. Bits of beards, fag-ends of moustaches, dislocated noses and eyebrows, seemed to have rained in the study. Coats and trousers and waistcoats were rumpled, crumpled, and draggled. Wibley could have wept.

"Oh, the rotters!" he gasped. "The rotters!"

"Rats!" said the Bounder, looking in. "You asked for it, you cheeky fathhead! If you got me a whipping from the Head with your trickery, I'd not leave one rag sticking to another in all your rubbish."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snarled Wibley.



Scattering drops of water in his wake, Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, led the Famous Five in the direction of the Head's study. As the strange procession passed along the corridor Mr. Prout and Mr. Hacker stopped and stared in amazement. "Goodness gracious!" gasped the master of the Fifth. "Mr. Quelch—what—what—"

Bump! Bump! Bump!

Thrice William Wibley smote the study carpet, causing the dust to rise therefrom. Then he was rolled over, to the utter ruin of his "property" clothes. The coat—already split—was split again; the waistcoat followed; the black wig was torn and trampled; the black beard and moustache went into tatters. But that was not all—that was far from all! Johnny Bull grabbed "properties" out of the property-box and hurled them in handfuls at the yelling Wibley. Beards, moustaches, eyebrows, wigs, false noses and chins, stage spectacles, sticks of grease-paint, sticks of cocoa-butter, all sorts and conditions of things, were hurled at Wibley as he struggled in avenging hands, and he rolled on them, and bumped on them, and crushed and mangled them. Five juniors, fresh from a severe licking, considered that the tricky impersonator needed a severe lesson—and there was no doubt that they were giving him one!

terrific!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh, with a breathless chuckle.

"Let me catch him trying to spoof us again!" growled Johnny Bull in a voice like that of the Great Huge Bear.

"Oooooogh!" gasped Wibley. "Oooooh!"

"I think he's had enough," said Bob Cherry. "Keep this in mind, Wib—we all like you, old bean, but we're not standing your fatheaded tricks!"

"No fear!" said Nugent. "You've got about as much as we got from the Head, Wib. You ought to have some more, really."

"Oooooooogh!"

"Take it as a tip!" said Bob.

And the Famous Five, breathless after their exertions, crowded out of the study. Wibley was left a wreck amid wreckage.

He sat up. He blinked round him.

The study looked rather as if a hurricane had struck it. Table and chairs were overturned; books and papers and pens and inkpot lay strewn about. That

He started collecting and sorting the wreckage. His study-mates, Desmond and Morgan, lent him helping hands—grinning the while. The other fellows cleared off, laughing.

"I'll make them sit up for this!" gasped Wibley.

"Rot!" said Morgan. "You asked for it, and it jolly well serves you right, old chap!"

"Faith, and what did ye expect intoirely when they spotted you?" argued Micky.

"Oh, shut up!" growled Wibley, who was not in a mood to be reasoned with. "I tell you I'll make them sorry for themselves. You just wait."

Micky and Morgan exchanged a wink, Wibley in the main was a good-natured fellow, and seldom let the sun go down on his wrath. But this time Wibley meant every word he said. A ragging for himself he could have forgiven and forgotten; but the ragging of

his precious "props" was too much. On this occasion Wibley did let the sun go down on his wrath, and the result thereof was to be surprising!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Poor Old Quelch!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Well, what's the latest?"

Billy Bunter grinned.

"Quelch's got a cold!" he said.

"Poor old Quelch!" said Harry Wharton remorsefully.

Apart from its painful consequences all the Famous Five deeply regretted that inadvertent drenching of Mr. Quelch. After prep that evening, when they came down to the Rag, they were rather anxious to hear news of Quelch—hoping that he was not suffering unduly from his drenching. Billy Bunter rolled in with news. Bunter prided himself on being the first with the news. He had his own ways and means of gathering it.

"Frightful cold in the head!" grinned Bunter. "Sneezing like—like billy-o! Sneezing his head off! He, he, he!"

"Is that anything to cackle at, you fat, frowsy frump?" demanded Johnny Bull, with a glare at the grinning Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Of course, you fellows are sorry!" said Wibley sarcastically. "You did it. I suppose you don't know that drenching an elderly gent with cold water is liable to give him a cold."

"It was all your fault, you cheeky fathead!" roared Johnny Bull. "Are you asking for another ragging?"

"I say, you fellows, this may get us off class to-morrow," said Billy Bunter.

Bunter had a hopeful nature. "The Head has advised Quelch to go into sanny for a few days—"

"Best thing he can do," said Skinner. "We don't want to catch his filthy colds in the Form-room. I know I don't, for one!"

"And how do you know what the Head has advised Quelch to do, Peeping Tom?" demanded Squiff.

"I happened to hear them talking," said Bunter. "You see, I spotted the Head going to Quelch's study to see him. Happening to pass the door, and happening to stop to tie up my shoelace, I happened to hear what they were saying—"

"These things happen only to Bunter!" remarked Vernon-Smith. "And what did you happen to hear when you happened to be spying, you fat frog?"

"I hope I'm not the fellow to spy," said Bunter, with dignity. "How could I help hearing what they said when I was just outside the door, stooping to pick up a half-crown I'd dropped?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean, I was tying up a half-crown; I mean, I was picking up a shoelace. That is to say, I mean—"

"Never mind what you mean," said Skinner. "Let's hear the news. Are we really going to get shut of Quelch to-morrow?"

"Looks like it," grinned Bunter. "The Head advised him to go into sanny, and Quelch agreed that he'd better. He said that, if the Beak approved, he would send a line to a man he knew to take his place; a beast the Head could rely on. Of course, he didn't say beast—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Man named Spofford," said Bunter. "That was the name. Master of Arts!"

Some beast like Quelch, of course! Man who takes temporary jobs like this. He said Spofford would be glad of it, and that he was a man the Head could absolutely rely on. That means that he's a beast like Quelch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So, as Spofford isn't on the phone—too hard up, I expect—he, he, he!—the Beak suggested a wire, and Quelch phoned a wire," went on Bunter. "But the beauty of it is that they don't know that Spofford's coming till they hear from him. And he mayn't come at all; and if he does, he can't possibly get here till to-morrow, at the earliest. That looks as if we shall have an easy morning."

And Billy Bunter grinned with satisfaction.

"They'll stick us with a prefect," remarked Skinner thoughtfully. "I hope it will be Walker. He will read novels all the time and let us rip."

"Might be Loder!" said the Bounder.

"I don't want a morning with Loder." "Oh, Loder will be all right if we don't bother him!" said Skinner. "He won't make us work, anyhow; he hates the sight of work."

"Anybody's better than Quelch!" declared Billy Bunter. "If you ask me, it was jolly lucky those fellows mopped that pail of water over Quelch. I haven't done any prep, and chance it."

Some of the Remove fellows shared Billy Bunter's peculiar point of view. But most of them felt rather sorry when they heard for certain that Mr. Quelch had gone into sanny that evening, and was to remain there, in sneezing seclusion, till his cold mended. Especially sorry did the Famous Five feel, for they really respected their Form master, and liked him, more or less; and, anyhow, it was hard lines on Quelch. So sorry did they feel for Quelch, in fact, that they were strongly inclined to give William Wibley another ragging!

And when Bolsover major, and Skinner and Snoop, and a few other fellows of their sort, discussed the feasibility of ragging the new master when he came, Harry Wharton put in a rather sharp word.

"We don't want any of that!" he said. "It's up to us to behave ourselves while poor old Quelch is laid up on his beam-ends."

"Satan rebuking sin!" remarked Skinner. "Who put poor old Quelch on his beam-ends, I'd like to know?"

"That was an accident, as we told the Head."

"Yes; I know you told the Head so," assented Skinner, with a wink at the other fellows. "Surprising what a fellow will tell the Head, isn't it, when he's up for a whopping."

Harry Wharton's eyes glinted.

"The Head believed us, Skinner," he said quietly. "If you don't—"

"The Head's a soft old bird! I never did believe all I heard," said Skinner blandly.

"Not quite!" agreed Snoop, with a grin.

"I think," said Bob Cherry, with a glare at Skinner and Snoop, "that we could make you two fellows believe us."

"Perhaps," yawned Skinner, "and perhaps not. The odds on the not!"

"Easy!" said Bob cheerfully. "'Frinstance, suppose I take you by the collar, like that—"

"Ow! Leggo!"

"You take Snoop by the collar, Wharton—"

"Done!"

"Here, let go!" roared Snoop in alarm.

"Now," continued Bob, "suppose we bang your heads together like that—"

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"Ow! Wow! Yes!" roared Skinner and Snoop, with one voice.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Skinner and Snoop were left rubbing their heads, and wishing that Bob had not found it necessary to convince them!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Something Like a Stunt!

WINGATE of the Sixth had the pleasure—or otherwise—of taking the Remove the following morning.

Mr. Quelch was in sanatorium, booked to remain there for an uncertain period—certainly not less than a few days.

It was known that a man named Spofford was—probably—coming to take his place during his absence. Mr. Spofford was, apparently, one of those numerous gentlemen, who, trained for a schoolmaster's job, did not find a job available. He filled temporary posts from time to time, with periods of rest between.

The Remove men wondered whether he was coming, when he would come, and what he would be like when he came. In the meantime, they were rather satisfied with a prefect in charge.

Wingate was not the man to let them slack; but there was no doubt in most minds that he was an improvement on Quelch. First and second class, that morning, went off quite satisfactorily; and, in break, the Remove men debated whether Spofford had arrived or not. Nobody, so far, had seen anything of him, if he had.

But there was one fellow in the Remove who was not bestowing a single thought on Mr. Spofford. That one was William Wibley.

Wibley was in a state of ire, of worry, and of distress. His own little ragging he had recovered from. But his precious "props" could not recover.

The ragers had not really done a lot of damage—not so much as might have been expected from exasperated fellows who had been "whopped" because of Wib's trickeries.

But certainly a good many of Wib's "properties" were in a disastrous state. His make-up box had been—perhaps inadvertently—trampled on. The box might be repaired. But the sticks of grease-paint were beyond repair. They were squashed and trampled into the study carpet, and added many new hues to it.

Without a make-up box, Wibley was like a cowboy without a horse, or a footballer without a football, or a cricketer without a willow! While the other fellows, in break, mostly discussed the new man who was coming as a substitute for Quelch, Wibley went to telephone for a new make-up box to Mr. Lazarus at Courtfield.

Remove fellows, of course, were not on the telephone! But the Remove master was, so that was all right!

Mr. Quelch, safely packed away in sanny, could scarcely raise objections to a member of his Form borrowing his phone.

So Wibley cheerfully borrowed it.

Two minutes after the Remove had been dismissed for break, William Wibley was in the deserted study of his Form master, with the door shut, and was stepping to the telephone.

Just as he reached it the bell rang.

"Bother!" grunted Wibley.

Break lasted only fifteen minutes. Two or three minutes were gone already! Wibley really had no time to waste on unknown persons who might be ringing up a man who wasn't there!

He hooked off the receiver at once. He did not want the ringing bell to summon someone else to the study, to find him there! That would have resulted in "six" for Wib.

All he could do, in the circumstances, was to take the call, tell the caller that Quelch was not there, and then get on to Mr. Lazarus and the really important matter—a new make-up box!

"Hallo!" grunted Wibley into the mouthpiece.

"Hallo!" came back a voice. "Is that you, Quelch? I've only just had your telegram—I was away—so I've rung you up as soon as I could. I know your timetable, Quelch, and I fancied I should catch you in break. Spofford speaking."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wibley, remembering the unimportant existence of Mr. Spofford—unimportant, that is, in comparison with a new make-up box!

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POETS!

Compose a Greyfriars limerick like the following and win one of these USEFUL PRIZES!

Said Bunter to Wharton: "I say,
At footer I shan't play to-day.
I've a pain in the head,
So I'll go up to bed,
And there I shall jolly well
stay!"

The above effort was sent in by H. Horsley, 21, Roland Road, Handsworth, Birmingham.

"I'm fearfully sorry," went on the voice. "It's kind and thoughtful of you to put this chance in my way, Quelch! I knew you'd think of me if you could serve me at any time. But I've accepted a three weeks' engagement at Rookwood—a Mr. Manders there is laid up with influenza—and I'm taking up the post this very day."

"Oh!" repeated Wibley.

He grinned over the telephone. All the other fellows were wondering when Spofford was coming! Wibley, alone in the Remove, knew that he wasn't coming at all!

"I can't say how sorry I am," went on Mr. Spofford's voice. "I've never even seen Greyfriars, and I should have been very glad to come. But you see how it is, don't you?"

Wibley was about to speak, when the voice rattled on. Mr. Spofford seemed a rather talkative gentleman—unlike his friend Quelch!

"Many thanks, all the same, Quelch—thanks from the bottom of my heart. A week ago I should have jumped at this—a couple of days ago—it would have been a real pleasure. But I was actually at Rookwood, discussing the post with Dr. Chisholm, when you wired yesterday—I never got your wire till I came back for my things. Unfortunate, isn't it?"

Without waiting for a reply, Mr. Spofford went on:

"I'm sure, Quelch, that you'll remember me another time, and remember how glad I shall be to accept such a chance."

"Will you have another three minutes?" came a soft, feminine voice from parts unknown.

"Thank you, no!" came Mr. Spofford's voice hurriedly. Mr. Spofford, no doubt, was not in a financial position to pay for unnecessary trunk calls. "Not at all! Good-bye, Quelch! Thank you so much, my dear fellow! Good-bye!"

"I say—" gasped Wibley.

But answer there came none! Mr. Spofford was cut off! He had had his three minutes, and that was that!

Wibley stared at the telephone. Had Mr. Spofford given him a chance to speak, he had intended to tell that gentleman that he was taking the call for Quelch, and would deliver his message to the Remove master.

But Mr. Spofford hadn't given him a chance.

Not that it mattered. Spofford, under the impression that he had been talking to Mr. Quelch, was satisfied; and all that Wibley had to do was to take the message to the Head—which he could do, without mentioning that he had been in Quelch's study to use the phone himself!

That, for the moment, was Wibley's intention!

But—

A peculiar glimmer had come into William Wibley's eyes. Wibley's active brain was already evolving a remarkable idea!

He grinned.

In the keen interest of the amazing idea that had dawned in his brain, he forgot even his intention of phoning Mr. Lazarus for a new make-up box!

"Stunning!" ejaculated Wibley.

He thought it out. A man who had never been to Greyfriars before was expected there that day, in answer to Quelch's telegram, to take Quelch's Form!

If that was not a wonderful chance for a tricky young rascal who lived, moved, and had his being, in playing impersonating tricks, Wibley would have liked to know what a wonderful chance was!

Nobody at Greyfriars, except Quelch, knew this man Spofford! And Quelch was safe in sanny!

Nobody—but Wibley—knew that Spofford wasn't coming—and Wib could keep it dark if he liked!

Suppose a man arrived that day calling himself Spofford! Wibley's eyes danced!

"Could I do it?" he asked, apparently addressing the telephone. "Couldn't I? I could do it on my head!"

Anyone glancing into Mr. Quelch's study the next moment would have been astonished at what he saw there. He would have seen a junior executing a triumphal dance round the study table!

"Oh, gorgeous!" gasped Wibley.

They had ragged him, got up as Mossoo! They wouldn't rag him, got up as Spofford—a man they had never seen! They would take him as the genuine article! They would take him as their new beak. They would toe the line—and Wibley would give them all they deserved, and perhaps a little more!

Could Wib play the part? Wib could play any part! He was a fairly tall fellow for his age—as tall as

Mossoo, anyhow! Mr. Spofford need not be any taller than Mossoo!

"Gorgeous!" declared Wibley. "A scream! A real shriek!"

He chortled.

Could he do it? Of course he could! For many minutes Wibley contemplated that amazing stunt with blissful ecstasy. His mind was quite made up.

Then, remembering the passage of time, he rang up Mr. Lazarus at Courtfield. But it was not about a make-up box that he talked. That did not matter now.

He was soon through to Mr. Lazarus; a gentleman who sold almost everything, in Courtfield, and who provided most of the stage "props" used by the Remove Dramatic Society.

"Wibley speaking from Greyfriars School! I'm coming along after dinner—I want some things, and I want you to help me make-up."

"Yeth!"

"I'm going to play the part of a Form master in a—a—a comedy! See?"

"Yeth."

"I'm going to try the effect of the— costume on the fellows by turning up here in a taxicab, see?"

"My cootness! Yeth!"

"You'll have the things ready for me?"

"Yeth; thertainly!"

"Good!"

Wibley rang off, and left Mr. Quelch's study. He seemed to be walking on air as he went down the passage. Playing such a part, taking everybody in, and getting away with it, was a joyous prospect to Wib. As for the consequences, if the Head found him out, he did not think of them! He was not going to be found out!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, as Wibley came out grinning into the quad. "Come into a fortune, Wib, or what?"

Wibley grinned at him.

"You ragged me yesterday!" he said.

"That's ancient history, old chap," answered Bob amicably.

"You ragged my props!" said Wibley.

"We'll rag them again, and you, too, if you play any more of your cheeky tricks on us!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Will you?" said Wibley. "Well, I'll tell you what! I'm going to thrash you all round for that ragging in my study."

"One at a time, or all together?" inquired Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"One after the other," said Wibley.

"The thrashfulness may be a boot on the other leg, my esteemed and fat-headed Wibley!" suggested Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

"Barely possible!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Better forget all about it, old bean!"

"No time like the present," said

Johnny Bull. "Begin with me, Wib! I don't think we gave you quite enough yesterday; and there's lots more on tap, if you want it."

"Steady, the Buffs!" said Bob. "Wib's only gassing—let him gas if he likes! Go on gassing, old tulip."

"You'll see whether it's gas!" said Wibley; and he walked away, leaving the Famous Five staring.

"Well," said Nugent, with a chuckle. "If Wib's going to thrash the lot of us, one after another, he's got his work cut out."

And the Famous Five chortled—little dreaming, at that moment, that William Wibley actually was going to do it, and still less how he was going to do it.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Getting On With It!

AFTER dinner that day Wibley of the Remove disappeared.

Nobody specially noted that circumstance.

Except when amateur theatricals were on in the Remove William Wibley was not a fellow of very much importance; and if he was not seen in the quad or the gym, the passages or the studies, nobody was likely to remark on the fact.

So he disappeared at his ease, as it were.

Certainly, the Remove fellows would have been interested had they known that Wib had cleared off to Courtfield on his bike to visit Mr. Lazarus' establishment with a remarkable stunt in his head.

But nobody suspected that.

Meanwhile, there had been no news of Mr. Spofford.

That gentleman, in the belief that he had informed Mr. Quelch how matters stood by phone, was miles and miles away in Hampshire, filling his temporary post at Rookwood School in that county.

Dr. Locke was a little puzzled at not hearing from him.

He was aware, of course, that Mr. Spofford might have another engagement, which would prevent him from taking the chance Quelch had kindly put in his way. But in that case, a prompt answer to Quelch's telegram had been expected. No answer had yet come. The Remove had had a prefect in charge in the morning, and were to have a prefect in charge in the afternoon—unless something was heard from Mr. Spofford.

Something was to be heard shortly.

Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, was reposing in his study arm-chair after dinner, reading a three-days old newspaper from Paris, when his telephone-bell rang.

Mossoo took up the receiver.

"Allo!" said Mossoo into the transmitter. "Voyons! Allo!"

"Spofford speaking!" came a voice, not recognisable as that of Wibley of the Remove, though it belonged to that enterprising young gentleman, now sitting at a telephone belonging to Mr. Lazarus.

"Mais oui!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "Comment?"

"Is that Mr. Quelch?"

"Mais non! Le pauvre Quelch—the poor Quelch is seeck, he is in sanatorium viz one verree had cold," said Monsieur Charpentier. "Mais je connais le nom Spofford—I know zat name you speak, sir—you are ze monsieur zat take ze place of ze poor Quelch, isn't it?"

"Exactly. I am sorry to hear that Quelch is laid up. No doubt that was the reason I could not get his number."

"Parfaitement."

"Are you the headmaster?"

"Ciel! Non! Je suis Henri Charpentier—French master ici—here—"

"Ah! They should have given me the headmaster's number! But perhaps, sir, you would be so kind as to mention to Dr. Locke—"

"Certainement."

"Will you be so kind as to tell him that I have arrived at Courtfield, and am coming on to the school. You have the name—Spofford."

"Mais oui! I vill tell ze Head viz pleasure, sair!"

"Thank you very much, monsieur."

"Du tout!" said Mossoo politely. "Not at all."

The speaker at the other end rang off. Monsieur Charpentier, with never a suspicion in his mind, trotted away to Dr. Locke, to report to him that telephone message. Naturally he had no doubt—and naturally Dr. Locke had no doubt, either. Mr. Spofford was expected to communicate by either telegram or telephone. He had done so—and that was that! It was not surprising that he had been given Mossoo's telephone number at the school instead of the Head's. The usual efficiency of the telephone department accounted for that.

Wibley, at Mr. Lazarus', grinned.

With all his nerve and all his recklessness, Wib simply dared not ring up the majestic Head and pull his leg. He had got out of that difficulty by ringing up Monsieur Charpentier and getting him to deliver the message to the Head.

He nourished a hope of being able to dodge a personal interview with the Head when he arrived. Certainly he was going to leave no stone unturned to dodge it.

If he couldn't dodge it, Wib was prepared to carry on. The way was really easy for him. A temporary master arriving in the ordinary way would be expected to show his credentials; but a man whom Quelch knew and recommended was in a different position. Dr. Locke probably would merely extend a courteous greeting to this friend of the master whom he trusted and relied on. And, in any case, the new master was going to lose his suitcase on the train; Wib had already decided on that, to account for the absence of the baggage. Anyhow, Wibley had now created the necessary "atmosphere"—Mr. Spofford was expected that afternoon at Greyfriars—which eliminated most of the difficulties of the situation.

For the next hour, Wibley was very busy in Mr. Lazarus' back parlour.

Many times Mr. Lazarus had kindly lent his aid to his schoolboy customers in such matters as this; and he had no suspicion; only being a little surprised that Wibley was going to show up in the open in broad daylight in his outfit as a Form master. Still, that was Wib's business, not Mr. Lazarus'.

Never had Wibley taken so much trouble with an impersonation as he did on this occasion.

Wib was a past-master at this sort of thing; it was a thing that he could do really well. When Wib adopted a character he not only looked it, he lived it. If he played Hamlet, he almost believed that he was the melancholy

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“Eh bien!” exclaimed Wibley, ready to play the part of Monsieur Charpentier. “Pourquoi—vy you rush into zis study in zat noisy vay?” The make-up box lying open on the table was enough. Bob Cherry grabbed hold of the little pointed black beard on the junior’s face and jerked it off. “Wibley!” he exclaimed. “Bag him!” roared Johnny Bull.

Dane for the time being. He threw himself into a part with such zest that it was quite a surprise to him to come back to ordinary life again. Now he was not only made up as a schoolmaster—but he almost was one.

Certainly he was rather a small one. Wib was not small for a boy—but it had to be admitted that he was rather small for a man. Even with elevators in his boots, he was rather on the short side for a master.

Still, there were plenty of short men about; and he over-topped Monsieur Charpentier, at any rate. There was nothing really remarkable in Mr. Spofford being a short man. As nobody at Greyfriars knew him, they could not possibly know whether the genuine Spofford was long or short.

Wibley’s mobile features could be twisted into almost any shape. Remove fellows had declared that Wib’s features must be made of elastic. Certainly, it was quite easy for him to look quite unlike himself.

Skilful and imperceptible touches of make-up made him look fifty. Bushy eyebrows concealed his own, which were light; a toothbrush moustache gave his mouth quite a different appearance; an artistic mole was added to his chin; wrinkles were suggested in his brows; a brown wig, with a bald spot, quite concealed his own close-cropped hair. A pair of spectacles gave the finishing touch. Wib’s nearest and dearest relative would never have dreamed of recognising him.

Mr. Lazarus surveyed him with admiration.

“It is vonderful!” he declared.

“Think I’ll do?” asked Wib, surveying himself in the glass with great satisfaction and honest admiration.

“My tear poy!” said Mr. Lazarus,

“If you walk into Greyfriars like zat, zey vill take you for one of ze masters.”

Wibley grinned. Mr. Lazarus was far from guessing that that was exactly what the spoofer was planning.

When all was finished a taxi was phoned for. Bold as brass, William Wibley walked across the pavement to the taxi, watched by Mr. Lazarus.

The driver merely glanced at him. To the driver’s eye he was what he looked—a respectably-dressed, middle-aged man, in a silk hat.

“Greyfriars School!” said Wibley, in a voice quite unlike his own.

And he drove off.

Any other fellow who had been trying to bring off such a spoof would probably have felt his heart beating rather quickly as the taxi approached the gates of Greyfriars.

Not so Wibley! Wibley was enjoying himself! This sort of game was the breath of life to Wibley! So far from feeling anything like apprehension, William Wibley had only one feeling—and that was happy anticipation!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Spofford Blows In!

“I SAY, you fellows! Wib’s out class!”

“He’s not here,” said Bob Cherry, glancing round the Remove Form-room.

The bell had rung for class, and the Forms at Greyfriars had gone into the Form-rooms. It was known by this time that Mr. Spofford was coming, but he had not yet come. Dr. Locke, before going to the Sixth Form-room, had requested Wingate to carry on with the Remove till Mr. Spofford arrived and took over.

Then the Head went in to the Sixth, and, deep in Greek with that lofty Form, probably forgot all about the Remove, and their new and temporary master.

Mr. Quelch was always punctual with his Form, but Wingate, though a dutiful prefect, was not quite so punctual as Quelch. So the juniors had a few minutes in their Form-room to themselves. It was Billy Bunter who noticed that Wibley was not there. And, the attention of the other fellows being drawn to that circumstance, they observed that Wibley wasn’t!

“Sticking his props together, in his study, I expect!” said Johnny Bull, with a grin. “They want some sticking together!”

“They do—they does!” agreed Bob Cherry. “All the king’s horses and all the king’s men couldn’t stick some of them together again.”

“Poor old Wib!” said Harry Whar-ton, laughing. “He asked for it—in fact, begged for it. I fancy it will be a long time before he tries that sort of spoof on us again.”

“The longfulness of the time will probably be terrific,” remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Which showed that the chums of the Remove did not quite know their Wibley yet!

“The new man hasn’t come,” remarked Vernon-Smith. “I heard that he was coming this afternoon.”

“May blow in while we’re in class!” said Peter Todd. “The later the better. We’re getting on all right with old Wingate.”

“Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here’s Wingate!”

Groups in the Form-room broke up, and the juniors went to their places as the Greyfriars captain came in. George

Wingate glanced over them with a keen eye.

"All here?" he asked.

There was no reply to that. If Wingate failed to note that Wibley was cutting class nobody was inclined to tell him. But the captain of Greyfriars was not likely to overlook an absentee.

"Where's Wibley?" he rapped, a moment later. "If you young sweeps think you can cut class because your Form master's laid up you're making a mistake. Wharton, where's Wibley?"

"I think he may be in his study, Wingate. I dare say he never heard the bell. He's rather keen on something—"

"Well, cut off and fetch him!"

The head boy left the Form-room. Latin grammar was the order of the day, and Wingate proceeded at once to work. He certainly was a milder master than Quelch, but he was no believer in slacking. He did not enjoy taking the Remove, but the Head had put it up to him, and he was the fellow to do his duty conscientiously.

The Remove were deep in Latin grammar when Harry Wharton came back—alone. Wingate glanced at him.

"Well, haven't you found him?" he asked.

"He's not in his study, Wingate."

"Where is he, then?"

"I don't know."

"Look for him, and round him up!" grunted Wingate.

Not sorry to escape Latin grammar for a time, the captain of the Remove left the Form-room again, to look for Wibley and round him up—a task in which he was not likely to be successful, in the peculiar circumstances.

It was ten minutes later that wheels were heard outside, and the Removites wondered whether the sound portended the arrival of the expected Spofford.

It did.

Five minutes elapsed, and then there was a tap at the door of the Form-room, and it opened.

Wingate looked round. All the Remove looked round.

Framed in the doorway was the figure of a short, middle-aged gentleman, holding a silk hat in his hand. He blinked at the Form through a pair of gold-rimmed glasses.

Wingate made a step towards him. As the man was a stranger at Greyfriars, he had no doubt this was the expected Mr. Spofford. He was surprised to see him arrive at the Form-room in this way.

"Mr. Spofford?" asked the Greyfriars captain.

"Quite!" said the newcomer, in a rather squeaky voice. "Exactly! Is this the Remove room?"

"Yes, this is the Remove," said Wingate. "I will take you to the Head, sir, if you wish—"

"Is the Head engaged at the present time?"

"He is with the Sixth, sir."

"Then I will not disturb him," said Mr. Spofford. "I will see Dr. Locke later. Quite unnecessary to disturb him now. I am prepared to take over my duties at once. How is Mr. Quelch?"

"I am sorry to say he has a bad cold, sir. If you desire to see him in the sanatorium—"

"Later!" said Mr. Spofford. He came into the Form-room and put down his silk hat on Mr. Quelch's desk. "It was my intention to arrive here in time for class, but, owing to the loss of my baggage on the railway, I have been delayed at Courtfield. I shall, however, take over my duties at once. You are surely a big boy for the Lower

Fourth!" he added, blinking at Wingate through his gold-rimmed glasses. Wingate crimsoned.

"I am not a Remove boy, Mr. Spofford!" he gasped. "I am a Sixth Form prefect, placed in charge of the Form till your arrival."

There was a suppressed chuckle in the Remove. The idea of the Greyfriars captain being taken for an overgrown junior tickled the Remove. It was extremely annoying to Wingate. He was quite unaware that the gentleman who made this little mistake had sometimes bent over to take "six" from his ashplant, and was now getting a little of his own back.

"Oh, I understand," said Mr. Spofford. "What is your name?"

"Wingate, sir!"

"Very good! You may inform Dr. Locke that I have arrived, and taken over, and rejoin your Form," said Mr. Spofford. "You may now leave the Form in my hands, Hingegate. Did you say your name was Hingegate?"

"I said that my name was Wingate!" grunted the captain of Greyfriars.

"Pingate? A peculiar name—Pingate!"

"Wingate!" hooted the Greyfriars captain, greatly annoyed.

Mr. Spofford blinked at him.

"Your name is of no consequence, but your manners are, my boy," he said. "I am not satisfied with your manners, Hingegate! Leave the Form-room! Shut the door after you!"

Wingate left the Form-room and shut the door after him—rather hard! And Mr. Spofford turned to his Form and surveyed them through his gold-rimmed glasses.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Going Strong!

MR. SPOFFORD looked at the Remove.

The Remove looked at Mr. Spofford.

They had wondered what the new man would be like. Except that he was rather short for a gentleman of his apparent years, there was nothing unusual about him to look at. Yet all the Remove fellows had a sense of there being something unusual about him. Somehow he did not exactly impress them as the sort of man they had expected to see.

"Head boy!" rapped out Mr. Spofford.

Harry Wharton was still absent, looking for Wibley, so Frank Nugent answered for his chum.

"Wharton's head boy, sir," he said.

"Let Wharton speak for himself, then."

"He's not here."

"Not here?" exclaimed Mr. Spofford. "And why is he not here? Has he been given leave from class?"

"Wingate sent him to look for another fellow, sir."

"This is very annoying," said Mr. Spofford. "I require the assistance of my head boy. I require a Form list. I am as yet unacquainted with your names. Carter— Did you say his name was Carter?"

"Wharton, sir."

"He should be here! He should not be wandering about the school in class-time. Who is the boy of whom he was sent in search?"

"Wibley, sir."

"Absurd! I have met Wibley and have given him leave from class. Wibley will not be in class this afternoon. Wharton is wasting his time. I shall allow no waste of time in this Form!"

"Well, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Some bargees have all the luck! Fancy Wib spotting the new man at the kick-off and getting off class!"

"Who is that speaking?" rapped Mr. Spofford.

Bob started.

"Me, sir!" he stammered.

"Me, sir!" repeated Mr. Spofford, glaring at him through his gold-rimmed glasses. "Is it possible, boy, that you have learned such grammar as that under the instruction of my friend Quelch?"

"I—I—I mean I, sir," stammered Bob, with crimson cheeks.

"Oh, you mean I, sir!" said Mr. Spofford. "Have you never learned to say what you mean?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Bob.

"What is your name?"

"Cherry, sir."

"Sherry! Your name is Sherry?"

"No, sir; Cherry."

"Absurd! Do not attempt to play practical jokes on me. Do you suppose I am likely to believe that your name is Cherry, or Apple, or Raspberry, or anything of the sort?" snapped Mr. Spofford.

Bob's face was as red as the ripest cherry that ever ripened.

"But—but that is my name, sir," he stammered. "My name really is Cherry—Robert Cherry, sir."

"Nonsense! Take fifty lines!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob.

"And your name?" demanded Mr. Spofford, fixing his eyes on Johnny Bull.

"Bull, sir."

"What—what? Are you venturing to imitate the absurd jesting of this boy who pretends that his name is Cherry? I do not believe that your name is Bull, or Cow, or Sheep, or anything of the kind!"

Johnny's face was as red as Bob's. Some of the Removites grinned. Johnny did not grin.

"My name's Bull!" he roared. "And a jolly good name, too!"

"Silence! Take fifty lines! Now, your name?" said Mr. Spofford, pointing with Quelch's pointer to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur. "I was not aware that there was a negro in this Form. Your name—Snowball, or Remus, or what?"

"I have not the esteemed honour of being a negro, my estimable sir," said the Nabob of Bhanipur, "and my name is Hurree Jamset Ram Singh."

"I will not allow this frivolous jesting!" snorted Mr. Spofford. "How dare you pretend that your name is Holy Jampot Rum Bang! Did you say Holy Jampot Rum Bang?"

"I did not!" hooted the nabob. "I rejoice in the absurd and execrable name of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh."

"I can see that this is a jest," said Mr. Spofford. "No doubt you have planned a rag on your new master by pretending to have these ridiculous and impossible names. Take fifty lines."

"Oh, my esteemed hat!"

"Now you, the boy with the spectacles—what is your name?"

"Bunter, sir."

"Grunter? I do not believe that your name is Grunter!"

"I said Bunter!" hooted the Owl of the Remove indignantly.

"That is equally absurd. Bunter is not a name. It is a ridiculous ejaculation."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Take fifty lines—"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Now, your name?" snapped Mr. Spofford, indicating the Bounder.

"Vernon-Smith, sir."

"I require only your surname."

"That is my surname."

"Nonsense! If your name is Smith, say Smith."

"My name isn't Smith; my name's Vernon-Smith," answered the Bounder savagely. Smithy was rather particular about his double-barrelled name.

"I can see that this is a rag; the whole Form concerned in it apparently. Take fifty lines. Now, your name?" rapped Mr. Spofford, addressing Micky Desmond.

"Desmond, sir."

"A very good name—a very honourable name," said Mr. Spofford rather unexpectedly. "And yours?"

"Morgan, sir!"

"Excellent!" said Mr. Spofford. "A name celebrated in Welsh history."

Micky Desmond and David Morgan looked rather pleased with themselves. Other fellows, whose names had been held up to ridicule by this remarkable Form master, looked anything but pleased.

"Your name?" rapped out Mr. Spofford, addressing Peter Todd.

"Todd, sir."

"I see that the rag is being carried on," said Mr. Spofford. "Todd, of course, cannot be a name. Take fifty lines."

Peter glared at him. Peter's name might be a little unusual, but he was quite pleased and satisfied with it—as fellows generally are with their names.

"My name's Todd, sir!" he almost bawled. "T-O-D-D—Todd!"

"Absurd! You will no doubt tell me next that your name is Sweeney Todd! Is your name Sweeney Todd?" snapped Mr. Spofford. And the Removites grinned.

Peter had heard many jokes in his time on the subject of the wicked barber of old times who bore the name of Todd, but it was really too thick to get some more of the same from a Form master.

"No, it isn't! It's Peter Todd!" snapped Peter.

"Rubbish! Take a hundred lines! Who is this?" snapped Mr. Spofford, as the Form-room door opened and Harry Wharton came in.

Wharton glanced at him in surprise.

(Continued on next page.)



Post your Soccer queries to "Linesman," c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. It's his job and his pleasure to answer knotty problems from readers.

ONE of the most pleasing things about my post-bag is the evidence which it supplies that my readers go about with their eyes wide open. They make a note of things. For instance, I have a letter this week from a young player who takes every opportunity of watching first-class teams in their games.

"One of the things I have noticed," he says, "is that these tip-top footballers never seem to wear new boots. Why is it? Surely the boots must wear out sooner or later?" It is a fact that football boots, like ordinary boots, have a habit of wearing out, but it is also true that one does not often see a player turn out in what are obviously a new pair of boots.

It can be taken for granted that the average footballer just hates new boots. This is not entirely due to superstition, though I know quite a lot of star footballers who think that new boots are unlucky.

But once a player gets a pair of boots fitting him properly, he hangs on to that pair as long as he possibly can.

A FAMILY AFFAIR!

IT is said that Bob Kelly, who is now with Preston North End, and who has been playing in first-class football for twenty years, has never had a new pair of boots in all that time. Such a statement is a slight exaggeration, but it is true that he has worn the same boots for many seasons. Whenever a footballer leaves one club for another he is always allowed to take his boots with him. I remember when Dave Halliday, now with Manchester City, left Arsenal for the Lancashire club, the first thing he packed was a parcel containing a very old pair of boots. "I wouldn't part with them for anything," he said, and added that he might have to have new soles on them, new uppers and patches all over them, but they still remained his favourite boots.

More patches than boot is one way in which the footwear of Spencer, the Stoke full-back, might be described. His trainer got him all fixed up at the start of the

season with a fine new pair, but this player still clings to the old ones.

Mention of full-backs reminds me to answer a query regarding brothers playing in the same team as full-back partners. The only brothers at full-back in a first-class team to-day are Jack and George Milburn, of Leeds United. Everton used to have two brothers named Balmer who were full-back partners, but they have passed out of the game. A couple of interesting features may be mentioned in connection with the Milburn brothers.

One is that Potts, the goalkeeper of Leeds United, is married to a sister of the Milburns, so that he is the brother-in-law of the two full-backs who play in front of him. Quite a family affair, this Leeds United defence.

The other interesting feature about these brothers Milburn is that Jack, in his early days, was regarded as a right full-back, and he still prefers that position. But when his brother George followed him to Leeds, Jack volunteered to cross over to the left-back position so that George could play in his natural place on the right. The understanding which one would expect to be noticeable in the play of two brothers in partnership is plainly seen when one watches the Milburns. And it is small wonder that their manager describes them as the best pair of backs in the country.

A CORNER-KICK QUESTION!

EVERY time a corner-kick is taken a goal seems to be expected, but goals seldom come from these corners. How is that? This observation and question reach me from a reader at Wolverhampton. The observation is certainly a correct one. In every big match the spectators get all worked up when a corner-kick is awarded, but for the most part the expectations are not fulfilled. No goal follows.

I know a goalkeeper who, right through one season, made a careful note of the number of corner-kicks awarded in the matches in which he took part, and at the end of the season he told me that his record showed that on the average only

one goal resulted from every twenty-three corner-kicks. This seems a very small proportion, but I don't think the figure is far out as regards football as a whole.

One of the big reasons why corner-kicks so often fail to produce the expected goals is that the odds are always on the defenders. They have only to get the ball away, whereas the attackers have to steer it into a comparatively small space.

Another reason why corner-kicks do not lead to many goals is that so many of them are badly placed. A goodly proportion of them come over so near the crossbar that the goalkeeper can get to the ball first. He can use his hands. The other players can't.

A useful hint may be passed along on this corner-kick question. To those whose job it is to take them, I would say: put the ball just so far from goal that the goalkeeper dare not leave his citadel to try to catch it without running a grave risk. Tactics should be considered, too, in relation to corner-kicks. I should say that the Villa score perhaps more frequently from corner-kicks than any other team I have seen. This is a favourite dodge of the Villa forwards. As the ball comes over from the flag, one of them makes a big show of jumping up to head the ball. He misses it deliberately, and it then travels on to a colleague who is behind him. By a move of this kind the defenders are apt to be taken by surprise, because they concentrate on the man who goes for the ball in the first place. That dodge is worth trying.

CONCERNING HUGHIE GALLACHER.

I AM sorry that I cannot oblige a Bromley (Kent) reader with all the particulars he asks concerning Hughie Gallacher, the Chelsea centre-forward. He wants to know all the clubs for which Gallacher has played, and the number of goals he has scored with each. The clubs of importance Gallacher has played for are Bellshill, Queen of the South, Airdrieonians, Newcastle United, and Chelsea. I have no record of his goals for the first two-named clubs, but

in League matches Gallacher scored ninety-two goals for Airdrie, a hundred and thirty-two for Newcastle United, and up to the start of the present season fifty-seven for Chelsea.

I can't give his Cup goals. In International matches for Scotland Gallacher has scored twenty-two goals. Altogether, not a bad record for a centre-forward who was turned down, in his early days, by several clubs because he was too small.

"LINESMAN."

He was unaware so far that Mr. Spofford had arrived, and came back to the Form-room expecting to find Wingate there. But seeing the little, spectacled man at Mr. Quelch's desk with a pointer in his hand he guessed at once who he was—or, to be more correct, who he wasn't.

"Who are you?" rapped Mr. Spofford sharply.

"Wharton, sir."

"Indeed! Then you are head boy of this Form?"

"Yes, sir. Are you Mr. Spofford?" asked Harry.

"Should I be here if I were not?" snapped the new master. "Have a little sense, Wharton!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Harry, his cheeks reddening.

"Why were you not in the Form-room, Wharton?"

"Wingate sent me to look for Wibley, sir. I can't find him anywhere."

"As he has leave from class, that is not surprising. You should not have been absent from the Form-room."

"But Wingate sent me, sir!"

"You should not have been absent from the Form-room!" repeated Mr. Spofford, raising his squeaky voice.

"Do not argue with me, Barton."

"My name is Wharton, sir!"

"Did you say Barton or Carter?" It seemed that Mr. Spofford was a little deaf.

"I said Wharton!"

"Whatever your name may be, you should not be absent from the Form-room in lesson-time. I shall punish you, Carter."

"What? I've told you—"

"That will do!" Mr. Spofford stepped from the Form master's desk, pointer in his hand, and pointed to a chair. "Bend over that chair, Carter."

"You are not going to cane me!" exclaimed Wharton in angry amazement.

"That is exactly what I am going to do! Bend over that chair immediately. I shall not wait!" rapped Mr. Spofford.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry breathlessly.

"Potty!" murmured Johnny Bull in wonder.

"The pottiffulness must be terrific."

"I am waiting for you to bend over that chair, Baker!" rapped Mr. Spofford, with another variation of the head boy's name.

"But I was sent from the Form-room, sir, by a prefect—"

"For the last time, Barker, I refuse to be argued with. Will you bend over that chair, or will you not?" thundered Mr. Spofford.

Harry Wharton gazed at him. Whether the man was a fool, whether he was a tyrant, or whether he was both, was difficult to determine. But there was no doubt that he was in earnest. And there was only one thing for a Lower Fourth fellow to do when he was ordered to bend over by his Form master. The captain of the Remove drew a deep, deep breath, and, with glinting eyes, bent over the chair.

Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!

could not contain that expression of his disapproval. Harry Wharton rose after the infliction, his face set, as Nugent's voice rang through the Form-room.

Mr. Spofford spun round towards the class.

"Who spoke?" he rapped.

Frank Nugent jumped up.

"I did!" he retorted hotly.

"And what did you say?"

"I said shame, and it is a shame—a rotten shame!" exclaimed Frank, with flashing eyes. "And I say it again—shame!"

"Hear, hear!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Shame!" howled Johnny Bull, ready to back up his chums.

"The shamefulness is terrific!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Mr. Spofford blinked at the Co. through his glasses. The Remove sat breathless. They had hoped that Spofford would be an improvement on Quelch. Obviously he was a change for the worse. Quelch was severe, but this little spectacled gentleman seemed not only severe, but utterly unreasonable, which Quelch never was.

"I see," said Mr. Spofford. "This Form has taken advantage of my old friend Quelch's illness to get out of hand. Rebellion is rife in this Form. I shall put it down. I shall put it down with a strong hand. Nugent, stand out before the Form!"

Nugent stared, and the Remove stared. So far, Nugent's name had not been mentioned. How did the man know his name was Nugent? It seemed rather like magic to the juniors.

"Do you hear me?" hooted Mr. Spofford.

Slowly Frank came out before the Form. Mr. Spofford pointed to the cane chair with the pointer.

"Bend over, Nugent!" he snapped.

Frank hesitated.

"Don't!" called out Herbert Vernon-Smith.

That really was the limit, and the breathless Remove expected Mr. Spofford to go off at the deep end at once. But perhaps he did not hear. He had already shown signs of deafness. Perhaps he chose to be deaf. Anyhow, he took no notice of the Bounder's cheeky call to Nugent.

"You hear me, Nugent!" went on Mr. Spofford. "If you imagine that I am to be trifled with because I am a new master, you will find out your mistake! You will bend over that chair immediately, or I shall report you to your headmaster for disobedience."

Slowly, very slowly, Frank Nugent bent over the chair. Six times the pointer rose and fell, with resounding whacks.

"You need not go back to your place!" said Mr. Spofford. "Stand by the wall, beside Carter."

"I don't know anybody named Carter!" said Nugent.

"I mean Barton."

"I don't know anybody named Barton."

"Stand by the wall at once, or I will cane you again! You, Barker, stand by his side."

Nugent backed to the wall, and Wharton went with him. Then Mr. Spofford called to Bob Cherry.

"Sherry—if your name really is Sherry—"

"My name's Cherry!" growled Bob.

"Stand out before the Form! Very good! Now bend over that chair!" said Mr. Spofford, flourishing the pointer.

Bob Cherry gave him a long, grim look and obeyed. Six whacks were duly administered. Then he was ordered to stand beside Wharton and Nugent.

"Bull, you will now bend over that chair!"

More slowly than the other fellows Johnny Bull obeyed. Quite coolly, Johnny considered whether he could venture to knock the little man spinning. Obviously he couldn't, the penalty for punching a beak being immediate expulsion. Johnny Bull took his six in grim silence.

"Now, Jampot, if your name really is Jampot—"

"My esteemed and ridiculous name is Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, venerable sahib!" answered the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Bend over that chair!"

The dusky junior bent over in his turn, and in his turn took six. Then he was waved to the wall.

All the Famous Five had been whopped now, as—if they had happened to remember—Wibley had told them they would be.

They stood in a row by the Form-room wall, with crimson and angry faces, wondering what would happen next under this remarkable and unexpected new master.

"We shall now proceed," said Mr. Spofford, picking up the book that Wingate had laid down on the Form master's desk. "Silence in the class!"

Harry Wharton breathed hard.

"Are we not to go to our places, sir?" he asked.

"What? What?" Mr. Spofford blinked round at him, and put his hand to his ear. Evidently, to the Remove, he was rather deaf. "Did you speak?"

"I asked you if we were not to go to our places?"

"Certainly not! Stand where you are! You will stand by the wall during this lesson like the naughty boys you are."

"Naughty boys!" gasped Bob Cherry, and there was a chuckle in the Remove.

Remove fellows, of course, were "men," and the Famous Five were very important men. To be called "naughty boys," and to be ordered to stand in a row by the wall like naughty infants in a prep school was absolutely intolerable. If Mr. Spofford had wanted to make the Famous Five feel thoroughly sick he could not have calculated better. Perhaps he did.

"What is the lesson?" squeaked Mr. Spofford, addressing the Remove generally.

"Latin grammar, sir!" said Skinner.

"Very well! Each of you will write a paper on the first conjugation," said Mr. Spofford. "Proceed."

The Remove proceeded in that rather unusual way. Certainly this was easier than working with Quelch.

Mr. Spofford sat at Mr. Quelch's desk. He had sorted out a volume of Shakespeare from that desk, which was used in the literature class. He opened it and began to read. The juniors stared at him and at one another. For a Form master to sit reading Shakespeare during class was rather odd; though it was not really odd for William Wibley to do so, Wib being much more interested in Shakespeare than in Latin grammar.

"Looks like an easy thing for us if this goes on," murmured Skinner to Snoop.

Sidney James Snoop nodded and grinned.

"Wharton's crew ain't enjoying it!" he whispered.

Skinner chuckled.

"Hardly! If the new man's down on that crew, more power to his giddy elbow, Snoop!"

"What-ho!" chuckled Snoop.

The Famous Five, with infuriated faces, remained standing by the wall. The rest of the Remove took it remarkably easy. The new beak, deeper and

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Wibley Keeps His Word!

"SHAME!"

It was Frank Nugent's voice. Nugent watched his chum's

"whopping" with his eyes gleaming with indignation. It was so unjust, so unreasonable, that Frank

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"Bend over that chair!" snapped Mr Spofford. The Famous Five bent in turn and each received "six." "Now you will all stand by the wall during this lesson like the naughty boys you are," said the new master. "Naughty boys!" gasped Bob Cherry, and there was a chuckle in the Remove, while the five stood with crimson and angry faces.

deeper in the entrancing pages of Shakespeare, seemed to have forgotten all about his class.

There was a buzz of talk in the Form-room, of which Mr. Spofford took no notice whatever. Lord Mauleverer even dozed off. Billy Bunter gave most of his attention to a packet of toffee, with which he would never have ventured to deal under the gimlet-eye of Quelch. The Bounder talked football with Squiff and Tom Brown and Peter Todd. Skinner read a pink paper, hardly taking the trouble to hide it behind his desk, and calculated the odds of his favourite "geegees." It was quite an easy time for the Remove—not to say a slack and lazy time. The Form's opinion of the new master improved. If this sort of thing was going to continue, it seemed, after all, that he was a big improvement on Quelch!

Only the Famous Five did not share that general satisfaction. They stood on one leg, then on the other, then on the one again, tired and dismal and savagely furious. No fellow likes being held up to ridicule, and the great chiefs of the Remove were being made to look utterly ridiculous before all the Form. Skinner & Co. rejoiced in their discomfiture, and the other fellows seemed more or less amused. The feelings of the Famous Five towards the new master were almost homicidal.

It had lasted about an hour when there was a tap at the Form-room door; it opened, and the majestic figure of the Head appeared!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Startling!

DR. LOCKE stepped into the Remove room. His arrival had a startling effect.

The juniors, lounging and chattering among the forms, suddenly pulled

themselves together, and re-assumed their usual orderly aspect. Mr. Spofford, sprawled half-across Quelch's desk reading Shakespeare, dropped that great poet as if Shakespeare had suddenly become red-hot, and almost bounded to his feet. Harry Wharton & Co., crimson before now, glowed positively scarlet as they were caught in their ridiculous position by their headmaster.

Dr. Locke's glance sought Mr. Spofford. The Sixth, having been handed over to Mr. Lascelles for mathematics, the Head was at liberty; and he had come along to see the temporary master of the Remove, and to greet him with his usual courtesy—though probably rather surprised that Mr. Spofford had taken over his duties in this rather informal manner! William Wibley had plenty of nerve—heaps of nerve—tons of nerve—but he needed it all, under the calm gaze of his headmaster.

For a second, panic very nearly seized on the disguised young rascal, and he felt strongly inclined to bolt. But that passed in a moment. He was "for it" now—and he had to go through with it. His hope of eluding an interview with the Head had been faint; and now, clearly, it was not to be eluded. Wibley screwed up his courage to the sticking-point, and advanced to meet the Head.

"Mr. Spofford?" asked Dr. Locke courteously, but with a rather keen glance lingering all over the little man.

Something unusual struck him, as it had struck the Remove, about this gentleman. He could not have put his finger on what it was! But it was there!

"Precisely so, Dr. Locke," said the new master, with a deep bow. "Hearing that you were engaged with the Sixth—"

"I quite understand," said Dr.

Locke, though as a matter of fact he didn't quite. "I should, however, have preferred—but that is no matter! My colleague, Mr. Quelch, recommended you most strongly to me, Mr. Spofford."

"Quelch has known me a very long time, sir," said the new man, with perfect truth. "I believe he has a very flattering opinion of my abilities," he added, perhaps not quite so veraciously.

"Perhaps you will step to my study with me, sir!" said the Head—and Wibley groaned inwardly. That personal interview, and a personal "jaw," could not be dodged. "The class may be left with the head boy for a time. Mr. Quelch's head boy, Wharton! Why—what—"

Catching sight of the five blushing juniors lining the wall, Dr. Locke gazed at them blankly. His brow became stern.

"Wharton! What does this mean? I trust that you are not playing some absurd prank on Mr. Spofford, because he is new here."

"Not at all, sir!" said Harry, with set lips. "Mr. Spofford ordered us to stand in a row by the wall, sir."

"The orderfulness was surprising and terrific, honoured sahib!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Greatly surprised, Dr. Locke turned to Mr. Spofford again. The playful Wibley rather wished that he hadn't carried his little game with the Famous Five quite so far. But it was too late to wish that now.

"Mr. Spofford!" The Head's manner was very stately, "I scarcely understand—"

"A punishment, sir, for impertinence!" said Mr. Spofford. "I was unwilling—hem—to use more severe measures on my first day here—"

(Continued on page 16.)

ENGAGEMENTS CANCELLED

Skinner's friends are hereby informed that he will be unable to fulfil any engagements until the middle of next week. That's what I'm going to knock him into when I see him!—
J. BULL, Study No. 14, Remove.



THE NEW Greyfriars

No. 56 (New Series).

EDITED BY H. H. H.

COKER MAJOR STEPS IN

Helping Minor Against Rebels

The sensational appointment of Coker minor of the Sixth to the rank of prefect, to which we referred last week, has led to unlooked-for developments this week.

Coker major of the Fifth has taken a hand in the game—but a quite different hand from what was generally anticipated!

When the appointment was first made, Horace Coker was just as much against it as anyone else. In his opinion it was quite bad enough to have a young brother in a higher Form than himself without having that young brother promoted to the rank of prefect. But for the fact that Potter and Greene strapped him to a chair in his study till he thought better of it, Horace would undoubtedly have gone to the Head to register his strongest protest!

His attitude seems to have changed now, however.

Coker minor's difficulty in handling fellows bigger and stronger than himself has not in any way lessened this week, and at the beginning of the week he had to endure persecution in plenty. That persecution has now almost ceased—thanks to Coker major!

The first to find out Horace's new outlook was Skinner. Coker minor told him to take fifty lines and Skinner asked where he should take them. Coker minor's answer to that bit of "cheek" was to order Skinner to bend over—to which Skinner cheerfully responded "Rats!"

The next moment Skinner thought an earthquake had struck him.

It was Coker major!

Several other fellows had the same experience the same day, and it soon became known that Coker major was following his prefect-minor round the school, giving a large-sized sock on the physiognomy to any man not treating his prefect-minor with proper respect! Once or twice Coker minor was heard to protest, but his protests had no effect whatever on his fraternal relative! Once the great Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form, gets going, there's no holding him.

As we go to press, the position is that Coker minor is being treated with more respect than any other prefect in the school. But you can take our word for it, that position won't last for ever. Our objections to Coker minor as a prefect are as strong as ever, and Coker major's not going to alter them.

Something sudden is going to happen to Horace James Coker before long!

DICKY NUGENT'S WEEKLY WISDOM

Paget says he has invented a pen which generates enough electricity in writing 100 lines to keep a small lamp burning for 5 minutes.

I've noticed before that Paget is a chap who's inclined to make "light" of his work!

MY WORST & BEST EXPERIENCE

by HARRY WHARTON



Readers of the "Herald" who know how widely I have travelled may be surprised to know that both my worst and best experiences occurred within the four walls of Greyfriars.

My worst experience was in the chair of the visiting dentist who sees to our teeth once a month. I went to him with an aching molar. He decided to give me gas and extract the offending tooth at once. Off I sailed into unconsciousness at the first few whiffs of gas, blissfully imagining that it would all be over when I came round again.

Imagine my horror when I awoke to find that it was by no means all over! My tooth was only half out, the dentist's forceps were still in my mouth, and the dentist himself seemed to be missing. The pain in my gum was positively alarming!

When I sat up, I saw that the dentist was just getting up from the floor, nursing his own jaw. I guessed in an instant what had happened—I'd had an underdose of the gas and semi-consciously landed out at him before he'd had time to finish the operation! That, as it turned out, was exactly what had happened.

Once he was on his feet again, the dentist soon whipped out the tooth—without resort to gas this time! But the pain I endured in that brief intervening period makes me regard it as easily my worst experience!

My best experience was being elected captain of the Remove only a short time after my arrival at Greyfriars. Bulstrode, my opponent for the captaincy, had previously held it unchallenged for some time and resented my intrusion. The election campaign was a very bitter one in consequence.

To finish up the victor and to hear the cheers of my colleagues as they "chaired" me—to know that so many fellows had entrusted me with the responsibility of leading the Form—was for me the best experience I have ever had and has remained so to this day.

(Next week Billy Bunter will tell you his worst and best experience. Don't miss it!—Ed.)

FOOTER TEAM REQUIRES FIXTURES

We're only an apology for a team really and the fixtures we want are with teams we can lick—if such teams exist, which is doubtful!—Write C. R. TEMPLE, Upper Fourth.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



On one historic occasion Bunter actually took Harry Wharton & Co. to Bunter Court—but it turned out that Bunter had rented it in Lord Mauleverer's name. There was trouble for Bunter!

Peter Hazeldene is a first-class goalkeeper, even more brilliant than "Squiff" on occasion—but he is a moody fellow, who might let half a dozen shots beat him when his temper is roused.

When Gerald Loder of the Six found treacle and ink in his favourite slippers, he raged and down the Remove passed like a tiger. Nobody confessed, however, and Loder is still raging.

"WON BY A NECK!"

Greyfriars v. Rookwood

By Harold Skiff

Why the thump the "Herald" call on me to write up this match, goodness only knows! I fully admit that what I know about football would fit into a Museum. If it was a question of Lad's chances in the Swiss now, I'd be much more able to say, ever, here goes!

Twenty-two determined fellows duly paraded for the contest from the "Off!" it was all out to win. On the Rookwood looked good, successive victories to the Greyfriars it was soon seen that the Rookwood was a sure snip after all. Greyfriars led the field and Hurrewing moved beautifully, losing ground rounding, resulting in the failure of the Rookwood, dead cert more than one of jockeying for position, cantered to the fore and the Rookwood soon tailed off.

Rookwood were strong in part, but weaker in the middle. Greyfriars displayed no weakness where, but with Wharton's help made a great race of it.

In the second half, Coker minor, being forced to retire, never, fought it out despatched. Greyfriars emerged right on the post, winning the event by a neck.

Stott says I've forgotten that Greyfriars scored 2, but I'm not sure what that has to do with the result.

(Take Skinner with you, chaps—he's leg-pulling! Fact is, he knows plenty of ball and plays quite well himself—when he's not giddy goat at the same time.)

As Herald

EXTRA
GOOD
EDITION

ED BY HARY WHARTON.

October 28th, 1933.

TABLOID TUCK.
The invenshun of the age! Each lozenge guaranteed to kontain as much nurrishment as a 5-corse dinner! Why waste time eating? Change your old-fashioned tuck hampers for Tabloid Tuck TO-DAY!—PROFESSOR BUNTER, Tabloid Tuck Speshalist, Study No. 7, Remove.

N BY A ECK!

rs v. Rookwood

arold Skier

mp the "H..." should write up to Rookwood... only know I cheer-... what I can't know... would fill the British... was a queen of Bonny... in the Swin... Stakes, ... ch more at me. How-... !

determined... colts... or the cont... and right... "it was clear that they... in. On the... of form, ... ked good... with three... ries to their... edit. But... n that they... aren't such... r all. Grey... quickly... ad Hurree... gh on the... eautifully... times, but... ounding the... end, this... failure of... that looked a... than once. After a lot... or position... Rookwood... e fore and... here was a... front of the... posts, but it

ere strong... the fore-... er in the... quarters, ... ayed no class... style any-... a Wharton... the saddle... ce of it.

l half, Ch... injured a... ny Silver... a stern, both... retire. The... rest, how-... out despera... to the... rs emerge... victorious... winning a... most exciting

o forgotten... mention... scored 7... goals and... ut I'm d... ed if I see... o do with... Do you?

er with a... gain of salt, ... g-pulling... as usual. ... cs plenty... about foot-... cs quite a... fair game... he's not... playing the... he same... time!—Ed.)

TUCK-HUNTING SEASON BEGINS

Billy Bunter Discusses Prospects

At this time of the year, when the leaves are falling and the shadow of winter draws nigh, the thoughts of all serious tuck-hunters turn to the forthcoming season's prospects.

Inevitably the thought arises "What sort of 'bags' are we likely to get this year in comparison with previous years?" Fellow tuck-hunters, you can take it from me, as one who has made a detailed investigation of all the best preserves, that the



prospects this year are as good as ever—if not better!

For the connoisseur, there are, as usual, almost unlimited supplies of the best tuck in the land in the eggclusive quarters of the Sixth. It must be admitted, however, that in these happy hunting grounds the intrepid egg-plover take his life in his hands. But if he is willing to risk being slawtered at any moment, his rewards are beyond the wildest dreams of the average sportsman.

In the upper reaches of the

Fifth passidge, tuck abounds. Unfortunately, the increasing activities of regular tuck-snoopers in this part have put the beasts on their guard, and it becomes more and more difficult to obtain a bag worthy of the efforts eggspended.

Quite good results are to be obtained in the Shell, though the wise huntsman employs strategy to obtain them. Personally, I find that a little judishus ventriloquism is very effective in getting the fellows to scurry away on some false trail, leaving the field clear.

As to the Remove passidge, I'm reluctantly coming to the conclusion that it's a hopeless proposishun. Tuck, which was so plentiful at one time, seems to have disappeared altogether. Now and again, the sportsman hears rumours of it, but, alas, long before he can reach it, it has vannished.

Still, taking it all round, there's plenty of sport about for those who look for it, and I fancy it will be a long time before I retire from the game. Some favour big game hunting, others favour whale hunting, and head hunting has its enthewsiastic followers. But to those who have eggspierenced the deleerious joys of tuck hunting, these piffing pastimes are a meer bagatell!

PARADOX

Some Third-Formers had the nerve to pinch a pair of steps belonging to Gosling to enable them to get over the school wall in a bound-breaking expedition. The Head has taken steps to see that the steps are not taken again!

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!



of the Sixth... ink in his... e raged up... ove passage... ve confessed... still raging!

Told by the school doctor that he suffered from myopia, W. G. Bunter "fopped" in the study armchair and refused to budge until Toddy informed him that myopia only meant short-sightedness!

Frank Courtenay labours like a Trojan to keep the Highcliffe XI "up to scratch." His efforts are rewarded, for Highcliffe are a rattling good team now. Courtenay says they will soon approach championship form!

Bathing, followed by a picnic, was much favoured by the Famous Five last summer. Bunter "stuck" to them—and shivered in a bathing costume for the sake of the feed which followed!

MASKED JUDGE'S AMAZING VERDICT

Prisoner Pardoned—Prosecutor Punished

Fellows who happened to be in the Remove Court of Justice last Tuesday got the shock of their lives when the judge walked on to the bench wearing a large black mask. He explained that owing to the anonymous threats which had recently been received by junior judges, it had been deemed advisable to keep the identity of the judge a secret.

The particular case which had brought out this surprising precaution was the prosecution of Percy Bolsover, pugilist, by William Stott, who claimed five shillings damages for alleged assault.

Bolsover did not surrender to his bail and was accordingly tried in his absence.

Stott said that the assault was brutal and entirely unprovoked.

Witnesses were called to testify to the assault, and Dr. Tom Brown, police surgeon, certified that prosecutor was suffering from a broken neck, fractured spine, dislocated ankles, and knock knees.

This concluded the evidence, and everybody in court felt confident that Bolsover would be sentenced to a long term of imprisonment and Stott would obtain his five bob damages.

Imagine the general surprise when the judge calmly pro-

nounced the verdict "Not Guilty"—and, not content with that, turned round to the prosecutor and sentenced him to twenty strokes with the fives bat!

It was not till the executioner was half-way through his job that Judge Wharton, who had been missing, turned up, looking very excited, and tore off the other judge's mask—to reveal the well-known face of Bolsover himself!

Wharton explained that Bolsover had locked him up in the woodshed, and it was only the accidental arrival of Gosling that enabled him to get away as soon as he had.

On Wharton's orders, Bolsover was placed under arrest and tried summarily. Needless to say, the second verdict was rather different from the one Bolsover had arrived at himself!

For assaulting Stott he was ordered to pay five bob damages and costs and to go to penal servitude for ten years.

For imprisoning Judge Wharton he was sentenced to 50 with the cricket-stump and ten years' penal servitude.

For impersonating a judge he was sentenced to ten years on the treadmill.

The sentences were afterwards commuted to one of buying ginger-pop all round.

'Lonzy's Little Letters

Dear Editor,—In the course of a recent peripatetic perambulation in a pedestrian capacity, I encountered a juvenile riding a specimen of those vehicular contrivances characterised by the internal combustion method of propulsion terminologically described in the vernacular as motor-cycles, who pertinently addressed to me the interrogatory remark "Why don't you get your hair cut?"

Since there may be general interest in any responsive asseveration I effectuate, may I enunciate the explication that the reason for my retention of such an inordinate quantity of hirsute adornment is my mistrust lest the peculiar idiosyncrasies and peccadilloes of the tonsorial practitioners should render my facial appearance incongruously inappropriate to my intellectual potentialities.

Explanatorily yours,

ALONZO TODD.

(Lonzy's merely saying that he lets his hair grow because he can't trust the barbers to trim it nicely. But how he says it!—Ed.)



(Continued from page 13.)

Which was rather cool, considering that the Famous Five had been whopped, one after another!

Dr. Locke opened his lips to tell Mr. Spofford what he thought of such an idea! He closed them again with the words unuttered. He was far too experienced a headmaster to "rag" a subordinate in the presence of the boys. He decided to speak very plainly in the seclusion of his study.

"You boys may go to your places now!" added Mr. Spofford.

Quietly the Famous Five went to their places.

"Wharton!" said the Head. "You will remain in charge of this Form-room for a few minutes."

"Yes, sir!"

"Mr. Spofford, if you will kindly come with me!"

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said the disguised Wibley, suppressing a groan. Neither in his own character of Wibley, nor in his assumed character of Spofford, had the Head's study any attraction for the spoofer of the Remove. But he had to go.

Dr. Locke walked majestically out. After him walked the little gentleman. Herbert Vernon-Smith's hand came out of his pocket, as both backs were turned. In Smithy's hand was a "googly" ball—one of those little balls which, if bounced, will jump in the most erratic manner. As a missile, however, a googly ball will fly as accurately as any other ball; and the Bounder was a deadly marksman.

Whiz!

Mr. Spofford gave a jump and a sudden yell as the little ball banged on the back of his head. That was Smithy's retaliation for Mr. Spofford's cheeky remarks concerning his name.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Smithy, you ass—"

"Oh, Smithy!" gasped Tom Redwing.

Mr. Spofford, taken quite by surprise by that bang on the back of the head, naturally clutched at the back of the head with his hand. The ball dropped behind him, and, bouncing on the floor, zigzagged away into the air in the manner of googly balls and dropped among the desks. But nobody noticed the googly ball. All eyes fixed, as if fascinated, on the back of Mr. Spofford's head as he clutched it. For under that sudden clutch, Mr. Spofford's hair was seen to rise, as if it was not fastened to his head—as, indeed, it was not! The sight of a man's hair rising on his head, like quills upon the fretful porcupine, was so astounding that the Remove gaped open-mouthed.

"I say, you fellows!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I say, he's got a wig on."

"The wigfulness is terrific!" gasped Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Dr. Locke glanced round at the new master, aware that something was on—though unaware that something also was nearly off!

"What—?" he began.

He broke off, staring. Wibley's wig was fastened on his head with dabs of gum. But his sudden grasp at it as the googly ball tapped had snapped the

gum, and the wig had shifted. As it lowered behind it rose in front, under the amazed eyes of the headmaster, revealing a trace of Wibley's own tallowy-coloured hair.

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Head.

"Oh!" gasped Wibley.

Terror seized him! Very nearly he turned tail and ran—which would have been the culmination of an astonishing episode! But he restrained himself! The danger of being found out brought to his rather thoughtless mind the consequences of being found out—assuredly a terrific flogging, and possibly the "sack." Wibley, with a great effort, pulled himself together.

A gentle pressure of his skilled hand replaced the wig where it ought to have been. He had been within an ace of exposure—but now he was Mr. Spofford, safe and sound!

From the Remove room came a chuckle. Dr. Locke glanced in at the doorway, and the chuckle died away into deadly solemnity. Then, with a cold and contained expression on his face, Dr. Locke walked on down the passage, and Mr. Spofford followed him.

Dr. Locke himself had a magnificent head of silver hair, and perhaps he could make allowances for a man whose hirsute adornments had faded before their time. Still, he did not like it! Prout, the master of the Fifth, was getting dreadfully bald; but it had never occurred to Prout to conceal the same with borrowed hair! Already something unusual about this man had struck the Head—and now that he had discovered that Mr. Spofford sported a wig he was feeling glad that that gentleman was engaged only as a temporary master; and resolved that his engagement should be very temporary indeed. Really, it was not the thing!

What Dr. Locke would have thought, had he known that that wig covered, not a man's bald pate, but a schoolboy practical joker's own hair, cannot be said. He might have had a fit!

When they were gone, the Removites chuckled loud and long.

"It's a jolly old wig!" chortled Skinner. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"And he never stopped to ask who biffed him on the crummet!" grinned the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's a jolly queer fish altogether," said Bob Cherry. "Can't say I like him."

"The likefulness is not preposterous," said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Not a bad old bean, though," said Bolsover major. "He's been giving us a jolly easy time this afternoon."

"That's not his duty!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, blow his duty! We get enough of that from Quelch!"

"Wharton won't like him!" chortled Skinner. "Wharton's a naughty little boy who has to stand up by the wall."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Remove.

Wharton crimsoned.

"That's enough, Skinner!" he snapped. "I have to take dashed cheek from a beak, but not from you."

"Naughty!" said Skinner.

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

"Who's a naughty little boy? Who's put to stand by the wall? He, he, he!"

"One little, two little, three little, four little, five little naughty boys!" chanted Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So you think it's frightfully funny?" snorted the captain of the Remove.

"Well, if it's funny, you can have your share of the fun! Go and stand by the wall, Skinner!"

"Wha-a-t?" gasped Skinner.

"Go and stand by the wall!" repeated Wharton grimly.

"You silly ass! Do you think you can make a fool of me?"

"I think that I'm head boy of the Form, and that the headmaster has just left me in charge, and I think that you'll do exactly as I tell you!" answered the captain of the Remove. "Get on with it."

"I won't!" yelled Skinner furiously.

"You will!"

And Skinner did, as the captain of the Remove grasped him, hooked him out from the desks, and jammed him against the Form-room wall. Then he picked up the pointer.

"Stand there," he said, "or I'll give you six, the same as Spofford did me!"

"You can't!" shrieked Skinner.

"Try it on, and see!"

And Skinner stood by the wall—with an expression on his face that made the Removites roar.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Present for Prout!

MR. SPOFFORD—alias William Wibley—stood in Mr. Quelch's study looking out of Mr. Quelch's window. He was not feeling quite so merry and bright as when he had arrived at Greyfriars. The interview with the headmaster in his study had left him rather limp. Wibley was feeling the strain.

Dr. Locke had not been suspicious or doubting. It was really impossible for the headmaster to suspect, or even dream of, such a spoofer as the practical joker of the Remove was playing. But he had been uneasy, dissatisfied, vaguely perturbed. Wonderfully as Wibley played his part, convincing as he was, there was, perhaps, something lacking. Only the fact that Mr. Spofford had been fully answered for by Mr. Quelch induced the Head to engage him at all, even for a few days. He had complete faith in Mr. Quelch's judgment. Yet he could not help thinking that, for once, Quelch's judgment had been at fault. He was not satisfied with Mr. Spofford!

Wibley, well aware of it, had been glad to escape from the interview undetected. Now, in Mr. Quelch's study, of which he had taken possession as Quelch's substitute, Wibley was wondering whether he had better "chuck" it and go while the going was good, so to speak. It was easy enough to walk out of the gates of Greyfriars as Mr. Spofford, and walk in again as William Wibley—leaving the disappearance of the new master a mystery.

But Wibley was not going to "chuck" it.

Playing Form master was too tremendous a lark for that! And the fellows who had ragged his precious "props" had not yet been made to sit up sufficiently for their sins. And now that he had got through that dreaded interview with the Head, he could avoid that gentleman.

Wibley of the Remove, of course, would be missed! But Mr. Spofford was Wibley's Form master, and could give him leave if he liked.

Wibley chuckled at the idea of giving himself leave.

Wibley was going to carry on! This was the biggest spoofer he had ever brought off—the greatest triumph of the Greyfriars impersonator. He was going to carry on, and chance it!

The Remove were out now. After coming away from the Head, Mr. Spofford had only looked into the Form-room to dismiss the Form. The Head

had shaken his nerve a little! But Wib was himself again now.

Tap! The door opened, and Mr. Prout, master of the Fifth, rolled in. Mr. Spofford turned from the window warily on his guard.

"Permit me," said Prout, with his plump politeness, "to introduce myself—Paul Prout, master of the Fifth here! I heard of your arrival, Mr. Spofford."

"Delighted to meet you, sir!" said Mr. Spofford.

Wib was not feeling delighted! Prout was an inquisitive, talkative, rather meddling old gentleman, and Wibley

would have preferred to keep him at a distance. But no member of Dr. Locke's staff had ever been successful in keeping Prout at a distance!

"Hearing," said Prout, "that you were an old friend of my colleague Quelch—"

"We played together," said Wibley gravely, "as boys!"

"Indeed, sir!"

"As innocent infants, sir!" said Wibley.

"Oh! Quite! Yes, yes!" said Prout.

"Well, I am about to visit Quelch in

the sanatorium—a little chat, I feel sure, will cheer him."

Wibley did not feel sure of that! Prout's chats were not really cheering. But he nodded assent.

"Pray do not let me detain you, Mr. Prout," he said.

"I was thinking," said Mr. Prout, "that as Quelch is your old friend, you might like to walk down with me."

Wibley repressed a jump.

"No doubt Quelch will expect you—it will be a pleasure to him," said Prout.

(Continued on next page.)

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

YOUR Editor is a very busy man these days, chums, believe me, for I've been planning another first class, gilt edged, top hole surprise for you fellows. That's got you all guessing, I bet! That it will cause a great sensation I'm thoroughly convinced; that it will please every reader of the MAGNET is a certainty. As you all know the good old MAGNET has always led the way when it has come to the question of presenting FREE GIFTS to its readers. But it's going one better this time! As to the nature of this stupendous FREE GIFT SCHEME I am saying no more until next week. Don't miss my important announcement then, as it will affect every single one of you. In the meantime, tell all your pals that something extra good and extra big is on the way to MAGNET readers.

FROM "Somewhere in Wales" comes a letter from E. D. A. G., who tells me he is greatly interested in motor racing, and he wants to know something about

FAMOUS MOTOR RACES.

First of all, regarding his query about the Tourist Trophy—which, as you all know, is run in Northern Ireland—this is, of course, an International race, and cars from all parts of the world compete in it.

Each country has its own particular motor races, which are known by different names. France's most famous motor road race is called the "Grand Prix," but that country also holds the longest motor racing event in the world, known as the Grand Prix d'Endurance.

The Targa Florio event, held in Sicily, is one of the most thrilling in the world, for the cars climb from sea-level to a height of four thousand feet, by means of innumerable hairpin bends. Most of the cars entered drop out before the course is completed. One of the shortest, but decidedly thrilling, races is the Grand Prix of Monaco, in which the cars race madly through the streets of Monte Carlo. The circuit is not two miles in length, and cars have to complete it one hundred times, racing past gardens, over tram-lines, through tunnels, along the quayside, and past the railway station, flanked by buildings practically all the way.

Argentine, Sweden, Morocco, and countless other nations also have their famous motor races, which are open to all international drivers.

The reader who asks for the above information also suggests that I should devote space in the MAGNET to motor

racing. I am afraid that I cannot spare any room at present, but I will bear his request in mind. What do other readers think?

BILLY BUNTER seems very much to the fore this week, and he has succeeded in squeezing himself into my chat. "Fatty Barnes," of London, sends me a letter accusing me of making Bunter unpopular! "Fatty" tells me that he is also a fat boy, but he is quite popular with his chums at school, who often stand him tuck to make him fatter!

He tells me he is twelve years of age, and weighs over ten stone. But he can't beat

BILLY BUNTER'S RECORD!

Billy is still a long way ahead of him, as you will see from the next reply to a query from H. L., of Kyabram, Victoria, Australia. He wants to know the respective proportions of Billy Bunter, "Tubby" Muffin, Fatty Wynn, and Baggy Trimble. Right, here goes:

Billy Bunter is 4 ft. 9 in. in height, and weighs 14 st. 12½ lb.

"Tubby" Muffin is 5 ft. in height, and weighs 12 st. 10 lb.

Fatty Wynn is 5 ft. 2 in. in height, and weighs 14 st. 8 lb.

Baggy Trimble is 4 ft. 11 in. in height, and weighs 10 st. 4 lb.

So, you see, Billy Bunter is the shortest and the heaviest—which means that he is the most like a barrel!

The next query this week comes from "Magnetised," of Stratford, who asks me

HOW TO MAKE FREEZING MIXTURES.

It appears to me that "Magnetised" has the wrong formula, as he has been unsuccessful in his attempts. As a general rule, whenever solids are dissolved in water a fall in temperature is caused. Common salt and snow, for instance, form a freezing material, and if these two are mixed in equal weights the liquid formed has a temperature of about minus 20 degrees Centigrade. If four parts of calcium chloride are mixed with three parts of snow the liquid falls to about minus 50 degrees Centigrade.

Another freezing mixture is formed of six parts of ammonium nitrate in ten parts of water. If solid carbon dioxide is dissolved in ether or chloroform, a temperature of minus 77 degrees Centigrade is obtained. For ordinary household use,

such as the freezing of ice-cream, a mixture of salt and water will suffice.

The same reader asks me what grey hearthstone is and where it comes from. It is an ordinary tough rock of a coarse type which is quarried in the same manner as any other stone.

HERE comes a query which "strikes home" to me! "Interested," of Birmingham, wants to know

WHERE WAS THE FLEET PRISON?

Well, I am sitting not far from its site now! The Fleet Prison stood on the east side of Farringdon Street and was built in the twelfth century. It took its name from the Fleet River, which—now covered in—still runs underground past my office. The prison was burned down by Wat Tyler, rebuilt, burned down again in the Great Fire, rebuilt, and burned down again by the Gordon rioters in 1780. Once more it was rebuilt, but was eventually pulled down in 1845.

It is strange to think that your Editor is now occupying a "den" practically in the same position as the prison which once housed so many authors and journalists that a famous writer described it as "the Haunt of the Muses."

Many famous works of literature were conceived and written in the Fleet Prison—and the tradition is still being carried on!

When I look through the pile of letters on my desk and see how enthusiastic my readers are I realise how much you fellows think of the MAGNET in general, and Frank Richards' stories in particular. "I like these stories better than any other school stories ever written," says an Australian reader. "I think Frank Richards is the finest author of boys' stories," says another chum from Scotland. "I hope to go on reading the MAGNET for years and years," writes a Canadian.

I could fill an entire issue of this paper with the many wonderful things my readers say! You all know what to expect when you get hold of your copy, and you won't be disappointed next week when you read:

"THE GREYFRIARS GUY!"

By Frank Richards.

When I say that this splendid "Fifth of November" story is worthy to rank with this popular author's best you know as much as I could possibly tell you about it. Our long Greyfriars stories have only one standard by which you can judge them, and that is—the best ever! So look out for a treat next week, chums.

Of course, there will be another nerve-tingling yarn of adventure, featuring Umzugaan the Mighty, a topical "Greyfriars Herald" supplement, an interesting Soccer talk, and another little chat with my chums.

So order your copy now!

YOUR EDITOR.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,341.

"As you are a stranger here, I shall be delighted to be your guide."

This was very civil of Prout; very civil and very kind. But it produced a deeply dismaying effect on the spoof Mr. Spofford!

"Oh! Ah! Yes!" stammered Wibley.

"Very kind of you, sir—"

"Not at all!" said Prout benevolently.

"A pleasure, Mr. Spofford! Any friend of my valued colleague Quelch—"

"I—I—I think—I have some unpacking to do—"

Prout raised his eyebrows.

"Has your luggage arrived, then?" he asked.

"My—my luggage!"

"I understood that it had been delayed on the railway—"

"Oh! Ah! Yes! But in fact—I mean—I must telephone to the station, to ascertain whether my—my bags have been found—"

"A very good idea," said Prout. "I know the number—I will get it for you, Mr. Spofford!" Prout crossed to the telephone.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Wibley involuntarily. He did not really want to telephone to the railway people about non-existent luggage.

Prout spun round from the telephone, and blinked at him. Prout had never heard a Form master—even a temporary master—ejaculate "Oh crikey!" before. It was an unintentional slip on Wib's part.

"What—what did you say, sir?" gasped Prout.

"I—I said—the fact is, I have some letters to write—" Wibley was getting desperate now. "I see there is ink here—and pens—I think—"

"But surely, sir, you had better telephone—"

"Not at all! I will phone later. At the present moment—"

"I quite understand—at the present moment you would prefer to visit Quelch and see your old friend!" assented Prout. He tacked doorwards again. "Pray come with me—"

"Yes—no—I think—" Wibley was quite desperate; there was no getting rid of Prout, except by drastic measures. He picked up Mr. Quelch's inkpot from the table. "Dear me, there is no ink here—"

"Indeed!" said Prout, approaching. "Quelch is generally very careful in such matters—"

"None!" said Mr. Spofford. "Look!" He waved the inkpot in the air, to show that it was empty, having already ascertained that it was full!

The result was inevitable.

A stream of ink shot out, and caught Mr. Prout fairly under his plump chin. It splashed over his chin, over his necktie and collar, and over his manly chest. It ran down him in trickles. It almost drenched Prout. It was quite a large inkpot, and there was plenty of ink in it—or had been! Now there was none in it—but plenty on Prout!

Prout staggered back, gurgling. Taken utterly by surprise, he staggered helplessly, and sat down on the floor of Mr. Quelch's study, with a bump and a gasp.

"Urrrghh!"

"Upon my word! What have I done?" exclaimed Mr. Spofford. "It— it appears that there was ink in the pot, after all!"

"Wurrghh!"

"My dear sir, it seems that there was ink—"

"It does, sir!" gurgled Prout. "It does! Such an absolutely thoughtless action—grooogh!—such an absolutely stupid and unthinking action—wurrghh! Are you an idiot, sir? Gurrghh!"

"I cannot sufficiently express my regret—"

"Gurrrrghh!"

Prout staggered to his feet. Streaming with ink, he backed to the door. He glared at Mr. Spofford as he went, deeply regretting that he had taken the trouble to call on that gentleman. All Prout's plump politeness left him; washed away, as it were, by the ink.

"Such a stupid action—" he boomed.

"Really, sir—"

"I could almost believe, sir, that the action was intentional!" roared Prout.

Wibley could quite believe it.

"Oh, sir! Really—"

"Pah! I will leave you, sir—I cannot go to Quelch now—I must change, and wash—upon my word! Pah!" snorted Prout.

And he went, gurgling; and the study door closed after him with a slam that ran the length of Masters' Passage. Mr. Spofford grinned. Prout was inky, Prout was wrathful, and Prout was indignant. But he had got rid of Prout, at all events!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Windfall for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"Hold on a minute," said the Bounder. "I'll get him with this loaf!"

"Beast!"

Instead of holding on for a minute Billy Bunter backed out of Study No. 4 in the Remove promptly.

It was tea-time in the Remove, and in Study No. 4—Smithy's study—there was a spread. Smithy and Tom Redwing were entertaining guests—no less distinguished persons than the Famous Five of the Remove.

Had the spread been in Study No. 1, or Study No. 13, probably Billy Bunter would have been allowed to wedge in. But the Famous Five could not give him permission to wedge into another fellow's study; and the Bounder was not the man to let him do it.

Smithy took aim with a loaf, and the fat Owl of the Remove lost no time in getting out of range.

Slam! The Bounder kicked the study door shut. The tea-party in Study No. 4 continued its operations, regardless of Bunter. Which was fearfully exasperating to Bunter, who had only had one tea, and was more than ready for another.

And he had seen the good things in Smithy's study—the Bounder was always lavish on these occasions. It was really a feast of the gods; and Bunter, like a podgy Peri at the gate

of Paradise, found no admittance. It was enough to exasperate any fellow who had only had one tea! Bunter stooped to the keyhole.

"Beast!" he roared, through that aperture.

"Bunter!" came a sharp, squeaky voice.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter, spinning round in alarm. Mr. Spofford was coming along from the stairs.

"What does this mean, Bunter?" demanded Mr. Spofford.

"Oh! Nothing, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I wasn't calling Smithy a beast, sir! I—I was just saying—"

"Open that study door!" said Mr. Spofford.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. He turned and opened the door of Study No. 4.

"I say, you fellows—"

"He gets the loaf this time!" said Vernon-Smith.

And Bunter got it—right on the spot where he had parked his first tea, and had hoped to park his second!

"Yoooop!" spluttered Bunter, staggering back into the arms of Mr. Spofford. "Ow! Beast! Wow! Grooogh!"

"Well hit!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Boys!" roared Mr. Spofford. "How dare you! I repeat, how dare you!" He pushed Bunter aside, and stepped into the doorway. "Such ruffianism as this—"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

Seven juniors jumped to their feet at the unexpected sight of their new Form master.

"Who threw that loaf?" demanded Mr. Spofford. "Was it Smith?"

"Nobody named Smith here, sir," said the Bounder coolly.

"What! What! Your name is Smith, I believe."

"Not at all, sir."

"Then what is your name, boy?"

"Vernon-Smith, sir!" said the Bounder coolly.

"I will not allow you to bandy words with me, Smith!"

"This chap's name really is Vernon-Smith, sir!" said Bob Cherry.

"Do not argue with me, Plum—"

"My name's Cherry!" roared Bob.

"Silence! What is this I see?" exclaimed Mr. Spofford, staring through his gold-rimmed glasses at the well-spread board. "Ham, eggs, cakes, biscuits, tarts, meringues, eclairs, preserved ginger, fruits—"

Upon my word! Did Mr. Quelch allow such orgies in junior studies?"

"Mr. Quelch allowed us to have what we liked for tea, sir!" said Harry Wharton.

He spoke a little diffidently, however. Certainly, the Remove fellows were allowed to buy what they liked at the school shop for tea in their studies. But the Bounder's gorgeous spreads were a little over the limit, all the same. Probably had Quelch looked in he would have disapproved.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Spofford, with a snort. "I fear that you must have taken advantage of the good nature of your Form master. Certainly, nothing of the kind will be allowed under my rule! I will permit no such orgies!"

The Bounder's brow darkened savagely. Mr. Spofford turned to the fat Owl, who was grinning in at the door. It was rather amusing to Billy Bunter to see a feed forbidden, if he could not take a share in it. Bunter little dreamed what was coming!

"Bunter!" rapped Mr. Spofford. "Oh! Yes, sir!"

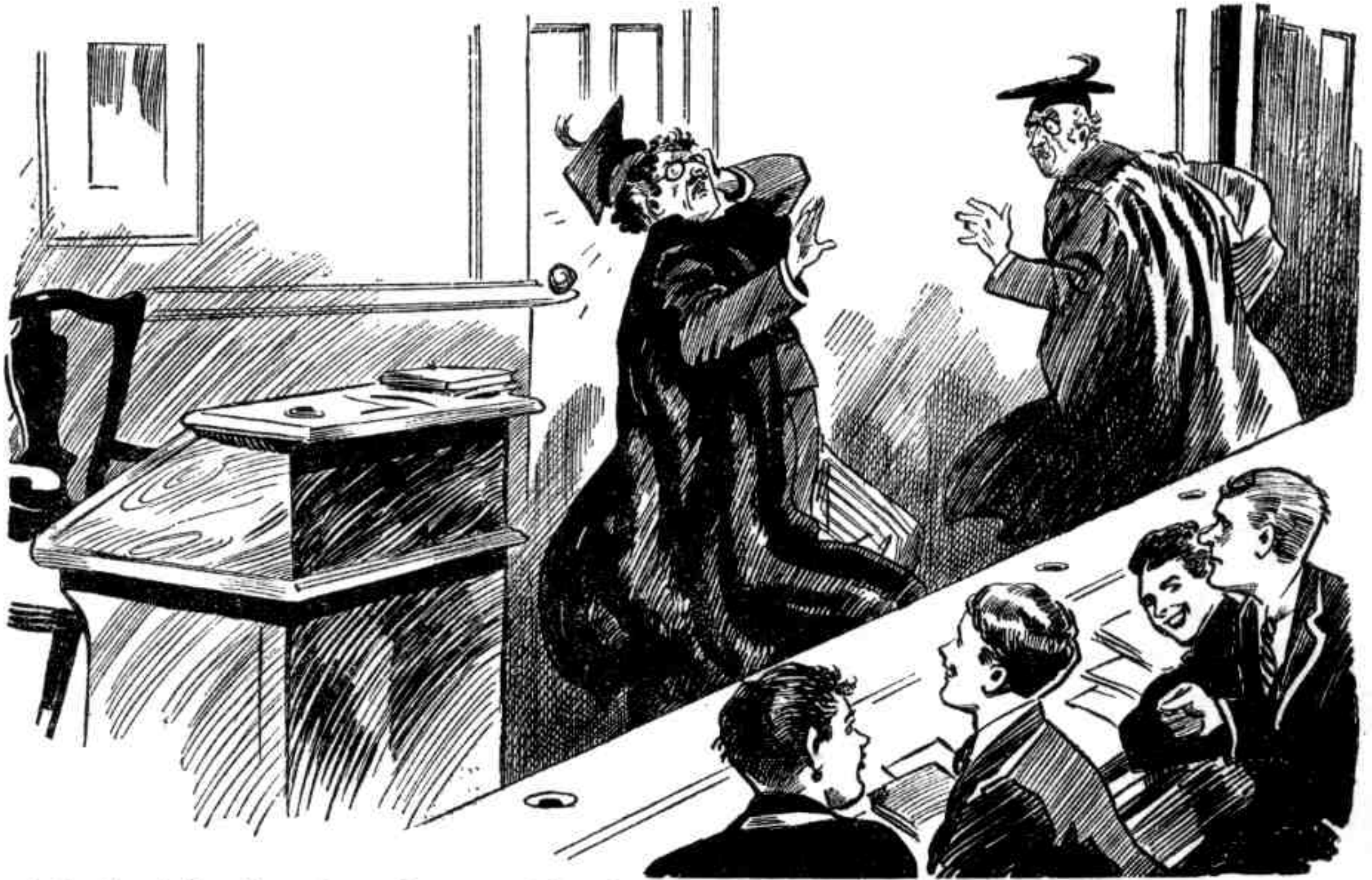
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As the disguised master made a sudden grasp at his wig where the googly ball had struck, the wig shifted. "Bless my soul!" gasped Dr. Locke in amazement. "Oh!" cried Wibley.

"Are you hungry?"

"Oh! Yes, sir! Rather!"

Bunter blinked at the new master, wondering whether Spofford was going to ask him to tea. If he was, Bunter's answer was going to be a prompt affirmative.

"Have you had your tea?"

"Nothing to speak of, sir—only an egg and some ham, sir, and a bit of cake and a few biscuits and bull's-eyes—"

"If you are hungry, you may sit down in this study and eat what you like of this outrageous quantity of foodstuffs."

"Oh scissors!"

"Look here, Mr. Spofford!" exclaimed the Bounder. "You can't give my tuck away to another fellow!"

Mr. Spofford gave him a blink through gold-rimmed glasses.

"All this tuck, as you call it, is confiscated," he answered. "Bunter, sit down at the table at once!"

"But—but Smithy, sir—" stammered Bunter.

He was anxious to begin—yearning to begin. But the look on Smithy's face daunted him. It made him realise what he had to expect afterwards, if he scoffed Smithy's tuck.

"Never mind Smithy!" said Mr. Spofford. "I am master here, I hope! Bunter, you have stated that you are hungry! Unless I see you, with my own eyes, make a good, solid meal at this table, I shall consider that you have been speaking untruthfully, and shall cane you severely."

"Oh golly!" gasped Bunter.

"Either," said Mr. Spofford, "you will make a considerable meal, on the spot, or you will follow me to my study for a caning! Take your choice!"

A choice like that was not hard to decide. Billy Bunter plumped into a chair vacated by one of the dismayed tea-party and started. He started on

delicious ham and poached eggs; and the rate at which ham and poached eggs disappeared was really marvellous. Spectres at cock-crow did not vanish so swiftly.

Vernon-Smith looked on, with bitter rage in his face. Tom Redwing stood in silence, puzzled.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on, hardly knowing what to make of it. There was something so very odd about these proceedings of Mr. Spofford, that they almost wondered whether the little gentleman was quite balanced in the upper story!

Quelch might have confiscated such a tremendous spread, but Spofford had not done that—he had ordered Bunter to eat it! And that was so extraordinary that the Famous Five were, as they might have described it themselves, flabbergasted!

It was already clear that this new master, for some mysterious reason, had rather a "down" on the Famous Five. He had fairly persecuted them in the Form-room. Now he was barging in to break up their tea-party with the Bounder. Why he should be down on fellows he had never seen till that day was a deep mystery.

Bunter gobbled! Bunter was busy! Happy and sticky, Bunter travelled through the heaps of good things on Vernon-Smith's table.

The Bounder made a movement towards the door. Looking on at this was not amusing! Mr. Spofford waved him back.

"Remain where you are, Smith!" "My name's not Smith!" hissed the Bounder.

"I have already given you fifty lines for impertinence. Take fifty more. Sit down and write them."

Herbert Vernon-Smith looked at him, breathing hard. Rebellion was in his

face. Tom Redwing gave him a beseeching look. Smithy was already in the "bad books" of the beaks for insubordination. He controlled his rage, cleared a corner of the table, and sat down to write lines. Smithy scribbled while Bunter gobbled.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances. Clearly, there was to be no tea for them, after all, in Smithy's study.

"May we go, sir?" asked Harry. "No," said Mr. Spofford. "You may not go. You will stand where you are, and be silent."

With deep feelings, the Famous Five stood where they were, and were silent. Mr. Spofford glanced from the doorway. Several fellows, passing the study, had glanced in at the strange scene there. Among them were Micky Desmond and Morgan, Wibley's study-mates. He called to them.

"Desmond! Morgan!" "Oh, yes, sir!" "Step into this study!"

In surprise, Micky and Morgan stepped in. Mr. Spofford pointed to the table, where, in spite of Bunter's tremendous exploits as a trencherman, the supplies were still ample. Micky and Morgan blinked at the table and blinked at the new master blankly.

"All this food," said Mr. Spofford, "must be disposed of. You boys, I think, have not had your tea. Sit down—and eat!"

"Howly Moses!" murmured the astonished Micky.

Morgan only stared. "Do you hear me?" rapped Mr. Spofford. "Obey me immediately, or I shall give you an imposition of five hundred lines!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Morgan.

They sat down at once. The good things on the table were tempting—and 500 lines certainly were not!

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While the Bounder scribbled Latin and the Famous Five stood with grim, glum faces, the feast went on, and fellows stared in from the passage, wondering. Billy Bunter was making great progress, and, with the assistance of Micky and Morgan, the table was cleared at last. Hardly a crumb remained of the Bounder's gorgeous spread.

Billy Bunter rose, happy, sticky, and breathing hard. Bunter had had the time of his life! It was quite a wind-fall for Bunter! He grinned a sticky grin at the Famous Five.

"You may go," said Mr. Spofford, with a wave of the hand; and Bunter, Micky, and Morgan left the study.

"Smith, this will be a lesson to you! Now let me see your lines."

Vernon-Smith, in savage silence, handed over the lines. Mr. Spofford glanced at them and threw them into the fender.

"Very badly written!" he said. "Write them over again, Smith. It will be a less amusing, but more useful occupation than throwing googly balls about."

Smithy started a little. Apparently Mr. Spofford knew who it was that had caused that little accident to his hair, though he had taken no notice of it at the time.

Mr. Spofford walked out of the study. The juniors looked at one another. There was a long silence.

"Well!" said Bob Cherry at last, with a deep breath.

"Well!" murmured Frank Nugent.

"The man's mad!" said Johnny Bull.

"The madfulness is terrific!"

"Blessed if I don't think he's a little cracked!" said Harry Wharton. "It's all jolly queer, anyhow."

There was no doubt that it was queer—very queer. Very queer indeed! In a wondering mood the juniors left the study, and went down to the school shop for tea. They simply could not understand the extraordinary proceedings of Mr. Spofford—though they would have understood easily enough had they been aware that that gentleman's real name was William Wibley! But they did not know that yet.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

An Astonishing Discovery!

PROUT called the roll in Big Hall that evening. Wibley's name was not called, Mr. Spofford having made it known that Wibley, of his Form, was absent on leave.

Mr. Spofford was not present, like the other masters, at roll-call. He had not yet looked in at Masters' Common-room. He seemed rather to be avoiding meeting other members of the staff. Some of them had not even seen him yet. Prout had seen him—seen too much of him, in fact—and was deeply annoyed with him. Prout had told several other beaks of that accident with the inkpot in deep tones of indignation, and the other beaks had listened, and had not smiled till Prout's portly back was turned. Prout had taken quite a dislike to the man. Such an accident was so very extraordinary. It really looked as if the man had done it on purpose! Prout could hardly believe so; but certainly, he had taken a dislike to the man!

After roll-call Prout rolled out of the House, to pay his deferred visit to Mr. Quelch, in sanny. Prout had no doubt that the invalid would be greatly cheered and bucked by that visit, being

quite unaware that his chatty conversation was a thing dreaded by all the staff.

Mr. Quelch was sitting up in bed, not looking happy, when Prout was shown in. There was no visible increase of happiness in his looks at the sight of Prout.

Prout, with a formalin tablet in his mouth and eau-de-Cologne sprayed on his handkerchief, sat at a safe distance. He was going to be kind and chatty, but he was not going to catch Quelch's cold. After a few ponderous remarks of a sympathetic nature, Prout got to the subject of Spofford.

"Your friend Spofford has not yet, I believe, seen you?" said Prout.

"No!" said Quelch.

As a matter of fact, Quelch did not want to see anybody, in his present state—though he was too polite to tell Prout so.

"A somewhat curious and erratic gentleman," said Prout.

Quelch stared.

"I am quite unaware of it," he answered.

"A very singular thing has occurred," said Prout, and once more he told of the incident of the inkpot in Quelch's study.

Mr. Quelch listened in astonishment.

"Were it possible to suppose such a thing, I should certainly suppose that the act was intentional," said Prout.

"That, of course, is impossible," said Quelch.

"Oh, of course! But it was very extraordinary! But Spofford seems extraordinary in many ways."

"I have never noticed it," said Mr. Quelch, very dryly.

"I was informed, as I was taking the roll, that he had given leave of absence to a boy of your Form, Quelch. That is surely very unusual!"

"Very—if correct," said Quelch.

"He informed me so himself," said Prout stiffly. "It seems that the boy Wibley has indefinite leave. Very singular indeed!"

"No doubt Wibley gave him a good reason—"

"Oh, no doubt! But it seemed to me so very singular that I mentioned the matter to the Head."

"Mr. Spofford must have done that already."

"On the other hand, he had done nothing of the sort. Dr. Locke was surprised—and, I think, far from pleased!"

"I do not quite understand this," said Mr. Quelch. "I should like to see Mr. Spofford, if you will kindly tell him so."

"Already," said Prout, "I have offered to conduct him to your bedside, my dear fellow. The incident of the inkpot then occurred. I take it for granted, Quelch, that the man has abilities, since you recommended him strongly to the Head! But the boys of your Form—"

Prout coughed.

"I trust," said Mr. Quelch, "that the boys of my Form have not been giving trouble to Mr. Spofford?"

"I fear, my dear Quelch, that they are not learning to respect him," said Prout. "A very strange story is spreading concerning him. I have heard it from several quarters already. You will acknowledge, Quelch, that it is—well, shall we say a little undignified, for a gentleman in the position of a Form master in a Public school to wear a wig."

Mr. Quelch jumped.

"A wig!" he repeated.

"That is certainly rumoured in the school—"

"Absurd!" said Mr. Quelch. "It certainly is not the fact! A young man

of Spofford's age could hardly be in need of such a thing."

Prout blinked at him.

"Did you say a young man, Quelch?" he ejaculated.

"I did! Spofford certainly is not much over thirty."

"I hardly follow you, Quelch. Possibly you have not seen Mr. Spofford for a considerable time—"

"I saw him in the last vacation."

"Then I am quite perplexed. Mr. Spofford certainly is not a day under forty-five; I should say fifty—"

"Really, Mr. Prout—"

"Really, Mr. Quelch!" said Prout warmly. "Certainly he is the smallest man for his age that I have ever seen, but he is assuredly not much under fifty—"

"The smallest!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch blankly.

"Yes, very singularly small for a full-grown man—"

"Either you are dreaming or I am," said Mr. Quelch. "Spofford is a man of six feet at the least."

"Let us have this clear, Quelch! I cannot suspect you of wandering in your mind. Yet you say that Spofford is a man of six feet."

"He is, I believe, over six feet," said Mr. Quelch. "Certainly some three inches taller than I am."

Prout sat and blinked at him.

"We must get this clear, Quelch," said the Fifth Form master at last. "It begins to look as if some extraordinary deceit has been practised on us. I will describe the man to you. He is no taller than the average boy in the Form he is taking—actually shorter than Bolsover, for instance—"

"Mr. Spofford is three inches taller than I am, Mr. Prout."

"He wears gold-rimmed glasses—"

"Mr. Spofford has never worn spectacles in his life—"

"He has a small dark moustache—"

"Mr. Spofford is absolutely clean-shaven."

"His hair—genuine or not—is brown."

"Mr. Spofford's hair is auburn."

"Upon my word!" said Prout, almost breathless. "Quelch, I have given you an exact description of the man who has come here calling himself Mr. Spofford. You state that in no respect does that description fit the Mr. Spofford you are acquainted with."

"In no respect whatever," said the Remove master. "The man you have described to me is not—and cannot be—the Spofford I know."

"Have we been deceived, Quelch, by some charlatan—some impostor—some unscrupulous adventurer?" exclaimed Prout.

"If this man is as you describe, it would certainly seem so," said Mr. Quelch, showing some signs of agitation.

"I must see him, at all events. If he is some impostor—"

"It is clear that he is an impostor, Quelch. Somehow he has learned that Mr. Spofford was expected here, and has come in his name. That would account for his arriving without luggage. He has stated that his luggage has gone astray on the railway."

"It is extraordinary," said Mr. Quelch. "It is possible, of course, that Spofford was unable to accept the engagement, and may have spoken of the matter to some man who has taken advantage of the circumstances. Yet what could be such an impostor's object?"

"What, indeed?" said Prout. "What but robbery?"

"Eh?"

"What else?" exclaimed Mr. Prout, rising to his feet. "He must have some

object—and his object can only be a dishonourable one. He is not Spofford; it is clear that he is not Spofford! Who, then, is he? A crook—a cracksman—a desperado, Quelch! A desperate and determined villain!"

Prout was excited now.

"I am completely astonished and perplexed," said Mr. Quelch. "I must see the man—I must see him at once! Prout, bring him to me immediately!"

"I will do so," said Prout, "if he will come. If he will not come, the case is clear, and we must take measures—stern measures, Quelch!"

"Do nothing hastily, Prout. Consult the Head—"

"Quite! But I must lose no time!" And Prout, thrilling with excitement, hurried away, leaving Mr. Quelch very perturbed and perplexed. The spoofer of Greyfriars was not quite so secure as he supposed!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Climax!

WILLIAM WIBLEY chuckled. Wib was enjoying life! Seated in Mr. Quelch's arm-chair in Mr. Quelch's study, with his feet on Mr. Quelch's table, the spoofer was quite at his ease.

The Remove were at prep.

There was no prep for Wibley!

Wibley, supposed by the rest of the school to be absent on leave, was making himself comfortably at home in his Form master's study.

All doubts and hesitations were banished now!

Wib was going to carry on!

Nothing succeeds like success. Wib had succeeded. He was going on with the game. He was keeping it up till the latest possible moment—till, in fact, he should hear that Quelch was coming out of sanny—after which, of course, Mr. Spofford had to disappear promptly. That would be several days yet—days that Wib was going to enjoy, pulling the leg of the whole school! It was a tremendous spoofer—and a tremendous lark—and Wib was going to play it out for all it was worth!

Such were the happy thoughts in Wibley's mind, when a tap came at the study door, and it opened to admit Mr. Prout and Dr. Locke.

Wibley jumped up.

Both masters had seen his feet on the table—a rather unusual attitude for a middle-aged Form master. But they were on the floor in a second, and Wibley was standing on them, gazing at the Head.

His heart thumped.

That anything was amiss, that suspicion was abroad, he did not yet realise; but he realised that this unexpected visit must portend something, and he was uneasy and disquieted.

Prout rolled in, heavy and ponderous. The Head stood in the doorway. There were sounds of footsteps behind. Wibley had a glimpse of Wingate and Gwynne of the Sixth Form.

Alarm crept into his heart. Prout he was not surprised to see; Prout was always barging in somewhere. But why the Head? And why two prefects in the rear?

"Mr. Spofford!" Prout's voice was sarcastic. "Mr. Spofford—if that is really your name—"

"Sir!" said Mr. Spofford. Wibley understood now that suspicion was rife. But he was penned in the study; the

window shut, the door blocked. He had to play out Spofford's part now, whether he liked it or not. And there was no doubt that he played it very well.

"Sir!" he repeated. "I scarcely understand you—"

"I will make my meaning clear, sir," said Prout. "I have just seen Mr. Quelch, who is desirous of seeing you at once. Will you have the kindness, sir, to accompany me immediately to the presence of Mr. Quelch?"

"Really, sir!" said Mr. Spofford. "At this hour—"

"Mr. Spofford"—the Head spoke quietly—"it is necessary for you to see Mr. Quelch at once, and in my presence."

"May I ask why, sir?"

"It appears, sir, that you bear little or no resemblance to the Mr. Spofford with whom Mr. Quelch is acquainted. Mr. Prout informs me that Mr. Quelch has told him so."

"Oh!" gasped Wibley. He had not thought of that possibility. Really a fellow couldn't think of everything!

"This matter must be immediately investigated!" said Dr. Locke. "Are you prepared, sir, to accompany me into Mr. Quelch's presence?"

"Certainly!" said Wib.

There was nothing else for him to say—at least until he got a chance to bolt!

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Prout. "You are prepared for that?"

"Yes!" said Mr. Spofford firmly. "If dear old Quelch has indeed made such a statement as you mention, it is obvious to me, sir, and should be obvious to you, that the poor fellow is wandering a little."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"My old friend Quelch," went on Mr. Spofford, "is evidently far more ill than has been supposed. His mind wanders a little, that is clear—in fact, this amounts to delusions! Dr. Locke, will you allow me to see Mr. Quelch at once—immediately—without the loss of a moment? In my presence, I am assured, he will recognise me, and it may do the poor fellow good!"

"Mr. Spofford," said the Head, after a pause, "if this is, indeed, a deplorable mistake, due to some—some feverishness on the part of Mr. Quelch—I am deeply sorry! But you will see that the matter must be investigated without delay!"

"Investigation," said Mr. Spofford calmly, "is what I demand, sir! I have a right to demand it."

"You shall have your wish—if it is your wish, sir!" gasped Prout.

"Certainly," said the Head. "Please accompany us, Mr. Spofford."

"I am ready, sir—indeed anxious!"

The Head stepped back into the passage. Prout—perhaps with an eye on the window as a way of escape—stood back for Mr. Spofford to pass him out of the study. There was no chance of a sudden grab at the window and a jump into the dark quad! Prout followed the suspected man out. Mr. Spofford, cool as a cucumber, walked down the passage by the side of the headmaster.

"Wingate! Gwynne!" breathed Mr. Prout. "Keep close to that man—I cannot help suspecting that his intention is to escape, immediately he is outside the House! A sudden dash—you understand?"

"Certainly, sir!" said the Greyfriars captain. "Come on, Gwynne!"

The two prefects hurried after the Head and Mr. Spofford. They kept very close to the latter gentleman. If

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there was an attempt to bolt in the quad, they were ready to tackle him on the spot, and to answer for it that he would not get away with it. Which was perfectly clear to Mr. Spofford also, and rather dismayed him—as most certainly he had intended to bolt at the earliest opportunity! Prout had been too wary for him!

Many eyes were turned on Mr. Spofford and the Head, and Prout and the two prefects. The juniors were at prep, but some of the Sixth were about and most of the masters—strange rumours had already spread through the school on the subject of Mr. Spofford! Prout had talked freely already! Mr. Lascelles and Mr. Capper, Mr. Hacker and Monsieur Charpentier all looked at him curiously as he walked to the door of the House with Dr. Locke. Wibley breathed hard and deep as he went.

He had to get away! Somehow, he had to get away! But how? Dodging, when he was out of the House, had been his first idea—for obviously he could not keep on and face Quelch! But two hefty Sixth-Formers were watching him like cats, ready for him to dodge! Besides, the gates were closed for the night—and even if he succeeded in breaking away, he was pretty certain to be run down before he could clamber over a wall! Fortunately for Wib, he did not lose his coolness. He had a minute to think—and it was enough!

Going out into the quad, evidently,

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MAGNET**

SOMETHING EXTRA
GOOD IN

FREE GIFTS

Coming Shortly!

was useless! But those who were watching for him to break loose in the quad certainly were not watching for him to break loose inside the House—where, of course, there was no chance whatever of escape! But that was Wib's idea—for he knew, what nobody else even dreamed of, that if he had a chance to get rid of Spofford and become Wibley again, it would be all right!

"Quite a delusion!" he said, with great calmness, as he walked beside the Head, with one furtive eye on the staircase. "Quite! Poor Quelch—an access of feverishness—poor, poor fellow! When he sees me—"

Mr. Spofford ceased to speak suddenly, and made a sudden, desperate bound—not for the doorway, as was suspected and watched for, but for the staircase!

Before a hand could be lifted, he was bounding up the stairs three at a time—with an activity very remarkable in the middle-aged gentleman he looked!

The Head stood rooted, blinking after him.

"What—what?" gasped the Head.

"Villain!" roared Prout. "He is escaping! Wingate! Gwynne!"

"My only hat!" gasped Wingate.

"Follow him!" roared Prout. "He will escape by a window! Pursue him! The rascal! The scoundrel!"

As it happened, Monsieur Charpentier was standing on the stairs, glancing

down at the party. Wibley had to pass him—there was no help for it! Mossoo was a small gentleman—no bigger than Mr. Spofford—but he was a plucky gentleman! Realising that this was a desperate attempt to escape on the part of the man whom Prout had denounced as an impostor and a crook, the little French gentleman jumped at him as he came bounding up the stairs.

He grabbed at Wibley! He caught hold of him!

Wibley was utterly desperate now! Without stopping to think what he did—there really was no time to think—he grabbed back at the French master, got hold of him, and spun him over.

Bump! Bump! Bump! went Mossoo down the stairs.

"Mon Dieu! Ciel!" spluttered Monsieur Charpentier, as he bumped. "A moi! Mon Dieu! Yooooop!"

Wibley bounded on frantically. Wingate and Gwynne, rushing up after him, met Monsieur Charpentier in full career. Wingate reeled to the right, Gwynne to the left; they crashed, and Mossoo crashed on them.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Wingate.

"Oh scissors!" gurgled Gwynne.

"Mon Dieu! Sauvez-moi! Whooop!" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier.

"Bless my soul!" murmured the Head, gazing on like a man in a dream.

"Pursue him!" roared Prout.

Up the stairs tramped Prout, like a charging elephant. After Prout went several masters and seniors. Mr. Spofford had already vanished above. For a stranger at the school, he seemed to know his way about remarkably well. He had, for the moment, disappeared. But the hunt was up!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Hunted Man!

"I SAY, you fellows!" yelled Billy Bunter.

"Spofford—they're after him!" howled Bunter.

With his fat face blazing with excitement, Bunter blinked into Study No. 1 in the Remove.

"Who's after whom?" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Prout—Capper! Lots of them—after Spofford!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I heard a row, and went to look, and Spofford was running. Spofford, you know—the new beak, you know! Spofford—"

"My hat!" exclaimed Nugent. "But what—"

"They're after him! He dodged into the Fifth Form passage—I saw him!" stuttered Bunter. "Is he mad, do you think? They're after him—"

Prep was forgotten! Wharton and Nugent ran out of Study No. 1. Already many other Removes were out and there was a buzz of excited voices in the passage. The voice of Coker of the Fifth was heard shouting from the landing.

"I saw him—I saw somebody running—"

"Pursue him!" came Prout's deep boom. "A rascal—a crook—a criminal—an impostor—his name is not Spofford at all—he is here to rob the school—pursue him—find him—ooooh!" Breath failed Prout.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "What's this game? Is Prout potty, or what?"

Wingate of the Sixth rushed into the Remove passage.

"Has someone passed—that man Spofford—" he shouted.



"All this food," said Mr. Spofford, "must be disposed of! You boys, I think, have not had your tea. Sit down—and eat. Obey me immediately or I shall give you an imposition." While the Bouncer scribbled Latin and the Famous Five stood with grim, glum faces the feast went on.

"Not this way!" said Vernon-Smith. "What's the matter, Wingate?" shouted a dozen voices.

"The man's an impostor—a crook of some sort, Prout thinks—he's got to be collared! Look for him!"

The Greyfriars captain dashed away again. Shouting voices from the direction of the Fifth Form studies told that the fugitive had been seen in that direction. The House echoed to shouting voices and trampling feet.

"By gum!" exclaimed the Bouncer, with a glitter in his eyes. "An impostor, is he—a crook, is he? I'm on in this! I'll give him something for handing my spread over to Bunter!"

"And we'll jolly well give him something for that whopping!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "I thought he was rather a queer fish for a Form master—"

"Come on!" shouted Harry Wharton. "Tally-ho!" roared Bob Cherry.

The Bouncer was already speeding away very anxious to lend a hand in dealing with Mr. Spofford! The Famous Five were not far behind him. They also had an account to settle with the man who called himself Spofford. Not that they quite believed that he was a crook! He had not acted like one! A reckless practical joker, or an irresponsible lunatic, was more likely, judging by his line of conduct since he had arrived at Greyfriars. But whatever he was, they were keen to lay hands on him.

All over the House fellows of all Forms were swarming, hunting for the man who was escaping.

Crash! Smash! From somewhere came the sound of smashing glass, and there was a roar.

"That's him! Come on!"

There was a swarming rush in the direction of the broken window. Hardly a fellow doubted that the desperado had

smashed a window to escape. The window was on the dormitory landing; and the fellows swarmed up the stairs. Vernon-Smith caught Harry Wharton by the arm.

"Hold on," he said. "That's gammon—he couldn't drop from that window without breaking his neck—that's to put us off the track! He's biffed something at the window to draw us off."

"Oh!" exclaimed Wharton. He realised that the Bouncer was right. "But where—"

"Yaroooh!" came a yell from the direction of the Remove passage. "Ow! Wow! Yow! Help! I say, you fellows—yaroooh!"

"Come on!" panted the Bouncer.

He raced for the Remove passage, with Harry Wharton & Co. at his heels. Almost all the other pursuers had gathered by the broken window.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob. "What silly ass has turned off the light?"

All was dark in the Remove passage. Someone had turned off the light there. It was not difficult to guess who! The fugitive must have passed that way.

From the darkness came the bellow of Billy Bunter. Bunter was the only Remove fellow who had not joined in the hunt. Bunter did not like crooks at close quarters.

"Yaroooh! Keep off! I say, you fellows, keep him off! Whoop!" roared Bunter.

"What the thump—"

Wharton flashed on the light. Nobody was in the passage excepting Billy Bunter! Bunter was sprawling and yelling with alarm.

"Have you seen him?" shouted the Bouncer.

"Ow! Groogh! Wow! I say, you fellows," spluttered Bunter. "He ran

into me—knocked me spinning—yaroooh! I'm winded—groogh—"

"Spofford?" yelled Smithy. "Was it Spofford?"

"Ow! Yes! Wow! He ran into me and knocked me over—yow-ow-ow—"

"Which way did he go?" yelled Bob.

"Wow! Up the passage—ow! Keep him off! I say, I heard a study door open—I believe he went into a—wow—study—"

"Come on!" gasped the Bouncer.

Most of the study doors stood wide open. One was shut—the door of Study No. 6, which belonged to Wibley, Micky Desmond, and Morgan. Micky and Morgan were with the crowd on the landing above—Wibley was supposed to be absent. That shut door was enough for the Bouncer. In his mind's eye he saw the hunted rascal clambering down the ivy from the study window. Vernon-Smith shot along the passage like an arrow, tore open the door of Wibley's study, and rushed in.

Crash!

He rushed into Mr. Spofford!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Captured!

WILLIAM WIBLEY, when he put up that tremendous spoof on Greyfriars, expected to have the time of his life!

Now he was getting it! But he was not getting it as he had anticipated.

Far from that!

What would happen to him if the truth came out, Wibley dared not imagine. The sack, of course, was a certainty for a fellow who played such a trick, and set the whole school in a wild uproar. And in his desperate attempt to escape discovery of his identity, he had made

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matters worse—fearfully worse! He had pitched the French master downstairs on the heads of two prefects! He had smashed a window to throw pursuit off the track. His offences were innumerable and unpardonable. But he had got to his study—and he needed only a few minutes to get rid of Mr. Spofford's identity and resume his own! Already he had thrown off his coat, pitched off his spectacles, and dragged off his moustache. That was as far as he had got, when the Bouncer rushed in.

Wibley went spinning as Vernon-Smith crashed into him. He bumped on the floor with a gasp. The Bouncer jumped after him.

He grabbed at the sprawling Spofford! Wibley, desperate before, was doubly desperate now! Leaping to his feet, he hit out at the same moment. The sudden blow landed on Vernon-Smith's nose with all Wibley's beef and desperation behind it. The Bouncer went crashing across the study. He sprawled and yelled, his nose streaming crimson. Quick as thought, Wibley jumped to the door, grabbed the key from the inside of the lock, jammed it in the outside, drew the door shut, and turned the key. Herbert Vernon-Smith was up a second too late, grabbing at a locked door.

But alas for Wibley! Even as he turned from the door the Famous Five came speeding up the passage, and they were almost upon him!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!" bawled Bob Cherry.

"Collar him!"

Mr. Spofford fled frantically up the passage.

"After him!"

"Here, let me out!" the Bouncer was yelling as he kicked at the locked door of Study No. 6.

But the Bouncer was not heeded. The game was in sight now, and the chums of the Remove raced after Mr. Spofford.

Up the box-room stairs they went, hardly two yards behind him. He was going strong. But so were the Famous Five.

Slam!

The box-room door slammed just ahead of them. Escape from the box-room was easy, over the leads under the window; there were Remove fellows who had broken bounds that way sometimes. If the fugitive had had time to lock the box-room door—

But he hadn't!

Even as it slammed shut Bob Cherry reached it and drove his hefty shoulder against it.

The key was turning, but it had not quite turned. The door flew open, knocking Mr. Spofford half-across the box-room as it crashed on him.

"Oooooogh!" came a gasp from the darkness within.

"Collar him!"

The Famous Five crowded in.

"Get a light!" panted Wharton.

"There he is!"

"Look out!"

In the darkness of the box-room a shadowy figure made a rush for the doorway. But that shadowy figure had no chance. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull grasped it together. The other fellows joined in at once. That figure went with a bump to the floor of the box-room, struggling frantically in the grasp of the Famous Five.

"We've bagged him!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"What-ho!"

"Chuck it, you rogue!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We've got you! You may as well give in!"

"Urrrrgh!" came in a suffocated gasp from the hapless Spofford,

struggling under five pairs of grasping hands. "Wurrrgh!"

"Got him! Keep him tight!"

"Urrrrgh!"

"Turn on the light; we've got him!"

Nugent groped to the light and turned it on. There was sudden illumination in the Remove box-room.

Mr. Spofford was revealed—in his shirtsleeves, minus moustache and spectacles. But it was Spofford, or the person who had called himself Spofford; there was no doubt about that. His wig was still on, but rather awry—hanging over one ear. One of his bushy eyebrows had come off in the struggle; the other still adhered. Gurgling for breath, Mr. Spofford was a prisoner.

"Got him!" grinned Bob. "Hold him tight! We'll march him down and hand him over to the Head!"

"Urrrrgh!" gasped Mr. Spofford.

"Have that mop off!" said Johnny Bull, and he grabbed at the loosened wig and jerked it away. A close-cropped head of rather tallowy-coloured hair was revealed.

The Famous Five stared at it. There was something unexpectedly boyish about that head, with the wig gone. The impostor was plainly younger than had been supposed.

"Bring him along!" said the captain of the Remove. "They're still hunting him up in the dormitories; the sooner we hand him over the better."

"Ow! Stop!" gasped the prisoner.

"Keep hold of him and bring him along! The Head will be jolly glad to see the bird we've caught!" chuckled Bob.

"Hold on, you fellows! For goodness' sake stop!" gasped Mr. Spofford.

"Don't give a man away!"

"Well, that's pretty cool!" said Frank Nugent, staring at him. "Do you think we're going to let you go, you rascal, now we've run you down?"

"Keep it dark!"

"Keep it dark!" repeated Harry Wharton blankly. "Yes, we're likely to keep it dark—I don't think!"

"The don't-thinkfulness is terrific!" chuckled the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Yank him along by his esteemed and ridiculous ears!"

"Oh crumbs! Keep it dark, I tell you!" gasped the hapless spoofer, as the Famous Five jerked him towards the door. "I own up—For goodness' sake give a fellow a chance! It's the sack!"

"The sack!" repeated Wharton.

"Of course it is, you ass! Think the Head will let me off, after this?"

"Wha-a-a-t?" Wharton fairly stutted. "M-m-mean to say you're a Greyfriars man?"

"Yes, you fathead!"

"Who-what-I-I seem to know your voice now. Who—"

"You've heard it often enough, you ass! I'm Wibley!"

"What!"

In utter amazement the captors of Mr. Spofford released him, and stood staring at him in the blankest amazement.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Only Wibley!

"WIBLEY!"

"Wib!"

"Wha-a-a-t?"

Even with his wig, moustache, spectacles, and one eyebrow gone, Wibley was hardly recognisable. But a certain familiarity in his looks was dawning on the astounded juniors. They had begun to realise that he was not a man at all, but a boy; and now they knew. In utter amazement they gazed at him.

"Wibley!" repeated Wharton faintly. Wibley grinned.

"This is luck!" he said. "You fellows have run me down, but you'll keep it dark! You won't give a Remove man away. It's the sack, of course! Thank goodness it was you, and not somebody else! I say, cut off and bar them off, if they come this way, till I've had time to change—"

"What?"

"Lucky there's a tap here. I can wash this make-up off. Cut off and get me some clothes—"

"Clothes!"

"I can't show up in these trousers! Buck up!" exclaimed Wibley impatiently. "They're yelling somewhere now—up in the dormitories, I think. I smashed a window to draw them that way, and cut down the back stairs. But they may come this way any minute. That old fool Prout is frightfully keen—"

"Great gum!" gasped Bob Cherry. "It's Wibley; it's not Spofford at all. It's not a crook; it's only a born idiot! It's Wib!"

"Look here, you're wasting time!" said Wibley. "Do you want me caught and sacked? Now you know, back up."

"Back up?" gasped Wharton.

"Yes! And don't dawdle about."

The Famous Five gazed at him. Wibley had spoofed them as well as the whole school. In his character as Form master he had whopped them and given them lines! Now that they had bagged him, he not only requested them to keep it dark, but to help him escape the consequences of his spoof!

Harry Wharton found his voice.

"You cheeky sweep!" he gasped.

"You whopped us in the Form-room!"

"I told you I would!"

"What?"

"I told you I'd whop you, one after another, for ragging my props. Never mind that now—"

"Never mind it!" stammered Nugent.

"No; there's not a chance! That fat chump Bunter will bring them this way! For goodness' sake buck up and help a fellow out of a fix! If I'm seen like this—"

"You won't be!" gasped Bob Cherry. "We'll change you a bit! We won't give you away to the beaks, you spoofing bouncer, but we'll jolly well make you sit up!"

"Terrifically!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Wash his make-up off for him!" roared Johnny Bull. "Here's the tap; shove his head under it!"

"Here, I say—Yarooooh!" roared Wibley. "Oh, my hat! Yooop! Groooogh! Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

The Famous Five were not going to give the Greyfriars spoofer away to the beaks. They were not going to hand their capture over to the Head, now they knew. But they were going to make him sorry for himself.

Wib's make-up was washed off! Luckily there was a tap in the box-room. It was turned on, and Wibley's head held under it. He struggled and wriggled, and roared and spluttered, and howled and yelled. But it booted not. Bob Cherry found a cake of soap and a brush, and scrubbed his face with the same, while the other fellows held him under the streaming water. He scrubbed hard! He scrubbed awfully hard! Every vestige of Wibley's make-up went. He felt as if his face was going with it.

"There!" gasped Bob. "That will do!"

"Urrrrgh!"

(Continued on page 28.)

UMZUGAAN, THE MIGHTY!

By
ROLAND HUNTER.

Taking a sudden leap, Umzugaan the Mighty crashed on the back of the lion, his knees gripping its wiry body. As the huge beast tripped to snap, the young Zulu got a grip on the top jaw and pulled the head back towards him with all his might.

The Forest Fire!

UMZUGAAN, the young Zulu, sat up suddenly. He had been asleep beside his smouldering camp-fire.

Something had alarmed him. His nostrils quivered, sniffing the air. He smelt lion! He smelt smoke. There was a strange crackling to be heard, and a queer restlessness in the forest all around.

Then a lion crashed out of the thickets full into the clearing and landed within two yards of Umzugaan.

It was no ordinary lion. It was jet black, and had a collar around its neck, deep in the flowing mane, from which trailed a long chain.

It was the pet lion of Masasi, the devil-man!

But there was no blazing defiance in the animal's eyes. The tufted tail was held low, and the ears were upright, half-turned, as if the lion feared something behind it far more than the Zulu, who stood like a statue before it.

Umzugaan was watching the eyes of the lion. He dared not stoop for his spears, in case the movement should cause the huge animal to pounce upon him. Besides, in the sudden alarm, he had sprung from sleep to the other side of the fire. It was his throwing spear that lay at his feet. His stabbing spear was on the other side of the fire, out of reach.

The lion wavered, and its eyes roved to one side. It snarled angrily, and its tufted tail began to rise and lash to and fro. Umzugaan was bewildered. He knew most signs of the wild, but the lion was behaving strangely.

Suddenly Umzugaan stooped and plucked a burning brand from the fire. Then, with a mighty shout, he charged at the black lion.

At the same moment, from far away, sounded a shrill whistle. Masasi, the witch-doctor, was calling his grim companion to his side.

The lion growled and retreated before the Zulu, but not for long. He gave a half-hearted spring, and slashed out with one mighty paw. Umzugaan spun aside and hurled the blazing brand at the lion's head.

The fiery missile dropped on the beast's shoulder, singeing and burning.

With a howl of pain and fear the lion darted aside, and, with drooped tail, fled, with the speed of a racing horse, through the thickets.

Umzugaan snatched up his spears and set off in pursuit. He was puzzled, for he had thought that Masasi and his black lion were ahead of him on the trail. Had he not followed their spoor for many leagues through the forest? He knew they had passed that way ahead of him. How, then, had the lion come there, from behind him?

The trailing chain rather suggested that the lion had somehow escaped from its master in the night, and that Masasi was busy trying to whistle it



back. How Masasi obtained such a spell over the savage brute was a mystery which Umzugaan did not try to solve.

He had followed Masasi and the lion for hundreds of miles already, on a trail of vengeance. Umzugaan's father had been headman at the Klierdorp kraal, but that black lion had slain him. It had been the outcome of a plot, commenced by Intali, who was now chieftain at Klierdorp. Intali had bribed Masasi to bring his black lion to Klierdorp, so that Umzugaan the Elder might be slain.

Umzugaan felt sure that was what had happened, but he needed proof. For that reason he sought to kill the lion, seize Masasi, sorcerer and medicine-man though he was, and force him to speak the truth.

After nearly four moons he was still trailing Masasi relentlessly, and the witch-doctor could not shake him off.

Umzugaan followed the black lion that ran from him in such strange terror. But he did not proceed far. The forest was in a tumult, and he suddenly realised why.

A leopard darted across the trail within a yard of him, and did not so much as turn its head. It was closely followed by a panther, then by a herd of deer. A great forest hog lumbered through the thickets, great snakes slithered away through the undergrowth, monkeys careered through the trees overhead, and birds flew up into the night air shrieking with terror.

Umzugaan paused, peered through the clustering trees, and saw the vivid orange glow in an awful pattern of light and shade. The terror of the brute beasts was his, too, although he did not fall into a panic. Here was danger greater than any other in the world.

A fierce crackling, sounding from the

westward, told that the forest was on fire! The trees and shrubs burnt like chaff, the flame shot a hundred feet into the air, the smoke rose in huge clouds, and the fire travelled fast. The wind had shifted, and for the first time Umzugaan scented the terror in a way that left no doubt in his mind, even if his eyes had not told him the truth.

He turned and ran down the slope of the ground. He cared not where he went, so long as he ran downhill. Somewhere there would be a river. At least, he hoped so. A river was the only means of escape.

The fire could travel farther, faster, and longer than he could. He gripped his spears and ran, heedless of thorns and wild beasts, snakes, and scorpions.

To make matters worse, the wind freshened to a gale, and the fire roared and crackled on its destructive course.

Ten miles an hour the fire travelled, a wall of orange flame, hissing in the undergrowth and climbing the tall trees like fiery serpents, until they blazed like torches.

Shrill in the roaring inferno came the last dying screams of smaller animals that had dropped exhausted, or had not been able to escape. The air was full of flying sparks and burning leaves. They dropped and started many smaller fires ahead of the main body of flames. Umzugaan felt his bare flesh burnt many times by these falling, fiery fragments, but he never stopped once to brush them from him.

He saw before him through the swaying, moaning trees, the gleam of a river. The wind was howling in the thickets, making them sigh and complain, as if they knew their destruction was close at hand.

Umzugaan reached the brink of the river at last, and plunged in. Around him were lions, leopards, panthers,

hyenas, wolves, deer, hogs, bushcats, monkeys, snakes in a medley of wild life, all plunging into the swift-flowing river, where the crocodiles swarmed, snapping at the panic-stricken multitude, and dragging many creatures below the surface.

Around the bend in the river the howling wind had felled many trees, so that they formed a temporary dam, holding up the current for a time. The waters piled up behind the obstruction, roaring and hissing, until, with a crash, the dam broke, just as Umzugaan was swimming across through the awful night.

The water came down like a tidal wave, sweeping logs and driftwood before it, and drowning hundreds of animals.

Umzugaan lost his spears. He was flung about as if he were but a straw in a gully. Great logs swept past him, and he fought to escape them. One struck him violently on his side, forcing him under the surface. He came up again, treading water madly. He got his arms around the log and hung on, bruised and dazed, and was carried thus, swinging dizzily round and round, downstream, until the log jammed on the point of a little islet set in midstream.

Log after log fouled this point, striking with great force. The log Umzugaan clung to was lifted up at one end and swung round. The young Zulu was raised bodily from the water, then flung down on the mass of logs and sodden trees, where another great tree came on top of him, pinning him down so that he could scarcely move.

Umzugaan lay there stunned for a time while the fury of the storm raged above him. The fire had reached the brink of the river now, hissing and roaring as if in baffled rage at being foiled.

In the lurid glare of the flames Umzugaan was suddenly aware of a man crawling over the scattered logs towards him. The leaping flames lit up his naked body. The air was pungent with smoke, and so hot as to make breathing difficult.

Yet even in that murk Umzugaan recognised the newcomer. It was Masasi, the devil-man. His girdle of monkeys' tails clung limp and sodden to his wet thighs. The water of the raging river had washed the ashes and paint from his body and face, so that the magic marks around his eyes were no longer visible. No one, in that moment, who had not met the man before, would have known him to be a witch-doctor and sorcerer.

Umzugaan knew, however, and struggled fiercely to free himself from the log that pinned him down. He exerted all his huge strength until the muscles stood out on his great chest, and the perspiration rolled down his face in streams. The log moved, but not sufficiently to release him.

Masasi came and stood over the young Zulu, an evil smile on his face.

"The magic of thy strength is useless now, O Umzugaan," he said harshly. "Many times hast thou escaped me. This time, there shall be no mistake. My knife shall do its work!"

He raised the weapon, and the flames of the forest fire caused it to glint wickedly. Yet Umzugaan did not flinch.

"I have tried to redeem the promise made to my father," he cried. "I have failed, but not through lack of courage. Still am I Umzugaan, the Mighty. The storm hath defeated me, not thou, O

Man of Evil. Strike, then, with thy coward's hand—strike, I say!"

Masasi leered at the Zulu through the murk.

"You must die!" he said, in hissing tones.

Umzugaan's eyes were focused on the poised blade, and as he stared he saw a hand come from behind the devil-man. It gripped Masasi's wrist and, with a jerk, caused the knife to drop with a splash into the water, where the swirling river swept it away.

Masasi swung round with an oath and faced the newcomer. Umzugaan caught a glimpse of the man—a huge chieftain, to judge from the feathers on his head—although they were bedraggled and limp with water now.

The Human Pendulum!

WHAT tribe the newcomer belonged to Umzugaan could not say, neither did he care.

He caught a glimpse of the man and took in the details at a glance—the limp feathers, the well-cut features, the stalwart build, and the scars on his left shoulder where a lion had mauled him.

He heard, too, the man's words. "Is this a time for murder, O Stranger?"

Masasi snarled like a wild beast as he turned, but their feet slithered on the slimy logs. The water shifted the fallen trees as he clasped the newcomer in a strangling embrace, and with a cry the pair of them fell backwards helplessly into the river and were swept out of sight.

Umzugaan's life had been saved by a man whom he knew not—by a man who had gone to his death in consequence, so it seemed.

The shifting of the logs, however, eased the pressure of the tree that lay athwart the Zulu's loins. He wriggled his great arms free and, half-sitting up, he clutched the great tree, exerting all his enormous strength. He lifted it, and his muscles fairly cracked under the strain. He shifted his legs free and tossed the tree clear of his limbs, so that it crashed down in the shallows and scared two crocodiles that had come to snuffle at his feet.

He arose and chafed his hurts. He was dazed, weak, and his senses reeled. He managed to move above the reach of the waters, and lay in the shelter of a rock to regain his strength.

The forest fire, checked by the river, was dying down somewhat now. The flames no longer hissed and roared along the bank, but the smoke still rose in dense clouds.

But as the dawn showed Umzugaan took stock of the situation. He felt stronger and better now. He found himself on an island, and knew he would have to swim across to the opposite bank of the river out of reach of the fire. He saw the river rolling down, bearing a medley of broken trees and drowned animals along with it; with here and there the limp carcass of a human being, to bear witness to the destruction, while the crocodiles lay gorged on the oozy mud of the mangrove swamps.

Umzugaan seized a stout stick and entered the water, beating with his stick to keep the crocodiles off.

Swimming strongly, he reached the opposite bank and ran for it, ankle deep in the mud, up the slope to the grass of a small clearing, with a crocodile snapping at his heels.

In the centre of the clearing was a tree, up which Umzugaan swarmed, leaving the crocodile at the base, snorting with baffled rage.

Resting in the boughs, Umzugaan waited till his strength returned. Then he surveyed the scene.

He could clearly see in the mud on the verge of the river the trail he knew so well—the spoor of Masasi, side by side with the spoor of the black lion. Masasi and the black lion must have been on that island. They had both escaped, and Umzugaan wanted to follow their trail once again, especially now that he was so close to them.

Whether the stranger whose intervention had saved his life had also escaped, there was no means of telling.

Umzugaan's next move was to escape the waiting crocodile. Stripping some stout creepers from the tree, he fashioned them into a long rope, knowing from experience that no hawser could be stronger.

At one end he made a noose, with a slip knot, and this he dropped down from the bough on which he rested until it dangled a foot above the muzzle of the crocodile. The reptile saw it, and snapped at it. Umzugaan jerked the line out of its reach, then lowered it again, allowing the coil to strike the brute on the eyes and whisking it clear almost immediately.

For some time he played this game, until the crocodile was maddened. Once more the noose dangled temptingly before the reptile's snout. It snapped at it, and this time Umzugaan allowed the jaws to close over the line. Then he gave a quick wrench, and the noose tightened suddenly round the brute's upper jaw, the rope resting neatly between the serrated teeth, where it could not be bitten through.

The brute fought to free itself, but Umzugaan was hauling it up gradually, exerting every ounce of his mighty strength. The crocodile strained on the line.

"Umzugaan, the son of Umzugaan! Who can stand against me? Am I not Umzugaan, the Mighty?"

The perspiration rolled down his face and over his brawny chest. His muscles stood out on his arms and the veins were like cords on his forehead. But the line held. He was raising the floundering crocodile bit by bit until only its hind legs were on the ground, and the fore part of its body was stretched up the tree.

Then Umzugaan tied the line to a stout bough and paused to rest. The crocodile thrashed about like a fish on a hook, snapping its great jaws and beating the ground with its powerful tail. But it remained there, held fast.

Umzugaan scrambled through the tree branches to the far side, clambered along a branch until it bent like a whip under his weight, and then slipped lightly to the ground and ran on into the forest, leaving his strange catch to fend for itself.

Umzugaan was once more following the trail of Masasi and the black lion. He had no weapons now—nothing but his bare hands.

He was following the trail through the forest, but the sun rose in majesty and scorched the tropical world. Umzugaan had endured much and could not proceed without food, drink, and rest. He brought down a monkey with a well-aimed stone, and ate. He procured water from the stems of a stout

creeper—pure nectar that had no evil germs in it. Then he rested in the heat of the noon, when all the forest slept.

As the shadows of evening lengthened towards dusk the young Zulu took to the trail again, refreshed and strong. His pace was rapid, the trail was clear to the eye, and he lost no time.

Suddenly he heard drums, and hesitated. He was approaching a village, and the drums spoke of vengeance, death, and blood.

Proceeding cautiously from bush to bush, the young Zulu saw the flickering of fire through the trees. He moved without a sound, peering round every tree before he took another step. He saw the clustered huts of a village, saw that the warriors were drawn up in a large circle around a tree in the centre of the huts, the big fire flickering on their naked bodies.

The spoor of Masasi and the black lion led this way. Masasi had arrived at this village, and there was trouble.

Umzugaan reached the huts and slunk in amongst the dense shadows. No one observed him, for all were watching the scene around the big tree. Umzugaan was tall and could see over the heads of the tribesmen. He saw Masasi there, dancing to the throb of the drum, whirling this way and that, rattling a skull on the end of a string as he danced, his kilt of monkeys' tails swinging in a grotesque manner, while the watchers swayed this way and that, almost in a hypnotic trance. He saw, also, the black lion on the edge of the ring, secured to a stout post by a chain.

Suddenly the dance ceased. Masasi went to the post, unfastened the chain, and held it in his hand. He was talking now in a sing-song chant.

"He who comes between Masasi and his vengeance must die by the lion!" he was saying.

Then, for the first time, Umzugaan saw something hanging by a rope from an overhanging bough of the big tree. He peered through the uncertain light and saw that it was a man. The prisoner's ankles were lashed together and his wrists were secured behind his back. The rope had been fastened about his waist, taken up, and lashed to the bough of the tree, and now he dangled there like a human pendulum.

Masaki went nearer and spoke something to the lion that no one else could hear or understand. The lion sprang to the full extent of its chain, and raised one huge paw as if to strike at the helpless, dangling man, for all the world as a kitten might play with a ball that dangled on a string.

A Debt Paid!

THE blood of Umzugaan ran cold. He began to understand. He saw the bound man's tribal marks, saw the scars on his shoulder where at some time a lion had mauled him. It was the man who saved his own life on the islet.

Masaki had reached the village with his black lion and found the man there. He had painted himself anew to prove he was a witch-doctor. The tribe feared him and did his bidding. They had seized their own chieftain and bound him, and dangled him there from the tree to be the sport of Masasi's black lion.

Umzugaan could hear them muttering. They hated Masasi and loved their headman, yet they must watch him done to death in this fashion, for they were in deadly fear of Masasi and his supposed magic.

Charging forward, with only his bare

hands for weapons, Umzugaan crashed through the tribesmen, taking them unawares. Startled men tried to seize him, but they were flung aside as if they were mere children. One man thrust a spear forward, but it was gripped and snapped in two, and flung away.

As Umzugaan burst through to the centre of the ring, Masasi spun round with a snarl, whipping a long knife from his belt. He released the lion and sprang forward, hoping to strike Umzugaan before he could recover from his headlong charge through the watching tribesmen.

But the young Zulu was ready. As Masasi charged with knife upraised, Umzugaan met him. One hand grasped the devil-man's knife wrist with such force that the bones chafed against each other and the weapon fell to the ground.

Umzugaan's other hand was round Masasi's neck, and with a terrific wrench he lifted the witch-doctor off the ground and tossed him in the air over his head. Masasi described a perfect arc and came to the ground with a crash, and lay there, writhing and moaning.

It was the chance Umzugaan had so long prayed for, to wrest the truth from Masasi. But he turned his back on it now. The man to whom he owed his life was in danger. He dangled there on the end of the rope. The released lion had sprung and aimed a blow at him with one claw-armed paw, but, misjudging the swing, had missed, and leapt about to try again.

The assembled tribesmen were watching with bulging eyes, afraid of the freed lion, afraid to interfere. But Umzugaan never hesitated. The lion's back was turned towards him as the brute watched with hungry eyes the swaying man on the end of the rope.

The young Zulu gave a mighty leap and came crashing down on the back of the black lion, his knees gripping the wiry body. One hand grasped the thick mane, so that he could hang on, the other arm was flung over the brute's head, half-blinding him. As the lion tried to snap at his assailant, Umzugaan got a grip on the top jaw, and he pulled the head back towards him with all his might.

The animal snarled with rage, and threshed about to free itself. But nothing would shake Umzugaan from his hold.

The young Zulu sang his battle-song, and it rose high above the din.

The assembled tribesmen began to murmur. They had feared the evil eye of Masasi, yet, as the Zulu sang, Masasi had been powerless in the mighty hands of Umzugaan. The magic of Masasi was exposed as a hollow fraud in a way that these tribesmen could understand, and they murmured uneasily.

Yet Umzugaan knew nothing of this. He was fighting the black lion, maintaining his hold on its back, still holding open the slaving jaws. The lion gurgled and snarled in a choking manner, rolling in the dust, and threshing wildly with its great paws to get at its assailant.

Umzugaan's muscles stood out on his powerful arms. His senses were reeling under the strain. If he had had but a knife, the grim pet of Masasi might have died there and then. With his bare hands he could do little but hope that the lion might choke.

Then a shrill whistle sounded from the shadows beyond the huts. Masasi was calling his pet. Masasi was anxious to get away. The lion heard and became even more frantic. Still Umzugaan

clung to the brute as they rolled over and over on the ground, locked in that deadly embrace.

At last they crashed into the trunk of the tree, and Umzugaan met the full force of the impact with his head. He felt his brain reel, felt the warm blood stream down his face. His fingers lost their grip on the mane, and as the whistle of Masasi sounded again in the shadows and the lion fought frantically to free itself, the Zulu, little more than half-conscious, slid to the ground and lay at the foot of the tree, bleeding and battered.

The black lion sprang aside and stood for a moment, irresolute. Its anger was terrible to behold. It roared a challenge to the darkening skies, and the tribesmen scattered this way and that, terrified.

The roar echoed in Umzugaan's ears and did more to bring him back to full consciousness than anything else could have done. He realised his danger, and came to his feet. The lion heard him, and faced him. Man and lion stared at one another. Umzugaan crouched, waiting for the attack.

But the ferocity faded from the lion. Its haunches went down, the tail drooped, and it began to edge backwards, eyes wavering, ears twitching nervously. Umzugaan suddenly saw a patch on the animal's back, where a burning brand had scorched the hair of the black lion.

And the lion remembered—remembered the man who had attacked him, remembered the fire, that scorched and burnt. And it was afraid.

Umzugaan made a low dive, reaching out with his hand as if to snatch an imaginary brand from an imaginary fire.

With a snarl the black lion spun round and fled from the spot.

Umzugaan made to pursue, but he staggered only a few steps before his legs lost their strength and crumpled beneath him. He went down heavily, panting hard, his head sagging. Men came to seize him, and the bound chieftain had been cut down from the tree, and now came running to the spot.

"Treat him gently," he ordered. "Was he not mightier even than the witch-doctor? Is he not now my blood brother?"

Umzugaan was dimly aware that he was being lifted and carried to a hut, then his senses sank into darkness and slumber.

It was broad daylight when he awoke, and the chieftain who had been so near to death sat watching over him.

"Fear nothing," he said. "I owe thee my life, stranger."

"'Twas a debt paid," said Umzugaan. "For thou didst save me when I was pinned down by the tree, and Masasi would have slain me. Now let me rest, so that I may pursue Masasi, according to my vow, and slay him."

"I and my people are thy servants," said the chief. "They sing of thy might, thy courage, and thy honour. Make this hut thy home for as long as thou hast need of it."

Umzugaan was perfectly fit again by sunset, however, and he set out once more, full of hope, knowing that Masasi and the black lion could not be far away.

THE END.

(Four moons have come and gone, and only two remain now in which Umzugaan can fulfil his vow of vengeance. But he has more hope than ever now. Don't miss next week's yarn in this thrilling adventure series.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,341.

THE ACE OF JOKERS!

(Continued from page 24.)

There was a trample of feet on the box-room stairs. Vernon-Smith burst into the room. Bunter had released him from the locked study, after long banging. Smithy tore in, breathless and furious.

"Got him?" he panted. "Why—what—who—"

The Bounder stood transfixed at the sight of William Wibley.

"Wurrgh!" gurgled Wibley. "I'm soaked—drenched! Gurrgh! I—"

"It's Wibley!" howled Bob Cherry. "Spofford—Wibley—all a spoof! We've given him a wash now—"

"Wibley!" The Bounder grasped it. "My hat! I'll—"

He fairly bounded at Wibley.

"Urrgh! Keep off!" yelled Wibley. "I say—yaroooooh!"

But the Bounder did not keep off. Wibley had handed his spread over to Bunter, and set him to write lines while the Owl of the Remove gobbled it! Smithy wanted vengeance—and he had it! He got Wibley's head into chancery.

Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump! "Urrgh! Help! Dragimoff!" gurgled Wibley.

"Oh, my hat! Smithy—"

Thump! Thump! Thump!

The Famous Five grasped the Bounder and dragged him off. Wibley made a jump to the door. Vernon-Smith tore himself loose and jumped after him. His foot shot out, and Wibley did the box-room stairs in one.

Bump!

"Yarooooh!" roared Wibley, as he landed in the Remove passage.

But he was up in a twinkling, and running for his study. He dashed in and slammed the door. From the other end of the passage, on the landing, came the boom of Prout's voice.

"This way! Follow me! He has been seen! Bunter informs me that the villain passed him in this passage!"

Tramp, tramp, came many feet up the Remove passage. Harry Wharton & Co. came down the box-room stairs with the Bounder. Prout shouted to them.

"Have you seen him? Is he in the box-room?"

"Nobody in the box-room, sir!" answered Wharton.

"Search the studies!" shouted Prout.

Prout hurled open the door of Wibley's study.

"Scoundrel! Are you here?" roared Prout.

Wibley had been two minutes in the study. Fortunately, two minutes had been enough. His disguise and make-up were already gone, and Wibley had jumped—or, rather, bolted—into his own clothes.

With a coolness that was remarkable in the circumstances, he turned to Prout with an expression of mild surprise on his face.

"Want anything, sir?" asked Wibley.

Prout stared at him.

"Wibley! I understood that you were absent—"

"I've come back, sir!"

"No matter. Have you seen a scoundrel—the man Spofford—an impostor—a rascal! He is in this passage somewhere. Have you seen—"

"I haven't seen any stranger here, sir."

"Come!" boomed Prout, backing out of the study. "He is not here! Search

for him further! Search the studies—the stairs—the passages! He must be found and handed over to the police! Search for the scoundrel!"

Prout and his army marched on, in search of the scoundrel! As they were not looking in Wibley's study, they were not likely to find him!

Mr. Spofford was never found.

He had vanished.

Neither within nor without Greyfriars was a trace of that remarkable and elusive gentleman discovered.

The real Mr. Spofford, at Rookwood, was heard from, but could throw no light on the matter. Mr. Quelch could throw no light on it. Nobody could—or, at least, would! The juniors who knew did not want Wibley sacked—as he most certainly would have been had they told what they knew!

But, on their own, they rather made the spoofer of Greyfriars "sit up" for that tremendous spoof. They honed to make him tired of spoofing! How many times the Famous Five and the Bounder kicked William Wibley during the following days could not have been computed without going into big figures. They kicked him often, and they kicked him hard! And fellows who wondered what it was all about never guessed that they were kicking Mr. Spofford, the temporary—very temporary—master of the Remove!

THE END.

(You look out for next week's MAGNET and a ripping "Fifth of November" yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled "THE GREYFRIARS GUY!" It's full of fun and fireworks. And don't forget that this issue will contain further particulars of the greatest FREE GIFT SCHEME ever!)

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