

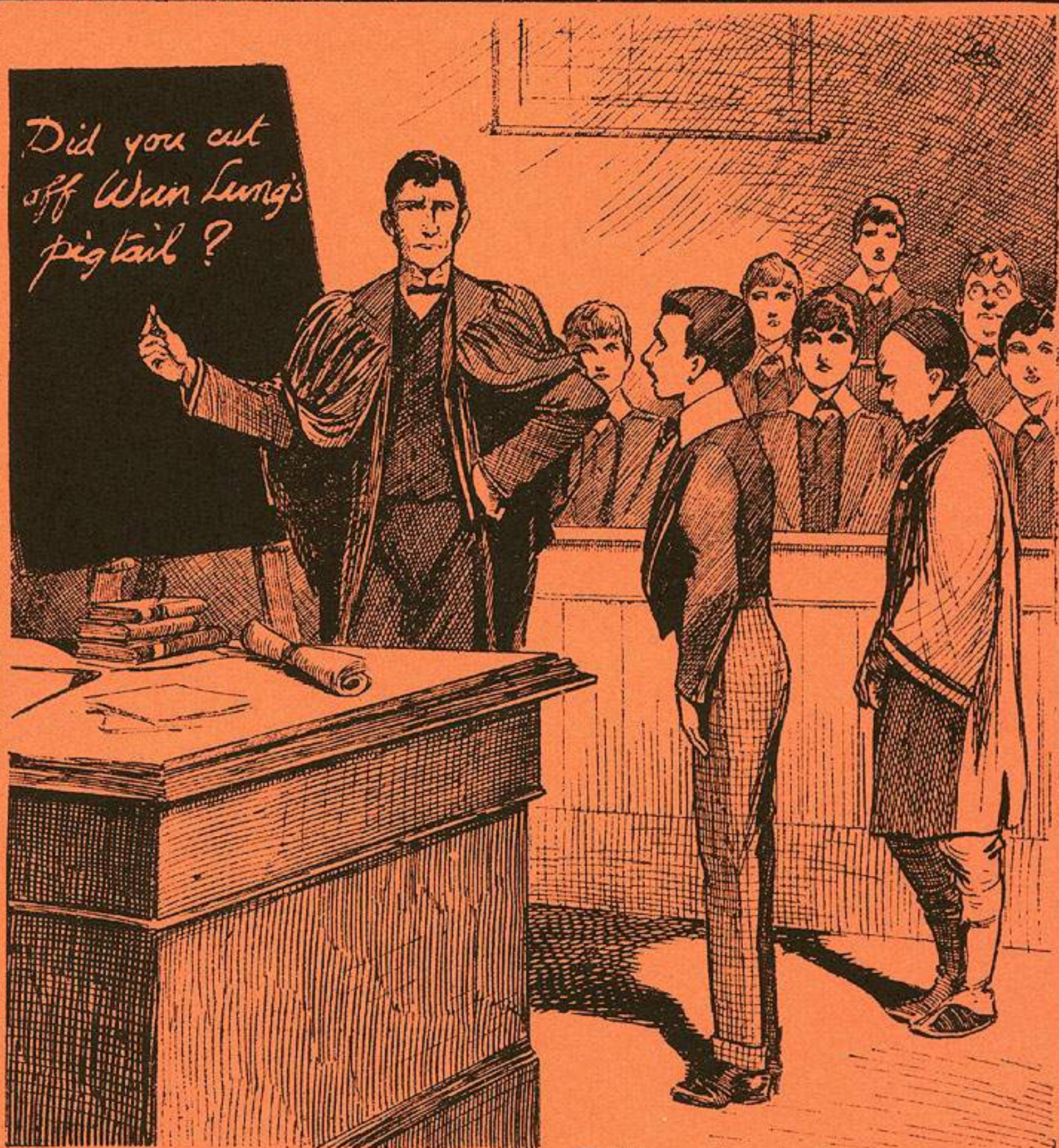
"WUN LUNG'S LOSS!"



No. 128 |

Grand, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.

| Vol. 4.



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Wun Lung's Loss



A Splendid, Long, Complete
School Tale of
HARRY WHARTON & CO.
at Greyfriars.

— BY —

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bulstrode Gets the Whitewash!

"**W**HERE is he?"
"It's all right! He can't get away now."
"Good!"
"But where is he?"

Bulstrode, the bully of the Greyfriars Remove, grinned gleefully. Skinner and Snoop, who were coming on tiptoe along the Remove passage, paused as he held up his finger.

"You've seen him?" said Skinner.

"Yes."

"Then he came this way? But where is he now?"

Bulstrode pointed to the box-room stairs—a narrow flight, winding upwards, at the end of the Remove passage.

"He whipped up there!" said Bulstrode, with a grin. "I just caught his pigtail disappearing as I ran down the passage. He's gone to hide himself in the box-room."

Skinner and Snoop chuckled together.

"He couldn't have chosen a better place—for us!" grinned Snoop.

"Just so!"

"Wharton and Nugent and the rest are at cricket," grinned Skinner. "They won't be in for some time yet. They're playing the Upper Fourth, and they're thinking cricket and breathing cricket."

"He, he, he!" chuckled Snoop.

"Let's have him out—there's no one to interfere."

Bulstrode nodded.

"Good! He can't get away now! The cheeky young sweep! Fancy his having the nerve to interfere with the jape we were getting up for the new chap! The cheek of it! And to collar the pail of whitewash and buzz off with it!"

"The cheek!" said Snoop.

"We'll wash him in it!" chuckled Bulstrode. "I was afraid he would buzz out into the Close—but he came this way. He's still got the whitewash. We'll smother him in it from head to foot, and make him swallow a mouthful or so. That will put the young heathen up to a wrinkle about interfering with us!"

"He, he, he!"

"Come on, then! Hold on, here's that rotter, Cherry!"

The three cads of the Remove paused at the foot of the box-room stairs as Bob Cherry came out of his study—the end study in the Remove passage, No. 13. Bob had his bat under his arm, and was in flannels.

He glanced at the trio.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he exclaimed. "Spending your afternoon indoors?"

"Well, I'm not wanted in the Form team, for one," said Bulstrode, with a sneer. "Did you think I should come and look on while you and Wharton and the rest were showing off?"

"Rats!" said Bob cheerfully. "You could play in the Form team if you liked to behave yourself, as you know jolly well—and, anyway, it's better looking on at a cricket-match than rotting about the passages on a fine afternoon."

"I suppose we can do as we like."

"You can go to the dickens if you like," said Bob Cherry. And he strode down the passage, with his big, heavy stride, and disappeared by the lower stairs.

Bulstrode and his companions breathed more easily when he was gone.

"Glad he's off!" said Skinner. "If he had known that Wun Lung was hiding in the box-room, and that we were after him—"

"He would have shoved in his oar, of course, and we don't want a row with Cherry just now," said Bulstrode. "He would be bound to stand up for Wun Lung, as the heathen is his study-mate, along with that factory chap. But the coast's clear now—"

"Let's go up—oh, hold on! Here's Linley."

A finely-built junior, with a frank and open face, came out of the end study. It was Mark Linley, the lad from Lancashire. He also had a bat under his arm, and was evidently going out after Bob Cherry to join the cricketers. He, too, paused, and glanced at the three juniors standing by the box-room stairs.

Something about Bulstrode & Co., perhaps, excited the suspicions of the keen-sighted Lancashire lad.

"No hands wanted," said Skinner, in an undertone perfectly audible to the junior.

Mark Linley flushed.

It was an allusion to the fact that he had worked in a factory before he came to Greyfriars on a scholarship—a fact that some of the fellows seemed determined that he should never be allowed to forget. Not that Mark wanted to forget it, for that matter. There was nothing to be ashamed of in his origin, and he was never likely to become snobbish enough to be ashamed of it.

The Lancashire lad paused, and Skinner, with an inward tremor, wished for the moment that he had not made that ill-natured joke. He thought that there was going to be trouble. But Mark did not look at Skinner.

"Have you seen Wun Lung?" he asked, looking at Bulstrode.

"The Remove bully looked extremely thoughtful.

"Isn't he in your study?" he asked.

"No."

"Do you want him?"

"I wanted to speak to him," said Mark.

"Oh, I dare say you'll find him looking on at the cricket!" said Skinner. "You're batting for the Remove, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"That's where he is, sure as a gun."

Mark looked at the juniors searchingly.

"Then you haven't seen him indoors?" he said.

Bulstrode shrugged his shoulders.

"Blessed if I take much notice of what that rotten Chinese does," he said. "To my mind, it's a disgrace to have a rotten heathen in the school at all."

"Wun Lung is a decent little chap, and he is religious enough in his own way, heathen or not," said Mark quietly.

"You're not the sort of fellow to preach, anyway. If you

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"ALONZO THE GREAT."

haven't seen him, all right. I had an idea, from something he said, that he was going to your study, and—"

Bulstrode laughed disagreeably.

"You thought he was going to play some jape on me, I suppose, and you thought you'd interfere to save him from a licking," he remarked.

Mark Linley did not reply. As a matter of fact, Bulstrode's words were very near the truth. The Lancashire lad, after a last keen look at the three Removeites, strode away without speaking again.

The three juniors grinned at one another as he went down-stairs.

"They're gone now," said Bulstrode. "Now, let's get on."

They looked down the passage once more, and then ascended the box-room stairs.

The door of the box-room, on the little landing at the top, was closed. Bulstrode paused outside it. His face was very grim.

Wun Lung, the little Chinese, had never got on well with the Remove bully. Bulstrode had always regarded the diminutive Celestial as a suitable object for ragging and cuffing, when he felt in the humour—which was very often.

But Wun Lung, though a baby in Bulstrode's hands if it came to a fight, was an exceptionally deep youth, and he generally contrived to keep his end up, and anybody who bullied him was pretty certain to come off worst in the long run.

But Wun Lung had, as a matter of fact, started the ball rolling this time.

A new fellow was coming to the school that afternoon, and Bulstrode and his friends, in their genial way, had prepared a little surprise for him.

Snoop was to meet him at the gate, and bring him up to the School House, passing under the Remove study windows; and Bulstrode and Skinner above were to have a pail of whitewash ready to tip over his head.

Such a joke upon a new boy seemed to Bulstrode and Skinner the very quintessence of humour, and they roared over it in anticipation.

Why Wun Lung had interfered was not clear, but he certainly had. He had taken away the pail of whitewash almost under Bulstrode's eyes, and the bully of the Remove had resolved to make him sorry for it. For the moment, he had quite forgotten the expected new boy. All his attention just now was given to Wun Lung.

He seized the handle of the box-room door and shook it.

The door was locked.

"Hallo, we're locked out!" said Skinner.

Bulstrode gritted his teeth.

"I'll soon alter that." He knocked at the door. "Wun Lung!"

"Me savvy."

"Oh, you're here, you heathen worm!"

"Allee light."

Wun Lung's voice came quavering through the keyhole, and the tones of it seemed to indicate that he was terribly frightened.

Bulstrode kicked on the door.

"Open this door, Wun Lung!"

"Me flaidde."

"Oh, you're afraid, are you?" grinned Bulstrode. "Well, you're right. We're going to make you sit up."

"Wun Lung solly."

"I'll make you sower! You've raided the whitewash—"

"Bulstrode playee tlick on Wun Lung's fiend!"

"Oh, the new kid is a friend of yours, is he?"

"What you tinkee? His fathel fiend of my fathel. You savvy?"

"Well, open the door."

"Bulstrode no touchee Wun Lung?"

"Open the door."

"Bulstrode plemisc, honoul blight—"

"Open this door!" roared Bulstrode.

He expected his mere voice to compel the little Chinese to obey. Skinner did not think Wun Lung would allow himself to be frightened into obeying; but the click of the key in the lock showed that Wun Lung was unfastening the door.

"He's opening it!" murmured Bulstrode.

"Good egg!"

Click!

Bulstrode grasped the handle of the door again, and pushed it.

It swung open at his touch.

"Got him now!" exclaimed Bulstrode, as he pushed open the door and entered quickly.

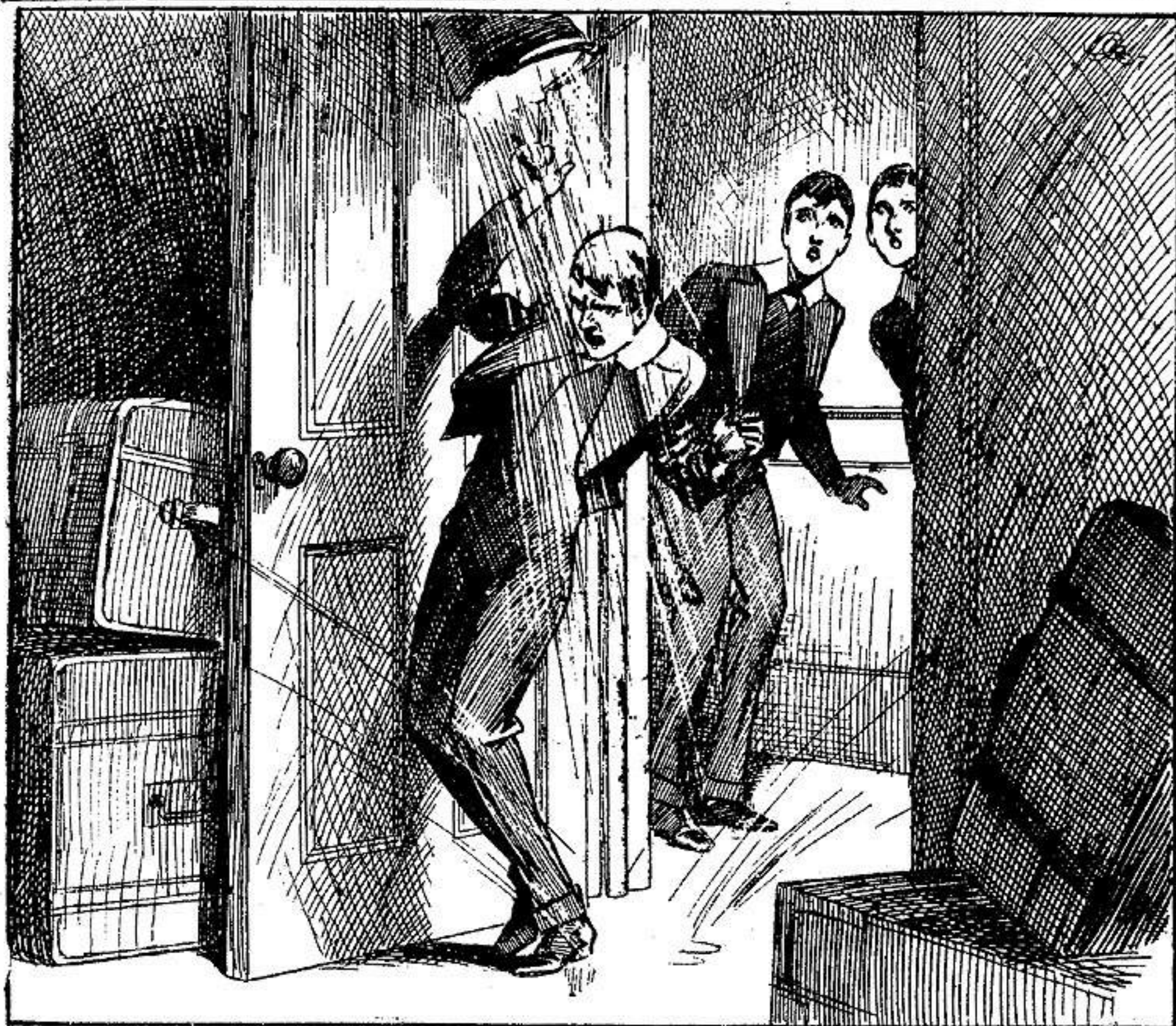
Swish!

Bulstrode staggered back with a wild yell.

From above came a flood of something—he did not know what; something wet, cold, and clammy—that descended upon him with a swoop, and choked and blinded him.

It was the whitewash!

A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
By FRANK RICHARDS.



"Got him now!" exclaimed Bulstrode, pushing open the box-room door. "Ow!" The Remove bully staggered back with a yell. A flood of something cold, wet and clammy descended upon him with a swoop. It was the whitewash!

THE SECOND CHAPTER. A Hot Chase.

WUN LUNG chuckled softly. The little Chinese had known what he was about when he unlocked the door.

The pail of whitewash was suspended inside the door by a single cord, fastened to a hook in the ceiling. It hung against the top of the door, so that the latter, in opening, pushed up the bottom of the pail, overturning it, and shooting out the contents upon whoever should enter.

Bulstrode had received his own whitewash, as he had intended the new boy to receive it from his study window.

It was poetical justice, but none the more pleasing to Bulstrode on that account.

He choked and gasped as the whitewash swamped on him.

In an instant he was as white as a spectre from head to foot, and his hair, his eyes, his mouth were clogged with the clammy fluid.

Skinner and Snoop received big splashes of it, too, on their faces and clothes, and jumped back from the doorway in surprise and alarm.

That was Wun Lung's opportunity.

While Bulstrode staggered, blinded, and the other two were for the moment petrified, the little Chinese dashed out of the doorway.

Skinner made a clutch at him a moment too late—the Celestial was past him, and bounding down the stairs four at a time.

"Groo!" gurgled Bulstrode, driving his knuckles into his eyes.

eyes to clear the sight. "Groo! Wough! Euh! Oh! Yowp!"

"My only socks!" gasped Skinner.

"Doesn't he look a beauty!" murmured Snoop.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!"

And the two juniors yelled with laughter.

They could not help it.

Bulstrode did not feel comic at all, but he looked decidedly funny, and the other two simply yelled.

The Remove bully spat out whitewash, and growled savagely as he rubbed it from his eyes.

"W-w-what is it?" he gasped. "It—it tastes horrid! Something fell on me—yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's the whitewash!"

"He, he, he!"

"The—the whitewash!" gurgled Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"What are you cackling at, you fool?" roared Bulstrode.

"Nothing funny in a chap being drenched with whitewash, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha! It looks funny."

"He, he, he!"

"Where's that Chinese?"

"He's gone."

"Gone?"

"Yes; he nipped out before we could stop him."

"You chumps!" roared Bulstrode furiously. "You've let him get away! By George—"

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He made a rush at Skinner and Snoop. He felt that he must wreak his rage upon somebody. The two juniors rushed to the stairs, and fled.

"Stop!" roared Bulstrode.

But Snoop and Skinner knew better than to stop while the Remove bully was in that mood. They fled down the Remove passage, laughing breathlessly.

Bulstrode staggered down the stairs after them.

He was almost beside himself with rage.

If Wun Lung had been there then, Bulstrode would probably have done him some serious injury. The burly Removite tramped along the passage, breathing fury. He left a trail of squelching whitewash behind him.

His only idea was to find Wun Lung now.

He dashed down the stairs. It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and nearly everybody was out of doors, so there were no masters about to stop Bulstrode, and inquire into the reason of the curious state he was in.

A Removite was on the steps of the house. It was Alonzo Todd, the Duffer, as the fellows usually called him. He stared at Bulstrode in amazement.

"Good heavens! Who is that?" he exclaimed.

"It's me, idiot."

"Oh, Bulstrode, you are covered with whitewash!"

"Do you think I don't know it!" roared Bulstrode.

"Have you seen Wun Lung pass?"

"Dear me! You are not going out like that."

"Idiot! Have you seen—"

"It will lead to trouble, Bulstrode," said the Duffer of Greyfriars warningly. "Boys are not allowed to go out in such a state, I feel sure. I cannot understand your reason for preferring to do so. It seems to me a most peculiar taste, but—"

"Have you seen Wun Lung?" roared Bulstrode.

"Really—"

"Where's that Chinese? Has he passed you?"

"Yes. He passed me about a minute ago. He seemed to be in a hurry."

"Which way did he go?"

"Towards the cricket-field, I think. Really, Bulstrode, I think your appearance in the Close will cause quite a sensation, and I should really recommend you to clean off that stuff—"

But Bulstrode was gone.

Leaving the Duffer of Greyfriars in a state of great astonishment, he dashed down towards the cricket-field.

There was a big crowd on the cricket-ground.

The Remove was playing the Upper Fourth, and most of the Lower Form fellows who were not playing had gathered to see the match.

Bulstrode's sudden appearance, as white as a ghost from top to toe, created a commotion at once.

"Look there!" exclaimed Tom Brown, who was waiting his turn to bat. "What on earth's that?"

"It's a giddy ghost in daylight!" exclaimed Ogilvy.

"Faith, and it's the wild man from Borneo!" said Micky Desmond.

"Who is it?"

"What is it?"

"What's the joke?"

"Great Scott! It's Bulstrode!"

"Bulstrode!"

"He's been taking a bath in whitewash."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The ha, ha, hafulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, looking round from his wicket. "The honourable Bulstrode must be off his esteemed rocker."

Bulstrode took no notice of the exclamations and questions that greeted him. He was glaring round in search of Wun Lung.

"Where's that Chinese?" he roared.

"Ha, ha!"

"It's Wun Lung!"

"One of Wun Lung's little jokes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode raged.

"Where's that Chinese?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Remove bully caught sight of the little Chinese in the crowd. Wun Lung was making himself as small as possible among the Removites, and Ogilvy and Morgan and Micky Desmond were doing their best to screen him. But Bulstrode caught sight of the Chinese attire, and rushed towards the little Celestial.

"Hold him!" he shouted, as Wun Lung made a spring to escape.

"Rats!" said Ogilvy.

"Stop him!"

Wun Lung was running desperately.

On his track went Bulstrode, still shedding whitewash in the MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 128.

splashes as he ran. The fellows roared with laughter. The sight was utterly ridiculous. Wun Lung running and dodging and hopping through every opening in the crowd, and Bulstrode tearing on his track, leaving a white trail behind on the green grass.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even Temple of the Upper Fourth, who was bowling to Harry Wharton, stopped for a minute to snigger.

Wharton looked round with a grin, but with one eye on the bowler.

All attention had gone from the cricket now. The fellows watched the absurd chase, and cheered on Wun Lung and Bulstrode alternately.

"Put it on, Wun Lung."

"Go it, Bulstrode."

"Hurrah! Put your beef into it."

"Collar his pigtail."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Two to one on the heathen."

"Buck up, Bulstrode!"

The Remove bully was straining every nerve to overtake the diminutive fugitive. He was a faster runner than the little Chinese, but the sympathy of the crowd was with Wun Lung, and they opened freely to let him dodge through, and closed up again for Bulstrode, many of them getting liberal smears of whitewash as he thrust himself through.

But the little Chinese was run down at last.

He stumbled near the ropes that marked the edge of the field of play, and the bully of the Remove was upon him.

"Now, then!" gasped Bulstrode.

He made a clutch at the fluttering pigtail.

But Wun Lung was desperate.

He twisted round, and caught Bulstrode's ankles, and in the twinkling of an eye the Remove bully's feet were flying into the air, and Bulstrode came on the grass with a bump that jarred every bone in his body.

There was a roar from the crowd.

"Well done, Wun Lung!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode staggered up.

The little Chinese was running again, but now Skinner headed him off, and he paused. Bulstrode rushed at him. There was only one way open to Wun Lung, and he took it. He hopped over the rope, and ran in among the cricketers.

Play had been resumed, and Harry Wharton, the Remove captain, was batting to Temple's bowling.

Wun Lung came tearing breathlessly through the fieldsmen.

There was a shout of astonishment and anger from the cricketers.

"Get off, there!"

"Get off the ground!"

"Outside!"

Wun Lung ran on, straight towards Harry Wharton. The young captain of the Remove was the one to save him from Bulstrode's vengeance, if anyone could.

"Get back there!"

Wharton was swiping at the ball, but Wun Lung's arrival put him off his stroke, and he missed it. The ball crashed into the wicket.

"How's that?" shouted Fry of the Upper Fourth.

"Out!"

Harry turned angrily to the panting Chinese.

"You young ass!" he exclaimed. "Look what you've done! I'm out!"

"Wun Lung sorry!"

"You've lost the Remove a wicket, you young duffer! You—"

"Bulstrode after Wun Lung."

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"Oh, hang Bulstrode!"

"You saved me."

"Look here—"

"You're out, Wharton," said Dabney of the Upper Fourth. "Oh, rather, you know. How long are you going to stop there?"

"Got you, you heathen rotter!" gasped Bulstrode, as he swept up, and grasped Wun Lung by the shoulder.

Wharton stared at him angrily.

"Get off the cricket-field, Bulstrode. You ought to know better than this."

"I'm after that young sweep. Look what he's done to me."

"Let him alone."

"I—"

"Come with me, Wun Lung."

"Me comee."

Wharton put his bat under his arm, and drew Wun Lung away with him. The little Chinese had lost him his wicket, but that could not be helped now. Temple would have admitted a claim, if he had made one, to continue his innings, but Wharton did not want to do that. His stumps were down, and he accepted the ill-luck with what philosophy he could muster.

"Wun Lung so sorry!" murmured the little Chinese, as he followed the captain of the Remove cricket team off the field.

Wharton nodded shortly.

"It's all right; it can't be helped. Man in, Bob."

"Right you are," said Bob Cherry. "But I say, that wicket went down through Wun Lung and Bulstrode, you know. Temple would admit that."

Wharton shook his head.

"It's the fortune of war. Go in, Bob."

"Oh, all right."

And Bob Cherry went out to the wicket. Dabney of the Upper Fourth gave Bulstrode a poke in the ribs. The burly Remove was staring blankly after Wharton, as if uncertain what to do.

He started, and glared at Dabney.

The Fourth-Former pointed to the ropes.

"Get off the ground," he said. "You're in the way here."

"What-ho!" said Fry. "You're neither useful nor ornamental, if you want to know the exact truth, Bulstrode. Take your blessed whitewash away. If you want to play the ghost in 'Hamlet,' you can't use this for a stage."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rather."

Bulstrode snapped his teeth, and strode off in the direction of the pavilion. Wun Lung saw him coming, and he held on to Harry Wharton.

The Remove bully strode up to them.

"Wharton—" he began.

Wharton's eyes met his.

"Well?" he said coldly.

"You see what that young hound has done to me," said Bulstrode in a thick voice, "are you going to stand between me and him now?"

"Yes."

"After what he has done?"

"I suppose you were bullying him—"

"Nothing of the sort—I—"

"Friend of Wun Lung comee school to-day," murmured the little Chinese. "Bulstrode meanee chuckee whitewash ovel him. Wun Lung takee whitewashee away. Bulstrode comee whackee Wun Lung—me chuckee whitewashee ovel Bulstrode—"

"I thought it was something of the sort," said Wharton scornfully. "You were going to play a rotten joke on the new boy, who happens to be a friend of Wun Lung's. He was quite right to try to stop you."

"Enough of that," said Bulstrode savagely. "You're standing up for him, as usual, I suppose? Is that it?"

"You're not going to touch him, if that's what you mean," said Wharton laconically.

Bulstrode ground his teeth.

"Very well! You can take his part now—but I shall come in later! I'll make him squirm for this, in spite of you! That's all."

The Remove bully strode away.

For the next hour he was busily engaged in cleaning himself, and trying to clean his clothes, from the whitewash. Himself he was successful with, but the clothes were not likely ever to be the same again.

Wharton glanced after Bulstrode as he went, and then looked down at the little Celestial.

"You'd better look out for Bulstrode, after this, kid," he said shortly.

Wun Lung nodded without replying. His quaint little face was very grave. He felt, himself, that it behoved him to look out for Bulstrode.

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NEXT
WEEK:

"ALONZO THE GREAT."

EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Hard of Hearing.

"EXCUSE me—is this Greyfriars School?"

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent had strolled down to the gates. They were both out, and the Remove innings was finishing. The Remove were batting second, and their total so far was greatly in excess of the Upper Fourth figure, in spite of the disaster Wun Lung had caused by getting Wharton out. It was a "two-day" match, the second innings on both sides to be played on the following Wednesday afternoon. Harry and Frank were chatting at the gates, when a lad came up from the direction of Friardale, and stopped. It was he who asked the question, and Harry turned round to look at him as he replied.

He was a lad of between fourteen and fifteen, with a pink, healthy-looking face, and bright eyes. He had a pleasant expression, and Harry rather liked his look at the first glance. He guessed at once that this was the new boy whom he knew to be coming to Greyfriars that afternoon.

He nodded genially.

"Yes, this is Greyfriars," he replied.

The other looked blank.

"Oh, I'm sorry," he said. "I'm sure I beg your pardon."

Wharton and Nugent stared.

The other fellow's reply was so utterly unexpected and irrelevant, that they did not know what to make of it.

"Eh?" said Harry.

"I'm sorry, I'm sure."

"Sorry?"

"Perhaps you will tell me where it is, then?"

"Where what is?"

"Certainly not. I simply wish to find Greyfriars School."

"Eh?"

"What?"

Wharton and Nugent drew back a little. They began to entertain a suspicion that the stranger, cheerful and intelligent as he looked, was mad.

The boy looked at them in surprise.

"I am going to Greyfriars School," he said. "I have walked from the station. My name is Dutton; Willy Dutton."

"Then you're the new fellow."

"Oh, no, not at all."

"Hey?"

"I am a trifle hard of hearing at times, but it is not at all necessary to bellow, as you suggest," said Dutton. "If you speak a little louder, I shall hear; but I may as well say that I dislike being shouted at."

"Oh," said Wharton, comprehending, "you're deaf."

"Eh?"

"Are you deaf?"

"Certainly not. I am not in the least out of breath. A little walk like this is not likely to tire me."

"My hat!"

"I asked you if this was Greyfriars School? I was told it was in this direction, and on the left. Perhaps you can tell me where it is?"

"This is Greyfriars."

"What?"

"This is Greyfriars!"

"Nonsense! There are no flies here at all."

"This is Greyfriars!" roared Wharton.

"Oh! This is Greyfriars. You said just now that it was not."

"I didn't!"

"Eh?"

"I did not say so!"

"Where?"

"What do you mean?"

"You said there is a may tree, did you not?"

"A—a what? No, I didn't."

"Eh?"

"I said I didn't say so."

"Really, I wish you would speak plainly. This is Greyfriars, you say?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll come in."

"Where is your box?" asked Wharton. "Did you leave it at the station?"

"I have them on my feet."

"Eh?"

"I have my socks on my feet," said the new boy in wonder. "What are you getting at? You didn't expect me to have them on my hands, I suppose?"

"I didn't say your socks, I said your box," roared Wharton.

"Clocks? Oh, I have only one clock, an alarm clock. It is in my box."

"Oh dear!"

"No, it is not here. I left it at the station to be sent on."

"My word!"

"There is a boy—a Chinese chap—here, named Wun Lung, I think," said Dutton, looking inquiringly at the chums of the Remove.

"Yes, rather, in our Form," said Wharton.

"I don't know about his being forlorn, but I daresay he feels lonely here," said Dutton. "My father knew his father in Canton, and I've met him. We're friends."

"He's a decent chap."

"Well, why shouldn't he wear a cap?"

"Eh?"

"You said he wears a cap. I don't see why he shouldn't. You're wearing one yourself."

"Oh dear!"

"No fear! Why, I can see it on your head," exclaimed Dutton. "I'm not blind."

"My hat!"

"Is Wun Lung in now?" asked Dutton.

"Yes."

"Thanks. Where shall I find him?"

"In the house, I think. His study is No. 13 in the Remove."

"Give him your love? What are you getting at?"

"Oh dear! Good-bye."

"Look here, if you call me a liar—"

"I didn't. I—I—there's the house! That way!" Wharton pointed. "You're sure to find Wun Lung there! Go on!" He yelled out the words.

Dutton nodded.

"All right; you needn't shout."

And he walked on towards the School House.

Wharton and Nugent looked at one another helplessly.

"That merchant's coming into the Remove, isn't he?" murmured Harry.

"Yes; so I've heard."

"It will be a new lung exercise," said Wharton resignedly.

"Jolly good for developing the chest, anyway."

And Nugent grinned assent.

They rather liked the new boy, from his looks; but there was no doubt that his affliction must be as great a misfortune to his friends as to himself.

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter came rolling up. He had tracked Wharton from the cricket field.

"Hallo, Bunter! Hungry as usual?"

Billy Bunter blinked at the Remove captain through his big spectacles.

"Oh, really, Wharton, I don't know what you mean by as usual. I don't believe I eat very much. But I happen to be feeling a bit peckish now. Are you going to have tea in the study this evening?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"I'll get in the things if you like."

"And scoff them all before you get them to the study?" said Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Mrs. Mumble is going to send them in, in time for tea," said Harry.

"Oh! I suppose you're going to have tea early?"

"Not earlier than usual—not till after the innings, in fact—so perhaps it will be a bit late. Buzz off!"

"In that case, perhaps you'd better make me a small loan to get a snack at the tuckshop. I'm expecting a postal order this evening, and I'll return it without fail when it comes."

"Rats!"

"Oh, really—"

Nugent grinned as a new idea came into his mind.

"Did you know there was a new chap in the Remove, Bunter?" he asked.

Billy Bunter pricked up his ears, so to speak.

New fellows were his game. Bunter was a remorseless borrower; but the fellows at Greyfriars, especially his own Form-fellows, knew him so well that it was difficult for the fat junior to extract money from them.

But with a new boy Bunter was generally successful at first, until the new boy came to know him, when trouble sometimes resulted; for Bunter always put off the payment of debts till a certain postal order should arrive, and although continually expected, that postal order still obstinately refused to turn up.

"A new fellow, Nugent?" he asked eagerly.

"Yes; chap named Dutton."

"Where is he?"

"Just gone in."

"Did he look as if—as if—"

"As if he could be sponged on?"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"He looked pretty prosperous!" grinned Nugent.

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"You'd better see what you can make of him. He's only just gone in!"

Bunter hardly waited for Nugent to finish. He ran off towards the School House as fast as his fat little legs could carry him.

Wharton looked quickly at Nugent.

"What on earth have you set Billy on the track of the new chap for, Frank?" he asked.

"Fun!" said Nugent, serenely. "Dutton's as deaf as a post, I think—and it will be funny to see Bunter trying to extract money from him. Come and see!"

And Wharton laughed and followed his chum.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Misunderstanding.

DUTTON had entered the House, and was standing gazing about him in a rather lost way. The building was deserted on the fine summer afternoon, and the new boy felt a little lost and lonely. He was debating in his mind whether to step outside again and ring, when Billy Bunter came puffing in.

The fat junior blinked round in search of the new boy, and saw him at once. He came ambling up to him.

"I say," he began. "You're the new chap, ain't you?"

"I have taken off my cap," said Dutton. "What do you mean?"

Bunter stared.

"I asked you if you were the new chap?" he said.

"No, it's not a new cap, but it's good enough, I suppose. I don't see why I should wear a new cap to please you, whoever you are!"

"I—I—I say, are you off your rocker?"

"Eh? What's that about my socks?" asked the new boy, leaning his head a little to one side, and putting his hand up to his ear.

The gesture explained the state of affairs to Billy Bunter.

"Oh, I see! You're deaf!" he said.

"Eh?"

"You're deaf!" bawled Bunter.

"Oh, not at all—just a little hard of hearing!" said Dutton. "I can hear you perfectly if you speak clearly, as you did just then."

"I bawled!" gasped Bunter.

"Who called?"

"Nobody, ass! I said I bawled!"

"Somebody called me? Who was it?"

"Nobody!"

"Look here—"

"I came in specially to see you," shouted Bunter. "I thought you might be lonely as you are a new chap."

"I don't see why you should think I should look bony in a new cap. Besides, this isn't a new cap."

"My hat!" murmured Bunter.

"Eh?"

"I suppose you're hungry after your journey?" shrieked Bunter.

"Oh, yes; I'm a bit peckish."

"Like to come and have a feed?"

"Look here. If you say I eat weeds again—"

"I didn't!" roared Bunter. "I asked you if you'd like to have a feed?"

"Oh, I see. Certainly. That's very kind of you!"

"You see, I'm always kind to new boys," said Bunter. "I think a decent chap ought to be decent to new chaps, and make them feel at home, you know."

"No, I haven't."

"Eh?"

"I haven't been to Rome. I've been to Boulogne!"

"My word! I never said anything about being at Rome."

"Yes, I generally live at home. I've had a tutor, you know, and he's prepared me for the Lower Fourth Form here."

"Oh, crikey! I don't think I'd chum with this chap, if he was rolling in sovereigns!" murmured Billy Bunter.

"Eh? Did you speak?"

"Yes, I said I would be glad to stand you a feed, only I haven't had a postal order I was expecting, so—"

"Dear me! I thought they slept in a dormitory here."

"What?"

"Didn't you say that they had four-posters in the bedrooms?"

Bunter almost collapsed.

"Great Scott! I said I hadn't had a postal order I was expecting!"

"Oh, it's while things are in disorder owing to—to what did you say?"

"Will you come and have a feed?"

"Certainly!"

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"I'm sorry," said Billy Bunter. "But you see how it is, Mrs. Mimble, I'm stony. I'm expecting a postal order this evening." "Don't talk nonsense, Master Bunter!" interrupted Mrs. Mimble with asperity.

"I'm stony broke just at present, owing to a disappointment about a postal order. I suppose you won't mind settling for the feed, if I pay up as soon as my postal order comes."

"Certainly!" said Dutton, cheerfully. "I like a four-poster best myself!"

Bunter gave it up.

Words were useless: it was a time for action.

"This way!" he exclaimed, catching Dutton by the arm, and he led him out of the house. A roar of laughter greeted him, and the short-sighted junior blinked round and saw Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent for the first time, standing on the steps almost in convulsions.

He blinked at them.

"I say, you fellows, this is awful!" he exclaimed. "This chap is fearfully deaf, and he can't tell the difference between a postal order and a four-poster!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going to stand him a feed, though: I believe in doing the decent thing by new chaps," said Billy Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Bunter rolled off to the tuckshop with his prize. Mrs. Mimble came into the shop, looking less amiable than usual at the sight of Bunter.

"This is Dutton, the new chap," said Bunter. "He's going to have a feed, and I've brought him here instead of taking him to the village, Mrs. Mimble. Have you sent those things into No. 1 Study yet?"

"Not yet, Master Bunter!"

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"Then I'll take 'em."

Mrs. Mimble shook her head.

"Master Wharton said I was to send them," she replied.

"But it's all the same if I take them, as I belong to No. 1 Study!" exclaimed Billy Bunter warmly.

"No, no!"

"Now, look here, Mrs. Mimble. Wharton didn't mean that I wasn't to take them if I wanted to. Of course he—"

"He said particularly I was not to trust them to you, Master Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Mrs. Mimble—"

"That is what he said, Master Bunter."

"There's some mistake. He couldn't have put it like that. He's a particular friend of mine. They weren't his exact words, now were they?"

"Well, no, not exactly!"

"Then what did he say exactly?"

"Really, Master Bunter—"

"I knew there was some mistake. Now, what did he say exactly?" persisted Billy Bunter.

Mrs. Mimble coughed.

"Well, his exact words were: 'If that spoofing young scoundrel Bunter comes nosing after the grub, mind you don't give it to him!'"

Billy Bunter turned crimson.

"Oh, really, Mrs. Mimble—"

"Well, you asked me for his exact words, Master Bunter."

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"Ahem! Never mind that now," said Bunter, with a hasty glance at Willy Dutton. But Dutton had not heard a word. "My friend is hungry!"

"Is he paying, or are you?" asked Mrs. Mimble pointedly.

"Oh, I'm really paying—"

"Then, please let me see the money. You know I cannot trust you, Master Bunter."

"Well, as a matter of form, Dutton's paying, and I'm going to settle with him afterwards," said Billy Bunter.

"Really, Master Bunter—"

"I suppose you don't mind that?" said Bunter to Dutton.

"Certainly!" said Dutton. "I like jam tarts!"

"Very well," said Mrs. Mimble, without any idea that Dutton had imperfectly heard, and mistaken Bunter's question, and she served willingly enough. Bunter was the only fellow at Greyfriars whom she would not serve till she had seen his money.

Jam tarts and ginger-beer were forthcoming at once.

Dutton evidently had a healthy appetite. He sat on one of the high chairs at the counter, and ate jam-tarts with great gusto.

But he could not equal Billy Bunter.

The fat junior travelled through jam tarts and cream puffs and dough-nuts at a rate that astonished the new boy.

"My hat!" said Dutton. "You can put 'em away!"

"I've got a pretty good appetite," explained Bunter. "I'm not greedy, but I like a lot. I've got a delicate constitution, you know, and I really only keep going at all by taking plenty of nourishment."

"You keep the place flourishing!" said Dutton. "Well, I should say you did, judging by the amount you put away."

"I didn't say that, you ass!"

"Let it pass! Certainly; it's nothing to do with me; good for trade, I suppose," said Dutton cheerfully.

"Blessed if he's not as deaf as a rock!"

"Yes, I'm fond of chocolates; as many as you like. By the way, what's your name?"

"Bunter."

"Shunter? That's an odd name."

"Bunter, I said!"

"Punter? Dear me!"

"Bunter, you chump!"

"Oh, Bunker! I say, Bunker, let's have some more ginger-pop."

"You chump! I said Bunter!"

"Yes, I heard you, Bunker."

"You fearful duffer!"

"Pooh, I don't see why we should suffer from a little more ginger-pop. But, if you're getting to the end of your tin, all right. You must be jolly rich to be able to stand a feed like this, anyway. Why, it must come to seven or eight bob already."

Mrs. Mimble stared.

"Seven shillings and fourpence," she said.

"Oh—er—ye-es!" said Bunter.

"I understood you to say your friend was paying?"

"Just so!"

"Well, then—"

"You see, Dutton—"

"Oh, no; I don't want any mutton!" said the new boy. "I'll have some of the cream puffs, if you like; though really I've had enough!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Harry Wharton and Nugent, looking in at the door.

Bunter blinked at them.

"I've come for the things for tea, Mrs. Mimble," said Harry. "I hope you haven't given them to Bunter!"

"Certainly not, Master Wharton. They are here ready. But—"

"I say, you fellows, this chap is a trial. He undertook to pay for the feed, me to settle out of my postal order this evening, and now it appears there was a misunderstanding."

"Seven shillings and fourpence!" said Mrs. Mimble.

"Oh, really, Mrs. Mimble, you see there was a misunderstanding. I certainly understood that Dutton was going to lend me the money. You can put it down to my account!"

"You owe me too much already."

"Well, I'm sorry; but you see how it is. I'm stony. I'm expecting a postal-order this evening—"

"Don't talk nonsense, Master Bunter!"

"Oh, really! I rather think I shall have a cheque in the morning, too, from a titled friend of mine, and—"

"Will you pay me the seven-and-fourpence, or shall I complain to the Head?" said Mrs. Mimble, with a dangerous gleam in her eyes.

"I say, Dutton," exclaimed Bunter, shaking the new boy by the shoulder, "will you pay this little account for the present, and I—"

"Oh, I don't know whether I could accept a present!" said Dutton. "What is it?"

"Will you pay this account—"

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"A greyhound? Come, now, I suppose you're rotting!"

"I'm stony broke—"

"All a joke? I thought so. Well, good-bye, and thanks for the feed," said Dutton.

And he walked out of the tuckshop with a nod.

Billy Bunter blinked after him in dismay.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "Of all the blessed coolness! He's gorged till he can hardly move, and now he's left me to settle the bill!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Seven shillings and fourpence, please, Master Bunter," said Mrs. Mimble, with deadly persistence.

"Oh, really—"

"You can put it down to my account, Mrs. Mimble," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Bunter, I shall settle this for you, by paying Mrs. Mimble the money I should have lent you from time to time—you understand?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Now, hand over the things, Mrs. Mimble, please!"

"I say, Wharton, if you're going to settle this, you may as well make it up to an even ten shillings, and take my postal-order when it comes," said Bunter.

"Rats!"

And Harry Wharton received his packet, and walked out of the tuckshop with Nugent; and Billy Bunter, with an indignant blink, followed them. Bunter had just had a feed that would have been more than enough for any ordinary junior; but Bunter was always ready for another, and he did not mean to be dead in the next act, as he would have expressed it.

He followed the chums of the Remove to No. 1 Study with a decidedly businesslike expression.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Trouble at Tea.

WUN LUNG came along the Remove passage with his usual noiseless step, looking quickly round him, a great deal like an alarmed rabbit. Wun Lung was alarmed, as a matter of fact; he was keeping an eye open for Bulstrode.

The little Chinese uttered an exclamation as he came in sight of a junior standing in the Remove passage, looking about him.

"My chumee!" he exclaimed.

Dutton—for it was the new boy—looked round.

"Wun Lung!"

"Me gladee see you," said the little Chinese, as they shook hands. "Me expectee you this afternoon, me no see you comee."

"I've been having a feed in the tuckshop," said Dutton. "A chap stood me a feed when I came—a chap named Shunter, I think."

"Bunter?"

"Yes, Bunker. I can't quite make the chap out—he told me his name was several different things. How are you?"

"Me allee light!"

"I look white! Do I? Well, I'm feeling all right," said Dutton. "It's a good many years since I saw you, but you haven't changed a bit."

Wun Lung looked at him curiously.

"My fiendee mole deafee now," he remarked.

"Well, a little out of breath; I've been looking for my study," said Dutton. "Mr. Quelch says I'm to go into No. 2; where there are three fellows already."

"Ah, you will be with Bulstrode, then."

"Is it an awful den? Well, I shall try to make it comfy. Where is it, do you know? I can see No. 1, but No. 2—"

"The numbel is slatched off; this is the loom," said Wun Lung. "But you comee to tea with me."

Dutton nodded cheerfully.

"Oh, yes, I hope I shall see you often!"

"You comee to tea?"

"No; I haven't been to sea, except a trip to Boulogne, and you wouldn't call that going to sea."

Wun Lung gasped. In earlier days, when he had known Dutton, his friend had been deaf, but not quite so bad as this.

"Comee to tea?" he shrieked.

"Oh, tea? Certainly! I've had one, but I can stand another," said Dutton. "Is your study in this passage?"

"Yes, at the end."

"Right you are!"

Wun Lung drew his friend along the passage, and then suddenly stopped. Sitting on the stairs at the end of the passage was a junior, of whom the little Chinese could see only the feet; but he knew those feet. It was Bulstrode.

He was watching for Wun Lung.

"Holdee on," murmured the little Chinese.

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"Anything wrong?"

"Bulstrode—"

"There he is, Bulstrode!" called out a voice from the door of Skinner's study.

The form on the box-room stairs started up.

Bulstrode caught sight of Wun Lung, and came quickly along the passage.

The little Chinese looked at him for a moment, and then dragged Dutton away. He knocked at the door of No. 1 Study as Bulstrode came down the passage, and walked in, dragging Dutton after him.

Harry Wharton & Co. were sitting round the study table at tea. They looked up as Wun Lung came in with Dutton. Bulstrode glared in after them, but he did not venture to follow the Celestial into Harry Wharton's quarters. He passed on, nursing his vengeance till a more favourable opportunity.

Wun Lung smiled ingratiatingly at the chums of No. 1 Study.

"Me come tea!" he announced.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"All right," he said. "Don't stand on ceremony, kid. Sit down, and your friend, too."

"Allee light. Sit down, Dutton!"

"Brown!" said Dutton. "Glad to meet you, Brown!"

"Eh?" said Harry Wharton. "My name's not Brown."

"Oh, Pound! I thought Wun Lung said Brown. I'm glad to make your acquaintance, Pound. Is this your study, Wun Lung?"

"No."

"Slow! What is slow?"

"My word!" murmured Nugent.

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "would you like me to cut down to the tuckshop and get some more ham, and some cake? I'll go like a shot!"

"Stay where you are!"

"I don't mind the trouble in the least. In fact, I'd like to go to the tuckshop!"

"Go there, then, and stay there!" said Wharton. "That would be a really obliging thing to do."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Well, shut up! Pass the ham to Dutton, Franky!"

"Had a good journey down?" asked Frank, as he passed the ham to the new boy.

Dutton nodded.

"Yes, I came from town this morning. It's a long journey."

"Nice weather for it, though."

"I didn't see any heather myself, but I suppose it's there, as you say so. It's very pretty country round here."

"Yes, we've got some ripping scenery round Greyfriars."

"I saw the spire of the church in the village, if that is what you mean. I didn't see any other spires."

Nugent gave it up.

"I say, you fellows, this chap will be a trial," murmured Billy Bunter. "He doesn't understand the plainest things. There was that misunderstanding in the tuckshop—"

"Which will cost you seven-and-fourpence!" grinned Nugent.

Bunter grunted.

"I'll write it out and explain it to him that way, and he can't refuse—"

"You won't do anything of the sort," said Wharton brusquely. "You're not going to sponge on a new fellow like that."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Shut up, and pass the bread-and-butter!"

Bunter snorted, and relapsed into silence. He did not break it again till he wanted his plate replenished, and then he asked Dutton, who was next to him, to pass the saveloys.

Dutton looked round him.

"I can't see them," he said.

"Ass! There they are."

"Well, I can't see any oysters myself."

"You frabjous ass, I didn't say oysters! I said saveloys!" roared Bunter.

"Eh?"

"Pass those blessed saveloys this way!"

"What did I say? I said I couldn't see the oysters!"

"Oh, you chump!"

"Jump! Why should I jump?"

Bunter gasped.

"You frabjous cuckoo—"

"Eh?"

"You fearful, frabjous, burbling chunk—"

"Speak a little louder—or, rather, clearer. I can always

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hear if a fellow speaks clearly. No need to shout. Now, what were you saying about the oysters?"

"Oh, I wasn't saying anything about oysters, you chunk of fatheadedness! I said pass me the saveloys, and look sharp!"

"I can't see any carp, either."

"Oh, my hat!"

"The deaf-fulness of our honourable chum is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But keep it up-fully, Bunter; it is the good and healthful exercise for the lungs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I want those saveloys!" yelled Bunter. "Can't you pass them to a chap?"

"Dear me!"

"Oh, you hear now?"

"Yes. But surely you cannot be in earnest?"

"Yes, I am, chump."

"But, why—however, I suppose you know best. If you are japing, it's your own look out."

And Dutton picked up his teacup and emptied it over Bunter's knees.

The fat junior leaped up with a wild yell. The tea was hot. The other fellows stared at Dutton in blank astonishment.

"What on earth—" began Wharton.

"Ow! Yow!"

"Well, he asked me to!" said Dutton, who looked very puzzled.

"Eh? Asked you to?"

"Yes. Didn't he say I was to pour my tea in his lap?"

"My hat!"

"Your lap? Oh, I thought he said his own!"

"Great Scott! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Yow! I'm scalded!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked furiously at the chums. Dutton's absurd mistake seemed comical enough to the onlookers, but there was nothing funny in the incident for Billy Bunter.

Dutton looked round him in great surprise. He did not seem to understand the cause of the laughter.

Wun Lung dragged his chum away. They had finished tea, and anyway, the little Chinese thought it about time to retire. Dutton had done enough damage.

Bunter snorted as they left the study.

"If that—that villain comes into this study again, I'll—I'll jump on him!" he exclaimed. "The—the dangerous ass!"

"Never mind, Billy; finish the saveloys, and be quiet."

And Bunter thought he couldn't do better than take that advice.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Caught in the Act.

"THERE he is!"

Bulstrode started.

Skinner gave him the warning, as he caught sight of Wun Lung on the upper stairs. The Remove bully's hand went under his jacket. He had a dog-whip there.

"Right you are!" he said.

Bulstrode ran towards the stairs. The Remove bully's wrath had not abated yet; rather it seemed to grow every time his vengeance was put off.

Wun Lung was lounging on the stairs, and though he had caught sight of Bulstrode, he did not show any alarm.

He leaned on the banisters, and regarded the bully of the Lower Fourth with a smile that was childlike and bland.

Above him the staircase curved to the landing, and it did not occur to Bulstrode for the moment that there might be anyone there.

He ran up the stairs.

"I've got you now!" he exclaimed.

Wun Lung nodded and smiled.

"You gottee me!" he exclaimed. "Allee lightee. You wantee see me?"

Bulstrode laughed savagely.

"I'm going to lick you within an inch of your life," he snarled.

"No likee lickee."

"I dare say you don't; but you should have thought of that before, you worm." Bulstrode jerked the dog-whip out into view. "Now, then—"

"Whatee whippie fol?"

"I'm going to lick you."

"Bulstrode beastly bullee. No likee lickee."

The lash sang in the air.

"You heathen rotter! Take that!"

Wun Lung gave a yell as the lash curled round his legs.

"Ow! Me hultee!"

ANSWERS

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"And that!"

"Oh!" roared Wun Lung.

Bulstrode was a little surprised.

As a rule, Wun Lung would take anything, if he could not escape from it, with true Oriental stoicism, and he had had his arm twisted and his ears pulled many a time without allowing a cry to escape his lips.

But just now he seemed bent upon making as much noise as possible.

Bulstrode soon discovered the reason.

There was a quick step on the landing above, and a form in rustling gown loomed round the bend of the staircase.

Bulstrode had his grasp upon Wun Lung now, and was making the dog-whip ring round him.

But he desisted as a sharp voice rang out.

"Bulstrode!"

It was Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, who was descending the stairs.

Bulstrode dropped his hand.

He stared blankly at Mr. Quelch.

The Remove-master was the last person he had expected to see there; but he knew at once that the Form-master had been up to the dormitory on some matter or other, and that Wun Lung had known that he was close at hand, and would be drawn to the spot by any uproar.

Once more the Remove bully had fallen a victim to the cunning of the little Chinese.

Bulstrode, with a sinking at the heart, released the little Celestial.

"Yes, sir?" he faltered.

Mr. Quelch's brows were contracted, and his eyes were sparkling with anger. It was seldom that the Remove-master lost his temper, but he was very near losing it now. His eyes were fixed upon Bulstrode with an expression that made the Remove bully wish the floor would open and swallow him up.

"Bulstrode, put down that whip!"

The dog-whip clattered on the floor.

"So this is one of your ways, Bulstrode. I have always known that you had the propensities of a bully, but I never suspected that you carried them as far as this. You have dared to beat a boy much smaller than yourself with a dog-whip."

"I—I—"

"Doubtless this has occurred before, and I have never known it," said Mr. Quelch. "Wun Lung has, perhaps, shrunk from telling me, from motives of honour. You have taken advantage of that to bully and ill-use him. You are a coward, Bulstrode."

Bulstrode stood crimson and silent.

Mr. Quelch's tongue was bitter when he let himself go, and he was letting himself go now with a vengeance.

"You are a coward and a bully, Bulstrode," he went on.

"I am ashamed to have such a boy in my Form. You are a disgrace to the school. But now that I am aware of your true character, I shall keep an eye on you, sir. You will find yourself expelled from Greyfriars if you are not careful."

"Oh, sir!"

"I shall keep a very careful eye on you, and I shall request the prefects to do the same," said Mr. Quelch. "Mind, any instance of your having ill-used this lad that comes to my ears will be reported to Dr. Locke, with my earnest request for your expulsion from the school. Meanwhile, I shall let you learn by experience what it is to suffer physical pain, so that you may not be so ready to inflict it upon others. Follow me!"

He strode away with rustling gown.

Bulstrode gave the little Chinese a single look, and followed the Form-master.

Wun Lung grinned at the ceiling. He had not been very much hurt, so far, though he certainly would have been hurt if Bulstrode had not been interrupted.

But he was likely to be pretty safe from Bulstrode now. Bulstrode was booked for a severe lesson.

The Remove bully was ten minutes in Mr. Quelch's study.

When he came out his face was white, his eyes hard and staring, and he had his hands tucked away under his arm-pits, and was squeezing them hard.

Skinner met him in the passage, and stared at him.

"Great Scott! Bulstrode, what's the matter?"

"Don't talk to me!"

"But—"

Bulstrode pushed rudely past him, and went to his study, and slammed the door. Skinner stared after him, and whistled softly.

"My word! Quelch must have caught him!" he murmured. "He looks as if he's been through it, too!"

Bulstrode remained in his study for a considerable time.

He was looking more collected, but still somewhat pale, when he appeared later in the common-room. He had had

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a severe caning, and strong and hardy as he was, it had told upon him severely.

Some of the fellows looked at him as he came in. Wun Lung was curled up in an armchair, and he blinked at Bulstrode with one eye.

The Remove bully glanced towards him once, and then turned his eyes away, taking no further notice of the little Chinese.

And Wun Lung grinned softly.

Bulstrode had had his lesson.

The Remove bully sat down by himself, and affected to read; but his palms were still aching, and he could not concentrate his attention on the book. He strolled out into the Close in the dusk. Snoop tapped him on the shoulder, and Bulstrode turned round with a savage snarl.

"What do you want?"

"Oh, nothing," said Snoop. "I hear you've had a licking. I suppose you're going to let Wun Lung alone now?"

Bulstrode's eyes burned.

"I'll make him squirm yet," he said. "I'm not going to touch him now, but I'll make him sorry for this. I don't know how yet."

"I've got an idea, if you like to hear it."

Bulstrode's look became more cordial at once.

"Go ahead!" he said concisely.

Snoop looked round.

"Come under the trees," he said. "We don't want to be heard. It might lead to an awful row, you know."

"Well, what is it?" said Bulstrode, as they strolled in the dusk of the elms.

Snoop chuckled softly.

"You know, they say a Chinaman feels the loss of his pigtail more than anything else," he muttered. "It's a disgrace in their country to lose one's pigtail, and that would make Wun Lung sit up more than anything else."

Bulstrode made an impatient gesture.

"You ass! A chap would be expelled like a shot for playing a trick like that. The kid would raise Cain over it."

"Yes, but—"

"You wouldn't do it?"

"Not much!" said Snoop promptly.

"Well, I wouldn't either. If you've got nothing better to suggest than that—"

"Somebody else might be got to do it," whispered Snoop.

"Nobody would be fool enough."

"There's one chap at Greyfriars who's fool enough for anything."

Bulstrode started.

"Oh, you mean Todd?"

"Yes, the Duffer."

"My hat!" murmured Bulstrode. "We might work it; he's simple enough for anything. It might be worked."

And the two young rascals discussed the scheme in whispers in the shadow of the elms.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Todd Means to be Obliging.

ALONZO TODD, the bright youth who was generally known as the "Duffer," looked into No. 1 Study, and nodded to the chums of the Remove.

"Come in!" said Harry Wharton. "Want anything?"

"Is there a new fellow here?" said Todd. "Skinner says there's a new chap named Dutton, and that he wants to see me."

Wharton laughed.

Alonzo Todd was the victim of endless practical jokes in the Remove, and Wharton had no doubt that this was another of them.

"He went away with Wun Lung," said Harry. "I believe he belongs to No. 2 Study, so you may find him there."

"Thank you so much."

And Todd closed the door and went along the passage. He blinked into No. 2 Study in his genial, good-natured way.

Bulstrode was there, with Snoop. Tom Brown and Hazeldene, the other occupants of the study, were out. Bulstrode started a little as he saw Todd, and beckoned to him to come in.

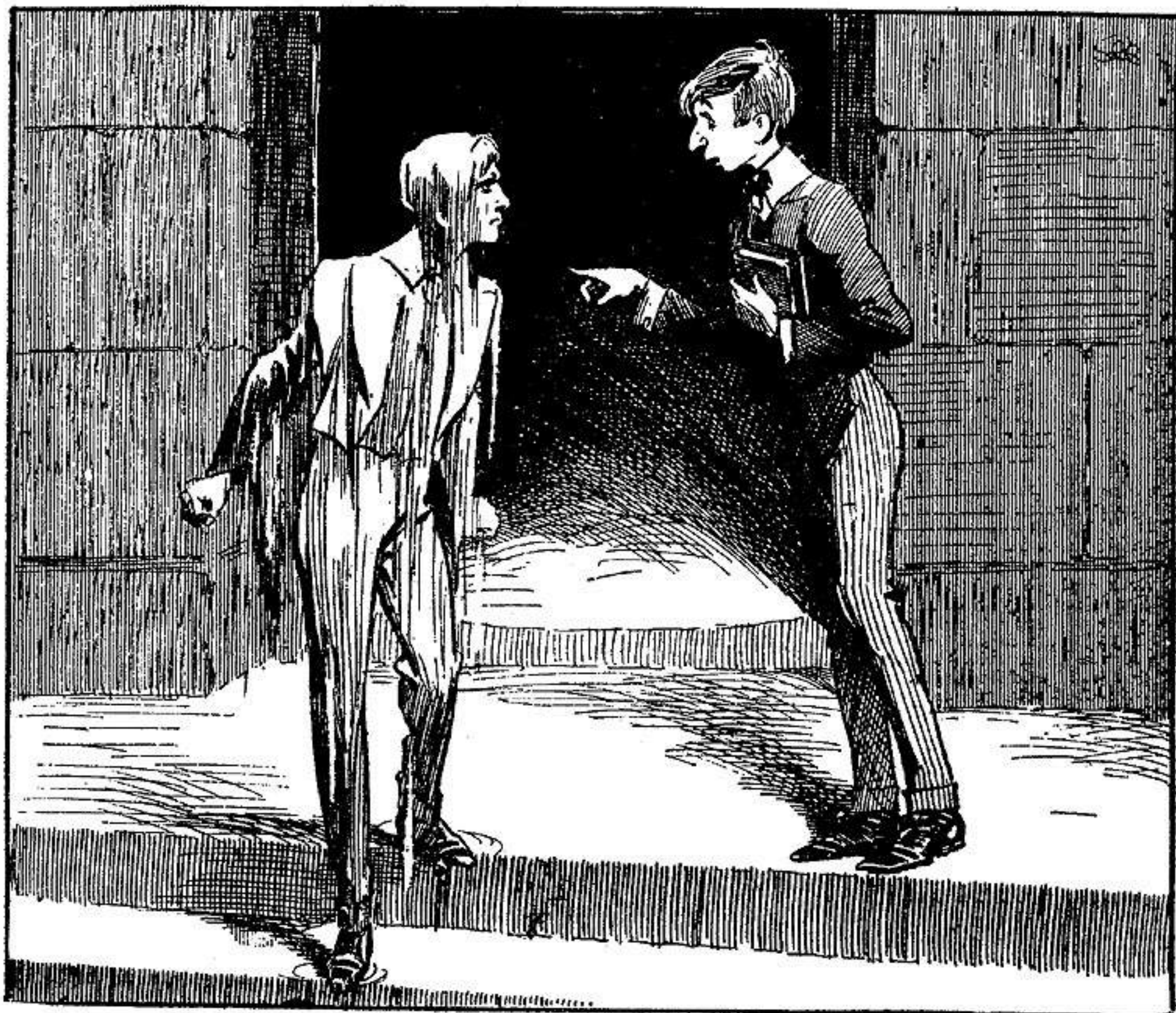
"Is Dutton here?" asked Todd.

"Dutton! No. Come in!"

"Skinner says Dutton wants to see me."

"Oh, never mind Dutton! I expect it's only one of Skinner's little jokes. I want to speak to you, Toddy."

Bulstrode's manner was very friendly. Todd had not got on particularly well with the bully of the Remove so far, but he was a peace-loving fellow, and always anxious to live on good terms with everyone.



"Oh Bulstrode, you are covered with whitewash!" said the Duffer of Greyfriars in amazement.

"Certainly," he said.

"Sit down, old fellow!"

"Thanks, so much!"

Todd sat down, looking rather surprised. Snoop opened a packet of toffee, and extended it to Todd with a grin as cordial as he could make it.

"Have some toffee, old chap?" he said.

"Thanks, so much! I like toffee. I will take only one chunk, thank you. My Uncle Benjamin says that a lad should not eat too many sweets. They are bad for the teeth."

Snoop was about to make some uncomplimentary remark concerning Todd's Uncle Benjamin, but he remembered in time, and nodded instead.

"Well, it's nice," he said.

"Yes, it is very nice indeed."

"Todd, old man, I know you like to do good-natured things," said Bulstrode.

"Oh, certainly! My Uncle Benjamin impressed upon me very earnestly that I should always strive to help others."

"Your Uncle Benjamin is a—a brick," said Bulstrode. "I should like to meet him. I feel sure that we should pull together."

Snoop turned away to cough. Todd beamed.

"I am sure you would," he said. "I have written to my Uncle Benjamin to ask him to come to Greyfriars, and I should be very glad to introduce you, Bulstrode, when he comes."

"Thanks, awfully! But just now, would you care to do a really good-natured thing?"

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"With very great pleasure."

"It's for little Wun Lung."

"He's a nice little chap," said Todd. "I should be very glad to oblige him."

"Well, this is how it is," said Bulstrode, with great seriousness, "Wun Lung has been suffering from bad headaches, and he complains about them a lot. He can't stand them, you know, and I—I feel awfully sorry for him."

"Yes, it must indeed be exceedingly painful," said Todd, who always spoke in a variety of English quite his own. "I trust that the affliction will abate."

"Well, the worst of it is, that it doesn't show any signs of abating yet," said Bulstrode, "and it won't, you know, until Wun Lung has his hair cut."

Todd stared.

"His hair cut!" he ejaculated.

"Yes. You see, that's the only real cure for a really serious headache. Wun Lung wears more hair than we do, because he's got a pigtail. It's having long hair, rolled up in a tight pigtail, that gives him these awful headaches."

"Why doesn't he have it cut off?"

"That's where he's in a difficulty. You see, in China it's considered a sort of disgrace to lose one's pigtail. Of course, Wun Lung's too sensible to think anything of the sort, but he's made a promise to an uncle or somebody in China, never to cut off his pigtail, or to ask anybody to cut it off."

"How awkward!"

"Yes, isn't it? The poor chap told me with tears in his eyes that he'd give anything to get it cut off, but he can't do

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it, you see, without breaking his promise, and he can't ask anybody else. Rotten, isn't it?"

"I feel for him very much," said Todd. "I should like to tell him so, and express my sympathy for his sufferings."

Bulstrode looked alarmed.

"Oh, no, you mustn't do that!" he exclaimed. "That would spoil everything. I—I mean, you won't be able to help Wun Lung if you speak to him about it."

"How is that?"

"Why, his only chance of getting rid of those headaches is to have his pigtail cut off, yet he can't ask anybody to do it. But if a chap did it without his knowledge, see?—that would make it all right. That's what I'm going to ask you to do—rid Wun Lung of this trouble, you see, without forcing him to ask you to do it. Then he'll be cured of his headaches without having broken his promise."

Todd nodded thoughtfully.

"I see," he remarked.

"That's the only way I can think of helping him," said Bulstrode. "You see, he's told Snoop and me about it, so we—we can't do the trick, you know, as it would amount to his breaking his promise to his—his uncle. But if you do it—"

"But how can it be done without his knowing it?"

"Well, you're such a sharp fellow, I was sure you could think of some dodge," said Bulstrode. "I leave that to you. Of course, you could snip it off with the scissors when he's asleep some night, if you liked."

"You're sure he would like it?"

"If you'd seen him talking to me about it, with the tears streaming down his cheeks, you'd think so," said Bulstrode solemnly.

"Dear me! Poor chap!"

"Yes, it's awfully hard lines," said Snoop. "It makes me feel quite miserable to see him sometimes—especially as he says lots of times that if some good, kind fellow would only help him in his trouble, it would be all right."

"You see?" said Bulstrode.

Todd looked determined.

"I'll help him!" he exclaimed.

"You'll do it?"

"Yes. It's not so very much to do for a chap, and my Uncle Benjamin always told me to do anything I could for anybody."

"You're a good sort, Toddy!"

"Not at all. I like to be obliging, and it's my wish to always make myself useful."

"Better work it to-night," said Bulstrode. "The sooner the quicker, you know. Wun Lung sleeps like a top, and he'll never know till morning."

"Very good."

"Then that's settled?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Good," said Bulstrode. "Of course, you won't say a word to anybody? If the matter got to Wun Lung's ears, he would be bound by his promise to ask you not to do it. That would be rotten, under the circumstances."

"I quite understand. I won't say a word."

"Good! Will you come to the tuckshop and have some ginger-pop, Toddy?" said the Remove bully hospitably.

"Thanks, so much; I will."

And Bulstrode and Snoop walked Alonzo off between them, and filled him with ginger-beer and cake and flattering words, till Todd felt that they were two of the very nicest fellows at Greyfriars, and wondered why he had never discerned their sterling good qualities before.

Snoop and Bulstrode stuck to Alonzo pretty closely, too, for the rest of the evening, in case he should be inclined to confide his generous intentions to anyone else; and they were still with him when the Remove went up to their dormitory.

Wun Lung was rather surprised to receive an assuring grin from Todd, and he wondered what was making the Duffer of Greyfriars so friendly all at once; he would have been alarmed if he had known.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Well Meant.

TODD looked round for Dutton in the dormitory. Skinner grinned as he saw the Duffer approach the deaf junior. Dutton had never even heard of Todd's existence, and had certainly expressed no desire to see him. Skinner had simply desired to bring them together to see what would happen. Between the Duffer and the deaf youth, the interview was likely to be funny, Skinner thought.

Alonzo Todd tapped Dutton on the shoulder, as he sat on the bed taking his boots off, and Dutton looked up.

"Hallo!" he said.

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"You're the new fellow, Dutton, I suppose?" Todd remarked.

"Eh?"

"You're the new fellow?"

"What did you say?"

"You're the new fellow."

"Rude fellow, am I?" said Dutton, turning red. "What do you mean? If you're looking for a thick ear, you're jolly near getting one."

Todd looked astonished.

"Pray do not be offended," he said, "I had no intention, I assure you, of calling you rude fellow. You misunderstood."

"Made of wood, is it? Your own head may be."

"I did not say—"

"Run away and play, you cheeky ass! What do you mean?" exclaimed Dutton angrily.

"I—I—"

"What's a lie?"

"I—I—"

"Liar yourself, then," said Dutton. "Let me alone! I don't know you, and if you're thinking of japing me because I'm a new chap, you'll find that I'm a tough customer."

Todd's jaw dropped.

The fellows were all grinning, but both the juniors were getting a little too excited to take any notice of that.

"I—I really fail to understand," said Todd. "My intention is simply to be obliging. Skinner says that you want to see me."

"Of course I've had tea. What about it?"

"Skinner says—"

"Who's skin and bone?"

"Oh, dear—"

"Well, of all the cheek!" exclaimed Dutton. "I never saw you before, and you come up and insult me like this. Take that!"

And he jerked round the boot he had just taken off, and caught Todd a clump on the side of the head with it.

Alonzo staggered back, more astonished than hurt.

"Oh, dear!" he gasped.

Dutton dropped the boot, and kicked off the other, and then put up his fists, and danced up to the Duffer of Greyfriars in a pugilistic attitude.

"Now, then, put up your hands!" he exclaimed.

"I—"

"Put up your fists!"

"But—"

"Are you going to put up your fists?" roared Dutton, determined to show the whole grinning dormitory that he was not to be imposed upon, or made fun of by anybody. "I'm jolly well going to lick you."

"But—"

"There's one for your nose."

Tap!

Dutton's knuckles came hard upon Alonzo's nose, and the Greyfriars Duffer staggered back. His hands sawed the air wildly.

There was a shout of encouragement from the juniors. They were not sorry to see a tussle beginning.

"Go it, Duffer!"

"Lam him, Dutton!"

"I'll be your second, Toddy!" exclaimed Bulstrode heartily. "Off with your jacket!"

"But—"

"Give him socks!"

"But—"

"You can't back out now. He's dotted you on the nose. You'll have to lick him."

"But—"

"Let him come on!" shouted Dutton, dancing and brandishing his fists, his courage rising to almost sublime heights as he realised that Todd did not want to fight. "This way! I'll give him the licking of his life!"

"Hurrah!"

"Go it, Dutton!"

"Buck up, Toddy!"

"But—"

"Come on!"

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, who thought the matter had gone quite far enough, and who had no desire to see two fellows pounding one another for nothing. "Stop that, Bulstrode! Toddy, keep back."

"Certainly! I have no desire to fight. My Uncle Benjamin said that a boy should never fight without good cause."

"Stand back, Dutton!"

"Mind your own business, Wharton!" shouted Bulstrode angrily. "Keep out of this."

"Rats!"

"Look here—"

"They're not going to fight for nothing," said Harry quietly. "Look here, Dutton, it was a misunderstanding."

"Eh? Who's a gander?"

"My hat!"

"Who are you calling a rat?"

"I—I didn't!" stammered Harry. "I said it was a misunderstanding. Todd was only wanting to be friendly with you."

"Nothing of the sort."

"What?"

"I never said I would."

"You—you would what?"

"I never said I would lend him anything."

"I—I never said anything about lending. I said Toddy wanted to be friendly!" yelled Wharton.

"Oh, he's sending, is he?" said Dutton. "What's he sending for?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Removites.

Dutton put his hand to his ear.

"What did you say? Speak distinctly, but don't shout. I hear better if you speak in an ordinary voice."

"Todd was being friendly!" shrieked Wharton.

"Wanted to catch me bending, did he? I'll show him."

"Friendly, friendly, friendly!" raved Harry.

"Yes, I hear you. I'll teach him to catch anybody bending. Let me get at him!" And Dutton broke away and rushed at Todd.

He seized the unfortunate Duffer of the Remove, and they were whirling round in combat in a moment more.

The Removites cheered them on.

Todd was getting angry now, and he was hitting back; but both of the juniors hit the air chiefly, and there was not much damage done.

"Go it, Todd!"

"Baste him, Dutton!"

In the midst of the uproar the door opened, and Loder, the prefect looked in. He scowled at the sight of the excited crowd.

"This what you call going to bed?" he demanded. "I've come to put the light out."

"Cave!"

The juniors scuttled to the beds, and Dutton and Todd staggered apart. Loder came into the dormitory, still frowning.

"Now, what's this row about?" he demanded, only sorry that he had not caught Wharton fighting instead of Todd and Dutton, for neither of whom he cared a rap in any way.

"He insulted me!" gasped Dutton.

"I didn't!" panted Todd. "He misunderstood. I think he must be insane."

"I shouldn't wonder!" grunted Loder. "You'll take fifty lines each."

"Oh, dear!"

"Now get to bed. Mind you show those lines up tomorrow, too. You hear me, you new whelp—what's your name?"

"No, it certainly wasn't."

"Eh—what?"

"It wasn't a game."

"What are you drivelling about? What's your name?"

"It wasn't a game. I was going to lick him. He insulted me."

"Are you mad?"

"I don't care whether it's sad or not. I'm not going to be insulted by a chap like that," said Dutton.

"Is there anything wrong with this kid?" asked Loder, in wonder, too surprised by Dutton's random answers to be angry with him.

"He's deaf," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, I see. What's his name?"

"Dutton."

"Get to bed, Dutton."

"If you mean that my head is like mutton——"

"Great Scott!" gasped Loder. "Get into bed, you young sweep!" he roared.

"Well, suppose it is cheap. What's that got to do with me?"

Loder gasped again.

"Get him to bed, some of you," he said. "I can't talk to him. My only hat! I should like to be that fellow's dearest chum—I don't think."

And the prefect extinguished the light, and left the dormitory, leaving Dutton to get into bed in the dark.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Wun Lung's Great Loss.

THE Remove chuckled loud and long in the darkness, while Dutton undressed and scrambled into bed. The new boy was likely to be a trial in some respects, but there was no doubt that he added considerably to the gaiety of Greyfriars.

The chuckles died away at last, as one by one the Removites settled down to sleep.

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ONE
PENNY.

But there was one who did not sleep. It was Alonzo Todd.

He had been considerably shaken up and excited by his encounter with Dutton, for one thing, and did not feel much inclined to settle down to sleep. But he also had his promise to Bulstrode on his mind.

He had to stay awake to perform that little favour for Wun Lung. He had slid a pair of strong, sharp scissors under his pillow ready, and he only waited for the little Chinese to be fast asleep.

As the clock rang out the hour of eleven, Alonzo Todd sat up in bed.

The dormitory was still and silent. There was a sound of heavy breathing through the silence of the night, and a low, unmusical snore from Billy Bunter's bed.

"Are you fellows asleep?"

Todd asked the question in a low voice.

There was no reply.

"You fellows asleep?"

He spoke in a louder tone this time. There was no sound in reply, but the regular breathing of the sleepers.

Todd put one leg out of bed, and groped under his pillow for the scissors. He found them, and stepped right out.

"Wun Lung!"

No reply.

"Wun Lung, old chap!"

Still silence.

Alonzo was reassured.

He stepped quietly towards the bed occupied by the little Chinese. There was a glimmer of starlight in at the high, uncurtained windows of the dormitory, and Todd had ample light to find his way.

He reached Wun Lung's bed.

The little Celestial was fast asleep.

His pigtail, which he always left uncoiled at night, lay loose on his pillow, like a snake winding down into the bedclothes.

Wun Lung was soundly asleep. He did not stir as the Duffer of Greyfriars bent over him. The Duffer opened the scissors, and felt their edge.

Then he took the pigtail in his left hand a few inches from Wun Lung's head.

A couple of strong snips of the scissors, and the Celestial appendage came off in the hand of the destroyer.

The Duffer smiled with satisfaction.

"How pleased he will be!" he murmured.

He threw the severed pigtail under the bed, and crept back to his place. He tucked himself in, and in a few minutes he was asleep.

Wun Lung slept soundly on.

Alonzo Todd slept all the more soundly, for having lain awake late that night. He did not open his eyes when the rising-bell began to clang through the morning air.

It was the sound of a wild yell that awakened him.

He sat up in bed.

The morning light was streaming in at the high windows, and the rising-bell was clanging out its final clang inharmoniously.

"Dear me!" said Todd, rubbing his eyes. "I am certain I heard someone call out. I wonder what it was!"

He was not left long in doubt.

Wun Lung had leaped out of bed, and was waving his hands in despair, and uttering cries of grief that rang through the dormitory.

"Oh, oh, oh! My pigtailee! Oh!"

"What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"My pigtailee."

"What's the matter with your pigtail?"

"Gonee."

"What?"

"Pigtailee gonee! Oh, oh, oh!"

And the little Chinese sat down on the edge of the bed, and rocked himself to and fro; the picture of grief and despair.

The juniors gathered round him in surprise.

They did not know in the least what to make of the little Chinese for the moment. But a look at his head revealed the fact that the pigtail was indeed gone.

There was the stump of it left, and that was all.

"My only hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Fancy a chap's pigtail coming off like that."

"Must have been a false one," said Bulstrode, with a shake of the head. "A genuine pigtail couldn't come off."

"That's it," agreed Snoop.

"No falsee—no falsee! Leal pigtail."

"Rats!"

"Pigtailee glow on head."

"Then how did it come off?" asked Tom Brown.

"Some lascal cuttee."

"Eh! Who did it, then?" demanded Harry Wharton.

The little Chinese shook his head.

"Me no savvy."

"You don't know who did it?"

"No savvy."

"Then—"

"Cuttee while Wun Lung sleepee."

Harry Wharton's brows contracted.

"Someone must have cut it off!" he exclaimed. "What a rotten, cowardly trick! There will be a row about this, and I shouldn't wonder if the fellow was expelled."

Alonzo Todd sat in his bed petrified.

He had been the victim of endless japes, but he was always ready to be victimised again, and he always realised, too late, that he was being done.

He realised now that Bulstrode and Snoop had been having him on, and that he had done the worst thing possible for poor Wun Lung.

His first impulse was to announce the truth and ask Wun Lung's pardon. But the little Chinese was clearly in no mood to pardon. He was as angry as he was sorrowful. And Harry Wharton's words struck a chill to Todd's heart.

Expelled!

He had meant well—but who would believe it? Who would credit that he had been so egregious an ass as he now realised that he had been.

He saw that he was not suspected. Bulstrode and Snoop, of course, would be silent for their own sakes.

Todd said nothing.

After all, getting into a row would not restore the severed pigtail to Wun Lung's head, and the Duffer of Greyfriars determined to remain silent—at least, until he had had time to think the matter over and decide calmly what to do.

Wun Lung was rocking himself to and fro in despair.

Some of the fellows looked sympathetic, but the greater part of them took the matter as a joke. They could not realise the importance of the thing to the Chinaman.

"Don't worry!" said Ogilvy. "It'll grow again, you know."

"Oh, oh, oh!"

"Besides, we all have our hair cut regularly," said Morgan. "It's nothing, when you get used to it, look you."

"Oh, oh, oh!"

"It's a rotten shame," said Nugent angrily. "The cad who did it ought to be cut by every decent chap in the Form."

"Perhaps it wasn't anybody in this Form," Snoop suggested. "It might have been some japer from the Upper Fourth, or the Shell."

"Well, there's pretty certain to be an inquiry, and I don't envy the chap if he's found out," said Harry Wharton. "Buck up, Wun Lung—you'll grow another in time, you know!"

But Wun Lung refused to be comforted.

He rocked and moaned, and did not dress, or make any movement to prepare himself for going down. One by one the juniors left the dormitory, till only Dutton and Harry Wharton remained.

"It's beastly!" said Dutton. "I'm awfully sorry, Wun Lung, old chap. I wish I could find the chap that did it, that's all."

"Oh, oh, oh!"

"Go? Oh, certainly, if you like!"

And Dutton left the dormitory. Harry Wharton clapped the little Chinese on the shoulder.

"Buck up, Wun Lung, old chap! You'd better dress, you know."

"My pigtailee! Oh, oh!"

"It's hard lines, but—I say, couldn't you get a dummy one to wear?" said Harry, struck by a bright idea. "Or perhaps you could fasten the old one on again."

"Oh, oh!"

Wharton looked round in hopes of finding the severed pig-

tail. He soon discovered it under Wun Lung's bed, and picked it up.

"Here you are, Wun Lung!"

The little Chinese took it with a burst of tears, and moaned over it. It was the first time Wun Lung had ever been seen to cry at Greyfriars, and it affected Wharton strangely. He went quietly from the dormitory, leaving the unhappy Celestial alone.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

In Class.

MR. QUELCH glanced down the Remove table at breakfast that morning. One place was empty; the place that should have been filled by the little Chinese.

Mr. Quelch looked inquiringly at Wharton.

"Where is Wun Lung, Wharton?" he asked.

"He hasn't come down yet, sir."

"Not ill, I hope."

"Oh, no, sir!"

The Remove-master frowned.

"Then why is he not down? Explain, please."

Wharton hesitated.

"The fact is, sir, some rotter—ahem!—I mean, some fellow cut off his pigtail last night while he was asleep, and he's awfully cut up over it."

Mr. Quelch almost jumped from his seat.

"What? Do I hear you correctly, Wharton? Someone has cut off Wun Lung's pigtail?"

"Yes, sir."

"What an abominable outrage!" exclaimed the Remove-master. "Is the perpetrator known?"

"No one knows who it was, sir. Wun Lung was asleep, it seems, and didn't know it was done till he woke up this morning."

"It is infamous!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, whose face was quite red. "I can promise the boy, whoever he was, that he will be expelled from Greyfriars. There can be no excuse for such an act of wanton wickedness. Bulstrode!"

The Remove bully started.

"Yes, sir!"

"Stand up!"

Bulstrode stood up.

His heart was beating fast, but he contrived to maintain an outward appearance of perfect coolness.

He had expected a "row" to follow the outrage, but he had not quite expected Mr. Quelch to take it so seriously as this. But he felt pretty safe. He had not done it; and he had been asleep at the time.

"Bulstrode, did you cut off Wun Lung's pigtail?"

"No, sir."

"You assert that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know who did?"

"I was asleep all last night, sir. I did not wake up till the rising-bell went this morning," replied Bulstrode.

"Have you any idea who might have done it?"

"It might have been Bunter, sir," said Bulstrode, with an air of great reflection.

The fat junior jumped.

"I? Oh, really, Bulstrode—"

"Bunter! Why Bunter?"

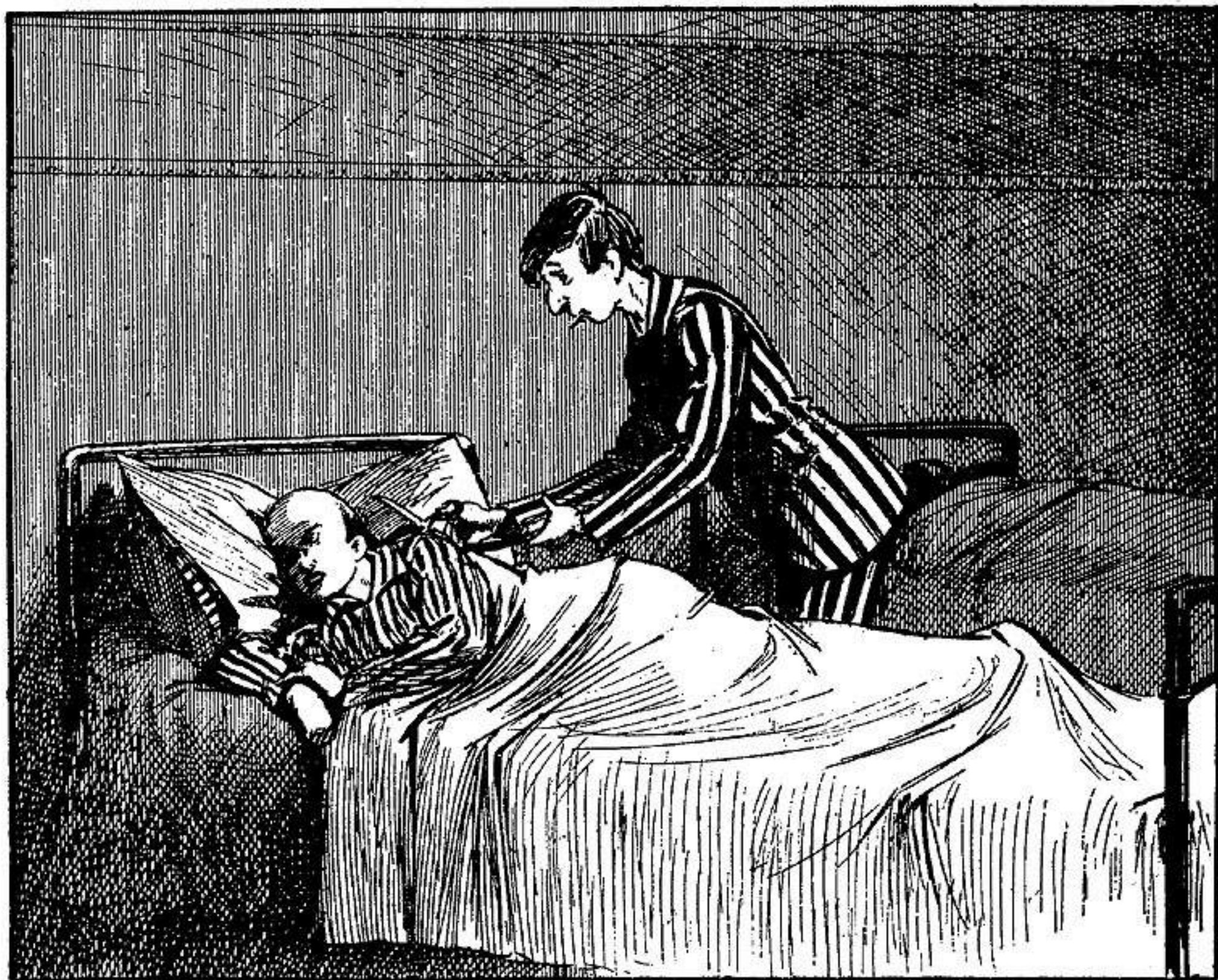
"Bunter sometimes gets up in his sleep and does things," said Bulstrode, with perfect coolness. "Fellows have joked lots of times about cutting off Wun Lung's pigtail, and the idea might have got into Bunter's head when he was sleep-walking. Of course, I know Bunter wouldn't do it consciously. But it's such a rotten trick to play that I can't

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ONE HALFPENNY.



"How pleased he will be!" murmured the simple-minded Alonzo Todd, taking the sleeping Chinese's pigtail in his left hand. A couple of strong snips with the scissors, and the Celestial's appendage came off in the hand of the destroyer.

believe any chap in the Remove would do it; that's why I suggest that Bunter might have done it in his sleep."

"You declare that you did not do it, Bulstrode?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Very well; I found you ill-using Wun Lung yesterday, and I punished you severely. I know you have a spiteful and revengeful nature, Bulstrode. I cannot help suspecting that you may have revenged yourself in this cowardly and underhand manner!"

Bulstrode set his lips.

"You do me an injustice, sir."

"I hope I do, Bulstrode, for your own sake; but if I do, you have only yourself to thank for it. I assure you that the matter will be strictly investigated, and the guilt of the right person will be brought to light; and that person will be expelled from the school without mercy."

And Mr. Quelch sat down again, very much perturbed.

Alonzo Todd was in a state of terror, and Bulstrode and Snoop were feeling very uneasy, though determined to deny everything if Todd should implicate them. It would be hard to prove that they had plotted to get the Duffer to play that trick on Wun Lung; at least, to prove that they had done more than make a harmless joke which Todd had taken too seriously.

After breakfast the fellows discussed little besides Wun Lung's great loss. It was known that the little Chinese had eaten no breakfast; and that showed how deeply he took the matter to heart, for as a rule Wun Lung could keep his end up with Billy Bunter at the table.

When the Remove went into their class-room Wun Lung did not accompany them. The little Chinese had apparently obtained permission to cut morning lessons.

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But when the morning's work started, and Mr. Quelch came in contact with Dutton, the juniors soon forgot Wun Lung.

Mr. Quelch had seen Dutton the previous day, of course, and had made the discovery that he was very deaf; but he had hardly realised what an obstacle that would be to easy work in the class-room.

The juniors were anticipating Dutton's first morning in class with great expectancy.

"You will construe, Dutton," said Mr. Quelch, glancing at the new boy, and making a sign to Harry Wharton to cease.

Wharton sat down.

Dutton was looking straight before him, and he continued to do so, without taking any notice of the Form-master's words.

Mr. Quelch pointed to him.

"Dutton!" he called out.

Dutton moved his head.

"Did you address me, sir?" he asked.

"Yes. Kindly construe, from where Wharton left off."

"I have tried to dress as neatly as possible, sir, that is all."

"What!"

"It was not at all my intention to try to appear like a toff, I assure you."

"A—a what?"

"A toff, sir!"

"Toff?"

"Yes, sir. You remarked that I looked like a toff, I think."

Mr. Quelch breathed hard through his nose.

"I told you to construe from the point where Wharton left off!" he exclaimed. "Kindly take your book and go on!"

"Certainly, sir!"

Dutton left his place and walked towards the class-room door.

Mr. Quelch stared after him, almost petrified. Dutton had almost reached the door before the Remove-master found his voice.

"Dutton!" he shrieked.

Dutton turned back.

"Yes, sir!"

"Where are you going?"

"Oh, I don't mind, sir. I shall be glad of a run in the close, whether the wind's blowing or not."

The class chuckled joyously.

"Where are you going?" howled Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, going? I'm going out, sir, as you told me."

"I—I told you?"

"Hold me? There's no need to hold me, sir," said Dutton, in wonder. "I'll take my place if you say the word, sir."

"Dear me!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "I did not tell you to go!"

Dutton looked puzzled, and took out his watch, looked at it, and glanced at the Form-room clock over the bookcase.

"It is not slow, sir," he said. "Unless my watch is wrong, the clock is exactly right."

"Bless my soul! The boy is terribly deaf! Go back to your place, Dutton!"

"Eh?"

"What made you think you were to leave your place?" bawled Mr. Quelch.

"You told me to take my book, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Remove

Mr. Quelch frowned the juniors into silence.

"I told you to take your book, Dutton."

"What book, sir?"

"Book!" shrieked Mr. Quelch. "Book! Construe!"

"Yes, sir; I do like stew, but—"

Mr. Quelch looked for a moment as if he would explode. Then, with a happy inspiration, he seized the chalk, and chalked a word on the blackboard:

"CONSTRUE!"

Dutton blinked at it.

"Oh, sir, I understand," he said, "but would you mind telling me why you told me to take my book, just now?"

"Boy—"

"Yes, sir."

"I—I told you to take your book—"

"Eh?"

"I told you—" Mr. Quelch broke off, and whisked round the chalk again to the blackboard and wrote: "I told you to take your book."

"Oh, I see, sir," said Dutton. "My book! I understand perfectly now, sir. No need to shout, sir—I'm only a trifle deaf."

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Quelch. "Only a trifle! Bless my soul!"

And Dutton took his place and construed.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bulstrode Knows Nothing.

WUN LUNG was inconsolable.

His pigtail had been severed, and he was in a tailless state, and, like Rachel of old, he refused to be comforted.

He did not turn up at lessons at all that day, remaining in seclusion in his study most of the time, in a state of great grief.

The only fellow he talked to was Hop Hi, his minor, the little Chinese of the Second Form, and chum of Nugent minor.

Wun Lung and Hop Hi talked in a strange tongue quite unknown to the Greyfriars fellows, and some of the fellows found a curious interest in listening to the mysterious syllables, which meant nothing to them.

Hop Hi was probably trying to comfort Wun Lung, from his expression, but, if so, he did not succeed in his object.

Wun Lung was not to be consoled.

Mr. Quelch had duly reported the matter to the Head, and Dr. Locke, justly angry, had ordered that the matter should be strictly investigated.

Two or three fellows, whom Mr. Quelch suspected to be capable of the trick, were closely questioned, and Bulstrode, Snoop, Skinner and Stott had to give accounts of themselves.

But they related, with steady looks, how they had slept soundly all through the night, and had known nothing about

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Wun Lung's loss till the morning, when his howls announced it to the whole dormitory.

Bulstrode went further, even, to cover his retreat in case of any injudicious chatter from Alonzo Todd.

He spoke on the matter with great apparent frankness.

"There have always been jokes about cutting off Wun Lung's pigtail," he said, in answer to the Head. "I've threatened to do it myself, by way of a joke. Of course, I should never really have dreamed of touching it."

"I hope not, Bulstrode," said the Head, looking at him keenly. "It was a dastardly outrage."

"Quite so, sir."

"And you did not touch Wun Lung?"

"Certainly not, sir."

"And you did not incite another boy to do so?"

"Oh, sir."

The Head rapped his knuckles on the desk sharply.

"That is not an answer, Bulstrode."

"But—"

"Did you, or did you not, incite another boy to cut off Wun Lung's pigtail?" exclaimed Dr. Locke sternly.

"Certainly not, sir," said Bulstrode, desperately driven to the lie direct; and, for the moment, he wished he had never meddled in the matter, for Bulstrode was not the kind of fellow, in spite of his faults, to like telling a lie.

But it was too late to think of that now.

"Very well, Bulstrode."

"Some fellow may have taken the jokes on the subject seriously, and fancied it would be a good jape to cut off the pigtail, sir; that's all," said Bulstrode.

"Such a joker will not long remain at Greyfriars, when he is once discovered," said the Head. "You may go."

And Bulstrode went.

Snoop met him in the passage, and they exchanged a grin, but rather an uneasy one. Both of them were feeling nervous.

"I never expected all this bother about the matter," said Snoop. "What a fuss to make over a blessed heathen's pigtail."

Bulstrode grunted.

"Lot of rot. I call it," he said. "But the Head seems determined to get to the bottom of the matter. Well, let him rip."

"Something might come out, you know," said Snoop uneasily.

"Let it."

"But hang it all, Bulstrode—"

"We're all right. I'm only too jolly glad, under the circumstances, that we had nothing to do with it," said Bulstrode.

Snoop stared.

"Nothing to do with it?" he murmured.

"Exactly."

"But—but we—"

"We were joking about Wun Lung's pigtail, I know, and that duffer Todd may have taken it seriously, that's all," said Bulstrode. "We never had the faintest idea that he would go and do anything of the sort."

Snoop could only stare.

"Remember that," said Bulstrode coolly. "It will be useful to know, in case Todd should blab, and we should get called up before the Head."

"Ye-es."

"As for Todd—hallo, here he is!"

Alonzo Todd came up to the two rascals of the Remove as they came out into the Close. The Duffer of Greyfriars was looking very worried.

"I say, this is bad," was his opening remark.

"What's bad?" asked Bulstrode.

"About Wun Lung's pigtail."

"Yes, isn't it," said Bulstrode with a nod of assent. "It's awfully rough on the heathen, though I think there's a lot of fuss being made for nothing. I wonder who did it."

"So do I," remarked Snoop. "It seems to be a mystery."

The Duffer stared at them.

"A mystery!" he repeated.

"Yes, isn't it?"

"The Head has been questioning me," said Bulstrode.

"I assured him that I hadn't the faintest idea who had played such a fool's trick."

"The faintest idea?"

"Have you?"

"Have I?" gasped the Duffer.

"Yes. Do you know who it was?"

"Who it was?"

"Blessed if he isn't understudying a giddy parrot again," exclaimed Bulstrode. "Look here, Toddy, you look as if you know something about the matter."

"He jolly well does," said Snoop. "I shouldn't wonder if he's the guilty party. I won't give you away, Toddy, but you'd better be careful."

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By FRANK RICHARDS.

Alonzo simply staggered.
"W—w—what do you mean?" he gasped. "Do you mean to say you've forgotten?"

"Forgotten what?"
"Telling me that Wun Lung suffered from headaches, and would never be relieved till his pigtail was cut off."

"Eh?"
"And you said that he wanted it cut off, only he had promised not to ask anybody to do it or to do it himself."

Bulstrode rubbed his nose thoughtfully.
"I've got some faint recollection of hearing Snoop make a joke like that," he remarked.

"Oh, no, you haven't," said Snoop, with a dangerous look.
"It was only a joke, of course, but it was you who said it. We may as well have that clear."

"Look here, Snoop—"
"It was you, Bulstrode."
"Well, well, it was just a joke," said Bulstrode hastily, feeling that a dispute with Snoop then would not have the effect he desired upon Todd. "Of course, you never took that yarn seriously, Toddy?"

"But I did," said Toddy helplessly. "How was I to know that you were telling me lies, you know?"
Bulstrode turned red.

"Lies!" he roared.
"Yes, I suppose it was a lie if it wasn't the truth," said Todd. "My Uncle Benjamin says—"

"Bless your Uncle Benjamin. You—"
"I thought you meant what you said, and I told you what I was going to do," exclaimed Todd, indignantly. "It was a very cruel joke to play. You knew that I was going to cut off Wun Lung's pigtail."

Bulstrode shrugged his shoulders.
"My dear chap, you're dreaming," he said. "How should I know that you would be such a silly ass?"

"I suppose I was rather a duffer," said Todd doubtfully. "I'm always being taken in by some rotter."

"Some what?"
"It was a silly thing to do, anyway," said Todd. "You made me do it."

"If you start telling that yarn about me—" began Bulstrode threateningly.
Todd shook his head.

"I should not think of mentioning your name if anything came out," he said. "I hope I am an honourable chap. My Uncle Benjamin always told me never to tell tales under any circumstances. I don't know whether I ought to own up to the Head."

"I shouldn't," said Bulstrode more placably. He was considerably relieved by Alonzo's determination to follow his Uncle Benjamin's advice in this particular. "What's the good of saying anything now? The Head won't believe that you were such a blessed juggins; he'll sack you, as sure as a gun."

"That would be a terrible blow to my parents," said Alonzo. "It would cause me the most profound regret to bring such a trouble upon them."

Bulstrode grinned.
"Then don't do it. And don't tell us about it, either—we'd better not know; it's safer. Don't jaw at all, if you can help it. We—"

"Dry up!" muttered Snoop.
He made a gesture towards the door. A youth was leaning there, against the wall, reading a paper which concealed his face. The young rascals observed him for the first time, and a chill went through them as they realised that the junior must have been within hearing all the time.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Secret Safe.

BULSTRODE grated his teeth.
He looked at the junior leaning against the wall. The fellow was in etons, and the paper he was holding up to read concealed his face; it might have been any of a dozen fellows, and Bulstrode had no idea who it was. But one thing was certain: the boy had been standing there within easy ear-shot, and he knew as much as he could be told of the guilt of Bulstrode & Co. In his mind's eye, Bulstrode saw himself betrayed, called before the Head, and expelled. For if one fellow knew the truth, it was not likely to remain long a secret from the rest of the Form; and then it was quite certain to leak, sooner or later, to the ears of the masters.

"Hang it!" muttered Bulstrode.
"He's heard!" grunted Snoop.
"Who is it?"
"Blessed if I know!"
"Oh, dear!" said Todd. "It's all up now!"
Bulstrode clenched his hands.
"I'll make him keep shut up, or smash him!" he said.
"Come on, and let's see who it is!"
They walked quickly towards the junior, Todd hanging

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back a little. Todd wanted his secret to be kept, but he did not mean to be involved in any bullying or brutality for the purpose. But Bulstrode was ready to go almost any length.

All that could be seen of the junior was a pair of trousers, a waistcoat and Eton jacket, two hands, and the cover of "Pluck" held wide open.

The junior seemed to be still reading; yet he must have heard!

Bulstrode reached him, and still the paper was not lowered, and the junior did not make any movement. There was something unnatural about his quietness.

The burly Removite snatched the paper down.
"Don't come that game with me!" he growled. "You've been listening!"

"What! Great Scott! What!"
"Dutton!" exclaimed Snoop.

Dutton stared at Bulstrode in astonishment. He evidently had not the faintest idea why the remove bully had snatched his paper away.

Bulstrode scowled at him savagely.
"You've been listening!" he exclaimed.

"Eh?"
Snoop caught Bulstrode by the arm.

"Let him alone!" he said. "Shut up, Bulstrode!"
"What do you mean?"

"Don't you understand? He's deaf!"
"Ah!"

"He can't have heard!"
"By George!"

Dutton stared at them. He was completely puzzled.
"What are you up to?" he exclaimed. "What do you mean by snatching my paper away like that, Bulstrode?"

"Oh, sorry!" said Bulstrode. "It was only a joke!"
"Who's a joke?"

"A joke!" roared Bulstrode.
"Coke? What on earth are you talking about?"

"It was a joke!"
"I don't care whether you're sorry you spoke or not; what I'm talking about is your snatching my paper away," said Dutton. "If it's your idea of being funny, you're right off-side, that's all I've got to say. Give it me!"

"Here you are!"
Dutton took his paper, and smoothed out the crumpled leaves.

"You didn't hear what we were saying?" asked Bulstrode.

"Eh?"
"Did you hear anything of what we were saying?"

"Who's playing?"
"What we were saying, ass?"

"Nonsense!"
"What?"

"It's no good telling me the chaps are going to play football in this weather!" said Dutton. "Cricket, if you like."

"My hat!" murmured Bulstrode. "It's pretty clear that he can't have heard. What a lot of happiness he must cause in the family circle at home. No wonder they've sent him here!"

"Eh! What are you saying?"
"Oh, it's fine weather!" said Bulstrode.

"There's no heather here, that I can see."
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?"
"You, you chump!"

"Oh, all right!" said Dutton. "I'll take you on, if you like. What are we to jump over, and do you propose a high jump or a long jump?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Snoop.
"My only hat!" said Bulstrode. "We're pretty safe, I think!"

Dutton put his hand to his ear.
"Eh? What's that? Speak clearly, and I shall hear all right. Don't shout!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Bulstrode and his companions walked away, leaving Dutton surprised and puzzled.

"Jolly lucky it was that deaf ass there, and not anybody else," grinned Bulstrode. "Better keep your mouth shut in future, Toddy. It's safer!"

And Alonzo Todd nodded without speaking, and walked away alone. He was very much worried in his mind.

He was sorry for Wun Lung, and sorry for what he had done. It was not likely to do much good if he confessed; he felt that. He did not want to be either expelled or flogged; and was his explanation likely to be credited? He realised that it would be hard to make others believe that he had been so exceedingly simple.

If he had been directly questioned, it would have been a different matter. He would never have told an untruth as

Buistrode had done. But he had not been questioned. He was known to be such a kind-hearted and good-natured fellow that no one would have dreamed of suspecting him of playing a cruel trick.

But the secret weighed upon his mind.

Mr. Quelch had announced to his Form that the culprit was given that evening to confess in, and that if he declined to do so, investigation would begin in earnest in the morning. Most of the Remove felt uneasy about it.

True, the fellows who were innocent would have nothing to fear; but there was no telling what an inquiry might lead to, or what stern measures might be taken if the guilty party were not discovered.

"The rotter ought to confess," Bob Cherry remarked, and the Remove agreed with him; but the "rotter" himself apparently did not; for no confession was forthcoming.

Meanwhile, Wun Lung was still moping.

He remained solitary, brooding over his loss, and talking to no one but Hop Hi, and then always in the strange language of his native land, incomprehensible to anyone who heard it.

Harry Wharton began to feel a little anxious about the Chinese.

"He'll be getting into a bad state of health if he doesn't buck up," Harry remarked. "Something ought to be done. Look at him now!"

The chums of the Remove were going in to tea after cricket practice. They caught sight of Wun Lung standing under the trees, leaning against an old trunk, his eyes staring straight before him, and his face pale and worn. There was no doubt that the loss of his pigtail was preying seriously on the little Celestial's mind.

"Let's speak to him, anyway," said Nugent.

They crossed over towards the little Chinese. Wun Lung did not look up, or give any sign of being aware of their approach.

Harry tapped him on the shoulder. Then he raised his almond eyes.

"Buck up, old son!" said Harry comfortingly.

Wun Lung whimpered.

"My pigtailes!" he murmured. "Cuttee off."

"It'll grow again, you know."

Wun Lung shook his head hopelessly.

"No glowee soonee."

"Look here, you can't mope round like this!" said Nugent. "Buck up, or you'll be getting seedy, you know."

"The seedyfulness will be terrific," murmured Hurreo Singh.

Wun Lung only shook his head.

"Don't brood over it," said Harry. "It'll grow again in time. Come now, come in to tea with us, and cheer up!"

Another shake of the head.

"No cheelee up, till find the lascal who cuttee," said Wun Lung.

"And what will you do to him?" asked Harry, a little alarmed by the expression that had suddenly flashed into the quaint little Oriental face.

"Me payee out!"

"Here, hang it!" muttered Nugent. "None of your Oriental business, you know. What are you going to do?"

"Cuttee off head!"

"What!"

The chums stared at him aghast.

"Cut off his head!" ejaculated Wharton. "Why, you young ass, do you know what you're talking about? You're not in China now, you know."

Wun Lung grinned faintly.

"No cuttee head off—cuttee off head!" he explained, tapping Wharton's curly hair with his hand to make his meaning clear.

Harry drew a breath of relief.

"Oh, I see; you mean you'll cut his hair?"

"Cuttee all off!"

"Ha, ha!" chuckled Nugent, as Wun Lung's meaning dawned upon him. "A Roland for an Oliver, you know. I see! He means that he'll shave all the hair off the chap's head—is that it, Wun Lung?"

The little Chinese nodded.

"Allee lightee!" he said. "Shavee all off, makee baldoo—alle samee Chinese! Makee him sit up. What you tinkee?"

"And serve him jolly well right," exclaimed Wharton. "Look here, Wun Lung, if you can find out the chap, we'll help you!"

"Allee light."

"Now come in to tea."

Wun Lung shook his head; but when the chums left him he was looking more cheerful. He had worked out his scheme of vengeance in his quaint Oriental mind, and, with the promised aid of the chums of No. 1 Study, he would be able to carry it out—if he could discover the culprit!

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THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Dutton does not Mean It!

MR. QUELCH wore an exceedingly stern countenance the following morning, when the Remove came down to breakfast. Wun Lung took his usual place at the table, looking very downcast. The juniors looked rather uneasily at their Form-master. Nugent whispered to Harry Wharton that he had his Brutus look on, and Wharton nodded; and the Remove looked out for squalls.

Nothing happened at breakfast, however. It was not till the Remove were in their Form-room that the storm burst.

Mr. Quelch, looking more like Brutus than ever, stood facing the expectant Form, and the juniors waited in silence.

"I have something of importance to say before lessons begin this morning," said Mr. Quelch, and his eyes, which the juniors had often compared to gimlets, ran over the class keenly. "It refers to the outrage committed the night before last in the Remove dormitory. You are all aware that Wun Lung's pigtail was cut off by some unknown dastard during the hours of darkness."

The Remove certainly knew that!

"The culprit has not confessed," said Mr. Quelch.

As a matter of fact, the Remove knew that, too. But they did not venture to make any remark.

"Neither has he been discovered," said the Form-master.

"It is now time to take severer measures. I call upon the boy to stand up and confess!"

"Noble offer," murmured Bob Cherry. "I can see the chap standing up to jump at it—I don't think!"

"The don't-thinkfulness is terrific!" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Mr. Quelch waited a few moments.

"Well?" he said, at last.

There was no reply.

"I appeal to the boy, for the last time, to confess," said the Form-master.

Dutton rose in his place.

"Certainly, sir!" he said.

There was a general craning of heads to look at Dutton. Mr. Quelch stared at him, too, quite blankly. No one expected a confession from Dutton. No one had dreamed that the new Removite had been concerned in the affair at all.

"Dutton!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!"

"It—it was you!"

"Decidedly blue, sir," said Dutton, glancing out of the window. "It is a fine morning, sir, and the sky is usually blue on a fine morning."

"What?"

"I shouldn't wonder if it's hot this afternoon, certainly."

Mr. Quelch gasped. The Remove giggled.

"Fancy it being Dutton!" murmured Nugent.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"It wasn't," he said.

"But he's confessed."

"He's misunderstood. He couldn't have heard what Quelch was saying."

"Oh!"

Mr. Quelch came a pace nearer to the class, and fixed his penetrating gaze upon the deaf junior. Dutton's face was quite placid and calm. He certainly didn't look like a fellow who had just confessed to an act for which he might be expelled from Greyfriars.

"Dutton, stand out here."

"I hope it will remain clear, sir."

"Stand out here."

"Oh, sir!"

"Will you obey me?"

"But—but is it allowed to fetch beer here, sir?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Remove involuntarily.

Mr. Quelch froze them with a look.

"Come out here, Dutton."

"Yes, sir, I will certainly fetch the beer if you tell me, but where shall I go, and—and shall I take a jug, sir?"

The Form-master gasped for breath. He beckoned to Dutton, trusting to the language of signs instead of repeating his words. Dutton understood that. He came briskly out before the almost convulsed class. The attempt to suppress their desire to laugh was causing positive pain to some of the Remove.

"Now, Dutton, you have confessed to committing that cowardly outrage upon Wun Lung," said the Form-master sternly.

"Eh? Excuse me, sir, I did not quite catch what you said."

"You cut off Wun Lung's pigtail."

"Certainly, sir. I do not think there is likely to be a gale myself, but if you say so—"

"Did you cut off Wun Lung's pigtail?"

"Oh, sir!"

A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
By FRANK RICHARDS

"Well?"

"I may be a little deaf, sir, but I never expected to hear my Form-master tell me I ought to be hung," said Dutton. "I am surprised, sir!"

The Remove yelled with laughter. Mr. Quelch turned his gimlet eyes upon them. But it was useless. The juniors simply could not help it. They yelled, and yelled again, and rooked with laughter, and the Form-room rang with it.

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, banging his desk with a cane with a crack that rang through the room like a rifle-shot. "Silence!"

The laughter sputtered away in gasps at last.

The Remove-master, with a very red face, turned to the deaf junior again.

"Dutton, listen to me carefully," he said, bawling to make his voice heard. "Now can you hear what I say?"

"Perfectly, sir. I can always hear if people speak clearly, sir. There is no need whatever to shout. I am a little hard of hearing, but I am not what would be called deaf."

"Bless my soul, Dutton! Am I to understand that you have confessed to cutting off Wun Lung's pigtail or is it a mistake?"

"Yes, sir."

"What?"

"I am quite willing to take any message for you, sir, and I certainly will go and fetch the beer if you wish me to do so."

"Beer! Boy—"

"Any time you like, sir."

Mr. Quelch passed his hand over his forehead. He had recourse to the chalk again. He scrawled hastily on the blackboard.

"Did you cut off Wun Lung's pigtail?"

Dutton stared at the chalk question in blank amazement.

"Certainly not, sir?"

Chalk again.

"You have confessed to doing so."

"Oh, sir!"

"Did you not do it?"

"No, sir."

"Then go back to your place!"

"Certainly, sir. But—"

Mr. Quelch waved his hand commandingly. He had had quite enough conversation with the deaf junior. Dutton, looking perplexed, resumed his place in the class, and the Remove became grave again as Mr. Quelch frowned and addressed them. The incident which had made them so hilarious had not amused Mr. Quelch, and all the Form felt that there was trouble to come.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Alonzo Owns Up.

"WE will now return to the matter in hand after this ridiculous interruption," said Mr. Quelch, with a frown that quite banished any desire to laugh on the part of the Removites. "I have appealed to the boy who cut off Wun Lung's pigtail to confess. I give him one more opportunity of doing so."

He paused.

There was no answer.

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch, compressing his lips a little.

"The boy does not choose to confess. That the culprit belongs to the Remove is quite clear to me. You will therefore listen to the decision I have come to, in consultation with the Head. Until the culprit is discovered the whole Form will be punished."

A quick breath ran through the Remove.

The announcement was not unexpected. It was really the only thing that could be done if the masters were determined not to let the matter drop, as evidently they were.

"Until the culprit confesses or is discovered," went on Mr. Quelch, in measured tones, "the whole Form will be detained on all half-holidays and will be detained in the class-room for one hour after the usual time of dismissal in the afternoon."

The Remove simply gasped.

"My hat!" ejaculated Wharton involuntarily.

"Did you speak, Wharton?" said Mr. Quelch coldly.

Harry rose in his place, with a determined expression on his face. He was Form-captain, and it was for him to speak, if anybody did. And now or never was the time.

"Yes, sir," he said.

"Well?"

"We have the second innings of a match with the Upper Fourth to play on next Wednesday afternoon, sir," he said.

"I am sorry for that."

"We can't very well scratch it, sir—"

"I am afraid there is no alternative, Wharton."

"But, sir—"

Mr. Quelch made a gesture imposing silence.

"I have stated my decision," he said. "I know that it falls heavily upon the innocent members of the Form, and I am

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sorry for it. But you must all see that there is no other resource left to me. A serious outrage has been committed. The guilty party refuses to confess, and cannot be discovered. It is left to you yourselves to make the discovery. The guilty party must be known to some of you—perhaps to many. Let him be exposed or induced to confess. That is all I can say. Until the truth is known the whole Form will be detained as I have stated."

"But, sir—"

"That is enough, Wharton. It is useless to prolong the discussion."

Wharton sat down.

The Remove went through their lessons that morning heavily enough.

Few had any idea as to who the culprit was, and no one believed for a moment that he would confess and take the serious consequences of his act.

If the fellow had been generally known public opinion in the Form, if not a sentiment of honour, would have compelled him to own up.

But he was not known.

It looked as if the period of detention for the Remove might extend over the whole of the term without the truth ever coming out at all.

It was a gloomy prospect.

The idea of having cricket matches cancelled, cycle races off, and all other arrangements for the afternoons and half-holidays seriously interfered with, was enough to strike dismay to the Form.

When they came out after morning lessons they collected in gloomy groups in the Close, discussing the blow that had fallen upon the Form.

They agreed without a dissentient voice that it was "rotten," but no-one could propose what ought to be done under the circumstances.

Some of the fellows scowled at Wun Lung, rather unreasonably regarding him as the cause of their troubles.

"What did the blessed heathen want to wear a blessed pigtail at all for?" demanded Ogilvy. "It's all his fault."

"Faith, and ye're right!" said Micky Desmond. "It ought to have been cut off long ago, the haythen spalpeen!"

"Oh, that's rot!" said Harry Wharton crisply. "The fault is the chap's who cut it off. We ought to find him out somehow, and make him own up."

"How'll you make him?"

"Send him to Coventry, or rag him bald-headed," said Wharton. "If there's ever a time for ragging, I think this is it. But we don't know who it was."

"And we're not likely to know," said Bulstrode. "The chap, whoever he is, will have sense enough to keep it dark, I suppose."

Wharton looked at him, and walked away without replying. He could not help suspecting Bulstrode. Nugent and Bob Cherry strolled with him, and the chums discussed the matter, without being able to shed any light upon it. Alonzo Todd came out of the House, and caught sight of them, and hurried after them.

"Will you stop a minute, Wharton?" he said. "I want to speak to you."

The chums stopped.

"Go ahead!" said Harry.

The Duffer of Greyfriars hesitated. He was looking very worried and troubled, and the chums could see that he had something on his mind.

"I want to ask your advice about something," he stammered, at last.

"Go ahead!"

"It's—it's about what Quelch said this morning," said Todd. "We're going to be detained for all the half-holidays till the—the chap owns up."

"Can't be helped," said Harry. "It's worse for us than for you, as you're not in the cricket eleven."

"But—but suppose I knew who—"

"Phew! You know the chap!"

"Suppose I do?"

"Then tell us," said Harry. "You can't tell Quelch—that would be sneaking—but you can tell us, and we'll jolly soon make the rotter glad to own up."

"P-p-perhaps he isn't a r-r-rotter," stammered Todd.

"Oh, he jolly well is!" said Bob Cherry. "No decent chap would cut off a Chinaman's pigtail. It's a serious matter to a Chinese."

"But—b-but he may have intended it as a—a favour."

"Eh?"

"Suppose he thought that Wun Lung wanted it off, and—"

"Nobody could be idiot enough to think so."

Todd turned very red.

"Really, Cherry—"

Harry Wharton gave a start.

"Was it you?" he exclaimed.

"Yes," stammered the Duffer.

The juniors stared at him.

"You! You!"

"Yes. I—"

"What did you do it for?" demanded Nugent. "I should never have suspected you of playing a dirty trick like that."

"I—I didn't mean it for a dirty trick," stammered the Duffer. "Bulstrode told me—"

"Oh!" exclaimed Wharton. "Bulstrode was at the bottom of it, of course. I guessed that from the first!"

"Well, it seems that I misunderstood him, you know," said Todd miserably. "But he and Snoop told me that Wun Lung suffered from bad headaches, and would never be cured till his pigtail was cut off—and that he had promised somebody in China never to cut it off, or to ask anybody to do it, so—so if it was done, it had to be done without his knowledge."

"Bulstrode told you that!"

"And you were ass enough to believe it!"

"You chump!"

"Well, I—I didn't know he was lying, you know—or—or, rather, joking; for he says now that it was all a joke, and he never expected me to take it in earnest."

"Yes, he says that now," said Wharton. "But he did mean you to take it in earnest. It was his revenge upon Wun Lung—because he dared not touch him himself, after Quelch had caught him once. You ass!"

"You cheerful chump!" said Bob Cherry.

"I—I suppose I was a bit of an ass," said Todd. "But look here, I'm not going to let the whole Form suffer for me. I'm going to own up."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"That's the only thing you can do," he said. "But if you explain to Mr. Quelch how it was, he'll understand, perhaps."

"I can't mention Bulstrode's name. It would be sneaking, I suppose."

"Well, perhaps it would."

"I shall have to face the music, I suppose," said Todd ruefully. "It's rather hard, when I only meant to be obliging all the time."

"You're a jolly lot too obliging, sometimes," said Nugent. "It's a habit you've got to get out of."

"You chaps advise me to own up to Mr. Quelch?" said the Duffer slowly.

"Yes, rather!"

"I—I suppose I must."

"We'll bear witness that you're a silly ass," said Wharton thoughtfully. "It's only fair that Quelch should know what a chump you are, so that he won't think you meant to play a dirty trick on the Chinese."

Todd smiled in a rather sickly way.

"Oh, all right!" he said. "Will you come with me?"

"We'll come."

And the four juniors made their way to Mr. Quelch's study, where they found the Remove-master.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Scot Free.

"WELL?"

That monosyllable, which Mr. Quelch seemed to fire at them like a pistol-shot, was not encouraging.

The juniors were considerably damped in spirits as they stood in the study, under the eyes of their Form-master.

"If you please, sir, Todd has something to tell you," said Harry.

"Oh! About the Wun Lung affair?"

"Yes, sir."

"You may proceed, Todd."

"Thank you so much, sir," said Todd. "If you please, sir, I cut off Wun Lung's pigtail."

Mr. Quelch jumped.

"You!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, sir."

The Remove-master seemed scarcely able to believe his ears. He stared at Alonzo Todd.

"You—you cut off Wun Lung's pigtail, Todd!"

"Yes, if you please, sir."

"And—and you dare to come and tell me in this barefaced manner!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"You—you told me to, sir."

"Ah, yes! I certainly commanded the culprit to confess," said Mr. Quelch, more calmly. "But—but this effrontery—No matter! It was you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why did you do it? But I need not ask you that. So cruel a trick could only have been done by a boy with a really bad nature. You will follow me to the Head."

"But, sir—"

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"No more," said the Remove-master, rising. "Come with me."

"If you please, sir," said Wharton, "Todd had an explanation to make, if you will be kind enough to listen to him, sir."

"Oh, very well!" said Mr. Quelch shortly. "Make your explanation, Todd. I shall certainly be interested to hear what it is."

"I only wanted to be obliging, sir."

"What?"

"My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to make myself useful, and to—to be obliging, sir, and I promised him that I would."

"Are you insane, boy?"

"I—I hope not, sir."

"You do not mean to say seriously, I suppose, that you thought you would be obliging Wun Lung in cutting his pigtail off, Todd?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir. It was through a fellow saying something for a joke, sir, which I took in earnest. I understood that Wun Lung suffered from headaches, which could only be cured by his pigtail being cut off. So I cut it off, sir. I assure you that I only meant to be obliging."

Mr. Quelch looked hard at him.

"It seems incredible to me, Todd, that any lad of your age could be so unspeakably stupid!" he exclaimed.

"We've come to bear witness for him, sir," said Harry Wharton. "The whole Form knows Todd to be an awful duffer, sir."

"Indeed!"

"Any chap who has a yarn to tell that nobody else would believe—always tells it to Todd, sir," said Wharton. "He'll swallow anything. I believe he's the biggest duffer that ever lived, sir."

Mr. Quelch paused.

"Do you believe, then, Wharton, that Todd was deceived in the way he declares?" he asked slowly.

"Yes, sir, I quite believe Todd."

"It is very extraordinary."

"Yes, sir. Todd is an extraordinary duffer—excuse me."

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips.

"You say that this extraordinary deception was practised upon you by another boy, Todd?" he demanded.

"Yes, sir."

"What was his name?"

Todd hesitated.

"Come, come!" said the Remove-master brusquely. "Tell me his name."

"I promised not to mention it, sir."

"Indeed!"

"Besides, sir, he was only joking. He has assured me since that he was only joking, and had no intention of being taken seriously in the matter."

"Oh! Wharton, kindly fetch Bulstrode and Wun Lung here."

"Yes, sir."

Harry Wharton left the study, and returned in a few minutes with the bully of the Remove and the little Chinese.

Wun Lung looked as impassive as usual, with the exception that the gloomy expression was still on his face; and Bulstrode's looks showed that he was striving to conceal his alarm.

Mr. Quelch gave him a sharp look as he entered.

"Wun Lung," said the Remove-master, "Todd has confessed to having cut off your pigtail the night before last."

Wun Lung started back.

His almond eyes opened wide, and he looked at the Remove-master, and then at Alonzo Todd, in amazement.

"Me greatly 'stonished, sil," he murmured.

"You did not think it was Todd?"

"No, sir, me no tinkee—me no tinkee now."

"Come, you do not think Todd would confess to an untruth?"

"Me no savvy."

"Todd's statement is certainly true," said Mr. Quelch. "Bulstrode, I understand that Todd was led to do this thing by the representations of a boy much more cunning than himself, who wished to be revenged upon Wun Lung, but cleverly managed to throw the risk of the deed upon a simpler fellow."

Bulstrode turned crimson.

"If Todd has been saying anything about me—" he began.

"Todd has not mentioned your name."

"Oh!"

"Todd does not wish to give me any information, as he regards it as dishonourable to speak," said Mr. Quelch, "but I guessed that you were the boy responsible."

"Really, sir, that is a little hard on me."

"Did you suggest to Todd that Wun Lung suffered from headaches, which could only be relieved by his pigtail being cut off?"

"I, sir!"

"Yes, you! Don't prevaricate, Bulstrode."

"Certainly not, sir. I had no intention of prevaricating," said the Remove bully, his courage rising as he saw that nothing definite could possibly be known against him, as Alonzo Todd had not spoken.

"Well, answer me, Bulstrode," said Mr. Quelch sharply. "Did you suggest this action to Todd?"

"Certainly not, sir. Some joke might have been made about Wun Lung having headaches through wearing that silly pigtail—I don't remember—but certainly Todd must have been an awful ass if he thought I meant he was to cut it off. He cannot say—"

"He says nothing. I am questioning you."

"I am innocent, sir."

Mr. Quelch was baffled.

He felt in his heart that Bulstrode was guilty—that he had obtained a cowardly revenge upon Wun Lung by getting Todd to act as a catspaw. But he might be mistaken—and, in any case, there was no proof. Bulstrode was too cool to be likely to convict himself. Mr. Quelch did not see how he was to be punished. Clear proof would be wanted before he could report a boy to the Head for severe punishment. In Bulstrode's case, the clear proof was certainly not forthcoming.

"I hardly know what to do in this matter," said Mr. Quelch, in marked tones. "Todd has been the victim of a cunning and unscrupulous boy, whoever he is, whether it is Bulstrode or not. He acted with incredible folly, but folly is not wickedness. You do not think yourself, Wun Lung, that Todd would willingly have injured you?"

Wun Lung shook his head.

His eyes blazed upon Bulstrode for a moment with a fierce menace, but only for a moment. The next he was cool and quiet again.

"No, sir," he said. "Me likee Todd. He fool, but he no bad."

"Then you do not desire his punishment?"

"No, sir. Me no wantee."

"You may go, Todd. You understand, Wun Lung, that it is impossible for anyone to be punished in this matter, under the very peculiar circumstances, unless it is Todd."

"Allee light, sir!"

"Wharton, you may inform the Remove that, since the truth is known, the detention is rescinded."

"Thank you, sir."

"It is unfortunate that the culprit in this matter must go unpunished," said Mr. Quelch, looking directly at Harry Wharton. "I trust that if the Remove learn the true identity of the boy who has caused all this trouble they will show him a proper contempt, and in a way that he will not be able to misunderstand."

And, with a gesture, Mr. Quelch dismissed the juniors.

Outside in the passage, Bulstrode walked quickly away; Nugent paused, and looked significantly at Harry Wharton.

"He knows it was Bulstrode," he remarked.

"That's certain, Frank."

"He can't punish him—"

"But he wants us to."

"Exactly," said Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton set his lips.

"And we're going to," he said quietly.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not to be Insulted.

"I'm so sorry!"

The Duffer made that statement with great earnestness, and he tapped Wun Lung on the shoulder to emphasise his words. The little Chinese gave him a peculiar look.

"Allee light," he said.

"But I'm really awfully sorry," said Todd. "I only meant to be obliging, you know."

"Allee light."

"My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to make myself useful, and I always try to, you know."

"Allee light."

"I really thought it would be a great favour to you, cutting off your pigtail, you know," said Todd. "It would be a great comfort to me to know that you do not feel angry with me."

"Me no angry with you," said Wun Lung. "All Bulstrode's fault."

"But he was only joking, and—"

Wun Lung shook his head.

"No jokee. You only fool; Bulstrode logue."

"Oh, I—I'm not exactly a fool, you know," said Todd.

"I—I believe what people say—"

"You gleat fool!"

"Oh, you know—"

"Gleat fathead fool," said Wun Lung. "If me no tinkee

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you gleat fathead fool, me shavee youl head like billiard ball."

"Oh!"

"You gleat fool, me no shavee. Me payec out Bulstrode. You savvy?"

And Wun Lung walked away.

Todd rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Well, I'm sorry it happened, and I'm glad I've convinced Wun Lung that I was not to blame," he murmured.

"I rather think he'll be spiteful about it."

There wasn't much doubt on that point, to judge by the look on Wun Lung's face as he went in quest of Harry Wharton & Co. He found the chums of the Remove talking together in the quad., and twitched Harry's sleeve to draw his attention. The sturdy captain of the Remove looked down at the little Celestial.

"Ah! I was expecting to see you, Wun Lung," he said.

"You plomise helpee me," said Wun Lung, his almond eyes glowing. "You helpee me punish Bulstrode. What you tinkee?"

"Certainly."

"We were just talking it over," said Frank Nugent.

"We're going to have him up before the Form, and make him answer for it."

"Lipping!" said Wun Lung. "When Bulstrode punished, me fasten on pigtailee again. What you tinkee? New one takee long time glow."

"You turn up in the Form-room in a quarter of an hour," said Harry. "We'll have Bulstrode there by that time."

"Velly good!"

The word was passed round among the Removeites.

All of them knew by that time how the matter had happened, and the hand Bulstrode had had in it. The Duffer of Greyfriars had raised himself in the opinion of his Farm-fellows by his pluck in owning up to Mr. Quelch; though they all laughed heartily over his simplicity in allowing Bulstrode to use him as a catspaw. But all agreed that Bulstrode had acted badly, and that the little Chinese was entitled to make him "sit up" if it could possibly be done.

But how was it to be done? That was the question. Under ordinary circumstances, such a thing would have been followed by a fight between the two; but a fight between the burly Bulstrode and the diminutive Chinese would have been absurd. Wun Lung could not avenge his severed pigtail by being knocked into a cocked hat as well.

The idea of making Bulstrode answer for his conduct to the Form was approved by almost all the Remove.

Several fellows went in search of him, but he was not easily found. He had judged it wiser to keep out of sight as much as possible till the matter had had time to blow over. Harry Wharton & Co. did not mean to be baffled, however. They had promised their aid to the little Chinese, and they meant to keep their word.

"Bulstrode!"

"Where's Bulstrode?"

"Anybody seen Bulstrode?"

"Seen Bulstrode anywhere?"

So the inquiries went on.

The passages and the studies were drawn blank, and the common-room and the gym. The Remove bully was not to be seen.

"He's keeping out of sight on purpose," said Harry Wharton, with a frown. "But someone must have seen him, surely."

"Seen Bulstrode, Dutton?"

"Eh?"

"Have you seen Bulstrode?"

"Certainly."

"Well, where is he?"

"Eh?" said Dutton, putting his hand to his ear and leaning forward a little. "Speak more clearly, will you? Not louder—clearer!"

"Where is he?"

"He? Who?"

"Bulstrode."

"Certainly, if you like. But where is the load?"

"The load!" gasped Nugent.

"Yes. How can I help you carry your load, if it isn't here? Are you joking?" demanded Dutton.

"Oh, my word!" groaned Nugent. "What did I start asking him questions for? We weren't talking about a load, ass! Bulstrode! He's gone! Have you seen him?"

"Well, I suppose the beans would grow pretty fast in this weather," agreed Dutton. "They ought to be well watered before the sun is up, of course!"

Nugent almost collapsed.

"Carry me away!" he murmured. "Carry me home to die!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Eh? What did you say?"

"It's all right."

"See me to-night? I suppose you will," said Dutton, looking puzzled. "I suppose you're pretty certain to see me to-night, Nugent. I really don't understand what you are driving at. Don't go away, you know. Repeat what you said, will you; and speak a little clearer. Not louder."

"Have you seen Bulstrode?" shrieked Nugent.

Dutton flushed, and suddenly lashed out with his right, and Nugent staggered back from an exceedingly forceful tap on the nose.

He sat down with a bump in the grass.

"My hat!" he gasped. "He's mad! What did he do that for?"

"Hold on, Dutton, you ass——"

"I'll teach him to call me a toad!" said Dutton, brandishing his fists. "Toad, am I? Come on, then, and the toad will lick you! Get up! Come on! Toad—hey? Come on, and see if I'm a toad."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see anything for you fellows to cackle at. I'm not going to be called a toad by anybody, I can tell you that!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Nugent didn't call you a toad——"

"Eh? What's that about a road?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here——"

Nugent staggered to his feet.

He held a handkerchief to his nose and that handkerchief was showing thick streaks of red. The tap on the nose had had effect.

"The blithering idiot!" sputtered Nugent. "Howd my gap while I lig him!"

"Here, hold on, Frank——"

"I'm goig to smash him!"

"But——"

"Howd my gap, you ass!"

Wharton dragged his chum back.

"Don't be an ass, Frank. He thought you were saying something you weren't."

"I don'd gare," roared Nugent, sputtering. "Loog ad by dose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you cackling idiot——"

"Ha, ha!"

"You shouldn't call me a toad, then," said Dutton.

"You howling ghump——"

"It's a mistake!" bawled Wharton. "Nugent asked you if you had seen Bulstrode?"

"Oh, I see! Why couldn't he speak plain, then?"

"Ha, ha! He did."

"Eh?"

"Oh, rats! Come on, Nugent!"

And Nugent was dragged away, still mopping his nose.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Gully Party!

BULSTRODE!"

"There he is!"

"Bulstrode! You can hear plain enough. Stop!" Half a dozen Removites had caught sight of Bulstrode, in the Cloisters. The Remove bully was walking away rather quickly; but he could not pretend not to hear the shouts sent after him. They could have passed unheard by no one but Dutton.

He paused, and looked round.

He looked just a little alarmed as the juniors closed round him, but he assumed a manner of bravado, which did not deceive Harry Wharton & Co.

"What do you want?" he asked.

Wharton's reply was laconic.

"You!"

Bulstrode began to bluster.

"What do you mean? What are you getting at?"

"We want you."

"What for?"

"To come to the Form-room."

"The Form-room! What on earth for?"

"To meet the Form."

"You're rotting, I suppose."

"Not at all. You've got to explain."

"Explain?"

"Blessed if he isn't picking up Todd's way of parroting," grinned Nugent. "Don't waste your breath like that, man; come along."

"I jolly well sha'n't come if I don't choose," said Bulstrode fiercely.

"You will come," said Harry Wharton.

"Who'll make me?"

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"We will."

"Look here——"

"Come on!"

Bulstrode gritted his teeth.

"I won't, then!"

"Will you come?" said two or three voices.

"No."

"Collar him!"

Bulstrode sprang back.

"Hands off! Hands off, I say, or——"

"Collar him!"

And the Remove bully was promptly collared.

He had no chance to struggle. His arms were grasped and held fast, and he was walked off towards the School House in the midst of a crowd of juniors.

He soon stopped resisting. Somebody was already proposing to give him the frog's-march, and Bulstrode did not want that at all. He did not want to be more humiliated than he was already. The feeling in the Form was evidently against him, and Harry Wharton & Co. quite held the upper hand.

"What do you want with me?" he asked sullenly. "I'll come in if the Form wants it. You can take your paws off me."

"Very well."

Bulstrode was released, but the juniors kept round him. Wharton did not mean to allow him a chance to bolt.

"It's about Wun Lung," said Nugent. "You know jolly well that you put the Duffer up to cutting off his pigtail."

"That's Todd's business."

"And ours, too."

"If you're going to make a row over that——"

"We are," said Harry Wharton quietly.

And Bulstrode relapsed into silence.

He was walked into the Form-room, and as soon as it was known that he was there the greater part of the Remove came crowding in. As soon as most of the Form were inside, Harry Wharton ordered the door to be locked. Locked it was at once—a proceeding that the Remove bully viewed with considerable alarm.

"I suppose this is all a rotten jape," he growled. "I'll make some of you sit up for it presently, too."

"Rats!"

"Look here——"

"Let him alone!" exclaimed Skinner. "What does it matter about the rotten heathen's pigtail, anyway?"

Wharton turned on him in a flash.

"So you were in it, too?" he exclaimed sharply.

Skinner started back at once.

"Oh, no," he said; "I—I know nothing about it. But——"

"Then hold your tongue."

"Look here, Wharton——"

"Shut up!" said Bob Cherry, giving Skinner a push on the chest that sent him staggering away; and Skinner judged it wiser to keep on the outer circle of the crowd after that. He was willing to speak a word for Bulstrode, if that was any use, but he was not of the stuff of which heroes are made. When he saw that feeling ran strongly against the bully of the Remove, he was ready to take a back seat at once.

"Now, then, Bulstrode, it's pretty clear that you're responsible for Wun Lung losing his wool," Harry Wharton began. "Todd, come and spin your yarn."

"Really, Wharton, I don't want——"

"It isn't a question of what you want, but of what we want," said Wharton crisply. "Come and do as you're told."

"But——"

"Bring that witness forward," said Wharton, frowning. "If he doesn't immediately tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, pinch him till he does."

"Oh, I—I'll tell you all about it, of course!"

"Go ahead, then."

"You see, Bulstrode was just rotting me——"

"Of course he was, and you were mug enough to fall into the trap."

"Really, you know——"

"Toddee gleat muggae," said Wun Lung. "Speakee quickly."

"Oh, all right!"

And Alonzo explained how Bulstrode and Snoop had induced him to cut off Wun Lung's pigtail. A roar of laughter greeted the explanation. That anybody could be duffer enough to be made a catspaw of so easily was astounding; but the Remove knew Todd. He had been taken in many times by flimsier stories than that.

Bulstrode listened in sullen silence.

He had never expected the matter to come home to him in this way, or he might have postponed his revenge upon Wun Lung for a more favourable opportunity.

Wharton looked round as Todd concluded.

"Where's Snoop?" he asked.
 "Snoop! Snoopey! Snoop! Where are you, Snoop?"
 But Snoop was not to be seen.

Snoop was wise in his generation, and he had made it a point to give the Form-room a wide berth as he found the Remove assembling there with Bulstrode and Wun Lung. It would have required a very long search to unearth Snoop just then.

"He's not here," said Bob Cherry, after a look up and down the class-room.

"Oh, never mind Snoop!" exclaimed Nugent. "He was only Bulstrode's toady in this, as in everything else. Let him go."

"Nugent's right."

"Bulstrode was the head cook and bottle-washer," said Tom Brown. "Never mind Snoop. Now, let Bulstrode answer for his giddy sins."

"What have you got to say, Bulstrode?"

"Go to the deuce!"

"Thanks! Anything else?"

"No."

Wharton raised his hand.

"You do not deny the truth of the witness's statements?"

"You know I don't," said Bulstrode savagely. "I had to be careful with Quelch, but I'm not afraid of you."

"You told that rotten yarn to Todd to make him cut off Wun Lung's pigtail?"

"Just as you like," said Bulstrode, with a shrug of the shoulders. "You're doing all the talking in this act, and you can go on."

"You did that because you were afraid to cut the pigtail off yourself, I suppose."

Bulstrode laughed harshly.

"Afraid of what—that Chinese dwarf?"

"No," said Wharton quietly, "of being expelled. You wanted to revenge yourself on Wun Lung, and you wanted somebody else to take the risk of being kicked out of Greyfriars for it."

Bulstrode bit his lip.

Wharton turned to the juniors.

"You see how the case stands," he said. "All you fellows form the jury, but I don't think there can be much doubt about the verdict. Bulstrode put Todd up to this—a serious outrage, as you all know. He meant Todd to be punished for it, if anybody was punished. Now, Todd was a silly ass—"

"Hear, hear!"

"But that doesn't excuse Bulstrode. In fact, it makes him all the worse, for having imposed on the simplicity of a silly ass—an extra special silly ass. Now, Bulstrode's guilt being clearly established—"

"Guilty!" said the juniors in chorus.

"Good!"

"Rats!" said Bulstrode.

"The question is, what compensation is to be made to Wun Lung? He's lost his pigtail, and Todd came very near getting something in the neck. Now—"

"Let them fight it out," suggested Stott.

There was a general laugh.

"I'm ready!" said Bulstrode, with a grin.

Wharton shook his head.

"A fight between Bulstrode and Wun Lung is out of the question. Bulstrode could knock him to pieces with one hand. I suggest that the punishment be left to Wun Lung, and that the Form back him up in inflicting it."

"Hear, hear!"

"Look here—" began Bulstrode.

Wharton held up his hand.

"Silence! Stand forward, Wun Lung!"

And Wun Lung, grinning now, stood forward.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Close Shave.

BULSTRODE made a movement towards the door. Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent took him affectionately by the arms, and stopped him.

"Not just yet," said Frank.

"Let me go, hang you!"

"Some other time, dear boy."

Wun Lung stopped before Bulstrode, and his almond eyes scintillated as he fixed them on the face of the Remove bully.

"Bulstrode cuttee off Wun Lung's hair," he said; "Wun Lung cuttee off Bulstrode's hair allee samee."

There was a shout of laughter.

"Good!"

"Tit for tat!"

"A Roland for an Oliver."

"Get your hair cut, Bulstrode."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode turned crimson.

"If you think I'm going to stand anything of the sort—" he began.

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EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

"You are," said Wharton.

"I—I—"

"You've had Wun Lung's topknot off. You can't grumble."

"I tell you—"

"Shut up! Are you ready for the operation, Wun Lung?"

"Allee leadee."

"Then begin."

"All right."

Bulstrode made a desperate wrench to tear himself free, and sprang towards the door. A dozen hands were upon him at once.

He was dragged back, panting, and fighting like a wild cat.

"Let me go, hang you!" he shouted.

"Nother time, chappy."

"Not just now."

"Hold him!"

"Now, have your hair cut like a good boy, Bulstrode."

"Fair play, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stick him on a form," said Harry Wharton. "If he won't keep still, we'll put a rope round him."

The gasping Bulstrode was forced down upon a form.

There, three or four pairs of hands held him fast, and Wun Lung came up grinning. The little Chinese had taken a pair of scissors from his pocket.

"All leady!" he exclaimed.

"Go ahead!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites gathered round eagerly.

It was rough justice, but it was justice. Bulstrode had been responsible for Wun Lung's loss of his hair, and Bulstrode was to lose his own by the hands of Wun Lung! Nothing could be fairer, and it was an idea that appealed to the Removites. It was funny as well as just.

Bulstrode simply gasped with rage.

He had rather thick, silky hair, which he always parted carefully, and of which he was considerably proud.

To have it hacked off by the Chinese was too awful for words. What would he look like when the Celestial was finished?

He hardly dared to think.

He made one more desperate effort as the little Chinese came towards him with the gleaming scissors in his hand.

But he was jammed down again.

"Keep still, you ass!" said Bob Cherry warningly.

"You'll get out, you know."

"Hang you!"

"Quiet!"

"Rotters! I'll lick the lot of you!"

"Going to lick the whole Form at once, at one fell swoop?" asked Tom Brown.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, Wharton, if you let that Chinese beast touch me—"

"You've only got yourself to thank for it."

"I'll—I'll smash you!"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"I'll meet you in the gym., with or without gloves, any time you like, and you know it," he said. "If Wun Lung were big enough to tackle you, you should meet him; but if he were big enough to take care of himself, you'd have let him alone."

"Me cuttee now."

"Keep off!"

Bulstrode struggled again.

"Here, hang it!" said Bob Cherry. "He'll get his head cut instead of his hair if he doesn't keep still! Hold on! I've got a cord in my pocket."

"Good!"

The cord was produced, and Bulstrode found himself tied down to the form, his hands secured to his sides. It was impossible for him to struggle now. Wun Lung called to Todd, who came up grinning, and held the bully of the Remove by the ears, to keep his head in position for the operation.

Wun Lung laid the scissors on the desk, and then drew a little case from his pocket. The juniors watched him with interest, wondering what was coming.

Wun Lung opened the case, and took out a safety razor, a stick of shaving-soap, and a shaving brush.

There was a general exclamation.

"You're not going to shave him, Wun Lung?"

"Me shavee!"

"But—"

"Shavee head."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Wharton. "Hang it! You know—"

"He cuttee off allee my hail."

"Yes, but—"

"Me cuttee off allee his hail."

"But—"

"You plomise."

"Yes, I promised, but—"

"Me holdee you to plomise."

"Well, it's your own fault, Bulstrode; you should have let his topknot alone," said Harry Wharton. "You'll have to face the music now."

Wun Lung brought forward a basin of water, which he had placed in the Form-room ready. He had evidently thought out the scheme of shaving his enemy's head.

He started first with the scissors.

With a deftness that a professional barber might have envied, he snipped off Bulstrode's hair, cutting it very close to the head.

The Removites looked on grinning.

Bulstrode soon bore a striking resemblance to a convict newly released from prison, and the fury in his face quite bore out that character.

Snip, snip, snip, went the scissors.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The hair fell thickly round Bulstrode's shoulders.

His face was a picture of rage. But the little Chinese did not even look at it. His attention was all given to the hair-cutting.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "I must say Bulstrode is beginning to look a regular brute!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, hang you, I'll make you sorry for this!" snarled Bulstrode.

The last crop of hair had fallen, and the scissors could do no more. Wun Lung laid them down on the desk.

Then he took up the shaving-brush, dipped it in water, and commenced to lather the head of the bully of the Remove.

He rubbed on the soap and lathered it with the brush, till Bulstrode's head was a mass of soapy foam.

"You—you Chinese beast!" gasped Bulstrode. "I—I—Yow!"

Whether by accident or not the shaving-brush had been dabbed into his mouth, and the Remove bully gasped and was silent.

Wun Lung lathered on.

Then at last he laid down the brush and picked up the safety razor. There was no danger of cutting Bulstrode with this instrument as there might have been with an ordinary razor.

It glided over Bulstrode's head, in the Chinese's active hand, and the Remove bully gasped as he felt it through the soap.

"Leave off!" he yelled. "Stop him! Wharton, stop him!"

Harry tapped Wun Lung on the shoulder.

"Hold on, kid!" he exclaimed. "Don't you think you've done enough?"

Wun Lung shook his head obstinately.

"He's lost most of his hair, you know."

"Me lose all."

"Yes, but—"

"Bulstrode lose all, too. What you tinkee?"

"But—"

"You plomise."

Wharton drew back.

"You'll have to stand it, Bulstrode. It's only fair, and I promised to stand by Wun Lung so long as it was fair play."

"Hang you all!"

"You'd better take it quietly."

Bulstrode did not take it quietly.

But that made little difference; he took it all the same.

The razor glided over his head to and fro, with a skilled hand guiding it, and the remains of his hair dropped off in the lathered soap.

The little Chinese worked patiently. If he had been a professional hairdresser, working for a high fee, he could not have been more careful.

Wun Lung washed off the lather, and then towelled the head. Then he threw down the towel with a grin.

"Allee light," he announced. "Me finished."

"Oh, I'll pay you out for this!" groaned Bulstrode.

The Removites gasped as Bulstrode's head was exposed to view. It was bald!

The surface of it was almost as smooth as the surface of a billiard ball. Here and there streaks of hair were left. That was all.

Bob Cherry snipped through the cords with his penknife.

Bulstrode rose free from the form.

He made one spring, like a tiger, at the little Chinese. He was swung back by the ready grasp of Harry Wharton.

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The captain of the Remove stepped in front of him.

"None of that!" he exclaimed sharply. "If you want anything of that sort, I'm ready. You're not going to touch Wun Lung."

Bulstrode quivered with rage.

"I'll make you all sit up for this, some time!" he hissed, and he strode to the door, unlocked it, and stamped out of the Form-room.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Bald-Headed Bulstrode.

"GOOD heavens!"

Mr. Capper, the master of the Upper Fourth, uttered that exclamation, as he met Bulstrode in the passage.

The smooth, hairless head of the burly Removite attracted his attention at once, and he stopped and stared at it blankly.

"What—what—who is that?" he exclaimed.

Bulstrode only snarled.

"Boy! Stop!" exclaimed Mr. Capper. "What—what does that mean? You are Bulstrode?"

"Yes, sir."

"How came your head in that state?"

"I—I've had my hair cut, sir."

"Dear me! Do you mean to say that the barber was so reckless as to cut off all your hair, and leave you completely bald?" exclaimed Mr. Capper.

"Is it very bad, sir?"

"Dear me! It is shocking!"

Mr. Capper passed on, and smiled to himself. Bulstrode certainly looked extremely absurd. The bully of the Remove was raging inwardly; but it was useless to relate the facts to the master. He looked ridiculous enough as it was, without confessing that he had had his head shaved as a punishment by his Form-fellows.

Bulstrode went up to the dormitory to change his collar, which had been soaked in the process of shaving. He changed it, and remained in the dormitory some time, wondering what he should do.

He did not care to show himself in public in his present state; yet there was no avoiding that for long. Afternoon lessons would soon be commencing, and though he could dodge dinner, he could not dodge lessons.

He decided to keep out of doors as much as he could. There he could wear his cap, and keep his bald head out of sight.

What to do in the class-room he had no idea.

He had left his cap downstairs, and he quitted the dormitory to descend in search of it. Monsieur Charpentier met him in the passage. The little Frenchman was going down to dinner, but he forgot all about his dinner at the sight of a bald-headed youth of fifteen.

"Vat!" he exclaimed, stopping. "Ceil! Is zat you, Bulstrode?"

"Yes," growled Bulstrode.

"Vat is ze mattair?"

"Nothing, sir."

"But—but your head!"

"It's all right, sir."

"It iz zat you have no hair upon ze head, mon garcon?" exclaimed the French master. "Vat have happen viz ze tete—ze head?"

"Nothing, sir."

"But ze hair it eez all gone viz itself."

"I've had a rather close hair cut, sir."

"Ciel! I zink zat it is ferry close, Bulstrode. I zink zat you vas entitled to ze big damages from zat barbaire."

"Yes, sir."

Bulstrode ran on downstairs, leaving the little Frenchman holding up his hands in astonishment.

He took his cap from the hall, and went out into the Close. The Remove had gone in to dinner, but Bulstrode did not feel inclined to join them. He could not wear his hat in the dining-room, and he did not feel inclined to appear without it.

He went over to the tuckshop, and surprised Mrs. Mimble by eating a big meal there, instead of having his dinner.

Mrs. Mimble was surprised, but Bulstrode was a paying customer, and she had no objection to make. Bulstrode did not leave the tuckshop till the juniors were coming out after dinner. Most of them looked curiously at Bulstrode. His cap concealed the baldness of his head, but a glance showed that the hair was gone, all the same, for Wun Lung had shaved carefully round and above his ears.

Bulstrode glared furiously at the Removites in return for their glances. He did not speak to any of them. He was in such a deadly rage that he could have uttered nothing but torrents of abuse.

A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

NEXT WEEK: "ALONZO THE GREAT."

"Looks sweet-tempered, don't he?" murmured Bob Cherry. "I don't wonder! It was rather rough on him—though no more than he deserved."

"The roughfulness was great, but the deservefulness was terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Wingate came out of the House, and he glanced at Bulstrode. He noticed something a little odd and curious, though he did not quite see what it was. As it happened, a gust of wind caught Bulstrode's cap just then, and whirled it off. Bulstrode made a clutch at it, and caught it—but too late—the sun was shining on his smooth head.

Wingate staggered back in astonishment.

"What on earth does that mean, Bulstrode?" he exclaimed, as soon as he could find his voice. "How did you get your head into that state?"

Bulstrode jammed the cap savagely on his head again.

"I've had my hair cut!" he growled.

"You—you've had your hair cut—like that!"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" growled Bulstrode.

"But—but—what for? Who did it? Come, tell me the truth!"

"The fellows did it."

"Why?"

"Oh, a jape, I suppose."

Wingate's brow grew stern.

"Look here, Bulstrode, if the fellows have done a thing like that for a jape, it will have to be inquired into. That means a flogging. You had better tell me the facts before I report it to the Head."

Bulstrode bit his lip.

"They fancied I was responsible for Wun Lung getting his pigtail cut off," said Bulstrode reluctantly.

"Oh! And you were—eh?"

"Well, you see—"

"Come, the truth!"

"Well, perhaps there was something in it."

"Yes, perhaps there was," said Wingate. "I haven't the slightest doubt there was myself. You've got exactly what you deserve, Bulstrode. I've heard about that from Mr. Quelch, and as you've been cunning enough to cover up your tracks so that the masters can't touch you, I'm glad you've got what you deserve from another source. It serves you right!"

And the captain of Greyfriars strode on his way, laughing.

Bulstrode saw him talking to a group of other Sixth-Formers a little later, and they were all laughing.

Two or three seniors strolled up to Bulstrode presently, and asked him to take his cap off. He could not disobey Sixth-Formers, and they looked at his bald head and grinned. He went indoors to escape this persecution, and kept on a cap in the passages.

But he was not destined to escape. Luck was against him. He strolled into the library as the room where he was least likely to be disturbed, keeping his cap on: and, as luck would have it, he found Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth Form, there.

Mr. Prout glanced up from his book.

At the sight of a junior walking into the library with his cap on, the Fifth Form-master started, and turned pink with anger.

"Bulstrode!" he rapped out.

The unfortunate Bulstrode stopped.

"Boy! Take your cap off!"

"I—I—"

Mr. Prout made an angry gesture.

"Take your cap off at once."

Bulstrode unwillingly obeyed.

Mr. Prout gave a jump, and dropped his book as the bald head of the Remove bully was exposed to his view.

"Goodness gracious, Bulstrode!" he exclaimed. "What have you been doing to your head? How came it in this state?"

Bulstrode faltered out the old excuse:

"I've had my hair cut, sir!"

"Most careless of the barber," said Mr. Prout. "Disgraceful! The man must have been intoxicated! Disgraceful!"

Bulstrode retreated from the library to avoid further questioning. The Fifth Form-master was evidently curious about the matter.

He retreated into the Head's garden, a very quiet spot, to pass the time until afternoon lessons. As fortune would have it, Mrs. Locke and her little daughter Molly were walking in the garden.

Bulstrode came face to face with them on one of the garden paths.

He stopped, turning red.

He simply had to raise his cap; it could not possibly be avoided. He dragged it slowly up from his head, and Mrs. Locke uttered an exclamation, and little Molly a shriek of fright.

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed Mrs. Locke. "What has become of your hair, Bulstrode?"

"I—I've had it cut off!" stammered Bulstrode.

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NEXT WEEK: "ALONZO THE GREAT."

EVERY TUESDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

And he ran off before Mrs. Locke could question him further.

Fuming with rage, the unhappy bully of the Remove beat a retreat to the Remove dormitory, where he remained striding to and fro like a wild beast until the bell began to ring for afternoon classes.

He stopped at the sound of the bell.

What was to be done?

To show up in the class-room before a grinning Form with his bald head, and to meet the cold, sarcastic gaze of Mr. Quelch—he felt that he would almost face death rather than that. But there was no help for it.

An idea darted into the junior's mind. He took a large silk muffler from his box, and wrapped it round his head and neck, as if he were suffering from a bad cold.

He descended the stairs, his face burning red, in sharp contrast to the white silk muffler bound over his head.

The Remove were already in their room, and Mr. Quelch was already noting the absence of Bulstrode, when he entered, last, and went towards his place.

The Form-master stared at him.

"Bulstrode! What have you got your head bound up in that manner for?" demanded Mr. Quelch sharply.

"M-my head, sir!" mumbled Bulstrode.

"Yes. Have you had an accident?"

"N-n-no, sir!"

"What is the matter, then?"

"I've a slight c-c-cold, sir!" stammered Bulstrode.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"You show no signs of having a cold, Bulstrode. Kindly take off that absurd bandage, and I will judge for myself whether you need it!"

"Oh, sir! I—"

"You hear me, Bulstrode?"

"Ye-es, sir; but—but—"

"Take that bandage off at once!"

Bulstrode groaned inwardly, and the Removites drew a quick breath as his hands went up to untie the silk muffler. What Mr. Quelch would say when he saw the junior's bald head, they could not guess. They could only wait and see.

Bulstrode slowly unfastened the muffler, and let it fall from his head.

Mr. Quelch uttered a cry of surprise.

"Bulstrode! What—what— You are completely bald!"

The Remove giggled. Bulstrode stood with downcast eyes and burning face. The Remove-master stared at him blankly.

"What does this mean?" he gasped. "Who has cut off your hair in this ridiculous manner, Bulstrode?"

"It's been cut off, sir."

"But by whom?"

Bulstrode was silent. Mr. Quelch's eyes roamed over the grinning Form. They rested upon the face of Wun Lung for a moment.

The truth dawned upon him.

His stern frown relaxed into a smile.

"Ah, I think I understand, Bulstrode! The Lower Fourth evidently imagine that you were more guilty than Todd in the matter of severing Wun Lung's pigtail, and you have been punished by your Form-fellows. Is that it?"

Bulstrode was silent.

Mr. Quelch stared at the bald head, and his mouth was twitching; the juniors knew that he was trying not to laugh, and they soon saw that he would not succeed. The laugh came out, all the more irresistibly from the efforts to suppress it.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Remove took their cue from their Form-master.

A roar of laughter rang through the Form-room.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode stood crimson and dumb.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch calmed himself at last. He made a commanding gesture to the class, and the laughter died away in chuckles.

"Bulstrode," said the Remove-master, as soon as he could command his voice—"Bulstrode, you cannot take your place in class in that state. Besides, you are in danger of catching a real cold. You will go into sanatorium for a time until your hair has had time partially to grow. As for this occurrence, I shall make no inquiry into it, as I am convinced that substantial justice has been done. You can take this note to the matron, Bulstrode."

And for some time after that Bulstrode was not seen at lessons; but he was not missed very much.

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars next Tuesday, entitled: "Alonzo the Great," by Frank Richards. Order your "Magnet" Library in advance. Price One Penny.)

A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.



STANLEY DARE

The Boy Detective

INTRODUCTION.

An undergraduate named Douglas Clayton, of St. Martin's College, Cambridge, is accused of the murder of a fellow-undergraduate, and Stanley Dare, assisted by Professor MacAndrew, takes up his case. The two working together soon discover the existence of a secret gang of desperadoes, and by following one of them up one night after a "town and gown" fight, Stanley Dare locates the headquarters of the gang—a deserted house in Cambridge. He enters the house with a skeleton key, and hearing the sound of low voices, cautiously begins to mount the stairs.

(Now go on with the Story).

An Awkward Predicament—Stanley Dare Plays a Bold Game—The Eavesdropper.

The stairs were very old, and more than once gave out a creaking sound, although Stanley Dare mounted them as softly as a cat might have done. It was a perilous undertaking he was bent upon carrying out, for he was unarmed. And if these men got him into their power again they would show him no mercy, although they were still ignorant of the fact that he was a detective on the track of a murderer whom he believed to be a member of the gang.

On reaching the landing he could hear the chink of glass mingling with the hum of voices, and the scent of rank tobacco penetrated the atmosphere. The rogues were enjoying themselves.

The door of the room next to the one they occupied was open. Dare entered the room, and noticed that there was a door of communication between the two rooms. The woodwork was old and shrunken. Through a chink in the door he could see into the next chamber. Five men were seated round a table, drinking and smoking. They were unmasked. Latimer's double—or was it Latimer himself?—time alone would solve that mystery—was seated at the head of the table.

"Shall we bring in the bird that we have netted?" asked one of the fellows.

"Yes; bring him in," said Latimer's double, known to his associates as Jim Bargrave.

A man slipped from the room, and Bargrave at once fastened a mask over his face. A few minutes passed; then the man re-entered the room, bringing with him Douglas Clayton.

Dare clenched his hands with something like a gesture of despair.

"I feared it—I feared it, as soon as I heard what those fellows said," he thought. "What mad folly caused him to do this? It is the worst thing that could have happened, and makes my task all the harder. Could he not trust me to do my best to prove his innocence? And how comes it that he is here? Well, he must not be given up to the police again now. I must do my best to save him."

To make a resolve to rescue Clayton from these miscreants was one thing, but to carry out that resolve was quite another matter. His only chance was to play a bold game. Had he been armed it would have been easier; but, in any case, the young detective was not one who was ever daunted by difficulties.

Douglas Clayton had glanced round the assemblage with dismay written upon his face. When he had entered the house a couple of hours previously, almost exhausted, a fugitive from justice, he had supposed that it was untenanted, and would make an excellent hiding-place. He had no idea who these men were, but he did not like their looks, and he feared that if they guessed who he was the hope of a reward would tempt them to give him up to the police.

The first words that Jim Bargrave spoke convinced him that his fears were well founded.

"Douglas Clayton, I believe?" said Bargrave, in his cold, sneering tones. "We are happy to see you here, I am sure, but your visit is unfortunate for yourself. The police will miss you; and as we are law-abiding citizens, it will, I fear, be our painful duty to give you up."

"You will not do that?" exclaimed Clayton, who looked

pale and haggard. "I am innocent of the crime of which I was accused. My innocence may very shortly be proved. But I could not endure the thought of being immured in a prison cell like a common felon until the proofs were forthcoming, so I made my escape. Think what you would do yourselves under similar circumstances! You cannot be so utterly devoid of human sympathy as to betray me!"

Bargrave shook his head sadly, and a hypocritical smile played about the corners of his mouth, which was visible below his mask.

"We have all heard these protestations of innocence from guilty men," he said. "It is the same old cry. If, as you say, proofs are forthcoming of your innocence—and I hope you will not be grey-headed before they arrive—there was no need for you to make your escape from prison, or the police-cells, wherever you happened to be confined. And you need not fear being handed over to the tender care of the police again, for, being innocent as you assert, and the proofs of your innocence—"

Douglas Clayton interrupted him with an exclamation of fear and amazement. He seemed to have noticed for the first time something familiar in the man's voice. It was Latimer's voice in every tone and inflection.

"Who are you?" he cried hoarsely. "You have the mannerisms, and you speak with the voice of a man who is believed to be dead!"

"Your victim you mean, perhaps?" said Bargrave. "Ah, I am afraid that is only the working of a guilty conscience! Latimer is the man that you are accused of having murdered. I can hardly believe that he will come to life again to please you, although, no doubt, he would be willing enough to do so were it in his power. For myself, I can only say that I regret my voice should remind you of your crime."

The falsely-accused undergraduate stared at Bargrave in doubt and perplexity.

"Why are you masked?" he cried out suddenly. "Tell me that."

Stanley Dare was unable to remain any longer as a spectator of this scene. He had a plan to carry out, and there was no time to be lost about it.

Slipping quietly out of the room, he descended the stairs to the hall. In one corner he had noticed a large packing-case, filled with straw and pieces of wood. His idea was to raise an alarm of fire, and during the confusion endeavour to get Clayton out of the house again unseen.

It was the work of an instant to strike a match and fling it into the packing-case. The straw began to blaze, and the pieces of wood to crackle almost immediately.

Dare ran lightly up the stairs, and just before he reached the top he shouted, in a hoarse, disguised voice:

"Fire—fire! The house is on fire!"

He heard a confusion of voices, oaths, and exclamations, the noise of chairs being hurriedly pushed away, and the tramp of feet.

With lightning quickness he slipped into the room he had recently quitted as the door of the adjoining apartment was flung open, and the excited men rushed out.

They did not need to be told what part of the house the fire was. The crackling of the straw and dry wood reached their ears at once, and the bright glare of the flames already lit up the hall.

"Water!" cried someone. "Is there any water on the premises?"

NEXT WEEK:

"ALONZO THE GREAT."

A Splendid School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS

There was not much, but they managed to obtain a few bucketfuls, and so get the fire under before the ancient wood-work of the house itself caught. While the gang were thus engaged, Stanley Dare made his way into the adjoining room, in order to aid Douglas Clayton in making his escape.

But Clayton had not been left alone. Bargrave was too cunning to make such a mistake as that. One man remained, keeping guard over the undergraduate with a loaded revolver.

He turned round as the young detective entered the room, and, seeing that it was not one of his associates, cried out, in a startled voice:

"Who are you? What do you want here?"

"You will soon find that out," replied Dare. "I mean to have the whole of your gang of thieves laid by the heels yet. Drop that revolver!"

Douglas Clayton had uttered a cry of joy on seeing Stanley Dare, but at a warning glance from the detective he held his tongue.

"Drop that revolver!" Dare repeated to the man.

The fellow believed that Dare had friends outside, and for that reason he meant to do something to ensure his own safety.

"I'll not drop anything!" he snarled.

Dare leaped upon him and flung him to the floor.

"I want that revolver!" he said, as he wrenched it from the miscreant's fingers.

There was a short, fierce struggle. Dare banged the fellow's head upon the boards, and with a groan he lay still. The young detective leaped to his feet. The noise of the scuffle had given the alarm to the other men, and they could be heard hurrying up the stairs, and shouting to know what was wrong. The fire had by this time been got under.

"Take this," said Dare, thrusting the revolver into Clayton's hands. "We shall have to fight our way clear of this gang of scoundrels!"

"I am game to fight," replied Clayton. "But you have no weapon."

"This will suit me," returned Dare.

The table of the room was a rickety affair, but the legs were heavy and solid. Putting his shoulder under the edge, he upset the table, sending the bottles and glasses with a crash to the floor. It was the work of a minute to tear out one of the legs, just as Bargrave and his associates dashed into the room.

"What is wrong? Ah, it's you—eh? Hang you! I'll take care you don't escape us this time!"

He was armed with a revolver, as were two others of the gang, but before he could use it Clayton had got in a shot, and Bargrave staggered back with a nasty wound on his neck. It did not disable him, however, for, with a furious oath, he levelled the weapon again, and fired twice.

One bullet ripped a hole in the student's gown which Dare was still wearing; but the young detective's blood was up, and in deadly earnest, meaning to do his opponents as much harm as possible, he rushed at them, dealing terrific blows right and left with the table-leg—a most effective weapon at close quarters.

Douglas Clayton followed close at his heels, and they went through the gang of thieves and murderers in no time, bowling them over like ninepins.

"This way!" cried Dare.

They ran down the stairs and out through the back door, which was now open, into the grounds. A few minutes later they were in the street.

"Where had I better go to now?" said Clayton. "I must hide somewhere, for I will not again submit to be locked up like a common felon!"

"It was an unwise act on your part to break from prison," replied Dare. "But I can't find it in my heart to blame you, as I should probably have acted as you have done had I been in your position. You must trust yourself to me, and I think I can smuggle you into college."

"Into college? Impossible!"

"Not at all. There has been a big town-and-gown row, and all the ordinary arrangements and regulations are, for to-night, practically in abeyance. Fellows will be returning into college right through the night. Here, put on my gown and mortar-board. Your face is pretty well disguised already with blood and dust, and as there are a good many other fellows in the same pickle it will not excite remark. That's right! Now for St. Martin's once again."

"Ah, once again!" echoed Clayton sadly.

Stanley Dare had been successful in smuggling Clayton back into the college, and, what was more, into his old rooms.

The rooms had, of course, not been occupied by anyone else, but had been kept locked up ever since Clayton's arrest, the master having the key in his possession.

This did not trouble Stanley Dare in the least degree, as there were few locks which he could not open if he desired.

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NEXT
WEEK:

"ALONZO THE GREAT."

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to do so, and the door of Clayton's old room proved no exception to the rule.

At ten o'clock on the following morning he joined the undergraduate in his old quarters, in order to discuss the situation, and also to smuggle some breakfast in to him.

"There will be a hue and cry after me," said Clayton, after greetings were exchanged; "and the police will be searching everywhere."

"There is a hue and cry already," replied Dare. "But you are safer here than anywhere. The police will not dream of looking for you in your old rooms. Now tuck into that breakfast, and afterwards I want you to tell me how you managed to make your escape."

The young detective had secured the door, having taken a good look round before entering the room. But as he uttered the last words, a crouching figure that had been in hiding in an old cupboard on the stairhead, crept stealthily along the passage and stooped down beside the door with his ear to the key-hole.

As he raised his head for a moment, the bright morning light showed up his features.

It was Sennitt, the gyp. His was a weird-looking face at all times, but now there was an expression of the most malignant cunning on it that the human features could possibly assume.

Two Hundred Pounds Reward—The Colonel—Unmasked.

"The manner of my escape," said Douglas Clayton, as he finished his breakfast, "was very simple, and purely owing to an accident."

"I have heard about the cab accident," replied Dare. "But the police don't seem to be very clear in their statements as to how you managed to elude them."

"The reason of that may be," pursued Clayton, with a slight smile, "that they don't wish to admit that they were a bit careless in keeping watch over me. I had been brought up on two previous occasions, as you know, before the justices, and I had been too utterly down on my luck to give them the slightest trouble. On this third occasion the magistrates had committed me for trial at the next assizes."

"I know," said Dare. "I was in court, but I kept in the background, as I did not want to be recognised."

"While waiting trial I was to be lodged in the county gaol," went on Clayton. "It is infamous that an innocent man should be made to suffer like this, but the fact remains that it is so. I was being conveyed to the gaol in a four-wheeled cab, two policemen riding inside with me. Suddenly, as we turned a corner, a motor-car ran into the cab, and sent it flying over on its side. In the ensuing confusion I slipped away, having extricated myself almost instantly, and mingled with the crowd that had collected. Being dressed in my own clothes I escaped observation, and after dodging in and out of a number of streets, I finally hid myself in that empty house, where you found me."

"And now you are here, back in your old rooms," said the young detective, "you will be able to remain here in safety for a few days, after which I shall have to find a fresh hiding-place for you."

"How is the case progressing?" asked Clayton anxiously. "Is there any hope that you will be able to unravel the mystery of the crime, and that the shadow of guilt will be lifted from me, so that I may look my fellow-men in the face again?"

"There is every hope," replied Dare, laying his hand on Clayton's shoulder. "I am on the track of the murderer, and he will not be able to shake me off now unless he commits a second murder, and I am the victim."

"You know the guilty man, then!" cried Douglas Clayton eagerly.

Stanley Dare did not answer at once. For a minute or more he sat in deep thought. Then he said slowly, as though weighing every word:

"I know the man, but I have no proofs yet that will hold good in a court of law. But the net is closing round him, Clayton, and he will not escape—he will not escape!"

"What is his name?"

Sennitt, the gyp, playing the part of eavesdropper, bent with his ear as close as he could press it to the keyhole, his unpleasant-looking face becoming quite ghastly and bloodless, as it always did when he was excited. But, if he expected to hear an answer to the question, he was doomed to disappointment.

"I cannot tell you his name," said Dare.

"But you know it?"

"Yes, I know it. But you will forgive me, Clayton, if, for the present, I consider it best to keep it to myself!"

Sennitt, the listener, rose to his feet and glided noiselessly away.

"I know now who our pretended Toronto student is," he muttered. "It is Stanley Dare, the boy detective. And he is harbouring a fugitive from justice. That will put an end to his career if it becomes known, and I think it is bound to leak out. Bound to! Because I shall give information to the police, either to-night or to-morrow morning, that the escaped prisoner is hiding in the college. There is a reward of two hundred pounds offered for his recapture, and there is no reason why the two hundred should not come to me. It will be strange that I, of all men, should receive the reward!"

Unconscious of this danger which threatened him at the hands of the treacherous servant, Clayton talked away quite cheerfully of his future prospects, and of what a day it would be when his innocence was established, and he would be able openly to occupy his old rooms once more, and not in hiding as a fugitive from justice.

It was exactly twenty-four hours later that Stanley Dare, having been away for twenty hours out of that time, saw a middle-aged gentleman, of military appearance, stepping briskly across the quadrangle. Paget Graham, and two other undergrads happened to be crossing the court in the opposite direction, and the military-looking man addressed a question to them, which seemed to elicit from them some expression of surprise and commiseration. Dare strolled up and joined the group, at the same time making a sign to someone who was standing out of sight in a doorway.

"This gentleman," said Paget, "has come here to see Latimer, being quite unaware of the recent tragedy. Colonel"—Paget glanced at a card which he held in his hand—"Colonel Elliston was a friend of the family but did not know Latimer very well, as he had not seen him since he left Harrow."

"I am sincerely sorry to hear the terrible news of poor Latimer's death," said Colonel Elliston. "I suppose his people were too cut up to think of writing and letting me know. If I may be permitted to do so, I should very much like to see the rooms which he occupied."

"Another student is in possession of them now," replied Paget. "Mr. Stanley, here. But I am sure, Stanley, you would have no objection to showing the colonel over the rooms?"

"I regret very much," said Dare, "that I am quite unable to accede to this gentleman's request. Let me see, Colonel Elliston, I think you called him?"

Very considerable surprise, and some indignation, showed on the faces of the students at this, to them, extraordinary want of courtesy on Dare's part. The colonel shrugged his shoulders, but just for one second a baleful look gleamed in his eyes.

"Of course, under those circumstances—" he began, when Dare sharply interrupted him.

"It is curious that you should want to see Mr. Latimer," he said, "when you knew of his death as soon, if not sooner, than any man in the college!"

"What do you mean?" demanded the colonel. "Are you mad?"

Paget and the others noticed with surprise that the "colonel" had turned very pale. Blount and some more undergrads joined the group, seeing that something unusual was taking place. Dare made a second signal to the unseen man in the doorway, and then turned upon the colonel.

"My meaning shall be made clear," he said, as, with a sharp, sudden movement, he struck off the colonel's hat, and snatched off his iron-grey wig and false whiskers.

Cries of amazement burst from the lips of the students.

"Good heavens! It is Latimer!" exclaimed Graham.

"Not Latimer," said Dare. "Nor Colonel Elliston. But a thief and worse, whose real name, I believe, is Jim Bargrave, though he has many aliases."

"You've baulked me twice!" hissed Bargrave, for it was that clever scoundrel. "Who are you, I should like to know? You are passing yourself off as an undergraduate, but no undergraduate breathing could get the better of me as you have done."

"I will satisfy your curiosity," replied Dare. "I am Stanley Dare, the detective!"

It is difficult to say who was the most surprised at this announcement. Bargrave or the undergrads; excepting, of course, the trio who were "in the know."

"Stanley Dare! You!" cried Bargrave. "What a blind fool I've been! I ought to have guessed! Hang you! If you think—"

He paused abruptly, and stared over the young detective's shoulder. A police constable—the man to whom Dare had been signalling—was approaching quickly.

"So that's your game, is it?" snarled Bargrave.

"Expected you," said Dare coolly. "And, as you see, I am prepared for your visit."

Bargrave glanced wildly to right and left, but he realised that there was no hope of escape. Then a mad fury took possession of him, and snatching a life-preserver from his coat-pocket, he aimed a terrible blow at Dare's head.

But the young detective was fully prepared for the attack, and before anyone could interfere, the life-preserver was flying through the air, and Bargrave had pitched forward on his face, neatly tripped up by Dare, who had methods of his own for dealing with these sudden rushes of an opponent.

Before the fellow could pick himself up the constable had snapped the handcuffs on his wrists, and he was a prisoner.

"You know who he is?" said Dare to the policeman.

"Jim Bargrave, ex-convict, thief, forger, and, speaking generally, as vile a criminal as could be found in England."

"Did he murder Latimer?" asked someone.

"No!" replied Dare; "but he was an accessory, both before and after the act!"

"What a fool I was," snarled Bargrave, "not to have killed you outright when I had you down in that pit!"

Dare shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

"I've heard all that before," he said.

With the assistance of a college porter, Bargrave was marched off to the police-station, and from that moment his career of crime was finished.

Stanley Dare had gone to look for the professor, but, to his astonishment, he was not anywhere to be found in the college. Dr. Golightly had not seen him since breakfast. He had expressed his intention of going to the Post Office to send off a telegram, and said he was coming back immediately, but he had not returned.

However, Dare thought nothing of this at the time; though, when it came to three o'clock in the afternoon, and he was still absent, he began to feel uneasy, for he knew the gang of desperadoes, finding themselves being gradually hemmed in, would be guilty of any atrocity to try and stay the hand of the dreaded young detective who was hunting them down.

And his fears were presently realised, for by the six o'clock post that evening he received an ill-written letter which contained the following startling announcement:

"Professor MacAndrew is in our power. His life is in your hands. If you don't take any further action in the Latimer murder case, he will come to no particular harm; but if you still persist in following it up after this warning, his blood will be upon your head."

This note was signed by the mark of the gang—the cross within the diamond.

Stanley Dare did not doubt for a moment that it was genuine, and he was sorely troubled to know what to do. Where had these villains carried the Professor to? He must still be somewhere in the neighbourhood, that was certain.

He subjected the paper on which the note was written to a closer scrutiny under a powerful lens, and to his joy made a discovery which might be regarded in the nature of a clue.

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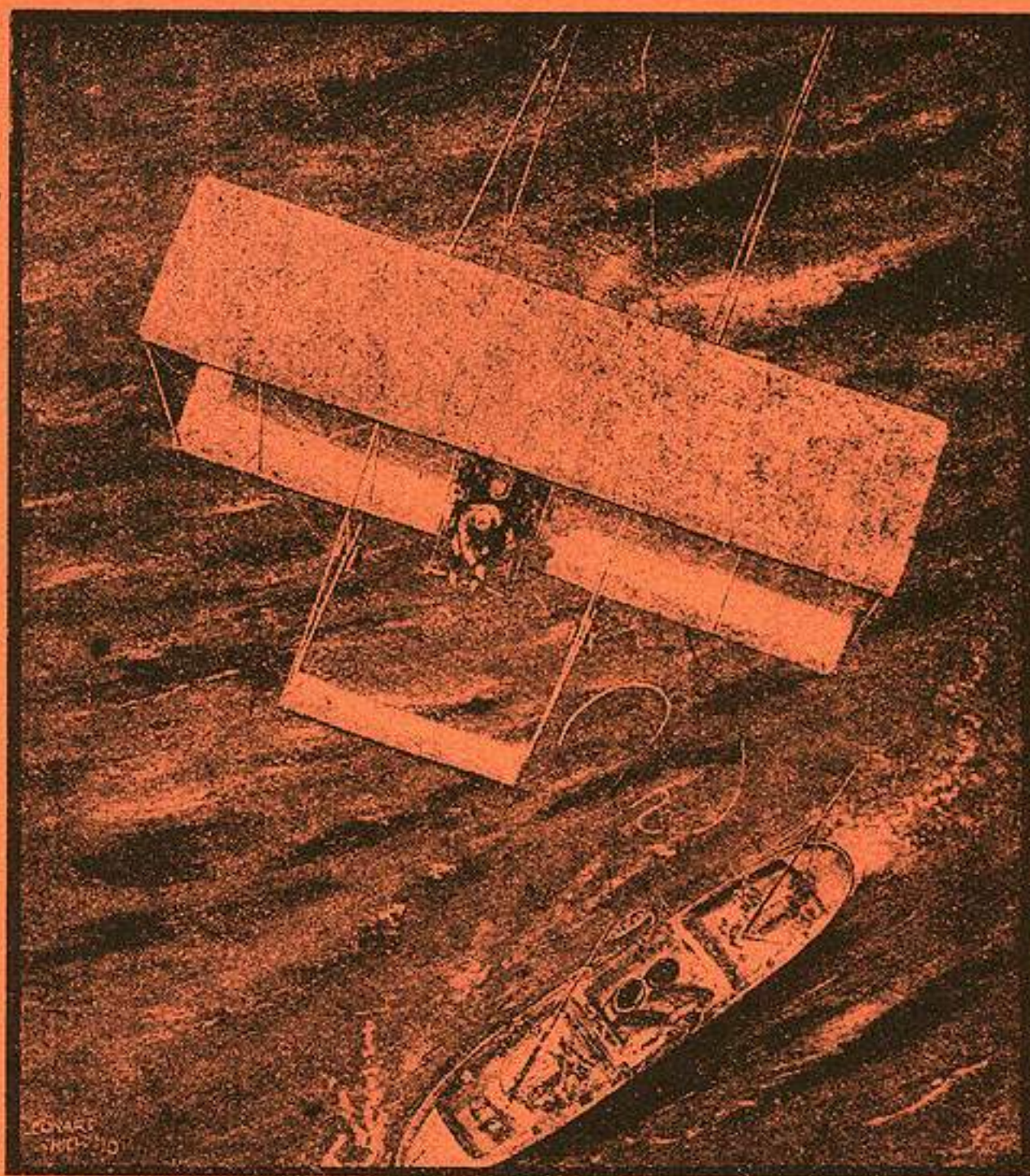
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