

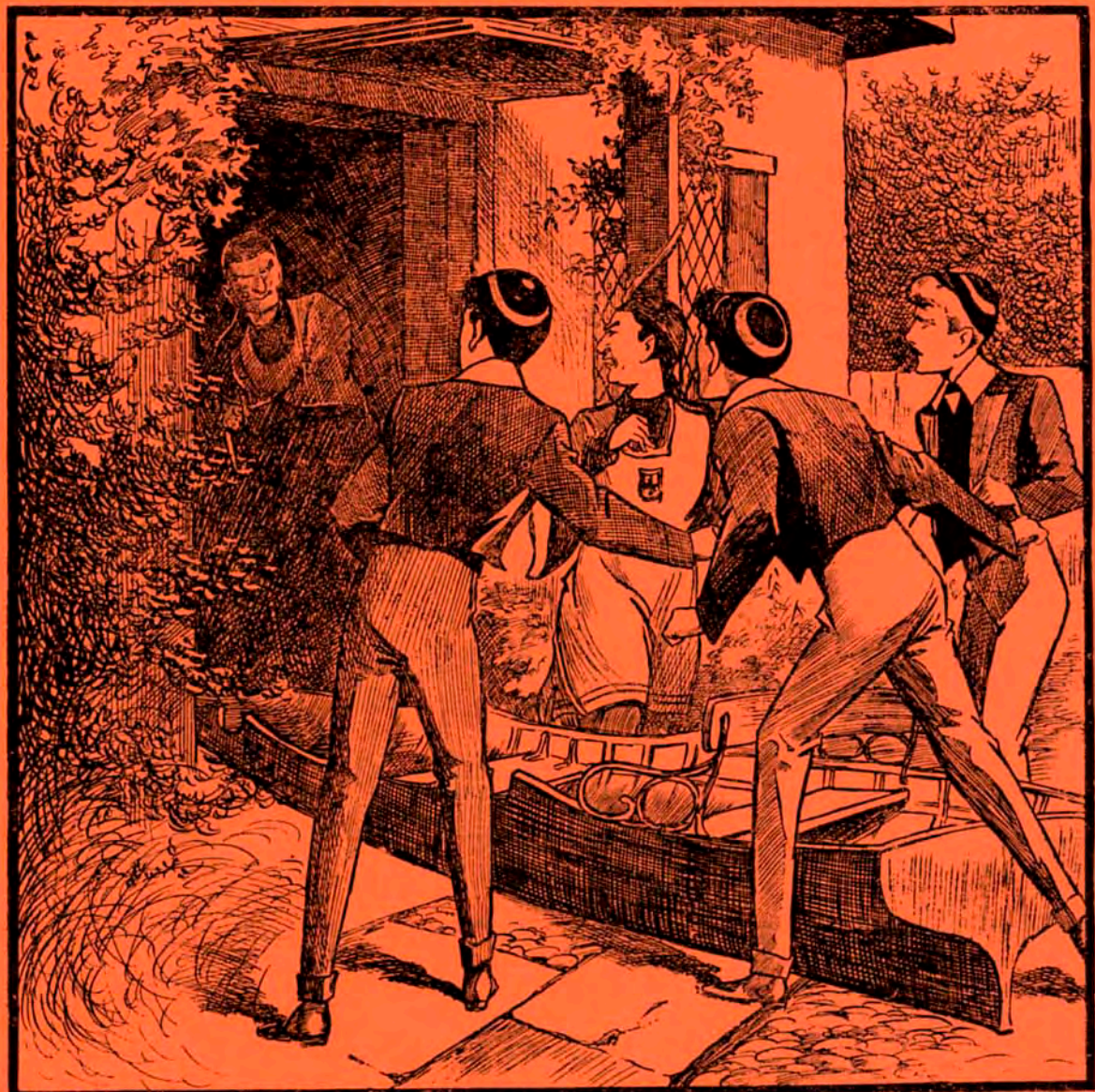
THE MISSING CHINEE & THE BLUE ORCHID

A Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.

Ferrers Lord, Ching-Lung, Gan Waga & Co



No. 318. Vol. 8. March 14th, 1914.



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(A dramatic incident in the Grand, Long, School Tale in this issue.)

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By FRANK RICHARDS.



Loder caught sight of a foot under the table. He stooped, and seized Hop Hi by the ankle, and dragged him out, yelling. "Ow!" roared Hop Hi. "Allee light—me come!" (See Chapter I.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Fag Wanted!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What the dickens——"
Bob Cherry jumped up in alarm.
It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and most of the fellows were on the playing-fields, but Bob Cherry of the Remove was in his study grinding away at lines. Bob was not enjoying himself. He wanted to be on the football-field, but there were two hundred lines of Virgil to be done, and the unfortunate junior had to stay in and do them. Little Wun Lung, the Chinese, was curled up in the arm-chair, watching him through half-closed eyelids as he ground away at the imposition. Wun Lung had stayed in to keep Bob Cherry company.

Bob was grinding wearily through the adventures of the

pious Aeneas, when the study door was suddenly flung open, and a breathless figure darted into the study.

Bob Cherry jumped up so suddenly that a shower of blots scattered from his pen over the paper, reducing the import to a state in which it could not possibly be presented for the inspection of Mr. Queleh, his Form-master.

"You silly ass!" roared Bob Cherry.

Slam!

The door closed violently, and the junior who had darted into the study plunged under the table and crouched there, palpitating.

Bob Cherry glared at his ruined imposition, and then stooped and glared under the table. The figure curled up there was that of little Hop Hi, of the Second Form—Wun Lung's minor.

"You—you fathead!" breathed Bob Cherry, in great wrath. "You've mucked up my impet—do you hear? What are you doing there, you—you Chinese image!"

Hop Hi gasped.

"Me sorry!"

"I'll make you sorer!" snorted Bob Cherry. "That's fifty lines, at least, I've got to do over again! You silly ass! What's the little game?"

"Loder after me!" panted Hop Hi. "Loder come here—you no sayce noting!"

"Oh, blow Loder!" growled Bob Cherry.

There was a sound of heavy footsteps in the passage. Loder, the bully of the Sixth, was evidently on the track of the fugitive. Bob Cherry looked round the study, and picked up a cricket-bat from the corner. Wun Lung jumped out of the armchair, and seized the poker. When Loder of the Sixth paid a visit to a junior's study, it very frequently led to trouble, and the juniors wanted to be ready for Loder.

The door was thrown open, and the Sixth-Former glared into the study.

He seemed surprised at not seeing the Second-Former.

"Did that Chinese rascal bolt in here?" he demanded.

"Find out!" said Bob Cherry politely.

"No come in here," said Wun Lung. Wun Lung had been some time at Greyfriars, and he had learned many things from his English schoolfellows, but he had not yet learned to tell the truth. Bob Cherry had tried very hard to instruct him on that point, even carrying his kindness so far as to lick Wun Lung with a cricket-stump whenever he caught him in a "whopper," but he never could get the little Oriental to understand that it was wrong to tell lies.

Loder glared round the study.

"I believe he came in here!" he growled. "He disappeared somewhere along this passage."

"What do you want him for?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"I want a fag!" growled Loder. "It's silly not that you Remove kids can't be fagged. If I were captain of Greyfriars I'd soon change all that."

"Lucky you're not captain, then, isn't it?" said Bob cheerfully.

Loder scowled, and made a movement towards Bob Cherry, but he caught sight of the cricket-bat, and paused. Certainly Loder was a prefect, and a junior certainly wasn't allowed to hit a prefect with a cricket-bat; but if Loder "went for" him, Bob Cherry was very likely to hit first and think afterwards. And the bully of the Sixth did not want to make close acquaintance with that bat.

"Is that Chinese here?" he demanded.

"He lun on," said Wun Lung calmly. "No come in here. Me hearce him passee the study, Loder."

But at that moment Loder caught sight of a foot under the table. He stooped, and seized Hop Hi by the ankle, and dragged him out yelling.

"Ow!" roared Hop Hi. "Allice light—me come! Me not here! Ow!"

"So you were lying, you young secondreds!" said Loder, playing at the two Removes.

"I wasn't lying," said Bob Cherry angrily. "I didn't say he wasn't here. And look here, you're not going to bully that kid. Let him alone!"

"Let him lonee," said Wun Lung. "You hittee my minor, I hittee you with poker."

"He's going to fag for me," said Loder. "I want somebody to get my tea. Nice state of things, when a prefect has to chase a fag up and down the House. Come along, Hop Hi, and I'll give you such a larruping when I get you into my study that—"

"Me no come!" howled Hop Hi.

"You've been licking him already, you brute!" exclaimed Bob Cherry indignantly. "He wouldn't have bolted just because you wanted to fag him!"

"Mind your own business!" snapped Loder.

"Besides, Tibb of the Third is your fag!"

"The young rascal's gone out. I shall lick him when he comes in!" said Loder. "Now, Hop Hi, are you coming, or shall I yank you along by your pigtail?"

Bob Cherry hesitated. The prefect had a right to fag the Second-Former if he wanted to, and it was no business of Bob Cherry's to interfere with him. But he did not like the idea of abandoning the little Chinese to Loder's tender mercies.

"You can come and fag instead of him, if you like, Cherry!" said the senior, with a sneer.

"The Remove don't fag!" snapped Bob.

Wun Lung dropped the poker.

"Me come!" he said.

"Well, you'd be more use than that little rat," growled Loder. "You can come if you like!"

"Look here, Wun Lung, it's against the rules for the Remove to fag," said Bob Cherry. "You must think of the honour of the Form."

"Lats!" said Wun Lung cheerfully.

"What!"

"Lats! Me faggee for handsome Loder—Hop Hi stayce here."

"If you say rats to me, you blessed pigtailed heathen!"

"Are you coming?" demanded Loder.

"Me come!"

Loder released Hop Hi, who promptly darted across the study, placing the table between him and the bully of the Sixth.

"Come, Wun Lung!" said Loder.

Loder was quite satisfied with the change. The rule that he could not fag the Remove irked him very much, and he broke it whenever he could. And Wun Lung the Chinese was famous for his powers as a cook. In that line even Billy Bunter did not excel him. And Loder was standing a very special feed that afternoon to two or three very special friends.

"Me come!" said Wun Lung, and then he cast a timid glance at Bob. "Handsome Bob Chelly not angry?" he asked.

Bob grunted.

"None of your soft sawder, you heathen!" he growled. "Buzz off, if you like. You can stay here, Hop Hi."

And Wun Lung followed the prefect from the study. As he departed he turned his head, and closed one eye queerly at Bob. Bob Cherry burst into a laugh. He knew that Wun Lung was as full of tricks as a monkey—and that wink told him that Wun Lung intended to jape the bullying prefect in some way.

Loder looked round suspiciously.

"What are you cackling at?" he demanded.

"You, Loder!" said Bob blandly. "I often do!"

Loder scowled and strode away, followed by Wun Lung. Hop Hi grinned, and curled up in the armchair in his major's place. He had full confidence in his major's powers to prove himself a match for the bully of the Sixth.

"Now I've got to do these blessed lines over again!" growled Bob Cherry, and he sat down to his task, plodding through the old, old tale of *Aeneas*, while his thoughts wandered to Harry Wharton & Co. on the football field.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Doomed!

L ODER'S study, in the Sixth-Form passage, presented quite a festive appearance. Loder was in funds, and he was "doing himself" remarkably well on that occasion.

Walker and Carne and Valence of the Sixth were coming to tea, and after tea there was to be a game of bridge—that being one of the favourite amusements of the black sheep of the Sixth. Cards were not supposed to exist within the walls of Greyfriars—but if any of the masters had searched Loder's study, quite a number of packs would have been found, and Loder would have found himself in serious trouble. But the black sheep of Greyfriars was very careful, and he had never been discovered yet.

The table was laid for four, and there was a fragrant odour of cooking. Little Wun Lung was on his knees before the fire, poaching eggs.

Loder looked on with approval.

He had given the little Chinese a licking with a cricket-stump immediately upon his arrival in the study—not that Wun Lung had done anything to deserve it, but on general grounds, as it were. Loder had a firm conviction that the more a fag was licked, the better he was for it; and Loder never failed to carry out his principles in that respect.

Wun Lung had taken the licking with his usual impassive quietness. Lickings did not hurt him very much. He had a true Oriental insensibility to pain. But his almond eyes had

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Harry Wharton & Co. looked in at the groaning seniors. They knew that the stuff administered was some harmless concoction, and they were not alarmed. "What's the little game, Loder?" "Oh!" groaned Loder. "That Chinese beast has poisoned us!" (See Chapter 3.)

gleamed in a way that might have put Loder on his guard if he had observed it. But Loder was thinking about his little celebration, and had no attention to waste on the fag, and he did not care twopence what thoughts might be passing in the mind of the little Oriental.

"All ready," said Wun Lung at last.

"Good!" said Loder, with satisfaction. "And here come the fellows. You can stay here and wait on us, Wun Lung."

"Me doee anything for handsome Loder."

"You'd better, unless you want that cricket-stump round you again!" said Loder grimly. "I'd have given you another whaling if you'd burnt the eggs. Come in, you fellows. It's all ready."

Walker and Carne and Valence came in together. They surveyed the well-spread table with great satisfaction. They had been at footer practice, and they were hungry.

"Chairs, Wun Lung!" growled Loder.

"Allee light!"

Wun Lung placed chairs for the Sixth-Formers. As Carne

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was sitting down the little Chinese pulled the chair back, as if by accident. Carne sat down—on the floor—with a loud concussion.

Bump!

"Yow!" roared Carne.

Wun Lung blinked at him.

"Me solly!" he murmured.

"You—you pigtailed beast! You did that on purpose!" howled Carne, jumping up in a fury.

"Me awf'ly solly! Yaroooooh!"

Carne seized the little Chinese by the pigtail and boxed his ears right and left.

The other seniors looked on, grinning. Loder's friends were all fellows after his own heart, and they grinned with enjoyment as the fag howled and wriggled in Carne's grasp.

Carne did not cease pommelling the little Chinese till he was out of breath. Then he flung the fag, gasping, into the corner of the study. Wun Lung collapsed there, blinking dazedly at the bullies.

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"Serve him right!" said Walker. "Must keep fags in order. I say, this looks ripping, Loder. That omelette is a beauty."

"The little beast can cook," said Loder. "Sit down."

And the four seniors sat down to the feed.

"More toast, Wun Lung!" snapped Loder.

Wun Lung obediently made more toast. His almond eyes were glittering new. Loder & Co. had started on the omelette, which was a very large one, and was certainly beautifully made. There were very few, if any, fags at Greyfriars who could turn out an omelette in the style of a French chef, but Wun Lung could. There was ample for large helpings all round, and the tea-party finished it to the last fragment, and smacked their lips over it.

"Jolly good!" said Walker heartily. "My hat! I think I'll sack young Paget, and have Wun Lung to fag for me."

"These Remove kids won't fag!" growled Loder.

"They will if you tick 'em enough," said Walker. "Wun Lung, you Chinese thief, would you like to fag for me?"

"Me happy do anything for handsome Walker!"

"Well, I'll make you, whether you're happy or not!" said Walker crossly, as his comrades grinned. Walker was anything but handsome, as a matter of fact, and he suspected the little Chinese of poking fun at him. "You cheeky heathen! I've a good mind to give you a hiding now to start with!"

"Handsome Walker—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Well, it was a ripping good omelette," said Valence. "It had a peculiar flavour, too. Never known it before. Awfully good!"

"You'll find the jam-tarts all right too," said Loder. "The heathen made them too."

And the tea-party started on the jam-tarts.

By the time the tarts were finished, however, some of the cheerfulness seemed to have departed from the gathering. Loder was moving uneasily in his seat, as if he felt an inward pain of some sort, and Carne was quite silent. Walker had risen, and was moving uneasily about the study. Valence was pressing his hand upon his waistcoat.

Wun Lung watched them with a peculiar gleam in his slits of eyes.

"I—I say!" said Carne at last. "I—I'm feeling rather queer. Must be the heat of the study. It's rather warm here."

"I was just going to say the same," said Valence, upon whose brow perspiration was gathering. "I—I suppose there was nothing wrong with what we've been eating, Loder? You didn't get any of these things out of tins, I hope?"

"No, I didn't," growled Loder.

"That's what it feels like to me—ptomaine poisoning," muttered Walker. "I—I feel quite ill."

"S-s-s-o do I!" confessed Loder. "It can't be the grub, though. That was all right. I got all the things at Mrs. Mimble's."

"Then what is it?"

"I—I don't know!"

"Ow!" gasped Carne suddenly, jumping up from his chair.

"What's the matter?"

"Ow! A—a—sudden pain—like a k-k-knife! Ow!"

"Yaroooh!" yelled Walker. "I've got it too! Yow-ow! It's like a dagger—like a beastly dagger in my—ow!—tummy!"

"There must have been something in the food!" howled Valence.

"The omelette—it had a taste!" yelled Walker.

"Ow! I feel as if I've been poisoned!" growled Loder. "But it can't have been the food!"

"Yow! What else was it, then, fathad?"

"Grooh-hoo!"

"Oh dear!"

"Yah! Oh! There it is again—like a d-d-dagger!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

There was the sound of a low chuckle. The four seniors swung round towards Wun Lung, a sudden suspicion in their minds. The little Chinese was doubled up with merriment.

"You young villain!" roared Loder, seizing him by the shoulder and shaking him furiously. "Have you been playing some trick with the grub?"

"He, he, he!"

"That's what it is!" gasped Walker. "He's put something in what we've eaten—in the omelette! I thought it had a taste!"

"Oh dear! This is awful!"

"Grooh!"

"Wun Lung, you young villain," howled Loder, shaking the grinning Chinese, "what have you been putting in the grub?"

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"Me poison you!" said Wun Lung calmly.

"What!"

"Me puttee poison in omelette."

Loder released the little Chinese, his nerveless hand dropping from Wun Lung's shoulder as if that shoulder had suddenly become red-hot.

"You—you've done what?" he gasped hoarsely.

"Me puttee poison in omelette because you bully Hep Hi," said Wun Lung, with terrible calmness. "You diee."

"Wha-a-at!"

"You perish in fearful agony in ten minutes," said Wun Lung. "You gloan and ghud your teef, and perish in convulsions."

"Good heavens!"

"You—you murderous young villain!"

"Help!"

"Ow! I'm dying!" groaned Walker, sinking on the sofa. "Loder, you hound, this is all through your beastly bullying. You ought to know better than to bully a wild savage from China. Ow! It's all your fault! You've murdered me!"

"And me!" groaned Carne. "Ow! I feel I'm dying! Send for a doctor! Telephone for somebody! Help—"

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"You perish soon in gleat agony," said Wun Lung, grinning with enjoyment. "No doctee can save you! Velly stlong Chinese poison. He, he, he!"

Loder sank weakly into his seat. Wun Lung, chuckling like a gleeful gnome, darted from the study. The door closed behind him, and the four groaning bullies were left alone to perish miserably—perhaps!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Not Fatal!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came into the School House, flushed and rosy, from footer. Wharton had a package under his arm, which he had purchased at the school shop on his way in. Johnny Bull had another. Bob Cherry came downstairs and met them, with a sheaf of impot paper in his hand.

"Finished?" asked Wharton.

Bob grunted.

"Yes, just done. Should have finished before, only that silly young rascal Hep Hi mucked up my impot. How did the match go?"

"Beaten the Fourth," said Nugent.

"Good egg! I'll join you in the study when I've taken this in to Quelch. Hallo, hallo, hallo! What are you cackling at, you heathen? What rascality have you been up to now?"

Wun Lung came along from the direction of the Sixth Form passage, almost doubled up with mirth. The chums of the Remove stared at him.

"What's the little joke, Wun Lung?" demanded Wharton.

"He, he, he! Velly funnee!"

"He's been fagging for Loder, instead of Hep Hi," Bob Cherry explained. "Have you been playing any tricks on Loder, you heathen?"

"He, he, he, he!"

"You cackling image!" roared Bob Cherry. "What have you been up to?"

"He, he, he! Me faggee for Loder—"

"Yes, I know that—but where does the cackle come in?"

"Me makee omelette—nicee big omelette!" chuckled Wun Lung, his almond eyes glistening with enjoyment. "Me makee him so nicee, dey eattee him all up—every little bit. Dey likee him. Eattee all."

"Well?"

"Me puttee somefin in omelette," chuckled the heathen. "Loder feelee pain in tummee—Walker feelee painee—Carne feelee painee—Valence feelee painee. He, he, he!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've been putting some medicine in their omelette?" grinned Bob Cherry. "Oh, you funny little beggar!"

"Loder feelee painee, he askee watter puttee in, and me tellee. He, he, he!"

"And what was it?"

"Poison—stlong Chinese poison. He, he, he!"

The laughter of the juniors died away. They stared at Wun Lung, aghast. The little Chinese was not like an English boy—he had many peculiar little ways—and though he was usually extremely good-tempered, there was a strain of Oriental ferocity in his nature, as they had seen on more than one occasion. There never was any telling what Wun Lung might or might not do. It was barely possible that he was serious, and that he had really poisoned the bullies of the Sixth. Bob Cherry turned quite pale.

"You've put poison into their omelette, Wun Lung?" he said huskily.

"Me puttee. He, he, he!"
 "But—but—not real poison!" gasped Harry Wharton.
 "Great Scott! Not real!"
 Wun Lung grinned and shook his head.
 "Not real," he confessed. "Nasty stuff—givee baddee poinee in tummee—pass off in an hour. What you tinkee? But me teller Lodee real poison. He scaree to death. He, he, he!"

"Oh, my hat!"
 Wun Lung went chuckling on his way. The chums of the Remove looked at one another.

"Better give Loder a look in," said Wharton slowly. "If the silly ass thinks he has been poisoned, he will raise the whole school over it."

The Famous Five hurried down the Sixth Form passage. As they neared Gerald Loder's study, the sound of deep groans fell upon their ears. The four seniors were evidently in a state of great suffering.

Groan! Groan! Groan!

"Oh, dear!"

"I'm dying!"

"Send for a doctor!"

"Groo-hoo! This awful pain!"

The juniors grinned, and opened the door. Four Sixth-Formers were stretched before their eyes in attitudes of suffering. Walker was rolling on the sofa—Loder was in a chair—Carne was striding to and fro twisted with pain—Valence was on the floor, wriggling. Knowing that the stuff administered by the little Chinese was some harmless concoction, the juniors were not alarmed—indeed, the sight seemed utterly ludicrous to them, and they burst into a shout of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the little game, Loder?"

"Is that a new variety of the Tango, Valence?"

Loder looked at them with haggard, pain-distorted eyes.

"I'm poisoned," he groaned. "I've got frightful pains—like daggers and knives and red-hot pincers. Go for a doctor. Quick!"

"Been too thick on the whisky?" asked Bob Cherry sympathetically. But Loder was too far gone to resent that allusion to one of his little habits.

"Go for a doctor!" he groaned. "That young villain has given us some horrible Chinese poison in an omelette. Ow! Go for a doctor!"

Harry Wharton shook his head gravely.

"No good going for a doctor," he said. "If it's a Chinese poison, an English doctor won't be able to save you. I'm afraid it's all up, Loder."

"Better think about your sins and things," suggested Nugent.

"Or make your will!" said Johnny Bull. "That's a good idea. Can I have your bicycle when you're gone, Loder?"

"I'll have your camera," said Nugent. "Shall I get some impot paper, Loder, and help you make your will?"

"You—you heartless young villains!" gasped Loder. "Can't you see it's serious. We're dying—all dying of poisoning!"

"I—I sha'n't last much longer!" murmured Walker. "I can feel the end coming. I'll try to forgive you, Loder. You caused all this by your bullying."

"Ow-ow-ow-ow!" howled Carne. "I'm dying!"

"Well, die quietly, for goodness' sake!" urged Bob Cherry.

"You don't want the whole county to hear you die, surely!"

"You will make a beautiful corpus, Loder," said Bob.

"That's one comfort. By the way, while there's yet time, would you prefer to be cremated?"

"Ow! Ow! You heartless young fiend!"

"My dear chap, I'm trying to be useful," said Bob. "I shouldn't mind the trouble of lighting a bonfire, and cremating you—alive or dead."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder staggered towards the door.

"I'm going to the Head!" he gasped. "That young scoundrel shall be hanged for this—Ow—ow—yow!"

"What's all this row about?" exclaimed Wingate of the Sixth, putting his head into the doorway. "Is anybody hurt?"

"Loder's dying," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "He's making a lot of fuss about it—doesn't seem to like the idea, somehow. I don't see why—he won't be missed."

"Not in the least!" said Frank Nugent. "Buck up, Loder. A chap can only die once. It will soon be over—and you will be at peace—and so shall we!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's all this silly rot?" said Wingate suspiciously.

"Shut up that row, Loder—you're not dying—"

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"No such luck!" grinned Bob.
 "I'm poisoned!" panted Loder. "Wun Lung put something into an omelette—I've got frightful pains—and he said it was a Chinese poison! Ow!"

"What rot!"

"I tell you, I'm dying!" shrieked Loder.

"Well, your lungs seem pretty strong for a dying person," said Wingate sceptically. "Do you young rascals know anything about this?"

"A little," admitted Bob Cherry. "Loder has been raging Hop Hi, and he made Wun Lung fag for him. Wun Lung put some stuff into the grub—something quite harmless, of course, only causing a little pain in the bread-basket."

"What!" yelled Loder.

"It's all right!" grinned Bob. "It will pass off soon. It's only a little Chinese joke."

Valence sat up on the floor suddenly.

"I—I feel better!" he murmured. "It—it's passing off."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I feel better, too!" gasped Walker. "Oh, that Chinese villain! It was only a rotten joke after all! Oh!"

"I—I—I'll slaughter him!" yelled Loder, greatly relieved to find that he was not dying, but greatly enraged at the same time. "I'll scalp him! I'll smash him—"

"No, you won't!" said Wingate, laughing. "You shouldn't have fagged him—and you shouldn't have been idiot enough to believe that he had really poisoned you. Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate strode out of the study, laughing, and the Famous Five followed him, yelling with merriment. The door closed upon Loder & Co. They were all sitting up now, and looking extremely sheepish.

"Only a rotten jape!" muttered Walker. "We—we ought to have guessed it! Of course, even that Chinese savage wouldn't have poisoned us."

"It felt like it!" growled Loder.

"My pain's nearly gone, now I come to think of it," said Valence, getting upon his feet. "We've been spoofed. I'll smash that heathen when I get a chance!"

"If this is what you call a giddy tea-party, Loder, you needn't ask me to any more," growled Walker; and he stamped out of the study and slammed the door after him.

"Just what I say!" snorted Carne. "I'm fed up with you and your rotten omelettes, Loder!"

And there was another slam.

"You ought to have had more sense than to fag that heathen beast, or to take it in that he's put poison in the omelette, you thundering ass, Loder!" said Valence.

And the door slammed for the third time.

Gerald Loder was left alone—and his feelings—especially towards Wun Lung of the Remove—may be better imagined than described.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Night Alarm!

"BETTER look out for Loder!"

Bob Cherry uttered that warning, in No. 13 Study, at tea-time. He addressed Wun Lung. All the Famous Five were in No. 13 to tea—with Mark Linley and Wun Lung—quite a party of them. Wun Lung had done more cooking—but this time he had not introduced any weird compounds into the dishes. Though, as a matter of fact, some of the juniors were a little suspicious. The little Chinese had a peculiar sense of humour, and he sometimes played his queer tricks on friends as well as foes.

"Loder was simply raging when we left him, kid," remarked Nugent. "You will be scalped as soon as he gets a chance. If you don't want to lose your pigtail—"

"No loose pigtail," said Wun Lung, running his yellow hand over that adornment. "Me looker out for Lodee. What you tinkee?"

"And Hop Hi, too," remarked Harry Wharton.

"Me looker after my minor."

A grim look came over Wun Lung's face, and Bob Cherry fixed his eyes on him.

"No more of your tricks, Wun Lung," he exclaimed. "You're not allowed to administer doses of stuff to prefects. You know. You might have made them ill."

"Me makee them illee if lickee Hop Hi," said Wun Lung.

"Me looker after Hop Hi. Fader in China sendee Hop Hi

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NOTE.
The only other paper containing a Complete School Tale by Frank Richards is "CHUCKLES," 4d. Our New Saturday Companion Paper.

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here for me to looker after. Me makee Loder sickce of lifee if he lickee Hop Hi. What you tinkee?"

"But draw it mild, you know," said Johnny Bull. "Loder's a prefect, and prefects are troublesome animals."

Wun Lung grinned, and said no more.

Loder, somewhat to the surprise of the Removites, did not seek Wun Lung, but they had no doubt that the bully of the Sixth was simply biding his time. It was Loder's business to see lights out for the Remove that night, and the Co. "opined" that he was deferring his vengeance till then, when he would be able to deal with Wun Lung without interference. The little Chinese was looking somewhat anxious as he went up to bed with the Remove at half-past nine.

Loder came in to see lights out, and the juniors expected the trouble to begin; but it did not. Loder gave Wun Lung a dark look, but did not speak to him. He seemed to have forgotten the unpleasant happenings at his little feed in the study.

The juniors turned in, and the prefect put out the lights, and retired from the dormitory with hardly a word.

"Loder's going to take it lying down," remarked Bolsover major. All the Remove had heard the story of Loder's feed by this time, and chuckled over it.

"Me no tinkee," said Wun Lung.

"What do you think he's going to do, then?"

"Lickee Hop Hi, pelaps," said Wun Lung. "But me lookce out."

"Well, you can't stop him, if he goes to the Second Form dorm.," said Bolsover major.

"Me stoppee."

"How are you going to stop him, you silly heathen?"

"Me knowee."

Wun Lung did not say anything further, and one by one the Removites dropped off to sleep. But Bob Cherry did not sleep. He was feeling a little uneasy about Wun Lung, and what the little Chinese might intend to do, and he remained awake for some time, with an eye on Wun Lung's bed, to see whether the Celestial rose. His suspicions were not without foundation. When the dormitory had been silent for a little while, the Chinese sat up in bed, and blinked round through his keen almond eyes.

Then he slipped out of bed, and hurried on his clothes. Bob Cherry sat up.

"You getting up, Wun Lung?"

No reply.

"Wun Lung! Where are you going?"

There was no answer, but there was a sound of scuffling feet, and then a gently closing door. Wun Lung had left the dormitory.

Bob Cherry jumped out of bed.

He shook Wharton by the shoulder, and the captain of the Remove opened his eyes, and blinked at him in the darkness.

"Wharrer marrer?" he murmured sleepily.

"That blessed Chinese has scooted out of the dorm.," whispered Bob. "I'm afraid the little beggar is up to some mischief."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Somebody ought to keep an eye on him," said Bob.

"There's no telling what he may do, especially if Loder has been licking Hop Hi again."

Wharton grunted, and turned out of bed.

"All right," he said. "Confound him! We'll go after him, and yank him back by his pigtail. The young ass!"

The two juniors half-dressed, and hurried from the dormitory. The lights were out in the passage, and on the stairs all was dark. The Sixth Form passage was in darkness, too; but lights gleamed under one or two of the doors. Not all of the Sixth were early to bed. There was no sign of Wun Lung. The juniors wondered whether he had gone in the direction of Loder's study.

"Goodness knows what the young duffer may be up to!" Bob whispered. "Let's have a look at Loder's study, anyway."

"If we get spotted in the passage——"

"Oh, let's risk it!"

"All right, but I'll wallop that young ass when we catch him!" growled Wharton.

They tip-toed along the Sixth Form passage to Loder's door. Light gleamed under Wingate's door as they passed it. The captain of Greyfriars was still up. But there was no glimmer of light from Gerald Loder's study.

"He's gone to bed," said Harry, in a whisper.

"Somebody's moving!" muttered Bob.

They listened. Loder's study was in darkness, and the pre-

fect, therefore, should have been in bed. He could not be supposed to be sitting up in the dark. But there was a sound of movement in the room. Either Loder was not in bed, or somebody else had entered the room after he had retired. Was it Wun Lung, and if so, for what purpose was he there?

They listened anxiously.

There was a sound of a window closing softly.

"What the dooce does that mean?" Bob Cherry muttered. "Somebody's got out of the window. Wun Lung, do you think?"

"More likely Loder breaking bounds!" growled Harry.

"One of his giddy expeditions to the Cross Keys, perhaps. We know his little games."

"Then we can look in. He can't spot us if he's gone out."

"All right, we'll chance it."

Harry Wharton opened the door softly. The study was in darkness, only a faint glimmer of starlight coming from the window. The glimmer fell across the bed in the alcove, and showed the form of a sleeper there.

The two juniors stood hesitating and anxious.

If Loder was asleep in bed, who had got out of the window? Had Wun Lung been there? What had the reckless young rascal been doing?

Wharton felt his heart beating fast with nervous dread. The little Oriental was not like the other fellows. There was no telling what he might do. With a vague feeling that the little Chinese might have done some harm to the sleeping prefect, Wharton approached the bed on tiptoe, and listened. If Loder was sleeping peacefully, there could have been no damage done. But Wharton could hear no sound of breathing. He approached more closely, and leaned over the bed.

Not the slightest motion from the recumbent form—not the faintest sound of breathing.

Wharton felt a thrill of strange horror.

What was the matter with Loder?

The junior was so close to the still form that he could have heard the slightest sound of respiration, but there was no sound.

The stillness was unbroken.

Wharton's own breath came thick and fast. His heart was thumping like a hammer now. He felt a grip on his arm. Bob Cherry's white face looked at him in the gloom. Bob, too, had observed the grim and terrible silence of the figure in the bed.

Minutes passed. They stood still, with thumping hearts, in dread of the discovery they might be about to make. What had the Chinese done?

"He—he's not breathing!" Bob muttered at last, in a husky voice. "Harry, what—what can have happened?"

"Goodness knows!" muttered Wharton.

"We must see."

"Yes."

Bob softly closed the study door. Wharton struck a match, and they bent over the bed, to look at Loder in the light.

Then a gasp of relief escaped both of them.

"Oh, the rotter!"

"The spoofer!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry's Little Joke!

L ODER was not there!

The figure in the bed was composed of bolster, pillows, and a folded overcoat, cunningly arranged to keep up the appearance of a sleeper.

The juniors understood at once.

Gerald Loder, the black sheep of the Sixth, had gone out on one of his excursions to some disreputable haunt or other, and he had fixed up that dummy in his bed in case, by chance, his study should be entered. Probably he took the same precaution every time he left his room at night on his disreputable expeditions.

The match went out.

"The spoofing cad!" muttered Wharton. "He's not here. It was Loder we heard get out of the window. Wun Lung's not been here at all."

Bob Cherry drew a deep breath.

"Good!" he said. "I was afraid——"

"So was I. That Chinese is such a queer little beggar. I dare say he's only gone to the Second Form dorm to see if Hop Hi is all right. Let's get out."

"Hold on!" murmured Bob Cherry, with a glimmer in his eyes. "Look here, this is a rotten trick for Loder to play."

"Well, that's his business."

"It's ours, too. Like his cheek to disgrace the school we belong to, isn't it?"

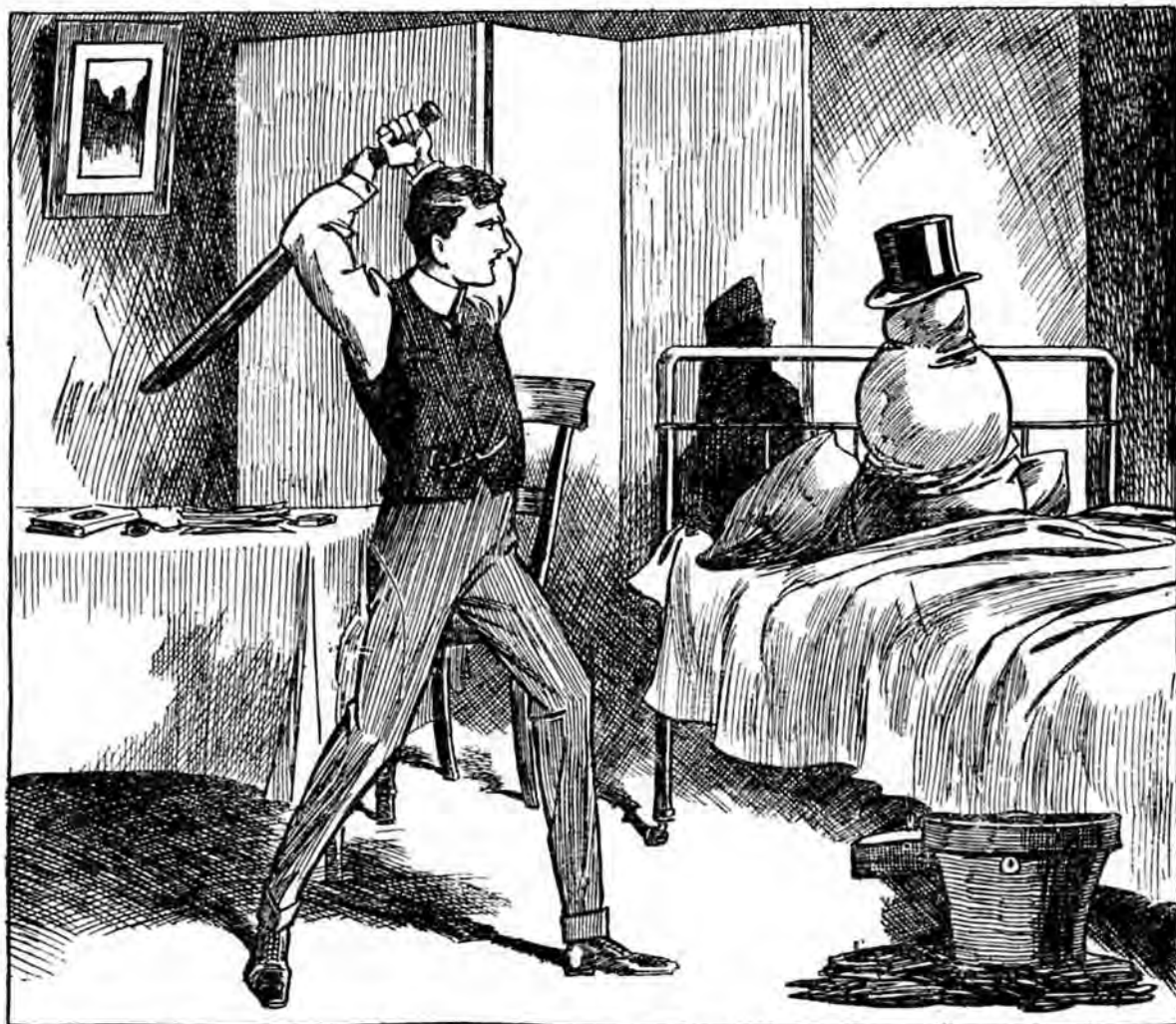
"What are you driving at, ass?"

"Besides," went on Bob, "Loder will be found out some day, and sacked. It's sure to come sooner or later."

ANSWERS

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The figure in the bed did not move as Loder came closer, with the bat in his hand. With a sudden sweep, he brought it down with all his force. Crunch! The silk hat crumpled up, but there was no cry from the figure! (See Chapter 6.)

"The sooner the better!" growled Wharton.
"So I think it's up to us to give him a little lesson on the subject of breaking bounds at night," said Bob, with a chuckle. "Suppose we make a few alterations in this giddy dummy? It will be a pleasant surprise for Loder when he comes in."

Wharton grinned.
"Good egg!"

The starlight from the window was sufficient for the juniors. They turned down the bedclothes, and removed the dummy Loder had so carefully arranged in the bed.

Bob Cherry explained his scheme in whispers, broken by chuckles. Wharton chuckled too, and they set to work with deft fingers. The folded coat in the bed was unfolded, and stuffed with the bolster, and buttoned up. Bob opened the chest of drawers and extracted some of Loder's property with a reckless hand. A suit of pyjamas was folded up, and a flannel shirt wrapped round them, and then fixed into the collar of the coat, to make a head for the dummy figure. The tongs and poker from the grate were slipped inside the buttoned coat, to make the figure stiff, and it was placed in a sitting posture in the bed. Folded sheets of notepaper were inserted into the sleeves, to give the appearance of cuffs, and they caught the glimmer of the starlight and showed up well.

In the gloom, the sitting figure looked exactly like that of a man sitting up in bed. But Bob was not finished yet.

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He opened Loder's hat-box and extracted the prefect's Sunday topper, which he placed on the dummy's head.

The effect made the juniors chuckle gleefully.

Then, with his finger dipped in ink, Bob daubed features upon the tightly-drawn white flannel shirt that formed the face.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They suppressed their merriment with difficulty, remembering that Wingate was in the next study.

"Rather a surprise for Loder, when he comes in and finds his dummy sitting up in bed, with his hat on!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"It would serve him right to fasten the window inside; but we won't do that. He'll have rather a shock, anyway."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is where we slide," murmured Bob.

And they slid.

Wharton closed the study door noiselessly. Wingate's light was out when they passed his door again. The Greyfriars captain had gone to bed. The juniors stole cautiously away up the stairs.

"Better look for Wun Lung in the Second Form dorm," Bob Cherry muttered. "He's bound to be there."

"Good!"

They made their way to the Second Form dormitory. Close

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by the door, in the darkness of the passage, they caught the glimmer of two shining eyes.

"Wun Lung!" muttered Harry.

"Allee light."

"What are you doing here, you young duffer?"

"Me watchee."

Wharton understood. He knew Loder of old. More than once that prefect, when he had a score to pay off against the juniors, had pretended to hear a disturbance in the dormitory, and gone there with a cane. He had played that little trick on the Remove more than once, and Wun Lung suspected him of intending to play it on Hop Hi.

"Well, you ass," growled Bob Cherry, "suppose Loder came here, what could you do?"

"Me stoppee him."

"How could you stop a chap Loder's size, you silly chump?"

"Me stickee wiz daggee."

"What!" gasped Bob.

Wun Lung produced a queer-looking Oriental dagger from the loose folds of his garments. The two juniors stared at him blankly.

"You—you dangerous lunatic! What are you doing with that?" gasped Wharton.

"Me watchee for Lodee. If he lickee my minor me gose for him," said Wun Lung calmly. "Me scare him to death. What you tinkee?"

"You—you ass! You'd be expelled from the school if you went for a prefect with a knife, whether you hurt him or not."

"No caree!"

"Come back, you young chump," said Bob, grasping the little Celestial by the shoulder, "and give me that blessed sticker! You'll be doing some damage with it."

"No comee," said Wun Lung. "Me watchee for Lodee."

"Loder's not coming," said Bob. "He's gone out—one of his giddy excursions. We've just been to his study."

"Goncee outee!" said Wun Lung doubtfully.

"Yes, ass! And he'll come home with the milk in the morning, most likely. Hop Hi is all right for to-night."

"Honour blight?"

"Yes; honour bright, you fathead! Come along!"

Wun Lung submitted to be led away back to the Remove dormitory. Although he was a greater Ananias even than Billy Bunter himself, he knew that Bob's word was to be relied upon. When Bob said a thing was so, it was so. The three juniors tiptoed back to the Remove dormitory.

"Now, give me that sticker before you go to bed," said Bob when they were in the dormitory again.

"What stickee?"

"That blessed sticker you have in your bags."

"No savvy."

"Look here! You've got it about you somewhere! You showed it to me in the passage!" said Bob. "Hand it over at once!"

"No savvy."

Bob Cherry breathed hard. Wun Lung "savvied" well enough; but on all occasions when he did not choose to understand, he blandly professed a complete ignorance of English.

"I tell you you've got to hand it over!" said Bob angrily.

"No savvy."

"Do you want me to thump you?"

"No savvy."

"Collar him!" muttered Bob savagely. "We've got to take that sticker away from him, or he'll be getting himself into trouble with it sooner or later. It's too jolly dangerous for him to have about him."

"What-ho!" said Harry.

And he grasped the little Chinese, and Bob ran his hands through Wun Lung's loose attire in search of the Oriental dagger. But he could not find it. He uttered an angry exclamation. Wun Lung, among his other gifts, had a wonderful skill in conjuring and sleight-of-hand. It was evident that he had disposed of the dagger somewhere immediately on entering the dormitory.

"Where is that sticker, you young villain?" breathed Bob.

"No savvy."

"Will you give it to me?"

"No savvy."

Wharton burst into a chuckle.

"It's no go, Bob. He won't tell you where it is. No good getting yards and yards of lies out of him. Let's turn in."

"I'll lick him in the morning if he doesn't hand it over!" growled Bob. "You understand that, you pigtailed heathen?"

"No savvy."

Bob Cherry came very near administering the licking then.

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and there; but he restrained himself, and turned into bed. Wun Lung curled up in bed, grinning. In a few minutes more the juniors were fast asleep.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Loder!

GERALD LODER dropped from the school wall into the road.

He stood in silence for a few moments, looking along the road, which glimmered white in the starlight, save where the trees cast heavy shadows.

The road was deserted at that late hour. Satisfied that there was no one to observe him, the black sheep of Greyfriars crossed the road quickly, and strode along under the shadows of the trees in the direction of Friardale.

The prefect was not, however, bound upon one of his nocturnal excursions to the Cross Keys. The card-party in the little parlour of that delectable establishment did not expect his company that evening. Loder halted by the stile in the lane, keeping under the shadows of the trees. A man who was sitting on the stile, wrapped up in an overcoat and smoking a pipe, slipped down and came towards him.

"Here you are, Master Loder," he said, taking the pipe from his mouth.

"Here I am, Jobling," said Loder. "Now, what is it? You said in your letter that you wanted to see me specially."

"Very special, Master Loder."

"Well, what is it? Some good tip, I hope," said Loder. "I've had bad luck lately. If you could put me on to a good thing—"

"It ain't that this time," said Mr. Jobling.

"You don't mean to say that you're going to worry me for the few quids due to you?" growled Loder. "You know that's all right."

"I'm goin' to offer you a chance of wipin' that out, Master Loder, without any cost to yourself," said Mr. Jobling. "You owe me four quid."

"I know I do. It was understood that it was to stand over for a bit."

"There's a party I'm acquainted with," went on Mr. Jobling calmly. "He wants something done as you can do for him. He's willing to pay fair and square for it."

"I don't quite understand."

"There's a Chinese kid in your school," said the book-maker.

Loder started.

"There are two," he said. "What about them? What on earth do they matter to you, Jobling?"

"Nothin' at all," said Mr. Jobling. "But they matter to the party I'm speaking of. There is a Chinese kid named Hop Hi?"

"Yes; he's the younger brother of the other little beast!" growled Loder.

"Ho!" said Mr. Jobling, quick to understand the Greyfriars fellow's tone. "You don't like them—what?"

"I'd like to wring their necks, the pair of them!" snarled Loder.

"All the better," said Mr. Jobling, with satisfaction.

"That makes it easier."

"I don't understand you. What do you want me to do?"

"That there kid, Hop Hi, the party I'm speaking of wants to see him," explained Mr. Jobling.

"Well, he can come to the school and see him, I suppose," said Loder, in wonder.

Mr. Jobling chuckled.

"Not exactly. You see, the party is a Chinaman."

"Well?"

"From wot he's let on to me he's had trouble with the father of that kid over in Hong Kong," said Mr. Jobling. "I don't know the rights of it, and I don't want to, neither. But I know he's offered me ten quid to help him get at Hop Hi."

Loder started again.

"What does he want to do to the kid?" he muttered. "I'm not going to help in anything shady, I can tell you that."

"Tain't any great harm, that I can see," said Mr. Jobling, with a chuckle. "Them Chinese kids wear pigtails, don't they?"

"Yes."

"Well, I can't see any 'arm in 'aving a pigtail cut off, can you?"

"No; what do you mean?"

"But it appears that it's considered a disgrace in China," said Mr. Jobling. "And the party I represent, he wants to get at young Hop Hi, and cut his pigtail off. That's his scheme of revenge on the old man in China. See?"

Loder burst into a laugh.

"The silly idiot!" he exclaimed.
Mr. Jobling laughed, too.

"That's wot I thought," he said. "Now, I've had some dealings with this man Foo-Chung, and he knows some of my business, knows that I know some of the young gentlemen at Greyfriars, I mean. So he reckoned I could help him to get his paws on the Chinese kid, and he's making it ten quid."

"That's a lot of money!" said Loder.

"He's got lots of dibs," said Mr. Jobling. "Made it opium smuggling in China, I reckon. But that ain't any business of mine. I can't see that it's any 'arm to cut off a Chinese kid's pigtail, can you?"

"Not that I can see," grinned Loder.

"That's all he wants, and it seems to me an easy way of earning ten quid," said the bookmaker. "If you help I'll stand you half."

Loder's eyes glistened.

"I've never had a chance of making a five-pound note quite so easily as that," he said. "I don't care twopence whether the silly kid's pigtail is cut off or not. It can't do any harm. I suppose the idiotic thing will grow again, won't it?"

"I s'pose so," assented Mr. Jobling.

"And if it doesn't it doesn't matter to me," said Loder. "I'd take a lot of trouble to make those Chinese rotters squirm. One of them played a rotten trick on me to-day."

"Then you can manage it?"

"What do you want me to do?" asked Loder, in turn.

"Get the kid out of the school somewhere where Foo-Chung can get at him," explained Mr. Jobling. "Mind, the kid's not going to be hurt. It's only his pigtail that's goin' to be cut off."

"You're sure of that?" asked Loder, with a momentary feeling of uneasiness. "Those Chinese are queer beggars, you know."

"Quite sure," said Mr. Jobling. "You don't think I'd 'ave a 'and in the business if it wasn't all right, do you? I ain't looking out for a chance of gettin' into trouble."

"No, I suppose not," assented Loder, reassured.

"You see, them heathens look at things different to what we do," said Mr. Jobling. "It seems that it's a deadly injury to chop off a pigtail in China; and if it's any satisfaction I don't see why Foo-Chung shouldn't have it, do you?"

"Not if he pays for it."

"Exactly. Now, you manage to send the kid out to-morrow," said Mr. Jobling. "S'pose you send him to Courtfield to fetch something or other, or cash a postal-order or something. Tell him to hurry, and take the short cut."

"Then he'll have to go through the wood," said Loder.

"Yes; and my party will be waitin' for him there, and off goes his pigtail, and he comes home bald!" chuckled Mr. Jobling.

Loder chuckled, too. He was by no means averse to taking a hand in that little scheme. The proposal came just at the moment when the perfect was feeling very anxious to make Wun Lung and his minor suffer for their sins.

"I'll do it," he said.

"Say he gets to the short cut about six," suggested Mr. Jobling. "I'll let my party know the arrangement."

"Right-ho!"

"And it means a lipun' note, which will come in 'andy after your bad luck, Master Loder."

"Good enough!"

"Then I can depend on you, Master Loder?"

"Yes, rather."

"That's about all, I reckon. Good-night, Master Loder!"

"Good-night, Jobling!"

And they parted. Loder strode back in the direction of Greyfriars, and Mr. Jobling looked after him with a very peculiar expression on his face.

But Loder did not see that. He strode quickly back to the school, feeling very satisfied in his mind. His "dead certs" had of late been extremely uncertain, with the result that Loder was short of cash and in debt. The five-pound note offered for the service required of him would, as the bookmaker said, come in very handy.

Loder clambered over the school wall, and dropped into the Close. He scuttled across the Close to the School House, keeping in the shadow of the elms, though there was little danger of being seen. At that hour all the lights were out in the great building of Greyfriars.

The Sixth-Former stopped under his study window, and clambered up the ivy. The window was unfastened, just as he had left it, and he pushed it up silently, and leaped into the room.

He closed the window and undressed quickly. He did not venture to strike a light. A light in his study at that hour would have been too risky. But Loder was not unaccustomed to going to bed in the dark.

Half-dressed, he stepped towards the bed for his pyjamas. Then he started back with a sudden terrified exclamation.

For a moment he stood rooted to the floor.

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He had left a dummy in the bed, horizontal. Now the dummy was sitting up, with a silk hat on its head.

Loder gazed at it open-mouthed.

For a moment he wondered dizzily whether he had suddenly gone mad.

In the gloom the white face and the silk hat glimmered at him. He pulled himself together with an effort. It was evidently impossible that a dummy could sit up of its own accord and put a silk hat on. Somebody was in his bed!

"Who—who are you?" gasped Loder.

With a vague thought of burglars in his mind, he made a jump towards the grate for the poker. The poker was not there. Loder scuttled round the table, in fear that the figure in the bed might spring upon him. It did not spring, however, and he had time to grab a cricket-bat out of the study cupboard. He felt safer with the bat in his hands, and he approached the bed, his eyes glittering.

"Who are you?" he repeated savagely. "What are you doing in my bed?"

No reply.

The white face glimmered at him under the silk hat, that was all. Who was the man? Had he come into the school to rob it, and fallen asleep on Loder's bed? That seemed the only possible explanation. But it hardly suited Loder to give the alarm. He would have to explain how it came about that he was out of his study when the burglar got there.

"Look here!" said Loder, in a suppressed voice. "I give you one minute to clear out. You can go free, if you go at once. Do you hear?"

Silence!

"My hat! He's asleep!" muttered Loder. "Drunk, perhaps. The blighter may have found my whisky. What the dooce am I going to do?"

A cruel glitter came into his eyes. He came nearer the bed, the bat grasped in both hands by the cane handle. He raised it in the air. One heavy blow before the intruder was on his guard would stun him, and then he could be pitched out. There would be an alarm to follow, of course, but it would not take Loder many moments to get into his pyjamas, and then he could make out that he had been awakened from slumber by the arrival of the thief in the night.

The figure did not move. Loder came closer, the bat in the air. With a sudden sweep he brought it down with all his force on the hatted head.

Crunch!

The silk hat crumpled up like a concertina. But there came no cry from the figure. The still form collapsed under the doughty blow, that was all.

Loder panted.

The man was evidently stunned, as he had intended. Loder dropped the bat, sprang forward, and seized the form to drag it off the bed.

Then he gave a yell, forgetting caution in his surprise and rage.

The still form came to pieces as he dragged it away. The head came off and unfolded, and his pyjamas dropped out of the folded flannel shirt. Panting with rage, Loder struck a match at last, and surveyed the figure. His hat-box, with the lid open, caught his eye. It was his own Sunday topper that lay a wreck on the bed, smashed out of all semblance to a hat by the crashing blow he had dealt.

Loder flung the match into the grate with a curse.

He understood at last. Someone—he thought he could guess whom—had discovered that he was absent, discovered the dummy, and made that little alteration as a surprise to him. Loder picked up the ruined topper, and tried to flatten it out. His fingers came through it. The hat would never be a hat again. Loder's night excursion had cost him a guinea for a new topper.

Loder's feelings, as he turned in, were too deep for words.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Kidnapped!

NUGENT MINOR, of the Second Form, came along the Remove passage, and looked into No. 13 Study. Nugent minor did not look amiable. Lessons were over, on the day following Loder's nocturnal adventure. Dicky Nugent wanted to be on the footer-field with Gatty and Myers of his Form; but Loder had spotted him in the passage and called "Fag." If he had been out of sight of the prefect, Dicky would have turned a deaf ear to the call. As it was, he had no choice about obeying it.

"I want somebody to go to Courtfield for me," Loder said.

"I'm going to play footer!" growled Dicky.

At another time Loder would probably have cuffed him for

that reply, but this time the cuff was not forthcoming. Loder seemed unusually good-tempered.

"Well, find somebody else," he said. "That little Chinese rascal will do. Find Hop Hi, and send him to my study!"

"Like a bird!" said Dicky joyfully.

And he started to look for Hop Hi. But the little Celestial was not easily found. The Close and the gym. were drawn blank; the Form-room was empty; the tuckshop was visited in vain. Dicky Nugent made his way at last to No. 13 Study, the quarters of Wun Lung, hoping to find Hop Hi with his major.

He was successful at last.

The two little Celestials were there, engaged in eating some queer-smelling compound they had cooked over the study fire, and talking in a weird language of which Nugent minor did not understand a syllable.

"Oh, here you are!" growled Dicky.

"Whatee wantee?" asked Wun Lung.

"Loder wants Hop Hi in his study."

Hop Hi looked alarmed at once.

"No goee!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, it's all right!" said Dicky. "He only wants you to go to Courtfield for him. He's not in a wax this time!"

"Allee light," said Hop Hi, much relieved. "Me goee!"

"You'd better!" grinned Dicky.

And he hurried away to join his chums on the foot-ground, dismissing Hop Hi and Loder from his mind.

Hop Hi made his way a little uneasily to Loder's study. He was doubtful about his reception, as it was quite possible that Loder intended to make him smart for the trick his major had played the day before.

But he was relieved as soon as he entered the study. Loder was in a good humour, and he nodded kindly to the little Chinese.

"Hallo! Here you are!" he exclaimed.

"Me comee at oncee," murmured Hop Hi. "Me always gladdee comee to do anyting for handsome Lodee!"

"Yes—I don't think," assented Loder. "I want somebody to go to Courtfield for me, and to hurry up. I want a postal-order."

"Me goee at oncee. Goee to Fliardale—more nearce!"

"No; you're to go to Courtfield," said Loder. "I've got a postal-order payable at Courtfield. You'll have to cash it for me, and then get me a postal-order for five shillings. Understand?"

"Me savvy."

"Here's the postal order," said Loder, taking one out of his pocket. "I've filled it in. Don't lose it!"

"No losee."

"Get there and back as quick as you can. I want to catch the post after you come back. You know the short cut?"

"Me knowee."

"Then buzz off!"

"Allee light."

And Hop Hi, greatly relieved that he was not licked, hurried out of the study, and left the School House. Loder remained with a grin on his face.

"I fancy that will make the young beggars sit up, when the imp comes back with his pigtail cut off!" he murmured. "Blessed if I know what they value a silly pigtail for, but it seems that they do!"

And Loder chuckled, and lighted a cigarette.

Hop Hi crossed the Close, and hurried down the road towards Courtfield. By taking the short cut, nearly a mile was saved on the way, and Hop Hi knew the way well. He jumped over the stile giving admittance to the footpath through the wood, and went along at a trot.

He did not intend to give Loder an excuse for licking him if he could help it. He kept on the trot through the shadowy wood.

The dusk was already falling in the wood, and the footpath was lonely. But it did not occur to Wun Lung's minor that there might be any danger.

He was in the heart of the wood, when there was a sudden rustle in the thickets, and a man leaped out into the path.

He leaped into the path before the junior, and Hop Hi halted.

His little almond eyes scanned the man's face as he backed away. The stranger's evident intention was to stop him.

The man's yellow face and Mongolian features showed that he was a Chinaman; but he wore no pigtail, and he was dressed in ordinary clothes.

"Whatee wantee?" demanded Hop Hi, as the man came striding towards him.

The stranger did not reply, but he grasped the little Celestial in his powerful hands. Hop Hi struggled violently, in great alarm.

"Lettee go!" he shrieked. "Helpee! Helpee!"

The ruffian grinned, and jerked a cloth from his pocket, and pressed it over the face of the little Chinese.

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Hop Hi's struggles ceased.

There was a soft, sickly smell from the cloth; it was impregnated with chloroform.

In a few moments the little Chinese lay helpless, silent, insensible in the grasp of the ruffian.

The Chinaman raised him in his arms, and, after a quick look round, bore him into the wood.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Disappearance!

"YOU sceenee my minor?"

Wun Lung was asking that question of everybody in the school.

It was past locking-up, and Gosling had closed the school gates; and Wun Lung, who had been waiting there for Hop Hi, came in looking worried.

"You no sceenee my minor, Bob Chelly?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Your minor in trouble again?" asked Bob. "What's the matter with him now?"

"No savvy. Me tinkee he not come in," said Wun Lung. "Lodee sendee him to Courtfield, and me tinkee he not come backee."

"Then he'll get lines for missing call-over," said Bob.

"Velly stlange he not comee backee," murmured Wun Lung.

"Oh, he'll turn up all right!" said Bob. "You don't think anything's happened to him, do you?"

"No knowee."

Wun Lung looked worried and troubled. There was a strong bond of affection between the two little Celestials—all the more strong, perhaps, because they were strangers together in a strange land.

The school went in to calling-over; but Hop Hi did not answer to his name. He was missing from the ranks of the Second. He was marked down as absent.

"Hop Hi turned up yet?" Bob Cherry demanded, when he came into Study No. 13 to do his preparation.

Wun Lung shook his head miserably.

"No comee."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"The young ass! He'll get into trouble for this!" he exclaimed. "It's past eight o'clock!"

"Something happen."

"Pooh! Nothing can have happened," said Bob. "He's staying out, that's all. Perhaps gone to the cinema; he's got cheek enough!"

"Me goee lookee for him, me tinkee," said Wun Lung.

"You can't go out," said Bob. "Not without getting a pass, anyway. I'll come with you to Wingate, if you like, and ask him."

"Me tankee you!"

They went to the Sixth-Form passage. But Wun Lung kept on to Loder's study, instead of knocking at Wingate's door.

"What are you going there for?" asked Bob.

"Me askee Lodee where Hop Hi goee."

"Oh, good!"

Loder was in his study with Walker when the two juniors came in. He looked at them with a frowning brow.

"What do you want?" he snapped.

"You sent young Hop Hi to Courtfield?" said Bob.

"Yes; and the young rascal hasn't come back yet!" said Loder. "I gave him a postal-order to cash. If he's lost it there will be trouble!"

"He hasn't come in," said Bob. "He's missed calling-over. We're thinking of going to look for him!"

"What rot!" said Loder. "He's all right!"

"You sent him to the post-office?"

"Yes."

"Will you give us a pass out of gates?"

"No, I won't," said Loder.

"Oh, all serene! Keep your wool on!" said Bob independently; and he stepped out of the study before Loder could throw anything at him. "Come on, kid! We'll ask Wingate!"

They found Wingate more amenable than Loder.

"Wun Lung thinks something's happened to his minor," Bob Cherry explained to the captain of Greyfriars. "He's gone to the post-office at Courtfield, and hasn't come in yet. Will you give us a pass-out to look for him, Wingate?"

"Yes. The post-office will be closed now," said Wingate, looking at his watch. "It's very queer he hasn't come in. When did he go?"

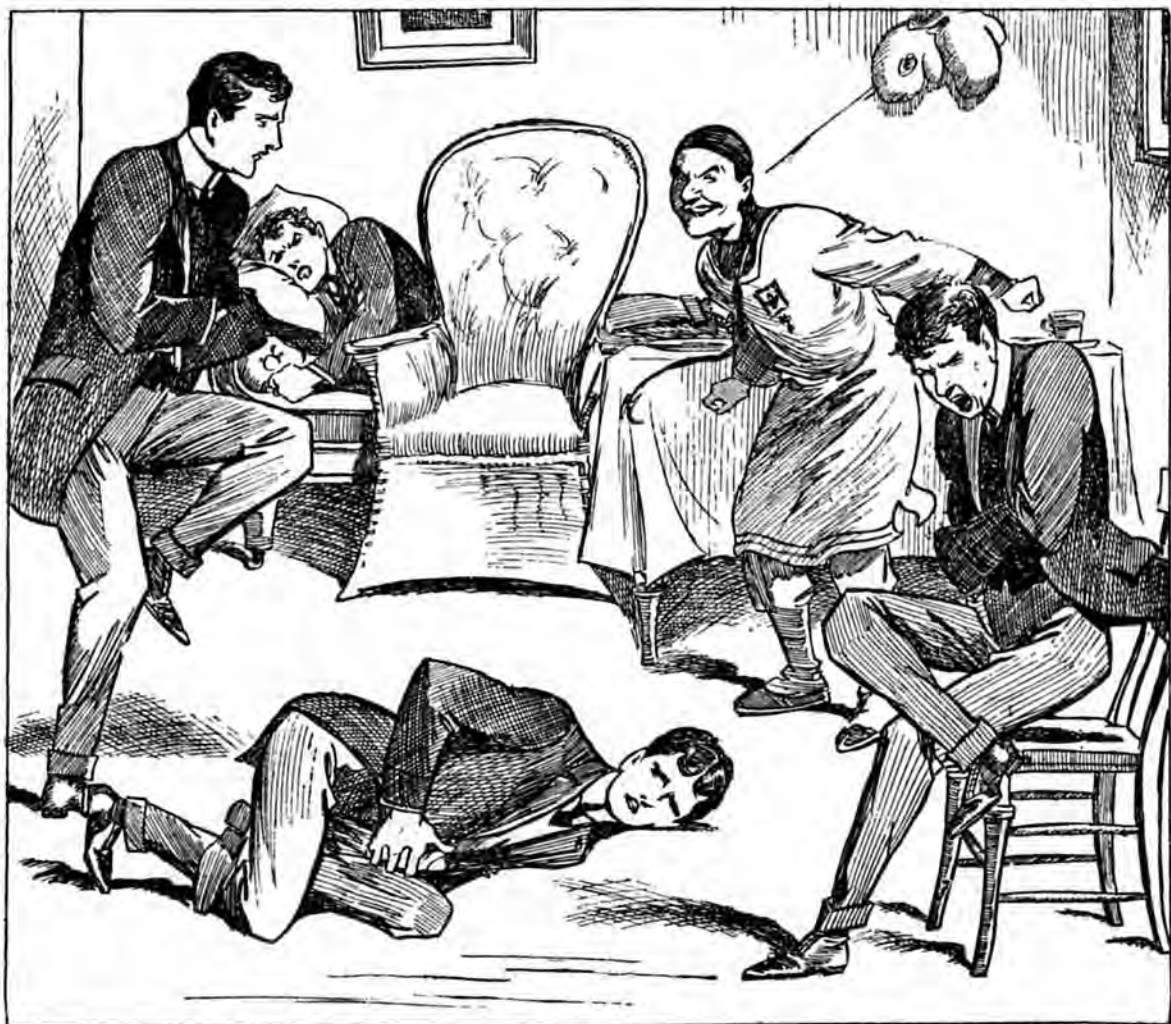
"Before six o'clock."

"Then he ought to have been back long ago."

"Something happen," said Wun Lung.

"I hope not," said Wingate kindly. "Here's your pass; show it to Gosling!"

"Thanks!"



Loder released the little Chinese, his hand dropping from Wun Lung's shoulder as if that shoulder had become red-hot. "What—what have you done?" he gasped hoarsely. "Me puttee poison in omelette, because you bully Hop Hi," said Wun Lung calmly. "You dice!" (See Chapter 2.)

"You comee wiz me?" asked Wun Lung, as he left the study with Bob Cherry.

"You bet. The prep will have to stand over," said the good-natured junior. "Cheer up, kid! We'll find Hop Hi all right, and wallop him for staying out and bothering us!"

Wun Lung shook his head. Evidently he was oppressed with some foreboding.

The two juniors left the school, and walked down the gloomy road to Courtfield. They saw nothing of Hop Hi on the road. The post-office had long been closed when they reached it, and it was impossible to make inquiries there for Hop Hi. They halted, hardly knowing what to do next.

"I suppose he may have taken the short cut?" Bob suggested at last.

Wun Lung nodded.

"We'll go back that way," said Bob.

"Allee light!"

"No good sticking here, anyway. If he's still in Courtfield, we can't ransack the whole giddy town for him!"

"Allee light!"

And they returned by the footpath through the wood. It was densely dark there, and they could see little; but at intervals they called out for Hop Hi. But only the echoes of their own calls responded.

"He can't have wandered away and lost his way in the wood," said the perplexed Bob. "He knows the way as well as I do."

as we do, and it must have been daylight when he came along here, too."

"Something happen."

"What could have happened?"

"Not knowee."

"Let's get back," said Bob, who was feeling very disquieted himself.

The disappearance of the little Chinese was certainly very strange.

They reached the school, and Gosling admitted them.

"Has Hop Hi come in, do you know, Gosling?" Bob asked.

Gosling grunted.

"I ain't let 'im in—I know that," he said.

"He no comee!" groaned Wun Lung. "Something happen!"

"We'll see if he's in the House," said Bob. "He may have sneaked in, you know."

But Hop Hi was not in the House. It was nine o'clock now—the bedtime of the Second Form—and Mr. Twigg, the master of the Second, was inquiring for Wun Lung's minor. Nobody had seen anything of Hop Hi.

"No comee backee!" said Wun Lung, with a groan.

"Blessed if I know what to make of it!" said Bob Cherry, greatly puzzled.

Mr. Twigg bore down upon Wun Lung, and inquired if he knew where his minor was. Wun Lung shook his head.

dolefully. Bob explained that they had been searching for the Chinese in vain.

"It is very odd!" said Mr. Twigg, in astonishment. "What can have become of him? The rest of the Form are in bed. I must speak to the Head about this!"

And the Form-master hurried to Dr. Locke's study.

By this time all Greyfriars knew about the disappearance of Hop Hi, and there was a considerable amount of excitement on the subject.

One of the fellows most concerned was Gerald Loder of the Sixth. Loder had been astounded by the failure of the fag to reappear. He had been in momentary expectation of hearing that Hop Hi had come in bawling the loss of his pigtail. But the little Chinese did not come in, and Loder began to be oppressed by uneasy doubts and suspicions. Mr. Jobling had assured him that no harm was intended to the fag, beside the loss of his pigtail. But, if that was true, why had not Hop Hi returned? That he must have met the Chinaman Foo-Chung in the wood, Loder knew. What had Foo-Chung done with him?

The prefect was uneasy and a little frightened. Suppose Foo-Chung had some more sinister intention to carry out? In that case, Loder had unwittingly become an accomplice in a crime.

The prefect's feelings towards his friend Mr. Jobling were bitter in the extreme. He resolved to see the bookmaker as soon as he could and demand an explanation. But for the present that was not possible, and Loder had to wait in growing anxiety.

His anxiety increased when Temple of the Fourth locked into his study with a message from the Head.

"Dr. Locke wants you in his study, Loder," said Temple. Loder started and flushed.

"What for?" he demanded hastily.

"I don't know. Something about Hop Hi, I think."

"All right," said Loder shortly.

Temple looked at him curiously as he went, wondering why the prefect looked so flushed and troubled. It was not like Loder to concern himself about others, and he could not be supposed to care very much whether anything had happened to Wun Lung's minor.

"Of course they know I sent him to Courtfield," muttered Loder, when Temple was gone. "That's all the Head wants to ask me about. Well, there's no harm in sending a fag to the post-office. I'm not responsible for anything that might have happened on the road. If anything's happened they can't connect me with it—they can't!"

But it was with inward misgivings that the black sheep of the Sixth made his way to the Head's study.

He found Dr. Locke looking very grave. Mr. Twigg was with him, also looking extremely serious.

"Ah, Loder, it is you!" said the Head. "I understand that you sent Hop Hi to Courtfield this afternoon?"

"Yes, sir," said Loder.

"Where did you send him?"

"To the post-office, sir, to cash a postal-order."

"Nowhere else?"

"Nowhere else, sir."

"You are aware that he has not returned?"

"Yes, sir. It is very curious."

"Very curious indeed," said the Head. "Something must have happened to him, I fear. You have no idea what can have detained him?"

"Not the slightest, sir."

"Did he have a large sum of money, by any chance—enough to make it likely that he has been robbed?"

"The postal-order was only for ten shillings, sir."

"Very well, Loder; that is all."

There was nothing at all like suspicion about the doctor; it was quite plain that he did not connect Loder with Hop Hi's disappearance in any way. The prefect breathed more freely as he left the study.

He was safe, at all events. But Loder was not all bad, and he felt a gnawing anxiety to know what had become of Wun Lung's minor. He disliked the little Chinese, but he did not want to be a party to any serious harm coming to him. But it was rather late in the day to think of that. Whatever scheme Mr. Jobling and his confederate had had in view had been carried out.

When the Greyfriars fellows went to bed that night there was a buzz of talk in the dormitories—on the subject of Hop Hi. It was known that the Head had telephoned to the police-stations in Friardale and Courtfield, and that they could give him no news so far of the vanished junior. Wun Lung's face was woebegone as he turned in. He slept but little that night.

"There'll be news in the morning," Bob Cherry said, with an attempt at comfort.

But when the morning came and Greyfriars turned out at the clang of the rising-bell, there was no news.

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Hop Hi had neither been seen nor heard of. He seemed to have vanished as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Wun Lung's Suspicion.

MORNING lessons were over, and the Greyfriars fellows came out of the Form-rooms.

There was no news of Wun Lung's minor. Inspector Grimes of Courtfield had been over during the morning, and it transpired that inquiries had been made at the Courtfield post-office, eliciting the information that Hop Hi had not been there the previous day. The appearance of the Chinese was, of course, noticeable enough, and it was impossible that he could have been to the post-office without being observed. It was clear that he had never reached the destination he had started for. Some mishap had befallen him en route. But what?

The police had been over the route, searching for traces of him, but on the footpath they had not discovered any sign that the little Chinese had even passed that way.

The search had extended from Courtfield and Friardale over the surrounding countryside, to Pegg, and along the coast; and inquiries were made far and near, but with no result. There was no clue whatever to the whereabouts of the little Celestial.

It was a half-holiday that day at Greyfriars, and the Remove had a football fixture with the Shell. But Harry Wharton & Co. for once dismissed footer from their minds. They were too much concerned about Wun Lung and his loss.

Wun Lung was looking like a ghost. The strain of anxiety was telling very heavily upon the Chinese junior.

All sorts of surmises were made to account for the disappearance of Hop Hi. Billy Bunter suggested that he had run away to become a pirate, declaring that Chinese pirates were quite common things in the Eastern seas; and Vernon-Smith asked him sarcastically whether he thought Hop Hi had purchased a rakish schooner with the proceeds of Loder's ten-shilling postal-order.

That Hop Hi had been kidnapped was the general opinion, though how, and why, remained a mystery that could not be solved.

"We're not going to play footer this afternoon, you chaps," said Harry Wharton, when the Remove chums came out after dinner. "Bolsover major can captain the eleven, and give the Shell the best match he can put up. We're going to look for Hop Hi!"

"Hear, hear!" said the Co. heartily.

"Buck up, Wun Lung!" said Bob Cherry, clapping the Chinese on the shoulder. "We won't leave a giddy stone unturned."

Wun Lung gave him a haggard look.

"We lookee—play findee!" he said. "If no findee, me killy Lodee."

"What?" gasped Bob.

"Me killy Lodee with daggee!" repeated Wun Lung quietly and firmly.

The juniors stared at him.

"You—you young ass!" said Wharton. "Don't let anybody hear you talking that rot, for goodness' sake! Loder's got nothing to do with it. You don't suspect him of having a hand in your minor's disappearance, do you?"

"Me tinkee."

"But—but—but—you must be off your rocker!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in amazement. "How could Loder possibly have anything to do with it?"

"He sendee Hop Hi."

"He only sent him to the post-office—nothing unusual in that. He couldn't know that anything was going to happen to him," said Johnny Bull.

Wun Lung shook his head obstinately.

"Lodee beastly bully; he hatee Hop Hi—hatee me. Lodee sendee him, and somet'ing happen. Lodee knowee."

"Oh, draw it mild!" expostulated Bob. "You don't suggest that Loder knows what's become of your minor, do you?"

"Me savvy."

"But—but—but—you're a silly chump!" urged Bob. "Loder didn't like Hop Hi, but he would not have a hand in anything like this. He might lick him with a cricket-stump, but nothing worse than that. If anything's been done to Hop Hi, the chap who did it will go to chokey. Loder wouldn't risk anything like that. Besides, we know that Loder was indoors all the time that Hop Hi was gone."

"Lodee knowee," said Wun Lung obstinately. "If Hop Hi no comee backee soonee, me killy Lodee."

"Then I'll jolly well keep you under my eye," said Bob

Cherry promptly. "You must be mad to suspect Loder of such a thing. He's a beastly bully, but he isn't a criminal. You don't seem to understand English ideas at all. Loder would no more do real harm to Hop Hi than I would."

"Me tinkee Lodee knowee. Me killy!"

"I'll take jolly good care you don't," said Bob. "And if I find you handling a knife again, Wun Lung, I'll lick you till you can't breathe. I'm not going to have you getting yourself sent to a reformatory. You'll come along with us; we're going to look for Hop Hi. And mind, if you get out of my sight even for a minute, I'll tell the Head what you've been talking, and he'll have you shut up so that you can't make a fool of yourself. Understand?"

Wun Lung only shook his head obstinately. The belief was evidently fixed in his mind that the bully of the Sixth had had something to do with his minor's disappearance.

"We shall have to keep an eye on that young lunatic," Nugent remarked, as Bob marched Wun Lung out into the Close. "There's no telling what he might do—and he hates Loder like poison. But he must be rocky in the topknot to think that Loder could have anything to do with his minor being kidnapped."

"Here's Loder!" said Wharton, as the prefect came out of the house, with his cap and coat on. "He's looking rather glum, isn't he? I wonder if he cares twopence what's happened to Wun Lung's minor?"

"The glumfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, scanning the gloomy face of the prefect. "The esteemed Loder would not care twopence if Hop Hi broke his honourable neck, if he had nothing to do with it. Wherefore the glumfulness of the esteemed Loder, my worthy chums?"

"Ass! You don't think the same as Wun Lung does surely?"

Hurree Singh shrugged his shoulders.

"Why the glumfulness of the esteemed Loder?" he repeated. "Perhaps he has something upon his honourable and ludicrous conscience."

"Oh, rats!"

"May as well speak to him," said Harry. "He may be able to tell us just which way Hop Hi went yesterday, and that will be a help. Loder—"

Loder scowled at the juniors.

"What do you want, confound you?" he growled.

"We're going to look for Hop Hi!" Wharton explained.

"You young fools! Do you think you can find him if the police can't?" sneered Loder savagely.

"Well, no harm in trying, anyway. Do you know which way he went to Courtfield yesterday—whether he took the short cut or not?"

"No, I don't."

Wun Lung broke away suddenly from Bob Cherry's grasp on his arm, and ran towards Loder, his eyes scintillating.

Loder stared at him.

"Where my minor?" asked Wun Lung, in a guttural voice.

"What you donee wiz him, Lodee?"

The prefect started.

"I! What do you mean? How should I know anything about your rotten minor?" he exclaimed harshly.

"You knowee—you tellee me, or—" Wun Lung's hands were working convulsively, and he seemed about to spring upon the Sixth-Former. Bob Cherry grasped him and dragged him back.

"Shut up, you young idiot!" he said angrily. "It's all right, Loder—the kid's half off his dot with anxiety, that's all."

"He'd better be careful how he talks to me, unless he wants a hiding!" growled Loder, and he strode away, and disappeared out of the school gates.

Wun Lung ground his white teeth.

"Lodee knowee!" he murmured. "He knowee—me make him tellee—"

"Rats!" said Bob impatiently. "Shut up! Come on, you fellows—this is where the Greyfriars Boy Scouts show what they're made of. If Hop Hi's left any sort of a trail, we'll pick it up and run him down. Come on. You keep with me, Wun Lung, or I'll tie a string on your blessed pigtail and lead you!"

And Harry Wharton & Co. followed Loder out of gates.

THE TENTH CHAPTER. The Kidnappers.

M R. JOBLING was smoking a cigar in the garden of the Cross Keys when Loder arrived there. Loder came in by the gate from the towing-path, and the smell of strong tobacco guided him to his friend Mr. Jobling. There was a considerable amount of risk for the prefect in visiting the place in daylight; but the state of anxiety he was in would not suffer him to wait until night-fall.

Mr. Jobling nodded genially to Loder through a cloud of the MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 318.

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smoke. His little eyes glittered for a moment at the sight of the Greyfriars prefect; he had no doubt as to what Gerald Loder had come for.

"Afternoon!" said Mr. Jobling affably. "You're just in time to see me. I was goin' arter I had finished this 'ere cigar."

"What has become of Hop Hi?" asked Loder abruptly. Mr. Jobling looked astonished.

"The Chinese, do you mean?" he asked.

"Yes. What happened to him yesterday?"

"You know the programme," said Mr. Jobling, with a grin. "Has there been a fuss about his blessed pigtail being cut off?"

Loder set his teeth.

"He hasn't come back to the school!" he said.

"Not come back?" echoed Mr. Jobling.

"No!"

"Well, that's queer, ain't it?" said Mr. Jobling reflectively.

"Now, I wonder why he hasn't come back, Master Loder? Do you know?"

"I don't," said Loder. "But I suppose you do."

"Ow should I know?"

"Look here, Jobling, it's no good beating about the bush!" Loder exclaimed fiercely. "You made me believe that a rotten trick was to be played on that little beggar, and I was willing to help. But you were taking me in. He hasn't had his pigtail cut off—that wouldn't have mattered. It was a trick. He's been taken away somehow. You made us send him out so that he could be kidnapped."

"Kidnapped!"

"He must have been kidnapped, as he hasn't come back."

"I don't know nothing about it, then," said Mr. Jobling, "and if you're wise, Master Loder, you won't know nothing about it, either."

"I can't be a party to anything of that kind. You know that. I won't have any harm come to the kid."

"Who says any 'arm is coming to him?" said Mr. Jobling. "S'pose that party from China has some scheme of extraction a thousand quid or so from the kid's father? Well, that's no business of yours. The kid needn't be hurt."

"Then you know he has been kidnapped?"

"I don't know nothin'," said Mr. Jobling stubbornly.

"Look here, Jobling, the kid's got to be sent back to Greyfriars safe and sound—and at once. Do you understand?"

"Well, find him and send him back," suggested Mr. Jobling, with a smile.

"If he isn't sent back, I shall have to go to the police and tell them what I know about the matter."

"And then they'll begin asking me questions?" murmured Mr. Jobling, without however appearing much alarmed at the prospect.

"Yes, and you'll be in trouble."

"So will you, Master Loder," said Jobling coolly. "If the Chinese has been kidnapped, you've 'ad a 'and in it."

"I didn't know—"

"You'll have to prove that. What yarn are you going to tell—that you owed money to a bookmaker, and by way of squaring the account, you helped to get the Chinese kid nabbed? Your 'eadmaster would be werry pleased to 'ear all that—I don't think."

And Mr. Jobling laughed in Loder's face.

The prefect stared at him blankly.

"Do you mean to say that you'd make out that I knew all along, you—your villain?" he stammered.

Mr. Jobling waved his hand amicably.

"Don't call me names," he said. "You don't know nothin' about it, so keep your 'ead shut—that's all. I don't know nothin', neither. Go home, and don't think about it no more—that's my tip."

"But the kid?"

"Oh, the kid's all right!"

"You—you are sure he won't be hurt?" said Loder weakly.

"Why should he be 'urt?"

"You know where he is?"

"I don't know nothin'."

Loder looked at the rascal helplessly. Mr. Jobling was quite right in his assumption that Loder dared not tell what he knew. His connection with the bookmaker would come out, and that meant his expulsion from Greyfriars, in the first place. And if Mr. Jobling got into trouble, he would take good care that Loder got into trouble, too.

Loder had been playing with fire, and he realised that he had burnt his fingers badly. The rascal had taken him in, and now it was too late he knew it. He had been made use of to get the little Chinese into the hands of the kidnapper.

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. Order Early!

and now all he could do was to remain silent, and save himself.

"Oh, you—you rotter!" said Loder at last. "You were taking me in all the time. You knew that the kid was to be taken away."

"Don't you worrit," said Mr. Jobling comfortably. "You won't get mixed up in the matter, if you keep your head shut."

"I can't let this go on, I tell you," said Loder desperately. "The kid will have to be sent back to Greyfriars."

Mr. Jobling shrugged his fat shoulders.

"I don't say that there may not be another ten quid for somebody if it all goes well," he suggested.

Loder made a fierce gesture.

"Do you think I would touch such money as that?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I think you would, if you could get your fingers on it, Master Loder," said Mr. Jobling, with great candour.

"Now, you go home; rather risky comin' 'ere in the day-time, ain't it?"

"You rotter—"

"Nuff said!" interjected Mr. Jobling. "I'm a patient man, but I don't like bein' called names. Good-afternoon!"

Loder gave him a fierce look, but he realised that he was helpless. He turned without another word, and strode out of

the garden, and tramped away moodily along the towing-path.

Mr. Jobling chuckled softly. He had not the slightest doubt that Loder would hold his tongue. However much the prefect's conscience might prick him, he would think first of all of his own safety.

The bookmaker finished his cigar, and then strolled out of the garden. He, too, followed the towing-path for a couple of miles, and he stopped at last at the gate of a little cottage almost hidden by the woods. The bookmaker glanced round him, and then opened the gate, and walked quickly up the weed-grown path, and entered the porch, shaded and half hidden by thick ivy.

He knocked twice on the door with his knuckles.

The door opened, and a dark Mongolian face peered out.

"Ah, it is you!"

"Ere I am," said Mr. Jobling, entering the cottage.

"It's all right, Foo-Chung."

The Chinaman nodded.

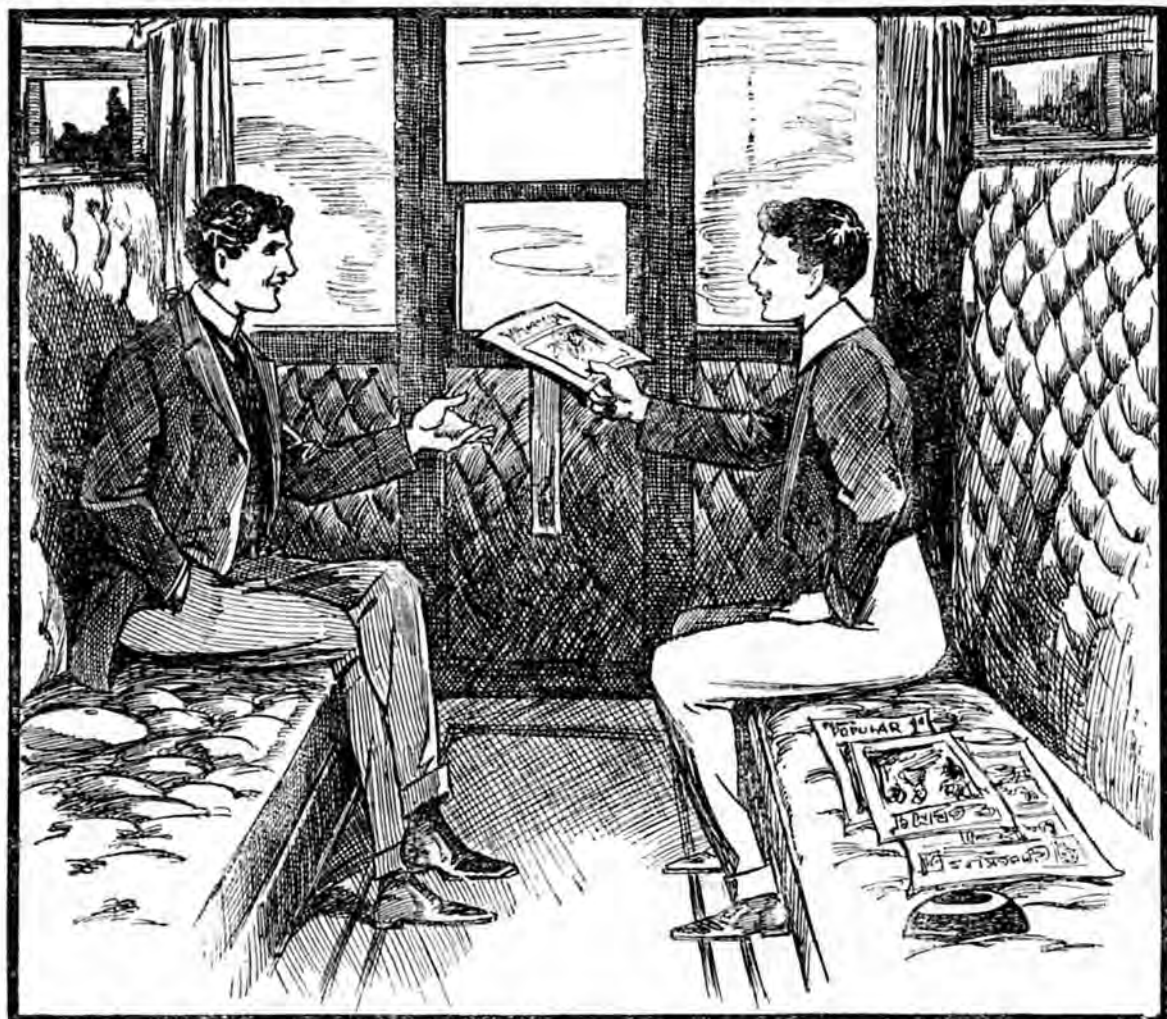
"All lightee," he said.

"Where is he?"

The Chinaman closed the door and locked it, and then opened an inner door that gave admittance to a small room. The room was in semi-darkness, the wooden shutters of the window being closed.

On a bed lay a still, diminutive form.

GOOD TURNS.—No. 35.



A keen reader of the Four Famous Companion Papers offers a fellow-traveller the loan of his "MAGNET" LIBRARY to while away the tedium of a long railway journey—a good turn that is thankfully taken advantage of.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 318.



Wun Lung climbed lightly out of the window, and dropped on the verandah, and thence to the ground. "Wun Lung!" Wharton clutched him by the shoulder. "You mad idiot—what have you done?" (See Chapter 14.)

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Looking for "Signs"!

The face was pale, the eyes closed in slumber.

Mr. Jobling gazed at the silent little figure, and an expression of alarm came over his fat face. He clutched Foo-Chung by the arm.

"Look 'ere, that ain't a natural sleep!" he muttered.

"You ain't been playing any of your Chinese devil's tricks?"

Foo-Chung grinned.

"Opium?" he said briefly.

"Oh!" said Mr. Jobling, relieved. "He's all right."

"All lightee."

"And the negotiations—?"

"Takee timee," said Foo-Chung. "No safee keepsee here.

Policee searchee."

"What are you going to do with him, then?"

"Takee away in thunkee, to-morrow or day aftel."

"In a trunk?" ejaculated Mr. Jobling.

"Allee lightee. Velly smalle—packee easee. No speako

—opium!" explained Foo-Chung briefly. "Quite safee."

"Well, I leave it in your 'ands," said Mr. Jobling, backing

out of the room. "Mind that no 'arm comes to 'im,

though. You ain't in China now, you know."

Foo-Chung grinned and nodded.

Mr. Jobling left the lonely cottage, and walked away back to Friardale, looking very contented. The kidnapping of Hop Hi and the extraction of a ransom from his father was a risky proceeding, but the risk was taken by the rascally Chinaman; and Mr. Jobling, without taking much of the danger himself, stood to make more out of the operation than he had made by years of petty swindling. He had reason to be satisfied.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 318.

"HERE we are!" said Bob Cherry. Harry Wharton & Co. entered the footpath in Friardale Wood. It was a bright spring afternoon, and the sun glinted down among the thick trees, already glimmering with green.

The chums of the Remove were looking very much in earnest. They knew that the local police had been over the ground before, searching for some trace of the missing Chinese, and had failed to find any, but they hoped that they might be more successful. As Boy Scouts, they had studied woodcraft and tracking, and if Hop Hi had been kidnapped in the wood, they hoped to find some trace of him and of the kidnapper. At all events, it was some satisfaction to be at work on the search.

Wun Lung's face was dark and moody. The little Chinese, usually as cheery as a cricket, seemed to have been completely changed by his anxiety for his brother.

He hardly spoke a word, but at times his almond eyes glittered, and he clenched his hands, showing that his mind was very active.

"Now, Hop Hi never got to Courtfield," said Bob Cherry. "I think it's most likely he took this cut through the wood. You see, it saves a lot of the distance, and Hop Hi couldn't have known there was any danger. Besides, if he's been kidnapped, he couldn't very well have been collared on the high-road, if he went that way. Too many people about."

"It's pretty certain he went this way!" assented Wharton.

"And so he must have been collared on this footpath, as he never got as far as Courtfield," said Bob. "Somewhere or other along this path some rotter was on the watch for him, and collared him."

"How on watchee?" said Wun Lung, his eyes glittering. Bob rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Well, it would be queer if the kidnapper happened to be here by chance, and Hop Hi came along by chance, too," he said.

"Velly queelee. But if kidnapperee on watch, he knowee that Hop Hi comee. How he knowee unless Lodee tell him?"

"Oh, rats!" said Bob, by no means prepared to admit that conclusion to his own argument. "Loder did nothing of the sort. Why should he?"

"Me knowee." "What I mean is, that some rotter had planned to kidnap the kid, and very likely he was hanging about the school, keeping an eye open for a chance," explained Bob. "Then he would see Hop Hi come out, and go into the wood, and follow him. See?"

"That's likely enough," said Nugent. "If Hop Hi's been kidnapped, it stands to reason that the kidnapper has been hanging about, watching for a chance of getting at him."

Wun Lung shook his head obstinately. His suspicions of Loder were not to be argued away so easily. The conviction was firmly fixed in his mind that the bully of the Sixth had had a hand in the disappearance of Hop Hi.

"Well, to get on," continued Bob. "Somewhere along this path the rotter, whoever he was, pounced on Hop Hi and collared him. He can't have done that without leaving some trace, I should think. There must have been some sort of a struggle. And then Hop Hi would have to be carried away, and the rotter ought to have left some trail. That's what we've got to find."

"File in!" said Johnny Bull. "If there's any trail we'll find it. We haven't practised as Boy Scouts for nothing."

"The findfulness will be terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Cheer up, my esteemed friend. While there is life there is hopefulness."

But Wun Lung did not cheer up.

The juniors proceeded along the footpath, carefully scanning the grass and the surrounding thickets. Bob Cherry had brought a shoe belonging to Hop Hi with him, but there was little chance of picking up his trail on the well-trodden footpath.

The juniors spent an hour in examining the path, and by that time they had reached the end, where a stile gave admittance to a meadow further on, without making any discovery.

"Now we'll try back," said Bob Cherry, with undiminished energy. "We've only gone roughly over the ground so far."

"No findee nothing," said Wun Lung. "Lodee knowee."

"Bosh!" said Bob.

The juniors turned back, and retraced their steps, proceeding more slowly, and examining the ground with greater care than before.

They examined for some distance on either side of the footpath, seeking for traces; and Bob Cherry halted suddenly with an exclamation.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look here!"

His chums gathered round at once.

"What is it, Bob?"

"Foot-prints?"

"Yes—look here!"

Bob had plunged into a thicket close by the path. There, in the soft soil, could be discerned the traces of two boots, clearly marked. The amateur scouts bent over them, scanning them keenly.

"Some chap has been standing here," said Bob, with great satisfaction. "See how deep the footprints have been driven? Some chap was standing here for quite a long time, I should say, and never moved."

There was no doubt about that.

After examining the footprints carefully, Bob Cherry placed his own feet in them, so as to occupy the exact spot where the man had stood hidden in the thicket.

"What are you up to?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I want to see what he was standing here for," said Bob.

"Yes—look here! Standing here, there's an opening in the thicket just before my eyes—I can see the path, and anybody coming along it—and can't be seen myself. Go on the path and look!"

Wharton returned to the footpath, and scanned the thicket. He could not discern Bob Cherry. The junior was completely hidden.

"Quite right!" he said, as he came back. "It's the exact spot for watching the path without being seen."

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"We've found the place," said Bob, with conviction. "That's something. Nobody could have stood in this thicket so long for nothing—only to watch the path. And only one chap could have had any motive for standing here a long time keeping an eye on the footpath—and that was the chap who kidnapped Hop Hi yesterday afternoon."

"Clear as daylight!" said Nugent.

"He standee here long timee," said Wun Lung. "You tinkee?"

"Oh, yes!" said Bob. "You see, his feet were fairly driven into the soil. Just a footstep wouldn't have made deep marks like that. He may have been standing here half an hour or longer—most likely longer—and without moving, too. Patient chap, I should say."

"If he standee here so long, he no watchee Hop Hi leavee school. No takee half an hour for Hop Hi to get here after leaving Gleyfiars."

Bob frowned. It was true that every fresh point discovered or thought out, seemed to indicate that the kidnapper had had some previous knowledge of the fact that Hop Hi would come along that path at a certain time. And the little Chinese did not miss a single point that told in favour of his own theory of Loder's participation in the kidnapping of Hop Hi.

"I say, that is so!" said Harry Wharton uneasily. "It would be absurd to suppose that those tracks were made by anyone but the kidnapper—"

"Oh, they're the kidnapper's tracks right enough!" said Bob.

"Well, if he stood here on the watch for half an hour or more, he must have been standing here at the very moment that Hop Hi left Greyfriars—or before," said Harry. "That is to say, he couldn't have watched Hop Hi leave, and followed him!"

"Must have known he was coming," said Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry scathed his curly head.

"Well, I don't quite understand that bit," he confessed.

"But I suppose you don't think for a moment that Loder had anything to do with it?"

"Well, no; that's impossible!"

"Me tinkee—me knowee!" said Wun Lung.

"Oh, you're an ass!" said Bob.

But the juniors were all feeling very uneasy now. They knew Loder for a blackguard, and an unscrupulous rascal in some respects. Was it possible, after all, that he had had a hand in the kidnapping of the little Celestial? A Greyfriars fellow, a senior and a prefect, participating in a crime? It was incredible—and yet all the evidence pointed that way.

"Let's get on!" said Bob abruptly. "If the kidnapper collared Hop Hi here, he carried him off from here—we may find something further."

"Which way would he go?" said Wharton thoughtfully.

"Not towards the high-road—he couldn't have carried a kidnapped fellow there—in broad daylight, too! He must have gone the other way—towards the river."

"The river!" muttered Bob, with a sudden shiver.

The word awoke unpleasant thoughts. They had concluded that it was a case of kidnapping, for it seemed impossible that anyone could have wanted to hurt the harmless little Chinese. But it was possible that something blacker than that had happened—and the thought of the river suggested it.

"Come on!" said Nugent.

They advanced into the wood, scanning the ground at every step, noting even the twigs in the thickets for signs of a passer-by. Deep in the wood there was a hollow where the late rain had gathered, leaving the earth soft and sticky. And in the soft soil at that spot, footprints reappeared.

It was, of course, possible that any person might have wandered through the wood, leaving footprints behind him. But the tracks in the damp soil before the juniors were exactly the same as those they had found in the thicket by the footpath.

They belonged to the same man! And they were old tracks. It was easy for the young scouts to see that they were at least as old as the previous afternoon or evening.

"He passed this way!" said Bob.

"No doubt about that!"

"Come off—he went towards the river!" said Bob Cherry.

"He may have had a boat waiting there—it would be the easier way to clear off!"

They pressed on towards the bank of the Sark. No further traces were found on the way, and a little later they came out on the towing-path. Before them the wide river gleamed in the afternoon sun.

There they halted.

The trail, such as it was, had ended. On the towing-path, the tread of men and animals was too frequent for them to hope to discover any tracks there. And if a boat had been

in waiting for the kidnapper, and he had departed by the river—the flowing waters retained no trace of his passage. The juniors could not even guess whether he had gone up or down the river.

They were baffled.

There was a long and grim silence. Bob Cherry broke it. "Nothing doing!" he said.

Wun Lung was gazing at the river, with a black brow. The juniors understood the dark thoughts that were passing in his mind. Harry Wharton clapped him on the shoulder.

"Don't think of that, Wun Lung," he said. "It's impossible that they can have done Hop Hi any harm. Why should they?"

Wun Lung groaned.

"No stuff! But me tinkee that perlaps—"

"Stuff!" said Bob Cherry uneasily. "Most likely there was a boat here. Besides, the body would have been found, if anybody had been chucked into the river. Don't think of such awful rot!"

"Loder knowee!" said Wun Lung, between his teeth.

"Oh, ring off!" growled Bob.

There was nothing more to be done. But the juniors spent another hour or two in seeking for "signs" up and down the towing-path—in vain, however. They were tired and dispirited when they returned to Greyfriars.

"I don't know whether the police have found out what we've found—but I fancy not!" Wharton remarked, as they entered the school gates. "I think we'd better tell Quelch, and he can let them know if he thinks fit."

"I was just thinking so," said Bob.

And Harry Wharton repaired to his Form-master's study, and acquainted Mr. Quelch with the discovery that had been made. The Remove-master listened to him with surprise and with great interest.

"I will telephone this to Inspector Grimes at once," he said. "And I may say, Wharton, that I congratulate you upon the use to which you have put your knowledge gained as a Boy Scout. Such training is really invaluable."

The chums of the Remove were very thoughtful, and not very cheery, over their tea in Study No. 1. Wun Lung was there with them. Bob Cherry was determined not to lose sight of him. What plans were forming in Wun Lung's mind he did not know; but he knew that the Chinese was planning something, and that it was something which might very easily become a tragedy, if Wun Lung were not carefully watched.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER. Under Watch!

WUN LUNG rose to leave the study after tea. He had hardly tasted anything.

Bob Cherry's eye was upon him at once.

"Where are you off to, Wun Lung?" he asked.

"Me tired—me goee lie down!"

"I'll come to the dorm with you," said Bob.

Wun Lung looked sullen.

"Why you watchee me?" he exclaimed angrily. "No likee Bob Chelly watchee me!"

"I daresay you don't," assented Bob. "But I'm jolly well going to watch you all the same. You're not going to get yourself into trouble. You've got a mad idea into your silly head that Loder knows something about Hop Hi's whereabouts."

"Me knowee!"

"And you've got some scheme of going for Loder—"

Wun Lung's eyes glittered.

"If Hop Hi no comee backee, me killy Lodee!"

"Yes, you silly ass; and then you ask why I'm watching you!" growled Bob. "I'm watching you to keep you from making a fool of yourself, and getting sent to a reformatory for seven years or so."

"No wantee watchee."

"You're going to be watched whether you want it or not, my pippin. It's either that, or I go to the Head, and warn him what you're thinking of. Blessed if I don't think I ought to do that, anyway," added Bob uneasily.

"Just what I was thinking," said Johnny Bull.

Wun Lung looked greatly alarmed.

"No tellee doctee!" he exclaimed.

"Then don't you try to get out of my sight."

"Allee light—me likee Bob Chelly watchee."

"You blessed Ananias!" growled Bob. "You don't like it, but you're going to have it. That's flat."

"Handsome Bob Chelly velly kind."

"Oh, ring off with the soft sawder. Are you going to the dorm?"

"No tired now," said Wun Lung calmly.

"You were lying, then?"

"Allee light."

"You'll come to the study, and do your prep," said Bob. "So-long, you fellows!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 318.

EVERY
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ONE
PENNY.

And he marched Wun Lung off to Study No. 13.

Wun Lung did not, however, do any preparation. He curled himself up in the armchair, and seemed to go to sleep. Bob did not urge him to work. He knew that Mr. Quelch would excuse the little Chinese from lessons under the circumstances. Occasionally he glanced at Wun Lung, and once or twice he caught the keen black eyes twinkling, showing that the Celestial was not asleep.

One or another of the chums of the Remove kept an eye upon Wun Lung during the evening.

They were very careful to give him no chance of getting near Loder.

But Wun Lung seemed to have given up the idea.

He made no further attempt to escape Bob Cherry's vigilance; but Bob suspected that he was only biding his time and watching for an opportunity, and he did not relax his watch.

Meanwhile, there was no news of Hop Hi.

The Head was frequently in communication with the police-station at Courtfield, on the telephone; but they had nothing to tell him.

The search for Hop Hi was still proceeding, but no more trace of him had been discovered than if he had vanished into thin air.

When bed-time came, Bob Cherry's anxiety concerning Wun Lung intensified. He could not keep awake all night to watch the little Chinese, even if he resolved to do so, the chances were that he would fall asleep.

And in the night, what might not the queer little Chinese do?

Bob debated with his chums whether they had better warn the Form-master of what the Chinese had said; but they naturally shrank from getting Wun Lung into trouble. Mr. Quelch would certainly have taken a very stern view of the Chinese's threats against Loder.

"But what the dickens are we to do?" said Bob, in perplexity. "We can't let him run on. He's got it fixed in his silly head that Loder's had a hand in that business. He's quite capable of chopping him up."

"Might give Loder a tip to lock his door!" suggested Nugent.

"Loder would go to the Head at once about it if we gave him a hint of what that blessed young savage has got in his head."

"I suppose he would, but—"

"Make him promise—" began Johnny Bull.

Bob shook his head.

"You know what an awful Ananias he is! He would promise anything. He doesn't understand English ideas about a fellow's word being his bond. He would say anything we asked him, and forget all about it."

"We can't let him get at Loder," said Wharton decidedly.

"No fear!"

"What's to be done, then?"

"Stay awake, and watch him in turns, I suppose," said Bob Cherry. "Nice way to pass a night, I must say, but it's up to us."

"Might drop off to sleep, and then all the fat would be in the fire," said Johnny Bull. "It would be ripping to be awakened in the middle of the night by Loder yelling murder, wouldn't it?"

"Great Scott!"

"Blessed if I see any way out of it, then, excepting telling the Head, and having the dangerous young ass locked up somewhere," said Bob.

"And that means bad trouble for him."

"Better than letting him carve Loder, and get sent to prison."

"I've got it," said Nugent. "We can lock the dormitory door, and take the key out, and then he can't get out of the dorm, anyway."

"There's the window."

"And the little beast climbs like a monkey!" growled Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry snorted. He was very much concerned for Wun Lung, and very friendly in his feelings towards the little Chinese; but he was getting impatient.

"I'll jolly well tie a string to him, and tie it on my arm," he said. "Jolly good mind to put a dog-chain on the little bouncer." He crossed over the common-room to the corner where Wun Lung was sitting, staring moodily before him.

"Look here, kid!"

Wun Lung looked up with a dazed expression. Something in the palm of his right hand caught Bob's eye.

"You young ass!" exclaimed Bob. "What are you doing?"

Wun Lung hastily concealed the sticky pellet in his hand. Bob Cherry knew what it was, and he knew the reason of the little Chinese's dazed look. Once before the chums of the Remove had discovered Wun Lung taking opium, and he had

NEXT
MONDAY—

"ALONZO'S MARVELLOUS MIXTURE!"

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solemnly sworn never to do so again. Bob gripped him by the wrist, and wrenched open his hand, and extracted the little ball, and threw it into the fire. Wun Lung did not resist. He only gazed at Bob with heavy, sleepy eyes.

"You've been eating opium!" muttered Bob, under his breath.

"No sleepers if no takee opium—tinkee of Hop Hi!" murmured Wun Lung. "Now me sleepers."

"Where did you get it?"

"No savvy."

"Have you got any more about you?"

"No savvy."

"Look here, Wun Lung, I told you that I'd go to the Head if I found you taking any of that filthy stuff again," said Bob, in a fierce whisper.

"Me solly!" murmured Wun Lung. "But me wantee sleepers nightee, and no sleepers for tinkee of Hop Hi!"

Bob relented, in spite of himself. And it flashed into his mind, too, that if the little Chinese fell into an opium sleep, he would be safe for the night, at all events, and all those elaborate precautions need not be taken.

"Well, don't take any more," he said. "Tell me whether you've got any more of the muck, Wun Lung. Do you hear?"

Wun Lung did not reply. His head nodded forward on his breast. Bob Cherry, in alarm, shook him; but the Chinese's eyes were fast closed, and he was breathing heavily.

"Hallo, what's the matter with him?" asked Bulstrode, coming towards the corner.

"He—he's asleep!" said Bob. "Tired out, I suppose."

"The poor kid's having a rotten time," said Bulstrode sympathetically. "Better take him to the dorm. It's close on bedtime, anyway."

He shook Wun Lung by the arm.

"Wake up, kid."

But Wun Lung's eyes did not open.

Bulstrode looked very curious.

"Don't say anything," muttered Bob. "The young ass has been swallowing opium, to make him go to sleep to-night."

Bulstrode whistled.

"My hat! He would get walloped if the Head knew."

"Keep it dark," whispered Bob. "The poor little beast doesn't know any better. Help me get him to the dorm. I'll call the fellows."

He hurried back to his chums.

"What's the matter?" asked Wharton.

"That young ass has been swallowing opium to get to sleep to-night," whispered Bob. "He's gone off now—can't be woke up."

"My hat!"

"We must get him to the dorm without its being noticed. All of you get round him, and we'll walk him up," said Bob.

"Right-ho!"

"That settles the difficulty for to-night," Wharton said thoughtfully. "You remember that time he took opium before, when we found him out—he didn't move an eyelid for a whole night."

"I remember. It's lucky, in one way, but—but it's horrible," said Bob, "and if he were bowled out—"

"We'll take care of that!"

The Famous Five and Bulstrode gathered round Wun Lung. There were several other fellows in the common-room, but fortunately an animated discussion was going on concerning the match of the afternoon, and they did not notice what was amiss. Bob and Harry took Wun Lung by the arms, and lifted him to his feet, the other fellows crowding round. The little Chinese hung a dead weight on their arms, his head falling forward on his breast. His weight was very little, however, and the juniors swung him away to the door, into the passage.

"I'll carry him upstairs," whispered Bob. "Stick him on my back. If anybody notices us it will only look as if I'm carrying him pickaback for a joke."

"Good egg!"

The nerveless Chinese was planted on Bob's broad back, and Bob held his hands firmly, and ran upstairs with him. Wun Lung's weight did not trouble him much. In a few minutes they were in the dormitory.

Bob landed Wun Lung on his bed, with a gasp of relief.

"Jolly glad nobody noticed," he said. "Blessed if it isn't like getting a drunken bouncer home to bed. Undress him, and pitch him in, and nobody will be any the wiser. I'll give him a hiding to-morrow."

Wun Lung was hurriedly undressed and tumbled into bed and covered up. He did not open his eyes or make the slightest movement of his own volition. He was like wax in the hands of the anxious juniors.

"All serene now," said Bob.

Wun Lung lay quiet, breathing softly and regularly.

When the Remove came up to bed, Wun Lung was still in the same attitude, and the fellows noticed nothing unusual about him. Loder the prefect saw lights out in the Remove dormitory, and he glanced at Wun Lung, and Bob Cherry was anxious for a moment. But the prefect evidently observed nothing unusual. He turned out the light and quitted the dormitory.

Half an hour later, most of the juniors were asleep; but Bob Cherry, as ten o'clock rang out, stepped from his bed, and struck a match, and bent over the little Chinese. He scanned the still, calm, insensible face. There was not the slightest sign of returning consciousness.

"Well, opium's a rotten beastly thing, but I'm jolly glad the little beggar is safe for to-night!" Bob murmured to himself.

The match went out. Bob Cherry returned to bed, feeling satisfied that the little Chinese was safe for that night. In two minutes more he was fast asleep. But he would not have fallen asleep so comfortably if he could have known that, as soon as the match was extinguished, Wun Lung's eyes had opened wide, and were now glittering into the darkness—sleeplessly.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

In Peril of His Life!

L ODER awoke suddenly.

He hardly knew what had awakened him.

But in the silence of the night, as he opened his eyes, he heard a sharp, sudden click.

Click!

Then he started into the widest wakefulness.

That click was the sound of the key turning in the lock of his door.

In the dense darkness of midnight, someone had entered his room, and turned the key in the lock—on the inside of the door. Someone was in the room with him in the dark; and the door was locked.

Loder shivered.

It was not likely that it was a burglar or any other dangerous intruder—such an individual could have had no motive for locking himself in the room with Loder. Most likely it was someone intending to jape him. But in the darkness and the silence Loder was oppressed with a strange fear.

The moon was glimmering through the clouds over the old Close of Greyfriars, and the light fell in at the window, and lay in a silvery bar across the floor.

Loder's eyes were fixed upon that lighted patch, as he sat shivering in bed, the clothes huddled round him.

Whoever had entered his study, would have to cross that patch of moonlight to get near the bed, and the prefect would see him then.

There was a soft footfall; and a little figure glided into the light; and Loder gave a gasp of relief as he recognised Wun Lung of the Remove. It was only the little Chinese! The little rascal was planning some jape—and Loder's teeth came sharply together. He intended to catch the Chinese in the act, and thrash him till every bone in his diminutive body was aching, as a punishment for the fright he had given him.

"You young hound!" exclaimed Loder, all his terrors gone now.

He made a movement to spring out of bed. Then he shrank back, with a gasp of alarm. The black eyes of the Chinese were glittering at him—and something else was glittering, too, in the glimmer of the moon. It was a long, cruel-looking, curved blade. Gerald Loder gazed with starting eyes at the deadly weapon. It was a Chinese dagger, in the grasp of the little Chinese—and over it, Wun Lung's face appeared in the moonlight—hard and savage and cruel—a face that the Greyfriars fellows would hardly have known had they seen it, so different was it from Wun Lung's usual aspect.

Loder's heart almost stopped beating with terror.

"Wun Lung!" he muttered huskily. "What—what do you want?"

Wun Lung came closer to the bed.

"You wakee!" he said.

"W-w-what do you want, Wun Lung?"

"Me wantee Hop Hi."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Me lockee door," said the Chinese, in a low, hard voice, his almond eyes glittering at Loder. "No one come in. You call out, me killy. Savvy?"

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"You—you're rotting, you savage little beast!" panted Loder, shrinking back to the further side of the bed. "You know you dare not—"

"Call out, den, and you see, Lodee."

Loder would have given a great deal to shout for help; but he did not. In spite of his words, it was impressed upon him that the little Celestial was in deadly earnest. And the white glitter of the blade struck cold to Loder's very heart.

"You keepee quiet, Lodee," said Wun Lung, half-leaning over the bed. "Me killy if you cly out! You knowee that."

"What do you want?" stuttered Loder.

"Me wantee my minor."

"Your—your minor!" murmured Loder.

"You knowee who takee Hop Hi—you sendee him out to be kidnappee," said Wun Lung. "Me knowee. You tellee me."

"I don't know anything about it," said Loder, trying in vain to control his terror. "I—How should I know?"

"You sendee him out to be kidnappee. Me savvy. Man waitee in wood long time for Hop Hi to comee—how he knowee Hop Hi coming?"

"I—I don't know."

"You tellee him—you sendee my minor to be kidnappee. You knowee where Hop Hi is. You tellee me, or me killy. Savvy?"

"I tell you I don't know anything about it," said Loder hoarsely. "Keep that knife away, you young fiend! If—you should kill me, you'd be hanged."

"No caree, if Hop Hi deadee. What me tellee fader, who sendee him here for me to looker after? Me killy Lodee, den killy myself," said Wun Lung.

"You—you mad young idiot—"

"No wastee timee. Where is Hop Hi, Lodee?"

"I don't know."

"You say noting?"

"I can't tell you what I don't know."

Wun Lung showed his white teeth.

"Then me killy!"

He made a rapid movement towards Loder, and the curved blade glittered in the moonlight as his hand was flung up. Loder, almost paralysed with terror, realised that the little Chinese was in deadly earnest, and that his life hung upon a thread. It seemed like some evil dream; but it was real—horribly real!

"Stop!" panted Loder. "I—I'll tell you! For Heaven's sake, stop! You—you'll never find Hop Hi unless I tell you!"

Wun Lung drew back his hand.

"You knowee?"

"I—I know a little—I'll tell you all I know—I swear it!" groaned Loder.

"You tellee me—and no lies," said Wun Lung. "If I no finde Hop Hi, I comee bakkee and killy you, Lodee."

"I—I didn't know he was going to be kidnapped," groaned Loder. "I swear it! I—I sent him to—to Courtfield because a man asked me. I—I thought he was going to have his pigtail cut off—that was all."

Wun Lung scanned his face keenly. The moonlight gleamed on Gerald Loder's face, showing it up as colourless as wax. It was easy for Wun Lung to see that the terrified prefect was telling the truth.

"Me believe that," said Wun Lung, simply. "You sendee him out, because manee askee. Who that manee?"

"A—a man I know—"

"Who?"

"A—a man named Jobling," stammered Loder. "You've seen him about Friardale and Courtfield—a bookmaker and racing tout."

Wun Lung nodded.

"Me savvy—me see him. He kidnappee Hop Hi?"

"No—but he was put on to it by another man—a Chinaman. I don't know the other man's name, or where he is. I've told you all I know."

"But Jobling knowee?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Where Jobling?"

"He stays at the Cross Keys, in Friardale."

"Which loom?"

"I don't know his room—how should I?" panted Loder.

Wun Lung's right hand made a threatening motion. He could read in the prefect's white, scared face as soon as he began to lie.

"You goee there playee cardee wiz him, many timee," said Wun Lung. "You knowee all about that. Tell me where finde him?"

"He—he has a room overlooking the verandah at the back of the house," faltered Loder. "The room with the diamond-paned window."

"Me findee."

Loder sank back with a gasp. Incredible as it seemed, he knew that he had been within an ace of death. He had saved his life by telling what he knew. But what was to happen

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now? Indistinct visions of some fearful deed to be enacted at the Cross Keys came over his dazed and terrified mind.

"Me goee finde Jobling," said Wun Lung. "Me askee him. If he no tellee, me killy. You stayee here, Lodee, and sayee noting. You say wordee, me comee bakkee killy."

Wun Lung glided away.

The door was unlocked; it opened, and closed again. The Chinese was gone.

Loder lay back on his pillows, panting, bathed in perspiration. He could hardly believe that the scene had been real. Had he dreamt it—had he been in the grip of a horrible nightmare?

It was real enough. His life had been threatened; he had barely escaped. And what should he do now? The Chinese was gone. Even while Loder was panting there with terror that would not quite leave him, the young Chinaman was on his way to the Cross Keys to seek Jobling. What was to happen? If Jobling refused to speak, Loder knew what would happen. He shuddered at the thought. But, then, it was not likely. Jobling was not of the stuff of which heroes were made. The sight of the Chinese dagger would be enough for him, if he believed that Wun Lung was in earnest. But what if he did not believe it—if he were obstinate, and carried his obstinacy too far? What then?

Loder lay trembling as he thought it out. He knew what his duty was—to give the alarm at once, and have the Chinese seized before he could reach his destination.

But he could not do that without betraying himself.

Expulsion from Greyfriars and certain ruin—that was the price he would have to pay! And yet to risk allowing a murder to be committed. But surely Jobling would have sense enough to speak, and save his life, as Loder had done?

The wretched prefect lay in fear and trembling, unable to decide; and with every moment that passed in miserable indecision, he knew that the desperate Chinese, with a deadly purpose in his heart, was approaching nearer and nearer to his destination.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

On the Track of the Chinese!

THE moon was glimmering in at the high windows of the Remove dormitory.

Twelve o'clock had struck.

Perhaps it was the deep boom from the clock-tower that awakened Bob Cherry, or perhaps it was the dream that troubled his slumber. In his sleep he had pictured Wun Lung, with the Chinese dagger in his hand, stealing into Loder's study, and he awoke with a start, almost convinced that the vision was real. He gave a gasp of relief to discover himself in bed in the dorm, and all quiet about him.

He glanced, however, towards Wun Lung's bed.

The moonlight glimmered on the white coverlet, and Bob Cherry started as he looked.

For the bed was empty!

Bob sat up quickly.

There was no doubt about it. The little Celestial's bed was unoccupied—he was gone! With a bound, Bob Cherry was out of bed.

"Wun Lung!" he called out softly. "Wun Lung!"

But there was no reply. The little Chinese was not in the room. Bob Cherry gritted his teeth hard together.

He had been deceived. He knew that now. The opium was another of Wun Lung's cunning tricks; the deep sleep had been a pretence. Bob had wondered where the Chinese had obtained the opium. He knew now that it was not opium at all. The little rascal had been humbugging him all the time in order to escape from his watch.

Bob shook Harry Wharton by the shoulder and awakened him.

"Get up—quick!" he muttered. "Wun Lung—he's up to some mischief."

Wharton rubbed his eyes.

"Isn't he asleep—the opium?"

"It was a rotten trick! He's gone!"

"My what!"

Harry Wharton was out of bed in a moment. He realised at once how serious the matter was. Bob Cherry's face was white in the moonlight.

"He's gone down," muttered Bob. "Loder—What may have happened?"

"After him—quick!"

Without stopping to dress, the two juniors hurried out of the dormitory.

All was quiet in the house.

There was no sound of alarm; but that silence was more terrible than alarm could have been. What had the Chinese been doing?

"Loder's study—and quick!" Wharton muttered.

They ran downstairs, making no sound with their bare feet. It was chilly in the passages, but they did not notice it. Their hearts were thumping with anxiety.

They reached Loder's room, in the Sixth Form passage, in a few moments, and paused outside the door to listen.

Had Wun Lung been there?

There was no sound in the study. Had the Chinese been there? Had anything happened to Loder? The juniors felt that they must know. Harry Wharton opened the door softly.

A startled voice came from the direction of the bed in the alcove.

"You young villain! Have you come back?"

It was Loder's voice. The juniors breathed more freely as they heard it. The bully of the Sixth was safe, at all events. But his question showed that the Chinese had been there.

They entered the study, and Wharton closed the door. They could see Loder's white, scared face staring at them from the bed.

"It's us, Loder," said Harry quietly.

Loder panted with relief.

"Wharton!"

"Yes. Has Wun Lung been here?"

"Has he?" muttered Loder, between his teeth. "Yes, the murderous young hound, he has! He threatened my life!"

"He hasn't hurt you?" said Bob.

"No."

"Where is he now?"

Loder hesitated. He had been debating in his mind how to stop the little Chinese from making that midnight visit to Mr. Jobling's quarters at the Cross Keys. The arrival of the juniors came just at the right time—if he should tell them all. Should he?

"Buck up!" said Bob Cherry. "We want to find that young ass before he does any harm. Do you know where he's gone?"

"Yes," muttered Loder. "And there may be murder done, for all I know."

"Quick, then, tell us!"

"He thinks you know what's become of his minor," said Harry Wharton. "I believe he's ready to do anything with that idea in his head."

"I know that!" muttered Loder, shivering at the remembrance of the curved dagger, seeming still to see the cold glitter of steel in the moonlight. "He came near murdering me, if I hadn't told him!"

"What did you tell him? Where is he gone?"

"I—I happened to know that a—a man I know had a hand in the kidnapping," Loder stammered. "I—I had to tell the little beast to save my life. Wun Lung's gone to look for him."

"Then you knew about Hop Hi—about the man waiting for him in the wood?" Bob Cherry exclaimed. "Wun Lung was right, then?"

"No, no. I didn't know. I—I thought it was all a lark. I was taken in!" Loder exclaimed hastily. "I hadn't the faintest idea of what was intended. I—I thought it was a lark to cut off his pigtail. I'll swear that was all."

"Oh! And the man you've told Wun Lung about—who is he?"

"His name's Jobling."

"Jobling the bookie?"

"Ye-es."

"He puts up at the Cross Keys," said Bob. "Has Wun Lung gone there to find him?"

"Yes," muttered Loder. "The room with the diamond-paned window, looking over the verandah at the back—that's his room. Wun Lung's gone there, and—and he's got a knife."

"How long ago?"

"I don't know. About twenty minutes, I think."

"Twenty minutes!" muttered Bob. "He's had time to get there if he hurried. Goodness knows what may have happened."

"Murder, perhaps," said Loder, with a shudder. "It's not my fault. I had to tell him. He'd have knifed me here in bed if I hadn't."

"Come on!" said Wharton briefly.

"You're going after him?" exclaimed Loder.

"Yes."

They did not waste any more time on Loder. They hurried from the room, back to the dormitory to dress themselves. There was no doubt in their minds as to what they should do. Their duty was to go after Wun Lung at once and save him from committing some desperate deed, if there was yet time.

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THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

To the Rescue!

HARRY WHARTON'S voice was thick and husky. What had the Chinese done?

The sight of the knife, the silence of the room from which he had emerged, seemed to tell their own tale.

"What have you done, Wun Lung?"

"Allee light."

"Tell me what you've done?"

"Nothing."

"Jobling—have you hurt him?" breathed Harry.

"No hurt."

Wharton drew a deep breath of relief.

"Allee lightee, old pallee," whispered Wun Lung. "Mo

Frank Nugent was awake, and sitting up in bed as they came into the dormitory.

"Oh, here you are!" he exclaimed. "What's the row?"

"Wun Lung's gone out with a knife. He's on the track of the man who kidnapped Hop Hi," said Wharton hastily. "We're going after him."

"Great Scott! I'll come too. Shall I wake Johnny?"

"No; three's enough, if there's anything to be done. Dress—quick!"

The three juniors bundled into their clothes. They moved silently; they did not want to awaken the other fellows and have awkward questions asked. It did not take them long to dress; and, carrying boots in their hands, they stole on tip-toe out of the dormitory.

At the end of the passage they paused to put on their boots.

Then they stole into the box-room, and Wharton opened the window cautiously. In a few minutes more they were on the ground and scudding across the Close.

Not a moment was wasted.

They climbed the school wall, and dropped into the road, and side by side sprinted down the glimmering road towards Friarale.

Not a word was exchanged as they ran; there was no need for talk. Their thoughts were following the little Chinese, and gruesome pictures rose in their minds of what he might be doing—of what he might have done. He must have reached the Cross Keys long ago. From what Loder had told him, he knew exactly where to find the accomplice of the kidnapper, and they dreaded to think of what might have followed.

"Here we are!" panted Bob Cherry, as they halted outside the Cross Keys.

The public-house was dark and silent. Not a light glimmered in any of the windows. The juniors turned into the path beside the inn, and gained the garden in the rear of the building.

There they paused, scanning the back of the house. Was Wun Lung there, or had he been, and gone again?

"Which is Jobling's room?" muttered Bob Cherry, trying to keep his teeth from chattering.

Harry Wharton pointed to a window, of which the diamond panes glimmered in the moonlight. It was open!

"He's there!" muttered Nugent.

"We shall have to go in," said Harry, in a low voice. "It's easy enough to climb over the verandah. Come on!"

But Bob Cherry clutched his arm.

"Hold on!"

A face had appeared at the window.

It showed up clearly in the moonlight; it was the little yellow face of Wun Lung.

He was looking out into the garden. The three juniors were hidden by the deep shadow of a big oak-tree, and the Chinese did not see them.

"He's coming out!" Nugent murmured.

Wharton shuddered. Whatever Wun Lung had gone there for had been done. Was it a deed of blood?

"Keep close," he muttered. "We'll collar him as he comes down, and make him tell us what he's done!"

"Right-ho!"

They waited silently in the shadow of the big tree, watching the Chinese schoolboy. Wun Lung climbed lightly out of the window, active as a monkey, and dropped upon the roof of the verandah, and thence to the ground. As his feet touched the ground, the three juniors sprang forward and surrounded him.

"Wun Lung!"

The little Chinese uttered a startled exclamation, and sprang away, and there was a glitter of steel in the moonlight as a weapon appeared in his hand.

But he recognised the juniors the next instant, and the dagger disappeared into his loose clothes.

"Wun Lung!" Wharton clutched him by the shoulder. "You mad young idiot! What have you done?"

makee him talkee, that is allee. Him tellee where Hop Hi keepee prisoner!"

"And you haven't hurt him?" asked Bob Cherry, with a gasp.

Wun Lung shook his head.

"No hurtee. Allee light. Me holdee daggee to thloatee—him allee—him tellee me, allee samee Lodee!"

"Oh, good!"

"Me flighten Lodee—makee him tellee—me flighten Jobling—makee him tellee," the little Celestial explained.

"Then—then you wouldn't have hurt Loder?" said Nugent.

A grim look came over Wun Lung's face, and his eyes glinted like steel.

"If he no tellee, me killy," he said simply. "Lodee savvy that, and he tellee. Samee wiz Jobling—he knowee me killy if not tellee!"

"You mad young duffer!"

"Me findee Hop Hi, or killy kidnapee. What you tinkee?"

"He's such a beastly liar," said Bob uneasily. "We've got to make sure that he hasn't hurt Jobling!"

"Lookke!" said Wun Lung, pointing up to the window he had left.

The juniors looked up. In the moonlight they caught a glimpse of Mr. Jobling's fat, puffy face, white and drawn now with fear. With a trembling hand, the bookmaker closed his window, and they heard him fasten it.

"Allee lightee!" grinned Wun Lung.

"All right," said Harry. "Let's get out of this. Keep hold of him, Bob!"

"You bet!" said Bob Cherry grimly.

His strong grasp had closed on the little Chinese's arm, and he did not mean to let go again. Wun Lung submissively followed the juniors out of the garden.

They paused under the trees in the lane.

"No goee backee to Gleyfiars now," said Wun Lung. "Me goee findee my minor!"

"Tell us what you've got out of Jobling," said Wharton, "then we'll see about it. Mind, if you try to get away from us, you'll get hurt!"

"Me goee findee Hop Hi. You comee helpee if likee."

"You certainly won't go without us," said Harry. "Tell us what Jobling has told you."

"Allee light."

Wun Lung's eyes wandered; but Bob Cherry's grip on his arm was not to be broken.

The little Chinese seemed to be submissive, but Bob Cherry did not take any chances with him. His grasp never relaxed for a moment. He did not mean to let Wun Lung have any further opportunities for using his Chinese dagger that night.

"What did he tell you? Out with it!" said Nugent.

"He knowee who kidnapee Hop Hi," said Wun Lung. "Kidnappee to makee fader payee ransom—you savvy? Bad Chinaman namee Foo-Chung!"

"Do you know where he is?"

"Little cottagee—downee river!"

"You know where to find it?"

"Jobling tellee me—little place called Ivy Cottagee—"

"I know that place," said Bob Cherry. "We've often passed it in the boats. It's been untenanted for years."

"That's where Foo-Chung keepee Hop Hi prisoner. Tomorrow or next day takee him away," said Wun Lung. "But no takee—me stoppee him!"

"I suppose Jobling was telling the truth," said Harry Wharton thoughtfully. "That's just the place where a kidnapped chap could be hidden."

"Me savvy. Jobling afraid of daggee—me knowee. Me goee dere findee Hop Hi—what you tinkee?"

Wharton considered. If Hop Hi was kept a prisoner in the lonely cottage, and his kidnapper intended to remove him to a more distant place as soon as the coast was clear, then the sooner a rescue was attempted the better. But if the kidnapper was some Chinaman, as reckless and desperate as Wun Lung himself, or more so, it would be no light task getting the kidnapped Second-Former out of his hands.

"Shall we go to the police?" asked Nugent. "If we told old Grimes at Courtfield—"

"No wastee timee," said Wun Lung obstinately. "Policee sillee foollee. Give alarmee in coming—Foo-Chung gettee Hop Hi away in boatee, plaps—plaps killy. No wastee timee—me goee findee Hop Hi now!"

"But he may be guarded—"

"Only Foo-Chung at cottage wiz Hop Hi—Jobling tellee me."

"He may be armed," said Nugent. "He may cut up rough, and we don't want the job of handling a blessed foreign desperado with a knife!"

Wun Lung grinned.

"Pletty certain cuttee up roughee," he said. "But me handle him—me stickee wiz daggee—and takee Hop Hi. What you tinkee?"

"You young lunatic, you won't stick him with a daggee!"

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NEXT MONDAY—"ALONZO'S MARVELLOUS MIXTURE!"

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growled Bob Cherry, compressing his grip on the Chinese's arm. "You'll hand that sticker over to me before we leave this spot! Do you hear?"

"You comee wiz me rescue Hop Hi?"

"Yes," said Wharton. "We'll cut some sticks here, and the four of us will be able to handle this rotter Foo-Chung, knife or no knife. What do you fellows say?"

"I'm on!" said Bob Cherry at once; and Nugent nodded assent.

"It's up to us!" said Harry. "If we go to the police there will be delay—they mayn't even believe the story; and, then, the police won't approve of Wun Lung's methods of getting information, either. People aren't allowed to wake chaps up in the middle of the night and threaten them with blessed Chinese daggers, even if they are kidnappers. The less said about this the better!"

"Handsome Hally Walton quite lightee."

"Oh, cheere it! We'll take the job on, you chaps. Let's cut some cudgels here and get along, and chance it!"

"Right-ho!" said Nugent.

"I'll have that sticker to start with," said Bob Cherry grimly. "I know you've got it about you this time, Wun Lung; and you're going to hand it over, or I'm going to wring your yellow neck—savvy?"

Wun Lung grinned and nodded.

"Handsome Bob Chelly—"

"Cheere it, and hand over the carving-knife!"

Wun Lung obediently extracted the dangerous-looking weapon from some recess in his clothes, and handed it over. Then Bob Cherry released him. It did not occur to Bob's simple mind that the Chinese might have another weapon about him.

"Cheerful-looking thing, ain't it?" said Bob, holding up the curved dagger. "I should like to live in the country where they carry these things about—I don't think! Still, it will come in useful now—better than a pocket-knife!"

And Bob used the savage-looking weapon to cut four stout cudgels from the thicket.

The juniors took one each; and then Bob put the blade of the dagger under his boot, and snapped it off at the hilt. Wun Lung uttered a cry.

"You blakee my daggee!"

"Just so," said Bob coolly. "And you're lucky that I don't break your neck, too. You won't have a chance of doing any more damage with that sticker!"

He tossed the broken blade into the ditch. The hilt, which was encrusted with jewels, and probably of great value, he handed back to the little Chinese.

"Daggee my property," said Wun Lung angrily. "You blakee. You bad lotter!"

"You can call me all the bad rotters you like," said Bob, with a chuckle, "but I'm going to break up every sticker I find you with, I warn you. Murder isn't cultivated as a fine art in this country."

"Me velly angly—"

"Never mind that; come on!"

"Come on, Wun Lung; we're going to find Hop Hi!" said Harry Wharton. And the countenance of the little Chinese cleared.

"Allee light! Me forgivee handsome Bob Chelly!"

"Handsome Bob Chelly doesn't care twopence whether you forgive him or not!" growled Bob. "Shut up your soft sawder, and hop it!"

And the four juniors started.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Fight With the Kidnapper!

THE waters of the Sark gleamed in the moonlight as the juniors came out on the towing-path. It was strange and eerie following the lonely path at that dead and silent hour of the night. The juniors could not help wondering what the Head of Greyfriars would have thought if he could have known where they were, and the errand upon which they were bound. If they succeeded in rescuing Hop Hi, and taking him back to Greyfriars with them, the Head would know. But they felt that their infraction of the rules of the school would be justified by their success. And it would be a feather in the cap of the Co. to have effected the rescue of the kidnapped junior.

But the rescue was not effected yet. At the lonely cottage there was a desperate ruffian to encounter, and though there were four of them they knew that the risk was great.

They stopped at last on the towing-path in sight of the little cottage, half hidden by the trees, and covered with ivy.

"There's the place!" said Bob.

"That's the placee," said Wun Lung, his eyes glittering.

"Hop Hi prisoner theree."

The cottage was dark and silent. Kidnapped and kidnapper were both probably fast asleep at that hour. It was just one in the morning.

"How are we going to get in?" said Nugent. "If we could take the scoundrel by surprise we might collar him!"

"We'll try the door."

They advanced cautiously up the weed-grown, neglected path, and entered the ivy-clad porch. Wharton ran his hand over the door. It was securely fastened within.

"The window!" said Bob.

There were three windows to the cottage. But each of them was covered by strong wooden shutters, and the shutters were fastened with padlocks.

The juniors paused, undecided.

"We've got to bust a way in, and chance it!" said Bob Cherry at last.

"Looks like it."

"After all, we're four to one if there's trouble!" said Nugent. "And we needn't stand on ceremony with a kidnapper."

"If fightee kills!" said Wun Lung.

"We won't kill him, you fathead; but we can stun him if necessary," said Wharton. "Come on; we've got to knock him up!"

"He won't open the door if we knock," said Bob.

"Bustee dool in!" said Wun Lung. "Blingee bootee stletcher, bustee dool!"

"That's the idea!" said Harry. "Look here! It's settled that we're going in, whether the man lets us in or not. We may as well bust in the door to start with, and save time! There's a boat down there in the rushes. We can take the rudder off and use it as a giddy battering-ram."

"Right you are!"

"Or the boat itself," suggested Bob Cherry quickly. "We can take it all together, and bump it on the door, and knock the whole blessed thing through with one whack."

"Good egg!"

The juniors hurried down to the riverside. The boat moored in the rushes was a light skiff, easy to lift and handle, but quite heavy and solid enough to be used as a battering-ram. They lifted it, and bore it up the garden path to the porch.

Two fellows on either side of the skiff, they grasped it firmly, and at a signal from Wharton, rushed forward, and dashed it against the door.

Crash!

The sudden crash of the concussion sounded like thunder in the stillness of the night. The juniors reeled back from the shock. The door shook and trembled and cracked. The cottage seemed to shake to its foundations.

"Buck up!" gasped Wharton. "One more like that will do it!"

A startled cry was heard within the cottage. The juniors did not heed it. They rushed the boat forward again, and it crashed upon the door.

This time the shock burst it through. The door crashed away in fragments from bolts and hinges, and the skiff fell in the doorway. The way was open before the chums of Greyfriars.

A startled, furious face glared at them from the shadows within. There was a glimmer of steel in a sinewy hand.

"Who are you?" exclaimed a savage voice. "What you wantee?"

Wun Lung sprang forward.

"Me wantee Hop Hi!"

"Stand back!" yelled the Chinaman in the narrow passage within.

"No standee backee!"

"Hold on, Wun Lung!" roared Bob Cherry. "He's got a knife!"

But the little Chinese did not heed. His hand was under his loose garments for a moment. It came out with a blade glittering in it. Knife in hand, the little Chinese leaped into the cottage.

Crash!

The loud sound of steel ringing on steel rang through the night.

"After him!" panted Bob.

The juniors rushed in. They were confused by the darkness as they passed out of the moonlight into the shadowy cottage. But they made out two forms fighting savagely, the knives playing like serpents of flame. Leaping, turning, twisting like tigers, the big Chinaman and the little Wun Lung attacked one another with savage ferocity. No one would have recognised Wun Lung now as the little submissive Chinese of the Greyfriars Remove. All the ferocity of the savage East was in his drawn, hard face, and glittering in his eyes.

Crash, crash! And a yell of pain! Wun Lung's blade had gashed along the arm of the big Chinaman, and there was red.

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on the shining blade now. Foo-Chung sprang back, panting, gripping his knife for a spring.

Harry Wharton grasped Wun Lung by the shoulder and dragged him back.

"Lottee go!" panted the Chinese.

Foo-Chung leaped forward, and there was a clang as Bob Cherry's cudgel struck the deadly weapon from his hand.

Crash!

At the same moment Nugent's stick descended upon the Chinaman's head, and Foo-Chung staggered, with an inarticulate cry, and fell like a log.

Wun Lung tore himself loose, and sprang forward; but Harry Wharton hurled him aside, and he staggered away. In a moment more Bob Cherry had snatched the knife from him.

"Givee me! Me kill!" yelled Wun Lung furiously.

"Hold the mad fool!" panted Bob.

He tossed the knife far away, and it fell with a splash into the river. Foo-Chung's weapon followed it, gleaming in the moonlight as it circled in the air, and then disappeared into the waters.

Wun Lung was struggling in the grasp of Wharton and Nugent. Foo-Chung sat up dazedly, groping blindly for a weapon, and finding none. He scrambled to his feet, and made a spring through the open doorway. He realised that all was up, and he was thinking now only of escape.

"Collar him!" shouted Bob.

He grasped at the Chinaman, but the powerful ruffian hurled him aside, sprang out of the doorway, and fled.

In a moment he had disappeared into the darkness of the wood bordering the river.

"You young ass!" growled Wharton, as Wun Lung ceased to struggle. "You've let that hound get away, with your rot! Chuck it!"

"Me solly!" murmured Wun Lung, meek and calm again as if by magic. "Me losee headee. Me wantee killy. No, not likee English boy."

"Well, he's gone," said Nugent. "Never mind, if we find Hop Hi. Let's look for him."

One of the doors in the little passage was locked and bolted on the outside. It was pretty evident that that was the room where the prisoner was kept. To unfasten it did not take long, and Wharton threw the door open.

Wun Lung ran into the darkened room.

"Hop Hi!" he called out.

There was a joyous cry in the darkness.

"Me here!"

Wharton struck a match.

Hop Hi, awakened by the attack on the cottage, had started out of bed, recovered now from the opium sleep into which the kidnapper had plunged him. Wun Lung grasped him and embraced him affectionately, murmuring words in a weird language comprehended only by his minor.

"Well, we've found him!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Good luck! Now you've recovered your lost property, Wun Lung, we'd better clear."

"Allee light!" chuckled Wun Lung.

And they cleared.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Safe and Sound!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. took their way back to Greyfriars in an extremely satisfied frame of mind. Hop Hi trotted along with them, leaning on his major's arm, still weak from the effects of the opium that had been administered to him. The juniors kept a wary eye open for Foo-Chung, but the Chinaman did not reappear. He was making good his escape, and on second thoughts the juniors were not sorry that he had gone. The search the police would make for him would make it necessary for him to flee the country, and the little Chinese would be safe from any further attempt, and his escape would prevent awkward questions being asked as to Gerald Loder's participation in the matter. For the Co. had decided that nothing was to be said about Loder.

"The rotters made use of Loder," Harry Wharton remarked, as they tramped back to Greyfriars in the moonlight. "He didn't know what they meant; he acted like a rotter, but not like a criminal. But if it all comes out he may find it rather hard to make people believe that. At any rate, we don't want to give him away. It's no business of ours to get a Greyfriars fellow sacked from the school—even Loder."

"Right-ho!" said Bob Cherry. "But we shall have to explain how we found Hop Hi. What are we going to say?"

"Allee lightee," said Wun Lung. "No tellee about Lodee. Me tellee whoopee."

Bob Cherry snorted.

Concluded on page 27, column 2.)

ALARMING RESULTS OF HAIR NEGLECT.

**Roots Choked with Scurf, Baldness Encouraged,
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PUT NEW LIFE INTO YOUR HAIR BY THE "HARLENE HAIR-DRILL" METHOD.

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THE DANGER.

A speedy result of hair neglect is the accumulation on the scalp of scurf and greasy matter.

Mingling with the perspiration, these deposits collect around the hair, and press down into the follicles (sheaths in which the hair grows).

Here they set up a diseased condition of the hair-growing structures, squeezing the hair-roots out of existence.

The first symptom of trouble is the splitting of the hair at the ends. Then the hair becomes dry, brittle, or, maybe, greasy, dull, and dead-looking.

Things rapidly become worse, greyness ensuing, and it is not long before your hair falls out in large quantities every time you brush or comb it.

**YOU LOOK YEARS OLDER
THAN YOU OUGHT TO LOOK.**

Further, you are probably tormented by an almost intolerable itching of the scalp, while steadily your hair is getting scantier and more unattractive.

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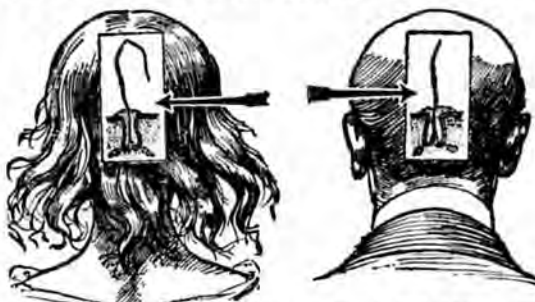
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Waga applauded by hammering the dish with the spoon, and laughed uproariously.

"Shut up, you fathead!" said the prince, in a hoarse whisper. "I'm good! Don't give me away!"

"As I told you, I got this from my friend, the Italian doctor at Para," went on Ferrers Lord. "It was waiting for me at home after our trip to Mysteria. With it came a letter and a brown, shrivelled fragment of a bulb. Orchids are wonderfully tenacious of life, as you know, and I employ the most expert grower alive. The miserable little brown fragment threw out a shoot, and finally a poor, weak spray. My man nearly went mad. There were eight buds on the spray. They were blue—as blue as the edge of a forget-me-not."

"Is that a rare colour, then?" asked Thurston innocently. "I fancy I have seen plenty."

Ferrers Lord laughed softly.

"Well, let that pass," he said. "An orchid may be worth half a crown or thousands of guineas. Mine—well, it does not matter. It was a weakling, and the blooms were only the size of a shilling. It pined and departed. The poor fellow who found it—he drew this plan—died at Para. Some natives found him adrift in a canoe raving mad. He had lost his companions, and was practically naked. He never recovered his reason until the last, but he muttered about blue orchids and the fortune he had won."

"An hour or so before he died he seemed fairly sensible. There were many ill at the time, and unfortunately Angelinetta had too much to do to listen. The orchid I received blossomed blue. This poor fellow—Oscar Whateman—declared that they grew like blackberries in a Devonshire lane somewhere indicated on that queer plan. We are getting so fat and lazy that I thought we would make a run up the Amazon. If we succeed, all the better for his wife and children."

"And if we fail?"

"It will do them no harm," answered Ferrers Lord, with his quiet smile; "and we shall have had our trip."

Ching-Lung threw a cigar at Gan-Waga—a gift that pampered Eskimo received without a word of thanks.

"I am sorry I can't raise any enthusiasm, Lord," said the prince. "Of course, the prospect of the trip fills me with exceeding bliss; but you can't expect a sane and serious person like myself to cheer at the idea of chasing a mouldy vegetable. Mouldy is correct—oh, Rupert? Most of the mouldiness I've met was a beautiful blue."

"Green, Chingy, yo' silliness!" crowed Gan-Waga. "Mouldiness alls butterfuls green."

"So are you, Eskimoses—as green as the grass that grew on the thatch of the house that Jack built!" Ching-Lung picked up the paper and became serious. "With only this to go on," he said, "it strikes me that it would be about as easy to find a blue moon as a cerulean—good word that for a boy—orchid."

"What slooliam, Chingy? Not knows dat chaps," said Gan-Waga.

"Blue, you cripple—blue!"

Gan thought it over.

"I 'members das perpressions, Chingy," he gurgled. "Ho, ho, ho! I go and calls Prouts a slooliam mugwumps!"

"You'll come back with an inflated left ear, child, if you do," said Ching-Lung. "Hit him first when he isn't looking, and then call him what you like. Anyhow—git!"

Gan-Waga licked the last fragments from the dish, pocketed the spoon, and departed, chuckling.

"Is that all, old chap?" asked Thurston, after a pause.

"Isn't it enough?"

"I'll tell you later," said Thurston. "The Amazon is new to me, and, so far, I don't think much of it. I may add that I have a deep respect for the Amazonian mosquitos. They're the most industrious kind I ever met with."

"Oh, come on deck and feed the poor starving things!" said Ching-Lung. "I want to stretch my legs."

Pedro the Pilot—A Wet Five Minutes—Crippled—The Pursuer.

The half-breed was at the Philomel's wheel. The pocket of his ragged shirt contained a quantity of abominable tobacco, and thrust through one of his ear-rings was a little roll of cigarette-papers. He smoked cigarettes incessantly, using only one hand to roll them with a dexterity that only those with a dash of Spanish blood in their veins can achieve. And all the time his keen, black eyes watched the yellow water. He belonged to that extraordinary type brought

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about by a mingling of races which strangles all the good and brings out all the evil in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred. He was a merry, happy-go-lucky rascal, who would have stabbed a stranger without compunction for the price of a pint of sour wine or aguardiente, and have faced a storm of bullets in defence of a friend. But he was a good pilot.

"Go to the wheel, Prout, and send that fellow to me!" said Ferrers Lord, sinking into a deck-chair.

Prout saluted. Pedro, all in rags, his cigarette-stained fingers covered with sham diamond rings made in Birmingham at two pounds a gross, swaggered forward with the air of a duke, and grinned.

"I don't know which to admire most—his tailor or his jeweller," said Ching-Lung.

"I should like to meet his tobaccoist—argued with a sledge-hammer," said Thurston, getting a whiff of a cigarette. "No jury would convict if I slew him. He's a strange-looking merchant. What's your name?"

"Pedro, senior."

The half-breed displayed a set of magnificent teeth, and bowed.

"You brought the Britisher—the mad Britisher, to Para?" Pedro, said Ferrers Lord, in soft Spanish.

Pedro looked puzzled, and shook his head. His face brightened as the millionaire spoke in another language.

"Yes, yes!" He beamed with delight. "I find two sovereign, and I get drunk. It was e-e-splendid!"

Thurston and Ching-Lung were compelled to laugh.

"It seems a pity to waste my Indian dialect on you when you speak such English," said Ferrers Lord. "Can you read?"

"On money, Excellency!"

"No; on paper, not on money, you thieving rascal!" said Ching-Lung.

"On ze banknotes—zen I read," said Pedro, bowing lower.

"Then read that."

Pedro took the dead Whateman's last message in his hand, and held it upside-down. He turned it over.

"For a sovereign—" began Thurston.

"No." The muzzle of a tiny revolver glinted between Ferrers Lord's fingers.

"You will oblige," he said drily.

Unhesitatingly, and still all smiles, the half-breed read out the four short lines written below the plan.

"Do you know the place?"

"I know Obidos, senior."

"That will do for the present, Pedro," said Ferrers Lord. "We will go to Obidos. And, Senior Pedro, no tricks, you must kindly understand! You have an excellent master, but one who is very hard to please. When I find that I have no use for the attendance of such a gentleman as yourself, I dismiss him—so!"

He pointed to a coil of rope that lay on the deck. Pedro smiled happily.

"I will take you to Obidos, senior, on the honour of a gentleman."

"I trust so," answered the millionaire grimly. "It would be a sad thing to see a gentleman like yourself hanging from the branch of a tree. Now give me that letter."

"A letter, senior?"

Pedro was the picture of amazement. Ferrers Lord put the revolver in his pocket.

"O'Rooney!" he called. "Throw this fellow overboard! A ten-mile swim will do him good!"

In an instant Barry's powerful arms were round the pilot, holding him inert and helpless. He swung him from the deck, and then, with a quick wrench, lifted him above his head. There was a scream and a splash.

"Senior, senior!" shrieked a terrified voice.

A head appeared above the yellow water. The paddles were reversed, and O'Rooney threw a rope. Pedro's face was grey, and he was not smiling when he was dragged aboard.

"Thank you!" The millionaire took the dripping belt he had unbuckled, and looked at him. Pedro winced before his gaze.

"The fool who quarrels with me on such an occasion as this," he said, "seldom lives long enough to quarrel with other people. You will be wise to remember that. Go to your post!"

Smiling no longer, the half-breed slunk away. There were two pouches in the belt. In the first one Ferrers Lord found what he wanted. He nodded, and Joe came forward, touching his cap.

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"Dry that for me carefully," said Ferrers Lord. "And give that rogue some fresh tobacco."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

All that had happened had been merely a matter of minutes. The millionaire settled himself in his deck chair, and crossed his legs.

"You have a most original way of getting what you want, old chap," said Ching-Lung, with a grin. "I fancy you have scared poor little Pedro, and upset his nerves. What the deuce were you after?"

"A letter."

"I found that out. O silent one," said Ching-Lung; "but, to look at Pedro, however deceptive appearances may be, one would not consider him a gentleman with a large correspondence."

"That is true, Ching, but I knew he had a letter from Hans Freidrich Hausmann."

"What!" cried Rupert. "That fat, impossible patent mouse-trap merchant we met on the racecourse at Buenos Ayres when that ugly-looking mare of yours won the Cup? He was savage that day."

There was a queer twinkle in the millionaire's eyes as he nodded.

"You must not speak of Hans Freidrich Hausmann disrespectfully," he laughed. "He certainly laid the foundations of his vast wealth by inventing a mouse-trap; but a good mouse-trap is a benefit to humanity. I admit that he is fat, and that he speaks atrocious English. I also admit that when my mare—for which I gave exactly eighty pounds—beat his fifteen-thousand-guinea flyer by a nose, he was wrathful. But Hans is a dangerous person to fall foul of. He hates me gloriously, and, oddly enough, controls and practically owns the firm of Euphrosi, Clotie, & Bryan, orchid importers, Brussels."

Ching Lung and Rupert Thurston sat up erect. They were thoroughly interested now.

"Ho, ho! I am beginning to see in the dark," said Ching-Lung. "He knows about the blue orchid, then?"

"I am perfectly certain of it," replied the millionaire.

"Over that race, the man of mousetrap fame owes me fifty thousand pounds. He forced the wager on me in the hotel—fifty thousand pounds to ten thousand against my mare. I did not want it, but I could not say 'No' before a grinning crowd. Then he began to be somewhat offensive about my blue orchid, not knowing that the wretched little plant was dead and gone. In fact, he made himself an intolerable little ass. The champagne helped him to do it."

"Yes! Go on," said Thurston eagerly.

"As a rule, I have found him crafty, silent, and cunning, but he had drunk too much—excited over the racing, I suppose," said Ferrers Lord. "He began to brag, and declared that, sooner than permit me to own a famous plant of priceless value, he would flood Europe and America with blue orchids, and sell them at a guinea each. 'When the wine is in, the wit is out,' Rupert. I saw at once that he knew all about poor Whateman. That is the story. It merely remains to be proved whether he can fulfil his boast."

"That is why we left Buenos Ayres in such a hurry?"

"Exactly," Ferrers Lord yawned. "I should imagine that Hausmann's really magnificent yacht is about eighteen hours behind us. She is a good eight knots or more faster than we are."

Ching-Lung whistled. He had seen the splendid vessel at anchor in the harbour at Buenos Ayres.

"Does that mean trouble?" asked Thurston.

"Wait and see, my boy. Because Hausmann invented a mouse-trap and made money out of it, do not despise him. He is not a man who wears kid gloves. We are in a country where it is useless to whistle for the police. It is my impression that if we happen to meet, there will be a good deal of trouble. In any case"—his eyes twinkled again—"it would be shameful to allow a blue orchid to be sold for a paltry guinea."

"Hang your orchids!" said Ching-Lung—"blue, green, pink, purple, or any other colour—they're not in my line; but I'll do my level best to stop his Majesty of the Mouse-traps getting his thieving fangs on them. If they were only a special brand of bluebottles, I'll do it! Ah, here comes the tea! I see old Ru has a heavy question on his chest. When he looks as if he couldn't help it, he always wants to ask something. I'll save him the trouble. Man of darkness and mystery, tell us—oh, tell us—why did you bring us in this lovely two-wheeled bloater-box, instead of in a lordly Lord of the Deep?"

"Because I am a sportsman, Ching."

"My stars! We're fourteen all told, and Hausmann's yacht must carry eighty or ninety men."

"A hundred and three exactly," said Ferrers Lord.

"That is the number the Medea carries."

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"Dear, dear! I think we had better go back to Para by the next 'bus,'" grinned the prince.

The cup dropped from his hand. There was a loud report, and a cloud of steam poured out of the hatchway. Screaming with pain, and with both hands pressed over his eyes, the engineer staggered across the dock. The paddles ceased to revolve, the little boat swung round in the current, and more scalding steam rushed upwards.

Ferrers Lord dashed down the ladder; the steam-gauge had blown to shatters. It was not a serious accident, but it meant delay. He shouted an order to empty the furnace, and the blazing fuel was flung overboard as fast as the stokers could work. Ching-Lung attended to the injured man, who had been badly scalded, and the Philomel, broadside on, drifted helplessly on the yellow stream.

"Hallo! Souze me! What's that, Tommy?"

Maddocks splashed a long sweep overboard, and pointed down the river. A plume of smoke rose against the grey-blue sky. Ferrers Lord turned sharply, and then seized a pair of binoculars. He laughed.

"So Hausmann did not see the races out, after all," he muttered. "All the worse for us! That's the Medea. Blue orchids may be ridiculously cheap unless something amazing happens."

Throwing off his coat, he went to help Maddocks with the heavy sweep.

How the Philomel was Overhauled—A Traitor's Doom—Hausmann Shows His Teeth.

The Philomel carried a couple of spars, but the breeze was very light. Prout and Maddocks ran up a sail, and she began to drag slowly through the water, blowing off her steam. Then the breeze freshened a little, but still there was hardly a ripple under her bows. A haze hid the smoke of the approaching steamer.

"What do you intend to do, old chap?" Thurston asked the millionaire.

"Run her into some creek if I can," said Ferrers Lord. "We're a good sixteen miles from land, and we look like making it in about half that number of hours at this pace. It won't take long to repair the damage; but we can't get a head of steam on her in a few minutes. Take charge of her, and keep her dead north if you can, while I attend to affairs down below."

For every mile the vessel made to the north, she was making at least three to the east. With four men at each sweep, she did a little better. They worked until the perspiration was streaming from their faces. Once a great log missed them barely by a yard as it rolled seawards on the yellow current.

"It would be just as good to let 'er drift, souze me!" growled the bo's'n, mopping his fiery face. "This is gettin' 'ot. 'Ere, come and give us a 'and, blubberbiter. I 'ates laziness."

"Don' yo' nots very fond of yourself?" grinned Gan-waga, coming to the rescue. "Yo' all uglinesses."

"And you wouldn't win many prizes, souze me, 'cept in a pug-dog show!" said the bo's'n grumpily. "Just get 'old and I'll sling some water on that sail. Every scrap o' breeze blows clean through the rag as if it was a riddle, souze me!"

Thurston had taken the wheel.

"How far to land, Pedro?"

The half-breed rolled a cigarette and stared ahead.

"Eleven—twelve—thirteen miles, senor."

"It'll be pitch dark before we make a third of that distance," said Thurston.

There was a sound of hammering under his feet; they were already at work. Time dragged on, the light faded, and the steamy mist grew denser. The deck was wet with it. Suddenly Ferrers Lord, his face and hands as black as a sweep's, hurried on deck. Ching-Lung, equally dirty, followed him. The men gave a cheer as a cloud of smoke burst from the little funnel.

"Bravo!" cried Rupert. "You haven't wasted a lot of time over that."

"It wasn't so bad as it might have been, old man," said Ching-Lung; "but it was shockingly dirty. Do I look like an engineer, or a nigger minstrel at Blackpool? As soon as we get the kettle boiling we shall be all right. It's waiting for the silly thing to boil that makes you tired."

Ferrers Lord listened intently. The haze was too dense for his eyes to penetrate. He darted below again and returned in a suit of spotless flannels.

"Funny weather," said Ching-Lung. "It will rain in a minute and save me the trouble of washing. Something unpleasant is going to happen. I looked at the barometer just now, and it's tumbling down fast enough to break its neck. Hallo!" He swung round swiftly. "That's thunder!"

It was only a distant rumble, but it told of a gathering storm. A blue flash tore through the mist, lighting up the little vessel, and a deafening crash of thunder shook down a torrent of rain. Ferrers Lord smiled grimly.

"Tell them to pour some oil on the furnace!" he shouted. Presently a gush of flame hissed above the funnel. The order had been promptly obeyed. It was raining steadily, but there was no more lightning.

"I wouldn't like to insure her if we got caught in a squall, Lord," said Ching-Lung; "and I think I can smell one coming. What's that astern? It's a boat, by Jove, and a big 'un!"

He leaned over the stern-rail. The dull throbbing of a screw came out of the mist.

"That's the Medea," said Ferrers Lord quietly. "Shall we ask her for a tow?"

Ching-Lung started.

"Ho, ho! This is exciting! Sure it's Hausmann's tank?"

"Perfectly sure," answered Ferrers Lord. "I made her out distinctly. She must have sailed soon after us. Not a sound there! Keep quiet, lads!"

Throb, throb, throb, throb!

The strange atmosphere carried each noise clearly. The unseen vessel was swiftly coming up, and the Philomel barely moved enough to make her answer her rudder.

"You don't want to interview Herr Hans Friedrich Hausmann, then?" said the prince.

"Not if I can possibly avoid it, Ching," said Ferrers Lord, "even though he owes me fifty thousand pounds. He will pay that honestly enough when I ask for it. She's fairly close now."

The yacht, barely two hundred yards away and still invisible, was almost level with the Philomel.

"Medea! Medea! Aho—o—oy!"

Pedro's shout rang loudly over the water. He hurled himself from the bridge, and made a headlong plunge over the rail. The revolver in the millionaire's hand cracked twice, and there was a tiny splash of blood mingled with the spray as the water closed over the body of the traitor. And he did not rise.

Honk, honk! blared the siren.

"Drop that sail! Let her drift!"

The sail rattled down. All was silent. The big yacht had stopped her engines. Suddenly a gruff voice, speaking German, bellowed through a megaphone:

"What are you? Where are you? What do you want?"

Ching-Lung shook his fist in the direction of the invisible speaker. Prout and Maddocks exchanged puzzled glances.

"Beautiful fog," said Ching-Lung. "I bless thee! How many times haven't you helped me to dodge my poor, poor tailor? I think we'll just about dodge the interview with the fat one, Ferrers."

"I trust so. We can put up a fight."

"Aho—o—oy!" brayed the hoarse voice. "What do you want?"

Naturally there was no reply. The Philomel drifted away swiftly. Once more they heard the throb of the propeller. Ching-Lung winked.

"Farewell, my little Dutchman, with the voice so big," he began. "May you never eat sauer-kraut—"

A flash of lightning, so vivid that it almost blinded them, split the fog. In the momentary glare the beautiful yacht, painted snow-white, seemed almost near enough to touch. It vanished with the peal of thunder and the drenching down-pour that came at its heels.

"It's a case of pure luck now," said Ferrers Lord. "They have seen us."

Ching-Lung ducked involuntarily as something rushed over his head with a spiteful ping. He knew that sound of old—a bullet. There was a clatter of breaking glass, and then a plop! and the water began to gurgle out of Gan-Waga's bath. A flake of paint dropped from the funnel and another pane went with a rattle. Behind it all was the sharp report of a magazine-rifle.

"Lie down," said Ferrers Lord.

In a moment they were all flat on the deck. Thurston, on the bridge, was blowing his fingers. He had been holding the wheel when a bullet struck it, and the jar had practically paralysed his arm. Hausmann was plainly declaring his intentions. As Ferrers Lord had said, the fat little German was a man to be respected.

"This is maddening!" said Ching-Lung savagely. "This is—"

Honk, honk, honk!

It was a deeper sound than the Medea's siren, and it came from upstream. Again the fog was torn by a vivid flash of lightning, and yacht and paddle-boat showed clear in every detail. Then came a terrific crash as a flash of flame leapt from the yacht's tall deck. The little bridge collapsed, and Rupert Thurston's body dropped amid the ruins and rolled into the scuppers. The mist closed down, mingling with the choking smell of an exploded shell.

(This Grand New Serial will be continued Next Monday. Order Early.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 318.

NEXT MONDAY—

"ALONZO'S MARVELLOUS MIXTURE!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. Order Early!

THE END.

27

THE MISSING CHINEE!

(Concluded from page 22.)

"If I hear you telling any whoppers, I'll give you a jolly good thick ear!" he exclaimed.

"Well, we want to keep Loder out of it if we can," said Nugent. "We'll see. Here we are at Greyfriars. How are we going in, Harry?"

"No good sneaking in," said Harry. "We've got to own up and explain, and we may as well get it over. I'll ring up Gosling."

And he rang the bell.

"Which I'll report you," growled Gosling, as he unlocked the gates. "I'll report this ere, you trust me. Why, my boy, if that isn't young 'Op 'I, wot was missing!"

"We've rescued him," exclaimed Bob Cherry calmly. "On full consideration, we felt that we couldn't leave it to the bobbies, as they weren't really quite up to the job, so we took it in hand ourselves, Gossy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'll be blowed!" ejaculated the astonished Gosling.

And the juniors chuckled as they walked on to the School House. Bob Cherry climbed in through the box-room window, and came down to the door to let them in. Then they made their way to Mr. Quelch's room, and knocked.

"Who is there?" called out Mr. Quelch, awakened from slumber at the third or fourth thump on his door.

"Us, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"Is that you, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why are you up? What has happened?"

"We've found Hop Hi, sir."

"What!"

The juniors heard Mr. Quelch spring out of bed. They could imagine how the news had startled him, and they grinned.

"Thought we'd better report to you at once, sir," said Harry demurely.

"Quite right—quite right. Wharton! One moment, and I will be with you."

In a couple of minutes Mr. Quelch's door opened, and the Form-master appeared in his dressing-gown. His eyes turned upon Hop Hi at once, and he gazed at the little Chinese as if he could hardly believe that he was really there.

"Bless my soul!" Mr. Quelch exclaimed. "This is very fortunate. But—how did you do this, Wharton?"

"Wun Lung found out where he was, sir, and we went to help bring him back," explained Wharton. "Under the circumstances, sir, we hope you will excuse us for breaking bounds?"

"Most decidedly!" said Mr. Quelch. "Certainly, Wharton! I should hardly punish you, considering what you have done. You should certainly have called me in the first place; but never mind that now, as the matter has turned out so well. Hop Hi was kidnapped, then?"

"Yes, sir. We're sorry the man got away; but—"

"Never mind. The police will probably find him. You may all go to bed now, and explain further in the morning," said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir. Good-night!"

"Good-night, my dear boys!"

And the juniors marched off, sleepy but with great satisfaction, to their beds.

Greyfriars woke up the next morning, to discover that Hop Hi of the Second Form was safe in the school again. And there was a buzz of wonder at the news that Harry Wharton & Co. had rescued the kidnapped Chinese.

Loder of the Sixth was glad to hear that Hop Hi was safe and sound, but he trembled for the expected revelation of his own part in the affair. But the revelation was not made.

Wun Lung was questioned as to how he had discovered Hop Hi's hiding-place, but his knowledge of English failed him at that point, and it was never cleared up. Both the Chinese kidnapper and Mr. Jobling had disappeared promptly, and the police searched for them in vain.

It was a nine days' wonder at Greyfriars; but the chief wonder to Harry Wharton & Co. was to see little Wun Lung become once more his old meek and mild and placid self—scarcely recognisable as the Wun Lung whom they had seen on the warpath.

THE END.

27



My Readers' Page

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The Editor is always pleased to hear from his Chums, at home or abroad.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"ALONZO'S MARVELLOUS MIXTURE!"

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

As my chums will doubtless guess, our long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. for next week, entitled as above, deals largely with the amazing exploits of the irrepressible Alonzo Todd, the champion duffer of Greyfriars. Alonzo is simply determined to do good, thereby carrying out the valuable maxims of his famous Uncle Benjamin; but his efforts in this direction meet with the sort of reception that would discourage anyone but Alonzo. That cheerful youth, however, persists until finally almost every inhabitant of Greyfriars School heartily wishes that he had never heard of Alonzo, or of

"ALONZO'S MARVELLOUS MIXTURE!"

A SPLENDID OFFER TO ENTERPRISING READERS.

Some time ago I mentioned on this page a scheme which I had instituted whereby Colonial readers could make a very substantial addition indeed to their weekly income simply by doing a little "missionary work" for "The Magnet" Library and its companion papers amongst their friends. I started a special department to assist my Colonial chums who wished to take advantage of this scheme, and this department has been kept busy ever since in showing my enterprising Colonial readers how to begin their work; and not only giving them a free start, but actually putting a sum of money in their pockets to commence with!

The address I asked Colonials to write to for particulars of this scheme was "The Export Department," "The Magnet" Library, The Fleetway House, Farrington Street, London, E.C.

Now, the success of this scheme, together with the numerous letters I have received from readers living in the British Isles asking to be allowed to participate in it, has led me to make special arrangements for extending it.

I now offer to every reader living in any small town or village in the British Isles a chance of making a very handsome

CASH ADDITION

indeed to his or her weekly income by devoting a portion of leisure time each week to the congenial work of advancing the interests of "The Magnet" Library and its companion papers. The steady increase in the number of new friends that the four famous companion papers—"The Gem" and "Magnet" Libraries, "The Penny Popular," and "Chuckles"—are making each week has naturally caused these papers to stride ahead, and it is my wish that my loyal and energetic chums should reap a share in this prosperity. To take advantage of my new scheme, readers should write at once to:

"Sub-Agency," 24, Tudor Street, London, E.C.,

and mention the name of this paper. Each applicant will then receive full particulars of the scheme, and can then decide whether to take advantage of the offer or not.

My chums should take particular note of the address given above and should remember that they do not commit themselves to anything or place themselves under any obligation, whatever by sending for particulars of this interesting and advantageous scheme.

PIGEONS.

Breeds of Fancy Pigeons.

"Fancy Pigeons" are of about half a dozen different families or breeds, namely:

1. "Pigeons, ordinary"—that is, normal shape and feather formation, whose fancy points are confined to singularities of colour and markings. Many of these are called "Toys," and include the Ice and Suabian, the Crescent, the Starling, Bullfinch, Lark, and other varieties of singular plumage, colour, and shading; hence their names.

2. "Pigeons remarkable for similarities of flight." All these are more or less of normal shape, but frequently they are also singular because of the division of colour between white and other shades of plumage. However, all are called tumbling pigeons or "Tumblers." The round-shaped pigeons to which the term "Tumbler" is generally given are also variously classified according to the manner in which they perform or tumble. The ordinary Tumbler is a pigeon which, when it has reached a great height, suddenly rolls over and over downwards. Recovering themselves again, they rise upward and renew the same rolling performance. "Topplers" are now erroneously called "Tipplers," without sense or reason. "The Toppler" is a pigeon which, when it has reached a great height, systematically as it flies in extended circles, topples head over heels four or five times at regular intervals.

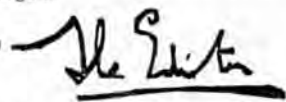
Another is the "Cumulet." This pigeon is so called because it is the highest of fliers. White is its colour, and when a flock of them are on the wing in a clear blue sky, they seem to resemble a small vapour cloud; so these are called cloud pigeons, i.e., cumulet from "cumulus," a cloud. The cumulet will fall or tumble downward, probably from a greater height than any other bird of the pigeon race. Besides these light flying tumblers there exists a very peculiar breed of Indian tumbling pigeons. These are called "Ground Tumblers," because they occasionally roll head over heels while on the ground in a most singular and ridiculous fashion; the bird that so performs for the longest time, and most frequently, is accounted the best.

The Pouter.

3. Another large family and breed of fancy pigeons is that which is singular because it possesses the power to distend and swell its crop to a most extraordinary degree. These are called by some "Croppers" and by others "Pouters." They are remarkable for two singularities, namely: for the largeness and smallness of bodily proportion. The English and Scotch Pouters, the Dutch and Flemish Croppers are among the largest of pigeons, while the small English Pouters are called "Pigmyes." The Austrian Pouters, and some other foreign kinds are, irrespective of their extended pout inflation, the smallest bodied of their race; but this diminutive proportion—hence their name "Pigmy"—is seemingly very much lessened by the inordinate length of their legs—most pouting pigeons are remarkable for their great length of limb.

4. Pigeons remarkable for peculiar formation of fleshy or rather warty growths over their beaks and round their eyes. These abnormal growths are called respectively "wattles" and "ceres," and form another very interesting and popular section of the kinds in which pigeons are to be found. The warty growths over and under the beaks of some are as large as walnuts, and much resemble that fruit. The Carrier Pigeon has such a wattle, while the Dragon has a wattle rather triangular in formation, called a "peg wattle." Antwerps and Barbs are also remarkable for abundance, and more or less largeness of the beak wattles. Carriers and Barbs are further famous for the round circular fleshy eyelids or "ceres" around the optic organ.

(Another Grand Article on
Pigeons Next Week.)



MYSTERIA.

By SIDNEY DREW.

(Concluded from Last Week.)

The End of Gan's Toffee.

It would not do to go to Joe. Gan thought he would try and find the keys, and visit the cold-storage-room himself.

He wrapped the saucepan, which was still fairly warm, in a sheet of brown paper, and, tucking it under his arm, trotted out.

Gan did not want to meet anyone, but, as is always the way on such occasions, he did.

He met Barry O'Rooney, and he met Prout. Gan involuntarily took a step back, and that was fatal. Had he gone straight on, all might have been well.

"What have you got there, souse me?" roared Maddock. "Are it more homlettes?"

"Bedad, the spalpeen's been thievin'!" said Barry. "Oi can see ut in his wicked oie. Phwat have yez got in that parcel, moi fat burglar? Shame on yez, Gan! Turra ut up. Phwat is ut?"

"Dat notings fo' yo', Irishes!" said Gan. "Yo' runs homes and washes yo'selfs!"

"Old him, souse me!" said Ben Maddock. "We ain't goin' to 'ave no thieves on this ship! 'Old him, Barry!" Barry caught Gan by the ear.

"Chingy!" squealed Gan. "Where are yo', Chingy?"

"Never mind him, souse me!" said the boatswain. "He's gone out for a walk on the lawn. What's in there?"

"Toffees," said Gan.

"Open it."

The Eskimo took off the paper. Both men staggered, and grasped their noses.

"Phwat did yez say ut was?" asked O'Rooney.

"What, souse me?" howled Benjamin.

"Toffees. Makes hims minselfs!" said Gan proudly. Maddock shuddered, and glanced at Barry.

"That's got to go into the waste-tub, souse me, and 'ave carbolie hacid poured on it!" said the boatswain. "We don't want no fever on this 'ere boat. It's deadly pizen. Give it to me!"

"Hand ut over, or I'll bash yez as well, bedad!" said Barry. "Ut hums, ut buzzes, ut squeals!"

"Dens takes hims!" shrieked Gan.

He swung the saucepan round, shooting a portion of the awful, lukewarm mixture of stickiness full into each face, and then, bolting himself, he also bolted the door of the swimming-bath.

The Last of Mysteria.

"It is a fine day," said Ferrers Lord.

As he spoke he pulled over the lever, and the powerful pumps drove the water out of the tanks. The Lord of the Deep bounded to the surface. The sky was bright and clear, and Mysteria, for once, had shed every atom of mist.

"There they are, by Jove!" said Rupert. "You're a true prophet, Ferrers."

Prout opened the door. A man was waving a dirty white handkerchief at the corner of the creek. Without using their binoculars they could see other men lying on the ground.

"That's Red Nob," said Ching-Lung. "Red Nob has elevated the toilet requisite, which means that he has tossed up the sponge. Alas! poor Red Nob! He's a goner!"

"The launch," said Ferrers Lord. "Cover us."

A line of armed men formed up, and the launch slid into the water.

"I am going alone," said Ferrers Lord.

Ching-Lung and Hal Honour stepped back. With its solitary occupant the launch entered the creek. Ferrers Lord sprang out. He stood, with folded arms, talking to Faber. Then they saw him turn and point to the launch. The men who had been lying on the ground scrambled up. Presently the launch, with its load of ragamuffins, was moving towards the submarine, the millionaire at the helm. He brought the little craft alongside.

Faber, his long, white hair waving in the breeze, was the first to reach the deck. Though the others looked haggard and dejected, the old man stood erect and unbeaten.

"Your hat, I believe," said Ching-Lung. "May I have the pleasure of returning it?"

He held out the battered tam-o'-shanter. Faber stared at him.

"Thanks!" he said, and put it on his head.

"You see," said Ching-Lung, "though I object to rascals on principle, I have a sneaking admiration for a bold one. That is why I return your hat, instead of putting it in my museum."

"Irons," said Ferrers Lord, in answer to Prout's glance.

The castaways were shackled and taken below. An hour later fifty men landed. The sentence had been pronounced, and Mysteria was doomed for ever.

That night the Lord of the Deep remained afloat. Lights gleamed in the great cavern, for it was from that cavern that the death-blow was to be struck. The night was warm, and Thurston and Ching-Lung walked up and down the deck of the submarine.

"We're coming to the end of it, and I'm almost sorry, Ru," said the prince.

"In a fashion I am sorry, too," said Rupert. "Not that I ever loved that ghastly island. Taking it all round, we have had a glorious time."

"What will you do?"

"Idle about, I suppose. And you, Ching?"

"I must go back to China, I suppose," said Ching-Lung.

"I envy you, Rupert, that you were not born a prince. This parting business is the worst part about it. And Lord is getting so lazy. We must make him promise to do something else quickly. We've had some gay times together, and I'm hungry for more."

"Hungry for what?" asked the millionaire's deep voice.

"More adventures, old man!"

"You have terrible appetites, lads," said Ferrers Lord.

"Well, it is a wide world. I have seen most of it, but there is still more left."

He turned away, with a laugh, and Ching-Lung's eyes twinkled.

"That's as good as a promise, Ru," he said. "And we shall be there."

"Now, Rupert!"

Prout grasped the spokes of the wheel, and set his teeth. Mysteria shimmered in the sunshine a mile away.

Thurston touched the electric button.

Mysteria burst into fragments, that were hurled far and wide, and a wave seemed to leap to the skies. A pillar of water darkened the air, and the thunder of the explosion seemed to shake the very sea. A green mountain of water arose, its top seething and white, and rushed forward.

"Now!" cried Ferrers Lord.

The Lord of the Deep raced southward, outrunning the giant wave. Slowly the smoke drifted away, slowly the disturbed sea settled down.

Mysteria—shattered, rent, torn to fragments—had vanished, to appear no more!

THE END.



VAL FOX

Ventriloquist—Detective.

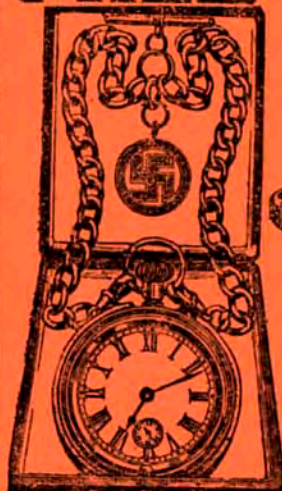
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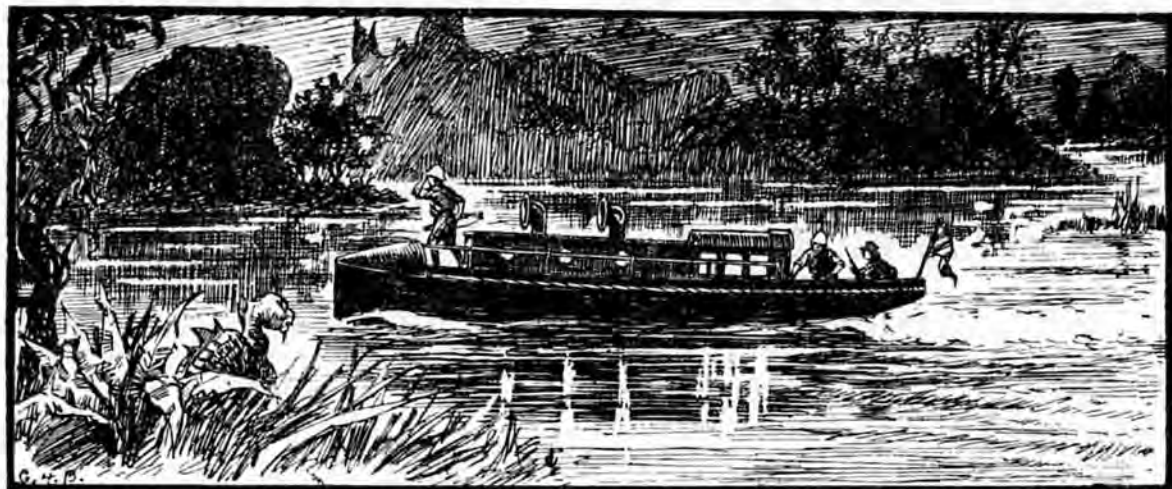
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THE BLUE ORCHID!



Grand Story of Ferrers Lord, Ching-Lung & Co.

By **SIDNEY DREW.**

READ THIS FIRST.

Ching-Lung (Prince of China), Rupert Thurston, and Gan-Waga (the Eskimo), with Prout, Maddock, and the rest of the famous crew of the Lord of the Deep, the marvellous submarine belonging to Ferrers Lord, the multi-millionaire and adventurer, find themselves on board the Philomel, a little paddle-steamer, which is puffing up the broad bosom of the mighty Amazon River. Ferrers Lord himself is in command of the expedition, the object of which, and the destination of the Philomel, is known to him alone. Rupert Thurston and Ching-Lung are discussing the prospects of the voyage, which has only just commenced, when the millionaire himself appears at the door of the saloon—
"Seize him, Rupert!" cries Ching-Lung, "and wrest the secret from him!"
(Read on from here.)

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

An Explanation—A Dead Man's Secret—The Story of the Blue Orchid.

Lunch was over, and, to the credit of Joe, it must be said that it was an excellent lunch. Gan-Waga, squatting on the floor, was putting the finishing touches to the remains of a treacle-tart, a dish the Eskimo highly appreciated. Thurston and the Chinaman were smoking, but Ferrers Lord, leaving the cigar-box neglected, kept spinning a gold serviette ring on the polished table in a thoughtless fashion.

"She is a noisy little beast," he said suddenly, referring to the Philomel.

"And you are a silent—er— Oh, guess the rest!" said Ching-Lung. "It follows."

Ferrers Lord gave the ring another spin, and watched it smilingly until it came to rest.

"Do you know," he said, "I am almost ashamed to tell you."

"In that case," laughed the prince, "you are not unutterably lost. There is still hope for you, Lord."

"Likes treacles more in tarts dat in booties, Chingy," remarked Gan-Waga. "It butterfuls."

"Silence! We don't want to hear you at all," said Ching-Lung sternly. "Your opinion concerning treacle-tarts, or anything else, is of no value or interest. Gorge yourself, but be quiet."

The millionaire cut the end off a cigar, and looked at his watch.

"Perhaps you have heard of Naylor & Grassworthy?"

"Not guilty," said the prince; and Thurston shook his head.

"Well, I am not responsible for your ignorance. They have a very dingy office in Billiter Square, London. I should imagine that the rent is not a pound a week; but Naylor & Grassworthy send out men to all parts of the globe, and turn over their hundreds of thousands in the year. To be brief, they deal with the rich, and cater for a very expensive hobby. They are a firm of orchid importers."

"Rotten things!" said Ching-Lung vulgarly. "I wouldn't give a shilling a gross for them."

"Tastes differ, Ching," went on Ferrers Lord, shrugging his shoulders. "My own collection is not large as numbers go, but I flatter myself that it is unrivalled. Never in my life did I purchase a plant, but took every one from its

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native home. There are stories attached to some of my orchids that would startle you. That is why I am fond of them, I suppose.

"The firm I mention have several agents out here, but they have no monopoly. Euphressi, Clotie, & Bryan, of Brussels, are powerful rivals. There is also a powerful German syndicate hunting the forests for rare blooms, and when these rivals meet they sometimes salute each other with bullets. There is a good deal of romance connected with the profession of orchid seeking."

"Yes, I am beginning to be interested," said Thurston. Ferrers Lord took a stained and dirty piece of paper from his pocket, and carefully smoothed out the creases.

"I got this from Dr. Angelinetta at Para. He is a good physician, a good Italian, and a charming fellow to waste his life in such a hole. He gave the paper to Thurston, and both Ching-Lung and Rupert bent over it curiously. "He was—the man, I mean, who owned the thing—formerly in the employ of Naylor & Grassworthy."

There was something scrawled on the paper, but it was so blurred that they could make neither head nor tail of it. Ferrers Lord laughed. With a stylographic pen he swiftly traced over the smeared lines, bringing out all the details in clear black.

"What do you think of it?" he asked.

"It looks like some microbe under a microscope to me," said Ching-Lung. "What is it supposed to be?"

"A plan of some kind. Are those things at the top wigwams? No; I see they're four hills, and marked as dangerous," said Thurston. "If that is their real shape, they would certainly be dangerous to climb."

"So would those telegraph-poles, Ru," grinned the prince. "And look at the gridiron and the seven tadpoles. Are they tadpoles? No; they must be motor-cars, for you're told to mark 'em for rubber. And who's Obidos? He looks like getting an arrow in his capital O—poor chap! What's Obidos done?"

"Obidos," said the millionaire, smiling, "is the name of a place."

"I'll bet money it's not twice the size of London."

"And you'd win," said Ferrers Lord, "providing you could find a maniac like yourself to take the bet. When you have finished cavilling I shall have something to say."

Ching-Lung put his hands in his lap, and assumed an air of meekness so ridiculous and mirth-provoking that Gan-

FRANK RICHARDS

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