



PONG!

OR,
THE NEW-BOY.
AT ST. KATE'S.

By CHARLES HAMILTON.

AN AFFAIR OF HONOUR.

"What are ye?"

"They are in the study now talking it over. O'Neil and Brown went up there after I saw them, and as I came here just now I saw Pong and Pongley go up. If anybody were in the lumber room now he could hear all that was said in the study."

Mr. Buckley laughed.

"He might have played the eavesdropper on occasion, but to do so in a pad with a junior of the French Form was a little too distinguished for an unscrupulous man like Herbert Buckley."

"O'Connell looked at him indignantly.

"Two of ye pocket, Cunningham," said Mr. Buckley, after a moment's pause. "It would be impossible for me to do as you suggest, but it is your duty as a perfect gentleman."

"I certainly do think so."

"Then I will do so," said Cunningham.

"Best not do this."

"The prefect granted."

"Boly upon me!"

And indeed Cunningham could be relied upon to lose no time in a matter where his revenge upon the junior who had defeated him was concerned. Within two minutes he was in the lumber room with his ear to the knot-hole in the wooden partition.

"Come in!"

It was Pat O'Neil who sang out the words as a tap came at the door of No. 8 Study.

Pat and Brown had been talking for only a few minutes when the tap came at the door, and in response to the Irish junior's invitation, Pat and Pong entered the study.

"Hello!" said Pat, cheerfully. "Have you come to apologise, Pong?"

The French boy stared.

"Apologise! Most!"

"Certainly."

"You got comprehended. It is you who apologise to me."

"I'm pleased."

"Nothing of the sort. I never apologise to anybody, old son. I go round insulting people as much as they like, and then I expect them to apologise."

The French junior looked puzzled.

"Vous vous excusez de moi," he exclaimed.

"Go on!"

"I have been insulted, and I demand satisfaction."

"Well, I'm going to give it to you, and perhaps you'll be sorry when you see yourself rolling in your grave."

"Oh, my mother!" cried the emotional French youth, clasping his hand to his heart.

The junior stared at him.

"Your what?" exclaimed Pat.

"My—mother!"

"What on earth's that?" gasped Tom Brown.

"She's gipped."

"He means his mother."

"Oh! his mother. Where is she?"

"Alas! She is in gay Paris, and perhaps not heard of for her last day more."

"That will be rather sad for her won't it?"

"If I perish in a field of honour, my mother will weep, but she may not hear her son die like a man and an Englishman."

"Well, then, that will make it all right, won't it?" asked Brown.

"Hah! my mother."

"Do you don't want any satisfaction after all?"

"Ah! you are up on the right."

"Not at all. I was beginning to think you knew."

"Nevair! Nevair! what a pleod of so noble family of Pong boy is as veins. I demand satisfaction."

"Very well. You shall have it in chunks if you like."

"Shall we wrap it up for you?" asked Brown.

"You mock yourself of me. Oid! I vipe out so insult in no blood."

"We've come here to arrange terms of the meeting," said Dick Pongley, lithe the custom for the second to jaw on these occasions, Pong, and the principal is supposed to shut up."

"Quite a supposition, in Pongo's case," said Brown.

Gaston Pong turned to his second with a polite bow, in the true Parisian style.

"I apologise," he cried.

"O'Neil's all right."

"I saw you it is so second set shall jaw vit himself," exclaimed Pong. "I am in no wrong, I beg, so pardon of you."

"Good!"

"What you'll talk over terms."

"Oh, yes."

"Zee! I embrace to second set I like."

"Here, get off—"

"I life my second, he is my shun," said the French boy, kissing poor Pat twice before he released him.

Pong, wiped his cheeks with his pocket handkerchief. Only the desire to carry out the joke on the new boy prevented him from filling him to the carpet on the spot.

"Now we'll talk over terms, if you chaps have finished kissing one another," grinned Tom Brown.

Pongley turned scowling.

"I wasn't kissing him—"

"Well, it looked as if you were."

"He was kissing me."

"I kiss my shun," exclaimed the French boy, making a step towards Pongley, as if he were about to start again. Pong, promptly placed the table between them.

"Keep off," he exclaimed. "Let's get to business. I say, Brown, your principal refuses to apologise to my principal, I take it?"

"Yes, rather."

"And my principal refuses to apologise to your principal?"

"He's better than that, I aver."

"I require to apologise."

"He's made up his mind," said Pat. "An accommodation between us, if only remains to fix the time and place of meeting."

"Right you are."

"Well, as the challenge party you have the right to choose the weapons," said Pongley. "What's your dim—? I mean what's your weapon?"

"Pencil," said Pat, in a gesture.

"The sword is a weapon of no gentleman," he explained.

"It is my wish to fight you on sword."

"Have you any swords with you?"

"No."

"Got any lies how to get any?"

"No, nor."

"Then swords are barred, anyway. Have you got any pistols, Pat O'Neil?"

"I know a place where I can get some."

"You will provide the weapons?"

"Yes."

"Good! Now for the time and the place. Surprise is the usual time, I believe for affairs of this sort. Have you ever killed anybody at any other time of day, Pong?"

The French boy shuddered.

"I have never kilt anybody at all."

"What! You want practice, then. You'll manage your next affair better, if you don't get killed in this case."

"Ain't you—I—"

"What time shall we say then?" asked Pongley.

"Business is too early," said Pat. "We should attract general attention by leaving the dormitory at such an early hour. There's another reason, too. To-morrow's Sunday, and I don't want to kill Pong on a Sunday."

"Good sense."

"Then, said Brown. "Shall we fix Monday morning then?"

"O'Neil's wait all that then," said Pat, with a young man's assurance.

"Oid!"

"We can fix it so-night if you like," said Pong.

"I think."

"Then it's all settled," said Dick Pongley, who was now in the study.

Your side undertakes to provide the pistols, I understand."

"Yes, unless Gaston Pong has brought a pair of duelling pistols to St. Kate's with him," said Tom Brown.

The French junior shook his head.

"I have no pistol of my own," said Pongley.

"Well, the pair we shall provide will be all right," said Tom Brown. "It doesn't matter what you carry, as your minutes will be touching one another's chest. Better send your will, Pong, and write a farewell letter home to your mother."

"Hah! my poor mother."

"Never mind, she will be comforted when she knows that you have perished on the field of honour, avenging an insult to the noble blood of the Duangs."

"Hah!"

"Come on," said Dick Pongley. "It's just on nine now, and we've got no time to waste if we're to be on the ground to time. Behind the shaded door, you'll find a pair of pistols."

"Right, those will be plenty of moonlight, and the wall will be handy for the chap who kills the other to escape over."

"Yes, zee."

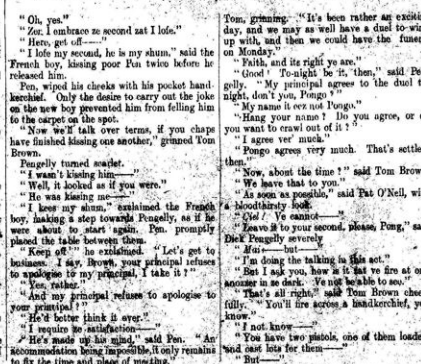
"Do you send a back out, Pong?"

"I! Ain't I certain as yet."

"Then stop your snoring," said Tom Brown, and led him out of the study too. Patrick Buckley followed later to write to his mother. You know the only chap who got a notice."

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"You won't know whether the pistol you get is loaded or not."

"But—"

"Then you place the muzzles against one another's breasts and pull the trigger—"

"Oid!"

The French junior turned pale. Tom Brown was at an elbow.

"The chap who has the loaded pistol kills the other as dead as a door nail."

"Don't die!"

"Ducks are fought like this in France—"

"Yes, now, is no ducks is as beautiful France no one is ever keel."

"Oh, we should go to the study in private steps," said Dick Pongley. "It's a matter of honor, I would refuse to have a hand in any duel in which it was not understood from the first that somebody was to be killed."

"Exactly," said Tom Brown. "That's how I stand in the matter. Either somebody is to be killed, or I wash my hands of the whole matter."

"But I tell you—"

"If Pong wishes to crawl out—"

"I wish nothing of the kind. But I—"

"Then shut up, and leave the talking to your own side," said Tom Brown. "My belief is that this chap Pong knows simply nothing about the etiquette of killing people."

"Mar! Mar! I know just as to be known, and I—"

"Never mind what you think. What is the hour for the terrible affair, kid?" asked Dick Pongley.

"Nine o'clock would suit me," said Pat O'Neil, "as we have to go to bed at a quarter past, that would get the duel nicely over, and the survivors—"

"The survivor could woot in safety, and escape from the country—"

And the dead chap—could be hidden in the Baggage room, and the other still called for—men's until he's found."

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(Continued from page 2)

"I remember, O'Neill!"
"I'll bet you it's Kenny there, playing the spy," murmured Pat. "I was rather surprised that he didn't follow me to the study and find out something if he could."

"What are you going to do?"
"I'm going to make him," whispered Pat. "If he won't come in, I'll shoot the books he shall and let him believe that it's all in deadly earnest."

"How so?"
"Pat O'Neill has a bag of shot."

"I'll shoot him with it?"
"Pat O'Neill has a bag of shot. Again there was a loud sound, in the silence from the window, and which created slightly as if a heavy body was leaning against it. The knot hole was above the reach of a head, and although the listening had to stand on tip-toe to reach it."

"New they're gone," he exclaimed, in his usual manner which he knew would be perfectly audible to the spy in the other room. "We may as well settle about it, Tom."

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"You are sure Pat O'Neill was not deceiving you, Cunningham?"
"Deciding may be. How?"
"His eyes have known you very intimately."

"Impossible!"
"If you are quite certain of that?"
"I am absolutely certain."

"Come, come, we must not be sure," said the form-master. "Come with us to the library."
"Unhappily unwillingly assented. They went to the library, the master of the Fourth moving in a very leisurely way, and the impatient prefect having to keep with him."

"The Fourth Form master looked disappointed. "I was afraid it would prove so."

"But he is in our hands all the same, sir," said the prefect eagerly.
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"My dear chap, there's no time to think of that now. You can think of your motor to-morrow, if you are still alive then."

"Do you?" What with? asked Pat, with a disparaging glance at Pon's head, as if to hint that the thinking apparatus there was not the first quality.

"I wish I could tell you the time of the Sunday train," said Pon, thoughtfully. "You know they're different from the Saturday ones. You should never commit a murder on Saturday night without knowing the time of the Sunday trains."

"Still, very likely you will get clear off. Lots of murders escape without being hung."

"Not at all. At your fifth or sixth murder you will find everything come easier. Still, you live and learn. Hello, here comes the landowner!"

"Pat O'Neill came in sight in the light of the moon, carrying a parcel in his hand. Tom Brown followed him."

"Faith, that sure I can't see," said Pat O'Neill. "I hope we haven't kept you waiting."

"Well, you have a few minutes, as a matter of fact, but it's all right. I'm not a policeman, and Pon can't expect to be allowed to stand blood before the time agreed on."

"Certainly not," assented Tom Brown. "The pistol are to be off at just nine, and if either of them is killed before nine o'clock, that doesn't count."

"Exactly," said Tom Brown. "Get the pistol!"

"Yes, here they are, loaded with lead and in first-rate condition," said Tom Brown, with a grin, as he took the loaded pistols out of the parcel Pat was holding.

"Good! Let's just examine the loading if you don't mind," said the French jumper's friend, with a grin. "Working time being over, in comes like this."

"Certainly. Pong has a right to expect you to be careful."

"My friend—my friends—"

"They're all right," said Pon, laying down the pistol. "Now then, across a handkerchief, fast it up, with the muzzle touching one another's broad-shoulders."

"No, that's been modified," said Tom Brown. "You are stand at twelve paces. That will be good measure in this light."



Wish I my poor master!

"Mr. Bulkeley's eyes glittered. "I should not be sorry if Pat O'Neill—"

"The principal and second had arrived first upon the ground. They had successfully dodged the rest of the form, who knew that a handing out was on, but did not cross hastily where and when it was to take place."

"The moon was very light, and almost ghastly. There was no sign of Pat O'Neill, or of Tom Brown as Gaston and his second reached the spot and halted by the rails of the grey old carriage."

"There was a certain uneasiness in the manner of Gaston Pong that had led Dick Fongally to put his question to the French jumper."

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