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# Pong!

or  
The New Boy  
at St. Kate's

By FRANK DRAKE.

ST. KATE'S

ELECTION NIGHT!

**"HURRAH!"**  
The shout rang and echoed through the deck of the quadrangle at St. Kate's.

"Hurrah!"  
As that hour the quad was really *deat*. The stars were twinkling in the clear dark sky. Eight o'clock had sounded out from the high clock-tower.

But on this fine July evening the boys of St. Kate's were "keeping it up."

"Hurrah!"  
The shout rang from a crowd of juniors, belonging to the Fourth Form and the Reserve, who were parading across the quadrangle. Some of them carried flags, others were waving caps and pocket-handkerchiefs. Many had mouth-organs, which were a deafening sound into the summer night. The faces of the juniors expressed unbounded satisfaction, and so did their clothes, cheering. And the juniors of St. Kate's had reason for satisfaction.

It was election night!  
The election for the captain of the *Manhood* was over, and the juniors' candidate had been chosen!

By a single vote, the majority had been declared for George Clavering, and Clavering was acknowledged captain of St. Kate's.

His backers were celebrating the victory now.

Cunningham, the defeated candidate, was in his study, savage and silent, sulking like Achilles in his tent.

Clavering had also gone to his own quarters, where he was giving a little feed to a few select friends, in honour of the occasion.

But the juniors, who felt that they had done the chief work in electing Clavering, were not disposed to allow the great occasion to pass off quietly.

Noble was their idea of a celebration, and noise in plenty was provided by the procession in the quadrangle.

It was Pat O'Neill's idea, of course.

Anything out of the common that happened in the Fourth Form at St. Kate's could generally be traced to the junior from County Kerry.

Pat had organized the Fourth into a grand procession, and he was marching at the head of it with his chosen flock. Pongally, Ben carried a flag high in the air, and Pat was exempt with a badge, upon which he blew a cheery *tu-tu-tu-tu-tu* every few minutes.

"Hurrah!"  
The bugle-note was the signal for a cheer, and every time the bugle rang, the cheer followed, with deafening effect.

"Hurrah for Clavering!"

"Hurrah for the captain of St. Kate's!"

The juniors were in a jollific mood, and would have hushed for anything just then.

"Sure, and it's a rare 'we're making," chuckled Pat O'Neill.

"I rather think Cunningham can hear us, Dicky, darling."

Dick Pongally grinned.

"I should rather say so, Pat."

You Know Your Friends Would Be Pleased With This Paper If They Saw It.

"Here, and it will do him good. He tried to win the election by a swindle, and we bathed him—"

"We did, Hurrah!"  
"We voted in the new kid, and his vote turned the scale—"  
"It did! Hurrah!"  
"And we're made Channing captains of St. Kate's!"  
"We have! Hurrah!"  
"And says it was Gaston Pans who saved the situation," explained Pat, bestowing a hearty slap upon the shoulder of a youth who walked beside him—a rather nerdy youth with half-laces and an expensive suit.

Gaston Pans, the new boy at St. Kate's, whose vote had afforded Channing the required majority of one, sniggered under that sign of Pat's hearty approval.

"He turned a rather aggrieved look upon the Irish junior.  
"Vy you hit me?" he exclaimed.

Pat laughed.  
"I wasn't hitting you, son. I was showing how much I admire you."

The French junior beamed.  
"Ah! I see, my dear. I have voted for your candidate, and my vote have catch him an election."

"Pat-ty!"  
"I am very please to oblige my dear."  
"Good."

Pat blew on the bagle again, and the junior responded with a singing cheer.

"Hurrah!"  
"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

"Ze victoire is to us," beamed Gaston Pans. "I am please to please my dear. I love my dear. I embrace you."

And the effusive French boy threw his arms round Pat O'Neill's neck and hugged him, and kissed him on both cheeks. Pat struggled frantically.

Kinging was all very well among foreigners, but it was decidedly distasteful to a British boy, and Pat did not like it.

"Here, hold on!" roared Pat.  
"Get in all right. I am holding on!"  
"I mean let go."

"Vy I let go my dear?"  
"Out! Stop kissing me! Out! I can't stand it!"  
"No, no, no!" roared Brown of the French. "Come and see Pans making love to his dear!"

"I love my dear—"  
"Out! let me go."  
"Here, please it!" exclaimed Dick Penroy, pulling the effusive Pans off the smug Irish junior. "I say—"  
Gaston Pans turned beaming upon Pen.

"You was my dear, too—"  
"I say—"  
"I embrace my dear—"  
"Check it! I—"  
"I love you. I embrace you."

And the French boy threw his arms around Pen's neck and embraced him, and shrieks of laughter from the juniors.

"Stop it!" roared Pen, struggling quite as furiously as Pat had done. "I mean't have it! Oh! Stop it, you monkey!"  
"Vat you say?"  
"Stop it, you monkey!"  
"You call your dear monkey, or it?"  
"You villain!" exclaimed Penroy, as Gaston Pans released him at last. "You horrid young pig, do you think you can go around kissing fellows as if they were confectioned girls?"

"If you see my dear—"  
"Catch me chattering with a chap who shatters over me—"

"Ah! Oh! I have been deceived! You share with me till now for no reason, and now you are no longer my dear."  
"Oh, rats!"  
"I say—"  
"Oh! that's all right, kid," explained Pat O'Neill, raising Pans by the arm and manning him on. "Only it's not the custom in this country to kiss one another. We reserve all that for the ladies, you know."

"I been my dear—"  
"Then the sooner you learn not to be bother. Shout, you beggars. We're getting near Cunningham's window."

The procession had passed half round the quadrangle.

It was approaching now the windows of Cunningham's study, and the light gleaming in them showed that the Sixth Form was there.

Pat O'Neill would have been the last fellow in the world to

trough over a fellow like that; but this was not an ordinary case. Cunningham, in collusion with Mr. Berkeley, the master of the Fourth, had attempted to defeat his rival in the election by treachery.

Although the story had not been told in public, many of the juniors had a pretty clear idea of how matters stood, and they were eager to show their disapproval of the defeated candidate's methods.

Pat turned and waved his hand as the procession moved under Cunningham's window.

"Halt!"  
"Halt!" roared Penroy.  
"Halt-halt!" exclaimed Gaston Pans. "It see as you stop now."

The procession halted.  
It was rather disorderly by this time, the array in which it had started being considerably mixed up.

A band of juniors sang under the window, and a choir of fourth-formers went up to tell the senior that they were there, if he had not known it already.

"Hurrah!"  
"Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!"  
"Hurrah!"

The window opened with a crash, and Cunningham's eyes widened as he looked out upon the jubilant juniors.

Pat O'Neill gave a fresh blast on the bagle as the prefect looked out of the study window.

The juniors halted in response.  
"Hurrah!"

Cunningham glanced sternly down upon the excited crowd.

As a rule juniors were extremely careful how they provoked the wrath of a prefect, especially as a bitter-tempered one as Cunningham, but on the present glorious occasion they were too excited to think of consequences.

"Hurrah!"  
"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The cheering ran up and wide in the quadrangle of St. Kate's, and was echoed far over the branches of the ancient elm.

Cunningham ground his teeth savagely.  
"You young hounds—"  
"Hurrah!"

"Ere, ere!"  
"Hurrah!"  
"Get away from my window!"  
"Hurrah!"

"Will you go, or shall I come down to you?" yelled Cunningham, furiously.

"Hurrah!"  
That was the venerable reply to the remonstrances of the prefect. Cunningham's face was crimson with fury.

"You young hounds—"  
"Hurrah!"

The prefect disappeared from the study window.  
"My hat!" exclaimed Brown. "he's coming out, and he's pretty certain to bring some with him."

"Better clear," said Stern.  
Pat O'Neill shook his head.

"You can clear if you like. I'm going to stay here till I choose to go."

"He'll lay into you—"  
"There are enough of us to guard him but-headed if he comes out."

"He's a prefect—"  
"How a prefect!"  
"That's all very well—"  
"Of course it is. Shut up, and give him a cheer—"

"Now the deities are we to give him a cheer if we shut up?" demanded Penroy.

"Begorra, don't be funny. Cheer, boys, cheer!"  
"Ta-ta-ta-ta!"  
"Hurrah!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"  
Few of the juniors were inclined for retreat. Even a prefect had little terror for them at that moment. If Cunningham had called out with a sneer, he would probably have been very roughly handled.

Doubtless the prefect gazed as much, for the tactics he adopted were different, and more effective.

He reappeared at the window, and glared out at the crowd, snapping Pat O'Neil with his eye.

"Are you there, O'Neil?"  
 "Sure and I am, Cunningham, darling!"  
 "You young wretch!"  
 "Faith, and ye can say what ye like, Cunningham. Ye're bound on. Who tried to win an election by a mean trick?"  
 "Cunningham did!" roared the crowd.  
 "Who got boxed out and shown up?"  
 "Cunningham! Hurrah!"  
 "Who's the meanest name at St. Kate's?"  
 "Cunningham! Hurrah!"  
 "Yes, Cunningham! He—on—some—more!"

Cunningham's right arm had suddenly appeared from behind him, and there was a large bottle of ink in his hand.

That bottle was suddenly reversed over the crowd of janitors, and Pat O'Neil, who was directly under the window, and the benefit of the greater part of it.

He gave a fearful yell as the black fluid splashed over his face, transforming him with remarkable suddenness into a very good instance of a Christy misseid.

"Arrah! Arrah! on!"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peggibly.  
 "You laughing hyess, show up! I—"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Cunningham primed, he turned the bottle with a sweep of his hand over the whole crowd, and there were few of the janitors who did not receive a splash or two of the ink.

The riotous frolic of Cunningham's slouch was sudden and complete.

The janitors retreated off to a safe distance, and Cunningham closed his window with a bang.

"Arrah! The Looze!"  
 "The horrid pig!"  
 "Och! Look black as my nigger!"  
 "Och! Och!"  
 "You utter arr, O'Neil!"  
 "Sure, it wasn't my fault. How was I to know that the Looze was going to smother a lot of ink on your silly chivver?"  
 "You silly old!"  
 "And sure I've got most of it myself inside."  
 "Serve you jolly well right. You ought—"  
 "Oh, shut up! Let's get on with the procession."  
 "I'm smothered with ink."  
 "I'm black as a nigger."  
 "My collar's inked."  
 "My waistcoat's spotted."  
 "I am black as a nigger."  
 "Oh, shooze it! Don't talk all at once. Or rather, don't talk at all that's better. Let's get on with the washing."  
 "By Jove, some of us need washing," cried Pat.  
 "I, myself need to wash me" badly."  
 "Go and get a wash tub, Pong. You can go and ask your Dick Peggibly. I'm going on with the glibby procession."  
 "Oh! all right. If you're bent on proceeding, let's proceed," said Pat.  
 "Come on, then!"  
 The bands rang out it's cheerful blast again.

Tu—on—larran!  
 Hurrah!

After all, ink was only ink. The janitors of St. Kate's were not going to let Cunningham think that he had damped their enthusiasm. The hurrahs rang out as loudly as ever as the ink purgatives remained the parade in the quad.

"Boys! stop that noise instantly!"  
 It was a sharp, deep, bitter voice, and it struck like a knife upon the sound of the wild cheering.

The shouts of the Fourth-formers died away.  
 The tall form of Mr. Bulkeley, the master of the Fourth Form at St. Kate's, looked up in the dusk of the summer evening.

The Fourth-form master's face was very angry.  
 He disliked Pat O'Neil, and he disliked George Clavering, and hence he had shown himself into the work of getting Cunningham elected to the post of captain of St. Kate's.  
 He had failed!

In spite of his efforts, which had not stopped short of trickery, Clavering had been elected, and that result was entirely due to Pat O'Neil.

It was no wonder that the form-master's nose tempo rose as he heard the wild hurrahs in the quad which announced

a victory that was a victory over himself as well as over Cunningham.

He stood regarding the janitors with lowering brows, under which his eyes gleamed with angry malice.

"Stop that noise instantly!"  
 The janitors stopped the noise. A silence fell upon the procession as it came to an irregular halt.

But there was rebellion in every face.  
 Mr. Bulkeley was not a popular form-master. He was hard and cold and inclined to be tyrannical.  
 And the disregard shown to the prefect was a beginning of rebellion. It was only one step further to denying a form-master.

The janitors, with burning eyes, looked to Pat O'Neil for guidance. And the Irish junior was not wanting.

He faced Mr. Bulkeley with flashing eyes.  
 "Did you speak to me, sir?"  
 "You teased me, O'Neil. I told you to stop that noise. I shall not allow the quadrangle to be turned into a bear garden by the boys of my form."

"If you please, sir—"  
 "Silence!"  
 "But—"  
 "Not a word. Go into the Looze at once, and keep quiet." There was a deep breath drawn by the janitors. Not one of them stirred from the spot.

Mr. Bulkeley's brow darkened.  
 "Do you hear me, O'Neil?"  
 "Yes, sir."  
 "Then obey me," thundered the form-master, with a flashing glance.  
 "No!"

DEFYING A FORM MASTER.

"NO!"  
 The word rang out from Pat O'Neil's lips like a clarion note.

It amazed Mr. Bulkeley, and it amazed his followers.  
 "Tyrannical as the form-master was, it was a terrible wrong thing for a junior to directly disobey him. Boys had been flogged or expelled for less than this. But Pat O'Neil did not flinch.

Mr. Bulkeley seemed to gasp for breath.  
 "O'Neil! You disobey me!"  
 "We have the Head's permission to hold a rehearsal in the quadrangle, sir, and unless the Head commands us to stop—"

"Will you obey me?"  
 "Not unless Mr. Biddolph tells me so, in this instance, sir." Pat's manner was quiet and respectful, but firm as a rock.  
 Mr. Bulkeley ground his teeth.  
 He had just himself into a false position, and he knew it, but he had never dreamed that the Irish junior would have the nerve to directly disobey him.

"O'Neil," he almost gasped, "will you go into the house at once?"  
 "No, sir."

Then an irresistible cheer broke from the Fourth Formers—  
 "Hurrah!"

Mr. Bulkeley's face was inflamed with rage.  
 He stretched out his hand and gripped Pat O'Neil by the shoulder.

"By Heaven!" he hissed, allowing the path to escape him in his rage. "I will make you repent your insolence."  
 Pat struggled.

"Arrah! show let me go!"  
 "Take that!" and thus it was.  
 Two savage blows descended upon Pat O'Neil, before he could run himself loose from the savage grip of the form-master.

Then he sprang away, and faced Mr. Bulkeley, with clenched fists and flashing eyes.

"If you touch me again, Mr. Bulkeley—"  
 "Dear me! what is all this?"  
 It was a deep voice—the voice of Dr. Biddolph, the Head of St. Kate's.

The kindly old Doctor looked in amazement at the angry form-master, and the equally angry and excited janitors.  
 "Is there any trouble here, Mr. Bulkeley?"  
 The master of the Fourth controlled himself with a great effort.

He knew that he was in a false position, and he inwardly

curled the good old Doctor for coming upon the scene at that inopportune moment.

The Head's keen, grey eyes were fixed upon him inquiringly. Mr. Balfesley made an effort to banish the tary from his face, but his voice was trembling a little as he replied to the Head's question.

"Yes, sir, I—"

"Hear me! What is it?"

"I have ordered Pat O'Neill to go in, and he has merely refused to obey me."

The Head's brow grew very stern.

He turned his glance towards the janitor from County Kerry.

"O'Neill?"

"Yes, sir," said Pat, respectfully.

"Have you refused to obey Mr. Balfesley?"

"He had your permission to hold a celebration in the road on election night, sir," said Pat.

"Yes, certainly, I remember."

"I told Mr. Balfesley so, and he—"

The Head passed his lips.

"This is very unfortunate, Mr. Balfesley. There is evidently a mistake. I am sorry you did not know that the janitor had my permission to hold this procession, but when O'Neill told you—"

The form-master ground his teeth.

"I had no reason to believe that O'Neill was telling the truth, sir," he replied.

"Is not O'Neill a truthful boy?"

"I have not found him so."

"Dear me—"

Pat's face flushed scarlet.

The presence of the Head himself could not restrain the righteous anger that blazed up in the Irish lad's heart as he heard Mr. Balfesley's words.

He made a step forward, his eyes seeming to flame.

"Is not true," he exclaimed, vehemently.

"O'Neill—"

"Is not true, sir." He says I am a liar—"

"Enough—"

"He says I am a liar," almost shrieked Pat. "Let him prove it, then. Let him tell you a single instance when I have lied, if he can."

"You must not speak like that, O'Neill!"

"He has slandered me, sir. Let him make his words good. He hates me; all the town knows that. He wishes to blacken me to you."

The Doctor sat his lips.

"O'Neill, you are speaking wildly—"

"Then let him prove what he said, sir."

The Doctor looked kindly at the janitor. The hot indignation in face and voice could hardly be assumed. He turned to Mr. Balfesley, who was biting his lip.

"That is a very hard remark to make respecting O'Neill, Mr. Balfesley," he said, and there was a drop in his voice. "Can you tell me any occasion upon which O'Neill has lied to your knowledge?"

"My opinion is not based upon any specific instance, sir, but upon my general observation of this boy's character."

"Ahem!"

"He cannot prove it—"

"No, more, O'Neill. As I had given you my permission to hold this procession, you may continue to do so. Pegg come with me, Mr. Balfesley."

"Certainly, sir."

The janitor marched on cheering. The form-master, hardly able to conceal the bitter rage that was swelling up in his breast, walked into the schoolhouse by the side of the silent, thoughtful Doctor.

In the hall, which was deserted and quiet, Dr. Biddulph turned to the master of the Fourth.

"I am so sorry this has happened, Mr. Balfesley."

The form-master was silent.

"I am afraid that O'Neill, and some of the others, will continue the opinion that you have a prejudice against this boy," said the Head.

Mr. Balfesley forced a laugh.

"That would be absurd, sir."

"Yes, of course, but it would be a very unfortunate impression to gain currency in the town over which you have control, Mr. Balfesley."

"I will suppose so, sir."

"Pray be a little more careful in the future, Mr. Balfesley."

"Certainly!"

"A form-master will always have more influence by appealing to the better side of his boys, and by making himself loved rather than feared," said the Head, "and from what I have seen of Patrick O'Neill, I think he is one of the finest lads in the lower school. I think you would come to have the same opinion of him if you observed him a little more closely."

And the Head walked away.

Mr. Balfesley listened with humble respect to the words addressed to him by the Head of St. Kate's, but there was a premonition of bitter rage in his breast.

He turned away from the spot abruptly, and walked to Cunningham's study, and knocked on the door.

"Come in!" said a soft voice.

The Master of the Fourth entered the study. Cunningham looked up gloomily as he came in and closed the door. The two photons who had shone in vain against George Claxtering were alone together for the first time since the election.

#### THE PROCESSION:

To-tu-tu-tu-tu!

The single bell rang loud and clear in the quadrangle at St. Kate's.

"Hurrah!"

The procession moved on. The janitors were triumphant. The prefect had splashed them with ink, but he had not quenched their enthusiasm. The form-master had been defied, and Pat O'Neill was the hero of the Fourth.

"Hurrah!"

The janitors cheered again and again, to let Mr. Balfesley know that they could do as they liked, but there was no danger of further interference from the form-master.

He had put his best in it, as Dick Peggotty expressed it, and he was not likely to risk another defeat in the face of the whole town.

Whatever respect the Fourth Form might have had for him had quite crumbled away now.

They had tasted the delights of successful rebellion, and it was extremely probable that the effect of it would last long after that night of excitement.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!"

Right round the quadrangle the exultant janitors marched again, the single and the mouth-organ blaring out, and the wild hurrahs ringing far through the night.

Right round, till they were at the door of the school-house again.

Then Pat O'Neill called a halt.

"Halt!"

The crowd surged to a standstill.

"Gentlemen of the Lower Form—"

"Hurrah!"

"Gentlemen—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Faith, and let me speak a word!" exclaimed Pat O'Neill.

"Gentlemen of the Lower School at St. Kate's—"

"Hear, hear!"

"We have elected our giddy captain, and frustrated the lawless tricks of Cunningham and somebody else whom you know very well."

"There was a groan for the somebody else, whom, of course, all the crowd knew to be Mr. Balfesley."

"We are successful!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Our man is Captain of St. Kate's—"

"Good old Claxtering!"

"We have celebrated the event in a style worthy of the traditions of the great and honourable Fourth Form at St. Kate's!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hip, hip, hurrah!"

Pat O'Neill waited till the deafening roar of cheering had died away, and then he resumed.

"We have held our celebration by the Head's permission—"

"Good old Doc! Hurrah!"

"In spite of interference by rotten outsiders—"

"Down with the Balfers!"

"And now, gentlemen of the Lower School, it's about time we cheered it."

"Hear, hear!"

"But before we seek our little beds, and sleep the sleep of

the fact, I propose that a deputation of the Fourth Form visits good old Clavering in his study, and congratulates him on the success he has achieved by the aid of the Fourth Form."

"Hear, hear!"

"Good!" exclaimed Brown. "I'll be chief of the deputation."

"Hais!"

"Are you saying rats to me, Pat O'Neill?"

"Sure and I am! It's my idea, and I'm captain of the form anyway. Sure it's myself that's going to be chairman of the giddy deputation."

"That's all very well—"

"Then what have you got to complain of? Dry up! Gentlemen, as chairman of the proposed deputation, I select my friend, Dick Pengelly, to accompany me—"

"Good!" said Dick, heartily. "That shows your sense, Pat! I shall be able to help you out—"

"Pat gave him a withering look.

"Sure if you don't help me out, Pat, I shall help you out, jolly quick, with the aid of my boot."

"Look here, you young ass—"

"Hais!"

"What I say is—"

"Back, as a rule! I'm chairman of this giddy deputation, and speakens, too, of course. I think we ought to take Peng as third member, as it was his rats that carried the election, and helped us to get in Clavering as captain of the school."

The French master bowed.

"Gid! I am honored—"

"Come on, then."

"I will make us polite speech—"

"No, you won't."

"Hais!"

"I'm going to do all the talking. You and Pen will shut up. Gentlemen of the Fourth Form, you can all follow us as far as the door of old Clavering's study, and when I blow my hags, cheer for all you're worth."

"Hear, hear!"

"Come on, then."

Pat, Pen, and Peng entered the house, and the junior followed them in a crowd. Up the stairs they went to the corridor upon which the Sixth Form studies opened, and Pat halted at the door of Clavering's room.

The light was shining under the door, and from within came a sound of voices in talk.

"Pat tapped at the door.

"Come in!"

"Now, then, turn on your sweetest smiles," said Pat anxiously. "This is an important occasion. I wish you hadn't all that ink on your face, Pat."

"What about your own?"

"Well, it can't be helped, I suppose. Come on!"

Pat O'Neill opened the door of the study.

The room was well lighted, and a couple of tables had been put together in the middle to form a festive board for the spread the new captain of St. Kate's was giving.

The white cloth and the crockery and silver glistened in the light, and the aspect of the study was very cosy.

There were several Sixth-Formers with Clavering, and they all turned their heads and looked in surprise at the ink-jackets.

Clavering, a handsome, athletic fellow, a splendid type of young British manhood, was seated at the head of the table. He smiled as he glanced at Pat's ink-jacket.

"Is that you, O'Neill?"

"Sure and it is, Clavering, darling!"

"What are you carrying that ink about on your face for?"

"Sure and I can't help it, as a rotten spudgen checked in over me while I was speaking to him at his window," explained Pat.

Clavering laughed.

"Well, the sooner you get a wash the better," he remarked. "I see your friends are in the same plight. Goodbye!"

"This was a strong hint that the interview was over, but as the juniors had not yet approached the purpose for which they had come, they did not budge.

"You see, Clavering," began Pat.

"You see—," began Dick Pengelly.

"Fare ye—," Gaston Pons commenced.

"Hais!"

"Sure, and can't ye shut up, Pat?"

"Well, you see, I can put it better than you can, Pat—"

"Arrah, then—"

"Gid! It is no better if you leave us to talk to me, as I can speak via as great faculty—"

"You'll get your nose punched with great facility if you don't chaven it—"

"Look here, Pat—"

"Look here, Pen—"

"I tell you—"

"Sure and I say—"

"Set it out—"

"I say, how long is this going to last?" asked Clavering, good-humouredly. "When you're finished, there's a door there."

"Faith, and we haven't started yet—"

"This ass will keep on interrupting me—"

"Me?"

"Arrah, and we've come to congratulate you, Clavering—"

"—in your glorious victory over the face and kerchief—"

"—because who else is to do but to do what an candidate ask us for," said Gaston Pons.

"Sure we get up to their little game—"

"And settled it for them—"

"And laid vote via my shams—"

"And now—"

"We—"

"Fare ye—"

Clavering rose to his feet.

"Will you kindly explain what all this hullabaloo means?" he asked.

The deputation looked at one another.

"It wasn't exactly complimentary and gratifying for their remarks to be described as hullabaloo."

"Faith, Clavering, darling—"

"We're a deputation—"

"My friend, O'Neill is chairman of the deputation, and I am its talkman—"

"What?"

"So speakman, I think it is. I speak—"

"Ho, ho! Don't trouble to tell me any more; I'll take the rest for granted," said Clavering.

"Now you see you've done it, you obstinate conundrums," exclaimed Pat, with a wretched glance at his two companions.

"Gid! It was you that have done me—"

"Pat, you're an ass. I say—"

"Oh, ring off, Clavering, we're a deputation from the Fourth Form to congratulate you on the result of the election—"

"In which we helped—"

"Especially me, by voting for us respected Clavering—"

"And we want you to know that the Fourth Form are going to back you up, which we wouldn't have done if that rotter Cunningham had got in," said Pat O'Neill.

"Yes, rather," said Pen, with emphasis.

"We're going to back you up all the time—"

"Yes, rather—"

"All as time—"

"And that's all," said Pat.

"Very good," said Clavering, gravely. "If that's all, thank you very much, and you may go and wash yourselves."

"One more time," said Pat O'Neill, unabashed, and he put the hags to his lips and rolled out a tremendous tattoo-ransom!

Instantly the signal was followed by a deafening roar of cheering in the passage.

"Hurrah! Hip, hip, hurrah!"

Tattoo-ransom!

"Hurrah!"

"Fare ye, fare ye Clavering!" shrieked Gaston Pons. "Ah! I must embrace the beloved and mercifully-to-be-admired captain!"

And the excited French youth rushed at Clavering and seized the unprepared captain of St. Kate's round the neck and embraced him.

The Sixth-Formers gave a yell.

"Get off!"

But when Gaston Pons was embracing a sham, it was not so easy to get him to let go. He embraced Clavering, while the seniors sitting at the table roared with laughter, and Clavering struggled feebly.

"Get off!"

"Ah! I love my captain, and I embrace him as a sham," exclaimed Gaston Pons. "I kiss him on an inked cheek."

And the French youth impressed a chaotic salute upon either cheek of the astounded and angry captain of St. Ratis.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Pat O'Neil.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled frantically.

The chaos was laughing too much to go to the assistance of Clavering. The captain of St. Ratis tried to wrench himself free.

In the struggle Pons leaped on the table, and Clavering's cap and sword were sent flying.

The cap was full of hot tea, and it fell with a splash across the captain's face, and in a moment the hot fluid soaked through his tunic, and he was sprung up with a terrific yell.

"Oh!"

"I challenge no lady captain!"

Clavering jerked Pons off and backed him as Pat O'Neil. The Irish junkie was chiefly doubled up with laughter, and he did not stand the shock.

He rolled on the floor of the study, and Gaston Pons rolled over him.

"Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the junkie-crowded in the doorway.

"Get out!" yelled Clavering, stepping his wet trousers with his handkerchief. "Get out, you young rascals!"

"Oh!"

"Get out!"

Pat O'Neil staggered to his feet, exulted with laughter.

"Sure, Clavering darling!"

"Get out, and take that lunatic with you!"

"Get out!"

"Get out!"

"Come on, lady! We've congratulated the captain, and now it's your turn. Give the bruth of a blay one cheer more!"

There was a deafening hurrah in the passage.

Gaston Pons staggered to his feet.

"I challenge no laddie captain!"

"Never!" exclaimed Clavering. "If you start exclaiming me again I'll give you the flicking of your life, you cheeky young rascal!"

Gaston Pons' eyes flashed.

"Let you say?"

"Oh, no!"

"I am insulted!"

"Oh! come along," exclaimed Pat O'Neil, grasping the French junkie by the arm. "Come along, you laddie lunatic!"

"I am insulted!"

"Take his other arm, Ben!"

"Right!"

"I am insulted. I have no satisfaction. I challenge!"

"You silly young rascal. Come along!"

"I challenge!"

"Oh, thank him out, Pons darling!"

"Yes, he goes!"

Between them the chaos of the French dragged the excited French youth from the study and Dick Pongilly along the door.

Clavering sat down at the table again.

His legs were feeling rather damp and warm from the tea, but Clavering was a good-natured fellow, and he was laughing now.

#### THE CHALLENGE:

**I**RAT O'NEIL and Dick Pongilly marched Gaston Pons along the corridor until a crowd of the laughing junkies.

The French boy was struggling furiously, and spitting the spit in his rage and excitement.

"Let me go! Let me go!"

"Not!" said Pat O'Neil.

"I may as well—"

"Back!"

"I risk!"

"Not!"

They set him down at last, in the junkie common room. Pons was crimson with excitement. He put his collar straight with a shaking hand.

"I have been insulted!"

"Oh! don't be an ass," said Pat, good-naturedly.

"I am of the noble family of Pons!"

"Hullo! what's he talking about?" asked Brown.

"His says he's of the noble family of Pong—"

"Ze family de Pons," shrieked Gaston. "Ze noble family of Pons!"

"The noble family of Pong," said Pat. "He must be a relation of Pong's, the porter's dog. Have you any canine relations, Pong?"

Gaston waved his arm frantically in the air.

"I tell you!"

"Yes, we know all about your Pong family!"

"I have been insulted!"

"Never mind, Pong! Good-bye!"

"You insult me again!"

"Certainly, I'll insult you as often as you like," said Pat O'Neil, cheerfully. "I'm a great hand at insulting young donkeys!"

"You call me an donkey?"

"Well, I know it's rather rough on the donkeys!"

"Oh!"

"Not!"

"I am insulted!"

"We've heard that before."

"I will have satisfaction!"

"Where will you have it?"

"Oh!"

"I say where will you have it—on the nose, or behind the ear, or just above the third button of your fancy waistcoat?"

"I not understand!"

"I thought you said you wanted satisfaction!"

"Get out! Yes, you!"

"Well, then," said Pat, pushing back his cuffs with a businesslike air. "I'll give you all the satisfaction you want."

The French boy retreated.

"You mean?"

"I mean I'm ready for you. I don't want to hurt you, as you're been a useful little man in spite of your funny ways, but I'm open to give you all the satisfaction you want."

"I am sorry to hear you—you not understand!"

"Never mind, I'll give you the satisfaction all the same," said Pat, springing up to the French junkie, while the fellow around appeared with laughter. "Where will you have it?"

"I not fight you in a duel!"

"I suppose you don't want to fight with your feet, or with the back of your head, do you?" asked Pat, sarcastically.

"I fight you in so French fashion!"

"How's that? Like a cat?"

"No, no! I fight you in so pistol or in so sword like gentleman!"

Pat O'Neil stared at the new boy.

For the moment he thought that Gaston Pons was waddling in his mind; but the sailor face of the French junkie was set in an expression of grim earnestness.

"Sword!" exclaimed Pons. "Pistol!"

Brown gave a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha! He's a giddy chaffler!"

The French boy waved his hand excitedly.

"I fight you in so duel! I accept an insult in so blood!"

"My only p'gramma!" roared Pat O'Neil. "He's off his rocker—be's right all his giddy rascal! That's what's the matter with him!"

"I am not off of my rocker!"

"Don't you know that we fight with our fists in England, and don't ever catch other up like pork chops?" demanded Dick Pongilly.

"I care not. I have been insulted, and I have no satisfaction!"

"I'll meet you with the gloves on if you like!"

"I have no satisfaction. Ze insult is so noble family Pons can only be ripped out in so blood," exclaimed Gaston, dramatically.

"You howling ass!"

"Ze is so fresh insult. It is wipe-out in blood along me so great insult. You you meet me and get me so satisfaction!"

"Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is not so matter for to tell. Ze blood shall flow!"

"This chap must have been brought up on an American cheap muckle and black puddings, to be so fond of blood," said Brown.

"I am of so noble family of Pons!"

"He's had enough of your pedigree, Pong!"

"My name is not Pong—and it is name of so dog—my name is Pong."

"It's all the same!"

"It is not all so easy, I insist——"

"My dear Pegg——"

"Oh! Oh! If you not want me and give me no satisfaction I heard you no so coward!"

Pat O'Neil laughed.

"I fancy the fellows here know whether I am a coward or not," he said, "and if a coward heard you talking about a duel, you young men, you would get a laughing."

"I will have no satisfaction——"

"Give him a licking, O'Neil, and have done with it," said Brown.

"I not take no licking——"

"Then shut up!"

"I never shut up till I have no satisfaction."

A gleam of fire came into Pat O'Neil's Was Irish eye. "Very well," he exclaimed. "Sure an Irishman can't refuse a challenge. Th' give you satisfaction, Pegg!"

"You meet me?"

"Yes, at sunrise, with anything you like, swords, pistols, carriage-knives, lawn-mowers, or machine guns!"

"He, he, he!"

"There is no reason for to fight. O'Neil is a brave man, and fight like no gentleman, I mean have no second."

Pat O'Neil winked at Dick Peggally, and Dick, who had looked amazed at first, comprehended and grinned widely.

"I'll be your second, Pegg," said Pat, readily.

The French boy embraced him.

"Not so very good of you, my friend!"

"Oh! Don't talk my charity, you brat! I mean, thank it! I'll be your second, but I'm not going to be killed."

"I keep my second for he is my shame——"

"Oh, keep off. Now then, Mr. O'Neil, will you appoint a second, and we'll make arrangements for the meeting?"

"Certainly," said Pat. "Brown's my man."

"Right!"

The Fourth-formers were jelling with laughter. Brown knew that the new boy was simply being "ruined," but Gaston Pons took it all in deadly earnest.

"If Monsieur O'Neil apologises, I shall no maintain up duty, and make him my shame worse than——"

Pat shook his head decidedly.

"Not ready."

"You refuse?"

"Well, will you want to kiss me if I'm your shame?"

"I always kiss my shame."

"Then I'd rather you shut me, or jolled me with a sword," said Pat. "If it's all the same to you."

"It is another insult——"

"Yes, you must be getting fed up with them by this time."

"No head shall see——"

"Rats!"

And Pat O'Neil walked away laughing. Brown walked along with him. Brown was a keen-eyed, ten-toeing lad from Yorkshire, and he had at once fallen into the scheme to "ruin" the newcomer.

"Of course, it's all gammen!" he said, as he walked away with Pat.

The Irish janitor laughed.

"Well, I should rather say so, Brown."

"It will be useful fun. The French kid thinks you are in deadly earnest. I'll arrange the meeting with his second," chuckled Brown.

Kenny of the Fourth passed them. Kenny was the chief of Cunningham's backers in the Lower Forms, and he gave Pat O'Neil a nod of hatred as he passed. Brown, who had his back turned to Kenny, went on without noticing him.

"You'd better meet the French kid with pistols, at sunrise, behind the chapel——"

Pat made a gesture of caution.

"Ware snakes!"

"I didn't see the end," said Brown. "Come up to your stud."

"That's better."

The two janitors ascended the stairs to No. 8, the study occupied by Pat O'Neil, Dick Peggally, and their enemy Kenny.

Kenny stood looking after them with a strange glint in his eyes.

"What was that?" he muttered. "Met the French kid at sunrise with pistols! They can't be going to fight a duel."

He whistled softly.

Pat O'Neil was such a madcap that there was really no telling what he might or might not do, and it was easy for Kenny to guess that the French janitor might have a penchant for duelling.

The end of the Fourth thought it over, with an evil gleam of malice in his little narrow eyes.

Was it a chance of getting even with Pat O'Neil at last?

#### A CHANCE AT LAST!

THERE was a strange sound upon the face of Herbert Balfour as he entered Cunningham's study and closed the door.

The prefect looked at him silently.

His face was gloomy, and there was a gleam of spite in his eyes.

Mr. Balfour had helped him all he could in the election, even to the extent of bribery; yet there was no doubt that it was partly Mr. Balfour's inconstancy that had enabled Pat O'Neil to corral the new boy and his vote, without a chance for the prefect to interfere with him.

"You have failed," said Mr. Balfour, abruptly.

Cunningham nodded.

"Clavering is captain of St. Kate's."

"Have you come here to thank me of that?" sneered the novice.

Mr. Balfour bit his lips.

The manner of Cunningham was not very respectful, but after entering into a league with one boy against another, the form-master could hardly expect to be treated with the former respect.

"Can nothing be done?" he asked, quietly, without betraying the resentment that Cunningham's sudden courtesy excited within his breast.

"I can't see anything that can be done. Clavering is captain of St. Kate's, by a majority of one vote."

"Yes, there is no appealing that."

"He shan't have an easy path before him as captain of the school," said Cunningham, vehemently. "I'll make him sit up yet."

Mr. Balfour looked at him inquiringly.

"What can you do?"

"I can make things thorny for him. I'm on the cricket committee, and I've got a certain amount of influence. I'll make things difficult for him there."

The form-master nodded.

"Yes, there is no reason why you should not do that—and if I can help you in any way you can always depend upon me."

"You haven't helped me very much in this matter."

Mr. Balfour's eyes glittered.

"All would have gone well had for Pat O'Neil."

"That is true."

Everything was arranged so that Kenny could bring the new boy into the school just in time for the election, and make him vote for you.

"Yes, but——"

But Pat O'Neil somehow discovered what was going on, and in some way contrived to get the French boy into the own hand and make him vote for Clavering.

"Yes, confused him!"

"He shall be punished," said Mr. Balfour, with a burning gleam in his eyes. "I hate that junior more than I do Clavering."

Cunningham started.

He looked curiously at the form-master.

Herbert Balfour had always kept up some sort of dignity, talked, over his feelings, even in plotting with Cunningham against the captain of St. Kate's.

Something had evidently happened to greatly disturb the form-master's equanimity, so make him come out into the open like this.

"I would rather punish Pat O'Neil than Clavering," said Mr. Balfour. "Clavering can wait. But Pat O'Neil——"

"I feel as bitter as you can possibly do, sir," said Cunningham, with a snarl of the teeth. "But we can do nothing. Clavering will, of course, back him up in every way now. And the Head seems to take notice of him, too."

"Yes, I have observed that."

"I don't see what we can do, then."

"He must be brought down somehow," said Mr. Balfour, between his teeth. "I have this evening, noticed at his hands something such as I have never before before seen from a grown man."

Cunningham did not reply.

He knew perfectly well that if Mr. Balkley had been treated with injustice by Pat O'Neil, he had provoked it by his own tyranny.

But it was not his cue to say so.

"He must be punished," said Mr. Balkley. "He shall be punished. It is difficult for me to move openly in the matter, especially in consideration of the view the Board takes. He has annoyed Pat O'Neil, and he likes him, as you say."

"Blasphemy! I can see why."

"What can we do? Something can be thought of—something shall be thought of," said Mr. Balkley, bravely.

Cunningham gave a start, and held up his hand for silence. He had heard a hand upon the handle of the study door.

The next moment the door was open, and Kenny burst excitedly into the study.

"I say, Cunningham—"

He looks off abruptly as he perceives the presence of the form-master.

"What is it?" growled Cunningham. "How dare you come into my room without knocking?"

"I forgot—I wanted to tell you—"

"Well, what is it?"

The junior was evidently bursting with news. Mr. Balkley made a step towards him.

"It's about Pat O'Neil," said Kenny, at last.

Kenny knew that Mr. Balkley had had a hand in plotting against Clavering at the election; in fact, he knew a great deal more than either of the plotters suspected. He thought he was safe in speaking out now, and he soon saw that he was right. The savage glitter that leaped into Mr. Balkley's eyes showed that he was eager to hear anything to the disadvantage of Pat O'Neil.

"What is it, Kenny?"

Kenny gave Cunningham a quick inquiring glance, and the latter nodded in sign for him to speak as freely.

"It's about Pat O'Neil—and the French kid—"

"What is it?"

"They're going to fight a duel."

Mr. Balkley started.

"What?"

"They're going to fight a duel."

"Nonsense!"

"It's a fact, sir," said Kenny, eagerly. "You never know what that French kid is going to do, or Pat O'Neil either. They're a pair of madcaps. They've been quarrelling heartily ever since some of they had in the captain's study, and some of the fellows know all about it."

"But the duel—?"

"They're arranging it. Some of the Fourth think it's all nonsense—"

"Of course it is," said Cunningham.

"It isn't, Cunningham," said Kenny, excitedly. "Because I came upon O'Neil and Brown talking it over, and they were making arrangements for the meeting behind the chapel, at sunrise to-morrow."

Mr. Balkley's brow contracted.

There was possibly an element of fact in the news brought by Kenny, and if so, what a chance to catch Pat O'Neil on the hip.

He looked quickly at Cunningham.

"There may be something in it," said the prefect. "Pat O'Neil is madcap enough for anything. Of course, he wouldn't intend to do any real harm, but harm would be pretty certain to some of his plottings with Brown."

The form-master's eyes gleamed.

"We must look into this," he said, in a low voice. "If it is true, Patrick O'Neil is a dangerous character who ought to be expelled from the school—and shall be!"

"It's true enough, sir."

"How can we ascertain—"

"I can't tell you," said Kenny, eagerly.

"Well, Kenny?"

"You know I share the study with O'Neil and Peggotty, sir."

"What about that?" said the form-master, impatiently.

"I only mention that, sir, to account for what I'm going to tell you. Behind the study is the lumber-room and the partition is only of wood."

"I know it."

"There's a knot out of the wood, and when I was in the lumber room after dark last night, I saw the light shine through from the study."

"What of it?"

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

Mr. Balkley coloured.

He might have played the card-dropper on occasion, but to do so in a plot with a junior of the Fourth Form was a little too undignified even for an unscrupulous man like Herbert Balkley.

Cunningham looked at him, inquiringly.

"You are a prefect, Cunningham," said Mr. Balkley, after a moment's pause. "It would be impossible for me to do as Kenny suggests, but it is your duty as a prefect to look into an affair of this kind."

"If you think so, sir—"

"I certainly do think so."

"Then I will do so," said Cunningham.

"Loss no time."

The prefect grinned.

"Jolly 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.

#### AN AFFAIR OF HONOUR.

"**C**OME 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 Brown entered the study.

"Hallo!" said Pat, cheerfully. "Have you come to apologise, Pegg?"

The French boy stared.

"Apologies? Me!"

"Certainly!"

"You not comprehend. It is you not apologise to me."

Pat grinned.

"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.

"Fare meur respect; do not," he exclaimed. "You ask yourself of me?"

"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 honour!" cried the emotional French youth, clapping his hand to his breast.

The juniors stared at him.

"Your what?" exclaimed Pat.

"My honour!"

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

Pat giggled.

"He means his mother."

"Oh, his mother. Where is she?"

"Alas! She is in gay Paris, and perhaps not behind to son of her heart any more."

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

"If I perish on a field of honour, my mother will weep, but she may not see her like a heaven man and a Frenchman."

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

"Woe! my mother!"

"If you don't want any satisfaction after all—"

"Ah! You creep out of us fight—"

"Not at all! I was beginning to think you wanted to."

"Nevais! Nevais! while in blood of a noble family of Poiss does as no more. 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. *Die!* I wipe out as insult in as blood."

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

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



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

"I apologise," he cried.  
 "Oh! that's all right."  
 "I jur you it is an sword not shall jur vis himself," exclaimed Pons. "I am in an wrong. I beg to pardon of you."

"Good!"  
 "I am forgive."  
 "Oh, yes."  
 "You'll embrace as second as I like."

"Here, get off—"  
 "I take my second, he is my shorn," said the French boy kissing poor Pons twice before he released him.  
 Pons wiped his cheeks with his pocket handkerchief. Only the desire to carry out the joke on the new boy prevented him from telling him to the carpet on the spot.

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

"I wasn't kissing him—"  
 "Well, it looked as if you were."

Gaston Pons made a gesture.  
 "Ze sword is ze weapon of an gentleman," he exclaimed.  
 "It is my wish to fight vis an sword."  
 "Have you any swords with you?"  
 "No."  
 "Get any like how to get any."

"I fear not."  
 "Then swords are barred, anyway. Have you got any pistols. Fat 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. Scarier 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 kill anybody at all."  
 "If so! You want practice, then. You'll arrange your next affair better, if you don't get killed in this one."

"How now—I—"  
 "What time shall we say then?" asked Pongilly.



"One!"                      There was a dreadful pause.                      "Two!"

"He was kissing me—"  
 "I kiss my shorn," exclaimed the French boy, making a dip towards Pongilly, as if he were about to start again. Pons, generally 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'd better think it over."  
 "I require to satisfaction—"

"He's made up his mind," said Pons. "An accommodation being impossible, it only remains to fix the time and place of meeting."  
 "Right you are!"

"Well, as the challenged party you have the right to choose the weapons," said Pongilly. "What's your drink—I mean what's your weapons?"

"Pistols," said Pons.

"Scarier is too early," said Fat. "We should attract general attention by having 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 well!"  
 "True," said Brown. "Shall we fix Monday morning then?"

"Can't wait all that time," said Fat, with a ferocious look.  
 "I am aghast for blood and vengeance."  
 "Oh!"

"We can fix it to-night if you like," said Tom, grinning.  
 "It's been rather an exciting day, and we may as well have a duel to wind up with, and then we could have the banquet on Monday."

"Faith, and it's right ye are."  
 "Good! To-night be it, then," said Pongilly. "My principal agrees to the duel to-night, don't you, Pong?"

"My name it can not Pong."

"Hang your name? Do you agree, or do you want to cross out of it?"

"I agree very much."

"Pong agrees very much. That's settled, then."

"Now, about the time?" said Tom Brown.

"We leave that to you."

"As soon as possible," said Pat O'Neil, with a third-thirty look.

"Oh! Ye cannot—"

"Leave it to your second, please, Pong," said Dick Pongilly severely.

"What's that?"

"I'm doing the talking in this set."

"But I ask you, how is it out or fire at one another in so dark. Ye not be able to see."

"That's all right," said Tom Brown, cheerfully. "You'll be across a handkerchief, you know."

"I not know—"

"You'll have two pistols, one of them loaded, and cast lots for them—"

"But—"

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

"But—"

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

"Oh!"

The French junior turned pale. Tom Brown went on relentlessly.

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

"How nice!"

"Balls are fought like that in France—"

"Yes, yes, in so many in so beautiful France no one is ever killed."

"Oh, we're going to do the thing in proper style," said Dick Pongilly. "As a man of honour, I should refuse to have a ball 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 cross out—"

"I wish nothing of the kind. But I—"

"Then shut up, and leave the talking to your second," said Pat, sternly. "My belief is that this chap Pong knows deeply nothing about the etiquette of killing people."

"How else? I tell know not to be known, and I think—"

"Never mind what you think. What is the best for the terrible affair, kids?" asked Dick Pongilly.

"Now a 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 morning—"

"How nice!"

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

"And the dead chap can be hidden in the Mead's garden, and left there till called for—I mean until he's found—"

"I think—"

"Then it's all settled," said Dick Pongilly. "Your side undertakes to provide the pistols, I understand."

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

The French junior shook his head.

"I have no pistols—"

"Well, the pair we shall provide will be all right," said Tom Brown.

"It doesn't matter much how they carry, as your pistols will be touching one another's chests. Better make your will, Pong, and write a farewell letter home to your mother."

"What! 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 Ponges."

"What?"

"Come on," said Dick Pongilly. "It is just on nine now, and we've got to rise to water if we're to be on the ground in time. Beyond the chapel, you kids."

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

"How nice!"

"Do you want to back out, Pong?"

"Oh! What! Containment!"

"Then stop your murmuring," said Tom Brown, "and get out of the study, too. Patrick has some farewell letters to write to his mother. You're not the only chap who's got a mother."

Dick Pongilly drew his arm through Gaston's, and led him from the study. The French boy was certainly no coward, but he was looking very pale and serious. The duel was turning out a much more serious matter than he had anticipated, but there was no backing out now.

Pat O'Neil turned to Tom Brown with a grin when Gaston went and Dick Pongilly had left the study.

"I say—"

The Irish junior broke off suddenly.

A slight sound had caught his ear, and he made Brown a sign to be silent, while his eyes searched the back wall of the study with a curious gaze.

The missing knot in the wooden partition was not unknown to Pat O'Neil, nor the fact that it was possible for a spy in the lumber room beyond to play the eavesdropper. It had never occurred to Pat that anybody would wish to do so until this moment. He looked towards Brown.

"Did you hear anything?" he asked, in the lowest of whispers.

Brown shook his head.

"It was somebody in the lumber room."

"What about it?" asked Tom.

"He was leaning against the wall by the second—you remember Kenny hearing an speak about the dead downstairs?"

Tom Brown nodded, with a glimmer of intelligence in his eye.

"I remember, O'Neil."

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

Tom Brown grinned.

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to rot him," whispered Pat. "If he wants to know all about the duel, he shall—and we'll make him believe that it's all in deadly earnest."

"My hat!"

"Hush!"

#### A CASE OF "SPYING!"

PAT O'NEIL listened.

Again there was a faint sound, in the silence, from the wooden wall, which creaked slightly as if a heavy body was leaning against it. The knot hole was above the reach of a hand, and whoever was listening had to stand on tiptoe to reach it.

Pat grinned.

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

"Right you are, Paddy."

"Dick Pongilly thinks it's more than half a joke," said Pat, who guessed that the spy would have come to that conclusion himself. "But that's all he knows."

"Exactly."

"We'll take the pistols, both of them loaded," said Pat, "and as we are going to fire, you can strike up our arms."

"Good."

"I mean to give Pong an awfully narrow shave, though," Pat went on. "I think it would be a good idea, say, to slip a little bit of his ear."

"It would serve him right."

"Of course, we shall all keep mum about the matter, and there will be no danger of the matter getting on to it," said Pat.

"Not unless somebody was really killed."

"Oh! of course we must draw the line at that. That's all very well for cutting the froggy, but between ourselves it's all my eye."

"Of course."

"But we're going to give him a lesson, and a bullet going past his ear would shake him up a bit."

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"Then that's settled. But mind you don't forget about knocking up his arm in time."

"I'll remember."

"You know, he'll flee away, and if his arm isn't knocked

up, he may go bearing a hole right through me. It won't do to have the pistol unloaded, because he's sure to examine them and use for himself."

"But we were arranging to have only one loaded, and shove the muzzle against your giddy chest—"  
 "We can alter that. There will be plenty of moonlight for taking aim, when you come to think of it," said Pat, with a wink.

"True."  
 "Now we may as well go and get the pistols. They're a very old pair—"

"Where are they?"

"You know the pair of old-fashioned pistols hanging up in the library—"

"Will they work?"

"Oh, yes. I've seen Jobbing cleaning them, and they're in perfect order. I've got some powder and ball, so that will be all right."

"Good!"

"Let's go and get them, and then get down to the ground. We wouldn't be late for the duel, or Fong will think we've afraid."

"Come on, then."

Pat O'Neil and Tom Brown entered the study. Cunningham, on the other side of the wall, stepped back from the peep-hole, and drew a quick, deep breath.

He did not waste a moment.

Quickly he made his way out of the hamper room, and hurried to his study on the upper corridor, where Mr. Bulkeley was awaiting him. Kenny was there; the form-master was close at the study when the prefect returned.

Mr. Bulkeley looked up eagerly.

"Well?"

Cunningham's face was pale with excitement. He closed the door.

"I think we've got a chance at Pat O'Neil at last, he's retired. If the Head don't expel him over this business you can see my head for a football."

Herbert Bulkeley's eyes gleamed.

"Tell me what you have discovered—quick."

"I listened at the hole in the wall, and heard pretty nearly every word," said the prefect, with a grin of satisfaction.

"It's right about the duel. Pat O'Neil and the French lad are going to meet with pistols at nine o'clock."

The form-master glanced at his watch.

"It is five minutes to nine now."

"Yes. They're not wasting time."

"But are you sure of this, Cunningham? The French boy seems to me, from what I have noted of him, to be a foolish, unstable lad, but Patrick O'Neil is too sensible, I am sure, to play such a bad trick."

"Well, it would be just like one of his escapades."

"Ah! yes, but I cannot understand his wishing to harm the French lad, nor his folly in running such fearful risks," said the form-master, with a shake of the head.

Cunningham grinned.

"O'Neil doesn't mean it to be a real duel. Pons is in earnest, but O'Neil has his head screwed on the right way. He's getting the new kid."

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.

"How so?"

"They are taking the old pistols from the library wall, and Pat O'Neil has powder and shot. They are going to load the pistols, and Tom Brown of the Fourth is to knock their arms up when they fire, so that no one will be hurt."

"Ah!"

"But don't you see, sir, that that will be pretty nearly as dangerous as if they were really fighting. When kids about mauling around with loaded pistols—"

Mr. Bulkeley's eyes glittered.

"I should not be sorry if Pat O'Neil—"

He broke off.

Cunningham laughed.

"I suppose we had better interfere, sir. If the pistols are loaded, it's perfectly easy to make out that they were going to fight a duel, and Pat O'Neil was positive on that point. The pistols are to be loaded. If they're caught in the act, with loaded pistols in their hands, it won't be any use O'Neil explaining to the Head that only a joke was intended."

"That is true."

"He could not possibly prove it. Besides, the mere fact that he was playing with loaded firearms would be sufficient for him to be expelled from the school."

Mr. Bulkeley nodded.

"Which ever way the matter goes, we've got him," shouted Cunningham.

"Doesn't it look like that to you, sir?"

"Yes, it certainly does."

Mr. Bulkeley rose to his feet.

"He did not seem to be in any hurry to move, however, and a strange suspicion about into the prefect's mind."

He knew how bitterly the form-master behind the janitor who had defied him and humiliated before all the form.

Was it possible that the master could be black-hearted enough to wish to leave time for a possible accident with the loaded fire-arms?

Cunningham was not a scrupulous fellow, and he hated Pat O'Neil. But he felt a shudder at such a thought.

"Hain't we better hurry, sir?" he ventured.

"You are sure Pat O'Neil was not deceiving you, Cunningham?"

"Deceiving me, sir? How?"

"He might have known you were listening—"

"Impossible!"

"If you are quite certain of that?"

"I am absolutely certain."

"Well, we will go to the library and see if the pistols have been taken first," said Mr. Bulkeley. "It is no good being busy in an affair of this sort."

"But meanwhile—"

"Come, come we must make sure," said the form-master, "close with me to the library."

Cunningham unwillingly assented. They went to the library, the master of the Fourth moving in a very friendly way, and the important prefect having to keep with him.

Mr. Bulkeley switched on the electric light in the library.

"Look!" exclaimed Cunningham.

He pointed to the spot where the old pistols had been fastened on the wall in the form of a trophy.

The place was empty.

"The pistols were gone."

The prefect looked quickly at the form-master. Mr. Bulkeley was gazing at the empty place on the wall where the pistols had been with a curious look upon his face.

"There is no further doubt now, sir?" hinted Cunningham.

Mr. Bulkeley nodded.

"There certainly does not seem to be."

"Hain't we better get out to the ground behind the chapel, sir?"

"Yes."

They left the library. In spite of the prefect's anxiety, the form-master did not hurry his steps in the least. Nine o'clock rang out from the clock tower before they had even quitted the house. It was the hour of the duel.

THE DUEL.

"GREET! I sink—"

"What's the matter now, Fong?"

"I sink—"

"Are you getting nervous?" asked Dick Fungally.

The principal and second had arrived first upon the ground. They had successfully dodged the rest of the form, who knew that a training duel was on, but did not know exactly where and when it was to take place.

Pen and Pons arrived on the spot where the duel was to take place. It was a solitary spot at night. In the daytime the janitor's little excursions were sometimes fought out there under the ancient beech trees. At night the place was silent and deserted.

The moon was setting high in the soft dark sky of June, and her silver light streamed down upon the scene.

The spot was very light, and almost ghastly.

There was no sign of Pat O'Neil or of Tom Brown as Gatten and his second reached the spot, and halted by the side of the grey old chapel.

There was a certain awkwardness in the manner of Gatten Pons that had led Dick Fungally to put his question to the French janitor.

Gatten Pons flushed indignantly.

"I am not nervous," he exclaimed. "I sink of my anger—"

"My dear chap, there's no time to sink of that now. You can think of your money to-morrow, if you are still alive then."

"Gee! I sink."

"Do you? What with?" asked Pen, with a disparaging

glance at Pat's head, as if to hint that the thinking apparatus there was not of the first quality.

"I sink nat I give O'Neil another chance to apologise."

"Oh, rats! Better wipe out the marks in gore."

But—

"You can easily get over the wall after you have killed him, and nobody will know until to-morrow that you are a murderer—"

"Mon Dieu!"

"I wish I could tell you the time of the Sunday trains," said Pat, 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."

But—

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

"Mon Dieu!"

"Only as this is your first murder you may find it hard to get away. What you need is experience in these things."

"You speak yourself of me."

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

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

"Here we are," called out Pat.

"Faith, and sure I can see ye," said Pat O'Neil. "I hope we haven't kept you waiting."

"Well, you have, a few minutes, as a matter of fact, but it's all right. Nise hasn't gone yet, and Pongo can't expect to be allowed to shed blood before the time agreed on."

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

"Exactly."

"Two more minutes—"

"Get the pistols?"

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

"Good. I'll just examine the loading, if you don't mind," said the French jester's second, with a grin. "Nothing like being sure in cases like this."

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

"Mur sure—my friends—"

"They're all right," said Pat, laying down his pistols. "Now, then, across a handkerchief, isn't it, with the muzzles touching one another's bread-baskets?"

"No, that's been modified," said Tom Brown. "They are now at twelve paces. That will be a good distance in this light."

"Oh! just as you like."

"My friends! I sink—"

"Hello, Gassy Pong! Not getting funky, are you?" asked Brown, cheerfully.

"So blood of us Pongs—"

"It will soon be flooding about here," said Tom Brown. "Mind you don't tread in it, any of you, and take tall-tale traces about with you wherever you go."

"Faith, and it's—"

"Was ever, if you will offer me an apology, as ad affair go no further," said Gaston Pons. "I sink of my meezur, and I sink of your meezur, and I sink of myself nat I sink I sorry to shed no blood."

Pat O'Neil shook his head.

"Too late!"

"If you give us apology—"

"Nothing of the sort. You will have to apologise to me on your banded knees—"

"Ah! Nivair! nivarir!"

"Then the affair must go on."

"I sink—"

"It's too late to sink now," said Tom Brown. "Choose your weapons."

"Stein—but—"

"Oh, ring off," said Dick Fongally. "I've done all the talking that's necessary. All you have to do is to take your pistol and shed some blood."

"Ves' good. I have done my best to save us 'shedding of as blood—"

"Yes, and now the time's come for gore. Take your pistol."

Gaston Pons selected one of the ancient instruments, in a rather gingerly fashion. Dick Fongally gave a yell.

"Here, don't point it at me!"

"Ves! I point tom, A'n't?"

"Point it at the ground, or at your own fat head," growled Tom. "Don't point it at me, you heaving ass."

"Nat in—"

"Oh, get along."

Gaston Pons allowed the muzzle of his pistol to point towards the ground, and then he measured the twelve paces.

The jester's second, as one another while the French boy's back was turned. The job was working out even better than they had anticipated. The youth from St. John's France had not the least suspicion that he was being roiled.

"Why the change of place?" whispered Dick.

Pat O'Neil grinned largely.

"Some rotter was listening in the balcony while we were talking," he said. "I pled it on to make him think the pistols were loaded, whatever it was. I fancy it was Keady, but I can't be sure."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If it was, he will have a tale to tell, and I shouldn't wonder if he were to bring a protest on the score to broad us out," grinned Pat. "It would be a sell for him."

"The pistols aren't loaded?"

"Sure, and of course not. There's just a little powder in them to make a pop, that's all, so as to properly rot our French friend."

"Brown said something about their being loaded with ball—"

"It was quite true," said Tom, calmly. "I loaded them with balls of worsted."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The French jester had made his twelve paces, and he now turned round, and faced his adversary, vent and pistol in hand.

"I am ready."

"Beggers," murmured Pat O'Neil, "the young beggar's got paid, anyway. He thinks this pistol is loaded, and yet he's standing up to it all right."

There was certainly something in what Pat said. The French youth, in spite of his peculiar little ways, had real pluck to face a pistol he believed to be loaded. And the English lads, absurd as the situation was, could not help feeling a certain admiration at that moment for Gaston Pons.

"I'm ready too," said Pat, taking his place.

"Fire when I drop this handkerchief," said Tom Brown, taking one from his pocket. "I shall count three, and then drop it. You understand clearly?"

"Faith and I do."

"One, two, three, one, two!"

"Good. Now, all ready?"

"Yes."

"One!"

"Stand back there, Pons. You don't want to catch one of the balls, I suppose, if they miss one another. Now, I'm just going to begin. One!"

There was a dreadful pause.

"Two!"

Pat O'Neil smiled. A thrill ran through Gaston Pons. The adversaries still faced one another erect in the moonlight.

"Three!"

The handkerchief fluttered from Tom Brown's hand to the ground.

The duellists raised their pistols. At the same moment the hour began to strike from the clock tower of St. Kate's.

Gaston Pons raised his pistol high, with the evident intention of firing in the air. But Pat O'Neil leveled his quite straight at the French jester.

Po-pop!

Two faint—very faint pops—and then a thrilling cry.

"Oh!"

Pat O'Neil's pistol went with a crash to the ground, and the Irish jester followed it.

From in the moonlight lay Pat O'Neil, and Gaston Pons gave a cry of horror.

AND AFTER!

SO naturally had Pat O'Neil played his part, that for a moment Pons and Tom Brown were almost deceived, and they half-feared that there had been something in the French jester's pistol after all.

But it was only for a moment.

Pat felt with his face turned to Tom Brown, and the moonlight shone full upon it, and revealed his left eye winking. Brown gave an involuntary chuckle, which reassured Pat. But the French junior was dead to it.

Gaston Fene stood like a statue for a few seconds, his pistol falling from his hands with a thud into the grass. "Adieu! Adieu!" he groaned. "I have had him."

Then he ran forward to where the Irish junior lay. "Monsieur O'Neill! Mon ami! Oh, did! He is dead!"

The French junior's terror and distress were very real. And in that moment the English juniors liked him better than they had ever done before. For it was evident that his distress was only for Pat O'Neill, and was not dictated by any thought of the consequences to himself.

Pat gave a deep groan. "He is rebuffed by a cry of delight from the French youth. "He is not killed."

He threw himself upon his knees in the grass by the side of the prostrate junior, and raised Pat's head from the ground. "Mon ami! My friend! Speak to me, oh, speak to me, and say not you are not dead."

It cost Pat an effort to keep his face straight as he heard this appeal. He gave a deep and ghastly groan.

"Mon Dieu! He is dying."

Another deep groan!

"Did! And I bring in air to you as not to hurt so far gone," exclaimed Gaston Fene. "Oh! I am no murderer."

Groans again!

"My master will never see me again. I will fly—I will fly, and hide myself. I am stained with no blood. Ah! Adieu, I am no murderer."

The French boy held up his hand in the moonlight with a gesture of horror.

There was a red stain on the fingers where he had lifted Pat's head, and he did not know that Pat had provided himself with a sponge dipped in red ink, and had squirted it over his jacket as he fell with his arm doubled beneath him.

"Blood!"

Dick Fongelly grinned.

"Well, that was what you wanted, wasn't it, Fong? You were simply thirsty for his gore a while ago, and now you've got joints of it, you don't seem happy."

"Oh!" groaned Pat.

"Adieu! He is dying, and it is I, and, who have murder him. Did! We shall I say to my mother you she knows me you have hanged me? Mon Dieu!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ah, you are heartless! I am stain with no life-blood of no friend of me, and I die in no air, and yet I shed his blood. Oh! what shall I do? Mon ami, mon ami!"

The Irish junior groaned again.

Dick Fongelly tapped the distressed French boy on the shoulder, and Gaston Fene looked up with a look-his eyes.

"I say, you'd better look it," said Dick. "Pat may not die, but you can see he is losing gore in a reckless way, and he may stop the twig any minute. It's so good your being hanged, you know. It would be a waste of good soap. Better look it."

"I see go—"

"The police—"

"Ah, Adieu, my mother!"

"Why don't you look it?"

"No," exclaimed the French lad, springing to his feet. "I have murder no boy, and I not run away with myself. I stand as consequence."

"But I say—"

"I have done wrong. I not fly like no coward. I take no punishment, whatever it is. I will not run away."

"Good old foggie," exclaimed Dick Fongelly, stepping him on the shoulder. "That's the right sort, anyway. I can see that we shall be able to charm you now."

"No way will be my show now that my hands are stain with blood—"

"Well, we'll come and see you hanged," said Tom Brown, comfortingly, "and we'll take any last message you like to your mother."

"And plant some turnips on your tombstone," said Pat.

"Adieu—"

"Ballo, rava!" whispered Tom Brown. "Here comes the Bulker."

But the warning came too late. Mr. Bulkeley and Cunningham had suddenly appeared

through the trees and were bearing down swiftly on the group of juniors.

"My only hat!" murmured the supposed dying junior, "I didn't think they'd bring the Bulker into it. Now for a run."

Mr. Bulkeley stopped, and glanced down at Pat O'Neill. It was evident that the farm-master believed that the junior was hurt. There was a curiously grim look upon the hard face of the master of the Fourth.

"Who has done this?"

"Adieu! Good man! It is I, I am no murderer."

"You have shot O'Neill?"

"I about him with pistol."

"If you please, sir—" began Dick Fongelly.

"Adieu! I shall be execute as murderer, and I never, never see my mother or la belle Paris again," moaned Gaston Fene.

"Oh! that's all right, rocky," said the dying junior, sitting up. "I'm not dead yet, by long chalks."

The French youth gave a jump. "So dying garcon—he is not dying."

Pat O'Neill groaned.

"Not hurt."

"Did! It is no minute. I about him and he fall down dying, and now he is to left. It is wonderful."

The master of the Fourth looked at Pat O'Neill with a strange contraction of the brows.

"O'Neill?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are not hurt?"

"No, sir," said Pat, rising to his feet.

Mr. Bulkeley ground his teeth.

"You have been shamming, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, for a joke—"

"You will find it so joke to play with loaded firearms," said the master of the Fourth, grimly. "Follow me."

"But, sir—"

"You will follow me at once, O'Neill, and you others also, and we will see what Mr. Bulkeley has to say about your playing with loaded firearms."

"If you please, sir—"

"Not a word, Follow me."

Pat O'Neill walked at the juniors, and it silently followed the farm-master.

PAT COMES OUT AHEAD!

DR. BIDDULPH was in his study, and he looked up with rather a worried expression as a tap came at his door, and he slowly laid down his pen.

"Come in."

Mr. Bulkeley and Cunningham entered, and the juniors followed. They came in with serious faces, and solemn air, but there was a twinkle in their eyes.

Dr. Biddulph glanced at them.

"What is it now, please, Mr. Bulkeley. Complaints?"

"There was just a touch of business in the head's corner. It seemed to him that he thought he had had enough lately of Mr. Bulkeley's complaints."

"Yes, sir, I have a report to make," said the farm-master, firmly. "If you do not care to hear it—"

"Oh! pray proceed, Mr. Bulkeley."

"It is a case of those boys carrying loaded firearms within the precincts of the college—"

The doctor gave a violent start.

"What did you say, Mr. Bulkeley? Loaded firearms?"

"Yes, sir."

"Pray tell me all."

"It came to Cunningham's knowledge that those boys were proposing to fight a duel with pistols behind the chapel—"

"A duel! Absurd."

"It was a trick to frighten the French boy—"

"A very cruel trick."

"If you please, sir—" began Pat O'Neill.

Stunned, O'Neill, till Mr. Bulkeley has forbidden. Pray go on, Mr. Bulkeley."

"Certainly, sir. I hurried as quickly as I could to the spot, and found that the pistols had already been discharged and O'Neill was lying on the ground affecting to be wounded. I need not point out to you that the discharging of the pistols might easily have been attended by the death or serious injury of any of those reckless juniors, and as O'Neill was the ring leader—"

The doctor's brow grew very stern.

"If this is proved, I am afraid I shall have no alternative but to expel Patrick O'Neill from St. Kate's," he said. "I would not permit any boy to remain within the walls of this school who played with loaded firearms."

"If you please, sir—"  
"I am ready to listen to you now, O'Neill. Wh explanation have you to offer—?"  
"It was all a joke, sir—"  
"That does not excuse you in the slightest degree, if the firearms were loaded."

"But were they loaded, sir—?"  
"Mr. Balfour declares that they were."  
"The boys are persisting, as usual," said Mr. Balfour.  
"The pistols were certainly loaded, as Cunningham knows."  
"How do you know, Cunningham?"  
"I heard them planning the scheme, sir," said the prefect.  
"I deemed it my duty to become acquainted with their intentions, when I saw that they meant to play a joke which included the firing of loaded pistols."

"Quite so. What have you to say to that, O'Neill?"  
"Pat grinned."  
"We were setting him, sir."  
"You were—were what?" gasped the doctor.  
"Feeding him, sir," said Pat, a little abashed. "Stuffing him up, sir. We knew that he was hovering at the head-table in the wall of the study, and we thought we'd give him something to listen for. So we worked off a yarn about loading the pistols, but we never meant to do anything of the kind."  
"Cunningham's face was a study. So was Mr. Balfour's. The head tried to keep his features from relaxing into a smile but he could not succeed."

"So you knew Cunningham was listening, O'Neill?"  
"We didn't know it was Cunningham, sir—but we knew somebody was listening, and we thought we'd make a fool of him to teach him not to be a sneak."

"Ahem! And you did not load the pistols?"  
"Certainly not, sir. We hadn't any bullets, so we couldn't have done so if we had wished to do so," said Pat. "I hope you don't think I could be such a fool as to play with loaded firearms."

"Ahem—"  
"We loaded them with balls of waxed, sir," said Pat, "and got in just enough powder to make a little pop, that was all, sir."  
"You hear that, Mr. Balfour?"  
"I do not believe him, sir," said the form-master, white with rage.

"The doctor pursed his lips.  
"On the contrary, Mr. Balfour, I do not see any reason whatever to doubt O'Neill's statement. Do you order him to retire?"  
"Yes, sir," said Tom Brown. "As a matter of fact, it was I who loaded the pistols, so I know what they were loaded with I suppose."

"We were all in the joke except Pong, sir," said Dick Pengilly.

"Some and it was meant as a lesson to Pong, sir," said Pat O'Neill. "He sits prowling round about fighting desks, and we thought we'd give him a lesson, sir—and I think he's had a lesson, too."

"Oh! But it is true," said Guston Penn, almost tearfully.  
"Yes I think not I have warned O'Neill, I nearly see the lesson, and I say vit myself, I repeat, again, because think of us word used again."

"Fishtand I—"  
"Dr. Balfour smiled.  
"It was a wild trick, O'Neill. And it must not be repeated. It was wrong too to take these pistols from the library. You must replace them, and each of you will write out twenty lines for this escapade."

"Thank you, sir," chorused the jokers.  
"You may go."  
The jokers left the study in high spirits. Then the Head turned to Mr. Balfour.

"You have misjudged O'Neill again, Mr. Balfour. I should take it as a personal favour if you would try to be a little more lenient with that jester, and to understand him a little better."

"Mr. Balfour did not reply. He would not trust himself to speak. He left the Head's study without another word.

"Then Dr. Balfour turned the glimmer of his pipe over upon Cunningham.  
"Cunningham, you are a prefect, and your duty is to keep the younger boys in order, and to set them a good example. You will certainly not do them a good example by playing the card-trick, and listening to their conversation at desks in study walls. If anything of the kind occurs again, I shall have to seriously consider whether you can remain a prefect. You can go."

"And Cunningham went!  
Four jokers gathered in No. 8 Study in high feather. Pat O'Neill and Dick Pengilly secured a window round the table.

"Aren't we've known this?" explained Pat, as he stopped breathless. "The others! We've known them again."  
"We have, rather," said Pat and Tom Brown.  
"Hush! It is small talk!" explained Guston Penn, leaning with smugness. "I am very glad to know that it was all a joke."

"Pat slapped his on the back with a heartiness that made him stagger."

"Good old Pong!" he exclaimed. "You're several sorts of an ass, but I wish you're your like, and if you'd promise not to let the Fat show with you, and there's my fat on it!"

"And the French jester clasped his hand—and from that day forth one of Pat O'Neill's trust chains was Guston Penn, known familiarly and affectionately as "Pong."

Tom Penn.

## HOW RALPH AND BOB SCORED.

BY B. CLARKE MOON.

A CRIMINAL place was Basleigh College, and many a vivid tale was told of deeds of blood committed there in ages past, when our founders, failing a foreign foe to battle, cut each other's throats in order to keep in practice.

In the old churchyard many a crowding headstone told of a Basleigh buried there. And now, when their very bones were considered into dust, it was said their spirits walked long centuries ago.

The church itself was now an ivy-covered ruin, where the hot and cool, unceasing by ghosts, made their homes.

It is a question whether the haunted church, past which the boys of Basleigh had to go to reach the village, was not a far hotter deterrent to their breaking bounds than the doctor's can. They had a ghost of their own at the college, without going all the way to the churchyard to seek some more, so they contented themselves with the one at hand.

"Wake up, Giles!" cried one of the lads, named Ralph Redderys.

"You shoudy kid!" roused Giles, who was a shuffling bally, and the biggest fellow in the dormitory. "How dare you wake me?"

"Well, the ghost is howling around," declared Ralph.

"I know how hoastly brave you are, and then—"  
"W—Where it—the hanged thing?"

"Look over your shoulder, man. Quick!"

"Woo—oh! Where is it?"

"Where's what?"

"The ghost," gasped Giles, springing out of bed and glancing fearfully at a black shadow in the corner of the room.

"How should I know? He's somewhere downstairs. I can hear him moving about. I only told you to look over your shoulder to see if you were safe. There's someone prowling about, and I shouldn't wonder if he's after that challenge you and the doctor's jousting. If you are too frightened to come I'll get Bob Clark. Are you going to catch a ghost or a burglar, Bob?"

"I'm a thinking but were likely to catch a cold on a night like this," growled Bob, who was a great chum of Ralph's.

"If you are bent on going, I'll have to go too; but I don't see why you can't take Giles. He's fat, and would stop a better a bit better than me."

"But look what a beastly tank he is," observed Ralph.

"Was't I through you two to-morrow?" said Giles. "There's nothing in this world could frighten me. I'll show you whether I'm frightened or not."

"Now if no happened that the legs of the upper dormitory had promised the lower dormitory fellows a holder fight that night, but then and one or two others declared it was too cold, so it did not come off. The lower dormitory fellows lay

In wait until they were nearly frozen, then one of them suggested placing a basin of water on the stairs.

"We are bound to keep 'em sliding there."

"Suppose they don't happen to tread in it?"

"Well, wouldn't they tread in it? They are bound to tread in it."

And this is what they did, with the result that Giles went sprawling into those basins, and fell down the stairs with a frightful crash, while water came after him.

So did the French master, who kept close by. He had got a pain, which he read with freedom.

"Parbleu! I teach you so as to make a less noise 'n' to night," he cried a though, as a matter of fact, he was teaching him to make more noise.

For a moment he stopped for breath, then a pistol-shot rang out. It was followed by a cry of pain, then someone rushed along the passage.

The little Frenchman uttered a yell of terror, spring into his room, and locked the door. If a murder had been committed, he saw no earthly sense in having a second one committed, so he played a dice between himself and the murderer.

Giles hurried back to his dormitory, but Ralph and Tom were made of sterner stuff. They went on to find the doctor, with blood flowing from his left arm, which was broken by a pistol-ball. His wife was by his side.

"It was a burglar, my lady," he explained.

"Never mind the burglar, sir," said Ralph. "You got hurt to bad. Can you lend up his arm, ma'am, while we go for the doctor?"

"No, no, my lady. Send the servant."

"But we'll be going, I tell you. Jim wouldn't pass the haunted church, and it would take him a month of Sundays to go round the other way."

"That cannot be helped. I forbid you to go."

"I tell you we are going," said Ralph. "Do you think Bob and I are going to let you bleed to death?"

"My dear lady—"

"What's the good of talking to him?" exclaimed Bob.

"Come on, old chap. Can you manage, ma'am? You won't faint?"

"I shall not faint, my brave boys," the answered.

"I forbid you to—"

"Clear on, Bob. He can only cover us."

Then they hurried back to the dormitory, dressed as quickly as possible, and were soon racing towards the village.

The doctor was in, and sending his horse he galloped towards the college, while the others went to the police-station to report what had happened.

"Sure this 'ere ain't an 'old?" said a sleepy constable, putting his head out of window. "It's a very serious thing to ask the police."

"Of course it isn't a hoar, you blessed idiot!" retorted Ralph.

"A little less of your 'blessed idiot' there!"

"I wish there was a little less of them where you are."

"I shall take your name and address, young chap."

"Oh, you'd take my moral' thing, from a gallon of ale to a solid shankler of meason, or a pair of number sixteen boots, send your wife if you are displeas'd to rear yourself. Come on, Bob! Let the thundersing thunders go to sleep again. It's no good except to nobody at."

"I shall arrest—"

"Yes! You want a rest. I'd give you one, too, if I paid your wages. You've no wiser sense than a cooked staggon."

Then they left the worthy constable to his own pleasing thoughts.

"There's no need for us to hurry back," said Bob. "The doctor will be there by this time. I hope old Styles isn't hurt."

Dr. Styles was their head master.

"You can bet he's hurt right enough," answered Ralph.

"Not I say, Bob. He's got some flesh, so has his wife. I wonder if the burglar has collared anything."

"He would have a good chance with all those prizes lying about. Besides, the doctor has got a pair of silver and jewellers. The fellow would know the two habits about here aren't worth a penny apiece. Boney that old jobber we have been chaffing, catching a blunder! He couldn't catch a dead mouse."

"I wish it wasn't so late, we'd got some grub. Wonder if the old girl or the talk shop would mind us knocking her up?"

"You can bet she would! It must be an' a'clock. Bet Mrs. Styles will give us a feed if we ask her for it. Come on, old chap."

They walked on, chatting over the events of the night, and treating the doctors' wound with admiring forebears. A broken arm did not occur to them as being very serious.

"But now they came in sight of the old ruined church."

"Wonder if any ghosts are keeping round the place," observed Ralph. "It's a rummy 'n' it is, Bob, but I'll let you, and I have broken bonds some: from there my fellow in the college, you've never seen a ghost in this churchyard. Suppose we explore it a bit. Dare you go down in the catacombs?"

"Oh? What's the good? We might frighten the ghosts, you know."

"Never thought of that. It does look a bit gruesome, don't it? Perhaps we shouldn't frighten 'em so much if we went in the daylight."

"Ahem—no. But I'm game, if you are."

"We needn't go far, you know, Bob."

"You can bet your bottom dollar we shan't go too far. Come on! Are you frightened?"

"Rather."

"So am I, but we'll go all the same. It will be something to boast about."

They descended the crumbling steps, then probed their way through the lean gateway, the gate being only half closed.

Then Ralph gripped Bob by the arm.

Far above in a vault whose wall had crumbled away the sun a flickering light.

"Shall we go on?" murmured Ralph.

"Yes, I'm game."

On tiptoe they crept towards the spot and glanced through the opening: then they could scarcely suppress a cry of horror.

A man, with a Maltese black watch covering half his face was consulting some articles in one of the rotting coffins. On another one a tallow candle was stuck, and its flickering light cast weird shadows over the gloomy place.

"Bob," murmured Ralph, "be awfully steady."

"Shall we risk an attack?"

"Yes, look at the glory of the thing!"

"Suppose we get shot?"

"They would bury us."

"So they would. Never thought of that."

"Let's get round to the doorway. Make a dash at his back, then help at him. Look! There's the challenge cup!"

"Come on!" murmured Bob.

They crept to the door; a light still be stopped to take some more of the plunder, which he had in a bag, then they started at him and headed him free downwards to the ground.

Drawing a heavy oath, the thief drew a pistol from his pocket and tried to strike his unknown assailants. Then Ralph checked his shot and struck the ruffian's temple with all his strength.

The burglar's head was rolling on the floor, and the thief had fallen his. Again Ralph struck, then Bob stretched the journey from the miscreant's arms, and dash him a blow on the head that completely stunned him.

"That's enough, old chap," roared Ralph. "Gentle, we've scored!"

"It's good we want to hid him with," answered Bob.

"Don't! You'd frighten the ghosts, see if there's any thing—oh, yes! Here's his hat. Get his arms behind his back. I say, Bob! I hope we haven't killed him."

"That doesn't signify," said Bob, restraining the left, and securing the burglar's arms behind his back. "Here's his pistol. Move it and here's a murderous-looking knife. Now, perhaps, we shall be able to induce him to escape to the college. But the plunder in his bag, old fellow."

A quarter of an hour elapsed before the murderous ruffian regained consciousness, then, with a resolve fortified at him and with a few pounds of the loot, he was roused towards the college.

"How are you getting on, doctor?" inquired Ralph, examining the master's nose, followed by Bob.

"Nixty, my lady, thank you. But—"

"Well, we've captured the burglar. He is now locked in your cellar, and here's the plunder. Good night, doctor!"

And when the doctor subsequently told the story to all the boys, three ringing cheers were raised for Ralph and Bob.

Next Week we shall Issue Another Grand Story of  
**TAFFY LLEWELLYN'S SCHOOLDAYS.**

YOU WILL FIND THE PICTURE GIVEN BELOW  
 ON THE COVER.



He was carried backwards, and came into collision with Onions.

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