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EVERY
WEDNESDAY.



A SCREAMINGLY-FUNNY EXTRA-LONG SCHOOL STORY—

The Jape of the

by MARTIN CLIFFORD



No sooner does Herr Schwartz, the new German master at St. Jim's, set foot in the school, than he falls foul of Monsieur Morny. That first encounter between the two masters marks the beginning of a bitter feud that assumes alarming proportions and sets the whole school wondering where it will end. When the end does come, it is one of the amazing results of a stupendous wheeze—the Jape of the Term.

CHAPTER 1.

Figgins on the Warpath!

"BLOW IT!"

George Figgins stood at the window of Study No. 4 of the New House, looking out into the old quadrangle of St. Jim's.

"Blow it!" he grunted, for the second time.

"What's the matter, Figgy?" grinned Kerr. "Got the toothache, or have you been crossed in love?"

"Don't be so silly!" growled Figgins. "I almost wish I had the toothache, or something; it would be something to think about now. Blow this rain! I'm bored stiff! I can't see rag those School House worms this afternoon!"

"Well, so might!" agreed Kerr. "I'm feeling at a loose end myself, and it would liven things up a bit. Got any wheezes?"

"I'll tell you what, Figgy," said Fatty Wynn eagerly. "Why not spend the afternoon in the tuckshop? You got a quid from your uncle this morning, didn't you? I think that's a ripping way—"

"Ass! All you think about is grub!" snorted Figgins.

"In any case, you fat cormorant, I want that quid for some new running shoes!"

"Oh, that's rot, Figgy," snorted Fatty Wynn. "Mean to say there isn't going to be a feed, after all?"

"Sorry, old scout; but I must have those running shoes. There's only one way I can think of to give you a feed out of it, Fatty—"

"What's that?"

"By buying the new shoes with the quid, and giving you the old ones to chew," explained Figgins generously.

"How's that?"

"You—you rotter, Figgy! Fancy making rotten jokes over grub! Oh, you—you—"

"Well, that's all I can do for you, Fatty," said Figgins. "Look here, Kerr, old chap, can't you think of a wheeze—we simply mustn't waste a whole half-holiday doing nothing. And those School House worms are getting a bit too cocky of late. Only this morning that cheeky cad, F. Ke, pitched a rotten apple at me; luckily it hit Darr— the Sixth instead, and Blake got six of the best. Still, the intention was there, and it's up to us to put the cheeky worms in their place."

"Blessed if I can think of anything!" yawned Kerr.

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—STARRING TOM MERRY & CO., THE CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S!



Ratcliff, he realised that it might be an important message. The leader of the New House picked up the receiver.

"Hallo! Hallo!"

Over the wires came a rather thick, guttural voice.

"Ach! Is tat St. James' School, isn't it?"

"Oh, my hat!" Figgins placed a hand over the mouthpiece of the transmitter and turned a grinning face to his chums. "It's the giddy German master, chaps. Ach! Mein Gott! He's got a giddy accent you could cut with a knife. Talk about old Seneider! Shush!"

Figgins took his hand away and called cheerily.

"Yes; this is St. Jim's, sir! Did you wish to speak to Dr. Holmes?"

"Ach! Is tat Dr. Holmes speaking mit it?"

"No, sir; they have put you through to the wrong House, sir. But—"

"Vat is dat? Is it tat I am speaking to von ter liddle poy. Hein?"

"You're speaking to a junior from the New House, sir," said Figgins frowning. "Dr. Holmes is over at the School House. If you have any message for him, sir—"

"I haf von wish to speak mit him," came the reply. "Is it tat you cannot put me trough to Dr. Holmes, mein poy?"

"No, sir! But I'll give him a message if you like, sir!"

"Ach! Tank you, mein poy. Ferry goot! Vill you kindly tell Dr. Holmes tat I have—what you call him—missed mein train at Wayland, and shall gum on mit meinsel by der next von, hein?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"You vill give him der apologies mit me, mein poy?"

"Oh, quite, sir!"

"Tank you, mein poy! Ferry goot! Tell him Herr Schwartz sends der message, ain't it?"

"Very well, sir! You are the new language-master, of course, sir?"

"Tat is so! Tank you ferry mooch, mein poy!"

And the Herr rang off. Figgins chuckled. His eyes were gleaming as he placed the receiver back on the hook and led the way out of the study.

"What is it?" demanded Kerr, eyeing his chum curiously.

"What did he want?"

"He's missed his giddy train," grinned Figgins. "Sounds quite a decent old sport, mit it! Ach! Let's hope he's not such a ratty old brute as Seneider was, anyway. I say, I've got a wheeze, yo', chaps."

"Well, what's the idea?" asked Kerr. "Something for the giddy new Herr, or for those School House worms?"

"What-ho!" answered Figgins, his eyes gleaming. "I say, old Schwartz has missed his connection at Wayland; that means he won't be heré for another hour at least."

"Well, what about it?"

"What about it!" chuckled Figgins, smacking Kerr heartily on the back in his glee. "Just this, my pippin. You're going to be Herr Schwartz for one hour only, Kerr!"

"Oh, am I?" ejaculated Kerr, eyeing his chum blankly.

"Just that!" grinned Figgins gleefully. "Don't you see the wheeze, you thick-headed dummy? You disguise yourself and talk like a giddy Hun, and turn up here as old Schwartz. You steer clear of masters, get hold of those School House worms, and put them through the mill. See the idea?"

"Oh! Oh, my hat!" gasped Kerr. "I—I see! But—but I know a better wheeze than that, Figgys!"

"You do?"

"Yes," said Kerr grimly. "You turn up as the Herr instead of little me; then if anything goes wrong, as it's bound to do, you get the chopper instead of me! See the idea?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fatty Wynn. "That's a ripping idea, Figgys!"

"You silly idiot, Kerr!" snorted Figgins witheringly. "Of course I should make a muck of it; but you wouldn't;

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"You're jolly well not trying to," grumbled Figgins, his own brow wrinkled terrifically with deep thought. "If only we could think of an excuse to go over there, we'd jolly soon find a chance of making things hum."

"Well, that's easy!" grinned Kerr. "The giddy new German master's expected this afternoon, isn't he? Why not slip over to see if he's turned up? That's a good excuse."

"My hat! Just the very thing!" said George Figgins, slipping down from the window seat, his brow clearing. "That's it, by Jove! Good for you, Kerr! Once we're there we'll jolly soon give the School House wasters a high old time. Come on!"

"Oh, I say, Figgys—"

"Come on, you fat barrel, or I'll roll you there," snapped Figgins. "We may even get the chance to raid a feed, you ass!"

"Oh! Oh, right-ho, Figgys; I'm on!"

The enticing possibility held out by Figgins was enough for Fatty Wynn, and he followed quickly enough then. For New House juniors to venture into the rival House outside class hours in the ordinary way was a proceeding fraught with danger—unless one had a good excuse, that is. And now they had a good excuse; it was quite a natural thing for the juniors to be curious to know if the new master had come, or to get a glimpse of him if he had.

So Figgins & Co. got their caps and started out in a very cheerful frame of mind. Just as they were making for the stairs, however, the incessant ringing of a telephone bell brought them to a halt.

"Hallo, that's Ratty's phone!" remarked Kerr. "Sounds as if he's not in to answer it."

"He isn't—spotted him hoofing it across to the School House some moments ago," said Figgins. "Better answer it, perhaps."

Without further ado, Figgins ran into the Housemaster's study; though never over-eager to oblige the irascible Mr.

you jolly well couldn't. There isn't a chap in St. Jim's who can lick you at impersonating anybody. Don't talk rot! Look here, old man, it's the jape of the term—don't turn it down, for goodness sake!"

"That's all very well," said Kerr, though he looked reflective. "But—"

"Blow your butts!" said Figgins. "Don't you see what a ripping wheeze it would be? You'd be able to pull those chaps' legs no end. You could test 'em in German, and lick 'em—make 'em do anything, in fact. Why, it's great!"

"H'm! Well, perhaps it would be rather a lark!" grinned Kerr. "But you chaps must be on the spot in case things go wrong."

"Yes, rather! Oh, good man, Kerr!" said Figgins enthusiastically. "You'll tackle the job, then?"

"Well, yes, I think I could manage it," chuckled Kerr, his own eyes beginning to dance. "Masters aren't likely to be knocking about in the afternoon. I could make straight for the Fourth or Shell studies, for that matter. Yes, it sounds easy enough, and I'm used to hearing old Sneider spout. Donner wetter! Himmell! I tinks dot I will tak it mit meinsel on, liddle poy. Hein!"

"Good man!" gurgled Figgins. "My hat! You've got old Sneider off a treat, anyway! Nobody's ever seen this new merchant, so you'll be as safe as houses, Kerr! Let's get back to the giddy study right away and fix up things. We've got plenty of clobber and make-up. And I'll give the dear old Herr's message to the Head when you've finished—what?"

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather! Come on, then. Better get a move on."

And, quite keen on the job now, Kerr led the way with a rush to the study to fix things up for Figgins' great jape. The afternoon didn't look like being wasted, after all; in fact, it promised to be quite lively, though for whom Figgins & Co. didn't know as yet.

CHAPTER 2.

A Regular Hun!

"**B**EASTLY rot, I call it!" said Baggy Trimble of the Fourth indignantly. "Who wants to learn German, anyway?"

"Goodness knows!" remarked Jack Blake. "I know I don't, though I suppose there are people who mug it up even when they aren't forced to. There's no accounting for tastes."

"I once knew a chap who mugged up languages as a hobby," said Digby. "He was a bit queer in the upper story, though, I fancy."

"Must have been," agreed Talbot, with a grin. "Anyway, they might have given us a rest from German now old Sneider's gone. Haven't we got enough to learn without that?"

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, wathah! It is wathah a pity we did not point that out to the Head," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy thoughtfully. "The extra hour usually given to German could have been devoted to football, or somethin' weally useful and important, you know."

"Well, it's not too late even now, Gussy," said Lowther seriously. "The giddy Herr hasn't arrived yet. You could slip along to the Head and give him our views, Gussy."

"Bai Jove! I weally do not think—"

"Put it to him straight," advised Lowther. "Point out that it isn't even patriotic to force chaps to learn German when some of 'em—chaps like Trimble here—don't even know English."

"Why, you rotter, Lowther—"

"Be firm in the matter," went on the humorist of the Shell. "Tell him the feeling in the Lower School is strongly against imported goods. Make it quite clear that Trimble, especially, has no desire to learn German. Perhaps the Head will then cancel the appointment and turn the giddy Herr back—and perhaps he won't."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Go on, Gussy—do it now!" urged Lowther enthusiastically. "Only put some exercise books in your bags first, old chap."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah, I am quite awah that you are onlay wottin' you wottah," said the swell of St. Jim's. "The Head has wathah swange ideahs on what we should learn, and I am quite suah it would be useless for me to pwotest."

"Go hon!"

"None the less, I weally do feel that we could do quite well without learnin' wotten German," said Gussy, looking about him for approval. "I quite agree with Talbot that we have more than enough to learn as it is."

"Hear, hear!"

The approval of the noble views of Arthur Augustus came quickly enough. Like Baggy Trimble, nobody wanted

to learn German. Latin and Greek should have been allowed to remain dead languages in the view of the juniors. Much as they were ready to believe that the language of "la belle France" was beautiful and useful, they felt that they could rub on quite well without the trouble of learning it. But they most emphatically did not want to learn German, and were most eloquent on the subject.

"We ought to write home about it," grumbled Trimble. "I'm jolly sure my pater never wanted me to learn German; it's taking time from the other lessons. Fancy having to pay big fees to learn something you don't jolly well want to learn! Rot, I call it!"

"Blessed if I can see how it affects you, Baggy!" said Blake. "The giddy fees your pater pays are all wasted, for that matter. You'll never learn anything if you stay here until you've grown whiskers."

"Yah! Who cares twopenny for that!" snorted Trimble. "I say, you fellows, I wonder what sort of a beast the new man will be? Bound to be a beast, of course. Probably a fat, square-headed rotter, even worse than old Sneider—"

Trimble paused suddenly, struck by the fact that several of the juniors were pulling extraordinary faces at him.

"What the thump's the matter?" he grunted. "Yah! Ain't I jolly well right? This new German master's bound to be a beast—"

"Ach! Himmell! Vot is it tat you call me? Poy, how dare you, ain't it?"

Trimble jumped, and wheeled round like a spinning top. Then his jaw dropped.

"Oh crumbs! Oh lor!" he gasped faintly.

Having had his back to the door of the Common-room, Baggy Trimble had failed to see the podgy little German man who happened to be standing there. But he saw him now, and he understood the meaning of the extraordinary contortions on the faces of his hearers.

The stranger was short and he was fat, and he had sandy hair, a huge walrus-like moustache, a rather big and reddish nose, and he wore big, round spectacles. In addition, he wore a big, wide-brimmed black soft hat, and a suit of a vivid black and yellow that was loud enough, as Lowther afterwards put it, to be heard at Wayland.

But his identity was unmistakable, or so the juniors felt. His guttural voice alone was enough to tell them that.

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Lowther. "The giddy German master! Trimble's for it!"

"Yaas, wathah! Bai Jove!"

All eyes turned upon the German gentleman, who was fairly glowering through his spectacles at the shivering Trimble.

"So," he exclaimed grimly, "tat is how you speak of your Cherman master, ain't it? Ach! You are von liddle rascal! So der new master is von fat be, heint?"

"Oh dear! I—I say, sir," gasped Trimble, his fat little legs knocking together. "I wasn't speaking of you at all, sir—of course not! I—I was speaking of—" old Taggles, the porter.

The little gentleman grimly entered the room and closed the door behind him. Then he placed the handbag he carried down on the floor.

"Dat is vun pig he, poy," he said in the voice that seemed to come from his boots. "It was meinsel tat you vos speaking of, ain't it? Ach! I shall bunish you meinsel most severely. In der first place, you vill der abologies make. And I insist tat it in the lovely Cherman language you make him, poy."

"Oh dear! I—I say, sir," groaned Trimble, "I scarcely know a word of German, sir. Won't it do in English?"

"Ach! Vat? Is it tat you knows not von word of der beautiful language of der Faderland?" gasped the little gentleman, glowering round at the staring juniors. "Ach! If tat is der state of der knowledge of Cherman in der school, ten it is time I come to teach her there, heint! Touch your toes, poy, at vunce!"

"Oh crumbs! What—what for, sir?"

"To enable meinsel to administer der punishments, of course, poy. Afterwards I vill—what you call him?—test der oder poy in Cherman, also. Ach! Touch your toes at vunce!"

"But look here, sir—"

"Obey me dis instant pefore!" roared the new master, with a ferocious glare that made the hapless Trimble quake.

"But—but—"

"Ach! Donner wetter! Touch your toes mit yourself at vunce, poy!"

It was a bellow. Trimble hesitated, but as the angry German master stepped towards him, he bent double and attempted to touch his toes—a very difficult matter for the fat youth. Instantly the angry little gentleman raised aloft his big, green-covered umbrella and brought it down with a terrific swipe.

Crack!

"Yarrooooooh!"

Trimble howled fendishly as the gamp descended with a resounding whack.

"Dere, mein poy!" observed the new master severely. "Led tat be von lesson to you pefore! I am amaze tat der lofely Cherman language haf been so neglected mit itself, ain't it? It is tat I shall persuade der headmaster to haf der Cherman lessons in der half-holidays and in der evenings mit it!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

The juniors groaned in dismay at the possibility of grinding at German on half-holidays and in the evenings. The looks they gave the new master were not amiable. Herr Ludwig Schwartz promised to be a "Hun" indeed!

"Now we vill deal mit der rest off der poys," resumed Herr Schwartz, glowering round at the staring juniors. "Stand in von row together, mein poys—he hear me, hein?"

The juniors stared at each other and hesitated.

Tom halted; it was as far as he could go.

"Ach! Go on, mein poy! Vat is it tat you wait for mit it? Is it tat you cannot translate tat ferry simple sentence, hein?" almost shouted the Herr, in great horror. "Mein gootness! You shall be punish for tat ignorance pefore. Touch your toes this ferry instant, poy!"

"But—but look here, sir—" gasped Tom, flushing.

"Touch your toes, vill you?" roared Herr Schwartz, almost dancing with great wrath. "I vill not be opeyed mit der disobedience! Ach!"

With one stride the podgy little gentleman reached Tom Merry, and, grasping the startled junior by the back of the neck, he doubled him up by main force. Then swiftly the shabby "gamp" came whizzing down.

"Ow!" gasped Tom Merry. "Ow-ow!"

"Now, der next poy!" gasped Herr Schwartz. "Der poy who does not opey on der instant vill get two strokes pefore, instead of vun!"



Turning the corner at a terrific speed, the boggie Herr Schwartz barged full-tilt into Monsieur Morny, the French master. Crash! Like two rubber balls meeting in mid-air, they bumped together, rebounded, and then dropped to the floor. "Ow!" "Ow! Mon Dieu!" (See Chapter 4.)

"Quick! I vill be opeyed mit it!" shouted the Herr angrily, taking another step forward, with his heavy umbrella raised aggressively. "Ach! Von second I gif you, and der poy not in line I vill meinself trash, isn't it?"

"Oh, my hat!"

There was a scramble to get into line. Trimble was the last. He had imagined he was not included in the general order, but a thump from the gamp on his fat person made him "jump to it" with a yelp.

"Now, mein poys," said Herr Schwartz, waving his gamp ominously, "I vill test you in der Cherman language so beautiful, ain't it? Ve vill take der sentence: 'Ignorant blockheads are ve in dis House.' You poy at der end vill speak it first in der English, and den translate it into Cherman. Be quick mit it!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Tom Merry happened to be at the end, and, after a brief hesitation, he repeated the strange sentence, "Ignorant blockheads are we in this House!"

"Ferry goot! Now go on mit der translation pefore, mein poy!"

"Oh dear! I—I don't know the German for—" Tom paused and made a desperate effort. "Un—unwiffened der—der dummkopf—I mean, dumm—dumm—dumm— Oh dear!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Talbot came next, and he got just as far as did Tom Merry in the translation, and then he stuck. The next instant the gamp came into play again. But only once; Talbot obeyed the command to "touch his toes" with alacrity.

Lowther came next, and after him, in swift succession, came the rest. Some of the fellows got as far as Tom Merry, some not so far, and some either copied Tom, or else made no attempt at all to translate the sentence. At all events, all of them failed in the "test."

For the next few minutes that terrible gamp was busy.

With unflagging energy the little German master warmed to his work, leaving a line of gasping, groaning, and squirming juniors in his wake.

"Dere!" gasped Herr Schwartz, reaching the end of the row at last. "Der ignorance of you poys is disgraceful mit it! I shall make it my business to make you—vat you call it?—tee der line mit it! Ach! Tat vas so! You vill now remain in der line as pefore while I visit der headmaster mit meinself!"

With that the new German master waddled towards the door. He had scarcely reached it, however, when the door

was flung open from the outside and five struggling juniors almost tumbled into the room.

Three of them were School House juniors—Cardew, Clive, and Levison—and struggling in their grasp were Figgins and Fatty Wynn of the New House.

"What the thump—" gasped Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove!"

"In with 'em!" gasped Sidney Clive. "They can explain what the giddy joke is and why they're hanging round the Common-room, my— Oh, my hat!"

Clive had just sighted the new master. He broke off and stared at him blankly; but he did not release his grip on George Figgins, who was laughing explosively as he struggled.

"Ach! Vot does dis mean, hein?" demanded Herr Schwartz, eyeing the scene grimly, his eyes gleaming curiously. "Release dose poys at once, dis instant! You hear me?"

"Oh! Oh, yes, sir—certainly, sir!"

Cardew & Co. obeyed quickly enough; they could guess who the stranger was.

"Disgraceful!" exclaimed the little gentleman. "Dis is vat is called pulling, is it not? I have vun horror of pulling! You two poor liddle poys vill come mit me, and I vill protect you mit meinsel! Ja! Der rest of you vill remain mit yourselves in dis room until I return. You understand?"

"Yes, sir!" It was a sulky chorus.

"Ferry goot! Come mit me, mein poys!"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

Figgins answered cheerfully, and he and the grinning Fatty Wynn followed the fat little Herr as he waddled out of the Common-room.

"Well, my only hat!" gasped Tom Merry, as the door closed upon him. "The—the old rotter! Why, he's a jolly sight worse— Hallo, he's left his dashed bag behind! Better run after him with it!"

And Tom left the line of squirming juniors and grabbed at the handbag on the floor. As he snatched it up the catch flew open, and the contents of the bag dropped out on to the floor with a thud. As it did so there arose a yell of amazement. For what had fallen out of the bag was nothing less than an ordinary common or garden brick.

CHAPTER 3.

Not Bargained For!

"B AI Jove!"

"Well, my hat!"

The School House juniors stared blankly at the brick. Why the new German master should be carrying a brick about with him in a handbag was an amazing mystery.

"What the dickens—" Tom Merry was beginning when he paused, his eyes gleaming. The Herr's strange conduct had already given rise to vague suspicions in his mind, but the sight of the brick deepened them. "That's a jolly queer thing!" he went on grimly. "I say, what were Figgys and Fatty Wynn doing, Levison?" he ended suddenly, as a startling thought crossed his mind.

"Goodness knows! We caught the bounders peeping through the crack in the door, doubled up with laughter," said Levison. "Why, what—"

"That's it!" shouted Tom Merry. "My hat! It was a jape! That wasn't the new master at all—it was Kerr!"

"Wha-at?"

"Bai Jove!"

"After them!" roared Tom Merry, in great wrath.

He tore out of the room. In the passage outside he glanced swiftly up and down, and then he sighted the pseudo Herr Schwartz, Figgins, and Fatty Wynn. They were holding on to each other and gurgling with suppressed mirth.

The rest of the School House fellows were on Tom's heels, and as they sighted the three a howl of anger went up. But even as Tom Merry started to lead the rush he pulled up short as a dignified form, in cap and gown, appeared in sight at the far end of the passage.

It was the Head. Figgins and his fellow-conspirators had been about to take to their heels on sighting Tom Merry & Co., but now they also saw the Head, and stood stock-still, almost rooted to the floor with dismay.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned "Herr Schwartz." "I'm done, Figgys! Shall I run for it?"

"No, you idiot!" hissed Figgins. "Bluff it out until you get a chance to slip away; you can do it! Oh, what awful luck!"

It certainly was bad luck for the New House invaders. All had gone well with their daring jape, so far, and Kerr's next move as "Herr Schwartz" was to have been the ragging of junior studies in the School House. With Figgins and Wynn to help him, and believing that Tom Merry &

Co. would never dare to disobey him and leave the Common-room, that should have been easy.

But Tom Merry & Co. had left the Common-room, and now—the Head had turned up! Kerr groaned inwardly.

But he quickly pulled himself together as Dr. Holmes strode majestically along the passage. There was nothing else for it. To bolt would mean a strict investigation, and having seen him with Figgins and Wynn, the Head would know where to look for the impersonator!

The Head smiled as he sighted the podgy little gentleman, and came towards him with outstretched hand.

"Ah! Herr Schwartz, I presume?" he observed genially. "I was just beginning to wonder if you had missed your connection at Wayland."

"It is der Dr. Holmes, is id not?" said Herr Schwartz, beaming up at the Head. "I haf just been talking mit dese poys; dey are ferry pright and intelligent poys indeed, sir."

"I am glad they have earned your approval, Herr Schwartz," smiled the Head. "Will you kindly accompany me to my study? I am just about to take my afternoon cup of tea, and perhaps you will join me?"

"Oh! Ach! Ah, yes, doctor!" said Kerr, a look of sudden dismay in his eyes. "But—but id is tat I have mein pag in der room behind left. Possibly you vill allow me to take id to mein room pefore joining you in der study after?"

"My dear Herr, do not trouble yourself to do that," said the Head genially. "Where is the bag, Herr Schwartz?"

"In the—id is der room dere—der Common-room is id not?" said Herr Schwartz, pointing to the Common-room door.

"Very well! Figgins, kindly get Herr Schwartz' bag from the junior Common-room and take it to his room. If you will kindly follow me, Herr Schwartz."

There was nothing else for it, and, with a dismal look at his chums, the seared impersonator followed the Head. Figgins and Fatty Wynn gazed after them in great dismay.

"Oh, my only hat!" groaned Figgins. "Tea with the Head! If he doesn't manage to keep it up—"

"The Head's a downy bird!" gasped Fatty Wynn, his face full of alarm. "He's bound to tumble to it sooner or later! Oh dear!"

"Poor old Kerr!" groaned Figgins. "We might have— Oh crumbs! Here, keep off—"

Figgins yelled as both he and Wynn were surrounded by a swarm of School House fellows.

"No fear!" exclaimed Tom Merry grimly. "Yank the rotters along, chaps! This wants looking into!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Despite their struggles, Figgins and Fatty Wynn were dragged into the Common-room by the irate School House fellows. The game was up now with a vengeance. Figgins saw that.

"Now, you beggars!" snapped Tom Merry. "We want to know what this means, Figgys? Wasn't that Kerr dressed up as the new master?"

"Of course it was!" snorted Jack Blake. "Figgins, you rotter—"

"Rag the New House sweeps!"

"Smash the cads!"

"Boil 'em in oil!"

"Yaas, wathah."

Figgins grinned feebly as he looked round at the furious faces of the School House juniors.

"Here, keep off!" he gasped. "I say, you fellows, never mind that now. Old Kerr's fairly in the soup! You might make it pax, and help to think of something. We've got to get old Kerr out of it somehow!"

"Bai Jove!"

"You—you cheeky worms!" snorted Tom Merry. "Never mind that now, eh? Never mind being taken in and made fools of by that cheeky cad Kerr. Make it pax, eh? I don't think!"

"Smash 'em!" roared Herries excitedly. "We'll teach 'em to come over here with their rotten games!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Oh, my hat! I say, you fellows might be decent!" groaned Figgins. "Old Kerr's bound to be bowled out! He's gone to have tea with the Head, and you know how keen the Head is. You don't want to see Kerr sacked, do you?"

"Bai Jove! Wathah not!"

"Well, p'raps not, though the spoofer deserves it!" said Tom Merry, frowning. "Hold on, chaps, we can deal with the cheeky rotters afterwards. But what the thump can be done, Figgys? Kerr's got to go through with it now, I'm afraid!"

"We must do something," said Figgins, a worried frown creasing his brow. "If only we could get the Head out of the study somehow—"

"My hat! Supposing the real Herr turns up—"

"That's just it! He telephoned saying he'd missed his connection, and was coming on by the next train," groaned Figgins. "He may be along any minute now!"

"But—but—"

"I took the telephone message, you see," said Figgys, with a faint grin. "That's what gave me the idea. I wish I hadn't now!"

"We'll make you wish you hadn't, too, yet!" said Tom Merry grimly. "But, look here! Why not use the phone again to wangle the Head out of his study? That'll give Kerr his chance to bolt!"

"My hat! It's risky; but—"

"Better take the risk than let Kerr get a giddy flogging, if not worse!" said Tom. "You can use Railton's phone. He's gone over to Wayland."

"Oh, good!"

It was certainly worth trying, and half a dozen School House juniors escorted Figgins and Wynn to the House-master's study. They waited outside, and Figgins was not long inside the study.

"Well?" said Tom Merry.

"All serene!" said Figgins, breathing rather hard. "It needed some nerve to do it. But—well, it's done. I told the Head he's wanted over at the New House. Didn't give him a chance to ask who was speaking. He'll think Ratty wants him, of course. Now we'd better clear out and wait—"

"No you jolly well won't!" grinned Tom Merry. "Collar them and yank them along back to the Common-room, chaps!"

"Look here—"

"You've done all you can to save Kerr," said the captain of the Shell grimly, "and now you're going to get it in the neck for playing such a trick on School House chaps!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, you—you rotters! Leggo!"

But the protestations of Figgins and Fatty Wynn were unavailing. They were forcibly escorted back again to the Common-room.

"Now, my giddy jokers!" grinned Tom. "You've had your laugh, and now we're going to have ours! We haven't a gamp handy, but I think a couple each with a cricket-stump will meet the case."

"Hear, hear!"

"You—you rotters!" roared Figgins. "Leggo, or I'll smash the lot of you! Why, I'll— Oh, my hat!"

In the grasp of many hands, the leader of the New House juniors was spread-eagled across a form, and held there while the sentence was carried out. Fatty Wynn had his turn next, and again the stump was laid on with a will.

"Now you can go and see what's happened to Kerr!" grinned Tom Merry, as he laid down the stump. "And let this be a giddy lesson to you. Boot them out, chaps!"

"Yes, rather! New House wasters!"

Struggling furiously, Fatty Wynn and Figgins were rushed to the door, and several boots, forcibly applied, helped them out into the passageway.

"Oh, you—you rotters!" roared Figgins. "Here, what are—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins didn't stay to finish his sentence. He leaped to his feet and flew, and Fatty Wynn followed him with surprising agility, as the School House juniors seemed about to use their boots again.

"Well, they took us in, but I fancy we got the laugh in the end," grinned Blake. "Let's go and see how Kerr gets on!"

"Hold on!" said Lowther, whose eyes were gleaming. "Look here! That was a jolly good wheeze of theirs; but two can play at that game. What about my having a go?"

"Eh? What the thump do you mean, ass!"

"What I say!" grinned Lowther. "I'm not so far behind old Kerr when it comes to impersonations—you fellows know that. Well, why not play their game? I'll impersonate the giddy Herr, and slip over to the New House. They'll think it's the real goods this time—even Figgins himself will, for a pension. I'll make the bounders sit up, I can tell you!"

"Bai Jove! That is wathah a good ideah, Lowthah! But I weally think you had better allow me to do the impersonatin', you know," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, shaking his head.

"Rats!" said Tom Merry, his eyes dancing. "By jingo, that's a corking wheeze, Lowther, and you're the man for the job. You're not so good as old Kerr, perhaps, but you've pulled off bigger jobs than this!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Good wheeze!"

There was a chorus of enthusiastic approval. Lowther, second only to Kerr as an impersonator, and an inveterate practical joker, was undoubtedly the man for the job. And the idea of paying their rivals of the New House back in their own coin, appealed to the School House juniors.

"Good man, Lowther!" grinned Tom. "Those New House worms need putting in their places, and you're the man to do it. You'll have to buck up, though, before the real goods turns up."

"My hat! Yes. Come on! You fellows can help me to make-up," said Lowther gleefully. "I'll make those merchants over there sit up! You see if I don't!"

And as the chums hurried away with him, they chuckled and agreed that he would.

CHAPTER 4.

Two of a Kind!

MONTY LOWTHER was an adept at making-up, and there were plenty of suits to choose from in the School House property-box. The juniors at St. Jim's were very keen on amateur theatricals, and willing hands were soon helping Lowther with his make-up. What had happened to Kerr they did not know as yet, but it certainly needed plenty of pluck to tackle such a job, considering how Kerr had fared. Still, Lowther felt quite certain that everything would go without a hitch. His chums could only hope so.

In a very short space of time Lowther was ready. He had chosen a thick mustard-and-pepper-coloured suit, a black, wide-brimmed trilby hat, and a pair of huge, yellow-brown boots. He wore a thick ginger wig of hair, and a pair of bushy, ginger eyebrows, with a heavy, drooping moustache to match, while a pair of gold-rimmed eyeglasses, and a very florid complexion finished the picture, excepting, that is, for the pillow that provided the necessary padding.

"My hat! You look a treat, Monty!" gurgled Tom Merry, eyeing his chum over. "You look more like the genuine article even than Kerr did, and he was jolly good. Mind you don't forget the giddy accent, though."

"Yaas, wathah! Don't forget that, deah boy."

"Ach! Not likely, mein poy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll do," grinned Blake. "Now, go ahead, and mind you don't get collared like the other giddy Schwartz."

"My dear man," said Lowther, in his own voice, "you can leave that to me, old sport. I fancy I'm not such an idiot as to walk right into it like Kerr did. Not me. Here goes!"

Lowther opened the door and marched boldly forth—right into Mr. Lathom, who happened to be passing just at that moment. The two collided, and then they both staggered backwards, Mr. Lathom only just saving himself from sitting down on the linoleum.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

There was a sudden silence. It was really most unfortunate.

"Poof!" gasped Mr. Lathom. "What—what— Oh!"

Mr. Lathom sighted Lowther then, and his wrathful expression changed. Knowing the new German master was expected that afternoon, he did not need to ask who the "stranger" was—or he imagined he did not.

"Ow! Oh!" he gasped, trying hard to look genial. "My dear sir, I am very sorry—very sorry indeed. I trust you are not hurt? It was most unfortunate."

"Ach! Nein; I vos not hurt mit meinsel, ain't it!" gasped Lowther, pulling himself together desperately. "I trust tat you vos not hurt mit yourself. It vos mein own fault, and I vos tender der apologies."

"Pray do not mention it, my dear sir," said Mr. Lathom politely, blinking short-sightedly at Lowther through his glasses. "You are Herr Schwartz, of course? I am Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth Form," he added, smiling, as he held out his hand. "Have you seen Dr. Holmes, Herr Schwartz?"

"Nein; id is tat I haf not yet dis afternoons," said Lowther. "I vos just lookin' for mein rooms, und dese liddle poy vos kind enough to speak mit meinsel on der subject."

"But the headmaster is expecting you, Herr Schwartz. I believe he has delayed tea so that you might join him on your arrival," said Mr. Lathom. "Allow me to escort you to his study, my dear Herr."

"Ach! Tat is not necessary, mein goot friend!" gasped Lowther hurriedly. "After I haf been mit meinsel to mein rooms I vill come to der headmaster's study, of course! Ja! I trust I shall see you again shortly, Herr Lathom."

"One moment, Herr Schwartz." As Lowther was about to hurry away the master of the Fourth interposed hastily. As a matter of fact, Mr. Lathom knew the Head was waiting—or believed so—and, being a kindly little gentleman, he did not wish the Herr to cause Dr. Holmes any annoyance. The Head did not like being kept waiting. It was Herr Schwartz's duty to report to the Head immediately

on his arrival. "You will excuse me, I am sure, but I think it would be as well for you to report your arrival at once to Dr. Holmes. You could call in whilst on your way to your room."

"Ach! Ferry goot, Herr Lathom," stammered Lowther. "It is ferry goot of you, sir. I will rush off mit meinselt at once, hein!"

"I will come and introduce you, Herr Schwartz!"

Mr. Lathom wanted to be kind, but the hapless Lowther did not think it kind at all. He groaned. But there was no help for it; to protest further would have aroused Mr. Lathom's suspicions doubtless enough. So he gave his chums a hopeless look and waddled along the passage with the master of the Fourth.

But Lowther had no intention of visiting the Head's study, if he could help it. His mind was working at top speed in a desperate effort to devise a way out of his predicament. Twice during that worrying journey he attempted to give the Fourth Form master the slip, but each time Mr. Lathom looked round at the critical moment.

The door of the Head's study was in sight now, and Lowther saw that his only chance of escape was to bolt the moment Mr. Lathom opened the door of the room.

But Lowther's luck was out.

For even as Mr. Lathom knocked and grasped the knob the door was opened from inside and Dr. Holmes stepped out into the passage. Behind him was the disguised Kerr.

The Head was speaking over his shoulder, and he did not see the two in the passage for the moment.

"If the letter is of great importance, Herr Schwartz, I should certainly attend to it without delay, as you say," he was remarking, a trifle impatiently. "If you will accompany me I will show you your room. The post leaves here— Bless my soul!"

The Head had turned his head and caught sight of Monty Lowther—Herr Schwartz the third!

He almost fell down as he stared at him in utter bewilderment. Mr. Lathom almost did the same as he suddenly sighted Herr Schwartz the second. There was a sudden, dreadful silence, and then both Lowther and Kerr acted.

Naturally, George Francis Kerr imagined it was Herr Schwartz in reality, and he did not stay to get a good look at him; he just darted past the Head, past the astounded Mr. Lathom and Lowther, and took to his heels.

Monty Lowther was scarcely half a second after him in doing likewise. The game was up, with a vengeance, and the only thing for it was instant flight.

"What—what— Bless my soul! Impostors!"

"G-gug-good gracious!"

The Head and Mr. Lathom stared, transfixed, as the two impostors bolted headlong down the corridor. At the end of the corridor a group of juniors had halted. They were Tom Merry and his chums, who had followed Mr. Lathom, anxious to know what would happen to Lowther.

They knew now, and they scattered to right and left as Monty and Kerr came pelting along. Kerr was leading by several yards, and he was going great guns.

But he soon lost the lead. Turning the corner leading into the hallway he barged full-tilt into a short, dapper little gentleman, with a smartly-trimmed "Imperial" and equally smartly-trimmed moustache.

It was Monsieur Morny, the French master at St. Jim's.

The collision was unavoidable and terrific. Like two rubber balls meeting in mid-air they bumped together, rebounded, and then dropped with two distinct bumps.

"Ow!"

"Ow! Mon Dieu!"

The next instant Lowther came pelting along, and only just in time did he swerve to avoid going headlong over the two on the floor. Two seconds later the second Herr Schwartz had vanished through the hall doorway. Lowther was an obliging fellow as a rule, but he saw no necessity to stay and help, in the circumstances.

But Tom Merry & Co. came along the next moment, and they could scarcely avoid helping. Monsieur Morny was sitting on the linoleum, gasping as if for a wager, and blinking about him dazedly. The hapless Kerr was doing likewise.

Tom Merry and Jack Blake fairly wrenched Kerr to his feet.

"Quick!" breathed the captain of the Shell. "Hook it, you ass! Go while the going's good! Make for our study, if you like, and change there!"

"Ow! Oh crumbs!"

Tom's whispered words penetrated to Kerr's dazed brain, and, pulling himself together, he scrambled to his feet and bolted on again. But the hall doorway was much nearer than Study No. 10, and Kerr was anxious to reach his own study in the New House, if he could.

But he was unlucky, however. Even as he made a bee-line for the doorway Darrell and Kildare came in from the quadrangle, chatting together.

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Kerr had to make a swift decision, and he made it. Twisting abruptly, he changed his direction, and, darting for the stairs leading up to the studies, he flew up them two at a time. He vanished, leaving Kildare and Darrell staring after him blankly.

CHAPTER 5.

The Genuine Article!

"**M**ON Dieu! Mon Dieu! Vat—vat is it zat have happen? Mon Dieu! I am hurt—I am injure viz me!"

Monsieur Morny groaned as the juniors turned their attention to him, and helped him to his feet. The little French gentleman was panting and gasping, with both hands over his rather prominent waistcoat. Kerr had been hurt by the collision, but Mossos had had decidedly the worst of the encounter.

He blinked about him dazedly, his usually pale features red with wrath and indignation.

"It is zat I am attack—assault!" he panted. "Ze scoundrel—assassin—did knock me down viz him! Ah-h-h-ah! Poof! Vere is ze rascal zat knocked me down viz him?"

And Monsieur Morny glared fiercely about him, his eyes fairly glistening with wrath.

"He's gone now, sir," said Tom Merry, winking at Blake. "It must have been an accident—"

"Mon Dieu! It was not ze accident!" hooted the angry Mossos. "Ecoutez! It iz zat I am— Ah-r-r-ah! I know him! It is ze new Sherman master, n'est-ce-pas?" he added, in sudden enlightenment, his eyes glinting with fury. "His face I know not, but now I have him guess. Mon Dieu! Zis is—"

"What is the matter? Monsieur Morny—"

The Head's voice interrupted the irate French master. Dr. Holmes hurried up with Mr. Lathom at his heels, and he looked in amazement at the excited Monsieur Morny. The Head's own face was dark with anger.

"What is the matter, Monsieur Morny?" he snapped. "I am surprised—astounded to hear this commotion. What has happened?"

The French master waved and gesticulated excitedly.

"It eez zat I am assault viz zat rascal, ze Sherman master!" he shouted. "I am insult; I am humiliate; I am hurt viz myself!"

"I do not understand you, Monsieur Morny!" snapped the Head. "You say that the new German master has assaulted you?"

"Oui, oui, monsieur! I am valking along ze passage ven ze rascal zat I do not know rooshed into me viz himself. But after I remember zat ze new Sherman master he is expected zis afternoon, and I guess viz myself zat he is Herr Schwartz. I am knock ovair viz myself, and I am hurt severely. Oui, oui!"

"Bless my soul!" The Head understood now. "You say that it was Herr Schwartz who rushed into you?"

"Mais oui, doctair! I walk along viz myself, ven ze scoundrel he rush into me like ze cannon-ball. I do not him see clearly, and ze ozzer person viz him I do not see at all, for I am knocked down—poof! But zat is ze new Sherman master!"

"Then I think you are mistaken, Monsieur Morny," said the Head. "I am inclined to believe that Herr Schwartz has not yet arrived, and that the person who collided with you was a rascally impostor!"

"Mon Dieu!"

"I was completely deceived at first," said the Head grimly. "Though I certainly felt that the individual's person and manner was strange, to say the least of it. The other person was also an impostor, and I feel convinced that they were either juniors, or older boys, masquerading as Herr Schwartz. Like Mr. Lathom and myself, Monsieur Morny, you have, I fear, been the victim of practical jokers."

"Mon Dieu!" gasped the little French master. "I am overcome viz astonishments, doctair!"

"They were just making their escape when one of them collided with you, apparently," said the Head, his face dark with anger. "They must be discovered without delay, and made to suffer dearly for this outrage. Ah, Kildare, one moment, please!"

Kildare came forward, his face showing his surprise and wonderment.

"A disgraceful thing has happened, Kildare!" snapped the Head. "A daring hoax has taken place, I believe, and I wish you to call the prefects together at once and tell them to make a search for the culprits!"

"Oh! Oh, yes, sir!"

The Head explained what had happened, while the captain of the school listened in amazement.

"It is quite possible, of course, Kildare," wound up Dr. Holmes, "that they were intruders—possibly men who had sinister designs on the school. But I strongly suspect that they were juniors who were carrying out some stupid practical joke, and that they did not expect to encounter anyone in authority."

"I—I should think so myself, sir," gasped Kildare, suppressing a grin. "Very good, sir. We'll search the school thoroughly, though I'm afraid they will have made themselves scarce by this time."

"I am afraid that will prove to be the case, Kildare," said the Head, his frown deepening. "However, kindly lose no time, and make every effort to discover the culprits."



the culprits must be discovered and severely punished. Will you kindly see to the matter at once, Mr. Lathom?"

"Very good, sir!"

Mr. Lathom strode away to carry out the Head's orders to the best of his ability. The Head departed, breathing hard with indignation.

"Phew!" breathed Tom Merry. "Now for trouble—if they're collared! Oh, my hat!"

But the juniors were relieved—very much relieved. They had more than half expected to be questioned by the Head, and by the way he looked at them as they marched away they felt, indeed, that he was suspicious. But he had said nothing, and they were relieved beyond measure.

Had he asked them if they had known the identity of the "culprits"?

Tom Merry shuddered at the thought. It was quite clear that the Head was in a fearful "wax," and that it would go hard with the impostors if they were discovered.

"Parbleu!" gasped Monsieur Morny, stroking his waistcoat tenderly. "Nom d'un nom! I tank you, mes garçons, for helping me to ze feet. I am hurt very mooch. I trust zat you know nozing of zis mattair—you know not ze culprit, is it?"

"The—the chap who butted—I mean, knocked you over—wore a moustache, sir," said Tom Merry innocently, evading the question. "The other chap did, too; and both wore glasses. I should know them again if I saw them, of course, sir."

"It is scandalous, as the Head says," said Mossoo, his eyes gleaming fiercely. "If I catches zem, I shall punish ze

Their punishment for having dared to deceive me in such a scandalous manner will be very severe indeed!"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

Kildare and Darrell hurried away, both of them hiding grins. They had not much hope of capturing the culprits. The Head turned to Mr. Lathom.

"Perhaps you will explain this scandalous outrage to the other masters, Mr. Lathom," he said grimly. "Kindly ask them to make strict inquiries, also as to the identity of the person who telephoned from the New House, stating that I was wanted there. It is quite obvious to me that the message was sent by a confederate of the masquerader in order to cause me to leave my study."

"Bless my soul! Scandalous!"

"It is monstrous!" snapped the Head. "Fortunately, I was not tricked into leaving my study to visit the New House at the bidding of someone unknown; I ignored the message. None the less, it is a very serious matter, and

As George Figgins opened the door a form—turned upside down, with two juniors crouching on it and two others pulling—came charging towards him. It stopped suddenly, shooting its occupants in a tumbled heap on the floor, amid an uproar of laughter. "Ach! wlen gootness!" gasped Herr Schwartz, raising his hands in horror. "Vat disgraceful goings on!" (See chapter 6.)

one who knocked me down to ze ground most severely. Hein! I zinks it was ze new Sherman master, and I zink he does it of a purpose. I should have— Mon Dieu! Vat—vat— Ah!"

Mossoo's voice suddenly ended on a note of excited triumph. His eyes flashed, and he glowered towards the hall doorway. Through it had just come a short, fat little man.

He was middle-aged, and he wore a light tweed suit, and he carried a Homburg hat in his hand, and a raincoat over his arm. He had fair hair, a flaxen moustache clipped short, and his face was fat and florid, with a genial, good-tempered expression.

Who it was the juniors did not need to guess. It was the new German master at last—Herr Ludwig Schwartz in the flesh!

But quite obviously Mossoo did not think so—possibly he never gave the new master a thought just then. He fairly

glowered at the little fat gentleman, hesitating in the hallway, and then he dashed forward, echoing his triumphant cry again.

"Mon Dieu! It is ze rascal himself! I have caught you, mon ami!" he cried excitedly. "I vill teach you to knock me over viz myself! You vill come wiz me zis instant to ze Head. Mon Dieu! C'est toi! Je le sais!"

"Mein Gott! Vat—vat—"

The stranger staggered back with a startled exclamation as the excited little Frenchman made a swift grab and caught one of his fat, red ears 'twixt thumb and finger.

"Hold on, sir!" gasped Tom Merry, in alarm. "You're making a mistake. This is not the chap—"

"Taisez-vous! Mon garçon, stand away viz you! Zis is ze scelerat—ze scoundrel who did me upset viz violence. Oui, oui! Mon Dieu! You shall wiz me come to ze head-mastair at vunce!" shouted Mossoo in great excitement, still with a vice-like grip on the stranger's ear. "Rascal! Venez! Come viz me!"

"Vat—vat! Donner wetter! Stop mit you, ain't it?" bellowed the astounded stranger—there was no possible doubt as to his identity now. "Donner wetter! Mein Gott! Ach! Is it dot you vos mad mit it, hein? Stob, you scoundrel! Let go mit meinsel! Yow!"

"Pah! Zink not to escape me twice!" hooted Mossoo. "I know zat you vas von impostor, isn't it! Silence viz you! You shall come wiz me to ze Doctair zis instant!"

"Oh, my hat! Stop him!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! Oh, gveat Scott!"

But there was no stopping Monsieur Morny. He waved the juniors aside with one hand and shook Herr Schwartz with the other until the new German master fairly shrieked. Though one of the kindest and most good-natured of men, Mossoo had been hurt in his tenderest spot, and his excitable Gallic temperament was roused with a vengeance.

The unfortunate Herr dropped his raincoat, and fairly danced with amazement and pain. But it was more than flesh and blood could stand, and the little German suddenly reached out and grabbed Monsieur Morny's ear with a thick finger and still thicker thumb.

"Ach! I gif you tit for tat! Donner wetter! Dis is von great insult and outrage, mit it!" he roared, shaking the little Frenchman in his turn. "How you vos like him, hein? You vos von French pig! Ach!"

"Vat? You call me ze French pig?" shrieked Monsieur Morny, dancing now in his turn. "Mon Dieu! Zis is too much! Vill you—Yarroooooop!"

An extra-special twist of the German master's podgy finger and thumb almost lifted Mossoo into the air, and brought a howl of pain from him. The French master's frantic efforts to release himself caused him to give the Herr an extra-special twist, and the Herr howled likewise.

The scene was ludicrous in the extreme, but the juniors were too scared to laugh. Clinging desperately and vengefully to each other's ears, the two masters danced and roared in pain and rage.

But it was a scene that could not last—the two central characters were making too much noise for that! Juniors and seniors came rushing to the spot, and then the Head's deep voice sounded as he rustled up, followed an instant later by Mr. Lathom and Mr. Linton.

For a moment the Head stared at the scene as though he could not believe the evidence of his eyes; the next he had hurried forward and grasped Monsieur Morny by his free, gesticulating arm.

"Monsieur Morny, are you mad? How dare you take part in such a disgraceful commotion in public, and in this manner!" he thundered. "I am shocked—scandalised, sir! How dare you, I say! Good heavens!"

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"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!"

The Head's stern and commanding voice penetrated instantly to Monsieur Morny's dazed and scattered senses. He released the German master's ear on the instant; and the Head's icy voice had the same effect on Herr Schwartz, for he instantly did likewise.

The two stood panting and gasping, each rubbing a red and swollen ear.

The Head glared from one to the other of them.

"What—what does this amazing scene mean? Monsieur Morny, I am awaiting an explanation, sir!"

"Mon Dieu! It is zat I have capture ze rascally impersonator, doctair!" cried the Frenchman, excitedly pointing a shaking finger at the crimson-faced Herr Schwartz. "Zere is ze rascal vat knock me to ze floor and trick you viz ze impudences!"

"Nonsense! You have made a terrible mistake, Monsieur Morny!" snapped Dr. Holmes, glancing sharply at Herr Schwartz. "This is undoubtedly Herr Schwartz himself. Do I understand—"

"Ach! Is it tat you vos der Doctor Holmes, mit it?" said Herr Schwartz, trembling with rage. "Den I must tell you tat I have mit meinsel been attacked and assaulted by dis fool madman! Ach! Der scoundrel, der dummkopf, him have called me von impostor, and have pulled mein ear mit himself. Ja! Ach! I vos hurt, I vos injured! I demand vun abologies from dat scoundrel, otherwise I shakes der dust of dis school from mein feet, ain't it!"

"My dear Herr," hastily interposed the Head, giving Mossoo a severe look, "I am extremely sorry that you should have been subjected to such an unfortunate experience. A mistake has been made, however; some unknown miscreants have been masquerading as yourself, and have caused Monsieur Morny to be knocked down and hurt. On seeing you, he apparently took you for one of the rascally practical jokers!"

"Ach! Mein goodness! I am lost mit astonishments! But it is tat I am hurt, mein Doctor Holmes," growled Herr Schwartz indignantly. "Der monsieur, he vos ferry careless mit himself."

"That is very true, I am afraid, Herr Schwartz," said the Head sternly. "An apology is certainly due to you from Monsieur Morny. Monsieur Morny, I think that, under the circumstances—"

The Head paused, suddenly remembering the staring crowd of juniors and seniors.

"Perhaps you and Herr Schwartz will accompany me to my study, Monsieur Morny," he went on hurriedly. "This is scarcely the proper place to discuss the matter. Mr. Linton, kindly disperse these boys. This way, Herr Schwartz, if you please!"

"Ja! Ach! Ferry goot, sir!"

The Head strode away with dignified tread and frowning brow. Herr Schwartz picked up his raincoat and waddled after him, with the hapless, but still seething Monsieur Morny trailing after them.

"Well, my only hat!" gasped Tom Merry, in an undertone. "What a giddy scream, you fellows! There looks like being some fun between those two after this. Did you see them glaring at each other behind the Head's back?"

"What price the tug-of-war?" murmured Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Lathom. "How dare you! Dismiss this instant!"

The juniors dispersed, but they did not stop laughing. Tom Merry & Co. were still chuckling when they hurried up to Study No. 10 to see what had become of Kerr.

They found him busy at work rubbing grease-paint from his face. He had already shed his vivid-coloured suit, which he had worn over his ordinary attire.

Tom Merry grinned as he saw him. He had feared the New House joker would have made himself scarce before this, and he had good reasons for not wanting that.

"Oh, here you are, Kerr!" he grinned. "Come inside, chaps, and shut the door—and lock it."

"Bai Jove! Why should we lock the door, Tom Mewwy?"

"So that the giddy bird doesn't fly," grinned Tom Merry. "You needn't hurry, Kerr, old chap—you're not going yet."

"Eh? What's that?" Kerr suddenly ceased his labours and eyed Tom Merry in great suspicion. "Here, no games, no chaps!"

"Oh, no—not at all!" smiled Tom Merry blandly. "You've had your little joke, and it's all over now, isn't it?"

"Look here," said Kerr uneasily. "I've had a beastly time! The Head seemed to be a bit suspicious of the first—he's a dowdy old bird, you know. I know that phone message must be a dodge of Figgy's; but the Book wasn't taking any. I had an awful time answering his questions, and only just managed to keep my end up. Then I got shut out of trying to get away by pretending I had an urgent letter to write. He seemed jolly surprised, but he

swallowed it all right. I should have got away with it, too, if the giddy Herr himself hadn't turned up like that. I say, fancy the fat little beast chasing after me like that! He must have guessed I was impersonating him."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the two juniors.

"Look here, what's the joke?"

"You are!" yelled Blake. "It was old Lowther, you silly ass! He was playing your game, only Lathom collared him and yanked him off to the Head."

"Oh, my only hat!" gasped Kerr. "Then—then the Herr hasn't turned up yet, after all?"

"He has now—yes!" chuckled Tom Merry. And he told the astonished Kerr what had happened since.

Kerr laughed feebly:

"But—but what's Lowther's game?" he said, eyeing them suspiciously again. "Oh, I see! He's going to try the game on with our chaps at the New House, you rotters!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where is he now?" snorted Kerr. "Like him, to collar our idea like that—mucking the whole show up! Look here, no larks, now; make it pax!"

"Likely, isn't it? What about those whacks with the gamp, Kerr? We haven't forgotten, if you have, old bean!"

"It was a joke, and it's over now!" growled Kerr. "Look here, I've jolly well had enough. Make it pax!"

"We'll let you off if you behave yourself!" grinned Tom Merry. "But you're not leaving here until Monty comes back. We're not letting you trot off to spoil his game, my pippin!"

"Oh, you rotters! Look here——"

Kerr suddenly broke off and made a wild rush for the door. But Tom Merry had anticipated such an intention, and in a flash he had the struggling New House joker in a strong grasp, and in another second Blake and the rest had rushed to his aid.

"No good, Kerr!" laughed Tom Merry. "You're our giddy prisoner, and you're staying here until Lowther returns. Tie him up, chaps, and shove him under the table!"

"Good wheeze!"

"Yaas, wathah! I considah he ought to have half a dozen with a cwicket-stump first, though, deah boys!"

"Well, he'll get that if he doesn't behave himself!" grinned Tom Merry. "Tie him up for the present, and then we'll get tea ready for when Lowther turns up. Let's hope he hasn't come a mucker, too."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And, after tying up the struggling Kerr and rolling him beneath the table, Tom Merry & Co. started to get tea ready. But they were rather anxious about Lowther. They knew that once having put his hand to the plough, Lowther was not the fellow to turn back, and they wondered how the humorist of the Shell was faring.

CHAPTER 6.

Lowther Pulls it Off!

"PHEW! That was a near thing, and no mistake!"

It certainly was a near thing, and Lowther thanked his lucky stars for his narrow escape. Immediately on dashing out into the quad Lowther had made for the old archway leading across to the New House. He had chosen to seek sanctuary out of doors, for one thing, because he felt it was safer; and, for another, because he had no intention of giving up his programme yet, doubly dangerous though it was now. Lowther was daring and reckless when on the war-path, and he was not likely to give up the game after all the trouble he had taken. They would know nothing of what had happened over in the New House, and it was against the rival House that Lowther intended to direct his operations.

It was just as well Lowther did take that direction; for scarcely had he reached the shelter of the archway, when Kildare and Darrell came across the quad from the direction of the gates. Luckily, they had not spotted him, and Lowther breathed more freely as he saw them walk up the School House steps and vanish indoors.

"Oh, good!" breathed Lowther. "Now for it! I'll make those cheeky New House worms sit up! Here goes!"

Leaving the shelter of the archway, Lowther waddled boldly forth and started across for the New House. There was scarcely a soul about; for a light drizzle was still falling, and it was very unpleasant out of doors.

As he neared the steps of the rival establishment Lowther saw several juniors standing in the entrance at the top of the New House steps, and he chuckled inwardly as he recognised Figgins, Fatty Wynn, Redfern, and Owen. Figgins and his chums looked very down in the mouth, and it was clear they were anxiously awaiting the return of Kerr.

They stared hard at Lowther as he came waddling up to the steps and mounted them ponderously:

"My hat!" breathed Figgins, little dreaming of the truth. "It's not Kerr! It—it must be Herr Schwartz himself—the real goods this time! What the dickens——"

"Looks to me as if Kerr's been bowled out!" groaned Fatty Wynn. "Yes, it's the blessed Herr right enough! What's he want here, I wonder?"

Figgins wondered also. Lowther's make-up was perfect, and in their mind's eye they had expected Herr Schwartz to be just such a podgy individual as this. As a matter of fact, both Kerr and Lowther had made themselves up as nearly like Herr Schneider, their former German master, as they could. As Figgins & Co. eyed Lowther now they never dreamed that he was also an impostor; such a possibility never even entered their heads that the juniors of the rival House might play their own game in an attempt to turn the tables on them.

Lowther beamed at the juniors through his glasses as he slowly and heavily mounted the steps.

"Good-afternoons, mein poys!" he said in a guttural voice that was the essence of geniality. "It is der vet day, ain't it? Is dis der New House vat I am looking for, mein young friends?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Figgins, staring, as the juniors doffed their caps. "This is the New House. But—but isn't it the School House you want? You'll find the Head there, sir."

"Ach! Nein! I haf der headmaster seen, mein poys. Id is mein tear old friendt Herr Ratcliff of der New House tat I vish to see at der moment. I haf der vish to renew der acquaintances mit him at der earliest moment, hein!"

"Oh!"

The New House juniors had had no idea that Mr. Horace Ratcliff, their tyrannical Housemaster, was an old friend of the new German master; they were very surprised to hear the news, in fact. But they understood now why Herr Schwartz was paying their House a visit—or they imagined they did.

"Ach! Is not der Herr Ratcliff in mit himself dis afternoon?" asked Herr Schwartz, as the juniors stared.

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Figgins. "He's in his study just now, I think. If you like I'll show you the way——"

"Thank you ferry mooch, mein poys!" beamed Herr Schwartz. "It is ferry goot of you mit it. Jawohl! I vos anxious to see mein old friendt Herr Ratcliff mit himself. Hein!"

"This way, sir!"

Figgins was always ready enough to oblige anyone, and he rather liked the new German master's genial smile. They all mentally decided he was a decidedly pleasant change from the irascible Herr Schneider. Fatty Wynn turned to accompany his chum; but Redfern and Owen were hanging behind, when the Herr paused and blinked at them.

"You vas come mit me, too, liddle poys," he said. "I vas lose no time in making friendts mit der pupils I haf come to teach. Ach! Ja! Gome, mein young friendts!"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

Redfern and Owen were rather surprised, but they grinned and followed wonderingly. Figgins led the way out of the hall and along the passage, making for Mr. Ratcliff's study. Herr Schwartz suddenly halted outside a closed door, beyond which came a queer, sliding noise and sundry bumps, which were followed by laughter and cheers. The hubbub from beyond the door, indeed, was rather alarming.

"Ach! Vat is dis?" he cried, frowning. "Is it der riot in dere, or vas dis a bear-garden, hein?"

"Ahem!" Figgins coughed. "That's the junior Common-room, sir. You—you see, sir, it's a wet afternoon, and the fellows are all indoors. They're just—just larking, sir."

"Ach! Dis vill never do, mein poys! I do not approve of such noise and riots mit dem. Open der door, mein young friendt. Ja!"

"Oh—oh, yes, sir!"

Figgins obeyed, though rather reluctantly. He guessed the fellows were having a "chariot race" with forms—and he was right. As the door opened a race was in progress, and one form—turned upside down, with two juniors crouching in it, and two others pulling—came towards the door with a rush. It stopped suddenly some yards from the door, shooting its occupants—the "charioteers"—in a tumbled heap on the floor, amid an uproar of yells and howls of laughter.

"Ach! Mein gootness!" gasped the Herr, raising his hands in horror. "Vat a noise! Vat disgraceful goings on mit it! Ja! I vas scandalised mit meinsel! Donner wetter! Dis vill never do! Disgraceful! Stop dat noise dis ferry instant! Ach!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Oh, my hat!"

A sudden silence fell on the room as the New House juniors sighted the podgy little gentleman in the doorway.

"It—it's the new master!"

"Look out! Oh crumbs!"

All eyes turned on the podgy little gentleman. They stared at him with interest, most of the fellows grinning.

Herr Schwartz blinked about him, shaking his head very seriously.

"Dis is von great disappointments to me," he observed sadly. "I had hoped dat der boys of dis school vere vell-behaved mit demselves. Ach! The noise and commotions, dey vos terrible! Boys, put dese forms back in dere places dis ferry instant! You hear me, hein?"

There was a note of command in the words, and several fellows started to put the forms back in their places. There was a buzz of surprise and many rather sulky looks. It was unusual, to say the least of it, for a language master to interfere in this manner—especially on a half-holiday, and more especially with the New House fellows.

"We weren't doing any harm, sir!" growled Lawrence of the Fourth. "We'd nothing else to do, anyway, as it's wet outside."

"Ach! Den it is my duty to gif you something to do, mein poys," observed the Herr, frowning darkly. "I tink you vos needs something useful to do, ain't it? Ach! I haf der ferry idea, mit meinself. I vas drill you like they vas do in der Faderland."

"Oh, I say, sir!"

"Look here, sir—"

"Silence mit you!" thundered the Herr, his voice suddenly becoming most ferocious. "Now, mein poys, I vas teach you, in der beginnings, tat I stand no nonsense mit me. You vill all get in line—in two lines—and I vas drill you. Quick mit you!"

He advanced into the room, looking very determined. There was another buzz—a rather mutinous buzz this time. But most of the fellows, after hesitating a moment, began to range into line.

"Now, mein young friends!" snapped Herr Schwartz, turning to the astounded Figgins & Co. "Quick! I vos not wants to report you to mein friend Herr Rateliff!"

"Oh dear!"

Figgins, Fatty Wynn, Redfern, and Owen ranged into line, and the rest of the wavering ones followed their example quickly enough. They did not want the Herr to report them to Mr. Rateliff—far from it. If Herr Schwartz was a friend of the unpopular Housemaster, then he would undoubtedly be backed up in his strange proceedings by him. That much was certain.

In a matter of moments the juniors were ranged in two orderly lines across the Common-room.

"Now ve vill do der gymnastics, poys," said the extraordinary new master. "You vill lift der both hands up and down mit you—up, down, up, down—so!" he explained, shooting his arms up and down violently. "You vill do tat until I meinself tell you to stop. Ach! It is von excellent exercise, mit it, and vill keep you out of der mischief, hein? Der poys who stops vill be punished severely mit himself! Ready, mein poys? Ten go! Up, down, up, down! Tat is right! Himmell! Tat vos splendid, mit it!"

The New House fellows did not share his opinion, however. But they obeyed, nevertheless—there was little else they could do in the circumstances. Just or unjust, usual or unusual, they knew that "Ratty" would support his friend in his queer orders. Many of the fellows, indeed, began to see the humour of the situation, and they went at it with gusto, broad grins on their faces. It was a great joke—for the time being.

But they did not see the humour for long. Lowther was warming to his work, and he did not give the order to stop.

"Tat is right—tat is splendid, mein poys," he observed with great satisfaction. "Keep it up—do not stop for von moment. You are all vot von would call flabby and out of condition mit yourselves. Hein! You vos what you call him—crocks! Zis vill do you good mit yourselves. Ja! Nein, nein; do not stop, my friends!"

Some of the fellows did stop, however; they were on the point of collapsing. Figgins gave an indignant gasp.

"Look here, sir—" he began.

"Silence mit you! Der poys who stop vill give me der names of demselves afterwards. Ach. Up, down, up, down! Tat is right—so! Continue mit yourselves and do not stop and I vill go and fetch der Herr Rateliff to vatch you. Ach! I vill not be von moment, and der poys who stops vill be punished mit himself ferry severely. Ja!"

With that grim warning Herr Schwartz backed towards the door. He fumbled for some moments with the handle, but it was not until the door had closed behind the Herr, that a sharp click told the juniors that anything was amiss.

"M-mum-my hat! What the dickens— Great Scott! He's locked us in!" panted Figgins, ceasing to pump his arms up and down. "What the thump 'a he thinking of? He must be potty!"

"I'm chucking it, anyway, and blow Ratty!" gasped Owen.

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"Hear, hear!"

There was a chorus of approval. The juniors were fed-up—more than fed-up. They lowered their aching arms with gasps of relief.

"He's the queerest merchant I ever struck!" panted George Figgins. "I suppose he locked the door so that we shouldn't clear, the beast! My hat! He looks like turning out worse than old Seneider! We'll make him— Oh, my only giddy aunt!"

Figgins broke off with a sudden yell, and his features grew crimson with wrath and dismay.

"What's up now, Figgy?" groaned Fatty Wynn, rubbing his aching arms. "What—"

"Can't you see?" bellowed Figgins. "It's all a spoof—we've been had—done brown! It—it's a swizz! It wasn't the new master at all! Dash it all, what new master would dare to start such tricks on his first day? Oh, my hat! Oh, my Sunday bonnet! Done—done brown!"

And Figgins groaned aloud in his deep dismay and wrath.

"But—but—"

"Can't you see?" shrieked Figgins. "Oh, what awful fools we've been—what blind idiots! It was Lowther—that fearful rotter, Lowther! He's done it to pay us back for the trick Kerr played—the dashed same dodge. And—and I never even suspected it until now. Oh, lor! Why didn't we think of it?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Oh dear!"

"Oh, the—the sweep!"

They saw it now—at least, they believed Figgins had "hit it" indeed. Most of them had heard of Kerr's adventure by this; yet, like Figgins himself, they had never dreamed that the same game might be played on them.

There was a roar of rage in the New House Junior Common-room. Figgins almost tore his hair in his rage and humiliation.

"We shall never hear the last of this!" he gasped. "And—and— Oh, my hat! What game will be he up to now?"

Figgins rushed to the door and wrenched at it in a vain hope that it might not be locked. But it was locked, and the door was of solid oak. The next moment the rest swarmed round the door, banging and crashing on it with fists and feet.

Meanwhile, Monty Lowther, chuckling gleefully, had proceeded on his way. He passed one or two fellows who looked at him rather curiously, and he beamed on them and passed on quickly without arousing suspicion. Outside Mr. Rateliff's door he paused and listened.

To his ears came a sudden, rasping cough—it told him that the irascible New House master was "at home," and opening the door very softly, the daring joker felt round the door edge until his fingers encountered the key. He plucked it swiftly out, placed it in the keyhole on the outside, and turned it in the lock.

Click!

A sudden startled exclamation came from within the study, and Monty Lowther smiled and walked on, making for Figgins' study. He soon reached it, and stepping inside he closed and locked the door behind him.

After that Monty got busy. At any moment someone might let Mr. Rateliff out, and at any moment Figgins and his men might "tumble" to the truth—indeed, he was amazed himself that they had failed to do so already. Still, they were locked in the Common-room, and the key was in his pocket, and it would be some time before anyone found a key to fit the lock.

Lowther placed the key on the mantelpiece, and then he got to work. First he emptied the coal from the coal-scuttle over the carpet, adding the cinders from the grate. This done, he took the jam and other comestibles from the study cupboard and emptied the lot indiscriminately into the empty scuttle. The books from the bookshelves he simply tipped casually over the floor in a heap.

It was a record rag, and within five minutes the room looked as if a cyclone had visited it. But the japer of the Shell was satisfied at last, and after chalking a message on the mirror, he left the room and departed, his work well done—in his view. The view of the New House fellows was likely to be that it was too well done!

Lowther avoided publicity after that, and making his way down by the back staircase, he passed coolly through the servants' quarters, and reaching the Close, made a bee-line for the woodshed. Here he shed his disguise, and rubbing the grease-paint from his face, he hurried indoors and made for Study No. 10. He walked in cheerily, and there was a yell as he entered from Tom Merry and the rest of his chums who were just beginning tea.

"Here he is! Oh, good!" gasped Tom Merry. "How did it go, Monty?"

"You look chirpy enough, anyway," said Blake.

"What-ho!" grinned Lowther. "Where's old Kerr? I didn't see him over there!"

"He's under the table," said Tom Merry, with a chuckle. "Yank him out, Gussy!"

Kerr was dragged from beneath the table.

He spluttered and glared.

"Oh, you—you rotters!" he choked. "Look here, Lowther, you rotter, what have you been up to?"

"You'll know presently," grinned Lowther. "By the way, you'll find the key of your Common-room on your study mantelpiece, old chap. And if you happen to pass Ratty's room you might turn the key in the lock and let him out. Savvy?"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "You—you've looked Ratty in his study?"

"Yes—and Figgy and most of the New House crowd in their Common-room," smiled Lowther. "I expect they'll be getting impatient by now, Kerr. Better go and let 'em out, old chap."

"Oh, you—you—" spluttered Kerr; and he made a rush at Lowther. Half a dozen pairs of hands instantly grasped him and held him back.

"No, you don't!" chuckled Tom Merry. "I say, Blake, old chap, you'll find some mouldy sardines in the cupboard. Yank 'em out and we'll give dear old Kerr some to take home with him. A pity to waste 'em, and— Hallo, he's gone!"

Kerr had gone! A sudden desperate wrench, and he was free and flying through the open doorway. A roar of laughter followed him.

But Tom Merry & Co. laughed still more when Lowther had related his adventures to them, and tea was a merry meal in Study No. 10 in the Shell passage that evening. It was undoubtedly a School House win, and Tom Merry & Co. were gleeful and triumphant.

"We'll have to keep it mum, though," warned Tom Merry. "The less we sing it over outside the better, chaps. There'll be the very dickens to pay if the beaks get to know who the giddy impersonators were!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Tom's chums agreed with him there. It was a great score over the New House and, amongst themselves, Tom Merry & Co. rejoiced with great rejoicings. But the Head was still on the warpath, and they realised that the less said about the matter outside the better.

CHAPTER 7.

The Grub-raider !

"JUST one sardine—"
"Not one!"
"A piece of cake, then?"
"Not a scrap!"

"One of those biscuits, then?" said Baggy Trimble indignantly. "Dash it all, don't be so thumping mean, Wildrake."

"Not a single biscuit!" said Kit Wildrake grimly. "You've had more than half the sardines, nearly half the cake, and most of the biscuits."

"But I'm hungry!" shouted Trimble. "Then tighten your belt, old nut; it'd do with a good bit of tightening."

"Beast!"
"Go it!" said Wildrake encouragingly. "You rotter!" hooted Trimble. "Ain't I to have any rotten tea, then?"

"You've had your tea, old fat man!"
"I haven't!" shrieked Trimble. "I'm hungry yet!"

"You always are—before and after meals! Pass the biscuits, Mellish—or the biscuits Trimble's left us!"

"Look here!" roared Trimble. "I'm not standing this. Aren't I in this study, and haven't I a right to my tea?"

"Certainly—when you bring your own stuff and stand your fair whack. But you never do. I've supplied the cake and the biscuits, and Mellish supplied the giddy whales. You've had a jolly sight more than your share of the lot. You've had all you're going to have, Fatty."

"But I'm hungry!" wailed Trimble. "Oh, change the record!"

"Beasts!"
"Good!"

"I'm jolly well having another biscuit!" shouted Trimble; and he reached over and made a grab.

Rap!
"Yooop!"

"Try it again and you'll get more," said Wildrake, putting down the spoon with which he had rapped the fat junior's knuckles. "I've said you've had your whack, and I mean it. You've collared nearly all the butter, and there's only a scrap left for Mellish and myself. If you want any more you can have a go at dry bread, or try the coal."

"Beast!" Look here, it's not jolly well fair! I'm hungry—

"Starting again, are you?" said Wildrake.

"Yes, I jolly well am!" hooted Trimble. "I'm jolly well going—"

"You are!" interrupted Kit Wildrake, rising from his chair. "You're going out of this study—sharp! Where's that fives-bat, Mellish?"

"In the corner there!"

"Good! I'll soon— Here, hold on, Trimble!"

But Baggy Trimble was gone. And Kit Wildrake, with a chuckle, resumed his tea. Baggy, meanwhile, rolled away along the corridor dismally and wrathfully. He felt he was being very unfairly treated—Trimble always did! The fact that Mellish and Wildrake had not had their fair share of tea was nothing compared to the fact that he, Baggy Trimble, was still hungry, though he had had more than his fair share.

"Beasts!" grunted Trimble, to himself. "Fancy kicking a chap out of his own study at tea-time! And it's too late now for tea in Hall."

The matter was serious in Trimble's opinion. He very often had to supplement a study tea by tea in Hall; but the study brew had been rather late to-day, and now it was too late for that.

Baggy ambled on along the passages dismally, racking his fat brain for some excuse to enable him to visit another study. There was a light footstep behind him, and he stood aside to allow Mary, the School House maid to pass him. She was carrying a tray, and as she passed, a delicious smell of hot, buttered toast came to Trimble's nostrils.

It made Trimble groan, and he watched enviously as Mary passed into Herr Schwartz's study. She came out again without the tray, and paused in the doorway uncertainly.

"Have you seen anything of Herr Schwartz, Master Trimble?" she asked.

"No, I haven't!" grunted Trimble.

"He asked for his tea to be brought to his room to-day," explained Mary. "But he's out now, and I wonder if I ought to leave it."

"How do I know?" snapped Trimble crossly.

Mary sniffed audibly, and then she turned on her heel and went back the way she had come. Baggy scowled

(Continued on next page.)



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after her, and was resuming his ambling gait when he pulled up, his eyes gleaming. He had suddenly remembered having seen Herr Schwartz crossing over to the New House scarcely three minutes before, while glancing out of the study window.

"Phew!" murmured Trimble. "It—it's risky, but—hanged if I don't do it!"

And Trimble, with a cautious peep into the German master's study to make quite sure that it was empty, rolled inside the room, closing the door after him.

Then he blinked hungrily at the tray.

From his point of view it was not much of a meal certainly. Still, the buttered toast looked all right, and the egg, the jam, and thin bread-and-butter, likewise the single slice of cake, certainly looked very appetising on the spotless clean cloth. And Trimble was hungry—very hungry, indeed!

It was a great temptation. He would never have dreamed of raiding Mr. Railton's tea, and he would have had to be very hungry indeed to touch either Mr. Lathom's or Mr. Linton's tea. But in Trimble's view language masters were persons of not much importance, and Herr Schwartz was only a "beastly Hun," and of no importance at all.

So Baggy quickly succumbed.

Within several seconds of entering the study Baggy had polished off the cake, and then the egg. The best of the supplies thus disposed of, Baggy turned his attention to the toast and jam, his ears on the alert for footsteps.

They came quickly enough.

Just as the fat raider was starting on the bread-and-butter, ponderous footsteps sounded in the passage, and Trimble gave a gasp.

"Oh, dear!"

He started for the door hastily, but suddenly realising the folly of that, he changed his mind abruptly and dived beneath the table.

He had just got fairly comfortably settled there when the door opened and the podgy form of Herr Schwartz entered the study.

His eyes fell at once upon the depleted tray, and he gave a grunt.

"Ach! Vos is dis? Der tea it haf been brought, but is not here mit itself. Hein!" he gasped. "Mein gootness! Somebody vas help himself to my tea, ain't it?"

He stared blankly at the tray. Trimble was never a very careful eater—his table-manners left a great deal to be desired. He had left a great number of crumbs over the tray, the table, and the floor, and there were traces of the egg and jam everywhere.

"Ach! It looks to meinsel tat it is der animal, and yet it der animal vas not; der animal could neffer open der egg mit itself. Nein, nein! It vos vun of der little rascals tat haf stolen mein tea. I vill meinsel complain at vunce. Ach, himmel! It is disgraceful vos!"

The Herr started wrathfully for the door. Unfortunately, Baggy Trimble's leg was sticking out from beneath the table, and Herr Schwartz, with a startled gasp, tripped and fell headlong over it.

Crash!

Herr Schwartz went down with a concussion that shook the room.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Trimble.

Instant flight was the only thing, and scrambling from beneath the table Trimble made a wild, desperate leap for the door.

But he had not counted upon Herr Schwartz.

The little German was far too plump and middle-aged to do such acrobatics in safety. He was hurt, and he was raging. He glimpsed Baggy in the nick of time, and a fat, strong hand closed on Trimble's leg as he tried to scramble past.

"Ach!" roared Herr Schwartz. "You vos vun young scoundrel! It vas you, Trimble, den dat haf mein tea devoured. Der impudence of you is astounding, ain't it! Take tat, and tat, and tat!"

Slap, slap, slap, slap!

"Ow! Yarrroooooogh! Yooooop! Murder! Yow-ow-ow!"

The grub-raider roared with anguish, as the wrathful Herr proceeded to box his ears vigorously.

"Dere!" gasped Herr Schwartz, pausing at last. "Now you vill come mit me to der Housemaster! Neffer haf I mit meinsel met such impudence as tat! You haf mein tea stolen and you haf meinsel hurt! Come!"

Trimble went—with Herr's plump fingers hooked in his collar, the hapless youth had no choice in the matter at all. Two minutes later he was standing before Mr. Railton, while Herr Schwartz related the story with great feeling and indignation.

"Very well, Herr Schwartz," said Mr. Railton, fixing a stern glance on the shivering Trimble. "This is a very

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serious matter. You are aware, Trimble, that your punishment for such a daring, impudent trick must be severe?"

"Ow! No, sir—that is, I didn't think about it like that, sir—in fact, Herr Schwartz is quite mistaken in thinking I took his tea. I didn't. The—the fact is—"

"Silence! Falsehoods will not help you, boy!" said the Housemaster sternly. "The matter is quite clear. You will bend over that chair, Trimble."

"Ow! Oh dear! I—I sus-say, sir—Herr Schwartz has already whacked—I mean, hit me; he smacked my head something fearful! I—I believe he's given me conclusion of the brain, sir!"

"What? Nonsense! Bend over that chair!" said Mr. Railton angrily. "Do you hear me?"



From the smaller of the two bags that lay on the grass in the little and waved one in each hand. "Dese," he explained, with a ghastly s
(See chap.

And Trimble obeyed quickly, with a jump. He bent gingerly over the chair, and the next few moments were a ghastly nightmare to the grub-raider.

"There!" gasped Mr. Railton at last. "Let this be a lesson to you, Trimble! You will also do me five hundred lines. Go!"

And Trimble went—a sadder if not a wiser Trimble!

CHAPTER 8.

Trimble's Revenge!

"HALLO! What the thump—"

"What the dickens—"

"What's the game, Trimble?"

The Terrible Three stopped and stared at Baggy Trimble.

The juniors were just going for a stroll in the quad, and were descending the stairs.

They had just reached the little landing half-way down the stairs when they came on Baggy Trimble—and Trimble was certainly acting in rather a strange manner. He was crouching by the banisters, staring through them intently,



glade Herr Schwartz slowly and impressively drew two pistols
smile, "are der weapons!" "Mon Dieu!" gasped Monsieur Morny.
(p. 13.)

apparently at the passage below. There was a bulge in his jacket, as if something was concealed under it.

So engrossed was Trimble that the three Shell fellows were almost upon him before he heard them. He gave a startled jump and blinked round at them in great alarm as they spoke.

"Oh!" he gasped. "It—it's you chaps! What d'you want to startle a chap like that for? I thought—"

"You thought it was a giddy beak, eh?" chuckled Tom Merry. "Well, what's the game, Trimble? What the thump are you grovelling there for?"

"And what have you got under your jacket?" demanded Manners.

Trimble grinned—obviously relieved to find it was only the Terrible Three who had found him thus. His grin was

rather malicious, and his little eyes glittered as he blinked at them.

"I say, you fellows," he mumbled, "you'd better clear out, you know. Or you can stop and see the fun if you like. But you'll have to be ready to run for it, mind!"

"You burbling fat chump! What d'you mean? What's this game?"

"Schwartz!" grinned Trimble. "That beast Schwartz!"

"Well, what about him?"

"I'm going to make the beast sit up!" vowed Trimble. "The beast pitched into me—knocked me about something awful! And then he got me a licking and five hundred lines. I'm in awful pain now!"

Tom Merry and his chums grinned. Evidently Herr Schwartz had made a deadly enemy of Baggy Trimble, in addition to Monsieur Morny, the French master.

The Herr had been at St. Jim's for two days now, and he had quickly settled down. The matter of the impersonations had blown over—fortunately for the impersonators—and despite a most thorough investigation the perpetrators had not been discovered—nor had Mr. Ratcliff discovered who had locked him in his study.

The Head had suspected that the whole thing was a joke—or outrage, as he preferred to term it—while Mr. Ratcliff had since looked very hard at Monty Lowther. Clearly he suspected that practical joker. But there was no proof—not a single clue—and the Head and everyone else in authority had to be satisfied with their suspicions.

Yet, though the matter was almost forgotten now, the effects still remained so far as Monsieur Morny and Herr Schwartz were concerned.

In the Head's study the two had flatly refused to shake hands despite the Head's efforts to promote peace. And though Monsieur Morny had made a sort of apology to the Herr—the Head had insisted upon that—it had been neither given nor accepted in good grace.

Certainly the little, high-spirited French master was in the wrong—good as his intentions had been. No man—German or otherwise—could have been expected to keep his temper when a complete stranger had pulled his ear without any apparent reason. On the other hand, Mossos was hurt, and his natural antipathy for Herr Schwartz's nationality had done the rest.

At all events, it was known that they were not on speaking terms, and to the juniors, at least, it was all very funny, and they looked upon the feud as a great joke. Actually they rather liked the good-natured and easy-going German master.

None the less, he was not so easy-going as Monsieur Morny, and fellows like Trimble and Mellish had soon discovered they could not check Herr Schwartz with impunity—a fact the slackers did not like at all, and they did not share in the general feeling that the new master was a decent sort.

And now, Baggy Trimble had still further reason to be "up against" Herr Schwartz. Tom Merry & Co. had heard the story of the stolen tea, and they grinned at the sight of Trimble on the warpath.

"The old rotter—made my napper fairly ring!" repeated Trimble impressively.

"It would—being empty!" said Lowther sympathetically.

"It's nothing to make rotten jokes about!" said Trimble, his eyes glittering. "Fancy a beastly old German being allowed to smack a chap's head, eh? The awful Hun! I tell you I'm jolly well going to make the beast sit up!"

"I shouldn't try," grinned Tom Merry. "You see what you got last night for making him sit down—at least, fall down! But what's the little game now, Baggy—you haven't told us yet? What's that under your giddy jacket?"

Trimble grinned, and, opening his jacket, he disclosed to view a large jar. In it was a thick, black substance, liquid, and decidedly smelly.

"It's some stuff I mixed myself," explained Trimble. "It's spot, and ink, and gum, and paste, and some stinking stuff I boned from Glyn's study. I'm going to make that beastly Hun a present of it on his napper, you know! See?"

"Oh! Oh, my hat!"

"He's gone into the library higher up the passage—I saw him go," grinned Trimble. "He'll be back any second now. You fellows keep out of sight and watch me! You'll see some fun in a minute!"

"You—you fat ass!"

"You—you burbling chump!" breathed Tom Merry. "Are you potty, Trimble? You'll get flogged—"

"Rats! You chaps sheer off if you funk it," sneered Trimble. "Flogging isn't my style, I can tell you. I'm going to make that beast sit up! Made my head ring, and got me a licking, besides the lines. And I bet I got another licking 'cause I haven't done the rotten lines yet. I'll show the beast what's what!"

"Oh crumbs!"

The three stared at Trimble in some alarm. They knew he was what Manners called "a vengeful little toad," and they could see he was in a vengeful mood now. Trimble was obviously on the warpath, and the unconscious Herr Schwartz was to be his victim, apparently. And if the German master did get that fearful-looking mixture on his head, there was likely to be serious trouble for Trimble. A flogging would be the least he would get, if caught.

But Trimble, apparently, did not give that possibility a second thought.

"Well, you awful idiot!" snapped Tom Merry. "Hand that stuff to me, you fooling duffer! D'you want to get a flogging or the sack, you fool?"

"Rot! I'll jolly well watch I don't get caught," grinned Trimble confidently. "Catch me! I just tip this over the banisters on his silly napper, and then I sheer off. Nobody'll know who did it, and— Shush! My hat! Here he comes! Quiet!"

A heavy, ponderous tread sounded in the corridor below, and Tom Merry & Co. heard a guttural grunting. It was undoubtedly Herr Ludwig Schwartz. Trimble held the jar between the banisters, his little eyes glinting.

"Stop, you silly little fool!" gasped Tom Merry in a breathless whisper. "Here—"

He sprang forward and made a grab at the jar in Trimble's hand. But he was just an instant too late. Trimble, with a quick movement, tipped up the jar, and then—

Swoooooosh!

Down swept the black, evil-smelling concoction, full on the round, bald patch in the centre of the Herr's close-cropped hair.

"Vat— Himmel! Donner un— Grooooooh!"

Herr Schwartz's yell of startled amazement ended in a queer, strangled gurgling.

It was a fluke, really, that the Herr had got it at all—or, rather, an accident. Trimble usually made a mess of anything he attempted, and had he been left alone his shot would undoubtedly have gone wide of its mark, so to speak. But Tom's unfortunate interruption had made Trimble act sooner than he had intended, with the result that Trimble got a real "bullseye."

The sticky, drenching, smelling liquid dropped full on the head of the hapless German master, flowing over his hair and down his face, and dripping over him like a smothering, enveloping shroud.

Spluttering, gasping, and gurgling he staggered about in the passage blindly.

The juniors on the landing above looked at one another aghast.

"Oh, my only hat!"

"That's done it!"

CHAPTER 9.

Mossoo Interferes.

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" gasped Tom Merry.

The three Shell fellows stared down at the staggering figure below them in breathless alarm.

The German master had found his voice now, and he was giving vent to a flood of guttural German between gasps and choking gurgles. Even Trimble did not move for the moment, so terrified was he at the sudden realisation of what he had done.

But he did not remain inactive for long.

Herr Schwartz, the liquid abomination still dripping from him, gouged madly at his eyes, and then he blinked dazedly upwards. Trimble withdrew his fat face from the banisters in desperate haste; but it was too late, and a gurgling roar of rage escaped Herr Schwartz.

"Oh crumbs!" quaked Trimble; and, with a startled gasp, he leaped upright and turned to bolt upstairs.

Unfortunately, the Terrible Three had chosen just that very instant to do the same, and there followed a scrambling sort of struggle, all four juniors jammed together on the stairs as they struggled to escape.

But the Terrible Three won through, and the struggle ended as Herr Schwartz caught his foot in the stair carpet, overbalanced, and rolled downstairs instead of up.

Bump, bump, bump, bump, bump!

Like a sack of coal falling the hapless Baggy went headlong down the staircase, bumping on each step as he went. He did not strike the bottom, however, simply because the raving Herr, who had just made a dive for the staircase on vengeance bent, arrived there at that instant. The meeting was unavoidable and terrific.

Crash!

In a gasping, struggling heap Trimble and Herr Schwartz rolled over and over in the corridor, Trimble howling with pain and alarm.

"Groooch! Ach! Donner wetter! Himmel! Scoundrel!"

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gasped Herr Schwartz, still spluttering. "Gooch! Ach himmel! Mein Gott! Grooooooh! Poof!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Halfway up the stairs Tom Merry and his two chums stood looking back at the scene, rooted to the spot in alarm. They wanted to run, and yet—

Tom Merry suddenly reached a decision, and he ran downstairs and started to help the dazed and raging German master to his feet. He was quickly followed by his startled chums.

"Oh!" gasped Trimble. "Ow-ow! I'm killed! My back's broken! Yow! Oh dear! Oh!"

He staggered to his feet, much too hurt and dazed to think of another attempt at bolting yet. And as he did so Herr Schwartz gave a grunt of rage and grasped him by the collar.

Smack, smack, smack, smack!

Trimble fairly roared as the German master let him have it hot and strong. Really, no master at St. Jim's was supposed to strike a boy in that manner; but it was evident that Herr Schwartz thought the occasion called for something drastic.

Smack, smack, smack, smack!

"Yooop! Yarrooooooh!" bellowed Trimble. "Stop him! Ow-ow! Yooooop! Murder! Help! Police! Yarroooooop!"

"Ach himmel! It vas you tat did' throw tat horrible stuffs over mein head, ain't it?" roared Herr Schwartz. "Take tat and tat and tat! I vill teach you to treat der master at dis school mit such outrages, hein! You vas der scoundrel, mit! Ja! I vas—"

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! Vat is ze mattair? Vat— Parbleu!"

Little Monsieur Morny came buzzing along, the tails of his black frockcoat sailing behind him. Amazed as he was at the sight of the concoction on the German master's head, his amazement gave way to indignation as Trimble squirmed under the hand of the enraged master.

"Vat—vat— Stop zat zis instant, Herr Schwartz! You are ze bully—ze coward! Mon Dieu! You shall not use zat boy like zat! Let him go!" he shouted, and he grasped Herr Schwartz's arm and hung on to it desperately.

"Ach himmel! Let me go at vunce! How you vos interfere mit me dare, monsieur?" roared Herr Schwartz angrily. "Dere! Now he haf gone mit himself!"

It was true enough—Trimble had gone. The interruption had saved him. As Herr Schwartz turned his attention from him, Trimble tore himself free and bolted for life along the passage. Herr Schwartz glowered after him, and then he turned on Monsieur Morny headily.

"Ach! You vas vun fool!" he shouted, almost dancing with rage, and shaking a podgy fist under the French master's nose. "You vas interfere mit vat concerns you not. Donner wetter! Look at meinself mit you! Look at mein face! It is tat I am victim of vun outrages!"

"Gentlemen, gentlemen! Good gracious! Gentlemen, you forget yourselves! My dear sirs—"

Little Mr. Lathom came rushing up, his face showing the greatest alarm. He was obviously shocked beyond measure to find Herr Schwartz shaking his podgy fist under Mossoo's nose. The master of the Fourth scattered the crowd of fellows that had been attracted by the row to right and left and then gallantly placed himself between the two masters, his arms upraised.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, I beg of you to desist!" he gasped. "Bless my soul! Herr Schwartz—Monsieur Morny, you forget yourselves! What is the matter?"

There was a buzz. The fellows stared open-mouthed at the scene—only Tom Merry and his two chums understanding what it meant, of course. Many of the fellows were grinning, openly. Their only regret was that they had not arrived on the scene earlier, and they hoped that the two bitter rivals would really come to blows. They quite looked forward to such an entertainment.

But they were to be disappointed.

Mr. Lathom was rather a meek little gentleman, but his scandalised voice had its effect. Herr Schwartz lowered his fist promptly.

"Vat is der matter?" he stuttered. "I vas soon tell you tat. Listen mit yourself."

The excited Herr took a deep breath to calm himself, and then he proceeded, in a voice hoarse with indignation:

"Listen! I vas just coming from der library—valking quite galmly along der passage, you understands?—ven all at vunce der stuff—der horrible stuff tat you see over mein head now—it came down mit itself on mein head—swoop! I vos astounded, and I vos choked and blinded mit meinself!"

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Lathom. "Is it possible that—"

"It vos der—vat you call him?—fact, Herr Lathom!" said Herr Schwartz, waving his hands excitedly. "Ferry vell! You understands? I vas blinded mit meinself. But ven I got der stuff from mein eyes I looks upwards, and den—den I sees him; it vos der vicked poy tat is so vat—Trimble!"

"Trimble!" ejaculated Mr. Lathom. "Do you mean that it was Trimble, of my Form, who played this outrageous trick upon you, Herr Schwartz?"

"Ja, ja! It was der vicked poy, Trimble! I looks up-vards, and I see him. But tat is not all, mein Herr. I was ferry angry, and I was run mit meinselt to catch him, and I was just reach der bottom of der stairs when der young rasgal, he comes and knocks me down mit meinselt."

"Good gracious! The—the boy dared to knock you down, Herr Schwartz?"

"Ja! Dat is so. He was fall on der steps, and he was grash into meinselt, and knocked me down mit himself. I was hurt—almost sthunned mit meinselt!" said the Herr indignantly. "And so I loses mein temper, and I smacks der young rasgal's head mit mein hand. Was I not right, mein Herr?"

"Ahem!" Mr. Lathom coughed. "Most certainly he deserves the most severe punishment, Herr Schwartz. I am amazed that he should have cared to commit such an outrage!"

"Ferry vell—ferry vell!" exclaimed Herr Schwartz, becoming excited again as he pointed an accusing finger at Monsieur Morny. "Den why should der monsieur interfere mit me ven I was giving der young rasgal vat he was deserve. He was interfere mit himself, and he was call me vun pully, and he was allow der Trimble to escape me, mit himself. Ja! It was so!"

"Oh!"

Mr. Lathom understood now why feeling ran high between the two language masters. He looked at Mossos, who was trembling with his own excitement—though he certainly showed uneasiness now.

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! It is zat I not know ze facts of ze case, Mistair Lathom!" said Mossos shrilly. "I along ze corridor come viz myself, and I see ze Herr pulling zat garcon, Trimble! I feel it the duty to interfere, n'est-ce-pas? Zat is ze truth, and ze Herr—"

"You was haf no rights to interfere mit meinselt!" shouted Herr Schwartz heatedly. "You was vun pig fool!"

"Vat! You call me zat? Zen I calls you ze Sherman peeg, and—"

"Gentlemen!" cried Mr. Lathom, glancing round at the grinning juniors. "I beg of you to end this scene—this public exhibition. I beg of you to accompany me to my room, and the matter can then be settled in private."

"I was vant no settlements mit der inderfering Frenchman!" hooted Herr Schwartz. "Ach! I was refuse to have noddings to do mit him!"

"Herr Schwartz—my dear sir, pray calm yourself!"

"Was I not galm? Would you be galm mit der stuff over der head and faces, and mit der bumps all over himself? Himmel! I vill haf no settlements mit der monsieur; but der vicked poy, Trimble—"

"You may leave me to deal with Trimble, Herr Schwartz," said Mr. Lathom. "Rest assured that his punishment will be very severe indeed. I am amazed and shocked that a boy in my Form should be guilty of such an outrage upon a master!"

"Ach! Ferry good! I vill now to der bath-room go! Ach! Tat vicked poy—"

Muttering to himself, Herr Schwartz waddled away, mopping his features with his handkerchief. His parting glare of hatred at Monsieur Morny was returned with interest by that excited little gentleman. Mr. Lathom ordered the crowd to disperse, and walked away with the gesticulating Frenchman.

The entertainment was over—much to the disappointment of the juniors.

"Well, my only hat!" grinned Tom Merry. "What a giddy scream! Poor old Schwartz—and poor old Mossos! It was hard lines on the giddy Herr, though! That fat rotter Trimble wants pulverising. Anyway, Lathom's optics were gleaming with wrath, and I fancy dear old Baggy's for it!"

"Yaas, wathah! And serve the little wottah wight!"

"Hear, hear!"

That was the general view. The fellows felt that Baggy Trimble deserved all he was likely to get.

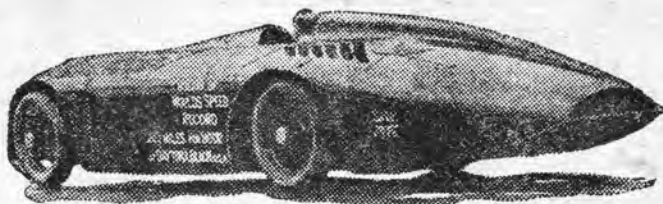
CHAPTER 10.

Baggy's Scheme!

BAGGY TRIMBLE got it "hot and strong" with a vengeance. Mr. Lathom was very reluctant to report the matter to Mr. Railton. He was a kind-hearted man, and he knew that the "performances" of Herr Schwartz and Monsieur Morny would not find favour in the eyes of the Housemaster—and certainly not in the august

(Continued on next page.)

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eyes of the Head. So Mr. Lathom dealt with the matter himself by giving Baggy Trimble six of the best and strongest with his newest cane, with an imposition of two hundred lines to accompany it. It was heavy punishment, but certainly much less so than the flogging Baggy deserved.

Not that Trimble felt very grateful, however—quite the reverse, in fact it only served to increase his desire for vengeance upon Herr Schwartz. As Manners had said, Trimble was a "vengeful little toad," and he was a regular Hun himself in the revenge line. But Herr Schwartz was not the only one now to be included in Baggy's dark scheme of vengeance. Mossoo was now placed on Baggy's list.

As a matter of fact, Mossoo had come to the conclusion that he certainly had been a little hasty in interfering between the Herr and Trimble. Certainly Herr Schwartz was not supposed to smack the heads of juniors; but, in the circumstances—well, Mossoo could not help feeling that he would have done the same.

But that conclusion did not make Mossoo feel in the slightest degree any friendlier towards Herr Schwartz—far from it; it only made him feel very angry against the cause of the trouble—Baggy Trimble of the Fourth. And as Mossoo was taking the Fourth for an hour that afternoon, Trimble did not have a rosy time at all. Mossoo gave him particular attention, and when a master gave Trimble attention, Trimble had a very bad time, for the fat youth was lazy and a hopeless duffer. So Baggy rolled out of the Fourth Form room that afternoon after classes sore both in mind and body, and fairly seething with rage. The sight of Herr Schwartz and Mossoo being boiled in oil, and afterwards drawn and quartered, would have been the most enjoyable sight on earth to Baggy just then.

And, to cap all, Trimble got no sympathy from anyone.

"You asked for it, you fat idiot!" grunted Blake. "Perhaps it will teach you a lesson!"

"Twimble nevah learns froom expewience!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, shaking his head. "I feah it will not do the little wottah any good, you know!"

"You shut up, D'Arcy!" snorted Trimble, scowling. "Two hundred lines on top of a licking! And I've not done those beastly lines for Railton yet! It's awful! I'm aching all over! Oh, won't I just make that beastly German sit up! And that beastly Froggy, too! Fancy rotten foreigners being allowed to do what they like with us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Beasts!" hooted Trimble, his eyes glittering with rage. "I'll make someone sit up for this, you see if I don't!"

And Trimble rolled away.

It was the same in Study No. 2, which Baggy shared with Wildrake and Mellish. Trimble got no sympathy from either, and his remarks to Wildrake resulted in that junior taking Baggy by the scruff of his neck and kicking him out of the study.

Baggy then included Wildrake in his list for revenge, and rolled away again, his fat little mind revolving the most weird and wonderful schemes of vengeance against all and sundry. His dismal, aimless wandering brought him at last outside Herr Schwartz's study door, and then Baggy paused.

He hesitated a moment, and then applied his eye to the keyhole. But the key was in the lock, and obstructed his view. Yet the sight of it gave the fat youth an idea. He remembered how Mr. Ratcliff had been locked in his study, and how the perpetrator had got away with it!

Why shouldn't he?

The scheme took Baggy by storm, and he gave a swift glance about him. Nobody was in sight, and Baggy acted swiftly. He opened the door gently, twisted his head round, and, grasping the key, drew it out and closed the door again.

"Ach! Vat is tat? Ach! Vat—"

Click!

Baggy had turned the key—on the outside. Herr Schwartz was locked in his room. Baggy looked about him again, chuckled, and placed his mouth to the door.

"Yah!" he called, imitating Mossoo's high-pitched voice. "Zat have put you in ze hole, ze Sherman pig! Yah! you are ze Sherman cochon—ze villain cochon! Yah!"

"Ach himmel! Vat—vat—"

Trimble chuckled as Herr Schwartz was heard to rush to the door. The knob twisted, and as he found it was locked, Herr Schwartz gave a roar of rage.

"Ach! Donner wetter! Dat French pig he haf locked me in mein room, ain't it? Ach! Himmel!" he roared. "Open der door mit you! Open dis door diz ferry instant mit you!"

Rattle, rattle, rattle!

The door fairly shook as the raging German master struggled with the door-knob.

"Yah!" Trimble fairly hugged himself with glee. "Yah! Sherman beast! Cochon! Parbleu! Mon Dieu! Yah! THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,046.

Beastly Hun! Come out of ze room and fight me wiz ze fists, Sherman pig! Yah! You are afraid to fight viz me! Yah! Coward! Poltroon!"

"Ach! Donner und blitzen!" bellowed Herr Schwartz, still tugging madly at the door. "How come I out of der room ven you lock der door? Der schuft! Donner wetter! I vos strikes you mit me ven I gets out! Ach himmel!"

"Rats! Go and eat coke, old sausage!" Baggy was using words and phrases that Mossoo was not likely to use, though Herr Schwartz was scarcely likely to notice that in his excitement.

"Rats! Mon Dieu! It is zat you are ze coward, Herr Schwartz! Come on out and fight, you Sherman beast! Yah!"

Baggy paused, breathless, and decided he had lingered long enough, and that he had done enough to put Herr Schwartz into fighting form. Moreover, the Herr, in his great rage, was beginning to thump and bang on the door now. It was not safe to stay.

So Baggy chuckled deeply, and trotted along until he came to Monsieur Morny's door. He thumped hard on the panels, and then—his scheme worked out—he scuttled away to watch proceedings from a safe distance.

As he fully expected Monsieur Morny was not long in emerging to see what the matter was; he pounced out of his study like a jack-in-the-box.

"Mon Dieu! Vat is ze mattair?" he gasped, gazing up and down the passage. "Vat—Ah! It is zat mad Sherman mastair again, viz himself!"

And, drawn by curiosity as much as anything else, Mossoo hurried along to Herr Schwartz's study door, from which sounded a furious thumping and many guttural exclamations of fury.

"Mon Dieu! Vat is ze mattair in zero?" called out Mossoo sternly. "Ze noise it is terrible. Vat—"

He was interrupted by a roar from within.

"Vat is der matter? Donner wetter!" shrieked Herr Schwartz. "You dare to ask tat question, mit you? Der schuft! Open dat door, ain't it, and I vill pull der nose of you! Ach!"

"What the dickens—"

"What the thump—"

"Gweat Scott!"

"They're at it again! Oh my hat!"

Tom Merry, Lowther and Manners came along with Blake & Co. They were not the only ones attracted to the scene by the noise. Mr. Linton came out of his study, looking very alarmed, and he looked more alarmed as he sighted the little Frenchman and heard the roars proceeding from the room. Seniors and juniors came hurrying along, and they all grinned as they sighted Mossoo and heard the Herr's bellowing voice.

"More trouble!" grinned Cutts of the Fifth. "This sort of thing will end in both of them getting the boot."

And Cutts chuckled at the thought. Cutts was a fellow who never sympathised with the troubles of others; but he was not the only one who chuckled. Most of the fellows looked upon the feud between Herr Schwartz and Monsieur Morny as a screaming joke.

"It is ze strange thing!" gasped Monsieur Morny, gazing at the door blankly. "Ze Herr must have gone mad viz himself! Hark! Mon Dieu! The door eet ees—Ah-r-r! Mon Dieu! Ze door eet ees locked viz itself!"

And, having suddenly made that discovery, Monsieur turned the key in the lock hastily. It was really very brave of Mossoo, if he really did believe the Herr was mad.

The next instant he had very good cause to regret his hasty action.

As he unlocked the door the raging Herr dragged it open and pounced out with a triumphant roar. Before the startled French master knew what was happening a podgy finger and thumb was gripping his rather prominent nose like a vice.

"Vat, vat! Mon Dieu! Parbleu!" he shrieked, dancing about wildly. "Release ze nose of me zis instant! Yarroop! Ow-ow! Mon Dieu! Ze man-is mad! Parbleu! Nom d'un nom! Ze scelerat pull my nose off viz im! Yooop! Stop, cochon!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "Oh crumbs!"

But Herr Schwartz did not stop. He pulled at Mossoo's nose as if for a wedge, his florid features flushed and swelling with rage.

"I teaches you to in mein study lock meinselt!" he roared. "I teaches you to insult me t'rough der keyhole! Ach!"

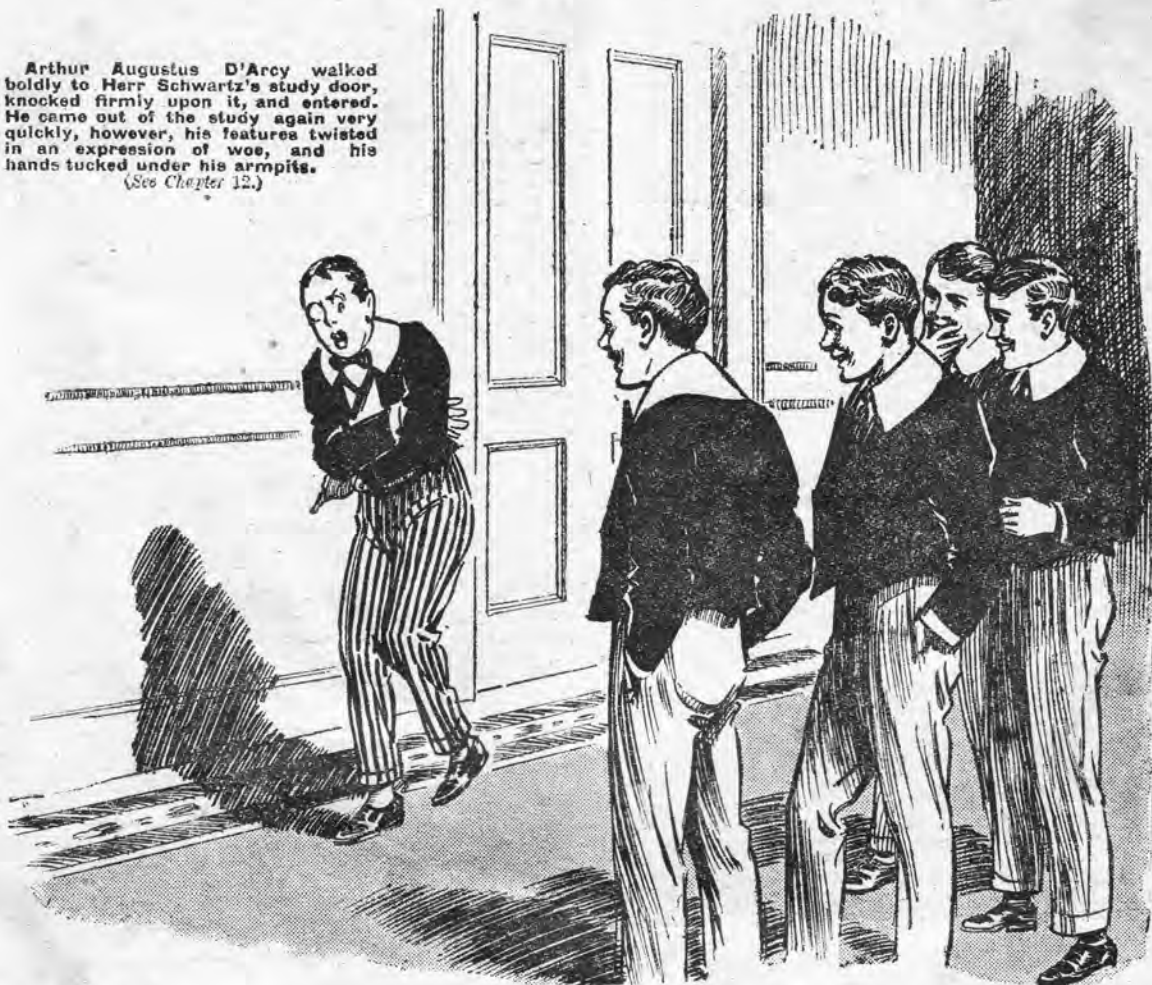
"And I teach you to pull ze nose of me for nozzings!" shrieked Monsieur Morny in return, prancing about madly. "Mon Dieu! I pulls ze nose of you like zat—so!"

And, making a frantic grab, Mossoo took a firm grip on Herr Schwartz's nasal organ, and pulled.

"Oh, great Scott!" gasped Blake, nearly weeping with merriment. "Another tug-of-war, only noses this time! Aren't they the giddy limit?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked boldly to Herr Schwartz's study door, knocked firmly upon it, and entered. He came out of the study again very quickly, however, his features twisted in an expression of woe, and his hands tucked under his armpits.

(See Chapter 12.)



"Ha, ha, ha!"

Apparently the Lower School looked upon the sad disagreement as an entertainment. Mr. Linton, however, did not look upon it in the light of a joke, nor did Mr. Railton, who came rushing up a moment later.

"Herr Schwartz—Monsieur Morny—what—what— Good heavens! Stop!" called the Housemaster sharply. "Monsieur Morny, you must be out of your senses, sir! Silence, boys! This—this is nothing to laugh at! How dare you? Monsieur Morny, I beg of you—"

He caught hold of the excited little Frenchman's arm, and Mr. Linton followed his example, and caught hold of Herr Schwartz's arm.

But Mr. Railton's voice had been enough.

The sound of it seemed to bring the two language masters to their senses, and they released each other, both of them colouring as they encountered the stares and grinning faces of the crowd. It seemed a great surprise to both to discover they had an audience.

Mr. Railton took charge of affairs in his usual efficient manner.

"Boys, disperse. Any boy in the corridor in one minute's time will take two hundred lines! Monsieur Morny, and you, Herr Schwartz, will you be kind enough to accompany me to my study, where this matter can be gone into?"

There was a cold note in the Housemaster's words, and both Herr Schwartz and Monsieur Morny calmed down swiftly enough, though they still eyed each other like tigers. Within half a minute of the Housemaster's warning the corridor was deserted. Nobody wanted two hundred lines, apparently.

CHAPTER 11. The Challenge!

"PISTOLS for two and coffee for one!" murmured Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tea was over in Study No. 10, and the Terrible Three were chatting. Naturally enough, the chat was on the subject that was on every tongue that evening—the

feud between Monsieur Morny and Herr Schwartz. The whole House had been highly entertained by the affair—or the junior part of the House, at all events. For two masters at St. Jim's to squabble in public was something new; for them to pull each other's ears in public, and afterwards to have a second tug-of-war with each other's noses was something never still.

Like the parrot in the story, the fellows wondered what the next move was going to be. Many of the more serious fellows felt it was likely that the Head would take the next move, by politely asking Mossos or Herr—or both—to shake the dust of St. Jim's from their feet.

The fellows who did think of that were rather concerned. Monsieur Morny was very popular indeed; he was a most inoffensive little gentleman in the ordinary way, and he scarcely had an enemy in St. Jim's—if any at all—unless one counted Trimble of the Fourth. And from what they had seen of Herr Schwartz as yet, the fellows all agreed that he looked like turning out quite a decent sort.

But the juniors were not given to looking at the serious side of things. Moreover, it was known that Mr. Railton had no intention of reporting the matter to the Head. From the beginning the keen-minded Housemaster had seen that there was something behind the squabble, and when he had heard first from Herr Schwartz how he had been locked in his study, and then Monsieur Morny's excited denials that he had neither locked the door nor insulted the Herr through it, Mr. Railton had realised quickly enough that it was a jape on someone's part—or an act of malicious revenge.

The Housemaster was inclined to take the latter view, and he had his own suspicions as to the perpetrator. Baggy Trimble was not quite so safe as he imagined himself to be! But there was no proof, as yet, and Mr. Railton's investigations brought no proof to light. So, for the present, Baggy was safe.

He had had his revenge, and it had been a complete success. Monsieur Morny and Herr Schwartz had received a severe "wiggling" from Mr. Railton, and they had left his study very subdued indeed.

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But they were not cured—far from it! They had parted with mutual glares outside the Housemaster's study, and it was clear that the feud was more bitter than ever between them. Indeed, there was a rumour flying about that the touchy and fiery Mossoo had actually challenged Herr Schwartz to a duel; though, as the story came from Baggy Trimble, very few placed any reliance upon it. Still, it was not unlikely, considering Mossoo's fiery nature and martial spirit, though, according to Baggy's story, the Herr had declined without thanks. Possibly—though, perhaps lacking Mossoo's martial spirit, Herr Schwartz had more common-sense.

But the story had given Monty Lowther an idea, and the practical joker of the Shell's eyes were glimmering as he spoke to his grinning chums.

"Pistols for two and coffee for one!" he repeated. "Well, why not?"

"Eh? What d'you mean, ass?" grinned Tom Merry. "What I say!" replied Lowther. "The giddy warriors want bringing to their senses, don't they? And there's nothing like ridicule to do it! I've got an idea, you fellows. Why not let Mossoo fight a duel with the giddy Herr?"

"Don't be an idiot!"

"Wouldn't dream of being one, old chap—two's quite enough in this study," said Monty affably. "Well, what about it? What about sending Mossoo a challenge from the Herr?"

Tom Merry and Manners looked at their chum and grinned.

"What's the wheeze?" demanded Manners.

"It's simple enough," said Lowther. "According to Trimble, Mossoo sent the Herr a challenge, and the Herr turned it down."

"It's all rot!"

"Maybe—though it's as likely to be true as not. Still, that doesn't matter. My idea is to send a challenge from the giddy Herr this time. Dear old Mossoo would rather die than turn it down! He's no end touchy where his giddy honour is concerned, you know! You know he's told us yarns about fighting duels in his giddy youth. I believe he was a bit of a fire-eater, and I believe he's a knut with a sword."

"But is old Schwartz likely to accept or to send a silly challenge?" gasped Tom Merry. "You—you—"

"Of course not. We do it for him—see?"

"Oh! But—but—"

"Listen!" said Lowther patiently. "My idea's this. We write a challenge, and take it to Mossoo. Mossoo's bound to accept—no possible doubt about that! He gives us the acceptance, and I pocket it. I don't take it to the Herr, of course, simply because I'm going to be the giddy Herr. See?"

"Oh, my hat!" Tom Merry grinned as he began to understand. "But—but you're forgetting that Mossoo's a knut with a sword—he calls it an epee, you know. If you mean to play the part of the giddy Herr—"

"Exactly! That's it! I meet him in the giddy duel!" grinned Lowther. "It'll be the jape of the term!" he added, with enthusiasm. "We'll get a crowd there—"

"Yes. But supposing Mossoo runs you through with his rapier? Where will you be then?" grinned Tom.

"Ass! I've thought all that out, of course. I shall insist upon pistols. Mossoo's too dashed keen after the Herr's gore to care whether it's pistols, or swords, or giddy cannons! I shall insist upon pistols. They've got some ripping ones in the toyshop in Rylcombe; they make a terrific bang, but that's all."

"Oh! I—I see!" said Tom Merry, grinning broadly. "It's just spoof. My hat, it's great! And then—"

"That's where you chaps come on!" grinned Lowther. "Mossoo's an easy-going chap, and he'll leave it to the Herr—otherwise, me—to arrange details. I shall arrange for the duel to take place in Rylcombe woods. You chaps will be behind a hedge close by, and at the critical moment when the pistols go off you shoot some red ink over my waistcoat from behind the giddy hedge with water-pistols. See the idea?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fall, streaming with gore, and you fellows appear, put me on a stretcher, and carry me away to bury me quietly. The joke will be when Mossoo returns to St. Jim's and meets Herr Schwartz alive and kicking. Well, what about it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry and Manners roared. It was quite clear that Lowther's amazing jape appealed to them as humorous, at all events.

"Yes, we're on, right enough!" gurgled Tom Merry. "It's you who'll take the risk, anyway. Though—I say, why not let Kerr tackle the job, Monty?"

"Rats! It's my idea!" snorted Lowther. "No fear. I'm the man for this job!"

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"But—but it's risky," said Tom Merry dubiously. "You're jolly good at it, I'll admit. But, remember, everybody knows the Herr now, and if you're spotted, it means trouble. Let Kerr do it. You must admit there's nobody at St. Jim's to touch him."

"Rot! Bosh! Are you fellows on, or not?"

"On? Yes, rather!" grinned Tom Merry. "It's the jape of the term! It's rather hard lines to pull Mossoo's leg to that extent; but, after all, it may bring him to his giddy senses. He's been rather down on the Herr, in a way. I believe the Herr was ready to apologise and be friends, but Mossoo wouldn't; said his giddy honour had been insulted, and all that. Yes, it may do him good. I'm on, Monty!"

"Right! Then, let's get the giddy challenge written, and I'll run along with it. Better write it in English, of course; I believe the Herr writes quite decent English, anyway, whatever his accent's like. Come on! We'll make the time—Hullo! Get out, you fat clam!"

Monty Lowther addressed that last remark to Baggy Trimble, whose grinning, fat face appeared in the doorway just then.

"He, he, he!" cackled Baggy. "I say, you fellows, heard the news?"

"Eh? No; and we don't want to hear it, old fat man. Roll away!"

Baggy came into the room, instead.

"Old Mossoo's sent that German beast a challenge to a duel, you fellows!" he said excitedly. "What d'you think about that?"

"Get out—!" Tom Merry was beginning, but Lowther interrupted him.

"Hold on, Tommy! Is it a fact about the duel, Baggy?"

"Yes; honour bright!" grinned Trimble. "Isn't old Mossoo a silly ass, you fellows? I took the giddy challenge myself."

"You did?"

"He, he, he! Yes, rather! You should have seen that German beast's chivvy; he nearly busted when he read it!"

"But how d'you know it was a challenge?" demanded Lowther, his eyes gleaming.

"Because I saw it!" grinned Trimble. "It was written in Mossoo's giddy English, you know; he's fairly raving! That German beast told him to go and eat coke—wasn't having any, you know!"

"Ha, ha! I can imagine him saying it!"

"Well, words to that effect," amended Trimble. "Told him not to be an idiot! He, he, he! I saw it!"

"You would! You're no end good at reading other people's letters, you little worm!"

"Oh, really, Merry, it just happened to come open and I happened to see the words!" spluttered Trimble. "I say," he added, with a chuckle. "What about that bust-up? Wasn't it a scream? Did you fellows see it?"

"Yes, and we've a jolly good idea who worked it, Trimble," said Tom Merry grimly. "The less you gas about it the better, my fat pippin. Railton suspects. After you chucking that stuff over Schwartz he'd be a duffer if he didn't!"

"Yah! He hasn't got any proof!" grinned Trimble. "I said I'd have my own back, and I have done—what? I say," he added, in sudden alarm, "you won't give me away?"

"No; but we'll give you a booting for being such a scheming little worm!" said Tom Merry. "Here you are—"

"Yarroogh! Beast!"

Trimble departed through the doorway like a shot from a cannon, Tom Merry's boot missing him by inches as he went.

"Well, that settles it!" grinned Lowther. "I believe Trimble's speaking the giddy truth, for once! I'll just answer Mossoo's challenge, and, having been challenged, we claim the right to name weapons, place, and time. Good! Couldn't be better, in fact! Mossoo won't dream of suspecting a spoof!"

And quite content now with the knowledge that Mossoo had indeed challenged Herr Schwartz, the Terrible Three sat down to their task of writing the answer. It was a somewhat delicate task, but they accomplished it at last. The finished note read as follows:

"Monsieur Morny,—I have my mind changed on the question of the duel. I will meet you, and I will wipe out the insults you have made me with your life, monsieur. As the challenged, I shall with myself insist on the privilege of choosing the weapons, the time, and the place. I will meet you with the pistols at three of the clock, to-morrow afternoon by the stile in Rylcombe Woods. Come with yourself alone, and I will come with myself alone, and I shall the pistols bring."

That was all, and the jokers left it unsigned—for obvious reasons.

"It isn't perfect," murmured Tom Merry, eyeing it over

reflectively. "But I'm blessed if I can make it better. In any case, old Mosscoo won't know the Herr's fist, or how he writes in English. Safe as houses!"

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather!"

"Come on, then; you'd better take it, Monty!"

Monty Lowther was only too willing, and they followed him out of the study and along to Monsieur Morny's study. Lowther knocked coolly on the door.

"Entrez!"

Monty Lowther entered quite coolly. He found Mosscoo pacing the study carpet feverishly, his face pale, his eyes burning.

"Vell?" he asked, eyeing Lowther impatiently. "Vat is it, mon garçon?"

"A note for you, sir!" said Lowther meekly; and he laid the note on the table. Monsieur Morny picked it up and tore open the envelope, and scanned the writing.

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! At last! Enfin!" Mosscoo fairly danced about the carpet with excitement, his eyes blazing. "Enfin! Mon Dieu! Vive l'honneur! Mais j'aimerais mieux mon epee—I like not ze pistols!"

And Mosscoo made a lunge with an imaginary sword with a swiftness that made Lowther jump back in alarm.

"Mon Dieu!" he went on, hissing in his excitement. "Mais, no mattair. Ze pistols, zey vill do! Ah-r-r-rrr! I laugh him at ze nose! Poof! My honour he vas insult, and to-morrow he shall be avenged. Oui, oui!"

"Is there any answer, sir?" asked Lowther innocently.

"Vat?" Monsieur seemed to become suddenly aware that he was not alone. He controlled himself, breathing hard, his eyes burning fiercely. "Oui, oui, mon garçon! Mais, oui! Mon Dieu! Vait vun moment!"

With trembling hands Mosscoo snatched a sheet of paper, pen and ink. He dipped three times at the inkpot before registering a hit, so to speak, in his excitement and agitation.

He scribbled furiously, without pausing an instant, and then he folded up the note and placed it in an envelope.

"Zat, you take zat to Herr Schwartz at vunce, Lowthair!" he hissed. "Say nozzings to him—just hand ze lettair to 'im—zat ees all, mon ami! Oui, oui! Zank you, mon enfant!"

"Very well, sir!" said Lowther cheerfully.

And Lowther walked quickly from the room, his task accomplished. Outside the door, however, he doubled up with inward mirth.

"Well?" grinned Tom Merry. "All serene?"

Lowther nodded, his face crimson.

"Yes!" he gasped. "Oh, my only hat! He—he swallowed it like a lamb! Ah-r-r! Vive l'honneur! Enfin! My honour he vos insult, and to-morrow he shall be avenged! Ah-r-r-rrr!"

And Lowther doubled up again helplessly.

"Come on, you silly ass!" chuckled Tom Merry, taking his chum by the arm and leading him away. "Let's go and tell Blake and the others now. My hat! What a scream! We must have a giddy audience or it won't be half the fun! Come on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Controlling their laughter as best they could, the Terrible Three hurried away to break the news of the forthcoming duel to Blake & Co.

CHAPTER 12.

A Warm Reception!

"JUST a minute, Merry!"

George Alfred Grundy called out in his usual magisterial way.

It was the following day—Saturday—at noon, and Tom Merry, with Lowther and Manners, were making for the study just after dinner.

Though Tom Merry & Co. had agreed that it would be more fun to have a good audience for the forthcoming "duel," they had been very, very careful how they selected the fellows to be members of it. Fellows like Trimble and Mellish, and Grundy, were not to be trusted, and the last one, for instance, would have been more than likely to "muck up" the thing in some way or other. The mighty George Alfred was a perfect genius for putting his foot into things.

Nor was George Alfred the only one of the decent fellows whom Tom Merry decided not to trust. Even Gussy was kept quite in the dark regarding the joke—for the present. In his over-eagerness to keep a secret, Arthur Augustus was more likely than not to let that secret out to the last person who should know it.

With this knowledge in mind, the Terrible Three had told only Blake, Herries, and Digby—it was time enough to tell Gussy when the time had arrived and the danger of its getting out was past. They had also told fellows they could trust—Cardew, Levison, and Clive, Wildrake, Talbot, Julian, Noble, Glyn, Dane—all the reliable fellows in the Fourth and Shell. And they had also told Figgins & Co.

Blake & Co. had supported Tom Merry in his belief that George Francis Kerr would be the man for the job, and after a great deal of argument, Lowther had reluctantly agreed to this. So Kerr had been approached, and he had willingly agreed to take on the impersonation of Herr Schwartz—for one afternoon only.

So all details had been fixed up. Tom Merry had biked to Rylcombe and purchased a water-pistol, in addition to the two toy pistols, which were remarkably like the real thing. Indeed, they looked most deadly weapons, and the report they gave out on the trigger being pulled was alarming.

But, despite all their care, somehow the secret did leak out—at least, the news that Monsieur Morny was to fight a duel with Herr Schwartz that afternoon.

It came to Grundy's ears during dinner, and being a fellow who never could mind his own business, George Alfred wanted to know all about it—which was his reason for stopping Tom Merry now.

"Just a minute, Merry," he said, his brow grim. "Is it a fact that Mosscoo's fighting a duel with Herr Schwartz, or is it just one of Trimble's yarns?"

"A duel!" repeated Tom Merry. "What's that?"

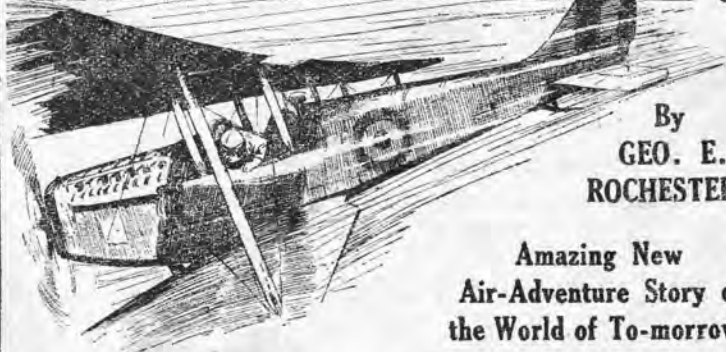
"Don't be an ass!" said Grundy gruffly. "Look here, it's jolly serious if it's true! It's got to be stopped. I'm not going to allow it to go on! The beaks ought to be told if it's true!"

"Go and tell 'em then, old chap! Only put some exercise books in your bags first! That's a tip!"

"No cheek!" snorted Grundy. "I want to make sure, first. It's not good enough, Merry. I'm sorry for poor old Mosscoo. He's a good little sort, even if he does have the cheek to run my French down! I can overlook that! I'm always being misunderstood—you know that!"

"Just a few!" grinned Tom.

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"Well, I'm backing up Mossoo an' along the line," said Grundy. "I'm not seeing him killed by a German, anyway. I don't say old Schwartz isn't a decent sort—he may be. I'm not running him down. Only—well, I'm not allowing him to fight old Mossoo! See?"

"I see!"

"That's how the matter stands. Mossoo's an ass when it comes to French; but he's a good little ass. I'm going to see he comes to no harm, Merry. I want to know if it's true about the rotten duel; if it is, then I'm going to stop it."

"How?"

"By offering old Schwartz to take Mossoo's place if necessary," said Grundy grimly. "I'm stopping him from shooting down old Mossoo, anyway. But is it true?"

"I tell you what, go and ask Schwartz," suggested Lowther. "If he says it's true, tell him what you think of him. Give it him hot and strong. Challenge him to a duel yourself, if it's true!"

"My hat! Good idea!" said Grundy, his brow clearing. "I jolly well will! Here goes!"

Grundy strode away, looking very determined.

"Come on!" grinned Tom Merry. "Let's see what happens!"

They hurried after Grundy, and it was soon evident that the great George Alfred was in deadly earnest. He marched up to the Herr's door, flung it open and marched inside without troubling to knock.

The grinning juniors waited outside with great interest for his return.

He was not long inside. The juniors heard a murmur of voices, and then they heard Grundy's voice raised angrily, and Herr Schwartz's voice raised still more angrily. Then came a sudden, ominous swishing sound, followed by Grundy's exit from the study, his face red with wrath and his hands tucked beneath his armpits.

"Oh, the beastly rotter!" he gasped. "The—the beastly Hun! Fancy a blessed German master licking a fellow! I'd have punched his head, only—"

"You didn't!" said Tom Merry.

"I didn't!" groaned Grundy. "The beast threatened to take me to Raitlon, or I wouldn't have allowed him to lick me. Where's that fat fibber Trimble; I'm going to lick him to a frazzle for this."

"Why, wasn't it true, then? Isn't the Herr fighting a duel with Mossoo?" grinned Tom Merry.

"No; he thumping well isn't," said Grundy, his eyes gleaming with wrath. "He licked me for my cheek—said I was japing him! Oh crumbs! I'll smash that fat cad Trimble for this. Where is he?"

Grundy rushed away in search of Baggy Trimble. Judging from George Alfred's looks there was likely to be a warm time when he found Trimble.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A roar of laughter followed him.

"Oh, my hat!" laughed Lowther. "Isn't that like Grundy! Hallo, here's old Gussy! What's up now, I wonder? See the gleam of battle in his optics. What's up, Gussy?"

"I have just heard some weally astounding news," gasped Arthur Augustus. "I have just heard from Twimble that Herr Schwartz is goin' to fight a duel with Mossoo."

"Awful!"

"It must be stopped," said Gussy. "I have washed heah like anythin', deah boys. That wottah Blake tried to stop me, but I wufused to be stopped. Monsieur Morny's life is in gweat pewill! There will be a tewwible twagedy unless it is stopped. I am goin' to wemonstwat wewy sewiously with Herr Schwartz. I have been to interview Monsieur Morny; but he is not in his study, bai Jove! If Herr Schwartz wufuses to stay his hand I will weport the mattah to Mr. Wailton without delay, deah boys."

"Oh, my hat!"

"It is not a laughin' mattah, deah boys. The position is wewy sewious! The duel must be stopped at all costs! I am goin' to make the English law cleah to Herr Schwartz. He does not appeah to undahstand what a sewious position he will be in if he kills Mossoo!"

"Or if Mossoo kills him?" suggested Lowther.

"Yaas, that is quite true! Howevah, there is not a moment to waste. Pway wait heah, deah boys! I am surprised at you fellows tweatin' such a gwave mattah so lightly."

"Here—come back, you ass!" gasped Tom Merry.

But he was wasting his breath. Arthur Augustus walked boldly to Herr Schwartz's study door, knocked firmly upon it and entered, his aristocratic features pale with anxiety.

He was in the study less time than Grundy.

But he came out in much the same way—his features twisted in an expression of woe, and his hands tucked under his armpits.

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"Well?" asked Lowther blandly. "Have you stopped it? If you have—which was it? The duel or the cane?"

"Bai Jove! There—there isn't a duel at all appawently," groaned Arthur Augustus. "I have been the victim of a wretched pwactical joke, deah boys. I will give that wottah Twimble a feahful thwashin'. The Herr was feahfully waxy—he seemed to think I had just gone in to pull his leg, you know. He caned me!"

"Go hon! Did you expect him to kiss you on your baby brow?"

"Wats! I have changed my opinion of Herr Schwartz," groaned Gussy. "He is a feahful wottah, and a wough bwute! Oh cwumbs! Where is that wottah, Twimble? I am goin' to thwash him feahfully for this."

Arthur Augustus rushed off in a state of great wrath and indignation, and again a roar of laughter followed him. It was clear now that if the duel was stopped it would not be stopped by either George Alfred Grundy or Arthur Augustus D'Arcy! That was certain.

CHAPTER 13.

The Duel!

"THREE o'clock!"

"Hallo, here he comes!"

"Oh, good!"

There were several chuckles amid the undergrowth by the stile in Rylcombe Woods.

All was in readiness for the jape—Kerr had spent a long time on his make-up; but it had been worth it. Even the fellows crouching down behind the hedge by the stile could scarcely believe that he was not, indeed, Herr Schwartz, the new German master at St. Jim's. His florid features, his close-cropped light hair and moustache, his gold-rimmed glasses, and his rather full waistcoat were perfect—Herr Ludwig Schwartz to the life. Undoubtedly George Francis Kerr was a genius at impersonation. Even Lowther had to admit that he couldn't have touched him at the game.

Kerr had been ready some minutes now, and the juniors had been waiting for Monsieur Morny to turn up. It was really rather surprising that he had not turned up earlier, knowing as they did how eager he was to avenge his honour. In fact they were beginning to wonder if he was going to turn up at all. It would be rather a sell if he didn't! Kerr looked at his watch again and again—resembling the eager lieutenant in the trenches who was impatiently awaiting an expected enemy attack, and who anxiously voiced the hope that "nothing had happened to them!"

Then three o'clock had chimed out from the village church clock across the fields, and as it did so they sighted the trim, dapper figure of Monsieur Morny striding along the field-path from the direction of St. Jim's.

"Oh, good!" repeated Tom Merry, with a chuckle. "Now, Kerr, old chap, out you go, and mind you don't muck it up. We'll cut off now and get into cover."

"Right-ho!"

Tom Merry and his chums "cut off," bending low as they scudded along inside the shelter of the hedge. They vanished, and a minute later Monsieur Morny, his face paler than ever and his bright, little eyes more fierce than ever, came toddling up with his short, jerky stride.

Kerr stepped out and bowed low to him.

"Ach! So you hab come, monsieur!" he said with guttural, but icy politeness. "I haf der veapouns all ready. Vill you haf der gootness to follow me, hein?"

"Mon Dieu! I am mooch obliged to, mein Herr," said monsieur, his voice vibrating with the intensity of his emotions. "It is zat I am only just in time. I vas viz myself delayed by ze Mistair Raitlon."

"Ach! You did not, I suppose, tell der Herr Raitlon about der duel, mein Herr?" asked the German master.

"Mon Dieu! Non, non! It is zat ze Mistair Raitlon would have ze duel stopped if I had him told. Zat ze duel must not happen, Herr Schwartz. It is zat my honour is at stake—it is zat I am ze brave Francais!"

"Ach! Led us ged down to der piziness!" snapped Herr Schwartz, with a guttural groan. "Meinself I believe in deeds and not vords! Ja! Lead on mit yourself to der spot vere der veapouns vas. Ach! Remember dat vateffer happens id is your own fault!"

Monsieur Morny fairly trembled with rage at the scorn and contempt in his "enemy's" voice.

"Mon Dieu! Parbleu!" he hissed. "For zem vords you shall suffer, Herr Schwartz! Lead on to ze spot before I ze temper lose!"

"Ach! Your demper vill soon be lost mit all of you! Ja! But come; follow me mit yourself!"

And Kerr led the way along the footpath under the trees, waddling along just as the real Herr Schwartz was wont to waddle. Monsieur Morny, pale with passion and breathing like an impatient war horse, trotted at his heels. The very fact that the Herr had gone there before him served to increase his determination to have his revenge. Undoubtedly Monsieur Morny was a gallant son of France—and undoubtedly more guileless than gallant!

Herr Schwartz stopped at last, in a little glade in the thick trees. On the grass lay two bags. From the larger one Herr Schwartz, very slowly and impressively, took out what appeared to be a case of surgical instruments, a bottle with a label marked "Brandy," and rolls of lint and bandages.

"It is not wise to engage der services of seconds, or of

head away, while from behind the bushes surrounding the quiet glade came queer splutterings. But Monsieur Adolphe le Blanc Morny did not hear—or if he did hear, he did not heed. He watched in grim silence as Herr Schwartz, his mouth working curiously, examined the pistols, and then handed Mossoo one with a flourish.

"Dere! As you vish, ve vill not der time lose, mein Herr," he said, with a bow. "I vill now pace off der distance. You vill haf der gootness to remain where you vos stand. It is now two minutes off der strike of der quarter-



"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "You worked it a giddy treat, Kerr, old man! I've never— Oh, great pip!" He broke off with a gasp, as Mr. Railton and Kildare suddenly appeared on the scene. "What does this mean?" asked the Housemaster, as Kerr tumbled off the improvised stretcher. (See Chapter 13.)

der doctor," explained Herr Schwartz. "Bud as regards der doctor, I shall not need der services of vun; and, in case tat you are not kelled outright, I vill attend to der hospital vork meinself, and see dat der ambulance is called ferry quickly—zat is if you are not, as I said pefore, killed outright!"

"Mon Dieu!"

"And dese," explained Herr Schwartz, with a ghastly smile, "are der weapons—der pistols."

And the Herr drew from the second bag two pistols and waved one in each hand.

"Dey are both already loaded, mit dem, monsieur," he said. "Dey are ferry goot pistols, and I vas practise mit dem mooch!"

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! If I ze choice had, and if I had ze weapon of ze Francois 'ere viz me now—ze bright opee—ze sword zat I am ze expert of! Ah-r-r-r-rrr! But no mattair! Soit! Eet is zat we are alone togegger viz ourselves, and ze time have come. Be quick viz you, Herr Schwartz. I, Adolphe le Blanc Morny, am ready!" he ended, buttoning up his tight frock-coat and folding his arms across his chest.

It was most dramatic and impressive. Kerr turned his

hour of der church glock. You hav der goot hearings, I suppose? You can hear der church glock strike from here, hein?"

"Oui, oui! I can hear!"

"Ferry goot! Den dis is der programme. At der right distance I turns mit mein back to you, and you turns mit your back to meinself. Den vo waits until ze church glock he strikes der quarter-past, and den ve both turns round and fires mit de pistols. You vos understands mit it?"

"Oui, oui! Zat is—vat you call him—fair enough, Herr Schwartz. I vos agrees viz myself to zat."

"Ach! Tat is goot! I tanks you, monsieur," said Herr Schwartz, with a grave dignity that befit such a solemn occasion. "Van moments! Haf you any last message tat you would vish me to send to your friends, monsieur?"

"Mon Dieu! Mais non! I—I have zat wiz myself arranged already."

"Right—ho—I mean ferry goot! Tat is all, den!"

Kerr waddled away, pacing the distance. Monsieur Morny turned with his back to him promptly, his head high, his chest out, the "deadly" weapon gripped

hand. One glance over his shoulder showed that the Herr had stopped and turned with his back to him.

The next few moments seemed like an eternity to Monsieur Morny—and to others, too, for that matter. But they passed at long last, and then over the fields came the chimes of the quarter-hour. And scarcely had the first chime rung over the peaceful countryside, when—

Bang, bang!

The peacefulness of the quiet glade was shattered by two loud reports.

As he pulled the trigger Monsieur Morny closed his eyes—only for that brief second. When he opened them again he was just in time to see a vivid patch of horrid-looking crimson spread over the white-and-black-spotted waistcoat of his enemy.

Then Herr Schwartz toppled over and fell headlong without a cry.

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!"

Mossoo was astounded. He was alive—untouched! But his enemy—his deadly enemy—had fallen. He lay in a crumpled heap on the sward. And that crimson patch—

Mossoo shuddered and almost collapsed.

He, Adolphe le Blanc Morny, had faced death—had fought and won the duel! He was untouched, but his enemy—

Mossoo's pride in his achievement was very brief indeed. He was one of the most tender-hearted gentlemen alive, and—without a suspicion that the crimson patch he had seen spreading over Herr Schwartz's chest was merely red ink shot from a water-pistol in Lowther's hand behind the bushes, or that his enemy was quite unharmed—he became quite overcome with sudden and overwhelming remorse.

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!" he wailed. "Vat have I done? He is killed—and I have killed 'im viz me! It is terrible! It is—"

"Hold up, sir!"

It was Tom Merry's cheery voice. In a moment the glade seemed alive to the hapless and bewildered Monsieur Morny. A little crowd of juniors surrounded the still form at the far end of the glade. Tom Merry, Blake, and Herries held the little French master up between them—though Mossoo scarcely needed that aid.

How they had come there so suddenly, or why, Mossoo did not even wonder; he scarcely knew where he was in his great agitation and utter despair.

He almost staggered across towards the group round his prostrate "enemy."

"Mon Dieu! Parbleu! Vat ees it zat I have done? I have killed 'im viz ze bullet from ze pistol! Vat shall I—"

"Stand back, sir! Don't come nearer! Better not, sir!"

Lowther, waving his hand authoritatively, stood in Mossoo's path. The rest of the little crowd closed up round the form on the grass. From the bushes and trees lining the glade came curious sounds. Mossoo may have heard them, but if he did he certainly did not dream that they proceeded from St. Jim's juniors, who were rolling about there, choking and wriggling in manifold efforts to stifle their hysterical laughter.

"Stand back, sir!" called Lowther again, as Mossoo halted. "Don't come nearer; you can do nothing! You fellows hurry up with that stretcher! We must cart the body away without delay and bury it. For Mossoo's sake we must do that!"

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!"

"Never mind, sir!" said Tom Merry kindly. "Even if it does come out, it may not be a hanging matter after all."

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! Vat—vat—"

"Duelling isn't allowed in England, of course, sir," explained Tom Merry, shaking his head. "The police look at things differently over here, you know. Still, there's no need to worry over much. They may decide to take a lenient view of the case, and it may only mean penal servitude for life."

"Oh! Mon Dieu! Vat have I done?" wailed Mossoo, his arms waving like windmills, in his extreme agitation. "Vat have I done? And vot shall I viz myself do?"

"Goodness knows! It was a good job we happened to be near. We're witnesses that it was a fair fight; that there was no foul play, of course, sir. I—I think I should be inclined to rush back to the school and keep mum about it, sir."

"Mon Dieu!" The little Frenchman hesitated a moment, his pale features working with emotion. Then he drew himself up to his full height—which wasn't very much—flung his chest out, and his eyes flashed defiance. "Mon Dieu! Non, non! Zat is not right—zat is not ze honourable way for Monsieur Adolphe le Blanc Morny to take viz himself. Non, non! I have ze deed done, and I vill face ze consequences like ze gallant man. Oui, oui! Nevah shall it be said zat Adolphe le Blanc Morny vas ze coward play! I vill return to ze school in ze open and vill—vat you call him?—face ze music."

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For a moment he looked at the silent crowd, just lifting Kerr on to the stretcher—two Scout staves brought for the purpose and covered with coats—and then, before Tom could say or do anything, Mossoo took to his heels, bare-headed as he was, and vanished among the trees.

"Oh, mum-mum-my hat!" gasped Tom. "He's gone—the silly ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a yell of laughter—a yell that swelled into a roar—as Monsieur Morny's departing footsteps died away in the wood.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The laughter rang through the thick woods, echoing and re-echoing among the gaunt and leafless branches. The hidden spectators of the "duel" had bottled up their laughter manfully until now, but now they gave full rein to it.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my only hat!" wept Tom Merry. "What a giddy scream, and no mistake! I shall—ha, ha, ha!—bust soon! Get off that giddy stretcher, Kerr, old man! You worked it a giddy treat! I've never— Oh, great pip!"

The captain of the Shell stopped short, with a gasp of utter dismay; for just at that moment two new figures appeared on the scene. One was Mr. Railton, the House-master of the School House, and the other was Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's. They had evidently been out for a walk together—as they often did—and while walking along the woodland path they had been attracted to the spot by the laughter—which was not to be wondered at.

At all events, here they were!

A sudden, terrible silence fell; the laughter ceased as if by magic.

"Well, boys," asked Mr. Railton, his eyes fixed upon the hapless Kerr, who was just tumbling off the stretcher, "and what, may I ask, does this mean?"

CHAPTER 14.

Not a Tragedy!

"B LESS my soul!"

Dr. Holmes was astounded, to say the least. The venerable Head of St. Jim's happened to be taking a short constitutional in the quadrangle that sunny afternoon. With stately tread the Head paced slowly along the gravel walk near the old elms, his hands clasped behind his back, his head bowed as if in thought. Quite a number of fellows were passing along the gravel path, and to all and sundry Dr. Holmes gave a kindly nod and a smile.

Dr. Holmes was in quite a good humour that afternoon—until quite suddenly and unexpectedly the Head sighted Monsieur Adolphe le Blanc Morny.

The little French master came trotting through the gates, gasping and panting as if for a wager, his face white, his head bare, his coat-tails streaming behind him in the breeze.

He looked a strange and startling sight.

The Head's brow grew thunderous. Really, it was no wonder. It was an unprecedented state of affairs for a master to run about panting and wheezing, hatless, and apparently in a state bordering on collapse.

It wasn't done. Dr. Holmes not only did not like to see it—he was scandalised. Fags in the Third might run about hatless and dishevelled, panting and gasping—in fact, they very often did—but it was not expected of masters. They were expected to have a certain amount of respect for their dignity.

"Monsieur Morny!" thundered the Head.

The Head's voice was like the rumble of the approaching storm. Gone was his kindly, benevolent smile. Monsieur Morny halted, panting. He did not wait for the Head to speak again. He waved his hands in the air in great agitation.

"Monsieur le doctair!" he panted. "Mon Dieu! I rush viz myself to see you—oui, oui! I have done it! It is terrible! Ze Herr, I have to tell you zat he is dead! I have keeled him—keeled him viz pistol!"

"G-g-gug-good gracious!" gasped Dr. Holmes, almost falling down in horror. "Good heavens! What is that you say, Monsieur Morny? Speak—pull yourself together! You—you say that Herr Schwartz is dead—that you have killed him? G-good gracious!"

Into the Head's mind at once flashed the knowledge that Monsieur Morny and Herr Schwartz were at loggerheads—rumours he had heard came rushing into his mind. Good heavens! Then—then—

The Head almost collapsed.

"It is ze truth! Zey tell me—zey say to me, say nozzings about it. But I, Monsieur Adolphe le Blanc Morny am

not ze coward! I face ze music viz me like ze brave Francois! Mon Dieu! But it is terrible!" wailed Mossoo. "Ze blood, it spread over him. I shoot ven ze clock strike—bang!—and he fall down—keeled! I, Monsieur Morny, have keeled him viz pistol!"

"Good heavens! Calm yourself, Monsieur Morny!" gasped Dr. Holmes, grasping the hysterical little gentleman by the arm. "Calm yourself! What has happened? You say—you actually say that you have killed Herr Schwartz?"

"It vos ze duel—ze duel viz pistol!" wailed Mossoo. "I shoot and he falls—poof! Dead! I am stricken viz ze remorse! Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! Vat shall I do viz myself?"

"Be quiet!" cried the Head, in an agitated voice. "Where did this terrible affair take place?"

"In ze wood—ze clearing in ze Rylcombe Woods, sir!" groaned Monsieur Morny. "He lies zere—"

"Quick! Then a doctor must be obtained without a moment's delay!" shouted Dr. Holmes, his usual self-possession for once deserting him. "I will telephone without a moment's delay for the—for the—for the—"

The Head's voice tailed away weakly—very weakly. And

Parbleu! Mon Dieu! I am going mad viz me! I am see ze tings zat are not zere!"

"Not at all, Monsieur Morny!" said Mr. Railton calmly. "My dear sir, the matter is not so serious as you suppose. The whole thing is an absurd and wicked practical joke!"

"A—a shoke?"

"Exactly! It is a joke conceived and carried out by these junior boys behind me. Kerr, a boy from the New House, who is a clever impersonator and mimic, has impersonated Herr Schwartz. He is here before you now, monsieur. It is a ridiculous plot—a practical joke from beginning to end. We now know who impersonated you when you arrived here, Herr Schwartz, and started the absurd quarrel between you and Monsieur Morny. Lowthey has also confessed to having impersonated you. But this matter of the duel is not so desperately serious. The note challenging you to a duel, Monsieur Morny—or, rather answering your challenge—was written by these boys, who, fortunately for themselves, did not sign it."

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! But—but ze blood—ze shot—"

"The pistols were merely toy pistols, monsieur, and the blood, as you call it, was merely red ink squirted on to

BOWLING OUT A ROTTER!

Once more Knox of the Sixth takes advantage of his position as prefect to indulge in his shady pursuits, but this time he gets bowled out "good and proper"! How the Sixth-Former is brought to his knees, and what part Tom Merry & Co., and Blake & Co. play in his downfall makes interesting reading in next week's issue of the GEM. All readers will find heaps of thrills and exciting situations in

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no wonder, for even as he turned to rush into the House Herr Ludwig Schwartz himself, in the flesh, wearing his usual fat, kindly smile, came waddling down the School House steps into the quad!

The Head stared and stared—but his stares were nothing compared with those of the little French master. And as they stood staring at the surprised Herr Schwartz there came the sound of many footsteps behind them, and Mr. Railton's grim voice was heard:

"One moment, sir! I think I can explain this matter!"

The Head and Monsieur Morny wheeled round on the instant. They sighted Mr. Railton first of all, and then their glance fell on another Herr Ludwig Schwartz—or so they imagined.

It was the hapless Kerr, still wearing his disguise. Mr. Railton had not allowed him to remove it. That was to be done in the presence of the Head.

But the Head, and Monsieur Morny, and Herr Schwartz, unaware of the strange events of the past few minutes, were astounded. They stared and stared and stared.

"Mon Dieu!" panted Monsieur Morny. "Mon Dieu! Vat—vat do I see? Ze Herr, he is dead and yet he is not dead viz himself! He is here, and yet he is lying in ze woods—dead! He is before me and he is behind me!

Kerr's waistcoat with a water-pistol. The whole thing—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" thundered the Housemaster, as several fellows burst into uncontrollable laughter. "This is no laughing matter!"

Tom Merry & Co. were ready to agree with him there—especially the hapless Kerr.

"The whole thing," proceeded Mr. Railton, "is an absurd joke. You have been wickedly imposed upon, Monsieur Morny."

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! And nefer did I dream of ze truth viz myself! Ah! Ze relief—ze joy of me! I am not ze killer! I have not ze blood of ze Herr on my hands viz me! I shall not be locked up viz ze police, and have ze penal servitude for ze life of me! I dance viz ze joy and I am overcome with the tankfulness! Herr Schwartz, I ze tausand apologies make to you! Nefer no more shall I hate you viz me! I apologise to you one—two tausand times!"

"And," said Herr Schwartz, not to be outdone, and beaming good-naturedly all over his podgy face, "I apologise to you, mein friend! Twice tree tausand times I

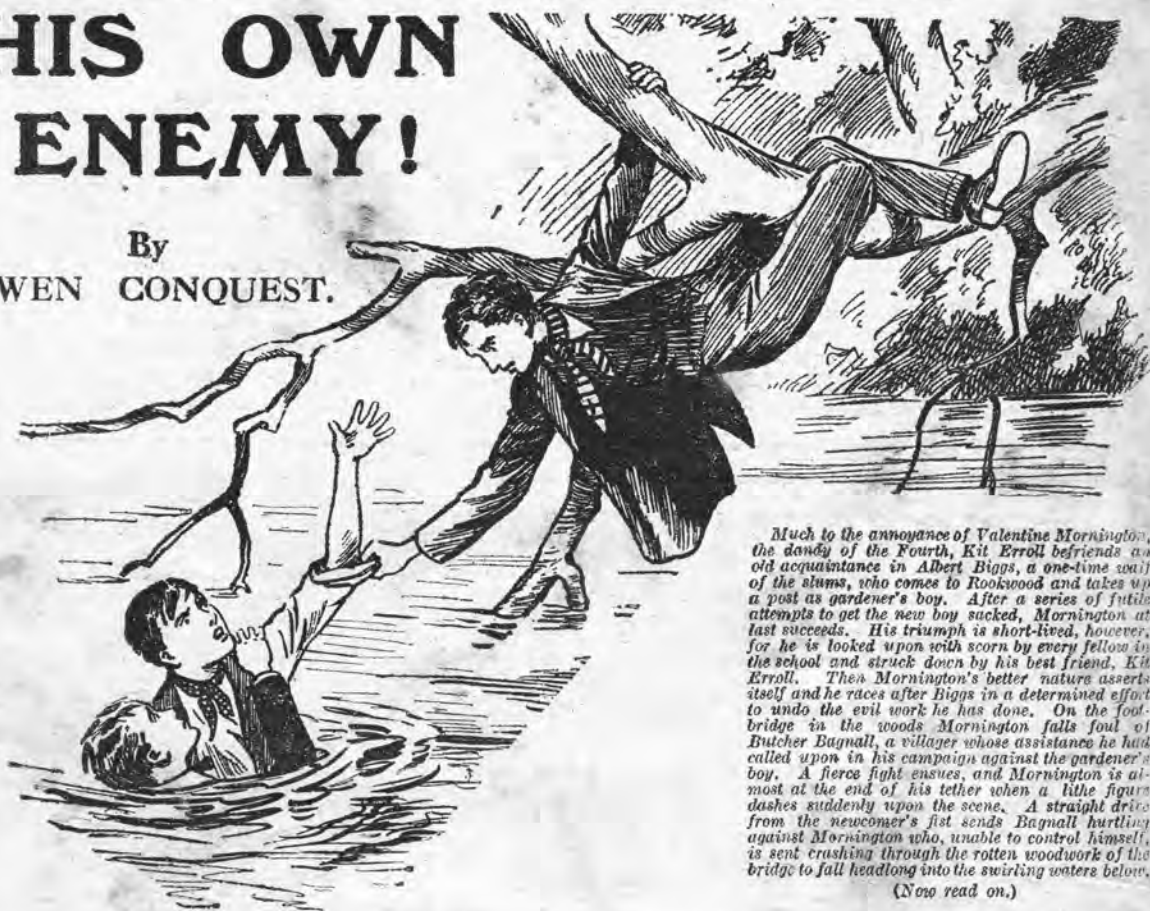
(Continued on page 28.)

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THE CONCLUDING INSTALMENT of our POPULAR SCHOOL SERIAL!

HIS OWN ENEMY!

By
OWEN CONQUEST.



Much to the annoyance of Valentine Mornington, the dandy of the Fourth, Kit Erroll befriends an old acquaintance in Albert Biggs, a one-time waif of the slums, who comes to Rookwood and takes up a post as gardener's boy. After a series of futile attempts to get the new boy sacked, Mornington at last succeeds. His triumph is short-lived, however, for he is looked upon with scorn by every fellow in the school and struck down by his best friend, Kit Erroll. Then Mornington's better nature asserts itself and he races after Biggs in a determined effort to undo the evil work he has done. On the foot-bridge in the woods Mornington falls foul of Butcher Bagnall, a villager whose assistance he had called upon in his campaign against the gardener's boy. A fierce fight ensues, and Mornington is almost at the end of his tether when a lithe figure dashes suddenly upon the scene. A straight drive from the newcomer's fist sends Bagnall hurtling against Mornington who, unable to control himself, is sent crashing through the rotten woodwork of the bridge to fall headlong into the swirling waters below.

(Now read on.)

From the Jaws of Death!

INTO the wintry flood surging among the piles of the bridge Mornington dropped, and went under, disappearing from sight.

So suddenly had the catastrophe happened that both Bagnall and Albert Biggs—for he the newcomer was—stood staring in vacant alarm for several seconds. Then Biggs realised what had happened.

He did not hesitate. Leaving Bagnall staring stupidly downwards, Albert Biggs leaped on the rail, took one swift glance along the current, and dived in.

Splash!

"Oh crimes!"

Too terrified to move, Bagnall watched—saw Morny's hand go up, and then his arm and his black head. The junior whirled along, missed the farthest post by a foot, and the next thing he was out in midstream, struggling weakly.

It came into Bagnall's mind that Mornington was hurt—that his chance of keeping above water in that surging flood was remote in the extreme, and the fellow's face blanched.

Roused to action at last, he started along the bridge clumsily, dropped down the sloping bank, and went running alongside the stream.

But Albert Biggs was swimming strongly now, overtaking the feebly struggling Morny foot by foot.

"Help!"

The cry rang feebly over the waters, scarcely reaching the brown woods lining the banks.

Mornington realised he could not keep afloat, that his strength was ebbing away; that unless help came swiftly he was doomed.

"Old on, Master Mornington!"

It was a gasping cry from behind Mornington. The

junior heard it, and his heart leaped. The next moment a hand clutched him, and he felt the water surge over his face as his would-be rescuer swam hard against the current.

"Old on! I got you!"

Again came the encouraging cry, pantingly, through clenched teeth. Biggs was fighting hard—he had need to fight hard. The swollen river dragged and pulled remorselessly.

But Biggs fought on, Mornington doing all he could, though he was still going with the current, slowly but surely.

A shout rang in his ears. He felt a thrill as he heard it. A glance round he ventured, and then he saw. It was Butcher Bagnall, leaning out over a branch—the branch of an overhanging tree that bent, touching the water under his weight.

"Hold on! Get ready to grab, young 'un!"

Biggs set his teeth for a supreme effort. Morny was alive to the only chance of rescue also now. Together they fought the current, the dazed and half-drowned Mornington doing all he could, which was little enough in the circumstances. A hand shot out over the waters—Bagnall's beefy hand. Biggs made a grab.

"Good! 'Old on!"

Biggs held on desperately. Bagnall did likewise, perilously perched as he was on the branch. But the branch was in the water now, and a mighty effort took Biggs and his feebly struggling burden to it. The current sent them surging against the branch. If it would only hold they were safe!

It held! Bagnall's grip was aiding Biggs now, and slowly, despite the outward tug of the current, they fought towards the bank. Biggs' foot touched ground at last. He stumbled out. Morny, still gripping him, staggered after him drunkenly.

They collapsed on the bank, exhausted, panting, choking, streaming with water. Bagnall joined them, his red face drawn and anxious.

"Thanks, Bagnall!" panted Mornington, raising himself dazedly on one arm and holding his head. "We're safe—safe! Biggs—"

He held out a shaking hand silently.

Biggs stared, but at the look in Mornington's eyes he gripped and shook.

"I struck my head!" panted Mornington. "Goodness knows on what! I—I—I was just going after you, Biggs, to fetch you back!"

"You was?" gasped Biggs incredulously.

"Yes! I—I'm sorry, Biggs! I've been a heartless beast to you—I've treated you and Erroll like a rotter. I'm thoroughly ashamed of myself now. I'd like you to believe that!"

"I can see you mean it, Master Morny! But I'm not goin' back to Rookwood. I better be off now, though I shall look nice and feel nice sittin' in a train like this!"

"You're goin' in no train, Biggs—you're coming back to Rookwood!" snapped Mornington breathlessly.

"I ain't—I ain't lettin' Master Erroll down no more!" said Biggs, his voice trembling a little. "I ought never to have gone to Rook—"

"Listen to me!" said Morny, setting his teeth to keep himself in hand. "That letter was a forgery—it was never written by Erroll!"

"Never written by Erroll—" faltered Biggs, his eyes lighting up.

"No. It was written by me!" said Mornington, a touch of colour tinging his white cheeks. "I forged Erroll's signature—I wrote the letter, and I wrote it to force you to clear out of Rookwood. It was another of my tricks! It was a dirty trick—a criminal trick! Erroll knew nothing whatever about it!"

"Then—then—"

"You're coming back to Rookwood!" said Mornington grimly. "Yesterday you thrashed me—a thrashin' I richly deserved! You can thrash me again when we get back, Biggs! You can't make me hate myself more than I do for what I've done, though!"

"Ain't you better be gettin' a move on?" interrupted Butcher Bagnall gruffly. "You'll catch your death of cold at this 'ere rate! Better shove off 'ome, Master Mornington! And—and you needn't take no notice of what I said on the bridge. I was only tryin' to frighten you, blowed if I wasn't!"

"You didn't, though!" said Mornington. "But you've done us a good turn this time, Bagnall, and you and this chap can call it quits, anyway!"

"Blow me, yes!" said Biggs eagerly. "I don't 'old no grudge arter this, Mister Butcher! You ain't such a bad chap, arter all!"

And with that Morny and Biggs started off at a run, and Mornington soon began to feel better with the exercise. There was an ugly bruise on his head, but he made light of it. They reached the bridge and Morny got his bike, and Biggs recovered his parcel—the parcel containing all his worldly goods. He said nothing further about catching the train at Latcham, and taking turns on the back step, the two reached the school in a glow.

Mornington was lounging by the gate when Kit Erroll came in. Erroll looked tired and sick with disappointment. He had ridden to Latcham, and he had called at the station there and at Coombe; but he could get no information, and he had been obliged to return with a heavy heart to Rookwood.

He was going to ignore Mornington, but Mornington hid himself into his path.

"Get me pass, Mornington!" snapped Erroll. "We might fight this matter out another time!"

"I won't fight it out after tea, then?" suggested Mornington coolly. "I've got quite a lot to say to you, and I want you to help me to persuade that ass Biggs to stay on. I've talked to him like anythin', but I don't suppose he'll agree until you've had a go at him. I managed to get him to come back, though!"

"Morny!" stammered Erroll. "What are you saying?"

He stared at his old chum, a strange suspicion forming in his mind. Gone was Mornington's mocking smile. It was the Mornington he knew best—the Mornington he liked and admired who stood before him now.

"Study—the old study, Erroll!" said

Morny quietly, a break in his voice. "That blow you gave me just now not only knocked me down, but it knocked some sense into my rotten head at last! It opened my eyes, too, though if it had been a bit higher it would have closed them! But jokin' aside, Erroll, can you forgive a chap—a chap who's been a howlin' cad and knows it, an' wants to make amends?"

Erroll caught his breath. But he was silent. Mornington knew the reason.

"You want proof!" he said. "Proof that I mean what I say. Come up to the study an' see it! An' I want to tell you how Biggs dragged me out of the river—saved the life of the cad who'd done his best to ruin him, and who'd hounded him from the only home he'd got! Comin'?"

"Yes, I'll come!" said Erroll quietly. "I don't grasp what you mean, Morny, but I believe what you say about being sorry for what you've done! I'll come!"

And he came! Over tea—with Biggs the honoured guest, though behind locked doors—Kit Erroll learned how Mornington had raced to attempt to undo the evil work he had done, and how Biggs had saved his life—had risked his own life without hesitation to save the life of his enemy. And then he understood that Morny was indeed changed—though it gave Erroll great joy to know that Morny had repented in time before the river incident—the good in him had triumphed in the end!

"But it was that uppercute that did it!" said Morny, with a rueful grin. "It was a beauty, and it was no wonder I saw things in a different light!"

"I shall know just how to keep you in order in the future, anyway," grinned Erroll, "so you'd better not kick over the traces again, my lad!"

"I won't!" said Morny grimly.

And the dandy of the Fourth really meant what he said.

THE END.

(Now turn to page 25 and read the particulars of our grand new serial: "FOR THE HONOUR OF ROOKWOOD!" the opening chapters of which will appear in next week's bumper issue of the GEM.)

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The JAPE of the TERM !

(Continued from page 25.)

apologises, monsieur! Let us be der friends and forget der past mit ourselves! If you vill honour we mit der shake hands—"

"Mon Dieu! You are ze brave, forgiving enemy, mon ami! Non, non, no! You vas ze enemy no longer! It vas all ze misunderstandings, caused by ze pad garcons—rose vicked poys! Oui, oui, oui! I shake you by ze hand and kiss you on ze cheek—both of zem!"

And Monsieur Morny, tears of joy streaming down his cheeks, carried out his word.

There was a chorus of soft chuckles—chuckles instantly checked by a look from Mr. Railton.

"That—that will do, I think, Monsieur Morny—Herr Schwartz!" gasped Dr. Holmes faintly. "I—I think the rest of this astounding affair had better be investigated in my study."

"I think so, too, sir!" agreed Mr. Railton, a faint smile hovering round his lips. "Kerr—and you, Merry, Blake, D'Arcy, Digby, and Herries—yes, and you, Figgins and Wynn—will be good enough to come with me. Ah, I am forgetting Lowther and Manners! Kildare, will you also ask Trimble of the Fourth to come, too? I have good reason to believe that he was the person who locked Herr Schwartz in his study. I think that is enough!"

And Tom Merry & Co., as they wended their weary way indoors, thought it was far too much. Nor did the strange

sight of Monsieur Morny and Herr Schwartz, ambling away arm-in-arm, the best of friends, bring them much comfort, glad as they undoubtedly were to see such a satisfactory end to the feud.

After the feast comes the reckoning—and after the joke Tom Merry & Co. discovered that there was a reckoning also! It was a sad ending to the great jape, and there was a sad prospect in store for the japers. As for Trimble, that unhappy youth gave himself, hopelessly away, as he usually did, under cross-examination, and his schemes for revenge met with the reward they deserved.

Considering everything, however, all the juniors got off very lightly. Floggings, gatings, and even the sack were all possibilities. But none of these happened. Possibly the Head saw the point of the joke; possibly his good humour had not quite vanished yet. But one thing the juniors did know, and that was that Monsieur Morny and Herr Schwartz had both gone to the Head together to intercede on their behalf, and they one and all felt deeply grateful to the two gentlemen—excepting Trimble, who was never likely to be grateful to anybody for anything.

For some days after their interview with the Head, Tom Merry & Co.'s usually cheery spirits were conspicuous by their absence. But when the effects of their lickings had at last worn off they were unanimously agreed that, though they had started the feud to some extent, it had been brought to a satisfactory conclusion as a result of the Jape of the Term!

THE END.

(Look out for another rousing long complete school story of Tom Merry & Co. in next week's GEM, entitled: "PREFECT AND RASCAL!" You'll enjoy it, ehums!)

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