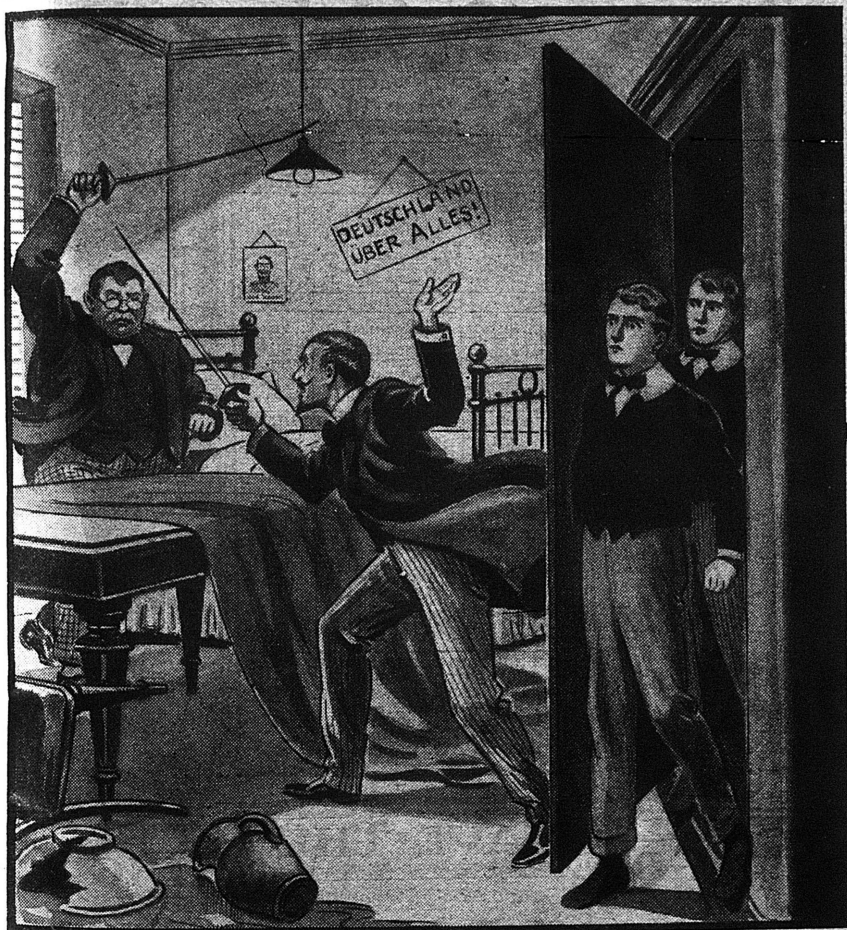


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BANK HOLIDAYS IN ENGLAND AND WALES.
GOOD FRIDAY, April and.
EASTER MONDAY, April 5th.
WHIT MONDAY, May 24th.
MONDAY, August and.
CHRISTMAS DAY, December 25th.
BOXING DAY, December 27th.

P.J.H.

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By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



The door flew open, and Herr Schneider rushed out, so suddenly that he collided with Gore before the Shell fellow had time to flee. "Ach! Den I have caught you wiz yourself!" exclaimed the German master, his grasp closing upon Gore's collar. (See Chapter 1.)

CHAPTER 1. Gore is Too Funny.

"A WFUL cheek!" growled Gore of the Shell. "Blessed nerve!" said Levison of the Fourth. And half a dozen other fellows in the passage said the same.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther came into the School House just in time to hear those remarks. Tom Merry was swinging a footer in his hand. The Terrible Three of St. Jim's had been punting the ball about in the quad, and the footer and themselves looked a little muddy.

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" asked Tom Merry.

"Schneider—the cheeky ass!" said Gore.

"Listen to him intirely," said Reilly.

From the German master's study came a booming voice tabbed in song. Herr Schneider, like many of his country-

men, was musical. It was not at all uncommon to hear snatches of German Lieder booming from his study. And he was "going it" now.

"Es braust ein Ruf wie Donnerhall!
Wie Schwertgeklirr und Wogenprall!
Zum Rhein! Zum Rhein! Zum Rhein!
Zum Deutschen Rhein!
Wer will des Stromes Huter sein?"

Quite unconscious of his audience outside the closed door of his study, Herr Schneider was booming away at "The Watch on the Rhine." Gore & Co. were indignant.

"Awful cheek to yell that here," said Gore.

"Like his nerve intirely," said Reilly.

Tom Merry laughed.

"What rot! Why shouldn't he sing 'The Watch on the Rhine' if he wants to? He's heard us doing 'Rule, Britannia,' often enough."

Next Wednesday:

"THE CALL OF THE PAST!" AND "OFFICER AND TROOPER!"

No. 390. (New Series), Vol. 9.

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"That's different," said Gore. "What would they do to a chap who started singing 'Rule, Britannia, in Berlin?' " "Jump on him, most likely," said Tom. "Well, then, it's like his cheek to spout his blessed German patriotic songs here," said Gore indignantly. "Oh, rats! It's a free country," said Monty Lowther. "Thank goodness it isn't like Prussia, where a chap can only sing what the police will let him. Schneider's making an awful row; but it's really an unsolicited testimonial to British freedom."

But Gore didn't see it in that light. Gore was indignant. Perhaps the fact that he had fifty German lines to write out for Herr Schneider made his indignation all the keener. The unconscious Herr went on:

"Lieb Vaterland, magst ruhig sein,
Lieb Vaterland, magst ruhig sein!
Fest steht und treu die Wacht, die Wacht em Rhein!"

"Like a blessed megaphone, ain't it?" said Monty Lowther. "There, he's finished now. No harm done!" But Herr Schneider wasn't finished. Either he was feeling especially musical, or his patriotism was at high-water mark. "Durch den Lufte tausend zuck es schnell," went on the Herr's booming voice.

"I'm not going to stand it," said Gore. "Get ready to dodge, you chaps. I'm going to talk to him."

"Look here—" began Tom Merry. "You go and eat cake!" said Gore independently. "I'm a blessed patriot, if you ain't! I'd have all German masters sent to the concentration camps if I could. Their beastly Zeppelins are bad enough, without their beastly verbs!" "Hear, hear!" said the juniors.

"Lieb Vaterland, magst ruhig sein!
Lieb Vaterland, magst ruhig sein!"

Gore bent down to the keyhole of the study door and called through.

"Bow-wow!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Herr Schneider, in the study, went off his song quite suddenly. That disrespectful interruption startled him.

The juniors scuttled back to the nearest corner. Herr Schneider's temper was not always to be depended upon, and he generally had a cane handy.

The study door opened, and Herr Schneider blinked out through his big spectacles. There was no one in the passage. "Ach!" murmured Herr Schneider, frowning. "Ach!"

And he drew back into the room and closed the door.

Gore peered cautiously round the corner. He was grinning. From the study came the booming voice of the German master once more:

"Lieb Vaterland, magst ruhig sein!"

"Blessed if he isn't still going it!" exclaimed Gore. "I'll talk to him again."

"Better chuck it!" advised Levison. "He'll spot you next time."

"Oh, rats!"
"Ass!" said Tom Merry. "You're not allowed to check masters, even German masters. Don't play the giddy ox."

"Rot!" said Gore politely.

And the Shell fellow crept cautiously down the passage towards the German master's door. The other fellows watched him from the corner with great interest. They preferred to keep at a distance. Herr Schneider was a hard bitter when he was in a bad temper.

"Lieb Vaterland, magst ruhig sein!
Fest steht und treu die Wacht, die Wacht em Rhein!"

Gore put his mouth to the keyhole again.

"Bow-wow!"

The door flew open, and Herr Schneider rushed out so suddenly that he collided with Gore before the Shell fellow had time to flee.

Gore made a jump to escape, but Herr Schneider's grasp closed upon his collar.

"Ach! Den I have caught you wiz yourself!" exclaimed Herr Schneider, shaking the junior till his teeth seemed to rattle.

"Ow, ow! Grooch!" gurgled Gore. "Leggo!"

Too late he realised that Herr Schneider, with great cunning, had been waiting just inside the door, in case the practical joker should come back. It was, as Gore said afterwards, just the dirty trick one might have expected of a beastly Prussian.

"You say bow-wow to me, ain't it, after?" said Herr

Schneider. "You are vat you call sheeky mit your master before!"

"Grooh! Leggo! Ow!"

Herr Schneider did not "leggo." He had a cane all ready in one hand, and he proceeded to "whop" the humorous Shell fellow, who was not feeling at all humorous now. Gore roared.

"Leggo, you German beast!"

"Vat! You call me names mit myself!" exclaimed Herr Schneider. "You vas unimpudent poy, Gore, after."

Whack, whack, whack!

Herr Schneider had lost his temper, and he was really hitting too hard. Gore felt that it was very much too hard. Tom Merry strode forward, frowning.

"Herr Schneider!" he exclaimed.

The Herr glared at him.

"Stand pack, Merry!"

"You've no right to pitch into Gore like that!" said Tom Merry sturdily.

"You say anoder word and I came you too after!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Leggo! Oh, help!" yelled Gore. "Mossoo, stop him!"

Monsieur Morny, the French master—more familiarly known as "Mossoo"—came down the passage. There was, naturally, no love lost between the French and German masters, though they were frigidly polite to one another. Monsieur Morny was a good-natured little man, and hardly ever inflicted punishment, and he looked on at the scene with grim disapproval in his glance.

"Herr Schneider," he exclaimed, "I protest against zat! Zat is too much zat you do."

"Ach!"

"Whack, whack!"

"If you shall strike zat boy unnce more, it is zat I shall call the Housemaster!" exclaimed Monsieur Morny indignantly.

Herr Schneider paused. He was going a little too far, and Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, would certainly have disapproved. He released Gore, but he bestowed an angry frown upon the French master, and strode back into his study.

"Ow! The rotter!" groaned Gore. "Ow, ow!"

"You will excuse me zat I speak. Herr Schneider," said Monsieur Morny. "It is only zat I zink you have lose ze temper, n'est-ce-pas?"

Slam!

That was Herr Schneider's response to the French master's polite apology. Monsieur Morny, coloured with indignation. The door had slammed fairly in his face—indeed, it came near disarranging his beautiful little pointed beard.

"Ma foi! Je pense—" began Monsieur Morny in great wrath.

But he remembered himself, and walked away, controlling his indignation. George Lumped off, and joined the crowd round the corner of the passage, groaning.

"Hard cheese!" said Levison.

"Ow!"

"Still, you checked him, Gore," remarked Blake of the Fourth. "But he oughtn't to have gone for you like that! Does it hurt?"

"Does it hurt?" groaned Gore. "You silly idiot, yes, it does!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"It was jolly decent of Mossoo to chip in," said Tom Merry. "Ow!" said Gore. "Blow Mossoo! Blow you! Blow everybody!"

And Gore departed to nurse his injuries and his wrath.

CHAPTER 2.

No Apology.

"SERVE him wight!"

Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The swell of the Fourth Form was laying down the law in Study No. 6. Herries and Digby were making toast. Blake had just come in, chuckling, and told of the little joke on Herr Schneider, and its disastrous results to Gore of the Shell.

"Serve him wight!" said Arthur Augustus. "Pawwas Herr Schneidach may have whacked him a little too hard!"

"He did," said Blake. "Poor old Gore got it in the neck, and he only said 'Bow-wow!' through the keyhole!"

"Any chap might have done that!" remarked Digby.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sniffed, and turned his famous cyglasses reprovingly upon his study mates.

"I trust no one in this studay would have done it," he

said severely. "I wegard it as wotten bad form to wag a nastah!"

"Well, that's so," said Blake. "I stand corrected. Shut up, Gussy, and make the tea!"

"I wuse to shut up! I wegard it as specially wotten to wag old Schneidah. He is a wathah bad-tempered beast, but we ought to wemembar that he is a stwangah within the gates. The posish of a German chap in this country in time of war is a vevy awkward one. Therefore we ought to show him extwa courtesy, and not wag him!"

"Pass the jam!"

"Blow the jam! Pewwaps it would have been more dignified of Herr-Schneidah not to lose his tempah—"

"Go bon!" Do you want all the jam?"

"I do not want any of the jam, you ass! I wegard Goah as havin' acted with great wudeness towards Herr Schneidah, and I think that he ought to apologise!"

"Are you going to make the tea, Gussy, or are you not?"

"Wats! It is quite twue that Herr Schneidah has been vevy sharp-temphed lately, but we must make allowances for that. You can't expect him to be happy when his countymen are bein' given such socks by our twoops. Undah the cires, it is up to us to tweat old Schneidah with special consideration!"

"Well, I'll make the tea, if you'll leave off talking," offered Blake.

"Wubbish! I am shocked and disgusted at Goah's conduct, and I am goin' to point out to him that he owes Herr Schneidah an apology," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "Goah is not a bad fellow on the whole, and powwaps he will see it."

"More likely to dot you in the eye!" grinned Blake. "I should uttably wufuse to be dotted in the eye, Blake. You fellows can wait tea for me—"

"Bow-wow!"

"I am goin' to see Goah. I trust that by this time he has weflected on the mattah, and will be weady to see wesson!"

"Come and have tea, you ass!" roared Blake, as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy opened the study door.

"Wats!"

And the swell of St. Jim's strode away down the passage. Blake and Herries and Digby grinned. They could imagine the kind of reception Gore of the Shell would give to their elegant chum. But if Arthur Augustus D'Arcy persisted in going out to look for trouble, there was nothing for it but to give him his head. The chums of Study No. 6 went on with their tea.

Arthur Augustus tapped politely at Gore's door in the Shell passage.

"He opened it, in response to a cheery "Come in!" which did not proceed from Gore. Talbot and Skimpole, who shared that study with Gore, were at tea; but George Gore was sitting in the armchair scowling, and explaining at full length and with great emphasis his opinion of Germans in general, and Herr Otto Schneider in particular.

"Hallo!" said Talbot genially. "Come to tea, Gussy?"

"Thank you, no, dear boy! I have come to speak to Goah. Goah, dear boy, it appears that you have acted vevy wudely to Herr Schneidah!"

"Hang him!" growled Gore. "I'll make him sit up for this some-how!"

"Wesly, Goah—"

"Ow! I've got a dozen or more separate aches! Ow!"

"Herr Schneider has been vevy brutal lately," said Skimpole, blinking at D'Arcy through his big glasses. "Only this afternoon in the German class he rapped me on the knuckles with a pointer, simply because I remarked that the German language, much as I admired it, gave me a pain in the throat." Skimpole shook his head in his solemn manner.

"I was stating a fact. Other fellows have had the same experience, I am assured; yet Herr Schneider was ratty—distinctly ratty!"

"Ow! The beast!"

"Howevah," said Arthur Augustus, "nothin' can possibly excuse wudeness, Goah!"

"Eh?" ejaculated Gore, with a ferocious glare at the swell of St. Jim's.

He had fancied that Arthur Augustus had come to sympathise. He discovered his mistake.

"I wepeat, Goah, that nothin' can justify wudeness," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "I wegard it as bein' up to you to tweat an apology to Herr Schneidah!"

"What?"

"I trust you will not allow a slight physical discomfort, Goah, to cause you to neglect what is weally due to yourself, as well as Herr Schneidah. Fway proceed to his study and oflah him an apology!"

"You silly dummy!" roared Gore.

"I trust you will not wufuse—"

"You howling idiot!"

"Wesly, Goah—"

"You burbling jabberwock!"

"These opprobrious expressions, Goah, are quite out of place. If you wufuse to tweat Herr Schneidah the apology that is his due, I shall proceed to his study and tweat an apology in your place!"

"You—you shrieking idiot!"

"Wesly, Goah— Bai Jove! You wottah! Oh!"

Gore, losing all patience, seized a cushion and hurled it with deadly aim. It caught Arthur Augustus on the chest, and fairly swept him through the doorway into the passage.

"Oh! My hat! You wottah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Talbot.

"Now come in and have some more!" shouted Gore.

"Bai Jove! I will give you a feahful tw'ashin'!"

Arthur Augustus came rushing in, on the war-path; but he paused suddenly as he saw that Gore had picked up the butter-dish in one hand, and a jam-tart in the other. Arthur Augustus did not fear for himself, but he feared for his clothes.

He backed out of the study hastily.

"I will thwash you anothah time, Goah! Oh cwumbs!"

The swell of St. Jim's jumped away just in time to escape the whizzing jam-tart. "Oh, you wottah!"

Whiz! The butter came in a chunk from the dish, and it caught Arthur Augustus on the ear as he dodged the jam-tart.

"Gwoogh!"

"Now come in and jaw again!" yelled the incensed Gore.

Arthur Augustus dabbed furiously at the butter with his handkerchief. The handkerchief was speedily reduced to a greasy rag. The study door slammed on him while he was still dabbing at the butter.

Tom Merry looked out of the next study in surprise.

"What on earth's the row there?"

"Gwoogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' to laugh at, Tom Mewwy. That howwid beast Goah has smothahed me with beastly buttah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I came on a fwriendly mission," gasped Arthur Augustus. "I was merely pointin' out to him that he owed Herr Schneidah an apology—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Terrible Three.

"Oh, wats!" said Arthur Augustus crossly. "Howevah, I shall go and apologise to Herr Schneidah myself, in the name of the Lowah School!"

"Better leave him alone," grinned Monty Lowther. "The Schneider bird is ratty to-day!"

"Wubbish!"

Arthur Augustus rubbed off most of the butter, and, deferring vengeance on George Gore till a later date, he took his way to Herr Schneider's study.

Courtesy came before everything with the Hon. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. A junior of the School House had been rude to Herr Schneider, and it was up to somebody to apologise for that infraction of good manners. If Gore wouldn't—and it was quite evident that he wouldn't—it was up to a representative of the Lower School to do it in his place.

That was how Arthur Augustus looked at it; and he tapped at Herr Schneider's door simply brimming over with good intentions.

"Gum in!" snapped a very cross voice.

Arthur Augustus entered.

Herr Schneider was seated by his study fire reading a paper. His face was dark and frowning. He was reading, as a matter of fact, of a German defeat, and it did not improve his temper.

Herr Schneider, like many Germans, had an almost pathetic belief in the invincibility of the German Army, and when they were beaten he felt that there was something wrong in the universe somewhere. It was a thing that couldn't happen, and so it was very disconcerting when it did happen.

"Was denn?" he snapped. "Vat is it?"

Arthur Augustus coughed. It was not a very promising opening. However, he felt that as soon as he had explained his mission, the clouds would clear off the German master's bald brow.

"Pway excuse me, sir—"

"Vat is it, tat you vant before?"

"I heah, sir, that when you were singing in your study—"

"Vat?"

"Goah called through the keyhole—"

"Poy!"

"Bow-wow, sir!"

Herr Schneider jumped up.

"And I wish to say sir," said Arthur Augustus, a little alarmed, but sticking to his guns; "I wish to wemak—"

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A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. by MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"You insolent poy!" shouted Herr Schneider. "You gum here to be cheeky—ain't it!"

"Bai Jove! I—I really—"

Herr Schneider seized a cane, and strode towards the swell of St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus backed to the door in alarm. Herr Schneider had evidently misunderstood his intentions, and it did not look as if it would be easy to explain.

"Hold out to hand mit you, D'Arcy!"

"Weally, sir—"

"You hear me, poy?"

"I—I weally—my intention—"

"You said 'bow-wow' to me!" roared Herr Schneider. "Insolent poy! I teaches you tat you not 'bow-wow' to Cherman master, ain't it!"

"But I didn't. I—I didn't—I—"

"Hold out to hand!"

"I wufuse to hold out my hand!" said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "Psway allow me to explain. I— Oh! Bai Jove! My hat!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Oh cwumbs! You uttah bwute! Oh!"

The angry master had him by the collar, and he laid on the cane with great energy. Then he bundled Arthur Augustus out of the study, and slammed the door upon him. The swell of St. Jim's staggered against the opposite wall, gasping.

"Oh, bai Jove! The uttah beast! Oh cwumbs! Oh. deah!"

Blake and Herries and Digby looked round with grinning inquiry as Arthur Augustus came into Study No. 6.

"Well, how did it work?" asked Blake.

"Gwooh!"

"Did Gore apologise?"

"Goah is an uttah wottah!"

"Well, did you apologise for him?" chuckled Blake.

"Ow!"

"Was Schneider nice?" grinned Herries

"Gwooh! Schneddah is an uttah beast! I wegard him simply as a vuffian! Gwooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's not a laughin' mattah! I have been tweeked with gwoss diswespect—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The old duffah misapprehended my object, and instead of allowin' me to explain, he assaulted me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"In the most bwutal mannah. For the futuah, I shall wegard him with as much despision—I mean contempt—as I feel for the Kaisah himself!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 3.

Trouble in the German Class.

"LOOK out for squalls!" murmured Monty Lowther.

It was the next day, and Herr Schneider was taking the Shell in German. Herr Schneider came into the Form-room with a grim brow.

Monty Lowther's whispered warning was not needed. The Shell, as soon as they saw the herr's gloomy brow, were prepared for "squalls."

Some of them made up their minds to be extra good, and avert the vials of wrath, and to refrain from pulling Herr Schneider's leg even in the gentlest manner, as they sometimes did in the German class. Some of the Shell fellows, however, felt exasperated. They felt it wasn't fair.

Herr Schneider had always been somewhat tart in temper, and never popular. Certainly he had approached popularity once, at the time when his pretty niece was staying at St. Jim's. Fraulein Marichen had shed some of her sweetness over her grumpy uncle, as it were, and he rose in the estimation of the juniors. Monty Lowther had not forgotten the pretty Marie yet, and he tolerated Herr Schneider more patiently than the other fellows. For Marie's sake, Lowther thought, they ought to go easy with the old sport. But of late Herr Schneider had been growing more and more exasperating.

His position, as an alien in England during the war, was not really agreeable; and his feelings, of course, were with his own country.

At first Herr Schneider had been kind and sentimental. Concerned that the terrific armies of the Kaiser were going to sweep everything before them, he had been quite concerned about the fate of his adopted country. He had generously said that when the Germans overran Sussex, he would intercede to save St. Jim's from the fate of Lewin and Aerschot. He would do his best for the old school that had sheltered him for so many years.

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It was very kind of him; but his kindness was far from appreciated from fellows who hadn't the slightest doubt that the Kaiser's hordes were going to get it right "in the neck," when Tommy Atkins once fairly started upon them.

The herr, in his sentimental German way, was ready to "weep," as he called it, for the fate overhanging this unhappy island. But the juniors only felt inclined to give him something else to weep for.

But of late Herr Schneider's sentimentality had given place to irritation.

Those tremendous victories, which were a foregone conclusion, had not come off. London was not occupied by German troops, the Uhlans had not ridden into Birmingham, the German cavalry had not stable their horses in Lincoln Cathedral. They had not set fire to Manchester, they had not arrived in Glasgow, and Edinburgh had seen nothing of them. There was something wrong somewhere.

Herr Schneider's kindly intervention to save St. Jim's from destruction was not yet required.

True, a large number of Germans—tens of thousands, in fact—had landed. But, unfortunately, they had come as prisoners of war. That wasn't what the good herr had expected. And Herr Schneider took it personally. He devoured the newspapers, looking for the tremendous victory which, like the celebrated smile, never came off.

So his temper suffered. When his temper suffered, the German class generally suffered, too. And they did not like it.

As the juniors indignantly declared, Mossoo wasn't like that. Monsieur Morny was as good-tempered and cheerful as ever, however bad things were looking in his beloved France. His confidence was never shaken for a moment. But Herr Schneider was growing grumpier and grumpier every day. "Rule, Britannia," irritated him, and "La Marseillaise" got on his nerves dreadfully; and mischievous fellows who had discovered that fact chanted it frequently for his special benefit.

Some wag had chalked up on the German master's looking-glass a picture of a hideous Ulian fleeing before a French trooper; another joker had executed a drawing on his wall depicting the Kaiser as a Red Indian chief, girded with Belgian scalps. On the Fifth of November the Kaiser had figured as Guy Fawkes, and had been burnt in the quad amidst loud cheering. And Herr Schneider grew snapper and snapper.

"We're in for it this afternoon!" grumbled Gore. "I'm jolly well not going to stand too much of it. If he doesn't leave off ragging us, I shall complain to the Head."

"Shurrup!" whispered Kangaroo, the Cornstalk school-boy. "He's got a fiery eye on you, Gore."

"You will stop talking mid you in class!" snapped Herr Schneider.

There was dead silence. The lesson commenced with the juniors in lowest spirits. There was thunder in the air, so to speak. Only that morning there had been news of a German reverse, and they knew the effect it always had on Herr Schneider.

"Mein Gott!" said Herr Schneider, when Bernard Glyn became entangled in the fearsome German declensions. "Mein Gott! Dis is to dumst class tat neffer vas before. Glyn, you are van dummkopf!"

Bernard Glyn grunted. He wasn't a blockhead by any means, and he did not like being called one.

"Excuse me, sir," said Glyn. "Vat is van dummkopf?" There was a faint chuckle from the Shell fellows, as the Liverpool lad imitated the beautiful accent of Herr Schneider. Herr Schneider glared.

"Glyn, you vas impertinent! You will take a huntert lines."

"Thank you, sir!"

"Zwei" huntert, exclaimed Herr Schneider—"two huntert lines, Glyn, and if you say more impertinence I will you cane mit you!"

Bernard Glyn did not "say" any more impertinence. Herr Schneider had taken up his pointer.

"And you, Gore—you vas as stupid as Glyn," said Herr Schneider.

"I have come here to learn German, sir," said Gore sulkily. "If I knew it already I shouldn't waste any lessons."

That was undoubtedly true; but Herr Schneider was not in a mood of sweet reasonableness. He rapped Gore's knuckles with the pointer, and Gore yelled.

"Take tat mit you, and speak mid respect to your master!" said Herr Schneider. "If you poys have a little common-sense, you vork ferry hard mid Cherman, for it will be ferry necessary to you some of dese days, hein."

That was too much for the Shell. There was a deep murmur of indignation. Herr Schneider was referring to the time in the future when England was to be reduced to the same state as Alsace and Prussian Poland.

"Vat is it tat you are doing, Noble?" rapped out Herr

Schneider, as Kangaroo appeared to be making a calculation with his pencil on the flyleaf of his German book.

"Working out a problem, sir," said the Cornstalk cheerfully.

"This is not a mathematics lesson, Noble."

"No, sir; but this is a very interesting problem. Perhaps you could help me with it, sir, as you have first-hand knowledge of the subject," said Kangaroo meekly. "This is it, sir. If sixty-five million Germans take three months to beat a hundred thousand Belgians, how long will it take them to beat an empire containing four hundred million inhabitants?"

Herr Schneider's face was a study for a moment. He did not work-out the problem. Perhaps it was beyond his powers. He shook his pointer at the Australian junior.

"Gum here mit you, Noble."

"Yes, sir," said Kangaroo cheerfully.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Now, you go pack to your place, and be silent mit you, Noble."

"Yes, sir."

"You vas laughing, Merry."

"I, sir?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yes, you! Ach! I will have respect in dis class! Do you deny tat you laugh?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Vat is it tat you laugh at, hein?"

"I—I—I'd rather not tell you, sir," said Tom Merry demurely.

"I order you to tell me, Merry, at vunce!"

"But, sir—"

"At vunce, Merry. You will tell me at vat it is tat you laugh in class."

"You—you order me, sir?"

"Ja, ja, ja!"

"Very well, sir," said Tom Merry meekly. "I was laughing at you, sir."

"Vat?"

"You, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Shell fellows.

"Merry! Stand up, mit you? Hold out to hand! Now to odder hand!"

Whack, whack!

"Lowter, vat did you say to Manners?"

"Ahem! I said that the old boy was getting ferocious, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Take a hundret lines, Lowter! You vill take a hundret lines too, Manners. Dane, you vas laughing. You vill take a hundret lines."

"But I wasn't laughing, sir!" protested Clifton Dane indignantly.

"You must not contradict me, Dane. You vill take two hundret lines, den!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I keeps order in dis class, or I know to reason vy for, after!" snapped Herr Schneider. "If dere is any more to laugh, I gif a hundret lines to de whole class."

There was no more "to laugh." The Shell fellows were not feeling like laughing now. They were feeling more like lurching. And when the German lesson was over, the Shell were in a state of burning indignation.

CHAPTER 4.

Polly Causes Trouble.

"LINES for all of us!" growled Manners, as the juniors came out of the Form-room. "I'm getting fed up!"

"I do lines, thou dost lines, he does lines!" groaned Tom Merry. "It's sickening!"

"Time Herr Schneider drew a line, ain't it?" remarked Lowther.

"Oh, don't be funny! I'm fed up!"

"How have you been gettin' on, dear boys?" asked Arthur Augustus, meeting the disconsolate Three in the passage.

"Rotten!"

"We had a wotten time with German this mornin'. I wegard Herr Schneidahn as a beast!"

"Awful beast!" said Figgins of the New House dolorously. "He's loading us with lines. Something ought to be done."

"We're done!" said Lowther. "And the lines are going to be done."

"I'm fed up!" growled Jack Blake. "Tain't our fault if the German Army is getting it in the neck. And that's what's the matter with Schneider."

"I wish old Schneider were getting it in the neck too!" growled Gore. "I've a jolly good mind to go to the Head.

He wouldn't allow the old ass to carry on like this if he knew."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Don't want to make trouble," he remarked. "Besides, that would amount to sneaking. We ought to be able to keep our end up against a giddy German, I should think."

"Suppose we don't do the lines?" suggested Kangaroo.

"Got to, my son."

There was little doubt on that point. The lines had to be done, and the juniors went to their studies to do them.

But they were in an exasperated and rebellious mood.

The Terrible Three sat at their study table, and ground out lines very crossly. German lines are always a worry. As Monty Lowther remarked, Latin lines or French lines could be written in a civilised hand, but German lines had to be done in German. And the lines the Terrible Three were scribbling now looked more German than ever.

But the lines were done at last, and the Terrible Three adjourned to the end study to see how Kangaroo & Co. were getting on. Kangaroo and Bernard Glyn were writing out weird-looking German, and Clifton Dane was talking to his parrot. Clifton Dane's parrot was a great talker, and wonderfully quick at picking up remarks. Indeed, he sometimes caused trouble by repeating remarks he had overheard.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry. "How are the lines going?"

"Rather scrawly," said Kangaroo, with a grin.

"Blow the Kaiser!" came a screech from Polly's cage.

Tom Merry jumped.

"Who's that? Oh, that blessed parrot!"

"I'm teaching him some new remarks," said Clifton Dane, with a chuckle. "Polly's awfully quick."

"Better not let Schneider hear them," grinned Lowther.

"Rats! I suppose I can teach my parrot what I like," said the Canadian junior. "I don't ask Schneider to come here. If he comes and hears Polly, he can like it, or he can lump it!"

"Lump it!" shrieked Polly. "Confound old Schneider!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Polly wants sugar! The Kaiser wants boiling! Screech!"

The juniors laughed loudly. Polly blinked at them from the cage, and, apparently encouraged by the laughter, he went on cheerily.

"Call that a face? Boil it! Ho, ho, ho! Blow the Germans! Down with the Kaiser! Give 'em socks! He, he, he, he!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mine are leave Polly's education alone, and do your lines, Dane," granted Kangaroo. "It's time they were taken in."

"Poor Polly! Polly wants sugar! Blow the Kaiser! Yaroooh!"

"Look out!" murmured Manners.

The handle of the study door turned, and Herr Schneider came in. He had not troubled to knock, as the other masters always did.

"Is it not tat I tell you to bring lines to me at six o'clock?" Herr Schneider demanded.

"Yes, sir," said Kangaroo meekly.

"Now it is a quarter more tan six, hein."

"Sorry, sir; not quite finished yet."

"And you, Merry—"

"Mine are finished, sir; they're in my study," said Tom.

"Ha, ha! Blow the Kaiser!"

Herr Schneider jumped. He did not see the parrot's cage hanging in the corner, and he naturally supposed that one of the juniors had spoken.

"Mein Gott! Who say tat?" he demanded.

"Here's old Schneider! Poor old Schneider! Schneider wants boiling! Give 'em socks, boys! Dig 'em out and sink 'em! They're no good—made in Germany! Hooroooh!"

"Mein Gott! Vat—"

"Silly old Schneider! Hooroooh!"

"Vat!"

"Blow the Kaiser! Hooroooh! Poor old Kaiser, getting it right in the neck! Yaroooh!"

"Dane—Glyn—you dare—"

"I didn't speak, sir," stammered Clifton Dane.

"Same here, sir," said Glyn. "Mum as an oyster, sir!"

"I demand to know who say all tat!" shouted Herr Schneider.

"Ahem!"

"He, he, he! The Kaiser's off his onion! He, he, he!"

"Ach! It vas vun parrot!" exclaimed Herr Schneider, glaring at the cage, which he had caught sight of at last.

"Mein Gott! I—"

"Shut up! Go and eat coke!" sang out Polly. "Go home to Germany! Old Schneider's a beast! Polly wants sugar! Ha, ha, ha! Hooroooh!"

Herr Schneider was purple with rage.

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"Dane, you have teach tat bird tat he say dose dings!" he roared.

"He—he picks 'em up awfully quick, sir," said Clifton Dane. "Of course, sir, we often say that the Kaiser is off his onion, you know, sir, and Polly hears us. No harm in stating a well-known fact, sir."

"Polly wants sugar! Down with the Kaiser! Hooroo!"

"Ach! I will wring te neck of tat peastly bird!" exclaimed Herr Schneider, making a stride towards the cage. "That you jolly well won't!" exclaimed the Canadian junior, jumping in the way. "Let my parrot alone."

"Stand out of te way, boy!"

"You're not going to touch Polly!"

"Poor old Polly!" cackled the parrot. "Poor old Schneider! Down with the Kaiser! Give him socks! Oh, chase me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Herr Schneider stamped forward, and stretched out his fat hand to the cage. Clifton Dane shoved him back without ceremony. Kangaroo and Glyn jumped up at once to back up their chum. The Terrible Three lined up too. They weren't going to see Polly damaged, and Herr Schneider was quite in a mood to wring the unfortunate bird's neck.

Herr Schneider glared furiously at the juniors.

"You, Dane—you dare to touch me!" he panted.

"Let my parrot alone, then, said Dane. "You can cane me if you like, but you're not going to touch Polly!"

"I report dis to your Housemaster!"

"Report and be blowed!" growled Clifton Dane.

Herr Schneider, puffing with wrath, stalked out of the study. The Shell fellows looked at one another in dismay.

"Now we shall have Railton down on us!" groaned Kangaroo. "More trouble!"

"Well, he's not going to hurt Polly," said Clifton Dane indignantly. "Only a beast would want to. Polly doesn't mean any harm!"

"He does it without meaning it!" grinned Monty Lowther. "We shall have Railton here in a jiffy. Herr Schneider was simply boiling!"

Lowther was right. In a few minutes the step of the Housemaster was heard in the passage. He looked into the study with a frowning brow.

"What does this mean, boys? Herr Schneider tells me that you have insulted him!"

"Hooroo!" shrieked Polly.

"He tells me that you actually pushed him, Dane!"

"He wanted to wring my parrot's neck, sir!" growled Dane.

"Ahem! Herr Schneider did not mention that!"

But—

"Bless old Schneider! Blow the Kaiser! Hooroo!"

"Shut up, Polly!" gasped Clifton Dane.

"Shut up! Don't jaw!" pursued Polly cheerfully. "The Kaiser's an ass! Schneider's a beast! More lines! More trouble! Oh, crumbs!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Railton.

"You—you see, Mr. Railton—" stammered Dane.

Polly caught the name at once

"Railton! Hallo, Railton! Railton's a brick! Hooroo!"

"Dear me!"

"Railton's a brick! Railton's a brick! Hooroo!"

Mr. Railton tried not to smile. It was an unsolicited testimonial from Polly.

"He—he catches the things we say, sir," stammered Clifton Dane.

"Ahem! Some of the things you say, apparently, are quite harmless," said Mr. Railton, his brow relaxing. "But you must not teach your bird to say disrespectful things of Herr Schneider!"

"Schneider!" shrieked Polly. "Schneider, how you was? Schneider's a beast! Send him home to Germany! Hooroo!"

"Dane, you cannot keep that parrot in your study, under the circumstances. You must keep him outside the house!" said Mr. Railton sternly.

"Oh, sir!"

"And you will take five hundred lines for allowing him to learn such remarks!"

"Lines!" yelled Polly. "More lines! More trouble! Hooroo!"

"You hear me, Dane?"

"Yes, sir," said Dane dolefully.

"Horrid beast!" said Polly.

"Really—" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"Yah! Rotter! Schneider's a rotter! It's a long way to Tipperary!" Hooroo!"

Mr. Railton hastily left the study.

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"Good-bye, kid!" shrieked Polly. "Keep your pecker up! Keep your wool on! Hooray!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Railton walked away very quickly. Clifton Dane shook his fist at Polly.

"Oh, you silly beast!" he growled. "You've done it now! I shall have to ask Taggles to keep him for a bit till this blows over. Come on, Polly!"

And Dane unhooked the cage to take it away. Polly yelled:

"Mind your eye, stupid! Hooray! Good-bye, cocky!"

And Polly disappeared, leaving the juniors shouting with laughter. As the Canadian junior carried the cage away he passed Herr Schneider in the lower passage, and the German master gave him a glare. Polly went on talking:

"Schneider, how you was? Keep your wool on! Oh, my hat!"

Dane hurried the parrot out of the house. The fellows in the passage broke into a chuckle, and Herr Schneider strode away to his study and slammed the door.

CHAPTER 5. The Latest News.

"ZINK that you are Sherman peeg!"

The Terrible Three jumped as they heard that remark.

They were coming back to their study to get their lines, which had to be taken to the German master, when they heard those words from the next study.

"Mossoo!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"I zink zat I punch your silly head, zen!"

"My only hat! Who's Mossoo talking to in Gore's study?" exclaimed Manners.

"Can't be Mossoo," said Tom Merry, puzzled. "It's some ass imitating his toot!"

Tom Merry knocked on Gore's door and opened it. George Gore was alone in the study, Talbot and Skimpole being downstairs.

Gore looked round quickly as the Terrible Three appeared. He was grinning.

"Did you hear me?" he exclaimed.

"I heard you," said Tom Merry. "What the dickens are you imitating, Monsieur Morny's voice for, you ass?"

"I'm practising."

"Practising what?" asked Lowther. "Have you taken up D'Arcy's idea of becoming a giddy ventriloquist?"

"Rats! No; better than that. It's a jape," explained Gore.

"Blessed if I see where the jape comes in!" said Manners.

"You wouldn't!" said Gore. "But you heard me, didn't it sound like old Mossoo's queer toot?"

"Yes; but—"

"Well, suppose Herr Schneider heard me doing it, he'd think it was Mossoo, wouldn't he?"

"Not if he saw you, I suppose."

"But he wouldn't see me!" chuckled Gore. "That's where the cream of the joke comes in!"

Tom Merry's face grew serious.

"Look here, Gore, that's more than a joke. You don't want to make trouble between old Schneider and Mossoo. They're not on speaking terms already!"

"Rot!" said Gore. "They're a pair of beasts! Mossoo gave me fifty lines of the Henriade yesterday for mixing up their silly-genders in the French lesson!"

"Mossoo's a jolly good sort!"

"Well, it doesn't hurt him to imitate his toot," said Gore, "and I'm jolly well going to do as I like!"

"But what's the little game?"

"Find out!" said Gore.

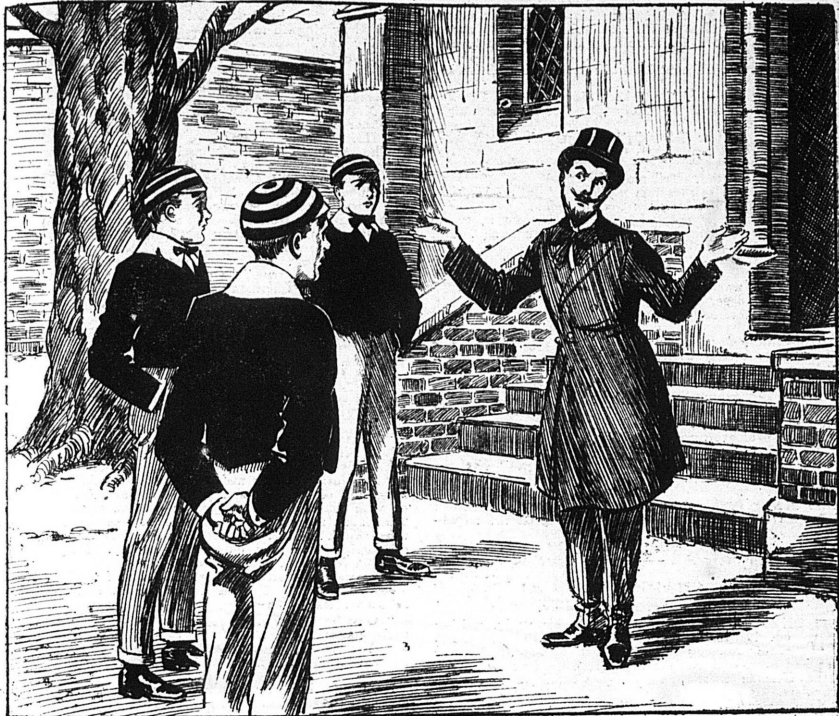
Tom Merry & Co. left the study. It was not of much use arguing with Gore. He was an obstinate fellow. As they departed, Gore went on with his valuable practice:

"Vat zen, monsieur? I zink zat you are Sherman peeg! Mon Dieu! I defy you, zen!"

Certainly Gore had Monsieur Morny's voice almost exactly. And the more he practised the nearer he came to the original. Monsieur Morny had a somewhat squeaky voice, and his peculiar French accent made it very noticeable. It was not difficult to imitate, and Gore had taken a lot of trouble about it.

But the Terrible Three did not give much thought to Gore after they entered their study. They uttered a yell of dismay.

They had left their newly-written lines on the tables, and unfortunately they had left the door open, as well as the window. And the keen winter wind had blown into the study, and the sheets of imput paper had been whisked off



"Bonjour, mes garçons," said Mossou, as the Shell fellows politely raised their caps. "Is it zat you know zat I go from St. Jim's?" "Ahem! Yes, sir," said Tom Merry. "We're awfully sorry, sir." "Zank you ver' mooch," said Monsieur Morny. The tears came into the little gentleman's eyes, and he turned away. (See Chapter 13.)

the table. Half of them had fallen into the grate, and were scorched and partly burnt.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Manners. "Our lines!"

"What rotten luck!"

The juniors rushed to the rescue of their impositions. Tom Merry's lines, as it happened, were secured by the ink-pot, used as a paper-weight. But Manners' sheets were half destroyed, and Lowther's quite gone.

"Well, this beats the giddy band!" said Monty Lowther, in utter disgust. "All my lines wasted, and old Schneider already ramping for them!"

"And half mine!" growled Manners. "What silly ass left the window open?"

"Why, you did," said Tom.

"Ahem! So I did," admitted Manners. "Look here, Tommy, you take your lines in, and keep him quiet if you can. Tell the beast the rest are coming!"

"All serene!"

Tom Merry took his imposition to the German master's study. He was rewarded with a scowl from Herr Schneider.

"Und Manners and Lowter?" exclaimed Herr Schneider sharply. "Vere are doir lines, den?"

"They're coming, sir," said Tom meekly.

"Den dey petter gum quick!"

Tom Merry returned to his chums. Manners was rewriting the destroyed half of his imposition, but Monty Lowther was standing with his hands in his pockets, and a thoughtful expression upon his face.

"Nearly done," said Manners.

"What about you, Monty?"

"I'm thinking of a wheeze," said Lowther, with a grin.

"Oh, rats! No time for wheezes now! Pile into your lines, and I'll lend a hand!"

"But it's a little joke on Schneider," said the humorist of the Shell, his eyes glimmering.

"Ass!" roared Tom Merry. "Schneider isn't feeling humorous just now! This isn't the time to twist the tiger's tail, you fathead! Pile into your lines!"

"Blow the lines!" said Lowther. "Look here, this is the time that Schneider's evening paper comes, isn't it?"

"Blow his evening paper!"

"He always trots out to meet the man, he's so jolly anxious for German victories," said Lowther. "Well, I've got some news for him."

"What the dickens—"

"No time to jaw, or I shall miss him," said Monty Lowther. And he walked out of the study, whistling cheerily, and went downstairs, and out into the quadrangle, already dark in the early winter evening.

"What has the silly ass got in his head now?" growled Tom Merry. "It's about as safe to jape Schneider now as to jape a mad dog. Get your lines in, anyway."

Manners finished his imposition, and rushed downstairs with it, and just caught Herr Schneider coming out of his study.

"My imposition, sir," said Manners.

"Put it on der table!" snapped Herr Schneider. "I looks at him after."

"Certainly, sir."

Herr Schneider had put his coat and hat on, to go down to the gates. The German master had an evening paper brought to the school every day, so keen, was he to watch the progress of the German arms—and legs. He had stated contemptuously that the English papers did not report the German victories, and declined to admit the possibility that there weren't any to report. But he was very keen for such news as he could get. Deeply had the St. Jim's fellows resented seeing him standing in the quad with his paper and

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chuckling over the fall of Antwerp. No doubt it was natural that he should be pleased, but considering where he was, it would only have been decent to keep his satisfaction to himself.

But there was a different kind of news for Herr Schneider this evening. As he stepped out of the School House, Monty Lowther came dashing up from the dusky gloom of the quadrangle, looking very excited.

"Is that you, Herr Schneider?" he gasped. "Ja, ja! Is tat newsmen—?" "I—I've got news, sir." "Vat is it, Lowther? Tell me quick!" "I suppose you saw in this morning's 'Daily Mail,' sir, about the French attacking the German lines?" "Ja, ja! Tat is noting! Neffer can dose miserable French penetrate te lines of te great Cherman Army! But vat news—vat news, den?"

"The latest, sir—?" "Ja, ja! Quick!" "You really want me to tell you, sir?" "Ja, ja! I order you," shouted Herr Schneider. "German lines totally destroyed, sir!" said Lowther. "Vat!" "Eye-witnesses' evidence, sir—not the slightest doubt—German lines utterly destroyed!" "Mein Gott!" "Utterly destroyed by English fire, sir!" said Lowther. "Ach! Tat cannot be true! Mein Gott! Te English Army can neffer stand against te great Cherman Army! Nonsense! It is false!" "Evidence of eye-witnesses, sir."

"Mein Gott!" "It's quite true, sir," said Monty Lowther. "Not the slightest doubt about it. German lines totally destroyed by English fire."

And Monty Lowther walked cheerfully into the School House, leaving the German master standing on the steps—saying things in German.

CHAPTER 6.

Merely a Misunderstanding.

MONTY LOWTHER was busy in his study, writing out his imposition over again, when the fellows came crowding in to ask him questions. Two or three had overheard the startling information he had given to the German master, and they wanted to know the particulars.

"Seen the evening paper, Lowther?" exclaimed Kangaroo. "No," said Lowther, without looking up from his lines. "But the news—?" "You told Herr Schneider—?" "Weally, Lowthah—?" "How do you know if you haven't seen the paper?" roared Blake. "I do know," said Lowther calmly. "Eye-witnesses' evidence."

"Who are the eye-witnesses, then?" demanded Gore. "I'm one—?" "What!" "Tom Merry's another—?" "Bai Jove!" "Manners is another!" said Lowther, with perfect coolness, slugging away at his German while he spoke. "You—you silly ass!" yelled Blake, exasperated. "How can you three duffers be eye-witnesses of what's happened in France or Belgium?"

"Yaas, wathah!" "I didn't say it happened in France or Belgium, did I?" "Well, where did it happen, then?" "In this country, of course, or we couldn't have seen it." "The silly duffer's pulling our leg," growled Gore. "What part of this country did it happen in, you funny idiot, then?" "St. Jim's!" "What!"

"To be more exact, in this study," said Lowther, with refreshing coolness. "You silly ass—?" "You uttah idiot—?" "You howling chump—?" "But it's true!" shouted Lowther. "I tell you we saw it, and you can see for yourselves, if you like to look."

"What! Where—how—which—?" Monty Lowther pointed to the grate. The juniors stared at the charred remnants of the German imposition lying in the fender.

"What—what's that—?" "The wind blew the sheets off the table," Lowther explained. THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 360.

plained, "so it happened that the German lines were destroyed by English fire."

"My hat!" "You—you—funny idiot!" "Ha, ha, ha!" "Bai Jove! But you didn't explain that to Herr Schneider—?"

"Not likely! He can find that out for himself," said Lowther calmly. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"The juniors cleared off, and proceeded to spread the 'news,' and the whole House was soon grinning over it. Meanwhile, Monty Lowther rewrote his lines, and Herr Schneider was waiting at the school gates for the arrival of the newspaper-man. The weather was bad, and the man was a little late, and Herr Schneider was fuming with impatience. Taggles, the porter, politely asked him into his lodge, where a cheerful fire was burning. Herr Schneider stepped in with a frowning brow.

"It cannot be true," he said. "It cannot! I will neffer believe it! Te Cherman Army is invincible! It is false! Ach—!"

"Wat's that, sir?" asked Taggles. "Tat Lowther say te news is tat te Cherman lines are destroyed," spluttered Herr Schneider. "It is a silly rumour. It cannot be true."

"Oh, it's bound to come, anyway, sir!" said Taggles cheerfully. "I've 'ad a letter from my nevy at the front, sir, and he says they're giving the brutes the regier kybosh, sir—begging your pardon, seeing as how you are German, sir."

"Nonsense!" snapped Herr Schneider. "All tat news is false. All te news excepting te Cherman news is false." Taggles snorted.

"I've 'eard as they make up hawful lies in Berlin, sir—inventing of victories and sich," he remarked. "It's 'ard on your fellers, sir, I do say that; but wot can they expect? They ain't no good agin our men, so wot the dickens can they expect? Can't 'elp feelin' sorry for 'em, sometimes, considering that they haven't an earthly. I s'pose that's 'ow you feel about it, sir."

That wasn't at all how Herr Schneider felt about it, and he stalked out of Taggles' lodge with a snort. Taggles shook his head solemnly.

"Must be 'ard on him, to 'ear about 'em gettin' chopped up," mused Taggles. "But wot can they expect—that's wot I want to know. They ought to have knowed it in advance, if they'd 'ad any common-sense. That's wot beats me."

Herr Schneider tramped to the gates again. The newspaper-man arrived at last, and Herr Schneider simply grabbed the paper. He yanked it open, but he could not read in the light at the gates, and he strode into Taggles' lodge again. He soon ascertained that the latest news was "as you were." A little advance had been made here, and a little retreat had been made there, and the Germans were surrendering in batches, and our troops were in the best of spirits—the same old news. There was certainly nothing to substantiate the startling and thrilling information Lowther had imparted.

Herr Schneider crunched the paper in his hand, and strode away furiously towards the School House. He had no doubt now that his leg had been pulled, and he wanted vengeance—and he wanted it at once. He noticed that there were a number of juniors in the hall as he came in, and that they were all grinning. They grinned still more at the sight of his furious face, his eyes glittering through his spectacles, and the paper crushed savagely in his hand.

"Now for the squalls!" murmured Blake. "Yaas, wathah! I fancy Lowthah is goin' to get it wathah warm," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It is possible to be a little too humeuous."

Herr Schneider did not go to his own study. He stopped at Mr. Railton's door, and knocked, or rather banged, on it, and strode in. There was a buzz among the juniors.

Evidently there was going to be trouble. Herr Schneider had hit the door with his eye, and the fellows saw Mr. Railton rise from his table in astonishment as the German master flourished the evening paper.

"What is the matter, Herr Schneider?" exclaimed the Housemaster.

"Dat poy—Lowther—?" Herr Schneider almost choked with rage. "Herr Railton, I am a Cherman in dis country! Is it tae I shall be insulted and choked?"

"Choked!" exclaimed the Housemaster. "I—?" "Ja, ja! I have been choked—choked by tat Lowther!" Mr. Railton stared.

"Herr Schneider! You—you cannot mean that Lowther has assaulted you—?" "Nein, nein! He choke me!" shouted the herr. "I

have been choked mit him! Is it tat a chunior poy shall choke a master?"

"A—A chunior—oh, a junior—Lowther has joked—I understand." For the moment the herr's beautiful accent had perished. For the Housemaster, and he really thought that Herr Schneider was accusing the humorist of the Shell of choking him. "Ja, ja—he choke mit me, himself after!" gasped the herr. "He tell me lies."

"Indeed! What—"
Herr Schneider flourished the "Evening News."
"Dere is noting here—no news tat is new! Lowther he come to me, he tell me lies. He say tat to Cherman lines are totally destroyed mit demselves by to British fire. Is it tat he shall make such chokes mit me. I ask you, Herr Raitlon."

Mr. Raitlon frowned.
"Certainly Lowther should have told you no such thing, and especially if it is not correct," he exclaimed.

"It was von pig lie, Herr Raitlon. To Cherman lines shall never be voken by der Englanders—tat is impossible—"

"We disagree on that subject, Herr Schneider, and it is one that we need not discuss," said Mr. Raitlon icily. "Naturally, I wish the boys to show you every consideration. Though, of course, the news of a victory affords them the freest satisfaction—as in my own case. Lowther, however, certainly should not convey to you news which, as a German, you would regard as unwelcome. I will send for him at once."

Mr. Raitlon called to one of the fags in the passage.
"Tell Lowther I require him here immediately, Kerruish." Kerruish hurried away for Monty Lowther. In a few minutes the humorist of the Shell entered the Housemaster's study. He was not looking humorous; he was very serious indeed. In his hand he held his finished imposition.

"Lowther, Herr Schneider has a very serious complaint to make of you."

"I am sorry, sir," murmured Lowther. "But I have done them over again now."

"Yes, you have done what over again?"
"My lines, sir." Lowther laid the German impot on the table, looking as if butter or cream would have considerable difficulty in melting in his mouth.

"It is not a question of lines, Lowther," said Mr. Raitlon sternly.

"No, sir!" said Lowther, in astonishment. "Is there anything else, sir?"

"You gave Herr Schneider false news concerning a German reverse. As Herr Schneider's sympathies are naturally with his own countrymen, Lowther, it is unfeeling to tell him of such things. Besides, in this case your statement was not correct. There is nothing in the newspaper to substantiate it."

"I—I'm afraid I don't quite follow, sir," said Lowther humbly. "I don't remember telling Herr Schneider anything about a German reverse. And I certainly never told him anything that was false."

"Poy!" roared Herr Schneider. "You gum to me in der quangle, and you tell me tat to Cherman Army is defeated by to British, nit it?"

"You are mistaken, sir," said Lowther politely. "Perhaps you do not understand the English language very easily, sir. That must be it."

"Lowther!" said Mr. Raitlon warningly.
"Well, sir, Herr Schneider has misunderstood what I said to him!" said Lowther, in an injured tone. "I thought I spoke plainly enough, but he has quite misunderstood."

"Exactly what do you say to Herr Schneider?" demanded Mr. Raitlon, with a very searching glance at Lowther.

"I told him that my imposition had been destroyed, sir."

"Yat!" yelled Herr Schneider.
"I had left it in my study, sir," Lowther explained. "The wind blew the paper into the fire, so I have had to write it out over again."

"Te poy tells lies mit himself!" shouted Herr Schneider.
"He tell me tat to Cherman Army shall be broken up by to British."

"This is very extraordinary," said Mr. Raitlon: "I really do not see, Lowther, how the statement you say you made could be so misinterpreted by Herr Schneider. Tell me the exact words you used, if you can remember them."

Monty Lowther appeared to reflect deeply.
"Lemme see, sir. I said that the German lines had been destroyed by the British fire," he said demurely.

Mr. Raitlon started.
"Ja, ja, tat is vat he say!" exclaimed Herr Schneider.
"Tat to Cherman lines have been totally destroyed by to British fire."

"So they were, sir," said Lowther calmly. "The wind blew them into the fire, and they were totally destroyed."

A chuckle came from the passage. Mr. Raitlon glanced towards the door, and the chucklers promptly disappeared.

"Herr Schneider seems to think that I was referring to the German lines in Belgium, sir," said Lowther, with refreshing coolness. "Of course, I wasn't doing anything of the sort. I was referring to the German lines in my study. I don't know anything about the German lines in Belgium. Of course, I hope they have been destroyed; but I don't know anything about it. I was really explaining to Herr Schneider how it was that I hadn't brought in my imposition."

"Mein—mein Gott!"
Mr. Raitlon looked very hard at Lowther.
"Your words were open to misconception, Lowther. Herr Schneider naturally thought you were referring to the lines of the German Army."

"Did he, sir?" said Lowther innocently. "Of course, as he didn't mention that to me, I couldn't know that, could I, sir?"

"I think you must have guessed it, Lowther."

"Ahem!"
"In fact, Lowther, I think you worded your statement to Herr Schneider with the intention of being misunderstood."

"Ahem!" murmured Lowther. "I—I told him the exact facts, sir. The German lines had been destroyed, and—"

"I fear, Lowther, that you must have intended your statement to mislead Herr Schneider, and you will take a hundred lines."

"Very well, sir."
"You may go!"

Monty Lowther promptly went.
"Is it not tat he shall be punished, Herr Raitlon?" exclaimed the German master, as the door closed after Monty Lowther, and the sound of a chuckle came from the passage.

"I have punished him, Herr Schneider," said Mr. Raitlon coldly. "And in my opinion you would do well to take no notice of such a trifling matter. It has been in my mind several times to speak to you on this subject. I make every allowance for your feelings as a German, but an English school is not the proper place to show open satisfaction at a German success or a British reverse. You have done both. An Englishman who acted in such a manner in Germany, as you know well, would find himself in trouble immediately. This is a free country, for foreigners as well as for natives, and nobody desires to see German methods introduced here. At the same time, Herr Schneider, it would be advisable for you not to provoke the resentment of the boys by open display of feelings naturally disagreeable to them."

Herr Schneider listened to that little lecture with his mouth open, like a fish out of water. It was well deserved; he had tried the patience of masters as well as of the boys. When Mr. Raitlon had finished, Herr Schneider left the study without a word. He could not trust himself to reply.

In Tom Merry's study there was a sound of merriment. Monty Lowther was the richer by a hundred lines; but he said that it was worth it, and the other fellows agreed with him.

CHAPTER 7.

Herr Schneider Makes Another Mistake.

"WHAT the dickens, Gore—" Gore put his finger to his lips.
"Shush!" he whispered mysteriously. And Levison of the Fourth "shushed."

It was the day after Monty Lowther's little joke on Herr Schneider. It was a half-holiday at St. Jim's; and the weather having mended a little, Tom Merry & Co. were on the football-field playing Figgins's team from the New House.

The School House was well-nigh deserted. All the fellows were out of doors, and all the masters with the exception of Herr Schneider. The herr was like a bear with a sore head that day. News from the front was worse than ever—from the German master's point of view. And the retaliation his bad temper had called forth rendered his temper "badder" than ever, as Monty Lowther said. Herr Schneider had withdrawn to his study to smoke his big German pipe and meditate upon the extraordinary failure of the Kaiser & Co. to carry out their tremendous schemes. And outside his study door Levison of the Fourth had suddenly come upon George Gore, occupied in an exceedingly curious manner.

Gore had a strong cord in his hand. He had looped one end over the handle of the door and drawn it tight. The other end he was fastening to a gimlet, which he had driven in the doorposts almost up to the handle. Levison watched him with a grin.

When the cord was tied securely from the door-handle to the gimlet, it was impossible for the door to be opened from within. The German master was a prisoner in his study.

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NEXT WEDNESDAY—"THE CALL OF THE PAST!" A magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Bottling him up, like the giddy German Fleet!" grinned Levison.

"That isn't all!" said Gore, with a chuckle. "I'm going to talk to him."

Levison whistled softly.

"Better look out. He'll know your voice, and—"

"He won't know my voice!" chuckled Gore. "That's where the little joke comes in. I've been practising Mossoo's voice."

"My hat!"

"Keep watch at the end of the passage," said Gore. "Whistle if anybody comes along, there's a good chap. I don't want to be spotted."

"Right-ho!" said Levison.

The Fourth-Former took up his watch at the end of the passage.

"All serene," he called out softly.

Gore knocked on the door.

"Gum in!" came the German master's grumpy voice from within.

Bang! Gore knocked again.

"Gum in!" roared Herr Schneider. "Gannot you open te door?"

"Mon Dieu! Venez vous!" said Gore in his excellent imitation of the high-pitched tones of Monsieur Morny. "Open ze door yourself, you Sherman peeg!"

"Vat!"

"Peeg! Sherman peeg, zen!"

"Mein Gott!"

"Open ze door, zen, you Sherman rottair!" went on Gore. "I zink zat you are yun peeg. I zink zat you sould be sent home to Shermany wiz ze ozzer rottairs!"

"Ach, himmel!"

"Ven zat you go to Shermany, you can tell ze Kaiser zat ze French Army come soon and bottle him up, like ze British Fleet wiz ze rotten Sherman Fleet."

The door-handle rattled as Herr Schneider dragged it from within.

"Mein Gott! You hold mein door wiz yourself!" roared Herr Schneider. "You gum here and fasten mein door and insult me, Herr Morny."

"Bah! I speet upon you."

"French pig!" yelled the imprisoned German master, dragging furiously at the door, but dragging in vain.

"Sherman rottair!"

"Machen die Ture auf! Open der door, you French Goward!"

"Bah! Lache!" howled Gore, still in the high-pitched voice of Monsieur Morny. "I speet upon you! I speet upon Shermany! I speet upon ze Kaiser! Zat Kaiser—he is mad! Ven zat ze French Army sall reach Berlin, it is zat we put him in a lunatic asylum viz ze ozzer lunatics."

"Mein Gott!"

The door creaked and groaned as Herr Schneider dragged it at the handle from inside. But the strong cord held it fast. It did not yield half an inch.

"Led mo' out!" roared Herr Schneider. "How tare you fasten me up in mein study mit meinsel, you peastly Franzosisch pig! Yah! Coward!"

"It is you zat is ze coward! You dare not come out and face a Frenchman! Bah!"

"It is tat I gannot open der door."

"You lie!"

"Vat!"

"Vous mentez!" shrieked Gore. "Vous mentez comme un lache! You lie like a coward! Bah! I speet upon you!"

"Ach! Mein Gott! Tat leetle peeg of a Frenchman!"

Ven tat I get out, I preak every pone in his poddy! Ach!"

"Ma foi!" squeaked Gore. "Vous n'osez pas! You dare not, peeg! Sherman sausage! Ven zat you dare to come out viz you, I zrash you, isn't it? Bah! Sherman sausage! Hum! Peeg! Fat cochon! Yah!"

There was a howl of wrath in the study. If the German master could have got at his interlocutor just then, certainly Gore would have been in danger. But the securely fastened door was between them, and Herr Schneider could not even see him. And the German had not the slightest doubt that it was Monsieur Morny who was talking to him through the door. Ever since the war began, relations had been strained between the German and French masters at St. Jim's. Now they were no longer on speaking terms. A frozen silence had reigned between them, and now it appeared that Mossoo had broken the silence emphatically.

"Vy you not come out?" shrieked Gore. "Lache! Venez done!"

"Ach! Ven tat I gum, I preak you into bieees! Ach!"

"Peeg!"

"Peast!"

"Rottair!"

"Goward!"

"Sherman cochon!"

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"Franzoesich dummkopf!"

"Bah! I waste no more time on you! Stay zere and zink of ze time ven zat ze Francaise march into Berlin and place ze silly Kaiser in ze lunatic asylum! Bah!"

And Gore, thinking that he had done enough—as he certainly had—walked away. He joined Levison at the end of the passage. Levison was nearly doubled up with laughter.

"My word," murmured Levison, "there'll be squalls over this! Old Schneider thinks that was Mossoo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He may go for Mossoo bald-headed when he meets him!"

"That's what I want," said Gore coolly. "Mossoo's given me lines, and Schneider's given me lines. I'd like to see 'em punching one another. It would be ripping!—Let's get off. We may have to prove an alibi."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the two young rascals promptly departed, leaving Herr Schneider simply raving in his study. Gore, with the utmost coolness, strolled round the quad under the German master's window about ten minutes later. He saw an infuriated red face glaring from the window.

"Gore!" called out Herr Schneider.

"Yes, sir," said Gore, taking off his cap respectfully, and coming under the window.

"Mein door is fastened outside. I want you to go sound and open it," spluttered Herr Schneider.

"Something wrong with the lock, sir?" asked Gore innocently. "Shall I go and get a locksmith?"

"Nein, nein!"

"I don't think there are nine locksmiths in Rylecombe, sir," said Gore. "I think there's only one, sir; but he could manage it."

"I did not say nine—I said nein, you stupid boy! Go round and open my door. It is fastened outside by a cowardly pig!"

"My hat! I'll try, sir."

Gore went into the house, and unfastened the cord at the German master's door. The door was dragged open, and Herr Schneider came out furiously.

"There you are, sir," said Gore. "Somebody had fastened it with this cord, sir. Do you know who it was? Very disrespectful thing to do. One of the fags, I suppose."

"It was not a fag. It was tat French peast!" roared Herr Schneider. "But I talks to him—ja, ja! I talks to him! Have you see Monsieur Morny?"

"Mossoo, sir? He's just gone out." Monsieur Morny had been gone out more than half an hour, as a matter of fact; but it did not suit Gore to give that information.

Herr Schneider ground his teeth.

"Gone out! Ze coward! Te peeg! You do not know vere he is gone, Gore?"

"Yes, sir. I think he's gone to the post-office, sir, for his French newspapers."

"I gif him French newspapers! You may go!"

Gore walked away cheerfully. A few minutes later the stout German came out with his overcoat on, and a stick in his hand. Gore and Levison watched him with great joy.

"He's after Mossoo," whispered Gore. "He'll meet him coming back from the post-office. My only hat, this is going to be rich!"

Levison whistled.

"They'll both get the sack if they start scrapping," he said.

"Serve 'em right," said Gore callously. "Let 'em! I'm fed-up with Schneider, and I don't like Mossoo much better."

"Mossoo's not a bad sort," said Levison. "Still, if Schneider goes for him, he'll be in the wrong; and the Head's a just beast. I say, if they're going to scrap, we ought to be on the scene. We'll take some of the fellows. Don't want to make ourselves conspicuous, or the Schneider-bird might smell a mouse."

"What-ho!" said Gore, with a chuckle.

They strolled down to the footer field. There were a crowd of Fourth-Formers and Shell fellows watching the junior match.

"Hallo! What's the joke?" asked Bernard Glyn, who was among the onlookers, as he caught sight of Gore's grinning face.

"Something's up," explained Gore. "I've just seen Schneider—"

"Oh, blow Schneider!"

"He's been calling Mossoo names, and he's gone to look for him with a stick," said Gore.

"What?"

"It's a fact. It'll be worth seeing, too," said Gore.

"Who's coming?"

"But, faith, he can't be going for Mossoo!" exclaimed Reilly. "The Head wouldn't allow it, intirely!"

"You're spoofing, Gore!"

"Gammon!"

Gore shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, I only know what I've seen and heard," he said. "I'm going to see the fun. You fellows can please yourselves."

"Bo jabsers, I'm coming!" said Reilly.
 "Same here, I guess," said Samley Linnely.
 Quite a little army of juniors started for the gates with Gore and Levison. The football-match went on gaily, but it was almost deprived of spectators. A House-match was a House-match; but a "scrap" between the German and French masters was still more worth seeing. And it is to be feared that the crowd of young rascals who poured out of the gates of St. Jim's were not at all anxious that the peace should be kept.

CHAPTER 8.

A Franco-German Encounter.

"ACH! Stop mit you!"
 Monsieur Morny stopped.
 The French master was walking gaily back from Deloombé post-office, where he had received a batch of newspapers from his beloved France. Like all true Parisians, Monsieur Morny felt himself in exile when he was not able to read the boulevard of the City of Light; he sorely missed the sights and sounds, not to mention the smells, of La Ville Lumière. The French papers he received by the post came as a sort of whiff of his beloved Paris. And with his "Figaro" and "Matin" and "Journal and Action Française"—albeit several days old—he promised himself an enjoyable afternoon. But it was a case of Monsieur Morny postponing, and Herr Schneider disposing. Half-way back to St. Jim's the portly form of Herr Schneider loomed up in his path, with furious eyes gleaming behind spectacles.

If Herr Schneider had been calmer he would have carried a complaint to the Head of the shocking insults he had received, as he supposed, from the French master. But he was not calm; he was very far from calm. He had been fagged up in his study and insulted. He had been called a German pig and a coward. A coward he certainly was not, however much truth there may have been in the rest.

And he was bent now on proving to Mossoo that he wasn't a coward, at all events, and on taking summary vengeance for the insults that had been heaped on him.

Monsieur Morny regarded with with surprise.
 The stout German towered over the dapper, neat, precise Frenchman.

"Bon jour!" said Monsieur Morny, surprised but polite.
 "Ach! French peeg!"
 Monsieur Morny jumped. He doubted if he had heard right.

"Monsieur!" he exclaimed.
 "Goward!"
 "Herr Schneider!"
 "There is now no locked door between us, you French peeg," roared Herr Schneider. "Will you repeat vat tat you have said, den?"

"But I have said nozing!" said the astounded French master. "You call me names! I zink zat you are very excited. I beg you to be calm."

Mossoo's impression was that Herr Schneider had been deceiving himself to his cherished lager, not wisely, but too well. In no other way could he account for the German master's extraordinary conduct.

"I will not be calm!" roared Herr Schneider. "You have been insulted and mein beloved Chermamy!"

"Mais, monsieur—"
 "Vat have you said of mein Kaiser—hein?"
 Mossoo was silent. He had said many things about the Kaiser, though he was too polite to say them to Herr Schneider. He could only conclude that some mischief-making person had repeated some of his observations to the German master.

But what he had said he had said. Mossoo would not have eaten his words if he had been threatened by a whole German army corps, let alone by one German master.

"I have said many zings of ze Kaiser," he said mildly.
 "But I not say zem to you."
 "Zat is vun lie!"
 "Monsieur!"

"Mein Kaiser is ein lunatic—vat?" roared Herr Schneider.
 As it happened, Monsieur Morny had expressed that as his first opinion, not once but many times, though never in the hearing of Herr Schneider. In fact, he did not see how so obvious a circumstance could be doubted by anybody but a German.

"I may have my opinion, Herr Schneider!" he said, with dignity. "If you sall quarrel viz everybody zat zink zat ze Kaiser is mad, you sall quarrel viz everybody outside Sherman—isn't it?"
 "Ach! Peeg!"

"Monsieur, I endure zat languago from nobody!" exclaimed Monsieur Morny indignantly. "It is you zat are ze peeg!"

"Franzosisch peeg and goward!" roared Herr Schneider, shaking his stick at the French master.
 "Smack!"

Monsieur Morny's open hand came across Herr Schneider's fat, red cheek with a crack like a pistol-shot. Mossoo was, as he would have described it, au bout de la patience. He had no patience left.

Herr Schneider staggered back for a moment; and then, with a roar like a bull, he fairly hurled himself upon Monsieur Morny. His stick came down with a resounding thwack across the French master's shoulders. Monsieur gave a yell of rage. He was not much more than half the size of the stout German, especially sideways. But he was as full of pluck as a Scotch terrier. He rushed upon the German master, hitting out right and left.

There was a roar of voices, as a crowd of fellows came tearing up from the direction of St. Jim's.

"Go it, Mossoo!"
 "Give him beans!"
 "Lemme hold your hat, sir!"
 "Down with the Deutschlender!"
 "Vive la France!"
 "Hurray!"

The seriousness of the matter was quite lost on the young scamps of the Shell and the Fourth. They were overjoyed. It was, as Digby remarked, a sample of the Franco-German War brought home to them, and as good as a cinematograph. And all their sympathy was on the side of the Frenchman, partly because he was French, and partly because Herr Schneider was so openly and flagrantly in the wrong.

And Mossoo, though the smaller of the two, seemed to be getting the better of it. He was at his bulky antagonist like a fiery bantam, jumping about like an excited frog, and planting punch after punch upon the confused and bewildered German.

"Take zat viz you!" shrieked Mossoo, in his high-pitched voice. "And zat! And zat! Sherman peeg! Is it not zat I have held my tongue so long and never said vat it is zat I zink you of! Take zat! I zink zat you are a cochon! Bah! Take zat and zat! Les Allemands sont tous cochons! Bah! And zat!"

"Mein Gott!"
 Monsieur Morny's beautiful silk hat fell off in his excitement, and Gore kindly picked it up for him. Bernard Glyn rescued his bundle of papers from the mud. The juniors stood round in a cheering ring.

"Go it, Mossoo!"
 "Pile in, be jabers! Pile in! Give the spalpeen socks!"
 "Hurray!"
 "Ach!" gasped Herr Schneider, rolling round in wild endeavours to get at his more nimble antagonist. "Himmel! I preaks every pone in your puddy! Ach! Vait till I gets hold of you, you Franzosisch peeg! Ach!"
 "Bah! Prenez done! Tako zat!"
 "Ach! Ow! Yah! Mein Gott!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Two to one on Froggy!" yelled Gore.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Herr Schneider, driven to fury by the rain of blows on all sides from the active Frenchman, made wild rushes at his foe, and succeeded in getting in a blow at last. The blow had the weight of fourteen stone behind it, and it doubled poor Mossoo up like a henfiskie. He landed on his back in the muddy lane and gasped.

"Mon Dieu! I am keel! Helas! Mon Dieu!"
 "Ach! Get up mit you!" roared Herr Schneider, prancing round the fallen Frenchman like an excited dryhorse. "Get up, you goward, or I keeck you!"

"Fair play!" shouted Glyn. "Don't bit a man when he's down! You can do that to the Belgians; you can't do it here!"

"Get up mit you, or I keeck you, Franzosisch peeg!" bellowed Herr Schneider.

But poor Mossoo could not get up. He was not an athlete, and the terrific blow had completely knocked him out. He was full of courage, but he was done.

The German, in his rage, kicked the fallen man in the ribs; not very hard, but just as a reminder that he was waiting.
 "Dash it all, we're not going to stand that!" shouted Clifton Dane, and the Canadian junior ran forward and interposed.

"Get pack mit you!" roared Herr Schneider.
 "Rats!" snapped Clifton Dane. "Back up, you fellows!"
 The juniors "backed up" at once. They formed a ring round the fallen Frenchman, and Herr Schneider had to give ground. The angry German glared at them, and made a threatening movement, but the grim looks of the St. Jim's

fellows made him pause. They were quite in a mood to pitch him into the ditch.

Herr Schneider, gritting his teeth, turned away and stalked off towards St. Jim's. He had had the best of the encounter, anyway.

Clifton Dane knelt beside poor Mossoo. He helped him into a sitting position.

Monsieur Morny blinked at him dazedly.
 "Mon Dieu! I zank you, mon garcon. Helas! I feel ver-ee bad. It is like zat I have ze punch of ze mule's foot. Mon Dieu! Zat Sherman is mad, I zink! I do not know vy for he shall come and quarrel viz me. Help me up. Zank you!"

Monsieur Morny was raised to his feet, leaning heavily on the Canadian junior. He was still gasping, and he was hurt, but more than the hurt to his body was the hurt to his pride. He had been kicked—kicked by a German—in the presence of onlookers! His face was crimson with shame and rage.

Gore handed him his hat, and he put it on in silence, and walked slowly towards the school, helped by the Canadian junior. Without another word he went into the House when they reached St. Jim's and went up to his room.

The juniors dispersed, grinning over the "scrap," but at the same time concerned for poor Mossoo. They felt that it wasn't quite fair that he should have been licked when he was in the right.

"Mossoo means to go for him again," said Clifton Dane. "I could see the giddy gleam in his eye! But the poor chap hasn't an earthly!"

Tom Merry & Co. came off the football-field, and simply gasped when they heard the news. Gore and Levison could have enlightened them as to the cause of the quarrel, but that they did not intend to do.

"But what was the wov about, deah boys?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"All Schneider's fault," said Clifton Dane. "Gore saw him start out after poor old Froggy, and we went to see the fun!"

"Gore!" said Tom Merry suspiciously. "Did you have anything to do with it, Gore?"

"Bow-wow!" said Gore.

"I don't see how he could," remarked Glyn. "We all saw it. Schneider sopped Mossoo in the lane, and picked up a quarrel with him. He called him names, and Mossoo smacked him. Poor old Mossoo put up a ripping fight, too; but he wasn't big enough. And that fat beast kicked him when he was down!"

"Shame!"

"Let's go and give him a groan!" suggested Monty Lowther.

"Good egg!"

"Yaas, watah! I weally considah that we ought to express our disappwoval of beastly Pwussian conduct heh!"

An army of juniors marched under Herr Schneider's study window, and gave him a series of hearty groans. They expected to "draw" the herr; but Herr Schneider was not to be drawn.

Now that he had had time to cool down, the herr realised what a very serious thing had been done, and he was only too anxious for the matter to be dropped. He could imagine what the Head would say if he heard of a fight between two masters, whatever the provocation might have been.

So he sat tight, as it were; and Tom Merry & Co. groaned and groaned under his study window without a sign in response.

They groaned till they were tired, and the German master gave no sign; but at least, as Monty Lowther remarked, they had the satisfaction of letting him know what they thought of him.

CHAPTER 9.
Satisfaction Required.

MONSIEUR MORNY was not seen again that day by the St. Jim's fellows.

He stayed in his room. Levison of the Fourth declared that he had seen him from the quad, striding to and fro in his study, and gesticulating.

But when two or three fellows went to look, they found that the French master had drawn his blind, perhaps having spotted Levison in the quad.

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But the shadow of the little Frenchman could be seen, crossing and recrossing the blind in the lighted room, for quite a long time.

Mossoo was evidently thinking over the insult that had been put upon him, and the juniors wondered what was to come of it.

However, bedtime came, and nothing was seen of Monsieur Morny outside his study, and the juniors went to their dormitories.

Herr Schneider was smoking his big German pipe in his study shortly afterwards; then a tap came at his door.

"Gum in?" growled Herr Schneider.

It was Monsieur Morny who came in. Herr Schneider stared at the French master. Monsieur Morny was the very last person he would have expected to visit him, under the circumstances.

Mossoo's face was very pale, and his eyes were burning. The stout German rose quickly to his feet, in anticipation of hostilities. But Mossoo had not come there for fistfights; the little gentleman was at too great a disadvantage in size for that.

He closed the door carefully behind him, and stood facing Herr Schneider, with his arms folded across his chest, looking almost Napoleonic.

"Was denn?" said Herr Schneider.

"Monsieur"—the Frenchman's voice was trembling with suppressed emotion—"zis day you have insult me—a Frenchman!"

"It is tat you shall insult me first, Herr Morny!"

"You keeck me viz your big Sherman boot. Zat is an insult zat cannot be forgotten nevair! I demand ze satisfaction!"

"Ze vat?"

"Ze satisfaction," repeated Monsieur Morny, his eye glittering. "Nous autres Francais; we do not fight viz ze feest. Zere is vun vay zat a gentleman he sall fight, and vun it is zat a Sherman shall keeck me, zat insult shall be viped out in blood!"

"In blood?" repeated Herr Schneider.

"Mais oui."

"Mein Gott!"

"Zat you are mooch pigger as me, zat is true," said Monsieur Morny. "Also I cannot fight like ze castermonger viz ze hands. I offer you ze choice of ze ropier or ze pistol!"

Herr Schneider blinked at the furious little Frenchman with his spectacles. He could hardly believe his ears at first. But there was no doubt about it. Monsieur Morny, having been fearfully insulted, was challenging him to settle the matter in the Parisian fashion—in a duel. And to judge by Mossoo's deadly looks, the duel would not be a mere comicality, like most French duels. Mossoo was out for blood!

"But tat is against te law," said Herr Schneider, who had a true German's deeply ingrained respect and veneration for any kind of law.

"In zis country, oui; but in Franco——"

"But we are not in Franco, mein herr."

"And also in Shermany."

"But we are in England, and not in Chermanny."

"Zat is no mattair."

Herr Schneider sat down again. In his young days, at a German university, Herr Schneider had, of course, fought in a duel. He was exceedingly proud of a little scar on his face, which was a souvenir of it.

Those peculiar student duels of Germany, in which the combatants are carefully guarded against possible damage, are really part of the German university education, and the trifling scars are highly prized by the absurd youths who gain them without danger to life or limb.

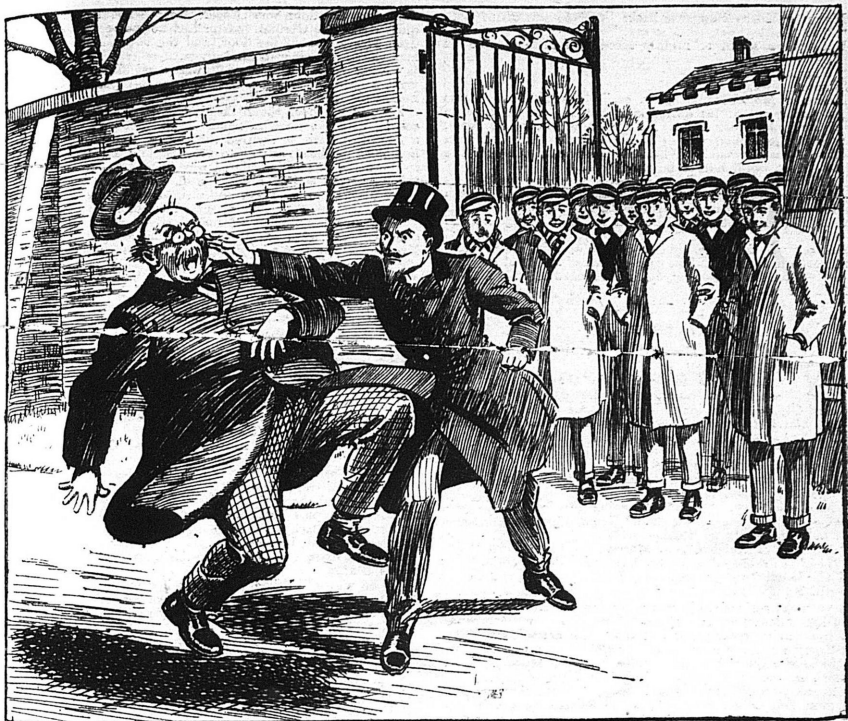
Indeed, in Germany—a country where snobbery is more rife than in any other—it is not unknown for a foolish fellow to manufacture a scar on his cheek, as a pretence to a souvenir of university days.

But though Herr Schneider had been through the harmless and necessary duel of his student days, many long years ago, he was not in the least inclined to go through a more serious one now. Whether it turned out a comedy or a tragedy, it was equally disagreeable to his ideas.

"I tink tat you are silly!" he remarked.

"I vill do notting of te sort. It is verboten—forbidden—in dis country. A Cherman does notting dat is verboten!"

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Smack! Monsieur Morny's open hand came across Herr Schneider's fat red cheek with a crack like a pistol-shot. Herr Schneider, with a roar like a bull, hurled himself upon his colleague. But Monsieur was as full of pluck as a Scotch terrier. He rushed upon the German master, hitting out right and left. (See chapter 8.)

Monsieur Morny's attitude became more Napoleonic than ever.

"You refuse?"

"Ja, ja!"

"Zen I call you a coward?"

"I haf alretty galled you a goward," said Herr Schneider; "and you may gall me a goward as long as you like, mein herr!"

"Lache!"

"Dummkopf!"

Monsieur Morny trembled with rage.

"Zen after to have insult me, you refuse zat you give me satisfaction?"

"I giff you anoder trashing if you like, but I do nothing zat is against ze law," said Herr Schneider.

"Zen I strike you vuz my feest?"

"Doo I trows you out of ze room."

"Ah, ze Shermans are all chiens!" said Monsieur Morny furiously. "You take advantage of to be a big beast, and you afraid to fight like ze gentleman!"

"Ach!"

Monsieur Morny unfolded his arms, and strode towards the German master, and shook a furious fist within a foot of his nose. Herr Schneider pushed his chair back a little, and blinked at him.

"Will you give me ze satisfaction, you Sherman rottair?"

"Nein!"

"I have in my room ze swords zat are all ready. Zere is ze moon, and ve can fight behind ze chapel vizout fear of inter-
ruption!"

"Nonsense!"

"Ah! Lache! Scelerat! Coquin!"

"Will you go away, and not be so ridiculous?" said Herr Schneider calmly. "Vat would ze headmaster say if he should hear of dis?"

"Zat is nozing to me. My honour demand zat I have ze satisfaction."

"Nonsense! You have to satisfaction of being trashed py a Cherman, like all te Franzosich peegs in dese days!" said Herr Schneider scornfully. "And now, if you not go out of mein studd, I dakes you py te neck and trows you out!"

And the stout German rose to his feet, towering over Monsieur Morny. The little Frenchman backed away.

"I go," he said. "But zat is not ze finish. You refuse ze satisfaction! Zen I force you! If you not fight like ze gentleman, I keel you like ze dog! Gare a vous!"

"Rubbish! Posh!" said Herr Schneider. "All tat is against ze law!"

"Je n'en moque—I care nozing for zat! Ze honour demand zat I have ze satisfaction. Vous verrez!"

And with that threat Monsieur Morny bounced out of the study, and Herr Schneider sat down to finish his pipe.

Monsieur Morny rushed up to his room, pale with rage. He had to pass the door of the German master's bedroom, and the light in the passage had been turned out. As the little Frenchman rushed along in the dark, there was a sudden collision, and a gasp from some unseen person he had run into.

"Oh, my hat!"

Monsieur Morny staggered back.
 "Mon Dieu! Vat—who is zat?"
 But only a sound of rapidly receding footsteps came in reply.

"Who is zat, I say?"
 Silence.
 Monsieur Morny could guess easily enough that it was some junior out of his dormitory; but he had no time to waste on juniors just then. He rushed on to his own room. The little Frenchman was in deadly earnest. He had been insulted by a German! Whatever the result, whatever the scandal, that insult had to be wiped out.

And Herr Schneider would probably not have smoked his big German pipe so peacefully if he had seen how the French master was occupied in his room just now. Monsieur Morny had unlocked a big trunk, and taken out of it a long leathern case.

He opened the case, and a couple of thin, long blades glimmered in the light. The case contained a pair of duelling swords—a relic of Mossoo's youthful Parisian days. Mossoo was on the warpath!

CHAPTER 10.
 The Raiders!

"WHAT luck?"
 Hatt a dozen voices in the Shell dormitory asked that question as the door opened, and Bernard Glyn came in, breathing hard. Glyn closed the door behind him and panted. Tom Merry & Co. sat up in bed, and blinked at him in the gloom.

"Rotten!" said Glyn.
 "Have you fixed up the bell?"
 "You've been jolly quick!" said Monty Lowther.
 "Spotted?" asked Kangaroo.
 "No," said Glyn. "I was just going into Schneider's bedroom, when Mossoo came charging along the passage like a mad bull, and fairly bowled me over."
 "Mossoo!" exclaimed Tom Merry.
 "Yes!" growled Glyn. "So I bolted. I've got the wire and the bell in my pocket now. I say, you chaps, I fancy something's up!"

Glyn spoke seriously. It was a jape on the German master that had taken him out of his dormitory. Tom Merry & Co. were, as they expressed it, fed-up with Schneider. They felt that it was up to them to avenge their own many injuries, and, above all, the injuries suffered by poor Mossoo. Vengeance, of course, could only take the form of japing the obnoxious German master; and Bernard Glyn, the amateur inventor, had hit on a scheme, which he had worked before with success in a different way. It was quite a simple scheme. By means of an electric bell concealed under the German master's bed, a wire, and a dry battery, it was possible to give Herr Schneider a series of surprises during the night, which would certainly interrupt his rosy dreams of a landing in Kent and a Zeppelin raid on London.

But the schoolboy inventor had been interrupted.
 "What's up?" asked Tom Merry. "Anything wrong with Mossoo?"
 "Yes. You know he's been shut up all the evening. Well, he's been tramping about his study, waving his paw—"

"I've seen his shadow on the blind!" chuckled Gore.
 "He's been working himself up into a rage, like a giddy lion lashing his tail."
 "And I think he's just been to see Schneider," said Glyn. "I heard a door slam downstairs, and I think it was Schneider's; and then Mossoo came bolting up like a maniac. Looks to me as if there's going to be more trouble."
 "They'll both get the push if this goes on," said Clifton Dane.

"I believe Railton's heard something about it already," remarked Manners. "He was looking jolly serious this evening."

"Where's Mossoo now?" asked Tom Merry.
 "Gone to his room, I think," said Glyn. "I'm going back when the coast is clear. Old Schneider won't be long in getting to bed now."

"I'll come with you," said Tom Merry, slipping out of bed. "It's too good a jape to be missed. Schneider's got to be taught manners. I'll put the wire down while you're fixing the bell!"

"Right-ho!" said Glyn.
 Tom Merry hurriedly slipped on his clothes. Bernard Glyn opened the door, and peered into the passage and listened. All was dark and silent.

"Coast's clear," said Glyn.
 "Come on, then."

In their socks, the two Shell fellows crept down the passage without a sound. There was a light under Monsieur Morny's

door, but the door was closed. Herr Schneider's room was quite dark; the German master had not come up to bed yet. Tom Merry opened the door, and the two juniors slipped in and closed the door behind them.

"Now, sharp's the word!" whispered Glyn. "We shall want a light. I've got a flash-lamp in my pocket. You can hold it for me."

Tom Merry held the little electric torch, while Glyn proceeded with the work in hand. It did not take long. With a length of wire he secured the electric bell underneath the bed, near the head, and quite out of sight. The wire attached to the bell—a double insulated wire, of course—was run down the leg of the bed nearest the wall, and thence passed along the wall close to the floor, and pushed out of sight under the edge of the linoleum that covered the floor.

"Put out the light," whispered Glyn, as he reached the door with the wire. "Mustn't let it be seen in the passage. I've got to run this wire along the passage—it will go under the edge of the linoleum."

Tom Merry turned off the light.
 "How about going under the door?" he asked. "If it gets stuck, the current won't pass."

"That's all right—the door doesn't fit close to the base, ass. Lots of room for a wire to pass."
 "Good!"

Glyn opened the door, and drew the wire carefully under it, close to the door-jamb, and pushed the coil along the passage.

Before he could proceed further, the sound of an opening door was heard, and footsteps in the gloom of the passage.

"Cave!" whispered Tom Merry.
 "Get back into the room," muttered Glyn. "That's Schneider."

"But the wire—"
 "That's all right—mum!"
 Glyn pushed the coil of wire close to the wall and left it there. It was not likely to be found in the dark. The two juniors drew back into Herr Schneider's room, and Glyn noiselessly closed the door.

The two juniors waited in the darkness of the room, their hearts beating.

"Who was it?" asked Tom, in a low voice.
 "Mossoo, I think. He's going down again."

"Well he won't come in here, anyway," said Tom.
 "Not likely. Hush!"

The footsteps in the passage had stopped outside the German master's door. Tom Merry caught hold of Glyn's arm in consternation. It certainly was not Herr Schneider outside; but whoever it was, he was coming into that room.

"He's coming in!" whispered Tom breathlessly.
 "Cover—quick!"

There was a big wardrobe standing in a corner of the room, across the corner, as the juniors remembered; and they backed away to it, and squeezed behind it in the dark. It would not have done for them to be discovered in Herr Schneider's room, whomsoever the new-comer might be.

They were barely in their hiding-place when the door-handle turned, and the door opened abruptly. The two Shell fellows scarcely breathed.

They expected the light to be turned on. But the darkness remained unbroken. The new-comer entered the room and closed the door. They could hear him breathing quickly in the darkness.

Who was it?
 They were soon enlightened upon that point. A muttering voice became audible in the silence of the room.

"Ma foi! Is vient, et nous verrons!"
 It was the voice of the French master, speaking to himself in French. The juniors, of course, understood what he was saying—"He comes, and we shall see!"

Tom Merry and Glyn remained perfectly still in their hiding-place, but their hearts were thumping. What did it mean? Monsieur Morny was evidently waiting in that room for the German master to come up to bed. What was it that was to be seen? Was he meditating some attack upon Herr in the dark? That did not seem at all like Mossoo; but why then did he not turn on the light?

The minutes passed.
 They heard the Frenchman moving, and a sound as if he had laid down some heavy article; they could not guess what it was.

Then silence.
 The blinds were down, and not a glimmer of light penetrated into the room. From the movement Monsieur Morny had made they knew that he had taken up his position behind the door. Thus he would be concealed from sight when the door opened. What was his object?

He could hardly have come there to renew his fistical encounter with Herr Schneider. He must have had enough

of that, and must have known that physically he had no chance against the German.

But evidently his surreptitious visit to the German master's room meant mischief. The two juniors felt thoroughly uneasy. They could not get out of the room without discovery while Mossoo was there, and if they waited they had to wait until Herr Schneider came, when it would be still more impossible to get out without discovery. And they felt, too, that something was in the air. They knew the Frenchman's excitable nature, and they knew that he had been brooding over his injuries. It was possible that their presence might be the means of preventing something very serious from happening. Certainly it was for no ordinary purpose that Mossoo was lying in wait for his enemy.

But the juniors had not much time for thinking the matter out. In a quarter of an hour there was a sound of heavy footsteps outside.

They heard a quick breath from the Frenchman in the darkness.

"Maintenant, nous verrons!" The door was thrown open, and the German master came ponderously in. The open door hid the Frenchman from his sight as he turned on the electric light.

The room was suddenly flooded with light, and the juniors in their hiding-place, blinked. Herr Schneider threw the door shut, and in doing so revealed the Frenchman.

CHAPTER 11.

Tom Merry Chips In.

"SIE sind hier!" "Oui, scelerat!" Herr Schneider started back a pace or two, blinking wrathfully at the Frenchman over his glasses. Monsieur Morny clutched up the case he had laid down, and placed his back to the door. Herr Schneider still blinked at him.

"Vat is all tat, den?" he demanded. "Vy for is it tat I find you in mein zimmer, like a purglar, Monsieur Morny?" "Vous ne comprenez pas?" hissed Monsieur Morny, with deadly sarcasm.

Herr Schneider shook his head. "Non! Fous bouvez aller!" said the German master. Herr Schneider's French was still more funny than his English, but it did not make Monsieur Morny smile.

Monsieur Morny did not "allow." He had planted himself with his back to the door, and evidently he did not intend to move. He clicked open the case and revealed the two duelling-blades. Herr Schneider blinked at them, his pale-blue eyes growing bigger and rounder behind his spectacles. Mossoo slipped his hand behind him, and turned the key in the lock. Then he took the two weapons from the case, and threw the case upon the bed.

"Choose!" he said dramatically.

"Vat!"

"Choisez!" said Mossoo. "You have insult me, and you refuse ze satisfaction! It is not zat I permit you to refuse. Here ve alone—alone, and ze door is lock. Here ve vill fight like ze gentlemen, and not like ze Sherman peegs! Choose!"

"Mein Gott!"

"Here, in zis room, ve fight to ze death!" said Monsieur Morny.

"I do nodding of te sort."

"Lache!"

"It is against te law."

"Cela ne fait rien! You sall zink of zat before zat you keek me viz your big brutal Sherman boot!"

"I kick you vunce more if you not go out and dake away dose silly toasting-sticks," said Herr Schneider.

Monsieur Morny threw one of the blades towards Herr Schneider, and it fell glittering at his feet. He grasped the other in a businesslike way.

"En garde!" he said.

"Nonsense!"

"Take up zat sword!"

"I vill not!"

"Zen I steek you like ze peeg!" said Monsieur Morny, and he made a pass at Herr Schneider, which made him jump back in alarm.

"Put you are mad!" roared the German. "Go avay mit your nonsense, or I shout for help."

"Shout, zen! Ze door is lock; no vun can enter!" said Monsieur Morny. "Here ve are man to man—a French gentleman against a Sherman peeg! It is too much honour for you zat I fight viz you; but I have been insult, and zat can only be viped out in blood. I give you vun minute to take up zat sword, and if you do not take him I run you zrough ze body like a peeg!"

"Mein Gott!"

Herr Schneider glared helplessly at the Frenchman. Mossoo was in deadly earnest, there wasn't the slightest doubt about that. He had earned himself in the German master's bedroom in order to force him into a duel to the death. The door was locked, and the Frenchman, sword in hand, was between Herr Schneider and the door. The fat German's red face became paler.

Behind the wardrobe Tom Merry and Bernard Glyn looked at one another in utter consternation.

They understood now, and, but for the seriousness of the situation, the little Frenchman's ferocity would have made them inclined to laugh. But it was evidently no laughing matter. Obnoxious as Herr Schneider was, they certainly didn't want to see him stretched in his blood on the floor of his bedroom; and still more they did not want Monsieur Morny to be taken away and hanged—which was the natural result of having that kind of "satisfaction" in a law-abiding country.

There was a dead silence in the room. Mossoo had given his enemy a minute's grace to pick up his weapon and defend himself. Herr Schneider grunted asthmatically, and stooped to pick up the rapier.

Tom Merry pressed Glyn's arm.

"We've got to stop the silly fools!" he whispered.

Glyn nodded.

"En garde, monsieur!" said Monsieur Morny, with deadly politeness.

Herr Schneider was quite pale now. Sword in hand, within the limits of the bedroom, the Frenchman, a master of fence, undoubtedly had a great advantage. In fact, the tables were turned. The big, stout German had knocked Mossoo out in fistic encounter, but in a more deadly conflict the boot was on the other leg. And from the German's point of view it was not "business." He believed in combats with all the advantage on his own side.

He glanced wildly round the room as if in search of an avenue of escape. Had the window been open Herr Schneider would certainly have risked a jump; but the window was shut, and the blinds were down. There was no escape, and there was no help. The rapier trembled in Herr Schneider's fat hand.

"Vun moment!" he gasped. "I broteet against dis! Dis is against te law!"

"En garde!"

"Dey vill hang you if you shall keel me!"

"En garde!"

"You vill be arrested mit der bolice!"

"En garde!" shrieked Monsieur Morny.

"Ach! Mein Gott! Dis is dreadful! Herr Morny, I peg you be calm. I am villin to abologize tat I have you keeked!"

"Zat is too late! En garde!"

"Ich vill nicht!" roared Herr Schneider. "Help! Help!"

"Bah! I speet upon you! Vous etes lache! En garde, or I vill you steek like a peeg!"

"Help!"

Tom Merry and Bernard Glyn jumped out from behind the wardrobe. Evidently the moment had come to chip in. Herr Schneider was dodging round the table, and the Frenchman was rushing to the attack. Tom Merry flung himself upon Mossoo, grasping his right arm, and dragged it down. Bernard Glyn ran behind him and threw an arm round his neck and dagged him backwards.

"Run for it, Herr Schneider!" panted Tom.

Monsieur Morny struggled desperately.

"Laissez—mot done! Leave me free zat I keel him! Release me viz you! Garcons, zat you let go viz me! Ah! Ze coward, he run!"

There was no doubt about that. The moment the ferocious little Frenchman was collared by the Shell fellows Herr Schneider made a bound for the door. He unlocked it like lightning, tore it open, and sped into the passage, panting like a very old bellows.

"Ach! Mein Gott! Hold tat madman, mein poys! Ach! Ach!"

And Herr Schneider disappeared.

Monsieur Morny struggled, but the two sturdy juniors had him fast. They liked Mossoo; but they twisted his wrist till he let go the rapier, and Tom Merry promptly secured both weapons and jammed them into the case and closed it.

Monsieur Morny tore himself away from Glyn, raving with wrath.

"Cochons!" he roared. "You save him from me, zen! He have insult me! Ma foi! But I vill have ze satisfaction!" And Monsieur Morny rushed in pursuit of the German master.

"My only hat!" gasped Glyn. "Here's a go!"

"After him!"

And the two juniors rushed in pursuit.

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NEXT WEDNESDAY—"THE CALL OF THE PAST!" A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 12.
The Sack for Mossoo!

"B LESS my soul!" Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's, jumped up in alarm. The Head was not given to jumping as a rule, but the sudden irruption into his study of a frantic and terrified German master might have made the most reverend and sedate headmaster jump.

The door had been thrown open with a bang, and Herr Schneider rushed in; his face white with terror and streaming with perspiration. He dashed towards the Head, dodged behind him, and grasped him, as if to hold him as a shield against what was to come.

"Ach! Save me! I will not be murdered mit myself! Ach! Help!"

"Herr Schneider!" gasped the Head.
"Help, den! I will not be murdered! I will see vunce more to mein pelofel, Chermany! Ach! Keep him away mit his swords and zings! Ach!"

"Good heavens!" ejaculated the Head, tearing himself away from the German master's grasp. "What ever has happened?"

"Ach! Hero he gum! Ach!"
Monsieur Morny had arrived.
He came in like a whirlwind in pursuit of his foe.
"Vere is zat Sherman coward?" he shouted.
"Monsieur Morny!"
"Vere is it zat he hide himself?"

"Monsieur! Sir! What is the meaning of this?" shouted the Head. "Calm yourself at once, sir! How dare you brawl in my study!"

Tom Merry and Bernard Glyn arrived at the door. But they did not enter. The Head did not look as if he would be pleased to see any juniors just then. The two Shell fellows prudently kept back out of sight, ready to rush in if they were wanted. Tom Merry had already thrown the case of duelling-swords into his study for safety.

"Keep him away!" gasped Herr Schneider. "He will me murder! Ach!"

"I demand ze satisfaction!"

Dr. Holmes placed his hand on the French master's shoulder and whirled him back as he was advancing on his enemy.

"Calm yourself, Monsieur Morny!" he said sternly.
"Otherwise I shall request you to leave this school at once!"
"Mon cher docteur—"

"Now, tell me what this means!" said the Head.

"That man he gum into my room mit swords and zings!" moaned Herr Schneider, still keeping behind the Head. "I will not fight mit swords and zings. It is against la law!"
"I demand ze satisfaction!"

"What!" thundered the Head, in a voice that made the two juniors in the passage jump, and made Monsieur Morny almost spring into the air. "Is it possible? What! You—you have done this, Monsieur Morny?"

"My honour demand ze satisfaction!" murmured Monsieur Morny, backing away from the Head in alarm.

"Nonsense!"
"Mon Dieu! Cher Monsieur Holmes—"

"Whatever provocation Herr Schneider may have given you, you had no right to act in so outrageous and utterly wicked and absurd a manner, Monsieur Morny."

"Mais—mais—"

"I am shocked—outraged!" exclaimed the Head.

"Mais—but I have been keeck by ze Sherman peeg!"
"I keeck to French peast because he insult me!" said Herr Schneider. "But I will not fight mit swords and zings."

"I should suppose not," said the Head. "I should certainly suppose not. Am I to understand, Monsieur Morny, that you entered Herr Schneider's room with deadly weapons—actually with deadly weapons?"
"Ze honour demand—"

The Head stopped the unfortunate little Frenchman with an imperious gesture.

"Enough! I request you to leave this school to-morrow, Monsieur Morny."

"Holas!" murmured Mossoo. His fury was gone now. The Head's just anger seemed to have a magical effect upon him. He had a respect for the doctor that almost amounted to veneration.

"And unless you give me your word of honour immediately to quarrel no further with Herr Schneider, in any manner, I will telephone at once to the police, and give you into custody."

"Mon Dieu!"
"Your promise—at once!" rapped out the Head.

"Mais, monsieur!"
The Head crossed to the telephone. Herr Schneider crossed with him, still keeping Dr. Holmes between him and

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the fiery Frenchman—fiery no longer, however. Poor Mossoo had been completely tamed.

"Helas! Monsieur! I—I give zat promise," said Monsieur Morny. "Parole d'honneur!"

"Very well," said the Head. "Kindly understand that I expect you to quit this school to-morrow, Monsieur Morny. There shall be no danger of such a scene being repeated."

"Oh, monsieur—"
"I shall be obliged if you will leave my study!" rapped out the Head.

Monsieur Morny opened his mouth to speak again, but the Head made a wrathful gesture, and he almost crept to the door and disappeared. He passed within six feet of Tom Merry and Glyn without noticing them. Mossoo had "les larmes aux yeux," as he would have said; the anger of the Head and the "sack" from St. Jim's had completely crushed the good little man. The juniors saw the tears in his eyes as he passed them, and their sympathy was keen. Certainly he had played the "giddy ox," but they put it all down to the account of Herr Schneider.

"Herr Schneider! I am sorry that this has happened," said the Head. "It is most outrageous—most outrageous! I cannot understand Monsieur Morny acting in such a manner. But there will assuredly be no repetition of it."

"Ach!" said Herr Schneider, who breathed more freely when the watlike French-master was gone. "Tat is all right now, ain't it, before."

"It appears," said the Head, "that there has been a quarrel."

"But I assure you tat I was not to plame," said Herr Schneider. "Monsieur Morny he come to mein study dis afternoon, and he shriek and shout trough de door at me most insulting expressions. He fasten te door so tat I not get at him, and call me trough te keyhole. Is it tat I dake all tat batantly, mein herr?"

"It would have been more advisable to acquaint me with the matter than to quarrel and cause such a scandal as this," said the Head. "However, the matter ends here, and to-morrow Monsieur Morny will be gone. Good-night, Herr Schneider!"

"Good-night, sir!"
Tom Merry and Glyn promptly "scouted." They did not want to be caught in the passage. Herr Schneider had not mentioned them to the Head. He had been too scared and confused to wonder about their unexpected presence in his room. But he remembered it as he came up to his room again, keeping his eyes carefully about him, in case the French-master should appear. The two juniors had scudded back to the Shell dormitory; and to the Shell dormitory went Herr Schneider.

He opened the dormitory door, and turned on the electric light, and peered in through his glasses. All the Shell seemed fast asleep.

"Merry! Glyn!" said Herr Schneider.

"Snore!"
"I know tat you are awake," said the herr angrily.

"Answer me at vunce, ain't it!"
The two juniors resignedly sat up in bed. After coming to the rescue of Herr Schneider as they had done, they did not expect even the obnoxious German-master to be "down" on them. But they did not know him. Now that he had recovered from his fright, Herr Schneider realised how utterly ridiculous he must look in the eyes of the two juniors. He had fled from the bed-room while they held the enraged Frenchman, and they were not likely to forget his ignominious flight, or to keep it to themselves.

Herr Schneider's fat cheeks turned at the thought. Instead of feeling grateful to the juniors for rescuing him, he felt an intense annoyance at having exposed himself to their merriment and contempt. That was very like Otto Schneider.

"You two poys vas in mein zimmer," said Herr Schneider, frowning at them.

"We—we thought we had better hold Mossoo, sir!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Tat is all right, but vat vas you doing in mein room?"

"Ahem!"

"You vill tell me at vunce, ain't it."

"Ahem! Under the circumstances, sir—"

"Ach! I order you to tell me!" exclaimed the German-master angrily. "You had gum dere to choke me, isn't it?"

"Oh, sir! We wouldn't choke you for anything," said Tom Merry demurely. "We might as well have let Mossoo stick you, sir, as choke you."

"You pretend tat you not understand!" shouted Herr Schneider. "You gum into my room to play a choke."

"Ye-es, sir."

"Den you take tree hundred lines of Cherman each," said Herr Schneider. "I tinkt tat I keeps you from playing chokes on me, ain't it."

And Herr Schneider turned out the light and stalked

"Well, of all the rotten, ungrateful beasts!" growled Bernard Glyn. "I think that takes the cake! He was glad enough to have us there when Mossoo was on the war-path."

"Rotten cad!" growled Tom Merry.
"What the dickens has been happening?" exclaimed Kangaroo. "Tell a chap about it, you bouncers!"
Tom Merry explained. All the Shell were awake, and they all gasped as they heard the story.

"My only-hat! A duel!"
"Fancy Mossoo as a bloodthirsty warrior! Ha, ha, ha!"
"Wasn't Schneider in a blue funk?"

"He was, rather," said Glyn. "And if we hadn't held Mossoo, and taken his toasting-fork away, there would be a fat German in hospital now. Or else there would be a coffin wanted."

"My word!" said Gore. "I—I never thought it would come to that."

"I jolly well know you had something to do with it," said Tom Merry. "Schneider told the Head that Mossoo fastened his door on the outside, and insured him through the key-hole. I know Mossoo wouldn't do anything of the kind. And I jolly well remember hearing you practising imitations of Mossoo's lout yesterday, Gore."

Gore snored.
"And Mossoo's got the sack!" said Glyn.
"The sack! By Jove!" said Lowther. "Poor old Mossoo!"

"He's got to leave to-morrow."
"I don't see how he could expect anything else, after going on the war-path like that," chuckled Croke. "My hat! A duel in a bed-room! That takes the cake!"

"And we've got three hundred lines each from Schneider, after saving his worthless skin," grunted Bernard Glyn. "The brute might have been decently grateful, at least. Mossoo would have stuck him like a partridge if we hadn't chipped in. And he gives us three hundred lines for our help. Best!"

"And the jape never came off, after all," said Kangaroo. "It's jolly well coming off, though," said Glyn, slipping out of bed. "I've fixed up all right in his room, and the wire's on the edge. I've only got to run it along the passage, under the edge of the linoleum. He'll never find the bell, but he'll hear it."

"If he finds the wire, and follows it here—" began Croke.
"He won't! I'm not going to bring it here. I can work it from the passage, with the dry battery."

Bernard Glyn quitted the dormitory, with the little dry battery in his hand. Herr Schneider had gone to his room, and locked the door, in case of any further French invasion. Glyn picked up the coil of wire, and quickly ran it along the passage wall, pressing it down between the edge of the linoleum and the wall, keeping it there with a few tacks at intervals. He turned it into the recess of the passage window, where he fastened the ends of the insulated wires to the dry battery. Then he was ready for business.

CHAPTER 13.

Very Mysterious!

HERR SCHNEIDER turned out the light, and settled down in bed with a grunt.

He had locked the door, and placed a table against it by way of additional precaution.

He had searched the room, too, very carefully, before turning in. Feeling safe at last, he settled down to sleep. Herr Schneider was a good sleeper, and he was soon in a deep slumber, dreaming of the great conflagration which would happen when his fellow-countrymen should set fire to London. A beatific smile overspread his fat face as he dreamed of that glorious coming event. In the midst of his dream it seemed to him that he heard the alarm-bell ringing, louder and louder, till suddenly he started and awoke.

"Bzzzzzzzzzzzz!"
"Mein Gott!" murmured Herr Schneider. "Was denn?"
"Bzzzzzzzzzzzz!"

It was the loud, persistent ringing of a particularly raucous electric-bell. Herr Schneider sat up in bed and listened. He knew that it must be getting on for midnight. Who was ringing so loudly at that hour?

"Bzzzzzzzzzzzz!"
"Mein Gott!"

Sudden silence. Herr Schneider rubbed his eyes. It had seemed to him that the loud and raucous bell was ringing in his own room; but that, of course, was impossible—or, at

least, ought to have been impossible. He concluded that he had been dreaming, and settled down to sleep again.

"Bzzzzzzzzzz!"
He was sinking into slumber when the buzzing started again.

"Ach, vat is tat, denn?"
He sat up in bed, listening. The buzzing was certainly in his own room. Herr Schneider rubbed his eyes in amazement. How an electric-bell could possibly be buzzing in his room was a deep mystery. He reached out for the electric light switch near his bed, and turned on the light.

The buzzing instantly ceased. It did not occur to Herr Schneider, naturally; but, as a matter of fact, the light was visible under his door, and it was warning to the cheerful junior in the window recess along the passage.

Herr Schneider jumped out of bed, picked up the poker, and made a circuit of the room. He looked under the bed and under the table and into the wardrobe and behind it. But he found nothing. It was only too clear that he was alone in the room. Yet the bell had been ringing there; he was certain of that.

"Ach, it is ferry strange! Mein Gott!"
He put the poker down, and tumbled into bed once more, but left the light on, and listened. No sound but the silence of the night, save the moaning of the wind in the leafless elms, outside in the quadrangle.

He turned the light out at last, and laid his head upon the pillow. Scarcely had his head touched the pillow when—

"Bzzzzzzzzzzzz!"
"Ach, it is verry choke mit me!" howled Herr Schneider, bounding out of bed like a very fat Jack-in-the-box.

He switched on the light again. The buzzing instantly ceased. The enraged German proceeded to make a minute investigation of his room. But the bell, carefully fastened under his bed where the light did not fall, escaped his search, and the insulated wire that ran from it was invisible excepting upon a very close inspection.

Herr Schneider was baffled. He thought of looking out into the passage, but the vision of the warlike French-master was before his eyes, and he did not care to unlock the door.

Herr Schneider murmured some things in German, words which he never taught in the German class, and plumped into bed again, and turned out the light. He determined to sleep in spite of the buzzing of that raucous bell.

"Bzzzzzzzzzzzz!"
Herr Schneider ground his teeth with silent rage.
Rap, rap!

It was a sharp knocking at his door.
"Go away, you peast!" shouted Herr Schneider, thinking of the French-master at once.

"My dear sir—" came a voice from the passage.
It was the sharp-toned voice of Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell.

"Ach, I peg your pardon! Vat do you vant, Herr Linton?"

"Ahem! Would you mind not ringing that bell, Herr Schneider? It has awakened me several times, and I desire to sleep!"

"Ach, I do not ring him!" howled Herr Schneider.
"Excuse me—it appears to proceed from your room!"

"I know not how it is tat tat pell shall ring. I do not ring him."
"That is very extraordinary," said the master of the Shell. "However, I must accept your assurance, of course."

And Mr. Linton, whose voice sounded very cross, went back to bed.

"Bzzzzzzzzzzzz!"
"Ach, Himmel! Donner und Blitzen!"
Rap, rap!

"Herr Schneider, do you mean to say that that bell is not ringing in your room?" came Mr. Linton's voice through the door. "I must insist upon your ceasing this at once—it is unnecessary and ridiculous. Otherwise, I shall certainly lay a complaint before Dr. Holmes in the morning!"

Herr Schneider turned the light on and bounded out of bed. He dragged the table away, unlocked the door, and threw it open. Mr. Linton, in a dressing-gown, stood outside, with a dark frown on his face.

"Herr Schneider—"
"Ach, look for yourself, den!" shouted Herr Schneider. "I tells you tat I ring no bell. Vat for I ring te bell at dis hour of te night, hein?"

"I am sure I do not know," said Mr. Linton tartly. "But I am quite certain that the sound comes from your room."

"I know not how it is tat tat pell rings, I tells you!" roared Herr Schneider.

"Calm yourself!" said Mr. Linton, suspecting lager at once.
Lager beer was the only possible explanation of that unheard-of disturbance in the middle of the night.

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"Vat! I am calm!" shrieked Herr Schneider, who certainly did not look very calm. "I am ferry calm mit myself, Herr Linton, and I tanks you to speak civilly to me!"

"Sir!"

"Was denn? I tells you tat I rings no bell!"

"I will not argue the point with you!" said Mr. Linton icily. "You are not in a state for argument, Herr Schneider!"

"You—you tink tat—tat—Mein Gott! It is not tat I have been thinking! Tat is false!"

"Pray be quiet, Herr Schneider, unless you wish to alarm the house," said Mr. Linton. "You had better go quietly to bed!"

"I goes quietly to ped, and denn tat pell he start ringing mit himself!"

This statement sounded so extraordinary to Mr. Linton that he could not possibly doubt further that Herr Schneider was in a state of intoxication. He adopted a scolding manner, which had a most infuriating effect upon Herr Schneider.

"Hush—hush! I beg you to go quietly to bed, sir."

"I am choked—it is tat dey have choked me!"

"Hush—hush! Nobody wishes to choke you, I am sure!" said Mr. Linton soothingly. "Pray allow me to help you to bed. There! Now I will put out the light. Pray be calm!"

Herr Schneider, in a state of speechless wrath and bewilderment, allowed himself to be pushed into bed. Mr. Linton put out the light, and retired.

Herr Schneider lay awake, expecting the mysterious bell to start operations again. But it did not, for Bernard Glym was in bed too by that time.

And Mr. Linton settled down to sleep in his room, much relieved in his mind at having succeeded in calming Herr Schneider and putting a stop to his extraordinary pranks.

CHAPTER 14.

Noble Gore.

TOM MERRY & CO. encountered Monsieur Morny when they came down in the morning. The French-master was down early too, and he was pacing in the quadrangle, under the leafless old elms, with a most lugubrious expression upon his face.

Mosso had had time to calm down, and to reflect. And in justice he could not blame the Head for asking him to leave St. Jim's. Duelling was all very well in the Bois de Boulogne, but it was undoubtedly very much out of place at St. Jim's, and the French-master's "faux pas" left the Head no recourse but to dispense with his services.

But the little Frenchman was very much dispirited. He had been very long at St. Jim's; he loved the old place, he liked the boys, he was popular there, and he was happy. And there were two sisters in Paris who depended upon his regular remittances for support, and his salary at St. Jim's was a generous one. He would not find it so generous elsewhere, he knew, even if he found a post at all in such troublous times.

His honour had demanded satisfaction, and he had lost sight of the business point of view; but in the clear, cold morning he thought of the business aspect of the matter, and realised that he had, as "ze Anglais" would have expressed it, made a dreadful ass of himself.

"Bonjour, mes garçons!" said Mosso, as the Shell fellows politely raised their caps. "Is it zat you know zat I go?"

"Ahem! Yes, sir," said Tom Merry. "We're awfully sorry, sir!"

"Zank you ver' mooch!" said Monsieur Morny. "And I zank you also zat you did interfere vix me last night—hier soir. I vas ferry mooch excite, and I vould have keel zat Sherman peeg in ze duel; but now zat I am calm, I know zat zat vil not do in Angletterre. You save mo from all sorts of zings. I zank you from my heart!"

"But—you are really going, sir?" asked Lowther.

"Oui, oui! It will break ze heart for me, but I must go! Ze docteur he give me vat you call ze ordair of ze boot!"

"Suppose you explain to him, sir, that Schneider started the trouble?" suggested Manners.

Monsieur Morny shook his head proudly.

"I ask no favours, even of ze Head!" he answered.

"D'aillurs, I have done wrong; and it is right zat I shall go, even if it breaks ze heart!"

The tears came into the little gentleman's eyes, and he turned away.

Tom Merry & Co. were left looking very glum. They liked the French-master very much; and, though they knew nothing of his private affairs, they knew that the loss of his position at St. Jim's would be a serious blow to him.

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"Hallo! What are you chaps looking like a set of boiled owls about?" asked Blake of the Fourth, as he came out with the rest of Study No. 6.

"Mosso's got the push," said Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove!"

"Mosso!" exclaimed Blake. "Because of that scrap yesterday? But it was the Schneider-beast who started all the trouble. Lots of witnesses to prove that."

"Ain't that!"

Tom Merry explained what had happened in Herr Schneider's room the previous evening.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Blake. "You bouders! Why didn't you call us? I'd have given a term's pocket-money to see Schneider sp'ring with Mosso after him!"

"Yaas, watah!"

Tom Merry wore a worried look.

"But somethin' ought to be done," said Arthur Augustus.

"Mosso played the giddy ox; but he is a decent sort, and Scheinadah is a beast. I approve of Mosso!"

"Better go and tell the Head so," said Monty Lowther seriously.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Because the Head would bez Mosso to stay, with tears in his eyes," said Lowther. "He doesn't know at present that you approve of him!"

"You uttah ass—"

"Something ought to be done, and something's going to be done," said Tom Merry decidedly. "The row started because Schneider thought Mosso fastened his door, and insulted him through the keyhole. I know jolly well that Mosso didn't, but I can guess who did. If the Head knew all the facts, he might go easy with Mosso. Let's go and talk to Gore!"

"But I don't quite comprehend—"

"No need," said Tom Merry politely. "Let's see Gore about it. Here he is!"

Gore of the Shell had just come out of the School House, and the juniors bore down upon him. Gore looked a little alarmed.

"What's the row?" he demanded.

"Mosso's got the sack."

"That's ancient history," yawned Gore.

"Look here," said Tom Merry, "Mosso's been made out to be in the wrong all along the line. You know he isn't."

I heard you practising Mosso's squeak, and I heard the Schneider-bird sell the Head that Mosso had fastened the door and slanged him through the keyhole. Now, it was you all the time; I'm sure of that!"

"I suppose you're not going to sneak?" growled Gore.

Tom Merry knitted his brows.

"I can't go to the Head and tell him that you started all the trouble," he admitted. "But you can, Gore!"

"I!" exclaimed Gore.

"Yes, you. It's up to you to own up!" said Tom Merry firmly.

Gore sneered.

"And get a licking. No fear!"

"Weally, Goah—"

"Oh, rats!" snapped Gore.

"I put it to you as a decent chap, Goah," said Arthur Augustus severely. "A licking for you is not so serious as the sack for poor old Mosso!"

"All the same, I'm not looking for one," yawned Gore.

"Well, you'll get it," said Tom Merry determinedly. "If you go to the Head and tell him the whole yarn, he will let you down lightly for owning up. He'll think you've come of your own accord. You'll get off with a caning!"

"Canings are not in my line, thanks!"

"If you don't do the right thing," said Tom Merry, raising his voice, "we'll jolly well give you the licking ourselves!"

"Yaas, watah! That's a weally excellent idea! We'll all give Goah a fearful watahshia! if he doesn't own up!"

"Look here," said Gore desperately. "I'm jolly well not going to own up! Let Mosso get the sack! He's given me lines!"

"Rotter! You started all the trouble, and it's up to you to get Mosso out of this pickle if you can. Do the decent thing!"

"Rats!"

"Then you'll get a Form ragging," said Tom Merry; "and you'll be sent to Coventry afterwards by every decent chap in the school!"

"Yaas, watah!" said Arthur Augustus. "I shall certainly velf to speak to you again, Goah!"

"Well, that will be a relief, anyway!" snorted Gore.

"Why, you uttah watah—"

"Own up, Gore!" chorused the juniors.

A number of fellows gathered round. Levison of the Fourth was among them. Gore gave the black sheep of the Fourth a spiteful glance.

"Levison's in it, too," he said. "Do you feel inclined to go to the Head, Levison?"

Levison laughed. "I was only a 'looker-on in Vienna,'" he remarked. "It was your little game from start to finish, Gore. But I'll give you some advice on the subject if you like."

"Blow your advice!" growled Gore. "Trot along with me; I'm a good adviser," said Levison. And he drew the sulky Shell fellow away. "We'll give you till after breakfast to think it out," said Tom Merry.

Gore snorted, and walked away with Levison. "Well, what's your precious advice?" he growled. "I've got to own up and take a licking from the Head, or else take a Form licking and be sent to Coventry. Blessed if I see much to choose between the two!"

"I advise going to the Head!" grinned Levison. "Listen to me!" And Levison proceeded to explain. Gore listened with a scowling brow at first, but his face gradually cleared, and he grinned.

"You think it will work?" he muttered. "It's a charm, I should say. If it doesn't, I'll come in and own up too, and we'll whack out the licking," said Levison.

Gore stared at him. "You will?" he said incredulously. "Honest Injun! And I'll stay just outside and prompt you if you go wrong!"

"Well, I'll try it!" And Gore, taking his courage in both hands, as it were, proceeded in search of the Head. Dr. Holmes was already in his study, and he called out to Gore to come in, in response to his timid tap.

George Gore entered the study with a lugubrious face. Dr. Holmes glanced at him curiously. Levison remained outside the door, which Gore left ajar.

"Well, Gore, what is the matter with you?" "If—if you please, sir, I—I—I've got something to—confess!" said Gore, hanging his head.

"Indeed! Go on!" "I—I hear that Mossoo—I mean, Monsieur Morny—is leaving, sir?"

"That is true." "And—and it's on my conscience, sir," said Gore, trying to remember exactly what the black sheep of the Fourth had told him to say. "I—I've got a guilty conscience, sir—I mean, an uneasy conscience—and—and—and—"

"I do not understand you, Gore. There is no reason that I can see why Monsieur Morny's departure should be upon your conscience."

"It's all my fault, sir." "Nonsense, Gore!" said the Head sharply.

"Yes, sir, it is. I—I can't let you sack Mossoo—I mean, discharge him—when it's all my fault. He's got two old fathers in Paris dependent on him, sir," stammered Gore.

"What?" "I—I mean, two old aunts or something," said Gore, getting a little confused.

"Sisters," came a whisper from the door. "I—I mean, sisters, sir—two old sisters in Paris," stammered Gore; "and—and I've been thinking it over, sir, and I felt bound to come and confess that I started all the trouble, sir; and I rely on your—you—you—"

"Generosity!" whispered the prompter outside. "Generosity, sir, to take into consideration that I've come here of my own accord to tell you, because I—I—I felt—"

"Felt it my duty!" whispered the unseen prompter. "Felt it my duty to do so, sir."

Dr. Holmes regarded Gore fixedly. From where he sat at the writing-table, he could not hear the whispers from without; but Gore's glances towards the door made him suspicious. The prompter was doing his work better than the chief actor.

"Kindly tell me how you started the trouble, as you express it, Gore."

"Old Schneider—"

"Herr Schneider, you ass!" whispered Levison. "I—I mean, Herr Schneider, you ass! I—I—"

"Gore!" thundered the Head. "I—I mean, sir, Herr Schneider thinks that Mossoo bunged up his door and slanged him through the keyhole, sir," stuttered Gore, getting more and more confused. "But it wasn't Mossoo, sir; it was I. I fastened the door, and imitated Mossoo's squeak—"

"Mossoo's voice!" "Imitated Mossoo's voice, sir. Old Schneider—"

"Herr Schneider!" from the prompter. "Herr Schneider, sir, thought it was Mossoo, and went

out and walloped him, sir, in the lane; and that led to Mossoo playing the giddy ox, and—and that's how it is, sir. I've come here to—own up, because it was lying very heavy on my conscience, sir, and—I felt it my duty—I can't remember the rest—I—I mean—I—"

Gore broke down completely. He cast a despairing glance towards the door. Dr. Holmes rose from his chair, stepped across to the door, and threw it wide open. Levison jumped.

"You may come in, Levison," said the Head. "Oh!"

Levison gave Gore a furious look, and stepped into the study. He had become a principal instead of a prompter now.

"What were you doing outside my door, Levison?" "I—I—I—"

"Was Levison whispering to you, Gore, to prompt you in what you should say to me?"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Gore. "You see, he knows all about it, Levison!" "You fathomed!" muttered Levison, under his breath. "You've mucked it up."

A slight smile hovered about Dr. Holmes's lips. "It appears that you were trying to help Gore in his painful duty, Levison?"

"Ye-es, sir!" "I knew it wouldn't work," gasped Gore. "I—"

"What did you say, Gore?" "I—I—nun—nun—nothing, sir!"

"Very well! It appears that the trouble between Monsieur Morny and Herr Schneider was started by a most disrespectful trick played by you, Gore. I do not think I should be far wrong, Levison, in concluding that you were with Gore at the time. You certainly deserve that I should punish you both most severely."

Gore surreptitiously licked his hands in anticipation. "However—" went on the Head.

Gore brightened up at that. "However." "As you have come to me and given me this information, against your own interests, I shall pardon you—"

"Oh, sir!" "You may go. And the next time you come to me to make a confession, Gore, you may come without a prompter."

"Ye-es, sir!" gasped Gore. And the two young rascals scuttled out of the study, in order to give the Head no time to change his mind. And Dr. Holmes smiled, and rang the bell for Toby, and sent for both Monsieur Morny and Herr Schneider.

"Well, dear boys!" It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I trust you have done the right thing."

"Of course we have," said Gore loftily. "Did you think we should let poor old Mossoo get the push, because we were afraid of a licking! He doesn't know us—does he, Levison?"

"Certainly not!" said Levison, with a grin. And Arthur Augustus only said:

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry & Co. waited anxiously for news of Mossoo. But when they saw him again they saw that it was "all serene."

Gore's confession had cleared the air, and there had been an explanation in the Head's study. Herr Schneider had condescended to apologise, when he learned that it was not Mossoo who had "slanged" him through his keyhole; and Mossoo, in his turn, apologised more gracefully, and vowed with tears in his eyes his repentance of the scene in Herr Schneider's room—and the Head dismissed them both from the study, if not on friendly terms, at least upon as good terms as they had ever been, and both of them on their best behaviour.

"It's all right, mes garçons," said Mossoo, when he met Tom Merry & Co. "It is not zat I must depart viz myself, owing to ze confession of zat noble boy Gore."

Tom Merry & Co. coughed. "Jolly glad you're staying, sir," said the juniors all together. "Vive la France!"

"Zank you, my boys! You are verre good. Zat boy Gore he imitate my voice, and make Herr Schneider go for me—and I not know zat at ze time, n'est-ce-pas—so now I can forgive zat Sherman from ze heart. But I must go and zank zat noble boy Gore."

And Mossoo rushed off to thank that noble boy Gore; and Tom Merry & Co., who knew exactly how noble Gore had been, smiled. But all was well that ended well, and there was peace at last between the foes of St. Jim's.

THE END.

(Next Wednesday's splendid long, complete story of Tom Merry & Co. is entitled "THE CALL OF THE PAST!") Please order yours *in advance*.

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No. 13.—

AFTER THE WIRE-TAPPERS!



I hope it will interest you to learn that I'm still alive and kicking, and, what is more wonderful still, possessed of a whole skin. Touch wood! One never knows. Anything may happen out here. I've seen too many pals carried off, escaped so miraculously myself time and again, that I'm not inclined to be boastful about it.

A cat is supposed to have nine lives. I'm more lucky than the luckiest of black cats. On about an average I have nine escapes per day. I'm beginning to think that the ammunition has not yet been "made in Germany" that will bow me out for a duck.

Using a sporting term reminds me of the little Soccer battle we had behind the firing-line the other day, and the adventure, as melodramatic as a Drury Lane play, which followed it.

I'll tell you first about the footer match—surely the strangest that has ever been played.

Troop A of the King's Dragoons—my troop—were given a couple of days' rest as a reward for the little picnic we had in the trenches—the said picnic consisting of staying some four days in trenches in an exposed position, with night and day artillery and infantry attacks, and a struggle to get our grub.

Our nearest neighbours were the gallant little Berkshires, about whose bravery I haven't as yet seen a line in the few newspapers that come our way, but about whom I could fill a volume.

Let me say here that they've been in every battle since Mons, have fought like heroes all the time, have played a principal part in the beginning of that great defensive movement which blocked the roads leading to Calais from the Kaiser's hordes, and, in short, they are bonnie lads every one of them, but awful poor shots at goal.

I know, because it was my luck to get through their defence three times, and pop the ball through the posts.

That's telling you that a team from Troop A of our lot and an eleven from the Berkshires had a little cup-tie on our own. We're going to play off the final in Unter den Linden, Berlin's famous thoroughfare.

Well, we'd hardly kicked off, when an enemy aeroplane flew over us. Someone said the Kaiser was coming down to referee us. It was only a rumour. The Berkshire centre-forward was still sky-gazing when someone drove the ball hard in the small of his back. For a moment he yelled, as if the aeroplane had dropped a bomb on him, much to the amusement of the "gate"—about a couple of hundred Tommies, "resting" like ourselves.

Some of us thought about stopping the game, feeling sure that the German observer up aloft would report our position to his artillery, and, as a consequence, we might have a few Jack Johnsons bombarding one or the other goals.

"Come on—on the ball!" I shouted from my position at inside-right. "Play up, Dragoons!"

We caught the Berkshires on the hop. A nice bit of passing, when we made rings round their half-backs, brought us down to their goal. A good, square centre was flung in by our outside-right, and I had the soft job of tapping it through out of the goal-keeper's reach.

That set 'em alight. They forgot all about German aeroplanes—everything. King Footer reigned supreme for the next hour and a quarter.

The Berkshires played up like billy-oh. They penned us in our own half for five minutes or so, but they couldn't score

for toffee. But directly the Bandy-Legs—that's what they called us—got moving, we were always dangerous.

To cut my yarn short, we crossed over at half-time with our lot leading by three goals to one. The Berkshires gave us a rare grueling after the re-start, and the dogged manner in which they fought down every one of our attacks says volumes for the way they keep their end up against the German hordes that tried to hack their way through to Calais—or was it Jericho?

They drew level with us, and then the band began to play—in more senses than one. I mean, the Bandy-Legs went for their goal as if we were charging a squadron of Uhlans. We got the lead again, and quickly popped on another goal, when I suppose the Kaiser thought it was time he took a hand in the match.

There was a boom, and a shell passed over the ground and landed amongst the spectators. Two of 'em were carried off, injured by splinters, but as the crowd were as determined as us to see the match through, we kept on—and so did the German artillery—till we played out time, the victors of a good, sporting game by six goals to three.

When we broke up, the Germans had got more guns ranged on the spot. They didn't do any further damage except to the ground. It's full of shell-holes now. The fat-headed jossers have spoilt the best pitch for miles around.

Our colonel was there watching the game. As we came off, he beckoned to me.

"Well played, corporal!" he cried. "That last goal of yours was a ripper! I'm thinking of offering some prize—a silver cup or medals—for playing off amongst our lads over here."

I thanked the dear old chap cordially.

"And, I say, corporal," he went on, "as soon as you've had a rest, I've got a job that I think will suit you."

"I'm ready now, sir," I replied.

"We've reasons for believing that the enemy's wire-tappers are at work intercepting messages passing from officers in command to the general staff," said the colonel. "We can't allow that."

"Certainly not, sir," was my reply.

"Very well, then, lad," the dear old fellow continued. "I'll get you and a patrol to try to round up one or two of the Germans active at that game. A section of motor-cyclists have failed to stop them, and an armoured motor-car has been out on the road with no better success. I've told the general the King's Dragoons 'll show how the job can be done."

Any Tommy would have been pleased at the way the colonel put it.

"Then get ahead, my lad," he smiled, as I promised that the boys and I would do our best. "And good luck go with you!"

This was a job that suited me down to the ground. In double-quick time all preparations were made, extra rations packed, and the five of us moved out.

It was early afternoon, bleak and cold, and though we had pressed the Germans several miles back from Ypres, and had given them beans all along the line, we had not yet got them on the run.

(Continued on Page III of Cover.)

The wire-tappers get to work in this way. They are spies, of course, usually dressed in the uniform of a Tommy or of our Allies. They carry with them a special miniature receiver, which they connect up with by a fine wire with the overhead or underground telephone line.

In this way they can hear any messages that pass between officers. Very important messages are not sent across the telephone, but, all the same, there is a lot of valuable information knocking around that the enemy would find very useful to them.

And I might add that the wire-tappers are very clever and resourceful men. They are picked out for their hazardous job because of their daring and ingenuity as well as for their knowledge of languages; for the message they may intercept may be in French, Flemish, or English.

We had reached a ruined village—nameless, by order—and had tethered our horses in the shade of a battered chateau, determined to spend the night there, when it occurred to me to take a quiet stroll round the place before we made ourselves comfy.

It was just as well I did. Fifty yards from the village, as I strolled along alone, I heard a sharp, metallic click. Something moved amongst some straw that was littering a field beside the road.

"Here's a rabbit for the pot," thought I, pulling out my revolver.

But I didn't shoot. I stepped across to the straw and kicked as if I was taking a penalty-shot.

There was a loud squeal, and a figure in khaki hurtled out and sprang to his feet with a curse. It was that which gave him away. I had him covered at once.

"Drop it, old sport!" said the fellow in excellent English. "I guess you're on the wrong lay. Comrades needn't get angry with one another."

"Comrades—no," I admitted. "What was your game in that straw?"

There was no need to ask. I could see the hole he had dug to get at the telephone-line. His receiver and a strip of wire was close to it.

"I'm after the wire-tappers," he began.

"So am I," I interrupted him. "Up with your hands! No Tommy swears in German."

I gave a whistle to my pals in the chateau. They came running up like a lot of loons. I was still standing over the senseless wire-tapper, when a volley rang out. One of the troopers went down, hit in the shoulder. Fortunately, the others had gumption enough to drop to cover.

Only two of us had revolvers, and we could see about a dozen Germans hovering near some sheds and barns fifty yards away in a tight corner. Two of us kept 'em busy, while two others crawled back to the chateau and worked round with the horses.

By this time we had accounted for several of the enemy. I had meanwhile trussed up my capture. We tumbled him into a dry ditch, and then, vaulting into our saddles, we went "hell for leather" after the squareheads.

There were eight of them still left. At least four of them were out of action, as was one of our troopers. We went for them with steam up.

That was a daisy of a chase. Can you picture eight motor-cyclists flying like the wind along a road that was pitted here and there with shell-holes, a pitch-black night, not a light anywhere, and four of the King's Dragons galloping after them, determined to give 'em Tipperary?

A cavalryman always has the best of it in a scrap with a cyclist: he has one hand always free for shooting, whereas the cyclist has both fists occupied, and his attention centred on his machine. Anyway, we overhauled them one by one, and bagged the lot.

It was no joke getting them back to the village, though. Three of 'em had come a cropper on their little automobiles, and had to "get out and get under" what was left of the pieces. Four more had had their last ride.

Out of the dozen we moved back with five wounded. One got away to tell the tale, and three, uninjured, had to squat down with us while I used the wire-tappers' apparatus, and by its means got connected up with our colonel.

I can hear his laugh when I reported to him even now, as, hours afterwards, I am writing these lines to you. The dear old chap was very complimentary. We were sharing our rations with our prisoners, to whose injuries we had rendered first aid, when a dozen troopers and a Red Cross wagon lumbered up. Before midnight we were all back in camp.

You've broken up a very dangerous gang, corporal," the colonel told me, when I reported. "It wouldn't surprise me if these weren't the fellows who have been doing so much mischief. They are all highly-educated men."

"We were very lucky, sir," I said, as I saluted and withdrew.

THE END.

(Next week's GEM Library will contain another stirring despatch from our chum at the front. Order your copy in advance.)

THIS WEEK'S CHAT.

The Editor's Personal Column.

For Next Wednesday—

"THE CALL OF THE PAST!"

By Martin Clifford.

Next Wednesday's grand, long, complete tale of St. Jim's will create a considerable sensation, inasmuch as it chronicles a dramatic situation in Talbot's school life. An impassioned and earnest appeal is made to the "Toff," urging him to resign a career of crime; and the appeal emanates from a very charming girl to whom Talbot was deeply devoted in past days, and for whom he still cherishes something more than a passing regard. All his strength of character, his manliness, and his loyalty to his chums, is sorely tested in this time of severe temptation; but Talbot faces the situation firmly, and—

"THE CALL OF THE PAST!"

powerful though it is, does not succeed in shaking his iron resolution to do the right thing, no matter what the consequences may be.

TO ALL MY CHUMS.

I have a very important announcement to make this week, which will, I am sure, delight many thousands of my chums, especially those who are lovers of the fine Greyfriars stories which Mr. Richards has written in the "Magnet" week by week.

For some time past I have been bombarded with letters requesting that stories be published concerning Harry Wharton's early adventures. This appeal has been a very powerful one, but up till recently I could not see my way clear to gratify my chums' wish.

Now, however, I have taken over the well-known boys' weekly called "The Dreadnought," and in this Thursday's issue, I am introducing the popular Greyfriars characters into this journal. This is splendid news, is it not?

In addition to these unrivalled yarns of Greyfriars School, there will be many fine features in our new companion paper, which will prove to be one of the best penny periodicals on the market. It is also my intention to revive the "Gem" Correspondence Exchange, which has proved so popular hitherto.

I shall have more to say on this extremely important subject next week.

THE ANTI-GEM SOCIETY.

I had no space on this page last week to express my gratitude to the vast number of Gemites who have written letters of strong disapproval relating to the above society. Even now, I am able to thank them but briefly for their continued loyalty to my little journal. Before the powerful indictments hurled upon the precious organisation and its president, such a society must assuredly sink into oblivion; and even were it to flourish, I doubt if it would mitigate one whit against the growing success of the "Gem."

My warmest thanks are due to the following for their letters expressing whole-hearted support:

"A Yorkshire Reader," "Fair Play," J. Hamilton, G. R. D., "A British Girl," "Long 'Un," Maud Foulston, W. McNally, S. Dobson, M. Garney, J. Brooks, H. L., E. W. C. T., A. W. B., A. S. D., B. S., Cicely Vyone, Alfred Winter, "Loyal Reader," W. H., "An Old Reader," W. H. E., Wallace Sutton, "A Manchester Reader," "A Loyal Girl Reader," Mabel H., "An Old Gemite," William Owens, "Jumbo," "A Girl Reader," (A. S.), "Three Loyal Readers," (Plumstead), B., Stinchcomb, Harold Jordan, George Gibbins, Lily Lucas, R. Gilbert, L. A. Pullen, "A Loyal Tipperary Reader," Sidney Ritchie, George James, Eva Nicholas, L. Steekles, M. Malone, L. Davis, G. Ellis, B. Bone, M. and J. Robertson, C. Mackley, Dora King, and "A Faithful Boy of Wales."

Before closing down this somewhat unpleasant subject for good and all, I might add, lest there be any who consider I have judged Master Carlton too harshly, that I am always pleased to receive frank and open criticisms concerning the "Gem" and its companion papers; but unfair and ill-founded attacks upon them are not acceptable to any Editor, and my case is no exception. Master Carlton's epistle gave the erroneous impression that there was something radically wrong with the issue of the "Gem." On the contrary, if I may judge by the many letters of appreciation which reach my sanctum daily, this bright little journal enjoys a greater measure of popularity than ever.

THE EDITOR.

A Cash Prize for Every Contributor to this Page.



Our Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE

MUCH TRAVELLED!

A number of tourists were recently looking down the crater of Vesuvius, when one of them, an American, remarked to his companion:

"That looks a good deal like the infernal regions!"
An English lady, overhearing the remark, said:
"Good gracious! How these Americans do travel!"—Sent in by N. Shaw, Sheffield.

OPPORTUNITY!

Returned Soldier Lad: "Clara, you were engaged to me, and yet I hear that while I was at the front you often went out with that old admirer of yours, Tom Cuddley."

Clara: "Oh, George, he was so very thoughtful, and I was so anxious, that he took me every night to—to—er—to the War Office to see if you were killed!"—Sent in by Private H. Bowers, Parkhurst, I.O.W.

THE REVERSE.

At a meeting where a committee was being condemned for its mismanagement, the speaker said:

"Perhaps you think that in our committee half do the work, and the other half do nothing?" As a matter of fact, gentlemen, I can assure you the reverse is the case!"—Sent in by A. Johnson, Walthamstow.

MISUNDERSTOOD!

Tommy: "Oh, mother, look at that fat lady over there!"

Mother: "Hush, Tommy! You shouldn't say 'fat'; you should say 'stout lady'."

Mother (next morning at breakfast): "Will you have some fat with your bacon, Tommy?"

Tommy: "No, thanks, ma! I'll have some stout!"—Sent in by Thomas Richards, Bootle.

GAVE THE SHOW AWAY.

One night a lady was in need of a copper with which to tip the messenger at the front door. She called out to the maid in the kitchen:

"Jane, have you any coppers there?"
"Yes, mum," was the reply; "two of 'em! But they're both of 'em me cousins!"—Sent in by A. R. Perrin, Glasgow.

NATURALLY!

"What is the result, young gentlemen," said the medical professor, who was taking a class of students, "when a patient's temperature goes down as far as it can?"

"Why—er—he gets cold, feet!" replied one of the class.—Sent in by Miss G. A. Martin, Bray, Ireland.

SMALL NILES.

The teacher was taking the geography class. Pointing to a map of Egypt, she said:

"Now, children, what is the name of this river?"

"The Nile!" shrieked the whole class.

"Good! And what are these smaller tributaries called?"

"A small hand was seen to be waving eagerly at the rear of the class."

"Yes, Jimmy?"

"Juven-niles!" he said.—Sent in by Miss F. Harwood, Elton, Bury.

BREAKING IT GENTLY.

While he was working in the coal-mine, a large mass of coal fell and killed poor John Brown, and one of his mates was sent to break the news to his wife. On his arrival at the cottage, he said:

"I am sorry to tell you a big piece of coal has fallen and smashed your husband's watch."

"Well, what about it? Why couldn't he tell me himself when he comes home?"

"Oh, you see, mum," replied the man, "the watch was in his waistcoat pocket, and he got smashed as well."—Sent in by H. Whiting, Dorchester.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER!

There was a terrible noise in the dining-room, and the fond mother, greatly alarmed, rushed in to see the cause of it. On the floor her dear son Willie, eleven years of age, was going through all sorts of contortions and somersaults, both backwards and forwards. Bang, bang! he went, without any sign of ceasing.

"Willie! Willie!" his mother cried. "What are you doing?"

For a moment Willie stopped his contortions.
"Oh, it's all right, mother!" he gasped. "You see, I forgot to shake my medicine before taking it, so I thought I'd shake myself, as the medicine's inside me!"—Sent in by Miss M. Dickens, Hendon, N.

HE DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING!

An Irishman in a Dublin coffee-house was once writing a letter, but was annoyed by a waiter who kept looking over his shoulder and reading what he wrote. Determined to shame the ill-mannered waiter, he continued his letter as follows:

"I would say more, only an infernally impudent waiter is looking over my shoulder and reading every word I write!"

"Yer lie, yer soundbrell!" shouted the waiter. "Oh haven't read a word!"—Sent in by Miss N. Jones, Brynmair.

MUCH DEARER!

"This is your little sister, Tommy," said his father, showing him the new baby. "You will love her dearly, won't you?"

"Y-yes, of course!" replied Tommy. "But she will cost a good deal to keep, won't she?"

"I suppose so," said the father.

"Yet," said Tommy mournfully, "when I asked you the other day for a white rabbit, you said you couldn't afford it!"—Sent in by L. Hill, Plymouth.

THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT.

A long girl named Short, long loved a big Mr. Little, while Little, thinking little of Short, loved a little lass named Long.

To make a long story short, Little proposed to Long, and Short longed to be even with Little's shortcomings. So Short, meeting Long, threatened to marry Little before long, which caused Little in a short time to marry Long.

Query: Did long Short love big Little, less because Little loved Long?—Sent in by John Brock, Newbridge, Co. Kildare.

MONEY PRIZES OFFERED.

Readers are invited to send ON A POSTCARD Storyettes or Short Interesting Paragraphs for this page. For every contribution used the sender will receive a Money Prize.

ALL POSTCARDS MUST BE ADDRESSED—The Editor, "The Gem" Library, Gough House, Gough Square, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

THIS OFFER IS OPEN TO READERS IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD.

No correspondence can be entered into with regard to this competition, and all contributions enclosed in letters, or sent in other wise than on postcards, will be disregarded.