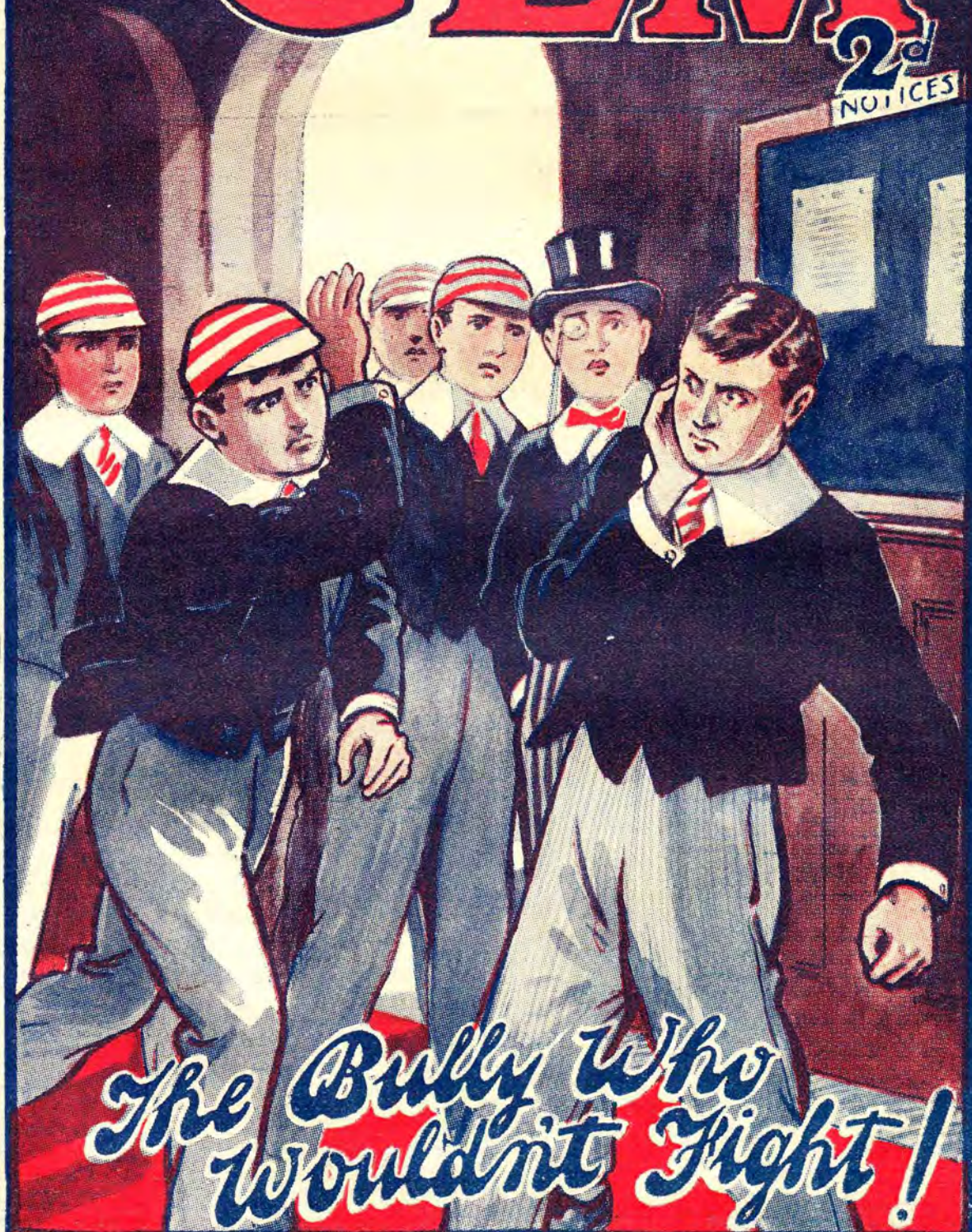


YOU WANT THE BEST SCHOOL STORIES? THE "GEM" HAS THEM!

The GEM

2^d
NOTICES



*The Bully Who
Wouldn't Fight!*

HIS FORMER VICTIMS GET THEIR OWN BACK WITH
A VENGEANCE ON—

The BULLY WHO WOULDN'T FIGHT!



A Magnificent Long Complete Story of St. Jim's, featuring
George Gore, the Bully of the Lower School, in a new role.

CHAPTER 1. Gore Breaks Out!

CRASH! Bump!

Tom Merry jumped up, and a shower of blots scattered from his pen upon the paper before him.

The leader of the School House at St. Jim's gave an angry snort. He was nearly at the end of a German imposition when the sudden crash in the next study startled him, and certainly it would be of no use to take that imposition to Herr Schneider now.

Bump!

"The silly asses!" muttered Tom Merry wrathfully. "That's Gore and Skimpole having another row!"

He stepped to the study wall, and rapped on it with his knuckles.

"Shut up, in there!" he roared.

Bump!

"Will you be quiet?"

Crash!

Tom Merry breathed hard through his nose, and went to the door. He opened it, and as he looked out into the Shell passage, the door of the next study opened, and George Gore came out with a very flushed face.

He slammed the door behind him, with a slam that rang the whole length of the Shell passage, and was heard nearly all over the School House.

"You noisy ass!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Gore stared at him.

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"What's the matter with you?" he demanded.

"You've made me spoil an impot!" said Tom Merry wrathfully. "Fifty lines for old Schneider, and now I've got to do most of it over again!"

"Well, go and do it, then," said Gore, "and be hanged to you!"

Tom Merry looked at him. Gore had never been polite; in fact, he was generally the reverse. When he was good-tempered his manners left much to be desired. And he was not frequently good-tempered. Gore had always been a bully, and although he had certainly turned over a new leaf of late, the old nature would keep cropping up.

When he was in one of his tantrums, as the other fellows called them, Gore was the old Gore again, and decidedly unpleasant. And it was perfectly clear that he was in a more than usually violent tantrum this time. At such times he did not measure his words.

"I shall make as much row as I like in my own study!" Gore went on deliberately. "I have been bumping Skimpole. He worries me! I've buzzed him into the corner, and buzzed all his silly books at his head! And you can go and eat coke!"

Tom Merry pushed back his cuffs.

"I suppose you are looking for a thick ear!" he remarked.

"Come on, and select which one!"

"Oh, rats!"

Gore swung on down the passage. Although in a savage and quarrelsome mood, he did not want to enter into a fistic encounter with the champion athlete of the School House.

Tom Merry looked after him. He was greatly inclined to

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

CHAPTER 2. Gussy Butts In!

follow Gore down the passage and give him reason to be sorry for his rudeness; but he had the impot to do, and Tom was a peaceable chap.

He turned back into his study, and was soon deep in German characters again, working against time to get the imposition through, which made the German writing look more German than ever.

Gore tramped down the passage with his hands in his pockets and a sullen frown upon his face. As he turned into the Fourth Form passage to reach the stairs, Mellish and Levison came up to go into their study. Mellish and Levison were the cads of the Fourth Form.

They stared at Gore as they caught sight of his frowning face.

"His lordship looks wrathful," Levison remarked sarcastically. "Better give him a wide berth! I'm trembling!"

Mellish sniggered. "So am I," he remarked. "Hear me tremble."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Gore gave them an angry look. The remarks were intended for his ears, and he heard them. He came striding up to the two Fourth Formers, his hands clenched. It was really not a safe moment for the two cads of the Fourth to worry Gore. But of late he had been so peaceable, in comparison to his former self, that they did not know the risk they ran. At the present moment Gore was simply yearning for a reasonable pretext to hammer somebody.

Levison looked at him with a sneering grin. "Had bad news, I suppose?" he remarked. "Letter from home—eh?"

Gore started. "How do you know I've had a letter from home?" he demanded.

Levison grinned. "Because I saw it in the rack before you took it," he replied.

"And how do you know it was from home?" asked Gore, in a very unpleasant tone.

"I know your father's fist." "You seem to take a lot of interest in other chap's correspondence!" said Gore.

"I keep myself posted, you know," said Levison airily. "I always notice details of that sort. I noticed the postmark, too—the place where you live. And as I've heard what a terror your father is, I should say that he's been ragging you by post!"

"You ought to be a Sexton Blake!" said Gore.

"Yes; I rather fancy myself in that line!" said Levison complacently. "And—" "But the Sexton Blake bisney isn't exactly popular in a school!" Gore suggested. "Fellows don't like having their private business nosed out by an inquisitive cad! They don't like Peeping Toms at work on their correspondence. I don't, anyway! And I'm jolly well going to give you a licking for not minding your own business."

"Here, hands off! Ow!" "Yow!" howled Mellish. Smack, smack!

Gore's right caught Levison on his nose, and his left landed on Mellish's chin.

The two Fourth Formers staggered back, and Gore drove them into their study under a shower of blows.

"Take that—and that—and that!" "Ow!" "Yow!"

"Here, back up, Mellish!" shouted Levison desperately. And he put up his hands to Gore, and resisted as much as he could.

But Mellish had dodged round the table, and was looking wildly at the window, as if minded to jump out. Gore "went for" Levison unmercifully. He hit out right and left, and the cad of the Fourth was driven round the study, vainly striving to defend himself. He had no chance against the burly Shell fellow.

"Oh!" he roared. "Help! Yaroooh! Help! Oh!"

"Bai Jove! What's the mattah here?" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, looked in at the door of the study. At the same moment George Gore's heavy fist caught Levison on the point of the chin, and he went to the floor with a crash that made the study shake.

D'ARCY jammed an eyeglass into his right eye, and stared into the study.

"What is the mattah here, deah boys?"

Gore snapped his teeth. "Mind your own bisney!" he replied.

"Weally, Gore—" "Get out!"

D'Arcy came a step farther into the study.

"I wefuse to get out!" he said. "I asked what the mattah was ~~here~~. If you have been up to your old twicks, Gore—"

"Oh, buzz off!"

"He has," groaned Mellish, caressing a damaged chin. "The beast started on us for nothing, and without any warning. Ow!"

Levison sat up. He passed his hand over an eye that was rapidly becoming discoloured, and then over his aching jaw.

"Oh!" he groaned. "The beastly bully!"

"Has the wottah been bullyin' you, Levison?"

"Ow! Yes."

D'Arcy looked thoughtful.

"Well, you are an awful wottah yourself, Levison," he remarked, "and Mellish is an awful wottah, too! I dare say you deserved it. I am quite willin' to listen to your explanation, Gore!"

Gore laughed angrily.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" he exclaimed.

"I decline to do anything of the sort! I should be inclined to thwash you in any case, but I do not wish to make my clothes dusty. Undah the circs, I shall be satisfied if you wetiah ffrom the study."

"Rats!"

D'Arcy pushed his white cuffs out of danger. Then he carefully put his monocle into his waistcoat pocket. Gore watched these preparations with a sneering grin. He was very much bigger than D'Arcy, and he was spoiling for a fight.

Levison picked himself up, gasping.

"That's right, Gussy," he said. "Go for him, and I'll help you!"

"Pway do nothin' of the sort, Levison. That would not be ewicket. And pway do not call me Gussy; I am Gussy only to my intimate fwiends. Gore, will you have the extweme kindness to wetiah ffrom this study, where you are not wanted by the ownahs?"

"No!" said Gore.

"If you do not wetiah in peace, I shall have no wesource but to give you a feaful thwashin'!" said D'Arcy warningly.

"Rats!"

"Vewy well; I shall thwox you out!"

"Come on!" grinned Gore.

Arthur Augustus came on. He went for George Gore with a rush, and grasped him round the neck. He gave a wild yell as Gore's fist thumped upon his nose, and Gore roared as he received D'Arcy's knuckles in the ear. Then they closed in a desperate wrestle, and struggled round the study. Mellish and Levison had to dodge to avoid being biffed over.

The two combatants crashed into the bookcase in the corner, and there was a smash of breaking glass and a yell from Levison.

"Look out!"

Crash!

Next moment D'Arcy and Gore crashed into a chair and bumped to the floor. There was a shout from the passage, and two or three juniors looked in. The noise had been heard afar.

Blake, Herries, and Digby—Arthur Augustus' study-mates in Study No. 6—stared into Levison's study in blank amazement.

"My hat! It's Gussy breaking up the happy home!" exclaimed Blake. "Don't kill him, Gussy. You know how terrible you are when you start."

"Bai Jove!"

"What's the row about?" asked Digby, grinning.

"I'm chuckin' this wottah out!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows—"

"He looks more like chucking you out!" grinned Herries.

"Weally, Hewwics—"

Bump!

Arthur Augustus rolled over on his back, and Gore sat astride of his chest. The bully of the Shell proceeded to bump the back of D'Arcy's head on the floor.

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Blake ran into the study.

"None of that, you cad!" he exclaimed.

The chums of the Fourth grasped Gore, dragged him off the swell of St. Jim's, and flung him out bodily into the passage. Gore rolled on the linoleum with a grunt. He was upon his feet in a moment, panting breathlessly, his eyes gleaming with rage. But he did not venture to rush into the study again.

The chums of the Fourth were rather too many for him.

D'Arcy staggered up.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped, looking down at his clothes in dismay. "I am in a howwid state. Where is that wotfah Gore? Gore, I shall let you off for the pwsent, as I am in such a feahful state, but pwsently I shall give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Oh rats!" said Gore from the passage.

And he tramped away.

Arthur Augustus hesitated.

"Bai Jove! I've a jolly good mind to go aftah him now and give him a feahful thwashin'! Aftah all, I cannot get much dustah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Better have the gloves on in the gym," said Blake. "I should recommend a wash now. I can't have you in my study in that dirty state."

"Weally, deah boy—"

Arthur Augustus looked at himself in the glass. He did not stay to finish his remarks; he realised that a wash was necessary. To be untidy or dirty was torture itself to the elegant swell of St. Jim's.

He hurried to a bath-room, and comforted himself with steaming water and lathering soap.

CHAPTER 3.

Caught in the Act!

GEORGE GORE put his collar straight and retied his tie as he walked down the passage.

He dusted his face with his handkerchief, and pulled his jacket straight. He was not very much the worse for his encounter with the swell of St. Jim's—the brunt of the battle had fallen upon D'Arcy. Gore was feeling victorious, which was the worst feeling he could have in his present mood, for it made him more quarrelsome than ever.

Gore had a letter in his pocket from his father, and that letter made him savagely angry, and he was anxious to find someone to wreak his anger upon. It was not very reasonable, but Gore never was very reasonable.

He walked out into the old quad, the sullen frown still upon his face. Tom Merry's chums, Monty Lowther and Manners, were chatting outside the School House. They looked at Gore—they could hardly help noticing his sullen face. Gore looked back at them with a sullen stare.

"Anything wrong?" asked Lowther.

"Yes," snapped Gore. "But I don't see that it's any business of yours."

Monty Lowther reddened.

"Well, of all the pigs, I think you take the cake," he remarked. "I've a jolly good mind to give you a thick ear."

"Come on, then!" said Gore.

"Looking for trouble?" asked Manners.

"Just as you like."

Monty Lowther took a step towards him. But just outside the School House was hardly the place for a row. They were under the view of half a dozen masters' and prefects' study windows.

"Come into the gym, will you?" said Lowther.

"No, I won't!"

"Then shut up!"

"Oh, rats!" said Gore. "Go and eat coke!"

And he swung away.

"Something wrong with his lordship," Lowther observed. "I shall have something to say to him when I see him again somewhere a little less public."

Gore was laying up some accounts to be settled afterwards. He did not seem to care.

He strolled away towards the gates. Under the old elms, near the porter's lodge, two fags of the Third Form were indulging in the pleasures of an argument. They were Wally D'Arcy—D'Arcy minor—and Jameson, his chum. Chumminess in the Third Form at St. Jim's appeared to consist chiefly in having rows; and on those lines Wally and Jameson were great chums.

"Oh, cheese it!" Jameson was saying. "You can call it offside if you like, but my idea is that you're wrong!"

"Silly ass!" said Wally, with equal politeness. "If the weather wasn't so blessed warm, I'd jam your silly napper against that tree!"

"Just you try it!" said Jameson.

"I jolly well will—"

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"Hold that row, you young sweeps!" said Gore's disagreeable voice.

The two fags turned towards him. In an instant their own quarrel was suspended at a sign of interference from a fellow in a higher Form. They glared at the Shell fellow most aggressively.

"Hallo!" said Wally. "What do you want? Where did you get that face? Did you dig it up, or win it in a raffle?"

"Dig it up, I should say, and knocked it with a spade," said Jameson; "that's the only way of accounting for the features!"

Gore snorted. In his present humour he was not likely to take the elegant badinage of the Third Form quietly. He advanced upon the two fags, expecting them to run; but they did not run. They stood their ground and put up their hands.

"You beastly bully!" said Wally.

"Rotten cad!" said Jameson.

Smack! Biff!

Jameson recoiled away from a heavy backhander, which knocked his guard aside and caught him on the ear. Wally wriggled in the grip of the bully of the Shell.

"You cad!" he panted.

Gore gritted his teeth.

"Take that, you cheeky young bounder!"

Smack, smack!

"Ow!" roared Wally. "Rescue, Jimmy!"

Jameson rushed to the rescue at once. But the two fags were no match for the bullying Shell fellow, who was big enough and old enough to be in the Fifth, if he had not been kept back for laziness.

Gore, with a savage grin, seized the two fags by the collar, and, holding them almost at arm's length, knocked their heads together.

Crack, crack!

"Ow!" gasped Wally.

"Yaroooh!" panted Jameson.

Gore grinned evilly.

The two fags were quite powerless in his strong grasp, and Gore was enjoying himself. This was better than bumping Skimpole or fighting with D'Arcy.

In spite of the frantic struggles of Wally and Jameson, he brought their heads together again with a loud and sounding crack.

"Yah! Oh!"

"Yoop!"

The fags' heads were singing and aching, and they struggled ferociously, but in vain. Gore was too strong for them, and Gore was not merciful.

A stout, hard-faced gentleman, who had just walked in at the gates of St. Jim's, and was about to follow the drive up to the School House, paused as he heard the sharp cries under the trees, and looked in that direction.

The stout gentleman had a very hard face, and it seemed to grow harder and sterner as he saw what Gore was doing.

He left the path and crossed the grass towards the elm-trees. Upon the soft grass his heavy footsteps made no sound, and both the bully and his victims were too excited to notice the approach of a stranger.

"Ow!" yelled Wally, as his head cracked against Jameson's again. "Won't I pay you out for this! Ow! Leggo! Leggo!"

"Leggo!" groaned Jameson. "Ow! Chuck it!"

Crack, crack!

"Yaroooh!"

The stout gentleman had arrived upon the scene. He fixed a deadly glare upon George Gore.

"George!" he thundered.

Gore jumped.

The bully of the Shell released the two fags. Wally and Jameson staggered away from him, holding their heads and gasping. Gore fixed a terrified look upon the stern-faced, stout gentleman.

"Father!" he gasped.

CHAPTER 4.

Father and Son.

FATHER!" That word, which should have been the tenderest but one to any boy, was evidently without any tender associations for George Gore. Any associations it had were of fear and dislike; of high-handed harshness on the one side and suppressed rebelliousness on the other.

Wally gave a soft whistle.

"My only Aunt Jane!" he murmured. "Gore's in for it now. I've seen his pater before, and I don't envy him! Let's cut."

Jameson nodded. They "cut."

Mr. Gore did not glance at them. His eyes were fixed upon his son with a freezing stare. Gore, after gasping out that one word, remained dumb.

"You expected me!" said Mr. Gore at last.

"Ye-es, father!"

"Did you get up this little scene for my especial benefit?"
 "N-no," said Mr. Gore, with ferocious sarcasm. "I am surprised! I should have thought that you had arranged it for me, so that I could have no further possible doubt that all I have heard about my son is true—that he is a bully, a brute, and a young scoundrel!"

"Oh!"
 "I have come here," said Mr. Gore, "because I have received unfavourable reports of you from Dr. Holmes."
 Gore looked sullen.

"The Head has always been against me," he muttered.
 "Don't try to browbeat me!" thundered Mr. Gore. "I will not be argued with. I refuse to be bullied, sir, especially by my own son! Do you understand?"

"But I wasn't—"

"Silence, sir!"

Gore was silent.

"The Head states plainly in his letter that he has seen signs of improvement in you, and that your Form-master

too lazy to work; you remain in the Shell at an age when most boys are passing out of the Fifth into the Sixth. I dare say you find life here very easy and lazy—better than working in your father's office, and helping to contribute to your own maintenance."

"Oh, father!"

"Don't answer me back! I forbid you to do so."

Gore held his tongue. His father was seldom reasonable, but he seemed to be even a little less reasonable than usual that afternoon.

The two, father and son, were very much alike, as a matter of fact, although each greatly disliked his own qualities as seen in the other.

It was useless to argue with Mr. Gore, and the gentlest reply was taken by him as an argument. The only method was to bow one's head to the storm, and wait for it to pass over.

"You have had a lesson and a second chance once," said Mr. Gore. "You have not profited by them. If you do



"Ow! Yaroooh!" yelled Wally and Jameson as Gore brought their heads together with a crack. "Ow! Leggo!"
 "George!" thundered the stout gentleman who had arrived on the scene unnoticed. The bully looked up with a start. "Father!" he gasped.

was favourably impressed," said Mr. Gore, "but that you have apparently abandoned the new line of conduct you have followed since the time you narrowly escaped being expelled from the school. The lesson has been lost upon you, sir, after all. Cases of bullying have been brought to his notice, and you have been reported by the prefects as addicted to smoking!"

"Only one cigarette—"

"One cigarette to a boy of your age is as bad as a hundred," thundered Mr. Gore. "A criminal might as well state that he has committed only one burglary. It is the principle of the thing, sir."

"But—"

"Don't argue with me! I refuse to be argued with by an inscible boy. I have come here to take you away from the school."

Gore staggered.

"Take me away?" he gasped.

"Yes."

"Oh, father!"

"Ah! You do not want to leave the school, hey?"

"Oh, no, no!"

"I imagined not," said Mr. Gore satirically. "You are

not wish to leave the school, you have only yourself to thank for being forced to do so."

Gore bit his lip hard.

"Ah, you have nothing to say for yourself, I see," said Mr. Gore. "Of course, I quite expected that."

That was another of Mr. Gore's sweet, reasonable ways. If anyone replied to him, it was insolence and arguing; if anyone did not reply, it was because he had nothing to say for himself.

Mr. Gore had his victim either way.

Gore dropped his eyes.

"I am going to take you away from this school with me," went on the parent. "After all, it is time that you learned to help support yourself. No wonder you dare not look your father in the face, under the circumstances."

The unfortunate Gore raised his eyes again.

There was no doubt that Gore was a bully, and that his character was made up chiefly of defects, but heredity had something to do with it, and Gore had been very unfortunate in his father. Mr. Gore was hardly the man to bring up a son to be kind and gentle in his ways.

"I am now going to see the headmaster," said Mr. Gore.

"You may go to your study. I shall see you again before I go."

"Very well, father."

George Gore turned away, and walked towards the School House.

Mr. Gore snorted as he looked after him, and blew his nose loudly. Mr. Gore was evidently in a very bad temper that afternoon.

Gore went to his study.

Skimpole of the Shell was there. Skimpole had the doubtful pleasure of sharing that study with Gore. There was a big bruise on Skimpole's cheek, which made his glasses set a little awry, and kept him incessantly blinking. He blinked at Gore.

The bully of the Shell scowled back at him.

"Get out!" he said.

"Really, Gore," said Skimpole, who was the mildest-tempered fellow in the Shell, as he needed to be, to get on in any way with George Gore. "Really, I have some work to do."

Gore picked up an inkpot.

"Get out, or I'll buzz this at you!" he exclaimed. "My pater's coming in here to see me and I don't want you here. Get out!"

"If you had explained that at first, Gore, I should have acceded willingly to your request that I should retire," said Skimpole, in his long-winded way. "Under the circumstances, Gore—"

"Get out, you ass!"

"Really—"

Swish!

The ink flew out of the inkpot in a stream, and it caught Skimpole in one ear. The unfortunate junior gave a wild yell, and clapped his hand to his ear.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Now will you buzz off and stop jawing?" roared Gore.

"Really—Ow!"

Gore rushed at him and seized him by the shoulders and whirled him out of the study doorway. Skimpole collapsed in the passage. His spectacles fell off, and he groped for them wildly. Gore took his books from the table, and hurled them after him, pelting Skimpole as he groped blindly for his spectacles. The last of the books hurled forth, Gore slammed the study door.

"Dear me!" gasped Skimpole.

And in a state of great confusion of mind the short-sighted junior gathered up his books and trotted away down the passage.

Gore threw himself into a chair in the study in deep and gloomy thought.

He had feared a "row" when he received his father's letter that day. His father seldom wrote to him excepting for the purpose of calling him to account in some way. He had expected a severe lecture, which he would have endured with sullen fortitude, and perhaps a licking, which he would have had to put up with. But to be taken away from the school—that was too bad!

What a fool he had been! Gore spent most of his time at St. Jim's in making himself disagreeable. But he liked the school, and he shivered at the idea of being taken away and placed in his father's office under the terrible eye of his parent. He had had a narrow escape of that once before—he had been expelled from St. Jim's—and he had run away from home, and the Head had taken pity on him and allowed him to return to the school.

Gore had been very careful for some time after that, but gradually he had slipped back into the old ways. It seemed to be in his nature, and he could not help it. At all events, he did not help it.

There seemed to be no curing him. But now—now that it was too late—he realised what a fool he had been!

If only he could have had another chance!

But if he had it, he would probably lose it as he had lost the other. It seemed that he was fated to make a fool of himself. And how unfortunate that his father should have caught him in the very act of bullying the fags! That act had been so utterly uncalled for and unjustifiable—the act of a sheer bully.

It served him right, as he realised with a groan. Why couldn't he have had more sense?

And he was to go! To leave the school, the familiar faces, the green playing fields, the shining river, for a stuffy office and a pen, a desk and a high stool, and his father's voice within hearing. And it was his own fault!

Gore realised that quite clearly; but it was no comfort to him. That afternoon he had made more than one boy miserable in the school; but as he sat there in his study, with his gloomy and bitter thoughts, he was certainly the most miserable fellow at St. Jim's.

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CHAPTER 5.

The Head's Advice.

"BOY!"

Tom Merry looked round. He did not know whether the monosyllable was fired at him or not, but he thought it was, and he looked round.

Mr. Gore had just entered the School House.

Tom Merry had finished his imposition at last, and had come down with it in his hand, to take it to the German master's study. As he was the only fellow in the Hall besides the stout gentleman, Tom Merry concluded that he was the person addressed.

"Yes, sir?" he said.

"Show me to the Head."

Tom Merry coloured. He had no objection whatever to showing anybody to the Head's study; he was the most obliging of boys. But he had a very strong objection to being ordered about by anybody who was not entitled to give him orders. He had seen Mr. Gore once before on the occasion of that gentleman's visit to St. Jim's, and he had not liked him. People very seldom did like Mr. Gore.

"If you touch the bell, the page will come and show you the way, sir," he said.

"Don't be insolent, boy!" snorted Mr. Gore. "You are, I suppose, one of those insolent rascals who has led my son into bad ways."

Tom Merry turned crimson.

"Your son didn't want much leading," he retorted.

"And I have precious little to do with him, I can tell you."

"Boy!" thundered Mr. Gore.

Tom Merry turned away. He did not wish to be impatient to a man old enough to be his father, but Mr. Gore was certainly very provoking.

Mr. Gore rang the bell angrily, and Toby, the page, appeared.

He showed the irate old gentleman to the Head's study.

Dr. Holmes rose to receive his visitor, suppressing a sigh. He had had one interview with Mr. Gore, which he never forgot. Mr. Gore had come and gone like a whirlwind, leaving the quiet, scholarly old gentleman in a state of mental confusion that he did not recover from for quite a long time.

"Ah, Mr. Gore!" said Dr. Holmes. "Pray be seated, sir. I expected you, as I had your letter this morning."

Mr. Gore placed his cane and his silk hat upon one chair, and himself upon another.

"I wrote you in reply to your letter, sir," he began.

"Which was written in reply to one from you, Mr. Gore."

"Exactly."

"I am, of course, very pleased to see the parents of any of my boys," said the Head. "If he had stopped to reflect, the Head would have realised that that was a statement which George Washington would have hesitated to make."

"But the purpose of this visit—"

"You have complained of my son—"

"Allow me! You wrote to me asking me to tell you exactly how your son had progressed since the time he was allowed to return to St. Jim's, and to tell you frankly whether the improvement in his character had been permanent," said the Head. "In reply to that letter, I could only state the precise facts to you. Gore showed decided improvement for a considerable time, but he has of late shown a falling back into the old ways. I hear so from his Form-master and from the prefects. But I hope—"

Mr. Gore waved his hand.

"In a case like this there is no room for hope," he said. "If such a lesson as my son received did not cure him, there is no cure to be found in this school, and the best thing he can do is to leave it."

Dr. Holmes started a little.

"You intend to take your boy away?"

"Yes, sir."

"This is rather sudden, is it not?"

"There is no need to dawdle, sir, when one's mind is made up," replied Mr. Gore. "I am a business man, sir. I am not in the habit of wasting time. In business, sir, minutes are precious. This afternoon I found that I could make time to take the journey. I leave London for Edinburgh at seven o'clock, and I found I had time to come down here before leaving for Edinburgh. It would have been absurd to put it off in order to reflect upon a matter already decided."

"I suppose so," murmured the Head.

"I am therefore prepared to take my son away at once," said Mr. Gore, rising.

The Head seemed to hesitate.

"Pray pardon me," he said. "I suppose it is really no business of mine, but I take an interest in your son, as in all my pupils. May I inquire what you intend for him?"

"I shall take him into my office, sir," said Mr. Gore. "He will begin at the bottom of the ladder, and work his way up, as his father has done."

"He may not have the abilities of his father," the Head suggested.

Mr. Gore smiled grimly.

"In that case, he can remain at the bottom of the ladder—the proper place for those who cannot or will not work," he said. "He has every chance of making a career for himself. The responsibility is his. I need not waste your time any further, sir. My own time, too, is of value. I must catch the half-past five at Rylcombe Station."

"One more word, sir. If your boy were given another chance—"

Mr. Gore shook his head.

"Quite useless, sir," he said.

"You are resolved to take your son away, then, with you now?"

"Yes; if he cannot pack up in time to catch the train, his belongings can be sent after him, I presume?"

"Certainly. But—"

"As for the fees, which have been paid in advance for the term, I do not, of course, expect any part of them to be returned," said Mr. Gore. "I am a business man."

The Head coloured.

"I was not thinking of the fees," he said. "If you are determined to take your boy away, there is nothing more to be said. I think it would be advisable to give him another chance, that is all."

"H'm! I will talk to him and—see," said Mr. Gore. "I have a great respect for your judgment, sir. A man who can successfully run a school of this size, without a previous business training, is a man whose mental calibre I can respect. I will, then, speak to George once more, and see if I can find any possible reason for giving him one more chance. Good-afternoon, sir."

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Gore!"

The Head shook hands with his visitor, who quitted the study. His heavy footsteps sounded along the passage. Dr. Holmes sank into his chair, feeling quite limp. Mr. Gore often had that effect upon people he visited.

CHAPTER 8.

Not Funny for Mr. Gore!

"WHICH is my son's study?"

Mr. Gore propounded that query as he met Jack Blake of the Fourth in the Fourth Form passage. Mr. Gore had been to his son's study before, and, consequently, he tried to make his way there alone on this occasion; but he had forgotten the passage and forgotten the number since his last visit.

Mr. Gore looked severely at Blake as he asked him. He always looked severely at boys when he spoke to them. He appeared to have an idea that it was rather impertinent of boys to exist at all, and that the more boys were sat upon the better it was for them and for everybody else.

Blake was about the last junior in the School House to be sat upon with impunity. He looked at Mr. Gore, and remembered him. Mr. Gore's was a personality not easily forgotten. But his hectoring manner did not please Blake at all.

"Excuse me, sir," said Blake, with dangerous politeness, "did you do me the honour of addressing me, sir?"

"I asked you which is my son's study?"

"That depends, sir."

"What?"

"It depends upon who your son is, sir," Blake explained, with a very innocent smile.

"My name is Gore."

"Oh, Gore! There's a fellow of that name in the Shell, sir."

"Will you show me the study?"

"Which study, sir?"

"My son's study."

"George's, sir?"

"Yes; my son's name is George."

"Oh dear! George will be so glad to see you, sir," said Blake, and he added under his breath: "I don't think!"

"What did you say, boy?"

"Lovely weather, sir, isn't it?"

"I have no time to discuss the weather with a silly boy," said Mr. Gore. "Show me the way, and then begone."

"My hat!"

Blake led the way down the passage. Mr. Gore's manners and customs did not please Blake a little bit. He was leading him to the Shell studies, but he did not mean to lead him to the right one. If Mr. Gore wanted a service rendered, he should have taken the trouble to be polite about it.

Blake went down the end of the Shell passage, and started up the box-room stairs. Mr. Gore paused.

"I do not remember going up these stairs on the occasion of my last visit to my son's study," he remarked.

"Perhaps not, sir. Memory often fails as we get on in years, sir," Blake suggested.

Mr. Gore snorted.

"Lead on, and hold your tongue," he said.

Blake grinned and led on.

Mr. Gore followed him angrily up the stairs. He seemed to take that additional staircase as a personal injury.

Blake opened the door of the box-room, and stood aside politely for Mr. Gore to enter. The stout gentleman passed in without a word of thanks. Mr. Gore regarded thanks as an unnecessary and superfluous waste of breath.

Blake closed the door quickly, and made a clicking sound with the handle, as if he were locking it. Then he scooted downstairs at top speed.

Mr. Gore looked round the room he found himself in.

It was a dusty old room, lighted by a single small window, and half-filled with empty boxes and trunks and lumber of all kinds.

That it was not a junior study was apparent at a glance. Mr. Gore simply snorted with wrath. That a junior should dare to show him into the box-room was amazing and most exasperating.

The irate gentleman grasped his cane hard. He would have been very glad to have Jack Blake of the Fourth (Continued on the next page.)

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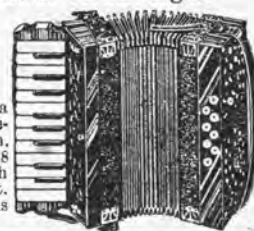
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within hitting distance just then. He remembered the click at the door, and snorted again. He had not the slightest doubt that the junior had locked him in. He strode to the door and rapped upon it with his cane.

Rap, rap, rap!

"Open this door, you young scoundrel!"

Rap, rap, rap!

Blake's footsteps died away in the distance. Mr. Gore was purple with wrath. He thrashed the door with his cane as if it had been Jack Blake instead. The blows rang and echoed through the School House passages, till the cane split in two, and Mr. Gore had a narrow escape from the flying fragments. He dodged it, and whacked the door with redoubled fury with the piece that was left in his hand.

Crash, crash, crash!

A voice yelled up the box-room stairs:

"Stop that row, you noisy idiot, or I'll come up to you!"

It was the gentle voice of Knox of the Sixth, the prefect. Mr. Gore whacked the door with louder and more tremendous whacks, at the prospect of being heard and released.

There was a sound of tramping footsteps on the stairs. Knox came up in a towering rage, not in the least doubting that it was some humorous junior who was making the uproar, and that he refused to desist from pure "cheek."

The handle was turned from the outside, and the door flung open so suddenly that Mr. Gore was very nearly knocked backwards by it.

"Now, you young fool!" roared Knox. "Oh, my hat!"

He stared blankly at Mr. Gore.

"Great Scott! Who are you?"

"My name is Gore, sir!" roared the stout gentleman.

"Oh, Gore's pater, I suppose?" said Knox. "Well, I must say I'm surprised at tricks of this sort in a man of your age, sir."

"What?" choked Mr. Gore. "I was trying to attract attention."

"You could have done that by standing on your head in the quad, without the trouble of coming all this way upstairs," said Knox.

"You—you idiot!" panted Mr. Gore. "I was trying to attract attention in order to be released from this room. I have been locked up in this room by an insolent junior."

"What rot!" said Knox. "The door wasn't locked."

"Not locked?"

"Certainly not!"

"What—what?"

"There isn't even a key in the lock," grinned Knox. "What on earth could have made you imagine it was locked I don't know!"

Mr. Gore stared at the lock. There wasn't any sign of a key there. He gasped for breath.

"I—I heard a sound, and—and concluded—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothing to laugh at!" thundered Mr. Gore. Knox apparently thought there was; he could not control his merriment. He staggered out of the room, roaring with laughter. Mr. Gore, breathing fury, followed him.

He was quite purple as he descended into the Shell passage.

CHAPTER 7.

The Bully's Promise!

GEORGE GORE was standing in his study doorway—he had been disturbed by the noise in the box-room above.

Mr. Gore caught sight of him and stopped, needing no further guide to his son's study.

Gore looked at his father's purple face in dismay. When his father looked like that, Gore looked for trouble.

"Is—is anything the matter, father?" Gore faltered.

"Yes," snorted Mr. Gore. "Yes, I have been treated with insolence and derision by a rascally young scoundrel, while my dutiful and idiotic son was sitting in his study without thinking of how his father was to find his way here."

"You—you told me to wait in my study," faltered Gore.

"Don't argue with me!"

"I thought you knew the way, father—"

"If you are insolent I shall chastise you, George!"

Gore relapsed into silence.

Mr. Gore planted himself firmly in the armchair, and planted his feet firmly on the rug, and planted his elbows firmly on the arms of the chair. He fixed his eyes firmly upon his son.

"George!" rapped out Mr. Gore.

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"Yes, father?"

"I came down here to take you away from the school. Dr. Holmes thinks, however, that it would be judicious to give you another chance."

Gore brightened up perceptibly.

"Yes, father."

"The question is," said Mr. Gore, "whether you would have enough sense to make the most of a chance if I gave you one?"

"Oh, yes, father."

"You did not do so in the previous instance."

"No, father."

"But you think you can promise more judicious conduct in the future?"

"Yes, father."

"Bah!" exclaimed Mr. Gore, in exasperation. "Are you an utter idiot? Cannot you say anything at all except 'Yes, father,' and 'No, father,'?"

"Yes, father—I mean, no, father," stammered Gore.

Mr. Gore snorted contemptuously.

"I don't know what I have done to have an utter fool for a son!" he said. "However, to resume. Your great fault, George, is that you have a hasty and uncontrolled temper, that you are overbearing and bullying, and that you are lacking in good manners and self-control."

Gore was silent. He could not help thinking that if he had those qualities they had probably descended to him on his father's side, but it was almost as much as his life was worth to say so.

"I found you quarrelling and fighting when I arrived here," said Mr. Gore. "You are always quarrelling and fighting—generally, I believe, with smaller boys than yourself. Is that not the case?"

"I—I—"

"To bully, or even to raise the voice, to one smaller than yourself, and at your mercy, is wrong and cowardly!" thundered Mr. Gore.

Gore suppressed a grin just in time. It was what his father was doing at that very moment, but Gore senior was not blessed with a sense of humour.

"If you can definitely promise a change in this respect, I am willing to give you a chance," said Mr. Gore. "I am going away to Edinburgh, and shall return in four days. I am willing to give you those four days to make a new start. If you have not changed your ways by then you leave the school. You understand?"

"Ye-es, father."

"You will promise me," resumed Mr. Gore, with terrific seriousness, "on your word of honour, not to enter into a fight of any kind while I am away at Edinburgh. If you break your word I have done with you."

"I promise not to begin a fight; but—but suppose a chap goes for me, all of his own accord—"

"It would probably be on account of your having bullied him at some time, I dare say," said Mr. Gore dryly. "In that case you would be compelled to take the punishment quietly, and you should be thankful for an opportunity of learning the great lesson of self-control."

"But—but the fellows will think I'm a coward if I let the fellows hit me!" gasped Gore.

"Very well," said Mr. Gore, rising squarely. "I have given you your chance, and you have declined it. I have no more to say. There will be no time to pack your box now, but Dr. Holmes will have it sent after you. Get your cap and come with me."

Gore shivered.

"Oh, father! I—I—I—"

"Is your cap here?" asked Mr. Gore.

"No, it's downstairs, father. I—I—"

"Then follow me downstairs."

Mr. Gore opened the study door. Gore followed him into the passage despairingly.

"Father, I—I—I'll promise anything, but don't take me away from St. Jim's."

Mr. Gore halted.

Levison of the Fourth was just coming round the corner from the Fourth Form passage, but as he heard Gore's words he halted and drew behind the corner. From that spot he could hear every word that was spoken in the Shell passage, and Levison's besetting sin was curiosity. Neither father nor son was looking in his direction, and they had not noticed his momentary appearance and his sudden backing away.

Gore was in too anxious and disturbed a frame of mind to notice anything just then.

Mr. Gore was regarding his son with hard, stern eyes.

"You are willing to promise, George?"

"Ye-es!" groaned Gore.

"Mind, if you break your promise the punishment will be more severe than merely being taken away from the school," said Mr. Gore harshly. "If I found my son to be dishonourable as well as bullying and overbearing, I should

cast him off, sir. I should no longer regard him as a son of mine."

"I—I shall keep the promise, father."

"You had better! Now, then, you promise me, on your word of honour, to enter into no quarrel at all during the four days that I am absent at Edinburgh. Even if you are attacked in the most unprovoked manner you will not retaliate. You will take any insult, and even any blow, without raising your hand. If you can pass through that ordeal I shall consider that you are learning self-control, and shall give you a further chance to remain at this school and adopt the career that was originally intended for you. If you fail, I shall remove you from the school. You understand?"

"Yes, father."

"And you promise on your honour?"

"Yes, father!" groaned Gore.

"That is all then. You need not come to the station with me. Good-bye!"

And Mr. Gore, without staking hands with his son, tramped away.

Levison heard his heavy footsteps coming, and dodged into a study to escape his sight.

Mr. Gore passed on and descended the stairs.

In the Hall he glanced at the clock, calculating whether he had time to call in at the Head's study and complain of the trick an unknown junior had played upon him. But he had left himself only just time to walk to the station.

For economical reasons he had not taken the station cab. He strolled out of the House, marched squarely across the quad, and tramped away towards Rylcombe.

"That's Gore's pater," said Monty Lowther, who was lounging in the gateway with Manners. "Nice, gentle expression on his chivvy, isn't there?"

"I don't envy Gore the visits!" grinned Manners.

"My hat! Rather not!" Monty Lowther turned into the quad. "That reminds me—I've got to talk to Gore. I was keeping off the grass while his pater was here. But I owe Gore a dot in the eye, and I think it's time to pay up."

"Hear, hear!" said Manners.

And the chums of the Shell went to look for Gore. The bully had sown the wind that afternoon, and now he was going to reap the whirlwind. There were quite a number of fellows at St. Jim's who had little accounts to settle with George Gore that afternoon, and it was certainly the most awkward time they could have chosen—for Gore.

CHAPTER 8.

The Path of Peace!

GEORGE GORE went back to his study and shut the door. He sat down in a chair, and drove his hands deep into his pockets and thought it out.

He had got himself this time into about the biggest scrape of his career at St. Jim's. He realised that. If he entered into a single fight of any kind during the next four days his father would take him away, and there would be no hope of return.

How he was to keep quite clear of all quarrels for four days was a puzzle.

But he had to do it. It was either that or leaving the school; and the more he thought of leaving the school and commencing work in his father's office, under the shadow of his father's frown, the less he liked it.

And if he broke his promise there was little hope of concealing the fact. When Mr. Gore returned he would inquire. If Gore had been in any fights in those four days the facts would come out. Fellows like Mellish and Levison would give him away with pleasure, especially if they could seriously injure him thereby. Gore's treatment of them that very afternoon had not given them any cause to regard him with kindness. But even if his schoolfellows did not betray him, the masters or prefects would know the facts and would tell his father the truth.

He had to keep clear of fighting. But how?

That was the question. Gore had a sharp temper—sometimes almost ungovernable. He had a habit of bullying and cuffing and ragging. Besides that, he had a certain amount of bulldog courage, which would not allow him to submit to bullying himself. For all these reasons, it would be little short of a miracle if he kept clear of a fight for the space of four days.

The door of the study opened.

Skimpole of the Shell came in. Skimpole had two bruises on his ample forehead and one on his cheek, and his spectacles were more sideways than ever. Skimpole found it difficult to see through them, and he was blinking his eyes in a way that was really painful to look at.

There was an expression of unusual determination upon Skimpole's face. As a rule Skimpole, the genius of the Shell, was the meekest and mildest of juniors. He buried himself in the contemplations of such questions as Evolution and Determinism, and was quite lost to practical things. He never lost his temper, and, in fact, was supposed



As Skimpole launched out his fist to give the coward's blow, Gore quickly moved aside on his seat. Skimpole's knuckles came in contact with the hard wood of the chair, and he uttered a howl. "Yow!" "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Gore.

not to have one. But for once in his life Skimpole was looking warlike.

"Shut the door, idiot!" growled Gore.

Skimpole folded his arms and faced Gore.

"I refuse to close the door, Gore," he said.

Gore stared at him.

"What!" he roared.

"Close the door yourself, if you wish it to be closed!" said Skimpole, in accents of great firmness.

Gore clutched at the inkpot. Skimpole pushed back his cuffs. Gore let go the inkpot again. He remembered in time that fights were barred, and he was almost too astonished at what Skimpole was doing to think of throwing the ink over him. He had heard that the worm will turn, but he had never expected to see it happen. But the meek and patient Skimpole was evidently turning.

"Kindly rise and put up your hands," said Skimpole, assuming guard himself—in a way that would have made a fag of the Second smile. Skimpole knew as much about fighting as he did about Sanskrit or Chinese, and he could not see clearly enough to hit straight in any case. But he had plenty of pluck. "I am going to thrash you, Gore, for inflicting personal injuries upon me. As I cannot see at all without my glasses, I shall be obliged to wear them, but I rely upon you, as a decent fellow, not to smite me above the level of my nose, as it would be extremely dangerous to have the glass broken over my eyes. I am sure you will appreciate the circumstance. Now, come on!"

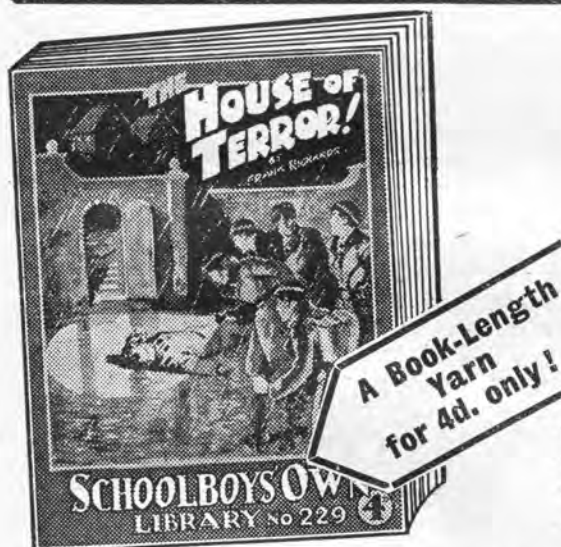
Gore did not come on.

He sat back in his chair and roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am going to inflict bodily chastisement upon you, Gore!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



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"Unless you are prepared to fight me, after your brutality, I shall administer the coward's blow!" said Skimpole.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gore did not seem to be able to leave off laughing.

Truly, Skimpole was on the warpath and was comic enough to cause much merriment. But the genius of the Shell was earnest and serious; he always was, as a matter of fact. Having made up his mind to declare war, he meant to carry it through.

Biff!

Skimpole launched out to give the coward's blow. Gore moved a little and Skimpole's bony fist crashed on the back of the chair.

The genius of the Shell uttered a howl.

"Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Gore.

"Really, Gore!"

Gore had laughed himself into a good temper, and Skimpole's barking of his knuckles gave the finishing touch to his satisfaction. The bully of the Shell rose to his feet and clapped Skimpole on the shoulder.

"It's all right, Skimmy—"

"Ow!" groaned Skimpole, sucking his knuckles. "Ow! I do not feel all right! I am suffering from considerable contusion upon the joints of my digits!"

"It's all right. I am sorry I buzzed the ink over you, and buzzed you out of the study," said Gore.

Skimpole brightened up.

"My dear Gore, I am only too willing to overlook any little offence!" he exclaimed. "I am only too glad and exhilarated to see you in such a mood of politeness and consideration. Under the circumstances I am quite—"

"Exactly. Good-bye!"

"I should be very pleased to read you a chapter from Professor Balmcrumpet's work on the subject of heredity and environment considered as the causes of the effects which they produce," said Skimpole.

"Thanks! When I can't get to sleep some night I'll let you do it," said Gore; and he quitted the study, leaving Skimpole blinking in a dubious way.

"Dear me!" murmured Skimpole. "I cannot help suspecting that he intended that last remark in a humorous sense. Dear me!"

And Skimpole shook his head seriously and set his spectacles straight once more.

CHAPTER 9.

On the Warpath!

TOM MERRY joined Monty Lowther and Manners in the doorway of the School House. He had finished his German imposition and taken it Herr Schneider, and he was thinking of football.

"Hallo, my son!" said Monty Lowther. "Have you seen Gore?"

"Yes, awhile ago," said Tom Merry, frowning. "He cheeked me, and I don't know whether I ought to go for him or not. I suppose I can let it slide; it's no good going round looking for trouble."

"Same thing with me," said Monty Lowther. "Only I'm not going to let it slide. Gore has his ears up too much lately, and it's about time somebody gave them a pull."

"Yes, rather!" said Manners emphatically. "He has been bullying the fags this afternoon. Jameson and young Wally are groaning over it now."

Tom Merry frowned.

"What has he been doing?" he asked.

"Knocking their heads together."

"The silly cad!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as the swell of St. Jim's joined the Terrible Three.

"I have just seen Wally and he has a fearful headache. Jameson's head appeals to be vewy hard. He has a headache, too, though. I weward it as wotten. And you always wun the wisk of injuwin' a chap if you biff him on the nappah."

"Yes. The brute. Better give him a licking, Monty—or will you leave it to me?" asked Tom Merry.

"Oh, I don't care which!"

"Pway stand out of the mattah altogethah, deah boys! I am goin' to give Gore a feahful thwashin'; and one will be enough for the pwsent."

"Oh, you can go and eat coke, Gussy!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Oh, run away and play!"

"I am goin' to look for Gore, Lowthah. Othahwise, I should pwobably thwash you for your impertinent wemarks."

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy marched off with his aristocratic nose very high in the air. He was going away to search for Gore. Gore was at that moment coming downstairs, but D'Arcy turned the corner before the bully

of the Shell appeared in sight. The Terrible Three lined up in George Gore's path.

Gore halted.

"Hallo!" he said. "What's the trouble?"

"The trouble is, that I want you to step into the gym," said Tom Merry, frowning.

"What for?"

"To put the gloves on."

"I don't want to fight with you," said Gore.

"You should have thought of that sooner. You are a bully and a cad, and you are badly in want of a licking," said Tom Merry scornfully.

Gore coloured.

"I don't want to fight you," he said, putting his hands in his pockets. "You are a decent chap, Tom Merry, and that ought to be enough for you."

Tom Merry hesitated.

"Well, if you don't want to—"

"I don't!"

"Then you can take a back seat, Tommy," said Monty Lowther. "You're too soft-hearted—I won't say anything about your head—to deal with a rotter like Gore. Gore, will you come into the gym?"

"Look here!" said Gore uneasily. "I don't want a row with you, Lowther. I'm sorry if I spoke a bit rudely to you this afternoon. I can't say more than that."

Monty Lowther dropped his hands.

"Well, if you put it like that—" he said.

"I'm not looking for rows," said Gore. "The fact is I've just seen my pater, and—and I've had enough rowing for some time. My pater can pitch it hot and strong; but you've seen him, and you know. I think you fellows might leave me alone for a bit while I get over seeing my pater."

Tom Merry was touched at once. It was easy enough to turn away his wrath with a word.

"Oh, it's all right, Gore!" he explained. "We don't want to lick you, as far as that goes, but you'll have to stop the bullying business you started again. Mind, if you lay your paws on young Wally again there will be trouble!"

"I'm sorry I touched him," said Gore. "Only—only I was worried about my father coming, and—and, well, I suppose I was in a rotten temper, and that's the truth."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Well, the truth is a good thing," he remarked.

Gore breathed a deep sigh of relief as he walked on. He had easily made his peace with Skimpole; but he had been in doubt about the possibility of doing so with the Terrible Three. But he had succeeded there as well.

Gore had not said a word of his promise to his father. It was useless, or worse than useless, to allow that to become known. In the first place, he might not be believed, for he was far from bearing a reputation as a truthful fellow, and his story might be considered merely a transparent excuse for cowardice.

In the second place, if he were believed, and the fellows regarded him bound by such a promise, he would be at the mercy of everyone who chose to take advantage of it.

And he knew that fellows like Mellish and Levison would take the most merciless advantage of such a state of affairs.

His business was to keep the promise strictly secret; if it once leaked out he shivered at the thought of the consequences.

He was thinking it over as he walked out of the School House, and at the bottom of the steps almost ran into Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The swell of the School House uttered an exclamation:

"Bai Jove! Gore! Stop!"

George Gore paused.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"Pway put up your hands, deah boy! I am goin' to give you a feahful thwashin'!"

Gore groaned.

CHAPTER 10.

As One Gentleman to Another!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was ready for business. He had put on his oldest pair of trousers, and his worn jacket.

He remembered his last encounter with Gore, and the havoc it had wrought in his attire.

He pushed back his cuffs carefully.

"Will you have it here, or will you come behind the chapel, Gore?" he asked.

"You see—"

"I am quite willin' to have the gloves on, if you like, deah boy," said D'Arcy, very considerably. "I am bound, undah the cires, to give you a feahful thwashin'. But I weally don't want to hurt you too much."

"Have I—I offended you?" asked Gore.

(Continued on the next page.)



Do you know a good joke? If so, send it to "THE GEM JESTER," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.). Half-a-crown is awarded to the sender of every joke that appears in this column.

A BACK ANSWER.

Mr. Ratcliff: "You should not eat so much for supper, Wynn. It is not good for you to sleep on a full stomach."

Fatty Wynn: "That's all right, sir—I sleep on my back!"
Half-a-crown has been awarded to K. Fisher, 15, Broxtowe Drive, Mansfield, Notts.

SPOKE TOO SOON.

Sergeant (addressing platoon): "Any man 'ere know any thing about music?"

Recruit: "Yes, sergeant, I do."

Sergeant: "Then you can go and shift the piano in the officers' mess!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. Rowntree, 1, Villa Road, Brixton, London, S.W.9.

TAKEN AT HIS WORD.

First Motorist: "What I say goes."

Second Motorist: "Then just step over to my garage and say something to my car."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to P. Lambourne, 77, Springfield Road, Tottenham, London, N.15.

HOPEFUL.

Tim: "I forget a lot nowadays."

Slim: "How do you mean?"

Tim: "One day somebody tells me something, and the next day I've forgotten it."

Slim: "Fine! Lend me ten bob."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to C. White, 116, Ashfordby Street, North Evington, Leicester.

BREAKING IT GENTLY!

Alf: "I say, dad, you remember that you promised me a half-a-crown if I passed my exams this term?"

Father: "Yes, my boy."

Alf: "Well, dad, you aren't going to be put to that expense."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. Townsley, 62, Middleton Road, Oldham.

PAYING HIS WHACK.

Father: "Now that you are going to work, Tom, you must help with the expenses."

Tom: "Yes, dad. What can I do?"

Father: "You can pay the final instalment on your pram."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. Cohen, Beach Hotel, Woodstock, Cape Province, South Africa.

A BUCKJUMPER.

"That's a nice horse you've got there," said the passer-by to the groom.

"It's not too bad," said the groom, "only it's a miniature 'orse."

"Miniature horse?" echoed the passer-by in astonishment. "It's quite a big one."

"Yes," replied the groom; "but one minute yer on, and the next minute yer off."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Nuttall, 208, Main Road, Sea View, Natal, South Africa.

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"Weally, Gore—"

"I'm sure I didn't mean to," said Gore. "As a matter of fact, I regard you with very great respect and friendship."

"Weally, deah boy—"

"If I've ever done anything that seems at all disrespectful you must put it down to thoughtlessness," said Gore, with great solemnity. "Of course, no chap in his right senses could think of offending you."

D'Arcy coughed.

Gore was quite right, of course, and he put it very nicely, but the swell of St. Jim's was not wholly satisfied.

"You tweeked me in a vewy wuff and wotten mannah when I was thwowin' you out of Levison's study," he said.

"But you started it, you know."

"I was takin' up the cause of the oppressed," said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity. "I had no resource but to lend Levison a helpin' hand, undah the cires."

"But you gave me a fearfully rough time," said Gore. "Yaas, wathah! And I'm goin' to give you a feahfully wuffer time now!"

"If anything occurred in Levison's study to displease you," said Gore, "I'm sorry. I can't say more than that, can I?"

D'Arcy coughed again.

He was quite surprised at this tone from Gore.

"Vewy well!" he said. "If you choose to apologise, as one gentleman to anothah—"

"I do apologise," said Gore.

"Well, deah boy, undah the cires, as you apologise, I am pwepared to ovahlook what occurred in Levison's study, as one gentleman to anothah. But there is anothah mattah. You have bullied and wagged my youngah bwothah in a weally wotten way."

"I'm sorry."

"Yaas; but that's all vewy well," said D'Arcy. "I've pwomised Wally to give you a feahful thwashin'! I am pwepared to ovahlook your wuffianly conduct towards myself, but I am bound to give you a thwashin' on Wally's account. So I must twouble you to put up your hands."

"Now, look here, Gussy—"

"I am Gussy to my fwiends," said the swell of St. Jim's frigidly. "You will have the extweme goodness to call me D'Arcy."

"Vewy well; D'Arcy, then," said Gore pacifically. "I'm sorry I banged your minor's napper against Jameson's."

"Yaas; so now you will put up your hands?"

"I give you best," said Gore.

"That is not suffish, deah boy."

"I'll tell Wally I am sorry, if you like."

"I'm afwaid that Wally would not wegard that as suffish, eithah."

"Now, look here! I don't want a row," said Gore. "I've just had a jawing from my pater. He doesn't want me to fight. Of course, you wouldn't think of advising a fellow to disregard his father's wishes."

D'Arcy shook his head.

"I should wegard that as tweekin' a pawent with disrespect, which is wotten bad form, Gore," he said.

"Then you see how it is," urged Gore. "My pater has forbidden me to fight. I've apologised. What more can I do?"

Arthur Augustus thought it out.

"Of course, if you are not wottin'—" he began.

"Honest Injun!" said Gore.

"Then I do not see what you can do," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "Of course, between gentlemen, an apology is suffish. But Wally had a pain in his nappah, you know, and he wants you to have a licking."

"Suppose you convey my apology to him," suggested Gore, "and explain to him that I'm sorry, and that it ought to be enough."

D'Arcy nodded.

"Vewy well, deah boy, I will do so. And I must wemark that I considah your view of the case as weally gentlemanly."

"Oh, good!"

"I will acquaint my minah with what you have said, and it will be all wight, as far as I am concerned," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"Thanks!"

Arthur Augustus nodded, and walked away.

Gore grinned, but it was a very uneasy grin. He had escaped another encounter, but he wondered whether his luck would hold out.

Arthur Augustus made his way to the Third Form Room. Wally and Jameson were there with a crowd of fags, and Wally was still rubbing his head. Wally's head was hard, and had stood a good many hard knocks in its time; but

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Gore had hurt him, and Wally wanted satisfaction. He looked up eagerly as his major came in.

"You've licked Gore?" he asked.

"No, deah boy."

"But it's arranged, I suppose?" said Wally. "Where is to be—in the gym?"

"Ahem! No!"

"Behind the chapel's better," said Jameson. "It's more private, and we can all be there to see it. Is it to be behind the chapel, D'Arcy major?"

"Ahem! No!"

"Then where?" demanded Wally.

"Ahem! Not at all, deah boy!"

"What?" howled Wally.

"Gore has apologised, Wally," D'Arcy explained. "He has apologised to me, and has given me an apology to convey to you. As one gentleman to anothah, he expwesses his wegwet for what has occurred, and, of course, that ends it."

Wally glared at his major.

"That ends it!" he yelled. "Ends it, does it?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"So you are going to let him off, you chump!"

"As one gentleman to anothah—"

"Oh, you ass! Do you think I'm going to let him off, after he's banged my napper against Jameson's wooden head?"

"Look here—" began Jameson.

"Gore has apologised—"

"Do you think he can apologise my headache away?" yelled Wally.

"Well, no. Still, fwom one gentleman to anothah, an apology should be suffish—"

"Oh, kick him out!"

"Weally, you young wuffian— Oh! Yow! Stop! You diswepctful young wottahs, stop immediately! I wefuse— Oh! Yawooh!"

A crowd of fags had taken Wally at his word. They rushed at the swell of St. Jim's, and Arthur Augustus was hustled to the door of the Form-room so quickly that it made his head swim. Boots of all sorts and sizes—and not overclean boots, either—were planted behind him, and he went into the passage, sprawling.

"Bai Jove! Oh! Ow! Yow! You young wottahs!"

Slam!

The Form door closed after the swell of St. Jim's. He made a wild rush at it, but it was locked on the inside. Arthur Augustus limped down the passage.

It was pretty clear that even an apology, from one gentleman to another, was not regarded by the victims of Gore's bullying as "suffish."

CHAPTER 11.

Seeking a Champion.

"TOM MERRY!"

Tom Merry looked up from his prep.

Wally of the Third was looking in at his door, and there was a bump showing under Wally's curly hair. Tom Merry greeted him with a smile.

"Come in, kid!" he said. "What do you want?"

"I'm looking for a chap."

"Well, unless I am the chap, you'd better look farther, as there's nobody else in the study at present," said Tom Merry, with a smile.

"Perhaps you are the chap," said Wally, coming in and closing the door.

Tom Merry looked surprised.

"I don't quite catch on," he said. "Explain."

"You see, the case stands like this," Wally explained. "Gore banged my napper against Jameson's. Jameson's napper is as hard as bricks, and I'm hurt."

"I've heard about it," said Tom Merry. "I'm sorry."

"Gore's a bullying cad."

"I'm afraid he is."

"I'm not big enough to lick him," said Wally wrathfully. "He could make mincemeat of me with one hand. Gussy was going to wallop him, but he's come it over Gussy with soft solder. You know what an ass Gussy is."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Gussy thinks that an apology from one silly ass to another makes it all right," said Wally. "It certainly doesn't extract this blessed ache from my blessed napper, and he hasn't apologised to Jimmy, anyway. I want somebody to lick Gore."

"H'm!"

"You could do it quite easily," said Wally. "If you lick the beast, we'll stand you a feed in the Form-room."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at," said Wally, "Will you do it?"

(Continued on page 14.)

HERE WE ARE AGAIN, CHUMS, FOR—



Let the Editor be your pal! Write to him to-day, addressing your letters: The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HALLO, chums! The wonderful reception which has been given to the two recent Lumley-Lumley stories is very pleasing to me indeed. I've received stacks of letters from readers, praising them in the highest terms—and I'm still getting letters. One reader wrote: "They are the finest school stories I've ever read." Another says: "A Shadow Over St. Jim's!" will remain long in my memory. It is the most moving story of human interest the GEM has published." This is the trend of all the letters, and, in consequence, I have arranged for four more great yarns dealing with the return of Lumley-Lumley and his further adventures at St. Jim's. The first of these stories will appear in a fortnight's time, and I will have more to say about it next week.

Meanwhile, Martin Clifford provides us with another powerful and exciting story for next Wednesday. It is entitled:

"THE GIPSY SCHOOLBOY!"

It is a yarn of great appeal, dealing with the experiences of a gipsy boy named Kit, whose honesty and pluck win for him a place at St. Jim's. Kit is a very likeable boy, and you will enjoy every word of his exciting adventures.

Mr. E. S. Brooks keeps going his high standard of thrill stories of St. Frank's with the next yarn of the ripping series "The Ten Talons of Taaz!" The one and only Handforth is the next boy of the "marked ten" to receive "the call" from the priests of Taaz. But

Handy proves to be a tartar when it comes to carrying out his test of courage. He is not afraid, but you know what an obstinate fellow he is. His obstinacy this time, however, places him in a perilous plight, for the Tibetan priests are merciless. Death is the punishment for refusing to obey them. You will vote this story the most thrilling of the series so far.

FREAK SHOWERS.

People in Nockeby, Sweden, recently got the shock of their lives during a heavy thunderstorm. Showering down with the rain came hundreds and hundreds of caterpillars! This unusual shower recalls many of a different sort that have happened in various parts of the world. Fish have fallen from the sky many times, and frogs, toads, red worms, periwinkles, snails, and crabs have rained down. It has been recorded that 294 showers of different living things have occurred. The usual explanation is, as I have said before, that they are whipped up into the air by a strong wind, carried along for perhaps many miles, and then fall with the first shower of rain.

The fall of living things sometimes proves very profitable to the people who collect them. When the periwinkles which fell near Worcester once were

gathered up and sold they realised £20! But the sort of shower none of us want is the one that happened near Belgrade. They were hailstones—but what a size! A farmer was killed by one weighing eleven pounds.

THE NON-STOP TRAVELLER.

Eighty-seven thousand miles in a year is good going, and most of us don't get anywhere near that total. But Mr. Brittlebank has been doing it for twenty-three years! He started out in 1911 to see the world, and he's been seeing it ever since, travelling over 2,000,000 miles. He has toured round the world fourteen times, and is now well into his fifteenth trip. Mr. Brittlebank is seventy-six years of age, but doesn't feel it. Travelling, he says, keeps him young.

THE SCOURGE OF THE EAST.

A new war in the air will soon be waging. For many years Governments of Africa and Asia have been fighting against a common enemy—the locust. The damage these pests have done to crops must run into millions of pounds, and we in England must consider ourselves fortunate to be free from the scourge. Like a tremendous thundercloud the swarms of locusts seem when they appear in the sky. Then they descend like a pall on fields of crops, and when they take to the air again the crops are simply devastated. But if recent tests in England are anything to go by, the locust is going to get it in the neck! A poisonous powder has been discovered which kills a locust in twenty-four hours at the most. It is intended that when the locusts are sighted planes will go up and spray the powder over them. It has been proved that the powder will penetrate their bodies, and so exterminate them. Let's hope that the latest stage in the war against the locust will bring about a long-hoped-for victory.

TAILPIECE.

"Water, sir?" asked the waiter, proffering a glass and decanter to the diner.

"No, thanks!" replied the diner, who was taking soup. "I have a plateful in front of me already!"

THE EDITOR.



A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal, post your notice, together with the coupon on this page, to the address given above.

P. W. Nevitt, 53, Hollam Road, Milton, Portsmouth, would like to hear from readers who have made a hobby of "Magnets" prior to June, 1932.

John Pearce, 127, Armitage Road, Milnsbridge, near Huddersfield, Yorks, wants a pen pal; age 11-13; stamps, books, exchange old copies of GEM.

Richard Roberts, Wych's Fold, Gee Cross, Hyde, Ches., wants a pen pal in the Empire; age 15-16; sports, football, cricket.

Paul Hammond, 36, Chesterhill Road, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, wants a pen pal in Australia and New Zealand; age 12-13; stamps, camping.

Leslie G. Edmondson, 155, Fishponds Road, Eastville, Bristol, wants pen pals in the Dominions, India, and South America; age 14-15.

Eric Hargreaves, 66, Bell Lane, Bury, Lancs, wants a pen pal

in Australia or New Zealand; age 11-13; sport, stamps, photographs, and cigarette cards.

Lewis McWhinnie, Ward 6, Robroyston Hospital, Millerstone, Glasgow, wants correspondents interested in films and photos.

R. Lawes, 25, Wortley Road, East Ham, London, E.6, wants pen pals; interested in photography and old numbers of the Companion Papers; age 12-16.

Aidan McCann, 14, Royston Road, Firwood, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Lancs, wants to hear from readers who have made a hobby of the old copies of GEM and "Magnet" prior to 1924.

Eric Lidy, London House, Bethersden, Kent, wants a pen pal in America who is interested in wireless.

Miss Olwen Milesen, 216, Whitechurch Lane, Edgware, Middlesex wants girl correspondents; age 10-12.

Miss Doris Spencer, 141, Capel Road, Forest Gate, London, E.7, wants girl correspondents interested in sports, reading, snaps, swimming, and newspaper exchange.

J. Moran, 180, Lion Street, Walworth, London, S.E., wants a pen pal outside of England; age 16-20; interested in old Companion Papers.

Bill Wallace, 5, Fisher Street, Tusmore Garden, Adelaide, South Australia, wants pen pals interested in wireless; age 12-15; England, India, U.S., Europe.

Miss Zaza Suffiad, 4, Bowlo Building, Fly Dragon Terrace, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong, China, wants girl correspondents keen on sports, music, reading, and drawing; age 12-15.

(Continued on page 23.)

PEN PALS COUPON

6-10-34

THE BULLY WHO WOULDN'T FIGHT!

(Continued from page 12.)

"I would do it without the feed in the Form-room," said Tom Merry, "only it happens that Gore's in a peaceable temper, for once, and I've made it up with him. Under the circumstances, I can't very well jump on him, though I know he treated you rottenly."

Wally snorted.

"Oh rats! I don't see what you wanted to do that for, especially just now."

"Well, you see, I didn't know you were looking for a champion. But I dare say you will find somebody else to lick Gore. Fatty Wynn would take it on, I should think, if there was a feed at the end of it."

Wally brightened up.

"My only Aunt Jane! That's a jolly good tip!" he exclaimed. "Thanks!"

And he ran out of the study, leaving Tom Merry laughing.

Jameson and Curly Gibson of the Third were waiting in the passage. They looked eagerly at Wally.

"Well?" they demanded together.

"Nothing doing there," said Wally. "But I've got a tip from Tom Merry. Let's get over to the New House. Fatty Wynn's the chap."

"Fatty Wynn?"

"Yes. He's a jolly good boxer, fat as he is, and he could lick Gore hollow. If he takes it on, Gore is bound for a whopping. Come on!"

"Good egg!" said Jameson.

The three fags left the School House. They crossed the quad in the dark towards the New House. There was rivalry between the two Houses at St. Jim's, and, as a rule, the fellows stood by their own Houses through thick and thin. But this was an exceptional case. It was urgently necessary for Gore to be licked—at all events, it seemed so to Wally & Co.

There was a light in the window of Figgins' study in the New House—the study shared by Figgins, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn of the Fourth.

Wally marched in boldly, as if the House belonged to him, and went upstairs and knocked at Figgins' door.

"Come in!" sang out the voice of Figgins.

Wally and his comrades entered. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn were seated round the table at prep. There was a discontented expression upon the fat and usually sunny face of Fatty Wynn. He was talking when the fags entered, and he did not leave off. Fags were not considered of much account by the heroes of the Fourth.

"I'm not complaining," said Fatty Wynn, in a tone that was very much full of complaint. "If the study funds have run out, it was necessary to have tea in Hall, but to expect a fellow to look cheerful after a tea of thick bread-and-butter—groo!"

"Well, you had a feed in the tuckshop this afternoon," said Kerr.

Fatty Wynn sniffed.

"Do you call that a feed? I had a couple of pork pies and a few sausages, and a pound or so of cake and some tarts, besides the doughnuts and the apples—and apples, as a matter of fact, only make a chap hungry. It was a mistake to have the apples—it would have been better to have some more pork."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,390.



No. 34. Vol. 1. (New Series).

SAINTS' HARD GAME WITH RIVER HOUSE

BREWSTER NETS FOUR TIMES

Wally D'Arcy at the Microphone

Tom Merry and his men have a tough task to-day in opposing Hal Brewster and his team from the River House School, near St. Frank's. Brewster & Co. are deadly rivals of Nipper & Co's, and they are reported to be in hot form just now. Saints are doubtful about their forward line. Digby has hurt his ankle, and we shall have either Kerruish or Clifton Dane at outside-right.

Here they come—Clifton Dane is Tom Merry's choice. He's a good man, though not so fast as Digby. They're tossing—Brewster calls correctly, and elects to kick with a strongish wind. The ball rolls—Merry passes to Blake—Blake swings it out to D'Arcy—no, it's intercepted by Brewster, who is away with it, dribbling with superb skill and threading his way goalwards in a solo effort. Kangaroo tackles, but Brewster beats him. Kerr challenges, but Brewster dribbles by, and, with Figgins bearing down on him, lets fly. Boomph! Watch that sphere whizz—Fatty Wynn will get to it—oh, heck, it's just out of Wynn's reach—it's in the net! Goal to the River House in the first minute. And a great goal, too!

Saints re-start with grim determination, but play soon swings to the Saints' half. Here come the River House—Brewster dribbling like a master, to crash home a regular cannon-ball of a shot right past Fatty Wynn for number two! Saints are a shade slower than usual. Dane makes ground but is robbed, and once again Fatty Wynn is called upon. He saves in quick succession once, twice, three times—but the fourth catches him at a disadvantage, and Brewster trots back to mid-field with his comrades thumping him joyously on the back—Brewster has a "hat trick" to his credit! Interval now, and I think River House are well satisfied.

Tom Merry leads his men on to the field for the second spell—note a change in the line-up, Figgins having come up to inside-right, Lowther going outside, while Clifton Dane takes Figgins' place at right-back. Dane is good anywhere, without being brilliant. Now we have Figgys up in the forward line we should see some fireworks. Figgins is a "dasher," and Merry has evidently decided that dash is needed. Off they go—what a change, by Jove! Figgins comes charging through, is robbed, but retackles the defender and heads in on goal with a rush. The ball whizzes from Figgins' foot—the keeper sprawls full length, but in vain—it's a goal, a goal, hurrah! Now the Saints are getting together in their very best style. Tom Merry comes through, takes a neat pass from Blake and tricks the goalkeeper before placing the ball skilfully in a corner of the net. Three to two against us now. But watch out, fellows—here comes Brewster again, out for a goal, swerving in dazzling fashion past the

(Continued at foot of next column.)

SIX GOALS FOR ST. FRANK'S

Six times did the spear-head of the St. Frank's attack pierce the Claremont defence, four times in the first half, and twice during the second spell, when Claremont, under Teddy Baxter's gallant leadership, rallied a little. At the start St. Frank's were all over their opponents, Nipper being in great form and netting early with a fine drive. Pitt added a second, and Handforth came up from goal to score from a penalty for a very obvious case of "hands." Tregellis-West scored number four just before the interval. Nipper and Watson added the remaining goals, and St. Frank's were well deserving of their win. Baxter and his men tried hard, but lacked the cohesion of the victors.

FULL RESULTS:

ST. JIM'S	5	RIVER HOUSE	4
Figgins (3) Merry (2)		Brewster (4)	
ST. FRANK'S	6	CLAREMONT	0
Nipper (2), Pitt,		Handforth, Tregellis-	
West, Watson,			
GREYFRIARS	10	REDCLYFFE	0
HIGHCLIFFE	2	BAGSHOT	0
ROOKWOOD	4	ST. JUDE'S	1
RYLCOMBE GRAM.			
SCHOOL	3	ABBOTSFORD	2

LEAGUE TABLE.

	P.	W.	D.	L.	F.	A.	Pts.
St. Frank's	4	4	0	0	20	4	8
St. Jim's	4	4	0	0	22	7	8
Rylcombe Gram.	4	4	0	0	13	4	8
Greyfriars	4	3	0	1	22	8	6
Highcliffe	4	2	0	2	8	10	4
River House	3	1	1	1	11	8	3
Rookwood	4	1	1	2	9	12	3
Abbotsford	3	1	0	2	4	5	2
Bagshot	4	1	0	3	3	10	2
St. Jude's	4	0	0	4	2	15	0
Claremont	3	0	0	3	1	11	0
Redclyffe	3	0	0	3	1	22	0

defence—now with nothing but Wynn between him and the goal. Wynn dives for his lightning shot, but is unlucky. He deflects the ball, but it strikes the upright and rebounds into the net. Four to two against!

Saints return to the attack with grim determination. Figgins smashes his way through, and ends a magnificent solo run by crashing the ball into the rigging for number three! From the re-start, Merry secures the ball, and a swinging pass sets the forward line in motion again. Lowther takes the leather close, then unselfishly passes across to Merry, who slams it home from point blank range. That's number four and the equaliser!

On terms at last, Saints are playing up like heroes. River House are game, but they've had enough. Merry and Figgins put in a breath-taking spell of short passing, till the River House custodian is drawn out of his citadel to tackle one or the other. Merry feints, as though to shoot. The keeper dives at his feet. But he coolly backheels to Figgins, and Figgys, with an empty net before him, makes no mistake. Goal, goal, goal! Figgins scored it, but the credit is shared by Merry. There's just time to kick off again, and then the final whistle shrills—jolly well played, St. Jim's, and hard luck, River House!



Week Ending October 6th, 1934.

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lowther Calling



Hallo, everybody! It's nice to be young, as Methuselah remarked when he saw the centenarian climbing a tree. As the thin gentleman sandwiched between two fat people in the theatre complained: "Your elbows are making me laugh in the wrong places!" During the vac., D'Arcy minor stared intently at a fat gentleman who sat opposite him in a bus. "Why do you stare at me like that?" demanded the fat man. "Please, sir," said D'Arcy minor, "there's nowhere else to look." The car-owner buttonholed the salesman. "Look here," he said, "you promised to replace anything broken within three months!" "Quite right, sir," "Then," said the car-owner, "I want three new ribs, a collar-bone, and six teeth!" The not very well-known footballer gazed at the boy who sought his autograph. "I've signed your book three times before!" he said. "Yes, but when I get six of yours, I can swap them for one of Dixie Dean's!" answered the lad. Did you know that London never sleeps? Even the streets are always up! Skimpole wants to know if you can "hide" in "Hyde" Park! Ow! The answer to that is that the Crystal Palace threw out crystal gleams, but the Marble Arch gave it the "marble eye"! Kerr says there is a Russian bell which weighs 198 tons. It is NOT known as "Big Benovitch." Kerr also says a mosquito has 22 teeth. I must count—I still have the marks from last summer! Skimpole complains that when bathing at Bigsea, he had to scramble over rocks covered with seaweed. Skimmy went down to the sea in slips! Gore would like to form a club for fellows keen on wrestling. Boys of the hold brigade! "What did Humpty-Dumpty fall off?" inquired Fatty Wynn. What a "wall-eyed" question, old chap! As the elephant trainer said, having tied the elephant's trunk in a knot: "That'll teach you to squirt water over me!" "What is an optimist?" inquires D'Arcy. An optimist, Gussy, is a fellow who goes camping and puts his shoes outside his tent door at night! We heard of a friend of the Head's who has two ponies who keep his lawn well cropped. All he wants now is a couple of elephants to keep it flat. Blake met a gymnastic instructor who earns £2,000 a year. Living on the "fit" of the land! We read that a British punitive expedition in Africa ran into a strong force of Sofas. We hope they sat on them! Did you hear about the Leamshire cricket club dance? It was abandoned "no ball!" "What should I take for a cold?" asks a reader. "The very first offer, old chap. You don't like it? Well, as the swindling financier said, come up and sue me sometime! Good luck, all!

SOLUTION OF CROSSGRAM
Detained by Rateliff. Sorry unable play against Grammarians. Disappointed. Figgins.

ST. JIM'S NEWS REEL

One hundred and fifty aeroplanes took part in a mimic battle over St. Jim's. Some of the masters were very annoyed, but we feel that a good "scrap" always "clears the air!"

Fatty Wynn says a distant ancestor of his invented the original ice-cream 270 years ago. You don't believe it? Wynn says it's the "frozen" truth!

"Do dogs know their names?" asked the "Wayland Courier." "Gay dog" Crooke, when called to book by Mr. Linton, seemed deaf to his in class the other day. And he didn't "wag his tail" after a "licking," either!

A German glider costs only 200 marks. Glyn's home-made one has already cost Glyn 504 "marks"—in the shape of bumps and bruises!

Herr Schneider has a very big nose. Whisper it—the fags call him "Herr Schnozzle!"

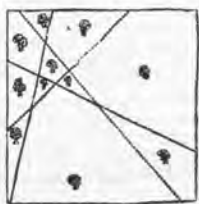
OUR CROSSGRAM

- Can you decipher this Crossgram message? Each numbered clue represents one word.
1. Held back.
 2. Through the agency of.
 3. New House master (stop).
 4. Regretful.
 5. Prevented.
 6. What footballers do.
 7. In opposition to.
 8. St. Jim's near rivals (stop).
 9. Put out (stop).
 10. New House leader (junior) (stop).

Solution is at the bottom of column three.

CALIBAN'S PUZZLE CORNER!

Here is a plan of Dr. Locke's ornamental garden. Tom Merry wants to know how he can walk through it from one entrance to the other covering every path and without going over any path twice. Can you help him?



Solution of Last Week's Puzzle

pies. Of course, I was simply famished at tea-time."

"Of course you were," agreed Kerr sarcastically. "I don't believe I ever remember when you weren't."

"Well, a chap gets hungry in this October weather. I always get an extra keen appetite at this time of the year. The worst of it is that Dame Taggles has stopped tick. She says there's no more till I've settled up."

"Quite right, too."

"That's all right, but I'm hungry. Sure you chaps can't raise anything?"

"Broke!" said Figgins.

"Stony!" said Kerr.

"Ahem!" coughed Wally.

"What are these blessed School House fags doing in our study?" demanded Fatty Wynn crossly. "I don't see why we shouldn't have our study to ourselves, anyway?"

"We've looked in——" began Wally.

"Well, now you've looked in you can get out——"

"But——"

Fatty Wynn rose and picked up a cricket stump.

"Are you going?" he queried.

"We wanted to ask you——"

"Outside!"

"—if you'd care to come to the tuckshop——"

"Eh?"

"—and have a bit of a feed," said Wally blandly.

Fatty Wynn's expression was changing. The frown gave way to a sunny smile. He replaced the cricket stump in the corner of the study.

"Now you're talking!"

"You'll come?"

"What-ho!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Kerr and Figgins. Fatty Wynn stared at them.

"I don't see where the cackle comes in!" he said. "I was just saying——"

"That you'd turn those fags out! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, I haven't time to talk to silly asses!" said Fatty Wynn. "Come on, young D'Arcy! Let's go down to the tuckshop before it closes!"

And Fatty Wynn walked away with Wally & Co., with a beatific smile upon his plump face, and Wally, Jameson, and Curly Gibson exchanged winks behind his back.

CHAPTER 12.
The Champion.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY sat down at the table in Study No. 6 with a ruffled expression upon his aristocratic countenance.

The way he had made his exit from the Third Form Room was not soothing to his dignity, and he was disappointed in Wally. He was very much shocked to find that an apology from one gentleman to another was not sufficient to satisfy any D'Arcy.

Wally evidently had other views on the subject, and Arthur Augustus could not help feeling it. Perhaps if he had had the headache and the bump he might have taken the same view as Wally, but he had neither the headache nor the bump, and so they did not influence his views.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were grinning a little. They knew the cause of D'Arcy's ruffled looks, and they appeared to consider the matter in a comic light, although it did not appear in the least comic to the swell of St. Jim's.

There was a kick at the door, and it flew open. The subject of D'Arcy's disappointed reflections walked in. D'Arcy looked at him in an inquiring way.

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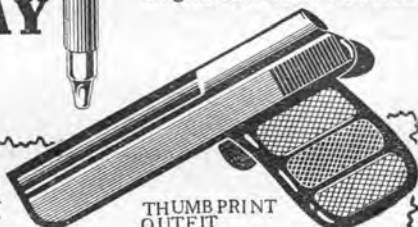


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"Hallo, old cock!" said Wally cheerfully.

"Weally, Wally, I wegard that as a dweadfully vulgah expression—"

"Come off it, old son!" said Wally. "I'm in a hurry, and I've no time to waste! You see—"

"I twust you have come to tell me that you have thought the mattah ovah, Wally, and have decided that, as one gentleman to anothah, Gore's apology was quite suffish to end the mattah."

Wally grinned.

"Well, not exactly," he said. "I've come to borrow some money. If you won't lick Gore, the least you can do is to lend me some tin!"

Arthur Augustus dived into his pocket.

"I shall be vewy pleased to make you a loan, Wally," he said. "How much do you want?"

"A pound."

"Vewy well."

Arthur Augustus was generally well supplied with money by Lord Eastwood, his father. He tossed a pound over to Wally.

"Thanks, old son!" said Wally. "I'll pay this back—perhaps."

"You need not twouble about weturnin' the loan, Wally, though I weally do not wish to incouwage you in extwavgant habits. But I twust you will think bettah of it, and forgive Gore!"

"Ye-es; I'll forgive him when he's been licked!" said Wally. "No good being in too great a hurry about these things, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows, I don't see any weason for laughtah. Wally is takin an altogethah wong view of the affair! Do you mean to say that you are goin' to tackle Gore, Wally?"

Wally shook his head.

"He's too big," he said. "I can't do it. But I'm going to give Fatty Wynn a feed to lick him!"

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus jumped up. "Is that what you want the pound for, Wally? Bai Jove!"

"That's it, kid!"

"Then I wefuse—"

"Too late!" said Wally, slapping his trousers pocket.

"But—but you ought to have told me—"

"If I had, you wouldn't have dubbed up the dibs!" said Wally.

"Bai Jove! What an uttahly howwid expression—"

"So-long!" said Wally. "Sorry I can't stop and listen to a sermon, Gussy; my friends are waiting for me at the tuckshop!"

And Wally walked out of the study. Arthur Augustus looked at the other fellows. They were roaring with laughter.

"Bai Jove!" D'Arcy ejaculated. "What an uttah young wascal my minah is! Do you think I should be justified in taking my pound back, Blake?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"But, undah the cires—"

"Under the cires, go on with your prep, and leave Wally alone!" said Blake. "Gore has been in want of a hiding for weeks, and if Fatty Wynn gives him one, more power to his elbow, as Reilly says, that's all!"

Wally hurried down to the tuckshop across the quad. Fatty Wynn was already there, and Curly Gibson and Jameson were keeping him in talk while he waited for Wally. The scamp of the Third rushed in.

"It's all right!" he announced. "Mrs. Taggles! Where are you? Hurry up!"

Dame Taggles came out of her little parlour. Wally laid the pound note on the counter, and gave orders. Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened. He did not lose time. He began on the first thing that Dame Taggles handed out, and went on without a pause. It was not until the keen edge was taken off his appetite that he found time to speak at all.

"It's jolly decent of you to stand me a feed in this way, D'Arcy!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Not at all," said Wally. "You see, we like you, and you're such a decent chap, too. And we believe in the two Houses pulling together!"

"Quite right!" said Fatty Wynn. "If I can do anything for you chaps, I'll do it with pleasure."

"Ginger-pop, Wynn?"

"Please! I say, this is ripping! That's a bad bump you've got on your head, D'Arcy minor."

"Yes. Gore gave me that—bullying cad!" he said.

"So he is!" agreed Fatty Wynn. "Somebody ought to give that cad a hiding!"

"Supposing you give him a hiding?" suggested Wally diplomatically. "You see, I'm not big enough, and Gussy has dropped the matter. If you'd give Gore a hiding, Wynn, I'd take it as a personal favour!"

"Could he do it?" suggested Jameson, very cleverly.

Fatty Wynn sniffed.

"I could lick any School House rotter in the Fourth or the Shell!" he said belligerently.

"And if you would—"

"Like anything!" said Fatty Wynn. "Where is he?"

"In his study!" said Wally, highly delighted.

"I'll go and see him there!" said Fatty Wynn. "You chaps can wait in the passage, and keep watch—we don't want a lot of kids rushing in and making a House row of it!"

"That's right!"

"I'll have a snack first, though!" said Wynn. "I never could fight, or do anything else, unless I laid a solid foundation."

"Go ahead!" said Wally heartily. "Try the marmalade tarts. Make it up to the pound, Mrs. Taggles!"

"Yes, Master Wally!"

The heroes of the Third were brimming with satisfaction. They would have fed Fatty Wynn out of a golden trough if they could. Fatty Wynn, fat as he was, was an athlete, and he was the champion bowler of the junior cricket eleven, and the champion goalie of the footer team. He was known as a fighting man, when he chose to take the trouble to exert himself.

There was no doubt that he could lick Gore if he tried. Everything in the garden was lovely now, as Wally whispered joyously to Jameson. And Jameson nodded and rubbed his head.

The pound was expended at last. Fatty Wynn rose from the high stool with a sigh of contentment.

"Ready?" asked Wally.

Fatty cast a longing look round the shop. He had had enough, perhaps; but, like Alexander, he sighed for fresh worlds to conquer. But he nodded.

"Yes," he said. "I'm ready!"

"Come on, then! You'll give him a thorough licking?"

"Oh, simply smash him!" said Fatty Wynn.

"A good dodge would be to turn the key in the lock, and then he couldn't get out," suggested Curly Gibson. "Then you could simply hammer him!"

"I'll do it!"

"Good egg!"

And the three fags marched Fatty Wynn into the School House, and escorted him up to the junior passages in great state, and planted him outside Gore's door.

Fatty Wynn knocked at the door and opened it.

CHAPTER 13.

Another Feed for Fatty.

GEORGE GORE was alone in the study. He was at work with his preparation.

Skimpole was not there, doubtless being too busy with some vast problem to think of such small matters as preparing his to-morrow's lessons. Gore looked up from his work as the fat Fourth Former came in, and he stared in blank amazement as he watched Fatty Wynn's proceedings.

Fatty stepped quickly into the study, closed the door, and turned the key in the lock. Then he slipped the key into his pocket, and turned towards George Gore.

Gore rose to his feet. Fatty Wynn's mysterious conduct gave him a suspicion that the plump Fourth Former had gone suddenly mad.

"Hallo!" said Gore.

"Hallo!" said Fatty Wynn, wiping a smear of jam from his mouth. "Bully!"

"What?"

"Rotter!"

"Eh?"

"Put up your hands!"

And Fatty Wynn placed himself on guard, and advanced upon the bully of the Shell in an extremely warlike way.

Gore stared at him blankly, his suspicion growing stronger that the fat Fourth Former had taken leave of his senses. He retreated round the table in considerable alarm.

"What's the matter?" he exclaimed.

"I'm going to lick you!"

"B-b-b-but what's the row?" stammered Gore.

He hadn't the faintest idea why Fatty Wynn should visit him in this warlike way. He had several quarrels ripening, so to speak, but not one of them was with Fatty Wynn. He had had no quarrel whatever with the Falstaff of the Fourth. Indeed, Fatty Wynn was so good-natured and easy-going that very few fellows quarrelled with him.

"You're a rotten bully!" said Fatty Wynn. "You've treated D'Arcy minor in a rotten way, and I'm going to lick you for it! Savvy?"

"Oh, blow D'Arcy minor!"

"Put 'em up!"

"What does it matter to a New House chap, anyway?" demanded Gore.

"I'm looking after D'Arcy minor," said Fatty Wynn loftily. "I'm going to stop your rotten bullying! Put up your hands!"

"But—but—"

"Come round from behind that table, and put up your hands!" shouted Fatty Wynn. "D'Arcy minor is a decent young kid, and I'm going to protect him. He's stood me a very decent feed when I was practically famishing, and I'm not going to see him badly treated."

Gore comprehended.

"Oh! He stood you a feed?"

"That's not why I'm going for you, of course," said Fatty Wynn, rather hastily. "I'm doing this on general principles. Bullying ought to be put down."

"Yes, but—"

"And you're a beastly bully, Gore!"

"Ahem! You see—"

"Are you going to come round from behind that table, or shall I come round for you?" asked the fat Fourth Former truculently.

"I—I'll come in a minute. You see—"

Fatty Wynn made a rush round the table. Gore dodged round it still more quickly, so that they still faced one another, with the table between. Fatty Wynn puffed for breath. He was not much inclined for exertion after the feed he had had in the school shop.

"Look here, you cad!" he roared. "I'm going to lick you! You may as well take it quietly. Don't be a coward. Put up your fists!"

"I—I— Wait a minute. I was just going to send you a message, Wynn, asking you to come over here," said Gore.

"Rats!"

"Yes, I was, really," said Gore. "I know how fond you are of steak-and-kidney pie, and I thought you'd join me in a little feed."

Fatty Wynn dropped his hands.

"Steak-and-kidney pie?" he repeated.

"Yes."

"H'm!" said Fatty Wynn. "Of course, if you're really sorry that you banged young D'Arcy's napper in that way—"

"I'm awfully sorry!"

"And you won't do it again?"

"Never!"

"Well, I don't see that a kid could want more than that," said Fatty Wynn thoughtfully. "I don't much like the idea of punching a chap who wants to stand me a feed. It's not exactly right in return for hospitality."

(Continued on the next page.)

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"Of course it isn't!" said Gore. "And you'll like the steak-and-kidney pie. Look here!"

The burly Shell fellow crossed to the cupboard and opened the door. Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened at the sight of the large steak-and-kidney pie and the handsome pudding on the next dish to it. When Gore was in funds he generally did himself very well.

If one feed had sent Fatty Wynn to his study on the warpath, another feed might send him home in gentle peace.

And Fatty Wynn was evidently very much impressed. All the warlike ardour had faded out of his plump countenance at the sight of the steak-and-kidney pie.

"It looks ripping," he said.

"Yes; and don't you think these House rows are carried too far?" suggested Gore amicably. "How much better for two fellows to sit down quietly and have a decent feed instead of hammering one another!"

Fatty Wynn nodded.

"That's just what I was thinking myself," he remarked. "It's a much better system to talk things over and—come to an amicable understanding, and—have a bit of a snack together."

"Of course it is!" said Gore.

"And I was always rather fond of steak-and-kidney pies," said Fatty Wynn.

"This one is ripping!"

"It certainly looks it!"

Fatty Wynn sat down. Gore did not join in the feed; he played the part of waiter, helping Fatty Wynn with liberal helpings. It was surprising the number of helpings that Fatty Wynn was able to negotiate, especially considering the feed he had lately had in the tuckshop.

But Fatty Wynn had wonderful powers in that line. There was a very considerable difference in the size of the steak-and-kidney pie by the time the Falstaff of the Fourth had finished.

"You'll have some of the pudding?" said Gore hospitably.

"Yes, with pleasure!"

And Fatty Wynn started on the pudding. There came a tap at the door of the study and a muffled voice through the keyhole.

"Have you licked him yet?"

Fatty Wynn started. He had forgotten all about the fags in the passage. It seemed that Wally & Co. were growing tired of waiting. They had heard no noise from the study, and they could understand that something had gone wrong with the programme.

"It's all right!" called out Fatty Wynn, with his mouth full of pudding.

"Have you licked him?"

"N-no."

"When are you going to begin?"

"Oh, don't be in a hurry! Go and keep watch."

There was a muttering sound of discontent in the passage, and the fags obeyed. Fatty Wynn wired into the pudding, and it was a mere wreck by the time he had finished. He rose to his feet at last with a very shiny and contented face.

"Just a little more?" asked Gore.

"N-no, thanks!" said Fatty Wynn. "I've done myself splendidly! I say, Gore, I—I really think you're a ripping sort of chap, you know. I shall come and see you again."

"Do," said Gore.

Fatty Wynn unlocked the door.

"Good-bye!" he said, quite affectionately.

"Good-night, old chap!"

And the door closed behind Fatty Wynn, and Gore turned the key in the lock after him, to secure himself from any further interruptions.

CHAPTER 14.

Levison is Brave!

GEORGE GORE had given Fatty Wynn a right royal feed, but the fags of the Third did not give him a right royal welcome when he came out of Gore's study.

After a severe ragging at the hands of Wally & Co. he was allowed to totter out of the School House and seek peace and quietness once more in his own quarters.

Wally & Co. were passing Levison's door when that worthy looked out and gave them the invitation to "come in!"

Wally paused.

He did not like Levison—few did—and he was not inclined to accept his invitation unless he saw a reason for it.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"I've got something to tell you—how to get even with Gore, if you like," said Levison.

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"Oh, good!"

The fags stepped into the study, and Levison closed the door. Mellish was sitting at the table, and he gave the Third Formers quite a friendly nod. Wally was regarding Levison rather suspiciously. He did not trust the cad of the Fourth.

"Gore has been ragging you chaps, I know," said Levison. "You brought Fatty Wynn in to lick him, didn't you?"

"How the dickens do you know?"

"I happened to see you in the tuckshop," grinned Levison. "But it hasn't come off, has it?"

Wally snorted.

"Gore fed the beast up," he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you've brought us in here to listen to your cackling—" began Wally wrathfully.

"I haven't," said Levison. "Look here, I can tell you something. Gore's pater was down to see him this afternoon!"

"I know that; I saw the old man."

"Well, I happened to hear him talking to Gore—"

Wally's lip curled.

"Oh, I understand!" he said. "You happened to be behind the door or round a corner, or at a keyhole, or something!"

"Never mind that," said Levison, with a slight flush. "Never mind how I heard it. I did hear it, and that's enough. Gore's pater was going to take him away from the school for being a rotten bully; and he's only left him here on probation. Gore has solemnly promised him to keep out of all rows for four days till his pater comes again."

Wally whistled.

"He's not even to defend himself if he is attacked," went on Levison. "You see the position it places him in. If Gore gets into a single row, his pater is going to take him away from the school, and Gore would just as soon go to prison as go home. His pater isn't exactly a sweet-tempered man."

"My only Aunt Jane!" said Wally. "That accounts for Gore making his peace with everybody—to Merry and Lowther, and he's even soft sawdered Gussy, and he's wasted his grub on Fatty Wynn. That accounts for it!"

"Of course it does!" said Levison.

"And don't you see," broke in Mellish eagerly, "it's a jolly good chance for you fags to go for him?"

"We're not big enough to tackle a chap his size," said Wally, with a shake of the head.

"No, no; under ordinary circumstances," said Levison. "But just now he's bound by his promise, and he can't hit back."

"What?"

"Even if you dot him on the nose he can't hit back," said Levison, with a grin. "He dare not. Don't you see what a chance it is for you?"

"You unspeakable cad!" said Wally.

"Eh?"

"You rotter! Do you think I'd hit a chap, however beastly he was, if I knew he couldn't hit back?" demanded Wally savagely.

"You young ass—"

"If this is true about Gore, it wouldn't make us go for him; it will just prevent us from going for him!" said Wally. "If you weren't the rottenest kind of a beastly worm, you'd see that for yourself!"

Levison's eyes gleamed with anger.

"Oh, you're rotting!" he exclaimed. "You know perfectly well that you'd be glad of a chance of going for Gore, if you could do it safely."

"Rats!"

"I tell you he dare not hit back!" persisted Levison. "And if he did lose his temper and forget about his promise, and go for you, it would ruin him with his father. He would be taken away from St. Jim's, and we should be rid of the beastly bully for good. It's worth getting a black eye or so for the sake of that."

"You cad!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, come on!" said Wally, turning to his comrades. "Let's get out of the study; that chap makes me sick!"

Levison followed him to the door, his face dark with anger.

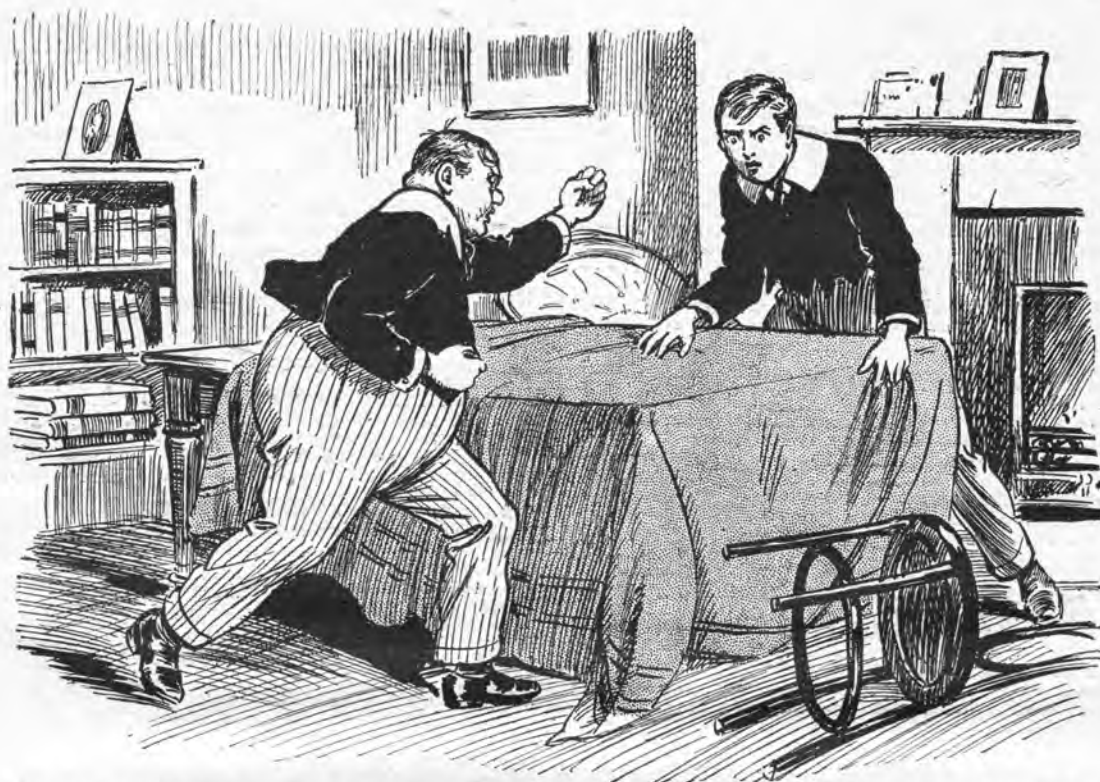
"Do you mean to say you're going to let this chance slip?" he demanded.

Wally gave him a scornful look.

"We're not going to get Gore into a row with his pater, if that's what you mean!" he exclaimed. "If the chap can't hit back, we shan't go for him. He's a beastly bully, and we've got an account to settle with him, but there's such a thing as fair play and decency, though you don't seem to know about it. Come on, you chaps! That chap will make me ill if I talk to him any longer."

And Wally marched off down the passage.

Levison turned back into his study with a savage



Fatty Wynn made a rush round the table, but Gore quickly dodged to the other side. "Look here, you cad!" said Fatty. "I'm going to lick you. You may as well take it quietly. Don't be a coward, but put up your fists!"

expression upon his face. He could not understand Wally's scruples in the least.

"I suppose he doesn't believe me," he remarked.

"I suppose it's that," said Mellish.

Levison gritted his teeth.

"Gore's pater will be back in four days," he remarked. "Before that time's up, we ought to have made Gore's existence a regular torture to him. We can pay him back all the old scores now."

"Yes, rather!"

"Look here, suppose you go to his study and pick up a row with him, Mellish," Levison suggested. "He dare not hit back, and you can simply wipe up the study with him."

"Why don't you do it?"

"Besides," went on Levison, unheeding the question, "if he did hit back, his father would take him away from the school; and that would be even better."

"Yes; but it wouldn't console me for being half-killed in Gore's study," said Mellish, with a grin. "And that's what you don't want to risk, either. Gore may keep his promise to his father, but he's got a bad temper, and he's got a habit of hitting out before he stops to think. I don't want to get one of his right-handers on the jaw, even if his pater goes for him afterwards. Thanks, but no."

Levison set his lips.

"Then I'll take it on myself!" he exclaimed.

"Bravo!" exclaimed Mellish heartily. "That's the style!" Levison hesitated a little. Like the monkey in the story, he preferred to find a cat to pull his chestnuts out of the fire. But it was pretty clear that Mellish was not inclined to act as a catspaw for him.

And there was very real danger that Gore might forget his promise, weighty as it was, and hit out in his old manner. It was a very great risk to be run; and yet even that was worth while, for the satisfaction of getting Gore dragged away from the school.

Life would certainly be more tolerable there without the bully of the Shell, and it would be a terrible revenge upon Gore. And Levison was spiteful and revengeful by nature; it had never even occurred to him to forgive an injury.

"I'm going," he said.

"Good! I'll watch you."

Levison went down the passage. Mellish stood outside the study door, and watched him turn the corner into the

Shell passage. Then he followed him to the corner and watched him from there. Farther than the corner of the passage he did not go. Mellish never believed in running unnecessary risks.

Levison, taking his courage in both hands, so to speak, marched up to Gore's door and kicked upon it. Gore's voice was heard from within.

"Hallo! Who's that?"

Levison turned the handle. The door did not open. He kicked upon the door again, greatly encouraged by the fact that it was locked. In the first place, the locked door prevented Gore from getting at him, and, in the second place, it hinted that the bully of the Shell was afraid.

"Open this door!" shouted Levison.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Cad! Coward!" bawled Levison through the keyhole. "Yah! Coward!"

Gore jumped up from the table and stepped towards the door. His hand was upon the latch, and Levison heard him, and he felt his heart sink. But Gore did not open the door; he turned back and sat down quietly at the table again. He could not afford to quarrel with Levison.

Levison heard him retreat, and his courage rose. It was pretty clear that George Gore wanted to avoid trouble. And the more he wanted to avoid it, of course, the more Levison wanted to force it upon him.

The cad of the Fourth kicked at the door again. His kicks and blows resounded along the passage, and fellows looked out of their studies up and down.

"Open this door!" roared Levison.

"Rats!"

"I'm going to lick you! Coward!"

Gore's ears burned, but he did not answer.

"Coward!" roared Levison. "Cad! Bully! Rotter! You're afraid to come out!"

And he kicked savagely at the door.

"Stop that row!" called out Tom Merry.

"I'm trying to get Gore out," said Levison. "He was going for me to-day, and I want him to fight me. He's afraid to come out."

"Well, I'm not afraid to come out, and if you don't stop that row, I'll come out and wipe up the passage with you," said Tom Merry.

And Levison decided that he had better give it up for the present.

CHAPTER 15. The Coward's Blow!

GEORGE GORE wore a decidedly worried look when he took his place in the Shell Form Room the following morning.

His promise to his father was weighing on his mind. He had succeeded in avoiding Levison so far, but he knew that when the Shell was dismissed after morning lessons the cad of the Fourth would be waiting in the passage for him. And what was to happen then?

At any other time Gore would have licked Levison, probably in a brutal way. But that was impossible now—unless he was to leave St. Jim's. It was the first of the four days of his probation, and it seemed that he was not to be able to get through it without a fight.

Levison meant to make him fight, or else make him take the coward's blow in public. And if he took that, and took it lying down, it would be an end to all his prestige in the Shell.

After that, fags in the Second and Third Forms would rag him with impunity. Fellows would turn up their noses at him; he would be considered a coward and despised accordingly. The prospect was terrible to any boy in a school, and especially one who had made many enemies by his bullying proclivities. When it was once generally known that for some reason Gore would not hit back, he could imagine how many old foes would come up to settle old scores with him—old scores that had been unsettled because he was too big and strong to be reckoned with, but which had rankled deeply all the same.

Few of his foes were likely to take Wally's generous view of the matter.

Gore could not help thinking that Levison must have some inkling of his promise to his father. Otherwise, the conduct of the cad of the Fourth was inexplicable. As a rule, he carefully avoided any chance of a row with Gore, knowing perfectly well that he was no match for the bully of the Shell.

Levison's sudden heroics looked as if he had information; and Gore knew that the cad of the Fourth generally did get informed of what was going on, by some method or other. And if Levison knew, and chose to take a merciless advantage of his knowledge, what was Gore's life likely to be like during the next four days? It was no wonder that George Gore had a clouded brow that morning, and that he gave absent-minded answers to Mr. Linton, and earned a goodly crop of lines thereby.

When the Shell left the Form-room for the morning recess after third lesson, Gore did not go out with them. He had lines to do, and he took that opportunity of doing them. It gave him a respite from Levison's kindly attentions; but that respite could not last long. He could not remain in the Form-room for ever.

When the hour of dismissal came after morning lessons were over, Gore had to go with the rest of the Form. He went out with them with a troubled look.

The Fourth were already out, and, as Gore expected, Levison was waiting in the passage. He came directly up to Gore.

"Are you ready, Gore?" he demanded in a loud voice that reached the ears of all the fellows near at hand and brought them round in a crowd.

Gore backed away a step.

"Ready for what?" he asked.

"To come and have the gloves on with me?"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Blake. "Is Levison developing into a giddy hero? This is the first time I've ever heard you ask anybody to have the gloves on, my son."

"Gore was bullying me yesterday," said Levison, looking round. "He's bigger than I am, and he thinks I can't tackle him. That's why he does it. But I've made up my mind to have a try, and he's got to fight me."

There was a murmur of approval. Levison generally gained his end, and paid off his grudges in ways that were dark and sly, and his open and courageous conduct made the fellows think much better of him. All eyes were turned upon Gore. He was expected to lead the way to the gymnasium with the utmost promptness. But he did nothing of the sort. He put his hands in his pockets and backed away.

"I don't want any trouble with you, Levison," he said in a low voice.

Levison laughed sneeringly.

"You should have thought of that before you ragged me yesterday," he said.

"I'm sorry!"

The juniors gasped. What was the matter with Gore? This sudden repentance looked rather too good to be true. It looked rather as if Gore were afraid to fight—though why he should be afraid to fight Levison was a mystery.

Levison laughed again, his most unpleasant laugh.

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"Most bullies feel sorry when they're called to account, and don't want to put up a fair fight," he remarked. "That's not good enough for me. Are you ready?"

There was a long pause before Gore replied. The fellows were all looking at him very curiously.

"No!" he said at last.

"You're afraid?"

"I'm not."

"But you won't fight?"

"No!"

"Why not?"

"Because I don't choose."

Levison advanced closer to him.

"You can't have it that way," he said. "You choose to bully, and you don't choose to fight. You can't expect to have it like that."

"I am willing to apologise," said Gore, pale to the lips.

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm waiting for you, Gore," he said quietly.

"I'm not going to fight you."

"Coward!"

A thrill ran through the crowd of juniors. Surely Gore would not take that quietly. But he did! His face was very pale, and his eyes had a haunted look about them. But the blow the word should have called forth did not come. Gore's hands remained down at his sides, and he backed away a space farther.

"Coward!" repeated Levison tauntingly.

"Coward! Cad!" said Mellish, taking courage to join in, as it became perfectly clear that Gore would not fight.

"Rotter! Yah!"

"What's the matter with you, Gore?" demanded Tom Merry.

Gore was silent.

Levison stepped towards him and raised his hand. Gore half raised his own, and dropped it again.

Smack!

Levison's open hand smote him full across the face, and he staggered back. A deep red mark showed across the pale cheek.

The juniors drew a deep breath.

They expected to see Gore leap forward, hitting out, but he did not. He put up his hand to his cheek, and turned away.

He had taken the coward's blow—without replying.

Levison laughed tauntingly.

"Coward!"

"My hat!" said Tom Merry, in blank astonishment. "What's the matter with Gore? He must be ill!"

"Oh, he's a coward!" said Mellish.

And he pushed up roughly against Gore, and sent him reeling. The bully of the Shell did not even look round at him.

"Let him alone, Mellish," said Tom Merry roughly. "Whether he's a coward or not, you're not going to begin bullying. Shut up!"

And Mellish shut up.

George Gore went out into the old quad and walked under the trees, his heart beating almost to suffocation, rage and chagrin and shame struggling in his breast. He was keeping his promise to his father—the promise on which so much depended. But it was costing him dear.

Contemptuous looks met him on all sides—scornful looks and sneers. Fellows he had bullied jostled him when he passed them, fags called out taunting names from a safe distance, and afterwards ventured quite near to do so.

And Gore struggled with himself and bore it quietly.

For the alternative was worse—the office, the desk, under his father's cold and pitiless eyes, was always before his vision. Even this was better than that, and this would not last for ever.

After four days he would be free again—but what were the four days to be like?

Gore sat by himself in the Form-room that afternoon. Other fellows made plenty of room for him; nobody wanted to have much to do with Gore. He had earned for himself general contempt. As Monty Lowther remarked, if a fellow was born a coward perhaps he couldn't help it, but there was no need for him to be a bully as well. What Gore suffered he had brought upon himself; no one would have discovered that he was a coward if he had not started as a bully. No one felt sorry for him; the feelings towards him were of contempt and anger. For taking a blow from a Fourth Former, Gore was felt to have "let down" the Shell. It was a disgrace to the Form.

Gore, that afternoon, was about as thoroughly miserable as it was possible for any boy to be. He was a bully, but he was not a coward; but he had no choice excepting to lie down under the imputation. If he stated what promise he had made to his father, he knew that he would not be believed; it would be taken as an improbable invention to excuse his cowardice.

He could only grin and bear it.

But it was hard to bear. When the Shell came out after lessons, several Fourth Formers had something to say to Gore. They had burning recollections of pulled ears and twisted arms, and were not likely to let the bully of the Shell escape now that they believed him too cowardly to fight.

Gore pushed his way through them, and went up to his study.

"Cad!"

"Coward!"

"Yah! White feather! Yah!"

The hoots and jeers followed the bully to his study. He went in and closed the door, and sank down in a chair breathing hard. How was he to stand this? He was making a great sacrifice for the purpose of staying at St. Jim's. But would St. Jim's be worth staying at at this price?

Skimpole came in. He blinked benevolently at Gore through his big spectacles.

"You seem to be having a somewhat unpleasant experience, my dear Gore," he added. "But pray console yourself. It is not your fault that you are a coward; it is undoubtedly a strain in your blood, and is to be wholly attributed to the influence of heredity. If you would care to look up the subject in Professor Balmcrumpet's book on heredity and environment—Dear me, how very singular that Gore should walk out of the study while I am speaking to him."

Gore went into the Junior Common-room.

A hiss greeted his appearance there.

Gore cast a savage glance round him. His temper was at boiling point, and he was dangerously near breaking out.

"You'd better keep out of here," exclaimed Crooke.

"You're a disgrace to the Form, and you're not wanted."

"Oh, shut up!" said Gore angrily.

Crooke came towards him. Crooke had never risked a row with Gore before, but he was quite ready to risk one now.

"What's that?" he demanded, in a threatening tone.

"Shut up!" said Gore.

"Take that!"

Smack!

Crooke's fist came crashing upon the burly junior's face, and Gore rolled on the floor. He jumped up in a fury, and clenched his fists and rushed at Crooke. But he stopped before he reached him, and put his hands in his pockets and walked out of the room.

A yell of derisive laughter followed him.

"Blessed if I ever saw anything like it," said Manners. "What can have come over Gore? He was always a bully, but I never knew he was an utter coward."

"He does seem to be a rotten worm," said Blake. "But I don't see the use of piling on him because of that. Better let the poor brute alone."

Blake's chums agreed with him. But many fellows in the Lower School did not. Levison and his set did not give the bully of the Shell a moment's peace.

Gore spent some time that evening walking in the quad, keeping to himself. But when he entered the School House again, Levison & Co. were ready for him. The Shell fellow tramped upstairs to a chorus of jeers and sneers. He opened the door of his study—the room was a wreck. Furniture had been displaced or broken, glasses were smashed, drawers and boxes turned out, papers torn and scattered. On the mirror was a notice which read:

"Coward! Cad! Bully! Rotter!"

Gore gave a howl of wrath.

"Oh! The hounds! I'll smash them—I'll—"

He paused. He could do nothing, and the raggers knew that he would do nothing; although only Levison knew why. Gore turned out of the study with a groan. Down the passage a voice floated to his ears.

"Yah! Coward!"

Gore winced.

He moved along to Tom Merry's study, and tapped at the door and went in. The bully of the Shell had taken a resolve.

CHAPTER 16.

Backing Up Gore.

THE Terrible Three were all at home, working at their prep.

They stopped as George Gore came in; and their looks were not polite. They waited in grim silence for him to speak. Gore closed the door, and then he turned an almost haggard look upon the chums of the Shell.

"I want you fellows to help me," he said huskily.

"Help you out of the study?" asked Monty Lowther, rising. "With pleasure."

"Shut up, Monty," said Tom Merry. "The poor beggar looks pretty down at the mouth. What do you want, Gore?"

"I—I don't know what to do," said Gore miserably. "I'm having a beast of a time now."

(Continued on the next page.)



STOP HIM SOMEBODY!

He's bagged my chocolate cream

The most and the best for a penny

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"Well, a fellow shouldn't be a coward as well as a bully," said Manners.

Gore flushed.

"I suppose I've been a bit of a bully," he said. "But I'm not a coward, and I never was one. I—I—" "Then why didn't you stand up to Levison?"

"I couldn't!"

"Why not?"

"I—I—it was a promise."

Monty Lowther grinned.

"That's rather too thin," he remarked. "You should think of a better one than that. You promised your dying grandmother, holding her thin white hand in yours—hey?"

Manners chuckled.

"No," said Gore. "I promised my pater."

"Oh, your pater!" said Lowther. "I've seen your pater, and I don't see how you could work up a pathetic scene with him. Still, you never know."

"He's as hard as nails," said Gore miserably. "He's an awful bully himself, but he won't let anybody else be one. He's down on me because I'm a bully. I suppose I've got my faults—"

"You never supposed a truer thing in your life," commented Monty Lowther.

"Well, he made me promise not to get into a fight of any kind for four days," said Gore. "I had to promise not even to defend myself even if attacked. And if I don't keep my word, he's going to take me away from St. Jim's as soon as he comes back from Edinburgh. You see what's at stake?"

Tom Merry whistled. Monty Lowther winked at the ceiling.

"You don't believe me?" said Gore.

"I don't," said Lowther.

"Same here," said Manners candidly.

"I believe you," said Tom Merry quietly.

"Oh, you're an ass, Tommy!"

"Look here, you chaps, we've seen Gore in plenty of fights before," said Tom Merry. "He's a bully, but I don't believe he's a coward. And his pater, from what I've seen of him, was just the man to make him make a promise like that. I believe that Gore's telling us the truth."

"Thank you!" said Gore gratefully. "It's the solid truth, every word of it—honest Injun. And it's put me in a horrible position. Levison must have been listening. I think—I remember father was speaking in the passage, after he'd left the study. Levison must know something, or he'd never dare to act as he's doing. He wants to score off me, or to drive me into doing something that will make my pater take me away. I don't know what to do. You fellows might help me—if you believe me."

"Oh, I believe you if Tommy does!" said Monty Lowther resignedly. "Anything to oblige."

"What can we do?" asked Tom Merry.

"I—I don't know. Advise me, or help me somehow," said Gore. "I—I depend on you. I can't stand this that's going on—I know I shall break out soon, and if I have a single fight in the next four days I'm ruined!"

"My hat! It's rough!"

"It's a lesson not to be a rotten bully," said Manners. "It's all your own fault."

Gore groaned.

"I know it is. But that doesn't make it any the pleasanter."

"No; I suppose it doesn't."

"Look here," said Tom Merry. "We can help you—but it will have to be a compact. At one time you turned over a new leaf, and became quite a decent chap. You've dropped back into your old ways. That's got to stop. If you're ready to promise us now, on your word of honour, to keep clear of bullying in the future, and be a decent chap, we'll stand by you."

"Hear, hear!" said Manners and Lowther.

"I mean to do that, anyway!" said Gore. "I—I meant to do it, I swear. I don't know what made me such an ass—but you watch me, if I get a chance, that's all."

"You promise then?"

"Yes; honour bright!"

"Good!" said Tom Merry, rising. "Now, we'll let the whole House know the promise you've made to your father!"

Gore gasped.

"They'll pile on me more than ever, then, Tom Merry!" Tom Merry laughed.

"Not if they know that the Terrible Three are ready to fight all your battles for the next four days!" he replied.

"Oh! You mean that?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Thanks!" Gore's face was bright again now; a load was gone from his mind. "You're a jolly good sort, Tom

Merry. When this is over you shall see that I'm not the ungrateful brute you've thought me."

Tom Merry nodded.

"I think you'll keep your word," he said. "You've had lesson enough, anyway. Come on!"

And the Terrible Three and Gore walked downstairs.

They entered the Junior Common-room together. There was a hiss from a group of Fourth Formers.

"Hallo, you rotten coward!" said Levison. "Have you made up your mind to fight yet?"

"Oh, he couldn't fight a white rabbit!" said Mellish.

And there was a jeering laugh.

"Gentlemen," said Tom Merry. "I have a few words to say! Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!"

"Rats!"

"Order!" said Blake. "Go ahead, Tommy!"

"Gore has explained to me that he's promised his pater to keep clear of rows for four days; hence his shirking trouble. Levison most likely knows it, or he wouldn't be so jolly brave all of a sudden!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a lie!" said Levison.

"What!" exclaimed Tom Merry, advancing towards him.

"I—I mean, you're mistaken!"

"That's better! Well, the case is as I say, and we have decided to see Gore through it. We've taken up the cause. Gore is going through the next four days without having any rows, but any fellow who tries to put upon him in any way will have to deal with us. If Levison is spoiling for a fight, he can select Manners or Lowther or myself. He can take his choice!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't want any row with you fellows!" said Levison sulkily.

"Then you'd better let Gore alone. If you say a single insulting word, or touch him, you will have to fight one of us, and that applies to every fellow present."

"Bai Jove! I wegard that as quite wight, and I fully approve of it!"

"Then it must be right!" said Blake. "The one and only Augustus has said it! The great chief has spoken!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"I hope it's clearly understood?" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah; and I will back you up, deah boy!"

The Common-room was in a buzz of discussion. Some of the fellows believed Gore's statement with regard to his promise to his father and some did not. But there was one thing that all of them had to believe, and that was that the Terrible Three were backing up Gore, and that if Gore were ragged there would be a serious fight on the hands of the ragger.

And after that Gore was left severely alone. The best fellows had not troubled him at all, and the others did not want trouble with the Terrible Three.

That day of torment had had its effect upon Gore, but the succeeding days were not like it. A calm peacefulness descended upon the bully of the Shell. He gave no cause for offence, and he received none. And it was very clear from Gore's manner that he remembered his promise to Tom Merry, and meant to keep it.

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus remarked to his chums. "Gore is becomin' quite decent, and I shall be quite sowwy if his governah takes him away. I can weally stand Gore now, if it wasn't for the colour of his neckties—weally, you know!"

On the fifth day came Mr. Gore.

The stout gentleman marched into the school with a hard, grim face, and a glance at him was sufficient to show that he expected to catch his son tripping. He was shut up with the Head for five minutes, and then with Mr. Railton for an equal length of time, and then with Gore's Form-master, the master of the Shell.

He came forth looking disappointed. Was it possible that he was disappointed because he had not caught Gore in fault? It was possible. He proceeded to ask questions of the prefects, but the prefects had the same report to give. Gore's conduct for four days had been exemplary—so far from entering in a row, he had been seen to take blows without returning them.

Mr. Gore finally dropped into his son's study. Gore met him with fear and trembling. He had kept his word, but his father was not a pleasant man to deal with. Mr. Gore regarded his son from under his heavy brows for some moments before he spoke to him.

"You have kept your promise, George?" he said.

"Yes, father."

"You have not fought with anyone, or struck a blow, since I saw you last?"

"No, father!"

"Fortunately, the statements of the masters and the

(Continued on page 23.)

THE SCHOOLBOY WHO WAS BURIED ALIVE !



BY EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

The Second Victim !

REGGIE PITT, the popular leader of the West House Remove, was wrestling with Latin verbs. He wasn't enjoying himself a bit. But prep, after all, was prep, and it had to be done. He sat at the table in Study O, trying to concentrate on his task.

It was certainly very cheerful in that little room. The fire glowed warmly, and the hiss of rain against the window served to accentuate the comforts within. It was a wintry evening, bitterly cold, blustery, and raining hard.

Jack Grey, Pitt's chum and study-mate, had finished his prep earlier, and had gone to the Ancient House to talk football with Nipper, the junior captain. Pitt was glad to be alone, for during the past few minutes he found it difficult to concentrate. His thoughts kept wandering away from Latin. Without any reason at all he found himself thinking of Zinestero Castle, that grim old building in the heart of Bellton Wood, which had been brought from Spain, stone by stone, by the mad Count Zinestero, and erected in the quiet Sussex countryside.

"Rats!" muttered Pitt, giving himself a shake.

It was irritating. Why should he think of Zinestero Castle? He couldn't get the confounded place out of his mind. He tried hard to bring his thoughts back to Latin. In vain. His will power was insufficient, and soon he was thinking of Zinestero Castle to the exclusion of all else. He had an irresistible desire to venture forth into the rain and walk to the castle.

His usually cheery face became set in a mask-like expression; his pen wandered idly over the paper, scratching, and he had no knowledge of what he wrote. His will was no longer under his own control.

At last, obediently, as though in answer to a summons, he rose to his feet and walked slowly and deliberately out of the study. There were no juniors in the passage. Had any of the fellows met Reggie Pitt then they would have wondered what was wrong with him. He walked mechanically, and his steps took him to the cloak-room, just inside the West House lobby. Then he emerged at once, after donning a macintosh.

But his head was bare as he went down the steps into the wind and rain. Somebody came running across from the East House, and they nearly collided. The other fellow turned and stared, and shouted to Pitt. But Pitt walked on in that same deliberate fashion, and took no notice.

The gates were not yet closed. Out he went into the dark lane, the rain beating into his face, the wind causing his macintosh to flap round his legs.

He no longer wondered why he was venturing forth in this fashion; he just walked on, obeying the inexorable summons which had come from the darkness of the night.

Presently he reached the stile in Bellton Lane, which gave on to the footpath through the wood. He climbed the stile and plunged amongst the trees, to be instantly lost in the impenetrable blackness.

Yet, as he walked, he never once faltered; he kept to the path without a halt, and thus, in due course, he reached a point, almost in the centre of the wood, where he left the path and plunged amongst the wilderness of trees, treading through sodden bracken and dead leaves.

He emerged soon into a forlorn and neglected drive. Walking down this, stumbling over ridges and potholes, with the rain beating upon his bare head, he reached a high and formidable wall, in which was set a massive wooden gate.

It was the entrance to Zinestero Castle—to the courtyard. For a long time now the grim old building had been empty, and the country people round about declared that the castle was haunted, and it was avoided after dark.

As though he had been given verbal instructions, Reggie Pitt felt for a knob in that massive gate, and a little wicket door immediately opened. He passed through, and he not only closed the door after him, but bolted it on the inner side.

He walked forward across the courtyard, and in the gloom of the wintry evening he could dimly see the outline of the deserted and forbidding castle, with its turrets and towers, and the wide moat which surrounded it.

But the drawbridge was down, and Reggie Pitt walked firmly across it. A figure, shadowy and mysterious, stood in the shelter of the archway beyond. And as Pitt reached that spot he seemed to shake all over, and he looked about him in bewilderment. It was as though he had awakened from a trance.

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated blankly. "Why am I here?"

A hand reached out from the shadowy figure, and it rested firmly on Pitt's shoulder.

"You have come, my son, in answer to the summons of Taaz, the Omnipotent," said a soft, cultured voice. "It is well. Follow me."

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THE CASTLE OF TORTURE !

Reggie Pitt shivered. A queer, trickling sensation ran up and down his spine. He understood. The second talon of the Ten Talons of Taaz had struck—and he was the victim!

He remembered vividly then the menace which hung over ten juniors of St. Frank's.

In going to the rescue of Tibetan priests in a shipwreck, the boys had looked upon the face of Raak-ok, the high priest, the punishment for this being death.

They had, however, been allowed to go free; but they had to appease the anger of the priests' Vulture God Taaz. Each junior, in turn, would be called upon to undergo an ordeal. If one showed cowardice the punishment would be death. Already Vivian Travers, one of the ten, had faced his test of courage. Now it was Pitt's turn!

"It looks a bit like rain, dear old fellows!" observed Vivian Travers, as he stood in the Ancient House doorway.

Nipper and Jack Grey were with him. Outside the zone of light on the Ancient House steps the rain was pattering heavily on the gravel of the Triangle. The paved paths shimmered like rivers, reflecting the light from the windows of the Modern House opposite.

"I'm not sure it's much good talking to Pitt about football," said Nipper ruefully. "If the rain keeps on like this Little Side will be flooded to-morrow. Still, come on! Let's make a dash for it!"

They raced down the steps, swerved to the right, and ran past the dark opening of West Arch, and soon reached the main doorway of the West House. They charged in, laughing and breathless.

"Hope Reggie's finished his Latin," said Jack Grey. "If he hasn't he'll boot us out of the study. Prep to-night is a regular teaser! Glad I've got mine done."

They went down the Remove passage and entered Study O. The light was full on, the fire was burning, but there was no sign of Reggie Pitt.

"He must have dodged out for a minute," said Jack as he looked at the table. "His books are still open, and he left the light on. Make yourselves at home, you chaps."

"Just what we're doing, thanks," said Travers as he dropped comfortably into the easy-chair.

Nipper leaned over the table.

"Let's see how much more of this drivel he has to do," he said. "Hallo! What's this?"

"What's what?" asked Grey.

Nipper was staring at Reggie Pitt's Latin paper. The upper half of it was very neat, but lower down, for some extraordinary reason, Pitt had spoilt all his work. For he had written "Zinestero Castle" no less than five times. And it was noticeable that the handwriting, although characteristically neat at first, degenerated into an erratic scrawl. The last two or three letters of the final word written were almost indecipherable.

"Zinestero Castle!" muttered Nipper, and his voice contained a hard, alarmed note.

"What do you make of it?" asked Jack Grey, puzzled. "What on earth possessed Reggie to muck up his work like this?"

"This is not Reggie's ordinary handwriting," said Nipper sharply. "And he went out, leaving his work unfinished—"

"Meaning?" asked Vivian Travers, rising abruptly to his feet.

"Meaning one thing, Travers—and you know what it is," said Nipper tensely. "Pitt has had the 'call'!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Grey, his face going pale.

The three Removites looked at one another. They were all members of the "marked ten." They understood. Travers, as yet, was the only one who had undergone the mysterious ordeal, and he had steadfastly refused to relate what had happened to him some nights earlier.

"You may be wrong, Nipper," said Grey, at length. "I don't see—"

"Why should Pitt write Zinestero Castle so many times like this?" interrupted Nipper. "He did it unconsciously. By Jove! It's a clue for us, you chaps. We know that Pitt has been 'called' to Zinestero Castle!"

"So what?" asked Travers evenly.

"We'll go there—we've got to go there," said Nipper, clenching his fists. "Come on! Let's round up the others."

He strode out into the passage, and Castleton happened to be strolling past.

"Hallo!" he said, staring in surprise at Nipper's set face. "Anything wrong?"

"What makes you ask that?"

"I was wondering if Pitt had had bad news, or something," replied Castleton. "I saw him about ten minutes ago, and he didn't answer me when I spoke to him."

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"Perhaps he didn't hear you."

"Come off it!" said Castleton. "I was running into the House, and Pitt had just come out. Without a cap, too—in this weather! He walked straight out into the rain and darkness without looking to right or left, and he absolutely ignored me."

Nipper laughed, and Castleton did not know that it was a forced laugh.

"That's nothing," he said lightly. "I expect he was having a game with you. Come on, you chaps."

They hurried away, for Nipper had no desire to be questioned by Castleton, who was obviously curious. When they got into the lobby, Nipper paused.

"You heard that," he said in a low voice. "That clinches it! You got out of bed and left the school the other night in just the same way, Travers. But this time the call has come in the evening instead of the middle of the night."

"Yes, it looks pretty significant," admitted Travers. "But we can't do anything. In fact, we mustn't do anything."

But Nipper ignored him. Five minutes later in the Ancient House he had rounded up the other members of the Ten. Study C was crowded, and in addition to Nipper and Grey and Travers, it contained Handforth, Church, McClure, Tregellis-West, Tommy Watson, and Archie Glenthorne.

They were agog with excitement when they heard the news.

"By George! So it's Pitt's turn!" said Edward Oswald Handforth.

"Yes," said Nipper grimly. "And we're going to Zinestero Castle."

"You can leave me out of it," said Travers steadily. "I've had enough of the priests of Taaz. It's Pitt's turn now, and if you try to interfere you'll be crazy. The only thing for us to do is to leave him alone—and wait."

"But that seems so tame!" protested Nipper.

"Absolutely," said Archie stoutly. "I mean to say, surely it is up to us to rally round?"

"These Eastern merchants are in deadly earnest," replied Travers, with unusual gravity. "It's madness to try any monkey tricks with them. I've been through the mill, and I know. By butting in, you might sign Pitt's death warrant."

The others looked at one another with set, startled faces.

"Rats!" said Nipper suddenly, his voice firm and grim. "We're not going to leave Reggie Pitt in the lurch. Who's coming with me to Zinestero Castle?"

"All of us!" said Handforth promptly.

And, indeed, they all eagerly assented—with the exception of Travers. And he was the only one who knew!

The Torture Chamber!

THROUGH dark, dank passages Reggie Pitt was led. His guide, a sinister figure in his Eastern robes, was carrying a quaint lamp which gave forth a flickering light. But the light was confined to a narrow radius, and all beyond the shadows were dense.

Pitt's heart was beating faster, but he strove to remain calm. He knew not what ordeal lay ahead of him, but he sensed that it would be severe. The only comforting thought was that Vivian Travers had come through his own ordeal with flying colours.

They went down a long upper corridor, and Pitt could hear the moaning sound of the wind outside. They turned through a doorway and came into a great lofty chamber. Here other lamps were glowing, filling the place with a strange and unnatural light.

Only half visible, amid a background of shadows, loomed an enormous image, which shimmered uncannily. It was Taaz, the Vulture God. It was perched high there, with outspread wings, with its strange head, half bird and half man, and its talons outstretched, clutching.

Vague figures moved about in the shadows, and Pitt knew that there were several other priests here. And he realised, with a sudden shock, that he had once been in this chamber before.

It was the torture chamber of Zinestero Castle!

The mad count had had everything restored—exactly as it had been in medieval days. Pitt found himself being led forward to a heavy upright post, which was fixed solidly to the floor. One feature of the adventure which added to its grimness was the utter silence. No word was spoken; and when the priests moved about, their feet were noiseless.

But as Pitt was placed with his back to the upright post sounds came—sinister, significant. He heard the ring of metal, and he felt hard pressure on his arms and legs. Heavy steel clamps, which were fixed to the post, were now fastened round the prisoner so that he could not move. Thus he was held there, helpless, at the mercy of his captors.

"What are you going to do to me?" Pitt burst out, unable



Nipper & Co. were horrified at the scene that met their eyes as they opened the door of the torture chamber. Reggie Pitt, his chest bared, was fixed to a post, and a priest had his hands over Pitt's eyes. Another priest was advancing upon the captive with a hot iron!

to bear the silence any longer. "What's all this jiggery pokery?"

"You must remain calm, my son, for in calmness lies salvation," came the voice of one of the priests. "Panic leads to terror—and terror will mean death!"

"Death!" muttered Pitt, his blood running cold.

"You have transgressed against the great Taaz, and if you prove yourself to be of courage, Taaz will forgive," came the priest's voice. "It is for you, my son, to face danger and pain and terror—and to face it all with fortitude."

Reggie made no reply. He saw, with a start, that a brazier was glowing with white-hot fire; two priests were bending over it, their yellow faces like masks. And in the brazier were branding-irons. One of the irons was withdrawn, revealing the end glowing white with heat. It was thrust back, and as the priest performed this action he turned his head and looked impassively at the prisoner.

Pitt clenched his teeth—to prevent the escape of a cry which had already risen to his throat. So that was it! They were going to torture him with hot irons! There was no way of escape, and Reggie was filled with a blind rage against these heathens who were thus having their way with him. He was alone in this mysterious old castle with them. To shout for help would be worse than useless.

"Why are you doing this?" Pitt demanded suddenly, his voice sounding before he realized that he had opened his mouth.

The priest in charge came forward, facing him.

"It is not for you to seek knowledge, my son," he said. "We are but the servants of Taaz. We bear you no ill-will, and desire not to take your life. But should you displease Taaz, death will follow. Taaz has no love for a craven!"

Reggie Pitt understood, and if he was more horrified than ever, he was strengthened, too. It was his courage they were going to test. Well, he would show them that he was no craven. Let them torture him until his senses deserted him, he would utter no outcry—he would make no appeal for mercy.

If anything had been needed to show him what was planned, it followed now. A second priest advanced towards him, and with quick movements opened his clothing until his chest was laid bare.

At the same time the priest at the brazier withdrew a glowing, white-hot iron. He held it to his face as though to test it, and Pitt saw him nod. Then, with slow, measured tread, he advanced.

"Prepare, my son!" said an impressive voice behind the prisoner.

Two hands came round the post, and in a moment they were clapped firmly over Reggie Pitt's eyes. His heart was thudding like a hammer as he heard the slithering footsteps of the priest who advanced with the branding-iron—

"This isn't the way to the castle!" said Handforth suddenly.

The eight St. Frank's Removites were out in the wind and rain, and Nipper was leading the way. The others had expected that he would take the footpath into the heart of the wood.

But Nipper was continuing straight down the lane into Bellton. He was obliged to come to a halt, for Handforth was dragging at his arm.

"I know," said Nipper. "But do you think we'd stand an earthly chance if we went to the castle in the ordinary way? Have you forgotten what happened when we tried to follow Travers? We were stopped by the priests, and were warned that if we went any farther it would mean Travers' death."

"Begad, that's right!" muttered Tregellis-West.

"Well, we can't take that risk now—we can't endanger Pitt," continued Nipper. "It's ten to one there's a priest on guard on the footpath, and perhaps another in the castle courtyard. But, after all, these priests of Taaz are strangers in the district. They don't know much about the castle. But we do."

"What?" said Handforth, with a start.

"We know some of the secrets—and the most important secret is the underground tunnel," said Nipper. "Don't you remember? There's an entrance in Bannington Road. If we can get in there and reach the castle secretly—"

"By George," interrupted Handforth enthusiastically, "why didn't I think of it?"

They pressed on eagerly now. Nipper's idea was first class. They were all anxious about Pitt—they wanted to help him, if it was in any way possible. Yet they feared that if they interfered openly their efforts would do more harm than good. For these eight juniors were under no misapprehension concerning the grim and determined activities of the priests of Taaz.

Through the village, which seemed utterly deserted in the rain, and then they hurried out upon the road to Bannington. It was deserted, and presently they reached an ordinary looking manhole cover. Electric torches flashed, and several of the juniors between them managed to raise the cover and put it aside.

A shallow brick wall was revealed, but Nipper knew that the base of this wall, although solid looking, was actually a secret door. It led down into a tunnel, and the tunnel, in turn, led right into Zinestero Castle!

"Wait, you chaps," said Nipper tensely. "Keep your eyes wide open, in case a car comes along, or a bus. If so, shove this cover back like lightning and dodge out of the way."

He dropped into the cavity, and almost at once he was successful in locating the mechanism which operated the secret door. It opened, and Nipper's torchlight revealed a lower cavity, with a glimpse of steep stairs.

"It's all right!" he called exultantly. "It still works. Come on!"

He vanished, and the others, very excited, followed him. The last two to come down had shifted the manhole cover near to the opening, so that they were able, at the last moment, to hoist it over, and place it in position.

A few minutes later the eight boys had collected together at the bottom of the steep steps, and they were now in a fairly wide tunnel. The air was icily cold and dank. The walls were streaming with moisture, and there were puddles all along the tunnel floor.

At the time of Count Zinestero's occupation of the castle, there had been many trick devices in this tunnel—walls which automatically closed, imprisoning any unwary intruders. But that mechanism had been put out of action, and the tunnel was safe. In one place there had been a collapse of the wall, but this had since been repaired. The boys hurried on, intensely eager for the adventure.

At last they came to some steep steps which led sharply upwards. They mounted higher and higher, and after a while the dampness vanished. They knew, then, that they were actually within the walls of the old castle.

"Careful now, you chaps!" murmured Nipper. "We might be heard. After this we mustn't do any talking. And be ready to act if necessity arises."

"Carry on," said Handforth tensely. "We're ready."

The steps were narrower now, and as they mounted Nipper tried to remember the lie of the land. While he was doing so, his torchlight showed him a recess in the stonework—and in this recess there was some mechanism. He halted. He knew that in that recess there was a secret door. Nipper suddenly remembered—they were high up in Zinestero Castle, and that door led straight into the torture chamber!

"Ssssssh!" hissed Nipper. "Keep absolutely quiet, you chaps."

He examined the mechanism, and saw how it was operated. Then he switched off his light, and the other fellows switched off theirs. They were plunged into Stygian darkness.

But Nipper's hands were on the controlling rod. He pulled gently, and without a sound the secret door opened.

Nipper almost uttered an exclamation, for he had expected the torture chamber to be dark and empty. But it was glowing with a ruddy light. The door opened wider, and the boys behind Nipper craned forward.

They gazed upon an extraordinary scene.

Reggie Pitt was fixed to an upright post in the centre of the chamber; a priest behind the post had his hands clapped over Pitt's eyes, and another priest was advancing upon the captive with a white-hot iron.

Nipper's heart almost stopped beating. He dared not make a sound at such a crucial moment as this. He could only watch, horrified.

Buried Alive!

REGGIE PITT knew that the fateful moment of his ordeal had come.

He sensed, rather than felt, that the second priest was near him. Then suddenly something that felt ice-cold pressed on his bare chest.

He caught his breath in with a sharp hiss between his clenched teeth. But that was the only sound he made. For he had sworn that he would give no cry. With muscles tensed, with his fingernails digging into his palms, he remained silent.

"You are possessed of courage, Unbeliever," said the soft voice of the priest. "It is well."

The hands were removed from Pitt's eyes, and he was able to jerk his head forward. His first instinctive glance was at his chest. He expected to see seared flesh. But his chest was unmarked, only streaming as with moisture.

In the hand of the priest of Taaz was not a white-hot iron, but a long icicle! It was the thick end of this which had been pressed against Reggie Pitt's chest—and, blindfolded as he had been, he had thought that it was the hot iron. Actually, he had felt nothing but intense cold!

"Oh!" he exclaimed, feeling suddenly foolish.

"It is well done, my son," said the priest, his face as impassive as ever. "Let it be known to you that if you had

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made any outcry at the first touch of the ice, the branding-iron itself would have been used."

"I—I thought—I—I mean—"

"Yes. It was intended that you should think thus," said the priest. "Taaz has commanded that no harm shall befall you if you acquit yourself to his liking. It is regrettable that your friends should have thought fit to interfere, for by so doing they are endangering your life."

Nipper and the other boys at the secret door, hearing these words, were startled. They had made no sound; they had given no indication of their presence. But at that same second, a powerful light, appearing as though from nowhere, swung round and revealed Nipper & Co. with dazzling clarity.

"Stand forth, foolish youths!" said the priest sternly.

"Back!" gasped Handforth.

But, even as he spoke the words, a light appeared in the secret passage itself, and the boys in the rear, turning, saw two ominous-looking yellow faces. They saw, too, gleaming daggers.

There was no alternative; they were obliged to move forward into the torture chamber. They came out in a little crowd, their faces flushed with excitement. They had believed themselves to be safe; but the priests of Taaz, apparently, knew everything!

"My children, never again must you seek to aid the one who has been called to answer to Taaz," said the priest in charge. "The unbeliever Travers has expiated his sin; the unbeliever now before your eyes is in the act of expiating his. If he acquits himself to the liking of Taaz, he will again join you. If not, he will die. In due course, each of you will be called. But, heed this well. Be warned. Any future interference will mean certain death for the one who has been called. Enough!"

He raised a hand, and another priest, who had approached the boys, flung something which seemed like a handful of powder. It spread out over Nipper & Co., immediately resolving itself into a dense cloud, pungent and overpowering.

They felt their senses reeling, they blundered and stumbled blindly, and then they collapsed one by one.

While this dramatic incident was taking place, the metal clasps had been removed from Reggie Pitt, and he was hustled at speed out of the torture chamber. He heard the thud of a door. There were two priests with him, one on either side.

"What have you done to my friends?" he asked huskily.

"Fear not; they are unharmed," said one of the priests impassively. "When they awaken they will have more wisdom."

"Aren't you going to let me go?"

"Taaz will decide whether you shall go, or whether you shall take the long journey into eternity," replied the priest. "Thus far you have pleased Taaz. It remains to be seen whether your courage is of that quality which will earn your release from his curse."

Pitt's mind was in a whirl. He did not know whether to believe the priest. He had seen his schoolfellows fall as though stricken by some dread paralysis. Yet his own position was so acute that he had scarcely any time to think of others.

He was in a gloomy upper chamber of the castle—a bare room with icy draughts whistling through it. He was taken straight to a shallow recess in the wall. It was of just sufficient width to admit him, and he was commanded to remain perfectly still.

He could not understand this fresh ordeal. There were loose bricks on the floor—and mortar, too. One of the priests was handling a trowel, and another held a light. The priest in charge stood close against the recess itself—ready to deal with Reggie Pitt if he should make any move.

Calmly, unhurriedly, the priest with the trowel spread mortar on the solid stone floor—just within the recess, and close against Pitt's feet. He placed a brick on the mortar—then another brick beside the first one. He laid a layer of bricks, spread mortar on them, and then laid another layer.

The helpless junior made no sound, but he went cold with fear. For, unless his eyes befooled him, he was being walled up! He was being buried alive!

Higher and higher rose the layers of bricks; the wall was being built so that the exit from the recess would be blocked. And Reggie Pitt was behind, helpless, and the wall was ever growing higher.

"No, no!" he muttered. "You can't do a thing like this! It's murder!"

"You are afraid, my son?" asked the guarding priest, his voice suddenly harsh.

Reggie tried to pull himself together. He was, indeed, terrified. For there was no deception about this awful thing. These inhuman yellow devils were intent upon concealing him for all time!

Fortunately, he controlled his feelings. He had been warned. If he showed the white feather he would inevitably die. He tried to think of some loophole of escape—some trick of deception which the priests were employing. But there was nothing. Already the wall was built to the height of his chest, and the priest, working skilfully, was continuing to lay the bricks.

Higher grew the wall. It was at his face level at last. The sense of being imprisoned, buried—it was driving him near to the panic point. For there can be no worse horror than the knowledge that one is being doomed to a slow and horrible death by suffocation.

"Farewell, my son," came a soft voice through the opening. "Thus far you are brave."

"You beasts—you devils—"

Reggie Pitt, feeling himself cracking, used every ounce of his will power. He realised that he had scarcely uttered the words; he had hardly breathed them, for his vocal chords seemed paralysed.

The next moment the light was shut out. He heard a scraping, and it became faint. He knew that the last brick had been placed in. He was sealed up! And the silence within that living tomb was broken only by the hard breathing of the victim. The impulse to scream was irresistible. Terror had got hold of him now. This tomb was too ghastly— But again his sterling spirit conquered.

"No!" he swore. "I won't scream—I won't give them that satisfaction. They won't hear a sound from me, the devils!"

He was suddenly calm. He found himself wondering how long it would be before suffocation came and his senses left him. He thought of the bricks and the new mortar. If he exerted his strength, he could destroy the newly built wall.

There was scarcely room for him to move, for the wall had been built flush with his front. Yet, by wriggling and twisting, he was able to hunch himself up to a certain extent; then, using all his strength, he used the leverage he had thus gained.

Suddenly the wall burst.

But it was the wall behind him—not that newly built wall in front of him! The apparently solid wall of the castle burst under the pressure, and the next moment Pitt found himself hurtling through space. It was the plaster of the wall that had given way. The outside bricks had been removed.

Pitt felt the icy wind and the rain on his face.

Down—down! He was falling like a stone, and his senses were confused.

Splash!

He plunged into a depth of icy-cold water, and the shock revived him. He knew he was in the moat.

He came to the surface and struck out blindly. In the dimness he could just see the bank.

"It is well!" came a mysterious voice from the darkness. "A coward would have been resigned to his fate. By fighting for your life without screaming for help you have satisfied Taaz. Go in peace. But say nothing of what has befallen you to any living soul, or Taaz will be angry, and Taaz will give you no second chance. Go!"

Pitt scrambled on to solid ground. He looked about him, but no living thing was in sight. Zinestero Castle was like a place of the dead—mournful, desolate.

The ordeal was over. Pitt found new strength; he ran to the great gates, and made his exit through the wicket door. And on the footpath, in the heart of the wood, he found Nipper & Co. He blundered into them almost before he knew they were there.

"It's Pitt!" came a husky shout from Handforth. "He's safe!"

"And you're safe!" said Reggie Pitt steadily.

"We don't know how we got here; we only came to our senses a few minutes ago," said Nipper. "By Jove! Those men from Tibet are tough customers, and no mistake! What happened to you, Reggie?"

"I can't tell you," replied Pitt quietly. "If I tell you, they'll kill me. Each of you must go through his own ordeal—with no hint of what is to befall you."

And they went out of the wood and back to St. Frank's.

(Next Wednesday: "THE NEEDLES OF NEMESIS!")

THE MONTH'S BEST BOOKS! TAKE YOUR CHOICE

THE libraries for October offer something to please everyone. Whatever your tastes in reading, you will find a book here to suit you down to the ground.

For lovers of school yarns the **SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY** offers two new volumes. No. 229, "THE HOUSE OF TERROR," by Frank Richards, tells how Harry Wharton & Co. become involved in a baffling mystery centred around the menace of death that overhangs Ravenspur Grange. Their thrilling adventures will hold you breathless throughout this great holiday yarn.

No. 230—"THE RIVER ADVENTURERS," by Martin Clifford—is a rollicking long story of fun, frolic, and exciting adventures on Old Father Thames, starring Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's on holiday. Don't miss it.

If you like war yarns, packed with thrills, then the **BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY** caters for you with No. 449, "ON SECRET SERVICE," by Hedley Scott. A distinguished officer has been captured by the Germans. He has with him certain documents which must not fall into enemy hands. Two young airmen undertake to don disguise, enter Germany, find the prisoner, rescue him if possible, and bring him back, together with the papers. Right to Berlin they go, and their non-stop adventures make thrilling reading of the highest order.

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Nipper & Co. and the boys of St. Frank's are the well-established favourites with a vast army of readers, who will be pleased to know that the **BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY** has another volume for them. It is No. 451, "CRUSOES OF SURF ISLAND," by Edwy Seales Brooks. It was Handforth's idea in the first place. The fellows went to live on an island off the South Coast for a week, undertaking to take nothing but the clothes they wore with a pocket-knife—to fend for themselves entirely. But they tumbled

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For those who revel in stirring adventures in the wilds there is **BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY** No. 452—"LOST IN THE JUNGLE," by Murray Graydon—an enthralling yarn of African perils and mystery.

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THE BULLY WHO WOULDN'T FIGHT!

(Continued from page 22.)

prefects bear out yours," said Mr. Gore grimly. "I believe you!"

"Thank you, father!"

"I shall keep my word, as you have kept yours, and allow you to remain at this school," said Mr. Gore. Gore's face brightened up.

"Oh, thanks, father—thanks!"

"There is nothing to thank me for," said Mr. Gore, "and I warn you that I shall keep a careful eye on you in the future, and if I receive any more unfavourable reports on your conduct, George, it will be the worse for you!"

"I'm going to be very careful, and—"

"Mind you are! Good-bye!"

And Mr. Gore hurried off to catch his train. Gore executed a cake-walk round the study in his glee, and then went out.

He met Levison in the passage. The cad of the Fourth backed away.

"Hands off!" he exclaimed.

Gore gave him a grim look.

"You were spoiling for a fight a little while ago," he remarked. "I'll come into the gym now. You gave me a coward's blow. I'm ready to return it. Come on!"

"I—I—"

"You don't want to fight?" said Gore contemptuously.

"N-no!" muttered Levison.

"You treated me as you did, and you don't want to fight," said Gore. "By Jove, I won't give you any choice about it! I'll smash you, and Crooke, too! I'll—"

"No, you won't!" broke in the quiet voice of Tom Merry, as the hero of the Shell came out of his study. "Let bygones be bygones, Gore. You've paid for being a bully—you deserved all you got. Let the whole matter drop!"

Gore hesitated for a moment. Then he showed plainly enough that his better nature was uppermost.

"Right you are!" he exclaimed. "You can cut, Levison!"

And Levison gladly "cut."

Tom Merry linked his arm in Gore's, and they walked down the passage together. And that was a proud moment for the bully who, for a period, wouldn't fight.

THE END.

(Next week: The boy who camped out at school! Read "THE GIPSY SCHOOLBOY!")

PEN PALS

(Continued from page 13.)

R. A. Cail, 22, Priory Road, Cambridge, wants correspondents; Great Britain and Dominions. U.S.A., China and Japan; age 15-18.

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