

**SURPRISE
FREE
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INSIDE!**

EVERY SATURDAY
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The **MODERN BOY**

2^p



RED-HOT RUGGER
Story This Week!

The SCHOOL for SLACKERS!

By

Charles Hamilton



"You—you—you sir! Mr. McCann, the new 'Endmaster, surely!" visited the school porter at last, blinking unbelieveably at the pleasant-faced young man.

"He's a Lion Wire!"

"McCann? That's the name?"

"Is it a name?" yawned

Ashley Compton.

And there was a lazy laugh in Big

Study.

It was a large, handsome room,

with tall windows that looked out on

the quadrangle, across the Sixth-Fern

green. There was a glimpse of rolling

cliffs and coombes, and the

Atlantic, in the distance. It was

handsomely furnished, like all rooms

at High Combe School. And the

fellows who lounged in it were, so

to speak, handsomely furnished also.

They were very careful about their

clothes at High Combe. Virgil of

old sang "Arms and the Man," but

had Virgil belonged to High Combe

he certainly would have made it

"Clothes and the Man."

They were not quite so careful

about other matters. In football and

cricket, for instance, High Combe's

reputation was deplorable.

But they did not deplore it.

If Okham beat them at football,

they, at least, were infinitely better-

officers than any man at Okham.

If there were no silver pots on the

sidboard in Hall, there were

perfectly cut clothes round the Pre-

Fern's Table that might have made

any pot-hunter sigh with admiring

envy.

High Combe was perfectly well

satisfied with itself.

Nothing would have been more

elegant than the figure of Ashley

Compton, reclining on a tapestried

sofa, his well-manicured fingers

clasped behind his head, his rather

long legs stretched lazily, yet with a

due regard to the crease in his

trousers.

Compton was the best-dressed man

in the Fifth, which was saying a

great deal, for they all delighted the

hearts of their tailors.

PROPERLY speaking, only First

Eleven men and prefects should

have used Big Study. Troilgar,

the captain of High Combe, should

have seen to that. But Fred never

bothered about that, or anything else.

At the present moment Fred was

busily engaged in brushing a Raké

of cigarettes ash from his sleeve. He

was greatly relieved to find that it

had left no mark there. That would

have worried him.

There were six or seven of the Fifth

in Big Study, as well as some of the

Sixth. Bandal of the Sixth had his

shoulders in the seat of a deep, big

chair, his legs across a cane chair.

"I ought to run you in, Trod," he

declared.

"What's that?" asked the captain

of High Combe.

"I'm a prefect! You're not! You're asking, and that's against the rules. If it wasn't too much trouble to get out of this chair I'd run you in."

And there was a chuckle in Big Study at the idea of Bandal ever getting up enough steam to run anybody in.

THERE was only one discordant note in the scene. That was provided by a fellow who stood outside the open window, looking in. He was in football gear, and had a Soccer ball under his arm. It was he, Bob Darrell of the Fifth, who had spoken the name of McCann—dropping it in at the window, as it were.

"Is it a name?" he repeated after Compton.

"Of course it's a name, Bob!"

"It's the name of the new Book?"

"I'd take your word for it, old

bean," said Ashley. "If you say it's

a name, it's a name. But it sounds to

me more like an unorthodox ex-

pression."

And there was another ripple of

laughter in Big Study.

Darrell frowned in at the window.

He was the only man—or almost

the only man—in the High Combe

Fifth who was keen. Keenness was

not popular at High Combe.

Not that Darrell himself was un-

popular. He was generally liked. If

he was keen on games, and even did

a little work in class, he had many

good qualities to compensate for such

shortcomings.

And, after all, as his pal Seymour

said, why shouldn't a fellow be keen

on games if he liked? It wasn't in

accordance with High Combe tradi-

tion, but where was the harm? In-

deed, it came in useful at times, for

High Combe did play matches, though

in a very haphazard way, and then

Darrell came out very strong.

"Look here, turn out, you

slackers!" said Darrell.

"Turn out!" repeated Compton.

"Why?"

"What about Soccer?"

"Don't!" said Bandal, in a feeble

voice. "You've makin' me tired."

"We were licked seven goals to one

in our last match with Okham," said

Darrell. "The Okham men were kill-

ing themselves laughing when they

changed after the match."

"So were some of us!" said Compton

stiffly. "Did you notice the trousers

they changed into?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

—Sweet Jesus Darrell.

"Well, I can tell you one thing."

"What, I can tell you a bit of a

change when McCann takes the reins

—and he's coming today. I've

The whole School is against him. The whole Staff is against him. They even throw him into the river! But the new Head is a young man whose middle name ought to be Dynamite. "Wake 'em up and shake 'em up!" is his motto! The School Story that is Different!

heard of the man—heard a bit about him."

"Anythin' remarkable about him besides his name?" asked Compton.

"He's young—about a hundred years younger than our old Head," said Darrell. "He's a tremendous game-man. I'm hoping that he will wake up High Combe. We've been called the School for Slackers. And we deserve it—you men do, at any rate!"

"Guilty, my lord!" murmured Compton.

"Well, when Jimmy McCann blows in—"

"Overt pipe! Is his name Jimmy as well as McCann?"

"Yes."

"My hat!" said Compton.

"The governors," said Carlson of the Sixth, "ought to be called to order for appointin' a man with a name like that Head of High Combe. Fancy Jimmy McCann, after Dr. Christy!"

"And he's a live wire—what?" asked Compton. "One of those energetic braves who make you sit up and take notice. I don't think he'll have a lot of effect on High Combe."

"He will!" said Bob Darrell.

"He won't! I've seen these young masters, old boy. They blow in brassin' with pep, make themselves a general nuisance for a term or so, and then settle down into the rut. New ideas aren't popular in any Public school—least of all in High Combe. These are young masters—"

"It's a new Head this time—that makes a lot of difference! In fact, I fancy it must have dawned on the governors that the old show needs looking up a bit or they'd never have sent McCann here," growled Bob. "There was a time when High Combe used to capture pots—"

"Anybody here want to capture pots?" drawled Compton.

"We used to bag scholarships—"

"Anybody here want to bag schools?"

"Is that a football you've got there, Bob?" asked Randall, sitting up in his chair and looking at the stalwart figure framed in the open window.

"Do you know one when you see one?" asked Darrell sarcastically. "Yes, it's a football."

"What are you doin' with it?"

"I was hoping that some of you slackers would turn out for a pick-up game. I'd like McCann to see something going on when he blows in, otherwise he might think he'd stepped into a hole for the aged and infirm."

Some of the fellows in Big Study chuckled. Tredegar threw away his cigarette and glanced round.

"What about it?" he said. "Let's."

"Not!" drawled Compton. "Hand

me a snake, old boss, and don't talk out of your hat!"

"Who's coming out for a pick-up?" demanded Bob.

"Nobody, old boss! Run away and play! You're makin' us all tired," said Aubrey, in a plaintive voice. "Can't you see you're makin' us all tired? Give us a rest!"

"You're the latest shaker of the lot, Compton! I'd like to see Jimmy McCann give you six of the best on those beautiful bags of yours."

Aubrey chuckled at the idea.

"You're not likely to see it," he remarked.

"I'm not sure of that. From what I've heard of McCann he's a man—and the man we want here."

"My dear lad," drawled Aubrey, "if the new Head takes any new games, he will find the whole school up against him. And he won't try it on for long. We've got traditions here, and even a headmaster is bound to respect tradition. Now don't tell us any more about McCann—you're bettin' us! Anybody seen the 'Sporting Times'?"

Bob Darrell gave a grunt and walked away with the ball under his arm. There was no doubt that High Combe was a school for slackers—said, in Bob's opinion, at least, it wanted waking up. He wondered whether Jimmy McCann would

wake it up. If he tried, there was at least one fellow in the Fifth Form who was going all out to help.

"Touch Your Toes!"

JAMES McCANN, M.A., walked in at the great gateway of High Combe School.

He walked with a quick, spry stride.

Old Judd, the porter, looking out of his lodge, wondered who he was.

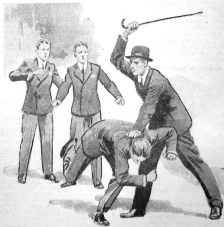
It was not likely to occur to old Judd that this was the new headmaster of High Combe.

Mr. McCann might have been taken for many things—cricketer, footballer, boxer, rowing man—but few would have spotted him, at first sight, for a headmaster—especially headmaster of a school like High Combe.

He wore a border hat. It was not the latest thing in borders, as Compton of the Fifth could have told at a glance, and it was tilted just a little to one side of his head.

It revealed hair that had a rather ginger tinge—the fighting colour. It was auburn hair, close-cropped and glossy, but there was a spot of ginger in it. In Mr. McCann himself there was more than a spot of ginger.

His eyes were grey, hard, and clear. His limbs were sinewy. He



Wriggling, struggling, panting, Aubrey Compton was bent over. Then the stick in Mr. McCann's right hand came into play.

The School for Slackers!

was young. That, of course, was a fault that time would correct. But at the moment there was no doubt that James McCann was very young for such a position as he had come to take up at High Combs.

Judd took him for an older brother of one of the High Combs. Judd did not wholly like his looks. His manner was quiet, yet there was an air of life and vigour about him which seemed strangely out of place in the School for Slackers.

Judd knew that an unexpected young man had been appointed to succeed Dr. Chetwode, the venerable Head. He knew, as all High Combs knew, that Mr. Chard, the master of the Fifth, had confidently expected the succession, and was intensely disappointed and disappointed by the appointment of Mr. McCann. Judd knew all about it. But he did not guess that that young man, with his classic, boyish look, was the new Head.

The thought did not cross Judd's mind for a moment. He simply wondered who the man was, and came out of his old stone-walled, ivy-clad lodge—old and venerable, like everything else at High Combs—and touched his hat in a very perfunctory manner.

He noticed that the young man's boots were muddy. Apparently he had walked from the station, more than a mile away. Devonshire lanes were muddy in the spring. But there were fountains to be had, if a man wanted them. Mr. McCann had preferred to walk, breathing in the glorious air of the Devon moors. But old Judd had not a lot of respect to waste on a man with muddy boots and a stick under his arm. He might as well have had a black-and-tan dog at his heels.

"Pester, what?" said the young man, in quite a pleasant voice, before old Judd could speak. "My baggage will be along shortly from the station."



The new Head, Mr. McCANN, who's going to glaze-up High Combs School. . . . The most energetic New Brood that ever raised clouds at Dux!!!!

"Baggage!" repeated old Judd. "Have it taken into my house?" "Your house?" repeated Judd. "I should say, Dr. Chetwode's house," said the young man, with a smile that lighted up his keen, serious face quite pleasantly. "It will not be my house for a few hours yet. What?"

Judd could only blink at him. "You—you—you ain't Mr. McCann, the new 'Headmaster'?" stuttered Judd, at last.

"I am Mr. McCann," answered the young man; and with a nod to the porter he walked on, leaving Judd rooted to the ground.

Mr. McCann glanced round the quad with an appreciative eye. The old buildings, the ivy-mantled tower, the multicoloured windows of the library, the stout old oaks, were very pleasant to the sight. From the School Field came a sound of shouting. Some janitors were putting a football about there. A bigger fellow, rather broad-shouldered and sturdy, with cherry blue eyes, was among them, apparently giving them some instruction. This was Mr. McCann's first view of Bob Darrell of the Fifth. He gave him a distant nod of approval, unnoticed by Bob.

Three fellows, coming down from the House, stared Mr. McCann.

They were Aubrey Compton and Teddy Seymour, of the Fifth, and Corkran, of the Sixth Form.

Still at a distance, they eyed the newcomer.

Mr. McCann, glancing round at the School Field, visible between the library and the clock-tower, did not, for the moment, observe them. But they observed him.

And he gave a start as he heard a voice, very clear and distinct, ask the question:

"Who's that large?"

It was Compton who spoke.

Mr. McCann's eyes left the footballers at once, and fixed on the three seniors of High Combs. And there came a gleam into them. Compton had not lowered his voice in the least. He intended the newcomer to hear what he said.

"Seymour coloured.

"Shut up, you fool!" he whispered.

"The man can hear you!"

"Why shouldn't he?" asked old Compton calmly.

"Dash it all, Comp, that may be the new Head!" breathed Corkran.

"According to what Bob said, he's a young man and a bit of a brawler."

Compton grinned. He had guessed at once that this was the new Head, having rather more penetration than old Judd.

"Oh, rot!" he answered, as distinctly as before. "In that lot!"

"Quiet!"

"And these trousers?"

"For goodness' sake, Comp!"

"Better tell the men that the public ain't allowed in here!" added Compton, with perfect coolness, and he walked towards Mr. McCann.

Seymour and Corkran followed him, wondering at his nerve. Compton liked to make fellows wonder of his nerve.

Mr. McCann had stopped. He was sturdy, and rather stocky to figure,

and he stood rather like a rock. His face was almost expressionless, but there was a gleam in his grey eyes.

JAMES McCANN was a stranger to High Combs personally. But he knew all about the School for Slackers. He knew why the chairman of the governing body had insisted upon his appointment as headmaster, overriding many other claims. He knew the task that lay ahead of him at High Combs. He knew, too, that he would be able to handle it. Dr. Chetwode had been Head of High Combs for thirty years, and in the latter years the school had drifted into a state of decay. Jimmy McCann was blowing in like an invigorating sea-breeze.

"Reverse me," said Compton, as he came up, his manner a delightful mixture of politeness and impudence. "I think you've come in at the wrong gate, my man."

Seymour and Corkran loudly laughed. If this blighter turned out to be the new Head, as they feared, what was going to happen to Compton? Fortunately, senior men at High Combs were never whipped!

"The tradesmen's gate," continued Compton, as Mr. McCann looked at him quietly and steadily, "is on the other side!"

"The tradesmen's gate?" repeated Mr. McCann.

"Yes, Judd will show you. You'll find him at the lodge. You shouldn't really come in this way, you know."

"No?" asked Mr. McCann.

"No! I believe," went on Compton, "that you're from the outside of it at Obelisk. I think I've seen you sitting at the counter there. Isn't that so?"

"No!" said Mr. McCann. "Not at all."

"My mistake," said Compton graciously. "Anyhow, ask the porter and he will tell you where to find the tradesmen's gate. Better cut, my man—you'd get into rather a row, even in this way!"

And Compton of the Fifth made to walk on.

Then Mr. McCann spoke.

His voice rang sharp and commanding.

Compton glanced round at him laughingly.

"Did you speak to me?" he asked.

"I did!" asserted Mr. McCann. "I told you to stop! Your name?"

Compton raised his eyebrows.

"My name hardly concerns a shopman from Obelisk," he said. "Don't be impertinent, my man."

"You are labouring under a slight error," said Mr. McCann. "I am not a shopman from Obelisk."

"No?" said Compton. "No! Now I think of it, I think I've seen you in the draper's at Hordwell. That's it, isn't it? You're the draper's young man."

"Wrong again!" said Mr. McCann quietly. "If I were the draper's young man I should not, I hope, be ashamed of it. But as it happens, I am not James McCann, the newly appointed headmaster of this school. And what is more, I am convinced that you are aware of it."



They had done it—plucked the new head into the riot! And now they were legging it hard—leaving the splashing figure to do what it liked!

Mr. McCann slipped the stick from under his arm into his hand. Compton & Co. stared at that proceeding.

"If you fancied," went on Mr. McCann, "that I was the outfitter's young man, or the draper's young man, your impertinence would still have been inexcusable. I am restrained that you had guessed my identity and that it is your intention to be insolent to your new headmaster. I am unwilling to inflict a punishment in my first moments at High Combe, but I cannot allow this to pass."

"Really, a fellow couldn't be expected to guess it!" drawled Compton. "You must allow me to say that you don't look the part."

"Possibly not. But you will find that I shall act the part," said Mr. McCann. "Read over and touch your toes!"

"Wh—what?"

"Do I not speak plainly?" asked Mr. McCann. "I told you to bend over and touch your toes. I am going to cane you."

Antony Compton stared at him in sheer amazement.

"Really, sir," cut in Corkran of the Sixth. "As you're new here, sir, perhaps I'd better tell you that Compton is in the Fifth, and the Fifth are never whipped."

"You need not speak, my boy!" said Mr. McCann. "Compton—if your name is Compton—I am waiting for you to obey my order."

Compton stood erect, breathing hard and deep. His eyes were glitter-

ing, his cheeks flushed. He looked very handsome in his anger and excitement and very insolent. Compton might be a slacker of the first water, but he had a passionate temper and plenty of courage. At that moment he would not have bent over at the order of this stranger to save his life.

"You hear me?" said Mr. McCann very quietly.

Compton shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm not deaf!" he answered coolly.

"I ordered you to bend over!"

"I'm not a fog in the Fourth Form!"

"Will you obey my order?"

"No!" said Compton between his teeth. "I won't!"

SEYMOUR and Corkran watched McCann's quiet face, wondering what on earth was going to happen now. If James McCann began his headmastership by taking that, his headmastership looked like being an even sliacker and easier proposition than Dr. Chetwode's. But the young man was not in a hurry to act. He seemed to be considering the matter thoughtfully.

Compton made a move to turn away, as if the matter was ended. Then he discovered suddenly that it wasn't!

James McCann's left hand shot out and grasped his collar. Seymour and Corkran gasped.

Compton gave a yell. Then he struggled.

But if he had been a Lilliputian in

the grasp of Gulliver his struggles could not have availed him less.

The grip on his collar seemed to be of iron. The strength in James McCann's arm seemed unlimited. Compton was so wracking, but he was twisted over in the new headmaster's grasp as if he had been an infant.

Wriggling, struggling, panting, Antony Compton was bent over—irresistibly. Then the stick in Mr. McCann's right hand came into play. Whack, whack!

Seymour and Corkran gazed on helplessly. Other fellows in the quad gazed. Faces appeared at the windows, gazing. Old Judd, from his lodge, gazed. Even Dr. Chetwode disengaged himself from the armchair in which he spent a great deal of his time, and gazed from his study window. Mr. Chand, master of the Fifth, gazed from the window of his study with unbelieving eyes. All High Combe, in fact, stood at gaze!

And Mr. McCann, apparently unconcerned that he was the cynosure of countless amazed eyes, whacked and whacked.

There was a yell from the football field, and the juniors there came scampering over to see this amazing sight. Bob Darrell came with them. He had expressed a hope, only an hour ago, that Compton would get six on his beautiful bags from the new Beak! Now Compton was getting them—and Bob fairly blinked.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

Mr. McCann released Compton, who staggered against an oak and stood there, crimson, panting, hardly believing that this awful thing had happened. McCann tucked the stick under his arm again.

"That," he remarked coolly, "is that! I am sorry for this, Compton! I will not say that it hurts me as much as it hurts you! It doesn't!

The School for Slackers!

But I am sorry—and I hope you will never ask for it again!"

And James McCann walked into the Head's house, leaving the quadrangle in a haze behind him. Compton of the Fifth, wriggling and writhing, glared after him in speechless rage.

Backing Up the New Beak!

HIGH COMBINE was shaken. It was shaken almost to its ancient foundations.

Big Study buzzed with it.

Master's Common-room echoed with it.

Juniors, meeting one another on staircases and in passages, said in breathless tones:

"Seen the new Beak? He's mad!"

Ferguson of the Fourth, who was Compton's fag, went specially to Compton's study to see how he was taking it. Compton had retired to his study to hide his rage and humiliation from all eyes. Ferguson expected to find him in a bad temper. He found him in a worse one than he expected. Other fags, waiting at the corner of the passage for Ferg, saw him open Compton's door and go in.

A split second later he came out again. An elegant and well-fitting shoe was glimpsed behind him, flapping from the doorway. Elegant and well fitting as it was, it fairly lifted Ferguson of the Fourth. He ran across the passage, and the study door slammed after him as he crashed.

Ferg was limping as he rejoined his breathless friends. Still, he had discovered what he had gone to learn! Compton of the Fifth was still in a very bad temper. He was taking it badly—very badly!

Other fags lingered by the door of Common-room to hear the deep drone of Chard, master of the Fifth.

"Who is this man?" Chard was heard saying. "He comes from nowhere and beats a Fifth Form boy—one of the best boys in my Form—in the open quad, under the eyes of all the school, before he has been here ten minutes! Who is this man?"

Chard said this over and over again.

Everybody would have liked to know what Dr. Chetwode thought of the new man. Nobody doubted that he regarded him with scorn and aversion. These feelings were universal in the school.

But whatever the old Head thought he did not count it to High Combine. And he was gone.

He had presented McCann to the school in Great Hall, then left. Masters and boys were sorry to see his go.

They discovered suddenly and unexpectedly that they were awfully 'lad of the venerable Beak. They had never realized it before. Indeed, disrespectful juniors generally called him Rip Van Winkle—not in his hearing, of course!—and members of the staff had been known to allude to him as an old dudger.

Only Chard was really satisfied with him, because big, aggressive Mr. Chard practically ran him and the

school and expected to step into his shoes when he retired. Even so he had wondered why it had never dawned on the ancient gentleman that his resignation was overdue.

But now, so awful was the change from Chetwode to McCann, all the school found that they loved and venerated Rip Van Winkle and wished from the bottom of their hearts that he was still there.

But he was gone, with his silver hair and unseeing eyes, and the new man reigned in his place—a new man whose hair was not silver, but ginger, and whose eyes, so far from being unseeing, were frightfully keen and wary and penetrating.

Tredegar of the Sixth had already taken the box of cigarettes from his mantelpiece and slipped it under some papers in his desk. And Randal had gone round Big Study patting the casing papers under the cushions.

Fellows hardly knew what to expect. Life had been so jolly under Rip Van Winkle. Especially in the Fifth they had been a happy family. In the back benches of the Fifth Form Room it was a haven of rest. Fellows arrived there like weary mariners getting into port, with the happy consciousness that they need work so much so long as they were at High Combine. Chard never made a man work. Chard was a gentleman. But this new blighter—what was he?

He was already nicknamed the Blighter.

There was one comfort. The whole school was against him. The whole staff was against him. He would plough a lonely furrow at High Combine.

Only one voice was raised in his favour; that was Bob Darrell's. And it was drowned in a chorus of indignation.

"The man's a blighter," said Randal—"a Noney Farmer! He's been here a few hours and coaxed all over the place in that time. He noticed a smell of honey in the Sixth studies—I see him sniff."

"If he puts down smoking," said Bob.

"The fags are ready to lynch him," said Carew. "He barged into the Fourth Form Room in prep and found them playing football. He asked who was the prefect in charge."

"Well," said Bob, "you ought to have been."

"He thinks he can whup seniors," said Segmour.

"Dash it all, Compton asked for what he got!" said Bob. "From what I hear, he checked the new man—"

There was a roar in Big Study.

"Are you speakin' up for McCann?" demanded Tredegar.

"Well, give a man a chance," urged Bob, facing the angry crowd.

He believed in giving the new man a chance, and rather believed that McCann's coming would be a good thing for High Combine. But he was alone in that belief. It was clear that any fellow who had a good word to say for the Blighter would become as unpopular as the Blighter himself. And Bob liked his popularity, and did not want to lose it.

But he had said too much already. Fifth and Sixth Form men surrounded him with angry faces. They did not know how to deal with the new Beak, who had taken them all by surprise. But they knew how to deal with one of their own number who showed the slightest inclination to back up the new Beak. Even his own pal, Teddy Seymour, looked so excited and scornful as the rest.

"You're backin' up the Blighter, are you?" roared Tredegar.

"Backin' up that dashed ruffian who's whopped old Ashby—whopped him like a fag!" shouted Corlan.

"You're a rotter, Darrell!"

"You're a worm!"

"You're a toad—a crawlin' toad! Growsin' up to the Beak!"

Bob's blue eyes flashed.

"Who's growsin' up to the Beak?" he roared. "I haven't spoken a word to him yet, and don't want to! But I say—"

"Every man here," said Randal, "is against him! Every man here is down on him! Every man here is goin' to make it just as hard as he can for the blighter! What?"

"Hear, hear!"

"And if you don't line up with the rest, Darrell—"

"Hold on!" broke in Teddy Seymour. "Bob's only guessin'! Bob's as much down on him as we aren't! You, old chap!"

"So," said Bob. "You see—"

He got no farther.

EVERY man in Big Study—and there were two or three dozen big and angry centers there—would have been glad to handle James McCann had that been practicable. It wasn't! But it was practicable to handle a man who spoke a single syllable in his favour—and they did.

They collared Bob on all sides.

"Bump him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Hands off, you duffers!" roared Bob, struggling frantically. "I tell you— Oh, my hat! I stop—parceod!"

Bump! Bump! Bump!

Fifth and Sixth Form men at High Combine, as a rule, were much too lolly, and much too lazy, to think of such a fag proceeding as "bumping" a fellow. But they forgot their indolence and their laziness in their wrath and indignation. Indeed, it almost seemed as if Jimmy McCann had already infused some of his own ample energy into the School for Slackers! At all events, they displayed plenty of energy now.

Bump! Bump! Bump!

Bob roared and struggled. He was a mighty man of his hands, and two or three fellows were grasping on the floor, knuckled flat, while the rest, humped the offender. A table rocked, and several chairs went over. The din from Big Study was terrific. Even the fags in the Burrow had seldom kicked up so terrific a stindy.

In the midst of the fearful uproar nobody noticed the door open. Nobody noticed a stocky man—new in cap and gown—standing in the doorway, looking in with surprise but interested

eyes at that remarkable scene. Nobody knew that the new Break was there till Mr. McCann spoke.

"You are making a great deal of noise here!"

"Oh!" It was a general gasp.

Bob Darrell was dropped like a hot potato. Flashed and breathless, the coppers stared round at the Break. Bob lay sprawling on the floor, his face crimson, his hair a mop, his collar and tie gone, his waistcoat buttoned. He gasped and gurgled for breath.

Mr. McCann's clear, keen eyes rested on him. He recognized the fellow he had seen coaching the junkies at Foster. He glanced round at the circle of flushed faces. Some of those faces were defiant—as defiant as they dared to be. Probably Mr. McCann grasped how matters stood. He had a way of taking in a situation at a glance.

"I suppose this is what you would call a rag," he remarked, in quite a casual tone.

Bob Darrell staggered up.

"Only a game, sir!" he gasped. Jimmy McCann smiled.

"Quite," he assented. "But not so much noise, please! 'Tredegar'—Mr. McCann never forget a name after once hearing it—'Tredegar, let there be no more noise from this room.'"

With a cheery nod, the new Break walked away. Deep silence followed his departure. 'Tredegar' hardly realized that he was waiting till the new Break was out of hearing before he spoke. But he did wait.

(Continued on next page)



NAME THE SHIPS

and be one of this week's

50 STAMP PRIZE WINNERS

Fifty Winners are wanted here and they will be invited to CHOOSE THEIR OWN PRIZES. There is choice of either a Large 5s. Packet of 1935 All-Different Stamps (supplied by Messrs. Stanley Gibbons Ltd.) or the splendidly illustrated 5s. 1935 Simplified Stamp Catalogue—also published by Stanley Gibbons.

FREE COMPETITION ~~~~~ YOU CAN DO IT!

SHIPS Ahoy! And Prizes Ahoy, too! The final competition in our Two-Hundred-and-Fifty Stamp Price Offer appears here this week, and in concluding this entertaining series we want another fifty winners. Be sure you try and be one of them, as this week's contest is such an interesting one. This is what you have to do:

Above and below our artist has drawn the outlines of ten different types of ships and boats—can you identify them? All are well-known types, and to help you name them, here is a short list which includes the ten correct answers!

Yacht — Speed-boat — Cruiser — Tanker — Schooner — Tramp — Liner — Sloop — Trawler —
Lifboat — Battle-Cruiser — Tug — Submarine — Gunboat — Destroyer — River Police Boat.

To make out your entry, simply take a postcard, write the numbers 1 to 10 on it, and then by the side of each, fill in (in ink) the type of the corresponding boat. Underneath, add your name, address and age; also state whether you would like a 5s. Packet of Stamps or the 1935 Simplified Stamp Catalogue as your prize if a winner. Post promptly to:

MODERN BOY "Ships,"

5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

so as to arrive not later than **FRIDAY, MARCH 22nd**. Entries arriving later will be disqualified.

Rules—The Fifty Prizes will be awarded to the fifty readers who identify the ships correctly or most nearly so. In the event of too many ties, the prizes will go to the nearest correct entries, age being considered. Postcards only may be used, and any containing more than one name for each type of boat, will be disqualified. The Editor's decision will be final and binding. Employees (or their families) of the proprietors of *Modern Boy*, and of "Boys Broadcast," in which the puzzle also appears, must not compete.



The School for Slackers!

"Does that outsider think he can barge into Big Study and give orders here?" said the captain of High Combe.

Evidently Mr. McCann did think so. And it really looked as if he was right in thinking so, for there was no more noise from Big Study.

Ducking the Blighter!

"HIS on the Book's Grind!" breathed Aubrey Compton. "Good luck!" muttered Tredgar.

"Quiet!" whispered Seymour. Compton sneered.

In the moonlight his face shined white. Over the Dreen cliffs and coombes the moon sailed, like a bowl of silver. Strange lights and shadows played among the trees and shrubs in the Head's garden. Six fellows were there, at an hour when all High Combe was supposed to be fast asleep in bed.

Mr. McCann had barged many things in one day at High Combe, but he would have been greatly surprised to find that four of the Fifth and two of the Sixth were watching him from deep shadow as he paced the Book's Grind.

It was a path that ran down from the Head's garden to the river—so-called because masters often took their walks there. It was a quiet, secluded path, shadowed by great trees whose spring green was now silvered by the light of the moon.

Fellows who only knew Aubrey Compton as the slacking dandy of the Fifth would hardly have recognized him now, with the moon gleaming on his white face and burning eyes. The Blighter was going to learn, his first night at High Combe, that he could not carry matters there with a high hand—not without getting what he asked for, at any rate. There was a kick, even in the School for Slackers!

"Somebody's cousin!" breathed Randal.

Mr. McCann had disappeared to the direction of the river. It was from the other direction—that of the House—that a footfall became audible.

"Another fellow cousin' to lead a head!" muttered Fred.

A shock of fair hair glimmered in the moonlight. It was Bob Darrell who came up, rather breathlessly.

"Oh, here you are!" he panted.

"Quiet, you fool!" muttered Compton.

"Is the Head—"

"He's down the path! If he hears you—"

"For goodness' sake, chuck it!" muttered Bob. "I hardly thought you were in earnest when I heard. But I missed you, Teddy, and came after you! You're not really mad enough to handle McCann—"

"He handled me!" said Compton.

"Oh, you're crazy!" said Bob impatiently. "Fred, haven't you more sense than this? This means sneaking, if you're spotted."

Fred hesitated. He was at ease, going follow, and generally the class of the last word.

"Perhaps it's a bit thick!" he murmured. "After all, he's Head—"

"If you're funky, clear off!" Compton cut in angrily. "I'm going out! I'm going to duck that cur in the Clovey, if I have to do it alone!"

"You can't!" answered Bob. "You shan't!"

"Can't I?" Compton snarled, and his white teeth gleamed in the moonlight. "You'll see! By golly, I'll make the cur sorry he had hands on me!"

And Aubrey Compton started down the shadowed path the way the new Head had gone. The other fellows followed him.

Bob Darrell stood very still. He realized, as they did not seem to do, the deadly seriousness of what they had planned.

He knew in his bones that if McCann found out who had handled him he would sack the offender, short and sharp—kick him out of the school so quick that it would make his head swim.

But surely they would never carry out that mad scheme? Bob fringed on an oak, his hands driven deep into his pockets, and listened.

Supposing McCann had walked as

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for as the bank of the Clovey, where the Grind ended in a dark, shadowed spot, overhung by trees, where the stream rippled down to the coombe? Dark and lonely, with hardly a gleam of moonlight through the branches, it was the very spot where a man might be handled without a chance of seeing who handled him.

A sudden sound of scuffling came up the shadowed path—a heavy splash in the water!

Bob started, with thumping heart. They had done it!

From the distance he could hear the splashing and pattering of a man struggling in water. Instantly there came a pattering of running feet. They were coming back—they had done it, and were running for the House! Randal was the first to pass him, head low, pattering. After him came Tredgar, Seymour, and the rest. Aubrey Compton was last, grinning broadly as he ran.

They passed Bob in a twinkling and disappeared up the dark garden. The pattering of their running feet died away. They had not even seen him there under the tree. Faintly, from afar, he heard a shuffling down.

Then up the Book's Grind, from the

river, came a drenched and dripping form, squelching water as it came.

In the clear moonlight, outside the radius of shadow of the tree under which he stood, Bob had a plain view of James McCann. The Head was soaked with water, smothered with mud, and his face glistening wet. But the face, to Bob's surprise, was calm. He even fancied that he detected the ghost of a smile on it.

He backed close to the trunk of the oak. They had pitched McCann headlong into the river, and Bob would not have gone without making sure that the man was safe. But he did not want to be spotted out of the House at eleven o'clock at night. That drenched figure would pass him unseen, as the running schoolboys had passed.

But it did not. Mr. McCann stopped as he came abreast of the spot where Bob Darrell stood in black shadow. Bob wondered whether the man could see in the dark. He seemed to have the eyes of a hawk.

"Stop out!" said Mr. McCann. Bob considered, for a second, dodging round the oak and cutting across the garden. Then he stopped out.

He saw surprise dawn in Mr. McCann's face. It was not Bob Darrell he had expected to see. Not the fellow who had crashed the fags at football, and had been ragged in Big Study.

"You!" said Mr. McCann.

"Yes, sir."

"Your name?"

"Darrell."

"You had no hand in this?"

"No, sir."

"But you know who had?"

Bob was glad to know, by that question, that Mr. McCann did not know who had ducked him. But surely he was not going to ask for the names? He surely was not going to ask a fellow to give away his friends? Bob could not, surely, have so mistaken his man?

He hadn't!

"You know who had?" repeated Jimmy McCann.

"Yes, sir," said Bob quietly.

"Very well. I shall not ask you who they were." Jimmy McCann smiled at the relief that involuntarily flushed into Bob's face. "Neither shall I ask you why you are out of the House at this hour. Perhaps I can guess as much as you could tell me. But—go in now, Darrell."

"Yes, sir! Good-night, sir!"

"Good-night, my boy!"

Jimmy McCann squelched on. In his room, when he switched on the light, he stood looking for a long time at the reflection of his drenched and dripping figure in the glass, with a grin—a very grim—gleam on his face. They did not like the new broom at the School for the Slackers, that was clear. But, all the same, the new broom was going to sweep clean!

Next Saturday the School for Slackers is in Open Review! There neither MEN have a conferring meeting nor more conferring school boys than THE CONFERRING HEAD—and you can read it only in Next Week's MODERN BOY!