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The MODERN BOY

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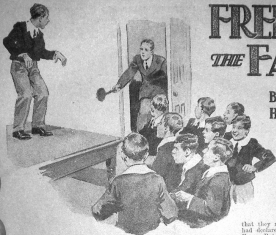


The Crooner!

FREELING THE FAGS!

By CHARLES
HAMILTON

Standing on the table—and wishing that he wasn't—Ferg suddenly broke off his exasperated speech and looked at his lag-master in dismay. He didn't like the look in Corrigan's eye, nor the look of the fellows sitting in Corrigan's hot hand!



Boiling with indignation!

THE school could not quite believe it at first. But there it was on the notice-board, written in the chair, firm hand of James McCann—otherwise the Hightier, the new headmaster of High Combe School; there for all High Combe to read, muck, burn, and inwardly digest. And yet it was incredible.

"Even that unspeakable Hightier," declared Corrigan of the Fifth, "must draw the line at this!"

"Must!" said Teddy Seymour.

"It doesn't look like it," remarked Bob Darrell. "McCann hasn't put that paper up for a joke."

"Oh, shut up, Darrell!" said both Bob's friends together.

McCann had posted the paper in morning break. Plenty of fellows saw it before third school. In the Forrester fellows who had seen it told fellows who hadn't. The whole school brimmed with it long before the hour of dismissal came. When that hour came there was a rush from everywhere to see the paper on the board. Fellows who had seen it wanted to see it again. Fellows who hadn't were frantically bent to see it. It was quite a crush.

High Combe was swarmed before and round the big notice-board. For once the elegant manner for which the School for Slackers was celebrated seemed to be forgotten. Fags pushed and shoved—even Sixth Form men barged.

Head of the Sixth, regularly supposed to be too busy to brush a fly off his nose, was seen to kick habits of the Shell for not making room for him fast enough. Tredegar, captain of the school, who played football as if he were playing respect, shouldered

over Forrester and Pyc of the Fourth, who heaved his way to the board.

"The Hightier's Latest," as the fellows called it, seemed to have splintered—for the moment, at least—the repose which is said to stamp the case of *Vera de Vera*, and which certainly had stamped the School for Slackers.

But it was in the Fifth that excitement was keenest. Indeed, Aubrey Corrigan, of that Form, put his hand to the notice as if with the intention of tearing it down, an action which sent a thrill through the swarming, jostling crowd. But Corkeon of the Sixth gently but firmly pushed Aubrey's hand back. Corkeon, like all the rest, heathed James McCann with a deep and deadly loathing. But he was head prefect, and there was a limit.

"No!" said Corkeon, shaking his head. "No, old man! Better not!"

And even Aubrey realized that perhaps he had better not!

And what was the paper that had sent such a thrill of amazement and rage and indignation through High Combe, and especially through the Fifth Form of that ancient foundation? It was honest! Jimmy McCann was always honest. His news wasted no words or a drop of ink. But it was to the point! Jimmy went always right to the point, like a bullet to a bullseye.

"Fagging for the Fifth Form is abolished."
"J. McCann, Headmaster."

That was all! But those few words meant much. They meant something little short of a revolution in the School for Slackers. They meant—at least, all the Fifth were convinced

that they meant—that the Hightier had declared open war on Chard's Form. But that was the Fifth's lookout. They had egged their fags on to wage war against the Head, and now the Hightier had spiked their guns by abolishing fagging for the Fifth. No Fifth Form man would be able to call "Hey!" and hear the parter of feet as a fag scudded to obey the call! From now on, only the Sixth would be empowered to call "Hey!"

"If that fool," said Aubrey Corrigan, "thinks that we're going to stand this, he's a bigger fool than I've taken him for."

Aubrey spoke in quite a loud voice, careless whether Mr. McCann heard him or not.

"Abolishin' faggin'!" said Perrell, almost dazedly. "Abolishin' faggin'! I've said before that the man's mad!"

"We're not standin' it!" said Aubrey.

"No fear!" said Teddy Seymour, rather doubtfully, however.

NOBODY was willing to stand it. But it was not easy to see how it was to be avoided. The Hightier was the sort of man to get his own way. Having dropped into the School for Slackers like a bombshell, shaking it up out of its happy dreams, upsetting everything right and left, he was evidently born on going from bad to worse, from worse to worse—but who was going to stop him? There was the rub! He was about as easy to stop as an unpowered car in full career.

"If we stand this, we may as well chuck up the sponge and let the headmaster man have his own way all right!" said Aubrey.

But Darrell groaned. He could not help it. He could see, if the rest of the Fifth couldn't, that McCann was going to have his own way all along.

The New Stand-No-Nonsense Head flings another Bombshell into the midst of the SCHOOL FOR SLACKERS!

the line, anyhow. And he un-
packed, too, that it would be a
topping good thing for the school if
he did!

"Look here, you men!" said Bob.
"What's the good of blowing off
steam? It's an order from the Head.
McCann means this—"

"Shut up, Darrell!"
"Oh, talk sense!" insisted Bob.

"After all—"
"Meanin' up all our traditions!"
said Teddy.

"Traditions be blasted!" said Bob.
"The Fifth never used to have flags.
It kept 'em, and I'm not at all sure
it's a good thing, either—"

"Why, you big young Donkin of
the Fourth!" roared Burke wrathfully.

"I know! Donkin burns my toast
and loses my study, smashes my oak,
and I help him with his work! I
don't let me be fearfully easy to get a
rest from Donkin."

"Oh, I say!" murmured Donkin,
who was in the crowd.

He did not feel flattered by these
remarks of his flag-mate.

"Donkin would be a useful flag if
you batted him as I do young
Ferguson!" said Aubrey. "I know
I'm not givin' up my flag, McCann or
so McCann!"

"Sense here!" declared several of
the Fifth.

"It will be the Sixth's turn next!"
said Compton.

"Oh! You don't think that really,
do you?" exclaimed Darrell.

He was deeply dismayed at the idea,
trying to picture himself making his
own head, he felt quite dizzy.

"I jolly well do!" said Aubrey.

"I say, that's the limit, you know!
He can't touch Sixth Form privileges,
even a McCann!"

For the first time in history, High
Combe fellows beheld Darrell of the
Sixth showing signs of excitement.

"But what are we goin' to do?"
asked Raymond of the Fifth. "What
are we goin' to do with the brute?"

"Smash him in his study and pour
boiling oil into his ears!" said
Carter.

But the funny man of the Fifth did
not get a laugh. Matters were too
fearfully serious for Carter's little
jokes to be appreciated.

Aubrey Compton drew a gold pencil
from a pocket of the most elegant
waistcoat at High Combe.

"I'm goin' to shove the Elighter
what we think of his notice, any-
how!" he said.

"Aubrey, old man!" exclaimed Bob,
in alarm. He moved forward, but
five or six fellows barged him back.

Aubrey, with a firm hand, added
his own comment to Mr. McCann's
notice. There was a gasp from the
watching crowd—and it melted away.

The notice-board, so thickly
crowded a few moments before, was
deserted. Nobody wanted to be on the
spot when the Elighter saw what
Aubrey had added to his paper.

Some minutes later, Mr. McCann
came out of his study and walked

with his springs stride down the
corridor. He stopped at the board.
No doubt Jimmy McCann was aware
of the thrill that his notice had sent
through the School for Slackers.
Probably he had expected to see a
crowd staring at the board, and was
surprised to see it deserted. He
stopped and looked at it.

Then a grim look came over his
face, which set hard. The stocky
young man stood with his eyes fixed
on his paper on the board, his face
growing grimmer and grimmer.
It read rather differently now. Under
his own words appeared the following
line, in parody:

"Moulding by the Elighter McCann
is abolished."

But that added wording was not
signed. Aubrey had stopped short of
putting his name to it.

Trouble in Dorm No. 3!

"BOY!" Sharp and clear rang
the call. "Boy!"

The call of "Boy!" especi-
ally towards bedtime, was a sound
that would have drawn no
attention at High Combe in
normal times, except, of course,
from the flag called.

Even in the present times,
which all High Combe agreed
to regard as abnormal, such a
call from a Sixth Form man
would have drawn the atten-
tion only of his flag.

But that call, so
old and familiar,
caused, on the

present occasion, a thrill—a sensation,
in fact.

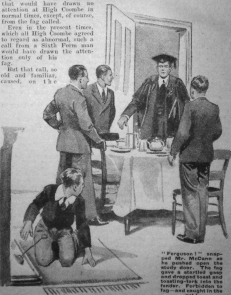
For it was Aubrey Compton who
called.

On the board was the Head's notice
—a new notice, without further
concessions from Aubrey—abolishing
baggies for the Fifth. If Head's
authority went for anything in High
Combe, bagging for the Fifth was
a thing of the past, and Aubrey
Compton had no more right and
power to call "Boy!" than any
junior in the Sixth or the Fourth.

Staggering as it was, Aubrey could
no more tag Ferguson of the Fourth
than Ferguson of the Fourth could tag
Aubrey—if Head's authority went
for anything! But did it? That, it
seemed, was a matter that was about
to be put to the test.

Anyhow, Aubrey called "Boy!"

Dorm No. 3, at night, was a dormi-
tory three-bedded like all Fifth
Form dorms at High Combe. In the
day-time it was a study. They were
very wealthy and expensive and
well appointed at High Combe, but
only the grand and glorious Ninth
had a room to each man. Three to



"Ferguson!" snapped Mr. McCann as he pushed open the study door. The flag gave a startled gasp and dropped head and tailing-back into the fender. Forbidden to lag—and caught in the act!

Freeing the Fags!

a room was the rule to the Fifth, where they "found" together—"finding" being the High Count term for pooling resources in the grub line. Durrell, Compton, and Teddy Seymour found in Barn No. 3; and a happy and united family it had been till the arrival of Mr. McCann.

There had been little differences, of course. Bob, keen on football, cricket, rowing, and anything that led him into fresh air and strenuous exercise, argued loud and long with Aubrey, who was keen on beautifully dressed trousers, superb waistcoats, ties that were a dream, hats that really were hats and not merely head coverings, and who affected to be rather keen on cigarettes and leading horses.

Teddy, drawn sometimes one way and sometimes another, was rather in the position of Bunyan's "Mr. Facing-both-Ways." Sometimes he played hand with Bob, and even worked a little in Chard's Farm-house. More often he stuck with Aubrey. Sometimes he turned to early, and turned out early, to go down to the sand-ridge and battle with Bob in the Atlantic sargassos. Sometimes he broke out after fights out with Aubrey—explosives in which Bob had never joined.

Under the tattering rule of the Versatile Bank, the late Head, such things were easy and indeed customary at High Counts. It was said that Mr. Chard, coming out of Okham Theatre at eleven at night, had run into three or four bags of his fur, also coming out—and had very carefully failed to see them! Peter Chard never saw anything that his Farm did not want him to see—that was why he was called "Popularity Peter."

Teddy, on the whole, was more drawn to Bob, but he had a tremendous admiration for the magnificent Aubrey. Generally it was his business to keep the peace when trouble threatened—in which he was always successful—for Bob and Aubrey, dissimilar as they were, had a real friendship, and both would have made big concessions rather than have it severed. Barn No. 3 had been quite a happy trio till McCann happened.

Now the differences were going deeper.

Bob admired the man, and believed that he was doing good to the school. Aubrey was the leader in the opposition to the new regime, in that deadly feud he displayed a keenness, an energy, a courage, and resource that rather surprised his friends. They had never dreamed that old Aubrey had so much pep in him.

It was tea-time in Barn No. 3. That was why Aubrey was eating "Boy!"

Nobody looking into Barn No. 3 would have guessed that it was a bed-room at night. Beds, and all their appointments, had vanished. Luxurious ottomans could be seen

set beds. The Persian rug on the floor had cost somebody twenty guineas.

A upholstered armchair covered the spot where Donkin had dropped a hot cinder on it. The Donkey still remembered the whopping he had received on that occasion—set from Bob, his fag-master, but from Aubrey, who had rather a heavy hand with a five-bar. That had led to one of the rows in Barn No. 3. Bob, finding his fag in a state of fearful wear and lamentation, had pointed out wrathfully that Donkin was his fag. Aubrey, on the other hand, mentioned that it was his carpet. Teddy, as usual, had traced out the trouble.

There were pictures on the walls, and a Ming jar on the mantelpiece in which Aubrey kept cigarettes. There was a big window looking on Quad, and below it the bulging bay of the great window of Big Study. There was a handsome grate, in which a cheery fire burned, an old oak chest, with a carved lid on brass hinges, in which coats were kept—and if old Lagges, the porter, did not see that it was well supplied, he betide Ferguson of the Fourth if he did not supply the deficiency! There was a radiogram in one corner, connected up with the electric current. No messing about with batteries for Barn No. 3!

A fellow who could not make himself comfortable in Barn No. 3 must have been a fellow hard to satisfy. At the present moment, however, discomfort seemed to reign. Bob Durrell, standing before the window with his hands driven deep into his trouser pockets, frowned, and looked worried. Teddy Seymour, as usual, pulled in two directions, fished his nose in perplexity, and gazed alternately at Bob and Aubrey standing outside the door and calling "Boy!"

"Boy" did not seem in a hurry to appear.

Ferguson of the Fourth must have heard. Aubrey's voice was not loud—nothing about Aubrey was loud—but it was very clear, and it carried. At tea-time, too, Ferguson should have been very careful to keep within hearing. The Barrow was not far distant, though it was down stairs and round corners, the house being a rambling old place. If the door was shut, and the fags ticking up a row, a call might pass unheard. But it was seldom that a call from the dandy of the Fifth passed unheeded. Ferguson knew by experience what it meant for him.

Yet there was no patter of feet! Aubrey's tips out. The gloves that came into his handsome, you had a mental thought for John Andrew Ferguson of the Fourth. Was it possible that the Head's notice was the cause of this—that its effect on the Fourth had been quite different from its effect on the Fifth?

It was possible that the fag might not see eye to eye with the fag-master on the subject of 'agging. Aubrey had to cast his mind back. He might have remembered that in the

Fourth he had looked 'agging, and thought it rot. But he did not care to cast his mind back.

If Ferguson was putting on "collar" just because of that notice from that cheery modifying and McCann, Aubrey was the man to give a fag something to cure him of collar.

"Boy!"

"Look here, chuck it, Compton!" came a roar from Bob Durrell.

"What's the good of playin' the giddy on?"

"Mind your own business!"

Bob strode to the door.

"Makin' us all look fools!" he snapped.

"What!"

"The fags won't come! They know they won't now that McCann's washed it out! Think they ever liked 'agging for us?"

Roared Bob, with angry eyes.

"All the House can hear you! I shouldn't wonder if McCann himself can hear you!"

"I want him to!" said Aubrey, with bitter coolness.

"Oh, rot! All the House hearing you call 'Boy!' and no fag comin', it's foolish! Nobody's likely to come except McCann—and he'll bring a cane with him if he does, as likely as not!"

Aubrey laughed.

"My fag's comin'!" he said.

"Ferguson!" he called.

There was at long last a patter of feet. A Fourth Former came running up the short staircase to the landing outside Barn No. 3. But it was not Ferguson. It was Donkin. He turned a frightened face on the Fifth Farm-ness.

"I—I've come!" he stammered.

"I never called 'Boy!'" granted Bob.

"I—I came because Compton called!" stammered the Donkey.

"Ferg—Ferg—Ferg—" he stammered.

"Well?" tapped Aubrey.

"Ferg—Ferg—Ferg can't come!" stammered Donkin. He got it out at last.

That, at another time, would have gamed. It was a rule at High Counts that if one fag belonging to a study could not come for any reason, another fag belonging to the same study was bound to obey the call. Either Donkin or Fye, who was Seymour's fag, had to take Ferg's place if Ferg was unavoidably absent when called. In the same way, Ferg had to replace Donkin or Fye if necessary. Compton would have been satisfied at any other time. Now he was not satisfied.

HE stepped towards Donkin with an expression on his face that made the dandy of the Fourth wish that he had not understood Ferg.

"Why hasn't Ferguson come?" he asked quietly.

"He—he can't!" Donkin stammered again. "He—he—he can't!"

"Is he with Capes?" Mr. Capes was master of the Fourth, and there was a repute—a very repute—possibility that Ferg was under detention.

"Nonsense!"

"Is he in the Burrow?"

Donkin stammered inarticulately. It was only too clear that Ferguson was in the Burrow. And if Donkin had heard Compton call "Boy," Ferguson had heard! He did not choose to come, presuming on that new order of the Righter McCann! Donkin, low daring, had come!

"I'm asking you a question, Donkin!" Aubrey's voice was sharp as steel. "Is Ferguson in the Burrow?"

"Ye-ess, Compton!" murmured the Donkey feebly.

"And he won't come?"

The Donkey was silent, but it was only too clear.

As a fierce rebel against the authority of the Head, Compton might have been supposed to have a sympathetic fellow-feeling with rebels against authority. That would have been logical. But there is little logic in human nature. Fiercely bent on resisting authority above, Aubrey was equally bent on exacting submission from below. For the rebel and the tyrant are the same man at heart, only acting differently in different circumstances.

Compton's face was almost pale with rage.

His dream was of High Combe united as one man against the Head—standing shoulder to shoulder, and presenting an unbroken front to the enemy. And here was a gap in the ranks, a chink in the armour at the very beginning!

"I—I say, Compton, won't—won't I do?" faltered the Donkey. "I—I can make toast quite as good as old Ferg! I say, Ferg came up instead of me yesterday, and I see him a fagging turn! I say—Yarsook!"

Donkin was interrupted by Compton taking him by the collar. Compton shook him like a terrier shaking a rat. If the Donkey hoped that he would do instead of Ferg, this made it clear to him that he would not do at all. Compton stared round at Darrell.

"Hand me a fress hat, can't you?"

"No!" said Bob grimly.

"You fool! Hand me a fress hat, Seymour!" shouted Compton.

"Oh, I say!" brayed the hapless Donkey.

"Here you are," said Teddy, stepping to the door with a fress hat. He passed it out to Compton. Bob's brow grew blacker.

"Bend over, Donkin!" snarled Aubrey.

"Oh, I say!" muttered the Donkey, more than ever convinced that he had been wise to come up in Ferg's place.

Bob Darrell strode out of the door. He grasped Aubrey's arm, and shook it loose from Donkin's collar.

"Cut!" he said curtly.

"Oh, I say—" gasped the Donkey.

"Cut!" roared Bob.

"Stop where you are!" roared Compton furiously.

"I—I say, I'm Darrell's fag, you know!" stammered the Donkey. "I say—"

"Cut!"

Donkin cut. His master's voice



"You will proceed," said the Head to the Fifth Ferguson, "to make toast for Ferguson. You will fag for him in my presence. If you do not do so satisfactorily you will be whipped—by Ferguson!"

was good enough for him, and Aubrey's look was terrifying. Not usually swift in his movements, the Donkey put on a turn of speed worthy of a zebra. He vanished down the staircase.

Teddy Seymour fairly bounded out of Dorm No. 3. Never had his activities as a peace-maker been so sorely needed. Donkin had escaped the fress hat, but Aubrey looked at that moment like knocking Bob Darrell on the head with it, and Bob faced him with clenched fists and glowing eyes. Teddy barged between.

"Hold on, you men! Chuck it, I say! Look here, Aubrey, you can't whip another man's fag—you know you can't! Bob, old man, don't be a fool!"

He grabbed Bob by the arm, and dragged him back into Dorm No. 3. Aubrey, breathing hard, tucked the fress hat under his arm and went down the stairs. The mountain had not come to Mahomet, as Mahomet was going to the mountain. In Dorm No. 3 Bob Darrell granted angrily, and Teddy placated him with soothing gestures.

Aubrey Compton headed for the Burrow, to root out the rebel in his lair.

Ferg Fixes Out!

THE Burrow was the resort of all the lower boys of High Combe—Fourth Form and Shell. It was called the Burrow because fags swarmed in it like rabbits. It was a large room, the length of a long passage from Big Study—but long as the passage was, the row in the Burrow was sometimes heard in Big Study, and a

perfect would come down the passage with a cane, and distribute impartial whacks.

For it was noticeable that the Lower Forms at the School for Slackers had not so fully developed the fine art of slacking as their elders and betters. They were younger and had not been in the dreary atmosphere of High Combe so long. Some of them came from prep schools that were not at all slack, and had not yet forgotten that live people were expected to look as if they were alive.

There were "men" in the Fourth, who would have put kindness into games, given half a chance. There were even some who had the extraordinary idea—extraordinary at High Combe—that fellows come to school to learn things! No doubt, in the course of time, under the genial influence of High Combe, they would get over all this, and realize that graceful sauntering and well-crested trousers were the beginning and end of all things.

But in this direction quite a lot of the juniors had a lot yet to learn—most of all, Ferguson of the Fourth. Perhaps Ferg derived vigour from his native Highland air. Perhaps he derived it from his remote ancestors, the great Fergus, founder of the clan. Anyhow, he had it! True, he was down on the McCann man. He had no use for a nobody from nowhere who barged in where he was not wanted. But he had, at the same time, a smacking admiration for the man who had given Compton of the Fifth six on the bags, his first day as headmaster. And now, for the first time, Ferg saw good in the changes and reforms that the Righter was bringing about.

Freeing the Fags!

It was all very well for Compton of the Fifth to talk about the old school standing up as one man against that barking outsider, Compton wasn't a fag! Had he been, Ferg thought that he might have viewed the abolition of fagging for the Fifth from a very different angle. Ferg certainly did!

Ferg loathed fagging. He hated a fag but on his terms. He disliked having to "chuck" whatever he was doing and send of the call of "Boy!" No doubt when Ferg got into the Senior Form he would realize that there was a lot to be said for those old institutions—that traditional things should not be roughly touched or hastily discarded. But at the moment Ferg was in the Fourth, and all he realized was that it would be a jolly good thing to get out of fagging.

STANDING on the table in the Burrow, Ferg disclosed these revolutionary views to the Fourth and the Staff. The Burrow was packed. Shell fellows—who did not fag—rewarded Ferguson with cat-calls and boos. They were all for tradition. Why shouldn't the grubby little fellows fag, Babbie asked—and most of his Form agreed that was answered why! But from quite a number of the Fourth came cordial support for Ferguson. They were not, perhaps, prepared to stand up to their fag-masters and hurl defiance in their teeth. But they were ready to cheer Ferg, and they did, with enthusiasm.

"Let the old Donkey fag if he likes!" said Ferguson. He alluded scornfully to the fact that Donkin had answered the call of "Boy!" passed unheeded by Ferg himself. "I'm not going to! That man McCann is a Righter, a fearful beast. Nobody wants him here, but, after all, he's Head! What has he abolished fagging for the Fifth for? Because the Fifth set the fags on to chivy him, laughing at his study door, barging him in the queue!"

"Serve him jolly well right!" said Babbie of the Shell.

"Shut up, Babbie!"

"Well, if the Fifth want the Righter barged, let them barge him!" roared Ferguson. "I'd be jolly glad to see them do it, for one! Let them barge him right out of High Combe, if they can! But the man's Head, and he says, official, no more fagging for the Fifth! Are we going to be whipped by the Book because we're so fond of making toast for Compton, and fobbing and carrying for Seymour, and wriggling in smokes for Peverell? And I can tell you, he's the man to whop! You needn't keep on telling me he's a beast—I know he is! All the same—"

"Ain't you going to fag for Compton any more?" asked Patsy Fye.

Ferg drew a deep breath.

"No," he said, "I'm not! And if Compton gets shirty about it I hope the Righter will jolly well give him six, like he did his first day here. And I can jolly well say— Oh!"

Ferg looks off on the chair spaced and Aubrey Compton walked into the Burrow.

A moment ago the Burrow had been in a roar. Ferg's voice had barely dominated the chorus of his friends and the boos of his opponents. Now there was sudden silence. Ferg's jaw dropped at the sight of Compton's face, quite calm but set hard. He did not fail to note the frowl but under his fag-master's arm.

Compton had called "Boy!" in vain. Now was the time for Ferguson of the Fourth to tell him that he could call "Boy!" as often as he jolly well liked, but that he, J. A. Ferguson, would see him blown before he would send at his call. This, and much more, Ferg had been going to say to Compton of the Fifth—he had told his friends on several times over, in fact. Now was the chance to say it all! But Ferg let his chance pass by, he said nothing.

Standing on the table, and wishing that he wasn't, Ferg blinked at his fag-master in sudden dismay. He was a conspicuous object, standing there—he looked to the eye, as it were. He wondered whether Compton had heard anything on his case along the passage. He hoped fervently that Compton hadn't. He wished he had heard Compton coming, so that he could have stepped down in time. He even wished that he had answered the call of "Boy!" He did not like the look in Compton's eye, and he felt deflated.

"Is Ferguson here?" drawled Aubrey.

"Here, Compton!" answered Ferg, a little faintly.

"What are you doin' on that table, you young nes? Get off it!"

Ferg did not explain that he had mounted the table to address the mob as a revolutionary leader. He was not at the moment feeling like a revolutionary leader; he was feeling like a fag with a quaking eye on a frowl but. He got off the table.

"Did you hear me call 'Boy!'?"

"Ye-e-e!" breathed Ferg.

"Why didn't you come?"

Ferg glanced round at a silent crowd of juniors. A minute ago Patsy Fye and Loom and Barr had been roaring applause. They were silent now, and avoided catching his eye. So far from giving Ferg any active support, they were not giving him even moral support.

"I asked you why you didn't come, Ferguson!" Aubrey's voice was quiet and cool and dangerous.

Ferg was driven to answer.

"McCann says we don't fag for the Fifth any more, Compton! I—I—I say, he's Head, you know."

It was feeble, but it was all that Ferg could do. Under the steady gleam of Compton's eyes, his revolutionary fervour had faded out.

"Did I tell you that no man here was to take any notice of that man McCann's meddling rot?" asked Aubrey.

"Yes-s-s."

"Oh! You haven't forgotten!"

"None-s-s."

"Very well! Bend over that chair, Ferguson!"

There was an awful pause. According to the headmaster Compton had no right whatever to give that order. According to the new rule, Compton was asking for a Head's whipping for himself for carrying on in defiance of a direct order from the Book. But, according to custom and tradition—strong at any school, strongest of all at the School for Boys—a fag ordered by his fag-master to bend over had to do that very thing. And Ferg, after the briefest pause, did it.

All eyes in the swarming Burrow watched.

Compton wished the frowl but in the effective way acquired by long practice in handling the same as an instrument of punishment. He laid it on with scientific precision. When it came to whipping he was not much inferior to Jimmy McCann himself. No prefect at High Combe could get so much out of his official appliance as Compton of the Fifth could get out of a frowl but. Ferg would have been glad of six, or twice six, from Bland or Corran instead of this from Compton.

Three swipes the hardy Ferg took in silence. The fourth made him jump. The fifth made him wriggle like an eel. The sixth drew from him a frantic yell that was heard as far as Big Study.

Compton passed.

By immemorial tradition, six was the limit. Six might consist of half a dozen strokes, or any less number—sooner of more. Ferg had had the full six. It made him wriggle, it made him writhe. His freckled face was almost pale as he rose after the infliction.

Compton tucked the bat under his arm.

He strolled out of the Burrow. A deep-drawn breath from the crowd followed his departure.

"Wow!" murmured Ferguson. He wriggled.

"Boy!"

Compton's voice called from a distance. It was clearly heard in the Burrow. All eyes were on Ferguson. If Ferguson hesitated, it was not long enough to give Aubrey occasion to call a second time. He belted one of the Burrow.

Jimmy McCann had abolished fagging for the Fifth. In Form No 3 Ferguson was fagging with a distinct mobility he had seldom displayed before. Carter of the Fifth looked in and grinned.

"What price the Righter?" drawled Aubrey.

"Twopence, and dear at that!" answered Carter. He went away to call his own fag. If one man got away with it, why not another? In Form No. 3 Ferg went on fagging.

Whipped by His Own Fag!

THE Righter!" breathed Carter of the Fifth. He had been just about to call "Boy!" But when he saw Mr. McCann walking up the passage with a cane under his arm, Carter was glad—jolly glad—that he had not yet called "Boy!" Calling "Boy!" all of a sudden lost its charm.

Carter stepped back into his room so suddenly that he trod on the toes of Burke and Raymond. They ejaculated simultaneously; but Carter made a sign and softly closed the door.

The quiet but firm and steady footsteps of Jimmy McCann passed it. They died away towards the short staircase at the end, which led up to Dorm No. 2. Carter and his friends exchanged eloquent looks. The Blighter was going to Compton's room, where Ferguson of the Fourth was in the full tide of faggery. He had a case under his arm. Had the brute, in his study, teased Compton calling "Boy"? Likely enough—he seemed to care and to hear everything that went on at Highcombe! What was going to happen now? Whatever it was, Carter & Co. were glad that it was not going to happen to them.

Jimmy's knock at the door of Dorm No. 2 sounded loud and clear. He opened the door after knocking.

Compton, Darrell, and Seymour looked at him. They rose to their feet. Even Aubrey, though strongly disinclined to show that mark of respect to the new Head, rose. Tom was going on in Dorm No. 3. Ferg had done his work well. The table was nicely laid—eggs poached irreproachably, toast done to a turn, and jam, marmalade, and jolly set out in enticing array.

Ferg, on his knees before the fire, was making roasts. His face was red from the warmth of the fire, and as he stooped he wriggled. Not for a long time was Ferg likely to forget the haunting tringes of the fireside. Every now and then he gave a convulsive jerk. He was doing exactly what as Jimmy McCann looked in at the doorway, and the Head's keen eye did not miss it.

Mr. McCann stepped in.

Ferg looked round from the fire. He gave a startled gasp, and dropped toast and toasting-fork into the fender. Still on his knees, he blinked at the headmaster. Severely as he had been used, not for worlds would Ferguson have given away his faggery to the Head. But here was the Head, seeing with his own eyes, and Ferg, like Carter & Co., wondered what was going to happen now.

"Ferguson!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Ferg.

"Stand up!"

Ferg stood up. Involuntarily he wriggled as he did so.

"You are faggery here, I think," said McCann.

Ferg did not answer. If the man couldn't see for himself, Ferg wasn't going to tell him anything.

Neither did Mr. McCann ask him to do so. He glanced at Darrell, red and uncomfortable; at Seymour, disarrayed and dubious; and fixed his eyes on Aubrey Compton, cool and quietly defiant. Aubrey had plenty of nerve, and he needed all he had now.

"Did you see my notice on the board this morning, Compton?"

"Certainly, sir!" Compton would not have told the man a lie to save his life. Fide, if nothing else, prevented that.

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Are you collecting these novel strips? Another will appear Next Saturday!

"Yet you are faggery a Fourth Form boy?" said Mr. McCann.

"Faggery is a privilege of the Fifth Form, sir," answered Aubrey, speaking quite calmly, as if he were merely explaining things to a new comers. "It's one of our oldest privs."

"It is abolished for the Fifth Form, Compton."

"Indeed, sir?" said Aubrey.

"Quite!" said Jimmy McCann.

There was a pause. Bob Darrell looked it.

"We're all in this, sir! We're all in this!"—Thus Bob, backing up a friend in a bad cause.

"You need not speak, Darrell!" said Mr. McCann coldly.

"But, sir—" began Teddy.

"You need not speak, Seymour."

Silence again.

Mr. McCann seemed to be musing. The cane was under his arm; he did not slip it into his hand. What was he going to do? Faint sounds came from the Fifth Form passage. Breathless fellows were gathering there to learn what was going on. Like wildfire, the news had spread through the Fifth that the Blighter McCann was in Dorm No. 3.

"Ferguson!"

"Oh! Yes, sir?" gasped Ferg.

"Take Compton's chair at the table."

Ferg blinked. The cane slipped into Mr. McCann's hand now. He pointed with it to the chair from which Aubrey had risen. Amused, Ferg approached that chair. Compton, looking wondering, moved uneasily, and Ferguson sat down in the chair.

"Darrell! Seymour! You may go!"

"The fellows haven't finished tea yet, sir?" remarked Aubrey, still in a casual tone.

Mr. McCann seemed deaf. He stepped aside from the doorway for Darrell and Seymour to pass out. Aubrey's lips moved. He very nearly said: "Don't go!" But not quite.

Slowly, perplexed, puzzled, Darrell and Seymour went out. They joined the crowd of seniors in the passage below—now overflowing on the stair that led up to Dorm No. 3, of which the door remained wide open. Some of them could see into the dorm. All of them could hear.

"Compton!"

"Sir!"

"Take up that toasting-fork!"

Aubrey looked at him. What did the head mean? He picked the toasting-fork out of the fender.

Ferguson, in Compton's chair at the table, sat dumb. He could not guess what was coming. Neither could Compton. But both of them saw knew.

"Faggery," said Mr. McCann, in a quiet voice which, however, reached every ear in the Fifth Form passage, "is abolished for the Fifth Form at Highcombe. Yet I find it continuing in this dorm. This will not do, Compton! However, since I find faggery going on here, it will continue, in my presence. You will fag, Compton."

Compton looked at him.

Freeing the Fags!

"You will proceed," said Mr. McCann, "to make toast for Ferguson, Compton. You will make tea. You will lag for Ferguson in my presence and under my eye. If you do not do so satisfactorily, you will be whipped—by Ferguson!"

Ferg's eyes opened wide. They looked as if they would fall out of his head.

COMPTON trembled with rage. So this was the Blighter's game—to make him look a fool, humiliate his girls, make him the mock of the very fags in the Barrow! A casting he had expected and cared little for—even a flogging. It would have strengthened his position in the school, to stand up to hard punishment, a martyr to tyranny, a defender of old traditions and privileges against brute force! But this—

"I won't!" Compton leaped his voice, and his answer came in a yell of defiance.

"I think," said Jimmy McCann, "that you will!" Ferguson, I see a fiver lat on the shelf. I have no doubt that you are well acquainted with it. Take it."

Ferg looked at him. He looked at Compton. He almost tottered to the shelf and took the fiver hat in hand. A gleam shot into Ferg's eyes. Half an hour ago, he had wriggled and writhed under that hat. If McCann really meant this—if he really was in earnest—Ferg knew how he was going to handle Compton's fiver hat. But was he in earnest?

He was!

"Read over that chair, Compton!" Aubrey did not move.

"Will you bend over that chair, Compton?"

In the Fifth Form passage they listened breathlessly.

"No!" shouted Compton.

Jimmy McCann moved swiftly. Compton did not know that he was in that grip of steel till he was bent over the chair—bent over in a grip that a fellow twice as strong could not have resisted. His struggles availed him exactly as much as if he had been gripped by an iron vice.

"Ferguson!"

"Oh, cranked! I—I—I mean you, sir!"

"You will give Compton six. If you do not lag them on hard, you will be flogged!"

Ferguson laid them on hard. He did not want to be flogged. But he did want to hand back to Aubrey what Aubrey had handed him in the Barrow.

"Six!" said Mr. McCann. "Will you lag for Ferguson now, Compton?"

"No!" It came staking, but it came.

"Six more, Ferguson, please! I hope you are not getting tired, my boy?" added Mr. McCann considerably.

Ferg was not tired. Up went the fiver hat again. Down it came with a bang.

"Stop!" Aubrey hissed the word. What was the use? In that relentless grip, what could a fiver do? Already he was hunched to the dust. Flogging was not so humiliating as this. "Stop!"

He did not know how pleased

Jimmy McCann was to hear him say it. The iron grip relaxed; Compton, white with rage, staggered to his feet. There were tears of fury in his eyes. How was he ever to free this down—chopped by a fag—his own fag! Thanking the little beast afterwards would be no solace.

"I am glad, Compton," said Jimmy McCann gravely, "that you have decided, finally, to obey your headmaster."

Aubrey did not speak. He could not. He gaped blindly for the teasing-fog.

"Obedience," said Jimmy McCann, "is sufficient. I shall excuse you the rest, Compton. Ferguson, you may go."

Ferg went, and the fact that Jimmy McCann followed him prevented the Fifth Form men from kicking him the length of the passage. The door of Down No. 3 slammed. Fellows who knocked on it received no answer. And it did not open; it was locked. Behind that locked door, Aubrey Compton hid his rage and shame from the eyes of High Cosmo.

In Big Study there was gnashing of teeth. But in the House, where Ferg told a breathless tale, there were shortlets and chuckles. Every man in the Barrow knew that there would be no more fagging for the Fifth. Aubrey Compton had called "Boy!" for the last time!

Compton and the FIVE are up to their tricks again! Next Numbering, in "The Beauty's Hoop-Trap!" A Great of School Fun and Surprises!!!

MODERN BOY NEWS REEL



FIVE years from now film, as we know them, will be as dead as the dodo!

For months past secret experiments have been carried on which will completely change the whole of the film world!

American and British companies have been spending a lot of money on these experiments, and at last it seems they are getting results. Very shortly a new film will be shown at the Mayfair Cinema in London. I can't tell you its name, because at the moment it hasn't got one.

But I can tell you that the film will be coloured blue and orange, and that the audience will be supplied with pairs of glasses, having one lens blue and the other orange, through which to watch it.

When seen through these glasses the film will appear black and white, just like an ordinary one, so there seems to be no point in colouring it at all. But—instead of looking for, as films do now, it will have depth. The actors will appear to have three dimensions—length, breadth and thickness! In other words, it will be stereoscopic!

I am told that it will give the effect not of looking on to a screen, but of looking through a window!

This film won't be perfect: people don't want to have to

MODERN BOY'S Film Expert will be only too pleased to tell YOU anything you want to know about the Cinema. If you want a reply by Post, enclose a stamped, addressed envelope if you can.

wear glasses when they go to the cinema! It won't even be the last word in "stereoscopy." For experiments are proceeding at such a rate that, even before it has been shown, this new film I am talking about is out of date!

I have discovered that there is already in existence an apparatus which shows films so that they look "solid" even when you're not wearing glasses. I can't tell you much about it, because the details are being kept deadly secret. But I do know that the films will be shown on a screen made of a material like celluloid.

Making this screen has been a tremendous business, and experts in a big British chemical works have been engaged for weeks in getting it just right.

NO one knows yet when films made for this apparatus will be shown in the cinema, for there are still several technical difficulties to be overcome. But you can take it from me that it will not be very long.

Tremendous strides are being made in colour film, too. For years the film people have been searching for a way of making films in colours that did not look garish on the screen, and it seems that at last they have succeeded.

A British film—called "Noble Parade of 1935"—in which there are some scenes in colour, will be shown in a week or two; and two important American pictures, with colour all the way through, are due in this country very shortly.