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The MODERN BOY²



10,000 Miles Dash Through Italy!

They Do Everything But LEARN at the SCHOOL FOR SLACKERS!

The DANDY'S BOOBY TRAP!

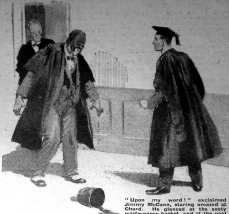
By CHARLES
HAMILTON

Shacks All Round!

CHARD'S trampeting could be heard from the Head's study. The Fifth Form master at High Cosmo School had a powerful voice. It dominated Common-rooms when Chard sat there with the other Heads. Now it dominated the Head's study and the corridor outside, and reached the ears of a dozen fellows, who exchanged glances and grinned. Loud-voiced as Chard always was, he seemed to be putting on a little extra steam now. Perhaps he knew, or guessed, that a number of Fifth Form men were interested listeners and wanted them to know that he was standing up for his rights—and their rights—against the interference of the new headmaster, Mr. James McCann.

The various Forms at High Cosmo had gathered at the sound of the bell for classes. Punctuality was a new thing at High Cosmo. It had been practically unknown before the arrival of James McCann. They had taken things very easily in the days of the former Head, old Dr. Chetwode, the Venerable Beak. Now Mr. McCann had wrought a great change. Even in the Fifth, the slackest Form in the School for Slackers, they no longer strolled into the Form-room with their hands in their pockets when the lesson was half through. Popularity Peter—Mr. Chard—was as ready as ever to accept the slightest excuse. But Jimmy McCann wasn't! And it was Jimmy McCann who ruled the roost.

Jimmy McCann would drop on a fellow who was out of his Form-room, and ask him why. He would be frightfully unpleasant. Really it was better to be in than out. Punctuality was growing to be less trouble that impunctuality. Jimmy McCann would walk a Sixth Form man off to his Form-room like a new fag. He was capable of taking him by the collar if he did not go quietly and quickly. The Brighter, as they called him, was capable of



"Upon my word!" exclaimed Jimmy McCann, staring across at Chard. He glanced at the sooty water-paper basket, and at the pool of inkly foot in the doorway. And then he understood!

anything! Slowly, but surely, the School for Slackers had realized that the easy-going days of the Venerable Beak had gone for ever!

On this particular morning, however, the Fifth were not yet in class. With the punctuality they had reluctantly, but thoroughly, learned, they had arrived at the door of their Form-room. It was customary to wait there till the Form-master let them in. The door was supposed to be locked till then. It seldom was. Chard, as slack as his Form, generally forgot his key, when he had not lost it. On this occasion the door, as usual, was not locked.

The Fifth could have gone in had they liked. They did not like! It was more agreeable to loaf in the passage—and when Carter brought the news that Chard was jaxing the Head there was a general move in that direction. The Fifth were interested!

THEY rolled a great deal on Chard to stand up for them against the meddling, unspeakable Brighter. He had rather disappointed them so far. No doubt he did all he could, but it was not so much as they had expected of him. In spite of Chard, the Brighter seemed to be getting his own way all along the line. But Chard was "going it" now—that was clear. He trumpeted like an elephant in the jungle. No doubt Mr. McCann was speaking, too. But his quiet voice could not be heard outside the study. "The old ass!" muttered Bob Darrell.

"Oh, shut up, Darrell!" said several voices.

Bob was the only man in the Fifth who did not want to be championed

by Mr. Chard against the new Head. He did not regard slackness as a sacred right and privilege to be fought for tooth and nail. Such views, however, were unpopular in the School for Slackers.

"Chard's givin' him beans!" murmured Teddy Seymour. "Listen!"

"Puttin' him in his place!" said Powell. "Good old Chard!"

Aubrey Compton shrugged his shoulders.

"Finkin' cuds like McCann can't be kept in their place," he said. "He's lettin' Chard blow off steam, but he will take his own line, all the same!"

"He happens to be Head?" said Bob sarcastically.

Aubrey did not heed him. He was listening intently to Chard's roar from the study, a gleam coming into his eyes. If there was one fellow at High Cosmo more than all the rest who was implacably against the new Head, it was Aubrey Compton, the dandy of the Fifth. Judging by his look, Aubrey saw here a chance of getting rid of the unspeakable McCann.

"I protest! I repeat, sir, that I protest!" came Chard's voice. "As a Form-master, as senior member of the staff, sir, I have certain rights! My Form has certain rights! It is my duty to uphold both! I repeat that it is my duty!"

Chard had a way of getting additional emphasis by repeating what he said twice, or even three times. He was under the delusion that his remarks were worth hearing more than once.

"To take a Form, sir, out of the

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hands of its Form-master is an unprecedented step! I am bound to point out that it is a step that was never taken when Mr. Chetwode was here. It is a step, sir, that was never taken by the late Head."

"Dear old Rip van Winkle!" murmured Carter. "How we miss him!"

"Shut up, Carter!"

"McCaun's sayin' somethin'," muttered Warren. "What's McCaun sayin'?"

As there was a pause in the trumpeting it was evident that the Head was speaking. But not a sound of his voice came through the oak door.

There was silence till Chard trumpeted again.

"I see no reason, sir, to express such dissatisfaction with the work done in my Form! I trust, sir, that I am capable of taking a Form in Livy."

"Trustin' nature, Chard's!" murmured Carter.

This time the funny man of the Fifth was rewarded with a chuckle. But Compton impatiently made a sign for silence.

"If you insist, sir, upon taking the Fifth Form in this class," Chard's voice went on, "I can only protest! But I protest, sir, with all my power. I protest against it as an invasion of my rights! I protest against it as a slight put upon the senior member of the staff."

THREE were grave faces now in the listening Fifth. Matters were getting serious.

They did Livy in the Fifth. And everyone knows what an impenetrable brute Titus Livius is, unless a fellow works.

The Fifth would have heeded Livy with any book but Chard. With Chard, Livy did not worry them unduly. It did not matter much if a classical author was impenetrable, to fellows who did not want and did not try to penetrate him. Chard let them glide gracefully over the surface of Livy, as it were, like elegant skaters gliding over the ice.

With McCaun it would be different—fairly different! McCaun would want them to penetrate Livy. He would make them penetrate Livy. It would be like the ice breaking under the skaters, only worse! Even Bob Starred, perhaps, hoped that Chard would protest successfully.

But it was very doubtful. McCaun had a way of going about like a steam-roller. The Fifth listened anxiously.

But not a sound of McCaun's quiet voice came to them. Aubrey Compton drew a deep breath.

"That's that!" he said in a low voice. "McCaun's takin' us 'this class."

"Looks like it!" growled Powell.

"I say, anybody got a Livy?" asked Raymond anxiously. "If we're going to be up to McCaun we ought to take a squint at the staff. It doesn't matter about Chard—everybody knows he wags it up himself before he lodes it out to us! But with McCaun—"

Compton suddenly ran off down the passage.

"I say, what's the game, Aubrey?" called out Bob, rather anxiously.

Aubrey did not answer. He vanished round the corner into the Form-room passage.

The Fifth Form men looked at one another. Chard, still trumpeting in the Head's study, trampled unheeded.

"What's old Aubrey up to?" muttered Seymour.

"Somebody 'up against the McCaun man!" said Burke. "Let's go an' see."

The whole crowd followed Aubrey. Chard was still trumpeting. But if he was raising his voice for the benefit of an unseen audience, he had lost his audience now.

The Fifth arrived at their Form-room door. It stood ajar, and Aubrey was within.

"Don't touch the door!" came Compton's voice from inside the Form-room.

"But what—"

"Keep clear!"

The Fifth Formers kept clear. They could see now what old Aubrey was up to, and they grinned happily.

Aubrey was working swiftly. There was no time to be lost if McCaun was coming to take class. Standing on a chair inside, Aubrey was holding a waster-pole-basket on top of the thick curtain door, leaving a little on the handle of the doorway.

"What's in it, Aubrey?" breathed Teddy Seymour.

"Not from the chimney, and the best part of a quart bottle of ink!"

"How!"

"I've no time for more! But I fancy that will be enough for McCaun! Will he feel like squatin' Livy after this little bit?"

"Will he," chuckled Teddy—

"what?"

"He, ha, ha!"

"Aubrey, old man—" said Bob unthinkingly.

"You shut up, father! All you need clear off—better get by on the scene when McCaun gets it in his neck! None of us, of course, knows anything about this!"

There was a chuckle.

"But we're supposed to be waitin' here—"

"We've a right to suppose that Chard's still in his room, as he hasn't turned up here to let us in," answered Compton coolly.

"Get across the quad to Chard's room!"

"But you?"

"I'm droppin' from the window when I'm through! Clear off, before the Brighter bless along the passage!"

"Old Aubrey thinks of everything," said Powell admiringly.

"Come on, you men! Let's go across to Chard's room, and inquire why he hasn't come!"

"But I say—" began Bob.

"Oh, come on!"

Bob was hustled away among the Fifth. They marched out into the quad and walked across to the old clock tower, under which were situated the rooms occupied by the Fifth Form master. As Chard had not

turned up at his Form-room, they had a right, as Compton pointed out, to walk across to his room and ask what they were to do. It was an excellent excuse, and it got them safely off the scene when McCaun put his head into the booby trap.

Aubrey did not linger.

HAVING given the finishing touch to the trap for Mr. Compton, he dropped from the Form-room window and scudded across the quad after his friends.

At Chard's room, in a lumpy crowd, they waited.

"Old Aubrey's the wike to get paid to the Brighter!" said Powell.

And the Fifth chuckled, and agreed that old Aubrey was!

In the Head's study Chard still trumpeted, unheard by his Form. Had they heard him now, probably the Fifth would not have been so satisfied with the state of affairs. The trumpet had taken on a more subdued note.

"I am glad, sir—I am glad!" came the trumpet notes, unheard by any but James McCaun. "I am glad, sir, that I have convinced you—that you have decided, sir, not to put such a slight upon the senior member of the staff—a member of the staff, sir, implicitly trusted by Dr. Chetwode."

I am glad, sir, that you honour me so far as to trust my Form in my hands!" There was a note of sarcasm in the trumpet. "I repeat, sir, that I am glad that you have decided this point, Mr. McCaun!"

The Head's door opened, and Chard appeared in the doorway, had three keen eyes to see. But there were no eyes to see. All Chard's Form were on the other side of the quad before this.

"I am glad, sir!" said Chard once more, with great dignity.

"Very well, Mr. Chard!" said James McCaun. He had conceived the point—perhaps thinking that the discussion would have the desired effect, and that there would be some work done in the Fifth that morning. Chard, threatened by the indignity of having his Form taken out of his hands, might get a move on.

Jimmy McCaun hoped so. He did not want to wound Chard's feelings more than was essential. He wanted, and intended, to stop shaking at High Council. But he preferred gentle measures, of gentle measures would effect his purpose. If talking to Chard would work the work, Jimmy McCaun was willing to let it go at that.

Chard rolled away majestically. He was feeling backed. He could not perhaps feel that he had put the young Head in his place. But he had, at least, got away with his protest. He had gained his point—he had prevented McCaun from barging into his Form-room and taking his Form out of his hands. That, at least, was something—it was a sort of triumph. So Chard felt backed as he rolled down the passage to the door of his Form-room.

To his surprise, he sighted none of the Fifth. He had felt pretty certain

that they had been within hearing of his voice while he talked to the Head in his study. None, however, were in sight now. They were not even waiting for him at the Form-room door. Chard naturally supposed that, tired of waiting, they had gone into the Form-room—as Jimmy McCann certainly would have supposed had he come along in the place of Mr. Chard. But he hadn't.

It was Chard's plump hand that pushed open the door of the Fifth Form Room. It was Chard's plump figure that rolled in, and upon Chard's majestic head the wastepaper-basket, crammed with soot soaked in ink, descended.

Crash!
Chard gave a gurgling cry. What had happened was quite unknown to him for the moment. He gurgled, staggered, and choked. He spluttered wildly and frantically.

"Something black and choking—it was soot—clothed him like a garment. Something bonneted him, sitting over his head like a very large hat—it was the wastepaper-basket. The rim of the basket lodged on the bridge of Chard's prominent nose. Its contents streamed over him, blackening him, choking him, suffocating him.

"Urrrrrrrgh!" gurgled Chard.
"Wurrerrgh! What—gurrerrgh!"

He staggered back into the passage. Strange noises penetrated to other Form-rooms. Doors opened. Fenno looked out from the Shell, Capes from the Fourth. Goggs, the maths master, popped out of the Sixth, his spectacles almost falling off, his scanty remnant of hair almost rising on end at the sight of the wild, weird figure staggering in the corridor.

"What——" gasped Mr. Fenno.
"What——" spluttered Mr. Capes.
"Wind-at——" gasped Mr. Goggs.
"Urrrrrrgh! Wurrerrgh! Gurrerrgh!" gurgled Chard.

He grabbed at the mysterious something on his head, plucked it off, and hurled it to the floor. He revealed a face as black as the blackest in Central Africa. His eyes rolled, hoarsely from that blackened face. The other masters stared at him, speechless. There was a tread in the passage, and James McCann arrived. Jimmy McCann was not easily surprised. But he jumped at the sight of the master of the Fifth.

"Who—what——"
"Wurrerrrrrrghh!"
"Upon my word!" ejaculated Jimmy McCann.

He stared at Chard, then glanced at the sooty wastepaper-basket and the pool of inky soot in the doorway. He understood.

"My dear Chard——"
"Gurrerrgh!"

"Pray let me assist you!" Mr. Chard at that moment was not pleasant to touch, but Jimmy was not particular. He took the Fifth Form master's arm and led him away to the nearest bath-room. Mr. Chard, it was obvious, was not in a state to take his Form in Liry. What he wanted was hot water and soap—lots of hot water and lots of soap! Jimmy

McCann kindly piloted him to the region of hot water and soap and left him to it—a faint smile dawning on his face as he walked away.

Chard's Fun Mishap!

THE Fifth Form at the School for Blackies suffered that evening, "Up" to Jimmy McCann for Liry, the High Coombs Fifth groaned in anguish of spirit.

Content in Aubrey's masterly scheme for putting paid to the Blighter, they had waited, over at Chard's rooms under the clock-tower, in happy anticipation.

No leak, though never so grudgingly determined to make himself obnoxious, could possibly have taken the Form in Liry after getting a basketful of soot and ink on his head. It was only an hour; and there was at least an hour's hard labour in getting off that soot and ink. Liry, with Chard, meant an hour's baggy stacking, while Jimmy McCann was cleaning off soot and ink. It was all so happy and delightful to anticipate—and all so utterly rotten and deplorable the way it had turned out!

It was foul luck!
For Mr. Chard, busy with hot water and soap, rubbing and scrubbing at inky soot, the headmaster naturally took the Fifth, after all.

They were summoned to their Form-room, to find McCann there. And with feelings that could not have been expressed in words they prepared for the worst time they had ever experienced at High Coombs.

Jimmy, to their surprise, and considerably to their relief, made no reference to the booby trap. Old Liggins, the house-master, was cleaning up soot and ink from the doorway while they took their places. Jimmy did not seem to notice it. What had happened was a matter for the Fifth Form master to deal with; and Jimmy, though the High Coombs did not give him credit for it, was not a man to overstep another man's province. Perhaps, too, the peculiar episode appealed to his sense of humor.

Chard, secretly if not openly an aider and abettor of the resistance to the new Head, would probably have smiled had that booby trap caught its intended victim. He was not smiling now! Whatever Peter Chard was feeling like, it was absolutely certain that he was not amused.

The Fifth were taken of every disadvantage. Not a man in the Form had prepared that lesson. Even Bob Darrell, who often set the ancient traditions of High Coombs at naught by doing some work, had been talking games in Big Study the evening before, and had somehow forgotten prep. With Chard that did not matter. With McCann it mattered fearfully.

Bob rather wished that he had given Liry a look-in and postponed till another time the task of explaining to Trollogar, the captain of the school, that a series of defeats through a whole season did not constitute a record to feel satisfied and complacent about! But it was rather too late to wish that now; Bob was "for it" with the rest.



The two seniors thudded madly into the history master, and as he spluttered and staggered the precious papers in his hands went flying, some through the open window.

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And that was not all! But for their faith in Aubrey's masterly scheme, some of the Fifth, at least, would have taken a booby snipe at Lily before McCann started on them. As the matter stood, they had taken no snipe. The book of Lily with which McCann was now dealing was as a sealed book to the unhappy Fifth.

Some of the fellows gave Aubrey Compton rather black looks. Aubrey, popular as a leader of rebellion against the blighter McCann, was rather at a discount now. Aubrey had incited them in this—Aubrey, with his dashed cleverness! If the silly sea had only left things alone!

Unfortunately, he hadn't! Chard rubbed and scratched in a bath-room, and in Chard's Form-room they suffered under McCann.

It was rather a surprise to them—and not an agreeable surprise—that the brute seemed to know Lily inside out. It was a stunning joke in the Fifth that Chard "mugged up" a lesson before he handed it out. Carter, the funny man of the Fifth, had even, on occasion, abstracted and hidden Chard's book and left him at a dead loss. Such a jest would not have served with McCann. The brute seemed to have the whole thing in his head. He was, as Aubrey remarked in a bitter whisper, the kind of brute who would!

But there was not much whispering in the Fifth. McCann's eye would glint at a whisper. Nobody wanted to catch that eye!

He seen had them, as Powell elegantly described it afterwards, sneezing!

THE new Head was getting to know his High Counts; but even he seemed a little surprised by the abnormal depths of ignorance in the Fifth Form.

He did his best to lift the Fifth out of that abyss.

Not a man in the Form escaped. Man after man stood up, with resentful heart and burning cheeks, to display his dismal and useful ignorance of that great Latin historian, Titus Livius.

Bob Darrell, after a series of blunders, felt rather ashamed of himself. Every other fellow in the Form, after much worse blunders, felt only angry and indignant. Was was this rascal who was making them work like fellows snuffing for a heady scholarship? What the diabolus did Lily snaffle, anyhow? The High Counts shared the opinion of the Old Boy in the song:

"A man doesn't come up to Borrooft to learn.

But because his dear paler has money to learn?"

Certainly the Fifth Form men were not there to learn, if they could help it. The awful trouble was that they couldn't! Gladly they would have risen to one man, and hurled Jimmy McCann forth from the Form-room that he was despoiling with these new ideas about work.

But they had tried that game once and found it far from a paying proposition. With gloomy, indignant faces, they suffered under McCann—and dimly resolved to give prep a look-in in the future, in case the unspeakable brute took them in hand again.

How McCann packed so much work into an hour was a mystery. He put so much into that hour as Chard put into a term. Happy doers in the back benches of the Fifth, accustomed to having their drowsy existence forgotten by Chard, were called up, one after another, bewildered and indignant at the mere idea that they might possibly know something about the lesson in hand. They blinked like owls dragged into unaccustomed daylight.

After a minute with Jimmy they sank back on their benches, spent and exhausted, feeling their brains work crumbling to pieces round them. Sixty seconds with Jimmy tied a fellow more than sixty whole classes with Chard.

Only Carter, greatly daring, ventured to introduce an element of comedy into that tragic hour. Carter had his reputation as a funny man to keep up; and, really, the tormented Fifth were in need of a little comic relief.

Carter affected an ignorance even more abysmal than that actually existing in the High Counts Fifth. With a face of innocent inquiry, he asked Mr. McCann whether Titus Livius was the same person as the Emperor Titus. Even Powell knew better than this.

Mr. McCann gave Carter one keen, searching glance. But Carter's face was as innocent as a baby's. He assumed the air of a fellow who, eager to know, was taking this opportunity of acquiring knowledge. A happy grin went round the worried Fifth. That beggar Carter was pulling the brute's leg! They wondered at his nerve, but they were glad to hear him.

"No, Carter," said Mr. McCann, perhaps not oblivious of the happy grin on many faces. "Titus Livius, the historian, was quite a different person from the Emperor Titus."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" said Carter weakly. Having got away with this, Carter pursued the game. "I thought Carter pursued the game. "I thought they might be the same person, sir, as they both had the surname of Carter."

There was a suppressed gringle in

the Fifth. Carter was going strong!

"The surname of—what?" asked McCann.

"Carter, sir!" said Carter innocently. "The celebrated and infamous Titus Carter, sir."

CARTER might have got by with his first big-pull. A fellow—at High Counts, at least—might imaginably have mixed up Titus the historian with Titus the emperor. But even at High Counts no fellow could possibly have mixed up either of them with Titus Carter. Carter, in his headless desire to relieve the tension in the Fifth Form Room, had gone too far.

Mr. McCann's eye seemed to penetrate the jester of the Fifth like a lance. Carter, wishing that he had stopped in time, stood unsmiling under that penetrating eye.

"To whom do you go for history, Carter?"

"We're up to Mr. Mace for history, sir," faltered Carter.

"Very good!" said Mr. McCann. "Your questions show. I fear, that you have paid very little attention to Mr. Mace. I shall speak to Mr. Mace."

Carter breathed more freely. He was not afraid of Mace.

But Jimmy had not finished yet.

"I shall ask Mr. Mace to set you three papers, Carter—one on Titus Livius, one on the Emperor Titus, and one on Titus Oates."

"Thank you, sir!" said Carter demurely. Mace, of course, would set him the papers, if McCann gave the word. But Mace would never ask to see them, so that did not matter.

Alas! for Carter. Even yet the blighter had not finished.

"I shall ask Mr. Mace to bring the papers to me, for my inspection, Carter. If they are not satisfactory I shall set you a whole book of Lily to write out, and you will remain in detention after three every day until it is completed. The papers must be shown up this evening."

Collapsing Carter!

He sat down with a bang. His legs fell! to support him. Three awful history papers, which had to be done, and done well! The alternative was days—weeks—of detention. "After three" was the High Counts term for the end of the day's work. After three nobody at High Counts even pretended to work—until prep, when a few did pretend. After three a fellow was free as a bird in the air, unless he had detentions, which seldom happened. Carter had an awful vision of his unhappy self, sitting lonely in the Form-room after three every day, for days on end, writing codium Lily!

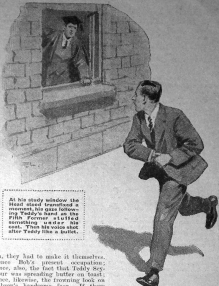
Seldom, or never, had a funny man looked so dreadfully serious as Carter

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looked now. Three rotten history papers, every one of them a "stinker"—or the odious Levy! The joy of life had departed from Edward Carter. Nobody, looking at him now, would have supposed that he had ever been funny in his life, or fancied that there was such a thing as fun in the scheme of things. An under-taker's mate, sitting beside Carter, would have looked merry and bright in comparison.

Needless to say, there were no more comic inclusions in that hour. Never had an hour lasted so long. There were, of course, only sixty minutes in it, but each minute seemed to drag its weary length along like a wounded snake. It seemed to the Fifth almost too good to be true when the Blighter dismissed them at last. They almost tottered out of their Form-room.

The next school, fortunately, was history with Mace. They had a much-needed nerve rest, in history with Mace. Mr. Mace, one of the oldest institutions at High Combe, had reached the ripe age of seventy. He liked to take things easily; so did the Fifth! Whether Mace said anything to them during that school, the Fifth did not know. If they did, they did not listen—they were too busy telling one another what they would like to do to Jimmy McCann!



At his study window the head master transacted a moment, his gaze following Teddy's hand on the Fifth Formers' studied something under his coat. Then his voice said after Teddy like a latter.

"It's a Winner!"

"YOU fool!"

Aubrey Creighton raised his eyebrows.

They did not call one another fools at High Combe except perhaps in moments of terrific stress, silly scenes, rade, and fatheads they might call one another—but not fools. That kind of expression was barred.

But Carter of the Fifth, glaring into Study No. 3, did not seem to care a bean for the good-naturedness of manner and elegance of expression on which High Combe justly prided itself. High Combe fellows did not call other fellows fools, but Carter called the dean of the Fifth a fool, and followed it up with a series of other epithets seldom heard in that elegant and luxurious study.

Compton could raise his eyebrows so further, without pushing them over the top of his head. But his stare of surprised disdain had no effect on the enraged Carter. Striding into Study No. 3, he actually shook his hat at the disdainful Aubrey.

"Bless it mild, old chap!" said Bob Darrell, glancing up from the grate, where he was making toast for tea.

Toast-making was a new industry for the Fifth Formers. It dated from the abolition of tugging for the Fourth—one of the reforms of the unspeakable McCann.

No longer did Compton, or Darrell, or Teddy Seymour call "Boy!" down the stair—a call followed by a rush from the Barrow, and the breathless arrival of Ferguson, or Donkin, or Pte. of the Fourth. The call of "Boy!" was never heard now in the Fifth! The Sixth still called "Boy!" the Fifth never.

If Fifth Form men wanted toast for

tea, they had to make it themselves. Hence Bob's present occupation; hence, also, the fact that Teddy Seymour was spreading butter on toast; hence, likewise, the frosty look on Aubrey's handsome face. If there was one rotten act for which Aubrey could forgive McCann less than for any other, it was taking away his tag. He felt rather like an ancient Roman patrician deprived of his slave.

Carter brandished his hat at Aubrey. He seemed almost on the point of tapping Aubrey's nose with it.

"You silly ass!" said Aubrey. "Pathead! Mist! Look what you've done!" yelled Carter. "You had to buy a fat-headed lousy trap for McCann! Chad had to poke his silly head into it! And now I'm landed with three putrid history papers!"

"Mace ought to refuse to take the papers to the middle!" said Aubrey.

"Talk sense!" barked Carter. "What can Mace do, except shudder? He told me he was sorry—but bit of good that does! Doshier's old ass! McCann's jawed him, and he's set me three genuine stinkers!"

"Go to Chad!"

"I've been to Chad," wailed the hapless Carter. "Popularity Peter can't do anything. He doesn't seem keen, either! It seems to me rather nice about gettin' that smack on his super this mornin'."

"He must know that it was meant for McCann!"

"Fot lot it matters when it was meant for to the man who killed it!" growled Carter. "I can tell you Peter's shirty."

Compton shrugged his elegant shoulders.

"Squat down and have some of this toast," suggested Bob. "You've got time for the papers between tea and prep!"

"Prep!" grunted Carter. "Yes, there'll be prep! Can't risk cutting it as usual with that louse on the ground. But look here—that idiot Mace has set me three awful stinkers. What am I going to do? What do I know about Eton Livings, or the other dashed Titus, or Titus Gates? It was a dirty trick, the Blighter catching me up like that! Look here—you landed me in this, Compton, and it's up to you to get me out of it. You must think of something! See?"

Aubrey was silent. He had set himself up as leader of rebellion. Follows had followed his lead. There had been disaster. All the Fifth had been through it, Carter the worst of the lot. It was up to Aubrey to help him—if Aubrey could think of anything useful. And he could feel for a fellow who had three papers to do in one afternoon.

The amount of mugging-up required was tremendous. Mace had to be

The Dandy's Booby Trap!

looked for books—the books had to be dug into—skinned, if not read. Knowledge, certainly, would have been acquired in the process. But Carter was not an eager follower in quest of knowledge; he was only eager for a way of getting out of doing those three papers, which he justly, if indelegantly, described as “stinkers.”

“I’ve a jolly good mind——” began Carter, wrathfully. His hat was doctored, and his eyes fixed on Aubrey’s nose. One, at least, of the rebel leader’s followers was on the verge of mutiny—red and rabid mutiny. Three genuine stinkers! fed up Edward Carter with the superb Aubrey, as a leader. Bob Darrell interposed hastily.

“Cluck it, Carter, old man!”
“I’ve a jolly good mind——” repeated Carter. It seemed that he expected to derive some advice in his calamity from the paraching of Aubrey’s nose.

“No good raggin’!” said the pacific Toddy.

“Three stinkers!” hissed Carter. He came back to that like the refrain of a song. “Three awful stinkers.”

“If you’d shut up a minute——” drawled Aubrey.

“Three genuine stinkers——”

“I gather that Mace has to take the papers to McCann before prep,” said Compton. “Suppose you write them and give them in to Mace. Mace will be satisfied with them, whatever they’re like——”

“What’s the good of that, when McCann’s going over them, you ask?”

“Suppose McCann never saw them?”

Carter blinked.

“He will see them if Mace takes them to his study, won’t he? Think he’s going to go suddenly blind just to please me?”

“To give a man a chance to speak!” complained Aubrey. “Suppose two or three fellows were barging about in the corridor and barged into Mace—quite by accident, of course—as he

was passin’ the corridor window. The window’s open——”

“It’s always shut!”

“It will be open this evenin’! Mace comes a trapper—the papers fly out of the window—with a little assistance, perhaps—and a man under the window snatches them. They disappear.”

“Oh, my hat!”

“What can McCann do?” argued Compton. “The papers have been done—though accidentally lost! Mace will testify that they were good papers. Mace is a gentleman. McCann can’t do anything. You’ve done your papers, and that’s that.”

CARTER stared at Aubrey and drew a deep breath. Toddy Seymour gazed at him with open-mouthed admiration. Only Bob looked dubious.

“It’s a winner!” said Toddy. “McCann can’t do a thing! Aubrey, old man, I’ve always said you had a lead on your shoulders.”

“By gum!” said Carter. “I say, I’m sorry I called you names, Compton. I might have known you’d see a way out!” Carter’s face was unshodded now and he no longer looked worklike. “I say, it’s a corker! McCann couldn’t even smell a rat. And if he did, he couldn’t do anything.” Carter chuckled, in good spirits again after a weary day. “I say, it will be one up against the Nightingale! I say, I’ll get those papers done—if McCann can’t gain! He see them they’ll be all right! Anything will do for Mace.”

Carter, grinning, went back to his own study to write the papers. The lead was lifted from his mind. It was no longer a question of work. What Carter of the Fifth knew about Titus Lavin, the Imperial Titus, and Titus Gates would not have covered half a sheet of paper.

But as he had said, anything would do for Mace! Mace was a gentleman—in the High Combe definition of that word. If Mace had ever found fault with a fellow’s work it was so long ago that the oldest inhabitant could not recall it. Mace

might have given a fellow full marks for describing Titus as Emperor of Japan!

Carter was precisely twenty minutes writing out those history papers. All he had to do was to cover the sheets with writing. That was easy enough. Certainly, those papers, if they had met Jimmy McCann’s eyes, would have caused those eyes to open very wide—almost to pop out of his head! But they were not going to meet Jimmy McCann’s eyes, so that was all right! Anything was good enough for Mace; and quite good enough to fly out of the corridor window and disappear!

Study No. 3 was finishing ten when Carter came back, beaming.

“Right as rain, you see!” said the happy Carter.

“You’ve done them already?” asked Bob, with a stare.

“Done them, and taken them to Mace, and been told they are quite good—quite good, my dear Carter!” answered Carter, with a delightful imitation of Mr. Mace’s cracked and squeaky voice.

Study No. 3 laughed.

“Mace is goin’ to the Head at six!” added Carter. “It’s up to you now, Aubrey!”

“Leave it to me!” drawled Aubrey. “I’ll see to it that those papers never reach McCann!”

Carter went back to his study happy. Aubrey looked at his watch. “Lots of time yet!” he remarked. “But we’d better be ready! Come on, you men.”

Bob Darrell hesitated a moment. Aubrey’s eyes glittered at him.

“You’re comin’?”

“Oh! Yes! I suppose so!”

And Bob came. Aubrey’s strategic dispositions were soon made. It was all so simple—easy as falling off a form. The corridor window, close by the Head’s study, was wide open. Outside, in the quad, Toddy Seymour took up his stand, leaning idly on the old stone wall, waiting for the papers to drop out like ripe fruit into his hands.

In the corridor, Aubrey and Bob waited. Six o’clock rang out from the clock-tower over Chad’s rooms across the quad. Mace was not yet in sight. Aubrey knitted his brows. The Head generally left his study at six. If that doddering old man Mace was late——

He was late! It was more than five minutes past six when he appeared. Mace was old and slow. Still, Mr. McCann had not left his study, so that was all right. Having an appointment there with a member of his staff, no doubt McCann felt bound to wait.

“Here he comes!” howled Aubrey at last.

Mr. Mace appeared round a corner. He was a tall, thin old gentleman, with gold-rimmed glasses on a long, sharp nose, and white hair—what there was of it. Mace had never been known to keep an appointment to the exact time, so long as the present generation of High Combes had known him. Late as he was to see know him, Mace had doled slowly on his way, the papers in his hand.

50 PRIZES for READERS!

IN the first of our series of One-Week Competitions we asked readers to place up 10 foreign stamps, and the 50 prizes offered—either 5s. Packets of 500 different stamps, or the Stanley Gibbons 1923 Stamped Stamp Catalogue, as the winners choose—have been awarded to the following readers whose efforts were correct and the best completed:

- L. Ashford, Dartington; B. Allen, London, N.E.1.; H. J. Bailey, Farnley; G. K. Barrowman, Dalry; A. M. Black, Cambridge; R. Chaworth, Upper Norwood, S.E.11.; H. Baxterfield, Buryhead; M. S. Brock, Thurston, Walsby; G. P. Bragg, Reading; J. Brantley, Foston, Mable; C. Hill, Alington; J. R. E. Jackson, Brampton; J. R. Kay, Walsley; J. Angley, Ditchford; J. M. Ackland, Farnborough; M. Gordon, Farnham; S. D. Jones, Tynhoe, Wals; J. A. Anderson, Edinburgh; J. Mackintosh, Greenhill; R. L. Spall, Kent; R. Newman, Douglas; R. S. Slater, Swinton; W. W. Smead, Lancing; R. A. Smart, Broom; C. Thomas, Swinton; J. H. Spicer, Millfield; F. Watkins, Boreas; P. G. Jones, Gillingham; S. Cole, Swanton; J. Taylor, K. Hill, Thurston Road; H. L. Paul, Alington; M. J. Harris, Swanton; E. Everett, Swanton; G. Kennedy, Apt; A. M. Anderson, Swanton; J. Leitch, Glasgow; A. P. McCulloch, Glasgow; A. McCulloch, Swanton; A. Marshall, Swanton; A. M. Harris, Swanton; M. R. Hutchings, Foston; J. Cyril H. Hutchings; A. G. Fowles, Upper Norwood; J. W. Wain, Swanton; M. Frost, Swanton; M. S. Wilson, Dartington.

As he reached the open corridor window, Compton nudged Darrell. Both of them rushed madly down the corridor.

Bump!
Mr. Mace spluttered and staggered. Two windows of the Fifth window into him almost up-ended him. He clutched at Darrell with one hand, at Compton with the other, spluttering, the papers in his hand fluttering everywhere.

Bob Darrell grasped Mace to steady him, skillfully revolving him away from the fallen papers. Two of them had fluttered out of the window on their own. In a twinkling Anthony had fished the other and tossed it after them.

One swift glance showed him Teddy Seymour begging all three outside. Then he turned to Mr. Mace, profuse with apologies.

"Oh, sir! So sorry, sir—quite an accident—"

"Through?" spluttered the history master of High Coombe. "Warrup!" "Awfully sorry, sir," said Bob sincerely enough. He thought it rather rotten to hange Mace—though he had done it.

Kindly, politely, dutifully, they helped the breathless master on towards the Head's study. In his dizzy confusion, Mace seemed not to have missed his papers yet, which was all to the good. The latter he inquired for these, the better chance for Teddy Seymour. As they helped Mr. Mace onward Compton winked at Darrell behind his doddering back.

JIMMY McCANN, at six o'clock, rose from his writing-table in his study. Mr. Mace's knock should have been heard on the door precisely at that moment and Jimmy's staff had been so efficient as Jimmy himself. But it was not heard; and Jimmy, having to wait for Mr. Mace, walked to the window, which was wide open, and stood looking out into red sunset glowing over wires and cables and rolling Atlantic.

He stood there, breathing in deep breaths of salt air from the sea—and, in the meanwhile, noticing that a Fifth Form fellow was leaning slyly against the stone wall under the corridor window next to his study.

Jimmy frowned a little. He did not like to see senior men leading slyly about like that. He was considering whether to call to Teddy Seymour and give him a hint to get moving, when a surprising thing happened. Papers fluttered from the corridor window.

Teddy grasped at them as they landed, and captured them.

Stuffing them under his coat, he started to run.

For a second Jimmy, at his study window, stood transfixed. Then his voice shot after Teddy like a bullet. "Seymour!"

Teddy spun round in utter dismay. His eyes almost goggled at Jimmy, framed in the window.

"Oh!" he gasped. "Oh! Yes, sir!" "What are those papers, Seymour?"

(Continued on next page)



The Editor Talks

Address your letters to:
The Editor, THE MODERN BOY,
First-class News,
Parrington Street,
LONDON, E.C.4.

All letters must bear the full name and address of the writer

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WHEN IS TWO O'CLOCK NOT TWO O'CLOCK?—That sounds like another "array" from The Old Boy's column. But if you're so sharp as I believe you are you have already guessed the answer.

That's it—Sunday morning's rain-out with the hours, when at the chilly stroke of 2 a.m. it suddenly becomes 2 o'clock!

IT IS THEN Summer Time—official.

As you want your watch to be right when you wake up to-morrow (Sunday) morning, put the time ON one hour before you go to bed to-night, Saturday, the 13th.

The official changeover takes place at 2 a.m.—but you needn't sit up all then!

And now all we want is THE SUMMER!

NEXT THURSDAY!—As I've told you elsewhere in this issue, the next number of MODERN BOY will be out on Thursday, the 18th—two days in advance of the usual day of "coming out." That's because of the Easter Holidays.

DON'T forget **BIGGLES**—he's out again on Thursday, too! This time we meet him as the pilot for an oil company of British Guiana, with his old chum Algy and mechanic Suggs at his crew. But the job gets out, and they're stranded in the wilds. They've got to think of something to do to raise money. Algy suggests they turn themselves into:

"Jungle Airways, Limited, Jay Birds for Siggys, Flip-Flaps for Cassaballs!"

And then—the bones of an old ship in the sand, and buried treasure—and that's quite enough to whet YOUR appetite for next Thursday's complete **BIGGLES** story, eh?

PERCY F. WESTERMAN beats up more excitement in Thursday's long instalment of "Ringed by Fire"—Charles Hamilton stirs up unusual fun and frolics in another "School for Slackers" yarn; Murray Roberts gets across a really brilliant episode in the Captain Justice series. And the usual share-out of other good things that a fellow can find only in MODERN BOY.

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FELLOWS listed on the opposite page!

I hope to be able to publish the

THIRD complete list of Prize-winners next Thursday. That's not many days to wait!

THERE'S A GREAT CUP FINAL STORY COMING!—That's for the issue after the next one—the week-end when something like 20,000 people will cram themselves into Wembley Stadium to see the battle for the Football Association Cup.

The extra-special story I have had written for that issue is going to make us one of the grandest footer pages ever published.

THE PRICE OF A FOOTBALLER.—

The average price of footballers this season is £5,000. As much as £12,000 has been asked for a single player—Turkey Walker, of Heart of Midlothian.

It is not surprising that there is a movement on foot to limit the amount which one football club can pay to another for the transfer of a player to about £2,000.

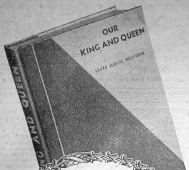
BIG-MONEY transfers are not good for the game, and clubs would certainly feel it more profitable to keep their best players than transfer them for £2,000, for it is the star players who attract the big crowds.

SPINNING MYSTERY!—Here's something well worth trying. Cut out a circle of white cardboard, about three inches in diameter. Using black Indian ink, draw a line across the circle, dividing it into halves.

THEN ink all the white on one side of the dividing line, leaving the other half white. Push a strip of pencil through the centre, and spin it like a top. The faster you spin it, the better the effect.

AND what do you see? Not a grey blur, as you might think, but a mysterious greenish-blue, red, yellow, and green. Where these colours so surprisingly spring from I leave you to puzzle out. The trick is better by electric light or gas than by daylight.

SEE YOU AGAIN ON THURSDAY, the 18th!



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**The Dandy's
Booby Trap!**

"Pip-pip-papers, sir!" started Teddy.

"Give them to me at once."

Like a fellow mesmerized, Teddy Seymour came to the window and handed the papers up to the Head.

"Thank you, Seymour!"

Teddy tottered away.

Mr. McCann looked at the papers, and his face grew grim as he read Edward Carter's compositions on the three subjects of Titus the historian, Titus the emperor, and Titus Gates!

There was a knock at his door.

Mr. Mace came in rather breathlessly. Compton and Darrell had helped him as far as the door. Compton's swift glance, before the door closed, fell on Jimmy McCann—on the papers in his hand, and on Carter's almost illegible scrawl on the papers! Compton jumped as if he had been shot. The door, closing, almost hit him on the nose.

Darrell stared at him.

"What's the matter, old man?" he asked.

Ashley did not answer. His feelings, just then, were too deep for words. He almost flung away. In Study No. 3 they found Teddy Seymour, and from that dismayed youth learned what had happened.

"Of all the petrifid lark!" groaned Ashley when Teddy had told his story. "Who could have thought of the Blighter looking out of his window at the wrong moment—and have guarded against it? I thought my scheme for saving Carter was water-tight—and now he's properly in the soup. The Blighter'd skin him when he reads those papers!"

FOUR or five Fifth Form men had to hold Carter when he saw

Ashley again after he had seen McCann! Carter was absolutely frantic. Those papers, never intended for Jimmy's eyes, had come under the Head's survey, after all. And Jimmy had not been so satisfied with them as Mr. Mace had been! Lily, and Lily, stretched before Carter of the Fifth! Lily, and Lily, and Lily—every day in the Form-room, after three! Lily, and Lily, and Lily—worth without end!

Carteraved. Only by sheer force was he kept from assault and battery. Judging by Carter's remarks, his feelings towards the Blighter McCann were as unrelenting with sunlight compared with his feelings towards Ashley Compton of his own Form.

Even Ashley had to acknowledge that prospectively, so far, did not seem to be smiling on the Fifth Form fond!

"—Daren Thorne's Night that!" is the title of the School for Slaves story in the next issue of **WONDERFUL LONDON**. And it's a corker—it's a school story that is DIFFERENT from all others!