

# *The* **MODERN BOY**

EVERY SATURDAY  
WEEK ENDING  
JUNE 29<sup>TH</sup> 1935  
N°386 VOL 15

2<sup>D</sup>

*This*  
**CRICKET  
BAT**

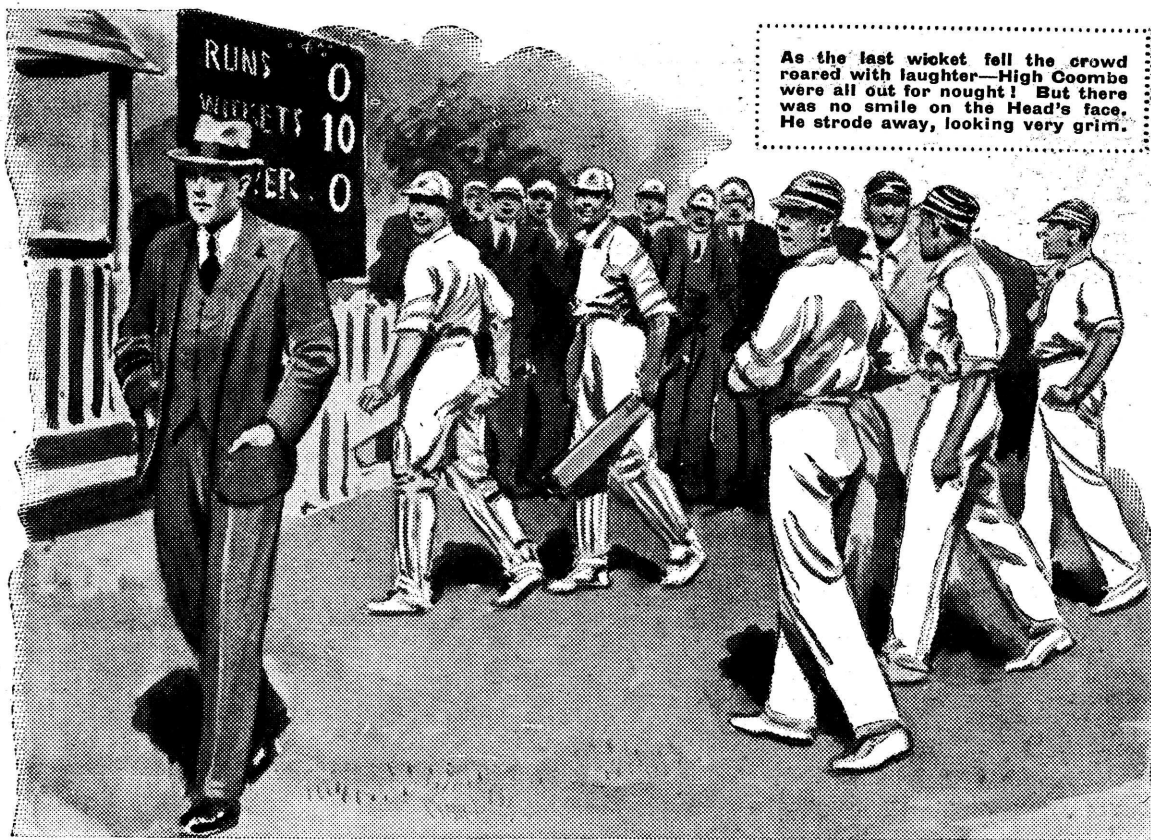
*Autographed*

BY THE  
**SOUTH  
AFRICAN  
CRICKETERS**

*Offered  
Inside!*



**MIDGETS  
OF THE  
SPEEDWAY!**



As the last wicket fell the crowd reared with laughter—High Coombe were all out for nought! But there was no smile on the Head's face. He strode away, looking very grim.

# WHAT PRICE DUCK'S EGGS!

The unpopular Head of the **SCHOOL FOR SLACKERS** sees the most amazing game of Cricket ever played!

"We'll Beat McCann!"

WHAT was booked to happen at the High Coombe versus St. Chad's match was, of course, Aubrey Compton's idea. The dandy of the Fifth pondered over it in Study No. 3, and saw that it was good! Then he communicated it to the men in Big Study somewhat warily. He was not quite sure how some of them would take it. For it was "thick"—and even at the School for Slackers there was some sort of a limit.

Even to his own pal, Teddy Seymour, Aubrey breathed it cautiously; and Teddy stared at him with goggling eyes. To Bob Darrell he did not venture to breathe it. Pals as they were, Bob might have punched Aubrey's handsome nose. Nobody told Bob about it. He could see that there was something on, but he was left in the dark, for it was an absolute certainty that if Bob heard he would go off at the deep end.

One by one the first eleven men were let into it. They gasped at the idea. It was enough to make any fellow gasp. But Aubrey carried his point. Any stick, he pointed out, was good enough to beat the new Head with. What did a cricket match

matter in comparison with making him, James McCann, sit up and learn where he got off? Nothing at all!

Tredegar, captain of High Coombe, was the last to be told. It was rather a delicate matter dealing with old Tred. McCann had influenced him a lot. This term Tred was talking drivel about keenness at games, sticking to practice, and beating St. Chad's as a preliminary to beating Okeham—as if the High Coombe men could possibly beat Okeham!

Tred, so far, found only one sympathetic hearer for this sort of drivel—Darrell of the Fifth—though Teddy sometimes lent a more or less sympathetic ear. The rest of the Fifth gave Tred the marble eye. His old friends in the Sixth regarded him, perhaps, more with sorrow than with anger. Randal cut him dead. Under the blighting influence of the Blighter, Jimmy McCann, Tred had "whopped" Randal, Sixth Form man and prefect as he was, for slacking at games. High Coombe had thrilled

with the outrage. Tred, it seemed, was setting himself up as a sort of secondary Blighter, and all the seniors at the School for Slackers had agreed that Tred was going to find out that it wouldn't wash.

Tredegar, always popular and respected, now found himself something of an outcast—and it was frightfully uncomfortable. Fellows would stop talking if he joined a group—and resume when he left. Fellows would walk out of Big Study when Tred walked in. No fellow dropped into his study for a jaw. If he dropped into another fellow's study he was quickly frozen out again.

Tred had never quite made up his mind to back McCann, although he had made a sort of move in that direction. But if backing McCann meant cold and averted looks from all his friends, and an atmosphere constantly below zero, Tred was hardly the man for it. Aubrey had no doubt that Tred would come into line before the St. Chad's date. And he did!

Cricket practice was the order of the day at High Coombe now. Bullock, the games master, after a feeble resistance to the overpowering Blighter, seemed to have settled down

By  
Charles Hamilton

## What Price Duck's Eggs!

to feed from his hand. He jumped when McCann pulled the strings, as Aubrey described it. Fellows did not venture to cut Nets. They had to bat, bowl, and field—slogging about in the sun! Worse than that, there were Early Nets now—turning out before brekker!

And in spite of themselves, as it were, they were improving. Fellows could not keep on slogging, even unwillingly, without showing signs of improvement. And every sign of improvement was noted with satisfaction by Jimmy McCann.

Jimmy was even entertaining a hope that Tredegar's team would be good enough to beat St. Chad's when they came over, and that the unaccustomed zest of victory would help on the good work and put High Coombe cricket on its feet. He little knew!

**A**UBREY was well aware of Jimmy's hopes, and he had very coolly planned to put paid to them.

"You can take a horse to water," Aubrey declared in Big Study. "but can you make him drink?"

"Not even the Blighter!" agreed Randal, from an armchair.

"Life's hardly worth livin' at High Coombe now," said Coffin, of the Sixth. "Nets before brekker—groogh!"

"Britons never shall be slaves!" said Randal.

"Which, being construed, means High Coombe men never shall be cricketers!" said Carter, who could not help being funny.

"We're all in this." Aubrey Compton glanced round Big Study. All the first eleven men were there, excepting Tredegar and Darrell. "We're all agreed—"

"Yes, and Tred will come round," said Coffin.

"He's comin' round," agreed Aubrey. "He's pretty sick of bein' out. Tred's all right, only McCann has been talkin' him over. Tred will play up and we shall beat—"

"St. Chad's?" grinned Carter.

"Don't be an ass, Carter! We shall beat McCann. He can make us slog at games practice—but he can't make us keep our wickets up if we don't choose!"

"Even if we could, anyhow," said Carter.

"Will you shut up, you ass? He can't make us take wickets—"

"He's no miracle-worker!" said Carter.

Aubrey hurled a cushion at the funny man of the Fifth.

"Now shut up! We're all agreed—and when St. Chad's come over the Blighter will see exactly how far he can drive us. He won't be so fearfully keen on the next fixture, I fancy."

"We shall look awful asses to the St. Chad's men!" said Teddy Seymour uneasily.

"Who cares?"

"And Bob will go all out, anyhow—he always does."

"Let him! If Darrell can win a cricket match on his own I'll be glad

to see him do it. Besides, when Tred comes round, he can chuck Bob."

"Chuck Darrell!"

Randal very nearly sat up in his armchair at the idea.

"McCann has been advising Tred to make some changes in the team. Well, that will be a change—and may please him."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Big Study.

The idea of pleasing McCann by chucking the only good cricketer in the Upper School took Big Study by storm. They roared.

"Aubrey, old man, you're a card!" gurgled Randal. "After the St. Chad's match the Blighter may give up driving us at games. Even that brute will see that it's no good."

"Bound to," said Aubrey. "The fact is we've got him on toast. If any man in the team takes a St. Chad's wicket we'll scalp him afterwards. Any man who doesn't go down for a duck will be cut by the school. Fancy the Blighter's face watchin'—"

And Big Study roared again. The mental picture of McCann's face, when he beheld such a sight as the reward of his labours, was fearfully entertaining.

That was the big idea—to score no runs and take no wickets!

It was worthy of the School for Slackers! The beauty of it was that when it came off, McCann could do nothing. Bowlers who failed to take wickets, fieldsmen who dropped "sitters," batsmen who did not keep their sticks up—what could be done to them? Nothing! It was overwhelming defeat for McCann—the Blighter, at long last, would see where he got off! If Tred came round, and dropped Darrell, there was nothing in the way of success—and Aubrey counted on that as a certainty.

And he was right, for Tred, fed up with being an outcast among his old friends, did come round. His position was intolerable—at least to an easy-going fellow like Tred—and he was angry and irritated with McCann for having placed him in it. Between annoyance with McCann, the love of popularity and an easy life, and the gentle persuasion of Aubrey, Tred came round—and everything in the garden was lovely.

### "Well Done, Ferguson!"

**F**ERGUSON of the Fourth took a businesslike grip on the handle of his bat and faced the bowling. The Head was coming along by the nets, walking with the games master, and if the Head was going to give the juniors a look-in, Ferg wanted him to see that there was one man at High Coombe, at least, who could handle a bat.

Ferg, of course, hated the new Head. Everybody at High Coombe—Bob Darrell excepted—made it a point of honour to hate him fearfully. Nevertheless, Ferg knew that McCann had forgotten more than anybody at High Coombe had ever known about the game of cricket. On that subject he valued McCann's judgment and praise, and was eager to catch his eye.

"Pull up your socks, Fatty!" he called out to Pye. "The Blighter's got an eye on us!"

Fatty Pye was chiefly noted for his immense consumption of jam-tarts and doughnuts. But he could bowl. There was quite keen cricket in the Fourth, as Jimmy McCann had been glad to note. And though the Head was a busy man, and gave up a good deal of time to coaching senior men, he had an eye on the juniors and took quite a flattering interest in their game. Keeness was a passport to Jimmy's esteem; and he had noted Ferg's keenness with a very approving eye. Now, as he stopped near the first-eleven net with Bullock, the corner of his eye was on Ferg, and Ferg knew it, and was greatly backed.

Bob Darrell was in the first-eleven net, and Bob was always worth looking at when he handled a bat. Like Ferg, Bob liked to show up well under the Head's eye. He, too, wanted McCann to see that cricket was not altogether a lost art at High Coombe. Teddy Seymour was giving him some bowling, and other men stood round to field. Somehow or other, they hardly knew why, all the men on the spot pulled themselves up when McCann came along, and looked a little less like stuffed figures specially manufactured to advertise well-cut cricket flannels. Aubrey Compton, indeed, looked very alert—with a wicked gleam in his eyes.

Teddy sent the ball down, and Bob hit it away. Aubrey, moving for once as if he was really alive, went after it, and returned it to the bowler—or did he? McCann and Bullock were standing quite clear—McCann the nearer of the two to Aubrey. How the clumsiest fieldsmen could have whizzed the ball at them instead of back to Teddy was a mystery—or perhaps it was not a mystery in this case.

Bullock had a sour expression on his face. He was, so to speak, feeding from McCann's hand—having no choice about that—but he was not enjoying the meals. Bullock had some suspicion of what was "on" in the first eleven for St. Chad's day, but he was very careful to affect complete ignorance, and he was not likely to take any steps to prevent McCann getting a fall.

If this barging outsider chose to overrule him in his own special domain, let him get on with it—and get the results! That was the Bullock's sour reflection. The results might have the effect of keeping him clear of Bullock's domain afterwards.

Bullock was watching Aubrey, and a faint grin dawned on his red face. Perhaps he noted the gleam in Aubrey's eyes—perhaps he guessed what was coming. Certainly he shifted his position a little so that McCann's stocky figure was more completely between him and the fieldsmen with the ball. If that fieldsmen was going to play tricks with the cricket ball, Bullock did not want to get the benefit of it.

Did McCann observe that faint grin dawning on the red face and the slight movement into closer

cover? Possibly—for the keen-eyed Blighter had a way of observing everything. It was certain that McCann made a movement as the ball left Compton's hand—though his eyes were not on Aubrey.

Hot from Aubrey's palm came the whizzing ball, and as the other fellows saw its direction—nowhere near Teddy—they stared, in the excited and happy expectation of hearing it crack on McCann. McCann, moving to stroll on towards the junior nets, whether by accident or design, left the Bullock in the line of fire.

IT all happened in a second. The ball was coming hot and strong, but McCann was out of the way exactly in time; and before Bullock knew anything, the ball jarred on his plump chin. Crack!

The roar that the Bullock gave could have been heard in the House and down the coombe.

He staggered and sat down, his hand clapping his chin.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Teddy, his eyes nearly starting from his head.

"Oh, Aubrey, you ass!"

Aubrey stood petrified.

Mr. McCann glanced round at the sitting Bullock.

"My dear fellow!" he exclaimed. He gave Bullock a hand to rise, and the games master staggered to his feet, gasping, gurgling, rubbing his chin. "Compton, did you throw that ball?"

"An accident, sir!" Aubrey gasped. "My foot slipped—"

"A very unfortunate accident for Mr. Bullock," said the Head, frowning. "You had better get something for that bruise, Bullock!"

Bullock nodded; he could not speak. Still with his hand to his chin, he tottered away—after giving Aubrey one black look. Mr. McCann walked on.

Ferguson of the Fourth had the wish of his heart at last. Jimmy McCann stopped again at the junior nets.

"Well hit!" came the Head's deep voice, as Ferg sent the ball whizzing. Ferg felt a glow of satisfaction. After all, the man knew good cricket when he saw it!

Ferg proceeded to excel himself. The Head stood looking on, evidently interested. Fatty Pye sent down some good balls, but Ferg put paid to all of them. Loom and Bunn took turns—even Donkin had a go—but the bowling could not damage Ferg. He sent it anywhere and everywhere. Suddenly the Head's hand went up. Smack!

"How's that?" asked Mr. McCann, laughing.

Ferg grinned with glee. Caught out by the Head—the man whose own cricket record was a tale of glory had condescended to catch Ferg out! Ferg's face glowed. Was this man a blighter—a bounder? He could see that Ferg was a cricketer, anyhow!

"You shape well, my boy!" said Mr. McCann. He did not add what was in his mind—that he wished that

some of the first eleven men shaped as well. "I shall send you down a few myself."

The cup of Ferg's glory was full! The man who had played for the M.C.C., and captained Loamshire, was actually taking the ball from Donkin to bowl to him! Ferg wondered if this was a happy dream.

The fags stood round, staring. Ferg braced himself for the supreme effort of his life. If he stopped that bowling—if he kept up his sticks—greatness greater than this was not within human imagination. And Ferg did! Perhaps the Head did not go all out, but he tested Ferg hard. Once, twice, thrice came the ball—such bowling as Ferg had never stood up to before—and once he stopped it dead—twice he knocked it away. Not till the fourth ball did Ferg's bails fly.

Then the Head, smiling, tossed the ball back to Donkin.

"Catch!" he said cheerily, just like a Fourth Form fellow. And the Donkey, celebrated for dropping the easiest of sitters, caught it. Somehow, under McCann's eye, fellows could do things.

"Well done, Ferguson!" said the Head, and walked away.

Later, when Babbie of the Shell spoke of the Blighter McCann, Ferguson came over to him.

"Did you say Blighter?" he asked.

"Didn't you hear me?" answered Babs.

"Did you mean McCann?"

"Yes, you know I did."

"Then you can jolly well take that!" said Ferguson—and Babbie took it right on the nose.

Besides Darrell of the Fifth, Jimmy McCann had now one more loyal and enthusiastic supporter in the School for Slackers!

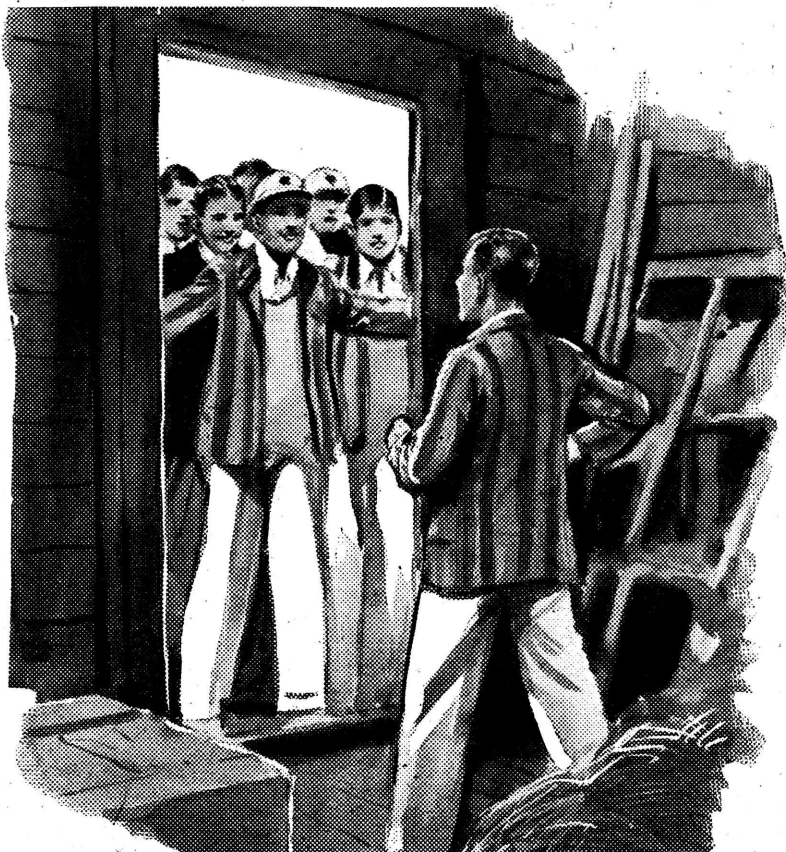
### "Toe the Line, or—"

BOB DARRELL was not dropped from the first eleven for the St. Chad's game. Tred had come round, and he entered into the spirit of the plot to make the Head look silly. Tred was tired of being hectorred and overridden by McCann—at least, his friends made him believe that he was—and all the Sixth, all the Fifth, welcomed him back as a wandering sheep into the fold.

Once more Tred sat in Big Study in a happy atmosphere of esteem and popularity.

But, as Tred pointed out, he simply could not chuck Darrell. A thing had to be plausible. Even Bullock would jib at chucking a man like Darrell; and the Head was certain to barge in. And if the Head wanted to know, what was Tred to say? He couldn't explain that he was chucking a cricketer because that cricketer was a man to take wickets and make runs—and Big Study agreed that he couldn't.

The list was going up on Tuesday, and Darrell's name had to be in it. Bob himself would rage if he was



"What's the game?" Bob demanded, as, scrambling up, he faced the grinning fellows in the doorway. . . . "We're going to leave you locked in here—unless you toe the line!" replied Aubrey cheerfully.

## What Price Duck's Eggs?

left out—indeed, it would put him wise to what was going on, which would never do. Bob was certain to give no end of trouble if he learned of the big idea.

But Bob had to be got rid of. Aubrey rose to the occasion—he was equal to that emergency as to all others. Having got the whole thing in apple-pie order, Aubrey was not likely to be beaten by a trifle like this.

On Tuesday, therefore, when the list was posted, Darrell's name was in it. James McCann was seen to give that list a glance—and if he was not wholly satisfied with it, at least he was satisfied to see the name of R. Darrell there. Had it not been there, certainly there would have been awkward questions. But it was there, and that was all right. Only Bob was not going to be there when St. Chad's came—but that, as yet, was a card up Aubrey's sleeve.

Bob was Aubrey's pal, and he would feel it deeply getting left out of the cricket. But that could not be helped. Friendship could not be allowed to interfere with business—the great and important business of giving McCann a fall. Teddy Seymour said that it was too bad; but, as usual, he followed Aubrey's lead. Plenty of fellows were willing and ready to help. They liked old Bob, but they weren't standing any of his nonsense. If he had "come round" like Tred, they would have welcomed him with open arms and hearts. But there was not the remotest prospect of that—so other measures had to be taken. Bob, like McCann, had to learn where he got off!

**S**T. CHAD'S were not expected before half-past ten in the morning, but there was no school for fellows in the eleven. Less happy mortals had to grind as usual—and in these dismal days at the School for Slackers it was real grinding. No longer did the school slack in the Form-rooms while the cricketers slacked in the field!

Bob's idea, after brekker, was to put in a spell at the nets, by way of getting his hand, in. But Compton proposed a walk down the coombe and a bathe on the sand-ridge, where the Atlantic rollers came sweeping in. And Bob gladly agreed. They made up a party—Darrell and Compton and Seymour and Carter, who were all in the eleven, and Raymond and Peverill and Lacy, who were not.

Bob was in great spirits, looking forward to the day's match—hoping that after all McCann's efforts, the eleven would put up a decent show for once, and perhaps beat St. Chad's. He could not help noticing that his companions seemed in cheery spirits also—with the exception of Teddy, who had rather a hangdog look. They were in a state of happy anticipation—though not of cricket!

"Stop here," said Aubrey, coming to a halt. Down the steep, wooded coombe, near where it opened out on the wide beach, a hut stood. It was used by boating men and fishing men from the school, and for the parking

of boating gear. It was very strongly built, as it had to be to stand the Atlantic wind that sometimes roared up the coombe with almost the force of a hurricane, and the waves which in wild weather dashed on its walls. The door was locked, but Aubrey produced a key and unlocked it.

"Want something out?" asked Bob. "No; somethin' in, old chap!" answered Compton.

Bob did not understand that reply—till he received a sudden barge from Lacy and Carter which sent him spinning headlong into the fishing-hut, where he sat up, tangled in a net.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the fellows outside, excepting Teddy. Teddy murmured inaudibly that it was too bad!

Bob scrambled up, and turned a face red with wrath to the doorway packed with grinning faces. Bob could take a joke—even a rough joke—but this seemed to him rather more than one.

"Look here," he bawled, "what's the game?"

"Stay there, old bean, while I talk to you," said Aubrey. "Listen to the words of wisdom from the jolly old oracle."

"Yes, be a sensible chap, Bob," implored Teddy. "Why the thump do you make your pals have to handle you? Why can't you line up with the rest, like a good chap? That's all we want."

Bob began to realise that he had been walked down the coombe with ulterior motives!

"Put it to him plainly, Aubrey," said Carter. "Don't jaw, Darrell—this is where you listen-in!"

"We're playing St. Chad's to-day, Bob," said Compton, "and we've got a game on to dish the Blighter. He's made us all work at cricket—he's driven us like a lot of galley-slaves, and bully-ragged old Bullock, and bullied Tred—and he thinks he's got us where he wants us. Well, we're goin' to open his eyes when St. Chad's hop along. If you'll back us up, we want you. If not, you cut the game."

"I'd like to see any man make me cut the game!" Bob roared.

"Glad you'd like to see it—for you will shortly, if you don't toe the line," drawled Aubrey. "We're goin' to leave you locked in here—the window's screwed up ready—and you'll kick your heels till we send somebody to let you out."

"Why, you—you—" gasped Bob. "You dare to keep a fellow out of the cricket—do you think even Tred will stand that?"

There was a chuckle from Aubrey & Co.

"Tred's in this," explained Compton. "He's droppin' you out of the team unless you agree to play up. Now, this is the game—we're goin' to let St. Chad's walk off with the match. They can make as many runs as they like for no wickets, and High Coombe's score will be two big noughts."

"One in each innings," explained Peverill. "Every man lets his sticks go down at the first ball."

"Got that, Bob?" asked Aubrey, as Darrell stared at him open-mouthed.

"You're joking!" gasped Bob. "You can't mean it! Even a born slacker like you, Aubrey, wouldn't play such a rotten trick as that."

"It's all cut and dried, old chap, and every man in the eleven is backin' up! Are you doin' the same?"

Bob's face flamed.

"Am I?" he roared. "No! If I'm the only man on the ground that plays the game, I'm going to play it—and hard! Hard as I can!"

"Bob, old fellow—" pleaded Teddy.

"Shut up, Seymour!" said Peverill.

"Where's that key, Aubrey?"

"Just think a minute, Bob!" urged Aubrey. "Nobody wants to treat you like this! But we've got to dish McCann. After all his slave-drivin' he's goin' to see the rottenest show ever. It will be somethin' for him to chew on! Will you back up, old bean?"

"Tred will never—"

"Tred's leadin' us to the jolly old victory!" grinned Compton. "We've got Tred all right!"

"Glorious victory over McCann, under Tred's masterly leadership!" said Carter.

"Well, Bob— Stop him!" yelled Compton, as Bob, by way of answer, charged. He came at the doorway like a bull.

It was not easy to stop Bob. But six fellows packed the doorway and their combined efforts were too much for him. There was a brief but terrific struggle, and Bob went hurtling back into the hut.

The door slammed. The key turned, and Aubrey slipped it into his pocket. Bob, on his feet again, raged in the hut like a lion in a cage.

But he raged in vain. Strong walls, a screwed window, and a locked door were too much for Bob. He thumped. He shouted. He heard Aubrey's cool voice without.

"Changed your mind, Bob?" "You rotter!" roared Darrell. "You cad!"

"Is that the lot?"

"I'll smash you for this!"

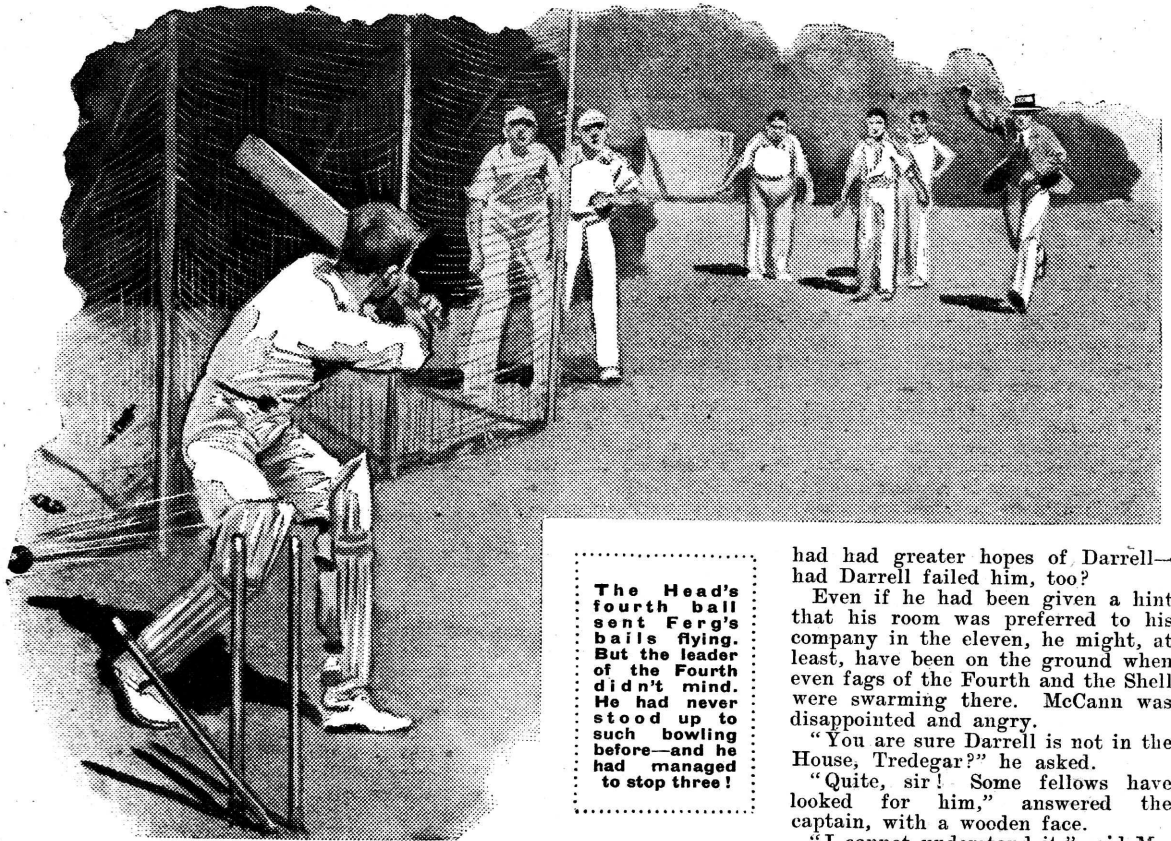
"Dear old Bob!" said Aubrey, unmoved. "Peverill and Lacy, you hang on here and make sure that he doesn't get out! You'll have to cut school, but it's in a good cause."

Tramping feet receded up the coombe. From a chink in the shutter screwed down over the window, Bob had a view of departing backs. For the next ten minutes he was yelling alternate threats and beseechings to Peverill and Lacy.

### The Head Hits Back!

**H**IGH COOMBE, in break, saw the St. Chad's men arrive, and the gathering on Big Side. They were not a great team, and had Tred and his merry men shared such keenness as Ferguson's, and pulled up their socks, they might very well have started the season by beating the Chaddies.

Jimmy McCann nourished a hope that they were going to do it—at the very least, that they were going to put up a respectable show and not to be beaten by an innings and a sackful of runs.



The Head's fourth ball sent Ferg's bails flying. But the leader of the Fourth didn't mind. He had never stood up to such bowling before—and he had managed to stop three!

Bullock, in his white umpire's coat, had a sort of stealthy smile on his face. He knew nothing officially, of course, but he had a very clear idea that that slave-driver, McCann, was going to meet with the surprise of his life—he was going to see a show worse, much worse, than it would ever have been had he left matters entirely in the hands of the games master. Bullock wished him joy of it—though, as a cricketer, he felt, perhaps, a twinge or two.

Jimmy, it was clear, had no suspicion that there was anything in the wind. He was there in company with Chard and Penge, and there was a cheery smile on his healthy, tanned face.

The bell not having yet rung, all High Coombe crowded round—eager! For though the secret of the big idea had been well kept, all the School for Slackers knew that something was on—something beside cricket! Whispers and hints had got abroad that the Blighter was going to get the knock—somehow. Everybody wanted to see him get it. And Jimmy, in the innocence of his heart, was glad to see the fellows crowding up—he took it as a sign of new keenness!

But one thing caught Jimmy's keen eye at once. Darrell was not to be seen. He spoke to Tredegar.

"Where is Darrell?" he asked.

Tredegar had the grace to blush.

"He hasn't come in, sir."

"Hasn't come in!" repeated Mr. McCann blankly. "Do you mean that Darrell has gone out of gates?"

"He went out some time ago. I shall have to play another man," said

Tredegar. "In fact, I've told Wall. He's here."

"Compton!" said McCann. "Do you know where Darrell is?"

"He told me he was going down to bathe this morning, sir."

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed the puzzled headmaster. "But surely Darrell cannot have forgotten that stumps are pitched at ten-forty-five—he cannot have forgotten the match." He glanced round in the expectation of seeing Bob scudding down to the field at the last moment. But there was no sign of a late-comer.

Aubrey gave Tredegar a meaning look. Tred gulped, and explained:

"The fact is, sir, I'm not keen on playing Darrell. You advised me not to hesitate about making changes in the team—" Tred gulped again.

"What?" McCann almost hooted.

"I think that Wall—"

"Don't talk nonsense, Tredegar!" McCann, for once, was irritated out of his usual urbanity. "You are very well aware that Darrell is the best man in your team. You cannot spare him."

Tred looked sulky.

"I can't play a man who's not here," he said, and there was a snap in his voice. "If Darrell chooses to clear off—"

"I cannot understand it," said Mr. McCann. "I thought that Darrell, at least, was keen." He set his lips, revising his opinion of Bob Darrell.

His keen eye had not failed to spot the recent weakening of Tredegar. Was Darrell going the same way? It looked like it. He had had hopes of Tred—and Tred had failed him. He

had had greater hopes of Darrell—had Darrell failed him, too?

Even if he had been given a hint that his room was preferred to his company in the eleven, he might, at least, have been on the ground when even fags of the Fourth and the Shell were swarming there. McCann was disappointed and angry.

"You are sure Darrell is not in the House, Tredegar?" he asked.

"Quite, sir! Some fellows have looked for him," answered the captain, with a wooden face.

"I cannot understand it," said Mr. McCann again.

"Of course, he ought to be here," said Randal gravely. "You whopped me for slacking last week, Tred. I shall expect to see you whop Darrell! Fair play all round."

McCann glanced towards the House. If Darrell was there, he did not choose to come out. McCann had chiefly relied on Darrell that day—he wanted to see Bob go in first and give heart to the team by a good show. And the fellow had gone out—and did not choose to come in. Slack—slack like all the rest. For once, Jimmy McCann was unjust; but he could only judge by what he saw.

The Bullock bustled up.

"What are we waiting for?" he inquired.

"Darrell, sir!" said Aubrey, with silky smoothness. "I'm afraid he rather got his back up when he heard that Tred wasn't keen on playing him—didn't you think so, Teddy?"

"Sort of!" gasped Seymour.

"Anyhow, he's not turned up!" said Aubrey. "He went out of gates some time ago and he hasn't come in."

The Bullock grunted. He did not like Darrell, because Darrell was said to like McCann.

"I shall speak to Darrell about this!" he yapped. "I suppose we are not waiting till Darrell chooses to come—if he does choose, sir?"

"No!" said McCann.

Jimmy seemed to swallow something. His disappointment in Darrell was bitter. But it was necessary to get down to business—and they got down to it—minus Darrell.

Tred won the toss and took first knock. He opened the innings for

## What Price Duck's Eggs!

High Coombe with Randal at the other end.

"Pair of duds!" Ferguson whispered to Donkin. "Randal's half-asleep! Wonder if he'll wake up when his sticks go down."

Tredegar, at the pavilion end, took the bowling. Tred's face was almost crimson. He was, no doubt, rather ashamed of himself and the big idea. But it was too late to back out now. And McCann had told him not to talk nonsense!

Tred tried as hard as he could to feel offended with McCann, as a sort of salve to his conscience. He hoped the Chaddy would send down a difficult ball to play and give him a decent excuse. Instead of which, the bowler trundled down an easy one which the Donkey could have played. High Coombers were accustomed to see High Coombe wickets go down easily, but they rubbed their eyes when the captain of the school was out to that ball!

"Idiot!" said Ferguson.

Tred came away from the wicket with a crimson face. McCann, not yet wise to the game, felt for him.

"Hard luck, Tredegar!" he said; and the wretched Tred felt like kicking himself and kicking Compton. He sneaked away to hide his burning face in the pavilion.

Compton was next man in. He had his pads buckled ready. He gave Mr. McCann a smile as he lounged away to the wicket—a smile that Jimmy remembered afterwards! Compton sent up an easy catch and was out—first ball!

Seymour followed him in—and out! The Chaddies cheered their man for the hat-trick. Hat-tricks, however, were going to be cheap that day.

Corkran of the Sixth went in. It was an almost perfect wicket, and Corky suppressed a sigh. He would have liked to hit a few. But the Big Idea had to be carried out. Corkran let a straight ball trundle by, and the wicketkeeper gazed at him in wonder. Corky walked back to the pavilion. McCann looked at him as he came, and Corky did not meet his eyes.

Carter winked at his friends before he took Corky's place. He left a smiling group at the pavilion—and one face on which thunder was gathering. That one was McCann's. Round the field the High Coombe crowd gazed in wonder and in amusement—Ferguson in angry wrath. Fellows might be rabbits at cricket—but the veriest team of rabbits did not let their sticks go down like this. Four wickets down for nil—what the dickens were they thinking of?

Another minute or two and it was five wickets for no runs. Carter, true to his own suggestion, introduced a little variety by getting out leg-before. He made no mistake about it, either—Carter was born funny. Having deliberately legged the ball, Carter looked round like a performer for applause, and was rewarded by a ripple of laughter from the pavilion.

Wall, the new man in the eleven, took the last ball of the over. Probably he could not have stopped it. At

all events, he didn't, and the wicket-keeper chuckled as he replaced the bails. St. Chad's might have cheered the double hat-trick—but they seemed too astonished to cheer. Some of them were laughing. It was, as Ferg confided to Donkin and Pye, enough to make a cat laugh. At this rate of progress the fellows booked for the Form-rooms would be able to see the home innings out before the bell rang—an unprecedented occurrence, even at the School for Slackers!

McCann's face, by this time, was a study. It was dawning on him. It was a "rag"!

It was dawning upon the spectators, too! Grinning looks were exchanged among them. It was a rag on the Blighter—a terrific rag! A gorgeous rag! The kind of rag that made history in a school. Everybody knew, now, what was going to happen when the field crossed.

**T**HEY watched it happen. Randal, as Ferg had foreseen, woke up to find his wicket in bits. Seven down for nil! Randy walked back to the pavilion with the air of a man who was glad that his day's work was done. He had exerted himself more than the other men. He had had to stand there in the sunshine while six wickets went down at the other end.

But he was out himself now, and able to take the rest to which he was entitled. The expression on McCann's face was sheer joy to Randy. This was the blighter who had made old Tred whop him for slacking! Randy felt that this day had been worth living for.

Coffin and Carew were partners now. Jimmy McCann's jaw shut like a vice as he watched them. Carew had the bowling, in Randal's place, and by this time Jimmy was not surprised to see a middle stump hooked out undefended. He opened his lips to speak to Burke, next on the list, but closed them again. What was the use of speaking?

Burke went in, and there was quite a murmur of surprise when he hit the ball. But as he dropped a beautiful sitter into the hands of point, it cut no ice!

Last man in! It was Tunstall of the Sixth. The bell was ringing for class now, and the pack of onlookers round the field should have cleared off to the Form-rooms. But not a man heeded the bell. Since Jimmy McCann had become headmaster of High Coombe, fellows had learned to be prompt and early, lest worse should befall them. But on this occasion they paid no heed to the bell.

They simply had to see that remarkable innings out. Obviously, it wasn't going to take long. There was a ripple of laughter in anticipation round the field. This was some rag! Last wicket lasted just long enough for the bowler to send the ball down. Tunstall watched it knock his leg stump over, and came away.

Coffin, at the other end, had the glory of being "not out"—a thing that couldn't be helped! But he was not out—for nil!

The crowd broke away, roaring

with laughter as they made for the House. Grinning faces at the pavilion surrounded Mr. McCann. Some fellows said that the Bullock winked at Mr. Chard; certainly the Fifth Form master had a wide smile on his plump face as he walked away. There was no smile on Jimmy McCann's.

Everybody else was smiling or laughing—especially the St. Chad's men. The Chaddies were looking forward to telling about this when they got back—and setting St. Chad's in a roar with the story. A score of eleven noughts was really a tale worth telling.

Aubrey, cool and disdainful, watched McCann, wondering whether the Blighter would break out. Some of the others felt a little uneasy. It was a great rag. But how was the Blighter going to take it? After all, what could he do? He could do nothing—absolutely nothing—and Aubrey would have been glad to see him break out into impotent anger. That would have been another score for the cheery Aubrey.

McCann did not break out. He walked away to the House, leaving a grinning and rejoicing mob behind him. What he was feeling and thinking they could guess, and he did not tell them. The Bullock smiled when he was gone. He thought it possible that the meddling bargee had learned, now, that it was wiser not to meddle!

**I**F Jimmy McCann saw any more of that remarkable fixture, it was only from a window. Aubrey hoped that he gave it an occasional squint! Really, in its own way, it was worth watching. As an entertainment it could have had few equals. The St. Chad's innings was as good, in its way, as the home innings. Not a wicket fell.

The two men who went in stayed in as long as they liked, and hit up runs off bowling which would have been easy stuff for a blind man. They could have batted all day if they had liked; nobody was going to get them out. But when the score stood at a hundred for no wicket, St. Chad's declared.

There was still time before lunch for High Coombe to bat again—and to complete their innings, too! For the second innings was a repetition of the first. Eleven duck's eggs were changed into eleven pairs of spectacles! St. Chad's enjoyed their lunch—though some of them were laughing almost too much to eat. Happy grins adorned High Coombe faces—with the exception of Bob Darrell's!

Teddy had cut down the coombe to let Bob out—and he came back too dismal and miserable even to find solace in punching Aubrey's head!

After the St. Chad's men were gone—unexpectedly early—the School for Slackers rejoiced in their remarkable victory over the Blighter McCann.

Just before tea, a happy crowd in Big Study was still bubbling with victorious satisfaction—Tred, stifling twinges of conscience, happy in unbounded popularity among his old friends. Carter came and opened the

# This Week's Autographs Contest!

Another  
**72** Hand-Written  
AUTOGRAPHS  
of Famous  
CRICKETERS

FREE  
for  
ALL

Special Extra Prize  
Autographed Bat  
specially signed for  
"Modern Boy" by the  
S. African Test Team

## Read How To Enter For These Prizes

**A** NOTHER fine Autographs Contest this week! Your Editor has some *Actual Hand-Written Autographs* of Famous Cricketers, and he is now giving them away week by week in a simple contest which you and your friends can enter. This is all you have to do. *Sign your own name* in the top left-hand space on the coupon below, and add your age and address in the spaces provided at the side. Then persuade *five* of your pals to add their autographs, ages and addresses, too, in the other spaces. Each form should contain six actual signatures including your own, and be completed in *ink*. Then place it in a properly stamped envelope and address it to:

"Signatures" No. 2, MODERN BOY, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.),

so that it reaches there not later than Wednesday, July 3rd, the closing date. Now if you entered last week's contest, you can still join in this one—just fill in your own signature, etc., at the top of the coupon, only be careful to get five *other* pals (different from your last week's collection) to give you their autographs and addresses. You should make a point of doing this, as it will put you in the running for the Special Bat Prize as explained below!

From this week's entries the Editor will select the two sets of autographs, which in his opinion are the best written and indicate the most character for the ages. The twelve competitors whose names appear on the winning coupons will each receive a free set of six genuine, hand-written cricketers' signatures. Only entries on the proper forms will be accepted. The Editor's decision will be final and employees of the proprietors of MODERN BOY must not compete.

**THE SPECIAL PRIZE!** In addition to the hand-written signatures, your Editor has secured a Cricket Bat containing the signatures of all the South African Touring Side now in England, and this he is keeping as a special prize for the fellow who sends in the greatest number of signatures during the run of the competition, thus giving you *two* fine prize opportunities! Full details for the claiming of this prize will be given in "Signatures" Contest No. 6, but, meanwhile, get busy and secure as many of your pals' signatures each week as you can. Note that each form sent must contain six different names and be sure to *keep a note* of how many signatures you send in each week.

## MODERN BOY "Signatures" Competition No. 2

Autographs

Ages

—and full Addresses Here

<u>Autographs</u>	<u>Ages</u>	<u>—and full Addresses Here</u>

2

## Nothing To Pay—A New Offer Each Week!

door of Big Study and looked in—with so startled a face that the buzz of cheery talk broke off, and all the men in the room stared at him. He seemed unable to speak.

"What—" began half a dozen fellows. Aubrey Compton felt his heart beat! Had the Blighter somehow done something?

"Come and see!" gasped Carter, at last.

They came—and saw! They packed in front of the school notice-board, where there was a new notice up, in the headmaster's hand. They gazed at it—unbelieving, dumbfounded. It was brief, but fearfully to the point:

"J. A. Ferguson, Fourth Form, is appointed Captain of Cricket.—  
J. McCANN, Headmaster."

"Ferguson Captain of Cricket!" exclaimed Aubrey. "A fag given authority over us! What utter bosh! I'm not standin' for that!" And his hand reached to tear the Head's notice from the board.

Corkran, the head prefect, shot out a hand and caught Aubrey's arm.

"Don't be an ass, Compton!" he said. "It's no use tearing the notice down. It won't get rid of Ferguson as Captain of Cricket, but it will land you in for a licking."

"But—but, dash it all," stammered Aubrey, "the man's gone too far! He's mad! We can't take this lying down—we've got to show him that we don't intend to put up with this nonsense! A fag runnin' the cricket—it's unthinkable! We shall be a laughing-stock!"

"Serves you jolly well right!" said

Bob Darrell, who had just arrived on the scene. "You would make a fool of the Head, and now he's going to get his own back. Why the dickens don't you admit he's top-dog, and that it's useless to kick against him and his ways? He get his own way in the long run, and beats you every time!"

"We're not beaten yet!" retorted Aubrey. "The Blighter can make a fag Captain of Cricket, but he can't jolly well make us play under the kid. You leave it to me—I'll find a way of dishing him!"

*More easily said than done! But Aubrey's a trier—and things get extra lively at the School for Slackers in next Saturday's story, "CAPTAIN—AND FAG!"*