

TEST MATCH BAT & CRICKETERS' AUTOGRAPHS Offered Inside!

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SUPER MIDGET—THE NEW ONE HORSE-POWER CAR!—See page 17

ASKING for the SACK!

The leader of the Rebels at the SCHOOL FOR SLACKERS challenges the live-wire Head, JIMMY McCANN, to expel him—and gets the medicine he DOESN'T want!

By

CHARLES HAMILTON



A Job for the Donkey!

DONKIN of the Fourth looked startled and dismayed when Bob Darrell came into Study No. 3. His jaw dropped, and he blinked at Bob, with his mouth open, like a fish out of water.

Aubrey Compton frowned. Teddy Seymour, sitting on the radiogram in the corner of the study, grinned.

Bob stared round the study. It was his own study, which he shared with Compton and Seymour, and he did not understand why his sudden entrance should have caused such dismay. Neither did he understand why Donkin was there.

Since the new headmaster, the Blighter McCann, had abolished fagging for the Fifth, Fourth Form juniors had no business in Fifth Form studies.

Bob was in flannels and had his bat under his arm. He looked ruddy and cheerful, after strenuous sloggng at the nets. Even the fact that McCann had appointed a junior—Ferguson of the Fourth—Captain of Cricket had not fed Bob up with the game, though it had fed-up every other High Coombe senior to the chin!

Fed-up or not, however, they had learned to heed the notices concerning games practice which Ferguson posted on the board. Ferg, backed by the Head, saw to that!

After "three" that day there had been Senior Nets from 4 p.m. to 5.15 p.m., presided over by the cheery Ferg. Not a man had ventured to cut. But when the quarter chimed from the clock tower, they had vanished like ghosts. Only Bob had remained

on the cricket ground, with Ferguson, when the exact stipulated time had expired.

Ferg, junior as he was, was developing great powers as a bowler, and Darrell was the best bat in the Fifth, so they had enjoyed quite a happy half-hour after they were left with the nets to themselves. Then Bob came cheerily in to tea, and was surprised to find that his coming had rather the effect of a bombshell in his own study.

There was no sign of tea, so far, in Study No. 3. Whatever Donkin was there for, it was not for fagging. Aubrey Compton looked annoyed, and gave the Donkey a swift glance of warning. Donkin had a letter in his hand, which he had been about to transfer to his pocket. Startled by Bob's sudden appearance, he stood with it still in his hand, gaping at Bob.

Glances of warning were wasted on Donkin; he was not quick on the uptake. He was called the Donkey not without reason.

"Well, what's up?" asked Bob Darrell, rather gruffly. It was plain that something was up.

"Cut, Donkin!" said Aubrey, curtly.

"Yes, Compton!" stammered the Donkey. "I—I say, did you say the back door at the Okeham Arms?"

"Cut, you little idiot!"

Donkin made an uneasy movement towards the door, with a doubtful eye on Darrell.

Bob Darrell, setting his lips, shut the door and put his back to it. There was a gleam in his blue eyes.

Mr. Garger gave a husky gasp as the Head stepped round the corner of the barn. Aubrey Compton, facing Garger, had his back to Jimmy McCann. But the look on Joe Garger's face was enough to tell Aubrey that something was wrong!

"Stick where you are, kid!" he said. "You're not going yet."

"Let that kid pass, Bob!" said Aubrey quietly, his own eyes gleaming, too. "He's taking a message for me—"

"To the back door of the Okeham Arms!" said Bob, scornfully. "Well, he's jolly well doing nothing of the kind, see? If McCann spotted him it would mean a flogging for the poor little beast. You ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself, Aubrey!"

"Sermon may be taken as read," drawled Aubrey. "Get away from the door!"

"Go and eat coke!"

Donkin blinked from one to the other, quite at a loss. The hapless Donkey was by no means keen on carrying Aubrey's message to a bookie at the Okeham Arms. He dared not object—but he would have been rather relieved if Darrell's objection had been made good. On the other hand, he was in dread of Aubrey's elegant and well-fitting shoe being planted on his trousers. Anyhow, he could not get out of Study No. 3 with Bob's hefty figure guarding the door. So he stood where he was, in dismay.

Aubrey rose from his armchair. His well-cut lips were set and his brow knitted.

"Will you get away from that door, old bean?" he asked.

Asking for the Sack!

"No!" answered Bob.

"I shall shift you!"

"Get on with it!"

Teddy Seymour made a bound from his seat on the radiogram. He rushed between just in time. The peace-maker of Study No. 3 often had strenuous times keeping the peace in that study. He shoved Bob back against the door with one hand, Aubrey back against the table with the other.

"Now, chuck it!" urged Teddy. "What's the good of raggin'? There's been nothing but raggin' and rowin' in this study ever since the Blighter blew into High Coombe. Can't you mind your own bizney, Bob?"

"No!" said Bob.

"Well, look here, Aubrey, chuck it, then! After all, very likely Snoozle will lose—"

"Shut up, you ass!"

"You know what those dead certs are!" argued Teddy. "I dare say you'd be glad in a day or two if your bet never got to Garger. Sec?"

"Fathead!"

Teddy, realising that there was nothing doing so far as Aubrey was concerned, turned to Bob again. Really, it was a hard life for a peace-maker in Study No. 3 at High Coombe.

"Look here, Bob, you chuck it!" urged Teddy, beseechingly. "What do you want to barge in for? Aubrey's got a tip for the two o'clock at Okeham on Wednesday—sort of thing you put your shirt on! He can get four to one against Snoozle, if he gets on to-day! Sec?"

"Rot!" said Bob briefly.

"Look here, you ass, we always used to have somethin' on the races when Dr. Chetwode was here!" said Teddy, indignantly. "Think we're goin' to change all our manners and customs because that bargee McCann is Head?"

"We've changed some of them," said Bob sarcastically. "We do some work in the Form-rooms now, and we even play cricket after a fashion. And it's time we changed a few more. That fag isn't going to be sent to the Okeham Arms! He's not going out of this room till that note's had a match put to it!"

Aubrey pushed back his spotless cuffs. Considering how unlike they were in ways and tastes, it was surprising that Compton and Darrell were friends at all. But it was a chequered friendship.

"Will you stand aside, Darrell?" asked Aubrey.

"No!"

The next moment Compton's grasp was on Bob Darrell, and they were struggling fiercely.

In the Wrong Hands!

BOB, sinewy and hefty, was more than a match for the elegant Aubrey. But Aubrey had plenty of muscle, lots of determination, and an unyielding temper. Nothing would have induced him to give way—not so much because he was fearfully keen to back Snoozle

for the two o'clock on Wednesday as because such transactions were strictly and severely forbidden by the Blighter.

Aubrey was the great chief of the resistance put up by the School for Slackers against the new headmaster—the new broom that was making such a clearance of dear old privileges and traditions. Anything that was forbidden by James McCann had an irresistible attraction for Compton of the Fifth.

Aubrey, to tell the truth, liked Mr. Garger, the bookmaker at the Okeham Arms, no more than Bob did. With his fat red face, his odour of tobacco and spirits, his red-spotted tie, his bowler hat a little on one side, Mr. Garger offended all Aubrey's fastidious nerves. It would have made the dandy of the Fifth shudder to be seen in public with Mr. Garger.

Even in his betting transactions with him, Aubrey preferred to send messages by fags, instead of seeing the man himself. But backing his fancy with Mr. Garger was part and parcel of the resistance to McCann. It was Aubrey's fixed determination to carry on just the same as in the days of the sleepy old headmaster, whom the fellows had called Rip van Winkle, and to treat James McCann as an undesirable interloper not to be seriously regarded. And Darrell was not going to stop him!

But Aubrey suddenly landed on his back and sprawled, gasping.

"Oh, I say!" murmured the Donkey.

Bob, panting for breath, turned to the fag.

"Give me that note!" he snapped.

"Don't!" panted Aubrey, sitting up, breathlessly.

Bob grasped the fag by the collar. Aubrey bounded up and rushed at him again. Bob, grasped by the shoulder, had to let go the fag. He grasped Aubrey again, and they struggled.

"For goodness' sake!" gasped Teddy. "You men, for goodness' sake—Oh my hat! Oh scissors! Whoop!"

The struggling pair crashed into him and sent him spinning. Teddy crashed on the radiogram and slid to the floor, spluttering, and Bob stumbled over him and landed on him with a bump. There was an agonised gasp from Teddy as all the wind was driven out of him.

Aubrey rolled over on Bob. Teddy, under the two, realised what it was like to be a pancake. Bob struggled, but Aubrey, for the moment, had the upper hand. Pinning Bob down on the wriggling Teddy, Compton shouted over his shoulder to Donkin:

"Cut, you silly little idiot! I'll jolly well boot you if you don't cut!"

The door slammed; pattering feet raced down the steps and along the passage. The Donkey was gone!

"You rotter, Aubrey!" roared Bob. "You silly ass, Darrell!" snarled Aubrey.

"Ooogh!" came from Teddy, in tones like those of an expiring frog.

The door reopened. Carter, Peverill, Haddon, Warren, and several other Fifth Form men stared in. The uproar in Study No. 3 had reached other studies.

"What's the name of this game?" asked Carter.

"Ooogh!"—from Teddy. "Drag-emoff! Ooogh!"

Darrell and Compton got off the suffering Teddy. They separated, glaring at one another. Teddy lay gurgling for breath on the carpet.

Aubrey was cool again at once. He was dusty, untidy, dishevelled—a very disagreeable state to the dandy of the Fifth. But he had gained his point. The Donkey was gone. By that time he was out of the House, cutting down to the gates. Aubrey smiled.

"Chuck it, old man!" he said. "You can't help being a fool, Bob, but you jolly well know that you shouldn't have barged in."

Bob, scowling, gave Seymour a hand up and landed him in an armchair. Then he stepped to the window and looked out.

Aubrey grinned. If Bob was thinking of cutting after Donkin and recapturing that note to Mr. Garger, there was nothing in it. Donkin was well on his way to the gates; and even Darrell could hardly have thought of running him down in the quadrangle and making a scene under the eyes of all High Coombe.

But Aubrey's grin faded away as he saw the expression gathering on Bob's face at the window. Darrell gazed down into the quad with a fixed expression of alarm and horror. The colour faded from his ruddy cheeks.

"Aubrey! You ass, you've done it now!" he groaned. "Look!"

AUBREY COMPTON ran to the window. The other Fifth Form men joined him there, to stare down. Even the breathless Teddy heaved himself out of the armchair to join the crowd at the study window. And what they saw fully accounted for the horror in Bob's dismayed face.

Donkin was half-way to the gates, running—till he was stopped suddenly by a stocky figure in his path. It was the figure of the new headmaster—the Blighter McCann!

He held up his hand to Donkin, and the fag stopped. What the new headmaster said was, of course, inaudible to the bunch of fellows at an upper window at a distance. But they could see the dismay and terror in the Donkey's face.

Aubrey caught his breath. Did the Blighter know? The masters were against him, so far as they could venture; the boys were against him; his supporters in the school numbered only two—Darrell of the Fifth and Ferguson of the Fourth. Yet, somehow, the keen-witted Blighter seemed to know everything that went on at the School for Slackers.

But even if he had known nothing, a less keen-witted man than Jimmy McCann might have read much in the terror and dismay of the Donkey. Guilt was written all over him.

If ever a fellow's face showed that he was up to something that he shouldn't be up to it was Donkin's!

Watching from the window, dumb with horror, the Fifth Form men saw Donkin slip his hand into his pocket and draw therefrom a note. That

note he handed over to the headmaster.

Aubrey's teeth came together hard. He knew that it was his note to Mr. Garger that had been handed over. The Blighter, evidently, had suspected something. Now he knew!

Donkin limped away—not towards the gates now. James McCann put the note into his pocket and walked towards the House. He did not look up, and his face was expressionless; yet Darrell had an impression that he knew that a bunch of eager faces watched him from the window of Study No. 3. He disappeared into the House.

"AUBREY, old man—" Bob muttered. Anger and hostility were forgotten now. All Bob thought of now was that his pal was "for it."

"I say, what was in that note?" asked Carter.

Aubrey was conscious of a cold chill down his back. But he was superbly calm. Whatever might be coming to him, it should never be said that he lacked the nerve to face the music.

"Only a note from me to Garger," he said lightly. "I want him to put a fiver on Snoozle for me to-morrow."

"There was a general gasp. "And McCann's got hold of it!" gasped Peverill.

"Looks like it. I'll boot Donkin!" "Oh, you ass!" groaned Bob. "You won't be here to boot anybody! It's the sack, you ass—it's the sack, you fathead!"

Aubrey shrugged his shoulders. "Was your name on the note?" asked Carter.

"Only my initials. But, of course, the Blighter will know my fist," said Aubrey, still with superb calm. "If the cad's lookin' for an excuse to sack a man, he's got me!"

"Oh, Aubrey, old man!" mumbled Teddy. "If—if you'd listened to old Bob—"

Aubrey smiled. It was not easy, in the circumstances, to smile, but Aubrey smiled!

"What about tea?" he asked. "Tea!" repeated Bob and Teddy blankly.

"It's tea-time!" Aubrey pointed out.

"Well, you're a card, Aubrey, old man," said Carter; and the Fifth Form men left the study—to spread the news that Compton was in all probability up for the sack, and that he was taking it as calmly as if getting sacked from school was a trifling everyday experience.

When they were gone No. 3 sat down to tea. Bob and Teddy had little appetite. They were dismal and worried. But Aubrey, as usual, was superb.

"It may not be the sack!" said Bob hopefully. "I know jolly well that McCann wants to get through without sackin' if he can. He's had lots of cause already. But—but this is so awfully thick—backing horses with a putrid tick like that man Garger—"

"Who's butterin' the toast?" inquired Aubrey.

His chums could almost have wept. But Aubrey refused to be shaken. If, in his heart of hearts, he was in dread of what was coming, he gave no sign of it.

What was coming? That was the question. In less than an hour nearly everybody at High Coombe knew what had happened—and was wondering, with intense eagerness and excitement, what was going to happen next. In No. 3, from moment to moment, they expected Liggins with a message from the Head.

But there was no message from the Head. And as another hour and another ticked away, excitement grew more intense. What was the

Head waiting for? What was going to happen?

A Ripe Old Excuse!

WHAT was to happen? Nothing! High Coombe fellows could not believe it—least of all Aubrey. Yet nothing happened!

The Blighter had in his hands a note written by a High Coombe senior to a bookmaker—a particularly disreputable bookmaker, so very disreputable that he was in bad odour even with other racing men. It was more than enough to get a fellow sacked! And he was doing—nothing!

It was amazing. Corkran of the Sixth suggested in Big Study that he hadn't, perhaps, recognised the writing and didn't know the initials. But that suggestion would not hold water for a moment. More than once, the Blighter had "barged" into Chard's Form-room and taken the Fifth in class—he knew the "fist" of every fellow in that Form.

Moreover, the miserable Donkey, duly and thoroughly kicked, was questioned, and he admitted that he had let out to McCann that Compton of the Fifth had handed him that note. What else, wailed the suffering Donkey, could a fellow do with McCann's eye boring into him, and the danger of a flogging overhanging him? Never had a fag been so conscientiously booted as the Donkey was booted, if that could have done any good!

The whole school, of course, sympathised with Aubrey, and many expressed their sympathy by giving Donkin a booting. They felt that it



Startled and laughing eyes were centred on the dandy of the Fifth as he walked in at the school gates arm in arm with the frowsy Garger, followed by the Head!

Asking for the Sack!

was the least they could do! What Donkin admitted under the bootings set all doubts at rest—McCann knew that that note was Compton's.

Yet he did—nothing!

Bob Darrell had a fixed belief that James McCann was trying to carry through the reform of the School for Slackers without sacking a single man from High Coombe. Aubrey, on the other hand, held a view that the Blighter dared not sack a man—especially such a man as himself, son of an influential member of the governing body.

But if one or both of them was right, though that accounted for no expulsion, it did not account for McCann dropping the matter entirely. Before McCann's coming there had been a tradition that the Fifth were not whipped. That was one of the many traditions in the School for Slackers that McCann had coolly and cheerfully disregarded. Since his coming, Fifth Form men had been whipped, when it was for their good. Even if the new Head did not care, or did not dare, to sack the superb Aubrey, he certainly did dare to whip him, for he had done so more than once! A flogging or a whipping instead of the sack—that might reasonably have been looked for. But the Blighter did nothing at all!

At prep that evening Aubrey was smiling—with less effort than previously. Bob was puzzled, but relieved. The volatile Teddy was in great spirits. It seemed that it had blown over—how and why nobody could say—but facts were facts. Even Aubrey did not suspect McCann of playing with him, like a cat with a mouse. If he had been going to act, he would have acted before this—and he had not acted.

IN Hall in the morning many eyes turned on Mr. McCann, at the head of the prefects' table, at breakfast.

Jimmy always breakfasted with the school—one of the new institutions! And fellows no longer lounged in when the meal was half over. McCann, that morning, chatted with some of the prefects in his usual urbane manner—Corkran and Randal and Coffin. He seemed unaware of the general interest with which he was regarded, especially from the Fifth Form table.

He did not even glance at Compton. Aubrey undoubtedly felt bucked when the Fifth went to Mr. Chard's Form-room. It was all right, after all—the Blighter, it seemed to Aubrey, had funked it. He told his friends so in the low-voiced conversation that went on in Form-room during class. Teddy nodded assent—he could make nothing else of it. Bob Darrell grunted scornfully.

"You're an ass, Aubrey!" he growled. "I can't get on to why McCann hasn't dropped on you—he's got a reason, though goodness knows what it is. But that man funk it—rot!"

"Why hasn't he done something, then?" asked Teddy.

"Goodness knows! May be letting

Aubrey off with the fright!" said Bob.

Aubrey's lip curled.

"I'm not exactly frightened of a dashed usher!" he drawled. "The man's bothered me rather by interceptin' that note. It's givin' me the trouble of goin' to see Garger myself. That's all!"

"You can't be mad enough!" breathed Bob. "Even you, Aubrey! Now he knows he will keep his eye on you! If you're nailed you can't expect him to let you off a second time. Have a little sense."

"Yes, old man," said Teddy, always the follower of the last speaker. "Don't risk it, Aubrey!"

"McCann barks, but he won't bite!" said Aubrey disdainfully. "I'm goin' to see Garger in break."

"You're not!" hissed Bob. "Fellows aren't allowed out of gates in break, for one thing—"

"I can get leave from Chard to go down to Bullock's." Mr. Bullock, the games master, lived outside the school. Going down to speak to Bullock was a ripe old excuse for getting out of gates.

"You'd never get to Okeham and back before the third school—"

"Garger's goin' to wait for me at the corner by the barn," drawled Aubrey. "He's doin' the walkin'."

"Then you've got word to him?" said Bob, aghast.

"How did you get word to him, old chap?" asked Teddy.

"Chard's got a telephone. He lets me use his phone—I had to ring up about gettin' a new hat. Somehow they gave me the Okeham Arms number, and I got Garger."

"I wasn't ass enough to talk gee-goes on the phone, of course. But Garger's walkin' up to the old barn this mornin', and I'm seein' him there in break. Why not?"

"Why not?" said Bob dazedly. "Are you trying to make it impossible for McCann to keep from turfin' you out of High Coombe?"

"He doesn't dare turf a man out," said Aubrey, coolly. "And I'm not mentionin' to him that I'm goin' out to see Garger. One doesn't confide these little matters to a headmaster."

"There's nothing McCann doesn't dare," retorted Bob. "I tell you he'll turf you out quickly enough if you carry on with this mad idea. Give it up!"

But Aubrey was not to be moved.

When the Fifth were dismissed in break, Bob Darrell's face was dark and clouded. He was intensely angry with his heedless chum, and intensely anxious about him. Why McCann had spared him he did not know, but he knew that Aubrey was mistaken as to the Head's motives. The dandy of the Fifth was asking for it—sitting up and begging for it. Chard willingly gave him leave to go down to Bullock's, but though the Head was not to be seen Bob did not believe that Aubrey would escape his eye. McCann could hardly fail to keep that keen eye open after the note that had fallen into his hands the previous day.

It was in Bob's mind to collar his chum by force and drag him off to the study, and sit on his head there

till the bell rang for third school. But while he was considering that drastic measure Aubrey slipped away and disappeared.

Compton's Friend!

MR. GARGER touched his shiny bowler hat very respectfully to Aubrey Compton. His red nose shone back the sunrays, and he breathed an aroma of spirits and cigars. These little details, added to his crimson beer-stained waistcoat, his spotted tie, his rolled gold ring, his baggy trousers, and the rest of his get-up, offended every fastidious nerve in Compton's system. Undoubtedly, Mr. Garger was a blot on the landscape.

It required all Aubrey's self-restraint to keep from betraying his repulsion in his face. Never, Aubrey thought, had he beheld so absolutely offensive an outsider as Joe Garger. But Joe had his uses—a schoolboy who wanted to back his fancy could not do so through any respectable medium—it was Garger or nobody. Aubrey was glad that it was a quiet and secluded spot behind the old barn, at the corner of Coombe Lane, and that no eye was likely to fall on them there.

"Four to one, certainly, sir," said Mr. Garger. "And you got a good 'orse in Snoozle, sir! The bloke what told you about Snoozle knew something! That 'orse—"

Mr. Garger got no further. He stopped and gave a husky gasp as a stocky figure stepped round the corner of the barn.

His fishy eyes widened till they seemed about to fall out of his greasy face at the sight of the headmaster of High Coombe.

Aubrey Compton, facing him, had his back to Mr. McCann. But the look on Joe Garger's face was enough. He spun round.

For a moment the Devon moors, the green tors, the coombes, and the blue sky seemed to spin round Aubrey. He was caught! If ever there was a fair catch this was it! Standing there, in conversation with the beery bookmaker, he faced his headmaster, and for once Aubrey's superb nerve deserted him.

Garger stood speechless. Apart from his awe of the High Coombe headmaster, apart from his uncomfortable knowledge that that hefty young man could have knocked him out with a single punch, there were certain legal penalties attached to Mr. Garger's way of carrying on the betting business. Mr. Garger would have given at that moment all that he had ever gained by welsling to be safe away from that spot.

Aubrey crimsoned.

What was the Head going to do? Sack him? He had a moment of clear vision, and knew very clearly that McCann would sack him as soon as look at him if the spirit moved him to do so. But was old Bob right—was McCann trying to get through without expelling any High Coombe man? From the bottom of his heart Aubrey hoped that Bob was right!

It was only for a moment or two, but it seemed an age before the Head

spoke. And when he did speak what he said was unexpected. Jimmy McCann often said, and did, unexpected things.

"Good-morning, Mr. Garger!" he said quietly.

Mr. Garger would not have been surprised if Jimmy had scarified him with his tongue, if he had reported him to the local police—even if he had knocked him down. But that polite greeting flummoxed him. He could only blink.

"A friend of yours, Compton?" asked Mr. McCann, in the same urbane tone.

Aubrey could not speak; he managed to nod. For a dizzy moment he wondered whether McCann knew who and what Garger was. Perhaps he didn't! If he did, his line of action was simply a mystery.

"No doubt you have leave out of gates in break, Compton?" said Mr. McCann.

Aubrey managed to nod again.

"Mr. Chard, no doubt, gave you leave?"

Another nod. Words simply would not come.

"To meet this friend of yours?"

"To go down to Bullock's, sir," Aubrey managed to articulate. "I—I met Garger by—by—"

He was about to say by accident. But the quiet contempt in Mr. McCann's face stopped him. He set his lips. He would not lie to this bargee! He would take what was coming to him, but he would not lower himself in the eyes of the man he loathed. He did not finish the sentence.

"I think you deluded Mr. Chard, Compton, and came out specially to meet this friend of yours," said Mr. McCann.

"Yes, I did," answered Aubrey, sullenly. The Blighter should see that he was not going to skulk behind a lie, at any rate.

"I disapprove of this," said Mr. McCann gravely. "High Coombe boys should not meet their friends in this secret and surreptitious way. Why not bring your friend into the school, Compton?"

Compton only stared.

"That," said Mr. McCann, "I must insist upon! You have walked from Okeham, I presume, Mr. Garger?"

"Urrrrr—yes!" gasped Mr. Garger.

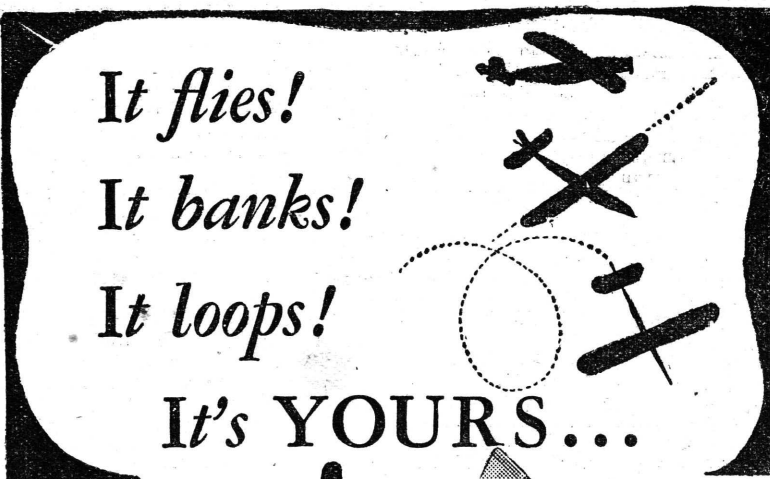
"Probably you will be glad of a rest and a spot of lunch before you walk back in this hot weather," said McCann considerably. "Compton, take your friend into the school."

Mr. Garger wondered whether this was an extraordinary dream. He had always had a lurking dread of uncomfortable results if his dealings with High Coombe boys became known to the headmaster. Instead of which, this amazing young man was asking him to the school—to stop to lunch!

Compton's face from red had become white. He hated the idea of anyone seeing him in company with Mr. Garger. Now he was bidden to walk that frowsy gentleman into High Coombe, as a friend to stay to lunch. He stood rooted.

"Do you hear me, Compton?" Mr.

(Continued on next page)



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Asking for the Sack!

McCann's voice was still urbane, but there was a note in it not to be mistaken—or disobeyed. "I cannot allow you to meet your friend in this surreptitious manner, out of gates, but I allow you—in fact, order you—to take him into the school. Proceed!"

He, Aubrey Compton, the dandy of the Fifth, the glass of fashion and the mould of form at High Coombe, the most fastidious fellow in the School for Slackers—he was to take this blot on the landscape into the school, as a friend, and let all the fellows see them together! Aubrey felt that he would rather perish!

He stood glued to the ground behind the old barn.

"I am waiting, Compton!" said McCann, in an ominous voice.

He did not need to say more. So far from not daring to sack a High Coombe man, it was not even necessary for him to mention that if Compton disobeyed him now Compton would catch the next train for home! Aubrey knew it without being told.

Sacked! And for consorting with disreputable characters outside the school—what an explanation to give at home! His father, Colonel Compton, was quite a tremendous man on the Governing Board. But he could not help him, sacked on such a charge! Indeed, the fierce old colonel was more likely to reach for his stick when he heard how and why his son had been sacked.

Compton moved. His face was colourless with rage. His eyes burned. But he obeyed. He almost tottered towards the lane.

"You are forgetting your friend, Compton!" said Mr. McCann, with grave irony. "You must not forget your friend, Compton! Take your friend's arm, Compton, and walk in at the gates!"

"My eye!" said Mr. Garger, addressing space. He was in quite a bemused state with overwhelming astonishment by this time.

"I—I—" Compton panted. Silently, white with fury, he took

Mr. Garger's frowzy arm and walked him down to the school gates.

Awful for Aubrey!

FERGUSON of the Fourth spotted them first, and howled:

"Look!"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Tredegar, Captain of High Coombe. "Compton and—who—what—"

Old Judd, the porter, looked, and almost fell down. Bob Darrell stood transfixed. Teddy Seymour gasped. The quad was crowded with fellows. Startled eyes were on the dandy of the Fifth as he walked in at the school gates arm-in-arm with the frowzy Garger.

"Is he mad?" gasped Corkran.

"It's Garger!" shrieked Ferguson. "Garger the bookie—the man who was run in for scrapping with a bobby in Okeham!"

"There's the Head!" articulated Bob Darrell. "What does it mean? He's caught Aubrey, but what—"

"Who's your friend, Compton?" called out Babbie of the Shell.

The Head followed them in with a grave face. Mr. Chard could scarcely believe his protruding eyes.

"Compton!" he gasped.

Compton could not speak. His white face was scarlet now, under the amazed stare of all High Coombe.

Mr. McCann answered the Fifth Form master:

"This man is a friend of Compton, Mr. Chard! I fear that Compton deluded you in asking for leave to go down to Mr. Bullock's. In fact, he went out to meet this friend."

"He is staying to lunch with Compton, Mr. Chard. A place will be laid for him at the Fifth Form table. I cannot allow Compton to meet his friends surreptitiously out of gates, Mr. Chard!"

The bell rang for Third School, and High Coombe trooped into the Form-rooms in a buzz of excitement and laughter. Even the stately prefects of the Sixth were grinning.

There was something dramatic, at least, about the "sack"—and a fellow could carry off a flogging by

a display of cool hardihood. But ridicule and humiliation cut deeper. Walking across the quad, under the eyes of the school, arm-in-arm with that beery, frowzy loafer from a public-house, made the hapless dandy of the Fifth writhe with shame.

In the Fifth Form room in Third School he sat with a burning face. Chard glared at him so intensely angry and irritated that he quite forgot that Compton was his favourite in the Form.

"Compton," he trumpeted, "you are a disgrace to this Form! I am ashamed of you! How dare you associate with such—such—such—Pah! You are a disgrace to High Coombe, Compton!"

Compton very nearly told him to shut up!

Seldom had High Coombe been so eager for dismissal from class. Everybody wanted to see whether "Compton's friend" was still about the school.

He was! Possibly it had dawned on Mr. Garger's muddled brain that he would best please his young patron by performing the vanishing trick. But James McCann saw to that. Mr. Garger was put in charge of the Head's butler—left till called for, as it were. After Third School he was wanted again. When the Fifth came out, Mr. McCann called to Aubrey:

"You will walk in the quadrangle with your friend till dinner, Compton."

Aubrey hesitated. The sack was better than this! But was it? A moment's reflection convinced Aubrey that it wasn't. He walked in the quad with his friend!

How Aubrey got through that hour alive he hardly knew. Mr. Garger, perhaps, was a little embarrassed. Seldom or never had he been the centre of such attention. Aubrey's face was red and white by turns. He writhed with shame and fury. He wished that the solid quad would open and swallow him up. He thought, with longing, of boiling James McCann in oil!

(Continued on next page)



The Prince's Own Stamps

By DOUGLAS ARMSTRONG, who will answer FREE any Stamp Queries which any reader may care to send to the Editor. If you can, enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for reply by Post

The Prince as a naval cadet, 1911, appears on the 3 cents Newfoundland stamp (left), and below as a colonel of the Welsh Guards, on a 4 cents Newfoundland stamp.

DID you know that the Prince of Wales is Honorary President of the foremost society of stamp collectors in the world—the Royal Philatelic Society, London.

His Royal Highness began to collect stamps at school, and when only ten years old he sent part of his collection to be shown at an international stamp exhibition in London, where it was sportingly marked "Not for Competition." In those days, and later as a cadet at Osborne, he was a frequent visitor to the big London stamp shops, showing a special interest in the stamps of his namesake colony, Prince Edward

Island, and those of British North America generally.

It is particularly appropriate, therefore, that Canada should be the two parts of the British Empire which have paid him the compliment of placing his likeness on their own postage stamps.

Newfoundland has provided collectors with a pictorial biography

of British North America and Newfoundland



of the Prince at all stages of his career, first as a boy of three, in the ½ cent stamp of 1897, then as a midshipman (3 cents, 1911). Next, he appeared in 1928 on the 4 cents stamp issued in that year, and then in the undress uniform of an officer of the Welsh Guards, of which he is a colonel, on the current 4 cents stamp of Britain's oldest colony.

His latest stamp portrait is on the 5 cents value of the Silver Jubilee commemoration stamps of Canada, where he appears in company with the Duke of York, Princess Elizabeth, and their Majesties the King and Queen.

But plenty of fellows seemed to find it amusing. Juniors of the Fourth and the Shell howled with merriment. Fifth and Sixth Form men grinned. Some fellows turned their faces away in sheer pity for the unhappy Aubrey. But to most of the amazing sight of the dandy of the Fifth parading the quad in company with that frowsy and disreputable loafer, seemed an irresistible attraction. They gazed—they stared—they grinned.

The bell for dinner came as a relief to Aubrey. But it was rather worse, if possible, in Hall!

Mr. Garger's place was laid next to Aubrey's. The dandy of the Fifth sat beside his "friend." He ate little. But Mr. Garger ate a great deal, and gobbled what he ate—his table manners undoubtedly left a great deal to be desired. Mr. McCann, at the top table, had a grave and serious face; but nearly every other face in Hall wore a grin.

Fellows hardly noticed what they ate, they were so busily occupied in looking at Aubrey and his friend.

After dinner, the school wondered what was coming next. Aubrey, at

the very limit of endurance, wondered if the Blighter meant this to go on all day. But Jimmy McCann could be merciful; and doubtless he realised that the dandy of the Fifth had had enough.

"Compton!" the Head said. "Please see your friend off at the gates!"

For once Compton was keen and eager to obey an order of the Head's!

Possibly Jimmy McCann guessed what was likely to happen when Aubrey saw his friend off at the gates. Compton's long-suppressed fury had to be wreaked on something or somebody! He led Mr. Garger down to the gates. Had Aubrey ever kicked a footer as he kicked the squat form in the gateway, he might have sent it from one goal to the other! That kick, with all Aubrey's rage and fury in it, fairly lifted Mr. Garger, and he shot out of the gateway and landed on his hands and knees in the road. He rolled there and roared.

Compton rushed out after him. One kick did not satisfy him. One, no doubt, would have satisfied Mr. Garger, but he had no choice in the matter. How many he captured

before he squirmed away and took to his heels Mr. Garger never knew!

AUBREY COMPTON stamped savagely into Study No. 3.

"Seen your friend off, Aubrey?" asked Bob Darrell.

"Having him in to lunch again?" asked Teddy Seymour.

Aubrey departed from the study again, slamming the door violently after him. He went down to Big Study.

"Hallo, here's old Aubrey!" said Corkran. "Got your friend with you, Aubrey?"

Again a door slammed behind Aubrey. He went into the quad.

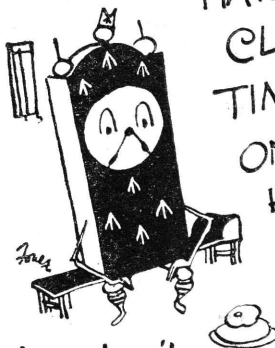
"Here he is!" shouted Ferguson. "Where's your pal, Compton?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Aubrey wondered whether he would ever hear the end of it. Judging by appearances, he never would!

Stung to the quick by the bitter humiliation put upon him by the Head, Aubrey goes all-out for revenge Next Saturday, in "Laying for the Head!"

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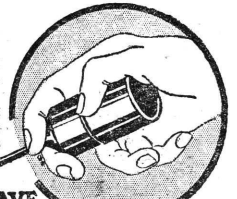
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