

MODEL AEROPLANES FOR READERS!—See page 9!

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"PRINCESS ELIZABETH" GETS THE RIGHT OF WAY!—See centre pages.

The CRICKET DICTATOR!

A Fourth-Former turns out the Prefects of the SCHOOL FOR SLACKERS for practice at the Nets—at FOUR O'CLOCK in the DEWY MORN!

By
Charles Hamilton

Turns with the Cane!

JOHN ANDREW FERGUSON of the Fourth Form stood in the middle of Big Study, feeling rather like a rabbit in a trap.

All round him, in comfortable arm-chairs, sat the Sixth Form prefects; ten good men and true! Corkran, head prefect, had his official ash in his hand. He was swishing it gently. He was in no hurry to begin. He was willing to give Ferg the pleasure of anticipation.

In the window-seat sat Tredegar of the Sixth, captain of High Coombe. Tred, not being a prefect, was not really entitled to attend a prefects' meeting, so he sat apart. He was there in a purely honorary capacity—an interested onlooker. So was Aubrey Compton of the Fifth, who sat by his side. So was Teddy Seymour, who sat on his other side. They looked on—and smiled!

Ferguson looked round. On every face was a smile; but not quite a pleasant smile. Such smiles might have been on the faces of an audience in the ancient Roman arena when they turned their thumbs down.

Even James McCann, the new headmaster of High Coombe, could not help him now—so far as Ferg could see. Mr. McCann had appointed him captain of cricket—with a view to shaming the slackers of High Coombe into bucking up a little. It had been quite effectual so far as the bucking-up was concerned. Captain of cricket had "whopping privs." Ferguson could—and did—whop any man who slacked at games—he had started by whopping Tredegar himself!

Even Aubrey Compton, his fag-master before McCann abolished fagging for the Fifth, had had to take "six" from Ferg for cutting Nets. With all these tremendous powers had McCann been able to invest John Andrew Ferguson. But outside games he was merely



Ferguson of the Fourth, liable to be whopped himself by any prefect who judged him deserving of the same.

It was quite a peculiar position; and Ferg had found it great and glorious in one way, extremely uncomfortable in another.

On the cricket field Ferg reigned supreme. Admiring fags clustered round to watch, had seen him dust the bags of prefects; had heard him shout "Move there, Tredegar!" or "For goodness' sake look alive, Randal!"

They wondered where Ferg found the nerve to do it. But Ferg had heaps and heaps of nerve.

He needed it all; for off the cricket field he became nobody again. Prefects whose bags he had dusted naturally looked for the first opportunity of dusting Ferg's. Opportunities were not wanting. Ferg, in these days, grew very circumspect; but circumspection could not save him. If any other excuse was lacking, there was always "roll."

"Roll,"—otherwise "side," or "cheek," was a dire offence. Some of the rules, of course, every fellow knew. It was side to talk in the passages, for any fellow under the Fifth; it was side for a junior to walk in the quad with his hands in his

They ceased to grin as Ferguson, still wriggling after his whopping, took a stump of pencil from his pocket, stepped to the notice-board, and altered the time on his paper—from four-thirty a.m. to four!

pockets; it was side for any man not in the Sixth to wear a coloured waist-coat—though Compton of the Fifth often did so unrebuked.

But was it side for a Fourth Form man to walk across the quad with his straw hat on the back of his head? Opinions differed on this important point.

That is to say, they had differed—till Ferguson of the Fourth walked across the quad with his straw hat on the back of his head!

Then Compton, observing him, had remarked to Corkran that that young tick Ferguson was putting on roll again. It was decided, without a dissentient voice, that for a junior to walk across quad with his hat on the back of his head was side of the most pronounced kind. It was side of so serious an order that an ordinary whopping would not meet the case. It was, obviously, a case for a prefects' beating!

A prefects' beating seldom happened at the School for Slackers. But

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when it did it was a very serious and solemn function. All the prefects gathered in Big Study; the culprit was brought before them, judged, sentenced, and executed on the spot. Every prefect took the cane in turn and administered a whop.

As ordinary lickings had had no effect on Ferguson, the seniors had decided on a prefects' beating—as a stronger hint to the new captain of cricket to draw in his horns. It was computed in the Fourth that Ferg had had an average of one licking per day since he had become captain of cricket. This had not had the effect of making him go easy with the senior slackers—rather had it made him go harder, with some idea of getting his own back! But a prefects' beating might, perhaps, produce the desired result!

So behold Ferguson—wriggling with uneasy foreboding, in the middle of Big Study; surrounded by pitiless smiling faces!

"Look here—" said Ferguson. Corkran gently swished the cane. "Roll," he said, "is pretty serious in a kid in the Fourth! We can't have fags putting on roll as if the place belonged to them. I'm sorry, Ferguson; but you've been pretty cheeky all this term; and this is the limit! I think we're all agreed?" He glanced round.

There was a general nodding of heads.

Ferg's eyes gleamed. "Look here," he said. "Chuck it! If I hadn't shoved my straw on the back of my head you'd have found something else. It's because McCann—"

"I think that's enough!" said Corkran, rising. "There's a chair, Ferguson. Go over it."

A cane chair stood in the middle of the room, ready for the victim. Ferguson hesitated one moment, and bent over the chair. Having placed himself in the required position, he waited with dismal apprehension. This was not going to be a flicking, he knew. This was going to be tough!

"Go it, Corky!" murmured Coffin. Corky went it.

He laid on the first swipe with cool, calm, scientific precision. It cracked like a pistol shot. Anyone in the quad might have supposed they were letting off firearms in Big Study. It rang loud and sharp; and louder still rang the yell of Ferguson of the Fourth.

"Yooo-hoop!" Ferg was tough. He prided himself on being able to take a licking. But he was getting it uncommonly hard now. All his toughness could not keep back that yell.

And that was only the first! Corkran passed the cane to Coffin. Coffin laid on the next with a quiet, determined vim. Ferg, with another yell, gave a convulsive jump. Then came Lacy's turn—and the whop of the cane was followed by a fearful roar.

A shadow darkened the sunny open window, and Darrell of the Fifth stared in from the quad.

"What the dickens are you up to?" he asked. "Killing a pig, or what?"

Corkran glanced at him. "Don't barge in, Darrell! It's a prefects' beating."

Wall of the Sixth took the cane from Lacy. Wall laid it on, under Bob Darrell's staring eyes.

"Yooooop!" roared Ferguson. Wall's whop was as hard as any that had gone before. It made the hapless Ferg squirm.

Bob's brow darkened. He did not know, but he could guess, why Ferguson was up for a prefects' beating.

"Look here—" he began. Wall passed the cane to Carew. Carew swished it and landed it on Ferg. Another fearful howl!

"Buzz off, Bob, old man!" drawled Aubrey Compton. "Don't interrupt the judicial proceedin's."

Carew, with a cheery smile, passed the cane to Randal. Randal was stretched lazily in his chair, looking, as usual, too lazy to move. But Randy made an effort, detached himself from the armchair, summoned up all the energy he had, and whopped.

"Wow!" from Ferguson. "Look here!" bawled Bob. "This is pretty rotten! I don't like that cheeky little tick being captain of cricket any more than you do. But there's a limit, and I can jolly well tell you—"

"You might shut that window, Tred!" yawned Corkran.

Tredegar slammed the window on Bob's flushed face. Randal passed on the cane and sank back gracefully into his armchair. The whopping went on. If Ferg for a moment had hoped that something might come of Bob Darrell's remonstrance, he was disappointed. Every prefect in turn took a whop with the cane, and by the time they had finished Ferg was nearly "all in."

"That's that!" drawled Corkran. "Don't put on any more roll, Ferguson. You can cut!"

Ferguson went to the door. He went bent almost double, as if trying to shut himself up like a penknife, and Big Study smiled after him as he went. Ferguson had had the licking of his life.

And there was more to come if the captain of cricket did not mend his ways!

Asking for More!

"H, I say!" gasped Donkin of the Fourth Form.

"Phew!" said Fatty Pye. And other Fourth Form men uttered other surprised ejaculations. Half the Fourth and some of the Shell had gathered round John Andrew Ferguson as he went up to the big notice-board with a paper in his hand.

It was the day following the prefects' beating in Big Study. That morning there had been no Early Nets.

Whereat Corkran & Co. had rejoiced. Turning out to fielding practice at half-past six, even on a bright summer's morning, was an unspeakable infliction at the School for Slackers. That energetic brute

Darrell did not mind, though as a Fifth Form man it irked him to turn out at the order of a fag. But Bob was the only man in either Fifth or Sixth who did not mind.

That day there had been cheery smiles among the seniors. Either Ferguson had forgotten to put up the usual notice, or he had made it a point to forget—or perhaps he had not sufficiently recovered from that terrific whopping to turn out early himself. Anyhow, there had been no Early Nets that day. Obviously, the prefects' beating had produced the desired effect.

But here was Ferguson recovered, or almost recovered, from that prefects' beating, coming along to the notice-board, followed by a mob of excited, wondering, admiring, and alarmed fags. Ferg, it was plain, was up to something.

Darrell of the Fifth, coming in from cricket, spotted that unusual concourse of fags, and strolled over to see what was on.

Ferguson, with great calmness, pinned up his paper in a prominent spot, among a dozen others. But for the fact that he was captain of cricket he could have been whopped for roll; for sticking a notice on the board at all. But as captain of cricket he was within his rights and powers.

"Cheek!" said Babbie of the Shell. Babs, as a Shell man, thought it awful rot for a Fourth Form tick to put up over the heads of his elders and betters. He wondered at Ferg's nerve in daring to carry on as he did. And, indeed, Ferg was about the only junior at High Coombe who had the nerve to use so drastically the high and mighty powers entrusted to him by Mr. McCann.

Jimmy McCann knew a man when he saw one—and Ferg was a man, though as yet on a small scale.

"Oh, I say!" repeated the Donkey, as he blinked at Ferg's paper. And there was a buzz of wild excitement.

"You'll get whopped again, old man," said Bunn. "I wouldn't like to be in your shoes when the pre's see this!"

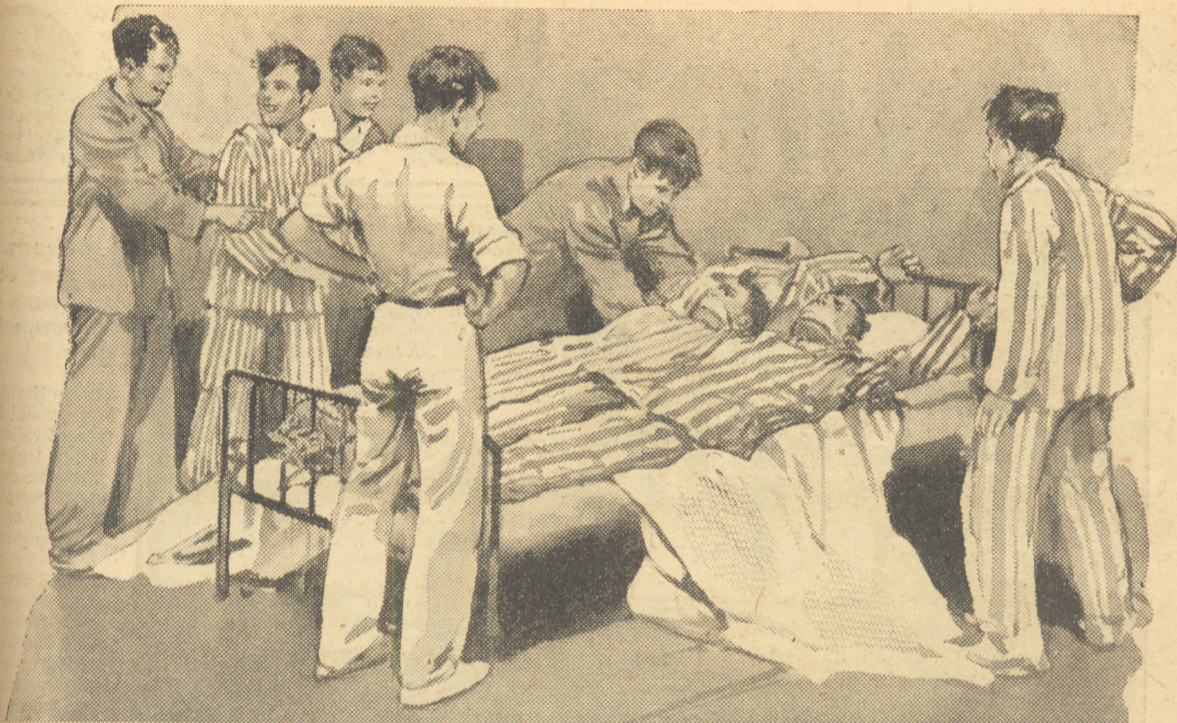
Ferg sniffed. Having cut Early Nets that morning, Corkran & Co. had no doubt that the captain of cricket had been intimidated by that prefects' beating. They agreed in blessing Compton, whose bright idea it was.

But it appeared from the notice on the board they had jumped rather too hastily to that happy conclusion. Bob Darrell, looking over the heads of the swarming fags, gasped as he read, and then grinned.

"FIELDING PRACTICE!
The following will turn out for Early Nets, at 4.30 a.m., Wednesday.—J. A. Ferguson, Capt."

This brief notification was followed by a list of ten names, beginning with Corkran, head prefect. The other nine were all prefects. The whole prefectorial body was named there! No wonder the fags buzzed with wonder and excitement.

If the slackers of High Coombe had



Grinning faces surrounded the Fifth Form men tied down to the bed, gagged, helpless, glaring with wild wrath.

raged at turning out at half-past six to Early Nets, what would they feel like turning out at half-past four?

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob Darrell. It was unheard-of! It was unthinkable! Six-thirty was early, but a fellow could turn out at six-thirty and no harm done—indeed, he might feel all the better for it. But not at four-thirty!

It was sheer tyranny—a ridiculous order, which a headmaster was certain to rescind as soon as he heard of it—unless, perhaps, he had special reasons for not doing so. Even McCann, early bird as he was, did not turn out at four-thirty—or anything like it!

"Do you think the men will turn out, young Ferguson?" asked Bob.

"I shall jolly well whop them if they don't," answered Ferguson coolly.

Bob, grinning, made his way to Study No. 3, where Teddy Seymour was making toast for tea. Aubrey Compton was spreading butter on toast in a very gingerly manner. If there was one of McCann's sins that Aubrey resented more deeply than any other it was the abolition of fagging in the Fifth. Feeding lost its charm when a man had to fag for himself.

"And to think," Aubrey was saying, as Bob Darrell came in, "that that cheeky little beast, Ferguson, was my fag before the Blighter blew in. I used to bat him on his bags for burning my toast. And now—"

A scorching smell pervaded the study. Teddy jerked at the toasting-fork.

"And now I'm burning it!" he grunted. "Bother! That man McCann is a silly ass!"

"A meddlin', interferin', cheeky rotter!" said Aubrey. "A saucy usher who doesn't know his place! And a

Fourth Form kid is captain of cricket! Well, I fancy we've put paid to that!" He glanced round at Bob's grinning face. "You seem fearfully amused about somethin', old bean! What's the giddy jest?"

Bob pitched his bat into a corner and chuckled.

"That kid Ferguson—" he said. "Not askin' for more?" inquired Teddy, as he impaled a fresh slice on the toasting-fork.

"Early Nets—" said Bob.

Aubrey chuckled.

"I fancy we're done with that!" he remarked. "Ferguson's had it hot, and he doesn't want it hotter!"

"To-morrow," said Bob.

"Mean to say the little tick has had the check to begin again?" exclaimed Compton, in astonishment.

"At four-thirty a.m.," went on Bob, "all the pre's—"

"A.m.!" ejaculated Teddy Seymour. He stared round at Bob. The scorching smell intensified in Study No. 3; but Teddy, in his amazement, was regardless of burning toast. "Did you say a.m.? You mean p.m.!"

"A for Albert, M for Michael!" said Bob, in the manner of a telephone operator, to make it clear.

"Half-past four in the morning?" Teddy was dazed. "The kid's mad!"

"I believe a.m. means in the morning," agreed Bob. "We don't learn much from Chard in the Fifth, but I picked that up in the Fourth terms ago."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" roared Compton. "Are you pulling our leg, or has that putrid little tick had the check—"

Without waiting for an answer, or even finishing the question, Aubrey Compton cut out of Study No. 3. Teddy, seemingly petrified, squatted, gazing at Bob, while the slice of toast on his fork was gradually incinerated. Compton flew across the landing, and did the stairs three at a time. High Coombe would hardly have recognised the elegant, leisurely dandy of the Fifth!

Aubrey could not believe it—he had to see it with his own eyes. It had been Aubrey's idea to bring Ferguson up in the way he should go—by means of a prefects' beating. The whole prefectorial body had welcomed it, enthused over it, and acted on it, with painful results to Ferguson. Had it, after all, been a failure? Had it only made matters worse?

Compton, in the midst of buzzing fags, stared at Ferguson's paper on the board. Corkran was already staring, and his face was a study.

"My—my hat!" gasped Aubrey.

Corkran looked at him.

"You ass!" he said.

That was the head prefect's thanks to Compton for his bright idea—as it had turned out. Indeed, as it had turned out, that was all the thanks that the bright idea was worth. The last state of the slackers of High Coombe was worse than their first.

Compton's Plot!

JAMES McCANN smiled.

Bullock snorted.

"Absolutely absurd!" said Bullock. "Unheard-of! Ridiculous!"

Bullock, the games master, felt that he had McCann there. Was it not, on the face of it, unheard-of, absurd, and ridiculous? It was!

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The Cricket Dictator!

(Continued from page 15)

Bullock, like the rest of the staff at High Coombe, had watched McCann's progress at the School for Slackers with a jaundiced eye. The new headmaster could not even walk on Big Side without annoying Bullock.

How many annoyances and irritations he had had to swallow since McCann had blown in, old Bully could not have counted, without going into very high figures. He would have thrown in his resignation, only he had a feeling that McCann would accept it. His position was, perhaps, a little weakened by the outstanding fact that High Coombe cricket had improved out of all knowledge.

Still, surely he had McCann now! Early Nets at four-thirty—absurd and ridiculous! Power entrusted to a thoughtless fag had got into that fag's thoughtless head, and he was making a fool of himself. Of course, this nonsense had to be washed out.

Only McCann did not look like washing it out. He smiled—but there was a hint of grimace in his smile.

Bullock stood before him in his study—a portly figure, his hands in the pockets of his flannel bags. It really might have seemed as if Bullock had an idea of overpowering that stocky young man, James McCann, by sheer size and weight.

But McCann was not in the least overpowered. He did not even seem to notice that Bullock looked aggressive.

"You will, of course, cancel this," said Bullock.

"I hardly think that I shall intervene," said Mr. McCann.

"You mean that you will leave it in my hands?"

"No, Mr. Bullock! I do not think it necessary for you to intervene, either!"

Bullock breathed hard.

"Four-thirty," he said. "Hardly light."

"At this time of the year, yes," said Mr. McCann.

"The health of the boys——" said Bullock. "The loss of sleep——"

"This is not, I imagine, intended as a permanent arrangement," explained Mr. McCann. "It appears that the captain of cricket has special reasons——"

"Captain of cricket!" The mere words, in connection with Ferguson of the Fourth, were like a red rag to a bull—to Mr. Bullock's hearing. "A foolish, inconsequent, unthinking, impertinent fag——"

Mr. McCann ceased to smile. His eyes took on that look of hard, cold steel that High Coombe had already learned to know.

"I am busy, Mr. Bullock!" Jimmy sat down and picked up his pen.

"The boys concerned have placed the matter before me, sir! They have asked me to represent to you——"

"You have done so," Jimmy pointed out. "There is nothing more to be said."

He began to write. Bullock gazed at the top of his bent head. He stood gazing at it for several long moments before he turned to the door. He was snubbed! Having described the Head's specially selected captain of cricket as foolish, inconsequent, and unthinking, he could hardly have expected anything else!

Bullock left the study, purple.

At the corner of the passage three or four anxious prefects were waiting for him. If they had hoped anything from Bullock's barging in, his purple look told them that their hopes were unfounded.

"Nothin' doin'?" asked Corkran.

"Puppy!" gasped Bullock.

Corky stared at him. For the moment he supposed that that compliment was addressed to himself. Then he realised that the games master was thinking of Mr. McCann.

"Then——" said Randal.

Bullock shook his head and walked away, and the seniors stared after him and then at one another.

"It's up to you, Corky," said Coffin. "Go in and speak to the brute! He's bound to listen to head prefect!"

"Make him!" groaned Randal. "Four-thirty in the mornin'—think of it!"

"Nobody will turn out!" muttered Coffin.

"You know that little beast! He will come round with a cricket stump and root us out!" said Wall.

"I'd smash him!" said Coffin, between his teeth.

"Easy enough—if the Head wasn't behind him!" groaned Randal.

"But what's the good of talkin' about smashin' him, when the Blighter would sack a man like a shot for layin' a single finger on him while he's playin' at being captain of cricket? Don't talk out of your hat!"

"Another prefects' beating—a bit stiffer!" muttered Wall. "Let him know that if we turn out at four-thirty to-morrow morning, he will be up in Big Study again to-morrow afternoon!"

Corkran shook his head slowly. He was losing faith in the efficacy of prefects' beatings, applied to that hardy young scoundrel Ferguson.

"I'll speak to the Blighter!" he said.

He went along to the Head's door, tapped, and went in. Jimmy McCann laid down his pen, and looked at him inquiringly.

"What is it, Corkran?"

"I think Mr. Bullock's mentioned to you, sir——"

"Quite!"

"Well, of course, it's quite absurd, sir," said Corkran. "Fielding practice at half-past four in the morning is——"

"Quite!" said Jimmy again.

"Then you'll rescind it, sir!"

"Well, no," said Mr. McCann, with a cheery smile. "I am giving the captain of cricket a free hand, Corkran, so long as he does not overstep the mark."

"Isn't this rather overstepping it, sir?"

"Not in view of the circumstances," explained Mr. McCann. "I am very unwilling, Corkran, to interfere with the constituted authority of my prefects. I have observed that this authority has been somewhat severely visited upon Ferguson of late. He has made no complaint, and I have not, therefore, felt called upon to intervene. It appears that he has his own methods for promoting a better understanding."

Corky opened his mouth—and shut it again.

"This better understanding," continued Mr. McCann, "will, I hope, soon come to pass. I shall not intervene unless compelled to do so. But if I inquire of Ferguson why he has fixed so extraordinary an hour for fielding practice to-morrow, I shall be obliged to make a rigid inquiry into a prefects' beating which, I think, took place yesterday."

Corky wished he had not come into the study.

"Is there anything more?" asked Mr. McCann.

"N-n-no, I—I think not, sir."

"Very good!" said Mr. McCann.

Corkran was glad to get out. He told his friends at the corner of the passage, the result. They did not seem in the least keen on the better understanding to which Mr. McCann had referred. Rather they would have liked to take the skin off Ferg's back. It was rather unfortunate that, as they moved away in a disconsolate body, they passed the big notice-board, and beheld Ferguson standing before it, grinning at his own paper.

Coffin breathed hard. He had his official ash under his arm. He made a stride towards Ferg.

"Hold on!" muttered Corky, uneasily.

Coffin did not heed. He tapped Ferguson on the shoulder, and the Fourth Former glanced round.

"Go over, and touch your toes, Ferguson!" said Coffin.

"What for?" demanded Ferg.

"Siding in the passages!" said Coffin sweetly.

Grimacing at his own notice on the board might, by a stretch of the imagination, be considered siding in the passages! It was good enough for Coffin, who was angry and annoyed. Ferg gave Coffin a long look—and went over and touched his toes! Coffin gave him three, all good ones.

Ferg wriggled as he rose. The prefects grinned. They ceased to grin as Ferguson took a stump of pencil from his pocket, stepped to the notice-board, and altered the time on his paper—from four-thirty to four, by crossing out the "30." He walked away, still wriggling; but Corky & Co. did not watch his wriggles. They stared at the altered notice.

"Four a.m.!" said Randal, in a hollow voice. "You ass, Coffee!"

Coffin breathed deep.

"I'll give him a few more——"

"And then he'll make it three!?" moaned Randy.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Let the little beast alone!" growled Corkran.

It was clear that Ferg was a little

beast who'd be better left alone! Leaving him alone, therefore, Corky & Co. proceeded to Study No. 3—partly to tell Aubrey Compton what they thought of him and his bright ideas, partly in the hope that old Aubrey might somehow be able to get them out of this. Old Aubrey, after all, was the brainy man.

"Look here, Compton, that cheeky little tick, Ferguson, has made it four in the morning, now, because Coffee whopped him," said Corkran.

"Now, what's going to be done?"

"Looks to me as if you are!"

grinned Bob Darrell.

And Teddy contributed a chuckle.

"Oh, shut up!" said Coffin. "Look

here, Compton, you silly ass—"

"It was your rotten idea to whop

that little beast for roll," said

Randal. "Look how it's turned out!

Four a.m.—"

Aubrey laughed.

"That's all right," he said. "Don't

you worry! Stick in bed to-morrow

morning till rising-bell—you'll be all

right."

"You silly ass!" roared Corkran.

"That little sweep will be glad of the

chance of rooting us out and whop-

ping us for slacking—he's got the

power to do it, owing to that brute

McCann—and think he won't jump at

handing back what we gave him in

Big Study?"

"No!" Aubrey shook his head.

"Ferguson won't do any jumping at

four o'clock to-morrow morning."

"And why won't he?" demanded

Corkran.

"Because at three-thirty he will be

tied down to his own bed, in the

Fourth Form dormitory, and he won't

be let loose till rising-bell," said

Compton coolly.

Corky & Co. stared at him, then

roared.

Corky & Co. went away, chortling,

to tell the other great men in Big

Study. Aubrey Compton smiled at his

friends.

"You men are lending me a hand in

the early dewy morn?" he asked.

"Rot!" growled Bob Darrell. "I'm

not ragging in the Fourth Form

dorm!"

"Rather a jest on that cheeky little

tick, though!" chuckled T e d d y

Seymour. "I'm on, Aubrey, old man."

"Look here——" said Bob restively.

"Bow-wow!" said Aubrey cheerily.

And that was that!

No End of a Lark!

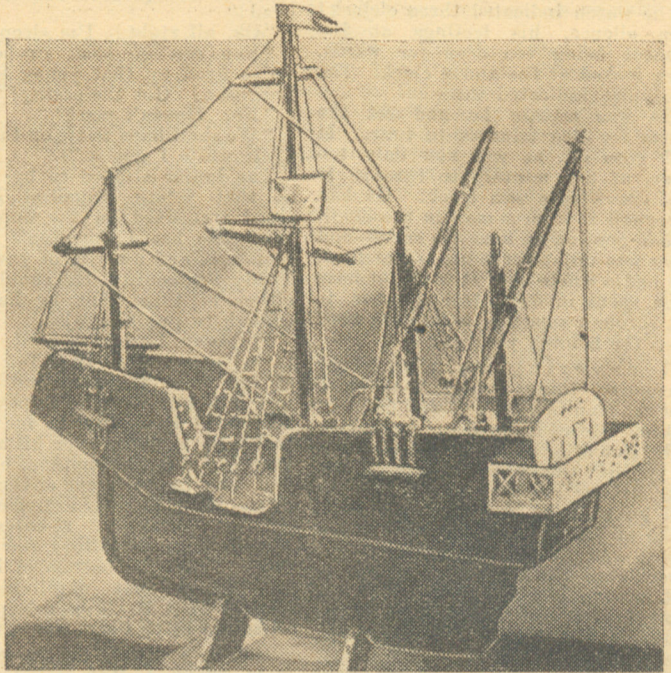
BUZZZZZZ went Ferg's alarm clock.

Ferguson sat up in bed, rubbed his eyes, blinked at the windows of the Fourth Form dormitory, and saw no light. In high summer it should have been fairly light at four in the morning—though as Ferg had never before been up at that unearthly hour, he could not have said it from experience.

But if there was any light it was the merest glimmer. Ferg had set the alarm clock for five minutes to four, and placed it at his bed-head. He gave himself five minutes to jump into his clothes. Finding it still so

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with this snap of his clever home-made model of an Elizabethan merchant ship. The model is 13 inches long from the stern to the end of the bowsprit, and 11 inches from the keel to the top of the mainmast.



The only tools he used were a knife, a fretsaw, an old razor-blade, a hammer, and some sandpaper. He tells me he worked at it practically every evening for nearly six months. The model fully deserves the special prize and certificate which it won in a local exhibition—and the Special Award of 10s. 6d. from MODERN BOY!

This handyman reader is D. CHAPMAN, North Street Post Office, Leighton Buzzard, Beds.

dark, he was tempted to turn over and go to sleep again.

But he heroically resisted that temptation. He was captain of cricket, and he had fixed the time for fielding practice. A precious ass he would look if the men turned out and he didn't! They wouldn't wait for him long, that was certain! Give them the slightest excuse, and they would bolt back to bed like rabbits to their burrows. It would get to McCann's ears—and what would he think?

Ferg, it was true, rather wished that he had not repaid the prefects' beating in precisely that manner—for he was horribly sleepy, and he would have given anything—or almost anything—to turn over and go to sleep again.

But he knew that if he sat there arguing the matter out with himself, it would very probably end by his going to sleep again. So he made a bound from the bed, and got out before the buzzing of the alarm clock had died away.

Several other fellows had awakened, or half-awakened. One or two grumbling voices were audible. Even rising-bell came too early for most of the Fourth, and nobody wanted to awake earlier. Ferg did not heed. He plunged his sleepy face into cold water, and was wide-awake on the spot. He got into his flannels and shoes. The alarm clock gave a last spasmodic gurgle, and ceased. Fatty Pye sat up in the next bed and growled.

"You blithering idiot, wharrer you getting up in the middle of the night for?"

"Four o'clock!" said Ferg.

"Tain't!" grunted Fatty.

"Tis!" retorted Ferg, with equal brevity.

"It's light at four!" snorted Fatty. "Idiot! Waking a fellow up! Middle of the night—urrrggh!" Pye grunted, and laid his head on the pillow again.

Ferguson finished dressing. Naturally, a Fourth Form man who was captain of cricket was not going to

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argue the point with a fellow like Fatty. Still, he was struck by Pye's remark that it was light at four. That certainly had been his own impression. Yet it was not light—or only barely so. Ferg looked at his watch. Having looked at it, he glared at it.

The watch indicated three o'clock! In silence, his feelings at the moment being too deep for words, Ferg looked at the alarm clock. The clock also indicated three!

He was certain he had set the alarm for five minutes to four. It had gone off, as was now only too clear, at five minutes to three! It was not Ferg's own clock. He had borrowed it from a man in the Shell. It had gone off an hour too early—and Ferg was up at three instead of four. He had a whole hour that might have been spent in delightful slumber, to get through somehow before the time fixed for fielding practice.

Recovering his voice, Ferg murmured things about that clock and the man in the Shell who had lent it him. He considered going back to bed. But after that dip in cold water he had lost the sleepy feeling. Moreover, it was fairly certain that if he did go to sleep again he would not wake at four. Certainly he was not going to rely again on that treacherous clock. So he decided to put in some physical jerks till it was a bit lighter, and then go down to the ground. Bowling at a stump would pass the time till four.

For a quarter of an hour Ferg jerked physically. Then he went out of the dormitory, stepping softly and closing the door without a sound, so as not to awaken other fellows. He trod down the passage towards the stairs. It was getting quite light out of doors, but the staircase was a well of darkness.

Much to his amazement, Ferguson heard footsteps and a mutter of voices on the landing below, where the Fifth Form dorms were. He stopped and stared over the banisters in wonder. Ten men of the Sixth were booked for fielding practice at four; but it was not yet half-past three. Besides, Sixth Form men would not come up to the Fifth Form quarters. It was Fifth Form men who were stirring. Why?

"You've got the rope, Teddy?"

"Here it is."

MODEL GLIDERS!

SO that you and all your friends will have an opportunity of taking up model gliding, Quaker Oats Ltd. are repeating their offer made in a previous issue. Turn to page 29. There you will see the Puffed Wheat and Rice announcement which contains a coupon for your convenience, to be sent in with 2 packet tops for a fine realistic glider that flies, banks, loops—it is absolutely FREE.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

If you want more than one glider, or any of your friends would like to get one, simply write to Quaker Oats Ltd., 11, Finsbury Square, London, E.C.2, giving your name and address and enclosing 2 packet tops from Puffed Wheat or Puffed Rice for each glider required. (You don't need to send a coupon if you mention MODERN BOY when writing to Quaker Oats Ltd.)

Amazed, Ferguson recognised the voices of Compton and Seymour of the Fifth.

"I've got the hanky to tie over his mouth! Mind, he's not to make a sound. If he wakes up the other little beasts we may have a hornets' nest about our ears."

"Yaw-aw-aw-aw!"

"You can yaw afterwards, fat-head!"

"Oh, all right! I'm sleepy!"

"You can go back to bed when we've fixed up that young scoundrel Ferguson! Got the string?"

"No. Haven't you?"

"We shall have to tie on the hanky. Wait while I get it."

The junior alluded to by Compton as that young scoundrel Ferguson stood transfixed on the upper staircase. He heard Compton's receding footsteps, and a series of yawns from Teddy Seymour. He could not see either of them, but he had heard enough to put him wise.

Ferguson, breathing hard, cut back to his dormitory. In a few minutes at the most, Compton and Seymour would be there—with the pleasant intention of tying him to his bed and fastening a hanky over his mouth to keep him quiet. Compton, evidently, had come to the rescue of the slackers of the Sixth in their extreme need!

Ferg hurriedly re-entered the Fourth Form dormitory and shut the door. From the bottom of his heart he blessed that unreliable alarm clock! Had he been asleep in bed when the Fifth Form men arrived—

But he was wide awake—extremely wide awake! And in two minutes other Fourth Form men were equally wide awake, listening in amazement to Ferg's breathless whispers. Fatty Pye, Bunn, Loom, Donkin, and a dozen others turned out. They grinned as they parked themselves in a bunch behind the door.

If Fifth Form men came ragging in their quarters, they were ready to deal with them. It would be, Ferg pointed out, no end of a lark to catch Compton of the Fifth in his own trap! They waited breathlessly.

Soft footsteps came along the passage outside. With hardly a sound the dormitory door opened.

Aubrey Compton stepped in. Teddy Seymour followed him, both on tip-toe. There was not a sound; the open door hid the bunch of juniors from their sight. Early daylight was gleaming in the quad now, but the dormitory was dusky.

"Fast asleep!" whispered Aubrey. "Which is the little brute's bed? Look along the— Oh, my hat! What—"

Slam! The door banged behind the Fifth Form men. They spun round—and reeled over under a rush of a dozen juniors. Before they knew what was happening, Aubrey and Teddy were on the floor, and a swarm of breathless fags pinned them there. In amazement and rage, they struggled madly.

"Pin 'em!" gasped Ferguson.

"Got 'em!" panted Bunn.

"Urrghh!" gasped Teddy. "Oh crumbs! Oh—what—oow!"

"I'll—ooogh—oh! I'll—ooogh!" spluttered Aubrey.

Frantic were the struggles of the captured Fifth Form men. But struggling availed them not. Every junior in the dormitory was awake now. Every man turned out to lend a hand. Compton and Seymour, resisting wildly, breathless and panting, were dragged to Ferguson's bed. They were pitched across it, and the rope they had brought for tying Ferguson came in handy to secure them there. Ankles and wrists were tied to the bedstead.

Whether they would have ventured to shout and awaken the House, enraged as they were, was perhaps doubtful. But Ferg gave them no chance. Handkerchiefs were stuffed into their mouths and tied there with the string provided by Aubrey.

Grimacing faces surrounded them as they sprawled on the bed, helpless, glaring with wild wrath.

"Let 'em loose at rising-bell," said Ferg. "They'll get into a row if they're found here."

Ferguson left the dormitory for a second time. His friends, chuckling, went back to bed. Chuckling died away in balmy slumber. But there was no slumber for Aubrey and Teddy.

While the Fourth Form slumbered the Fifth Form men wriggled and wriggled and wriggled. But they wriggled in vain—and they had to settle down to wriggle till rising-bell.

CORKRAN of the Sixth heard four chime from the clock-tower. Perhaps he had been dreaming of fielding practice at four—a horrid dream! Half-awake, he lay and listened to the chime, and turned his head luxuriously on his pillow to sleep again. No Early Nets; no fielding practice in the dewy morn—owing to the intervention of that brainy man, Compton of the Fifth!

Corky's last waking thought was of gratitude to Aubrey as he sank happily into peaceful slumber—which, alas! lasted only three minutes. Then it was rudely shattered by the hurling open of his door.

"Now then!"

It was a sharp voice.

Corkran sat up—and stared. Ferguson, captain of cricket, stood there, a stump in his hand. Corkran gazed at him as if he had been a ghost. Ferguson, at that moment, should have been stretched on his own bed, tied there hand and foot, with a handkerchief stuffed into his cheeky mouth to keep him quiet—if Aubrey's masterly scheme had worked. It appeared that Aubrey's masterly scheme hadn't! Corky, taken utterly aback, gazed and gasped and almost gibbered.

"Why aren't you at Nets?" Ferg was no longer Ferguson of the Fourth: he was captain of cricket, invested—pro tem—with absolute powers over every man at High Coombe. His voice rang with authority. "You saw the notice. Four a.m. It's five minutes past four! Why aren't you out?"

Corkran stuttered. "He would have been out, certainly, had he not relied on Aubrey—as unreliable, it proved, as Ferg's alarm clock!"

"Not a man on the ground!" continued Ferg. "Not a man! Get out!"

Swipe! The cricket stump came down across the bedclothes—and Corkran's legs. Corkran was out of bed with a bound. With another bound he would have been at Ferg, smiting him hip and thigh—but he stopped! Ferg, stump in hand, eyed him with perfect coolness. The position in Big Study of a couple of days ago was now reversed.

Captain of cricket had whopping privs to deal with slackers—and staying in bed, regardless of the order on the board, was slacking of the deepest dye. Behind Ferguson at that moment loomed the Head—probably fast asleep at that moment in his own House, but present in the spirit, as it were—the Head, and the "sack"! Corky did not bound at Ferguson.

He looked round for his trousers, instead.

"I give you five minutes!" said Ferguson. "Mind, it's six on the bags if you're later than that!"

Corky, breathing fury, was glad that Ferguson did not decide to give him six anyhow! He would have had to take them. He did not answer.

"I'm going to stop this rotten slacking in the Sixth!" said Ferguson

truculently. "Bear that in mind, Corkran!"

He walked out and went along the passage. Corkran, as he crammed himself hurriedly into flannels, heard him enter the next study. He heard the voice of Randal:

"What the dickens—"

"Randal, you rotten slacker, turn out!"

"I'll see you dashed first! I'll—yaroooooop!" Corkran heard the swiping of the stump and the roar of Randal.

Ferguson quite enjoyed his progress along the Sixth Form studies that dewy morn. It said much for the self-restraint of the High Coombe prefects that Ferg reached the end of the passage without being rent limb from limb! But what could a fellow do? Relying on Aubrey and his scheme, they had stayed in bed instead of turning up to Early Nets, and thus delivered themselves into the hand of the enemy!

Every prefect had had a swipe at Ferg when he took that prefects' beating in Big Study. Now every prefect had a swipe from Ferg when the captain of cricket had to rouse them out of bed. Ten infuriated Sixth Form men went trailing down to Early Nets, shepherded by the authoritative Ferguson.

Possibly the sight of Mr. McCann at his window, looking out into the fresh morning sunshine, helped to save Ferg from being massacred on the cricket ground.

There was a slight twinkle in Jimmy McCann's eyes—but every man there knew how that twinkle would change into a gleam of cold steel if a finger was laid on his captain of cricket!

Fielding practice lasted till rising-bell. Then the infuriated ten got back to the House—in time to meet two dishevelled, enraged Fifth Form men coming down from the Fourth Form dormitory. Aubrey barely escaped with his life!

Early Nets at six-thirty, twice a week, continued. But there were no more Early Nets at four a.m. That was a card Ferguson kept up his sleeve. He never needed to play it, for he was never called up in Big Study again.

Roll or no roll, Ferg was safe from being called up for a prefects' beating!

Tar and Feathers for Jimmy McCann! That's been in the mind of Aubrey Compton for a long time. . . . Next week he plans to carry it into effect. If you miss THAT story you WILL miss a treat!

HERE'S a brand-new detective story, red-hot from my pen.

DUDWITT, THE DETECTIVE.

Dudwitt, the Detective, sat in his detecting-room to interview callers, who were waiting in the callers-room outside. The first man came in. Dudwitt smiled as he waved him to a chair.

"Good-morning," he said. "I deduce that your name is Snobbit, you live at Golder's Green, you had fried hake for breakfast this morning, you came here by a taxicab, and you are going to consult me about a burglary."

"Good-morning," said the visitor. "My name is Hooker, I live at Battersea, I had boiled cod for breakfast, I came here by tram, and I'm going to consult someone else. Good-bye!"

THE END.

(Other detective story writers please copy.)

I MET the Ed. a minute or two ago. He said:

"I've got a riddle to ask you: Can you give me an example of something resting on nothing?"

"My hat!" I gasped.

"Correct," said the Editor, and passed on.

What the dickens did he mean?

MORE astonishing news! A learned headmaster, holding forth to a newspaper man, has declared:

"The plastic nature of the juvenile mind soon converts work and punishment, a sequence to which humanity is born, from an imposition into a natural order. From resignation to toleration is but a step, and from toleration the way to affection is straight and easy."

Which if it means anything at all, it means that all boys learn to love work and punishment.

Just My Foolin'

By THE OLD BOY

HOW this carries me back to dear old St. Parsnip's, where I received my immense education! I remember one morning coming across Mugge minor weeping silently in a corner of the playground.

"Boo-hoo!" he sobbed. "It's not fair! Young Stiggles has had the cane three times this week, and I've only had it once."

"Come, come," I said kindly (I was a prefect at the time). "I'm sure your master will cane you if you ask him nicely."

"No, he wo-won't! He says too much cane isn't good for us, yet he lams Stiggles nearly every day. That's because Stiggles is his favourite."

"Cheer up!" I said. "I'll give you a hiding, if you like."

IT was pathetic to see the poor little chap's face brighten up. He followed me to my study with dancing eyes, and when I had laid into him until I was tired, he thanked me in a voice broken with emotion.

I ADMIT, though, it was a shame when old Beaver, master of the Fourth, started his Form reading Buffalo Bill, and ordered all Virgils found in the studies to be confiscated. It was a heartrending duty to have to tear some wretched fag's Virgil away from him, just when the poor kid was deep in the adventures of Aeneas.

ONCE a week, by way of a treat, old Beaver used to keep the Form in for two hours' hard work—and how they used to look forward to it! It



was the only bright spot in their wretched lives.

RATHER a stupid mistake occurred this morning, when I was showing a well-known zoologist some photos my brother had taken in Africa. I had just called at the chemist's to get the developed prints of his films. He had returned from Africa only a day or so previously, and had used up his spare films with photos taken at home. Well, I showed the zoologist a print, and he got all worked up.

"Marvelous!" he exclaimed. "This is a photograph of the rare Fungus Ape, a cross between a baboon, a gorilla, and a marmoset, and reputed to be the ugliest creature in the world. It was supposed to be extinct, but now—this is wonderful! Just look at the expression of the creature's face!"

SO I looked at it—and then I did snort.

"Sorry!" I said crossly. "I didn't mean to give you that one. It's a photo of me sitting on a branch of our old apple-tree. My brother took it in the garden yesterday."

And they call him a famous zoologist! Grarrrrh!