Rugby boys are allowed a little more freedom, black coats and waistcoats being ordered, and black ties, no attention being paid to cut. With this is worn a straw hat with house ribbon all the year round, and a “topper,” of course, on Sundays.

There are three terms in the English school year, each consisting of about twelve weeks. These are known as the Easter or Lent, the Midsummer or Trinity, and the Christmas or Advent, and the holidays in general consist of eight weeks at Midsummer, five weeks at Christmas, and three weeks at Easter.

The schools all meet several times a year in athletic contests. Chief among these is the gathering held at Aldershot, in the spring of each year; displays are given in gymnastic and boxing exercises. The medals and cups at this meeting are given by the army, and usually some distinguished officer distributes the awards to the competitors. In the early summer a racquet cup is competed for at “Princes,” and in the late summer we find teams from each school shooting at Bisley for the Ashburton shield, Spencer cup, and other trophies. At cricket, each school usually plays but one or two matches with other schools, chief among them being the Eton and Harrow, and the Rugby and Marlborough, but no success has yet crowned the attempts to institute a championship. Football matters are even worse, as there is at present only one interscholastic match played. This is partly owing to differences in the rules, but chiefly to the fact that school feeling usually runs so high that matches, if attempted, usually end in—well, a “rush.” A better time is coming, though, I hope, and I think in a few more years we shall see our public schools competing, like the American colleges, for a championship.

A point which I think wants clearing up is the system of fagging. Fellows here have told me that, after reading the description of fagging in “Tom Brown’s Schooldays,” their blood has boiled within them. Let me then defend the system, as defense seems necessary. An English boy usually goes to his first school (away from home) when about eight or nine years of age. These schools are called preparatory, and only keep boys up to the ages of thirteen or fourteen. While at this school perhaps he achieves great distinction, in a small way; so naturally, when he goes on to a public school, he expects the world to bow before him, and, speaking broadly, wants taking down a peg or two. This, then, is one of the objects in fagging, and in general it succeeds. Again, the fag has in his master a true friend, one whom he can always look up to for advice and assistance in all his troubles. In return for this he gives his services, and, if his master is of the right sort, usually gets the best of the bargain.

Let us now look at the other end of the question; namely, the advantages derived by the fag master himself from the system. Apart from the bodily comfort he sustains, of having his person well attended to, he has the advantage of being a ruler, and having power invested in him. He learns to govern small boys quietly and well, so that when he starts in on a business career he has little trouble in keeping his men in order; and surely this, from a practical point of view, is defense enough.

These fag masters are known by the various names of præpostors, monitors, sixth, etc., and are always chosen from the best and most thoughtful fellows in the school. This must necessarily be so, to insure the success of the system, when it is remembered that they have unlimited power with the small boys, and in their hands is practically invested the order and management of the whole social life of the school. I hope, then. I may have made it clear that fagging is not a relic of barbarous times, and that there are distinct advantages in the system, both for master and fag. The average English boy does not mind being a fag; he is so used to the idea; in fact, while at a preparatory school he looks forward to it.