

Rendcomb College

Magazine

VOL. 6. No. 5.

FEBRUARY, 1938.

SCHOOL NOTES. MICHAELMAS TERM, 1937.

Term began on the 17th September. We assembled in a downpour of rain as though the clerk of the weather had decided definitely that holidays were "off," and that he could be indifferent to our complaints. Actually the Term was a seasonable one. None of our outdoor activities were curtailed, and a sharp spell of hard weather in December stiffened the mud of the football pitches, but did not lead to any cancellation of fixtures.

The Old Boys' match took place on Saturday, October 2nd. It was a matter for regret that so few old Rendcombians turned up. These events ought to meet with a wider response. There are the faithful few, and we are always glad to see them with a little effort, there might be many more.

The Half-Term Holiday took place on the weekend of the 5th-8th November. The weather was good, and the entire School went away and came back refreshed by the break. Some stalwarts went on a cycling trip to the Mendips with Mr. Fell. Such expeditions deserve to be encouraged, and we commend the idea to those who, for various reasons, are precluded from a chance of going home on such occasions.

During the Term an electrical blower has been installed at the organ in Rendcomb Church. Our organists will welcome the innovation, as doubtless will those victims of punitive pumping. But we would remind the latter that there are other—if less ecclesiastical—methods of expiating their sins.

We came back from Half-Term to find an exciting treat in store for us. This was a lecture with film illustrations by Grey Owl. When we consider how his Cheltenham engagements were booked out—and how impossible it would have been for us to have heard him otherwise, we feel doubly grateful to Mrs. Noel Wills for her generosity and forethought in giving us this signal opportunity.

As the Term progressed Christmas came nearer. We are right in thinking that our end of Term festivities are things to be remembered. It can rightly be said that we "do ourselves proud." We decorate for the event—this year less lavishly—but none the less as effectively as ever. We remember massacres in the wilderness, when it could have been truly said that Birnam Wood had come to Dunsinane. But the College looked very festive without undue plunder of our resources.

The village came to the dress rehearsal of the School Play, and on Saturday, December 11th, our parents' day celebration was one of the most enjoyable we have known.

The play chosen, "Tobias and the Angel," was well received and the tea that followed saw us all in the best of humour. Our own Christmas party took place a week later, on the 18th December. And we all sat down, in motley or otherwise to a delightful dinner, which was followed by a gala dance, and supported later by a delectable supper. The Entertainments' Committee, the domestic staff, and everyone concerned, earned our gratitude. We make no apology for recording these facts. Christmas at Rendcomb is something to remember, and to look forward to. It is part of our tradition.

* * * * *

We are seldom called upon to announce the joint departure of two members of the staff in such happy circumstances as that of Mr. Hosken and Miss Simmons. Mr. Hosken left at the end of Term to take up his new appointment as Head of the school run as part of the Watts' Naval Training School, Elmham, Norfolk. Miss Simmons left to become Mrs. Hosken. Apart from his academic work and his long sojourn at Rendcomb House, we shall remember Mr. Hosken as probably the best athlete we have ever had on the staff. We wish him success in every phase of his new work.

As for Miss Simmons, she had become an institution. We wish to place on record our recognition of the years of devoted service she has given to the College. She was never too busy to attend to the slightest of our calls upon her. That, indeed, was one of the most remarkable things about her. She gave readily of her time to everyone. Those of us who have ever been on the sick-list will not forget her devotion. She was at her best when we were at our worst. We wish them both every happiness in their new life.

We would be guilty of gross ingratitude if we did not record the generosity to the College of Colonel Claude Kirby. We remember his first descent upon us with a lorry-load of stage lighting equipment, and his intriguing talk on that occasion. Since then some of us have had the privilege of visiting his workshop at Minety, and of seeing how much a public spirited man can do for his neighbours. It was with regret that we learned he was leaving our immediate vicinity. That upheaval for him was not without some compensations for us. He had already enriched the library by gifts of books, but this Term he has placed us under a singular debt. He has given us, amongst other things, a fine Drummond lathe, with a full complement of tools. A lathe indeed of such a quality, that it has prompted Mr. Fell to suggest a new workshop to house it. In addition he has lent us a band saw and a circular saw. We also possess, through his generosity,

model theatre and a miniature locomotive, that await exploitation by our mechanically minded. We know he wants no other thanks than our appreciation, but we should like him to be aware of that fact and to know that he will always be a welcome visitor when he finds time to come our way.

Although we have still a considerable length to go before we shall be satisfied with our stage lighting equipment, Colonel Kirby will be glad to know that the good seed he has sown has not fallen on barren soil. For our Christmas play the stage was fitted with floodlights, controlled by a dimmer, providing effects which functioned excellently. In addition, two spotlights were installed. And we look forward to permanent equipment on these lines. The puppet theatre has been provided with a new stage, and although it was impossible to arrange a puppet show for the end of Term that does not mean that activities in this direction have in any way abated. We look forward with interest to the next production of the Rendcomb Marionette Theatre.

The following boys entered College at the beginning of Term: R. Brain, J. A. Cunnison, H. P. Lecky, F. T. Luffman, A. W. Morris, N. P. Morris, J. J. North, J. H. Quick, E. B. Smith and N. C. Stone. To them we extend our "salvete."

Two boys left at Christmas, P. L. Field and P. Lambert. Field has been awarded a Scholarship to the Cheltenham Art School, and has gone to take up studies there. He has chosen to follow his brother's footsteps, and we wish him every success. Lambert departed, just after having passed the School Certificate Examination, with a distinction in Music. We remember him for his wit and his music, and for a singular recovery from a period of illness which would have discouraged many another with less pluck. It is a pity that circumstances prevented him giving a talk this Term on the clavichord that he had brought back with him. Some of us have been privileged to hear him playing contrapuntal music on that most gentle and winning of instruments. We regret his loss, and hope that whatever the future holds for him it will give him scope for his sensibility and sense.

The cinema shows on Sunday evenings were well arranged and well patronised. The use of the amplifier to provide incidental music is to be welcomed. Silent films were apt to be received in anything other than silence, and we suggest that sound effects provided by the audience can well be dispensed

We are indebted to Mrs. Noel Wills for the following interesting information. Dormitory beds, as we know, fall into different classifications. Some are conspicuously high, others, by contrast, low. The old high beds—not by any means the least comfortable—are a legacy from the Great War. They were purchased for the College from a hospital in London for wounded Russian soldiers.

A bed, in its lifetime, can see many vicissitudes, and if beds could speak doubtless they could tell many a strange tale. But they are singularly uncommunicative, and few of us are likely to be disturbed by any dreams that may have visited our couches in the past. This information is set down entirely for our waking moments, but it is worth recording, nevertheless.

Term ended with rumours of internal domestic readjustments but the consummation of these—effected during the Christmas holiday—belongs more properly to our next issue. We would merely note that the School has grown to such an extent as to make such alterations an absolute necessity. They are the last possible major “general post” that can be played with our accommodation inside the existing College building.

OLD BOYS' NOTES.

A. D. Thomas has passed his Elementary and Intermediate Examination of the Library Association. This, and the fact that he has completed three years in the service of a Public Library entitle him to become an Associate of the Library Association.

G. M. Wilson has been successful in his Pass Moderations after one term at Oxford.

J. R. Wheeler has been appointed to a teaching post for nine months with the Anglo-Polish Society at Gydnia, in Poland.

M. H. C. Martin has joined the staff of Ottershaw College, Chertsey, Surrey.

Peter Lambert has been accepted for the two-year teachers' training course at Goldsmith's College, London.

Mr. H. W. Hosken has played for the Corinthians during the last two football seasons of 1936 and 1937.

MEETING OFFICERS.

MICHAELMAS TERM. 1937.

Chairman : B. H. Peacock.

Council : D. G. Morison, E. R. S. Gillham, P. Field, B. H. Peacock, H. F. Lane, D. D. Haig, P. Lambert

Meeting Selection Committee : D. G. Morison, E. R. S. Gillham
P. Tuit, D. D. Haig, B. H. Peacock.

House Committee : D. G. Morison, P. Lambert, M. F. Lane, H. W. T. Bates, L. H. Hyett.

Games Committee : E. R. S. Gillham, R. L. Short, D. D. Haig.

Games Treasurer : D. D. Haig.

Games Secretary : A. E. Godsell.

Groundsman : J. F. Spencer.

Senior Shopman : H. W. T. Bates.

Shopmen : J. R. Harmer, D. F. Gallop.

Banker : F. J. Willis.

Breakages Man : J. F. Spencer.

Secretary : J. F. Spencer.

Auditors : F. J. Willis, A. S. C. Smith.

Finance Committee : M. C. B. Russell, J. R. Luton, E. R. Morris.

Entertainments Committee : D. G. Morison, E. R. S. Gillham,
P. Field, E. R. Morris, J. R. Harmer.

Cycle Men : L. H. Hyett, J. W. H. Neads, P. A. Herring.

Paper Man : E. R. Morris.

Pauntley Committee : D. D. Haig.

Suggestion Committee : D. G. Morison, P. L. Field, E. R. Morris.

Record Committee : D. G. Morison, D. D. Haig, R. L. Short, J. F. Spencer, J. R. Harmer.

Amplifier Committee : D. D. Haig, R. L. Short, P. Alder, D. W. Stone, P. D. B. Levett.

Magazine Committee : D. D. Haig, P. Field, E. R. Morris.

Drying Room Committee : G. G. Constable, J. R. Harmer, S. Palmer.

Games Wardens : Football—D. W. Stone, J. W. H. Neads

„ „ Cricket—G. Constable.

„ „ Hockey—J. W. H. Neads.

„ „ Tennis—M. F. Lane.

„ „ Indoor—E. R. Morris, P. R. Highley.

Tennis Groundsmen : A. E. Godsell, G. G. Constable.

Lecture Committee : D. G. Morison, D. D. Haig, E. R. S. Gillham

LECTURES.
MICHAELMAS TERM, 1937.

We have been well provided with lectures this Term. Apart from our visiting lecturers, the Entertainments' Committee conceived the idea of calling upon our home resources to provide talks on available Friday evenings. It was a good idea. We are too prone to accept the proverb, "Omne ignotum pro magnifico habent," and while we are ready to concede the glamour of the stranger, that should not prevent us from listening to our own oracles when they are willing to speak to us.

On Friday, 8th October, Mr. A. G. Granston Richards lectured on "Youth Hostels." No one could be better qualified to speak on such a subject. Some of us have had the pleasure of sharing the hospitality of these caravanserai with the lecturer. He told us how this very significant movement had grown, how widespread its ramifications are both at home and abroad. Mr. Richards speaks with particular qualifications on the development of the Youth Hostel movement in Germany. His talk was illustrated by photographs and maps, that ought to prove the inspiration of many a future holiday.

On October 12th and 13th, Mr. Grant gave us two instructive talks on international affairs in Europe since the War. After quoting a remark that the years 1919-1932 were the post-war years, while 1933 was the first pre-war year, he gave a rapid survey of the internal affairs of the various countries, dwelling particularly on the economic starvation of Austria, and the ill-feeling between Hungary and Romania due to the Peace Treaty of Versailles. While Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria were dissatisfied, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania—the last three forming the Little Entente—wished for no revision of the Treaty. The Disarmament Conference of 1932 had failed to bring peace and security, and Germany adopted the attitude of a martyr.

In his second talk, Mr. Grant dealt mainly with Germany's ambitions in Central Europe. Hitler, on his rise to power in January, 1933, changed the policy of Germany, both internal and foreign; his repudiations of the Peace Treaty shattered the foundations of the League, while his "Power Policy" gambled on the reluctance of other nations to attack, and went for its objective at the risk of war. His objective was to expand eastwards, and unite all peoples of German stock; there was grave fear in Austria of virtual assimilation. The Austrian Putsch of 1934 failed, and German internal influence had likewise failed, to make her Nazi. Italy had ceased opposing Germany in this for lack of other friends, but their interests clash in Eastern Europe. The smaller Eastern States look on Germany as the coming power.

After an outline of British relations with Italy during and since the Abyssinian War, Mr. Grant remarked upon the challenge to Britain inherent in the success of German policy in Eastern Europe, and of Italian policy in the Mediterranean. Fascism had divided every nation for and against it.

On Friday, 15th October, Mr. C. S. Weatherhead lectured on "Venice." Like most who have visited that memorable city, he had gone there not without previous information. Much of our foreign travel consists in either confirming or refuting our pre-conceptions. Unfortunately it is not generally realised that Venice is to a great extent a maritime slum, picturesque no doubt, but often both squalid and smelly. There is a bright spot about St. Mark's that engages the attention of the visitor, and the Campanile of that building featured prominently in most of the views Mr. Weatherhead showed us. What he had to say was interesting, but was blurred by a somewhat haphazard sequence in his pictures. He gave us glances—and very delightful ones they were—of the more famous sights, supported by somewhat sentimental lagoon sunsets. Venice receives the tourist with such open arms that he sometimes scarcely knows what he carries away. The writer of these notes apologises for any apparent animadversions. Indeed, he has been in the same boat himself—or should one say—the same gondola?

On Friday, 22nd October, Mr. R. N. D. Wilson spoke about "Looking at Pictures." He was concerned chiefly about that rather elusive quality called "rhythm," elusive in the sense that it is hard to define in the abstract. It can be seen more readily than described. His illustrations ranged from reproductions of works by Fra Angelico and Michelangelo to pictures of the German liner "Bremen," and a landscape painted by Duncan Bateman's father. Through these diversities he drew the thread of his discourse. Mr. Bateman's picture of a harvesting scene for all its vivid realism came nearest to demonstrating Mr. Wilson's thesis. We were not greatly impressed by his more ultra-modern examples. But he made out a case, and some of us went away with some idea of the more formal aspects of pictorial art.

Mr. Hoyland spoke to us on the 30th October about what one may call his experiences in "Digging." The capital "D" is deliberate. His was no common or garden turning of the sod. He set out to see what could be done to alleviate the lot of our unemployed. He was under no illusion that the problem could be solved by an addition to the allotment acreage, but he was convinced that one of the approaches to a better understanding of the difficulties was open to those who were prepared to take off their coats and get down to honest, manual toil, sharing the actual living conditions of those for whom they were working

and showing by real hard spade-work that the barriers between the intellectual and the labourer could be broken down. He has dug widely, from South Wales to India and Central Europe, and wherever he went he found the spade a useful weapon of attack. His faith is founded on work, and what is more important still, he found that it worked. One cannot but admire his sincerity, and it is a method well worth trying. We are convinced, however, that the chief gain is that which comes to the diggers themselves. They cannot fail to see the immensity of the problem, and to appreciate how little even the most disinterested individualistic altruism can do to solve it. That knowledge must surely spur them to a demand for State action, for it is only by such we can get to the real roots of the matter.

On Tuesday, 9th November, through the kindness of Mrs. Noel Wills, we had the opportunity of hearing Grey Owl lecture, and of seeing his remarkable films. It was a memorable experience. From the moment that he stepped on to the scene in his picturesque Red Indian dress, till the last word of his talk, he held his audience spellbound. We were aware of a dominating personality.

He began by describing the lure of the trail. Those waterways in the Far North, leading from lake to lake through virgin forest. His film showed us the canoes, sometimes afloat on clear and tranquil mirrors, sometimes shooting perilous rapids of dangerous "white water," at other times in portage over rough forest tracks. Everywhere was the glamour and the beauty of the unknown.

Then followed glimpses of the buffalo reservations. Of the herds grazing in vast prairies, or in wild career as they were rounded up by the men on horseback. But probably it will be the pictures of the beavers at Beaver Lodge that will remain most vividly in our memories. These are the animals that Grey Owl has made supremely his own. Indeed, it is to him they owe their preservation. We shall not soon forget the stories and pictures of Rawhide and Jelly-roll. He made them seem more than human. That is his secret with animals. It is to his humanity they respond. Anything like his patience with those beavers, his suffering when they carried their litter and began to build a lodge inside his own cabin, we can scarcely imagine. He was awarded with complete and unequivocal friendship.

He made a moving appeal for the abolition of blood-sports. He has no use for the hunter who is out to kill for the game's sake.

Possibly some of us may have detected a trace of sentimentality in some of his passages, a tendency to over-picturesque description, of a proneness to identify wild life too closely with the sensitivity of a very impressionable human personality.

But these were minor defects. None could fail to be impressed by his passionate sincerity, and the great-hearted vision of the man himself. For these even more than for his words and his superb pictures, we are indebted to him. It was a memorable afternoon, and we could have wished for more.

On the 17th November Mr. H. W. Hosken lectured on "The Passion Play at Oberammergau." He began by showing us pictures of the village that is the setting of this unique spectacle- He then traced the origin of the play; how a simple local religious festival has been transformed into an event that with each production draws an ever increasing world-wide audience. Then followed scenes of the Festival Theatre, of the great open-air stage that affords such possibilities for the production of crowd scenes, of effective massing and moving climaxes. Then there were pictures of the play itself. It was all well arranged and well described, and we are indebted to Mr. Hosken for a lecture of real interest and beauty.

It is a far cry from Oberammergau to the coast of South Wales. (Perhaps it would be better if we put that sentence in the reverse order). Few of us are likely to be able to visit the Passion Play, but all can follow Mr. James in the itinerary he mapped out for us through his own country. We could not follow in the foot- steps of a better guide. He began in Glamorganshire, and it was interesting to learn that that county is almost as rich in castles as it is in coalfields. Cardiff is castellated, and in addition possesses modern buildings that might well be the envy of many more salubrious places. He went on by cove and headland round the Pembrokeshire coast, past Tenby, and when he reached St. David's one felt that he had come to his true destination. The great ecclesiastical buildings there are one of the glories of our island. His talk doubtless will have the effect of making many of us want to visit these places ourselves. Perhaps, indeed, we might persuade Mr. James to lead an expedition. Without him we should be certain to miss such a lot. He is a master both of discovery and invention.

On Thursday, 2nd December, Mr. Macarness visited us and gave a talk on "The Art of Silent Reading." He is a lecturer of wide experience, and much of what he had to say was illuminating, but we are inclined to think his approach to the subject was somewhat too idyllic. Of his own love for literature there could be no doubt, but we are not certain that he hit upon

the most convincing way of communicating it. Boys are realists, not to say iconoclasts, and they are suspicious of a gilded pill. There is no royal road to an appreciation of the best in literature, and "reading without tears" at the most only leads us to the suburbs of the city. The fortress has to be taken by persistence rather than by enthusiasm, however well intentioned. And a too romantic assault is likely to end by defeating itself.

The last lecture of the Term, given by Mr. A. T. Culwick on the 7th December, was one of the best we have ever heard. Mr. Culwick has been working in Tanganyika as a District Officer. To qualify for that onerous post means that you have to show an aptitude for the following, among many other vocations: a doctor, a policeman, a judge, an engineer, a politician, a quick-change artist, a psychologist, a sanitary inspector, a soldier, and a school-master. (That is only half the list). And, above all, you must be fairly tough and have a sense of humour. Lastly, you must not be afraid of hard work.

All these attributes the lecturer had in abundance, not for getting the sense of humour. So no wonder we enjoyed listening to him. He began with a series of photographs depicting villages liable to the most alarming inundations. So much so that a knowledge of life-saving and navigation, not to speak of bridge-building, and aquatic transport might well have been added, to his qualifications.

We saw him in all the plurality of his offices. Looking after sick children (one of them the royal offspring of a native chieftain), building schools, taking motor lorries across swollen rivers, reviewing police, dispensing justice, formulating reports, struggling with red tape, and generally amusing and admonishing, and even mothering his charges. And not for a moment did we suspect that he was about the heroic task of Empire building. (He scarcely seemed aware of this most important duty himself). His humour was only equalled by his modesty. His resourcefulness was only matched by his intrepidity. Such are the people we send out to manage our savage reservations. We could wish they could be employed in directing our natives at home.

THE ENGLISH CLASSICAL PLAYERS.

On the 2nd December the English Classical Players revisited Rendcomb, and gave a performance of "The Tempest". Of all the plays of Shakespeare it is the one that most closely conforms to the unities of time and place. The action takes place on one single, magical day, in that most romantic of settings—an uninhabited island. There are no bewildering changes as in those plays where the scene shifts from the sea coast of Bohemia to a Sicilian Court, and where there are lapses of time that have to be measured in years.

The unity of "The Tempest" might seem to suggest that it was an easy play to produce, but this is far from being so. Mr. Ray found himself confronted with many problems, and as though to emphasise the pivotal figure of the drama, he took the bold expedient of keeping Prospero on the stage the whole time. It was an interesting experiment, but only partially successful. The curtain rose on the ship-wreck scene, to a medley of cries and lights, with the statuesque bulk of Prospero, clad in ghost-like white, directing the proceedings. In the confusion many of the lines inevitably were lost, and when the lights came on for Scene II it was rather disconcerting to find that the immense and weirdly distorted magician, without any diminution of stature, had to be readjusted in our eyes, as the benign and merciful father and peace-maker, that is Prospero's role for the rest of the play. He took up too much of the stage. At times it seemed as though "Saul," by some trick of levitation, had been set down to preside over the spectacle. He was too monumental, too much the "deus ex machina," and as a result his essential humanity was lost.

Ariel presented difficulties, and we are not convinced that these can be overcome by the use of diaphanous veils and the gyrations of a pseudo-ballet dancer. The crispness and Puck-like "allegresse" were missing. The real excellencies of the play were to be found in the casting of Caliban (played by Mr. Ray himself) and his two associates, Trinculo (Norman Buckle), and Stephano (Christopher Williams). Mr. Ray, as always, showed himself a master of the art of make-up His clowning was good, but we are not certain that he got across the really beautiful lines that Shakespeare has put into the mouth of the monster. Curiously enough, some of the loveliest passages of verse are given to Caliban.

"Be not afraid; the isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices;
The clouds, methought, would open, and show riches
Ready to drop upon me, that when I wak'd
I cry'd to dream again."

Caliban remains one of the most remarkable creations of Shakespeare's fertile imagination. Mr. Ray gave an admirable presentation of his brutish side, but it lacked somewhat the strange animal spirituality with which it is so surprisingly touched. Apart from Gonzalo, we feel that the other characters have been only partially visualised. Miranda remains a slight and girlish figure, devoid of any real depth. The Neapolitan courtiers are stock figures that might have been taken from any pageant.

Indeed, the whole play has much of the quality of a masque. (And incidentally the masque within the masque was well contrived.) The use of music as a background was happily devised. The whole drama is redolent of music, and requires some sort of musical setting. Verse spoken against music—especially when the verse is lyrical in quality—gains in intensity. And the producer had realised this. But we could not help feeling that the whole effect was scarcely up to the standard of their usual presentations. It was suggestive rather than convincing. We look forward to seeing these indefatigable actors again, in a play better suited to the limitations of a comparatively restricted stage. That is a curious conclusion to draw when we consider the essential unity of this piece.

ACTING.

MICHAELMAS TERM, 1937.

Six plays in all have been produced this Term, and it remains our lot to chronicle them. We are in doubt as to whether our previous notices of plays have done all that was requisite. We are inclined to believe that they concentrated too much on giving a mere synopsis of the various plots, and did not say enough about the production and the acting. Why do we attach so much importance to acting? Obviously there is the fact that it provides entertainment, not only for our- selves, but our friends. The aim of art should be to give pleasure, but school acting has a double role to play, since it concerns the actors quite as much as it does the audience. It increases our imagination, and should quicken our responses to both life and art.

We are convinced that if the best results are to be achieved much depends on the choice of plays. That, indeed, as we all know, is a matter of extreme difficulty. We have to keep in mind both the capabilities of our actors and the appeal that any given play is likely to ‘make to our audiences. (It is possible, we think, to stress this latter too much. We are out, it is true, to please, but that does not necessarily mean that we must pander). Some people would welcome a series of “thrillers,” but thrillers have very rarely any value other than that of being sensational at the time. They are quickly forgotten, and, as in the case of the average indifferent film, few of us would want to see them twice. They have nothing permanent to give us.

We think that “Tobias and the Angel” was a good choice. It had been rather drastically “cut,” but even that did not spoil its intrinsic qualities—a simple and moving and fantastic story, told in excellent prose.

“The Sweeps of Ninety-Eight,” as one would expect from anything written by the Poet Laureate, had its own merits, though possibly it relied too much for effect on its period setting. The other plays were frankly entertainments, and little else. We would, indeed, have been sorry to miss the exquisite humours of P. G. Wodehouse. That was a good choice for adults; it would have been entirely out of place for juvenile actors, but it was so well produced and acted that its artistry was completely satisfactory.

It is difficult to hold the balance between the merely diverting and the play that possesses ultimate significance. But we, believe that we could do with more reality and more literary texture in our plays. They need not be any the less popular for having such.

One word on the capabilities of our plays. Boys are—on the whole—potentially good actors. But when it comes to women’s parts certain difficulties arise. Many boys dislike being cast for such. They should console themselves with the thought that in Shakespeare’s time all women’s parts were played by boys, and *there is no reason to believe that they were played badly*. There ought to be no ignominy in accepting such. It is the mark of a good actor to undertake a part that may not at first greatly appeal to him, and then to see how much he can make of it.

* * * * *

On Saturday, 9th October, members of Form IV. presented a short play entitled “Good Morning, Sir John.” The cast consisted of three: J. H. Neads as Sir John Dover; J. R. Laton, as Derwent, his secretary; and H. S. Palmer, as Maggie, a maid-servant.

The plot centred round a matter of blackmail. Maggie is discovered opening a safe, whither she had gone, not to procure filthy lucre, but letters that were being kept to blackmail her sister, who at one time had had a passion for Sir John, and had committed herself a little unwisely to writing. The master surprises her, but she, is well served by the good offices of Derwent, the secretary, and the tables are turned on the villain. It was a slight play, which provided a pleasant interlude during a Saturday evening.

* * * * *

On the 16th October “At the Coach and Horses” was played by other members of the same Form. This is what is called a “crook” play. The scene was laid in an inn kept by a re-formed “lag,” Lenton, by name. A visitor arrives, who is none other than a detective in disguise. He is on the track of some jewel thieves. He talks most amicably with the landlord, and then exits, presumably to bed.

No sooner is he gone, than in through the window comes Stanway (a professional thief). He is an old crony of Lenton's, and had just succeeded in pulling off a successful bit of work, the theft of a pearl necklace, effected during a Carnival Fancy Dress Ball that was being held in the neighbourhood. He had gone to this dressed as a highwayman, in company with his female accomplice, Peg. The landlord tells him that a detective is in the house, and conceals him behind a secret sliding panel. (This panel had played an important part in a former highwayman murder mystery).

The detective, who has not gone to bed, re-enters just after the concealment, but in time to meet another crook, Mayhew, who, disguised as Mephistopheles, makes his entrance through the window. He is despatched to bring in Peg, and then follows a tussle with the landlord as to the whereabouts of the suspected thief. Lenton refuses to tell, but the clue is revealed by a ghost (a relic of the former case) which enters and discloses the panel. The miscreant is brought to book.

The play closes with Viner in the ascendant, and the malefactors apprehended. Such a plot provides a succession of thrills, but little else. It is too remote from reality to be convincing.

But the play was well acted. In particular we would mention E. J. Powell, who made his debut in the part of the landlord. The detective was played by C. F. Bailey, and Stanway by M. A. C. Levett. Peg, his somewhat blowsy accomplice, by R. F. Boyland. Mayhew in Mephistophelean attire) by L. H. Hvett; the Ghost by G. W. Ivens, while A. R. Tenty was the policeman.

* * * * *

On the 14th November, Form III. presented Lord Dunsany's comedy "Atalanta in Wimbledon." Here we were concerned with a fantasy. The whole thing was palpably absurd. We were introduced to a suburban family which, like many, boasted a discontented daughter. She, under her father's highly improbable advice, had taken to reading poetry, one of the results being that she had chosen Atalanta's method of securing a husband. An advertisement in the "Morning Post" announced that she would wed the man who could defeat her at ping-pong. The penalty for failure was death by the sword.

The suitor duly arrives, and engages in the life or death contest. But a suspicious policeman appears on the scene, and the puzzled father, who at first scouts the idea as impossible, is confounded by discovering the game in progress, and Blegg, the family gardener, fondling an antique sword in readiness to carry out his young mistress's commands. Two later arrivals, however, remove any danger of homicide—Bill, who is in love with the girl, but had never declared his passion, and the pompous secretary of the Amateur Ping-Pong Association, who declares that any member playing for a reward will forfeit his status.

Mr. Jinks, the ping-pong suitor, withdraws. Blegg sheathes the sword, and Margery, the daughter, falls into the arms of the undemonstrative Bill. The whole thing was quite fantastic, as remote from life as the improbabilities of "At the Coach and Horses."

But there was this difference. The crook play sought to exploit our feelings for some sort of melodramatic reality, however impossible. (So do many films). "Atalanta in Wimbledon" aimed at playing upon our sense of the grotesque. The one sought to convince (and a failure to do so would have resulted in absurdity); the other frankly proposed a ridiculous situation, and invited us to laugh. No illusion was necessary, and the humour proceeded directly from its improbabilities.

The tempo of the production was on the slow side; it lacked a certain sprightliness, but on the whole the actors did quite well

The cast was as follows: Margery Dawks, A. W. Morris; Mr. Dawks (her father), C. Barnett; Mr. Jinks, P. G. Forrest; Constable Spellkins, S. A. Trayburn; Blegg (an old gardener), F. R. Dobbs; Bill (the lover), P. A. Herring, and Mr. Leonard (the secretary), B. J. Lumby.

* * * * *

"The Sweeps of '98," by John Masefield, is a one-act play, based on an incident of the Irish Rebellion of 1798. The action takes place in an inn on the outskirts of Dublin.

Tiger Roche, a notorious rebel, is waiting for a ship to get him clear of the country. He falls in with the equally notorious Major Sirr and two of his cronies on the English side. Sirr boasts of his ruthlessness in dealing with rebels, and they all drink together. Fifes and drums are heard outside, and Tiger Roche persuades his companions that a column of rebel troops are approaching. Major Sirr and his gentlemen ignominiously take refuge up the capacious chimney. A body of English soldiers enter and make a search. The men in hiding are discovered, and are dragged out of the chimney corner begrimed like sweeps. Tiger Roche succeeds in convincing the young English captain that they are rebels, and has the satisfaction of seeing them taken off under arrest, while he (the real rebel) makes his escape.

There is plenty of action in this play. That is its real virtue. Only very slight characterisation is attempted, and the dialogue does not essay any distinctly Irish idiom. This is probably to the good. One possible fault lies in the fact that to an audience without any knowledge of the historic background, the situation is not quite explicitly communicated. The setting was well contrived.

The lighting effects were good, and the fine chimney-piece was a welcome addition to our stage resources. The “noises off” were effective. The main characters were well cast, and the action suitably timed.

The cast was as follows: Tiger Roche, E. R. S. Gillham; Major Sirr, E. R. Morris; Major Sands, D. D. Haig; Mr. Justice Fitzpatrick, D. G. Morison; the landlady, C. F. Bailey; a Captain, W. A. Wyon; two soldiers, D. W. Stone and J. F. Spencer.

* * * * *

“Good Morning Bill,” a three act comedy by P. G. Wodehouse, was produced by members of the staff on Saturday, 27th November. The following were the dramatis personae:

Marie (a maid)	Mrs. Neal
Lord Tidmouth	Mr. Hosken
Lottie	Mrs. James
Bill Paradine.. . . .	Mr. Gross
A Page-boy	Mr. Weatherhead
Sally Smith, M. D.	Mrs. Lee-Browne
Sir Hugo Drake (Bill's uncle)	Mr. Richards

It seems best to put the cast like that at the beginning of our notice, for it will bring back this play very vividly to the audience and save a long (it would have to be a very long) synopsis of the plot.

We will remember Mrs. Neal as Marie, and the tinkly-tonkly way she set the tea-table in Lottie's suite (which at that time also contained Bill Paradine). Mrs. James was Lottie—an adventuress, who had got poor Bill in tow. It was a regrettable entanglement, for Lottie (alas!) was a common little siren, and Bill was “County”—of the house of Paradine.

Lord Tidmouth, admirably played by Mr. Hosken, was a friend of Bill's, an aristocratic friend, who had the faculty of dropping in and out at the most disconcerting moments. He had a monocle and a Society manner, and never seemed at a loss. Poor Bill was distinctly at a loss. He was in a bad way when the play opened, desperately in love with a paragon of women, and anxious to get rid of the awful Lottie. His new love turns out to be Sally Smith, a very self-possessed lady doctor. She gets called in to deal with an attack of nerves on the part of Lottie. How Bill wilts under her double diagnosis; how the scene shifts to the Paradine country seat; how Sir Hugo Drake attempts to break off the unfortunate affair with Lottie; how Bill summons Doctor Smith down to the country mansion under a false pretence; how the two ladies meet there under most trying circumstances; how Bill storms the citadel of the lady physician's heart, and how Lottie gets bought off by Sir Hugo, at a very substantial price—all this would take too long to tell, but everything ends as it should, and the family honour is saved.

So much for the play. It was brimful of typical P. G. Wodehouse humour, both of speech and situation. It was excellently cast and produced, and provided a full three acts of first-class entertainment. It would be invidious to single out individual members for praise. They are fully aware of our response to their performances.

From point of view of "finish" it was a real achievement, and the company and their producer deserve every congratulation.

One final note. We would suggest to Mr. Molyneux that he has missed his true vocation. He should take up at once the, profession of painting family portraits.

* * * * *

TOBIAS AND THE ANGEL.

The outstanding quality of James Bridie's work, and the quality which makes him difficult to act successfully, is his astonishing capacity for change of mood. In a few lines he can shift his ground from emotion to broad comedy without a trace of anti-climax. At that tremendous moment when sight returns to Tobias, the dialogue goes like this:

Tobit: . . . I can see! I can see! Oh, Tobias!

Tobias: Father!

Tobit: I can see, Anna! I can see! I can see, Tobias! I can see you! What a beloved, ugly, old darling you are! Kiss me. What do you think of the Lord now, you mournful old crocodile?

—and there we are, back again in comedy. There is hardly a dramatist living who, in eight lines, dare drop that scene so. This is the sort of thing that happens throughout "Tobias and the Angel," and ability to negotiate these moods is the mark of a successful production.

Judged thus, the Rendcomb production failed occasionally. There were moments, particularly between Tobias and Sara (in the morning after Asmoday had been banished), and between Anna and Tobit at the end, when the changes of mood were blurred, and points lost. But generally the actors seemed to feel the changes, and moved easily with the ebb and flow of the dialogue. Tobias and Sara, afraid of Asmoday at night, obviously got the feel of their lines, and the scene moved as if should. The scenes in the garden, with Raguel, Tobias, Sara, Raphael, and several attendants all on the stage, were not so successful. They were played on a dead level, when they should have been kept flickering between comedy and emotion.

Individual performances varied. D. G. Morison, as Tobit, was restrained and sensitive, and some lines were memorable. E. R. Morris, as Tobias, in a long and varied part, was consistently

good, and added his own individual bias to a character already well drawn in the script. On the debit side, all that one can fairly say is that his gestures tended to be stiff and his gestures cramped. D. D. Haig was aloof and dignified, and he has a presence; he felt the Archangel's humour, but he did not always know how to combine it with his dignity. B. M. L. Simon did not fail, if he did not quite succeed, in a difficult woman's part, and R. L. Short, in a much easier woman's part, underplayed it. Anna's grief just failed to come over. B. H. Peacock drew a neat little sketch of a bandit. D. Gallop might have had more fun with Raguel. The attendants were good, and Tuck and Morris showed distinct promise, as did E. B. Smith and Bodman.

The whole of the stage management side deserves praise. The play calls for a formidable set of lighting effects, frequent changes of scene, and a most bizarre assortment of properties. All these difficulties were well met. Mr. Molinaux is to be congratulated on his designs for the garden and the river, and the lighting was the most elaborate we have yet seen on the Rendcomb stage.

THREE POEMS.

I. THE FILM STAR.

Oh, I have seen them, seen them, seen them,
Hoardings and posters of you, my dear;
Panels of faces between them, between them,
Ring at the finger and pearl at the ear.
But, oh, for the pity, the pity, the pity,
Sadness that you who were once so near,
Are now but a cipher, a face for the city,
Emptily, mighty and made, my dear.

* * * * *

II.

I pity with all solemnity
Those who are love-lost, have no perspective;
For love, even in dying, is unreal,
And does not refer to the life I live.
Those who are loving are open to any
Of those innumerable softenings that catch us out;
They are not hardened, have no derision,
Cannot be cruel, and will stand in doubt
How to account for murder or for money,
Or how to meet the difficult situation.

III.

Not the explosion
Of thought in life,
The detonation
Of what is new,
Wears down love's cliff.
But the slow erosion
Of what is true,
The demolition
That I or you,
Not knowing what
We did, might do.

NEMO.

A COTSWOLD ARTIST.

It is often said that a prophet has no honour in his own country. Like many aphorisms, the statement is not entirely true. We believe that Gloucestershire is one of those counties that possess a proper local pride, and as a School we are appreciative of good work done by our Old Boys.

For that reason it was a real pleasure to visit the Cheltenham Art Gallery at the end of last Term, and to find an exhibition of works by five young artists, among whom was Dick Field, A. R. C. A.

The collection as a whole evidenced a high level of craftsmanship, but we felt that Dick Field's work was the most distinguished and satisfying of the lot. He is a sound draughtsman, and in addition possesses a real colour sense. The most accomplished picture in the exhibition was his Gouache painting, entitled "The Clover," Winson (No. 6). It had been previously exhibited at the Royal Academy. Its subject is a ruined farm building, half-stripped of its stone slates, so that the rafters reveal their bony skeleton. In the background is a copse.

There is nothing startling about this picture, no attempt at modernism—indeed the detail is almost Pre-Raphaelite in its exactitude. But it achieves its effect, imprinting itself upon the mind and memory of the spectator. The colouring is beautiful, crisp greens and sere greys almost ivory in their purity. And the surface texture (in part arising from his medium) is pleasing. This neat, precise type of landscape is possibly the genre that comes most easily to Dick Field. It has, so to speak, been bred in his bones, but it possesses certain limitations, and it is interesting to note that he does not confine himself to this manner. Pictures like "Dusk" (No. 26), and "The Wagon" (No. 118) reveal him in a different mood, one that lends itself to a more fluid and spacious handling.

To many, his landscapes will seem his most typical work, but it would be wrong to overlook his portraits. In this section of the exhibition quite the most distinguished work was his drawing of Peter Lambert (No. 52). It is a most sensitive study, sure of line, and detached yet intimate in its feeling. His portraits in oils have their merits, but none of them reach the note of austere accomplishment that is to be found in this, and several other drawings. (There are two separate studies of Peter Lambert, and it is hard to say which is the more satisfying).

If Dick Field merely possessed an agreeable flair for landscape, one would feel that his work, sooner or later, would come to a point beyond which further progress was unlikely. (In a sense "The Clover, Winson" represents a certain type of finality in that direction). But the fact that he is a draughtsman, and possesses psychological as well as pictorial insight, suggests that he has a long way to go.

Up to the present his work is conventional rather than provocative. He has, as is natural, concentrated rather upon exploring new paths. It is all to the good that he has avoided any glib and sensational modernisms of manner. But we shall be surprised if, as he discovers his personality, he does not surprise us some day.

In closing, we should like to add that, from time to time, the Cheltenham Art Gallery has exhibitions of more than ordinary interest. Those of us who are interested in Art outfit not to miss these.

R. N. D. W.

* * * * *

TWO SEASCAPES.

I. —At Douarnenez, Brittany.

I have been bathing from a little cove of rocks and sand. The sea rather cold; a grey day; and the coast and the sky remind me of Ireland. Long treeless horizons, faintly blue hills, the harvest fields the colour of sand. The town itself is a French St. Ives, more picturesque perhaps, and certainly more smelly. Every evening the harbour in sunlight is full of fishing boats with blue nets drying on the masts. A strange, rainbow hue, kingfisher blue—very delicate gauze—the sort of colour discovered by the early Impressionists. The fishermen wear red rose-maroon trousers and overalls. Floating on the green, silky, almost viscid, water, are some boats larger than the others—tunny-fishers, these. They are painted in white, a white so vivid as to seem almost a new colour. As evening fell it seemed to drink the lingering light, and to return its brightness with a strange phosphorescence all its own. A paradise for painters, only it has all been painted before.

Even this writing is too picturesque. But the place is picturesque. There is no escaping the fact. It is crowded, but there are, thank Heaven, more natives than visitors. And the natives are noisily alive. They talk and sing until late hours in all the little estaminets along the quay.

This morning I saw a wedding party. Like all wedding parties, it was slightly ludicrous. The bridesmaids much more at ease than the bride. The men in black Sunday attire, and looking very self-conscious. The crowd greatly amused. (Query: Is it not a mistake to make a public display of these human necessities?) At lunch time the beach is deserted. The parents and their broods have all gone into the houses for *dejeuner*.

It is judged a safe time for a party of nuns to come down to paddle. They wear most picturesque head-dresses of starched linen, that flutter about like giant butterflies. And they hobble about over the rocks, bathing their feet in the little pools. Only the more adventurous go calf-deep into the sea.

The more I see of humanity the more I wonder. The diversity of our occupations and pastimes is bewildering. And the impassive vastness of the sea only makes it all seem slightly beside the point. Or perhaps it puts things in their correct perspective.

II. —Mont St. Michel.

Mont St. Michel, when one first sees it, is neither of sea or land. It might be a vision of the apocalypse let down from Heaven. It might be a galleon, high-masted, and in full sail. It might be a fortress seen afar across pastures rather than sea. For the sheep in flocks graze into the tideways, and the dry, dusty causeway goes out across a space that is neither sea or land, flanked by the sickle curve of a muddy river.

I suppose one ought to see it first at high tide. But these shallow mud-banks, with their oyster grey colour, are as treacherous and as lovely as the sea. And I saw it first in a faint, leaden, summer haze, that lent it both height and unreality. And there were sheen in the foreground. (As there are in the photographs.) Lonely flocks unshepherded, their drab fleeces like the pale, sea-withered grass.

The closer foreground is a car park, at the end of the long digue. Some of the cars are almost in the sea. The dry, baked mud of the foreshore, after several days, is still on my running-board.

Mère Poulard presides over the entrance to the town. Her omelettes, made ostentatiously over an open fire, are probably neither better nor worse than

many others. The exhibitionism, however, prepares one for a narrow street of bric-a-brac shops. Such things do not pain me. This devouring generation, equipped with cheap means of transport, naturally swarms over such places. And the monks had gone before either the railway or the internal combustion engine had been invented. So little harm has been done.

One climbs. First by a steep cobbled slope. Then by steps. You become aware of ramparts and fortifications. They are right.

Just as Chartres was designed by Our Lady herself, this prodigious sky-scraping adventure was ordained by St. Michael—the Prince of the Heavenly Host. He built himself here a fortress “in the peril of the seas,” where men could fight and pray.

He who trod the devil underfoot, is here seen trampling men and seas, rearing himself, higher and higher, a house, and a citadel, and lastly a church, whose sharp spire is like a lightning conductor for the forces of heaven.

The rest is all detail and archaeology. We have failed the vision.

WAYFARER.

FOOTBALL.

MICHAELMAS TERM, 1937.

In spite of winning our first match with the Old Boys, we started the season badly, suffering an unexpected defeat at Hanley Castle, and another at home to Dean Close 2nd XI. Stone was not very sound as goalkeeper, nor were any of the forwards well placed, with the exception of Short.

After a series of experiments, the final forward line was: Haig, outside left, Short, Gallop, Morris, Morison.

Morison and Haig were good fast wingers, and Short played a consistently good game at inside left. Gallop and Morris were below the standard of the others, but should improve greatly as they go up in the school. Morris, although somewhat slow, would be quite useful to the team if he would play a more open game, and refrain from too much dribbling. Godsell and Wyon as wing halves played some good games, but their passing can still improve considerably.

In his first match in goal, at Dean Close, Lane's play was extremely good, and although he did not quite keep up to this standard, he played well. His worst fault is that he does not catch the ball properly.

Our “Average 15 years’ XI” was young, and but for one or two exceptions, was

almost the same as the Junior XI. To mention all the individual talent here would take too long, so let it suffice to say that there is definite promise for the future.

Gillham was a sound and keen captain, and carried on the fine standard set by his predecessor. The matches were:

FIRST XI

Saturday, Oct. 2. —OLD BOYS. Home. Won 6—3.

Seven Old Boys appeared, but in spite of that we had a good game!

Saturday, Oct. 9. —HANLEY CASTLE. Away. Lost 2—3.

Let it suffice to say that Hanley Castle made the most of all their opportunities, while we only scored from about a sixth of our chances. This was not a good game.

Saturday, Oct. 23. —DEAN CLOSE 2nd XL Home. Lost 1—5.

The game was played in a continual downpour of rain, and the Dean Close XI. was all over us, the score being quite a good indication of the play.

Thurs., Nov. 4. —DEAN CLOSE 2nd XL Away. Won 3—2.

It may have been the thoughts of half-term on the next day, or, more likely, the rearrangement of the team which caused this unexpected result. The team played well together as a whole, and played good football. Haig, Short and Morison each scored.

Nov. 13. —TETBURY G. S. Home. Won 4—0.

In spite of our success, this was not a good match. The team were not together, and only won because our opponents were much weaker.

Nov. 20. —SWINDON COLLEGE. Away. Lost 0—4.

Again the team were not on form, and could not hope to stand up to the superior football of the Swindon side.

Nov. 27. —HANLEY CASTLE. Home. Won 7—2.

It was a surprise for us to win this match so easily, after our defeat at Hanley, but there was nothing of particular note in the game.

Dec. 2. —TETBURY G. S. Away. Won 5—1.

On their home ground Tetbury played much better, but our team was combining better, and after having had the first goal scored against us. We ended by winning 5—1.

Dec. 4. —SWINDON COLLEGE. Home. Lost 3—4.

It was a hard and fast game, in many ways the best of the season, and although we might just have secured a draw, we could not have hoped for a win.

AVERAGE 15 YEARS' XI.

Oct. 16.—KINGHAM HILL. Home. Won 2—1.

This game was remarkable for the sound passing of the forwards, which was good.

Wed., Nov. 17.—KINGHAM HILL. Away. Lost 2—4.

We played a weaker team in this match, and although we lost it was a good game.

JUNIOR XI.

Sat., Oct. 2. —FARMOR'S SCHOOL, FAIRFORD. Away. Won 5—1 Junior XI.
started their season well by winning their first match. They played well together for such a young team, but their opponents were weak.

Nov. 20, FARMOR'S SCHOOL. Home. Won 16—0. Although the opposing team was weak, the score of 16—0 was unexpected.