

Rendcomb College

Magazine

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FEBRUARY, 1937.

SCHOOL NOTES.

MICHAELMAS TERM, 1936.

We are glad to be able to record that the new appearance of the Magazine seems to have met with general approval, but we feel that we have a good way still to go before we get what we want. As yet the Editor regrets that so few unsolicited contributions come his way.

Our Old Boys are singularly reticent. Communications from them would be especially welcome. We invite criticism. We could do with the spice of controversy. Our "Home News" service is reasonably efficient, but what we need badly are a few "Foreign Correspondents."

We welcome Mr. C. Hodges, M.A., who joined the staff at the beginning of Term. He has come for a year from Bedford School to assist with the teaching of Mathematics and Physics.

We also extend a welcome to Miss L. Stringer, who succeeds Miss Brimlow as Assistant Matron.

Rendcomb House was completely redecorated during the Summer Holidays. The colour scheme has enormously improved and lightened the building, and we are grateful to the Governors for their interest in the work.

Monday afternoons have found the Art Room a hive of increasing activity. We would commend those interested in line and colour to go over and see the results. Unfortunately, the best works are too large for inclusion in the Magazine. They are characterised by a spontaneity that is very different from the old-fashioned copying and niggling some of us used to associate with "Art Room" periods.

The School is becoming “puppet-minded”, if we may be permitted, without offence, to adapt a current cliché. Under Mr. Molineaux's guidance a start had been made some time ago. Now we can boast of possessing a Marionette Theatre that staged a show at the Christmas entertainment. The construction of the puppets themselves is a highly intricate art. So is their dressing, as Miss Finlayson could testify. And when it comes to making them walk - but books could be written on that subject. We are already developing a school of manipulators, and the performance of “The Pilot” shows what can be done, and what possibilities remain to be explored. The scenario was well chosen.

The words had the right romantic tang, of full-blooded heroes, of swooning maidens, and desperate, moustachioed villains. The settings were excellent. And the puppets walked. What more can we say?

The Half-Term Holiday took place from Friday, 6th November, to Monday, 9th. The weather was propitious, and the break found us back at work duly refreshed and invigorated.

We regret to record the departure of Mr. R. H. Newport, the Headmaster's Secretary. He will be missed in many ways, but in none more so than in connection with Acting. He was a skilled and imaginative producer. We part with him less unhappily because we understand he has returned to the world of the theatre. We wish him, in his new career, the success he so richly deserves.

The Christmas Entertainment took place on the 12th December. The village was invited to a dress rehearsal of the School Plays on the previous evening. A full account of these will be found in another column. This year a novelty was added by the performance of a puppet play.

Our own Christmas party was held on the last Saturday of Term. We have always felt these occasions to be something out of the ordinary, but this year it will be unanimously agreed that things went with a better swing than ever. Fancy dress was “de rigueur,” and produced some drastic results. The dancing was good, and a staff burlesque of the puppet show succeeded in bringing down the house. We would desire to thank all those who contributed to make these end of term festivities such a marked success.

The following new boys joined the College at the beginning of Term: M. F. Lane, C. F. Bailey, P. A. Herring, C. H. Bodman, W. A. J. Caverhill, F. H. Dutton, L. H. B. Hatherell, D. Montgomery, J. M. Murry, D. A. C. Smith and D. G. Taylor,

The following boys left at Christmas: R. H. Bettison, A. C. Magor, R. J. Eley. To them we extend our “valeté.”

OLD BOYS' NOTES.

The Rev. J. R. Bateman, M.A., has been appointed Chaplain and Tutor of Ripon Hall, Oxford, as from October 1936.

P. Wyon and M. H. Gleeson-White have both passed their final examinations, the former at Leeds University, and the latter at the Middlesex Hospital, and are now qualified doctors.

MEETING OFFICERS.

MICHAELMAS TERM, 1936.

Chairman : Brain.

Council : Brain, Wilson, Morison, Bettison, Haig, Richardson, Willetts.

Election Committee : Wilson, Brain, Morison, Tuft, Haig.

House Committee : Field, Sinclair, Haig, Bates, Collett.

Games Committee : Wilson, Brain, Gillham, Morison, Bettison.

Senior Shopman : Magor.

Banker: Haig.

Breakages Man : Peacock.

Shopmen : Tuft, Wyon.

Secretary : Russell.

Auditors : Peacock, Spencer, Willis (apprentice).

Finance Committee : Spencer, Gallop, Morison.

Entertainments' Committee : Richardson, Sinclair, Hair; Morison, Spencer.

Cycle Men : Bates, Collett, Willis.

Paperman: Short.

Pauntlev Committee : Field, Willis, Spencer.

Record Committee : Willetts, Tuft, Short, Magor, Sinclair.

Suggestion Committee : Wilson, Tuft, Field.

Amplifier Committee : Sinclair, Short, Stone, Cutts, Haig.

Magazine Committee : Wilson, Haig, Field.

Drying Room Committee : Alder, Wyon, Ash.

Library Committee : Tuft, Peacock, Wyon, Harmer, Morris.

Games Wardens : Cricket—Morris.

„ „ Tennis—Richardson.

„ „ Football—Godsell, Stone.

„ „ Hockey—Stone.

Tennis Groundsmen : Godsell, Constable.

LECTURES.

We have had fewer lectures than are usual for a Michaelmas Term. But under this heading must be included the visits of the Lanchester Marionette Theatre, and the English Classical Players. (We reserve the term "Acting" to cover our own school activities). So although the actual number of lectures, as such, was limited, we were not short of extraneous diversions, and the speakers that we did hear were much appreciated.

On Sunday, 11th October, Mr. James Burford paid us a visit, and lectured on "Malta." Mr. Burford is no stranger to us. We remember him under the double role of wit and lecturer. Those who have heard his conversation are not likely to forget his sardonic epigrams, his somewhat sharp-edged sallies of speech, his singularly satiric humour. Now, the curious thing is, that when Mr. Burford lectures, he prefers to eschew this side of his personality, just as Canon Hannay in the pulpit avoids any reminder that he is the "George A. Birmingham" of his entertaining Irish romances.

Mr. Burford's lecture was a fine example of the art of exposition. From his technique the would-be lecturer has much to learn. Consider how he used his slides. He would place a map or a plan upon the screen and leave it there while he talked ahead. Leave it for a sufficiently long time to imprint its black and white contours on our minds, so that when the pictures followed we could see them in relation to their layout, the one thing that photographs, other than those taken from an aeroplane, singularly fail to achieve. The present writer feels that he could find his way about Valetta, without the doubtful assistance of a guide, thanks to Mr. Burford's clarity of method.

Malta, owing to its central position in that most Mediterranean of seas, has a history that goes back a long way. We were shown views of underground temples devoted to cults that preceded those of Greece and Rome.

But the real excitement began with the fortifications erected by the Knights of St. John. The Grand Harbour of Valetta is surrounded by the most massive monuments of military engineering known to Europe. And how much more impressive and beautiful are they than our latter day essays in defence works. These colossal pilings of bastions have given Valetta a formidable frame-work, out of which the modern town is striving to burst. And here Mr. Burford can speak with authority, because he was engaged on a town-planning survey that has as its object to provide for expansion without destroying the noble inheritance of the past.

It was interesting to find that Valetta is rich in very fine examples of Baroque architecture. That formerly somewhat despised school is now seen to be the product of real invention, capable of a singularly suave and charming elegance.

Mr. Burford's lecture made not a few of us long to see Malta with our own eyes.

We are indebted to Mr. Richards for the opportunity he gave us of seeing the photographs he brought back from his visit to Germany when he was accompanied by Willets, Abbot and Roper. His comments on them awakened the *wanderlust* in us all.

Curiously enough, some of his most striking pictures were of Baroque architecture, a reminder of how widespread that highly sophisticated style became in the days of its full vigour. He left us with a vivid impression of the beauty of the towns and cities that they visited, their high gabled houses, their superb setting on great rivers and amid the folds of forest-clad hills. Here, one felt, was the real Germany. A Germany traditional and wise and homely, more instinct with the true genius of the race than the hysterics that occupy so large a space in the news items of today.

Austen Magor was not entirely well served by the L.M.S. in the slides they supplied for his talk on Blackpool. The colours were too garish. Never were there such bright green trams and 'buses, such seed-catalogue flower beds, such an aquamarine sea. One wonders whether such slap-stick publicity does a place any good. Or has the L.M.S. sized up its Blackpool clientele?

But given his material the lecturer made an honest job of it. He had much of interest to tell us, and it was quite obvious he had not wasted his time in Blackpool. Here there was little question of Baroque, though the interiors of the various ballrooms at times outdid the splendour of Versailles. And all to be enjoyed for a modest shilling. Blackpool knows what it is after, and how to set about doing it. The crowds do the rest.

THE LANCHESTER MARIONETTE THEATRE.

On Monday, 16th November, we were given (by the kindness of Mrs. Wills) a novel and delightful entertainment - a Puppet Show by Mr. and Mrs. Waldo Lanchester. The word "puppet" is often used to indicate contempt, and the popular tendency is to regard a puppet show as a minor and insignificant imitation of the "real thing" - real acting, that is. Our charmed senses were, however, rapidly shown how erroneous is this opinion. The producer of a puppet play fulfils not only the role that a stage director is popularly supposed to perform, but, in addition, speaks his actors' parts, sings their comic songs, and directs their every movement. Truly a gargantuan task, and how Mr. and Mrs. Lanchester brought it off without a hitch and with only four hands, remains a mystery to us. The puppets clicked smoothly over the little stage with a reality that was almost unbelievably human. The art of puppetry is the art of exaggeration, the art of mimicry, the art of caricature. The piano virtuoso who discoursed Chopin so glibly was a virtuoso down to his finger-tips, and his attack on the keyboard was masterly to a degree. Various cameos ensued, including a pair of versatile dancers, a Pierrot and a somewhat elusive butterfly, and a fantastic episode in which a rural gentleman with a hoe sang a song about the necessity of hoeing. While he was taking "40 minutes" all his turnips came to life, and performed a wild and uncanny dance in the moonlight. The "tour de force" was undoubtedly the dance of the grasshoppers, which was not only amusing, but aesthetically pleasing and artistically appetising, and altogether completely edifying. The dance was performed by a very green grasshopper, before a self-constituted metronome in the shape of a horribly realistic black bug. The scene was set in Fairyland, with pixies' caves and hills of russet brown and scarlet toadstools in profusion. One was forcibly reminded of Alice and the vividly unreal adventures that befell her in the land of Looking-Glass, where toves are slithy and grasshoppers ballet dancers.

Another ballet (of a more gruesome kind) was a danse macabre by an amazingly elastic skeleton on a windy night, in the company of a wide-eyed crow. There was a scene at an inn, most nautical and grotesque (it might have been portrayed by Rowlandson). A hornpipe was executed with dexterity. More wonders followed, including a full circus, complete with tightrope, dappled greys, and including one, a fine Old English Gentleman, and a man of "many parts," who resolved his person parthenogenetically into numerous infants of varying proportions. We should also like to congratulate Ebenezer on an extraordinary exhibition of trumpet blowing.

Altogether this was an extraordinary treat, and one which we all enjoyed and vociferously applauded. We are grateful to Mrs. Wills for a delightful evening.

ENGLISH CLASSICAL PLAYERS.

“TWELFTH NIGHT.”

On Thursday, November 19th, we once again welcomed the English Classical Players to Rendcomb. On this occasion Mr, Ray’s Company gave us “Twelfth Night,” and although many of us regretted that some of the scenes – particularly the more humorous ones at the end – were cut out, we, nevertheless, enjoyed the production to the full.

The plot of the play is, like so many of Shakespeare’s, based on a common theme. A brother (Sebastian) and his sister (Viola), are shipwrecked, and each believes the other to have been drowned. From this situation the main plot develops. The sister goes to the Court of Duke Orsino, on whose territory she was cast up, and there masquerades as a boy, and in that guise contrives to get into further difficulties. She falls in love with the Duke, is sent by him to make love to a wealthy Countess (Olivia), and finally discovers that the Countess has fallen in love with her. All ends happily when Viola’s brother turns up – most bad pennies do – and Olivia switches her affections from Viola to Sebastian, while Orsino executes an equally rapid volte-face, and transfers his affections and exaggerations to Viola. There is also a very racy sub-plot, chiefly concerned with Olivia’s drunken kinsman, Sir Toby Belch, and with Sir Toby’s companions in sin, Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Maria. A good deal of humour calculated to appeal to the Elizabethan gallery – “the garlic-striking groundlings – arises from the pranks Toby and Maria play on Malvolio, the Puritanical and self-satisfied steward of the Countess Olivia, with whom he has had the temerity to fall in love.

In the character of Sir Toby Belch, Mr. Ray was excellent. Once again he got the whole audience to agree with his point of view, and we were all prepared to admit “that to be up late is to rise, betimes.” His facial expressions, his pointed gestures, and his whole-hearted entry into the character of the, part he is playing, are lessons that all aspiring Irvings would do well to study.

Mrs. Ray as Maria was also good, and introduced a delightful element of gaiety - also genuine and never forced into the production. Olivia was capable and graceful, but never achieved any marked effect. Viola, playing a difficult part, did well to get it across as successfully as she did, the masculine role making considerable and sometimes unachieved demands upon her. Orsino was weak, but Malvolio, with his sad, discreet, almost Cromwellian countenance, his yellow stockings cross-gartered, and his lordly affectations, was a comedy in himself. Sir Andrew Aguecheek, a rabbit-brained little braggart, was suitably rabbit-

brained. The appeal of the whole production was enhanced by the note of worldly-wise sadness which the beautiful songs of Feste, the jester, imparted to it – “Youth’s a stuff will not endure.” In general, we may say that the performance was thoroughly enjoyed by the School, who look forward with renewed eagerness each year to the visit of the English Classical Players.

HYDE PARK ORATORS.

Perhaps one of the most amusing aspects of London is that peculiarly outstanding one, which is to be seen at its most amazing in Hyde Park oratory. The Continental visitor is astounded at the libellous remarks passed on Royal personages and on the Government in general. But he has come to understand that it is one of the habits of “the egregious English.” What he will never understand is the toleration that allows the policemen to stand around and join in the laughing. In most modern European countries the degree of abuse tolerated in Hyde Park would cause immediate imprisonment, if not actual execution. The infallibility of the Dictator is more widespread than that of the Pope.

But to return to our subject. The safety valve of London’s religious and political opinions is situated on a wide stretch of asphalt just inside the Park Gates at Marble Arch Corner. All the tub-thumping and hymn-singing is carried on to a background of the dull roar of traffic that swirls round the Marble Arch. If we came in through the main gates at night we see on our left the long line of lights that marks Park Lane, with the four flood-lit towers of Grosvenor House standing up above the black trees. Behind us gleam the lights of the Regal Cinema, and from under the great white block of Cumberland House, the Tube station belches its stream of people. Into this stream pour other streams from Oxford Street, the Edgware Road and the Bayswater Road, and all of them converge on the Park.

As we go into the Park, perhaps the first orator we meet will be a fanatic, who, with bare head and an open Bible in his hands, strides round a small circle cleared for him, his upturned face brilliant in the yellow glare of the street lamp immediately above him. Suddenly he stabs his finger in the Bible and reads out to the gaping onlookers his divinely inspired message. Then again he begins his perambulation, his eyes burning and his hands uplifted. The next stand we come to is occupied by a meagre-faced little rat of a man, who addresses his audience in a brotherly fashion and a strong Scottish accent. He is preaching the gospel of Communism, and his audience is large, more because he has a perpetual cold and cannot enunciate properly, than for any other reason.

Farther along we come to an earnest individual proving that the whole Protestant Reformation sprang from Luther's attempt to justify his seduction of a nun. His facts are all wrong, but he silences all hecklers with the statement that he'll answer their questions in a fortnight's time, when he has returned from his coming holiday in Germany. There is a Jewish heckler, an auctioneer in Petticoat Lane by profession, who has no message to preach beyond that of "down with mothers-in-law." His maxims for married mugs are humorous and apt, even if unprintable. He always has a large audience, and they are invariably well entertained; but the best amusement occurs when he encounters another arch-heckler, and engages in a wordy combat full of pert, Cockney wit, general abuse, and on some occasions ending in an undignified scrap, until the unhurried and immovable police intervene.

Here an optimistic speaker is wasting his fervid oratory on five people and a mangy dog – the latter belongs to nobody present. He has thin hair, a straggling, grey moustache and a scrawny beard; his head is bent forward and wobbles from side to side, while his watery eyes blink at the five inspired faces below him from behind a pair of indifferent pince-nez. With a sweeping gesture, which nearly unbalances him, he invokes the sky, and announces that God is come to earth again. He gasps for breath after his extraordinary contortions have untied themselves, but still he labours on in a haze of self-assurance at his apparently unrewarded task of evangelizing London.

Over here the Salvation Army are singing hymns and hearing testimonies. Their proceedings periodically interrupted with cries of "Hallelujah, brother!" Here the Empire-building Blackshirts carry on the good work of making the world a fit place for Britons to live in. A strapping, physical specimen is proclaiming his dictatorial views: "I am conscious of social injustice to the masses; I am conscious of England's loss of prestige; I am conscious" When a loud and raucous voice suddenly bawls: "Yeah! but only just!" In passing, we overhear a conversation, snatches of voices: "Sure, his teeth are like stars ; they come out at night."

In the far corner by the railings Charlie is discussing other people's opinions and airing his own. If he were in Parliament we should all be in Utopia. He wants to know why the Home Office did not read his views on the White Paper ; he discusses Chinese Railways and Siamese cats; he touches on croup in chickens, and proceeds to the death-rate in Latvia, and winds up his performance-there is no other word for it-by proving that the Great War was an accident, and that he should be Prime Minister. He cannot be out-heckled; he knows his job from A to Z. He stands there on his raised box, his thin, white hair flowing in the wind, and his untiring tongue going on and on. Nobody knows what he's trying to say – he probably doesn't himself – but many people

know his speech off by heart from beginning to end, and recite it with him, word for word. But he pays no attention to them, and gazing out over their heads to Park Lane, he goes steadily forward, and the sound of the chorus rises up against the babel of voices and the throb of traffic. Round him gather most of the humorists of the place, the leader of the Nightshirts, the Führer of the Fanackapans, Bible jack of the National Scroungers' Association, Irish Pat, and Uncle, Tom Cobby and all.

Such then is Marble Arch Corner. There is never silence, and the steady yellow light of the lamps shines down on the changing heads of the never-resting crowd. They drift from group to group, pick-pockets and University professors, doctors and vagrants, stage people and hucksters. They are all there, finding beneath the unchanging sky and the sougning trees one point of common contact. Here is a place that most Englishmen and all Londoners can understand; to some it is a club, to others a music-hall, but to most of us it is a place where we can see life at its most human and its most enigmatic, and every-body, whether consciously or unconsciously, is interested in life's enigmas; for, after all, the proper study of mankind is man.

Nemo (Form VI.)

CONVERSATION PIECE.

“Men talk so much,” you say. They do.
But who'd not want to talk to you :
 The penalty of beauty is
 A host of mere acquaintances :
Acquaintanceship moreover takes
Delight in chat, and rarely makes
 For more than casual amity,
But that is not the case with me :
I talk because my words may move
Rocks from the mountain-road of love.

Nemo (Form VI.)

MOUNTAIN SIDE.

Unless you were there once, at eventide,
After the day had been full
With sun and laughter—
There above to look down upon
Fields in the valley—
You cannot understand the meaning of
shadow and light ;
Cannot become infused with
That feeling of earth—
All that touches earth,
All that grows out of earth,
All that depends upon it,
Cannot become one with
The shadow of a haystack
Thrown to give so much tranquil vitality
To the green of the slope.
While into the, distance the eye and the hand
Strive together to touch and see
The blues, greens and greys
Crowned with armfuls
Of stately, ship-proud clouds.
All this you cannot understand
Unless once you were there at eventide.

M.H.C.M.

ACTING.

On Friday, 13th November, the staff sprang a surprise by presenting us with a three-act thriller "Recipe for Murder," by Arnold Ridley the author of "The Ghost Train." The action takes place in the living-room of a country house, the home of the Summers family. John, the eldest son, is being blackmailed by a fellow named Cheriton, who had served with him in the Army during the War. Cheriton happens to be aware of the true facts concerning the death of John's younger brother Hugh. At home Hugh is regarded as a hero who had died a gallant soldier's death. The truth is that he was a rotter who had been ruined by Cheriton, and had been shot for desertion of duty by none other than John himself.

Wishing to spare his mother, John had never revealed the painful facts, and Cheriton is using his knowledge to extort both money and acquiescence in his projected marriage to John's sister Peggy. It was

a situation that was bound to end in a crisis, and when Gilbert Jackson, a former lover of Peggy's, arrives on the scene and presses his suit, Cheriton decides to play his trump card. John, driven to the wall, sees no way out of it other than to get rid of him.

A friend of the family, Henry Willett, a writer of detective fiction, comes in one day to find John in a state of nervous tension. John engages him in conversation and worms out of him a recipe for murder. It is the old one of a gun going off accidentally while it is being cleaned – a device that would “trammel up the consequences,” and give John a reasonable loop-hole of escape.

Willett's suspicions are aroused by John's deadly seriousness, and before he leaves, John tells him the whole story. Wishing to avert a tragedy, Willett – unknown to John – removes the bullet from the cartridge in the gun.

Follows the murder scene, John confronts Cheriton, and having staged the cleaning episode, shoots. And now the mystery enters. Cheriton drops dead. John is fully convinced that he has shot him. But the family physician, Dr. Naylor, views the body; finds no trace of a wound, but every symptom of prussic acid poisoning.

Now it happens that at the moment when John fired, Cheriton had gulped down a glass of lemonade that was in his hand. Dr. Naylor adds to his role of family doctor that of family detective. He takes the investigation in hand. It is all a very complicated affair. And in the end an explanation suggests itself.

Fluffy, the old family servant, who is as deaf as a post, also happens to be as blind as a bat. She had once made a brew of grass seed instead of tea, and, questioned by Dr. Naylor, she admits that the lemonade Cheriton was drinking had been made, not from lemons, but from a powder, which obviously must have been prussic acid. It was just such a mistake as Fluffy was quite likely to make. Or indeed, was it a mistake? The curtain falls on a note of interrogation.

Fluffy, at any rate, will be saved by her infirmities. John is cleared by the blank cartridge, and Peggy marries Gilbert, with whom she had planned an elopement. Rather improbable, you may say - but it is a plot that provides a full, gamut of thrills and mystery.

Mr. Hodges gave a very convincing and natural rendering of the part of John Summers. He took it at exactly the right tempo. Mr. Hosken had the difficult and distasteful role of the villain, Dick Cheriton, and worked things up to an effective, climax in the death scene. Mr. Wilson made an agitated and somewhat blundering Henry Willett, while Mr. Richards, as the detective doctor, was eminently collected, and in variably on the spot.

Mrs. James, as Fluffy, the deaf old servant, showed her ability for character-acting. Her performance could not have been bettered. Mrs. Richards was a dignified and quiet Mrs. Summers, a gentle, elderly lady, entirely oblivious of the tragedy that is being enacted around her. Mrs. Lee-Browne, as Peggy, her daughter, had a rather conventional part to play, all the more difficult for the fact that the author had given her little to work upon. She did it with a pleasant, youthful ease. The same applies to Mr. Gross, who played the part of Gilbert Jackson, her returned lover.

The performance inevitably had its faults. Plays of this kind require a professional slickness that was not always forthcoming, but it proved a variety of surprises, intentional or otherwise, and the applause on the final curtain had been well earned.

On Saturday, 21st November, Form III, produced a crook play, entitled "The Lost Hat," by Edward Percy. The action takes place in a waiting room at Clapham Junction, and the plot concerns the activities of two rival gangs, each trying to make off with a string of pearls. At the beginning the pearls are in the possession of a certain Mr. Tufton and his followers. But detectives appear on the scene, and Tufton slips the pearls into the hat of an old gentleman asleep in a chair. His name is Briggs, and when he awakes the two gentlemen engage in a long and sententious conversation. Suddenly a train is heard. Briggs runs out to catch it, taking with him his hat. Poor Mr. Tufton sees his pearls vanish in the apparently unsuspecting Mr. Briggs's hat. Presently, however, Mr. Briggs reappears. He comes in carrying his hat and dabbing his perspiring head. It was a false alarm, was the wrong train. Mr. Tufton sees his opportunity. He snatches up Mr. Briggs' hat before that gentleman can protest, bolts out of the waiting-room, and boards the out-going train, firmly convinced that the pearls are once again in his possession. But Mr. Briggs has been too cute for him. During his brief absence he has transferred the pearls from the hat to the side pocket of his overcoat, and the curtain goes down on his gloating over them in triumph.

The play is enlivened by a considerable amount of low Cockney comedy, provided by the ladies involved in the gangs. It was well cast. Bailey gave a good performance of the old gentleman, Mr. Briggs. His snoring was very convincing, and he kept his apparent innocence up to the very last, Hyett made an excellent Mr. Tufton, and the ladies were suitably portrayed by Eley, as Miss Sidegarth (a sly tippler), Cutts as Mrs. Huss, Palmer, as Mrs. Rimple (both broad Cockney figures). M. Levett, as Cissie Huss (a greedy little girl),

and Jackson, as Miss Jones, a professional thief belonging to Mr. Tufton's gang. Tenty and Boyland cut bold figures as the frustrated detectives.

It was a change, after the vicissitudes of these rather sensational plays, to find Form II, displaying their talent in Lady Gregory's peasant comedy, "Spreading the News." It is a moot point as to how far successful these Irish plays can be when presented by an English cast. Nothing could be worse, than to hear them done with a B.B.C. accent. We are not greatly troubled with such, and good Gloucestershire turned out to be quite a satisfactory substitute for the "brogue."

The plot is a slender one. It all arises out of a confusion at an Irish fair. Jack Smith has left his pitchfork behind him, and Bartley Fallon, a mournful, middle-aged farmer, goes after him with it, in the hopes of restoring it to him. In his exit he upsets a basket belonging to his wife. There is all the evidence of a quarrel of sorts, and rumour gets to work. Bartley Fallon, say the gossips, has assaulted Jack Smith with the pitchfork, and left him "stretched out in the five-acre meadow," and all on account of a love affair with Jack Smith's wife. Mrs. Tarpey, a costermonger, is largely responsible for the worst exaggerations, but everybody's tongue is wagging, and a newly arrived magistrate is at once on his mettle. He and his police escort will make short work of the culprit. When rumour is at its rifest, Jack Smith reappears. There is general consternation, and the martinet magistrate orders the arrest both of the murdered "man and his alleged murderer.

It is a fantastic affair, made convincing, however, by its racy Irish idiom. Here is a play with lines that repay speaking. It was a pity that these youthful actors took it at such a speed. That was the worst fault we have to find with the production. F. R. Dobbs, but for an occasional indistinctness, did well with the part of Bartley Fallon. C. Tuck was excellent as his voluble "better-half." Trayhurn was admirably suited to the part of Mrs. Tarpey, the costerwoman. C. Barnett was pompous as the magistrate, and P. Gurdon, as the police constable, managed to assume a most convincing Irish brogue. The remaining parts were well sustained, as follows: Jack Smith, P. Herring; Shawn Early, S. Curry ; James Ryan, J. Owen ; Tim Casey, J. Sterry, and Mrs. Tully, P. Forrest.

It was a bold venture to select "The Jar," a one-act drama by Luigi Pirandello, as the first of the two Christmas plays. It is a piece of high-spirited "bravura," a tour de force, taxing both the actors and the producer. The scene is the yard of a Sicilian olive farm, and Mr. Molineaux is to be congratulated on the charming back-cloth he painted for the occasion.

Don Lolo, the owner of the estate, cannot have been a pleasant master. He went about in a state of chronic apoplexy, storming at all and sundry, and his rage gets kindled to a fine frenzy when he discovers that a valuable earthenware jar has been broken. Zi Dima Licasi, an artisan skilled in effecting repairs, is called in to mend it. He commences to work from the inside of the jar, and when the top has been riveted into position, finds that he cannot extricate himself. The farce turns on his impossible predicament. Don Lolo blusters more loudly than ever, and the play ends with his upsetting the jar, which comes to pieces once more, and the unfortunate handyman is rescued and carried off in triumph by a howling mob.

D. G. Morison, as Don Lolo, and J. D. Sinclair as the artisan, had the heaviest parts. Morison roared like a bull, and fumed like an irate colonel. Sinclair was cool and collected in his unenviable position. D. Haig, as Scime, the estate lawyer, was provocative and obsequious by turns. The rest of the company made a lively and colourful chorus of Sicilian peasants. They acted with gusto, the only way to treat this play, which is nothing more or less than a superb piece of practical joking. The team work was excellent. The remainder of the cast was as follows: Mpari Pe, D. C, Richardson ; Trisuzza, P. A. Cutts ; Tana, G. Constable ; Carminella, H, Palmer; Nociarello, M. F. Lane; Driver, H. W. T. Bates ; Tarara, R. L, Short, and Fillico, B. H. Peacock.

The second play chosen for the Christmas entertainment was "Master Wayfarer," by J. E. Harold Terry. It is a period piece with an eighteenth century setting, The scene is laid in the parlour of "The Pigeon Pie," a wayside hostelry on the York road. There is no real plot as such. We are shown a brief and romantic episode, and the beauty of this play is lyrical rather than dramatic. This quality is heightened by the songs. A wayfarer, a travelling showman with his pack on his shoulders, comes in from the night. He brings with him a spirit of gaiety, and at the same time an undertone of strange melancholy. He regales the company with jest and song. His audience consists of Mistress Phoebe, the young maid of the inn, Master Beamish, her stalwart and plain spoken lover, and the foppish Master Smeaton, whose fine feathers are his only recommendation. During the course of a quarrel the coxcomb gets rudely put in his place. Beamish's stock visibly rises, but the most moving note in the play is struck by the revelation that the Wayfarer is in reality the father of the young maid. It is all done very slightly, very delicately, and the strange and motley visitor slips out into the night exactly as he had come.

W. Y. Willetts gave a subtle and whimsical rendering of the part of Master Wayfarer. He sang his songs effectively, and managed to strike a happy medium between mirth and a vein of hidden pathos. G. M. Wilson made a very pompous and (when it came to the test) pusillanimous dandy. E. R. S, Gillham, as the honest lover, gave a fine and moving interpretation of the part.

AN UNUSUAL CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

Barking Creek is situated on the borders of the Great Salt Lake. It is an extremely lonely spot, being shut in by cliffs that in places rise to a height of about two hundred feet. In Barking Creek there are only two houses. One belongs to a man called Jack Waldock, a person of some wealth, the other to an old fellow, Pete Brendon by name, who made his living by working as a general man-servant to his wealthy neighbour. The only means of reaching this lonely spot is by a rough cart track used only by fishermen, and even then not very frequently.

It was Christmas Eve. The crashing of the, great breakers on the cliffs below rose to an incessant roar; the wind whistled through the trees, and now and then a wild bird would give an eerie shriek. The rain was coming down fast, and the sky was now and then illumined by flashes of lightning, followed by darkness and a clap of thunder. Such were the conditions when a middle-aged man came riding slowly down the cart track on horseback. He had some small parcels hung on each side, of his horse, and he was whistling to keep himself company. He rode up to the door of the large house and knocked loudly. The door was opened, after a short interval, and Jack Waldock peered into the night. "Why it's Bill," he suddenly shouted, "Come in."

Bill only too gladly came in. He was the postman from Salt Lake City, a good twelve miles away. He handed Jack a fairly large heavy parcel, and, after searching his bag, a few more letters and smaller packets. Before he left Waldock gave him a glass of whisky, and they drank together, toasting the festive season. Then he was off again. The door was bolted, and Jack returned to his place at the fireside.

Old Pete appeared carrying an armful of logs. "What a night," Jack exclaimed, "I shouldn't like to have Bill's job." He started opening his letters when he suddenly said, "Hullo ! Look at this." He pointed to the largest of the parcels on which was stuck a red label bearing the inscription, "Not to be opened until six a.m. on the 25th of December." "That's funny," said Pete Brendon, after examining it carefully, "it's probably from an old aunt who's playing a joke on you." Jack's first impulse was to open it at once, and then he reflected that he might just as well keep to the instructions. What was the use of spoiling whatever little game there might be?

It was ten p.m. on Christmas Eve. Jack, who had just finished his supper, said, "I shouldn't go home if I were you, Pete. You can sleep on the couch over there." And Pete readily accepted the invitation.

It was 5:30 a.m. on Christmas Day. Jack Waldock and Pete Brendon were snoring peacefully, when suddenly there came a sound of voices, and a loud and repeated knocking on the door. Pete and Jack awoke simultaneously, and opened the door. They were confronted by three mounted police. "Have you got a parcel here which is not to be opened till six a.m. on Christmas Day?" asked the man who appeared to be their chief. "Why, yes," said Jack, looking surprised. "Let's have a look at it," said the chief. Jack handed him the parcel. Suddenly the chief ran away towards the cliff, and when he reached the edge hurled the parcel over. As it struck the water there was a blinding flash, and sheets of spray flew in all directions. "Only just in time," panted the chief.

"But why should anyone want to send me a time-bomb?" asked Jack Waldock. "Well, it's like this," replied the chief of police. "Your aunt in Montreal has died leaving the next of kin about £100,000. You are the rightful heir, but a fellow called John Wright was the next of kin after you. He badly wanted the money, so he tried to get rid of you. Quite a cute idea, that Christmas present of his. But he hasn't managed to pull it off. The story came our way from a servant of his, who got into a blue funk after he'd posted the box of tricks, and confessed everything. We came down here as quickly as we could to warn you, and, Good Lord! we were only just in time." A broad grin spread over Jack's face, and he held out his hand towards the chief of police. "Thanks," he said. The chief of police smiled, and departed.

D. W. Stone (Form IV.)

SAILOR PAN.

One day the good ship "Susie Ann,"
She sailed upon the seas,
Among her crew was Sailor Pan,
And the ship went along with a western breeze.

Now, Sailor Pan was a real tough nut,
And muscles big had he,
One night he cut the mooring ropes,
And the ship sailed off to sea.

That night a hurricane rose and roared,
And Sailor Pan was afraid.
The waves rolled high and the water poured
Into that ship of timber made.

Then Sailor Pan he prayed to Heaven
That the storm it might be stayed.
And after a gale of seven days seven,
Old Sailor Pan was saved.

Sailor Pan saw an island
Upon the sea so blue,
And he said to himself very wonderingly,
"It's too good to be true."

By a stroke of luck Old Pan was saved
From a dark and watery grave;
But first of all at his wretched self
Old Sailor Pan must gaze.

No shirt had Sailor Pan at all,
Some tattered breeks had he,
And dangling down by his skinny shanks
Was a pair of old suspenders.

"You've served me well," said Sailor Pan,
"And now I will repay ye,"
And he hung them up with labour great
On a tall and stately palm tree.

So if you want to see them now,
Go to the Island of Ann.
And there, you'll find the old suspenders
Of that long dead Sailor Pan.

Denis Montgomery (Form I.)

FOOTBALL, 1936.

The football this term, while not of the same standard as that of last season, fell only a little way short of it. There was a good deal of keenness, particularly in the lower half of the school, and this keenness was sustained by the three visits of Mr. Jock Nicholson, until lately trainer of the Bristol City team. Of the 1st XI it was found, that though not as skilful as many of the teams it encountered it nevertheless made up for this deficiency by general vigour and speed both in the attack, but even more so in the defence. Thus it was on dry days when vigour equalled the value of skill (at any rate in school football) that we achieved our best results.

The forwards were weak in combination, though individually quite strong, and as a result there was a good deal of chopping and changing in the formation of this line. Short and Willetts were perhaps the best of the forwards, but both must learn to keep more in position and to combine with the other forwards ; their individual play was good. Haig, at times very good, was at others erratic. Richardson and Gallop must learn to move quicker and pass sooner. The half-line were, again, perhaps, the back-bone of the team, Brain, the centre half, bearing much of the brunt both of attack and defence. His speed, accuracy and skill were of inestimable value. The other two halves were good_ In general the halves must remember that close passing between themselves has shown itself to be a most effective method of attack.

The backs were sound. In the early games of the season they were slow onto the ball, and uncertain in clearing, but this improved regularly and with few lapses from grace, until at the end of the term their play was steady, vigorous and accurate. Bettison, in particular, has a strong kick, which will be much missed next season, but he is inclined to dribble in the goal area and not to clear at once. The goal-keeper was steady if not inspired, and the distance he cleared from a goal-kick was of no small value in beginning an attacking movement.

The team from left wing to right was: Forwards - Gallop, Short, Richardson, Willetts, Haig. Halves - Wilson, Brain, Gillham. Backs - Bettison, Peacock. Goal - Morison.

OCT. 3. - OLD BOYS. Home. Lost 1 - 2.

In this match, although we lost, the game was largely ours. The forwards missed several golden openings, but were opposed to a veritable "wizard of the uprights."

OCT. 10. -- MARLINO SCHOOL. Home. Lost 1 - 2.

This was a good, hard game, in which the two teams were fairly evenly matched. The halves in particular played excellently, but the backs were over-inclined to miss-kick.

OCT. 24. -- DEAN CLOSE. Away. Won 5 - 0.

On this occasion we gained a fairly easy victory. There was a strong wind blowing, and during the first half we played into it, and achieved little success. In the second half, largely owing to the efforts of Brain at centre half, we were pressing almost continuously.

NOV. 5. -- HANLEY CASTLE. Home. Won 2 - 1.

A fast game played under rather unfavourable weather conditions. The forwards failed to take advantage of some opportunities, and though the defence worked hard and the ball was often in Hanley's penalty area, we only succeeded in scoring twice.

NOV. 19. -- DEAN CLOSE. Home. Drawn 1-1.

On this day our opponents brought over a slightly stronger team and ours was slightly weaker. Added to this, the team played badly. The score was representative of the game.

NOV. 28. -- MARLINO SCHOOL. Away. Drawn 1 - 1.

On this occasion the team played on a modification of the three-back system, but as this proved in no way outstandingly successful, as the ground was slippery and the team uncertain, we changed back to the normal formation at half-time. It was a fast and vigorous game, somewhat marred by rain.

DEC. 5. -- HANLEY CASTLE. Away. Drawn 5 - 5.

In this, the last match of the season, the team played at its worst, and at its best. There was a continuous downfall of rain, which was only interrupted by intermittent snow, and as a result the ground was rendered peculiarly ill-adapted to our general style of play. During the first half and most of the second, with very little spirit and less skill, the Hanley team had the game at their feet. Ten minutes from the end the score was 5 - 2 against us. At that stage the tide of fortune changed. The team began to play with all-conquering verve, and broke through the opposing defence time and again. When the game ended the score was 5 - 5, and another few minutes might have seen a yet different result.

Results : Played 7. Won 2. Lost 2. Drawn 3.

GROUP GAMES.

The West was the weakest Group, and considering the relative strengths of the teams, it may be said that the West put up the best show. The South won the games, and though this Group and the East were fairly evenly matched, the South had the advantage in skill, size and combination. The first game to be played, that between West and South, resulted in a win for the South by 5 goals to nil. The final result of the game was hardly ever in question, but the West played as well as they could, and nothing more can ever be expected. The West v. East game was another defeat for the West, the score being 6 - 1. In this match the play was very uneven, and there was no attempt on either side, at anything approaching combination. The East v. South game was a hard one, played in wet weather, and on a pitch that had been much used and showed evidence of the fact. The play as a result was somewhat wild, and towards the end of the game the friendly spirit of rivalry which is normally present, was less in evidence than we could have wished. The play was equal, and the South, who won by one, goal to none, scored that one goal on a rather lucky chance offered by blatant muddling in the East defence.

JUNIOR XI.

The Junior XI were not very successful, but they improved towards the end of the season. It was not easy to give the XI the practice together which they needed, and which they themselves demanded. The forward line, from left to right, were: Stone, at his most successful in the first match; Hyett, who though a keen player, is more at home in the half line; Jackson, a fast, clever, if somewhat erratic forward, who scored many of our goals; Morris, another clever forward, but inclined to play with the ball too long; Palmer, who was tried in this position experimentally, and proved a success, his fast tackling and vigorous play being of great use. The halves were: Luton, who played hard and steadily; Neads, who played vigorously, but at times too wildly, and who must learn that accurate passing is as important as accurate tackling; Constable, who was, perhaps, the best half, consistent and usually accurate. The backs were: Powell, who has a strong but rather wild kick; and Spenser, who was a sound captain and a steady player. The goal-keeper, Trayhurn, made a number of good saves, but must learn to use his hands more often.

The team's results are given below:

Oct. 10. Marling School Juniors Lost 5-10.	Nov. 28. Marling School juniors. Lost 3-4.
Oct. 28. Kingham Hill. Lost 1 - 6.	Nov. 30. Kingham Hill. Won 1 - 0.
Nov. 14. Farmer's School. Won 2 - 1.	