

RENDCOMB COLLEGE MAGAZINE

May, 1932

Vol. IV, No. 3

SCHOOL NOTES.

It was with the greatest regret that we heard of Mr. Simpson's resignation, on being appointed Principal of the College of St. Mark and St. John, Chelsea, and we should like to take this opportunity of expressing, on behalf of the College, our sincere appreciation of his invaluable work at Rendcomb since its inauguration in 1920. It is impossible to estimate the extent of the loss which the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Simpson will cause, but we extend to them and their children our very best wishes for their future success and happiness.

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At the same time we very heartily congratulate Mr. Lee-Browne on his appointment as Headmaster, and offer to him and Mrs. Lee-Browne the warmest possible welcome to their new position.

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Old Boys' Day this term will be held on the 14th May, and Founder's Day on the 18th June.

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The following are prefects for the Summer Term: J. E. Allen, J. H. Dixon, E. D. Boulding, R. C. Waters, G. K. Noble, (South); C. Taylor, W. S. Boardman, A. R. Curtis, J. R. Wheeler, D. Uzzell, (East); C. Sidgwick, (West).

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The principal positions of responsibility to which the General Meeting has elected for the Summer Term are:— Chairman: C. Sidgwick; Secretary: L. Robinson; Cricket Captain: A. R. Curtis; Tennis Captain: M. H. C. Martin; Games Committee: A. R. Curtis, M. H. C. Martin,

C. Sidgwick, R. Waters, and A. Brain. Football Secretary: D. C. Uzzell. House Committee: S. Boardman, D. Boulding, D. C. Vaughan, H. Miller, A. Shield. Banker: A. M. Wilson. Shopmen: A. R. Curtis, M. H. C. Martin, and G. K. Noble. Auditor: C. Taylor. Council: J. Allen, C. Taylor, S. Boardman, A. R. Curtis, J. R. Wheeler, J. H. Dixon, C. Sidgwick.

OLD BOYS' NOTES.

W. T. Greenway is working in the office of Messrs. R. A. Lister & Co., Ltd., of Dursley.

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C. Jones is at Jesus College, Cambridge, studying for the Diploma in Estate Management.

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R. G. Daubeny wrote while voyaging from India to Malaya for a short holiday. He was hoping to visit W. S. Morgan near Singapore.

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A. Wilcox and J. C. Maslin were running for Reading University and Loughborough College respectively in the Universities' Athletic Unions Cross Country Championship at Liverpool. Maslin also won the Cross Country Championship at Loughborough College.

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N. A. Perkins played Chess for Oxford University against Cambridge University. He and his opponent drew their match.

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F. Knefel and D. Haes are working with the recently-formed Betula Woodwork Association in Park Road, London N. W.

J. B. Harrison, who was formerly at Broadway, has started work with Howard Decorations, Ltd., of [REDACTED] Road, London, S. W. 14.

F. J. Batten is in the office of the Vacuum Oil Co., Ltd., at Bristol.

We congratulate N. A. Perkins on being awarded an Exhibition of the Goldsmiths' Company of. £100.

ON RETURNING TO RENDCOMB.

These trees we loved, and all their dappling shade;
The beech-mast on the grass; the cloth-of-gold
Of buttercup's, and all the beauty made
For vesture of the woodland and each fold
Of these rich hills. And all the spacious days
We spent in friendship; these we loved; the strife
Of games; the work and laughter with the plays
We acted on the tree-ringed stage; our life
Of labour in the school, the dancing, walks,
And freedom; kindly service, and the joys
Of giving; and the comradeship of talks
On many things that made men out of boys.
And so much giv'n, to you again we give,
That what we found at Rendcomb still may live.

THE ROUND TABLE SINGERS.

Through the kind generosity of Mrs. Wills, a very enjoyable Concert was given on February 12th, by 'The Round Table Singers'—a Quartet consisting of Miss Emilie Strudwick (Soprano), Miss

Joyce Case (Contralto), Mr. Eric Sydney (Tenor), and Mr. Julian Were (Bass). These singers have made a special study of English four-part music, and they had arranged a most interesting programme, which was virtually a bird's-eye view of the development of the madrigal and part-song from Elizabethan days to the present time. Four groups of items were chosen from the 16th, 18th, and 20th centuries respectively, and Mr. Were preceded each group with a few remarks which helped us to tune in our minds to the particular century under consideration.

Musical historians have found it difficult to define the word "Madrigal", but from the three or four possible derivations of the word, Mr. Were liked best the one which makes the form apply to a composition in the mother tongue, as offered to the more usual Latin. As an example of the music of the Church on which the secular madrigals were modelled, the concert began with "Laudate Nomen Domini" by Christopher Tye (thought to have been the music master of Queen Elizabeth). Then followed madrigals by three of the great Elizabethans—Byrd, Willye, and Morley; and, to conclude this group, the all-English character of the programme was interrupted so that we might hear the particularly perfect little madrigal "Hard by a Fountain", by the Flemish composer Waelrant.

After the glories of the Elizabethan age, English music suffered a sad eclipse during the middle of the 17th century, and such music as there was followed very different paths. It is true that our greatest musical genius, Henry Purcell, came at the end of this century, and the only criticism of this programme would be that it does not contain his name.

We went on to Purcell's successors of the 18th century—lesser names such as Arne, Stevens, and Webbe, but writers of attractive music. The favourite form of part-music was now the Glee, where the chief interest was centred in one voice, and not spread equally among all the voices, as in the madrigal. Another popular type of composition was the Catch; this was a Round with the words arranged in an ingenious (and sometimes amusing) way. Webb's "Would you

know my Celia's charms" made an excellent example.

The chief names drawn on from the 19th century were those of Parry and Stanford, who were the fore-runners of our 20th century renaissance. The Victorian Part-song differed from the Glee in that the music was generally less florid, and the word values were set with greater care. Parry and Stanford set new standards in exact word-setting, and Parry's "Come, pretty Wag and Sing" is a model in this respect.

Our 20th century composers when writing music in parts for voices, have occupied themselves as much in arranging old tunes as in writing new ones. Dr. Vaughan Williams has a special genius for putting folk-songs into modern dress; and his setting of "Just as the Tide was flowing" is one of his most attractive arrangements.

It is only possible to enjoy vocal chamber music when it is well sung, and on this occasion the singers' skilled performances made the attractive music a real joy. When the Headmaster offered a word of thanks to the performers, and to Mrs. Wills, at the conclusion of the concert, it was clear from its endorsement of the audience that they had all thoroughly enjoyed the hour's jolly music.

LECTURES.

On Thursday, February 11th, we had the pleasure once again of hearing Mr. Croome, and of seeing further examples of his clever photography. Last time he came to talk on Italy in general; on this occasion he dealt more fully with three towns of the North, Bergamo, Verona, and Venice.

First he spoke of Bergamo, perched on a crag, with its encircling walls, reminding us of the Middle Ages, in spite of the Renaissance Church of Santa Maria Maggiore. He then passed on to show us slides of Verona, its amphitheatre, its forum and its bridge over the Adige, still remaining to remind us of classical Rome. Here again, the measures taken for the city's defence told of the middle ages, while the Church of Saint Anastasia told of the Renaissance.

The greater part of the lecture was devoted to Venice, for which, by the end of the lecture most of us shared Mr. Croome's enthusiasm. In imagination we were carried to the Plaza de San Marco, with its towering campanile, and fascinating cathedral. If we thought more of the historical associations than of the beauty of the ducal palace, we admired the canals, for the first time perhaps, chiefly for their beauty. After Mr. Croome had taken us out on the lagoon, shown us the canal highways and byways, we lamented the advent of the motor boat which is ousting the gondola and threatening to undermine the buildings. Justice cannot be done to Venice without colour, but our impression of Mr. Croome's slides was that they came as near doing so as possible.

C. G. V. T.

On the 26th of February, Mr. W. F. Bushell took us on a rapid, but well directed tour of South Africa. His apology for the ruggedness of his lecture was quite unneeded. Granted that an hour and a half is insufficient for more than a mere sketch of the subject, Mr. Bushell covered an amazing amount of ground. His success in this matter was accounted for by a quality which too few lecturers possess—he never described each building in each slide minutely. He took aspects of South Africa at random, ranging from the dangers of becoming reminiscent to South African fruit, and from the bushman to modern practices and ideas. His lecture, which was extremely popular, raised many interesting questions, most of which he dealt with more fully the same evening when he spoke to the Discussion Society.

C. S.

On Friday, the 4th of March, the Rev. Runnels Moss gave us a recital from "David Copperfield". He has an extraordinarily wide range; he gave us the laughter and the tears of Dickens; and he impersonated all the characters in their rich variety—David, the Murdstones, the Trotwoods, Mr. Micawber, Uriah Heep, Peggotty, Emily—a truly remarkable performance. Even when we did not entirely agree with Mr. Moss' interpretation, we had to admit that his representation was extremely vivid. His

account of the storm was most moving, and he has left a lasting impression on our minds.

On Saturday, the 5th March, Mr. Whitehouse fulfilled a long-standing promise and gave us his lecture on "Bridges". This was a remarkable evening, and not even the most expectant were prepared for success so complete.

The lecture was a well-planned account of all the principles and methods of construction from primitive days to the time marked by that romantic achievement, the building of the Forth Bridge. Every means was used to illustrate and interest: photographs, sketches, models and experiments were all artfully blended to give the clearest picture of development.

It began with photographs and sketches showing the earliest form of bridge—a rope flung over the gulf, to be crossed hand-over-hand. Then came the felled tree-trunk, needing more artifice, but safer and less strenuous. The next step shows the beginnings of design: this was the combination of the two, a log to walk on and a rope for hand-hold. Accident, rather than design, is suggested to have brought on the next stage. Here the rope and log were lashed together with vertical ties—the genesis of the modern suspension bridge. Many fine photographs were shown of this type.

The second chapter dealt with the history of the arch. It has the same origin as the suspension bridge, and the different lines of development were contrasted. At this point began the experiments, so simple that no one could fail to understand them, but quite unforgettable. In a few minutes and with the aid only of a length of chain and some pieces of wood, we were shown the essential details of the thrust arch, tied arch, distribution of load, and use of the roadway as its own tie. Another series of experiments made simple the complicated double arch of Brunei.

The great strength of the arch form is best explained by reference to the stone arch. We saw with four sketches, how this may have developed from a stone causeway piled on the arched logs; these stones would be trodden firmly into arch form, and the logs might rot and crumble

away, leaving the stone held by its own weight. There were some fine slides of stone arch bridges—the country which demands many bridges necessarily includes much beautiful scenery. Now we were taken back again to primitive times to see, in the rude "stepping stones," the origin of the girder bridge. The stones were connected with others for greater convenience, and finally overlaid with flat slabs to form a continuous pathway. This stage is well illustrated at Tarr Steps, a bridge of remote origin on the borders of Exmoor. Many bridges standing to-day belong to this simple type, where no considerable span is necessary. The achievements in this class have been made possible only by great advances both in the quality of materials, and in the manner of using them. These developments were the subject of the next group of experiments. Strength of materials was tested by tug-of-war, showing clearly the difference between iron and steel. The chief methods of construction were edgewise loading and triangulation, and for these there were simple experiments and models, illustrating all essential features of the modern steel girder.

The story of the Forth Bridge made a great closing chapter. Here the new principle was the pushing out of fixed points by triangles. Again the principle was established, by slides, sketches and a most convincing human cantilever, just as the Forth Bridge is an epitome of all methods of bridge building, so this section was a lecture in itself. A series of slides of all stages gave a vivid reconstruction of this piece of engineering history.

The success, at the second attempt, of Mr. Whitehouse's astonishing paper tubes experiment, provided a happy epilogue to a most delightful lecture.

DISCUSSION SOCIETY.

On the evening of February 7, Mr. Fogden talked to us about various aspects of life in Australia. He covered a great deal of ground, and presented to us very clearly, the problem and dominant issues which confront Australia today. He introduced his subject with a general survey

of the size of the country, its natural regions, and climatic conditions, leading us on to a description of the products and mineral deposits to be found in the different parts of the Continent. His analysis of the Australian character was particularly interesting. In his stay in the country, he said that he had found the Australians amazingly courageous physically, due, no doubt to their hard struggle to conquer nature, and to their open-air life, but that intellectually he thought they were immature. They were a young nation, with little history or tradition, and he was under the impression that they had an "inferiority complex" in their attitude to Britain or to anything British. The discussion which followed was rather of an informative than of a provocative nature.

C. W. W.

In addition to his lecture, Mr. Bushell addressed the Discussion Society on various aspects of South African life. He gave us a brief history of the country—how the original Bushmen inhabitants were subdued by natives from the interior, so that now only a very few remained, how the country had been settled by the Dutch and finally by the English. He then spoke of the present relations between the various races, and told us some of the modern problems of the relations between the whites and the blacks, and of the way in which the Dutch, especially, opposed the granting of any fresh liberties to the natives. He also dealt with the problem of the Indian coolies, who had recently immigrated in large numbers into South Africa, and had thus created a serious economic problem by their willingness to work at amazingly low wages.

Mr. Bushell also told us something of South African schools—particularly of the one of which he had been Headmaster—and of how they differed from the English Public Schools. He enlivened the discussion with some interesting personal reminiscences.

E. D. B.

On Sunday, March 13th, Mr. Richings, whom a few of the older boys remember as a master, outlined to the members present his impressions of life

in Canada. The first thing Mr. Richings stressed was that the Oath of Allegiance to England is purely a matter of sentiment. In connection with Canada's relations with England, he showed clearly how Canada is drifting further and further from the mother country and nearer and nearer to the United States in language (most striking of all, at first), outlook, and ideals. Turning to actual life in the Dominion he depicted the life of the country-folk as a mixture of ignorance and sophistication—'a horrible mixture'. Town-life is a great attraction in Canada, and day by day young farm workers come to the towns, because they think that there they have a better chance of 'getting-on'. Speaking about the towns themselves, he said that the impression given in books of the houses being mere wooden shacks is often only too true, The towns are few, and except for the big cities they are just straggling overgrown villages scattered over the prairies.

Turning to the question of food which he said was a great problem in Canada, he disclosed the system by which food is sold. The production of wheat and the disposal of other food are controlled by large combines. This system is bad, for it means that there is little or no competition and consequently high prices. The small farmer and shopkeeper, such a familiar sight in England and other European countries, are almost entirely absent. Indeed such a thing is contrary to all Canadian ideals. The Canadian's mind is full of the idea of bigness—everything must be done on a big scale—immense—and this is where the American influence is considerable.

A short discussion followed. Although Mr. Riching's views concerning Canada's future were a trifle gloomy, and his structures on Canadian lack of culture were rather extreme, we are grateful to him for coming to talk to us, and for giving us many fresh ideas.

On Sunday, March 20th, Mr. Warr, of Dean Close School, Cheltenham, gave a talk to the older members of the Discussion Society on the Bias of Modern Thought. He began by pointing out the tendency for thought in all ages to be biased, that of the Middle Ages, for example, having a theological bias. He re-

minded that this was not, humanly speaking, undesirable, for some sort of bias is a necessary accompaniment of enthusiasm; so that the man without bias is, intellectually, the man without life.

Modern thought, he said, has a scientific bias. This is sometimes forgotten, because we ourselves partake of that bias; but it soon becomes clear when we come to examine our treatment of problems, and find that it is always the scientist's. We appreciate with difficulty preceding historical epochs, because they are primarily unscientific.

He went on to speak of some results of this bias. Among these was our incapacity to think clearly on subjects not wholly capable of scientific treatment, for example religion. "For these imponderables," he said, in Acton's words, we have "no scales". He mentioned also our numerical way of thinking, whereby we think of men as "hands", not as individuals. This led up to the stressing of the quantitative, rather than the qualitative elements in life—a fault especially noticeable in the typically modern U. S. A.

The discussion which followed showed that the talk had proved interesting. Among the points raised was the question of the applicability of the term "scientific bias" to modern thought; it was agreed that it applied to the thought of the average man only, the leaders in thought having left their materialistic stage some thirty years ago. The effect of intellectual bias on the study of history was a point which appealed to those who are studying history; it was felt that we often apply to our scientific standards too much justly to appreciate the past, and that we could reorganize the value of other points of view without underestimating our own contribution to progress.

Some difficulty in expression was clearly experienced in the discussion of so abstract a subject; but it was nevertheless interesting. Mr. Warr's talk had clearly been found provocative, and conducive to hard thinking on an abstract subject. It was the more valuable because it led us to examine ourselves.

ACTING.

There was a welcome revival of Acting last term, and it was pleasant to find a return to the more formal, carefully rehearsed type of performance—as opposed to the very entertaining but sometimes rather "ragged" shows which were a feature of acting during the Christmas term.

On February 13th, members of Form I, acted a short sketch entitled "Clever Catherine". In this and a dramatised version of Robert Browning's poem "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," which they performed later in the term, Form I showed considerable promise; they appear to be entirely lacking in self-consciousness, and their actions are perfectly natural. Some of them, however, must learn to speak more distinctly.

On the following Saturday, a version of Arnold Ridley's thriller "The Ghost Train" was acted, and it was greatly appreciated by the audience. The acting on the whole was good, but unfortunately the actors were not word perfect in their parts, and there were one or two awkward pauses. A. Wilson, as Miss Bourne was particularly good. C. Sidgwick, who also played the important part of the asinine detective-hero, is to be congratulated on his excellent production of the play—which was particularly interesting in that it proved that a full-length, three-act play may be successfully produced even on our small stage.

On February 27th, Form V. performed the famous scene "Telling one's Ancestors" from Sheridan's "School for Scandal". The whole cast was very good and a particularly good performance was that of M. Kirkman as Sir Oliver Surface.

On March 5th, Form III acted two short scenes from Shakespeare's "Henry V", in which R. Brain gave a very forcible performance as Pistol. This was followed by some entertaining French songs sung by Form IV.

On March 19th. Form V performed another scene from "The School for Scandal". J. Dixon, who seems to be happy in any part which is not serious, was completely at home as the gossiping and malicious Mrs. Candor, though M. Martin, as Crabtree was the only member

of the cast who affected a truly eighteenth-century manner.

Finally, on Easter Monday, March 28th, a number of the Senior boys, together with Miss Coy and Miss Dixon, presented A. A. Milne's comedy "The Man in the Bowler Hat." J. Dixon and Miss Coy were particularly good as the humdrum suburban couple with a yearning for adventure, and the whole standard of acting in this play—as, indeed, it had been throughout the term—was high.

C. W. W.
E. D. B.

HOCKEY.

Because the initial expenditure would inevitably have been too great, the Meeting undertook to provide for only forty hockey players during the Easter Term. In this way it was hoped to organise two games at once, one with full sides and the other with sides below full strength. This, however, was impracticable, and actually in each week there were two games in which the best players took part, and one full game for the younger boys. Mr. Browne gave most valuable assistance in teaching the game all through the term.

About ten boys had played Hockey the season before, and thirty had to play a new game. They learnt extraordinarily well and enthusiasm ran high. Often practice was to be seen on the enclosed lawn at the back of the house. This, although ruinous to the lawn, was no doubt most useful.

From the first game, the standard of play rose higher. The weather was dry, and the ground wore very well. Later in the term, we were fortunate in being able to welcome a team from Dean Close School. From every point of view, the game was satisfactory. Actually, we lost 3—7, but the game was hard and fast. The speed at which our opponents started somewhat surprised us but at one period after half-time, it was we who set the pace. The forwards did quite creditably; their passing was the best they had shown hitherto. The backs were especially good; they were deliberate, and

cleared hard. The halves should have passed much sooner than they did, for our opponents intercepted well. The game did show us that we had not been used to strict umpiring, and in the future we ought to have every practice game well umpired.

It is easy to be optimistic about the future. In two years, there will be a really good eleven. But it is essential that everybody should play hockey. They should learn as soon as they come here, and their knowledge would then be utilised before they left. It should be possible to raise our hockey to the same level as our football.

J. E. A.

ATHLETICS.

The Senior runs last term were extremely disappointing, in that so few entered for them. The Junior lodges attracted many more entrants. The North Cerney, for which there was a field of three, developed into a race between C. W. Wells and J. H. Dixon. Waters being compelled to abandon the course through an injury to his thigh. Wells won in 24 mins. 22 secs, and Dixon's time was 24 mins. 38 secs.

For the Senior lodges, four entered, and it was won, not unexpectedly, by J. Roberts, who is really a most promising long-distance runner for his age. His time was 13 mins. 58-3/5 secs. M. Kirkham was second in 14 mins. 11 secs., J. H. Dixon was third in 14mins. 49 secs, and M. H. Martin fourth in 16 mins. 38 secs.

The junior lodges was won by G. A. Lowe in 15 mins. 4 secs. He ran well, as did H. Selby to come second in 15 mins. 9-3/5 secs. A. Brain was third in 15 mins. 29 secs., and D. Richardson fourth in 15 mins. 40 secs.

The inter-group relay was this term decided in one contest, each group participating at the same time; it was won by the East in 77 secs., and this put an end to the absolute supremacy in sports of all kinds which the South group had held for two years.

C. W. W.

A Day in a Benedictine Monastery.

From the monastery tower, vaguely outlined against the dark sky, the sound of a clock striking breaks suddenly upon the silence of the night—one: two: three: four! As if by magic, all that before was wrapped in peaceful repose now is busy with life. The monastery bell intrudes rudely upon the sleep of the monks, whilst a laybrother goes through the building, lantern in hand and hood on head, knocking on the door of each cell, and calling "Benedicamus Domino!" to the monk within, Nor does he pass on until he has received the answer: "Deo gratias!" given in many tones of voice. Some reply with bright enthusiasm, some with resignation, some with a growl inspired by the thought that sleep must be abandoned, and some with that relief which comes with the knowledge that one more sleepless night is over.

Seven minutes before the half hour the first bell for Matins warns the laggards to hurry with their cold shave, and the Sacristan, jangling his keys, opens the doors of the Church.

One by one the monks take their places in the choir.

At half past four a hundred strokes are rung upon the bell: the Abbot strikes his choir-stall with a small wooden hammer, and the 'Night Office' begins.

The 'Divine Office' is the monk's most important work. Consisting mainly of psalms, and lessons from Holy Writ and the Fathers of the Church, it is offered to God in the name of the whole Church as her official worship. Moreover, to the monk also falls the duty of winning through his life of prayer the grace necessary to bring to fruition the Church's many active works, divided among those whose abilities and qualities mark them off for one kind of service or another. Besides the ordinary secular clergy there are the 'religious', men living in an Order or Congregation under some rule, who work in the missions, who toil among the poor, who care for the old, the young and the sick, or who labour for the instruction and conversion of sinners, or the education of children. The prayer of the monk, which is especially powerful because it comes from one wholly given

thereto, brings fruition to these works of the active clergy, and grace to the souls of his fellow men; for, though cut off from the world, he has abandoned neither the Church nor mankind.

The 'Night Office' lasts at least an hour, usually more; and on great festivals, when much is sung instead of being recited, two hours may pass before the end is reached. Then the priests are free to offer their private masses, and give themselves to half-an-hour of mental prayer.

Before next going to the Church for the Hour of Prime, every monk must go to his cell to put it in order for the day, for each is his own servant. Not until Prime is over, shortly before eight o'clock, can he take, standing and in silence, his frugal breakfast of coffee and bread, and, maybe, a little butter; and even less on fast days.

Having thus refreshed himself, each monk retires to his cell for 'spiritual reading' until at nine the bell again calls him to the choir. This time it is for the Conventual Mass, the central act of the daily worship. Sung with but little ceremony on ordinary days, the extra solemnity of High Mass gives a sufficient dignity to Sundays, lesser festivals, and the more important liturgical offices of the year. On the greatest feasts of all it is the Abbot who celebrates the Mass, at a throne erected for the occasion, using his right to full pontificals, which includes the use of mitre and crozier: and thus a special wealth of ceremony and music gives the celebration of the great Christian mysteries due majesty and splendour.

The rest of the morning until midday is spent by the monks at their various occupations. These, in most modern Benedictine monasteries, are of an intellectual nature, as may easily be gathered from a glance at their splendid libraries. The novices study the Rule, monastic traditions, and assist at lectures given by the novice master; those preparing for the priesthood are busy with Theology and Philosophy, whilst the older monks are occupied with many and diverse matters. Some are writing books that are the result of life-long research, some studying subjects connected with the Church's doctrines or history; others translate works from those Oriental

languages they have made their speciality, whilst a few, as the Cellarer and the Sacristan, for the good of all, devote themselves to the practical business of the house.

The Abbot is the father of this great family. Honourable and desirable though his position may appear to those who see him only on festivals with his mitre and crozier, least of all the monks, does he find his time his own. The whole day long he must be ready for those who come to speak to their common father, for whatever cause, spiritual or temporal; for he has to care and be responsible for all; and when it is not his monks or his monastery that fall for the Abbot's attention, it is visitors from outside, or guests staying in the guest-house.

A few minutes after the midday Angelus has been rung, the chief meal of the day takes place.

The refectory, where alone the monks may eat or drink, is a long room, dominated at the far end by a great crucifix. Beneath this is the Abbot's table, raised on a small dais, one step above the other tables. Here only Abbots may eat, or other great Church dignitaries, as bishops and cardinals, and, if they should visit the monastery, the chief civil persons of the land. Down each side of the room is a row of narrow tables. At these the monks sit, their backs to the wall, looking across the refectory. Breaking the line of tables, on one side is a small pulpit from which the weekly reader reads during the meals, talking being rarely, if ever, allowed. In the middle of the room, below the Abbot's table, is another, a little less frugally garnished, for the guests; and below this is a long and wide table at each side of which sit the laybrothers. At the bottom end of the room a hatch gives into the kitchen. From this the weekly server takes the plates with which he serves his brother monks, all but the Abbot taking their turn at this duty.

When the bell for the midday meal has rung, the monks take up their places standing in front of the tables, in two lines or 'choirs', and grace is sung. All then sit down and wait in silence until the reader has begun to sing a short passage from the Bible, which is followed

by the reading of some other book in the venacular, usually historical or biographical. The meal consists of soup, two dishes and a dessert, simple but sufficient, meat being forbidden on certain days of the week, on fasts and during Lent and Advent. When all have finished eating, the Abbot gives the sign for the reading to stop, and all rise to sing grace. The 'Miserere' is sung as the monks file out of the refectory, in procession through the cloister, to the Church, where grace is terminated.

There follows an hour of recreation, when conversation may be freely indulged in, taken in common in the garden or library. The community breaks up into at least two groups, one of which is that of the novitiate, presided over by the novice master or his assistant. In this group are not only the novices undergoing their canonical year of novitiate, but also the postulants (who have to spend some nine months in the religious habit before becoming novices) and those who are in the first half of their three-year vows, taken at the end of the novitiate. These latter must remain under the novice master for some time; then, for the last year or so of temporary vows, they join the community. Thus, whilst remaining sufficiently long in the novitiate to receive a sound foundation in monastic traditions and the spiritual life, they yet live for a while as full members of the community before taking, after a long trial of some five years, the final step that makes them, once and for all, monks of the Benedictine Order.

It is from this group, comparatively small though it usually is, that comes the most noise during the hours of recreation: and when wet weather obliges the monks to take their exercise in the cloister, the part reserved to the novitiate rings with the sound of youthful voices and laughter.

The older monks, however, do not lack that spirit of joy so characteristic of the Benedictine: and if their voices are less boisterous and their ways more reserved than those of their younger brethren, recreation is always a moment when the spirit of fraternal good cheer and merriment brings true refreshment to mind and body alike.

When the bell rings at half-past-one

the talking stops, and each goes his way, many, especially the young, passing the next hour or so in some form of manual work – an occupation that has never lost its honoured place in the monastic life.

After Vespers have been sung, more or less solemnly according to the day, the evening is spent like the morning, each monk busy in his cell with his own work: and there are more lectures for the novices and students.

At seven, after half-an-hour's spiritual conference given by the Abbot to the whole community in the chapter-house, supper is taken in the refectory with the same ceremonial as at dinner, though grace and the meal are shorter, especially on fast days. The monks do not end by going to the Church, but, when grace has been sung, half-an-hour's recreation in common, follows at once.

The bell calls all to choir for Compline at eight. Recited in the dark, this final Hour of the Office brings the monastic day to an end. When the Angelus has been rung, the monks return to their cells in absolute silence. The 'Great Silence' is observed, from Compline until Prime next morning during which time none may speak save only for the gravest reasons.

Before nine o'clock the lights of the monastery have been extinguished. Seven hours of silence and repose repair the strength and refresh the minds of the sleeping brethren, that the great Benedictine family may be ready to continue its work in God's service, when, in the early hours of next morning, the bell shall announce the beginning of another day.

(D. D. C.)

Malaisie, or Home Thoughts from Malaya.

The Gorgon's head of Malaya is England. He, who cannot withstand the temptation of Perseus, but looks back avidly on the rich attractions of home-life is lost. It is fatal to lament the absence of English culture, womenfolk, books, music, theatres, and the coming of spring. Comparisons are odious and he who compares Malaya with England, only ends by hating Malaya. One soon learns that

the only way to enjoy this country is to forget England, and not to sigh in melancholy fashion for "England, now that April's there." Indeed, Malaya can give one an admirable existence.

Johore Bahru, the town in which I am stationed, is admittedly one of the best stations in the peninsula. It faces the Straits between the mainland and Singapore, is almost the most southerly point of Asia, and about 100 miles north of the Equator. It is a modern town, with good drainage, wide, well-metalled roads, with public gardens, and enough shops from which to pick and choose. It has sea bathing, it has a golf course. Malaria is unknown here, and the occasional mosquito is entirely innocuous. The Europeans have a delightful Clubhouse with six perfect hard tennis courts, with a library, the usual bar, all the English newspapers and billiard tables. If we like to be more strenuous, there is a Rugby football field on which to disport. Singapore is within twenty miles, and there we can shop in modern emporiums, dance daily in world-famous hotels and see the latest films months before they ever arrive in Cirencester. A visitor from India, the other day, was amazed at the comfortable, civilized life we lead. Even Calcutta he said was a backwoods town compared with the modernity of Singapore.

It is hot here, and hot all the year round, but never unbearably so, and, in our tropical suits, we never stew in the heat as you do in an English summer, with your vests and pants and waistcoats. Our mornings and evenings are always delightfully cool. We sleep well and are not encumbered with numerous blankets. There is no dust and dirt here. We never have to wake up to shave shiveringly on a nasty chilly morning with the rain dripping dismally outside. We have a heavy rainfall, but it serves to freshen and cool the atmosphere and, more important still it keeps our drains clean. Tennis, Badminton, Football and Swimming are carried on throughout the year. Again, what an admirable institution is the "boy" in this country. Usually a Malay or a Chinese, he acts as one's personal servant. Indispensable, always at one's beck and call he is valet and cashier, he winds up one's watch, mends one's clothes, keeps everything in order and

does all those thousand and one little things which in England drove an inefficient, untidy dilatory person like myself to distraction. Everyone has a car, and most people a chauffeur. Our houses are spacious, even palatial. The one I am in at present used to belong to a Malay Prince.

Malay is not so beautiful as England, but it is a green country, a little monotonous perhaps in its exotic, exuberant profusion, but it has its exciting moments. The exquisite sensation of a tropical moonlight night beneath graceful palm trees, swaying to the accompanying ripple of waters is no poetical myth. Go to Penang, and see a flame-splashed sunset of blues, yellows, reds and greens, reflected in waters scintillating with all the delicate colours of the opal.

Our landscape lacks the variety of the English countryside, but it has moments when the elements combine to make it sublime.

The centre of social life is the club. There we foregather in the evenings after tennis to read the home papers, and there we talk and gossip to our heart's content. No mental strain is involved, and the hours while themselves away quite contentedly. That is all the Englishman in Malaya asks. In a heat requiring careful conservation of energy, any excessive display of mental fireworks is bad form. It is "tabu" to discuss problems of science and religion, of art or economic theory. Shop and scandal are considered bad form but everyone indulges. We avidly follow the exploits of the Sultan to give us something to talk about. The smaller the community of English, the more encompassing is the scandal. We all know that at any time our actions may be discussed by our neighbours, and so we all tend to lead orthodox, narrow lives, infused with convention and politeness. The charm of English life is the variety of people one meets, variety here comes only from the number of amusements one can encompass. Visitors find the Englishman in Malaya hospitable, charming, sporting, and always ready to help, but not really very exciting in the life he leads, in his conversation or in his outlook. If we had fewer of the amenities of civilization and lived closer to the

earth in the primitive undeveloped jungle, we might be more thrilling. As it is, we tend to languish intellectually. It is hard to maintain intelligent conversation over games, films, and the relations of a small group of human beings over a number of years. Our mental background is distinctly barren.

The trouble of course is not the Englishman in Malaya but the environment. There are too few of us, and we see too much of each other. Then there is the monotony of the climate, that climate, which in its never changing heat, is "too much with us, so that, late and soon, we lay waste our powers." "The temperature never varies 10 deg. either side of the average 90 deg. all the year round. A few days' sunshine and torrid heartiness is enjoyable, but a year of it tends to pall. Even the brightest, most alert personalities must sooner or later lose their elasticity, in a land where there is no spring but always summer.

The Malay has a universal touchstone by which to value ways and means. It is the word 'senang'—comfortable, easy, facile. His laziness is his art; his leisure his prerogative. He demands only of life that it shall not demand too much of him. He is a delightful person, with an English sense of humour, but his placid, easy attitude to life is infectious. He cannot understand the Western desire to see what is on the other side of the hill. The Englishman and the Chinaman have, by their energy, transformed the land into a busy modern country; everywhere are waterworks, roads, rubber plantations, and tin mines. But the Englishman in his leisure has not escaped the companion of Malayan heat, 'senang'. He, too, soon ceases to bother to see what is on the other side of the hill in matters of the mind. Why should we arduously seek? Why should we not acquiesce in the easy life? Let us be only amused and we are content.

It is this aspect of our existence which has led me to head this article with the punning title of "Malaisie." Amusement as an end inevitably leads to a satiety of pleasure which ends in boredom. And indeed, while most people enjoy the life thoroughly, no one is wholly pleased. There

ments or depression, into real discontent. We have our books, our gramophone records, games, a social life, and cinemas, but yet the mist does lift sometimes and we see that we are leading second-hand lives. Always treading in the heels of Western civilization, we never quite attain it. Malaya is civilized but it is not England. You eat our tinned pineapple, we have to consume your tinned civilization. Too much tinned stuff spoils the palate. That is our grievance.

Do not let me mislead you into thinking that the Englishman goes native, or succumbs to the enervating climate. But he soon acquires the easy amoral attitude that it is suicide to worry, to get over excited and to be over conscientious, for he knows that these emotional activities are needless waste of vital energy. His display of energy in other directions is amazing. Every week in Johore Bahru a harrier meeting is held. Two hares start out to lay paper trails and then the harriers pursue them to the death. The tracking down is carried on at a fast rate over a course of four or five miles, through rubber and pineapple plantation, through jungle and through thick grass, shoulder high. It is remarkable to see men and women of over forty turning out and proving most ardent and enthusiastic in the chase. All this is carried out with the thermometer about 90 deg. In a Malay examination, a conversational test was set me to explain this harrier business in Malay to a native. I explained it at length, but the only comment the Malay made was bluntly to enquire "But why do the English do this?" I was nonplussed and could only answer frivolously that it was because the English were mad. Why does the Englishman play strenuous rugger and soccer in torrid heat? Why does he indulge in all these activities, which leave him like a wet rag, drenched with perspiration?

It is his typical answer to the climate. It is the one direction in which he does not acquiesce, in which he asserts his superiority. It is his way of being English.

The Dutch in the East Indies cast no stigma on inter-marriage with natives. They make the East their home. They have adapted themselves to their environment by moving nearer to the Asiatic level and they make most successful colonists. The English are just as successful, but they do it by maintaining themselves as a superior caste, by remaining incorrigibly English. They never quite accommodate themselves to the East; it never becomes a home. It is curious how each new-comer spends many hours planning out the details of his return home, and extraordinary that men with twenty-five years to spend in Malaya, spend it looking forward to the day when they may retire to England.

I may have painted a misleading picture of Malaya, but I still hold that to forget England is to cut out half our troubles. For Malaya can be a most delightful place. Could I, in England, in my first year down from Cambridge, own a car, share five servants with another man, and live in a large comfortable house, rent free and with two acres of garden? Could I run a racing yacht, and play either tennis, soccer, or badminton every day of the week? I have a piano and belong to a well equipped library. I have incredibly more freedom and independence than I could ever have in England.

I pay no income tax and there are no rates. So I must confess that I enjoy life thoroughly. It has limitations, but what life has not? And perhaps, in time even that 'malaisie' will vanish as the sunlight eats into my bones.

(W. S. M.)