

# THE STRATHALLIAN

THE MAGAZINE OF STRATHALLAN SCHOOL

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## Editorial

IN a term which has been almost remarkable for unfavourable weather from a sports point of view, one would have expected to find the Editorial an easy task, since it should have been a chorus of thanks. Should have been, we say, but certainly is not; for despite the enforced idleness physically, mental activity has not been correspondingly stimulated. Nevertheless we struggle on, though our task becomes increasingly difficult.

It is pleasing, however, to know that the conscience of some is sufficiently stirred to make an attempt at something—so often the mere effort results in something really worth while, a fact which others would do well to notice and absorb. To new aspirants to the honour of seeing themselves in print, we would urge that failure at the first attempt must not discourage them. Often beginners fail merely because they have allowed themselves to be unduly influenced by what they themselves have read, by the very things which possibly have inspired their efforts. In other words, what they have written has not the requisite touch of originality: and it should be noted that all of us must go through the imitative stage before the original idea will come. All too many of

us, unfortunately, are satisfied with mere imitation, and, beginning to ape others as a baby, continue to do so through life. But, we repeat, without initial imitation nothing is ever achieved.

We would, therefore, recall to the mind of all the fact that the summer term is invariably the most difficult for the magazine on account of its numerous outdoor attractions (from our point of view, of course, distractions), and past and present pupils are asked to do their utmost to make this year an exception.

In conclusion, we would like to add a short comment upon the first volume of "The Strathallian." Fewer readers than was anticipated have so far taken advantage of the binding scheme detailed in our last issue. Those who have will, we are sure, be well satisfied with the tastefully bound volume which results. If anyone had intended to have the volume bound, but found a number missing, we would remind him that all but Number One can still be obtained from Mr. Riley; if, as is so often the case, it is Number One that is missing, the remaining eleven parts may still be bound at the same rate at Messrs. Wood & Son, High Street, Perth.

## School Notes and Notices

ONLY one room in the new building remains unoccupied, and this, we hear, will be in use next term as a Grub Room. Nicol House are fortunate in being able to claim the large bedroom opened this term, for it is a fine room with a splendid outlook.

Visitors to Strath. during the term have been struck by the preparations for the cricket season then in progress, and all agree that the groundsman has made an excellent job, both of the cricket square and the nets. Indeed, the former will have few, if any, equals in Scotland. An innovation this term was the beginning of cricket practice in the last few days of the term, when prospective members of the teams were engaged in bowling practice. Let us hope that the weather will be kinder next term for cricket than it has been in the past one for rugger.

Indeed, the rugger fifteens have had a very lean time, only five matches being played altogether by the three teams, the 1st and 3rd fifteens each claiming two games. Unfortunately both the 1st engagements were away from home, so that the School has had no opportunity of seeing them in action; but though only one of the games was won, the side lived up to the expectations raised last term, which made one regret still more the paucity of matches. Possibly due to the lack of opportunity of getting rid of superfluous energy, the House competitions aroused even greater enthusiasm than of yore, early morning training being the order of the day. We offer our congratulations to Ruthven Juniors and the Freeland Senior Seven upon claiming the victors' palm; and to Ruthven Seniors and Simpson Juniors as very gallant losers.

The Library has been in continual use for reference since some time before half term, the Business Class in particular being frequent visitors in the evenings; while the senior examination forms are beginning to realise its utility and facilities for extra work.

The lectures this term have excited considerable interest, and have been more varied

in character than hitherto. We began with a scientific lecture by Professor Brodetsky on "Stars," followed by an admirably illustrated Nature lecture, by Mr. John Ward, F.E.S., on a little-studied subject, "Spiders"; and last, but certainly not least, the Rev. Runnells-Moss gave us a recital of "Oliver Twist," in which he is universally considered to have surpassed his success in his earlier "Tale of Two Cities." During the summer months we expect to be busy engaging lecturers for the coming winter session, and it is hoped to publish details of the programme in our next issue. Variety of interest will again be our aim.

There has been the usual Saturday evening cinema show throughout the term, and the final performance was given on the last night, so that with the Rugby House matches on the Monday, the Dramatic Social on Tuesday and the cinema on Wednesday, the term closed in its usual hectic manner.

The Dramatic Society continues to flourish exceedingly, and had a record membership during the term. For the Social Evening two one-act comedies and a three-act thriller were produced. The plays seemed to have suited the tastes of the audience; indeed, it would not be going too far to say that the performance was the best yet, and we understand the fact was duly acknowledged by the donations made towards stage equipment, which was also a record.

This term has seen the initiation of a Debating Society in the School, as distinct from any class organisation, though no doubt the success of inter-class debates has led to the movement spreading so rapidly among the senior members of the School. Meetings have been held on alternate Tuesdays since half term, and some enjoyable, if not too profound, arguments have been heard.

We bid goodbye this term to both captain and vice-captain of rugger. G. Moncur and R. Balfour pass on to the larger world with our best wishes. Both will be missed from the cricket teams this summer, and their

departure means the election of new House captains in both Simpson and Nicol. Also this term we lose the services of V. Lauderdale in the Choir, the Editorial Board and the Dramatic Society, in all of which spheres he has long been an enthusiastic worker.

The following promotions have been made to fill the vacancies made by boys leaving:

Prefects : Dunlop Linton.

House Prefects : A. Montgomerie, Charles Rich.

Sub-Prefects : R. D. Paton.

Bruce Mackay is captain of Nicol and captain of tennis.

S. Wright is captain of second cricket.

### THE LIBRARY

The response to our appeal in the last issue of the magazine was indeed a noble one, as the readers will doubtlessly have witnessed, with the result that only a few hundred more books are required to fill (completely) the shelves at present available. By the time this is accomplished we shall have laid for posterity the foundations of a Library worthy of the School.

Naturally it is the fiction section which has profited most as a result of the appeal, but the reference sections have by no means been neglected. The literature section now contains most of the more important classics, and the history section, too, is efficient if not complete; Mr. Riley has well equipped the commercial section, and there remains now the science section to bring into line with these others. A great part of the money collected during the term from all sources is being devoted to achieving this aim. It is pleasing to note the good use made already of the various sections.

Owing to the ever-increasing number of boys using the Library, and necessitated also by the difference of the summer term from others, a new system will be in operation next term, details of which will be available.

D. S. THOMSON,

*for the Library Committee,*

### THE BOAT SWAIN

There's a long, dull heave, then the swish  
of oars

Breaking the glittering sea,  
The slash of a whip, and the cry of a man,  
For the big cruel bosun is me.

'Tis a tedious job, this job o' mine,  
To bully the rowing slaves;  
Yet it's an ancient job and a rough job  
Keeping watch that each wretch behaves.

I swagger along with a knotted rope,  
Unclad to my trouser-belt;  
I can raise a cry from the hardest slave  
When I make my belayings felt.

And it's fine to see the red blood flowing  
On each scarred and raw-flesh back,  
But there comes a time when my conscience  
pricks  
And I let the poor devils slack.

For the captain he is a pirate bold  
From that pirate lair Saffee;  
And we're homeward bound with a haul of  
gold  
And gals for the Khalif Maffee.

And I am the captain's gaffer-in-chief  
O'er these yellow dogs and white,  
And well I know how to tickle them up  
Till their backs is an awful sight.

But I often think of the days long gone  
When I was the slaving dog,  
When a bosun chap with a stinging lash  
Threw my senses all agog.

So I'm chucking up when we reach Saffee  
With the poor gals and the gold,  
And the Khalif chap he can talk to me,  
But I reckon he'll find me cold.

And I'll hire a boat to the golden shore  
Of the land that once was home,  
And—here I am with the galley slaves  
And the rolling sea and foam.

But I'm chucking up when we reach Saffee  
With these poor gals and the gold  
For the Khalif chap and his evil crowd,  
And I reckon he'll get them sold.

For they're pretty gals and they're jolly gals,  
These gals that we've brought from Rome—  
But away with the Khalif, money, gals,  
For I am bound for England, home!

G. D. M.

## Round the Form Rooms

### Form S5

**D**ESPITE additional work in mathematics, meetings have again been held regularly on alternate weeks. The term opened with a debate with S4 "That the death penalty should be abolished", and was followed by an interesting lantern lecture by Paton on "Arran". Scott, with a lecture on "Golf", continued the good work. Throughout the term Mr. Ward has given a series of lectures on "Why we behave like human beings", which aroused considerable interest and will be concluded next term.

A. M. M.

### Form S4

It is with regret that we chronicle the departure of our form master, Mr. Lee, who has been the life and soul of all our meetings, and has provided us with many interesting lectures. Indeed, he was responsible for the lecture on "Bull fighting" with which this term's meetings opened. Some weeks later Mr. Skirrow related some of the experiences of his army training days, which proved both interesting and instructive. Later the mysteries of "Farming" were explained to us in two short lectures by Dobson and Dunlop.

A. M.

### Form S2

Meetings this term have been somewhat few, but have been, nevertheless, very enjoyable and amusing. At the beginning of February the long looked-for Mock Trial was held, with Mr. Skirrow playing the role of Prosecutor and Fleming that of Counsel for the Defence; Beveridge filling the position of prisoner. We have to thank Messrs. Hardcastle and Shaw for their kindness in delivering addresses at two other meetings. The former gave a historical talk, and the latter an account of conditions in various European countries before and after the outbreak of hostilities in 1914. Both talks were much appreciated. The last meeting was set aside for talks by members of the form on topics of general interest, a type of meeting we hope to repeat next term. This time two papers were read by Watt and Lawson.

W. W. W.

### Form S1

The Junior Exam. having been forgotten, we settled down to an eventful term, meetings being held every Tuesday. Three talks and three debates have formed the outstanding items of a successful programme. The talks were given by Mr. Skirrow, "England during the War"; Mr. Norton, "The Development of the English Stage"; and Mr. Lee, "Bull Fighting"; while in the debates, "That the dole should be abolished", "That War should be abolished", and "That Trains are superior to Buses", the motions were carried in the first two instances, but in the last no decision was reached owing to lack of time. The class has suffered, from the sports point of view particularly, two losses this term in that A. Bryce and W. Gray have left us. Gray was vice-captain of the class and cricket captain, and M. Farrell has succeeded him in the former capacity. The election of W. Roy as cricket captain necessitated the further election of a vice-captain of cricket in his place, R. Buchanan being the successful candidate.

W. C. R.

### Form J1

At the commencement of the term "That Glasgow should be the capital of Scotland" was debated with much enthusiasm. The principal speakers were J. W. Drummond and J. Stevenson, and the motion was finally defeated by 18 votes to 3. Further meetings took the form of a lecture by Mr. Norton on the legends and historical associations of Somersetshire, and the reading of a one-act play.

J. B.

### Form 2

The class having been preoccupied with work, there has been only one meeting this term, but this was very successful. Several three-minute speeches on various topics were given by members of the class, and that on "Beauties of Glasgow" was in danger of developing into a lively debate.

Since an unusually large number of books have been lost by members of the class, three class detectives, who desire to remain anonymous, have been appointed to trace

lost books. This might have proved a lucrative business, for, under agreement, the successful detective received one-third of the value of the book; but—we blush to admit it—on one occasion one of these officials was found with the book himself.

We congratulate those members of the class who were playing in the house matches; and also Mitchell on gaining his Swimming Proficiency Badge.

R. L. P.

#### Form I

The form has had a good term in every way. There have been many informal meetings, and we have even gone so far as to produce a magazine which created considerable interest in the School. We are sorry to lose our editor so soon, but it is good to know that he has been moved to a higher class.

G. H.

#### “ OLIVER TWIST ”

The foretaste afforded last year with “ The Tale of Two Cities ” prepared us for a rare entertainment when the Rev. A. R. Runnels-Moss gave us a recital of “ Oliver Twist ” on March 4th. The story affords far greater scope for characterisation and at the same time demands greater histrionic powers, naturally; and the lecturer seized his opportunities with avidity. If his cockney accent left something to be desired when impersonating Nancy, Mr. Moss was magnificent as Fagan, the conscience-stricken Sikes and the sinister Monks.

But it was with the comic creations of Dickens that the lecturer was most at home. He revelled in his portrayal of Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Corney before and after their marriage, and his audience were able fully to appreciate the humour of Dickensian situation and character. Bumble’s wooing of Mrs. Corney over the round table was nothing short of a masterpiece; though it is hardly fair to single out any particular episode for special praise when the whole evening was packed with good things.

“ A good wine needs no bush,” said Shakespeare, and similarly Mr. Moss needs no publicity: he is his own advertisement. To see him once in these Dickens’ Recitals is to want more, and still more. We now want to see him as Mr. Micawber and Uriah Heep.

M. N.

#### THE DEBATING SOCIETY

To this generation has fallen the honour of founding the Strathallan Debating Society. Formed near the middle of term, there was only time for the inaugural meeting and three debates. At the former the office-bearers were elected. Mr. Norton, under whose wing the society sprang into being, was asked to be President, and the other officials, elected by ballot, were:

*Chairman:* C. L. Rich.

*Secretary:* E. B. Mackay.

*Committee:* D. Walker, J. T. Johnston, W. G. Leburn, A. Melville, A. Montgomerie and V. Lauderdale.

The first debate was held on the motion “ That Record-breaking is Beneficial to Modern Civilisation.” As an opening debate it played its part well, though it lacked some of the fire of subsequent meetings. A. Melville and R. Linton supported the motion against the attack of C. Rich and A. Montgomerie.

“ That the Encroachment of the Talkies is to be Deplored ” formed the topic of the next meeting, which resulted in a narrow defeat of the motion. V. Lauderdale’s speech for the proposition was the tit-bit of the evening, and it set a lighthearted standard for the remaining speakers to follow; as a result trivialities tended to take up more than their share of the time, and the subject was by no means exhausted when the meeting closed.

The last debate was undoubtedly the best, “ That Britain is a Declining Nation ”; and feelings ran high, to keep the idea in serious channels. Perhaps the most effective speech was by R. Linton, whose refutation of points made by the proposers, and propounding new ideas, went far to influence the almost unanimous vote for the rejection of the motion with which the debate ended. V. Lauderdale and J. Waldie, who opposed the motion, were fortunate in finding much support from subsequent speakers.

Altogether the society may be said to have made a highly successful debut; and, when the meetings are resumed, an enthusiastic session is assured.

E. B. MACKAY, *Secretary.*

## The Dramatic Society Social

AS the dramatic critic seated himself among the expectant audience, he recalled memories of the birth of the movement, which has now justified its existence to the full; for the unfledged efforts of three years ago seem far away, and the Dramatic Society to-day has improved out of all recognition. The theatrical talent displayed has reached a very high level, and the Society may justly be proud of its progress.

On this occasion the audience was treated to two short comedies and a full length thriller. "Friends," by H. Farjeon, might be described as an Irish extravaganza; starting on a note of harmony, it introduced various sources of discord until finally the two protagonists had worked themselves up to such a pitch of frenzy that it seemed as if their choler must lead to bloodshed.

R. F. WILSON, as Dan Donagon, showed marked ability and vivid powers of expression throughout. His self confidence enabled him to forget his audience and to enter fully into the joys of rolling on the floor with John O'Flaherty. A word also must be said of his mastery of the Irish brogue. Indeed, all the members of the cast showed a conspicuous proficiency in this direction, due, we suspect, not to lengthy sojourn in Ireland, but to opportunities provided by the mathematics department.

As the excitable John O'Flaherty, R. D. LINTON was a complete success. His acting was emphatic and colourful, and his efforts to reach his former friend were so energetic that even his feet were brought into play. G. LEBURN played the part of Father Murphy who sought—somewhat unsuccessfully—to "arbitrate betwixt the clamour of two eager tongues." His acting was effective in conveying the impression that he was above the petty disputes of this world, but nevertheless he was sufficiently human to enjoy the fun of the fair. The accent of the Irish priest, however, sometimes degenerated into the "My deah freends" of the stage curate. L. FLEMING, W. ROY, W. FALCONER, W. McLACHLAN, G. DOBSON and J. BELL formed

a tough party of villagers and entered enthusiastically into the rough and tumble arising from the efforts to separate the combatants.

"Friends" was followed by "The Tender Passion," a comedy by Vincent Douglass. The slumbers of an embittered wreck of humanity are disturbed by the arrival of two lovers, William and Fancy. The inevitable quarrel occurs and William departs in a huff. Fancy is consoled by an unhappy stranger who arouses all the latent jealousy of "sweet William." A reconciliation takes place when Fancy promises never to see the stranger again. The audience is left to imagine fresh complications when the pair discover that Fancy has unwittingly already accepted the position of housemaid to the sympathetic stranger.

B. MACKAY, as Adam, the down-and-out, earned considerable laughter by his cynical shafts of wit directed against the lovers and was successful in maintaining an attitude of sublime indifference to the emotional disturbances around him. He was, however, lacking in the appropriate vulgarity and conveyed the impression of a gentleman down on his luck rather than that of an illiterate rogue.

The romantic William was admirably portrayed by W. MITCHELL who did not forget the plebian origin of the part and was by turns sentimental, jealous, furious, and conciliatory. He is undoubtedly developing a talent for love making, and his work in the billing and cooing parts was most realistic. His partner, I. LAWSON, as Fancy, was delightful. Feminine charm radiated from her, and she proved capable of exhibiting both passionate love and passionate anger, not to mention passionate sorrow. William's face must have smarted after the slap with which she repudiated his suggestions, and her sobs were quite heart-rending.

W. JACK, as the melancholy Mr. Oddie, was making his first appearance as an actor. He was unfortunately nervous, and his performance suffered accordingly. Good at his entrance as the much married man, he failed to raise his voice later or to show enough

expression in his acting. With attention to these points he may prove useful. Q. DUNLOP adequately filled the small part of the constable.

The principal play of the evening was a thriller "In the Next Room", by Eleanor Robson and Harriet Ford. It describes the adventures of a notorious crook who assumes a triple personality in order to obtain possession of some priceless diamonds which have found their way into a cabinet purchased by Philip Vantine. Two murders are committed and the usual innocent people suspected before the real villain falls a victim to the wiles of the struggling journalist and his betrothed.

J. WALDIE gave a remarkably fine rendering of the ancient family retainer, Parks, maintaining throughout the respectful aloofness of the perfect butler blended with the familiarity which long and faithful service permits him to adopt in times of crisis. His way of saying "Oh, no!" was a sheer delight, and his acting was both varied and expressive. Moreover, he made full use of the opportunities for comic display to which his part lent itself. Undoubtedly he has a talent for humorous characterisation.

As Lorna Webster, Vantine's niece, A. HARRINGTON was only moderately successful. Although attractively made up, his voice is becoming too deep for feminine roles; but his chief fault lay in his stolidity. She was always calm and unemotional; not even her uncle's murder or the discovery that the renowned Colonel Piggott was actually the villain seemed to stir her.

J. T. JOHNSTON took the part of Philip Vantine, the collector of antiques. One usually looks for talented acting from him, but here something was lacking. His performance, in fact, was uneven, and though good in parts, was occasionally decidedly poor. In short it lacked insight into the character portrayed, and lacking also light and shade, was too "Johnstonian."

"The New York Record" had an energetic reporter in James Godfrey, and V. LAUDERDALE played the part with distinction. His embarrassment when caught kissing the fair Lorna was perfectly rendered, and throughout his acting was forceful and impressive. His chief attribute is his pose which is always admirable, but although

improved in this direction, he still tends at times to talk too fast and run his words together.

Mr. NORTON, as the gesticulating Felix Armand, the determined Colonel Piggott, and the ruthless Crochard all rolled into one, had a difficult part to play. Undoubtedly he acquitted himself well. His make-up was superb, and his portrayal of the French characteristics was a fine piece of acting. We liked his accent and his mincing gait; while his struggle with Godfrey delighted the audience who only on such occasions may be privileged to behold a battle between master and pupil.

Detectives, especially in America, are supposed to be brusque and brutal, and A. MONTGOMERY gave all the necessary coolness and efficiency to the part of Inspector Grady. He bullied the unfortunate Rogers most effectively, and the only fault to be found with his acting is that sometimes he made rather too much noise.

R. PATON, who took the part of Rogers, the footman, who is under suspicion of murder, showed that he knew his place, and only forgot to be a footman when under fire of the detective's third degree methods, on which occasion he became panic-stricken and swooned. His emotional display was most realistic.

One of the best pieces of acting was that of a new recruit, S. K. WHITE, as Julia, the lady's maid. White gave a most promising display. He has a delightfully clear voice and showed a real sympathy with the part he was portraying. Julia appeared to be a murderess and was convincingly terror-stricken at the accusations levelled against her. Her quarrel with Rogers, her deserted husband, her start on seeing the photograph of her former lover, and her realistic swoon into a convenient chair were all rendered in praiseworthy fashion. I enjoyed his acting.

A. FLEMING, as Madame de Charriere, the lady afflicted with matrimonial troubles, was not so successful as usual. His acting was uneven, and too often rather expressionless. He has a perfect voice and should make better use of it.

Of the minor characters, G. K. CHALMERS was too meak and mild for an arm of the law, Simmonds, Grady's assistant, and his



acting lacked variety. Q. DUNLOP was a sufficiently stalwart constable, and A. HOWIE a suitable corpse and minor police official.

Once more we must pay tribute to the efficiency of the producer, Mr. Norton, and his assistants, A. Melville and I. Scott, and to the painstaking zeal of the stage managers under C. Rich. To these and to the orchestra, directed, in Mr. Sharman's absence, by Mr. Marchant, as well as to the actors themselves we owe a debt of thanks for a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

P. W. S.

### THE DRAMATIC SOCIETY

This term has been one of the most successful in the history of the society, both in regard to membership, which had to be closed at sixty, and to entertainment, the programme consisting of trial readings, rehearsed readings and the Presidential Address.

The trial readings, necessitated by the quest for fresh talent among new members, consisted of "The Grey Parrot" and "The Coiners"; while the latter, "The Boy Comes Home," "A Collection will be Made" and "Wurzel-Flummery," were given as rehearsed readings.

The Presidential Address this term was "Some Curious Modern Plays," and included mention of Drinkwater's chronicle plays, Eugene O'Neill's wordless play "The Hairy Ape," and his novel "Strange Interlude," several war plays, and concluded with a more detailed study of "Green Pastures," by Marc Connelly.

In addition, three lectures were held under the auspices of the society, details of which are to be found elsewhere.

On the penultimate evening of the term the society gave what was probably its most ambitious programme since its inauguration, two one-act comedies, "Friends" and "The Tender Passion," and a long three-act drama, "In the Next Room." The criticism of these is to be found on another page; but it is pleasing to report that a record collection was made for stage equipment during the performance, £3 7/6, and we would thank the givers for this practical demonstration of their appreciation.

D. THOMSON, *Secretary*.

### THE BIRD SONG

O joyous bird, why dost thou sing to me?  
Why dost thou perch on that shrub, warped  
and small?

Thy blithesome spirit is with wings set free—  
Seekest thou this when thou hast choice of  
all?

Seek cooling shadows where the sunbeams  
dance

Down through the leaflets to a ferny bed  
Where streams are murmuring, and thy  
timid glance

Finds nought to spread thy wings in name-  
less dread.

Why linger here when mountains blaze with  
gold

Of thorny whin; where droning insects fly  
Over a highland marsh, where from the fold  
Some black-faced sheep have straggled, there  
to lie

And watch the foolish cattle kneel to drink  
The sharp bog waters? Hills each morning  
shine

With elfin tears that with the first sun shrink.  
The wind bears dusty pollen from the pine  
Scenting the evening air, while one by one  
The stars shine pale within the cloudless blue  
Which deepens till the night's dark work is  
done

And all God's wondrous world is lost to view.  
But why, O bird, with these within thy sight,  
And gifted by thy God with tiny wings  
To seek these joys, why shouldst thou choose  
thy flight

And throat thy song where only sordid things  
Are found to dwell? I see the roof tops grey  
And silver smoke curl to a greyer sky.

Why look on these when each and every day  
The smoke of mountain mists is rising high  
Tinged by the sunrise crimson, swirling deep  
Into the purple vales where night hides still?  
O bird, where trees are blossomed thou  
couldst sleep

On mossy bough, head 'neath thy wing, until  
Surfeit with slumber, like a god would eat  
Seeds from an opening flower in nectar  
dipped

Meant for the bees. Yet here thy tiny feet  
Are clenched on smoke-grimed twigs. I too  
have sipped

Of nectar, for thy careless happy song  
Has filled my heart with yearning, and my soul,  
Upon the wings of poesie borne along,  
Found happiness that flesh cannot control.

I. C.



## Where the Danube Flows

**S**WIFTLY, smoothly, relentlessly, with the democratic red and white banner swinging idly where the old imperial eagles should have been, the boat, bearing me away from Vienna, slips down the Danube. The splash of parted waters about her prow is the only sound.

The morning mist still hangs over us, hiding the land, for it is not yet nine o'clock. Only the banks of the river are visible, and they give an impression, strong as it is inexplicable, of terrible cruelty. Expectant as I am for new things, I almost wish I had remained in my comfortable bed at Vienna. Good old Vienna! I lift my hat to you. Strange town, still trying to be the gayest city in Europe, smiling through her tears, girding up her flowing silks, which had swung so gracefully through mirrored, marble halls to the lilting voice of Strauss, to perform the spasmodic jerks called for wherever black hands beat out those desperate jazz rhythms, and black masks split open to let out the syncopated howl of the young, delirious twentieth century!

Out of the haze a heron flaps lazily across the river to disappear into the fringing willows. Then the sun rises, the water sparkles and glitters with life, and I am glad I left Vienna. As the boat moves swiftly on, my thoughts fly back a short fortnight when I was leaving England for Bavaria and Austria, and I saw again the Rhine in all her moods. I saw her ruined strongholds brooding over the water; I visualised the Tales of Hoffman, and saw the Maidens of the Rhine come to life in the frescos of Hohenschwangan, that stupendous castle of King Ludwig II., set amid the magnificence of the Bavarian Alps, and rivalling only the pictures adorning the pages of Grimm's fairy tales. Then there was Munich, an ultra-modern city preserving the glory of her past in her buildings. Her picture galleries alone are an attraction, crowded as they are with masterpieces, but her beer — ah well, *chacun son goût*.

Swiftly many other Bavarian castles pass before my eyes: I see again the pageant of

Oberammergau — and then the train of thoughts is broken, for the river flows now between mountains, and from flagpoles flies the Hungarian flag, red, white and green, its heraldic shield and crown flaunting the old tradition. Moreover the ever-changing panorama holds the watcher spellbound.

The sun is setting as we enter the great plain of Hungary. Away on the skyline stands a row of poplars, their silhouettes melancholy and detached against the flaming background. In the prow of the boat a student is drawing from his violin a sad, slow melody, as though improvising—music that I was to learn to love. The endless repetition of the refrain seems to suggest the endlessness of the vast plain.

Now it is sundown, an hour altogether Hungarian. It is the hour when the gipsy musicians tune their throbbing violins; when the air is rich as though flavoured with tokay; when romance, never far distant in this strange lovable country, is strongest in its spell. Then as the boat rounds a curve where the outlying spurs of the Alps, the Bakong Mountains, meet the Carpathians, I make my bow to the Queen of the Danube.

The imposing size of the river there, three to six hundred yards broad, the sharp contrast between its two banks, place Budapest among the most finely situated of the larger European towns. On one side is a flat sandy plain in which lies Pest, modern of aspect, regularly laid out and presenting a long frontage of handsome buildings to the river: on the other the ancient town of Buda struggles capriciously over a series of small hills, commanded by the fortress, and backed beyond by spurs of mountains which rise in terraces, one above the other.

Behind us the sun is staining the western sky with blood over which night is slowly drawing her veil; ahead a myriad twinkling eyes beckon the stranger on. The star encrusted dome of heaven seems to reflect the delicate beauty of the city. The ancient fortress is picked out by powerful arc lamps. The walls which have withstood the

onslaughts of the infidel stand out against the surrounding gloom like illuminated marble. The statue of St. Gelbert, and the Fisherman's Bastion, both illuminated, seem to hang like ivory discs suspended in the air. The Royal Palace, where once that regal figure, Maria Theresa, held high carnival, is a blaze of light—the governor's ball apes the imperial pomp of the past. The darkness which surrounds it is a magnificent garden, descending in terraces to the Danube, but night now hides its fountains, ornamental statues and beds of sweet smelling acacia.

That evening I dined in a little restaurant in an old byway of Buda, which had seen the passing of the Turks when the Crescent threatened Christendom. The courtyard of the inn is fitted with small tables. Around these the diners, for the most part good middle-class folk, enjoy themselves with rare gusto. The Magyar is a queer mixture of the Oriental and Occidental. They are a light-hearted people, but constant invasions have left them a race of gipsies and fighters. Seated in one corner, I could see diagonally across the crowded court through an open window into the kitchen, a perfect furor of industry. Dishes were being scoured, chickens roasted, omelets fried, and vegetables chopped (with an enormous knife) all at once. The four walls are covered with creepers which have overgrown the iron rods used in wet weather to support a canvas cover, so that the only roof is the sky, a deep clear blue, crowded with stars that peep through the foliage round the rods like candles on a Christmas tree. The air is filled with the music of the *tziganes*. The leader of a gipsy orchestra walks between the tables, playing his violin the while.

The tunes played are full of the glowing passion of gipsy blood; they are weird and primitive, suggestive of the wild freedom of the plains, the melancholy of its loneliness. Like many of the old Scottish songs, they have come down through centuries unwritten, handed down from father to son, and they tell the struggles and triumphs of each succeeding age to the next. The orchestra plays as if improvising, without music, slowly at first and softly as the wind sighs in the trees; then quickening, whirls off into a mad abandon of joyous ecstasy.

To think of Hungary is to think of her music; and as I listened then, with glasses of Rizling glittering in the half light, across my memory came the lines:—

"What is the Magyar music, and what its soul,

That it should every living heart control?"

The head waiter, the only person in the establishment who speaks English, is at my elbow. Bowing gracefully from the waist, as only the gentlemen of the East can do without creating the impression of affectation, he courteously hopes that my dinner has pleased me. In France this would be a polite way of demanding a *pourboire*, but in Hungary it is propagandism. The Magyar advertises his country in the best possible manner, by unstinted service and politeness. Having complimented him upon his cooking and service, I congratulate him on his music.

"Yes, it is very beautiful, is it not?" he replies with a smile—he has heard the same words so often on the lips of strangers. "Our *tziganes* play very well."

"Where can I hear them again?" I ask, hoping he will not think that I would rather hear them elsewhere.

A look of consternation greets this query. "But you have not heard—the festival to-morrow—but you must go—it will be unique."

Then he unfolds a strange story, with a wealth of fascinating expressions, of the death of Réla Radics, the late gipsy king; how that great prima-violinist, who had charmed Franz Joseph and three generations of Hungarians, was carried to the grave where the people had thronged in such numbers that the great orchestra, assembled to play their leader's lament, was unable to play. As a result the *tziganes* had planned a festival to raise money to erect a monument to his memory. To-morrow was the festival. All this he told me in a hushed voice, and more.

To-morrow the Radoczi March, sentenced to silence centuries ago by the first emperor Joseph on account of its power to inflame the fighting spirit of the people—their hearts throbbed more violently, their blood coursed

more freely, and the soul of the most dispirited was roused—would once more raise its voice under the free canopy of heaven.

The morrow finds me early at the stadium of the Ferencvarosi Forna Club. My seat is well to the front but of most hard wood. It is a gay scene; the crowded galleries present a colourful spectacle on both sides of the field. The ladies, after the fashion of Paris, wear picture hats and ankle-length dresses of thin flowered materials. The army is well to the fore. Everywhere hands come to the salute, and long cloaks swing over uniforms of every hue.

A large area in the centre of the field is given up to a small red-carpeted stage and a forest of chairs for the musicians. Meanwhile a Boy Scout band, with the aid of loud speakers, succeeds in producing a noise to the exclusion of all else. Indeed, when it is silent between its items, the interval of quiet is positively startling—until the feminine part of the audience realises it has now an opportunity of completing its rudely interrupted conversation. Then a great movement at one end of the field hails the arrival of the musicians. I am convinced that some cunning official had bribed that noble band of youths to play louder than ever at that moment so that by contrast the delicate voices of the violins should sound even more ethereal.

A more restrained march accompanies the gipsy musicians round the enclosure. On they come like an army, a spectacular procession of a hundred girls in native Hungarian costume, marching under the flags of the Rakoczi epoch, leading the way. Before all goes a girl carrying on a crimson cushion the violin of Béla Radics. The orchestra follows, in bodies of two hundred strong, each led by a famous prima-violinist. Each leader receives a cheer from the crowded galleries, in volume relative to his popularity, which he acknowledges by waving his instrument.

At length the orchestra is arranged. An old, white-haired gipsy, with the air of a great aristocrat, is helped on to the carpeted dais. Slowly he raises his instrument, and a great hush falls upon the gathering. Then,

when his bow has released the two inevitable chords of introduction, the whole host of players swing with a wild delight into the haunting melody of the Hungarian anthem. The music rises and swells until all the suffering and joy of the Hungarian race is in the voice of the violins. Then suddenly it dies away in the ripple of cymbals.

I doubt if an orchestra of a thousand has ever played together in one place before. The sight is one of utmost grandeur: a group of some nine hundred violinists, eighty 'cellists and double bassists, and twenty cymbalists is an unforgettable sight.

One after the other, the famous prima-violinists conduct the orchestra in turn, and I listen fascinated as the most beautiful Magyar songs reverberate in the great stadium. I hear the voice of the tarogato, the weeping tones of the Rakoczi dirge; I am transported into a world of wild delights, of brutal impulses. The voice of the throbbing violins mount to the head, excites the senses, clouds the judgment, for the ancient Hungarian songs speak straight to the heart.

Such are my impressions of Buda-pest, all coloured by the echoes of that barbaric Zigeuner orchestra, so that I feel justified in quoting in conclusion the words of Louisa Blaka, the Hungarian Nightingale, upon the tziganes:—

“Ye who have charmed so many lips to smile, who have brought tears to so many eyes, ye who, with your throbbing violins, have faithfully shared, through so many centuries, the nation's every grief and sorrow, every joy and glory, surely ye deserve to be cherished among the Magyar's fondest memories.”

W. S.

## INDIFFERENCE

The Moon said, “I am silver.”  
The Sun answered, “I am gold.”  
And the Sun added, “I am warm.”  
And the Moon said, “I am cold.”  
Mars shouted, “I am ruby.”  
While the Earth said, “I am old.”  
And Time laughed hollowly and said,  
“Oh well, that's your tale told.”

G. H.

## On Contributions

"H EAVENS! Another mag. Interesting as usual, but dash it all, it seems no time since I was last roused to the extent of meaning to contribute something. It's a pity all the Editorials should have to appeal for material. Surely they must have the effect of rousing shirkers who have more literary prowess than I."

With me it seems I receive the magazine, read it, appreciate it and then go off at a tangent instead of concentrating on the appeal on the front pages. I think about the clever set of fellows there must be at School when I realise that neither Harris nor even the famous M'Kechnie tried to teach me how to write poetry—poor men, I suppose they had enough to do to try and teach me prose, and to read real poetry, without trying to get me to write it. I go on to wonder if these budding poets are awarded no marks out of ten if they omit the full stop after the title of their poems, or was such a reward reserved for me and my likes in order that one of the above worthies might not have to correct my journalese-infected essays?

On these lines my thoughts run, and a week passes by, the magazine lying with a pile of unanswered letters. What vestige of conscience remains after five years in the hard (?) world sets off another train—a train rather like the Gleneagles-Forgandenny express. Does not that explain itself? What was it we used to be told in the business class? "Everything worth receiving is worth acknowledging." Yes, but a mere acknowledgment is pretty useless. It is an article that is required. Surely I have done something which could be enlarged upon and exaggerated until it became readable.

Shooting? Certainly I went shooting last year, but I shot nothing larger than a native. What a pity I haven't had an opportunity to grapple with a lion or some such popular beast. No, I'm afraid shooting must be ruled out. But an article! An article? What does the word suggest? Sharp's Super Creamy Toffee (shade of Hoey, B.A.!)—perhaps a leader in the "Times" on a political subject. Anyway, who would read it?

Another blank!

Ah, now what about "Reflections on Life at Strath."? No, the title would put anyone off, even supposing it did find its way into the magazine. Moreover, everyone knows all about it, and somehow one's own school days never seem so adventurous as one reads in story books.

Swimming? There is little glamour about a swim in dirty warm rivers, though one is glad of them when nothing better can be obtained. Riding has no interest for many; Rugger is not played here; an account of the type of work on which one has to concentrate would be monotonous and in all probability would contradict a number of stories of the glorious life led in "the brightest jewel of the Empire", . . .

At this point the magazine is filed away furtively, with mutterings about the impossibility of writing or thinking in so hot a climate.

If this is not what usually happens to those who receive the magazine, this article will never be published and I have no need to apologise for it: if it does find its way past the Editor, maybe it will serve its purpose by stimulating the minds of those who possess ideas and are lazy—if only to keep out a repetition of this type of copy, they may send in something. D.

## Xuereb and the Cat

WHEN Xuereb, the cook, lost his cat, the hullabaloo of his lamentation and very bad language penetrated even into the sanctuary of my office, which, being on the other side of the house, is removed from the men's quarters and all the smells and noise that are their natural right. I pulled the old-fashioned wire bell to summon the head foreman, Aquilina, but before the distant jangling of the bell had died away, the crimsoned and sweating face of Xuereb poked through the bead curtain hanging over the doorway.

"If the excellent one can give me one minute of his time, I would speak," said the head.

The excellent one having a minute to bestow, I told him to speak on.

"The excellent one knows of my cat, the bee-u-ti-fool —."

The curtain rustled as Aquilina, coming in answer to the bell, paused hesitatingly outside.

"Stenna l'haun (stay there) Aquilina," I ordered, and the rustling ceased. I turned to Xuereb with an oath in the vernacular as he spat upon the rush carpet; whereupon he hastily drew his foot through it and looked penitent.

"Well, about your cat?"

"Ai-ma, you know my cat, signur, the bee-u-ti-fool Kiska?"

The cat had once used my office cupboard as the most delectable place it could find to bring a family into the world, so that my acknowledgment of my familiarity with his pet was somewhat cold; and my glance wandered to the cupboard in question.

"Oh-e, how that cat loved you, signur," murmured Xuereb, in a tone implying that since the advent of the kittens my office was a Mecca to all cat lovers.

"What of the wretched brute?" I asked impatiently.

"She is stolen, O lover of dumb things and seeker of truth, stolen by those sons of filth whose fathers were dogs and whose mothers —."

"Bizayet (shut up). What have I to do with your zibbel grauar (dust heap searchers)?"

An inarticulate grunt of suppressed mirth came from the other side of the curtains.

"Do you expect me to look for the beast?" I continued.

Xuereb lifted up his head, rolled his eyes till the whites showed, and wailed "Ai-ma, I am a poor man and an orphan. When I ask the men, they mock me."

The former fact I considered as somewhat superfluous, for since he is over sixty, it was not altogether unnatural.

"Send Aquilina to me," I said, and took up my pen to show that the interview was over. "I will ask him about your cat."

"You wish to see the son of devils?"

"I want Aquilina," I retorted, firmly.

"They are the same," he replied, and somewhat soothed by the parting shot, he drew aside the curtain to allow the scandalised foreman to enter, and shuffled away.

I wasted no time in getting to my subject.

"Why have the men stolen his wretched cat?"

"Signur," said Aquilina, striking a picturesque attitude, "the beast was lousy and slept among our food till it tasted of filth."

As this defence could not be dismissed as trivial, nor perhaps was it without foundation, I continued hastily, "Where is the cat now?"

"In the broken-down well by the orange grove, signur. There is still a little water since the last rains."

"Tell Xuereb where it is then." And he left to pick up the threads of my interrupted work.

An orange grove in blossom time, when the heat of the day is past, is perhaps one of the pleasantest places on God's earth. The cool air is fragrant with the fugitive scent of the blossom, and purple shadows move beneath the trees and heap themselves under the vine-clambered walls that are tinged with saffron and gold in the sunset. My invariable custom was to walk through the groves smoking my before-dinner pipe. Natives are quick to understand the whims and moods of their master, and I always spent this half-hour in solitude. Thus my surprise and indignation were great to see a hunched figure squatting by the old well, crooning and moaning a weird dirge that rose and fell sonorously. At the sound of my voice the figure jumped up and scuttled

away into the dim, misty light of an olive plantation. I could hear the patter of bare feet, the crackling of a twig, and then silence. It had been Xuereb, and in his hand was a shapeless bundle. No great powers of deduction were needed for me to realise that he had been recovering the body of his precious cat. For a moment or two I felt a twinge of pity for him, as it is all too seldom that a native has any genuine affection for dumb animals.

The dull booming of the dinner gong echoed through the fast deepening twilight, and I retraced my steps to where the soft diffused light of swinging lanterns gleamed on the verandah.

I thought no more of Xuereb or his cat till two days later, when the sounds of a similar, but worse, disturbance, came from the men's quarters. A sirocco wind had been blowing, so that I felt damply miserable, and my head ached abominably. With some of my choicest phrases on the tip of my tongue and a stick in my hand I strode down the passages. The din was increasing, and I could hear Xuereb's shrill cackle above the roar of angry voices. They stopped as I thundered into the room. The long board table was littered with broken bread and nearly empty soup plates, and I also noticed a bedroom boy being very sick in a corner. Xuereb was standing by the steaming soup cauldron, surrounded by a gesticulating group of men and boys, who stood aside as I approached.

"Well, Xuereb," I asked in a nasty tone, "have you lost another cat?"

"O, no, lover of the poor," he giggled, and with his spoon he dexterously fished up a vile and appalling object, "for see, like a true Catholic I have forgiven these men. Behold I have found my cat, the bee-u-ti-fool Kiska."

I. C.

### "BRITISH SPIDERS"

Until Mr. J. J. Ward lectured to us on spiders, few of us realised how fascinating these creepy, crawly creatures could be. Some of us knew that they were endowed with an extraordinary number of legs and that in the construction of their webs they surpassed even those monuments of industry, the bees—that was about all. Mr. Ward

lightened our darkness with a flood of illumination. He has spent a life-time in studying the peculiarities of the spider, and is a mine of information concerning them. A truly wonderful series of coloured photographs bore witness to the untiring zeal of the lecturer and served further to enthral his audience.

After a short description of the spider's characteristic anatomy, Mr. Ward dealt with the complex eye, the formidable jaws, the structure of the legs and the marvellous spinarets. He showed us how the spider sits awaiting its prey, his swift pounce on the rash intruder into his parlour, and the final death-dealing stroke which converts some unfortunate fly into breakfast, lunch, tea or supper. The digestive processes were unfolded, and we were privileged to view a truly herculean battle between a wasp and an angry house-spider whose mansion he had unwisely wrecked.

The delicate mechanism of the web, "the wireless" by means of which the spider was acquainted with the approach of his prey, the creation, dilapidation and demolition of this castle, the rearing of the young and their departure into the cold world—all these were detailed by the indefatigable lecturer. In spiderland the hen-pecked husband is a common feature of the landscape, and the siege of the lady's heart may be attended by fatal consequences to the unlucky swain should his suit prove vain. It was suggested that this murder of the male was due to its slaughter of the young at breeding time.

The life histories of many different species of spider were outlined by Mr. Ward. Vivid slides enriched our knowledge of the common garden spider, the water spider, the larger house spider and the foreign bird-eating spider. Indeed, we discovered that some familiar friends were not spiders at all; thus the little red insect which the writer had always believed to be a spider is actually a mite related to the cheese mite, the little animal which imparts locomotion to ancient cheese.

In thus recording our deep appreciation of the lecture, may we be permitted to hope that the powers that be will arrange further lectures in animal and plant life, thus enabling us to acquire fresh knowledge in the field of natural history.

P. W. S.

## Niagara

THE journey from Buffalo to Niagara can be accomplished in just over an hour, and takes in the Peace Bridge into Canada, the Welland Canal and the historic Fort Niagara. At the end of the journey, the twin towns of Niagara Falls are found in their everlasting shower bath, for, for a distance of more than a quarter of a mile from the towns, all inhabitants live in an atmosphere of rain.

The first view of the falls is obtained from an observation tower high above the level of the cataract, and from here the first impression is truly awe-inspiring. To the left lie the American falls, and to the right the Canadian. The former, known as the Horse-shoe Falls, form an immense crescent, and the water which rushes over into a mighty bowl seethes and foams; while clouds of spray, rising like steam, make the huge bowl even more like a boiling cauldron. Here it was that Jean Lussier, a French-Canadian, went over the falls in a rubber ball, and is the only man alive to-day who has survived a descent.

The tower, besides being used for observation purposes, houses the famous burning springs. The flaming water may be extinguished and drunk. Hardly distinguishable from fresh water in appearance, its taste is peculiar, due to the presence of sulphur.

To the South, some distance up the river, two hulls are entrapped in the rapids. These are the remains of barges which broke loose from the wharves up at Buffalo, some thirty miles away, and had been borne down the rapids almost as far as the cataract.

Underground tunnels give access to the rear of the Canadian Falls, and platforms on the face of the cliff underneath the falls allow one to visualise the immense volume of water rushing over every second. A huge hole in the face of the rock serves as the outlet from the turbines of the Ontario Hydro-Electrical Power Station at Queens-town, which develop 650,000 horse power. These gigantic generators supply power over the whole of Ontario and more than compensate for the scarcity of coal in the district. Across the river is a similar station

belonging to the United States, while the Toronto Station is the main centre for Toronto.

Further North an overhead railway spans the river, two hundred feet above an immense whirlpool. Close to this, at a narrower point of the river, Captain Webb lost his life in attempting to swim the rapids. The river at this point is only fifty yards wide, but the current is strong, and Webb dived in and never rose to the surface. It is possible that he struck some rock and was rendered unconscious.

At night the falls are illuminated by huge arc lamps, but it is doubtful whether the rainbow effects so produced render the water more beautiful or the sight more memorable than the majestic snowy whiteness of the natural cataract.

A. M. M.

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We congratulate the Business Class on their excellent progress this year, and, in particular,

The boy who thought that "floating a company" meant taking to the boats in a storm;

The boy who criticised a certain one-door make of car because it did not conform to the principles of Double Entry;

The boy who, on hearing of certain bank failures, thought his money would be safest in the Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond;

The boy who, despairing of ever getting his Trial Balances out, was anxious to get to work on Self-balancing Ledgers. He is much better now;

The boy who thought that "a run on the bank" referred to a sprint along the river;

The boy who imagined that a "Reconciliation Statement" was an apology after a quarrel;

and we tender our sincere sympathy to

The boy who believes that his life will be much easier after he has left school.

A. W. J.



### "WHAT IS A STAR?"

On Thursday evening, January 29th, under the guidance of Prof. Brodetsky, who is Professor of Applied Mathematics at the University of Leeds and a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, we left, in imagination, the surface of the earth and probed into the mysteries of space. The experience was stimulating, and even if the Professor's mathematics were a little beyond some of the younger members of the audience, all were able to appreciate the wonderful collection of extraordinarily clear lantern slides with which the lecturer illustrated his points.

The excursion into space took us first into the solar system, where we were able to see the real position of the earth as one of the smaller members of a group of nine bodies rotating round the sun as centre. Saturn's rings and Jupiter's moons were, as always in an astronomical lecture, a matter of interest, as was the discovery of a new planet, Pluto. Then we had a peep at the sun itself, and some conception of its fiery nature was obtained from the photographs of its spots, or clouds of iridescent vapour, its prominences, great flames thousands of miles high, and the corona, the glow extending still further into space.

Next we were taken to the stellar universe proper, and we saw photographs of part of the Milky Way, that collection of stars making a faintly illuminated belt across the sky at night, so distant that the stars appear to be continuous to the naked eye. We heard, too, the story of the red giant star, Betelgeux (which the lecturer insisted on calling Beetle-juice), of the variable star, Algol, and of the interesting method by which, taking the diameter of the earth's orbit as a base, one is able to compute with reasonable accuracy the distance between us and the nearer stars. The distances took our breath away! The Professor seemed to think little of a few hundred light years, and a light year is the distance which light, at a speed of eleven million miles a minute, traverses in a year.

In conclusion, we saw our own sun as a rather insignificant star, perhaps a little under average size, situated somewhere inside the Milky Way, and felt that our place in the universe was as nothing. And yet

the Professor gave us encouragement when he spoke of the wonderful theory of Einstein, who is speculating on the curvature of space, and this idea of a finite universe appeared to the lecturer as something quite settled beyond the possibility of contradiction.

We hope that this lecture is the precursor of further lectures of a scientific character, and even if one does not learn many new facts from such a discourse, it is valuable as giving something of "the breath of life" to the "dry bones" of scientific theory.

W. E. W.

### LA VOISINE SANS MERCI

Thank goodness! Thursday's hours are fleet;  
We go to visit down the street,  
And call on Mrs. Leslie Brown,  
Whose husband thinks he owns the town,  
Whereas he's only president  
Of Brown, McWhirter, Squint & Dent.

She'll say, "Good afternoon, how glad  
I am to see you! Hope you had  
A good time down at Tiddleslea."  
All this because she knows that we  
Are well aware she's home to rest  
After a world tour, East to West.

And then she'll say, "Come in with me  
And take a cup of China tea;  
My husband bought it in Shanghai."  
(As if we'd never heard that lie.)  
So in we go and sit on seats  
That feel as though they're stuffed with  
peats.

She'll hand round cakes of sickly hue  
And currant buns and meringues too—  
(These last she knows we dare not take  
For fear of all the mess they make.)  
There's biscuits, too, which I declare  
Would serve to pave a marble stair.

If only Thursdays never came,  
Or coming, did not bring the same  
Sad round within that door!  
If only we might leave that bore  
To sit on her uncomfy chairs  
And crunch her own stale marble stairs!

D. G. M.

## Some Terribly Serious Thoughts Upon Examinations

EXAMINATIONS are of many kinds: army officers in the late war had to examine their subordinates' feet; the sergeant-major invariably examined the cleanliness of buttons much in the same way that it is customary for those in authority to examine that part of the anatomy normally obscured by the auricular appendages of small schoolboys.

Examinations such as these, however, do not come within the scope of this article. If these ramblings be well received, we may possibly be induced or persuaded to treat of these more uncommon aspects of the subject in a subsequent number. We are to devote ourselves to those horrors which overhang the lives of many youths at the end of the summer term.

The first thing to grasp about examinations is that they are by no means so bad as they look, and not nearly so difficult as they might be. In fact, an intense research into the matter shows that examinations have seldom been less difficult than they are to-day.

Their origin is obvious: indeed, were it not for a certain corruption in the modern spelling, the word would be self-explanatory. Professor Oldage has clearly shown in his scholarly little book, "Where are those lost Letters?,"\* that some time in pre-mediaeval days one letter was lost. A mediaeval scholar, with the characteristic thoroughness of his age, discovered the loss, but found himself too late to trace the missing letter. Being a "Big I" himself he thought the addition of an "i" would make adequate compensation for the lost letter. In this form the word has come down to us, though it was originally spelt "exdamnation." The learned professor, having derived the "ex" from the Latin word meaning "from," enters into a long proof† that the second

part of the word meant "Heaven." There seems to be some fallacy in his argument, but just where it occurs has never been discovered.

Whether the origin of examinations is celestial or, as is so often suggested, infernal is beside the point. Here they are, and in the very simplest form. Not always have pen, paper and ink, with a minimum of brain been the only necessities. Years ago, for instance, the examination for the army was so hard that few were successful in passing. We have a record on a fine piece of granite that the candidate was first required to crack, with a small hammer, a large boulder weighing the best part of a ton. Thus he qualified for cracking the skull of his enemy. The same authority comments on the fact that no one had ever passed this test except at Christmas, and then only in particularly severe winters. The second test was a race with a dinosaur. If the reptile won, the candidate was disqualified and took no further part in the examination; a victory for the candidate, on the other hand, qualified him for the army, whose motto "Who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day" embodied a great ideal. Historians attribute the ease with which this country was conquered by successive invaders to the severity of the examination.

Later the pendulum went to the other extreme, and in the Middle Ages ability to read a verse of Latin often saved a man's life. The history of examinations becomes a little monotonous some years after this stage, but the modern specimen will repay a little study.

Now-a-days, more important than the actual examination is the filling up the necessary forms of entrance. This is the real test of the candidate's intelligence. Should he enter his age on the right line and put the correct number of "Yesses" against certain subjects, it is felt that he is qualified to leave school, equipped with a certificate of

\* "Where are those lost letters?" page 8533.

† "Ibid," pages 8540-9372.

merit, so that he may prepare himself during the next three or four years of his life for the greater struggle that awaits him, his income tax return form.

The examination itself is a mere formality.

Of course it provides increased employment in the ink and paper factories, and also in lesser spheres of industry. What is of more importance, it gives numerous doddering old gentlemen an excuse for drawing large salaries. For these gentlemen set the papers. I might say much upon the subject of papers (without in any way exhausting my vocabulary). The difficulties in setting them, for example, are enormous; all text books set require to be read at least once by the gentlemen concerned. Mathematics papers are easier to set, for there is generally a plentiful supply of triangles A B C, X's and Y's, and most of the figures up to nine lying about the place; and, of course, there is no necessity that the gentlemen should work through the sums to find an answer. They believe in sharing the labour, and that they consider the candidate's share.

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that our American cousins are seeking to reduce examinations to an even greater gamble than they are in England. They feel, and rightly too, that the examiner should not be the only one to get a thrill out of process. Therefore, the candidate is given the chance of a gamble when answering his paper; the examiners' little flutter coming when the names of successful candidates are required. Thus in History, for instance, questions are set on the following lines:—

The Battle of Hastings was fought in 1314, 1066, 1815.

Nelson won the Battle of Crecy, Waterloo, Nile.

All that is required of the candidate is that he shall shut his eyes and stick a pin in one of the possibilities, crossing out the other two. Of course, there may be as many as a hundred questions on the paper, but only those born under the most unlucky star could fail to pick fifty per cent. of the right answers. And, of course, the number of

questions has no effect upon the examiner; he still has to have his bit of fun. The idea has not, unfortunately, spread to England. The nearest approach to it is in some of the recent so-called Intelligence tests. One instance of these must suffice, but readers will understand what a thrilling idea it is from the following:—

If six and four are ten, do not put a cross inside the circle provided at the bottom left-hand corner of your paper.

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### A TRIOLET: To Patsy

The first time that I passed her by  
She smiled her welcome to me.  
Her lips were spokesmen for her eye,  
The first time that I passed her by:  
Patsy's five and three feet high,  
So all was proper as could be,  
The first time that I passed her by  
And she smiled her welcome to me.

M. N.

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### A SERIOUS TRIFLE

Had Adam been an American,  
It's sure as sure can be  
His direct heir had been a man  
With wealth of land and sea.

For as Adam was walking  
With Eve in Eden's grove,  
While in the trees each living thing  
Spoke to its mate of love,

Eve tripped upon an outflung root  
And in his arms she fell:  
While he, concerned about her foot,  
Sought her worst fears to quell.

And thus, as over her he bent,  
Her red lips met with his,  
And so they found by accident  
The wonder of a kiss.

Had Adam been an American,  
He'd have patented th' invention,  
And levied tax on everyone  
That did so with intention.

## Sports Notes

### RUGBY

IT was unfortunate that a successful first half of the season should be followed by so disappointing a second half. Snow-covered and frost-bound grounds led to the cancellation of all but two of this term's matches, only one of which was won. However, the first XV. can claim a highly satisfactory season in so far as they lost but two matches, both away from home. For this record the forwards deserve considerable praise, for they have played a greater part than usual in the team's success. The backs were good in defence, but seemed to lack penetrative power on the wings, so that often good work by the centres was wasted.

The second and third teams continued their winning ways in the few matches which could be played, the latter achieving an overwhelming victory over Morrison's Academy 2nd XV.

**Heriot's School v. Strathallan**, played at Edinburgh on Saturday, January 24th.

Winning the toss, Strath. played with the wind in the first half. From a scrum in mid-field the ball was heeled cleanly, and a promising three movement was spoiled by a knock-on. Strath. continued to have the better of the opening exchanges, the forwards holding the upper hand; but after a quarter of an hour the home eight began to settle down and asserted their superiority in weight, with the result that they carried most of the scrums. As a result, the threes, who were much faster than the School backs, began to press strongly, and before long broke through to score far out, the kick failing. From the restart Strath. were soon pressed into their own twenty-five, and though a missed penalty kick brought relief in a twenty-five, a clever movement by the Heriot's threes quickly brought play back to the Strath. line, where a score under the posts was converted. Strath. rallied, but were pulled up for minor infringements, and half-time came with Heriot's again pressing.

Half-time: Heriot's, 8 pts.; Strathallan, nil.

On the resumption Strath. were again thrown on the defensive, and another score resulted, too far out for a successful goal kick. A few minutes later Heriot's scored again, but again the kick failed. A typical forward rush carried the ball into the home twenty-five, where a line-out saw Strath. get the ball, but the threes were too slow to penetrate the Heriot defence. A good kick brought temporary relief, but Strath. were soon back again. This time a kick ahead that was marked broke up the attack. A scrum on the home twenty-five, after some midfield play, saw Johnson break through, only to be overhauled and brought down before he could score. Strath. continued to strive valiantly for a score, but though they continued to hold the advantage territorially, their threes were not fast enough to drive this advantage home, and the final whistle went without further scoring.

Result: Heriot's School, 14 pts.; Strathallan, nil.

**Bridge of Allan v. Strathallan**, played at Bridge of Allan on Saturday, March 28th.

Strath. lost the toss and kicked off down the wind. For a short time the home forwards seemed to hold the advantage, but little real danger threatened. Gradually Strath. drove their opponents back into their twenty-five, where hard play by the forwards made up for their lack in weight. The threes did not see much of the ball, and when they did were closely marked, Buchanan on several occasions being bundled into touch near the corner flag. Play continued to fluctuate in the home twenty-five; a rush from which line saw Forsyth scramble over for a well-deserved try, which Johnston converted with a good kick. The success inspired Strath. to still greater efforts, and Forsyth, playing a hard game, was frequently to be seen boring his way through his opponents. Strath. were given two free kicks for offside, but both attempts at goal were in vain. Half-time came without further scoring.

Half-time: Strathallan, 5 pts.; Bridge of Allan, nil.

On the resumption Bridge of Allan, aided by the wind, soon pressed the School into their own twenty-five, and a fine kick found touch a yard from the line. A fine run by Carruthers, however, brought relief. A scrum on the School twenty-five resulted in a break-away, for the home winger, an old Strathallian, to score far out, the kick failing. Some good work by the forwards followed, and enabled the School to get a footing in their opponents' territory. A scrum in midfield saw Johnston send out a nice pass for Moncur to go over near the flag for an unconverted try. Johnston was playing well, and kept the opposing forwards in check. He was, moreover, getting the ball back more often from his own forwards and feeding his threes well. A chance of adding to the score went begging when Leburn broke away on the right and cross kicked. A Bridge of Allan attack spelled danger, especially when they were awarded a free kick near the posts, but the kick failed, and the School took up the attack, and from a scrum on the home twenty-five Johnston crowned his good work throughout the game by stealing over for a try, which was not converted. Play continued to run in Strath.'s favour, but no further scoring took place.

Result: Strathallan, 11 pts.; Bridge of Allan, 3 pts.

First XV. caps were awarded at the end of the season to R. H. Balfour, J. T. Johnston, N. Cuthbert, J. Waldie, L. Fleming and A. Melville.

### Team Criticism

MONCUR, G., has captained the team well, and his clever and determined running makes him the School's most dangerous outside. He has set a fine example to the team by his strong tackling.

MACMILLAN, W., is a safe full back whose kicking, however, might be improved. His tackling and fielding were very good. Unfortunately, injuries kept him out of the game for half the season.

SHAW, J., who was brought into the team through Macmillan's injury, was very

dependable. Although small, he showed great pluck in tackling and stopping rushes. His touch finding is good, but he would do better if he kicked sooner instead of trying to run through the opposing forwards. With a greater experience of positional play, he should develop into a player of considerable skill.

BUCHANAN, W., at right wing is a fast elusive runner. Safe in defence, he cannot always take a difficult pass.

WATERSTON, W., is a clever and resourceful player. He tackles well and is not upset by the superior weight of an opponent. He is inclined to attempt too much on his own and should pass sooner than he does, for he is apt to neglect his wing partner.

CARRUTHERS, H., is a very nippy three-quarter. He would do very well on the wing if he would play with a little more enthusiasm and intelligence.

LEBURN, W. G., at stand-off half, receives and gives his passes in fine style, but could be quicker to make an opening. His touch kicking is splendid.

JOHNSTON, J. T., at scrum half, is one of the mainstays of the team. He gets his passes out quickly and accurately. He is very dangerous near the line and works tremendously hard in defence.

BALFOUR, R., the vice-captain, is a hard-working leader of the pack, with a fine understanding of forward play. He has used his height to great advantage in the line-outs and has done good work in the tight and loose. His play has been of the highest class, and he has been very consistent throughout the season.

MELVILLE, A., has hooked well this season. He is generally in the thick of the fray, always conspicuous in the loose and works with tireless energy in every match.

CUTHBERT, N., one of the heaviest forwards whose weight has made him a prominent figure in the pack, is of a bustling type, and has led many dangerous rushes.

A good scrummager and sound in defence, he has proved himself a consistent and energetic worker throughout the season.

FORSYTH, T. A. N., is another excellent forward, shining in the line-outs, and he is always well up in the forward rushes.

WALDIE, J., as winging forward, has got through much useful work. He is splendid in the open and is very useful in defence.

FLEMING, J. L., is an excellent forward who is always breaking loose and can stand any amount of knocking about. He is always conspicuous, working tirelessly in every match.

LAUDERDALE, V., is a keen and whole-hearted player and a solid scrummager. Though he lacks pace, he is always on the ball.

MILLER, J., a keen forward, always looking for work, has done many good things and has shown himself imbued with the right vigorous spirit.

### Second XV

Only one game could be played this term, and this, in Glasgow against Hillhead High School, was played on a ground which was really too hard. The game resulted in a 13-nil victory for the School. Second XV. caps were awarded at the end of the season to R. D. Linton, B. Taylor, W. Jack, Q. Dunlop, I. McKenzie, A. Montgomerie, S. R. Wright, F. Thompson, R. Buchanan, H. Carruthers and G. Dobson.

### House Matches

SENIOR SEVEN-A-SIDES. In the preliminary rounds Freeland beat Nicol fairly easily by 25 pts. to 3, the latter putting up a gallant fight up to half-time. Ruthven, after leading by nine points at half-time, just scraped home by a point against Simpson, and indeed were like to have lost by that margin had not Moncur missed a fairly easy kick at goal in the last second of the game.

The final produced some good football, Freeland establishing an early lead of ten

points, before Ruthven pulled themselves together. Nevertheless Freeland crossed over leading by a clear thirteen points. On the resumption a bad lapse by the Ruthven defence saw Shaw, the Freeland full-back, run clean through from more than half way. This seemed to rouse Ruthven, who rallied strongly, and gained two well earned tries, but they had left things too late, and the game ended with Freeland worthy winners by 16 pts. to 8.

JUNIOR ELEVEN-A-SIDES. Simpson scored an easy victory over Freeland by a clear margin of twenty-five points, Marr standing out for good running. Ruthven had a hard game to overcome Nicol, Kirkland showing excellent promise for the latter. In the final Ruthven established an early lead of eight points, and Simpson, who were playing very poorly compared with their former showing, had to be content with a single try. The second half was a spirited affair, but the better side won.

### CRICKET PROSPECTS

A full fixture list has been arranged for both elevens for the coming season, Robert Gordon's College being an extra fixture. Both the cricket square and the nets are in excellent condition, and, given fair weather, we anticipate a highly successful season. The first team is under W. G. Leburn's captaincy, and he will doubtlessly prove a tower of strength in the batting. Johnston, D. S. Thomson and Forsyth will be available to support him with the bat, while the last two and R. Lindsay, who headed the bowling averages last season, will share the attack. Thus, with five members of last season's team available, few fears need be anticipated for the first team, particularly since last year's second XI. can supply boys to fill the vacancies.

With the facilities for net practice so much improved, and the groundsman available for coaching in bowling, all who show promise will soon have an opportunity of proving their worth; while competition for places in the second team will be greatly fostered by the inter-class matches which will be begun in the first weeks of term.

## Scout Notes

OWING to the severity of the weather this term our activities have been somewhat restricted, and for three or four weeks it was not possible, on account of the snow, to hold the customary Saturday morning parades. However, the P.L.'s, to whom the responsibility of carrying on was left, are to be congratulated on their continued efforts, as a result of which the interior of the Hut has been embellished and considerably improved; the walls are now not quite so bare, and each patrol has decorated its corner in its own style with very pleasing effect.

The winter programme has been brought to a conclusion this term with the closing of the Patrol Competition. This reached its conclusion with the Swimming Tests and the Hobbies Exhibition, both held towards the end of term. Although several passed the First-Class Swimming Test, only one was able to gain his Swimming Proficiency Badge, and M. Mitchell is to be congratulated. P.L. Mackay we also congratulate on gaining the Rescuer's Badge.

These tests revealed certain general weaknesses in our aquatic performances, and those intending to try for either the Swimming or Rescuer Badge would do well to practise diving for small articles, and for the latter badge four methods of rescue and three methods of release must be demonstrated in the water.

We should like to take this opportunity of thanking Mr. Norton for having judged these tests.

The Hobbies Exhibition was held on the last Saturday of the term. For the purposes of judging, the entries were in three sections: first, that of patrol exhibits. Here the Otters scored most points for their patrol hut and surroundings, in an attractive nook in the woods not far from headquarters; we all congratulate them. Points were also awarded to the Swifts and Seals,

The Otters led the way in the second section for individual entries, thanks to W. White with his model motor-boat. Swifts and Eagles also gained points.

In the third section points were given for the most satisfactorily decorated patrol "corners." These were gained by the Seals and Owls. With these awards, the Winter Patrol Competition was concluded, the final positions being:

Eagles	-	-	176 pts.
Swifts	-	-	150 "
Hawks	-	-	123 "
Otters	-	-	115 "
Owls	-	-	114 "
Seals	-	-	74 "

Mr. Ward, having judged the exhibits with Mr. Atkin, presented the Challenge Trophy to the Eagles (P.L. A. Mackay). We should like to thank both Mr. Ward and Mr. Atkin for helping us in this way—surely the rôle of examiner is not at any time an enviable one, and we are grateful to them for extending their powers of criticism to a fresh field at a time when they were being exercised very fully in other directions.

One thing has become obvious as a result of the competition—a patrol leader *alone* cannot make his patrol the best in the troop; the leading patrols are those which have worked together as a whole, and we must extend that enthusiasm and loyalty to our P.L.'s which was so evident during the last week of the term to all our Scouting activities.

We were sorry Findlay left us at the end of last term: Sinclair, who was elected in his place deserves congratulations on his leadership. Congratulations also to Mitchell, V. Mackay and J. Wilson on completing the Second-Class.

The annual Summer Camp will this year, it is hoped, be held at the Isle of Man between August 29th and September 11th.

D. H. J. M.



## “O.S.” Notes

**Sports Day this year is to be held on Wednesday the 3rd June, and Commemoration Day is on the 27th June. It is to be hoped that all Strathallians who are able to attend will do so.**

IT has been decided this year to transfer all sporting events between the School and the Old Boys to Commemoration Day. The usual short service will be held at 2 o'clock, and the cricket match has been timed to start as near 2.30 as possible. Over and above this, a tennis tournament has been arranged between teams of Old Strathallians and the School, six a side. The customary tug-of-war will take place just before tea at 4.30, and, if possible, there is to be a team race over a mile and a half cross-country. Mr. N. Guthrie Reid (Lochside, Bearsden) will be glad to hear of any Old Strathallians who desire to take part in these contests.

The writer of these notes spent a very pleasant journey to London in company with Mr. Harry Gowan, who was at Strathallan in 1915 and who is at present on the staff of Messrs. W. D. & H. O. Wills, the tobacco people, of Bristol, where he has married and settled down. There seems to be something wrong somewhere, for he was asking if we had yet got an Old Boys' Club! It appears that he had met O.S. members of the Club without hearing of its existence. Old Strathallians of the earlier days are reminded that they will be doing an enormous service to the Club if they will communicate to the Secretary the present addresses of their contemporaries.

Whilst in London, during the holidays, the writer came across rather a remarkable set of circumstances where two Strathallians, well known to one another at school, were working for different firms in the same building, and yet neither was aware of the proximity of the other. Each was rather astonished when informed that he had an old school chum under the same roof at Stone House, near Liverpool Street Station,

London. Mr. James Motion, with Messrs. Flatteau, Dick & Co., timber merchants, and Mr. Robert Barr, with a firm of chartering agents, are the two concerned. Mr. Motion must be doing very well indeed since the writer found him duly protected against being disturbed by casual callers. The clerk enquired whether Mr. Somebody Else would do!

Strathallians out in Shanghai—and there are four or five whose whereabouts are known—will be interested to hear that one of their old school chums, Mr. Roddy Morrison, is joining an engineering firm in August. Mr. Morrison has finished his engineering apprenticeship and has been successful in having one of his inventions with regard to aeroplane engines taken up by influential aero engineers.

Strathallians aspiring to become chartered accountants will be interested to hear that Mr. David Bogie has been appointed Assistant Examiner to the Institute. All who know him will join with us in congratulating him on his rise in the profession.

London Strathallians will be disappointed to learn that it has been decided to hold the dinner bi-annually on the occasion of the England-Scotland match at Twickenham. This step has been taken after consultation with the London secretary, Mr. Clive Montgomery, and we hope all who visit Twickenham to see the match will endeavour to be present at the London dinner in the Hotel Russell.

Mr. C. E. L. Anderson, of Dundee, has sent us a cutting from an Indian paper which he has received from his brother. It probably refers to an incident at Strathallan which occurred seven or eight years ago, and runs as follows:

“At a certain public school in Scotland several years ago one of the smaller boys wrote to the Rolls-Royce Company for their latest catalogue. Instead of sending the catalogue, a representative called with a £2000 Rolls and asked for Mr. ——. His face was a study when he learnt that the person asked for was a small boy aged 12.”

Those who recollect this incident and its amusing circumstances and consequences will quite understand the feelings which prompted Mr. Willie Anderson to send the cutting home.

During the last few months there has been quite a number of Strathallians taking commissions in the Territorial Army, and the writer will not be surprised if he hears of unexpected meetings of old school chums during the 14 days in camp; and there may be one or two embarrassing circumstances, since one O.S. who never rose beyond the ranks of the "commoners" is now a captain and one or two old "school captains" are 2nd lieutenants. Things like this happened in the late war.

It is generally understood that there are to be one or two Strathallian weddings during the coming autumn, and we would be very glad if the intending benedicts would kindly let us have full particulars for our next issue.

The writer of this column would be very glad to have from Strathallians any items of personal interest for insertion herein, especially as it is intended to try and double the space devoted to Old Boys' news.

We bid God-speed to Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Cameron and Messrs. Alastair and Willie Thomson on their journey to the Colonies to take up again their former duties. We trust that they will send us a line when they reach their destinations.

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### HOTEL A LA MODE

Open night and day.  
Rules for all visitors.

Board 50 cents per square foot, meals extra.

Breakfast at five, dinner at six, supper at seven.

Guests are requested not to speak to the dumb waiter.

Guests wishing to get up without being called can have self-raising flour for supper.

No responsibility is entertained for diamonds, bicycles, and other valuables left

under pillows; they should be deposited in the safe.

Guests wishing to do a little driving will find hammer and nails in the closet.

If the room gets too warm, open the window and see the fire-escape.

If you are fond of athletics and like good jumping, lift the mattress and see the bed spring.

If your lamp goes out, take a feather from the pillow; that is light enough for any room.

Don't worry about paying the bill; the house is supported by its foundations.

J. W.

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### COLLECTIONS

*We make no apology for publishing the following : Its truth is sufficient justification.*

Plan :—(a) Collections.  
(b) Conclusions.

Collecting is a fine hobby. Collecting cigrett cards is. I have got a fine collection of cigarette cards and it has got a lot of cigarett photys in it they are very intresting and if you want to make a big you must ask people to smoke a lot then they will perhaps get cross with you becoss you are always asking them for photos but you'll get them? won't you.

And; if you exchange them carefully with youre frends one will prehaps be able to get sets sets are things which if you have got the right number then that is a set.

Once I had three sets and I was looking at them in class and if you do that that makes a master get angry and he got angry with them and tore three up. That was 150 but it dosnt matter realy becarse they were realy swops and he is a kind : because he nose that was feeling and when he tore such a lot of them up he has got to pay me back and he is doing because he has only paid me back nine and 7 of them are the same.