

THE METEOR.

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THIS paper proposes to remedy a fault which has been keenly felt for, we may say, generations of Rugbeians; we have had magazines years ago, but it has been often felt that something of our nature was required, to hand down to posterity a short Chronicle of what was daily passing around us. On glancing at this paper you will immediately exclaim, "How long will it last? Any longer than its predecessors?" But pray look above. The Meteor! Of course we shall die even sooner than they did; we have neither the energy nor the power to continue our existence to any length: and what can we hope of posterity? But we feel that the School is at present in such a prosperous state that it would be a grief to posterity to be ignorant of the doing of their distinguished predecessors. Last year's eleven has passed away unnoted; who was there to tell of its glories? This year it shall not be so. Was not last year's football better than the football of former years? Yet the half-back play of a Pauncefote and a Gwatkin, and the forward play of such as Davenport, Cook, Vivian, Ringrose, and Hartcup, were unrecorded. Big-side Runs! we would speak of you! but alas! how can we?—Where is our Denshire, where our Garnett, and our Tanqueray? Of the Rifle Corps, more hereafter. The year we have just entered on will be memorable. Everything has a Tercentenary, and Rugby, amongst the rest; the chief object in view, is to draw as much money as convenient, from Old Rugbeians, a race of beings always generous, equally inclined to give

either to a Pavilion or a Chapel. We have always been warned in addition to these, of a Gymnasium, a Swimming Bath, a new Racquet Court, a few new Fives Courts, and several other luxuries; but these last we believe to be at present, visionary.

"Whatever you do, do well," is a maxim which it would be well to apply to the Rugby School Rifle Corps. It seems strange that Rugby, who is so energetic in her cricket and football, should so strangely belie her character in this respect. Not that she has not turned out her good marksmen, for at the present time the Universities rank one or two old members of our Rifle Corps among their best shots; but these are as nothing to the number we shall expect from a school whose *esprit de corps* is so high in every other respect. When first raised, in 1860, the Rifle Corps consisted of 120 members, and these were not those whose leisure hours were not occupied in any other amusement, but consisted chiefly of the best football players and the best cricketers in the School, who thus sacrificed for the glory of Rugby a great portion of their spare time, though it was already very much taken up by the demands of their favorite pursuits; but since that time it has gone through a course of perpetual dwindling, till, on our return last month, it was found to consist of the paltry total of 30. Surely the rate at which it had come down hill, might

give it enough impetus to send it some way up again; yet disheartening was the account which the officers gave us of the answers they received on asking anybody to become a recruit. The usual form of conversation is somehow thus: you are first saluted by a broad grin, which is deemed sufficient answer for such a question. On pressing him, he replies (with a grin, if possible, still broader than before) "Rather not," or "Catch me," or some other equally laconic and decisive reply. "Why not?" "Oh, it's such humbug." "Why humbug?" "Why, there are only ten fellows in the corps, they are all officers, and never come to drill," says your sarcastic and slightly exaggerating friend. "And are you not yourself one of the causes of there being so few as there really are, by running down the Corps, instead of coming forward yourself and adding one to our number?" Here your friend generally cuts it short by saying "Well, any how, I'd rather not, and leaves you in despair.

Such being the state of affairs, the question naturally suggested itself—how are they to be mended. The principal objection raised was the number of drills, and the fines imposed for the neglect of them. To give no cause for this complaint, all the drills during the Summer Term will be done away with except on special occasions, so that no one will be able to complain of his cricket being interfered with by an hour's drill. Again, a recruit did not like having to wait six weeks before he could begin to shoot; he will now only have to wait a week from the time he joins. The Corps has been greatly abused for the poor figure it cut at Wimbledon last year; this was the result of our numbering so few that we were obliged to put inferior shots in the tail of our eleven: this places us at a great disadvantage to the Harrovians, who, having more than 200 from whom to choose their eleven, have only to take one out of every 20, whereas we have lately had to

take one out of every four. This, we hope, will not be the case again: for the numbers of the Corps are rising fast, and it already consists of 85 members. The last thing we have to mention is the need of better rifles, which will be obtained if it is found that the numbers of the Corps are sufficient to make it worth the expense. Time only will shew of what the reforms that have been just made in our Rifle Corps will be productive.

It seems strange, that after briefly hinting at an apology for presuming to intrude its remarks upon the world at large, a paper that has scarcely begun life should have set itself to the task of reproving its patrons; before it has been heard of, much less countenanced, it has blurted forth rebukes and advice on a topic too well known to all of us; the Corps has been discussed: it is, of course, a sore subject, and has been discussed quite enough; reform has commenced in it; it will soon hold its own position in the hearts of all Rugbeians. It is not, however, reform that has effected a change in the Choral Society: it has been rather an additional burst of energy, and increased love for music throughout the School. The Concerts are far abler than in days gone by, and they ought to be, for we devote more care and time, we have greater numbers, and we are conducted by one of the leading musicians of the day: but beyond this, its success has been furthered by the interest with which it is supported, and the fairly regular attendance of its members. It need not now be ashamed of its chorus singing, as far as we may judge of it by the work of the last concert: but a real want is felt for strong voices, and while we have quantity, we lack individual quality. With one or two brilliant exceptions, where are

our soloists? Where is the Barber, the Case, the Göschen of former days? Is it possible that out of a community of five hundred human beings there are so few fine voices? They must be somewhere: their assistance is urgently required. Next comes the question of instrumental music; for if anything is more delightful than vocal, it is instrumental: and nothing in this way has been done at present. Efforts are said to have been made last term, but as they did not produce any orchestra, we conclude they failed. Now there ought to be many lovers of music, who cannot sing, yet have an instrument of some kind at hand to beguile a winter evening; the services of these would be gladly accepted at the concerts, without their being troubled formally to join the choir. We are told that Mendelssohn's 42nd Psalm is proposed for our practices between now and July, instead of a selection from any oratorio; and as there is more time than usual on our hands, we shall naturally have a concert in July far superior to any that has yet been given. Before a month has passed, we hope that something will be in preparation; we are strong in trebles, and have still one or two of each of the other voices to keep up our reputation as soloists; especially now there is little to be done, and the Rifle Corps is urging us to be diligent, we ought to make the most of the long evenings, before the pleasures of cricket and bathing call the most earnest members of the choir from the art that more than all others hath charms.

HACKING AT FOOTBALL.

This is a custom on which, or rather against which, a great deal has lately been written by well-meaning English people (we used the word English advisedly, because they seem to have been chiefly incited thereto by a peculiarly

John Bull horror of kicking or being kicked). Now, with regard to these people, we have noticed one thing, namely, that the people who have the most to say against the custom, are, as is often the case, people who have never tried it, who have known nothing about it to begin with, and who, to go on with, have taken the worst examples of it for their instruction: not exactly the right way to attain to a high pitch of erudition on any subject; in fact they have made the not uncommon mistake of passing over the less conspicuous results of the custom and looking only at the more apparent. It will be objected that it is rather strange that the more apparent results of hacking should be always bad, but the reason is, that this custom develops rather the passive virtues than the active, by teaching those who play to keep their temper, sometimes under trying circumstances, to bear rather than to do. Of course, among so many, it is impossible to find all perfect, and, disagreeable things do happen sometimes, yet we will venture to say that if any one were to come to Rugby and watch every match during the football season, he would chronicle more instances of good temper and friendly contest than of bad temper or spite. We ourselves have now for the space of six years played Rugby football, and have only known three instances of the kind, when a player was laid up by deliberate hacking. Two of these instances were certainly disgraceful, but as we before remarked, among so many there will always be some black sheep, and public opinion was certainly not favourable on this occasion to the offenders. The other was the case of a strong fellow who richly deserved it for taking advantage of his strength to play unfairly, and was indeed chiefly done in self-defence. But these good people will again take up their parable and say "Why should such a custom be necessary, why cannot you play without it?" To this we can only reply that if they knew anything of the Rugby game, or would even come to look at it, they would certainly see how necessary it is to facilitate the passage of the ball through innumerable pairs of legs, and thus prevent waste of time of which there is enough as it is. Probably when the game first began, hacking was not an institution, but when the players came to find how inevitably it did occur, they made it legal under certain conditions, and