



# The Meteor.

Edited by Members of Rugby School.

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BEWARE, courteous reader! turn over these pages with care, treat tenderly a paper that is superannuated. One whole Term has the *Meteor* lived; regular to the day, almost to the hour, has he appeared: four times has he brought forth the multitudes of Rugby to gaze, and to wonder; and he has no business, being a Rugby *Meteor*, to appear any more. He is young, but he is stupid and illiterate, and so he ought to have left: one Term, they say, is quite long enough for that sort of individual. We are all scholars here now-a-days: the rest must take themselves off. But, curiously enough, the *Meteor* is an exception, and he insists on remaining: he remains, however, with a blush and an apology, hoping to survive the very severest superannuation that can be made. But he is very sorry for his past follies: in three months he is well aware that he did more harm than can be reduced to a few lines: he professes Conservatism; but oh! what countless Radical changes are his doing! His very self has been reformed: he began with ill-fashioned white paper, he has grown to yellow; he began with six pages and the Rifle Corps, he has increased to an occasional extra sheet. He has taken up arms (a crest, at any rate) and has waged war with everything and everybody. He presumptuously announced three months holidays—effected a change in the Steeple Chases—an abominable change in the Racquets—started a Natural History Society—insisted that this should be the last year of Athletics in early spring—indulged the feverish delirium of an unreasoning Radical, and was obliged to

rebuke him heavily on his next appearance—hurt the feelings of the public by an Acrostic—and, but oh! let him not add to his crimes by telling them all again. He tried to spare Rugbeian feelings by suppressing a complaint about gloveless hands, and only made matters worse with a Notice to Correspondents. He is sorry for the Acrostic; he repents having turned the School upside down, and means in future to leave it right side up. He promises, when next year's Athletics have passed by, that he will not give two varying accounts of the same race; and he begins his next four appearances in a chastened and humbled spirit, trusting, as usual, to the public, and hoping, for the sake of honourable Rugbeians, that his lustre may not be dimmed by the impurity of the imagined wit of any dishonest contributor.

## OUR OLD RUGBEIAN ON "RADICAL."

IN our last number we endeavoured to answer the objections which had been raised by a correspondent to Big-side Levée, as it exists at present. In this number we propose to consider the question—Can Big-side Levée be improved without altering its present character?

One fault we think the most prejudiced admirer of Big-side Levée will be ready to allow. There is no question that measures are very often carried which its members have had little or no opportunity of discussing. So flagrant was this evil while we were at the School, that a law was passed to the

effect that when the notice for Big-side Levée was sent round, it should be stated on the notice what the object was for which the Levée was summoned. Unfortunately the working of this law was not very satisfactory. In most Houses, we believe, the notice is sent round at dinner-time; there is, therefore, a period of about half-an-hour during which the members of Big-side have to make up their minds how they shall vote. This is not all. The notice sent round by the Head of the School (we speak as culprits) was generally of the vaguest description, as for instance: "Big-side Levée this afternoon, at 2.15. About Reynolds's Field." What about Reynolds's field? That we shall hire it? or that we shall not hire it? That we shall buy it? or that we shall take a lease of it? That we shall rent it for £6 a-week? or for £4? Even this was not the worst. A device was sometimes employed which we blush to think that we should ever have used, or that Big-side should ever have countenanced us in using; for, though in accordance with the letter of the law, it was undoubtedly the grossest violation of its spirit. The device was simple enough. A Levée was called, ostensibly for a trifling matter. As soon as this was disposed of, a most important measure was brought forward. The Levée was taken by surprise; everyone thought that everyone else would oppose; and the Chairman hurriedly declared the motion carried. We hope that our successors, with a moral character less deeply tainted than ourselves, have proved superior to such petty meanness.

Now there can be no doubt that the remedy for all this is very simple. Let Big-side Levée pass a law that no Levée shall be called unless a notice of 48 hours has been given; that a notice affixed to Big-School door shall state fully what motion is to be brought forward; and that no other motion shall be put to the House except in the form of an amendment. We do not see why this is not perfectly feasible, and why it should not be perfectly satisfactory.

Here we touch upon a grave question. Political philosophers are fully agreed that party government is essential to the right working of a popular assembly. But it is quite certain that to dream of working Big-side Levée by party government would excite the derision of every small boy in the Lower School. To this defect it is that we are inclined to attribute the apparent failure of Big-side Levées. It is easy enough to call Big-

side Levée a farce: but if we call Big-side Levée a farce, what name are we to give the House of Commons on a non-government night, when there are not half-a-dozen members who care twopence for what is going on, when out of 658 members not one hundred vote in the largest division, and when Mr. Darby Griffiths is counted out at seven in the evening? And the ardent Frenchman in the gallery, who has read much of "Misther Pitt" and "Milor North," and who can see nothing but a handful of members talking, laughing, and reading papers, indignantly declares the greatest Legislative Assembly in the world to be "von big hombogs." In what respect, we ask the detractors of Big-side Levée, is Rugby School worse off than the British Empire? How is it possible to get excited over questions which do not admit of excitement? How is it to be expected that Big-side Levée should fire up over the motion "That a prize be given for putting the stone," in the same way as it fires up over the motion "That Mr. White's and Mr. Black's be the two Best Houses?" Give Big-side Levée an exciting question, and it becomes active and enthusiastic enough. Give it an unexciting question, and it is just as dull and just as torpid as the House of Commons. We do not think this can be accounted a disgrace.

The defect, therefore, under which Big-side Levée labours, seems to us a defect inherent in the very nature of things. The question is—Can it be in any degree obviated? What we propose is as follows: That for cricket, football, racquets, and hand-fives, &c., Committees be elected by Big-side, each consisting of five members, one from each Form; that any motion brought forward by any of these Committees be supported by the whole weight of the Committee; and that these Committees give their assistance to the Head of the School and the Captain of the Eleven in cases where their services may be required.

The advantages of such a plan we will endeavour briefly to lay before our readers. In the first place, we think that it will supply the want of which we have spoken by creating a sort of factitious opposition. Let us suppose that a motion—*e. g.*, the late Football rule—has been brought forward by an independent member. The Committee, if they do their duty, will consult together on the question: should they think the rule beneficial they will offer no opposition: should they think it open to objection they

will oppose with all the weight belonging to their official character, and Big-side will be able to decide on the pros and cons. Or let us suppose that the motion has been brought forward by the Committee. In that case Big-side will be assured that the motion has been duly considered by a responsible body, while if it be open to objection there will be plenty of independent members of sufficient eminence to come forward and oppose.

In the second place, we hope that such an organisation of the Committee as we propose would produce a twofold result. On the one hand, every Form would be represented, and its interest in Big-side Levée kept alive. On the other hand a serious danger would be avoided. For if the five members of each Committee were to be elected indiscriminately out of Big-side, it is probable that the five greatest swells would be elected. The result might be that if the Committee proposed a motion, no one would oppose it; and if they opposed a motion no one would venture to support it. But according to the plan which we have suggested of electing one member from each Form, it is probable that some of the greatest swells would be ineligible: and these, unawed by the "divinity which hedges round" the swell, would keep a sharp look-out on the conduct of the Committee.

In the third place, such Committees would unquestionably be most useful in many ways. Were they instituted, there need be no gap of two years in the accounts of Big-side Football Matches in the Big-side Books. What could be easier than for the Head of the School to depute a member of the Football Committee to keep an account of Big-sides for him? Last season a complaint was made that there was no account of Football Matches in *Bell's Life*. Why, we ask, should not the five members of the Football Committee send up accounts of matches to five different papers. In our last number we published the pathetic appeal of a young raven who cawed loudly for Rugby food in the *Undergraduates' Journal*. Why, we ask, should not the hungry souls of such little birds be sated?

Lastly, this plan would in no sense be an innovation. Big-side would only be doing what it did when it nominated the four Stewards to act in its behalf as a Committee for the management of the Athletic Games.

If we might venture on one other measure of reform we should suggest that Big-side Levée should be consulted on all occasions where it has a right to be consulted. We will give an instance. At the Athletic Games

this year we heard that two prizes,—one for the Half-mile Flat Race, the other for a Half-mile Hurdle Race,—were to count for the Cup. Now two or three years ago we were distinctly told that these prizes did *not* count for the Cup. How is it that they count for it this year? Was it carried at Big-side Levée that they should? If so, well and good. If not, did the Stewards decide the matter on their own responsibility? Then we can only say that they have a grander and more comprehensive conception of a Steward's functions than we ever heard of. This, we think, is distinctly a case in which Big-side Levée should be consulted; and if it be not consulted we think it will have good reason to feel aggrieved.

We hope that our correspondents will not be sparing of comments and criticisms upon these suggestions; and we specially invite our brother "Radical" to tilt against our constructive scheme as uncompromisingly as we tilted against his.

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#### THE PRIVATE CONCERT, APRIL 22ND, 1867.

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If we may be allowed to chronicle an event that has long passed away, but took place, nevertheless, since our last number, we shall give as brief a notice as possible of the Easter Concert. The introduction of a concert at Easter is in itself an extra thing, and only light secular music was performed. The room was, as is usual everywhere, crowded with a "gay and fashionable audience;" amongst them were a few members of the School,—the minority who cared for music,—and several distinguished Old Rugbeians. The chorus amounted to about 50: the orchestra (a new mark of improvement) consisted of six, of whom Mr. Rowden was devoted to a violoncello, Mr. Leslie to a flute, Mr. Smythies to a violin, Mr. Bennett to a harmonium, and Messrs. A. C. Johnson and Hurst to the pianoforte. The concert opened with "The March of the Men of Harlech," sustained by the chorus and ably accompanied by the instruments. The other full pieces of the First Part were the old Madrigal "Since first I saw your face," Berger's "Night, lovely Night," and "Spring with fairy foot returning" (Rossini), the first two being unaccompanied. The last, which closed the First Part, was called for again, but as half the chorus had somewhat prematurely hurried away to the green room, it