



The Meteor.

Edited by Members of Rugby School.

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Our contemporaries, as a rule, are at this festive season presenting their readers with some special source of amusement, in the shape of extra pages filled with such matter as seems only to come into existence at Christmas time, and to be one of the chief features of the season. We suppose it is conventional,—just as it is conventional to eat goose at Michaelmas, or pancakes on Shrove Tuesday,—for periodicals to swell in size and to feed their friends with light and digestible “pudding” (which is after all the real meaning of a periodical “pudding,”) about the month of December. Our readers must, however, and we hope willingly, accept our Christmas number free from all such adornment. The motto which has been before our Editorial minds, even if not generally known, is “*Simplex munditiis*,” and so we hope it will remain. Want of material or poverty of ideas is far from our complaint: our correspondents are still loquacious, our own pens could easily become more prolific than they are. But we must have an eye to the future, and were we to make such a precedent, our successors might in future ages be at loss to keep it. Besides, we quite feel that the School is generally satiated with “extras” just now, and any more might become disagreeable, for we are certainly not prepared to provide light reading and stirring stories, such as to form a pleasant break in the midst of the heavier subjects that an examination entails. We can but express a hope, in conclusion, that our efforts to satisfy what was fast becoming a serious want, have been attended with success. Should any one, but we can hardly fancy it,

cry out in answer to it that our price is perhaps a little high, we can but feel sorry for not being capable of initiating such a grumbler into the difficulties of the literary world; but at the same time we should feel glad if that malcontent would thoroughly digest Mr. Carlyle’s opinions upon “Cheap and Nasty.” With the best wishes of the season to all who have kindly patronised or criticised us, we beg to announce that the next “Meteoric display” may be expected early in February, when we shall again crave the indulgent favour of our readers.

PERHAPS one of the most striking changes in the feelings of the School just now is the apathy which is growing upon them with regard to Big-Side Runs. Hare and Hounds used to be justly considered one of the most prominent amusements of Rugby, and we probably still enjoy a reputation for activity in that branch of exercise, simply because our old prestige is not likely to fade or decline without some very urgent reason. Steps, however, ought to be taken to prevent any such decline becoming even possible. In the Book of Rugby School there is a chapter devoted to description of our running, a description such as to impress any one with an idea of the immense fervour with which all able-bodied members of the School join in such aglorious recreation. Football is of course allowed the foremost sports, but place in our next to Football, Hare and Hounds is proved to be far the most engrossing excitement. And so it was no doubt until quite lately, and

does it not seem more than a pity, a downright shame and disgrace, that there should be any cause to lament its degeneracy? But at the same time, it must be evident to any but the blindest that if we do not exert ourselves to keep our reputation unimpaired, if we do not feel convinced ourselves and try our best to convince others,—that running must not decline, that the very routes of the runs must not pass out of memory, and that our theories about the advisability of runs must be put into actual practice,—the glory of a “good scud” will soon be unknown. It is true that Hare and Hounds is only meant to be a pass-time, a substitute and no unworthy one, for Football, in case of frosts or bad weather. And further, it is true that until the quite recent burst of bad weather, we have been entirely slaves to Football without a chance of a respite, because the ground was always fit, and always serviceable. But still the apathy, of which mention has been made, became perceptible. The days were, and moreover they were not good “old” days, when the first Big-Side Run formed the subject of many a speculation and much excitement. The days were when every Big-Side Run was decently attended, and not a farce, a mere private amusement for an odd trio, which had no concern with and offered no interest to the rest of the world. One used to hear enquiries, aye, and anxious enquiries, about the order in which fellows had come in last Big-Side Run: and then followed anticipations for the Crick: “so and so ought to do well”—“so and so does not improve, and will hardly do for the Crick.” But there is barely interest, much less excitement now, if the notice of a run appears on Big School door. We can all imagine the horror, the actual shudder that would run through us, the disgust for future generations that we should feel, were we suddenly to be told absolutely for certain, that within thirty years Football would have quite died out, that the word “puntabout” or “maul” would be a mere barbarism, an unintelligible sound. Certainly Big-Side Running has not become so extinct as that yet; we do know what “scud” means though we never use the word. We do pretend to run, and most of the runs are just kept up in the memory of a few who are good enough to feel interest in them. But still the fact of being so close upon the verge of degeneracy, or at all in a state of apathy about Big-Side Hare and Hounds, would have caused real grief to many a predecessor whose example

we should do well to follow. There is the same remedy to be suggested for this as for almost everything that is classed under the name of “Big-Side.” Let each house take care to keep up an attachment to running by wholesome application of that most excellent panacea for *ennui* on a wet day, and of indigestion on a whole-School day,—a House Run. Let fellows first gain confidence in their powers in minor performances such as those, and then let them by all means aim at a higher and faster grade of running, and join the Big-Sides. It is perhaps rather late in the season to comment upon such a subject, but we are bold enough to hope that our remarks may not be so transient as our name indicates, and that next Term and more particularly next autumn, it may be remembered that our predecessors have won a reputation which has devolved upon us to sustain.

THE Hat controversy has closed: the ravings of “An Utter Fool,” the logic of “Cosmopolitan,” are alike silenced; it is time for the *Meteor* itself, if not to close, to take a little holiday. Long has the great question of black beaver hats or black straw hats been the *Meteor*'s theme; long, so at least calumniators have said, its stay and support. It has had to throw away its stay; will it not need a few weeks to learn to do without it? So it is fortunate, perhaps, the end of the Term has come. Now, for a little retrospect, a little reflection, a little reproof.

There are two distinct ways, as every one who has been in a position of authority knows, in which anything disagreeable may be given, and each way possesses its special advantages. The first method has the greater chance of success; the second by far the least trouble for the giver. Imagine the case of a father whose son has been disgracefully ploughed for Moderations. In the course of time the unfortunate youth is received into the bosom of his somewhat-disgusted family: in the course of time an interview takes place between the father and the son, in which naturally the former has to inflict a considerable amount of the article reproof upon the latter. Now, there are obviously two ways in which he may go to work. He may either begin by a description of the attractions of University life, by an assurance that tutors will sometimes be careless, that many men who turn out well are ploughed, &c., &c.; so gradually work round to the fact that he has been driving at all

the time—that he must give up all idea of an Alpine tour this year, and read nine hours a-day with a coach. Or he may blurt it out at once—"You have, Sir, wasted a disgraceful amount of money, you have done yourself discredit; if you don't read 9 hours a-day &c."

Now, we have a reproof to give our readers, and in doing so have to choose one or other of these methods. Which? Our selfishness leads us to choose the latter. We will make no prelude, we will go by no circuitous route,—straight to the point at once.

In the last few months the School has not been *energetic*; and want of energy is a grievous fault.

We may seem rather to despond, but a careful review of the past year, and may we not say of the past Term, reveals the existence of the fault. The actual play at Football of the School has, we believe, been the subject of praise and commendation from those who are good judges of the game; but the frequent talk of "notes," of revival of "compulsory" rules, seems to point to something wrong in the spirit with which Football is regarded. But in the Running of the School has been the chief exhibition of the evil: Big-Sides have dwindled; the idea of running 8 or 9 miles, on rather a damp cold day, has been scouted in a way which ought to terrify us. The Natural History Society has been kept afloat—shall we rouse the ire still further of a deity who, we fear, already bears us a grudge, by saying just afloat?—at any rate those most intimately acquainted with it would, we suspect, if made to confess the whole truth, wish that the School did a little more than it does at present to maintain it in its present position.

Of course there are, and have been, some brilliant exceptions. The Rifle Corps is to be enrolled, and to gain thereby numberless advantages. May the fame of those who have wrought the change live as long as there are Rugbeian arms to wield the rifle—Rugbeian feet to execute the goose-step! Within our own columns we could point to one or two instances in which a cause has been advocated, arguments adduced, adversaries squashed, in a way that betrays no want of energy at all.

NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY.

On the 6th a special meeting was held, at which Rev. J. W. Hayward (of Price's) presented to the Society a large Collection of Butterflies and Sphinges. Mr. Hayward

congratulated the members on the advantages naturalists in the School enjoyed now, as contrasted with the disadvantages which he had himself experienced. He cautioned the members against a reckless love of collecting eggs; many rare birds were, he said, fast becoming extinct, owing to the careless rapacity of collectors.

Notes were read by G. B. Longstaff on "Some additional instances of mimicry in Insects," and on "Lists of Local Fauna."

On the 14th the last meeting of this Term was held; papers were read by J. M. Lester on "Mimicry in animals;" by F. R. Smith on "The Nutmeg-tree," in explanation of a specimen presented by him to the School collection; and on "The Lias Fossils," by E. Cleminshaw. This last paper was the most valuable communication that has been made by any member, honorary or ordinary, since the Society has been in existence: it contained the results of long research in the neighbourhood, and was illustrated by the whole of the author's local collection.

A list of about 90 birds observed near Rugby was handed in by H. C. Reader, and a large collection of plants, made in a tour this summer in Germany and Switzerland, by F. R. Smith. E. W. Prevost (Bowden Smith's) was elected an associate.

FOOTBALL.

BLAKE'S *v.* SCHOOL HOUSE.—This match, after being long deferred on account of the weather, was played on Thursday, December 12th, and continued on Saturday and Tuesday. Blake's won the toss and chose kick off; School House took the Island Goal. Very soon after commencing, by some very good forward play, the School House carried the ball down to their adversaries' goal, where they were obliged to touch it down. It was then taken out, and in a very short time it was taken back, and was touched down a second time in Blake's goal. After this time, however, Blakes' had somewhat of the advantage in penning, although with no result. During this match, Moberly (School House) unfortunately met with a bad accident, breaking his collar bone.

Saturday, Dec. 14th.—The match was continued, and with more equal results. The School House had the best of the penning, and each side obtained a touch down. Some very excellent play was shown this day. The results on each side are so small that it