



The Meteor.

Edited by Members of Rugby School.

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It is quite a year ago since the question of placing a new organ in the School chapel was raised. It was felt then that as we were celebrating the Tercentenary of the School, and everybody all around was doing what all Englishmen do on all celebrations and anniversaries, viz., subscribing, that the members of the School themselves might well do something of the same kind. The feeling resulted in a determination to replace the effete organ of the School Chapel by a thoroughly good new one. Our readers will remember that the estimate of Messrs. Willis, the great organ builders, amounted to £1,000. Of this it was agreed the School should raise £600, the remainder being derived from other sources, in a great measure from the salaries of the old paid choir contributed by the Headmaster. The method adopted was,—that three allowances a term should be paid by each house. The product of this has been,—£180 deposited in the bank to the credit of the Rugby School Chapel Organ Fund. But amid the pressure of Athletic allowances last term, and from a variety of causes, it has been found that three allowances was more than some houses could contribute. So about a week ago it was resolved to diminish the House subscriptions to the organ by a half, *i.e.*—to make them $1\frac{1}{2}$ allowances per term. It will be scarcely necessary to inform our readers that the result of this change is,—that if the organ fund is to be raised within anything like the same time, much more must be done, individually and voluntarily, than before. The present seems, then, a fit time for making something of an appeal to the Rugby public.

And, firstly, let us assure our readers of the necessity of a change. Naturally, in a thing like an organ, our proofs of deficiency cannot be directly evident to the eyes of the general public. Those who plead for a new chapel can point to cracks in the wall, crowded benches, &c., and everyone can appreciate the force of such arguments as these; but we can assure our readers the deficiency is none the less really great. One of the best judges in the country, we believe, pronounced our organ to be one of the worst instruments he knew. It is true that by the great talent and cleverness of our organist pleasing sounds and effects are produced Sunday after Sunday; but we have heard, on good authority, that he complains continually of the restraints imposed on him by the rottenness and badness of his instrument. Another point is that this organ cannot be mended. It is, speaking medically, an incurable. It is tolerably certain that the need for a change will only increase as time goes, and soon become absolutely pressing. Would it not be right to make this change, then, at the time when the chapel is restored? Let us say a word or two about the scheme proposed. Our readers must remember that in an organ fund the last hundred pounds is a very important matter: what we mean is,—the contributions of a couple of terms will make the difference between having a fair organ and having a first-rate organ, one of which the School may be justly and for ever proud. The organ which it is proposed to erect, if the liberality of Rugbeians permit, will be in every respect a first-rate instrument—if not the best in the county, certainly second

only to the Birmingham Town Hall organ; and one of the finest in England. Now it seems to us that here is an opportunity of giving substantial proof of our devotion to Rugby, of our wish to make everything connected with it as good as possible.

There is no real difficulty in the way of a great part of the work being done by the voluntary subscriptions of members of the School. Any small boy knows that it needs but that three or four fellows, who take the lead in each house, should set the fashion of sending a shilling or a couple of shillings to the organ fund, and the example will be followed by numbers.

But perhaps our strongest point is, we are already a third part of the way to our journey's end. The subscriptions of a year have given us nearly £200, we believe without being oppressive to anyone. We publish in another part of our columns an advertisement asking for voluntary aid to the fund. May we venture to echo the words of that part of it in which a hope is expressed that "the voluntary contributions of Rugbeians will at least make up the sum for the coming year which has been paid by the contribution of allowances in the past year."

WHAT is the converse proverb to "It is an ill wind that blows no one any good? Our memory is at fault; whatever it is, be so good, reader, as to imagine it beginning this article. There can be no doubt that our name "*The Meteor*" has hitherto been rather a help to us than otherwise. If it has not from any inherent beauty enticed the Rugby public to support us, it has at least been no discouragement. And to us in the composition of these and the like effusions our readers will easily understand how valuable it has been. Whenever we have directed attention to a seeming abuse, no base words have detailed it; we have been described as "the *Meteor* casting piercing glare upon a mid-night darkness;" if we have had at any time to take credit to ourselves, the world has been reminded that "the *Meteor's* light though transient is ever pure, ever brilliant;" if we have had to pray against untimely collapse, the form of the prayer has been that "our light may be wanting in the transience, not in the brilliancy which our name implies." Every possible characteristic of those erratic luminaries has been, we think, transferred to the region of metaphor. Just compute, reader, how often when a sentence has seemed

to lack point or elegance our name has been invaluable.

Yet we have at last discovered a fault.

It is our purpose at present to complain of the tone which is adopted with regard to the *Meteor* too often, of the coldness of the support which it too frequently meets with. And if we come to look at the causes of this evil, one of the first that strikes us is our name. It is evident the reception we meet with depends very much upon the general idea of what we are. This looks a little Irish; so let us explain. What we mean is, if our readers accept it as an acknowledged fact that a school like Rugby ought to have a periodical, that there is work for such a periodical to do, and that it forms a regular part of the school, their judgment will be quite different to what they would form if they looked upon us as a mere private speculation; which unless it can keep up great popularity by its literary merits ought to be squashed. Now our name, we consider, does us harm by favouring the latter idea. If we had been the *Rugbeian*, or the *Rugby Magazine*, we cannot help thinking the public would have looked upon us as one of the orthodox school institutions, and would have judged us accordingly. Certainly our contemporaries the *Eton Chronicle*, the *Marlburian*, the *Cheltonian*, the *Haileyburian* seem to us, as far as we hear, to be treated in a far more friendly way than we generally are; we cannot help thinking the name has something to do with it.

Now it may seem to some of our readers that in pleading in this way we are acting rather an unmanly part. They will say "Why, if the *Meteor* cannot stand on its own merits, but has to ask this indulgence, why you know, &c, &c." But this is hardly the whole truth. The conducting of a school periodical is universally allowed to be a difficult task; in spite of this difficulty, certain creatures are found to carry it on, believing it to be productive occasionally of undoubted good; is it not more becoming under such circumstances to be over indulgent rather than over critical? And what is the nature of darts hurled against poor *Meteor*? "So intolerably dull and monotonous." Who says so? Jones; and yet suppose us to introduce elements of excitement, suppose the next number to contain novels teeming with that "blue black hair which is seldom met with in nature, but, when met with so intensely beautiful;" or those "locks, which when touched by the sunbeam are converted

into a rippling sea of molten gold;" suppose the last pages adorned with poetry on "Dear Avon's glassy rill," and hexameters "Written on searching an old desk;" do you not feel morally convinced that that very Jones would be the first to cry out, the first to make funny remarks about sending the Editors to to Hanwell by public subscription, &c. ? Do you imagine Jones has ever for a moment considered the possibility of making a school magazine decently exciting ?

It must be borne in mind that we are assuming all the time that we are some good. We believe this to be the opinion even of the cynical Jones himself, certainly of the majority of the Rugby world. Smith may look down upon us with contempt, from his intellectual elevation and ridicule the tameness of the articles and the poverty of the subjects; but he was really glad when we set the Hat question on foot. Bails, even, the all absorbed athlete, thinks at the bottom of his heart, (if cricket and football have not absorbed all that valuable organ) it is better that we should appear than not. Blockhead, laughs at us, not because he has an especial objection to school journals, but because it is his dignified habit to say to everything, except perhaps what contributes to his direct personal gratification, "What rubbish!"

We are aware that the grounds of praise or support which we receive from those who do praise and support us may not be wholly unimpeachable. Cainhandell, in the xxii., says he really thinks a school like Rugby ought to have a periodical; but his real reason for visiting Pepperday's every third week and depositing sixpence is not because he thinks those who give Rugby a dignity it ought to have are to be supported, but because he has a predilection for seeing his glorious old Norman name in real printer's type. "Smallboy" too gives us a good name among his acquaintance, because he likes to be able to say at the critical moment when the paternal hand is in the pocket and another half-sovereign is trembling in the balance: "You'd like me to *buy* (with especial stress on the *buy*) the *Meteor* and send it; to let you know how the school is going on, you know."

But we are tempted to doubt if the reasons of our reviling friends are as good even as these. It must be remembered that there are matters in which the opinion of a theoretical man does not avail much against practical experience.

A member of the Anatomical branch of

the Natural History Society, if such a branch existed, might demonstrate to you that there was sufficient motive power in the muscles of your leg to jump a six-barred gate; he might try to convince you that the force of gravity was not sufficient to counteract this. But you would have much more confidence in your practical experience which tells you that you have often stumbled at a rail a good four inches lower, and that a "howler" would most emphatically result from any compliance with his wishes.

If our readers have any belief in our honesty, ought they not to conclude that we are convinced that novels and rhymes are best out of our pages, and that what we produce is the result of our best efforts ?

Be it borne in mind finally that we do not wish to avoid fair criticism. We do not deny that many a number, many a page of ours may justly merit correction, perhaps contempt. But we would ask you, reader, to consider whether a school magazine is desirable, and unless you decide candidly that such a thing is altogether useless, to take up our numbers with a will rather to favour than to criticise; above all not to set up a standard, the real impossibility of attaining which you have never attempted to consider.

NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY.

A meeting of this Society was held on May 23rd. Among the exhibitions was a collection of Andamanese curiosities presented by Capt. Fryer. Papers were read by F. Lefroy, on "Reason and Instinct in Animals;" and F. R. Smith, on "Enplectella, a Siliceous Sponge," which he exhibited. 54 persons were present. The number of the Society has been limited to 20 members and 20 associates. The new members are V. Ellis, H. Powell, G. A. Ogilvie; and the new associates A. Napier, C. T. Clough, and J. D. Anderson.

CRICKET.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD v. THE SCHOOL.—This was only a one-day's match, consequently each side had but one innings. The School were worsted by 27 runs. As will be seen from the annexed score many of the enemy troubled the scorers; for us notably Tobin ml. and Francis. Very fine fielding was shown by Kennaway at cover point. Score:—