



The Meteor.

Edited by Members of Rugby School.

No. 4.

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SADDER and wiser we became, as we thought of the Radical and his letter; not sadder because the Levée is abused, not sadder because he wishes to destroy a thing "that has existed for generations," but because this proposal of a change is taken in hand by an individual whose apparent knowledge and experience of Levées is so shockingly limited, and because his ideal assembly is so absurdly inferior to the one he abuses: wiser we became, for we little thought that an individual—whose writing proves him of some importance, whether he is a "swell of the first water" or not—could have trifled with a grave subject in so frivolous a style. He has, at any rate, ventilated the matter, and has said some of the old stuff about "ancient classics and modern games," which we have often noticed goes down with the lower orders of the community. He has done very little else, besides committing several gross errors, one of which is the groundless supposition that a great part of Big-side plays no Football, except in Second Twenties. He also lets us know his ideas of honour; he would justly deem it an honour to attend an assembly of House Twenties and Elevens; but he considers it a bore to attend a Levée as a member of the highest and most important division of the School. "Bring together 180 members of the Upper School," he would say, "and you have dust and row; bring together 200 athletes, and all is quiet and orderly." He has an almost childish idea of the worth of an audience of athletes.

We think it not out of place to suggest a few remarks upon the subject, hoping for

comments and improvements upon them from correspondents. It is evident, first, that the Levée is too large. When the Upper School was first constituted as the governing body, it was much smaller than it is now: now we want some simple arrangement, and as the division between the Upper and Middle School is great, so is it great between the Vth and the forms below. If we took the VIth, XX, and Vth as our Levée, and ten were elected out of the Lower Vth, we should not have a much more complicated one than we have now. We would, however, admit any member of the XI who was not already admitted by this arrangement; and we would exclude everyone who had not been a certain time, say a year, in the School. Our Levée would, by this means, number about 110, which would not be too many, and it would include most, if not all, of the influential members of the School. We wish to add one or two remarks upon the Radical's letter: we wish to remind him, that all ordinary Athletic prizes are £1, unless there is an express arrangement that they shall be higher: also, that it is usual to give a second prize as an understood thing. This is for his private information, as he seems a little ignorant of these matters. We also beg to suggest that it is not the material, but the working of the Levée which is "a farce;" that this farce is the result of the fickle nature which is the part of every great assembly, and also of the carelessness into which those who attend the Levée have fallen; that arguments might just as easily be produced, if they would only rouse them-

selves and take the trouble, by the Upper School, as by the Elevens, and the Twenties. We publish a letter from an Old Rugbeian Correspondent upon the matter, and he promises us a sketch of some reforms that might be effected in the Levée, for our next number.

REFORM is the order of the day. Reform has occupied the attention of Parliament since the beginning of the session, and Reform is fast cutting its way into our games and education. But it is the Reform in our games which we propose here to discuss. In a former number we proposed an alteration in the Steeple-chases. For years it has been felt, that our Steeple-chases were not real Steeple-chases, that the running was too great a stretch for lungs and legs, although the course was not very long. Now that the course has been changed, and the Steeple-chase has been run, we may view the change in its proper light. No one who was present last week could have helped noticing the improvement. Many indeed when they saw the course for the first time, looked upon it with the greatest horror, thinking they would be half-dead before they reached the goal. But the result proved quite the contrary. The runners themselves did not find it nearly such a pull as they had expected. The course moreover affords a much better field for good wind and good running, and next year we shall expect to see a larger entry, since we believe many were deterred from running this year from the dread of the new course. We are very glad our proposal has been acted upon in this case, but another Reform has taken place, which was brought about by one of our Correspondents, and at which we must express our regret. We allude to the new Double Racquet and Double Hand-fives Ties. Our reasons are those expressed by "Philo-Rugby" in our last. Almost all the pairs who have entered are in the same Houses, and the best player may often weakly choose one in his own house, not second best. Now what we should propose as a remedy is this—that the School Double Racquets and Hand-fives should be drawn as before; that there should be a Challenge Cup to be competed for, in Double Racquets and Hand-fives, by two chosen members out of each House; that the House Racquets and Hand-fives should be played off this Term, the representatives chosen and the proposed Cups played for next Term. The advantages of this would be manifold—

the chance for the Cup would be the same as it was by the old system, and the Houses would have a chance of competing against others, as is almost the case in the present one. Again, it is very hard for one of the best players, supposing he is the only good one in his House, to be prevented from going in, because all the other good players in the School pair with others in their own Houses. We know ourselves of many old Rugbeians who have spoken continually of a Challenge House Cup, and who would most gladly subscribe to it.

In our last number appeared an article upon the Old Rugbeian Football Match, and the subject suggested to us the opportunity of a few remarks upon Old Rugbeians as a class. In spite of their having been praised in immoderate terms since Rugby was first known, we cannot help bestowing a little more eulogy upon them. If a few of them go away from here, and think no more of the place, these are the worst specimens, and generally those who have never risen from the lowest ranks; the majority retain, for many years, some all their life, an interest in the doings of present Rugbeians. They come down here, whether to play football or cricket, to see athletic games, or whatever be their reason, from all parts of the world; they pay their money whenever they are asked, scarcely knowing what they are to pay for; and wherever they are they unite in a kind of fellowship, which arises only from a mutual advantage—that they are Old Rugbeians.

We shall come to this happy stage some time or other, and we may as well see their goodness, that we may follow in their steps. But we have one or two complaints to make. One is, their perpetual anxiety to grumble, which we deny to be the privilege, as some assert, of every Old Rugbeian: they have a way, especially the younger ones, of coming here in the football season and discovering that their House XX is not the best that could be chosen, as if a day or two's experience could teach them as much as a month or two has taught the head of the XX; so in the cricket season, they write and point out faults in the choice of the XI, and other little errors. Some have a way of deploring the general aspect of things, and wondering what the place is coming to; also of saying that it was not so in their time. An Old Rugbeian in this form we object to; because we feel sorry that he is disappointed in the

place. Some few Old Rugbeians, however, we have to complain of for breaking their word. It would be quite absurd to recount the instances we remember at leaving-breakfasts, hall-suppers, &c., of the worthy people who have vowed they will come down several times every year; these, we find, seldom come down at all. We wish Old Rugbeians to understand that if they feel bound by any ties to the School, they *must* come down, and especially those who have still school-fellows left here; that they ought to make every effort to come here upon every occasion; and when they come here, let them be careful not to —; well, we would almost allow them to grumble if they would come and see us as often as they can. All we have to say is that *we* will not grumble, when *we* are Old Rugbeians.

We are boys! yes, we are undoubtedly boys, but we are really made almost too conscious of the fact in our dealings with the tradesmen of this flourishing town. We are treated with civility, perfect civility generally, but it is with a civility that is akin to kindness, with a touch of condescension. And this treatment takes different forms. We have the tradesman jocose, who wanders from the subject of the article we are interested upon into pungent witticisms or petty scandal. Also the tradesman pompous, who is evidently too good for the place, and has probably lived in fond hopes of "bettering himself" for years and years. He generally ends his sentences abruptly, without the word *sir*. But the most dangerous class of all is the whited-wall tradesman, who invariably, perhaps slightly loftily, promises that we shall have what we order immediately at the very latest, but we call again in a week, again in a fortnight, and if we are lucky we get what we want in a month or so. And we bear all this. We suppose because we are too good-natured to do what we clearly ought to do; that is, to treat any specimen of the first class rather distantly, and at the first sign of wandering to pull him up sharp. To treat any specimen of the second class very respectfully, adding the word "*sir*" to our answer to any sentence of his which omits it, and to treat any member of the third class at the second offence to a P.P.C. card.

AN OLD RUGBEIAN ON "A RADICAL."

We had always piqued ourselves on being tolerably advanced and pretty consistent

Radicals; but we confess that our brother's letter in our last number fairly threw us into the shade. The subject, however, is so important that, even at the risk of lowering our character in our brother's eyes, we wish to say a few words on his amusing and revolutionary suggestions.

We may observe, at the outset, that on one point we fully agree with our correspondent. If it can be incontestably proved that Big-side Levée has done its work, that it was founded during a period of disorganisation, and has become an effete and decrepit member of an order of institutions which has long passed away; if it can be shown that for the last twenty years it has been slowly degenerating from bad to worse, and no longer represents the opinions and interests of the School, then, we say, by all means sweep it away.

The question, therefore, resolves itself into this—is Big-side Levée worthy of the ridicule and contempt of the School? Does it carry measures opposed to the wishes and interests of the School? and would it be possible to replace it by another body more respectable and more efficient? As our correspondent is so firmly convinced of the irretrievable depravity of Big-side Levée, we shall presume that he has said all that can be said against it; nor do we think that it would be possible to find a more effectual method for turning him from the error of his ways than by meeting his arguments fairly.

His first argument, that "great numbers of its members have little interest in, and less knowledge of, the matters with which they have to deal," can only be called an argument by courtesy. We cannot dignify it with a loftier name than a sweeping and unfounded assertion; and until it has been supported by the strongest proofs, we shall take the liberty of disbelieving it; at the same time, we cannot but express our astonishment that such an assertion should have proceeded from our brother Radical. Has he forgotten what party it was that asserted the indifference of the working men to the franchise? We earnestly beseech him to take heed to his steps, lest he should in due time (by mistake, of course,) find himself in the lobby with Mr. Disraeli. The second argument is more plausible—"When members of Bigside Levée do attend, they vote for men, and not for measures." That this is often the case we fully allow; but what then? Is this a fault which you can ever get rid of? Is it not a fault inherent, to a greater or less

degree, in all assemblies? Is it not a fault inherent in the supreme Legislative Assembly of this country? Will "Radical" venture to assert that no Liberal members follow Mr. Gladstone simply because he is the leader of the Liberal party; and that no Conservative members follow Mr. Disraeli simply because he is the leader of the Conservative party? One question we should like to ask our correspondent—Is this a fault from which his ideal assembly would be free? Does he mean to assert that a House Twenty will not follow the Captain of the House Twenty, and that a House Eleven will not follow the Captain of the House Eleven? If he does, we cannot congratulate him on his knowledge of human nature.

The third argument is, that no reasons are given for or against a proposal. This is nonsense; our experience of Big-side Levées is at least as great as our brother's, and we contradict him flatly. If sometimes no reasons are given, it is generally because no reasons are needed, because the Levée is in possession of all possible information on the subject. Should "A Radical" need reasons, he can rise and insist that they shall be given; or if he be not "a swell of the first water," he can surely persuade some friend of his who does support that proud character to fill his place. We would remark further that as to "speaking with a hope of success," this objection is common to all legislative assemblies: the House of Commons, in this respect, is in as woeful a plight as Big-side Levée. But will our correspondent's ideal assembly be free from this objection? Will the bottom fellow in "Radical's" House Twenty speak "with as much hope of success" as the Head of the School, or the winner of the Crick?

As to "Radical's" fourth argument, we are not sure that we have fully understood him; but, as far as we can gather, his objection seems to be that Football Rules are decided by Big-side Levée, while Bigside Levée really knows nothing about Football. Here, again, our brother indulges in a sweeping statement, which a moment's calm consideration would refute. We maintain, in opposition to our correspondent, that Big-side Levée *does* know quite as much about Football as is necessary. It contains almost all the best Caps in the School, almost all the best Below Caps, almost all the fellows who have been longest at the School, and who, therefore, have played Football longest. This is a mere question of statistics, and we

defy our correspondent to refute us. Take, for instance, the School House Twenty of last Half: Davenport, Soutter, Field, Ringrose, Poole, and Gwatkin were all members of Big-side Levée, of the body "whose opinions are nothing worth!" of the body of which "everyone speaks in ridicule and disgust!" That there are members of Big-side who take no prominent part in Football, and know little about it, we are ready to admit; but again we say this is a fault common to all legislative assemblies. The House of Commons passes turnpike bills and canal bills, though probably nine-tenths of the members know nothing about either turnpikes or canals. And, we would ask, is this a fault from which our brother's ideal assembly would be free? How will he ensure that "the House Elevens," "the winners and seconds of School prizes," and "the Commissioned Officers of the Rifle Corps" shall "know something about" Football?

And now we turn to the constructive scheme of "A Radical." We confess that we perused this scheme with mingled sentiments of deep sorrow and overwhelming shame. Has our brother forgotten his name? A legislative assembly based entirely upon fancy franchises! our would-be John Bright leaving the Tory leader of the House of Commons miles behind! By the ties of our common brotherhood, by the memory of our common hopes and our common aspirations, we beseech our brother to forsake the downward paths of ignorance and iniquity. May his repentance be speedy, and may it be sincere! And may our words tend to further the wished-for consummation!

We think, with all good Radicals (into which class we cannot, at present, admit our correspondent) that every legislative assembly ought to be based upon a simple principle. Such a principle we find in Big-side Levée. It is probable, viewing the matter abstractedly, that the Upper School will contain the best Football players, and the best Cricketers; the best Racquet players, and the best Fives players; the best Athletes, and the best runners at Hare and Hounds. It is almost certain that it will contain the sharpest fellows in the School, as well as those who have been at Rugby longest, and have had most experience of School affairs. The reason why it goes down no lower than the Upper School is obvious. The authorities of the School have thought fit to make a distinction at that point between fags and

non-fags, and we have followed their example. What is quite as important, but what "A Radical" entirely overlooks, the Upper School pay a subscription double of the subscription of the Middle and Lower School. If the ideal assembly of "A Radical" is to be established, the whole financial system of the School must be altered.

We assert, then, that Big-side Levée stands upon a simple and intelligible principle, the principle of mental and physical superiority, of superiority in age and experience, as well as upon the principle that those who pay most shall have the largest share in legislating for the common weal. That such an assembly contains anomalies we fully admit. But we contend, in the first place, that these anomalies are very slight; and, in the second place, that an Englishman is the last person to declaim against anomalies, for anomalies have existed in every English institution since the beginning of history.

We contend, therefore, that the principle of Big-side Levée is a sound principle, a principle more consonant with the spirit of our Rugby institutions, and the spirit our English institutions than a more un-anomalous principle would be. But we are prepared to meet our correspondent on his own ground. We are willing, for the sake of argument, to allow that the principle which was so mercilessly ridiculed by one of the greatest English statesmen, that

"Each fair burgh, numerically free,
Should choose its members by the rule of three,"

is the true principle. And even, taking this low ground, we are ready to prove that the ideal assembly of "A Radical" is full of anomalies, and that it would be impossible to constitute any assembly which shall not teem with anomalies.

What, then, is the constitution of "Radical's" assembly? All House Twenties—180; all House Elevens—99; the Winners and Seconds of School Prizes—20, say; the Commissioned Officers of the Rifle Corps—3; the Winner of the Crick; the Head of the School; and the School House Below Caps—17 say. We may remark, parenthetically, that "A Radical's" sarcasm about dust and row is rather unhappy. If the present Big-side Levée, consisting of 185 fellows, creates "dust and row," much more will "Radical's" Levée, consisting of about 270.

And now let us examine "Radical's" Levée. The first question that suggests itself

is: considering that the number of fellows who play Cricket is about the same as that of those who play Football, why should the latter have 197 representatives, and the former only 99? Here is an anomaly with a vengeance. To continue: the numbers of the Rifle Corps are about 80, and the numbers of Football players about 480: the Rifle Corps, therefore, ought to be represented by 33 members, and not by 3. Here is another anomaly. Again, there are about 25 fellows in the School who run Hare and Hounds. If we compare this with the numbers who play Football, Hare and Hounds ought to be represented, not only by the solitary winner of the Crick, but by at least 9 more. This we may call anomaly number 3. As to the winners and seconds of School prizes, we give them up in despair. Why the Athletics should have special representatives at all, or why they should have that precise number, we are totally unable to see. Still more perplexing is the introduction of the School House Below Caps. Why not the School House Second Eleven? Why not the winners of the School House Hand-fives and Racquets? Why not the holder of the School House House-bags?

Further, let us look at "Radical's" Levée from another point of view. Is the second for the Crick a less swell than the bottom fellow in "Radical's" House Twenty? If not, why should he be excluded and the other admitted? If he is, what is "Radical's" standard of measurement? How many seconds for the Crick are equal to one fellow in a First Twenty? Or how many fellows in a First Twenty are equal to a second for the Crick? Again, why should the vote of a Below Cap be worth as much as the vote of a Cap? And why should the vote of a Blue-band be equal to the vote of a XXII. fellow? And why should the vote of a XXII. fellow be equal to the vote of an XI. fellow!

There are, therefore, in "Radical's" scheme, about a dozen glaring anomalies. A pretty fair number for a Levée which is constituted upon the rule of three principle!

"But," says 'Radical,' "is there any connection between ancient classics and modern games?" We will answer his question by another: Is there any connection between ancient classics and modern fagging? Why should a "swell of the first water" be liable to carry coats simply because he does not know Greek? When "Radical" has answered our question satisfactorily, we will endeavour to answer his.

Something more we had to say, but we will reserve it for another time. We hope on some future occasion to replace this negative defence by one more positive. But one thing we think that we have proved. If Big-side Levée be indeed plagued with the great

plagues of worthlessness and incapacity, our Correspondent has neither discovered the causes nor the remedies of those plagues, nor has he devised an assembly which shall be exempt from their influence.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Solutions of the below may be sent to *Tait and Tait*, Booksellers, Rugby.

While we faintly still bemoan her, hope erroneous, visionary,
Lightning flash, *The New Rugbeian*, only to leave the darkness darker ;
We with brightness duller, steadier, will dispel it.
Ah ! you know us ! hush then ! *tête-a-tête* pray tell it.

1. { Forget me not, some token dear,
{ Parting with but love, not fear.
2. { A sprite,
{ A light,
{ Unearthly being quite.
3. { To fast ones quadruped, well—yes—a pleasure,
{ And fast ones biped in immoderate measure.
4. { A twice told tale, a weariness monotonous,
{ A much too frequently inflicted lot on us.
5. { Allopathists and homœopathists
{ To work their cures my potent charm assists.
6. { The moving point of courtly strife
{ Between imperial man and wife.

THE ATHLETIC GAMES.

April 8th and 9th.

The Athletic Games took place on the appointed days, in spite of the roughness and inclemency of the weather ; it was scarcely to be expected that the *Meteor* would err in a prophecy which related in any way to the state of the atmosphere, and the benefit of the arrangement of Big-side was deeply felt upon the very windy and unpleasant morning of Tuesday last. The Stewards were F. W. Haslam, J. A. Ormerod, B. Pauncefote, and C. H. Vivian.

FIRST DAY.—The Sports began soon after Twelve o'clock.

I.—Flat Race, 200 Yards, open to all ; winners of Heats, Beavor, Gardner, Jeffery, Steward ; winner of Final Heat, Gardner, (Rev. P. B. Smith's) ; 2, Pauncefote, (Rev. C. T. Arnold's). This race was rather easily and very prettily won. Pauncefote and Haslam ran only in the Final Heat, having been required to start the Heats.

II.—Flat Race, 200 Yards, open to all under 5 feet 7 inches. Winners of Heats,

Badger, Crofts, Delarue, Gardner, Layton, Ringrose.

III.—Throwing a Cricket Ball came next. This was won by Gardner, with a throw of 95 yards ; Yardley was second, Harrison third.

IV.—Standing Jumping. The following entered :—Allen, Farr, Gardner, Harrison, Haslam, Pauncefote, Sykes, Yardley. This was well contested by Farr, Gardner, and Pauncefote ; but Farr failed, and Gardner (Rev. P. B. Smith's), Pauncefote (Rev. C. T. Arnold's) were equal first ; height 4 feet $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

V.—Mile Race :—Bailey, Becke, Fletcher, Gretton, Gwatkin, Hall, Milner, Paine, Richardson, and Scott, entered for what was supposed to be the first Heat ; but it was afterwards found that none of the Second came up to the scratch. Becke made the running at first, and led for some distance ; after some time Scott passed him, and both soon gave way to Hall and Richardson ; Richardson got the lead by a good spurt, but within 25 yards of the end he was passed by Hall. 1, Hall (Rev. C. B. Hutchinson's) ;