



The Meteor.

Edited by Members of Rugby School.

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THE attendance of Caps at Big-Side matches is a question which has been considered a great deal at the beginning of the present season. It is undeniable that some legislation is required on the subject, for it is a scandal that Caps should absent themselves from Big-Side on grounds so trivial as are sometimes given. However, that the Big-Sides should be so small this season can in some way be accounted for by the fact that not a single new Cap has been given since the Sixth match. Here, surely, there is something wrong. Why no new Caps? At the Sixth match this year, it was said the number of new Caps was the smallest on record. We suppose then there is a diminution of players worth their Caps in the School. Why so? Carry your memories back, those of you who can, three or four years, to the time when you were in the Middle School, you who are now in the Sixth or Twenty. Do you not remember how there were ten Caps, two fellows in the Eleven, and four in the Twenty-Two, all in your own Form? Ask a Middle School friend now-a-days, how many swells of the above denominations there are in his Form. His answer will tell you, perhaps, that there is one Cap, and, by chance, one in the Twenty-Two. Of course, then, you cannot but wonder what has caused this. You begin to feel that, after all, certain discontented Old Rugbeians have reason on their side when they lament over the degeneration of the School since their days. In spite of the violence of your protestations against the fact of any such degeneration, a melancholy truth seems to force itself upon you, and,

contrary to the feelings and wish of your inmost heart, you are beginning to think that the glories of the Middle School must be fading. But some excuse must be found; we must have something to lay the blame upon; we must be able to say to Old Rugbeians that the fellows in the School are as good and as strong as they used to be, and that any apparent falling off in the School must be attributed to some latent cause. What can that be? It cannot be the enticements and enervating effects of the Arnold Library already. What then? Superannuation. That word so dreadful to you when you wish very much to come back and get into the Twenty-Two, or get your Cap. That is the reason. If you will but consider, how many are there who are on the verge of getting into the House Twenty who are coldly informed that they are superannuated, and must leave? We have found then a reason which can explain away the small choice of fellows to make new Caps; and this also gives a certain amount of excuse for the smallness of Big-Sides. Shall we, then, haste to give numbers of Caps, so that there shall always be a Big-Side of a tolerable size? By no means. Let us always keep up that standard of Cap-play which has been fixed by our predecessors. In olden days, when the number of Caps was larger, the absence of a few did not materially affect the match: there were always sufficient to make the match a good one. But now, it is not so; it makes the greatest difference in the match any two or three good players being absent. In order to amend the attendance at Big-Side, "Trio" have written in our columns;

the Head of the School has circulated among the Houses the existing rules concerning the matter. But this is not sufficient. A note only has to be got from the Head of the House, and the Cap is released from Big-Side for that day. When a note can be got easily, it is not likely that a Cap will ever go without one, and incur the punishment of lines, or deprivation of the Cap. As the rules stand at present, they are quite insufficient to prevent a Cap absenting himself from Big-Side for no valid reason. He can go to the Head of his House and say "Sign me this note:" it is signed, and he goes on the Racquet Court, or reads in his study.

There is need, we say, of legislation on this subject; and we should like to have some good, feasible, and strict rules. But we have other means in our power. Most of the Caps have, as we have remarked, left the Middle School, where discipline and rules are the principal impulsive powers, and have come to that part of the School in which *Honour* is supposed to hold its sway. Let them, therefore, consider it contrary to their honour to be absent from Big-side without a valid cause, and let them stamp as dishonourable any one who does so: and we shall be much mistaken if this plan will not do more towards ensuring a good attendance at Big-Side than all the existing rules and imaginary penalties.

"I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER," sings a certain poet, and such too is the daily strain of all our conversations and pleasures in School life. There is, however, one difference between our own and the Poet's reminiscences, for, if we consider, nearly all that we remember leaves a vivid impression of pleasure, and after listening to the tales of anybody that has a long and well-stocked memory, we can but conclude that life in the old times must have been really amusing. But not so with the Poet: he begins, it is true, with pleasure; but his reminiscences close with a dolorous moral, showing that in his recollections the mournful side is the most prominent

The feeling of attachment to reminiscences is perhaps experienced more especially after a visit of Old Rugbeians: then it is that we have just heard tales of the days when there were giants in the land, and we are imbued with recollections, and incited to stir our own memories for the like. We have heard probably a catalogue of incidents—enough to

make us wonder why life is now so comparatively dull at School; but at the same time we feel that there must be two sides to the picture, and we fancy that those jokes must have left a bitter impression upon somebody, though we hear of them as so splendid. Some one, surely, we think, must be able to sympathize with the above-mentioned poet, when he says:

"I remember Billy Hawkins
Came, and with his pewter squirt
Squibbed my pantaloons and stockings
Till they were all over dirt."

For we have heard of many a trick as disagreeable as that played by Billy Hawkins. But somehow, the disagreeable part of life seems to fade from their tales when Old Rugbeians begin their tales, and at the end of all there is but one sentiment, that it really was great fun. And yet a present Rugbeian has a good many ugly reminiscences, probably. He may remember the Turret School: we will hope not, because that will entail a further recollection of something unpleasant which caused him to become acquainted with, and subsequently to remember, the Turret School. He may distinctly remember his first House Run and its attendant pains and annoyances: he may still feel some bitter disappointment about promotion in Form, or even in games. Highly disagreeable are such circumstances at the time, but when they have become reminiscences, he wonders why they ever were so disagreeable, and why he did not say to himself—"it's all the same a hundred years hence," and have taken no notice of such vexations. And so, as the reminiscences grow older, they grow pleasanter. Much of their pleasure, however, lies in an involuntary comparison with the actual condition of the thinker: for instance, we talk with pleasure of last season's House runs while we are comfortably doing nothing under a July sun; but bring us round again to a cold November's day, and put us standing waiting for the start, and those same reminiscences do but picture more clearly the discomforts awaiting us.

But whether our recollections are pleasant or disagreeable, at any rate, it is remarkable how very frequently we refer to them. "I remember, I remember," so runs our daily tale. And yet it is not very odd, when we think of it, that we so generally live on scraps and conversations of reminiscences, in a society such as a Public School. We do not prophesy: except in our debating societies, we do not talk much about the present and

the politics and changes of the day : unless then we talk plain, undiluted "shop," upon copies, cruxes in a Greek Play, and such uninteresting subjects, we must talk of the past. The only thing to be avoided is the too frequent remembering of the same thing, for even the best jokes and tales fall under the old saw, that familiarity breeds contempt. Sometimes, however, the teller of the tale becomes so enamoured of his tale, and so constant in telling it, that the uninterested hearer, besides fully knowing how the story runs, knows also what remarks preface and lead up to it, and what criticisms follow it. But, even in this case, the well-known reminiscences may introduce others and, in spite of their familiarity, furnish some degree of amusement. Old Rugbeians, of course, are not so prone to wearying their audience with oft-repeated tales, simply because they do not meet so often : but it is the gossiping groups before the hall fire or in the studies that ought to be especially careful against spoiling the interest of their reminiscences by too frequent repetition. There are, of course, certain kinds of traditional reminiscences common to all schools, such as rumours of extraordinary freaks, and hair-breadth escapes from the extremity of the local law ; and certain astounding feats in one or other of the games, and instances of almost superhuman, or, at any rate, of super-puerile acts of daring and agility. But there are also reminiscences of a higher order, such as belong to one place far more than another. There are the feelings that make an Old Rugbeian shudder when he hears that the Chapel is perhaps to be pulled down. Probably he has been at Oxford or Cambridge, and there too become attached to a Chapel, but the last one does not carry with it a train of pleasant recollections, such as are connected with the chapel of his School days. The present Rugbeian may, perhaps, associate with the chapel a narrow seat and a decided perception of a neighbour on each side, but when he becomes entitled to reminiscences of his own he will feel conscious of other thoughts which are not yet strong enough to assert themselves, and he will feel that to sever such a chain would be desecration. He has probably reminiscences now of his early days in some other part of the School, which he would regret to see abolished by the disappearance of his old haunts ; let him then imagine the way in which a new Chapel would be regarded. Often, probably, has he felt the honour that accrued to him

when he talked of by-gone times and by-gone deeds, and often has he felt the pleasure of being able to supplement the tales of others with incidents drawn from his own stock of reminiscences ; let him then fancy his helplessness and feeling of desolation, when unable to connect with a new building and with the fresh appearance of what was once so familiar, the same tales that were once so oft repeated.

FOOTBALL.

FOOTBALL COMMITTEE.—A meeting was held on Monday, November 11th, to draw the ties for the third time, the only match in the second round having been played on the Saturday. Rev. T. W. Jex Blake's were drawn against Rev. C. B. Hutchinson's, the School House being odd House. The result of the tie will be seen in another column.

THREE B'S v. SCHOOL (continued).—This match was continued on Thursday, November 7th. The School far out-numbered their opponents, many of whose best players were absent. Finally, a goal kicked by Peshall soon ended the match in favour of the School, a goal having been kicked on a former day. Very good play was shown in this match, especially by Mr. Lee Warner, Graham, Crenshaw, Peshall, and Cholmondeley.

PATRIARCHS v. THE SCHOOL.—This match was begun on the termination of the pre-described. Nothing decisive was done that day. On Saturday, November 9th, the game was continued, when the Patriarchs had it all their own way, and, after obtaining a try and punt-out, the first goal was kicked for them by Peshall. After the change the Patriarchs soon got another try, which, however, was missed ; and after some good forward play, the ball was moved about the ground with great rapidity, but was again driven back to the School goal, and a second goal was soon kicked for the Patriarchs by Peshall. For the Patriarchs, H. Lee Warner (O.R.), Bucknill, and Gray played well : for the School, Forster and Badger.

GOLD v. SILVER TASSELS.—This was really three Houses—School House, Moberly's, and Town, against the School. However, the Three Houses got decidedly the best of it the first day, a lucky run-in being made by Warner. The try was missed ; soon after a punt-out had the same fate. The match was resumed on Monday, when the Silver far