

## CORRESPONDENCE.

Contributions will be received at the *Advertiser* Office, or at Mr. Pepperday's, under cover to the "Editor of the *Meteor*."

*To the Editor of the Meteor.*

SIR,—Before public attention is entirely turned away from football, will you kindly allow me to make a few remarks on the present state of the game?

First of all, I wish to make an emphatic protest against a practice which threatens to grow into a very serious evil; I mean that of holding by the neck, or "scragging." Lookers-on have observed and remarked upon the fact that attempts to "tackle" are becoming more and more reckless attacks upon the neck of the holder of the ball. If we could only realize how very tender, how very liable to serious injury, the upper part of the spine is, I am sure that all such attempts would at once entirely cease.

Again, the opinion seems to prevail that "scragging" is the legitimate remedy in cases of obstinate refusal to "have it down." Judging from the rules, which forbid "all attempts to throttle as totally opposed to the principles of the game," I should imagine that hacking—on this occasion only combined with holding—is the remedy intended for such obstinate cases; and indeed, a tradition, if not a rule, exists which authorises its application.

Lastly, I wish to point out clearly what appears to be the certain result of the present "tight scrummages;" their extraordinary compactness is caused by the custom which many players have of holding on to those in front of them, sometimes even of grasping the front rank of the opposite side. To such an extent does this custom prevail that in a scrum last week no less than four strong arms were observed encircling one sturdy pair of shoulders. Now to say nothing of the obvious breach of the rules committed by *holding a player who has not got the ball*, the immediate result of this unnatural tightness is to prevent the ball from being taken through, consequently it is "raked out" at the sides; and already, I see, good forward players, finding that they are useless in the centre of the scrum, have begun to hang about its outskirts, playing almost half-back: by and by everyone will avoid the centre, and the scrum will by slow degrees melt away, and fall into disuse.

Whether this would be a desirable consummation or not is a question on which I offer no opinion, I merely wish to show to what results the present system must inevitably lead.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,  
J. H. D. M.

*To the Editor of the Meteor.*

SIR,—I think your correspondent "Psittacus," in bringing forward a torrent of crushing argument to make "O.R. at Oxford" feel small and hide his diminished head, misunderstands that gentleman. In no other way can I account for his extraordinary argument. He says, with reference to the School Twenty, "If you ask 'Who are they to play?' he answers 'Oh! the other Caps of course. It would be like the Eleven playing the Twenty-Two in Cricket.'" He goes on to say in so many words "I do not know what it may be like in cricket, but we do not want any more matches like the Eleven and Twenty-Two match in football!" In this case I do not see what this has to do with it, surely there is no resemblance between the Eleven *v.* the Twenty-Two, and the Eleven and the Twenty-Two *v.* the School! Neither is it to the point as far as numbers are concerned, for the School Twenty would not be much outnumbered by their opponents; indeed I should think they would probably make up for more in quality than their opponents would in quantity.

Without dwelling on the (in my opinion) manifest advantages of a School Twenty; except in so far as to say, that I entirely disagree with "Psittacus" in what he says about playing other Public Schools,

I beg leave to remain, Sir,  
Yours humbly,  
CARLO.

## THE RACQUET COURT.

*To the Editor of the Meteor.*

SIR,—In your last number but one you touched on a subject which is a matter of great interest to all Racquet players. Nobody, however, has taken up the glove which you have thrown down; so I venture to submit the following suggestions to your readers. Few will be so blind to the faults of Rugby as to deny that in Racquets we hold a most inferior place compared with other Schools. Old Rugbeians are always well up for the

Racquet prizes in the Universities, but somehow they never get them. Critics say that we are deficient in wrist and style, that we never take the trouble to follow up our adversaries' drops, and that instead of a good drop just above the line we invariably volley the ball back with all our force above the service line. Now I do not think that our Court is the sole cause of all this. It is somewhat dead and certainly too big; but still these are faults on the right side for beginners. If we can play well in a large court we shall be sure to get about better in a smaller one. The cause of our bad play lies first in the difficulty which good players find in obtaining the court; and secondly, in the want of good models from which to learn their style.

The first cause ought to be removed at once. It is better that a great School like Rugby should send out a few first-rate players, than a number of inferior ones who have no natural aptitude for playing. If this is granted, we have only to grant the best players an opportunity of improving themselves. It might be effected in this way. The head of each House should send up every year a list of the best players in his House. This list should be laid before a Council of the Head of the School, the winner of the School Racquets, and the winners of the House Racquets. This council should choose the 50 best players, and, to prevent any unfairness, the worst five in the 50 so chosen should be liable to not more than two challenges each Term. In case he were beaten the victor would take his place. To prevent any foolish challenges the challenge ought first to be sanctioned by two members of the Council. This plan might be considerably modified but I don't think 50 would be too small a number: and Big-Side might settle whether three or four days should be given up to them in the week.

This, I think, is the best way of curing the first evil; but the second is no less important though I fear the Conservatism of Rugby will not allow a change in it so easily. The players want style. This they cannot get from occasionally watching good players, who being unacquainted with the court, are not at home upon it. This is only to be got from a competent manager. Why the management of our courts, with the revenue that can be derived from it, should be tacked on to the already well-paid office of cricket professional I have never yet understood.

It is unfair on the School, unfair on any future professional, who, surely, will not succeed to this iniquity, and last, but not least, it is most unfair on those numerous racquet markers who, having struggled for the Championship, and played many good matches, naturally look out for some of these School places as the prizes of their profession. I have come across many of them, especially that family which has held the Championship of England for the last seven years, and found them the most unassuming and honest men that I could wish to see. One of them lately talking to me about School courts, who is himself going to Eton, said that all the good players at the Universities came up from School (generally Harrow) with a good style to begin with, but Rugby men never. He also told me that he would be content to take any School situation for nothing, if he had the monopoly of balls, racquets, &c. I am sure Rugby would do well to get a good marker: the fellows would soon learn a good style, and he would be invaluable in arranging handicaps. I will not now take up any more of your space, but leave these crude remarks for discussion. I hope the subject will be well considered. We have spent near £3000 on our Racquet Court, and how has the name of Rugby been benefitted by it? A new game has been introduced merely that we may show our own weakness.

I am, Sir, yours obediently,  
W. L. W.

#### HARE AND HOUNDS.

*To the Editor of the Meteor.*

December, 1867.

SIR,—As I believe that no letter has yet appeared in your columns bearing any reference to the grievance to which I am about to refer, I think that this letter might, not unreasonably, obtain a corner in your already well-known paper. The question that I wish to ask can easily be answered, namely, What is the reason of the decadence of Big-Side Runs? Why does Rugby, celebrated in days long gone by for her Hare and Hounds, neglect this ancient institution in the times of her prosperity? The answer is simply this. No encouragement is given to Big-Side Runs, and therefore fellows, as a rule, do not think it worth while to run them; and even those who do, see that they can get no earthly good by coming in first, and there-

fore they do not take the trouble to train. The consequence is that about four fellows usually start with one hare, and only about one of them comes in. Is there no remedy for this? Cannot Hare and Hounds be elevated again to its ancient importance? Let us at all events do what we can for it, and not suffer it to die out utterly. Why should not the School give a prize to the fellow who has the highest average of coming-in for the Big-sides of the year, and another extra prize for the winner and second in the Crick? For if the winner of the mile receives a prize, much more should the winner of the Crick, as it is obvious to the meanest capacity that running 12 or 13 miles is harder work than running one. Hoping that you will excuse any error that I may have made,

I remain, Yours, &c.,  
N. or M.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—The two letters from "A.M." and "Ne Sutor Supra Crepidam" will appear in our next.

SCHOOL PRIZES.

DR. ROBINSON'S DIVINITY PRIZE:—

- 1. Adam } æqual.
- Browne (3) }

INDIAN PRIZE:—Ellis.

HORACE PRIZE:—1. Browne ma.  
2. Barnwell.

MATHEMATICAL PRIZES:—

- Sixth ..... Baring.
- Upper School ..... 1. Ogilvie ma.  
2. Southam.
- Middle School ..... 1. Parton.  
2. Ogilvie mi.

NATURAL SCIENCE PRIZES:—

- Mechanics ..... 1. Ogilvie mi.
- Botany ..... 1. Smith mi.  
2. Knubley.
- Chemistry ..... Longstaff.

NATURAL HISTORY:—

- Fossils ..... Cleminshaw.
- Plants ..... 1. Knubley.  
2. Smith mi.
- Butterflies ..... Haslam.
- EXTRA BOTANICAL Smith mi.

GERMAN:—Upper School, Micholls.

FRENCH:—

- Upper School ... 1. Adam.
- Middle School... 1. Buckland mi. } æq.  
Romilly.  
2. Buckley.

HOUSE NEWS.

J. M. WILSON'S, Esq.

Through the kindness of Mr. Wilson, a valuable addition has lately been made to this house—a Vth Form room. Although called by that name it is open (at certain times) to every member of the house. All thanks are due to Mr. Sidgwick for the great taste and liberality he has shown in furnishing it.

RIFLE CORPS.

THE TERCENTENARY CHALLENGE-CUP was competed for on Tuesday, December 3rd, for the second time since its presentation,—7 rounds each man at 200 yards and 10 at 500. The match was a very close and well-contested one throughout. The Cup was won last Term by Corporal Humphry, who would by the conditions have kept it had he won it a second time consecutively; he lost it, however, to Captain Tobin, as follows:—

- 200 yards. 500 yards.
- 1st.—CAPTAIN TOBIN ... 2332342-19 2323442243-29-48
- 2nd.—CORPL. HUMPHRY.. 3234323-20 3328r24234-26-46
- 3rd.—LIEUT. GRAHAM... 322422-17 4340234034-27-44

MR. BALDWIN'S CHALLENGE-CUP was also shot for the same week—Thursday, the 5th, and won from Lance-Corporal Penrose by Captain Tobin, who made a total of 37 points; L.-Corpl. Penrose also made 37, but was beaten in shooting off the tie (Capt. Tobin a centre, L.C. Penrose an outer); and Corporal Humphry 3rd with 33. The match had to be begun, upon this occasion, at the long ranges, on account of the quickly-fading daylight.

SCORE:

- 400 yds. 500 yds. 200 yds.
- 1st—Capt. TOBIN ..... 22224-12 43222-13 23223-12—37
- 2nd—L.-Corpl. PENROSE 24423-15 23032-10 23222-12—37
- 3rd—Corpl. HUMPHRY.. 34002- 9 44034-15 03222- 9—33

MR. BLAKE'S HOUSE CHALLENGE-CUP was shot for on Friday, the 29th, for the first time, at 200, 500, and 600 yards. Result—Captain Tobin 1st, L.-Corpl. Penrose 2nd.

THE FENIANS.—At a late hour on Thursday night, owing to a gross misunderstanding, a poor man's words were construed so as to give great suspicions that he was a member of the Fenian conspiracy, and that the School Armoury was the point on which the attack was to be made. The Town Rifle Corps was immediately called out, and policemen, armed to the teeth, guarded the "sanctum" of the R.S.R.C. Many were the rumours circulated, but for the feelings of those taken in by this hoax we shall not divulge them.