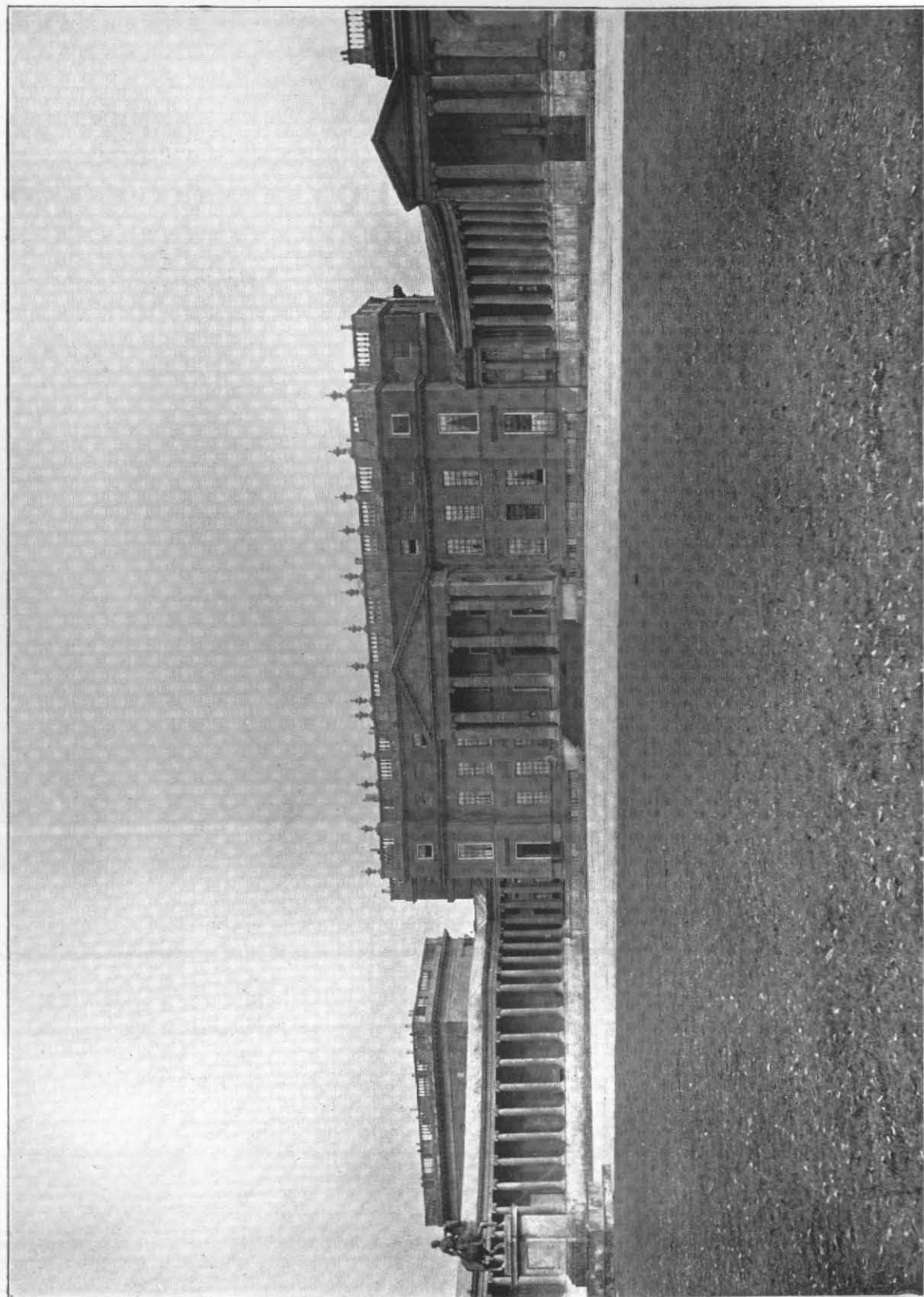


THE STOIC



Number Two

DECEMBER 1923



THE NORTH FRONT.

THE STOIC

VOL. I

DECEMBER, 1923

No. 2

THE LAST FIRST TERM

FOR more than half of us it has been the only first term, and it has been quite 'first' enough for everybody. For a time we really seemed to be beginning all over again. With new boys largely outnumbering the old boys, it looked as if the immigrants might absorb us rather than we them and all our atmospheres and attitudes of last term be lost. For last term we had learnt the right attitude to many things, and acquired an atmosphere which we valued and which was our own. However, we need not have feared. The atmosphere has been re-created and the attitudes have been re-learnt. The immigrants have made their own contribution, as it was their right and our pleasure that they should, but they have not proved very different from the aboriginals, and the effect upon them of what they found here has been great and obvious. At all events life at Stowe in the second half of this term has been near enough to what it was at the end of last term, to make it clear that we have between us now established a manner of living of our own. We have our own ways of doing and saying things and our own ways of dealing with one another, and if these ways change we may now feel sure that the change will come from within and not from without. We shall not again be in danger of losing our identity when further immigrants arrive. We have had two first terms, but we shall have no more of them. The second was the last.

This is true physically as well as spiritually. The four Foundation Houses are ready and full—full to overflowing, as the inhabitants of Chandos Houserom know—and the School is in being for good or ill. We shall grow in the future, probably very fast for a year or so, but it will be growth and not mere aggregation. To grow you must first exist—exist as an individual, complete even if immature—and this is the stage we have now reached. For good or ill the School is in being.

There seems no clear reason at present why it should not be for good. It will certainly be our own fault if it is not. But there are a great many of us and we are all free agents, and a very little is needed to sour the atmosphere of any community. While our own remains fresh and clean and kindly, it is worth while to reflect how much that means to us in happiness, and also to remember that what has been made by all of us can be unmade by any of us—and at any time. At the end of this term, if all goes well till then, we may surely say to ourselves, 'So far, so good,' but we ought not to say it even to ourselves without adding that it would be terribly easy still to spoil it all.

THE AVENUE

A NUMBER of anonymous Old Etonians, acting through Mr. Hugh Macnaghten, the Vice-Provost of Eton, have contributed the money required to buy Stowe Avenue, and offer it to Stowe in the name of their School. The formal presentation will be made, it is hoped, in the early part of the year.

When Stowe was bought, the Avenue could not be included in the purchase. Mr. Williams-Ellis bought it to prevent it going to strangers and perhaps to destruction, and held it for some months. He could not, however, retain it indefinitely, and until the Old Etonians stepped into the breach there was grave danger that we should lose it altogether and perhaps see the trees cut down and little villas built along its wide grass edges. This danger has now for ever disappeared.

If we had always owned the Avenue, we should have been saved a good deal of anxiety, but anxiety is a small price to have paid for the added value which the Avenue has now acquired as the gift of Eton. We used to think of it as 'The Avenue,' and it is a great thing that we can now think of it as 'our Avenue.' But it is a greater thing still that we can think of it as 'our Avenue, given to us by the Old Etonians.' We are a new School, and no one—at any rate no one outside the place—can know exactly how good a School we are going to be. But Eton has taken us on trust, and that means more to us than it is at all easy for us to say. For Eton is nearly five hundred years old—and also it is Eton.

Some of the correspondence which has appeared in the *Times* on the subject of the Avenue is reprinted below:

TO THE EDITOR OF *The Times*.

SIR,—With reference to Stowe's 'noble avenue,' which is the subject of a letter in your issue of the 15th inst., I should like to quote a few sentences from a letter

which I received on the same subject from an Old Etonian just four days ago. These were his words:—

'You have doubtless seen the enclosed cutting from *The Times* re the Grand Avenue at Stowe, and doubtless you will agree that the avenue should be saved from destruction. Cannot Etonians do this and present it as a gift to the new school? It would be a graceful act, and one which in days to come might give rise to friendly feeling, such as now exists between Wykehamists and ourselves . . . I submit that the idea is worthy of consideration. If you think otherwise tear this letter up and say nothing about it. If, on the other hand, you favour the idea . . . I will give one hundred pounds provided my name is not disclosed to the public in the appeal, the list of subscribers, or at all.'

I have thought over this suggestion for four days, and the letter in *The Times* of to-day, especially the sentence, 'No very large sum is involved, as the vendors have quoted a price to us of £1,750,' has resolved my doubt.

I venture, therefore to make the following suggestion. If fifteen Old Etonians will contribute £100 each, and one-half Old Etonians (by which I mean the mother or sister of Etonians, and very often 'the half is more than the whole') will contribute £50, the thing is done. And two results will have been attained. First, Eton, one of the oldest and not the least famous of our public schools, will have held out a hand of welcome to the youngest of them all, and, secondly, a noble avenue, one of the glories not merely of the country for which lately 1,157 Old Etonians gave their lives, will have been saved, a possession for ever, an inspiration for the living, and a living memorial of the dead. I have only to add that if these words find any response, I will gladly receive contributions to the fund. If the appeal fails, but I do not believe that it will fail, at least I shall not have withheld, and I do not think that I have the right to withhold, from old Etonians the words of the noble letter of the old Etonian which inspired my appeal.

Yours faithfully,

HUGH MACNAGHTEN.

VICE-PROVOST'S LODGE, ETON.

October 15th.

TO THE EDITOR OF *The Times*.

SIR,—I did not mean to try your forbearance again, but three things, all good, which I think that Old Etonians interested in Stowe Avenue have a right to know, make silence impossible. The first is this. I have received permission to say that her gracious Majesty the Queen 'is much interested in the proposal that Old Etonians should, if possible, save from destruction the grand avenue at Stowe which her Majesty knows so well,' and that, 'as the mother and sister of Old Etonians, the Queen wishes to contribute towards this noble object.' I may add that 'Prince Henry has also expressed a wish to take part.'

The second is that I have been sent a subscription by an Old Harrovian, which I do not value the less because I cannot accept it. I honour and admire Harrow: it was my father's school: it has given me one, more than one, of my best friends: the headmaster of Harrow, in whose debt I abide, is almost, if I may say it without offence, an Old Etonian. But this particular project was started by an Old Etonian for Old Etonians, and must be confined to them. If it should lead other great public schools to undertake similar, or even nobler, enterprises, then the unknown author of the proposal to save Stowe Avenue for the nation and for Stowe School will prove to have been one of the greatest, as he is assuredly one of the best, of England's benefactors. There are other enterprises waiting for the old boys of

our public schools, if they will undertake them, less picturesque perhaps, but even nobler and even more patriotic than this enterprise of Old Etonians. I will mention only one: the Hermitage School of Arts and Crafts for crippled boys and girls, Chailey, Sussex. It will be a good and glorious thing if Eton saves the avenue and gives it to her youngest sister for a memorial and pledge of love, but it is a better thing to save boys and girls, for they, and not trees, make the city.

My third reason for writing is a letter in *The Times* of last Friday, which proved to me that 'others have laboured . . .' has never been better illustrated than in this matter of Stowe Avenue. A year ago a single man came forward and saved the avenue from instant peril at his own expense. The doomed trees owe their respite to him alone. And if Old Etonians should succeed in their endeavour, and that victory, of which the trees, perhaps, to-day are whispering, should be won, they will most gratefully proclaim that it was Mr. Clough Williams-Ellis who, by his foresight and public spirit, made that victory possible.

Yours faithfully,

HUGH MACNAGHTEN.

VICE-PROVOST'S LODGE, ETON.

TO THE EDITOR OF *The Times*.

SIR,—Before deciding to subscribe to the fund for the purchase of Stowe Avenue there are two points on which I think many Old Etonians and their relations would like information—*viz.*, (a) the approximate annual sum which the school would have to pay in rates and taxes; (b) whether the governors of Stowe School are in the financial position to be able to ensure that now and in the future the avenue would be adequately maintained, *i.e.*, the existing trees tended, and young trees planted in their place as they die off.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

VIOLET LECONSFIELD.

PETWORTH HOUSE, PETWORTH, SUSSEX.

October 18th.

TO THE EDITOR OF *The Times*.

SIR,—Lady Leconfield is entitled to an immediate answer to her questions.

1. The rates and taxes payable on the Avenue total approximately £10 annually, this amount being covered by the rents received for the grazing rights.

2. I am authorised by the Governors to state that they will guarantee to provide for the proper upkeep of the trees. I can add my personal assurance that intelligent care of them will be taken. Forestry is a matter of special interest to us here, and we are trying to make it one of the educational activities of the place.

A new school, with its way to make, has naturally many needs, and we at Stowe have already benefactors to whom we owe and feel much gratitude. But the generosity of Eton is something quite apart, and, whatever comes of the Vice-Provost's scheme, Stowe will never forget the gracious gesture which the first school in the world has made to it.

Your obedient servant,

J. F. ROXBURGH,

Headmaster.

STOWE SCHOOL, BUCKINGHAM.

October 23rd.

TO THE EDITOR OF *The Times*.

SIR,—May I ask once more for a little space in your columns to congratulate Old Etonians of both sexes on having achieved their object, saved Stowe Avenue, and established, please goodness for ever, an *amicabilis concordia* between the two schools, such as exists between Winchester and Eton? A Greek once said, 'Rejoice: we have won.' May we say, 'Rejoice with us' to-day?

Most of the subscriptions were sent, in faith, from the first; I would ask those who promised their subscriptions on condition that the whole sum was raised by Old Etonians to send them to me now. To give a list of 160 donors is impossible, because many of them have expressed a wish to remain unknown, and some have only subscribed on condition that their names are not mentioned, following the example of the unnamed Etonian who started the scheme with the words, 'I will give one hundred pounds provided my name is not disclosed to the public in the appeal, the list of subscribers, or at all.' I therefore feel sure that all Old Etonians of both sexes will agree that one name, 'Old Etonians,' is all-sufficient and best.

Yours faithfully,

HUGH MACNAGHTEN.

VICE-PROVOST'S LODGE, ETON.

TO THE EDITOR OF *The Times*.

SIR,—I have been asked by the School to write to you and express our thanks to the Old Etonians who have saved the Avenue for us. If their kindness really results in a *concordia* with Eton, as Mr. Macnaghten hopes, that will matter more to us who are actually members of the School and to those who will come here after us than it does to anyone else, and also it will be our business more than anybody else's to live up to it. Will you please publish this letter, therefore, so that we may thank the 160 Etonians, whose names we do not know, for what they have done for us? They have not only given us our Avenue; they have given us a helping hand just when we needed it most, when we were beginning our career as a school. It means a great deal to us to be treated like this by Eton.

D. F. WILSON,

Head Prefect.

STOWE SCHOOL, BUCKINGHAM.

IMPERIAL OAKS

ON Friday, November 2nd, a number of Delegates to the Imperial Conference paid an informal visit to the School.

Among them were:

Major-General J. H. MacBrien, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

Rear-Admiral A. G. Hotham, C.B., C.M.G., R.N.

Senator J. P. Malan.

Colonel J. Obed Smith.

Mr. C. W. Schmolke.

Before leaving they planted five young oak trees in the grounds on behalf of the Dominions which they represent—one each for

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Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. The Delegates were entertained chiefly by the Prefects, but everyone was able to appreciate their friendly interest in the place, and we welcomed them with genuine pleasure not only for what they represented, but also for what they were.

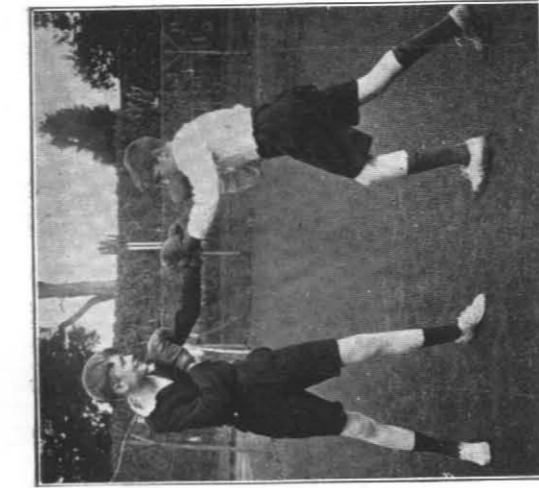
This School would be false to its origin and out of joint with the times if it were not in a special degree an Imperial School; for in 1923 the British Empire means something more than it meant when the older Public Schools were being founded or becoming famous. And it not only means something more; it means something different. We used to think of the Empire as belonging to us. We now think of ourselves as belonging to the Empire—belonging to a free society of friends and kinsmen. The pride of possession has gone, and with it all the associations of empty thinking and vain-glorious speech which once clung to the word Imperialist. We have another kind of pride in the Empire now—the pride of the men who went 'proudly friended' in the poem of Rupert Brooke. To be proud of the Empire in this sense is the right of everyone, and it is a right which we exercise at Stowe.

There is another point. If it is not an impertinence to make the comparison, the Empire is as young for an Empire as Stowe is for a School, for one should measure the age of an Empire not by the length of its past, but by the probable length of its future. Both the Empire and this School have a great deal of growing up still to do, and that is another reason why Stowe should think of its future and of the Empire as in some way linked.

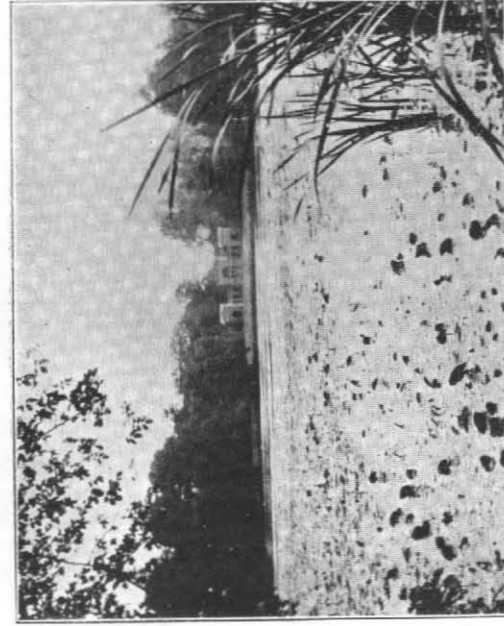
Because we are so concerned with growing up, a young oak tree, just out of the acorn, is of special interest to us, both as a possession and as a symbol. Yet these oaks have been planted (like many other things at Stowe) not for us, but for the next generation. They will still be small trees when not one remains alive of the men who saw them put into the ground in the autumn of 1923. It is difficult to compete in longevity with oaks. But the School itself can say to them with confidence (in Browning's words):

Grow old along with me.
The best is yet to be.

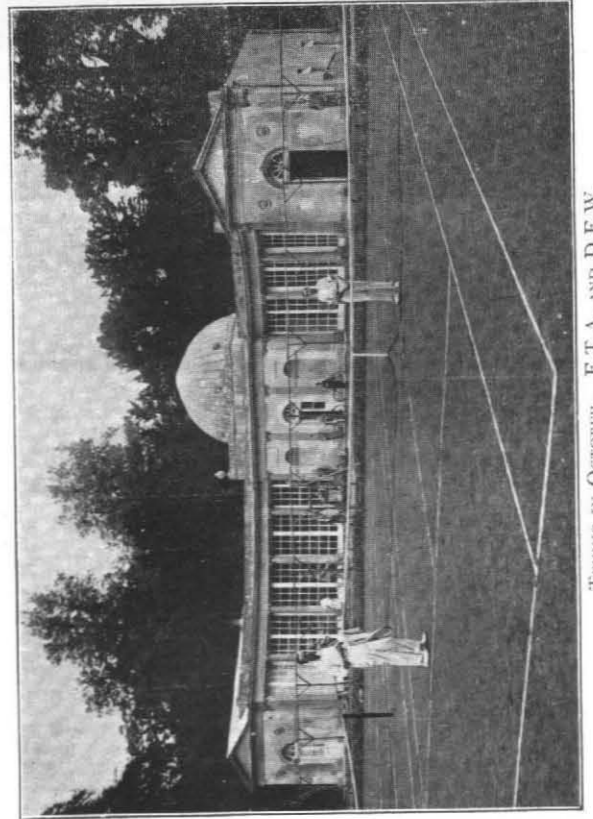
For the School as a School must survive longer than any man or tree, as long, we hope, as the Empire itself—that Empire into which it is unashamedly proud to have been born,



BOXING. C.A.C.B. AND G.A.R.



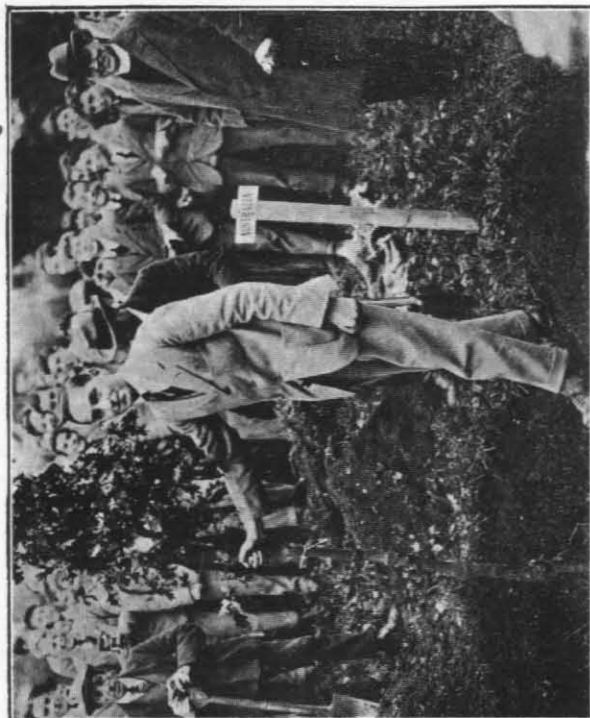
ELEVEN ACRE AND TEMPLE OF VENUS.

CUTTING THE FIRST SOD ON THE BOURBON FIELD.
[C.B.J.]

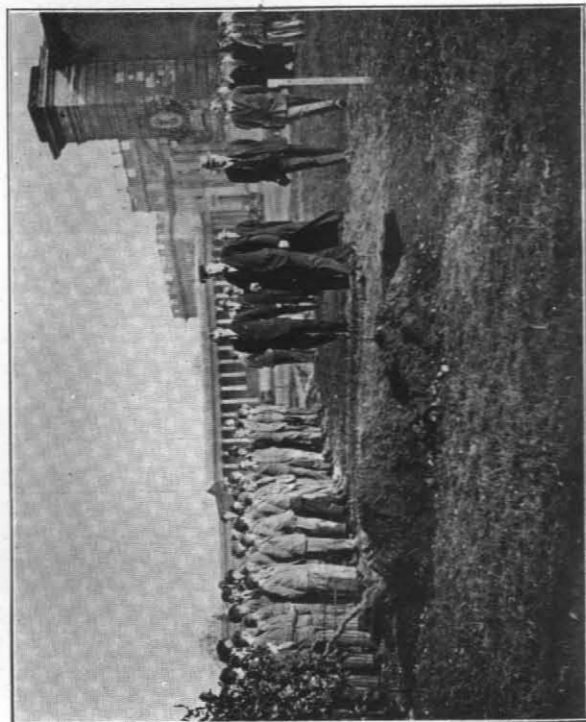
TENNIS IN OCTOBER. F.T.A. AND D.F.W.



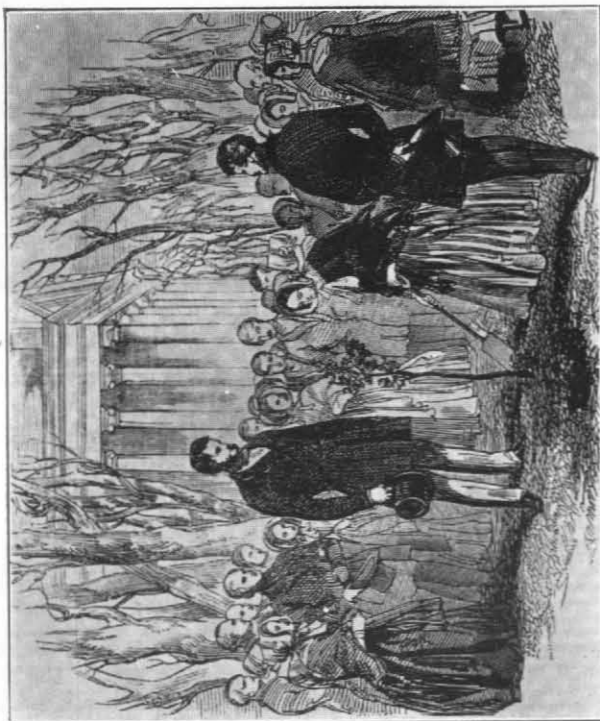
EARLY DAYS AT RUGGER: A LINE OUT.



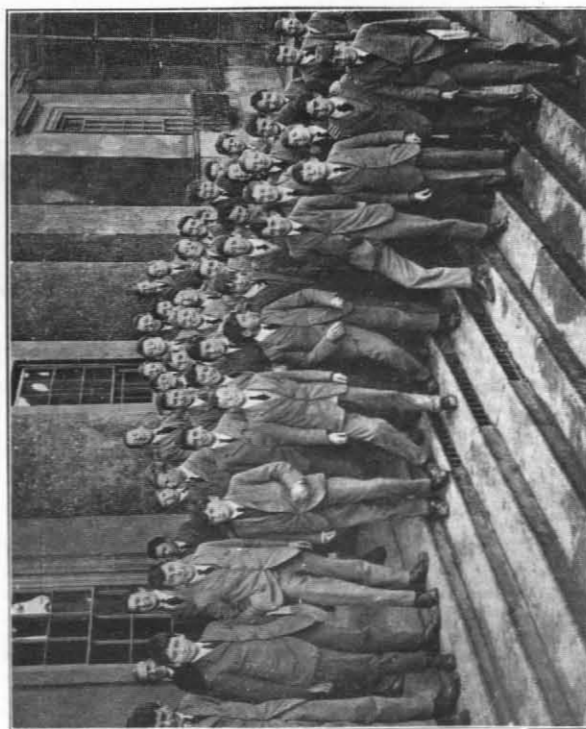
THE HEAD OF THE SCHOOL PLANTING A TREE AT STOWE ON NOV. 2ND, 1923.
[D.F.W.]



THE PROCESSION TO THE FIRST OAK.



QUEEN VICTORIA PLANTING A TREE AT STOWE ON JAN. 17TH, 1845.
[From the *Illustrated London News*, Jan. 25th, 1845.]



WAITING FOR THE DELEGATES.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S TREE

Friday, January 17th, 1845.

From the *Illustrated London News*, of January 25th, 1845.

(Reprinted by permission of the Editor.)

A most interesting scene occurred on Friday afternoon, the locality being that portion of the grounds in which is placed the Temple of Concord and Victory, whence is seen, to great advantage, the Grecian Valley, beautifully planted. Shortly after three o'clock her Majesty left the mansion, leaning on the arm of the Duke of Buckingham, and proceeded to the above spot. Prince Albert followed with the Duchess of Buckingham; and many of the other guests were of the party. On reaching the south side of the Temple, the Royal party paused; and the Duke of Buckingham having handed the Queen an oak sapling, her Majesty placed it in the ground, and then received from Mr. Ferguson a spade, with which the Queen covered the roots. The Duke of Buckingham and Mr. Ferguson completed the work, whilst her Majesty kept the tree in an upright position.

But this we hope in future years
When high its royal head it rears
Above its fellows round—
That long 'twill be
A leafy tree
Near 'Concord's Temple' found!
While she that plac'd it there still prove
The idol of her people's love!

Prince Albert then planted a young cedar tree at a short distance from the spot; and her Majesty and the Prince having planted two other similar trees on the north side of the Temple, the Duke of Buckingham called out 'God bless her Majesty the Queen,' a sentiment answered, first, by the cheers of the noble party present, and re-echoed by about two hundred persons who were congregated in the park, at a point from whence a view of the pleasing ceremony was obtained.

THE FABRIC OF STOWE. No. II.

IN the last number of *The Stoic* some reference was made to the great house of Stowe as it had been, as we found it, and as it has been converted to its new use.

For what must surely be the first time in its long history—save only perhaps when Queen Victoria paid her famous state visit or on a few other such gala occasions—Stowe must be wishing that it were even larger!

The fact is, such is the vigour of the new foundation, that next year Stowe School will have already outgrown Stowe House. That means new buildings.

The placing and nature of these buildings cannot be a matter of indifference to *The Stoic's* readers, as they will have a direct bearing on the School life of every boy at Stowe and some small effect on the appearance of the place itself.

I say 'small effect' because, for a number of good reasons, all the new works immediately contemplated (with the exception of the Sanatorium, which must necessarily be isolated) are to be carried out within the two great courts that lie behind the quadrant colonnades on either side of the North Portico.

One practical consideration before the Governors was that of accessibility from the main block, for service as well as for boys and masters, and also for the heating, lighting, drainage, and water mains which will all link up to the central system.

Then there was the aesthetic difficulty to be faced—how to add to a monumental group of buildings of perfect external symmetry without doing violence to the architectural balance upon which so much of the present effect depended?

To that problem the spacious East and West Courts gave the answer, for within their towering screen walls even a two-storied building would still be invisible from without, so that until entering them the visitor would never realise that anything had been added.

What are first to be added are, in the East Court, a new block of four classrooms on two floors occupying the angle adjoining the present cycle stores, and in the West Court, a new dormitory block along the back of the colonnade for upwards of twenty boys with new changing room, house room and some half-dozen studies on the ground floor below it.

Both floors will be on the same level as those in the main block, from which they will be directly entered.

The Sanatorium will occupy a site now being cleared just beyond Whitehead's cottage. It is a widespread building all on one floor in the form of an 'H,' the extremity towards the cricket field being arranged for ordinary casualties and the other end (completely isolated from the rest and looking towards the gardens) for infectious cases.

The new Fives Courts are to be accommodated to the West of the workshop, where the old back of the vanished greenhouses gives us a useful start.

In addition to these buildings already named, there are the larger matters of the speech hall and the new dining hall block which, however, have not yet been finally determined on, though various alternative schemes are under consideration.

Whenever new accommodation is demanded one instinctively looks round the array of temples to see if some of them cannot be made useful as well as ornamental, at the same time giving one an excuse for very necessary reparations.

So far, however, no scheme has been devised whereby any, save perhaps the Temple of Concord, can be both usefully and conveniently employed, and their restoration and maintenance must be a work of piety rather than of immediate utility.

In his admirable book, *The English Home*, Mr. Alfred Gotch gives a sketch of Stowe and its satellite temples that deserves quotation at length :

'In all these great houses the lay out helped the general effect; the gardens and the groves were designed in the same spirit as the houses which they surrounded. Those at Stowe were the most famous of their time. There was but little formality in them, although they were traversed by a few straight walks and vistas. They embodied, indeed, the new idea which eschewed formality, and sought to gain the help of nature without apparent effort. They covered a considerable amount of space, and were divided by undulations of varied steepness, and by great masses of trees. The landscape thus provided by nature was improved by art. A stream was made to fall here, to wind there, to broaden out into a lake elsewhere. Paths were contrived to pass through thickets, to descend a dell, to curve beneath a lofty mound crowned with a 'temple,' to undulate along the edge of a copse and overlook meadows sloping down to the lake. The whole was studded at intervals with buildings, each of which had a character of its own. There were grottoes, temples, arches, rotundas, and columns, designed by Vanbrugh, Leoni, Kent, and others. They were so placed amid the trees, the meadows, and the water as to remind the spectator of pictures of Italian scenery. Half Italy was squeezed into two hundred acres of English countryside. A Corinthian arch admitted the principal approach from Buckingham. There were many temples; among them one to Venus, one to Bacchus, others to the Ancient Virtues, to the Modern Virtues (in ruins—a costly piece of satire which must speedily have palled), to British Worthies, to Concord and Victory, to Friendship and to other deities and abstractions. There was Dido's cave in one place, and St. Augustine's in another, a Fane of Pastoral Poetry elsewhere; there were monuments to people of more or less eminence, archways commemorative of royal visitors, artificial ruins, bridges over artificial waters, a Gothic temple, and a large tablet to a dead dog.

'Most of these buildings were furnished with inscriptions on which were bestowed much ingenuity, scholarship, and neatness of versification. For thirty or forty years monuments were added as occasion arose, either to commemorate the death of a distinguished acquaintance, or the visit of some royal personages. . . . The whole idea is carried out with so much skill, the buildings themselves are so charming that, once we accept the artificial atmosphere of the place, we wander from point to point with unabated interest and admiration. Nowhere else can we gain so vivid an insight into the laborious elegance of the age.'

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How important a part the temples and monuments played in the galas and entertainments at the great house may be learnt from Horace Walpole's lively letters—as when the Princess Amelia visited Stowe in 1770. How any of these same temples and monuments may be turned to practical account to-day is a riddle the answer to which will be very gratefully received.

CLOUGH WILLIAMS-ELLIS.

CRICKET

THE SCHOOL *v.* ALEC WAUGH, Esq.'s, XI.

Played at Stowe on July 18th. The School, 112 (Griffin 24, Silcock 21); Alec Waugh's XI, 153.

THE SCHOOL *v.* CAPTAIN G. ROBERTS' XI.

Played at Tile House on July 22nd. The School owes much to Mr. Roberts' generosity and goodwill. In spite of the weather, this was the most enjoyable match we had, and we only hope it will not be the last time the School plays on the Tile House ground.

Captain Roberts' XI won by 5 wickets. Scores: The School, 76 (Cowell 33, Croft 16); Captain Roberts' XI, 77 for 5 wickets.

THE SCHOOL *v.* THE MASTERS.

The return match was played on July 27th, the Masters winning by 7 wickets. Score: The School, 120 (Falconer 48); The Masters, 121 for 3 wickets.

THE SCHOOL *v.* THE WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Played on July 28th. Spoilt by rain. Score: The School, 101; The Works Department, 14 for 1 wicket.

BOXING

Boxing is at present necessarily subject to certain limitations, but the enthusiasm and energy of Saunders have seen it firmly established in the School. On every Wednesday and Saturday, at 5.30 p.m., a devoted band may be seen steering its course cautiously but unflinchingly to the White Horse Block, there to acquaint itself with the art both in theory and in practice. If the truth must be told, a portion of this band confines itself to the theoretical side of the matter, but the number of active participants is increasing rapidly, as each day discovers some modest person who has before been content to hide his light. One may, of course, question whether tea is the best precursor of boxing, or boxing the most suitable preparation for evening chapel; but considered in abstraction from such relations the two hours each week are most successful.

Of the regular performers, Riess, Bowen and Rowse are perhaps the most stylish performers, moving well on their feet, and making good use of the left.

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Butler too is promising, but unfortunately has no sparring partner of his own weight: Cowell, Stephens, Kelley and Eddy should do well.

It is proposed to hold Inter-House Competitions next term, details of which will be arranged later. There will be six weights, the lightest under five stone, the open weight over nine. Points will be gained by the winners in each weight, and by those whom they beat in the finals; but the exact proportion will be settled later. It is hoped that those who have done boxing before will not merely enter, but practise beforehand. As boxing is itself one of the finest forms of exercise, so a contest in it demands especial fitness.

LAWN TENNIS

An inter-House tennis match was played, on the hard courts, at the end of the Summer Term. Temple beat Bruce by three matches to two. Results:—

E. R. Avory and P. M. Falconer (Temple) beat D. F. Wilson and J. J. Hartland-Swann, 7—5, 6—3; beat W. R. K. Silcock and K. L. Scott, 6—3, 6—2.

H. E. Robinson and B. S. Harriss (Temple) beat W. R. K. Silcock and K. L. Scott, 6—4, 6—4; lost to D. F. Wilson and J. J. Hartland-Swann, 6—1, 2—6, 5—7.

D. F. Wilson (Bruce) beat E. R. Avory (Temple), 7—5, 5—7, 10—8.

SWIMMING

Two inter-House Relay Races were held last term. As it was impossible to get a satisfactory course at the bathing-place in Eleven Acre, they had to be decided in the 'learners' tank. Bruce won both events, owing much to the strong swimming of the Dunsfords. Results:—

I. 120 Yards Relay (4 distances of 40 yds.).—1, Bruce (D. A. Dunsford, A. Dunsford, C. B. Jones, C. H. Hartland-Swann); 2, Temple (E. Richards, P. M. Falconer, A. M. Cowell, D. H. I. Searle). Won by 8 yards.

II. 120 Yards Relay (2 distances of 80 yds.).—1, Bruce (D. A. Dunsford and C. B. Jones); 2, Temple (E. Richards and D. H. I. Searle). Won by 10 yards.

GRENVILLE FENCING CLUB

One of the many activities of the present term has been the formation of a fencing club by a considerable number of members of Grenville House.

The inaugural meeting was held on Wednesday, November 14th. At this meeting de Amodio read an interesting paper on the History of Fencing, and, afterwards, with the help of S. J. Murdoch, gave a practical illustration of many of the technical questions raised in his paper.

Shortly after the start of the Club the Headmaster presented to it two handsome épées. This splendid gift, together with the room which has been definitely set aside for fencing, and which is fitted up with the necessary racks, has been a great stimulus and encouragement to the work of the Club.

At the present time, various plans for the future are under consideration. Of these, the most important is the suggestion that in the future the Club shall be open not only to members of Grenville House, but also to the School, thus making it a School Club, even though it will be called, in compliment to its founders, 'The Grenville Fencing Club.'

SCHOOL WIRELESS CLUB

A Wireless Club has been formed and has already been joined by many members throughout the School. The activities of the Club are at present curtailed by the lack of a suitable home, but it is hoped that this will be remedied shortly.

As the Club is still in its infancy, plans for the future are by no means settled. At the same time accommodation not only for receiving but for making, altering and adjusting experimental and other apparatus is one, amongst others, of the good things to which we look forward next term.

THE ZOO

The Zoo is now nearing completion so far as the actual buildings are concerned, but there is still a great deal of turving to be done, and it is difficult to build and turf at the same time.

Just now the work is being held up by a plague of rats, which is threatening disaster to the Zoo's inhabitants—besides tearing up the turf we lay—and we are busy with traps and ferrets. These rats are of the ordinary brown kind, and have been following the workmen in their excavations. Unfortunately, they seem to have come to stay!

The animals in the Zoo are not so varied as they are numerous. They consist of one red squirrel, fourteen rabbits, eight ferrets, eight guinea pigs, sixteen pigeons and two pea-hens. Two golden pheasants and a peacock are expected, as well as some young badgers and fox cubs, and we have the promise of a dwarf Indian tree bear!

The pea-hens have been in possession of their run for some days, and are now quite at home. The cage for the golden pheasants is well under way, but will house the pigeons until the pheasants arrive. The present pigeon cage will then be used as an aviary for hawks and owls, as it was last term, and there will be another aviary adjoining it for small birds of a hardy nature. This, with a pigeon-loft, which we hope to have built by the end of the summer term, will complete our programme as it now stands.

So far we have used 96 lbs. of staples and 1,300 yds. of wire netting, 4 ft. in height and of varying mesh. The wood for the stakes has been cut and then dragged some distance to the Zoo by ropes; and the gravel has been dug from a pit about a mile away and carted up in a small hand-cart. The whole of the work has been voluntary.

We are very grateful indeed to the Headmaster and to many parents, notably Mr. Bertram, for the interest they have taken in our work and the help they have given us.

H.E.R.

STOICA

ON November 16th the 'First Sod' of the new grounds on the Bourbon Field was cut by C. B. Jones, the Captain of Football, in the presence of a photographer. The sod was removed by a curio collector and now occupies a place of honour in the Zoo.

Mr. Warrington has promised to present the School with a House Challenge Cup for Football. We are grateful to him—not for the first time in our history—and we know Mr. Warrington well enough to be sure that the cup will be worth seeing when it comes.

The Dean of Bristol has promised to present an annual prize for an essay on some subject connected with the History of Christianity.

Mr. H. C. Barber, of Hunstanton, has promised to give two prizes for Reading Aloud. One, for Seniors, will be awarded for the reading of passages from a play of Shakespeare, the other, for Juniors, for reading from the Authorised Version of the Old Testament. We welcome no prize foundation more warmly than this.

The Headmaster's late 'House,' which claims to win the Football League Cup at Lancing more often than most Houses, has presented a League Cup to Stowe for annual competition.

Miss Cathcart, of Edinburgh, has promised to present a House Golf Trophy, to be competed for annually in the Easter Term.

Mr. Martens has most kindly promised to send as a gift a five-ton truck of fertiliser, specially prepared after analysis of the soil, for the new grounds being laid out on the Bourbon Field.

By the permission of the Master and of Mr. A. J. Robarts, most of the School attended a Cub-Hunting Meet of the Grafton Hounds at Tile House on October 23rd. About fifty were at another Meet of the Grafton, also at Tile House, on November 14th. On this occasion the fox led the Hunt through the Stowe grounds, and in particular through the area being mapped by Set D, who were out on survey work near the Gothic Temple.

Two professional wild men have lately provided logs for the Masters, and exercise themselves by wood-cutting feats performed in the neighbourhood of the now 'silent' engine.

All three Laboratories and the Art School will be in working order next term.

The first pike to be got out of the lakes (since they were our lakes) was caught by Yorke on November 17th. It was not large, but it was a pike.

Arboreal dwellings. Several eligible sites are now to let.

The first birth hitherto recorded in the Zoo occurred on November 26th. The infant is reported to be progressing favourably.

Browns *are* waterproof. They have been tested. And, as prophesied at their introduction, they *do* give much innocent pleasure to the inhabitants of neighbouring villages.

During the singing of 'La Marseillaise' by a French Set in Classroom H the other day, a pane of glass in the window became deeply moved and cracked.

The eastern half of the Headmaster's garden has now been laid out. The disadvantages of sowing grass two months too late are admirably illustrated by the condition of the 'lawns.'

Shilling teas are now a reality at the Shop, and one more must be added to the list of Moss's achievements in enterprise and organisation. Visitors may be entertained by the members of the School—and no questions are asked as to whether host or guest pays the bill.

The Stoic extends a hearty welcome to a contemporary younger only than itself. *The Chandosian* shows promise of a brilliant future, and the study of difficult manuscripts will doubtless receive a notable stimulus from its publication.

The beneficent effects of a Prefect's examination success last term have extended to the two New Houses, the Librarians of which have each received their portion of the spoils.

The 'Cygnet' of last term have now learnt to fly. The other day one of them flew dangerously near the head of the Senior Prefect, who was adjusting his aerial on the roof.

The space on the North Front will shortly be turfed by Mr. Sikes who, however, is engaged at present in clearing the site for the new Sanatorium and the new Classrooms.

The Telescope (one of Mr. Bertram's many gifts) is nearing the end of its chequered career. On being sent from the makers in London it was mistaken for a roll of linoleum, stored as such and long lost to sight. The Observatory was then found to require repairs, and while these were being done the telescope again disappeared. It has now, however, been tracked down to the Temple Boxroom, where it had taken refuge, and it will shortly be put to its proper use in the repaired Observatory.

A large wall map specially made for the School by Stanford has been hung outside the Music Room. The scale is 25 in. to the mile, and the area covered extends some 2½ miles round Stowe in every direction.

Saturday dancing has proved popular enough to justify its introduction. The floor of Assembly is not exactly springy, but it has the virtue of being large.

Lines written in dejection at Stowe. (Do they suggest a sincere flattery of Leçon Neuf?—Ed *Stoic*.)

'It rains, it snows, it hails, it freezes. My fingers are cold, my toes are cold, I am cold everywhere. Thank goodness there is no defaulters to-day. It is too cold, very much too cold, really too cold. Indeed it is very cold, and I am frozen. Flambard is an ass and is very dense. He comes in our French book every time. He annoys me. He is a dressed-up little idiot.'

Mr. W. B. Gourlay, of Cambridge, has presented a very fine lecture lantern to the School. The first lecture to be illustrated by its aid was given (appropriately enough by Mr. Gourlay himself) on Saturday, December 8th. A most interesting series of travel slides was shown, including pictures of volcanoes in many different parts of the world.

The Octagon, whose functions have hitherto been purely ornamental, acquired an unaccustomed usefulness during the frost. The ice was good and the area of the lake seemed much greater from the centre than it does from the land.

Forestry this term is a part of the School curriculum, and the non-Latinists of Form III, armed with axe and billhook, set out twice a week for the Grecian Valley, much to the envy of the occupants of the White Horse Block, who watch them longingly from the upper windows.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

The cash price of a single number of *The Stoic* has now been fixed at 2/-. It can be sent by post for 2/3. The annual subscription (three numbers post free) will be 6/6, which sum may be sent at any time to the Treasurer of *The Stoic*, Stowe School, Buckingham.

The Editor wishes to thank the following firms for the permission they have kindly given to reproduce photographs taken and supplied by them:—CENTRAL PRESS (the Head of the School planting a tree at Stowe), CENTRAL NEWS ('Waiting for the Delegates,' 'The Procession arrives at the First Tree'), SPECIAL PRESS ('Tennis in October' and 'Early Days at Rugger').

EVENING

When the tender hours of day have passed,
So wearily and so slow,
And the gentle evening still and calm
Hath her misty mantle cast
O'er the world below,

Then seemeth all the earth to rest
So quietly and so deep;
The glowing sun hath sunken low
In the hills of the purple west
To seek sweet sleep.

The evening star doth loose her light
O'er the crimsoning sky,
And the drooping tree doth rustle in the breeze
Of the coming night;
Then day doth die.

The shepherd ploddeth homeward slow,
O'er the winding way,
The pallid moon doth glimmer through the shades
Of dusk, and so
Night ends the day.

A.J.T.

THE WALKER COLLECTION

Mrs. Rochester Pusey has presented to the School a fine collection of Museum specimens, chiefly Geological and Zoological. The collection was formed by the late Dr. F. A. Walker, a portrait of whom accompanies the gift. Owing to the incomplete state of the Museum, the arrangement and display of the specimens have had to be postponed till next term.

RUGGER AT STOWE

THE School's first Rugby season opened with one neatly-trimmed pitch, four others more or less whiskered, a few goal-posts and balls, and a mob of over two hundred enthusiasts, more than half of whom had never seen a rugby ball before. Luckily such a state of affairs can occur only once in the history of any School, and by the beginning of next season there will be at least a captain and a secretary, and possibly one or two 'colours' of a minor order.

After the first two or three weeks' scramble was over, C. B. Jones (Grenville) was appointed captain and A. G. Bowie (Temple) secretary, since when things have taken shape and gone ahead: the School looks for great things to be done under the leadership of these two.

The difficulties of arranging fixtures in our present state are much greater than they were in the case of cricket in summer, for the obvious reason that only people of a like maturity can play the game satisfactorily against each other. And so matches have fallen into two categories, (a) those against preparatory schools and (b) those against sides which could not unsuitably engage the whole rather heterogeneous strength of the School. Matches of the first category are easily come by, but perhaps provide rather too easy a test even for the 'little ones'—the lightest and smallest set of players that we can put into the field. The Little side has been well led by Creed and, although it has contained quite a large proportion of people who never played before this term, has done very well in its matches and has on more than one occasion played quite good football. Only three matches of the second category were arranged for this term, and at the time of writing only one has been played, the other two having been postponed owing to the frost. The even balance in size and weight of the Little side is not possible in the Big side, and this is a dis-

advantage in playing, for example, the under sixteen team of a full-blown school, where all the members of the side are probably between fifteen and sixteen. There is, however, some undoubtedly good material in the Big side, and the few matches should do an immense amount of good in welding it into a team.

But only a chosen few can take part in outside matches, and so an Inter-House League Competition has been run, which pulls in practically everyone in the School. Each House has an 'A' team, which excludes first-game people, and plays against the 'A' team of every other House; a 'B' team—the next best XV—does likewise. These matches have aroused considerable enthusiasm, and have had the effect of making people realise that the only way to play the game is to play it hard. The House matches proper, which will be played next term, will surely demonstrate that elementary principle even more clearly.

As we are only at the beginning of things, we must not look for perfection at once. Nor should we find it, or anything like it, if we did. But we can look for a very marked improvement in one of the elementary points of the game before the season ends. At this stage the most important thing of all is to learn to tackle. With negligible exceptions the only way to tackle for people at school is 'low and hard.' The high smother tackle—man and ball—may have a place when the other is learnt, but as the standard way of bringing a man down it is utterly out of place. When a big man tackles a 'rabbit' it is an easy and apparently effective method, but when the same big man meets another of the same size and weight, he will realize how ineffective a method it is. At present the tendency to throw out clasp-ing hands at a man's neck is much too common, and no one need have the slightest anticipation of getting into any good team either now or hereafter, unless he adopts the other method. Quite apart from anything else, it is sheer joy and one of the most glorious sensations of Rugby to feel your opponent crash down as your hands close round his knees.

THE SCHOOL v. WINCHESTER HOUSE, BRACKLEY.

Played at Stowe on Saturday, October 27th. The School put a light team into the field and won their first match by 23 points to nil. The game was really more even than the score suggests, as it was only outside the scrum that the School showed any marked superiority. The School pack was slightly out-weighted, but made up for this by their pace and keenness. They are an even lot, and should do well when once their tackling improves. Creed led them well, and Sword, Dunsford and Rowse were often prominent.

The outsides were quite unexpectedly good in attack: their defence was not seriously tested. Kelley at fly-half opened up the game well, and the threes were

all sound. Pearson proved himself a dangerous player on the wing; he goes hard for the line and needs very little room to move in.

Tries were scored by Rowse, Pearson, Dunsford and Turton (2). Pearson converted two and had bad luck on several occasions.

THE SCHOOL v. BILTON GRANGE.

On Saturday, November 10th, the School beat Bilton Grange by 23 points to nil; but the game was not so uneven as the score suggests. The visitors were a little lighter and considerably slower than the School team, and played with less dash, but tackled, heeled and passed well.

Bilton Grange attacked at once, but Sword picked up a loose pass well within his own half, and ran through to score a good try. The kick at goal failed. Further tries followed at regular intervals through Marshall, Tudor-Davies, Sword and Pearson, all four being converted by Pearson.

Play during the second half was rather scrambling and uninteresting, the monotony being occasionally relieved by a tackle round the neck meeting with more success than it deserved. Bilton Grange once or twice looked like scoring, but the School always saved. Throughout the game Sword was prominent with some fine runs: Creed worked hard in the scrum and led the forwards well. Harris at full-back had little tackling to do, but brought off some really fine kicks.

THE SCHOOL v. STRATTON PARK.

Played at Stowe on November 17th, the School winning by 48 points to nil. Stratton Park were beaten for pace and, though they had a good share of the ball, their passing invariably broke down whenever they began to look at all dangerous. The game was something of a procession, but there were several really good bits of Rugby in it. The first try of the second half came from a very good bit of play by Pearson, who got well away on the wing, and when tackled by the full-back, gave Sword a perfect inside pass. Of the forwards, Dunsford, Marshall and Rowse were particularly good. Rowse scored one first-class try, dribbling right up the field, with the ball well under control.

Tries were scored by McLeod (3), Rowse (2), Sword (3), Pearson, Dunsford and Tudor-Davies. Pearson's place-kicking was again very sound; he missed nothing that was at all close in.

THE SCHOOL v. LYNAM'S.

This match took place on December 3rd, after a week's postponement owing to frost. The rest did not appear to have done very much good to the School team, four of whom were on the sick list, as many elementary points of the game were forgotten, such as tackling low, going for the man with the ball, being on the run to take a pass, and so forth. We were rather lucky in winning by three tries (nine points) to a try (three points), for the Dragons controlled the game for the greater part of the time, and lost only through the rather uncertain holding of passes on the part of their three-quarters.

The School packed badly, and were beaten in the tight fairly often by a lighter scrum. The Dragon threes thus saw plenty of the ball, and with a little luck and better handling might have placed us in a bad position in the first half. Creed at the start elected to keep the ball among the forwards—tactics which did not inspire the backs with confidence, as their work came to be defensive only. They thus lost the very important moral effect of being themselves on the attack.

The forwards as a whole were ragged. They were often painfully slow in breaking, and in the loose did not get on to their opponents nearly fast enough. There was too much an air of *laissez-faire* about them. Ling, who took the place of Tudor-Davies, unfit, at scrum-half, was very slow and lobbed his passes, so that Kelley could never take the ball on the move. As a result, the whole three-quarter line passed standing still, if it was not aiming direct for the touch-line.

In the first half Marshall scored a try from a good dribble, which, however, like many of the other dribbles throughout the game, was practically unsupported. The Dragons pressed after this, and getting possession frequently in the scrum, made a lot of ground. During some loose play on our line, one of their forwards picked up smartly and went over for a try.

In the second half the School played better and gave their threes some scoring chances, two of which were taken, first Sword running in from about thirty yards, and then Gill forcing his way over from a line-out. Sword had another fine run very nearly through the whole Dragon side, but having zig-zagged across the field, he was brought down by a Dragon coming back quickly to 'cover up.'

The best of our backs were Sword and Gill, while of the forwards the best were Creed, Marshall and Dunsford mi.

The School team was:—Cook, back; Pearson, Sword, Gill and Farthing, three-quarters; Kelley and Ling, halves; Creed (captain), Marshall, J. F. Dunsford mi, Croker, Thompson, Croft, J. W. G., Boyd-Carpenter and Toms, forwards.

THE STOWE SCHOOL GOLF CLUB

PLANNING a golf course is intriguing work; and if personal experience goes for anything, it affords considerable scope for the use of the imagination. This, perhaps, accounts for the following highly-imaginative dialogue, in which X and Y, the joint architects of the Stowe course engaged, on their walk back from 'Cobham,' after fixing the position of the ninth green.

X (*impressively*): 'The Final Round of the Amateur Championship of 1933 was played to-day on the famous Stowe course . . .'

Y: ' . . . which was in perfect condition, in spite of the rough usage to which it had been subjected during the week.'

X: 'The finalists . . .'

X AND Y (*together*): ' . . . X and Y . . .'

Y: ' . . . had fully earned their places . . .'

X: ' . . . in the final bracket . . .'

Y: ' . . . X having conquered such giants of the game as Roger Wethered, Holderness and "Chick" Evans . . .'

X: ' . . . and Y having successfully accounted for Tolley, Hunter and "Bobbie" Jones.'

X AND Y (*together*): 'Both participants played super-golf in to-day's final.'

X: 'At the completion of the morning round . . .'

Y: ' . . . which thrilled the vast concourse of spectators, they went in to lunch all square . . .'

X: ' . . . both having gone round in approximately 73.'

Y: 'The first five holes of the second round were halved . . .'

X (*quickly*): ' . . . but X put his approach stone dead at the sixth, to become one up.'

Y: 'It was a ding-dong tussle from there to . . .'

X: ' . . . the short sixteenth, where . . .'

Y (*triumphantly*): ' . . . Y squared the match by holing his tee shot. The crowd gasped!'

X (*indignantly*): 'Here! I say, that's not fa——.'

But enough of ten years' hence: what of to-day?

The S.S.G.C. arrived quite quietly towards half-term. It has grown with astonishing rapidity, and is now a very lusty infant indeed. In fact, the Club is in a far more advanced state than the course over which it plays. For it takes time to make a golf-course, and ours can hardly be called one—yet. There is no fairway, and it is quite possible to lose a ball on the greens; but there are the beginnings of what should, in time, become a good 'test of golf'—to use a phrase dear to the hearts of club secretaries.

The first four holes are between the South Front and the Octagon. The first is a full iron shot to a blind green; the second a short mashie, with the green close to the Rotundo; the third a dog-leg hole back towards the lake, giving a chance to the adventurous to cut off a corner by going over—or through—some trees. The fourth is another iron shot—rather colourless at present—but with possibilities.

The last five holes are in the waterworks field, and the open park beyond the Gothic Temple—our future club-house, as some say. The ground here is ideal for golf, and there are several really good holes, the seventh and eighth being the best. The seventh is a full brassie through a gap in the trees, to a green just over the brow of the hill, and the eighth a two-shot hole, with a green well guarded by trees.

Although there are so far only nine holes, there is ample room for a full eighteen-hole course, and who knows but that, some day, our friends X and Y may not go forth and set their imaginations to work again?

MUSIC AT STOWE

LIKE many other things, the musical development of Stowe is principally a matter for pious hope. Many considerations, the inevitable outcome of the School's youth, prevent our doing more at present than mark-time and await future opportunities with confident optimism. In the first place, the facilities for the performance of instrumental music are as yet quite unavoidably limited: there is no organ; there are seven pianos, only four of which are ordinarily available for practice: and if there were more it is difficult to suggest where they could at the moment be placed. Again, although there are plenty of piano pupils, some of whom show distinct promise, hardly one is more than fifteen years old, and consequently the standard of playing is necessarily low; while at present only three boys learn the violin. Further, while the natural suggestion springs to the mind that in the circumstances musical development should be principally vocal, it must not be forgotten that the voices of over half the School are now in the uncomfortable stage of 'breaking,' so that any singing they indulge in is not only painful but even deleterious. In a year or two, however, it is to be hoped that these difficulties will be overcome by a combination of nature's powers and the artifice of man.

Meanwhile, the musical activities of the School are being chiefly concentrated on the congregational singing at the chapel services, when it is expected that everyone will do his best to sing the hymns and canticles heartily and with intelligence. An attempt is made to ensure the possibility of this by periodical congregational practices, when good unfamiliar tunes are learnt and familiar ones refurbished. A nucleus of boys who voluntarily attend a short weekly practice is provided with pointed psalters, with a view to its leading the singing of the psalms.

So far as the limitation of means permits, an effort is made to provide opportunities for those who wish to listen to music by an informal recital every Sunday evening, when piano music and piano arrangements and transcriptions of orchestral music are performed with occasional vocal interludes by members of the staff. It is believed that even a piano version of the *Capriccio Espagnol* or of the *New World Symphony* may do something to broaden a boy's musical sympathies, while it is not thought reprehensible to include Edward German's *Henry VIII Dances* and other works in a lighter vein. These recitals

may with advantage be varied in the near future by visits from amateur string quartets or a professional violinist.

A Choral Society has been started, and with the invaluable help of kindly masters has managed to maintain itself in spite of the numerous other distractions that Wednesday afternoons provide. At present its efforts are confined to rounds and two-part songs. An occasional outlet is provided for the pent-up energies of the whole school in a sing-song, culminating in an uproarious 'concert' at the end of term.

Music is taught as a form subject in three forms for three-quarters of an hour a week, when the rudiments of sight-reading and aural training are varied by lectures, if that be not too grandiloquent a term, on particular musicians and on certain aspects of musical development. A projected Gilbert and Sullivan Society, the fruitful efforts of the Modern Languages Masters in the matter of French and German songs and the recently organised Dancing Classes all have, or may have, a real effect on general musical appreciation in the School, but fall outside the scope of this article.

With the institution of an O.T.C. it is sincerely to be hoped that it will be found possible to form a brass band. There is something about a trombone which appeals to an intelligent boy who might view with contemptuous indifference the prospect of singing the alto part in the chorus of Stanford's 'Revenge.' A brass band, in turn, could be made to form the basis of a school orchestra that might in time pretend to rival the orchestra at Rugby School. Such a proposition opens up a boundless vista of possibilities, though it is doubtless extravagant to look forward to a time when tunes from the B minor mass or, more appropriately perhaps, a fugue-subject from one of Handel's Chandos Anthems will oust 'Le Roi de Sardaigne' or 'Bananas' from the halls and passages of Stowe.

THE LIBRARY

THE Library no longer wears the rather bleak, wintry aspect of emptiness; the brown, bare shelves are gradually becoming coloured with the blossoms of literature. Tints of many shades, green, grey and blue, of sunset and orange—gleams of scarlet and gold—are bursting out along the shelves. It really gives one the feeling that before long the whole will be aglow with colour, and all the bareness covered. Already there is a considerable tasting of the fruit thereof, and truly it is well worth while, as amongst those fruits are most of the finest specimens in the orchard of English literature.

This blossoming is mainly due to the fact that the three important collections of books that were mentioned in the last number of *The Stoic* as being on their way have since arrived, have been arranged in their places, and, in the case of the new books, for the most part catalogued.

The first two of these gifts, namely, the books from Lord Home and the Montauban presentation, have been described already. The third is a magnificent contribution from the Governors.

This, in itself, is a library, as it includes books of all kinds, from the *Encyclopedia Britannica* to Mark Twain. In it are standard works on Music and Painting, Literature, Science and Nature, Travel, History, Biography, Theology, Architecture and Fiction, and a fine collection of poetry from the 'Percy Reliques' to 'Georgian Poetry.'

The Rev. P. E. Warrington has taken very great interest in forming this collection, and, as in the case of the Montauban Presentation, several of the books have been specially procured and bound for the Library. These books fill the shelves from nine to fourteen.

Major and the Hon. Mrs. T. Close-Smith have, quite recently, presented about 160 books, including the Harmsworth Encyclopædia and twenty volumes of the Record Society's Publication.

Mr. W. H. L. Llewellyn has given us Thorburn's 'British Birds' in four volumes, a beautifully illustrated work; Mr. Herbert Jackson No. I of a limited edition of his fine book, 'European Firearms'; the Dean of Bristol 'Liberal Evangelicalism'; Mr. L. Duke 'Last Poems,' by A. E. Housman; and the Hon. G. Butler the 'Bab Ballads' and the 'Poems of Service.'

Should anyone wish to know who is the most popular author in the library, there is little doubt about that: Kipling is easily first. It was said recently that he had 'moulded the thought of a generation'; he is certainly moulding the thoughts of a second, if that be so. Robert Louis Stevenson is almost as popular, but Edgar Allen Poe's 'Tales of Mystery and Imagination' competes closely with 'Kim,' 'Soldiers Three,' 'Treasure Island' and 'Kidnapped.'

Mention should here be made of the House Libraries, which are doing very valuable work in the domain of lighter reading.

STOWE AND THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

RING out the old, ring in the new—it is a hackneyed phrase enough, but it may well bear one more repetition, for it has been echoing in our ears these many days, to the sound of many hammers, and the time will soon come when new customs, new traditions will crowd upon us, and tempt us to forget the old Stowe of the years long gone.

The greatness of Stowe was an eighteenth century greatness. It is to the age of Congreve and Pope and Horace Walpole that we must look, if we would find the beauties of Stowe praised by famous men, who knew her at first hand. So let us go back for a space to that age of magnificence and artificiality and see if the men of those days praised Stowe aright. It is no easy task, for

those days are gone away,
And their hours are old and grey,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years.

And when we get there, we find praises lavished on those peculiarities which to-day we could well spare.

Wherever the wanderer may turn in the vast grounds of Stowe, the hand of the eighteenth century can be clearly seen, mocking at the beauties of nature with bricks and plaster. It was Pope who said:

True wit is nature to advantage dressed;

and Pope was more typical of the age in which he lived than any other of our English poets. Now what Pope said of wit, he believed of everything. 'Nature to advantage dressed' was his watchword. Nature alone was a poor thing to Pope and to the rather foppish gentlemen of our Augustan age: but nature touched up by art—her open spaces filled with the works of man, her streams led through grottoes of man's making, in a word, nature with her naked frailties hid—was the object of their unstinted admiration. This was the fashionable attitude in the days when Stowe was in the making. It almost seems as if, 'To every Glade its Temple,' was the motto of the men who laid out the grounds of Stowe; and when their work was done Stowe became indeed 'a work to wonder at': and to their way of thinking no man could wish for more.

Maybe we think differently to-day, preferring nature to art, and if the right of the matter is on our side, then Stowe—her temples and monuments shed away—is certainly a magnificent exception to prove the rule. To our way of thinking it can have no higher praise than this, that the newcomer to Stowe can hardly realise, as he wanders by lake and stream, through wood and valley, and sees the perfection with which everything is blended into a supremely natural and satisfying whole; that the character and charm are not the careless work of nature, but the laborious creation of the hand of man; that the Grecian valley and the magnificent sweep up to the South Front do not own nature as their architect, but Bridgeman and 'Capability' Brown and the ubiquitous William Kent. But if, as we have hinted, the general lay-out of the grounds of Stowe typifies all that is best in eighteenth century ideas of art, the myriad 'fanés and temples' with which the grounds are so liberally besprinkled are no less typical of the worst. There can be few things, harmless in themselves, more outrageously out of keeping with their surroundings than the Temple of British Worthies—to take but one example from the many which spring readily to mind. And yet to eighteenth century eyes those temples were a perpetual joy; they were the crowning beauties of the place—a constant reminder of the superiority of man. There was really nothing inconsistent in this attitude. The eighteenth century believed, with Pope, that 'the proper study of mankind' was man. Nature was regarded as no more than a background to show off more effectively the works of man—useful, necessary, but having in itself no very great claims to consideration. It is in this connection, as being not so much a thing of beauty as a thing to wonder at, that we find Stowe mentioned by eighteenth century writers—it pleased their heads, and for the most part left their hearts untouched.

It was during the life of Sir Richard Temple, afterwards Lord Cobham, that the gardens of Stowe were laid out on their present lines, and the place became one of the favourite retreats of the great men of the age. Pope was a friend of Cobham and often stayed with him, spending most of his time out of doors, where he found just that mixture of nature and artificiality which he liked. As to the gardens, he says in a letter, 'They are beyond all description'; while the famous lines in which he lays down the rules of landscape gardening:

To build, to plant, whatever you intend,
To rear the Column, or the Arch to bend—

have Stowe as their text.

But Pope was only one of many famous men who delighted, at that time, to wander through the 'op'ning glades' of Stowe. Congreve, Vanbrugh, Wilkes, Kent, the exquisite Lord Chesterfield, even royalty itself, were all among the visitors to Stowe. The poet Thomson, who had so little in common with the other great literary figures of his time, joined in their praise of Stowe, in a passage which he introduced into the second edition of 'The Seasons':

O lead me to the wide extended walks,
The fair, majestic Paradise of Stowe,

he says, and again:

While thus we talk and through Elysian vales
Delighted rove

There remains Horace Walpole, genial, brilliant, dilettante, typical eighteenth century gentleman. He knew Stowe when it had passed into the hands of Lord Cobham's nephew, Lord Temple. He revelled in its beauties, waxed sentimental over the names of the famous men who had stayed there, and was the first writer we know of to hint that Stowe might possibly be even more beautiful if some of the temples and monuments were removed. In particular he ridiculed the growing habit of raising premature monuments to the memory of obscure celebrities. 'I will not,' he writes, 'place an ossuary in my garden to my cat before her bones are placed in it'—and, we may hope, not even then. But he was only half converted; he adored—he himself avows it—the Gothic Temple!

With the closing years of the eighteenth century the days of Stowe's magnificence passed away. Fashions were changing, and Stowe could not change with them. The nineteenth century saw Stowe forgotten, save for that memorable occasion when the bankrupt Duke of Buckingham had the honour of entertaining Queen Victoria, with the assistance of the bailiffs.

And to-day, having played one part with varying fortune for two hundred years, Stowe has passed into the fires of dissolution, and is emerging, Phoenix-like and fresh apparelled, to play another part, and perhaps a greater. We, who have watched her learning her new lines, as we look back on past glories and forward to fresh triumphs, may well echo Waller's couplet:

Leaving the old, two worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

F.T.A.

A COUNTRY WALK

TO enjoy a walk in the country, it is important to pretend that you are deeply interested in something that will be found near your journey's middle. It may be a cast-up whale, or a mountain top, or it may be nothing more unusual than a church door, and it does not matter if you are disappointed in it when you get there; the purpose has been served if the thought of your goal has kept up the interest of the expedition, by giving it the spice of discovery. So, as the guide-book said that the south door of Leckhampstead church 'should certainly not be missed,' we took our sticks and set out for Leckhampstead, prepared for anything or nothing.

On Saturdays the market-place at Buckingham makes up for its quietness on the other six days of the week, and we left the chattering farmers and the boastful cheapjacks behind us with a sense of relief and set off down the hill past the Fire-Escape Castle. A few yards, and we turned up to the left into a shady avenue, at the end of which lies Maids Moreton. It seems that in the fifteenth century two maiden ladies rebuilt the church; if they were responsible for the design of it too, they certainly had excellent taste, and it may well have been their own idea to re-name the place so charmingly. Cyclists must reach Maids Moreton by turning to the right off the Towcester road, the avenue being only for those who are wise enough to walk. The church is most beautiful, and inside under the tower is hanging an old wooden door, once in the north porch, riddled and splintered by Cromwell's destructive soldiers in the Civil Wars. On the left side of the chancel arch is a tablet to a Mrs. Penelope Verney, bearing the following lines:

Underneath this stone doth lie
As much virtue as could dye
Which, when alive did vigor give
To as much beauty as could live.

The author of one of our guide-books called this 'doggerel verse,' but the author of the other reprimanded him stiffly, observing that the lines are by Pope. It seems possible that they may both be right. The irreverent book went on to suggest that the old spelling of 'die' gives the last couplet a second meaning, but I do not think this would have amused the Maids at all, even if they had understood it.

Before going on to Leckhampstead, we turned off the turf-edged road to see Foscott, or, as some say, Foxcott. A famous Buckingham-

shire antiquary says that the name means 'habitation of foxes,' and for all I know he may be right. The church is absurdly small and very old; there is a Norman door at the south side, but we had to peer at it through a grill. A glimpse through the trees at the manor house, and we were back again on the road to Leckhampstead.

This dream village lies, appropriately enough, at the blind end of a lane. You cannot go *through* Leckhampstead (save on foot); you must go *to* it or pass it by. You are advised to go to it. The church was shut, as Buckinghamshire churches frequently are, but the important thing to look at is the south door, over which is a piece of Norman stone carving certainly not later than the eleventh century. It is very rough, executed maybe in the village, but when you know what it is meant to be you can pick out the two dragons struggling for a human soul, represented as a grotesque little figure with a very large head.

Just beyond the west door of the church is a square white house backed by dark trees; it ought to be haunted, but it probably is not. A little stone bridge in the foreground completes the picture, which remains as clearly in my mind as if I had painted it. A footpath behind us led to Lillingstone Lovell, which in beauty of name almost surpasses Maids Moreton. The guide-books were engaging about this place, and spoke of an ivy-covered tower of Henry III's time, and some fifteenth century brasses; also 'a field here was in three counties, and used to be the resort of prize fighters, who when disturbed by the police defied them, requiring three warrants for their arrest.' (The three counties were Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and a detached part of Oxfordshire, but the boundaries have since been altered.) We would gladly have extended our walk, and come out to the north of Stowe, but it was getting late and, after all, Leckhampstead was our ostensible object.

There is another path at the west end of the village bearing to the left over a field to Akeley, and as we climbed it we turned round to take a final look at Leckhampstead; the sun was setting, the last rays lighting up the squat, red-tiled spire on the church tower. Then we tramped on into Akeley, a village which is as dull as its name; if Shakespeare was ever wide of the mark it was when he asked what was in a name. For a moment here we were on the high road again—a baker's motor-van hurtled by—and then we crossed into another lane with a signpost saying Chackmore. To the right we saw the woods of Stowe, and caught a glimpse of the wrong side of Stowe Castle.

All walks should end downhill, and the last two or three miles down through Chackmore and Stowe avenue in the gathering dusk were perhaps the best of all. The market folk in Buckingham were

packing up their stalls, and the market-place was littered with waste paper and straw. With that exquisite combination of weariness and well-being that only walking gives, we sat down to our supper in the inn, in what Stevenson calls 'the peace and spiritual repletion of the evening's rest.'

A.M.

STOWE NATURE NOTES. No. II

To those acquainted with the birds of summer which lived in the woods and meadows about the School, the return in September brought consciousness of many changes. Not a few birds had left us; no longer the swift curved in graceful flight over the waters of the lakes, and only an occasional swallow and house martin were left of the goodly number here in the summer. These went within a few days, the house martin last of all. They had a long journey in front of them; the house martin to Central Africa, the swallows somewhat further south and the swifts to Cape Colony. A journey for each full of peril—but less perilous than the cold of an English winter. By this time, however, the survivors of the migrants should be resting among African kraals or on the sunny veldt. Our other migrants—of the birds noted last term—include gold crests, chiff chaffs, spotted fly catchers, linnets, yellow hammers and cuckoos. The movements of the gold crests are not so great in distance as those of the swift, house martin and swallow, but many cross the Channel, to winter in Southern France, leaving a few hardier birds in Southern England. The chiff chaff, too, winters in Southern France; but many cross the Mediterranean for the North African coast, and the spotted fly catcher goes further south, as far even as the Transvaal. Linnets are partially migratory, some going to North Africa and some remaining. The yellow hammer, too, is only partially migratory. The cuckoo leaves early as he has a long journey—to tropical and Southern Africa.

Though many birds have left, we still have our little population of crows, rooks, jackdaws and starlings remaining in and about their favourite haunts. They are not quite as numerous as they were in summer. Nor do they frequent the grass land in front of the house as much as before, for the colder and darker days give less time for playing games and the struggle for food is doubtless keener. Yet the jackdaws on the high trees of the Grecian Valley every morning after daybreak can be seen taking short circling excursions as if to stretch themselves after sleep and decide in which direction to prospect for food. The starlings have learnt wisdom over the summer and may often be seen prospecting in large and small coveys. A few lead solitary lives but most appreciate the advantages of communal life—a lesson which the crows have not learnt. Their cousins, the rooks, however, have for centuries lived in law-abiding communities. Every morning before breakfast starlings may be seen hopping on the top of the high brick wall facing the cricket field. They evidently play some kind of game though the rules are difficult to understand. They fly down or up to the top, one, two, stop for a time, think again, become shy and hop away. One morning a third starling was seen to alight between two, presumably to ease conversation, for the first and second straightway hopped nearer and the third starling at the tactful moment flew away leaving one and two better friends than ever and breathing soothing chirples to

each other as only starlings can. Starlings, rooks and jackdaws are probably the most awkward bargains of our British birds, but they are such good friends to one another, feeding often together, and sometimes playing together, that one loves them and their ways.

The lake this term has been even more interesting than it was last term. Early in October it was clear that dissatisfaction had arisen within the swan family, for, sometimes during their swims abroad a cygnet would leave the parental custody and fly right away to the other side of the Octagon. On the 2nd of November the old swans were observed by H. E. Robinson flying from the Octagon. They flew together towards the School, wheeled round towards the Rotundo and then down to Eleven Acre. Shortly afterwards they were followed by the two cygnets—also side by side—who flew in precisely the same direction. However, the cygnets are now settled again on the Octagon, and it seems as if, having discovered the place of their parents' retreat, they have been chased back to the scenes of their childhood to live there alone. Certain it is that the family life of the swans has broken up, and according to Yorke the old birds have started building a nest among the reeds close to the Northern shore of Eleven Acre. The grebes and their family of three were noted early in the term out together, but here again, it seems as if family life is coming to an end. Late in October, Mr. Grebe and one child were seen together on the water, but now each is usually alone, and the little grebes are almost as big as their parents. One (a son it is thought) has a small crest and his side whiskers are just coming. Next term he may be even more handsome than his father. By this time the young coots are very clever at finding their way about the weeds and in diving for food. They live well and are numerous and well-proportioned. The moorhens, too, have increased in number, but they prefer the land to the water. As yet the moorhens are timid and on leaving the rushes they walk warily landward straining and ducking their necks to be sure that all is well—but they have one safe protection in spite of their frailty; for, on the least alarm they fly back and settle in the reeds completely hidden and inaccessible. An observation by Rivers-Moore is here much to the point. He says that he saw a moorhen about two hundred yards from the water and it suddenly disappeared. It was at the time on land much punctured by rabbit holes, and Rivers-Moore thinks that it took alarm and disappeared down a rabbit hole. Apparently the moorhen is intimate with rabbits. On peaceful occasions moorhens attend most scrupulously to their toilet. On the 14th of November a fine male bird was clearly observed perched on the top of a bent reed in the Oxford water preening his feathers and doing so with such an earnestness that the yellow tip of his crimson beak could rarely be seen. It was discovered that right at the top of his handsome yellow legs is a crimson ring. He must be modest, too, to hide such beauty. The lakes, meantime, have had several visitors. Bats, according to Robinson, come down there to drink. Two herons were seen by Yorke, fishing near the old swan's nest. Yorke says that one heron frightened the fish with his threatening bill, long legs and deliberate tread, and he saw the other heron snap up two silvery roach. They evidently understood co-operation, but they are shy birds and have now left us.¹ Pochards have arrived and have been settled for some time on the Eleven Acre. Mr. Pochard has a fine copper coloured head and neck, a black breast and black tail, and a black beak with a white band on it; the rest of his body is greyish white. Mrs. Pochard is similar but not so handsome, her neck being comparatively sombre. They are sociable birds, moving about and sleeping (with heads tucked in their feathers) on the water in parties, and not very shy—for Yorke was allowed to approach quite

¹ Since the above was written, Robinson reports two Herons on November 19th near the lake (which was frozen) searching for worms on the meadow land.

near. Two kingfishers have been seen by Yorke on the Eleven Acre near the island, but they have cleverly hidden their home in order to discourage callers. Fifteen teal have been counted on the Octagon, and six widgeon on Eleven Acre, and the tufted duck is still with us.

While many birds have left us for the winter some visitors have arrived to take their place. These come from the North of Scotland, Norway and Sweden. Two kinds only have yet been definitely seen—redwings and fieldfares. The fieldfare is an interesting bird, for, seen behind he suggests a pigeon, seen in front he suggests a thrush, and seen in flight he suggests a crow, for he flies with slow and measured beat. His back is slate-grey, his breast rufous, shading to white underneath and marked with rows of black spots—size about one foot long. The fieldfares prefer to keep together in flocks and by preference are vegetarians, living on hawthorn and dog-rose berries. In late winter, however, they patrol the fields, beaks facing the wind and poking among the grass for worms and insects. The redwing is a similar bird, but has rufous patches on his sides and not on his waistcoat. It was first reported about the School by H. E. Robinson. In contrast to the fieldfare the redwing is not a vegetarian by preference, as he frequents the fields hunting for worms, snails and insects, but during a hard frost he will eat yew, holly and ivy berries. In spite of their divergent views on diet, fieldfares and redwings are good friends, and in company with their cousins, the starlings, may often be seen prospecting for food in the self-same field.

It is a common misconception that the woods in winter have little interest for bird lovers. While it is true that the variety of birds is more limited, yet the opportunity of seeing birds is greatly increased. Leaves in summer hide our birds so easily that some are very difficult to scout, but in winter the bare twigs afford little cover and the birds are easily detected. One feels, too, that the birds are friendlier, a feeling chiefly derived perhaps from cock robin, who certainly in winter permits of very close approach. Tits are very frequently seen, especially great tits and blue tits. Coal tits, marsh tits and long-tailed tits move about now in small parties among the trees. Their twitterings can be heard almost on every walk abroad and they are as full of tricks as ever. Favourite trees are oak and beech, great tits and coal tits visiting them for acorns and beech nuts. Tom tits and long-tailed tit prefer to nip up the tiny insects called 'aphides' which creep about the nicks and crevices of the trees, but they do sometimes, too, eat acorns and beech nuts. It is probable that this insect diet is the cause of their acrobatic movements, as to pick out a fine aphid from a nick on the underside of a twig is a very clever accomplishment indeed, and they must be able to do this many times daily or starve. Nuthatches have been seen taking out acorns and nuts to crack. First of all the nut is fixed firmly in a crack in a tree and then the bird pecks at the nut until a hole is punctured and made large enough to admit the tip of his bill. Acorns are easy to manage. But to open a hazel nut must be very hard—and to find it empty harder still. Perhaps disappointment with nuts has made him turn his attention to 'aphides,' which, like the blue and long-tailed tit, he nips up from the cracks on the bark of trees. Winter is probably also the best time to see tree creepers. These have a dark back—hardly distinguishable from bark—and a silvery breast. A long tail serves as a support against the bark and eases the strain on his powerful claws. To see him climb trees is one of the most wonderful sights of nature, for he goes up, down, round and about almost anywhere, with swift gliding motions. A tireless journey and an endless meal—picking up in quick succession insects in the nicks of the bark. The silence of the woods, however, is even in these November days often broken by the songs of two birds, robin redbreast and the wren. Cock robin takes up his perch in a place he likes and regards that

and its neighbourhood as his own special region. He will tolerate no other robin and is ever ready to do battle for his position. His notes have now a somewhat reproachful tone as if to say 'Why didn't you come sooner?' and he cocks his head and jerks his tail as if in welcome to his visitors. To those who are really well behaved he allows a very close approach and will show a blue edge to his red waistcoat. The wren is shyer than cock robin and likes the cover of bushes. His notes are louder and more varied and it seems strange that so much noise should come from such a small bird.

J. E. F. W.

TIBET

THE editor asks me to write a few words on anything. I choose Tibet, because (1) I shan't have to search my memory, as I've not been there, (2) neither have you, so you can't contradict me, (3) if I wrote like this of any other country, you might think I lied (whereas now, probably, you know I do), (4) since no Tibetan will read this, I can challenge them all and sundry to dispute it.

So on with my tale!—as the Manx cat said to his Creator.

What strikes the Tibetan traveller most is the great number of assistant masters. This is natural enough, as the people attend school up to the age of ninety-five. They learn day and night, but are let out once a month for punishment and meals.

Before they are fourteen, they float companies, marry, bring up families, and soon hunger for retirement. Then for a year they engage in acrobatics,¹ to refresh their minds and subdue their bodies for more serious studies.

These begin at fifteen. As at Stowe, there are eight classes. Pupils start at the bottom, and spend ten years in each, except a few, who, at seventy, begin to dodder, and rapidly descend. Tibetans yield to none in reverence for the aged, and it is thought disgraceful for a prefect in Middle Five to have to give defaulters' drill to his great-uncle in Form III.²

Owing to the great courtesy of an eminent headmaster (and in some degree to his short-sightedness), I have before me a copy of the syllabus for the Lower School throughout Tibet.

¹ It is a stirring sight to see a band of ardent youths, hastening head over heels or cartwheel fashion down a public road, preceded by the grave instructor, whose white beard sweeps the dust as they revolve.

² Once, to my knowledge, where his grandfather was the sole defaulter, the instructor suffered gladly in his stead, running thrice round the streets of Lhaza on all fours.

Form III studies the German census.

Lower IV studies the Japanese court guide and telephone directory.

Middle IV^b studies the Railway Time-tables for Persia and Peru.

Middle IV^a studies Liddell and Scott's Greek Dictionary.

The work of the upper school is similar, and ends with the mastery of logarithmic tables, and the weather reports from Pernambuco for the last ten years. All these books are learnt by heart.

The scheme is the fruit of seventy years' study by the seven wise men of Tibet (who were locked in during their deliberations, and visited weekly by a slave with a wet towel), and it has the following six merits:

- (1) It teaches the same useless things to all. None therefore seeks or boasts of learning, so that conceit and mental exhaustion are unknown.
- (2) It makes school so dull, that on their release pupils renew their youth and live another hundred years.
- (3) It settles the scholar's future by unfitting him for any place but school: after a year of 'peep-bo!' and 'hunt the slipper' outside its gate, he re-enters it as an assistant-master.
- (4) It has well nigh extinguished publishers and booksellers, to the great enlargement of men's peace and purses.
- (5) It ensures harmony between master and pupil, who have no minds with which to differ.
- (6) It keeps the people quiet.³

The young ladies of Tibet learn the cookery book by heart, but do not use it, as cooking is deemed vulgar, and the national food is whelks.

When the Tibetans need intelligence, they repair to the ingenious foreigners who frequent the court, of whose infinite subtlety this one example will suffice.

When the schools were overrun by rabbits, which burrowed through the class-room floors, scampered about the desks, upset the ink and

³ Once a foreign pupil asked the meaning of the words 'desire' and 'discontent,' which he had found in the Tibetan part of his Greek dictionary. The volume was suppressed throughout the realm as a dangerously seditious work, but afterwards re-published in the Greek part only.

sat in the master's chair, Mr. Bluffitt, an Ohio merchant, undertook to destroy them by instructing them in American football. The Dalai Lama, however, fearing the game would spread among his subjects, rejected his advice for that of a venerable French ecclesiastic, L'Abbé Tize,⁴ who preached to the rabbits, pointing out that they belonged to the lower creation, and being a nuisance to man, their lord, ought to abolish themselves instanter. Finding the sermon long and little to their taste, they yawned so that they died of suffocation, and sit stuffed in a ploughed field under the abbot's statue to this day.

Such is my record of Tibet, and if anyone asks confirmation of it, he shows plainly that he doubts my word, and will bring me a hundred lines by Wednesday.

A.F.

⁴ Better known to his associates as 'La Bêtise.'

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