The Sydneyian

A MAGAZINE EDITED BY MEMBERS OF THE
SYDNEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

APRIL, 1881.

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SYDNEY:
PUBLISHED BY J. J. MOORE & CO., GEORGE STREET.

1881.
### SYDNEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL CADET CORPS, 1880.

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W. HELSHAM, Color Sergeant.
A. G. H. MORRIS, Quarter-Master Sergeant.

April 6, 1881.

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### DEBATING SOCIETY.

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HENRY C. L. ANDERSON, Hon. Treasurer

Audited and found correct.

L. ARMSTRONG, Hon. Secretary.
We are informed, by those who have turned their attention to the investigation of such subjects, that of the whole prodigious amount of heat and light radiated in all directions by the sun, only one two-hundred-and-twenty-seven-millionth part reaches or in any way affects this earth of ours; the remainder, so far as we are concerned, is entirely wasted. There is here evidently room for some economy.

If, as the classic poet remarks, we may compare small things with great, there may be discerned a similitude between the preceding case and that of most persons educated in the fashion of the present day. Small, indeed, is the energy of these latter compared with that of their sidereal prototype; but such as it is, it is, still diffused over a proportionately wide surface, and produces a correspondingly fractional effect; when its concentration on a single object might have given rise to an appreciable result. For this diffusion and waste of energy we have to blame primarily the complexity of our modern civilization, whose varied requirements impose an equally varied range of study, which is even now daily increasing in ever-widening circles of multiplied diversity. Some of the sciences have now attained to such a stage, that the accurate knowledge of the thousandth part of one demands the devotion of a lifetime. At the same time, any reasonably well-educated man is generally expected to have some familiarity with the laws and illustrations of some half-dozen sciences by the time he is of age. Yet in the general scheme of his education science is but one amongst a crowd of other subjects, all equally importunate claimants for a share of his attention; languages dead and living, mathematics, and history, struggle with each other, and with those baser and more utilitarian forms of knowledge which have regard to the attaining of social advancement, for the possession of the scanty fragments of his distracted intellect. And even then he has yet to reckon with art, of which one branch at least—music—has always been justly considered an indispensable part of a complete education.

It is not difficult to deduce the natural outcome of this manifold drain upon the resources of the brain. If it is attempted, according to the prevailing theory, to distribute the attention impartially amongst these numerous and varied subjects, the best of us can do but little real good in any of them. It will be immediately apparent how small is the share of attention capable of being assigned to each subject, if we consider the case of a single day, and conceive of all these studies as included in the work of a single day of six hours, which is probably as long a period as can profitably be employed in really severe brain-work, such as is the acquisition of fresh knowledge. If a list be made of the subjects with which modern education is concerned, it

The Sydneyian.

EDITORIAL.
will be seen that the daily allowance for each one will be but a very few minutes; and even the yearly sum of this allowance will amount to a very inconsiderable period. Under these conditions it is clearly impossible to expect the attainment of a knowledge at once extensive and profound; the most we can hope for is that a few of the quickest and clearest minds may attain a sufficient superficial grasp of general principles to delude their fellows into the belief that they know a great deal more than is actually the fact. Such students, whatever effect of brilliancy they may produce at the moment, will leave no permanent mark upon the world.

Thackeray says somewhere “Have some special subject which you have made your own; so that you may be pointed out as Mr. So-and-so, who knows more about owls, for instance, than any other man in England.” This is what we also would advocate as the antidote to the vagueness and inaccuracy which are consequent on the present system. It matters not very greatly what this special subject may be—classics, a science, or whatever else may be suited to the tastes and abilities;—but it should not be so small as to be insignificant, or so large as to be beyond the limits of a thoroughly accurate comprehension. The weakest of us will be surprised to find what he can achieve in a single subject, when his best faculties are concentrated upon it, and how easily he will surpass less devoted competitors. We are on this point at one with our esteemed fellow-litterateur, the Earl of Beaconsfield, who is clearly of opinion that anyone can accomplish anything not physically impossible, if he only sets his mind to it; whereof we have ourselves seen many notable instances. On the present occasion, however, we would rather insist on the advantages to be attained thereby from an educational point of view; on the lucidity, accuracy, and confidence, which will ensue from a just and thorough understanding of a single subject, whatsoever it may be, from its fundamental facts to its crowning principles.

These observations must not be taken to imply that we would confine a man’s studies practically to one subject; however eminent he might become in his special line he could not fail to be on general matters as narrow-minded and prejudiced as he would be ignorant. In practice it will not be found that the whole of his time, or nearly the whole, is required to enable him to thoroughly grasp his subject and attain distinction in it; if it is so, he is swimming in too deep waters. It is only intended that he should consecrate to one end so much of his time and care as may be requisite to ensure success; and that he should employ the remainder of his energies in instructing himself in that general knowledge of language, art, and science, which is essential to the formation of a liberal and cultured mind. In this harmonious combination of the twin principles of concentration and diffusion will be found the only true and possible scheme of education; and it is because the former of these principles is, in this country at least, practically unrecognised at the present day, that we have tried to direct attention towards it. From the latter we obtain culture, tolerance, breadth of view; but it is to the former, and the former only, that we must look for that certainty and solidity of knowledge, which is the only sure foundation of the temple of fame.
THE ORIGIN OF MODERN POETRY.

[AN ESSAY.]

The Gothic Nations which over-ran the Roman Empire, though ignorant of the polite arts, were not insensible to the charms of poetry. Their bards were treated with no less respect than their priests; and whatever knowledge they possessed was communicated in metre, and probably in rhyme; but whether the practice was borrowed from the Arabs or the Goths we know not. In the age of Charlemagne, the Minstrels of Provence, called the "Troubadours," introduced the metrical tales or ballads, which acquired the name of Romances, from the dialect in which they were written. It appears that Normandy was the "cradle of minstrelsy.

The North-men, who wrested that beautiful province from the feeble successors of Charlemagne, had, like every other barbarous people, especially the Scandinavian tribes, their native bards. These it is believed, were carried by Rollo (or Rolf) into France, where they probably introduced a number of their native traditions, relating to their heroes, who were afterwards enlisted in the tales of chivalry. The Minstrels, like the "improvissatori" of Italy, by the frequent exercise of their talent in extemporaneous composition, became good judges of the public tastes. By the progress of translation, they became the depositaries of nearly all the knowledge of the age, which was committed to their memory: that they should, therefore, form a variety of new combinations from the numerous materials in their possession was natural. Facts in History prove that the profession of a Minstrel was held in high estimation among the Saxons, as well as among the Danes.

Alfred, in 878, wishing to ascertain the true situation of the Danish army, which had invaded his country, assumed the character and dress of a harper, and under this character, though he could not but be known to be a Saxon, obtained an honourable reception from Guthrum. About sixty years after, a Danish King made use of the same disguise to explore the camp of our King Athelstan. The Minstrel was, therefore, a privileged character with both these people. The reader of History will also call to mind the beautiful legend of the discovery of Richard I. by the Minstrel Blondel, when he (the former) was imprisoned in the Tyrol, by the Emperor Henry VI. In the reign of Edward II., the Minstrels were admitted into the royal presence.

John, of Gaunt, in the beginning of the reign of Richard II., erected a court of Minstrels, with full power "to receive suit and service" from the men of this profession, within five neighbouring counties; to enact laws and determine controversies, &c., for which they had a charter.

It appears that the first compositions were unadorned annals or histories, reduced to measure, for the convenience of the reciter, who was to retain them in his memory. Their poems were all composed in rhyme. Of all the corrupt dialects introduced by the barbarians, the Italian language assimilated most with the Roman, and soon acquired a tincture of elegance. Dante, called the father of modern poetry, wrote, in the middle ages, his "Divine Comedy," or, as Mr. Cary prefers calling it, "The Vision;" Ariosto followed; and
Petrarch, with whom Chaucer is said to have had a personal interview, appeared among the first founders of modern literature. The passion for allegory, so long the characteristic of the Italian School was rendered by Chaucer, as prevalent in England as it had previously been on the continent. Italy continued, during several ages, to be the "Poet's Land" of Europe, and in that interval was produced the "Jerusalem Delivered," a poem of great merit, and which, we believe, still maintains a high character in modern literature.

In Spain, poetry was early cultivated, but without much attention to classical taste. In France, it did not emerge from barbarism until the reign of Francis I., and it arrived at its highest perfection in the era of Louis XIV. La Fontaine and Boileau, Corneille (the French Homer), and Racine—"the French Virgil, the graceful, the tender, the melodious Racine"—had, at this period, produced works, destined to immortalize their names.

The modern Drama had its origin in the mysteries, a sort of religious farce introduced from the East; to the mysteries, in the 16th century, succeeded the moral plays or moralities, which were a decided improvement on the former plays. These produced the masque, which became the favourite amusement of the Courts of James I. and Charles I. This species of composition was successfully cultivated by Ben Jonson and others; but has been redeemed from oblivion by Milton's Comus. Till the commencement of the 18th century, the German language was almost a stranger to poetry. Klopstock invented hexameter verse; and from that period many fine writers have arisen in Germany, distinguished by poetical taste, genius, and real talent. We need only mention Goethe, Lessing, and Schiller.

MODERNS.

IMPRESSIONS OF MELBOURNE.

The most remarkable feature is the grandness of the scale on which everything is done; the bay is immense, the streets wide, the buildings large, and the water supply plentiful, though the water is muddy. Melbourne's prosperity has been in accordance with its large ideas until within the last few years, but at present, business is suffering a recovery from the shocks it has lately received. The Town Hall is a fine looking, large building in a very central position, and in addition to the numerous rooms for business, has a very fine hall and a splendid organ. The hall is also used for public and private entertainments, so it is to be hoped that the foundations are strong. Organ recitals are given twice a week and are well attended; the bellows are blown by hydraulic power, and with better success than in the case of the Exhibition organ which, while flooding the building with delightful music, flooded the cellars with water. There are rooms for the accommodation of the Mayor and every convenience, including a well appointed kitchen, a feature which is also noticeable in the Parliament houses. Talking of Parliament houses, they are still in an unfinished condition, but will be splendid buildings when the design is completed if one can judge from a model of them. It was originally intended to
have the front built of marble, but I think that idea has been abandoned as being too costly. The entrance hall is beautifully decorated and looks very well when lighted at night, it has also the advantage of being beautifully cool in the hottest weather, and this is noticeable in all the banks and public offices. There is a very good library and reading-room, with papers from every part of the colonies for the use of members, but we were told that the books of travel are most extensively patronised. The view from the roof is very fine on a clear day, but such a thing is a rarity in summer as either dust or mist generally interrupt the view. The Public Library is some little distance from the Town Hall, but the pavements are very good so that walking is easy, as long as there are not too many of their wide streets to cross. These wide streets are the pride of all the Victorians and they are certainly very fine, but the idea seems to have been carried to an extreme, so that more space than is really required for their traffic is taken up. Another fault in the design, is that the blocks were made very deep with a small lane at the back, but when the property became valuable, houses were built facing these lanes, so that many of the best mercantile houses are in these narrow back lanes in spite of their wide streets. The Public Library contains in addition to a great number of books, very good collections of pictures and statues, the latter of which are mostly casts from famous works of art. Visitors from Sydney are apt to fall into raptures over the pictures they see there and to regret that we have not such a collection, but many who go to such a place in a strange city, never think of going to see our own collection which is not at all to be despised, though the pictures are mostly smaller. There is also a very good technological collection in the same building, and there are a large number of models of different kinds of machinery. At the entrance there are the figures of two large lions, placed there, I suppose, so that visitors might see the lions of the place even when the building is closed. While on the subject of lions there is a very good Zoological Society in Melbourne and the animals are numerous and well kept. There are two splendid tigers but they are hard to see well unless at feeding time, especially the gentleman from Bengal who condescendingly allows his tail to be seen round the corner. A baboon seemed to come in for a good deal of admiration from a numerous crowd of spectators, who probably recognised the family likeness. The snakes were as usual rather slow things to look at, and did not excite so much interest as they probably would have if loose. The ideas of the lower classes with regard to the classification of the animal kingdom would appear to be vague as one old lady remarked on leaving the leopards "Isn't he a splendid bird?" The birds are very well represented especially such kinds as swans and ducks. Passing from live animals to dead, for we went to the Museum next, the dead animals suffer from the contrast; but the collection at the museum is a very good one, but unfortunately their space is so limited that they are unable to show all they have. There are in addition to the animals shown at the museum several interesting models showing the working of gold and other mines. Contrasting these sights with the corresponding ones in Sydney I am afraid we should come off second best.
A SIMILITUDE.

Winter's past; e'en now forgotten,
Once again come spring days fair;
Ev'ry tree with blossoms covered,
Balmy perfumes in the air.

Spring will pass just like a shadow;
Driv'n before the sun's hot rays,
Soon 'twill heighten into summer,
Summer with its parching days.

Autumn mild will then relieve us
After summer goes away;
But 'tis only for a short time,
Autumn will not with us stay.

Autumn deepens into winter,
Winter with its piercing cold,
Clearing all the earth of verdure,
Making aught on it look old.

Thus it is and ever shall be.
Childhood is our fresh spring day;
Manhood then like fiery summer;
Autumn with its dull calm grey.

Then old age in wintry garments,
Autumn having quickly sped,
Comes upon us, ah! how quickly!
And we are laid among the dead.

Spring, 1880. PETER POTTS.

THE "MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM" AND "THE TEMPEST." AN ESSAY.

These two plays may be broadly distinguished as being, the former a play of the fancy, and the latter a play of the imagination. The "Midsummer-Night's Dream" is a creation of that intuitive faculty, by which the mind forms images or representations of things at pleasure, a faculty "whose exquisite delicacy of touch can catch the surface colour of things, and group them anew by laws of beauty." In "The Tempest" the extravagances of fancy are chastened by that deeper power of combining and modifying our mental conceptions by which "poetry sees into the heart of things and reveals their inmost harmonies." It is from this point of view that we are justified in saying that Milton had a very imaginative, Cowley a very fanciful genius.

But though creations of different faculties of the mind, the two plays under consideration admit of comparison, because in both there is a wonderful world of spirits, interwoven with the turmoil of human passions and with farcical
adventures of folly. Whilst, however, the former "is really a dream, a fairy land where spirits make man their sport," in the latter, "human life is only removed into an ideal sphere in which the spirits serve the wise." Hence, the spirit world in the "Midsummer-Night's Dream" is very different from that in "The Tempest." In the former, the spirits subordinate man, in the latter, they are subordinated to man. In the "Midsummer-Night's Dream" twilight, moonshine, dew, and spring perfumes are the elements of these spirits; in the human world they merely sport in a childish and wayward manner, with beneficent or noxious influence. Their most violent rage dissolves into good-natured raillery; their passions, destitute of all earthly matter, are merely "an ideal dream." To correspond with this, the loves of mortals are painted as poetical enchantment which may be immediately suspended and then renewed at pleasure. The extremes of fanciful and vulgar meet, when Titania, who has been enchanted by Oberon, awakes and falls in love with Bottom, the weaver, with the ass's head, in whose behaviour, during the tender homage of the Fairy Queen, Titania, we have a most amusing proof of the extent to which the consciousness of such a head-dress heightens the effect of his habitual folly. In fact, Bottom the weaver, is probably one of the best sketched characters in the play. We are amused at his folly; and at his apparent confidence in his own powers, as where he says, "Yet my chief humour is for a tyrant," "Let me play Thisbe too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice," or again, "Let me play the Lion too." Nor is the interlude of Thisbe and Pyramus, in which Bottom plays the part of the tragic lover, unmeaningly chosen as the burlesque play within the play; for it is an exact counterpart of the pathetic incidents in the main drama—a secret meeting of the lovers in the forest, and their dispersion by an unfortunate accident—and closes with a most amusing parody.

The "Tempest," on the other hand, has, in contrast with the "Midsummer-Night's Dream," little action and progressive motion. The union of Miranda and Ferdinand, unlike the complication of the love scenes in the earlier play, is fixed at their first meeting, and Prospero merely throws apparent obstacles in their way, "lest too light winning make the prize light." We foresee, from the first that the attempts of Antonio and Sebastian on the life of Alonzo, King of Naples, and of Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo against Prospero will be entirely frustrated by the magical skill of the latter, and nothing remains therefore but the reconciliation.

In considering the individual characters we may notice the wisdom of the "Princely hermit" Prospero, and his willingness to forgive the treachery by which he was deprived of his dukedom, and by which subsequently his very life was threatened; the impression of the black falsehood of Antonio and Sebastian is, in some degree, mitigated by the gossiping of the old and faithful Gonzalo, whilst Stephano and Trinculo, two good-for-nothing drunkards, find a worthy associate in the person of Caliban.

The comic element seems to have been necessary to the Elizabethan drama, and in both plays under consideration it forms a parody on the main plot. But whilst the "Midsummer-Night's Dream" is wholly comic in its treatment, "The Tempest" is for the most part serious in tone; and for that
reason may perhaps be called a tragic comedy. The characters that form the most striking contrast in this respect are those of Puck and Ariel. The former plays the part of clown in the fairy kingdom. He is the "lob at this court, a coarse goblin, represented with broom or threshing flail in a leathern dress, and with a dark countenance; a roguish but awkward fellow, skilful at all transformations, practised at wilful tricks, but also clumsy enough to make mistakes and blunders contrary to his intention," as for instance, in bewitching Lysander in mistake for Demetrius. The fairy describes him—

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewed and knavish sprite,
Called Robin Goodfellow; are you not he,
That fright the maidens of the villagery;
Skim milk; and sometimes labour in the quern;
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
And sometimes make the drink to bear no barm;
Mislead night wanderers laughing at their harm?
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck;
Are not you he?"

He even jests with Oberon, and makes him smile; he seems to delight in the mishaps of others, as where he says, "And those things do best please me that befall preposterously," and again, "And so far am I glad it so did sort as this their jangling I esteem a sport."

Ariel, on the other hand, possesses grace, tenderness, speed, and especially freedom and lightness, the properties of his element, which are peculiar to him; he takes every form, deceives, leads astray, scatters, and frightens men by all sorts of apparitions, sounds, and illusions; he obeys Prospero thankfully and truly, "without lies," "without mistakings," "without murmurs." Puck indeed seems to have a contempt for man: "What fools these mortals be;" while Ariel seems to have a sort of sympathy, as shown in his half appeal to Prospero in favour of Antonio and Sebastian. "Mine would, Sir, were I human."

Had Puck been Prospero's servant it may well be doubted whether the latter would have regained his dukedom. Ariel makes no mistakes, Puck many, and seems to delight in them. Ariel works at all hours, "following darkness like a dream." The spirits in the "Midsummer-Night's Dream" seem to have no reflection, as we see in the case of Titania, who was "enamoured of an ass." Ariel, on the contrary, appears to have been endowed with reflection, for he often does the right thing without previous instructions, as for instance, in separating Ferdinand from the rest of the wrecked crew, and in leading Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo astray when they were on the point of murdering Prospero; as also in warning Gonzalo and Alonzo, by his music, of the impending danger of assassination.

The "Midsummer-Night's Dream" is supposed to have been written about twenty years before "The Tempest," and this supposition is borne out by a noticeable difference in the tone and versification of the two plays. The latter is consequently preferred by those critics who suppose that the poet must have continued to improve with increasing maturity. A preference for
either is perhaps merely a matter of personal taste. Although the “Midsummer-Night’s Dream” exhibits a luxuriant vein of bold and farcical invention, and the combination of the most dissimilar parts which seems to have arisen without effort and by some ingenious accident, “The Tempest,” in profound and original characterization, in its deeper views of human life, and its greater ideality, would appear to be the superior play.

DEBATING SOCIETY.

On Thursday, March 10th, a Meeting of the Debating Society Committee was held, at which it was determined to let the Society be in abeyance for a year, when it was hoped that there would be more interest taken in it by the School. This year not one meeting has yet been held. In such a state of things it is better to end than to drag on the ghost of a Debating Society, till a more appreciative race occupies the scene. The Committee was that of last year, for no fresh one has been elected. The accounts will be published in this issue of the Sydneian. It was decided that the books belonging to the Society should be put away until wanted, and that the piano should be either let or sold. We hope that at the end of this year sufficient want of the Society will be felt to warrant its being started again.

EX-SECRETARY.

SINGLE STICK AND BOXING CLUB.

A GYMNASIUM has for some time been greatly needed at this school and steps have lately been taken by some members of the Cadet Corps in the formation of a club which more nearly succeeds in supplying this want than any scheme which has yet been proposed; I allude to the Single Stick and Boxing Club which has been formed this quarter. Now, if the boys were to take this movement up in a proper spirit, this would develop into an institution which would certainly be a great credit to the school.

Boys who indulge in that bugbear to many of this school, commonly called fagging, should derive great benefit from an hour's healthy exercise after school, whilst those who aspire to the position of a member of the rifle team will be sure to find their shooting materially improved.

Sergeant Hagney has voluntarily offered his services, and under so competent an instructor we cannot fail to get on well, if a sufficient number of boys join.

Complaints have but too often to be made through the medium of this magazine of the want of public spirit among the boys, but I trust, in this instance at least, a hint will be all that is needed and that this will shortly be one of the most flourishing institutions of the Grammar School.

C. C.

A NEW HERESY.

Having observed latterly a considerable scientific flavour in the questions submitted in your columns, treating of wind and sky and sea, in fact de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis, I thought the subjoined short argument of a pamphlet, published in all good faith by a well-known navigator to these shores, might be of interest to some of your readers.
The writer commences by asserting that it is commonly supposed that the greater heat of the tropical regions, in comparison with the temperate and arctic, is caused by the less obliquity of the sun's rays; this he erroneously assumes to mean their obliquity to one another, which he very needlessly proves to be insufficient as an effective cause.

Conceiving that he has thus cleared the ground for a new theory; he assumes that the shape of the atmosphere is that of a convex lens, so formed that it concentrates the rays of the sun upon the equatorial regions, giving them an undue excess of heat. By the same construction he accounts for the coldness of the summits of mountains by assuming that they are raised above the focus by their height, the rays being concentrated on their bases.

Emboldened by success, he further speculates on the probability of the atmosphere having once formed a lens of such power that the heat of the sun, concentrated by its means, was sufficient to fuse the earth's surface producing those igneous and metamorphic rocks which others (as he thinks, falsely) attribute to the effects of volcanic action. Finally, he intimates his opinion that, as heat is considered to be a form of motion, and transmutable into other forms of motion, it is very probable that an uneven distribution of this concentrated heat of the sun, exercising an increased pull on one side of the earth, has produced the diurnal rotation of this pendent world; he even hints dimly at the source of the annual revolution of the earth, and the origin of gravitation, being explicable by the same theory, which is in his hands a very Eldorado of all knowledge.

Comment on this pseudo-scientific absurdity is unnecessary; yet it is seriously intended as an explanation of natural phenomena: I send it as a curiosity only.

LUNATICUS.

CRICKET.

Several changes have taken place in the Sports Committee since the beginning of the year. R. Thompson has been appointed Secretary in the place of Roberts, who has sailed for England, and Cruickshank was to fill the vacancy in the committee. Thomas succeeds Page, who has also left. The annual sports will be held, most probably some time in May, and no boy will be allowed to compete for any race who has not paid his sports fee. We trust that all boys will pay, and that the collectors will zealously hunt up all the dilatory ones.

SYDNEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL v. KING'S SCHOOL.

The first elevens of the above schools met on Saturday, March 26th, at Parramatta, and after a most exciting contest the Grammars proved victorious by 14 runs. The scores were—Grammars 34, 49, of which Thompson 22, in the first innings and Hayes 12. Stiles and Parker, 10 in the second, contributed most. King's School 38, 31, for which Osborne and J. Manchee 9, and Rawson and Marsh 8, did best. The bowling for us, was done by Cruickshank and Payten, while Manchee Brothers and Marsh bowled best for King’s. The fielding of both teams was splendid.
A match was played between the above schools on Wednesday, March 16th at Stanmore, resulting in a victory for Newington College by 17 runs in the first innings. The scores were—Newington 61, and 2 wickets for 43; Grammar’s 44 and 90. For Newington, Hill 23, Rygate and Moore 9, in first innings, and in second, Murray 17 (not out), Hill 15, John Cleeve 12 (not out), did best; and for Grammar’s, Stokes 11, Hayes 10 (not out), Broomfield 10, in the first innings, and in the second, Thompson 21, Payten 14, Page and Stokes 12. Cleeve Brothers bowled splendidly for Newington in the first innings, while Donnan and Cruickshank divides honours for the Grammars.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editors of the Sydneian.

Sirs,—I wanted to write for the Sydneian—I wrote: forgive me if my production does not come up to your standard, and quietly lay my remains (represented by the accompanying half-sheet of foolscap) to moulder 'midst the mad effusions contained in the proverbial waste paper basket. Not long ago I sent some verses (not nursery rhymes), to the Editor of a certain weekly paper, asking, at the same time, for his opinion of them, and advice to me; he generously criticised my piece, ("piece of nonsense" say you), and pointed out its chief blemishes, and, for advice, told me to write no more poetry! I was hurt, deeply hurt, and setting to work corrected the errors and made some changes. You have the piece before you! Read it calmly—crush not my poetic spirit in the bud! Yours faithfully for ever,

PETER POTTs.

(People who have been cured of some incurable disease, are often requested to give their benefactors a testimonial to that effect, and at the "wind-up" of the letter usually conclude with the following sentence, "You can make any use of this you like." I apply this to the above.)

To the Editors of the Sydneian.

Sirs,—Is it allowable for Cadets to come to School wearing one portion of their uniform and not the other as nearly all at present do? I am sure no other School allows it. It does not speak well for the Cadet Corps to have the members going about the streets half-dressed. Hoping this will be rectified.

I am, &c.

A RECRUIT.

[When "A Recruit" has become a veteran, we trust he will see the folly of indulging in vague and comparatively unfounded generalisations.—Ed.]

To the Editors of the Sydneian.

Dear Sirs,—In one of your issues some time back (I think at the beginning of the cricket season), I saw a letter in reference to that part of the playground which had recently been formed for a cricket pitch. However, nothing at all has been done nor is it likely that there will be, so long as the matter rests in
the hands of the Committee alone. Yet, still something may and should be done, now that the winter and the rainy seasons are coming, to prepare it for next season. The ground should be ploughed immediately after Easter, more grass sown, and every one kept off. King’s school has a very fair ground, Newington is making one, and so it is but right that we should have some kind of a one. Of course, if football (not exactly after the Rugbeian style) be played there as usual, a few defeats next year may be perhaps, not out of the question. If the committee which has lately been formed by the masters, succeed in securing a piece of the Domain with the pitch that I have referred to, it might be possible to turn out some real good cricketers, and a healthy frame is a necessary adjunct to a healthy mind. Will there never be any activity or energy displayed in the school? Surely the climate is not so very enervating. Hoping you will publish this.

I remain, J.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Brisbane Grammar School has removed into its new quarters. We understand that the new buildings are not only admirably adapted for the purpose of practical teaching, but that from an architectural point of view they are worthy of the reputation of the School, and of the Government, by whose wise liberality they have been erected. Nor has private munificence been slow to supplement this public liberality. From a recent telegram we hear of the arrival of the stained glass windows, which were subscribed for by private friends of the School, and which are to form a fitting ornament of the great hall.

Whilst we heartily congratulate the Brisbane School upon its good fortune, we are conscious of a feeling of not ungenerous envy—

"Non equidem invideo, miror magis"

When shall we be equally favoured? and why is it, that whilst in Queensland there is such an enthusiasm in everything that appertains to education, our own efforts are paralysed by the chilling breath of general indifference? That the appointments of our own School are utterly unworthy of the work that it is doing for the colony, no one will deny. In fact for many years past, the absolute necessity for immediate reform in this respect has formed the chief item in every public deliverance in reference to the School. Sir Hercules Robinson in speaking upon this subject in 1877, says "'I must repeat my opinion, that the buildings of the School and the surroundings are quite unsuitable for the purposes for which they are at present employed, and that the subject calls for early and serious consideration. I have visited Schools in all parts of the world, and I have never in my experience seen any School of the number and importance of this one, in which the accommodation for the boys, both inside and outside is so thoroughly defective." The continuance of the present state of things is not only an injustice to the masters; it is in the highest degree pernicious to the boys. We shall probably be answered, that in the present transitional state of public feeling with regard to higher Schools, the Trustees do not feel justified in inaugurating any extensive
scheme of improvement, and we presume that with the proverbial "deliberation" of New South Wales, we may look forward to a prolonged period of masterly inactivity. Meanwhile it is somewhat hard, that the energies of the Masters should be strangled by the insufficiency of external appliances for the efficient performance of their work, and that the education of the boys in habits of reverence and neatness should be vitiated by the meanness of their surroundings.

We are requested to give notice, that those who wish to enter for the All-Schools or Strangers Races at the Sydney Amateur Athletic Club Meeting, are requested to give in their names and colours, as soon as possible to the Secretary—R. Thompson.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

To the Editors of the Sydneian.

SIR—Having observed in a previous issue the enquiry of a correspondent as to the true reason of the blue colour of the sky, and being dissatisfied with the rendering of Tyndall's theory subsequently given to account for it, I venture to attempt to put the matter in a more intelligible light, for the general benefit.

Let it be granted that sunlight is composed of waves of different lengths, transmitted by the particles of ether; that the smallest of these waves (64,631 to the inch) produce the extreme violet of the spectrum, and the largest (36,918 to the inch) produce the extreme red, the intermediate sizes producing all the other visible colours; and that if from the violet end of the spectrum there be removed as many of the successive rays as will together produce a general effect of blue, the remainder will produce a general effect of yellow. These postulates are proved in any work on the nature of light.

Experiments with polarisers prove that the light of the sky is reflected to us from some surface. This surface must be such therefore, that it reflects the blue light and transmits the yellow; for if both were reflected, we should have the effect of white light. This result can only be attained by assuming that the reflecting surface consists of minute particles, whose diameter is greater than that of the waves of blue light, but less than that of the waves of yellow light; and this is believed accordingly to be actually the case. Even thus, a small proportion of the yellow waves must also be reflected, as will be seen on consideration; and on analysis of the blue light of the sky shows that it does contain this proportion of yellow rays, which is however insufficient to be noticeable.

A little consideration will show us that the light which comes from every portion of the heavens is reflected, and therefore blue, with the exception of that which comes to us in a direct line from the sun, which is transmitted, and therefore yellow; for practical verification whereof, circumspice.

I have the honour to be, CAELICOLA.
To the Editors of the Sydneian.

Sirs,—As we have your promise to solve all problems propounded by your subscribers with a view to diffusing knowledge, I venture to ask the cause of the following phenomenon which I observed some time ago. Just before sunset, when the sun was a little above a range of low hills, a cloud suddenly obscured him. At this moment I happened to glance towards the east and saw that all the rays seemed to be stopped by the atmosphere, and directed inwards towards one focus which was just above the water line, over the sea. The rays as they converged, seemed to lie in broad bands, which narrowed as they neared the central point. The space between each band of rays looked dark and murky by comparison. The sky was full of patches of dark thick clouds at the time. This appearance remained as long as the sun was hid by the cloud, but as soon as it had passed and the sun was no longer obscured, the effect disappeared. As I could not form even a conjecture which could reasonably account for the phenomenon I thought I would refer it to any of the learned editors of the Sydneian who is a scientist.

Trusting that you will redeem my rede, I remain,

A SUBSCRIBER.

To the Editors of the Sydneian

Sirs,—Will you kindly inform me what method the Romans used in keeping accounts, particularly their system of multiplying two sums together, such as CVXIX by LXXVII. I cannot conceive how they could conduct the operation with their unwieldly system of notation, unless by doing sums in their head which would be impossible, except in a simple case, and would always be liable to serious mistakes. I have looked in several tables of weights and measures which the Romans employed, and also in dictionaries, &c., and have never come across a word on the subject. If you will kindly take the trouble to answer this question, I shall be much obliged.

I remain, yours, &c.

P. S.

SCHOOL NEWS.

Mr. Fache, after a period of nine years’ service as English Master, has resigned his appointment in the school. The Civil Service Form has lost a very painstaking and conscientious master. We are glad to learn that Mr. Fache’s Form presented him with a testimonial upon the occasion of his leaving the school. This is not the kind of gratitude, which consists in “a lively sense of benefits to come.”

We understand, that at a recent masters’ meeting, a committee consisting of Mr. Weigall, Mr. Francis, and Mr. Skinner was appointed to organise a scheme, which should provide for encouragement to school sports without injury to school work. We believe that these gentlemen have already written to the Trustees upon the question of supplying a suitable cricket ground.
We are requested to notify, that the Head Master will issue Railway passes in the reception room, at 3:15 p.m. on Thursday, April 14th.

Upon the occasion of the last school assembly the Head Master took occasion to hand the gold medal of the University to Leverrier, who won the Senior Prize at the University Public Examinations held in November last.

SCHOOL NOTICES.

First Series of Handicap Examinations in English, Latin, and Greek Grammar, and Arithmetic, on Wednesday and Thursday, April 13th and 14th.

**English, Latin, and Greek Grammar,**
The maximum for each paper to be 100.

**In the Upper School—**

VI. Form starts at scratch.
V. Form receives 5 marks in Latin, 10 in Greek.
IV. Form receives 10 marks in Latin, 20 in Greek.
Upper Remove receive 15 marks in Latin, 50 in Greek.

**In the Modern School—**

1. Modern receives 5 marks in Latin. Starts at scratch in English.
2. Modern receives 15 marks in Latin, 10 marks in English.
Civil Service receive 15 marks in English.

**In the Lower School—**

III. A starts at scratch.
III. B receives 5 marks.
III. C receives 10 marks.
II. A receives 15 marks.
II. B receives 20 marks.
Lower Remove receives 25 marks.
I. Receives 35 marks.

**Arithmetic Handicap—Thursday, April 14th.**

One prize for Upper School and one for Lower School for the best aggregate at the end of the year.

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CONUNDRUMS, CHARADES, &c.

Query—Is the man who cuts down a tree on Sunday, a wicked "fellah"? (eh?)

*Free-hand* drawing—Pocket picking.

**CHARADE**

Quatre membres font tout mon bien,
Mon dernier vaut mon tout, et mon tout ne vaut rien.

PETER POTTS.

**DOUBLE ACROSTIC.**

The Initials form an island in India's Ocean seen;
That deadly tree, the finals, here unfolds its leaves of green.

1. Two letters in *my first* you'll see,
   Which once were mixed with I and V.
2. *My second* once a great queen used
   To gain that death by Heaven refused,
3. *My third*, neath Turkish sway, a town,
   In the Crimean war well known.
4. *My fourth* a creature much maligned,
   Yet somewhat sluggishly inclined.

N A. F.

**ENIGMA.**

I'm, when whole, a design, or it may be a bill
Drawn out on another, you can if you will
Behead me, when lo! I will keep you afloat,
But yet I am neither a ship nor a boat;
If you dock me yet further, and if you're inclined
To use nautical language, most surely you'll find
I'm the stern of a vessel. And if you deprive
Me of one letter more, yet the act I survive
In abbreviated form, and oft you may see
Me on walls and placards. I am always one foot,
And often am many. To come to the root
Of my riddle, although the last letter alone
Is left of my five, yet I'm sure you will own
If pronounced, I'm a drink which from morning till eve
All genuine Chinamen gladly receive.

N A. F.

We beg to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the following journals:—

*The Marlburian.*
*The Cheltonian.*
*The Melburnian.*

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**SCHOOL CALENDAR.**

April 11.—VI. and V. Form. Classical Examinations.

,, 13.—English and Greek Handicap Examination, Upper School, 1.15—3.15.

Latin Handicap Examination, 1.15—3.15.
School breaks up for Easter Holidays.

,, 25.—Winter Term begins, 9.30 a.m.

,, 29.—Sydneian Box closes.

May 9. —Sydneian No. XXXIII. published.