

Mount House Record, Plymouth.

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EASTER 1918.

No. 1.

Editorial.

With Easter falling very early this year, the problem of whether to break up 'before' or 'after' simplified itself, when we had at the same time to take into consideration the expressed wishes of the authorities as regards school travelling both at this season and in the summer holidays. The fact also of having begun unusually early made the term less abnormally short, and no arrangement would have been satisfactory which involved unnecessary curtailment of the delightful summer term. As the latter will, in fact, be well advanced before this appears in print, it may be as well to announce here our purpose to break up on Wednesday, July 24th.

The Easter term has been comparatively uneventful, but by no means unprofitable. It began badly by one boy bringing back chicken-pox and another whooping-cough. The former was isolated so quickly that it went no further, but the latter epidemic maintained its character as a particularly troublesome infliction. Both houses had their turn, and though the number of victims never reached a large total, the mildness of the war-whoop in most of the cases only tended to prolong the uncertainty. However all contrived to be pronounced free of infection in time for the holidays.

In one very important respect we have every reason to congratulate ourselves. The very difficult task of catering for our large numbers in these times has been surmounted in a way that reflects the greatest credit on

all concerned; for while waste has been reduced to a minimum, somehow we have always contrived to dodge the prevailing shortage without affronting our conscience, and no pains have been spared in the kitchen to make our food palatable. As Mr. Ritchie would put it — *pro tanto beneficio meritas gratias agimus*. We cannot believe that the prospect of even greater restrictions need fill us with gloom.

The Scouts have had renewed opportunities of practical service, and have not been found wanting. Miss Glenday's organised expeditions on Thursdays, followed by detailed criticism of the results achieved, have made for still greater efficiency throughout the troop. The poultry-tending, and the saw-mill have run themselves without any supervision, and labour has always been freely forthcoming (from scouts and non-scouts alike) for a great variety of odd jobs of an arduous nature.

The generally high standard attained in the annual gymnasium competition must have been the best return to Mr. Lampard for all the trouble he has taken, and it must be doubly gratifying to him to see his own son the cup-holder for 1918.

The fact that we have no Eggbuckland 'runs' to record is, in a sense, a testimonial to the weather, for football holds the field as long as the ground is playable.

From the point of view of work the rank and file the Third Form in particular have made good this term having advanced a stage and 'attained their objective'; otherwise the only individual successes to mention are the good places taken by Spooner-Lillingston and Picken on entering Clifton, while Baily i has passed into Sherborne. The former pair will be starting in Mayor's House, keeping up our long-established connection; both will have a chance in due season of showing their prowess as athletes in a house which has just become the proud holder of the challenge shield at the sports.

Many of our old boys keep us going very faithfully with letters of their doings, and to those who find themselves unable to rise to the effort of writing for publication we would again commend the idea of our address-register

which we suggested last year. The new school song may serve to remind those who leave us that the last thing we want is to have any link missing in our 'ever-growing chain.'

In Memoriam.

2nd Lieut James Courtney Clarke, Indian Army was killed in Mesopotamia when fighting against the Turks on his 20th birthday, November 5th, 1917.

Lieut. Leslie Hicks Roslton, R.G.A. died of wounds in France on April 1st, 1918.

The news of the death in action of J. C. Clarke, youngest son of the Rev. J. H. C. Clarke of Tamworth, reached us early in the term, but we have not been able to hear further particulars as yet. He came to Mount House rather later than most boys owing to having been very delicate, and was in the school from May 1910 to May 1913, when he left to go to Blundell's. From there he went into the Indian Army getting a King's Cadetship. He was full of pluck and keenness always, and the country has lost in him an enthusiastic and gallant officer.

L. M. Rolston was an old boy of Garfield House days where he was with Mr. Cox for some years, going on from there to Dunheved College Launceston. He is the younger son of Dr. G. T. and Mrs. Rolston of Yelverton. When war broke out he was studying in London for the Indian Civil Service, but joined the Inns of Court O.T.C. two years ago and took a commission in the R. G. A., going out to France in September 1916. His battery saw heavy fighting at Vimy Ridge, Messines and around Ypres. He was enthusiastically interested in his work and a keen and popular officer, and was gazetted Lieutenant early in

March. His Brigade Commander wrote to his Major after his death:—

“He was a most promising officer, and devoted to his duty, and his death is an irreparable loss to the brigade as it is also to your battery.” His Major writes:—

“I am more sorry than I can say as he was one of the best officers I had, and his death is a very great loss to myself and the battery.”

School Notes.

Reference may be made in these notes to a somewhat frivolous innovation of the past term, which has served a useful purpose and has perhaps ‘come to stay.’ Once a week, during a more or less expectant hush between the courses of the midday meal, a stentorian voice proclaims without any preliminary warning the ever-neccesary reminder, “Wednesday, early closing!” The startled visitor looking down the table for the bold disturber of the peace finds no indication on the impassive countenance of Radford that it is he who has acted as official crier, and everybody else proceeds to remark how quickly another week has gone. By an extension of the practice our breakfast reflections also are liable to be similarly ‘strafed’ with “Tuesday war-savings!”

Mrs. Rhodes has again not allowed ‘war-savings’ to be forgotten, and the School in general responded with a good spurt during the Special Plymouth week. Our grand total now amounts to £214 & 10.

A much-needed improvement postponed for the duration of the war is the provision of better accommodation for the many important additions to our Museum. Among recent gifts we have to acknowledge from Mr. Butler quite a considerable portion of a Zeppelin that met its fate at Cuxhaven, together with part of its burnt envelope, while Bullen has presented a war-worn helmet.

We have long talked of the possibility of developing a drum and fife band for the School. It cannot be said

that this ambition has yet been attained, but it has certainly been brought a stage nearer. As a start some of the scout funds were invested in half a dozen flutes, and perhaps no one had realized till that step was taken that there would be any further serious difficulties to overcome. If so we were speedily undeceived. For a time much breath was lavishly expended in the attempt to produce sounds of *any* sort, till at last Mr. Butler once more proved the saving of the situation. An enthusiastic flautist himself, he most kindly gave his services as instructor to a select class which assembled on Saturday evenings in Mrs. Rhodes' room. Brownlow's unfortunate illness robbed him of his one really promising pupil, and with the exception of Thorpe few of the others showed enough perseverance to overcome the initial difficulties. But we hope that, now a beginning has been made, the movement will be revived at any rate in the winter term. If any real results are to be achieved, in this instance it is to the younger boys of the Third and Fourth forms that we must mainly look for recruits.

Brief mention may here be made of the very flying visit of the Prince of Wales to Plymouth during the term as an event which it will be interesting to recall in years to come. Our Union Jack was rigged up at the entrance to the Avenue, and all the School turned out to give his Royal Highness a welcome as he motored in from Princetown. It was bitterly cold, and fortunately the usual royal punctuality did not leave us with long to wait.

A pleasant surprise was a visit from 2nd Lieut. E. Wakeham, 6th Cavalry (King Edward's Own) Indian Army, on leave from France, where he has been serving for some months.

G. Radcliffe is now Sub-Lieut. on H.M.S. Liverpool.

2nd Lieut. G. B. Yonge, Devon Regiment has been for some month at the Raglan Barracks, Devonport, but may go abroad at any time.

C. W. M. Cox has left Clifton, and joins the R.E.

(Signals) Cadet Centre near Bedford for training in the middle of May.

W. J. Radford who left us for Blundell's last term has done well in their sports ; besides getting his remove. He won the 100 yards (under 14), was 2nd in the $\frac{1}{2}$ mile (under 14) and ran in the winning team of the Relay Race, so we congratulate him on making a good start at his public school.

Good accounts come from the Housemaster of D. E. Yonge at Sherborne. He has been awarded a House Shield, a new honour to be given to those who have not won the House Colours but have done "good keen work for the House and so ultimately for the School"—so is well worth having.

R. B. Summerford, who was for some years in the school has this term, passed into the R.N. College, Osborne. We were so pleased to hear from him last term.

Congratulations to C. J. Price (still in the School) on being the first winner of the Rimington Prize. The prize was awarded by vote (secret ballot) to the Scout who throughout the past year had shown the most usefulness, unselfishness and good fellowship. It cannot be won twice by the same person. There was no doubt at all as to the winner—boys and staff votes showing the direction of general opinion. Neville Picken however came in a good second. The prize itself consisted of three beautiful books by Sir Henry Newbolt, (stamped with the school crest and Motto 'Ut Prosim,') entitled 'The Thin Red Line,' 'The Tale of the Great War,' and "The Happy Warrior."

The Mount House War Savings Association now numbers 68 members, and we are very anxious to enrol still more next term. The investments fell off rather at the beginning of the term, and we were afraid that we should not realize our ambition of topping £200 by Easter, however at half-term people pulled themselves together and at the end it was found that £69 17 4 had been paid in during the term. The total amount subscribed

since the School formed a branch of the National War Savings Association in Sept 1916 is £214 8 10. We should feel proud if in two years our total could be brought up to £300. So let us keep that ambition before us during the coming term, and each one do what he can.

On Jan. 24th an unexpected visitor arrived about 8-45 p.m. in the front hall—viz: a white ferret! The little creature was surprisingly tame but very hungry, it had probably been lost by its owner somewhere in the fields below and had found its way into the house.

Baily has left us this term to go to Sherborne and N. Picken and E. L. Spooner-Lillingston have gone to Clifton. We hope they will next term let us hear their impressions of their new surroundings, where we wish them the best of luck.

RAINFALL FOR SPRING TERM 1918

January rainfall (for 18 days)	3.6 in.
„ average	2.66 in.
„ rainy days (for 18 days)	13
„ average	17
February rainfall	2.6 in.
„ average	2.27 in.
„ rainy days	19
„ average	14
March rainfall (for 22 days)	1.1 in.
„ average	2.33 in.
„ rainy days (for 22 days)	10
„ average	15

Prize - Giving.

This twice postponed ceremony seemed in danger of disappearing altogether when whooping - cough was threatening to make further inroads to the already depleted singing class. It was hastily decided in view of this danger that nothing ambitious could be attempted, but in the end a very enjoyable informal concert was arranged among ourselves. Mr. Sewell kindly came to help us out and his

songs were greatly appreciated. Mr Butler too, at even shorter notice, made a great effort to be there ; he arrived just after it was over, but the boys were not to be denied and were greatly pleased by his wonderful performances on the flute and piccolo.

The business of the prize-giving itself did not take very long. Mr. Cox, under the circumstances, dispensed with any formal report of the (very much) past year, being indeed more tempted to dwell on the satisfactory state of affairs at the end of the current term. The only outside parent present was Mrs. Rimington, who most kindly came to us for the special purpose of distributing the prizes and certificates. We were all delighted by a charming short 'speech' from her, and felt encouraged to do our best to deserve all the kind things she said of the school.

We should like to record here our gratitude to her for the newly instituted Rimington prize for 'good citizenship.' The awarding of this was a matter of some difficulty. Anything like self-seeking or advertisement is absolutely foreign to our notion of a good Scout, but educated popular judgment may be trusted to pronounce in the ballot upon the qualities of usefulness, unselfishness and goodfellowship. The voting of both staff and school selected Price for this high honour, with Picken i as a good second ; Carroll, Burnard, and Lillingston also received considerable support. Mrs. Clark had also most generously offered special English prizes for each form at Mount House, and these beautiful volumes were won respectively by Cocks i, Carroll, Picken ii, and Collingwood. Certificates for excellence in various subjects were assigned to Cocks i (3), Price, Clark i, Jones, Carroll, Clark ii, Lanyon i, Norman i, Lanyon ii, Spender, Cunningham, Foot, Hughes and Leest ii.

Ashby Cup Competition.

On March 18th the annual gymnastic competition took place. There was again no general display given as in pre-war days, and there were no outside spectators. The physical drill has progressed well this winter under the capable instruction of Miss Glenday, but for the purposes of

competition Mr. Lampard had arranged a full programme over the limited apparatus of parallel bars, trapeze, horse, and ropes. The entries numbered seven—five boarders and two day-boys. Members of the staff acted as judges, sitting up in the gallery of the gymnasium; the stage, it may be mentioned, was occupied by seed-potatoes which were all eyes for the occasion. As was anticipated the chief interest in the contest soon narrowed down to the struggle between Lampard and Macpherson ii. There was little to choose between them on the bars. Lampard had a slight advantage on both horse and trapeze, but lost considerably over the ropes at the end. It was a case of strength and weight, against agility and lightness, but Lampard had throughout more finish in his work. One judge actually brought these two out equal but the total of the others awarded the cup to Lampard by the narrow margin of 4 points. Duhan i (another heavyweight) and Picken i tied for third place; and then came Macpherson i who was excellent over the horse, but very weak on the trapeze. Price and Chilcott put up a plucky show, but were a little outclassed.

The proceedings opened with hearty cheers for Mr. Lampard, it being remembered that he has a peculiar way of disappearing at the end. He certainly had every reason to be satisfied with the way his performing troupe have come on since last year. The final scores read:

Lampard	350 points	Macpherson i	286 points
Macpherson ii	346 „	Price	250 „
Duhan i	311 „	Chilcott	237 „
Picken i	311 „		

The Three-ball Match.

This hardy annual made its appearance again on Thursday, March 21st, and proved that it had lost none of the vigour of old times. The game was very keenly contested from beginning to end, and ultimately resulted, after many periods of doubt as to the issue, in a win for L to Z, the side which has hitherto had few or no victories to record. Mr. Cox on this occasion was away from home

(fortunately for him, we would say ; for the strain of a game like this is severe even to one of his activity), so that the chances of a win for A to K were considerably lessened ; and we also missed the familiar and welcome figure of Fleet-Paymaster Jones from the field of battle, while on the other hand Mr. Sewell was unable to give his expected services. The Staff was represented by Miss Glenday alone, who played, as she always does, with judgment and unerring skill. Of the Boys it may be said that every single one played as if the honour of his country was at stake, and did his best for his side with a grim determination that was admirable. It is difficult to give details that will cover the whole of such a game, and the present writer, while he has all of it in a general way before his mind, can for the most part give particulars only of the happenings at one of the goals, defended as it was by each side in turn.

The weather was all that could be desired when the three balls were kicked off at 2-45, and the contest raged for the best part of two hours. Very soon after the start the first goal was scored, Burnard being the owner of the toe which gave a successful finish to a good rush. Then followed more than half an hour of most even play, and under neither bar did any one of the balls find its way, until at last Courtney in his excitement equalised for his opponents by putting one through his own goal. The game again proceeded on even lines, and many deeds of valour were performed. Carroll, with Chilcott in support, made a most determined onslaught on the enemy's goal, and would have scored but for the heroic defence of Macpherson i ; but soon after the same prominent player had his revenge, for the ball which he had brought up and passed was put through by Brown. At the other end Lake scored soon after, and the game was again equal. But, before half-time was called, Burnard succeeded once more, so that A to K led at that moment by 3 to 2.

Both sides seemed ready enough for a short respite from the fray ; but, coming out again refreshed, they were soon harder at it than ever. How shall the bewildered chronicler tell of the deeds that were done ! A goal by Picken i put the scores even. This could not

proud Carroll endure, nor rested he until he had restored the lead to his side. Yet fiery indignation lurked in the heart of Mac. ii, who forthwith made the balance good. Then came a goal at one end by Duhan i, and another against it by Lampard and Mac. ii, but whether of the twain was first recorded we wot not now, for great and terrible was the struggle. At this end the ball was seen to strike the bar and pass over, at that to rebound from the side post and then be kicked right over. We noticed a good save by Baily i, and a good shot from a difficult angle by Lake, which again was saved. In any case the scores were equal when the last quarter of an hour was reached, and the very ground seemed to pant with excitement. Then came the moment for Norman to assert himself, and to him belongs the honour of being in the right position for recording the coveted goal; and before the end Price and Mac. ii between them made assurance doubly sure by securing a second goal to the good, in spite of the attempted interference of the crossbar and the frenzied opposition of the foe. So a thoroughly well-fought match went to L to Z by 7 to 5.

It was a good game in every way from beginning to end, and the right spirit prevailed. No special mentions are wanted, for each gave of his best, and the glory was shared by all.

Bird Life in our Grounds 1917.

With the pressure of war tillage the continuity of my diary suffered a good deal, but it is a melancholy fact that there was also considerably less than usual to record. The memorable severity of that January and February exacted a greivous toll, and the disastrous effects on bird life will be seen for a long time to come. Indeed, sad as the story is, there is great scientific interest on such occasions in observing which species are the first to go under and which, owing to their habits and requirements, come off best. Those which are most highly specialised and thus depend on certain conditions in their mode of life fail to adapt themselves to the strain and suffer accordingly. The full effects of such a calamity can, of course, be only

very partially guessed at if a few acres of ground are the limits of our enquiry; but even here they were most marked; and so far-reaching was the abnormally hard winter that even migratory birds which had then left our shores did not escape the visitation. The greatest loss that we have suffered in our grounds is the entire disappearance of our favourite, the nuthatch, which had for some years been so well established as a resident. As some compensation, both the tawny owl and the magpie nested with us for the first time. The felt nesting-boxes again failed to attract tenants, though half-completed nests were in two cases made in them.

To proceed to detail:—

Blackbird. Began singing on Feb. 21st and the first nest was started by the Red House on March 11th. The singing, as I have often noticed, was almost confined to still evenings and was far less often heard in the early mornings when thrushes make melody. Suffered greatly in the severe weather. Very few nests, and very few birds about in the autumn.

Thrush. Was in full song in the first ten days of the year, but all singing stopped when the snow and bitter east winds came; with the general thaw on Feb. 16th it was renewed at once everywhere; at first they did not appear to have suffered as much as some other species, but the nests were far fewer and further snow in March caused several to be deserted. One very tame thrust was most persistent in trying unsuccessfully to pull off strips of dead iris from the bed in front of the house; I went to assist it, and found to my surprise that there were plenty of loose bits, *exactly* the same, lying handy but neglected. On May 26th I noted a thrush singing on the ground while hunting for food, and it actually sang once with a worm hanging from its bill and then finished swallowing it. In September and October no thrushes at all were to be found in the garden; snails and slugs were unusually abundant.

Mistle thrush. A dead bird picked up behind the stable on Feb. 12th. Singing began only on Feb. 20th—a very mild day. Very few about in nesting season, but a young one was found in the gym on June 3rd and a family was about the grounds at that time. None in early

autumn. On Nov. 8th four were seen together about 7-30 a.m.; the song was heard later in the day and resumed a few days afterwards.

Chaffinch. Began singing in defiance of the hard weather Feb. 7th and was in full song before the thaw came. One songster in March had a very peculiar variation, always beginning in quite a different key, almost like a hedge sparrow. On June 3rd I watched two fighting furiously on the ground, while one was singing hard all the time; presently he spied me, and flew off with a warning 'pink,' and then to my surprise I saw that the other bird was a female. The chaffinch is notorious for a rough wooing, but this appeared to be a regular set to. Three nests were found, but no broods were reared.

Bullfinch. A small party, generally two hens and a cock, were very frequently seen at work on the early buds of the wych-elm in January and February. They nearly always appeared as soon as it was light in the morning; and were often imitated more or less by house-sparrows. The buds and blossoms of the apple-tree suffered a good deal from bullfinches in March and April, but despite this there was a bumper crop. At the end of June a family of young ones were about in Mount view.

Greenfinch. Made their spring reappearance on Feb. 28th in various parts of the grounds, but nothing more was heard or seen of them till March 9th when a second party arrived. In May they were always about, especially at the fir-cones. During June they were seldom heard, but began trilling again in July.

Hedge-sparrow. Singing all through the bitter weather of the last three weeks of January, even they became silent in the first fortnight of February. On Feb. 12th however they began again and next day—the thaw did come till Feb. 16th—a party of four were going through the elaborate courtship manoeuvres characteristic of the 'shuffle-wing.' I have often observed that four or even five birds take part in these actions and it is impossible to guess the sex of any individual from its behaviour, each in turn being pursued and pursuer and none behindhand in display. A brood was reared in the holly before the front door and an old nest in a laurel close by was immediately

after repaired and the first egg was laid on May 10th; the fourth on May 13th. I watched this nest carefully. At 6 p.m. on May 24th (the eleventh day) these eggs were hatched. The young flew on the morning of June 6th (thirteen days, or less), and one addled egg remained in the nest all the time.

Robin. Sang through the long frost, and on Feb. 12th (after nearly five weeks of it) a pair were feeding together quite happily. Two nests were complete by April 1st but were not used for some time. One of these (near the stable) contained 5 eggs on the 30th still unhatched; the brood was reared successfully, and a second nest was completed (again in the welcome shelter of a tin) by May 25th and there was a broken egg on the ground beneath it. Five eggs were eventually laid and the young flew in the afternoon of June 25th. In the autumn robins were not in their usual numbers.

Wren. A party of nine or more wrens were roosting in an old nest in a yew on Jan. 16th and continued to use it till Feb. 12th when they still gathered together but retired to another retreat. I discovered this to be an ivy-covered holly just over the wall in Whiteford Woods, and they continued to use this till the beginning of April. No occupied nest was found at all—only two 'cocks' nests.' On Sept. 30th one or two were again roosting together in a laurel by the original yew.

Nuthatch. A few occasional visits during the hard weather. The last individual appeared in the latter half of March, but not a single one heard or seen since.

Spotted flycatcher. Several arrived on May 6th after a spell of fine weather. None nested with us in 1917, but a young family were about in Beechfield grounds at the end of June.

Chiffchaff. On May 16th I found an unlined nest in brambles along side the path on our western boundary. It contained 5 eggs subsequently but was robbed. Many were singing till the end of September.

Woodwarbler. One heard in Whiteford Woods on May 7th.

Sparrowhawk. On May 3rd one chased a starling round the house, and on May 31st one flew very low past the front door holding a small bird in its talons into the

Mount View trees, where I believe it had a nest. At any rate it was very often about there.

Raven. I noted a pair overhead on Feb. 28th passing S.W. as usual there was a regular movement observable in the first half of September, seven being seen together on the fourth. All seen were at a considerable height and in calm weather.

Tawny Owl. All January I heard the 'keewick' and the whimpering notes, but hooting proper did not begin till Feb. 20th. The next evening just after dusk I heard (and saw) the production of another sound which I had speculated about before. Proceeding by guess work one might easily have attributed it to young birds, but it clearly is peculiar to the breeding season and, I take it, to the adult female. On this occasion an owl flew very rapidly over the house and pitched in a fir where he began to hoot and call ('keewick') alternately, mobbed by various birds. A moment later a second owl landed in the copper-beech, where I had a very clear view of it. It began a very subdued bubbling noise exactly like the well-known 'bleat' of a snipe at its breeding quarters, the throat distended and pulsating and even the tail quivering. Presently with a 'keewick' she (?) joined her mate and soon flew off, leaving him behind. The following night the same *sotto voce* sounds came from an owl in Mount View, while two others were fighting in our firs on the drive. On Feb. 26th I noticed a very brief and silent visit to the nesting box in the cedar. Every night towards the end of March an owl flew straight to the box between 7 and 8 o'clock and bubbled away tremulously there for some time. On May 6th I examined the box for the first time and found two eggs in a corner of it. One of these was hatched at my next visit on May 24th, and June 10th I found a young bird huddled in one corner and fully fledged without any of the white nestling down. Two days later at 9 p.m. I heard a great clamour and saw a magpie (which had the young of its own close by) fly across towards the owl-box chased by an owl, which in turn was hotly attacked by the second magpie. All were lost directly in the thick foliage, whence the noise continued (from the magpies, not the owl).

[*To be concluded.*]

A. H. M. C.

With the Canadians at Passchendaele.

Extract from a letter written by C.N.M.C. after being invalided home (*censored by editor*).

We started (from Popringe) in the dark at 10 p.m., each carrying or wearing an overcoat, 150 rounds in our pouches, an extra bandolier of 50 rounds, 3 days' rations, 2 pairs of socks, 1 bottle of water and 1 of tea, three empty sandbags, a shovel, a Bengal light; and we Lewis gunners carried 2 pans of ammunition as well, whereas the grenadiers carried from 8 to 12 bombs apiece.

We were soon on the 'duck-walk', which here was double, and we seemed to walk miles on it; it twists and curves around the shell holes with water on every side and one has to watch the whole time where one is treading. At one time we crossed a road where an 18 lb. battery was busily firing. The flash of the explosions was dazzling and practically blinded you for a second, as the darkness was more intense after each flash. We were walking right into the flashes for over 10 minutes and I am afraid the cursing was loud and frequent as the men stumbled blindly off the mats into the water. We went within 10 yards of the nearest gun, and the explosion must have raised my steel helmet at least an inch off my head, and wasn't it deafening! And yet one could hear the artillery officer giving his orders all the time. We had to stop for the night on a slight rise called Abram Heights, and when we were within half a mile Fritz suddenly dropped 4 gas shells right against the walk. We had immediately to put on our respirators and it was terribly hard walking along in the dark with them on; however we were out of the gas in about 5 minutes and had them off again. No casualties; lucky for us they were not high explosive shells. We slept the remainder of the night in old German trenches.

We rested the whole of the next day, and as it was foggy in the morning we were able to wander over the battlefield where the Australians had driven Fritz back a week or two previously. I must say I was startled to see the number of dead of both sides still lying about just as they fell; here and there was a grave with a rude cross on

it, and there were large filled-in shell holes with nothing on them, but there was no mistaking what they were. Fritz's machine-gun posts must have been numerous from the number of empty belts one saw piled up here and there. I was thinking that the ground here was pretty full of shell holes but found out afterwards that we did not have to shell this ground *very much*, as Fritz ran. Toward noon the mist lifted and we had hastily to take cover again, as shells began to drop around us and ours were whistling overhead. We must have been about 2 miles from the ridge and one could see our shells bursting away off to the left in H— wood, and over the top in front of us and to our right towards Passchendaele.

We started again as soon as it was dark and soon got to the end of the duck-walk and then we followed white tapes on the ground which gradually led us up the ridge. The going was heavy as it was hard to see all the shell holes, and 'Hole on the right!' 'Hole on the left!' generally reached you just as you fell in. There was not much mud. Suddenly the word was passed back for dead silence, and then we found ourselves climbing over our hastily built front-line trench. We seemed to flounder around a lot before we were told to take cover in shell-holes and our platoon went over the same ground twice before we were told to lie down, about 8 men in a hole. Even then I did not realize that we were out in 'No man's land.' All through the night N. C. O.'s kept walking round trying to find out where their men were, and every now and then a Fritz machine-gun would open up. The orders were that at six sharp we were to leave our overcoats behind and go over. It was a bitterly cold night and yet we managed to sleep a bit. We were in a deep shell-hole about 15 feet across and 8 feet deep, and we just lay all around inside it. About 5 a.m. Fritz started shelling us with 5.9, and then it suddenly occurred to me that I was resting on the wrong side of the hole, and that as we were in a salient it would be better to dig in. So we all got to work and in about ten minutes had got a sort of trench and only just in time as a shell burst on the lip of the hole. We were only covered with dry earth. About 5-45 our sergeant came round and told us that he was the only one left out of his eight, a

shell having killed three and wounded four who had started back to the dressing station. By 5-45 we were all chilled through and eager to be moving (of course the rum had gone astray), so we ditched our overcoats and got ready. It struck me that as we had only 300 yards to go at a walk that I might as well carry mine; so the sergeant and I both carried ours slung over our left arm and after fixing bayonets I carried my rifle at the trail.

At six a deafening roar announced it was time and our barrage of every sort of shell was flying over our heads as we started. Honestly, no thought of danger crossed my mind. I knew I was greatly bewildered as to where to go as our land-marks (church and houses) had been flattened out and everyone was asking where our objective was. Anyhow we kept following A Company in single file. We had to go down a slight incline and cross a swampy hollow and then up another slight rise to the village (which was on a sort of plateau on the top of the ridge), and the final objective of 14, 15, 16 platoons was 100 yards down the ridge on the far side. 13 platoon [the writer's] was extra support, along with 1, 5, and 9. We went over with C Coy, passed through A until the village, and then had to fall back again behind A Coy and dig in in case of a flank attack, or to be used if necessary to support 14, 15 & 16. As we approached the swamp, it was extraordinary to see the water and mud flying up in front of us and moving along with us. I did not see a single live German here and just kept moving on wondering when I should see anything to shoot at. In the middle of the swamp we got into our own barrage and the man in front of me was killed and two behind wounded, and I just got a hole taken out of my trouser-knee and it even cut my drawers without marking me. I never noticed the noise now. A, B, C, D, were still in file, with about 8 paces to files on either side. On reaching the fence one saw the first German dead, and then going on again we reached the first houses through which B Coy had gone, and the German dead around the pill-boxes were astounding. Instead of stopping here we pushed on to see what was going on in front and at last I saw some Germans running over the crest of the ridge; but an officer turned us back

here, and then for the first time we saw Fritz's barrage falling in the swamp where no one was.

We got back behind the hedge, and then rapidly dug in; the Corporal and I dug in together and the other two Lewis gunners dug in four yards to our left and the Sergeant and others of 13 dug in on our right. We had ample time to dig in and were not bothered at all for about two hours so we had a hole six feet deep two wide and six long in good dry soil right under the hedge on the border of the swamp. About noon Fritz's aeroplanes came over low and spotted us, and this was the first and only time I fired my rifle in France. He flew very low and opened fire with his machine gun, and we used our Lewis gun; but neither of us hurt the other, and then he made off. In about fifteen minutes German 5.9 and 9 inch shells were dropping all around us, and this kept on until we left at 3 o'clock next afternoon, although it was not quite so heavy at night. In a short time most of our funk-holes were knocked in, but mine was not hit. We got very cramped when the sergeant took shelter with us but he was a splendid fellow. I soon found out what heavy shelling meant, and it was just a case of holes everywhere and so close that a shell in making its hole would fill in another and many poor fellows were buried and unburied three or four times over. About 3 o'clock there was a slight lull and I went out into the swamp to get German overcoats and blankets from the snipers' posts to cover our wounded with and it was there I found the cigarette case. Fritz is certainly well clothed and his snipers were covered entirely in a brown waterproof overall combination garment and had 4 blankets and any amount to eat and drink. Their biscuits were very good and so was their bully beef. One soon got accustomed to the big shells and I could tell almost exactly where they were going to fall, but they required some dodging. I got a fine supply of coats and blankets for the wounded. It was much the same next day and one was buried partially several times with mud and water in our hole, but they never got a direct hit on mine. It rained through the night I forgot to mention, and the going out was awful next day—mud, mud, mud, and a maze of shell holes full

of water right back to the duck-walk. Our poor boys who walked out wounded were lying there dead all along the trail, broken stretchers, dead stretcher-bearers and dead German prisoners who had been hit as they were going out, and yet behind it all one knew that our fire had been much heavier and the Germans must have suffered far heavier losses than we. Their pill-boxes are regular deathtraps to them, as our new mode of attack in single file instead of in waves seems to ensure our getting through, as there in one never-ending stream of men with no gaps.

No thought of danger ever crossed my mind until we were going out, and then the following shells certainly did make me shiver. One never realized the nerve strain until it was all over, and I gradually found out that I must have used up a lot of reserve strength. There that is all.

Scouting.

The Troop has made the best of a short term, and the weather has been more favourable than in the Spring of past years ; for, since the first Thursday, when the elements were most uncompromising until some time after dinner, there has been no interference with our weekly march. A notable change has been introduced in connection with the Thursday outings, and it has met with the most complete success ; for they have been passed on to the management and leadership of our active and resourceful A.S.M., and have benefited very largely thereby. It is well to acknowledge one's own limitations in time, and a joy to see the activities of the Troop directed in a way that is beyond the powers of a Nestor. We have moreover had a weekly report upon the marches, with useful remarks and hints upon the efficiency or otherwise of the various patrols on each occasion. A special record of the A.S.M. will be found appended.

The present number of the Scouts is 35, Hodge being the only one admitted since Christmas. There are many more candidates, but we do not want to force the pace with them. A considerable number have qualified for 2nd Class standing, and Price, Macpherson i and Macpherson ii have been awarded Naturalist Proficiency Badges. The number of days for War Service having recently been altered from 28 to 50 (unless the service should have been completed by Dec. 31st 1917), a further effort will be required from Brownlow, Radford and Vaughan-Jackson. This is a little hard upon them. But what matters! They are Scouts.

After the voting at the beginning of Term, the first five on our list were Price, Picken i, Macpherson ii, Macpherson i and Carroll. Of these the first two were retained as leaders of their old Patrols (Jackals and Otters) while the remaining three were entrusted with the care of Owls, Kangaroos and Hawks, respectively. After a short interval, the leaders selected their 2nds, and Lillingston, Duhan i, Baily ii, Baily i and Radford have acted in that capacity for the Patrols in the order given above.

The members of Patrols were to some extent interchanged, in the expectation that the scoring in the Competition would work out more evenly, but this hope has not been realised. The number of marks to be gained all round has been increased, but the disparity in position can hardly be said to have been improved away. There is evidently more good stuff in one patrol than in another, and doubtless a study of the figures will rouse to fresh exertion those who for the time have fallen short. The Jackals have made great efforts to regain their pride of place, and right well do they deserve their success, for they have led the way all through the Term. The final scores read thus:—Jackals 592, Owls 571, Kangaroos 479, Otters 478, Hawks 367.

Owls have again made a very good fight of it and are to be congratulated on their great effort. Kangaroos and Otters, it will be seen, are neck and neck, but too far behind the leaders. Hawks have still to win their laurels.

The record on the Gym. board now will read :—

Xmas 1916. "Jackals," J. D. Macpherson,

Easter 1917, "Owls," W. M. Wall

Summer 1917, "Jackals," C. J. Price

Xmas 1917, "Otters," N. F. Picken

Easter 1918, "Jackals," C. J. Price.

Our flag has only once this term been outside the gates, and was borne by Picken i, On March 9th the Plymouth and District Local Association was inspected by the Mayor on the Hoe, when we were represented ; but, Saturday being a bad day for us, and the veto of the Matron on the score of colds &c. calling for recognition, only 20 were free to put in an appearance, under the A.S.M.

Scouting days with us are over for Picken i, Lillingston and Baily i, much to the regret of those whom they leave behind. We can but thank them for their past services, and add our best wishes to our cheers in giving them a good send off.

W. M. RHODES, S.M.

Report of Scouting Expeditions

The outdoor work of the troop this term has consisted of practice in various kinds of tracking, ambushing, and general scouting, each outing being followed by some peice of work connected with it, including sketch maps, collections of tree buds, and criticisms of the tactics employed in the various games.

The troop is improving steadily in its methods of warfare, and the scouts are learning the need for silence and concealment if they want to be effective. There is a splendid spirit of keenness throughout, and a great desire to get on, which is leading to good results. The chief faults are more due to the extreme youth of the troop than to any lack of interest or energy, the patrol leaders, for instance, are rather wanting in promptness and decision, and must learn to make up their minds at once, and also to be quite sure that every member of their patrol knows exactly what his job is, otherwise there is a good deal of unnecessary confusion and waste of time. The rank and

file on the other hand, must be ready to carry out their orders exactly, and if these orders are, occasionally to keep quiet and do nothing, must do it to the best of their ability. Some good work has been done in connection with maps and so on, especially by the older scouts, the young ones are certainly improving, but are still rather inclined to scamp their work.

The different outings we have had are as follows:—

January 24th. Weather very uncertain. The Otters laid a wool trail, by way of Weston Mills, and the rest of the troop found a good deal of difficulty in following it. Pieces of wool about a foot long were used, and were laid on the ground, in cracks, tied to trees, plants, railings, and so on. The trackers were inclined to follow rather too quickly, but found it a very effective test to their powers of observation.

January 31st. Splendid weather. The Jackals, Otters and Owls occupied the country round the Egg Buckland Cemetery, and some members of the Kangaroos and Hawks attempted to carry dispatches through to the field beyond the Cemetery. The defence, under Picken i and Price, worked very, well and made good use of the cover available; they would have avoided some confusion by using pre-arranged signals, and they allowed Baily i and Radford to pass right through their lines by hesitation in dealing with them. The left flank was rather weakly defended, and as the runners chose that way of getting through all managed to arrive safely, though it was distinctly risky. With the exception of Macpherson i and Carroll, who came through very well, all the runners exposed themselves too much. In spite of this, the use of cover and silence was noticeably better.

February 7th. Very bad weather. The Owls laid a trail, by way of Egg Buckland, and Linkity Lane, with the usual Scout Signs, and the addition of a special "What is it?" sign, placed on trees, plants and so on. The rest of troop followed, armed with pencils and paper, and wherever the "What is it?" sign was observed, wrote down what it was that bore the sign, in the case of a tree or plant naming it. There was rather a scarcity of signs, but

in spite of this the trial was better followed than usual, the Kangaroos gaining most marks for their observations. As no precautions were taken, the Owls successfully ambushed the rest of the troop at the end.

February 14th. During the first part of the afternoon a collection of tree buds was made, and later on mounted and sent them in, the best collection being made by the Jackals. This was followed by some very good ambushing practice; one scout was sent on to try to make his way home without being captured. He was followed by four, who were in turn followed by eight, and then by the rest of the troop—twelve. The results showed that we were much better at laying ambushes than discovering them, chiefly through haste and carelessness, and also failure to guard the rear. Though we were decidedly uncertain, by the end, who were the captors and who the captured, it gave us excellent practice in individual scouting.

February 21st. A small troop, owing to tests, and very damp country. We first had two scouts in turn showing the rest of the troop for about a quarter of an hour. Macpherson i and Radford were the most successful, Macpherson was never seen, and Radford only just on time. We then did observations; points were given for various things noticed on the marsh, such as a nail a pigeon flying, a patch on clothes, and so on. Leest i proved to have the sharpest eyesight, and Baily i was a good second.

February 21st. A record day. We got caught in a blizzard soon after starting, and came home in a heavy snowstorm. We were attempting to track, but the signs were completely blotted out, so we marched home by Crownhill, arriving back snowed up and more than ready for tea.

March 7th. A beautiful day. The Kangaroos were told off to remain within a definite area round the Egg Buckland cemetery, for a certain time, without being captured, they were allowed to hide shortly before time was reached. In spite of a very good effort at camouflage, they were found about a minute before time. They might have moved about rather more and tried to ambush some

of the troop, or escape back through them towards Egg Buckland, but what they did was very well managed, and they quite deserved to get through.

The attackers worked much better than usual, especially the smaller scouts, though they all lost their heads rather at the end. If each patrol had worked in extended order, instead of in a bunch, they would have kept in touch better, have covered the country more thoroughly, have been much less noticeable, for instance on the Fort Austin Road.

March 14th. The Otters laid a "What is it?" trail, and tried to ambush the troop. The trail was well laid, but rather carelessly followed. The ambush was also well planned, and the only means of escape seemed to be for half the troop to attempt to decoy the ambush while the others took it in the rear; after elaborate preparations, the ambush was found to have vanished utterly, and was finally successfully rediscovered owing to a mistake, as the ambushers thought they were seen and came out.

March 19th. As the field was unfit for football, we had a short scouting expedition instead; as we had to stick to roads, each patrol took it in turn to ambush the rest of the troop. The individual scouting done was good, but the rank and file did their best to spoil it by being rather slack and noisy. The ambushers made two mistakes, so that in spite, of some very careful work on their part, the rest of the troop managed to escape them; one was in releasing their prisoners, the other in not lining both sides of the road.

E. I. GLENDAY, A.S.M.

Letters from Old Boys and others.

2nd Lieut. G. L. Rees writes from Hospital at Leicester—I expect you will be rather surprised to see the above somewhat ominous address, and I'd better explain at once that the fact of this letter being written in pencil is not due to any feebleness on my part, but rather to an accident which befel my fountain pen, which has sent it back to its maker for repairs! Personally I am feeling remarkably fit in a general way, the only thing wrong with me is my right leg, as I was wounded by a bullet in the right thigh; it just missed the bone, but must have grazed the sciatic nerve (this is the doctor's theory) as my right foot isn't of much value to me at present, however, it's getting better every day, and I can move my ankle quite vigorously, and hope soon to be able to move my toes! Meanwhile I'm not allowed out of bed, and have to keep very quiet under pain of having my leg tied up in a splint! It's a very nice hospital, and quite handy for Bedford, so my people come over to see me quite frequently. However, they have an absurd predilection in favour of anti-tetanus inoculation, which they do not once, but many times; my request for an anaesthetic was greeted with scorn and derision!

When I first joined the battalion, three months ago, it was at Poelcappelle (just on the left of the Passchendaele ridge), and we remained in that sector till this offensive began. It wasn't altogether pleasant up there; the ground was too wet for trenches, and one was always very much exposed to shell fire, which was in fact the chief proposition to be dealt with. As the weather improved, towards the end of February, things became rather more lively, and both sides did frequent raids—usually reported as 'successful.' I was never actually in one of our own, but once I was in charge of half the company holding the line, while the other half went through us and did the raid, and that was quite exciting, as it was largely an artillery show, and the Hun is rather good at retaliation! However, I always managed to be in the place where the shell happened not to fall, and indeed the ground was so muddy that a shell could drop surprisingly near without doing any damage at all.

On March 23rd we (the division, that is) moved down south to repel the unruly Boche, and actually went into action on Sunday, the 24th, at about 10 a.m. I'm afraid I had to retire rather early—at 10-30, in fact—but after I'd gone the battalion did rather well at first, clearing the enemy out of a small village called Cléry (near Péronne) and holding a new line, but later they were outflanked, and had to retire. I was a stretcher-case really, but I waited at the battalion aid-post till 6 o'clock that evening, and there was no sign of the promised ambulance; so as the aid post was getting badly bombed, and looked like being shelled as well, I decided to walk, and had to tramp four of the longest miles I've ever experienced along a shelled road before I picked up a cooker which (like everything else) was proceeding to the rear, and got a lift. I arrived at

Amiens next morning, and took refuge in a stationary hospital, and stayed there 48 hours, when the hospital was evacuated, and I went to an awfully good private hospital at Wimereux (near Boulogne), run by a Lady Hadfield, who was quite a nice old lady, in spite of the vast quantities of camouflage with which she tried in vain to disguise her age! After three days I was sent across the channel to England, the sea was very choppy and the ward was right in the bows, and I didn't enjoy myself in the very least, however, I succeeded in maintaining the dignity of the King's uniform (i.e. hospital pyjamas), though I very nearly succumbed when, just as I was feeling my worst, an orderly proffered a plate of very fat ham, a slice of thick bread and butter and a cup of cocoa, and asked if I was hungry!

I seem to have bumbled on at great length about the war, and really I didn't intend to unburden myself to such an extent, especially as 'there's nothing new under the sun' in these strenuous times, and everyone has some thrilling adventure to relate.

Lloyd is doing very well at Bedford, he rises to wonderful heights whenever a form order is announced, and as far as I can gather had great hopes of arriving at the sixth, but as for some unearthly reason he has already (he is only 14) transferred to the Modern side and has chucked Latin and Greek, I suppose the Sixth has no longer any interest for him.

The Rev. C. E. De la Bère (now an officer in the fighting line) writes from France:—Excuse this paper, but as I am situated in an Observation Post, which I have to go to in the dark and leave in the dark, and as I left my writing paper behind you can see that it's a case of this or nothing. I intended to have paid you a visit, especially as I was down at Plymouth, visiting my brother who is wounded at No 4 S.W. Hospital Plymouth; but my visit was very abruptly broken off by orders to go overseas, so I wasn't able to carry out my original programme; however someday I hope to be back again.

My brother tells me that Clarke, I am not certain which one, but — I've just had to break off for an hour as we've been subjected to a pretty violent strafing, very large shells and very much too close to be pleasant: I shall soon have to shift to another position and I've an idea they'll start on that next so I can see that I'm going to have a pretty lively day before I'm finished.

J. F. P. Jesse writes that he is at School at Exmouth where he seems to be doing well having won his form prize at Xmas.

E. L. Payn writes:—The weather has been quite warm lately, but early in January we had some very sharp frosts, and two pipes burst, one of them was not found out until it had made a fearful mess. We had one very heavy fall of snow, the biggest they have had down here for years. I hope the Scouts are still going strong. I have now got my treadle fretsaw which I like very much, and I am going to start making a handkerchief box some time. I have not had any French lessons for a long time, although I don't think that I have forgotten very much. I suppose most of the boys I was there with must have left now. It is about seventeen months since I left

Mount House. I hope to come and see you all again sometime, but there does not seem much prospect of that at present. I am getting on pretty well and can get about a bit better than I could. The subjects that I have for my lessons, are, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Mechanics, History and Geography. Have you got much of a football team now at Mount House? I don't think that there is any more news at present.

C. C. Croft writes from Blundell's :—Am sorry I have not written before but have been very busy. We have had rotten luck in the House matches as we were knocked out in the final. At the end of the proper time no one had scored but in the extra ten minutes each way to decide, School House which was the heavier team scored. We have done fairly well in School match. We beat Keyham twice. The Russell, the long cross-country run, is to be run on Saturday. Fairweather a man in Westlake ought to get it. The sports are in the last fortnight of the term. I think we ought to keep the sports cup which we have at present. Hope you are getting on at footer alright this term.

O. O. Jones writes from R. N. College, Osborne :—I am enjoying myself here no end, it is great sport. I like the idea of having games every afternoon and then work, you get such a top hole lot of games. We play hockey and rugger this term, I have only played rugger twice I don't like it so much as soccer from what I know of it, I have played hockey nearly every afternoon, I think it is a ripping game. We have had an inter-dormie hockey match through the whole college, and the best two dormies in each term play all the other twos of the other two terms. I play for my dormie, left half, and our dormie is the best in our term, which has four dormies. We lost all the matches against the other terms except one against the Exmouths which we won by one goal, all those we lost we only lost by 1. My class is starboard 2, my latest monthly order was 3 weeks ago when I come out 21st. I was very annoyed at the beginning of the term to find I have to do German, the 30 best at Latin and French in the Exam. were chosen for it and I am in the top class, I am beginning to like it rather. I belong to the Natural History Society and we have topping lectures on Saturdays. This morning all the Exmouths were confirmed by the Bishop of Winchester, he looks a very old man. All the boys parents are here and the grounds and Osborne Bay is full of them. Last Sunday I went to sick Bay for a cold and was kept there until Friday, you get an awfully good time there but I was jolly glad to get out again and get back to duty. At Kingston I have been in the workshops and I have completed my centre punch in the machine shops.

T. E. E. Cocks writes from Westminster :—I'm afraid it is a very long time since I wrote to you last. The time seems to pass so quickly. I can hardly believe, that I shall have been here three years at the end of the summer term. Life is very pleasant here, in spite of the efforts of the Huns to make it otherwise. The only thing they really do is to liven matters up a bit occasionally, and make us spend the night reading in the passage instead of going to sleep in bed. I

have got a beautiful little piece of shrapnel, picked up in the school precincts, but I think I prefer to handle it, than for it to have handled me. It would be a most uncomfortable sort of thing to run up against in the dark.

I had the Record sent to me from home a little while ago, and I am glad to see M. H. S. is still going strong. I hope the footer is going on all right. We have beaten both Harrow (2—1) and Bradfield (2—0) within the last ten days or so. We play Charterhouse on Saturday, and after beating Harrow, I should think we stand a pretty good chance of winning. I am in the VIIth now and so I am on the monitorial, although I am not actually a monitor yet. We have to work jolly hard. The exams. for election to Oxford or Cambridge come off in a week's time, and though I am not trying for a scholarship this year, I have to do the exams. I played in what is called Lamprobaties last year in cricket. Lamprobaties is the name for the match between the King's Scholars and the Town Boys, and as the Town Boys' team is practically the school team, it is a very coveted distinction to have played for the King's Scholars. The match was drawn, owing to the weather. We won last year, though. Our sports will be coming off soon. All football stops after next Monday, when the King's Scholars play the Town Boys. I think I am 12th man for the King's Scholars, if I am not actually playing. The Inter-House O.T.C. Drill Competition takes place next Tuesday, and so our house squad, in which I unfortunately figure, is working hard at Extended Order etc. That reminds me, I am glad to see scouting is flourishing at M. H. S.

W. A. Nightingale writes from Marlborough :—I am afraid my subscription to the Record is overdue so I have sent it in this letter. I think I told you in my last letter that I was going to take up engineering ; I started this term so I thought you would like a line to say how I am getting on in my new work. Of course there is a great deal new to learn but as I am interested in the subjects I don't find them very difficult to pick up. " Stinks " is quite an amusing way of passing the time. Out of 17 I was 4th for half term. The other day a lecture on Aircraft was given us by the commander of one of the R.N.A.S. stations on the English coast. It was very interesting especially as he had lantern slides of the different types of machines. Also some pictures of submarines taken from sea-planes which gave one a good idea what an extraordinarily difficult mark to hit is afforded by a U boat.