

"THE VISOR"



BIRKENHEAD INSTITUTE
MAGAZINE.

CHRISTMAS, 1927.

ROBB'S

IS THE HOUSE FOR GOOD VALUE IN

Boys' Clothes,

Suits,

Overcoats,

Raincoats,

School Blazers

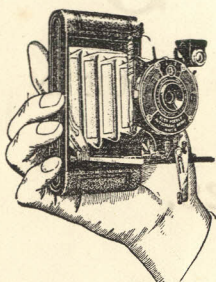
AND

Caps.

ROBB BROS
LTD
CHARING CROSS
BIRKENHEAD

When replying to advertisers please mention the "VISOR."

J. Woodhall



For all
“KODAK”
SUPPLIES
and
GENERAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC GOODS.

DEVELOPING PRINTING and ENLARGING.

Personal and Best Service Guaranteed.

Local Depot for
Meccano,
Hornby Trains,
Wormar Engines,
Kliptiko, Wenebrik and
All kinds of
Toys and Games.



Phone 621—**256 Grange Road,**
BIRKENHEAD.

When replying to advertisers please mention the “VISOR.”

THE "VISOR."

THE ORGAN OF THE BIRKENHEAD INSTITUTE.

VOL. I., No. 1.

CHRISTMAS, 1927.

EDITORIAL.

Last term we had to mourn the untimely death of Mr. Bryant. Mr. Skellon, at the end of the session, left for another post. We now extend a hearty, if belated, welcome to Mr. Davies, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Finn.

As usual, our school have gained capital school certificate results—sixty-five school certificates, of which thirty-six are matriculation certificates.

Last year's VIa. contained thirty-two boys. One boy (who, through illness, attended school only in the afternoons throughout the year), failed, one boy received school certificate, while thirty have matriculation to their credit.

This School Magazine, which was unheard of at half term, is certainly a grim reality. In history, small pieces of paper have been known to cause wars. Blood has been shed over a whole magazine amongst the Committee, so you have got your money's worth.

The Committee consists of four members from Upper VIc. (F. G. Robinson, E. A. Connell, A. S. Perry, P. J. Beacall), three members from Upper 6b (W. Hastings, B. V. Wood, I. R. M. Latto), and three from Upper 6a (S. Y. Richardson, R. E. Evans, S. Papperovitch).

There are many clubs and societies in this school, but many as they may seem, some schools have several more. We have a Football Club, Cricket Club, Chess Club, Running Club, Rifle Club, Debating Society and a Meccano Club. Now, you "star turns," how about a Dramatic Society.

It is unusual for us to be called from lessons in the middle of the afternoon to listen to an interesting lecture, such as that of Dr. Weekes on December 1st. His speech was highly entertaining, being both amusing and instructive. Let's hope there will be many such enjoyable afternoons at B. I. in future.

Wretched weather conditions have been a great obstacle to activities at Mount Road this term, but owing to capable handling of the ground by Connell, the groundsman, during such horrible weather, no matches have yet been scratched.

The cricket pitch is beginning to look "something like," and we ought to have a ground of which to be proud next Summer.

When Henry Baynton produced "Julius Caesar" in Liverpool a few weeks ago, many boys from the Lower VI. forms went to see it, as our old friend William Shakespeare, Esq., supplies that play for School Certificate purposes this year. The general opinion of the play, as produced by Henry Baynton, was "quite good."

Mr. Moat took a few members of the school chess team to Liverpool Chess Club one night this term to hear a lecture, with demonstrations, by Mr. E. Spencer, a Lancashire Chess Champion, on "The End Game." This was quite a useful education in chess, especially when the team is so hard pressed to hold the shield.

The Magazine Committee desire to thank the advertisers in this magazine for their support. They hope that the boys and the parents of boys at this school will patronize the supporters of the school magazine.

Owing to pressure on space, we have unfortunately not been able to include Scout News. We hope to remedy this omission in our next issue.

We must thank Mr. Smallpage for his article and for his support, and Mr. Paice for designing the cover.

We heartily congratulate one of our governors, Mr. J. R. Paterson, on being capped once more for Scotland in Rugger.

MEMORIES.

Deep in the comfortable arm chair I sat, with clouds of tobacco and memories lazily curling around me. Outside, the inclement weather served to augment the coziness of the room, with its glowing fire, and silence broken only by the ticking of the old grandfather clock. Warmth and comfort wafted my dreamy mind far back into the mysterious, echoing past. Ponderingly, I watched the curls of smoke wind their weary way to the ceiling, one ringing about the other, and all, as if influenced by one fickle mind, blowing hither and thither with the multitudinous eddies of air.

The tobacco was strong, I thought—like the black shag that was smoked at camp. If ever man set out to live simply of his own accord, we did then. The strenuous days of tramping, broken only by the spells when we ate those rough, rude meals, the occasional friendly brawl, and the final race back to the tent. We had but little sleep then, and spent most of the night in lonely, cross-country walks, returning in the early hours of the morning to sleep, shivering in luke-warm beds, exposed to the fury of the elements. It was cold, bitter cold,—like the cold that had affected a youth of my acquaintance—a queer fellow he was.

He boldly suggested to me that there was very little to be known that he and his father didn't know. We were, at the time, standing beside a soot pit belonging to a nursery. "What's this?" I asked him. "Oh, it's only soot," he answered, putting his foot in it to assure me. It wasn't only soot, however, it was soot and water, and that youthful genius went up to his waist in it. "It's nothing to laugh at," he asserted, in answer to my expressions of merriment.

There are many things in life which (at the time of their occurrence) are "nothing to laugh at." I didn't think it was anything to laugh at when, in the Isle of Man, my youthful benevolence prompted me to give a halfpenny to an old man, begging by the roadside. I fumbled in my pocket, produced a coin, and dropped it into his hat. Imagine my horror when, a little after, I found that I had given him a shilling by mistake. Fortunately for myself I was sufficiently "hard faced" to return to the old man, retrieve my shilling, and console his feelings with a substituted halfpenny.

I spent many happy days there, and well nigh found a watery grave. Wandering amongst the rocks on the coast, I and two friends were cut off by the tide, and forced to climb a formidable cliff, about 80ft. high, and almost perpendicular. About three-quarters of the way up I happened to slip. Never shall I forget the sensation of the few moments during which I fell. With remarkable luck I caught hold of a projecting ledge and was able to continue my ascent.

What if I had continued to fall, down, down towards the hard rocks, and the cruel devouring sea, down through the sharp, salty air—falling—falling—though surely, surely, am I not rising—up with the faint, lulling blow of the breeze, puffing me about like the tobacco smoke—look! a seagull—it's approaching—it's going to peck me—Ah! Dear, dear, I must have slumbered; but the fire's nearly out, and the icy blast grows stronger. Let us stoke up.

R.B.

“DE PROFUNDIS.”

Twenty-two boys in the Cubby-hole grind;
 Twenty-two boys in a room of this kind!
 Ten feet by twenty, that's all it is now;
 If the health people knew, there would be a row.
 “Now, how,” you will ask, “did this thing come to be?”
 Just read on a bit, and then you will see.
 In the first part of term we had little to do,
 So we often adjourned to the Gym. Wouldn't you?
 Of course they found out, and so later on,
 We discovered that all our free periods were gone.
 The next Monday morning we heard of our doom:
 We were always to linger in this little room.
 The weather was warm and not very windy,
 But all the same we kicked up a shindy.
 The windows we used to keep open all day,
 But now that it's cold, we should get blown away.
 Alas and alack, my tale is now told,
 So pity us, scholars, now freezing with cold!

“ERMINE.”

SCHOOL SOCCER.

President—J. SMALLPAGE, Esq. Captain—J. WILSON.
 Secretary—F. BLOOR, Esq. Vice-Captain—G. V. OVENS.
 Ground—Mount Road Memorial Ground, Ingleborough Road.

As has been the case in former years, the School Elevens have so far had quite a successful season. The First Eleven has won four and drawn two out of ten games, including the staff match, played, while the Second Eleven has won five out of nine games. In two of our games we have been unfortunate in losing the services of Theaker, whose knee gave way on each occasion.

In the majority of games, the First Eleven has scored fairly heavily, even when they have been defeated, and Cooper and Parker are to be congratulated on their ability in finding the net. The latter player has improved tremendously during the season, but even so it would lead to better results were he to combine more with his fellow forwards. Cooper has scored in every match except that against Oulton, in which game he did not play, while Parker is leading scorer. In Murphy and Baker, we have two forwards who make up for their lack of size by their trickiness. Neither of them, however, is blessed with a particularly strong shot.

At half-back our First Eleven has been well served by Ovens, Wilson, and Hughes, although recently Maxwell was introduced at centre-half in place of Wilson who has joined the forwards. All these players have shown themselves to be skilful at constructing and repelling attacks.

As full-backs we have two players in Connell and Currie who differ widely in their respective methods of defence, but who are able defenders except for their occasionally erratic kicking.

In coming to the position of goalkeeper, we come to the position which has aroused a good deal of controversy in the school. There were two candidates for the position, Wilson (L. VIc.) and Powers. The former player has been replaced by Powers, who, by his subsequent displays, has given convincing evidence of his capacity.

The Second Eleven has been somewhat disjointed recently through the endeavours of our captain to build up a Junior Shield Team. Contrary to expectations, this team has fared quite creditably, and has every hope of progressing some little way in the Shield Competition.

The usual Second Eleven is proving quite capable, but has suffered lately through calls on their ranks to fill up gaps in the First Eleven, caused by injury. Their forward line is quite good, but does not combine as well as it might, although it has been responsible for some big goal-scoring achievements. The half-backs have acquitted themselves well, and, when they settle to their game, Walley and Marchant, at back, tackle and kick soundly. In recent games, Wild has played quite well as goalkeeper.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

[We invite letters for this page, but do not hold ourselves responsible for any opinions expressed, nor do we necessarily agree with them].

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "VISOR."

Sir,—From many observations that I have made during the football season, I notice that the standard of play in both the school teams is a very low one. The main faults may be put into two classes. The first is that there is little or no attempt at combination. Probably 50 per cent. of the passes which are put either to the wings or down the middle do not find their objective, and are snapped up by the opposition.

On the whole it cannot be said that the defences are weak, for they are not afraid to tackle their opponents, and to tackle heartily. It is with the forwards that the other weakness is to be found. They dribble well, and advance in fine style, but their finishing is weak. In front of goal, their shooting is, to say the least, erratic. Until we can find players who know where the goal is, we cannot hope for victory." Yours, etc.—

"SOCCERITE."

ATKIN HOUSE NOTES.

House Master—Mr. BLOOR. House Captain—G. V. OVENS.

Up to the present, Atkin House have not been very successful, as most of our last year's team, which won the cup, have left, and our senior boys are but few in number. We are confident, however, to judge by lower school results, that we shall recover our traditionally good form, and be "cock-house" as usual.

We are glad of the increase in form matches as they have brought forth some hidden talent, talent which, we are sure, will be well represented in future school teams.

The house is well represented in the school running club. The house chess team, containing three Atkinites out of the seven men constituting the school team, is confident of winning the house championship in chess.

At the recent swimming gala, the house squadron team retrieved a poor start and finished second. In C. Smith we have a potential school swimming champion.

The house has suffered from the unfortunate death of Mr. Bryant and the departure of Mr. Skellon. We are fortunate, however, in getting as additional house masters Mr. Davies and Mr. Williams, to whom we accord a hearty welcome.

HOUSE REPRESENTATIVES:

School 1st Eleven—G. V. Ovens (vice-captain), F. Patron, W. R. Powers.

School 2nd Eleven—P. R. Smith, B. V. Wood, Jackson.

School Chess Team—G. V. Ovens, B.V. Wood, I.R.M. Latto.

STITT HOUSE.

House Master—Mr. WATTS. House Captain—G. BOWEN.

Stitt House so far has had a fairly successful season. The results are:—

GOALS						
P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	POINTS.
11	7	3	1	45	27	15

The seniors were successful against Atkin when they won 3-1. The intermediates in their match with Atkin were very weak in front of goal, and the result, 1-1, does not fairly represent the run of the play. Against Westminster, though playing five reserves, Stitt scored five goals against their opponents' three. Stitt were very successful in their match with Tate, when they won 3-1.

Juniors. Atkin provided little opposition when Stitt won 6-0. Jones and McBride, who have since gained their places in the prospective Junior Shield Team, played well. Though the above two players were absent from the side against Tate, Stitt gained a hard fought victory, the score being 3-2.

Form Matches.

6TH FORM—Stitt beat Atkin 10-1, Richardson and Swan scoring 3 goals each.

5TH FORM—Both matches have been lost.

4TH FORM—Atkin received a heavy defeat at our hands, Stitt winning 8-0.

3RD FORM—Atkin gained two points from Stitt when we lost 4-3.

Swimming Gala.

Though we lost rather badly in the House Squadron Race, Hodge is to be commended on his fine effort.

TATE HOUSE.

House Master—Mr. G. W. HARRIS.

House Captain—R. E. EVANS.

Many new members have been added to the house this term, and some valuable members have left. This is always the case at the beginning of a school year, consequently the Autumn term is chiefly one of experiment, the trying of new talent, and the piecing together of teams.

The Swimming Gala proved the swimming prowess. Aston won the school championship, whilst Watkins was second. The house squadron team was stronger than any of the other squadrons. The boys swam in this order: Symons, Moore, Watkins, Aston. They won by nearly a whole length. The boys of the lower school showed very good form and should guarantee a good result at the next gala.

Football.

The house well holds its own against the others, the junior and intermediate teams however, achieving greater success than the senior team, which fact perhaps explains the fewness of our boys in the first and second elevens. In the inter-form matches, we have done exceedingly well. Much interest and keen rivalry now exists between the house members of the various forms.

Chess.

In chess we are fairly prominent, having two men in the school team, but as no inter-house matches have yet been played, it is impossible to forecast the prowess of the house.

In conclusion we hope that the house as a whole will succeed in all branches of sport, as it most certainly has done in previous years.

WESTMINSTER HOUSE.

House Master—Mr. F. W. JONES. House Captain—J. WILSON.

At the meeting of the house held on Sept. 23rd, 1927, our captain and vice-captain were elected. They are :—J. Wilson, captain ; E. C. Cooper, vice-captain.

Our activities in the various organisations of the school have all been fairly successful. For example :—

Football.

SENIORS—Our only match played this term resulted in a decisive victory over Tate by nine goals to two. We were superior in every position.

INTERMEDIATE—Our results have been very disappointing, due, no doubt, to the large number of senior Westminsterites in the first and second teams.

JUNIORS—We have played two matches and won both by four goals to two.

INTER-FORM—The results have been disappointing, and we can only hope for improvement in the future.

COLOURS—Out of three Football "Colours" in the school at the present time, we have two. We congratulate J. Wilson and E. C. Cooper, and hope they will continue to deserve the honour.

SCHOOL ELEVENS—We have ten representatives in the school teams. These are :—

1st XI.—Wilson, Cooper, Connell, Maxwell and Murphy.

2nd XI.—Boyle, Marchant, Theaker, Wilson (L.Vic.) and Baxter.

Chess.

We have only one representative in the school team, namely L. Theaker, but many others are qualifying for this honour.

Swimming.

We congratulate our house squadron for their valiant, although unsuccessful, efforts at the Gala. Our team was :—

Baker.

Ludlow.

Murphy.

Hallet.

THE RIFLE CLUB.

The above club was formed during the war and was in the charge of Mr. Watts. It then passed into the hands of Mr. Bloor, who was in charge of it till about four years ago. Finally, Mr. Hall took charge of it, and he still retains the post of supervisor. There are at present seven members, who practice from 4-30 p.m. to 5-30 p.m. on Thursday afternoon. Nothing much is heard or spoken of the club outside its seven members, but those unfortunate individuals occupying IIIb. classroom after school on Thursday afternoon will undoubtedly inform you that we still carry on—quietly or otherwise.

G.M. (Lower VIIb.)

B. I. R. F. C.

Once again the Park Rugby Club have lent their 2nd XV.'s ground in Park Road North for the Rugby Club to use on Wednesday afternoons, and their kindness is greatly appreciated. Mr. Davies has taken charge this season, and although rather handicapped on account of lack of support, the club is going ahead. There are many boys in the school from the Vth. form upward who do not play soccer with any great measure of success, but who might turn out quite promising Rugby players. These are the boys who are wanted by the Rugby Club. So far, this season, only practice matches have been played, but the club hopes in the near future to play some fixtures with neighbouring schools, and, if there is a good response to the appeal for support, to play Saturday fixtures as well.

Mr. Davies will be pleased to enrol any new members.

TO KENT.

Fruit-studded county, glorious shire of Kent,
On thy green swards the echoing yeomen's praise
Is ushered unto the ethereal sky: O, heaven sent,
Old England's garden, where the ghosts of famous men
Tread Nature's oft forgotten, silent ways.

B.V.W.

THE CHESS CLUB.

The Chess Club, under the able direction of Mr. Moat, has proved to be a great success. The club now contains fifty-six members, most of whom meet on Tuesday and Thursday evenings either to play off tournaments or to play friendly games. From the members of the club, eight boys have been chosen to represent the school in inter-school games. The chess team is competing again this year for the Wright Challenge Shield, which it won last year and also the year before. The team has played four shield games up-to-date, resulting in three wins and one undecided. Here are the results:—

Birkenhead Institute.....	6	Wallasey Grammar S. r	
*Birkenhead Institute.....	6½	Rock Ferry High S....	½
*Birkenhead Institute.....	7	Oldershaw	0
†Birkenhead Institute.....	2½	Oulton	2½
Total for		22	
		Total against.....	4

*Matches unsettled, but certain win for B. I.

†2 games not yet adjudicated.

In the 1st Division of the Tournament, Theaker has completed his eight games, and won half of them. The championship, however, seems to lie between Baker and Walley, the latter having won all his games so far (three), and the former all his (four). A great surprise result was the defeat of Ovens by Green.

The result of the 2nd Division is very open, McNeill having lost only one out of six games, while McKeown and Crawshaw have each played five, won four and lost one.

In the 3rd Division Knock-out Tournament, all the 2nd round ties have not yet been decided, while Wilson has reached the 4th round.

All praise is due to Mr. Moat, who has directed one of the most successful clubs in the school.

STALEMATE.

SWIMMING GALA.

"The Gala comes but once a year,
But, when it comes, it brings good cheer."

The Swimming Gala at our school is always a jolly festivity, thanks to the hard work of Mr. Clague to make it a success. Once our school warms to its work, it generally makes a big "splash" in Birkenhead, and this splash was noticeable in Livingstone Street the other night, when the putty nearly jumped out of the windows of the Baths, during the excitement of the squadron race. The neighbouring houses complained of the noise—"the murmuring of mighty splashes"—during the Mop Fight, and perhaps it was a good thing that Mr. Clague did not take his usual exhibition dip, otherwise there would have been a fracas in the streets around. Of course, much of the gilt was taken off the ginger-bread, so to speak, through Mr. Skellon's leaving. It will be remembered that in a previous Swimming Gala, Mr. Skellon kindly obliged by falling in, fully-dressed. However, as he has left, none of the staff would cause a sensation by repeating the action. So we had to rest content with the Mop Fight, in which the participants fell in, dressed in bathing costumes instead of fully-dressed.

We will not bore with elaborate details of the races, the results of which are already well known. Among the most successful that evening were Smith of Form IIIa., who carried off four medals, and Watkins of Form Vc., who swam splendidly, in the School Championship, against so redoubtable an opponent as R. Aston. In closing, we would like to thank Mr. Clague and the rest of the staff who worked so energetically to make the Gala a success.

DEBATING SOCIETY.

The above society meets every fortnight to debate upon topics of general interest, and others which are of particular interest and use to the average schoolboy.

These debates serve as an alleviation from the ordinary routine of school life. After a tiring and exacting day in the class-room, after countless impositions, and punishments of one kind or another, what is more enjoyable, and, at the same time, beneficial, than attending one of these school debates and hearing men of wisdom (?) discussing learnedly topical subjects?

These debates are also useful to the boys in developing in them the confidence and courage to stand up and give voice to their own convictions on the subject under review. It certainly means also the diffusion of much useful information upon various matters. One never knows how many old boys of the Institute have just failed to become Members of Parliament because they missed the opportunities they had here of developing the gift of oratory.

With regard to those debates already held this term, it may be fairly urged that the majority of them have passed off very successfully. Our first discussion was on the subject "That Birkenhead should have a Civic Week." A. S. Perry proposed the motion, ably seconded by B.V.Wood, whose witty speech met pleasurable acceptance. W. Hastings and M. H. Baker, opposing, urged that a Civic Week was of no practical value in extending the trade of the town. Despite this contention the motion was carried easily.

A fortnight later we met to discuss that well-known slogan, "Buy British Goods." The proposers, Messrs. Maddocks and Connell, stated that as the welfare of nations has, and always will, depend on trade, so we should endeavour by trade to place the industries of our Empire on a sure foundation. The speakers for the opposition, Messrs. Beacall and Papperovitch, contended that if we traded with the colonies only and not with other nations, the result would lead to enmity with other countries and destroy that world brotherhood which was the aim of the League of Nations. This argument gained the support of the assembly, and the motion was accordingly defeated.

The motion for the third debate was "That there should be Professionalism in Sport." The proposers, Messrs. Baker and Perry, urged that as musicians, painters, and authors are paid for exercising a gift, often inherent since birth, and developed by assiduous practice, so should professional sportsmen be paid for exercising a gift which is of great benefit to thousands of people. The opposers, Messrs. Ovens and McIver, countered this argument by contending that it is incompatible with the true interests of sport when a man is paid for playing a game. In consequence, no doubt, of the even distribution of arguments, the voting was of a very close nature, and the house decided by a small majority in favour of the motion.

The last debate to be held this term, "That the Power of the Press should be diminished," was discussed a week or so ago. Messrs. Evans and Blackwood, proposers, painted a lurid picture of the evil wrought by the Press to-day. But Messrs. Beacall and Wood, the opposers, showed quite clearly the bad results likely to follow if the power of the Press were diminished. And the assembly, influenced by this, rejected the proposal by a huge majority.

In closing, the Debating Society extend a most warm invitation to all boys in the school to attend their meetings, assuring them that they will pass a most interesting and enjoyable time, and also receive a hearty welcome from the Committee.

"AND YOUR ENGLISH SUMMER'S DONE."

Kipling in writing "L'Envoi," must have allowed his thoughts to wander back to the summer days, he, with his friends, enjoyed as a school-boy in sunny Devon. Somehow, in a scarcely definable manner, our boyhood's summer days, were always fine. Perhaps we remember only the fine, sunny days, and forget the dull days, when we used to sit and fish in some neighbouring pond, or busy ourselves in a book at home.

The clock has been put back. The summer has ended. Yet we have few regrets at her passing. Autumn, as Keats has said, has her beauties too. We, who cannot go abroad to another and a finer summer, are yet able to love the fall of the leaf.

Even the birds, erstwhile so mute and silent, have lost some of their lethargy, and chanced a few echoes of their spring songs. But the notes resemble the touch on a broken violin, where only one string is left to mock the loss of the others. No longer does the startled blackbird dash through the lush green leaves along a stream bed, chiding shrilly. Only a harsh croak, a rustle of dead leaves, and she is gone.

Our English Autumn is so beautiful and so sad. The rustling leaves stir up memories of bygone days. Yet by the boy, Autumn is hailed with delight. Blackberries, chestnuts, hazel nuts, all are to be found. Apples, nibbled with caution and wry faces in summer, can now be munched in comfort. And—the huntsmen. What a mad gallop there is when the clarion call is heard. Over fences, over ditches, over stiles and gates, till we can see the brilliant scarlet hues of his coat, and hear the crack of his whip as he chides erring hounds.

And please remember the Fifth of November. Boys of to-day, of yesterday, and of to-morrow, all are the same. How a crackling fire stirs them with tales of redskins, and what shrieks of delight hail the sharp rat-a-tat of fireworks. Even the Olympians like the mild, nicely coloured firework.

Winter, with the gay round of festivities will soon be here, and snow-fights will be indulged in no doubt. Then, with the New Year, the nights will shorten, and soon the first buds, tiny heralds of another, and perhaps a better summer, will appear.

Sad are the days, and worse to come, when we see the buds appear, and are not filled with joy. For then we are as dead men, yet we live; blind, yet we see; and deaf, yet hearing.

P.J.B.

NOTHING.

How enigmatic is nothing! It can be defined in many ways—zero, oblivion, that which is left when everything is taken away, a bung-hole without a barrel, o, the power to which a number must be raised to equal unity, and so on and so forth. But how much nearer are we to a correct understanding of this absorbing subject? My own comprehension of nothing is aided by dividing it into two classes, the comparative and the absolute nothing.

My second and third definitions may be considered as absolute. But how elusive, evasive, inexpressible is anything absolute. And if anything absolute, such as equality, infinity, eternity, and the authority of the H²d Pr¹ct, can hardly be comprehended, absolute nothing is still less comprehensible. Let us leave the vain, empty, useless discussion of absolute (not absolutely) nothing, and consider comparative nothing.

When your master tells you that you know nothing about your work, he is right; but he is wrong if he mean by

"nothing" absolute nothing. The fact is that you know comparatively nothing about it. In Geometry, you may be a right ignorant, stupid dud, but you will at least know that the centre of a circle is outside it. Therefore you do know something about Geometry (and you didn't know you knew any).

Turning to Algebra, we can bring more light to bear on this "empty" subject. —1 is less than 0. But 0 is nothing and one cannot conceive of anything less than nothing. Therefore 0 is not nothing, at least it is not an absolute nothing but comparative nothing.

Turning to Integral Calculus. . . . [He cannot continue, as he has lost his Calculus book.—ED.]

However, what I have said may help you to understand what nothing is.

My essay is!

S.Y.R.

UNKNOWN WIRRAL.

About half way along the main road from Upton to Moreton, on the left-hand side, there is a footpath leading to a copse belonging to the owner of the large house near by. In this copse, which the public are allowed to approach, are the foundations of and the tombs belonging to a very ancient church—Overchurch. This church, which was of very ancient origin, probably dating back to Saxon times, was constantly repaired, until a little over a hundred years ago, when it was destroyed, the more important parts of it being taken to Upton church. The famous Biddan stone, from which Bidston probably derives its name, now in Upton church, was once in Overchurch, while a "breeches" Bible from there is also at Upton.

As one leaves Marsh Lane to enter the pretty little hamlet of Storeton, Lever's road is continued on the left. If one walks a little way along this road, which is generally open, the entrance to a farmyard is noticed on the left, and directly facing this entrance is a farm (Pate's), a yard, and then a cow-house, which, after a careful scrutiny, one notices to have the appearance of a small chapel. This is probably the remains of Storeton Hall, once famous as the home of the lords of Wirral under the Normans, although I have also heard the theory

advanced that it was a monastery, which was connected to a similar house at Prenton. I believe that there is also a subterranean passage from here to a farm at Prenton. Whether the ruins at Storeton are of hall or monastery, the "Roman Road" of Prenton is probably a causeway built by the owners of the building.

Two much neglected villages, both of which are very pretty, are Caldy and Shotwick. Caldy, which is close to the shore, is well off the main road, and has as good a shore for bathing and pic-nics as any other part of Wirral. Shotwick is very quiet and peaceful, probably because the nearest main road is about a mile away. It has a beautiful old Hall, and its church, which contains many objects of great interest, is very old. Some distance away is the site of Shotwick Castle, which in the days of Shotwick's greatness, housed kings.

Irby and Thurstaston are very popular local resorts, but I have found that the majority of people who visit these places know little or nothing of Irby Hall, easily accessible from both. This hall is very ancient, the back portions being of considerable antiquity, while the front was probably restored in the early seventeenth century. At the back, the building is moated, the moat, which is about fifty yards from the house, being a fine example and very deep. The hall was probably guarded thus to repel onslaughts from foes across the Dee.

B.V.W.

ALEXANDER SELKIRK'S SOLILOQUY BEFORE LEAVING JUAN FERNANDEZ.

Solitude's reign is done.

No more between the whisp'ring palms at dead of night,
With the pale moon, its yellow beams outspread, its light
Flooding the world, shall e'er I lie again,
Only myself for whom to care, but now for home,
For this my life upon a pleasant isle is done.

As some young child, who softly through the length of night
Has slumbered, dreaming pleasant dreams of countless joys,
Awakes from out his sleep into the full of day,
So I, from out my happy reign upon this isle,
Return again into the bustling, madding crowd,
And this, my solitude, has ended as a dream.

B.V.W.



CAPTAIN: "Hi! Let go that forward rope!"
NEW DECK HAND: "Garn! Who's touchin' yer bloomin' rope?"

THE PREFECTS OF THE BIRKENHEAD INSTITUTE SCHOOL.

The Prefects of the B. I. S.
 Are brainy, almost to excess,
 And, in their zeal for mathematics,
 Perform such mental acrobatics,
 That one must ask, in some alarm,
 May not these efforts do them harm?
 Deplorable would be their fate,
 If, in the heat of some debate,
 Their vast, but finely-tempered, brains
 Gave way beneath these heavy strains;
 And helter-skelter, with refrain,
 They poured out into Whetstone Lane,
 Waving their arms in frenzied glee,
 Muttering dreadful formulæ,
 And shouting to the passer-by:
 "You are a circle! I am π !"

This fact is true beyond dispute,
 Formulæ are their strongest suit;
 And, though they certainly combine
 To shoot a very powerful line,
 In mathematical technique,
 Their records would be grim and wasting,
 Without that stalwart, William Hastings,
 Hence, when they gather to discuss
 (Assisted by the calculus)
 The subtler facts of mensuration,
 They win our thoughtful admiration;
 But this, I would most strongly stress,
 Must every time be rated less
 Than those rare pleasures they afford,
 While seated round the festive board.

R:J.D. (Lower VIa:)

MYSTERY ! ! ! ! !

Pitch, murky darkness ! A darkness impenetrable ! Night, —the time of death, when things of evil flout all good things of day, had come with a vague, but awful, sense of mystery, that hung over him like a pall of terror as he lay on his bed in that blackness of Acheron. He could not see an inch in front of him, but he knew that it was there. What was it ? Something he knew was there but couldn't touch, couldn't see, couldn't comprehend. ! From the tomb of Sarsis I. in the Valley of Kings it had followed him, but had never approached him as he knew it was approaching him on this night of awful mystery.

He tried to reach out his hand for a match, but his limbs were paralysed with terror. He could only stare, stare upwards with an unblinking gaze. He tried to open his mouth and scream, but his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, and only a feeble squeak issued from his throat. A cold sweat broke out all over him ; and a faint rustle from the corner of the room warned him that It, invincible, was approaching him. His heart seemed to have stopped beating, while the terror which had first assailed him seemed to have increased an hundred fold. And then a merciful unconsciousness swept over him.

When he came to, he knew that It was still hovering near him. The blackness of the atmosphere nearly drove him mad, while he was bathed in a cold sweat. His limbs were still numb as death, and he could not utter a word. But from the middle of the room came a low " swish," another rustle, and then he felt It, the awful It, beside him. This It seemed to generate an icy cold, and as It bent over him, his paralysed limbs seemed to gather strength. He leapt from his bed, and, in desperation, hurled himself at his awful enemy, the awful It, fluttering around him. He caught It tightly in his arms, and, pulling back, stumbled over a chair, knocking it over, but still he hung to It. Suddenly, amidst the uproar caused by his desperate struggles, the light was switched on. The illumination revealed him sitting on the floor, tightly holding—a curtain. Dazedly, he looked from the object in his arms to the open window, through which blew an icy blast ; looked at the grinning steward peering round the door of his cabin. " Sorry, sir," said the servant, " I heard the noise in your cabin, and just looked in. Had a night-mare, I suppose, sir." The man on the floor looked from the steward to It, the awful

It, in his arms, and his face assumed a deep, a very deep, rouge. "Yes, I suppose so," he said, as he rose to fix it again in the correct position.

THE TOTAL ECLIPSE, JUNE 29th, 1927.

Titanic struggle—when the mighty sun,
With dazzling rays, with awful heat, its sight
Hidden from man, dethronèd by the moon,
Had left us with the darkness of the night.

A chilly wind swept o'er the sunless land,
All Nature's agents had been lulled to rest—
The sheep had stayed his bleating on the moor;
The songless bird had flown back to his nest.

When, suddenly, from out the blackened orb
Burst forth a sunbeam—shone on fields of dew,
And then the sun, triumphant o'er the moon,
Blazèd his trail o'er heaven's field anew.

B.V.W.

THE TWO VOICES.

(With apologies to Wordsworth and to the Prefects).

Two voices there are—one is of IIIb.,
One of IIIc.—and each a mighty voice.
In both thou did'st for a long time rejoice,
When, down the corridor so swiftly,
There came a tyrant, and, with holy glee,
Thou fought'st against him, but hast vainly striven,
The prefect's voice the very roof hath riven.

Where not a voice doth murmur heard by thee,
Of one great joy thy life hath been bereft.
Then, cleave, O cleave, to that which still is left.
Thou high-souled lad, what sorrow it would be
If thou should'st do thy imposition, for
The prefect's glee would just be as before,
His awful voice would haunt thee evermore.

Now when I this missive penned,
I wrote it, smiling, to the end;
But, ah!—I then received, poor chap,
The prefect's hard, back-handed, slap,—
For there, before me, clear as day,
That beastly imposition lay.

R.B. (IIIb.)

OUR FARM CAMP.

We have, as a school, had many fine examples of successful team work, such as our School Bazaar, but none so striking as our Farm Camp of 1918.

Many boys who see the beautiful silver cup which we bought with the profits of the camp may be interested to know how our first House Trophy was earned.

Several of our bigger boys had gone to help the farmers during the August holiday in 1916 and 1917, but early in 1918 the Government urged all secondary schools to do much more. They said it was essential for camps of boys of 16 and upwards to be established in many agricultural centres from the beginning of June, so that farmers might be able to call on them for all sorts of farm work when required.

We found later that most farmers had no difficulty in securing Farm Girls and German prisoners, and that many secondary schools sent boys to places where they had difficulty in obtaining work to do.

However, we did not know then what we know now, and we were assured that unless we came to the rescue potatoes would rot in the soil and harvests would never be garnered.

Mr. R. J. Russell, one of our governors, interviewed several large farmers in Mid-Cheshire, and we decided to run our own camp.

A large Mission House at Tilston Fearnal was lent to us by the Vicar, who was most helpful in establishing the camp, and most friendly to us during the four months of its existence.

We decided on 20 as a suitable number to start with, and Mr. Dowse, who took the first party to camp, soon obtained work for all his boys.

We undertook to put in a fortnight at a spell, and somewhat to our surprise, many offered to come again if required: otherwise we could not have supplied the requirements of the farmers in August and September.

The work was arduous and often dirty; many boys worked 10 hours daily, and the pay was fixed by Government at 4d. per hour.

Potato picking, weeding, working both at the hay harvest and corn harvest—all came alike to those workers.

We did our own cooking, in fact all the work of a Scouts' Camp, in addition to the farm work.

One unlooked for result of this camp was that several of our boys decided on farm work for their future and have followed it up in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

One of our number who won a University Scholarship declined to accept it and started at an Agricultural College immediately.

We had very few cases of sickness until the end of September when it rained incessantly.

Boys managed to amuse themselves: bathing and singing were the main recreations. A musical entertainment given by the first batch gave much pleasure to the neighbours.

The camp brought out abilities of boys in very unexpected ways, and proved a valuable training for all of us. Incidentally boys and masters got a better knowledge of each other.

J. SMALLPAGE.

DEPARTURE OF MR. SMITH.

We are sorry to announce the departure of Mr. Smith, who is leaving us at Christmas to take up a position at Blackburn Grammar School.

During the last three years that he has been among us, the respect for him has grown. He is liked not only by the members of his Latin classes, past and present, but also by those with whom he has come in contact in his sporting activities.

Mr. Smith has attended football and cricket matches regularly. He has made many glad by forming a running club, and has managed to make it one of the most popular clubs in the school.

We assure Mr. Smith of our best wishes, and hope that he will enjoy himself at his new school. This school will be the poorer for his loss. We look forward, however, to seeing Mr. Smith again, and feel certain that it will not be a case of "*salve aeternum nobis aeternumque vale*," but "*au revoir*."

OLD BOYS' SOCIETY.

President—J. SMALLPAGE, Esq., B.A.

The above Society was formed in November 1923 with the object of keeping as many of the Old Boys as possible in touch with one another, and fostering amongst them the spirit of good fellowship, by means of social activities, such as debates, dances, hot-pot suppers, and smoking concerts. In addition to these a football club has been formed, the particulars of which are given elsewhere in this Magazine.

An Old Boys' tie has been designed recently, the colours of which are representative of the four School Houses, and has proved exceedingly popular.

The meetings of the Society are held, at present, during the winter months only, but with a continually increasing membership, it is hoped to extend our activities to the "sum-

mer" months, when the question of swimming, cricket, tennis and other out-door recreation can be considered.

Remember, therefore, that when you leave school you will be welcomed into the ranks of the " Old Brigade " on payment of an annual subscription of 5s.

A. FRANK HOWES,

Hon. Sec.

THE BIRKENHEAD INSTITUTE OLD BOYS' A.F.C.

The Old Boys' Football Club needs no introduction to boys of the Birkenhead Institute. It is an institution which is almost as old as the school itself, although its activities were necessarily restricted during the Great War.

It is impossible in the short space at our disposal to review the ups and downs of the club, throughout its long career, but a brief reference to the last two or three years may be of interest to our readers.

For the three past seasons teams have been fielded in the Divisions I. and II. of the Liverpool Old Boys' League. During this period the championship has been won twice, and we were placed third in the other season. The second team has always figured among the first three, and last season tied for top place. In addition, the school has been represented every year in the Senior and Junior Old Boys' Shield Competitions.

In view of the growing enthusiasm and steadily increasing membership, the Committee have this season arranged a very ambitious programme. The first team is now playing in the I Zingari League (Division III.) with pleasing results, and at the time of going to press, they have reached the third round of the I Zingari Challenge Cup Competition. The second and third teams are maintaining our reputation in the Old Boys' League, and on several occasions a fourth team has entered the field.

Membership is open to all Masters, boys and old boys of the school, and boys, parents and friends are assured of a very hearty welcome at any of our matches.

Subscriptions per season are as follows : —

Schoolboys	£0 5 0
Old boys for the first year after leaving school	0 10 6
Honorary members	0 5 0

These fees include membership of the Old Boys' Society, whose activities will be found elsewhere in these pages.

The Hon. Secretary, Mr. C. D. Gracey, 29 Woodchurch Lane, will be pleased to furnish any desired information on request.

If it's **IRONMONGERY** you want
Get it from an **IRONMONGER.**

YOU WILL FIND A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS DISPLAY
of
Fretwork Accessories, Carpenter's Tools and Chests
and other interesting articles,
at

William Hastings,
251 Grange Road.

Tel. No. 119.

Roberts & Jobson

LIMITED,

for all

**Athletic
Goods**

At
Lowest
Prices.

**The Sports Shop,
Charing Cross.**

'Phone Birkenhead 778.



F. J. DAVIS,

Bookseller

And

Stationer.

14 Grange Rd. West,

BIRKENHEAD.

Telephone 1698.

When replying to advertisers please mention the "VISOR."

Established in Public Favour
over Half a Century.

T. & G. Young's

**Milk
Brown
Bread.**

**16 Balls Road
and
151 Conway St.
Tel. 1087.**

To Let

Apply to Magazine Secretary
Birkenhead Institute.

Tel. 21 ROCK FERRY.

E. A. MURRAY & SONS,
LTD.,

Printers & Publishers

(A few doors from Bedford Road).

**437 New Chester Road,
Rock Ferry.**

When replying to advertisers please mention the "VISOR."