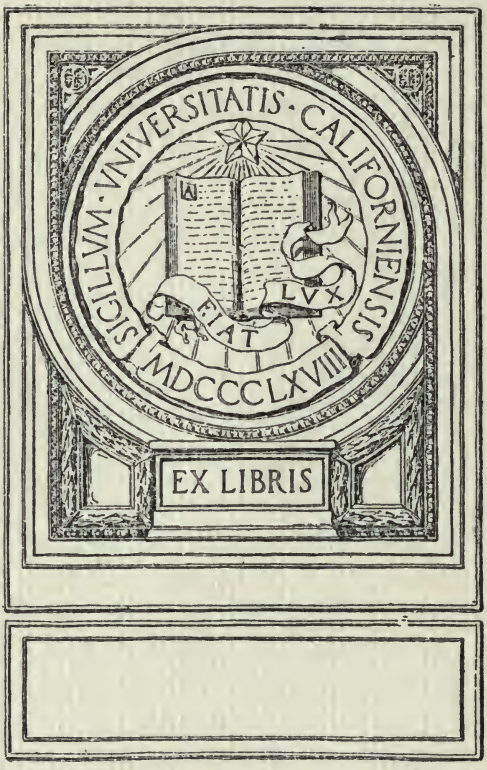
THE
ENGLISH
PUBLIC
SCHOOL


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
FIAT LVX
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

THE ENGLISH PUBLIC SCHOOL

THE ENGLISH PUBLIC SCHOOL

A SYMPOSIUM

EDITED BY

J. HOWARD WHITEHOUSE

LONDON
GRANT RICHARDS LTD.
ST MARTIN'S STREET
MDCCCCXIX

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY THE RIVERSIDE PRESS LIMITED
EDINBURGH

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

By the Editor

The origin of this book is due to the appearance of Mr Waugh's much-discussed *Loom of Youth.* That book was considered in *The Nation* last year in an article entitled "The Indictment of the Public School." This article led to a prolonged correspondence and to a number of articles on various phases of the public school system. The original article and the discussion which followed are reprinted in this book, with a quantity of additional matter, including contributions from Mr Arthur Ponsonby and Professor Oscar Browning. Some of the chief contributors to the original correspondence now sign their names to what were anonymous contributions. The authorship of the original article remains anonymous.

I have to express my thanks to Mr H. W. Massingham for his permission to reprint such of the contents as appeared in *The Nation.*

Mr Waugh's book has aroused so much interest in a subject of high importance that

no apology is offered for putting forward this book of suggestions and criticisms. It should be noted that neither the editor nor the contributors are responsible for, or necessarily endorse, any of the views set forth other than their own. The book is not put forward in a hostile spirit, but in order to assist the critical examination now taking place in the minds of a not inconsiderable portion of the people of this country into a system which dominates a great part of our educational life.

I desire in this introduction to deal briefly with the chief points of criticism raised either in the subsequent pages or elsewhere, and to put forward a number of suggestions although some of these are also raised and discussed by other contributors to the symposium. The power of tradition and convention in the English public school system is excessive, and this fact alone is sufficient to justify inquiry, suggestion and criticism.

For general convenience the main points around which criticism has ranged are considered separately. References will be made in this connection to some of the questions raised, and the suggestions made by Mr Martin Browne, in his *Dream of Youth*, a little book written in reply to Mr Waugh by an Etonian.

Any school would have reason to be proud of the fact that one of its members, whilst still at school, should be capable of producing such a well-written, thoughtful and suggestive book.

THE CURRICULUM

One of the chief lines of attack by critics and reformers is directed against the curriculum. It is hard to resist the conclusion that the attack is justified. The study of the classics has been carried on in a great number of the public schools under conditions which have prevented adequate time being given to the study of more important subjects. The reasons given by those who support the present system appear neither sound nor, relatively speaking, important. The study of Greek and Latin provides, they say, the finest mental training, and its compulsory retention is justified on this ground. But other studies at once more necessary and useful provide equally sound mental training.

We are told, further, that the study of these languages is essential in order to have knowledge of a wonderful history and literature. Two observations may be made in this connection. Notwithstanding the excessive time spent on these languages only a small propor-

tion of the boys leaving the public schools have attained more than a smattering of them. Very few use or study them afterwards. Many retain only a sense of the waste of a great part of their school life in being made, for instance, to attempt the production of verses in a language of which they had no real understanding.

The broad case for the abolition of the almost exclusive dominance of Greek and Latin surely lies in the fact that the growth of the modern world, with all its complex problems, calls for a drastic revision of our methods of education, and the teaching and choice of subjects, apart altogether from the claims of tradition and convention. The fields of human knowledge and experience are now so vast that the subjects taught at our schools must have regard to the needs of boys who in the near future are to be citizens of the world. This is not a plea for the commercialising of the schools, but for their liberation.

MODERN LANGUAGES

It is for this reason that I think the case for greater attention to be paid to modern languages has been made out. It has more

than national importance. No great international advance can be expected, no matter what machinery for international government (*e.g.* the League of Nations) is set up, unless behind that machinery there is knowledge and the sympathy between peoples that springs from knowledge. The adequate teaching of modern languages is essential because only in this way is the future citizen given the key which will admit him to real intercourse with contemporary nations, their peoples and problems. The absence of this has always made the democracies of every country powerless, because ignorant, in influencing the treatment of foreign questions. The case for the universal study of modern languages is thus bound up with the cause of international progress.

MODERN HISTORY

But there are other essential subjects which the typical curriculum of a public school neglects, or deals with inadequately. One of the most important of these is Modern History. By modern history I do not mean English history exclusively, but the history of the great contemporary nations of the world. In the past English history has been studied in a kind of water-tight

compartment, instead of in relation to the development of the nations around us. It has been too exclusively a matter of picturesque military and naval deeds, too little a matter of the social and economic development of our people and of modern problems. But if the teaching of English history has been inadequate, the teaching of the modern history of other countries has been almost *nil*, and few boys leave school with any intelligent knowledge of the rise and progress, the thoughts and problems of the peoples who comprise the great family of nations.

What picture, for instance, of the life of America, the working of its State and federal governments, the problems of its social and economic system, was given to any boy in any school before the European war? And if this be true of a country speaking the same language, what is to be said of the historical teaching given of modern France, or Germany, or Russia?

Mr Martin Browne wrote his little book from one of the most famous of English public schools. In considering its curriculum he gives a copy of his school time-table showing the hours of study devoted to the various subjects by himself during the last two halves he spent there—a lad of seventeen.

In the Lent half of 1918, out of a working week consisting of twenty-three hours, his time-table, which he prints, shows that although six hours were devoted to Greek and Latin, and six hours to English history, modern history (other than English) had no place in his curriculum. In the summer half of 1918, out of a working week of twenty-one hours, seven hours were devoted to classics, seven hours to English history, and five hours to Napoleon.

If the only foreign history which a boy who is specialising in history is required to study is that connected with the military campaigns of Napoleon, it is obvious that our whole conception of what is meant by the study of modern history needs to be revised. It may be urged that the time-table quoted was drawn up for a boy to enable him to pass some examination. That would not be an adequate reply, but would show the need for reform in the system of examinations, which fetter and limit the system of public school as of other education.

On the general question of the teaching of history, I would urge that it should not be confined to the teaching of English history, but that modern history, in its widest sense, should be taught, with a view to giving boys

knowledge and sympathy with the peoples of other countries, and some understanding of the more important of the international problems which are before the world. I would further urge that in all teaching of history, whether English or foreign, less emphasis should be paid to merely military questions of little relative importance, such as the disposition, composition and detailed tactics of troops taking part in famous battles, or the military tactics of Napoleon (a very favourite theme), but that emphasis should be placed upon the social and economic development of modern nations. Nor would I, for my own part, avoid the frank but sympathetic treatment of such international questions as the League of Nations, and other plans for promoting international life and thought through better methods of intercourse.

CIVIC TEACHING

Closely allied with the question of the teaching of history is that of civic teaching. Here there is a great difference in the methods pursued at different public schools. A few have honourably distinguished themselves by the introduction of civics to an important place in their curriculum, and the reality of the

interest aroused was shown by the appearance of *The Eton Review*, and *A Public School Looks at the World*, from Repton. It is greatly to be regretted that the movement of which the latter paper was the outcome was arbitrarily suppressed after an improper intervention by the War Office!

Such teaching is essential if any intelligent sense of citizenship is to be developed. Moreover, the study of civics makes both English history and foreign history much more real things, and greatly helps the understanding of each.

In all our schools we have probably been too nervous in dealing with contemporary problems. The new social conditions in this country are themselves a justification for a revision of our methods. Boys in their later years at school should have the opportunity of learning something about the great measures of social legislation of the time. Such an opportunity should be within the reach of all boys, but especially of those who seek to be in positions of leadership in the future.

Modern social legislation even before the war was of a most complex character. It was without parallel in our social and economic history. In the era of reconstruction it will be even more complex, and unless senior boys

have their sympathies drawn towards the study of these questions at school, our ideals of citizenship must be dominated by the popular Press. The point is, perhaps, even more important in the case of boys who are not going on to a university.

THE PLACE OF CRAFTSMANSHIP IN SCHOOLS

I strongly urge that a greater place should be given to practical training in arts and crafts. Manual activities, as a part of intellectual and moral training, are frequently looked upon with contempt, and considered suitable only for small boys. I am convinced that this attitude is a profound mistake, and that every boy should have the opportunity of such training. Apart from the intellectual stimulus which it gives to even the brightest boy, it is to many the best form of self-expression. It gives new interests in life, and in later years it will have been found to help to a far better understanding of social and economic questions. It gives a boy, too, worthy interests for leisure hours, and helps him to get a true standard of values.

A practical knowledge of arts and crafts

helps to a true understanding of the principles and meaning of beauty.

I have referred more than once to Mr Martin Browne's book. On the need for beauty in our schools he expresses himself with remarkable power. "The lack of beauty in our teaching," he says, "is . . . to me the greatest calamity of education. The wonderful store of literature and art is very largely unused or misused. I am certain Alec Waugh is right in saying that we do want the free run of, and encouragement to enjoy, the work of the poets and artists who have left us their wonderful treasures. But we must have the best. Horace or Ovid, for instance, is a scandalous choice for the upbringing of youth. What need have we, and what right, when we possess a huge store of literature which stirs the heart, and exalts the spirit, to turn to the finished exponents of worldliness for our stable educational diet?

"And remember this appeal for beauty is closely connected with our moral standard. Why did Tester go wrong? Because his passion for beauty could not find an outlet in the stuffy atmosphere of Fernhurst. If we can find satisfaction for the flaming spirit of our desire in the treasures of beauty the ages have left us, and in their application to our

life now, we shall simply not want to be impure. And beauty, real beauty, will show us that impurity is ugly. Words fail me, because the thing is beyond words, but—Let Us Have Beauty!

"And what is more do not let us be afraid of physical beauty. We ought to see that man and woman are the most beautiful of all God's wonderful creations. It is the greatest moral help to feel the human body a sacred thing that must never be defiled."

I do not wholly endorse Mr Browne's view, but it is a suggestive passage. It is almost common ground to all schools of thought, that surroundings of simplicity and true beauty are in every way a refining and helpful influence alike to the individual and the community, and I refer to the matter at this point, because the right kind of training in craftsmanship makes beauty a real thing, and helps towards a fuller understanding of all the wonders of natural life.

RELIGION

One of the most difficult questions to discuss in connection with the public schools is that concerning the place, treatment and influence of religion within them. One chapter in this

book deals with it, and is written by one well qualified by knowledge and experience. Every book about the schools, whether novel, history or criticism, presents some aspect of this question. Mr Waugh gives a picture in *The Loom of Youth* which shows the entire failure of the influence of religion in the school. The religious life he described, and those who organised it, deserved failure. It was false and unreal, and the boys justly appraised it.

To my mind, the failure alleged against public school religion cannot be wholly divorced from the failure of religion outside the schools. There was never a time when the power of the Church—whether State or Nonconformist—was weaker than it is to-day. This is not the failure of Christianity; it is the failure of its professed exponents. We have passed through a supreme agony, and we have found the Church inadequate. It professed a faith which it did not understand, or, if it understood, it lacked the courage to interpret. In the long years of peace it had built an edifice, often beautiful and impressive, but based upon a false and crumbling foundation. This foundation was in part composed of unessential, irrelevant and frequently worthless dogma; it was in part composed of caste and social prejudices. When the war

broke out men looked to the Church in vain for the exercise of the independent vision of the followers of Christ: it had become in each country a mere department of the civil government.

So in the public schools. Religion has become a formal thing, one of the amenities of life, to the rites of which every proper person gives formal observance. This is partly due to the fact that the school organisation is wrong. Religion is a special department of the life of the school, but it is shut off from any real connection with its general life. It is partly due to the fact that we have not settled what we mean by religion. It is still a thing of creeds and intellectual beliefs, of catechisms and observances, of special clothes on Sundays, of one day weekly when all the joyous interests of the other days are forbidden.

The whole basis of the religious organisation of the schools requires reconsideration. Instead of making its services and observances and methods a reflection in miniature of those which have failed in the greater world of men these should be considered solely from the needs of boy life and should be a symbol of the way of life for which the school stood in all its phases.

Perhaps I can best make my meaning clear by the method of constructive suggestion; and I would make the following proposals:—

1. The public school sermon should be shortened and its character changed. The average sermon to adults is deservedly a failure, and it is a mistake to suppose that the same kind of sermon will succeed with boys. Creeds and dogmas should have little place in a school sermon. It should seek to make real the final virtues of life — truth, chivalry, unselfishness, love—which rise above all questions of doctrine and creeds. And the method of the sermon should rely less on formal and didactic exposition, but upon the use of stories, the exposition of pictures, and particularly of biographical illustration. Noble objects of admiration should be held up for reverence.

If boys are given reverence, manly virtues, and a sympathetic outlook upon the problems of the world, the more definite study of dogma may well be left until the post-school age.

2. The school service requires reform. Mr Browne makes many good suggestions in this connection, all of them having for their object the getting rid of formalism and making it a more real and suitable influence. Mr Browne also suggests that attendance at service should

be voluntary on the part of the boys. But the daily and weekly gathering together of a little community, sharing the same life and ideals, ought to be of such a character that the question of debating whether to attend it ought hardly to arise. The services should be short. Repetitions of creeds and prayers should be avoided. The boys should take a large share in them. The lessons read should be better arranged and selected, and need not be confined to the Bible. But the element of beauty, mystery, reverence, should always be present, for these things are vitally necessary.

3. I believe that much harm has been done through presenting the Old Testament to boys as being of equal importance with the New as a spiritual and moral guide, and I should like to see this practice brought to an end.

4. Sundays should be reformed. It is too frequently a day of formal and dull observances, and the convention which limits its activities to services, testament study and perhaps a decorous walk, is responsible for much of the failure of school religion to be a real influence. It stands too for the false division of life into things secular and things sacred. Apart from the communal gathering, Sunday should be a wholly free day, and every

attempt should be made to make it a happy one. Boys should be allowed to follow their hobbies, and, within reasonable limits, to play their games. In the last hour of the day there should be music and reading aloud. It should be a day so full of happy activities as to be looked forward to with eagerness instead of, as often happens now, with apprehension.

But no discussion of the question of the religious life of the schools has touched the roots of the question which does not recognise that the greatest religious influence must always be the character of those who control them.

A broader curriculum, embracing politics in the proper meaning of the term, which gives senior boys especially an interest in the study of human problems, may be a great help to the religious life of the school. It will also help to a solution of the problem of the excessive worship of athletics, because it will give elder boys adequate alternative interests.

ATHLETICS

Perhaps the most constant theme in all books about the public schools is the domination of athleticism. Athletics in their right place are wholly good, and indeed essential, but the exaggerated part they play in the life

of many schools and the interests of the boys is an evil admitted on all hands. My suggestions are these :

1. The system of compelling every boy to play a certain game should be ended.

2. In his free time a boy should be able to choose the physical activity he wishes to indulge. For instance, a boy whose school is by the river or the sea should be able to row or sail.

3. Distinctions in the school should not be exclusively based upon success in athletics.

4. The wider the choice of interests which are before a boy for his free time, the less danger there is of one game monopolising a boy's interests and giving him wholly false values in his school life.

5. There should be a far greater out-door life, apart from ordinary games, based upon woodcraft study in its widest sense with all the allied activities.

In a recent visit to American private schools I was struck by the wider choice of interests which boys had. This did not mean any less keenness on exercise and games as such, but it meant wider interests and a truer perspective. I remember one school by the side of a great lake, where boys were eagerly making, in an admirable workshop, canoes and sailing boats, for use on holidays. Here, too,

in the winter months skating and tobogganing had a great place in their lives, which were not dominated by the ideal of a single game as an end in itself. Moreover, it is a great mistake to think that such occupations as these do not also stand for camaraderie and co-operation, and for moral training and discipline.

One other method in this connection struck me as admirable in American schools. It was common to make admission to the school teams dependent upon the boy having done his school work satisfactorily. First values were placed upon first things. The part that a boy played in the general life of the school counted much more than his excellence at some specialised sport.

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

Some of the contributors to this book raise what are after all fundamental questions in connection with the public schools. Should they be preserved as a separate system for a definite social class, and is not the system inferior to that of the day school? I will venture to set forth my own conclusions, with a brevity I hope may not be mistaken for a didactic mind:

1. The boarding school must always be a

less natural institution than the day school, where the boy is not divorced from the influence of the home, the most important of any, and is able to give natural expression to the emotional side of his nature.

2. The general influence of the public school has been a dividing factor in our social system. It has diminished rather than increased sympathy between classes.

3. The boarding school system is not a necessity except in special cases. The example of all other great nations shows this.

4. An ideal educational system would not follow lines of class divisions. Under such a system, all schools would be free, and common to rich and poor alike. America has nearly achieved such a system.

But against these facts and arguments, there is much to be said on the other side. The day school needs reform as well as the boarding school. The perfect home is not common, or the home that is better than the best boarding school. The public school is not the only example of the class method in our educational system. The State-provided system follows lines of social divisions and provides an (inferior) elementary school for the children of the poor.

All this may be true, but yet we trust that the boarding school system as now organised

in this country may not be a permanent feature of our national life. We are striving towards a unity of life—not a unity of beliefs, or creeds, or material interests in an ignoble sense; not even simply a national unity. We are striving towards a unity in which every individual will be a member of a co-operative commonwealth (allied perhaps to similar ones in other lands), with all its amenities—freedom, leisure, education—secure to him. In that commonwealth there will be no place for a small privileged caste with its water-tight system of education.

I am far from thinking that any change in the machinery of education in the public schools, whether it takes the form of new subjects in the curriculum, and the drastic revision of time-tables, will in itself prove to have any final reforming influence, in the sense in which its critics desire. The whole outlook of those who control the old public schools has to be altered. Not only are fresher and better methods of education required. If they are to survive and to become instruments of social unity, the old conventional idea, whether expressed or understood, that boys are to be sent to these schools to receive a certain social mark, to join a definite caste, to become one of the governing classes, to have opened up for them an easy

path to the ranks of those who control the rest of the country in politics, religion, and the departments of civil government, must be swept away for ever.

When this has been done, and the public schools have been fitted into the educational needs of the whole nation, frankly forgoing their claim to be the possession of a caste, there remains a great work for them to do. A part of this would be that they should become the places of noble and unfettered experiment in what is the first and final needs for any nation, the training of her youth.

But before the right atmosphere can be created for true education, the schools must be freed from the military atmosphere which too frequently surrounds them. The War Office and its institutions should have no place in them. Militarism is the negation of education, and the attempt to use the schools as feeders for the needs of the army, with the inevitable introduction of the controlling hand of military authority, with its withering spirit, and anti-social bias, can lead only to the destruction of every vital thing for which education stands.

J. Howard Whitehouse.

THE INDICTMENT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

THE INDICTMENT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

We have sometimes wondered from what direction the knowledge and energy necessary for the reformation of our whole educational system would come. For the word education in England means something different to almost every one who talks about it. It may either stand for a barren sectarian controversy, or for the training we think well to give to the children of the poor, or for the totally different training which we reserve for the children of the rich, or for some other of the many phases of the system which we have in this country — a system which, in essentials, is one of class education. The Education Bill now before Parliament is itself the best evidence of the chaotic nature of our system, and of the fact that we do not think, as, for instance, it is possible to do in America, in terms of a public co-ordinated system, free and common to all classes. For the Bill makes no attempt to claim free secondary and higher education for all children, irrespective

of their social status. It contents itself by crowning the curriculum of the elementary school with the coping-stone of a continuation class. Now, however, the hammer of criticism has fallen on the idols of the past. This is the special work of Mr Alec Waugh (now happily reported alive) in his much-criticised *Loom of Youth.*

The Loom of Youth is the most powerful indictment of the conventional English public school that has appeared in our literature. It is the work of a brilliant boy written at seventeen, and it is obviously largely autobiographical. But it is much more than this. It is a photographic plate of the everyday life of the public school. It is as though the spectator saw it all through the medium of a cinema film. This photographic quality demands a much more reasoned criticism than that given by the schoolmasters who have hastened to repudiate it.

What are the main lines of its representation of the public schools? It is a picture of a collection of boys, possessing indeed a certain herd instinct and sympathy, but banded together in an organisation incompatible with culture or, except in a very limited sense, with any form of healthy intellectual or social life. The boys consciously resist each temptation to

do honest work, or to show interest in it. Between them and their masters exists a barrier, rarely broken, and chiefly built upon false conventions of the past. The life is marked by a certain brutality, which shows itself alike in word and in deed. The public opinion is rigid and conventional. It gives no freedom, whilst allowing and condoning licence. It is a life of false issues, given to worship of the athletic god, and offering a united front of resistance to any competing or broadening influence. The natural expression of the emotional side of a boy's nature is repressed, and finds other satisfaction. The innocent boy is coarsened; he becomes one of the herd. Religion at its highest is "good form"; its more solemn rites to be observed ("I'm in for the Confirmation Stakes") as a way of release from school work. It is a frankly barbaric picture, with some redeeming touches barely visible on the large canvas.

The realism with which the life of the boys is traced is extended to the masters. They are described as incapable of exercising real influence on the boys nominally under their care. We say nominally, for really the boys are a community to themselves, living a life rigidly apart. Of true pastoral care, the shepherding of the flock, there is no trace.

Such is the indictment of *The Loom of Youth*, and the inquiry at once arises how far the conditions and atmosphere described in the book are typical of the public school system. The schools as a whole have been protected from popular criticism. Their isolation, their independence of all public aid and inspection, their social prestige, the camaraderie of their members—all these influences tend to shield them in a degree which would not be possible in cases where there was public responsibility. In Mr Lunn's *Harrovians* there is this passage:

"I wonder," said Peter thoughtfully, "what would happen if anyone wrote an article describing what really goes on in this House."

"Oh, nothing," said Manson. "If anyone says anything against the public schools who hasn't been to one, everybody shouts, 'My dear man, what can you know about them? Nobody but a public-school man can understand the fine old public-school spirit.' And if you have been to one, everybody says, 'You horrid cad, criticising your dear old Alma Mater. Where's your giddy patriotism?'"

The reality of this attitude of mind will be generally recognised. At the same time, it would be unfair and illogical on the strength of a single book, dealing with one school, to assume that all schools are alike. What we are entitled to do, and what the public interest

requires, is to see how far the author is confirmed by other authorities who have abandoned the conventional standpoint of Mr Lunn's *Harrovians*.

As to the special social evil so frankly dealt with by Mr Waugh, we will only say that the author of *Tom Brown* suggests the existence of the same state of things, and hardly any realistic story of public school life, as opposed to mere stories for boys, fails to confirm Mr Waugh. Mr Lionel Portman's *Hugh Rendal* is a typical example. No honest headmaster could deny the reality of the danger. But if we put this difficult question on one side, there remains substantial support for the case set forth in *The Loom of Youth*. *The Harrovians* and *Hugh Rendal* both give us the picture of an organised society with the same false values, strong enough in its enforced unity to resist outside influence or change. The dominance of athleticism, and the basing of all distinction and privilege upon its worship, is shown throughout. This is also the theme developed with even greater force in one of the best and wittiest stories of public school life written in recent years, Mr Turley's *Band of Brothers*. Here is an English family where the standards of the school have become the religion of the home, and the father, himself an old boy, cares

only that his boys, all sent in turn to the same school, should worship the gods before which he bowed, and send home the same sacred symbols—cups and caps and colours for the sacred "pot" room—the holy of holies in the country home where even the talk of visitors was hushed. All his boys follow the right path except the youngest, and the story of his apostasy is not only a satire but a tragedy.

The author of one of the greatest contributions to our knowledge of boy life, Dr Stanley Hall, has reminded us in his *Adolescence* that the feelings of sympathy and pity become exquisite in youth, and that these qualities, the germ of the moral faculties, require the most careful culture. The development of boys' characters is closely associated with the religion of the schools, and the irony with which Mr Waugh approaches this side of school life is one of the most arresting aspects of his book. Is this attitude just? It is confirmed by the writers we have mentioned. But we should like to call especial attention to a little-known book written by Dr Gilkes, the late headmaster of Dulwich College, a name of honour throughout the educational world. It is entitled *The Thing that Hath Been; or a Young Man's Mistakes.* It is a picture of a public school from the standpoint

of the masters. But it is as formidable an attack upon one aspect of the public schools as anything contained in Mr Waugh's book. Dr Gilkes reveals with remorseless candour the arrogance, the class consciousness, the intellectual and social exclusiveness of the staff. It is a great impeachment of the religion of the school, and of the character not only of the head but of the master in orders who was specially concerned with its teaching and application.

Dr Gilkes shows us a school religion, formal, unrelated to the needs and life of the boy, a thing of dogmas and verbal expressions, preached by men whose characters were held in contempt by the boys they addressed. He shows the dead set made by the staff against one of their number coming from a different social class and refusing to accept the current hypocrisies. When one of the most eminent of living schoolmasters desired to present this book to the library of one of our most famous schools, it was refused on the ground that it contained an argument in which Christianity came off second best! What indeed the book shows as clearly as *The Loom of Youth* is the entire absence of religious influences in the true sense of the word. The gates to the world of spiritual ideals were locked. No

reader of Dr Gilkes's book will feel that the Bishop of London has taken us very far along the path of reform in the suggestion that we should send more ordained clergymen into the public schools.

When we remember that the greatest influence in the life of youth is the personality of those who surround them, and have care of them, we cannot dismiss either the warning sketches of so many experienced writers, or the still more sombre pages of Mr Waugh. Very occasionally do the saint and the hero emerge. The Arnold of Judge Hughes's pages would redeem any system, and make short work of its traditions. But in these pictures of real schools and real men we find few Arnolds. The portraits are drawn sometimes in scorn, as in *The Loom of Youth*; sometimes in fierce resentment, as in Mr Vachell's Retford in *The Hill*; sometimes with tolerant humour, as in Mr Bradby's *Lanchester Tradition*; sometimes with despair, mingled with pity, as in *Mr Perrin and Dr Traill.* Where the master, as in many cases, is shown as an average well-meaning man, the system, with its accumulated traditions, is too strong for him, and he looks helplessly on at machinery he can neither stop nor control. Such indeed is the case with

the head, drawn, with obvious sympathy, by Mr Waugh.

There is, then, strong independent support for the essential truth of Mr Waugh's book. This does not mean that there are not many devoted men in the ranks of public school masters. It does not mean that they fail to turn out many brave, healthy, attractive boys. It does not mean that there are not schools seeking with wisdom and enthusiasm to raise the level of the system and to lead along the path of reform. What it does mean is that against many of these old foundations there is a grave and unanswered case.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

By Sir Sydney Olivier

If, among other tasks of Reconstruction, we are to overhaul the public school system, in the first place, let us keep our heads as to its actual effects, and in the second, let us attack the roots of the evils imputed to it. I am not going to undertake a defence of masters, though I think they are unfairly disparaged: they are set an impossible task, and it is parents that lay it upon them and are responsible for the outcome.

That system, as one of *The Nation's* correspondents has pointed out, and as it ought not to be necessary to point out—but, after the exhibition of ignorance and credulity in regard to social *morale* recently[1] displayed at the Old Bailey, it may perhaps be so—has produced and produces a great deal in the character of the class that uses the public schools that is fine and, indeed, indispensable in healthy human relations.

[1] In the Pemberton-Billing German "Black Book" case.

If these virtues are counterweighed by limitations of intelligence and adaptability which in the stress of the last four years have disclosed weaknesses in our national life, be it remembered that this is a class system of education designed to produce a certain type of character for the military, administrative and professional classes, and not aiming at commercial or industrial virtues or at the fostering of artistic or creative capacity. That is, doubtless, from the national point of view, a defect —it is one of the root defects—but I think it may be claimed that the virtues of the ideal of the public schools have been and are very creditably, on the whole, produced by them; and if those virtues are limited, it must be recognised that it was not the nation but the aristocratic and propertied classes of the nation that produced the public schools. If the nation wants something better it must nationalise secondary education—and part of the moral of Mr Waugh's book is Mr Fisher's Bill.

But, anyhow, let us keep our heads. As a preliminary it may be safely observed that *The Loom of Youth* cannot be admitted to be an accurate picture of any other particular public school than that from which it is drawn. I have no means of judging whether its picture of that school was fair two years ago. I knew

a good deal about the same school forty years ago, and it certainly would not then have justified so damning a representation, though I can recognise filiation in some of the characteristics and social traditions. Nevertheless, it is obvious, as you have remarked, that there is nothing gratuitously false in detail to the life of a public school in this picture, which is clearly the reaction of an artist's sensibility and not an invented concoction: and yet I suspect that the representation may be, as a whole, unjust, as being eclectic and partial. If it is not so, that school has certainly changed for the worse since the boyhood of my generation.

Always myself, in my schooldays, a sceptic in regard to public school idols, and in some degree a contemner of conventions and rules, though certainly with less acuteness of apprehension than Mr Waugh's, I say, assuredly, that such a portrayal, if it had claimed to represent the characteristics of my own school in my time, would have been a grossly and perversely libellous caricature. And though I cannot claim to know much now of the inner life of that school either, I know enough about it to say confidently that it has not changed and deteriorated so much in the interval as Mr Waugh's school must have done, if his account of it does it full justice.

By this comparative method also I should infer that that representation is not, in its effect, a completely fair one.

That school, as I knew it, was different (as I thought then and am the more disposed, thanks to Mr Waugh, to think now, different not for the better) from my own. Mr Nevinson has written of Shrewsbury school, which, like others of which also I had some knowledge, was then, and no doubt is now, different again in its characteristics.

Defenders of the public school system may therefore quite reasonably demur to any assumption that that system is tried, convicted and condemned by Mr Waugh's book.

Nevertheless, much of the satire and the indictment on the positive counts (in their essential significance, and taking no account of the palliatives and the sets-off) are in substance true, in greater or less degree, of *all* large boarding public schools, and must necessarily and continually be true of them.

(You commented specially on three disquieting symptoms attested in Mr Waugh's and in other similar books: the idolatry of athleticism, bound up with the idolatry of the House, the repression of "the natural expression of a boy's emotional nature"—

and in this connection the sterilising and conventionalising of religion—and, in necessary association with these, the manifestation of what you refer to as "a special social evil," by which I suppose you to mean the grosser perversions of what, in its more sentimental and superficial aspects, used in my school time to be called "spooning." If you really want a sincere discussion on the subject on which you have trailed your coat, we must be clear what it is we are talking about.

The root of all these symptoms lies in the fact that our public schools are (generally speaking) huge collections of young male humans removed from their natural conditions of nurture and herded together under masculine discipline. The parents of the public school class, partly out of desire for their sons' good education, partly out of distaste for their personal company, habitually send them away from home into boarding-houses. This is, of course, a direct perversion of the purpose of the endowments of most of the older (Foundation) schools, whose pious institutors intended to give free education to resident boys of their own townships, and had no idea of substituting monasteries for boys for the monasteries of men whose property they had got hold of on the pretext of the abuses of such establish-

ments. In some cases, possibly, the parents are really so ignorant, or so infected with superstition about the splendours of our public school system, or so snobbish, as sincerely to imagine this internment to be better for the boys than attending a good public school daily, when they could do so. In many cases, no doubt—and it was these cases that created the boarding system—they have really no alternative, at present, if they are to get them good schooling at all.

Under such conditions Athleticism—"Gymnastic," as Plato spoke of it in his prescription for the training of the Guardians in his ideal State—is the appropriate discipline for the chivalrous life—the life of the "spirited" class; and that is what the public schools aim at furnishing, and do furnish; and it would be a great mistake or injustice to ignore or condemn the merits of the result. Gymnastic is not a disease or an infatuation, it is a deliberate and, within its limits, a justified educational policy. And not only is it adopted on account of its positive educational virtue within those limits, but it is forced and elaborated into a compulsory scheme taking up as fully as possible all the surplus time and energy of the boys—"to keep them out of mischief"—deliberately as a remedy against such other manifestations

of vital energy as are alluded to in your indictment as a deplorable product of public school life. If you inhibit the flowering of human nature in love, animal nature will breed you, infallibly, the fungus of human lust. In every cloistered association of boys and men you will find lubricity and the insurgent plague of animal erethism of which lubricity is the miasma.

These plagues do not, by any means, always necessarily take that outlet to which you have alluded and which in the school code of *The Loom of Youth* was clearly recognised as within the sanctions of heroic morality. I have known that in some public schools they did so, and I have known equally certainly that in other schools they did not. It is quite possible for the *morale* of a public school to be such as to exclude that development. And it certainly by no means amounts to being the most considerable mischief that the public school system does to the young life of the nation.

But the conditions are always dangerous. For, as Plato (who faced the facts unaffectedly and analysed them exhaustively, once and for all, in the *Phædrus*) set forth clearly, Gymnastic, so far from suppressing love in the spirited character, promotes and incites it,

and the more athletic and splendid a community of youths and boys is, the more certainly (the natural scope for their exercise being shut up by the boarding-house system) will there arise all grades of affection up to passionate love between boys—the athlete will be enamoured of grace and wit, the younger boy will worship and pine for the favour of the brilliant hero. So that Gymnastic, adopted, in part, as a curb to mere animal energy, itself introduces those new adventurous impulses of the soul's charioteer of which it may easily befall, as Plato describes, that the dark steed of the chariot will find occasion to take shameful advantage.

It is idle and irrelevant to deplore, in this connection, the inefficacy of religion in public schools. Does anyone imagine that the *morale* of a seminary is superior? Have monasteries had a better repute? Boys of the public school age are for the most part, and quite healthily so, incapable of religion in the religious sense of the word. Religion (for the public school boy) is appositely (and self-illuminatingly) defined by the poet of *Rugby Chapel* as "Morality touched with emotion"—a definition which Dr R. F. Horton could surely have improved on so long ago as when he was holding prayer

meetings in his study at Shrewsbury school. But for a public school that is about as much of religion as is appropriate. Gymnastic—in its full Platonic scope as a spiritual culture—supplies it, and Gymnastic becomes, in virtue of this, very largely the religion of public schools, with God as the supreme pedagogue and law-giver—God conceived of under a form already sufficiently purged for the position assigned to Him and not requiring Plato's preliminary Socratic defecation of popular theology.

The Anglican services used in public schools certainly had their origins in the inspiration of men who knew what they meant by them. But, with exceptions I shall mention immediately, they are not so understood by the great majority of the boys who take part in them. For these they are, and aim at being, formulas of a moral code, touched with emotion by the art of exquisite language, the free use of popular congregational music in choral versicles and responses, intonation of prayers, Anglican or Gregorian Psalm chants and luscious hymnal part-singing.

The typical public school chapel brand of religion, when thoroughly absorbed, constitutes a decent working code of "good

form" for the ordinary public school man, who, by the time he is fifty years old—no doubt often much earlier—may quite likely be a really religious man inside of it. But the schoolmaster who has really a religious influence, and the schoolboy who is really religious, appear outside of this healthy secularism either as High Churchmen or as Evangelical Christians. In both sections of this minority—and it is a small minority—you will find truly religious men and boys, intensely aware of their spiritual life and its needs, the former recognising the Catholic Church as a trustee and guide, the latter finding sustenance rather in the experience of direct communion between the individual and the Father of Spirits.

But, necessarily and inevitably, to the average sensual boy, the High Churchman appears a posturing ritualist, and the Low Churchman a Puritanical bounder (suspiciously like a Dissenter), and though there are some schools in which an effort is made to specialise in High Church religion (the more possible specialisation for a public school), I have never myself observed that the resulting product was on the whole superior to the ordinary public school type. Nor, I suspect, would a school at which the

boys all held prayer meetings in their studies produce a better output.

Undeniably, in any case, the conventional official semi-religious emotion of chapel and Sunday observances does not and cannot adequately lay hold of the boy's full spiritual needs. What else is lacking?

It is a tradition—and if the tradition only covers a scanty basis of fact, its survival shows the more that it embodied a vital idea —that the chivalrous boy, when he entered upon his education for the spirited life, was made some lady's page: and in all the rude discipline of arms had that woman to love and serve, and her to be good to him. That is, in essence, and with appropriate variation, all that is required. I do not suggest that the life of a boy's own family will supply all that vital, emotional, and spiritual sustenance that a public school cuts him off from. Neither his mother nor his sisters may provide what he needs—the latter have very probably had enough of him. Moreover, he may easily fall into the pitfall of imagining that the parlour-maid does so, with tiresome results; for her nature, too, has its needs. Little girls of his own age are beneath his requirements. But he ought to have continuous social contact with intelligent grown-up women, who will

impress both his sense of beauty and his understanding. To my own eternal blessing and deliverance I was privileged, quite early in my first term at a public school, to fall in love with a benign and radiant damsel of twice my own age, and, again, a few years later, with the nobly beautiful mother of a family of ten children. It seemed to me strange then that these women were so good to me as they were—("Kiss her!" cried the latter's husband to me one evening. "She'll let you!"—and the mother of ten bent, blushing enchantingly, over the teacups). But I know now that all good and wise women are more than kind to boys.

Not that love of this kind (which endured for me and still endures) interferes with the further fallings in love which naturally befall a youth among maidens, and even among his schoolfellows—it rather prepares for and makes these others possible and intelligible to him—but the simple fact is, that inconclusive and apparently unmeaning, in any physical sense, as such experiences may be, and imperfectly as they may avail to mitigate the mere physical trouble of exuberant animalism, they make it impossible for a boy to feel any sort of interest in, not to say inclination towards, perversions of affection or passion in relation to other boys.

What then is needed? To break down the monopoly of the public schools and their narrowness of ideal. To break down the boarding house system. Both can be broken, and can only be broken by the same process, that of providing first-class advanced education for every boy within a bicycle ride of his home, and insisting that he receive it. No parent should be allowed to send his boy to school in a boarding house without special excuse any more than to send him into a private lunatic asylum.

The best-blended and least crippled men I have known have been public school day boys. Rupert Brooke—to name an example that will carry wide acceptance whilst still remembered, who was as creditable a product of the public school standard as could be desired—passed his Rugby school days in his own father's house (a trying test for both), and maintained —as I hope I may say without impertinence— a notably intimate and enviable friendship with his own mother, such as few public school boys do.

If boys must leave home for schooling, they should be allowed and encouraged to have as much of the society of their resident schoolfellows' families or of other friendly people as they can possibly get. I never knew any

boy that was not glad to have this outlet, and much the better for it, or any family that was grudging of this hospitality. This mode of dilution, rather than the cognate expedient of mixed resident schools, a compromise with the boarding-out system, seems to me to be the right practical line of attack on the evils of public schools. The tyranny of Gymnastic and the *esprit de corps* of the house system will no doubt be weakened by it, and the latter is by no means all a bad thing; but Gymnastic, as a valuable art of training youth, need not and should not be ousted. It will always retain a paramount place in any wholesome boys' school, and nothing is to be gained by a frontal attack upon it in a campaign for its dislodgement from usurped provinces of the spirit.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS *versus* THE DAY SCHOOLS

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS *versus* THE DAY SCHOOLS

By Professor Oscar Browning

I have read with interest the letters on the "Indictment of the Public School," as I read with similar interest the article which gave rise to them. They are a great contrast to the letters which appeared for several weeks in *The Spectator* on the same subject. In them *The Loom of Youth*, which I regard as a great literary masterpiece, and absolutely true in fact, was almost universally condemned, whereas in yours it is universally commended. This shows how public opinion has come round to the book, and indicates the influence which it is certain to have on educational reform. If we indict public schools it is important that we should clearly understand what we mean by the term—we certainly mean boarding schools and not day schools. House rivalries and the overwhelming importance of house matches cannot exist in day schools, where boys live with their families, nor is school life likely to be so

communal, yet the *War Letters of a Public School Boy* date from Dulwich, which is a day school, and according to the old meaning of the term is not a public school at all. The faults and the merits of public schools are all concerned with public boarding schools.

I was an Eton boy from 1851 to 1856, and Eton master from 1860 to 1875. When I was a boy the only public schools recognised as such were Eton, Harrow, Winchester, Westminster and Rugby—Marlborough was not so regarded, nor Cheltenham nor Shrewsbury; Clifton was not yet founded. The Public School Commission which sat during the early years of my mastership included in its purview nine public schools and nine only, all of them boarding schools. Westminster, which had a good number of day boys, was admitted for its historical position, and from the fact that under the Stewarts it had been the primary public school in England, the nurse of statesmen, as Eton became under the Hanoverians.

I could give to any responsible person who desired it ample evidence that the state of things described in *The Loom of Youth* is absolutely true, indeed well within the truth, that the condition of public schools has not improved of late years, but in some respects

has become worse, and that athlete worship instead of being a healthy influence productive of a "clean" life is in many respects the reverse, and encourages immorality. But it is of little use to multiply the denunciations of public boarding schools; the important thing, as "an old master" says, is to carry us further and show us the way of deliverance. This can be done, in my opinion, in recognising the fact that the only sound and healthy education is to be found in the home, and that any system which takes boys away from home life at the age of nine and deprives them of the company of their father and mother, and especially of their sisters, is bad and unnatural, and can only produce unnatural results.

Home education in conjunction with large day schools is the rule all over the civilised world. It may be true that many homes are not suited for the education of boys, but home education educates the family as well as the children. How many of us know, both from experience and literature, how the children are the strongest personal influence in a German home. Our public schools are the creation of an accident: we happened to have a small wealthy society to rule us as the government of England was constituted, and

the boys were sent first to Westminster and then to Eton to be trained for public life as they are now trained to be athletes and soldiers. This system, which is fully recognised in Prince Lichnowski's pamphlet, was of great social and political influence: and England will always be grateful to her public schools. But circumstances have altered and their day has passed. We cannot afford the expense, and the democracy does not demand this kind of training for its masters. With the loss of exalted duty which sustained them, public schools have become degenerate, and we are at liberty to follow the rest of mankind in educating our children at home with less expense and with far better results.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE OLDER UNIVERSITIES

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE OLDER UNIVERSITIES

By R. H. Tawney

There has been one curious omission from the interesting correspondence upon Public School Education which has recently appeared in your columns. No one, as far as I have seen, has pointed out that the characteristics, both good and bad, of the public schools are very largely a reflex of the characteristics of the two older universities. Yet the former are, in the main, what the latter make them. It is at Oxford and Cambridge that the majority of public school masters form their conception of education. It is to Oxford and Cambridge that the majority of the cleverer boys in the public schools will proceed. It is the scholarship examinations of Oxford and Cambridge Colleges which determine the curricula of the upper forms of public schools. It is Oxford and Cambridge which set the intellectual standards, the moral ἦθος, the outlook on society to which the public schools tend to conform. No doubt there is action

and reaction. Considering how small a fraction of the population is educated in the schools which are described—rather quaintly—as "Public," the proportion of undergraduates which Oxford, at any rate, draws from them is astonishingly large; and if Oxford and Cambridge set their stamp upon the public schools and the two older universities, they are themselves very largely at the mercy of the material which the public schools send to them. But in the informal and largely unconscious alliance between the public schools and the two older universities to preserve a corner of higher education, preponderatingly, though not, of course, exclusively, for the relatively well-to-do, the universities are certainly the predominant partner. If together they form an educational island connected only by slender bridges with the main continent of public education, it is the universities who hold the keys. And if you desire to see a change in the public schools, it is, I suggest, with the two older universities that reform must begin.

It ought to begin with them, indeed, quite irrespective of its effect upon the schools. For, after all, the question is perhaps a somewhat larger one even than your correspondents

have suggested. They have criticised public schools because, among other reasons, their tone is said to be exclusive, because their outlook is apt to be narrow and artificial, because their intellectual standards are lax and their social standards exacting. But these are just the faults which are characteristic, not only of the public schools, but of our whole system of middle-class higher education. They are certainly too characteristic of the older universities. And in the universities those defects are far more disastrous than they are in the public schools. For the universities do not only influence the public schools, they stand in a special relation to the Civil Service, to the professions, to national life and the activities of the State. The Church, the Bar, and some parts of the Press are largely staffed by men who have formed their opinions in the atmosphere of the two older universities. If the interests and ambitions of the commercial classes are the main driving force behind the movement of public affairs, it is still predominantly the graduates of Oxford and Cambridge who preside over the daily working of the administrative machine and who advise as to legislation.

I cannot, therefore, agree with those who

are disposed to wave aside as irrelevant to serious educational progress the question of the character and organisation of the two older universities, and who say: "Let them stew in their own juice. If they will not reform themselves, we can do without them." That attitude, however natural, I believe to be profoundly mistaken. The influence of Oxford and Cambridge extends far beyond the circle immediately affected by them, because Oxford and Cambridge control several strategic points in our social and educational system. Their *métier* hitherto has been to supply the governing classes with the common intellectual habits needed to hold them together and to enable them to present a united front. They are the guardians of a social tradition rather than of a national culture. It is, of course, precisely for that reason that proposals to reform them usually arouse a storm of indignation in minds which regard most questions of educational policy with equable indifference. They are not merely places of education; they are social institutions. To alter their character is to do something more than to make a change in a piece of educational machinery. It is to touch one of the *arcana* of class ascendancy.

Academic reformers, in my experience,

usually understand by reform some rearrangement of "schools" or curricula; and it is probably my own ignorance which prevents me from sympathising fully with those who see something progressive, liberal and emancipating in the study of natural science and its application to industry, and an effete superstition in the pursuit of literature, philosophy and history. But quite apart from questions of curricula, there appear to me to be three incontestable conditions of a healthy system of education, and, in so far as life is affected by education, of a healthy national life. The first is that the organisation of universities should be such that representatives of all classes should be able to enter them easily and mix freely in them. The second is that the test of admission should be intelligence and character, not the possession of money or social position. The third is that their constitution and government should be such as to ensure that they will be responsive to the gradually changing needs of the educational and social worlds around them. Unless you have the first you sow the seeds of social division in the very institutions which should do most to overcome them; you send out young men who mistake the prejudices of a class for the interests of a nation, because they have never mixed with

their fellow-countrymen, and who, properly speaking, indeed, do not even know what manner of beings their fellow-countrymen are. Unless you have the second you admit amiable fools because they are well-to-do and exclude able boys because they are poor; you hold up to the nation an evil example of deference—Heaven knows we have suffered from it enough in this war!—to ignorance when it is gilded, and of contempt for intellect when it is not; you practise a kind of educational simony and give a daily demonstration of materialism which no theoretical teaching can efface. Unless you have the third you will not have the other two. When I look at the world of industry I confess to a sneaking sympathy with syndicalism. But I consider my own university—a syndicalist institution if ever there was one—and I tremble.

The tragedy of English education is the tragedy of English social life. It is the organisation of education upon lines of class. Education should have been the great uniter. Too often it has been the greater divider. For that tragedy, with all that it entails and will entail in the days to come, the two older universities bear some considerable responsibility. They did not originate

it, but they have acquiesced too readily in its continuance. They are still, in a sense, the apex of the educational system of the country. They are a kind of symbol of what Englishmen understand by higher education. And among the many excellent lessons which they teach, they teach one that is, I venture to say, wholly degrading. It is that if a boy has money and no brains he will find it extremely easy to obtain a university education, while if a boy has brains and no money he will find it extremely difficult. The effect of the humiliating connection of the two older universities with wealth and social position involves a permanent demoralisation of the national temper, which is even more disastrous than the injustices which it inflicts upon individuals or the waste of ability to which it condemns the nation. It is a perpetual lesson in cynicism. It gives a kind of academic canonisation to the snobbery, half intellectual laziness, half coarseness of moral fibre, which is one of the characteristic vices of English society. It is as though the universities said: "Who cares for the things of the spirit? Hand us out the dough." There have been ages and institutions in which learning was almost the ally of poverty. Our older universities have come near, if not to creating, at least to

tolerating, the alliance between learning and wealth. They cater largely for the products of the public schools, and the public schools cater for them. Is it any wonder if, as so many of your correspondents have complained, the public schools tend, no doubt with many exceptions, to be straitened in their social sympathies and somewhat contemptuous of intellectual discipline?

Oh! I know what can be said on the other side. "Life in a college is necessarily expensive. Besides, there are enough scholarships for every able boy of small means, and we must not lower the intellectual standard by offering too many. What proof is there that clever boys find it difficult to get a university education? And after all, if Oxford and Cambridge are expensive, other universities are cheaper." It is quite true that life in college is expensive, that there are scholarships and exhibitions, and that there are other and cheaper universities. These things are true, and it is only fair to admit them. But they are not the whole truth. Granted that there are scholarships, that does not dispense with the necessity of cheapening university education; for there is no sense in surrounding education with a high tariff and here and there providing means to climb over it. Granted

that old and often inconvenient buildings increase the expenses of maintenance, can anyone who knows (say) Oxford affirm with conviction that the reduction in the cost of college life is, as I submit that it should be, a principal object of those who administer colleges? If it were true that the cost of living had already been cut down to the bare bone, then there would be a good case for the State, which cannot afford that any able boy should go without higher education, to make possible its further reduction by a grant of public money. But few, I fancy, would contend that, *given the necessary reorganisation*, there was no further possibility of reduction.

I do not imply that college authorities are incompetent; but they inherit a system which they did not create. They are busy men, and naturally work within the limitations which it imposes, without feeling obliged, even if they have the time or the business experience, to reconsider the whole plan and scale of college finance and organisation. Colleges, if it is not profane to say it, are (among other things) boarding houses; and it is not every man who can conduct a successful boarding house, especially if tradition requires it to be empty for nearly six months out of twelve. Nor, even if one or two colleges

desire to move in that direction, is it easy for them to do so without the co-operation—how hardly obtained—of nearly a score of other corporations, which cherish their independence with more than Republican virtue. It is quite true that, even as it is, a certain number of ex-elementary schoolboys get to Oxford and Cambridge, and that some of the difficulties which prevent the number being larger are to be found, not in the universities, but in the backwardness of public secondary education, especially in the critical years between sixteen and eighteen. That fact, as far as it goes, is a valid plea of extenuation in favour of the older universities, but it does not go as far as is sometimes supposed. If the weakness of the secondary schools limits the supply of entrants to the universities, the financial difficulty of entering a college limits the supply coming forward from the secondary schools. The suggestion that boys of small means should enter other universities is not one which needs serious consideration. A division of labour between educational institutions is, of course, advisable; but quite the worst form which it could assume would be that some should be reserved for the relatively poor and others for the relatively well-to-do.

The truth is, that the time has come to

reconsider the whole question of university education in England; and first, and in particular, the government, constitution, finance and endowments of the two older universities. Whatever happens, one is inclined to think that the world after the war will be a world of second-bests. For one generation "the spring is out of the year." If we are to make the best of the next, if we are to achieve anything like spiritual unity, we must democratise higher education. We must seek salvation where it can be found, in the cultivation of character and intelligence. That is a task which must be approached by many different paths, but one of the most important lies through the democratisation of the universities. It is with the two older universities, I suggest, that we ought to begin. Their government should be remodelled to make it easier for them to be influenced by outside educational opinion. The financial administration of the colleges should be examined with a view to ascertaining whether by rigorous economy and by the extension of common action between them the cost of living cannot be substantially reduced, to the level, at least, of some of the women's colleges. Public funds, if necessary, should be used to ensure that

no boy who reaches the requisite intellectual standard shall be debarred from entering them by lack of means. What is required, in short, is another Royal Commission, like those which gave a new orientation to the universities in the middle of the nineteenth century. If such reforms were carried out, it would probably be found twenty years hence that they had not only rejuvenated the older universities, but that they had also removed a good many of the blemishes which your correspondents have deplored in the public schools.

PUBLIC SCHOOL RELIGION

PUBLIC SCHOOL RELIGION

By Arthur Ponsonby

Any consideration of the shortcomings of our public school system must be incomplete if attention is not given to the question of religion as taught in these institutions to-day. It is perhaps unreasonable to expect that the teaching of religion inside the school should be in advance of what it is outside. But in dealing with youth the question is more vital; for a boy cannot exercise the same discrimination as the adult in what he should accept or reject. The so-called religious teaching is forced upon him with his Latin, his mathematics and his science largely for examination purposes—and what remains over and is intended for his moral elevation is without doubt the most tepid, inadequate and mechanical element in the whole of his education.

The Church has still to a large degree the control and supervision of educational establishments and the headmaster is as a rule a clergyman. This is an accepted tradition,

and until it is broken down very little change can be expected. But to what end is this religious control utilised in British public schools? Is it to formalism and the superficial knowledge of dogmas and the mechanical performance of certain rites? Or is it to ethical and moral guidance? Is the spiritual life something to which attention must be paid at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, or is it the essence which lies at all times at the back of every thought and action?

Any man who has been a public school boy can answer these questions. He can look back and estimate the worth, or rather utter worthlessness, of most of what was comprised under the head of divinity and religion in his years at school.

The child comes to school with vague and childish notions of theology and a parrot-like knowledge of the Catechism; God the Ogre is behind it all an alarming figure who must be propitiated and besought not to punish him. The boy has constantly to refer to himself as "a miserable sinner" and supplicate for "mercy," and the way to salvation lies through the Catechism, which must be learned word-perfect.

"What did your godfathers and godmothers THEN for you?" He takes a long breath.

". . . first that I should renounce the devil andallhisworks, the pompsandvanity of this wicked world, andallthesinfullustsoftheflesh." The nursery-maid may have frightened him with descriptions of the devil, but he is not yet aware that the world is very wicked. And then to think that we make our children at the age of eight talk about the "lusts of the flesh," taking great care never to explain to them at the age of sixteen, when the lusts begin to attack them, what they are and what they mean.

So he goes on repeating the subtle theological intricacies in the Creed and the Ten Commandments. The last paragraphs he generally finds very sticky, because they are to him entirely incomprehensible, in spite of all explanations.

"What is the inward and spiritual grace?"

"A death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness: for being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath we are hereby made the children of grace."

This clause of the Catechism exposes the key-note of a great deal that is wrong in the general conception of children's moral training. There need be no irreverence in questioning the infallibility of the doctrines propounded in the Catechism, a form of instruction drawn

up and revised during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by various Anglican ecclesiastics. A thoughtful disbelief in a certain hard and uncompromising dogma can be every bit as reverent as a thoughtless belief in it. In the ecclesiastical world, however, credit is only given to credulity.

The orthodox belief is that a child is born tainted with evil instincts and inclined to sin, and it is the duty of pastors and masters to correct his nature and remove the taint by a series of religious observances. The process must be one of vigilant repression of evil and inoculation of good. This, indeed, is the underlying principle throughout.

If this antiquated and entirely false superstition were abandoned there might be some chance of undermining the whole system, with its deadening and cramping effects. It is far more probable that every child born into the world contains within it a spirit of perfection, and retains that spirit untainted till the body dies. The spirit of perfection has naturally infinite capabilities, which it is only prevented from exercising and exhibiting by material imperfections and disadvantages due partly to physical causes, partly to heredity, and partly to environment. There can be no such thing as a spirit of evil. Evil

is the result of the physical deficiencies of human nature as it is at present constituted. The good alone is inspired. The evil is the obstacle which interferes, often very seriously, with the free expression of the good. With such a belief the process of education would mean preventing at this early age the formation of any impenetrable crust of evil physical habits which might become instincts, in order to allow the free expression from within of the essential good. No operation of inoculation is needed, because the good is there in its most sublime form, waiting to find an outlet. The younger the child the less formed are the many physical disabilities that darken the light that is trying to shine through, and the better chance there is of mitigating their intensity. These physical deficiencies, which may sometimes be very strong, cannot be entirely removed. But a careful moral training, based not on inexplicable dogmas, but on rational teaching, may prove to be the most valuable factor in correcting natural defects, and thereby assisting the development from within which is being hindered in its progress. But the Catechism will not be very much help in this. However, the Catechism is necessary for Confirmation—a ceremony which the majority of boys regard in just the same

way as any of the other natural occurrences of adolescence: beginning to shave, wearing a tail coat, getting a cracked voice; or as something that cannot be avoided and can be gone through as part of the day's work, like the various examinations.

Rich parents generally leave the religious education of their children, with all the rest, to tutors and governesses. They are most of them hampered themselves by doubts with regard to dogmatic Christianity, but if they think about it at all they dare not take up any uncompromising or decided attitude one way or the other, and half-heartedly they submit to the recognised official forms of religious teaching. Creeds, collects, Catechism and Commandments are taught as religion; "You mustn't do this" and "Don't do that" as morals; and charity is understood not as service and sacrifice, but as giving money to missions and contributing to the offertory.

At a public school daily chapel, two services on Sundays, Greek Testament, and Bible questions or Scripture teaching are the doors through which the teachers are supposed to reach the inner spiritual nature of the hundreds of boys who pass through their hands. Greek Testament means construing in a large class a chapter of the Gospels, which has been run

through with the Bible the evening before. Explanations are given of the text, but they are more often about the Greek than about the Testament. Bible questions are a series of conundrums set with a view to occupying a couple of hours of a boy's time on Sunday. Sometimes they are exceedingly ingenious, and necessitate a good deal of research in Bible dictionaries and concordances. They seldom take the form of essays, or compositions requiring thought and imagination. They are generally bald questions as to events, names, phrases, geographical and topographical details, the meaning of expressions, and the comparison of passages in Old Testament history. Boys may be found on a Sunday afternoon studying a commentary on Timothy or some voluminous concordance. Knowledge of Scripture history is looked upon with high favour. Special prizes are given for it, and the general impression prevails that a boy is morally strengthened in proportion to his aptitude for divinity.

Morning chapel consists of part of the Morning Service, a psalm, a hymn (if popular, well shouted), and the lesson. It is all quite mechanical, and does not arrest the attention of the boy for an instant unless he is peculiarly devout. The Sunday service is a full-dress

affair, an opportunity for displaying "Sunday bags." The sartorial side of Sunday service in the Church of England would seem almost to be a fortieth article of religion. Do people dress up out of respect for the Deity or because when they are in their Sunday best their minds are more spiritually inclined? Of the many depressing effects of any sort of British religious service the rustle of silk, the nodding of plumes, the well-creased folds, the general aroma of pomatum and camphor are perhaps the most desolating of all. But schoolboys rather enjoy watching one another and visitors' and masters' wives coming in, and they criticise the peculiarities of costume. There is a sermon, which might afford a good opportunity of instilling some sort of reality into the proceedings, but it is an opportunity not often made use of. Anything sentimental or emotional should be scrupulously avoided, but a short discourse of the simple, telling sort can make the boys think in such a way that they will begin to examine the meaning and purpose of life. Attached to the older foundations there are a number of elderly divines, who cannot be expected to perform this office and whose eccentricities remain indelibly engraved on the minds of their youthful congregation. From start to finish the whole

tone and manner of these services are hopelessly perfunctory. There is no tendency to irreverence among the boys, but their reverence is senselessly conventional. They may be correctly orthodox, or some may be boldly unorthodox; but it is a question of fashion, not of thought. If daily prayers are read in the boarding houses it is a mere matter of routine. Forms are gabbled through, which by constant repetition have become quite meaningless. This, then, is practically and officially the sum total of school "religious" education.

Does the result of such a lack of moral training show itself in the boys' characters? Decidedly it does. They are not immoral. That is far too hard a word to apply to boys between the ages of twelve and eighteen, and a word that is used too often and too lightly. It denotes a serious defect in character, of which of course there are always a few instances. But as a whole they are distinctly "unmoral," which is the inevitable outcome of such treatment. Home influence, as already suggested, could correct this, but if ever small sparks of moral self-consciousness are kindled at home, at school they are almost extinguished, and, anyhow, never fanned into flames. Many boys brought up in this way

show to their life's end a strong disinclination to penetrate below the surface, an intolerance for the abstract aspect of problems, and an ingrained preference for worldly wisdom.

It is very difficult for a boy to grasp that there is the smallest connection between all this ceremonial religion and the historical, geographical and Greek teaching, which he does not believe really matters, and his conduct, duty and life, which are still only very hazily apprehended. When he is scolded and punished for his misdemeanours it is, as a general rule, on the principle of the repression of evil, not of liberation of good. He is told what he ought NOT to do, but it is seldom suggested to him what he OUGHT to do. Rarely does he receive any word in all his schooldays, at the most susceptible time of his existence, about the significance of life, the knowledge of humanity, the true meaning of morality, the world he lives in, his duty to his fellows, and his own sense of responsibility. No setting up of an ideal, no suggestions for moral training, no guidance for conduct, no aim for growing hopes and aspirations, nothing but Jehoiachin, Dearly beloved brethren, and ὁ λόγος.

"If the public schools were to make an attempt to Christianise the rising generation,

would the parents stand it?" asks an enlightened public school master. "I think not. The average parent understands by religious teaching something which will provide a sanction for the commercial spirit and the existing social order. In a vague way he wishes his boy to realise that wealth is blessed and poverty slightly discreditable, and that the British Empire is a sounder and more practical ideal than the Kingdom of Heaven. If his boy must be righteous it is desirable that his righteousness should not exceed that of the Scribes and the Pharisees; whatsoever is more than this comes of Socialism or some other evil thing. No doubt the Bible is a most unpromising book on which to build up a sound commercial education; but many generations of business men have learned to regard it as a talisman; so the boy must grow up with it but not of it."

If only Bible teaching could be made intelligent and discriminating, it would have its use as a foundation for a religious teaching. Most boys can be reached by a simple, rational and direct appeal. They are all beginning to grope in the great spreading darkness, and they are only too grateful for a friendly hand with a lantern. But instead of any lead or guidance, the idea is to turn out boys like

those described in the Rev. C. L. Marson's admirable pamphlet: "They can tell you who Huppim and Muppim and Ard were; they know the latitude of Beersheba, Kerioth, and Bethgamul; they can tell you who slew a lion in a pit on a snowy day; they have ripe views upon the identity of Nathaniel and St Bartholomew; they can name the destructive miracles, the parables peculiar to St Luke, and, above all, they have a masterly knowledge of St Paul's second missionary journey. They are loaded and ballasted with chronicles of Baasha and Zimri, Methuselah and Alexander the Coppersmith. . . . Take any of these 'religiously educated' children and ask them what one must do to make life nobler and less sordid. They simply look puzzled."

No amount of theology, divinity or dogma by itself can be made use of as a substitute for the teaching of religion. The observance of strictly orthodox practices and the ready beliefs are no signs of a religious disposition; on the contrary, they very frequently go with a mechanical, unsensitive mind, whose reverence is a matter of routine and whose inspiration is nothing more than punctilious convention. There is very little connection between piety and moral rectitude.

It is good for foals to be turned out loose in a paddock, but there must be fences to the paddock to prevent them from straying into mire and bog. Morally speaking, there are no fences whatever (except school regulations, which no one is despised for disregarding). Many consequently wander very far afield, But, theologically speaking, they are tied up in stalls with their noses forced into a manger filled with stodgy indigestible food. And yet the only complaint made by the headmasters is that there is a deplorable falling off in Scripture teaching, especially in the smaller public schools. These are probably the very schools which are endeavouring to institute some real system of moral discipline and adequate religious training.

Such, however, is the force and purity of the foundation of good, which springs up in human nature, that in spite of this neglect most boys develop from their innermost consciousness unaided a fairly sensitive moral perception and welcome it in others. Were they indeed born as "children of wrath," the religion that is taught them at a public school would leave them in a deplorable condition of positive depravity. So frail and unstable, indeed, is the structure of dogmatic teaching presented to them, and so little connection

has it with the deep foundations of true morality, that it soon crumbles in after-life. And then, with no intellectual resources, no enthusiasm for the wonders of nature, and no appreciation of the great achievements of humanity, they drift into apathy, indifference, and a cold, cynical contempt for the vital supports in the guidance of their life. Without being fully aware of it, they are left stranded, and the weapons that might stand them in good stead in the difficult task of utilising to the full their exceptional opportunities are blunted and rendered useless.

OTHER CRITICISMS & REPLIES

OTHER CRITICISMS AND REPLIES

Sir,—I admire Alec Waugh's *Loom of Youth* intensely. It is a true picture of public school life almost at its worst, and a marvellous achievement for a boy. But I have always known there was another side to that picture. Chiefly, of course, I judge by my own memories of Shrewsbury ever so many years ago. It is true that we are all likely to idealise our schooldays, and talk a lot of nonsense about "happy boyhood"—just the period of life which is often the most unhappy. I know that our "studies" were antiquated, that our manner of life was barbarian, and that we were hardly aware of the modern world. Still I could not express the gratitude which most of us owe to the beauty of the place, the cheerful stoicism of the school, the accurate teaching of all the classical masters, and the immense personal influence of one.

It so happens that the writer of *The Nation* article refers to a book written by Mr A. H. Gilkes. *The Thing that Hath Been* is, from

the master's side, almost as stern an indictment of the public school as Alec Waugh's book from a boy's. Yet Mr Gilkes was the one master to whom I referred, and both at Shrewsbury, where we came under him, and at Dulwich, which he served as headmaster for so many years, he proved how powerful an influence for good a public school can be made.

Last week a confirmation of it came to me in the *War Letters of a Public School Boy* (Cassell). The book is edited by the boy's father, my friend and former colleague on *The Daily Chronicle*, Mr Harry Jones. Paul Jones, who was killed in action last July, was a Dulwich boy, and his years of growth were spent under the power of the same remarkable personality. With how splendid a result! What vitality and zest in life! What charm and frankness, knowledge of the present and the past, critical judgment, fearlessness and cleanliness of thought and action! We have heard much of the public school boy at his worst, or, if you will, at his average. Here you have him at his best, and I do not know what system of education in England, France, or Germany produces a better man.

It may be said that his advantage was exceptional, and that such masters are rare. Certainly, they are rare, like all greatness.

But Paul Jones stands as evidence that the public school is not necessarily pernicious, and that what really matters in education is neither the system nor the subject taught, but the teacher. Yours, etc.,

HENRY W. NEVINSON.

SIR,—I am a schoolmaster in one of those old foundations against many of which, you told us last week, there is "a grave and unanswered case." And when I take up my pen to attempt some kind of answer I realise how right you are. The case against us is, and always will be, unanswered, whatever we may say. For why should anyone listen to our defence? We can know nothing about boys, since there is, we are told, between us and the boys "a barrier rarely broken." We are "incapable of exercising real influence on the boys nominally under our care." Our characters are "held in contempt by the boys we address," and rightly so, it appears, for are we not also full of "arrogance, class-consciousness, intellectual and social exclusiveness"? How can such ignorant and incompetent snobs carry any conviction when defending themselves? And there is another reason why the case against us holds the field. A brilliant

but—dare I say it?—not infallible boy writes a vigorous and superficially truthful story of one side of school life, as seen perhaps in a temporarily bad house in a temporarily bad school. It is hailed with a salvo of such epithets as "masterly," "relentless," "incontrovertible," "epoch-making." We sound our feeble counterblast, which is simply, It is true, but not the whole truth, or even nothing but the truth (for *all* masters are not really fools and dupes or *all* boys liars and loose talkers). But, we are told, it is not enough merely to repudiate the photograph as a false one. But why not? The charge rests entirely on the photograph being completely true, and we say that our experience convinces us it is not completely true. Who shall judge? We say that the organisation of the school we know is not "incompatible with culture," though admittedly, as in most English communities, culture must be prepared for suspicion and lack of sympathy from the majority. The boys do not "consciously resist each temptation to do honest work." We grant there is far too much laziness; but is not that an English failing now in process of cure? The barrier between masters and boys is not "rarely" but frequently broken. Public opinion, in a large school at any rate, is not

nearly so powerful as is supposed by outsiders, nor is the athletic god so universally worshipped. The "innocent boy" is not necessarily "coarsened," though puberty, no doubt, robs innocence of its very valuable ally—ignorance. And, finally, it is profoundly untrue to say there is "no trace of pastoral care," of "religious influences," or of "spiritual ideals." These last are not common in any human society. The fact is these sweeping indictments are much too sweeping; they are really indictments of human nature, especially perhaps of English human nature. When false values no longer hold in the world they will perish in the schools. When spiritual ideals flourish in English homes and religion is no longer formal, then religion and spiritual ideals will flourish in English schools. When learning is honoured and education is prized by the English people, and *every* boy knows he will have to work for his living, then sound reform will be possible. Boys will regard their work seriously, and schoolmasters will receive encouragement and sympathy in their immensely difficult task, instead of being forced by hostile and ill-informed criticism to cling to what is questionable for fear of seeing destroyed what they know to be valuable. Yours, etc.,

PUBLIC SCHOOLMASTER.

Sir,—The writer of the article has ably dealt with the defects of the system portrayed in Mr Waugh's *Loom of Youth.* As he points out, the novel is "a picture of a collection of boys, possessing indeed a certain herd instinct and sympathy, but banded together in an organisation incompatible with culture or, except in a very limited sense, with any form of healthy intellectual or social life." He might have gone further. In its pursuit of material ends and its utilisation of the herd instinct to enforce a false system of values, the public school only shows the same features that are characteristic of most places of education, though, perhaps, owing to the artificiality of public school life, it shows these features more prominently. The truth is that our schools all reflect the social order (a moral disorder!), and help to perpetuate it. We are thus in a vicious circle. A bad social inheritance is passed on to our children through their environment—of which the school is so important a part; they, in turn, having been distorted and drilled in the mode, become part of the machine that fastens the same fetters on a new generation.

As a headmaster I am myself a cog in this machine, and have been brought by the war to a gradual realisation of its horror. To me

the state of the world appears to condemn all the systems of education that our vaunted civilisation has produced. The European anarchy would have ceased long since if men had been taught to value the things that give worth and dignity to human nature; if they had not, instead, been taught to regard as honourable the insensate ambition of their rulers, and to esteem that nation as glorious that becomes richer and more powerful by territorial aggrandisement. Nor could this anarchy have been tolerated so long if men had cared for children and felt their natural beauty, instead of regarding them as so much plastic material to be moulded and fashioned in their own unlovely adult shapes.

No wonder that only exceptionally, and, as it were, by accident, the human race makes spiritual progress! The restraint imposed by social inheritance is too strong. Yet in every one of us is born the thirst for freedom and the impulse to attain perfection. If the mind conceives the great idea, or the heart is thrilled with some sublime emotion, the dead weight of prejudice bears it down, and the spirit sickens "in the muddy pool of conformity and tradition." *That* is the indictment of the public school, and not of the public school only, but of all the institutions in which blind

conservatism and the fear of change are embodied.

I venture to thank you, sir, and your reviewer for calling public attention once more to one of our gravest social evils. Yours, etc.,

HEADMASTER.

SIR,—May I say a word in connection with the article "The Indictment of the Public School" which appears in your current number?

The old public schools have become huge vested interests. Some of the consequent evils are:

(1) In the absence of public control or inspection the schools tend to live in educational backwaters with obsolete methods and curricula.

(2) They accentuate class divisions. Boys are sent to them for the social "stamp" thus obtained.

(3) Whilst they turn out brave, attractive, healthy lads (what schools could not with such material?) these are often conventionalised in mind and spirit, the slaves of "good form," and without that individuality which comes from the free play and cultivation of personality.

(4) The time of the public school boy is, to a great extent, wasted, because his studies are based on tradition and have little relation to the life which awaits him either as citizen or worker.

I speak from my practical experience as a master.

Will not the writer of your article carry us further and show us the way of deliverance? Yours, etc.,

AN OLD MASTER.

SIR,—I have read this article with interest, and am writing about it from memory. Schoolmasters need to be a long-suffering race. Lucian's punishment for tyrants in the other world was that they should sell fish or teach boys literature. Sir Walter Scott excuses, I think, some ineptitude on the part of one of his characters by saying, "Remember, the man was a schoolmaster." I once read in Sir Richard Burton's *Arabian Nights* two full pages of abusive names that had been applied to schoolmasters by the gorgeous East. In a modern tram a man once leaned across to a schoolmaster opposite, and said, "Shake hands, sir; we are both members of despised callings. I am a plumber." And now comes your

article. It admits, I think, that schoolmasters may be in some cases devoted, but leaves the bulk of them targets, as before, for the scorn, indifference, or hostility of mankind. I accept the situation, but have sometimes wondered what the explanation was. As against the rest of mankind let me suggest this. Men who achieve success like to think that they owe it to themselves; men who have not done what they think they ought to have done, or who are not what they think they ought to be, are prone to cast about for the reasons of failure. The readiest solution is to be found in the schoolmaster. "Why was my development stifled by Cæsar's *Gallic Wars*?" says the man of science. "Why was I not taught something useful?" says the man of business. "Why was I not taught to think, to feel, to act?" say many others who have reason to be disappointed with themselves. The general voice must be against the schoolmaster, for even if he could be credited with adequate intelligence and skill he could not do all that is expected of him.

Your article deals with a crop of novels which indict the public schools. But supposing you widened your scope and included a book like *Sinister Street*, and others whose names I have forgotten, could you not find

as squalid and unpleasing a picture of other types of school as well? I think you could. The school story has been much with us in recent years, and its flavour is often rancid. The writer of *Tom Brown*, as you say, knew where the swampy places lay, but he did not gloat on them. His outlook is too normal and wholesome. "Read not Scott for he is dry, and his romances, though interesting, are yet intelligible." The modern school story is not so superficial; its psychology, if I am using the right jargon, aims at going deeper. It does not pass the swampy places by, it dives into the cracks and crevices, and seeks to find truth there. Truth was fabled once to be at the bottom of a well; now she is best found in dirty places and in dust-bins. The recipe for making many books of this kind, and I am not thinking necessarily of those you name, seems to me fairly simple. Keep a diary; put down without reserve what you conceive to be your thoughts and feelings; do not spare your enemies; above all, do not be tender to your friends. If, to provide a feminine interest, you can make copy out of your mother and sisters, do not hesitate to do so. Some men may dislike the lack of delicacy and reticence that such a method seems to imply, but these are souls that

cannot realise the compelling power of the love of truth and the great laws of literary self-expression. Art is a stern mistress.

The important question no doubt is whether the truth is found. Your article is chiefly concerned with *The Loom of Youth*, which is quite living and, except for athletic detail, interesting. We know what Keats said in the preface to *Endymion*, of the imagination of the time between boyhood and manhood. "Mawkish" was the word he used. I surmise that the inspiration of this book is not wholly autochthonous. The hero master, who is described in its pages, and who wishes to show up the public school system, is, consciously or unconsciously, the moving spirit. As to that I may be quite wrong, but, at any rate, the imagination of a clever youth can be morbid and mawkish and fail to see things in their true proportions. You speak of Arnold. I remember meeting an old sixth-form boy of Arnold's, a man of distinguished career and character, who said that in his judgment Arnold was a bully and a coward. So vast a difference does it make with what eyes we are looking. Many boys, I think, have read *The Loom of Youth*. To some of them the whole outlook is strange and unfamiliar. Unfortunately, they could not

express themselves or make their own experiences interesting. Interest is for the time being in the dust-bin and will remain till its vogue has passed away. It is easy, or I am mistaken, to find or make your dust-bin. The writer of your article is, I do not doubt, a reputable man and member of a blameless household. But consider if the searchlight of a psychological novelist were turned upon his household and all its acts and motives twisted upside down, the skeleton, as Thackeray would say, pulled out of the cupboard, could not that household be represented as a moral dust-bin, all crawling with writhing and verminous creatures?

And so with schools. They have their swampy places; they have their shade, but they must have some light as well, varying, no doubt, with differences of time and place in its proportion. Are they as squalid in life and outlook as, in different ways, *The Loom of Youth* or *Sinister Street* portray them? If there is no spiritual or intellectual life, no discipline or guidance or elevating power, no room for individual tastes or independence of character in English public schools, let us fly to the Lycée or Gymnasium, or wherever the ideal is to be found. The

defence of public or other schools that are indicted must be left to those who have passed through them, rather than to those who direct them, but if I believed in the dust-bin picture I should not wish to sign myself, yours, etc.,

HEADMASTER.

SIR,—With reference to the article "The Indictment of the Public School," in the last number of *The Nation*, may I point out that one result of the war is to remove these schools still further from a controlled place in our educational system. Nearly every one of them has organised a memorial fund. In the case of one of the wealthiest of the schools the amount subscribed approaches a quarter of a million pounds. These funds become new endowments, the interest being used to educate the sons of old boys.

It is questionable if there is any considerable need for this form of relief, but in any case the result is to make the schools in question even more exclusive, and to make yet more difficult their inclusion in any co-ordinated democratic system. Yours, etc.,

E. W. D.

28*th May* 1918.

Sir,—May I thank you for the article on the above subject in your last number. The writer of it refers to *Hugh Rendal.* Among other things, this book illustrates the social isolation of the public school system. The only touch the boys get with the people and conditions outside their little world is through the school mission. Here is an extract from Hugh's diary:

"The mission fellows came down for their beanfeast. . . . They seemed to like playing cricket and singing sentimental bosh and bathing best, though how we shall like bathing this evening I don't know. . . . At seven o'clock, when we'd filled 'em up to the front teeth with tea, they all collected in a bunch at Great Gate . . . and said how jolly thankful they were, which they jolly well ought to be, and then hooked it back to their slums."

And so a traditional social outlook, far removed from any real sense of brotherhood, is strengthened. Yours, etc.,

An Old Boy.

28*th May* 1918.

Sir,—It is not for me to attempt to defend the public school system, more especially since, in my own case, being in a bad house, I hated mine. But at the same time I think it is worth remarking that the case against the public school can be overstated, and

that damage will be done to the cause of reform if the prosecution acquires a hysterical note.

First of all I would like to point out that it is not always what happens in the school that matters. It is what is ultimately made of the boys that matters; the general run of boys, not the particular. I defy the attackers of the public school system to point to another system, French, German, Italian, Russian, or Spanish, which produces a consular class like to ours, which is generally reckoned as just, tells no lies, and is universally acknowledged to be unbribable. The public school does undoubtedly produce a sort of public sense of honour. Our consuls, colonial administrators, and Civil servants *abroad* are undoubtedly unbribable. I do not think the same can be asserted with such confidence of any other service save, perhaps, that of the United States. The same may be said of the class which entered the Old Army, a class which, however much you may justly or unjustly object to some of its characteristics, did and does possess an excellent sense of Honour of the sort that you will find glorified by Alfred de Vigny, the only writer who has ever understood what "soldier" means. Again, in South

America, the public school boy has, as rancher, farmer, or miner, won such a position that, if any Argentine wishes to express to another Argentine that he will keep his word at all costs, he does not say, "On my word of Honour," but "On the word of an Englishman." It has become a proverb. Yours, etc.,

A Young Man who Hated
his Public School.

1*st June* 1918.

Sir,—A week ago, in the trenches, I read an article in *The Nation*, to which you will perhaps allow me to reply. Unfortunately, I have lost the copy of the paper, and have forgotten the title of the article, but it is easily identified as a criticism (chiefly unfavourable) of English public schools, based on recent public school novels, particularly on *The Loom of Youth.*

What I should like to suggest is that a wider appeal to such novels (and kindred literature) should modify your critic's conclusions. I know of only four novels which may be regarded as breathing a distinctly hostile spirit of criticism, and one of these

is really only a *jeu d'esprit*. Your critic mentions them all:

(1) *The Harrovians.*
(2) *The Loom of Youth.*
(3) *Mr Perrin and Mr Traill.*
(4) *The Lanchester Tradition.*

(1) Mr Arnold Lunn's story *may* be a true picture of his old house in his time, but Harrovians vehemently deny that it is a faithful portrait of Harrow society. Two other Harrow stories have been written: *The Hill* and *Follow Up*. Here the authors both idealise their old school. Why take Mr Lunn's evidence in preference to Mr Vachell's and Mr Fox's?

(2) *The Loom of Youth* is a much overrated book. Considered as a schoolboy's *tour de force* it is magnificent. It is, no doubt, a faithful picture of all that this schoolboy saw at *his* school. Yet much that was good may have escaped his notice, and S—— is not the only public school in England.

(3) *Mr Perrin and Mr Traill.* Consult the opening chapters, and you will find that Mr Walpole insists on the point that "Moffatt's" is only a second-rate or third-rate school. He is far from intending any general attack on English public schools; his sole object is to reveal the unfortunate condition

of assistant masters at certain unpleasant places, which any parent can avoid if only he makes careful inquiries and does not aim primarily at cheap fees.

(4) *The Lanchester Tradition*, a well-meant skit. Mr Bradby is a Rugby master. Can anyone really suppose he is dissatisfied with Rugby?

(5) Now for the novels that, directly or indirectly, recommend the English public school system. Why does your critic mention *Hugh Rendal* and *A Band of Brothers* almost in the same breath as *The Loom of Youth*? He may regard these books as supplying evidence of the kind that he wants, but certainly their authors were animated by no such motive as was Mr Waugh. Mr Desmond Coke, dissatisfied with the sentimentalism (as he conceived it) of various school stories, set out in cool, critical spirit to write *The Bending of a Twig*, but only succeeded in idealising Shrewsbury. Your critic mentions one of Mr Tinley's books, but not the other. Surely *Godfrey Marten, Schoolboy* is as whole-hearted a recommendation of the public school as was our old friend *Tom Brown*. If your critic can claim *The Lanchester Tradition* as favouring his case, what of Mr Bradby's other books—

Dick and *For this I have Borne Him*—which, without being public school stories pure and simple, show us the Rugby boy at his best? Has your critic read *Basil Verely* or *Fathers of Men* or *The Twinings*? Charterhouse and Uppingham and Clifton are quite favourably painted in these stories.

(6) *Sinister Street*, which I believe your critic did not mention, is not an attack on St Paul's, but just the life history of a particular Pauline. *Sonia* shows an American boy's disgust with the English public school, but Winchester lures O'Rane home in the end.

Pardon the length of this letter. My object is neither to defend nor to attack the English public school, but to do justice to the literature it has inspired. Yours, etc.,

NEVIL P. WOOD.

B.E.F. *6th June* 1918.

SIR,—I have read with interest your article on *The Loom of Youth*, under the title, "The Indictment of the Public School," in your issue of May 25th. Will you allow me space in your columns to draw attention to two or three educational experiments being practised in this country to-day which form

a striking contrast to the characteristics of "The Public School" as described in that article? You say of "the rigid and conventional" public opinion of the public school that "It gives no freedom, whilst allowing and condoning licence." There are educational experiments being carried on in our midst to-day which seek to give all freedom, whilst condoning no licence. It is to these that I would like to call your attention. Unfortunately they leave untouched the children at the top of the social ladder. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to be an educational pioneer where his own children are concerned, but criminality and destitution are two gateways through which children can be led to those who are "seeking with wisdom and enthusiasm to raise the level" of our educational ideals.

I place first amongst these The Little Commonwealth, in Dorsetshire, with its presiding genius, Mr Horace Lane. The citizens of The Little Commonwealth are drawn from the ranks of criminals. Their only necessary qualification for entrance into that community is to have broken the law, to have been brought before a Magistrate and condemned as unmanageable by the ordinary

authorities of parents or school teachers. Boys and girls are eligible. Their ages are the ages of the ordinary public school, 14 to 18. Yet with such antecedents the system of freedom and no licence, which Mr Lane has encouraged, has answered so well that the public opinion of the citizens of The Little Commonwealth is higher and nobler, and more exacting of self-control, than that of the most aristocratic and wealthy public schools in the land.

There are now quite an appreciable number of Montessori day schools for infants which are conducted on the same principle—freedom without licences.

I have recently visited a boarding Montessori home for the children of officers who have been killed in the war or seriously injured. It has only been opened a few months under the direction of Miss Jane Kenny, and holds at present only five little children between the ages of 2 and 6, but it is wholly free from the taint of "institution" ugliness and restriction, and one can rest content that children there will develop physically and mentally in a joyous way.

Those who have read the reports of the four Conferences of the New Ideals in Education at East Runton, Stratford-on-Avon,

Oxford, and Bedford College, London, will realise how these ideas of freedom in education are cropping up in many schools, and in many parts of the country. This year this Conference will again take place at Oxford, and a whole day will be devoted to "experiments" of this nature, which have not previously been made known to the public. One of the most interesting of these experiments is to be started in September of this year.

Mr Norman MacNunn, author of *A Path to Freedom in the School*, has for five years experimented in child self-teaching and mutual teaching, and he will now be Chief Adviser in a New Community for Boys and Girls, orphans of soldiers who have died for their country.

The Community will be Co-educational, residential, and the children will be taken about the age of 8. They will, it is hoped, stay in the Community till they are able to earn their way in the world. It will be founded on principles recognising the two main directions of healthy mental and moral growth, creation and research. There will be no predetermined view of the careers the children will adopt, but it is hoped that many of them will become teachers of the new

methods from which they have themselves benefited. They will be children with no private means. There will be no class or form teaching in this community. Each individual will be looked upon as a unit, as would be the case with a child living at home. Teachers will be called Advisers—the help in the direction the children want to go. The rooms of study will be called: "The Room of Finding Out" and "The Room of Telling." The practical needs of the members of the Community—gardening, poultry, working clothes making, etc., will all form part of the educational process of the life. The members of the staff who advise and instruct on these practical matters will be on a social equality with the rest of the staff. There will be no servant or master element. The local postmaster, the policeman, the grocer, will be drawn in as valuable lecturers. No fixed curriculum will be drawn up, but two subjects will be thought an essential part of the education, knowledge of the mother tongue and mathematics.

Those who are pledged to help this new experiment believe, in the first place, that it will give the teacher the greatest opportunity he has ever had of exerting "intellectual and moral influence." "Issuing no commands,

delivering no ultimata, his lightest hint is a command, a grave look has the weight of an ultimatum." In the second place, they believe that for the taught it will lead to "the finest discipline the world has ever seen."

Mr MacNunn holds that "there is no analogy whatever between the efforts of partial and of complete freedom." "This is a case," he says, "in which revolution is better than evolution, because even a generous half-measure of liberty neither has a tithe of the disciplinary value of complete liberty, nor is it very closely connected therewith as a matter of practical psychology."

This theory implies a faith in the inherent goodness of human nature which has never been practised before.

Hitherto, says Mr MacNunn, the outstanding evil of our educational systems has been "waste," "waste of time, waste of energy, waste of character, and waste of opportunity. We have wasted time because we have had either to base our questions on a purely imaginary average boy, or else to individualise them, so that they are largely wasted so far as listeners are concerned. We have wasted energy because we are doing the lion's share of the work, thus depriving the boy of that

active participation which he demands as the first condition of showing intelligent interest. We have wasted character for many reasons, but principally because we had little time to encourage original ways of working, and because our discipline, owing to the abnormal inertia of the class, had to be external and based on punishments and rewards. We have wasted opportunity because every boy carries in him the secret of his own mental growth, and we had no means of inducing him to reveal himself." Yours, etc.,

BETTY BALFOUR.

FISHER'S HILL, WOKING.

SIR,—Your correspondent, Mr Nevil Wood, speaking of *The Hill* and *Follow Up*, says: "Here the authors both idealise the old school." I should draw a clear distinction between the two books, though both are favourable to Harrow. *The Hill* avowedly describes exceptional characters and incidents. *Follow Up* is absolutely normal, ordinary, and, in the best sense, commonplace. It does not in the least "idealise" Harrow, and, as a picture of the school, is all the better on that account. Yours, etc.,

GEORGE W. E. RUSSELL.

SIR,—The difficulty of practising literary criticism in the trenches is one I have so far experienced as to be unready to chide Mr Nevil Wood for a few inaccuracies in his interesting letter; still, a footnote might be added to point out that the author of *Godfrey Marten, Schoolboy* is not Mr Tinley, but Mr Turley; while Sir Henry Newbolt's book is, surely, not *The Twinings*, but *The Twymans*.

To the list might be added Mr Ivor Brown's *Years of Plenty*, published in the first months of the war.

But of one statement of Mr Wood's, that, in *Sonia*, "Winchester lures O'Rane home in the end," an immediate contradiction must be made. Apart from its topographical setting on the Southampton Road, there is not the faintest resemblance between Winchester College and the school—I forget its name—described at the beginning and end of *Sonia*. Yours, etc.,

C. K. S. M.

LONDON.

SIR,—In *The Nation* of 8th June you published a letter from "An Old Boy" on "The Indictment of the Public School."

The writer quotes an extract from *Hugh Rendal*, which is supposed to show that the average public school boy rather sneers at missions, etc., and thinks that they and their like ought to be very thankful for "the crumbs they get from the rich man's table."

This is an entirely erroneous view of the case. When a cricket team or some such party comes down to its parent school the average boy's idea, although he does not understand the hardships of their daily life (how can he?), is that it is up to him to do all he can to give them a good time, and be glad that he is in a position to do so. Whatever faults the public school system has, it certainly fosters the spirit of helping the man who is down and not sneering at him.

The type of boy depicted in *Hugh Rendal* is an example of youthful snobbery which (mercifully!) is very uncommon, and which at most public schools would receive the treatment it deserves.

Nearly all letters against the present public school system quote such books as *Hugh Rendal* and *The Loom of Youth*, etc., which, although partly true, are the opinions of "extremists," and in no way examples of the average boy's daily life and thoughts.

Yours, etc. "A Prefect."

SIR,—Your "Indictment of the Public Schools" and the long correspondence on it last week leaves me very much depressed. It is all so dreadfully stale and old. A. says the public schools are indefensible and ought to go; well, they *won't* go, in our time, at any rate. B. remonstrates apologetically that they aren't quite so bad as all that. C. says they can't be reformed till everything else has been reformed first. D. blames "society." E. the State. F. the Classics, and so on. So it goes on. It might all have been written in 1898 or 1878. Can we get no further than that? We can, and we have.

In the last two years or so a movement has got going in at least some half-dozen of the score or so of schools that make up the conventional list of "public schools." Its promoters in most cases are, I fancy, a very small group of young masters; its enthusiastic supporters are practically all the more thoughtful boys—let us say, a fifth part of the school. Its aim is to lay the foundations of a truly liberal education by means of the study of the great questions of the day, international, industrial, social. It has already produced a lot of valuable results. Its enemies are the old "compact majorities"—teachers who despise new subjects, fogies who hate en-

thusiasm, and, above all, "authorities" who, whatever their real views, dread the hostile clamour of prejudiced and ill-formed parents. In the school which carried the movement furthest it has already been "officially" suppressed.

What then? Here is a living monument. It is badly in need of intelligent support from outside. As a headmaster recently remarked to a "reformer": "If this were a sane world, I should have nothing but encouragement to offer you, for your plans could do nothing but good." There is the case in a nutshell. It is for the parents to convince headmasters that they are as a body saner than the headmasters suppose. It is no use writing to *The Nation*. Write to your son's headmaster. Every letter written encouraging the headmaster to give scope to the "young" party to pursue their ideals will be a definite contribution to bringing about a state of things in which your powerful "Indictment" is obsolete. Yours, etc.,

YOUNG MASTER.

A REPLY

A REPLY[1]

By the Writer of the Original Article

You published a little time ago an article entitled "The Indictment of the Public School" which gave rise to a considerable correspondence containing much reasoned and suggestive criticism of the system dealt with in the original article. The whole subject, including the correspondence in your columns, has been under the consideration of a small informal committee. Their qualifications to express any views—if apology be needed—include a personal knowledge of the English public school system either as boys or as masters—sometimes as both.

We should like to submit to your readers the definite suggestions upon which we are agreed, and which deal with many of the points raised by your correspondents.

We should first define the sense in which we use the term Public School. By this we mean the public boarding school. There are day schools which rank as public schools,

[1] This reply appeared in *The Nation* in February, 1919.

but their life and problems are essentially different. Many of the problems raised by *The Loom of Youth*, and the numerous books of a similar character, deal with problems peculiar to the boarding school. It is necessary to emphasise this point, for much confusion exists. Mr Nevinson, in his interesting letter, refers to the letters of a public school boy, but the boy referred to came from Dulwich—a day school. Whilst this distinction should be remembered in connection with the following proposals, it is of course true that some of them are equally applicable to the day public schools.

The suggestions we make are as follows:—

1. A Royal Commission should be appointed to consider the position, resources, curricula, government and influence of the old universities. These largely control not only the curriculum of the public schools, but even other aspects of their life. The requirements of the universities for their admission examinations—notoriously pedantic and narrow in important respects—decide the character of the class-room work. Members of the universities supply the staffs for the schools. Frequently these are old boys of the schools. There is thus a circle—we will not call it vicious, but conventional. We

wholly agree with your correspondent "T." who set forth very weighty reasons for thinking that the old universities were responsible for many of the defects of the public school system, reflecting as they do the tragedy of English social life in their system of education organised on lines of class. We think with him that if a new orientation were given to the universities, and their democratisation secured, the benefit to the public schools would be great.

2. Closely connected with the last suggestion is the question of the curriculum of the public school. We are agreed that it is too narrow and that it is controlled by external influences which are also narrow. The dead hand of Tradition lies heavily upon it. It has not been responsive to the changing needs of modern life, nor to the lessons borne by the great stream of human experience. The very accumulation of human knowledge and experience should prevent any subjects (*e.g.* Greek or Latin) from being regarded as permanent instruments of education to the exclusion of others more modern in character.

The schools should therefore be given freedom to adapt their curricula to the needs of life. The recent reports issued by the committees set up by the Government have

emphasised the neglect of science and modern languages. Two other widely different examples may be given of the need for the reform of the curricula of the public schools. The first is the teaching of modern history. In many schools this is non-existent in any real sense. An inadequate attempt is made to teach the history of this country, which is too often detached from the story of the other great nations of the world. It would be difficult to name many schools where the boys are taught modern history intelligently, —the development, ideals, social conditions of contemporary countries, and the history of our own country in due relation to these. In how many public schools before the war would a boy leaving at any age between 16 and 18 be able to give an intelligent account of the way in which the vast countries which we know as the United States are governed? How many of these lads when the Balkan War broke out in 1912 had any coherent idea of the peoples and countries concerned, or of their problems? Only one answer is possible to all candid persons who know the facts.

The other example is the neglect by the public schools of the whole question of handicrafts. We do not refer to manual training in its narrow sense for younger boys for a few

minutes weekly, but to the question of developing both intellect and character through hand work—the making of simple and beautiful things, with the mental outlook that would certainly follow and the greater resourcefulness. The boy taught in youth the joy of arts and crafts not only benefits in every way, but is given wide and new interests in life, with a new mental horizon when looking at social and industrial questions.

So far our suggestions affect in almost equal measure not only the boarding schools, but the day public schools. We desire to limit our remarks but some overlapping is unavoidable. Our further points are more exclusively concerned with the boarding schools.

3. In the book which was discussed in the original article, and in many of the others mentioned, the question of the religion of the public schools and its failure as a real force is constantly dealt with. The statements made are in many respects true. The school chapel and its message is too often felt to be something unreal and apart, having no relation to the herd sympathies and conventions which control the school life. It is a formal religion, its observances accepted,

like the upturned collar of the blazer, as a mark of good form. It is bare justice to remark that in this respect the school too often reflects the greater world. But this need not stop those who desire noble experiment to get something better in the schools.

All would be agreed that the greatest influence is the personality of those controlling the lives of the boys, but apart from this there are some definite constructive suggestions which are perhaps worth making:

(*a*) Incalculable harm is done by placing the whole of the Old Testament on the same level of moral authority as the New. Later in life the man whose spiritual training has been based upon the New Testament will come back to the Old with the power to appreciate the beauty and poetry of some of its contents. But little except harm is gained by taking boys through the whole of it, including much that puzzles, bores and misleads them, and making religion stand for this in their minds. In presenting ideals to our youth we ought at once to divorce the Old and New Testaments.

(*b*) The school sermon too often reflects the character of the average church sermon and is not of the kind that moves boy nature. One day preachers will cease to preach from a

text. It is an obsolete method. No literary criticism of any work would be tolerated in ordinary secular life which based its argument upon some phrase or sentence stripped from its context. Of course there are texts which are in themselves great and complete themes, but the ordinary sermon, consisting of the exposition of a text—taken frequently from the Old Testament—has no message for the normal boy. He is repelled too by its conventional phraseology. We have always thought that biography ought to play a larger part in school sermons—the presentation of noble, chivalrous lives, leading to an exalted hero-worship. A sermon to boys should not be much concerned with formal phrases, or with dogmas which form the subject of contention between different schools of theology. It should hold up to them the heroic and the ideal. It should keep alive some reverence and mystery in their hearts.

(*c*) Sunday at many boarding schools is a day of deadly dullness, and sometimes misery, to the boys. The hard lines of division, making part of our life secular, part "religious," appears to them, as to many other sane persons, illogical and absurd. Sunday should be the happiest day of the week, and it could be made so without losing anything of its religious

influence. At present games, hobbies and other amusements are forbidden in many schools. Attendance at two or more services, with sometimes a Greek Testament class thrown in, are, in addition to a formal walk, the only activities of the day. We would allow games, hobbies and all forms of healthy exercise and amusements. This would not make less real the communal service, which of course should be retained. The most effective time for it is at the close of the day.

4. The worship of athletics is almost universal. They are the chief thing in the life of the school in many cases. The system was originally adopted consciously, in order to prevent by strenuous exercise the development of unwholesome tendencies. It is open to question if the object was secured. It is certain that a creature has been reared which now controls its makers. We regard its present excessive worship as harmful, creating a false public opinion, and leading to many evils. Is it possible to place it in a more reasonable position in the life of the school? We think so, though in the case of an old school, with a united public opinion, any change will be gradual. But masters, and the public behind them, must first have an ideal, and a policy with which to realise it.

Could not reform begin in the following ways?

(*a*) Distinctions, privileges and appointments to positions of responsibility should not depend mainly upon athletic achievement. In some countries there is a well-established system under which distinction within the school precedes recognition of athletic honours.

(*b*) The out-of-school interests and activities should be greatly enlarged to prevent the exclusive dominance of athletics, and a boy should be allowed more freedom and choice. It is curious that at the preparatory schools boys are generally encouraged to have as many hobbies as possible. Public opinion compels them to shed these interests the moment they enter a public school and to worship the single idol whose service knows no freedom. Apart from matters of organisation, and the impetus given by masters, the way to prevent a boy being the slave of a narrow athleticism is to give him a choice of interests, with freedom to follow them. We have known boys whose schools were by the sea, and to whom sailing and woodcraft and the study of wild life made an irresistible appeal, compelled to forgo all these interests because every half-holiday was mortgaged to

a compulsory game. Many a patrol of Boy Scouts from the slums gets a better education.

(*c*) Only when this greater out-of-school life has been developed can we reasonably expect a wider mental outlook on the part of the boys. We have had the opportunity of examining some typical letters to their home people of boys at schools under the rigid dominance of athleticism, and of others at more experimental and unconventional schools. There is clearly noticeable a vital difference in the two sets of letters. The first is a dreary catalogue of statements referring to the weather and of recitals like this: "Yesterday we played So-and-so. They made so many runs (or goals). We made so many. Next week we play So-and-so." The latter show a sense of perspective and reveal new interests coming into their lives. A delight of real things accompanies a natural love of games. To each boy there should be secured under reasonable conditions and adequate safeguards freedom for his leisure hours.

5. We believe that the benefits of the prefectorial system are too much taken for granted. Its author was mainly Arnold. He never made the mistake of thinking it a system which could run itself. In modern years it has sometimes developed into a tyranny, par-

ticularly where boys are appointed prefects solely because of athletic prowess. There is too little supervision over the way in which they exercise authority and the power of punishment, and the result is that in not a few cases the prefectorial system becomes an evil. The handling of small boys demands sympathy and knowledge which it must not be too lightly assumed every athletic youth possesses. It is often forgotten that the prefect system is not self-government. It is the most autocratic form of government. At its best it is an excellent and beneficial system, but it is not the only system, and we should like to see many more experiments in self-government. Other countries offer us many admirable examples in this connection. In schemes of self-government, too, the relations between boys and masters become much more natural and friendly, and the tendency, often a rule of life, for the boys to regard their masters as a hostile class apart, to be done on every possible occasion, is destroyed.

6. There are a multitude of other points which, if space permitted, we should have submitted for consideration, but we must not close without referring to the most important question which should govern all discussions on the public boarding school: Is it the best

system and should it be regarded as a permanent one? Our answer must be in the negative. The system in this country is the creation of an accident. The most sound and healthy system of education is to be formed in conjunction with the home. The future is with the day school which preserves to young boys the influence of the home life. Such is the rule over the rest of the civilised world. But in our period of transition let us remove from our boarding school system all preventable evils. And we must in fairness remember that it is an infinitely better system for boys from inadequate homes than the day school system.

It is perhaps the anonymity which we preserve which gives us the courage to put forward these suggestions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS DEALING WITH ENGLISH PUBLIC SCHOOL LIFE, WITH DESCRIPTIVE AND CRITICAL NOTES

By J. H. Whitehouse

The following bibliography is confined for the most part to novels dealing seriously with life at the English public schools. Stories written for boys only, and presenting no real view of school life, are omitted.

Wherever possible the date of first publication is given, as offering some indication of the period described in the book.

Since the publication of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, in 1857, there has been a succession of tales of school life the value of which, apart from their frequent literary interest, lies in the fact that they are records of real schools and real experiences. It is believed that the present bibliography includes the more important of these. They give a wide picture of boy life under the public school system, and enable the outstanding characteristics of that system, whether good or bad, to be appreciated.

The bibliography is arranged alphabetically under the authors' names.

BARNET, JOHN. *The New Guv'nor.* Wells Gardner.

A tale of Haileybury. A vivid and interesting picture of school life, with good studies of boys. The book is noteworthy for a sympathetic and original sketch of the hero Barthold. The spirit of hero-worship is well described.

BENSON, E. F. *David Blaize.* Hodder & Stoughton, 1916.

David Blaize is presumably a picture of life at Marlborough, where the author was educated. It is certainly one of the most attractive studies of boy life which has ever appeared in the literature of English public schools. The opening chapters of the book deal with David's life in his private school, and are of interest and value.

The features of this book which entitle it to a first place in the literature of public schools are its admirable literary style, its natural and life-like picture of school life, and, above all, the skill with which the attractive character of the two boys with whom the story is chiefly concerned is drawn. Their friendship, temptations and triumphs are set forth with the hand of a master, one who understands the depths of boy nature.

BRADBY, G. F. *Dick.* Smith, Elder, 1906.

Mr Bradby is a Rugby master whose literary reputation extends beyond that famous school. Strictly speaking, *Dick* is not a school tale, for the story is wholly concerned with the holidays. But Dick is a public school boy and the atmosphere is that of the public school. It is a

singularly winning picture of a typical boy spending his long holidays, in the absence of his relatives, with sympathetic strangers. A book full of humour.

BRADBY, G. F. *For this I have Borne Him.* Smith, Elder, 1915.

A sequel to *Dick,* telling of the boy's response to the call of war and his death on the field of battle. The minor characters are well drawn, particularly the old lady, Mrs Lane, whose view was that "The Hague Convention should have forbidden anyone below sixty to bear arms, with an exception in favour of the clergy. Then war would have been some fun. As it is, it is mere foolishness."

BRADBY, G. F. *The Lanchester Tradition.* Smith, Elder, 1913.

A bold story for a master at a public school, for it describes the fettering power of convention and tradition, when these are supposed to be based upon the example and teaching of a great hero in the past. Mr Bradby shows that such hero-worship may be only a sham to cover inefficiency and idleness. The book is remarkable for its character sketches, particularly of the reforming headmaster and his assistants (who did not wish to be reformed).

BROWN, IVOR. *Years of Plenty.* Martin Secker, 1915.

The first part of this book deals with public school life: the second, with university life. The school life is well presented and the author shows great power in his studies of boy nature. Mr Waugh has given great praise to this book in a public lecture. It is however not nearly so

detailed a study as his own, but it succeeds in giving the life and atmosphere, and at least in suggesting fundamental problems.

Clifton College Twenty-Five Years Ago: The Diary of a Fag. F. E. Robinson & Co., 1904.

This is a reprint with additional matter of a real diary kept by a small boy at Clifton in the year 1879. It is therefore a particularly valuable document, since it recorded the boy's life and experiences from day to day with no thought of publication. There is nothing sensational in the diary, but to those interested it is a fascinating little record.

Cope, Desmond. *The Bending of a Twig.* Chapman & Hall, 1906.

A story of Shrewsbury school of great power. The author appears to have issued the book in two forms—one containing a rather elaborate satire on other school stories, the other omitting it. A very natural picture of school life is given, but the book is not written in the challenging spirit of others.

De Quincey, Thos. *The Opium Eater.* 1822.

This book is included in the present bibliography because of the description which it gives in Part I. of public school life at the end of the eighteenth century. A study of this portion of *The Opium Eater* will tend to correct the popular view that the prefectorial system was founded by Arnold of Rugby. De Quincey entered the Manchester Grammar School at the age of fifteen, in the year 1800—twenty-eight years before Arnold went to Rugby. Yet he gives us a picture of the school as he

found it which is the most attractive of any in literature. It is a picture of a great school from which corporal punishment has been abolished, and where discipline is maintained solely by the influence of the elder boys. Of these boys, and their mental and moral cultivation, De Quincey gives a most alluring description. He thus records his first arrival at the school:

> About nine o'clock in the evening, I was conducted by a servant up a short flight of stairs, through a series of gloomy and unfurnished little rooms . . . to the common room of the senior boys. Everything had combined to depress me. . . . The season besides was rainy, which in itself is a sure source of depression; and the forlorn aspect of the rooms completed my dejection. But the scene changed as the door was thrown open: faces kindling with animation became visible; and from a company of boys, numbering sixteen or eighteen, scattered about the room, two or three, whose age entitled them to the rank of leaders, came forward to receive me with a courtesy which I had not looked for. The grave kindness and the absolute sincerity of their manner impressed me most favourably.

DICKINSON, H. N. *Thomson's Friend.* Humphries, 1917.

This is not a public school story. But it is a profound study of boy character, of great value and originality. It relates how a commonplace, selfish and wholly unattractive boy, of poor parents, bullied by his fellows, received on one occasion a trifling act of courtesy from an Eton boy. He never saw the boy again, but the incident changed the whole current of his life, and transformed his character. The Eton boy became a kind of guardian angel, with

whom in imagination he was in constant touch, and whose example and influence enabled him to acquire the virtues which he lacked.

FOX, A. D. *Follow Up: The Story of a Commonplace Harrovian.* Brown, Langham, 1908.

Another story of Harrow, written with entire loyalty to the school, and giving a wider view of the school life than is to be found in *The Hill.* An admirable tale with good character sketches.

GILKES, A. H. *The Thing that Hath Been; or, A Young Man's Mistakes.* Longmans, 1894.

This is not so much a story of school life as a study of masters. It is one of the most impressive pictures of the struggle between conventionalism and liberalism that the literature of public schools contains. It is also a brilliant piece of irony.

The plot of the story is concerned with the life of a young master of working-class origin but of great intellectual and moral distinction. He is appointed to a conventional public school and is at once brought into collision with conventions he does not respect and gods in which he does not believe. The masters, and the system as worked by them, are drawn with a remorseless hand, which is only restrained by a powerful sense of humour.

It is a noble if somewhat depressing book, teaching great lessons of toleration. It is worth while recording that when the book was published it was presented to the library of Rugby School and was refused on the ground that it contained an argument in which Christian-

ity was worsted. It is not Christianity which is worsted, but the preposterous old gentleman who pretended to interpret it.

HAY, IAN. *Pip: A Romance of Youth.* Blackwood, 1910.

The first part of this book describes Pip's life at school. It is an admirable study of boy character and a first-class story of school life. Pip is indeed one of the most notable characters in the literature of the public schools. The author's sense of humour is seen at its best.

HORNUNG, E. W. *Fathers of Men.* Smith, Elder, 1912.

A first-class story concerned with a stable boy sent by the aristocratic relatives of his widowed mother to a conventional school. The situation thus created is handled with great skill, and the author has written a story of much interest. The characters of the boys are all well done, and the school life is admirably drawn.

HUGHES, THOMAS. *Tom Brown's Schooldays.* 1857.

Tom Brown has been continually republished in many forms. Two editions may be mentioned here, those published by Messrs Sidgwick & Jackson and by Messrs Macmillan. The former, published in 1913, is beautifully printed and illustrated, and has many interesting notes. The latter has been constantly reprinted since 1857, and contains the attractive pictures by Arthur Hughes and Sydney Prior Hall.

At this date it would be absurd to describe a book so widely known. The editor may, however, be forgiven for emphasising the following points :—(1) The story describes

real conditions as they then existed at Rugby. (2) Both the good and the weak points of the boarding school system are brought out, frequently unconsciously. (3) The problems of the schools then are essentially the problems to-day—*e.g.* the moral question, the power of a false public opinion, the place of athletics, the limits and methods of government by boys.

No book has better described boy character, with its infinite capacity for hero-worship and friendship, and its response to the influence of strong personality.

KIPLING, RUDYARD. *Stalky & Co.* Macmillan, 1899.

Mr Kipling's book is only of limited interest. The boys he describes are really exceptional, and it is a mistake to consider them as normal examples. This may well be a cause of general satisfaction. There is a certain sense of humour shown in the description of the somewhat unsavoury incidents in which the book abounds, but it is a somewhat coarse and elementary form.

LUNN, ARNOLD. *Loose Ends.* Hutchinson, 1919.

A similar book to *The Harrovians*, but even more biting in its remorseless satire. It is full of brilliant sayings, as for instance when the author speaks of a certain House as having the cohesion of a Church which has not yet evolved a heretic. The author goes as far as Mr Waugh in his critical presentment of the public school system. The book is marred by the repetition of incidents which have appeared in earlier books by others. The new master keen on literature and appalled by the standards of his boys might have come out of *The Loom*. The incident of a boy bringing a stuffed animal out of the

school museum to represent himself in a form taken by a short-sighted master appears also in *David Blaize.*

LUNN, ARNOLD. *The Harrovians.* Methuen, 1913.

The Harrovians, if we may be forgiven the expression, is the spiritual father of *The Loom of Youth.* It is a very able picture of public school life, written very much from Mr Waugh's standpoint, and discussing in the main the same problems. There is the same photographic quality as in the later book, and the book is in effect an impeachment of the whole system. It is full of challenging passages, such as this:

> Peter had begun to read his Bible with some care, but he could not find much contact between the Christ of the Gospels and the Christ who was vaguely supposed to be the authority for the schoolmaster and the schoolboy code. What did the teaching of the school pulpit amount to? "Consider the lilies of the field"—hardly! Rather, "Blessed are those which work hard and play hard, for Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like a flannel at Lord's or a monitor on Speech Day." "Blessed are the meek." No, rather, "Blessed are those who have a decent self-respect and take a proper place among their fellows. Blessed are those which have a proper sense of their importance. Blessed are those who bear as marked a resemblance to the Pharisee as possible by discussing the tone of their house on every possible occasion. Blessed are those who learn to kill the young men of other countries with the greatest possible dispatch." (Two clergymen had been officers in the school corps.)

MACLAREN, IAN. *Young Barbarians.* Hodder & Stoughton.

Sketches of life at a Scottish school. They contain studies of boy life written with great understanding and sympathy.

PAIN, BARRY. *Graeme and Cyril.* Hodder & Stoughton, 1903.

A book full of true feeling and containing very sympathetic pictures of boys. It is a story of friendship between two boys of similar social standing, and of the entry into their lives of a boy who a few years before was the neglected son of a criminal, and himself in the way of becoming one. An engaging study marred by the tragedy at the end.

PORTMAN, LIONEL. *Hugh Rendal.* Alston Rivers, 1908.

This book belongs to the same class as *The Harrovians*, though concerned with another school. It seeks to give a real picture of school life rather than merely tell a pleasant tale. The net result is not so gloomy as in *The Loom.* Good alternates with bad, though in many respects the book forms an indictment of methods. It is a good study of the prefectorial system, and there is much original character study.

RITTENBERG, MAX. *The Cockatoo: A Novel of Public School Life.* Sidgwick & Jackson, 1913.

This gives the story of an Australian lad who is sent to an ordinary English public school, and of the clash between his egotism, and dogmatic unconventionality, and

the traditions of the school. The book is well written, but it does not go very deeply into issues, and the interest of the story depends too largely upon exciting events which happen out of school and are unrelated to the normal life of any school.

REED, TALBOT BAINES. *The Master of the Shell; The Fifth Form at St Dominic's; The Cock House at Fellsgarth; Tom, Dick and Harry; The Adventures of a Three-Guinea Watch; The Willoughby Captains.*

We have included these tales of public school life in this bibliography as being in their way masterpieces. Mr Reed was not himself at a public school as a boy, and these tales are not therefore based upon personal experiences, nor are they in any way a challenge to the public school system. But the author has given us what so many writers fail to give, real pictures of the communal life of boys, and real studies of boy character. The stories are a sheer delight to all boys, but they make a wider appeal to all interested in the public school system.

TURLEY, CHAS. *A Band of Brothers.* Heinemann, 1913.

A most humorous book, written with great literary charm. We know of no other book which puts so well the question of the worship of Athleticism and the wholly false values resulting. A good study alike of boys, masters and parents.

TURLEY, CHAS. *Godfrey Marten, Schoolboy.* Heinemann, 1912.

This book gives with great skill and charm a picture of ordinary everyday life at a public school. The sustained interest of the story does not depend much upon incident, but upon the naturalness and reality of the atmosphere. It is a good study of the prefectorial system.

VACHELL, H. A. *The Hill: A Romance of Friendship.* Murray, 1905.

A story of Harrow. It does not raise many of the questions discussed in such a book as *The Loom of Youth,* but it is a good story, well told. Incidentally it gives a vivid and most unfavourable sketch of a master. The spirit of snobbery is rampant throughout the story. The best thing in it is the picture of boyish friendship and its enduring influence.

WAUGH, ALEC. *The Loom of Youth.* Grant Richards, 1917.

This book will stand out as a landmark in the history of the public schools. There are several reasons for this. It is a remarkable literary achievement, the more notable because written immediately the author had left school. It is the most candid of all the books about public schools. It gives with the detail of a photograph the daily life and atmosphere of the school described. Here, so far as the author's experience is concerned, is the real thing. Masters and boys are both sketched with impartial remorselessness. Their religion, ideals, conversation, conduct, all are given us. There is little story about the book: it depends for its interest on the presentation of a life, an atmosphere.

The book is a challenge, so far as what it describes is typical, to the public school system in almost every detail.

WELLS, H. G. *Joan and Peter: The Story of an Education.* Cassell, 1918.

This is mainly an indictment of the public school system as judged by results. Mr Wells gives little account of the actual life of his hero at the public school. But his guardian, an "Empire-builder," investigates the methods and ideals of the public school system, and finds them altogether inadequate to the needs of the day. The private school, however, to which Peter is sent early in his career is described in scathing terms. After running away from here he is sent to a good preparatory school. The conversation between Peter's guardian and the head-master of this school is a central chapter of the book. The ideals with which the school was started, the failure of those ideals before the indifference of parents, the tyranny of the curriculum, the narrow lines on which improvement is possible have broken the heart of the reformer. "If you want to feel the generations rushing to waste," he declares, "like rapids—like rapids—you must put your heart and life into a preparatory school."