

B/14

SIR AND SEN.

THE FOUNDING OF OAKWOOD SCHOOL.

Introductory

I was born at Roffey Hurst near Horsham, third of the six children of the Rev. William Allen and his wife Lucy Ellen (nee Playford).

I remember my father only as an invalid, who occasionally recovered sufficiently to appear in the garden leaning on sticks.

In 1890 there arrived from New Zealand my mother's eldest sister, my Aunt Margaret Fenn with her six children. Her husband, Theodore Fenn, a naval officer who, on retirement had taken service with the New Zealand Steamship Company, had died suddenly.

Their third child was Richard Playford Fenn. He had been born at Easeborne near Midhurst in 1880 and went out to New Zealand when he was two and later began his education at the High School of Otago.

So I was six and he was ten when we first met. He stammered badly and we were warned not to copy him or we would stammer too. The two families of cousins (six in each family) saw a great deal of each other, exchanging visits in the holidays or meeting at Highfields our joint grandfather's house in Forest Row.

I always hoped it would be Dick's turn for a visit. Often it would be one of his brothers; but two went into the Navy and one into the Merchant Service, so it was nearly always Dick who came.

That same year my father died, and my mother had to sell everything. We went to live at Littlehampton and she eked out a small pension by taking in children with parents in India, who shared our Governess, or attended local day schools.

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We owe a large debt of gratitude to our Governess Miss Gripper (Kip to us) who remained with us till we were grown up, and to our nurse, Caroline, who refused to leave when dismissed as we could no longer afford a nurse. "I'll cook m' but I won't go." Both these people served us for many years for what we could afford, which must have been very little. Kip gave us a very sound grounding.

In the mean time Dick had gone to Tonbridge and in 1893 we left Littlehampton and went to live in Hove, and at about the same time the Fenns left Tonbridge and went back to Easebourne, Midhurst where they lived at Dodsley Gate¹.

I went away to school at the age of eight to the Beehive, Windsor, largely through the kindness of the headmistress, Miss Browning, and some help from a friend.

My eldest sister was now at the Clergy Orphan School in St. John's Wood and moved with it to St. Margarets, Bushey. My brother was at the Clergy Orphan School at Canterbury (now St. Edmunds). The rest of the family, when they had finished with Kip, went to a Hove day school (Addiscombe).

From the age of twelve I corresponded regularly with Dick and continued to do so when he went up to Oxford with a classical scholarship to Jesus College. He was a wonderful letter writer and composer of light verse and later on, to my mind, of real poetry. He was a tremendous reader with a retentive memory, and knew all the odes of ^{HORACE} Homer by heart and most of the Odyssy. These, with his Greek Testament, were his bedside books and Browning was his favourite English poet; but there can be little in English literature that he had not read, besides much French and some German.

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At Oxford he played rugger for his college, and rowed in the Jesus eight. He made some close friends, everyone of whom was killed in the first world war.

After Oxford an unsettled time, coaching here and teaching there, till he settled for some years as assistant master to Mr. Branfoot of East End House, Ditchling near Brighton, and it was settled that when Mr. Branfoot retired, Richard Playford Fenn should take over.

Meantime I had left the Beehive, which had moved and I with it from Windsor to Bexhill (what a come-down), and must say here that I thoroughly enjoyed my school life; that I think the education at the Hive was in advance of that meted out at the average girls' school of the times. We spoke French or German all day and were quite fluent on leaving. We had the run of a first rate library, an excellent literature master who took two other subjects as well, which varied, Ancient History, Architecture, Dante etc.; I had hoped to try for an Oxford scholarship, but, even if I won it, I could not afford to take it up. Things were desperate at home and I must earn.

I decided to go to Germany and found a job in Berlin - Charlottenburg - neither lucrative nor interesting. I stayed for six months and went to Bad Harzburg in the Harz Mountains, very pleasant, enjoyed life, but earned nothing; returned to Berlin to the Maien Strasse - a very quarrelsome family, left and went to Jacobsdorf near Falkenburg in Upper Silesia and had a splendid time for nearly two years, but still very little money. Saw the need to come home and pass some exams.

Dick and I were still writing regularly and soon after I returned he left for two years and a bit in Canada, mostly on a ranch near

Ashcroft in British Colombia where he went to tutor two small boys (Barclays) who were to be prepared for an English public school. Their mother had been killed by a rattle-snake.

Dick found that, besides tutoring, he was expected to lend a hand about the ranch. He had learnt to ride before he went out but found cattle-work very different to English riding. We went on writing, but after we were married we decided to destroy all this earlier correspondence, but I still have his Canadian diaries, and have kept all his poems.

On my return from Germany I took the place of my eldest sister, who went out to Bermuda. She had been teaching daily at a small Brighton school, a dreadful place. I left at the end of the term and went to London and taught at a school, which deserves a book to itself. It was a remarkable, money-making concern, but from it I was ^{AB} bale to get to the Draper's Hall, Threadneedle Street and sit my Higher Local Exams where, after "satisfying the examiners" in Maths, I passed in French, German, English, History and Literature and a few other things with a view to obtaining a teacher's diploma. But I received almost a command to go back to my old school as junior mistress. So back I went to Bexhill and stayed for five years.

In 1909 Dick returned from Canada and joined the staff of The Link, a prep. school at Malvern.

In April 1910, I went to stay with my old aunts in Forest Row. My grandfather had died whilst I was in Germany and they had sold Highfields and built a smaller house, The Brown House. Dick also arrived for a visit. Just before Easter, the aunts sent us out to

get wild daffodils, with explicit directions where to find them. Finding ourselves right up on ~~Corn~~^{ASH}down Forest, we sat down romantically on a fallen tree, and got engaged. We forgot the daffodils, but passing a field of them, we got over the hedge and picked armfuls, only to be told on our return that they were not wild ones and we had stolen them. This was April 14th, 1910.

Both of us went back to school, but we had not long been back when I was taken desparately ill, was rushed to a nursing home to be operated on, my mother was sent for, Dick came up from Malvern and I nearly departed; but I pulled through, though I spent nine weeks looking at those green walls. Then home by car and the rest of that summer in a spinal carriage and Dick pushed me up and down the Brighton hills. In October I returned to light duty, and that Autumn my old headmistress died.

Dick and I began to get restive. We argued. He could keep himself; I could keep myself; therefore we could keep ourselves (there is a fallacy somewhere here). However we decided to get married in April 1912.

His youngest sister, Josephine, was working as a dispenser^{ph} in Chichester Hospital, prior to training at St. Thomas' Hospital. She said come to Chichester, there is no prep. school here.

So we had hundreds of letters printed, announcing our intentions, got a directory and sent them round regardless. The result was not encouraging, we had very few answers, but at least one vague promise of a day boy. So we looked about and found a small house in Summersdale to rent, with a vacant plot beside it (mainly the local rubbish heap). It had three sitting-rooms, four bed-rooms and a large

attic. We took it. The landlord shook our hands and said "For God's sake don't ask me to spend money on it."

On April 16th 1912 we were married by Dick's cousin, Van der Zee Fenn (Van), at St. Lukes, Prestonville, Brighton, very quietly as I was not considered strong yet; and when we had settled everything we found we had exactly £30 between us and half a wedding cake to eat. Of course no honeymoon. We went straight to Summersdale, and set about getting ready for term, and on May 4th 1912, "The School", Summersdale opened. We could not bear the idea of being called "Inglenook". Opening on that day, Charles Frederick Rendle, son of Dr. Rendle of North Pallant, and now a chartered accountant in South Africa, sat down at the dining-room table to his lessons with R. P. F., but the excitement was too much for him and the whole school was violently sick: but he recovered and punctually at one, Dorothy, aged 15 (neice of Mrs. White my daily woman), and I, with immense pride, produced dinner. In the afternoon the Headmaster took the school for a walk. Later I relieved him for more lessons.

At half term Rendle was joined by our first boarder, Walter Pinder, from Midhurst, and we finished clearing the derelict plot next door and put up a cricket net. We never rented or bought the plot; we just annexed it.

But now our money ran out. What to do? There was R.P.F.'s gold classical medal, presented to him by Edward Vll. The jeweller looked dubious, said presentation medals were often filled with lead; it must be assayed. However it turned out to be solid gold and tided us over.

Came the holidays and an Etonian who wanted coaching for Smalls.

He boarded with us, and terrified me with his penchant for pistol practice. He and R.P.F. used to shoot at targets in a chalk pit. R.P.F. also coached a small boy, Eddy Maltby, who had failed his common entrance. I tried, without much success, to teach French to a man called Privett who came over from Portsmouth.

Numbers grew slowly and we were not too badly tied. If we wanted to go out to dinner or bridge we put the clocks on one hour, sent the boys to bed, and left the good Mrs. White in charge.

In 1913 we produced our first play. Scenes from A Midsummer Night's Dream.

We now had school caps, green with pale blue ribbons, and plain green blazers.

But lack of capital dogged our footsteps.

Chinese Interlude

Our cousin, Professor Giles, Curator of Oriental manuscripts at the British Musuem , suggested to us that far more was to be made by educating the sons of Eastern potentates, and promised to start us off with the four sons of Wan She Kai, the first Chinese president.

He put us in touch with Mr. Zee, Wan's agent in London. The boys were already on their way to England and had reached Switzerland. In due course they arrived and came down to see us.

I reckoned on the four boys, Mr. Zee and their tutor, and arranged with Mrs. White tea for eight in the drawing room. R.P.F. went to the station to meet them. I waited. Presently two taxis drove up packed with Chinamen - the boys, their tutor, Mr. Zee, a valet, the Minister of Education from Peking, and his secretary. I gasped to Mrs. White - "Tea for twelve in the dining room" and left her to cope.

They all filed in with bowler hats and sticks. They then found that their leader had left his hat and stick in the hall, so they all trooped and deposited theirs!

I knew at once that nothing could come of this. The 'boys' were far too old, except the youngest; they were young men. We talked. They translated (as much as they thought fit). We had tea. Mrs. White did nobly. Everytime a cup or plate was passed, the recipient got up and made me a bow. I felt quite dizzy. They left and finally ended up in Cheltenham, and old Wan was soon assassinated so we were well out of it. But how we worked in the holidays. Term time was almost a relief.

One of these tasks was the anglicising of Franz Weidmann, son

of a German father and an Australian mother. The father had died and the mother wanted the boy, then in Germany, to be brought up British. He had to be smuggled out of Germany, and through our lawyer, Mr. Wannop, he came to us. We bought him English clothes, grew his cropped hair, changed his name to Frank Wideman, corrected his German-Australian accent, stopped his heel-clicking, took him to the Isle of Wight for a holiday and eventually passed him into Lancing and from there he went to Sandhurst.

In 1912 we let the house, very profitably, for Goodwood week, and afterwards to people who wanted to ride on the Downs. They brought their own horses and stabled them at the Old House at Home. We went to my mother at Hove ... and it rained all August incessantly. Our tenants begged to be let off the last fortnight and we were only too glad to get back.

In 1913, we let again and took rooms in a farm house in North Marden, walking there in a thunderstorm over Stoke Clump, Kingley Vale and Lambs Down, with one small case between us. We spent a week there, walking most days, if it were only to retrieve the weekly joint, hung in an oak tree at the crossroads by an Emsworth butcher.

We then set out to walk to Beachy Head, having posted parcels of clothes ahead of us.

First to Fittleworth, a good twenty miles, the last five on the hard high road - and me with blisters! My sister, Esme Allen (later Miles) was there and put us up for the night.

Back to the Downs, up Amberley Mount and on to Steyning (in another thunder storm) but it was really a lovely summer.

A night at the White Horse (where we put our shoes out to be cleaned, one pair marked Fenn, and the other pair marked Allen.) Inns were very primitive in those days, but this one had just added a bathroom! On the next day, past Chanctonbury and High Salvington (Worthing was then mercifully clear of the Downs), along the Poor Man's Wall, (Portslade and Shoreham did not sprawl over the Downs then) past Poynings and the Devil's Dyke and Clayton Hill with its windmills, Jack and Jill, to Ditchling where we stayed with the Branfoots of East End House, the school we expected to take over. From there over Ditchling Beacon and Mount Caburn. Then across the railway and the Ouse to Seaford where a convenient aunt put us up. Next day a short journey through Alfriston, Lullington and Ferrington to Beachy Head. Then by train from Eastbourne to Hove to stay with my mother till our tenants had gone.

Numbers were increasing and we were outgrowing our house. Amongst our boys was one, James Shorland, nephew and adopted son of a school fellow of mine, Mrs. Laverton. He was a talented boy and a musician, and Mr. Swansborough's first violin pupil. We had acquired a piano and Mr. Swansborough by now. James Shorland disappeared at Marseilles on a journey home from Ceylon and was never seen again.

In the summer of 1914, we went to stay with the Lavertons at Bratton, near Westbury in Wiltshire. R.P.F. had learned to drive a car and was able to practise on the Laverton's Ford. We were there when war was declared. We drove into Westbury to go home, only to be told that all trains were reserved for troops. So the Lavertons had to take us back for the week-end. We got away on Monday and took all day to get home, being shunted into sidings and being left there

while more important trains went by, with tropps, stores and ammunition.

That Xmas we acted scenes from Henry 1V Part i.

Casualty lists were now appearing and were long. Little
~~Boevy~~
Crawley-Bowey lost his father on the first Xmas eve of the war.

In 1915 we took their house (Avenue House, but we continued to call ourselves 'The School') and we rented a fair sized field for games. Alterations and additions were made during the summer and in September we moved in with about sixteen boys, mostly from a distance. We had very few local boys at first.

Now we had a household, a cook, and two maids. Few cars were to be seen and our roads were not yet tarred, but were dusty in summer and muddy in winter; no rubber boots! We had to have a boot boy. Our only connection with Chichester was a horse bus, driven by Mr. Harvis (who would drive you right up to your door if it were raining) and whose wife played the piano for our dancing class. Sir and I pedalled about on our bicycles.

Times began to be difficult, food was scarce and rationing not very satisfactory. Graylingwell was a military hospital, so were the barracks and the temporary buildings around the Royal West Sussex. The hospital population drained the neighbourhood of milk, butter and eggs. There was little sugar and no sweets. The empty sweet shops sold a few cigarettes; meat was poor and shorn of fat.

There were no street lights and windows had to be carefully blacked out. Spy stories were rife and many harmless people were persecuted. We ourselves were confronted by a large man from Scotland Yard, who took some convincing that certain plans, which had come into

his hands, were only imaginary ordnance maps concocted by small boys.

In the summer of 1916 R.P.F. joined the Queen's Westminster Rifles and went off to camp at Hazely Down near Winchester.

My sister Miss Allen (later Mrs. Miles) came to help. A retired parson Mr. Peckham undertook the Latin and Greek. We now had about twenty-five boys. A private soldier named Waters, recovering from trench feet at the barracks, took games and some walks, looked after the field, chopped wood and took the maids to the pictures. Sergeant Luck took drill and boxing on the lawn (when wet, in Major Weldon's coach house). So we carried on. 'A' maths were perhaps my chief worry, but we managed to pass our common entrances. During this autumn R.P.F. was doing a musketry course at Purfleet which seemed a bad place for the purpose. His letters say, "went to the range as usual, but the mist was so thick we could not do any firing."

In December he was still in the ranks in horrible billets in Redhill - a row of condemned houses, damp and cold. He writes, "I have been detailed as mess orderly today, rather a job on Saturday when it entails being House orderly as well, a combination of kitchen-maid and house-maid. I had to clean up our mess room after dinner, draw coal for the house, and light the kitchen fire." "I get a fatigue every day now - 'rations' yesterday morning - ie. unloading a cart of bread and meat for the cook house."

All this seemed very unsuitable employment for a middle-aged schoolmaster! But Canon Daniel, vicar of Redhill, was very kind to us. R.P.F. had a few days leave at Xmas and we stayed in great comfort with him and his daughter and every evening a number of soldiers would drop in unasked and make themselves at home, and experience a few hours

of warmth and comfort. January was exceptionally cold with skating and tobogganing. Shippham's workmen made us two toboggans and we taught the whole school to skate on the flooded Fordwater fields.

R.P.F. was transferred to an Officers Cadet Battalion at Rhyll and only once had a short leave from there, which we spent in London.

During this term we played our first cricket match and the boys did credit to the coaching of Private Waters. We played Aldwick Place and lost by two wickets. Mr. Frederick of Aldwick Place was a very good friend, to whom I could turn for advice. He would bring his team down to our level, and after a match would collect our boys and give them a helpful little talk.

It was a wonderful summer. In the holidays I let the house (including the matron and Bumble the spaniel) and knowing that R.P.F., now a 2nd Lieutenant, would be in the West Country, took rooms at Weston-super Mare. Then I heard he would be on Salisbury Plain so I booked a place as paying guest in a rectory and that was cancelled. Finally I planted myself in the Thackeray Hotel in London till the W.D. made up its mind. They sent him to Chatham. I took a room over the forge at Bearsted in Kent, where the blacksmith's good lady fed me on out-sized carrots, which had won prizes at the flower-show. R.P.F. had a few days embarkation leave which we spent wandering round the hop-fields and there we said goodbye.

He took out a draft of Third Royal West Kents. After an uneventful crossing they went overland to Tarahto, thence via various Greek Islands. He was especially thrilled at passing the Greek Islands, and sent me the following verses:

Among the Ionian Isles

Faery Seas Forlorn

I never dreamed that I should be
Sailing this fabled azure sea,
Where in the starry breathless night
Strange dreams and fair grow close and bright.
From morning mists that veil the skies
Grey-eyed Athene may arise,-
Unearthly wisdom in her eyes.
Or Aphrodite's self may float,
Shell-pink on sapphire by our boat.
Each sound of music brings a thrill,-
Is Phoibos playing from the hill?
Here every craft that holds a boy
May bear Odysseus home from Troy:
Such forms as flit along the shore
Are unfamiliar now no more,
How could I help but know them all?-
Fair Naussica's maidens tall
Who by the creek's mouth toss the ball.
Here every isle that stars the sea
Calypso's magic home may be:
Have those gaunt mountains by the shore
Heard blinded Polyphemus roar?
Perhaps the tuneful Sireus lay
By yonder golden shellstrewn bay:
Here Circe mixed her magic wine,
Turning the heroes into swine.

Each sight, each sound brings back to me
The folk of Homer's faery,
But evermore my dreams must roam
To my Penelope at home.

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To Alexandria and on to Palestine where R.P.F. joined the 2/4 Hampshire Regiment and made the long march, with a good deal of fighting with the Turks, to Jerusalem.

He writes, "A horrible afternoon. I have been trying to sleep in my dug-out, but with the sun, the flies, the ants and the dust it is hopeless. I have laid a blanket over the sunny end and it is better.

We were out all last night, digging fire and communication trenches and this morning from seven to ten-thirty filling and laying sandbags in a beastly nullah, full sun and no air; lunch, bully, sardines and tea.

I returned to my dug-out, shut out all the sun I could and proceeded to a solemn ablution of my feet. As I have not had my boots off since Tuesday morning, it was rather a treat, though I had to sacrifice my last drop of muddy water. Meanwhile, a stupid gun is pooping stuff overhead, but not too close.

It is a dirty life, but it can't last forever and I can stand it as well as most.."

Again, "My days are spent in dodging the sun; fighting the flies; inspecting meals; mounting guard. My nights in playing boy-scout in

No Man's Land.

One eats when there is food to be had, sleeps when conditions allow it.

I washed yesterday - the Padre, very generously, gave me half a bucket of water.

Tell cook I am looking forward to a change of diet - something that has no sand in it and has never been inside a tin."

An undated letter about this time says, "As a concession I am to have a mount, and I have not ridden for seven years,"

In Sight of Jerusalem

This letter of December 1st. is written from the 45th Stationary Hospital, El Arish.

"I am likely to be here for a day or two, so may as well fill up the hiatus in my letters. I wrote my last about November 15th when I was at Wadi Surar, the junction of the Turk railway to Jaffa, Jerusalem and Gaza; up to that point our share in the campaign had been hard work but plain sailing. Heavy shelling once, less heavy several times and we had taken a village under enfilade from rifles and machine guns.

After leaving the junction our troubles began and we had ten days of misery. On the 19th we marched a long way north, coming to a halt at Latroon, where my Company had to take a hill on the right.

Johnny bolted and we had no fighting; but the deuce of a climb. That afternoon we got into the mountains, up a rotten pass, fighting on the hills all round. Night caught us in the pass in heavy rain and no cover.

Next day we moved up the pass. I had a good word from the Brigadier for a hurried bit of road-mending where the Turks had blown it up. The night found us at Kuryet-el-Enab in drenching torrents of rain (and I had an attack of gastritis.)

So far we were a victorious army, chasing a flying enemy and the towers of Jerusalem were to be seen; but Johnny was no fool. Our guns could not be brought up yet and he had a splendid position on inaccessible hills.

The morning of the 21st. he caught us in bivouac, and I had a

terrible ten minutes. My company was in the thick of it and I saw more horrors than I had dreamed of. Why I was not hit beats me. We got out of El Enab very shaken and moved slowly across the mountains making to leave Jerusalem on our right and pass to the north of it. I was sent out with the company to take and hold Beit Surik, a small village on a hill about six miles from Jerusalem. Again my luck held and the Turks cleared out without fighting. It was a bitter night and the third without sleep.

Meanwhile the rest of the regiment moved on to Nebi-Samuril and had an awful time there. We came up to support them on the afternoon of the 22nd., but had to spend a night on the way and were heavily shelled.

On the 23rd. we tried again and got through, to find that the regiment had been relieved and were coming back. Going up to them we had a bad time, and I had a narrow escape. A shell burst right on me, knocked me out and covered me with shrapnel scratches. Five of my men more or less badly wounded by the same shell, had to be left behind. I came in covered with blood, but got an hours sleep in a cave after the M.O. had tied me up."

(I had a telegram from the War Office. "R.P.F. slightly wounded remaining on duty" followed by another saying he had been sent to hospital.)

"We left that awful spot at 3 a.m. and marched till 10.00, finally climbing up to a village, Beit Dukka, so steep that all the stores had to be man-handled up to it.

Without rest I was sent off to picket the next hill one thousand feet down and two thousand feet up, and stayed there all night without

a blanket between us, short of rations and no tobacco.

The next day we heard the welcome news that our division was going out of the line to rest. We had a terrible time getting our stuff away from Dukka, and a nine mile night-march over the hills to near El Enab again, where we spent a better night (I had had four without sleep and had not washed or shaved for a week, caked in blood and dirt.)

On the 26th we marched no less than seventeen miles, a tremendous task in that country, with the men worn out at the start. I was really bad at the end, and had not the C.O. given me a ride on his horse in the afternoon, I must have fallen out. We dragged into the junction late that night and on the 27th moved five miles, went to Akir (a Jewish settlement) where we were to remain.

I was just settling down and enjoying the first bread (rye) which I had seen for a month, when the M.O. decided to send me down the line for treatment.

I left the regiment on Wednesday, came in a bumping sanitary cart across country to Wadi Suras, got into a motor ambulance to Tulis on the Gaza, and there I spent the night in a tent with three other officers; on Thursday to Gaza where we spent the day at the casualty clearing station and on by hospital train to this place. I have not seen it by daylight, but have an impression of palms, white sand and endless rows of large tents. I have been in bed ever since, very comfortable and having a lovely rest - real English nurses and sisters! I had two letters from you on Wednesday dated October 21st. and 24th.

I arrived here on Monday - a topping place: not being a military hospital, there is no fussing or red-tape and one is left alone. Fine rooms, splendid wards; I am in 'N' with seven other officers. The ward opens on to a large balcony, where we live and eat, looking down on a paved court and the trees of the zoo at one end. I am classed as enteritis and am quite alright; but my temperature does not please them.

We are allowed out after 2 p.m. to go into Cairo, but I have not been able to do this yet. My ankle still has to be dressed twice daily and my other alleged wounds, really so many scratches, do not even require to be dressed now. Cairo is at its best now and the nights are cool and fresh.

How I shall ever collect all my kit puzzles me. It is in various dumps all over Palestine. My valise had a lump of shrapnel through it, cut through blankets and ground sheet, and tore a hole in my tunic. I have had no letters from you since October, and am so anxious for news. Hospital life has many compensations but it does not afford materials for writing letters

So we will leave R.P.F. for the present and return to the Dame school.

We had four new boys for the Xmas term:

William Rowett from Rangoon and a difficulty we had in settling matters, owing to the sinking of mail by submarines, but he turned up and is now Chaplain to the Scilly Isles. (*Walter of Penzance*)

Desmond Mander - now a Colonel.

Rodney Patey whose grandson's wedding I have seen in the papers,

Tony Lupton.

We played Aldwick Place and lost 2 - 1 (outgoal being scored by Alec Home).

We acted scenes from 'Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass' to an audience of wounded soldiers from Graylingwell. They were not allowed out alone so I had to fetch them. They formed fours and marched along and I pedalled away alongside!

Easter Term was uneventful. The new boys were two of the 3 Clovers (from Portsmouth).

Special prizes for essays and maps, given by R.P.F., were won by:-

Essays	T. Symonds (now vicar of Edenrose, Derby)
	W. Rowett
Maps..	C. Wheat (now an Archdeacon in S. Africa)
	E. Tynedale-Biscoe

They were presented by Lady Patey.

The Summer Term produced only one new boy (but quite a handful!) John Rickarda Galwey, an Irishman whose brother was to follow him and whose parents became our great friends. He now, after a most eventful life, works in Liverpool, finding employment for men leaving the services, and writes most amusing letters.

Christopher Wheat was now head-boy, and was to be head-boy of St. Edwards, Oxford in the future.

We played two matches with Aldwick Place. The first we lost by fifteen runs, the second we won by an innings and nine runs (I think Mr. Frederick must have weakened his team very much in our favour.)

Back to Egypt

Letters and dates are a little confused; but on December 13th R.P.F. had moved to the Polygon Convalesant Camp - which he liked very much. He writes cheerful letters of exp~~editions~~itions into Cairo, trips up the Nile. Much kindness from Lady Allenby and Mrs. (or is it Lady?) Stillwell. He takes the Stillwell children to the zoo. On December 3rd he walks to Heliopolis, but on December 23rd his hand swells up and a minute piece of shell is extracted; but he expects to rejoin the battalion after Xmas.

On January 20th he drives out with the padre to the tombs of the Khalifs, and in the same letter complains that he still has no letters from me.

Then further trouble with his ankle. They decide to operate and he writes on January 30th that the stitches were taken out of his ankle; and on February 4th that he was out on crutches and had received a letter from me written for his birthday on November 17th! This was followed by a deluge of letters; he had over forty from me in one day - and has never since asked me for letters.

He plays bridge and chess; goes for a long drive; attends a concert; meets Lady Wingate.

He joins the Turf Club "to give me a refuge in Cairo, a place to sit, read and be quiet in." He has a boot on for the first time.

Tea at Shepherds with Mrs. Stillwell.

"I am almost at the end of my hospital life and hope to get clear of it this week. I am having massage."

"I hope to be out next Wednesday and I also hope to see the Duke of Connaught, who is to visit us on Tuesday. I am to go straight up

to the line, and am really looking forward to getting back again.

At last I get a railway warrant and a 'movement order' for tomorrow morning, which will take me up to Kantara where I report to my divisional base and remain at their disposal.

So tomorrow I am off again!

No.2 Infantry Brigade Depot, Kantara. "A Busy morning packing; played billiards with Schofield; shared a compartment with a transport officer; dined and dozed on the train; found a lorry going to Details; put my valise on and sat on it in a pack of men and officers, bumping through the dark.

I am sharing a tent with one Semple of the Irish Rifles. To my surprise and delight much of my missing kit has turned up, including my fieldglasses, my revolver and a clean towel. I lost no time in getting into thinner clothes. Then Semple and I went to Ordnance Stores and I bought a canvas bucket and some odds and ends. Back to the tent and the orderly sergeant brought up my batman, Dingle, who turns out to be a useful fellow. I shall go for a walk in the desert as soon as it gets cool. I must exercise my lame foot as much as possible.

Things have taken another turn for me in a queer way. It will amuse you; but it is rather annoying for me and just a little humiliating. Semple was not well and as he was to go up to the line that evening I advised him to go to the M.O. He went off after breakfast and did not return. I was not surprised when I got a chit from the Adjutant telling me "I was confined to my tent until further notice."

I was then ordered to 'Reception Station' where a Sgt. R.A.M.C.

took down particulars and wrote me an admission form to the 24th Stationary Hospital as a 'Measles Contact'!

I plodded back to my tent, packed and was off again to the 24th. A very decent Capt. R.A.M.C. received me. I was found a tent with a new bed. I slept comfortably and had breakfast in bed. There is not the slightest prospect of my developing measles, but here I am to stay for sixteen days! It is perhaps just as well. My ankle is not too good. The M.O. says it must have a dressing on it and I am not to walk. I am to have a bigger tent to-day with electric light, but I cannot go out of camp and shall be bored to death.

"I hear my bones within me say

'Another night, another day'".

My isolation time is up. Notified to the 3rd echelon (G.H.2.); found an empty tent; met Semple again so we joined forces, got leave and spent the day in Port Said. The next day I was on duty and the next I spent at Ismalia.

I am once more in that pleasant state of uncertainty. I have been told to "hold myself in readiness to move at short notice" so I have been sorting and packing all day.

I find in the Army lists that I have a double - same name, rank and initials. (This was to cause some confusion later. I was congratulated on his promotion and consoled with when he was finally "missing believed killed, N.F.).

Rumours fly. It is possible I may have news for you shortly. Much depends on what happens in France.

After a whole month in Kantara I have got a move on - put in charge of a draft going up to the division, only twenty men including

a Company Sgt. Major. We paraded 5 p.m., marched to the station, found a train full of details. A sleeping coach for officers - no dinner but some bread and butter and three hard-boiled eggs which had to do as breakfast as well. Interesting coming by train over the same country which we had walked over in the autumn.

We got to the rail-head (Acts 1X 32) and marched off leaving our valises with a guard - a mile of very hot road and we reached this spot, a rest camp, found the Y.M.C.A., drank quantities of lime and soda. We are in peace - guns to the N.E. of us. The camp is a bare hill surrounded by olive gardens and vineyards. The green is refreshing after the sands of Kantara. I slept well, though the ground was hard after months of beds.

Left the rest camp on the 13th with a mixed draft of reinforcements, no guide, vague directions, reached a clump where I spent the night. Another long hot march through the mountains to the Brigade filling point. Chester and I kept each other company till we reached the Wadi. Then began our woes. I got a mule for my kit and a guide and we tackled the worst and steepest mountain path I had ever seen. An hour of it brought us to the battalion dripping with sweat and done to the world; but we were made welcome.

In the afternoon, I went to a hill post held by half the Company under Bryant. I had just got my kit up over the most awful collection of rocks and boulders and was settling down for the night when we got orders to shift. I had my equipment and British Warm, but had to leave the rest of my kit. We stumbled over rocks and stones till 10.30 when we bivvied in the open for the night. My ankle held out

nobly; but whether it was the heat or the climbing, I lay down ... and was violently sick! I shall either get fit very quickly or collapse altogether. This is a rotten country for war.

We came up at dusk yesterday and fell over rocks in the usual way.

"I have shed sweat enough, left flesh and blood

On many a flinty furlong of this land."

I have half a company and find six posts by night and two by day, with Cave at Company headquarters and Bryant on my left. With Aitchison we make a very harmonious mess. Came in at 4 a.m., had some sleep and a very good breakfast. There is a spring of good water near; but for occasional gunfire, would never dream that this is the front line, with Johnny just over the way in force.

Two letters from you - now on a not very steep boulder-strewn slope, thick with flowers. Higher up cultivated patches and a deserted village. Can only move about at night, spend the day in cover of the rocks.

We came out of the line just before daybreak, very hot. Ankle giving trouble after two days and nights in boots. Went to aid post. M.O. put on hot fomentations and took me off duty. The rock scrambling has been too much for it, shall undress (first time for a week)! Good sleep, ankle better to rest it today and tonight."

Some hiatus in the letters here. I next hear from him on short leave in Cairo. He shares a room with "Hart of my Company" at the Continental. Finds the heat very trying.

"Went round the bazaars to get a few little souvenirs for you. Was asked to dine with Capt. Arkmore of B. Company, Capt. Kirby, the

C.O. and Mrs. Stilwell. Mrs. Stilwell had a box for us at the Kursaal afterwards and we saw, of all things, "Charley's Aunt"! Still it was quite good fun."

Then a long description of Cairo, its public gardens, etc.

"Mrs. Stilwell has asked me to lunch tomorrow and we leave at 6.15 for Kantara. Was distressed to hear of the death in action of my old friend Sydney Baker. That leaves only two of our old Oxford Inseparables.

Things look very black just now. I hope it is the darkest hour before the dawn.

Kantara.

When I got back to camp I found two letters from you. I had a good time in Cairo, spent all my money and then some, consumed quantities of assorted liquor and said goodbye to many friends.

This I am pretty sure is my last letter to you from Egypt. It is said that we leave here tomorrow and I suppose embark the next day. I played cricket here last Saturday, on a strip of matting surrounded by desert. I captained our XI against the Somerset officers who beat us after a good game. Now, if you please, I am asked to play rugger this afternoon. I shall probably spend the night in the 24th hospital!

Here ends my campaigning in the East, and I am no longer of the E.E.F.

It is rather rotten pulling us out of this to a more strenuous zone of war, but there may be a chance of leave, and we shall have letters in as many days as it now takes weeks. So this is my last letter from Egypt and Palestine.

My next letter is from "H.M. Transport -----" off ----- and is a long diary of the voyage to Marseilles, playing bridge and chess and still hoping for leave. One of the convoy was sunk, but the rest arrived at Marseilles on the 30th but there was no leave. They went straight into the line.

In his letters from "somewhere in France" he says, "In spite of disappointment I believe I shall see you before long."

Then for a long time I have only field postcards.

At school the summer holidays came. I had one boy left on my hands, (Alec Home) (parents in India). I took him with me to Parkstone (Bournemouth) to stay with my old governess "Kip" who said she would have him provided he was not left on her hands (which is just what happened).

We went on a picnic to Corfe Castle Home and I bicycled and arrived home before the others to find a telegram. R.P.F. on leave! There was a train in half an hour. I packed a case (Home making an excellent lady's maid). I caught the train and left him on Kip's hands,

I found R.P.F. at the Thackeray Hotel. We were together again at last.

It was hot in London and we planned to go to Kew the next day and spend the whole day on the river, but he was very poorly and that night he had a high temperature and was delirious all night. I sent for the hotel doctor and found he was the father-in-law of a friend of ours and knew Chichester well. In a few days he said I could take R.P.F. home and he would try to get his leave extended. After coming up to town again to attend a medical board, he did get an extra week.

And the events leading up to this "leave".

"We disembarked, had a long march to the rest camp, band playing and had quite a reception - it is a long time since we have been so much admired! I share a bell tent with Bryant and Byerley, lunched with the C.O. then conducted him about the town as he knows no French. It will amuse you to think of me as interpreter in France.

Entrained about 10 p.m. Here we are in a French village some miles behind the line. I am in a nice old farm house and shall have a real bed for two nights."

He is in the trenches, housed in Company H.2. a deep dug-out. "Like living in a cellar, have a beast of a cold and sore throat, have not had my clothes off since Monday; shall be glad to get back to camp and have a wash."

"Thanks for biscuits and soap, both in the nick of time. My prospects of leave, which were fairly bright, have almost disappeared - "I touch a fairy thing that fades and fades"! No need to worry about me. I am more likely to die of worry. I know I am not fit to command a company under present conditions, but I want to try all the same if Cave is not fit to go with us."

"Leading a ghastly life, having shifted positions two nights running, with another move tonight. Beastly cold after Palestine, and the dug-outs are damp. Some have wire beds like bunks and we fight for these luxuries.

I do not think many subalterns have had such a first experience of France as I have. To be left suddenly in command of a Company in a difficult part of the line and to be left there four days beyond the specified time; undergo severe bombardment and finish with a brigade relief and a three-hour march under shell and gas. I got

my platoons off in good style, but stayed behind to load up the limbers which were late. I did not get off till 2 a.m. with eleven kilos to go on an unknown road, under fire most of the way, and in a dense white mist. We pulled into the next camp at about 4.30. I feel ten years older. This is a pretty place among woods and with the sun shining and the band playing, it is hard to realize that twenty-four hours ago I was in fear of my life and enormous anxiety about my men."

His leave is again postponed but he finds life easier now he has a charger "Nigger" and his ankle no longer bothers him.

"Things have happened and I am a long way from where I was when I last wrote. On Sunday night I dined at Brigade H.Q. - one second lieutenant in the thick of the staff.

I swelled with pride this morning when both the C.O. and the Adjutant addressed me as "Captain Fenn", but so far I have not been allowed acting rank.

I am at last Acting Capt. with pay allowances since July 21st. I shall not disguise the fact that I have been and am in a bad place when anything may happen to me."

(Then only field cards.)

"We are out of it now - or on our way out ... and I am one of the lucky ones. I do not expect to ever see such a time as we have had since the 20th ... even if the war lasts for ever.

We have earned high praise from higher command, but we have paid a dreadful price for success. I hope to come home a Captain and there may be a little decoration. At present we are resting in reserve.

If I get home I must spend some time in town. I shall need practically a new outfit.

Was sent for by the C.O. with Capt. Cottam and our Co. Sgt. Majors and taken to Brigade H.Q. and paraded in line and the Corps Commander and Divisional General and a galaxy of Red-Hats walked down the line, and shook our hands, made speeches, etc., and next day there was a real ceremonial "March past" the French Army Commander who took the salute. Imagine me on my old black "Nigger" at the head of the leading company!

We are billeted in a French village. I have a nice room and a good bed, but I think we shall leave tomorrow.

The only thing we can buy that is cheap and good is champagne, but there is a lot to do, and my two subalterns, who were perfect heroes in action, are far too busy with the champagne to do any work."

(Then a gap in letters - a few "whizz-bangs" (field service post-cards) then the leave referred to.

But the leave came to an end. We said goodbye in London and he crossed from Folkstone to Boulogne and had to march a party up to the rest camp.

"We entrained on Friday and had twelve hours in the train, getting out at midnight at an unknown station and proceeding by an unknown road with about forty details.

However, we got to a village at about 3 a.m. and I put my crowd into an empty house and slept with them on a hard and dirty floor. Next morning I reported to divisional wing, who told me to go up to the battalion if I could find them. I picked up two of our subs. whom

I knew and two newly appointed and the five of us jumped lorries all the afternoon and wandered about for hours - as far up as the support line, and out of which we cleared quickly, especially me who had no gas mask and no tin hat. Eventually we found the transport and the 2. M. gave us a bivvey. I was tired and lame.

The Battalion had been in the line for some time and had lost many men. Holbrook was hit as soon as he came back, but not badly (Holbrook's boy, Dennis, came to us eventually, was our star bowler, and was killed in the 2nd world war). I may be transferred to C. Company as their Co. Commander was killed a few days ago.

This part of the country is open rolling land, no hills or woods, easy to move over, but very little cover.

I found battalion H.Q. alright. The C.O. was very kind and congratulated me on being awarded the M.C. So now you may put M.C. after my name and address me as Captain as I am posted to C. Co. in command, though I hate having to leave A. Co. Holbrook got the M.C. as well. My subalterns are Laine (a Guernsey man), Isaacs (of Hampshire N.C.O.), Young (newly joined) and his precious Lordship Viscount Uffington (now away on a course). I anticipate some trouble with that young man when he comes back. (He was to lose a leg at Havrincourt).

We had to move out after lunch and are now occupying a trench waiting for orders. I am sitting in a cubby hole, dug out of the trench and roofed with corrugated iron.

Yet another change for me and a big one. I came up to H.Q. this morning and the C.O. took me aside and told me he wished me to take on the Adjutant's job. It is the hardest work in the battalion and

I know absolutely nothing about it. I shall have more than ever "to shun delights, and live laborious days," whilst I learn the work. It is a great compliment, the greatest I have had since I enlisted. All the more so as I know it comes from the Brigadier. So now address your letters Capt not A/Capt.

I begin by taking a Battalion Parade tomorrow. I am horribly nervous.

(Later). The Brigade Parade was not so bad, although my (new) horse disgraced me by playing up when the band started, and turning his back on the Brigadier.

I am looking forward to a letter from my wife, who should be quite proud of her old hubby, being Captain and Adjutant and M.C., but he would give it all up for another week at home.

We had a long march yesterday, much of it in the dark and the rain, but I rode most of the way and am none the worse. There is a horrible great gun just behind me and at every discharge my door flies open and the plaster comes off the walls. Weather showery but not too bad,; main roads good enough, but tracks in this forest very bad.

I am torn, bedraggled and dirty. I must have some more clothes. I have indented for a pair of regulation breeches at ordnance, but these are only for decency. I shall have to get some from London for parades. Please take my old tunic to a tailor to put on braid and stars as for Captain. M.C. ribbon above left pocket, a set of Hampshire buttons from Flight of Winchester. Two blue chevrons on right sleeve and wound strips on left and have it sent out as soon as possible.

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I went off to Doullens yesterday and spent most of the day there. I managed to get a few things I wanted, including a woolly jersey and scarf.

There is a hustle toward and I expect my next letter will be a whizz-bang. I have dealt with promotions clean through the battalion today with lists of honours and awards, details of ammunition, bombs, gas and a hundred other things, till my head spins and I want my tea! Very comfortable in this tent with Major Tidmarsh.

About the last minute I can snatch for private correspondence for some time. We had a move yesterday evening. The weather is fine but turning cold especially at nights. Gloves of any kind would be acceptable. Have been fitted out with new office paraphenalia, including a clerk who helps me as much as he can.

We have a Yankee M.O. at present, quite a good chap, very American and rather entertaining.

Well, we are on the edge of big things, so big I hope we shall soon be beyond the need of so much secrecy. It may be quite a long time before I can write again.

This has been the devil of a month for us. When I rejoined on September 1st. we were still in the line. We came out a day or two later. Then came the big show. You probably read all about it in the papers.

Sept. 12th Havrincourt. At the end of a hard and glorious day Hampshire men had wrested Havrincourt from a strong enemy. Message from Corps. Commander "Well done Hants."

Sept. 27th Marcoing. (offically B, of Cambrai) was to have been

a joint affair with eh fifth Duke of Wellingtons but the Duke of Wellingtons were unable to reach the assembly point, they joined in later. At Marcoing the Battalion captured four field guns, forty-six machine guns, ten trench mortars and over one hundred prisoners.

I see the "Times" has us "sheltering in the commodious dug-outs of the Hindinburg line" - if the correspondent had to do as we are doing, there would be less of the "commodious". My orderly room is in a deep shaft, damp and dirty with no light, and bitter cold. In the H.Q. dug-out we have a double row of bunks - mine an upper one about a foot wide, with a slope downwards and outwards and about six inches from the roof! In the last show, when we took the canal crossings we slept in some awful places and came out just crawling.

I lost two good friends last month, poor Bryant at Havrincourt and Cottam at Marcoing. The incessant moves of the battalion entail a lot of work, but except for odd moments, I was never in great danger. The back blast of a large H.E. on our dug-out at Marcoing blew me through the door-way into the arms of the General!

I hope the tunic will come when we get out of the lines. I am now glad of a few warm things. Gloves are what I chiefly need.

We did well in both these last shows; received many congratulations and are living up to our reputation. I expect the C.O. will get a bar to his D.S.O. for it.

We have made five moves in a week, sometimes good, sometimes evil billets; but no enemy yet. Today we have actually been doing a sham fight within sound of the guns.

To my great distress Major Tidmarch had to go to hospital with

malaria - a heavier burden of responsibility on me.

The wildest rumours are going about, so wild they have to be officially contradicted - still it does make one think and hope. This is a pleasant village in quite decent condition. A few of the inhabitants came back today, poor things! The boche have been here for years and removed all valuables, but he kept the kitchen garden going and we are reaping the advantage. My mare, Polly, is having a thin time. I ride more than any other officer and am rather a top weight for her. A lovely day, sunny weather and not cold. The roads have dried up and the luck of the weather is with us.

We are still moving from village to village in "recaptured areas" packing up and unpacking, billet after billet. Yesterday I spent directing a show practice on the low hills beyond us.

This is the 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ years anniversary of our wedding. Let's hope the half-year will see the war over and done with. We hear extravagant rumours, but the sound of guns gives the lie to them.

We came on a few miles yesterday and took over new billets. This is the best billet we have had yet, a comfortable town house standing back from the road. I have not been so comfortable since I left home.

I had a fine bath in an old bicycle shed and a change of clothes. The news is good, especially the taking of Ostend and Lille, but the old boche has a kick or two left in him. I have lost my hair brushes. Please send me some more, in a case as they get so dirty.

You must have been amused at Col. Brook's fairy tales about me. Don't worry about 'exposure'. Anything like that at Marfaux was due to my having, early in the action, realised that going back would be more dangerous than going forward.

We are just through yet another show, and a very successful one. The crossing of the river Selle in torrents of rain and no moon. All the Battalion's objectives were obtained by 7.15 a.m.

Then we spent Sunday and most of yesterday in a dirty French village. We were received enthusiastically by the poor civilians and are housed in a sumtuous town house replete with every comfort. It belonged to a Notaire Publique and I have his office as my orderly room.

I am not due for leave under present arrangements till the end of January, five months since my last day in England.

Nothing to write about but I cannot resist the attraction of writing in ink. The battalion has invested in a smart despatch case for my benefit, stocked with stationery and pens.

We are now 'at rest' behind the lines in a French village. There are no French inhabitants in it, but the whole of our brigade is here, not sorry to get away from the shelling. It was a good long march back and I was glad of my mare, but she is nervous and troublesome when too close to guns. The C.O. was very nice to me this morning and thanked me for all I had done. The ex-Adjutant came back today to find himself superseded (rather a delicate position for me).

Still licking our wounds, so to speak, and preparing for another go at the old Boche. Everyone in 'Upper Circles' seems to be going on leave just now - the Brigadier etc. Things are going on steadily well, but you must not be too sanguine of an early finish.

We got here this morning after quite a decent march. The town is the one we took on October 20th (Solesme I think). We were the

first troops to enter it, but now it is packed and a good many civilians have returned. Our Headquarters billet is quite a nice house, but as all the windows are broken, it is cold and draughty, and the heavy traffic on the pave is deafening. I was out yesterday looking for a training area and slept in my valise on the floor of the mess.

THE END IN SIGHT

"We are more or less 'at rest'! The weather has been beastly and I have hardly been dry for a week; but we are all in high spirits, shoving the old boche out of France as fast as our overworked transport can keep up with us. Twice in action this week, and each time came out with fresh honours."

(Le Duesnoy - a group of villages driving the enemy to La Longueville. It had now rained continuously for 24 hours and the companies passed the night in great discomfort, but this encounter was the last.)

"Now we hear rumours and rumours, and have wild hopes which I dare not put on paper."

Later, "Everyone much excited over the passage of Boche delegates through the lines, late last night, but the shelling still goes on.

Is this the last letter I shall write to you before peace is declared? The news of the Kaiser's abdication came through this morning and everyone seems to think the war is just about over.

We came here (Maubeuge) this morning, crossing the Sambre on a pontoon.

We have been in every show on this front since we came back

from the Marne in August and continuously in the fore-front since the drive began in September. Our own show on the Marne proves to have been the real turning point - so all the good lads we left there did not fall for nothing. This is not a bad part of France, well-wooded and hilly. The town itself (Maubeuge), a frontier fortress and manufacturing town, is ugly.

NOVEMBER 11th ARMISTICE

We had Brigade Order about 8.30 this morning, saying hostilities would cease at 11 am. We still held the line. The C.O. and I rode round the out-posts during the morning, but we left steel helmets and gas-masks behind.

So it is over and the question arises. How soon before we get home? This afternoon we are all (officers) going to be addressed by the G.O.C. Division.

No relaxation of censorship yet. We expect to go on a rather long trek, starting on my birthday (Nov. 17th). We shall all have to smarten up now. I shall want clothes. Please send my stiff service cap, ties, hadkys, collars and gloves. I am writing to a London tailor for some breeches etc.

The Armistice has brought an increase of work to the Orderley Room. I get out for a short ride, either in the morning or after lunch.

I was frantically busy yesterday preparing to move this morning; but at about 10.30 all was postponed. So today with all ready I am free. I went out with the Major in the morning and had a look at the old part of the town - old gates and moat are fine.

Some of the country on the march should be interesting. The
Sambre Valley to Nanur, the approach to the Rhine etc. If you can,
send me my camera and some films. I don't think peace time soldiering
will suit me. I have very little knowledge of drill, and none of
ceremonial. I am all right in the line, but no use in barracks."

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And here I think whilst R.P.F. marches on to Germany, we will
return to the school and happenings there.

Michaelmas Term 1918

We now embarked on the two most difficult, worrying and harassing terms in the history of the school.

Mr. Branfoot was anxious for us to take over Eastfield House soon, and our lawyer had power of attorney to clinch matters; but much in the conditions of the take-over was unsatisfactory and I sorely needed R.P.F. for discussions and advice. I could only postpone decisions and find excuses for prolonging matters.

We opened term with fear of epidemics. There was a vicious type of influenza about, and there was meningitis at the Barracks. We arranged no matches. We kept ourselves to ourselves and did not even go to church; but we were not to escape.

The cook and the maids were the first 'flu victims and this made life difficult. Then the boys followed rapidly. Temperatures were very high and our anxiety was great. There were deaths all round us and we had so little suitable food, with a shortage of milk, butter and eggs. We depended largely on Horlicks. With difficulty Dr. Rutherford (and how much we owed to his care) procured us a nurse; but alas, she went down with it at once and only meant one more to nurse. My sister went down, leaving only myself and the two youngest children (Clover 3 and my small neice each aged six) out of bed. In despair I wired to the mother of a new boy, Mrs. Collingridge. She came and was our salvation. She nursed us all - for I and the two small children followed the rest.

On November 11th. I sat up in bed and heard the cheering at the Barracks, but really only wanted a really hot water-bottle. Almost

miraculously we all recovered; but to what confusion. No cleaning had been done for weeks and the muddle was indescribable.

We decided to break up, but so few boys had homes. As many as had were despatched to them - by rail (cars were as yet by no means general). The maids went home. My sister and I took ten boys to a boarding house in the Steyne at Bognor and put in two women to clean the house, Food was more plentiful in Bognor, and the good lady of the house looked after us well. In a fortnight we had recovered and returned to finish the term.

A play was out of the question; but we had a breaking-up party, a fancy-dress dance with all the boys' sisters and as many little girls as we could find.

But fate had not done with us. The next term was even worse. First of all Halsted was ill and was operated on (in the house, one did not go to hospital for trifles in those days) for a middle-ear infection.

Then Murray had double pneumonia. He was desperately ill. We had two nurses and his mother in the house, and difficulties over everything - a fight to get extra milk, brandy, oxygen, even fuel to heat his room. Eventually he was removed to a nursing home and operated on. (This was of course before the days of M & B, and anti-biotics.) He survived and is a great big six-footer with two children.

Our cup was not yet full. At the end of the term we started chicken-pox and were left with four or five boys for the holidays.

Now it was decided that we should take over Eastfield House in spite of the rather unsatisfactory agreement. I installed an ^Apunt to look

after my chicjen-poxers and arranged to go over to see the Branfoots and decide what equipment we would take over, see the kitchens and much of the house which I had not seen -----

By post that morning came a postcard "Regret to inform you, house completely destroyed by fire in the early hours of this morning."

This indeed was the last straw! I went over; but the blackened ruins, festooned with hose-pipes, were a sorry sight. I commiserated with the Branfoots, who were terribly under-insured; but with the help of their old boys, we were able to raise a small annuity for them. Luckily our lawyer, still worried about the agreement, had signed nothing.

Then came Easter day and all was well. R.P.F. returned at very short notice and we were never to be parted again. Miss Allen left and Miss Ley became matron.

Mr. Branfoot carried on for the summer term, partly in the ruins partly in marquees, with some boys boarded out in the village, whilst we were hunting for larger quarters. When Summersdale Lodge came on the market, just what we wanted, and we could still use out existing playing fields.

There was a handy lodge which housed our cook and her husband Mr. & Mrs. Discombe, with a garage, a workshop and a room over it for a master. There was a good garden and we were able to acquire a bit more land, and build on two detached school rooms. The house had large rooms and spacious halls and landings. We moved in on September 1919 and were joined by thirteen boys from Eastfield, one of whom, Kevin Wakefield, soon became our head-boy and eventually won a scholarship to Lancing.

Our first assistant master arrived. Not a success - he stayed a term and a half.

This year we again acted the Dream - a somewhat longer version, and the following term we gave a concert.

This term, William Rowett left (he is now Chaplain of the Scilly Isles).

In the summer term Miss Sieviewright joined us and was a great help for some years. She was a friend of Miss Leys.

Also this term arrived some boys who were to leave their mark on the school and are still faithful old boys. The two Galways, whose parents became our great firends, and the Rusbridges who were to send us a second generation.

During the summer term Chichester was visited by "His Beatitude, the Metropolitan of Demotica" representing the Greek church, and two of our boys, Mathews and Wakefield, were his train-bearers in the Cathedral.

We played five matches and won just one (we were always playing larger schools in those days). In the Michaelmas term we played two matches with Aldwick Place and lost both.

We acted.

Scenes from "Strewel Peter" as a curtain raiser, followed by "The Taming of the Shrew" with the Boyce brothers as Katharine and Petruchio.

John Bishop left. He is now Rector of Singleton. Miss Ley also left to become a missionary in S. Africa; but she has since married and lives in Cambridge.

Her sister took her place for one term. Little of interest

happened this year.

We acted "Ivanhoe". Not really a great success; but on this occasion the school song was sung for the first time. Words by R.P.F. set to music by Dr. Henry Ley, our Miss Ley's brother and then precentor of music at Eton.

Four boys were confirmed at Portfield Church by the Bishop of Lewes.

Mrs. Elphrinestone came this year for a couple of terms as matron. She was a school friend of mine and brought her son Michael with her who was also to send us his son Nicholas.

This spring we decided at last (after ten years) to have our honeymoon and we had a glorious three weeks in Provence, making Avignon our headquarters. We saw Arles, Nimes, Orange ^{TARASCON} ~~Tarus-con~~, and the Pont de Garde. All in wonderful summer sunshine and returned to find Paris under snow and the Channel at its worst.

In the summer, Mr. Miles joined the staff and cricket began to look up. We managed a draw with Northcliffe.

This year we acted an adaption of the 'Rose and the Ring' having actually a Richmond Makepeace Thackeray in the cast. (He was killed alas in the 2nd. world war.)

The next year brought us our first Mason - John (who died young, killed in a tractor accident) but he was the first of eight Masons, all related, who spanned the years till 1961.

Also this year arrived our first Clovers. Three brothers from Portsmouth and three (unrelated) from Suffolk, also Richard Prior, afterwards maths master and house master at Kings Canterbury, where

many of our future boys were under him.

Other notable arrivals were the Hon. Edmund Cokayne (aged 7) and the Hon. John Cokayne (aged 2) sons of Lord Cullen, the Governor of the Bank of England. I was to have the whole family left in my care when Lord and Lady Cullen left for Chile. So I had six honorables aged eighteen to two, for the Christmas holidays! Three girls and then three boys. The eldest boy Charles was already at Eton. We managed to amuse them somehow. R.P.F. used to take them riding on the Downs.

Life was more leisurely with plenty of domestic help and I must pay a tribute of gratitude to Mrs. Discombe our cook, for nearly twenty years, and Kitty White, house-parlourmaid for nearly as long.

I was able to read aloud to the boys at tea, and many old boys have said how they remembered those books, a great variety - one for the older boys followed by one for the juniors. "Quentin Durward", "Treasure Island", "The White Company", "The Fortunes of Nigel", "The Little Duke", "Old St. Pauls", "The Alices", "Children of the New Forest", "The 39 Steps", "Snap", "Kidnapped", "The Jungle Book", "Micah Clark", and so on. In the summer tea was outside on the lawn and these were the picnics on the Downs at Stoke Clump, Kingley Vale, Goddwood, or Cocking Hill or at West Wittering where there was not so much as a beach hut to spoil the shore, just a tamarish hedge, a grassy bank and the sea.

Before the days of television lantern lectures were a feature of the Winter terms. Such subjects as the Tower of London, the childhood of animals, Mount Everest, the Bayeux Tapestry, aircraft etc. We

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also had a weekly dancing class and a percussion band and the boys frequently got up little plays on their own.

Table tennis and chess tournaments and marvellous games in the gravel pits which adjoined our playground and really made an extension of it - the graves!

This year we won six cricket matches and lost three. The redoubtable Northcliffe only beating us by twelve runs. In the Emsworth match, two Emsworth boys went for the same catch, which made them collide head-on and each cut the others head open enough to need stitches. They were brought down from the field just as I was dealing with a motor accident at our gates'. A hectic day. We had to keep them in our sick room for the week-end. We let the house again and spent the summer (without boys) in the Cotswolds at Painswick and Cocklebarrow.

The Michaelmas Term was uneventful. An outbreak of mumps scratched most of the matches and postponed the play, and the next term was interrupted by influenza and measles.

Summer Term

The cricket season was poor but the term went well with many picnics on the Downs and at West Wittering. The Ben Greet players gave an outdoor performance of "As You Like it" on the little playing field and the next day they played us at cricket and we won.

The Hon. Mrs. Sturdy gave the prizes at the sports and Michael Elphrinstone now nine years old, threw the cricket ball fifty-five yards (later he was to win this event at Marlborough). Lady Cullen of Ashbourne gave the school prizes and presented a special prize for English, won by G. V. Galway^E. Again we let the house and took a

party of boys abroad visiting Dieppe, Lisieux, Rouen (many an expedition to Bayeux) and Lessay.

Michaelmas Term

A good football team. We beat the Barracks, Summersdale, North-cliffe and Emsworth.

We acted "The Merchant of Venice". Miss Sieviewright left, having been with us since 1920. Her place was taken by Mr. Taylor (our first master to own a car).

The Easter term was uneventful except for influenza and the following summer term was spoilt by an epidemic of mumps.

In April R.P.F. and I had a glorious holiday in Florence. The Michaelmas term and a poor football season and a revival of "Alice" with Templer as Alice.

Easter term. Nothing is recorded except lecture on "Cobham's Flight" and "the Sea Road to the East".

Summer. (John Lyne (8) came this term). A better cricket season. We beat the Ben Greet Players who acted "The Tempest" and "Twelfth Night" for us.

We built a new pavilion and erected a flagstaff.

Mr. Miles left to join the B.B.C., but he and Miss Allen helped us to take a party of boys (ten) and one girl (J. Potter) to Heyst in Belgium for the holidays. Our headquarters was the Hotel Troffaes. We were quite close to Zeebrugge (not yet entirely repaired after the raid) and made an excursion to Ghent, also to Bruges and into Holland at ~~Sturjs~~. *SLUYS*

We played a wonderful cricket match (we had some gear with us) one Sunday on the sands against a team from another hotel and beat

Emsworth and the Theolog~~an~~ians.

Once more we took the boys abroad. This time to Avranches (making an expedition to Mt. St. Michael) to Coutances, spending a day on the coast, bathing and watching the blessing of the vehicles, everything from lorries and cars to bicycles and prams!

Michaelmas term This term Peter Strallen arrived to spend term and holidays with us (joined by his sister in the holidays) for many years and eventually to send us his four sons. Once more we acted 'The Rose and the Ring'.

Easter term

3 We took up Folk Dancing. Mrs. Haslehurst taught it and brought a friend who played the fiddle for it. The boys enjoyed it.

The senior boys acted another French play "A l'aigle D'Or" and the younger ones once more "Two Blind men and a Donkey".

Two boys were confirmed at St. Pauls. (Paul Charge died at Eastbourne College aged fourteen).

Summer Term

An average cricket season. We won four and lost three and some matches were scratched.

Colonel Jenkin presented a cup for the Quarter mile which was won by F. Hubbard.

This year R.P.F. and I went abroad without boys, again to Normandy, to Briquebec, St. Lo Vire, Dom^Ffront and Mortain.

Michaelmas term a very poor football season. We won only one match.

We acted Henry IV part i. with Gofton-Salmond as Falstaff. Hicks

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Hicks gained two scholarships at King's School, Worcester, the classical and the King's scholarship.

143 Mr. Havard left and Mr. McKenna came, a great acquisition to the staff. (He was killed at the end of the war).

Easter term, uneventful. Summer term rather wet. We won four matches out of twelve. (R. Playford Fenn was Captain). He was our nephew and went down in the Royal Oak at Scapa Flow.

This summer we took a delightful house in Caen and I tried my hand at French housekeeping. We had a nice garden, a good maid and cook Georgette, a French dog Miquette, and seven French hens. We had four boys with us whom we used to send down to the dairy with out timballe to fetch the milk daily and they collected a few French boys and taught them the elements of cricket. In the afternoons they usually rowed us up a stretch of the Orne, or we took one of the many light railways leading to Quistram or other places on the coast for a swim and Caen itself was an interesting old town. I hear it was flattened out in the war. I was intrigued to buy my butter off the high altar of a church that had been ~~secularised~~ during the Revolution.

Eventually we saw the boys off home (in charge of the Captain) and ourselves wandered off to Bagnole de l'Orne, a charming little spa in the forest of La Ferté Macé. We were actually in Thesse-la-Madeleine quite near.

In the Michaelmas term we acted "Pierre Patelin" (in English) and "Two Blind Men and a Donkey".

Now for a few years my diary seems very sketchy. I note that

the summer of 1932 was very fine, that we won four and lost five matches, and that in the Michaelmas term we acted "The Princess and the Woodcutter" and "Catharine Parr".

Mealses wrecked the summer term and we were to have taken part in the Chichester pageant as the Children's crusade; but reluctantly had to hand over our parts and costumes to the Prebendal School.

In the Michaelmas term we once more acted "Midsummer Night's Dream" with Hayes as Puck who was heard to say from the back of the stage, "get off her dress you fool!" as Titania's gathers began to give way.

Easter Term and Mr. McKenna brought back mumps.

1934 Summer term a wonderful cricket season. I think we won all our matches, five in all. I think Stallen was captain. He left with a scholarship at King's School, Canterbury and John Jarman with a scholarship at Aldenham.

At the same time we had good news of old boys.

R.H. Prior won the senior Maths scholarship at Christchurch, Oxford and W.B. Simmonds the senior medical scholarship at St. Barts.

In the Michaelmas term we acted "Brother Wolf" (not a great success) and the juniors repeated "Six who Pass while the Lentils Boil".

Easter Term - Mrs. Ford joined us also the Clover twins and we had Clovers and Covers for some time and with occasional confusion.