Walthamstow High School Magazine

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Walthamstow High School Old Girls' Association

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AN interesting paper on *Robert Louis Stevenson* was kindly given by Mr Charles. One member, who has never been tempted to attend any of our former meetings, was persuaded to accompany a friend and afterwards remarked that she had never enjoyed anything like it before. *W*hat further comment is needed.

The debate on *The Broken Road* was also well appreciated. The enthralling argument as to whether we are masters of our fates or *vice versa* being vigorously discussed.

There are many who say they would contribute only they cannot find a subject, and it has been suggested to have a debate for the Magazine, so that anyone who wishes to write may do so without trouble. We thank the girls who kindly replied, and hope the idea will prove a success. The subject chosen for this number is: Which has the greatest influence for good: the novel or the drama?

We have no marriages to report, but next time even the most sentimental of our readers will have no cause for complaint.

There are three births to announce, a daughter, Helen Margaret, to Mr. and Mrs. Robertson (May Goodchild) -a son, Robert Theodore, to the Rev. and Mrs Franklin (Cora Wildash) – and a son to Mr and Mrs Sidney Pearce (Maud Claus).

The Annual Meeting

29TH MARCH, 1912.

THE desks were standing sulkily,
  They said "it is no fun,
To have these girls come trooping in,
  After the school is done,
These "Old Girls' Meetings are a curse,
  We hate them everyone."

Then four young maidens hurried up,
  All eager for the treat,
Their skirts were brushed, their faces washed,
  Their shoes were clean and neat,
They hurried in, all talking fast,
  And quickly took their seat.

Four other maidens followed them,
  And yet another four,
And thick and fast they came at last,
  And more and more and more,
All hopping through the worn old desks,
  And scrambling through the door.

Miss Hewett and her satellites,
Talked on an hour or so,
And then they rested on a chair,
Conveniently low,
And all the little maidens sat,
And waited in a row.

"The time has come," Miss Hewett said,
"To talk of many things,
Committee wants two members new,
Two angels (without wings),
Whether subscriptions are paid up,
And what our balance brings?”

"I do propose," Miss Hewett said,
"To alter things a bit,
A guinea down, and when that's done,
Life member, you are it,"
"Miss Hewett, dear," the maidens cried,
"That takes a bit of grit."

“But wait a bit," Miss Hewett cried,
“Two shillings you can pay,
But once a year it must come forth,
And promptly to the day,
But once a guinea you have paid,-
For life you’ve paid your way.”

"A cup of tea," Miss Hewett said,
"Is what we chiefly need,
Biscuits and pastries sweet besides
Are very good indeed,
Now if you're ready, Maidens dear,
We will begin to feed."

"Now, see you here," a voice proclaimed,
"He're many postcards, look,
Advertisements and smells to guess,
And characters in book,
And she who guesses most quite right
She then a prize may hook."

"We've got to guess!" the maidens cried,
Turning a little blue,
"After such kindness that we call
A dismal thing to do."
"The prize is fine," the voice replied,
"Can you not guess this view?"

Now, Alice Wise she got the prize.
She said, "How very nice!"
Miss Hewett spake again and said,
"Now we begin to slice,
From paper you must cut a cat,
Yes,-you may cut one twice."

"It seems a shame," a maiden cried,
"To make us play this trick"
Another said, "Oh dash the thing,
I've done my cat too quick."
Another girl said nothing but,
"I've cut his tail too thick"

"I weep for you," a voice exclaimed,
"I deeply sympathise,"
With sobs and tears she sorted out
Those of the largest size
Putting them on the old black-board,
Wiping her streaming eyes.

"Oh maidens dear," Miss Hewett said,
"We've had some rare good fun,
Winnie Coulston's cat's the best
For her's compares to none,
Shall we be trotting home again?
Good-night to every one."

The Spring Time

Last term was, to the girls, important both for work and games. There was Netball, between the forms and against other Schools, and the term ended with examinations.

We were very proud and delighted to hear that Elsie Hatch had, by passing the Matriculation with First Class Honours before she was seventeen, won the County Scholarship, which has not been claimed by a girl for two years. This year another girl also gained it.

The Team were in the Semi-Final, in which they played Chelsea, who defeated them by twenty-one to ten. The match was very exciting in spite of some rain which apparently came to watch it also.

The Form Matches resulted in Form Five winning the shield. Their total goals being sixty-seven.

Dora Bosworth obtained the university extension certificate for her paper which she did last term.

We have started school in quarters more cramped than ever, and; sorry as we shall be to leave the dear old building, the visions of one in which there will be no more crushing, no more lost books, seem to gain in brightness as they slowly draw nearer the realisation.

The School has a grandson in the person of Arthur Hopley, who has come to swell the number of Preparatory.

School Care Committee Work

As an old scholar of the Walthamstow High School, I am very glad to be able to accede to a request for a contribution to its magazine, by giving a rough outline of the above work, in which I first became interested as a volunteer, afterwards obtaining a post as assistant organiser, in which capacity I now write.

A School Care Committee is attached to every L.C.C. (formerly “Board”) School in London,-that is, if sufficient workers are forth coming, which, as a matter of they are not; and the duty these purely voluntary bodies are asked to perform is to "care" for the children apart from their education. They came into existence, together with a small band of paid officials, in consequence of, and on the heels the “Provision of Meals” Act in 1906, and were at first primarily concerned with the selection of “necessitous” children for the free meals, though the care was never limited to that alone.

Each committee consists of six, or nine members, who meet usually at the school for which they work, every two weeks or month, to discuss the cases on hand, and enter their decisions upon the “case papers,” that is upon special forms, where is recorded all the information collected, from whatever source, which they have been able to obtain about each family in question. During the interval of meeting, each member fulfils his or her part undertaken at Committee by-home-visiting, interviewing parents at School, by co-operation with any body already in touch with the case, or suitable to it, and in fact by thorough investigation always referring to the District Organiser, as she is called, for assistant and advice when necessary; the latter (with the aid of one or two assistants, of which the writer is one), is responsible for the smooth working, and keeping to rule, of all the Committees in her district, are as London is divided among twelve such District Organisers, her work is no light matter; she has to fill in the gaps herself where the Committees are wanting, for they are constantly flourishing and dying down, like so many changing lights in the darkness.

Now the scope of those Committees, and their sheep-dogs the Organisers, widens and widens as time goes on. No longer chiefly confined to "feeding," the next great step has resulted from the regular and systematic visits of the doctors in the schools, for it is very obvious to anybody who knows anything of the ignorance, prejudice, apathy, or callousness, of a great mass of parents of the children in our elementary schools, that the good seed would here fall upon much unfruitful ground if there were not someone near to carry on the work faithfully; and this our gallant army of voluntary workers has done-watching, influencing, urging, and helping by every means in their power, and the whole scheme, which at first looked rather overwhelming, is now in thorough working order.

And then, again, the "After Care" of the children is the next great advance, the former undertakings having shaken down and formed solid working basis for new; but it urgently calls for more helpers. "After Care" means the great endeavour to lead boys and girls arrived at school leaving age (14 years), into the path that is best suited to the individual child together with its surroundings, and will not turn him, or her, out presently unequipped and alone to struggle for existence.

The scheme aims at co-operation, and inter-communication between the school and the Juvenile department of the Labour Exchange, seeking to bridge over first and foremost that gulf between school life and the true work-a-day world, in which so many go down.

I hope this gives the reader some idea of what the Care Committee are doing for Young London, and if it should occur to anybody to come and help, or come and learn, I hope they will not stop there; I know no better way of gaining first hand, and first rate, insight into social work.

SOPHIE EMILY WHITTAKER.

"Companioning."

IT is popularly supposed that a companion has a good and easy time and most certainly lives happily ever after. This idea is probably, derived from a certain type of novel where the heroine, generally an orphan, one day saves a fat pug from the revolving wheels of a motor car. The owner, an elderly lady in a bath-chair, promptly adores the rescuer and implores her to be her companion. The girl-who at that time of her career is struggling to instil some very elementary ideas of education into the vacant minds of seven small children-promptly accepts. Several peaceful years elapse, and then the old lady dies. With her last words she implores the companion to look after her pug and marry the nephew, to whom she has left her fortune. Having fallen in love with the pug and the young man at first sight she promises to fulfil her mistress' wishes. She keeps her word, lives wisely well; and happily to the end of her days.

Alas, in real life things are very different! If a person requires a paid companion one may be sure it is often because she is so difficult to live with, that the poor relations will not do so under any conditions.

There are many types of people who want companions, but they are all difficult. There is the elderly spinster, who travels and requires someone to talk English to her and French to the porters, to look after the luggage, interview hotel keepers and all the while be mildly entertaining.

There is the widow, who advertises for a bright young girl with a slight knowledge of needlework preferred. Subsequently one discovers that it would take a professional dressmaker to cope with the amount of work needed for the widow-and her *nine children.*

Then the lady who wants a "companion-help who is looking out for a real home with every comfort," often deceives herself. She hopes to entertain an angel unawares in the shape of a house-parlourmaid, cook, errand boy-general; who is not above cleaning windows and fetching in coals from the shed at the end of the garden. The invalid, who want someone to nurse and amuse her with a temper of sugar and a constitution of iron.

Any girl thinking of becoming a paid companion will find it easier if she starts directly she leaves school. She must have a highly developed sense of humour, and a very poor opinion of herself; she must be prepared to be the "scapegoat" both of the family and the servants, and must be expected to behave in a superior way although treated as an inferior. Then, if she possesses a sense of humour of *abnormal* size, a contented mind, with a blessed memory for forgetting

unpleasantness, she may be safely carried through most difficulties, and become happy anywhere.

A New Sphere.

COLLEGE days are over, and school duties have begun, and it is difficult to know whether to be glad or sorry. All those who know anything of College life will realise its many attractions, but Life is beginning when one launches out into the unknown, a fully, fledged teacher.

For me, the new life is very different from the old, for it has begun amid entirely new surroundings.

I was appointed teacher in Yorkshire early in the last College term, and the extra hard work at the end was sweetened by the knowledge of a teaching post when all was over.

The country and people, and even the children here are a new experience. The village in which I am teaching is about fourteen miles east of Sheffield, and is very old, quaint and charming. Its grey church, and the old grey stone cottages and low ivy grown walls are very picturesque, and the country round is lovely, - it is hilly, and through the hills one may often get a glorious view of rolling country, stretching into the blue distance of the moors.

A tall chimney, with its group of red brick buildings, and the winding machinery which may be seen here and there, all surrounded by the mushroom colony of red brick houses in ugly even rows, are the indications that this is a colliery district, but the air, and as yet, the scenery, is not spoilt by these collieries, though nearer Sheffield it is different.

The people are characteristically cautious, and though they are friendly and well inclined to know the stranger's business, they are themselves very uncommunicative.

Yorkshire is not behind the times as regards schools, at least in the case of the modern schools,-they are very up-to-date as regards buildings, apparatus, and methods, though in the old schools the teachers are sadly hampered by their old fashioned buildings. Personally, I have been extremely fortunate, for the school in which I am teaching is not a year old, and is very fine, and a pleasant place to teach in, besides having almost a complete Staff of College trained certificated teachers - congenial companions.

I am teaching Class 4, boys and girls, of ten to twelve, and though rather slower than London children, they are, I think, more pleasant to teach; for they are sweeter and more childlike in their ignorance, than the over precocious town mites, who are experienced at ten. The most serious difficulty in our work is the lack of sympathy between home and school, parents eagerly seize opportunities for complaint, and take their children from school at the very earliest legal age, but we are seeking to overcome this by interesting the parents in the gardening, games, and needlework, and by "School Open Days" for parents.

Out of school hours there is so much to do-the country to be explored, and my friend and I have cycled to all the neighbouring towns, Worksop, Rotherham, and Sheffield; we are only one and a half miles from a large colliery town, so slight shopping is not a difficulty.

We have the Ladies' Hockey Club parties and whist drives, and also those of the Tennis Club, so that, although we are so far in the country we are very happy and very busy, and have no fear "rusticating."

F. W. (AN OLD GIRL.)

Spring-Cleaning.

WHEN I received a note from our Editor asking for a contribution to the IRIS, in a week's time, my first impulse was to refuse, for we were in the middle of spring-cleaning and I had not another thought of any description in my head-but the happy idea struck me that this would be a subject which had not before appeared in the pages of that highly appreciated magazine, and as "variety is charming," it might not do so badly.

Girls who are "out" may gain a good deal, but they lose a lot of the joys of the "home-girl."

Have any of my school-fellows (of many years ago!) spring-cleaned?

I do not mean just the usual annual affair, but accompanied by white washers, painters, and other similar horrors.

Have you ever hunted for your hat and had to climb over a sofa and mount a chair, finally reaching the article with a long stretch?

When the hall and staircase is in process of rejuvenation we dodge men in quite a spirited manner, and they are always outside just the room one wishes to enter-but, when the kitchen is in the hands of the purifiers!! I hope the printer will put two exclamas after that! The drawing room finished, had to be used as a store for furniture, *etc*., from other parts of the house, we looked for the china, and found jugs on the settee and a vegetable dish on the piano, a larger tea-pot than usual was required, and found at the bottom of a bath in the garden-house, I heard the poor man of the family inquiring for tea things, these were unearthed from under a table in the drawing room, and most of the pictures being stacked in the lounge, that became uninhabitable as a place of rest.

Then, dearly beloved (that sounds like a second heading of a sermon), have you smelt spring-cleaning? The paint, size, and furniture polish combined, vie with Rimmel's for *strength* of perfume, though in that respect only-the other day, the paths outside were being tarred and asphalted, I happened to pass through the hall and breathed in the combined essence of tar, roasting mutton and furniture polish, no one who has not experienced it can imagine the effect, I assure you, fair reader, it is unique.

Now for the last point, and I can hear the sighs of satisfaction as you reach it-have visitors ever called on you when you were busy? The dear creatures, how one would enjoy their company at any other period in the calendar, but, when mistress and maid are alike turning to with sleeves up, hair dishevelled, and not too spotless a face, to have things straight for the lord of creation, a ring at the bell, and either the minister or a lady who has all her work done for her, and does not know how to soil her hands, arrives on a visit. Then, unless one descends to the society lie of "Not at home," a proper excuse has to be sent, couched in language more polite than one's feelings.

Heigho ! I think a flat must be Elysium compared with a house in process of spring-cleaning, but 'tis over now for a time, so my song which has been, for a fortnight, "There is a happy land, far, far away," with mezzo forte on "far," is now changed to "Now the labourer's task is o'er," and the" Hallelujah Chorus."

KITTY PHELP.

Infant Prodigies.

There was once a wretched infant, who, despairing of exciting interest in anyone except its parents, began at the age of one year, to exclaim in a loud and penetrating voice, "thirty years famine in Kansas! thirty years famine in Kansas!" This was its only accomplishment. If anyone said to it "Hello baby!" it would reply with the same doleful refrain. Finally, having presumably exhausted its poor little frame but this brief Cassandra-like existence, it passed quietly away one night, to the bewildered grief of its parents, and the relief of the whole community.

All this as you will have shrewdly guessed, happened in America.

And with equal penetration you will remark that of course it is all nonsense, your common sense forbids your belief in such a horrible little monster, and besides, can any true thing come from America? But why disturb yourself? Who cares now? This little bit of life's flotsam died over ten years ago, and the famine hasn't come yet.

But what do you say to this? There is, beyond all doubt, a person of the age of nine now living in the same wonderful country which bears the matter-of-fact name of Winifred Sackville Stoner. There is really no pardonable reason for doubting her existence. She has been thoroughly investigated. Here you are asked to read patiently the next dozen or so lines. You have guessed of course, that she is a "prodigy." But what does she do-what are her claims to fame? She writes poetry and stories, she has inspirations in Esperanto, and, above all, she has written three books! The details of her "education" are almost too horrible for publication. At one she could both walk and talk, and when requested could recite "Crossing the Bar." Even at this early age these were not all her accomplishments. She had one supreme trick, reserved, in all probability, for At Home days. This was

an ability to scan from Virgil.

But this is trivial, for Winifred grew. Upon attaining her second year she was able to read and talk French. Oh, not a lisping "S'il vous plait," but a thorough Parisian chatter. At three she could typewrite (which of course shows wonderful brain power!), and at five she addressed her first public meeting. Six years of age saw her writing for magazines, and at seven her first book made its appearance. At eight she wrote something or other in Esperanto and at nine she “spoke eight languages, and demonstrated a remarkable knowledge of history, Latin, literature, geography, and rhetoric,"Now you may have five minutes to storm at whoever you like for such an imposition on your credulity.

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It was all the result of training her mother tells us. So we should have guessed. This is a refined and unpunishable form of child-murder. Precocity in children is, if natural, one of their most charming characteristics. If you had heard Marjorie Heming call her multiplication table “the most devilish thing,” only a desire not to encourage such expressions would have prevented you from hugging her tight. But if you walked into a friend's house and stumbled upon a thing gibbering Virgil, your first anxiety would be as to the whereabouts of the nearest exit.

The most charming things about children is their aloofness. You can never understand them. Wordsworth meant just this peculiar mystery when he wrote or them as "trailing clouds of glory." Children are wrapped up in these lovely clouds and one can only get a casual glimpse of the child itself by the rents made in the clouds by rough-handed elders. And then of course, as time passes, the clouds get so rent and torn that they cannot hold together and fall away bit by bit until they quite disappear. There are, however, those who feel them going, and perhaps catch blindly at them now and then. They may manage to grasp a few of the glorious threads and if they do, it is to hold them for a life-time. But alas! Most of us forget all about them, or worse still, finish the dastardly work begun for us by stepping impatiently out of them and trampling them underfoot in a wild desire to be “grown up.” The real children are those whose world is rounded off by a sweet indefinable wonder. “What is this dream nonsense?" you say. It is true, poor friend. You think not? Ah well, you died very young then, or perhaps you were never really born.

Still, perhaps you will agree that you can't understand children altogether. Your boy’s pocket is a bulge with the death-dealing catapult which is taboo. Mother, remembering many useless remonstrance’s, thinks it wisest not to see; but father deals out a fearful reprimand, or perhaps something more severe. You know the result. Mother's son pities her short-sightedness, and feels confident that he will not be so easily fooled when he grows up, and father has a boy who only draws his "clouds” the tighter whenever he sees his parent coming. So there you are check-mated, and one must accept ones limitations, which is one of the seven highways to happiness.

Poor little Winifred and her torn clouds! Not torn only, but stolen away on her birthday like the tattered rags of an old life to be hidden, and to be ashamed of. This little baby with its

“Wee white hands, and little running feet little running feet, and
Croodlin' as of the sea."

to be taken and moulded and trained-to what end?

What are the real things of life? Not that you went to the Continent in nineteen hundred and something, but that there is an old street in Bruges with a weary old pump in front of the last red house. Not that you have lost an old friend, but that a certain exultation has gone out of your life. Not that there is a thrush singing outside your window but that there is a torment of inexpression in your heart.

Pity then, for Winifred and her “good giant Arithmos," which is her little pleasantrie for mathematics. You know what will happen to her. Just what happened to the Kansas baby, she will be a nine-days' wonder, and then her world will know her no more. She will not even die of brain fever, for when the measles-stage of childhood arrives, she will be so tired that she will go to sleep one night and forget to waken again.

And Winifred’s mother? She will realise then how much rather she would like to hear her baby say, like Barrie’s little boy, ‘Oh, mother, I am glad of you,’ than to recite the whole of the ‘Iliad.’

H.M

Magazine Debate.

WHICH HAS THE GREATER INFLUENCE FOR GOOD- THE NOVEL OR THE DRAMA

The Novel

I MUST allow that when I saw the subject of our magazine debate, my first impression was that the drama had the most influence for good, but little consideration convinced me that it is the *novel* which yields the greater power.

I have no doubt but that on the individual, the drama has the greater influence of the two. A well-acted play will bring truths home to our minds in a way which no novel can do. Things happen, as it were, before our eyes and leave a lasting impression on us for good, or evil, as the case may be. And we cannot skip the moral parts out as we can, if we wish, in reading a novel. Think of the plays of Shakespeare, for instance. We may read them again and again, but once we see them played we have a much clearer and more vivid recollection of them than we ever had before. Why, then, has the novel more power for good than the drama? Because its influence is more widespread. Surely, we all of us, read more novels than we see plays! And think of all the people in country places who seldom have the opportunity of seeing any play, and when they do occasionally visit the nearest town it is generally to witness the "Circus Girl," or some other performance! And, then, too, there are the people who speak the word “Theatre" in bated breath and think it almost a crime to enter one! They all read novels, though.

Again we see a play and feel it does us good: we wish to see it a second time, and find it is no longer being played. How different with our books! We keep them all our lives, if we will, and can read our favourites over again and again, finding fresh inspirations in them every time.

In these days when libraries are everywhere and good literature is cheap, helpful and inspiring books are within the reach of all. All sorts and conditions of people, rich and poor, young and old, busy and idle, find their recreation in reading: indeed there are many who take all their ideas and views of life from the books which they read. Fraught, then, with much power for good or evil is even one single book. Would that all writers of novels would realise the responsibility laid upon them, to influence for good the people their own time and perhaps of generations to come!

W.H.D.

The Novel

The argument was in full swing, and words were being hurled across the table so violently that it took a little while to find out if she had interrupted a family feud or only an interesting discussion. Deciding that the latter was the case, she took her courage in both hands and asked what the point was.

"Has the drama or the novel the greater influence for good?”

“Well,” she began, “that’s a very big question. You see that person who made a habit of seeing a decent play would not care for penny dreadfuls, for instance, and the one who only liked musical comedy, say, or very highly coloured melodrama would,"

"That's got nothing to do with it. That’s begging the question," said the family baby. "Now, I think the drama has."

"Why?" asked the visitor.

"I knew you'd want to know that," she said. "It's because in a play you see the thing happen and in a book you’ve got to do it all for yourself as you go along,"

"That's a very lazy argument," said one of the boys. "What are your brains for?"

Time was getting on and the point had to be settled, and after a while they agreed that the novel won. Not from any special merit of its own, but simply because in these days of public and other libraries and cheap editions one could read a dozen books for each play seen, and that it is neither the fault of the novel or the drama if the ones most read and seen are unworthy.

THE GEES

The Drama

The novel influences through the intellect, and the drama through the sentiment, and as the majority of people are moved more by their feelings than their reasons, it appears that the drama has the greater influence.

The average stage play is of better quality than the literature generally read: and many who enjoy the productions of Shakepeare's plays may read only the best of literature.

In plays like the "Sign of the Cross" no novel could influence one so strongly because the surroundings, dress, manners and customs are brought before our eyes in a way that no written description could do; and here the drama has a distinct advantage.

Of course a play can only successfully show a portion of life and point to one moral, while a book like "Adam Bede," for instance, can display so much-the vanity of Hetty-piety of Dinah-selfishness of the squire- thoughtlessness of Arthur-the manliness of Adam, are all brought before us in one book. Is it not better to teach one truth to ten persons than ten truths to one person?

The Drama.

Most of us are not deep thinkers, and our most serious and valuable thoughts are more likely to be roused by actual life than by life accompanied by comments and explanations and the author's own views; we are really standing more on own feet then at the play. The representation of real life is more faithfully reproduced in drama and creates a more vivid impression, therefore it must be a greater power. The memory of a scene –well acted-and a speech-well delivered, will long outlast the effect produced by written words.

The thrill, the vivid portrayal of actual events makes us see life at first hand, and gives us real experience of it. We are given nothing to help us form our idea of the characters; they are the raw stuff; no clue, other than their own words or actions, guides us as to what they really are. We are confronted with life. Unaccompanied by comment. This must cause even the usually thoughtless, furiously to think. The fascination of the drama. This is its greatest value.

M. A.

Women's Printing Society, Ltd, Brick St, Piccadilly