

Walthamstow High School Magazine.

Foreword.

FOR some time past many of us have noticed with no small apprehension the behaviour of certain mysterious cracks which have been opening and shutting like oysters in various parts of the building. It was, therefore, with real anxiety that we watched the workmen exploring the cavernous depths below the School and it was a great relief to hear their verdict declaring our building safe and our foundations sound. Still the mystery of the cracks remains unsolved.

This term has been, on the whole, quiet and uneventful which is perhaps just as well, in view of the near approach of examinations, which are taking place towards the beginning instead of the end of next term. Meantime a happy Christmas to you all and the best of good wishes for 1929.

M. NORRIS.

To the School.

H. HILTON and D. Forster are greeting you this time with a loud Christmas cheer to drown the sighs that each breathes to you elsewhere in this, the seventeenth number of IRIS. Memorable O.G. Sub-editors, such as V. Adams and N. Blofield, have set a high standard of generous effort and patient forbearance, and the School Sub-editor is certain that the O.G.A. have secured in H. Hilton another capable and efficient Sub-editor. In the past, she used to send her essays in to time even when she was in the Sixth Form, and, in the present, she daily advises (and measures), authors who submit their work to Curtis Brown, the Publisher's Agent.

The O.G.A. is fortunate in being able to borrow her creative energy and her pleasant critical judgment. Wouldn't it be exciting if she discovered a Great Writer among either Present or Past? She would know how to secure "film rights" and copy-rights and every right.

We hope to let you have a photograph of the net-ball team, but if this arrives too late for publication, you must blame November gloom.

Both Sub-editors wish to thank all who have done their duty by IRIS, and to give you their combined wishes for her health and happiness.

Old Girls' Editorial.

THE Old Girls' editor feels almost too depressed to compose any such thing as an editorial. There have been so few communications of any sort, that she begins to wonder whether one can strictly be called an editor, if there is nothing to edit? Many possible reasons for the impenetrable silence in which most O.G.s' have wrapped themselves can be suggested, but the editor cannot bring herself to believe any of them. "No," says she, deliberately hugging her grief, "they just didn't bother: they each hoped someone else, would."

(Pause - to allow each reader to experience a feeling of guilt.)

The Old Girls' Social held on November 20th, proved as jolly a gathering as usual. A very large congregation enjoyed a crowded programme. Doris Atkins' whistling, Kathleen Oyler's piano solo and Minnie Foxon's singing provided the musical side of the entertainment. Miss Squire's very charming dance made us all homesick for the time when it was our privilege to dance with her.

Miss Hewett was a most welcome and appreciated guest. She told us in her own inimitable way about her experiences as 'locum' Headmistress at the Leeds Modern School. The amusing playlet, "A Mere Man," which ended the evening, was given by Linda and Sylvia Smith, Marjorie and Vera Budd, Gladys and Muriel Johns and Ivy Horton and was uproariously applauded.

The "Tiddley Winks" Concert Party by means of a spirited performance on November 24th, collected nearly £11 for the O.G.A.

which must be grateful to all performers and helpers.

The prizes are to be given to the Senior School on Friday, 14th December, by Miss Hewett.

We are sorry that Doris Hitchman's name was, by a clerical error, given instead of that of Doris Atkins, the retiring secretary. We should like to take this opportunity of recording the O.G.A.s' grateful thanks to her for her long and pleasant services.

Two contributors give two possible topics for future articles. Mabel Smith suggests "Old Girls One Never Hears About," and inaugurates the series with her study of a business man's secretary. Dorothy Jones gives details whereby others may enjoy the holiday she describes. Who is going to follow Mabel in the next issue with a similar portrait? Who is going to devise other holiday schemes suitable for the time and pockets of all IRIS readers? Who is going to give good advice on how to look for a first post? If an article is too much to hope for let us have a symposium of ideas. Above all, do let us have news, else must IRIS become very dead indeed. Any items about the doings of Old Girls will be most joyfully received. Send a postcard to D. Higham, Dunkeld, Church Hill. We must thank Mrs. Balfour (Helen Mercer) for a well-written article which was crowded out by others of more general appeal. Of course the Old Girls' Sub-editor (H. Hilton, 1051, Forest Road, Upper Walthamstow), would be delighted to receive also contributions of a literary nature. Where are all the poets who used to contribute to Literary Society gatherings? She refuses to believe that literary talent among IRIS O.G. readers is sparse-(but WHERE IS IT?) Won't you therefore give her a chance to show how well she can write an editorial when she has something to edit?

WE congratulate the following girls on their academic successes:

P. Attenborough (French), E. Brown (English), C. Saunders (History), W. Taylor (History). Each of these girls is now a B.A. Hons. London. D. Bubbers, Hons., Class 1., and M. Fulford hold B.Sc. Hons. degrees and M. Evans (B.A. London). D. Holmes, E. Holt and A. Macropoulos is each a B.Sc. London. S. Owen and O. Morris are graduates (B.A.) of the University of Wales.

K. Oyler has passed the L.R.A.M. examination.

R. Carvill is now a chartered accountant.

We are unable to offer any further information as to the achievements of Old Girls as no authentic records have been given us.

School Chronicle.

THE Echoes have been as happy as usual this term, and, while never actually silent, they have enjoyed a peaceful time; the Four Hundred have found "the even tenour of their way," and there have been few interruptions of routine. The Autumn Term is undoubtedly the best for work: this year a gorgeous golden September gave every inspiration to the newly promoted, and, in gloomy November, in sheer self-defence, even the idlest must find refuge in work. We began the year with three examination Fifts, the new Commercial Fifth with a wonderful Form-room in the Gallery. (They could quite well write the Chronicle for the Echoes this time!)

The names of the following girls must be added to the last list of Matriculation successes:- I. Bond, J. Oyler, M. Johnson, Q. Blench, B. Corbitt, E. Gwilliam, E. Knowles, O. Lothian, G. McFarlane, B. Riggs, E. Williams.

As Q. Blench and B. Corbitt attained Honours in the examination (*i.e.*, distinction in three or more subjects and a generally high level).

General School successes were:-N. Quinton, W. Aberly, M. Blackler, E. Britton, F. Davis, L. Goode, W. Greenhead, M. Lovell, I. Oldfield, F. Pontin, G. Puffett, P. Rainer, M. Selway, E. Webster, W. Wildman, D. Campfield, D. Haycock, J. Huskisson, E. Smith, A. Turner, V. Wood. Among them they secured several distinctions. We congratulate all the above, as well as I. Bond, M. Mecham and G. Philips, on passing the Society of Arts Examination.

In the Sixth, Phyllis Woolnough, was successful in securing her Higher School Certificate in English, French, and History, with Latin subsidiary. This gives her the Inter. B.A., of London University. We are proud of our head girl. Phyllis Dabbs, Margaret Harris, and Mary Rich secured the Higher School Certificate. Muriel Williams had distinction in German, which she took as an additional subject.

On Saturday, the 22nd September, members of last year's Fifth, together with some of the Sixth, gave "The Electra" of Euripides, in Gilbert Murray's English version. The day was, literally, the last day of summer, and somewhat chilly at that. Two spots of rain fell just as the Chorus, trained chiefly by Edna Martin, and dressed, exquisitely and airily, by Miss Squire, emerged from the dressing-room. Then the sun shone, and the tragic story unwound itself to the accompaniment of strange chords improvised by Gwen Jones on the piano, and soft movements of the Chorus to make bearable the tragic horror faithfully presented by the Electra (Blanche Corbitt), the Clytemnestra (Queenie Blench), and the Orestes (Hettie Burr). Phyllis Woolnough as the god, Castor, appeared, according to our tradition, *on the rockery*. (This is the W.H.S. equivalent for the *deus ex machina*), and by her calm, made a peaceful end to the mighty traffic of the stage, which had included, besides the tragic principals, the Old Man (Nellie Quinton), and the Peasant (Jessie Huskisson), as well as the very lively Messenger (Barbara Riggs). The Chorus Leader was Margaret Harris for speaking, while Edna Martin led the movement.

We understand that at times the Echoes get a little ribald about Greek tragedy and its conventions, especially "that messenger that always comes in with that bit of fur." This is the right way of youth, yet it argues no lack of appreciation. The majesty and strength of the action of a Greek play, musing- and then casting forth "the emotions of pity and terror" must still, after more than two thousand years, have a great power of life over the feelings of all who have feelings. And, in an age when the aim of education appears to be to get certificate in order to get money to get things, the presence and inspiration of the Greek Theatre, albeit to present deeds most bloody, calls to reality the most spiritual. For instance, in the moment of triumph over her enemy, *Ægisthus*, Electra presents this truth; "...The lie of lies that dimmed the brow, Vaunting, that by thy gold, thy chattels, thou Wert Something, which themselves are nothingness, Shadows, to clasp a moment ere they cease."

"Exquisite beauty of any kind has a moral value of the highest kind"-this is a sententious sentence from Echoes in a Chronicle that has no need for weight, but the Echoes are getting old and have seen much and heard much. In this way, therefore, we claim the privilege of introducing the Dancing Competition; for although this happened at the end of the Summer Term, it is so important an event in the life of the School that it must be given a full record even at Christmas time. UIVA's interpretation of Shelley's, "Ode to the West Wind," must claim, together with the Sixth Form "Study of Movement," a place in the School's Chronicle of Loveliness. Form U. IVA. won the trophy in the Senior School by adding to their lyric in the Greek Theatre a Spanish Dance of great verve and excellent technique done in the School Hall. Miss Johnson who judged the Competition, particularly commended their work as well as that of the Sixth, whose second dance was "Moth and Flame." Form Vx. produced a very interesting version of "The Forsaken Merman," and VA. a dramatisation of Matthew Arnold's "Mycerinus." Form D. IVB. did a very realistic Thunderstorm Dance.

In the Middle School, Form U.IIIA. won the trophy with their Flower Dance and "Pierrot and Columbine," while, for the first time in history, Form I. secured the Lower School trophy with a vigorous Russian Dance and an equally exciting Toy Dance. Their "Form Sister," Olive Ludlow, had been a very patient coach.

The Hospital Cot effort took the form, this year, of performances in the Greek Theatre. On the evening of Wednesday, July 11th, Form LIVA. presented a dramatised version of Daudet's "La Dernière Classe," and Form U. IVB. presented Dekker's comedy "The Shoemaker's Holiday." The French performance was restrained and artistic, Rose Brazier as the schoolmaster and Joan Hibbit, as the schoolboy Franz, being well supported by *la classe*.

Every word was audible and had a dramatic effect such that even people who knew no French must have realised the sad theme. Short as the scene was, it left a memorable impression.

So also did the gay antics of Form U.IVB. in that "right merry and well-conceited" Elizabethan comedy, "The Shoemaker's Holiday." The team-work was excellent and everyone in the audience enjoyed the amount of real fun and frolic that the girls put into their acting. The dashing hero (Sylvia Hiner), and the gentle heroine (Hilda Oliver), were everything that hero and heroine should be, but the play demanded, and received, most from the Shoemaker (Edna Prevost), and the comical apprentice Firk (Irene Arnold). Every other character in the lengthy caste deserved to have her name

recorded, though space forbids reference to any but Marjorie Fleming, the clear and energetic "Announcer."

On Thursday afternoon a miscellaneous programme was offered, including vivacious French Action Songs, some delightful bits of "Alice in Wonderland," by Form I, and Scenes from Shakespeare by Forms UIIIA. And VA. Form LIVA, presented "Brother Juniper" from "The Little Plays of St. Francis." The afternoon was very hot and our guests were glad of the teas and ices which the girls were delighted to sell to them, at a profit. £40 is the sum needed annually for the Hospital Cot, and it was well earned.

The School stall at the Hospital Fete made £15 15s. for the hospital. And now, in winter gloom, the Echoes are cheered by vigorous practising for Prize-giving day; songs in French and English, and short plays in both languages are being rehearsed, and, though, of course, Echoes cannot hear dances, yet rumours reach them of Greek, Russian and Welsh dances, which, on the day, December 14th, they will have the power to see. Prizes are to be given to the Junior School in the afternoon by Mr. Hamilton Fyfe, and to the Senior School in the evening by Miss Hewett. It would be rather fun to hear what the younger girls, strangers to her, say at home, after the Prize-giving of the moment when they realised that the Distinguished Guest on the platform was also the Portrait-in-the-School-Hall.

"What lively legend haunts about thy shape,
Of naughty girls and good ones in the hall?"

After the Prize-givings, of which we hope to be able to record "a short note" later, come the Parties. The Echoes are already roused by these-a daring essay at "Love throughout the Ages" is being made by Forms VA. and VB., while Form VI. are joining with Form Vc. to present "Cautionary Tales."

Summer and Winter Echoes crowd upon us: the new paint and the crack dating from the Summer holidays, the crannied recess with picture, carpet and curtain that is now a Sixth Form study, the new arrangement of the Reference Library in sections, murmurs about the loss of books in the past, as well as joyous recognition of the purchase of many delightful new books this term. The Art Room has acquired "Ornament," a wonderful book and a cast of the *Hermes of Praxiteles* and a tondo of the *Virgin and Child* by Michelangelo.

Miss Park and Miss Taylor are already the friends of the School, and there is no need to introduce them. Miss Jacob, fortunately, is now completely recovered from her illness, and we were all very glad to welcome her on her return, though we had soon made friends with Miss Farthing and were sorry to lose her.

Contact with the world beyond the School has been made this term through the League of Nations lectures given by Sir Gilbert Murray. Many of the Staff and several of the Sixth Form attended these lectures.

Impressions.

ONE vast cheerless greyness sicklied over,
But threatening still, unconquered by the frail
And patient, sadly-smiling lamps that cover
The darkness with an unconcealing veil;
And numberless people with grey stern faces,
Ceaseless and purposeful, strong
With a strength that elates me and braces
As all about me they throng.
A clangour and roaring and clatter
That rise and vanish away
Like the people that mingle and scatter
In the encompassing grey.

I look down from the bridge on the pageant
Of men-on the black, panting trains
And my heart swells within me, is pregnant
With loudly exultant strains,
Strains that would sound through the world's breadth and length
In praise of man's power, man's wit, and his strength.

In the train I scan the faces
Fronting me; and none look wise;
Now of steel sword-strength no traces,
Naught of purpose in the eyes.

Again soft greyness claims me and enfolds me,
Soothing and caressing and alive;
With ardour and with passion clasps and holds me.
I life from life and love from love derive.

The still trees toil without end or stay,
And the moon is sunk deep in thought;
And 'neath the grey waters ever play
Dim fancies with mystery fraught.
And with purpose the air is weighted,
With purpose that's strange and unknown;
And the silence is filled with things fated
And the seeds of the future unsown.
The vastness grows more vast and deep;
I with it; and my heart
Sings in silence as quiet as sleep
Of the greatness of which I am part.

PHYLLIS WOOLNOUGH (*Form V I.*).

Uncle Martin.

A Story with a Moral.

THEODORA loved her Uncle Martin, although she had never seen him. He was a missionary, and a young one at that, and quite recently his portrait had been in all the papers because of the brave way in which he had defended the mission station, containing many crippled and sick people, against an infuriated Chinese mob. So no wonder that for a full three months he had been her hero, and now when he was coming to stay with her mother-Theo longed for him to like her and think her "decent."

Since he was a missionary, Theo thought he was sure to like people who were good. There were no modern books about good people on Thea's shelves. They were filled with literature such as *Mildred, the Madcap of St. Margaret's* and *The Prettiest Girl in the School*; there was, however, a school prize of her mother's, entitled *Julia-or Happy and Good*. Thea didn't think that she would be happy doing the things Julia did, but she tried to train herself to be like her, for the sake of Uncle Martin's affection.

When he arrived, he shook hands with her, and said-"So this is our 'gift of God.' Do they call you Dora or Thea, kiddie?" Theo longed for him to call her Thea, but because Julia had never let herself be called "Julie," she replied very primly, "I am called Theodora, please." Her Uncle dropped her hand rather abruptly, and lifted up Robin, aged five, threw him to the ceiling, caught him again, and kissed him. Theo couldn't help wishing he'd do that to her, but it would have crumpled her clean frock, and Julia the Good never crumpled her frock.

So she turned away, and began to set the tea in an ostentatiously unostentatious way.

Many times during the next week, Theo stopped herself from climbing the apple-tree to read *When We Were Very Young*, because Julia disapproved of climbing, and sat on a straight-backed chair reading the Bible and doing entirely unnecessary sewing.

Yet Uncle Martin took hardly any notice of her, but played bears in the garden with Robin all day.

Once she actually asked him to explain a text to her, but he said with a queer smile, "I'd rather play with Robin, if you don't mind."

"There," she thought, "he thinks I ought to be able to understand it by myself and I can't, oh, I can't!" And she ran into the tangle of blackberry bushes at the foot of the garden and sobbed quietly to herself.

Presently she heard her mother say-"What do you think of my little Theo?"

"Well," replied Martin's voice, "Candidly, you'd better look out, or you'll have her a horrid little prig!"

Five minutes later, she climbed the tree under which he sat, swung from the lowest branch and landed pick-a-back on his shoulders. He gave a surprised look at her tear-stained face, and understood something of what was in her mind.

"Why, Kiddie," he asked, "reformed?" and he kissed her. He then played tennis with her all the afternoon.

Moral: Never "show off," but above all, don't "show off" your piety.

JOAN HIBBIT (*Form U. I Va.*).

Algiers.

PERHAPS a short account of my holiday in Algeria may interest readers of IRIS.

We travelled overland to Marseilles and after a run of twenty-eight hours across the Mediterranean, we sighted the Atlas Mountains and landed at Algiers, which is as un-European as anyone could desire, with its glittering white houses, veiled women and white-robed men.

The next morning, before breakfast, we bathed in the Mediterranean and afterwards explored the narrow and none too savoury streets of the Kasbah, the native quarter of Algiers. We saw a number of unveiled women here with painted faces and henna'd nails and heels. They display their love of colour by wearing dresses of the most vivid hues and they bedeck themselves with all kinds of jewellery, ornaments and charms, mostly of gold or coral.

From Algiers we motored 150 miles South, through marvellous mountain scenery to Bou-Saada, the first Oasis of the Desert region. Here I was invited into one of the Arab houses and had native coffee (this is black, sweetened with a kind of syrup), sitting crossed-legged on the floor. Moreover, I was actually introduced to a Sheik (a very mild one) and shook hands with him!

From Bou-Saada, we made an excursion to a remote Cliff-Village, called El-Hamel, built on the side of an immense rock. Here we saw little Arab boys at school, sitting on the floor and gabbling long passages of the Koran, obviously with vigour renewed for our benefit. The inhabitants of this village apparently do no work at all; they merely sit or stand about in picturesque groups. We were much puzzled as to how they managed to obtain a livelihood until our Guide informed us that the Marabout, the High Priest in charge of the Mosque, owned the whole village, and fed and clothed every man, woman and child in it. The men, when they have finished their training, go out and preach the Koran, sending any money they may earn to the Marabout to help him support his village, and he is consequently extremely wealthy. We did not see a woman at El-Hamel, as this being a very religious place, no woman is allowed outside the houses. About once a day, they air themselves in the courtyards which are attached to all Arab dwellings, or on the flat roofs, but then they have to be closely veiled.

Before leaving this village, the Marabout, who is renowned throughout Algeria for his piety, asked us to take coffee with him, and we were also lucky enough to hear the call to prayer from the Minaret, and to see the Arabs turn to the East and fall on their faces in devotion.

At Biskra we had our first camel-ride into the Sahara. This rather uncomfortable method of travelling would have become monotonous had we not been accompanied by a number of natives, a singer and a flute player, who were very eager to entertain us. In their childlike simplicity they seem to derive great pleasure from their songs, which are strangely haunting and melodious, and which they have a peculiar way of chanting. They all joined in the choruses, clapping their hands and beating time with their bare feet. Little negro boys, unhampered by any ethical restrictions as to their neighbours' property, fed us with handfuls of dates which they shook from the palm trees, at this time of year loaded with fruit hanging down in great clusters from the branches.

In the afternoon one or two of us went on horses (real Arab steeds!) to some hot springs about ten miles beyond Biskra. The water actually boils as it comes up from the earth and gives off little bubbles and a white steam.

The next day we visited the garden made famous by Robert Hichins, as "The Garden of Allah." This is really one of the most beautiful gardens in the world. With its long shady avenues of palm trees and flowering mimosas. Here are also olive, fig and pomegranate trees, and flowers of gorgeous colourings, but little scent. From the low wall of this garden one looks right out into the desert, lying shimmering in its veil of heat.

In the evening we visited the Ouled Nail Dancing Girls, whose mechanical abdominal jerks could not, even by the wildest stretch of imagination, be called beautiful, although decidedly an achievement, combined with a certain amount of rhythmic grace.

We also went to a performance of the Dervishes. I believe we should have found it impossible to sit through this had we not been completely bewildered by the throbbing tom-tom, weird cries, and frenzied movements of the performer. He pierced his tongue with needles, burned himself with lighted twigs, and bit his arm until the blood gushed out. Afterwards we were shown tame scorpions, mesmerised so that their deadly sting had no effect.

A few of us penetrated into the Sand-Diviner's house, through sundry dirty and winding alley-way's. Climbing some dark and creaking stairs we found ourselves in a small room, empty save for two sleeping Arabs lying full length on the floor. Our Guide and another native held oil lamps – the only means of illumination. The mysterious Eastern smell of burning incense, so characteristic of all the Arab villages, helped to sweeten the otherwise polluted atmosphere. We sat on rugs facing the Diviner with sand on a piece of cloth between us. Over this he made several passes, tracing and retracing patterns, all the while muttering Arabic incantations in a sing-song voice. The knowledge of the future that he revealed was not very convincing, but we could not fail to be impressed with the surroundings.

We took the train from Biskra to Constantine, breaking the journey to visit the dead Roman city of Timgad, eerie and forlorn with its ruined Theatre, Library, Forum and Baths. On the paving stones can be seen the marks made by the chariot wheels and drawings executed by the inhabitants in the second and third centuries A.D. Perhaps the Arab method of hailing travellers-so reminiscent of the Roman Salute-has been handed down to them by the Romanised Berbers.

We began our homeward journey from Constantine, spending another morning in Algiers before catching the boat which once more carried us over the Mediterranean.

From Paris I flew to London. The journey would have been more enjoyable but for the deafening noise of the engines: in fact by the time we landed at Croydon we were thoroughly confused, and I, personally, remained deaf all the following day.

I went on this holiday with a private party, on the whole a young, jolly crowd, and if anyone, after reading this very inadequate description of the delightful time I had, would care to have particulars, she should write to: Mr. Roy Clarke, The Haymarket Club, 29, Spring Gardens, Trafalgar Square, S.W.1.

He is, I understand, arranging two similar tours for next year, one at Easter and one in October. The cost is an inclusive one (really inclusive!) of 29 guineas for seventeen days, and it is remarkably cheap considering the distances covered.

DOROTHY JONES (O.G.).

Form V C.

(Led by P. Young after Wordsworth.)

I MET a little damsel green,
 "In Form Vc. I am," she said.
 She oft a-wandering might be seen
 For many a mile she had to tread.

She had a lonely winsome air,
 For all alone was she;
 Her eyes were sad and very sad,
 Her sorrow troubled me.

"Form friends and play-mates little maid,
 How many may ye be?"
 "How many? Seven once," she said,
 And sadly looked at me.

"But where are they who used to dwell
 With you a while ago?"
 "Alas," she said, "the tale I tell
 Will fill your heart with woe.

"The gallery which was our home
 One day on us collapsed,
 For as we sat to draw a pome
 Two of us there were trapped.

"O where is little Rhona Main?"
 We asked Miss Squire one day.
 "The vaulting horse has eaten her
 As for team she wouldn't stay."

"One bitter day a match was played.
 No tactics did they use:
 Poor Betty was so badly blamed,
 She died of the abuse.

"So in the Græcus she was laid
 Where noble Maisie fell,
 And every day around them played
 The friends they loved so well."

Miss Hooper said, "Yes, very sad, but Maid Invertebrate,
 Don't drown the Form-room floor with tears. And hurry, you'll be late."

Form Notes.

You asked for this item. Below are supplied the only notes sent in:

THE SIXTH FORM this year has swelled in number from nineteen, of last year, to twenty-seven, and on the first day of term we had fears that the walls of our noble Form-room might burst under the strain-yet while *we* have remained free from harm, who knows that we may not have been the cause of those ominous cracks in the Staff-room walls, and so placed its innocent inmates in danger? However, encouraged by the ashes of the Tiddler, we have put the energies of twenty-seven strong into a strenuous term's work.

Our first task was to work at the "Electra" with Miss Forster, and make it something worthy of Euripides and our Greek Theatre. We thoroughly enjoyed our practices, being blessed with the knowledge that we were at last able to give a performance free from any mercenary transactions.

Afterwards we became immersed in such duties as Lost Property, Cloakroom Duty, and Prefects' Meetings. Now we are busy with the arrangement of the School Parties, but, optimistic as we have always been, we know that our labours will be well rewarded, and that the parties will be as jolly and successful as in the past.

FORM L.IIIw., at the beginning of this term, visited together with L.IIIE., the British Museum for the purpose of seeing the relics of Ur of the Chaldees which have been excavated from the ruins on the site of this city. The visit was interesting and was all the more so because of the period which they illustrated, which was between 4,000 and 5,000 years ago, and also because we happened to have been learning about the city in our Scripture lessons.

Who Knows-TIN-TACKS?

The onion in the cup?
 Where to buy elbow-grease?
 "Nager" means "to swim," and "la neige" is "the snow" ?
 Why Marie Antoinette had "white eye-brows like swimming"?
 "The Head Mistress and the other ordinary mistresses?"
 Which are the extraordinary ones?
 That equatorial regions export rubber, eucalyptus, bananas and malaria?
 Why School fires are at their best and brightest on mild days? And the converse?
 The unspillable ink-well that did?

Seasonable Talk.

GIVE to me the bed I love,
 And the blankets o'er me,
 Let the light that is about
 Shine around and on me:
 Head on the pillow and fall to sleep,
 Wake again in the morning.
 When I wake a watch they'll keep
 On my brother snoring.

V. ELDRIDGE (Form LIIIW)

The Lonely Road.

I WAS standing by a roadside,
 At dusk of an Autumn day,
 A dreary dusty roadside,
 It seemed as before me it lay,
 And it was a very open road,
 Open to wind and to rain,
 And a lonely road it seemed to me,

Where not many people came,
 And I was upon that road alone,
 Thinking my thoughts so drear
 When the wind in the trees above did moan,
 And I realised night was near,
 So back again I went my way,
 Along the dusty road,
 Back to the village where my friends,
 Called me to my abode.
 And I was much more happy then,
 With the firelight flickering gay.
 How sad I'd be if for always,
 On the open road I'd to stay!
 Although that may be the life for some,
 'Tis not the life for me,
 For friends I love and always will,
 To keep me company.

JESSICA WARD (*Form U.IVa.*).

I Dreamed

AND in my dream, I saw the earth that turned
 Upon its axis, as some painted ball,
 Dropped by a childish hand doth roll upon
 A carpet of clear blue eternity.
 And on that carpet was enwrought a plan,
 Divine and all encompassing, whose ground
 Was dim obscurity. There sparkled bright
 About its edge a myriad whirling stars,
 Far flung in glittering confusion; and
 Amidst, symmetrically placed, there shone
 The gold-rob'd sun in lustrous sov'reignty.

BETTY NETTLESHIP (*Form Va.*).

A Scene in Winter.

A STRANGE new world of shining light,
 A frosty silver gleam-
 Far stretch the silent fields of white,
 More lovely than a dream;
 The paths we know are lost to sight,
 And hushed the moorland stream.
 Soft-drifting snowflakes, fold on fold,
 Have woven a mantle deep,
 And now, safe-sheltered from the cold,
 The whole land lies asleep;
 Only the winds across the wold,
 For ever tireless sweep.

BERYL DAVID (*Form Vb*)

In Defence of Essex.

ESSEX is generally considered to be "thoroughly uninteresting, as flat as a billiard-table, and with no scenery of note." Now, I have explored most of the counties round London, Kent, Surrey, Middlesex, Berkshire, Buckingham, Bedford, Hertford, Cambridge and Suffolk, but I still remain loyal to this Essex of ours. True it has no wooded hills or rugged coastline, but its peaceful little villages and general air of serenity are entirely its own. They are perfectly charming, these little clusters of trimly thatched houses, complete with church and village pump.

I have recently had access to a map of Essex dated 1804, on which are marked all the little villages that even to-day are no more than one street. The county has since been opened up by railways and roads, but many of the villages are from five to ten miles from the nearest station, while the lanes leading to them are very often little more than cart-tracks which do not offer the same opportunities for speed as the modern arterial roads and so are very rarely explored. Thus it is that a good deal of Essex, especially the north, is practically unknown, and this only thirty or forty miles from London.

In Essex we have few seaside towns, and herein I think lies the secret of our solitude. The average week-ender wants to see the

sea and will not waste time in humble little villages when Brighton is only fifty miles away, so, while all the traffic streams to the south coast, our Essex is left as it has been for years past, sleepy and unhurried, flat certainly, but charming.

DAISY M. CARROLL (*O.G.*).

The Oiler of Wheels.

THERE are two or three sections of the Old Girls-our one-time boon companions-who have achieved a deserved measure of fame. These may be classified as follows:

- (a) O.Gs. who have passed Exams of a High and Terrifying Order.
- (b) O.Gs. who have Emigrated to the Uttermost Parts of the Earth.
- (c) O.Gs. who have Married and had Babies.

So far as Section (a) is concerned, one looks with mingled awe and admiration at the ever-extending list of Honours decorating the panels in the School Hall.

The adventurous members of Section (b) contribute the most fascinating articles to IRIS.

As for Section (c)-well, this is the most astounding of all. People who were in IIIA. with you only the other day (as it seems), turn up at O.G.A. meetings, looking just the same, and would actually have you believe that they are Matrons of Several Years' Standing!

It is all very wonderful, but I do feel that a word should be said for the more obscure, but quite harmless and necessary city worker, the Secretary.

She labours in a less prominent field, perhaps, and glory may not be her portion, but she is, at her best, a factor to be reckoned with in this modern civilisation of ours. She must incorporate in herself something of each of the qualifications I have enumerated above;-she must be as efficient in her own department of knowledge as any M.A. in hers; she must possess resourcefulness and a knowledge of life and human nature, and she must embody in herself such virtues as may enable her successfully to carry out her maternal duties, for she is, to all intents and purposes, a mother-a commercial mother!

Think, for instance of the tact required when you, as secretary, have to act as buffer between your man and all his undesirable callers.

"Tell him to go to --!" are your amiable instructions.

"We told him that last time," you suggest daringly.

"Well, get rid of him nicely-talk to him-tell him I'm out, or dead, or up North-anything you like!"

Then there are the days when your Tyrant is in a bad temper.

Everything you do or say is wrong though usually on such days you are wise enough to say nothing.

"Where's that report I asked you to get out for me? I thought I told you to put it on my desk! Where-where-oh, here it is! Why did you start it like that? It's all wrong-it's sheer nonsense. This is what you should have said. Did you ring Jones about that appointment? Yes? 'Umph' etc., etc.

There are other times, when he is affability itself. At Christmas, especially, you are in high favour, and have to exercise your ingenuity in composing letters of thanks for the various gifts and good wishes which he receives. And none of your stereotyped notes will do-there must be an appropriate witticism in everyone!

I haven't space to enlarge further upon the experiences and qualifications of the private secretary, but I do know that whilst fifty per cent. of her salary may be the result of efficiency, the other fifty is undoubtedly earned by patience, tact, unfailing good temper, and a sense of humour, which qualities are the secret of that subtle distinction between the secretary and the mere shorthand typist.

It is the exercise of such qualities under all conditions that makes the job worth while. It is unswerving adherence to them that smoothes the pathway of commerce for the chief, whose irritability may be the result of a more harrasing pressure of events than you can know.

Corresponding ill-temper on your part would perhaps be the proverbial last straw, and some important deal miscarry, when you might have contributed to its success had you poured

oil on the troubled waters.

For remember that even a powerful engine will fail if each little part is not in running order, and it is your privilege to look to the minutiae of the vehicle of commerce, so that the whole may run smoothly-to be, in short, the Oiler of Wheels.

MABEL LEONARD SMITH, (O.G.).

Chimneys.

THEY have a fascination about them. Perhaps you have not noticed it. If not, travel every day through scenery in which they are the dominant feature, and you will understand.

At first they are mere chimneys-stacks of dirty brick and mortar, blackening hourly in the smoke-laden atmosphere over which they preside-a kingdom of smuts, soot and fog. They are ugly, ungainly and detestable, as they rise against the sky.

Gradually, though, they come to possess a significance. Familiarity gives character to each. Here is one with a twisted cowl, sadly weather-beaten, comical, but with a friendly look like a kind old man. Here is another, thin, spirey, entirely disdainful, painfully superior in its obvious newness. Over there a stack of short, huddled chimneys, are gathered closely together like a group of children at play. In the distance a giant rears itself skywards, proud, stately, a monarch to whom fit homage must be paid by the series of bowing chimneys on the lines of roofs directly below it.

Some are cheerful, some are mournful: many are old and very weary, and occasionally one can find a cynic among them, looking with semi-humorous, semi-sarcastic eyes on its neighbours.

Are they symbolical of the lives in the homes beneath them? Is it mere chance which gives each individuality?

MARGERY SHEPPARD (O.G.).

The Crack.

ON the morning of the 7th inst., we came to school in the usual fashion. We were changing our clothes and exchanging remarks in the cloakrooms, when someone suddenly dashed in upon us in the most unseemly manner, hurled herself through a group near the door-way, and came to a standstill on my toe. To say that we were alarmed at this outrageous conduct is to express our feelings mildly; indeed, we were so amazed that one, usually so quiet and circumspect as this member of the Form happened to be, should forget herself so far, that we all remained speechless. This extraordinary occurrence, however, did not last for long. Unanimously, we demanded the meaning of such "unsuitable" behaviour. Having regained her breath and removed herself from my toe, she exclaimed, "Haven't you seen the school falling down?" Now, strange as it may seem, we had not noticed this singularly important fact. We regarded the walls of the cloakroom with interest; they appeared to be intact. We surveyed the ceiling: it presented a uniform smoothness. We gazed pityingly and questioningly upon She-Who-Ran. She told us to follow her. Some of us with only one shoe on, others wearing hat and gloves, and a select few, properly attired, hurried upstairs. At the top of the stairs, our guide halted, and we felt we were on the verge of being initiated into some profound secret. As we neared the Staff Room, our guide again stopped and pointed triumphantly to the ceiling, wherein we perceived a huge cavity. For some time we stood transfixed. Recovering ourselves presently we walked fearfully to our Form-room, there to discuss the Crack.

MARJORIE JOHNSON (Form V I.).

Concerning Contributions.

AT a meeting held early this term, the Upper School agreed that it wanted a bigger and brighter School magazine, published three times a year instead of twice. With pain and difficulty, just enough has been exhorted to fill this issue of IRIS.

Naturally we are most interested in ourselves and our concerns: whoever suggests otherwise, and wishes the School magazine to propagate Plato, Plotinus, Einstein and Epstein, is a prig and no true member of our happy, jolly, rollicking community.

Accordingly, we make no apology for numerous scraps of topical verse that will appear somewhere in this article.

Very little prose of merit combined with interest was sent in. Dorothy Campfield (V.I.), wrote a fluent and well-constructed

article on "The Daily Newspaper," but the humour was a little forced. Mollie Gerber (II.) wrote very neatly and carefully about birds, and Gwen Beaumont (L. IIIE.) sent in a careful article about "Hitchman's Diaries"; this was too lengthy and in rather a stiff "grown-up," style.

Margaret Gill's story was full of life, but it had plenty of deaths in the Edgar Wallace style. Nellie Querney (VB.) wrote well on "Conversation between lessons": "*What is the French for 'always?'- Be quiet do!- Well, what is it? Winnie do tell me-Twenty-one, twenty-nine; says Winnie threateningly-Lily, do you know?- 'Donner, to give; aller, to go' comes from Lily,*" and from the fire-guard, "*How did the dance go off?- What is the lesson ?-Do you know your History? - Botany, I think, or Algebra.*"

It is better to classify as prose J. Liggins' proof by Euclid that Hamlet was not mad: we could not print it, as there is no way of reproducing the diagram, but we congratulate her on her ingenuity. This, we understand, arose from other "conversations between lessons."

Of serious verse there was rather less than usual. Nellie Quinton (VI.) wrote pleasantly about one of those golden days in October when all four seasons seem to meet. Her work has always the merit of sincerity, but she should begin to experiment with more difficult metres.

"Spring was a laughing child who fled
Behind old winter's sheltering gown;
Summer flaunted a robe of red,
And gold of sunshine was her crown.
Green and gold was earth's carpet spread
Save where it blackened 'neath winter's tread."

Marjorie Hayes (U. IVB.) sent in a really beautiful MS., but her subjects were not of general interest. Irene Bant (L. IVA.) was vigorous about the Navy. The Lower School verse was not so good as usual this time. G. Beaumont (L. IIIE.) wrote pleasantly about mermaids. V. Dennis (U. IIIw.) and Y. Bayes (L. IIIw.) commemorate the Wind that was a shrieking monster on two Friday afternoons this term. M. Dallas speaks feelingly "To the Banshee." "O wind from the west scurling round the partition,
Hear the sad weary cries of our woeful condition!
Betake yourself off to some place far away,
And leave us at peace in Form U. IVA."

Kathleen Jones (U.IVA.) told, in amusing verse, "The Tale of the Nib." S. Tatham's "Desks" is too lengthy to print in full, but here is one verse describing how the tidiness of the first day of term is short-lived.

"But, alas, one sad day we are late in
from break
And snatch up our note-books and run,
And, leaving our desks in a
tumultuous heap,
Fly (swallowing the last of a bun)."

Ruth Hyatt's work was all good; her Spenseirian stanza ended thus:

"High lifted up were many loftie towres,
A conservatrie where plants they used to groe,
And eke upon its lawnes and rosy bowres,
Full well did spende their many virtuesse howres."

Mary French (L.IVa.), wrote careful verse about Prize-giving Day and Margaret Rabson from the same Form has evidently been meeting the Homework Bogy.

"Then riders live she had to do,
And Theorem twenty-one and two,
(And three if possible).
She worked at them for hours and hours;
With all her brain and working powers,
She did but riders three.
"Then Scripture found she for her task,
In Latin many a word she'd ask
And ask and ask again,
And then *mirus, mira, mirium*,
Repeat with *annus* and *annum*
And she was nigh despair."

In conclusion it must be mentioned that Form U. IVA., and

Form L.IVA., also Form L.IIIw. were the most energetic contributors. Thanks are especially due to the jolly, miscellaneous committee that sat in Form VB.'s room.

BELOW are printed suggestions for the School Library, sent in by Sheelagh Tatham (L. IVA.); "Patriotism," by E. Britton; "Rulers and Ruling," by M. Lord; "Curiosity," by V. Prior; "Birds and their Habits," by E. Martin; "Languages," by M. French; "Stormy Weather," by W. Gale; "Firelight," by P. Cole; "Following the Hounds," by M. Hunt; "The Rivers of England," by M. Brooks; "The Breeze in the Rushes," by P. Reed; "Trees in Spring," by L. Branch; "Brass Craft," by R. Brazier.

Games Notices.

WE are very fortunate in having practically the same netball team this season as last, and so far, we have been successful in our matches. We are competing in the League Matches and we have beaten St. Angela's and Leytonstone in the first round.

Our Junior Team has only played one match as yet, but the members of the team and other girls in the Lower School are very promising for future School teams. We hope that, now we have an extra court, they will practise very hard, and show their enthusiasm by turning up at all the matches.

Results of the Netball Matches played this term:

Skinners	1st team	18-16	Win
	2nd "	17-3	"
*St. Angela's	1st "	30-11	"
East London	1st "	25-3	"
	2nd "	24-5	"
Greycoat	1st "	15-4	"
	2nd "	9-10	Loss
Junior (15 and under)		9-1	Win
" (14 and under)		6-2	"
University College	1st team	17-15	"
	2nd "	7-9	Loss
	3rd "	16-6	Win
Leytonstone	1st "	24-11	"
	2nd "	11-4	"
	Junior "	6-8	Loss

*League Matches

The hockey field is in a fit condition for play, and the club is progressing rapidly under the influence and coaching of several members of the staff, who have aroused enthusiasm in the School by turning out themselves on the coldest of December days to referee the practice games. The Hockey Club is greatly indebted to these mistresses and hopes in the near future to repay them by producing a really fine team.

A few members of the club attended a lecture, and their enthusiasm has reached such a stage that they can be seen practising in the early hours of the morning. (Exaggeration: 8-15 a.m. at the earliest).

The tennis team were unsuccessful against the Monoux School and against the Staff. Miss Squire and the team spent a day at Wimbledon during the championships. Very few of the team have ever enjoyed themselves so much, although we came home feeling very small as we compared our tennis with the brilliant performances we had seen during the day. On that particular day all the well-known players were playing, and none of us are likely to forget the match between R. Lacoste and H. W. Austin.

The School tennis tournaments were won in the Upper School by Form VA and in the Middle School by L.I VB.

To those who took part in the sports on Sports Day, the heat of the sun must have been a little overwhelming; but the number of spectators increases each year, and one cannot but think that soon a policeman will be needed to regulate the traffic in and out of the School gates. The Cups were awarded to Forms VA., U. IIIA., and L. IIIE.

The Swimming Sports were held again last term, and, in spite of the somewhat muddy nature of the water, we were able to retrieve a few patty-pans from the bottom of the bath. The Cups were won by Form VA. in the Upper School, by L. IVA. in the Middle, and by Form II. in the Lower School.

DOROTHY TAYLOR (*Games Captain*)
School Societies.

THE LITERARY SOCIETY has been able to hold two meetings during the Autumn Term. On Friday, October 26th, we had a Magazine Evening, when members read their articles which had been submitted as entries to the Society. Among the best and most interesting of these was "Impressions," by P. Woolnough, "Phaeton," by S. Tatham and "Home Thoughts" by D. Ling.

Our second meeting, on November 16th, was of a new and novel kind. Scenes were taken from any literary source and acted by members of each Form, while the task of the audience was to guess the context of each scene acted. Much amusement accompanied the performances, and Upper IVA.'S scene from "Little Women," was voted the best effort of the evening.

Meetings for next term have not yet been arranged, but we all hope that our yearly visit to the "Old Vic," will come in the very near future.

The Society heartily welcomes Miss Park as its new Vice-President.

MUSICAL SOCIETY NOTES.-Owing to the enthusiasm of Miss Taylor, whom we are very happy to welcome, two extremely interesting meetings have been held this term.

The first meeting on November 8th, was of a very enjoyable character. Community singing, conducted by Miss Taylor, proved a great success.

On November 27th the meeting took the form of a lecture in celebration of the Schubert Centenary. The life story of Schubert was told by Miss Taylor, and the lecture was demonstrated by Form Representatives.

We are glad to see so many members of the Staff interested in our activities.

THE SCIENCE SOCIETY has enjoyed three meetings this term.

A Competition Evening was held on Monday, October 1st, at which about eighty members racked their brains to solve the puzzles set by the Science Sixth. Before the competitions began, members met in the Art Room where one unlucky victim from each Form had to give all impromptu speech on the subject which she had drawn. Form U. IV A. outwitted the other Forms in competitions and speeches.

The weather for the fungus foray, held on Saturday, October 20th, was disappointing and only forty-five instead of a hundred turned up, but these forty-five with a few Staff enjoyed the walk through the Forest from Loughton to High Beech. Not so many Fungi were found this year but between us we gathered quite a variety as well as armfuls of beech leaves. We returned to Chingford through the Forest.

On Saturday, November 17th, a party of seven, with Miss Clough, visited Yardley's Soap Works, and on Thursday, November 22nd, a party of twenty went with Miss Dennithorne to Gibb's Works. The lucky members of both parties thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Winners of the Holiday Competitions were as follows: O. Lothian, M. Danger, J. Spratt, B. Hewett, M. Durrant, M. Hayes.

O.G.A. Societies.

THE LITERARY SOCIETY alas is no more. With only ninepence in our exchequer, and with but about eight really faithful members, it was decided that the Society had better sink into obscurity.

It was with regret that this decision was reached, as we had had many enjoyable meetings, but the odds were too heavy. Our numbers were not sufficient to justify our expenses. For some months, unless we had been fortunate enough to secure the services of an outside lecturer, the same few members provided material for the meetings and the task at last became too arduous.

Now we hear that Norah Blofield, the founder of the Society, is on her way home. Perhaps, freshened by the sea-winds and invigorated by her stay in New Zealand, she will, if she intends to remain here, pull us into form once more.

M. SHEPPARD and Q. SIZER (*Hon. Secretaries*).

THE GYM. CLUB.-We still thrive. With several new members and nearly all the old, the present Season opened quite successfully.

Rose Harris still insists on getting us over the horse, under

people's legs and along the room. It matters not if we have left School five years and plead old age and stiffness -she hauls and pulls till we have done what was required of us, and after a class or two, we all begin to feel very energetic.

So if any of you want rejuvenating, come and join us next term. That will be 7s 6d. please.

MARGERY SHEPPARD (*Hon. Secretary*).

FORM VA. Won the Form-Room competition last term.

Births.

On July 15th, 1928, to HILDA CUBITT (*née* Allen), a daughter, Daphne Mary.

On October 20th, 1928, to Mr. and Mrs. G. CHARMAN WILLIAMS (Hilda Farmer), a son and two daughters, Peter, Pansy and Wendy, who died October 21st.

Marriages.

ELSIE V. HABBEN to JOHN STONE, on June 30th, 1928 (45, Essex Road, North Chingford).

JOAN SWEETING to REGGIE BELL, on October 6th.

BELLA OLIVER to EDWARD QUINLAN, on 13th October.

GRACE SYRETT to Major J. C. DENVER, R.A.M.C., on 31st October.

The Prize Distribution.

THE Prize-giving was held on Friday, 14th December. The prizes were given in the afternoon by Mr. H. Hamilton Fyfe, author and journalist, who delivered (and exemplified) a witty speech on "Optimism."

In the evening we were all delighted to welcome Miss Hewett, who established with every human soul in the Hall those contacts that she defined as the aim of education. The universal languages of Art, of Music and of Mathematics, provide contacts with the whole world, through which can be established the reign of friendship and universal cordiality. Miss Norris, in her Report, the main facts of which are already known to you, was equally certain that the spirit of education commands "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

We are very grateful to our Chairman of the afternoon, Mr. P. Astins, E.C.C. and to Mr. Hewett who took the chair in the evening. He promised that some day we should have a new Laboratory and a Library.

The entertainment programme was varied as usual, and went with a swing from start to finish.

In addition to the academic successes noted elsewhere, the following details were printed on the Prize-giving programme:

Board of Education Final Certificate: I. Beaumont, A. Brooker, A. Feuerstahler, D. Fillmore, E. Hewett, A. Landery, M. Oliver, D. Robertson, M. Roses, C. Saunders, J. Speakman, G. Stanshall, E. Waterman.

Helen Rainer has obtained the Froebel Union Higher Certificate, and Freda Robertson her L.R.A.M. H. Ivey is now a fully qualified masseuse.

The School is helping the Miners by all the means in its power: girls have cheerfully given up the money usually spent on "party refreshments," and they intend, too, to raise more funds by carol-singing and by making and selling sweets and cakes, as well as by filling the Form Collection Boxes with money raised by such means as saving bus fares or bun pennies.

The last of our district League Matches was played on Saturday, the 8th December, against West Ham. We won by 17 goals to 14. This means that we are now in the semi-finals of the London Netball League: next term we play the James Allen School, Dulwich.

Mrs. Budgen (Miss Beckett) has been taking Miss Clough's place for the last fortnight of term. We are sorry that Miss Clough is ill and hope she will soon be well.