

THE EXPANDING SECONDARY SCHOOL

After the excitement of the armistice peace brought changes and problems as troublesome as those of war. At first changes were for the better. Mr. Mansfield and Mr. Peach were back in the 1919 autumn term and were joined by Mr. Crompton fresh from war service in the Sudan after earlier graduation at Oxford. The Belgian evacuees, who had done so much for the school, went ; and the staff assumed a better balance as between men and women, and a more highly qualified appearance. The staple product of Long Eaton, lace, was in great demand ; so men returning from war found ready employment ; money flowed into the district. Parents were able to afford secondary school places and the Governors discovered that the scarcity of scholars which had been one depressing effect of war was now replaced by a demand for places which they could not satisfy.

In June 1919 the Governors accordingly passed a resolution urging the County Council to build the extensions to the school which had been contemplated in the original design ; and they pointed out, as evidence justifying their request, that the school, built for 200, had already 265 scholars. Since the extension could clearly not be provided at once the Governors proposed that huts should be erected as temporary accommodation until the building could be done. Alternatives to this course, which had been suggested but rejected as inadequate by Mr. Clegg, were the buying of Dr. Johnson's house in the Market Place and the Baptist Schools in Clumber Street. So the school first hears of the huts, as temporary accommodation, which in 1960 are still an essential, if squalid, part of the classroom space. In September the urgency of the need for accommodation is emphasised by the refusal of admission to twenty five candidates qualified for entry, because there is no room. Their parents are assured by the

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Governors that the children will be admitted when places are available, and renewed inquiries are made of the Disposal Board for suitable Army huts. Towards the end of the year the County Council agree to their erection, and, after further representations by the Governors, Mr. Widdows, the County Architect, replies that plans are being prepared for the originally contemplated extension to the school. In December Mr. Widdows attends a Governors' meeting to discuss these plans and Messrs. Perks, the Long Eaton Builders, are commissioned to erect the large hut which has been obtained from the Disposal Board.

But Mr. Clegg's thoughts had not been concerned only with administrative problems in an overcrowded school. His interest in books—still witnessed to by the 15th century Plutarch displayed in the Long Eaton Public library—led him in this year to publish an edition of the "Cypress Grove" by the 17th century poet, William Drummond of Hawthornden. This is a meditation on life in the manner of the better known Sir Thomas Browne, and likely to appeal only to those with an appreciative ear for 17th century prose. Mr. Clegg's introduction shows he had this; his own style reveals the influence of the studied, aphoristic manner of that period, as when, after tracing with scholarly pleasure certain phrases through various writers, he sums up with the Baconian "There is no patent in a trope." Characteristically, the book was handsomely printed on fine paper, and is not merely a text but a beautiful object.

Prosperity in Long Eaton had given the Governors an accommodation problem; it gave them also another, rather contradictory, one. This arose from the desire of parents who had children at the school to take them away before the course was completed so that the high wages being paid on a restricted labour market might be brought into the household. So the Governors meet the problem of the so-called "early leavers" for the first time. It is a problem which is to haunt practically every Governors' meeting in the future. In 1919 it was dealt with by re-drafting the agreement under which a child is admitted to the school. A clause requiring any parent failing to keep his child at the secondary school for four years to pay £5 as liquidated damages is embodied in the new agreement.

January 1920 sees 315 pupils in the school, which has to manage as best it can until the hut can be erected. An additional complication is that the lease of part of the grounds is about to expire and the landlord, the Long Eaton Urban District Council, wishes to sell the land, but whereas the U.D.C. want 3/- a yard the Governors cannot bring themselves to offer more than 2/6. Pleasanter incidents are the invitation received by Mr. Clegg to give a course of lectures in ...

the East Riding of Yorkshire upon art, on which the Governors officially compliment him, and the very favourable report which the School Inspectors make on the art teaching in the school. They are impressed by the murals, as well they might be, for few schools had such decoration, and the inspectors agree with Mr. Clegg's views on the unconscious absorption of beauty by the child from its environment. They are impressed also by the way in which other subjects are hand-maidens to art : woodwork, they find, is chiefly concerned with the carving of blocks for printing ; needlework is mainly decorative, the creation of patterns in embroidery. But even in art the accommodation difficulties arise, for the inspectors say the Art Room is inadequate and urge that better provision should be made.

It would have been strange had the inspectors found art holding any other position than it did, for Mr. Clegg's book " Drawing And Design ", a four year course in art teaching for secondary schools, stated firmly its author's opinion that art was a subject of major educational value. " Art should take a place in the school curriculum second to no other subject, and the time allotted to it should at least equal the time given to a language or science in the years 12-15." The reason for this belief is that Art is a subject in which the joy of achievement may most easily be experienced by the maturing mind, and this association of joy and success once established may be transferred to more abstract subjects. Mr. Clegg holds a view like that of Sanderson of Oundle the difference being that whereas Mr. Clegg sees the manual dexterity of art as a source of joy and therefore a powerful educational means, Sanderson saw the same value in engineering and practical construction. Sir William Rothenstein in his preface to the second edition of " Drawing And Design " comments on this belief. " Education means, before all things, sincerity and respect for the finer things of life. Unless a man has these, he is not educated, however much knowledge of facts he may have acquired. Mr. Clegg believes that sincerity and reverence, in addition to manual skill, may be developed by the intelligent practice of drawing and of handicrafts." Mr. Clegg also saw in the beauty of objects by which an art student is necessarily surrounded an influence which affects unconsciously the developing mind. " The future citizen should be encompassed about with all beautiful and ennobling influences-two or three first-rate pictures, perhaps a single fine object-these are ample decoration." These general principles come from the introduction ; the body of the book is a series of carefully contrived lessons arranged in a manner justified by the practice of years in the classroom ; everything in the book had been proved in school. As if to underline this, two of the illustrative plates were executed in school under the supervision of Miss Rigby, the art mistress, three

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thousand copies of each plate being made. And the inspectors appreciated the practical basis of the book when they commented that it should prove of great value to young teachers.

In accordance with Mr. Clegg's views art was not confined to the Art Room. He was an admirer of Italian and Flemish painting and some of the reproductions which he hung on the walls of class rooms and corridors are still about the school : the Raphael Madonna in the Art Room is one. On one occasion one form was shown by the Headmaster a pen and ink drawing by Railton and asked whether its members would each pay 1d. a week to buy the drawing for the form room. They did; Mr. Clegg's enthusiasms were infectious; and so he began what he referred to as his " black and white room." But his enthusiasm and sympathies were not limited to painting and visual beauty. Mr. Mansfield recalls how a bright frosty day and the news that the ice was holding would cause the Headmaster to dismiss the school to the Trent Rifle Range Pond, skates being mysteriously made available for everyone, and off rejoicing pupils would stream, the Headmaster, on his bicycle, skates dangling from the handlebars, among the earliest arrivals. Such cavalier treatment of the timetable seems to have caused some comment among the townspeople, but for Mr. Clegg this was easily offset by the enchantment of a morning on the ice. And if he sought the best in painting and in circumstance he looked for the best in people too. Mr. Mansfield has described him as sometimes wilfully blind to the shortcomings of pupils. Faced with a demand for action against a boy who was uninterested in school work and extremely idle, he scrutinized the wretched scrawls in the boy's book looked up with a twinkling eye, and said, " I'm sure his mother thinks he's wonderful."

This geniality was characteristic. A small boy on the corridor would be greeted with " Good morning. Isn't it a lovely morning ?" On another occasion Mr. Mansfield remembers seeing him deeply moved when a boy who had been asked for his impressions of the school replied. " Well, sir, it's such a happy place." " No answer," says Mr. Mansfield, " could have given him greater pleasure." He never seems to have raised his voice or his hand ; he does seem to have raised the standards of those around him, largely by the conviction with which he sought the best in things and people.

If his views on art as a means of education and his attitude to pupils were unusual, so were his views on school organisation. He accepted the incentive value of trophies of various kinds but disliked cups, the form they usually take in schools. He tolerated a cup as the trophy for success in school studies, but for the trophy for sports he ..

had the wooden triptych, still to be seen in Room 8, carved by Mr. Alliott. These trophies were awarded to the winning forms, for Mr. Clegg had no school Houses.

In the same way when the subject of a War Memorial for the school was raised, he was not in favour of any conventional memorial. He did provide the inscription for the Town Memorial in the Market Place, and Mr. Alliott carved it in the stone, but for the school he wanted something different : a large piece of Charnwood granite brought from the Forest and embedded in the school grounds. This was never done, but for a short time after the war four Houses were created, but only for the boys of the school, and these were given the names, two in each case, of former pupils who died in the war. These Houses of Doncaster-Stone, Keeley-Webb, Hooper-Lewis and Racklyeft-Maltby were the first school Houses and seem to have replaced the granite block scheme as a memorial to the dead.

The introduction of a House system, although only a temporary one, indicates the increasing size of the school and consequent tendency to more complex organisation, and another development at this time reflects the increasing age of the school. This was the formation in 1920 of the Old Scholars' Association. Gatherings of former pupils had been arranged by Mr. Clegg at an earlier date but such association was now formalized in a permanent body. Mr Clegg took great interest in it and Mr. Mansfield has described the success of the Old Scholars' Re-unions during the 1920's as due to " his vital presence ". " I shall never forget ", he writes, " the dismay and silence at the Re-union at Xmas 1929 when it was learned that he had been suddenly taken ill and, for the first time, would not be present " .

In 1920 Mr Clegg persuaded the Governors to suggest to the County Council the purchase of a house on Broad Street for use by the staff. The County Council rejected the idea on the ground that the Board of Education would not sanction it. Had this house been obtained not only would the school's accommodation have been increased but an access might have been developed from Broad St., an entrance which would have been invaluable today as an alternative to the dangerous entrances from an increasingly busy Tamworth Road. Another suggestion to the Governors at this time had more success. This was a request for an annual sum of money for the buying of bulbs to beautify the grounds. As a result of this the borders have gradually been filled with daffodils and other plants. This action, like the display of pictures, illustrates the Headmaster's belief in the value of unconsciously contemplated beauty. " Buying hyacinths to feed the soul," was his own account of it.

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In July 1920 Mr. Peach resigned to become headmaster of Bilston Central School and Mr. Mansfield became senior form master. No appointment to replace Mr. Peach was made for the first part of the autumn term and the senior pupil, and now very distinguished Old Boy, Harry Godwin, helped the staff. In 1921 Mr. Aucken was appointed to teach chemistry, and the staffing position seems to have become more stable.

By this time the rise in prices caused by war had become so great that the Government in full cry for economy reduced the Exchequer Grant to force thrifty administration on local government. The County Council found that an increased amount of education costs had to be paid out of rate revenue, and in order to keep this as low as possible decided to increase secondary school fees. In Long Eaton they were to be raised to £10 a year. The Governors protested strongly though unsuccessfully against this, but, inconsistently, supported a request from Mr. Clegg for an ex-pupil to be employed as a laboratory steward at a salary of £10 a Year, and for the appointment of a school secretary. They also asked for more expenditure when they urged the County Council to buy the site of the present fire station to extend the school grounds. By asking for much perhaps they succeeded in getting a little, for although the County Council rejected the fire station purchase, on grounds of economy, it agreed to the appointment of a secretary and a lab. assistant. Accordingly Mrs. Bingham became the first school secretary in 1923, but the post of lab. assistant was not filled because no ex-pupil applied. Other staff appointments during this period were those of Mr. Beer, later Mr. Bowman-Beer, to teach Maths. and Physics, Miss Dedicoat, and Mr. Anderson for woodwork. Miss Dedicoat had taught at the school during the war but had left to take a degree and now returned as a graduate teacher.

For one week in the autumn term of 1922 the school was closed because of an outbreak of measles. This and other records of the absence of teachers because of " diphtheria " in the house provide a forceful reminder of the additional hazards of life forty years ago. In January 1924, despite a slight drop in numbers to 280 pupils, the Governors send a deputation to the County Council to press for the long-promised extensions. The County Council state flatly that any building is impossible ; there is no money ; and suggest an arrangement whereby the cookery class is held in Sawley Road School. Shortly after this had been accepted by the Governors the cookery mistress left and no new one was appointed ; so the accommodation problem was partly disposed of by dropping one subject.

For the pupils the great event of 1924 was the visit to Wembley, organised in two parties, one staying for two days, the other for one.

The sixth school magazine, published in this year, has a long account of this by Miss Dora Bastable, now headmistress of a Nottingham primary school. Mr. Clegg allowed his pupils to walk round London in normal fashion as individuals ("no crocodiles for us"), joined them on the Great Racer, and when asked by a worried waiter: "Sir, a boy has ordered a Peach Melba, is it allowed?" replied: "Can he pay for it?" He also took the party round the National Gallery and, while they were gazing at Whistler's Nocturne, was asked by one puzzled boy: "Please, sir, where's the picture?"

By this time the economic difficulties which had caused the Government's restrictions on spending were affecting Long Eaton. The trade in lace fell sharply and Governors' meetings in 1924 are mainly concerned with early leavers, both fee-paying pupils and holders of free places being affected by the new poverty. The Governors suggest that free places should be increased to 40% but find no support from the County. The September meeting brightens up, however, at the examination results which include twenty four passes in the London General Schools Examination, three Open Scholarships at Nottingham University College, two Derbyshire Major Scholarships and one State Scholarship, the outstanding scholar being Audrey Butler. For this the school is given a half holiday.

But the general situation worsens; trade shrinks more; early leavers increase in numbers (Mr. Clegg in an effort to counter this tendency suggests the introduction of a commercial course) and in July 1925 a County Council letter demands a reduction of one in the staff in order to maintain the staff-pupil ratio of 1 : 20. The Governors ask the County to receive a deputation to discuss this and the reduction of fees where two children are from one family, and so general is the depression that the proposed deputation is to be made up from the Governors of Clay Cross, Ilkeston and Heanor as well as Long Eaton. The County Council refused to meet the deputation and repeated its demand for the dismissal of one teacher, but accepted for a year a compromise by which the Art mistress was to be part time, and the P.T. Instructor, already a part time teacher, who now resigned, was not to be replaced; but insisted that its original demand must be met by July 1926. Mr. Ward was accordingly given notice in June 1926, but was saved by Miss Dedicoat's leaving to become Senior Mathematics Mistress at Salt Girls' High School, Shipley. The end of the year again saw the school enjoying a half holiday for a pupil's success. This time it was for Harry Godwin's election as a fellow of Clare College, Cambridge.

But although the school's academic successes were pleasing, its main concern during these years of depression was to find some means of lowering the number of early leavers. Mr. Clegg's suggestion

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of a commercial course for this purpose was approved by the County, subject to the Board of Education's inspectors being consulted. At the same time the Governors were assured that the question of accommodation for domestic science teaching would be borne in mind when the County Council drew up its next three year programme for the Board's consideration. This it would do in the following year.

The General Strike of 1926 does not seem to have affected the school. Mrs. Sedden (Winnie Feber) remembers it as " an exciting break in ordinary routine," and says: " life seemed dull when the trains ran to school once more." But since it creates no ripple on the records any disorganisation must have been slight. Another sharp reminder of the past is given by Mrs. Sedden's recollection of her distress at the frequent sight of beggars and hawkers in the streets. More important than strikes to the pupils were " Sports Days with hero-worship for the Victor Ludorum, matches with neighbouring schools and mixed expeditions to Swanwick by train ; hockey and football in winter, tennis and cricket in summer." -

Sports Days were held then, as now, at the end of the summer term. Owing to the lack of field space at school they were usually held on the Recreation Ground. The programme for the Annual Sports held on July 30th, 1919, states that the " starters (Blue and White Rosettes) are Mr. Crompton Mr. Mansfield and Miss Drake." Mr. Mansfield and Mr. Crompton were probably feeling tired by the time of the first race, for they usually began Sports Day early. There seem to have been difficulties preventing the marking out of tracks before the day arrived and Mr. Crompton recalls making his way, together with Mr. Mansfield, through the echoing streets of a deserted Long Eaton, at 4 a.m. to begin measuring and marking out for the day's delights. These early Sports were organised on a class basis, and the 1919 programme shows a Class Relay and a very intriguing Tug of War Final in which the boys of the Sixth form took on those of IA. This was perhaps not so one-sided as it appears, for in 1917 there were only two boys in the top form and in 1924 only six. From 1924 till 1927 there was an annual triangular sports match with Ilkeston and Heanor schools held at Easter, but this was abandoned in 1928 because it discouraged entries for the school sports.

At Xmas there were two school parties: a Junior and a Senior. Mrs. Sedden says : The Junior Party started with boys and girls sharply divided between dances on either side of the hall. You were urged to dance and when the music stopped you hastened back to cover with your own sex. Supper-time, however, brought something of a thaw. We wore pink, blue, or yellow, silk party frocks, white socks, dancing slippers with elastic, and long hair. By the time we advanced to the Senior Party most of us were bobbed or shingled,

supper partners were arranged in advance, and all the latest dances : Charleston, Blues, and Black Bottom, were performed ; and it was a great thrill to be asked to dance by one of the staff ". It seems worth adding that the staff on these occasions wore evening dress.

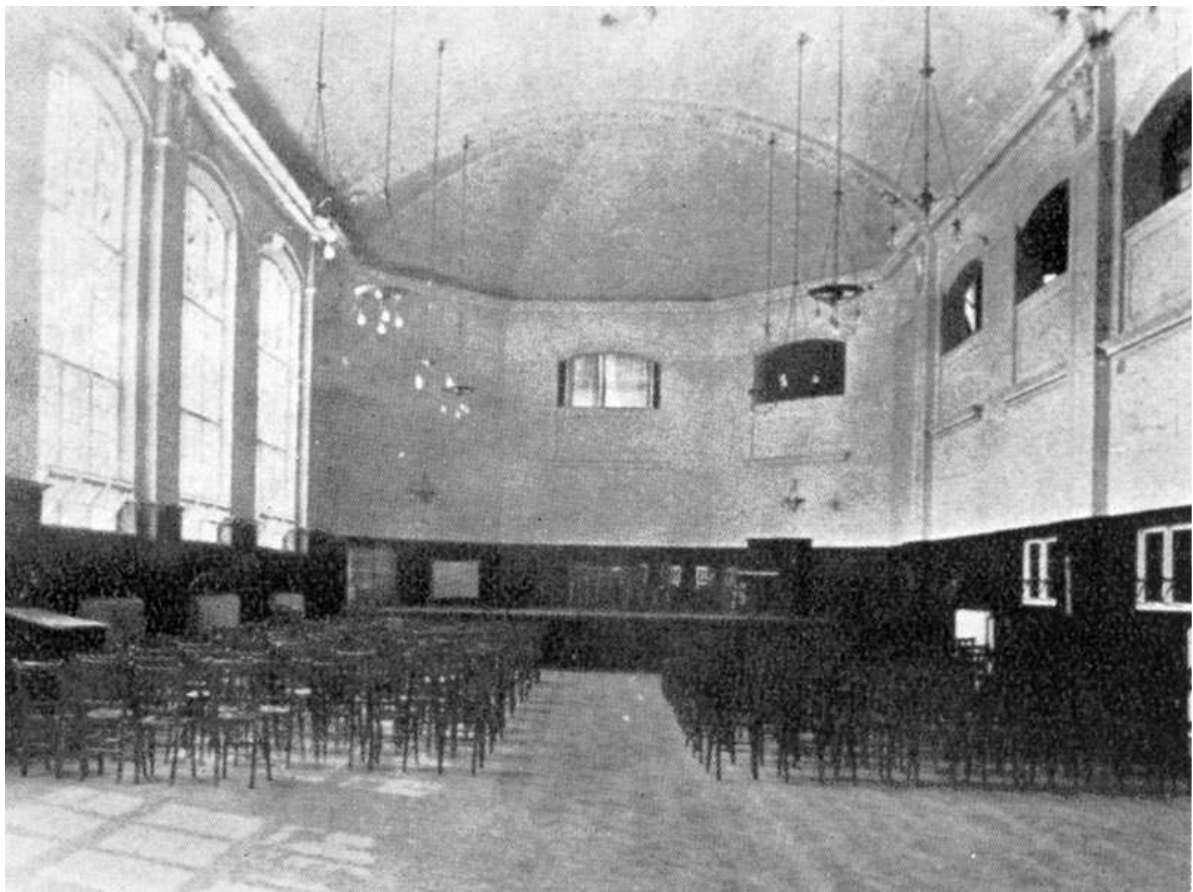
The staff, getting up to mark out tracks at 4 a.m., presiding over parties, shepherding pupils to Wembley, the Theatre Royal in Nottingham, and the baths at Derby Road, have their memorial in the recollection of their pupils. Mrs. Sedden remembers Miss Taylor officiating as Senior Mistress from her tiny room by the main entrance (it is now the switch board room) tying up cuts, and, in class, insisting on meticulous neatness. Mr. Crompton was teaching Latin and there came a glorious day when an urgent message came to him in class : " Your bees have swarmed," and the Latin text was dropped for a veil and gloves as the bee keeper hastily left. Miss Silk was admired for her " wonderful serve at tennis which we all tried vainly to emulate," (no wonder, Miss Silk was a County player). 'Mr. Mansfield seems to have been characterised by professional keenness for he was " always bewailing the persistence of our English accent in his French lessons and the too frequent hockey and tennis matches which took some of us away from him just before School Certificate." Mr. Fletcher, in those days fresh from a distinguished career at Cambridge, now Dr. Fletcher of Liverpool University, was in charge of mathematics and " miraculously brought Brenda Clarke and myself up to Cambridge Entrance standard on a diet of highly indigestible advanced mathematical text books." It was not quite such a miracle as Mrs. Sedden says, for she achieved a standard equal to that of Wrangler.

The eclipse of the sun in 1927 saw Mr. Mansfield, Mr. Crompton and Mr. Bowman Beer standing in the eerie light of the pre-eclipse outside the gates of Giggleswick School. Mr. Clegg had given permission to any of his staff to absent themselves in order to watch the eclipse ; he himself, he said, would " hold the fort " at school ; and Mr. Mansfield, keen on obtaining memorable photographs, and Mr. Bowman Beer had persuaded a reluctant Mr. Crompton to go speeding north through the night. At Giggleswick Mr. Mansfield set up his camera and they waited, Mr. Crompton afflicted with raging toothache. So impressive was the sight of the total eclipse of the sun that when it was over Mr. Crompton had lost his toothache ; and, what is more remarkable, Mr. Mansfield had forgotten to take any photographs.

In July 1928 only twenty three candidates sat the school entrance examination and only fourteen passed. There were 262 pupils in the school, however, and the Governors pressed the County Council again for the new building. They were told that, if money was available, the originally contemplated extensions would be completed in the ...



THE SCHOOL BEFORE 1914



THE HALL AS IT WAS BEFORE 1930



THE STAFF IN THE EARLY TWENTIES

From left to right: Back row : MR. ALLIOTT, MR. CROMPTON, MISS EDMONDS, MISS SILK, MISS DEVEY (MRS. HARTSHORNE), MR. ANDERSON, MR. MANSFIELD. Front row : MISS DEDICOAT, MISS LOWIS (MRS. JARRETT), MISS EVANS, MR. CLEGG, MISS TURNER, MISS DRAKE..



A CLASS AT WORK IN THE FRENCH ROOM (Room 3)

year 1920-30 By January 1929 numbers had fallen to 247 and the Headmaster is again urging the introduction of the commercial course, already approved in principle, to counteract the decline. In July 1929 the estimated numbers for the following year justify the Governors in increasing the staff and Mr. Pritchard is appointed for Science, Maths. and Games. By September there are no signs of the promised building and the Governors protest to the County. An assurance is oven them in January that building will begin in the spring of 1930; so Mr. Clegg sees the school which he has guided for twenty years about to increase its size, as he and Mr. Widdows had planned it should, when the original plans were drawn. He also receives what is to he his last Inspectors' Report on his school, for there has been an art inspection in December 1929. This report is a tribute to Mr. Clegg's enthusiasm and judgement. Its only criticism is its condemnation of the Art Room as inadequate, and this will be met by the rebuilding for which a firm promise has now been given.

Mr. Clegg's health had not been good for many years. The severe pneumonia described earlier by Mr. Adams, which had kept him bedridden for months in 1910, had left an aftermath against Which he constantly fought. In 1920 he had to ask for leave to take a holiday in Italy, after which he Seemed to regain his normal vigour ; but the end of 1929 brought fresh signs of trouble, " However," says Mr. Mansfield, " he was determined to die in harness and he was at school t \\o days before his death in March 1930!"

Miss Bastable gives a good picture of Mr. Clegg. " I remember so vividly seeing 'Mr. Clegg come out of his study, papers in one hand, his light walk, tweed suit, stroking beard, twinkle in his eye," and the description indicates the kindly leadership which seems to have been his great quality. " More than anyone I have ever known," writes Mr. Mansfield, " he believed in example rather than precept. He made very few rules, but he was more punctilious than anyone else in observing them. Because of increasing traffic on the road outside he made a rule that all scholars must dismount from their bicycles before entering or leaving the school grounds. Although we on the staff mainly ignored this rule, lie always observed it." When the school acquired the strip of land between the canal and the original school boundary the strip was littered with stones. Mr. Clegg and some of his staff stood one dinner break watching the boys at play and reflecting how desirable it was that the stones should he collected in one spot for disposal. Suddenly Mr. Clegg walked out to the ground and set up a large stone at one end. At this he began to throw stones. The boys stared ; then the attraction of example was too strong ; they joined in. In half an hour the scattered stones were collected in a small area.

THE JUBILEE BOOK

Mr. Sharman recalls facing Mr. Clegg at the beginning of one term, having been absent for the first day, because he had been unable to resist the lure of the Welsh mountains, blue in the west, at the extremity of his last day's cycle trip of the holidays ; and had cycled on, fascinated, though the Vale of Llangollen to Bala and beyond. " What punishment would the run-of-the-mill headmaster of that day or of this have devised for such an avoidable transgression?" he asks, and continues : " My punishment was : ` Well done!' Need I say I left the Head's study in a state of astonished relief ? Could Sam have foreseen then that six years later the Civil Service Commissioners would award vital extra marks to a youth on his 'viva voce ' appearance whose cycle had crossed a dozen European frontiers, for qualities his wanderings were supposed to have developed ? I prefer to believe he did so foresee."

But behind the kindness were shrewdness and determination. His shrewdness is well illustrated by Mr. Mansfield's account of how Mr. Clegg once visited an antique shop which contained a piece of Georgian silver he had long looked for to complete a silver tea set he had been collecting for years. He showed interest in and enquired about several pieces, but not the one he wanted. " As he was saying goodbye to the disappointed dealer, he looked at it nonchalantly, and casually asked the price. He got it very cheaply." Kindliness normally served this shrewdness but when it could not he could be severe. As Headmaster he used his powers of suspension and dismissal whenever he thought necessary, and as the head of a school of fee-payers and scholarship holders exercised such powers more frequently than is possible in the circumstances of today.

His death coincides with the end of an era. In the outside world the postwar period is over. In the school the building is overfull; the secondary school established ; expansion is the expectation.