

CHENET NUMBER 8

THE MAGAZINE OF CANNOCK GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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JULY 1966

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Cover: Design by Diana Hallchurch 5A "Insect Wings".

EDITORIAL

THE traditional school magazine, it must be conceded, is conservative in pattern and mundane in content. However, we hope that this is not the case with this issue of 'Chenet'. We have tried, without, we hope, contravening the laws of libel, to produce a magazine that has sparkle and vitality, with contributions from all sections of the school and from two illustrious ex-members. Our aim, therefore, has been to interest at some point or other all readers, whether pupils, parents or friends. We can only hope that in some measure we have succeeded.

STAFF NOTES

BIRTH

NOVEMBER 5, 1965 Sarah Elizabeth Spencer.

MARRIAGES

AUGUST 7, 1965 Miss M. Walker and Mr. E. J. Brookes at Countess of Huntingdon Church, Ely.

APRIL 10, 1966 Miss B. Edwards and Mr. C. Mapstone at Hanbury Baptist Church, Bargoed.

SIX members of staff moved to other fields at the end of last school year. One cannot add to Mr. Pomfret's words in last year's 'Chenet' on the departure of Miss Baker to a Senior Lectureship at St. Matthias College, Bristol. Suffice it to say that her influence on the school in its formative years is still being felt, and it has been good to see her on occasional visits to former home territory during this year and to learn that she is very happy in her new surroundings. Mr. Bailey, after several years in charge of school music, moved to a Lectureship at the West Midlands College of Education, Walsall, and Mr. Hill to an appointment at the new University of Kent. Miss Dodgson travelled north to a secondary school in County Durham, whilst Mrs. Hall and Miss Ryndycz (now Mrs. Homer) both retired (temporarily we hope) from the academic world to devote their full energies to domestic duties.

In September we welcomed ten new members of staff:

Miss B. Edwards, B.A. (Wales).

Miss C. Neild, B.A. (Sussex).

Miss C. Pantlin, Certificate of Education (P.E.) (Derby).

Miss S. Simpson, B.A. (Hull).

Miss H. Whieldon, A.T.C. (London).

Mrs. S. Valter, M.A. (Edinburgh) from Chase Terrace Secondary School.

Mrs. R. Yates, Diploma in Education (Nelson Hall).

Mr. N. Baskerville, B.A. (London) from Adisadel College, Cape Coast, Ghana.

Mr. V. E. Gaunt, B.Sc. (Birmingham).

Mr. R. Hunter, A.R.C.M., G.R.S.M., from Netherthope Grammar School.

Unfortunately we had to say an early goodbye to Mrs. Valter at Christmas, since her husband was scheduled to take up an appointment in Australia in the new year. In her place we were pleased to welcome Mr. N. Blackham, B.A. (London) from Kingsbury High School.

STAFF NOTES *Continued*

The outstanding feature of this school year in the staff room has been the smooth transition of the Deputy Headship from Miss Baker to Miss Andrews, so that school organisation and staff fellowship have been of the highest order. We have indeed been fortunate in having two such capable and gracious ladies as staff Prima Donnas. As a result of the numerical growth of the school another administrative post has evolved, that of Senior Mistress, which Mrs. Aston has capably filled.

Mlle. Vanhoutte from Lille University has been this year's French Assistante, and we have also had brief visits from students of Madeley College and Anstey College.

This has not, however, been a good year for the more sporting members of staff. The annual cricket match against the school was lost by the huge margin of ten wickets despite a gallant knock of 31 by Mr. Gaunt. The soccer team held the under XV's to a draw, but lost to the first XI by seven clear goals, though it is fair to say that at least four of these were the result of malign fate in the goalmouth. As usual Mr. Draper was an outstanding pivot, and Mr. Horne worked tirelessly in midfield. Our staff ladies fared little better, though they did put up a gallant fight against the school netball team before going down 7-4. —G.T.A.

SCHOOL NOTES

THE annual FIRST FORM OUTING to the Dovedale area took place as usual at the end of the summer term. This year's expedition seems to have been less eventful than of yore, with no losses of personnel nor even any wet feet.

The last week of the Christmas term was again enlivened by the cacophony of adolescent voices permeating almost to G-Block from the vicinity of the Hall and Dining Room. That is to say the eleventh FIRST FORM PARTY was in orbit. Mr. Smith in what has now become his traditional role of ringmaster kept proceedings moving with a swing, as new items blended with more traditional ones. Mr. Lloyd again baffled (almost) all with his mind-reading feats, Mr. Spencer's 'Statues' produced some most unlikely poses, whilst Mr. Baskerville's staff mystery voice puzzle revealed a surprisingly high standard of ventriloquism by a number of staff. On a more energetic note Miss Edwards' balloon game was splendid spectator sport, with 1Z (who had a veritable tower of strength in William De Ridder) coming out on top. After half-time jelly and cakes the second half passed all too quickly with high class entertainment from the Sixth-Form 'Group', and the passing round of Mrs. Valter's mystery parcel ended proceedings, leaving as many happy memories as pieces of newspaper.

Also in the Yuletide season film entertainment was enjoyed — 'Captain's Table' by the lower school and 'The Bridal Path' by the seniors.

A party of budding linguists travelled to Aubervilliers with Mr. Draper for the first half of the annual Gallic exchange. After preliminary difficulties in finalising accommodation, the party left Cannock in the early hours of April 2, and an enjoyable and educative ten days was enjoyed by all. The visit of the party's French counterparts is scheduled for July.

Not to be outdone by the sixth form, lower school members have showed great interest in theatre trips. In November a Third Form group saw 'Pygmalion' at the Victoria Theatre, Stoke, which was also the venue of 'A Christmas Carol' which a First and Second Form group visited in December. The Fifth Form travelled to Birmingham Repertory Theatre in February to see 'Twelfth Night' and by the time this magazine appears the Fourth Form will have been to 'The Boston Story', also at Birmingham.

—B. WILLIAMS, U.VI.C

SCHOOL OFFICERS

HEAD GIRL	Jean Baker
DEPUTY	Ann Perry
HEAD BOY	Brian Skelton
DEPUTY	David Bushnell
SCHOOL PREFECTS	Mavis Belcher, Christine Bewley, Lesley Bickley, Suzanne Dent, Christine Eccleston, Deirdre Hall, Phillippa Hall, Margaret Holt, Cheryl Massey, Gillian Pointon, Rita Proud, Jane Swanson, Susan Willetts, Keith Aanensen, Keith Alderson, Alan Biggins, Brian Bradbury, Robert Cooper, Terence Dando, Colin Davis, Alistair Gourlay, Kenneth James, Michael Plant, Stuart Richardson, David Rhodes, Derek Sheasby
JUNIOR PREFECTS	Margaret Binnion, Shirley Gunn, Vivienne Hopley, Rita James, Jennifer Pritchard, Brenda Spencer, David Baker, Robert Davies, John Gill, Phillip Griffin, David Spencer, Phillip Thomas
RUGBY FOOTBALL	<i>Captain:</i> D. Bushnell <i>Vice-Captain:</i> K. James
CRICKET	<i>Captain:</i> D. Bushnell <i>Vice-Captain:</i> K. Aanensen
FOOTBALL	<i>Captain:</i> K. Aanensen <i>Vice-Captain:</i> R. Cooper
TENNIS	<i>Captain:</i> J. Myers



—Illustration by Robert Hume, L.6A

THE QUESTION

“That s what happens when tankers discharge oil” —
A pointer to a terminated existence.

That: bird with feathers of deceitful luxurious grease,
Coaxed then forcefully guided to beach by indifferent surf.
A smoothed, bewildered victim of the system,
Of what is necessary for the survival of men
Necessary for propelling gleaming sports-cars or feeding bitter hearses
A subject for uncontained, unwanted pity,
As our external sorrow blatantly reveals contemptible sickness.
But I cannot say it is an awful shame.

Overshadowed by Great Tor, by powerful sun,
The urgent need to conquer the cliff, to attain exalted position,
(Height is significant — it is solitude),
To survey the unruffled sand, the patterned river delta
The jutting carboniferous limestone lumps, the undercutting, the caves, the arches,
The magnetic glory of the sea, its sheer expanse and lovely waves,
Destructive, but perpetually creating,
The merging horizon and the hardened, unshaped, base metal of the tanker.

A reminder of the moulded live carcass,
That men will not be forgotten, impose his presence, add his incalculable stones to
the scale,
Produce his immeasurable, unretractable effects.
But I cannot make a defiant response,
Cannot conjure new life into the bird
Or set it free.
Can I climb down from the tor
To the awaiting chain of death’s desperate infectious designs
And yet survive?

—CHRISTINE CADMAN, U.6

THE journey to the mountainous terrain of Austria began nocturnally on April 7th. The departure was timed at 03.15 hours in the presence of certain paternal figures and two inquisitive policemen who, after being informed of our destination, were eager to accompany us. The journey to London was spent playing cards, whilst Mr. Skinner, our guardian, slept. Upon our arrival at Victoria Station we proceeded to nourish ourselves on bacon and eggs before putting ourselves at the mercy of the writhing masses awaiting the boat trains.

After arriving at Folkestone and having left our means of conveyance, we took up our positions on the already laden vessel, after groping our way, heavily handicapped by our requisites for the week, through the swirling mist. The journey across the aqueous expanse of the Channel was temporarily halted by fog, so our first sight of France was somewhat belated. We arrived in Calais to the welcome of beret-clad French dockers, after which we were conducted through Customs and on to the waiting train. To aid our couriers from the travel service, each person had affixed to his attire certain yellow badges like unto the size of dustbin lids.

The journey across France was uneventful but nevertheless enjoyable, as time was spent relaxing in our couchettes. To the summoning of Bill Moulding at six o'clock in the morning we prepared to refresh ourselves by washing almost an hour late in Innsbruck. After the continental breakfast of coffee and rolls, we began the last stage of our journey to Fieberbrunn, where we arrived in the heat of the midday sun, five minutes late.

The first day was spent obtaining our ski-ing attire from neighbouring peasants who greeted us with a string of German phrases. The onslaught was finally overcome and we endeavoured to make ourselves understood. Thus, laden with boots and skis, we made our way back to the hotel and the appetizing Austrian food.

We finally reached the ski slopes after experiencing the serenity of the chair-lift, which although slow was very pleasant. Under the guidance of a sun-tanned instructor, Gerhart (or the equivalent German spelling for this phonetic translation), we tried our luck on two skis. The first steps of balance and the projecting of the skis over the white surface with our rear trotters were easily overcome and we endeavoured to be more learned. As the week progressed we learnt the 'snow plough' (a means of deceleration), the 'Stem turn' (a means of changing the bearing of your descent), how to fall (more readily learnt by our hapless friends Alan Roberts and Roderick McAlpine), traversing, the 'kick turn' and many other skills. Towards the end of the week we tried our acquired knowledge on the 'drag lift' of which the guardians were more than patient whilst we painfully learnt the art.

The evenings were spent in the company of a party from Bedford who, like us, were experiencing this new means of transport. The usual pastime was dancing 'La Bamba' (which I strongly advise you against doing on skis), an exercise learnt from Mr. Skinner to the accompaniment of the juke box and a chorus of rugby songs. The keeper of the Bedfordnians was a Mr. Philbrook — more familiar to us as 'Jim' — who gave us regular entertainment in the early hours of the morning.

The end came too early for all of us and we had to return home. The farewells to the Bedfordnians at Victoria was a sad occasion and we returned to the rainy wastes of Cannock determined to return to this newly acquired sport again.

PAGINA LATINA



MERVYN BIBB 3A.



Ego scio illa animalia herbas edere; tu scis illa edere herbas – sed illa – ne sciunt se edere herbas ?

Amicus : “Tuam pecuniam an tuam vitam amittere mavis, O Claudi?”

Claudius : “Meam vitam, certe. Meae pecuniae in senectute egebo.”

-SHARON CRADDOCK, 3A

Funus per vicum praeteribat.

Unus vir alii viro dixit : “Quis est mortuus?”

Alius respondit : “Ut puto, is vir qui in arca est; auriga esse vivus videtur.”

-PETER SAMBROOK, 3A

Iocum ridiculissimum unquam audivi est etiam
ridiculus verbis.

-ELIZABETH BREWE, 3A

Ursa fabulam filio suo narrans :

“Olim erant tres homines qui in silva vive-
bant

-JULIE FEASEY, 2A

Filius : “Quid multos pedes, dorsum flavum,
oculos virides et caudam longam
habet ?”

Pater : Nescio.

Filius : Neque ego; sed in iurea tua id posui.”

-A. CARPENTER, 2A

Duo Romani in horto ambulat :

Primus : Serpens quidam mihi crus momordit !

Secundus : Qualis erat ille ?

Primus : Oh, ubi unum vidisti, vidisti omnes !

-P. SMITH, 2A



Robert Hopercraft. 3A.

ONE cold, frosty morning in February, 1803, a man named William Hill lost a bet. He had bet £500 that Richard Trevethick's new steam locomotive would not haul ten tons of iron and about 75 passengers for a distance of 7½ miles. For years horses had hauled the creaking wagons along the track to waiting barges on the canal. This new contraption, to the hundred or so amused watchers, was simply an excuse for the morning off. They had been allowed to watch this new, and apparently impossible, device on which very few people were prepared to place any money. The people watching could hardly believe their eyes when it started to move. The locomotive progressed slowly towards the canal, having to stop often for branches to be cut off the trees to allow the tall funnel to pass. The lines kept cracking under the weight of the train.

The next stage in the history of railways was the "Liverpool and Manchester" railway. After the construction had started, the engineers decided to use steam power, rather than horses. They ordered a contest to be held to find the best locomotive for the job. Three were entered. One broke down in practice, and another broke down in the contest, trying to gain too much speed. This left the "Rocket", built by Robert and George Stephenson.

The "Rocket" cruised comfortably at a top speed of a then unbelievable 25 miles per hour. This was accepted by the engineers to run on the railway, and, as it ran so well, they ordered more of Stephenson's locomotives.

Then came the fierce "battle of the gauges" between Stephenson and Brunel. Stephenson built all his engines to the gauge of 4 feet 8¼ inches, while Brunel believed a smoother, faster ride could be obtained with a wider gauge. So he used a 7 foot gauge. The battle was getting so fierce that the government ordered a contest between them to decide which was better. Brunel won both of the races held, but Stephenson's engines went wrong and so were eliminated.

One day, however, some government officials were at a station where a standard gauge line and a broad gauge line met. The goods and passengers had to change trains. So the stationmaster, a standard gauge supporter, ordered the complete train to be changed in order to cause complete chaos. His workers, somewhat puzzled, obeyed.

His scheme worked. A few weeks later a bill went through Parliament banning the building of any more broad gauge tracks. Even so, it was quite a few years before the last broad gauge train ran.

THIS year Speech Day was held on Thursday, May 5th, and not on Thursday, March 31st, as originally planned. As the Prime Minister would not change his arrangements, we had to change ours.

The Speech Day service was held in St. Luke's Church, by kind permission of the Vicar. Regrettably, the increase in the number of pupils in the school meant that, this year, for the first time, it was not possible to invite parents to the service.

The sermon was given by Mr. D. H. Gardiner, the Headmaster of Calving Hill Secondary School. In it he spoke of the broader aspects of education. He quoted, from his own experience as a teacher, examples which emphasised the changes which have taken place, particularly since 1944. He stressed the need to make full use of the benefits provided by the modern educational system.

The lessons were read by Jean Baker and Peter Taylor, and two anthems were sung by the School Choir.

The evening ceremony was opened by the Chairman of the Governors, Alderman A. Hampton, O.B.E. In his address he spoke of the progress made locally in the sphere of education. He promised that, whatever the changes in the future, there will be no falling off in the high standard or in the number of places available.

The Headmaster began by welcoming Mr. Gardiner and apologising for the fact that it was impossible to invite more parents. He gave a report of the activities of the school in the past year and drew attention to the achievements of David Rhodes, who gained a place at Cambridge, and Christopher Hinks, who gained the school's first place at Oxford. Mr. Pomfret spoke of the number of degrees gained by the school's first intake and the large number of University and College places gained by the present sixth form.

Mr. Gardiner distributed the prizes. The theme of his address was the way in which the general pre-occupation with success can distract people from more worthwhile vocations.

PRIZES 1966

FIRST FORMS	Yvonne Allport, Lavinia Hunt, Alison Leighton, Kay Lomas, Elizabeth McClintock, Christine Smyczek, Stephen Jaworski, John Lomas, Nicholas Madge, Jonathan Sides, Graham Sterling
SECOND FORMS	Susan Cantrell, Janetta Hastie, Christine Sammons, Susan Woloscue, Robert Hopcraft, David Maugham, Peter Rogers, Nigel Saunders, John Williams
THIRD FORMS	Brenda Currie, Brenda Dennis, Susan Hurmson, Susan Preston, Jill Titterton, John Dyke, David Fearn, Roy Plant, John Somerville
FOURTH FORMS	Karen Brickley, Elizabeth Goodacre, Susan Hill, Patric Lomax, Susan Taylor, Alan Mayes, Gilbert Park
GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION, "O" LEVEL	Eva Brookes, Susan Cope, Jennifer Jones, Elizabeth Makeham, Rosalind Wilkes, Royden Cope, Leslie Farnell, Denis Latham, Robert Mallen
GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION, "A" LEVEL	Lesley Bickley, Linda Carmichael, Roosje de Ridder, Marjorie Molineux, Gillian Pointon, Rita Proud, Keith Alderson, Brian Morris, Peter Trusselle
CRAFT COURSE	Catherine Rowley, Meryl Yates, Stephen Rose, Andrew Thursfield
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	Dania Williams, Richard Donithorn

THE FOOL'S PARADISE

So you've got your money, I hope it does you good,
It's worth the sweat, but not the blood;
Now you realise it's just as hard
To live with two bathrooms and three new cars,
While evening-gowned vultures take their feed,
And peck at your wallet with insatiable greed.
When you wake up one morning it'll all be gone,
And you'll wonder what it was squandered on,
But will you start again the trail
Of robbery, murder and blackmail?
Don't you realise money not ethereal,
It can only purchase things material?
You want this year's car and next year's car —
Cars for every year ahead.
But remember one day there'll be no cars
Remember one day you'll be dead.

When you're in your grave it's too late to repent,
No-one will listen to your plaintive lament.
If you don't stop now from your sinful trail,
All death's moans are to no avail.
When your body is nothing in a Churchyard hole,
And black-shrouded devils fight for your soul,
You've had all your money, you've had all your power,
But now the silvery phantoms have their hour.
So it's no good shouting, it's no use crying;
There was time for that before you were dying.
While these creatures of darkness fight over you,
There's just not one thing you can do.
You just stand and stare, you just stand and scream,
You have to stand and wait.
It's not a phantasma; it's not just a dream
They're demons deciding your fate !

-M. MATEJTSCHUK, 4A



—Graham Pratt. L.6A

THIS year the sixth form is the largest that we have ever had. Forms are somewhat larger than in previous years, and the numbers facilitate more colourful discussions and debates, and a more united approach to the intensity of the 'A' level course. The inauguration of Folk Club has encouraged an enthusiasm in modern music which has benefited all but those who wish to work at break. Guitars are becoming a common sight in A Block and many arc the girls, who are now serenaded by Spanish music.

As usual there have been multifarious expeditions in quest of knowledge with goodly fellowship en route. In January a Maths group attended a lecture on Computers at Wolverhampton, whilst a Physics group travelled to Brownhills in February for a lecture on Radio Astronomy. On a more energetic note a number of hardy masculine types were led by Mr. Skinner on a ski-ing trip during the Easter Vacation, whilst as we go to press a similar group is exploring Snowdonia with Mr. and Mrs. Douglas.

The Scripture Department has again organised weekend visits to Launde Abbey (in January) and to the Lake District (July). The ancient abbey in Leicestershire was an ideal setting for a serious approach to the meaning of life.

Drama trips have proved more popular than ever, and during the year coach parties have seen 'Richard II' (at the Nottingham Playhouse), 'Hamlet' (at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre), 'The Wild Duck' (at the Library Theatre, Manchester), and 'Tartuffe' and 'Les Femmes Savantes' (at the Victoria Theatre, Stoke).

The more musically minded attended a performance of the 'St. Matthew Passion' at Lichfield Cathedral in March, whilst earlier in the year we enjoyed a visiting performance of 'Marriage of Figaro' under the auspices of Miss Maude Smith.

A more ambitious project was attempted this year with much time and money

expended in building and erecting the various mobiles, and a 'ballroom launch' was attempted. A visiting 'Group' was backed up by one from the sixth form, and all who attended enjoyed a pleasurable evening.

Christopher Hinks, our Head Boy until Christmas, brought distinction to the sixth form by becoming our first pupil to gain a place at Oxford University. We also congratulate Annette Frost and Bramwell Williams who reached the finals of the Midland Schools verse speaking competition at Birmingham in November.

As the year draws to a close it seems hardly a moment ago that right at its beginning a small but dedicated group of Geographers and Biologists invaded the University of Swansea to take part in a week's field course in the surrounding area. In spite of inclement weather and aching limbs much benefit was obtained, and this may or may not be proved in a tangible way when the advanced level results are published.

Periods of relaxation during this term have enabled many bodies to roast in the sun. The rule that all tennis players must change into full kit has caused many masculine limbs to turn an embarrassing pink. For the less sporting mention must be made of the pioneering of coffee at break time by the scholarship sixth. Their names will long be revered by future generations.

CHILD BORN IN LONDON GARAGE

Tool box as cot



-Robert Davies, L.6C

LAST night a young woman gave birth to a child in the garage of one of London's largest hotels.

The couple had travelled from a village near Brighton to clear up some matters at Somerset House and had found all the hotels fully booked. Fortunately, a kind proprietor offered his garage for them to spend the night in. The baby was placed in an empty tool-box, serving as a cot. Our special reporter described the scene as "extremely pathetic".

When questioned, the husband, christian name Joseph, said, "I'm very surprised, and very grateful to the man at the hotel for all his

help". Further comment was made impossible as a number of farm hands from the near-by live-stock show at Olympia burst in and demanded to see the child.

They said they had "had a vision", while looking after some sheep at the show. They presented the baby with a lamb which, the day before, had won a first prize.

Reports now arriving say that three important radio-astrologists are making their way to this country from America to see the baby. Another source adds that Sir Fred Hoyle is accompanying them. We hope to verify this as soon as possible.

—PETER TAYLOR, 4A

THIS year's dramatic production was described on the publicity material as a comedy. For those who came without any further inside knowledge, it more than lived up to this description. The additional programme information that it was a French comedy is a sufficient reminder of the characteristically simple and futile plot.

The characters, some of them challenging caricatures much larger than life, afforded ample scope for the combination of natural talent and capable acting. The cast was too large to allow for individual references, but special mention must be made of the leading successes.

Fadinard gave a realistic impression of a completely and sincerely witless young bridegroom, physiologically a tenuously connected nervous system clothed in a suit, whose artful opportunism suggested that for him the present was the penalty of the past and always seemed likely to generate an even worse future. The one feature that different sets of circumstances had in common was that he was the victim.

His alternating father-in-law-to-be/father-in-law-not-to-be came over with the right air of hollow fickle pomposity, very much a self-inflated man. The charming bride survived with remarkable freshness and equanimity a tortuous Cook's tour of Paris, which was triggered off by insensitive equine gastronomics. As with all good comedies we discovered at the end that we had gone full circle and that the play need never have taken place at all.

Excellent support was given by a mixed array of stock characters which included the aged decrepit, the humorously deaf, the flamboyantly affected, and national guardsmen with two left feet.

The costumes, make-up, lighting, scenery and general production were all in the tradition of good taste and high standards which we now expect, but which we must not forget makes a major contribution to the complete success of a play. One particularly good ingredient, so easily overlooked because it is much more noticeable its absence, was the timing, and this respect the main responsibility rested upon Fadinard, who rose to the occasion and gave a very convincing performance.

The Cathedral at Rheims

False forced silence,
Shuffling feet procession-wise,
Black robes dragged swishing on
intangible flesh
Ghostly bearing yellow heads on white
stalks stabbing skyward
At sordid rafters,
Adorned in ancient illusion.
Bright windows
Dull windows
Breakable, fragile.
But the past : not breakable, not
fragile,
Stubbornly surviving wealthy Ameri-
cans flashing cameras,
Curious children, and realism.
A symbol modern man daren't forget,
daren't regret.
Used not appreciated :
For it is fine to the architect
Christian triumph to the Catholic
Food for the tourist,
Unimportant to me.

-CHRISTINE CADMAN, U.6

Monday Afternoon

'Don arms ! Prepare for battle ! Sound the charge !'
With mighty voice the sturdy leader cries —
'Away, away ! No lagging, hanging back !'
On march the ranks of grumbling muttering slaves.

'Attack, attack ! Put power in your stroke,'
The general orders, rooted to the spot,
In uniform arrayed (long flowing cloak)
With voice — though much disliked — by all obeyed.

Out on the field of battle-murky gloom —
The biting blast, the snow, the falling men
To left and right sink down beneath the fire.
While some complain, make rude remarks, retreat.

The padded general scorns the injured slave :
'No rolling on the ground in battle time.'
When one is captured, dragged away by foe,
'He's lost his boot, detain him, bring him back.'

When all the ground is reeking with black gore,
The muddy soldiers turn in weary line,
Make for their barracks, still their chattering teeth —
Cursing the cold, the general and the game.

-RUTH HARRIS, 4A

The Frozen Mountain

Still and lifeless it stood, like a giant spider,
Its arms brittle and white,
It stood under a mantle of frost,
Cold, but beautiful.
It seemed as if it were waiting patiently for the sun
To restore it to its former splendour,
Every day growing fatter and fatter,
As if it were feeding on the pool of ice below,
Glittering under the lamplight
Like a horde of jewels
Gathered together by a miserly man.

-PETER SMITH, 2A

MY introductory view of America was of New York's Kennedy airport, which was the half-way mark on my journey to California. It proved to be an awesome, if not accurate, experience of America and the Americans. I spent only four hours in New York, but that short time served to confirm my worst suspicions about the "Great Continent". The three dominant factors in existence appeared to be space, speed and impersonal efficiency. The airport itself was built on a huge scale in comparison with London, and the atmosphere was generally overwhelming to someone newly arrived from England. People seemed in a perpetual state of hurry and, although I was treated with courtesy, I had the impression that no-one gave you their full attention, and that they were working under continuous pressure.

I was glad to leave New York. Life was at a different pace to that in England, and I felt apprehensive about the rest of my stay. However, what I did not realise until I had seen something of California was the contrast between the ways of life on the East and West coasts of America. Life was still led at a faster pace in California than that in England, but the compulsive hurrying was gone. At one time in its early history, California was occupied by the Spanish Conquistadores and still retains Mexican influences. These associations seem to give the people of the state something of the Spanish "manana" attitude. They have a much more relaxed approach to life than the people on the eastern seaboard. The Californians are also intensely proud of their state and consequently are eager that visitors should appreciate its natural beauties as much as they themselves do.

My first meeting with an American "in the flesh", as it were, came the morning after my arrival in San Francisco, in the shape of a neighbour of my sister. She epitomized American womanhood to me on that first occasion, friendly to the point of suffocation, and over effusive with a tendency to keep repeating, "Oh, this is just too wonderful!" I think

perhaps it was unfortunate that I should be given such an extreme example before I had met anyone else. Over the next four weeks, I met Americans, Canadians, and "refugees" from England. They all went out of their way to be friendly, especially when they found out that I and my family were English. Their motives for this probably differed! The Americans, I think, considered it something of a status symbol to have English friends, and consequently as soon as an English visitor opens his mouth, he can be sure of a warm reception. That is not to infer that the Americans' friendship was forced. They gave me the impression of being tremendously sincere in their relationships, and naturally charming and hospitable. The English people living in America were also delighted to see anyone from England. I was surprised at their eagerness to keep their ties with the home country. They all admitted that the American way of life was much more pleasant to them but they still referred to England as "Back Home", even though some had been in America for twenty years. They seemed much more reluctant to part with their nationality than their nation itself and many more choose to remain aliens in America rather than becoming naturalised Americans.

From what I saw, the Americans, or at least the Californians, have a tremendous capacity for enjoying themselves, and they enjoy their recreation as intensely as possible. I cannot comment upon all the American organized games. While I was in America I had chance to see only one baseball game between the San Francisco Giants and the Cincinnati Reds. The game itself was a disappointment. Glorified rounders did not attract me, but the uniforms of the players and the fanaticism of some of the supporters made the afternoon spent watching it well worth the scorched scalp I got. I also had a chance to try some ten-pin bowling. This was a very popular game and constituted something of a family outing. Mother and Father could play while the children amused themselves on miniature versions of the lanes, out of

AMERICA *Continued*

harm's way. Gambling is, of course, prohibited in California, but families think nothing of making a weekend trip to one of the famous Nevada gambling centres, such as Las Vegas or Lake Tahoe. The Casinos at Tahoe, where I stayed for three days, were again designed with the family unit in mind. While the parents gambled, the children would be looked after free of charge in the adjoining nursery. The Americans like their recreation well organised; the classic example of this is conventions. Technically serious affairs, they are so prodigious that they almost qualify as a national sport. I am sure that half the fun of conventions must be in the complicated organisation. Visiting one of these conventions is an experience never to be forgotten. I remember walking around a very plush hotel all evening wearing an identity card stuck on my lapel, talking to people whom I had never met before and whom I would never meet again.

On July 4th, I had another excellent opportunity to see the Americans at the serious business of enjoying themselves. Traditionally, the 4th is a day for parades to celebrate and the one I saw lasted for three hours in one continuous stream, incorporating Sheriff's posses, brass bands, drum majorettes, and cowboys. It was a fascinating, if exhausting, afternoon.

The warm reception I received wherever I went never failed to amaze me, and when I had to leave the country at the end of the month, I realised just how attached I had become to the "Golden State", and its people, and how reluctant I was to leave. All I can do is to echo the words of a famous American "I shall return".

Remembering a Winter Walk

I remember walking over snow,
Fresh and white,
Glistening like morning dew on young grass;
And breathing deeply into the air,
Cool and clear,
Free from the dust and grime of city life.
I remember the trees,
Stark and bare,
Without their summer foliage,
Yet covered by a feathery blanket of snow,
Which clothed them like a mantle.
I remember the farm cat,
Picking her way daintily through the snow-
filled ditches,
Pausing to snake a paw at the new white
substance.
I remember the steel-grey sky,
The wind whistling through the trees
I remember it all,
For though the walk was long ago,
It is still fresh in my memory.

—GAIL BALI, 2A

THE bell tolls the knell of parting school. As most of the pupils wend their weary but joyous way home, the school is silent apart from the distant tinkle and plonk of the school's piano heralding the start of Dancing Circle, a few odd screams and shrieks from those in torment in the Detention Room, the sound of laughter and of breaking glass and the muffled roar of Mr. Stanley's 'hot-rod'. It is in this atmosphere that the members of the Junior Orchestra, hereafter to be known as the Malcontents, slowly and sedately make their way to the Hall, to be directed to A6, to be directed to G9, and to be directed back to the Hall again. They walk slowly and sedately, not because of their sober temperament, or even because of apathy, but because they know that their conductor will not arrive until 4-15. Having arrived at the Hall, they coolly and calmly set up their instruments. Then riot erupts. This period from 4-0 to 4-15 accounts for 95% of all breakages to musical instruments. So far the following have perished :

2 side drum sticks, 2 side drum skins, 2 violins, 3 wine bottles, 4 elastic bands,
1 conductor's baton, 2 tambourines, 2 tambourinists, 3 conductors.

Suddenly, at 4-15 the sentinel at the main door shrieks a warning, 'Here he comes', followed a little later by 'There he goes' as the conductor again disappears into the abyss of the staff room. Ten minutes then elapse before he feels confident enough to try again. This time he succeeds and enters the room with a feeling of triumph. A great cacophony of sound greets his arrival. The cymbals clash, the side-drum beats, and everyone is pleased to acknowledge the fact that the conductor has effected his arrival. After five minutes, during which time the conductor loses in succession his music, his stand and his baton, we begin the auricular torment. The conductor well knows that he dare not allow us all to play the music concurrently, the price of window-glass being so high. Accordingly he takes each section of the orchestra separately; first the strings (or string) plus the double bass, which is presided over by a certain Philips, whose shape is in perfect harmony with that of his instrument; then the woodwind section, whose solitary member plays his heart out to no avail, since he is completely inaudible. Finally the turn arrives of the percussion, who without really trying makes twice as much noise as everyone else put together. After about twenty dissonant minutes, the novelty of the conductor and his music begins to wear off. The music itself begins to sound more akin to a funeral dirge than to the Fiftieth Symphony in O Minor. At last the two remaining 'musicians' (the rest having given up the uneven struggle and retired home) sink exhausted to their knees. The conductor takes pity on them and says they may go. This effects a wondrous resurrection, as they joyously leap to their feet. The joy is short-lived, however, for the conductor coolly announces that they must replace the chairs first. Finally they trudge away, watched by their heartless, despotic overseer, who as he peers through the gloom with fiendish glee, doubtless muses on what is 'Top of the Pops' this week.



—Christopher Austin, L 6C

IT was the middle of spring with people halfway between the blues of winter and the vain hopes of summer. No-one had imagined that it could happen that day. Adults were busy, children were playing, all without a care in the world. One child bounced a ball to her sister, and then, as if struck by a bomb, the earth began to shake.

People came running out of their houses at terrific speed. Like bees in a hive they could not stop for anything. What were they to do? The situation had never arisen before, and they were not prepared for it. Children began to scream and to run their parents for help, but parents, too, were just as helpless as dry leaves blown by the breeze.

Confusion reigned everywhere. Tears flowed freely, only to be dried quickly by the breeze. Space was grasped in the hope of protection. Bodies became battered and bruised. Many were hysterical, frightened of the object on which they lived. Anyone who tried to move was thrown from side to side. The noise was like thunder. Lightning struck in many forms and in many places.

People now realised what life and love meant. They struggled for it, grasped it but were forced to let it go. 'God help us', they cried, and looked to heaven for help. The earth had turned against them, they were afraid the whole universe would do the same.

The sound of buildings falling to the ground pierced their ears. No pane of glass remained in one piece. Human works fell to the ground, for buildings collapsed under the strain just as violently as their human counterparts. Animals were dumb, feeling that some mighty monster was rising out of the earth to wreak a terrible revenge. The countryside seemed to have become a jelly.

Louder and louder grew the noise as vibrations spread like ripples over a large stretch of water. People lay about everywhere while the earth raved and trembled like a mighty dragon. Then the noise abated and by degrees stopped. Bodies lay lifeless. Buildings seemed to have reverted to their raw materials.

Then the breeze caused the dust to be scattered about. If people were not dead before, they were now choked by the dust, limbs no longer mobile. Those to whom any life remained heard the sound of rustling leaves which belonged to broken trees. Trees and humans alike dragged out the last strands of life.

THE EARTHQUAKE

..... *Continued*

Such stillness could not have been found anywhere else. The noise of insults, threats and compliments alike had died down. The broken glass glittered in the sun. It seemed superficially even beautiful, but its grim message was that of the essential frailty of man. A child's hand slipped from a broken table and was covered in the dust. Like so many more this child had been killed before it knew real life, real love, or any definite emotion. Silence meant doom; silence with its deafening bellow beating into the cracked ground, having no respect for the dead.

A door swung to and fro, causing the only vibration. Many had opened it, cursed it, even kicked it. Now it could give its reply, laughing at the corpses scattered everywhere. The complete population had not been wiped out, but here was an illustration of warfare, the war between the earth and its inhabitants. How stupid, but how inevitable, and how infinite.

TEENAGE PROBLEMS

ANNE WEBSTER, 4E :

It is a great pity that the 'problem' teenagers are given publicity, whilst the majority of law-abiding teenagers are not.

We are not teenagers for long. Once we are 'grown up' we shall remain that way until we die. Why can't people realise this and let us enjoy our few 'teenage' years.

GRAHAM PONDER, 4E :

Just as our bodies change their dimensions rapidly, so do our minds. Both have got to be given room to expand.

SUSAN CORBETT, 4E :

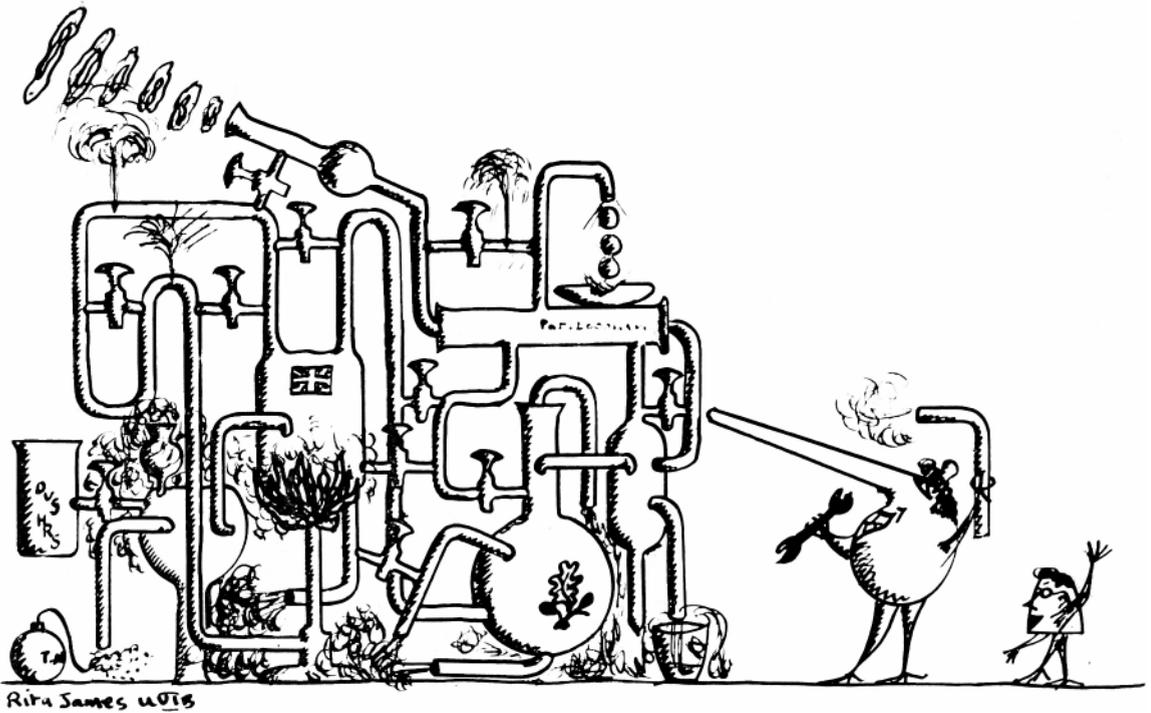
Grown-ups tend to forget that they were ever young, and this is reflected in their intolerant attitude towards teenagers. Come to think of it, it's hard to believe that some of them ever were teenagers themselves.

A grown-up sees children playing 'stupid' childish games. Yet he or she got great fun from playing similar games years ago. In the same way the grown-up criticises teenage fashions, forgetting that he or she once shocked their own elders by their own interpretation of fashion.

Again, the teenager is often labelled a had 'mixer' because he or she is not on the same mental wavelength as the friends of his or her parents.

The teenager is regarded as a grown-up when there is housework to be done or younger children to be minded, but not when there is anything important to be discussed.

Then there are the education and money problems. Usually today's teenager has far more opportunity to succeed in life, far more money to spend, and far more leisure in which to spend it. This enables the parent to recite self-righteously that 'things were different in my young days' and also brings to the teenager the temptation to abuse these privileges and thereby not learn the value of 'hard work'.



"Please Sir, is it on the syllabus?"

—Rita James, U.6B

WHAT ARE TEACHERS ?

WHAT are teachers? They are classed as human beings. Like other human beings they come in two categories, male and female. Teachers can be short or tall, thin or fat, bald or with plenty of hair.

Most teachers will turn a blind eye to groups around the notice-board at break and lunchtime, unless of course they are on duty. Yet what is the use of a notice-board if every time you stop to look at it, you are ushered along by some well-meaning member of staff?

Teachers differ among themselves in their habits. Some are fond of weekly or fortnightly tests to make sure that their prey have digested everything that they have been taught. Other teachers are not so cautious and consider that their job is just to be teaching, leaving their prey to revise unsupervised.

Another kind of teacher, this time a rare species found only in certain conditions, enjoys spending at least the first half of the lesson in talking of things completely irrelevant to the lesson, yet returning to the latter just in time to set homework. By this time of course he will have gathered the information he requires from his unsuspecting victims. He then hastens back to his native abode to spread this information to fellow-species.

Cunningly known as the 'Staff Room', the teachers habitat is a smoky resort built at the top of a flight of stairs, a strategic position against any would-be invaders. This room is of course anathema to any of the hapless prey, yet female members of the latter have been known to brave its terrors in order to secure vital information, whilst ostensibly collecting cups and saucers. Yet one mystery still remains. What lies within the secret cavern known as the 'Quiet Room'?

—KAREN BAILEY, 4A

THE snow lay on the hills as if someone had spilled flour from the sky. Small trees burrowed their way through the snow to the cold, crisp morning air. The highest hills stretched towards the sky, splitting the snow, leaving large black gloomy patches of rock. The sun came out and the snow glittered like a fairy's wand. Slowly the ice hanging on the trees like shiny bells on a Christmas tree, started to drip as the sun's growing heat destroyed them in its slow, cruel way.

The paths up the hills were gone, covered by snow. Footprints of early-rising animals were visible. One set stood out from all the rest. The tracks were large and went into the snow rather than stood on top of it, as those did of the odd mouse which had woken from its winter sleep. Now and then the snow would be discoloured by red spots of blood. The trail went up into the hills, leaving the melting valley below. The small river was now swollen with the extra load of melting snow and ice. Rocks became more numerous, and the small low-lying bushes ceased to exist. Near the top of the hills a number of old, weathered tree-trunks lay between the large rocks.

Here was the home of an old male wild cat, the tree-trunks having been his home for many years. He sat, snarling, watching the surrounding country, his kingdom, where trespassers would pay the price with their lives. Lying at his feet was the body of a rabbit, its body bitten and dead.

Suddenly the cat stopped snarling, and all was silent except for the small babbling river, which grew bigger as the sun's destructive heat increased.

At the stream a small, starved body sipped at the cool, sparkling fresh water. Its head rose as it sniffed at the air. It had caught the scent of the rabbit. It whined with hunger, as it stalked off towards the rocks. The cat watched, listened and sniffed. He knew someone was in his kingdom. He crept more deeply into his lair, his green flaming eyes sparkling in the darkness of the tree trunk. The small stoat, hunger-stricken, rushed forward to the rabbit.

The stoat's teeth sank into the cool, fresh meat. The cat sprang; the stoat let go of the rabbit, and struck at the cat, sinking its yellow teeth into the cat's thick fur. The cat sprang forward; teeth bared it struck at the tiny body. They grappled, fighting with all their strength and using all their experience until the small body lay crushed and lifeless in the snow.

The cat stood over the stoat, scratched but triumphant. At length he crept back to his lair with the body. His meal would now be the bigger.

The destructive, snow-killing snow was gone, the wind blew strongly. The clouds raced across the sky and the valley was cold once more. The snow covered the blood which lay on the rocks where the battle had been fought.

The ice on the trees glistened once more as the air grew colder. The snow stuck to the icicles, making them white instead of clear and shiny. The hills were quiet once more, the storm covered all the traces of the fight, and the little stream went on its way, laughing to itself as it slowly froze.



—Illustration by Robert Hume, L.6A

MOST people think of a camera as something that you get out of the depths of the cupboard during the summer holidays, to take the odd snap of the family on the beach. But cameras, in different forms, are constantly helping out in many ways.

The camera is the eye of the scientist, “Ultra slow-motion” cine cameras are now being developed. These cameras have been used to discover the effect of a moon rocket landing on a dusty area. A small object was dropped into a bowl of dust, and was filmed using one of these cameras. The film showed exactly the effect that a moon rocket would have, landing in a dusty area in the low-gravity atmosphere of the moon. The slow motion camera has also been used for recording explosions, for studying the wing movement of birds and insects, and for countless other purposes.

What goes up must come down. In this case, what goes down is able to go up as well. The “what” is speed. Cine cameras have been used to compress time. What goes on in an airport in a day can be seen in a few hours. Faults in machinery can be seen in such a film; flowers can be seen in a few hours. The list is endless.

Printed circuits for computers are getting smaller and smaller. Here again the camera is used. A multi-lensed camera makes several, extremely small pictures of a circuit. This is the first step in making a “micro-miniaturised” circuit.

The camera is also the eye of the explorer. Television cameras, and cine and still cameras are even now exploring outer space. Cameras can explore areas formerly inaccessible to man. The white hot interior of a nuclear reactor,

narrow pipes, even the labyrinth of the human body; these places can be explored by the photographic eye.

Now that man is beginning the exploration of space, cameras have not become redundant. Astronauts can bring to everyone the vastness and beauty of space. Soon the effect may become even more vivid with the use of three-dimensional photography.

Although not the eye of the policeman, the camera is a great help to him. Many new “crook-catching” devices incorporate cameras. One model uses infra-red flash, the light of which is invisible to the human eye, but not to certain types of film. So anyone who opened a safe or drawer which had this device attached would, even in total darkness, leave behind them a photograph of themselves ! Another device takes the photograph of anyone operating the alarm at a fire station. This is used for catching hoaxers.

And one final use of the camera is to take snaps of the family.

Spleen

*(Being a free translation of a poem by Charles
Baudelaire)*

When a low and heavy sky weighs down like a lid
On a groaning spirit, long a prey to weariness,
And when, from the horizon embracing all the air,
It pours forth black day, more sorrowful than night.

When earth is transformed into a dank dungeon
Where Hope flits like a bat
Beating the walls with frail wings,
And bruising its head on rotting ceilings.

When rain spreads forth her boundless trails,
Mocking the bars of a vast prison;
And a silent plague of vile spiders
Spin and twine their threads in our brains.

Suddenly bells jump with fury,
Wounding the heavens with a fearful howl;
Whilst wandering and homeless spirits
Begin to whimper endlessly.

Long hearses, without music or drums,
March slowly through my soul; Hope,
Weeping, is conquered, and Anguish, monstrous, despot.
Into my bowed skull drives her black flag.

— LESLEY BICKLEY, S.VI

The Cemetery

The moon rose silently in the sky,
There was no sound, no motion to break
The solitude of the eerie ghost,
Save the sound of the wind in the trees,
And footsteps, soft and quiet.
He wandered aimlessly by the groves,
Nothing to do, nowhere to go.
He paused, here and there,
To read inscriptions on the graves of
People, people long dead,
People that he might have known.
Some graves were neat and tidy,
But others were neglected,
Untended, overgrown with weeds.
Then the clock struck twelve,
The ghost faded away,
Leaving the cemetery
Cold, bleak and dead.

— MERYL YATES, 2E

The Spider

There goes a little fly,
Delicate creature,
Investigating, always investigating.
Clambering up the window frame
On to the curtains; then down,
Down, on to the table, on to the floor.
But wait, that is not a fly,
But a spider — ugly things!
With their eight legs
Crawling everywhere — Ugh!
Spiders!
They can't fly, only crawl.
You find them everywhere,
Spinning their webs,
In your faces and on your arms,
Spiders!
They kick in all unlikely places,
They run past you, over foot, over your hand,
Cold shivers run down your spine,
Mingled with a feeling of disgust.
Disgusting spiders with their many legs.
Spiders !!!

LYNDA BEAVON, 3B

WAITING, he goes back over the years of his life. What has he done? Nothing. Now it's too late to change anything. In just fifteen minutes they will come for him, then it will be over.

There he sits, in his tiny, bare home of the last three week. A desperate man, accused of murder that only he knows he did not commit. As he sits alone, thinking, the end draws nearer.

He sits, clasping and unclasping his hands. He paces the stone floor. He smokes. He thinks. He is helpless to do anything. The beads of sweat stand glistening on his forehead.

He looks around, really seeing the room for the first time. The small window allows a small shaft of light on to the stone floor, where half-smoked cigarettes are stubbed out. The time is going slowly, but not slowly enough for him. Unable to control himself any longer, he breaks down and sobs, crying like a baby.

He stops suddenly and lifts his head up. He hears the heavy, echoing footsteps getting closer. The shock hits him. The time has come. He remains silent as the key turns slowly and the door opens. He rises to his feet and steps out into the corridor between the two uniformed men. The corridor is long and deserted and the walk is slow. They reach a heavy iron door. The daylight hurts his eyes, then he is plunged into darkness. His muffled scream rings out around the courtyard. A door slams.

An innocent man dies a horrible and unnecessary death, and a killer goes free.



FROM very early times man has lived on Dartmoor. In many places, traces of ancient man are still to be seen, and several prehistoric settlements are still standing. Grimspound is a well-preserved group of hut-circles, surrounded by a retaining wall. The site covers four acres, and is the only pound on the moor which has a stream running through it. From the top of the Tor above Grimspound, extensive views of the moor can be enjoyed.

In places there are clapper bridges, built of massive stone slabs supported by stone piers.

Post Bridge, a fine example of this type of bridge, is built of four stones, two of which are placed in the middle of the stream to support the other two.

There are also stone circles and rows of great upright stones. Usually, the stone rows lead off from the circles and end with an upright stone standing on its own. Sometimes the last stone in the row will remain standing while the rest of the row has disappeared.

THE CONQUEST OF SPACE

Nigel Saunders, 3B

WHEN the Russians first put a man into space in 1961, everyone thought that it was a magnificent achievement — that man should have conquered space! But some were not so happy; there were countless thousands in Africa and Asia who were starving. They did not read about it in the newspapers, they did not think that it was marvellous — many of them still do not know about it today. All that they know is that they are starving and for some reason the help sent is not sufficient; that we are spending too much money on other things; that space travel has become the ultimate.

Yes, we do need to colonize other planets because of our increasing population; yes, it is one of man's instincts to explore the unknown; but I think that it is being done, at everyone's expense, on much too big a scale.

Why do wealthy countries have to waste millions of pounds in the race for the moon? The best thing would be for these nations to join together, perhaps under the United Nations Organization, to finance space projects. Then only one rocket would need to be built at a time, the great brains of the world could work together, everyone would win the space-race, and enough money could be saved to help the starving people of the world.

Russia and America have, I feel, gone too far in the race for the stars; even though they help the needy as much, if not more than, other countries. This help could be increased if the powerful nations of the world were to join together in the Space Race.

PETITE, je faisais souffrir mes poupées malgré qu'elles m'aimaient et que j'avais de l'amitié pour elles. Elles avaient le cœur mort, toi, tu es vivant. Seul dans ta cellule tu attends l'aube. Il fait toujours noir mais tu sens s'approcher le lever du soleil, cette chaleur dorée qui va glacer ton sang pour te jeter dans l'obscurité complète.

Que la lune qui prend son éclat dans ce manque de pitié éblouissant, qu'elle résiste ce jour à son vieil ennemi. Mais non, le voilà le guerrier, qui se montre dans le ciel, c'est bien lui qui va remporter la victoire.

Comme les premiers rayons effleurent notre balcon le président laisse tomber son bras. Quelque part une porte se ferme, cela commence. Je te vois, toi aussi, et j'ai une envie trop forte de casser l'ampoule du soleil, parce qu'il éclaire cet abattoir de la vie, tout n'est plus caché.

Acculé au mur tu parles encore avec les yeux. Hier c'était "deviens ma femme"; aujourd'hui tu ne me fais nul reproche, car tu te sais fort en ce dernier sacrifice. Tu regardes la terre brûlée, ce petit coin pour lequel tu luttas toujours et les larmes coulent malgré toi. Tu es bien de ta race.

Je veux que tu le comprennes, du fond de mon âme je regrette ce que j'ai fait. Je voyais qu'il fallait répandre ton sang pour effacer les maux de la guerre civile. J'ai vu ce beau pays en paix, je retourne et je trouve qu'en l'améliorant tu as perdu ce qui nous appartenait de bien. Jadis on connaissait ses copains, on ne tuait pas pour un oui ou pour un non — mais moi aussi, l'étrangère, je suis coupable. On m'a demandé ta mort et pour mettre fin à la guerre j'ai dit oui. En effet je tue pour un oui.

Je savais qu'il serait trop facile de faire courir le bruit que j'étais en ville puisque les tiens sont partout et une étrangère, ça se remarque ici. J'ai toujours été la voix de ta raison et la voix de la raison a hué celle du chef. Tu es venu.

Sans hésiter j'allais te rendre aux soldats du gouvernement, pourtant, quand nous étions partis du camp dans les montagnes je sentais que tu savais parfaitement ce qui t'attendait au petit restaurant. Tu me regardais, cette douce expression aux yeux — pourquoi ne m'avoir pas étranglé sur le coup? Mieux ça que d'écouter les applaudissements de cette foule folle.

Soudain, le silence absolu. Du haut des lointaines mosquées on entend, gémissants, des cris qui font frissonner. On pointe les fusils et puisqu'il est dans l'ordre des choses, on tire et tu tombes.

Bientôt il ne reste sur la place que toi, moi, et le président, qui essaie, je crois, de me remercier. Je ne veux plus, je ne peux plus, de lui, je cours sans le regarder chercher je ne sais qui, je ne sais quoi. Je m'arrête enfin dans les montagnes, une bande des tiens descend lentement vers la ville. Ils m'expliquent amèrement qu'ils vont signer l'armistice, ils n'ont plus de chef ni de courage. Je n'ai pas peur d'eux, ce qui va se passer, se passera.

"Je vous offre ma vie pour être quitte de mes dettes" dis-je, et j'arrive moi aussi à parler les yeux et le cœur.

"Tout le monde entendra parler de toi."

J'avais tort, on connaît toujours ses copains ici, la vie n'est pas terminée. Pour moi elle recommence.

Il y a une chose dont je ne leur parlerai jamais. A la porte du restaurant j'ai accepté devenir ta femme. J'ai eu beau essayer de te sauver. On t'a eu quand même, on t'a jeté à boîte aux ordures comme mes parents y jetaient mes poupées brutalisées — après tout cela, il est si peu de dire que je les aimais, que je t'aime.

Diana Hallchurch

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