

## Great Names at Eton and Harrow.



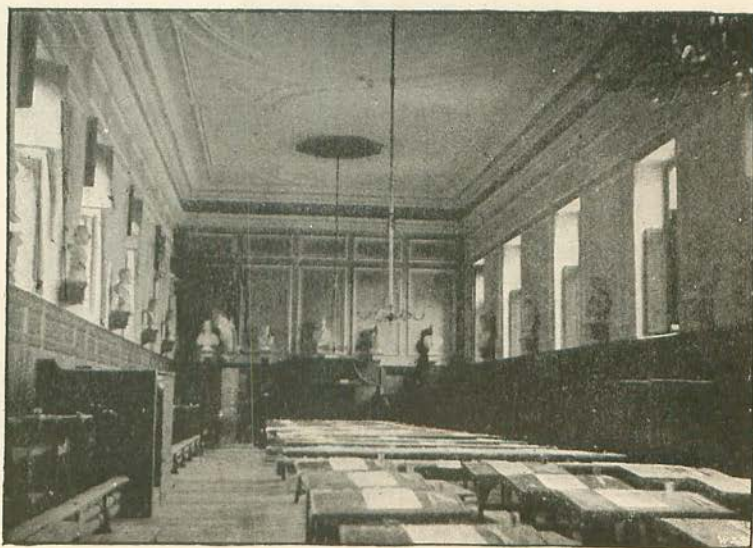
HE passion for cutting one's name upon the surroundings in general occupies a corner, more or less remote, in every human breast. When tourists carve their names in staggering letters all over some relic or monument of world-wide interest, it is the fashion—and rightly—to heap obloquy upon Samuel Jones or Thomas Wilkinson for ever and ever, that his name, cut in the most conspicuous place possible, may go down to succeeding generations as that of an inconsiderable ass. But let us make all allowances for Samuel Jones or Thomas Wilkinson. The rage for carving one's name is at its wildest during schooldays, and if it then be checked, frustrated, and pent up, it will burst forth in manhood, and produce a surrounding eruption of dates and initials far into responsible middle age. Wherefore we will be charitable, and suppose that the pocket-knives of Samuel and Thomas were restrained, or even taken away from them at school—or, perhaps, that Samuel and Thomas never went to school at all.

A boy who has not cut his name somewhere probably does not exist—most have done it somewhere about school. But when the school is a very old one indeed—hundreds of years old—there is apt to remain no single inch upon which to make the required digs and scrapes. Eton and Harrow are schools of this sort, and the boys of old time—very like the boys of this time in disposition—did so manfully dig, scrape, and carve in certain favourite spots on the walls of these schools, that in the earlier parts of the present century it became necessary to prohibit the practice; indeed, the practice had spread over a sufficient superficies to prohibit itself. Therefore it was enacted—and the enactment still holds good—that any boy, upon leaving, might commission an approved workman to cut his name upon some new piece of wainscoting or upon

some wall-lining inaccessible to a boy of ordinary length with no ladder. Half a sovereign is the price of this particular slice of immortality at Eton.

Among all these thousands of names it would be extraordinary if none were to be found of boys who grew into famous men. There are many. No more interest, however, attaches to those cut by deputy than to the name inscribed in the ordinary school register. With these, indisputably cut by the boy himself, it is different.

Eton is the older of the two schools under notice; let us therefore begin with Eton. Founded by the mild scholar-king, Henry VI., in 1440, and intended as a sort of "feeder" to King's College, Cambridge, it has turned out many brilliant statesmen, among them Pitt, Earl of Chatham, and Fox, his son's great rival. The Upper Schoolroom is the place where one must look for the thickest crop of names, although more unknown names, of much earlier dates, are to be found on the window-shutters of the picturesque old Lower School—the earliest date being 1528, I believe. Here, then, in the Upper School, we look and soon find on the right-hand wall, and almost underneath the bust since erected in his memory, the name "C. J. Fox." It is boldly cut on the wainscot frame between two panels, and is, without doubt, the autograph of the boy who was to become a Lord of the Admiralty at twenty-one, and live the life-long oppo-



THE UPPER SCHOOLROOM—ETON.





C. J. FOX.

ment of William Pitt—the boy of whom, I regret to say, it is recorded that his father's "extravagant and vulgar indulgence" had a bad effect upon the tone of the whole school at the time. He did well, however, both at Eton and Oxford, in spite of his quaint vanities and his gambling habits. The portion of the wainscoting which has been photographed, containing his name, will give some idea of the closeness with which the entire wall is covered with similar inscriptions—indeed, there are many places where the names crowd even thicker.

Many of the more regular names, however, are those executed by the paid carver.

Some distance farther along, on the same side, the name "Clive" stands in very large letters. This is not, as more than one visitor has supposed, the signature of the



LORD CLIVE.

founder of our Indian Empire (who was a Merchant Taylors' boy), but that of his son Edward, who became the first Earl of Powis. He lived a very able and useful life as governor of Madras, but his father's great Indian fame so overtopped his own that he stands less conspicuously in our memory than he otherwise might. He was a man of remarkable physical strength, and was in the habit of digging in his garden at six in the morning, in shirt-sleeves, when eighty years of age.

Out of doors, in the quadrangle, at the foot of the clock-tower, a name and date may be distinguished cut in the weather-beaten stone and partly overhung by the leaves of a



S. CANNING.

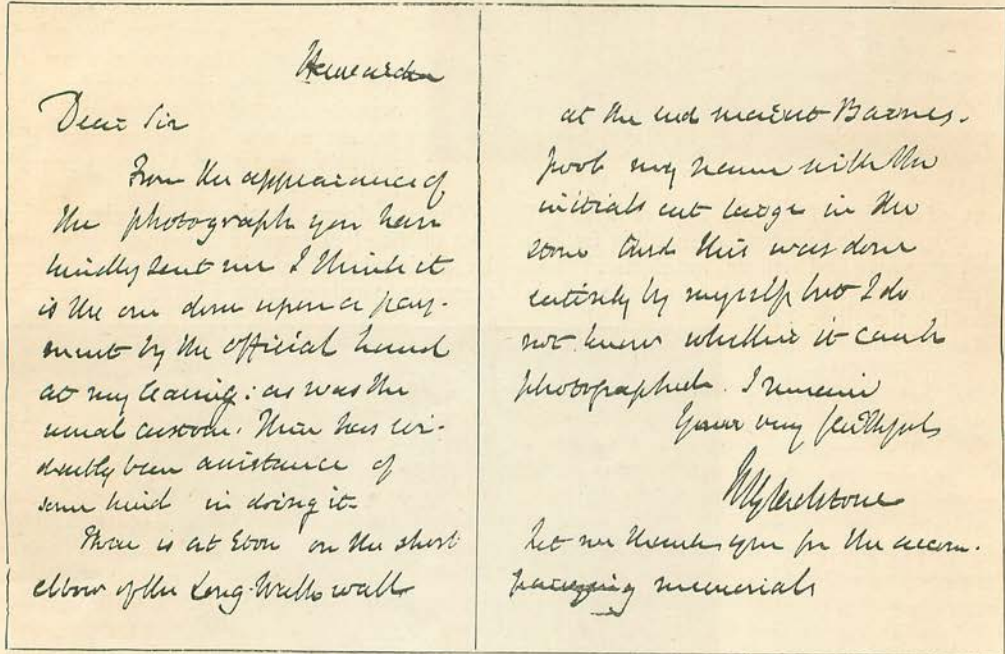
creeping plant. The name—"S. Canning"—is that of the boy who became Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, after he had established the influence of this country in the East in the manner which has enabled so strong a check to be placed upon the designs of Russia.

This was the man so often described as the eternal foe of Nicholas, the Czar whose power and spirit were broken in the Crimea. Stratford Canning was a great favourite at Eton, and became captain of the school. The Eton scholars were at that time always welcome at Windsor Castle, and it was about the Castle that George III. met Canning, and asked him which form he was in. Canning told the King the sixth. "Then you are a much greater man than I can ever make you," replied good "Farmer George," with an apt knowledge of the



sentiments of schoolboys toward their leaders. At Windsor, Canning met Addington and Pitt, and they took him to hear debates in the House of Commons—so that the young diplomatist began his political education full early, and in good hands.

walls, and, if so, whether this particular inscription were his own. To that end he wrote, sending a copy of the photograph, together with those of the other interesting names, and here is a facsimile of Mr. Gladstone's reply:—



FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM MR. GLADSTONE.

One among famous Etonians is William Ewart Gladstone, and in search of his name we were directed to the door of the Upper School—close to where stands the historic swishing-block. There, sure enough, was the name, just as the photograph given on this page shows, carved upon the door near the edge, and not far from it the names of other members of the Gladstone family. But the letters and all those thereabout bore unmistakable signs of having been cut by the same hand. Wherefore it occurred to the writer that it would settle a matter of some general interest if Mr. Gladstone would say himself whether or not he cut his own name in the Eton

Thereupon it became necessary again to visit Eton, and there, upon the coping of the low wall before the old "Long Walk," near the end, and not far from where the "bounds" lay in Mr. Gladstone's time, the name "Gladstone" in bold, though worn, letters



W. E. GLADSTONE.



was plainly visible. Mr. Gladstone speaks of initials in his letter, but beyond the "G" no initial letters are now visible. The flat stone, exposed as it has been for something between sixty and seventy years to wear and weather, nevertheless keeps the letters of the surname fairly clear. It certainly was not an easy thing to photograph—partly from its horizontal position, partly from the wear and even colour of the stone in flat and incision alike—but photographed it was, and below is a copy.



GLADSTONE.

Mr. Gladstone was at Eton from 1821 to 1827. This was in the time of the celebrated Dr. Keate, whose floggings are as famous as, or more so than, those of Dr. Busby, of Westminster, Dryden's master. Dr. Keate, who has been described by Kinglake (one of his scholars) as barely five feet high, stout, and so dressed as partly to resemble Napoleon Buonaparte and partly a widow-woman, never spoilt a boy through sparing the rod. Rather, indeed, like Hood's Irish schoolmaster, he spoilt the rod and never spared the boy. Many are the anecdotes told of the worthy doctor—and his constant threat: "I'll flog you"—notably of his way of enforcing the lessons of the Sermon on the Mount. "Blessed are the pure in heart," said Dr. Keate. "Mind that; it's your duty to be pure in heart. If you're not pure in heart I'll flog you!" The story, too, of the candidates for confirmation is good. The list of these boys' names had been written out on just such a piece of paper as was used for the "bill" of culprits destined for the swishing-block,

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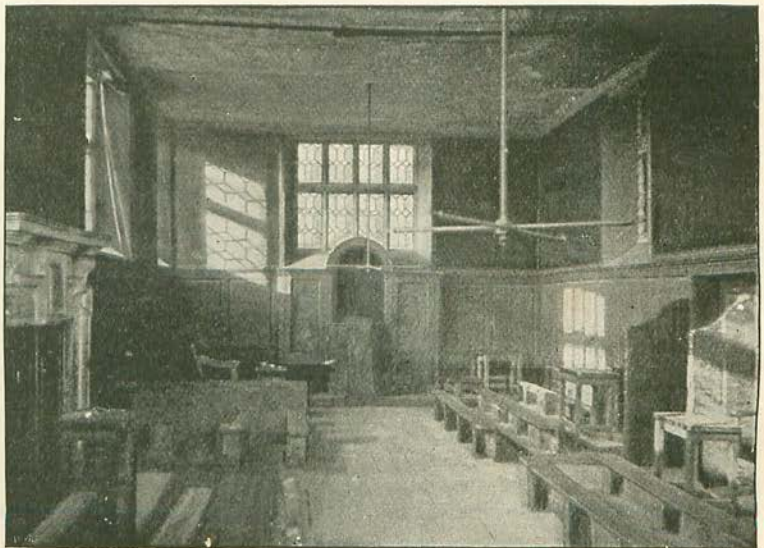
and the doctor, in fact, took the document to be such a "bill." Swished, accordingly, each catechumen was, in regular order; catching it all the more heavily for his attempted explanation that he was to be confirmed instead of swished; the doctor considering it an absurd and irreverent attempt at evasion of merited punishment.

At Harrow the historic room is that known as the "Fourth Form Room," which, indeed, was the original schoolroom provided by the founder, good John Lyon—"Lyon of Preston,

yeoman, John," as the song has it. School songs, by the way, are a chief feature of Harrow life. Dr. Montagu Butler gave singing the prominent place in school routine which it now

occupies, and many and good are the songs written by masters and old Harrovians specially for the school. School and "socket," fives and "footer," all have their appropriate songs, and these songs do much to make the school a happy one and foster the good school spirit that Harrow may justly be proud of. Indeed, scarcely a single song but has some reference to fun and sport out of school walls. Thus, good Queen Bess is sung of as giving her charter to the school in this way:—

And this is my charter, firm and free,  
This is my royal, great decree:  
Hits to the rail shall count for three,  
And six when fairly over!



FOURTH FORM ROOM—HARROW.





LORD BYRON.

To the Fourth Form Room, however. A charming old room this, with its dark oak lining, cut, every inch of it, thick with names. The name which every visitor makes for at once is over in the darkest corner, to the right of the large fireplace. It is Byron's, cut by himself, in 1805, before leaving. Of Byron's life at Harrow and of his friendship with young Robert Peel much has been said. Much, too, of how Byron lay meditating his verses on the Peachey tomb in Harrow churchyard, summer afternoon after summer afternoon. It is of Byron's friendship with Peel that an anecdote has been often told, which, however, will always bear repeating as an illustration of the noble character of Byron as a boy. A big boy had claimed the right to fag Peel, which claim Peel resisted. The big boy expressed his pretensions by twisting little Peel's arm almost to dislocation point, what time he inflicted bastinado-cuts on the inner fleshy part of the limb. Byron, himself too small to fight the tyrant, saw the torture with tears of indignation, and asked the big boy how many strokes he intended to inflict. "What's that to you, you little rascal?" was the retort. "Because, if you please," Byron responded, offering his arm, "I would take half."

Peel cut his own name in the end wall of the room on the right-hand side of the spectator who stands facing the master's seat of

state. He cut it large and broad, and deep too, as the photograph will show. From end to end the name occupies exactly 14in.—no small space for five tall letters. Indeed, perhaps the only boy who has written his name larger than Peel on the fourth form walls is one Warde, whose name sprawls across the panel on the other side of the rostrum in letters about a foot high. Truly some of these boys employed

characters compared to which Mr. Bob Sawyer's "corpulent letters of four inches long" were but tiny.

There is a school-song which tells of the different characters of Byron and Peel, and in which this carved name is referred to. Here are two verses:—

Byron lay, lazily lay,  
Hid from lesson and game away;  
Dreaming poetry all alone,  
Up-a-top of the Peachey stone.

All in a fury enters Drury,  
Sets him grammar and Virgil due.  
Poets shouldn't have, shouldn't have, shouldn't have,  
Poets shouldn't have work to do.

Peel stood, steadily stood,  
Just by the name in the carved wood,  
Reading rapidly, all at ease,  
Pages out of Demosthenes.

"Where has he got to? Tell him not to!"  
All the scholars who hear him cry;  
"That's the lesson for, lesson for, lesson for,  
That's the lesson for next July!"

Dr. Drury was head-master in Byron's



SIR ROBERT PEEL.



time, and the two verses well indicate the opposite reputations of Byron and Peel with the masters in the matter of industry.

On the opposite wall to that carrying the fireplace, on the left of the door as one enters, is a panel full of names, which is here reproduced — some of the names being



SIR WILLIAM JONES.

famous ones. Almost the first name that catches the eye is the not uncommon one of "W. Jones," framed round with a plain border. That was cut by Sir William Jones, the illustrious Oriental scholar, linguist, and lawyer of the last century, who, although he died at Calcutta when only forty-eight, left a name which will live while language is spoken. Away toward the left of this is seen the name "S. Perceval," cut by the ill-fated Spencer Perceval, who, in 1812, when Premier, was shot dead in the lobby of the House of Commons by Bellingham. The date, 1801, which seems to belong to this name, and to be an anachronism, in reality belongs to the name "W. Ricketts" just above.

Down lower, just below the big-lettered "Mirehouse," appears the name "Haddo." This is the autograph of the subsequent Earl of Aberdeen, who was Prime Minister during the Crimean War.

Exactly opposite Peel's name, at the other end of the room, near the great window, appears a whole column of names regularly

and cleanly cut in a neat and workmanlike manner. All being so well cut and so precisely in the same style, one is apt to suppose that these are examples of the official handiwork, and not autographs. On inquiry, however, it will be found that this column of names was cut by two of the boys

who had skill in wood-carving, for themselves and friends. One of these skilful carvers of wood was the late Cardinal Manning — his youthful wood-carving, it will be remembered, he referred to very fully during the interview with him reported some time ago in THE STRAND MAGAZINE. Here is the name "H. E. Manning, 1824,"

half-way down the column. Readers will also find, in the number of THE STRAND MAGAZINE referred to, many of the Cardinal's remembrances of his school life.

The name of Lord Palmerston ("H. J. Temple") cut at Harrow is often mentioned as an autograph. It was, however, cut for him by a schoolfellow—subsequently Bishop Wordsworth.

None of the names of Etonians and Harrovians now in their schooldays will go down to future generations of schoolboys as autograph carvings, wherefore the signatures



CARDINAL MANNING.

of famous old boys have, if anything, added interest, and should be regarded as precious relics.