Illustrated Interviews.

LXXV.—THE REV. EDMOND WARRE, D.D., THE HEAD MASTER OF ETON.

BY RUDOLPH DE CORDOVA.

From a Photo. by] DR. WARRE IN HIS STUDY. [*George Newnes, Ltd.*

IF Dr. Warre is not Eton, Eton is certainly Dr. Warre.

Man and boy he has been connected with the most famous of all the public schools of the country for the best part of half a century. He may be said without exaggeration to have lived his whole life there, seeing that from the time he went there as a boy until now he was away only while he was at Oxford. Of him it has been written by one of the chroniclers of Eton (Mr. A. Clutton-Brock, B.A.), "It is enough to say that Dr. Warre understands both men and boys, that no scholar was ever less pedantic, no reformer had ever a deeper reverence for the past, and no successful man ever owed less to advertisement. Dr. Warre has made many changes, particularly at the beginning of his career, and changes in a school, whatever their character, seldom please the boys, and are apt to dissatisfy the masters. Yet, in spite of this, his popularity, always great, has steadily increased with years, and it is safe to say that no head master was ever more honoured and trusted by masters and boys alike."

If circumstances have denied me the pleasure of writing critically or complimentarily of the head master of Eton, they have nevertheless conferred on me the favour of an interview, and so of being the medium through which he may speak to a large number of those who know and reverence him personally, and to the still greater body of the public which only knows him by repute as a great head master.

In the head master's own room at Eton the first obvious thing to ask for was a comparison of the Eton of Dr. Warre's day with the Eton of to-day.

"The comparison, to be really interesting," replied Dr. Warre, "should be the comparison made by a boy of the time when I was at school with a boy now. I am advanced in years, so I am not in a position to judge. Old Etonians seem, quite unconsciously, to imagine that things must be to-day the same as they were in their own time, and are shocked to find that they are different, because they forget that each generation has its own point of view. The aggregate of my impressions on this point, however, is this: that the surroundings, including one's own

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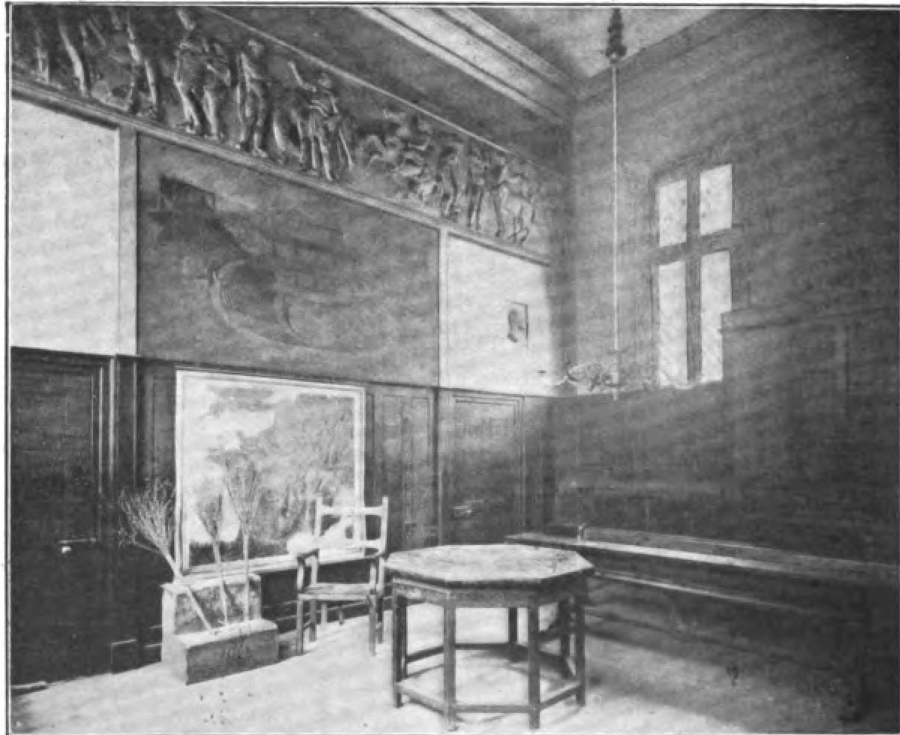
From a Photo. by] THE HEAD MASTER CALLING THE ROLL IN THE SCHOOL-YARD. [*Hills & Saunders.*

go must be taken in relation to the movement of the whole area of English society, for one cannot, in reality, dissociate them.

"How, when I was a boy, were we fed? Very well; our food was plain and simple, and although there is a tendency to make out that boys eat far more meat now than we used to do, we certainly used to have meat twice a day. Breakfast and tea were very simple meals, and were usually supplemented with things which we bought. These two meals we had in our own rooms, while dinner and supper were taken in the masters' dining-rooms. Now, in most houses breakfast is served in the dining-room. This probably has come about owing to morning chapel, which begins at 9.25, and as the boys do not come out of school until 8.30, the breakfast in common is more economical of time than

subjective perception of things, are not the same as they were. The change is, however, merely the same as that which has taken place in the rest of society, and when one recollects how much stiffer was our social environment when we were young as compared with what it is now, it is not so difficult to understand these differences. In some respects life at Eton was undoubtedly harder than it is to-day. I do not think, for instance, that there was as much comfort or regard paid to comfort as there is now. My own room and, so far as I can remember, boys' rooms generally were much less well furnished or artistically decked than most boys' rooms are now. That, however, is exactly the same with regard to the boys' homes. All public schools are practically made by the homes from which the boys come, so that any distinction so far as social things



From a Photo. by] DR. WARRE'S CLASS-ROOM. [*Hills & Saunders.*

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would be the case when the custom was for each boy to have breakfast in his own room. You see, the day begins early with us here, for the boys have to be in morning school at 7.30 in the autumn and spring school-times, and at seven in summer."

"How would you compare the course of work now with what it was when you were a boy?"

"In my time we had a 'saying lesson,' as we used to call it, every day. In accordance with the recommendations of the Public School Commission the system of repetition has been modified, though I think, myself, it is a pity that there is so little of it now. Our 'saying lesson' was classical, and the result was that almost every piece of Latin and Greek poetry which we had construed in school had to be said by heart. In my school days the curriculum practically resolved itself into Latin and Greek, for we were taught little mathematics and no French. What has made a great difference in the school work is the introduction of new subjects, and the fact that education is now dominated by examinations. People who write about education do not, it seems to me, realize that the schools cannot have the same free hand as formerly, for the examinations of the Universities and the State must be prepared for. You cannot ignore them, or avoid special work for them, do what you will.

"So far as work in the school goes, the rank and file have to work much harder now than they used to do; a good deal more is imposed and a good deal more is demanded of the boys. *Per contra*, the clever boy has the same work as the average boy to do, and some people are disposed to find fault with the fact that the clever boy does not have enough time left to him for the improvement of his mind after his own bent. It is difficult, however, to see how one could have the two systems working harmoniously together. The Newcastle Scholarship still keeps its level, and the Oxford and Cambridge Certificate examination, which the 'First Hundred' undergo every year, sets, as it were, a standard, and gives an object for work which, take it all in all, is very effective. During my time there was nothing like the Oxford and Cambridge Certificate examination. The system of School 'Trials,' as the terminal examination here is called, has also helped to alter the incidence of work. Every boy is examined at the end of the school term, which it is a peculiarity of Eton to call a 'half,' although there are three terms in the year. As a boy's place in the school depends on the result of the 'trials' he is put on his mettle three times every year. All this has a very definite effect on the general education. Then, again, there is the Army class, which takes over a hundred boys of the type which in the old days was not the most studious while at school, but would have left and gone to a crammer's to be especially prepared for the Army. They are now among the hardest workers in the school, and their example makes a very considerable difference to the other boys.

From a Photo. by] AN ETON BOY'S STUDY. [*Hills & Saunders.*

"With regard to recreation, the same old games still go on as they used to do. Rowing and cricket are still kept up and still retain their pre-eminence. They are by no means the only method of relaxation, for football, racquets, and fives are all prosperous.

"Then there are the beagles. In the old

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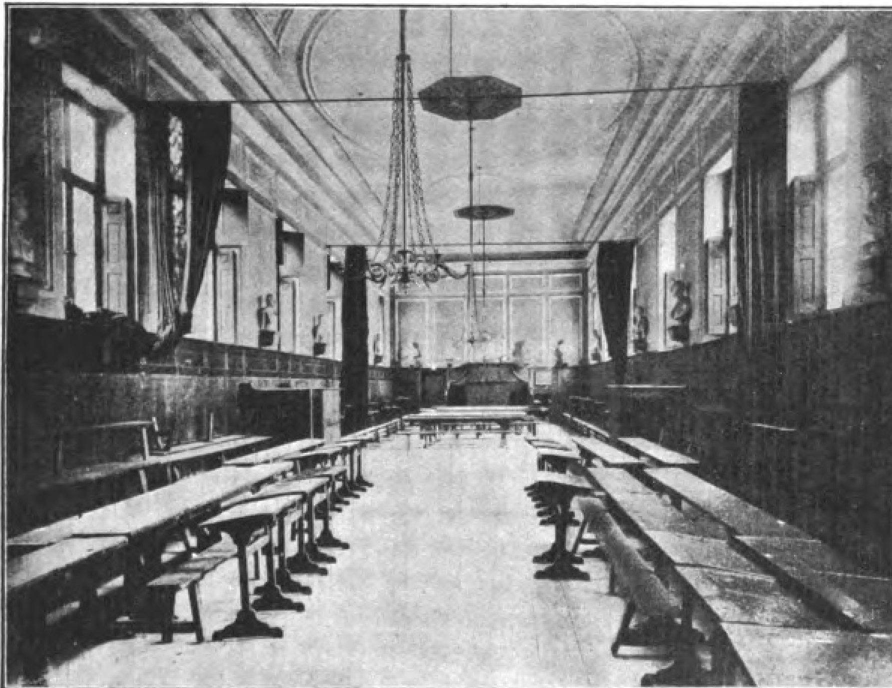
times a heterogeneous pack existed; but it was not supposed to be allowed, and, of course, it was out of bounds; but the institution has been for a long time recognised, and there is a very good pack of beagles which hunt in the Easter half. Nor must we omit the Eton College Volunteer Rifle Corps, of which at one time I was in command.

"There is one important point to which I refer with pleasure: the relation which exists between master and boy. In my young days there were very few masters. Indeed, there were under twenty in all, whereas now there are more than sixty. True, when I was a boy there were only about six hundred boys in the school, whereas now there are over a thousand, so that the average number of boys to a master is much smaller than it was. The result was that the masters in my time were really overworked, and so were kept much more aloof from the boys than they are now. The masters took very little interest in our games, and left us much to ourselves in our pursuit of them. Perhaps our sports were also rougher then, as society was, and coarser in expression. We had no doubt a compensating balance in the complete freedom which we enjoyed notwithstanding the system of 'shirking' which was then in vogue. That was abolished, if I remember right, under Dr. Balston, who was head master in the sixties. In old times, although the river was in bounds, and one was supposed to be allowed to boat, yet the approaches to the river were out of bounds, and to reach the river we had to break the rule of remaining in bounds. The same was true with regard to the Park and Windsor Castle, in which we were always allowed, and the precincts of which were technically in bounds. You ask me what shirking was. Well, if a boy was out of bounds and he saw a master coming, or one of the Sixth Form, he had to hide, and if in the town he would run into the first shop and take refuge until the coast was clear. If the master came into the shop, however, then the boy hid behind a counter in order that he might not be seen. Of course all this was eminently ridiculous, and the greater freedom which has come into vogue of late years has not made any practical difference as to discipline.



From a Photo. by] THE UPPER SCHOOL. [*Hills & Saunders.*

"As the number of masters increased, and the work of each thus became less severe, those who were distinguished for rowing and cricket used to be invited by the boys to help them. In this way I myself was often invited, but I took good care never to make the position a false one. Indeed, I never would coach the eight unless I was specially asked to do so for a particular day, and when the boys omitted to ask me, expecting me to come as a matter of course, they were sometimes surprised to find I did not put in an appearance. The same was true with regard to cricket. In that way the confidence of the boys has never been forfeited, because they have always felt that a master would not take part in their games unless invited. The relation between the master and boy has thus become a most wholesome one. There is a story that when Bishop Selwyn was out in Polynesia he met an Eton man, with whom he took his midday meal. In the course of conversation the man remarked, 'I'm afraid I didn't learn much at Eton. One thing,

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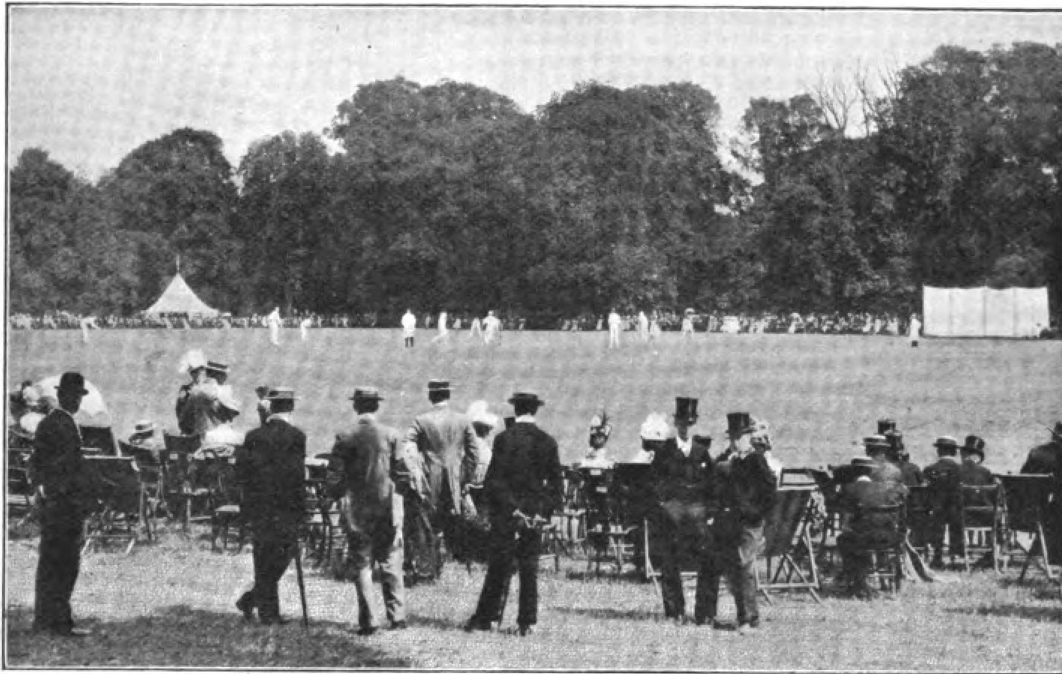

From a Photo. by] THE PLAYING FIELDS. [*Hills & Saunders.*

however, I did learn ; that was to know my place and to keep it.' It was a very good thing to learn, and it is a lesson we all learn here.

"With regard to my schoolfellows, I do not remember anything particular of many of them in my time. I recall, however, as an eloquent speaker in Pop. (the name by which the Debating Society is always known), the Right Hon. Mr. E. R. Wodehouse, who has been M.P. for Bath for the last twenty years, and I remember, too, also as a good speaker, Mr. Reginald Yorke, who was at one time member of Parliament for Gloucester. They were the leading boys in the school in my time. At this moment, however, I confess that I do not remember any of those at school with me, with the exception, perhaps, of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, who have attained any great eminence as statesmen. Of those who have come to the front since I do not remember any particular legends to exist. This may seem strange to the outsider, but is quite within comprehension here, because the whole thing is on such a footing of equality, and anything like presumption of greatness would be resented. There is no place in the world where anything like what is popularly called 'side' would be so quickly put down. All the conditions here are decidedly democratic in that respect, so that even members of the Royal Family educated here are treated in every way just like ordinary boys."

It is part of a journalist's business to know everything, for which reason I suppose most journalists don't know more than they ought. I had heard, however, a little story of Dr. Warre's prowess at school. One day when he went up to the head master to receive a prize at the end of the half, Dr. Hawtrey, in presenting him with his book, said, with a kindly smile, "If you go on at this rate, you will ruin me in books."

I recalled this anecdote to Dr. Warre, and, if he will forgive my saying so in print, the diffidence of the head master in hearing it was as marked as if he had been a boy again. He shook his head. "There really was very little in it. Those prizes were for 'collections,' as they were termed. They were copied from Oxford, and were introduced when I was in the lower Fifth form, and lasted until the beginning of my head mastership, about 1885, when they were altered to 'trials.' Somehow or other I managed to win the 'collection' prize in my division every time, and that was how I came to the notice of Dr. Hawtrey in the way you mention.

"After Dr. Hawtrey became Provost, Dr. Goodford, one of the assistant masters, succeeded him. He was an excellent scholar and a good and painstaking teacher, though he had one curious characteristic, for he often seemed to be asleep in school. I need hardly say, however, he never really was so, for it was impossible for any of us to do anything that escaped his notice. Soon after he was appointed head master I left to go to Oxford."

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From a Photo. by] FOOTBALL—OPPIDANS V. COLLEGERS. [*Hills & Saunders.*

"But first you took the highest honours, both in school and out, did you not?" I interjected.

"I certainly did win the Pulling, and I was lucky enough to get the Newcastle Scholarship in the year 1854. I was only seventeen at the time, and would have liked to have stayed on at Eton another year, but my father insisted on my going on to Oxford, where I won the Balliol Scholarship in the following year. At the scholars' table one became conscious of being with men who would be sure to do something in the world later on. Among them were Bowen, afterwards Lord Justice; Arthur Blomfield, afterwards Bishop of Colchester; Merry, now Rector of Lincoln, and Wright, now a judge, and many other able and gifted men, and among them Edward Herbert, my brother scholar from Eton, who was murdered by brigands in Greece.

"At the University the same sort of thing prevailed as here. The chief studies at that time were for the classical schools and mathematics. The other great schools, History, Law, etc., had not taken the position they have now. I went in for Moderations in Classics and Literæ Humaniores in the final schools. I naturally took to rowing at Oxford, and my time was divided between rowing and reading. Once you get into a groove life goes pretty smoothly at the University, and I do not think I ever did anything else until the Rifle Corps was established. I did not row in the inter-University boat race until 1857, although I might have done so in the previous year. In 1855 I remember the Thames was frozen from Oxford downwards, and skating was enjoyed for miles along the course of the river, so there was no boat-race that year. In 1857 I rowed six, and in that year we used the first keelless boat which was used in a University race. The President of the

From a Photo. by] THE ETON EIGHT OF 1900. [*Hills & Saunders.*

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A. MOON, KEEPER OF THE RACQUET COURT.
From a Photo. by Alfred Kissack, Eton.

HON. G. W. LYTTELTON, KEEPER OF THE FIELD.
From a Photo. by Alfred Kissack, Eton.

G. B. LEE, CAPTAIN OF THE SHOOTING EIGHT.
From a Photo. by Alfred Kissack, Eton.

LORD DALMENY, PRESIDENT OF THE ETON SOCIETY, KEEPER OF THE FIELD, KEEPER OF THE WALL, AND KEEPER OF THE RACQUET COURT.
From a Photo. by Alfred Kissack, Eton.

J. W. HELY-HUTCHINSON, CAPTAIN OF THE SCHOOL, KEEPER OF THE WALL, AND SEC. OF THE MUSICAL SOCIETY.
From a Photo. by Alfred Kissack, Eton.

J. EDWARDES-MOSS, CAPTAIN OF THE BOATS.
From a Photo. by Alfred Kissack, Eton.

M. F. BLAKE, CAPTAIN OF THE OPPIDANS.
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C. E. LAMBERT, CAPTAIN OF THE CRICKET ELEVEN.
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LEADERS OF ETON SPORTS.

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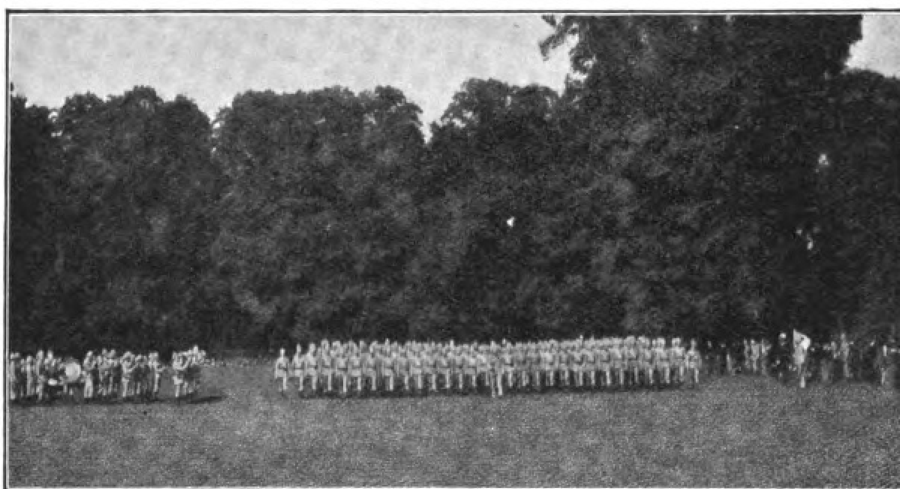

INSPECTION OF THE ETON RIFLE CORPS--THE MARCH PAST.
From a Photo. by Hills & Saunders.

Oxford University Boat Club at that time was an old Eton man, Arthur Heywood Lonsdale, who was a great benefactor of rowing, and it was he who introduced the keelless boat which had been seen at Henley in the previous year. It required some courage to introduce it for University rowing. In 1857 we won, but in 1858 we reverted to the old-fashioned boat, in which I rowed seven, and we were defeated, although the defeat must in part be attributed to the fact that a steam-tug bore down upon us just before the start, and the wash nearly upset us and bent the rowlock of the stroke oar, so that we practically rowed the race with seven men, and it was virtually all over at the start. In 1859 I was President of the Boat Club, but did not row at Putney that year as I reading for 'Greats.'

"The system of training was then much more unscientific than it is now. Our liquor was very carefully restricted in amount, and we used to eat a great deal of meat with few vegetables. The consequences were decidedly not good, and many of the men suffered a great deal from boils. Still we were young and strong, and had good digestions, so that no permanent harm ensued from the abnormal diet on which we were put.

"While at Oxford I took a great interest in the getting up of the Oxford University Rifle Corps, and I became its senior captain. In its formation many of the Dons took a great interest. Among them was the Provost of Queen's College, Dr. Thompson, who was afterwards Archbishop of York. He was Chairman of the Committee, on which also were Dr. Jeune, afterwards Bishop of Peterborough, and Dr. Evans, afterwards Master of Pembroke. The Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, the then Duke of Marlborough, as the scheme was being carried through in the county as well as at the University, invited our committeemen to attend the county meetings. In that way I learned a good deal about committee work, and had my reward in the experience which I gained in the work of organization, which has been of the greatest use to me in my subsequent career.

"As senior captain I was in command of the first review of the University Corps when the Prince of Wales came down to review it. Everybody was very nervous at the time, for, strange though it must seem to us now that the Volunteer movement has attained such remarkable proportions, very few people knew anything about rifles in those days. When the first volley was fired there was a great scare. Many horses on the review ground bolted in all directions, and two old ladies who were in a brougham were introduced rather unceremoniously to a neighbouring ditch. No great harm, however, was done, and the review did not a little to stimulate interest in the Volunteers, who at that time drilled in the grounds of Magdalen College."

"Of course you knew the late Professor Jowett well?" and I noticed on the mantelpiece of Dr. Warre's room a bust of the great Vice-Chancellor.

"Yes," replied Dr. Warre, "very well. Indeed, it is difficult for me to speak of him, as he was an intimate friend of many years' standing. He took a great deal of interest in me when I was at Balliol, and his kindness was never-failing, so that I entertain the greatest regard and reverence for his memory. His conversation was always worth hearing, but his powers of silence were very great, and he would sometimes walk with one for ten or fifteen minutes and never say a word during the whole time. His aim was always to help everyone with whom he came into contact, and he invariably gave a stimulus in

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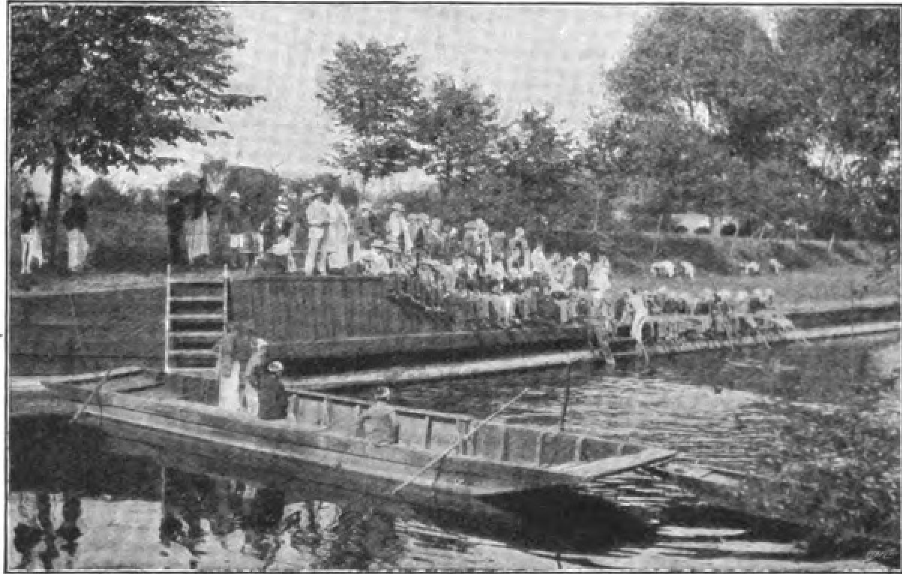
the right direction, while one was always certain to get the wisest counsel from him.

"You ask me about the stories concerning the master? Well, most of the many undergraduate stories told of Jowett had been just as glibly told of one of his predecessors, Dr. Jenkins; in fact, these stories become traditional, and are passed on to succeeding masters as fancy dictates. Of these stories I can recall two. One Sunday a scholar, for a joke, in his surplice after coming out of chapel climbed into one of the great elm trees in the quadrangle and sat down on a branch. The attention of the master as he was passing from the chapel to his lodgings was called to the fact, but the only remark he deigned to make was 'What a great white bird,' and so passed on.

"On another occasion someone had smashed a lot of windows in the front quadrangle. When the matter was brought to his attention the master after a moment's consideration replied, in an oracular voice, 'I rather think it is the effect of lightning.' This comic element was, however, a part of his wisdom in government, which was none the less successful because he refused to be drawn by either comedy or tragedy in academic life.



"PASSING"—THE EXAMINATION FOR PROFICIENCY IN SWIMMING AT CUCKOO WEIR.
From a Photo. by Hills & Saunders.

"Life at the University having run its usual course I was invited to return to Eton as an assistant master, and I came back in 1860. My interest in boating led me, on the invitation of successive captains of the boats, to coach the eight for the Westminster race and afterwards for Henley, and I continued this coaching until I became head master in 1884. At the very beginning of my assistant mastership I started the Volunteers, of which, as I have said, I was in command for a time. Even now, though I am no longer able to coach, boating and boat-building have a great fascination for me, and during the holidays I find a great deal of pleasure in designing racing eights and other river craft.

"Oh, yes," this in answer to a question I asked, "I knew Mr. Gladstone many years. He was always very kind to me. Everyone knows his memory was extraordinary, and the following fact will show even more vividly than most anecdotes that have been told of him how retentive it was.

"On one occasion he came down to Eton to lecture on Homer, and I may say, in passing, I was struck, as was everybody, with the extraordinary range of his knowledge. After the lecture was over Mr. Gladstone expressed a wish to see the old books of the Eton Society, of which he had been a member, and they were brought up for him. In his day it was the custom for a *précis* of the debates to be written in by the Vice-President of the Society. In turning over the leaves of the book he came upon a speech of his own, and looking at the writing he declared, 'That is not his writing,' meaning the Vice-President's of the week; 'that is Milnes Gaskell's writing,' yet it was sixty years, at least, since he had seen the writing in question. On that visit everyone remarked the extraordinary care Mrs. Gladstone took of her husband. Mr. Gladstone himself always appreciated that care, but he often humorously resented it. The story is told of him how that when he was walking in the garden one evening, and Mrs. Gladstone called to him to come in, he said, 'I shall take one turn more just to show my independence.'

"Yes, I also knew Lord Beaconsfield. I remember going down to Hughenden one day to arrange for a field day for our Volunteers, whom he had kindly invited, and I was greatly amused at the fact that on going

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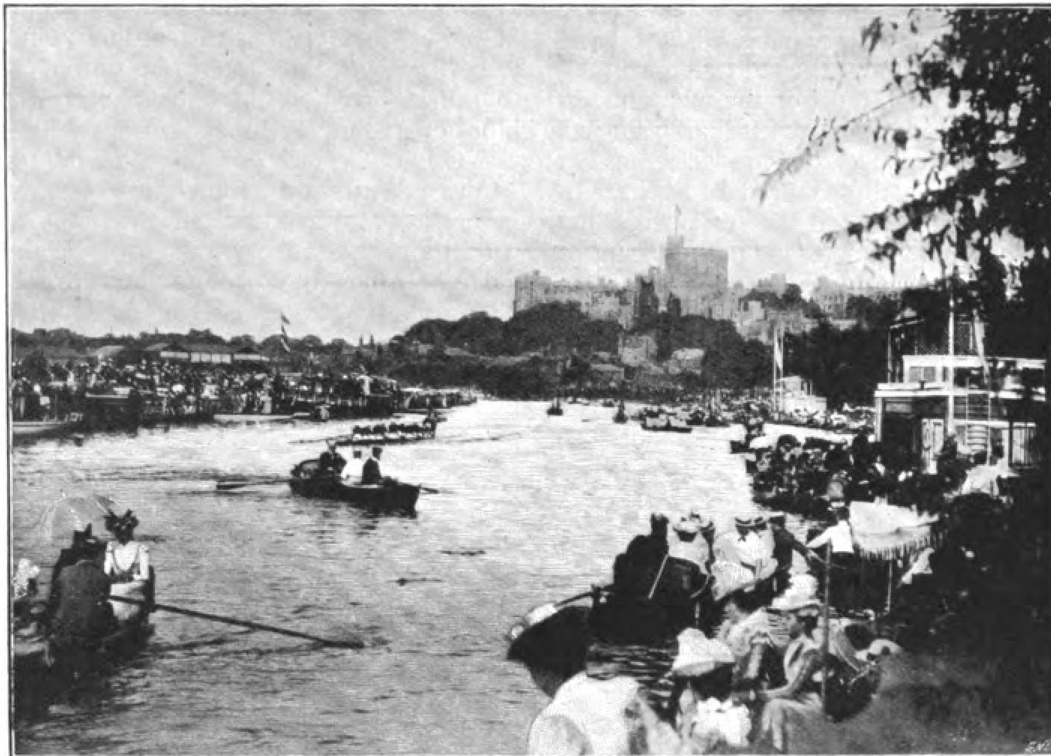

From a Photo. by] THE FOURTH OF JUNE AT ETON. [*Hills & Saunders.*

out to show us the grounds he took with him a little bill-hook. It was just at the time when Mr. Gladstone was being caricatured as a wood-cutter with an enormous axe. Lord Beaconsfield, however, did not say a single word that suggested there was any meaning in his action, so I must leave you and your readers to draw what inference you choose from the circumstance."

"It is a trite saying, I know, that 'the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton.' How many Etonians are now at the front?

"Altogether over 1,100 in various branches of the service. Sir Redvers Buller, Lord Methuen, General Pole-Carew, and many other general officers were at Eton, and, of course, everybody remembers that the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts himself, is an old Eton boy. He was at the school some years before I was, and, from what I have said, you will not be surprised at learning that there are, so far as I have been able to discover, no traditions preserved of him during the time he was here."

"Much has been heard from time to time about the evils of fagging. How far does your experience bear out this statement? What are the present services of the fag, and the relation between him and his fag master?"

"There is in reality very little fagging. It is restricted to Sixth and Fifth forms above Middle Division—that is, to boys who are, as a rule, about sixteen or seventeen years of age. A lower boy may be sent on a message, and in the houses there is a certain amount of fagging for breakfast and tea. But there is now much less of this than in former days. While a fag is supposed to owe these services to his master, the fag-master, on the other hand, has to befriend and protect his fag if he does his duty. It is very rare that any question as to misuse of the power of fagging arises. I do not believe that anything of the kind often occurs, or that it would be left unnoticed or unpunished by the boys themselves."

If the boys find a visit to the head master's room as pleasant an experience as I did, they must have a very happy life at Eton. There are, however, interviews and interviews —"illustrated interviews" and others—and the point of view of the interviewer is, as a rule, different from that of the interviewed. Still, I can regard an interview with Dr. Warre, even for a schoolboy, being robbed of much of its pain by reason of his sympathy of manner and broadness of view, which cannot fail to strike the most casual observer, in which category I will, for this occasion only, and without prejudice, set myself down.

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