

GREAT ATHLETES OF TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY :

A GOSSIP ABOUT 'VARSITY BLUES.

By "RAMBLER."



THE two great Universities in this country are complete microcosms, with manners, customs, and standards of their own. They are peopled "by the noblest of their species, called emphatically men"; who are not as other men are. During the period of their membership at the 'Varsity—before the mills of life grind them exceeding small—men are not judged by the ordinary standards of this world. They weigh their fellows in balances, but the weights used are not those of the Philistines. The aim and ambition of the average undergraduate is a wisp of blue ribbon—the bay wreath of the Olympian victor, which raises him above his fellows, and inscribes his name on the Golden Book—Blue Book would perhaps be a more appropriate term, were it not for the meaner significance convention has given it. Since Inter-'Varsity competition first began the names of Blues have figured frequently in the wider field of after life. Nor have athletic honours been divorced from triumphs in the schools, from the year when Joe Chitty (now Mr. Justice Chitty) won his first class in the final schools, played in the cricket match, and rowed in the boat-race, unto the day when Mr. Thesiger, while piling up a goodly score for his 'Varsity, was handed a telegram at the wicket announcing that he had gained a first in the law schools. Few boats probably have carried eighteen men who were destined to become more distinguished in after life than the two eight-oars which toiled up Henley Reach on that memorable 10th of July, 1829, the first occasion when a picked crew of Oxford tried conclusions with the oarsmen of the Cam. Number 4 in the Oxford boat—who was also a week later to meet a Cambridge team in the cricket field—was destined to become Bishop of St. Andrews and one of the great preachers and poets of his day; number 5, who turned the scale at 14 stone 10, was later on to be considered massive enough to fill a prebend's stall at York with befitting dignity; number 6 was ultimately to take his seat in the deanery of Lincoln; stroke and number 7 were to

become country clergymen of repute; and the cox. was in after life to steer himself into the deanery of Ripon. Of the Cambridge crew, one man was going to be known as the Dean of Ely and a historian of European repute, while another—perhaps the most heroic figure of both the gallant crews—was to be known to fame as the first Bishop of New Zealand, and to pass away in the palace at Lichfield. On that day, truly, was muscular Christianity justified of her children. This memorable race, by the way, is often spoken of as the first battle of the Blues, regardless of the fact that the Cantabs, if they wore any colour at all, wore pink. Their rivals sported the striped blue and white jersey of Christ Church. At that date the C.U.B.C. was only one year old, and the O.U.B.C. was not to come into being for nearly ten years. In the dark ages, before any records were kept of the doings of the Blues, there was up at Christ Church a young man—now well on the way to make "ninety—not out" in his match against Father Time—who divided his time between the cricket-field and the amateur stage. He was J. L. Baldwin, a name honoured in clubland as an authority on many matters, including whist. He, with Mr. F. Ponsonby (now Lord Bessborough) and with Mr. (now Sir Spencer) Ponsonby-Fane, conceived the idea of starting a first-class cricket club. The idea was such a good one that it subsequently became the I Zingari, which continueth even unto this day. Since the Church had so conspicuously proved the intimate relationship between theology and oarsmanship, there rowed in the Cambridge boat, towards the end of the thirties, a man who was to be the precursor of a long line of legal luminaries who graduated through athletic triumphs to forensic fame. This gentleman is known to history as "Billy Brett, of Caius," and by virtue of his ability to paddle his own canoe he was improved in due time into a Solicitor-General and a Lord of Appeal, until he became the Right Hon. Sir William Brett, Master of the Rolls. He is now titled Lord Esher. Rowing in the same eight a few years later, and adding to this the merit of winning the Colquhouns

and high honours as a classic, was a First Trinity man, one G. Denman. He has been heard of later on as an eminent judge. In the meanwhile the Oxford boat still confined itself to its duties as a theological



From a photo by] [Russell.
THE HON. GEORGE DENMAN.
(Formerly a judge of the Queen's Bench Division.)

training college, and sent into the world a genial, cheery man of Balliol who was to become the honoured Rector of Bishopgate until—only a year ago—he crossed the bar; and F. C. McDougall, of Magdalen, who was starting on a career that was to end with a bishopric in Labuan. A contemporary of theirs was George Hughes, the stroke of the famous victorious “seven-oared” eight, perhaps one of the best all-round athletes and scholars that Oxford has ever produced. To his laurels on the river he added his cap for cricket. He took a double-first, but in his decadence, after going down from the Varsity, he was bitten with the golf mania, and was so severely affected that in '70 he won the All England championship. These feats doubtless qualified him to become a J.P. for Herefordshire. His brother and biographer was the author of the immortal “Tom Brown.” With the beginning of the fifties, however, Oxford rowing began to turn its attention seriously towards the prizes of the Bar. It therefore welcomed in '49 an Eton freshman, J. W. Chitty. He rowed in the boat from his first year until '53. With the help of an old schoolfellow, J. J. Hornby, now Headmaster of Eton, he carried off the Pairs and the Goblets. To

show the impartiality of his mind, he then kept wicket for the eleven. Turning his attention for a period to the schools, he carried off a First-class in Greats, became a Vinerian scholar, and at length was called to be a Fellow of Exeter. Since then he has evolved ponderous tomes on the intricacies of the law; and, as he was a double Blue, the powers that be could do nothing less than give him the ermine and knighthood. Despite his absorption in legal vanities he remembers the claims his old Varsity has upon him. In '77 he took the chair at the Cricket Jubilee Dinner, and in '81 he presided as chairman of the University Boat-race Commemoration Dinner, and for three-and-twenty years he followed the crews as umpire in the Inter-Varsity boat-race. Rowing against Oxford, when Chitty captained the O.U.B.C., was a stalwart Irishman, “Teddy” Macnaghten, of First Trinity; for this he was rewarded in the fulness of time by being made a Lord of Appeal as Baron Macnaghten, P.C., and this without ever having sat on the Bench. A contemporary of his was a Third Trinity man, who also rowed in the eight, and became Mr. de Rutzen, of police court fame. Senior to Mr. Justice Chitty on the calendar was another oarsman, W. Spottiswoode, who deserved so well of his Varsity that when his time came in '83 he was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey. Prior to this, it is true, he had found time to become her Majesty's printer, an examiner in the mathematical schools, and President of the Royal Society. Pitted against him in the Cambridge boat was Walter Scott Lockhart, a grandson of the Wizard of the North, and heir to Abbotsford. Cambridge alone can boast of a Blue who attained to the



(From a photo by Russell.)
SIR RICHARD E. WEBSTER, Q.C., M.P.

first flight in the political handicap, and he, oddly enough, was, though a Rugby boy, a Frenchman. This was M. Waddington, who rowed in the eight and won the Pairs,

yet in his lighter moments carried off the Chancellor's medal. With these qualifications, it was to be expected that he would rise to the best that his country had to offer him. Having graduated as a deputy and a senator, and after drifting with a portfolio through a couple of ministries, he reached his apotheosis as Premier. In '83 he came to London as Ambassador of the Republic.

In the meanwhile the running track was beginning to send forth men of renown, for early in the sixties the man who is now Sir Richard Webster, Q.C., M.P., running in the Light Blue colours over the mile and the two miles, showed his heels to Lord Jersey, who was championing Oxford. Their time, however, would not break a record nowadays. Another Cambridge miler was C. B. Lawes, who also rowed in the boat and won the diamonds. He was, in some ways, one of the most striking men of his day. He was well born, rich, very handsome, and a sculptor of no mean attainments. He afterwards became notorious in connection with a libel case, which some readers of the *WINDSOR* may remember. While Webster was carrying all before him on the running track, J. R. Selwyn, of Third Trinity, was training in the 'Varsity eight to harden his muscles against the time when he should have to hew his way through his episcopal see of Melanesia, and to dodge the missiles wherewith his dusky flock were wont to receive his ministrations. They were great men, the Selwyns, both father and son. I believe that they are the only case on record in either 'Varsity of a son succeeding to his father's seat in the eight. Nor am I forgetting the clan of Bayford. A. F. Bayford rowed in the first crew that met Bishop Wordsworth's eight in '29. In the second generation there appeared another Bayford, the son of the veteran of '29. He took to the river like a duck to the water, but though he helped to row his college boat head of the river, he never got into the 'Varsity eight. He drew what consolation for this loss he could by winning his cricket cap. When this man had developed into a middle-aged active solicitor, "Fatty" Bayford, a grandson of Bayford I, came up to Trinity Hall. Like his father he rowed in his college boat at the head of the river, and emulating his grandsire, he found a seat in the 'Varsity boat in '93.

This excursion, however, into the hereditary problem in connection with blue is a digression from the chronicle. To resume. One of the greatest oarsmen who ever came

from Cambridge was probably J. H. D. Goldie, of Lady Margaret's. He arrived at a critical period. Before his advent the fortune of war had gone sorely against the Light Blue colours. For seven years in succession the Isis had held unbroken supremacy over the Cam. For the last three years the Oxford eight had been stroked by S. D. Darbishire, as pretty and as plucky an oarsman as ever donned dark blue. I remember him well after he had settled down to his practice in a quaint old house in Holywell. He was always keen—too keen, perhaps—bright and active. His death at



From a photo by]

[Dickinson.

THE LATE MR. J. H. D. GOLDIE.

such an early age was very sad, for he was a man who never made an enemy. It was in the last year of Darbishire's appearance with the Dark Blues that Goldie, as an Eton freshman, stroked the Cambridge boat. He seemed to inspire the Light Blue oars with new life. For four years running, all the time that Goldie set the stroke, the Light Blues showed their rivals the way home. The services that Goldie rendered to University oarsmanship are incalculable. His book, "The Records of University Boat-racing," is alone enough to keep his memory fresh and green—for he, too, has passed

away very recently after a long and painful illness. Under Goldie's captaincy the great family of Close made their name in the annals of the C.U.B.C. John Brooks Close—known by the expressive *sobriquet* of "The Beamer"—made his *début* in Goldie's third crew; his brother, James B., "The Baby," pulled behind him at bow in '72, a seat which—with a change to No. 3—he occupied in three winning eights. A third member of the same clan rowed in the eight a few years later. Mr. James Close, having snapped up all the honours of the Cam that came his way, devoted his life to coaching, and had the satisfaction of training his men so well that one of his crews secured the famous dead-heat of '77. A year later he left England with Mr. R. C. Lehmann for America, where he spent twelve years. In this period, thanks to his knack of coaching cow-boys and Red Indians into pulling together, he farmed several thousand acres in Iowa until what time his ship came in. Having made his pile he hurried back to England, where he devoted his superfluous energies to licking the raw material of First Trinity into finished oar-propelling power, an operation which required the expenditure of many winged words. For all that few veterans, either as men or coaches, are more popular than "J. B."

Despite their reverses in the boat, however, Oxford could boast of many a good man and true during the winters of her discontent on the river. Chief among these is C. J. Ottaway, the first man who gained a triple Blue, for he represented his 'Varsity at cricket, at football, and at rackets. Like most great men Ottaway was never greater than in defeat; nor did he ever play a better game than when Cambridge pulled the famous match of 1870 out of the fire by the skin of their teeth and by two runs. In the first innings, thanks to a modest though timely score by Ottaway, the Dark Blues held the useful lead of 28; in the second innings Cambridge collapsed utterly. Not one of the Light Blues could stay with Dale for more than a few minutes, until Yardley came in. He, batting as if inspired, in a very short time knocked up the first century ever scored in an Inter-University match. After he had retired Dale was sent back by a splendid one-handed catch by Ottaway, right over the ropes. Oxford at the close of the innings wanted 179 runs to win. Ottaway stayed at the wickets until 160 of this total was notched, before he fell a victim to an almost miraculous catch at square-leg. When

he left 19 runs were wanted to win, and five wickets were still to go down. But disaster followed on Ottaway's retirement, which culminated in Cobden's historic over, in which, when two runs would have secured a tie and three a win, he sent down a maiden and secured three wickets. This exhibition was avenged five years later, when Oxford, with Mr. Webbe in the team, sent the Light Blues home beaten by six runs.

The end of the seventies is remarkable for the exploits at Oxford of Mr. Montagu Shearman. Though a freshman, he developed wonderful talent as a sprinter; so Cambridge found out when he left them behind in the hundred yards and ran away with the Amateur Championship over that distance. Then he secured a Rugby Blue. In the following year he represented his University in three events—the hundred yards, the quarter-mile, and putting the weight, and won them all—a unique record. To show his versatility he went on to take a double-first in the schools, and to receive a brickbat on his forehead in a town and gown row, the imprint of which he beareth even now. The lessons he learnt at the 'Varsity he did not forget when he joined the Inner Temple, for he was instrumental in founding the A.A.A., and his figure is familiar to everyone who frequents the 'Varsity sports. With these qualifications to back him he is now, of course, on the high road to the Bench; yet he is still known to his old friends as "Monty." He has found time to contribute a volume to the Badminton Library, and to take a 'Varsity team to America last year. The only other 'Varsity man whose record on the running path came near this fame was the late Captain Portal, brother of Sir Gerald. He, too, held the Amateur Championship for the hundred yards and the quarter-mile. But, swift as he was, death overtook him in Uganda. The eighties saw some of the finest athletes whom the Universities have ever given to the world. In Rugby football Vassall stands pre-eminent. Under his captaincy the Oxford team had an unbroken succession of victories for some three or four years, and it is not too much to say that he revolutionised the game by his deft tactics with the pack. He is now little more than a *magni nominis umbra*, for he is putting on flesh as rapidly as his scholastic duties will allow.

In this decade K. J. Key came up from Clifton to study cricket at Oxford. He took his Blue with the highest honours, for he heads the list of tall scorers in Inter-

'Varsity matches with the record of 143. In 1887, playing for the Dark Blues at Chiswick Park, he and Philipson ran up a score of 340 before they could be induced to separate; and the same year he and Rashleigh, who now lends an occasional odour of sanctity to the Kent eleven, kept the Light Blue fielders on the move while they put on 243 runs for the first wicket. He left Oxford with an average of 49, the result of some eighty



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[E. Hawkins, Brighton.

MR. K. J. KEY.

innings. Cricket was not the only game he patronised at Oxford; he also played some football—a pastime in which he carried much weight. Now, despite his reverend, almost paternal, appearance, and his inclination to—shall we say?—*embonpoint*, he is the popular captain of the champion county. I remember that when, soon after leaving Oxford, he made his *début* for Surrey, some *quidnunc* hanging over the pavilion rails

remarked to Hornby: “I can’t imagine why W. W. plays that chap. He can’t bowl, and he can’t field——”

“Ah,” answered the Lancashire captain, “but he can bat a bit. He probably is the finest bat in England.”

He certainly is the finest cricketer the Universities have turned out of late years. Nor is this said unmindful of the claims of A. G. Steel, who, the year after he was freed from “genius tutelary” at Marlborough, headed both the amateur bowling and batting averages; nor of the dusky potentate who left a potential throne to show the Light Blues and men of Sussex the way to bat all round the wicket, and has endeared himself to all as “Ranji.” Strange as it may seem, among the Blues of this decade is to be found the creator of “Dodo,” whose grandfather, in a literary sense, is the Archbishop of Canterbury. E. F. Benson, of King’s, was a Blue for tennis—not for the common or lawn game, but for real tennis. Being a scholar, however, he deserted the more serious pursuits of life for archaeological research—a passion he gratified by excavating Megalopolis. Indeed the archiepiscopal family can boast another Blue, for a nephew of Dr. Benson, while at New College, won his cap for the mile before the stage claimed him for its own. Still, anyone who has seen him jumping tables and chairs in the “Taming of the Shrew,” will recognise the advantage of a University education even for an actor. On the river in this decade honours were fairly easy, for while the Cam rejoiced in the gigantic Muttlebury, Isis boasted of the one and only Guy Nickalls. “Muttle” was one of the most popular presidents the C.U.B.C. ever possessed. His triumphs on the river, and especially at Henley, are they not written on the fleshy tablets of every rowing man’s heart? Having been a “wet bob” at Eton, he naturally took to water polo, where he was a man to be avoided. Not less celebrated than its master was his (alleged) bulldog, also christened “Muttle,” whose name, as he rolled along behind his master, the street arabs of Cambridge were never tired of calling. “Guy” at Oxford was probably not so widely popular as his rival at Cambridge. For his demeanour was truculent, and he had a trenchant epistolary style, of which he gave proof in an official letter to the president of the C.U.B.C., in which he pleasantly referred to the Light Blue crew as “probably a poorer lot than usual”—a phrase which caused considerable fluttering in the dovecotes of the

Cam. Withal, Guy was a convivial soul, and the towing-path band gave many a cheerful concert in his rooms in the High for the edification of the nocturnal Proctor; but after many years of tribulation he did succeed in taking a degree. Some thought that it was *honoris causâ*; but that only shows the uncharitable nature of some. Guy Nickalls' successor as president of the O.U.B.C. was Lord Amphill, the young man with a future. Most young men at Oxford, by the way—more especially if they are prominent members of the Union—have futures, the pity of it is that the latter always keep such a long way ahead of them. Amphill, however, was a distinctly clever man. He was a very good oar and no mean performer at water polo. Being a debater, he became, in due course, president of the Union, and for a term presided over the debates with considerable dignity.

Cambridge can boast of another oarsman in the eighties who, though never himself a Blue, has been the cause of Blues in others. This, of course, is R. C. Lehmann, or as he is known to his friends, "Ruddy." He probably is now the finest coach in England, and last year he was captain of the

Leander Club, and ubiquitous at Henley. Moreover he is a man who knows how to wield the pen, and has a pretty wit; yet for the last six years he has dined at *Punch's* round table. He has also been a sergeant in



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LORD AMPHILL.

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MR. GUY NICKALLS.

the Middlesex Yeomanry; has won one or two boxing competitions; has been seen flying a hurdle very prettily; and has Parliamentary ambitions which three unsuccessful candidatures have not been enough to kill. Therein he was more unfortunate than a contemporary of his at Oxford, Mr. "Billy" Grenfell, of Taplow Court, who rowed in the eight for two years, which prevailed on an enlightened electorate to send him to the "Babble Shop" at Westminster. Among the Blues of the last generation—and a generation at the 'Varsity, be it remembered, lasts three or, at most, four years, and the succeeding generation makes a point of arising and of not knowing Jacob—was the captain of the Rugby fifteen, C. J. N. Fleming. He was a braw Scotch laddie, standing six feet in his socks, weighing close on fifteen stone, and doing the hundred yards in a fraction under eleven seconds, so when he was in a hurry most people got out of his way. Having obtained a Rugby Blue he set his affections on Association, in which pastime he would have shone as centre-forward had he, when within three yards of the goal, been

able to shoot anywhere except over or on either side of it.

In his softer moods Fleming, who, being the ethereal creature he was, was naturally called "Tottie," used to sing plaintive "hieland" ditties with a good deal about "simmer days" and "auld langsyne" in them. He is now engaged in teaching the young idea how to shoot—though not goals—and last season was again seen in the football field with his Scottish International cap. While Fleming was at Oxford S. M. J. Woods was the idol of Cambridge. "Sammy" indeed was worthy of some adulation, if only for his wonderful impudence as a freshman in doing the hat trick against the Gentlemen of England. Moreover he was a strong dashing forward, who fully deserved his International cap. He is very good looking, very cheery, and if he has a fault, it is a tendency to be just a trifle too noisy. So it was discovered one night in a London restaurant, when he was celebrating some Inter-'Varsity match. As the porter of the establishment told me: "I've chucked out a good many gentlemen in my time, and I knows how to tackle collegians, but I'd rather 'ave to chuck a snuffin' ravagin' traction ingine than that young Mr. Woods when 'e's 'aving a beano." And I agreed with him. Among rowing men of later years two Dark Blues stand out conspicuously. One was H. B. Cotton, a son of Mr. Justice Cotton, who for four years rowed bow in the 'Varsity eight. No man of his inches—he stood five feet six—or of his light weight ever scored so many triumphs. As president of the O.U.B.C. "Badger" was popular beyond the popularity of most presidents. His early death last year was inexpressibly

sad, and even at Oxford, where memories are short, it will be long before Cotton is forgotten. The other is C. M. Pitman, the seventh of a stalwart family of eight brothers. Tradition has it that once an eight of Pitmans rowed and beat a crew of the house of Cornish at Eton. Indeed, Mr. Cornish has rarely been without a troublesome Pitman to improve. F. I. was the famous Light Blue

stroke of '84 to '86; T. T. won the Half-Mile Championship. With this ancestry C. M.—his godfathers and godmothers in his baptism had called the child Charles Murray, so it was only natural he should be always known as "Cherry"—was destined for the highest honours of the river. He has now rowed for four years in the Oxford eight with credit to himself and with profit to his University. Moreover, he is gifted with a fine imagination, and knows how to serve up old chestnuts with great piquancy, wherefore he should become in due time a shining light of the junior Bar. The last I saw of "Cherry" was on a gloomy February day last year. He was then riding a bicycle along the tow-path coaching the 'Varsity trials. In the fervour of his objur-gations, launched at some unhappy galley

slave, he raised his hands from the handles. The next moment "Cherry" and his machine were in the icy waters of the river.

There are many gallant men and true whose deeds are unrecorded here. Of such are the great families of the Studds, of the McLeans, and of the Steels. Moreover, I take some credit to myself for having written many things on 'Varsity Blues without even a mention of C. B. Fry, the Incomparable. It would be as easy to say anything unrecorded of the giant gooseberry.



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[E. Hawkins, Brighton.

MR. K. S. RANJITSINHJI.