

## A SORT OF EDITORIAL

Once upon a time there was a poor slave and he worked all alone in a solitary cell deep down beneath the palace of Biergalor where King Bloodshot the Ruddy held court. At least, he had held court when he was sober, which was every second Wednesday of each month. He had to be then because it was on that day that he had to meander down to the

G. P. O. to sign on the dotted line for his Old Age Pension, and as this was difficult enough for him when he was sober, he just had to lay-off the wallop for that one day.

Now this poor slave was really a noble and handsome Prince named Urawan of neighbouring Kingdom and State of Welfare who had got across the local witch of Biergalor because he was too truthful, and as this was something she couldn't abide, especially when it concerned what he thought of her, she put a spell on him so that he looked rather like a cross between a squint-eyed toad and an accident going somewhere to happen.

Now, at the time of his transformation he was on his way to the Palace of Biergalor to ask King Bloodshot the Ruddy, for the hand of his beautiful, and only, daughter Dewdrop in marriage. Naturally, he had arranged to arrive on the second Wednesday of the month and, quite unaware of the startling change in his appearance, he [presented himself before the King who shot one look at him and then hastily swallowed two gold-plated aspirins and retired unsteadily to his canopied bed as was his custom about this time of day whenever it wasn't the second Wednesday of the month.

When he awoke the next morning without his customary hangover and realised that his pension had gone for a burton for that month, for, after all,  $23/5$  is  $23/5$ , an his overdraft at the bank made his feel dizzy every time he contemplated it, and the Off-Licence just round the corner from the Palace was getting very sticky about cash transactions. So, he was very wrath indeed and he sent for the Prince and commanded the Captain of the Royal Guard to have him thrown to the Royal Bears. Immediately! Then he felt a little better, but not for long, for the Captain of the Royal Guard came pelting back quicker than he went to tell his royal master that the Royal Bears had had one look at the transmogrified Prince and had then, with one accord, taken off for the nearest bit of horizon.

This was a bit of a corker for King Bloodshot the Ruddy who, in the interim, had downed a couple of jorums of light ale heavily laced with rum, so that his thinking processes, which were never remarkable, were by now practically non-existent. Nevertheless, so wonderful a thing is habit, he managed to order his incarceration in the deepest dungeon of the Palace and added, as an afterthought, if anyone so much as uttered the words 'Habeas Corpus' he was to be liquidated at dawn (without benefit of breakfast) and would someone please round up the Royal Bears?

So Prince Urawan was duly incarcerated and conveniently forgotten except by those of the Court who wanted something done for free, such as slop-pails repaired, new dentures run-in or septic tanks decarbonised. The only trouble was that they never provided Urawan with the wherewithal to do the job, and, though he was often hard put to it, somehow, for, like Kipling's mariner, he was a man of infinite resource and sagacity.

Then, one day, Princess Dewdrop came tripping down the winding stairway leading to his lonely cell, and when she had picked herself up and put here wimple straight, she slid back the grille of his cell door.

"Hello," she called shyly, "They tell me you can mend anything."

"Who's 'They'?"

"Oh, that shower upstairs," she answered. "Can you mend broken hearts?"

"Mend 'em! I'm more used to breaking 'em!" he replied, putting down the back-scratcher he was re-pronging for the Chamberlain's wife and coming over to the door. "Anyway, who are you and who's suffering from a broken heart?"

"Me, and I'm called Princess Dewdrop because, you see, I always have a cold in the head."

"Are you and have you! Well, how did it happen?"

"My Prince has been and gone and never come" she answered sadly.

"Talk sense girl! If he's been and gone, he must have come."

"That's just it, he never" she sobbed.

"Yes, he did. He came but he didn't go, because he's here."

"Here – where?"

"Here – right here before you, my pretty charmer, and the sooner you get me out of this flatulent cell, the sooner we can be wed!"

For the first time she got a good look at him as he stepped out of the shadow and received the full broadside of his quite appallingly loathsome appearance.

"You, Prince Urawan! – Marry you !!! Oh, I couldn't, not possibly, not with a face and figure like that!!!"

"Well, you don't have to look at 'em if you don't want to; just keep your head turned away or the blinds down, or something. Anyway, what's the alternative unless you hanker after old maid-dom?"

"I don't," she wailed, "but the loftiest and loneliest shelf in this perishin' palace would be better than living with that face for the rest of my life. Have you ever looked at yourself?"

"Talk sense, girl! I may squint but I don't squint backwards," rejoined Urawan, a bit nettled. "Anyway, " he went on, "if you don't like my face, etcetera, you know what you can do about it!"

"All right, there's no need to be coarse," she answered and then, "what can I do about it?"

“Unhex it – de – bewitch it – remove the ruddy spell!”

“Keep my father’s name out of it; he didn’t have anything to do with it. Anyway, he isn’t interested in Modern Art!”

Urawan signed. “I bet you never passed your 11 plus, did you? However, just cock your little shell – like ear this ‘ere way and I’ll tell you what you can do. It’s very simple. I’m an eggbound – I mean, a spell – bound – Prince and you’re a beautiful Princess and so all you’ve got to do to recover me is to – er – kiss me.”

“Kiss you!!!” she shrieked.

“Yes, that’s right, square on the lips. Go on, be a sport – shut your eyes and force yourself!”

So she did and a month later they were wed on the next second Wednesday of the month.

And they lived happily ever afterwards. Well, they must have done, for they were blessed with sixteen children, eight sons and seven daughters, in strict rotation, for Urawan was a very methodical Prince in all things.

What?

Oh: We shall not know about the last one for another month or so, yet.

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I suppose that, as Editorials go, this is a bit unusual. One does not generally start with a fairy tale, but, like all good fairy tales, this one has a moral too.

After all, I’m in much the same boat as Prince Urawan, given a job to do but not provided with the raw materials wherewith to do it, and so I have had to take a leaf out of his book and make do and manage with what I had.

You know, I absolutely refuse to believe that nothing ever happens to any of you which, suitably written up, would not interest or amuse the rest of us. If it is true, you must be living pretty dull lives! Why, even in my quiet backwater, things are happening all the time! So, if you don’t want another fairy tale next year, you really must remember the poor editor of your magazine and shove along some grist for his editorial mill!  
**PLEASE !!**

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## A FEW FACTS AND FIGURES

Number of Full Members	..	..	61
Number of Junior Members	..	..	28

The figures are only tentative at the moment because (a) several subs. for the last year (1962 / 1963) have still not been paid, and (b) some of the Junior Members who joined during their last term at School are shockingly slow in sending in their enrolment slips.

Credit Balance at the Bank .. 37 0s. 0d.

In connection with this I propose, and I am sure that you will all endorse my proposal, to pay back Mr. Mosey the 20 0s. 0d. he lent the Association to enable me to get it started.

From the above figures you will see that we are not doing so badly. In only two years we are in a position to pay off our starting loan and still remain comfortably solvent, and with no immediate large outgoings in prospect, we can begin to look ahead a little. Also, though a membership of eighty-nine does not seem a very impressive total, it may interest you to know that my own Old Boys' Association is only a little over seven hundred strong, and that the school has between five and six hundred pupils and has been going now since before Shakespeare was a lad!

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### TREASURE - TROVE

".....and I very much regret the delay in renewing my sub which was entirely due to my being unwell for some time with .....OVER PAGE.....a broken bottom bolt which so far the garage has been unable to fix."

NO COMMENT.

"I don't suppose that -----will be able to get away for the Dinner this year. Anyway, I hope not, but I will be seeing him in a few days and I will talk to him."

A FRIEND INDEED!

"I hope to be able to come to the Dinner but I expect not but you can be sure that I shall be there, though I doubt it."      PASS ME THE ASPIRINS, SOMEONE.

".....And I called at the School a week or two ago as I was passing but there was only a Landrover in front with a lady and the former told me that everyone seemed to be away."      UNNERVING, TO SAY THE LEAST OF IT!

"Dear Mr. Chadwick,

I hear that you have been ill and so couldn't come to the Play and I hope that next year we shall be lucky again....." A TRIFLE AMBIGUOUS, BUT I THINK I KNOW WHAT HE MEANT – I HOPE!

"Please, Mr. Chadwick, no drinking at our next Reunion Dinner. We don't want anyone half tipsy before the evening is half over. It is alright for you and Mr. Mosey, I suppose, because you are used to it..."

I CANNOT SPEAK FOR Mr.MOSEY, OF COURSE,  
BUT AS REGARDS MYSELF, I'M NOT EITHER!

THE REUNION DINNER

Last year some members from more distant parts who had hoped to be at the Dinner decided not to risk it owing to the treacherous state of the roads in some areas. Others who did risk it met with considerable difficulty, especially on the return journey after it was all over.

In mid-November such weather is always possible and so, as the result of suggestions from several members, and the obvious commonsense of it, it has been decided, with Mr. Mosey's approval, that in future the Old Boys' Hockey Match followed by the Dinner in the evening shall be held a month earlier in the term, i.e., on the Sunday nearest to the middle of October.

This year, therefore, the Dinner will be held at the School at 7.30p.m. on Sunday the.....

# 20<sup>th</sup> of October

..... and so will you please make a note of this very important date in our year.

The closing date for notifications of attendance and Dinner Subscriptions (15s. 0d.) is the last day of September (30<sup>th</sup>).

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## RETROSPECT

When I first blessed King's School with my presence soon after its translation from sunny Weston to the Cotswolds (the dry side!), I did not immediately realise what a golden opportunity I was being given to study that strange and insulated community of men – the School Masters.

Of course, I was not sent there with that kind of study in mind and, perhaps only in retrospect, did I look on them with a critical but kindly eye. It was a golden opportunity for just one reason. King's School must hold the record for its intake of new masters, so that, in a few short years, a steady parade of new subject material continued to strut and fret its hour upon the King's School stage. Why this "here to-day and gone tomorrow" – literally, in some cases! – should have been the case was not infrequently a matter for idle speculation, and many were the theories that had their champions.

Looking back, I can think of only one theory that was never voiced. Could it have been that one good look at us boys was enough to send all but the most hardy pedagogue to the "Situations Vacant" pages of his "Times Ed. Supp." With almost indecent haste! Well, more unlikely theories were current!

However, back to the Schoolmasters, themselves. They came in all shapes and sizes, but most of them were young and filled with the zeal and enthusiasm and inexperience of a first appointment. I suppose that it could be said that they came to mould, and be moulded, and for our part, we certainly did our bit. We certainly rough hewed their ends all right, even if they, much too frequently, rough hewed ours, in a somewhat different sense!

Knowing something of Teacher Training Colleges, now, I can see how some of them were striving to work out the theories of teaching and discipline with which they had been spoon-fed. However, there is always a great gulf set betwixt theory and its practice, and I should imagine nowhere more so than at King's School, for King's School is (or, at least, was) a law unto itself. And, speaking for myself, I am very grateful for that!

The standard theory seemed to be that to procure obedience and respect, the thing to do was to shout, bawl and look fierce, even if, as was often the case, I suspect, one were quaking inside. Well, perhaps this unfortunate phase has to be gone through, for stature grows with the passage of years and the experiencing of life in its many and varied forms.

Of course, there were exceptions: One or two elderly gentlemen (by our standards) strayed into the fold and helped to counterbalance the light-weight of the rest of the staff. For the most part they were reverent and dignified seigneurs of the older school of tradition, and their influence – like the leaven in the parable – was quiet but all-pervading and of immense value to the School. Perhaps I should except one. He was really elderly and, it was said, a refugee from retirement. Certainly, he was well past it and liked nothing better than to snooze in a deck-chair on the lawn. Worse, he disliked boys intensely and we often heard him mumbling fiercely to himself as he left a class-room such phrases as "Boys – chaa! Nincompoops - morons!! Imbeciles!!!" Mercifully, he did not stay very long, but whether the Powers that Were got tired of him or whether he decided that, after all, retirement was the lesser of the two evils, was a problem that was never satisfactorily resolved.

With such a wealth of material to study, it is not surprising that, in retrospect, their passage across the stage is only remembered as a blur, but one or two do stand out in the memory even if their names are sometimes forgotten. There was Mr. ? who taught Geography, and taught it very interestingly and well. At least, he could and did, if he were given the chance, but faced by a hostile class, he went completely to pieces, and there seemed nothing that he could do about it. As for his Duty days, they made you want to weep or laugh, according to your sensitivity. What that poor man went through every four or five days, none of us was old enough to realise, but after gamely sticking it for several terms he, too, departed to other woods and pastures where, one hopes, his undoubted ability in his chosen subject could be more effectively – and less turbulently and rudely – used.

Perhaps, however, the palm for the most perfect example of a square peg must be awarded to a certain young French master. If one of his classes had been portrayed as a Whitehall farce, all the critics would have condemned it as one man on the grounds of gross exaggeration. Those of you who were there during his very short tenure of office will certainly remember him as a very pleasant and well-meaning young master, always terribly anxious to be liked and thought well of, but without any idea at all as to the meaning of class-discipline and how it may be preserved. Well, you cannot preserve what you never had! It is a trite saying that punishment hurts the giver more than the receiver, but if ever this were true, it was so in his case. Only the most heinous crime would make him award a punishment – which was entirely disregarded by the culprit – and he gave it with the most utmost reluctance because, I am sure, he regarded punishment and popularity as being mutually exclusive. However, he did learn one thing at King's School, if he learned nothing else. By the time he left – after only half a term! – no one could have been smarter at dodging showers of rubbers, elastic-bands, inky paper pellets, and other bric-a-brac hurled at his head from all quarters of the classroom.

One member of the staff – in an ex-officio capacity, perhaps – we all remember and, if we are wise, we remember with great gratitude. We rather feared him then, and many of us still deal with him with the utmost circumspection. Though he no longer haunts the cloisters of this temple of learning quite so assiduously as was his wont (pronounced 'wunt' by the best people!), his drive and personality filtering downwards and outwards throughout the school hierarchy, still hold King's School firmly at the top of the Top Ten of the private schools. I now know, professionally, quite a lot about many private schools, some of which to those who, in their wisdom, decided that I should sojourn for a number of years in the Cotswolds – the dry side!

'VINTAGE'

A TOAST

Yes, he's been part of the School for a long time now and has carved his own little niche in the tradition of the place and in the hearts of very many boys.

Time passes him by with scarcely a glance. He looks no different now than he did when first we saw him more than a dozen years ago. He seems more durable than the Cotswold stone that frames him around and he is now one of the last links with the old days and one of the 'musts' when chance or opportunity brings one back to the School for a brief hour. His work is not spectacular nor properly valued by the immediate beneficiaries of it, but let something untoward cause it to falter for a moment and the whole School feels the impact.

So, Gentlemen, I give you a toast. Let us drink to 'Stan' – Stan of the Servedy: may his quiet service long continue.

L. J.

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To save postages and reminders and all the work and expense these entail, it has been decided to change the date on which subscriptions are due to the 1<sup>st</sup> of July each year, so that a reminder in the boldest type we can command can be included in this Supplement. Of course, this means that you will get a month's membership free, gratis and for nothing, but we are well known for our magnanimity.

# ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

So, Sir, unless you are one of those rare and specially highly valued members who have already paid the subscription for this current year (1963 / 1964), may I crave your attention to this small but vital matter – and, of course, there is no time like the present, is there?



## A HOLIDAY THAT REALLY WAS DIFFERENT.

Many of the readers of this magazine will recollect either with pleasure or with regret the past Winter we have enjoyed (suffered) but how many of them thought of taking their Summer Holiday during those icy days? I did. Perhaps not with relish but with no other alternative as being a farmer does not allow one to pick the ideal time of year. I had to go in JANUARY.

Neither I, nor my companions, Pete, have a great liking for the cold and so we set our minds to a warmer country. Having read Tony Hanks' article in last year's issue, we thought Turkey had a warm appeal and duly made all arrangements to go in that direction. For transport we chose my Land-Rover as the ideal machine for getting us there through come what may. Although not new, we felt it quite reliable enough for our wants. Prior to departure we had all the usual all-round check and on JANUARY 15<sup>th</sup> were away via Silver City's. (We had the 'plane to ourselves; oh, the joys of off-season travelling.) The Air Hostess happily provided us with blankets with the encouraging remark: "There's a bit of a crack under the door." We found this to be true and were shivering wrecks upon touchdown at Le Touquet. (-5C).

No sooner were we down than we were away from the deserted airport on the deserted roads. The very first evening we put 200 miles behind us on already very icy roads and saw no less than three accidents en route. Four-wheel drive, however, is a great help on ice and we were able to make good time.

By the evening of the second day we were at Basle on the Swiss border. The roads were now considerably worse with packed snow and drifts on either side and we were forced to dig a place out to pitch our tents for the night.

On the third day of travel we reached Innsbruck where the night temperature dropped to minus 17°C. I was amazed to waken in the morning with a thick rime of frost all over my blankets and on the canvas above my head. The Land-Rover continued to run very well, although we had great difficulty in keeping the wind-screen clear of ice and had to stop frequently to CHISEL it off.

Upon leaving Innsbruck our troubles began. It had snowed heavily all night and there was a good six inches of the nasty stuff on the roads. With a little bit of luck we ground our way to the top of the Brenner Pass and thence down into the valley before attempting the Wurzen Pass into Yugoslavia. The weather was continuing to worsen and we had doubts as to the road but decided to "churn" our way on. The Wurzen Pass has sections of 1 in 3 and is a nasty road even in mid-summer. On this particular day, there was a shockingly rutted surface of snow and ice with a fresh coating of the previous night's effort. After having gone about a mile on what appeared to be a vertical road, we rounded a bend to come face-to-face with a lorry on his way down. He, of course, could not stop and ground us into the bank with only a foot of snow between us and a bottomless pit. As soon as he had gone we attempted to restart. All the wheels span. We then had the pleasure of reversing down a 1 in 3 slope for a mile or more. Pete shut his eyes and turned a delicate shade of green. On the second attempt we made the top and the Customs.

They (the Customs) are not used to anybody coming up the Wurzen in a blizzard and so we had to thump continuously on the door to get them to take their big military feet off a red-hot stove and come out and let us through. We bought the necessary visas and then went flat out for twenty yards before coming to a final and definite halt in a Yugoslavian snowdrift of unlimited dimensions stretching as far as the eye could see. One cold and miserable hour later we dug our way out and returned down the Wurzen to Italy and then again to the Yugoslav border by the "back door". Again we had more troubles. The guard at the border conveyed to us by an intricate number of motions that the keys to the safe in which rested the visa stamps were in the next town eight miles away. We then ferried him sixteen miles to get his keys, after which he consented to stamp our passports.

Our next stop was planned for Zagreb. However, the blizzard had increased to reduce visibility to a few yards at the most and we were having difficulty in finding the sign posts in the banks of snow beside the road. We decided to camp for the night on the side of the road, only this time inside the Land-Rover as the prospect of putting a tent up outside was too much even for us by now hardy souls. I noted with interest that the thermometer was now down to minus 28°C. My hands confirmed this fact when I put them outside the door. Sleeping inside a short wheelbase Land-Rover is a refined art, the sleeper needing to be part contortionist and part-Siberian Yak. We had two sleeping bags each and three blankets and thankfully once inside were reasonably comfortable.

Upon waking in the bright early morn we were not pleased to find that we could not see out as we were buried under the night's deposit. After climbing on to the roof I could see that the road could not be found apart from one or two coloured posts showing themselves rather forlornly in a weak sun. We managed to regain the road but, after only a very few yards, came to a halt again in head-high snow that formed an unconquerable barrier both in front and behind. This we thought was a bad job and retired to the back for coffee on the gas stove. We then settled down to wait for we didn't know what. We waited in all about eight hours before we heard a healthy chugging in the distance and saw two lights (eight o'clock at night) which soon resolved themselves into a snowplough of huge size and indeterminate age. We flashed all lights and retreated to our hole in the bank. The driver soon drew level and peered at us through the gloom with shifty, untrusting Serbian eyes. With much shouting and map waving on both sides we discovered he was on his way to Postjona, a town well known for its caves and grottos. Of course, there was no other way for us to go but behind him (dragging our tails behind us). The town, it appeared, was five hours driving away. He was wrong, of course, as all Yugoslavians are in their estimation of time and distance. It was nearly dawn the next day before we ground our way into the town, having come nearly eighty miles of low ratio grinding crawl (and ten gallons of petrol to do them in .... ten to the gallon).

The town itself was choc-a-bloc with cars and coaches as the "Politzei" would allow no one, BUT NO ONE to go out of the town until the road was cleared. They regarded us as a slur on their character for having come INTO the town. The snow plough disappeared into the murk, only to return half-an-hour later, the driver shaking his head and offering the angry police the controls of his plough with many suggestive gestures on both sides. The police, however, were not to be intimidated and returned to their hut.

Also due in the town that morning were thirteen cars from Athens on the Monte Carlo Rally. Much to our amazement they did not appear: in fact, they did not appear anywhere, so we heard later, for three days. We had no choice now but to give up our intention of going to Istanbul; in fact we were doubtful whether we could get anywhere at all. The much-moustached proprietor of the guest house where we spent the night told us there was a way perhaps into Italy if we were prepared to go another one hundred and eighty extra and take country roads that he thought would not be blocked as they ran through forests and ravines that would shelter them from the wind. We jumped at the idea and filled all our tanks at the town's one pump and also our two five-gallon spares. The road was in an unbelievable state and for several hours we were unable to go in anything but bottom gear with endless bone-shaking holes and ruts. We saw no one for mile after mile, until rounding a bend we were confronted with a coach at right-angles across the road (sic) with its two front wheels over the edge of the ravine (canyon, gully, or what have you). As there was no one in sight we had to dig our way past and left it to its own unhappy fate.

With miraculous speed the snow vanished as we came out of the mountains into Italy. We now had our sights on Monte Carlo and the end of the Rally. To get there in time called for continuous driving after we had left Venice to which we paid a fleeting visit. It was almost completely deserted, with ice on the gondolas' prows and an old man sweeping snow off St. Mark's Square. Even the pigeons were absent.

The Autostrada from Venice to Turin is a long drag – even more so in Winter. A thin sheet of ice over most of it made life a little more interesting and it gave us great pleasure to pass the many creeping Ferraris, Maseratis, etc., which were unfortunately not equipped with four-wheel drive.

With very little time to spare we arrived in a sun-drenched Monte Carlo which was by this time crawling with cars of all shapes and sizes much be-spot-lamped and be-tyred and be-dented, after their worst run for years. After watching the speed trials round the town, we had to rush back up through the Alps of France to catch our plane which was booked for January 24<sup>th</sup>. It was, meanwhile, continuing to get colder. At Digne in the Maritime Alps it was down to forty-one degrees of frost (at night). The roads were as unpleasant and treacherous as could be imagined but so far we had not a mark or dent anywhere.

On the way to Le Touquet we were stopped for twenty minutes by machine-gun toting Gendarmes who insisted on searching through all our luggage for what only they knew. We were thus twenty minutes late for the 'plane but, as we were again the only passengers, they had waited for us.

We arrived at Lydd airport after ten days and three thousand three hundred miles on the clock. I deposited Pete at his home and the next morning set off for Oxford.

Rounding a bend some two miles from Peter's home, I was again confronted by a very large and much out-of-control lorry that was doing a steady thirty-five miles an hour on my side. "A collision occurred" of considerable magnitude, after which I had to exit via the rear as the doors were not to be opened (ever). An hour later, what was left of the Land Rover was extricated from the lorry and towed away on a crane.

I returned home by train.

P.S.

Should anyone require valuable Land-Rover spares or advice on digging in snow I will be happy to oblige!

J. P. Coville

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