

SHERBORNE SCHOOL

COMMEMORATION, JUNE 26TH, 1920

1. PROLOGUE, recited by A. G. ARCHER, Head of the School.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we greet you well,
And pray that Sherborne cast her magic spell
On all your hearts, that for one day at least
You may enjoy our simple annual feast.
Well do we know that o'er the world's great stage
Nations and classes "furiously rage";
Statesmen in vain ingeminating peace
Find yet no means of making wars to cease;
Extravagance and Famine hand in hand
Spread gloom, despair and hate from land to land;—
Yet for one brief day in this favoured spot,
"The world forgetting," though not all forgot,
With youth's unconscious gaiety for guide
Turn from the world's uneasy strife aside,
Gather fresh hope from youth's perennial source,
And then return refreshed to run your graver course!

First you I greet, twin pillars of our fame,
As good in government as Good in name,⁽¹⁾
Active alike and prudent in the rule
Of Dorset County and of Sherborne School!
With joy sincere we hail your health restored,
Promise of many years at our Olympian board.
And welcome thou, thrice welcome, honoured guest,
Who to our modest Athens of the west
From Eton's "antique towers" and "distant spires"
Bringest the grace that gilds, the fame that fires,
The lore that lights the past, the art that fills
Its dusty haunts with shadowy shapes and ghostly thrills!⁽²⁾

- (1) Col. J. R. P. Goodden, Chairman of the Governors and Chairman of the Dorset County Council; and Canon E. W. Goodden, Vice-Chairman of the Governors and Chairman of the Dorset County Education Committee.
- (2) Montague Rhodes James, Litt. D., F.S.A., F.B.A., Provost of Eton College, famous throughout the learned world as an expert in medieval MSS., and admired by learned and unlearned alike for his ghost stories.

And ye, to whom we owe our filial debt
 Not least for this, that here our feet were set
 On paths of mingled duty and delights,—
 You we salute with welcome to our rites.
 Be Sol propitious or unkind, not rain,
 Nor Rep., nor Maths., nor Grammar, nor—the cane !⁽³⁾
 “Nor all that is at enmity with joy,”
 Can damp the spirits of the human boy :
 Be floods of water or of woe abroad,
 Trust to your sons and they will guide you to a Ford !⁽⁴⁾
 And though there stirs unquiet in the heart
 Foreboding of the day when friends must part,—
 Some pressing on to “fields and pastures new”
 In Church and State their service to pursue,
 Others to well-earned leisure and repose,—⁽⁵⁾
 With each and all the love of Sherborne goes.
 Ah! leave the theme! Melpomene, refrain,
 Till on the “blasted heath” we meet again :⁽⁶⁾
 Thine own Apollo now, lest critics scoff,
 Archer and bard in one, will take this bowler off.⁽⁷⁾

- (3) Query—the sugar-cane? There used to be another kind of cane, but Progress (*pace* the Dean of St. Paul's) has rendered it obsolete. The sugar-cane moreover, if immoderately used, is undoubtedly “at enmity with joy.”
- (4) One of the inferior MSS. has a curious reading “Toey” for “Ford,” which has given rise to many ingenious conjectures.
- (5) About 50 boys are leaving this term, and also three masters, Mr. C. H. Hodgson and Mr. R. E. Steel retiring, and Mr. K. B. Tindall to become Headmaster of West Downs, Winchester.
- (6) The tragedy of Macbeth is to be acted to-night.
- (7) Apollo, as the audience are aware, was the Archer-god as well as the Leader of the Muses. To judge by the fate of Hyacinthus, his bowling was more erratic than his archery—or than ours; for the present Head of the School is also Captain of the XI. So the Scholiast: but he seems to be hazy on the subject of games, confusing quoits with bowls and archery with cricket.