

SHERBORNE SCHOOL.

COMMEMORATION, JUNE 17TH, 1939

PROLOGUE.

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To-day we reach the climax of the year ;
Statesman and Bishop, parents and boys are here
To celebrate our founders and enjoy
Boys their parents, parents their dear boy.
Music and drama, sport and exercise
Combine to attack the ear and storm the eyes—
Were you not captivated by the drill ?
Schubert's more loved than Louis Armstrong still ?
Though last night's orgy broke a few more tiles,
At thought of mending them the Bursar smiles ;
To let the rain in and the hot air out
They're useful ventilators, there's no doubt.
And now the bats who found the choral noise
A trifle loud, attend the statesman's voice.

Sir, welcome to a new and untried hall ;
Here you will win attentive minds, and all
Good wishes for your latest ministry,
Difficult, for demand outruns supply,
But grateful friends will call you (don't forget)
The Father Christmas of the Cabinet.
What have you on your sledge at present, sir—
Everyone's hopes begin to wake and stir—
Have you (Headmaster, please don't mock and laugh)
A parcel bulging like an extra half ?
Perhaps we ought to ask for a three-quarter,
For all our holidays are growing shorter,
And "Always ask for more than you expect"
Is good advice and has a sure effect.
But you'll admit that honesty, like beer,
Is best, and we've been honest with you here.

And you, my lord, and you, chief Governor,
Are older friends ; the first, a visitor
Familiar to the Duffers at their teas,
Confounds Eclectics with his sophistries ;
The second smiles and signs free passes, mark,
And now bird-watching boys infest his park.
No need to fly like poachers on fast legs ;
The modern boy takes photographs, not eggs.

The modern boy indeed has many hobbies,
He doesn't often come to grief with bobbies ;
Not his to pinch the helmets of the force,
That is for undergraduates, of course ;
Nor does he raid the pantry late at night,
Only a prep-school boy would take delight
In midnight feast or secret pillow fight.
His taste is more sophisticated now ;
Wrinkles appear on " boyhood's cloudless brow."
He spends his spare spare-time in arguments
On politics or music ; he invents
A pocket wireless for his use in School,
A hidden fan to keep his study cool,
A television set inside a watch ;
He paints a hideous and unpleasing blotch
And calls himself a Post-Abstractionist.
O take him to a psycho-analyst.
Such is the modern boy, and thank the Lord
Most are not modern.

But the bats are bored.

They want to hear the statesman, not the prologue ;
They'd like to see the chairman go the whole hog
And ask to have half-holidays abolished—
But here the prologue, tiresome and unpolished,
Must cease to rant, give place to serious thought
And wish you luck in all your work and sport.