

Spring Oratorical at Headford

by Mrs. H. Acreman

Had you been present on the evening of Thursday, April 4, at Headford School, you would have been most gratified listening to the more than twenty pupils giving their speeches in the Annual Spring Oratorical. These speeches had been prepared by the youngsters themselves and were delivered with a naturalness and poise that did not exist in most children of their age, say even six or seven years ago.

The program, opening with The Queen, led by the Rhythm Band, conducted by Jeanette McDonald, and followed by a word of welcome by Norine Simpson, one of the senior pupils, got off to a good start with Grade IV's presentation. Richard Burton was winner here, with his speech on the life of Baden Powell, and wearing with good effect his uniform as a Cub. Raymond Ross's discourse on Salmon, was most enlightening.

As an interested spectator, year after year, I am impressed by the diversity of the topics chosen by the pupils and incidentally find I learn a great many things I didn't know before. Perhaps from our little school will one day come a noteworthy naturalist, as the children seem to choose such things to talk about as fish, spider, beaver, butterflies and moths, nature's food factories and the uses of trees. Possibly we have a potential scientist or engineer, with their speeches on flax, silk, time, trains, matches, space travel, and gold. Maybe there's a future philosopher in our midst, as evidenced by a speech on The Oldest Christian Holiday - Easter, and one on the Discovery of Insulin.

A short discourse on the humane slaughtering of animals was worthy of note; and one on Harry Houdini the Magician, and St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, showed that these youngsters do a great deal of research in preparation for this Oratorical. The way which one of the senior pupils had delved into the current situation among the South African negroes was most enlightening.

So much for the actual speeches, but the program was delightfully "seasoned" with performances by the Rhythm Band, "The Bells," and "Little Tick-Tock" conducted by Jeanette; "The Robin's Song" by Grades I and II; and the most intriguing of all, an Eskimo Chant depicting a dog team of eight or ten and their leaders preparing to leave on a journey. Their "Icky-ticky-ticky" lingers with me yet.

A "Mystery Play" (I find no other way to describe it) called Absolutely Nothing, was subtitled "One way to Interest Children in Reading," and certainly lived up to its name.

The seniors also rendered a couple of selections - "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones," and "Pleasant are Thy Courts Above" in a very creditable manner. It should be stated these pupils sang unaccompanied in every instance.

The grade VIII pupils compete each year for a silver cup, earning points with their prepared speech and a short impromptu; and their reappearance always creates a tense moment.

This year Murray Clarkson, choosing the subject What I would like to be when I grow up, announced he would like to be a car mechanic, and gave a brief speech in explanation. Norine Simpson's impromptu dealt most wisely with Spring Safety; and Albert Leek took us on flights of fancy with his Trip to the Moon.

The judges later declared Norine Simpson, winner of the cup. Announcement of the judges' decisions in the various classes for the speeches was made by Mr. Evans, followed by the prizes for the best books, which had been judged previously. Judges for speeches were Mrs. McMaster and Mr. Evans of Thornlea, and Mrs. Wright, President of Thornlea Home & School Association, with Mrs. Acreman judge of work books.

It is hoped parents as well as youngsters appreciate that, as Mr. Evans said, this is a pleasant task, but with a very difficult one. One always feels one would like to give every child a prize, for they all do remarkably well in this "Little Old Red School House," except the S.S. No. 3 in this case is not painted red.

I find I cannot wind up this little impression without adding that I am sure these children will go on to wonderful things. One knows this instinctively when entering the school and one sees evidences of all studies they are engaged in. If you did not have an opportunity of seeing this work at the Oratorical, go up to the school some day at four o'clock - the teacher, Mrs. Catharine Frazer, will be delighted to show you around and make any necessary explanations.

Here is a list of winners and awards:

For Public Speaking, judging begins with Grade IV.

Grade IV: Richard Burton for

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Life of Baden Powell.
Grade V: Keith Burton for Gold.

Grade VI: Donna Morrison for Silk.

Grade VII: Margaret McDonald for Discovery of Insulin.

Grade VIII: Norine Simpson for The Oldest Christian Holiday - Easter; and impromptu - Spring Safety.

This earned the Silver Cup.
For Note Books and work book, all grades were judged.

Grade VIII: 1st. Norine Simpson; hon. mention, Murray Clarkson.

Grade VII: 1st. Margaret McDonald; hon. mention, Sharon Johnston, Christine Terry, Carl Morrison.

Grade VI: 1st. Donna Morrison; hon. mention Bob Lee.

Grade V: 1st. Rosemary Leek; hon. mention, Jean Clark, Jacqueline McDonald, Carl Czyzewski.

Grade IV: 1st. Raymond Ross; hon. mention, Richard Burton.

Grade III: Jeanette McDonald.

Grade II: 1st. Brenda Wellman; hon. mention, Ricky Czyzewski.

Grade I: 1st. Linda Hinks; hon. mention, Mark Terry, Janet Ross, Debra Gough.

A new technique has recently been developed which may save many human beings from unnecessary blindness. It is a process to dehydrate human corneas for grafts of corneal thickness. Dehydrated corneas can be kept indefinitely, reports the May Reader's Digest. They can be rehydrated and ready for grafting in 15 minutes.

History Of The Dance New Approach To Muse

There was a disappointing turn-out to the Willy Blok Hanson recital held in the Richmond Hill High School auditorium on Friday evening of last week, with less than 200 people present to appreciate and enjoy an entirely new approach to the art of dancing - in what was definitely a recital of the history of dancing. Interpreted by commentator Willy Blok Hanson herself, with the musical accompaniment by Rex Battle and orchestra, the evening was entitled "Soul of Terpsichore".

Mrs. Hanson related, in her soft, musical voice, the history of the dance down through the ages, from the primitive, ancient, medieval days, on to the Athenian civilization, through the Renaissance into the new-freedom of the ballet; with contemporary and classical dances bringing the history up to date. Throughout the narrative, illustrative dances were dramatically and beautifully done by her pupils.

It was with delight the audience watched, as Willy Blok Hanson herself revealed the soul of Terpsichore, the Muse, in two dance selections, which she interpreted to perfection.

To watch this petite woman, so full of life and grace and movement, as she fills the entire stage with her presence and the rapture of the dance, is something one can never forget. Willy Blok Hanson has been acclaimed, wherever she has danced, and we acclaim her again. We are only sorry more of those who appreciate interpretative dancing were not present to see her and her pupils, as they performed in Richmond Hill.

Following in her mother's dainty footsteps, Christy Lot Hanson danced too, last Friday night, with a studied perfection that has not yet reached the relaxed naturalness of her teacher-mother's, but which is a thing of beauty and a joy to behold nevertheless.

Our only criticism of this young dancer, who will some day be

listed among the greatest if her early work is at all indicative, is that she is still too serious before her audience. Christy Lot has a lovely smile, when speaking off-stage; we would like to see that same smile as she dances. Then she would truly be the soul of Terpsichore.

During the second half of Friday night's program, mother and daughter groups and pupils of Mrs. Hanson's Leventdale Road studio, demonstrated the "lessons of the dance", showing the audience the difficult but well-done, exercises which lead up to the interpretation of dancing.

And here again Mrs. Hanson disclosed her deep understanding - by staging a ballet number in which senior ballet dancers participated alone; and then with a repetition of the dance, the tiny applause-stealing toddlers were included, much to everyone's delight. Frankly, it was the nicest piece of 'handing' we have seen to date. For how exasperating it can be, for slightly older, more assured dancers to have to contend with the petite beginners, when the eyes of the audience become arrested by the altogether delightful antics of the innocents. But on Friday night, the senior dancers were duly admired - on their own, first.

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