**School**

***Reminiscences of Bendigo by the Almanac***

***Written by Peter MacIver***

For those of us who have conveniently forgotten about our own youth and who complain about the declining standards of the young today, David Scott’s *Reminiscences* are a timely reminder that young men were no different 150 years ago to today. The sorts of things he got up to at school were similar to what I did in my day and indeed students still get up to today. I’m sure many people will recognise themselves in these three stories.

IN A SLUDGE HOLE.

December 5, 1908. I forgot to mention in my earlier reminiscences my experience the first week I went to the Scotch School. The weather at the time was very hot, and the boys were in the habit of bathing in a dam just beyond Myers street, near the railway bridge. We kept in the water as long as we possibly could, and just used to allow ourselves time to get to the school when the bell was rung, which was five minutes before the hour of assembling after luncheon.

Well, one day I noticed that all the boys ran a longer way round than I thought was necessary, as I could see a short cut, and it seemed to me a pity to go further than, was necessary, so I went for the short cut, and found myself in a sludge hole 12ft. deep. It was sludge all caked over, and, being a new chum, I thought it was solid ground, so, of course, when my weight came on it down I went, amidst the laughter of my companions, who assisted to pull me out. I must have looked a comical object with liquid slush and caked mud hanging all round me and oozing out of my eyes, nose, mouth, etc. It was impossible for me to go to school like that, so something had to be done. I told the boys they had better get back to school to save punishment, and I then stripped myself naked, and went into the water and washed my clothes the best way I could, and put them on the bank to dry.

The water was of a bright yellow color, and, of course, when the clothes dried, they were of the same color. I dressed and went home, no school for me that day. They at once said, "Why, what have you done?" I had to explain, and got a good scolding, and just saved a thrashing. At school I expected to get one for being absent. The next morning I went to school as usual, and the master, after the roll was called, asked me the reason of absence the previous afternoon. I told him all about it, and I remember his words as if it was but yesterday, "Boy Scott, remember this, and let it be a lesson to you for life, that the shortest road is not always the safest, and be careful in choosing the right track in future. I think the punishment you have already undergone is sufficient." I was very glad I got off so lightly, but for some time afterwards they called me the yellow boy.”

FOOTBALL

December 12, 1908. The last year I was at school in Bendigo was at the English School in View Point, the head master at that time being Mr. Chapple, a new arrival from Rugby, a splendid man in every way, and passionately fond of sport. He organised our football team so successfully that we were champions of Bendigo for a season, and as a. grand wind up we went to Kangaroo Flat one Saturday, and were going to have a whole day's sport-a football match against the champion team of Kangaroo Flat, to be played in the morning at II o'clock, luncheon at 1 o'clock, and sports from 2 to 4 o'clock, and another football match at 4 o'clock against the combined district.

We drove out in a four-in-hand in great style, and on the ground there was erected a large marquee, where we were all to have luncheon. That was the programme, but it was not carried out exactly in that style, as will be seen by the following:-The match started in due course, and the masters of each school also played. The game we played in those days was Rugby. We had not been playing very long, and our side had kicked two goals when the play became very rough and the other side went, for us, instead of the ball. One tremendous big fellow got fairly on to me, and landed me into a big cutting 10 feet deep, full of water. I scrambled out, and did not say much, but watched my opportunity, and landed my opponent some time afterwards in the same place. Then the fun began. Both sides went in for fighting pure and simple, masters as well as scholars, and the game was brought to an abrupt conclusion, and we left the ground.

Our conveyance was not to come for us till the evening, so we had to tramp home to Bendigo. The master did not come with us, but went home by some other route. We were very hungry, and all the money we could muster amongst the lot of us was 2/6. We had to pass a Chinaman's garden, so we arranged with him to give us turnips and carrots to appease cur hunger for the 2/6. We never heard how the ones got on who remained behind, but I expect they got up games amongst themselves, and ate up the luncheon.

BROUGHT BEFORE BENDIGO MAC.

December 12, 1908. My last exploit at the same school was of a more serious nature, and was brought about by a school fight between our school and the Wesley School, in Forest-street. It was a pitched battle, with stones, and as we warmed up to it we did not notice that there were street lamps between us till we heard the shatter of glass, and they were all smashed to smithereens. This ended the fight, but not the trouble. There had been a, lot of street lamps broken in Bendigo about this time, and the authorities were determined to put it down, and they intended to make an example of someone. Unfortunately they picked on me as the individual who had broken the lamp; but why me when there were 100 a-side throwing stones? Sergeant Drought had the matter in hand, and I was summoned to appear at court. The summons was served on me at the school, and I was in a terrible ''blue funk" over it. The master offered to pay all the expenses of breakage some 30/-but no, they would not hear of it, and to court it had to go. The court sat in the upstairs room at the Town Hall, and as the case came on on a Saturday there was a great crowd there, especially scholars from both schools. There was a full bench of magistrates, with "Bendigo Mac'' as chairman. I was very brave up to this time, but when the charge was read out, and I was asked, ''Guilty or not guilty?" the sight of Bendgo Mac, with his gold specs., and the other array of Js.P., was too much, for me and I pleaded in tearful tones, "Not guilty." Sergeant Drought made out a great case, and said they should stop the great destruction of lamps that had been going on, and that here was a clear case, and they should award a heavy penalty. Mr. Chappie made a strong defence, and said it was only the exuberance of youths, and pointedly asked how, out of some 200 throwers, the police witness could identify me as the thrower. The magistrates consulted for some time, and then "Bendigo Mac" announced the decision, "'Case dismissed," much to my relief, as I had been told that I would be likely to get a week. That was my first and last appearance before "Bendigo Mac."