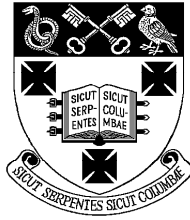# RADLEY COLLEGE
Entrance Scholarships

ENGLISH I

Friday 25th February 2000

Time allowed - $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours

This paper consists of two sections. Each refers to an extract taken from
The Penguin Stephen Leacock – A Compendium of Comic Gems*.*
Read both passages carefully, then answer the questions.

Remember: you will be rewarded for the accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar, as well as the quality of your ideas.

*Each section is worth **50 marks**; you are advised not to spend more than 45 minutes on either of them.*

SECTION A

From Gertrude the Governess (1911), by Stephen Leacock

The denouement[1] came swiftly. Gertrude never forgot it.
It was the night of the great ball at Nosham Taws. The whole neighbourhood was invited. How Gertrude's heart had beat with anticipation, and with what trepidation she had overhauled her scant wardrobe in order to appear not unworthy in Lord Ronald's eyes. Her resources were poor indeed, yet the inborn genius for dress that she inherited from her French mother stood her in good stead. She twined a single rose in her hair and contrived herself a dress out of a few old newspapers and the inside of an umbrella that would have graced a court. Round her waist she bound a single braid of bagstring, while a piece of old lace that had been her mother's was suspended from her ear by a thread.
Gertrude was the cynosure[2] of all eyes. Floating to the strains of the music she presented a picture of bright girlish innocence that no one could see undisenraptured.
The ball was at its height. It was away up!
Ronald stood with Gertrude in the shrubbery. They looked into one another's eyes.

"Gertrude," he said, "I love you."

Simple words, and yet they thrilled every fibre in the girl's costume.

"Ronald!" she said, and cast herself about his neck.

At this moment the Earl appeared standing beside them in the moonlight. His stern face was distorted with indignation.

"So!" he said, turning to Ronald, "it appears that you have chosen!"

"I have," said Ronald with hauteur.

"You prefer to marry this penniless girl rather than the heiress I have selected for you."

Gertrude looked from father to son in amazement.

"Yes," said Ronald.

"Be it so," said the Earl draining a dipper of gin which he carried, and resuming his calm. "Then I disinherit you. Leave this place, and never return to it."

"Come, Gertrude," said Ronald tenderly, "let us flee together."

Gertrude stood before them. The rose had fallen from her head. The lace had fallen from her ear and the bagstring had come undone from her waist. Her newspapers were crumpled beyond recognition. But dishevelled and illegible as she was, she was still mistress of herself.

"Never," she said firmly. "Ronald, you shall never make this sacrifice for me." Then to the Earl, in tones of ice, "There is a pride, sir, as great even as yours. The daughter of Metschnikoff McFiggin need crave a boon[3] from no one."

[1]Denouement = conclusion of a story.
[2]Cynosure = person or thing that attracts notice
[3]Boon = favour

1. Write a short paragraph explaining what might be considered humorous about the following:

   a. "... a picture of bright girlish innocence that no one could see undisenraptured."

   b. "The ball was at its height. It was away up!"

   c. "Simple words, and yet they thrilled every fibre in the girl's costume."

   d. "The daughter of Metschnikoff McFiggin need crave a boon from no one."

   e. "The rose had fallen from her head. The lace had fallen from her ear and the bagstring had come undone from her waist. Her newspapers were crumpled beyond recognition."

(25)

2. Illustrating your answer by reference to a number of words and phrases drawn from the text, explain, as clearly as you can, how Leacock achieves his comic effects in this passage. You may use quotations you have referred to in your answer to question 1.

You may wish to consider, among other things, the storyline, characterisation and Leacock's use of language. (25)

(50 marks)

SECTION B

From A, B, and C (1910), by Stephen Leacock

The student of arithmetic who has mastered the first four rules of his art, and successfully striven with money sums and fractions, finds himself confronted by an unbroken expanse of questions known as problems. These are short stories of adventure and industry with the end omitted, and, though betraying a strong family resemblance, are not without a certain element of romance.
The characters in the plot of a problem are three people called A, B, and C. The form of the question is generally of this sort:
"A, B, and C do a certain piece of work. A can do as much work in one hour as B in two, or C in four. Find how long they work at it."
Or thus:
"A, B, and C are employed to dig a ditch. A can dig as much in one hour as B can dig in two, and B can dig twice as fast as C. Find how long etc. etc."
Or after this wise:
"A lays a wager that he can walk faster than B or C. A can walk half as fast again as B, and C is only an indifferent walker. Find how far, and so forth."
The occupations of A, B, and C are many and varied. Sometimes they are set to walking matches, ditch-digging, regattas, and piling cord-wood. At times they become commercial and enter into partnership. Above all they revel in motion. When they tire of walking matches, A rides on horseback, or borrows a bicycle and competes with his weaker-minded associates on foot. Now they race on locomotives; now they row; or again they become historical and engage stagecoaches; or at times they are aquatic and swim. If their occupation is actual work they prefer to pump water into cisterns, two of which leak through holes in the bottom and one of which is water-tight. A, of course, has the good one; he also takes the bicycle, and the best locomotive, and the right of swimming with the current. Whatever they do they put money on it, being all three sports. A always wins.
In the early chapters of arithmetic, their identity is concealed under the names of John, William and Henry, and they wrangle over the division of marbles. In algebra

they are often called X, Y, Z. But these are only their Christian names, and they are really the same people.

Now to one who has followed the history of these men through countless pages of problems, watched them in their leisure hours dallying with cord-wood, and seen their panting sides heave in the full frenzy of filling a cistern with a leak in it, they become something more than mere symbols. They appear as creatures of flesh and blood, living men with their own passions, ambitions and aspirations like the rest of us. Let us view them in turn....

Leacock goes on to tell a number of stories about the three characters, in the course of which he describes C as "an undersized, frail man, with a plaintive face", explaining that "constant walking, digging and pumping has broken his health and ruined his nervous system."

3. Write the story of C's death or revenge. Remember that you will be credited not only for the quality of your ideas, but also for the accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar.

(50 marks)