

VARNDEAN GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR BOYS
1955

CORIOLANUS

by

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CORIOLANUS

The action of the play takes place in Rome, and in or near the Volscian cities of Corioli and Antium, at the beginning of the fifth century before Christ.

ACT I

After a threatened mutiny of the Roman citizens against the nobles has been avoided by a concession from the Senate to the people, the Roman army leaves to fight the Volscians. The battles result in a Roman victory, and Coriolanus returns in triumph, but is at once faced by his political enemies, the tribunes.

INTERVAL

ACT II

Coriolanus is elected consul but, owing partly to his own pride, which prevents him from accepting any compromise with the people, and partly to the cunning of Sicinius and Brutus, who make him lose his temper and betray his intolerance of popular rights, he is prevented from taking office. In spite of the nobles' attempts to save him, he is banished from Rome for ever for treason.

INTERVAL

ACT III

Desiring to revenge himself on Rome, Coriolanus offers his help to Aufidius, and soon, with a Volscian army at his back, has Rome at his mercy. His mother successfully pleads with him to spare his native city, but this betrayal of the Volscians by Coriolanus enables Aufidius to settle old scores with him.

PAST PRODUCTIONS

- 1925 A Midsummer Night's Dream
- 1926 The Merchant of Venice
- 1927 Twelfth Night
- 1928 Julius Caesar
- 1929 Macbeth
- 1930 Hamlet
- 1931 King Henry IV (Part I)
- 1932 King Henry V
- 1933 The Taming of the Shrew
- 1934 King Lear
- 1935 Much Ado About Nothing
- 1936 Romeo and Juliet
- 1937 As You Like It
- 1938 King Henry IV (Part II)
- 1939 } War Years
- 1945 }
- 1946 Macbeth
- 1947 The Merchant of Venice
- 1948 Julius Caesar
- 1949 Much Ado About Nothing
- 1950 Twelfth Night
- 1951 King Henry IV (Part I)
- 1952 As You Like It
- 1953 A Midsummer Night's Dream
- 1954 The Merchant of Venice

"CORIOLANUS" AT VARNDEAN

THE impressive production of "Coriolanus" at Varndean Grammar School for Boys this week is providing parents and friends with an unusual opportunity of seeing one of the least familiar of Shakespeare's dramas.

This heroic tragedy, close-packed with complex argument, is not an easy play, either for actors or audience; and it says much for the ability of the young performers that the text comes leaping to life.

Set in 500 B.C., the story of a proud warrior banished from high office because he refuses to cadge for votes in the market place has a peculiarly modern psycho-political flavour, and C. B. F. Geer, in the name part, presents a clear picture of a man whose fierce integrity drives him to a dishonoured death. He has an excellent voice and cuts a magnificent figure in his suit of shining armour.

Tackling the difficult task of assuming the leading feminine rôle, D. C. Collings and P. B. Marley do well as Volturnia and Virgilia (the hero's forceful mother and gentle wife).

But by far the best performance is given by Michael Cager, whose remarkable talent has been noted on previous occasions. He plays Menenius with astonishing perception and intelligence, missing none of the subtle undertones of irony in the character of a worldly-wise old statesman who has learned to shrug his shoulders at compromise.

Mr. B. E. Stone's production includes some stirring battle scenes, in which the clash of steel and the sound of drums and trumpets are convincingly warlike, and has an imposing set devised and painted by Mr. M. E. Bruce and constructed by Mr. S. E. Armstrong.

The well-drilled cast of nearly 40 boys includes J. I. Bolter and M. J. Tribe (the tribunes of the people); C. D. Boyce and D. W. Eyles (the Roman generals); J. E. O'Toole (Valeria); and G. A. E. Parfitt and D. J. Brand (Roman senators). The chief Volscian rôles are taken by M. G. Morgan (Aufidius); R. A. Lyall (lieutenant); R. J. Covell (governor); and A. D. Johnson (senator).

The last of four performances will be given to-night.



Caius Marcius (C. B. F. Geer) fights a duel with Tullus Aufidius, general of the Volscians (M. G. Morgan)—a scene from "Coriolanus" at Varndean



