

work of at least ten weeks. Now ten weeks from Monday October 18 take us through Thursday December 23 as the probable date of the last of these dictates. It would appear, then, that the boys worked till Christmas, as we should expect.

The exercises of the other years clearly represent each time the work of at least nine weeks in this Post-Michaelmas term. In 1564, these exercises were thirty-two, in 1565 not directly determinable, in 1566 thirty. Nine weeks from Christmas will in 1564 take us back to Monday, October 23; in 1565, to Monday October 22; in 1566, to Monday October 21. It would seem to be the rule, therefore, that the boys began the dictates of the Post-Michaelmas term on the Monday preceding October 28, and received dictates for nine weeks, ending their labors the week preceding Christmas day. Apparently the dictates began a week earlier than usual in 1563. But the reason seems apparent. These first dictates show that the boys had just gone into rustication from the plague. Presumably, therefore, this is the reason for the extra week.

But while the boys had no dictates Christmas week, yet they did give plays. The college accounts make it clear that three plays occurred in the Christmas holidays, and Kirby points out that they supplanted the boy bishop,³ who in cathedral communities, as at Winchester, officiated on Innocent's Day, December 28. It is thus fairly clear that the play at Winchester was on December 28, and that the boys would be at school through that date. They would then have a vacation, the possible length of which can also be fairly determined.

For Badger's first year, the exercises between Christmas and Easter were thirty-three (20v-36v). These would break, therefore, into three groups of eleven exercises each, or three of ten, eleven, and twelve each, or one of nine and two of twelve each. A group of nine would be made up of three weeks of three exercises each. A group of ten would be made up of two weeks of three exercises, and one of four. A group of eleven would be made up of two weeks of four exercises, and one of three. A group of twelve would be made up of either three weeks of four exercises or four weeks of three. So thirty-three exercises are most likely to represent the work of nine weeks, but there is a single possibility that the period was ten weeks, and another that it was eleven weeks.

Now there is a reference to a play, apparently in Greek, as given yesterday (27v). This was evidently at Shrovetide, as one would expect. For there are eighteen exercises following this one before Easter, and we shall see that these exercises regularly stopped a week before that period. These nineteen or twenty exercises thus represent the work of five weeks, beginning with Shrove week. It is probable that a lecture on "nothing too much" (27r) was aimed at Shrovetide, being given as the last dictate before that event, that the play was given on Shrove Tuesday, which would be holiday, and that the reference to it is on the Wednesday following. This would leave thirteen or fourteen exercises between Christmas and Shrove week. These would thus represent the work of four weeks.

³ Kirby, *Winchester College*, p. 287.