Pick of Punch 1954

Various

Jo Rosie Xmas 1954.

THE PICK OF 'PUNCH'


PRISON
REGULATIONS

THE PICK OF 'PUNCH'

An Annual Selection

1954
Chatto and Windus
LONDON

PUBLISHED BY
Chatto and Windus Ltd.
LONDON
*
Clarke, Irwin & Co. Ltd.
TORONTO

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The British Hotel

A Short Guide for the Foreign Visitor

Introductory Note

WITHOUT seeking to whitewash the British Hotel in its entirety, the following Guide is designed to show, by means of a few strokes of white where needed, that it is not as black as it is painted. A true half-timbered effect should result. For the reader's convenience the Guide is arranged alphabetically, and he should not work from it as a progressive vade mecum.

Alcohol

Insist on it. The eccentricities of British licensing hours cannot touch the *bona fide* guest in a British Hotel, as the law entitles him to purchase and consume alcohol at any time. Should he want a pint of ale after his pre-breakfast stroll, or a brandy-and-water in the small hours, he has only to ask for it. If he gets it, the compiler of these notes will be glad to have the name of the hotel.

Arrival

It is traditional for the British hotelier and staff to keep out of sight when the guests arrive, and nothing better exemplifies the streak of diffidence in the national character. No pressure is exerted on a guest to stay, and he is given ample time to look round and see if he fancies the place. If, after repeated ringing of the bell at the reception desk, shouted inquiries as to whether there is anyone about, and a thorough exploration of all the rooms on the ground floor, you feel like walking out, do so. You will have incurred no obligation of any kind. Critics of the British Hotel sometimes call this a "take it or leave it" attitude, an expression which has unfortunately gained currency in a context of disparagement.

Cooking

Under this heading the visitor from abroad should be free to form his own conclusions, summarizing them, if so inclined, in a report to the British Travel and Holidays Association. By long tradition, British Hotel toast is made the night before.

Departure

Take this before noon on the day of it. Should you forget to do so, however, do not fear that you will miss some later appointment, as the management will drop a hint by putting your baggage outside on the pavement. There is a small nominal

charge for this, approximating to one day's bed and board. Your departure will give you the opportunity to meet and thank the staff. It is because they are permanently hanging around the front door to give guests a cordial send-off that you have not met and thanked any of them before. (But see "Service.")

Gambling

The morals of hotel guests in Britain are rigidly safeguarded under the Licensing Act of 1872, which forbids games of chance. Among these categorically proscribed are Basset, Pharaoh, Ace of Hearts, Hazard and Passage, and if you have come to this country with the specific object of engaging in these you will be well advised to cancel your hotel bookings and seek furnished rooms. Visitors in whom the gaming mania is beyond control, however, may find some consolation under "Geography," below.

Geography

Any British Hotel of standing has with the passing of the years incorporated the buildings behind and on either side of it. It is traditional in such structural amalgamations that the fabric is disturbed as little as possible, and as a rule the operation only runs to the demolition of party walls and a token attempt at matching the corridor carpets at the point of annexation. The guest looking for the bathroom can therefore play Hazard and Passage to his heart's content, having bets with himself on how many more pairs of dark stairs he is going to fall up, who the lady is who has got into his bedroom and gone to sleep while he has been away, and so on.

Music

Many foreign visitors are surprised at the liberal provision of music in the British Hotel.

If you are a music-lover you should inquire at the outset whether the hotel of your choice offers this amenity. The answer is almost certain to be yes, and your next step is to ask to be quartered over the ballroom, there to enjoy an exhilarating musical entertainment, at least three times a week, until the dance is over at 2 a.m. If the perfectly placed room is already taken it may be worth while to ask for one near a ventilating shaft, as the music is traditionally piped up these where practicable.

"ALL MOVE ROUND ONE, PASS IT ON"

Reading Matter

Reading matter is plentiful, and hung up everywhere, consisting mainly of short anthologies culled from the great body of innkeeping legislation. These inform the reader that the British Hotel cannot be responsible for his property, except as settlement for an unpaid bill, and remind him (in case he should object to such an arrangement) that under the Innkeeper's Liability Act of 1863, his host is entitled to take action against his guests behaving "in a violent, quarrelsome or riotous manner." Mural literature in the bedroom will tell the guest all he needs to know about the statutory times of meals, restrictions on the use of bath-water, the danger of pickpockets, the notification of infectious diseases, penalties for cutting towels with razor-blades and, in some cases, instructions about the hours of black-out. There is nothing in law, as is mistakenly supposed by some, compelling visitors to learn all this matter by heart. All that need be memorized is the schedule of meal-times. A five-minute error may cost you fourteen hours without a crumb.

Residents' Lounge

In order that guests may have somewhere to go and think without interference, British Hotel managements have long adopted the practice of placing the Residents' Lounge out of bounds to the hotel staff, at any rate between the hours of 7 a.m.

and midnight. Only in the early morning is a maid allowed to enter, to ensure that the windows are securely shut and to tear the backs off a few magazines. As a further safeguard the bell is usually disconnected. In many hotels the Lounge is kept permanently locked, which naturally affords complete solitude to any guest who was in there at the time.

Service

This is chiefly vested in an old man who makes a half-hearted attempt to wrest your luggage from you as soon as you have been passed by the lady receptionist and given a baulk of timber with a key attached. On account of his great age and frailty you are forbidden by tradition to let the old man take your bag. Take it yourself. He will accompany you to your room, however, and must be allowed to throw open its door on arrival, otherwise he may suffer psychological damage at having to accept an unearned tip, and his medical expenses will be charged on your bill.

Taboos

Experience alone can teach the full range of these, particularly as many are peculiar to individual British Hotels. The observation of three cardinal rules will, however, go far towards making your stay trouble free. 1. Speak only when spoken to. 2. Do as you are told. 3. Never touch the mince.

J. B. Boothroyd

So Completely Unspoiled

WHEN my dear friends the Dampleas recommended me to go to —— for a week's holiday, they made me promise that I wouldn't tell anyone else about it. I'm afraid therefore that I can't give you its name. As Eileen Damplea said in her flat colourless voice which somehow seems to accord so well with her flat, colourless face and the yards of flat colourless wool which she is perpetually knitting into nameless, shapeless garments, "You see it's so completely unspoiled and we're terrified of people getting to know about it and . . . and spoiling it." Eileen's vocabulary is somewhat limited, though her flow of talk is not. In any case, it doesn't really matter, because, if you take a map of England and a pin, and stick the pin into any coastal town that is large enough to be named and yet is not one of the big seaside places that we all know to have been "spoiled" years ago, you will hit upon —— or another place so exactly like it that the difference is of no importance.

The primary feature of such "unspoiled" resorts is that many years ago some enterprising persons had intended to make them into large holiday towns of the


WET PAINT
mahood

kind that can be immediately recognized as "spoiled." Only the subsequent discovery of some major natural obstacle such as sinking sands, annual visits of shoals of poisonous jellyfish, midget maelstroms or all three together has saved these little gems of Nature from the full ravages of commercial development. The unrealized schemes of past *entrepreneurs*, however, have usually left their mark in the shape of some unfinished pier, half completed parade or ornamental garden that is now a mass of overgrown privet and veronica. The pier at —— is a superb example of its kind, ending sharply and romantically in mid-air, and possessing the amusing distraction of a now somewhat rusty machine by which, after the insertion of a penny, the hardy may test their powers of resistance to a series of minor electric shocks. Various attempts to complete the pier and the parade have been pluckily and successfully resisted by the retired residents, nursing homes, convalescent homes and boarding-schools who are naturally anxious to keep the place "select." To savour to the full the gentle, melancholy charm of the Piranesi-like half-constructed seascapes they should be seen on an English summer day of mild drizzle or white sea mist. It is then immediately clear how persuasive is their appeal to persons recovering from nervous breakdowns or the after-effects of influenza, and, of course, to the parents or guardians of groups of small children.

There is usually one larger hotel showing the architectural influence of the French château on Edwardian taste. This hotel was perhaps designed for slightly balmier prospects than have materialized; but for those who demand a certain opulence when on holiday there is usually a menu offering such cosmopolitan attractions as Crême Parmentier, Filets de merlan, Petits pois (processed) and Pêche melba (tubs). Many of the more enterprising of these hotels have added Jus de tomate to the evening menu to appeal to the American tourist.

If, however, your taste is more homely, a lovely old 1875 mansion, Italianate in design, has been adapted as a guest house. Lying on the outskirts of the town between the allotment quarter and the now unoccupied Army huts, it offers the attraction of both country and seaside. The fields nearby with their overgrown Home Guard trenches, barbed wire artfully concealed in bramble bushes and occasional unexploded mine make an ideal playground for the modern child who demands an element of realism in his games.

There are also, of course, a number of "rooms" available for the more limited purse.

The district that surrounds these unspoilt resorts, whether they be east, west, north or south on England's coast-line, nearly always possesses some feature of historical interest. Uggl's tower near —— is a good example. This quaint, rocky mound has been variously explained as a Neolithic barrow, a defence against the Danes, a monument of Tudor greatness, or an example of those charming Gothic follies so beloved of the eighteenth century. Whatever its origin, however, its appeal to the visitor is eternal.

For the less active or those without motor cars, a visit to the old part of the

town which overlooks the sea from the height of a steep hill always remains a possibility. One grey stone house near the Victorian Perpendicular church probably dates from 1790. Another, reconstructed in 1924, is built on the site of a fourteenth-century farmhouse. The Tudor shop is of modern origin.

No holiday at the English seaside is complete without morning coffee. The unspoiled resorts are peculiarly rich in tea-rooms. At ——, for instance, there is a choice of "The Marmalade Pot," which was once run by ladies; and Brown's Tea Room, which never was.

Altogether —— and its sister resorts are ideal for those who wish to dawdle away their vacation, watching the empty days stretch ahead of them in an endless vista, so that when the annual fortnight's holiday comes to its end, parents and children alike feel that it has been more like a lifetime.

ANGUS WILSON

Welcome to Britain!

SEE me this morning," said Jack, kneading the Mixture of Butter and Best Quality Margarine. "I reckoned it must be the Swiss Navy. These four blokes come in, sorta yachtin' caps on. I said, ' 'Ullo,' I said. 'Getcha sunnink?' "

"One o' these delegations, I 'spect," said the mobile fish canteen man, testing the bouquet of the vinegar. "You know, go round like royalty, inspect all the blast furnaces an' biscuit factries. Or the old Jap geezers: *Ullo, yes-please-thanks-velly-much*, and soon as they're back 'ome, over come the old shirts—arf a dollar."

"No, well, one of these blokes," said Jack, " 'e comes up, 'e says: 'Karfy? Karfy?' Like the old Arabs, I thought."

"If they was Arabs," said the garage man, in to collect the daily pot of sweetened, "woon they 'ave galibayahs on like when we was in Egypt? Then they'd be '*Salaam effendi*' when they come in, like when they used ta come round the old tents floggin' books and them nice yellow 'andbags with the Pyramids on 'em."

"Ah," said Jack, alert to correct a wrong impression. "Well. They told me they was Norway, little while later. I said 'Oh yer?' Lookin' all round the caution, they was. Think they'd never seen a place like it before. An old way, it dawns on me. 'Oh,' I says, '*corfee*?' I says. That was it. Only they didn't seem ta much care for it."

"Make it a different way, I expect," said the garage man, tearing a rubbery corner from his sandwich. "See the old Arabs sometimes stoppin' for a brew-up. They 'ave it very strong—boil away, boil away. Then you stir occasionally."

"What, like in yer sleep?" said the mobile fish canteen man, derisively.

"No, Stan," said the garage man, "no. You gotcher coffee. Right? Right. Well——"

" 'Ere," said Jack suddenly, "now you tell me this. 'Owsit when, say, me and Bert Diggins is in India, we get the old lingo off in no time—why, I 'member it even now: *Gillo, gillo*! *Thairo* a *thora*, tosh!—and these blokes come over 'ere and you can 'ardly make 'ead or tail?"

"Down the old bazaars, eh?" reminisced the garage man. "You never got nothink really cheap like down say, Strutton Ground or Maidstone market. *'Ere v'are! They're-two-bob-men's-all-woollen-socks.* Rookin' lotta——"

"Welcome to Britain," interrupted Jack, waving his wooden spoon, "that's what they say. Lor crikey, I done my bit. 'Siddown,' I says. 'Make yerself atome. Cutcherself a piece-a cake.' All very nice an' friendly. Smilin'. Lovely lotta cameras too, only they didn't take no photos of me."

"Supposed to make the place brighter," said the garage man. "Well, look at us. We 'ung out a lotta flags—Smasho petrol, no more knock. What 'appens? They wanta know if we do dinners like they get in the States, clip on a tray, side of the car. All right, only I *mean*."

"Take a picture postcard, Miss Baxter . . ."

"Werl," said Jack, heaving a great pile of coloured cardboard from under the counter, "look at dis stuff they send me—Phruty-Cola, Ice Lollies adverts (nice bitta stuff there), throat pastilles. I sometimes wonder if I couldn't make a bitta cash on them for selvedge, steada givin' 'em old Tug every coupla weeks."

"I'd-a thought it was just your drop," said the mobile fish man, "'avin the place nice. Take that Ice Lolly advert."

"This establishment," said Jack, abandoning the butter mixture, "'as a reputation. All meals served prompt. Says so outside. Say we was all to be gazin' at these bitsa stuff on the adverts?"

"You want to attract overseas customers?" said the fish man—"Well, there you are."

"What brasses me orf," said the old man near the window, "few years ago we was all for keepin' these geezers out. 'Member old Winston? *We shall fight on the wassname, we shall fight on the sunninkelse.* Now they reckon we can't do without 'em. Coor. Still."

ALAN HACKNEY

Very, Very Quietly

HISTORIANS will probably agree in placing the inception of the Pyrwhitt-Robinson Method as far back as 1925, when it fell to Pyrwhitt-Robinson, as Head of the School, to introduce a visiting lecturer—an explorer described in the announcement of his lecture as "the first man to enter Lhasa in disguise."

The hall buzzed with interested anticipation. Pyrwhitt-Robinson, already imbued with that dislike of sensationalism, that instinct for calming things down, which was later to dominate his life, introduced the explorer with the remark that "although, of course, a great many people have been to Lhasa, I believe I am correct in saying that our speaker to-night was the first to do so *in disguise*."

Everyone, except possibly the lecturer, calmed down immediately.

It was a promising beginning, but not until some years later, when he entered journalism, did Pyrwhitt-Robinson embark methodically upon the development of his plan for keeping people calm no matter what. (He was, at this outset of his career, a sub-editor on a newspaper having its offices not, as they say, a hundred miles from Printing House Square; and in saying this they are correct, since the offices were right *in* Printing House Square.)

Pyrwhitt-Robinson had already formulated the view that most of the trouble is caused by people going about trying to make things sound exciting. What was wanted, he said, was the Sedative Approach.

With a view to training a basic *cadre* of Sedatives, he organized among his fellow sub-editors a nightly competition of which the prize-winner was he who could

produce the least exciting headline to be actually printed in the paper the following morning.

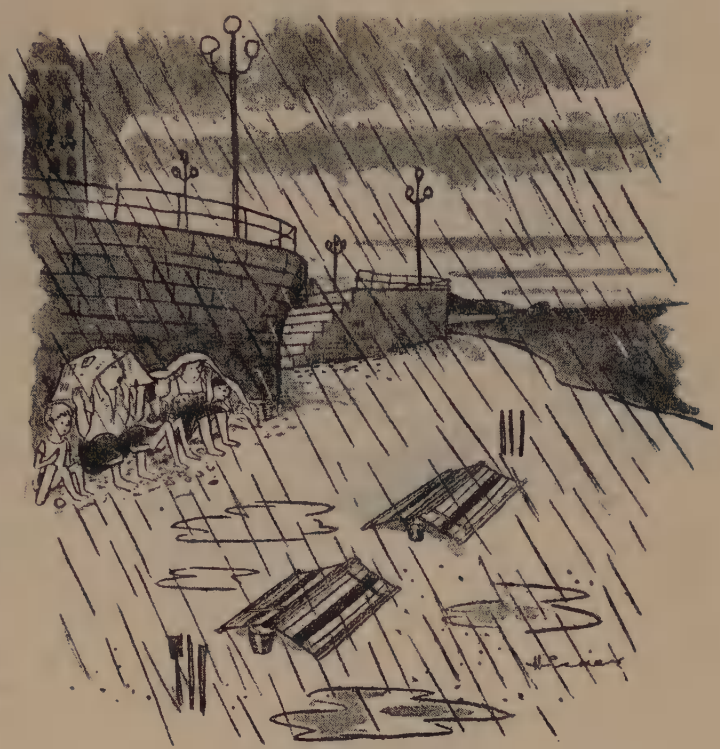
"Small Earthquake in Chile. Not Many Dead," was an early success of Pyrwhitt-Robinson himself. On the other hand, his headline on the outbreak of the Abyssinian War—"Dispute in N.E. Africa. Differences of Opinion Grow" —was altered at the last moment by a Sensationalist chief sub-editor. (So was the work of one of his pupils, who wanted to cut out part of some dispatch about the "Munich Crisis" in favour of a quiet story called "Fewer Rabbits in Australia.")

Following a series of such clashes with the Sensationalists, Pyrwhitt-Robinson transferred his services to another newspaper. Possibly owing to confusion caused by the first "Blitz" on London ("Blitz" was, of course, a word absolutely barred by Pyrwhitt-Robinson), he had the pleasure of seeing his headline on that event run right through the early edition. "Explosives Dropped from Flying Machines," it announced: "Unusual Experience at London Docks."

Later work as a war correspondent afforded him considerable scope. In the London office of the paper he then worked for they will long remember the opening words of his first, eagerly-awaited dispatch from France after D-Day. "A good many British and Americans in their characteristic uniforms," wrote Pyrwhitt-Robinson, "are in Normandy this afternoon, most of them having come here by boat."

His editor thought at first the censors had gone crazy, and made a frightful scene about it with the Minister of Information. But Pyrwhitt-Robinson was able

"THERE, I *KNEW* I'D FORGOTTEN SOMETHING—BABY!"



to explain that he had simply felt that this was the kind of story which might definitely excite people unless handled very, very quietly.

Reluctantly relinquishing war correspondence soon after this episode, he gained employment with a provincial newspaper in time to deal with the news of the fall of Berlin and the death of Hitler. "Change of Government in Germany. Cabinet-making under Difficulties," was felt to mark a milestone in the progress of the Pyrwhitt-Robinson Method.

Harassed as he was by the Sensationalists, Pyrwhitt-Robinson moved from post to post rather frequently, but a glance at the local newspaper in this or that section of the provinces would often reveal his hand steadily at work, keeping things absolutely calm.

When other newspapers were screaming "Tornado Sweeps Florida" or "Dictator Threatens Britain's Meat Ration," it was soothing to come across—in some publication from the Lake District or East Anglia—the Pyrwhitt-Robinson touch: "Winds Strong in Part of U.S.A." or "Exaggerated Reports About Meat."

In his privately-printed Sedative Sub-Editor's vade-mecum, Pyrwhitt-Robinson lists a number of "preferred phrases," handy alternatives to the over-stimulants used by the Sensationalists. Thus for "Heat Wave," the phrase "Warm Weather" or "Higher Temperatures at Kew" should always be substituted. "Record Crowds Storm Lord's" should read: "Many People at London Cricket Ground." Wrods like "crash," "slump," "boom" and "crisis" are best, says Pyrwhitt-Robinson, avoided altogether.

Having inherited a small legacy, Pyrwhitt-Robinson became, earlier this year, Editor-Proprietor of a newspaper in the west country with a circulation of several hundreds weekly, thus at length shaking off the trammels of the Sensationalists. There has already been interested comment on his treatment of what some of his contemporaries referred to excitedly as the Christie Case, or the House of Death.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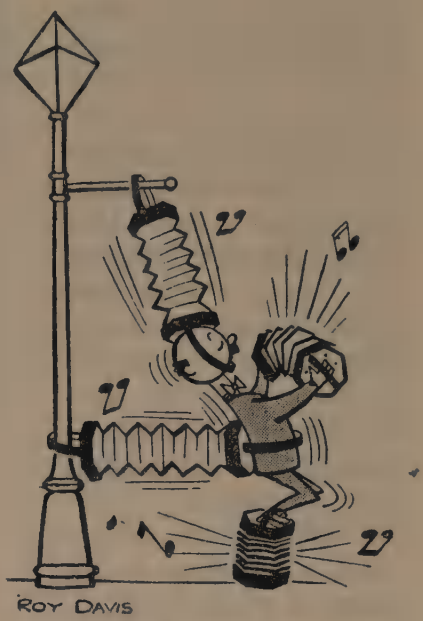
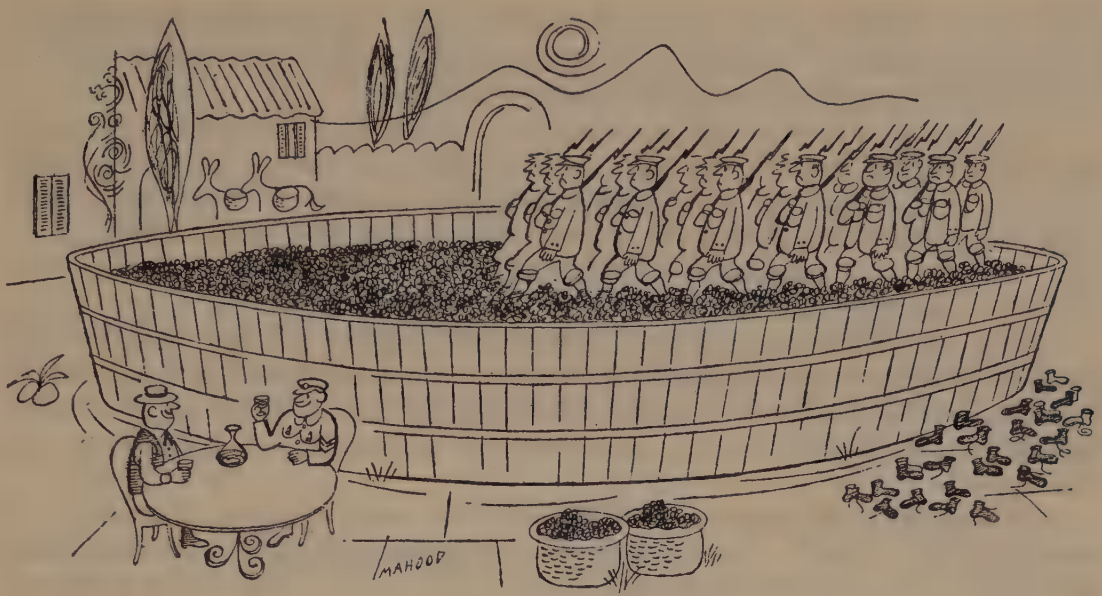
EMERGENCY
EXIT


ROY DAVIS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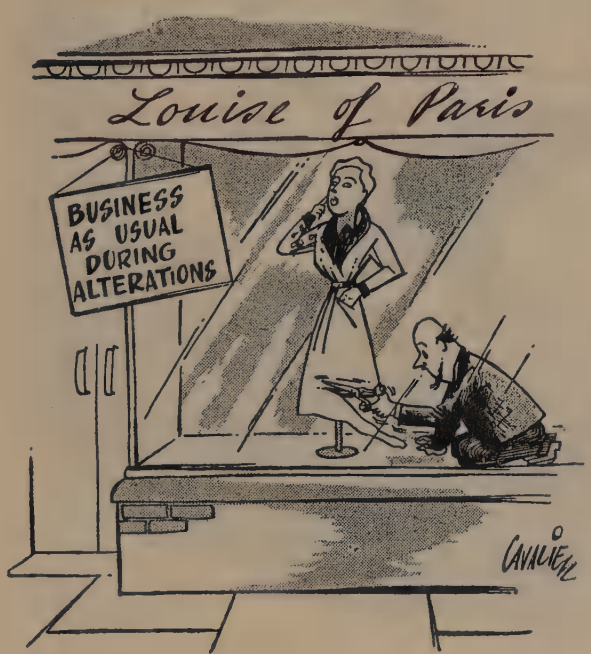
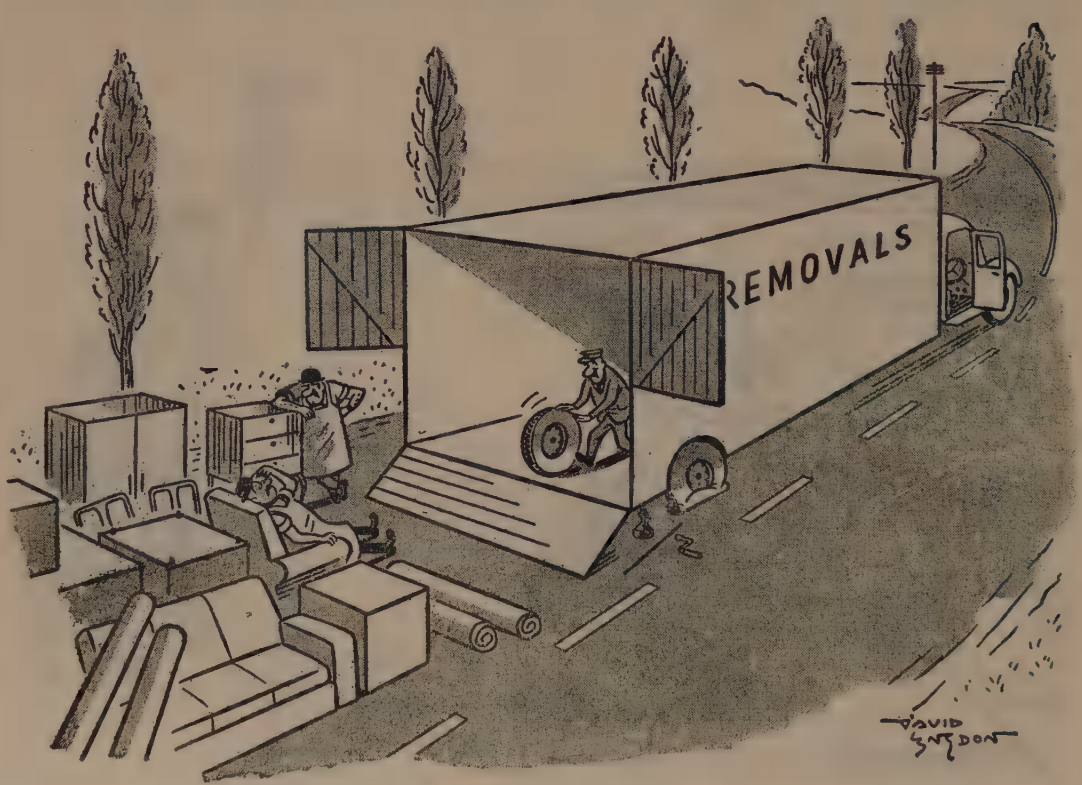

Louise of Paris
BUSINESS AS USUAL DURING ALTERATIONS
CAVALIER

"Conditions in Notting Hill, Police Officers Interested" was how Pyrwhitt-Robinson presented the affair. "Prominent People at Island Resort" was judged to be a particularly calming headline on the Bermuda Conference.

In a recent interview with a student of journalism which Pyrwhitt-Robinson spared no effort to make as dull as possible, he disclosed that he envisages a broad extension of the Method. "The new journalism," he stated, "should not confine itself to keeping absolutely calm about what are called the Big News Events of the day. The world situation being what it is, there is always the risk of sensationalism creeping in nevertheless.

"My aim will be to give these events the minimum possible publicity. In future I shall relegate all political events, also fires (unless very small), storms, record-breaking jet-flights and crime waves—which, by the way, I prefer to think of as Several Non-Legal Acts—to the back pages, or at least to low positions on the front page.

"The habit of the Sensationalists is to seek for events implying movement and what they call 'drama.' I, on the other hand, shall concentrate on publishing news indicating stability and what I may term 'non-occurrence.' Thus, I have a reporter at work just now on a story showing that the amount the tide rises and falls along



this part of the coast has not varied significantly for several hundred years, and is unlikely to do so in the future. I propose to follow this with news that the coast is not, on the one hand, being eroded, nor the sea, on the other, receding. Everything is staying in the same place.

"We shall also publish a series of photographs of quite average-sized tomatoes —not huge, and not especially small; just average."

The student of journalism was scribbling like anything in his note-book. "But this," he gasped, "will revolutionize journalism."

Pyrwhitt-Robinson raised a deprecating hand. "Please," he said, "don't write anything of that kind. Say, if you must . . ."—he paused, seeking the turn of phrase that would leave people absolutely calm—"say that I may possibly be planning a paper which will not be quite the same as some existing papers, perhaps."

CLAUD COCKBURN

AT LORD'S

Quietly in the sun they read or sleep;
Stir now and then, and languidly clap their hands
To watch the ball miraculously find the deep;
So turn to sleep again. Each fielder stands
A moment poised; then slowly inward moves,
Crouches in expectation, waits the flying ball;
Eager, alert, the keeper taps his gloves.
Time stands aloft, ironic, over all,
And whets his scythe; the soft and languid dream
Is broken by the bowler's pounding run,
His flashing fingers tight upon the seam;
He bowls; the swift ball glances in the sun,
Moves in the air, suddenly swings late and low,
Falls; and the batsman wisely lets it go.

G. H. VALLINS

TRIOLET

I've bought myself a new deck-chair
And I am going to sit in it.
The sun is warm, the forecast fair—
I've bought myself a new deck-chair.
My wife has just informed me where
She'd like it put (to knit in it).
But *I* have bought this new deck-chair
And *I* am going to sit in it.

E. M. E. W.

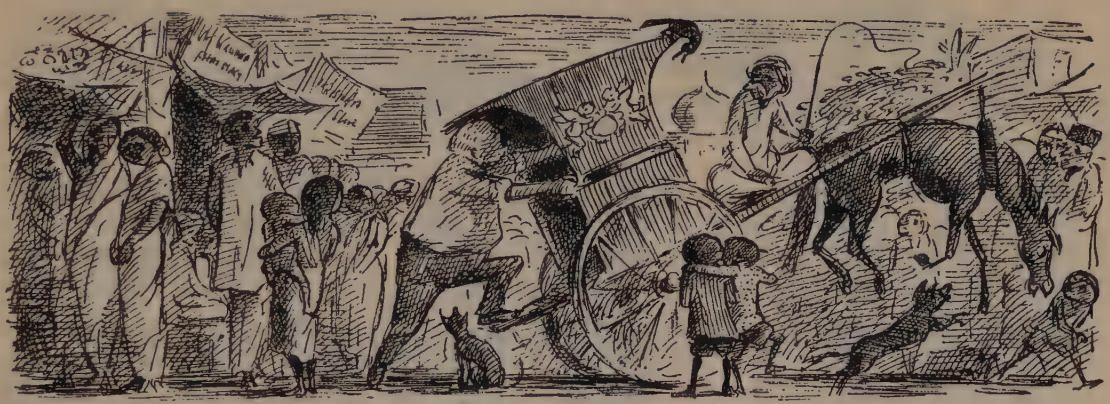
O see India with the artist's eye, or even the visitor's, was never possible for those of us who worked there. Aden, or whatever the last port of call was, could be looked at with that kind of subjective detachment; but once we were ashore at Bombay, the heart and mind were too heavily engaged. Conscience, service morale, whatever it was—the appalling sense of responsibility that erected and permeated that whole breath-taking pyramid of administration—would have no truck with æsthetics. We were dull dogs and impatient of the tourist mentality.

The bazaar was picturesque, to be sure; but what was the Municipal Sanitary Inspector doing this hot afternoon, and how many of the names of his pay-roll represented real sweepers? That village, of course, made a charming picture, perched up on its island of dead villages in its green sea of crops; but it had too many registered bad characters; its two headmen were at ancestral loggerheads and behind with their land revenue; and on a jaundiced, official view of the green sea, it was going to be difficult enough to get in this harvest's revenue, let alone clear off arrears. And that charming couple we met yesterday evening, all the graces of the east and west combined—wasn't it his brother-in-law who had that case pending in the A.D.M.'s court; and although *we* knew that this social encounter would not affect the course of justice, would more than one in ten of our charges believe this; and is not the appearance of justice as vital as justice itself?

One need never regret having taken a hand in the administration of British India; on any reasonable view of historical probabilities it was unique. And it had other compensations, according to your sense of vocation, or your sense of self-importance, or even your plain gullibility. But it was never really much fun. Even the smallest of us knew quite a bit of that infinite neglect of heart's ease which in happier countries is the royal prerogative.

It was not only beauty and quaintness that the visitor saw and we did not.

SKETCHING

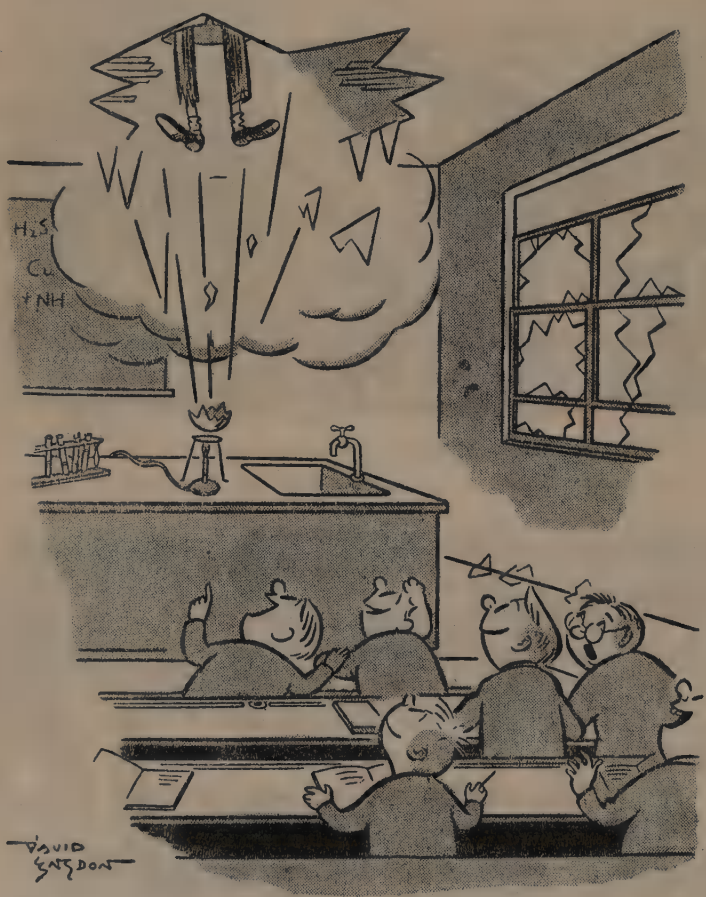


GETTING INTO A TONGA

TRYING TO FIND THE RIGHT SHOP

There were other things which we took for granted, or had explained away, or even in sheer self-protection had schooled ourselves not to notice. There was the smell and manifest physical appearance of evil, uncommon now in the west. There was man's respectable and matter-of-fact inhumanity to man. There was the age-old, lingering and dreadful martyrdom of the domesticated animals. And there was a lot that was comic, only we had not so much lost our sense of humour as developed some of the vast, tolerant resignation of the country, so that almost nothing was incongruous any more.

The visitor sees it all, the beauty, the quaintness, the huge, inhuman irresponsibility, the comicalness. He sees the East, which is not an abstraction or a boy's adventure-story-cum-Hollywood myth, but a very real and solid world, which begins with improbable suddenness at Suez and goes, I imagine, as far as Japan. And if, while he is contemplating the East, he feels a cold breath on the back of his neck, it will be something in character, a buffalo, or a mangy dog, or a wildly grotesque man. Let him by all means turn round. It will not be his conscience.



"YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TOPPED IT UP WITH NITRO-GLYCERINE, NOT WITH THE MINISTRY COMPLAINING OF THE SHORTAGE OF SCIENCE TEACHERS"

Whether I myself could, after all these years, see India if I went back to it I do not know. There are things I remember well, as merest matters of fact, which now strike me suddenly as exciting. It is not, I am sure, the ordinary middle-aged process of gilding the past. I am not adding anything to what I remember, but losing something that would not, at the time, let me see it as it was. What was sicklied o'er with pale cast of thought now emerges awash with the authentic red-gold haze of India, which could be, and often was, sunlit dust, but seemed at other times

simply the sticky and indissoluble dregs of perennial sunlight. Could I now, given the opportunity, contemplate the picturesque East and, if I turned round, find behind me, not my official conscience, but only the picturesque and indigenous buffalo?

P. M. Hubbard

YOU won't find much oo-la-la," observed William Marks the taxi driver, speaking perfect Somerset English in spite of thirty years on the French side of the Channel. "Things are very quiet in Boulogne. Four hundred and eighty-seven raids and the casino blown up. It takes time to recover."

He told me of the glorious days before the war when the franc needed no artificial efforts in its defence and the pound was worth twenty silver shillings and the English came over in droves on the day trips, no passports needed. They painted the town a light pink and returned to the boat at night on all fours, incoherent with happiness and almost overcome by French hospitality, having seen enough oo-la-la to last a lifetime.

To-day, the tourists are back but in smaller numbers. Boat-train passengers seldom leave the buffet of the new concrete *Gare Maritime*. Car drivers charge

impatiently off the *Lord Warden*, down the wonderful new ramps, over the bridge and on to the N.1. for Paris. It is left to excursionists on British Railways Two-Pound Trips to keep the flag flying and maintain *l'esprit d'entente* with the English-loving *Boulonnais*.

In Boulogne, as nowhere else in France, we English are loved and admired. Water is kept constantly on the boil for our endless cups of tea. Our aversion to raw meat is understood, our partiality to fish and *pommes frites* appreciated. Our simple requirements are met, our madness ignored.

A lady guide meets the boat. She holds out a pink leaflet advertising a conducted tour of the English Cimitery and the Remparts. For half a crown she will show us all the sites of Boulogne, full explanations everywhere. She will take us to a restaurant which provides eggs and chips, fish and chips, steak and chips, ham and chips, or we can have English tea with bread and butter, jam, cakes and champagne, just as we have at home.

Most visitors prefer to call at the *Syndicat d'Initiative* Office and receive the personal attention of Mademoiselle Butez, a retired college lecturer. She is never happier than when tramping the sand-blown streets to the *Haute Ville* with her umbrella and brief case, conversing in English. "Over seventy, and still I learn." The tourists, needless to say, speak not a word of French.

Mademoiselle knows of walks round the *château* which once were trodden by Dickens, Thackeray and Rossetti. She can indicate the exact spot where the Tommies sang Tipperary for the first time, and she can point out hiding places used by R.A.F. pilots in the more recent conflict.

She took me round the Wednesday market in Place Dalton, hurrying past the sacks of geese and *lapins vivants* and ignoring the mounds of cheeses and polished vegetables. In triumph she halted before a crockery stall.

"English tea-pots," she announced proudly. "Family pots, brown with a stripe, exactly as in London. We *Boulonnais* are big tea drinkers, in spite of the expense—but then, no one is here poor. We live by our fish, and when prices are high, all Boulogne drinks tea."

She picked up a white pudding basin as if handling rare china. "We are big pudding eaters, too. Steamed jam, spotted dick, we like them all. At Christmas, all Boulogne eats plum pudding. Every housewife has the authentic English recipe."

All Boulogne, apparently, has a liking for *le fife o'clock*. On the market stalls I noticed fruit cake, currant buns, baps and shortbread, not to mention Edinburgh rock trimmed with tartan ribbon and sold as biscuits.

Before the war, Boulogne had a big English colony, with an English doctor, an English chemist, an English church and six English tea rooms. In those palmy days one could live in France more cheaply and in greater comfort than in England. *Hélas!* the English have now departed. The church, for lack of a congregation, has been lent to the French Protestants. Even the statue of Britannia has gone from the harbour entrance. She was destroyed by the Germans in a fit of childish temper when they occupied the town.

"How we laughed!" said Mademoiselle. "You see, we have in Boulogne the English sense of humour."

She sees nothing surprising in the sprigs of heather, the sadly inaccurate Union Jacks and Royal Family photographs which adorn shop windows. Have not fifteen Frenchwomen sat on the throne of England, one of them the daughter of the Count of Boulogne? Was not the town once a British possession, captured and held to ransom by Henry VIII in some obscure war concerned in some way with Mary, Queen of Scots?

As a holiday resort, Boulogne has more to offer than smart Le Touquet, with its grid-iron layout of luxury shops, or little Wimereux, *plage de famille aux prix modérés*, a jewel in the opal coast. Boulogne's bathing beach may be too near to the docks for absolute cleanliness, but its fish market, its salting ateliers and its smoking sheds are second to none.

If we follow the movements of the fishing fleet in the daily paper *Le Journal du Pas-de-Calais et de la Somme*, we can meet the *Clair de Lune*, the *Petit Poilu* and the trawlers and steam drifters when they sail into harbour with their loads of herring, whiting and mackerel.

William Marks is always there at the quayside, waiting to drive home the ship's engineers and fishing plutocrats; later he goes back to do business with wealthy dock labourers—for men who have no difficulty in picking up three thousand francs a night unloading fish can hardly be expected to walk.

Fried fish, as may be expected, appears on all restaurant menus, along with mussels, shrimps, crabs and conger eels. Hollow-cheeked trippers pass hastily over tinned pilchard—the town's speciality—they won't look at pickled herring, but they enjoy succulent *sole meunière* at the Aquarium and lobster simmered in port and brandy at Café-Brasserie Jules.

Jules is cheap. Jules is always busy. Workmen drink at the *comptoir*, tradesmen sit on the terrace outside. Professional men lunch there daily, school teachers gather for coffee on Thursdays. Old sailors play cards on red padded cloths. Wedding parties dine at long festive tables, hidden in a forest of tall bottles.


AN AMERICAN'S MAP of ENGLAND
Berwick-upon-Tweed
Carlisle
export trades
west to east trades
THE CRUEL SEA
WALES
Swansea
Ilfracombe
Plymouth
Penzance
POSTCARDS
Land's End
Antiques
KEEP LEFT
A1
LONDON
the Way
to Paris
No Central Heating
Fog area
Rain area
Sunspots
Stately Homes
Ancient Monuments
Churchill's birthplace
Churchill slept here
Elizabeth I slept here
Stratford-upon-Avon
Oxford
Cambridge
Escape route to Paris
Escape route to Holland
Canterbury
Manchester
The Long Barrow
Scotland
King Arthur's Castle
Unintelligible dialects
Ice water procurable
Minehead
Olde Tea Shoppes
Wellington
Marlborough

"*Chez* Jules, they do not exaggerate over the prices," Mr. Marks tells his English customers. "There is no clonk on the head, no knock-out blow. And all the food is cooked in best butter, not horse grease."

Madame Jules admits to owning a British decoration for her work in the Resistance. She forgets what she did. It was simply that she knew an English milord when she met one, even when he was disguised as a French mechanic. And she has lived to refuse to tell the tale.

Once upon a time she used to serve *faux filets* all day long to English visitors. *Mais ils sont passés, ces jours de fête.* Every week during the season there is a *bal* or *kermesse* or religious procession through streets gay with fishing nets. Every day there is a *Grand Concours* of amateur singers, pigeon fanciers, yachtsmen, gymnasts, Rotarians or fish retailers. But few English seem to join in the fun.

The day trippers only want to eat, drink, take photographs of themselves, send postcards to friends and fill their shopping baskets with booty. This accomplished,

"PS. PLEASE EXCUSE SCRIBBLE"

they like a nice sleep on the sands until the boat sails. At 6.20 p.m. they stagger blissfully up the gangway of the *Canterbury*, the men wearing berets from Lucien's and glossy ties from the Prixunic, the women in beach hats and silk scarves.

They are not interested in culture. They have not seen the oil paintings in the Town Hall, nor the old belfry, nor the prefabricated huts of the fishermen's quarter, but their bags are bulging with chunks of cooked pork, bacon, liqueurs, brandy and strong perfume. Boulogne has done them well; and as ambassadors for Britain they have by no means disgraced themselves.

A. V. Davis

JACKPOT

Gambling machines may be fruit of the devil,
The apples and pears of delectable evil,
But when I return to my humble demesne
I shall set up my own private gambling machine.
These cleaners and polishers, mixers and mowers,
Deep-freezers and geysers and washers and sewers
Cost vast sums to buy and still more cash to mend,
While the gambling machine is the thriftiest friend.
Though the housekeeping money may vanish inside it,
One red-letter day the kind devil will guide it,
To pour at my feet all the wages of sin,
My pennies, the bobs that the neighbours dropped in
Which will pay for a lady to cook and to clean
While I loll at ease by my gambling machine.

Kathleen V. Richardson

A SONG OF SUMMER

I thought of summer when the lagging spring
  Was packing, slowly, for his northward journey;
Summer, I thought, was a delightful thing.
  I talked it over with the cowman, Ernie.

They tell me, Ern, I said, the common larch,
So dark a feature of our present scenery,
Will deck itself, towards the end of March,
In a diaphanous display of greenery.

Why, so it will, he said. I tell 'ee, Dick,
Spring may be colder than a lump of suet,
But that old larch, come April, gets so thick
You can't see top o' Wickin chimney through it.
Old sun do often grow uncommon shy,
In these parts, in partickler; but it passes.
I seen him blow his top off in July
And shrivel up the great long lushy grasses.

That, I declared, is what all men desire.
And both of us drew nearer to the fire.

The other day, not far off ten to one,
I found the cowman, Ernie, in a hollow,
Sheltering from the all-devouring sun,
With bread and cheese, and bottled beer to follow.
This, Ern, I said, is all a man could wish.
Winter brings profit to the Æsculapians,
For wet and cold are just the thing for fish,
But deleterious to Homo sapiens.

That's what I told my mate, he said, just now;
He came by here, creating and complaining,
Said it was hot enough to fry a cow.
Worsen he was last week when it was raining.

What I was saying t'other night to Des:
It's right, I says. And if it's right, it's reasonable.
You have to think of it like this, I says:
The weather's what you might call sort of seasonable.

That's right, I said. It's just the time of year.
So I sat down and borrowed half his beer.

R. P. LISTER

He Never Thinks He's Past Love

AM unable to comprehend utter *complacency* and CONCEIT of old roués. Is extraordinary that elderly playboy assumes without question that he's *completely irresistible.*

Was trapped into lunch last Friday with sugar daddy met on holiday. Spent all morning thinking, yes, will go; no, won't; yes, will, can't just not turn up? yes, *can* just not turn up, not my fault if can't get in touch with him, suppose had broken leg, couldn't go then. Must go, don't be mean. Don't care if I am mean, can't face ghastly lunch.

So didn't go.

And *would* have been ghastly. Will never forget hideous dinner with admirer *circa* 110 exactly like old frog. Was very young then, about three years ago, and thought old frog would be interesting. Started off with cocktail in bar, and old frog said "Call me Hereward." ! ! ! ! ! ! !

Then went in to dinner and old frog went into action. Issued orders, objected to everything, argued about everything, demanded everything not on menu, had waiters flapping about all over place, and all the time kept eye on me to see if impressed. *Awful.* Felt self shrinking minute by minute.

Then half-way through wonderful dinner which I hated, suddenly noticed *female* at next table watching. Caught my eye, sneered. Sneered back.

Hideous evening crawled to a close, and swore NEVER AGAIN.

But after lunch didn't have with holiday sugar daddy felt *very mean.* All afternoon kept thinking poor old man, am worm.

Was depressed when got home, then message on hall table from landlady. "Your friend kept ringing why not there lunch? Are ill? Your friend will ring again this evening."

Old STINKER. Rushed upstairs to dump shopping, then was rushing out for rest of evening when met landlady on stairs. Sugar daddy on 'phone, and Mrs. P. had told him I was in.

S.d. "Are all right? Couldn't understand it. Said to self, such nice young lady wouldn't be unkind to poor old gentleman who been looking forward so much to privilege of delightful lunch with charming young companion."

Self. "Am terribly sorry, couldn't let you know, had to work right through lunch. Had sandwiches."

S.d. "But is terrible. Must have dinner to-night to make up."

Self. "Well, no, terribly sorry, but——"

S.d. "To-morrow?"

Self. "Well, no, frightfully sorry, but——"

S.d. "Sunday?"

Self. "Well, no, awfully sorry, but——"

S.d. "Monday?"

Self. "No. Won't be able to for weeks and weeks. Have lots of engagements, and nights no engagements am working late."

"MARRY ME, ALICE, AND LET ME TAKE YOU AWAY FROM ALL THIS"

S.d. "How late?"
Self. "Never know how late till ten minutes before I go."
S.d. "Give me ring ten minutes before you go."
Self. "Might be midnight. And will have had sandwiches by then."
S.d. "How long this going on?"
Self. "Weeks and weeks and weeks."
S.d. "Drop me line when free."
Self. "No!"
Slammed down 'phone.

Would like to know why it is that if someone you'd like to go out with asks you when you really not free, he thinks you don't want to go and withdraws immediately like wounded tortoise.

MARJORIE RIDDELL

For a Desert Island

YEARS ago I chose the one book I should like to have with me if and when I am cast away on a desert island. I have never revealed the name of it and do not intend to do so now. Too many other people might want it with them on desert islands, and it might go off the market before I could say "Swiss Family Robinson."

Actually, I wouldn't care too much now, because I think I have found a book which will have to displace the favourite if the worst comes to the worst. In fact, if the chips were really down I should decide in favour of this new discovery. Now that I have perused it carefully, I know I would be a fool to be cast away on a desert island without it.

It's called the *Dictionary of Discards*, was written by Frank M. Rich, and all the members of the aforementioned *Swiss Family Robinson* would have given their right arms for it along with the purchase price of $3.75 and considered arms and money well spent. From acacia gum to zinc sulphate, the dictionary tells you how to make something out of absolutely everything. Cast away with this book under my arm, I could make myself quite comfortable, and, if alone, could fend off boredom by following the hundreds of fascinating and unending pursuits it offers. If I should find myself not alone, I could even soothe the savage breast by making music on a toy violin made out of a corn husk, or a lyre fashioned from a turtle shell.

I should point out, before going on, that the author did not intend this as a desert island book. It was designed primarily for use around the home. He says, in his preface, "Within these covers you may find some use for your discard far removed from its original purpose. The suggestions for what to do with these everyday materials may reveal unexpected services to which they may be put in the

kitchen, workroom, or garden." My feeling is that he missed a good bet by not adding "or on a desert island." Anyone with the imagination necessary to bring forth this little volume should have been able to see that far.

To introduce the reader to the style of the dictionary I'll select a passage at random. In the Bs we find this one:

"BASKETS, GROCERY. Basket-ball goals; book ends; bicycle carriers; carts, cart-wheels; chairs; Christmas tree stands; clogs; coat hangers; crayon boxes; containers for rhubarb roots for winter forcing; frames for cushion looms; garden tags; hacksaw frames; hockey cages; picture frames; shovels and discs for shuffle board games; splints, covered with burlap or canvas and painted, make stage tree stumps; stools; peach type baskets, with every second stave removed and heavy stone on top, make racks for poultry watering, feeding dishes; table bases; tabourettes; toy wheelbarrows; traps, in tin trays, make window boxes."

Continuing, I learned to my complete fascination that I can make blackboard erasers out of old carpets, and emergency windscreen wipers out of old blackboard erasers. I was not a little surprised to find that any time I like I can make a pair of water wings for myself. I have only to soak animal bladders overnight in water with a little chloride of lime or potash added, inflate, and tie with rubber bands. I might want those water wings, too, when that desert island episode comes up.

After reading this book I'll have only myself to blame if I find myself cast away without my roller-skates. Think what I would be able to do with them! They will yield ash can trucks, carts, casters, coasters, leg and arm exercisers, merry-go-rounds, scooters, etc.

If there should be lobsters around my island I could make excellent use of the shells. They will provide me with bead necklaces (these I might be able to use for barter with the natives, unless they have the lobster shell necklace market cornered), fertilizer for potted plants, jointed dolls, miniature flower pots, mucilage spreaders and lettering pens. With the latter I would be able to write notes to put into bottles so people would know where to find me.

Most famous castaways about whom I have read have had a chance to get back to the sinking ship and salvage some of its cargo. I hope that happens to me, because in order to make good use of my dictionary I'll want a few items that the island cannot be expected to provide. I'll want carpets, because out of them, in addition to blackboard erasers, I'll be able to make cushions, jumping mats, kneeling pads and pot holders. I'll also want a few telephone books and some string.

The string will be very important and I'll want lots and lots of it. According to the book, it will provide me with suitable accessories, such as a tam, stockings, purse, belt and bracelet. I can also make shoes for myself out of string. This will help, especially if I have already followed previous instructions for the use of shoes, and have cut my own up to make ukulele picks, holsters and fly swatters.

I'd like to have some paper cups and paper plates, too, but I realize this is asking a lot. Both are fine for making eyeshades, which I shall probably want. The cups alone will provide me with comic party hats, gauntlets, a bank, a pencil holder and a megaphone, which would come in handy for shouting to passing ships.

Maybe there will be gourds on my island. That will be fine, because then I'll

"IT'S NO USE RINGING—THEY'RE AWAY"

have, in alphabetical order, some balance pans, bowls, boxes, cups, darning eggs, dippers, dishes, doll heads, favours, flower pots, globes, hanging baskets, jack-o-lanterns, juggling balls, miniature lamp shades, planetariums, puppets, rattles, salt and pepper shakers, scoops, sleight-of-hand tricks, spoons, trays, and, with buckshot or ball bearings, tumbling clown figures. What more could I ask?

I never chew gum, but I intend to start carrying some with me, because I might need it to use as an emergency adhesive. It will fasten on false moustaches or loose shoe heels, and can also serve as a shoelace tip substitute. Black gum can be used for missing teeth make-up, but I think the black maquillage mentioned elsewhere in the book is about as far as I care to go.

Some of the references, such as this one, puzzle me. It reads as follows:

"DIVIDERS. With one leg in a small hole through sheet aluminium and the other grooving a furrow around a circle to be cut out [I want to know, first of all, whose legs are involved here], then repeated on the other side, permits separating circle from rest of sheet so that, by laying sheet over open jaws of a vice, circle can be removed by striking a few blows on both sides of circle with peen side of hammer."

I said earlier that I would try to rescue some telephone books from the ship. Before reading my dictionary, I would have said that telephone books were among the last things one would need on a desert island. How wrong you can be! I know now that they will provide the following necessities and luxuries: "Aid for alphabetizing cards, correspondence, etc.; blotters for mimeographed sheets, pressed specimens; boxes; busy work [I'll figure this one out later]; substitute for cloth; confetti; covers; filing cases; frames for raffia winding; game spinners; garlands;

". . . AND *THEN* THE FAMILY PORTRAITS IN THE LONG GALLERY HAD TO BE SOLD"

herbarium covers; letter files; needle books; papier-mâché; pasteboard; patches for repairing other books; pictures; plant presses; printing presses; puppet stage figures; properties; puzzles; with pins, make knitters; scrapbooks; silhouettes; specimen books; gilded, make toy money, and word builders."

I see a reference that says butterfly net handles can be made from broomsticks. Well, I don't need those, but the little men in the white coats who come to get me may. They'll find me weaving garlands out of telephone books and cutting up my shoes for baggage tags. And I'll defy them to take me away before I have finished making leg and arm exercisers out of my roller-skates.

WANDA BURGAN

A Tie to Keep Mustaches In

OVER against one mustard-coloured wall in the hotel lounge some Brazilians were playing chess. Several chairs scattered about the torrid room supported what I took to be unhappy countrymen—momentary prisoners in a town hemmed in on three sides by jungle and on the fourth by the coffee-coloured flood of the Amazon. They were prisoners because Belém, in Northern Brazil, is a refuelling point on the flight from New York to Rio, and it was raining: not gently, but in a thick vertical downpour.

I myself was waiting for a small wood-burning steamer on which I had engaged passage up the Amazon to Manaos. For nearly ten days now the shipping agent had been assuring me that *O de Pinedo*, my wood-burner, could be expected at any moment.

On the long table in the middle of the room I turned over the reading matter the hotel provided for its guests: *The Northampton & County Chamber of Commerce Journal*, *The Tees-side Journal of Commerce*, *The Fortnightly Review of Business and*

Economic Conditions, *O Economia* and a few back copies of local newspapers. I chose a local paper, *Folha do Norte*, intending to improve my Portuguese.

There are people who say that Portuguese is easy to learn. I was able without difficulty to pick my way through the captions to a couple of pictures, but when I began to read a fashion article on what Madame was wearing in New York and Paris I was brought up short by the word *avilar*. Consulting the *Novo Diccionario Inglez-Portuguez e Portuguez-Inglez*, by Castro LaFayette, "Professor do Instituto Polyglotta de Pariz, etc.," I found: "*avilar*—to pip, to adarn." Very good. Ladies, in my absence, had gone back to piping.

Soon, though, I bogged down on the word *cachola*. This, the Professor explains, means "noodle, the cheeks of a ship." I was pretty sure that I was reading a recipe, since the shipping news, which I had already fruitlessly examined for any mention of *O de Pinedo*, was on another page.

The next item I knew to be a recipe, for it began with the familiar command to "take six" and went on to specify *gemas*, which were egg yolks. But then the word *dialthea* sent me thumbing through the dictionary; it turned out to be "ointment of marshmallows."

A third recipe I had to abandon because of difficulties with the operative word, *torresmo*, defined by the Professor as "fried jeer," and another ingredient, *thridacio*, or, as he states, "lettuce juice."

"WELL, I'M FOR CALLING A SPADE A SPADE"

Having read the household hints I now turned back to page one and was soon deep in the United Nations and not doing badly at all until *amentar*, in a paragraph devoted to a discussion on arms limitation, sent me to the Professor once more. There I found: "*amentar* —to enchant wolves that they may gather together and kill one another's sheep."

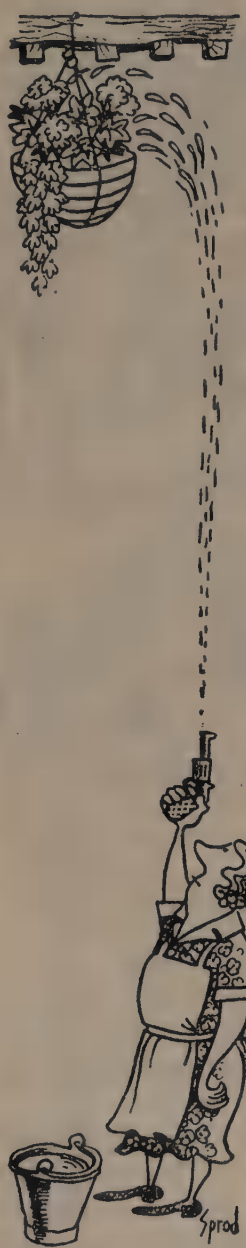
Again in politics, but in another column now, I puzzled through a half-dozen lines until *pejar* stumped me. Here the Professor did not help a great deal, for he defines it thus: "*pejar*—to embarrass, to impede, to fill with, to become pregnant (in Brazil), to cease the grinding of sugar cane." Date-lined Rio de Janeiro, the story, I had thought previously, was about an official call on the President of Brazil by the Argentine ambassador. Now I became confused.

"IT APPALS ME TO THINK OF THE DREADFULLY STANDARDIZING EFFECT THESE MODERN FLATS MUST HAVE UPON THE OCCUPANTS"

So I tried something simple: lower down on page one was another small item date-lined Manaos, Amazonas, recording the arrival there of the *enxota-eaes*, or as the Professor explains: "a beadle whose business it is to prevent dogs coming into church."

Turning the page, I browsed among the police cases for a while. One of them concerned a *hospedador* who had been involved in a brawl with his landlady, found *esbraguilhado*, causing the police to intervene, and been taken into custody. The Professor defines *hospedador* as "one who lodges gratuitously," while *esbraguilhado* is "that which has the small clothes unbuttoned." The cause of all this, I gathered from *Folha*, was the lodger's *estremecimento*, or "ardency of love, start, shake, confusion."

The second police case was even more difficult. I had to look up *descoutar*,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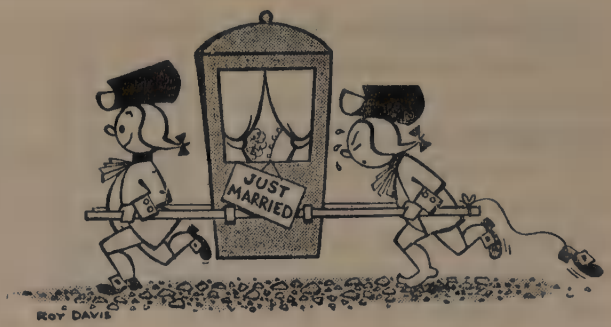

JUST MARRIED
ROY DAVIS


BOWER-PHILLIPS

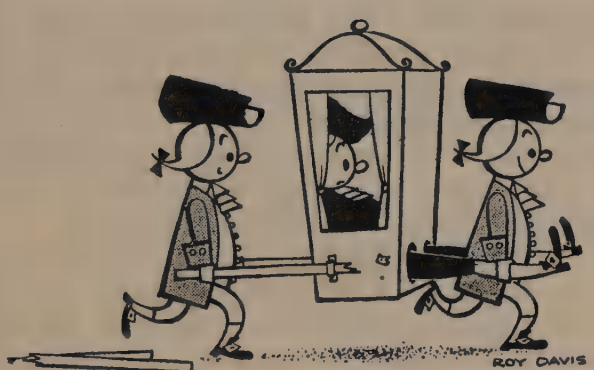

SENSATIONAL NOVELTY
THE LATEST IN MECHANICAL TOYS


WE BUY ALMOST ANYTHING


BRUCE WALKER


WE BUY ALMOST ANYTHING


WE BUY ALMOST ANYTHING


ROY DAVIS

defined as "to penetrate into the park, to bereave a place of the privilege of being an asylum"; *bocio*, which is a "swelling of the throat"; *abada*, or "the skirt of a garment tucked up, the female of the rhinoceros"; *espernear*, which is, the Professor says, "to be continually shaking the legs"; and *amezendar*—"to sit upon the ground unmannerly."

Finally the police ended a full day by apprehending a *janelleiro*, defined by the Professor as "he who always likes to be at the window." A Peeping Tom? No doubt remained in my mind, for the *janelleiro*, charged the police, had brought about *estridor*. This, according to the Professor, is "clang, piercing, sharp, shrill voice or sound, the noise, buzz, din of people gnashing, creaking."

There remained the advertisments. One shop announced the arrival of a shipment of *gorgoletas*. The *gorgoleta*, explains the Professor, is "a narrow-mouthed vessel out of which the water runs and guggles." Some of the common words for clothing I had already learned. But what was *tonga*? "Cotton drawers or waistcoats of savages." And *bigodeira*? "A tie to keep mustaches in."

I put *Folha do Norte* back on the centre table. The Brazilians were deep in their chess, and the travellers were still staring hopelessly out through the long streaming windows. If only the rain would stop, I thought, I could go down town and buy some presents for those learned experts back home.

ELIZABETH KEEN

Heal Thyself

THE public always appear surprised that doctors should fall ill, as though hearing that a policeman's house had been burgled or the fire station had gone up in flames. Doctors go sick fairly often, though they suffer differently from anyone else: they have only one disease, which presents both a *mitis* and a *gravis* form.

The *mitis* phase is characterized clinically by the usual symptoms of malaise, headache, shivering, loss of appetite, coughing, and insomnia. It usually lasts several days, while the doctor does his surgery sitting in an overcoat and wonders why he's becoming so bad-tempered. He shakes off his symptoms like a wet dog and makes a diagnosis of draughts, late nights, or over-work.

When he wakes up one morning with black shapes in front of his eyes he sneaks down to the surgery in his dressing-gown and stealthily takes his temperature. A hundred and four! This immediately ushers in the *gravis* stage of the illness. He snatches a textbook from the shelf and nervously flicks over the pages. The first disease he spots is typhoid fever. *Prostration . . . headache . . . cough . . . backache* . . . he reads, running his finger quickly along the symptomatology. He realizes nervously he has every one of these afflictions, locks the door, and tries to feel his own spleen.

Admitting he is a desperately ill man he staggers to bed, bringing with him every medical and surgical textbook he can lay hands on. Once comfortable on the pillows he can see the problems of diagnosis more clearly. There are several more alarming diseases than typhoid to attract him, and after a while he becomes certain he is in the grip of either cholera, smallpox, or plague. He takes his pulse, inspects his tongue in his wife's hand-mirror, and carries out a careful search of his entire body-surface for spots. Finally he settles for malignant endocarditis, a diagnosis that in his finals would have had him thrown out of the examination room.

He next faces the problem of treatment. Doctors' houses are well supplied with drugs by the manufacturing chemists, who supplement their advertisements in the morning mail with transparently-wrapped packets of samples. These are always stuffed into the bathroom cabinet where old tooth-paste tubes, rusty razor blades, and worn fragments of soap accumulate. Dragging himself out of bed, he finds a bottle of bright green pills and wonders what they are. He swallows a few and rummages about until he comes across some aspirins. Several more coloured packets then attract him, and he starts mixing himself a therapeutic *hors d'œuvre*.

Doctors require different doses from the general public. The patient who goes away with a prescription marked sternly ONE TEASPOONFUL IN AN EGG-CUPFUL OF WATER EVERY FOUR HOURS is frightened enough to assemble spoon, egg-cup, and kitchen clock and takes the dose as precisely as starting a race. But in the profession pills are generally taken in doses of ONE HANDFUL NOW AND THEN (or if they are

particularly small ones, About a Dozen), medicine administered as A Large Swig Pretty Frequently, and ointments and embrocations assumedly labelled Rub on Vigorously Until Alarmed by the Condition of the Skin.

The doctor's wife, who has recognized for some days that he is suffering from 'flu, suggests she summon one of his colleagues. But doctors, like animals, prefer to be ill alone. He refuses to see anyone; and when she insists on telephoning a rival practitioner the consultation is usually embarrassing and unhelpful:

"Why, hello, Bill! Laid up, eh? Been taking your own prescriptions, ha ha!"

"Hello, George! Decent of you to come. Needn't bother about the old bedside manner in the trade, eh, ha ha!"

"What's the matter with you, Bill?" asks the visiting doctor.

"Well, I think I've got polyarteritis nodosa, or possibly methemoglobinæmia."

"Go on!"

"Yes. What symptoms should I have?"

"Oh, sort of pains in the limbs and so on."

"That's it exactly!"

"Well, I hope you get better."

"Yes, so do I. So kind of you to come along professionally like this. Goodbye."

Doctors recover in a different way from ordinary people. A layman is told to stay in bed for an extra week, and take a fortnight at the seaside; but a doctor, after taking his temperature every half-hour for a day or so, suddenly discovers he is completely cured. He at once gets up and puts on his clothes, and either goes downstairs and takes the evening surgery or makes for the garden to catch up with his digging. As most doctors will admit, they can't afford to be ill: they're not registered as patients under the National Health Service.

Richard Gordon

A MAN ABOUT THE KITCHEN

How cute is our kitchen!
  How neat each appliance!
How gleamingly rich in
  The marvels of science!
How splendidly sited
  Our eye-level oven!
How easily lighted
  By my ever-loving!
How fit for its function
  Our sink! And how urgent
And active the unction
  Of this new detergent!

How tightly entangled
  Our washing-machine is
With other new-fangled
  Ancillary genies!

How odd—since our kitchen's
  So up-to-the-minute—
We still seem to spend an
  Eternity in it!

RODNEY HOBSON

FOR THE END OF THE LONDON SEASON

Nightly the débutantes to dance and feast
  Thronged, as our tribal lore decrees they must;
  Nightly the volume of the shrill, almost
Meaningless liturgy of "talk" increased;
As monolithic as a pagan priest
  The hostess moved among them, while the host,
  In ceremonial finery, stood lost
And patient, like a sacrificial beast.
The Papuans had an older ritual:
  They hung their daughters up in wicker cages
    For several years—more practical somehow.
But still, I should not be surprised at all
  If anthropologists in future ages
    Collate *The Tatler* with *The Golden Bough.*

PETER DICKINSON

GENIUS LOCI

I am the man you pick
From all the random runners in the rain;
I am the man whose quick
Bright eye suggests the keen, incisive brain,
Who wears one of those smiles
That lame dogs look for when approaching stiles,
Whose shoulder aches, you feel,
To lend its strength to someone else's wheel.
You hail me with relief;
You run towards me with your little map—
In brief
I am a stranger here myself, old chap.

D. MATTAM


Super-Suck
Sweeps

On getting out at CHORLTON-CUM-HARDY

IT is a strong temptation to accept the offer of such a gem as East Anstey to Bishop's Nympton, put it in the tin with the others and say no more; but unfortunately a collection of railway tickets cannot be amassed that way. Postage stamps are another thing altogether: you can fill whole albums with Virgin Islands mints without knowing to a thousand miles where the Virgin Islands are; but railway tickets should be the record of one's own journeys, and moreover, journeys undertaken at one's own expense, which cuts out unfair competition from commercial travellers. And then again, the would-be donor not infrequently turns out to be a railway fanatic, than whom few bores can be more crashing. One is expected to know all about the wheel formation of long-dead engines which once did service on the Cambrian. No, a collection of tickets does not imply a mania for trains as such. What gives the game its piquancy is the deceit inevitably involved: deceit which falls short of actual dishonesty.

Tickets, as we know, should properly be surrendered on demand to the servants of the Railway Executive. They can, however, be retained in any of the following ways:

(*a*) They can be bought and not used;

(*b*) They can be bought at an intermediate station along the journey and retained when the original ticket is handed in at the destination;

(*c*) They can be bought for a journey slightly farther than one proposes to undertake and retained on the pretext that one is travelling "through";

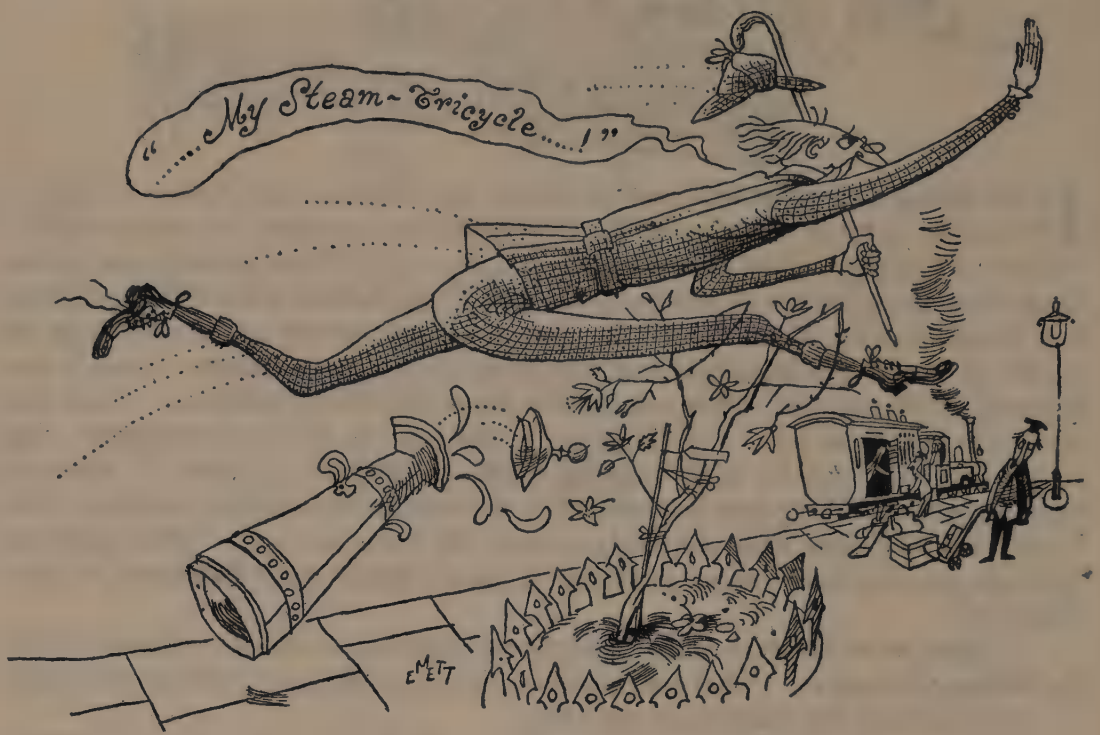
(*d*) They can be found on waiting room floors;

(*e*) They can be retained by stealth, sleight of hand, or diversionary tactics on confrontation with a servant of the Executive.

Let us examine these methods. (*a*), strictly speaking, is inadmissible and was abandoned by the present writer after he had bought a Third Class single from Worksop to Shireoaks in 1944 at a cost of 5*d*.—a venial extravagance, true, but a clear profit for what was then the L.N.E.R.

(*b*) is an equally timid method, with the same disadvantage: it entails a financial outlay for which the Executive performs no collateral service. The ticket-holder does, indeed, travel over the track for which he has paid a fare, but he has paid twice. (Are you following all this?)

(*c*) is a permissible, and in certain circumstances an unavoidable, method. I have at least a dozen tickets to Manchester (Central) which have been retained by the simple expedient of getting out of the train at Chorlton-cum-Hardy, showing the ticket, and saying "Through." (It should be said that Chorlton-cum-Hardy is the stop before Central, and that I have the misfortune to live there.) For reasonably



long journeys the Manchester (Central) and Chorlton-cum-Hardy fares are the same, so that no unwonted profit accrues to the Executive. Some of the choicest items in the collection have been retained in this way, including two Manchesters (London Road) to Ledbury, 1946 and 1948, retained at Ashperton, and a Shrewsbury to Glandyfi, 1952, retained at Machynlleth.

(*d*) we can afford to disregard, and (*e*) remains as the only truly satisfactory method. One gets every pennyworth of journey, and then complicates the Executive's books by withholding the ticket. Sheffield to Warwick (Mil.); Chilcompton to Bath; Ludlow to Leominster; Kendal to Manchester (Vic.); Cheltenham Spa (St. James) to Stow-on-the-Wold; Paris—but, of course—to St. Gervais pour Châteauneuf-les-Bains via Clermont Ferrand; Runcorn to Widnes via Ditton Junction—a series of memorable tickets has been withheld in this way. On September 9, 1943, for example, I had to display an interest in platform notices for twenty-five minutes until the barrier man (he cannot be called a "ticket collector" in the true sense) had gone away. I was thus able to withhold an incomparable ticket from Parsley Hay to Ashbourne—and anybody who has never heard of Parsley Hay has no business to be reading this article. On the return journey the Parsley Hay station-master had to be engaged in conversation for fifteen minutes until he had become so engrossed in the history of his marshalling yard, as he chose to call it, that any talk of tickets would have been palpably indelicate.

The diversionary tactics to be employed will vary with the traveller and the station. At halts and wayside stations it is wise to feign consternation immediately on alighting, run towards or away from the guard's van (whichever is the farther), and shout: "The harmonium! The harmonium! Hold the train!" A long

altercation will ensue, the staff will be thrown out of routine, and an early opportunity can be taken to slink away.

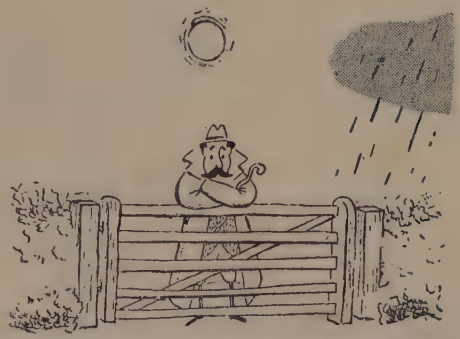
To return to the question of accepting gifts. I would not condemn this method out of hand in the early stages of a collection, and indeed my own tin contains a few such gifts. It is desultory stuff, most of it—Rotherham to Sheffield, Manchester to Warrington, that kind of thing—which was acceptable for a start but contains

no collectors' pieces. Each collector will fancy a particular part of the country or railway region. Southern is a little too slick for me, but Eastern and North-eastern can both show a very presentable ticket. And so, it goes without saying, can the Western Region. But let us not forget, when we romanticize about the Great Western, that although it has its Morebath Junctions and its Up Exe Halts, it has also to answer for its Cardiffs and its Pontypool Roads.

Finally, a few tentative suggestions. Prefer rural to urban tickets, except where the urban ticket has such plaintive qualities as a workman's return half from Ashton (Central), Middleton, Oldham (Werneth) or Whitefield to Manchester (Vic.). Prefer, on æsthetic grounds, the oblong single ticket to the square and ragged-edged return half. Prefer tickets for journeys which are seldom made to the ten-a-penny London to Glasgows. Do not disdain the cheap day return. British Railways possess more than 6,000 passenger stations, and, as any football promoter knows, the permutation of any two stations from 6,000 is $\frac{6{,}000 \times 5{,}999}{2} = 17{,}997{,}000$ possible tickets. There is no need to stop there, of course. Having got all the First Class tickets, you can collect them all again, in Third.

G. D. Taylor

"You were doing a steady thirty-five—all along the front, sir"
"Well—I had a following wind"



"IT LOOKS LIKE BEING THE WORST YEAR ON RECORD UNLESS WE GET SOME RAIN . . .

. SUN . . .

. . RAIN, PRETTY SOON"

BALLADE OF A MISUNDERSTOOD AUTHOR

I wrote a book by fits and starts
  And published it; my kith and kin,
God bless their non-existent hearts,
  Read it and grinned a tactful grin.
  The blurb was thick where blood was thin—
"The fierce, mysterious Orient . . .
  A brilliant study of Viet Minh . . .",
Which really isn't what I meant.

The play they made about it charts
  A white man's slow decay from gin.
They split my hero in two parts
  By giving him a younger twin;
  Both rôles were played by Richard Gwynn
And people loved the way it went,
  X strolling out as Y dashed in,
Which really isn't what I meant.

The film will star Miss Dawn Rinartz;
  Wearing a two-piece tiger-skin
To help her acting out, she darts,
  Pursued, through tunnellings for tin;
  Then there's a chap called Gunga Din,
Lassie, a duel in a tent;
  I think that the Marines will win,
Which really isn't what I meant.

Envoi

  Prince, when I limned my heroine . . .
But let it pass. By accident
  I've made a pile from "Sin for Sin,"
Which really isn't what I meant.

PETER DICKINSON

"Genuine English tourists, monsieur, working our passage to the Côte d'Or."

The Hounslow Boy

Police Report

ALEC HOUNSLOW. Age 16. Pupil at Fording County Comprehensive Secondary Modern School.

On the 4th September the accused reported to his headmaster that a postal order of value five shillings had been stolen from his locker. He alleged that the only person to whom he had mentioned having received the postal order was a Mr. Theodore Kane, the Maths master. Police inquiries revealed that the postal order had been cashed but that the signature was not in Hounslow's handwriting. The headmaster thereupon gave Hounslow five shillings out of the school funds, in compensation.

After further investigations, however, both the postmistress and her assisant identified Hounslow as the boy who had cashed the postal order. Moreover, the proprietor of a café adjacent to the post office stated that on the afternoon of the 4th the accused consumed more than five shillingsworth of food on his premises.

On the 27th September Dr. Isidore McNab, the handwriting expert, travelled down from Edinburgh to review the case and established that Hounslow did, in fact, sign the postal order but did so with his left hand. The police therefore prosecute on two charges: that the accused:

(i) did write his own signature in a manner calculated to mislead and defraud.

(ii) did obtain five shillings from the school funds through the headmaster by false pretences.

Psychologist's Report

Alec Hounslow. Age 16. Mental age 25. Motor-muscle co-ordination subnormal; Kletrich-Weider Scale 2 + d/43? approx. Hildemann Test shows that the subject's left hand has a 34·7 resistance to motivation, thus accounting for a high degree of manual irresponsibility.

"Both together, sir?"

Psychiatrist's Report

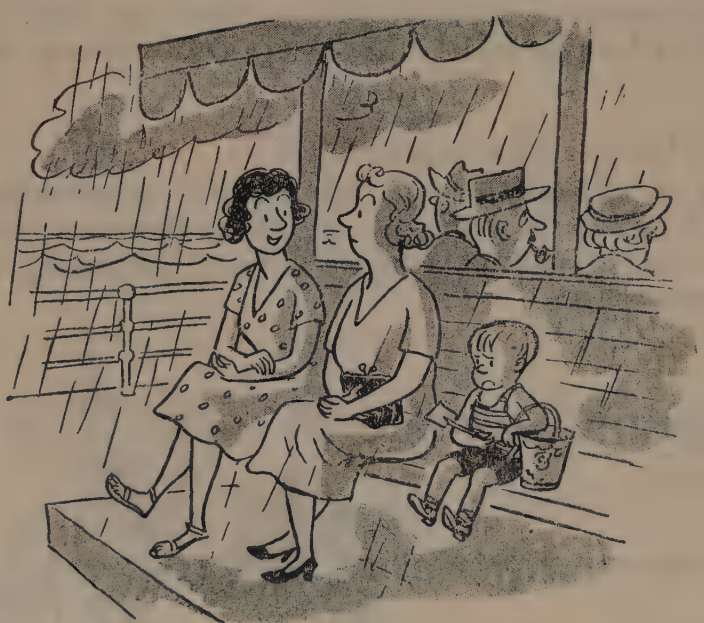
Obsessional interest in food, symptomatic of the extravert child starved of affection in the home. Maladjusted at school. Manual operations markedly schizoid; an interesting case of sinistromania, in which the patient is compelled to perform with his left hand the very opposite of what he would do with his right. Suggest two months' psychiatric observation at Courtenay Manor M.O.H. Seaside Home for Mental Research.

Psychiatric Social Worker's Report

Have visited Mr. Thomas Hounslow, the boy's father, at his home. Mr. Hounslow, a proof-corrector of the London Telephone Directory and a man of wide reading, traced and attributed his son's conduct to frustration of infantile ambidexterity. In support of this assertion he produced a diary of the year 1938 with the following entry:

"*April 4.* The boy appears to be ambidextrous. Am grieved to see that he uses his spoon and pusher quite indiscriminately in either hand. While reading to Gladys as usual this evening I came across this alarming passage in Sir Thomas Browne, who insisted that a choice between left and right hands was important and should be irrevocable . . . 'for there will otherwise arise *anomalous disturbances* in Manual Actions not only in Civil and Artificial, but also in Military affairs and the several actions of War.'

"Gladys says that no one in the family has ever been left-handed, and we are going to insist that Alec use his right hand only."



"My husband and I can't grumble really because we won our holiday in a newspaper competition"

In view of the cumulative evidence from these and other experts the Hounslow boy was acquitted. Mr. Philip Curzon-Bailey, O.B.E., the juvenile court magistrate, said that strictly speaking the boy was guilty but that no liberal-minded magistrate should speak strictly to a young person who could not justly be held responsible for his

guilt. Reviewing the boy's unfortunate history, Mr. Curzon-Bailey suggested that if Mr. Thomas Hounslow had not thwarted his son's earliest attempts at self-expression the sinistromania and starvation-psychosis might never have developed. As in nine out of ten cases that came before him, it was the parents—not the child—who were wholly to blame.

PATRICK HEYWORTH

Pigeon Square

OH, Aunt, must we go on flying? Do let's sit down."

"Why, we've only just come out and barely had time to stretch our wings, and you're asking to sit down."

"I'm not much of a flyer, I suppose."

"That's obvious. In my time we thought nothing of flitting to Brighton and back—afternoon on the Domes, you know . . . *This* is Trafalgar Square."

"Oh how gorgeous, how exciting!"

"There's Nelson in the middle, and down there is the National Gallery, and that's South Africa, and there's Canada."

"And the lions and the fountains and such a crowd—the air's thick. Coo!"

"Don't say 'coo.' Nelson's packed, of course: that's what comes of dawdling. The St. Vincent side is best, but I don't see two places together. Take a look, your eyes are sharper."

"Isn't it frightfully—messy?"

"Such words! Nelson may not be perhaps all one might wish, and we may wonder why, having gone to all that expense and trouble, they should so neglect him; but don't ever forget—Nelson is Nelson."

"I only meant——"

"Never mind, it's what you *say* counts. There, your uncle and I sat on the left shoulder for the Coronation, and couldn't have wished for a better place."

"Oh, Auntie, what luck!"

"Of course, it meant being there overnight; and the din made by those starlings! —there should be a law against them . . . Now, which way shall it be? Havelock, I think. Dear Havelock, so different from that horrid Napier, forever getting horses shot under him . . . There are the Pouter-Potts. There, they've gone. That's the worst of Trafalgar Square—always finding and losing a face. You're flapping rather, my dove; it's not nice."

"HELLO—WORKS? THERE'S ONE OF THESE SMOKE ABATEMENT CHAPS . . .

"*Tante*, I'm so thrilled!"

"Naturally, but we must contain ourselves. Here's Havelock, and—such luck!—hardly a soul; we'll have the head to ourselves. Now then."

"Coo, look at all the funny people!"

"Don't *use* that word."

"But look, such a funny person—a he, isn't it?—the tall, blonde one in black, all smiling and dancing up to people and clicking his heels and bowing—he's a clown isn't he, they're all clowns?"

". . . JUST COMING IN TO SEE ME . . ."

"He's called a *photographer*; it's rather complicated, he puts that thing up to his eye——"

"To shoot them!"

"Nonsense: to take their picture. They love pictures. The National Gallery's full of them; your uncle slipped in one day—don't ask me how—and there was everyone gaping at pictures of—you'll never guess what. Plucked people! Such a very extraordinary taste. But then they are extraordinary . . . Watch him, now. It's the girls he's after, the plainer and fatter the better. He's caught two: squirm and shake heads as they may, they'll give in. Look now. He makes them stand close, screwing their eyes in the sun, and each must hold up her outside hand."

"Why?"

"You'll see: he dips in his pocket, drops into each hand——"

"Oh, peas!"

"Yes, and cries 'Come on then, come on then, come on,' and the lazy good-for-nothings take no notice; one flies up; 'Come on, come on, git up there'—now there's a couple on each hand fluttering and pecking; he kneels, squints (watch the little bird!), and it's all over. Isn't that fascinating? So it goes on all day, and from every corner of the globe they come. Funny, funny people."

"Are they nice peas?"

"And see how the spray's blown and the people are running; there should be a rainbow—there it is! You know, we've a little rainbow on our necks: your uncle used greatly to admire mine. Dear old Trafalgar Square, so gay, so bracing—I'm reminded a little of St. Mark's, where your uncle and I went for our honeymoon."

"That must have been absolutely marvellous!"

"Yes, my dove, it was, and some day, if you're very lucky, you may be going there yourself. One thing, though, I should warn you of: after dark, men come round with nets—you understand what I'm talking about?"

"Yes; Mother told me."

"Man isn't, I'm afraid, a very high type, and the further south you go, the more human he becomes. We're exceptionally lucky."

"But what's Thinning Out?"

"Something, my dear, you will one day know all about and never discuss."

"BUST 32, WAIST 24, HIPS 35, SCALE 1½ INCHES TO 1 INCH"

HOLIDAY REFLECTION

OF COURSE I'VE OFTEN NOTICED HOW PEOPLE LOSE THEIR STIFFNESS DIRECTLY THEY LEAVE THE PROMENADE AND GO DOWN . . .

. . . ON TO THE BEACH BELOW; ONLY RECENTLY, HOWEVER, HAS IT STRUCK ME THAT PRECISELY THE SAME THING HAPPENS . . .

. . . TO DECK-CHAIRS—AND I KEEP ON WONDERING IF THIS IS MERELY UNCONSCIOUS MIMICRY . . .

"What's that nasty thing with four legs and two heads coming out from the Arch?"

"A mounted policeman."

"What's it doing?"

"Scaring cars, I should think."

"Auntie . . . Couldn't I glide down and eat a pea—just one that's rolled by the grating?"

"Eat a pea! In Trafalgar Square! Goodness me, no: it'll be circuses next, and then the Embankment. We'll go and look at the bus queues, if you like, and there are the pavement artists and murder placards; and then, if it's time for luncheon, we'll go to the Park. That is entirely suitable—except for the ducks."

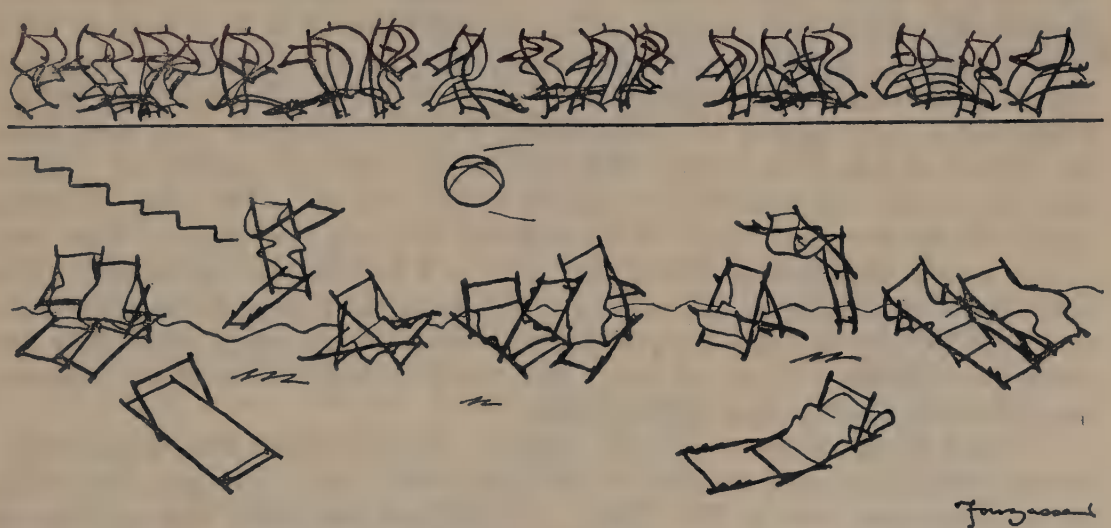
G. W. Stonier

HUXLEY HALL

In the Garden City Café with the murals on the wall
Before a talk on "Sex and Civics" I meditated on the Fall.

Deep depression settled on me under that electric glare
While outside the lightsome poplars flanked the rose-beds in the square,

While outside the carefree children sported in the summer haze
And released their inhibitions in a hundred different ways.



. . OR IF THEY ARE DEFINITELY TRYING TO IMITATE US INTENTIONALLY

She who eats her greasy crumpets snugly in the ingle nook
Of some birch-enshrouded homestead, dropping butter on her book,

Can she know the deep depression of this bright, hygienic hell?
And her husband, stout free-thinker, can he share in it as well?

Not the folk museum's charting of man's Progress out of slime
Can release me from the painful seeming accident of Time.

As Barry smashes Shirley's dolly, Shirley's eyes are crossed with hate,
And Comrades plot a Comrade's downfall "in the interests of the State."

Not my vegetarian dinner, not my lime-juice minus gin
Quite can drown a faint conviction that we may be born in Sin.

JOHN BETJEMAN

Glaphyra and the Lazy Dog

THERE was a letter in *The Times* the other day from a man who wanted to teach a French boy typewriting. What was the equivalent, he asked, for that time-honoured finger exercise, THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPS OVER THE LAZY DOG?

Not writing letters to *The Times* is a form of spiritual discipline at which I claim to be an adept. But this was a special opportunity; the kind of correspondence that stirs Printing House Square to its depths, and I wanted to be in early, so as to show ingenuity. In this I was well-advised, for other correspondents have since offered some rather lame suggestions. Half-way through the morning, having negotiated a tricky turning in Thessalonians, I found I could not keep away from it. I tried, at first, to be literal. But there wasn't much to be said for LE RENARD BRUN QUI COURT VITE S'ÉLANCE À TRAVERS LE CHIEN FAINÉANT. The English version gets in all the twenty-six letters of the alphabet with only nine spares. Here was I with a total of fifty-three letters, and even so I had left out GJKMPWXZ. The other finger exercises were no better; I didn't know the French for packing one's box with five dozen liquor-jugs, and MAINTENANT EST LE TEMPS POUR TOUS LES BONHOMMES VENIR À L'AIDE DU PARTI was purely derisory. The French version would have to be something quite different.

K and W held me up a good deal at first. Kaiser Wilhelm looked promising: FUYEZ, KAISER WILHELM, À DIXMUDE or something of that kind. But one doesn't like to look too dated, even in *The Times*. A good start was made with LE KHEDIVE A DIX MOSQUES PRÈS DE BYZANCE, which turns most of the difficult corners. Was

there anything in the kiwi—FUYEZ, KIWI, LE JAGUAR VOUS CHASSE or something? It had an unnatural ring about it, and at last I made up my mind to tell the editor that K and W weren't really used in French and I was going to leave them out.

This meant concentrating on QVXYZ as the difficult letters, though they aren't really so bad in French. FUYEZ must have got me thinking about the man who said "Run! The end of the world has begun," because my notes take on an eschatological colour at this point. FUYEZ LE JUGEMENT PROCHAIN DU CINQ OU SIX AVRIL—that, I may point out, gets in all my twenty-four letters except B, only I appeared to have exceeded the forty mark, and it looked as if I would have to make it snappier.

After that, I got "jugement exquis" ready-made from a French dictionary, and tried that for a bit. Then the phrase "Faites vos jeux" got hold of me, and I see there is a promising entry which runs FAITES VOS JEUX, TYPES MORNES—how many croupiers must have wanted to say "Put your money on, depressing specimens"! But the Z continued to elude me. HAÏSSEZ-VOUS, INGRATS, LE CAFÉ EXQUIS DE MON PAYS? is only short on BJ, but it is a bit of a mouthful. I started on a new page, and drifted off into the grand manner of French poetry. FEREZ-VOUS INJURE AUX NYMPHES? might have come out of any of these fellows; and there is a sinister note of warning about JEUNE NYMPHE, VOUS AUREZ UN GRAND DÉBÂCLE—but is *débâcle* masculine? A Low-Latin word *debaculum*, perhaps? Anyhow, we are short on FIQTX. The useful word "nymph" was abandoned, and I touched my poetical high-water mark with BUVEZ, JEUNE FILLE AUX YEUX CALMES.

Buvez, jeune fille aux yeux calmes, Buvez . . .
Les yeux de jeune fille, si calmes etc. etc.

But she didn't pan out properly as a finger exercise, and my next effort is on a lower level altogether, VOYEZ QUE LA JEUNE FILLE TRIOMPHE AUX DOG-CUBS. Here all the letters are present and correct, and I should think an intelligent French typist would find "dog-cubs" a quite natural Anglicism.


TODAY
LE BOUQUET
William Scully


Smilby.


KEEP LEFT
NO SMOKING
SILENCE


GIOVANNETTI


MIND YOUR HEAD
J.W.TAYLOR

In this poetical mood I began to remember unexpected tags from French literature. There was a thing of Daudet's which ended up "*les grands yeux de Balzac, qui regardait.*" I got as far, I see, as JE ME FICHE DES GRANDS YEUX DE BALZAC, which really wasn't too bad; but I couldn't get the full alphabet without adding QUI PIVOTAIT, and then you would have had to have something for him to pivot on. Besides, I wasn't sure *The Times* would like me to fish myself of Balzac . . . "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog"—did somebody just sit down and think of that? Or did it cost years of trial and error? Of course, when you are translating, it is a good principle that you should transpose, if possible, not only the language but the thought. Now, the thought of this brown fox business is essentially English; it reflects the careless, amateur way in which we approach our sports; the hound lying there with its eyes so calm, because cub-hunting hasn't started yet. That is not how the French go to work; you imagine to yourself, rather, a team of tough athletes listening to a patriotic allocution from their coach . . . He says, ACHEVEZ, CORPS GYMNASTIQUE, BIJOUX DE FRANCE, hitting the thirty-seven mark and at the same time showing keenness about the plural of *bijou*.

But the plain fact is, the French use too many vowels. It was some hours later that I tumbled to this, and started looking about for good consonantal words. "Longchamp," where they have the hippic concourses, at once suggested itself, and I found a useful opening in LONGCHAMP! ASSEZ BON! EXQUIS! But the type-writing people

make it so difficult to print a shriek-mark that I was afraid my beginner would get discouraged; although at one time I had filled in the picture with LONGCHAMP! J'Y ACQUIS ONZE HIBOUX, and again, LONGCHAMP! J'Y VIENS PORTANT MON FEZ. This last word had such evident possibilities that I toyed with it for some time, even describing it otiosely as a FEZ CYLINDRIQUE. But in the end I abandoned Longchamp and took to Chypre, a useful word meaning Cyprus. QUINZE BIJOUX VULGAIRES D'UN FUMET DE CHYPRE touched thirty-seven again. Then I succumbed (like Antony before me) to the attractions of Glaphyra; "*caduque*" seemed a suitable epithet, because the dictionary said it meant "frail," though it also means "decrepit." And now, by forced marches, I got down at last to the brown-fox record with thirty-four letters:

GLAPHYRE CADUQUE, METTEZ VOS BIJOUX FINS

There is an exercise for the budding stenographer; all his twenty-four letters, and only ten repeats. If he is worried about K and W he will have to address Glaphyra as a frail kiwi, which seems rather touching.

And yet . . . "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog"—somehow he has more life in him than the decrepit Glaphyra.

R. A. KNOX

SUCCESS SERIAL

Bert Bloggs, who earned eight pounds a week,
Had twins, both boys, both good at Greek;
So good that both got County Schols
(Everything paid, including hols)
To Cambridge. These were worth, let's say,
A round four-fifty pounds p.a.—
Nine hundred, roughly, for the pair.
Both boys did excellently there,
So that in time the elder, John,
Became a distinguished Classics don,
While James—for brevity's sake, Jas.—
Was something pretty big in Gas.
In short, although one searched for years,
One wouldn't better their careers
As proof of how Free Education
Amply rewards the Welfare Nation.

However, Chapter Two begins:
These splendid chaps themselves had twins,
All boys, all of them brilliant lads,
Who all—you've guessed it!—like their dads

Got scholarships to Cambridge. Yes . . .
But weren't their fathers a success?
Both with—coincidence *is* queer—
Seventeen hundred pounds a year?
The sum, precisely, where one can't
Qualify for the *slightest* grant?

Both fathers worked the problem out:
Nine hundred pounds a year, about,
From their eleven hundred (net)
Meant either being ruined by debt
For the remainder of their lives
Or starving for some years. Their wives
Viewed neither prospect with real zest.

So the four boys' careers went west—
At least, their academic ones.
All four got jobs at baking buns
And earned, in time, eight pounds a week.

Each son had twins, both good at Greek . . .

JUSTIN RICHARDSON

The Open Road for Me

WHAT is more delightful than a journey to London or any big town by motor car? Instead of having to reach a railway station at a scheduled time, we start two hours earlier and arrive only an hour later than the train. Instead of sitting in a warm carriage reading a book and then watching the fields and trees slide by, we sit in a nice draughty little box with the wireless on if our car is a newish model and watch the tarmac swallowed before us and the fascinating behinds of other motor vehicles.

I do not know which is the most charming back view of a car among the many which I have studied for hours. There is the Saturday party with Mum and Dad and the kids, well in the middle of the road and keeping up a steady twenty-five. What a pleasure it is to see that little bird stuck on the back window which dips up and down as if acknowledging our failure to overtake! Sometimes this may be varied by one of the children making faces at us through the back and then turning round to tell Dad to step on it and swerve a bit more to the right or we will overtake

him. I like, too, the enjoyable uniformity of a convoy of British Transport lorries. I like the thrill of being signalled on at a blind corner. Is this my last moment alive? Apparently not, for here I am writing my experiences to you.

Lest I become too cocksure and proud of my own motor car, there is always the chastening swish of the more expensive model passing me, the brief glimpse of the woman in furs and a man in a check coat with his ears almost as low as his neck. They leave a yellow deposit on my wind-screen and are seen no more. Perhaps most delightful of all is to come on a convoy of American army vehicles "Left-hand drive, no signals, no brakes, no driver, five hundred feet long and speed limit 20 m.p.h." They are empty at the moment and doing fifty, but perhaps sometimes they carry something. There will not be a straight bit of road where I may overtake them for another seventeen miles, so I will have plenty of time to look at them and think about Anglo-American relations. What fun it is to see each of them swerve out to pass three bicyclists abreast and so put the on-coming traffic in its place!

When I have overtaken these I find myself in a black fog-belt, which smells of fish and chips, only stronger. It comes from a lorry in front of me. Beyond it

"They've all gone to the Business Efficiency Exhibition"

I find a trades van doing sixty in the middle of the road; written across its back doors is "Telephone Clissold 7777." Yes, but why? And who are they? And would anyone answer if I were to telephone?

Ah, now we're for it. An omnibus and a mail van are overtaking one another and coming towards us. Someone will have to pull up. I do not trust my own brakes, nor those of the fog-belt behind me. Still less those of the Americans behind the fog-belt. If I try to run on to the grass verge I shall be thrown back on to the road by concrete kerbs—those thrillingly dangerous modern inventions. Brakes full on, I find myself gliding gently into "Clissold 7777." My headlights are smashed but he is undamaged. Yes, he has taken my name. He is very angry indeed. Do I think the road belongs to me? Didn't I see him give a signal? I'll hear more of this. By now everything I have passed has overtaken me.

And what glorious English scenery there has been for the last fifty miles along this noble high road! Poles and wires and concrete lamp standards, Egyptian factories with rock gardens in front, artistic hoardings set in crazy paving, flashing globes and changing traffic lights, felled trees and devastated parks and always the cheerful roar of a thousand different engines. I am slowed down behind a very careful driver who must be running in her Eau-de-nil masterpiece. She makes more signs than I knew there were in the highway code. The back of her car, beside the golliwog which hangs in its window, is equipped with a fascinating series of tail lights which change colour according to her mood.

All the time, of course, there is my companion in the front seat with me. She also can drive a car, and tells me how I ought to drive mine. I cannot retreat behind a book, and the quarrel lasts from eight-thirty, when we started, until now, which is half-past eleven. It reaches its height when we can find nowhere to park. I cannot think why people still travel by train.

JOHN BETJEMAN

LINES TO AN AUTHOR

I'm glad I came across your latest story—
People had always told me you could write.
"He'll make a change," they said, "from what you're used to."
(The stuff I'm used to's mostly rather light.)

So far, I find your thread a shade elusive;
That, or your story content's rather small.
I'm sure it hangs together in the end, though.
When do we get the rest? *Or is this all?*

W. ROGER NICHOLSON

THE time was a few minutes before ten o'clock on a sunny June morning; the place, my consulting room, where I was standing, my old wound aching dully, in the midst of a knot of patients who had managed to overturn my secretary, Miss Gillibank, and invade my consulting room in force. An elderly woman in purple trousers, a cigarette dangling from the corner of her mouth, was thrusting a shrieking infant into my very face; a heavily-built bus conductor and a Salvation Army captain, their tongues protruded, plucked me violently by the arms; in the corner of the room a saintly-faced old clergyman was quietly divesting himself of his shirt. Suddenly the door was flung open, an incisive voice exclaimed "You are right, Watson! Life in the National Health Service has become too much for you!" and in another moment I found my hand being warmly shaken by my old friend Sherlock Holmes.

"Forgive this untimely intrusion, my dear fellow," he said. "The fact is that I have ventured to ask one of my clients to meet me here, since I am temporarily without a consulting room. The case may be of some interest, and I should welcome your co-operation."

"My dear Holmes," I said, "I should be proud to be of service. When will your client arrive?"

"Almost immediately. You can work and listen simultaneously?"

"I think so."

"Excellent!" He turned to the old clergyman. "You find it easier to mount your bicycle by means of the back step?"

Before the astonished old man had time to reply, the door was flung violently open and a tall, soldierly-looking figure burst into the room, followed by a disorderly mob of patients, Miss Gillibank struggling feebly in their midst. The first-comer paused, glancing doubtfully around him, but Holmes quickly stepped forward, proffering his hand.

"Mr. Pleydell, of White Ladies, if I mistake not?" he said.

For the next few moments I was fully occupied in reducing the noisy throng of patients to some sort of order, and in attempting to muffle the screams of several more babies who had been carried into the room, but I was soon methodically plying stethoscope and thermometer, and listening with keen interest to Mr. Pleydell's narrative.

"The White Ladies household," he said, "consists of my brother-in-law, Berry Pleydell, who is also my cousin; his wife Daphne, who is my sister; myself; and Jonah and Jill Mansell, a brother and sister who are cousins to all of us. Do I make myself clear?"

"Pray continue your most interesting statement."

"Crippling taxation, and the drudgery of sticking on these wretched stamps, have reduced our staff to a minimum. We retain our butler, Falcon, two footmen, Flail and Bloodstock, our housekeeper, Mrs. Festival, and a cook, Jane Bugworth. All have been in our service for many years.

"In the early hours of the morning of the fifth of June I was awakened by a noise, and decided to investigate the cause. Finding that a window had been forced, I immediately roused the household and we made a thorough search of the building. Mr. Holmes, eight pairs of evening trousers had been stolen."

Looking up from a strangulated epiglottis, I saw my friend rub his hands in keen enjoyment.

"This is certainly very novel," said he.

"Now, in these unhappy times, when we find ourselves flinging the grounds open to the public to meet the cost of turning the footmen's liveries, such a loss is of course disastrous; but there is an added vexation. On Thursday, our local flower show dance is to be held, and an ancient family tradition will be broken if a male Pleydell does not attend it. Yet new trousers cannot be tailored in the time."

"Could they not be purchased ready-made?"

"I suppose such things are done, Mr. Holmes: at White Ladies we see little of the more sombre side of life. However, I fear that the course you suggest would be unthinkable to a Pleydell."

"Then we must act without delay. First, are there any newcomers among your immediate neighbours?"

"There is a family called Parkinson. They bought Monkshood Royal from dear old Vandy Sabre just after the Diamond Jubilee."

"No one more recent?"

"Well, there is Wooster. He and his manservant run a poultry farm on a piece of land rented from Millicent Tantamount."

"He is rich!"

"On the contrary, he is heavily in debt, and any profits from the farm speedily find their way into the pockets of the football pool promoters."

"You fill me with interest. Would it be possible to visit this Wooster to-day?"

"Certainly. My car is outside, and I should be glad to take you."

"Excellent. You will introduce us as two Buff Orpington enthusiasts from Cornwall. You can come, I take it, Watson?—I see that your labours are finished."

"It would be a great pleasure."

On our journey, Mr. Pleydell was often forced to stop his car—one of famous make but something of a veteran—and trudge back along the road to retrieve some part of the mechanism which had fallen off, and during these delays Holmes had ample opportunity to tell me something of how he had fared since our last meeting.

"I have left my Sussex bee-farm," he said. "In turning over some old socks, my housekeeper came upon a couple of human ears—you remember the Cardboard Box affair?—and the foolish creature rushed out of the house in a huff and refused to return. Then, during an exceedingly delicate chemical experiment, I had the misfortune to blow the roof off a small outhouse which I had made my laboratory. After this I found myself unable to secure domestic help of any kind, and was forced to remove to a small private hotel in the Baker Street area, where I have been ever since. Until recently, I have received clients in the lounge, but a few weeks ago, while coffee was being served there, Lestrade and I had a violent struggle with an immensely powerful Tibetan lama, and since then I have been without a consulting room of any kind. Only the other day, entering upon an investigation so delicate that the slightest slip would have meant disaster and the plunging of the whole civilized world into unthinkable catastrophe, I was forced to ask the great statesman who approached me on the matter—one so eminent that I must not mention his name even to you—to smoke his cigar in one of the cubicles at the Caxton Road swimming baths. These are strange and altered times, Watson, and I cannot say that I care for them."

So slow was our pace that it was late afternoon before we arrived at our destination. Mr. Wooster, a cheerful-looking young man in rather shabby tweeds, greeted us warmly when we were ushered into his presence by a suave manservant, and readily agreed to show us over his farm.

"Oh, by Jove, dash it, absolutely!" he exclaimed. "What, as one might say, ho! Jeeves!"

"Sir?"

"Flock round."

"Very good, sir. The bowler hat or the sou'wester?"

"The sou'wester."

"Yes, sir. And the tie, if I may suggest it, perhaps a shade more tightly knotted. Now, gentlemen, if you will kindly follow me . . ."

Holmes made a thorough inspection of the farm, asking a good many questions. In the store-room he picked up a square of dark cloth which was lying on a bench.

"I see you use the very best cleaning materials," he said.

"I keep it to rub up the bird's plumage, sir," said the manservant. "A glossy finish to a show entry often serves to predispose the judge in its favour."

"The thought is an ingenious one, and does you credit."

"I endeavour to give satisfaction, sir."

As we approached the gate of the farm, our tour completed, Holmes, who was walking in a curious zigzag a little ahead of us, suddenly stumbled and fell flat on his face in the grass. I was at his side in an instant, and as I helped him to his feet, I saw that his eyes were sparkling with excitement.

"It is a mere nothing," he said, laughing heartily. "I cannot think how I came to be so clumsy."

In a few moments we had said farewell to Mr. Wooster and taken our departure. No sooner, however, were we out of sight of the farm than Holmes requested Pleydell to stop the car.

"They have the trousers," he said. "I must ask you to follow me and to carry out my instructions to the letter."

In considerable bewilderment, Pleydell and I accompanied Holmes up a steep, narrow lane, over a stile, and across a field. Crouching low, we crept along beside a thick hedge, through which my friend peered from time to time. At last he came to a halt.

"We are now standing opposite the farm," he whispered, "and about fifty yards from the hut occupied by the manservant. I wish you, Mr. Pleydell, to squeeze cautiously through the hedge and crawl to the hut on hands and knees. Here is

to-day's paper. You will place it against the woodwork, cover it lightly with grass, and ignite it. Directly it begins to smoke, shout 'Fire!' at the top of your voice. Watson and I will join in the alarm. Can you do this?"

"I think so."

As our client wormed his way towards the hut, I saw that Wooster and the manservant were still standing where we had left them. The servant appeared to have his hands on his master's shoulders.

"What can they be doing?" I whispered.

For a moment, Holmes seemed to share my perplexity, and then his face cleared.

"Excellent!" he exclaimed. "He is adjusting his master's braces. The fall of the trousers is not to his liking."

"I confess that I fail to see how this helps us."

"Is it possible that you do not realize its significance? Remember the two Coptic Patriarchs."

"But they had no——"

"Tut, I have no time! See, there is the smoke! Now, Watson!"

"Fire!" we roared, at the full stretch of our lungs.

The effect was astounding. While Wooster stood like a man of stone, his mouth wide open, the manservant turned and rushed across the field like a madman. In a moment he had reached the hut, wrenched the door open, and darted inside. Even as Holmes and I dashed forward he reappeared in the doorway, carrying a large bundle. With the bound of a tiger, Holmes was upon him and had wrested his burden from his grasp.

"Allow me to present you, Mr. Pleydell," he shouted, drawing himself up to his full height, "with the missing White Ladies trousers!"

For a moment Pleydell and I stood transfixed with astonishment, and then with one accord we both burst out clapping as though at a play. As Wooster came panting up and joined our applause in a bemused fashion, Holmes thrust the trousers into Pleydell's arms and turned to Jeeves.

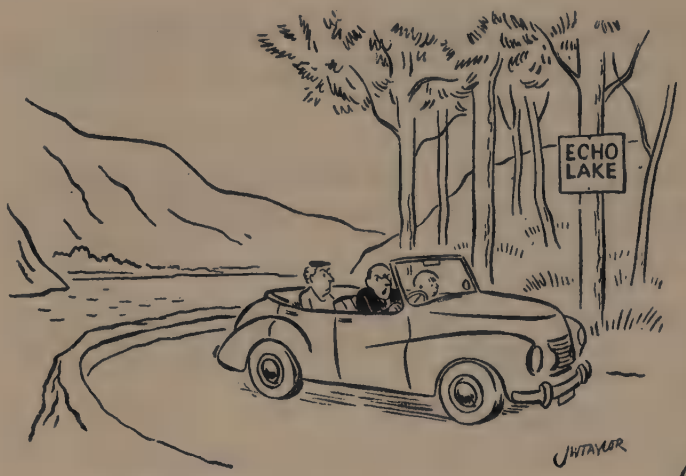
"I propose to run over the course of the events that have brought you to this unhappy plight," he said. "You will correct me if I go wrong."

"Very good, sir."

"Four, or possibly five days ago Mr. Wooster, returning to the farm after a night of merrymaking, stumbled into a tub of wet mash, ruining his one remaining pair of evening trousers. The tub has since been moved, but its mark remains in the grass, and round it a close examination reveals some dozens of meal-encrusted footprints. Similar marks lead by a devious route to Mr. Wooster's house. Your master had been invited to the flower show dance, and he now had no trousers in which to attend it."

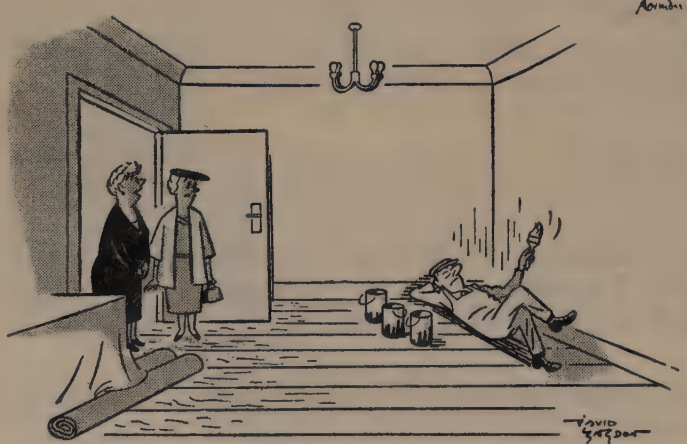
"Only the brown tweeds, sir, or the Bedford cord riding breeches. They would have occasioned unfavourable comment."

"Exactly. You take a pride in your master's appearance, as we saw this



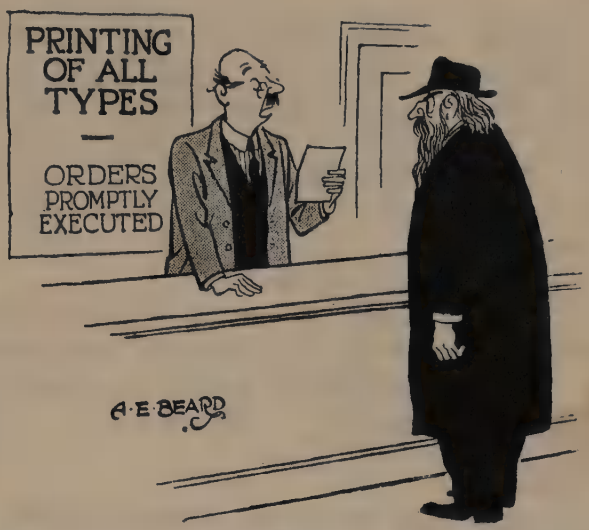
"All right—I heard you the first time"

"Are you coming quietly?"

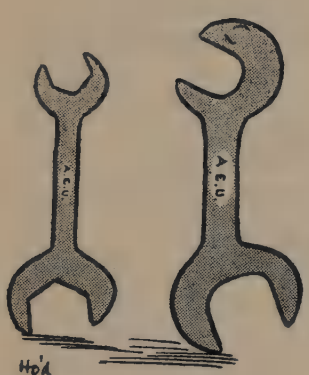


"I chose that shade because it was so restful . . ."

"A FINE TIME TO TELL ME *NOW* THAT SOMEONE'S THOUGHT OF IT ALREADY"



"FIVE HUNDRED HANDBILLS, 'THE HOUR IS NIGH, PREPARE TO MEET THY DOOM'—ANY PARTICULAR RUSH?"



"I'VE BEEN THROWN INTO MUCH BIGGER WORKS THAN YOU HAVE!"

"'MORNING MRS. NOUS—CHEZ IN?"

afternoon, and you decided to supply his needs with a plentiful selection from the White Ladies wardrobes. You then—most unwisely, as it turned out—converted Mr. Wooster's soiled trousers into polishing cloths."

"Precisely, sir."

"Well, it is not for me to judge you. You were loyal to your master, and did your best for him. Poor helpless worms that we are, why does Fate play these tricks upon us?"

"I could not say, sir."

"Nevertheless, there must be no more burglaries. Look well into your soul this night, my friend, and beat down this lawless demon who has brought you low."

"I will attend to the matter, sir, directly I have laid out Mr. Wooster's riding breeches for dinner."

* * * * *

"The case has proved absurdly simple," said Holmes, as we stood together, later that evening, in the corridor of the Southampton to London express. "We must hope for better things when I take the next step in this tremendous international affair the day after to-morrow."

"You wish to use my consulting room?"

"If you would be so good. Do not be surprised if my client is masked. And if you could contrive, my dear fellow, to lay in a bottle of vodka, and perhaps a pot or two of caviar, I should be infinitely obliged to you."

T. S. Watt

ABANDON HOPE

Lines written after a vain attempt to gain audience with Mr. Bob Hope, solicited in order to kiss his foot.

Ah, it was easier far
For mediæval peasants
To greet their Saint or Czar
With little presents,
Or for Tibetans to approach the Dalai Lama,
Than penetrate the bar
That guards the movie star
From far-off Yonkers or Duluth or Alabama.

These modern moguls reign
In D**ml*r carriages,
Inhabiting (with train)
The R*tz or Cl*r*dg*s,
And myriad courtiers shield them from the serfs that pester.

For clowns who entertain
The public must maintain
A retinue. Does it, I muse, include a Jester?

Bright-eyed as day began,
And louting in advance,
I tried, a fervent fan,
To catch a little glance
Of Hope, Bob Hope, him of the nose and gag-free gag.
But ah, the triple ban
Encompassing the man!
Ah, what divinity doth hedge the crownèd wag!

The hotel said "He's out."
The valet said "He's sleeping."
His manager devout
The while his watch was keeping,
With hourly vigilance amounting to obsessional.
And someone else—about
Third Secretary, no doubt—
Kindly suggested I should try his golf professional.

Court Chamberlains in gold
Kept monarchs in duress;
And priestesses of old
Guarded the Pythoness.
The film comedian glories in his Representative.
Bob Hope's was manifold—
But then (or so I'm told)
Hydras were by vocation notably preventative.

Dauntless my slug-horn I
Raised in a higher tone
Against the Dark Tower, by
Use of the telephone—
A drunken atheist seeking audience of the Pope
Under the Switzers' eye
Could not have got less nigh.
"To hell!" at last I murmured, and abandoned Hope.

LIONEL HALE

Bores: Redemption Course For

THE other day it suddenly dawned on me that I am, at thirty-three, in danger of becoming a bore.

It happened at a committee meeting. We had already committed ourselves to a course of action when up spoke someone from the far end of the table. "I," he said brightly, "have a good idea."

I settled back in my chair, blew smoke at the ceiling and gave speech.

"I remember," I said, "when we were landing on the Normandy bridgehead. I was in a landing craft with my Brigadier and his staff. The Germans were firing on to our landing point. It looked like a fireworks benefit night. We drew near, much too near. Then a young officer piped up. 'Sir,' he said to the Brigadier, 'I have a good idea.' The Brigadier tightened his chin-strap. 'Son,' he said grimly, 'we are past the time for good ideas.' "

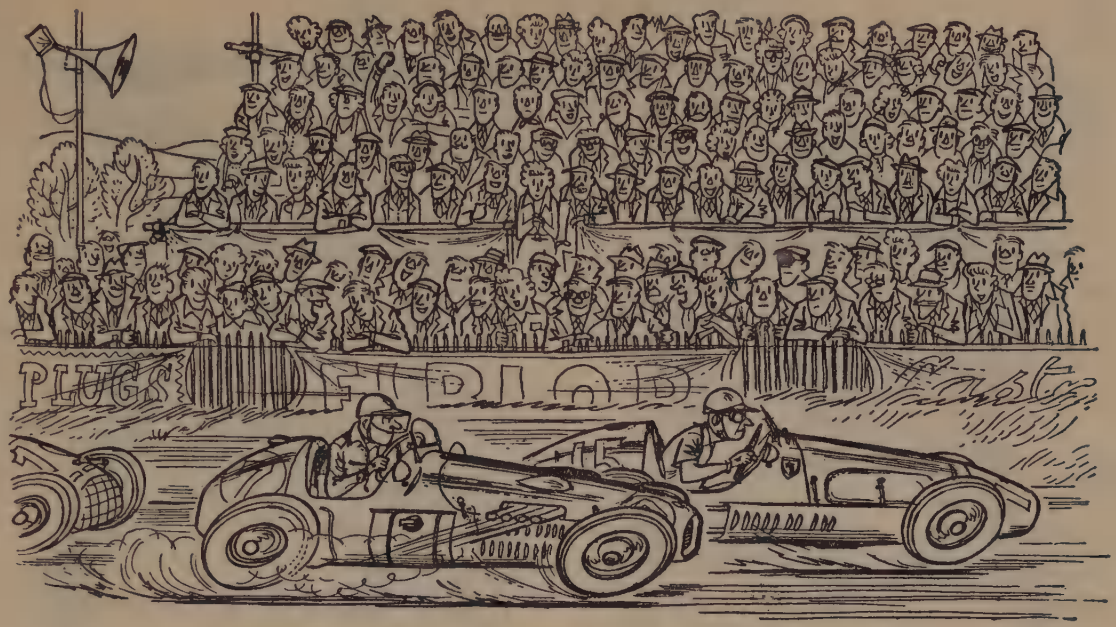
I looked sternly at the committee. "A good idea which comes too late," I said, "is a bad idea."

It was at this moment that I caught the glance between two of my colleagues. Nothing much. Just two pairs of uplifted eyebrows and two resigned expressions.

With a tightening round my heart I recollected that I had used the same story before, in the same way, before the same people. I was sunk. I was typed. I was an ex-Service bore.

I remembered how I had felt during the early days of the war when I was forced, out of politeness, reinforced by a keen awareness of my junior rank, to listen to war-scarred sergeants telling about the girl they had met on the way up to Ypres, or, after I was commissioned, how I had to laugh with the beribboned major who told me how he squashed the staff officer who queried the ration returns outside Cambrai. And now I had joined them in the ranks of the military Ancient Mariners.

We are a menace. We wreck all civilized intercourse. We hang around the conversations of our intellectual superiors, most of whom were at the Ministry of



MOTOR RACING, TO THE BRITISH, SEEMS TO BE JUST ANOTHER SPECTATOR SPORT . . .

. . UNTIL IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS, ANYWAY

Information or in charge of propaganda to the enemy during the war, waiting for a chance phrase on which we can hang a military analogy. And then we are in—"That reminds me of a sanitary corporal we had who always wore a civilian bowler when he was supervising the erection of latrines . . ." and away we go.

Those among us who are over forty have already dug out the photograph taken on first wearing a Sam Browne and have mounted it on the sitting-room mantelpiece. The over fifties have wars to draw upon. These are incurable.

But I have plans for the under forties. At an hotel near Aldershot I shall open a week-end school for the "Conversational Redemption of ex-Service men." The Chief Instructor, who will teach by example, will be a retired Major-Quartermaster from the Brigade of Guards, a man who can, in the accents of the Guards mess imperfectly adapted to his native dialect, tell military tales from Rouse to the closing of the bar, mentioning two milords and an honourable in each story.

He will take students on a jeep ride through the barrack lines, give them a swift tour of the battle course, and allow them to fondle a Bren gun, pattern 1941, and an anti-tank rifle, *circa* 1939. Then, when their recollective juices are sufficiently stimulated, they will be taken before the interviewing panel.

The Chief Interviewer will be a business-like woman in tweeds and pearls who has spent a lifetime organizing Women's Institutes in the counties. After years of

listening to tales which begin "The best bottled damsons I ever did were the year I had my second op. . . ." she will, for self-preservation, have acquired the power to carry on with her knitting without hearing a word addressed to her. Her assistant will be a young trades union official who has learned how to handle the oldest member of the branch who carried a soap box for Ben Tillett. The third member will be the paid secretary of a London Club who after five days a week saying "Ah yes," "How interesting," and "Fascinating, you really should put it in a book," will by way of a break spend his week-ends at my school being glacially indifferent to searchers for a captive audience.

My students, bubbling with anecdotes, brought to boiling point by the Aldershot atmosphere, will open in a canter.

"Seeing that Bren gun reminds me of what my platoon sergeant used to say when a man dropped the magazine while coping with a number one stoppage . . ."

The Women's Institute Organizer will knit. The trades union official will open the *Daily Herald*. The club secretary will look over the narrator's left shoulder as though he saw doom spelt out on the wallpaper. The narrative will stumble.

"DON'T YOU *DARE* 'HOW'S BUSINESS?' ME!"

The raconteur will break into a moist perspiration. He will look around for salvation—but it will not arrive. Out of perverse pride and determination he will drivel on to the bitter mumbled end. And then I will take his trembling, clammy hand and lead him away.

WILFRED FIENBURGH

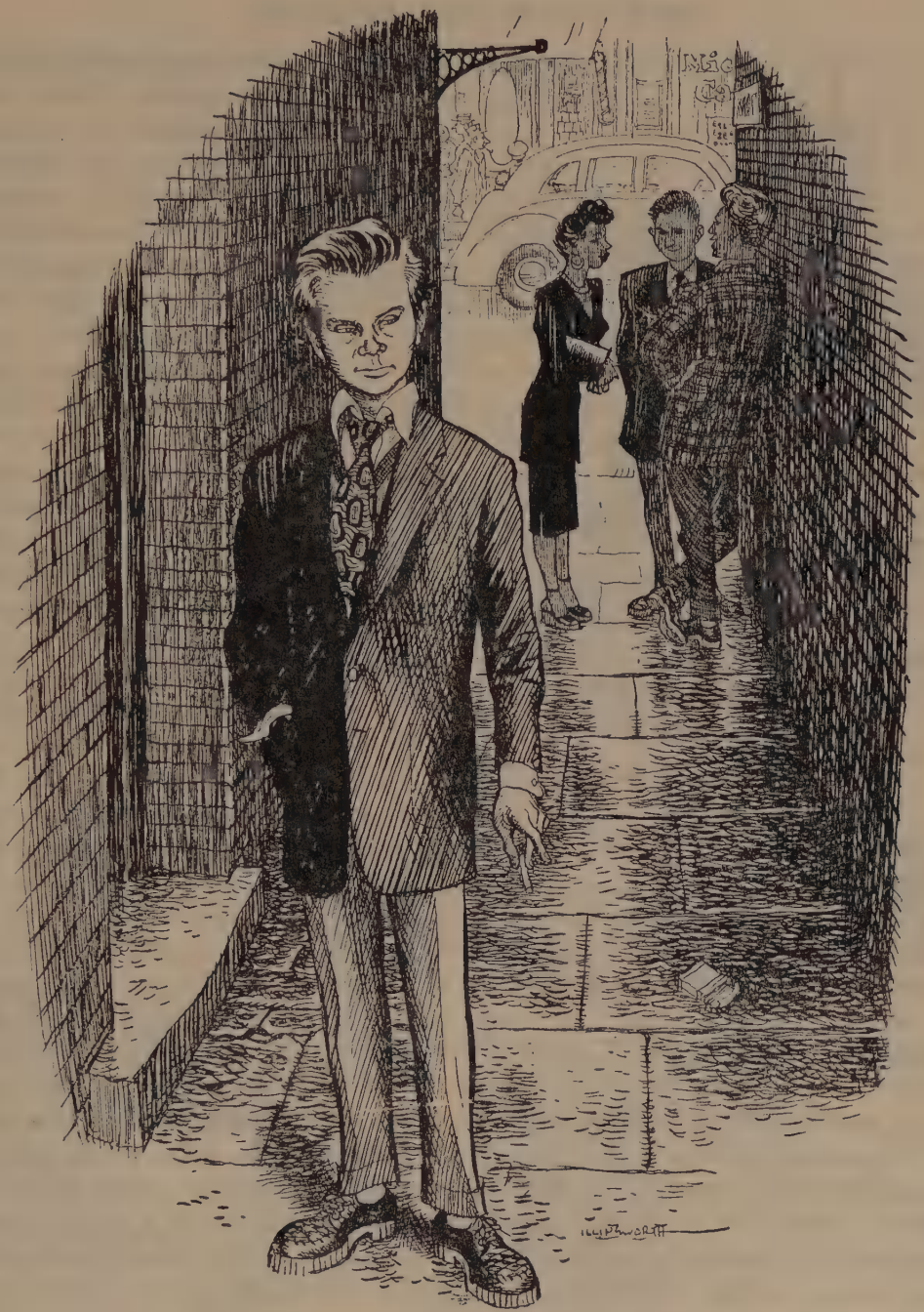
In Their Black Books

I'M most alarmed. A fellow-author, friend of mine, recently received a letter from his publisher containing the following sentence: "At least two booksellers refused to take a single copy of your last novel because they said (my italics) *you had been such a nuisance in their shops.*" The publisher added a severe rebuke: "If you go on in this way, you will soon have every bookseller *and publisher* against you, which won't really help at all."

At first I was inclined to laugh the whole thing off, until I saw by my friend's frown that he was serious: "Trouble is, I can't remember what I *did*. Might have been years ago . . . a chance remark . . . some assistant overheard . . . These blokes are like elephants, you know, and of course they all keep in touch: word soon gets around . . ." Out of sympathy I grew indignant, suggesting legal action; a libel suit; damages for slander. "And be put on the black list directly the case is over?" he said acidly. "A bright suggestion," and suddenly I too realized the gravity of this latest threat to a livelihood precarious even at the best of times. In my cinematic mind's eye I saw a bookseller curtly banishing a contentious author from his premises; tapping out an immediate message in morse with the same finger that had pointed to the door; I heard, on a cerebral sound-track, the decoded message broadcast by grapevine telegraph to every bookshop in Britain: a montage of headlines (in trade papers, of course) spelling out the dread sentence "THIS MAN IS BANNED": a photograph of the miscreant on every buyer's desk: travellers proffering proof-copies of his latest work turning hopelessly away from the stern headshake, the turned-down thumb.

Then a publishers' conference, the chairman speaking: "Got in bad with the booksellers, poor chump. Pity, that": librarians crossing off titles on their catalogue cards, rejected MSS. piling up in the post: the author with threadbare suit and starved hollow face staggering through falling snow towards dosshouses, the Embankment, and a pauper's grave. It was not a pleasant picture; and with a shiver of apprehension I asked "But can they do it?"

And of course the answer was in the affirmative. Booksellers were becoming emancipated: like daily women they had awakened to a realization of the power that had always lain within their grasp; a new dictatorship would reign over the literary



A BOY

God who created me
  Nimble and light of limb,
In three elements free
  To run, to ride, to swim:

Not when the sense is dim,
  But now from the heart of joy,
I would remember Him:
  Take the thanks of a boy.

Prayers—Henry Charles Beeching

world, more stringent than the benevolent despotism so long exercised by publishers and critics: the editor's decision would no longer be final, for bookstalls would no longer stock magazines including among the contributors some outlawed name. I foresaw fresh monopolies, the monthly selection by the Booksellers Society: a return to the days when servile authors bowed before the print-sellers of Fleet Street and Milton sold for a nugatory sum the copyright of *Paradise Lost*.

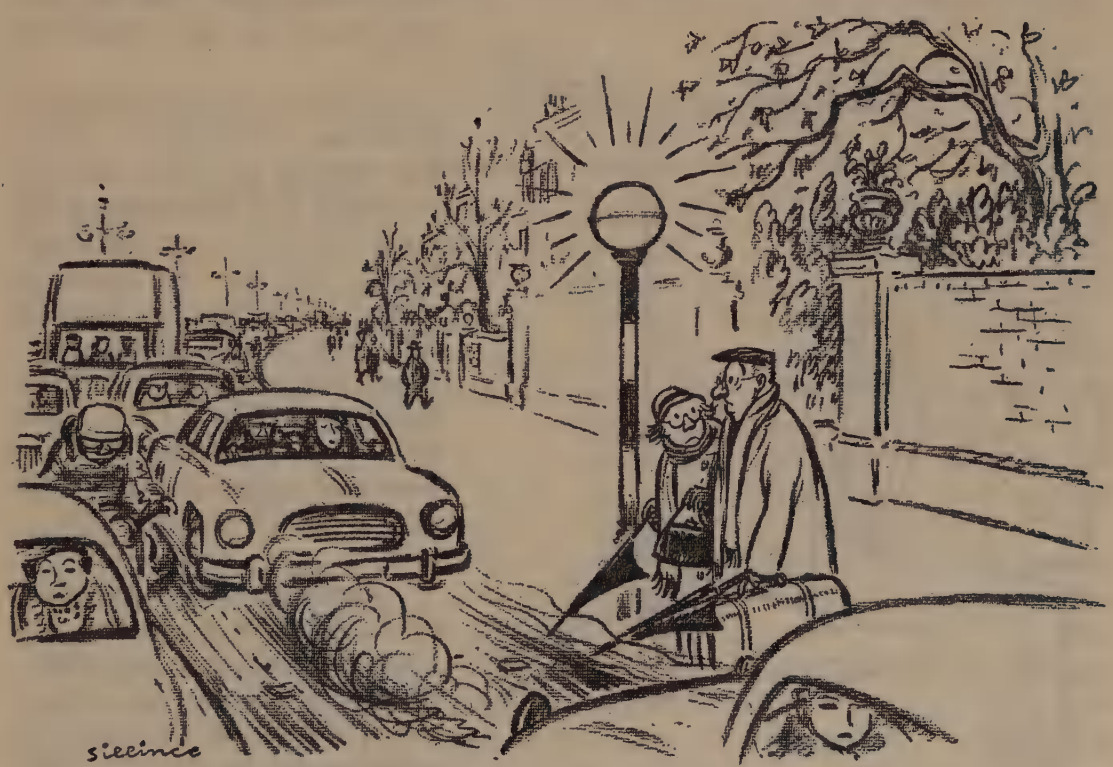
Yes, all these things would clearly come to pass, and feverishly I cast about in my memory for some occasion on which I myself might have caused offence to our future masters: an ironical tone of voice, a touch of brusquerie in my manner . . . Even so, I have seldom been photographed and would, with luck, pass unrecognized by even the sharpest-eyed assistant.

But, abruptly, this mood of self-congratulation faded and I came over cold: for, like a recorded play-back from the past, the echo of my voice returned to me, angrily raised in the act of doing that very thing—and in no mere bookshop but the main showroom of Thwarte's itself: Thwarte's, whose network of branch libraries extended not only over the realm but to the very outposts of our dwindling empire; whose directors would certainly be Ministers of the new régime—if not actually in control of it. I groaned aloud in recollection of that autumn day in 1947 when, emerging from the shops with two novels in bright jackets tucked under my arm, I was politely but firmly arrested by a tall man of military bearing, belted into a grey gaberdine raincoat, who overtook me silently, in rubber soles, on the corner of the street outside. He was the store detective; in the course of his duty he'd observed that I'd forgotten to pay for the books I was carrying as I went out. An oversight, of course. Now if I'd just come back with him to the shop . . .

Situations like this do not often come my way: this one seemed to offer illimitable possibilities of enjoyment. No, I said, there was no oversight, though I had not, indeed, paid for the books in question: was he definitely accusing me of theft? If

so, what about a policeman? I would fetch one myself if he liked. He was opposed to this course; we argued for a time, the detective dogged but puzzled by what he took to be my brazen effrontery. Then I tired of the game and explained that I had actually bought the books a week before, as the manager himself would confirm: this being so, I saw no reason to pay for them again.

We returned to the shop together, but this, by now, was closing down; the manager had already left for his suburban home. The detective stood outlined against a pyramid of fiction, stuffing tobacco into the bowl of a bulldog pipe: a shadow of suspicion still remained in him. "The manager served you personally? A week ago?" "As I told you." "Then why, after all this time"—he thought he had me now—"*are you still carrying the books around?*" "I might want to read one of them. Any law against that?" "Well," rubbing his chin indecisively, "there's no actual *law* . . ." For some reason this annoyed me. "In that case I'll be going. If you want me again I'm at the Imperial Hotel. As for my name" (and this is the part that now makes me wince), "there it is," pointing at a display of my new novel, which had been issued a few days before, "and here's my identity card as further proof. Satisfied?" The detective nodded glumly: he seemed deflated.



"Do we dash across while the light's alight, or while it's out?"

Next day I returned to see the manager, and there, with apologies from all concerned, the matter might have ended.

But a few months later I was again about to leave the shop when a boy of repellent aspect, barely above school age but wearing nevertheless a green assistant's badge, accosted me at the door. "Mind paying for that book you got there, mister?" The sense of being involved in a recurrent nightmare seized me for a moment, but surely what they needed was a lesson. "All right," I said. "I'll go quietly." Swollen with pride, the boy led me to a small dusty office: in it sat the detective at a desk. "Pinching, sir," said the boy. "Caught red-handed." I'd expected the detective to exhibit signs of consternation; instead he gave me a cold searching glance and said without smiling: "Any excuse to offer this time?"

It was a grand opportunity to have more fun, but, alas, a young woman of impatient temperament awaited me on the other side of London, and I was obliged to play my trump card without delay. "As it happens I have. If you examine the book I'm supposed to have stolen you'll find it doesn't belong to Thwarte's at all. See this bookplate: there's the owner's name—one well-known to you, I'm sure." The detective said "He could have sold it here, couldn't he? Anyway, what are you doing with it if it's his?" "Borrow," I said. "Ever heard of George Borrow?" They both gaped. The boy said "He wants his head examined, sir."

"You want yours slapped," I told him. "Now listen. Take that 'phone, ring this number, and you'll find the owner of this book lent it to me yesterday. Hurry up, I've no time to waste." The detective began to dial; then he said "Let's see—what's your name again?" "You know my name." "Ah, that's what you write under. But your *real* name—Barnaby, isn't it?" "No," I shouted. "It is not."

Barnaby was a noted book-thief, and it was not the first time this confusion had arisen; though no facial resemblance exists, back-view we might be mistaken one for the other, both being dark-haired and about the

same height, while in those days we both wore teddy-bear coats, and Barnaby, like myself, carried a cane. "Barnaby's in gaol," I said, "as you should know. Ring that number now."

My eminent friend was in. He was indignant, threatening to arrive with solicitors and C.I.D. superintendents if I were not immediately released. Yes, he'd lent me the book; no, I wasn't really Barnaby; and if he were in my place, he'd sue. I cut short the detective's apology with a threat of proceedings should this happen again, and a baleful glance at the repulsive boy; nevertheless they weren't quite convinced at Thwarte's: for some time afterwards, bells rang like burglar alarms whenever I appeared, and sullen-faced female adolescents followed me about in the intervals of being rude to customers; pimply-faced youths with green badges watched my every move through steel spectacles as I browsed along the shelves.

Since then, Barnaby, released from prison, has published his memoirs; *Love Life of a Book-Thief* has become a best-seller and, as a large photograph of the author adorns the dust wrapper, the detective now knows the difference between us. All the same, in Thwarte's I'm a marked man: they may even black-list me as a nuisance, unless I flee the country and hope that in time they'll forget. I'd better start packing now. Right away.

J. Maclaren-Ross

Winco at Waterloo

ON this autumnal morning of the first day of term, the Lower Fourth presented twenty-one stares of reserved judgment at their new master (History, English, and Games). He gave them back the embracing smile of bonhomie with which, as Intelligence Officer in the R.A.F., he had greeted his pilots in the happy years.

Mr. Geoffrey Bent was short, upright, and blue-eyed. His close-cut hair was growing grey, but his geniality was undimmed. Why, they would be calling him "Winco" in no time: they had done so, after he had dropped enough hints, in all the other four prep. schools which had employed him since the war. It was Dorset first, a bit too snobbish, and then Bognor, and, as by natural descent, Hastings and Seaford; and now he had, as he said with a chuckle, "re-posted himself to an auxiliary strip in Berkshire," just outside Reading. The Head (M.A. Oxon.) had seemed to him at the familiar interview "a very decent Station Commander," and there was a good pub near the end of the little drive.

He had already got the names of his form sorted out, a trick learned of necessity in the war, when names changed rather rapidly in the mess. And now to get on terms with the boys about the Battle of Waterloo. Get them alerted. History, as Winco Bent had said in a number of masters' common rooms, was alive, actually.

"Right. Let's get weaving," said Winco briskly, tucking his handkerchief up

"Well, there's always that trick of letting down the tyres . . ."

his sleeve. "Battle of Waterloo. Now I'm going to brief you first with all the essential gen about this Waterloo op., and you can keep the questions till afterwards. Smoke," he added with a deliberate twinkle, "if you want to, chaps."

It was his usual little joke, but new to this form; and they regarded it with courteous interest.

"Date, 1815," said the new master. "This Napoleon—Corsican type—had been interned in Elba, which is an island in the Med. Never was posted to the Med. myself, but a lot of good types tell me it's rather a bind. Well, this Napoleon found the Med. a bit of a bind and . . . I suppose," said Winco Bent, struck by a sudden thought, "you all know what the Med. is?"

"Would it, sir, be an abbreviation," asked a freckled boy with spectacles, "for the Mediterranean Sea?"

"Roger," said Bent, agreeably. "Well, this Napoleon bales out of Elba and arrives in the South of France and collects a lot of Frenchmen, Army jobs, and gets to Paris, and, of course, the British take a paltry view amounting to dim about all this and send out an Expeditionary Force. Under a general called Wellington. Wellington, general, brown type," said Winco, with a jester's anticipatory gleam, and added "Wellington, eh? So let's just call him Wimpey."

Travers major, who was carving a picture on his desk of Neville Duke's Hawker Hunter and was adding squiggles to represent the dissolving sound barrier, looked up, frowned perplexedly, and resumed his carving.

"Well, old Wimpey gets to Belgium, where he's joined by his allies, who in this war, for some ropey reason, were the Prussians, and they formate round about Brussels—which," said Winco in an enthusiastic parenthesis, "I don't mind telling you from personal experience is a wizard leave-town, and bang-on generally. Now this gives Napoleon a chance to do a bit of dicing, and up he comes. So old Wimpey had to scramble. Round about June 10th, 1815," said Bent, fingering the top button of his waistcoat, left undone in memory of fighter pilots long since forgotten.

"Now pay attention, all of you, because we're coming to this op., and June 19th is D Day . . ." The cheerful little voice went on.

Outside the class-room a leaf shivered, ready to fall, on the plane tree, and the

rusty autumnal sun rose in an overcast sky. The twenty-one boys looked steadily at Winco. In the back row, Carteret-Brown turned a slow and reflective head to meet the eye of his confederate, Collis minor. It was the look which an employer of men exchanges with his confidential secretary. It was final, impersonal, and unpitying.

LIONEL HALE

Pleasure Course

IT is eight minutes to eight in the morning, and we lie awake, tensely awaiting our awakening by the radio. In one minute precisely it bursts into song encouraging us with wheedling, feminine lilt to

Roll out of bed in the morning
With a great big smile and a good, good morning,
Get out with a grin . . . Wake with the sun . . . Cock-a-doodle . . .

Tension relaxed, we turn over and try to sleep once more, through the news that there will be moderate visibility in the Orkneys, with a prospect of showers later. Failing, we turn with resignation to our tartan-patterned enamel flask, hired from Sheila the Receptionist at a shilling a week, and pour out our early morning tea.

Seven thousand others are doing the same. The course has begun. Once upon a time, in this camp at Filey, they trained pilots to fight, those Few who thus saved the Common Man for his very own Socialist century. It took a capitalist, a Mr. Butlin, to go one better, to introduce the Millennium of the Common Man, at ten pounds a week for half a million of the Many each year, in camps at Filey, Skegness, Clacton, Ayr and Pwllheli, all reconvertible overnight should it unaccountably end.

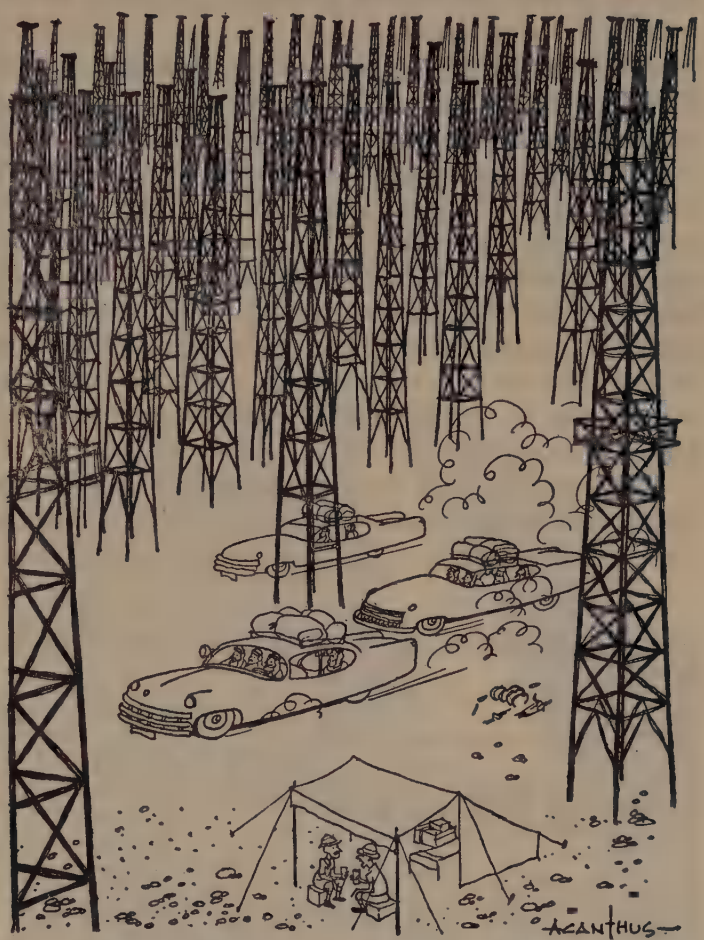
Meanwhile here we are lying in bed, in it, drinking our tea in a luxury chalet, embarking on a week's course of training in pleasure, learning to live, for the first time, life as it isn't, life without tears.

This millennium is based on twin foundations: the public schools for the hell of it, Hollywood for the fun of it. Rolling finally out of bed, in our house without housekeeping, we proceed to the baths, where "Gents" and "Ladies" have become "Lads" and "Lassies"; and thence, after shaving to music, to a multi-coloured dining-hall, where we sit down to breakfast fifteen hundred strong. As we do so the "Mayor" of the camp trounces us playfully on the head with a rubber truncheon, and then sells by auction the chairs on which we are sitting and the plates off which we are about to eat. We do this heartily despite him, all arrayed unCommonly in multi-coloured shirts and pants and prints, and waited upon, with many a smile, by girls in ginghams and bright plastic aprons (dispensing service without tips).

Suddenly there is silence for the House Captain, a clean-limbed youth in a scarlet

blazer studded with Butlin badges, and a rainbow-striped school tie. "Call me Dennis," he says. This is Gloucester House, and we are invited to pull our weight in it, join house committees for the various contests, score all the points we can, and get the cup back from Kent House. Breezily we are addressed by other "Redcoats," prefects without canes in a school without lessons. Then, all together please: "Hi-de-hi, ho-de-ho, 2 . . . 4 . . . 6 . . . 8. Whom do we appre-ci-ate? G..L..O.. S..T..A, *Gloucester!*"

Life in the millennium is, in theory, one long game without rules. Butlin the capitalist knows very well that if you lay down rules for the British they break them. But if you don't they make them. Thus presently lads and lassies alike are enlisting gratuitously in this team and that, submitting themselves joyfully to a competitive routine, cricketing and tennis-playing, boxing and whist-playing, footballing, net-balling, basket-balling, treasure hunting, looking beautiful and even looking ugly, all for the honour of the House and in an unCommon spirit which would have surprised and perhaps pleased Dr. Arnold.



"WELL, THAT'S THE DESERT—A MONOTONOUS SAMENESS—WITH HERE AND THERE A FEW WANDERING BEDOUIN"

Everyone in the millennium must know everyone else. So after chapel in the Gaiety Theatre—voluntarily and largely attended, with prayers for sunshine—those who know no-one proceed to elevenses at the One Alone Club, coming in one by one and going out two by two. A nice girl called Kay, in a blazer, won't let them away until they know someone, suggests ways—like joining committees for a natter each morning—in which they can meet twenty new people a day, warns them against fun and games in the chalets (for the first week), then mates them up and packs them off with a pat on the back and a laugh.

Meanwhile thousands have mustered on the green, for P.T. without effort, followed by a grand march-past without a battle. House bands playing, house banners flying, house songs ringing down the North Sea breeze, they march between mammoth beds of flowers without weeds, in perpetual bloom, shown off by the Camp Controller with the pride of the owner of a dream stately home. They march through a Peter Pannish Paradise, where kiddies by the thousand play, without tears, in a Never-Never Land of roundabouts and swings and fairy castles, drive trains around somnolent dolphins in beds of geraniums, or drop in to hob-nob with other kiddies at the Butlin Beaver Club ("always as eager as a beaver").

They march past a swimming pool as blue as the Mediterranean where, in waters without a chill, Venuses and Adonises from Bradford and Halifax, Middlesbrough and Sheffield, Leeds and Hull, bronze limbs without a flaw. They march past shops without queues where gifts may be bought, Sunday papers or even books, aids to beauty or plimsolls, swim-wear for the beach, underwear for the chalet, chrome and brassware for the home. For the "not-so-young" there are "quiet lounges," havens of rest, and for the tots, besides nurseries and playrooms, such amenities of the millennium as infant feeding centres, nappie service, pram hire and a bottle preparation room.

Throughout the day, the prayers for sunshine answered, there is training in various forms of pleasure: a tea-dance or a coffee-dance, a Ramble to the Happy

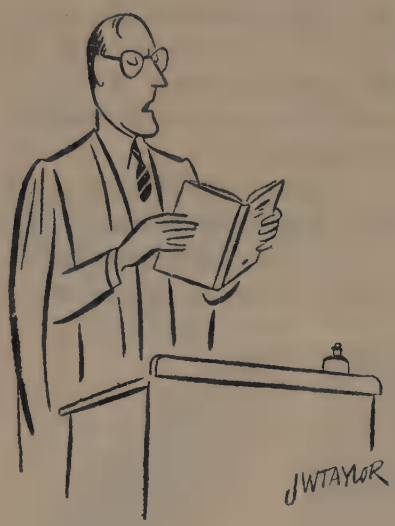
Valley or a Bike Hike to Hunmanby, a mammoth competition to choose a Holiday Princess. Bashful beauties are driven into the ring with encouraging spanks, presented by the House Captains, and judged by a panel of unimportant visitors politely introduced as important. The winner, a shorthand-typist from Chelmsford, wins points for York House, and the judges win points from the crowd as they embrace her.

A prize is then offered, "by kind permission of the Wigan Skin and Bone Yard," for the knobbliest pair of knees in the camp, and won by a factory hand from Manchester, gaining points for Kent House, and proudly revealing that it is his fourth Butlin win. On Tuesday there will be a contest for male "Tarzans," at the swimming pool, which the padre's wife has kindly consented to help judge.

Each evening, in two theatres, there is four-times-nightly variety, entertainment without paying, clouded only by an occasional notice flashed on a board: "Baby Crying in Chalet L 22 SW." Afterwards, in dreamlike, mammoth bars, lads and lassies enjoy luxury without wealth. All alike are labelled with inn-signs, in tasteful English lettering. But even the genus Common Man contains species aspiring to be less Common than others. Thus they reflect subtle differences of atmosphere.

In the Pig and Whistle, the English coaching inn as olde as only Hollywood can make it, with overhanging latticed windows, a real well with real water, and half-timbering cunningly contrived out of chocolate-coloured plaster, one species sings loudly in its shirt-sleeves. In the French Bar another species sings less loudly, often in jackets and sometimes even in ties, enjoying the amenities of abroad without foreigners in a décor of *Folies*, apéritifs and bistros and other such hints of Parisian vice. A more selective species frequents the Harvey Club, "a

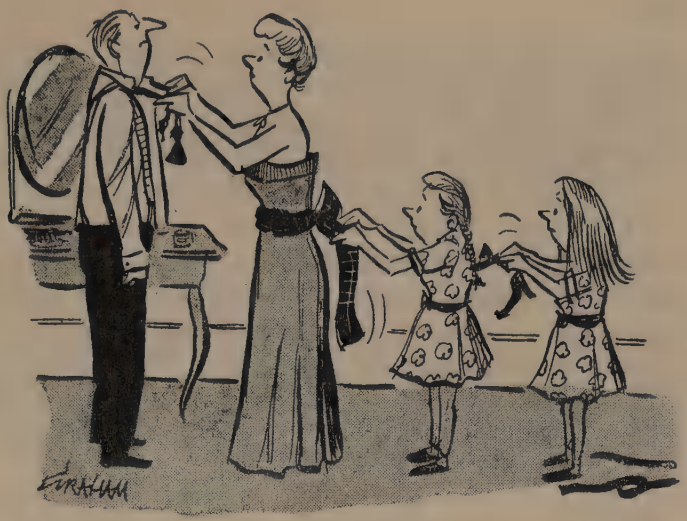
"That's right—watch the birdie"

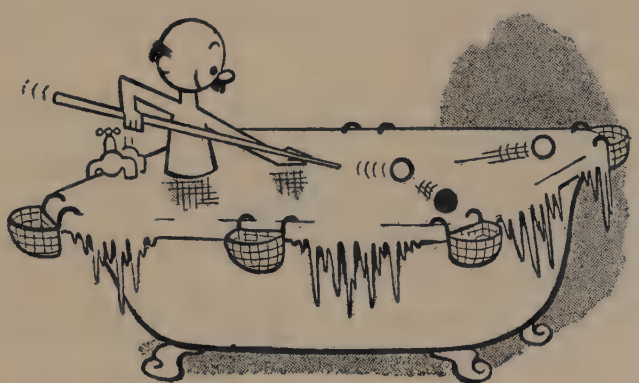


"Page forty, frame three—parse the second balloon"

"Well, it's started the clock going, anyhow"

"Nag, nag, nag—homework, homework, homework!"





ROY DAVIS

luxury drinking warren and secret gossip centre," where amber lighting, rubber flooring and chromium plating transform lassies and lads into exclusive "Rabbits," smartly hatted and suited, drinking multi-coloured cocktails and "real champagne" at 4*s.* 9*d.* the small bottle.

For eating there is salmon salad for one species amid the tropical seascapes of the Caribbean, fish-and-chips for another, amid the draped fish-nets of the Lobster Pot. For dancing there are two mammoth ballrooms, one in the Luna Park, Regency style, and the other Viennese, festooned with vines, emblazoned with Hapsburg coats-of-arms, and complete with an Old Vienna Hollywood set. Here a House Captain called Desmond, affecting a Yale accent, directs English country dances, billed as American square ones. Here lads and lassies, gents and ladies, dance the evening away, until Mr. Harry Roy and his crooners bid them

Good night, Campers, I can see you yawning,
Good night, Campers, see you in the morning,
You must cheer up or you'll soon be dead,
For I've heard it said folks die in bed.

The millennium is over. To-morrow we revert to this all too Common Century.

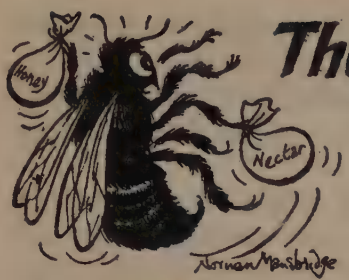
KINROSS

DAY RETURN

The train to the North in the morning
  Is a train with a great weight of care on its shoulders;
It is full of anxious executives
  Leafing grimly through many-paged folders.
There is an uneasy silence in the restaurant-car
  Broken occasionally by the hiss of a brief-case's zipper,
Or an Area Manager rehearsing his speech
  Through a mouthful of kipper.

The train from the North in the evening—
  Ah! That is a very different kettle of officials!
The deal is clinched, the contract signed,
  The advertising scheme bears the client's initials.
Bee-loud the restaurant-car now
  With the brash talk of men who have cleared all their fences,
And the sound of large gins going down
  To expenses.

RODNEY HOBSON



The Interfering Naturalists

THE interfering pranks of naturalists must cause a great deal of worry to the puzzled birds and beasts on whom they practise their ingenuity. One wonders what the poor creatures make of it all—disappearing houses, disappearing prey, dead victims restored to most embarrassing life, and a series of practical jokes played on their sex lives.

Disappearing houses must be upsetting enough. One naturalist apparently had great sport teasing some unfortunate bees with this trick. He picked on the kind of solitary bee which builds and provisions a fairly elaborate nest before laying her egg in it. One of these bees went off unsuspectingly to work one morning—that is, she went off to gather nectar and pollen for her nest—and returned after a short interval to find her nest no longer there.

The poor bee simply could not believe her eyes. She went on searching for hours and hours in the place where she had last seen it and kept coming back over and over again to make *quite* sure that she was not dreaming. The naturalist was very contemptuous of her because her nest was near at hand—indeed she often passed within a few inches of it—and he thought she ought to have gone in and taken possession of it instead of searching so obstinately in the old site.

But surely she was behaving as a conscientious bee with a proper respect for the rights of property. If we returned home one night and found that our house had removed itself without a trace, we might well hesitate to take possession of an exactly similar one in the next street. Like the bee, we should surely think "It *is* like mine, but I *know* I never built a house there!"

Poor bee! What she really thought—if she thought at all—must remain a mystery, but at the least she must have been annoyed, for in the end she flew away and began building all over again. Even now, however, she could not count on her house behaving itself on conventional lines, for the naturalist's next idea was to remove it while she was away and put a different one in exactly the same place. What *was* she to think? Whatever she may have thought, the naturalist was as irritated as ever by what she did, for when she went inside and behaved exactly as usual, he decided that she was stupid.

But why? In similar circumstances we should find it at the least a little embarrassing to run in next door exclaiming "What *do* you think? My house has completely disappeared and there's a different one standing there in its place." No—like the bee, we should probably pretend not to notice. It is difficult to believe that

she really did not notice, for the naturalist went on to offer her substitutes of extravagantly different appearance and size. Sometimes she would discover her house grown to twice the size in her absence, sometimes shrunk to a half; a circumstance not lightly to be overlooked. What a life she led! She can never have had an idea what she would find when she got home.

However, she had nothing to put up with compared to those creatures whose sex life has attracted the interest of naturalists. Birds have provided them with good opportunities in this direction, largely because they are often so surprisingly vague about which *is* the opposite sex. A spot of paint dabbed on or a few feathers plucked out and they seem completely at sea. The male Flicker Bird, for instance, is chiefly distinguished from the female by his luxuriant moustache. Clearly no keen naturalist could be expected to resist a temptation like that. In no time they had a fine false moustache firmly glued to the beak of an otherwise respectable wife and mother.

The result was dramatic, if not unexpected. Her husband—a right-minded bird—instantly threw her out of the nest. She then became the recipient of embarrassing attentions from other females, and her own timid attempts at interesting the males met with a distinctly cold reception, if not outright attack. Life must have seemed very confusing to her.

However, this story has a happy ending, for the moustache was finally removed and she was restored to her rightful husband.

The male locust had a still more humiliating experience at the hands of naturalists. His sex appeal apparently depends entirely on his song, which he produces by vibrating his wings. This could, of course, be frustrated by gluing them together. Once thought of, the idea was irresistible. Some locusts were captured and their wings firmly glued so that they were powerless to move them. The result was what might have been expected and pleased the naturalists, if not the locusts. "They were quite unable to attract a single female," they record with unfeeling triumph. One hopes, but with no great optimism, that they remembered to wash the glue off their wings before proceeding to their next victim.

This was the Grayling Butterfly. This decorative creature performs an elaborate courtship display before the female of his choice which reaches its climax in an elegant bow. This is no idle flourish, but has practical purpose behind it. The male Grayling carries a scent organ on his forewing, and when he bows he manages to thrust it, as it were, right under the female's nose; or, to be more exact, he catches her antennæ, which serve her for nose, between his wings. The scent thus wafted to her is apparently quite irresistible and he has no more trouble with his suit.

Affairs, however, go very differently if his scent organ is taken from him. They can hardly, in fact, be said to go at all. "In spite of intensive courting," brutally observe the naturalists, "he has great difficulty in acquiring a mate." If he does so, it is no thanks to the naturalists but to his own enterprise and initiative. These handicapped males sometimes learn to stand craftily by while another male is

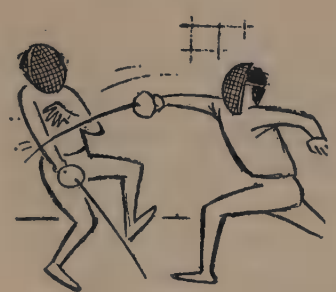
doing his courting, and then, at the very last moment, when the female is bemused and bewildered by the intoxicating perfume, they jump in and take the place of the successful suitor. It is not known whether the female notices this last-minute substitution or not.

Birds, insects, reptiles—all the smaller animals have suffered in much the same way, and one shudders to think of the psychological traumata naturalists may be inflicting by their merry pranks. Does the Grayling Butterfly think, like the girl in the advertisement, "I *used* to be attractive . . . What *is* it about me now?" And his best friends are hardly in a position to tell him. A severe neurosis would seem the very least he might expect. One begins to understand why naturalists cling so firmly, so indignantly, so angrily even, to their often-expressed conviction that animals do not, *cannot*, think.

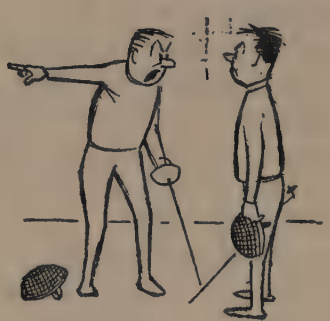
NESTA PAIN

HORSE-TALK WITH A DOG

"He leads a dog's life," people cry—
But why?
Who has a better life than thou,
Bow-wow?
For every hound
Free food is found,
Without the harsh behest we meet
That we must work before we eat.
All day you do exactly as you feel;
You sleep before, and after, every meal.
Things would be said
If I had so much bed.
We seem to suffer mental fogs
Whenever we refer to dogs.
"I'd shoot him like a dog," fierce fellows say:
I never knew a dog that died that way.
Of all the creatures in the Ark
We honour most the ones that bark:
It was, we feel, by heaven's plan
That Noah saved the "Friend of Man."
Canaries, cats, can titillate the soul;
And some have loved a goldfish in a bowl.
But strong men weep
When you are put to sleep,
The Best of Beasts, the Senior Quadruped
(This may embarrass you, but must be said).



"Faithful," "obedient"—in you we see
The kind of character we'd *like* to be.
Yet in the play
Sometimes in real life,
When men betray
Or take another's wife,
What does the wronged one say?
"You beetle" or "You bat"—
"You shark"—"You stinging ray"—
"You gnu"—"You gnat"—
"Hyena"—"tiger"—"rattlesnake" or "hog"?
No, no, surprisingly, he yells "You *dog*!"
And then, of course,
It's odd about the horse.
The horse, we feel, has little fun:
We flatter men who "work like" one
(But mean to say it's overdone).
And goodness, dog, I wonder what you'd say
After a typical horse's day,
Pulling the plough, the wagon, or the van,
Or jumping walls with some enormous man,
Spurs in the stomach, bridles round the face,
And bits and whips to keep you in your place!
Yet when the world rides heavy on our backs,
Too high the fences, and the race too hot,
Whipped by our masters, gored by income-tax,
Do we complain "A horse's life!" Why not?
"Horse-sense," upon the other hand,
Is much admired by many,
A thing I never understand,
For horses haven't any.



With four fine hooves, or even three,
I know they'd never saddle *me*:
And would an animal with any brain
Consent to tackle Becher's Brook *again*?
Then, horse-work we reward:
But horse-play is deplored,
Though is there anything more fair to see
Than colts and fillies frolicking and free?
No, dog, the thought is fuddled;
Our metaphors are muddled.
We seem to stray,
We lose our touch:
But, as you say,
It may not matter much.

A. P. H.

ARENA AT ARLES

Tartarin de Tarascon in all the bookshops,
Prints by Van Gogh, Provençal cottons and garlic.
And Daudet strings it together, fetching
Back the past as easily as his donkey,
The sails of his mill stiff against child's blue,
L'Arlésienne and the bridge painted from straw
Pigment, a half-remembered Chinese etching.

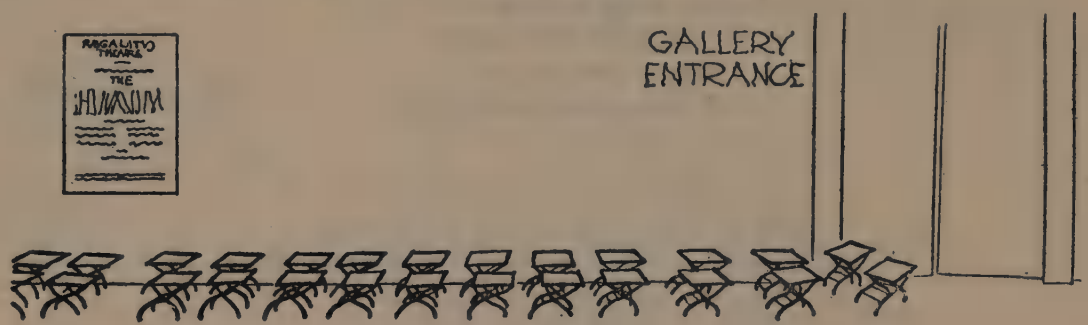
The voice returns, droning *Next, next, translate*
A passage, Vansittart, Ross, politely, *Would it bore you?*
While all the time summer was cramming our nostrils—
Cut-grass, roses, a cricket match going on
Somewhere, far away as our minds
Never much occupied with Daudet and his mill,
But rehearsing desire, conjugating the blank horizon.

Now that afternoon and this gently spill
Two decades together, men repairing the arena
For the Sunday *corrida*, bells ringing out sunset
From St. Trophime—or is it the bell
For evening chapel, prep, the long dream?
But the blank has been scrawled on, graffiti
On the heart scarred like this scorched stone,
Over which clouds now drift from the Camargue,
Bearers of storm, a Past in which we move alone.

Alan Ross

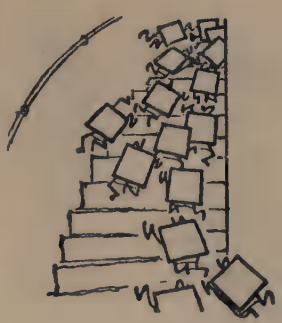
I SELDOM PASS ONE OF THOSE QUEUES OF STOOLS OUTSIDE A THEATRE . . .

. . . WITHOUT WONDERING WHAT WOULD HAPPEN . .



. . . IF THE DOORS .

. . . WERE OPENED . .



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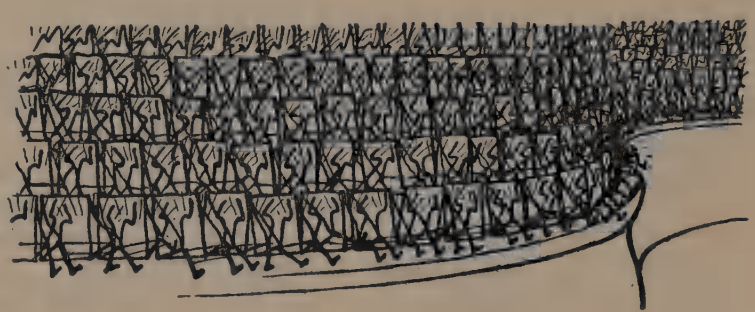


. . . EARLY

Repose for Ramperton

KNOWING him since he was a child, I have often felt that the mechanical triumphs of our modern civilization have been largely devised in order to send Ramperton to sleep, and it is only a few years since he told me that travelling by aeroplane was his one safe cure for insomnia.

What he cannot do is to sleep in bed.

"As soon as my head touches the pillow, I try to solve complicated mathematical problems, climb mountains, or dominate a hemisphere."

Apparently it was always so. "The boy has too active a mind," said the doctors. At school, he used to snatch a little rest by sleeping on the bare boards, or standing for a while on his head. Later he was helped by detective novels, dozing off at the moment when the true criminal was about to be revealed.

But these aids to slumber soon proved unreliable, and before he was twenty his main soporifics were railway trains and motor cars. Especially the Underground. He has often told me what alarm he has felt on waking up to find that the stations were going the wrong way round.

The cinema became his usual dormitory, and I have seen him slumbering in his office when a road drill was at work outside. "It relieves the strain on one's intellect," he has said, and he often found a little welcome oblivion while watching a motor race. The Thane of Cawdor and his wife were notoriously bad sleepers. If they had been like Ramperton they would have dozed off during the knocking at the Castle gate, or when the wood was coming to Dunsinane. Speed, you might

"SOMEONE HAS FAINTED!"

say, was his mandragora, loud noise his lotus land, and he likes nothing better than to take a refreshing nap while the telephone rings. But he will not use drugs, however harmless, and the worst fault of all his remedies seems to be that their effect wears off, as indeed it does with drugs, after a brief lapse of time.

"It's not much use," he points out, "flying to India and back for a good rest, if one keeps waking up every hour or so."

Needless to say, television came to Ramperton as a great boon. The fact that here one sat in a darkened room, and in Ramperton's case, on a very uncomfortable chair, for the sole purpose of seeing, was to him an immediate stimulus to the folding of his hands and the closing of his eyes. Drama and comment were kindly aids to the new opiate, and he would wake up at half-past ten, thoroughly refreshed, and ready for a hard night's work. I have seldom seen him looking so fit and happy as in the last few years.

"Have you no fear," I asked him sometimes, "that this medicine will begin to fail you, like all the rest?" And he cannot deny the danger. But he has great hopes of sponsored television, if that is ever allowed. "With newer and brighter programmes," he says, "with greater range and variety in word and scene, with more strain in fact on the eyes and ears, I ought to be able to woo the drowsy god for many a long year to come."

I deprecate the style of his conversation, but I understand what he means. It would be a curious stroke of irony, it seems to me, if a television programme of the future were to be sponsored by one of those benevolent firms which promise sound sleep, health and wealth and happiness to those who drink possets of chocolate and eggs and milk and malt. For there is nothing, he tells me, that keeps Ramperton awake so certainly as a soothing nightcap of any kind.

EVOE

This Reader Ends Here

I wander round the Library shelves, dipping into the new novels; but when they open like this . . . or like this . . . is it surprising that I come out with something I have read before?

HE looked like life had hurt him all seven foot of him as he walked slowly into the terminus, carrying his saddle over his arm the way they do back in Packseed Country. A ridge furrowed between his brows and his mouth was caught up sharp.

I guessed he was a burned child that would never dread the fire until it tried to burn something he loved and then he would quench it with a chill fierceness that would sear like molten granite and consume like time itself.

By his side there trotted a misshapen lump of human dough that rose with hysterical affability on the points of snakeskin shoes, pawing at the iron-hard muscles of the cowman's arm, eagerly pointing out the sights, a fawning lump, a lump as secretly murderous as a streptococcus, a lump that was kind of a platonic idea of lumpishness. Without shortening his stride or softening the smile that hovered just behind his eyes like a heat-haze in the Blue Roots Country, the stranger flung him under a passing freight-car and then asked a bystander in his soft, dangerous voice whereabouts in the town a man should go that was lonesome for women.

"NOW THIS IS JUST THE SORT OF THING THAT DOES *NOT* HELP ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS . . ."

* * *

Lady de Montmaesle smiled quizzically over her *petit-point*. Then throwing a rueful smile towards the portrait of the nineteenth countess, she walked to the great bell-rope that hung by the overmantel. It was long since the gracious days when she would have rung the silver bell by her side and summoned the Groom of the Chamber to pull the rope. The last Groom of the Chamber had not only refused to take his wages but had forced his employers, who were proud to consider themselves his friends, to accept his life-savings rather than reduce their circumstances still further below the poverty-line.

In response to her summons the junior footman on duty entered, his head whitened, alas, with a flour substitute that came in seven-pound tins from the Co-op.,

and placed a sack of coals on the fire. "With the compliments of the Coal Board, my lady," he said. Beyond windows now cleaned by the National Trust, open-cast coal-mining was rooting out the mineral wealth from the Home Paddock.

The footman was starting to withdraw when Lady de Montmaesle, smiling wryly to herself—Thank heaven, she was murmuring, for my sense of humour—said "James, have you not overlooked something." Blushing, the adoring James produced his Post Office Savings Book. "Hope you and his lordship can make use of this," he mumbled.

"Thank you, James," said Alicia de Montmaesle, and then, with a superb gesture that reverberated with seven centuries of breeding and rebuked modern ways, so-called, she stretched out her translucent finger-tips with a glance of defiance at the nineteenth countess. "Shake hands, James," she said.

* * * * *

This is the tale of what befell Pardiggle Potts, Esq., of Greenery Villa, Spott Avenue, Wantage. It is also the tale of Little Miss Bragg from the shop by the bus-stop, of Jessamy Purdle and her doll Teena-Anne, of Moony, the dog with a grievance, of Professor Salathiel O'Rory O'Rourke who knew songs in twenty tongues and curses in twenty-two, and, above all, of Mipps the Midget who wanted a home with Welcome on the mat and was forever being moved on by policemen and men from the Ministry and men from the Council and the newfangled necessity of earning her living.

* * * * *

As the cavalcade passed under the dexter arch of the sallyport, the great mass of the Abbey—the dorter, the refectory, the scriptorium, the calefactorium, the hospitium—loomed high above the riders who, as their palfreys jingled onwards, glanced back for one last sight of flying-buttress and quoin, nook-shaft and drip-stone, chamfered hood mould and keeled string-course, before turning to the front and observing that they were passing through a street in which could be found cordwainers and curriers, loriners and cutlers, farriers and waxchandlers, nay more . . .

* * * * *

The Combat-sergeant's eyes became red discs as he talked of what you did to an ally when you got him alone back of the hill.

"!!!" snarled Reilly to himself. "!!!!"

R. G. G. Price


JU-
JITSU
CLASSES
JU-
JIT
QUENTIN
BLAKE

KIMONO

THE word kimono, precisely used, means wearing apparel that wraps around one, but if you ask your *amah* to put on her kimono because guests are expected, she knows that you want her to put on her *kimono* and not the checked overcoat given to her by her last employer.

Visitors to Japan, nowadays mostly American, find kimono cute. They fail to realize, as a rule, that the cuteness of the kimono depends much on the art of the wearer. The large sums spent on kimono in attempts to capture this cuteness for themselves are seldom justified.

A broad-beamed woman with frizzy blonde hair trudging gamefully along as if she were on skis is not doing herself justice in kimono. Large red-faced men of mature years have been known to appear publicly in floral designs which no Japanese eye had expected to see but on girls in their late teens.

There have been grosser errors than these. One visiting opera company performed *Madame Butterfly* with all the female members of the cast, including Cho Cho San herself, in kimono wrapped right side over left, to the amazement of a Japanese audience which had until then believed that only corpses dressed that way.

It is as well therefore that kimono is not easy to wear. The women's obi is hot and uncomfortable; the flowing sleeves get into the jam and brush precious articles of bric-à-brac to the floor; and the footgear seems either to remove the skin from between the first and second toes or to drop off whenever a foot is raised from the ground.

The fact is that only the Japanese understand kimono. In childhood they have bowled hoops in it and played battledore-and-shuttlecock. In the wooden clogs so unmanageable to foreigners they have played jumping over ropes and, defying the law, have ridden bicycles. They see kimono with a discernment we cannot achieve. Their eye is not our eye. A Japanese woman in a silk kimono apparently sees nothing unbecoming in showing ankle-length woollen underpants when she steps on to a bus.

If the Japanese are polite about our indiscretions, which they generally are, they give us opportunities to reciprocate. There was a time when the Yokohama and Kobe maidens always wore kimono to work, and in summer they carried their parasols. As they walked along together, conversing—invariably conversing—they would nod and smile to each other in a manner entirely their own, sparkling but demure, vivacious yet submissive. Few of them seem to wear kimono now.

Someone has taught them to fashion their mouths into the enormous squares

now standard in Hollywood. The facial expression adopted to go with this is the one known as "dead-pan." The hair lies on the shoulders, looking all too often as though the decision to have it there was gravity's alone. The jaws move solemnly around the gum. And the dress is a checked shirt and slacks or blue jeans rolled half-way up stout brown calves.

Women's fashions change, and one hopes that this phase will soon pass. Men's fashions stay. For men the established wear on formal occasions, whether morning or evening, is the morning coat. For every Japanese who knows how to wear a morning coat there are ten who do not but who nevertheless feel compelled to resort to it occasionally.

The morning coat in Japan has hard work to do. Like morning coats elsewhere it attends many functions on wearers who bear little physical resemblance to its owner. Unlike morning coats elsewhere, however, many of its working hours are spent kneeling or squatting on the floor. This gives a permanent elbow-bend to the trousers, with a corresponding abridgment of their length, and a discernible backward tilt to the coat-tails.

The shortening of the trousers then tends to bring into prominence the wearer's shoes. These are, for ease in donning and doffing, usually of a wide and easy cut, gaping freely all round the entry. Should they happen to be brown in colour they will provoke no unfavourable comment.

It might be supposed that there is difficulty in finding a hat to carry off this ensemble. Too often, alas! as in our own experience, the choice is limited. It is found that the old brown Homburg which has given such faithful service since 1938 does very well.

JOHN NOTLEY

TRAFFIC SPEED-UP

On Blackfriars Bridge, below a leaden sky,
We sat and took our ease, my tram and I.
Long hours we idled there, scratching our head.
Red, red and amber, green. Green, amber, red.

But this was long ago. One summer's day
They came and took my homely tram away.
For ever and for aye they parted us,
And left me sitting, sadly, in a bus.

Yet all that goes by Blackfriars Bridge is good;
I miss my tram less than I thought I should.
Long hours my bus and I sit there, serene.
Green, amber, red. Red, red and amber, green.

R. P. LISTER

"She does so enjoy having visitors."

SO high are walls, it might be a prison (there's one not far off), but under them one reaches a drive-in, an arch, a porter who doesn't raise eyes from his newspaper: Kensal Green Cemetery.

If we pause, not certain which way to take, it may be with the feeling that we've no business here, and that when we have it's likely to be out of our hands; also we are realizing that make-believe by which, with some old painting or illustration, we would one day *enter* to look round, dip over the hill, and push the gate to the locked garden. Many times, I suppose, I must have passed this same scene framed by the archway. Now I am in and, pausing, part of the picture.

By luck—for there is more than one entrance—we have come in at the beginning (1835, or so). How beautifully time works, rubbing away what's too plain, and scribbling round and over with wildness! More, surely, than the century has obliterated names; here a couple of headstones lean together, there a great black box like a sideboard has been tipped and left; the broken column breaks, and on sculptural ivy climbs the living ivy.

But if the trees grow and breathe, stone—often in a most curious voice—speaks. Sometimes it may be only with granitic name and date; sometimes an address, a flourish, a text will be added; there will be a wife and children, or a plurality of wives;

more than this—information or exhortation of whatever kind—will incline us to spell out what's written. Thus may we encounter Samuel Laver (1797–1868), "musician, painter, and novelist," and surely not otherwise.

Sir William Casement, of the Bengal Army, has regimented four sepoys (or vikings?) who bear on their heads in perpetuity the canopy of his entombment. Honours abound. William Blake, Esq., M.C.P., will not fail to catch the eye. Baronets, benefactors, M.P.s, captains of war or industry, presidents of societies, all seem understandably reluctant to leave a position. But in this matter of worldly emphasis, who has the advantage—they or we?

One may well ask, since the proud rich man—despite camels and needles' eyes—doesn't, it would appear, go out a whit less rich or proud. Kensal Green may be, as the delighted Chesterton saw it, a remote junction to Paradise, but for many of its occupants Fame or Annals is more what they had in mind. Last thoughts must remain hidden; but why not, in every cemetery office, a tabulation of Last Words, which the visitor might inspect for 1*s.* or 2*s.* 6*d.*, going, of course, to upkeep? Those in stone too often betray the relative, hiding or gaining much.

Of disapprobation even the mildest there seems none. Here praise and self-praise link hands, point the toe, set off.

"It is the fate of most men
To have many enemies and few friends.
This monumental pile
Is not intended to mark the career
But to show
How much its inhabitant was respected
By those who knew his worth
And the benefits
Derived from his remedial discovery.
He is now at rest
And far beyond the praise and censure
Of this world.
Stranger, as you respect this
receptacle for the dead
(As one of many that will rest here)
Read the name of
JOHN SAINT JOHN LONG
Without comment."

So, remedial discoveries notwithstanding, it turns out. And yellow and red burns the sycamore, and a train passes.

Even those we do know, or think we know, may be somewhat disguised—Cruikshank, for example:

"For thirty years
a Total Abstainer and ardent
pioneer and champion
by pencil, word, and pen of
Universal Abstinence
from all intoxicating drinks."

The head surmounting this declaration challenges us in bronze: here (claims *Baedeker*) he is. Here he *was*, Universal Abstinence (or some other cause) having removed him to St. Paul's.

But Leech, Hood, Trollope, Thackeray, the brothers Brunel, Wilkie Collins, and "James" Barry (first woman surgeon and army officer, who went as a man) are here, in opposition to that other older brigade, the Highgate hill-siders, who include George Eliot, Herbert Spencer, Marx, and Old Mother Shipton. Dickens nicely distributes his favours, having there a wife, and here a ghost-love—Mary Scott Hogarth.

Between the two famous burial-lands has been split also one of the few great myths of the century: that which strove heroically to unite the Fifth Duke of Portland and Mr. T. C. Druce, shop-keeper of Baker Street, in a single person. Only the latter's uncoffining on the northern heights, after fifteen years' litigation, served to quell fancy. The Fifth Duke was all that a duke might be, habitually wearing three suits, one inside the other, tying his trousers with string, constructing vast subterranean palaces on his Welbeck estate and sacking any of the five hundred men employed who saluted him, travelling in a heavily curtained coach drawn by six small ponies, and eating—in two halves—a chicken a day. He was generally credited with harbouring a corpse on the roof of his London house: this proved—when investigated by a sanitary inspector—not to be the case. The roof-top was bare. But the vault of the Druces, which should have been, wasn't. Profound was the disillusion of thousands for whom it had become an article of faith that only the Duke, popping on bears and indulging in midnight rides and mock funerals, could possibly have run their favourite emporium.

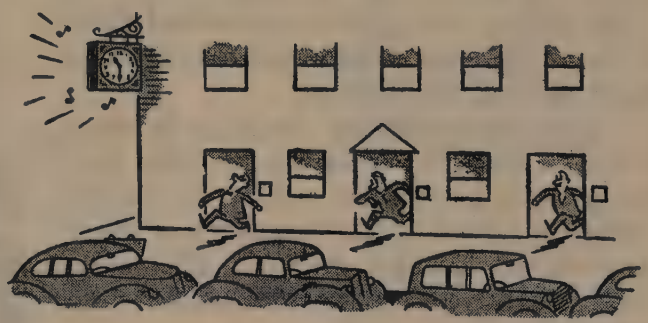
While I am considering this most delectable of histories—a Balzac novel in real life—peering through trefoils and following round inscriptions, an official comes up to ask if I'm looking for something. "Yes," I reply, "the Fifth Duke of Portland." "This way." I tell him some of the story. He points: three hundred square feet of ground, wildly shrubbed, with relations in a corner. The stone, of plain granite, is almost flush with the ground; one can understand, from his Welbeck habits, that he would take to earth as a duck to water. "Is there any considerable system of earthworks or tunnellings?" "Not so far as we've heard." "No way out, no escape-route to the canal?" "Definitely not: we should certainly know of it if there were . . . Brick vault," he adds.

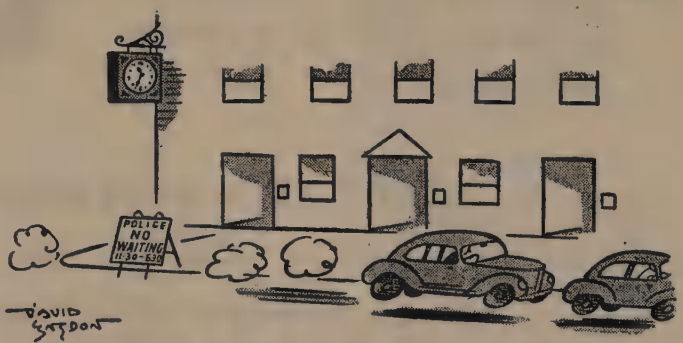
And there it rests. There presumably *he* rests. Though it is still permissible, I trust, to wonder whether the boot hasn't been on the wrong foot all along; beards may be put off as well as on; perhaps it was a clean-shaven Druce who whistled up through the night to Nottinghamshire to lay new plans for catacombs.

After the Duke's enclosure one reaches a more ordered, less distracting modernity of services and lives rendered, and then the meadow as yet untouched, with Surrey hills in the background. For a moment we are in the country; then turn, walk a few steps, and a veritable Alcazar of gasworks ascends, catching gleams


BEWARE OF THE DOG
BEWARE OF THE DOG
LOVELY ICES
PURE FRESH DELICIOUS
10/-


Gais




POLICE
NO
WAITING
11-30-6-30
DAVID
LITTDON


WORTH
PRISON

in the mist and towering to pure sunlight. The place teems with such Follies. This one imposes at the particular instant when we discover what seems to be Compton-Burnett ground: all uncles jostling nieces, and such names as Sabina and Ivy.

In the distance I catch a glimpse of raw earth, close-packed tumuli, flowers fresh and faded. A young woman accompanied by two children bends over a watering-can.

Then, upon us, and upon all round us, there bursts a quite blood-curdling shriek of high intensity, that might be some preternatural summons, a new war or the Fifth Duke sallying out from his long confinement; but is, in fact—as it discloses itself, with shriek joining shriek to form a sustained chord or chorus—no less than the gas-town signal to knock off. I, too, must go.

Once again the dog sleeps on in stone and his master's love, leaf-smoke drifts over the path, a bird's foot patters on gravel. There have been in these seventy acres forty thousand graves dug and filled. All is numbered, winding and odd—quiet, but not dead quiet.

G. W. Stonier

ELEGY IN A DESERTED CINEMA

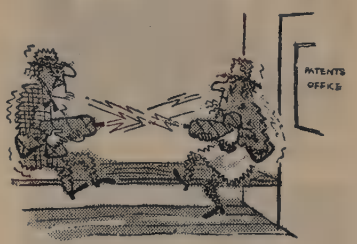
Circa A.D. 1960

Here, in this world of optical illusion,
Of artless loves by artificial light,
Nothing is left but silence and seclusion
And the long monotone of endless night.
The damp spreads, and the silent dustfall dirties
The pile and plush perfection of the hall;
And the huge murals of the middle thirties
Drop slowly from the wall.

Above, where fretwork fancies beyond number
Shone down through changing lights in pastel shades,
Black bats, inverted in diurnal slumber,
Hang headlong from the gilded colonnades.

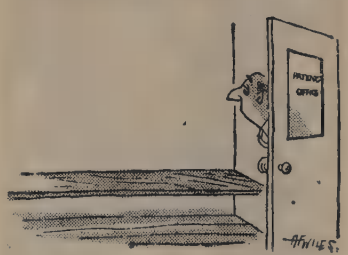
Below, an endless sea of empty places
Stretches where once the torch-beams, pencil-thin,
Probed the long lines of daft and dim-lit faces
For gaps to plug with people coming in.

In front, where cherished children chewed and chattered
And left their loathsome litter long ago,
The sour excreta of the mouse are scattered,
And rats run endless errands to and fro.
Behind, where seat-arms foiled a furtive passion,
Frustrate before the feature film began,
Strange creatures brood and breed and in their fashion
Find a fulfilment here denied to man.



This was the mental mirror of a nation.
Here faith filled large lacunæ left by sight.
Here the unconscious cried for consummation
And, half-assuaged, came out into the light.
Here in the sounding dark some peace was given
To every empty soul that watched below.
Here every woman found her David Niven
And every man his Marilyn Monroe.

That was before the flight of science and fashion
Had stripped the profits from the silver screens,
And Rank gone into radio-telepassion,
And Korda into women's magazines:
Before the church which had been reconditioned
For pictures had become a church again:
Before the studios had been requisitioned,
And Dr. Buchman bought the Gaumont chain.



But now the building, empty and neglected,
Harbours no loves but less than human types.
The lush electric organ, disconnected,
Has not a note in all its hundred pipes.
The bright embodiment of all man cherished,
A generation's cynosure, has waned.
The Gods of a forgotten age have perished:
Only the empty temple has remained.

P. M. HUBBARD

PART-SONG FOR A PARTY LINE

John Bull he had a Telephone,
All on a party line;
His dialling tone was half his own,
His incoming calls half mine.
John Bull had half a Telephone.

John Bull he had an Income,
An Income dearly gained;
But of every pound (that the tax-man found)
Only six-and-eight remained.
John Bull had half a Telephone and a third of an Income.

John Bull he had a spacious House—
It made four maisonettes;

With the £ *s. d.* from the other three
John coped with a few of his debts.
John Bull had half a Telephone, a third of an Income and a fourth of a House.

John Bull he had a Gardener
Whose wage was such a lot,
John could only pay for one weekly day—
So the garden went to pot.
John Bull had half a Telephone, a third of an Income, a fourth of a House and a fifth of a Gardener.

John Bull he had a daughter,
A Scholarship she won;
But the Tax he paid *proved* he didn't need aid—
Though they left him a sixth for fun.
John Bull had half a Telephone, a third of an Income, a fourth of a House, a fifth of a Gardener and a sixth of a Scholarship.

John Bull he had a Rich Uncle
Who died and went to heaven.
He left John the lot but death-duty got
About six parts in seven.
John Bull had half a Telephone, a third of an Income, a fourth of a House, a fifth of a Gardener, a sixth of a Scholarship and a seventh of a Rich Uncle.



John Bull he went to the funeral,
A Silk Top Hat he wore.
And fifty men would hire it again
As forty-nine had before.

John Bull had half a Telephone, a third of an Income, a fourth of a House, a fifth of a Gardener, a sixth of a Scholarship, a seventh of a Rich Uncle and about one per cent of a Silk . . . Top . . . Hat.

John Bull was once a whole man
And after our own hearts;
But the most we can say about him to-day
Is that he's a man of parts.

JUSTIN RICHARDSON

THE SIGN OF PROGRESS

Planning! There is some honour in the name:
But why must planners cover it with shame?

Beside a river stands an ancient inn,
A humble place that's hardly heard of gin.
Here sit the labourers and talk of oats,
Here come the men who mess about in boats.
The Barge Aground—a name that's fair and fit—
Though I am half afraid to mention it:
I'll tell you why. Since 1869
The little tavern's had a tavern sign.
The sign is painted with an artful hand,
An old barge perched upon a bank of sand—
Seagulls—a red sun sets behind a wood:
It may not be a Turner, but it's good.

CONCERTO DA CAMERA

I SUPPOSE I'M HOPELESSLY UNMUSICAL, BUT I STILL SOMETIMES SIGH FOR THE DAYS WHEN ONE COULD SIT PEACEFULLY IN ONE'S SEAT AND LISTEN TO THE MUSIC, INSTEAD OF HAVING—

TO—

SPEND—

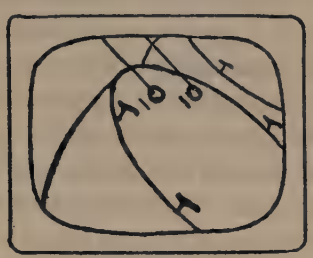
THE—

ENTIRE—

PERFORMANCE—

SWOOPING—

ABOUT—



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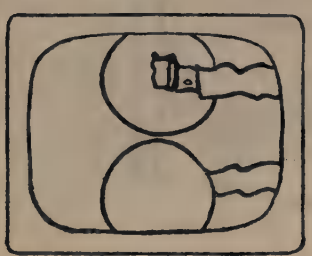

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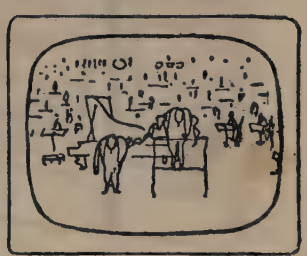
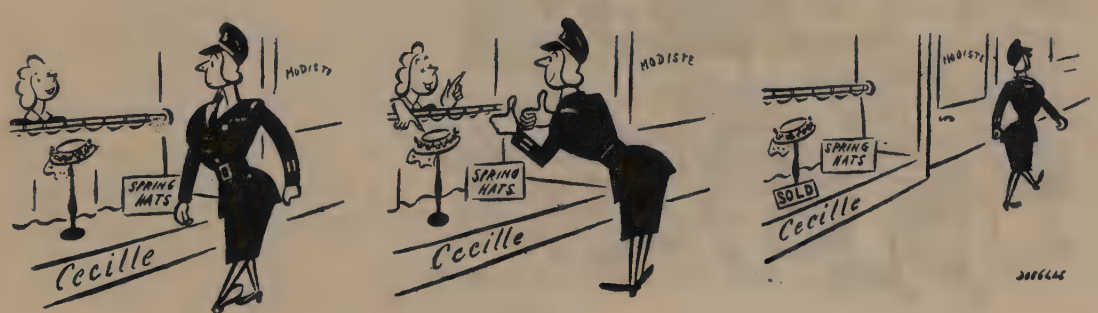


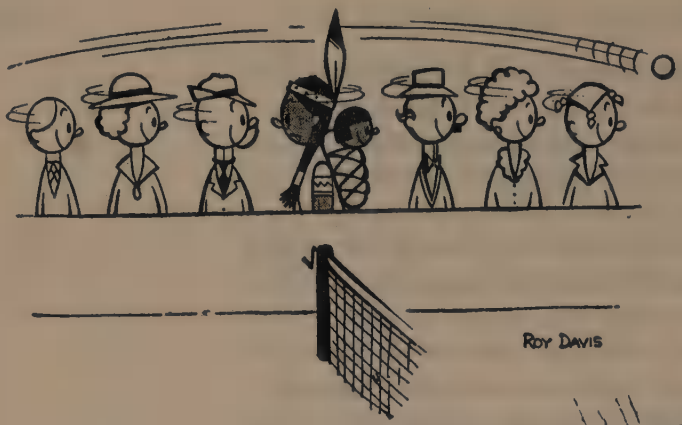
CAMERAMAN

At least it tells the navigator "Here
Is rest, refreshment, bonhomie and beer."
And, oh, what lectures we have had to stand
About the lack of colour in the land!
Poets, reformers, bellowed "on the air"
"There should be light and brightness everywhere."
And black rebukes were muttered, I recall,
About the inns that had no sign at all.
Here was the artist starving for a job:
And here was art demanded by the mob.
Enlightened brewers handsomely obeyed,
And called platoons of painters to their aid.
Hope came to Bloomsbury. *The Barley Mow*,
Green Men, *Red Lions*, filled the studio;
And A.R.A.s were not ashamed to rub
Artistic shoulders with the lowly pub.
Bright new *King's Heads*, *Lord Nelsons* by the mile,
Old Ships and *Spanish Captains* decked the isle.
Alas, how often in the tale of Man
Must Poetry surrender to the Plan!
See the canals, where in their private day
The painted boats were beautiful and gay!
Gone is the Heart, the Castle and the Rose:
The solemn State does not approve of those.
They say that since the nation ran the line
The locomotive does not look so fine.
And now grey councillors are circling round
(With hostile cameras) *The Barge Aground.*
Well, have you guessed? The sign is to be sacked
Under the Town and Country Planning Act!

It's an "advertisement," and it must class
With hideous hoardings in a field of grass.
(That is the peril of the planning kind:
Their logic leads to feebleness of mind.
They cannot, like the children of the light,
Admit exceptions which are wrong, but right.)
But other men disclose the things they sell:
One wonders what will have to go as well.
The chemist's bottles and the barber's pole,
The three gold balls, are clearly for control.
The jolly flags the shipping fellows fly
Are mere advertisements and shame the sky.
The flag that shows that Parliament's on view—
What is its purpose but to cause a queue?
Those scarlet pillars, peppered round the town—
What do they do but advertise the Crown?
If there must be such objects in the street,
The colour, surely, should be more discreet—
Waiting-room brown, perhaps, demure and matt:
It may not catch the eye—but what of that?
We're not important. Will they care a pin
If we put letters in the litter-bin,
Or cannot tell an egg-shop from an inn?
Look, Planners, now, beyond the tavern, do:
There is a spire that advertises too!
O Lord, I rave. I've got 'em on the brain.
Planners, fly hence! Sweet Chaos, come again!

A. P. H.





ROY DAVIS

Shelley Plain

MY guess is that any well brought up young woman, invited by some man friend to "step inside and see my collection of old paving stones," would hesitate on the threshold, mistrusting the genuineness of the invitation. But she might well be wronging the man, particularly if he were an American. Witness this, from the Personal Column of *The Times* recently:

Sale old Paving Stones associated poet Shelley; interest collector, American.—Tel: Broadbridge Heath 108.

Naturally, once the urge to collect paving stones gets into your blood, you want above all the ones with historical and literary associations. You want the ones Dr. Johnson walked on when he was rattling his stick along the railings, and if you can get the railings too, so much the better. Any serious collector would give a small fortune for the actual paving stones written about by Shelley. And so on.

As a matter of fact, Shelley does not seem to have written much about paving stones. He did plenty of paving, certainly, but he rarely, if ever, used stones. One has only to read the *Collected Poems* straight through at a sitting to prove the truth of that. He paved the steps of Liberty with "swift victory"; he paved the paths of the garden where that terribly Sensitive Plant grew with "daisies and delicate bells"; he paved Athens (a little oddly) with "ocean-floors"; and among other materials made use of by the poet from time to time were fire, waves, flowers, flashing rays and lilies. But no stones. It is true that

> Corpses are cold in the tomb
> Stones on the pavement are dumb

makes a promising start to "Lines Written During the Castlereagh Administration." But you could hardly hope to sell stones, even to an American collector, on the ground that they were the ones Shelley said were dumb in Castlereagh's time—any more than you could profitably offer him pieces of the pavement that sank under Beatrice's feet at the beginning of Act III of *The Cenci*.

Could these old Paving Stones be some that Shelley wrote *on*, rather than *about*? I can find no evidence to support such a theory. If it had been Wordsworth, now—

Sale old Stones, associated poet Wordsworth.

—one would have known at once that they came from that "Heap lying near a Deserted Quarry, upon one of the Islands at Rydal," upon the largest stone of which Wordsworth (using, he tells us, a slate pencil) so rightly wrote:

> Stranger! this hillock of misshapen stones
> Is not a Ruin . . .

One imagines that the price of such a heap, to an American collector, would run into five figures.

Shelley, however, did not share Wordsworth's fondness for scribbling his verses on the detritus from quarries, the walls of houses, seats in yew-trees, etc. One is forced reluctantly to the conclusion that these Paving Stones are associated with Shelley only in the sense that he may once have trodden upon them in his heedless way. Their provenance is not directly stated, and the choice at first sight seems fairly wide, Isleworth, Eton, Oxford, Clapham, Keswick, Lynmouth, Marlow, Tremadoc, Dublin, Cork, Killarney, Bracknell, Edinburgh, Este, Leghorn, Geneva, Bishopsgate, Venice, Rome, Naples, Florence, Pisa—Shelley visited them all; and many of these places, with the likely exception of Venice, must already have been adequately paved in his time. A *complete* collection of paving stones associated with the poet might well be the work of a lifetime.

But a closer look at *The Times* advertisement affords a more definite clue to the patient investigator than was at first apparent. The advertiser gives his telephone number. The place thus indicated can be tracked down in the A.A. Handbook, where it will be found to have against it the highly significant entry " Horsham 2." Now Shelley, as everybody who has an encyclopædia knows, was born at Field Place,

near Horsham, Sussex. These Paving Stones, it is reasonable to deduce, must be those on which the infant feet of little Percy Bysshe were wont to patter. What a prize for a collector! The only snag, if such it can be called, is that the purchaser would have to buy a good many of the stones to be sure of getting one that the young poet had actually set foot on. The little rascal may well have had that tiresome habit, peculiar to children, of skipping over the alternate ones.

Well, well, the investigation has not been without its reward. True, it was quite a labour to read clean through the *Collected Poems*, and not a single paving stone to show for it when it was done. But there were good things by the way: the footnotes to "The Dæmon of the World—A Fragment," for instance. "The pleasures of taste to be derived from a dinner of potatoes, beans, peas, turnips, lettuces, with a dessert of apples, gooseberries, strawberries, currants, raspberries, and in winter, oranges, apples and pears, is far greater than is supposed"—one had forgotten that Shelley wrote that.

For sale, old potatoes, beans, peas, lettuces, oranges, apples and pears, associated poet Shelley.

Any chance interest American vegetarian?

H. F. Ellis

Decayed Old Me

AM at war with old battle-axe in bed-sit next to mine. Is driving me *up wall.* Old battle-axe gets up at eleven, has nap before lunch, nap after lunch, goes to bed eight-thirty. Is as fat as pig and *must have silence.* Has ears like dog listening for biscuit tin and screams about noise if I peel a potato.

On Saturday was using for first time old vacuum cleaner bought from switchboard operator at office. Had given me demonstration and it sounded all right, so rather pleased with self for getting it for fifteen bob. Changed mind when used it Saturday morning. Darn thing blows instead of sucks.

Was chasing feather across carpet, when suddenly vacuum cleaner put on terrific burst of speed, jerked itself out of my hand, and set off alone. Ran over feather, crashed into small table, knocked ash-tray on to floor, and sent *packet twenty cigarettes* into curry cooking on gas-ring. *Furious.* Vacuum cleaner toppled over, lay on side, blew cigarette ash over floor, and hiccuped. Kicked it.

Bang, *bang*, *bang*, on wall from old battle-axe. So walloped saucepan against wall. Cry of rage from next room. Then silence.

Asked Henry round on Monday to try to mend vacuum. Had to smuggle him upstairs because of No Men in Rooms After Ten and Henry been working late. Crept up like mice, then silly ass fell over potted fern. Old battle-axe's door flew

"Coming in the sweep, Charlie?"

open, face over banisters. "Must ask you make less noise. Is disgraceful hullabaloo at such hour and wish to sleep like civilized person."

Thank goodness dark on first landing and Henry unnoticeable when flat on face.

Finally arrived in room safely. Henry took vacuum to pieces. Old battle-axe's door opened, footsteps downstairs. Then two people came up, knock on door.

Mrs. P.: "Is There Man In There?"

Henry: "No."

Mrs. P. opened door. Old battle-axe licking lips in background. Mrs. P. stared at Henry. Henry sitting in midst of vacuum cleaner.

Mrs. P.: "Is Disgraceful!"

Henry: "Quite agree. Fifteen shillings for vacuum cleaner that blows is clear swindle."

Mrs. P.: "Rules are made for good of us all. Rules are not made to be broken."

Old battle-axe: "Sleep impossible with such goings on going on."

Self: "What mean? No goings on going on. Henry very kindly mending vacuum cleaner. Is only ten past ten."

Mrs. P.: "Ten past ten is ten past time No Men in Rooms. Am old-fashioned and proud of it."

Old battle-axe: "Was assured this respectable house."

Self: "Must point out this my sitting room. Visitor here same as visitor at home."

Mrs. P.: "No, no, ah, no. Your *mother* be with you at home. Must have *some* reservations."

Old battle-axe: "Understood this nice quiet house and now nerves in quivering shreds."

Mrs. P.: "Where have modern ideas brought us? Divorce, *Dissolution! DECAY!*"

Old battle-axe: "Whole nervous system in chaos."

Henry: "Shall I leave?"

So he left. Didn't continue fight with Mrs. P. because room could be worse and very difficult to find another.

But *loathe* old battle-axe. Especially two days ago when learned she is leaving —has found *unfurnished flat without premium*! Could have killed her—but gave her vacuum cleaner instead.

MARJORIE RIDDELL

Dodge Castle (Stately Home Ltd.)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THE Fifth Annual General Meeting was held on December 28 at Dodge Castle. Present : Lord Dodge (Chairman), Lady Dodge, the Hon. Rupert Dodge, the Hon. Lavinia Dodge. The Chairman said:

"The Accounts for the year ended November 30 last disclose the most gratifying Net Loss of no less than £5,678, nearly £3,000 more than our previous record. The Loss is, of course, carried forward to our Parent Company, MYSELF (1948) Ltd., which it will virtually free from liability for Income or Sur-tax this year—and how many parents can say the like?

"This resounding success is, as you know, due to our revolutionary new system, TOTAL STATELINESS (Pro. Pat.), marketed under the trade-name '*See* Gracious Living Lived' (Regd.). A word on the historical background and future developments of this great invention will not be amiss.

"I would remind you that our early trading was marked by an almost criminal *naïveté*. Receipts were confined to an ' all-in ' half-crown charge for viewing the *whole* of the Castle, not one penny extra being asked for such priceless assets as Queen Elizabeth's Dormy or Bloody Mary's Boudoir, to name but two. Advertising was impersonal and even grammatical. Tips were unsolicited and, worse, unpooled. Small wonder that our takings were modest and that, in consequence, even those paltry expenses which we put forward—the butler, three maids, a gardener, a couple


NOTICE
THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED ON THIS WALL ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE OWNER OF THIS PROPERTY
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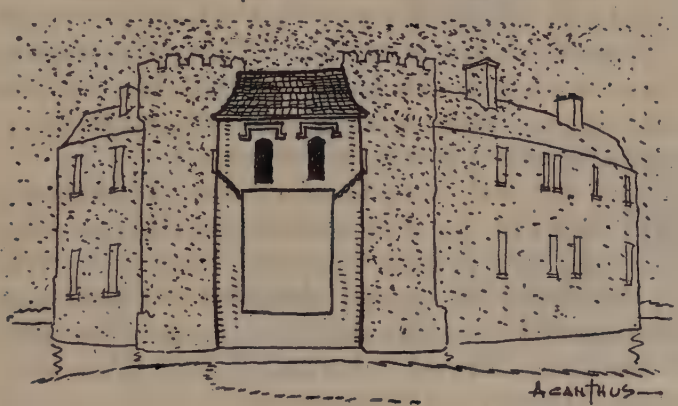
Gats

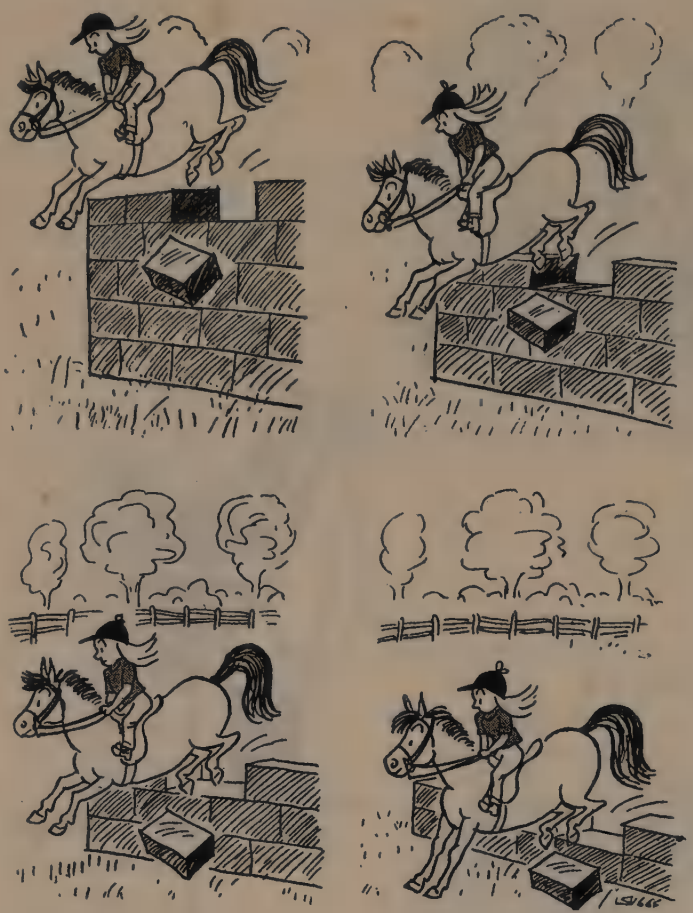

Sprod


STAGE DOOR
CAVALIER


BARGAIN BASEMENT
Playfair


SMOG COMING


ACANTHUS



of new carpets—were whittled down by the Revenue almost to actual cost. As a result, our first year's operations ended in a profit, which dogs the finances of the Company to this day.

"The lessons of this set-back were, however, quickly learnt. A tour of our competitors' units was made, and their best methods adopted and improved upon. Extra charges were at once imposed for each extra attraction. Where such did not exist they were promptly created. Ye Moate Two Shillinge Carre Parke, Ye Dungeon Lovers'-Lounge and Ye Haunted Lav. date from this time. Antiques were liberally hired, bygones actually bought. A most important extension was Ye Tilt-Yarde Teas, enabling us to include the upkeep of the stables in our costs. Advertising played its full part, souped-up pictures of my wife and daughter, under the now famous slogan 'Dodge Castle—the STATELIER Home!' creating widespread wonderment.

"The success of these measures was weighty but one-sided. Receipts rose by leaps and bounds, *but without a proportionate rise in expenses*. True, our domestic wages, repairs, heating, lighting and so on were now being absorbed, but the main bulk of our living costs—food and drink, clothes, hunting, shooting and fishing—was still being paid for out of your Chairman's own taxed income.

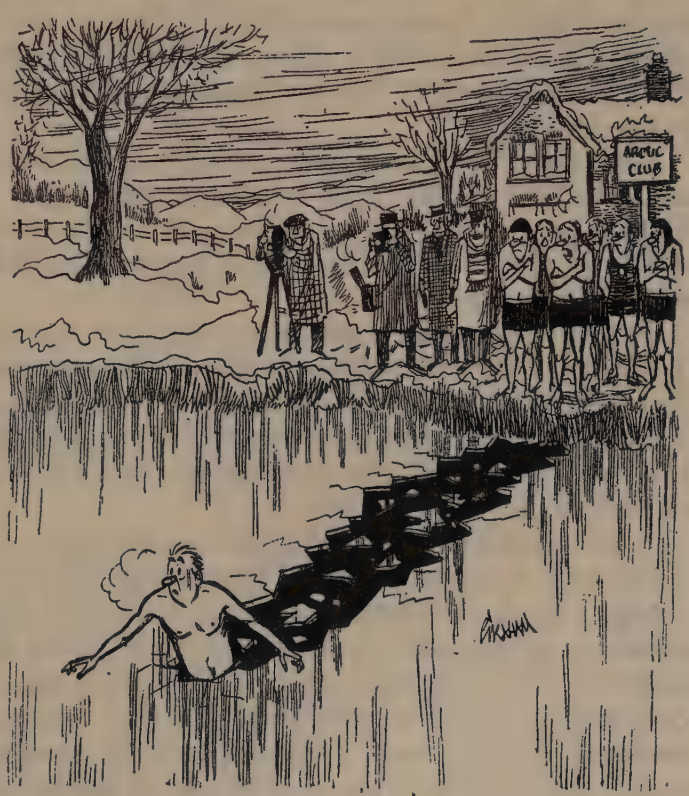
"However, a lucky accident now occurred, and pointed the way to our present—I trust permanent—prosperity. One day, my wife inadvertently left, on King Richard's Chaise-longue, the corsets she burst at King George's Coronation! Who will ever forget the vast queues that formed to inspect what they obviously considered our star exhibit, entirely undeterred by the extra shilling so promptly imposed! There and then was born the concept of TOTAL STATELINESS (Pro. Pat.), stemming from the instant perception that *personal* exhibits could not only draw the

Big Penny but could cover *personal* expenses. For, if the public *paid* to handle a pair of corsets, the maintenance of such corsets *must* be chargeable against revenue! Total *personal* exploitation was thenceforward the clear goal.

"Hence let me say that the financial rewards of this policy have been at least equalled by the spiritual satisfaction of giving real pleasure to so many of our fellow-creatures and/or clients. The appreciation of our public as they watched the family at meals, as they crowded in upon Lavinia's hair-washing, helped Rupert to get back on his horse, or listened to my afternoon nap was obvious in their expressions, facial and otherwise. The happy click of cameras has accompanied our venture of Family Prayers, gay faces have popped up over my morning *Times*. Even our little quarrels —and what family has none!—have, it seems, been a great draw; so that a long series of tiffs, especially those involving an interchange of soft fruit, is scheduled in next year's Plan.

"To return, however, to matters material. The success of TOTAL STATELINESS (Pro. Pat.) remained quite uncertain until its fiscal watertightness could be proved. I am happy to tell you that the Revenue Authorities have just agreed that, as '*See* Gracious Living Lived' (Regd.) is the source of the Company's income, *the full costs of such living are properly chargeable as expenses of the business*. This ruling extends to all gracious Raw Material (Occupational Clothing, Cosmetics, Glossy Papers, etc.), to gracious Labour (Personal Maids, Grooms, etc.) as well as to gracious Welfare Services (South of France, Polo, Clubs, etc.): an objection about gracious Food and (especially) Drink was overcome by citing the precedent of Pablo's Performing Seals Ltd., whose personnel also took their meals in public, thus providing an incontestable analogy with ourselves.

"A word about the future. The business is on a sound loss-making basis, expenses are rising, and the extension of our opening



"WHAT'S IT LIKE . . .?"

hours to allow Gracious Living Lived (Regd.) to be *seen* 'From Bath to Bed' (Trade Mark) should add considerably to next season's turnover. Prospects, in fact, are splendid; and further plans are on the drawing-board. Of these I can reveal no more than five highly confidential, five necessarily cryptic, words—'The *Statelier* Home—ON ICE!' "

The Report and Accounts were adopted.

JUSTIN RICHARDSON

The Air-Gun, Colonel Moran

"What have you done!" I cried, striking the pistol from Mrs. Hudson's grasp. "That wasn't the plaster-cast—that was Mr. Holmes!"

NO one can tell how many times Conan Doyle (*père*, of course, not *fils*) scribbled down with fierce enjoyment some purely recreational passage of this kind, savoured it for a moment, and tore it up with a groan. The albatross round the Ancient Mariner's neck was nothing to Holmes round Doyle's: in all the chronicles of literary practice there is no more poignant picture than that of Doyle salvaging from the Reichenbach Fall the fragments of a myth so jubilantly shattered a year or two before.

As far as I am concerned, however, others may yet succeed where both Doyle and Moriarty failed. They are doing their best. The latest attempt to destroy Holmes—or, rather, since a brain-child is indestructible, to destroy the esteem in which he is held—is the erection of a plaque, in Bart's, to mark his first meeting with Watson.

The mystery about the plaque is that no one had thought of doing it before. There are plenty of bodies in existence, hard at work trying to make a bore of Sherlock. What of Boston's "Speckled Band," and the "Baritsu Chapter" of Tokio? What of Mr. Christopher Morley and his "Baker Street Irregulars"? And had the "Sherlock Holmes Klubben" of Denmark never thought of getting craquing on a bit of plaquing?

It is even more surprising that no fan-club nearer home had hit on the idea. There must be dozens of them about, with names like the "Noble Bachelors," the "Reigate Squires" and the "Norwood Builders." For them, Holmes is a perennial excuse for a night out with the boys. They meet in the Conservative Club, and dine with handcuffs in the butter-dish and tobacco in the Persian slipper. Whenever the conversation affords a suitable opening they roar at one another: "You know my methods, Watson," and "Here, unless I am mistaken, is our client" (meaning the waiter from the bar with another tray of old-and-milds). On gala nights some specially privileged member is encouraged to throw the company into ecstasies by

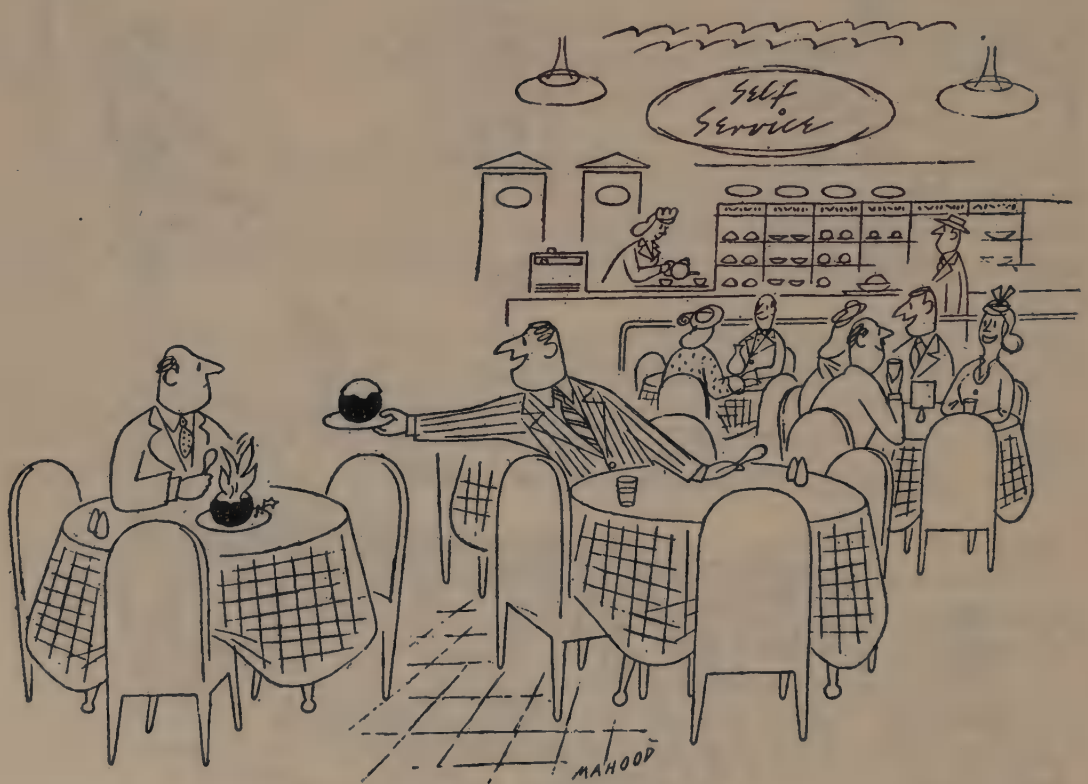

PERFUMES
ALLURE
IRRESISTIBLE
LURE
PERFUME
SONS
WORKS

shouting "Fire!" and exploding a plumber's smoke rocket behind the piano, while another, with concert-party associations, runs out disguised as Irene Adler.

Even so, they don't go putting up plaques. At least, they haven't so far. I suppose that now, someone having thought of commemorating the incident—if it amounts to that—in Bart's, others are sure to follow.

One thing you must concede to these enthusiasts—nothing is too much trouble for them. One of them presented to the 1951 Sherlock Holmes exhibition a test-tube filled with actual soil from the Reichenbach cliff-path. This, you will recall from Watson's narrative, was blackish, and "kept for ever soft by the incessant drift of spray." It was rather a pity that the organizers of the exhibition, so far as I remember, made no effort to keep it in this condition—perhaps there was some difficulty about getting drifts of the actual spray.

Yes, I think we may take it that plaques are on the way all right. There is no shortage of sites, even if, rather unfortunately, *the* site must remain unlabelled: the Abbey Building Society, situated as near to the location of the Baker Street rooms as can be calculated without any data to speak of, must already get its fill of



"Could I have a light, please?"

American visitors calling to get their stolen cars traced; to start hammering plaques on the front door would be too much.

But there are others. It should not be impossible to find the room at the Foreign Office from which the Naval Treaty disappeared, for instance; or that at Trinity College, Cambridge, where young Mr. Overton decided that only Holmes could recover his missing Three-Quarter. The authorities would gladly clear a space on the wall. What about a nice plaque in Pall Mall, at the point where a dark man with parcels paused for unwitting identification (as a recently discharged Royal Artillery N.C.O. of the Indian Army, widowed but with several young children), by Sherlock and Mycroft from a club window?

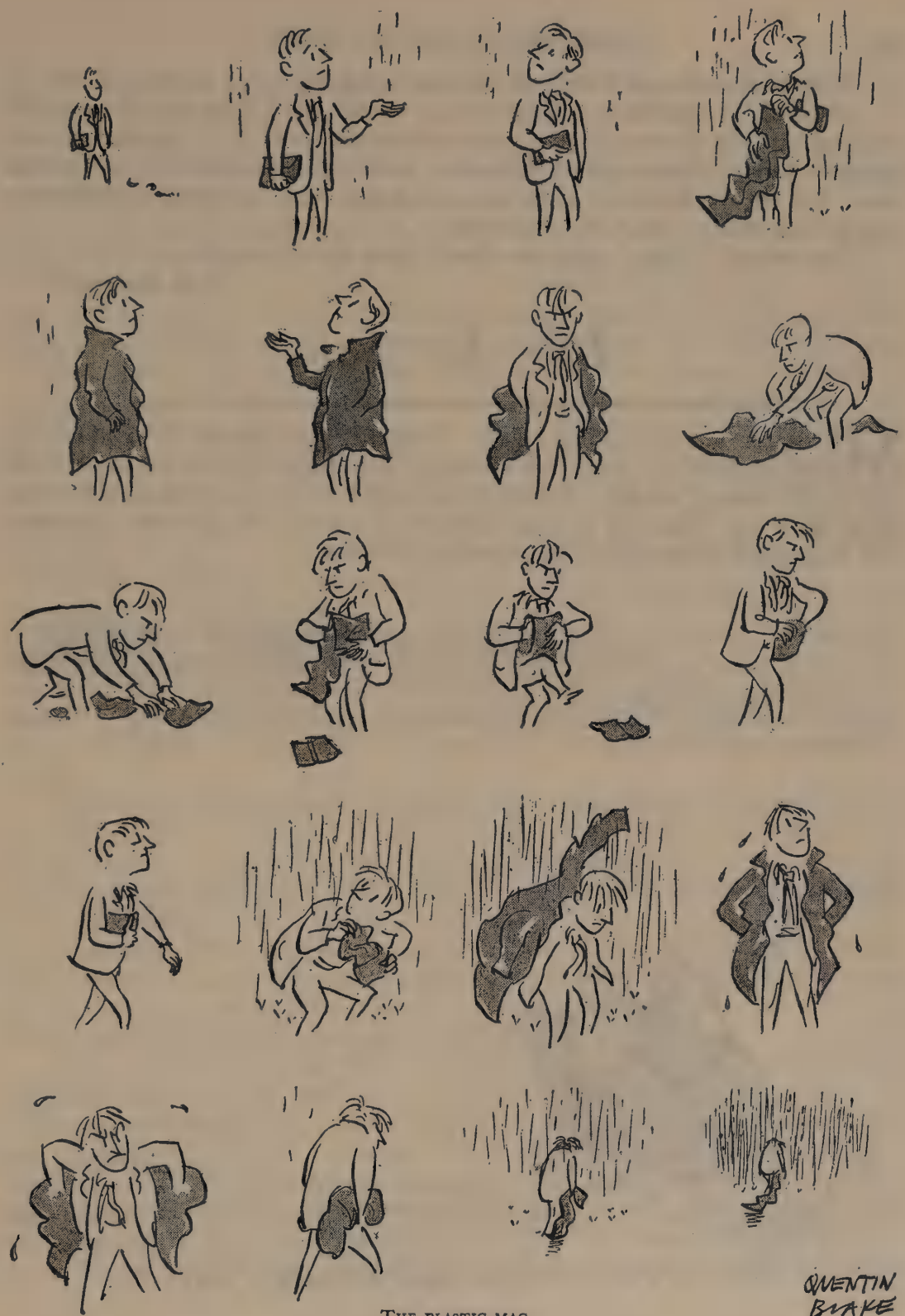
There is the St. Pancras Hotel (or, if there isn't, some equivalent establishment in those parts would be happy to stand in), where Miss Mary Sutherland would have eaten her wedding breakfast after marrying Mr. Hosmer Angel, if only he hadn't reverted before the ceremony, as Holmes deduced, to his true identity of Mr. James Windibank.

No, no real shortage of sites. Before very long, when the thing catches on, and equipment can be bought at mass-production prices from the Holmes and Watson Souvenir Plaque and Novelty Company (1954) Limited, there won't be a building in London unrecognized. In the world, you might say. Pursue this idea conscientiously enough and you will exhaust the cases actually chronicled, and be able to branch out into those merely introduced as background material. The Atkinson brothers would get a suitable memorial at Trincomalee. Somewhere in Sumatra the Giant Rat must be buried. The "reigning house" of Holland ought to be good for a plaque. And someone in Odessa is bound to have a record of the great detective's movements in the Trepoff murder case. Go to it, gentlemen. Put out more plaques.

I would say only one thing. The plaqueteers would do well to remember, as they hunt London's streets for the shop that sold the luminous paint to the Hound of the Baskervilles, that I shall be there.

Cambridge 1954

GENTLEMEN WITH UMBRELLAS



THE PLASTIC MAC

I shall be there, and I shall be in a very excitable state—a Study in Scarlet, you might say; a Man with a Twisted Lip. And I shall have with me my steel harpoon, my Von Herder air-gun, my Indian swamp adder and my little arrows dipped in curare. So be warned, that's all. Look at this Cardboard Box of human ears. It's not too late for you to leave my friend Holmes where he belongs—between the covers of the Collected Works.

You refuse? Then I think you should know the alternative . . .

J. B. Boothroyd

Bike for Sale

MY despair was beyond expression. Neither the back streets of Bradford, nor seven years in the Army, nor a working knowledge of three languages could give me the words I needed. I stood by the roadside at 1.30 a.m., three miles from home, heavy rain plastering my hair down, fingers numb and darkness all around. The back wheel of my bicycle had developed corners.

"Hey, wait a moment, I've just thought of a wonderful short cut"

One minute I was pedalling against the rain. I had made a speech at a by-election. The morrow being Saturday I could lie in. I was not happy—no one can be happy on a bicycle in the small hours of a wet night—but I was attuned to my misery. The next moment I was in the ditch. My back wheel was a mess of spokes like metallic spaghetti and the rim was more square than round. In the seventeenth century, mathematicians spent years in attempts to square the circle. I did it in two seconds flat.

I lumped the bike on my shoulders. "I am a failure," I thought. Twenty years ago when I was fourteen I had broken the wheel of my very second-hand bike on the road between Knaresborough and Harrogate. Over the high hill at Yeadon, down through the valley in a rainstorm, over the greasy cobblestones of outlying villages on a bleak Sunday evening I had lugged, pushed and dragged the wreckage. Around me the roads grew quiet. The lights on the hillsides disappeared as folk went to bed. The last tram careened into the sheds at the terminus, and a ghostly city of glistening pavements saw me pushing still. That was twenty years ago. And in the matter of mechanical locomotion I had not progressed. I was still fighting the stubborn recalcitrance of a very broken, very second-hand bike. In the dark. In the rain.

Last time it happened I got a new bike. Half a crown down and one and sixpence a week. It had handlebars that dipped like a ram's horns and a saddle that elevated my posterior above my head. The tyres smelled of new rubber. The wheels hummed as they turned. It shone. I used it more for show than for travel. It gave glory to my days and delight to the summer evenings. I sold it in 1940 to my platoon sergeant for ten bob and the right to dodge spud-bashing parades.

This time, I reflected, as I shifted the thing from the groove it had worn in my right shoulder, I deserved something better. I would buy a new wheel with one of those built-in motors. Thirty pounds it would cost. Of course I had not got a loose thirty pounds, but I could raise ten. Maybe I could do it for ten pounds down and something each week.

But the hill to my home is steep and I am heavy. Perhaps I needed something more powerful. Perhaps I ought to use the thirty pounds I was going to spend on a mechanical wheel as down payment on a new motor bike. I could see myself roaring up the hill with an open exhaust at seventy m.p.h.

Then I remembered the crash I had in 1940 near Saffron Walden and the dreadful second I shall carry with me through eternity when I realized that the oncoming truck was going to hit me and nothing but divine intervention could save me. The divinity did not intervene. I remembered the time I went through a hedge near Salisbury while racing a Canadian D.R. I remembered when I got the wheel caught in the tram lines down the Old Kent Road. In two years I cost the Army about £600 in motor bikes.

Why not use the £120 a motor bike would cost as down payment on a small

new car? That was the answer. If we stopped eating I could manage the instalments.

I rested near the canal. The water shone in the fitful moonlight. As I was going to buy a small new car I would not need the bike. I was tempted to throw it in. But I caught sight of my new lighting set. Pity to waste a new lighting set. I plodded on.

Of course, with a large family I would be cramped in a small car. Better get a big one. The local paper was advertising a second-hand limousine for £800. If I used the £450 a small car would cost as down payment on the limousine I could ride in comfort. I visualized a touching little scene at the House of Commons. "Can I give you a lift, Clem? No trouble. My limousine is outside."

As I struggled on through the rain, doubt began to nag. Second-hand cars can be troublesome. If I used the £800 the second-hand limousine would cost, as down payment on a new one costing, say, £3,500, I could enjoy trouble-free motoring for years.

That was the answer. I was happy. Everything was solved. I even whistled on the last mile home.

This morning, therefore, I took firm action to deal with my travelling troubles. I took possession of my wife's bicycle. Would anyone like to buy a good, solid, gent's bike with a square back wheel?

WILFRED FIENBURGH

TO A SCHOOL JULIET

Could I forget thee in that other play
  Then might thy gentleness command belief
Nor present scenes be dull'd by yesterday—
  With recollection muddied o'er . . .
                In brief,
Sweet Capulet, I cannot overcome
The mem'ry of thee shoving in the scrum.

MARK BEVAN

FEMME FATALE

For a woman to be a *femme fatale*, in other words inimitably fashionable, elegant, charming and chic,
While appearing from within a multitude of undergarments, zippers, buttons and hooks,
And for a woman to get a graceful carriage with a nipped-in waist, high-heeled shoes and the silhouette of a female freak
Is far more difficult than it looks.

There's no doubt that a certain *savoir faire* is needed for a woman in a barrel-shaped
tweed coat and skirt to look palely aloof,
And it isn't every woman who can look delightfully dashing with a cummerbund on
or in an afternoon décolletage,
Nor look impeccably styled in a pencil-slim skirt—the long lean look which seems
to be all warp and no woof,
When her waist is the size which every woman hopes her waist isn't and her hips
are indubitably large.

I can doubtless foil my fashionable coat with suave accessories and temper my elegant
carriage with natural charm,
And be polished, refined and calm,
But I find my gentle femininity is definitely strained when my shoes are too tight
Or my clothes don't feel right
And my corset is crushing me and though I may look as sleek as a seal,
And oozing with chic understatement, that's not how I feel.

Some day, in the unforeseeable unfashionable future,
Lost will be the sartorial splendour the twentieth-century woman achieves,
And some unknown designer will make his sublime creation
Out of two fig leaves.

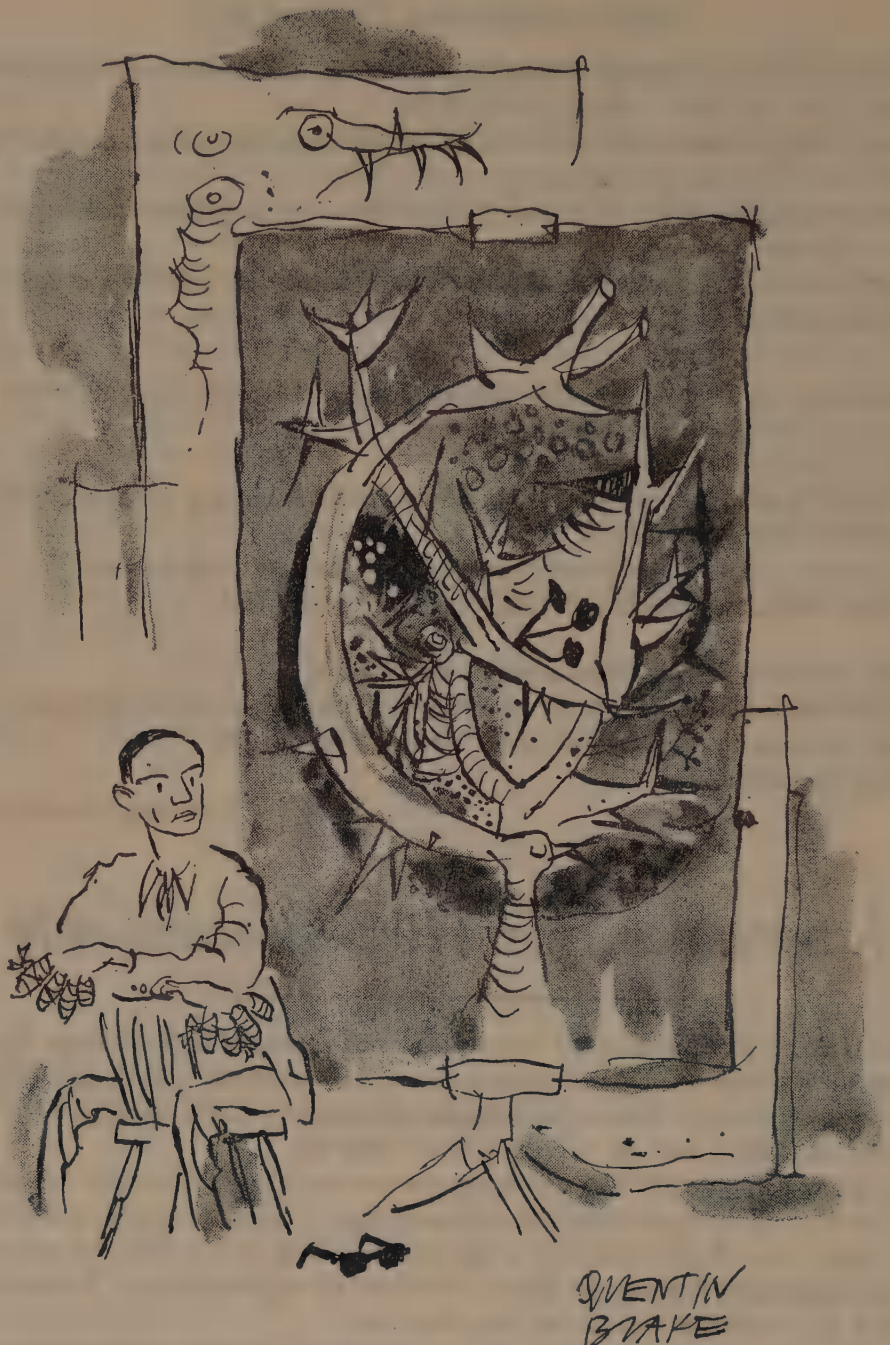
FRANCES NIGHTINGALE

Ignoramus for Hire—Reasonable

LIKE many others, no doubt, I have been much cheered to learn from UNESCO's recent survey that television in this country (whatever the policy in Italy) is out to educate and inform. I have been thinking about my declining years lately, and it seems to me that I may be happily placed after all.

The great selling-point for my octogenarian services will be that I don't know anything at all. There you have the nub and core. A slight dilemma worries me: whether to go in and win alone, as a specialist unique in his field, or to launch a College of Ignorance and grow fat on the fees of eager pupils. I don't know. Anyway, it is a decision which can be taken later.

First let me outline my plan, which may possibly seem a little hazy so far. My work will depend, like practically everything else in thirty or forty years' time, on the well-known scientific achievement of John L. Baird which is popularly known as the Telly. By then the scarcity value of good, wholesome, old-fashioned ignorance will have rocketed to inconceivable heights. The whole nation will be reeling off,



MR. GRAHAM SUTHERLAND

Our England is a garden that is full of coloured spikes
That gnash like devils' dentures where the orange sunlight strikes,
While lurking unexpectedly in a gaily-curtained cove
Sits Willie Maugham in yellow or Lord Beaverbrook in mauve.

B. A. YOUNG

as it might now reel the twice-times table, the itemized contents of the Wallace Collection, selected iambic verses by Archilochus of Paros, the progressive stages in the early development of the Gregorian Chant or the components of a Hele-Shaw radial stroke pump. Childish voices, raised at play in the mean streets of our cities, will be reciting long and fluent passages from the libretto of Friedrich von Flotow's *Martha*. A newspaper item about trade-barriers with Turkey will set any working-class breakfast table in a roaring discussion over whether *Eracle*, dedicated to Theobald V by Gautier d'Arras, was really intended as a burlesque on the Emperor of Constantinople.

I am aware that to the ordinary, stunted minds of to-day my examples of a nation's future erudition may seem a little extravagant. But I am speaking, remember, of a decade or two hence. By that time all the more elementary educational stuff will have flitted across our fifty million screens already, with repeats on Thursdays. Sir Gerald Kelly on the Flemish School, Sir Malcolm Sargent on Handel's *Messiah*, Sir Mortimer Wheeler on the burial rituals of Babylon—we shall have sickened of them all; further attempts, even by a thousand-and-one knights, to engage our attention with such trivia will only evoke family cries of "Nark it, big'ead!" or "Tell us somethink we don't know!"—and peevish letters to the *Daily Express* beginning "Scrap the lot" and ending "When are we going to see a nice ballet from Dargomijsky's *Russalka*?"

"I COULDN'T HELP OVERHEARING WHAT YOU WERE SAYING"

In the more practical field, consider the standard likely to have been attained, in these days, by persons drawn to the making of their own furniture in tooled leather, or garden fences in intricately woven basket work. Think of the culinary mastery of the

ordinary housewife at 22B Acacia Road, and the evening scene when her husband, weary from his day in the locomotive-sheds, finds that her recipe, borrowed from Numenius of Heraclea, is identical with that which he swilled down with a pint of sack at lunchtime in the railway canteen.

Above and beyond these considerations, remember this. Humanity is vain. In all but the finest characters, the amassing of knowledge carries with it an urgent and inflexible corollary—the anxiety to impart it. There may be strong men who know all there is to know about Renaissance glass-ovens or mycorhizic fungus, and go their entire life without mentioning it to any one; but they are few. For most of us, to learn is to tell. What is to happen when there is no one to tell, because everyone knows already? When your latest glittering jewel of rich and exhilarating knowledge—that the Abbé Liszt, for instance, used to play the piano with his fist—has already been simultaneously shared by every conceivable soul to whom you are bursting to convey it?

There, it is out. And that is where I come in. I took the first step last week when, unprotesting, I allowed the hire-purchase men to bear off my television receiver. After a short week or two, working to forget all I have learned since the eve of Coronation Day, I shall be ready. When the time comes I shall be able to assert truthfully in my advertisements that I know nothing. For a few shillings an hour—I have no wish to exploit my talents too graspingly—I shall rent myself out as a listener.

There may be a trifling additional sliding-scale for exclamations of interest, surprise, astonishment, amazement and incredulity (the flat rate would cover a formal "Good gracious" or "Well, I never")—but on the whole I think the fee will be regarded as reasonable by all.

Lastly, if I may—book me now: it's later than you think.

J. B. BOOTHROYD

The Trouble with Babies is . . .

THIS is for mothers. Not for grandmothers, who are so corny about babies that they wouldn't believe it, or for fathers, who wouldn't even understand it. And it is simply a temperate exposition of the things new parents go through.

The trouble with babies is: they are anti-social, disruptive of adult life, dictatorial (often consciously), and choose to impose their pattern on lives that have gone on very comfortably and moderately without them for twenty or thirty years. They deal in excesses themselves and bring others to their own unstable level, whether in pain, in emotion, in sentiment or in shopping.

They demand a good deal of hard physical work to keep them going at all,

and the ruthless technique of a family butler to keep them out of one's hair. They degrade one to the state of anxious, fawning suppliants for a smile. We are babies' yes-men.

They hurt, too. Not in the currently over-publicized business of producing them, but when it's a matter of their own will. As soon as they can have a hand in it, that hand is in your eye, and the other five darling, pink little fingers are clawing away at your glasses while they give you a shrewd kick in the wind with one delicate marshmallow of a foot.

I don't think they smell, though I do know a man who says he can tell the minute there's a baby or an apple in the house. They stop one having holidays. They curtail and often stop any frivolous spending on the part of any adult under the same roof. "I couldn't resist it" is more likely to apply, in fact, to a pink rubber whale—"See him spout, kiddies!"—than to a reasonably ridiculous hat after a baby has set its hygienic imprint on a household.

They force one to prance about on unnatural tip-toes after six o'clock in the evening, and this in spite of their cynical disregard for one's own six a.m. comfort. To have a baby, or two or three successive babies, in the house is like living perpetually under iron rules of conduct, and this is because they always get back at you. If you wake them they not only cry but induce in you a feeling of guilt second only to Cain's. And they sense that and hold it over you. They are nature's home-made Gestapo. (I understand this situation grows tenser as they get older.)

And another thing; their eyes are disconcerting. A brave parent would take the view that they are totally blank, but most of us cringingly ascribe to them the distant wisdom of Athens and the penetration of a dentist's drill. And they don't

talk either, which is obviously pure caprice on their part. They quite evidently started all that thing about the strong and the silent, since at least no one can deny their strength. A single look, a preparatory baring of the gums, if necessary a shrill, batlike scream, and we come to heel. We have to. We've learned our lesson.

There are a very few advantages in having a baby about the place. One is the way they feel when you hold them in that tight, professionally correct grip. That's rewarding. And there's a certain satisfaction, not entirely æsthetic, in wrapping them in the criss-crosses of a fine Shetland shawl. The theory is that it gives them a feeling of warmth and security, but it makes their holders feel pretty secure too, because in that way the babies are pinioned up to the chin and all they can let fly with is a look of pure reproach or, at the worst, cold enmity.

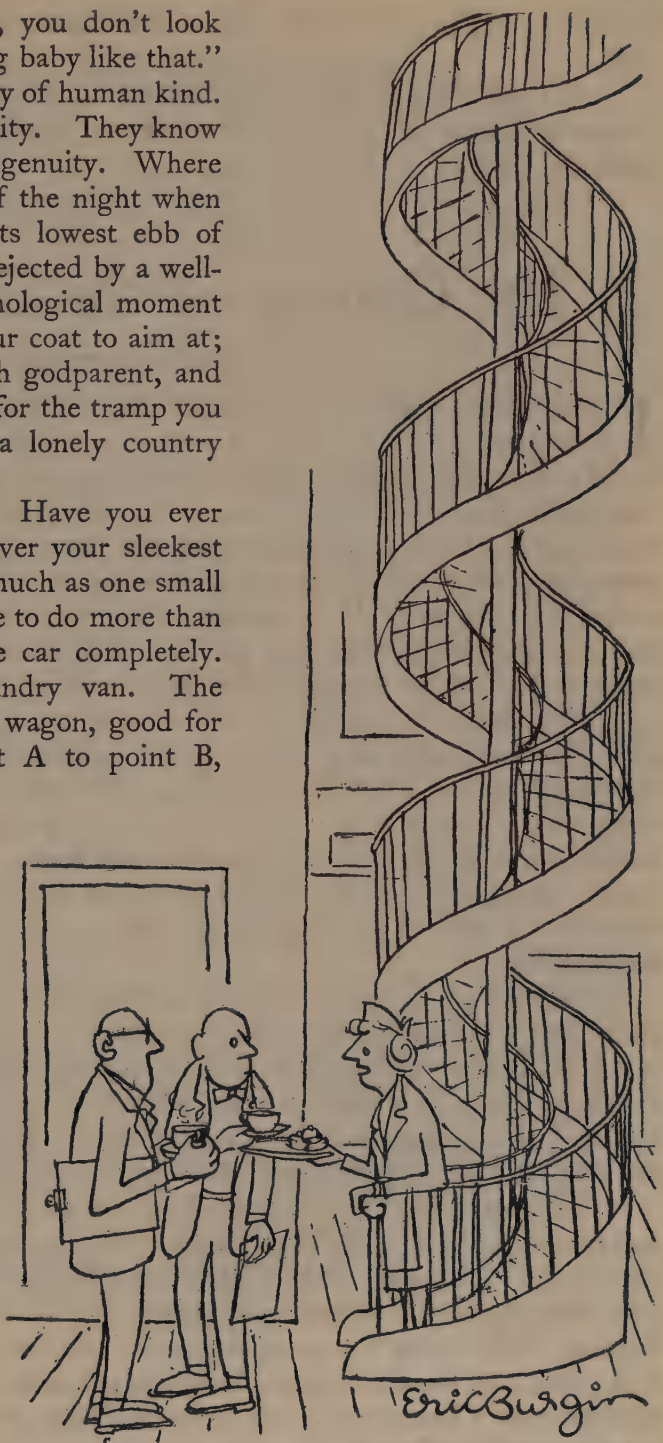
Babies from the age of ten months upwards frequently induce cases of heart disease among their elders. The elders get the heart disease and the babies get a lot of exercise. They teeter to and fro at the tops of flights of stairs, they snatch up carving knives with insouciant, toothless grins, they larrup each other, almost lethally, with educational toys, and no Indian sword swallower has anything on them.

While grown-ups suffer, they thrive. We get nervous prostration, insomnia and overdrafts, and all they have to show for it is two rather undersized teeth. (These are sometimes referred to, by spinsters, as matched pearls.) Their hair grows, yours greys. I sometimes wonder why more women are not greeted with

the cry of "Why, Mrs. Snooks, you don't look young enough to have a great big baby like that." It must be the indomitable charity of human kind.

Babies don't know that charity. They know other things instead, of fiendish ingenuity. Where to tweak and pinch; the hour of the night when the (adult) human body is at its lowest ebb of vitality and can be most readily dejected by a well-timed ululation or two; the psychological moment for being sick and the type of fur coat to aim at; the idiot-child goggle for the rich godparent, and the smile and outstretched arms for the tramp you had been hoping to ignore on a lonely country road. They know it all, babies.

And here's another thing. Have you ever noticed the change that comes over your sleekest and smoothest car if you get so much as one small child into it? Not that they have to do more than just sit there: that disguises the car completely. You might as well be in a laundry van. The car becomes a purely utilitarian wagon, good for nothing but getting from point A to point B, with the smallest number of stops for hygiene. No baby, and I mean NO baby, ever travelled more than a couple of miles without an assortment of extremely undistinguished luggage. (You don't think Monsieur Vuitton ever heard of babies, do you?) They have bottles and rugs and shapeless bundles, and usually some hideous mechanism strapped on to the luggage carrier. Everyone, and particularly the driver, will arrive looking wild-eyed, the immediately responsible adult will have a racking



"YOU'LL FIND IT'S ALREADY STIRRED"

headache, and the baby will put on the finest act of rosy reasonableness you ever saw.

If I can, before the end of this article, I'll try to think of at least one more compensating advantage that the creatures possess, but now I must run. I hear the baby crying.

PAT WALLACE

The Century of the Common Child

IN this festive Century of the Common Child the Christmas annuals reveal a March of Progress sadly unfamiliar to his backward parents. Its most notable exponent is Mr. Edward Hulton, whose four-square effigy, stern but humane, confronts the world—or at least the readers of the advertisement columns—midway between the skeleton of a new skyscraper and the tower of an old church. He assumes the crusading pose of one of his own strip heroes: a Jeff Arnold of the West End slough rather than the Wild West prairie, a Dan Dare of the social rather than the solar system. Exploring "the Best and Worst of Britain," Mr. Hulton confers nothing short of the Best on Common Boy in *Eagle* and Common Girl in *Girl*.

The evangelist behind this Evangelist is a certain Reverend Marcus Morris, once the incumbent of a modest living in Southport, Lancs., now the earner of a substantial one in Fleet Street, E.C.4. Mr. Morris, sandy-haired, pale-eyed, alert and inventive, once edited, in a clerical collar, a parish magazine of strip cartoons called *Anvil*, for eight thousand adolescent souls. To-day, in Mr. Hulton's wider parish, changing his collar for a silk one and his waistcoat for a yellow one, enlisting the aid of a child psychologist and educational adviser, he edits *Eagle* and *Girl* for four million.

The millennial world into which Mr. Morris introduces these souls is, in the first place, one from which social distinctions have vanished. Its chief figure of fun is the Snob, Harris Tweed, in monocle and old school tie, who is bitten by a lobster for being rude to a waiter. Mr. Purce, the new games master (now "football trainer") at Northbrook School, says "I don't care what you call me, only I do draw the line at 'Sir.' I wasn't the officer type myself when I was in the mob."

The class-conscious new boy, Tom Coppernick, comes not from a stately home but from a fun fair. He "never wanted to come to a sissy school in the first place"; says to the "three J's" (one of them called Eccles) "I don't want any friends. Not your sort anyhow"; refuses to be treated by Eccles to doughnuts and ginger pop because "My money's as good as yours"; but finally becomes "keen on the school" and, from the resources of his previous self-education, helps Eccles and Co. with their geometry homework in return for half-bars of nut-milk chocolate. ("We really *need* you at Northbrook.")

"Are you sure, dear, this is the Café de Paris they meant?"

It is true that Waldorf, the Oliver Twist-like boy-of-all-work at Ghastly Hall, shows traces of snobbery, being pleased to discover (from a hidden letter signed "A. Ghastly, Lord") that he is really Lord Ghastly and that his Fagin-like boss is, in fact, his butler. But in true Common style he sits down to share the ancestral fortune with Cecil the Tramp.

The girls of *Girl* may dream of unexpected legacies or discoveries of hidden treasure, with its glitter of jewels. But they find their heroes in bureaucrats rather than aristocrats: in Sir Robert Parks, for example, the Chairman of the Highlands Development Board, who as a reward for heroism presents Robbie, the Orphaned Scots Girl, with a cheque for £1,500 for the welfare of the villagers displaced from their lands by a hydro-electric reservoir.

Unluckily the principle of aristocracy still survives on the planet of Saturn, with its surrounding moons. Blasco, the Saturnine dictator who plans to become Emperor of the Earth and has founded a W.E.B., or World Empire Bureau, to further his aims, declares: "In Saturnia they do not believe as you do that all men are brothers and should have an equal chance in life. In their worlds all are made to work for the glory and happiness of the great ruling families of Titan."

Dan Dare, Pilot of the Future, the he-man with the rugged post-Piltdown jaw-bone, is at present foiling his dark designs in Operation Saturn, just as he has foiled other threats in the past. In 1999 the self-governing peoples of China, Japan, Russia and Origina (formerly Asia) were "engaged in a mighty drive to end poverty and squalor. Individual liberty is secure, regardless of race, colour or creed, under the elected World Federal Government and the protection of the incorruptible United Nations police." But now, "after years of rising standards," a new menace hung in the sky. It was an asteroid, a red moon hurtling towards the Earth. Dan Dare built a giant green chlorophyll light, right out in the stratosphere, and so it was diverted.

But the warfare in space, among Treens and Therons and Thorks, continues. "Day after day the chase goes on deeper into the solar system—through the orbit of Venus and beyond—where space ships have been before—nearer and nearer to the Sun." Thus the Common Child grows up familiar with the workings of the astral communications room at Interplanetary Space H.Q.; its clean-limbed, greying chairman of committees, Sir Hubert (only one degree less handsome than his colleague, Sir Clive Cecil, head of MI5); and his secretary Miss Peabody, who has permed blonde hair and "a basic idea for a solution" (not Jane's).

Common Boy can grasp all the complexities of magnetic storms in sun-spot cycles, or of the telesender, which dissolves man into his atomic components and transmits him to the planets by radio. He is at home in a world of helicabs and telegyros, magnetic grapnels and electronic brains, stereoviewers, lock-wave tuners, antisol glareshields and disintegron rays. He knows just what is implied by such phrases as "I'm giving her a crash-boost straight up into space," his favourite exclamation is "Supersonic!" and he amuses himself at home firing flying-saucers from Dan Dare planet-guns.

Meanwhile, with war in the skies, there is peace and goodwill on Earth. The Hulton millennium proceeds. International—distinct from interplanetary—quarrels are no more. All men are now brothers. Jap and Chink, Dago and Nigger, Wog and Frog are names forgotten. Diplomatically, in the interests of world harmony, Mr. Morris makes all his villains Englishmen. The native is the friend of the right against the wrong kind of white man ("Helm Sahib and Samson Wallah bad men," warns the faithful Ram Jingh. "No go, Missy Tess").

Mr. Morris discourages the go-getting competitive spirit. All work together for the Common benefit. The boys' club gang co-operates with the police to track the criminal. "There's forgery in the district," says P.C. 49. "All you chaps must help by keeping 'obbo' for suspicious characters." Virtue is preached surreptitiously, through the martial exploits of St. Louis ("no sissy"), Alfred the Great ("O heathen Dane! Get him, Christians!"), or "Soldier Joan," of Arc ("Golly the Bull! Lie still, man. Fake dead. I'll deal with him").

Life in the Hulton millennium, with the *Riders of the Range* and the *Luck of the Legion*, *Great Escapes* and *These Men Live Dangerously*, is adventurous. But there is at the same time a respect for the intellect. The "sap" of the past is the Star

Pupil of to-day. When Giglamps Foster says "I *do* want to get top marks," it is "Three cheers for the old bookworm!" Knowledge is all the rage. Common Boy learns of the mysteries of Fishing by Echo-sounding, the Conquest of Mount Everest, or the extraction of Phosphates from a Coral Island; Common Girl how to Prepare Grape-fruit, Make a Cross-stitch Belt or Enjoy a Country Walk.

For her, especially, the career's the thing: *I want to be a Beautician* ("Joyce leaves school this term. Interested in make-up, she has got a job at the beauty centre of a local store"); *I want to be a Saleswoman* ("Jennifer loved to play 'shops' when she was a child, and now that she's left school she is a junior saleswoman in a local store"); *I want to be an Air Stewardess . . . I want to be a Games-Mistress . . .*

If only Saturn can be kept at bay, the outlook for Mr. Hulton's human race looks bright enough.

KINROSS

How the Hemingway Got His Hump

His spots are the joy of the leopard; his muscles are Hemingway's pride.
Take care, when thou buzzest the tree-tops, to carry insecticide.
For a fubsy African ibis may force thy 'plane to ground
In a place where the African midges, mosquitoes and gnats abound.
Not muscle nor tan in the He-est man, nor Mauser nor .303
Can keep them away like a fly-gun spray, away from thy wife and thee . . .

MAXIMS OF BALOO

IT was a hot Saturday night at the third *wallo-hollo* from the left after Murchison Falls when Kiboko the Hippopotamus felt a tickling in his ear. Prang the Tick-bird, that lives on the pickings from wrinkled old hippo-hides, was carrying his gossip right to his master's ear.

"Wake up, wake up!" tapped Prang in Koboko's ear, "I have news for thee!"

Now news for Kiboko was news for all the beasts in the jungle. Not for nothing was Kiboko called the Trumpeter of Entebbe. Had any of his friends ever known Kiboko keep a secret?

He lifted himself six inches higher from the grey-green, greasy and deliciously cool mud, bent his ear forward and listened to Prang.

"On Thursday evening, Lord and Pasture, an aeroplane, *ndegi ulaya*, crashed up-river. Not one of those regular B.O.A.C. jobs on the Khartoum-Durban route. Those we know, thou and I and all of us. Nay, this was a small 'plane, such as photographers and hunters use!"

"Listen all!" trumpeted Kiboko, "listen to what a little bird hath told me. There is an aircraft down on the river-bank up-stream. We know not if it be film-folk and friendly, as maybe with Robert Morley or Deborah Kerr aboard. Or if it be a hunter's plane, with such as Jim Corbett or Ernest Hemingway."

Now the Law of the Jungle says: "Not all shooting is with cameras. Beware especially the bare-chested writer-man (*mwandikaji*). To get thee into a book he will get thee into his sights first. Confuse not the lone writer-man with the Hollywood crowd, who giggle and bathe and shoot only at their empty gin bottles as they float towards the Falls. That other is a Man. That is all a Man."

Now, then, he saw the kudu start for the gap, and he was sweating with happiness in the cold half light, and then they halted and faced into the wind, stretching their heads to his side of the valley. That was one of the things he had saved to write, the kudu, and the oily smell of his rifle, and the exotic smell of her letter in the pocket of his bush-shirt in the early morning. She had been in Venice then, and the Greek prince had been after her and he hadn't known that when he shot the great kudu in the dawn then.

Then 'Mbu the Mosquito came singing in for her supper.

"Silence, all!" she hummed, "I have been to the scene of the accident . . . I and my myriad sisters. It is the Hemingways, Ernest and his *'mke*, Poppa and Momma. Two accidents have they had . . . the one a crash from tree-tops-height —a flock of silly ibis hit them—and they spent Thursday night under our guardianship" . . . 'Mbu smiled a very small smile, licking her lips. "On Friday a second 'plane arrived, and they tried to say good-bye to us in too much of a hurry. *That* 'plane crashed too."

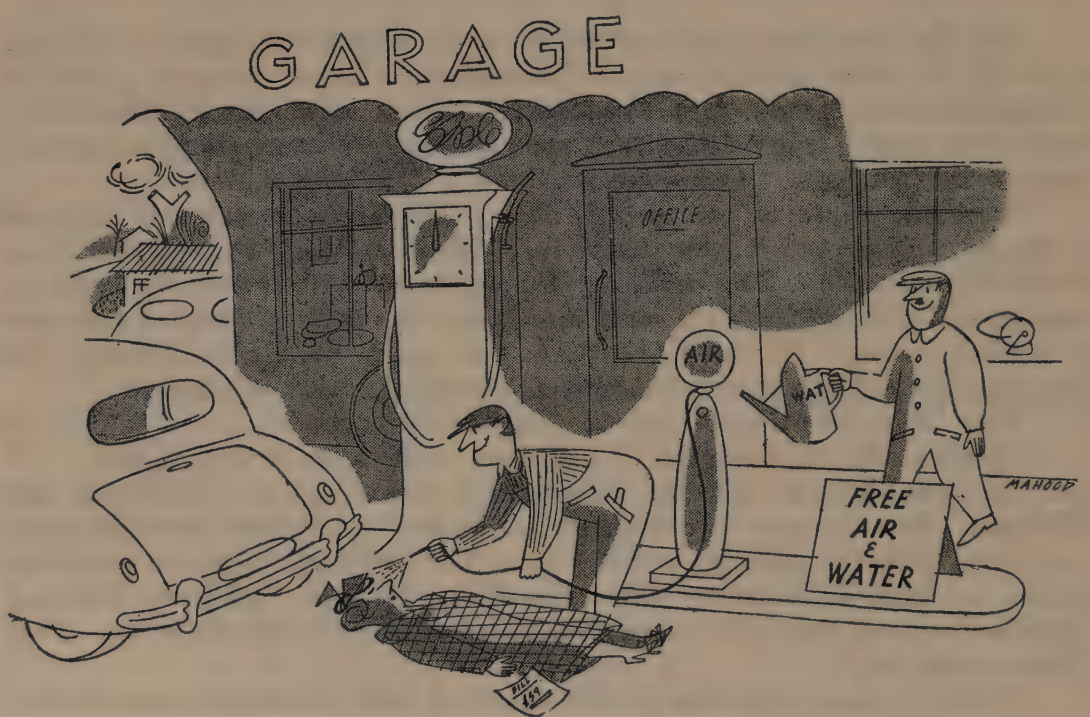
"And ye?" said Twiga the Giraffe. He had been standing as look-out man

lest the others be surprised bathing. "Did ye, thou and thy sisters, 'Mbu, attend the Hemingways' slumbers last night, too?"

"Slumbers?" buzzed 'Mbu. "Slumbers? They did not slumber! Poppa, finding the 'plane door jammed with the crash, had just broken it down with his head, and . . ."

Kaa the Rocksnake rippled his thirty feet length up from the shallows. "S-s-s-so! Perhaps Poppa Hemingway reads as well as writes. Perhaps he had read that little story about *me* when, far away and long ago, with half a dozen pile-driving blows of my head (what was it that other *mwandikaji* said? 'A hammer weighing nearly half a ton, driven by a cool, quiet mind living in the handle of it' . . . yes, he could write, that writer-man, too)—with half a dozen blows I broke down the stonework that was imprisoning Mowgli in the Cold Lairs. Yellow worm, the *bandar-log* had called me . . . but I feasted well that night." Kaa was very vain, and a considerable bore. "Yes, perhaps Poppa has read my story." He rippled his glossy length again.

"And hast thou read *his*, Kaa?" asked Faru the Rhino. "When Prang the gossiper told me that Poppa's story, *Snows of Kilimanjaro*, was to be made into a film, I scanned it again, wondering if there were a part for me. Alas, it is my lot never to be in the *written* story but always to be in the film. Once, I think, Mr. Cherry Kearton or someone took photographs of me—charging, skidding round a turn and



apparently falling. Every time Hollywood does an African jungle film that set of pictures of me, or something very like it, is used."

"Was it thou in this film, old one?" asked Chui the Leopard. "I ask, for it was *my* grandfather who was 'the dried and frozen carcass' found at 19,710 feet on the top of Kilimanjaro and in the first paragraph of Poppa's story. 'No one has explained what the leopard was seeking at that altitude,' wrote Poppa. I could tell him. My grandfather hated the Hollywood crowds, and he fled up the great mountain to avoid a new set of them, arriving to make a new film. He died, cold, but unbothered by cameras."

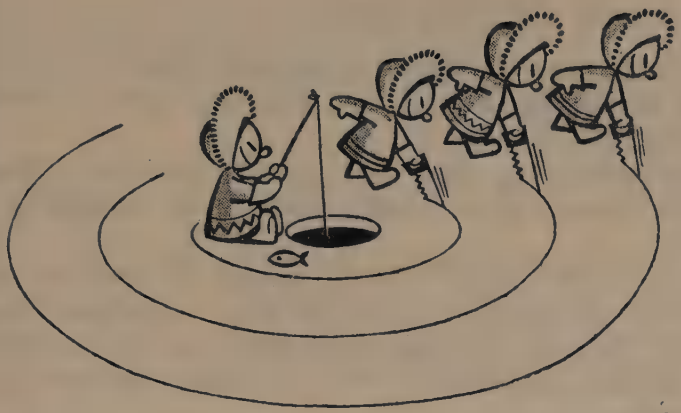
"MORTAL, THY HEART'S DESIRE DOTH WISH ME TO CONTRIVE? FIVE POUNDS A WEEK, FOR INSTANCE, AT AGE SIXTY-FIVE . . ."

This Jim Corbett, who was he? Who was he, writing of leopards and tigers in India, shooting with a muzzle-loader in his youngest days, counting the cost of cartridges, writing simply, telling a dam fine story? Why had this Corbett snarled up the jungle-writing market? That was another thing he meant to write, a letter to his New York agent, to find out if Jim Corbett was getting more for his stories than him, Poppa. Or should it be 'than he'? Writing was something that you went on learning. You never seemed to know it all.

"Perhaps it was I in the recent film of The Snows," answered Faru. "Perhaps it was. The same charge, the same high-speed turn, the same stumble. Gregory Peck had, it seemed, shot me, saving the life of himself and Susan Hayward. Didst thou witness, in the film, Susan Hayward being sick with relief behind a bush when she knew their lives were safe? That I had never seen in a film before. 'Twas verily a new gimmick to put on to the old sequence of the charge."

Kiboko rumbled, like summer thunder. "Enough of this loose talk! We should move up-river to see the travellers!" He had been distressed to his marrow by this *bandar-log* chatter of films, film-stars and Hollywood. Had he not seen Ava Gardner bathing during the making of *Mogambo*? . . . That was a lovely secret he *had* kept from all. He wished to change the subject from films altogether.


BUS
STOP
PD
WAITING



ROY DAVIS

ffolkes

But on the bank J. Feed Muggs the Chimp started to laugh aloud. "I was photographed by John Huston holding hands with Ava Gardner. I was photographed with Ava Gardner holding my hand!"

Mother Muggs caught him a whack over the ear that sent him sprawling. No love-tap, that. And as he picked himself up he found himself far too close to the snorting nose of Kiboko himself.

"Speak not of Ava Gardner, *bandar-wallah*!" Kiboko flamed. "The Law of the Jungle says: 'A River Goddess must be worshipped by the River folk alone.' We be not all one folk, thou and we. Go, get thee gone to thy tree-tops, and may the next 'plane that flies too near dislodge *thee*, thou eater of nuts, lackey of Bertram Mills and Commercial Television!"

* * * * *

At this moment, there floated down to the pool an old sleeping-bag, in the tapes of which had got tangled up an early-morning chest-expanding exerciser.

"I recognize that sleeping-bag!" hummed 'Mbu the mosquito shrilly. "I last saw it in Spain in the Civil War. In a film called *For Whom the Bell Tolls*! This must have floated down from Poppa's 'plane-crash. We must return, my sisters and I, and visit them quickly before dawn."

And all the animals left the *wallo-hollo*, and, some running, some wading, some swimming, they headed up-stream, with Kilimanjaro just taking the first light of distant dawn on their right hand. When they arrived they found one burnt-out 'plane, the oily streaks of a pleasure steamer that had gone on again towards Kampal, and no Hemingways.

That was the day of his fifty-fourth birthday and he remembered how The Kraut had said "Take it easy now, won't you, Poppa?" and he had bent a poker with his hands and torn a pack of cards in half with his teeth. Not bad at fifty-four to live your own story now, then, to read your own obits, to put eighty-year-old Somerset Maugham off the literary front pages for a day, and he remembered all the shrapnel he had taken in on the Piave and the time he was knocked down by a pram in Central Park. That was something else he wouldn't be writing about now, then.

RICHARD USBORNE

THE BARMAID

A barmaid is a lovesome thing, God wot.
Some wear their blouses low, and some do not.
Mine own is robed in black from throat to wrist,
And on her bosom glows an amethyst.

I've leant against her bar for several years,
And watched the tasselled jewels in her ears.
To comfort me this vision never fails.
My lady's bower is called "The Prince of Wales."

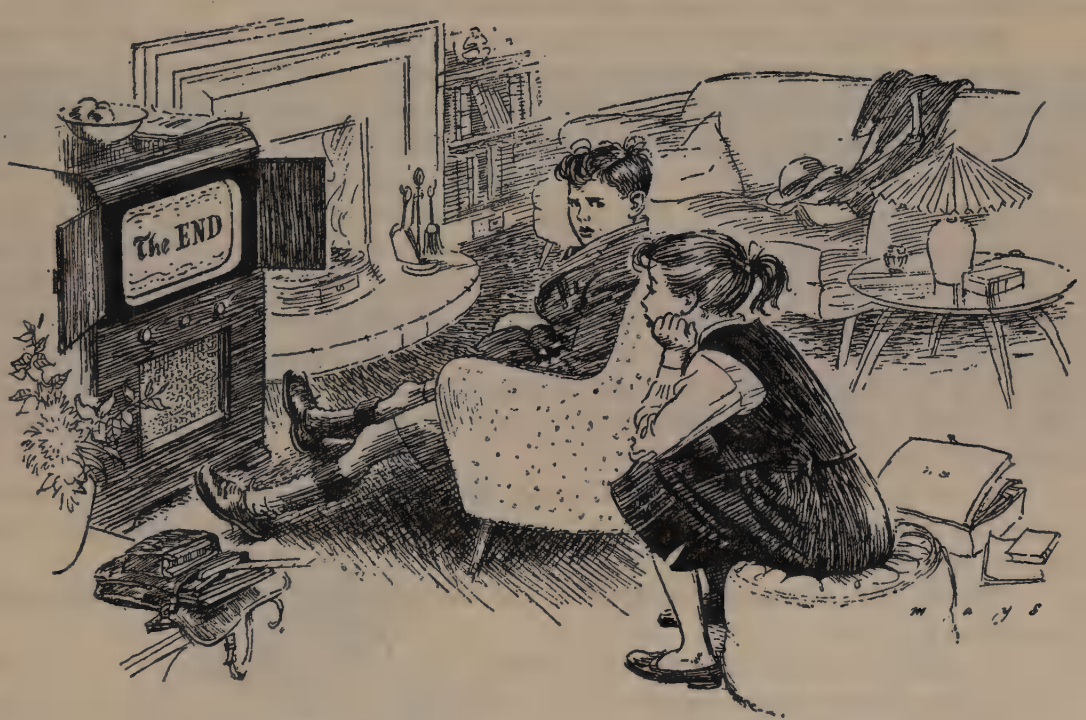
The bottles, that behind her head abide,
Gleam brighter than the stars of heaven outside;
And yet I think my lady's cheeks do shine,
More brightly than her earrings or her wine.

Suppose the roses there are not her own,
Or that they are enhanced by pumice-stone.

* * * * *

Why then I will adore her more than ever,
For deeming that I merit such endeavour.

R. A. B. MICHELL



"A FEW MORE PROGRAMMES LIKE THAT AND I SHALL GO BACK TO HOMEWORK"

Getting into Pictures

ONE day a year or two ago I happened to be glancing idly through a ciné weekly in a barber's shop when I was confronted by a photograph of a well-known producer sitting at his desk in an attitude of dejection, his hair suitably dishevelled, the floor all around piled high with plays in typescript, novels in their dust-jackets, and rejected scenarios in a tattered condition.

"THE STORY'S THE THING" was the caption running in large type above the picture of the despondent executive: for the past six months, according to the article printed below, he had been trying without success to find a suitable screen-subject; everything else was fixed: studio-space, distribution-guarantee, stars under contract, finance ready for release: the whole bag of tricks in fact. But—no story; so he couldn't proceed.

I turned the page; the next article dealt with an identical theme: this time it was actually written by a producer *and* director, whose name was a Household Word. He too was at his wits' end for material: "serious" writers, he deplored, took no interest in the medium; the standard of MSS. submitted fell far below that of the average published novel or play performed upon the stage; above all, they were not written "visually," with cinematic requirements in mind.

My heart went out to these unhappy men in their plight: by the time my turn in the chair came and the fibrous towel was tucked in round my neck I had determined to help them. One of my earliest ambitions had been to write for the films; during the war I had been employed for that purpose by a documentary company; in a drawer at home lay a full-length feature-script, written primarily for the screen and overflowing with visual content. The plots of books marked down long ago as ideal for cinema adaptation; fragmentary scenes; snatches of dialogue: actual camera-angles surged up from my subconscious and swirled dizzily in montage through my head—at the moment being held down by the barber's ruthless Cypriot hand. Obviously I was the answer to the problems of these distressed impresarios; nor was my philanthropic desire to come to their aid unmixed with recollections of the fabulous sums which producers were reputed to pay for film rights; for, as usual, I was not overburdened with ready cash.

So, on leaving the hairdresser's, damp, shorn, and smelling of aromatic lotion, I at once entered a telephone-box and rang up the first producer, since his need seemed the most urgent.

"Sorry, Mr. Samuelson is down at the studio to-day," an apathetic feminine voice informed me.

"Couldn't I contact him there?" I asked.

"If you have an appointment."

"No, I meant by telephone."

"Mr. Samuelson is allergic to the telephone, and he never sees anyone except by appointment."

"It's about a story," I said, playing what I believed to be my trump-card. I was evidently mistaken. Before, the voice had sounded merely bored; now, a perceptible note of contempt insinuated itself. "Oh, I thought you wanted Mr. Samuelson himself. Just a moment, I'll put you through to the Scenario Department."

A series of rapid clicks, one of which almost burst my ear-drum; then another voice, almost female, but brusque to the point of incivility: "Script editor speaking."

"I have a story that might interest Mr. Samuelson. I believe he's looking for one."

"The department's always looking for stories. Just send in a preliminary outline, typed, on a postcard. That will be sufficient for us to judge. If it shows promise we'll get in touch with you in due course. Good-bye."

"Wait a second," I said; "this is a full shooting-script."

"Haven't time to read 'em, I'm afraid, unless you're somebody frightfully well known. What d'you say your name . . .? Maclaren-Ross? Oh. Well, outline, synopsis, skeleton-treatment, full story-treatment, master-scene, that's the procedure. Shooting-script prepared by the director himself, if and when appointed. Not an original, is it?"

"Yes."

"Originals considered only when submitted through a recognized and reputable agency. Inflexible company rule. Sorry."

"But I've just read an article saying Mr. Samuelson's desperate for stuff."

"Publicity Department's pigeon, that: not mine. Good-bye."

The receiver clicked down decisively. I waited a minute for my annoyance to abate before dialling my second string: the Household Word. In the article signed by him his ready accessibility had been strongly emphasized: in frequent interviews that I'd read, this quality had also been stressed, together with insistent references to the lack of formality characteristic of him. I was certain that, in his own interests, he would listen to reason. Recalling my experience with editors, I foresaw already the invitation to lunch, the post-prandial rounds of cognac, the story retailed in synopsis over the coffee: "Yes, that sounds the stuff, old boy. Just push it along and we'll get it done. As for the fee . . ."

"I don't," I said, "want to speak to his secretary, nor to the script-department, but to HIM in person. Is that clear?"

"Half a tick, sir. I'll connect you right away . . ."

"HIS personal secretary speaking." (Female, undoubtedly, but dulcet and soothing this time. Dressed for a cert in something clinging and soft.) "Can I help you at all?"

"By putting me on to HIM," I said implacably.

"HE's out just at present, and I'm not sure HE'll be back this afternoon.

But I can give you HIS private number at home; if you ring about seven you're sure to get HIM . . ."

On the stroke of seven I was again spinning the dial. A deep contralto answered: "HIS personal secretary speaking."

"Surely not the one I talked to this afternoon?"

"Oh no. That would be Miss Sims at the office. I'm HIS *home* secretary, so to speak." (A low, gurgling laugh.) "Unfortunately HE'S left for the week-end. If you could give me a message . . . oh, a *story*! But that's wonderful, the poor lamb doesn't know which way to turn for one. Best thing you can do is to write HIM a letter, and I'm sure HE'll ring you back Tuesday morning . . . yes, I'll see HE gets it directly HE comes in."

But on Tuesday my telephone did not ring at all. Nor on Wednesday or Thursday. On Friday I rang the dulcet voice at the office. "I'm afraid HE is week-ending in Paris . . . No reply to your letter? But that's most extraordinary . . . very unlike HIM *indeed*. Perhaps it never got there at all: lost in the post . . . most unreliable, the mails, nowadays. If you care to write again, though, and bring it down by hand, I can guarantee HE'll have it first thing on Wednesday when HE returns . . . Oh, you *will*? That's *very* kind: I do apologize for the trouble you've been put to . . ."

So once again I shoved it all down on paper: the names of the books I'd written, my documentary experience, agreement with the views expressed in HIS article, request for a brief interview; and enclosed the letter with a copy of my script, for which I obtained a receipt from the commissionaire: HIS secretary being out to lunch at the time of delivery.

No immediate reply came to that either. Meanwhile, in the columns of the ciné weekly, Mr. Samuelson continued to tear his hair for lack of stories; I wrote to the staff-reporter relating my own experience, but received no acknowledgment: then to the editor of the paper, with similar result. Instead, another article by HIM appeared, expressing HIS grief that the appeal HE made to writers had met with so singular a lack of response; I telephoned the office and was told by an entirely new secretary—who denied all knowledge of my letter and typescript—that her employer was away on a pleasure-cruise and not expected to return for several weeks.

Three months later a bulky package was delivered to me, wrongly addressed and re-forwarded at least twice through the dead-letter office. Inside was my script, removed from its spring-binder, roughly tied together with tape, and stained abundantly with tea and lipstick, accompanied by a typewritten note as follows:

Dear Mr. McCallum Rose,—We are returning herewith your script which, addressed erroneously to HIM, eventually found its way to this Department. We regret that HE is too busy personally to read scenarios submitted by unknown authors, even in the rare event of these being recommended by a recognized literary agent; and though, in our opinion, your script shows ability above the average, we

are not only provided with material sufficient for some time to come, but HIS personal preference is for works whose popular appeal has already been demonstrated by their circulation in volume form, rather than for plays written specially for the screen, whose chances of success would necessarily be of a problematical nature.

Yours very truly

ISOLA VAN DEN BOSSCHE

(President, Scenario Selection Board)

J. MACLAREN-ROSS

MIDDLESEX

Gaily into Ruislip Gardens
  Runs the red electric train,
With a thousand "Ta's" and "Pardons"
  Daintily alights Elaine;
Hurries down the concrete station
With a frown of concentration,
Out into the outskirt's edges
Where a few surviving hedges
Keep alive our lost Elysium—rural Middlesex again.

Gentle Brent, I used to know you
  Wandering Wembley-wards at will,
Now what change your waters show you
  In the meadowlands you fill!
Recollect the elm trees misty
And the footpaths climbing twisty
Under cedar-shaded palings,
Low laburnum-leaned-on railings,
Out of Northolt on and upward to the heights of Harrow hill.

Parish of enormous hayfields
  Perivale stood all alone,
And from Greenford scent of mayfields
  Most enticingly was blown
Over market gardens tidy,
And taverns for the "bona fide,"
Cockney anglers, cockney shooters,
Murray Poshes, Lupin Pooters
Long in Kensal Green and Highgate silent under soot and stone.

JOHN BETJEMAN

EIGHTY IN THE SUN

For William Somerset Maugham, born January 25, 1874

I bask in Antibes and in honour, and consider the works of my pen
That have made me in one full lifetime all things to all literate men:
The rich man's Marie Corelli, the poor man's André Gide,
A Stevenson told of the facts of life, a Kipling shorn of his creed.

O, I was TERENCE RATTIGAN when TERENCE was still in his cot,
And the films and TV will call on me when USTINOV's long forgot.
Though the Ale I brewed was bitter, my Cakes were as sweet as sin,
And they brought me the Moon I sighed for, with a bit over Sixpence thrown in.
The world's delectable secrets turned to Ashenden in my mouth,
And the fetters of Human Bondage hold me fast in the suns of the south.

B. A. YOUNG

High-Level Conversation

MOSTLY I confine myself to circles where the conversation is of the "Seen Sam lately?" or "How's your aunt's sciatica?" type. Sometimes, however, in the course of political duty I find myself moving at a higher level where more is expected of me. To arm myself I have sat at the feet of the masters.

I have watched how Nye Bevan will promote a desultory conversation about the quality of the tea to a philosophic discussion by injecting some remark such as "What most people don't realize is that the dynamic of functionalism is a synthesis of expediency and virtue." I have seen how Herbert Morrison will check a high-flying dissertation on the means to attain a social revolution in twelve months by looking up and saying "And what is the membership of *your* constituency party?" But being neither educated nor experienced and not having a very original turn of mind I have to rely for my erudition on the scattered leavings of other people's conversation. Which can lead to some occasional embarrassment.

Earlier this year I looked at a peaceful Rhine warmed by the spring sun. The banks were a romance of blossom and the toy castles on the hilltops looked like the doodles of an absent-minded mediævalist. The man with me, having been educated at Winchester, could, almost as a matter of course, admit to having been both a Minister in a Labour Government and a classical scholar.

"It must have been about here," he said, "that Cæsar committed his worst atrocity . . ." His voice rolled on. I did not listen. As the elementary schools in Bradford did not teach the classics during the 'thirties, I assume, in scholastic circles, an attitude of defensive indifference. I watched a small bird hop beneath the café tables. But some part of my mind, like a piece of blotting paper, must have absorbed the story.

For later that day we attended a reception given by the Vice-Chancellor of Western Germany. Beneath the crystal chandeliers we sipped Moselle and scoffed underdone beef from plates held precariously at breast height. A flunkey with an enormous tray of cigars, balancing a lighted candle, moved among us explaining to the ignorant British that the big light browns with pointed ends were better than


GIOVANNETTI

the little black ones with straight cut ends. Suddenly I heard my own voice ring out with clarity and authority.

"It must have been about here," I said, "that Cæsar committed his worst atrocity . . ." My audience leaned forward appreciatively. It looked like a long story, they thought, which with luck would relieve them of the strain of manufacturing conversation for at least ten minutes. So I had to go on.

"When Julius Cæsar was camping on this side of the Rhine he was troubled by a tribe which crossed his lines during one of its migrations." So far so good. I was word perfect. "His legions captured the whole tribe and brought the chiefs to Cæsar. After long discussions Cæsar dismissed them, telling them they might go on their way. They were grateful, and all that night there was feasting and junketing in their camp. Then, at midnight, the legionaries closed in. They punished every man, woman and child with the utmost barbarity, just to teach them a lesson." By now my audience was enthralled. A German ex-general said "Tut-tut." I basked in a glow of obvious respect for my scholarship.

"Of course there was a terrific row in the Senate. Condemnatory notices appeared on the order paper. Brutus made a powerful speech attacking Cæsar for breaking his Roman word, and in the end they sent him a very strong letter." I paused. The ex-general looked up from his glass.

"I wonder which tribe could that have been?" he asked. "Could it have been the Nervii?"

The game was up. I turned on my most beaming smile.

"I haven't a clue. Only heard the story myself this morning. Actually it's all Greek to me." And I walked away trailing smoke from one of the big light browns with pointed ends.

"Greek?" said a puzzled Teutonic voice behind me. "Surely he means Latin."

After such a debacle I am left without a theory or method of conversation to work on. Unless, that is, I do what has so often been suggested to me—listen to the other fellow for a change.

WILFRED FIENBURGH

"WHAT DID I SAY AFTER '. . . OUR CLOSEST ATTENTION TO THE MATTER IN HAND'?"

Too Faithful Follower

IT'S sixteen years since I took to the road. During that time I've mixed with every sort of crook, spiv and vagabond. I've consorted with horse nobblers on Newmarket Heath and have listened to ladder thieves boasting of mink. Smugglers in snow, coiners, forgers, not to mention honest-to-goodness burglars of the old school, have all taken me into their confidence at some time or another. There are few crimes I haven't heard about first hand in the long watches of the night as I've leant up against a coffee stall. And there's nothing like a night watchman's coke brazier to encourage one sinner to share his burden with another.

I don't know why people confide in me so readily. But they do, without reticence or modesty. I suppose they mistake my indifference for tolerance and my boredom for absolution. Whatever the reason I've often noticed that nothing seems to alleviate a conscience so much as exposing it to one's acquaintance. The pity is that the sin which they can admit to is seldom succulent enough to deserve a hearing.

But for all my experience with these criminals nobody has ever admitted to that thing which I myself must now confess. I fear it will put me completely beyond the pale. So if you suffer from a squeamish stomach I warn you not to read on. Though the brutalities of cosh gangs may not upset you, though murders and rapes both fail to shock you, my crime will make every Englishman turn away in disgust.

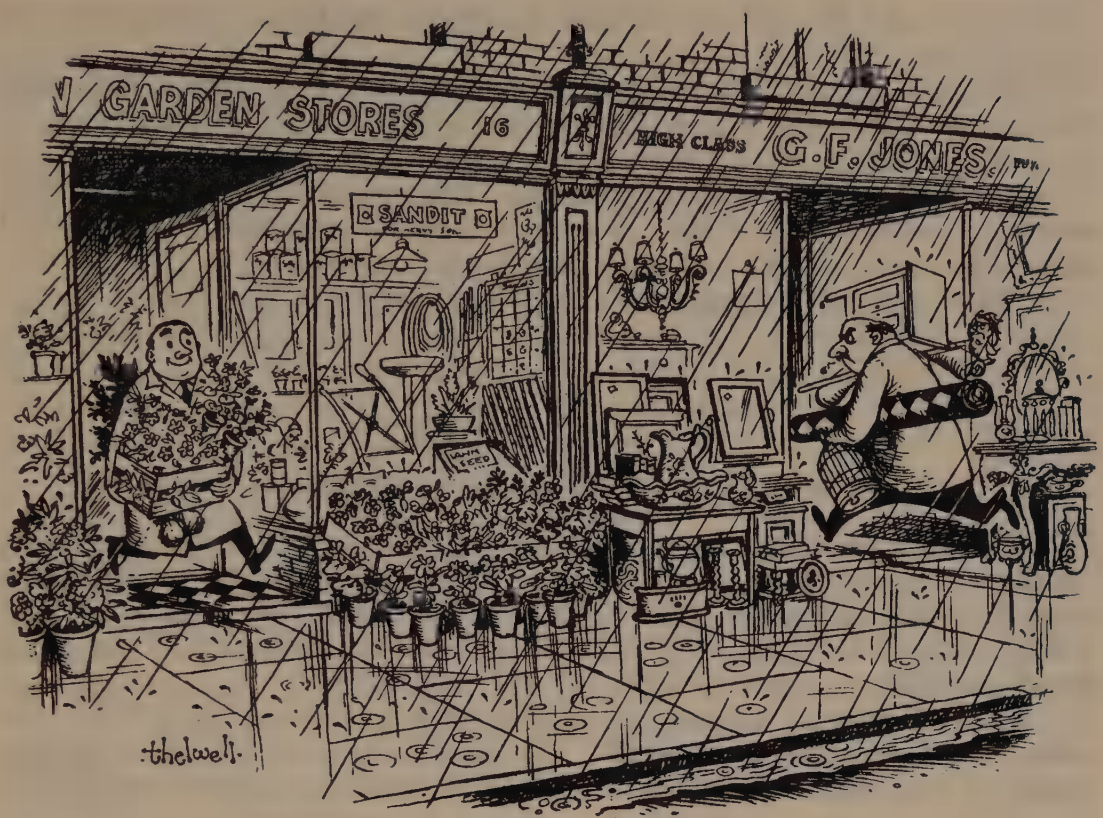
It is this: I don't like dogs. Not only big dogs and fierce dogs; I've always disliked all dogs, including small dogs, gay dogs and sheep dogs. The whole canine race is anathema to me. This dislike is nothing to do with my profession, though, of course, no gentleman of leisure approves of dogs which lurk in drives, or dogs which wake up the house just as one's easing oneself into the tool shed, barn or kitchen. No, I always disliked these animals even before I became a freeman. I've never been able to tolerate their bark, but it's their insidious faithfulness which I've found most disquieting. A man may cast the world aside, but it's not so easy to get rid of one of these quadrupeds.

And now this damned hound has been following me all day. I first noticed it at Kilkhampton. Sensing my antipathy, it keeps a respectful distance and pads along some fifteen paces behind. It's a mongrel, something of an Irish terrier with the legs of a corgi.

I haven't been out poaching for days, so it can't be trailing any game in my pocket. And it looks far better fed than I am.

I turn into the quarry just outside Stratton to have a rest out of the wind. I've done ten miles already to-day. So has the mongrel too. There he sits now, watching me roll a fag, anticipating that gesture I'm determined not to make.

"Go home!" I shout angrily, for having broken from all ties I don't want to forge any others.



"Go on; go back where you belong. You'll get nothing out of me. It's no use looking like that, I haven't got anything to eat, and if I had you wouldn't get any. Now go on, go home!"

It merely wags its tail.

I must have picked it up at Hartland. I'd heard on the road from Bideford that the Forestry Commission had taken over Bursden Moor there, and were signing on casuals to plant out a hundred acres of Scotch fir and Japanese larch. And I had intended to stay around there for a couple of days to earn some baccy money. And perhaps a quid for a couple of pairs of socks. But I hadn't been able to stick the work because my feet got so cold standing on the wet moor. A case where, if I had had the socks in the first place, I should have been able to go on working and earn enough money to buy what I didn't need. True, I did pick up a few bob, but that's baccy money, always the first necessity even before my poor feet.

There were about twenty of us there standing in a line out on the cold moor, waiting for the deep digger plough, hauled by a caterpillar tractor, to turn the next furrow. I've never seen a plough take such a deep bite, turning the rank sedge

and rushes under the peat, which came up smooth and black, making the share burnished like silver.

Then the gang would amble forward and heel the saplings in with a mattock. Most of the labourers were Irish . . . yes, maybe that's where I picked you up.

"Why don't you go back to your master, eh?"

I get up and move off towards Stratton. The mongrel follows, hoping I don't notice. As we enter the village I suddenly find myself going into a butcher's and forgoing an ounce of baccy by buying a bob's-worth of bones.

"There you are, you brute, confound your pathetic eyes."

RONALD DUNCAN

Treacle Tart

THE news travelled from group to group along the platform of Victoria Station, impressing our parents and kid-sisters almost as much as ourselves. A lord was coming to our prep-school. A real lord. A new boy, only eight years old. Youngest son of the Duke of Rumshire. A new boy, yet a lord. Lord Julius Bloodstock. Some name! Crikey!

Excitement strong enough to check the rebellious tears of home-lovers, and make our last good-byes all but casual. None of us having had any contact with the peerage, it was argued by some, as we settled in our reserved Pullman carriage, that on the analogy of policemen there couldn't be boy-lords. However, Mr. Lees, the Latin Master (declined: *Lees, Lees, Lem, Lei, Lei, Lee*), confirmed the report. The lord was being driven to school that morning in the ducal limousine. Crikey, again! *Cricko, Crickere, Crikey, Crictum!*

"PSST! MESCALIN?"

Should we be expected to call him "Your Grace," or "Sire," or something? Would he keep a coronet in his tuck-box? Would the masters dare cane him if he broke school rules or didn't know his prep?

Billington Secundus told us that his father (the famous Q.C.) had called Thos a "tuft-hunting toad-eater," meaning that he was awfully proud of knowing important people, such as bishops and Q.C.s and lords. To this Mr. Lees turned a deaf ear, though making ready to crack down on any further disrespectful remarks about the Rev. Thomas Pearce, our Headmaster. None came. Most of us were scared stiff of Thos; besides, everyone but Billington Secundus considered pride in knowing important people an innocent enough emotion.

Presently Mr. Lees folded his newspaper and said "Bloodstock, as you will learn to call him, is a perfectly normal little chap, though he happens to have been born into the purple—if anyone present catches the allusion. Accord him neither kisses nor cuffs (*nec oscula, nec verbera*, both neuter) and all will be well. By the way this is to be his first experience of school life. The Duke has hitherto kept him at the Castle under private tutors."

At the Castle, under private tutors! Crikey! *Crikey, Crikius, Crikissime!*

We arrived at the Cedars just in time for school dinner. Thos, rather self-consciously, led a small, pale, fair-haired boy into the dining-hall, and showed him his seat at the end of the table among the other nine new boys. "This is Lord Julius Bloodstock, boys," he boomed. "You will just call him Bloodstock. No titles or other honorifics here."

"Then I prefer to be called Julius." His first memorable words.

"We happen to use only surnames at Brown Friars," chuckled Thos; then he said grace.

None of Julius's table-mates called him anything at all to begin with, being either too miserable or too shy even to say "Pass the salt, please." But after the soup, and half-way through the shepherd's pie (for once not made of left-overs), Billington Tertius, to win a bet, leant boldly across the table and asked: "Lord, why didn't you come by train, same as the rest of us?"

Julius did not answer at first, but when his neighbours nudged him he said "The name is Julius, and my father was afraid of finding newspaper photographers on the platform. They can be such a nuisance. Two of them were waiting for us at the school gates, and my father sent the chauffeur to smash both their cameras."

This information had hardly sunk in before the third course appeared: treacle tart. To-day was Monday: onion soup, shepherd's pie and carrots, treacle tart. Always had been. Even when Mr. Lees-Lees-Lem had been a boy here and won top scholarship to Winchester. "Treacle. From the Greek *theriace*, though the Greeks did not, of course . . ." With this, Mr. Lees, who sat at the very end of the table, religiously eating treacle tart, looked up to see whether anyone were listening, and noticed that Julius had pushed away his plate, leaving the oblong of tough burned pastry untouched.

"Eat it, boy!" said Mr. Lees. "Not allowed to leave anything here for Mr. Good Manners. School rule."

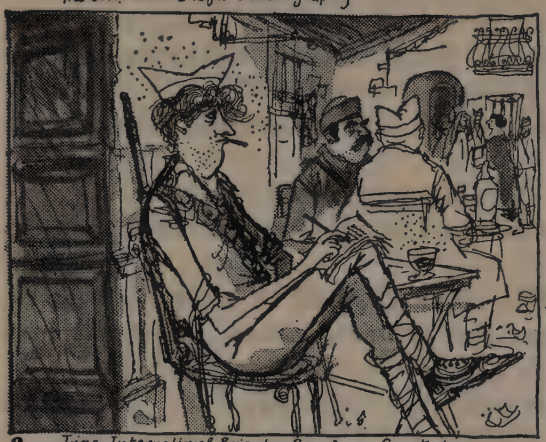
"I never eat treacle tart," explained Julius with a little sigh.

The Rake's Progress

By Ronald Searle

1. Discovers The Wasteland. First verse play published in The Cherwell. Drafts autobiography

2. Captivated by German Youth Movement. Settles in Berlin. Shakes hands with W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood. Deported



3. Joins International Brigade. Barcelona. Sunstroke. Converted to Yoga. Reading of own poems at Kingsway Hall

4. Dines with Cyril Connolly. Special issue of Horizon devoted to tone poems. Shakes hands with Stephen Spender

5. Dirge, accompanied by Tongan nose flutes, broadcast on Third Programme. British Council lecture tour, Friendly Islands. Nods to C. Day Lewis

6. Accepts Chair of Poetry at a Los Angeles girls' College. Visits Aldous Huxley. Succumbs to mescalin.

1. ADVENT Son of a North Country toiler. Writes authentic novel in dialect on the backs of old envelopes between teabreaks. Sacked.

2. TRIUMPH Book published. Immediate Success. Acclaimed. Fortyles Literary Luncheon. Mobbed in W.H. Smith's, Clapham.

3. GLORY Second novel chosen as Book at Bedtime. Bats for Authors at National Book League Cricket Match. Stage rights of 1st book bought for Wilfred Pickles.

4. TEMPTATION Name unfamiliar to John Lehmann at PEN Club party. Thenceforth tormented by desire to get into New Writing. Moves to Paris.

5. DOWNFALL Critical analysis of J-P. Sartre rejected by London Magazine and Encounter. Sales of third novel sink to 750 copies ■

6. RUIN Psychopathic treatment for schizophrenia. Emigrates to Australia. Revered.

■ Including British Commonwealth

1. GENESIS Scholarship to the Royal College of Art. Praised by Mr. D*rwin.

2. RECOGNITION Designs tableau for the Chelsea Arts Ball. First painting exhibited at the Tea Centre

3. SUCCESS Discovers Banana Motif. One man exhibition (on a banana motif) sells out. Praised by Sir John R*th*nstein

4. TRIUMPH Commissioned to paint Lady D*cker in gold leaf. Praised by Sir Alfr*d M*nnings

5. DOWNFALL Expelled from the London Group. Paints Lady M*nnings' dog. A.R.A

6. RUIN Televised sitting next to Sir Winston at Royal Academy banquet. R.A. Knighted.


CUT-OUT MODEL HOUSE
INSTRUCTIONS
QUENTIN BLAKE

"You are expected to address me as 'Sir,' " said Mr. Lees.

Julius seemed surprised. "I thought we didn't use titles here, or other honorifics," he said, "but only surnames?"

"Call me 'Sir,' " insisted Mr. Lees, not quite certain whether this were innocence or impertinence.

"Sir," said Julius, shrugging faintly.

"Eat your tart," snapped Mr. Lees.

"But I never eat treacle tart—sir!"

"It's my duty to see that you do so, every Monday."

Julius smiled. "What a queer duty," he said incredulously.

Titters, craning of necks. Then Thos called jovially down the table: "Well,

"You know, children have an instinctive understanding of the right use of a medium"

Lees, what's the news your end? Summer holidays reported to have been wearisomely long?"

"No, Headmaster. But I cannot persuade an impertinent boy to sample our traditional treacle tart."

"Send him up here," said Thos in his most portentous voice. "Send him up here, plate and all! Oliver Twist asking for less, eh?"

When Thos recognized Julius, his face changed and he swallowed a couple of times, but having apparently lectured the staff on making not the least difference between duke's son and shopkeeper's son, he had to put his foot down. "My dear boy," he said, "let me see you eat that excellent piece of food without further demur; and no nonsense."

"I never eat treacle tart, Headmaster."

Thos started as though he had been struck in the face. He said, slowly, "You mean, perhaps, 'I have lost my appetite, sir.' Very well, but your appetite will return at supper time, you mark my words—and so will the treacle tart."

The sycophantic laughter which greeted this prime Thossism surprised Julius but did not shake his poise. Walking to the buttery table, he laid down the plate, turned on his heel, and returned calmly to his seat.

Thos at once rose and said grace in a challenging voice.

"Cocky ass, I'd like to punch his lordly head for him," growled Billington Secundus later that day.

"You'd have to punch mine first," I said. "He's a . . . the thing we did in Gray's *Elegy*—a village Hampden. Standing up against Lees and Thos in mute inglorious protest against that foul treacle tart."

"You're a tuft-hunting toad-eater."

"I may be. But I'd rather eat toads than Thos's treacle tart."

A bell rang for supper, or high tea. The rule was that tuck-box cakes were put under Matron's charge and distributed among all fifty of us while they lasted. "Democracy," Thos called it (I can't think why), and the Matron, to cheer up the always dismal first evening, had set the largest cake she could find on the table: Julius's. Straight from the ducal kitchens, plastered with crystallized fruit, sugar icing and marzipan, stuffed with raisins, cherries and nuts.

"You will get your slice, my dear, when you have eaten your treacle tart," Matron gently reminded Julius. "*Noblesse oblige.*"

"I never eat treacle tart, Matron."

It must have been hard for him to see his cake devoured by strangers before his eyes, but he made no protest; just sipped a little tea and went supperless to bed. In the dormitory he told a ghost story, which is still, I hear, current in the school after all these years: about a Mr. Gracie (why "Gracie"?) who heard hollow groans in the night, rose to investigate and was grasped from behind by an invisible hand. He found that his braces had caught on the door knob; and, after other harrowing adventures, traced the groans to the bathroom, where Mrs. Gracie . . .

Lights out! Sleep. Bells for getting up; for prayers; for breakfast.

"I never eat treacle tart." So Julius had no breakfast, but we pocketed slices of bread and potted meat (Tuesday) to slip him in the playground afterwards. The school porter intervened. His orders were to see that the young gentleman had no food given him.

Bell: Latin. Bell: Maths. Bell: long break. Bell: Scripture. Bell: wash hands for dinner.

"I never eat treacle tart," said Julius, as a sort of response to Thos's grace; and this time fainted.

Thos sent a long urgent telegram to the Duke, explaining his predicament: school rule, discipline, couldn't make exceptions, and so forth.

The Duke wired back noncommittally: "Quite so. Stop. The lad never eats treacle tart. Stop. Regards. Rumshire."

Matron took Julius to the sick-room, where he was allowed milk and soup, but no solid food unless he chose to call for treacle tart. He remained firm and polite until the end, which came two days later, after a further exchange of telegrams.

We were playing kick-about near the Master's Wing when the limousine pulled up. Presently Julius, in overcoat and bowler hat, descended the front steps, followed by the school porter carrying his tuck-box, football boots and handbag. Billington Secundus, now converted to the popular view, led our three cheers, which Julius acknowledged with a gracious tilt of his bowler. The car purred off; and thereupon, in token of our admiration for Julius, we all swore to strike against treacle tart the very next Monday, and none of us eat a single morsel, even if we liked it, which some of us did!

When it came to the point, of course, the boys sitting close to Thos took fright and ratted, one after the other. Even Billington Secundus and I, not being peers' sons or even village Hampdens, regretfully conformed.

ROBERT GRAVES

CHOSE DÉSIRÉE

In the Bois with Mademoiselle I study poise *pour être belle.*
Chin in, *poitrine à gentil,* step in step with Mademoiselle.
Tulips nod and by their bed a *beau garçon* inclines his *tête.*
Chose défendue to nod back, and, though tempting, *pas honnête.*

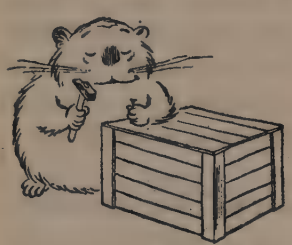
In the Bois with Mademoiselle *il faut souffrir pour être belle.*
Dark eyes, brown eyes, blue eyes, grey, quizz my trot with Mademoiselle.
Jonquils dance but le trotting is serious *pour prendre le chic.*
Chose défendue faire le flirt, and, as it happens, *pas pratique.*

In the Bois with Mademoiselle, I ask myself *pourquoi être belle?*
When *faire plaisir* is *défendu*, *belle's raison d'être* is hard to tell.
But were I plain and done with poise would I be tempted now to stray?
And would *la chose défendue* still be *la chose plus désirée?*

EVELYN ROCHE

VIEWING TIME

What is this life if, freed from care,
We have no time—except to stare . . .



No time to savour food and drink,
Or read, or write, or sit and think.

No time to paint, or play the flute,
Or dig, or darn, or bottle fruit.

No time for politics, or pubs,
Discussion groups, or drama clubs.

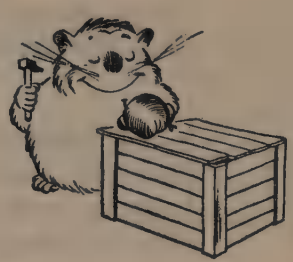
No time for charity, or church,
Or local history research.

No time to give the dog a walk,
Or *play* a parlour game, or talk.

No time for breeding cats or cavies—
In brief (and *pace* Mr. Davies)

A poor life this, if we can spare
No time—except to sit and stare.

E. V. MILNER



Red Letter Day

THE old man, the well-off uncle, arrived early to tea—it was the first of the month, his regular day. But just before his coming the young couple had themselves been invited to a party for that same afternoon—a "good" party. They stood now in the hall wondering how it would be possible, even at this late hour, to escape from their guest.

"After all, any afternoon does for him," said the wife, laying her hand on the drawing-room door.

"But, darling, do remember—this is quite a red letter day for the old boy, he gets out so seldom."

"Exactly; that's what I say, it's all the same to him when he comes."

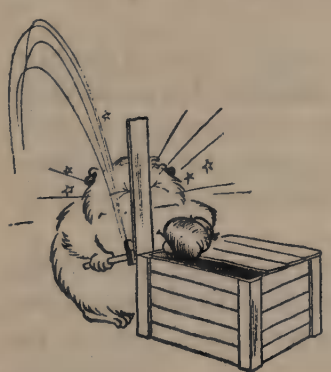
"It would be idiotic to offend him."

"It would be idiotic to refuse the Goodwins—it's just luck our being asked at all, and if we refuse they'll never think of us again. They have such hundreds of friends already."

"But it's four o'clock *now*. What excuse can we give? And you know how touchy and suspicious these old men are. They get so wrapped up in themselves. He'll see in half a second that you're putting him off and never forgive it. I shouldn't blame him. I shouldn't exactly enjoy it myself."

They argued savagely, nose to nose, in furious whispers which sounded like the hissing of snakes roused from a summer nap in some warm garden heap.

In the drawing-room, sunk in the deepest armchair, the old man waited, gazing absently through the open glass door at a freshly watered lawn. His ears were good except in a crowd—he heard the whispering but gave it no attention. It was none of his business, and he was too old and tired to waste time on other people's business. So he continued to look at the garden. And it seemed to him now that the smell of the wet grass was coming to him—and perhaps a whiff of sweet-briar from the hedge. His wide, thin nostrils twitched. Yes, no doubt of it. And a faint but distinct current of pleasure vibrated in his old dry nerves. How nice that was. He'd forgotten how nice—something he missed in that flat of his. How easy it was to lose touch with simple ordinary enjoyments, and how precious they were.



He had hesitated about his visit to-day—his nurse had been all against it, she had kept on reminding him of his bad nights, and that last attack which had so nearly finished him—she was certainly an excellent woman, most devoted and reliable. But he had insisted that he had family duties. He was

expected. He must go. How glad he was now that he had taken the trouble and the risk.

Suddenly his grand-niece, aged six, dashed into the room from the garden. She was carrying an immense doll of black stuff with a round face, goggle-eyes made of pearl shirt buttons and enormous teeth. At the sight of the visitor, she stopped abruptly, stared and blushed. She was startled by his thin yellow cheeks and deep wrinkles.

The old man moved only his large pale eyes towards the child. He could not afford to waste energy.

At last, aware of the child's silence and supposing her embarrassed, he murmured "Is that your best dolly?" But the question expected no answer, the glance had that appreciation seen only in the very young and the very old whose pleasure is unmixed with reflection, without any overtone of idea. The old man did not seek even to placate the child, he enjoyed her as he had enjoyed the garden, that whiff of grass and briar brought to him by an accident of time and place.

The child ignored a remark which, as she perceived at once, was merely polite. She put the doll behind her back, and walked slowly up to the old man, staring at him with an intent piercing curiosity. Then she said "Are you *very* old?"

He looked at her with the permanently raised eyebrows of his age, and echoed placidly: "Very old."

"Very, very old?"

"Very, very old."

"You're going to die soon."

"Yes, I suppose so." His eyes, bright with pleasure in spite of the eyebrows fixed in their record of old griefs, gazed at her with absent-minded wonder. He was thinking "Yes, how charming they are, children—how nice she is."

"You only have two years more."

"Two years?"

"That's what it says in the almanack."

"Two years." He repeated the phrase as a child turns over words without troubling to consider them. "The almanack."

"Yes, mummy's almanack."

"Your mother's almanack," he murmured. It did not interest him to discover in this way that his niece had been looking into *Whitaker* to calculate his expectation of life. He felt nothing about it at all. He had no time for such boring considerations. He said dreamily, as if the words were prompted by some part of his brain which, being set in motion, continued in the same direction quite apart from his thoughts, "And what is dolly's name?"

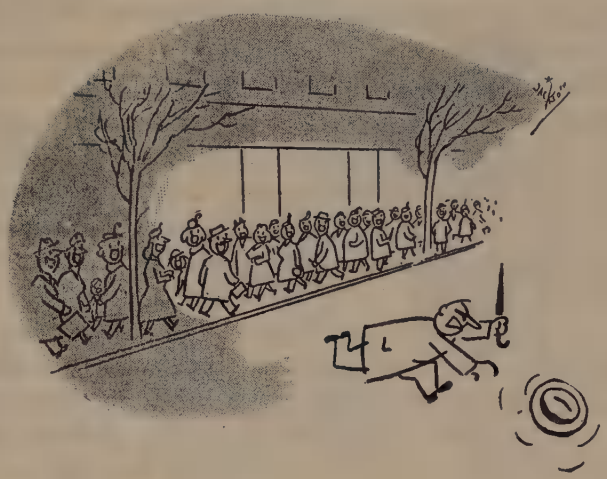
The whispering outside had come to an end. The young couple entered the room from the side door behind his chair. They both had that air of hardly restrained impatience which belongs to young healthy creatures everywhere: colts, kittens; the girl, buxom and a little too rosy, the man lean, with a soft thick mouth. Their bodies

seemed to bring with them that atmosphere of a snug private room, over-curtained and rather stuffy, which belongs to happily married couples in the youth of their pleasure.

And like others who enjoy much happiness, they hated the least interruption of it. They hated and resented this quarrel. As they came towards the old man, their faces expressed the highest degree of exasperation.

When he turned his eye towards them and made a gesture as if to get up, both smiled the same smile, one that did not even affect pleasure but only politeness.

"Don't, don't get up," the woman cried, and kissed his forehead, gently pushing him back into the chair. "Uncle dear, it's such a nuisance——" and she began an elaborate story, plainly a construction of lies, about a telephone call from a friend who was suddenly taken ill. But if he would not mind amusing himself for half an hour—an hour at the very most—they would hurry back. Or perhaps he would rather come another day when they would be free to enjoy his visit.



The old man seemed to reflect, and said "Thank you." Then, after another pause, as if for deeper reflection, he added "I'm afraid I'm rather early, aren't I?"

The couple exchanged furious glances. What enraged them was that he did not trouble even to examine their hint. He was too vague, too gaga. The woman tried again—"The only thing that worries us, uncle, is that we might be kept—it's always so uncertain, when people are ill."

"Don't trouble about me, my dear—I'll be quite all right."

They looked enquiry at each other. The wife pushed out her cupid's mouth, too small for her round cheeks, and half closed her eyes as if to say "You see—I told you he was going to spoil everything." The husband frowned from her to the uncle, unable to decide which was the chief cause of his enormous disgust.

"Two years," the little girl exclaimed loudly. She had never taken her eyes off the visitor. "In two years you'll be dead." She gave a little skip. "In two years."

The couple were horrified. They looked blank, senseless, shocked—as if someone had let off a bomb and blown out all the windows. The husband, very red, said in a voice of foolish surprise: "Really—that's of hardly—ah . . ."

The young woman took the child by the arm and said "That's enough, Susan. Come, it's time for you to go upstairs." At the same moment she gave the uncle a glance full of guilty anger, which meant "Yes, I'm wicked, but it's all your fault."

Susan jerked away from her mother and said angrily "No, I don't want to——" The old man slowly unfolded his long thin arm towards her as if in sympathy. He murmured "I haven't seen the dolly, have I?"

The little girl gazed at him. She was still fascinated by the idea of his age. She said "Two years, and then you'll be dead."

"Susan, be quiet."

The little girl's eyelids flickered. She was feeling what death meant. Suddenly she went to her mother and put her arms round her skirts, as if for protection. The old man's eyebrows rose a little more; a colour, almost youthful, came into his cheeks, and he smiled. He was charmed by this picture, so spontaneous, so unexpected. He thought "How pretty that is. How nice they are."

JOYCE CARY

Within the Shadow of Two Budding Secretaries

I

BOTH voices are soft, high, and convey an impression that their owners are as near to feeble-mindedness as makes no odds at all.

"Hullo, is that you?"

"Yes. Yes, of course it's me. What on earth happened to you?"

"I went where you said."

"To Tottenham Court Road?"

"Yes. It was simply piercing."

"So was I. I nearly died. And just imagine, a spiv asked me to go out with him."

"How long did you wait?"

"Oh ages. I still can't think how we missed. What are you doing?"

"Oh nothing. I was looking at *Woman's Kingdom*. It's got a wonderful article about Stewie. But do tell me about the spiv. A *spiv*? But where were you standing?"

"On the same side as that shoe shop. I was looking at the bookstall and there was a wonderful copy of a French fashion paper and the spiv asked me if I wanted any nylons."

"Emma how frightful. So what did you say?"

"I said no thank you but it was very kind of him."

"So then what?"

"He said would I go on the river with him and was I just down from the Varsity (he said Varsity). I thought that was rather sad, you know, showing he knew what to call it. Only now nobody who's been there, I mean older men like my father, I don't mean younger ones because I hardly know any who have been there, nobody does call it that. Because now that everybody knows you call it that if you've been there, they can all call it that and pretend they have."

"Yes, it was sad. So then what did you say?"

"I said no thank you again. And another spiv who was standing near selling wonderful earrings said go on, Gus, she wouldn't go about with the likes of us."

"Emma, how frightful. Oh, I do think that's sad, it does make me feel bad."

"Yes, it did me too. And he was so nice. Quite good looking."

"Well, I looked everywhere for you, only I didn't go across the road because you said stay where you are or we shall miss."

"Read me about Stewie."

"I can't. I'm reading Jane Friendly now."

"Oh do tell me what she says in the main letter. What's it about?"

"It's someone who's insanely jealous of their sister who's got a young baby because she's in love with the sister's husband."

"Do you think they make those letters up?"

"No, of course not. I'm sure not because they're so exactly what happens to oneself."

"Yes, that one about the boy who kept that girl hanging on. *Exactly* like E. and H."

"I know. I'm sure they're not made up."

"How's the New You getting along?"

"Oh fairly well. I get very discouraged. I don't think I ever will acquire poise."

"Some people have it naturally, of course."

"Debs do."

"Yes. Debs have marvellous manners, but personally I think they drip about the place."

"It must be an awful strain never giving way."

"Yes. Can you have lunch to-morrow?"

"I'm having lunch with Margaret."

"All right. I'll ring you up. And listen, don't forget about Coral Rose. It absolutely does things for your nails. I hardly have to clean mine at all now. Bye-bye."

"Bye-bye."

II

BOTH voices are soft, high and young. They do not convey an impression of intellectual power.

"Who's that?"

"Me. Is that you?"

"I thought it was. Isn't it freezing."

"I've got on a slip."

"Emma how frightful. But you can afford to."

"Have you lost any yet?"

"Two ounces. But it may have been because I wasn't wearing my fur gloves. How's the new job? I purposely didn't ring you because I knew you would be fussed."

"They're all pretty old."

"What's your immediate boss like?"

"He's no chicken. He won't see thirty again, I should think."

"Is he nice?"

"His name is Mr. Slipstream-Landfall. *G.* Slipstream-Landfall."

"How smashing. Double-barrelled."

"He isn't my immediate boss. She's Miss Dundass."

"What do you imagine G. stands for?"

"Gerald. No, Gerard."

"Gerard. Wizard. Did you see about Penny County-Brabazon?"

"Yes, but I don't like red hair."

"But he looks kind. I should like to knock about for six years and then get married."

"Kind and an Earl. And she's been a model and always flying."

"But it is young. What's Miss Dundass like?"

"Pretty, but battered. I should think she's been going a long time. She has those wonderful black sweaters with no jewellery and a wonderful short cut."

"I'm growing mine again."

"Mine's in those spikes in front and sort of folded at the back. Listen, if you see any pictures of Liz Taylor's old style, not her new one, that's no good, ring me *at once*, never mind if it's the office, you can pretend someone's dead, and tell me where I can buy it because that's the way I want to do mine."

"There's one in this week's *True Woman* as a matter of fact. I've got it here."

"Post it to me the instant you've finished with it. Or can't you send your father round with it to-night? It isn't late."

"I haven't read it yet."

"What's the main letter on the problem page?"

"It's someone whose husband makes her do all the housework and washing and cooking and mending and even gardening and painting the house and he won't give her any money and he stays out all night with other women but he says he does love her."

"Oh. Not interesting."

"No. I only think they're interesting when they have love in them."

"Is there anything about Marlon?"

"About his wardrobe."

"It sounds a dull number. Gosh, was that eleven? *Gosh*, and I meant to be in bed by ten, I shall have black shadows and to-morrow night I'm going to a dance, I hope George Type won't be there, I'm thinking of dropping him, gosh I must fly and have my bath, don't forget about Liz Taylor. Bye-bye."

"Bye-bye."

STELLA GIBBONS

WHY DID THEY SING?

Ours was a tall terrace house with area railings
And heaven knows how many stairs to be toiled up each day;
No water laid on in the rooms, open fires, all the failings—
And yet we had maids in that house, and the maids seemed to stay.

They would get up at six, and would doubtless be fetching and bringing
And cooking and answering bells till their long day was done.
But I, the small boy, I remember them always as singing,
Their brisk and familiar routine always shafted with sun.

There was Jean—"brushing down" on the turkey-red stair-carpet, kneeling;
White apron-strings crossed on the back of her lilac print dress—
Singing "Father, Dear Father, Come Home . . ." with appropriate feeling;
There was Jones, humming Tosti's "Good-bye," putting sheets in the press.

There was Cook—Mrs. Barlow, a spinster—an addict of "Daisy,"
At her black-leaded kitchen-range singing it, stirring in time;
And the scullery-maid, who would pointedly echo the "crazy";
And Nannir, a rare *prima donna* of Nursery Rhyme.

I can hear their songs still, can see the strong sun-shafts about them . . .
Head bent over sewing—arms stretched to a window, sleeves rolled—
Hip countering down-weighted shoulder . . . How graceless without them,
How silent that house would have been and how arid, how cold.

They were all, by our present enlightenment, bondswomen, drudges;
Underpaid, overworked. But then why does my memory bring
No afternoon shade of resentment, no half-light of grudges,
But always the morning-brisk sunshine? And why did they sing?

JUSTIN RICHARDSON

In the Days of My Youth

I WAS born into a generation that still took light music seriously. The lyrics and melodies of Gilbert and Sullivan were hummed and strummed into my consciousness at an early age. My father sang them, my mother played them, my nurse, Emma, breathed them through her teeth while she was washing me, dressing me and undressing me and putting me to bed. My aunts and uncles, who were legion, sang them singly and in unison at the slightest provocation. By the time I was four years old "Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes," "Tit Willow," "We're Very Wide Awake, the Moon and I," and "I Have a Song to Sing-O" had been fairly inculcated into my bloodstream.

The whole Edwardian era was saturated with operetta and musical comedy: in addition to popular foreign importations by Franz Lehar, Leo Fall, André Messager, etc., our own native composers were writing musical scores of a quality that has never been equalled in this country since the 1914–18 war. Lionel Monckton, Paul Rubens, Ivan Caryll, and Leslie Stuart were flourishing. *The Quaker Girl*, *Our Miss Gibbs*, *Miss Hook of Holland*, *Florodora*, *The Arcadians* and *The Country Girl*,

to name only a few, were all fine musical achievements; and over and above the artists who performed them, the librettists who wrote them and the impresarios who presented them, their music was the basis of their success. Their famous and easily remembered melodies can still be heard on the radio and elsewhere, but it was in the completeness of their scores that their real strength lay: opening choruses, finales, trios, quartettes and concerted numbers—all musicianly, all well balanced and all beautifully constructed.

There was no song-plugging in those days beyond an occasional reprise in the last act; there was no assaulting of the ear by monstrous repetition, no unmannerly nagging. A little while ago I went to an American "musical" in which the hit number was reprised no less than five times during the performance by different members of the cast as well as being used in the overture, the entr'acte and as a "play-out" while the audience was leaving the theatre. The other numbers in the show, several of which were charming, were left to fend for themselves and only three of them were ever published. In earlier days the complete vocal score of a musical comedy was published as a matter of course, in addition to which a booklet of the lyrics could be bought in the theatre with the programme. These little paper-bound books were well worth the sixpence charged because they helped those with a musical ear to recapture more easily the tunes they wanted to remember and to set them in their minds.

In the years immediately preceding the first World War the American Invasion began innocuously with a few isolated song hits until Irving Berlin established a beach-head with "Alexander's Rag-time Band." English composers, taken by surprise and startled by vital negro-Jewish rhythms from the New World, fell back in some disorder; conservative musical opinion was shocked and horrified by such alien noises and, instead of saluting the new order and welcoming the new vitality, turned up its patrician nose and retired disgruntled from the arena.

At this moment war began, and there was no longer any time. It is reasonable to suppose that a large number of potential young composers were wiped out in those sad years and that had they not been, the

annihilation of English light music would not have been so complete. As it was, when finally the surviving boys came home, it was to an occupied country; the American victory was a *fait accompli*. This obviously was the moment for British talent to rally, to profit by defeat, to absorb and utilize the new, exciting rhythms from over the water and to modify and adapt them to its own service, but apparently this was either beyond our capacity or we were too tired to attempt it. At all events, from the nineteen-twenties until to-day, there have been few English composers of light music capable of creating an integrated score.

One outstanding exception was the late Ivor Novello. His primary talent throughout his whole life was music, and *Glamorous Night*, *Arc de Triomphe*, *The Dancing Years*, *Perchance to Dream* and *King's Rhapsody* were rich in melody and technically expert. For years he upheld, almost alone, our old traditions of musical Musical Comedy. His principal tunes were designed, quite deliberately, to catch the ear of the public and, being simple, sentimental, occasionally conventional but always melodic, they invariably achieved their object. The rest of his scores, the openings, finales, choral interludes and incidental themes he wrote to please himself, and in these, I believe, lay his true quality; a much finer quality than most people realized.

"Conservative musical opinion . . . turned up its nose"

The fact that his music never received the critical acclaim that it deserved was irritating but unimportant. One does not expect present-day dramatic critics to know much about music; as a matter of fact one no longer expects them to know much about drama. Vivian Ellis has also proved over the years that he can handle a complete score with grace and finesse. *Bless the Bride* was much more than a few attractive songs strung together and so, from the musical standpoint, was *Tough at the Top*, although the show on the whole was a commercial failure.

Harold Fraser-Simson, who composed *The Maid of the Mountains*, and Frederick Norton, who composed *Chu Chin Chow*, are remembered only for these two outstanding scores. Their other music, later or earlier, is forgotten except by a minority.

Noël Coward

How the Numbers Came

I COULD not help composing tunes even if I wished to. Ever since I was a little boy they have dropped into my mind unbidden and often in the most unlikely circumstances. The *Bitter Sweet* waltz, "I'll See You Again," came to me whole and complete in a taxi when I was appearing in New York in *This Year of Grace*. I was on my way home to my apartment after a matinée and had planned, as usual, to have an hour's rest and a light dinner before the evening performance. My taxi got stuck in a traffic block on the corner of Broadway and Seventh Avenue, klaxons were honking, cops were shouting, and suddenly in the general din there was the melody, clear and unmistakable. By the time I got home the words of the first phrase had emerged. I played it over and over again on the piano (key of E flat as usual) and tried to rest, but I was too excited to sleep.

Oddly enough, one of the few songs I ever wrote that came to me in a setting appropriate to its content was "Mad Dogs and Englishmen." This was conceived and executed during a two-thousand-mile car drive from Hanoi in Tonkin to the Siamese border. True, the only white people to be seen were French, but one can't have everything.

The birth of "I'll Follow My Secret Heart" was even more surprising. I was working on *Conversation Piece* at Goldenhurst, my home in Kent. I had completed some odd musical phrases here and there but no main waltz theme, and I was firmly and miserably stuck. I had sat at the piano daily for hours, repeatedly trying to hammer out an original tune or even an arresting first phrase, and nothing had resulted from my concentrated efforts but banality. I knew that I could never complete the score without my main theme as a pivot and finally, after ten days' increasing despair, I decided to give up and, rather than go on flogging myself any further, postpone the whole project for at least six months.

This would entail telegraphing to Yvonne Printemps, who was in Paris waiting eagerly for news, and telling Cochran who had already announced the forthcoming production in the Press. I felt fairly wretched but at least relieved that I had had the sense to admit failure while there was still time. I poured myself a large whisky and soda, dined in grey solitude, poured myself another, even larger, whisky and soda, and sat gloomily envisaging everybody's disappointment and facing the fact that my talent had withered and that I should never write any more

COMPOSITION ON BROADWAY

music until the day I died. The whisky did little to banish my gloom, but there was no more work to be done and I didn't care if I became fried as a coot, so I gave myself another drink and decided to go to bed. I switched off the lights at the door and noticed that there was one lamp left on by the piano. I walked automatically to turn it off, sat down and played "I'll Follow My Secret Heart" straight through in G flat, a key I had never played in before.

There is, to me, strange magic in such occurrences. I am willing and delighted to accept praise for my application, for my self-discipline and for my grim determination to finish a thing once I have started it. My acquired knowledge is praiseworthy, too, for I have worked hard all my life to perfect the material at my disposal. But these qualities, admirable as they undoubtedly are, are merely accessories. The essential talent is what matters, and essential talent is unexplainable.

My mother and father were both musical in a light, amateur sense, but their gift was in no way remarkable. My father, although he could improvise agreeably at the piano, never composed a set piece of music in his life. I have known many people who were tone-deaf whose parents were far more actively musical than mine. I had no piano lessons when I was a little boy except occasionally from my mother who tried once or twice, with singular lack of success, to teach me my notes. I could, however, from the age of about seven onwards, play on the piano in the pitch dark any tune I had heard. To this day my piano-playing is limited to three keys: E flat, B flat and A flat. The sight of two sharps frightens me to death.

"Dear George Gershwin used to moan . . . and try to force my fingers on to the right notes . . ."

When I am in the process of composing anything in the least complicated I can play it in any key on the keyboard, but I can seldom if ever repeat these changes afterwards unless I practise them assiduously every day. In E flat I can give the impression of playing well. A flat and B flat I can get away with, but if I have to play anything for the first time it is always to my beloved E flat that my fingers move automatically. Oddly enough, C major, the key most favoured by the inept, leaves me cold. It is supposed to be easier to play in than any of the others because it has no black notes, but I have always found it dull.

Another of my serious piano-playing defects is my left hand. Dear George Gershwin used to moan at me in genuine distress and try to force my fingers on to the right notes. As a matter of fact he showed me a few tricks that I can still do, but they are few and dreadfully far between. I can firmly but not boastfully claim that I am a better pianist than Irving Berlin, but as that superlative genius of light music is well known not to be able to play at all except in C major, I will not press

the point. Jerome D. Kern, to my mind one of the most inspired romantic composers of all, played woodenly as a rule and without much mobility. Dick Rodgers plays his own music best when he is accompanying himself or someone else, but he is far from outstanding. Vincent Youmans was a marvellous pianist, almost as brilliant as Gershwin, but these are the only two I can think of who, apart from their creative talent, could really play.

At the very beginning I said that I was born into a generation that took light music seriously. It was fortunate for me that I was, because by the time I had emerged from my teens the taste of the era had changed. In my early twenties and thirties it was from America that I gained my greatest impetus. In New York they have always taken light music seriously. There it is, as it should be, saluted as a specialized form of creative art, and is secure in its own right. The basis of a successful American musical show is now, and has been for many years, its music and its lyrics. Here in England there are few to write the music and fewer still to recognize it when it is written. The commercial managers have to fill their vast theatres and prefer, naturally enough, to gamble on acknowledged Broadway successes rather than questionable home products.

The critics are quite incapable of distinguishing between good light music and bad light music, and the public are so saturated with the cheaper outpourings of Tin Pan Alley which are dinned into their ears interminably by the B.B.C. that their natural taste will soon die a horribly unnatural death. It is a depressing thought; but perhaps some day soon, someone, somewhere, will appear with an English musical so strong in native quality that it will succeed in spite of the odds stacked against it.

NOËL COWARD

THE CENSOR

The censor of my mind has gone on leave.
He used to sit securely in control,
Custodian of the dreadful thoughts that heave
And bubble in the darkness of my soul.

Now he has gone on furlough for a week;
Those monstrous thoughts come freely into sight.
Open my mouth I may, but dare not speak;
Paper before me, but I dare not write.

Never had I imagined that my head
Contained such thoughts, so bulbous and so black.
I think that I had better go to bed
Until the censor of my mind comes back.

R. P. LISTER

My Own Contributions

I NOW arrive at the moment when, willy-nilly, I must discuss, as objectively as possible, my own contributions to the field of light music. I have within the last twenty-five years, composed many successful songs and three integrated scores of which I am genuinely proud. These are *Bitter Sweet*, *Conversation Piece* and *Pacific 1860*. *This Year of Grace* and *Words and Music*, although revues, were also well constructed musically. *Operette* was sadly meagre with the exception of three numbers, "Dearest Love," "Where are the Songs we Sung" and "The Stately Homes of England." This latter, however, being a comedy quartet, relied for its success more on its lyrics than its tune.

Ace of Clubs contained several good songs, but could not fairly be described as a musical score. *Sigh No More*, *On With the Dance* and *London Calling* are outside this discussion as they were revues containing contributions from other composers. *Bitter Sweet*, the most flamboyantly successful of all my musical shows, had a full and varied score greatly enhanced by the orchestrations of Orrelana. *Conversation Piece* was less full and varied but had considerable quality.

With these two scores Miss Elsie April, to whom I dictated them, was a tremendous help to me both in transcribing and in sound musical advice. *Pacific 1860* was, musically, my best work to date. It was carefully balanced and well constructed and imaginatively orchestrated by Ronald Binge and Mantovani. The show, as a whole, was a failure. It had been planned on a small scale, but, owing to theatre exigencies and other circumstances, had to be blown up to fit the stage of Drury Lane. The Press blasted the book, hardly mentioned the music or lyrics, and that was that. It closed after a few months.

Proceeding on the assumption that the reader is interested in the development of my musical talent, I will try to explain, as concisely as I can, how, in this respect, my personal wheels go round. To begin with, I have only had two music lessons in my life. These were the first steps of what was to have been a full course at the Guildhall School of Music and they faltered and stopped when I was told by my instructor that I could not use consecutive fifths.

He went on to explain that a gentleman called Ebenezer Prout had announced many years ago that consecutive fifths were wrong and must in no circumstances be employed. At that time Ebenezer Prout was merely a name to me (as a matter of fact he still is, and a very funny one at that) and I was unimpressed by his Victorian dicta. I argued back that Debussy and Ravel used consecutive fifths frequently. My instructor waved aside this triviality with a pudgy hand, and I left his presence for ever with the parting shot that what was good enough for Debussy and Ravel was good enough for me.

This outburst of rugged individualism deprived me of much valuable knowledge, and I have never deeply regretted it for a moment. Had I intended at the outset of my career to devote all my energies to music I would have endured the necessary training cheerfully enough, but in those days I was passionately involved in the theatre; acting and writing and singing and dancing seemed of more value to my immediate progress than counterpoint and harmony. I was willing to allow the musical side of my creative talent to take care of itself.

"CONSECUTIVE FIFTHS ARE WRONG . . ."

On looking back, I think that on the whole I was right. I have often been irritated in later years by my inability to write music down effectively and by my complete lack of knowledge of orchestration except by ear, but being talented from the very beginning in several different media, I was forced by common sense to make a decision. The decision I made was to try to become a good writer and actor, and to compose tunes and harmonies whenever the urge to do so became too powerful to resist.

I have never been unduly depressed by the fact that all my music has to be dictated. Many famous light composers never put so much as a crotchet on paper. To be born with a natural ear for music is a great and glorious gift. It is no occasion for pride and it has nothing to do with will-power, concentration or industry. It is either there or it isn't. What is so curious is that it cannot, in any circumstances, be wrong where one's own harmonies are concerned. Last year in New York when I was recording *Conversation Piece* with Lily Pons, I detected a false note in the orchestration. It happened to be in a very fully scored passage and the mistake was consequently difficult to trace. The orchestrator, the conductor and the musical producer insisted that I was wrong; only Lily Pons, who has perfect pitch, backed me up. Finally, after much argument and fiddle-faddle, it was discovered that the oboe was playing an A flat instead of an A natural.

"THE OBOE WAS PLAYING A FLAT INSTEAD OF A NATURAL . . ."

The greatness and gloriousness of this gift, however, can frequently be offset by excruciating

discomfort. On many occasions in my life I have had to sit smiling graciously while some well-meaning but inadequate orchestra obliges with a selection from my works. Cascades of wrong notes lacerate my nerves, a flat wind instrument pierces my ear-drums, and though I continue to smile appreciatively, the smile, after a little while, becomes tortured and looks as if my mouth were filled with lemon juice.

NOËL COWARD

Philosophy and the Front Door

IF we accept the concept of philosophy as "the knowledge of things through their highest causes," then at one bound we reject the adverse view of philosophy as mere chimerical speculation, or as a chain of impractical hypothesis. It was not only Aristotle who . . .

Good morning? Yes? You've come what? Oh, Mrs. Beaver can't come and you've dropped round to oblige. Do come in. My word, that's kind of you. No, that's the bathroom. Not at all. And you're Mrs. . . .? Mrs. Jolly. How nice, how very kind of you. And you've never had less than three-and-six an hour. My word, why should you? Here's the kitchen: I'm afraid it's a bit of a—no, it's not my cat. I don't know where it came from, Mrs. Jolly. No, it shouldn't be on the table. My word, I never saw a cat go out of the window faster. Well done! Yes, I've had breakfast. Yes, my word, of course you can see that. And dinner last night, and tea, and lunch yesterday. Well, some of the untidiness is the cat, perhaps. Yes, we bachelors indeed. Well, Mrs. Jolly, I expect you'll find everything you want. I'm just doing a bit of writing. No, I'm not as clever as all that. My word.

It was not only Aristotle who pointed out that, even in order to prove that philosophy is an illusion and a non-reality, it was necessary for us to philosophize. Scepticism, even when . . .

Yes, Mrs. Jolly? Not a bit, do come in. You can't find a mop for the dishes? My goodness, that's bad. Have you tried the sink? No? Well, there's just a chance it might be there. And you like honest scrubbing soap, not those synthetic urgent things in packets? My goodness, I'm sorry. My patent leather shoes under the kitchen table? No, I can't think why they're there, and it's not the proper place for them, I agree, my goodness, not at all. Thanks awfully.

Scepticism, even when the scientists use all its intransigence to assail the philosophical concept, finds itself on philosophical ground. Thus, even a condemnation of the Upanishad . . .

Don't bother, Mrs. Jolly, I'll go. Good morning to you, too. Do I want any writing paper, pocket knives, combs or paper-clips? Well, it's awfully good of you to call . . . Ex-Battle-of-Britain pilot? Really, how splendid: you must have

been very, very young. Yes, writing paper would be very useful. Five shillings? Oh, I rather . . . Oh, it's *ruled*, I see, how splendid! There you are. Thanks awfully. Good-bye.

Thus, even a condemnation of the Upanishad finds itself on ground adjacent to . . .

Hullo? Yes. No, I haven't got any apple trees. I'm afraid you must have the wrong—oh, you're Appletrees, the grocers! My gracious, how silly of me, of course you are. My weekly order? Yes, of course. Oh, just the usual things. Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese, ha, ha! No, never mind. Oh, just three or four dozen eggs, and five or six pounds of butter. What, rationed? My gracious, has a war started? Oh, never stopped. I see, that's very good, Appletrees. Tinned stuff all right? I don't really—Sardines, yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. No! No, no cocoa, no cocoa at all . . . All right. One tin of cocoa. Oh, and one bar of honest scrubbing soap. Good-bye.

. . . on ground adjacent to the monistic idea of the True Absolute. But away with negativism! Let us rather turn to the positivism of the Greek philosophers, Thales and Anaximander and Anaximenes and ~~Appletrees~~ Pythagoras, who . . .

Front door, Mrs. Jolly. Mrs. Jolly, front door. Never mind, I'll go. Good morning. No, I didn't want a plumber. Oh, there's a tap dripping on to Mrs. Delarue's window-sill below, is there? Yes, do come in, can't have that, my word, no. That's the bathroom. That's Mrs. Jolly. What's that, Mrs. Jolly? No, I can't think why there are three slices of toast in the bath. Not at all the proper place, Mrs. Jolly, you're right. Burned, too. Just do anything you want, plumber. See you later.

. . . Pythagoras, who all sought the ultimate form of all objects of external apperception. The conclusions of the Eleatic school were challenged by . . .

Hullo. Yes, I'm speaking. Mrs. Delarue? Oh, Mrs. Delarue, we've met on the stairs. I'm so sorry, gracious me: yes, the plumber's here. Yes, of course it's up to me to pay him. Yes, naturally: as you say, it's my tap. Window-cleaner? Your window-cleaner can't get on? He could be doing my windows instead? What a good idea, how kind. Yes, very neighbourly. Yes, do send him up. Thank you so much, Mrs. Delarue.

. . . challenged by Heraclitus. This in a way revolutionary thinker, who flourished during . . .

Yes, Mrs. Jolly. I say, you know, I'm working. Yes, of course, you're working, too: I do beg your pardon, I didn't mean . . . You can't get in the bathroom because of the plumber? How about doing the bedroom? You've had a look in and can't think why there's a dustpan and brush in the bed? No, nor can I. Not the proper—All right. All right!

. . . flourished during the Persian domination of his native town of Ephesus, held that the permanence of things is only apparent . . .

Front door, Mrs. Jolly! Mrs. Jolly! It's the front door. Can't hear because you've got the wireless on? No, of course, I don't mind you having the wireless on. Music while we work. Pretty little thing, that: ti-tumti-ti-tumti, tira-lay, pom tiddle-pom. Oh, the door! I'll go. Good morning, window-cleaner. Just start where you like. Here? Well, I was working in here. Still, never mind. You carry on all round me.

. . . *only apparent, and taught that "Everything is in a state of flux," and my goodness gracious how right he was! When we come to Pythagoras, whose basic* . . .

What's that, window-cleaner? You can't get any water because the plumber has turned it off? Well, go down to Mrs. Delarue and ask her if you might use her tap. You'll do that, just for me?

. . . *whose basic thesis was the denial of all objectivity, we approach the* . . .

What, Mrs. Jolly? I can't hear for the wireless. You've answered the front door yourself? Fine! It's who? Two gentlemen from the Rating Authority? Oh, come in, gentlemen. Mind that bucket, the window-cleaner is . . . Oh, I'm so sorry. You want to measure all the rooms in the flat for rating revaluation? Yes, do carry on. If you want anything, ask Mrs. Pythagoras: I mean, Mrs. Jolly.

. . . *approach the most famous of his dicta, "Man is the measure of all things." In this second Grecian period of plumbing* . . .

That'll be the window-cleaner back again, Mrs. Jolly.

. . . *the Sophists, who were teachers of rhetoric and rating revaluation, brought* . . .

Hullo, speaking. Coming through the ceiling now, is it, Mrs. Delarue? Well, Thales the philosopher held that water is the source of all things. No, I'm not; no I didn't. You're coming up to see me, right away, Mrs. Descartes?

. . . *brought the doubt of any universally valid truth to the study of window-cleaning* . . .

Yes, by all means put the kettle on, Mrs. Jolly. A nice cup of hemlock all round. There's the front door again. That'll be the piano-tuner, I'm sure. Keep a cup for him, Mrs. Crito.

LIONEL HALE

Leisure Wear for Leisured Men

TASTE and fashion are the products of a leisured class. To-day we are fortunate enough to possess one, in Common Man. With time on his hands and money in his pocket, with that impulse to display himself before mere Women which was familiar in civilized times, he has become the dandy of his century. His *Rue de la Paix*, where all may gape at his peacock finery, is the Charing Cross Road, where the

less Common, less leisured buy mere books. Here, neon-lit behind sheets of glass, tastefully arrayed, among photographs of the Hollywood Great, around a Dutch Old Master or an Italian candelabra, is the new Man of Leisure's leisure wear.

Since the arbiter of fashion and taste is the Screen, these windows have a respectful American Look. Shirts are the Astor Cutaway or the Yale Button-down, the Manhattan Roll or the Times Square check. A pullover-of-many-colours is a "pure wool leisure jacket, as worn in America." Trousers flaunt zip fly, drop loops, self-belt, tapered bottoms and other such American amenities. American shoes, called Leisuals, promise "laceless luxury for informal occasions." Till lately, the Man of Leisure liked to display his spiv strength—or conceal his spiv weakness—in the long draped jacket and the square padded shoulders of a Broadway gorilla.

But the man of fashion is notoriously capricious. He now seeks an un-American New Look. Already, in sports wear, a "little man round the corner" is exporting to the Americans tailored black English jeans (tight or very tight) in place of the untailored (loose or very loose) which a few years ago they imported from France and exported to Britain. In a small Marylebone basement surrounded by a photographic gallery of big men wearing little, he draws inspiration from France and Italy, husbanding for next season a "secret list" of briefs, brief briefs or very brief briefs, in ice-blue, turquoise and gold. Already "Extra brief sun-and-swim two-way stretch briefs" and "satin elastic brief briefs with shaped fronts" are popular, or so he declares, among readers of *The Times*.

In the Piccadilly store, downstairs from the Glove Bar, Italian slipovers flaunt uninhibited colours, with significant abstract designs; and already the Charing Cross Road displays, in an Entente Cordiale contradicting geography, "Continental Cardigans." But more significant here is the English Look. The Edwardian brogue (laced) has joined the Cleveland, the Pall Mall shirt the Texas, the Edge-stitched Windsor the Edge-stitched Broadway. A Bengal Stripe and a pair of brown "chukkas" strike a jingo-ist note. Trousers are pipe-stems, not peg-tops. Jackets are hacking jackets, with slits at the back, displaying a waisted mould of form. Crimes are now committed, on fashionable commons, by young gentlemen in the velvet collars and fancy waistcoats, the turned-up cuffs and buttoned-down pockets of the Edwardian "masher." The Leisured Man of W.C.2 has come to imitate the Worker, under-privileged and un-Common, of Bond Street W.1.

Soon the *Odeon* will cease to be the source of his fashions, and with the spread of literacy *Man About Town*, the Voguish publication of the *Tailor and Cutter*, will doubtless extend its social range. The new Man of Leisure will find it scornful of those "ties like a rush of blood to the throat . . . too often affected by our God's own country cousins"; of "the Gnu Look of shoulders built the Broadway" and "the loose drapey styles from Hollywood," like "a milkmaid's yoke carried out in cloth." He will affect instead "A Military Air," which "follows the natural shape of the body, more or less, so that if you want to look like a strong tough he-man you have to be one—there is no garmental camouflage."

Jackets, he will learn, have four buttons, "just like an officer's tunic"; trousers have narrowed an inch in a year, and "like military trousers" have no turn-ups. With the Military Air goes "the rectitude of plain shirt and stiff collar. If these are white, so much the better." The half-boot is recommended as "an acceptable civilian counterpart of a useful sand-excluding style once patronized by the Desert Air Forces." Moreover "a strong return to popularity by the Bowler Hat reminds us of a similarity between its shape and that of the tin-hat."

The new Man of Leisure, still preferring to go hatless and thus to display the proud crest of a crew-cut hair-do, will surely ponder these words. He may well revert to the bowler, or indeed to the tweed cap, secure in the knowledge that it no longer carries, as in the days of the Common plumber and his Commoner mate, the stigma of toil. He may similarly revert without a qualm to corduroy, now "the Cloth of Kings." His ties henceforward will carry "quiet and minute motifs"; his handkerchiefs will be "top-pocket news." His suits will be cut, darkly and discreetly, from imperial worsteds: bird's-eye and barleycorn, hairline and herringbone, pick-and-pick, pinhead and Bedford cord.

He may even wear a dinner-jacket, confident in the knowledge that it has risen to be a Television Jacket or Host Coat, and with it a cummberbund, since "There is something poshlike about it that smacks, appropriately enough, of the first Elizabethan era"; and, "let's face it . . . the vast over-popularization of the fancy waistcoat must mean its death as a high fashion accessory."

Thus, soon enough, Common Man will

. . . detect
A respect
Which will say, in effect:
"You're a friend,
You're a comrade,
A brother,
In the sly,
Corner-eye,
Rather shy,
Passing-by
Glance of one well-dressed man
At another.

And what will poor Bond Street do then? It is racking its brains. "Retrenchment," it says, is the answer. More discretion. But how and where? One slit at the back, instead of two. What next? Every avenue must be explored. A formula must be found. There is no time to be lost. Already the undergraduates of Oxford, reading the headlines of crime, are discarding unworn Edwardian suits.

KINROSS

INDEX OF ARTISTS

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Printed in Great Britain by
Butler & Tanner Ltd.,
Frome and London