

PICK OF PUNCH

edited by Bernard Hollowood



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BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

Punch is the stronghold of British humour, even though other journals, once strictly grave, are now admitting the occasional smile. (Didn't even *The Times*, reporting on the cost of ship-cleaning, have the headline "Barnacle Bill"? It did.)

In a world where there sometimes seems less and less to laugh at it's surprising to find more and more writers and artists learning the trick. In this year's *Pick of Punch* there are new names, added to such notoriously hard-bitten comics as Wodehouse, Herbert, Ellis, Cockburn, Atkinson, Young, Price and Boothroyd at the typewriter, and Langdon, Sprod, Hewison, ffolkes, Mahood, Brockbank, Siggs, Sillince, Searle (it's madness to launch out on these lists) at the drawing-board.

To claim that it all suits all tastes would be absurd. Let's just say that, picking your way through this PICK, you'll laugh most of the time.

Jacket design by SMILBY



INNERLEITHEN, NEAR PEEBLES
SATURDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2002
DAY OUT IN BORDERS, WITH MUM

JP

Pick of Punch

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PUNCH

edited by Bernard Hollowood

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INTRODUCTION

With a shrewd eye to the Christmas market, and the willing co-operation of the publishers, I place this book in your hands conveniently for you to place it in someone else's, a tasteful greeting enclosed.

For it is at the Christmas season that the bookshops are piled thick with mirth on their centre tables, and that the regular customer, not at first realising that the eleven-month laughter drought has broken, is forced to make an irritable detour before he can see what's new this week in the way of military strategy, social reform and political reminiscence.

Such serious works are of course admirable, and I would have more of them, if they were not already cascading off the ends of their shelves in bookshops everywhere. All the same, it seems a pity that laughter on the printed page should carry some sort of seasonal stigma, and appear shyly and briefly as a fringe benefit of the goodwill period. Those who write humour have to work all the year round: why should the reader be excused duty from January to November?

However, in today's world, frivolity should no doubt be grateful for the opportunity to obtrude itself at all—a thought which adds to my pleasure in once more being able to introduce a *Pick of Punch*: some hundred thousand words of, I think, diverting letterpress, not to mention a wealth of illustration. And if by chance I was quite wrong at the beginning, and you have acquired this book not as something to be packaged up and got out of the house as soon as possible, but actually for your own entertainment, then I apologise. And thank you.*

But I should warn you that unless you get to work industriously, rather than dip idly in odd moments, you may find yourself laughing all the year round after all.

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

*My thanks also to J. B. Boothroyd, William Hewison and Kenneth Mahood for editorial assistance and for the layout of the book.

The Facts as we Know them



"It may be just a common cryptogamous plant to you,
but to me it's home."

DRIPSOMANIA

By E. S. Turner

This summer, at Heerlen in Holland, a golden trophy will be awarded to the man or woman with the biggest collection of *bierglasuntersetzer*, *sous-verres*, coasters or drip-mats. No one will be wildly surprised to learn that the trophy will take the form of a drip-mat, making up in glory what it lacks in soakability.

At the recent international convention of tegestologists in Germany six hundred delegates swapped 45,000 drip-mats in five hours—mats from Communist beer gardens and Western strip clubs, eight-colour mats from the Olympic Games and mats calling for Sunday opening in Monmouthshire. The winner of the 1960 golden mat fielded 18,000 entries, and the 1959 winner 26,000.

Teges is the Latin for "a mat, a covering." A scholar might pardonably guess that "tegestologist," if it means anything, means one versed in the science of rugs or rug-making. The Romans, in or out of their orgies, do not seem to have used drip-mats, possibly because their laws did not compel them to fill their glasses to the brim. Britain puddled along without mats until the 1920s, though sometimes the fastidious used porcelain coasters (a name more widely current in America).

The drinkers of Britain now dribble on to some three hundred million drip-mats a year. This is only about the same number as are used in Belgium, with one-tenth the population (a very vigorous beer-mat plant operates hard by the field of Waterloo). In Europe there are factories where tree trunks go in one end and beer mats come out of the other, a sight to intoxicate the tegestologist if not the tree-lover.

It is a matter for scandal in the councils of the British Drip-Mat Association that the South of England uses only half as many drip-mats as the Midlands and the



North. London publicans, as often as not, prefer to wipe their counters and tables with an off-white towel, arguing that beer mats are unsightly or that their patrons would only steal them or throw them about. They *like* their pianos with rings on. But north of the Fifty-second Parallel, where more gracious living sets in, men and women expect a mat under their beer mug as they expect a saucer under their tea-cup. If it has a joke on it so much the better.

The British Beer Mat Collectors Society was founded last year for the general advancement and regulation of tegetology. Its presidents are the comedians Morecambe and Wise, who have a very discriminating collection in their tegetorium. Mr. Derek Preedy, secretary of the Society, has sent a memorandum to the Pilkington Committee on Broadcasting calling for a more generous approach to the hobby. The Society's monthly magazine describes, among other things, ways of displaying collections. While one man likes to cover the walls with drip-mats another (like a lieutenant in the Fleet Air Arm) prefers to cover his ceiling. Another mounts his on rolls of bus ticket paper and suspends them; another keeps them in an album. On the whole mothers look more kindly on beer mats on the bedroom wall than on pin-ups. An advertisement in *The Beer Mat Magazine* says: "Keep Your Beer Mats Clean By Using———Invisible Wallpaper Protector." It seems another cleaning fluid firm was approached, but there was "a complete lack of co-operation." Many useful tips appear in the magazine. Thus: "Nigel McCrea writes to say that there are no breweries in Crete, Afghanistan, Barbados, Bermuda, Corsica, Liberia, Monaco, Saudi Arabia and the Yemen." The Society has contacts with Czecho-Slovakia, Japan and the Persian Gulf but none, apparently, with Ireland.

It goes without saying that the membership card of the Society is in the form and substance of a beer mat. A member who cannot produce his mat when challenged must make a contribution to the Society's funds. This explains such otherwise cryptic statements in the magazine as "I was caught 'mats down' by Mrs. Edwards." Members of the Society do not just pick up any beer mats they fancy and pocket them; they ask the landlord's permission. A small cloud, no bigger than a drip-mat, was sighted over Derbyshire recently, when a man was prosecuted for the theft of a beer mat, "the value of one penny," from a public-house. Had he not also taken an ashtray, it is unlikely that he would have found himself in court. The collector must therefore distinguish between drip-mats which are meant to be taken away and drip-mats which are not to be taken away. Normally, landlords respond favourably to polite requests and may even produce a wider choice from under the counter. But a Durham publican wrote a long and testy letter to the press complaining of bands of young men who burst into his premises demanding beer mats. To his question "Are you drinking any beer here?" they replied, "No, we only want beer mats."

Beer mats advertise just about anything these days, from snuff to fertilizers, from traction engine rallies to trips around Jersey. There are mats which urge one to be a Regular soldier, or a Territorial, or a Royal Marine, or to join any one of a

dozen other regiments. ("Why did you decide to become a soldier, Field-Marshal?"—"Actually, I got the idea from a beer mat in a pub at Dewsbury.") There are mats which nag for safety first on the roads. Political parties have scarcely penetrated this medium as yet, but there was an election mat bearing the appeal, in Conservative blue, "Mac Again Please," with the less ambiguous "Bossom This Time" on the obverse. There is a whole archipelago of mats in the shape of islands, among them Malta, the Isle of Wight and the Danish island of Fyn. There is a mat bearing the portrait of the president of the International Association of Drip-Mat and Label Collectors, of Duisburg, with the message "*Viel Sammerlerglück!*" There is a mat in America with a message in invisible ink, which comes to life only when beer is slopped on it.

Again there are mats with crossword squares, mats with horoscopes, mats (inevitably) with vintage cars and various mats of mild impropriety. Just now there is a scramble for a new line of Whitbread mats with *Punch* joke drawings. There are also mats for chocolate houses, one of which bears the information that Montezuma used to consume fifty pitchers of chocolate a day. This is the answer to those who say that drip-mat collecting is not an educative hobby. If poets could be induced to part with the beer mat rights of their shorter pieces, it could more confidently be hailed as a cultural hobby.

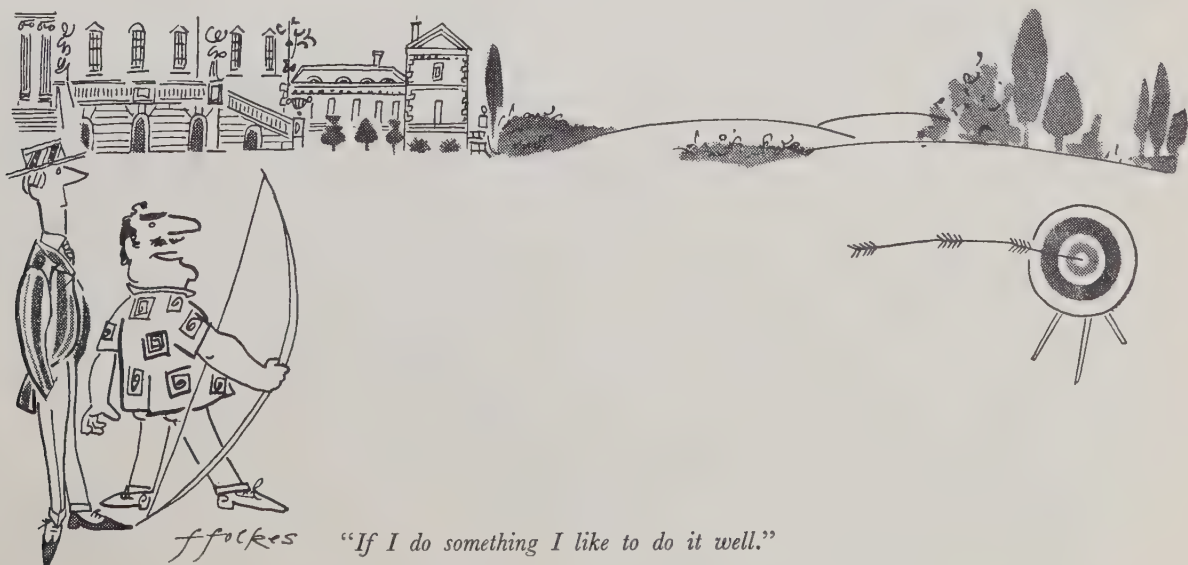
Beer mats come in pulp-board, cellulose wadding, cork, cardboard, plastic foam (washable, drip-dry) and paper tissue (mostly for cocktail glasses). Those who collect tissue mats may not know it, but they are hovering on the edge of papyrophily, a mania which has been hived off by tegetology. Its members have a special hankering for printed paper serviettes, but they leave beer bottle labels to the meadophilists.

The British Drip-Mat Association looks indulgently on the activities of collectors. Its chairman, Mr. Charles Edward Tresise, has striven mightily since the war to mop up the wettest counters in the world. The firm of Tresise at Burton-on-Trent is an object of pilgrimage and of schoolboy solicitation (when one boy is sent samples, the rest of the form write in). It was Mr. Tresise who let loose on the West-end of London a beer mat treasure-hunt, with columnists and starlets tearing from one drinking-hole to another in chauffeur-driven cars. He is not worried by the new dispensation which allows publicans to serve beer in vessels less than half a pint in capacity, so long as the load-line is marked. Increased use of refrigeration, he points out, means more condensation on the outside of the glass, consequently more dribble. Even if all dribble were abolished, drip-mats would still be necessary in order to tell people not to drink too much and to recruit the soldiers of the Queen. And, of course, to collect.

"Passengers at one of the world's busiest airports can attend services in a new all-denominational chapel. A special feature is a glass chapel screen which divides worshippers who have cleared customs from those who have not."

International Air Transport Association Press Release

Used to be sheep and goats.



"Can he borrow the bike?"



THE EFFLUENT SOCIETY

BY BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

Ten years of government have elapsed since the Socialists and aesthetes converted the South Bank, one of London's most charming and amusing relics of Victoriana, into the Festival of Britain show. Slowly the old country is recovering. There is a new vitality abroad. American-size buildings, like the Shell and Vickers giants, are shooting up into London's proud skies, blanketing the memory of the alien and therefore incomprehensible drollery of the Dome of Discovery, the Lion and Unicorn building, the Skylon and so on. Things will never be quite the same of course—we can't tamper with tradition without risking change—but there is every reason to suppose that our next national exhibition will wipe away much of the oily,

superior, intellectual grin that disfigured the face of Britain a decade ago.

The exhibition will try to spotlight the nation's great achievements during the Macmillan régime, the inborn craftsmanship of the British people, and the spirit of optimism in which we re-assert our claim to world leadership. In broadest outline the plans at the moment include:

1. *The Hall of Premium Bonds and Engineering*

This will underline our pre-eminence in the fields of state lotteries and electronics, and the *pièce de résistance* will, of course, be "Ernie," a supreme example of post-war engineering efficiency. The monthly draw for bonds prizes will take place from the exhibition hall itself, thus ensuring capacity attendances, and extra special prizes will be awarded to visitors named Ernest who can answer three simple fiscal questions put to them by Mr. Michael Miles. Miniature reproductions of Ernie in such varied materials as Coal Board coal, "Garagecreeet," Girdlefoam latex and candy floss will be on sale.

2. *The Emporium of England*

We have—not for nothing—been called a nation of shopkeepers, and this mighty exhibit will illustrate the latest exciting developments in the design of betting shops. From all over the country facsimile models—each with its authentic regional flavour—will be assembled, and all will of course be open to business on the usual terms. Britain's export trade in the future will depend very largely on our ability to sell betting shops to the uncommitted countries and to those underdeveloped territories at present without such amenities. The finest architects in Britain will be invited to submit designs, and the Council of Industrial Design itself, it is hoped, will nominate the panel of examiners under the chairmanship of Mr. John Betjeman.

Older kinds of shops such as self-service stores,

arcades, department, chain and mail order stores will be dotted about in the exhibition approaches, but will of course be dummies.

3. *The Arena of British Sport*

A splendid hall, modelled on the lines of the old Crystal Palace, will contain unrivalled facilities for Bingo and American ten-pins or skittles. A national Bingo competition organized by the Treasury in aid of shipping subsidies will take place daily throughout the season, the finals to be played off under floodlight in the main theatre. The Arena will be closed for one hour each day to enable visitors to see other parts of the Festival Exhibition.

4. *The Take-over Biddery*

The scheme here is for a small, very intimate pavilion fashioned on board-room lines. The entrance fee will of necessity be fixed rather high and in guineas. Direct walkie-talkie communication with the London Stock Exchange, provincial exchanges and whatever is left of Fleet Street, will be maintained night and day.

5. *The Pyramid of Credit*

Situated at the very centre of the Festival grounds the Pyramid will present an awe-inspiring dramatization of British achievement in hire-purchase and deferred payment. The entire edifice will be constructed of credit cards on a papiermâché frame and will be surmounted by an enormous coloured photograph of Harold Macmillan. Entrance will be by credit card only and there will be easy terms for

the wide variety of British-made goods and services on display, including Premium Bonds, betting slips and Bingo boards.

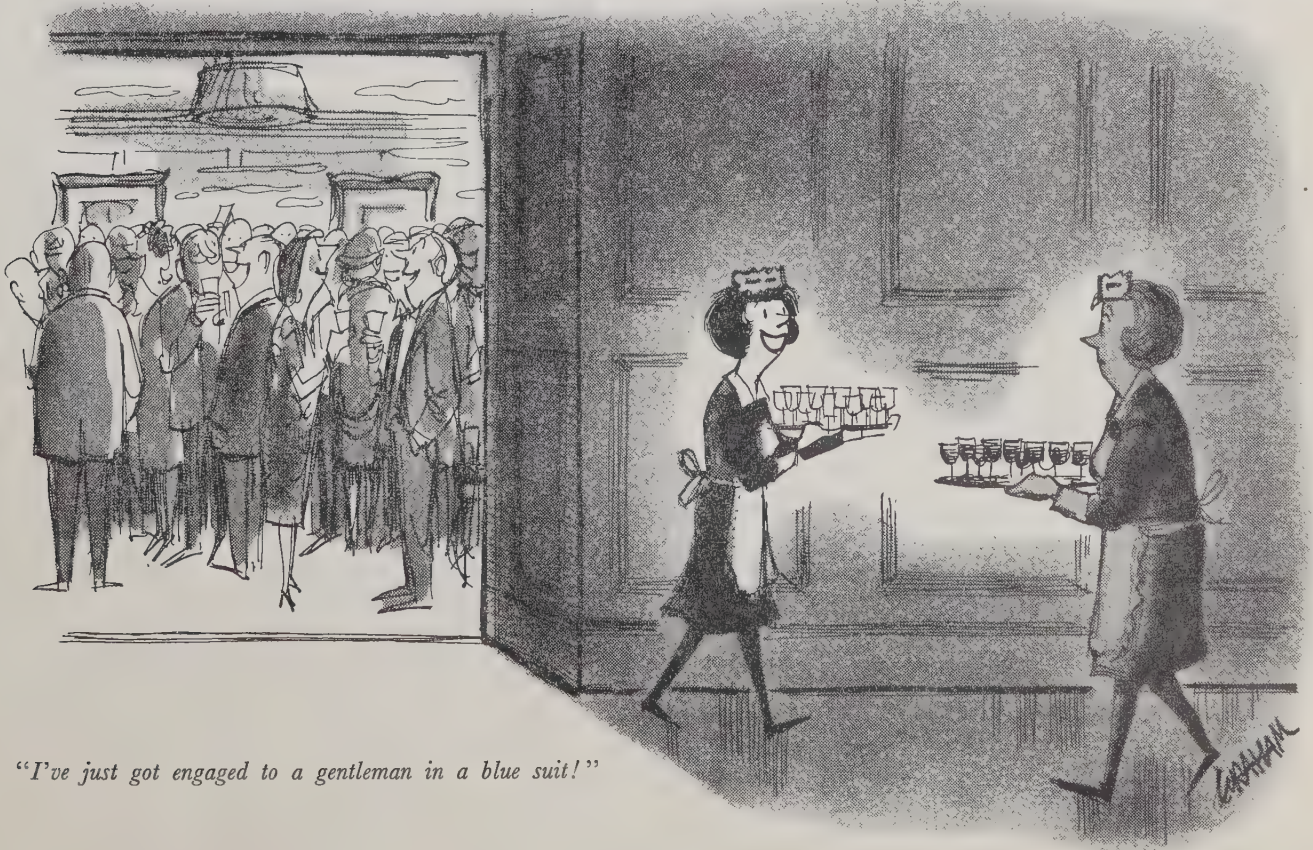
6. *The Hall of Elizabethan Venturers*

In this, the sixth and last of the central features of the Festival, will be housed those ancillaries of Britain's industrial and commercial genius, the Pool of Pools, the Commercial Channel and the Fiddle. The Pool of Pools will demonstrate how football pools provide employment for thousands of people who would otherwise be driven to work in manufacturing industry or the social services. The Commercial Channel (in collaboration with the Treasury and the Royal Mint) will feature a machine, the "Thomson," in which, for a fee, the public will be given a licence to print its own money, though the notes, which will be overprinted "3d. Off" and "Voucher," will not be considered legal tender outside the hall.

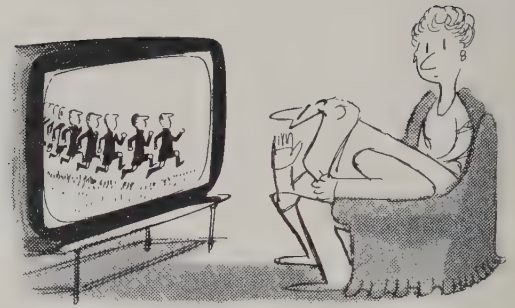
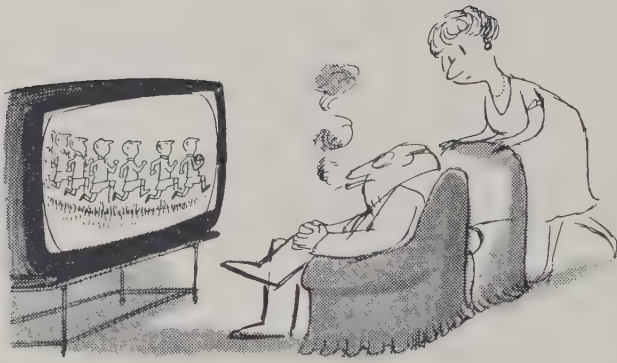
The Fiddle will take the form of a warren of private consulting rooms staffed by tax counsellors attired in fifteenth-century smocks and using quill pens.

It should all be great fun. Overseas visitors in particular will be impressed by the remarkable strides we have made in recent years, by our bubbling confidence and the staggering boldness of our political leaders.

Plans for a "Common Market Forum" are too tentative for inclusion in this preliminary announcement.



"I've just got engaged to a gentleman in a blue suit!"



ORPHANS ARE INFECTIOUS

Pasteur's germ-theory of disease may have had an uphill fight against professional die-hards but the general public threw themselves on it with enthusiasm. They enjoyed feeling that the air in the neighbourhood of other people was packed with germs. The poor were germ-laden and so were the old. Cinemas were fuller of germs than theatres. Other people's hats were more densely populated with bacteria than other people's gloves. The outsides of letters were a trap for infection and the upper decks of trams were more liable to harbour plagues than the lower decks. Perhaps germs were thought of as lighter than air, like hydrogen.

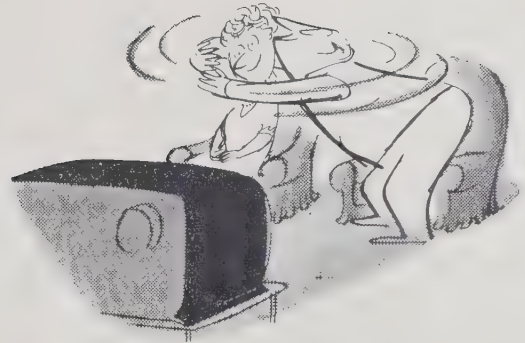
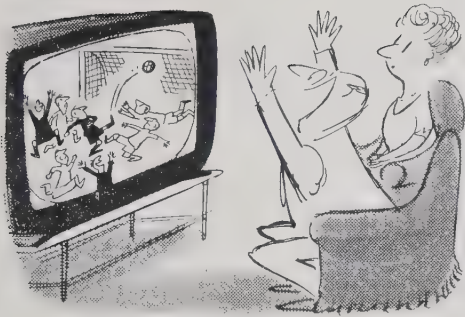
I suppose that germs as one of the mysterious, romantic threats of a gas-lit world were killed by modern antiseptic advertising and also by news stories about miracle drugs. It was no longer ecstatically terrifying to be crammed into a camera obscura with infectious-looking children if a shot of M & B or penicillin would stop disease in its tracks, so germs joined footpads and body-snatchers and burners of wills. But a generation or so ago they still had their place in the repertoire of domestic melodrama. I can dimly remember that when I was four I was taken to a circus and before exposure to the audience I had lumps of camphor *sewn* into my clothes. It is a more vivid memory than the circus itself, which I found quite baffling. Nobody had told me what to expect and when I saw apes bicycling my first feeling was that something had gone wrong.

I can remember elderly people whose choice of holiday depended on an elaborate method of rating resorts for germiness. This was not just a matter of avoiding places likely to attract the poor, whose

feckless attitude to disease was a threat to us all. Some towns of irreproachable dullness, without any of those violently flavoured delights that would allure excursionists, were dangerous because of their attraction to convalescents. These were thought of as being every bit as lethal as sufferers during the period of incubation. Fever came on gradually, raged and then died out slowly, emitting a declining number of germs but still capable of striking down passers-by on the promenade. Any town that catered for the enfeebled with ample glass shelters, easy gradients, cliff-lifts and the absence of entertainment on the pier, apart from a rather *sotto voce* concert party, was liable to get the reputation of attracting convalescents.

Germs were also thought to lurk in a curious selection of foods. I never remember anybody worrying much about milk, sold in those days in metal cans, not bottles, and ladled out in the open street within inches of the horse; but in my home some kinds of toffee were suspect, probably toffee likely to be made by bacillus-ridden foreigners. Chocolate was safe enough, apart from the rumour that brands made by neutrals in World War I had been poisoned as a gesture of solidarity with the Hun. Salad oil was a security risk and so were sultanas. I cannot remember why this curious line was drawn which allowed guzzling on raisins without fear of tuberculosis or scarlet fever.

On the other hand, respiratory diseases were popularly thought of as the result of foolishness on the part of the sufferer, not as the product of germs and still less of viruses. The word "virus" still meant rat-poison, a substance familiar to all readers of murder

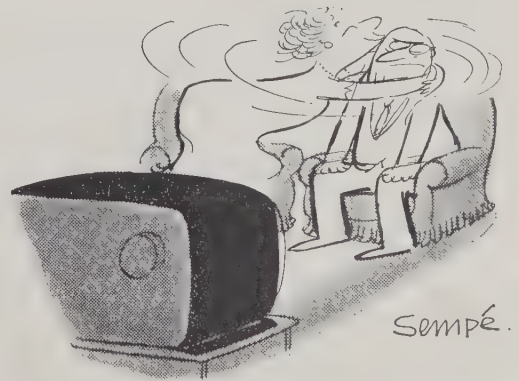
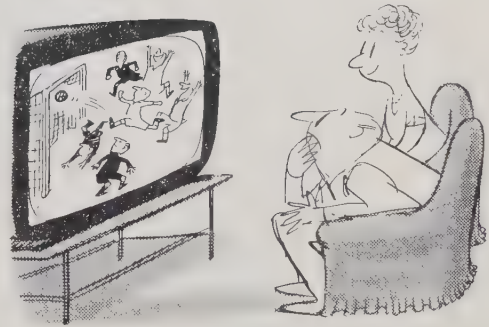
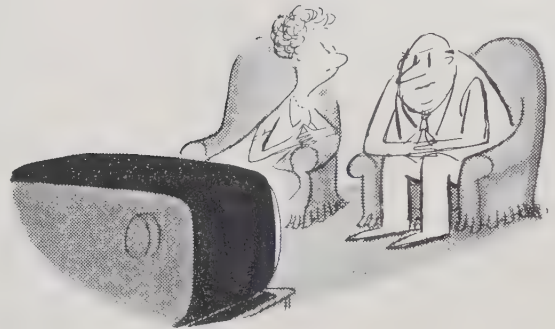


By R. G. G. Price

trials. You contracted pneumonia by sitting in a draught, by going out after a hot bath, by eating ices when flushed from playing games and by sleeping in unaired beds. The kind of resort where the sands were crowded with chickenpox and mumps was the kind of resort where the beds were unlikely to be aired. One seldom got pneumonia in one's own home.

Once you had picked up a germ, perhaps by lingering near a dust-cart or not running past a nursing-home, you rotted. Your skin erupted. Your remoter relations began to wonder whether they would get an invitation to your deathbed. You even risked being forcibly removed to an isolation hospital, the lazar-house from which no patient returned; you stayed on and on, getting their complete repertoire of fevers one after another. Attempts to provide isolation at home by making the family paddle in disinfectant and slowing down traffic about the house by hanging sheets soaked in carbolic across passages were always in danger of being dismissed as amateurish by some jack-in-office in charge of the Fever Hospital's press gang.

Crones no longer sit over their winter coals swapping yarns about coming out in purplish spots because they had shared a seat in the park with a bandaged child. No boy who has hygiene on his school timetable is going to submit to being told, as a friend of mine was told, never to use the Gravesend-Tilbury ferry except in emergency as it was peculiarly subject to infected passengers. The clear light of science sweeps fear of the unknown from the dark passages of the human mind. And if it substitutes fear of the known, well, you can have progress in threats as in anything else.



Mothers are all things to all men—each man has his own image, as DAVID WALSH suggests in the following examples.

I REMEMBER MAMA



The Stoker



The Aesthete



The Sea Captain

The Hunt Master



The Juvenile Delinquent



The



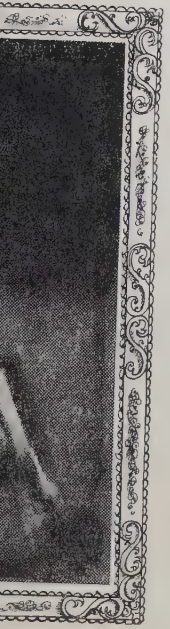
The Centenarian



The Actor Knight



The Squire



The Couturier

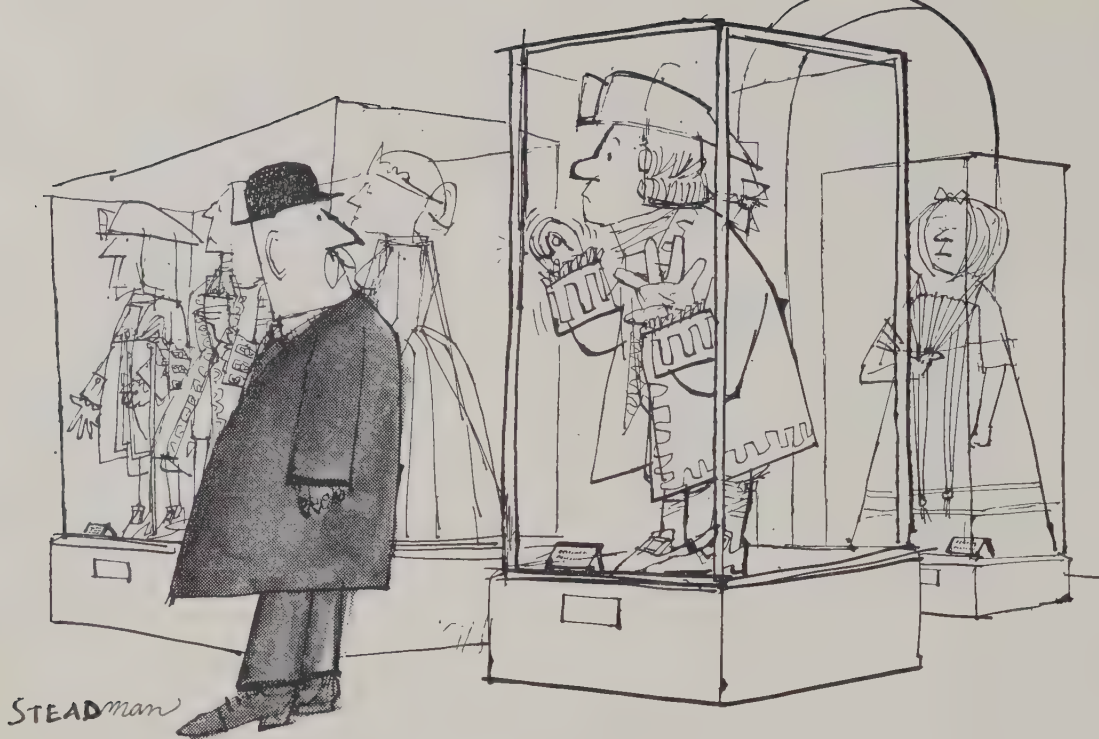


The Admiral



Everyone

P.W.



THE HOTEL BABYLON

By Christopher Hollis

“There have been times when I used to follow a lonely White-eye in the forest singing lustily all the time, hopping from tree to tree, as though calling for a mate.”

American Cage-Bird Magazine

That's no way to catch a White-eye.

Room 298 at the Hotel Babylon was large and comfortable. The only serious complaint against it was that, though it was easy enough by twiddling knobs to change from one television programme to another, only a very able man was able to turn off the television altogether. However the resources of science are invincible and, by asking for Room Service, I was able at last to obtain a Bulgarian gentleman, who, though plainly surprised at so eccentric a request, was yet prepared in return for a five-dollar tip to show me how I could disconnect the television. We had arrived at about ten o'clock in the morning, and we had not yet fully unpacked before an envelope was stealthily pushed beneath the door. I picked it up and saw that it was addressed to “Mr. Macmillan.” Ten minutes more had not passed before there slid under the door another envelope for Mr. Macmillan and, at intervals of twenty minutes or so, further envelopes thus inscribed arrived steadily beneath the door.

When therefore I went downstairs at lunch-time I took with me this, by then formidable, volume of correspondence and spoke to the girl at the desk.

“I am in Room 298,” I said, “and all through the morning letters have been arriving in my room addressed to Mr. Macmillan.”

The girl consulted the register.

“298,” she said. “But Mr. Macmillan is in Room 298. You are Mr. Macmillan.”

I maintained the contrary and tried to leave the letters with her but on no account would she receive them.

“We do not re-accept letters that have been delivered to our patrons,” she explained. “However I will make a note of your complaint.”

I hid the letters under a hat and made off.

Throughout the afternoon further letters also addressed to Mr. Macmillan continued to slide under the door. As it got towards six o'clock I was seated in the room writing a letter. My wife was having a bath. The door was locked. In spite of the lock it opened and there entered a formidable man in a blue suit and wearing a bowler hat which he showed no signs of removing. He explained that he was the house-detective and that he had let himself in with his master-key.

“Mr. Macmillan,” he said.

I denied the accusation.

“I've come to check up on you, Mr. Macmillan,” he explained.

“But I'm not Mr. Macmillan,” I objected.

He pointed to a copy of the hotel register on which was written, “Number 298, Mr. Macmillan.”

“How do you account for that then?” he asked.

“I don't account for it,” I said. “It's nothing to do with me. I didn't fill up that register. All I know is that I'm not Mr. Macmillan. I don't want his mail and, if there is any mail for me, I should be very glad to have it.”

“Not a very likely story, you must admit,” said the house detective. “If you hadn't been Mr. Macmillan, it's not very probable that they would have entered you as Mr. Macmillan, is it? These denials only make the whole thing appear a good deal more suspicious. It looks as if you had some reason for concealing the fact that you are Mr. Macmillan. I want to know your motive. I must warn you, Mr. Macmillan, that it would be a great deal better for you if you were quite frank with me—a great deal better for you, if I may say so.”

At that moment my wife, hearing the voices and anxious to discover what was going on, emerged stark naked from the bathroom. Seeing her, the house detective took off his bowler hat.

“And what's more, ma'am,” he said, “the hotel has no record that you are anybody at all. Mr. Macmillan only took this room as a single room.”

I offered him a drink. He accepted it.

“I thought that you would agree to speak freely,” he said.

I said nothing.

“They wouldn't have delivered you Mr. Macmillan's mail if you hadn't been

“Angela?—that's a pretty name!”



Mr. Macmillan," he persisted—still puzzled but perhaps a little mollified. I offered him a second drink. "I'm glad you're speaking freely at last," he said as he lowered it at one go. "If you'll pardon me, I'll use your phone," he said, wiping his lips. He picked up the internal phone. "Ben speaking," he said. "I've checked up on Mr. Macmillan. He's a straight guy. He's on the level. He's got a dame with him but he can explain everything. You can take it from me, he's on the level.

"I think that'll be all right now, Mr. Macmillan," he said. "Good evening to you, ma'am," and he put on his bowler hat and retired.

When I came back from dinner at about eleven o'clock I found among further letters for Mr. Macmillan a telegram addressed to me in my own name. I observed that the telegram had been received at eleven o'clock that morning, and the delay in delivery happened to be a cause of considerable inconvenience to me. I rang up and delivered my protest that a telegram which had taken half an hour to cross the Atlantic should take twelve hours to travel from the ground to the fourth floor of the Hotel Babylon.

At four in the morning the telephone rang. I got out of bed and stumbled to it. It was the manager speaking.

"Mr. Macmillan," he said, "I just rang to apologise for the delay in the delivery of your telegram. I have given strict orders that such a thing shall never occur again."

We had to catch an eleven o'clock train the next morning. I therefore rang up at ten o'clock and asked them to have my bill ready. They assured me that such anxiety was quite unnecessary.

"We have an automatic system that is quite infallible," they said. "If you stop at the desk on your way to the taxi the girl will press the numbers of your room on the register and the bill automatically and immediately appears. We can promise you that there will not be an instant's delay if you ask for your account at the very moment of leaving."

I accepted the assurance and, when we came down to take the taxi, asked for the bill.

"Number?" said the girl.

"298," I said.

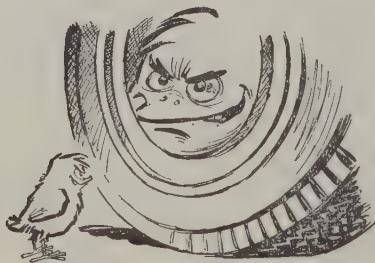
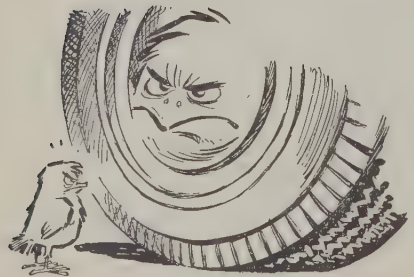
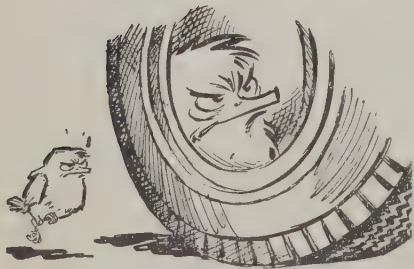
She pressed a 2 and a 9 and an 8 on a machine that looked like a portable typewriter and out at once popped a bill.

She handed it to me.

"298. Mr. Macmillan, Single Room. Send Account to the British Embassy," it read.

"Thank you, Mr. Macmillan," she said. "It's been a real pleasure."

"Thank you very much," I said to her as I got into the taxi.



HARGREAVES

"Legs eleven!"



PERSONAL APPEARANCE

By Henry Fairlie

It came as some surprise to me, leading the habitually sheltered life of a political writer as I have, when I received an invitation from Mr. P., the side-kick of Mr. Maurice Winnick, to join (should I pass the necessary tests) the panel of *What's My Line?* I was at the time—let's put it like that—in need of money. I agreed to meet Mr. P. at his office.

The office is listed in the telephone directory thus:

WINNICK, MAURICE, Orchestras . . . 18 George St., W.1.

I have not, during my life, pursued many of my activities in Mayfair, and as I searched for George Street, in a bitter wind, and then searched for No. 18, I wondered about "Orchestras." I knew that

Mr. Winnick had begun his career as a band leader, but I had been under the impression that since then he had struck out into new fields. Still, "Orchestras" was what it said, and I began to think of myself in a midnight blue dinner jacket, sitting behind a music-stand with the monograph M.W. worked on it, and standing up in the spotlight when the moment came for me to blow my one line of the melody on my trumpet.

"I am sorry I am late," I said to Mr. P.

"Oh, that does not matter, my dear boy, we are always busy here. You see, the position is this, Mr. Fairlie. Since Gilbert died, we have been looking for an anchor man for *What's My Line?* and your name has been suggested to me, and we thought you might be interested. Are you interested, Mr. Fairlie?"

"Well, yes, but . . ."

"Good, Mr. Fairlie. I think it's better that I do the talking first, and then you can ask me any questions afterwards. You see, Mr. Fairlie, Mr. Winnick is proud of *What's My Line?* It maintains, I think you would agree, what I might rightly call a higher intellectual or cultural standard than most panel games. We are proud of that, and we wish to keep it that way. Well, when Gilbert died, we had agents all over the country telephoning us to say that one of their clients was just the man to

"You've been rubbing him the wrong way all evening."



replace him. From all over the country, Mr. Fairlie. Yes, there would be no difficulty in replacing Gilbert just like that, except that we care for this programme, we want to maintain what, I think you would agree, are its high intellectual and, I might even say, cultural standards. You are getting my point, Mr. Fairlie . . .?"

"Yes, but . . ."

"I thought so. So we are being very careful, you see. The BBC, of course, has the right to veto any suggestion which we may make, but I think you can take it from me that Mr. Winnick chooses the panel for this game very carefully, and the BBC can usually be counted on to take our advice. Well, look what we could do for you, Mr. Fairlie, if you came on this panel. You receive your fee for the actual programme in the ordinary way from the BBC. We do not touch that. But then there are the perks. The perks, I say, Mr. Fairlie. Perks are very important in this business, and we handle them. Of course, it depends on how quickly you become a personality. But usually nine or ten regular appearances on the programme are enough. From then on,

you will be asked to make personal appearances, all over the country. You would arrange those through this office. That is our side of the arrangement. You are following me, Mr. Fairlie?"

"Yes, but still . . ."

"Oh no, Mr. Fairlie, don't get me wrong, when I talk about perks in this connection, I am not talking about chicken feed. Oh no, not chicken feed at all. You see, look what Mr. Winnick and the programme have done for those who appear on it. They become personalities. They may open two or three shops a week at £200 a time. Dress shops and shoe shops, things like that. You get my point, Mr. Fairlie. There's a lot we could do for you. Not that I'm suggesting you would necessarily open shops. But there are other kinds of personal appearances."

"Yes, I see your point. But tell me, what sort of programme do you think *What's My Line?* is?"

"A very good question, if I may say so, Mr. Fairlie, a very good question. I'd answer it this way, and I think that Mr. Winnick would give you the same answer. We see it as a game, Mr. Fairlie."

Just a game. But not just a game, because the people on the panel play it intelligently, and seriously. Yes, they play it seriously, Mr. Fairlie. That's the secret of the programme's success. A game, but played seriously."

"And what was Gilbert Harding's particular role, this position as anchor man, which you suggest that I might want to fill?"

"Another good question, Mr. Fairlie. I must say you are asking one or two questions. Most people, mind you, just leap at this opportunity, and never ask any questions about the programme at all. That's not taking the thing seriously, now, is it? Well, I'll tell you what Gilbert's role was. At one end of the table we have a comic, then two pretty dolls, and then came Gilbert. He was the solid man of intelligence. It was intelligence which he stamped the programme with, Mr. Fairlie. That's what we've got to replace. We've got to find another heavyweight in that anchor position: I don't mean heavyweight in physical appearance. But heavyweight, you know what I mean?"

"Yes, but what was the exact kind of intelligence which Gilbert Harding contributed to the programme?"

"That, Mr. Fairlie, I think I can best answer like this. Suppose some one signed himself in as coming from Bury or Rochdale in Lancashire. You know where I mean? Well, Gilbert knew like a flash that Bury or Rochdale were cotton towns. He *knew*, Mr. Fairlie, he just *knew* like that. And from cotton towns, he made the easy step to cotton mills. That was the kind of intelligence he brought to the programme. It's that which we've got to replace . . . somehow."

Mr. P. sighed as if the hope of finding such intelligence again anywhere in the length and breadth of Britain was an impossibility.

"Well, if you are interested in it, Mr. Fairlie, I'll get in touch with you again, and you can do a run-through for us. You wouldn't mind that, would you?"

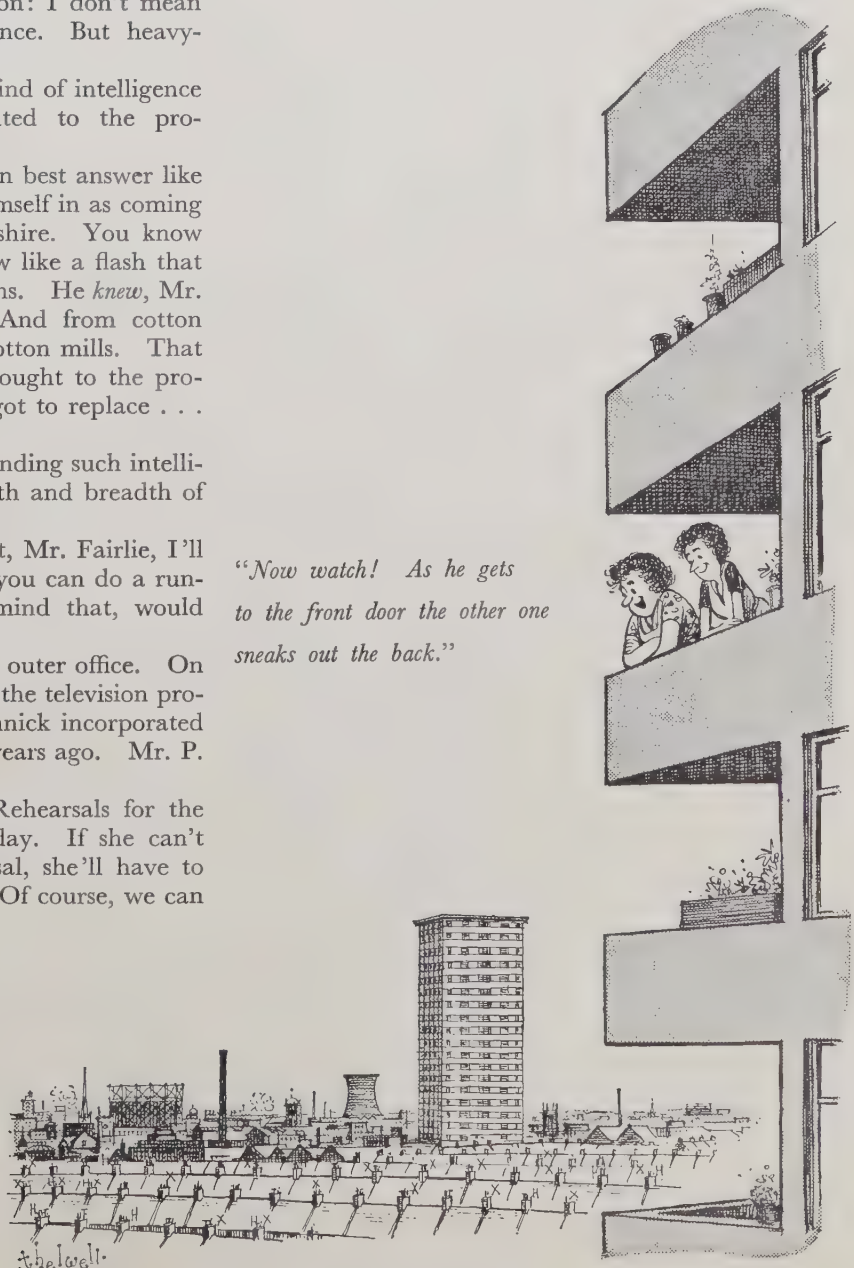
As I left, I went out through an outer office. On the wall were the certificates of all the television programmes which Mr. Maurice Winnick incorporated as limited companies six or seven years ago. Mr. P. was on the telephone:

"I can't help it if she's ill. Rehearsals for the panto begin two weeks from to-day. If she can't promise to be at the first rehearsal, she'll have to throw in the part. Replace her? Of course, we can

replace her. Look, you remember a little girl in the chorus in *Cinderella* last year: did a verse on her own. Lives with her mother in Streatham, I think. Valerie Something, her name was. Jeanette, name of that little girl who did the second verse of 'Prince of my Heart' in *Cinderella* last year? Valerie, yes. Timkins, that's right. You there, Harry. Valerie Timkins is her name. Get hold of her. We start rehearsing two weeks from now. We'll just have to replace, I tell you."

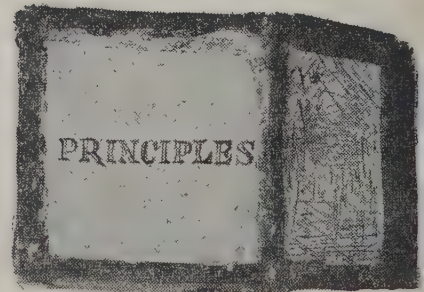
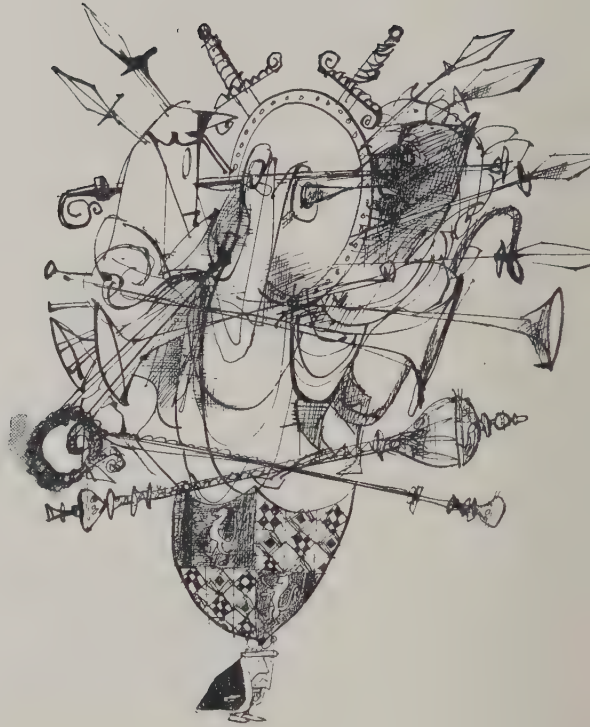
Mr. P. rang off. "You see, Mr. Fairlie, replacing, all the time. That's our job, I suppose you might say. Finding replacements. You'll be hearing from me."

"Now watch! As he gets to the front door the other one sneaks out the back."





BURDENS



STEADman

ROUND RAVIOLI'S

By Alan Hackney

"You can't turn your back for a minute," asserted the heavy auctioneer's porter, rotating his head like a radar scanner. "When was all this, then?" The new Italian décor of the snack bar showed him up shamefully and clashed with his green apron.

"A-River-Derchy-Romer!" agreed his lighter companion. "Musta bin over the olidies. Never know with old Jack."

"Sit down, then, go on," advised Jack, from behind the counter, affecting an air of unconcern. "Make out you're speechless for a bit; suit me to 'ave it nice and quiet. Tea?"

"Ta," said the heavy porter uneasily, still registering. When a large blip bounced back to him from a gondola-shaped lamp he spoke again. "Not *my* idea of decoration, Italian," he said.

"Can't get nothing else done in a good class of work," said Jack, fastening his damp cloth on to pastry crumbs before he put the cups down. "All over now, you only got to look."

"Moving with the times, I spose," nodded the thinner porter in a tone of defeat. "Competition," he added, shaking his head this time and crouching over his cup.

"Doing up, yes, that I grant you," conceded the heavier porter, "only—well. More like a tart's bedroom."

"You don't have to like it," sniffed Jack. "It was case of 'ave to. With the other it was all pay out, pay out, redece every coupla years. Now you got a proper job."

The heavy porter clamped his mouth tight and gazed about with splayed and hard-breathing nostrils. "Name and all! *Ravioli's*," he repeated in a tone of bitter regret, slowly wagging his head. "What was up with Jax Snax?"

"I see 'er father give 'is consent after all," noted the lighter porter, not raising his eyes from the closely folded newspaper which seemed stuck to the palm of his hand. "After they come back from Gretna."

"He wouldn't've got *mine*," said Jack indignantly.

"Bloke like that for a son-in-law. No prospects bar a trot down the Labour, Fridays. Nineteen, ex-rock singer."

"All Trad now," said the thin porter.

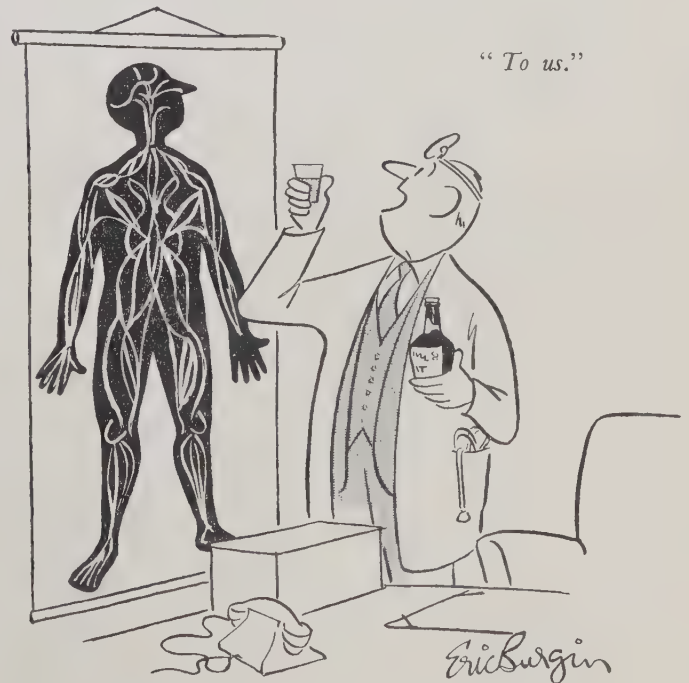
"I know what it was—I was telling Cyril," said the heavy porter suddenly. "Cyril, you remember what I was telling you what that Trad band was playin' when my boy 'ad it on?"

"No you wasn't," said the lighter porter. "You couldn't remember."

"No, well I 'ave. *The Red Flag*. The blessed Red Flag. All tradded-up, I give you that much, but still, the Red Flag."

"That's the young people of this modern world of to-day," the thinner porter nodded. "Take it as a matter of course."

"What does a bloke say, case like that, the father?" demanded Jack, still brooding over the newspaper



runaways. "Any sense, he'd tell 'em—'Back 'ere after a month and on my ear'ole? I should say so!"

Interpretation of this seemed to afford neither porter any difficulty and the heavier one began to look about again, cautiously. The refrigerator clicked and shook itself to a standstill behind him.

"Don't talk the same language," alleged the thin porter sadly. "Like take the case of *my* boy, up the Tech. You'd reckon what they was doing was all technicolour. Well, last thing he was doing was writing up this experiment: Determine the Frequency of a Fork by the Falling Plate Method."

"E'd best not come in 'ere and try that," sniffed Jack.

"Old Burrows still head teacher up there, is 'e?" asked the heavy porter. "Big busty bloke, glasses?"

"That's right, more like a matlo," said the thin one. "That walk 'e 'as."

The heavy porter nodded judiciously. "Big arms on 'im. Chest. Up the Bingo, Sunday, 'e was."

"Never," said the thin porter, leaping to the defence of his son's principal, but without stirring any of his slumped muscles.

"Calculating the odds, I expect," said Jack. "All the same, teachers. See 'em laying any money down without!"

"Like this bloke we got Thursday after the last sale," said the thin porter. "Buys a big piece, then come round to collect in 'is car. Jim and me get it out, Dutch dresser, you know 'ow big they go, can't dismantle. Anyway, this car. I'd've thought a van, or use the carriers."

"I *said* what's up with the carriers," put in the heavy porter. "Oh dear no. Only just round the corner, 'e says. Get one end in, on'y *course!* Car wouldn't look at it. Finish up, we're carryin' it all

the way 'ome and up the stairs. I reckoned half a bar apiece." He took a bite at his sandwich.

"Half a dollar!" he choked, in indistinct outrage.

"Shame," said Jack automatically. "Still, it wasn't raining Thursday, one way to look at it."

"All right for *you*, mate," said the thin porter gloomily. "Sit about 'ere all day, coining it, with your fancy Marley. Nothing *you* got to 'ump about, bar a trayloada cakes."

"Deenish peestries, Cyril, *if* you don't mind," corrected the heavier porter in mincing tones. "I dunno what this place is coming to. One time, you 'ad decent stuff 'ere you could getcher choppers into. Any event, what become of all those funny notices you 'ad up before—Be Reasonable, See It My Way, all that?"

"You blokes," said Jack, shaking his head in despair. "'Ow they gunner look on Marblefilm panels?"

"Lovely," said the heavy porter emphatically. "Homey."

"All right," sighed Jack. "Back they go, then."

He fished under the counter and came up with a gleaming white card. The thin porter craned to peer at it.

"The Customer May Be Pigheaded But To Us He's Always Right," he read. A drawing on the card showed two smiling pigs shaking hands.

The heavy porter smiled for the first time, acknowledged at last as a person of influence.

"*Much* better," he pronounced, spreading himself luxuriously for a moment. "See?" he remarked to the thinner porter, getting up. "On'y want a bit of needlin', these blokes. Righto then, me old Jack. Just got to cop the afternoon session, and we'll be back, and glad to. Cheero, then."

"I say to hell with everyone at Hepworth Industries, but that's only the drink talking you understand, Mr. Hepworth."



"His father is an eccentric, but he's also a crank in his own right."



Epitaph for Mr. Jiggs

"Mr. Jiggs, an orang-outang who amused thousands of visitors to the Zoo, has died."

—Daily Telegraph

MONBODDO believed the orang-outang was human,
Had a sense of ethics, was able to play the flute
And differed from civilised man in his fine decorum
And in being mute.

But Mr. Jiggs sat in his iron compartment,
A hill of indigo flesh and gingery hair,
And answered the stares of the peanut-happy people
With a soft, brown stare.

In youth he would clown for his visitors, but later
Became indolent and dangerously surly
And died of heat-stroke in his seventeenth summer—
For an orang, early.

What a piece of work is Man that he should imprison
This strong, magnificent, human-seeming brute
For thirteen years in a desolation of boredom
And think him cute.

— PETER DICKINSON

Coronation Mews

Suddenly all the smart television critics were falling over each other to tell us how good "Coronation Street" was. It would be awful if the inhabitants of that eventful thoroughfare felt that they had to live up to their new reputation



There's no need for window-boxes and ornamental shutters and all that caper in our street, thanks. Look at the gradely textures of the brick-work and the cobblestones, the Neo-Brutalism of the exposed plumbing.

Minnie Caldwell, Ena Sharples and Martha Longhurst in the snug at the "Rover's Return."

MINNIE: Who were that lady I saw you with last night, Ena?

ENA: If you mean who was it I was talking to when you were snooping through door of Florrie Lindley's shop, it was Elsie Tanner, as I'd have thought you'd have known seeing as she's lived here the past twenty-five years, unless you're a bigger fool than I thought you were, and that's impossible.

MINNIE: That isn't what you were supposed to say, Ena.

ENA: I day say it wasn't what you wanted me to say, but that was what I wanted to say, and when the day comes I say anything different from that you can send for the ambulance.

MARTHA: It's kind of a joke, like, Ena.

ENA: Joke! We don't want any more of them round here, thanks.

MINNIE: But we do, Ena, because of the gentleman from the *Spectator*.

MARTHA: He says we're better than *Monitor*.

ENA: Well, I'm not going out of my way to amuse any gentlemen from the *Spectator* or the *Monitor* or anywhere else, so they might as well get used to the idea. What was it I should have said, anyway, that was so sophisticated?

MINNIE: You ought to have said "That were no lady, that were my husband."

Cut to the public bar. Jack and Annie Walker are wiping up glasses, and they're not beer-glasses, either.

ANNIE: Well, I'm sure I don't know what's come over Len Fairclough these days. He never asked for vodka in his Martini before.

JACK: Nay, lass, tha don't want to get mithered over such things. Happens he thought he were still at t' pictures.

ANNIE: But they're all the same, Jack. Ever since they had that bit in the paper. Yesterday Mrs. Sharples complained that her milk stout was corked.

JACK: And were it?

ANNIE: Really, I don't know, Jack. I can't be expected to devote all my time to customers who order common drinks like that. Suppose Mr. Cyril Ray came in?



I told producer straight—Mr. Granger, I said, it's no use your asking me for an *entrechat de six* because it's not in character. Did he listen to me? Did he heck!



Listen, love, I finished *Ximenes* in an hour and ten minutes flat last Sunday while sorting office were working to rule. You don't expect me to read ruddy *Mirror* all through the week after that.



Ay, it's a naïve domestic brew right enough, Ena, but I just thought you might be amused by its presumption, like.

Dennis Tanner comes in instead and leans over the bar.

JACK: Ay, ay! Come for the usual, I s'pose.

DENNIS: Well, not quite t' usual, Mr. Walker. I want to make more of a trunk call like.

JACK: Trunk call, eh?

DENNIS: Ay, I want to call my agent in London. I'm playing my guitar at t' Royal Albert Hall Thursday, and I want to be sure they're on right voltage.

ANNIE: What is it then, Dennis, one of those rock 'n' roll concerts?

DENNIS: Is it heck-as-like! They had Segovia billed to play there and he's got the flu. Can I use it then, Mr. Walker? I'll tell my agent to give you the money. I don't carry small change with me these days.

Break for commercials. After they have finished (Rolls-Royce motors, Claridge's, Moët and Chandon), fade in Elsie Tanner's sitting-room, with Elsie Tanner putting her feet up after a hard day in the boutique. A knock at the door.

ELSIE: That's right, don't give me a minute's peace. It's not enough for some folks that I'm on my feet all day selling exclusive models to ignorant people that wouldn't know Balmain from Schiaparelli and then have to come home and knock up a *quiche lorraine* and two veg for me son.

She goes to the door and lets in Mr. Tatlock.

MR. TATLOCK: D'you mind me coming in for a moment, Mrs. Tanner? T'others have all had their chance, and there's only you and me left, except for Florrie Lindley, and she's getting ready to go out wi' that new chap of hers.

ELSIE: Ay, come in, Mr. Tatlock and take t' weight off your feet. Ee, you look proper jiggered! Would you

like a cup of tea? I got some Lapsang Souchong in special Monday.

MR. TATLOCK: Well, that's very kind of you, Mrs. Tanner, I won't say no. I like a drop o' Lapsang Souchong. I used to sup Earl Grey Mixture, but it's not t' same since the Chinese stopped sending us the proper jasmine tea.

ELSIE: Ee, I'm right out of matches! Do you think Florrie Lindley will have gone out yet?

MR. TATLOCK: Ay, she were just going out when I passed. And I'll tell you summat, Mrs. Tanner, that new feller of hers is a queer one.

ELSIE: How d'you mean, Mr. Tatlock? You've never *seen* him?

MR. TATLOCK: Ay, he were in t' shop. Wearing those suède shoes he were, and carrying umbrella, although t' wireless says fine and warm.

ELSIE: Oh, I can't wait till I've had a look at him!

Mix to Florrie and her new chap, coming home after their evening out.

FLORRIE (*as they go into the shop*): It will seem a bit strange at first, without the biscuits and the cat food and the fish-fingers and all.

THE CHAP: Well, you can't expect to get anywhere with the quality consumers in a grocery all your life.

FLORRIE: But it will be so different for all the people in the street, won't it, *and* the fifteen million viewers. I just don't know what they'll do when they can't pop in here for their cigarettes and things any more.

This is such a good place to break off the instalment that the fifteen million viewers will have to wait until next Monday to learn that Florrie Lindley is going to leave the grocery business and turn her corner premises into an antique-shop to cater for the new tastes of her neighbours. As for her friend, it is the man from the Spectator himself. What fun it will be watching all the inhabitants of Coronation Street when they find out!



Honest, Mam, if Ionesco's good enough for Sir Larry I don't see why he shouldn't be good enough for me. Any road, I'm expecting a telegram from Oscar Lewenstein in t' morning.

THERE'S THE POSTMAN NOW

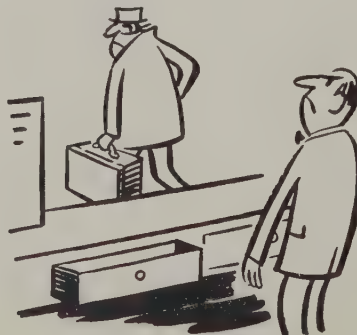
By J. B. Boothroyd

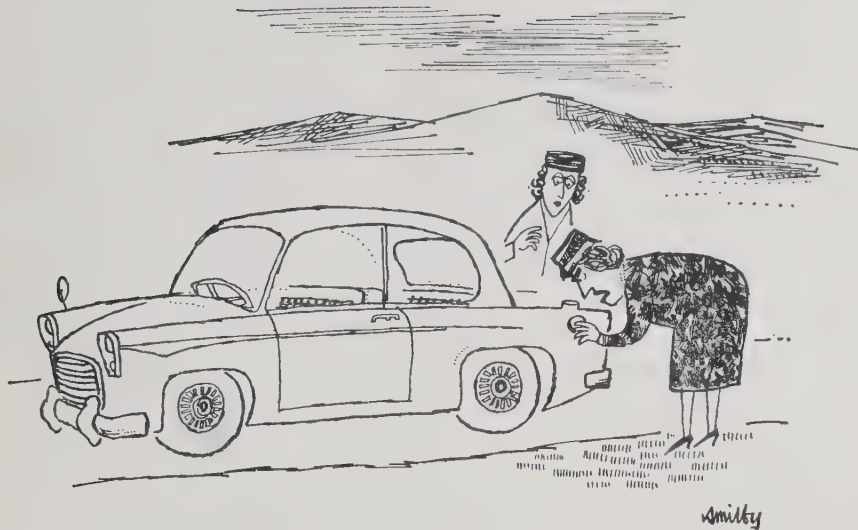
Are you tired, listless, depressed? Do you wake in the morning feeling that the new day has nothing to offer? Bring back the old zest and excitement into your life with a short course of Shopping by Post.

My wife and I had for some years displayed the symptoms mentioned, with leg pains and irritability added. Then a friend lent us the catalogue of a famous mail-order house, and from the moment that we wrote off for a dozen yards of Regency stripe curtain damask and in response to our valued order received two candlewick bedspreads our whole lives were changed.

Our friend was delighted at the success of her kind thought, and indeed assured us that we had been extremely lucky to get such a stimulating result at our first attempt. Her own mail-order adventure, apparently, had begun with a run of bad luck, the first two orders (man's nightshirt, pedal-bin with hygienic, detachable container) being fulfilled to the letter, except that the nightshirt was a boy's and the hygienic container seemed to have been detached before posting. It was only because *her* friend, who put her on to the course, urged perseverance, that she went ahead and ordered a letter-box draught-excluder. She knew that her new life of drama and novelty had arrived as soon as she saw the postman coming up the front path with a parcel four feet long. She tore off the wrappings, revealed the tubular-steel extendable fruit-picker, and after then never looked back.

We had several thrilling evenings deciding on our next purchase. The leisurely pace of these operations is a part of their charm. Eventually we sent off for a drip-dry shirt drier, ingeniously designed to stand astride the bath, and this time the suppliers injected an extra element of suspense by doing nothing for a week and then sending us a letter. It was addressed to Mr. J. Bullthroat, with the wrong house number, and disclosed that the demand had been exceptionally heavy, that further deliveries were expected daily, and that we should assist in the expediting of our esteemed order if on any future correspondence we quoted the





"I know there was some petrol in it when we started."

reference GT/109094/k32/OCK. We preferred to sit tight, and on the Thursday of the following week, if my memory serves aright, the collapsible wine-bin was duly delivered.

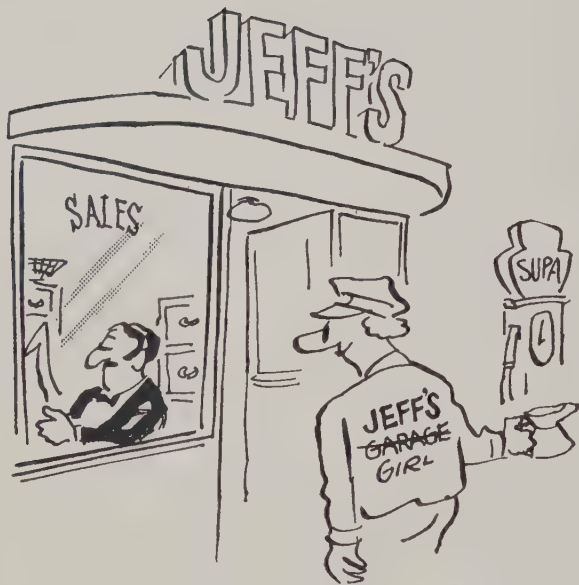
We were still, at this early stage, uncertain of the rules of the game, and assumed that once the dramatic moment of unwrapping was past, with its little delighted cries of "What do you suppose it can be?" or "Move the table so that we can lay it out flat," the fun was over, and that we must now set about the repacking and reposting with a letter of explanation saying that the nursery swing had arrived safely but should really have been a set of six steak-knives. Because of this misunderstanding we sent back the collapsible wine-bin, but instead of getting the shirt-drier in exchange all we got was a postal order for 38s. 3d. and therefore, in the end, had nothing to show but a good deal of hard work and a deficit of 3s. 9d. for postage and packing. In the same way we lost for ever the interior-sprung seat cushions in maroon velveteen. We had taken to these at sight, even though they were in fact substituting for a folding bed-chair in Hong Kong basketwork, and in the light of later experience we might have been enjoying them still. You never know, in response to an order for a fire-resistant metal deed box or a twenty-four-inch log-saw (with spare blade) we might one day have got the Hong Kong bed-chair, and used the cushions in it.

But in fact repacking and reposting shouldn't come into the thing at all, except in the case of faulty articles. An ex-WD telescopic gunsight, for instance, (endlessly entertaining for the bird-watcher), which arrives with nothing at the lens end but an empty hole is not an article that can be kept permanently about the house without throwing off an aura of unrest, and should be returned promptly. It is not a thing notably easy to repack and repost; indistinguishable in appearance from a black bicycle pump, but weighing some eleven pounds, it tends to escape repeatedly from the corrugated cardboard cylinder and fall on to the packer's



GARAGE GIRLS

by *Larry*



foot, or the dog's head if handy. Even the satisfaction of an ultimately neat job, sealed like an Egyptian tomb and directed in block capitals to a nine-line address rich in such fanciful matter as "259-271 Little West Wistonbury, Four-Lane-Ends Junction, Upper Market Barrasleighcombe, Huntingdonshire"* —even that satisfaction fades with the discovery that the letter meant for enclosure is still sitting in the string box.

No, the idea is to hang on to whatever you get, and become a collector. Most collecting is pretty narrow. People collect clocks, or glass animals, or match-box tops. This new collecting, where you get a carton of manila envelopes cheek by jowl with an electric paint-stripper, two dustbin-lid silencers and sixty feet of plastic hosepipe, is fresh and exciting, and serves as an ideal conversation starter when heavy guests drop in for drinks.

You may be wondering about the financial side, and I can set your mind at rest there. As with the more routine forms of gambling it works out fairly evenly over a period, which is doubtless one reason why the suppliers never write demanding the return of their seventy-eight and ninepenny galvanised wheelbarrow which should have been your forty-five and sixpence worth of rot-proof fruit-netting. Moreover, the book-keeping during the long, wet summer evenings lends an added brightness to your already brightened life. This week you may be down a guinea (leather motor-cycle jacket sent instead of padded leg-rest with wing-nut adjustment), but next, when you order a set of saucepans and get an illuminated aquarium, it brings you back to level pegging.

The surprises are invigorating and the risks are few. The experience of a friend of ours to whom we introduced the treatment is, I think, rare. He wrote off, after some persuasion, for a whitewood bedside cupboard. Some months have passed now, but all he has received in return is a regular bill saying "To 1 Sledge. £14,444 4s. 4d." So exactly how *he* stands at the moment it is too early to say.

*Mail-order houses with small, profusely illustrated box advertisements in the Saturday dailies specialise in locations of this kind.



called (a) in the middle of wash day (b) while the lady of the house was having a well-earned lie down (c) when a multitude of children appeared to be indulging in a form of civil war (d) during some major domestic catastrophe, e.g. pipes bursting, porridge boiling over, clothes-line snapping or paraffin stove going up in flames?"

She shifted uneasily, and I caught her eyeing the window, which was shut.

"Another thing," I said, warming to the job, "taking one sample day—say the day before yesterday, if you can remember what happened the day before yesterday—can you give me a list of whatever you were offered in the way of cocoa, tea, strong drink, cigars, purplish cough sweets, coconut kisses or the previous day's sardine sandwiches? And which if any did you accept?"

I poured her out more coffee, stabbing the air under her nose with the spoon. "Then again, how many people, over the period of the past fourteen days, have thought you were (a) collecting jumble (b) a Jehovah's Witness (c) a female housebreaker and enterer (d) from the pools? And how many have been openly disappointed because you were not the bearer of a free sample of detergent powder?"

Nothing could stop me now: not even the anguish on her plate-shaped face. "What proportion of smiles to scowls do you meet?" I snapped. "How often have women refused outright to tell you their ages? How many doors have been slammed in

your face? Was it an ailing mother, a thwarted bump of curiosity in childhood, or a great love of humanity which led you to tramp from door to door in search of unrelated facts? How many chiming bells have you rung in the past thirty-six hours? Have you ever braved a house with the name Bide-a-Wee? Does anyone still have 'When did you last see your father?' hanging in their hall?"

I raced her to the front door and shouted after her as she ran down the path without a backward look: "How many times have you left behind your (a) notebook (b) plastic mac and (c) ball-point pen?"

She did not answer, but paused only to write on the gatepost with a piece of chalk. And that was the last I saw of her.



"Settle an argument, Fred—shouldn't diesel give way to steam?"

AT GRIPS WITH LIVING

By Patrick Ryan

Any fool could climb on our roof. I've just been up there myself. But even Hillary would need Tensing and four Sherpas to help him down. It's the sloping top to the bow window, the yard-an-a-half of over-hang and the Pitz Palu of decayed gutter that cut off your line of retreat. Even the birds are afraid to nest in our eaves. There's nowhere on the glass mountain they can get claw-hold to lay the first beakful of raffia. The bloke who built our house wasn't having any of his kids carried off by eagles.

The television went drunk in the middle of *Coronation Street*. The picture slipped diagonally and there was Ena Sharples plodding up a 1 in 4 gradient to the Rover's Return. Our world of entertainment was suddenly set at an angle of 45°.

The only way we could see Bronco clearly and see him whole was to slump sideways with heads canted like garrottees. Four nights of this Quasimodo viewing and we'd all got engine-driver's neck. My wife started in for-God's-saking on Saturday afternoon so I tore myself away from the wrestling and inspected the aerial.

A bracket had broken from the chimney-stack and the H was leaning over sideways. I may not be much at electronics but I'm strong on sympathetic magic. "That's the trouble," I said. "The waves are coming in askew. I'll get up and straighten it."

Our property-owning democracy is divided like stockings into the laddered and the unladdered. We belong to the under-equipped bloc but what I lacked in ladder I made up in ingenuity. By fixing a baby's high-chair with the feeding-tray over the sill of the bedroom-window I was able to reach up and get my arms round one of our stone pineapples. With a foot on a telephone insulator I gave a seal-like heave and suddenly found myself across the over-hang and into the valley between ours and the next-door roof.

I traversed up the tiles to the chimney stack, pushed the aerial upright and hammered the bracket back into place.

Back down in the cwm I belayed my left arm round the pineapple and lowered a leg over the arête of the bow window. I can-canned feverishly, beating for footholds but finding only thin air. As the gutter belched like a long, rusty stomach and sagged ominously under my chest, I realised that, short of a death-dive, I could not get down.

With both arms twined amorously about its concrete stalk I pulled myself up by the pineapple and back into the valley. I squatted back to appreciate the situation, smiling nonchalantly. The nonchalance was necessary because there is nothing our community enjoys more than a neighbour in a predicament. Me stuck up on my own roof would get more of them out than the Coronation. And there are two old biddies in No. 27, the Misses Eulalia and Lucy Grope, who



Hollowood

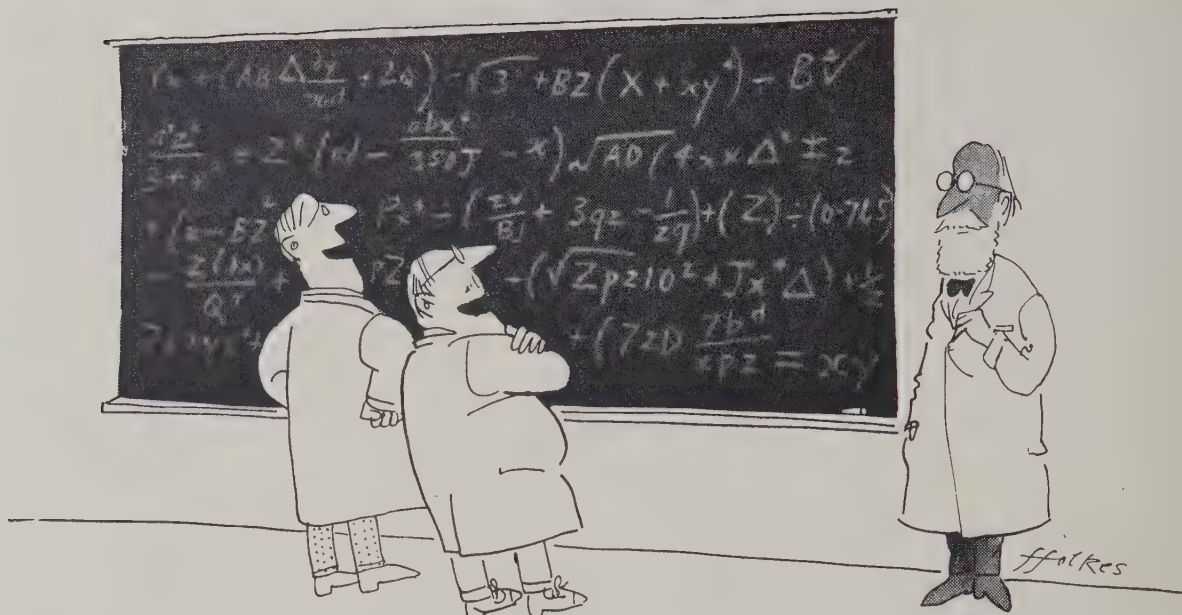
"How can you be sure this American astronaut got into orbit—we've only Pravda's word for it?"

"WIFE ON 'DUCKING-STOOL'
CHARGE

A housewife has been charged at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, with being a 'common cold.'

Under a law 101 years old, if found guilty, she could be dipped in a stream in a ducking stool."
—*Daily Mail*.

There's no cure, anyway.



“Witty, Professor, very witty.”

spend their lives looking for a chance to dial 999. Either of them caught a flicker of fear on my countenance and they'd have had the fire-brigade round quick as cockroaches. The last thing my garden wanted was fifteen brass-hats thigh-booting around in the dahlias. Never mind the deathless indignity of being give a fireman's carry down their blasted escape-ladders.

I scanned each visible bedroom-window carefully but there were no girls undressing anywhere. It cheered me to note that half the neighbourhood was living in jeopardy. There was barely a roof around that hadn't got tiles slipping, flashing falling away or cracks creeping up the chimney-stack. The curtain of No. 27 flickered ominously and I saw that Miss Eulalia was watching me through binoculars. I had to find employment or she'd smell a rat. I came out of my v-shaped squat and scrutinised my tiles row by row. On every fifth tile I scratched “Ryan was here” just for posterity. I was on my fourteenth inscription when my eleven-plus daughter appeared below.

“What are you doing now?”

“Checking the tiles for erosion.”

She watched for two silent minutes.

“Would you like to know something?”

“No.”

“Then I'll tell you. You've got up there and you can't get down.”

“Go away. And don't shout.”

“Shall I go over and tell Miss Eulalia my father's stuck up on the roof and can't get down?”

“Go away, that's all.”

“I could go away and buy an ice-cream if you like.”

“Go on then.”

“I haven't got any money. Shall I get my camera and take a photograph of you stuck up there . . .?” I threw her down a shilling. As she walked up the street she laughed like a female stoat.

Her mother came out next.

“What are you scratching about up there for?”

“Just testing for wet-rot. Might as well see everything's ship-shape while I'm up here.”

I probed deftly with my nail, frowning at problems of roof-surgery.

“Give over, buster,” she said. “I know you can't get down. I should have

“Iolanda Balas, 23, the Rumanian world high jump record holder, set a world indoor best when she cleared 6 ft. 1¼ in. in Leningrad, reports Reuter.

This jump equalled her own world outdoor record, nine centimetres (3½ in.) the height she achieved at an indoor meeting in Berlin last month.”

—Daily Telegraph

Low ceiling, perhaps.

my head examined for letting you get up there. I'll ask Jenkins for his ladder."

"It's not in his garden. Somebody else has got it already. And keep your voice down. Don't let on to the neighbours. Smile when you talk to me."

"And how am I supposed to get you down?"

"Fetch Gregory. Tell him to borrow a ladder and bring it round the back."

"Where will I find him? It's past opening time."

"Try the Bell first. They'll know where he is."

When she'd gone for her drinking brother I settled back in my coign to await rescue. I became adjusted to being trapped on a roof and philosophy set in. I began to get the message of St. Simeon Stylites. Up in the air I was cut off from earth-people, safe at last from ambition, careers, efficiency-mongers and the responsibilities of married life. "Of course," I'd muse in future, "I could have been promoted any time but I got stuck up on that roof." . . . my wife would have to talk to builders, school-teachers and encyclopaedia-salesmen. "It's no good asking for my husband," she'd explain. "He's stuck up on the roof." . . . with a fly-sheet, a sleeping-bag and a regular supply of canned beer and foolscap I could live out my life as the Hermit on the Tiles . . .

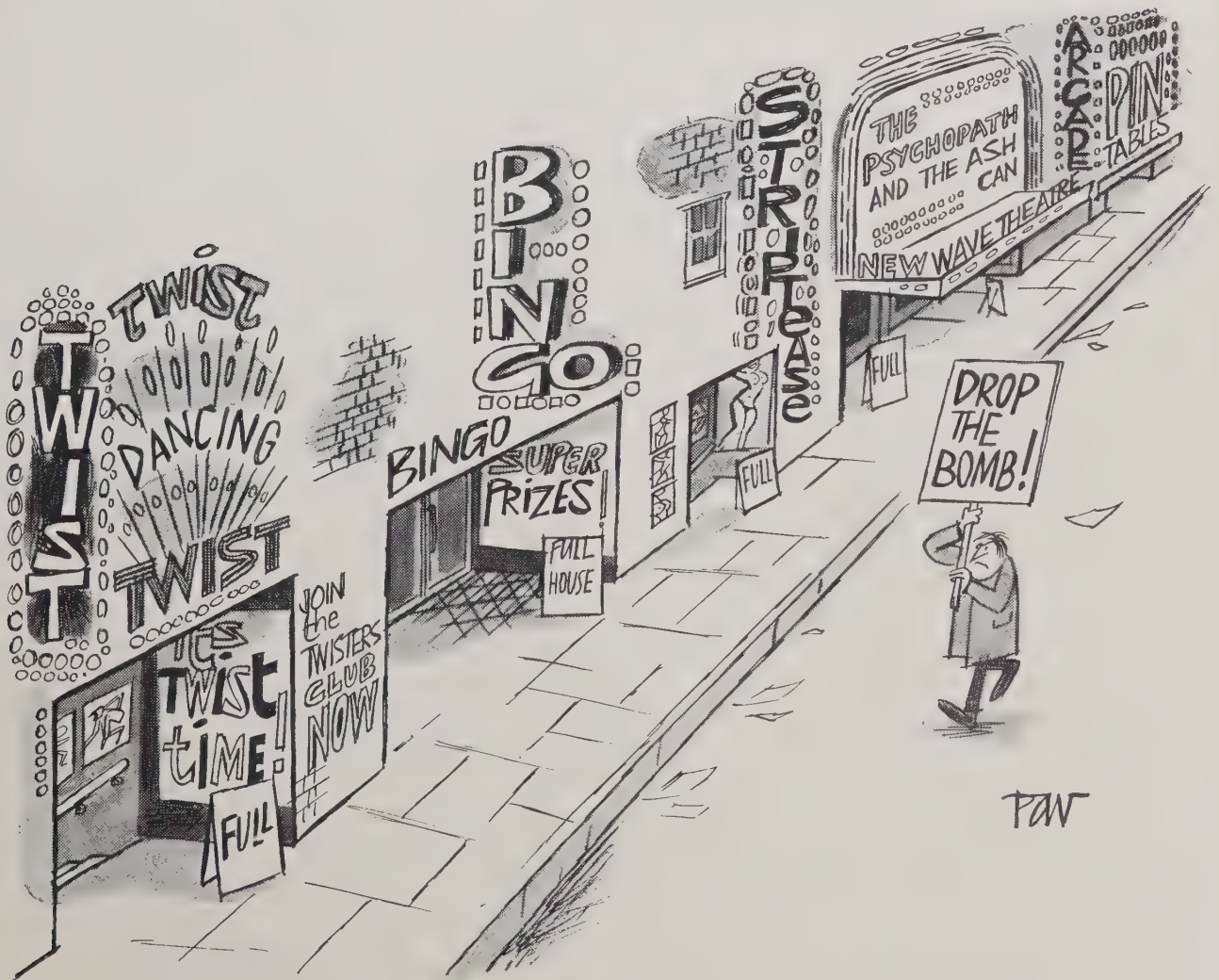
My peace of dissociation was broken by Probert, three doors away.

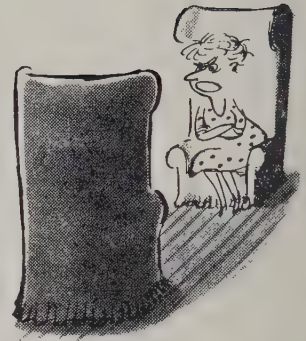
"You all right up there, old man?"

"Yes, thanks."

"What are you sitting there for?"

"Waiting for the mastic to dry. Been filling in a few holes in the coping. You





should see your roof from here. If there's one tile gone there's ten. And looks like a marabou stork has nested in your chimney . . ." Which sent him dashing inside to check the cracks in his ceiling.

It started to drizzle and all the paradise went out of my eyrie. Old Mrs. Cakebread, the rain-maker's widow, came home with her cat's-meat.

"You'll catch your death up there," she said.

"Got to finish the job now I've started."

"What job you doing?"

"Stack-proofing. It's the smoke. Desiccates the cement and makes your flue porous. You've got the most porous chimney in the street. Looks like coming down any day now."

And she bolted indoors to take her sixteen Siamese down the air-raid shelter. During the next hour, eight other busy-bodies quizzed me but I scared them all off with the diseases of their own roofs and none detected my predicament. My daughter came home and insisted on making me a cup of tea. She put the cup in a plastic bag and I hauled it up from the bedroom-window with my tie. The cup tipped coming over the bergschrund and I had to drink it out of the bag like a space-man. It is a most eerie experience on a roof in the rain, drinking cold tea out of a plastic bag. And she didn't put enough sugar in either.

I'd done two and a quarter hours in the crow's-nest when at last my wife and Gregory turned up singing. Five pubs she'd been in before she found him and she'd taken one in each for decency's sake. She was giggling-cut and he was worse. The fool couldn't find a ladder so he'd brought a climbing rope.

"Have no fear," he crowed. "Old Greg-boy's here!"

"Mafeking," piped my wife, "will be relieved."

"Ahoy there, skipper!"

As he threw me the rope, heads popped out of every window in the street. I made fast round the stack, slithered over the tiles and abseiled down the wall, trampling two window-panes en route. The whole neighbourhood was out when I landed, crowding me with questions.

"And how are you going to untie the rope from the chimney, old man?" asked Probert.

I squinted expertly aloft.

"The stack's rotting at the roots. It's the same all along the street. I'm lashing mine down before it comes through the roof . . ."

I took a hitch round the gate-post and strained a guy-rope taut from the chimney. As I shepherded my wife into the house and shut the door on the querulous mob I heard the bells of the fire-engine come clanging round the corner.



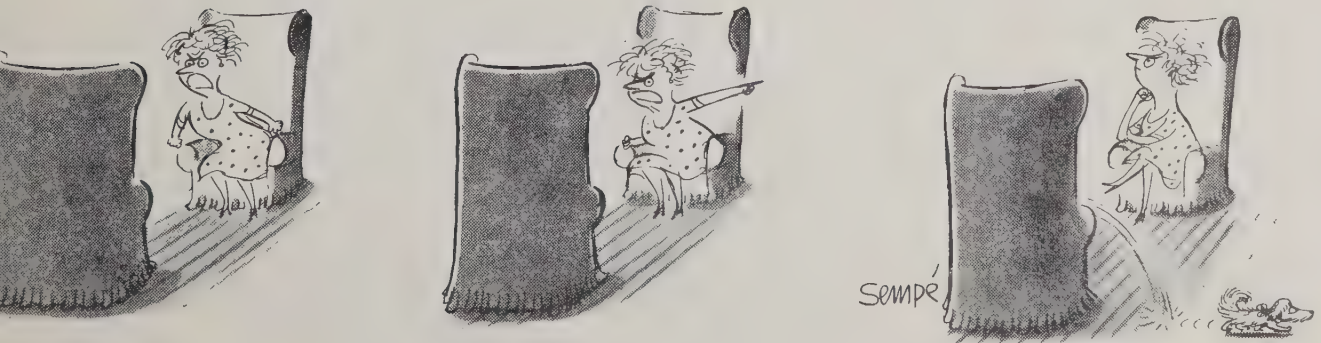
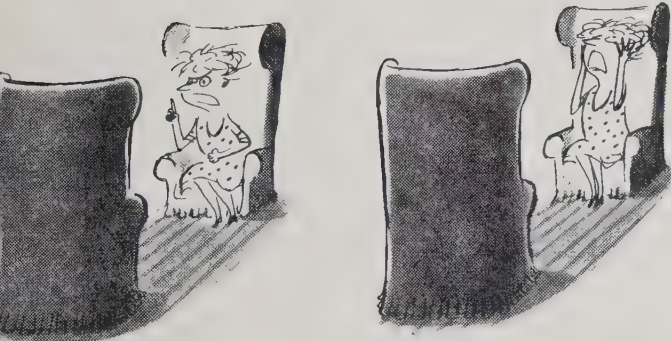
SKYPORT NOISE SCALE

By C. J. Bayliss

For measuring and describing the intensity of noise produced by low-flying aircraft

Skyport number	Description of noise to be used in complaints	Noticeable effect of noise
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0	idyllic	Clocks can be heard. Babies sleep.
1	intriguing	Visitors look skyward. Aspens tremble.
2	disturbing	Windows rattle. Pianos hum.
3	annoying	Visitors leave. Budgies show distress. Crockery rattles.
4	disquieting	Deaf aids disconnected. Small animals hide.
5	oppressive	TV commercials inaudible. Fruit falls from trees. Milk turns.
6	ear-splitting	Wine glasses shatter. Roof tiles crash. Clothes lines snap.
7	terrifying	Glaziers beam. Taxis make for open country. Guitars lose tune.
8	deafening	Garden ornaments disintegrate. Outhouses sag.
9	agonizing	TV tubes implode. Sparrows fall. Detached houses collapse.
10	maddening	Oak trees rive. Paving crazes. Semi-detached houses collapse.
11	stupefying	Sporting events abandoned. Terraces collapse. Government falls.
12	cataclysmic	Life extinguished. Atoms split.



SAFE FOOD GUIDE FOR THE SIXTIES

By Leslie Marsh

A friend who has always fussed a lot over his food is now fussing rather more about fall-out and since we have to eat together frequently I am having a difficult time.

Bread and milk were out, of course, long ago, but that was no great hardship. He had always thought bread a bit starchy and fattening and from the day some irreverent companion winked at him in church when they were singing "Fair waved the golden corn, In Canaan's pleasant land" and whispered "Chock-a-block strontium now, it's only 800 miles south of Russia" he decided that half a loaf was worse than no bread. As for milk, he knew it only in coffee and tea—he was never a pintaday man—and started taking these beverages *noir* or *à la Russe* until reminded that lemons were if anything more poisonous than wheat, growing higher and nearer the clouds of nuclear overmatter. Even the basic coffee beans and tea leaves were to be treated with suspicion.

Meat soon came under the axe. Cows, sheep and

pigs were visibly wolfing the iodine down, contemplatively chewing, daintily nibbling or greedily guzzling it with unconcealed gusto (a point in favour of animals; there's no archly refined attempt to hide their feelings about food).

A desperate man will seek refuge in the flimsiest hidey-hole. My friend flew to fish, until warned that Khrushchev's trailing clouds of glory fall on land and sea alike. "You can spell *poisson* with one S now," some morbid thinker told him. Thoroughly rattled yet hunting hard for assurance, he asked my opinion and in all fairness I had to admit that many or most of our second-course favourites come near enough to the surface to swallow any bait that's going, hook, line and strontium. "Denizens of the deep may be an overworked cliché," I pointed out, "but the deeper the safer, unquestionably. On a sparing diet of coelacanth, for example, you shouldn't go far wrong. Yes, I know, first catch your coelacanth, which Mrs. Beeton no more said than Marie Antoinette said that thing about cake. Not plentiful, agreed, but when you do get one it comes five foot long and weighs over a hundred pounds, which is quite a few fillets. But if you don't come across any for goodness sake stick to the demersal or bottom-feeding fish. These so-called pelagic fish that swim in the upper layers of the water—herring, mackerel, pilchards, sprats and so on—are simply asking for trouble."

He asked if I thought it worth examining the market possibilities of those queer fish that lurk in the perpetual darkness of the ocean depths, such as lanterns, lancets, or for that matter the eyeless ipnops. I thought he might have a point there but urged him not to fall into the elementary trap of regarding full fathom five as a submerged Plimsoll line of security; nearer two hundred fathoms would be the minimum depth at which the dreaded particles would suffer sea change for the better.

After hearing this my friend was taking no chances. He was for vegetarianism or the dark. Anything all a-blowing and a-growing was obviously flying in the face of Providence, but roots or tubers seemed to

*"Even if we only transmute
gold into lead—it's a beginning!"*





*“You’ll have to speak to Harvey.
If there’s one thing I’m not having
it’s erotic topiary.”*

him to offer a cosy earthwork of defence, a shallow shelter in the time of radioactive storm. He made heavy play with this recent gossip about ware potato storage buildings with permanent thrust-resisting walls for which, he assured me, the Country Landowners Association was offering £450 in prize money. But his gardening experience was sketchy and I had to remind him of Nature’s clumsy way of absorbing nourishment and nucleana through leaf and stem.

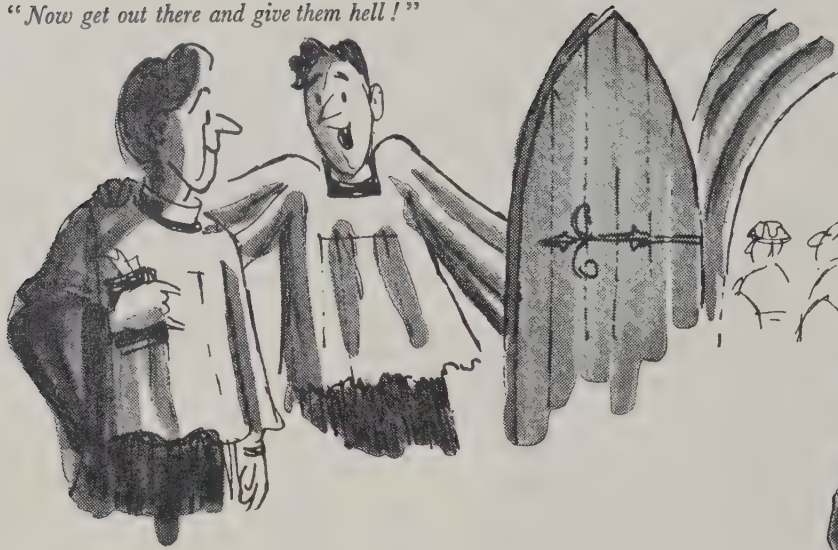
“Well then, what?” he asked, now too frightened to fret about verbs, one morning when the devil’s dust was reported to be thicker than usual. He was ready to talk himself (but not me) into the theory that the nut inside the hard shell, the banana or orange inside the tough peel, might be just what the radioactive doctor ordered. I had to come the old Nature’s-way-not-man’s-way stuff again: before the fruit, the flower. It was getting like a kindergarten botany lesson.

In the end, though, I bought him a pip of comfort. Supposing he sowed some very old pre-multi-mega-tonic tomato seed in very old greenhouse soil, the

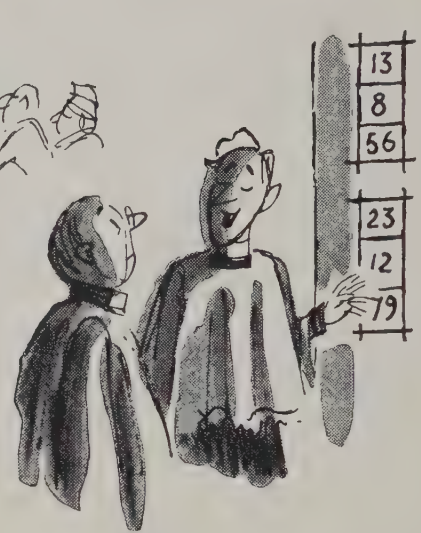
framework having been wreathed in strong polythene? Admittedly the plants would have to be watered, but clean water exists. You have only to bore a reasonable depth into the North or South Downs or any other chalk ridge, or, if you live in Derbyshire or Yorkshire or parts of Somerset, ask an obliging potholer to bring a few canfuls home, and purity is yours. I especially recommend old stock in the reservoirs beneath those swallowholes, or as you may have heard them called more often in your local, *bétoires, chaldrons du diable, marmites des géants*, or *katavothra*, in which rain is collected before it disappears into subterranean passages. Dwellers in arid, sandy areas must do the best they can with divining rods, taking care to burn the contaminated hazel twig after use.

To any frivolous objection that an exclusive diet of tomatoes may become monotonous I can only reply that what I have just said applies with equal force to cucumbers and gherkins. Anyhow even if you’d rather be dead than red wouldn’t you sooner be fed than either?

"Now get out there and give them hell!"

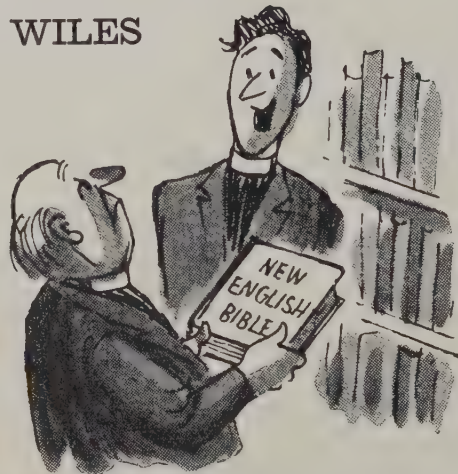


"... and the bottom set are the winning raffle ticket numbers."



NEW BROOM

By A. F. WILES



"To be honest I haven't got through the old one yet."



"I'm soup'ing up the organ."



"From that sort of pulpit I'd revive 'em like Billy Graham"

MARRIED MEN: WILL THEY EVER DIE OUT?

By Sally Hurst

The married man is the bane of the single girl. He belongs to a particularly predatory and cunning species that preys upon the unsuspecting, unprotected female. (Very few of us, in fact, get safely through to matrimony unscathed.)

The main trouble is that the married man in full cry is often so much more attractive than the single one. He has to be, of course. After all, he is not in it for amusement, he is in it for real profit. He has no time to waste and everything to lose. And he knows so well the incalculable value of the tender word, the unexpected considerateness.

However boorish the Married Man may be at his own hearthside, he is all thoughtfulness when on safari for big game at, say, a cocktail party. Note the quick "Here, let me hold that heavy ashtray" of the man who can sit unperturbed while his wife staggers past him with a loaded coal scuttle.

Scrabbling for his next toe-hold after the ashtray ploy, he may use one of the banal but successful follow-ups, such as, "You are that rare combination, a stimulating conversationalist and a sympathetic listener." Compared with the arrogant, take-me-or-leave-me-for-the-next-lucky-girl attitude of the bachelor, this is fairly heady stuff.

When it is time to go, the M.M. sends his wife upstairs to fetch her wrap, gives his victim's hand a quick, furtive pressure, and murmurs, "I must see you again. May I ring you?"

This is the point of no return. Clearly, what the victim should do is smile and say briskly, "That would be nice. I'd love to see you and your wife again," but it is surprising how rarely this happens.

Still smarting from the bachelors' disdain and flattered by the urgency in the eyes of this absolutely charming man, she is more apt to murmur her telephone number. Some have even been known to rummage in their handbags for pencil and paper but these are girls who cannot wait for fate to make the decisions; rather older girls, perhaps, who know that their only chance is to catch some man on the second time around.

Once the M.M. has secured the telephone number he has scored a tactical advantage. By surrendering it, in a low voice which her hostess cannot hear, she has revealed her willingness to go on to the next stage. She fully intends that the next stage will be the last. A pleasant dinner somewhere, good food in amusing company, an intelligent choice of wines and words, perhaps a nudge of a knee under the table or a brushing of fingers on the tablecloth. Afterwards, a handclasp, or perhaps a kiss on the cheek, then home alone in a taxi, feeling dreamy and warm and pleasantly desirable.

Naturally it does not turn out like this. There is, if not a sordid fight, an argument, unless her particular M.M. is one of the more patient ones who is prepared to wait until a third meeting before cornering the victim for a kill.

The chosen restaurant is inclined to be somewhere rather dark and unfashionable, where the waiters are known for their indifference. My own sister was once persuaded into going to the theatre and on to dinner with an M.M. Whether or



"Go easy on the sit-downs. Get into a few more scuffles."

"The Soviet Union and Hungary have concluded a trade agreement said to be valued at the equivalent of about £6 million. Under it the Soviet Union is to deliver coal, timber, and other raw materials and goods to Hungary in exchange for Hungarian manufactures, including shoes, furniture and plastic gods."

—*The Guardian*

No quality nowadays.

not she was trembling on the brink of an indiscretion I do not know but whatever romantic and fool-hardy notions she may have been harbouring died a quiet death when, during every interval of the play and afterwards as they dined and danced, her M.M. insisted on wearing dark glasses.

The M.M. is especially dangerous because he knows what pleases a woman and what does not. He is aware, for instance, that to comment on her dress, even unfavourably, is infinitely better policy than to ignore it. A most successful M.M. who is shared by two very dear friends of mine is fond of saying things like, "I wonder if that style will ever come back into fashion," and "Those Tate and Lyle sugar bags do make up remarkably well, don't they?" and "I must say this new Holloway uniform is very serviceable."

The victim is not used to the solicitude of the M.M. For years she has been shivering on wind-raked rigger pitches and crossing roads all by herself and drinking beer out of chipped mugs. She has become resigned to the expected date who never arrives, the promised phone call that never comes, the three-weeks-late birthday card, the casual escort who meets the boys and forgets that he came in with a girl. So the compliments of the M.M. fall upon fertile ground, and often bear fruit.

But the deadliest of the species is the ex-M.M., or the semi-ex-M.M. This carnivore has the polish, the know-how, the gambling fever and the set-up.

The ex-M.M. is never short of a quick answer. Find a hair-pin on his pillow and he will exclaim, "Damn that slovenly cleaning woman. She'll have to go!" Discover an ear-ring down his armchair and he will say sadly. "So that's what happened to it. I gave them to my wife just before she left me. She flung them in my face."

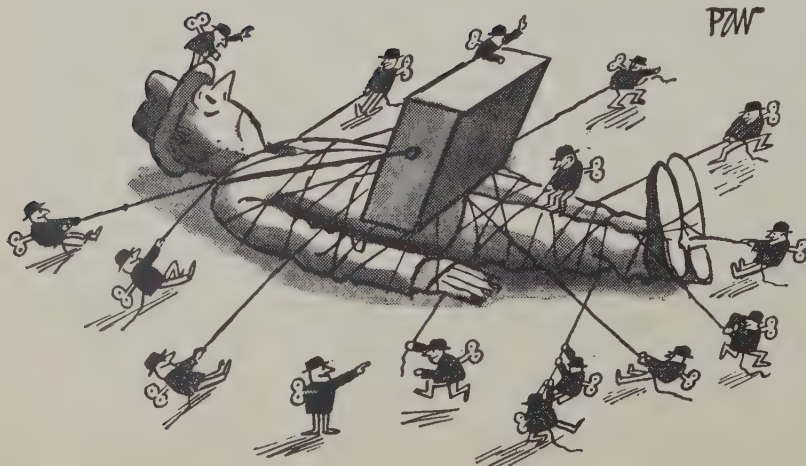
The ex-M.M.'s ex-wife is a shrew. Whereas the M.M. has to restrain himself to "We don't hate each other, we just go our separate ways" or even the still-popular "She doesn't understand me," the ex-M.M., having successfully disposed of his, can paint her any colour he likes.

The ex-wife is invariably a spendthrift, a nagger, an iceberg, a fiend. She has left the ex-M.M. just disillusioned enough to be a challenge, yet not beyond saving by a beautiful emotional experience.

The M.M. has only one advantage over the more resourceful ex-M.M. The M.M.'s wife is excellent protection. "My wife and I are through but we stay together because of the boy. Whatever happens, he mustn't suffer," murmured in a grave voice and delivered with a candid look provides him with a handy escape route.

The ex-M.M. may have to fall back on a sudden business trip abroad, or even an unexpected plea from a humble wife who wants to "try again." This is much less convenient, for business trips cannot last for ever and make-believe reconciliations are a strain on the imagination.

Although the pace is gruelling and the risk enormous, the M.M. often remains active well into his sixties. He becomes, if anything, more deadly as he matures. It must be the practice.





A HYDRO-ELECTRIC AFFAIR

By H. F. Ellis

“Water,” they came and told me, “is pouring out of the electric light bulb in the spare room.”

I remember thinking how odd this was, because not very long before I had been reading about that fourteen-inch grass snake found in a bottle of milk and had tried to imagine the feelings of whoever found the snake and the incredulity of others in the family to whom the surprising news must have been retailed. “I say, come and look. There’s a grass snake in the milk!”—in some such flat, almost deadpan way the impossibility must have been passed from mouth to mouth.

And now here was I, in the middle of a crossword, faced with a situation very nearly on all fours.

In deciding to explain to the general reader how

such a phenomenon as water in the electric light circuit can come about, and what can be done to remedy it, I have been influenced simply by a desire to help others. The giving of advice is now a national industry. Newspapers devote a page or two a day to it. Whole publications are devoted to hints and wrinkles, including diagrams. Organisations and institutions exist that can be rung up about almost anything. But the bulk of this advice concerns matters—what to wear, where to go, how to change a washer—of everyday interest, not beyond the ken of the average man or woman. Where there is a gap in the realm of problems a bit more out of the way than cocktail parties, holidays or dripping taps; it is when the unprecedented or the inexplicable occurs that a helping hand is most welcome. Everybody

has *some* idea, without reading Elizabeth Nicholas or Ernestine Carter, that a cool uncrushable bathing dress is indispensable for Majorca; he or she may be utterly at a loss when, let us say, hot jam gushes out of the telephone.*

We have to go back, for a full understanding, to the day when no water came out of the bathroom cold taps. This is a story that ranges from dearth to plenty. Now, in winter, a failure of supply means frost; it may be disastrous but it is not mysterious. In summer it is less common and suggests an early inspection of the main tank or cistern in the loft. The principle of the cistern, as many know, is that a metal ball on the end of a lever rises and falls with the water level, closing a valve when the cistern is about three-quarters full and opening it again, to admit an inrush of mains water, when the level falls. Should the valve become stuck in the closed position, so that the metal float can no longer descend in its water-bed when taps are turned on, the cistern becomes empty. This is what in fact had happened. The tank showed only an inch of mote-flecked liquid below the outflow pipe; the float stuck proudly out at right angles, as though about to demonstrate the motion of the Earth in its annual orbit; not so much as a faint hiss disturbed the slumber of innumerable trunks, teddy bears, stringless rackets and huge discarded mattresses. A sharp tap on the lever freed the valve, the float dropped through forty-five degrees with the finality of an old-time railway signal announcing that the line was clear, water gushed gladly in, the tank rapidly recharged itself, and nothing whatever came out of the bathroom taps.

Householders should note that this is what they may expect to come out when the tank has been emptied and refilled. The cause is an airlock in the downpipe, which may be removed by attaching a short length of hose to one of the cold taps and sucking. Or it may not. If the plan works, the lungs which have become charged to the brim with stale air tasting strongly of lead and old rats will suddenly be flushed out with a draught of swamp water. If it does not,

*I have not myself, up to the time of writing, had this experience. But I could have said the same, not long ago, about water from electric light bulbs.

the only thing to do is to summon professional aid.

The plumbers who came to our assistance not only removed the airlock with some kind of machine but reported that the whole ball valve arrangement was worn out, rickety and US; and in due course they provided and fitted, as their bill shows,

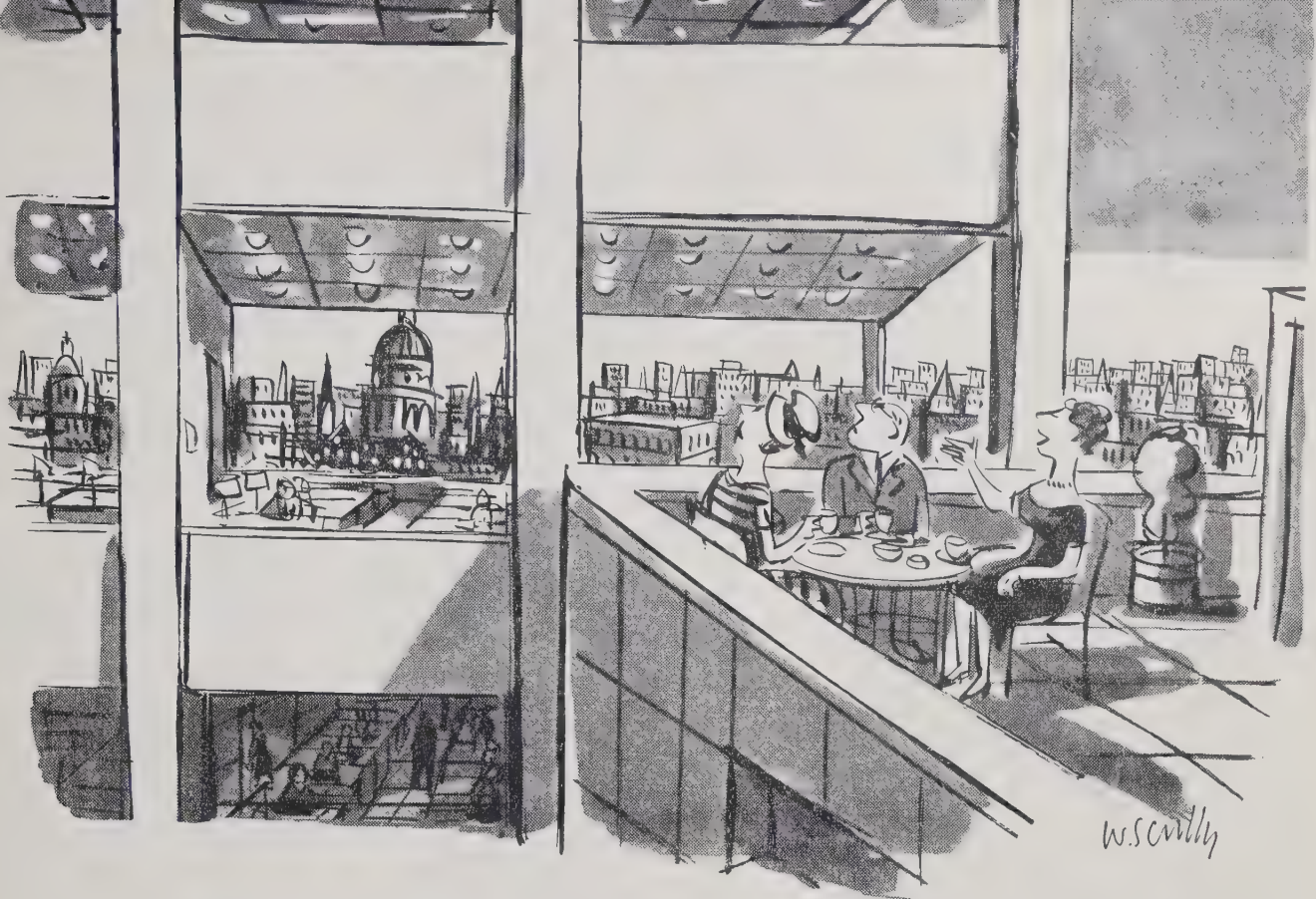
1— $\frac{1}{2}$ " HPBV fitting; 1—4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " copper ball; 1— $\frac{3}{4}$ " hex. nipple G; 1— $\frac{3}{4}$ " socket G; 1— $\frac{3}{4}$ — $\frac{1}{2}$ " bush G.

And that was that. End of Part One. Followed by a natural break until water was discovered pouring from the electric light bulb.

It was an eerie sight. The main light in the spare room is an ordinary central ceiling fixing, with a shaded bulb suspended by perhaps a foot of flex from the rose. From the bottom of the bulb itself a stream—not mere drops but an uninterrupted stream—cascaded down on the foot of a rather richly eiderdowned bed. It seemed against nature. So oddly does the mind work in emergency that as I stood there, more flabbergasted than I have been since my car's horn sounded when I pressed the trafficator switch, there recurred to me the story, heard long ago, of two Devon farmers discussing the new hydro-electric plant at Chagford. "It do seem out of reason," said one, "to make fire out o' watter." "No," agreed the other, "it don't seem possible. But there—'tis bütiful water to Chaggyford." Was it possible, I asked myself, that the process was now being reversed: that here, in an unremarkable suburban house, electricity was reverting to the element that gave it birth?

This phase of stupidity lasted only an instant of time. Remembering, first, that our electricity here, as supplied by the LEB, is made not of water but coke, and second that what comes down must have gone up, I ascended rapidly to the loft and found the cistern full to the brim and beyond. Far down beneath the gently oscillating surface the new 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " copper ball hung motionless at an angle of forty-five degrees, as though weighed down by some tiny Professor Piccard. Once again the valve had stuck, this time in the fully open rather than the fully closed position (perhaps the $\frac{3}{4}$ " hex. nipple G had fouled the $\frac{1}{2}$ " HPBV fitting; I don't know, I am not an expert in these things) and the in-rush of MWB best pressurised water had proved too great in the long run





"Luckily, we've not lost our skyline."

for the emergency outflow pipe to cope with it—nobly though the latter had tried, as one could tell by stepping out of the back door into a great lake of water.

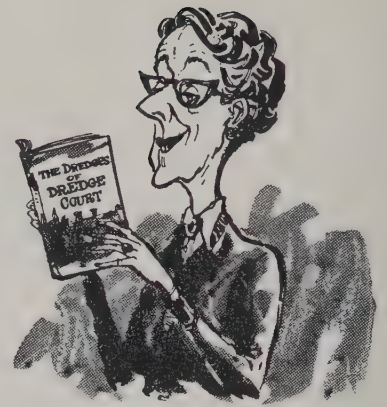
The householder will not need to be told that the first thing to do in a situation of this kind is to roll up the sleeve, plunge the arm into the cistern and give the ball lever a smart tap, which releases the stuck valve, restores the float to a horizontal position, and cuts off the inrush of water. After this the bathroom taps may be turned on to reduce the level in the tank to normal, a watch being kept on the float to ensure that it does not stick in the closed position, thus emptying the tank and causing an airlock. These preliminaries completed, the householder is at leisure to return to the spare room and review the hydro-electric scheme.

The flow from the bulb, estimated at about one-quarter watt-gallons per minute, had now been augmented by two or three other waterfalls of varying capacity, and a number of bulges or blisters in the ceiling showed where only the lining paper was holding up further cascades. It was clear that the overflow from the cistern, working its way down between the floorboards of the loft, had now spread itself over a wide area of that curious ridgy compost of lath and plaster of which the upper surface of a

ceiling is composed. Naturally, this flood had taken advantage of the first available hole, originally intended for electricity, and running easily down the flex had attempted, via the bulb, to find its own level. Later, as the volume of water increased, it had found other exits through small cracks and crevices. Confronted by such a situation, the householder should reflect that, as water continues to descend in quantity though the source of supply has been cut off, a considerable reservoir must exist above the ceiling. There is no ready means of ascertaining its volume, but obviously if it is measured in many gallons its weight may soon bring the whole ceiling down. There is a need for speedy drainage, and this can most easily be effected by widening one of the existing cracks. It is a strange experience to stand on a chair in one's own spare room, drive a screwdriver through the ceiling and instantly to be soaked from head to foot; but I doubt whether there is a better way. In all I punctured the ceiling in seven places, somewhat after the manner in which dropsy used, I believe, to be relieved, and the total quantity of fluid released certainly proved that quick action had been necessary to avert a disaster. It was no surprise to me at all, despite an adroit use of eleven buckets, when they came and told me that water was coming out of the electric light bulb in the dining room.

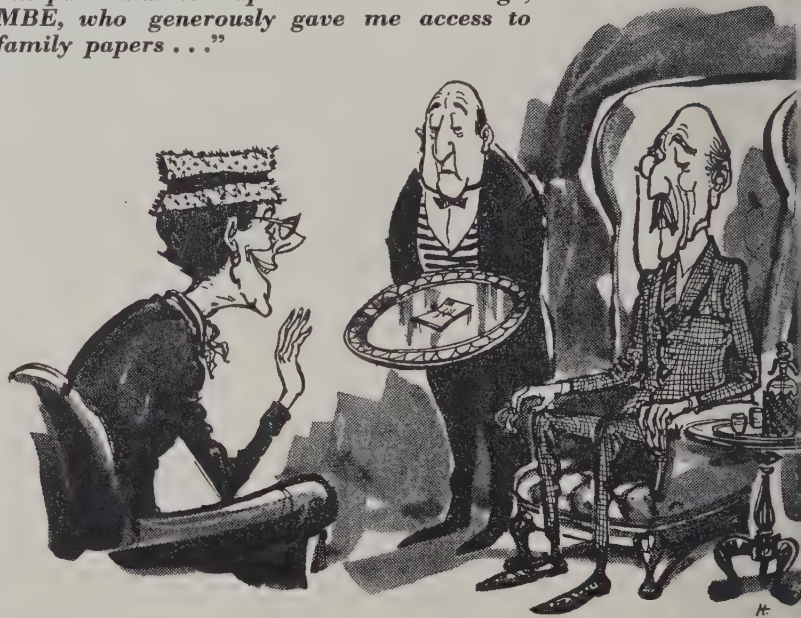
BUT FOR WHOM

"I should like to express my gratitude to all who have assisted in the compilation of this book . . ."

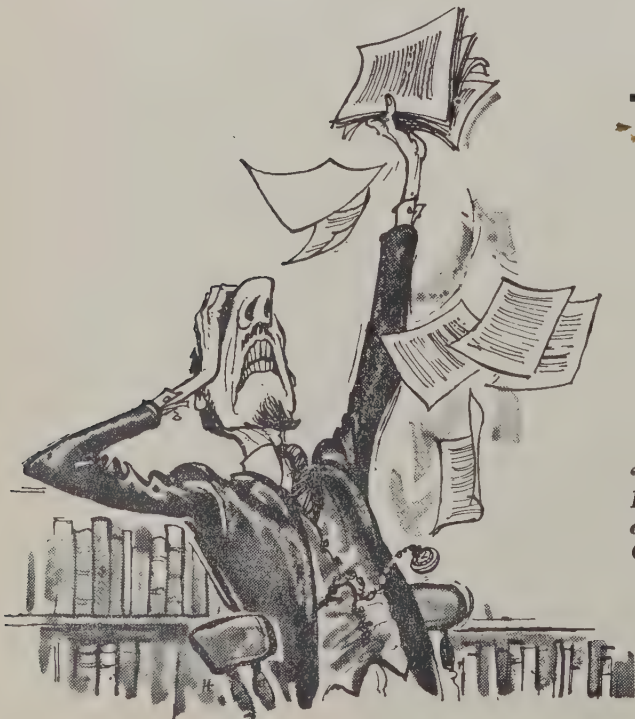


"to Mr. Park, Keeper of the Muniment Room at Dredge Court, for his never failing assistance . . ."

"in particular to Captain the Lord Dredge, MBE, who generously gave me access to family papers . . ."



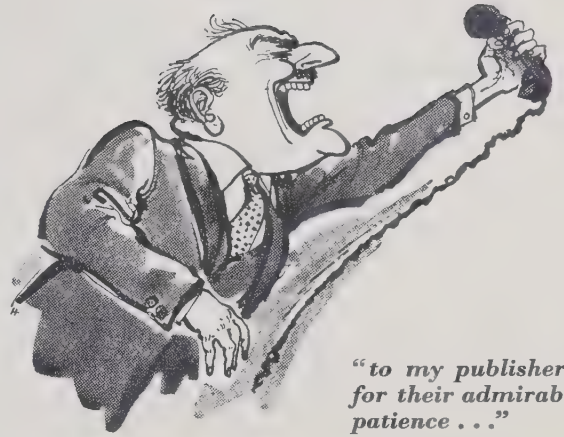
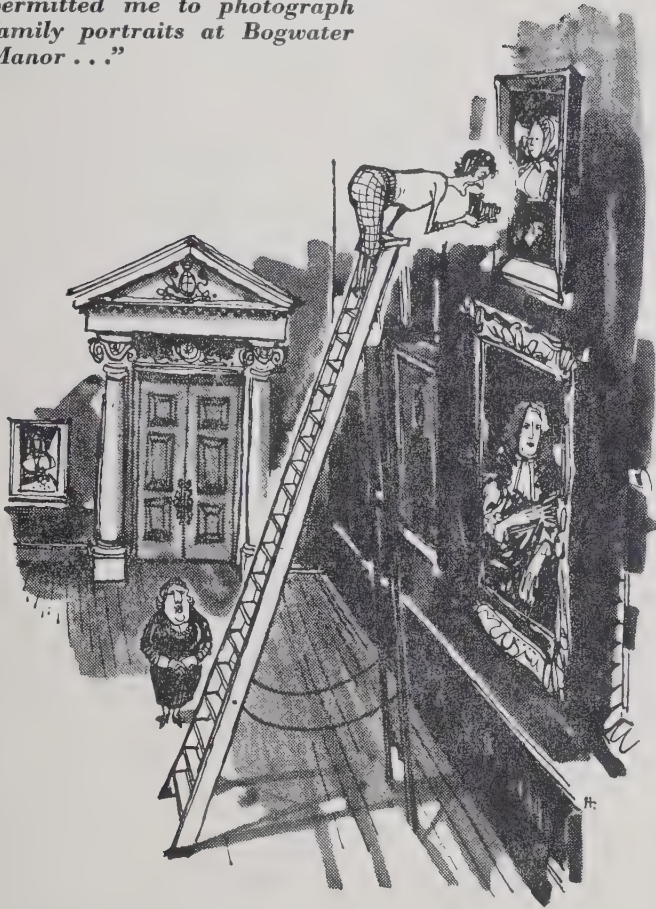
"to Mr. Rupert Fitz-Henry, for anecdotes about the Dredge Family . . ."



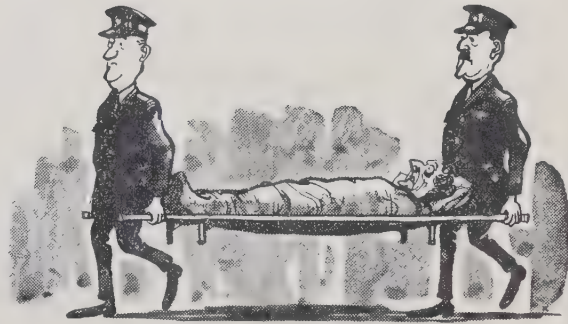
"to Professor Jympson-Holt, for his invaluable criticisms of a draft of Chapter Seventeen . . ."



"to Ophelia, Lady Dredge, who permitted me to photograph family portraits at Bogwater Manor . . ."



"to my publishers, for their admirable patience . . ."



"to Miss Alice Fish, who typed all three drafts, and rarely failed to decipher my abominable handwriting . . ."



*HEWISON
and E.S. TURNER*

"and not least to my dear husband, who never once complained of my long absorption in this undertaking."



THE TANGO IS A DANCE OF LOVE

By Jane Clapperton

“Congratulations!” said the perfectly strange voice on the telephone. “You have won two wonderful prizes. Wouldn’t you like to hear about them?”

“Indeed I should,” I heard myself saying brightly; wondering, with that instantaneous suspicion that six weeks in the United States have done so much to foster, just what I was letting myself in for now.

My wonderful prizes, as things turned out, were a course of absolutely free lessons at the Center City Academy of Dancing and an invitation to one of their weekly Fun-Times. “Do you like parties?” the relentlessly chummy voice enquired. “We have wonderful parties every week, where you can get together with your fellow students and form wonderful friendships that will last you all your life.”

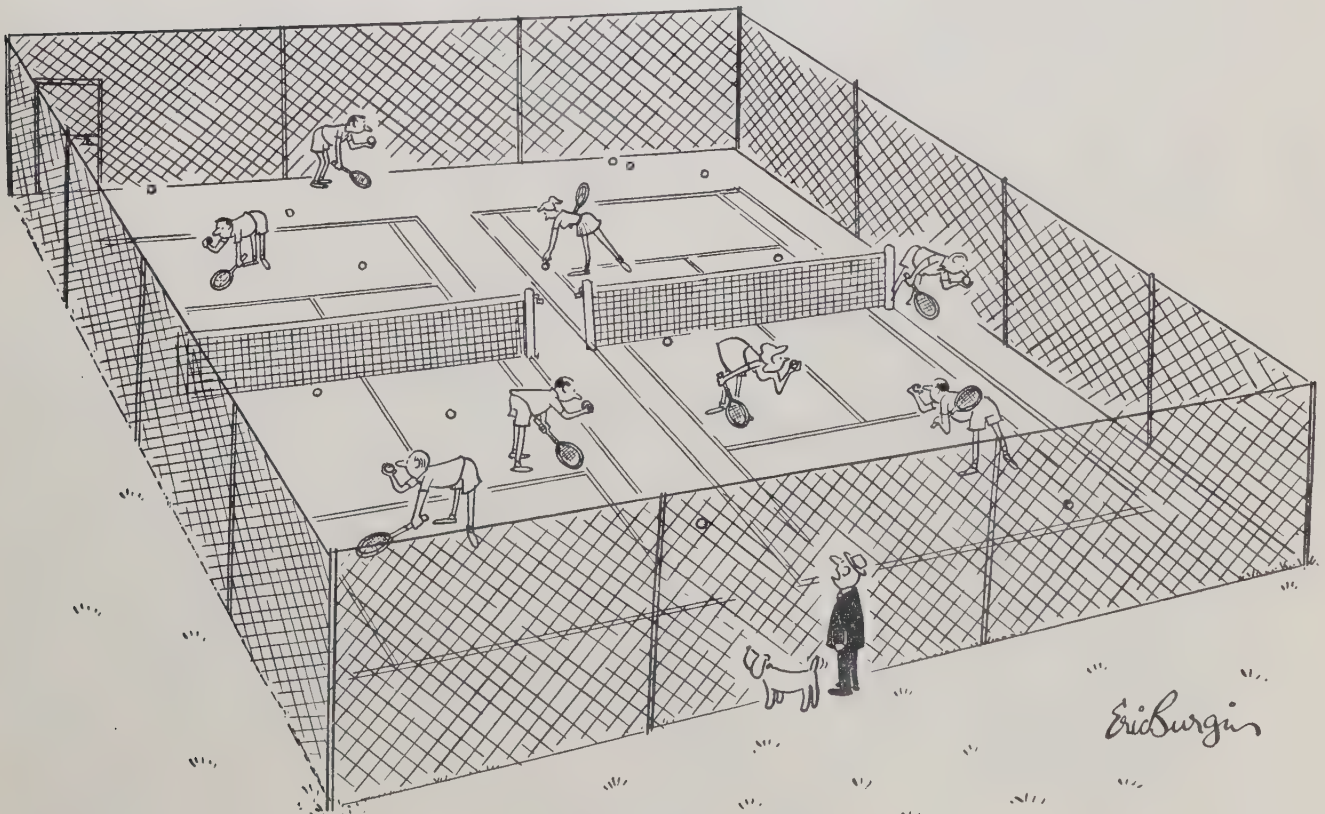
The chap who writes the script for these frontal assaults on the new telephone subscriber may never make the pages of an anthology of English prose, but he knows his stuff; not that all this is fooling anybody, exactly, but to turn down the two wonderful prizes so euphorically offered requires a blend of churlishness and resolution that few can command, especially late at night when a weighty factor

is the desire to get this lovable chatterbox off the line and go to bed. I hung up at last with a deep sense of foreboding and an appointment with their Miss Carter for the following Tuesday evening. By the time I presented myself at the Academy for my first lesson I was a solid, impacted lump of sales resistance.

The girl behind the desk slid her copy of *Playboy* into a drawer and gave me a form to fill up: name, address, age, have you ever had dancing lessons before? ("As a child" I wrote, guiltily wondering what Miss Woodhead-Smith would say if she looked down from the gold bar of heaven and saw me now.) Then I was sent over to a sort of Mourner's Bench of white hide to wait for Miss Carter. The posters dotted about weren't specially sedative: "POPULARITY SESSIONS" said one in wobbly green caps; "Prelim. Teachings Tues. & Thurs. at 8. Advanced Teaching Tues. at 9." Speculation on how one would assess the student's readiness to be promoted from Preliminary to Advanced Popularity was not only fruitless but downright alarming. I sat there plaiting my fingers into sailor's knots and pondering the larger cosmic problems—like "Why was I born?"—until Miss Carter turned up.

She was an undulant giantess with a mane of black hair and a great many fearfully white teeth, and with the addition of white leather tack and a number on her rump she would have made a spanking Liberty horse. But she was not for me. Mr. Ray, she said with a blinding flash of the snappers, had been assigned to me and would be with me in a minute. Scooping up a weeny Puerto Rican who had been caught in the telephone trawl along with me, she carried him off to learn about quarter-turns; since he barely reached her *balcon* they must have made an interesting couple.

Mr. Ray, when at last he emerged chortling from a practice room with his arm round the waist of a blushing student, projected Personality with such force as to add to my other fears that of severe radiation burns. He was tall and dark



"It's got teethmarks."

and really pretty awful; he engulfed my hand in a hot soft paw and bawled “Wonderful to have you here, Joanie, I just know you’re going to have a wonderful time with us.”

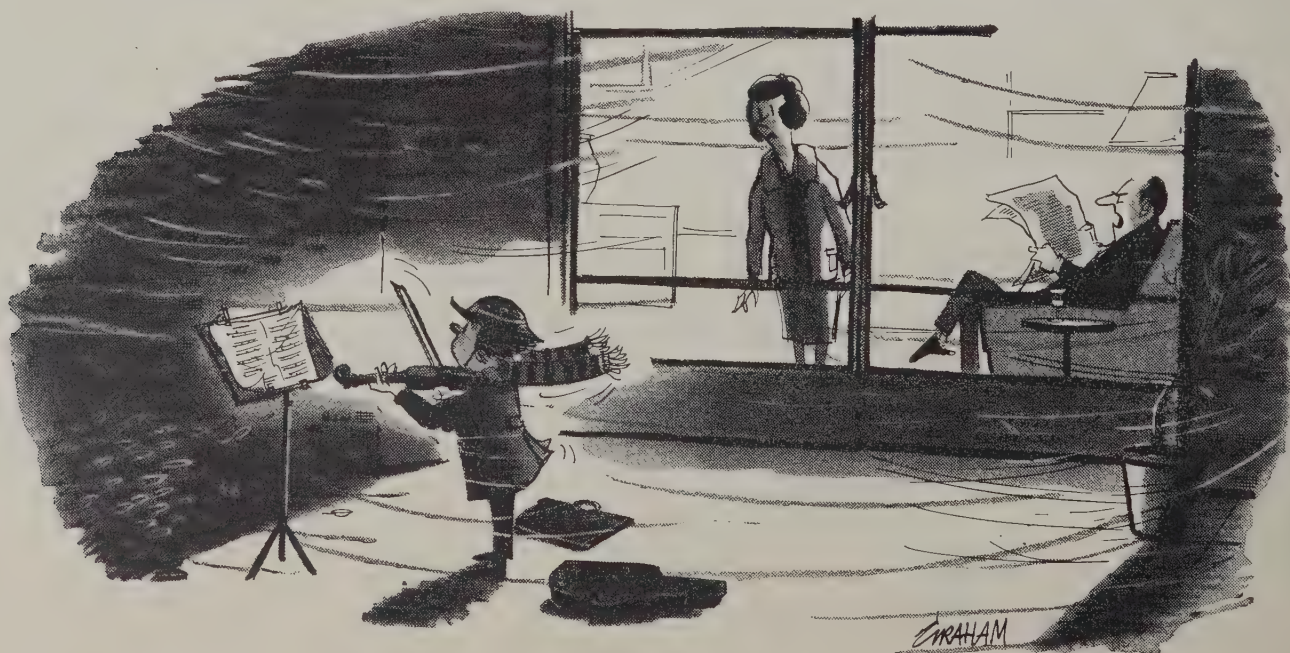
The practice room was a bleak little box with a table and two chairs at one end and a great tactless mirror at the other. Getting a firmer grip on my hand Mr. Ray marched me up to the mirror. I took one wincing look at our reflections—me with a nervous simper frozen on my face and one leg, to all appearances, three inches shorter than the other, Mr. Ray flashing and twinkling away like a fountain in the sun—and averted my eyes, so that I was taken by surprise when Mr. Ray grabbed my shoulders and wrenched them back with a crack like a snapped Malacca cane. “Posture,” he blared, “is the secret of dancing. Posture and of course rhythm and animation and *warmth*. That’s your trouble, Joanie, you lack *warmth*; you’re not really relaxed.” (And no wonder, with a cracked scapula and double dislocation.) “Dancing is not just a matter of the right steps. Now, you’re a girl, Joanie, and for a girl dancing is very, very closely bound up with appearance. Always take trouble with your appearance, Joanie. You could be quite an attractive person if you took a little trouble—no, I’m not flattering you.”

He glided gracefully two paces to the rear and looked me over. “I’m so glad,” he said earnestly, “that you’ve won this wonderful prize. No, I mean that, I’m really glad, because there is much we can do to help you. Of course these free lessons are only meant to give you an idea of what we do here; but the full course of instruction will really do wonderful things for you; break down that stiffness, all that British reserve——” “Ha-ha” I said dutifully. “——develop your self-confidence, improve your appearance, bring that hidden personality of yours into full flowering.”

Fascinating though this prospect was, I was beginning to wonder when, if ever, we were going to get to the quick-quick-slow. Mr. Ray, clearly a hot number when it comes to ESP, plucked this thought out of the air.

“You’re asking yourself what all this has to do with dancing. Well Joanie, that’s very simple; it’s all part of Life—getting along with People, developing your personality, learning to relax, all that is part of Life. And Life—well, Life is a Dance, Joanie, isn’t that so?”

Then, possibly feeling that he was losing his audience, he switched abruptly to a less rarefied approach. The next few minutes we spent locked in each other’s arms and gyrating madly: five steps back, whack into the wall, right wheel, knot the ankles loosely into a double clove-hitch, four steps forward, gash your





"They'll never get me up in one of those things."

shin on the chair, a smart canter down the touch-line to gather momentum and whack into the wall again, all this accompanied by "Careless Love" in strict tempo on the gramophone and manic yelps of encouragement from Mr. Ray.

Next there was a brief respite while Mr. Ray noted down a number of damning comments on a little green form. My animation, I read over his shoulder, was only fair, my personality repressed and my balance shaky; and though my natural ability was good, my posture and grace both needed work. After this lowering interlude we returned to the mirror.

"Now we are going to dance the Tango. Did you ever dance the Tango before?"

"In England," I said, stung at last to a feeble protest, "it is considered rather old-fashioned."

"Oh, *England* . . ." He shrugged this off, indicating that while where I came from they were probably too busy sloshing woad over each other to cherish the subtler joys of life, in Philadelphia those in the social swim were practically never seen without a red rose clenched between their teeth. After a few erratic swoops round the room, and a hotly embarrassing manoeuvre that obliged me to prance round Mr. Ray as though he were a maypole, we drew rein again in front of the



mirror. Mr. Ray shook his head. "Your posture is just terrible," he mourned. "So *stiff*. You should b-e-e-n-n-d." Here he laid violent hands on me and, ignoring my whimpers of pain and the protesting creak of out-raged vertebrae, forced a considerable kink in my spine.

"Now look," he ordered, panting. "Isn't that better?"

Whatever it was it looked incurable to me, but no doubt he knew best. I was harbouring fell suspicions of a financial arrangement with one of the nine-hundred-odd osteopaths listed in the telephone book when he suddenly clutched me to his bosom and gazed deep into my eyes, which by now were squinting slightly.

"The Tango is a dance of Love," he said, putting masses of expression into it. "Relax, can't you?" Taking this as permission to unravel my discs I straightened up, and was merrily chided for not trying.

We belted round the room again while Mr. Ray, badly gone in the wind but still game, puffed out a string of admonitions to watch that posture, relax, smile, enjoy yourself, pick 'em up, and so forth. At last, when hope was almost dead and travel sickness had set in, he unglued his tanned cheek from the top of my head and let me fall into a chair.

"Well, I guess that's it for now. These free lessons are only half-hours, you see, Joanie; the normal lesson lasts a full hour, and of course these practice rooms are just for beginners. We find that sometimes beginners are a little nervous—can't relax when other people are watching; but later on when you've made some progress—and you'll get on fast, I can tell that—you'll move upstairs to the ballroom where you'll meet some of the nicest people in Philadelphia. You'll make a lot of friends here, you know that? Philadelphia can be a very cold, unfriendly place" (and I don't know why he wasn't struck dead for this foul libel on a city that takes strangers to its heart so enthusiastically they're practically smothered) "but here, at Center City, you will find real, true friendship that will make the whole difference to your life. Remember, Joanie, we're *glad* to have you with us."

On the way out he stood over me while I weakly made another appointment for Friday; then, with a last cuddlesome grin and a jaunty wave, he slithered off through a door marked *Private*, probably to skim a few refreshing paragraphs of *The Power of Positive Thinking* before setting about the next club-footed prospect on the list.

The next day I wrote a note to the Academy explaining that, while it had all been very interesting and I was madly grateful, it just so happened that I was being sent on an assignment to Alaska on Friday morning and didn't know when I'd be back. Mr. Ray rang me up the following night.

"I was so *sorry* to hear you're going away. No I mean that, I'm really sorry, because there is such a lot we can do for you. But you just call me the minute you get back, and we'll have you all fixed up in no time. And Joanie!"

"Yes, Mr. Ray?" I said.

"I want you to practise that Tango posture. Just a few minutes morning and evening in front of the mirror; and you really practise it, understand? Because I'll know if you haven't been practising. I'll be able to tell right away. So you just stick with it."

Only one thing can happen to spoil Mr. Ray's beguiling vision of me twirling round and round an igloo, bent dizzily backwards from the hips and scaring the hell out of the eskimos, and that will be if I bump into him on Chesnut Street. But life in the New World is a hazardous business at best, and one can't provide for everything.



CONSERVATIVE PARTY

. . . . I have been here before.

It must be thirty years ago or more
since I, a deb in regulation white,
danced here on many a suffering summer's night.

Nothing has changed. It moves my heart to see
this hall, this ballroom, and this striped marquee,
so little altered I could stretch my hand
and touch the ghosts of Mr. Pilbeam's band.

The leads, where they have hopefully put some chairs,
are still too draughty: on the scarlet stairs
the young, in coloured layers, sit limbs asprawl
down to the sanded ash-tubs in the hall.
Nearly familiar faces, yet askew,
the children of the girls who once I knew
float by me, and their stripling voices soar
to echo words said countless years before.

Nothing has changed. Before me on a dish
lie little blobs of incognito fish;
here, too, the jellied things in quivering rows,
and mousses which one dares not diagnose.
Surely this is the concave waiter who
handed me once this patty dipped in glue,
and reverently placed the bay-rum ice
beside the plate of aspic-garnished mice?
He cannot be, and yet surprised I note
the self-same pin-mouthed maid to guard my coat.
Oh what nostalgia as my eyes do graze
her baited saucer on the cherry baize!

Oh that my loves, so distant and so dim,
should flutter here, like dusty cherubim;
and in the Belgrave Catering Company's glass

I see a moonstruck maiden as I pass.

— VIRGINIA GRAHAM



"The insects are polythene too, of course."

“In a civilisation dedicated to Success there is need of a forum for dissenters. This need we are resolved to fulfil.”

Our Manifesto, Vol. I, No. 1

Hail and Farewell

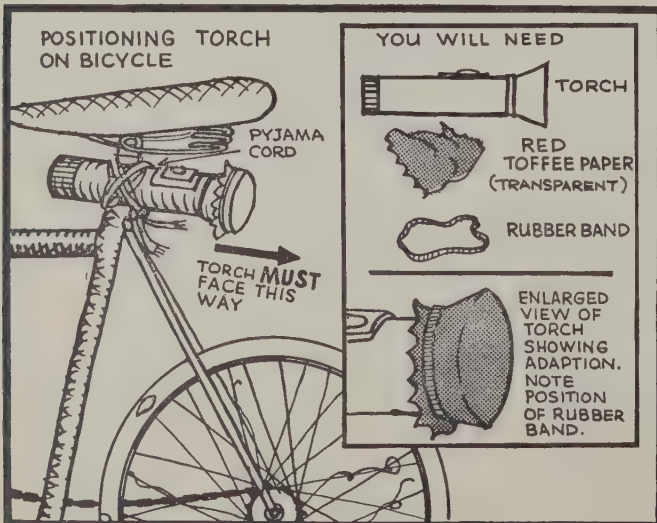
We have to inform readers that this second issue of *Failure* must perforce be our last. There will no doubt be gibes from our competitors, but our shoulders are narrow, and derision will run off. Readers, on the other hand, remembering the statement of principles so recently set out in this column, will feel that we have been faithful to them in our fashion.

And now an apology. Several attractive features had been promised for this issue, and we regret that most of them have failed to materialise. Many factors were involved. Contributors lost confidence in themselves at the typewriter in some cases; others had their marriages break up at the crucial moment; at least two were summoned from their work to attend examinations in bankruptcy; and Mr. Walter Ramble, who was to have written on *Gas Cookers: Their Care and Maintenance*, was unfortunately injured in an explosion. Book reviews have also had to be held over (indefinitely, as it proves) owing to a land subsidence under our reviewer's house at Esher, volumes on which he was working being unfortunately buried in the collapse. Matters were not improved by a small fire at our printing works.

Nevertheless we hope readers will find something to their taste, and would particularly recommend our long, complete attempted-murder story.

Care of Your Bicycle — No. 2

When your rear-lamp battery has become too corroded to remove, fasten transparent red toffee-paper over the lens of an ordinary hand-torch and lash it below the seat with pyjama cord, taking care that the torch points backwards.



THE FACE IS UNFAMILIAR

GEORGE JOHN RUNNABLE, b. 1910, son of a builder, spent early years in half-completed bungalow on outskirts of Godalming. Was keenly interested in natural history, especially bird-watching, until a tree hide which he had erected collapsed under him in 1928. Savaged by a guinea-pig, 1929. Other hobbies have included conjuring, the mandolin, matchbox collecting (he once had over a hundred, all the same) and correcting grammatical errors in the margin of library books. Describing himself as a jack of all trades, he has worked as a hairdresser, temporary postman and outside porter. Edited two issues of the magazine, *Failure*. Among his unpublished works are notes for a play, *Fool's Gold*, and the song lyric, *My Dreams and I*. Has a mandolin and a conjuring set for sale.

Did You Know?

The Brontosaurus is the largest known land animal, at 70 ft. long. It is extinct.

The cathedral of St. Pierre in Beauvais, begun in 1225, has the highest choir in Europe (153 ft.). Its roof fell in 1284. The spire (500 ft.) collapsed in 1573. The nave was never built.

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Your Questions Answered

MY husband is a junior executive (aged 62). I think he is beginning to worry about not having had coronary trouble—all the other executives of his age in the firm have. What should I do?

(Mrs. J. H., Walthamstow)

Do not worry: if you are right he may develop ulcers, which will probably satisfy him.

When my ship comes in I shall have money to invest. Have you any suggestions? (P. M. D., Painswick)

Try Blarney Minerals, who are drilling for oil near Dublin. A successful strike would relieve Britain of dependence on the Middle East sheikhdoms. If you prefer something smaller, J. G. Runnable c/o "Failure," is looking for capital with which to develop throw-away paper shoes.

My boy-friend has been taking me out to dine at the coffee stall on the Embankment. I was getting quite friendly with

him, but now I find that he is heir to a newspaper empire. Should I have known all along he was a phoney?

(K. R., Vauxhall)

Yes. People like us, my dear, prefer to eat in the basements of chain tea-shops. The establishment you mention is typical of another sort of people "slumming."

I have written an autobiographical novel describing my life in a St. Pancras bed-sitter. It has been published and reviewed, and several people seem to have bought it. Now my publishers want me to write another. At first I was terribly pleased, but I am finding it difficult to adapt my way of life to s*****s. Can you help?

(J. B. C., Belgravia)

Your problem seems to be becoming more and more common. Honestly, you have only yourself to blame. We are sending you some suggestions in a plain envelope.

At the Pictures

I ANNOUNCED last week that in this article I was going to review *Victim*, but owing to a misunderstanding about programme times at my local I found myself watching a super-glossy local-boy-makes-good affair which would not be of any interest to the readers of this magazine.

Instead, as this is likely to be my last real chance of carrying any weight with the cinema-industry moguls of Britain, I shall here briefly outline the sort of film I think this country ought to be producing. I happen to have by me a scenario which has so far aroused no interest, but which ought to give an idea of what I mean. I gladly acknowledge my debt to our great Italian contemporaries.

The action takes place in and around a Cornish tin-mine, and the main characters are a grandfather, father and son who continue to work the mine in the belief that somewhere it still contains a seam of ore. They have kept to themselves so much that they speak a dialect which not even other Cornishmen understand (this will enable us to use subtitles). They only have one shovel, so two of them are free to argue while the third digs. After a few reels showing their way of life, the son rebels. Convinced that the mine could be made into a successful holiday camp he hitch-hikes to Lostwithiel and hires, by sign language, a "resting" actress named Dora to act as hostess. On her return the father falls in love with her, but misunderstanding the grandfather's signs she persuades herself that he alone knows where the tin-seam really is and marries him. Father and son go off in disgust to work a neighbouring mine, and the film ends with a sequence showing Dora digging away in the mine while grandfather argues endlessly with himself in a language she doesn't understand. We ought to be able to cut it into four hours.

Holiday Snapshot Competition Result (Delayed)

The winner, Mr. Arthur Bloodshed, Green Ridges, Cuckfield, Sussex, thinks this winning entry was taken at Cannes during his short term of office as a travel agency courier, but it may be Casablanca. Our judges describe it as a well-judged spoilt negative, and say that many competitors overdid this effect, some being entirely blank. In photography as in other activities, they point out, there is a distinction to be drawn between impaired achievement and no attempt at all.



Part of a celebratory statue commissioned in 1924 by a body interested in the restoration of the Mexican Imperial Family. The sculptor, Joseph Szadzjh, has almost completed the left-hand group. The work can be inspected on the premises of the Redilone Pledge Co., Balham.

AROUND THEATRE-QUEUES

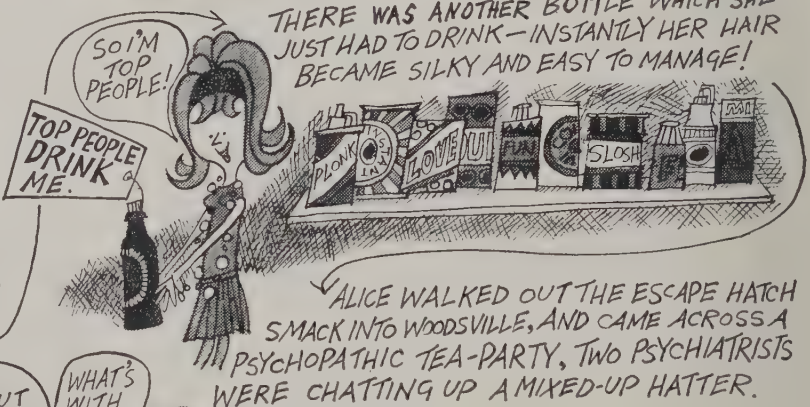
By Our Music Critic

West End theatregoers have a rich field of entertainment open to them this week, from Albert Turver's handwind gramophone, pram-mounted, outside the Vaudeville—his performance of Harry Lauder's *Keep Right on to the End of the Road* achieves audience participation nightly—to that lively little combination, The Fulham Three (2 cornets, 1 collecting-box), outside the St. Martin's. The leader, Ronald Nushett, once played third trumpet "in the pit" during the ill-fated musical, *Don't Worry, It's Washable*.

Queuers at the Adelphi can watch Bert and Flo Skinner somersault while rendering old favourites on accordions, and at the Globe and the Apollo, one collector doing for both queues, Harry the Whiner is attracting many remarks with his musical-saw selections. Harry tells me, by the way, that he is still in the running for assistant stage carpenter's job when the National Theatre gets built.

ALICE IN KOOKSVILLE (OR- THAT'S THE WAY THE LOOKING GLASS CRUMBLES)

WHILE MAKING A WEED AD IN GRASSVILLE ALICE (A TOP MODEL) DUG A POP-SINGING RABBIT, SWINGING DOWN A FALLOUT SHELTER



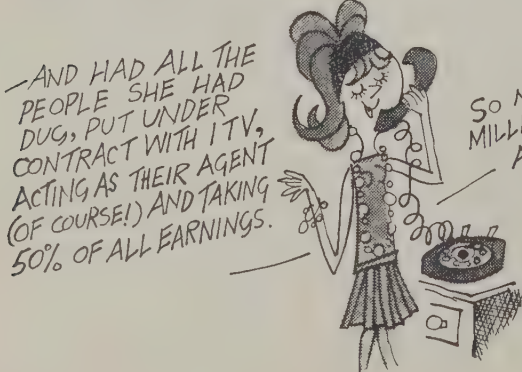
THE SHELTER WAS WELL STOCKED WITH GOODIES DAD!! INCLUDING SOME "INSTANT MARMALADE MIST" (THE MOST!) BUT DRAG FROM DRAGSVILLE THIS HAD EVAPORATED!

THERE WAS ANOTHER BOTTLE WHICH SHE JUST HAD TO DRINK - INSTANTLY HER HAIR BECAME SILKY AND EASY TO MANAGE!

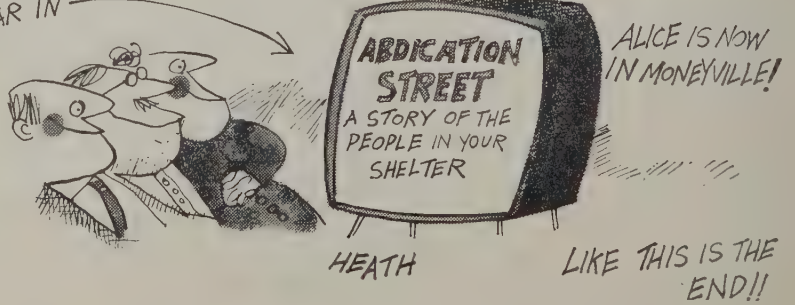
ALICE WALKED OUT THE ESCAPE HATCH SMACK INTO WOODSVILLE, AND CAME ACROSS A PSYCHOPATHIC TEA-PARTY, TWO PSYCHIATRISTS WERE CHATTING UP A MIXED-UP HATTER.



ALICE GOT A BIT HIGH ON "VITA-MUG" - THEN HAD TWO TRANQUILLISERS AND BLEW



SO NOW TWICE A WEEK - AND WATCHED BY 40 MILLION OF THE BUGEYED - THEY ALL APPEAR IN



HEATH

LIKE THIS IS THE END!!

THE LAND WHERE TIME STOOD STILL

By Alex Atkinson

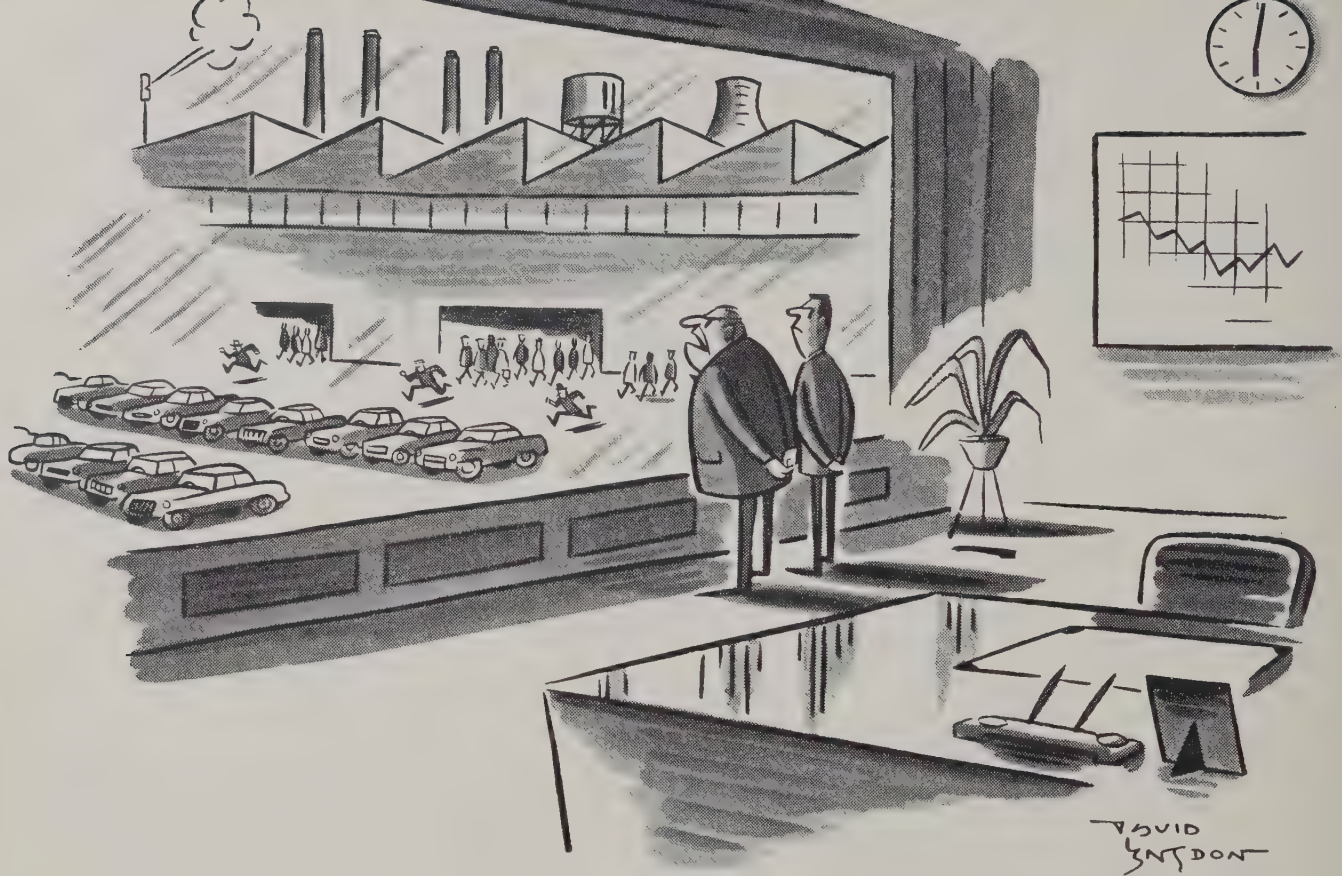
It is comforting to be aware, as I am, that in the fevered rush and clamour of life in the twentieth century there still remains one quiet backwater (usually referred to as the United States of America) where old-fashioned ways prevail, where little or nothing is sacrificed to the god of Efficiency, where a man can live out his days in calm and blissful ignorance of the hectic march of progress which so bedevils the rest of mankind. Let them fool around with their new-fangled notions in Greece, or Connemara, or the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg: here in the land of Thoreau and Will Rogers folks are archaic and proud of it. It is their heritage: did not their forebears come rushing to these shores in crowded ships to escape the soul-destroying bondage of the gadget, the liberal arts, the time-saver, the cunning invention, the spread of enlightenment and the introduction of universal suffrage? Here a man is *free*—free to muddle along amid the last, jealously preserved remnants of primeval chaos: aware, perhaps, that some hysterical disease called modern living may be raging in far-off lands, but dreamily content to take no part in it himself beyond an occasional flurry of whimsical imitation.

My thermometer is a case in point. It is a charming imitation of a useful gadget, and it cost me a quarter. (I didn't *need* it, but it's easy here to fall into the quaint old habit of buying things not for a purpose but to satisfy the simple, primitive urge of the collector. Aeons ago, hairy, blunt-faced creatures with two legs collected useless, brightly coloured pebbles, or the eggs of pterodactyls, or curiously shaped twigs; similarly to-day, in America, one collects exquisitely boring LPs with glossy sleeves, gay socks with built-in shrinkage, caressable pens that will write on butter but not on paper, and these damned thermometers.) It is round and you fix it to the wall with a rubber sucker. After exactly ten minutes it falls off and rolls through the two-inch gap that separates the floor from the bottom of the sliding-door of the airtight built-in wardrobe. When I bought it it was registering 107° Fahrenheit in a department store so humorously air-conditioned that the assistants' teeth were chattering. On the way home, in an officially announced average temperature of 92° with humidity standing at 70 per cent, it registered a few degrees below freezing point. It is at present nailed to the bathroom door, and it has stood immovably at 136° for the past four and a half weeks, come hail, rain or thermostatically controlled two-way automatic fans. Sometimes I get up in the middle of the night, put on a heavy overcoat, and sneak up on it to take it unawares. No change. It's always 136°, and I wouldn't really have it otherwise. Accuracy may be all very well for those headstrong, technology-mad fools in Sicily or the Solomon Islands: hereabouts, we prefer to stay bogged down in a world of medieval fantasy.

Or take my coffee-pot. There was a modern, efficient look about it and, according to one of the half-dozen close-printed tags that were strung around



"I would very much like to name a pancake after you."



"I always make a mental note of those who break into a trot."

its neck, delicately misspelt and laughably punctuated, it had been fashioned from the same secret material as is used in the making of space missiles. It was very reassuring, I can tell you, when I actually set about preparing coffee in it, to find that a sharp tap on the spout with a teaspoon was enough to break off a lump of this missile material about the size of an English muffin, and so render the whole complex machine sublimely useless.

Take, if it comes to that, the English muffin itself. These things are available in great quantities here. I have not been able to determine precisely what they are supposed to be, but I suspect that they must be some form of confectionery out of the mists of English history. Anne Hathaway, I have no doubt, used to serve them to her Will on chill Warwickshire afternoons, and now, in this musty repository of things past, they still prevail. "Prithee," I sometimes cry, as I enter my favourite New Jersey tavern, "let me partake of a goodly platter of marchpane, larks' tongues and syllabub, and a mess of coleslaw on the side withal. Nay, I'll warrant me 'tis a saucy young wench thou hast for serving maid this day, good master Butch! Fetch me a quartern of sack, the while I dally with her in yon inglenook. Methinks I have about me such trinkets and baubles as may please such an one mightily, the which I will bestow upon her in hope that she may favour me with a dimpled smile." "Sure," says Butch, "go thou ahead, I pray you."

At this very moment, for nine dollars a month, in the United States of America, you can hire a spinet; and if you take a fancy to it you can buy it outright. I don't know how the market is for lutes, serpents, ophicleides or water-glasses, but when you think that demure teenagers in Pittsburgh are settling down these summer evenings to entertain their swains with dainty spinet sonatas—when you recall that in 1958 Erroll Garner himself recorded a piece called "When Paris Cries" upon the harpsichord—when you take in the fact that newspapers

in New York and Philadelphia still devote page after page to things they call “nuptials,” “troths” and “debs”—you will understand why so many so-called historical romances have been written in America. They’re not historical romances at all: that’s the way these people *live*!

The mention of newspapers reminds me that a bare eight hours after my telephone had been connected, somebody with a fatherly voice (he sounded as though he had been recently fired from a filter-tip commercial for overdoing the sincerity) rang me up to explain how unbearable life would be if I didn’t have the local morning paper delivered each day. In other, foolishly go-ahead countries the daily delivery of newspapers may be taken for granted, but in these backward parts, where citizens still have their trousers held up by belts like Boy Scouts and will spit on pavement and passer-by alike while on their panic-stricken way to be X-rayed in case of tuberculosis, such a service counts as a luxury. Being anxious to savour all the delights of American life, including the freedom to stand fumbling in the rain for change at the corner news-stall every morning, I told the fatherly voice that I didn’t intend to start having any papers delivered through *my* mail-box in time for breakfast, thank you very much. Three quarters of an hour later, my heart-strings limp after a droning barrage of persuasion which culminated in the syrupy announcement that part of my first six-months’ subscription would go straight into a cancer-relief fund, I yielded. The fatherly voice blessed me, and we got down to meticulously detailed arrangements, including all my middle names, the advantage of having the Sunday edition, too, and the precise location of my apartment.

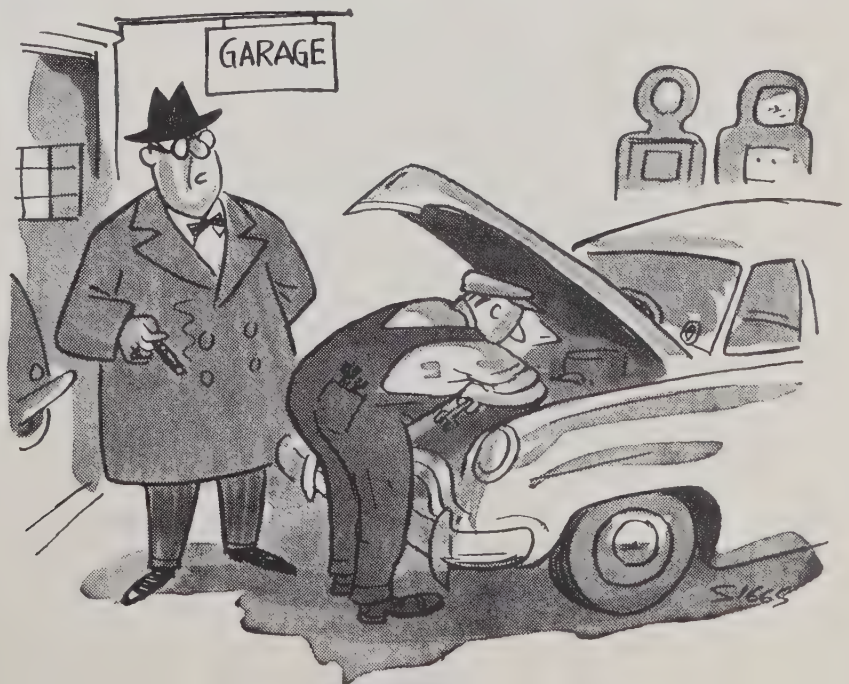
That was nine months ago, and I am happy to say that from that day to this not a single morning paper of any kind or description has been delivered to my door.

This charming attitude of *laissez-faire*, this *mañana* mentality, this simple scorn for the basic principles of efficiency—all these reactions against the tempting encroachments of progress combine to create and preserve the old-world charm of life in the US. They account for the fact that subway stations in big cities are situated in foul, evil-smelling, dim-lit catacombs, into which visitors from such sophisticated places as Naples or Glasgow are unwilling to venture except in threes, heavily armed. They account for the system of garbage collection in one of the biggest towns in the country, by which soggy cartons full of fishbones, boiled cabbage, clam shells and old lumps of strawberry shortcake are carefully placed on the sidewalk by ratepayers, so that they may be kicked up and down the street by small children dressed as Confederate soldiers. They account for beggars, and the existence of unemployment, and the shooting dead of burglars by policemen, and the arguments at cocktail parties about whether or not a

“Had it not been for the so-called ‘die-hards’—a term so often referred to us Nationalists disparagingly, yet so invigorating to all those who do not betray principles—who have unfailingly sustained the ‘European theory’ of our now muddled thinking on ‘European theory’ of our ethnological existence, by now muddled thinking on this subject would have been more general and deep-rooted.”—*Times of Malta*

We see what you mean.

“What—in your humble opinion
—is giving the trouble?”



virtually uncrackable code. If, dare one say when, they produce a brains-brother of Einstein, I doubt whether any Englishman will ever be found to discover what he is talking about, for surely no life is long enough to learn both Chinese and Pure Physics.

Gone are the days when the Orientalist could content himself with studying the philosophy of Mencius—is the white of a white horse the same as the white of white jade?—or of Chuang-Tzu who, having dreamed one night that he was a butterfly, was never quite clear thereafter whether he was not a butterfly dreaming that he was a man. Gone are the days of Confucius and all the things he is supposed to have said.

And, alas, gone are the days of Lao-Tzu who recommended that a country should be governed as one fries a small fish—gently, gently. A somewhat more violent culinary approach is advocated by the new Master, Hu-Lu Shao-Fu (Mr. K. to you), who has said that he will make the West dance like little fish frying in a pan.

The Chinese people are making a Great Leap Forward, exceeding their norms—rendered picturesquely as jumping over their fingermarks. At the same time, while simplifying some ideograms they are inventing thousands of new combinations of characters to befog the sinologue.

Once deciphered, the title of the artistic document with which we were entangled proved to be the *People's Middle-Country Earth-Wood Work-Job Study Newspaper*, which, as I suppose anyone would guess instantly, is the *Building Trades Journal of China*.

As we proceeded with the translation of formulae for ascertaining the limit loads of foundations for homes (pigs-under-roofs) and skyscrapers (rub-heaven-towers) on sticky and not-sticky soil, our own table-load of a dozen Russo-Chinese reference books, school algebras and coffee cups began to present a major construction problem in itself.

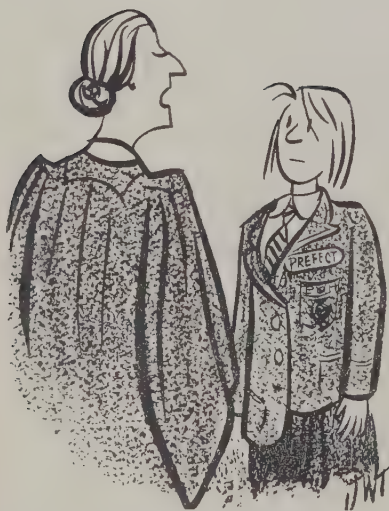
It might have been easier to translate “goat’s-toe-earth-depressing-device” if we had ever heard of its English equivalent—a sheep’s foot roller—and we might have tracked down K’u Lun—which the dictionary flatly maintained to be the old name of the capital of Outer Mongolia—if I had been living up to expectations by recognising a Coulomb equation at sight, but we almost met our Waterloo with “opposite-figure-univalve-conch-shell-revolve-crooked-line” which turned out to be a logarithmic spiral curve.

If you happen to think that way, I suppose horn for angle and rub-scrape for friction are logical enough, but who except the Chinese would ever hit upon “publish-fashion” for “formula.”

By midnight we had arrived at the construction of roads for vapour-chariots, permanent ways for fire-carts, and runways for snort-shoot flying mechanisms, i.e. jet aircraft. My partner sat muttering to himself: “What Ho Bang Li Sung Why,” which I took to mean: “What the devil can that be?” while I sat puzzling over the substitutions in a complete page of algebra, and what appeared to be a crossword puzzle with the clues in Chinese and the answers in decimals.

At 2 a.m. we were discussing, mercifully only hypothetically it seems, the construction of mixed-jellied-earth (concrete) launching sites for fire-arrows (rockets) with a daunting bibliography in which Popoff was rendered as P’o-P’o-Fu.

We reached the final paragraph of the sixteenth page at three in the morning. In it, the author, with the true Marxist spirit of self-me-criticise-comment, declared that he was still young, that his knowledge was small, and that he hoped that others more erudite would rush to correct him where necessary. He ended with an exhortation to the Chinese people to exert themselves to the limit in jumping over their fingermarks, and looked forward to the time when the People’s Middle Country should have its very own original-seed-pellets (atom bombs) and protect-stars (satellites).



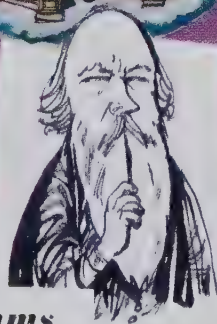
“And try to project an image more in keeping with your status symbol.”

COMPOSERS AT WORK

An inquiry into the shape of music



Beethoven



Brahms

TUM-TI-TUM

Tumpity-tum

TUMpity-TUMpity

Tumpity-tum

TUM_FITY

TUM_PITY

TUMpity-TUMpit-7

TUM-TI-TUM



onel Bart

Bach

...doubt it ...
...scentrated bar...
...those evening ...
...of concern



COMPOSERS AT WORK

-continued



Sousa



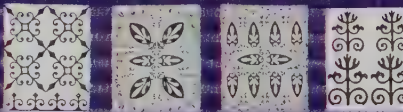
Symphony
No. 593



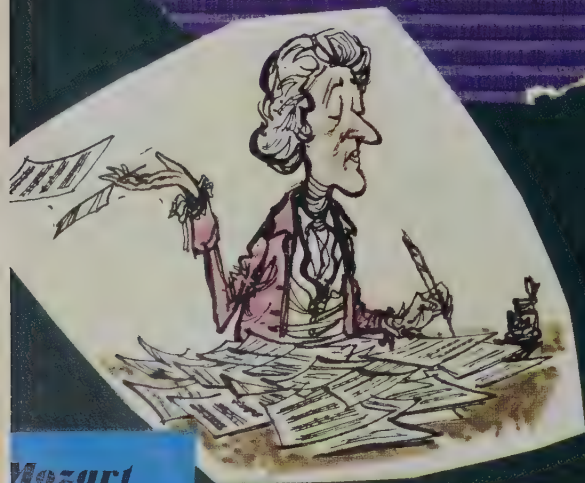
ditto
No. 594



ditto
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Mozart



Elgar



Land of Ho-pe and Glo-ry



Mo-ther of the Free

O PIONEERS

By Jane Clapperton

One of the things that bemuses me about life in the United States (the other is how they've managed to get along all these years without egg-cups) is the curiously schizoid attitude of manufacturers to their very own dream girl, the American Housewife. There she goes, prancing through the advertisement pages: an alarmingly vital sprite who can whip up a bushel of nauseous bite-size bitlets in less time than it takes to open the packet and who clearly never had a day's illness in her life. And yet a quick, strabismic peep at the aids to modern living with which she is encouraged to cram her split-level home makes one wonder whether all this bouncing health is just a hollow mockery. It's been common knowledge for years that the poor girl can't bend; hence the electric scrubbers, electric polishers and, for all I know, electric tongs for picking up Sunday newspapers, empty Coke bottles, babies and other articles too bulky to be taken care of by the vacuum cleaner. More recently her condition has deteriorated to the point where she hasn't the strength to open a tin, and has to fall back on the Auto-Magic Kitchen-Mate which is not, as you might think, her husband, but an electric tin-opener which rips the armour off the baked beans, along with any fingers and thumbs you are anxious to dispose of, in a matter of seconds. And now, as God is my witness, the woman can't even clean her own teeth—though indeed why should she when for a mere seventeen dollars and ninety-eight cents, plus tax, she can kit herself out with an electric toothbrush (simply approach the mechanism to those great rotting molars and the wonders of science do the rest).

That's one side of the picture, and if it keeps you awake at night don't blame me. But here comes the catch. This frail, lacklustre being whose muscles have all the tensile strength of damp spaghetti is expected to be able to put a wardrobe together with a mere flick of the wrist. The line taken by furniture manufacturers, aided and abetted by delivery men who hate to carry wardrobes upstairs—as a matter of fact they hate to carry *anything*, preferring if they can get away with it to stack their burdens against the front door and run like mad—is that having

presented you with the component parts, impenetrably shrouded in forty-two layers of corrugated board, they have done their share and the rest of it is up to you.

My first and most traumatic brush with this aspect of the American Way of Life came the day I moved into an unfurnished flat and discovered, slap in the middle of the living-room floor, a windowless prefab for large gnomes. A long inelegant tussle with sticky tape eventually revealed that this structure contained my new bed—in bits. Anyone who has ever put a bed together single-handed and without any tools will know that this is the sort of thing that marks you for life. An octopus could have done it in half the time, but equipped only with the courage of despair and the miserable two hands I was born with the contest was unequal.

It's not much of a game, really. You start by laying the pieces out on the floor, staring at them in a forlorn attempt to rationalise their unpromising appearance and fighting down the dark suspicion that all this junk has nothing whatever to do with beds and is simply what was left over after a gang of drunken amateurs had finished assembling a combine harvester. Attached to one of the girders is a little linen bag which is not meant to open; in the end you set about it with your teeth, and eight screws and a wing-nut fall out and roll under the radiator. Also in the bag is a bit of paper that says: "Assemble frame, taking care that side rails are at side and head and foot rails at head and foot. Tighten wing-nut, *having first adjusted adjustable clamp*. Insert castors in sockets provided (see diag.)." Diag., incidentally, is a nice little drawing of a castor; a bit too representational by current standards, but for somebody





"It contains adultery, incest, murder and goodness knows what else, but it's all lightly treated and done for laughs."

who'd never seen one before it would obviously have its uses. But *clamp* . . . *What clamp?* Why wasn't it in the little linen bag with the rest of the stuff? Or perhaps it was? Then it's still under the radiator. Down we go.

This beastly scene has been re-enacted with minor variations shortly after the arrival of every single piece of furniture I own—chairs, tables, bookcases, the lot. The fan took a particularly heavy toll (Philadelphia summers may be described, if you like euphemism, as sultry, and if you can't afford an air-conditioner you compromise with a gigantic window-fan which nudges the hot air around in an officious manner, thus converting a turkish bath into a turkish

bath with a draught). What set the fan apart from the rest of the occupational therapy was that nestling among the cardboard ramparts was a glossy, artistic booklet of instructions instead of the usual three enigmatic lines on a scrap of ricepaper. The instructions, though kindly meant, tended to confuse; for reasons which Freud would know all about I mislaid them within half an hour so I can't quote at length, but one sentence that has stuck in my mind, where it is doing me little good, went like this: "It is essential that flange with protruding lip should face away from inside of room."

The whole thing is further bedevilled by the conviction, deeply and irrationally rooted in the feminine psyche, that it's a waste of money to buy expensive tools. The pride of the flimsy collection tangled up in my kitchen drawer is a fiendish invention which offers four tools, none of them satisfactory, for the price of one. It is designed on the Russian Doll principle (a hammer containing a chisel containing a screwdriver containing Old Macdonald and his farm, and so on) and every time you start knocking in a nail the weapon disintegrates and the loose covers are cut to ribbons by flying ironmongery. Using the screwdriver leads to a more subtle form of dissolution; the base of the device slowly but inexorably unscrews itself and the contents quietly leak out one by one and lodge quivering in your instep. The furniture manufacturers, whose spies are everywhere, are clearly aware of this, and the fact that they continue to package their gimcrack products so that they can only be assembled by two strong men with a chain saw and a brace-and-bit has been ascribed by many thoughtful citizens to sheer sadism, if not to Communist infiltration.

Myself, I think they're overcomplicating. As I see it, these tycoons are in it together; the people who make the dishwashers, for instance, are assured of a steady sale because they know perfectly damn well that after erecting an all-steel kitchen cabinet with the aid of adhesive tape, safety pins and a plastic letter-opener no woman is going to be in a fit state to start slaving over a hot sink.

All over America, in buses, on trains, on hoardings, you will see posters depicting a nervous-looking lady gnawing her knuckles, over the following caption: "1 out of 10 of your fellow Americans is emotionally disturbed. Your Understanding Can Help Her To Find Herself." Note the pronouns, that's all I ask, just note them. So: who assembles whole gigantic suites with just a lick of flour-and-water paste? And who is emotionally disturbed? Right. Any more questions? Because if not, here is where one dear old cabinet-maker retires to a darkened room with a jug of Californian Burgundy and gets absolutely stoned.

OUR MAN IN AMERICA

By P. G. Wodehouse

For years apparently American Senators have been putting their trousers on all wrong. This was brought to light when Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House, suffering from pains in the back, went to the President's physician, Dr. Janet Travell, and got a thorough going-over. The examination concluded, he started to put on his trousers in the manner to which he had become accustomed, hopping on one foot while shoving the other leg through, and Dr. Travell, visibly moved, told him that it was doing this that had strained his back, and what he ought to do was sit down, draw up both trouser legs to the knees and then stand up and complete the operation. So all the Senators are doing that now, and cricks in the back are unknown. One might put it by saying that happiness reigns supreme.

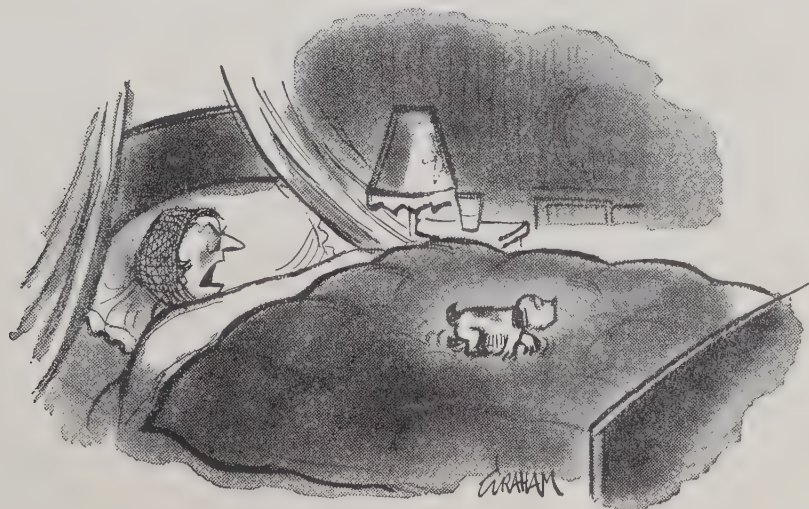
Though as a matter of fact the Senate were feeling pretty happy even before that, for they recently engaged Robert Sonntag, a native of Alsace-Lorraine, to cook for them. Until then about all the food

available in the Senate restaurant had been hamburgers, bean soup, cold cuts and fried bread crumbs, and you can't have happy, well-fed law-givers on such a menu. M. Sonntag has changed all that. Go into the Senate restaurant to-day, and you will find the Gentleman from Mississippi tucking into *Timbale de ris de veau Toulousiane*, while the Gentleman from Illinois squares his elbows over a plateful of *Mignonette de poulet petit-Duc*, and both, what's more, shouting for second helpings.

The only trouble is that now when they sit down, draw up the trouser legs to the knees and endeavour to complete the operation, they can't make their trousers meet at the waist. There is always, as somebody has well remarked, something.

More than once in these columns I have commented on the courtesy which meets one nowadays all over the United States, and when Mrs. Frances Knight, chief of the US Passport Office, broke into print not long ago with a letter saying that the

"Settle down!"



25,000 employees at Idlewild Air Port were a bunch of uncouth pluguglies who wouldn't recognise politeness if you served it up to them on an individual blue plate with watercress round it—I quote from memory—I felt as if I had been slapped in the face with a wet fish.

Fortunately, when a reporter from my Long Island paper went down there, posing as a foreigner speaking practically no English and trying to find (1) lost luggage (2) how to get to New York (3) change for five hundred francs and (4) had anybody seen her strayed poodle, she met with nothing but willing helpers all the way. The Chevalier Bayard, she says, could have picked up hints from them and Lord Chesterfield have taken their correspondence course.

So that's all right. And, anyway, whatever Mrs. Knight says, she could never convince Stanley W. Forsack of Long Beach, L. I., that the spirit of courtesy is not in mid-season form in modern America. Pulled in for speeding and haled before Judge John E. Holt-Harris, he was fined \$35. He said he hadn't got that much. The Judge made it \$30, but still Stanley couldn't oblige. Searching in his wallet, he could only chip in with \$29. So Judge Holt-Harris very decently pulled out a dollar of his own and added it to the kitty, making up the required sum.

One of the great masters of ceremonies at boxing tourneys, known to everyone as Harry, has recently retired, leaving behind him lessons from which it is to be hoped his successors will profit. It was Harry who insisted that the customary "May the best man win" was ungrammatical and banal, so he changed it to "May the better man emerge victorious." He hated racial bigotry. Before the Joe Louis-Carnera title bout at the Yankee Stadium, the atmosphere was so surcharged with hostility that police reserves had been summoned, but Harry put that right.

"Leave us view this contest without anchor or prejudism," he shouted, and the crowd, saying to themselves that the chap had a point there, did so.

A writer in the *New York Herald-Tribune* was saying a good word the other day for the black bears of New York State. Except for a certain grumpiness, he says, they are not bad neighbours, having neither the awe-inspiring size of the Alaskan brown bear nor the chronic bad temper of the grizzly. And now, it seems, the New York State Conservation Department is planning to attach radio broadcasting outfits to these bears in order that their wanderings may be tracked. Will there, one asks oneself, be sponsors, and will the bears start fighting among themselves over ratings? Only one of them in all probability

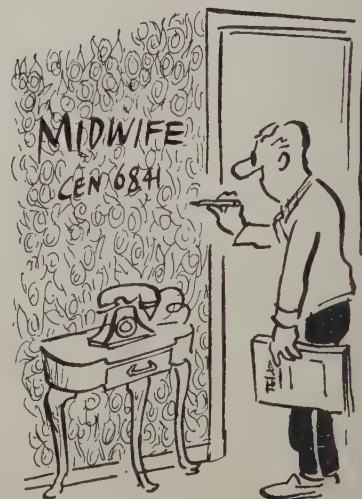
will be engaged to appear on the Jack Paar show, and this must lead to jealousy and bad feeling. Once encourage the ham that lurks in every bear, and there is no saying what the harvest will be.

It is never easy to get Patrolman Horace Duke of Portland, Oregon, worked up about anything. Those who have the pleasure of his acquaintance report him as a rather stolid, matter-of-fact officer. Assigned not long ago to investigate a telephone call to a woman, telling her "You will be blown up by an atom bomb at 3 a.m.," he waited with the complainant until after the hour mentioned, and then sent in his report. It read:

"This did not materialise. I resumed patrol."

MAN EXPECTING

by *Larry*





HE SAW HIS NATIVE LAND

BESIDE the untidy passage-way
The tall Nigerian sat.
His head was bare, his ebon hair
Did not require a hat.
The Englishman was at his feet
Upon a little mat.

The Englishman pursued the trade
That he was practised in.
He had his colours ready made
And labelled on the tin.
He did not think of black and brown
In terms of human skin.

The African was smartly dressed,
But innocent and mild.
He bent above his out-stretched shoe
And, breathless and beguiled,
He watched the Englishman at work
And very slightly smiled.

He did not hear the booming voice
Announce the ten-to-three.
His thoughts were on his distant home,
Which seemed a lot less free.
He wished his family and friends
Were only there to see.

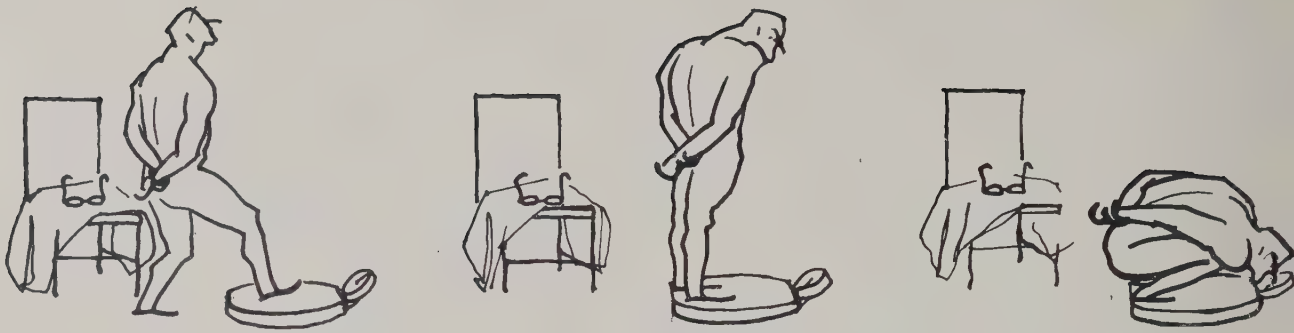
He dreamed of where the Niger sings
Through walls of silent stone
To where Nokoja's fabled kings
Sat on the ivory throne
And in the normal course of things
He had to clean his own.

And still the white man's near-white hands
Worked on in white man's style
To shine the black man's night-black shoes:
And once in every while
The black man smiled upon the white,
Who answered with a smile,

Until the job was done; and then,
Alert but still serene,
He went from what he saw in dreams
To where he should have been,
Shining and black at both extremes
And splendid in between.

— P. M. HUBBARD





DYSPEPSIA

AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE

By Ronald Knox-Mawer

"Baked yowl, fried in gung," said His Excellency. "I trust you like our native food?"

"Oh yes, sir," I growled, my teeth locked in the gung. It was my first visit to Government House.

"Can't understand Colonial Officers serving here in Africa who eat only eggs and chips," he snapped.

A sauce bowl was lowered past my ear. "Don't be afraid of it young man," called HE, as the bearer swamped my plate in green foam. "It's a local relish, very palatable."

There was a rattling at my side. It came from the throat of a fellow guest who had just tasted the relish. Kindly servants soon helped him from the table.

I bit savagely into a slice of yowl. "Settling down here?" inquired the ADC, as I clutched my napkin. "More or less," I replied through my tears.

"Try the salad," cried the Governor. "Tropical nettles," confided the ADC too late.

"English wives with their baked custards, they lost us India," declared His Excellency. "There's no colour bar where we all eat the same food."

The Governor signalled and six servants filed out on to the lawn. They carried trowels. "Just digging out the earth ovens," he explained. The servants began work, engulfed in flame. Smoke filled the dining-room.

"Excellent," approved the Governor, "the meat will be well done."

"So delightfully British," remarked the American

wife of a visiting bishop. The bishop choked discreetly into his handkerchief. "I just loved that yowl," said his wife, through the haze.

Outside, excavations were proceeding briskly. The six bearers padded back inside. They carried a tureen emblazoned with the royal coat of arms. There was a flash as the Governor uncovered the tureen. He beamed over the molten black flesh. "Now, you roll the meat into a ball with the thumb and forefinger thus." He demonstrated. We rolled our meat balls on the Wedgwood dinner service.

"There's jolly well no lack of vitamins in this, sir," said a visiting anthropologist, between spasms.

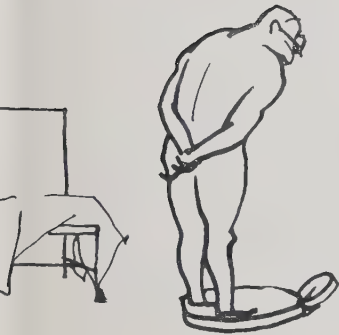
"That's why the people in these parts were never cannibals," replied His Excellency.

The native band on the terrace was playing selections from *Salad Days*. "Ever see the show?" asked the ADC. "No," I muttered, slipping another lump of yowl upon the ledge under the table.

"Have a glass of root cup," said His Excellency. "I'll stick to the solids if you don't mind, sir," I demurred, stabbing another forkful of grey sludge.

"I suppose one gets to like these exotic dishes," I murmured to my neighbour, the District Commissioner. "Never," he sighed, in silent mastication, "but I don't want to lose my job."

"A remarkable fruit," proclaimed the Governor, as we began the dessert. "Just eat the pips, leave the rest," he warned, "it's poisonous. You'll find the pips simply delicious, but do first scrape them clean." We got through the fruit with only one



casualty, a bearded Sikh at the end of the table, who proved a careless scraper.

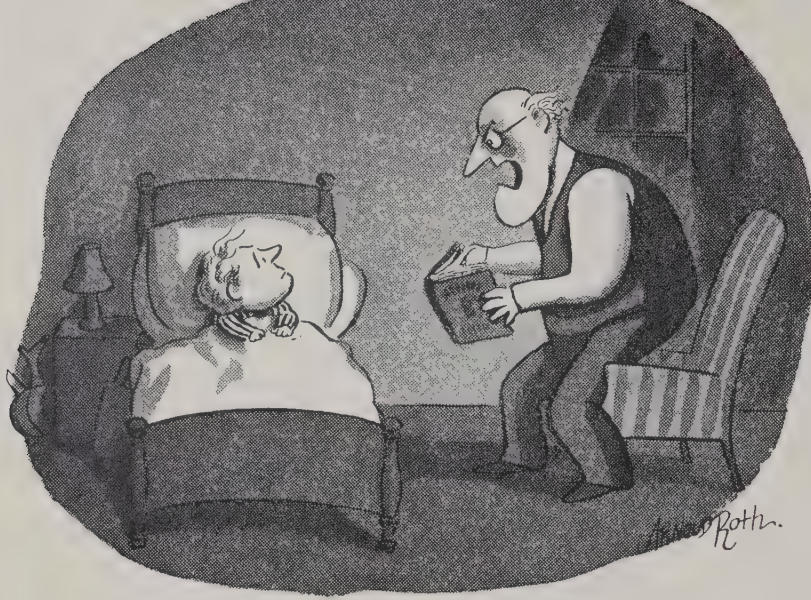
"Ladies and Gentleman, the Queen," boomed the Governor, above the sound of my hiccups. He took me by surprise. I was hunched over my finger-bowl, drinking water from the wrong side. "Such a cute way to drink the loyal toast," cried the bishop's wife admiringly.

The ladies hurried away. "Gather round, gentlemen," commanded the Governor. We formed a flatulent circle about him. "Did you know the natives here smoke their own version of the hookah?" he said with pride. His Excellency indicated a pile of bladders and bamboo-piping at his feet. The bladders gurgled sullenly. "Don't inhale too much," he cautioned, passing the mouthpiece to the bishop. "Very fragrant," gasped the bishop, ashen faced.

By now the meat balls concealed up my sleeve were causing discomfort. I lifted a furtive arm, and tried shaking them down my shirt. "Not feeling too fit?" inquired the District Commissioner. He slipped me a fistful of pills under the tablecloth. "Livingstone Rousers," he advised, "vegetable pills. I never go on safari without 'em."

A dusky choir began to sing for us under the candelabra. The Governor unstopped a decanter. "Try our mangrove brandy," he urged, savouring the bouquet. "They brew it in the swamp, you know." We held back, appalled by its malicious orange colour. The Governor drank steadily. At last he spoke. "Shall we join the ladies?" he said.

We helped each other on to the terrace. I searched Government House for an empty bathroom but all nine were occupied. When I returned the stronger guests had begun to leave. The Governor shook my hand. "Just a minute, young man," he said, while a bearer stowed a covered basket in the boot of my car. "HE never sends a new officer away without a little gift," whispered the ADC. "What's in it?" I asked, deeply touched. "Only two dozen yowl and a bag of gung," smiled the ADC as I ricocheted away.



“Who the hell do you think you are
with your ‘Don’t like Winnie the Pooh’?”

TO EACH HER OWN

By Catherine Drinkwater

“Will our entry into the Common Market mean more French and Italian men coming here to work? And if so why are we still dithering about?” The question is not mine, it was put, in clear girlish tones, to the panel of a rural brains trust that I recently attended. Looking about the audience I could see that an injection of fresh talent was needed urgently. My only hope is that if and when it comes the questioner doesn’t let herself in for a life of hard labour on the strength of a broken accent and a couple of Neapolitan love songs. I can’t speak for Frenchmen but on Italian men I speak with authority for I have seen them *en famille*, and that’s enough to put a frost on the warmest entente. I’ve seen them, clutching their briefcases full of artichoke sandwiches, like Ministers without Portfolios. Chatting up the bus loads of gullible maidens from Inghilterra, the sun glinting on their brown patent winklepickers that downtrodden female relations have patiently polished with the top off the milk. If it wasn’t for his mother and sister the average Adonis would never wriggle into his suit. Who do you think pulls their feet through those chic striped pantalonis? It takes a practised hand to get a size nine foot through the eye of a needle.

Assunta’s cousin wore trousers so tight that his blood was cut off from the knees every time he sat down. That’s why they’re always stalking about the piazzas like restless tigers; they’ve got to keep on the move in case gangrene sets in.

Then there’s their health; all those virile Romans are into long underwear by the first of October. Apart from the national disease of *mal di fegato*, which is the liver’s retaliation against a steady deluge of olive oil, one has to keep a stock of camomile tea for their night starvation. Cloves to plug the teeth they’re afraid to have out. Embrocation for their chests, and an evil-smelling liquid for throats relaxed after hours of bellowing “Mamma.”

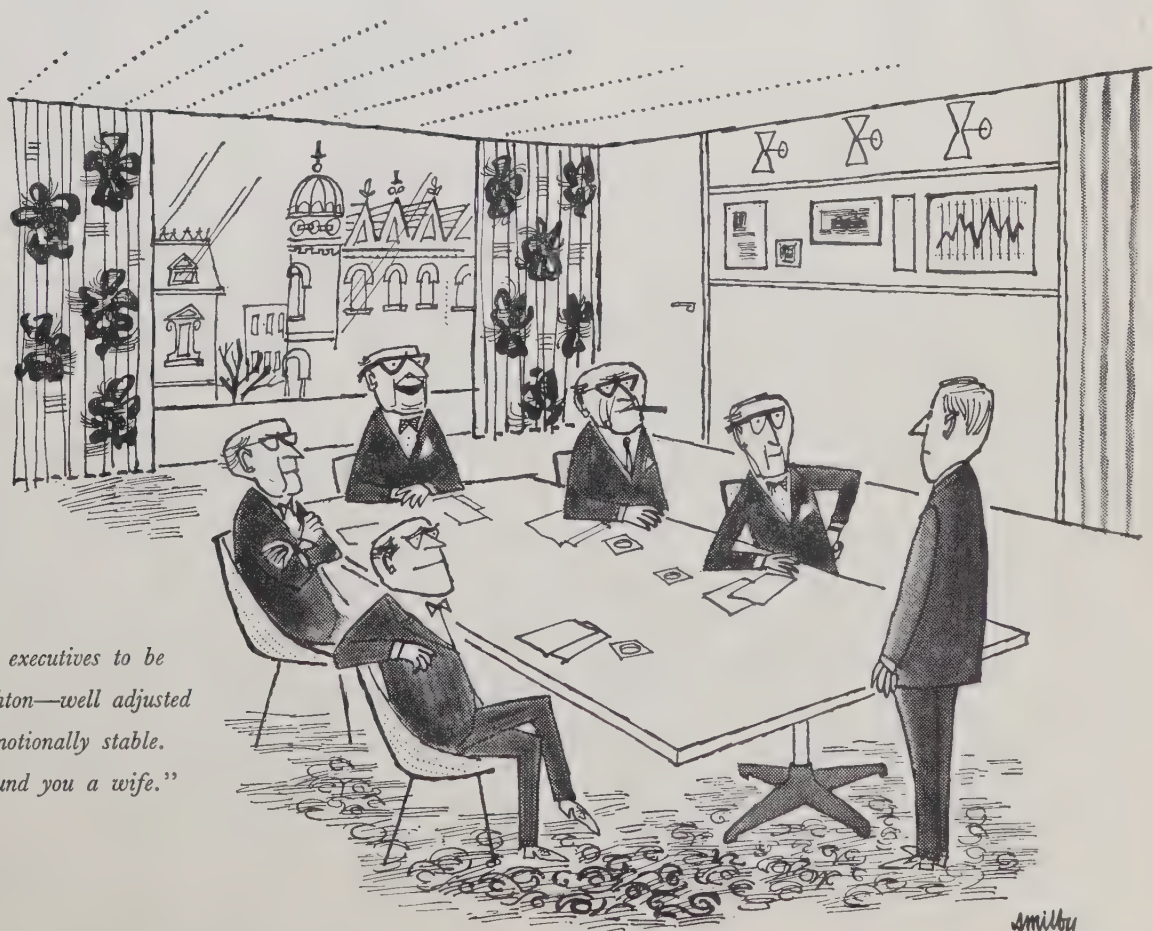
When Assunta’s brother got his call-up papers, black gloom descended on us. For months I had been inciting a spirit of rebellion amongst his female dependents, now overnight all was lost. Small, sodden handkerchiefs dotted the flat and his mother could scarcely see to tie up his shoe laces. For three weeks relations from as far afield as Palermo and Florence came to make their last farewells. In rebuke for my callous levity he warned me that rumour had it he was bound for the colonies. His grandmother overheard and by the time she’d finished calling on heaven everyone in the palazzo knew. Neighbours wept, someone gave him a mosquito net and a policeman’s topee and nobody spoke to me all day. Finally he went, covered with holy medals, weighed down with food, and strangled with embraces. He went to Milan, and by the end of a month they’d invalidated him out, all six foot and twelve stone of him, with a suspected touch of pleurisy. From then on his mother bought the embrocation wholesale, and emancipation died the death. In Italy it’s the men that get the vapours and stagger off to bed with vinegar-soaked cloths on their brow and barely enough strength to kick the cat from under them.

In their secret souls their attitude to women has a

strong affinity with their attitude towards the more useful domestic animals, and the farther south one travels the stronger and less secret it becomes. In Sicily, Sardinia and the Boot, the male population gladly absorbed the ways of the Turkish invaders towards women and show few signs of ever throwing them off. Last year I got to know a Sicilian married to a wealthy farmer who lived just outside Rome. He was on the far side of fifty and they lived with his two acid drops of sisters. The girl was a pretty creature who moved through life with the zest of an undertaker's mute and one cannot deny there seemed little in her life to liven up for. Her father having died she had passed to her elderly brother and during his military service he visited Rome and became acquainted with the farmer, who mentioned his inclination towards marriage. From there on everything went like smoke. The girl's picture was shown, the bridegroom's business assets gone into and she came up to Rome on approval—one way only. Within three months they were married. It was like a great dollop of Ibsen, but Assunta assured me that if the girl had been rash enough to slope off with someone more to her liking her brother would have been honour bound to rub the lucky lad out; this would lead to retaliation from his family and that's how

vendettas are born. If you feel such carryings on are unlikely remember these were the districts that gave us Al Capone and Lucky Luciano. Still we mustn't look on the darker side though I would here warn those who hope that foreign influence may dilute our own peculiar brand of class distinction that Italy is barely a status symbol behind us. Anxiously they hoist themselves up by their deep freezers, washing machines and cars, to the pinnacle of a cottage by the sea. They have top snob names (Patrizia is one) and they yearn to speak like radio announcers. It's all very disheartening.

Yet life is not all hard reality for the Italians are dab hands at boosting the female ego. A trifle too ready with their pinching and prodding maybe but only in Rome has a workman carrying a lavatory pan on his head troubled to weave his unselfconscious way through a crowded pavement just to whisper "Bella" into my ear. It was a delightful moment, recalling aptly enough a time when crossing the Bristol Channel on the Cardiff-to-Weston steamer an ardent young Welshman, overcome by the moonlight on the water, clutching wildly about him for inspiration, cried "You look just like an advert for Bile Beans." Truly each one has his own approach and exchange is no robbery.



"We like our executives to be integrated persons, Cleighton—well adjusted and emotionally stable. We've found you a wife."

smilby

Democratic Discipline

NORMAL SERVICE WILL BE RESUMED

By H. F. Ellis



We have a great reputation in this country for not having revolutions. Industrial and social revolutions there have been, but the last proper affair, free from debilitating adjectives, was in 1688; and that is generally regarded as something so out of the way that historians refer to it simply as The Revolution. Still, nothing lasts for ever. Already there seems to be a fairly widespread disposition to look upon both the main political parties as stale, tedious and bankrupt of ideas; and since they will never radically reorient still less disperse themselves of their own volition, the time may come within the next century or so for what must be known as The Second Revolution.

We must see to it that when it comes it is handled with a quiet efficiency and decorum that will be an example to the world.

All modern revolutions begin with an announcement over the radio. The one in Argentina a few days ago was broadcast during a performance of Verdi's *Forza del Destino*, the announcement being followed according to protocol by military marches. The public was advised to remain quiet. Further announcements would be made in due course. All this may seem simple enough: something that we can take in our stride when the time arrives, and hardly worth the bother of a rehearsal. The number of military marches in the BBC's archives is believed to be equal to the most prolonged emergency. Not, then, to worry.

This is too superficial a view. Consider first the phrase "over the radio,"

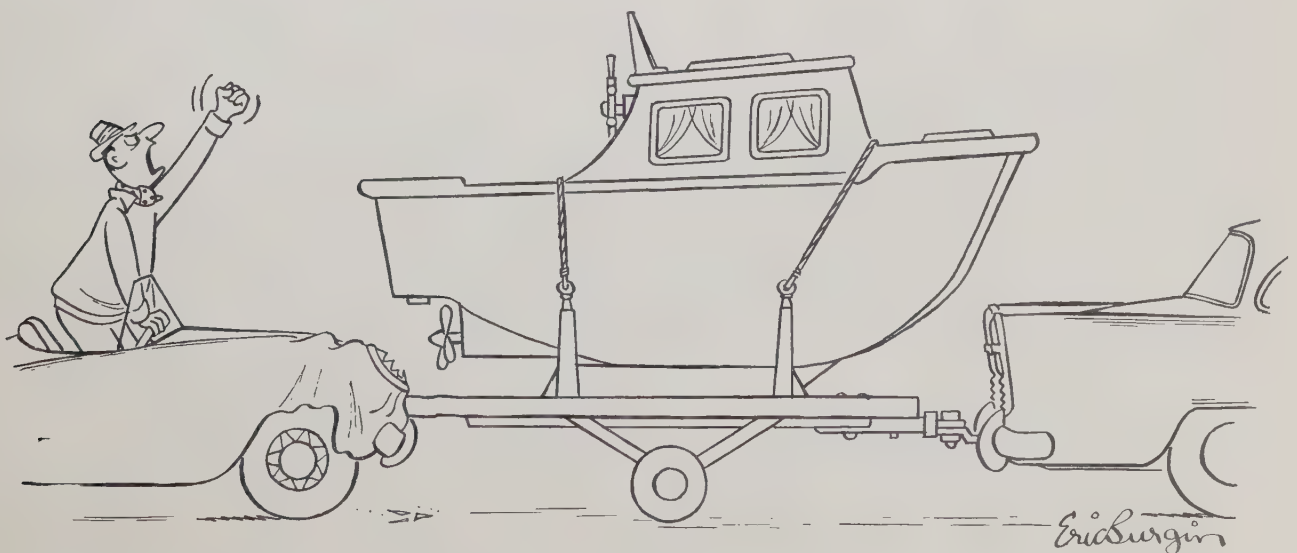
which looks so well in a *Times* report from Algiers or Teheran or Buenos Aires. What exactly would it mean here? In the old days, yes, when the radio was the wireless and the nation was at anyone's beck and call for the nine o'clock news, a revolutionary could count on getting his message over to a representative gathering. Even those of the family who were upstairs would be summoned post-haste before the announcement was fairly begun. "Come quick, Dad. Somebody's dead or it's a war or something" would be the cry, as soon as Mr. John Snagge's introductory tones were heard, and a near hundred-per-cent audience would be guaranteed before Mr. Michael Foot or Lord Hinchingsbrooke was fairly launched on his statement that the GPO, the Metropolitan Water Board and all power stations south of the Thames were already in his hands. But that opportunity has been lost for good. To-day, a revolution announced "over the radio" would scarcely rate a critical notice in the next morning's newspapers.

Well, naturally, the revolutionary junta would make it their business to seize the Television Centre first of all, in order to capture the vast viewing public.

If *that* is to be the solution, we are up against a very different kettle of fish. It is one thing to hear a disembodied voice announcing that Mr. Clore has taken over the Houses of Parliament and will be speaking to the nation in one and a half minutes; quite another to have the new leader precipitated suddenly on to the screen, perhaps with his nose torn sideways by a passing aeroplane. Would Mr. Butler or Mr. Cousins* consent to use make-up? And what, more importantly, of the timing? At what precise point is the advertised programme to be interrupted by the first *coup d'état* for three hundred years, followed by military marches?

Ideally, the announcement should be made simultaneously on all channels (which in itself calls for quite a bit of transmitter-seizing up and down the country), but there is the difficulty that a natural break on Channel Nine may be anything but that on Channel One. Revolutions, it must never be forgotten, have to count in the long run on popular support. Any would-be leader of this country who breaks in with a roll of drums on an operation in *Emergency Ward 10* is doomed. Half the nation would at once ring up to complain—a thing that never seems to happen in South America or the Middle East—and the revolution would be off to a hopelessly bad start. The problem is a ticklish one, but it has

*All revolutionary leaders mentioned in this article are imaginary and in no way suggest that any person of the same name is, or is thought to be, contemplating a *coup d'état* or *de main*. Mr. John Snagge, however, is a real person, who used to row.



“. . . and all who sail in her !”

to be faced. Either you interrupt a low-appeal programme, thus giving the minimum offence to a very small audience, or you crash in at a peak viewing time and risk achieving the top rating among Britain's Best-hated Men.

So grave are these difficulties, in a country unaccustomed to political broadcasts except at advertised times, that it may be necessary to sacrifice the advantages of simultaneity, and indeed instantaneity, and let the news seep into rather than burst upon the community. There is much to be said for leaving Channel One alone in the early stages and making use of Natural Breaks only. This is the only way that occurs to me of combining a maximum audience with minimum resentment. Conceivably, to avoid alarm or panic, the announcement could be presented in the form of a series of short commercials. I should not myself object to a chorus of male voices singing

The man for Men

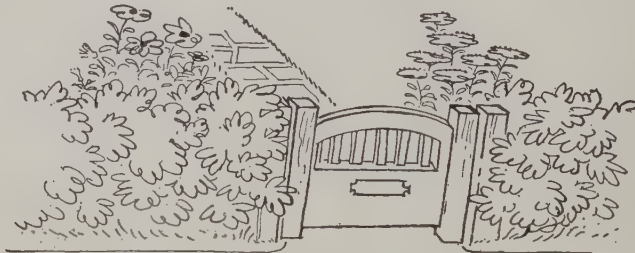
Is Wedgwood Benn

followed by thirty seconds of military march and then the name repeated in a conclusive staccato accent

Wedgwood Benn!

This would soften the viewers up, especially if accompanied by pictures of running water ("Cool as a mountain stream in an emergency"), and they would be ready, after a half-hour Western, for the next hint of big things in the wind—perhaps a scene of a housewife registering relief from worry as the new leader takes over one of the South-Eastern Gas Board depots.

But it is not my job to solve the problems, only to suggest that we ought to give this matter of revolution presentation "over the radio" a little thought. And we ought to do it now—before the wind of change changes.



*"Thirty-eight bust, same waist as mine—
who is she?"*



"Think, man, THINK!"



MISLEADING CASES

REGINA v. STROOL

By A. P. Herbert

At the Old Bailey to-day, before Mr. Justice Grail, Sir Luke Lintel, QC, opened the case for the defence in the sensational trial for bigamy of Reginald Strool, 43, commercial traveller. There were many dramatic exchanges between Court and counsel.

SIR LUKE: My Lord, the fact is my unfortunate client has a schizoid condition.

THE COURT: A what, Sir Luke?

SIR LUKE: Schizophrenia, my Lord.

THE COURT: You don't have to shout, Sir Luke.

I can hear you clearly—when you use clear language. You mean a split mind?

SIR LUKE: Yes, my Lord.

THE COURT: But don't we all?

SIR LUKE: My Lord?

THE COURT: One morning I travel to court with the

keenest interest and zest. The next I detest the thought of administering justice, and would much prefer to stay at home.

SIR LUKE: Yes, my Lord, but on the second day you do in fact attend the court and discharge your duties. Your responsibility is unimpaired. The prisoner's sense of duty, as will be shown in evidence, has dwindled to the verge of disappearance; and therefore he is not accountable for his actions.

THE COURT: I could easily allow my sense of duty to dwindle.

SIR LUKE: With great respect, my Lord, I doubt it. Your Lordship's case-history, I dare to hope, is very different. When the prisoner was nine, my Lord, his father locked him in a dark cupboard for three-quarters of an hour.

THE COURT: Good gracious! What was the offence?

SIR LUKE: Putting the cat in the coal-box.

THE COURT: Ha! "The punishment fits the crime."

SIR LUKE: Maybe, my Lord, but it was a traumatic experience which, as you will hear from the medical evidence, was of lasting effect. My Lord, the prisoner's ambivalent relations with his father led to a fixation on the mother, who took his part.

THE COURT: You mean he was fond of Mum? Very proper. So am I.

SIR LUKE: It is not quite so simple as that. My Lord, you may have heard of the Oedipus complex?

THE COURT: I have. I seem to remember that Oedipus, when he heard the bad news, put out his own eyes. Does your client ever feel impelled to do that?

SIR LUKE: Not so far as is known, my Lord.

THE COURT: Very well. But in 1956 this man married Lily Somebody and in 1958 he married Henrietta Somebody Else. What has Oedipus to do with that?

SIR LUKE: My Lord, there was a psychosomatic lesion—

"Your supper's in the oven. Walter Gabriel has straightened things out with Ned, but Ena Sharples suspects that Elsie Tanner . . ."



THE COURT: Caused by the cupboard?

SIR LUKE: Yes, my Lord—and other episodes—a deep-seated lesion. And the result, in a sense, I am instructed is that every woman stands in place of the mother. He feels the need for comfort and protection. All women are mother-surrogates.

THE COURT: Yes, yes, but he can't marry them all. Doesn't he know that it's wrong to marry two women?

SIR LUKE: Yes—and no, my Lord. Psychodynamically no. My Lord, as the evidence will show, before he married Henrietta something told him that it was wrong. But forces that he was quite unable to resist impelled, indeed, compelled him to go through with it.

THE COURT: What forces?

SIR LUKE: First, there was the transferred son-to-mother urge which I mentioned before—a trend to the female, *gynaecophilia*, my Lord.

THE COURT: Oh, yes, I remember that.

SIR LUKE: Secondly, my Lord, when at school, the prisoner was regarded as effeminate by his companions, a "sissy," my Lord, in schoolboy language. His first marriage was, no doubt, a psychical response to the challenge, a subconscious expression of the schoolboy's retort of triumph, my Lord, "Sucks to you." But it was insufficient: remnants of the old guilt-anxiety and inferiority-feeling subsisted, and these reinforced the urge to marry again.

THE COURT: My sacred aunt!

SIR LUKE: I beg your pardon, my Lord?

THE COURT: Nothing. Proceed.

SIR LUKE: If your Lordship pleases. Thirdly, my Lord, my client suffers from indelible delusions. He believes that he has lived before—a very common form of mental maladjustment.

THE COURT: Oh, yes, I knew a charming old gentleman who was convinced that he had been Lord Nelson.

SIR LUKE: Very apt, my Lord. But in this case there is a novel feature. The prisoner has been not one but many persons; and these persons belong to two distinct homogeneous categories, which are diametrically opposed in character. Sometimes, my Lord, he is Lord Byron or Casanova. At others he is Mr. Gladstone—

THE COURT: Poor chap.

SIR LUKE:—George Washington, St. Francis of Assisi, and others. On every important occasion, he says, he can hear the two sides debating in his brain what his conduct ought to be: and if, for example, Lord Byron triumphs in a dispute with Mr. Gladstone it is physically impossible for him to resist Lord Byron's advice.

THE COURT: You are doing very well, Sir Luke.

But would not all this come better from the prisoner?

SIR LUKE: My Lord, the medical evidence will fully support what I have said. But I do not propose to put my client in the box.

THE COURT: Oh? Well, no doubt you know best.

SIR LUKE: My Lord, the reason is very simple.

My client, it is clear, is possessed of two distinct personalities. One of these, in common parlance, has a better "character" than the other. One, that is, is more likely to adhere strictly to the truth than the other. But, my Lord, no one can tell—certainly not my client—which of those two, at any given moment, is likely to be dominant. Indeed, the evidence suggests that at times they change places on the stage, at very short intervals. I should not therefore care to take the risk of putting in the box a witness who might well be capable, though without wrongful intent, of erroneous testimony.

THE COURT: Very well. What are your client's relations with his wives?

SIR LUKE: Significantly ambivalent, my Lord.

THE COURT: What is the meaning of that pestilent word?

SIR LUKE: "Having two values," my Lord, like a pink gin at the "Crown and Anchor" and a pink gin at the Savoy Hotel. In the field of mental therapy it was used by the famous Swiss psychiatrist Bleuler to designate alternate feelings of love and hate for the same person. Stekel preferred the term "bipolarity." My Lord, one day the prisoner is buying flowers for Lily's birthday, the next he may be bitterly abusing her: one day, with Henrietta, he is dutifully washing-up, the next he smashes the crockery. Fortunately, because of his occupation, he is seldom in the same house for many days. Lily is established in the South of England, Henrietta in the North. It often happens, my Lord, that a period of hate for Henrietta coincides with one of love for Lily, and vice versa. So, in practice, at least, the happiness of the two wives is well served by the present arrangements. But here again the bilateral pattern of the personality is exhibited. Call Dr. Frogg.

DR. SILAS FROGG said: I have examined the prisoner in his cell on sixteen occasions. It is a classic case of phrenetic fission. There is a multiple psychosis, my Lord, precipitated by cumulative traumata — father-repugnance — mother-imago, transferred—derision reaction—and bifocal hallucination. My Lord, under the Word Association Test—

THE COURT: What is that?

DR. FROGG: The patient is asked to give the first spontaneous thought associated with a particular



"Do you think we will ever be able to afford to live the way we do?"

stimulus-word. The answers are often revealing to the trained inquirer. But this man invariably gave *two* answers instead of one, a symptom-expression of a cleavage even at the subconscious level. To the word "mother," for example, he replied "love" and "cow," to the word "wife" "one" and "two"—

THE COURT: You say, Doctor, that the prisoner has two personalities?

DR. FROGG: Yes, my Lord. There is a psychocerebral caesura, a bisection of the ego, a—

THE COURT: And therefore he is entitled to have two wives?

DR. FROGG: I do not say that, my Lord. But he has, I am sure, a dominating delusion fantasy that he is.

THE COURT: I have an irresistible luncheon fantasy.

The court will adjourn—for two or three days.

The hearing was adjourned.

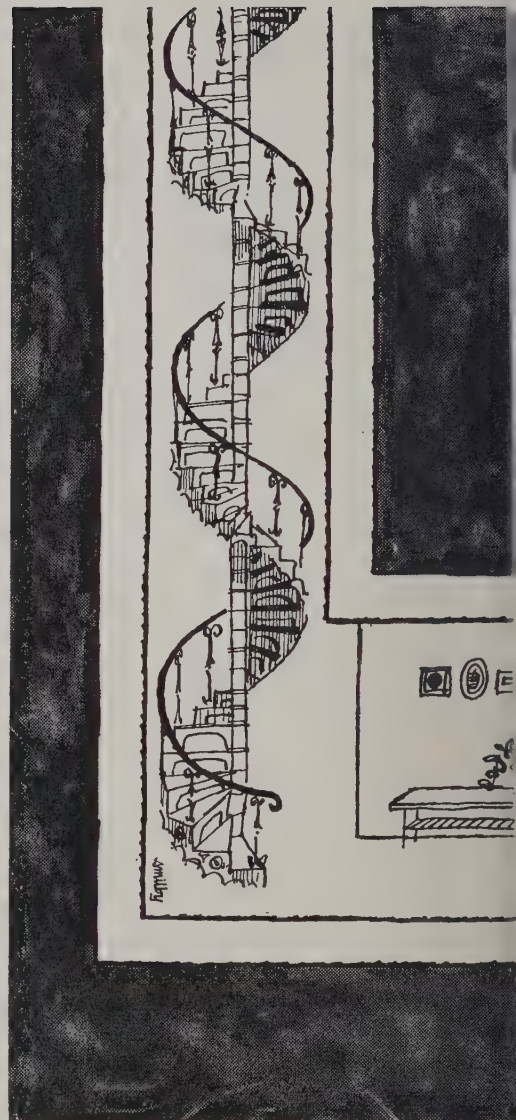
Fallout Shelters Can be Fun

No matter how grim the reason for its coming into being, there is no reason why you should not fit out your shelter according to the established traditions of gracious living.

Here is a genuinely liveable deep shelter for modern people who care about the better things in life. It was designed by Sir Cyril Sconce for Sir Francis and Lady Butteridge, and is to be installed in the grounds of their country place, Duckingham Hall. Jocelyn Bothways has done the interior decoration, and although we cannot perhaps all spread ourselves quite to the extent that he has, nevertheless there are many ideas in his plan that can be used in shelters of rather more modest ambitions.

Sir Cyril chose heavy reinforced concrete for the outer shell, both as being the toughest material available for resisting blast and also as a suitable medium for deploying the soft pastel colours chosen in collaboration with Mr. Bothways for the inside walls. A two-storey open-gallery design was decided on, in order to avoid the feeling of claustrophobia that could be induced by too low a roof in a building from which the inhabitants might not be able to emerge for a period of several weeks.

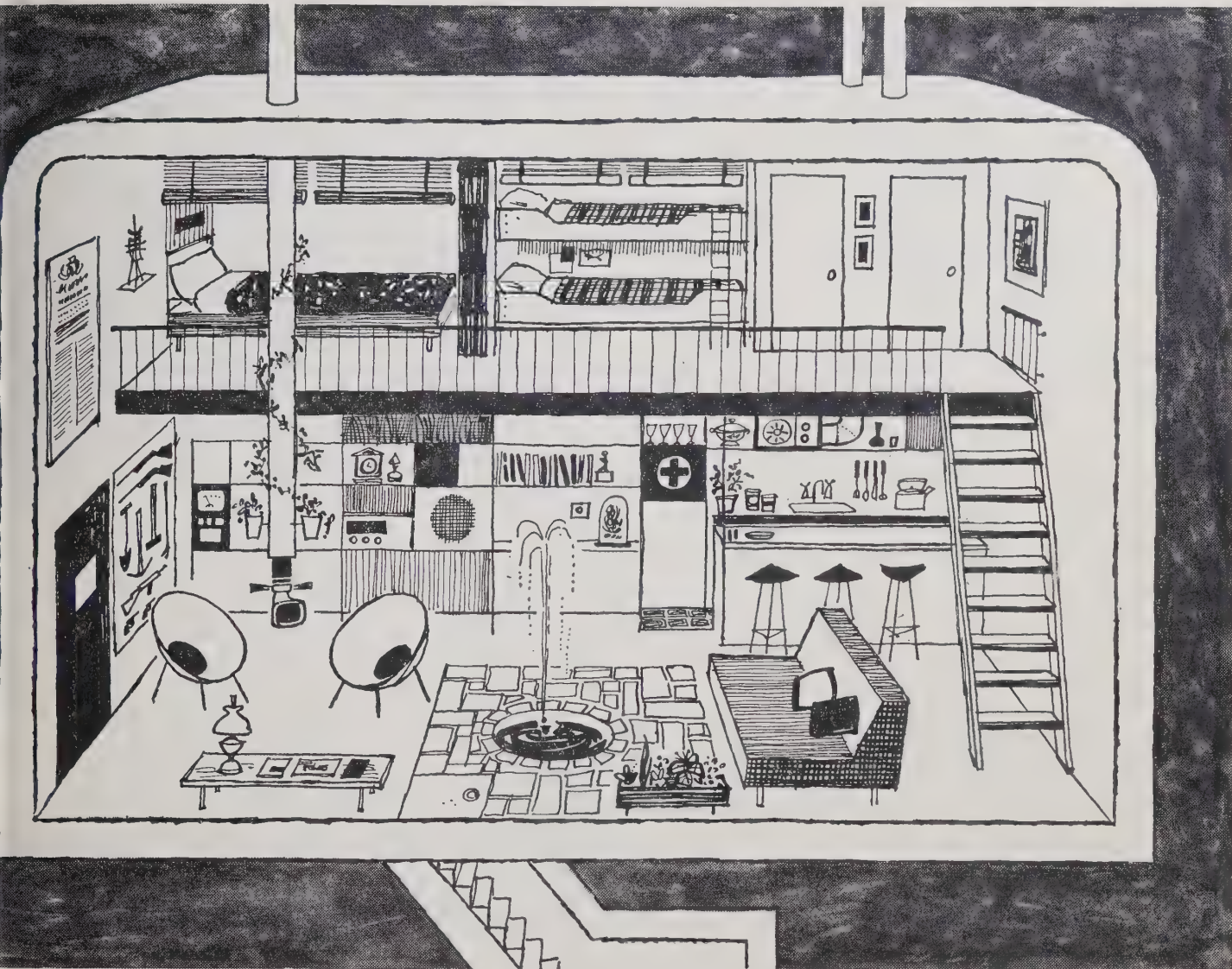
A charming feature is the external entrance and exit shaft, terminating at



ground level in an antique “folly” planted with appropriate shrubs. It is hoped to include among the foliage some quick-growing varieties which will indicate the presence of any residual radioactivity by putting out mutations.

An air of spaciousness uncommon in deep shelters is achieved by the use of a paved patio in the middle of the floor. Worth noting is the inclusion of a “play area” on the gallery level of the shelter, where Lady Butteridge’s two children Aidan, 7, and Barney, 5, can play while the “grown-ups” devote themselves to the sterner side of living down stairs.

Sir Francis insisted that, fallout or no fallout, there should be an adequate wine-cellar, and Sir Cyril has most ingeniously combined this with an emergency exit. In next month’s issue, Sir Francis writes on stocking a cellar for nuclear warfare.



DATA

Left
The prefabricated ruins used to soften the impact of the shelter-entrance are built up of Crowther's "Period" Ruin Units. They are light and easy to assemble, yet strong enough to resist the blast of a 50-megaton bomb at twenty miles' distance.

Among the shrubs chosen to "landscape" the entrance are *Alchemilla mollis*, *Iris pallida dalmatica*, *Helleborus corsicus* and *Rhododendron* Mrs. P. D. Williams. From The Armageddon Nursery, Aldershot.

Above
The decorated Victorian cast-iron staircase in the main entry-shaft was found in a demolition contractor's yard in Sidcup, in almost mint condition.

The "indicator pot-plant" for showing radioactivity in the outside lobby is a specially quick-growing variety of *Mind-your-own-business*. From Nuclear Shrubberies, Ltd., Wisley.

The heavy steel main door with flush-fitting blastproof crystal spyhole is painted Fireball Red.*

The small Reg Butler figure on the ledge beside the master bed-compartment is a maquette for his "Unknown Nuclear Victim" to be erected in Trafalgar Square.

The left-hand of the two identical doors (painted Mushroom Grey*) opens into a store-compartment containing supplies of non-radioactive milk and water, and also housing the batteries which power the lights, cooker, central heating, fountain and electronic apparatus.

Through the right-hand door is the bathroom, equipped with bath and basin of shatterproof vitreous china in Lichen Green.* From John Moulding & Co., Ltd.

The sink is equipped with a removable cover in South African stinkwood which converts it into a serviceable bar. From Megafun Ltd. Bar-stools from Festival of Britain, Ltd.

The air-filter (by Deepdown Air-filters, Ltd.) is mounted inconspicuously above the sink and will recirculate used air in the shelter if tests show that the air outside contains a dangerously high concentration of radioactive isotopes.

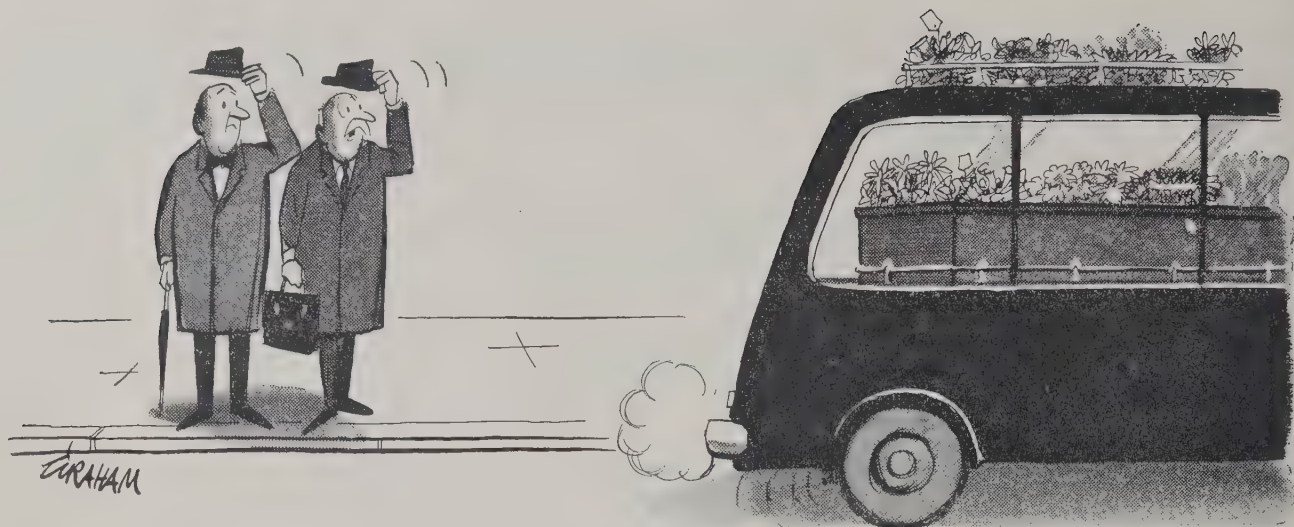
The eight-foot settee is upholstered in foam rubber and covered with Blue Steel* velvet (Feebles Ltd., 55s. per yard). It has been specially designed by Arne Conreames of UNO Furnishings not to be convertible into a bed, in order to discourage unwanted visitors to the shelter.

"Closed-circuit" high-fidelity radio equipment is provided (Skye Radio, Ltd.) so that if the BBC goes off the air, the family can still tune in to programmes broadcast on their own transmitter and so avoid the risk of panic.

The Danish teak-mounted periscope has been given an opening of reassuringly familiar aspect. It comes from Finpar, Ltd. The climbing plants are *Hedera helix aureo-variegata*, from Nuclear Shrubberies, Ltd.

*Shelter and Garden colour.

"Fell down the shaft of his survival shelter, poor chap."



PREP-SCHOOL RUNE

By Richard Usborne

At my prep-school forty years ago, one of my contemporaries was called Potter. His boothole number was 38. He was always full of new notions. Or at least they were new to me and others of our year. Potter came back one term and said "Look, I can break my nose!" He put the fingers of both hands covering his nose, and gave it a twist. There was a sharp crack. Then he twisted it the other way, there was another sharp crack, and his nose was straight again.

Well, some time later I learnt that he made the crack noises with a thumbnail against his top teeth. He didn't reveal the trick first time, because Coates *mi*, who was next to me, fainted and had to be carried up to Matron. By the time he had come to, been given a Gregory Powder and been walked across to the San to await Dr. Angier, the spotlight had come off Potter. Dr. Angier couldn't find anything wrong with Coates *mi*, who was ashamed of himself for fainting about Potter's nose. Matron got a muddled account of what had made Coates *mi* slither to the floor, and she muttered something surly about kids showing off.

Then next term Potter had another good trick. He said he could cut his arm off. He pulled his coat sleeve right down over his left hand and then gave himself a hard biff on the left biceps with the edge of his right hand. Then, with his right hand, he proceeded (apparently) to pull his severed left arm out of its coat sleeve. It was very realistic. The trouble was that Potter and the rest of us had forgotten about Coates *mi*. He fainted again. This time Matron got in a bate and, pausing only to give Coates *mi* a Gregory Powder, reported Potter to the Head. He got four. Coates *mi* was very upset about this and, when his parents came down for Sports that term, and smuggled him in a jar of boiled sweets, he gave most of them to Potter. It was strictly forbidden for boys to have sweets sent or brought to them, and if boys acquired sweets, they had to

hand them in instantly to Matron. Coates *mi*, Potter, Curtis *mi* and myself were guzzing away at these sweets during a lecture (with slides) by an Old Boy on an Expedition to Spitzbergen, and a master behind us smelled liquorice in the dark. All four of us got two each.

Potter came back another term with a secret rune or battle-cry. He taught it to the other three of us to gabble off, word perfect. It went:

Shim sham shamadiddle

Alibub orang-tang

See-saw bumbo

Li-bo larry-bo

Riptic poptic Cairo.

Having learnt it, we didn't really know what to do with it. It was certainly going to be a rallying cry if any of us were set upon by Churchill, Pearson or their gang. I don't remember that we ever were set upon. Also I know that we four planned to meet on some date (forgotten) a number (forgotten) of years later at the bar of the Ritz Hotel (not forgotten. Chisholm's mother . . . the Chisholms were frightfully rich . . . stayed there and we saw a letter from her with the address printed), and identify ourselves in the crush with this cry.

That hasn't happened yet, and anyway Coates *mi* was killed in the War. He got a very good DSO and MC, so presumably he had grown out of his tendency to faint at the thought of physical damage. But Potter's secret rune produced one ludicrous result in 1941 well up to prep-school standards.

I was in Jerusalem, a jumped-up officer posted on some kind of Intelligence lark which I didn't understand. But I was under the guidance of another officer, Connon, who, I was led to believe, did know what we were supposed to be doing. But he was utterly mysterious about everything. I think he hoped, before the war was over, to have the outlines of an enemy fort tattooed on his thigh, or to swallow a secret paper, or at least to write an invisible message in lemon juice. But at this juncture he took me round in a car visiting Arab houses, safely behind the lines of the advancing Australian, Free French and other contingents who were liberating Syria from Vichy. Neither Connon nor I had a word of Arabic, and I had only my prep-school French. Connon talked (probably bad) French to these Arabs over cups of coffee, and often, when saying *Adieu* to them, added a throaty "*Courage!*"

We had to share a double room at the King David Hotel for several weeks, and we generally spent our evenings separately. Connon may have been going round saying "*Courage!*" to people in the dark. I went to the cinema, or played bridge at the house of Munir El Hour, the Palestine Police Captain. One bridge evening I brought along as a fourth an old prep-school friend, Latham (his boothole number had been 71), whom I'd run into in Jerusalem. For a

"Why couldn't they have built **these** houses on good agricultural land?"



Moslem household, it was a fairly alcoholic evening at Munir's, with a bottle of Bolonachi's Egyptian gin, and Latham and I talked a good deal of prep-school shop between hands. The subject of Potter came up, and I repeated Potter's rune or battle-cry. Latham hadn't heard it, was delighted with it, and asked me to write it out so that he could learn it. I did, and I thought I'd left the piece of paper with Latham at the end of the evening.

Not so. Six months or more later, after Connon and I had clocked out of the King David and gone our different ways, I met him again, outside Rustum Buildings in GHQ, Cairo. I was on my way home after the office. Connon told me he was flying back to England late that night. I took him off to dinner with me on the roof of the Continental.

Near the end of the meal, he said "Look, there's something I want to ask you." And he produced from his wallet the bit of paper on which I had written the Potter rune for Latham in Jerusalem those months back. Connon said "What *did* you mean? I could *not* work it out." I said "How did you get hold of this?" He said "I found it in my riding boot, where you'd put it." (Like many fantasist officers in "I" who had been sent to the Near East and had read the *Seven Pillars*, Connon had brought some riding boots out from England. He polished them frequently, but never, to my knowledge, wore them. They had stood under our clothes-hangers in the cupboard in our room at the King David.)

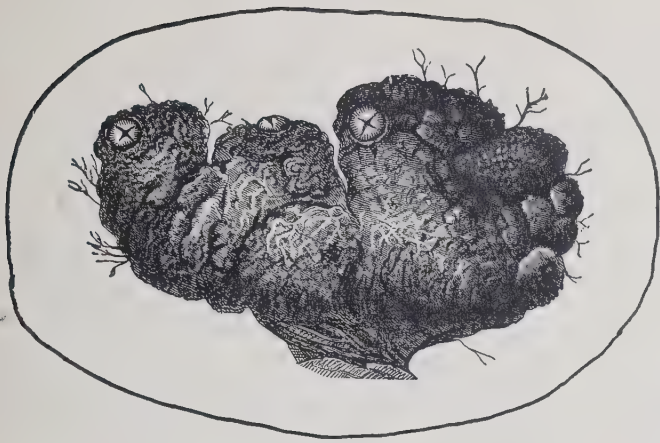
What must have happened was that I had scooped up the bit of paper after bridge at Munir's that evening, and that it had fallen out of a pocket in the cupboard and slipped into one of Connon's riding boots. What then *did* happen (I know, because Connon told me) was that he discovered the paper after our ways had separated, and he'd been quite sure it was a code message, from me to him, of great secrecy, urgency and importance. All he could rumble was the word "Cairo."

I tried to tell him what the (true) silly story was, but he obviously didn't truly believe me, and he drove off to Al Maza or Heliopolis or whatever it was, presumably thinking that the importance of this secret message had lapsed, and that I didn't want him to know what it was that I had been trying to tell him in Jerusalem.

Potter did good boffin work in the War. I hoped to find his name in Bernard Fergusson's book about Combined Ops, but it wasn't there. Potter had been an Inventions chap, mostly in Deception, but certainly connected with Mountbatten and Combined Ops at one stage. The man-made floating iceberg aerodrome idea wasn't his, but it might easily have been.

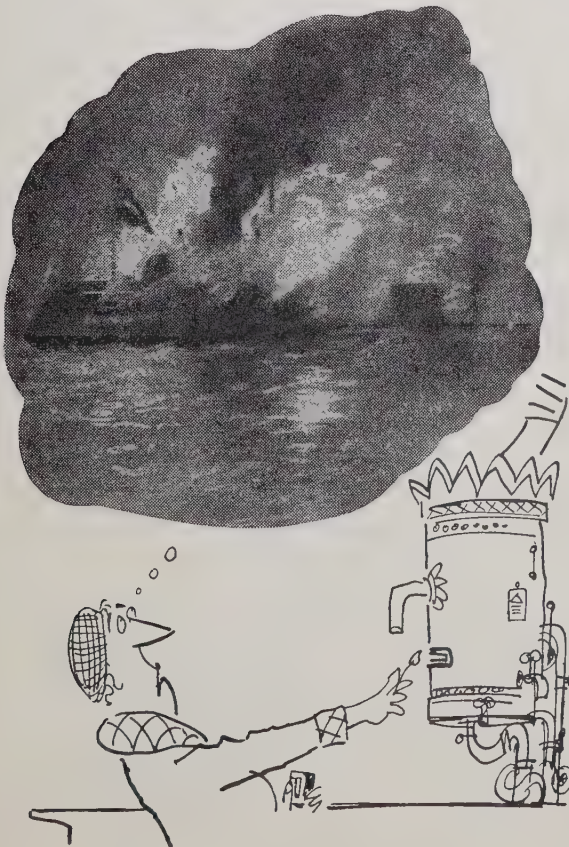


"I can't understand all this fuss over the loss of a few secrets. Surely we must have plenty more."

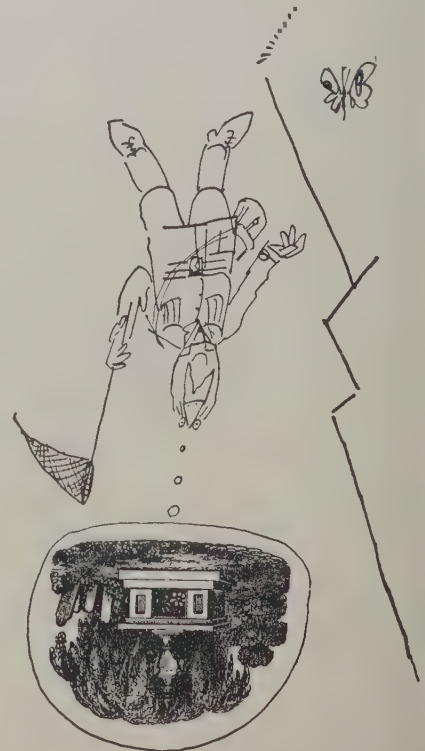
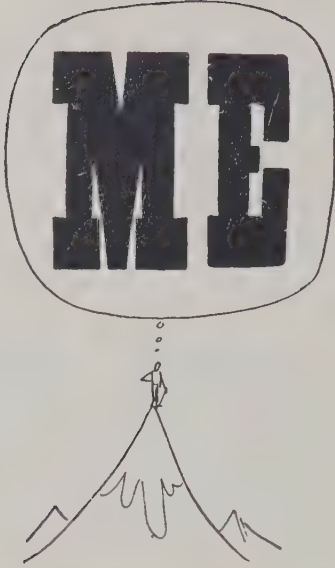


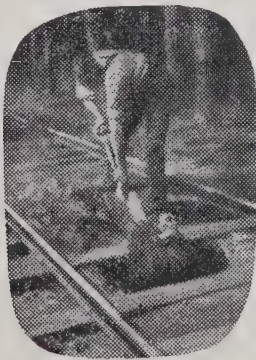
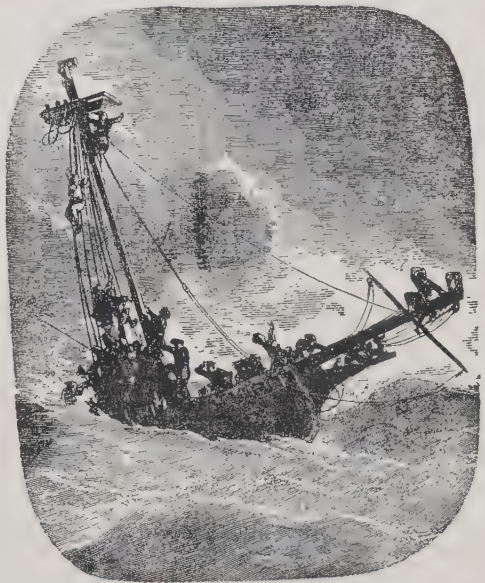
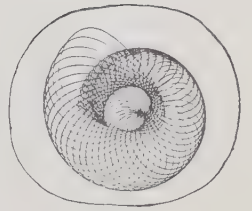
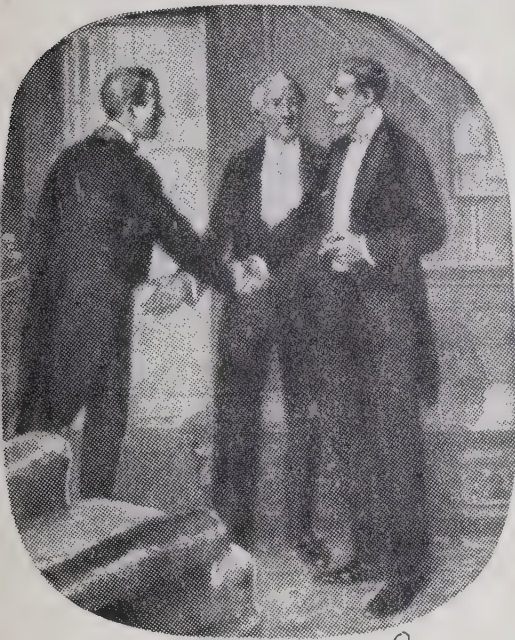
Mind's Eye

By F FOLKES



Mind's
Eye
—continued





DOCTOR IN MY LIFE

By Patrick Ryan

They've been getting at Enoch Powell in Parliament because 28 cases have been reported in the past two years of surgeons operating on the wrong patient or the wrong part of the body. It may assist him in his promised investigations to know that he can strike DNG 5210629 off the list. The medicine-men haven't had much chance to do me surgically wrong. I've never penetrated a hospital's defences deep enough to get within scalpel-range. I can't get past the outer guards of appointment-makers, card-writers, paper-checkers, wait-here nurses and you're-in-the-wrong-queue sisters. After three hours on the prison-bench with buttocks petrifying and no sign of reaching god-head I just give up and beat it to an osteopath for a quick twist, or to a herbalist for a box of garlic-and-charcoal pills. If they don't fix me up I watch *Emergency Ward 10* till some character turns up with my symptoms.

The healing artists, nevertheless, have worked their share of tangles in my ravelled skein. I was twelve when I suffered my first medical misfortune



"Then, one day, I thought 'Why not?' The monastic life seemed ideally suited to my reflective nature, my bald patch, and my bow legs."

in the waiting-room of Dr. Hayblow, physician-extraordinary to the Old Kent Road. I sat at the end of a line of regulars next to a man whose breath creaked like a leather door.

"I'm chronic," he said proudly. "Chronic. And what's more I got the neurasthena."

Uncertain whether the neurasthena was a bane or a benison, I smiled encouragingly.

"And what you done to your hand, son?"

"I cut it opening a tin of beetroot. And it's gone septic."

"Septic? Aaar . . . And have you got the red line?"

"I don't know. Where d'you get it?"

"Up the vein, of course. Blood poisoning. Let's have a look . . . Aaar . . . That don't look too clever. I reckon you got the red line starting down there."

All the regulars gathered round and gave their diagnoses. It was eleven for my having got the red line already and two not dead certain but I'd better watch out.

"What happens if you get the red line?" I asked in alarm.

"It creeps up the vein to your heart. Two inches a day the poison travels."

"And if they don't catch it before the elbow," said a fat lady with great satisfaction, "you have to have your arm off. If it gets to the elbow there's nothing the Good Lord himself can't do but amputate."

"Brother-in-law of mine 'ad 'and like that," moaned a man covered in calamine lotion. "Chisel slipped Wednesday. Septic, Thursday. Red line, Friday. Up his arm like a monkey after grapes. Sunday morning, 'alf after eleven, and our Gracie's a widow."

"Got to his aorta, that's what it did," nodded a bright-smiler in a feather boa. "Once it makes the heart the poison clogs up the valves and the aorta and all that. Pitiful death but mercifully swift."

Dr. Hayblow opened the surgery door.

"Next please."

"Me!" I cried. "I'm priority. I've got the dread red line."

I was off like a whippet and flung myself on the operating table with hand outstretched for the healing knife.

"Do me quick, doctor!" I begged. "Before it gets up the aorta."

"Get down off my desk," Hayblow said testily. "And keep your feet out of that card-index."

He called in three of the regulars to hold me down while he wiped the trail of beetroot-juice off my wrist and saved me from a fate worse than amputation.

The only doctor of whom I ever made an image in modelling clay for voodoo-perforation was the Judas



“—Quick! Will you marry me?”

who took one peep into my father’s mouth and refused to consider him for a postman until he’d had all his teeth out. That the mail might go through, my parent went to a shilling-a-pull dentist and sacrificed his every corroding tusk. When he presented himself again at the surgery, all gums and Gladys Morgan, that prescription-peddler completed the official examination and failed him for flat feet.

The physician with whom I became most intimate was the Irish locum who answered the call when I slipped a sprocket in my back and lay paralysed on a bed of pain. My wife was out when he came, having her hair done. The Angel Gabriel could come knocking at our door with a telegram saying “Doomsday” and she’d still keep her hair appointment.

“I did the same thing to my own back a year ago,” Seamus said, “and a colleague did a bit of manipulation and slipped it straight back for me. Put me right in a jiffy but I had to be careful about lifting things for a while . . . It’s an awful great body you have but I’ll see if I can’t do it on you.”

He arranged me in the posture of a prone praying-mantis, put one arm under my hips and the other round my right leg.

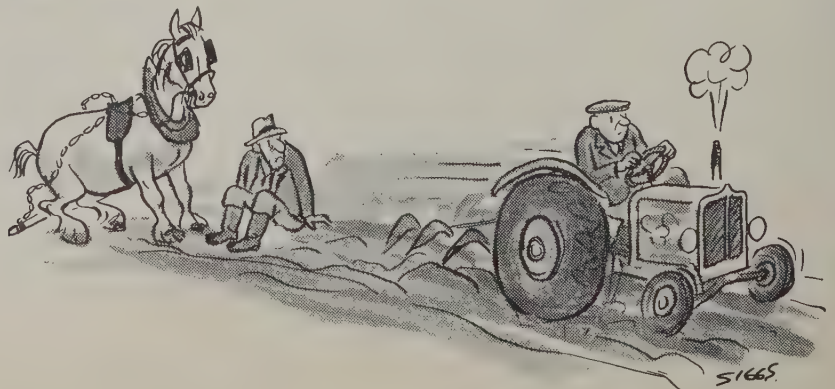
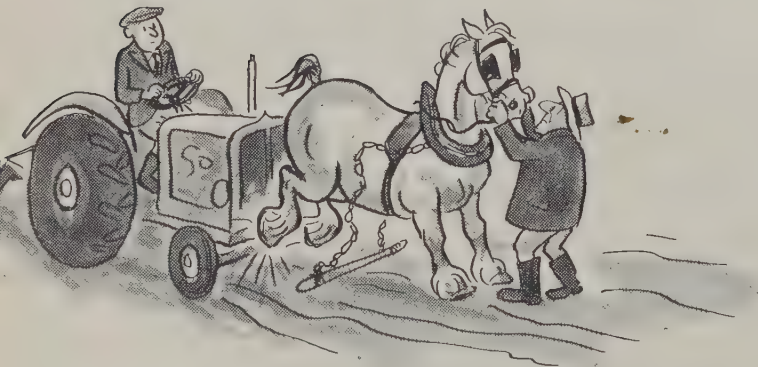
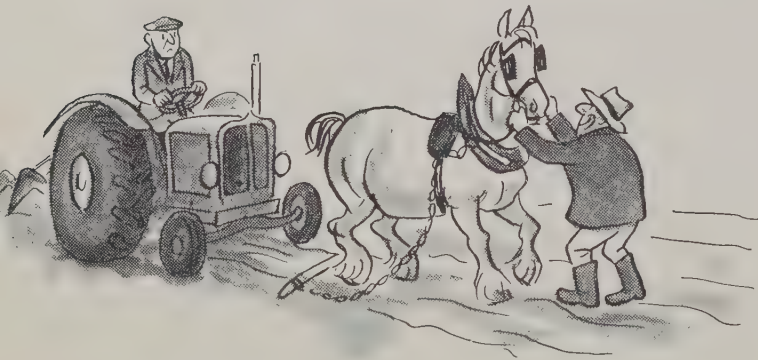
“Here we go . . . Hup!”

He pulled both ways at once, fire-works ran up my spine, the segments crinkled like castanets and suddenly I was free and easy again.

“You’re a marvel, doctor,” I said as I sat up. “An absolute genius. You’ve cured me in one.”

“I know,” he groaned, leaning on the bed with a hand on his sacro-iliac. “But I’ve put my own back out again doing it. I’ve ricked myself from here to next Thursday.”

My strangest brush with Hippocrates was provided by my friend George, the Army MO and frustrated actor who worshipped James Elroy Flecker. Our bond of friendship lay in his ability, when the privations of war were at their worst, to make alcoholic drink by spiking any available liquid with ether and surgical spirit. It was his custom after such medical libations to have me walk around the camp



with him declaiming the closing scene from *Hassan*. I played an Old Man while George played all the other parts, and our only audience was people looking out of their tents at three in the morning and telling us to get to hell out of it and take our blasted Golden Road to Samarkand.

One sober midnight a white-faced medical orderly woke me. I found George lolling in a chair, one toe bleeding and his pupils contracted to snake-size. "You've got to help me," he mumbled somnolently. "I've pumped myself brimful of morphia."

It transpired that he had intended to operate on himself for ingrowing toe nail and had injected what he thought was captured German local anaesthetic but which turned out to be captured German four-star morphia.

"Don't let me fall asleep," garbled George. "Walk me around till it works through my system. And don't let anyone know I'm hopped-up. They'd court-martial me for doing it to a patient. But they'll have my MD off me for doing it to myself."

His feet dragged limply in the dust as I lugged him round and round the olive-grove. The sentries surveyed us with unusual curiosity. The guard-sergeant came out of his tent. A late-night jeep pulled up and there was the Colonel giving us a penetrating look . . . The only way to save George from the BMA Disciplinary Committee was to make out we were merely drunk. So I gave out with *Hassan*, leading off with my Old Man remonstrating with the travellers. And then in George's tipsy bass I crashed out the Merchants' chorus of reply.

The sentries relaxed, the sergeant went back into his tent, the Colonel drove on to his bed. All was right with the world. It was just the Samarkand-bashers on the bottle.

LIVING TO RULE

By H. F. Ellis



When I first began to eat to rule in the nursery I had no idea I had stumbled upon one of the great sanctions by which free men fearlessly assert their rights and raise the standard of revolt against the grinding tyranny of governments and plutocrats. It simply seemed a good way of annoying Nanny.

Quite a lot can be done with the rules of eating, as laid down from time to time by anxious parents and a precept-loving nurse, to protract a mealtime beyond the endurance of an average adult. Refusing to turn the fork over for peas, keeping the elbows so close to the sides as to make manipulation almost impossible, laying the spoon and fork down between every mouthful, not drinking until the mouth is absolutely empty, making a long shy rigmarole of asking for the sugar instead of reaching across for it, repeatedly dabbing the lips with the lower end of the bib—there are a thousand justifiable devices for maddening the establishment. We used all of them from time to time as matter of course, without expecting or receiving so much as a line of publicity, even in the local parish magazine, for our efforts.

Later, at school, there were wider opportunities. “I thought you said we were never to . . .”; “Mr. Hankinson told us . . .”; “I’m sorry to have been so long, but we’re not allowed to run across Court”; “Sir, there’s a School Rule . . .” It was even possible, given a weakish sort of form master, to plead a compulsory haircut as a reason for not having prepared twenty lines of Virgil. They were gay days, but they were numbered. It simply did not occur to us that such childish goings-on could with advantage be carried over into adult life. Even at the university we preferred other methods of controlling our environment; I do not recall a single one of my contemporaries turning up three-quarters of an hour late for a tutorial on the plea that he had had to read right through the Statutes in Latin to make sure it was not forbidden to consort with philosophers on a Saint’s Day. Living to rule, I suppose it has to be confessed, was by this time regarded as a baby trick.

It is necessary to think again. One must live in the real world, growing up with it, accepting changed values, casting aside outworn prejudices and fuddy-



duddy assumptions of superiority. Persuasion, it has been well said,* is nine-tenths of the art of living, and if the accepted means of persuasion in the splendid 'sixties is to cause the maximum inconvenience to the largest possible number of uninvolved people, and get paid for doing it, who are we old buffers that we should stand aside from the Movement? If only everybody would live to rule, we ought to be able to bring every known form of human activity to a standstill within a matter of weeks, thus forcing the Government to accede to any demands we cared to make; and if some of our demands proved to be contradictory, we could all lie down in the road outside the Palace of Westminster as a protest against a state of affairs that had clearly become intolerable.

It may be objected that the general public has no such clear-cut body of rules to live and work to as those that can make life such a lark for, e.g., motormen, post office engineers and civil servants. While a railway driver, to put the difficulty in concrete form, is happily declining to take his train out until the statutory buckets of sand have been filled to a level that he deems to be conformable with the operational Rules of his profession, what can the hundreds of men and women who have been shuffling about on the platform in a bitter wind for the last forty-five minutes do to help? Where is the Code upon which they can rely to back up their refusal to enter the train when the driver is at last ready to start? Well, as a matter of fact, they have a weapon ready to hand in the Regulations and Conditions of the British Transport Commission, subject to which their tickets are issued but which are *not* printed thereon. They have a right, indeed they have a duty, to see and study these Conditions and Regulations

*If it has not been said before, it has been said now.

before consenting to take their places in the hopelessly inadequate carriages provided. Nor need there be any hurry to embark, even when copies of the Regulations have been printed and distributed or alternatively read out over the loud-speaker system. On learning, perhaps for the first time, that explosives and (as I believe) sphagnum moss may not be carried on the Commission's rolling stock except by special arrangement, every passenger assuredly ought to search his or her luggage, briefcase, handbag, pockets, etc., in order to ensure that no forbidden article has inadvertently been placed therein. He should also examine his clothing to make sure that it is not offensive to his fellow-passengers or liable to stain or damage the Commission's upholstery. He might well call for large double mirrors to enable him to scrutinise his back, for no man can be absolutely certain that he has not recently sat on a piece of chewing gum or been surreptitiously pelted with porridge.

Almost every action that we take, whether it be driving a car, buying cigarettes or simply taking the dog for a walk, is governed by rules, if we will only seek for them, rich in the raw material of procrastination and obstructiveness. There are bye-laws on every hand. A very satisfactory hold-up could be caused at park gates if drivers and the pedestrians would insist on reading regulations about kite-flying and riotous behaviour before entering. A man could spend a whole morning getting into Kew Gardens. National Health forms should be scrutinised with great care in doctors' surgeries. The public must insist on giving aid to the police in large numbers, whenever the latter appear to be outnumbered on traffic duty or at weddings. The laws relating to invitees and the duty owed to persons entering premises under a contract are sufficiently complicated, if rigorously studied and applied, to make hospitality and office work alike all but impossible. There are rich veins to be explored in the field of sport, e.g. by scrum halves with a really conscientious determination to stand exactly one yard from the scrum when putting the ball in. The Ten Commandments are still officially extant, and the thirty-nine Articles may be worth more than a cursory glance.

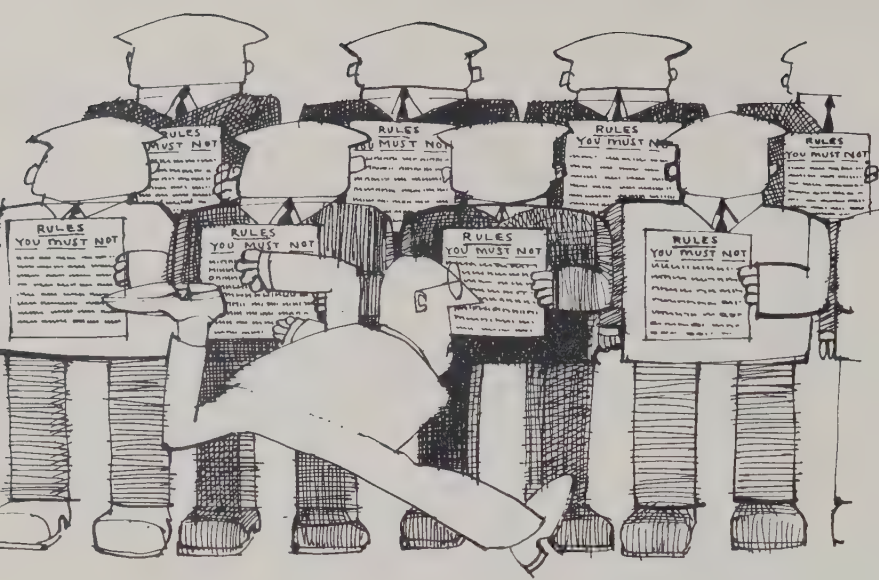
Of course it would all be very vexatious and uncomfortable. But it would be vexatious and uncomfortable for *everyone*—and that would include motormen, post office engineers and civil servants.



"Sorry. The greater embraces the less."

"... I get a bit of whine on the overrun, but she's very clean on the fast bends ... !"





OFFICIALS

By Gerald Scarfe



A Top Official at Work



An Official Thinking up a Swift and Cutting Reply to a Tentative Inquiry

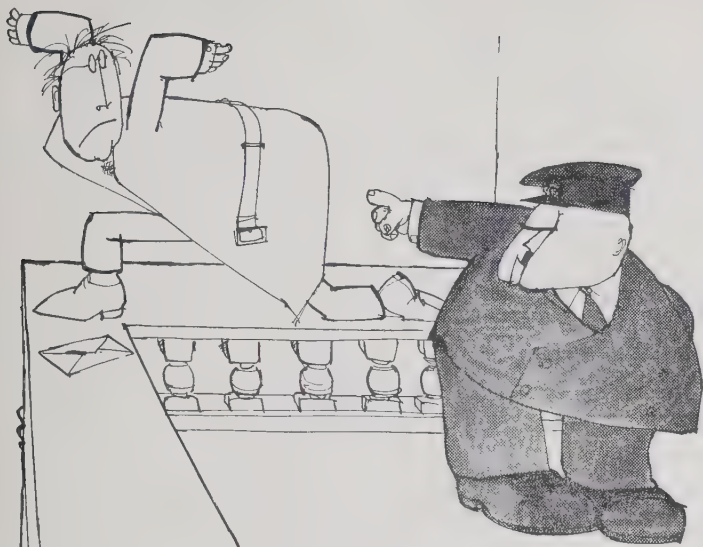
AN EVENING WITH THE TERRIERS

By B. A. Young

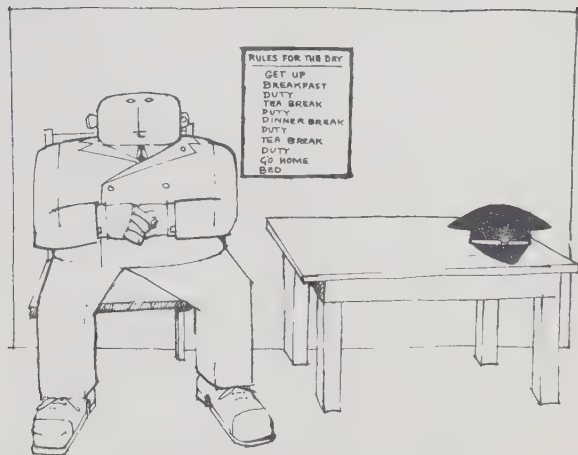
Good evening, gentlemen, let me introduce myself—my name is Burgess, *Sergeant Burgess*, and when you speak to me you don't say "Mate" or "Charlie," you stand properly at attention and address me as X13, got it? I shall be in charge of you lot till you finish your initial training, and it'll be easier for all of us if we decide we're going to get on together, *nicht wahr?*

Put your hand up any man who doesn't know what *nicht wahr* means. All know? Good. We don't want men in this unit that aren't handy with their languages.

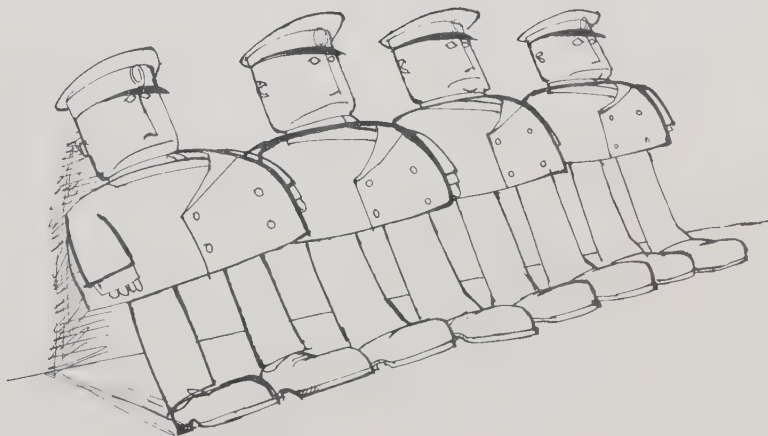
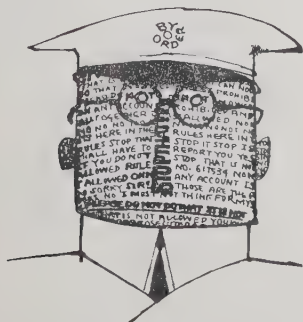
Now I dare say you'll find this lot a bit different from what you've been used to, so we'll start off on the right foot, with a clean dossier as we say in the Intelligence. First thing, when you come here I



"No! If I let you do it, they'll all want to do it."



An Off-Duty Official at Home



Off-Duty Officials Stacked for Immediate Use

want you properly dressed. You can keep your battle-dress and anklets, web, for your girl-friends outside. When you come to HQ here you come in proper Montague Burton uniform, *with* your dark glasses. Any man not in possession of dark glasses can draw them from the QM's stores after.

Right, then, what we're going on with this evening is recognition of aliens. First thing you've got to know is the names of the parts of an alien, so pay attention to this chart here.

This is an alien, European, Mark II, which is the type you are most likely to encounter. This part here at the top, this is known as the head of the alien. This narrow part underneath the head is known as the neck, head, retaining. Its function is to retain the head on the body. This is the body, this long

part here, and these are called the left and right arms, and these are the left and right legs. All clear so far?

Now, you'll see there are two projections, one on each side of the head, about half way up. These are known as the ears, external. This one is the left ear, external, and this one is the right ear, external. Their function is for listening to secret information which is talked about carelessly by civil servants and other personnel in possession of classified material. Any questions on that?

Here is a demonstration kit correctly laid out, and from now on when your kit is inspected this is how you will lay it out.

Your wireless transceiver goes at the bottom, and



"Are you sure this is Chris Barber's place?"

SABRE IS MY WEAPON

By R. P. Lister

Not long ago, on Earls Court Underground station, I met a policeman who was a keen swordsman. He specialized in broadsword and target, he told me, and was tolerably skilled with the bow; but what he was really good at was Judo.

I was on my way to take part in a fencing match against Harrow School, and was standing there by the ticket-machines with a lot of foils and things, when this policeman drifted up to me. I thought he was going to apprehend me for carrying offensive weapons, but it turned out that he was merely interested in the red and blue plastic tips covering the buttons of the foils. Last time he had played around with foils everybody was still covering up the buttons with insulating tape, which tends to leave black smears on the opponent's jacket.

We had an interesting talk about cutlasses, pistols and kindred topics, and then my colleagues, a telephone engineer and a fitter from London Airport, came along—they had been looking for me in another part of the forest—and we set off to have a bash at the boys.

We lost, 9 to 7, but since my age alone was as much as two and a half of the boys' put together this was fair enough. My colleagues (a fourth turned up at Harrow, having missed us entirely at Earls Court) were only about twice as old as the boys, and better practitioners with the foil than I am. Sabre is my weapon, for choice; there is something unrestrained about sabre, and to give a man a good crack across his padded skull releases some of the murky tensions deep down in the soul of civilised man.

After the match my colleagues had to go home to their wives, but I went to call on the policeman at his room in Queen's Gate, by arrangement. We had tea, and I inspected a fine collection of Japanese swords that he kept under his bed. "Did you see that film about Robin Hood?" he asked me. "The one where one of Robin Hood's men shoots one of the Sheriff of Nottingham's men off his horse?" "No," I said. "Well," he said, "I was the chap who shot the Sheriff of Nottingham's man off his horse." "Jolly good show," I said, for lack of any better comment. "What's more," he went on, "I was the Sheriff of Nottingham's man who got shot off his horse."

He had been working as a stunt man at that time, and Judo comes in handy for a man who occasionally has to shoot himself off his own horse in the way of business.

So we chatted on, and I told him about the time we found a lot of *Volkssturm* rifles in a crate and stood on a bridge in the middle of Erfurt, shooting at ammunition boxes that an obliging American Army sergeant sent floating down from



Hollowood
"A real hostage to fortune, you are, mate—disarming *and* smoking!"

upstream, and throwing the rifles into the river when they got too hot to hold. And later on, when a lot of reminiscence and time had flowed by, we strolled down the road to a favourite coffee bar of his.

Here we went down to the cellar and sat on the floor with a lot of fellows with beards and girls with long, matted hair. They kept passing a guitar from hand to hand, and singing. Most of them could play quite well. When they could think of noting else to play they played "When the Saints Go Marching In," which was fair enough. Personally, when I can think of nothing else to play on the guitar I always play "On Top of Old Smokey," but there is nothing like meeting new people with different ideas for broadening the mind.

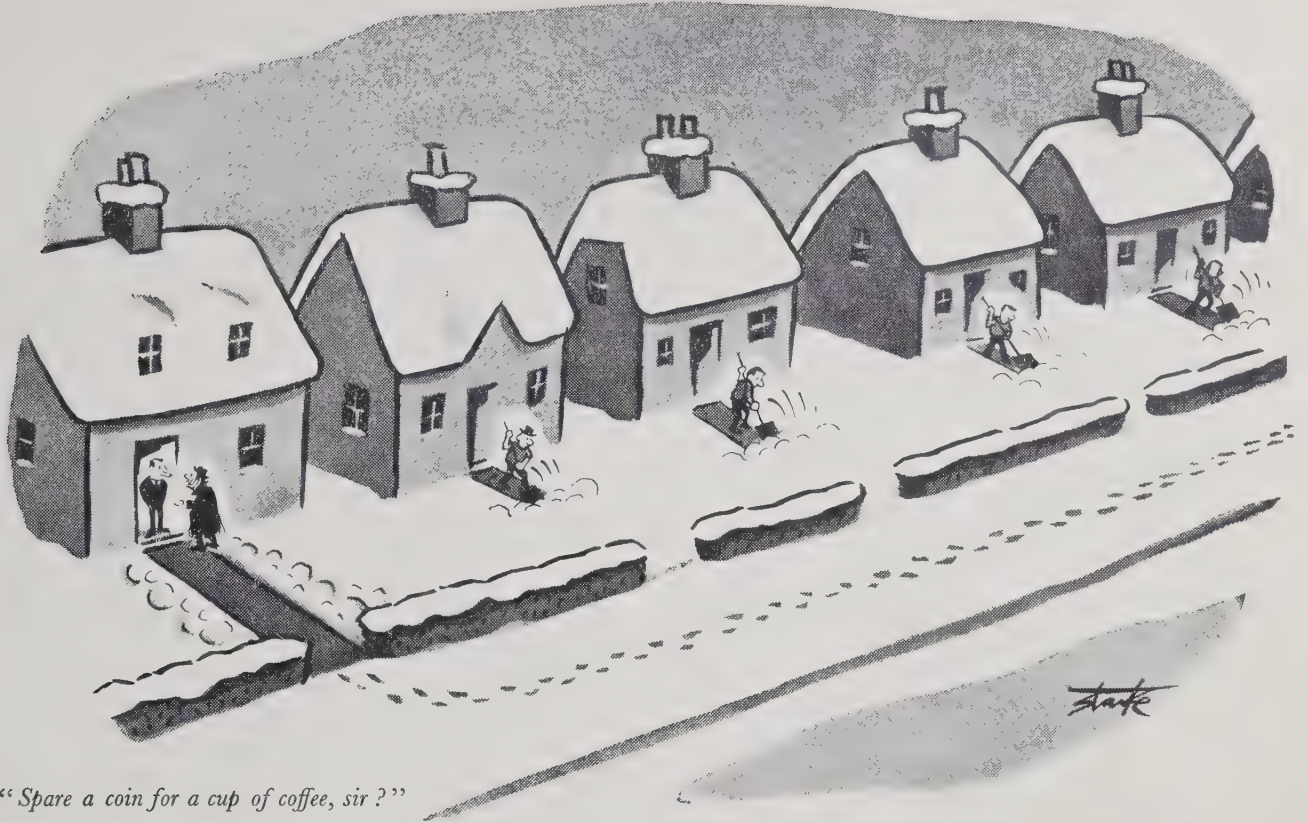
But really the only interesting thing that happened in this cellar was that on the way in the policeman poured a plateful of spaghetti bolognese quite slowly over the head of a man with a beard who was sitting on the floor just inside the door. It was very crowded in there; we had to pick our way over a lot of bearded bodies to get to the one bit of floor available to sit on. We each had a mug of coffee in one hand and a plate of spaghetti bolognese in the other, so it was hardly surprising that the policeman, looking at his feet rather than at his plate, poured the whole lot over the man's head. The man with the beard hardly seemed surprised either. He just looked up in a mournful way and started picking the spaghetti out of his hair and beard with his fingers. Probably it had happened to him lots of times. The policeman seemed the more annoyed of the two; he had to go back to the kitchen for another plate of spaghetti. Naturally he was in plain clothes by this time, so nobody realized it was a policeman who was throwing spaghetti about in the cellar.

Next day I happened to be riding across Wimbledon Common on a big grey horse, together with my friend Phoebe, who was on a small chestnut. In a moment of rash garrulity I told Phoebe, who is a fair hand with a sword herself, about this policeman, and the pleasant evening we had had together. Straight away she expressed a desire to meet him, and I said I thought this could quite easily be arranged. So when we had seen our horses neatly stacked up in the stable we went off and changed, since nothing is more embarrassing than wandering round London in riding breeches; particularly in subterranean coffee bars, where everyone dresses alike, and deviations from the norm are disesteemed.

We went along to Queen's Gate, and I rang a bell at a door, and asked for Mr. O'Leary. But the woman denied all knowledge of Mr. O'Leary. Phoebe asked if I was sure I had the right number. Naturally I knew the right number perfectly well, and I said that we must remember that this fellow was a CID man, though he was doing temporary duty on Earls Court station because he had had his leg ripped open a in bit of a *bagarre*. So it was not at all surprising



HARGREAVES



“Spare a coin for a cup of coffee, sir?”

if he was staying at this place under a false name, or else it might be that the housekeeper had strict instructions to deny his existence, in case some criminal types were wanting to get in there and knock him about a bit, for reasons of their own.

The only thing was, I said, to look for him in the coffee bar. So we got on a bus and went up town, quite a long way. “I thought you said you just strolled down the street to this coffee bar?” Phoebe asked me. “Why, no,” I said. “You must have misunderstood me. We hopped on a bus.”

In due course we came to this coffee bar that I had in mind, somewhere north of Soho, and went down to the cellar. It was not exactly as I had described the place to Phoebe, perhaps; there were three fellows in a corner with a guitar and a bass and a trumpet, and people on benches round the walls, twitching and jerking the way they do. But I told Phoebe they probably only had the three musicians in from time to time, and passed the guitar round the other nights. And I hadn’t noticed the benches. But it was too noisy most of the time for her to ask many questions.

The next evening she wanted to go back to the coffee bar to look for O’Leary, but it happened that I had tickets for some dustbin-type play we both wanted to see. So we went to this play, and the next few evenings after that there always seemed to be something or other, what with films and concerts and Covent Garden and the occasional party. It was enjoyable, but it ran me into a lot of expense, and at last I told her I had rung up O’Leary at the CID and they had told me he had been transferred to Edmonton and changed his digs. And so at last the whole thing was forgotten.

Of course, it would have been nice to meet O’Leary again, but he was a handsome, well-set-up fellow, with a thin black moustache, and Phoebe was remarkably pretty. I can handle a pistol fairly well and, I am happy enough with any kind of sword, though sabre is my weapon, for choice. I could even cope with bows and arrows if need be, but Judo I never touched, and I suppose it was Judo that decided the matter. Judo and the thin black moustache.

THE THREE OF SPADES

By Patrick Ryan

What with mortgages, the drink and the perishable nature of women's clothing, I don't often enjoy the experience of identifying with millionaires. I was grateful therefore to the *Daily Telegraph* for their snippet informing me that I have shared the tribulations of a tycoon.

An American tobacco chief said at the hearing of his suit for divorce at Darien, Georgia, that he locked his third wife out of his bedroom at night because he considered her to be "what I would call a Salem witch. She believed in voodoo and witchcraft and had a way of shuffling the cards. She never told me what my future was but she acted like it wasn't good."

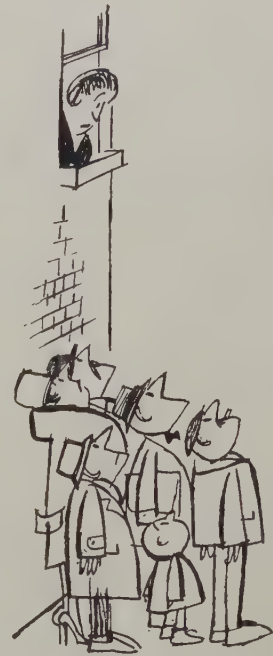
I had just the same trouble when I was eighteen and lodging with Mrs. Carbarrack at the Bermondsey end of Jamaica Road. She certainly had a creepy way of shuffling the cards and not only did she act like my future wasn't good but she also gave me a woe-by-woe description of it right down to the last clod falling on my unconsecrated grave.

Cartomancy was the passion of her life. She had no faith in tea-leaves, stars, Old Moore's Almanack or any of the other popular finger-posts of fate. The

future for her lay only in what the cards foretold. Her system derived from Jeremiah and there was no sweet by-and-by for any of her subjects. Half the cards in the pack symbolized sex or the sarcophagus; the remainder, except the three of spades, indicated such good times coming as polygamy, funerals, the black cap and leprosy. She saw coffins going in and out of houses like yo-yos and if she'd had her way the milkman wouldn't have been able to get down our street for hearses. She'd never tell me what the three of spades meant, its significance apparently being too dreadful for my adolescent ears and too daunting even for herself to contemplate.

"Oooh! My Gawd Almighty!" she'd gasp if the black triplet showed its face. "Not him. You've not gone and got that black three up again?" And she'd hurry on to the later dolours of my horoscope.

She was an occult-looking woman with hoop ear-rings and a Madam Butterfly pile of black hair. Small birds of sombre plumage could have nested in her peignoir. She carried her greasy deck of icicles at the alert in her apron pocket and her brown-button eyes were ever searching for someone to do. She used to catch me every night when I came home from work. There'd be something savoury frying in the pan and she'd be waiting by the table, riffling the pasteboards impatiently. If I didn't have my fortune



told, I just didn't eat. And I couldn't afford to feed out on my pay as an apprentice park-keeper.

"I'll just do you now, son," she'd say, lubricating her dealing fingers in her hair, "while you have your grub."

Although the details of my coming misfortunes changed every night there was no variation in the broad pattern of unhappy youth, miserable maturity and a shuddering end. I took to eating my meal with alligator rapidity so that I could be out of the kitchen before she got to my gruesome demise. I'm not sure what psychic effect her prophecies eventually had on my future but those nightly feeding-races with fate certainly ruined the after-life of my stomach-lining.

"You're doing a bit better to-night," she'd sometimes say. "You ain't going to be hung after all. You ain't had old Pierrepont, the King of clubs, up all evening. What we got next? . . . Ah! Jack of spades, the Artful Dodger, so you ain't going straight, that's for sure. Up comes the Jailer, ten of clubs, rattling his keys and you go to prison for, three, six, nine years. And, hullo, three eights for Cripplegate and you come out a cripple. Queen of diamonds, she's a blonde and you get married. Four of hearts, the marriage-bed but you ain't in it. There's a red seven, the seven seas, and here come Jack of hearts, the Frenchy-boy. So your wife runs off with this matelot and . . . Oh! Lord love us, no! Not after all you've been through!"

And the next card would be the mysterious menace of the three of spades and we'd pass hastily on to the lesser evils of amputation, lunacy or the chain-gang.

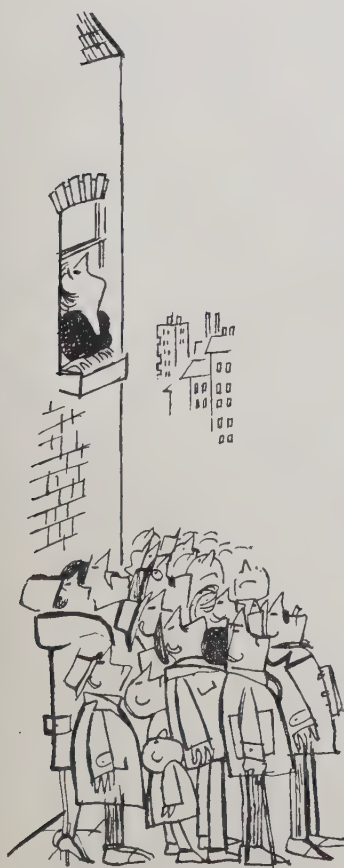
Although the nightmares she gave me upset my aim with the waste-paper spike I didn't openly object to her soothsaying me in private. It was when she started telling my destiny to Gladys that umbrage set in. Gladys was the greatest love of my life and we were planning to splice when my Park-keeper Grade IV ticket came through. I took her to tea at Mrs. Carbarrack's one Sunday and found that she, too, was an avid student of augury.

"I had an Auntie Philomena as had the second sight," she said proudly. "But I never yet had my fortune told by the cards."

"Then you shall, my dear. But we'll just do your boy-friend first. And if I'm any judge we'll be doing some of your future as well, won't we? . . . So here we go. Queen of hearts already, a ten before and an eight behind. A golden-haired girl of eighteen comes into his life. How old are you, Gladys?"

"That's me. I'm eighteen."

"Now, Jack of spades, that'll be your boy-friend, all right. Under a year you know him and there's eight of hearts, wedding-bells and four of diamonds, the bridal bed. And right after the four-poster comes



three small hearts. That means little ones, my dear. Cut the cards and take a card and Lord love us all, but its triplets!"

Gladys hid modestly behind her Veronica Lake hair-do.

"Deal again and there's the bed again and more small hearts. Take the bottom card and it says a lovely pair of twins. Five children in two years. You *are* going to have a quiverful of happiness . . . Oh, but what's this? Black, black and black again and then the two of spades, the curse of poverty. And here's the reason why. Three aces in a row, three stars, the demon drink . . . He goes on the bottle in the third year just when you're having twins again and . . . Never! Never the nine of clubs above and the six of spades below?"

"Why not, Mrs. Carbarrack?" faltered Gladys.

"If it weren't in them cards, I'd never believe it of

him." She shook her head at me in disappointment. "Nine of clubs, cat-o'-nine-tails, six of spades, a woman's tears. He beats his wife. All them kids and nothing to eat in the house, dead drunk half the time and he has to go and beat his poor wife."

"But I wouldn't," I protested. "I'd never beat Gladys."

"Not now you wouldn't. The cards don't say now. Three years' time you will when she's loaded down with eight children."

She'd slipped in an extra kid on me there but she was off again before I could challenge her arithmetic.

"Queens to the left, queens to the right and diamonds all about them. Women with money and there you are chasing after them. But you go wrong somewhere because there's the old Jailer rattling his keys. While you're in the nick there's titled men after Gladys but she stays faithful to her marriage vows even though the ten of spades, the workhouse master, comes for her. She's in the spike when you come out and all you do . . . Oh! My Gawd Almighty! No. Not after all you've done to that poor girl . . . Not the three of spades!"

She dropped the card and drew away as if I had suddenly become infectious.

"What does it mean?" I asked.

"Not for you to hear, son. Not for me to tell you."

Gladys peeked out from the refuge of her hair.

"But you must tell me, Mrs. Carbarrack. What does it mean?"

Mrs. C. champed her jowls in sad consideration.

"You'll be a married woman one day, my dear, and you'll have to know then. So, come here."

She bent her black bush above the ear of my love and whispered for half a minute. Gladys came up white and trembling.

"Oooh! My Gawd!" she breathed, hand to her throat in horror. "Not *him*."

The oracle nodded judicially.

"Yes. Him."

I felt like Mr. Hyde as Gladys looked at me and shivered. She picked up her bag and made for the door. I got up to stop her. The way she shrank back I could have been a porcupine.

"Don't you touch me. Don't you never come near me no more." And she ran out of the door and out of my life.

I often wondered in retrospect whether that fortune wasn't just an occult ploy of Mrs. Carbarrack's designed to save her best-paying lodger from marriage. If it was, it didn't come off. Although she wouldn't tell me what the three of spades meant, Gladys put it around the local girls all right. After that Sunday there wasn't a bint in Bermondsey would let me get within grabbing-range and I had to move over to Deptford just to get a bit of sex-life.



"And no spaghetti, macaroni, ravioli, vermicelli, canelloni, cappelletti, tagliarini, rigatoni, farfallete, conchiglie, ziti, ditali, lasagne, pastina, mezzani, mastaccioli, tubettini . . ."

"On the other hand, Bobby Locke says . . ."



LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY

By R. G. G. Price

Electricity was there before people discovered it and so was Gravity. It seems only too probable that Space, populated Space, was there too. It would be pretty odd if only since Science Fiction began were remote planets inhabited. The sort of problem which has been ignored in this passion for guessing what will happen in 1990 is what happened, Spacewise, in 1066.

I am not suggesting for a moment that Harold's defeat was due to intervention by Venusians. There seems no reason why the Planet People should take one side rather than another in our little local wars. It is true that technologically advanced races might have preferred the go-getting Normans to the more gentle, arty Anglo-Saxons; but if there is one thing that is clear about spatial visitants it is that they want to be loved. Flying-saucer crews float round and about wistfully trying to make contact with Earth Men. They are almost too anxious not to offend. It seems in the last degree unlikely that they would have risked the good opinion of thegns and earldormen and churls by battling against them.

But, the historically-minded reader may object, what about the Gods in the Trojan War? They lined up behind the human armies, cheering on their side and sometimes rigging the odds. Is it to be supposed that Martians or extra-

galactic bodiless intelligences would show a greater refinement of manners than the gods of Olympus? The answer, shortly, is Yes.

However, some historical events seem particularly likely to have been caused by Spacemen or Spacethings, those sudden panics that make armies leave their defences and run away, financial crises, sudden fashions in constitutional development. Some historical characters seem likely, at least intermittently, to have been non-anthropoid. Was Napoleon's lock of hair intended to hide a third eye? Elizabeth I once remarked that while she had the body of a woman she had the heart and stomach of a king and there is more than a hint here of other anatomies than ours. Assume that Bonar Law originated from somewhere on the far side of the Milky Way and his part in the fall of the Asquith Coalition looks quite different.

Take quite a different episode in British history. How far was Peel's change of front on the Repeal of the Corn Laws motivated by non-Telluric forces? Even in his bitterest moments Disraeli did not accuse Peel of harbouring non-spatial mutants, still less of being some kind of refugee from a White Dwarf. His proposals might have been nebulous but not the man himself.

It is a well-tryed principle of historical criticism that to establish a fact you need the evidence of two independent witnesses. Mere supposition is not enough, even when you are writing about the Etruscans. Although it seems inherently probable that Tellus was liable to as much interference from elsewhere in the Cosmos a hundred years ago as we all know it is today, it is impossible to relate any particular effect to any particular cause. This is a pity. It would save a good deal of backbreaking work by historians if awkward facts could be explained away as the consequence of phenomena not yet completely investigated by science.

Studies of the history of Parliament in the sixteenth century are hampered by the absence of some of the official documents. These may well have been snatched by Things, and not just mislaid by a noble family or used to provide skins for toy drums, a common fate of manuscripts. The Things may have taken them simply as evidence of having made the journey. It may have been mischief of the kind indulged in by poltergeists. But there is a more disturbing explanation. Somewhere out beyond the limits of any telescope may be a planet inhabited by Things that live on parchment. This would explain the gaps in State Papers, the missing pages of monastic chronicle, the lost books of Livy, the strange absence of Shakespeare manuscripts.

On the other hand, to look for a moment on the bright side, there may somewhere be Intelligences that preserve a first-hand record of events here in Britain from the earliest clouds of hot, whirling gas down to today. Once contact is



"It was such a lovely evening I thought I'd toddle down and have my ears syringed."



“Well, you’ve got to snatch happiness while you can these days.”

made with these original authorities, large-scale revision of accepted historical theories seems inevitable. What follows from this? *Resistance to Space projects by historians.*

Has the Royal Historical Society made one single gesture of solidarity with the cosmonauts? Not one. It is the Arts graduates who fight a rearguard action against compulsory Physics for all university students. They know too well what effect on their status the discovery of some globular and slightly radioactive spectator of a Witanagemot would have. Learning is a matter of guesses which seem probable to other learned men; but once make truth readily available and what is there left to do?

As communication between non-Telluric existence and the human race develops, it is inevitable that not all candidates for university chairs will be human. There are obvious advantages if sometimes the Cavendish Professor of Physics or the Lucasian Professor of Mathematics bring to their Chairs experience gained in other modes of being than that of their audiences. But the same, surely, will apply to the Regius Professorships of History. An inaugural lecture that begins “I remember once being inside Walpole when he was considering the Excise scheme” will provide an interesting change from lectures criticising Namier or Toynbee or Gibbon for overlooking something.

The rockets of the future will carry not merely measuring instruments and robots to service them. They will carry research students to cross-examine first-hand witnesses of historical events. The two-year research grant will include a return ticket in some faster-than-light machine and the thesis will be expected to cover the ground thoroughly: examiners will refer back the student of Balfour’s Irish policy who overlooks a giant fungus which once week-ended at Hatfield unobserved.

BUFFET CAR

by

LARRY



THE MAN ON THE PHONE

By Patrick Skene Catling

The invisible web of rubber-covered electric cables had somehow caught him again after all, and now, as words and small mechanical noises scuttled spiderishly along the lines, abroad and back, and crossed and recrossed local extensions, the enthralling network tightened, and he felt that he was being enmeshed this time inextricably.

"Do you want me to keep on trying?" a woman suddenly asked in his ear. Her voice was not friendly, of course, but it seemed fair; for an instant he was almost tempted to believe he was being given a chance of getting out though he knew he was incapable of doing that.

"You may as well," he said, disappointed but not really surprised to notice that acknowledged helplessness had brought with it no sense of finality or relief. "There must be *somebody* there," he said uncertainly. But the voice had already gone away. All he could hear for a while was the buzzing and chirring and clicking of metallic insects, diminuendo, receding through a lead tube, far away. Then there was a silence that suggested immeasurable distance and darkness and cold, and he wished he could put the black plastic instrument down to shut out the vastness of unconfined emptiness; the silence of the bed-sittingroom itself was finite, enclosed, and, if only he could acquire the knack, manageable.

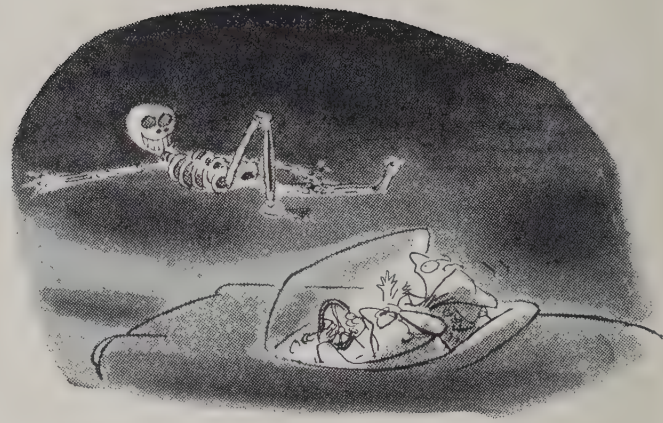
As he hesitated, looking unexpectantly into the circular groups of tiny holes for receiving and transmitting through, there was a short series of new sounds, like part of a rising musical scale played rapidly on radar—*boop, beep, bup, bip*—and he supposed that the international search he had instigated by dialling O had entered a phase of further complication: evidently enquiries were being made on his behalf by amphibious robot dinosaurs deep below the surface of the ocean. He could not very well just abandon them at that time of night. He wished he had never begun to call. As usual, however, it was too late to do any good by making wishes of that sort.

He had been afflicted with telephonitis, a frequently recurring compulsive desire to make unnecessary telephone calls, for more years than he cared to

remember. The habit, though its incidence continues to increase throughout the civilised world, is unfortunately generally misunderstood; too many ordinary people still regard it with severe disapproval as if it were a vice, a perversion, practised deliberately as a self-indulgence, rather than a malady suffered as involuntarily as acne or kleptomania. He had learned not to expect sympathy; on the contrary, he realised that excessive telephoning at awkward hours had already deprived him of the goodwill of his mother, his wives, and many people he was really fond of.

Among the minority who have cared sufficiently to make a study of problem telephoning, there has been controversy over its causes. Are they physical or psychological? Nobody knows for certain. Some doctors claim that the problem telephonist actually enjoys the sensation of the warm receiver pressed against the ear and the variety of vibrations that impinge from time to time upon the drum. But the psychologists refute this theory; they cite case histories of telephonists who complained that holding a telephone for as long as half an hour without





relief could cause acute distress, and that they endured the bodily discomforts only for the sake of the emotions engendered by telephony's enormous geographical extension of the human faculties of intimate conversation. And some telephonists state that while a call is still in progress they are *gratified* by constant awareness of the mounting cost—perhaps, as they are candid enough to admit, because of a hope that the recipient of the call, if the charges have not been reversed, may be favourably impressed. In cases of this sort of financial exhibitionism, however, there is often a concomitant sense of financial anxiety, which is usually suppressed until the telephone is hung up, when it may become the dominant emotional factor for hours or even days afterwards. A chronic telephonist who finds that his telephone bills are exceeding his total income is likely to experience such pangs of nervousness when he reviews his budgetary arithmetic that the only way he can regain his confidence is by telephoning an encouraging friend. This process is self-perpetuating.

* * *

"There's no Mr. Khrushchev at the Odessa number you gave me," the woman told him reproachfully. "Cancel the call," he said. "Try . . ." He wondered who could help.

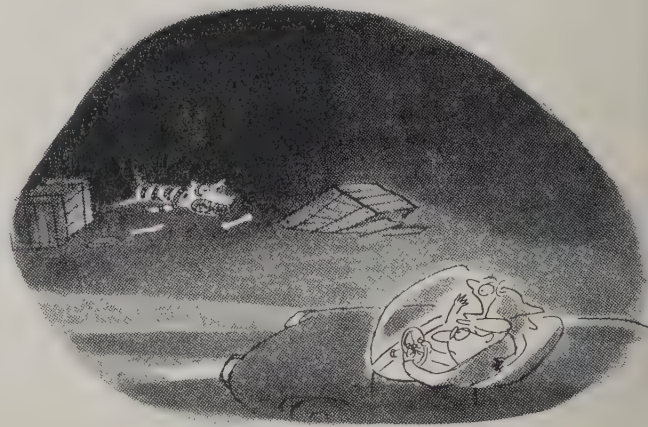
"Do you want me to go back on the call to Miss Garbo?" she asked. "Or shall I try Mr. Randolph —."

"Ring the Garbo number," he said. "We can get the other one any night."

"Yes, sir," she said calmly, and even though the "sir" was probably sarcastic he felt a momentary glow of the old warmth in the ashes of his ego. He lay back on the single bed and, as the remote electronic knitting needles and roulette wheels once more whirred in motion, he looked up at the blank white ceiling.

* * *

He could not remember how it had started, but he had been told that as a small child he had amused



grown-ups by climbing on to their laps when they were telephoning and by gurgling excitedly into the mouthpiece. Families who encouraged this sort of unnatural behaviour also enjoyed watching the effects of martinis on kittens and cage-birds. Before puberty he had already placed his first illicit long-distance call, in a neighbour's bedroom during a school-mate's birthday party, and by the time he went to university the craving to make telephone calls was already making it difficult for him to maintain normal social relationships.

As several telephonitis researchers have noted, one of the classic symptoms of the disease is the feeling that no experience can be savoured properly except in the telephone talks that anticipate and recollect it. Professional negotiations and amatory confidences alike, he found, seemed to lack reality unless they were ratified and solemnised by telephone. The next stage, the chronic stage, soon followed: he knew that

he wanted the telephone calls for their own sake, and nothing else really mattered. He became pale and moody and reticent in the company of others. He began to make sly excuses for withdrawal from society, and then, flushed and animated after a few quick solitary calls, he might well telephone and charm the very people he had just deserted. Euphoria became increasingly difficult to share.

One of the tragedies of telephonia is that sufferers are unable to help one another. Associations have been formed, first-name confessions exchanged, vows of abstinence taken, annual banquets held, all to no avail; once even the most earnestly dedicated of members heard a telephone bell ring they were lost. He tried the opposite cure; he got a job as a telephone operator, on the theory that he would engage in so many calls on duty that the very sight of a telephone elsewhere would bore him. But the first day on the

job was disastrous; succumbing to temptation immediately, he committed outrageous excesses. He called Melbourne for the Test match score, Tokyo for the time signal, Buenos Aires for the local weather report, and Los Angeles for a recorded one-minute sermon. The next day he suffered agonies of remorse, but of course the damage had already been done, and he never went back.

There had been moments of gaiety, even splendour: he had spoken through an ivory telephone at a nightclub table in Palm Springs; he had telephoned Paris and San Francisco *simultaneously*, using two radio operators aboard an Italian liner in the Straits of Gibraltar. He would always have at least a few good memories among the bad ones if, as now seemed inevitable, he was destined to spend his last days in the Bowery, clutching together his threadbare lapels and cadging dimes for three-minute local calls, or in public kiosks reeking of stale cigarettes, in London railway termini, furtively pressing buttons B, or grabbing at just any telephones anywhere for desperate snatches of free conversation with anonymous policemen.

* * *

When the door was broken down and the men in uniform overalls went in to disconnect him, he did not immediately seem alarmed. At first the only sounds that came from his mouth were clicks. But then, as they reached out their hands, he opened his mouth wide and his intermittent high-pitched shout clearly signified number unobtainable.



FULL ENQUIRY

By P. M. Hubbard

DUNBLEARY Castle was a noble pile
Which occupied a fabulous position
On the lone summit of a western isle
Deeply imbued with legend and tradition.
The fighting forces sought its demolition,
Alleging it obstructive to a site
Devoted to the cause of nuclear fission:
But when the public fury reached its height,
The Minister ordained that all be stayed
Until a full enquiry could be made.

Lackhampton Shaws contained some splendid trees
Centuries old and full of noble growing,
And children played and lovers loved in these,
Until the Council saw how things were going
And knowing trees were nasty things, and knowing
The Chairman's brother was a timber-buyer,
Resolved to have them all cut down: but owing
To feelings running high and getting higher
The Minister decreed no trees be felled
Until a full enquiry had been held.

Tanbarrow Downs were full of gold and green
And Bronze Age barrows, as the name implied,
And raised their rain-fed amplitude between
The coloured counties and the silver tide.
The Conquest Concrete Company applied
For leave to quarry half a mile of chalk
Bang in the centre of the southern side:
But after months of most explosive talk
The Minister forbade them to proceed
Till full enquiry had established need.

The Rushbourne people had a right of way
Across the fields down to the river valley,
In which on Sunday or a summer's day
Lovers and friends in twos and threes would dally.
The Council then proposed provisionally
To build a prison there and close the path
Permanently and unconditionally:
But when the Rushbourne people rose in wrath,
Before the term of notice reached expiry,
The Minister prescribed a full enquiry.

So now the sovereign people had its way
And democratic right was vindicated.
All interested parties had their say
And none had further cause to feel frustrated.
Instead, the facts were fully ventilated;
Four highly qualified Inspectors sat
And had the whole affair elucidated,
And filed reports: and only after that
The trees were cut, the castle was demolished,
The downs despoiled, the right of way abolished.



"I'm sure I'll be able to do better, sir—once I can shake off that feeling that I'm violating Nature's secrets."

THEATRE

Ronald Searle



PATRICIA HEALEY as Nicole Rovarte and FLORA ROBSON as Grace Rovarte
in *Time and Yellow Roses*



PETER COOK, JONATHAN MILLER, DUDLEY MOORE and ALAN BENNETT
in *Beyond the Fringe*



DOROTHY REYNOLDS as Harriet Gray and JULIAN SLADE at the piano
in *Wildest Dreams*



RAF VALLONE as Eddie in *A View from the Bridge*



CLARK GABLE as Gay Langland and MARLON BRANDO as Michael Carney in *The Misfit*

CINEMA

ffolkes



PATRICK MAGEE as Michael Carney Snr. in *A Whistle in the Dark*

KARL MALDEN as Dad Longworth and MARLON BRANDO as Rio in *One-Eyed Jacks*

THEATRE

Hewison



ROE as Roslyn Taber



JULIETTE GRECO



GLYN OWEN as Con, DUDLEY JONES as Alvin, DENYS GRAHAM as Ossy, and MERVYN JOHNS as Ben Morton in *The Keep*



“Sit! sit boy! . . . sit . . . sit . . . sit!”

WHAT'S WRONG WITH WESTERNS

By R. G. G. Price

Sociologists faced with the problem of explaining the eternal popularity of Westerns generally say they dramatize the conflict of Good and Evil and hurry off to more rewarding subjects, such as whether girls like to live near their grannies. My theory is that Westerns represent an escape from sociologists. Urban Man likes to dream that he is in a world free from social investigation and human engineering and labour-saving and time-and-motion study. He gets plenty of job analysis in his work; what he likes to relax with is courage and inefficiency.

Out West there are never any technological improvements. Every lynching involves a good deal of running to and fro and the simple physics of the pulley; you never see a mechanically minded lyncher fixin' an electric chair worked by water-power or by a buffalo-driven dynamo. The gas chamber is unknown, though surely the school teacher, at least, must know some elementary chemistry.

Even the technology available is deprived of maximum effectiveness by the mode of operation. Take the gun. The rattle of gunfire is nearly always the sound of waste. It is simply not true west of the Mississippi that every bullet has its billet. The hit-miss ratio may have been pleasing to armament manufacturers; but it was one reason why the frontier stayed long enough in one place for men to grow grey on it.

To the statistician the Injuns are more satisfactory. Their arrows can be used again and again and, unlike bullets, they rarely land more than six inches from the target. The sudden sideways movement of the paleface as an arrow sticks in the solid rock by his ear must create a toll on nerve and muscle with definite military advantages to the archer. The gun, on the other hand, is often no more than a wasteful means of self-expression, nearer a hooter than a shooter.

Efficiency in unarmed combat is equally low. Any of the experts who are

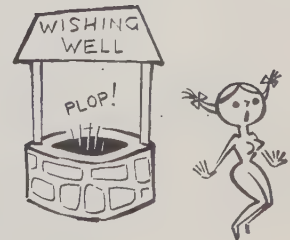
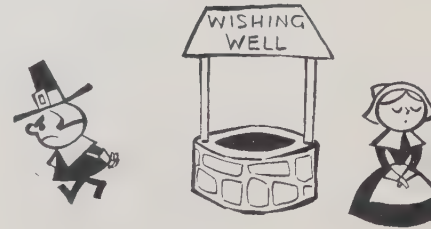
called in to ensure that money wasted is wasted in the office rather than on the factory floor would fault the low incapacity-rate in bar-room brawls. When a tough hombre can be hit over the head with three separate bottles, hacked with a heavily metallated boot and battered with a table covered with silver dollars, whisky and poker hands and, the moment after, bounce when he is thrown through swing doors, something is gravely wrong with technique. Perhaps part of the trouble is the low specific gravity of bar-room furniture, much of it, one cannot help suspecting, made of balsa wood. Indeed, most of the furniture out West is of sub-standard design. The type of rocking-chair used to keep watch with a rifle across the lap, and still more the type of hard chair tilted back and treated as a rocking-chair manqué, is ill-fitted to relaxing tensions while avoiding somnolence. Surely the back should be metal and moulded to the spine; too little Western furniture is adjustable. The wearing of rifles across the abdomen might well lead to abdominal deformation. An automatic rifle-holder would be better.

In most Westerns the emphasis is on transport—transport of weapons, weapon-operatives, scouts, guitars, lariats, bullion, etc. The most usual means of transport is the horse. Any time-and-motion consultant would concentrate on getting the highest weight-by-distance per feed-ton index. “Not an erg must be wasted,” he would tell his clients. Out West there is conspicuous consumption of ergs. Every time a rider makes for a target he gallops full tilt past it and then reins up and swerves round. For much of the average film the horses’ heads are not going the same way as the horse. As well as this lateral wastage, wastage occurring along the axis of the journey, there is vertical wastage. This occurs in display-situations where the horse rears upwards. Watching such prodigality must be peculiarly pleasing to viewers who suffer at work from men lurking behind piles of crates with stopwatches. Nor, I cannot help feeling, would the well-trained expert approve of trying to bring civilization to the frontier in wagons whose wheels turn backwards.

The next commonest form of transport power is the human body, whether plodding along a trail or crawling on the belly with one hand shading the eyes. Posture is generally bad and, in the case of some of the more gnarled and experienced inhabitants, almost non-existent. One seriously neglected aspect of time-and-motion study is the differential pace of Good Men and Bad Men. The no-good sons of mad dog land-grabbers and the no-good brothers of jailed trigger-men swagger into town with animal vitality. Persons intent on shooting up a burg swing into the saddle and are off in an instant. Bad Injuns fairly flash round corners. Compare this liveness and speed of reaction with the dreamy movements of the average Sheriff. Gary Cooper, still perhaps the archetypal Good Man, may be quick on the draw but he is maddeningly deliberate in everything else. See him pacing along the street, face large and puzzled and both thumbs on his integrity, and it becomes obvious why the rule of law took so long to move from Washington to the Rockies.

Sometimes the Sheriff is slowed down by seeing good in everybody and needing to be convinced that he is facing black-hearted snakes who will stick at nothing. Sometimes he just can’t bring himself to mount his horse. He stands beside it grinning up into the sunlight and exchanging looks with the heroine, a sheer waste as on the whole heroines are not taken from the pick of American beauties. It seems likely that in some areas Sheriffs are chosen because they are the quiet, reflective type rather than the sort of man who is on a horse and firing the moment a law has been infringed. Sheriff-selection methods would undoubtedly evoke criticism from the more alert personnel managers.

There are innumerable other points at which the Western provides food for the escapist from the psychologist-dominated, statistician-categorized, sociologist-chivied city. To take a final problem: why are there never any classes in smoke-signal recognition?



ROY DAVIS

QUIXOTE 1961

By J. E. Hinder

... The illustrious knight, incredulous of his squire's intelligence concerning the great changes wrought in Spain by the influx of tourists and finally stung to action by Sancho Panza's declaration that early closing and other reforms are to be introduced, sallies forth again from La Mancha.

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, having, after many curious adventures, reached the sea to the East, had not travelled an hour's march along the so-called Costa Brava, when they beheld, brightly illuminated, a large building from within which came sounds of revelry. "It is plain," said the knight, "that this noble edifice is the palace of the Duke of this region. Let us therefore make speed to enquire if his Grace will accord us hospitality." "In faith, sir," quoth his squire, "I am of the opinion that this is but one of those hostelries of which I told you, wherein our countrymen are so eager to entertain the foreigners."

"I see all too plainly that you are a bumpkin," responded Don Quixote. "I will warrant you that such an elegant dwelling-place can be no common inn for travellers." "Then, by the Mass," cried Sancho, "who may these be?" From the patio stepped three persons, curiously attired in long coloured shirts, children's trousers and hats of paper. "If the smallest of these be not a maiden, then I am blind as the bats of the Sierra Morena!" the squire went on. At this moment, one of the assumed maiden's companions attempting to embrace her roughly, she, in terror or feigning it, cried out.

It was sufficient for Don Quixote, who, on the instant, spurred forward the reluctant Rozinante, crying out in a loud voice: "Lady, abandon your fears, for Don Quixote de la Mancha is here to perform knightly service to all maidens in distress! It is manifest that ill-fortune or the enchantment of

some magician has constrained you to journey hither in such unworthy garb and in such evil company!" So saying he thrust his lance in the direction of her companion.

The maiden broke into loud and unpleasing laughter. "Drop dead, Daddy-O!" she exclaimed in the English tongue and turning to her ill-favoured companion cried: "Dig that crazy horseflesh, Ron!" "What price the last race at Pontefract!" he shouted. With much coarse jesting they marched onward towards the sea.

Don Quixote shook his head in bewilderment, then, dismounting, called loudly for the owner of the hostelry—as he now saw it to be. "Inn-keeper!" he shouted, "there is without a person of some station desirous of a bed for the night and food withal!"

A small stout figure emerged slowly. "No vacancies, mister," he said in a coarse voice. "High season, grandpa. Unless you got reservation—Cooks, American Express, Poly, WTA, Co-op Travel or somethin'?" "I do not comprehend you," cried the knight impatiently. "If you have no rooms, I will at least sup—and quickly!" "No meals after eight," replied the man immediately. "I can fix you a ten peseta lot of good old Rochdale fishes-and-chip to take away, if you like." "By the beard of Charlemagne!" roared Don Quixote, "are we, indeed, in Spain? Do you tell me, caitiff, that I may not eat? Perhaps I may not drink either?"

"Nothing alcoholic," replied the man. "Coupla



"Yes, Mr. Braithwaite, I think you should fit very well into our little organization here!"



"If you hadn't been so against transistors we'd know what's up!"

cokes? Sixteen pesetas, straight from the icebox." And he produced two phials of brownish liquid. "Mark well this villainous Moor," declared Don Quixote, "this is one of Merlin's servants and this liquid will, as like as not, transform us into swine within the saying of two credos!" "Then let us quit this place," cried Sancho, "and seek elsewhere lodging and refreshment suitable to your exalted station."

But the knight had seen approaching a concourse of persons, led by a stout dame wearing a tinsel crown. "By all that is chivalrous and of good repute," he cried, "here comes a Princess with her retinue to pay respects to my person!" Then, sweeping off his hat and making a low bow, he cried "Most High and Sovereign Lady, Don Quixote de la Mancha, cognizant of your exalted courtesies, begs to know in what manner he may serve you."

"Ingles," replied the stout woman in some confusion. "You tell him, Alf." This to a stout red-faced man who spoke in the English tongue—as did they all. "Mrs. Smaithwaite," he shouted.

"From Leeds! On a coach-tour, mate!" Don Quixote, now exasperated beyond all endurance, demanded in a passion that the man acknowledge Dulcinea del Toboso as the fairest of all creation, which puzzled the clown for some while, until, understanding finally, he spoke up. "Best-looking piece I ever saw was Marilyn Monroe!" he said amid crude laughter. Sancho, perceiving that his master was like to shed blood, touched his shoulder. "This is not fit company for you, sir," he murmured.

In perplexity, the knight allowed himself to be persuaded and, remounting Rozinante, moved slowly away. The woman called after him. "I'd 'ave RSPCA on to you!" she shouted. "Ridin' a poor old nag like that and you in them tin trousers!" The two horsemen trotted silently westward, Don Quixote moody and oppressed. Suddenly, his eyes lit up. "Behold!" he cried joyfully. Sancho Panza followed the direction of his master's glance and shook his head resignedly. Before them, less than a league distant, stood . . . a windmill. With this at least he knew how to deal.

THE BAG

I AM a lady in a fur hat watching a football match
and trying to open a bag of sweets.
I can see the sweets lying fruitily on their sides
and my throat is parched from crying out Chelsea! Chelsea!
but I cannot get into the bag, I cannot get into it.
For an hour now, with a terrible desperation,
with my long fingers and sharp nails I probe, I tear.
Though I say nothing, because the English are phlegmatic,
I am angry, my rage is a throttling thing.
Sometimes, sinking back exhausted, the inaccessible
oasis of blackcurrants, oranges and lemons on my lap,
sometimes I lift up my head and shout "Windy!"
so as to show the gentleman I am with that I care.
(He, too, has tried to get into the bag
with his strong hands and the car key and the latch key
and he has given up because he has little stamina
and because he is busy crying out Chelsea! Chelsea!)
So now, and we can blame science if my mother
turns in her grave, we can blame progress if now
I am a lady in a fur hat watching a football match
and trying to open a bag of sweets with her teeth.

— VIRGINIA GRAHAM

"Dobson! Why the hell aren't you in a trouble spot?"





IS THIS WHERE THE PIANO PLAYER LIVES?

By Len Rush

If there's anything more intriguing than receiving a letter addressed to you in strange handwriting, I'd say it's being told "A man called while you were out." On this occasion, the first in years, I asked "What was he like?" with a bored casualness that might have suggested to anyone but my wife, who claims to be married to a hermit, that there was a continuous stream of callers hammering on the door.

She gave me an odd sort of look.

"I didn't take much notice. Fairly young. Yellowish hair, cropped short, slim-jim tie, maroon shortie raincoat with epaulettes. Winklepicker shoes. Oh, and a home-made-looking shooting-brake."

It didn't sound like anyone I knew, or wanted to know.

"What did he say?"

"He said 'Is this where the piano-player lives?'"

It's true that I do play, a little. And there was a time when I was in demand, if that's not too strong a word, as an emergency deputy-relief dance pianist. Now, looking down at the card my wife handed me without a word (it said *Rocky Williams and his Jet Men. Weddings, dances, etc. Versatile. Transport.*) a wave of nostalgia overcame me. I recalled dim, draughty halls with concrete-hard floors and too many pillars and acoustics that were almost literally out of this world. Battered, sulky pianos. Crooked spot-waltzes. It was at such "gigs" that I scraped

acquaintance with the semi-pros—sleek-haired characters with the faces of choir-boys and the minds of terrible old men. After "The King" (played *accelerando* with the idea of getting home that much earlier) there was guarded talk of future jobs; scruffy visiting-cards were exchanged, phone numbers jotted down, and everyone piled hilariously into somebody's old Cowley. Could it be, I now wondered, that my name had been preserved on the back of a card for all those years?

Later, when Mr. Williams rang, I asked him about this. He seemed a reasonable chap, apart from a Bronx-on-Bootle accent and a tendency to call me "man." It seemed my name had been remembered in the present emergency, by one Chuck Reid, drummer—or rather by his father Tubby Reid. This explained the mystery (though the only positive thing I could recall about Tubby was his skill in removing beer-bottle caps with his teeth). At this point, I ought to have said, "Ah, good old Tubby!" murmured an apology and rung off. But he was a persistent, not to say desperate, young man, and I was daft enough to feel flattered. I found myself saying instead "O.K. then. Friday, half-seven, Bootle Assembly Rooms. Seeya."

During the next few days I heard lots of infantile jokes about Mr. Piano and Daddy-o, but I was far too busy practising to take them to heart. I dug out the old metronome which in the past I'd so often



“Damn! I’ve taken it on the transistor again.”

accused, perhaps unfairly, of not keeping time. In a not very successful attempt to keep up to date I also put in some pretty gruelling hours with my transistor set tuned to 208.

The Assembly Rooms hadn’t changed so much, though the clientèle was a good deal younger—nearer, say *Juke Box Jury* than *Dancing Club*. But I swear the piano was the same, a huge black monster with a tone like a wire mattress. The others looked surprised when I asked for a chair, and pointed out that the regular man, Charlie Harris, never used one. At first I pretended it didn’t matter, but it did really. Apart from feeling a first-class idiot, I found I just couldn’t play standing up. Having got my chair, I was able to take a look at my colleagues. Rocky, being a guitar player, was the leader (years ago, guitars were *de trop*, a waste of money, because you couldn’t hear them. You can now, all right—Rocky had *four knobs* on his). Arnold, a thin, nervous biology student, was a sort of guitarist’s mate (he was only a two-knob man) who thrummed while his boss twanged. Chuck Reid, squatting rabbit-toothed behind a suspiciously familiar set of drums, was the image of his dad (it was all coming back to me now). The sad, bearded youth behind him nursed the oddest of instruments; it had a graceful, ornate neck, sort of seventeenth-century Italian, degenerating into a flat clothes-prop with a

wooden triangle for a belly. It turned out to be a bass, an *electric bass*, which made me nervous (supposing something went wrong, and all that lurking electronic power got loose—electronic *bass* power . . .). But it was the tenor sax man who had me interested: though he sported a crew-cut and a fancy French sweater, there was something different about him that I couldn’t put my finger on.

For the opener, I suggested *Sweet Sue*—always a good stand-by. (The greatest stand-by of all time, incidentally, was the war-time *Yours*, which you could play as a Quickstep, Slow Fox, Tango or Rumba. I wouldn’t be surprised if Harry Davidson has done it as a Schottische.) It went off all right; they all knew it and the tenor sax hooted and honked in a manner that is now popular but which would have earned him the dead sack in my day. Emboldened, I followed with *Blue Moon*, *Stardust*, *Ain’t Misbehavin’* and a few others which I hoped were regarded as evergreens, and I thought we were getting through the evening very nicely; only of course I had forgotten about the dancers. Just as I was trying to think of a nice waltz, a sharp-faced youth in a deerskin jacket approached and said “Hey—when are you gonna make with the Rock?”

There was some brief palaver among the flex-section, Rocky said something I didn’t catch, and the next minute the air was alive with electronic twangs

and thrums and booms and the room was filled with jerking, pan-faced dancers. This was a set-back from which I never really recovered; the Jet men had taken over, and I was pretty well a passenger. The chords weren't so difficult, but the tunes were written in the cracks, so to speak, and I didn't envy the job the tenor sax had. Suddenly, I saw what was different about him; I noticed the lines on his face, and a bald patch that was now showing. He was coping, all right, but he was an *old-timer*, like me.

There is something undeniably hypnotic about rock music, and it certainly made the time flash by; so that it came as a surprise when Rocky called "Last waltz!" (I wondered if this were usual, or if it might be a concession for my sake.) When I suggested (I didn't care by now) *Always, Ramona*, and *Who's Taking You Home?* no one argued, and I even think the sax man smiled. Off we went into a cosy, *one, two, three*, with cross hands, tinkling arpeggios, and some Victor Silvester-ish sax, smooth as cream.

After "The Queen," played *accelerando*, Rocky paid me the staggering sum of two pounds five, but I think he was stretching it a bit when he said I'd been quite a help. I was picking my way through a maze of cable with the idea of slipping quietly away when the sax player stopped me. "Do you mind," he said, "if I have your address?" Not thinking, I gave it to him. He wrote it on the back of a card.



"I love you for just being you."

THE RETURN OF FAUST

By B. A. Young

The Arts Council is offering a prize for a new translation of the libretto of Gounod's *Faust*, and if the translation (undated and un-attributed) in my edition is anything to go by, *il était*, to borrow a phrase from Mephistopheles, *temps*. A version which renders:

*Un rat plus poltron que brave,
Et plus laid que beau,
Logeait au fond d'une cave,
Sous un vieux tonneau*

as:

A rat, more coward than brave,
And with an exceedingly ugly head,
Lodged in a sort of hole or cave,
Under an ancient hogshead

could hardly satisfy even the most reactionary opera company.

Still, the French text, now I come to look at it again, isn't so perfect either. This selling of souls to the devil, and drawing of swords at the mention of a lady's name, and all that jazz—it may have done for 1859, but isn't it the tiniest bit square for the nineteen-sixties? It's not only translating *Faust* needs; it's bringing into line with contemporary thought, like *Carmen Jones*.

To refresh the memory of those who have seen Gounod's masterpiece less than a score of times, the plot runs like this:

Act I: Faust trades his soul in part-exchange for youth and an *affaire* with Marguerite. Act II: The Kermesse. Marguerite's brother Valentine goes off to the wars¹, leaving her in the care of Siebel, a boy still apparently short of puberty. Mephistopheles gaily interrupts the proceedings to assure Valentine of his impending murder by one of the assembled company, and Siebel of his inability from then on to touch flowers without their dying. Faust sees, but fails to pick up, Marguerite. Act III: Faust and Mephistopheles place a casket of jewels on

¹Against the French, I suspect: Faust was a German and died in 1544, so presumably we are now in 1543, the year before the Treaty of Crépy.

Marguerite's doorstep; naïve child! she *puts them on* and is seduced by the end of that act and pregnant by the start of the next. By the end of it she is accursed by Valentine, too; he has got back from those wars and been killed by Faust in the duel that not surprisingly blew up when he discovered the form. In Act V, Marguerite has had her baby, killed it while the balance of her mind was disturbed, and been condemned (rather unfairly by our standards) to death. Faust and Mephistopheles try to let her out of gaol, but she is too mad to come, and in any case dies a few minutes later and is carried to heaven by angels. We are left to imagine what happens to Faust.

How recast all this fustian for the sophisticated 'sixties? Well, the most obvious point is that anyone with a soul to sell to-day will give the audience less of a *frisson* by selling it to the devil than to a business corporation. So here is scientist Faust, who has discovered a new antibiotic drug which will arrest the onset of old age. Overcome by the prospect of a world eternally full of teenagers, he is about to commit suicide when he is visited by the Chairman of Pan-Galactic Drugs, Ltd., Sir Mephistopheles Satan.

Sir Mephistopheles snatches the barbiturates from Faust's hand and tempts him to put the stuff on the market. In a few bars of recitative the unhappy scientist is signed up for twenty-four years at ten thousand a year, with a Bentley, a yacht, an expense-account at the Caprice and a promise to be introduced to Marguerite, one of those French-type film-stars with profiles like bulldogs.

Act II is no longer a Kermesse, but the Beaulieu Jazz Festival. Valentine, Marguerite's current husband, has been summoned to a CND meeting in Birmingham and asks Cyril, a teenage rock singer, to look after his wife while he is away. (Siebel's part needs building up. He gets two star songs, *Si la bonheur* and the Flower Song, but plays only a marginal role in the action.)

Faust and Sir Mephistopheles arrive, the former looking for Marguerite, the latter investigating the drug market. Sir Mephistopheles offers a free fix to anyone who wants it—it is wine in the French text, but the Beaulieu Festival is not licensed—but Valentine and Cyril, remembering what happened at Beaulieu once before, oppose him. Enraged, Sir Mephistopheles tells Valentine that he is shortly to be divorced, and Cyril that every disc he cuts will be recorded by Presley a week later. (He is, of course, a big shareholder in EMI, RCA, Pye, Decca, etc.)

So that when, in the next act, Cyril takes workpressings of his new records to Marguerite, they are ready-made floperoos. But in the middle of the Record Song, as it now is, he has the idea of singing only jazzed-up Schönberg and Stravinsky from then



PUNCTUATION

by STEADman!?,



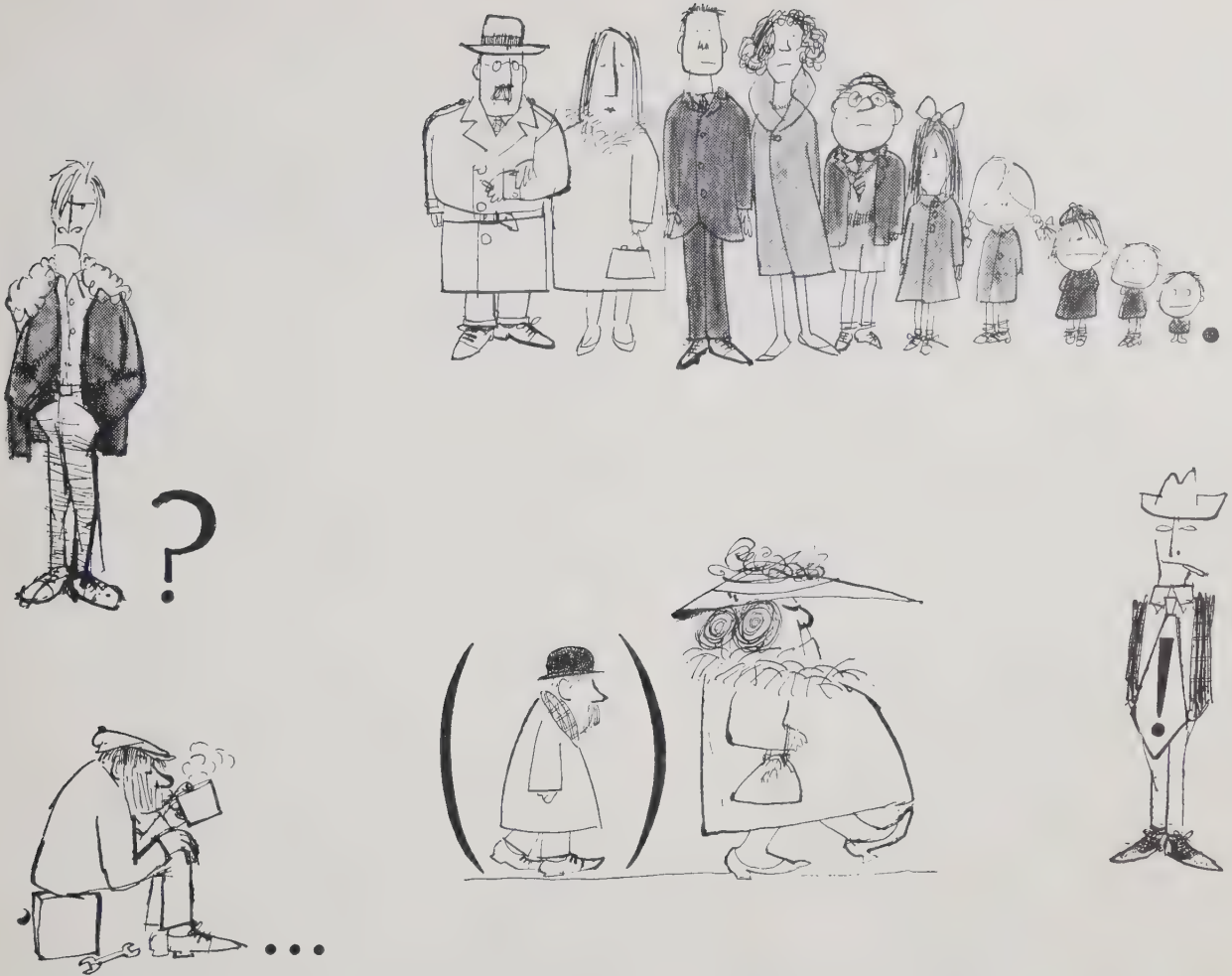
on; Elvis will never get around to that. Off he trots, and on come Faust and Sir Mephistopheles who leave at Marguerite's door a free three-month treatment of Youthamin, guaranteed to keep you young for life. Is it any wonder that Marguerite, her husband in Birmingham, should ask the inventor of this miracle-cosmetic into her room to show her how it works? . . .

The inevitable happens . . .

In Act IV, Marguerite writes to Aunt Millicent of the *Woman's Familiar* (she is more likely to do this than go to church, as in the present version); but Sir Mephistopheles buys up the paper, determined through her to keep Faust under his thumb. So all she gets is a mocking answer of "Have nothing more to do with this boy, dear" while a chorus offstage chants "Send me a stamped addressed envelope" to the tune of the *Dies Irae*. And then Valentine returns from his long absence with the CND.

The divorce is fixed in a few pages of passionate music.

Faust and the sinister Chairman come back from a brief sales visit to New York to find Marguerite in a



nursing-home awaiting an operation for appendicitis. She is out of her mind at the thought of all the contracts she ought to be fulfilling and the adverse publicity she will get from her divorce. They try to lure her away from the nursing-home to go for a little holiday in Sweden, where a girl can have an operation in peace; but she has got it into her mind that her trouble is due to her having used Youthamin ("My doctor keeps telling me it has these side-effects") and she won't budge. But as soon as the great last-act trio is done a chorus of film-executives appears and assures her everything is forgiven. Her soul is carried up to Hollywood, while Sir Mephistopheles stands gnashing his teeth and Faust is left to work out the remaining twenty-three years of his contract.

Curtain.

Mephistopheles, incidentally, in the original text is a *comic* character, but I have a feeling that a comic treatment of the opera, with some such name as *Getting Goethe's Garter*, would hardly go down at the Wells, let alone with the Carl Rosa. If anything, I

think a suggestion of Hammer Films horror would be the most likely to catch on; in fact I often wonder why they haven't made a film of Faust already and would be delighted to help script it if they ever do. The great advantage of Gounod's music is that it only has one universal emotion ("a kind of bathroom music" it was called by a former Covent Garden director) and the plot can therefore be moulded into any desired form without—and this is absolutely vital—a single semiquaver of the score being changed.

OUR BOOKS ARE OUR OWN

By Alex Atkinson

It is not generally known that Edgar Wallace once came through to me at a spiritualist meeting and gave me to understand (in a gruff voice, through a fat woman medium with shingled hair and a smell of recently consumed bread and butter) that he was keeping an eye on my career, which at that time consisted in rewriting all the Hemingway stories I could remember with different characters, plots and settings, and trying to get money for them from English editors to buy food. This snatch of autobiography is relevant on two counts. In the first place, I never sold a single neo-Hemingway, and not many other people did either: the Hemingway influence was pretty well stillborn, although there must have been scores of us at it just then, chopping up our sentences into lumps of three words at a time, swaggering into rooms trying to look like matadors or ambulance drivers. In the second place, if you examine the situation with any care and honesty at all, Edgar Wallace himself emerges as the last of the English writers to have been influenced by Americans and achieve fame and success. His models (and he's perfectly at liberty to come through again and correct me if I'm wrong) were legion, and they wrote for the press at so much a spine-chilling word.

Oh, you can throw in Leslie Charteris too, if you like; if you want to be really impish you can point out the sonorous, jangling echoes of Melville in J. C. Powys; but Wallace was the last, solid example of transatlantic influence. After him the wind began to blow once again in the opposite direction, and before anyone knew what was happening William Faulkner was trying to be an American A. E. Coppard, *The New Yorker* was modelling itself on Elizabeth Taylor, and thriller-writers in California were adding two loosely-draped nymphomaniacs to a measure of John Buchan and serving with a squeeze of alum. Consequently, at the present moment I am able to report that the influence of American on British literature is absolutely nil, and I defy anyone to produce evidence to the contrary. I'm not going to say you won't find a *trace* here and there. Few grim-visaged composers of humorous pieces, for instance, emerge entirely unscathed from their boyhood skirmishes with Mark Twain; even in the *Evening Standard* you will come across an occasional thing called a short story that bears the clumsy imprint of an early John O'Hara tale damaged in transit; there is more than one writer the memory of whose love affair with Runyon's present tense can still bring a lightly-tripping passage to a grinding halt.



Dividing Line

Dainty little flying thing,
Tiny body, fragile wing,
Art thou Butterfly or moth?
Eatest nectar or fine cloth?
Help me, help me to decide,
Before I spray insecticide.

— J. A. JEFFS



“Good heavens, do you suppose she meant that—about resigning from the Young Conservatives?”

But these are trivial excrescences on the smooth, virgin surface of our current English literature. Breathes there a man with soul so twisted that he can seriously point to any American force that went to the making of Graham Greene’s mystico-sexual extravaganzas? Where are the C. P. Snows of Brooklyn Heights? What Episcopalian hand or eye could have fashioned the broad symmetry of a Pritchett story? What do they know of Ivy Compton-Burnett who only Ivy Compton-Burnett know? Does anyone really imagine that John Braine’s Vodi sprang a-mouldering from *Esquire*? What’s Gunther to Durrell, or he to Perelman? Who begat Amis but someone very like Smollett? Do you ask me to believe that Scott Fitzgerald cried Aldous Huxley! or let slip the plots of Waugh? Such questions are idle, foolish, orotund and rhetorical, and so is the whole search for this mythical American influence. So also, if it comes to that, are the following sharp commands, yet they may serve to remind us of the gulf separating to-morrow’s Hawthornes from to-morrow’s Thackerays. Three paces forward, all those English picaresque novelists owing more than a row of pregnant dots to Henry Miller! (*Yes, yes, Mr. Durrell. Presently, presently.*) Stand up and be counted, all you Kentish Kerouacs, you Ferlinghettis from Finchley, you Norman Mailers from North Marston, you cute Cornish Capotes! (*A few meek chirpings are heard from the rear of the hall, but subside in giggles.*) Number

from the right, all you pale strivers who fell into the Thurber trap! (*There is a confused rush for the exit.*) Will the English Peter de Vries please take the stand? (*A scuffle breaks out between two bearded essayists, but nothing comes of it.*) Is there an Edmund Wilson in the house? (*A young chap called Colin, heavily sweated, bangs frantically on the door and is refused admission.*) Fall out any English Dorothy Parkers! (*Yes, yes, Miss Spain, we know, we know.*) Form a queue over here all those who admit to being under the influence of Salinger! (*Moody silence.*) Or Tynan! (*A voice: "He's English, dammit!"*) Or James Jones, or what's that lady's name again who keeps on about Peyton Place? (*After a short prayer of thanksgiving, the meeting breaks up.*)



As for the press, there is a misbegotten legend to be cleared away here. It is still widely believed that our English newspapers suffer from exposure to degrading contact with yellow Yankee rags. The facts are different. From an artistic point of view (and that's a hell of a view to take of any newspaper) the English Scottish and Welsh papers are among the best in the world, and by comparison with American papers, many of them are daily gems of literature and art. Others, again, are so loaded with schoolboyish sensationalism and dirt that they would be suppressed after a week by the outraged inhabitants of any American town you care to mention, including Las Vegas. In the matter of sordid muck on the one hand, and sound journalism on the other, our papers long ago left their American counterparts standing.

The things that American newspapers specialise in are (a) a suffocating provincial dullness (b) sheer quantity of words and avoirdupois weight, achieved by making sure that every other page contains at least four times as much advertising as editorial matter (the United States is ruled by a President, a Congress, a House of Representatives and a handful of advertising agencies), and (c) drivel. I have never understood why our papers have not succumbed to the influence of drivel, for it is obviously lucrative. To produce enough square inches of it, you have to get into the habit of regarding any child with a ball-point pen as a journalist, and any dotard with a sheet of unlined paper as a political cartoonist. That seems simple enough, and I suppose there is still time for our papers to cash in and catch up, if they want to. What's needed is more crudity of draughtsmanship in our political caricatures, combined with an abysmal naïveté of outlook and comment on the part of the artists; at least six "columnists" per paper, with different names but an equal ability to turn out eight hundred words so subtly that not one is memorable; news photographs so patently posed that they would not be out of place in great-grandmama's family album; photographs of street accidents, sudden death and gruesome murder with as much emphasis as possible on oozing blood and weeping relatives; fat "magazine" sections consisting of close-up photographs of food, indigestible half-pages of limp aphorisms, and gossip about rich television heroes; gratuitous gobs of fatuous information (such as "lapwings have been known to make sounds while still in the egg," or "George Washington's wife was called Martha") jammed in willy-nilly at the bottom of columns; "advice" pages designed to give a general picture of the country as one vast, backward suburb inhabited by adults who can't remember the names of Sophia Loren's last film, and anaemic acne-ridden teenagers eaten away with anxiety about how far to carry their nightly bouts of love-play. To all this there should be added a minimum of eleven misprints per thousand words, a sincere effort to leave two news stories in every issue maddeningly unfinished in the middle of their second paragraphs, and a dogged insistence on printing the name of every last guest at every last wedding for a hundred miles around, thus creating a six-page desert of boredom so unutterable that the reader turns with relief to read the twelve solid pages of close-printed used-car ads.



There are influences here for the asking. The trouble with Britain is that she is laughably slow at seizing opportunities: and that, curiously enough, is what Americans admire about her.





MY LIFE AND HARD SEATS

By Edmund Ward

“I’ve seen these fads before. When I was a young lad in the business. They said the yo-yo would kill the cinema. Then mixed hiking. Hitler. Then television. Now bingo. And bowling alleys. I’ve been in this business too long to give up. I remember the golden days. Every cinema manager with his own dress suit and up to two clean shirts a week. You didn’t always start with your own, of course. I inherited mine, when I was under-manager of the old Roxy in Manchester. All due to *Broken Blossoms*. I’d warned the manager, the pianist had warned him, two projectionists had quit because of it and even his doctor was worried. But he would keep on showing it for his own benefit. On a Sunday morning, halfway up the stalls with a sponge, sobbing and breathing heavily until you couldn’t see the screen for a light mist. Too much for him in the end and the suit fitted me a treat.

“Still had it when I went to the Astoria. That was a cinema. One of these Grand Dukes wanted to buy it and ship it home stone by stone. That was in 1934. A palace. Restaurant upstairs with real cloths on the tables and waitresses and a dance hall and a carpet so thick you had to use beaters to clear the lobby after a Tarzan film. Buster Crabbe. Weissmuller. That’s when the cinema was an influence. We used to get complaints from the superintendent of the local swimming pool. He couldn’t count the money for all the yowling. Kids were swinging on clotheslines off the tops of the changing cubicles and taking it in turns to be crocodiles and get strangled. It was a near thing sometimes, too.

“But it was the organ that really packed the customers in. To see this mighty instrument rising, full of lights and pedals and a tricky bit of treble in ‘Alone,’ that was a sight. They didn’t care what he played, they just wanted to see it lumber up and down. Never heard applause like it.

“Ah, the ’thirties. People used to spend the whole day at the cinema then, families of ’em. All through the afternoon for the children’s shows, up to the café for a spot of tea and then back down again for a serious piece of wringing out by Bette Davis or somebody. Brought out the very best in human nature. You could borrow a handkerchief from anybody in those days. Course, with Miss Davis, most people came supplied but there was always the odd convert.

“I was glad I’d seen all this when the war came. The Astoria was commandeered for an Army store—more than two million sets of underwear went up in smoke when it was bombed and I cried like a child when I heard about it. I’ve never changed my laundry since without thinking of that night. I’d been moved to a cinema called the Cosy then. A very different class of celluloid, I might tell you.

“The Cosy was a cinema on the outskirts of a town in the Midlands, halfway between the ordnance depot and a barracks. A conversion job, two Wesleyan chapels knocked together with a balcony too near the roof for comfort unless you were bird-nesting. It was the lobby distressed me most—especially after those



“Listen! That’s the world, baby doll.”

acres at the Roxy. If there were two customers at the paybox, you didn't have room to tear tickets, let alone bow in welcome.

"But the public were wonderful. During the war, you remember, sweat and sacrifice all the go, and unpatriotic to complain. We had one projectionist—Ministry of Labour appointment, directed there from a microscope factory because he was left-handed—who hung his overcoat over the projection slot and four houses sat in complete darkness listening to the sound-track without a murmur. And the queues! You could show anything as long as it moved and made a noise. We had a *King Kong* season that lasted for three months and when the film shrank I advertised it as 'How To Take Care of Your Pet Monkey' and showed it for another two.

"How they loved musicals! The customers learned the words and music, you had about ten good boys on mouth-organs, some of the brass-band fellows with any of their instruments they could smuggle past the paybox—I had one chap pay half-price for a euphonium disguised as his young brother many a time—a fair turn-out from the colliery choir and there it was. As spirited a musical evening as you could wish for.

"Not all the customers liked it, of course. You always get the odd hundred or so—mostly couples—who aren't really interested in the film. I'll never forget those back rows at the Cosy. *Babylon!* You could have written a book about it. A text-book, mind! We tried flashing a notice on the screen 'Film due to finish in ten minutes.' This was no good, they weren't watching. I tried sending in usherettes to warn them. The first one just disappeared, new uniform and all. The second two came out shaken and resigned on the spot. I finally solved it with a dog I borrowed from the butcher.

"Soldiers were the worst. There were more hair-raising reasons for a swift capitulation put forward on that back row than politicians dreamed of. Don't talk to me about current affairs courses. Some of them used to spend entire furloughs at the Cosy and complain when the water in the washrooms wasn't hot enough.

"Food was another drawback. Eating and entertainment are inseparable in the English mind and they were used to a clear run at a monster range of chocolates, peanuts, ice-cream, all that stuff. Some of the sterner patrons could take it out on a swift gnaw at the seat in front but others suffered. There was a fish-and-chip shop called Percy's up the road with an erratic business balanced on his allocation for cooking fat. All it needed was one whisper of 'Percy's frying to-night' to clear the Cosy like an epidemic. Often as not, the rumour would be started by some cunning lout in the queue outside.

"Ah, we fought a good war at the Cosy. The cinema did its bit. At one time we had barbed wire up over the orchestra pit. This was after some Marine

"Mr. R. M. Lewis, who prosecuted, said that Mr. E. J. Bird, a keeper on the Bristol Estate, saw a man leave a black car on the road between Chevington and Saxham, and go into a field where there were pheasants with a rifle."—*Bury Free Press*

And a few blank partridges.

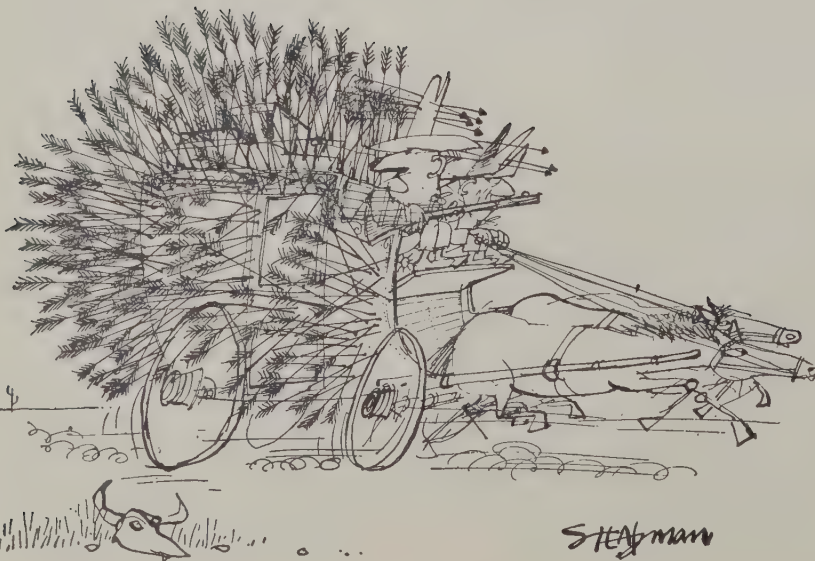
Levels

MY heart sinks low
Each time I go
To clean the bath inside.

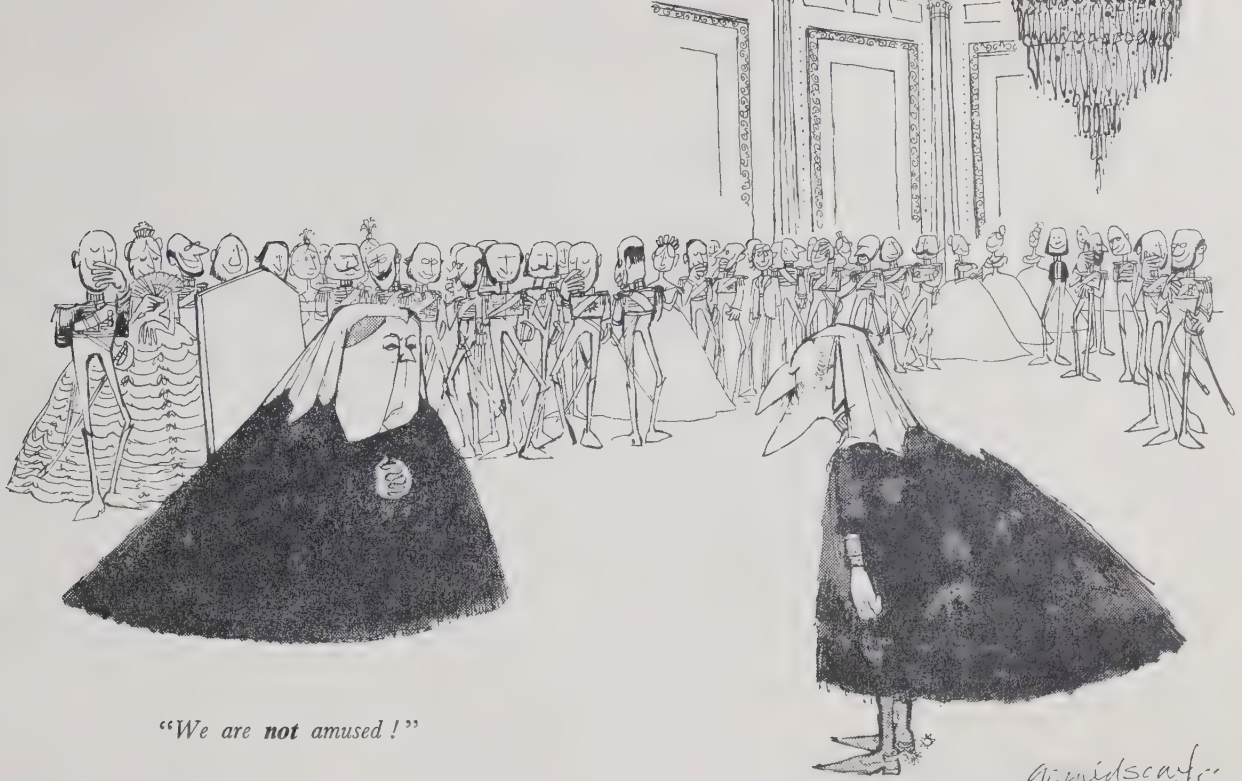
The daily score
Is clearly four
Distinctive marks of tide.

Now wouldn't you
Suppose that two
Might sometimes coincide?

— NINA BENTLEY



"Injuns!"



"We are *not* amused!"

in the audience woke up during the hand-to-hand bit in a war film and bayoneted Sidney Greenstreet. My wife darned the screen as well as she could but it was never the same. We had the only cinema in the business which played *Lassie Come Home* as *Scarface*.

"All the same, I wasn't sorry to move on when the war ended. My *Broken Blossoms* dress suit smelling of mothballs and carpet hurting my feet again, and a commissionaire to shout at the end of the queue for you. They were still keen on the cinema in those days. I know one man who laid the foundations of a sizeable fortune just selling bootlaces to people waiting to see *Gone with the Wind*.

"Lashings of colour in films again. Did your heart good to see it. And 3-D. Those cardboard glasses. Every little kid in town wearing 'em, tapping his way along the High Street, best advert you could wish for, even if a few schoolteachers did object. The wide screen, too. That took a bit of getting used to. You couldn't fill all those seats in the corners at the front unless you kept a close watch on the customers. I used to let the old boys on pension have these seats a bit cheaper and one of them came out after a Jane Russell feature thinking it had been a film about giraffes. It wasn't all jam, though. Some of the customers started softening their heads with television and the rot set in.

"Oh, but we fought back. Epics, for example. Good, clean stories about Romans and that, some from the Bible. Big films in the best sense with a proper interval. Long films. I remember with some of the first ones we had to have a masseur in the lobby to straighten people out so they could run for the last bus. Monsters, too, and life on other planets. You don't get that sort of concern with everyday happenings in a bingo parlour. Nudes are another weapon. I'm not keen on films like that myself, I had enough with the back row of the *Cosy*, but the big men in this industry have supplied me with a quality product and a good living for a matter of thirty or forty years now.

"What if more than a thousand cinemas have closed down since the war? All-in wrestling, bingo, bowling alleys. Pah! Nobody can sleep or concentrate on their courting with all that noise going on. It'll pass.

"Turn that heating up, Charlie. Parch 'em a bit. We've got a load of ice-cream to sell."

Men, Women and Children

"My feet are killing me."



GROWING UP IN MEADOW PROSPECT

By Gwyn Thomas

The acoustics of childhood are terrible. The basic failure to give or receive messages up to the age of twelve accounts for most of the bewilderment that keeps many faces rigid from then to the grave. Most of what a child hears is muffled or deplorable. That he assembles the elements of some kind of sanity before it gets time for manhood is the most formidable bit of craftsmanship in our experiences. That most of the sanity is not shaken off the plate again before the age of thirty is due only to the fact that we learn to keep very still.

According to the form-book I should have been well placed in this business of projecting myself in childhood, of establishing the sort of identity with which I could feel blithe and secure. Looking forward shrewdly at the age of three I would have said that I was the child most likely to receive every type of love and devotion listed in the child welfare manuals. It may have turned out that way. If so, someone must have been using a torn copy of the manual or reading in a poor light.

According to tradition and most fiction, the youngest of twelve children and the eighth of eight brothers can afford to be smug. He is the Benjamin, the chubby mascot on whom the distilled affection of all his elders is showered, over whom the fanatical love of his brothers is laid like a shield. I must have stood in the wrong shower, and there was something wrong about that shield too. I was chubby all right, but from that moment on the tradition dropped down dead. Either they had not heard of mascots or the name Benjamin had died on the wind.

Happiness is largely a matter of timing, of expert communication. The great

lump of our malaise is made up of good and loving intentions that were put on the wrong train and landed at the wrong moment. At timing, as an earthly art, I was never more than a Martian. Often my brothers would have a close harmony session in the kitchen during which I would be boomed out of countenance and told to pipe down because my treble was too piercing. The singing done, the table would be laid for supper. My brothers, sung out, would sit in silence. I would feel an urge to show my kinship with them and give out with the loudest hymn or carol I knew. This would always turn out to be the one song able to give toothache to growing Celts in a small room with cutlery exposed. Either I was chased off to bed or fitted with a rough cosy of pillows. If I tried spinning a top it was usually within earshot of a brother who was writing an essay on the slave trade, and was allergic to the sound of whipping. If a brother was entertaining a sweetheart in the front room this was the moment I would choose to recruit a dozen friends to play "Bomberino" to impress the sweetheart with what a gay lot we were. This bomberino is a game where half the players form a sort of crouching crocodile against a wall and the remaining players leap as high up the crocodile as they can. I played this game against the outer wall of the front room. We played it violently with loud shouting to induce a mood of summer abandon in the lovers within. I did not know at the time but the game put the whole house, especially the front room, in jeopardy. The inner wall would flake, the piano-lid would be dislodged, and every leap produced a thud so disconcerting that we would have sent Cellini, at his most ardent, back to his silver work. Always the wrong foot in the wrong place. Every time I whistled up into a blue sky I got thunder back for my trouble.

Once, after a long tour of the Book of Genesis in the Sunday School, I told them the story of Jacob, Joseph and Benjamin. I explained to them how Benjamin, the youngest, had been beloved by his brothers, but they missed this part because my father was in the front room rehearsing his glee group and shaking the tiles off with the volume. Then I told them how Joseph's brothers had taken him to the vale of Dotham and left him to die in a pit. They got this part very plain and they asked me how I was fixed for a stroll on the following Saturday to a part of the mountain that was full of fissures.

So I ceased trying to co-exist, to assuage. I would wait for their every moment of disquietude and squat on it like a waiting vulture. If, chafing at the



*"Arthur is very discerning.
He doesn't like anybody."*



approach of some important date, a shirt would ravel, a lace would break, or if they appeared for the first time in some adult absurdity like a wing collar and bow-tie, I would follow them around staring until I felt myself nibbling at the last morsel of their assurance. Or I would make a remark meant to sting or enrage. And I must say that within the vocabulary limit of a juvenile I could be as noxiously sub-acid as the uninvited fringe of a Royal garden party. Quite often I could have purchased security, if not happiness, if I had kept my mouth shut for ten seconds. But I had to communicate. And before the last word was out, I was pelting away from the wrath to come.

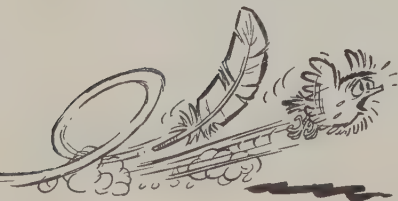
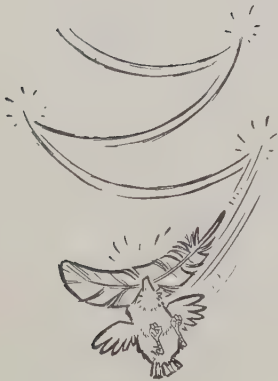


They fixed finally on a form of punishment that would inflict maximum indignity on me and the least wear and tear on them. They would fling me into the recess below the stairs. This place was roughly equivalent to what, I believe, they call in American gaols "the hole." It had a strong door bolted from the outside. When the door was closed it was as dark as the underside of a dungeon, as airless as the bed of the sea. And I was the boy who knew. I was a freeman of that borough. The place was full of ancient clothes that no one would accept the acrid duty of throwing out. And there were some potatoes in a far corner stored there in reply to a threatened famine of long before. They didn't help.

Normally I could depend on making my first trip into this crypt about 5 p.m. following a round of impertinence at the tea-table after seeing my hand beaten time and again to the sandwich plate by fingers longer and stronger than mine. I would rage in the darkness, bang my hands, fling myself against the door and hurl abuse at my gaolers in ways that have not been bettered in any prison drama. But the only reaction that came from the kitchen was a sound of tremendous eating and happy laughter as the brethren noted what a better place the kitchen was without me. Some of my assaults on the door were muffled by the curtain of old coats that had been hanging there since they were last used as disguise on a toll-gate burning job in 1837. But they cut down on possible bruising so I did not bother to unhook them. Sometimes I would fall tired and sit on the floor, thinking of other notable convicts. My all-time favourite was Edmond Dantès whose story had been read to me fitfully by my father in the hour before opening time. He had a way of constantly looking at the clock while reading, and he would often flick over a page. For close on a year and a half he kept Dantès and myself on the hop. I brooded often on Dantès as a tunneller. But any tunnelling from that calaboose would have led me straight into the hands of those who would regard it as a birthday treat to put me back there. When they let me out I would behave with a cunning submissiveness, producing a few tears and asking gentle questions about the crafts and hobbies then popular with the various members of the family. The answers to those queries got shorter as the questioner began to suspect that I was planning some looting action against their stock of fretwork, cork-work, sheet-music or modelling clay. It usually took me about fifteen minutes to assemble the materials for a fresh trip to the chokey.

The day I beat my own record was the wettest day in a short, drenched summer. It was the day chosen for the Sunday School outing. I was up about five and went coursing up and down the hillside street, shaking my fist at the sky and explaining to anyone I could see through the thick mist and rain that all these phenomena were the augurs of a heat wave. I was violently clipped twice by people startled at hearing someone awake and prophesying at that hour in the morning, and denounced once as being either a satirist or the sectary who was laying on this sort of weather on behalf of an opposed denomination.

I got back to the house to breakfast and dress. I was wet and fractious. They told me that in view of the weather and the world's general air of mourning, I could leave my bucket and spade at home and wear my new overcoat. The bucket and spade sanction I could ride because my urge to dig and shovel had



never ripened. But I stuck at the coat. It was a black article, bought deliberately large to allow for growth, and they had had their eyes fixed well beyond puberty. If I ever grew out of that thing it would be by way of one of the sleeves. It came down to my boots and the velvet collar stood a clear four inches from the back of my neck as if trying to work out our relationship. I told them they'd see me dead before I'd wear a coat of that sort on a Sunday School treat. They thought seriously about that for a minute or two. They told me that either I would go to Barry with the overcoat or into the cwch without it. I tried the coat on. I looked in the mirror. I was like the senior priest in some sullen brotherhood. I took the coat off, opened the door of the cwch and latched it behind me. I did not bang my fists or protest. I sat instantly on the floor and told the surrounding shadows that compared with me Dantès had been on Butlin territory.

I was released under the hour. They were worried that I might have crept into the corner where the ancient potatoes mouldered and committed a quiet hara-kiri just to embarrass them. They also wanted me to help them in diverting a mountain stream which had broken loose from its banks and was headed straight for the kitchen—a Mississippi manoeuvre that happened about fourteen times a year. I worked listlessly with the sandbags, for in those moods I was with



"Why the devil can't you pick a space your own size?"

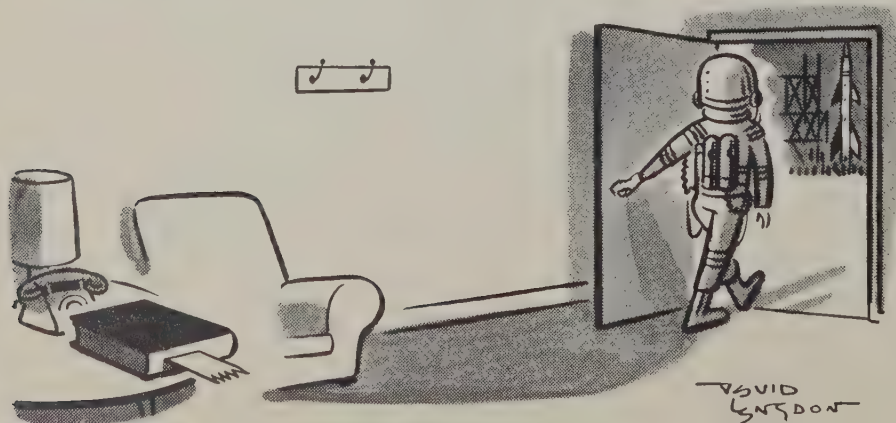
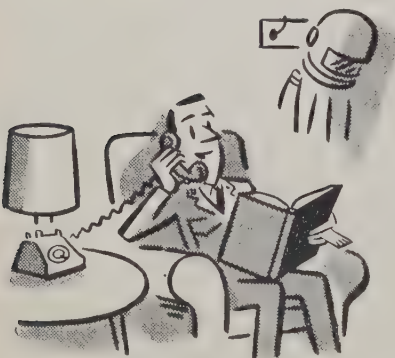
the stream. When I finished I started on a brisk round of social service. I stood outside the room where one brother was rehearsing "It is enough" from *Elijah*, a piece of oratorio that really put the helmet on a rainy day, and kept up a distracting buzzing sound which suggested that Elijah might be talking back. Then I deflated the rugby ball of the brother who had just been made captain of the village's junior fifteen. From there I went on to pouring glue over the clay of the brother who was trying to add sculpture as an extra tassel to the Celtic fringe. When these deeds were uncovered I was in and out of the hole like a piston.

The last trip was at half past seven. My eldest brother was putting on his tie, a very long black one crocheted for him by his girl. She must have measured his torso with a loose tape or become bemused by the play of the needles. It was long enough to hinder walking. I stared at it and started on the kind of corrosive banter that was my standard cry in the darkness at the time. I asked him if he was headed for a wooing or a hanging. He advanced on me with the tie strongly noosed for action. Then he changed his mind and threw me into the cwch. When he left the house the place was empty and silent. I was in for a spell. I arranged my back comfortably against the wall and told Surajah Dowlah to move up.

Logically I should have stayed there until about ten. But my father had had a strange evening at the club and had been thrown out of his routine. He had lost two arguments and one game of cribbage and had failed to make the bill on the annual concert with a recitation he had written himself about John Lee, the man they could not hang, a man and topic that so obsessed him that I spent two clear years of my childhood thinking he was Lee, hiding his identity and stroking his neck. He had also run across a few copies of the Salvation Army weekly *The War Cry* which contained some of the sharpest things the Army had ever said about drink and neglectful parents. He walked home a good hour before time with big, sad apocalyptic thoughts trailing about him. He came into the kitchen. I was half asleep in the crypt and just vaguely stirring. He kicked the wainscoting and shouted to the mice to clear off before they ran into cats or poison. I raised myself above mouse-level with a few clear shouts. My father let me out. The sight of me set off gushers of pity. He led me on to the flagged area we called the "back paving." He pointed to the sky. Its lower regions were a brilliant crimson with reflections from the great steel ovens being tapped at Merthyr three or four mountains to the north. The sense of doom, triggered off by his brush with failure and remorse in the club, became passionate in my father. He pointed at the scarlet flickers. "Do you know what they mean?" he said "No." I had not heard about the steel trade and furnace-tapping. When I had noticed the glare before I had dismissed it as a fair comment on most of the things that went on during the day. I was open to an explanation. "It is the glow of apocalypse. It means the world is going to end to-morrow."

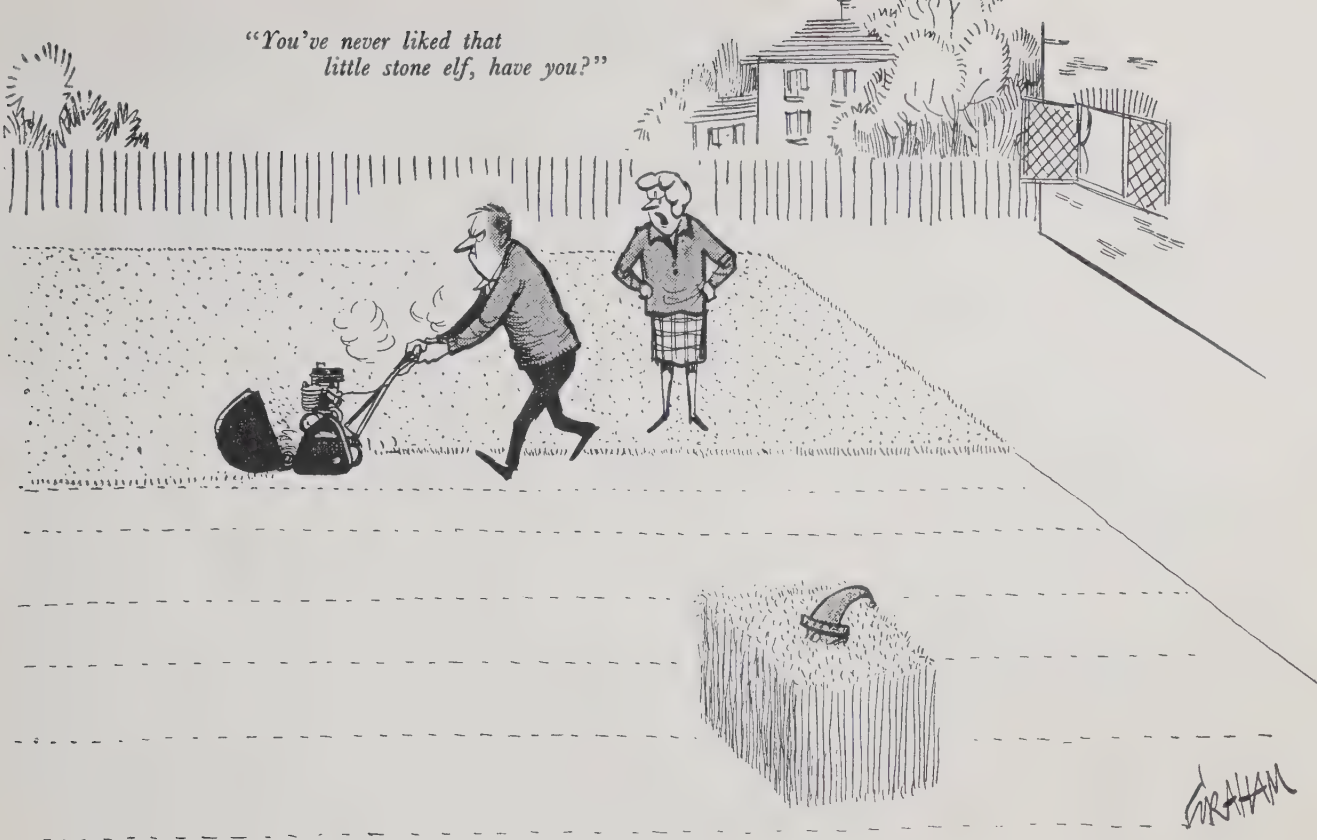
He was clearly expecting from me some cry or hug of dependent affection that would dilute his bitterness. "Didn't you hear what I said, boy? It means the world is going to end to-morrow." "And a good job too," I said, with maximum savagery.

He led me back to the hole so that he could have half an hour of peace before supper.



DAVID
LONDON

"You've never liked that little stone elf, have you?"



FRIENDSHIP

By Adele Greeff

Friends are the best investment in the world. They yield a high rate of interest. Friends are the people you invite to lunch when you have bought a new blue suit. Two is the best number for such an occasion. They then can play verbal tennis, with your looks as the ball, for the entire meal. You have no idea how wonderful you look in green. Red also is very becoming. Every colour is mentioned except blue. There's nothing that makes you feel richer than to have so much interest paid you.

Friends get in your hair and stay there. Whatever fashion comes along—page boy, windblown, Italian boy, poodle, pony tail, pouf—that's the style for you, although you notice they never change their own.

Friends don't just sit around telling you how wonderful you are the way you are. They wouldn't then be friends, but lovers. It would be the millen-

nium, Nirvana, Paradise Regained, the Ideal State, Erewhon or, more likely, an insane asylum.

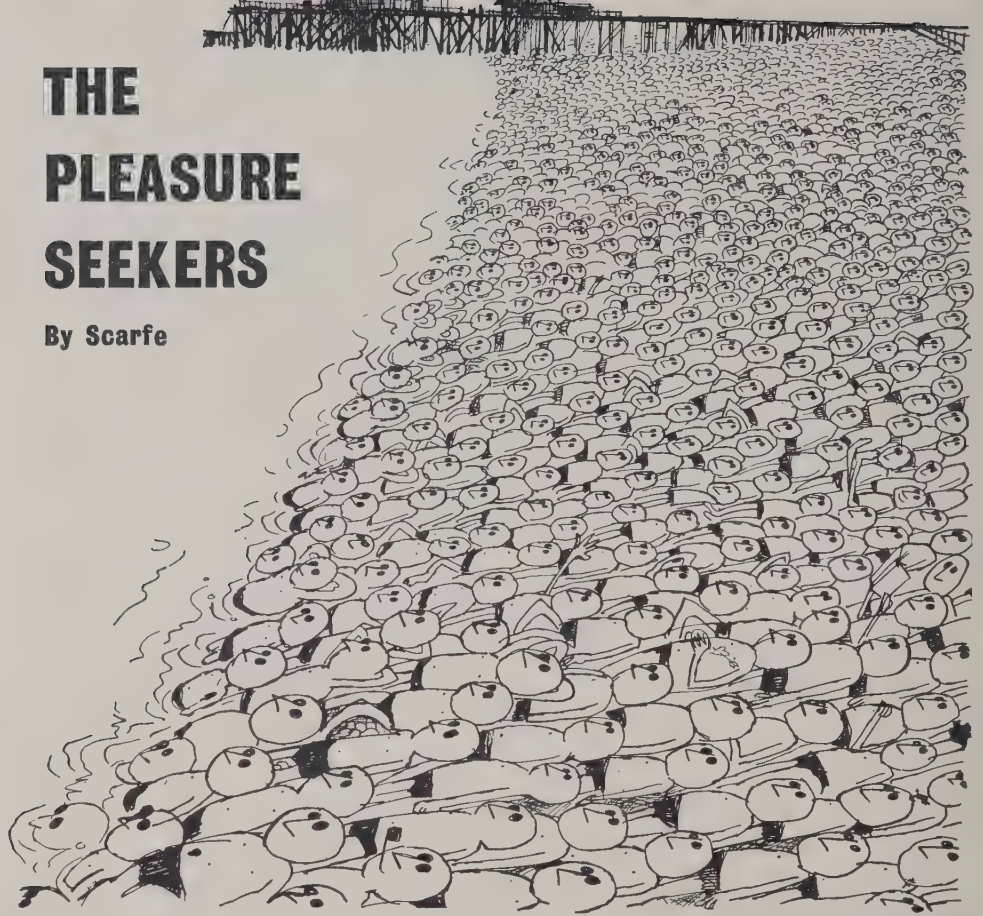
My friends are such good friends that their passion for changing things doesn't stop with my person. They come into my house and change things. And I let them do it. I haven't taken Mr. Carnegie's course, but if I didn't let them do it I know I'd lose them forever. In fact they would become enemies. They would go around saying "Oh Adele and that house of hers. It could be so attractive if she'd just let somebody help her with it." This would mean that I hadn't allowed "somebody" to move the couch from the left side of the fireplace to the right.

My really dear friends get into my bureau drawers and closet. I was almost so unsporting as to call one of them a thief, once, when suddenly I found that all my nylons had disappeared. Part of the game is that you're never supposed to ask where anything has been put. You're supposed to know instinctively. I almost ruined my batting average over this one. But my good fairy came to my rescue by burning out the light bulb in my closet. I had to get up on a chair to put in a new one. There were my nylons, packed in screw-top glass jars found in the kitchen and arranged in a row at the back of the closet shelf. Why, didn't I know? Nylons last longer when kept away from the air.

One perfectly darling friend of mine has a magnificent sense of arrangement, doesn't know that living-room mantelpieces are a sort of proving

THE PLEASURE SEEKERS

By Scarfe



ground for marriage. As I am an American wife, I know that the living-room mantel has to be made artistic and dramatic or I wouldn't be considered to have any kind of home at all. Our living-room mantel is made of an old log we found on the beach. Doesn't that sound chic? (It was lots cheaper than the fancy ones in the catalogues.) Over the old log I hang my latest painting. Nobody is allowed to remove that except myself. I may be putty, but even putty resists being changed into anything else.

To get back on the mantel before I get off on my paintings, in the right-angle space where the mantel joins the chimney, I have arranged a row of some

sort of snail shell—whelk, I think. (There are thousands of them scattered along the beach.) I have placed two large ones in the centre and graduated others down to eensy ones on both sides. Charming, don't you think? Anyway, my friend thought so.

The front of the mantel is a bare space that, obviously, is just the place for reading glasses, screwdrivers, pliers, scotch tape and unpaid bills that the secondary sex has managed, effortlessly, to have written into law that the husband is responsible for. The space that holds such things certainly should be considered husband territory.



On one particular afternoon that my perfectly darling friend visited me, the husband territory on the mantel was pretty well cleared. The screwdriver, pliers, glasses, et cetera, had been moved elsewhere so that a big fuss could be made about not being able to find them. The only thing in the husband territory was the car keys.

Later my husband came to get the keys. No Caesar has ever driven his army with the relentlessness with which my husband conducted the search for those keys. Every drawer was emptied. The car was pulled apart. Coat pockets were turned inside out. The sanctity of my handbag was

violated. The house was topsy-turvy. No keys. Not even my husband's swear words cast their usual magic spell. The hiding-place remained unrevealed. Finally my husband gave up. He called the garage to come and make a new set. And that was that.

Several weeks later my perfectly darling friend stopped in again to visit and rearrange the mantel. She picked up one of the large shells and exclaimed "Why, you're still using the place I found for the car keys. I never thought you would! Oh, Adele, I believe I'm beginning to reform you."

I smiled my nicest smile. It looks as if it was sculptured in putty.



"She's getting along as well as can be expected, sir."

JEALOUS—ME ? by J. B. Boothroyd

I'm not often moved to spontaneous admiration, but last week, with the January bills unpaid and my hall thermometer registering what would have been -5° if only it had been with it, I felt a twinge of applause for that "English couple" advertising in *The Times*. A house of character in the South of France was what they were after, with payment offered in sterling, dollars or francs if they could get something near coast, big living room, servants' quarters, garden or land for garden . . . And they ended up, "Stream desirable."

I honour them for it.

We are too ready, most of us, as newspaper correspondence about faulty Wellington boots or porous rainwear is always reminding us, to settle for the second best. I freely admit to being a great offender in this direction myself. When it comes to buying houses, in the South of France or elsewhere (outskirts of Guildford, say) my tendency is to clinch the deal on about the third Order to View. I'm bored by then. And sick of all those bundles of estate agents' typescript thumping on to the front door mat. Other people of my acquaintance, like this English couple, approach the whole business in an altogether more dedicated and deliberate spirit. Buying a house can take them three years. They're particular about the precise compass point faced by the downstairs cloakroom window, and whether a proposed glue-factory on a site two miles off in the path of the prevailing wind is

likely to receive the blessing of the planning authority. They can't abide glass front doors. They hate the sight of a distant pylon. They won't at any price live on clay, and chalk is worse. Too many hedges will mean excessive clipping time, too few the ruination of privacy. "There was that perfectly gorgeous one near Alfriston," they say, back from their thirty-fifth pilgrimage, "if only it hadn't been tile-hung" . . . or too far from the shops, or on a bus stop, or haunted, or stiff with herbaceous. There's always something there that they don't want, or something they want that isn't there. But they keep doggedly looking, finding their dream house over and over again—except that it's latticed, or Horsham stone, or next door to a Peke breeder, or short of a place to put the dustbins.

I feel ashamed when I think that I'd been in my present house two months before I even found that we weren't on main drainage.

So I wish this determined, well-integrated English couple all the luck in the world, particularly streamwise. They deserve it. I admire their firm character and high purpose. They are an example to us all in knowing what they want and going all out to get it, but I feel I ought to warn them they're in for a long, hard search, trailing through the Alpes Maritimes and all round there, groping their way through the bougainvillaea, banana trees and horny old knotted vines only to face repeated disappointments. Imagine the bitterness of rushing off after a highly possible property on that bit to the left of Monte Carlo, finding the stream of your heart's desire at the bottom of the garden or land for one . . . and then a house ("Oh, no, my dear") with absolutely no servants' quarters and the smallest living room known to the statistical department of the *Architect and Building News*. Then again, it could jump the other way: a wild dash by land, sea and air to see something near St. Tropez that sounds absolutely ideal, only to find that it is



"Everybody in the bar was a Kennedy."

indeed so, but lacks the one crowning amenity: the nearest stream is somewhere the other side of Cap Ferrat, and has no house of any kind, with or without character . . .

I am a weak fool, myself. Given the convenient severance of the two hundred or so ties that would make it impossible to take it even if I found it, practically any house in the South of France would suit me. One of those peeling little pastel shacks halfway up the hills behind Nice, even. Never mind the servants' quarters. I'll rinse out my own sun-shirt. Never mind a garden, or even land for one. I'll lie out on the flat roof, and if there's a girl who lies on the flat roof of the next shack up the hill and pelts me with little black grapes, then that's O.K. I wouldn't dream of getting the neighbours together to sign an injunction. The flaw in my character isn't irascibility, but a feeble readiness to put up with an inferior article. And you, my two imminently expatriate English friends, are entitled to despise me for it. The fact that I, settling in sun-drenched Provence or points west, could probably make do with a stream and no house at all—camping equipment being so greatly advanced these days—is plainly neither here nor there. You, from what I know of you on this short but stimulating acquaintance, would obviously be dissatisfied even with a house and no stream, though I think you should steel yourself to the possible need to settle for this in the end. It would be mortifying, of course. "What we really wanted," you would say to your friends, as they clustered at the picture-window of the big living room, swilling down the healing local beverages handed round by your suitably-accommodated servants and gazing over the Mediterranean's deep, tideless blue, "was a stream. It's really spoilt it for us, not having one." And the company would fall compassionately silent, respecting your grief, brooding on the seamy side of life . . .

There's a solution of sorts, of course. I don't know whether you'd consider it. I don't even know whether you could do it. But, if only in confirmation of my estimate of your resolution of character, I'd like to see you try. In fact, I'd go through our sideboard drawer and scrape up enough sterling, dollars and francs to come over and watch you. What I'm getting at is, if you really must have this stream, why don't you b—— well dig one?



Heroism

"HERO, a new zero-energy reactor . . . went critical . . ." *Handout from UK Atomic Energy Authority*

HOW like the modern novel's hero!
 His energy is also zero.
 Another most important factor
 Is that he's merely a reactor.
 He does not *act*—he never dashes
 To triumph in heroic clashes
 But, when the force of life impinges,
 Reacts by going out on binges.
 Drink and disgust compose his diet. He
 Does not approve of our society,
 So, though on it he's parasitical,
 Nothing will stop him going critical.

— PETER DICKINSON

CHILDREN SEEN AND HEARD

By J. Harborne

I was disturbed, but not surprised, to learn from a recently published book that communication between parents and children was not only dwindling, but fast becoming extinct. The trouble with children is that they spend most of their time yapping about trifles. Can I have a biscuit? Can I have sixpence? Can I have a drag of your cigarette? and it takes nerve and persistence to engage them in any kind of sane discussion. Asking what they did at school is a well-known trap and equally abortive is enquiring where they've been, although perceptive parents glean a great deal from the way they say "Out." If they snap the word and shrug disagreeably, either the gang didn't turn up or else they've lost all their pocket money. If they say it slowly and with a diabolic grin, then put out the lights and lock all the doors.

Of course, there are always the enervating Saturday conversations to look forward to and I spend most of the week sharpening my wits for these doomed encounters. First one starts around mid-morning with a cool, smiling devil of eleven:

"What do you mean, *do* something about my room—what's wrong with it?"

"Well, for a start, look at the floor. Is there any reason why it should be littered with wires, batteries, spanners, drills, Meccano, sweet wrappings, empty bottles, lumps of plaster, bicycle wheels, bicycle chains, tins of oil and . . . good God! what is that car battery doing in your bed?"

"That's not a car battery, that's a rotary transformer."

"I don't care what it is—get the filthy thing off the eiderdown—how can you sleep with a great lump like that in the bed?"

"I don't sleep in the bed. Who says I sleep in the bed?"

"I suppose you hang batwise from the ceiling?"

"Hey—! Now that's a good idea. If I screwed in a couple of pulleys, and I've got some rope somewhere . . ."

I leave him swaying on top of the wardrobe, drilling holes in the ceiling and consider I won that round on dignity alone. Well, dammit, I could easily have

stunned him with the rotary transformer, couldn't I?

A sharp battle of semantics is fought out around lunchtime involving an unusual child of nine. The difficulty with him lies in the fact he is interested in the exact meaning of words, whereas I am only interested in getting rid of him:

"There's never anything to do," he complains, watching me sagging over the cooker.

"Why not take a bath?" I suggest.

"Where would you like me to take it?"

"Very well," I say, all charm and control. "Go upstairs, take off your clothes, run the bath and get into it."

"What if the bath doesn't want to go for a run?"

"OK. Forget it. You can lay the table for me."

"How can I do that? I'm not a bird."

"You're asking for a smack round the head."

"I'm not asking any such thing, I'm just asking how can I possibly lay a table—not even an albatross can do that."

I forget what I say after this, but father says, "Why don't you stop baiting that boy?" Frankly, I'm not surprised parents no longer talk to their children, and one more remark like that from father and I don't speak to him either.



"Liked It, hated her."

CHANCELLOR'S ARM (*Economiosis*)

Some recent case histories of an obscure disease

Chancellor's Arm is a very rare disease; not more than two cases have been reported in any single year since 1945. But since it has invariably attacked eminent public men (though not yet scheduled for compensation as an Occupational Disease under the National Insurance Act) the symptoms are better known than they might otherwise be. They are:

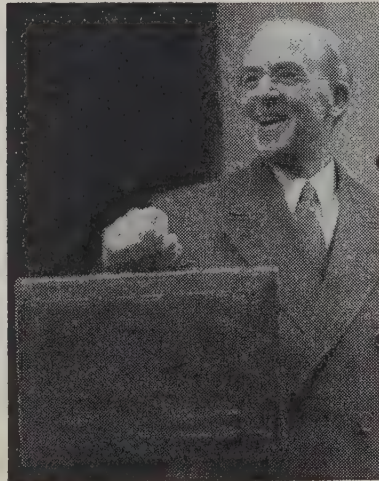
- (i) THE RICTUS, familiarly known as "Chancellor's Grin." This, of course, is a condition often observed in the diseases of public men, but here it is characterized by an intensity and fixedness not often observed in kindred ailments.
- (ii) THE POSITION OF THE ARM. This is the diagnostic symptom. The patient displays an uncontrollable urge to raise one arm, which at the height of the disease can only be satisfied by lifting a weighted bag, kept specially for the purpose.
- (iii) ENLARGEMENT OF THE GRASPING HAND. This does not always occur, but when it does the condition is extremely distressing.

The disease is rigidly seasonal, occurring normally in the first half of April. An almost similar condition, usually called False Economiosis, has occasionally been recorded in the autumn. Not the least distressing aspect of the disease is that the patient remains unaware of the severity of his condition.

The ensuing photographs, which are arranged in chronological order, show that though to the casual observer one case of Chancellor's Arm may seem just like the next, a significant change is taking place in the relative severity of the two primary symptoms.



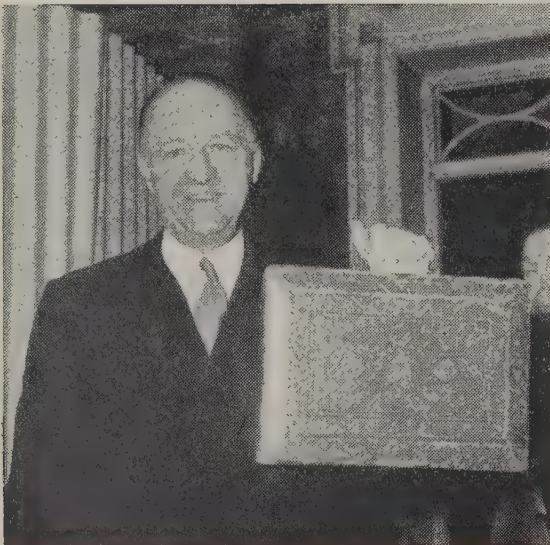
This patient, Mr. D., achieved a remarkable self-cure following conversations with a group of laymen. Though he did not escape all the usual after-effects he has since been able to lead a normal life. Note the classic intensity of the rictus and the moderate height, but extreme left extension, of the arm.



Sir S. C. was subject to annual attacks for some years. The characteristic arm is higher than in the case of Mr. D., and the grasping hand is mildly enlarged. The rictus (not at all typical of this patient) is clearly visible.

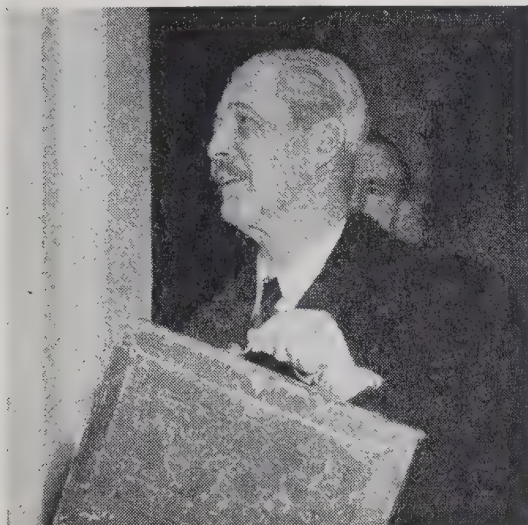


Another recurrent sufferer, Mr. G. The rictus is unusually slight, compared with earlier cases, but the arm is in an increasingly unnatural position, barely to the right of centre. One observer of this patient reported considerable desiccation.



A characteristic case of the autumnal variant, False Economiosis. Mr. B. was a chronic sufferer from the disease proper, and it has been suggested that his attack in October 1955 was entirely psychosomatic, brought on by guilt feelings following the euphoria of his recovery from the disease proper in the spring of that year. The more orthodox approach suggests that this was a case of gold deficiency.

Mr. M., who had the good fortune not to suffer from a recurrence of the disease after 1956, though he has since become an authority on other sufferers. This was a very mild attack; the rictus hardly differs from the patient's usual expression, and the arm is lower than Mr. B.'s, but like his, just to the left of centre.



Another patient, Mr. T., who suffered from only a single attack, though in his case it was so severe (note the fixity of the rictus and the acute position of the arm, which has returned to the right) that surgery was resorted to. It proved no more or less successful than other methods of treatment.



The most recent recorded case, that of Mr. A. By now the rictus has become almost a residual feature, not enough to distress anybody in normal health, but the height of the arm is unprecedented, with considerable left extension, and the grasping hand shows abnormal hypertrophy. The sudden appearance of the hat is probably irrelevant.



SOME AFTER EFFECTS

Mr. B. still suffers from occasional difficulty in controlling both rictus and arm. He is unusual in trying.



Mr. T. has resorted to the use of an attendant to check the movement of the arm. The rictus has proved uncontrollable.

Two classic examples of the normal after-effects of Chancellor's Arm. Though the need to flourish weights has vanished, the arm waves uncontrollably above the head and the rictus appears at the slightest stimulus.



CANINE IMBROGLIO

By Claud Cockburn

The situation as of 3 p.m. Friday was that the Escotts and the Carnabys were looking forward to a quiet week-end. Neither couple at this stage anticipated disaster and the unseemly disruption of their lives. It is known, for instance, that Carnaby, before motoring towards Sussex from his home in the Chilterns, said to his recently married wife "It'll be fun to see old Jack Escott again. You'll like him." She is quoted as replying "I'm sure I shall." Escott, awaiting them in Sussex, said to his wife "I'm looking forward to seeing Hugh Carnaby again. Must be all of five years. Wonder what his wife's like?"

The Escotts, in accord with the vital statistics of the income group to which they belonged, numbered four—the issue being female (15) and male (13) respectively. Mr. Escott, of whom it was sometimes remarked that he had a sense of humour, used to make the observation that the bull terrier, a dog by the name of Mao, represented the decimal point three which, to the vexation of Mrs. Escott, appeared in the statistics recording the average size of families in this group.

"How on earth," Mrs. Escott would say, "can they be so idiotic? How could anyone have 2.3 children?" Then Mr. Escott would smilingly say what he was wont to say about Mao.

By telephone the Carnaby's had, at the last moment, asked and received cordial permission to bring with them their little fox terrier Maisie. Mrs. Escott said "It'll probably be a bit nervous in a strange house. We must all make a point of being specially nice to it. I hope Mao behaves himself. He's apt to get so jealous."

Mr. Escott waited until she had said all she had to say and then adumbrated a more subtle approach. It was, he said, surely self-evident that ostentatious display of tenderness towards the visiting dog could but result in exciting in Mao just those emotions of jealousy which it was desirable to curb. Spiritually chafed, Mao was liable to vent his bitterness not on the human beings actually responsible but on this visiting terrier; snapping and snarling at her, perhaps even biting. A pleasant state of affairs could best be achieved by the Escotts



*"Do you mind if I borrow your
face for a few seconds?"*

“Are they still pinching in Rome?”



remaining somewhat aloof *vis-à-vis* Maisie, while very slightly exaggerating their gestures of affection and esteem towards Mao. In this way, he said, a “canine imbroglio” could best be avoided.

“Don’t you,” he asked, “all agree?”

James Escott said “What say? Come again, pop.”

Susan Escott said “Could everyone please be quiet a minute, I’m trying to make a trunk call.”

In further discussion Mrs. Escott said something which Mr. Escott said was an absurd distortion of his proposal, because he certainly never had suggested that they receive the visiting dog with kicks and blows while feeding pork steak to Mao before its very eyes.

Mrs. Escott said “Well I hope the Carnabys will understand what you think you’re up to.” To this Escott replied “Of course they will. Hughie Carnaby isn’t a damn fool—usen’t to be, anyway, in the old days,” and very soon after the guests’ arrival he explained to Carnaby the requisites as he saw them for avoiding any kind of canine imbroglio.

Carnaby said “I say, Jack, I didn’t know you were dog-crazy. You didn’t use to be dog-crazy in the old days. I don’t remember you being dog-crazy.”

Escott started to say “I don’t think ‘dog-crazy’ quite describes . . .” but had hardly finished putting the inverted commas round the distasteful expression before Mrs. Carnaby said “Oh are you mad about dogs, too? I’m absolutely mad about dogs.” Carnaby said “Don’t I know it?” Mrs. Escott said “Jack gets some funny ideas.”

After some twenty minutes of conversation along these lines, the situation as of approximately 7.20 p.m. was one which could be characterized as vexatious. Escott was irked by (i) Carnaby’s uncouth reactions to his proposed tactics on the dog front, (ii) Mrs. Escott’s allusion to his ideas as “funny”, (iii) Mrs. Carnaby’s doggy sentimentalities. His reactions under point (iii) were complicated by the fact that since Mrs. Carnaby was a common target with himself for Carnaby’s boorish sneers, he was forced to regard her as being in some sense an ally.

Carnaby, for his part, viewed with resentment and contempt the fact that



Escott seemed to be actually playing up to Mrs. Escott's goofiness about dogs. Carnaby was mentally sorry for Mrs. Escott who, now he came to think of it, probably had a pretty trying time with old Jack Escott.

Mrs. Carnaby felt sharp resentment towards (i) her husband for sneering at her in public, (ii) Mrs. Escott for an unpleasantly upstage attitude towards dogs and, by implication, towards dog-lovers such as Mrs. Carnaby.

Mrs. Escott was exasperated by her husband making what she considered a foolish exhibition of himself in this dog business, and by Carnaby for marrying a woman who, so far as could be judged at present, appeared to be an absolute fool.

Susan and James Escott went to the cinema, saying that they would get a snack somewhere later.

Mao and Maisie lay quiet under separate chairs all evening, but the dog question continued to burrow, throwing up mole-hills to disfigure the smooth surface of conversation. Thus a reference to Major Gagarin caused Mrs. Carnaby to say it was all very well for a man, and she hoped that now they wouldn't send any more dogs. She said "I nearly cry every time I think of that poor dead dog still going round and round up there till it falls into the sun or something." She seemed to be nearly crying. Carnaby, in a tone now so uncouth as to be almost a shout, said "Don't tell us, tell Mr. K." Mrs. Escott said "I suppose it was all for science, more or less. Like the porpoises." Escott, aware of trying to yank the discussion up to what he felt to be his own level said "But what, after all, *is* science?" His nerves, already twanging, nearly snapped altogether when Mrs. Carnaby said "That's just what *I* always say."

The TV session silenced, without abating, the antagonisms. Whenever one of the four glanced from the screen to the dogs, now sleeping, he or she was reminded of offensive or contemptible traits in the other three as disclosed by their reactions to the dog issue. After the Escotts and the Carnabys had gone to their bedrooms voices raised in anger were heard from the Carnaby's room. Mrs. Escott said "Your friend seems to be in trouble with that wife of his." Escott said "My friend? I noticed you were backing him up all evening. Now you've encouraged him so much he's probably beating her." Mrs. Escott said "It wouldn't take much for her to turn into a bitch herself."

Having said this she giggled vulgarly, but in the morning was ashamed and made a point of patting Maisie and saying she looked a little unhappy, and was there anything special she would like? Mrs. Carnaby, nerves raw from the overnight row, took this as an aspersion on her pet's physical condition. She said you could hardly expect the little creature to be as happy in a strange house as in her own home, which Mrs. Escott took as an aspersion on her own household arrangements. Also Mrs. Escott held Mrs. Carnaby responsible for giving her secret guilt feelings about that vulgar, malicious thing Mrs. Escott had said about Mrs. Carnaby turning into a bitch, so she now spoke very sharply, causing Mrs. Carnaby to flush with anger. Escott, appearing at this point, smilingly adjured Mrs. Carnaby not to take it to heart—his wife, he said, didn't mean half she said. Mrs. Escott, flushing with anger in her turn, thereupon left them. Escott, fearing that Mrs. Carnaby might start talking doggy-woggy to Maisie, himself talked continuously and at random until relieved by the arrival of Carnaby.

Asked by Carnaby, after Escott had left the room, what on earth Escott had been "booming away about," Mrs. Carnaby said she had gathered that Escott had ideas on a number of subjects but was frustrated because his wife didn't really understand him. Carnaby cackled coarsely and said "Why, the dirty old goat! Imagine a gag like that at his age. It's even older than he is. Did you offer to solace him?" Susan and James, who had been taking photographs of one another in the garden outside the drawing room in which this conversation took place, told their father that Carnaby had called him a dirty old goat.

ONE OF THOSE THINGS

THIS morning I am feeling very frail,
I am late, I know, and I apologize.
My hands are trembling, my cheeks are pale,
there is a dotted mist before my eyes.
A cup of coffee, maybe, a bit of toast,
but nothing more.
No, there was nothing nasty in the post,
and do please shut the door!

The fact is, when I'd lumbered out of bed,
I twiddled on the wireless just by chance,
and like a fool I completely lost my head
and started to *dance*.

You heard the thumps? Yes, that was me jumping,
leaping my way to the very doors of death.
Oh, the dizziness and the heart's wild pumping,
and the roar of the spent breath!

The whole thing is incomprehensible,
and, I agree, Freud should be told;
for I am, as a rule, so sensible,
and, as you hasten to point out, old.
The fact remains (although it remains a mystery),
this morning my feet had wings,
and you must mark it down in our family history
as just one of those things. — VIRGINIA GRAHAM

Escott, who at lunch had drunk more than usual to relieve his tensions, took occasion to tell Carnaby that he didn't mind what Carnaby told him to his face, but preferred not to be abused behind his back and in the presence of his children. Carnaby said that if the Escott children were taught to sneak about eavesdropping under windows, that was no fault of Carnaby's.

Escott stormily reported this episode to Mrs. Escott who said "Well if you spend the whole morning practically holding his idiot wife's hand what d'you expect? At your age it's absolutely clownish." Escott said "What d'you mean my age?"

By 4.15 p.m. on the Saturday the situation was that either the anger and guilt of all would explode in hysteria or positive violence, or else the Escotts would pull themselves together sufficiently to take a little walk which would permit the Carnabys to pretend that in their absence the Carnabys had had an urgent telephone call summoning them back to their home in the Chilterns that very night. This amenity the Escotts did, in fact, provide. So that by 6 p.m. the over-all picture had changed to the extent that the Carnabys, with Maisie, were twenty miles away quarrelling bitterly in their car, while the elder Escotts—Susan and James having again gone to the cinema—were in their drawing-room with Mao, quarrelling bitterly.

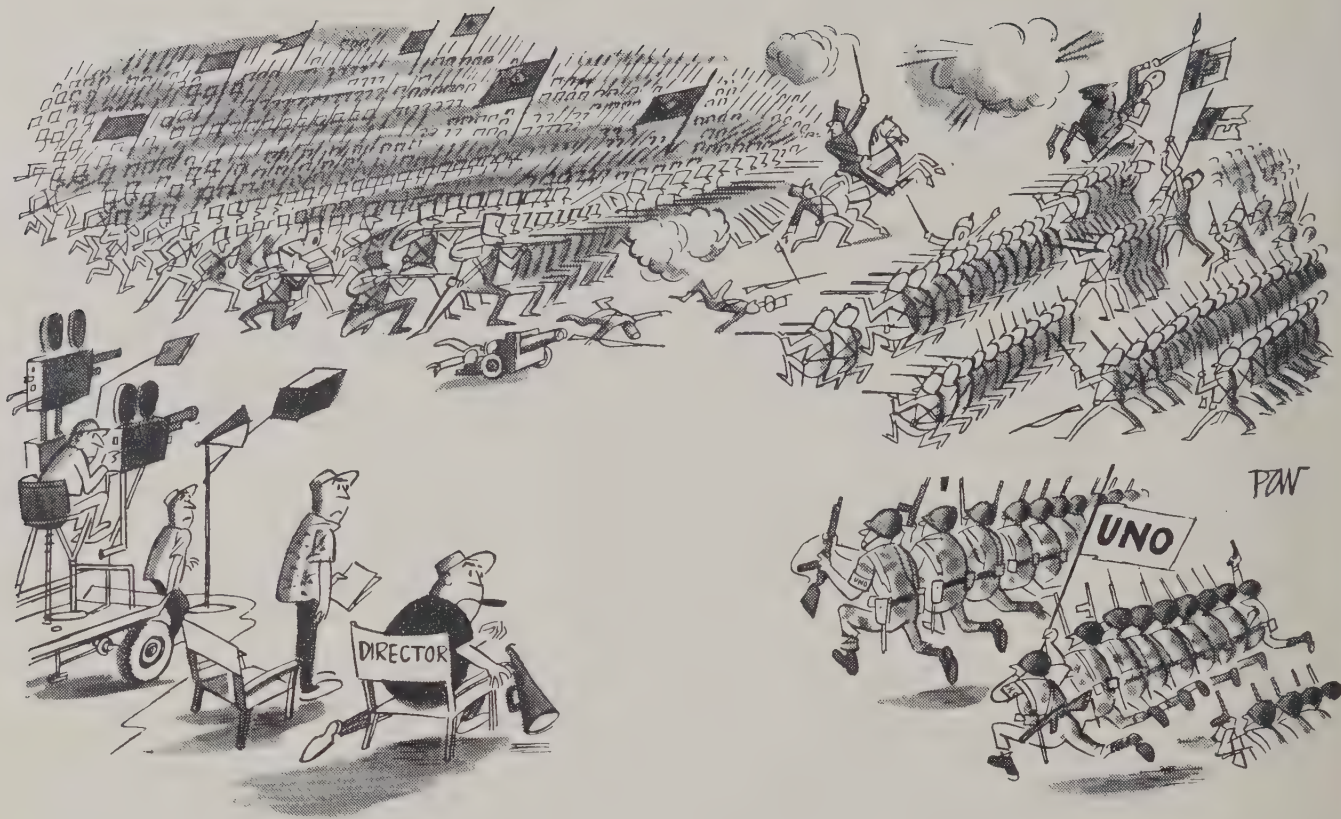
Their estrangement—though (for the sake of the children, they said) they continued to live together—dated from this week-end. Escott's friends said they gathered it all started when Mrs. Escott tried to bring a mad dog into the house, or something of the kind. Her friends said they understood it began when she found Escott acting cruelly to her bull terrier to please a former mistress.

When Mrs. Carnaby, some months after this week-end, petitioned for divorce on grounds of cruelty, she said the whole thing had originally been "caused by those dogs." The Judge asked what the dogs had actually done, and she said "Well I don't recall that the dogs did anything, actually."

The Judge made a witty allusion to the dog in the Sherlock Holmes story which did nothing in the night, and refused her petition, so that they merely separated, she insisting that Carnaby take on the custody of Maisie.



"I like the way you bow to Grandma Moses without fawning."



SEX ANYONE ?

By Alex Atkinson

The person (very likely Aristotle) who dreamed up the list of phenomena usually referred to as the facts of life seems to have had something of a one-track mind. I dare say that as a child he always wanted to be a midwife and was forbidden to do any such thing by his mother, a gaunt, flat woman with a twitch; as a result* he grew up with the stubborn notion that life's facts were (a) that kettles of water should be kept constantly on the boil; (b) that people do not make their entrance into the world decked out in pink woolly bonnets, cooing, but arrive looking like emaciated hedgehogs roasted over a slow fire in the woods and then peeled, after making their mothers-to-be eat pickled herring and lime marmalade in the middle of the night; (c) that women cannot be fathers for constitutional reasons, and vice versa; (d) that cross-pollination is either

essential or quite beside the point if you want a good crop of tomatoes; and (e) that men and women are mammals, like whales, only smaller.

Now these points may be all very interesting in their quaint fashion, but a moment's thought will convince any reasonably alert adolescent that life, if it includes any facts at all (which becomes increasingly doubtful with the onward march of science), is not built exclusively on such humdrum academic trivia, nor on the behaviour of small chickens in eggs or the length of time it takes an elephant to have a baby. The facts of life, to put it bluntly, are far more varied and thought-provoking, and I don't know why nobody has so far taken the trouble to place some of them before the paying public so that the paying public (who, after all, are intimately involved in this whole business, whether they like it or not) may be better equipped than they are at present to move about in the world with their heads held high and a sense of *belonging*. To list only five of the facts of life, chosen

*Cf *Psychopathology Of Everyday Life*, by S. Freud, for what it's worth.

at random but with a fine sense of poetry and an eye on the sale of motion-picture rights:

Children who are seen and not heard have just done something awful.

The dead are always with us; the living we can sometimes avoid.

Whenever twenty Americans are gathered together for cocktails, at least three of them will be psychiatrists.

Bravery is only admired by people who can't swim.

There are more people in Birmingham than some of us care to admit, and the same goes for Los Angeles.

The catalogue could be extended, for life is rich and strange when you come to think about it, in that eerie pause that falls across the earth after the last television channel has gone dark and nothing remains for the pitiful living to do but live and empty all the ashtrays. There are facts of life we haven't even uncovered yet (for all we know my theory that bats are deaf and dumb may prove to be one), and the chances are that a good many of them may still have more to do with sex than any of the authenticated facts of life that are dealt with in those hearty little booklets you see advertised in the backs of magazines, presenting sex as an antiseptic form of therapy for well-balanced minds. When they are

included in a whole series of advisory works in identical format, the effect of these booklets is to persuade the casual reader that sex must be an ailment, an avoidable peril, a hand-out from the government, or a jolly parlour game for three or more persons. Consider a typical bunch of titles:

How to Breed Budgies
Common Sense And The Compost Heap
What Your Married Daughter Should Know
A Short Guide To Cribbage
Hay Fever Can Be Cured!
The Bride's Book of Sex And Pastry Making
Baldness—The Truth
Colloquial Flemish In Three Weeks
Elementary Sex In Two Days
The Old Age Pension And You
Premarital Relations—The Truth
White Mice In Sickness And In Health
A Child's Guide To Family Planning

The truth is, of course, that when sex seems to be in the air men and women (and white mice too for all I know) are apt to be concerned with more romantic things than population explosions, the complex marvels of incubation, the life cycle of the common or garden gene, or the importance of prenatal influence in the formation of character. The facts of life that



"Stop racing your engine at her."

flit through their minds at these times are only two—namely *It does not matter if you miss the last train so long as you have a good story*; and *The one who finally switches off the lamp beside the settee is not necessarily the aggressor*. What chiefly flit through their minds are not the facts of life at all, but the uncertainties. (We are speaking now in the main of people who are not married to one another. People who are married to one another will have skipped this chapter anyway, acting on the absurd assumption, common among people who are married to one another, that they know all about that stuff and can afford to concentrate on more advanced subjects, such as whether wives should learn how to cope with flat tyres in the pouring rain, or the best method of unblocking the sink when it is discovered that your six-year-old son has just sawn the rubber plunger off the end of its stick.)

Let us consider some of these uncertainties of life, these dark, brooding questions which, whether answered or not, play so great a part in the hurly-burly of sex; and let me, at the risk of appearing stuffy, try to suggest some answers. We may as well have the whole thing set out in columns, for easy reference, in true textbook fashion; for if this doesn't turn out to be a textbook, I really don't know what it's going to turn out to be.

Getting back to the facts of life for a moment, there is one which has a bearing on the subject in hand; namely that a woman who is deliberately kissed on the point of the jaw, or on the projection (if any) in front of her neck, formed by the largest cartilage of her larynx, is entitled to suppose that the *tête-à-tête* has ceased to be merely a useful exchange of views, and has entered the realms of dalliance. (Dalliance is one of the things sex was called in the period, roughly, between Jane Austen and Elinor Glyn. Although a trifle arch it is still a handy word to use in the company of people who are undergoing deep analysis and have been conditioned to experience a nervous tremor, or a sense of dread, at the bald mention of sex itself. I use it here in an attempt to produce a romantic atmosphere. In an arid, academic work of this kind, as Euclid and Karl Marx before me amply demonstrated, a hint of perfumed fancy can work wonders.) The same applies if her male companion places his lips on or near her topmost vertebra while she is turning away to see if the curtains are properly drawn; on the left or right patella while he is on the floor fumbling under the couch for the five salted peanuts that just fell from her nerveless fingers; or between her shoulder blades while he is supposed to be doing up her zip in a hurry so that

Uncertainty of life	Answer	Suggestion for further study
Why does one woman take a second look at me and I don't care while another woman doesn't even take a first look and I can't eat for a week?	Can you supply a recent photograph?	This is a matter of simple chemistry. Some people just happen to have the right amount of bicarbonate of soda in their make-up. Check your atomic weight, and switch to fresh vegetables.
How can one tell the difference between men with honourable intentions and men with dishonourable intentions?	Men with dishonourable intentions are selfish and utterly fascinating. They look you straight in the eye. Men with honourable intentions are shift. They wear brown suits and are impossible to get rid of. Either way you can't win. For simple relaxation find a chap with no intentions and a lively curiosity.	It is always taken for granted that women have <i>honourable</i> intentions. Isn't that odd?
If a girl's parents decide that she must mate with a man of culture in order to keep the family's lofty traditions intact, how should she go about it?	She might try rushing into the Athenaeum in her best ballgown and crying out "Where's the action?"	Those parents had better watch it: many a man of culture has a Matisse on the wall and feet of Klee.
Why does he keep on being so damned amused at the antics of my little dog?	He is going through the preliminaries, sometimes referred to as love-play.	Send your little dog out, or not, according to taste.
Will I respect her tomorrow?	Oh, shut up.	Look at all the money you spent on those carnations.



"I'm afraid our terms of employment don't normally include a pension scheme, Miss Dawn."

Uncertainty of life

If she didn't invite me to her place with the firm intention of tricking me into seducing her, why is she not wearing her watch or any lipstick?

He opens the door in an Oriental dressing-gown, holding a glass of champagne. There is a heap of cushions on the floor, a log fire, a smell of incense, subdued lighting and the sound of a Chopin nocturne turned down pretty low. His eyes look kind of droopy. What is behind all this?

If I murmur "Please," will it be taken as invitation or discouragement?

Will he ask me to marry him?

She looks different somehow at close quarters.

Why is she crying?

Answer

Her watch keeps losing and is at present being repaired under the three-year guarantee. She is not wearing lipstick because you're ten minutes early.

He is playing hard to get.

He won't hear you. He has lost his head.

You mean he hasn't already?

You should have thought of that before you went around asking people how much money her husband left her.

There are three possible explanations: She saw it in a movie; you have stuck your finger in her eye; or there is someone else.

Suggestion for further study

Are you complaining, or what?

Stick around, but try not to giggle.

Try shouting in his ear, and be more explicit.

Aren't you ashamed?

What do you mean, different?

Why don't you cry too? You'll never know the answer.

they can get out in time to catch the last showing of some Belafonte film, which he didn't want to see in the first place.

Kissing, in fact, plays a definite part in sex. Some observers suggest that the practice started because in very early times what people tried to do when they wanted to demonstrate the ultimate in affection was to eat one another. This obviously soon proved impracticable (significantly enough, it is against the law to this day in most countries of any size at all), and a new approach was developed, with kissing as a cross between a fringe benefit and a starting signal. Other activities indulged in by men and women who have been formally introduced and feel an obligation to do something practical in the way of cementing the friendship, include the holding of hands (sometimes with a ritual intermingling of perspirations); the rubbing of noses in dim-lit restaurants, to the annoyance of the waiters who can't get any sense out of them about what kind of dressing they want on their salads; the tentative bumping of knees under tables (not to be confused with the kicking of ankles, which is usually a pure accident); the daringly erotic brushing of finger nail against finger nail about once every ten minutes during the Twist; and the sudden, desperate clamping together of the sides of faces (often with a painful jarring of cheek-bones) at

moments of tension, such as when it is revealed that one partner has made arrangements to cast himself from a high cliff on the way home if the other partner doesn't let him stay another ten minutes on the understanding that he just sits quietly and drinks his coffee.

But it is kissing that the whole thing really stands or falls by, and since a lot of people seem to be unaware of the finer points I intend to close this section with a few basic hints. They should be typed out and carried in the top pocket or the handbag, as the case may be, for help in emergencies.

1. If you haven't quite finished your canapé, for heaven's sake keep your mouth shut. In any case breathe through the nose at all times.

2. If you happen to be the girl, and you are both standing, and you find you have to sort of crouch down to get at his face, the whole thing is doomed to failure. Go away and pick someone your own size.

3. If she seems all at once to be losing control of herself, take a few minutes to think very carefully about your future.

4. If he keeps his eyes open, he's not to be trusted.

4a. If it comes to that, how do you know he is keeping his eyes open?

"Of course sermons would be so much easier if there were more than seven deadly sins."



BACK TO SCHOOL

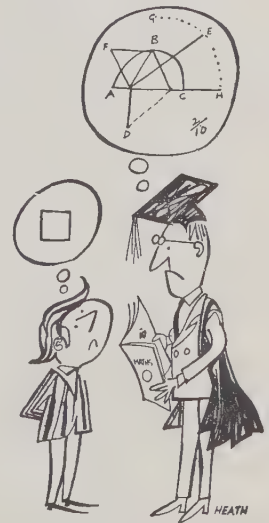
Dear Miss Browne,—What great news that you have come out of retirement in answer to the Government's appeal for teachers! It occurs to me, though, that after all those years on your lonely Cumberland chicken farm you could be just a bit out of touch with youth and find Ratrace House rather different from your dear old St. Ursula's. So here are a few hints to help you through that first tricky week while you're feeling unreasonably enraged at the size of the science building and bucking when anyone says "bra."

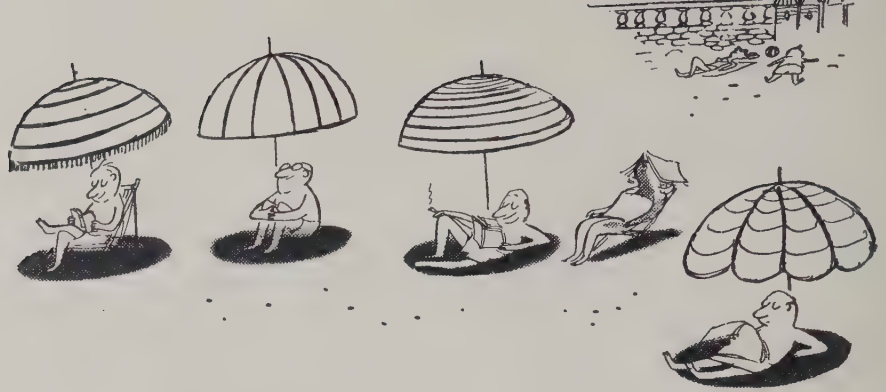
Teaching geography again, are you? Don't worry about Trieste and which half is Pakistan, because everything up to Africa will be in the school atlas; just try not to reminisce as you turn the pages. What you could do, if you've time before the first lesson, is have a quick re-think about the earth as a whole, this being what it is now. Try looking at a globe from the top, and underneath, and in orbit; curl your toes by telling yourself you're clinging to a blob 8,000 miles thick; do anything that'll give you a less fuddy-duddy attitude to distance, which Ratrace House girls do not measure in miles (unless asked to walk anywhere) but in return air fares. Thus to say that Singapore is so many *pounds* away is to give the girls who don't fly it regularly a keen idea of its distance—and, for a few seconds, to have your class listening before you go on to jute.

Yes, jute is still OK. Modern schoolgirls, like any others, know that jute is exported simply to keep geography lessons going while they do some quiet day-dreaming—which reminds me, the "Don't sit there with your head full of poetry, Miss Dreamy! Life's practical these days!" is an idiotically wrong approach to the 1961 girl mooning starry-eyed over an isobar graph. It's precisely because she knows how practical life is that she's looking like that. She's working out how rich a husband she'll need for a yearly water-skiing holiday as well as an E-type Jaguar.

I'm sure you'll manage the geography all right, Miss Browne, if you remember to keep calm when you hear them pronouncing "Asia." They are not "talking American" like your last lot, they're simply and unconsciously being a part of evolution and you'll have to put up with it. Another five years and they'll be calling alluvial soil fertile. As for the language question generally, my advice is to lie low and listen while yourself speaking in as basic an English as you can manage after fifteen years of telling the chickens to get weaving. Don't, unless you're doing it spontaneously from sheer nerves, burst into pre-war slang, though that would be better than 1961 slang. If one thing frightens the Ratrace House age-group it's hearing your age-group putting quotes and a facial expression to the word "dig." Your pre-war slang won't be entirely strange to Ratrace House girls, of course, but like all schools they only speak some of it. (They make bishes, for instance, and are spiffing.) The rest of their vocabulary is made of newer traditional words—e.g. clot, smashing, wet, weedy—along with flashes of teenage talk and a good solid layer of functional modern stuff which is the only part you want to get hold of. I can't help you much in advance, except to suggest a simple test question for the end of your first week. Does the word "backing" (musical accompaniment to singing on a small gramophone record) seem to you to belong to the second vocabulary group or the third? If you think the third, have a quiet talk with some older-established colleague and take things more calmly.

Clothes are going to worry you. Not your own, not unless you're wearing a





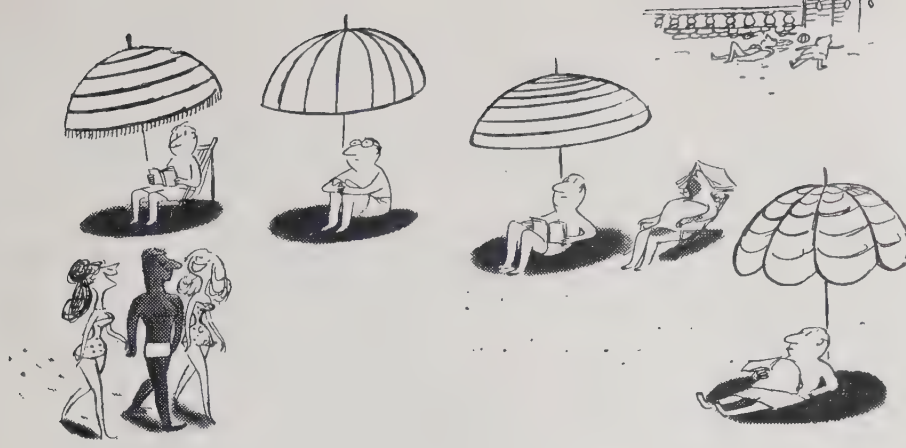
1943 suit with the shoulders up past your ears; looking moderately hopeless without actually wearing fancy dress is the duty of a self-respecting geography mistress. But you've got to get used to a bagginess in the sweater world that you up in Cumberland with your mountainous old sailor jerseys never had a clue to; you've got to be able to walk sideways along corridors or you'll never get past a girl wearing her after-hours consignment of stiffened petticoats; you must learn that black stockings are for fun, flesh-coloured ones for school hours. Assuming you've started calling stockings nylons, I suggest that you go back to calling them stockings—you don't want to be too hopeless. And you *mustn't mind hair*. You've got to accept jagged fringes, ragged bobs and screwed-up buns as *hair styles*. And if you wonder why the poor Ratrice girls are forced to bring back nineteen skirts, twenty-three tops and a dozen dresses for their leisure wear, ask the headmistress. She's the one who sends the circulars begging parents to keep to the clothes list.

How's your motor-car knowledge, Miss Browne? Still talking about saloons and coupés? Don't know an Agg from a Super Snipe? There's something you could brush up right away, because the girls at Ratrice House are very polite and will do their best at mealtimes to talk about subjects of real and general interest, and I want to save you the stares when you unfold your napkin and say brightly that you've just seen a Ragged Robin in the hedgerow. There will *be* nature-lovers at Ratrice House but they'll stand out sharply from the rank and file and tend to be Gerald Durrellish about keeping badgers in the shed. So crack down, in public, on your simple joy in the glorious Ratrice countryside. Most of the girls are furious because the beastly school isn't bang in the middle of Oxford Street. Poetry's out too. You'll have more luck with art, modern art—perhaps because a good modern picture costs the earth—and music, which on an LP costs nearly as much. I'm sorry to sound ever so slightly money-minded, Miss Browne, but on the day when you hear a Ratrice House girl tell a friend that her birthday cake tastes smashing, almost like a shop one, you'll see what I mean.

Finally, Miss Browne, *never* put on your independent, who-cares-about-me feminist act. You may look tough after those windswept years with the chickens but don't for a moment suggest that's how women *should* look. The dear, delicious frilly, massive-hair-topped creatures under your care are way beyond that stage in women's emancipation. No doubt they can have any job they like nowadays—they've never thought they couldn't. But all that most of them want is to get married and live happily ever after with dozens of strictly brought up children and lashings of aluminium garden furniture and amazing bathrooms. You'll see too what I mean about that rich husband.

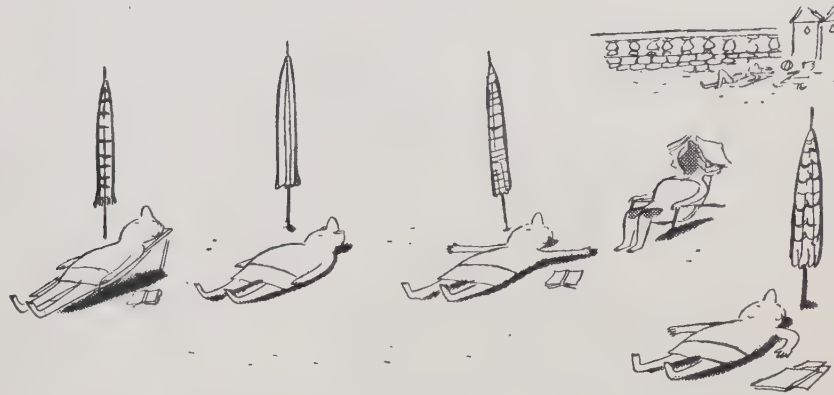
Don't let me leave you with the idea that all the Ratrice girls are themselves rich. As at every boarding-school to-day, some are there because their parents can afford it, some because they can't. It makes no difference to the set-up, and if the phrase "affluent society" maddens you then you should have gone to a State school, where I suspect it would madden you more. Well, good luck, Miss Browne. Remember that whatever you do or say you'll be utterly and hopelessly wet and weedy, so you've nothing to worry about. Yours sincerely,

ANGELA MILNE



TAKING THE VOCAL

By J. B. Boothroyd



Believe me I'm the last man to make light of mishaps in the air. Since 1945, when I circled Crete in a Beaufighter with a stuck undercarriage, and my parachute—we still had them in those nervous old days—caught on some obstruction that I couldn't get at and no one else would take an interest in, I've never been really relaxed in the air. That's putting it mildly. During my handful of flying hours since then I've been an assiduous reader of omens. The sight of a steward with one leg of his trousers slightly shorter than the other is enough to make me think he's secretly undone a brace button ready for ditching.

So if I remark on last week's incident when seventy-three passengers saw their port outer drop off in a sheet of flame and, instead of panicking, indulged in community singing, I'm only taking the purely sympathetic view. Particularly with regard to the singing. I have nothing but admiration for the man who can indulge in community singing at any time, let alone in a crippled aircraft, with luggage falling on his head, and after official instructions over the loudspeaker to remove his false teeth and spectacles. I have had no experience of this. As I recall

there was no singing in the Beaufighter. And I'm puzzled to know just how this thing gets started, and by whom. Community singing launched by a dynamic comedian's "All together now" is difficult enough to get going. I personally don't help much, on the rare occasions of involvement, because I'm not only passive or non-singing but catch myself with unnaturally compressed lips as a precaution against an involuntary crotchet or two escaping. I should have thought many people would adopt similar tactics, especially with their teeth out, but the fact remains that most people sing readily provided that others are singing with them, and it must simply be a peculiarity on my part that I tend to sing less and less as those around me sing more and more. Statistics show—and may be seen at FA headquarters—that by the last verse of "Abide With Me" at cup finals only a miserable couple of thousand or so aren't gritting out a few strangled la-las.

But, there again, there are distinctions between Wembley Stadium and a DC7 in trouble at 17,000 feet. Granted, the football supporters may in their hearts be preoccupied by the struggle ahead, but this is nothing to the pre-occupations of seventy-three

members of the United States Electric Boat Company's Athletic Club expecting to be annoyingly late for an engagement in Amsterdam. (I was pleased to see, by the way, that there was no report of these passengers "joking" as they saw the engine detach itself, slipped on their life-jackets and watched the crew placing rafts near the exits. People often do joke on occasions of this kind and sometimes get into the headlines for it. "Trapped Men Joke and Sing." I sometimes wonder what those jokes are like. Is the topical note much sought after, or is it the kippers and mother-in-law stuff? I just mention this in passing. Did any of these Electric Boat athletes sound off with a crack about the high jump for instance? If so, what was the audience rating?)

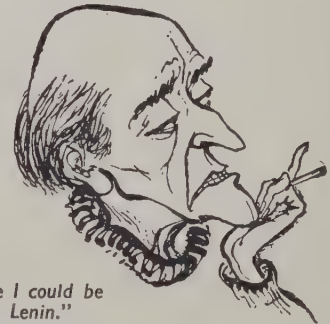
I was puzzled at first by one report which mentioned part of the choral programme as "Row, row, row your boat." In the circumstances it seemed as ill a choice as one could make, with the possible exception of "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep"—because I reckon they were down to about 1,000 feet by this time and still not levelling out. But I see now, of course, that this was, for EBC personnel, the equivalent of "Forty Years On" for old Harrovians. (All right, but I couldn't fit Eton in: too many boats around here already.) These athletes had ended many a jolly—jollier—firm's outing with lusty bellowings of "Row, row, etc.," and it had all the comfortable overtones of far-off Connecticut, paper hats at Christmas, votes of thanks to the staff, presentation gold watches to old and faithful servants, and so on. It was not, as I had thought, a facetious reference to the forthcoming ordeal by rubber dinghy in a waste of waters just south of Rockall.

In short, it wasn't a bad choice, and whoever made it is to be congratulated. What you want, when you're starting up community singing for what may well be the last time, is something that catches on quickly, spreading from flight deck to powder-room in no time. The great problem of community singing is and always has been what to sing. Many's the time a promising musical evening round a NAAFI piano has broken up without a note being fired owing to a demand deadlock between "Nellie Dean" and "In the Evening, By the Moonlight." Even the most dynamic song-leader feels a fool after embarking spiritedly on "The More We Are Together" and finding after two lines that the rest of the company is sitting there tight-lipped fingering the strings of its life-jackets. Undoubtedly "Row, row, row your boat" was just the thing. Practically nothing else would have done as well, or been so suitably free of sibilants (most of the choir having their teeth in their pockets). I imagine that anyone suddenly taking station in mid-gangway and yelling "All together, now—I miss my Swiss, my Swiss miss misses



"I'm inclined to prefer bottled mayonnaise."

HEARD ONLY IN DREAMS

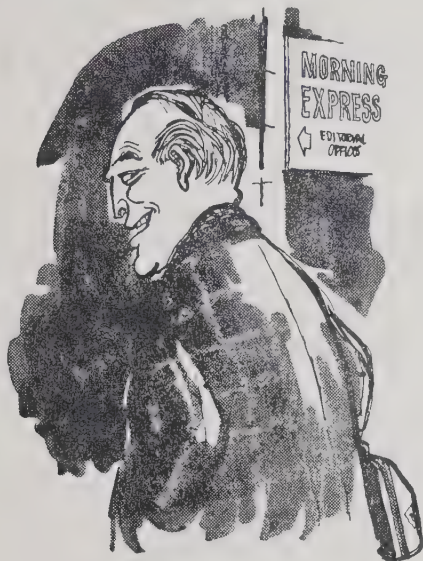


"Yes—I suppose I could be wrong about Lenin."

me!" would soon have been cringing back to his seat in silence, pink to the ears.

It remains to make two points. First, as a hater of both flying and community singing who spends much of his life trying to avoid either one or the other, I realize that I must expect my sleep to be broken from now on by nightmares involving me simultaneously with both. Two, the Electric Boat Company man who piped up with "Row, row" on the way to Prestwick last week and scored such an undoubted hit must on no account get too high an opinion of himself. The public is fickle. If, when the party flies back again in three weeks' time, he is tempted to try repeating his success—well, you never know, it might just not catch on.

I was nowhere near
the thick of it."



"I don't read books of philosophy—
I don't read at all."



HEWISON



"We're sending Julian and Jennifer
to the local Secondary-Modern."



"I'd rather be out with boys."



"Of course I'd let one marry my sister."

THE EYE-WITNESS

I WAS the man on the spot.
I was the first at the crime.
I got a story in hot;
I wasn't wasting no time.

I got my name in the news.
I got my face on TV.
I had the stuff they could use;
I got a nice little fee.

I saw the van hit the cab;
I saw the man with the gun;
I saw the smash and the grab;
I saw the driver get done.

I saw the gang get away;
They passed me as close as could be,
I could have—What's that you say?
Why didn't I stop them? Who, me?

— PETER SUFFOLK

OPENING HAZARDS

By H. F. Ellis

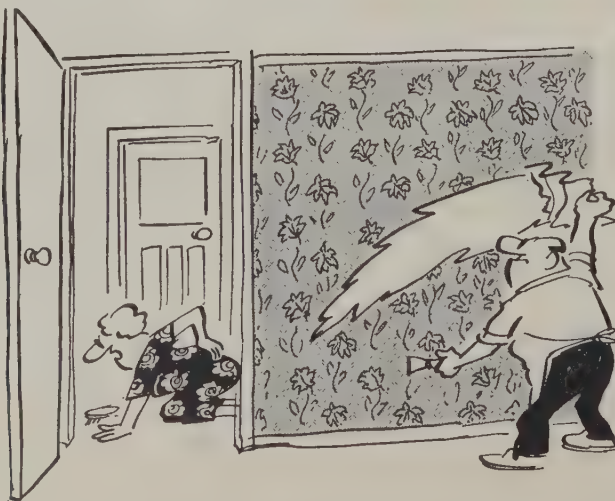
President Kennedy's back, strained while ceremonially planting a tree in Canada, and now the Bishop of Winchester's nose, which he had to "mop continually" after unveiling a statue at St. John's College, Oxford, have thrown an overdue searchlight on the risks attending initiatory ceremonies in general. "I would rather go through the Burma campaign all over again," a famous Brigadier told me, pointing to a bloodstained trowel over his mantelpiece, "than lay another brick at the request of the Rural District Council here."

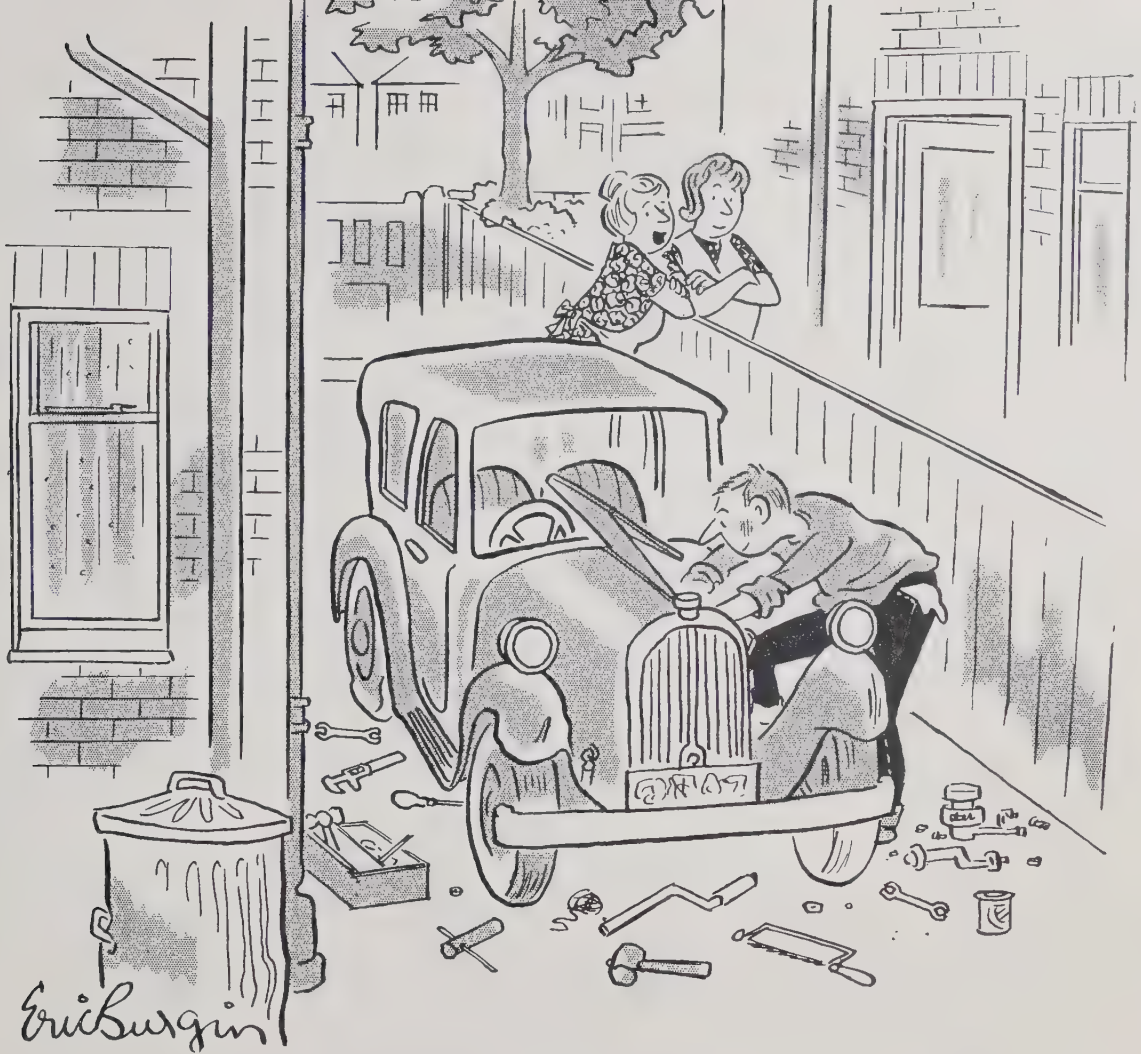
More alarming in some ways than the danger to life and limb that threatens those—often the best and noblest in the land—who are called upon to perform these dedicatory tasks is what appears to be a conspiracy of silence aimed at concealing the extent of the holocaust. Lloyds hummed and hawed when I rang them up to ascertain the current premium for cover against total disablement or loss of not more than one eye when laying foundation stones,* and at the London Clinic no information whatever could be given about the total number of casualties in this field over the past ten years. The Ministry of Works simply referred me to Health, who suggested (I think derisively) that the Lord Chancellor might be able to help. The Central Statistical Office was shut. Every attempt to extract up-to-date and reliable information, even on such non-controversial matters as ricked ankles at fêtes, was met with blank stares or overt hostility. "Who chopped his big toe off with what when cutting which first sod where?" I asked the Lord

*An obviously perilous occupation, in view of the weights involved. "We thought it best to leave him where he lay," the Managing Director of a great firm of contractors confessed to me, describing a recent mishap; "the flattened skeleton should be of interest to archaeologists one of these days." From his off-hand tone he might have been referring to the death of some Tom, Dick or Harry on the roads, not that of an OBE who once stood unsuccessfully for Cleethorpes (West).



MAN DECORATING by *Larry*





"It keeps him off the streets."

Mayor of X—, hoping to shock him into some sort of admission, but he closed up like a well-trained clam. The truth is, I suppose, that if the full facts were known they'd never get anyone of importance to open anything.

The pity of it is that, with proper care and adequate briefing, there is no reason why the casualty rate should not drop to a point at which concealment would be no longer necessary. The case of the Bishop of Winchester's nose shows that. He was charged, it will be remembered, with the unveiling of two statues, and it was when tugging on the rope to undrape the first one that he had the misfortune to be struck by a wooden batten. "When he unveiled the second," runs the report which somehow seeped through to the public press, "*Dr. Williams stood well clear.*" The italics are mine, but the implication is plain. The Bishop escaped further injury, having learned by experience to approach his duties with a due sense of the risks involved. My point is that opening ceremonies *can* be made safe for celebrities if only the bitter lessons learned by the fallen, the halt and the maimed are passed on in time to those others who, in their turn, so blithely grasp the rope, the spade or the silver trowel.

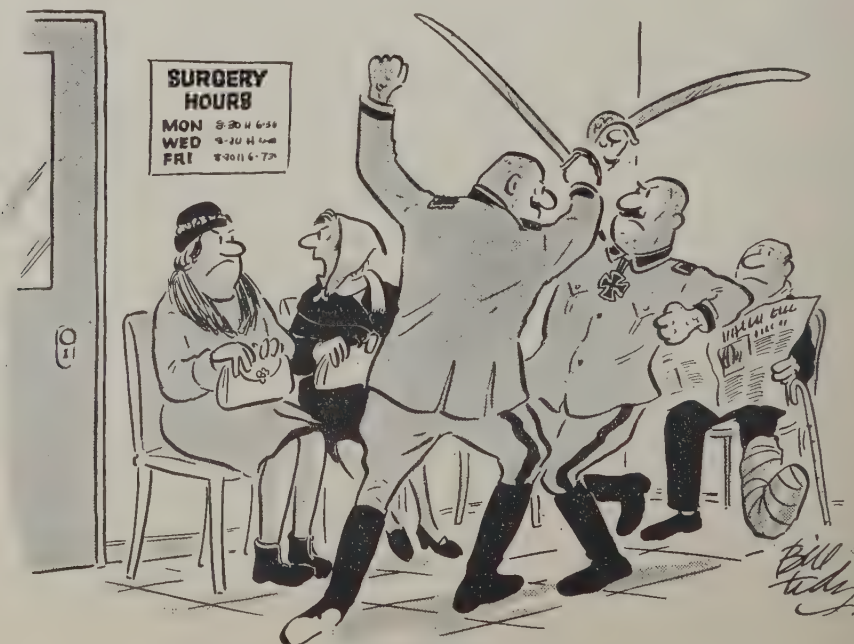
How many sprained wrists and wrenched thumbs could have been avoided had the victims been warned in advance never to try to look relaxed and debonair when opening a new public library! Gold keys, as any Town Clerk knows, almost always stick and must be turned with extreme caution; yet generation after generation of Dukes and Cabinet Ministers dash at the job, with more than half

their attention on the press photographers, as though a quick twist would cause the great double doors to fly triumphantly open; and an instant later there they are, biting back their tears and hastily hiding away their bruised fingers in the folds of their gorgeous robes. Or take Marchionesses putting electric power stations into operation by throwing huge switches. Such a simple precaution as wearing rubber gloves instead of those useless white kid affairs might have saved dozens of them.

It may be argued that people prominent enough to be asked to open bazaars and plant rose trees ought to be able to look after themselves without advice or supervision, but this is to forget the psychological angle. Old hands, it is true, whose number of launchings, let us say, may be approaching Helen's record, do acquire a certain caution, a readiness at all times to duck or jump aside; the neophyte, for all his or her ranks and titles, is too excited by the occasion to evaluate risks. You have only to watch the way a young film star will snip the air with her scissors before opening her first by-pass, much as a barber does when warming up for a trim but without his control and *savoir faire*, to realize the need for some kind of timely word of warning. The thing can be discreetly done. A printed slip, perhaps giving the figures for woundings at similar functions over the past twelve months, would check the over-eager. An up-to-date snapshot of President Kennedy should put a stop to this iniquitous double-trenching by visiting archbishops. At launchings, where one may be sure that some sort of memo, giving the name of the ship and the wording of the traditional "all who sail in her" bit, is already handed to the distinguished christener, the addition of a simply-phrased NB in red, "Remember to let go of the bottle *before* it strikes the ship," could hardly be resented. A little more forethought, coupled with a much less obscurantist head-in-the-sand attitude to the dangers involved, will soon rid the nation's most auspicious occasions of the all-too-familiar clang of the ambulance bell.

Some accidents there will always be. Inaugurating and unveiling is not a trade for children or fainthearts. Nor is it easy to see how any form of warning can protect Ministers driving bulldozers and actresses kicking off at football matches from the perils inherent in these activities. But something can be done, by checking over-sweeping gestures at Vegetable Shows, by discouraging senselessly energetic spade-work, by insisting on the lethal nature of such implements as trowels and scissors in unaccustomed hands, and in general by the adoption of a "pull gently and stand clear" approach to the business—we can go some way at least to ensure that the same openers, as with beer bottles, can be used over and over again. Will not the Bishop of Winchester follow up the useful lead he has already given by consenting to become the first President of a Society for the Prevention of Accidents at Inaugural Ceremonies?

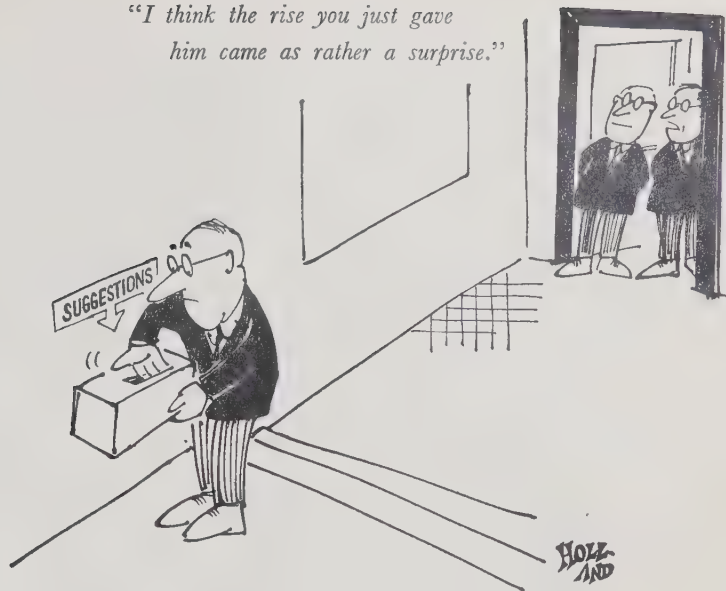
"They only came over here to
use our National Health . . ."



*"I think the rise you just gave
him came as rather a surprise."*

MANUAL FOR MAN-HUNTERS

By Leslie Marsh



Nothing is more daunting to a responsible citizen's self-respect than the feeling that he is standing on the touchline, out of life's hurly-burly, not trying to solve the predicament. Last week's Wandsworth gaol-break was a testing time for civic consciousness. "THE PUBLIC CAN HELP" we were told, because several of the escapists had distinguishing features:

- (1) Five moles on right cheek
- (2) Four scars on forehead
- (3) "Mary John True Love" tattooed on left forearm
- (4) Little fingers deformed
- (5) Scar under left eye and right forearm tattooed "Connie True Love Tony and Joan"
- (6) Razor slash from right ear to chin and left forearm tattooed "India 1945."

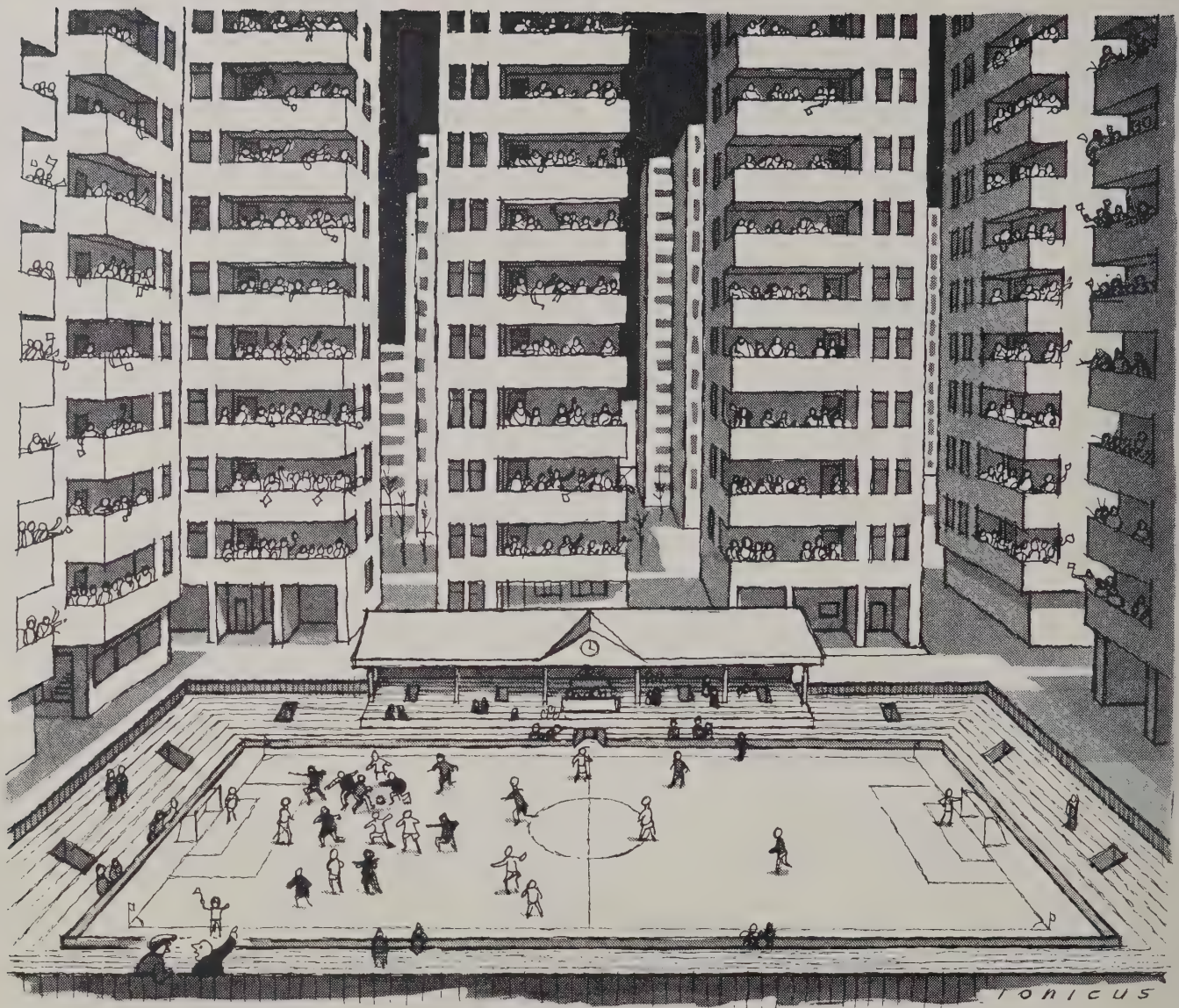
I wonder how many happy-go-lucky playboys were content to let these desperadoes stalk the land simply for want of keeping an alert eye open? Easy enough, no doubt, to brush it all aside with a glib sneer about the inconvenience of counting moles and scars in crowded buses and tubes, especially when the vehicle lurches in mid-count, and then to ask indignantly what the police were doing. What the police were doing, among other things, was awaiting your co-operation and not getting it. If you were honest with yourself you would have admitted that there are not all that many men with five moles on right cheek. An irregular quincunx might have needed a closer check than you could afford on a zebra crossing or in a busy hamburger bar, but the moment suspicion was aroused only the simplest variation on one of the oldest ploys in fiction was called for: "Excuse me, sir, but you bear a marked resemblance to my long-lost brother who had five moles on his

right cheek. Only four? Sorry, I'm a fool at figures. Making a mountain out of a molehill, aren't I?"

Scars are, if anything, more obvious than moles, though a clever fugitive with four on his forehead can assume a perpetual corrugated frown that deceives the unobservant. For future reference a doubtful case can be put to the test by telling the pseudo-scowler a reliable radio comedian's funniest story; the sure-fire laugh will unwrinkle the brow and reveal the brand of Cain, if any. In the old days scarred and gashed runaways took refuge by fleeing the country and mingling freely with German student duellers at Heidelberg and elsewhere but this bolt-hole has now been stopped.

A man resourceful enough to have broken out of prison may well have adopted one of several established techniques for keeping deformed little fingers out of sight—the Double Napoleon with both hands thrust under opposite sides of the jacket; the highly wrought nervous pose with tightly clenched fists; or the Stage Chinese with wrists folded across each other up wide sleeves, with mincing steps to match—but these masquerades can be pierced. Once you have detected signs of finicky over-concealment the counter-move is to play the part of a deaf mute and ask the time in mime, thus trapping the suspect into acting five o'clock. Ten o'clock, of course, would serve as well but split-second timing as used by experienced actors is essential in either case. One is likely to get from a miscreant at large a fairly churlish reaction to a civil invitation to play the quiet old game of Up Jenkins! or How Many Fingers Am I Holding Up? which has, like croquet and bezique, been losing ground recently.

Forearm tattoo marks pose a different problem



"They always play better before the home crowd."

involving what is usually referred to as the Sleeve Raising Factor. Time does not always permit jollying a man on the run into the nearest blood donor clinic where, under cover of pressure pump preparations, the romantic avowals can be read at leisure and carefully compared with the published lists. One old-fashioned tactic, exclaiming excitedly "Look out, there's a bee crawling up your elbow," has fallen into disrepute since a quick-witted getaway man retorted "That's where I want him, to cure my rheumatism." It is worth taking trouble to think out a new approach. "Reach for the sky—this is a stick-up" has been tried but found ineffective with men wearing the fashionable tight sleeves.

Whatever stratagem is used, the careless, over-enthusiastic amateur's worst hazard is hurried mis-

reading of the tattooed legend. To go dragging an unashamedly faithful lover off to the police station on first sight of "True Love" without stopping to get to the end of message, which may well be Penelope or Miss Polythene Bags 1961, is not helping the police. A final warning. Tattooists do not scruple, with the aid of modern science, to erase fickle clients' trothmarks and substitute fresh fancies. Mary, John, Connie, Tony, Joan, and all that jazz may have been re-stencilled an hour or two ago, merely going to show that some philanderer, innocent in the eyes of the law, has found a new love and has never been nearer Wandsworth Prison than the Common, for sporting in the shade purposes. Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds is a dirty phrase in the tattooists' world.

LEND ME

TWO VIKINGS, OLD BOY

By E. S. Turner

All that excitement about the air charter firm which ran out of petrol has set holidaymakers telling each other their charter stories.

If one believed half the accounts one overhears in railway carriages (and probably Dr. Beeching's outfit owes a pound or two for coal, if the truth were known) it would appear that the experience of a typical holidaymaker who signs on for a cheap flight goes like this:

He sets off in a twin-engined British aircraft to the Balearics, but owing to unforeseen circumstances arrives there eighteen hours late, via Lisbon, in a Belgian trooper sub-chartered to a French operator (with headquarters in Berne) who does not at the moment need it to fly pilgrims from Barcelona to Lourdes. Returning, our adventurer takes off in a converted Italian flying-boat (heavily Sellotaped), which takes him as far as Lyons, where he transfers to a Dutch-registered DC6, which the previous day carried a party of apes from French Equatorial Africa to Antwerp Zoo. He reaches Gatwick after having a whole day added to his holiday.

Other travellers tell of fascinating three-day stop-overs in Saharan oases while on the way from the Azores to Naples, or of unexpected tours of Athens with Scots rugby players while waiting for a

plane delayed at Ljubljana for fumigation after an outbreak of typhoid over the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Probably some of these tales gather a little in the telling, but it does appear that the charter firms of Europe, and their confederates the tourist agents, engage in a breath-taking game of put and take with counters worth anything from £500,000 to £50. Ordinarily, when watching an aircraft rasping overhead, one thinks of it vaguely as a gleaming symbol of progress. It would be a pity, perhaps, if we got into the habit of looking at it as somebody's hire-purchase risk thrice sub-leased and filled with Rotarians on a cut-price binge to Brussels.

No traveller worth his salt would wish to travel by stuffy regular air lines when the unpredictable world of the charter operators is open to him. There appears to be a gifted international fraternity of former war-time pilots, now managing directors, who all started in business with a corrugated iron shed, a couple of well-darned windsocks and a fifteenth share in a Dakota with flak scars still on its wings. In theory they are rivals, but they are ever ready to help each other in a jam. Bullied by the big airlines, guarding their fleets from repossession men, mercifully threatened as soon as their petrol bills touch six figures, these indomitable fellows are yet able, at the drop of a hat, to lift the Salford Women's Co-

*"You're certainly very fast on the draw
but what a girl wants is security."*





operative Guild to Nice or to whisk a party of Burmese politicians home overnight to suppress a coup. They are the true merchants adventurer of today and it is the height of ingratitude in a traveller to complain that the frank-faced British pilot he expected turns out to be an Iberian wearing pyjamas under his uniform, or that the hostess, instead of being a long-stemmed English rose, is a silk-wound houri hiding her lack of languages under a yashmak (this hasn't happened yet, but it will).

One likes to picture the scene in the operations rooms of these companies (surely they all have operations rooms?) on a busy Monday in late August. Tourist agents ring up continually, each call posing a new challenge in logistics. "Let's see," says the managing director, "we have to pick up these seventy American lawyers in Nicosia on Thursday. Can we lend the crate meanwhile to old Mac who's got some Mormons stranded in Helsinki? After all he got Simon to lend us a couple of Doves when our nuns mutinied at Beirut. No pilot, you say? What about that Mexican chap who used to spray crops in Haiti? Of course I can fix it with the Ministry." Another telephone rings. It is the voice of a man

who once let down the Old Boy Net. "No," says the managing director, "we can't help you. You got them to Reykjavik and you'll just have to get them out. One by one, in a Lysander, if need be. How do I know where you can get a Lysander? There are such things as aeronautical museums, aren't there?"

So it goes on. An accountant sits there, drinking black coffee and looking even blacker. Each aircraft ought to be earning £x a day. "How can I work out any figures," he demands, "when half our aircraft are lent to other people, often without a commission, and we're using other people's scrap?" The managing director tells him to relax. "What you need, boy, is a holiday," he says. "Look, we could fit you into that flight to Ankara with the Old Vic on Friday. The plane will definitely be there all week-end except for Saturday, when we have to lift a harem from Kuwait to Mecca. You won't? Too bad." The telephone rings again. "Yes," says the managing director, "certainly we can fly the National Juke-Box Corporation's shooting party from Aberdeen to the Pripet Marshes next week. Wish I could come with you, old boy . . ."



A PSYCHODIETETIC EPISODE

By Peter Dickinson

Dr. Giorgio Lolli, president of the International Centre for Psychodietetics . . . suggested . . . that critics of cocktail parties might well look "at the many marriages which may well have been saved by this ceremony, the fights which may have been averted and the business decisions which may have been clarified."—Daily Telegraph.

Pressure of guests—mostly visualisers, creative directors and such with girls wearing upswept hair in shades of modified off-blonde—squeezed me into a nook between a tallboy sort of thing and the stairs. (I say "sort of thing" advisedly, as I am sure it wasn't a tallboy but probably housed a miracle of electronics which could make *Tannhäuser* sound as if it were coming from inside your skull.) There were already four people in the nook, two large men, one small man and a cruiser-weight blonde, but even so it might have been a haven, except that it was obvious that the two large men were on the verge of fighting over the blonde.

Had they been even moderately tight they would certainly have fought, but luckily our host had averted this with the drink he had provided. It came out of a jug. I cannot describe it, but it was not what one would have chosen, supposing one had been offered a choice.

I knew none of the four, but as I nudged into the circle the blonde turned to me and said "The question is shall I run off with Trevor or shall I stick to Gavin? After all he *is* my husband."

She must have known, intuitively, that it would get worse before it got better and decided that the best thing to do was to speed the process up. I said "How d'ye do?" to Gavin and Trevor and they said "How d'ye do?" to me. The little man nodded enthusiastically. He had soft brown eyes like a bunny in a children's book and seemed to be enjoying himself. I nodded back, guardedly.

"Well?" said the blonde.

"Are they both insured for this sort of thing?" I asked.

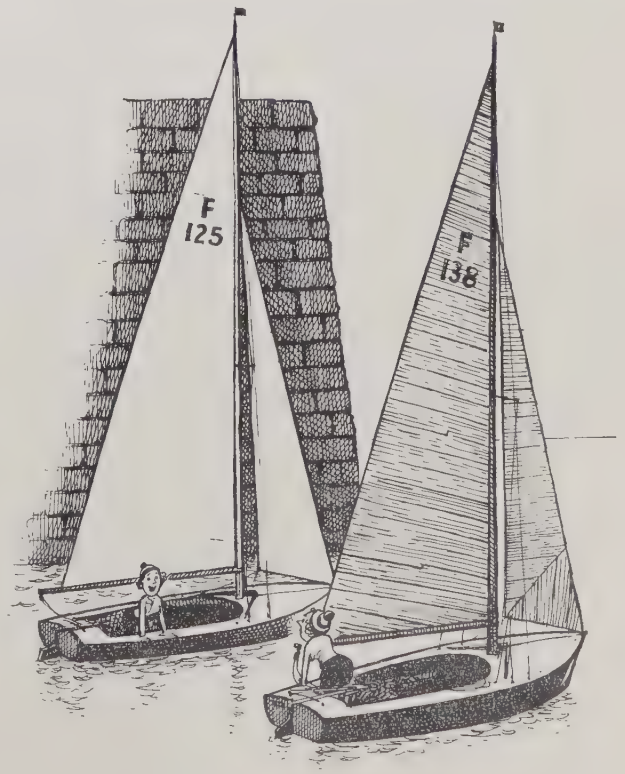
"What sort of thing?"

"This, of course," said Trevor. I realised that he had got hold of the wrong end of the stick when he managed to free an arm and gesture between the banisters at the screeching mess of people. Gavin took him up.

"It's fantastic," he said, "in this day and age."

"You'd think," said the blonde, "that they'd get somebody to do it for them."

"Not a hope," said Gavin. "People who do it for you have in their mind's eye an ideal binge which isn't at all what you and I've got, duckie. They see a party as an enormous room, all chandeliers and parquet, with about two dozen people in tiaras and stiff shirts—they're all going on somewhere of course



"It gets them really white and it's kind to my hands."

—standing round munching little bits of second-hand smoked salmon embalmed in aspic.”

“Wrong image, that’s what,” said Trevor.

“And it’s going on in half the boroughs in London,” said Gavin. “At this very moment.”

“Do you know,” they both said together, “I believe there’s an opening here.”

Time passed, I cannot tell you how slowly, while the two of them excitedly discussed getting out from the talent-rotting milieux of their respective agencies and setting up a small firm of caterers who would specialise in giving intimate parties for people who had no talent for intimacy. Of course they were not proposing to do a great deal of the work themselves, beyond thinking up a few compelling slogans like “INVEST IN INSTANT GAIETY.” They’d have a professional to see to the details while they got on with their novels about the gradual corruption by big business of a scholarship boy from Slough (Gavin) and Harrogate (Trevor).

At last the blonde broke into the conversation with the quick determination of a suffragette kicking a policeman on the shin.

“Let’s go,” she said. To Gavin.

“Oh I say,” said Trevor. “We haven’t . . .”

“Sorry, darling,” said the blonde. “I simply haven’t got flying speed. Not to-night.”

“But look, old chap,” said Gavin. “This is too good an idea to throw down the sink. I’ll give you a tinkle to-morrow and we’ll lunch over it.”

“Fine,” said Trevor.

They started to edge across the room. The crowd was thinner now, as not all the guests had been fossilised into a corner like us, but had managed to make get-aways. The bunny-eyed man smiled at me happily.

“One fight averted, one business decision clarified and one marriage saved,” he said. “Dr. Lolli will be pleased.”



“Why, Miriam! I thought you were extinct!”

SPUDS ARE TRUMPS

By H. F. ELLIS

“And potatoes with your steak, Madam? Roast, baked, sauté, creamed, duchesse, Parmentier, Pont-neuf, à la dauphine, croquettes, chipped, en robe de chambre . . .?”

“Bring me an Arran Chief, lightly boiled, please waiter. And some peas.”

This is Potato Year. The Potato Marketing Board has not hitherto quite caught the public fancy—whether by stamping its products, inventing slogans about them, or even having them thrown at its head at meetings—as have its brothers of the Egg, Milk and Tomato Boards. But now it has decided to come of out its clamp and fight. The campaign “to increase public awareness of the potato” has already got off to a fine start with a Northampton Potato Week, including a window display competition, a mobile potato information centre, a tasting competition, in which housewives were asked to distinguish varieties of potato cooked in different ways, and a hot-buttered-baked-potatoman, in costume, selling hot buttered baked potatoes. Other Weeks will surely follow. All the untamed forces of publicity and propaganda, of pageantry and peaceful persuasion, will be turned upon the unresisting housewife, until by the end of the year, if the Board has its way, such a wave of potato-eating will have swept the country that our average girth, per abdomen of the population, may well be the widest in Europe.

Obesity, I could add if I were out to sabotage the Board’s campaign, is not the only drawback to the excessive consumption of potatoes. “Their constant employment as the chief article of food,” my encyclopaedia tells me, “is not favourable to the development of the physical powers, and is consequently in its protracted influence unfavourable to mental energy. All this is too well illustrated in Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland . . .” And the same authority adds that in France the potato was long believed to cause leprosy and fevers, until the great M. Parmentier secured immortality for his name by increasing public awareness of its merits. But I

have no wish to make things difficult for the Board. It is not excessive consumption, let us more kindly assume, that the Board is aiming at, but only a proper appreciation, an intelligent and sober assessment of the product's worth. And indeed it is an interesting and flexible vegetable, deserving of a better fate than to be scooped up in shovels by insensitive greengrocers, poured into trolley-baskets, and finally boiled alive with a dessert-spoonful of kitchen salt.

Sir John Hawkins handled it. Drake caressed its curious tubers. Raleigh pressed it into the earth at Hayes in Devonshire and lived to see its pinnate leaves, entire at the margin, rise triumphantly above the ground. What other vegetable, what carrot, what cauliflower, what kidney bean came to our island fastness under such gallant auspices? From its far Andean home, where it was freely munched by Incas, the potato reached these shores, so it is said, in 1563 (though I should myself have put it somewhat earlier; the word "knobbly," with which it seems to me indissolubly bound, was current in 1543), and in the four centuries that have passed since then into what richness and multiplicity of varieties has it not proliferated. Majestic and Epicure, Eclipse and Midlothian Early, Gladstone, Golden Wonder, Arran Pilot, British Queen, Bellahouston, Ashleaf, Edzell Blue—the carillon of great names, not unfitted in many cases to grace butterflies or ten horse-power saloons, peals out across our fertile fields as musically as an Oxford Treble Bob. And if the varieties are manifold, the methods of preparing them for the table are well-nigh uncountable: over three hundred recipes have been catalogued. So that the changes that can be rung, by perming variety and recipe, must reach a total that no belfry in Europe could outcater. Yet with all this richness at our beck, we can do no more than growl "And bring some potatoes . . . Oh, mashed then. It doesn't matter."

One can see the Board's point. The time has come, at least for those of us who make a pretence at civilised eating, to learn to identify, to discriminate, to weigh the merits of May Queen against Sharpe's Express, to demand the delicately flavoured Arran Victory as an accompaniment to brill, the bolder, more distinctive Ashleaf with roast beef. Only by educating our own palates can we put a stop to the monstrous scandal of expensive restaurants where mashed is shaken on to our plates, at half-a-crown a spoonful, by waiters who neither know nor care whether it is Catriona or Great Scot.

There is no intrinsic reason why the subtle variations in flavour of different potatoes should not be savoured with at least the skill and enjoyment accorded to fine wines. Glancing at *The Vegetable Grower's Handbook* one notes, among the more

*A selection from Quentin Blake's weekly
comment on events*

IN THE CITY and IN THE COUNTRY



mundane qualities of mid-season and maincrop varieties such as "good cropper" and "susceptible to blight," phrases like "a most attractive nutty flavour" (Kipfler, a Viennese strain), "a little coarse" (Kerr's Pink), or "waxy and not nearly dry enough for some people" (applied to Eclipse, not as might be thought to a *retsina* from Greece or Cyprus). The rest of the vocabulary of appreciation should come easily enough:

"A fine white potato of full body and generous bouquet."
"Second growth. Selected. A mature, round tuber from Scotland, which should be served at considerably more than room temperature."

"Very pale and dry, with a delightful freshness. Can be eaten young."

"A superb farm-sacked spud with the unmistakable flinty character of the Downland communes. For laying down."

The tasting competitions sponsored by the Board

may well mark the beginning of an entirely new attitude towards this noble vegetable. I see no reason why, in time, a cultivated palate should not be able to pronounce, after rolling a forkful of *Parmentier* round the tongue, not only the variety but the district, perhaps the very field in Lincolnshire from which it came. "Surely this is a Kesteven Catriona, head waiter? Yes, yes. From Mr. Gargery's thirty-acre, I fancy. The manganese trace element is unmistakable."

Somewhere about October, I suppose, the great Potato Harvest Festival will be celebrated all over the country, with traditional dance and song, the blessing of the clamps, and the colourful tasting ceremonies to which every noted gourmet in the land will be invited. It is anybody's guess who will be the first Chevalier de Tastepomme de Terre.



"In the good old days this would have been over religion."

SHALL I UNWRAP IT FOR YOU?

By E. S. Turner

It is an admirable thing that women can now pop fresh herrings into their handbags and that men can carry liquid mulligatawny in their wallets. This is all part of the richer, fuller life we have earned in (I filch the phrase) the Pack Age.

I have been mingling at Olympia with some of Europe's leading strip-packagers, seal-spout pioneers, nail-gunners, flip-top and rip-strip experts, cauliflower-wrappers and chocolate enrobbers, boil-in-a-bag men, ampoule printers, rubber bandsmen, lords of the seasonal wrapping and makers of rubberised hair. They are, without exception, sanguine men, riding high on a rip-tide of prosperity and jargon; a little prone to say things like "Anything string can do, tape can do better" or to produce films about bottle-making with titles like *Well, I'm Blowed*, but they are none the worse citizens for that. Some of them give the impression that they are winning the export battle single-handed and they may be right.

Indeed, I do not know why so many people carp at the packaging boys, accusing them of sterilising the food as well as the container, of reserving their most dastardly art-work for those items, like detergents and cereals, in which competition is fiercest and of turning our leading Christian festival into an annual exchange of over-decorated and over-priced bath salts. What ingratitude it is! It were better that critics like these, men who cannot tell Kraft wrapping from Krafft-Ebing, were tied up with self-sealing strapping tape, stuffed into multiwall sacks and tossed into the Thames.

Consider, for a moment, the old-time grocer's shop from which the packaging industry has rescued us: the disgraceful singlewall sacks full of dusty rice and currants, with the odd hairpin half-surfacing; the giant vat of treacle, to which suppliants were expected to bring their own jugs (there were no milk bottles then); the defenceless ramparts of butter which men used to slap and slosh with wooden bats, like demented bricklayers; the gross cheeses covered with rind which weak maidens tried to carve with wires; the blocks of salt, as big as a petrol can, which had to be lugged home and crumbled down with a bread knife; everywhere the naked, the loose, the nameless and the anonymous, save for the occasional tin of biscuits with the head of an angel child, eyes upturned, on the lid.

There were also sweetshops where they sold bars of chocolate which had to be broken away from other bars, all absolutely bare save of thumb-prints; cakeshops where cats sat on unwrapped cakes; tobacconists who sold loose cigarettes; and laundries which returned your shirt unwrapped with a slip saying "Kindly do not send this article again," instead of slipping the frayed horror into a beautiful transparent envelope and letting shame work the desired effect.

From all this, and worse, we have been saved. Housewives, at last, are taking an intelligent interest in packaging. Before me is an advertisement in which one woman shopper says to another: "This wrapper looks so attractive—are you sure a lot of harmful chemicals haven't been added?" Her friend replies: "Of course I am. Genuine—parchment is the most chemically pure paper you



*"I don't want a new experience
in ham and eggs!"*

Ambitious Programme

"The houses have been examined by housing convener, Bailie David Gibson, who has pledged himself to 'clean-up' Glasgow's slums, sanitary inspectors, and a senior member of the town clerk's department."

Scottish Daily Express



“Ernie, there’s something about this place gives me the willies.”

can get and has been awarded the Certificate of the Royal Institute of Health and Hygiene.” I am confident that housewives like these could have tackled with credit Question No. 1 in the recent entrance examination of the Institute of Packaging. This ran: “‘A retail package should protect what it sells and sell what it protects.’ Explain the significance of this statement in relation to modern marketing methods.” (Statement? It’s an epigram!). Mind you, the paper got tougher as you went along. Here is Question No. 8: “Draft in outline only a specification for transparent film in four colours and delivered in reel form for use as an overwrap for a ½-lb. biscuit package.”

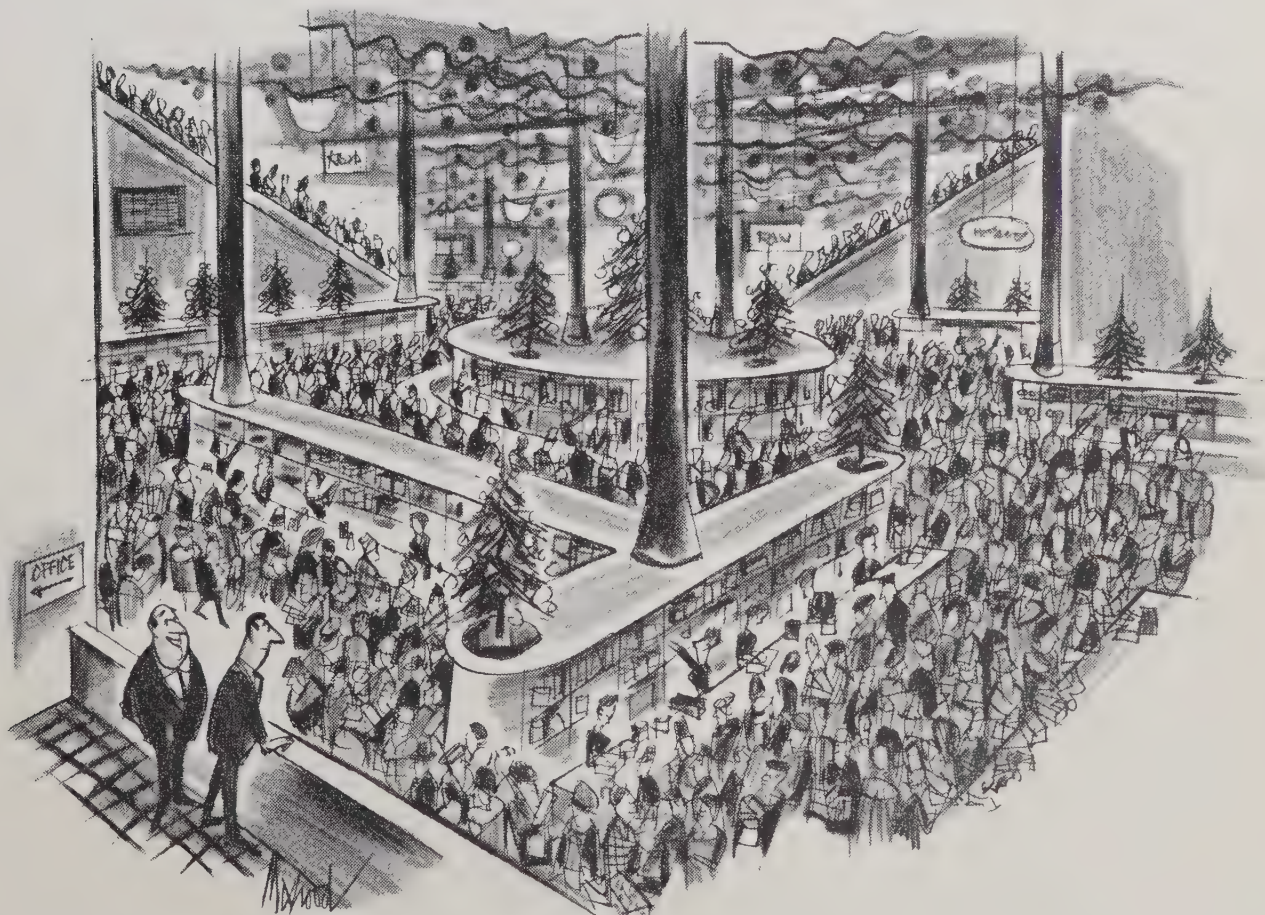
Of course, the packaging boys have had their setbacks. They got that idea of putting fancy pyjamas in boxes with picture windows, with the result that the sun bleached picture windows on the contents. That is possibly why old Mr. Gummidge always kept his pyjamas wrapped in a brown paper parcel tied with string (no slip-knot, either) on the top shelf of the back shop. But they’re putting special windows in the boxes now, to cut back the ultra-violet rays.

A major problem of the day, I gather, is to make a food container which cannot be opened by a strong-wristed beldam in the shop (“tamperproof”) and yet can be opened by a one-armed weakling in the kitchen. Some sort of piercing tool for polythene, polypropylene and polywollydoodle is also needed. At present people are scrabbling impotently at the stuff or even abandoning it and going to the little restaurant round the corner (first calling at the tobacconist’s, where the man is kind enough to wrench the wrapper from your cigarettes as you buy them). Yet, while many containers are too difficult to open, others are far too easy; gin bottles, for example.

It is obvious why women want to open things in the shop. Those pulp egg-boxes, for instance, often conceal dented eggs, and an honest packaging man will agree that this was not the purpose of the operation; it was to make people take six eggs instead of two.

I fancy the industry has not quite overcome all the problems of containing odour, otherwise the Institute of Packaging would not have appointed a high-powered Odour In Packaging Steering Committee. They can't be having trouble with those cocktail onions, surely? You can buy a squishy envelope full of them and put it in your handkerchief drawer and there will be no ill-effects; or so they tell me.

Just now the foil industry is thriving exceedingly. In Wolverhampton a prize of £5 offered for the biggest collection of aluminium wraps from locally bought goods was won by an entrant with 652 items, all different. The competition was not set as part of the Keep Britain Tidy movement; indeed, among the *avant-garde*, there is a feeling that foil has done much to raise the aesthetic standards of litter. A rain-washed silver pie-holder, half hidden in lush grass, has a beauty surpassing even the delicate bloom of dew on a transparent wrapper.



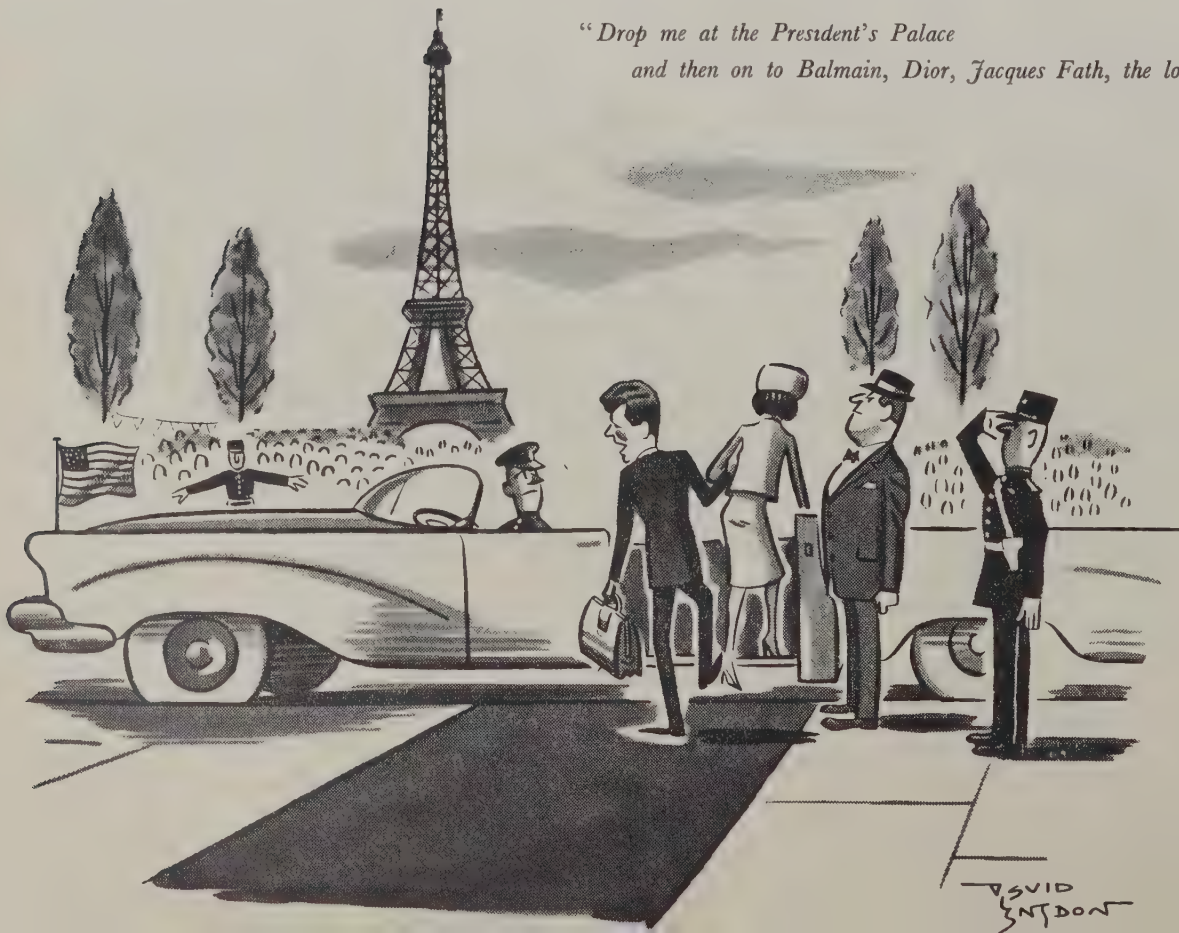
“Look at that, Simpson! Who said Christianity was dying?”

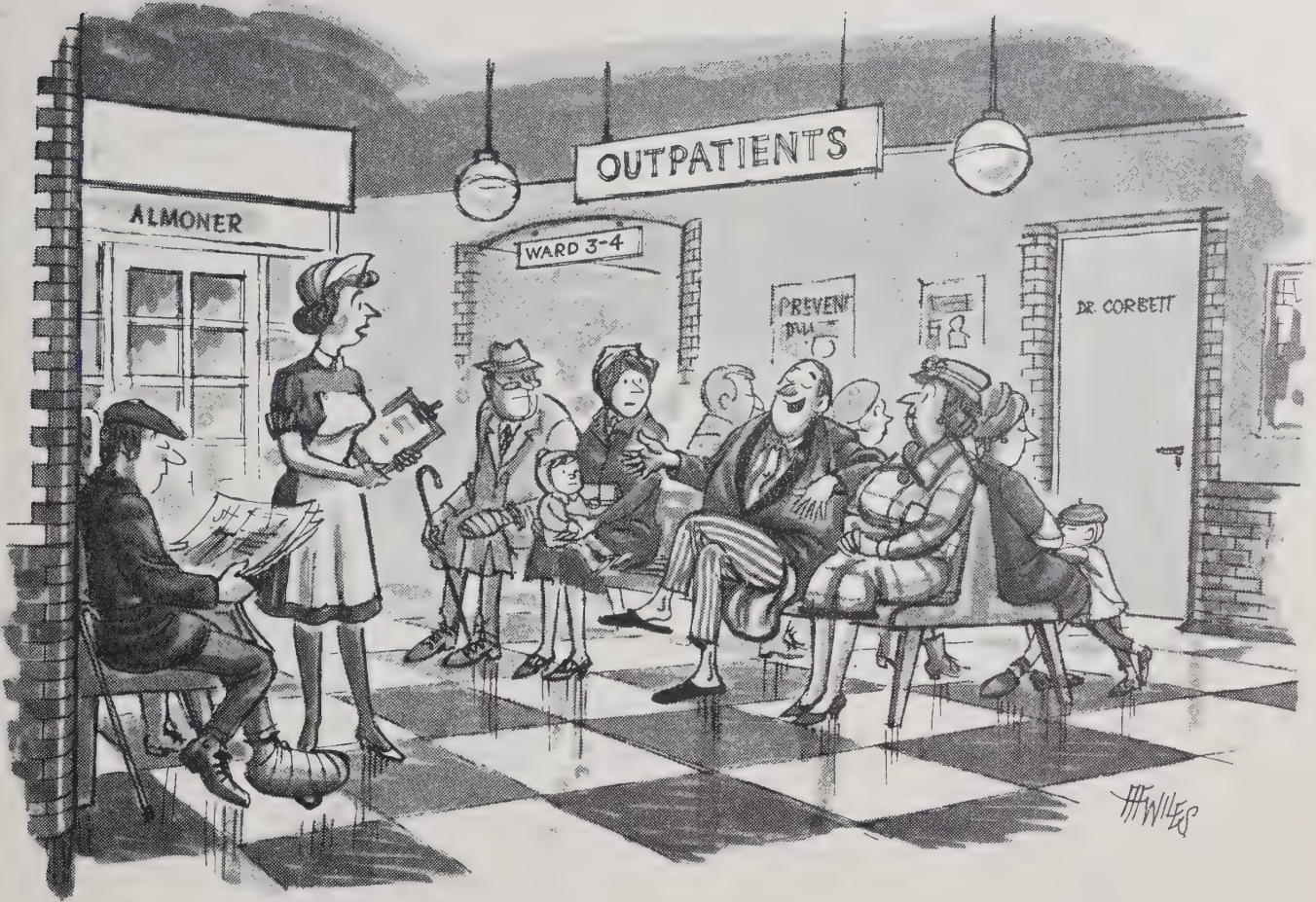
Much foil is used to contain those frozen complete-meals-for-one, all ready to put into the oven. To judge from illustrations I have seen, one is supposed to eat them straight from the foil, which is bad news for all those package-proud industries which do so well out of our washing up. The foil men foresee a day when a three-course meal will be reduced to one pill, "foil-wrapped, of course." For roughage, I imagine, we shall eat aluminium foil. Meanwhile the industry is anxious that housewives shall cover their squalid cheque-books with "silver and gold laminates," to make spending even jollier than it is.

Before I leave on a packaged holiday, I would like to make a couple of criticisms. Are not aerosol containers beginning to look too much alike? There is one, for example, labelled "Ideal for removing fly squash from windscreens." I keep thinking of a Jaguar family pulling off the M1 with a windscreen which looks as if someone had gone over it with a tube of gasket goo. "Hand me," says the driver, "the spray which is ideal for removing fly squash from windscreens." They pass him a squirt, but it only makes the glass worse. "Damn it," he protests, "I did not ask for the suède spray. Nor do I want the sunning oil. Or the de-icer. Or the invisible hair net. Or the air-freshener." They rummage about "What about the ant-killer?" they suggest brightly. "Or the squirt for foot rot?"

My other point is for the paint industry. Every Saturday since do it yourself came in a tin of cream paint has been spilled on the pavement of my local High Street. As soon as it begins to flow women push their prams through it and hordes of child tricyclists move into the attack. It is a form of free-for-all action painting which is copied, I believe, in many other suburbs. It may be that some of these tins of paint are spilled deliberately (people are like that round here) but most of them, I imagine, are dropped by persons struggling to carry three jiffy lunches, a couple of tinned rice puddings, an envelope of instant mashed potato and a piggie with a glass tum full of luscious fried bacon rinds. Is it beyond the resources of the paint industry to produce a tin which will not spring open when dropped, but which will none the less open at the merest touch in the toolshed?

*"Drop me at the President's Palace
and then on to Balmain, Dior, Jacques Fath, the lot."*





"Mr. Hawthorn! What are you doing in the Outpatients' Department?"

A BALLADE OF PROGNOSTICATED TRANQUILLITY

It is suggested that this year Soccer should continue throughout the cricket season

COME, MADDING CROWDS, foam madder
yet:

Charge, charge the barriers by platoons—
Blow Boy Scout bugles, burst bassoons:
What's life without the fever-fret?

Did I not once see Hendren (plain)
In a gold light that was all June's?
The temples of my gods remain:
Sweet Lord's shall lull my afternoons.

The paths of Quiet are beset

By zombies, zanies and buffoons:
The dieselled air with clangour swoons,
Noise knows no hindrance, owns no let.
My nerves can stand one extra strain:
Fans, dance your dervish rigadoons

And yell until your tonsils sprain:
Sweet Lord's shall lull my afternoons.

What if the afternoon be wet?

I'll strum the lute—or read Camoens—
Spread strawberry jam on macaroons—
Pour brandy on a crêpe Suzette—
Invent an electronic brain—
Play solitaire, or count the spoons.
When London's finished with the rain
Sweet Lord's shall lull my afternoons.

Prince, can you be completely sane?
What? Join that howling mob of goons
To spur on 'Spurs at White Hart Lane?
Sweet Lord's shall lull *my* afternoons.

— R. C. SCRIVEN

SEARLE'S-EYE VIEW

*Some portraits as seen by the Camera
and by Searle's imagination*

P. G. WODEH



MISS ENID BLYTON

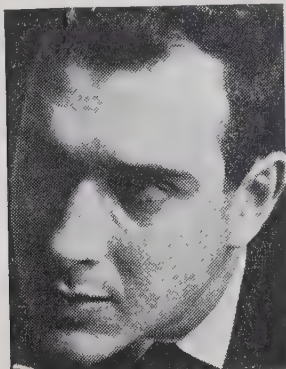


JOHN OSBORNE





HAROLD PINTER



C. V. WEDGWOOD



TO THE HILLS

By Gwyn Thomas



"He hates having his claws clipped . . ."

It is astonishing how long a period of my life I spent with no knowledge at all of North Wales, Merioneth, Caernarvonshire, Denbighshire and the rest. To the eye of childhood it had seemed a region so unlike my own in language and temperament it was as alien and remote as Baffin Bay. The North Walians I had met up and down the slopes of the Rhondda struck me as bitter, dogmatic, unassimilable. Their accent, edging back into the throat like a peevish animal into its lair, I explained as a wish on the part of speech to retreat from the lips as the mind felt less and less desire to make a charitable comment on life. And the satiric tongues of the Glamorgan men assured me that north of Llanidloes was one solid floor of slate abandoned by all save a few crabbed Sunday School teachers who would occasionally stoop and scribble cautionary texts on it.

I had made the acquaintance of a little North Welsh literature in translation. I am told by the aficionados that once the stuff touches English it loses its glory in a twitch of shame. I found it sombre. A recurring situation is that of a couple, eyeing each other across a small valley in the slate belt, who have been courting for about thirty years, hindered from marriage by pious and cantankerous parents. The parents die; the veteran wooers wed. The honeymoon is spent in a leaky cottage at monsoon time. The lovers, wary even under the full moon of joy, lie clad in full suits of oilskins, determined not to add arthritis to the other hazards of daring. A classic instance of communication by rustle.

Then last summer that darkness of this disdain lifted like a rocket. The great moment of illumination was about thirty yards from the top of Dinas Mawddwy pass. My wife was driving the car, for I am no friend of machines. My favourite posture when travelling would be blindfolded in the boot. She had wanted to fill up with petrol, water and whatever other liquids cars need at Llanidloes. But I had some bee in my bonnet about getting within easy distance of Harlech before dark. And being a believer in sympathetic magic I had the idea that if the passengers had enough liquid in them the car would be content. We pressed on.

The engine was beginning to bubble like an old-fashioned fish and chip outfit as we were crossing that rather flat, marshy plain north of Cemmaes Road. My wife was muttering something about the need to stop at a farmhouse or rivulet and get water to cool the thing down. But I was giving her a dramatic lecture on the Red-Headed Bandits of Dinas Mawddwy who had once been the scourge of the area, and how they had been strung up on every available tree by some vigorous baron after whom and his fertilising work a section of the Forestry Commission had been named.

We began the ascent of the Dinas Mawddwy hill. It was a sight of handsome ferocity. I told my wife that if she kept her eye on the hillsides she would see the dark ghosts of Glyndwr's men laying their guttural curse on English kings who were doing a bit in the same line. She told me that if I shut up and kept my ears on the engine I would hear the prelude of one of the biggest explosions since Senghenydd. The car began to pause and cough. Within sight of the summit we stopped. My wife did something to the bonnet while I tried to tell the brakes what would happen if they didn't hold. My wife, with a car-rug wrapped around her arm, had unscrewed something. A cloud of steam arose, thick and tall enough to alert every Comanche lodge in the bog of Tregaron. There was not a soul in sight. Two sheep which had resigned from the AA six months before because they kept running into human beings in our kind of fix, turned their backs on us. My nerves changed gear from panic to delirium. I could swear that two vultures of a special Celtic sort, short but sharp, were honing their beaks on the porcelain pots of a nearby telegraph pole, and telling each other through the steam that a little boiled traveller was what they fancied.

Then from somewhere in the vast and empty landscape people started to pour. Whether, like mating moths, they had responded to the impulses of my supplication I do not know. For all I knew they might have been a civilian lodge of Welsh Benedictine friars, posted above Dinas Mawddwy with a bucket of water for boiling engines, as their colleagues in Switzerland tote brandy for stranded climbers. They pushed us to the top. They set us going on the road to a splendid inn near Dolgelly. I looked forward to ordering a gill of their most potent lemonade, and to feel, as I lifted it, that I had truly and for the first time become a freeman of my own ancient and sloping home.

But my luck was running thin again. As I opened the door of the inn every light in the place failed. The bar was full; the darkness had real authority. I heard the landlord say that the nervous, tentative entry of the last arrival, myself, might had had something to do with the eclipse. "When the hand on the latch lacks confidence, the fuses teeter. In this part of the hills witchcraft is everywhere. If you refrain from invoking a curse on the Town Clerk's sheep your rates get a rebate of threepence in the pound."

People were moving about the lightless room with frequency and vigour, as if they had been waiting for this spell of darkness for months. An alien head would come between you and your glass. The landlord stood with his back to the till, groaning every time the barmaid missed the glass while operating the pump. Either she had a shaky hand or a genuine wish to be starting a flood, because there was plenty of ale landing on the floor. A mouth close to my ear was whispering in Welsh, fast and bitter Welsh. I followed one word in three, but thought little of the trip. The man's native village, farther to the north, had been put under water by an English Water Board. This man's relations, at the cost of much trouble to himself, had had to be exhumed and transported from the flooded graveyard to somewhere dry, high enough to be eternally safe unless the English, one day, decided to make the whole of Wales the bottom of a municipally directed lake.

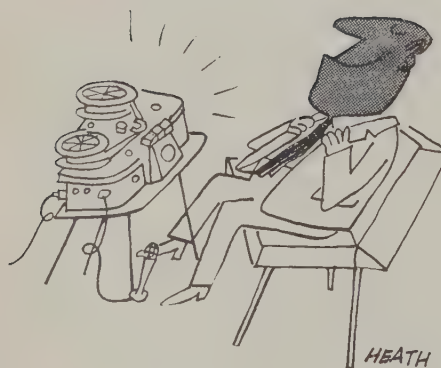
The whisperer was now grasping my drinking arm in a grip like that of Blind Pew. I took a genuinely honest sip from a passing measure and promised the whisperer that if I had any relations buried in a zone that the English might feel

"At Bulli over 200 miners ran more than 200 miles to safety from the Hunley colliery when the roof lifted. They have refused to return until assured of the pit's safety."—*Australian paper*
Well it's a long way.





"You're fabulous."



"You're fabulous."

an urge to flood, to have their remains removed now, before costs rose again. Then some joker took a long hunting horn from the wall and let rip with it just as the landlady was creeping in with a lighted candle. She dropped it and it landed with a short, formal hiss in the lagoon of home-brewed. At first I thought the blast was the whisperer calling on all foxes to unite against all water-boards, but when the lights went on he was still at my elbow, looking very grave and saying "Don't forget now. Before costs rise again. We're all in this, the dead and all."

I went outside to my wife who was waiting impatiently in the car and complaining about the forty moonless miles we still had to cover. She asked me what I had been doing. I told her that I had been drinking in the dark and having advice about digging up my relations. She thought about this for a while and said that my life had been heading for this sort of moment ever since she could remember.

The road from Dolgelly to Barmouth is as dark and tortuous as any human mind. Vast crags on the right and falling ground to the left kept the road impossibly narrow and suggested that the traditional vehicle for that stretch was something between a barouche and a wheelbarrow. The dark grew more resistant. Like any student of languages under stress my mind began to buzz with idioms. "It's as dark as a wolf's mouth." "It's as dark as a shark's fin." "It's as dark as the bruises on a deacon's id." My wife told me that if I gave her just one more simile she'd take a chance on the sloping ground to the left and really give me something to worry about. We caught up with a small van. I became mad at the sight of the rear lights and demanded that we follow the van into Barmouth. We followed it. It made a sharp right turn. So did we. We tagged along for half a mile. The road kept getting narrower. We seemed to be heading for the eye of a needle. My reflexes rose to the challenge and I contracted myself so intensely that my wife told me if I was planning a fit to wait until we parked. The van stopped in front of a large house. It turned out to be the most sequestered private nursing home in Wales, sited deliberately far from the Barmouth road. Before heading back for the main drag my wife inquired of the vanman if I could be left there for a while. The place was full.

We reached Beddgelert and had a night of fitful sleep. Every half-hour I leaned out of the window and shook hands with owls. The following morning a cool dew of reassurance fell upon me. I went out to look for the grave of the heroic hound, Gelert, who, bloodied after killing the wolf that threatened his master's child, was knifed by his master. I had learned a poem about this legend as a child and sobered many an audience by my impression of Gelert leaping and yapping and trying to explain to its master that the baby was safe behind the couch. Gelert is the only dog to stir me to tenderness. I have been bitten by dogs so often that, fed through a player-piano, I would probably come out with a hymn to Pasteur.

I made my way to the memorial and stood reverently before it. It turned out to be a minute electricity sub-station. The Gelert stone itself was in the adjoining field. The only other pilgrims were two very small girls, hardly able to read. They were reading the inscription aloud and falling heavily over the rhetoric about three times a line. I helped them. I enjoyed it. I was on a good wicket. I worked close to the granite and managed an extra resonance. I threw in a few phrases of my own about tenderness, devotion and the odd rewards of love. The little girls sniffled. At the end of the recital they picked up three empty ice-cream cartons. One each for them, one for me. They filled them with some of the most undistinguished wild flowers north of Abersychan. We laid them on the grave. It was my moment.

Then my wife laid a militant finger on the horn of the car, summoning me to the Himalayan jaunt over the pass to Capel Curig. I said goodbye to the girls. The nightingales had ceased to sing.

COMPANY DIRECTORS BOUND OVER

By Bernard Hollowood

The most worried group of people at the great rally of business tycoons held the other week at the Albert Hall under the banner of the Institute of Directors was the football section. While we toyed with our pre-packed austerity luncheons I questioned some of these deperately anxious men about the catastrophic decline in attendances at League games. It should be obvious from the views given below that the football director is a much-maligned man, the victim of grossly unfair and mendacious gossip at the hands of spectators, football managers, players and pressmen.

Left free to put their own business-like remedies into effect they would, I feel sure, soon have the turnstiles clicking merrily again, and put British soccer back in its rightful place at the top of the world table.

Councillor K. Rancid (M—— City): "I'm fed up with people belly-aching about amenities. What more do they want? Spectators on the ter-

aces are a jolly sight warmer than those in the stands, what with all that body heat and actual physical contact. A lot of people I know come to our ground just for the warmth, but whose fault is it if they won't pack close together as we used to do when I was a boy? When it's very cold I usually ask the staff to switch on the floodlighting for a few minutes to take the chill off—but I don't think this kind of thing is appreciated. Lavatories? No need for them surely. A football match lasts only ninety minutes, and anyone who's sick oughtn't to go to soccer anyway. And don't talk to me about la-did-dah Continental clubs with all their lounges, restaurants, and one-arm bandits. We don't want that kind of thing over here. Football's a man's game. If our players would get stuck in you'd soon see the crowds back."

Frederick Emmsworth (S—— Rovers): "I blame the Government. What's killing football is the ordinary man's affluence, which is of course based on

*"But, child, you **must** have eaten something—you wouldn't have been sick when you were blooded, otherwise."*



inflation and the crippling taxation of the executive class. Macmillan gives everybody a car to go to the seaside in summer, and what happens? They abuse the privilege, use their cars for shopping and joy-riding on Saturday afternoons when they should be supporting their town eleven. Football brings business to a place, as every shopkeeper knows, and good business means lower prices all round. So people who don't go to soccer are ruining the local economy and cutting off their noses to spite their faces. If the car industry would play the game and price the worker out of the market we'd soon see the terraces packed again. Mind you, I also think some of the blame lies with the footballers. They ought to get stuck in more."

Harry Pit (N— Villa): "I put a lot of our trouble down to midfield play. There's too much of it, and I think we ought to follow the example of cricket and cut down the size of the playing area. A 75-yard boundary has brightened up cricket appreciably, and I think that the elimination of the midfield area would brighten football. For one thing you'd have the goals closer together, so the play would always be in one side's penalty area. Also of course we should have more room for the spectators. I'd like to see drive-in football grounds with the spectators watching happily from their cars. Also of course it's up to the players themselves. They've got to cut out the fancy stuff and get stuck in."

Sir William Bauer (A— United): "Television is the trouble. We have a set in the Directors' Box and I must say it can be pretty distracting even when you're watching an A1 game. TV should go off the air on Saturday afternoons. This would enable receivers to cool down, and it would prevent the public from being contaminated by such filthy trash as wrestling, racing, boxing, swimming, Rugby Union and Rugby League. I'm not a fuddy-duddy though. In its place TV is all right. I don't think the odd programme such as *Take Your Pick* and *Double Your Money* does anybody any harm. What I object to most about TV is the fact that when they show

football matches, live or on films, the players are too scared and uppity to get stuck in."

Sam Taulk (— Town): "To some extent it's our own fault. We appoint the managers and we recruit them exclusively from the ranks of old players. Now footballers are not business men. Obviously. If they'd had what it takes they'd never have gone in for soccer in the first place. They are dead-beats and stubborn with it, so that they sometimes refuse to take the advice of their betters. A manager of mine bought a player for £20,000, an inside-left who wasn't worth his car-fare. So I had to step in. I sold him for £30,000 a few weeks later right over the manager's head. The manager was furious, so naturally I fired him. But my policy was justified up to the hilt six months later when the club I'd sold the inside-left to got rid of him to another sucker—an Italian club this time. Roma, I think. For £80,000, odd.

"Managers are ten a penny. I certainly wouldn't let my daughter marry one."

Mr. Syd Blakiston (B— County): "There's something wrong, I think, with the organisation of the League. After the first few games of the season three-quarters of the clubs are afraid of relegation and play accordingly. I would abolish relegation altogether and double the number of clubs promoted. In time this would get rid of the fourth, third and second divisions and make all clubs first-class. The spectator nowadays won't pay to see second-rate football. It's an obvious solution, isn't it?"

Mr. Neddy Chapbook (T— Academicals): "Listen mister, I'm a business man. I don't move a step in my business without taking expert advice, so I'm going to ask the League to call in a team of scientific consultants and public relations boys. They'll sort it all out. If they can flog the stuff I make I don't see why they can't sell soccer—even the fancy, effeminate stuff the teams serve up nowadays. No, I've nothing to add. No comment. Let me finish my lunch in peace, please. I want to hear Lord Chandos . . ."



"Strictly between ourselves, Mr. Denton—what are you like at bowling and scraping?"

Eric Burgin

SHOES AND SHIPS AND WAXWINGS

By J. B. Boothroyd



In the atmosphere surrounding any editorial desk particles of obscure intelligence are permanently floating. I plucked one from the air the other day which told me, for instance, that a pressure of 20,000 lb. would be needed to flatten a regulation soccer ball to the point of explosion. And again, only this morning, I learn that half the children in Northern Rhodesia, under sociological interrogation, have said that if they weren't human beings they would like to be birds.

Let us forget the soccer ball for the moment—and with it a poignantly untopical report that the French Government Tourist Office has issued a pamphlet entitled "Ten Things for Cats and Dogs to do in Paris"—and consider the aerial ambitions of the little Rhodesians. I don't know what the official fact-finder said, as he kept putting this question to the young citizens of Livingstonia, Chitambo and Lusaka, and getting back little tweets of "Bird, Bird, Bird." Probably it wasn't his business to say anything. All the same someone, I feel, should point out that being a bird isn't all it's cracked up to be. Personally, I'd rather be a dog or cat, who gets a softer life altogether. Has anyone, I'd like to know, ever issued a pamphlet on ten things for birds to do in Paris? Connoisseurs of the *double-entente* will kindly turn over. This isn't their sort of article.

This is, in fact, an article about a Dutchman in Amsterdam who has a couple of birds nesting under the bonnet of his car. Starlings, I fancy they are, and with eggs, he says, on the way. He says also that when the eggs arrive and hatching sets in, he will lay his car up and go by bus until the little feathered family is successfully airborne. It is also an article about a couple of blackbirds who, with a flash of that arrant stupidity which knocks all talk of dumb creatures' intelligence for six, have nested in the branches of an old tinsel-draped Christmas tree in a church hall in Rutland. Here, again, eggs are imminent, and those who are perfectly entitled, being members in good standing with paid-up dues, to use the hall for jiving, table tennis and other religious activities, have unanimously voted not to do so until the nest is vacated.

As you were going to say—exactly how I can reconcile these facts with an earlier statement that I wouldn't be a bird if you paid me, and still turn this into a well-argued *belle-lettre* enjoining the young pupils of Northern Rhodesia to keep their feet on the ground, even if it means having four of them, is a challenge such as no writer of light pieces has faced since Ring Lardner championed



"Two seats that have been attacked by an axe-maniac and a single with nasty lacerations and the innards ripped out."

"mange" as the loveliest word in the English language. I accept the challenge: and not because I'm short of other subjects, either: an item datelined Methuen, Massachusetts, reaches me even as I write, with the news that the milk of the Pacific walrus contains forty-three per cent butter-fat.

So take it from me, children, the great drawback to a career as a bird is that you never know for two days together just how you stand with the human race. Imagine yourself an Amsterdam starling, snug and warm in the sump-fragrant dark. (If preferred, you can be a Birmingham peewit or a Newport Pagnell nuthatch: at this time of year the road-transport of Europe is widely immobilized by strong men's compassion.) Every morning for weeks you hear Mynheer van Huytzeleer tiptoe to the garage, slip a handful of worms through the radiator grille, shush his wife at the back door where she is noisily tying her apron, and manfully suppress his sneeze all the way to the bus-stop. Then comes the day when the kids are off your hands. Exulting in your freedom you soar away with their mother and start tucking-in to a square meal in the soft fruit, when—wham! All hell breaks loose. Bird-scarers rattle and glitter, women run out of the house screaming and waving mops, little Dutch children hurl milk-bottles, clogs, butts of old cucumber from the sink-tidy . . . and at an upper window appears Mynheer van Huytzeleer himself, red-faced and fumbling pellets into an air-gun.

"Are these the same people," any starling may be excused for asking, "who've had us up to the pinions in soaked bread and bacon-rinds ever since the end of Lent? What's got into them?" Search me," says the other one, dodging a screwed-up dishcloth. "But if anyone comes around asking *me* what I'd like to be if I weren't a bird I shall plump for a skunk. At least they get dirty looks *all* the time. Let's take dessert off those wallflowers."

Or consider pheasants. A pheasant is brought up to the idea that he's going to be followed about all his life by a bodyguard with a double-barrelled shotgun and gaiters, and throughout his formative years this works well; even nursemaids, dogs and small boys armed with nothing more lethal than a plastic death-ray are chased from the lanes and spinneys: protective salvos are sometimes even fired over their heads: everyone, it seems, is an enemy, except the man with the

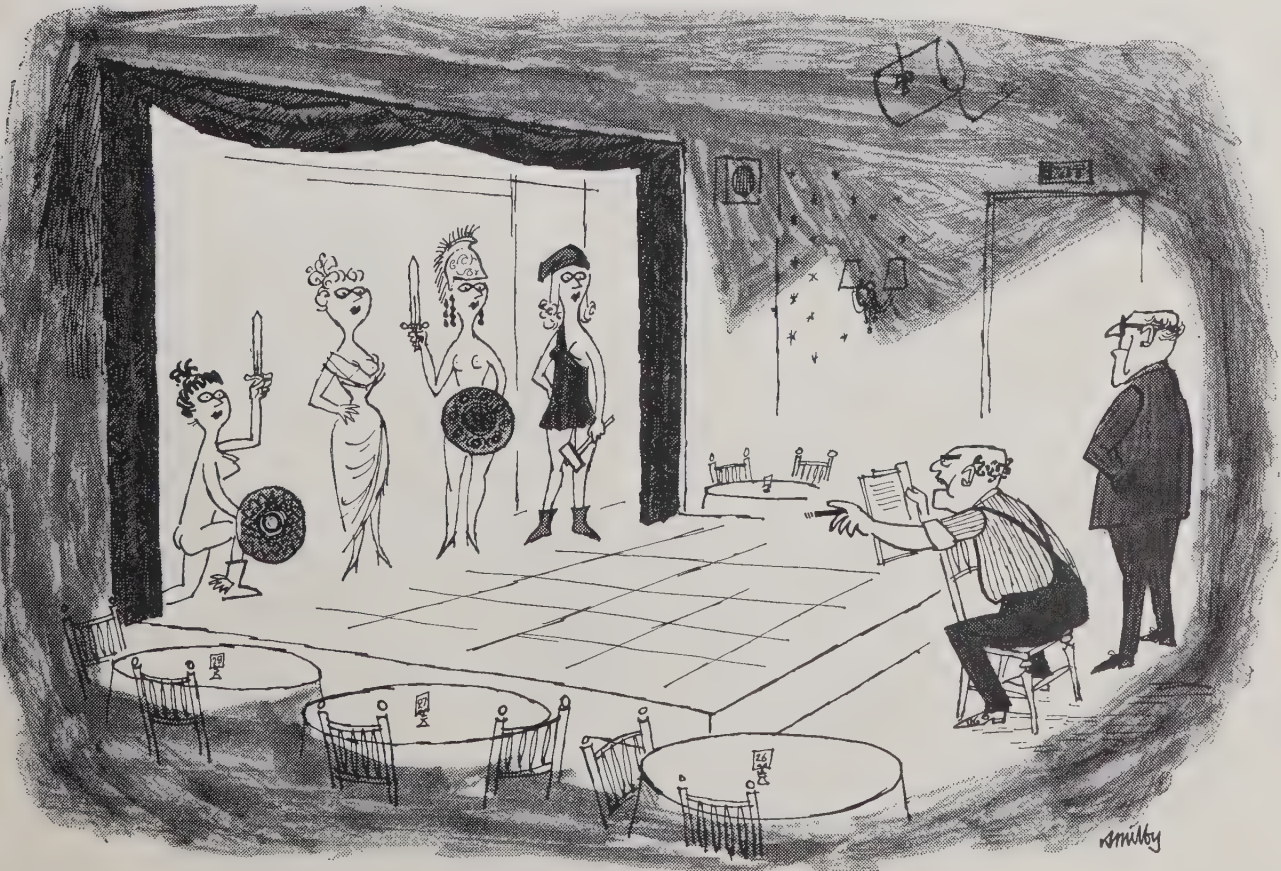
double-barrelled gun. But what happens, suddenly, without any distant early warning, on about October 2? The bodyguard is reinforced tenfold, if not more. The pheasant feels gratified, but only momentarily. Because what's this? Bang, bang! There go his tailfeathers. The reinforced bodyguard is shooting at *him*. And not over his head, either.

It's hard to make sense of. And, round about September 1, partridges agree. Similar bewilderment is in store for turkeys.

What of the budgerigar? His wounds are in the main emotional ones, it is true. But many a budgerigar would rather be swiftly dispatched by a twelve-bore than suffer the psychological turmoil of being coaxed into repeating a Flaxman telephone number for weeks, and then, whenever he starts up, getting blanketed under a green baize cloth, with cries of "Oh, shut up, you little b——!" before he's got the FLA out.

No, on the whole, children of Northern Rhodesia, my advice would be to give birds a miss when it comes to offers of reincarnation. There are lucky ones, granted. But even in a church hall in Rutland, just when you're well settled down in the mystifyingly sapless branches of a tinseliferous fir, you can never be sure that some anti-social element isn't going to steal in and start beating you about the room with a ping-pong bat. Stay as you are, kids. There's lots to do. Try painting on pin-heads. Analyse some walrus milk. Get a few fat friends together and explode a soccer ball.

But don't get the idea that you're entirely safe from switches in human attitudes, all the same. You don't have to be nesting in a motor-car engine to wake up one morning and find that you've left the Commonwealth or something. That's life, children . . . like this cutting that's just landed on my desk saying that Americans are eating three times as much lettuce as they were in 1919.



“ . . . and this is where you, Aphrodite, tiring of Hephaestus, slip out of your dress, while you, Ares . . . ”

KINDLY KEEP NATURE NATURAL

By H. F. ELLIS

Dedication brings a great deal of happiness, and not always only to the dedicated. Long years ago I remember reading a letter in (I think) *The Field* which stated that "the most significant event of the first half of the year has been the re-appearance of the white-winged black tern in Cheshire." I would not swear that it was the white-winged black tern; but, whatever the precise details, the significant thing about this significant event, to me, was that the same half-year had also witnessed the fall of Singapore, a defeat in the Western Desert and other trifles that upset me at the time. That letter restored my sense of proportion.

Naturalists are not the only dedicated people. Some clergymen and doctors qualify; so do many scientists and financiers; you may meet men entirely wrapped up in postage stamps or railway engines. But there is a high seriousness about botanists, ornithologists, entomologists and all, if I may so express myself, that lark that clergymen and even financiers rarely attain. The application of naturalists, their enthusiasm, their delight and, where need be, their indignation is of a pitch and purity beyond the common run. It is unusual, for a simple example, to find a man putting in as many solid consecutive

hours on a tricky theological point as another will devote to the logging of water fleas. When a writer cries out, with reference to some new development, that "the ultimate results can only be disastrous" the note of agony shows, I maintain, that he is more likely to be concerned with the threat to some species of plant only found in six other places in the country than to an old Tudor cottage*.

I am moved to these reflections by the latest issue of *The London Naturalist* (No. 40), the journal of that admirable body the London Natural History Society. Here, laid bare in a series of papers, reports and hand lists, is a world of patient endeavour unknown to the ordinary commuter with no interests beyond share prices and golf. It is impossible to read, without feeling curiously diminished, "Some Notes on the Snails and Slugs of Devilsden Wood" (45 species, and a scale map of the area), or "The

*The phrase quoted refers in fact to the proposed Esher By-pass and its threat to the Black Pond and "the boggy area where the scientific interest lies" on Esher Common. "Although the proposed route may not cause immediate damage to the more interesting areas, the ultimate results can only be disastrous, unless great care is taken to confine motorists to the road and prevent parking and general access to the common." (*London Naturalist* 40, page 141)



"I've done this personality quiz—you don't tot up to much."



Gerald Scarfe

Vegetation of the South Norwood or Elmers End Sewage Works" (171 plants with copious information about their habitat*). During the four years 1957-60, thrown away by so many of us in the pursuit of gain and riotous living, Mr. Douglas Kent was examining 500 Middlesex walls and noting, among many allied matters, that of the 21 walls on which *Phyllis scolopendrium* was found 57.1 per cent faced east, 38.1 per cent faced north and only 4.8 per cent faced south. It is typical of the selfless dedication of the true naturalist that Mr. Kent tells us nothing of the personal problems and sacrifices involved in the examination of 500 walls. He simply states that a survey was made of the flora of 500 walls, as another might say that he considered the reports and accounts, and goes on to list the 204 plants found, draw a comparison with the wall floras of other areas, note the effect of moisture-content, shade factors, air pollution, method of

construction and orientation of his walls, excuse himself for not including churchyard walls, which will be dealt with in a later paper—and that, apart from a page or two on seed-dispersion and the longevity of wall plants, is that. Imagination must supply the long tramps through the length and breadth of Middlesex, the scrambles, the bruised knees, the scraped shins, the endless minutes spent balancing on dustbins or hanging by the finger-tips from the coping of some ancient nine-footer rich in *Cymbalaria muralis*. Of all this, of the sudden unnerving shouts of "Come down there, you!" or the hopelessly unscientific "Hi, get out of that!", of desperate leaps from pigsty walls and breathless pursuits across nursery gardens, there is not a word. "Old brick walls are sometimes extremely porous," Mr. Kent notes; he dismisses as irrelevant the fact that they are sometimes unexpectedly topped with broken glass.

The world of change, as seen through naturalists' eyes, bears no resemblance to the face it presents to the untutored layman. No outsider could possibly guess what development will aid or hinder, delight or exasperate them. It never struck me at the time that

*A difficult subject frankly tackled, e.g. "An important characteristic of the Sludge Drying Beds, the Stormwater Tanks and the Sludge Piles is the heavy concentration of nitrogenous matter always attractive to the *Chenopodiaceae* and *Polygonaceae*."

the closing of Croydon Airport afforded "an opportunity to investigate the flora of an area long closed to botanists" or that Mr. Edward Lousley would find there, on the western side, a large patch of *Euphorbia uralensis*, hitherto wasted on a lot of pilots. When the railway line from Wimbledon to Sutton was under construction in 1928-9, how many people realized that Mr. Moorman, FGS was refused permission to enter the chalk cuttings near Cheam and was only able to identify the zone as *Micraster coranguinum* by examining some of the excavated material in the trucks after they had left the area? A defective waste pipe in Ealing in 1958 "resulted in the establishment of a luxuriant and trailing growth of *Poa annua*" on the wall of a house. Then some fool went and repaired it, and the plant died. People don't think, you see. A nice bit of blocked guttering on a barn near Uxbridge added *Agrostis stolonifera* to Mr. Kent's list; but you can bet it has been unblocked by now. And gravel pits are often sadly misunderstood. Proposed extensions of the workings at Slines Oak Wood would interest the Geology Section, but it has to be borne in mind that the wild woodland life would be disturbed. "The result of the Inquiry," says the *London Naturalist*, "was that the Minister has refused to permit quarrying except for a very small portion"—thus giving the geologists something to work on without vexing the ornithologists beyond endurance, and of course producing very little gravel. "A not unsatisfactory decision," as the *London Naturalist* observes.

Ruxley Gravel Pit, on the other hand, is on the list of places to be conserved by the Kent Naturalists'

Trust; so it's lucky no one objected to its being scooped out in the first instance. The whole subject bristles with difficulties.

"An unsatisfactory feature of the year's work has been confusion and frustration due to deliberate planting of roots in wild situations," Mr. Lousley writes, in a reference to the maddening way people spoil things for botanists. "Every root removed from one habitat to another with soil must transfer vast numbers of the diaspores of other species—small seeds of flowering plants, spores of ferns and bryophytes, algae, and no doubt fungi and animals* as well . . . If this practice continues, the value of much of our botanical work will be jeopardized . . ."

One does see his point. It is bad enough having seeds carried about to all the wrong places on the feet of birds, in the fur of cats or, as noted in another connection by Mr. Kent, "via mud on the footwear of children climbing over walls" without having nature deliberately distorted in this way. Unless, of course, you care to take the broad view and regard the actions of man, good or bad, deliberate or accidental, as part of Nature. After all, bombing brought more Black Redstarts to London, and nobody complained about that, though I wouldn't put it past the Germans to have done it on purpose. And as to that *Euphorbia uralensis* at Croydon, who is to say that it wasn't brought there originally between the toes of an Aurignacian, or one of those Peterborough Women? On second thoughts I doubt whether Mr. Lousley has the right to ask us to leave nature alone until he has finished making lists of it.

*Not foxes, of course.



Influenza Cadenza

I'LL never know why people sing
 Such panegyrics to the spring
 Whose brazen light I always find
 Quite devastatingly unkind.
 That hard, inexorable stare
 Makes mock of salt-and-pepper hair
 And gallant efforts to pretend
 The curtains in the hall will mend,
 While, outside, some officious bird,
 To irritating frenzy stirred,
 Proclaims that everything but me
 Is bright and beautiful and free!

— EDITH SIMPSON

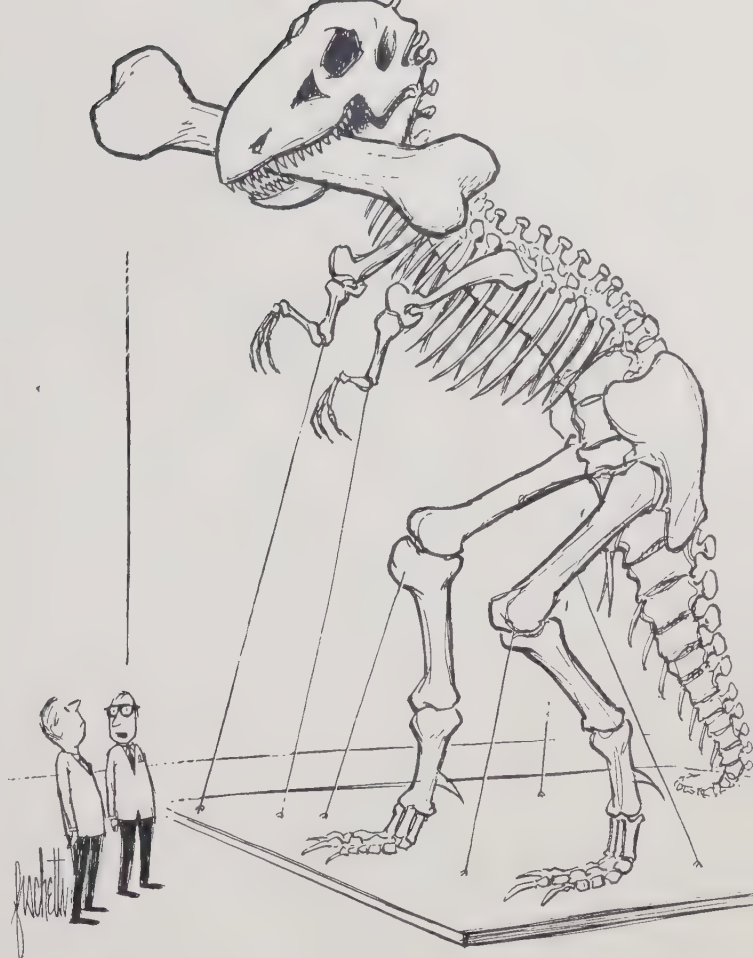
FAREWELL THE PEAKED CAP

By J. E. Hinder

The publishing world, always disinclined to follow the dictates of mere journalism, had until quite recently been slow to realise the potentialities of the new Golden Era of Professional Football. Now, of course, the situation is very different. The old conception of the game as a sad alleviation of working-class misery, a proletarian lifeboat in a sea of squalor and unemployment, is dead.

We have such new novels as Lyndon Portcullis's *Turnstile!*, a striking illustration of the manner in which the wind of change has swept across the terraces and into the literary stockade. Clive Ackleroyd, wonder inside-right of Botling Wanderers, for whom Mortadellaccio, the Italian league leaders, have paid 250,000,000,000 lire, lives a life of elegant luxury in his Milan penthouse. He has an expensive car, paid for by the club, an Italian *fidanzata*, acquired privately, and an hysterically faithful following at the *Foro*. Yet happiness eludes him. Can it be the call of his old ground, Mudlane Park? Are his roots yet deep in fogbound Botling, despite the veneer of international sophistication? This is a well-organised *novella* which brings into sharp focus the psychological strain inseparable from life in Big Football.

Towards The Goal suffers, to my mind, as a result of the excessive commitment of its author. Morton Breathchild, whose first soccer novel *Keep It On The Island!* won the Prix de Highbury last year, has created in Father Len Slope, the footballing padre, an inimitable character, but one more acceptable to transatlantic readers than to British. The story of his conversion of a gang of teenage delinquents by means of "the Great Game" is an exciting one but strains belief somewhat. "Fred," he says to a lad who has recently knifed his mother, "in the Game of Life it doesn't pay to hang on to the ball. Give it out to the wings more, but if you must try to burst through the middle—don't use your elbows! And remember—the whole team suffers when the Big Referee gives a penalty against you!" Small wonder that Fred is soon in trouble again. On a minor point of history: *Leyton Orient* in 1938?



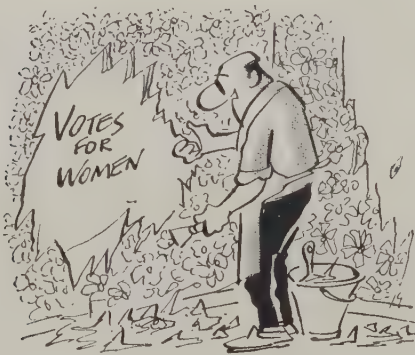
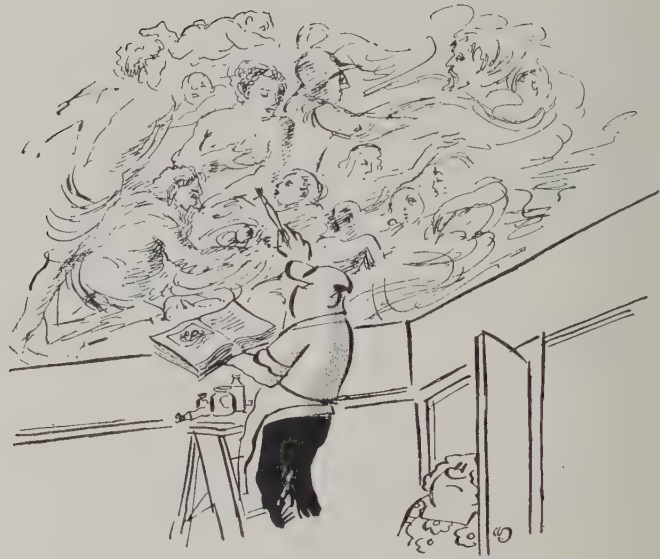
"It seemed logical. We had one bone left over."

Love and Football are inseparable in several books out this month. In Mabel Lucy Watcliff's *Passion's Transfer* it is a case of infatuation from kick-off to final whistle when cultured man-about-town centre-forward Mark Brumshaw meets Lady May Matthews, the new secretary of the Supporters' Club. Yet in the world of football, as elsewhere, the course of true love seldom runs smooth. However, Cupid eventually finds a path to the goal and at the end it is just a question of wedding-bells and promotion to Division One. In *Love In The Covered Stand*, her latest romance, Ethel Sawntrey deals amusingly with goalkeeper Cyprian Dardwickle's successful struggle to win back his fiancée, who is temporarily dazzled by the Continental finesse of Lodovico Mantalini, Slaithwaite United's Sicilian importation. A keen knowledge of the finer points of the game, coupled with a sure instinct for delineating the way of a footballer with a maid, makes this a very readable book.

Other books not received:

Wanton at White Hart Lane, by James Poker Trace.
Malgré and the Referee's Mistress, by Jules Parthenon.
Murder in the Penalty Area, by Agnes Beastie.
Teenagers for Wembley!, by Burp Restless.

Man Decorating by Larry



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The Countryman Anthology

Edited by JOHN CRIPPS

PLANTSMAN AND PARSON, barnstormer and Bent-Hook, mapmaker, pot-holer, hill farmer, woodman, parish councillor, wart-charmer, mouse-watcher, cowman, caravan dentist—these are but a few of the country men and women who have made their appearance in the welcoming pages of *The Countryman*. Home life in Fermanagh, the Highland cinema, the summer outing and the village panto have found a place, together with the Devon country bus; and, in a more reminiscent vein, subjects ranging from an Elizabethan dog and an eighteenth-century J.P. to poaching with crabs and Victorian parlour games.

All appear again in an anthology selected by John Cripps from the issues of *The Countryman* published in the early years of his editorship. Among the contributors are H. E. Bates, Garth Christian, Walter de la Mare, Cahir Healy, W. G. Hoskins, R. M. Lockley, Crichton Porteous, Justin Richardson, Thomas Sharp, Robert Trow-Smith, Sylvia Townsend Warner and many others who, in the enthusiasm of the moment, have described their own experiences with a freshness and spontaneity that do not fade.

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