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FIRST WITH THE SUN

BY ALAN MULGAN

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To

GEOFFREY AND DORIS

NEARLY all these papers have appeared in one or more of the following New Zealand newspapers: the *Auckland Star*, Auckland; the *Press*, the *Christchurch Times*, the *Star-Sun*, Christchurch; the *Evening Post*, Wellington; the *Evening Star*, Dunedin. Most of them have been written under the pen-name 'Cyrano.' The author wishes to thank these newspapers for permission to republish.

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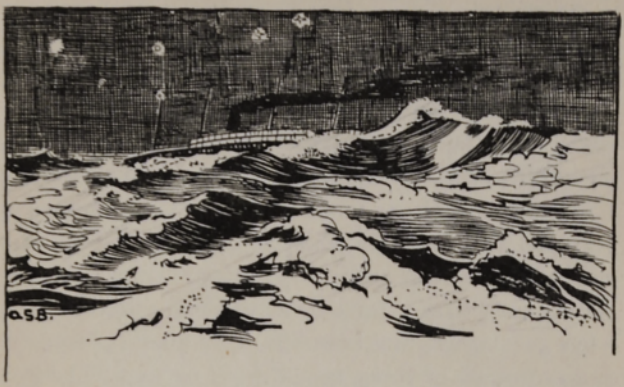


GOOD-BYE, IONIC!

We 'll tak' one stretch—three weeks an' odd by any road ye steer,
Fra' Cape Town East to Wellington—ye need an engineer!
M'ANDREW'S HYMN.

Is M'Andrew still alive? Does he potter about some Channel port, watching the ships go by, noting the growth of tonnage in the New Zealand trade and the passing of coal? Or does his body lie at the bottom of the Channel, somewhere within sight of the Lizard? The man himself, or his ghost, will stir to the fact that on Wednesday next the *Ionic* sets out from New Zealand on her last voyage.

For the passing of this fine old ship is a portent and a mark of time. One goes back to the days when there was no 'via Panama,' when there was not an oil-burner on the New Zealand–England run, when

internal-combustion engines for ships were unthought of. To some of us it seems only the other day that ships went south-east out of Wellington to the Horn, and then north to Montevideo, Rio, Teneriffe, and Home; and returning, rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and loped over the great waste between the Cape and Hobart to which M'Andrew refers. Now our direct passenger ships go and return via Panama (save an occasional one, carrying a few passengers, that takes the old homeward route), and nearly all of them are oil-fired or motor-driven. The past of the passenger routes is receding quickly into dimness, just as is the past of our internal communications.

The *Ionic* goes back to those round-the-world days, home one way and back the other. And when she goes from this long and honourable service of hers, the *Tainui* will be her company's sole survivor of those days, among passenger ships, and the *Tainui's* expectation of life, one supposes, is not long. (The Shaw-Savill Company is reviving the name *Arawa*; let us hope that in this fleet the equally historic *Tainui* will not die with the ship.) An important economic change is connected with the survival of these veterans. The *Ionic* and the *Tainui* are, I believe, the only passenger liners in the home trade that burn coal. Once upon a time coal was the only fuel; now coal is being discarded even by pure cargo-carriers. What this means in the aggregate to the coal industry may be imagined.

Much has been gained, no doubt, by the adoption of the Panama run. Leaving New Zealand you run into warmer latitudes with good prospects of fine weather, and the absence of coal means clean decks on leaving ports. Going via the Horn you run into colder and stormier seas. I know New Zealanders whose first trip Home took them into a gale outside Wellington, and then into continuous storm and gloom for eighteen days. They did not see the sun until they were abreast of the Falkland Islands, and then only in a watery gleam. And running by dead reckoning, the ship had rounded the Horn so far south that she passed outside the Falklands. During the whole of that fortnight and more seas were high—so high that water came down the ventilators; it rained most of the time; deck walking was next to impossible; and it was bitterly cold. 'Steamin' to bell for fourteen days o' snow an' floe an' blow,' as M'Andrew says of the Rio run. But Rio! It was one of the compensations of that run—Rio, that lovely city on the loveliest of harbours. The New Zealander of to-day has only the remotest prospect of seeing Rio.

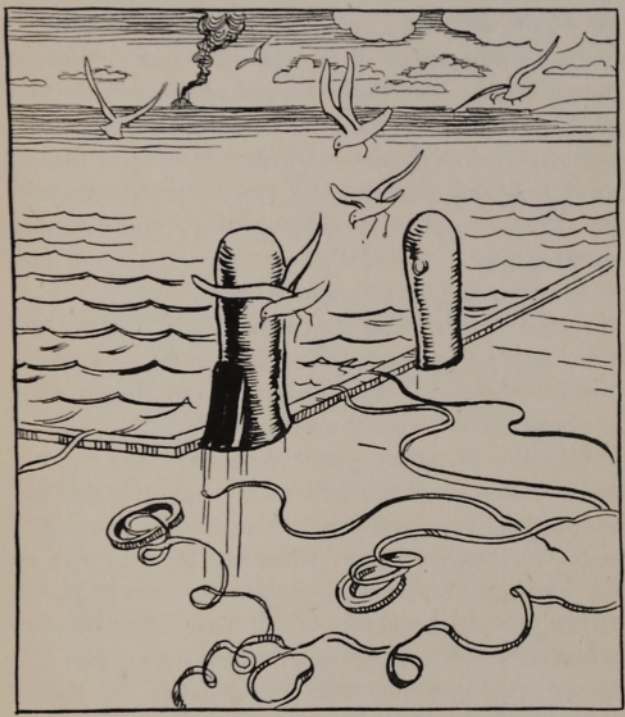
The old routes provided more variety. Back to New Zealand led one by Cape Town and Hobart. It was this two-Cape run that M'Andrew served on, and in the olden days there were single-screw ships helped by sails. The original M'Andrew, I 'm told, was chief on one of the original Shaw-Savill steamers—perhaps the first *Tainui*. I have read that the famous trio, the *Athenic*, *Corinthic*, and *Ionic*, were built

especially strong for the long high seas off the Cape of Good Hope. Whatever the special ideas of their builders, they did a fine job, for the *Ionic* is still going strong to-day, thirty-four years after, even logging a speed a little higher than when she was young.

The earlier ships of the run were much smaller, but what beautiful models they were—Shaw-Savill and New Zealand Shipping Company alike, the old *Tainui* and *Arawa* and *Rimutaka*—long and low, with yarded masts and clipper bows. With a fair wind they could go faster at times (so I have been told) than their twin-screwed successors. But the single-screw, as M'Andrew realized full well, was an anxiety. On the long stretch from South Africa to Hobart and Wellington they needed an engineer—'the fault that leaves six thousand ton a log upon the sea.'

Yes, they were beautiful ships, those types. We have far more comfort at sea to-day, but in some of the castellated makes of ships we have less beauty of line. The high superstructures give a touch of incongruity, as if something of the land had been added to a thing essentially of the sea, as if an hotel building had been superimposed upon a yacht. In the old type of ship one was in closer touch with the sea's moods, and felt a deeper sense of adventure. The *Ionic* looks like a ship, every foot of her. She rides the water as if she belonged to it. And an unforgettable experience it is to stand on the top deck of such a ship on a clear night and take in her strong

and noble length made mysterious by the darkness and sanctified by her years of service, and watch the masthead sway gently against the stars. A great ship



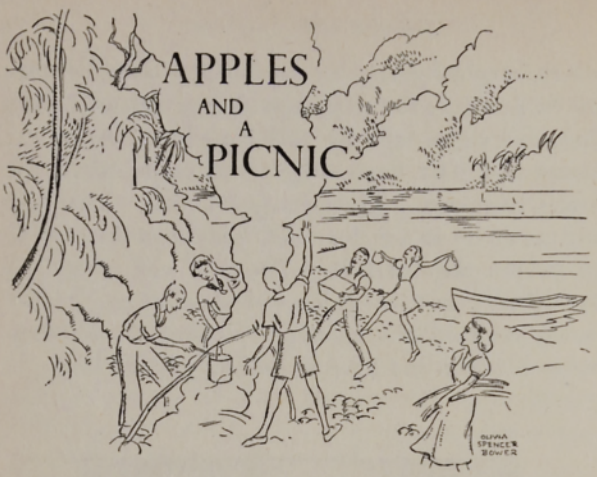
she has been. Is there any handwork of man so wonderful as this machine, so strong and so complex, so long and faithful in its service? Think of the battering such a ship has had, slam-banging over the

seas for thirty-four years! Think of the strain on her engines, yet they run sweetly to-day. Think of the stresses imposed upon her frames and plates, which are staunch after two million miles of journeying. Yet of the men who put her together so that she has withstood the anger of the sea for so long, none is remembered. All the clamour of forge has gone with the wind. Those who came from drab streets and wrestled with the steel that made her plates; those shipyard workers who juggled with hot rivets and hammered her into being—they were merely working men, noticed by some people only if they agitated for better wages and conditions.

Such a ship is more than a machine. To any one with imagination she is like a sentient being, and her passing touches the heart. For thirty-four years she has been a link with the old world, with what we call Home—let us not quarrel here about the word—and she has carried the fortunes of a young nation and the personal hopes and fears of thousands of its people. In the long nights at sea, when her frames creak on the slow swells, there might be a rustle of ghosts in her cabins, the ghosts of all those who sailed in her to seek a new world or to taste the joys of an old. About her hangs a nimbus of romance; her house-flag might be a rose and her stern ensign a spray of the kowhai's gold.

On Wednesday the *Ionic* will clear New Zealand and take the long trail for the last time. She may make the Channel on a night 'fine, clear, and dark—

a full-draught breeze,' or on a sunny morning with the Scillys away to the west, and then, closer, Land's End, and closer still the patterned loveliness of the Lizard and Start Point—sights that have stirred the hearts of so many Home-going colonials. Then she will move on to London, and, her cargo discharged, go to the ship-breakers. The final end of such a ship should not be piecemeal destruction, beauty slowly resolved into ugliness, but burial in the deep sea over which she plied so faithfully for so long.



THE picnic party had reached the dessert stage. Content with the world, they lay on the grass under a great tree and looked out over the shimmering blue of the lake to the bush-clad ranges of the distant shore. The high pulse of summer was beating in the still heat of early afternoon, and the air was delicately touched with the scents of tea tree and fern and wood smoke. The peace of appetite wisely satisfied was upon the company; they reposed in a rare half-minute of silence. Someone unpacked the apples.

'Will you have a Delicious apple?' asked the host of the poet.

'Now what do you mean by that?' asked the poet, disregarding the offer. 'Do you mean an apple that is delicious, or an apple called Delicious? Was ever fruit so fatuously named? It is the apotheosis

of the obvious. "Granny Smith" may be prosaic as a name for an apple, but it does suggest something.'

'Delicious in name and quality,' replied the host.

'I don't agree with you,' said the poet, clasping his hands behind his close-cropped head and gazing up through the red-flecked branches of the tree into the dazzling blue. 'The Delicious apple is not delicious. It is a hybrid, a mongrel. It suggests water-melons and pears. It has no character, no personality, no——'

'No guts!' suggested a voice.

'Thank you,' said the poet. 'It is not the expression I would have chosen myself—perhaps from moral cowardice—but it is admirable. I repeat that the Delicious apple suggests a pear and no apple should suggest a pear. It is a decline, a degradation. For the apple is masculine, virile, staunch, and true, and the pear is——'

'Feminine and weak,' said a delicate voice. 'Don't mind us. We are used to it.'

'Don't interrupt me,' replied the poet severely. 'I would not pay the pear the lofty and indeed perhaps the ultimate compliment of saying it was feminine. It is sexless—a soft, cold, wood-fibred, frail, and fragile excrescence, a thing reminiscent of hot-houses and cotton-wool.'

'Oh, for the wings of a dove,' murmured someone, 'that I might fly away and get this idiot a luscious Bon Chrétien. Dear as remembered kisses after death, is the memory of the last I ate.'

'A pear is merely a flirtation,' resumed the poet. 'An apple is a romance, a lifelong passion. Where among the fruits is there another such friend of man? Where is there a fruit that keeps so long, carries so easily, and is at once so exquisite and comforting to eat? The peach, I admit, has its high moments; there is no pie like peach pie. But consider its evanescence. I know a man who carefully picked several cases of peaches for a market only a night away. They were perfectly sound when they were shipped, but in the morning they were a ruin of brown rot. The little speck in garnered fruit that Tennyson mentioned so felicitously works much more slowly in the apple. You can store it and go to your store for joy over and over again. Do you remember the passage in John Burroughs about the apples stored in straw and the passing of youth? "The apple is indeed the fruit of youth. As we grow old we crave apples less. It is an ominous sign. When you are ashamed to be seen eating them on the street; when you can carry them in your pocket and your hand not constantly find its way to them; when your neighbour has apples, and you have none, and you make no nocturnal visits to his orchard; when your lunch basket is without them, and you can pass a winter's night by the fireside with no thought of the fruit at your elbow, then be assured you are no longer a boy either in heart or years." Truly the apple is, among fruits, the noblest of its kind, just as the onion is the noblest of vegetables.'

There was a murmur of dissent, which would have been a shout if the company had not been so drowsy.

'You should read Belloc on the subject,' said the poet. 'That account of his meeting with the onion-eater contains much wisdom. "I especially commend you for eating onions," said Mr Belloc. "They contain all health; they induce sleep; they may be called the apples of content, or again, the companion fruits of mankind." "I have always said," answered the stranger gravely, "that when the couple of them left Eden they hid and took away with them an onion. I am moved in my soul to have known a man who reveres and loves them in due measure, for such men are rare." Apples and onions—they are part of the whole duty of man.'

'But what,' asked the host, 'is more beautiful than a pear tree in blossom? You will remember that when Browning set out to describe an English orchard from his place abroad, it was a pear tree he took and not an apple.'

'Granted,' replied the poet, 'but I do not suppose there is any difference between the blossom beauty of apple and pear trees. And as to poets, they have loved apples more than any other fruit, except, perhaps, the grape, and with the grape it is the result of the fruit they love rather than the fruit itself. Just consider the references to apples in poetry and legend. There are the golden apples of the Hesperides and the apples that Atalanta's suitor cast before her in the race for his life and her hand. She

stopped to pick up the apples, but if they had been pears Milanion would have been numbered with the dead. It was an apple, too, that Paris gave to Aphrodite—"a fruit of pure Hesperian gold, that smelt ambrosially"—and there followed the launch-

ing of a thousand ships and the greatest story in the world. What does Tennyson choose but an apple when he wishes to symbolize the inexorable procession of the seasons?

> 'Lo! sweetened with the summer light,
> The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
> Drops in a silent autumn night.

'The apple grows out of the very heart of England. What would Devonshire be like without her apples?

'For me there 's nought I would not leave
For the good Devon land,
Whose orchards down the echoing cleeve
Bedewed with spray-drift stand,
And hardly bear the red fruit up
That shall be next year's cider-cup.

'Pears, forsooth! Do you know that lovely song of Barnes? No, Horace, I do not refer to him who is considered by many to be the best bowler in English history, but to Barnes of Dorset. Here, Clive, you know *Linden Lea*. Sing it for us.'

So Clive lifted up a light but sympathetic baritone and brought a breath of an English orchard into the drowsy New Zealand afternoon.

'Within the woodlands flowr'y gladed,
By the oak trees' mossy moat,
The shining grass blades, timber-shaded,
Now do quiver under foot,
And birds do whistle overhead
And water 's bubbling in its bed;
And there for me the apple tree
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.

'When leaves that lately were a-springing,
Now do fade within the copse,
And painted birds do hush their singing
Upon the timber tops;

And brown-leaved fruit 's a-burning red
In cloudless sunshine overhead;
With fruit for me the apple tree
Do lean down low in Linden Lea.'

Silence fell like a flag lowered in salute to beauty. Then the poet spoke slowly and softly these lines, lingering over them:

'Though I am old with wandering
Through hollow lands and hilly lands,
I will find out where she has gone,
And kiss her lips and take her hands;
And walk among long dappled grass,
And pluck till time and times are done
The silver apples of the moon,
The golden apples of the sun.'

There was another silence, and the poet sat up. 'After that,' he said, 'I think I will have an apple.'

'I am very sorry,' said the host, 'but while you were talking we have eaten them all.'

'Now, isn't that just the way of the world?' commented the poet as he felt in his pocket for his pipe.

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

'AFTER a stunning blow from His Majesty I crept to the remotest corner, and there I found her, the adorable, the naughty, the plain little thing.' So says the New Zealand artist of a visit to the British Empire Loan Collection which has recently been on show in Wellington. The 'little thing' is Henry Lamb's 'Head of an Irish Girl.' There follows a technical appreciation of the Lamb portrait which I need not repeat. The point is the contrast between the two pictures. The portrait of His late Majesty, George V, which does not belong to the Loan Collection from England, but has been shown in Wellington among these pictures, stood facing the door, so that it struck you the moment you entered. 'Struck,' as my artist friend found, is the right word. It is about life-size, and depicts the king wearing full

uniform surmounted by the robes of the Garter. It is smooth and effulgent; the smallest details of ribbon and button are painted clearly. It is, in short, a glorified photograph—impressive as an idealized representation of our late king attired for full ceremonial, but not a remarkable work of art. The little Irish girl, on the other hand, is probably to many people a dull picture in a dull frame. It is the sort of picture of which you may be disposed to say that it reminds you of the work of children at school. The colouring is sombre. There is the barest use of detail; the picture was painted—or seems to have been painted—with very few strokes. The child is not pretty. Yet, risking an opinion as a layman, I should say that every artist who has seen this collection in Wellington would say that as a work of art the small portrait is far more interesting than the large one. This is, perhaps, less important than that a considerable number of visitors who are not artists, think the same.

There is a lesson in this, and it is not the only one of its kind that the exhibition provides. The collection is to go to Australia, minus the portrait of King George (which belongs to our National Gallery) and will return to this country. It is to be hoped that every centre that can possibly do so will make arrangements for its reception, for though there are gaps in it as a history of British art, its educative value is high. You may see here some of the glories and some of the failures of British art. You will

be helped to understand why British painting, and especially what may be called 'official' painting, was so barren in the nineteenth century. The chief reason for its barrenness may be said to have been the reign of what is loosely called the subject-picture. It is not a good phrase, for every picture has a subject, and a picture that tells a story can be a good work of art; it depends upon the way it is painted. 'Story-picture' is a better description—the picture in which the story impresses more than the painting. We may think we are admiring the art of the painter, but what we are really enjoying is the incident or event or scene depicted. Perhaps our enjoyment arises from our own preferences, prejudices, and associations. We may be great admirers of Thackeray and know almost by heart the story of the last days of Colonel Newcome in the Charterhouse, so we will be greatly interested in Herkomer's huge painting of the Charterhouse chapel. This, however, does not make the picture a work of art. We have to look for other qualities. On the same wall is Pettie's 'The Vigil,' a picture of a knight kneeling before an altar; once a very popular picture. It pleases us because we are interested in knights kneeling in chapels; the scene calls up vague pictures of Round Table days and crusaders. But is it art?

These pictures brought back to me my lost youth, days far off when we thought the volumes of Royal Academy pictures wonderful, volumes rich in Leighton's massive men and women in classical draperies

('Wedded' for example), Alma-Tadema's crowded Greek and Roman scenes, and Poynter's reconstruction of a still more remote period. How thrilled we were by the incidents, the romance, the drama of those pictures! There was no one to tell us that a wasp-like person called James MacNeill Whistler was sapping the foundations of this enormous and complacent popularity. (Yes, I know that wasps are not sappers, but that doesn't matter.) Do you remember 'The Knight Errant,' by Millais? A young and handsome knight in armour is cutting with his sword the rope that binds a naked lady (somehow one cannot write 'woman') to a tree. What had happened to her? Did he catch the perpetrators of the outrage? Did he marry her? We should have been excited to be told that one day we should see the original of this picture in New Zealand. Well, here it is, in this collection, and to me it is very flat indeed beside the Raeburns of a former generation and the Orpens, Arnesby Browns, and Augustus Johns of a later. An artist described it to me as vulgar. The word gave me a slight shock, but I had to admit, though I would find it difficult to justify it in words, that there was something in what he said. It is only just to Millais to add that he did much better work than this. The pity is that he was conquered by the conventions of his time.

The mind almost reels at the number of such pictures painted in the nineteenth century, to be forgotten or live only as curiosities or links in the

history of art. What has become of all these Academy canvases? Many of them moulder in public galleries or in those great houses that are now so difficult to maintain. Some must have been burnt as rubbish. So many of them were so large. The Herkomer sent out to us is about twelve feet by eight feet. Acres and acres of paint, and so very little real beauty! I have a little reproduction of a picture of blue-gums in Australia, by Hans Heysen, and I swear there is more beauty in this than in some of those huge story-pictures. This happens to be the centenary year of Alma-Tadema and Poynter. Tadema once could command thousands for a canvas. I doubt whether a Tadema to-day would bring a bid of a hundred pounds. There is something very melancholy in the contemplation of so much laborious effort now so little regarded. You may say that it is the same with books, and this is so, but it seems to me that there is much more life in a bad old book than in a bad old picture. That may be because I write and don't paint.

FIRST WITH THE SUN

In that corner of the North Island of New Zealand that stretches out to the north-east stands the highest and most sacred of the several Hikurangis of the Maori. It raises its long summit of five thousand six hundred feet in the main mountain chain that runs from the centre of the island to the East Cape. New Zealand is the first considerable land mass of the British Empire to greet the sun. As the earth turns eastward to meet the new day, the New Zealander sees the sun first in its eternal procession across the vast plain of the Pacific—a plain unbroken here for six thousand miles that stretch between his country and South America.

Hikurangi is not actually the first point in New Zealand to see the sun on our longest day, but it makes a stronger appeal to the imaginative than those which beat it by a few minutes or seconds. In front of Hikurangi are rich sheep-station lands that slope down to the east corner north of Gisborne. Behind it are the troubled ranges of the Urewera country, a maze of steep forest-clad mountain-sides and narrow valleys, with here and there a Maori settlement—a terrain that is still among the wildest in New Zealand and was the last Maori-inhabited

territory to be opened to the white man. To-day motor cars cross this by a few roads, but off these ribbons the solitude of the forest still holds sway. There are Europeans who would like to tear down this forest for its timber, and burn off for settlement, but State recognition of the vital value of the region's natural covering stands in the way. Remove the forest and the hillsides would slip into the valleys and the rivers that flow through the rich coastal belt of the Bay of Plenty would silt up and flood.

The lands over which one can look from the summit of Hikurangi are rich in history. It was to the Bay of Plenty that the canoes *Tainui* and *Arawa* came from tropic seas in the great migration of some six hundred years ago, but it is as likely as not that it was earlier migrants who called the land 'Ao-tea-roa,' which, according to what seems the best explanation, meant 'The Long Bright World,' from the light that shone on the line of cliffs stretching away to the East Cape in the east and Tauranga in the west. It may be that as these weary and possibly famished adventurers neared the coast, Hikurangi — perhaps topped with snow—was the first land they saw. Between the Bay of Plenty and the east coast from Napier northwards, was waged the last campaign of the Maori wars, when Whitmore and Armed Constabulary, and Mair and Preece and Ropata and their Maori irregulars, chased Te Kooti up and down in a country difficult enough to break the hearts of all but the most enduring. That Maori harried Maori

in the Queen's name was a symbol. To-day the outlooker on Hikurangi sees below him lands which, under the leadership of the Young Maori Party—headed by Sir Apirana Ngata—are energetically and skilfully farmed by Maoris. Rebellion has died away like the notes of Whitmore's bugles, and a new spirit is working. Hikurangi, a mountain sacred in tribal lore, sister to the Hikuraki in Rarotonga, seems to brood over the past, and at the same time to call up a new world to redress the balance of the old. Standing there at dawn, an advance guard of his people and his world-wide confederation in greeting the sun, a New Zealander might well feel his imagination stir and soar. This land of his, first with the sun in Commonwealth and Empire, literally Land of the Morning—will it be first with the light of ideas as well as with the light of day? Will its magnificent and lovely natural endowment be matched with wisdom in its people?

This observer on Hikurangi might put in words what the sun would say of the changes he has witnessed in the original New Zealander during that tick of solar time since the Maori first came to New Zealand (whether it was seven or ten or more centuries ago need not concern him). How fares the Maori to-day? What is and will be his influence on the people who have dispossessed him of most of his lands, but treat him as a political and, more or less, a social equal? The sun would reply that between the Maori of Cook's visit and the Maori of

to-day there is a world of difference. In the interval European civilization has come to New Zealand, with its Christianity and its guns, its diseases, its medicines, its humanitarianism, and its industrial competition. The Maori is no longer owner of the land, a savage, physically splendid, who spent his days working and fighting and learning his history and legends in a communal life within the tribe. He was a craftsman, a poet, and a warrior. His tapus have been largely destroyed by the impact of an alien culture. Even among those Europeans who worked most devotedly for his welfare, there were few who understood the value of his code. In the decade or two after the last shots had been fired in the Maori Wars, the sun might have made a gloomy report to the watcher on Hikurangi. It was generally believed by Europeans that the Maori was doomed. His numbers appeared to be decreasing, and he seemed to be without much hope. That period, it is worth recalling, was also one of determined anglicization among Europeans. New Zealand was to be a second Britain. Native trees and birds were held of little account, and their disappearance was watched with indifference. To Cook the bell-bird chorus had been a wonder, but the English colonist was more at home with the sparrow and the thrush. English birds and animals were imported, with grave consequences. To-day the State has to send parties of marksmen to the back country to keep in check great herds of deer descended from that policy; the very balance of nature is

threatened by the unforeseen results of something done in the name of sport. New Zealand was then a stamping ground for English pioneers filled with good English intentions; it was losing its savage traditions and had not developed its new nation pride. To this generation it must have seemed natural that the Maori should die out. It was a pity, for he was a fine fellow, but these things could not be helped.

The Maori, however, did not die out. Thanks to the care of the State and the self-sacrificing labours of European friends and educated men and women of his own race, he checked his decline and his numbers grew. To-day his rate of natural increase is actually greater than that of the white man. Yet on his future, so much more promising than it was, is written a large interrogation mark. He eats European food (often to his detriment), wears European clothes, plays European games, and works by the side of Europeans. (An old friend of the Maoris has observed brassières on Maori girls at Rotorua, and comments: 'But they wear them in Bali now, I read.') He is still under the influence of old beliefs, customs, and states of mind, but is in danger of forgetting his old language. Older men complain that the younger will not take the trouble to speak the native tongue. At school he is taught the Wars of the Roses, but not the deeds of his ancestors. Maori arts and crafts are artifically fostered, but sometimes the Maori puts off plus-fours to put on mat and kilt for a ceremonial occasion, and may even brandish a spear made by the

gross in a European factory. His old tribal chants are merely curiosities; the tunes of the songs with which he entertains white people are European or American, though he often gives them his own personality. When Mr Bernard Shaw was entertained in Auckland, the programme included Maori songs, but Mr Shaw at once identified the music as German. What to do with the Maori landowner is still a problem. Only too often there has been nothing, after a year or two, to show for the thousands of pounds a Maori community has received for the sale of its lands. Easy come, easy go; and the European salesman of gramophones and motor cars has greased the ways of flight. On the other hand there are obvious dangers in the creation of a class of Maori landlords or *rentiers*. The best way out of the difficulty is to induce the Maori to work the land himself, and this is being done with increasing success.

While the condition of the Maori improved, his white neighbour began to think of himself as a New Zealander and not a transplanted Englishman, and to appreciate his local inheritance. To generations born in New Zealand, English culture was not everything. There was seen to be beauty and virtue in native trees and birds. Sanctuaries were established for birds and larger forest reservations were made. Poets began to write of the bell-bird and the tui, the kowhai and the rata, not as curiosities, but as part of their own life. It is easy to turn such local colour to nothing more than empty

prettiness, but these things correspond to the natural objects that have inspired poets in England from the beginning. The whole of English poetry is part of the great racial heritage of the New Zealander, but unless he travels, he never sees a lapwing or a hedgerow, a March starred with daffodils, or a June flaming with summer. He must make his own personal contacts with birds and flowers and changing seasons. As he acquires a fuller national consciousness it is natural that he should understand better the problems of the Maori.

It is significant that the half-caste Maori is increasing much faster than the pure Maori, and absorption seems to be the ultimate destination of the race. What will be the effect of this on the New Zealand nation? The admixture of blood should perceptibly darken the complexion and create a somewhat Italianate type, dark, stalwart, and handsome. The New Zealander already strikes one as bigger in body than the Englishman, but not so tall and lean as the Australian. The Maori tends to be of medium height and thick-set, and in both sexes runs to flesh comparatively early. To-day a thin Maori is a rarity. His physique is powerful and when he likes—as many a shearing shed shows—he is a great worker. The mental effect (so one may conjecture) will be to quicken imagination and self-expression. Although Irish and Scots have played a prominent part in the colonization of New Zealand, the culture of the country is overwhelmingly English. The New

Zealander is not conspicuously imaginative or self-expressive. He conceals his emotions. The country has produced few orators and the standing of public speaking is not high. He can be led to a community singing in a hall, but neither regiments nor football crowds break into song. He does not cheer easily, and the seriousness of his demeanour is noted by observers. There are times when one is tempted to think he regards wit and humour, especially when they are brought into public business, as slightly improper. A platitude is to him something more than a platitude, it is a badge of respectability. The Maori, on the other hand, is in many respects like the Celt. He is impulsive, imaginative, and vocal, and his melancholy is balanced by a love of laughter. His folk-lore and idiom have affinities with the Celtic. Britons Celtic in origin (using the term loosely) have understood the Maori best. He clothes natural objects with imagination. The heightened descriptions of the Celt are akin to his manner of speech. 'That one has a tongue would clip a hedge.' This Irish saying would appeal to him, and also the retort of an Irishwoman in New Zealand in an argument with her butcher about a joint of alleged lamb—'Many a sweet mile that lamb walked in the dewy morn.'

The Maori mourns long and expressively, but is ready with jest and often unself-conscious laughter. Watch a group of Maoris enjoy a joke and you may wonder whether we whites have not lost something

by overlaying our feelings with what is called good form. They laugh like children and enjoy to the full the fleeting moment. The white New Zealander plays his games rather dourly. His Rugby football might almost be regarded as a test for entrance into Valhalla. The Maori plays more boyishly, as if it was a game and not a religious exercise.

There is, too, some resemblance between Maori humour—especially of the unconscious kind—and Irish. 'By korry, to-morrow!' exclaimed a Maori when for the first time a train bore him out of a tunnel. (I use the expression that has become traditional in European versions of Maori humour, but I do not vouch for its frequency.) The stewards at a Maori race meeting were surprised when the owner of a winning horse rushed up with a protest. 'What d'ye want to protest about, Hori? Your horse won.' 'I protest!' cried the owner. 'My jockey, he win, and I pay him not to win!' And no collection of funeral stories should be considered complete without this one of a people with whom the ritual of mourning has always been elaborate. At a Maori funeral the European sexton dropped dead by the grave-side. Said one of the mourners to another as they drove home: 'Sad thing that, wasn't it? Cast quite a gloom over the proceedings.'

When sophistication is added to the natural quick wit of the Maori, the result is apt to have a delightful flavour of its own. The suave tones of the late Sir Maui Pomare are needed to bring out the full quality

of this story about him. He was travelling in one of those little coastal boats in which the passengers dossed in the saloon, and, preparing to go to bed, was rummaging for blankets. Taking him for an ordinary Maori, a steward remonstrated with him in New Zealand's version of pidgin English. 'My dear fellow,' said Pomare, 'if you can't speak English, would you mind trying some other language?' There is a Caesar family in New Zealand, and naturally it preserves the famous first name. One day a Hawkes Bay member of Parliament rode with Julius Caesar into a Maori village. To a Maori squatting in a blanket, he said: 'Good day, Erua. Allow me to introduce Mr Julius Caesar.' The Maori rose and came forward with a charming smile: 'I 'm very glad to meet you, Mr Caesar. And how did you leave our dear old friend Brutus?' A sequel is perhaps worth noting. When the M.P. told the story in the club at Napier, a squatter said: 'That 's what comes of teaching the brutes the Bible!'

Ultimately, then, the Maori may contribute something of his own to the general character of the New Zealander—something vivid in speech and quick and imaginative in mental equipment. His voice is definitely more pleasing than the white New Zealander's. Relatively the average of New Zealand speech is high. The visitor, accustomed to the dialect varieties of Britain and the gap between the speech of rich and poor, is soon struck by New Zealand's uniformity in pronunciation and tone. The

arrestingly pleasant voice, however, is not common among New Zealanders; indeed they are inclined to despise such graces. An unpleasant voice in a Maori is as rare as an ugly action in a left-hand bowler. Something of the Maori's softness and richness of tone may colour New Zealand speech. The Maori should make his own contribution to New Zealand music. He is naturally a singer, with a special bent for team work. It is true he now takes alien tunes for his songs, but the words are often true Maori, and as a European who joins Maoris in singing quickly discovers, he gives the music a local character. These songs have a tempo of their own, and the actions to which they are sung come down from a distant past. A New Zealand woman who has studied this form of music says it takes many hours of practice to acquire reasonable proficiency. The Maori of old was a highly skilled craftsman, who did amazing things in wood without metal tools. To the European some of his carvings are naturally repulsive, but such things as his use of spirals and his patterns of interior decoration are likely to influence public and private designs. After all, the Maori is the original New Zealander, and the new one constantly finds himself resorting to Maori subjects for symbols. For many years bank notes have borne the head of Tawhiao, the Maori King. The use of Maori scenes and designs on New Zealand stamps is significant. In appearance a white New Zealander cannot be distinguished from a South African or an Australian, but old Tawhiao,

with his tattooed face and his feather, is plainly a Maori and not a Zulu or a black-fellow.

There is the larger question how far the nation's literature and art is going to be influenced by the Maori. It is difficult to believe that a race so imaginative and so rich in story will not substantially affect the poetry and prose, the painting and sculpture, of the newcomers. The country that has been colonized is steeped in history and legend. Gods have fought with gods and mortals with mortals. There are countless tales of love and war, of stratagem, devotion, witchcraft, death, and escape. The supernatural was wrought into the very stuff of the Maori's life. He spoke poetry as easily as he fought. All this, so one thinks, must be reflected in the written and pictorial art of the nation. It would be rash, however, to predict an early flowering of this gift from one people to the other. The truth seems to be that the European New Zealander is not yet ready to assimilate Maori culture. He has often used Maori subjects; but nearly always it has been with a discernible alien touch. As he has worked, he has stood apart; he has not been able to surrender himself completely to his theme, so that it is part of him. Indeed, there has been a sense of embarrassment in the European's approach to Maori life. There are New Zealanders who like and respect the Maori and actively wish him well, but who are prevented by the great gulf between the cultures from fully appreciating European presentations of Maori

themes. This is not in the least surprising. The gulf is there; a people who have not long emerged from the Stone Age live beside heirs to Western civilization. It must take long to bridge the gap. Fusion will come slowly and almost imperceptibly.

The other day a New Zealander brought back from Denmark a vivid description of the monument to Gefion and her team of oxen that stands in Copenhagen. According to the legend Gefion ploughed the straits between Denmark and Sweden. The monument is heroic in size. The waters of the

fountain issue from the nostrils of the straining animals and play over their flanks. The memorial must seem quite natural to the Danes, who know the legend well, but how many centuries passed between the framing of the legend and the casting of these great bronzes? If someone erected a group of statuary showing Maui fishing up the North Island of New Zealand, I doubt if New Zealanders would feel happy about it. Some day, however, we shall erect such monuments and regard them as do other peoples who have come to their maturity.

INVECTIVE

LOOKING into a new book about Scott and his circle the other day, I came upon Lockhart's attack on Leigh Hunt, and I read it with the fascination that comes upon one who encounters a strange and very unpleasant animal.

Our hatred and contempt of Leigh Hunt as a writer is not so much owing to his shameless irreverence to his aged and afflicted king—to his profligate attacks on the character of the king's sons—to his low-born insolence to the aristocracy with whom he would in vain claim the alliance of one illustrious friendship—to his base pandarism to the vilest passions of the mob of which he is himself a firebrand—to the leprous crust of self-conceit with which his whole moral being is indurated—to the loathsome vulgarity which constantly clings round him like a vermined garment from St Giles—to that irritable temper which keeps the unhappy man, in spite even of his vanity, in a perpetual fret with himself and all the world beside, and that shows itself equally in his deadly enmities and capricious friendships—our hatred and contempt of Leigh Hunt, we say, is not so much owing to these and other causes as to the odious and unnatural harlotry of his polluted muse. We were the first to brand with a burning iron the false face of this kept mistress of a demoralizing incendiary. We tore off her gaudy veil and transparent drapery, and exhibited the painted cheeks and writhing limbs of the prostitute.

Time has dealt kindly with both men. The world has wellnigh forgotten Lockhart as a critic, but has gladly given him fame as a biographer of Scott. Leigh Hunt has just been made the subject of a very sympathetic *Life* by Edmund Blunden, which is acclaimed the best book of its kind. In modern times the most serious charge laid against Hunt is of being like the odious Skimpole in *Bleak House*, who is supposed to have been suggested by Hunt. Of this he has been acquitted. But what interested me most in this attack was its ridiculous and repulsive invective. Did this sort of thing really 'go down' with readers? It reads more like a parody than a serious piece of criticism.

Yes, it did, in those and other times. Milton established a European reputation by the free use in argument of such titles as 'blockhead,' 'liar,' and 'apostate,' and it has been remarked of this outburst that when such a genius descends to the bandying of foul language, he will beat the very bargemen—or bullock-drivers, we might say — themselves. In Lockhart's day invective was commonly used. It was a well-recognized literary fashion and there must have been many readers who enjoyed it. Lockhart followed this with an attack on the rising sun of Keats—'back to the shop, Mr John, back to the plasters, pills, and ointment boxes.' It was Lockhart, too, who by a criticism in the *Quarterly* kept Tennyson from publishing anything for ten years. But Lockhart, who had no real genius for invective,

was surpassed by men who had. Byron's satire had sometimes the force of a hurricane.

> Howe'er the mighty locust Desolation
> Strip your green field and to your harvest cling,
> Gaunt famine never shall approach the throne;
> Though Ireland starve, great George weighs twenty stone.

'I met Murder on the way,' wrote Shelley. 'He had a mask like Castlereagh.' Sidmouth and Castlereagh were 'two vultures sick for battle, two scorpions under one wet stone,' and other things equally unpleasant. The times were brutal. Politics and society were shockingly corrupt; England had been fighting for her life and kept striking at what she considered domestic foes with the blind energy of fear. The wars left her exhausted, dowered with hate, and ripe for revolution. Small wonder that writers on both sides used language that shocks the more delicate susceptibilities of to-day.

The fashion of invective lasted well into the Victorian age. Newspapers threw slops at each other and at the parties they opposed. The *Spectator* of 1835 allowed a correspondent to say of the Tories that they were neither hated nor feared; 'they are loathed; they are spit upon; and they do not merit the trouble of a kicking; we kick a cur; but we do not kick a mole or a hedgehog, a marmot or a grub. Even that which is actively kicked we respect and honour more than that which is morbidly and yet

foetidly corrupt.' Shade of St Loe Strachey! Newer lands were not backward, as *Martin Chuzzlewit* and *Journalism in Tennessee* show. The Tennessee editor found his new assistant's style far too tame, and rewrote his first article: 'We observe that the besotted blackguard of the Mudspring *Morning Howl* is giving out, with his usual propensity for lying . . .' That, he remarked, was the way to write, 'peppery and to the point. Mush and milk journalism gives me the fantods.' In our own country invective was far commoner in the early days than it is now. Glances at old files will amuse, surprise, and shock; political warfare was then so much more bitter and personal. Writing forty years ago, W. P. Reeves noted, as a marked failing in our political life, 'the savagely personal character of some of its conflicts and a general overstrained earnestness and lack of sense of proportion or humour. Newspapers and speeches teem with denunciations which might have been in place if hurled at the corruption of Walpole, the bureaucracy of Prussia, the finance of the *ancien régime*, or the treatment of native races by the Spanish conquerors of the New World.'

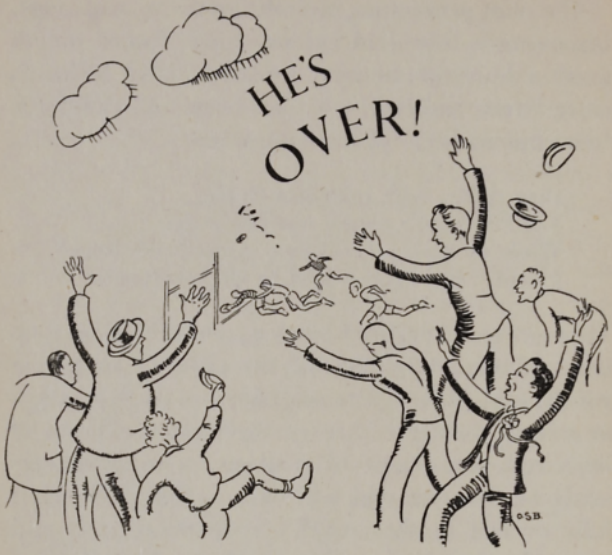
With the growth of tolerance and good taste and the softening of manners, pure invective loses much of its force. Critics become more urbane and resort more to irony and understatement. A great deal of the old invective was a convention and a very useful one to the user, for it saved him the trouble of thinking. It was so much easier to abuse than to

argue. When John Morley was editor of the *Pall Mall*, a young man applied to him for a post. Asked what his special 'line' was he replied, 'Invective.' 'What sort of invective?' asked the editor. 'General invective,' was the reply. Something more is needed to-day. Of course invective has not disappeared. There are a few writers who use it regularly. Leo Maxse, of the *National Review*, was one. Even the ranks of Tuscany could scarce forbear to cheer this old Tory lion, who was such a 'scholard in language.' The late Charles Whibley, of 'Musings without Method' in *Blackwood's*, was another. Month after month he maintained an extraordinarily high level of polished abuse. Men who did not agree with him read him for the fun of the thing and for the attraction of his style. On a lower plane the convention of exaggeration persists. C. E. Montague remarked that almost every Leader of an Opposition says of almost every Government Bill that he has to oppose, that it is the most monstrous hash of crude and undigested proposals that he remembers in a long Parliamentary experience, while a Labour member who wants to say effectively that a new Pensions Bill should confer still more than it does on the pensioners, says it is the most brutal insult ever flung in the face of the poor. When the *Morning Post* said of Mr Lloyd George at the end of his Premiership that he left 'every thinking man the world over sick to the soul of "Lloyd Georgism"' and all it implied, did it mean literally what it said? Of course not.

The most penetrating invective of to-day is in verse. Chesterton's hatred of certain things flashed out in many a burst of metrical invective. Mr Belloc is more bitter, and lacks what has been well called the 'unmeasured love' of his companion.

> How richly, with ridiculous display,
> The Politician's corpse was laid away.
> While all of his acquaintance sneered and slanged,
> I wept. For I had longed to see him hanged.

These writers, Siegfried Sassoon, and others keep up the tradition of intellectual invective in an age in which, as Sir John Squire remarks, 'we laugh gently at or sweetly reason with even the most vociferous of fools and the vainest of strutters.' Invective certainly has its uses, and will have so long as there is folly or evil in the world. Well done, it is still enjoyable, as when a graduate of the New Zealand University describes a report on University education as combining the absolutism of pre-War Potsdam with the ignorance of post-War Tennessee. There is a cleanness about such a stroke that reminds one of a perfectly timed cover drive. We may be thankful, however, that invective such as Lockhart and old Tennessee employed has been found out for what it really is.



THOSE who care to take their beloved games into the enchanted region of literature have long been aware what a difference in this respect there is between cricket and football. You will never find a real lover of cricket—permanently settled, that is—without some books about cricket on his shelves. Probably there will be *Wisden* for fact and Mr Neville Cardus for literature. He uses them to refresh his memory and to exercise his imagination. The glow of long summer evenings is in their pages; as you read, the sound of bat against ball drifts through

shadow and shine, and the smell of new-cut grass scents the fireside delicately. The literature of football is small by comparison. You might, indeed, go far before you found a man who could talk football till midnight and at the same time take from his shelves half a dozen books on the game, or even half a dozen notable chapters about it.

The reasons are not far to seek. Cricket as we know it is much older than Rugby football, and in England, at any rate, has been much more of a national game. Read *Rugger Stories*, collected by Howard Marshall, and you will realize that living men can remember the Rugby game when it was very different from what it is to-day. In *Tom Brown*, the sides were small armies. As late as 1870, says a contributor to this volume, they ranged from twenty to forty at his school, and, comments the editor, 'for the purposes of descriptive writing there was little material to be found in the endless mauls and the unco-ordinated and occasional efforts of individual players,' in the first fifty years of the game. It is the modern game, with its swiftness and quick dramatic changes, that creates the opportunity for the novelist and the descriptive writer, though the match in *Tom Brown* is still a classic. But the very nature of football of any code, as compared with cricket, circumscribes the novelist. Cricket is long, leisurely, and urbane. Some matches last three days, or nearly a week. Even country-house or club cricket in England—the most enjoyable of all—lasts at least a

full day or half a day, and players and spectators are drawn into an intimacy impossible in football. The hero can lunch with the heroine on the ground—as he does in *Willow the King*—and conduct his courtship at leisure. In short cricket is a social game and football is not.

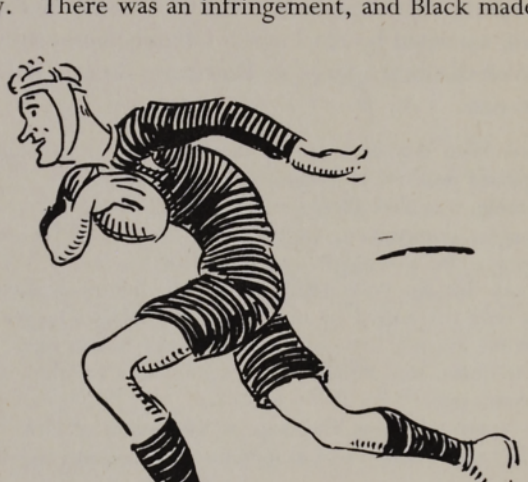
One may say with reason, however, that novelists and journalists have not done football adequate justice. In his contribution to this volume, Mr Robert Lynd criticizes novelists for having made man spend too much of his time in love and too little of it in sport. 'No great English novel has been written on Association football. Yet a glance at the newspapers would tell any one but a novelist that in this present generation Association football is engrossing the imagination of hundreds of thousands of Englishmen.' The match that so disgusted Jess Oakroyd in *The Good Companions* is, I suppose, the best description of a 'Soccer' match yet written—at any rate in its reactions upon an onlooker—but that is incidental. There is drama enough and to spare in football, especially in Rugby—drama and poetry. In no game is there a thrill so fierce and stabbing as that produced by a wing-three-quarter's dash for the corner. Think of a battle of strong, well-matched teams on a fine day, with the turf dry but springy, no wind to give an advantage, and the sun properly obscured by light clouds. Consider the swift alternations of fortune—the brilliant thrusts of attack, the heroisms of defence, the gathering excite-

ment as the twilight advances. Consider, also, battles on wet days, when steam rises from bodies in the straining scrum. Sir John Squire gets the romance and poetry of the game in his poem (properly reprinted here) about a Varsity match, a poem crowned by the English Olympic authorities as one of the best pieces of literature about games in the year.

I have seen this day men in the beauty of movement,
A gallant jaw set, the form of a hero that flew,
Cunning, a selfless flinging of self in the fray,
Strength, compassion, control, the obeying of laws,
Victory, and a struggle against defeat;
I know that the Power that gave us the bodies we have,
Can only be praised by our use of the things He gave,
That we are not here to turn our backs to the sun,
Or to scorn the delight of our limbs, and for those who have eyes
The beauty of this is the same as the beauty of flowers,
And of eagles and lions and mountains and oceans and stars.

Excitement! I know a man whose wife will not accompany him to a Rugby match, because, so she says, he makes such an exhibition of himself. In vain he assures her that other men are just as excited. He should give her this book to read. Mr Lynd doubts whether Rugby isn't too dangerous a game —for the spectators. 'Human beings were surely not meant to endure such harrowing ordeals.' Mr Bernard Darwin, a sporting journalist of long experience, describing a match between England and and Wales, says it was impossible to follow the

advice not to get excited; he did so the moment he saw the red jerseys, and remained in a pitiable state throughout the match. Wales led by three points near the end, but he was sure they would do something silly. There was an infringement, and Black made it



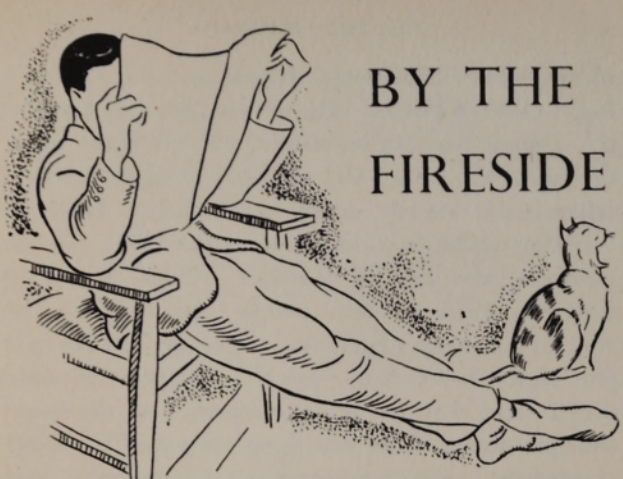
a draw with a goal. 'I nearly stamped on my hat, and I wish I had.' Mr Alec Waugh distinguishes between the long periods of breathless tension at Lord's, and the explosiveness of football excitement. 'At Lord's one does not suddenly leap to one's feet, wave one's hat in the air and shriek, "England!"'

Here are fiction and fact. Here are famous matches played over again—the defeat of the South Africans by the Midlands, the loss by New Zealand to Wales—and games in school stories and novels. Mr John Buchan describes how the ex-street arab from Glasgow played like a hero on the wing for Scotland. Mr P. G. Wodehouse, who wrote excellent school stories before he became famous as a humorist, tells of an inter-school match. Some years ago a friend told me that the best description of a school game was by Alec Waugh in *The Loom of Youth*, and after reading it here I can believe him. Liam O'Flaherty tells of a back who was a funk until he was mauled in going down for the first time to a forward rush. Then he 'saw red' and played like a man inspired. Mr A. C. M. Croome describes the play of 'Ronnie' Poulton, one of the greatest of all English backs, who had the gift of 'going through the brown.' Mr Croome saw him in a Varsity match run right through the defence for over fifty yards and score between the posts. Sitting behind touch in goal, Mr Croome saw the performance end on. 'Ronnie ran almost straight; the defenders seemed to do the dodging.' Isn't that often so? You see a player go right through a team. The defenders seem to melt away and you wonder how it happened.

The account of the defeat of New Zealand is competent, but no more. I wonder whether there has ever been written a really adequate account of that match. Perhaps it could not have been written

in the heat of the moment, but might be done now. It must take into full account the psychological factor. Some New Zealanders may think that the story of the mass singing depressing the New Zealanders is a fairy tale, but it is not. A New Zealand forward, a man, I should think, of very steady nerves and no more than average imagination, said when he came back that the singing of *Land of our Fathers* turned the New Zealanders' knees to water.

Two matches in which New Zealand played are described here, but there is nothing from this country. Perhaps a future edition, or another anthology, may include something written about Rugby in the land where it is really a national game. Of material there is abundance. Absolum winning that representative match in the nineties at the very end of the game; George Smith curving like a swallow to snatch victory from defeat against Wellington, and later using his great speed and determination to do the same for New Zealand against Scotland; that last-minute try of Morley's for England in Dunedin; the Auckland Grammar School's magnificent defence against New Plymouth at Eden Park in 1929 (for we must not commit the grave error of thinking of Rugby in terms of attack only)—not forgetting all the body of minor competition that is played hard and cheerfully in obscurity—these await the poet and the prose-writer who, exercising imagination and using the King's English like an artist, will make football into literature.



BY THE FIRESIDE

When the oldest cask is opened,
And the largest lamp is lit;
When the chestnuts glow in the embers,
And the kid turns on the spit;
When young and old in circle
Around the firebrands close;
When the girls are weaving baskets,
And the lads are shaping bows.

THIS is the season for fires; yes, even in northern New Zealand we are often glad to sit by them. So, when dinner is over, throw a log on the fire, draw up your chair, and given health, you will, with a good book or a friend who will both talk and listen, 'make the pomp

of emperors ridiculous.' Throw on a log? Yes, a log. Old-fashioned? Yes, it may be, but I prefer it. I grant coal has its virtues, but the really noble fire has a log on it, and the only fireplace worth a salute is the one big enough to take logs. What am I talking about in these days of gas fires, electric radiators, and central heating? About something that you more modern people may despise, but which I and many others love, something that has in it part of the heart of the world. Gas fires resemble fires in that they are an approximation to the shape and appearance of the real thing—but they are about as satisfying in the wider sense as a musical box would be to a man hungry for music. I once had a landlord who could not understand why I took out the gas fittings in his register grate and made a real fire. So clean, he said, so little trouble. I did not argue; what was the use? A man either has the real fire sense, or he has not. Electric radiators are not fires at all; they are merely miserable glows, valuable in their proper place, but not as a substitute for the centre of home life. And central heating systems—well, try substituting the word hot-water pipes for the essential in:

> Shut in from all the world without,
> We sat the clean-winged hearth about;
> Content to let the north wind roar
> In baffled rage at pane and door,
> While the red logs before us beat
> The frost-line back with tropic heat;

And ever, when a louder blast,
Shook beam and rafter as it passed,
The merrier up its roaring draught
The great throat of the chimney laughed;

. . . . .

And, for the winter fireside meet,
Between the andiron's straddling feet,
The mug of cider simmering slow,
The apples sputtered in a row,
And close at hand the basket stood
With nuts from brown October's wood.

Or suppose we change Macaulay's 'When the largest lamp is lit,' etc., to 'When the basement furnace is working properly.'

The centre of home life is, or used to be, the hearth. The family gathered round the fire; talked, read, or were read to; played games; told stories. A great hearth, a wood fire, a dark room lit only by the fitful firelight—these are the true conditions for stories. Who was ever inspired to transmit folk-lore or tell a fairy story by the sight of a convoluted water radiator? Cinderella would run away if you beckoned to her. Oh, yes, I know such a method of heating gives an even heat, which the fire does not. Similarly you can get a better afternoon tea (in some respects) in a fashionable restaurant than you can with a billy by a bush creek. But what of the beauty, the mystery and magic, the infinite variety, of a fire? It is not only a friend in itself, it is a cause of friendship in others. It helps to mellow the mind, calls out

good talk, and brightens the romance of the printed word. Really fine heart-to-heart talk, talk that both rambles and probes, is hardly possible without the help of a fire. 'Eleven o'clock? Yes, I suppose it is time to go—but we 've hardly begun to talk; confound these last trams!'

Register grates and all small fireplaces can be defended on the ground that they hold fires, but to sit before such a fire, confined, genteel and apologetic, is like looking at spring through a keyhole instead of a window. To be really satisfying a fire should be in a place large enough to take logs—a fire with, so to speak, a noble and sweeping gesture. You should be able to throw on enough fuel to make 'the solid core of heat,' of which Tennyson writes; that verse of *In Memoriam* was never inspired by the niggardly fireplaces of suburban villas, where often the cold formality of the surrounding tiles chills both the warmth of the place and the hearts of those who sit by it. Wood that burns as if it were enjoying itself is the true fuel. There should be room enough to kick the log, so that the sparks fly up in a stream. The most satisfying fireplace I have ever seen was in a back-blocks living-room. It was about six feet wide, and you could almost walk into it. It took great rata logs as big as a man could lift, and glorious fires they made! The joy of sitting in front of a fire of rata logs is something that is denied to the inhabitants of prim city bungalows. A friend of mine reports the existence of a bigger one in a foreign

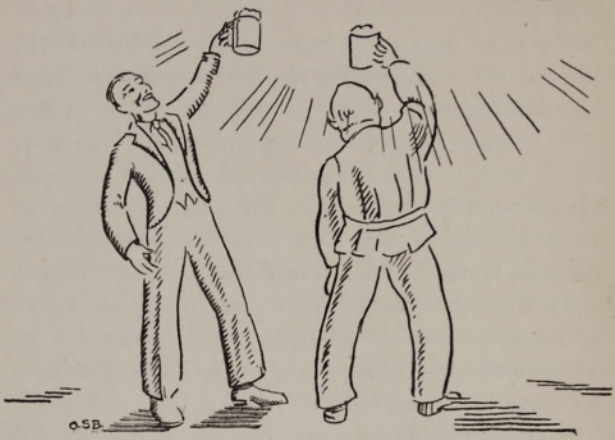
community that was rooted well in New Zealand. The fireplace was a room in itself, attached to the kitchen, and of an evening the whole family sat round the inside of the chimney, with the father telling fairy stories, the girls making quilts, and the boys shaping tools. Real family life this, which leaves its impress on mind and soul. Are you ever likely to forget the books that were read to you, or that you read yourself—from the Bible to *Lorna Doone*—before the old-fashioned fire? Scots, I believe, call the hearth the heart of the home, and I submit that we lose something precious when we do away with fires or reduce them to an almost meaningless artificiality.

'Be with me, Beauty, for the fire is dying,' says Masefield, in a sonnet on old age. Those of us who are old-fashioned, but not old, hope that if we live into old age there will be real fires for us to sit beside.

> Take the book and gather to the fire,
> Turning old yellow leaves; minute by minute
> The clock ticks to my heart. A withered wire
> Moves a thin ghost of music in the spinet.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Only stay quiet while my mind remembers
> The beauty of fire from the beauty of embers.

What sort of memory of fire would you get from the beauty of a radiator?

Mr DOOLEY



'As Mr Dooley says,' you remark to someone much younger than yourself, and are pulled up by a question in the eye of the listener. He (or she), you realize instantly, has never heard of Mr Dooley. Once more the passing of the years is borne in upon you. For once upon a time, 'befo' de war,' so to speak—indeed, long 'befo' de war'—Mr Dooley was a power in the world. The sayings of the Irish-American saloon keeper, of Archey Road, Chicago, went all over the English-speaking parts of the world, to be read with mingled amusement and edification. 'There 's no better place to see what's goin' on thin the Ar-rchey Road,' said Mr Dooley. 'Whin th' ilicthric cars is hummin' down the sthreet an' th' blast goin' sthrong at th' mills, th' noise is that

gr-reat ye can't think.' But Mr Dooley saw and thought, and his comments on affairs were the delight of America, Britain, and the Dominions. Men waited for the next instalment of Finley Peter Dunne's philosopher just as men wait to-day for—whom? Upon my soul, I cannot think of any one whose comments are so awaited. A. P. Herbert for a minority, but A. P. H. is not a man for the masses. There is no one like Mr Dooley now. When Finley Peter Dunne, journalist, of Chicago, died the other day he had outlived his creation by many years. The last collection of Dooley sayings seems to have been published in 1910.

It is curious how humour goes out of currency. I have found difficulty in obtaining the miscellaneous works of Mark Twain. I have scoured a New Zealand city in vain for Artemus Ward, and I have found book-shops and libraries barren of Mr Dooley. He used to be in scores of thousands of homes. Fortunately, I was able a few years ago to snatch a couple of volumes of his commentaries at a library dispersal. They do not contain some of the things I remember, but they serve to keep green his memory.

Politics, says this ruminating philosopher of the saloon, 'is a man's game; an' women, children, and pro-hybitionists would do well to keep out iv it.' You could, I think, safely date that remark by the reference to prohibitionists. Mr Dooley wrote so long ago that he regards golf as largely a game of social status. 'If ye bring yer wife f'r to see th'

game, an' she has her name in th' paper, that counts ye wan.'

We are back in the nineties, when Edward VII was still Prince of Wales and the United States was fighting Spain, and the South African war was looming up, and the Duke of Marlborough was joined to Consuelo Vanderbilt in a marriage that was nullified a few years ago by the Catholic Church on the ground that the bride was forced into it against her will. This Anglo-American alliance does not make a pretty story. Mr Dooley, who is rarely bitter, is fairly savage about the 'Ganderbilk' wedding. It is in this commentary that he says: 'Did ye iver read history, Jawn? Ye ought to. 'Tis betther than the *Polis Gazette*, and near as thrue.' Mr Dooley enjoys himself thoroughly over the war with Spain. Cervera was bottled up in Havana harbour and made his gallant dash to destruction; Dewey wiped out the Spanish fleet at Manila; 'Teddy Rosenfelt' led his rough-riders in ecstasy over the Cuban hills; and Lieutenant Hobson was kissed by regiments of women. Mr Dooley remarked that he knew now what Sherman had meant when he said war was hell. He meant 'war was hell whin 'twas over.' The passage reawakens memories of a far greater struggle.

I ain't heerd any noise fr'm th' fellows that wint into threnches an' plugged th' villyanious Spanyard. Most iv them is too weak to kick. But th' proud and fearless pathrites who restrained thimselves, an' didn't go to th' fr-ront, th' la-ads that sthruggled hard with their warlike

tindencies, an' fin'lly downed thim an' stayed at home an' practised upon the type-writer, they 're ragin' an' tearin' and destroyin' their foes.

Much of Mr Dooley is concerned with local politics, which were Greek to many English readers even at the time, and now with the passing of time are interesting only to the student. This goes to explain why he has not been reprinted; only an American could appreciate the remark: 'As Shakespeare says, "Ol' men f'r th' council, young men f'r the ward."' Yet even here there is fun to be found, as in the story of the perfervid orator who campaigned against the silent but industrious candidate. The defeated one could not understand it; he had made three thousand speeches. 'Well,' said the other, 'that was my majority.' One would like a collection of the best of Mr Dooley. It would include the famous remark: 'I have the joodicial temperament; I hate wor-ruk,' and the dictum about health that if doctors opened more windows and fewer patients it would be better for the world. It would include, too, the musings on Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee. 'Great Britain has ixtinded her domain until the sun niver sets on it. No more do th' original owners iv th' sile, they bein' kept movin' by th' polis.' And then, as if to even up the summary: 'I 've seen the shackles dropped fr'm th' slave, so 's he cud be lynched in Ohio.'

Mr Dooley, however, reached his highest point in his sketches of the Dreyfus case. These wild

burlesques may be bewildering to the reader to-day because he has only the slightest knowledge of a case that itself was a nightmare, a witch's cauldron of injustice and hysteria. 'Th' man on whom th' lies iv all th' wurruld is cinthered,' is Mr Dooley's description of the 'Cap.' 'Pat the Clam' flits about the proceedings, Mr Dooley's inspired name for Colonel Paty du Clam. Mr Dooley thought that Dreyfus didn't write the fatal document; he was the only man in France that didn't. Counsel for the defence objects to certain officers and politicians being sworn as witnesses. 'They must be sworn,' says the president. 'How th' divvle can they perjure themselves if they ain't sworn?' Then there is the interposition of Émile Zola, with his famous 'J'Accuse' manifesto.

When th' judge come up on th' bench an' opined the coort, Zola was settlin' down below with th' lawyers. 'Let us pro-ceed,' says th' impartial an' fair-minded judge, 'to th' thrile iv th' haynious monsther Cap Dhry-fuss,' he says. Up jumps Zola, an' says he in Frinch: 'Jackuse,' he says, which is a hell of a mane thing to say to anny man. An' they thrun him out. 'Judge,' says th' attorney f'r th' difinse, 'an' gintlemen iv th' jury,' he says. 'Ye 're a liar,' says th' judge. 'Cap, ye 're guilty, an' ye know it,' he says. 'Th' decision iv th' coort is that ye be put in a cage an' sint to the Divvle's own island f'r th' r-rest iv ye're life,' he says. 'Let us pro-ceed to hearin' th' tisti-mony,' he says. 'Call all th' witnesses at wanst,' he says, 'an' lave thim have it out on th' flure,' he says. Be this time Zola has come back; an' he jumps up, an', says he: 'Jackuse,' he says. An' they thrun him out.

One may imagine what Mr Dooley would have made of the present European situation.

My favourite passage, however, is something very

different. I read it years ago, and have never been able to locate it. It runs something like this. When Mr Dooley (talking to his crony Hennessey) thinks of the wickedness of the times—the decay of family

life (this was written, mind you, over thirty years ago), the decline in religion, the general corruption, etc., he comforts himself with one thought. 'What 's that?' asks Mr Hennessey. 'That it isn't so,' says Mr Dooley. A quotation to be used with caution, but a useful one to have by you.

DRYING SAILS

I NOTICED her first this time—I had seen her many times before—through an office window. Her sails, hoisted to dry in fugitive sunshine, could be seen above a waterside building, catching the light. 'There 's a schooner in the offing, with her topsails shot with fire.' The line came into my head again, as it often does when I see a trader's sails—even an old scow butting down the harbour. It is one of the essential lines of romance, like 'Over the hills and far away'—Chesterton's choice—and 'Childe Roland to the dark tower came.' It was Stevenson, was it not, who discussed with a friend the best opening for a romantic tale. One favoured an inn at evening, and the other a schooner off shore, waiting for adventure. Now the favourite opening is something like this: 'On a still moonless night a red sports model Eros was eating up the miles on the Brighton Road.'

There was a picture of the old *Huia* in the paper that evening. The schooner had been photographed more often perhaps than any vessel in our waters, but the public is always interested. And during the lunch hour for days on end there was a knot of sightseers about the beautiful ship, looking at her

tall masts and her sails, and watching the crew doing repair work. The *Huia* is kept like a yacht, and an unavoidable amount of untidiness on her decks during these operations did not detract from her sweetness and grace. Her clipper bow and long bowsprit, her white sides and gleaming brass, the lovely lines of a ship famous for her trans-Tasman crossings, must have called up in the memory of dozens of men on the wharf, books of their boyhood, and if they were old enough, the days when sail had not been elbowed by steam from the trading routes of the world—the days when the clippers, wing-and-wing, raced the southern wool.

Opposite her lay a modern cargo vessel in the home run, a long grey ship, by no means without beauty. 'Fifty years ago,' said another onlooker, pointing across the basin, 'she would have been the curiosity. Now it is this schooner.' Yes, the *Huia* has the interest of rarity as well as beauty and splendid service. The passing of the sailing ship has coincided with a marked revival of interest in her kind. Book upon book is published about the breed. Records are ransacked to settle questions of quick passages. The grain race from Australia to England is news. Adventurous young writers sign on in these great ships and write books about their experiences. It is, however, a rear-guard action. One of these ships is sailing from Australia without a cargo, but with a number of passengers, who have shipped for the novelty of a Cape Horn passage under sail. Possibly

the last big sailing ship on the ocean routes will be carrying jaded millionaires in search of a new sensation.

We must be careful not to over-romanticize the sailing ship. I can imagine a veteran of those days spitting in scorn on reading some of the rapture written about the beauty and romance of sail. It would have been better for the sailor, he would say, if people had helped him while he worked sailing ship round the world on two pounds a month and food which no seaman would tolerate to-day, rather than gush over his calling when he and his ship had disappeared from the seas. He might mutter darkly about taking in sail in a snow-storm off the Horn. The replacement of sail by engines has resulted in the avoidance of a vast amount of hardship and suffering, and it is only common honesty to admit it. Yet something has been lost in the change. Something always is lost in industrial, social, and economic changes. It has been said that no institution is ever wholly bad. What has been lost in the passing of the sailing ship is not only visible beauty of a kind—and remember that the liner has her own type of beauty—but the crafts of building, equipping, and handling ships that work by hazard of the wind.

This is a large part of the interest that draws the stroller to linger by the side of a ship like the *Huia*. She seems very near to the sea, much nearer than the big power-propelled ship. (I am not forgetting that the *Huia* has an auxiliary engine.) She is near

the sea, and of it. She was cradled in a craftsman's quiet yard, where her planks were shaped by hand, not in a shipyard roaring with furnaces and riveting machines. There is something essentially homely about her; the smell of paint and tar shows it. The bigger the ship the further you are from such delightfully primitive smells. (George A. Birmingham, himself a West of Ireland yachtsman, remarks that there are two kinds of dirt—the dust and grime of cities and the dirt that comes from knocking about in small boats. He much prefers the latter.) And the men who work ships like the *Huia* grapple with the elements, as it were, with their own bare hands. The great liner is crammed full of wonders. Every possible invention is brought into the service of safety. The sailor works through machinery of infinite variety. The master and crew of a sailing vessel wrestle with the sea itself, its moods of peace, exultation, and cruelty. 'More fell than hunger, anguish, or the sea,' quotes Joseph Conrad, and he goes on to write of 'the sea that plays with men till their hearts are broken, and wears stout ships to death. . . . It knows no bond of plighted troth, no fidelity to misfortune, to long companionship, to long devotion. The promise it holds out perpetually is very great; but the only secret of its possession is strength, strength—the jealous, sleepless strength of a man guarding a coveted treasure within his gates.' In the liner every resource of a scientific age is called in to reinforce that strength; in a sailing ship it must

stand alone. As we look at a schooner like this we consciously or subconsciously feel it, and our admiration goes out to a skill and devotion that year in and year out can bring a ship through such hazards.

This is the ancient craft of the sea, and it will last long after the last trading sail has crumbled into dust, so long indeed as men love the companionship and the conquest of the sea. The larger the ship, the further from such companionship. Describing a recent Atlantic crossing, a traveller says that on the first morning out he found the sports deck deserted. 'From a steward I learned that in this ship passengers seldom got up before noon. During the five days' crossing I never saw the tennis court in use, and rarely met passengers on deck. Many of my fellow-passengers must have crossed the Atlantic scarcely knowing they had been at sea.' In the afternoons, 'while the sun flickered in and out of the racing white clouds, and the wind sang its endless song in the rigging,' they shut themselves in the theatre to hear the 'talkies.' After dinner the night had no magic for them; they crowded the card room or 'with faces as fatuous as those of fashion-plates danced with ludicrous solemnity.' Our grandfathers voyaged to New Zealand in conditions that no one would wish to see return, but their months at sea added to their experience of life and gave them some knowledge of the sea and the handling of ships. There is no need to go on the sea in order to meet the shadows of

Hollywood stars or learn the doubling conventions in bridge.

To the traveller great ships are but means of transit. The lover of the sea (which really means the lover of craft upon it) will find, where he can, enjoyment in pitting his own skill against water and wind. Lord Jellicoe came down from the battle-ship *Iron Duke* to the fourteen-footer of the same name, and he was an exalted member of a large class. To all such, vessels like the *Huia* are lovely survivals, linking the age of industrial sail not only with the age of mechanical power, but with the splendid pastime of sailing for pure pleasure.

'ESCAPE ME? NEVER—'

THAT was a sprightly and stimulating article of Mr Frank Sargeson's the other day on titles of novels. It touched on a considerable secondary question in letters. To me the most interesting statement was Mr Sargeson's confession that though he fancied he knew *Lycidas* almost by heart, he had not recognized *Look Homeward Angel*, as coming from that classic. This is like going to *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*, with which you think you are familiar, and finding surprises. Like these plays, *Lycidas* is full of quotations. I shared Mr Sargeson's ignorance about Mr Thomas Wolfe's choice of a title, and am glad to have been enlightened. Years ago I could not place *Ships that Pass in the Night*, that felicitous choice of Beatrice Harraden's. Then I asked a friend and she said, 'Longfellow, of course' (friends have a way of saying 'of course,' on such occasions), and rattled off:

'Ships that pass in the night, and speak each other in passing,
Only a signal shown and a distant voice in the darkness;
So on the ocean of life, we pass and speak one another,
Only a look and a voice, then darkness again and a silence.'

It is great fun tracking down titles. Talk turned the other day on the Elisabeth Bergner film *Escape Me? Never*—, and I said I was sure it was Browning. I

could see the line on the page, but I had the haziest idea of the poem. So I went through Browning till I found it, and enjoyed myself on the way. The words are the opening of *Life in a Love*. Browning must be fairly rich in matter for titles. Here are three in *The Statue and the Bust*: 'The Unlit Lamp,' 'The Ungirt Loin,' and 'Each Frustrate Ghost,' all in a couple of lines. *Roses All the Way* would be a good title for a novel of political life, and 'The Undone Vast' for a novel of failure. A literary title appeals to the literary reader. Writers choose literary titles for the simple reason that generally their inclinations take them to books. Their minds are full of echoes. A title that one recognizes or would like to trace, spurs interest in a book. The enormous success of *If Winter Comes* must have been due in part to its title. It caught the attention at once. Numbers of people must have said to themselves: 'Oh, yes, "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" I must read that.' Mr Hutchinson had a fine eye for titles (I said 'had,' for what has happened to him?). *This Freedom* followed *If Winter Comes*, and it was A. P. Herbert, I think, who parodied this title in *These Liberties*. Then there is *Once Aboard the Lugger*, a perfect title for an exciting and amusing story. Margaret Kennedy is another wise chooser. Is *The Constant Nymph* a quotation? *Red Sky at Morning* is taken from an old weather rhyme, and *The Fool of the Family* from an old saying, which has been applied to the Army, the Church, and farming. *Dusty Answer* brought Rosa-

mund Lehmann fame; it is the sort of title that intrigues.

> Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
> When hot for certainties in this our life!

The lines are from the last sonnet in George Meredith's sequence *Modern Love*.

The Bible and Shakespeare are the great mines for titles, and phrases taken from these can be easily traced in concordances. *The Fool Hath Said* is the title of a recent book on religion, and there should be few people who cannot complete the quotation. But how many readers of Kipling know that *Many Inventions* comes from the Bible? Kipling presents some interesting quests. Where does *Rewards and Fairies* come from? Some Elizabethan poem, I believe, but I have forgotten. And *An Habitation Enforced*, the story of an American millionaire who found peace in England? You must have noticed what a difference there is in a phrase when the adjective is placed after the noun. *Captains Courageous* is far more effective than 'Courageous Captains,' and *A Passage Perilous* than 'A Perilous Passage.' It has been said, indeed, that the difference between culture and non-culture is that between 'The Home Beautiful' and 'The Beautiful Home.'

As to Shakespeare, he must be an inexhaustible mine. *Rain from Heaven*, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *All our Yesterdays*, are easily recognized, but not so easily *If This be Error*. Here are some phrases that

I take at random from the sonnets: 'No Pace Perceived,' 'Summer's Lease,' 'Rebel Powers,' 'Hours of Dross,' 'Gilded Honour,' 'Limping Sway,' 'Captive Good.' Whether any of these have been used I do not know.

The range of titles is as wide as literature itself. *And Gladly Teach* is the title of a recent American book. This is Chaucer's clerk of Oxenford—'and gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.' Rebecca West goes to Pascal for her title *The Thinking Reed*: 'Man is but a reed, the most feeble thing in nature; but he is a thinking reed.' *Not to Eat; Not for Love* is the title of a novel dealing with student life at Harvard. The phrases come from Emerson's *Journals*; the philosopher saw four snakes 'gliding up and down a hollow for no purpose that I could see—not to eat, not for love, but only gliding.' It was an inspiration for Thornton Wilder to choose *Heaven's my Destination* for his novel about George Brush. It is taken from a piece of doggerel common in Michigan and Wisconsin:

> George Brush is my name;
> America's my nation;
> Ludington's my dwelling place
> And Heaven's my destination.

What are the greatest titles? *Vanity Fair*, I think, comes first; *Pride and Prejudice* is high up, and I have just read that the incomparable Jane got it from Fanny Burney's *Cecilia*—'Dr Lyster has been the result of

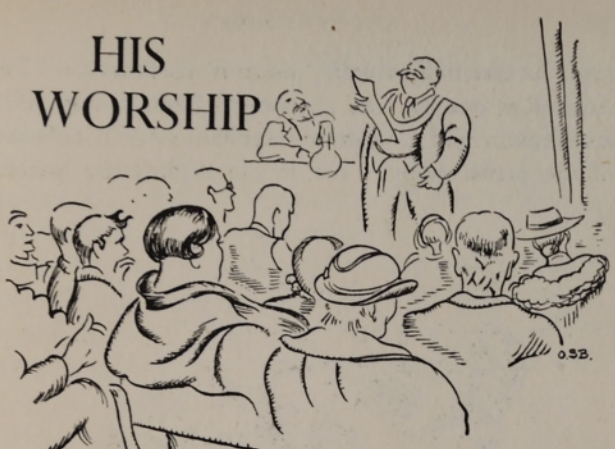
Pride and Prejudice'; the two important words were capitalized. It is said that *Lorna Doone* owed its start to the fact that its appearance coincided with the marriage into the royal family of the Marquess of Lorne. But could anything have kept down John Ridd and Carver Doone? After all a title may not amount to much, for *Tom Jones* is generally reckoned as great a novel as *Vanity Fair*. As to length, one of the most effective titles among war books was *When Blood is their Argument*, and I believe something like a record has been put up by a present-day German writer with a sentence about eating out of a bowl. Against these is a volume of Belloc's essays which bears the title *On*.

Some writers must cherish possible titles for a long while. Looking through *The Golden Treasury* the other evening, I came upon a striking line by Austin Dobson—'Fame is a food that dead men eat.' Here, I thought, is a fine title—'Dead Men's Food.' I might save it up for future use. Many years ago I was behind the scenes in a theatre just before the curtain went up, and amid the glamour of the stage I heard the call 'Orchestra and Beginners' (I 'm not sure about the 'and'). It struck me at once, what a title for a book of stage reminiscences or a novel of the theatre. I notice a book bearing this title has been published in England. If I were a writing traveller I should call one of my books 'All Clear Aft!' but I think this also has been taken. And what of 'Also Started' as a name for a book of reminiscences?

New Zealand writers have their own problems in title-choosing. One is that 'New Zealand' does not go well in a book label. It is ugly and cumbersome—however dear it may be to us—and it hasn't found itself yet. The two best titles have been used, *The Long White Cloud* (strictly not correct, but it doesn't matter) and *Land of the Morning*. *Kowhai Gold* was an inspiration. Did Miss Nelle Scanlan think of *Hamlet* when she chose *Winds of Heaven*? 'Marten Stuart' (Mrs Walter Scott) went to Browning for *Where the Apple Reddens* and to a well-known hymn for *And Shadows Flee*. Miss Jessie Mackay's poems have supplied at least two titles for New Zealand books, and we shall more and more look to native sources. One New Zealand novelist some years ago marked down for the title of a novel a phrase in a New Zealand poem. The novel is still unwritten and perhaps she will be forestalled.

We can, of course, always fall back on the Shakespearean device of attractive inappropriateness—*As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *or What You Will*. That, however, may be the hardest way of all.

HIS WORSHIP



Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg
The murmur of the world.

TENNYSON.

PROBABLY no quotation is so much used as the above in deprecation of the parochial spirit. We are frequently bidden not to be parochially minded, not to think of our city, our borough, our country, as the hub of the world, not to concentrate our minds upon the parish pump. It is admirable advice, and greatly needed, but there is another side to the question. What is evil is not care for the parish pump, but concentration upon it to the exclusion of other matters. There is a very great deal to be said for the parish pump mind, so long as it does not glue

itself to that indispensable piece of machinery. The Australian essayist and playwright Louis Esson, if I remember rightly, wrote an excellent paper in defence of the parish pump. For if you neglect the parish

pump and give all your attention to national or international politics, and your village or town is swept by typhoid or diphtheria, where are you? Mrs Jellyby, you remember, was intensely interested in the natives of Borrioboola-Gha, but her household went to rack and ruin. A well-governed country is a country of well-governed units. To despise public

service simply because it is relatively unimportant is pure snobbery.

I am reminded of this by a sprightly book published recently in England called *The Lighter Side of Local Government*. Both national and local government are never-failing subjects for abuse and satire, and if democracy fails in British countries it will be partly because the abuses and the satirists have lacked knowledge and judgment. We already have this disquieting fact, that the percentage of people who vote in municipal elections is much lower than the percentage in national elections. 'Terrible thing, this Socialist success,' says a citizen in *Punch* after one of the London municipal elections. 'Yes, isn't it?' 'By the way, did you vote?' 'No, did you?' 'No.' In England, interesting efforts are being made to instruct and interest the community in the work of local government; in some of the schools children are taken to see the municipal machine at work. One school has organized itself on the model of a local authority. This little book will help on the good work, for though it is a repository of folly, its satire is kindly, and it teaches, as that lovable reprobate Terence Mulvany said of himself, by direct and ricochet fire.

The average citizen, one may safely say, has only a hazy idea of the amount of work that the British amateur takes upon himself when he enters local government. Recently there was published a list of the bodies to which the Mayor of Auckland belonged;

it was staggering. In this book are cited a list of the principal speeches that the Lord Mayor of Manchester had to make in one week. He welcomed an Anglo-Catholic conference; addressed a synagogue congregation on Atonement Day; spoke to a Sunday school reunion; addressed the Rotary club; gave two speeches on the art of the theatre; opened a library and unveiled a war memorial; addressed the unemployed; and advocated reasons why Manchester should have the best medical school in England. There is much more devolution of authority in England than there is in New Zealand; perhaps there is no country in the world where municipalities have so much power, or where local government is more efficient. Yet a woman once said to the author of this book: 'I have wondered what a town clerk actually does—I know he has something to do with dustbins!' Under a dictatorship she could have been disfranchised on the spot, but under a dictatorship there wouldn't be any franchise that was worth anything, so the problem of what to do with this anti-social type remains.

The British system of government by amateurs produces a rich crop of humour. So often ignorance and illiteracy climb into power, and so often they are combined with complete self-satisfaction. 'Gentlemen,' said a new mayor, 'I am taking upon myself the morality for the first time.' 'This brings us to the —er—um—um——' said a mayor, reading a prepared speech. Town clerk (prompting): 'Crux of the

matter.' Mayor (in a stage whisper): 'Crux? What do 'ee mean by crux? Do 'ee mean guts?' Chairman: 'I can prove this 'ere efulent [effluent] is pure—I 'm going to drink it. [He does so, from glass.] We don't want no sooig [sewage] works at all—all you got to do is to cement down the outfall field and just put some drain pipes in for chimleys. Let the angels enjoy the smell, I says.' Malapropisms furnish a good deal of humour. 'Would it not be possible, Mr Chairman, to have the walls of the bath lined with aspidistras?' 'Mr Mayor, in my opinion, public affairs are getting into a state of *choss*!' (Not so good this last as a 'state of *chassis*,' the phrase used by one of Sean O'Casey's characters) . . . 'to preserve for posterity these beautiful, atheistic surroundings.' It was a Mayor of Christchurch, New Zealand, who, on the Bench, remanded a man 'in his own reminiscences.' I hasten to add that this was many years ago.

Ignorance and illiteracy are often balanced not only by shrewd common sense in the ignorant and illiterate, but by a large recruitment from the educated classes. In England the tradition of public service among the upper and upper-middle classes is still strong, and is a very valuable asset of democracy. A little learning, however, may be dangerous. The saying that 'Caesar's wife should be all things to all men' is fathered here upon an English mayor. It is told of an English councillor, that he referred to Potiphar's wife as 'above suspicion,' and, when the laughter had

subsided, remarked that he seemed to have mentioned the wrong lady. But is there much real humour in local body proceedings? Most reporters, I should think, would say not. Councillor (a doctor): 'This proposal is abominable; it should be strangled at birth.' Councillor (an undertaker, and on the other side): 'Well, you should know how to do it.' Such an exchange would set the press table writing, but would it get past the sub-editor?

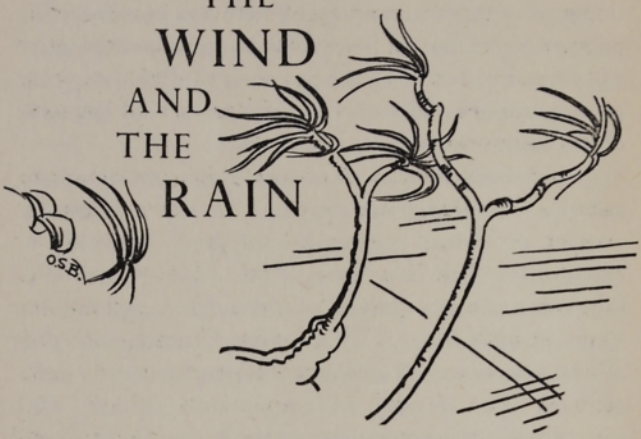
If mayors and councillors are unwittingly amusing, so are ratepayers. The relations between citizens and their local governments are a fruitful field for the observation of prejudice and folly; more often so than the relations between citizens and central government, for the latter is much more distant and aloof. Mayors are called up at all hours of the day and night on all sorts of matters. One of our metropolitan mayors had a telephone call at four in the morning over a burst water pipe. Anger may take the form of downright denunciation or heavy sarcasm. 'I enclose herewith cheque even date, and might have known what to expect from those who so notoriously are unbusiness-like. Would they like to borrow about £50,000 to play marbles with?' 'All Blankton Corporation officials should be condemned for the rest of their lives to have ashbins chained to their necks with the biggest round your own.' (This in respect of six shillings, for renewal of ashbin.) 'Whilst you are revelling in hounding the ratepayers who haven't paid their rates (it is part of your job, I

suppose), don't for one moment think that you are doing so without incurring the hate and curses of the poor victims who are being bled to death and eventually forced to resort to the gas oven to find a way out of their misery and worry.' Editors as well as town clerks know these types of letters.

For harassed officials, however, there are compensations. 'Having done my duty to my country in respect of twins,' writes a ratepayer, enclosing a cheque for half his rates, 'the balance will be forwarded after a period of financial recuperation. Yours proudly. . . .' 'Of course,' commented the official concerned, 'I shall ask this gentleman to come and see me, if only to congratulate him.' 'In accordance with your instructions I have given birth to twins in the enclosed envelope.' And pathos is mingled with humour. 'I cannot get sick pay; I have six children.' 'This is my eighth child. What are you going to do about it?'

'Bear and forbear,' was the advice given to a friend of mine on his wedding day. It is equally sound advice to the partners in municipal business. Or, as the Western story has it, 'Don't shoot the pianist; he is doing his best.' And if you want to avoid a dictatorship don't go about saying or implying that all members of local bodies are either stupid or corrupt.

THE WIND AND THE RAIN



THERE were few people about when in a recent gale with rain I went for a walk. That, perhaps, raised my feeling of self-esteem. I felt a little bit superior to all those who were huddling over fires while I was braving the wind and the rain. The fact was, however, that I went out because I wanted to. I rather like walking in the wind and the rain—sometimes—and I knew I should feel better for the walk. And as I walked, for the thousandth time in such conditions, certain lines came into my head. I suppose we all have our seasonal or weather lines, things that were embedded in our minds when we were young, and will be there till we die. 'We shall part no more in the wind and the rain,' and 'This was the parting that they had, beside the haystack in the floods.'

This first line rather dates the rememberer, for it is from a ballad, popular in the last century, *When Sparrows Build* by Jean Ingelow. Jean was a real poet at times, as witness *The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire*, a poem that ought to be popular in a cow country.

> Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
> From the clovers lift your head.
> Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
> Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
> Jetty, to the milking shed.

I have heard of one New Zealand dairy farmer who called his cows after All Blacks.

I have always thought that Jean Ingelow's line about the wind and the rain was poetry of a simple kind. It has a swing, a sense of the elemental, and a suggestion of human crisis. Why did they part? I don't know. They were always parting in Victorian song-ballads, without giving any reason for it, and they seldom came back. A friend suggests that this was connected with colonial emigration. It certainly was a long way to Australia or New Zealand. *The Wind and the Rain*; Dr Merton Hodge did well to choose this for the title of his play. But it wouldn't have sounded half so well if he had called it *Wind and Rain*. Wind and rain are in keeping with the poignancy of separation. That must be partly why William Morris's poem etches itself so sharply on the mind. Nowhere in literature, I should say, is rain more germane to the

story than in this tale of medieval love and cruelty. The woman and her lover ride away in the rain to escape:

> Along the dripping leafless woods,
> The stirrup touching either shoe,
> She rode astride as troopers do;
> With kirtle kilted to her knee,
> To which the mud splashed wretchedly;
> And the wet dripped from every tree
> Upon her head and heavy hair,
> And on her eyelids broad and fair;
> The tears and rain ran down her face.
> Ah me! she had but little ease,
> And often for pure doubt and dread
> She sobbed, made giddy in the head
> By swift riding; while for cold
> Her slender fingers scarce could hold
> The wet reins; yea, and scarcely, too,
> She felt the foot within her shoe
> Against the stirrup; all for this
> To part at last without a kiss
> Beside the haystack in the floods.

They meet the enemy; his men refuse to follow him; and the two are captured. The woman sees in front of her nothing but hopeless misery or death, and when she refuses to be her captor's possession he kills her lover before her eyes, and his followers beat the dead man's head to pieces. And all in the rain, which deepens the helplessness of the victims.

> This was the parting that they had
> Beside the haystack in the floods.

It is curious that I, walking on Wellington hills in a stinging sou'-wester in 1937, should repeat with enjoyment lines about a medieval butchery. Aesthetic pleasure takes odd forms.

There is, of course, more cheerful literature about winter to warm the walker on a wintry day. There is Kingsley's *Ode to the North-east Wind*, the sou'-wester of our country.

> What 's the soft South-wester?
> 'Tis the ladies' breeze,
> Bringing home their true-loves
> Out of all the seas.
> But the bleak North-easter,
> Through the snowstorm hurled,
> Drives our English hearts of oak
> Seaward round the world.

There is something exhilarating in striving against the wind on land, and much more is it so at sea. Walking in wind and rain is pleasant and stimulating—when there is assurance of warmth and comfort afterwards. Some of this enjoyment we owe to the fact that we take the road voluntarily and that we seek escape from unnatural conditions of living. The farmer may see little fun in walking in bad weather, just as the ancients had none of our love of mountains.

Winter has evoked a great literature. Mr Humbert Wolfe's *Winter Miscellany*, which I have before me, runs into three hundred and fifty pages of small type—a delightful book. Coventry Patmore, 'singularly

moved to love the lovely that are not beloved,' loved winter best of the seasons. That is not the view of primitive man, who identified winter with death, and celebrated the coming of spring as nature's

resurrection brought about by his gods. A visitor from Vienna has described such rites as he remembered them in the Austrian village of his boyhood. His talk brought home to us the cultural and climatic gulf that separates us from northern Europe. We

in New Zealand have no such immemorial inheritance of custom, going back into the twilight of history. Fancy New Zealand farmers putting gay garlands of flowers on their cows' horns, and playing them home to music. Nor have we such sharp divisions between the seasons. Nature is not dead in our winter. Spring comes to New Zealand next month, but it will not burst upon us. The weather in summer may be almost as cold as in winter, and quite as wet. It follows that the winter here does not call to the poet with so insistent a voice as in England and northern Europe. Mr Wolfe says so much has been written about winter that his difficulty is not of finding but of choice.

The strange glacial charm of winter has had the power to lend outline often to the work of the poorest poet: it has touched that of the greater with the loving craftsmanship of Benvenuto Cellini working in ice. Spring with its too easy blandishments has proved fatal to all but the best. The verse of the world is littered with the corpses of rathe primroses that died not because they were forgotten, but because they were sentimentally remembered. Not so with winter. Indeed, as Walter de la Mare once said to me, it 's difficult to go wrong with winter—so austere is it, so restrained a mistress. Being such a season it has drawn all poets with its grave enchantment, and not least Shakespeare.

That is to say, the very outlines of winter sharpen the outlines of poetry. 'Bare ruin'd choirs where late the sweet birds sang.'

Well, then, we must do the best with what we have. We have something of the northern winter and plenty of rain and wind. In his best-known short story, *Rain*, Somerset Maugham uses the persistence of a heavy tropical downpour to fret the nerves of his characters and prepare an atmosphere for his denouement. Might not our west coast rainfall be used for such a purpose? In *The Woman of Andros*, Mr Thornton Wilder employs rain to produce an effect of peace after the death of the woman and her sister.

That night, after many months of drought, it began to rain. Slowly at first and steadily, the rain began to fall over all Greece. Great curtains of rain hung over the plains; in the mountains it fell as snow, and on the sea it printed its countless ephemeral coins upon the water. The greater part of the inhabitants were asleep, but the relief of the long-expected rain entered into the mood of their sleeping minds. It fell upon the urns standing side by side in the shadow; and the wakeful and the sick and the dying heard the first great drops fall upon the roofs above their heads.

The bereavement-stricken young Greek hears it as he faces his sorrow in the darkness and knows that he must live on with courage, praising both the bright and the dark.

On the sea the helmsman suffered the downpour, and on the high pastures the shepherd turned and drew his cloak closer about him. In the hills the long-dried

stream-beds began to fill again and the noise of water falling from level to level, warring with the stones in the way, filled the gorges. But behind the thick beds of clouds the moon soared radiantly bright, shining upon Italy and its smoking mountains. And in the east the stars shone tranquilly down upon the land that was soon to be called Holy and that even then was preparing its precious burden.

Much more beautiful, however—indeed, it is one of the loveliest passages in English poetry—is the use of rain at the end of Matthew Arnold's *The Church of Brou*. The duke and duchess lie there—he was killed hunting and she never smiled after that—and the poet imagines the effigies waking when the evening sun lights up the church and saying: 'We are in bliss—forgiven. Behold the pavement of the courts of Heaven!'

> Or let it be on autumn nights, when rain
> Doth rustlingly above your heads complain
> On the smooth leaden roof, and on the walls
> Shedding her pensive light at intervals
> The moon through the clere-story windows shines,
> And the wind washes through the mountain pines.
> Then, gazing up 'mid the dim pillars high,
> The foliaged marble forest where ye lie,
> 'Hush,' ye will say, 'it is eternity!
> This is the glimmering verge of Heaven, and these
> The columns of the heavenly palaces!'
> And in the sweeping of the wind, your ear
> The passage of the angels' wings will hear,
> And on the lichen-crusted leads above
> The rustle of the eternal rain of love.

Here is a passage to release in the mind as you lie in bed at night with the rain on the roof, an expression of beauty to hold out to that beneficent brother of death for whom you wait.

'LONG LIVE THE KING!'

WHEN Robert Louis Stevenson died in Samoa in 1894 they found a letter on his writing-table. It was addressed to Anthony Hope, and congratulated him on his 'very spirited and gallant little book, *The Prisoner of Zenda*.' After surmising, and correctly, that Anthony Hope Hawkins might be a son of an old acquaintance, R. L. S. concluded with counsel to the young author to go on with more books as good as this one. Such praise must have encouraged Anthony Hope, but it has its special interest in the history of novels. For Stevenson had written *Prince Otto*, a novel of the same kind, a romance about an imaginary small European state. Stevenson and not Anthony Hope was in strict truth the first in line of the great Ruritania school of novelists, the writers who created that illimitable garden of swords. But one may say with certainty that *Prince Otto* would never by itself have founded the school. It contains charming passages, but it is not one of Stevenson's best books. It lacks vigour. Anthony Hope may have been influenced by *Prince Otto*, but he vastly improved on Stevenson's use of the idea. *The Prisoner of Zenda* is a masterpiece of its kind.

After having been launched on the wave of romantic revival, this book has had a wonderful voyage. It

gave a new word to the language. Only one creation in the fiction of our time is better known than that imaginary kingdom, and that is Sherlock Holmes. The reasons are easy to state. Anthony Hope could tell a story very well. He had remarkable gifts of construction and a style perfectly suited to a quickly moving tale of intrigue and action. As with Conan Doyle, one is apt to overlook the virtues of his style because it is so clear and simple. If you compare Conan Doyle's method of narration with the methods of some of the detective writers of to-day, you will see how effective is his simplicity and brevity. He knows the art of leaving out. And you may have read *The Prisoner of Zenda* and *Rupert of Hentzau* two or three times over a period of years without realizing how much they owe to their unpretentious but flexible and debonair English. Then, as you get older and your sense of style improves, you read these books again not only for what is said, but for the manner in which it is said. Of course, Anthony Hope owed much to the old plot mechanism, mistaken identity, which, as he says himself, pervades English comedy from Shakespeare's day to our own, but he was able to give it a new form. The best proof of the high quality of the Zenda stories is that in forty years they have not been equalled.

And what a mixture of qualities goes to make this quality. Here is action, rapid and highly exciting; romance nimbused in an indefinable atmosphere of beauty, virtue, villainy, and self-sacrifice, and charac-

ters that one remembers with affection—Rudolph Rassendyll, who chose to live dangerously and to practise self-denial; the Princess Flavia, red-haired goddess of our youth; Fritz von Tarlenheim, most gallant of lieutenants; Rupert of Hentzau, supple and humorous master of evil; and, greatest of all, Colonel Sapt, staunchest of friends and advisers, who at the end paid his last tribute—'and while all came and went, there, immovable, with drawn sword, in military stiffness, old Sapt stood at the head of the bier, his eyes set steadily in front of him, and his body never stirring from hour to hour the long day.'

The man who wrote all this did not consider it his best work. He preferred *The King's Mirror*, which is little read now. Anthony Hope Hawkins was the son of a clergyman, was educated at Marlborough and Oxford, and was called to the Bar. In his reminiscences, written, like his novels, with delightful ease but with restraint, he paints a most interesting picture of life at Balliol in the eighties under the great Jowett. He was a Liberal, and took the chair when William Morris came to Oxford to lecture on Socialism. So strong was the feeling against Radicalism and Socialism that they had difficulty in obtaining a hall for Morris; now the Oxford Union declares that under no circumstances will it fight for King and Country. From Oxford he went up to London, and got some work at the Bar, but he soon began to write. His first novel cost him fifty pounds to publish, and his royalties amounted to thirteen

pounds. His second was not more successful. The idea of Ruritania came to him one day as he walked back to the Temple after winning a case. He reviewed it over a pipe, and the next day wrote the first chapter. He had trouble with the king in the Castle of Zenda; he got him in so tightly that he could not get him out, a difficulty that will not surprise those who know the book. But in a month the first draft was completed; the book was published a few months later; and its success decided him to take the plunge and give up the law.

After that he wrote some twenty books. There are *The Dolly Dialogues*, as light as froth, but delicious in their way. There are social studies like *Double Harness* and *A Servant of the Public*. There are political novels like *Quisante* (the hero suggested by Disraeli) and *Half a Hero*. The latter is probably the best novel of colonial politics yet written, though Anthony Hope when he wrote it knew nothing of colonial life. The scene of *Half a Hero* might be New Zealand during the rise of the Liberal-Labour party. It is curious how well Anthony Hope contrasts the English point of view in the Government House group with the character of the colonial leader, and how he manages to convey accurately but sympathetically the atmosphere of newness in colonial society. That the book is so little known is a pity. Every budding New Zealand author should read it. There are many others. Anthony Hope had the rare gift for social comedy. I would vote for the in-

clusion of *Mrs Thistleton's Princess* in an anthology of short stories. But it was with him as with Jerome K. Jerome. He was associated by the public with one style of book. *Three Men in a Boat* hung round Jerome's neck all his life, obscuring his more serious work.

Perhaps Anthony Hope was dissatisfied with the place that the Zenda books took in the world. He was too sensible, however, to worry much over such a grievance. His reminiscences and his books reveal a writer of very attractive personality, a man of finely balanced sense of proportion and strong common sense. There is a refreshing love of old-fashioned virtues, and absence of posing and egotism. He had a successful life and he was thankful in a manly way for what he had received. He had no liking for the pernicious idea that authors and artists are a superior and privileged class. Politics attracted him, but, though he did not manage to enter the Commons, failure left no sourness.

> I have a strong liking and admiration for public men, and I have small patience with people who sneer at them; thinking to be superior, they are merely silly. One sometimes hears a tenth-rate artist, or writer, sneer at Cabinet Ministers. Good God! I have known many Cabinet Ministers, and the least gifted of them had ten times the brains possessed by such critics as these. Moreover, an active concern in public affairs keeps a man young and healthily combatant, and is the best preservative against the intellectual and moral dangers of old age—against growing narrowness, stagnation, and a fossilizing of the mind and heart.

The romantic revival of the nineties has been overlaid by a realism that writes a volume about a boy's adolescence, and gives a chapter to a man turning on the gas in the front hall. 'As one lulled by the song of Circe and her wine,' men turn from drab studies in the commonplace, and dreary detailed introspections, to the athleticism of action and risk for an ideal. Andrew Lang's weary reader went back to the 'surge and thunder of the Odyssey.' Some of us go back to the rhythm and clash and thrill of *The Prisoner of Zenda*, until we know the story almost by heart. This is why it is that the death of Anthony Hope comes to us with a touch of personal loss.

HERO WORSHIP

THE other day I was discussing with a friend a recent collection called *Victoriana* in which Margaret Barton and Osbert Sitwell pillory eminent Victorians for what these editors consider (and with good reason often enough) their self-satisfaction, stupidity, and hypocrisy. We agreed that Gladstone seemed to be Mr Sitwell's pet aversion, and my friend, with this in mind, remarked that what Mr Sitwell and his school objected to most in the Victorians was their earnestness. Gladstone was the apotheosis of Victorian earnestness. His enemies, it is true, said that his intellect could persuade his conscience of anything, and Labouchere, who was a Liberal, remarked that he did not mind the old man keeping an ace up his sleeve, but he did object to him saying that the

Almighty had put it there. But I think we may take it that Gladstone was very earnest indeed. He believed in free trade; he believed in liberty; he believed in the ultimate decency of things; he believed in his religion. What infuriates so many of the anchorless young literary men of to-day is just this earnestness, this belief in things. Mr Sitwell is not angry with Gladstone—as so many of his countrymen used to be—for making peace with the Boers, or failing to rescue Gordon, or taking up Home Rule; he finds Gladstone antipathetic because Gladstone was in earnest about things that do not appeal to him. This passion of the Victorians for political and religious ideals, their avowed devotion to duty, move him and his school to contempt and wrath.

Shortly after this discussion I went to see the picture, *Abraham Lincoln*. Lincoln has always been one of my heroes, and I found that the picture stimulated to the full my sense of hero worship. The picture had some of the crudities that British minds find in many American productions. It 'slopped over' occasionally. But I found the familiar story—the first time I had ever seen it told as a drama—profoundly moving in the old-fashioned way. Here was a man who really was a great man, a statesman confronted with a stupendous crisis, called upon to make the most awful of all decisions—to choose between peace and war—and, having chosen war, determined to carry on that war through rivers of

blood, until the objective which he considered higher than a bought peace was reached. Lincoln was not a soldier. He was not a man of war. He was a lover of peace, and one of the kindest-hearted men in history. This helps greatly to make him a heroic and lovable figure. If he had been a Napoleon, his struggle would not move us in the same way. I was struck again—as thousands of others must have been—by the extraordinary resemblance between Lincoln's position and that of Britain and her allies during the Great War. Men begged Lincoln to make peace with the South and stop the shedding of blood. His reply was that a negotiated peace could be obtained only by the sacrifice of all that the North was fighting for, which was precisely our position in the Great War.

As I watched the drama unfold and reflected upon it afterwards I thought of the decline of hero-worship among so many of the literary men of to-day. I thought of their ferocious satire, and contempt for all statesmen, of the corrosive acid that Lytton Strachey drops upon eminent Victorians, of the American fashion of 'debunking'—someone has even tried to 'debunk' Lincoln—of the bitter flood of hatred and pessimism and black and barren realism that flows from the publishers' houses. And it happened that there came into my hands the collected poems of Mr Osbert Sitwell, including his war satires. Mr Sitwell is a gifted poet and prose writer, and a member of a literary family that, with all its

extravagances and eccentricities (including a remarkable flair for publicity), cannot be ignored. Unfortunately Mr Sitwell combines with his passion for beauty—the family, he tells us, was dedicated to the service of Beauty—and his remarkable gifts of expression, a quite extraordinary amount of intellectual and moral arrogance. His hatred and contempt for all who disagree with him and his sister Edith (and presumably his brother Sacheverell, too) knows no bounds.

But it is the Sitwell war satires with which I am especially concerned. Probably no more savage satire on war in general and the World War in particular has ever been written. Even the verse of Siegfried Sassoon pales before these furious outbursts. The trouble is that Mr Sitwell screams so loudly and so indiscriminately that the average reader will be disposed to give up in disgust after a few pages. Wordsworth said poetry was emotion remembered in tranquillity; with Mr Sitwell it is emotion remembered in rage. His attacks on war as an institution need not worry us; the best minds of the world are busy trying to banish the evil. What blunts the edge of his fury is his failure to recognize a trace of honesty or idealism in those who brought England into the War or kept her there. Cain is described as the first statesman. All statesmen are by implication scoundrels. No distinction whatever is made between England and any other countries, and you might almost think that it was England that invaded Belgium. The issues

involved in the war are nothing to him whatever. But while he shares no common emotion he also respects no private grief. It is accounted for nothing to fathers that they gave their sons. In *Armchair* he says:

> If I were still of handsome middle age
> I should not govern yet, but still should hope
> To help the prosecution of this war.
> I 'd talk and eat. . . .
> I 'd send my sons, if old enough, to France,
> Or help to do my share in other ways.

In *The Modern Abraham* he depicts the profiteer resting in his 'fat arm-chair,' contemplating his cheque book and an appeal for money for disabled soldiers.

> They should not ask me to subscribe again!
> Consider me and all that I have done—
> I 've fought for Britain with my might and main;
> I made explosives—and I gave a son.
> My factory converted for the fight
> (I do not like to boast of what I 've spent)
> Now manufactures gas and dynamite,
> Which only pays me seventy per cent.
> And if I had ten other sons to send
> I 'd make them serve my country to the end.
>
> So all the neighbours should flock round and say:
> 'Oh, look what Mr Abraham has done.
> He loves his country in the elder way;
> Poor gentleman, he 's lost another son!'

This requires no comment. Indeed it might be said that this whole series requires no more than to

say that it is strange that any man should have gone through these years without seeing anything good in his country's record. Mr Sitwell's effort is interesting not only as a remarkable study in blind hate and furious uncharitableness, but as typical of a school of thought. We see here the sublimation of that contempt for the man of affairs that is so marked a feature of the literary world of to-day. That politics is an extremely difficult business and that even the most high-minded men have often to be content with second best, never seems to occur to some of these critics. Mr Sitwell worships art. One reason why he hates soldiers is that he thinks they do not care for art. But art is not the whole of life, and beauty has more forms than painting, music, and adorable landscapes. Good government is the basis of civilization, and for good government one must have statesmen and civil servants and drainage inspectors and police, behind all of whom the artist works in greater security. Let him be grateful.

Yes, it is a relief to turn from this welter of hatred and intolerance to the wisdom and serenity and large-mindedness of Lincoln. 'With malice towards none, with charity for all.' I wonder what Mr Sitwell thinks of Lincoln. Not very much, I 'll be bound. Why fight for the preservation of the Union? Why worry about anything except beauty? Lincoln himself must have had shocking taste in pictures and poetry, the very apotheosis of lower middle-class

mentality. He probably enjoyed Longfellow; need any more be said? Yet, curiously enough, Lincoln lives. The world has not been Sitwellized, and it still knows a hero when it sees one, and strengthens itself from his nobility.

SPOOFED

WHEN we say that the practical joke is the lowest form of humour we are thinking of such primitive cruelties as pulling a chair from under someone, or raising a false alarm of fire, or sending a string of tradesmen to a house on a fruitless errand. A practical joke can be both amusing and salutary. It was a very pretty example that Sir Henry Wood, the famous English conductor, provided recently. Believing that a composer with a foreign name started in England with an advantage over the native born, Sir Henry planned to confound the critics who had not always been kind to him. Five years ago he produced with his Queen's Hall Orchestra a Bach fugue, transcribed by one Paul Klenowsky, 'a young man understood to have lived in Moscow.' The work was an immediate success, requests for

repetition poured in, and it has frequently been played since. Sir Henry gave out that the young man had died, and the legend developed of a genius cut off in his prime. As recently as a month ago, the B.B.C. Orchestra played the music with a programme note to that effect. It has now been disclosed that Sir Henry Wood wrote the music himself.

The hoax was completely rounded off and entirely justified. No injury was suffered by any one save those who deserved to suffer; Sir Henry was being cruel only to be kind. He struck at an absurd English obsession—that in the arts the foreigner is always superior. This obsession is not held so strongly as of old, but it seems impossible to destroy it. It is most potent in music. Generation after generation of performers have adopted foreign names in order to improve their prospects. Mr Campbell becomes Signor Campo Bello; Mr Foley becomes Signor Foli; what chance would Melba have had as Nellie Armstrong? Coates, the conductor, I believe, won a reputation abroad before he was recognized in England. So did Dame Ethel Smyth, who must have enjoyed Sir Henry Wood's joke more than any one except Wood himself. It has been the same with acting. There has been a fixed belief that continental acting is better than English. But is it? Mr Bernard Shaw doesn't think so, for one, and he is no mean judge.

There must be a keen satisfaction in 'spoofing' the

world in this way. It is not easy to do, and the higher the circles the more difficult it is. Frequently, no doubt, obscure communities are taken in. It is related that at a students' annual 'Olla Podrida' at a New Zealand university college someone sent in one of Shakespeare's sonnets as an original poem, and it was not placed. A harmless and amusing piece of deception. On the other hand this sort of thing may be pushed beyond the limits of fairness. To few people is it given to recognize all the good poetry that was ever written. In the art world there have been some delicious successes of this kind, especially in these days of extreme modes. Quite recently an Englishwoman of position painted, as a joke, a picture of some street stalls, and put it forward seriously as a work in one of the modern styles. The critics were duly impressed. There is a story, for the truth of which I cannot vouch, that some painters in a Paris studio tied a brush to a donkey's tail, backed the animal against a canvas, and called the result 'Sunset,' or 'Nude Bathing,' or 'Composition' ('Composition' is a favourite term in the new art); and had the picture accepted for some exhibition or other.

I have just come upon the last scene in one of the most interesting of literary hoaxes. In a volume of essays issued three years ago, that learned and lively critic Professor Walter Murdoch, of Perth, Western Australia, discussing the 'immense deal of humbug' in art and literature, recalled a poem that in his time

in Melbourne had been passed from hand to hand in manuscript. Here it is:

Adown the pleached aisle they went,
He and She, and the Bird between—
Their faces scarred, the garments rent
That scanty hung on their shoulders lean.

And as they paced the Bird made moan,
Till She, who loved the apple red,
Stooped lower yet and raised a stone,
Aimed it and threw—the Bird lay dead.

He turned him round with wrathful eye,
Or ever her lips had time to frame
The words of the one eternal lie,
And smote the woman who had no name.

Pray for the souls who passed in sin
Down pleached aisle in woodland green!
God in his mercy take them in!
He and She and the Bird between!

This manifestation of the latest thing, Symbolism, captured the group among which it was circulated.

We handed it round with much solemnity from one to another, and we held grave debate as to what, exactly, it symbolized. I forget the various mystical meanings that were read into the tragic tale, and the various things the Bird was made to signify. But I remember that one very advanced critic told me, with considerable warmth, that we were all wrong, that it was a piece of sheer beauty, that beauty was enough, and that to seek a meaning in a beautiful lyric was absurd and out of date. What I do not

remember is that any of us had the honesty to call it a piece of nonsense, which, of course, was exactly what it was; it was written as a trap to catch humbugs, and we all punctually fell into the trap. When the fact was revealed, some of us were angry, and some of us had the grace to look caught; but the more ingenious spirits put a bold face on it and declared that, though the lady who wrote it might have meant it for nonsense, her subconscious mind had been at work and had produced a work of genius.

Now, in a book of reminiscences just to hand, the author of the lines corrects Professor Murdoch. The verses were not written with intent to deceive. She had been staying with friends of keen literary taste, and after dinner one evening they read a new volume of transcendental verse, which seemed to the party to contain much rubbish, though the author was clearly sincere. Next morning, while she was dressing, she scribbled in her sketching book some lines of nonsense to entertain her friends at breakfast, and thought no more of them. She was highly amused to find later on that these had been circulated and taken as serious. Despite the explanation, there were friends who insisted that she must have been spiritually guided.

Two thoughts occur: Into how many passages of classical poetry have enthusiasts read meanings that the author never intended? And is it possible that some of the extreme verse of to-day is written to 'spoof' the uncritical? 'God in His mercy—keep our eyes open and make us honest!'

WIT

MANY of us must be struck by the amount of really good wit that goes unrecorded, much of it as bright as some that is printed and reprinted. One suspects that there are witty stories that owe their currency partly to the eminence of those concerned. The same might be said of some humorous poems. I agree with Professor Walter Murdoch in questioning whether William Blake's

> A petty sneaking knave I knew—
> O! Mr Cromek, how do ye do?

included in an anthology of comic verse, is really laughter-provoking. Would it have gained entry if it had not been written by a genius? To my mind, dozens of funnier couplets have been written by obscure columnists.

The subject has been suggested partly by Mr James Agate's second volume of *Ego*, his reminiscences, and partly by some specimens of French wit cited recently by an English authority on French life and literature. This is Mr Cloudesley Brereton, whose book of only fifty pages, consisting of three broadcasts, won a French prize of fifteen thousand francs for the best book written on France by a foreigner in the last

ten years. The two contributions lead one also into the fascinating field of the differences between national types of humour. Mr Agate is one of the leading dramatic critics of England. He is avid of life, living at a great pace and enjoying to the full every experience. I have read few books with so much wit in them. No doubt any man with the entrée into the circles Mr Agate frequents could make a similar collection if—like Mr Agate—he took the trouble to keep a a diary, but Mr Agate is really witty himself, and like Falstaff, is the cause of wit in others. Take his remark to Marie Tempest during the preparations for her jubilee matinée. It was proposed that there should be a masque of the arts and sciences, with Marie enthroned—'the whole of London's, the country's, the world's genius to take part.' 'Would you like God to do anything?' asked Mr Agate.

It was one of Mr Agate's friends who described the late John Drinkwater's play *Oliver Cromwell* as being 'as dull as the Cromwell Road and nearly as long,' but for a Londoner this joke comes into the category of the obvious—something one is tempted to say whether one really believes it or not. Much more telling is the retort of one of Mr Agate's friends to a hostess. This man was invited to a strange house to play bridge on a Sunday evening, and went there from golf without changing. Finding the rest of the party in evening dress he apologized. 'But surely, Mr Blank, after seven o'clock on Sunday

evening everybody one knows is in evening dress?' 'On the contrary, dear lady, after seven o'clock on Sunday evening, everybody I know is in a public house. Good night!' And he walked out, to spend the rest of the evening in one. This, I think, may be described as an English retort.

I like too the remark about a self-advertising woman that 'she retired from private life forty years ago,' and, as an example of pleasant exaggeration reminiscent of the Somerville-Ross stories of Irish life, the description of a certain kind of fish when cooked: 'It looked like the wrong side of a pull-over and tasted like a mixture of privet hedge and boric lint.' Most of us have seen and tasted fish something like that.

It is an easy transition from this to French wit, for I feel that some of Mr Agate's jokes are as French as English. Mr Cloudesley Brereton says that in French wit there is no straining after effect and no making of deliberate openings for jokes. The exaggeration that is so often found in American humour is not greatly valued in France. A man in a fast-driven motor car in America asked why they were going through a cemetery. 'What cemetery, man?' replied the driver; 'we 're passing milestones.' The British like their jokes sweetened with humour, the French theirs as dry as possible. To a man who boasted of his mother's beauty, a Frenchman replied: 'I presume, monsieur, your father was less handsome.' Mr Brereton also quotes Talleyrand's terrible reply to a

dying friend he visited. In his agony the man in bed cried that he was suffering the torments of the damned. 'Already?' commented Talleyrand. I take leave not to think very much of this. Its cruelty apart, it seems to me to be another entrenchment on the obvious. Better is the reply of the younger Dumas, to the elder and greater, who was notorious for the employment of 'ghosts' to help him to write his romances. 'Have you read my last book?' 'No, have you?' And delicious, and, one might say, most typically French, is the bon mot credited to Legros, the famous French painter. Legros settled in England and, to the astonishment of his friends, took out naturalization papers. Calling on him in England, one of them observed that Legros remained in habit of life completely French, and asked him why he had become an English citizen. 'Well, to begin with,' was the answer, 'I score by having won the battle of Waterloo.'

Taking the lines laid down by Mr Brereton, you will probably detect French qualities in examples I have given from Mr Agate's book. There is also the retort, one of the aptest on record, of Lady Blessington to Napoleon III. When Napoleon was a poor exile in England, Lady Blessington befriended him. When he rose to power in France she visited Paris, but Napoleon took no notice of her presence. At last they met at a reception. 'Ah, Lady Blessington, are you making a long stay in Paris?' 'And you, sire?' was the reply. The wit is more French than English (Lady Blessington was Irish) and the

story is akin to that of the French king who, noticing that a young courtier was very like him, asked: 'Was your mother ever at court?' 'No, sire, but my father was.' Wit like this seems to develop in all sophisticated societies. The influence of French culture, which has spread to all countries, counts for something, but social and intellectual cultivation naturally tends to produce this sort of thing. The really native wit and humour of England are to be found lower down, among Cockneys for example, in the provinces, and in the music halls. If there are people who talk like the characters in society comedies, they form less than one per cent of the population.

DRIFTERS

As I followed the other evening the excellent production of the Workers' Educational Association of that Russian classic *The Cherry Orchard*, my thoughts swung back to a warm summer night in London a few years ago, when a discerning friend took me to the Lyric at Hammersmith to see a revue called *Riverside Nights*, by Nigel Playfair and A. P. Herbert. Galsworthy described the entertainment as the only revue he had been able to sit through entirely without grief. Part of the fun consisted of resurrected favourites of the Victorian era like Thomas Haynes Bayly's

> I wish he would decide, mamma,
> I wish he would decide.
> I 've been a bridesmaid many times—
> When shall I be a bride?

and the comic song, *Tommy, Make Room for your Uncle*, which lives now only in an atrocious rhyme of Browning's. I have often thought since that here is an excellent idea for some enterprising New Zealanders; it would not be unworthy of one of our repertory societies. Let us have an entertainment of things that pleased our fathers and grandfathers—say, in the eighties and nineties—the sentimental ballad,

the Christy minstrel show, a scene from a melodrama, and a patriotic song with a background of red coats and battle smoke. Here is an idea for someone.

But I am wandering. The gem of the evening was a little play called *Loves Lies Bleeding, or the Puss in Russian Boots*. I knew very little about Russian plays, but I did know something about Russian novels, and I was able to appreciate the delightful humour of the burlesque. It was one of the funniest things I have ever seen. There was the mad old man, Ebenezer Stephen Stephenson, who mumbled over his income tax forms, which he was in a frenzy to fill in before the appointed time; there was the woman who said, 'The goldfish are swimming round in circles. Alice Margaret's canary is lying dead in his cage. It would not surprise me if something quite unusual took place in this strange house.' And there was the young footballer, Thomas William Love, who was in love with the bride of the occasion.

HENRIETTA: But, excuse me, why are you not playing in the cup tie, Thomas William Love?

LOVE: To be perfectly accurate, I am. Or rather shall we say, I was. I will tell you what happened——

STEPHENSON (*Vaguely, as he works*): Nine-tenths of the amount of such earned income (subject to a maximum additional allowance of £45).

LOVE (*Annoyed by the interruption, resumes*): I was standing in goal. The score, as we say, was five goals each (and half the game to go). Five times the ball passed me and entered the net. (*Bitterly.*) That is the sort of man I am. The centre forward of the other side was running

'THE GOLDFISH ARE SWIMMING ROUND IN CIRCLES'

straight for me with the ball. He had passed the backs—there was nothing between him and me. Suddenly, at that moment, I realized the utter futility of my whole existence. What in the world, I reflected, does it matter whether a goal is scored or not, by one side or the other? Will anybody be wiser, more beautiful, have more elevated ideals? Some of the cheering crowd will cheer louder, and some will utter blasphemy and threats. But what, after all, is the crowd? What are they for?

STEPHENSON (*Muttering*): Retirement, bankruptcy, death, et cetera.

LOVE: Well, you will understand, Henrietta Jolly, that, having reached that conclusion, there was only one thing for me to do. Without so much as another glance at the advancing centre forward, I turned on my heel, walked away from the goal, and came to this house.

The bride and bridegroom came in; the young footballer and the bride embraced each other openly for a long period without any one taking the slightest notice; and in the end this young man shot the best man in mistake for his rival. When his error was pointed out to him he exclaimed, 'Now that is just the sort of thing that happens to me,' and the curtain fell.

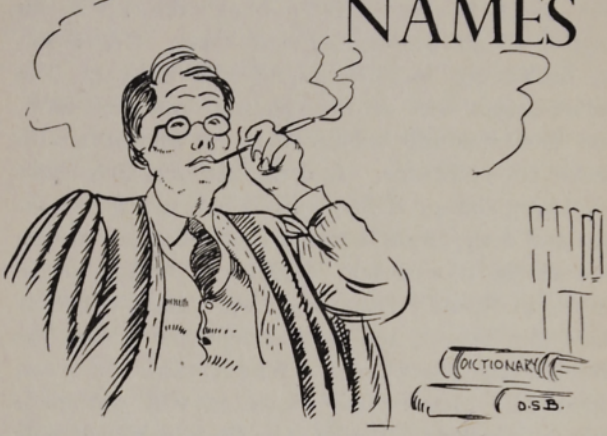
It was all a delicious satire on the morbidity, the fatalism, the lack of purpose and futility of much of Russian life as depicted in art. I believe the shooting incident actually occurs in Tchekhov's *Uncle Vanya*; a character shoots (either himself of somebody else) and misses, and despairingly regards this failure as symbolical of his life. Good parody has a way of

being astonishingly like the original. So watching *The Cherry Orchard*, I experienced a revelation. This must be in part the original of *Loves Lies Bleeding*, this society of drifters—charming, kind-hearted, but quite unpractical. I think that to understand why *The Cherry Orchard* is ranked so high one must see it acted and not merely read it. On the printed page it might be flat and unimpressive, this story of an aristocratic family that has no will to rule, but gently plucks the flower of the day, and has no care of the morrow. Seen, however, in flesh and blood, it is an extraordinarily impressive study of congenital incapacity. If it is a satire it is a very gentle one. There is no malice, no bitterness. Tchekhov, writing of the life he knew, created these real people in a spirit of understanding affection. They will not face facts. They insist on eating their cake and having it. They have no grasp of detail. In the end, having lost all, they drift away and leave their faithful aged servant alone in the locked house—nobody's business. What is plot? one is inclined to ask after seeing this play. Here is a minimum of plot, but a great play emerges. Character is all.

It may be true that one cannot indict a nation, but surely *The Cherry Orchard* is a social and historical document of the highest importance. The soul of a class is seen in the light of fate, and the nature of that soul shaped Russian destiny. 'The Russians have every sense except common sense,' said a Russian in a discussion about *The Cherry Orchard*. I recall, too,

the description of Kolchak's army in Siberia after the war, given in that striking book, *Britmis*, by an English officer who served with them. There was no leadership, no will among the officers. The Soviet troops were an ill-organized, untrained mob, but there was will behind them, so they met with hardly any resistance. And the last reflection about *The Cherry Orchard* is the contrast between the weakness and decay there depicted, and the iron ruthlessness of the new order. Lenin and Trotsky seized power in Russia because they knew most definitely what they wanted and went straight for it with the strength and directness of a Roman road. In a vast community fundamentally weak in will and made faint by the long agony of war (in which, we must remember, they helped to save us) they were the one group with a clear-cut design and steel-like determination. The cherry orchard has vanished, and in its place are Five-Year Plans.

WORDS & NAMES



ANOTHER discussion has broken out about the origin of the word 'wowser.' Frankly, I do not know what the greatest authorities say about the word, and it has been too hot to run round and try to find out. The discussion, however, is a reminder not only of the interest in the history of words, but of the doubt that still surrounds many of them. Hundreds and thousands of experts have spent years in tracing such history, but as Professor Ernest Weekley says in his latest book, *Words and Names*, there is still much to be done. 'Larrikin,' for example, is still a mystery. The experts, apparently, are not satisfied with the explanation that an Irish policeman in Australia sought to excuse some young offenders by saying that

they were only 'lar-r-r-kin'.' A measure of fame awaits the man or woman who will nail down the origin of this word.

Etymology is generally looked upon as a desiccating science, but much of it must be really fascinating, because it deals with the weaving of life into language. It interprets history and sociology and helps to make us understand the infinite variety of human nature. We talk history and mythology often without knowing it. The vehement opponent of classical education may unconsciously employ half a dozen classical allusions in five minutes. He may refer to a 'hectoring tone,' 'Fabian methods,' or a 'Gordian knot.' We speak about boycotting or lynching perhaps without knowing that we are talking history. But if these processes of feeding the language by fact were confined to the past, etymology would not be nearly so interesting as it is. Such processes go on all the time. Language is being made as we live. Prominent persons or incidents catch the popular fancy and make new words. It was predicted that the Treaty of Versailles would 'Balkanize' three-fourths of Europe, and the word is now accepted in both English and French and probably other languages as well. When, after the War, France and England disagreed over Turkish policy and the French troops were withdrawn from Chanak, in the Dardanelles, the French coined a verb 'chanaker,' to leave an ally in the lurch. The *Bulletin* says that the dispute over body-line bowling in the Test matches

has given Sydney a new metaphor. When anybody thinks he has been treated unfairly, he says, 'None of your leg-theory!' Perhaps Larwood will give his name to a new verb.

The cynic may find much in this book to support his view of human nature. It is recorded that in the *English Dialect Dictionary* there are approximately one thousand three hundred and fifty words meaning to give a person a thrashing, one thousand three hundred ways of saying he is a fool, and about one thousand and fifty terms for a slattern. Then there is the chapter called 'Xenophobia,' or hatred of a stranger, which begins with the classic story: 'Oo 's that?' 'Dunno.' ''Eave 'arf a brick at 'im!' Professor Weekley says that 'a philological examination of terms descriptive of the foreigner, his language, and his supposed habits would tend to show that this attitude is proper to mankind as a whole.' It is chastening to observe that our own uncomplimentary references to foreigners are often reciprocated. 'Punic faith,' meaning bad faith, is a well-known classical expression. In the eighteenth century the English spoke of 'French faith,' and if the French did not respond in those exact terms, they invented the phrase 'perfide Albion.' The French speak of a 'German quarrel,' meaning 'an idle, slight, or drunken contention, a frivolous or vain altercation.' But most instructive of all is the fact that our 'French leave,' which originated in the eighteenth-century French practice of leaving a party without bothering

one's hostess with a formal leave-taking, had an exact equivalent in French — 'to leave in the English fashion'! To find exactly similar idiomatic expressions in different languages is always interesting. In the Boer war unsuccessful officers who were removed from their command were 'Stellenbosched' —sent to a place where they could do no harm. Stellenbosch is a town in the Cape Province. In the Great War the French coined a verb 'limoger' from the town Limoges, with exactly the same significance. It is strange that 'mug' should be associated with stupidity, but the French 'cruche,' a jug or mug, also means 'juggins.' Such resemblances should help to explain why comparative philology is to its devotee an entrancing pursuit.

The only reference to New Zealand in the book is the statement that 'various persistent thorny growths' in this country are known as Scotchman, Irishman, and Spaniard. 'Wild Irishman' is a prickly plant that gave some of the early squatters a good deal of trouble. I have been wondering if this country has much to show in the way of original words, especially those taken from names. There is 'Plunket,' applied to Sir Truby King's famous method of rearing babies, and since this method has spread to Europe, perhaps there is a headache waiting for continental philologists a century hence. We seem to have been singularly uninventive. Not even Mr Coates's frequent references to turning corners has added a new word to our language. Mr Massey, however, gave

his name to the army boot. 'Homie,' and 'Pommy,' I believe, are Australian words, and so is 'cocky,' in the sense of a small farmer, a term that is coming into general use, and some day will be recognized even in the schools.

'Beware of obvious derivations,' our master used to warn us at school, but fantastic ones are also dangerous. Professor Weekley has a particularly lively chapter called 'Our Lunatic Contributor' in which he makes fun of amateur philologists, such as those who ignore the perfectly well authenticated origin of 'Tommy Atkins,' or derive 'nap,' a short sleep, from Napoleon's power of sleeping at will. You never know. Near Christchurch, in our own Canterbury, there is a river called the Styx. The natural assumption is that it was so called by some pioneer who remembered the river in the classical next world, over which Charon ferried the dead. Alas, it was originally the Sticks, so named because somebody marked a ford with sticks. Then somebody came along who thought it should be classical. The spelling was changed. Mr Dooley advised any one who was offered something for nothing to yell for a policeman. Those in doubt about derivation should go to the nearest good dictionary.

WHO IS SYLVIA?

'WHO is Sylvia?' happens to be one of my favourite songs. Sylvia is one of the most beautiful of names, and the song is a marriage of pure genius. Never were words and music more perfectly suited each to the other; its cadences are the very heart of beauty. Who is Sylvia? Is she dark or fair, short or tall; is her nose tip-tilted or straight? Who can say? Every one who loves the song makes his own picture of Sylvia. She is an abstraction, the spirit of lyrical romance, rather than a woman of flesh and blood, and when an attempt is made to create her in terms of the poem, I for one feel wounded in imagination. I have seen such an attempt, and I do not want to see another. A famous tenor sang *Who is Sylvia ?* at the talkies. As large as life, or perhaps larger, and dressed in the costume of Schubert's time, he sang as he walked in a garden. Before and after the verses the scene would be changed, and we would be shown a smiling and even simpering Sylvia sauntering about the background. This sophisticated young person carried a parasol, and might have stepped out of a musical comedy. You felt certain that she was made up to her very eyelashes. The singing—it may have been the fault of the recording—was over-loud and smudgy;

and altogether the poetry of the song seemed to be torn to shreds and trampled under foot. I have met several lovers of Shakespeare and Schubert who were wrathful about the outrage.

Here art failed by refusing to leave the imagination alone. This is one of the sins of which the screen stands convicted. It over-elaborates. The dramatist is strictly bound by limits of time and space. He must compress and compress again, and what leads up to the play or what takes place off stage he must recount or describe in words. As a rule, the longer he takes to do this the more is his action delayed. His reward is the intensity of effect produced on his audience. But the cinema has a much wider range, and the temptation to abuse its power of flight is very strong. It can depict easily what happens before the curtain rises. It can switch off to show scenes at the ends of the earth. The chief sin of Shakespearian production in the nineteenth century was over-elaboration. The poetry and swift action of the plays were clogged and crushed by lavishness of staging. As little as possible was left to the imagination of the audience. Then came a reaction towards simplicity, and we have seen in our own country what a satisfactory setting can be given Shakespeare with a draping of curtains and a few stage properties. The imagination is treated with respect. The cinema has brought another reaction. With its infinite possibilities and the huge wealth it commands, it threatens to kill the imagination. There is nothing

to prevent it from showing the events that precede *Hamlet* or *The Tempest*. The famous description by Enobarbus of Cleopatra in her barge is a temptation to the producer to show a magnificent spectacle. Clarence's dream could be easily, and fatally, illustrated.

Most of us form an idea in our imaginations of the men and women whom art has made immortal, and in some cases we prefer that our conceptions shall not be disturbed. Sometimes the illustrator helps us and even perpetuates a representation. For instance, there is no Alice but Tenniel's; we feel that all others are intruders. To many of us the Sherlock Holmes of the stage and the screen is never entirely satisfactory because he is not like the portraits of Holmes that appeared in the *Strand Magazine* when the stories first appeared. But the illustrator often disappoints us and I do not know that the disappearance of illustrations in novels is greatly lamented. We are asked to use our imagination as to the appearance of heroes and heroines, and I think most of us prefer to do so. The more beautiful and charming a woman is said to be, the more difficult it is for the artist to make a convincing portrait of her. Cleopatra in Shakespeare's play has by tradition and legend become of more than mortal stature; how can an earthly actress completely encompass the part?

The most striking of all, however, are the examples of Venus and Helen. We picture Venus in our minds as the goddess of love—somebody supremely

lovely, the sublimation of sex. The very name by which the Greeks knew her is a poem; it associates her for ever with blue sea and sun-kissed breaking wave. But perhaps we go to see *Tannhäuser*, and we decide that the painted temptress in the Venusberg is not the Aphrodite of our dreams. Or we go to an art gallery and see copies of the statues of her that have come down to us. To our eyes there is nothing lovely in the Greek face; rather does it seem to us 'faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null.'

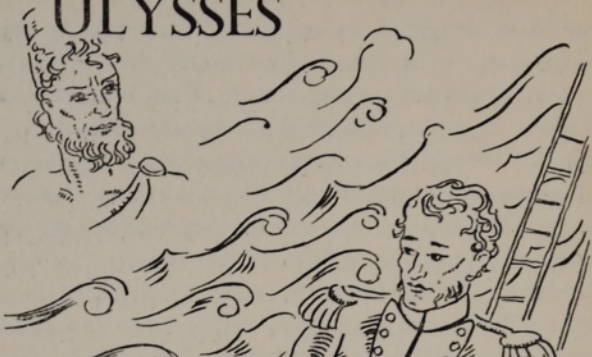
> Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
> Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
> With rosy slender fingers backward drew
> From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
> Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
> And shoulder; from the violets her light foot
> Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
> Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
> Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

The modern poet has much the better of it.

How can Helen of Troy, transfigured by poetry and legend, possibly be represented adequately in the flesh? She is the personification of woman's beauty, but we think of her as transcending human possibilities. We can imagine, however, the screen illustrating Edgar Allan Poe's *To Helen*. 'Those Nicean barks of yore,' voyaging over a perfumed sea, could be depicted easily, and what opportunities there would be in 'the glory that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome!' Can you not see that

producer delighted at being able to work in the Colosseum? The cinema has already laid hands on Helen. I did not see the picture, but I remember a portrait in a magazine of the lady who played her. She was merely (to me) an actress of average looks with heavily carmined lips. I have seen hundreds of such on the stage. Was this the face that launched a thousand ships? I would not have moved a dinghy for her. Did I wish to be made immortal with a kiss? Not I! So I appeal to Hollywood to leave us our Sylvias and Helens, our Blessed Damozels, and our Beatrices.

ULYSSES



A GERMAN professor has put up a memorial to Ulysses. The most famous of wanderers lived several centuries before the Christian era, so there is hope for others. Some day New Zealand may give Edward Gibbon Wakefield the memorial he deserves. This professor is head of the German archaeological organization in Greece—it was a German who discovered and excavated Troy—and he has set up at his own expense an obelisk to Ulysses on the island of Leucadia, which he identifies with the Ithaca of Homer. The monument stands in a park and can be seen from other islands and the mainland. Who will see it? Unless pleasure-cruising liners call there, very few. It might be an attraction to a cruise if passengers were promised a recital of passages from the *Odyssey* in situ by some well-known poet. The

promoters might even stage the return of Ulysses, with all the bloody drama of the suitors' end.

This monument is a graceful gesture towards the memory of a man who, if he lived at all, lived in the dawn of history, but he really needs none. The name and fame of Ulysses are engraved everywhere on the minds and hearts of men. He is one of the heroes of the Trojan war known to every educated man and woman. There is no more striking proof of the everlasting power of poetry than the immortality conferred on this king of a small Mediterranean island, whose character and deeds are as fresh to-day as those of any modern novelist's hero. He has become a symbol of courage, cunning, and wandering. Ulysses was not only formidable in battle, but steadfast in adversity, wise in counsel, and infinite in resource. Before Troy he was for fighting to the end, and he was foremost as a diplomatist. He had a hand in the final stratagem of the Wooden Horse, and went disguised into Troy to prepare for the attack that was to follow. Ulysses seems to stand for the subtlety and cunning of the Greek as contrasted with the plain bluntness of the Roman. There is no one like Ulysses in Roman history, and one does not connect the Roman with suppleness and stratagem. In the end those qualities availed the disunited Greeks nothing against the power of Rome. Their victory lay in things of the mind, but otherwise they had to accept a position of inferiority.

Ulysses was a many-sided man; the soldier-

diplomatist, like Marlborough. It is as a wanderer, however, that he is best known to the world. Twenty years passed from the time he left Ithaca for Troy, until he returned, and half of that he spent in getting home. Seven of those years of returning he passed on Calypso's island. His wanderings make one of the great adventure stories of the world—perhaps the greatest; the Cyclops and the Lotus-Eaters, the enchantments of Circe, Scylla and Charybdis, and the Sirens, to say nothing of the wrath and favour of the gods. Some of his adventures, like the encounter with Circe and the bending of the bow that he alone could use, have supplied familiar figures of speech.

It is no wonder his story has appealed to the poets. Tennyson, for example, would be a lesser poet without Ulysses. We should not have the soporific music of *The Lotos-Eaters*, which has become like stuff woven into the fabric of our intellectual life. How often a New Zealander, contemplating the many waters of his own land, must have murmured:

> A land of streams! Some like a downward smoke,
> Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go.

or on his long stretches of sea sand recalled:

> To watch the crisping ripples on the beach
> And tender curving lines of creamy spray.

And how perfectly 'And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy' fits some situations. But Tennyson's

Ulysses is greater. I think if it were put to lovers of Tennyson that they could have one short poem of his and one only, most of them would choose *Ulysses*. It is a mine for quotations. Many and many a time have the orator and the journalist drawn from it.

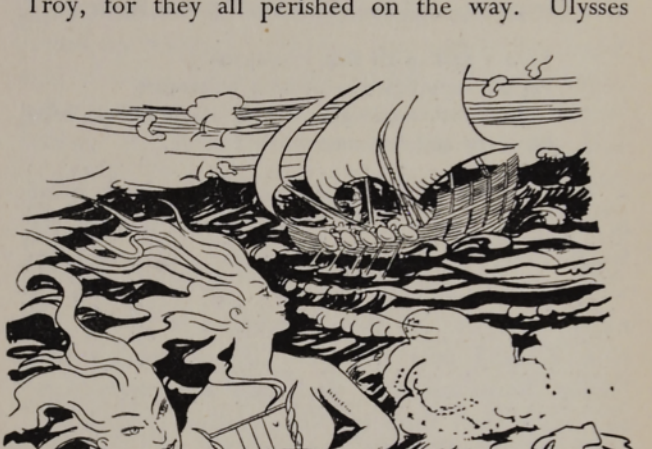
> I am a part of all that I have met;
> Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
> Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
> For ever and for ever when I move.

When words were wanted to express the heroism of the party that perished on the return from the South Pole, *Ulysses* supplied them: 'To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.' In every land the name of Ulysses has stirred impulses to poetry. A New Zealand poet has seen Ulysses and his men 'swing shoreward with slack sails and weary oars' and beach their ships on New Zealand ground.

> I have seen them lie
> taking their ease beneath the gnarled black boughs
> of giant pohutukawas bursting red
> for joy and honour. . . . I have seen them bind
> the red blooms in their hair and walk like gods
> laughing, upon this shore.

There is a prophecy in Homer that in calm old age death would come to Ulysses from the sea. This may have been the genesis of the thoughts Tennyson puts into his mouth. Ulysses is old and discontented. He wants to voyage once more. There is, however, a suggestion in the poem that he has travelled a good

deal in the years since his return to Ithaca. He refers to his mariners as old with him, 'souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me.' These cannot have been the men with whom he set out from Troy, for they all perished on the way. Ulysses



reached Calypso's island and finally Ithaca, alone. Did Tennyson forget or overlook this? Did he imagine that in the intervening years—Ulysses might not have been more than forty when he was re-united to his wife and child—Ulysses had done a good deal of sea-travelling? If so, it must have been rather rough on Penelope, who had already had

twenty years of loneliness. You will observe also that Tennyson's Ulysses refers to the devoted Penelope merely as 'an aged wife.' Ulysses might be regarded as the type of man who roves and in roving finds consolation, whereas Penelope is the type that is expected to remain at home and be faithful.

All this points to the magnificent memorial to Ulysses that mankind has erected. The desire to 'sail beyond the sunset,' to 'drink life to the lees,' is still strong in man, but in a shrinking world he finds it more difficult to play the part of Ulysses. Some men go exploring; others take to the sea in small craft, at times quite alone. The word 'Odyssey' is used to cover the trampings of a cargo-seeker, and Mr James Joyce has applied the name of Ulysses to the adventures or experiences, within twenty-four hours, of a man in Dublin. In a world where every geographical fact is becoming known, and pioneering is being slackened by circumstance, Ulysses may transfer his adventuring from the physical world to the world of ideas. That is the theme of a striking poem by a young American writer, Paul Engel. His countrymen have pioneered a vast territory, but that era is now coming to an end, he bids them pioneer in thought. This advice is applicable to all mankind.

FO'C'SLE LIFE

A FEW years ago I was one of a party of guests in a new ship making her first visit to a New Zealand port. After an excellent lunch we were shown some of the crew's quarters—not in the fo'c'sle, but amidships. The bathrooms for the greasers were large and luxurious; there was hot water as well as cold, and the variety of showers seemed to me larger than in the second class of the passenger liner I had travelled in some years before. The greasers slept in two-berth cabins quite as good as my one. In them were books and flowers and photographs.

The inspecting party included men with long experience of the sea—captains and managers. They noted the excellence of this accommodation with keen interest and compared it with older conditions. 'Treat 'em rough!' they quoted, and laughed. In recalling this old attitude towards the fo'c'sle hand they were not defending it. I doubt if any one in the party disagreed with the new policy, exemplified in this ship, of treating the man of the sea as a human being.

I thought of this when I read, a few days ago, the forecast of an agreement that has been come to in England to improve the seaman's lot. Representa-

tives of the Board of Trade, shipowners, officers, and seamen have agreed that the fo'c'sle shall go, and that there shall be better conditions all round. The use of the fo'c'sle for berthing is to be forbidden by law. Such a change, of course, is not new. There are ships in the home trade in which the men, as well as the officers, are berthed amidships. There are some in the New Zealand coastal trade. In others the men, or some of them, are berthed aft. But if the use of the fo'c'sle is to be prohibited, the law will strike at an old and general condition of sea life, and one that affects not only the comfort, but the status of the sailor. The officer was a seafaring man who lived aft, and the seaman was a seafarer who lived in the fo'c'sle, and between them was the length of the ship and the width of a world. That was the old conception in days of sail, and it has persisted in steam.

But before we go any further, a few words about derivation. The full word is forecastle, and it had a military origin. The forecastle used to be a raised platform in the bows of the ship on which soldiers operated. From this they shot arrows or boarded an enemy. There was a similar 'castle' at the stern, called the after or summer castle. In pictures of Plantagenet or Tudor ships the military nature of these 'castles' can be plainly seen. The term 'forecastle' came into use in 1490. Later the name was used for the crew's quarters, under the deck in the bows, or fo'c'sle head. Even to-day, however,

there is a relic in the Navy of the old after-castle times. The gear of the men whose job it is to clean the quarter-deck, at the stern of the ship, is branded with the letters A X L.

The fo'c'sle! It is a symbolical word, denoting the seaman, his caste, and his way of life. Some of you will recall descriptions of fo'c'sles, that confined space where men slept and ate and from which they stumbled to go aloft in wind and rain, hail and snow. Do you remember the night in *The Nigger of the Narcissus*?

> There was no sleep on board that night. Most seamen remember in their life one or two such nights of a culminating gale. Nothing seems left of the whole universe but darkness, clamour, fury—and the ship. And, like the last vestige of a shattered creation, she drifts, bearing an anguished remnant of sinful mankind, through the distress, tumult, and pain of an avenging terror. No one slept in the forecastle. The tin oil-lamp suspended on a long string, smoking, described wide circles; wet clothing made dark heaps on the glistening floor; a thin layer of water rushed to and fro. In the bed-places men lay booted, resting on elbows and with open eyes. Hung-up suits of oilskin swung out and in, lively and disquieting like reckless ghosts of decapitated seamen dancing in a tempest. No one spoke and all listened. Outside the night moaned and sobbed to the accompaniment of a continuous loud tremor as of innumerable drums beating far off.

And after the gale, in which the forecastle had been wellnigh gutted by the sea:

The forecastle was a place of damp desolation. They looked at their dwelling with dismay. It was slimy, dripping; it hummed hollow with the wind, and was strewn with shapeless wreckage like a half-tide cavern in a rocky and exposed coast. Many had lost all they had in the world, but most of the starboard watch had preserved their chests; thin streams of water trickled out of them, however. The beds were soaked, the blankets spread out and saved by some nail squashed under foot. They dragged wet rags from evil-smelling corners, and, wringing the water out, recognized their own property.

A few ships, like one described by Masefield, housed their crews in deck-houses amidships, and one may wonder why this was not done more often. The expense, I suppose, as well as the ingrained feeling of commanders and owners that a fo'c'sle hand was a fo'c'sle hand and an officer an officer, and never the twain should meet. There were times, one imagines, when such separation helped to prevent serious trouble. With his men well forward the skipper could keep an eye on them, and knew when they contemplated mischief. Standing on the poop, with the stretch of the main deck under his eye, the 'old man' was master of the situation. If the crew came aft in a body he knew something was up.

The historian of the first century and a half of modern industrialism may conclude that of all callings that of the sea was the worst for pay and conditions. The sailor had to sleep and eat in his factory. Conrad calls him a prisoner of the sea; and he faced daily

the risk of death by drowning. A thoughtless and unimaginative Parliament and public were slow to lessen that risk. Samuel Plimsoll had to make an exhibition of himself in the Commons before Parliament would legislate against rascally owners of coffin-ships. Yet the sailor in sail was a skilled man. Old Singleton in *The Nigger of the Narcissus* could not write his name, but he was an artist at the wheel.

When sail was commoner than it is now, a Home steamer passed a sailing ship off the Horn. One of the seamen in the steamer had lately changed from sail to steam. 'Ah,' he said regretfully, as he looked at the clipper, 'a man 's a sailor there; here he 's only a paint-cleaner.' At the end of his voyage he went back to the discomfort and danger of sail.

As I have said, the old allocation was continued in steam. The seaman still slept in the fo'c'sle, and ate where he slept. It was stuffy, noisy, and the part of the ship most exposed to danger. The fo'c'sle might be wrecked in collision with ship or ice. Several lives have been lost through these causes in large steamers in the last few years. When the Navy took over certain large Atlantic passenger ships at the outbreak of the War it was astonished and disgusted at the fo'c'sle conditions, and abolished that part for living purposes, which, of course, seeing that no passengers were to be carried, was easy.

Since the War there has been a noteworthy trend away from the fo'c'sle, though the old tradition among captains and owners has been strong enough

to check its pace. Some foreign merchant services have set an example to British in this and the general improvement of conditions. In many ships to-day officers and men live, in some respects, as comfortably as they do ashore, and in all respects as comfortably as the sea will allow.

How long it will take the British Merchant Service to abolish the fo'c'sle altogether remains to be seen. If the law is applied, it will probably be confined to new ships. It is clear, however, that as time passes, the old classification of fo'c'sle hand will lose its significance, and the gap between officers and men will be narrowed. If the 'treat 'em rough' method is not dead, it is dying.

PREJUDICE

'Of course, you 're prejudiced!' The charge is to be heard in many arguments, often before the discussion has gone very far. Sometimes it represents the real conviction of the utterer; sometimes it is a weapon reached for blindly. There is, however, quite a likelihood of its being true, for we are all prejudiced on some question or other. Some of us, indeed, are prepared to own to as much. No man will admit that he has no sense of humour, but occasionally you will find a man saying, 'Well, I may be prejudiced, but——' If, however, you promptly retort: 'My dear chap, of course you are,' your friend may be peeved. Some men do not like to be taken up readily in their admissions.

However, a man wise enough to stand aside, in Kipling's phrase, and watch himself behaving like a blooming fool—and no man is really wise until he achieves this detachment—must admit that he cannot at all times entirely divest himself of prejudice. His various attachments—his patriotism, his upbringing, his education, his station in society, his business, his political allegiance, all tend to cloud his pure reason. Prejudice may range from the dislike we take to a person on sight by reason of nothing more serious than the colour of his hair or the sound of his voice,

to those powerful pulls that operate from our racial or class traditions. It is very desirable, therefore, that we should periodically consider prejudice in the abstract and prejudices in the concrete, and attempt, in Dr Johnson's phrase, to clear our minds of cant. If you wish to do so I recommend to you *Prejudice and Impartiality*, by G. C. Field, professor of philosophy in the university of Bristol, an elementary treatise on the subject, clearly and brightly written. Beginning by defining prejudice in short as the interference with reason by emotions, sentiments, and interests, the author deals briefly with various kinds of prejudice, and shows how very imperfectly reason operates in this world of universal education.

Personal prejudice is very common, and if most of us cannot get rid of our national prejudices (and, as we shall see, it is perhaps not altogether desirable that we should do so completely) we might at least resolve to be just to our neighbours. It is extraordinary how many men there are who make their way in the world, are often capable of directing important affairs, and in most of their relations are charitable and generous, yet repeatedly show prejudice against their fellows. Professor Field draws a clear distinction between the matters in which personal dislike should operate, and those in which it should not. If, he says, he is asked to recommend a colleague for whom he does not personally care, for a scientific appointment, he has no right to bring his personal feelings into the business. If, however,

he has to decide whether he will invite this colleague to accompany him on a travel tour, then he has a perfect right to take his feelings into consideration. Elementary, you may say. Of course it is, but is this principle always acted upon?

When Professor Field comes to deal with politics and class and party and national loyalties, he gets into deeper water. Here prejudices press on all sides, and the humour of it is that so much of their operation is delightfully unconscious. As he says, it is absurd to hear a politician accusing an opponent of prejudice when he is reeking with it himself, but it is by no means certain that the offender is a conscious hypocrite. So many of us do these things as a matter of ingrained habit. We may appeal to our opponents to take a non-party view of something when all we mean is that we wish them to take our party view. There is also the common tendency to associate virtue as a matter of course with one's own side. Our author quotes a delightful passage from that gifted satirist George A. Birmingham, who in private life is Canon Hannay. The dean in *The Red Hand of Ulster* is a red-hot Unionist, but he explained to the Irish peer who tells the story that 'the Church cannot allow herself to become attached to any party. She must stand above and beyond party, a witness to Divine and eternal righteousness in public affairs.'

I am, on the whole, glad that I heard the dean say this. I should certainly have believed he was taking a side in politics, if he had not solemnly assured me that he was not.

I might even have thought, taking at their face value certain resolutions passed by its General Synod, that the Church was, more or less, on the side of the Unionists, if the dean had not explained to me that she only appeared to be on their side because they happened to be always in the right, but that she would be quite as much on the side of the Liberals if they would only drop their present programme, which happened in every respect to be morally wrong.

This pull of loyalties is a fascinating subject. As Professor Field says, we at once tend to get excited when there comes up for discussion some institution to which we are attached. He points to the inconsistency, in the War, of regarding as patriotic and proper criticism of Germany by Germans, while classing as unpatriotic and improper criticism of England by Englishmen. He adds, however, a curious exception that illustrates another phase of national and class loyalty. An acquaintance of his was interrupted in a denunciation of the Germans and all their works by the citation of a German who had criticized his own country. The denouncer at once branded the German as a traitor! A man should be loyal to his country. Here loyalty was consistent; but it is by no means always so. Lord Curzon was denounced by the Tory 'die-hards' as a traitor to his class because he gave way to the Liberal Government over the Budget. Would those same 'die-hards' have applauded Labour leaders who arranged a sympathetic strike?

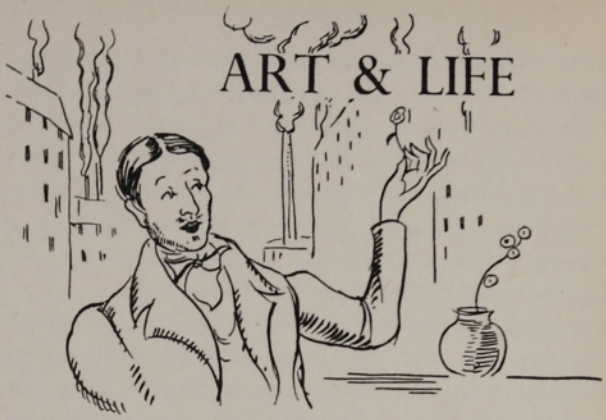
We must also bear in mind, however, that traditions

and loyalties sometimes work in the opposite direction, by creating a hatred that produces a permanent prejudice. The son of the vicarage or the manse acquires a permanent dislike of religion, or the soldier's son becomes an extreme pacifist. Some of the most remarkable intellects are not immune. An instance is Samuel Butler, whose whole life was affected by his narrow religious upbringing. It is suggested that the explanation of Lytton Strachey's prejudice against officials like Lord Cromer is to be traced to the fact that he was the son of an eminent Anglo-Indian administrator. What complex there may be in Bertrand Russell's mind one does not know, but this man, who has one of the greatest mathematical and philosophical brains of his age, is apt to behave at the sight of a uniform or a Cabinet minister like a petulant child.

Impartiality, Professor Field is careful to assure us, does not imply lack of conviction. Unfortunately many think it does, and any one who states conclusions strongly is apt to be accused of prejudice. The demand for impartiality in historians has led to the writing of some sadly anaemic books. It is possible, however, for a man to become so detached as to lose the faculty of action, and here prejudice in its widest sense may be defended. Towards the end of the book Professor Field, having shown how difficult it is to achieve impartiality, puts into the mouth of an imaginary opponent a spirited defence of prejudices. Getting rid of prejudices, it is argued, will not guarantee the achievement of truth, but it will damp

down all our enthusiasms and weaken those emotional elements that are the chief driving forces when action is called for. Professor Field might have cited a similar passage from Burke, the greatest of English political philosophers. Burke, to whom order was everything, defended prejudice for its value as a binding force in society. It caused men to act together quickly for the common good.

It might be found wiser, he thought, 'to continue the prejudice with the reason involved, than to cast away the coat of prejudice and to leave nothing but the naked reason.' Prejudice was of ready application in an emergency; it engaged the mind in a steady course of wisdom and virtue, and did not leave a man 'hesitating in a moment of decision, sceptical, puzzled, and unresolved.' In other words, instinct and emotion, all the tradition of our race or our class, may be wiser than reason. It is a principle upon which the British have often acted. Yet we are here on dangerous ground, for, as Professor Field says, 'we cannot deliberately choose to be prejudiced.' To free the mind of prejudice is an ideal that must always appeal to reasoning men and women, and it is more important than ever to-day, when the world has become one economic unit and an injury to one nation is an injury to all. If we cannot soar into the higher realms of impartiality we can at least try to see the other man's point of view, and refrain from thinking of all Frenchmen as comic reliefs, and all Americans as Babbitts or Al Capones.



SOME time ago in a talk on books, a friend mentioned to me that he had been reading one dealing with literary men in the nineties, and especially with the school that is often referred to as the decadents. 'I find them most depressing,' he remarked, with deep feeling. 'Thomas Hardy is cheerfulness itself compared with those fellows.' I agreed, and more than once since then I have thought of my friend's criticism. I thought of it again when I read a reprint of an able book on the period that was issued recently, Mr Holbrook Jackson's *The Eighteen Nineties*. As Mr Jackson is at pains to point out, many other writers of different kinds were active in the nineties besides Wilde and Dowson and Lionel Johnson and their set, and there were other artists beside Aubrey Beardsley; but the decadent group, with their posturings and mannerisms, their startling subjects

and methods of expression, their velvet coats and languorous lilies, their exquisite but artificial sadness, their scented but scarlet sins, their self-pity and their doctrine of art for art's sake—these men stand out both darkly and vividly in the annals of the period.

Time is dealing with the reputations of the group. W. S. Gilbert, who survived Wilde, may have been surprised at the continued vogue of the man whose eccentricities he satirized so brilliantly. *Patience* goes down the years with *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Wilde can now be judged much more justly than in the days after his disgrace, when, as Mr Jackson reminds us, they took his plays off the stage in London and left 'pirates' to sell his books. We view all that school in a truer perspective. Lionel Johnson lives by one or two poems, especially the gravely beautiful lines on Charles I—'the fair and fatal king.' Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch gives him several pages in *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*. Dowson gets into the same anthology with his 'wicked' poem on a surfeit of carnal pleasure:

I cried for madder music and for stronger wine,
But when the feast is finished and the lamps expire,
Then falls thy shadow, Cynara! the night is thine;
And I am desolate and sick of an old passion;
Yea, hungry for the lips of my desire.
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

The number of similar poems that this has caused other young poets to write—in New Zealand as elsewhere—would fill a large volume. More haunting,

however, is the little poem that is included in the *Anthology of Modern Verse*; every lover of that collection must remember the lines:

> They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
> Love and desire and hate:
> I think they have no portion in us after
> We pass the gate.
>
> They are not long, the days of wine and roses,
> Out of a misty dream
> Our path emerges for a while, then closes
> Within a dream.

Aubrey Beardsley, I must confess, pleases me so little—'This portrayer of evil puppets,' stys Mr Chesterton, 'with their thin lines like wire and their small faces like perverted children's'—that I would not hang even an original drawing of his on my walls, but by general consent he was one of the greatest of black-and-white artists. Richard Le Gallienne, long resident in America, is still with us. Le Gallienne, one of the most 'precious' of the school and a writer of relatively slight talent, I am told, used to cycle in Hyde Park, wearing velvet knickerbockers and frills round his cuffs and neck. He left his hair long and was photographed with a high light on his face. *If I Were God* was the title of one of his books, and the *Bulletin* said of it: '*If I Were God*, by Richard Le Gallienne. If I were Richard Le Gallienne, by God, I 'd cut my hair.'

Mr Jackson's analysis of the movement is acute and

just. It would be absurd to suggest that it had no virtues. The aesthetic movement had far more justification than you would gather from the absurdities of *Patience*. It was part of a revolt against the drabness and Philistinism of Victorian life, and it left its mark. Similarly the decadents in literature were in revolt against literary and social convention. They showed the world new aspects of beauty, and their faults of style were an excess of a virtue. They cared too much for mere words, but there had been many who did not care enough for them. They taught the writer to respect his medium. The weakness of the movement lay in its posing, its insincerity, its studied cultivation of sophisticated pleasure, its unhealthy stimulation of the senses through fine words, and its occupation with moods. It worshipped art to the exclusion of life, and was apt to mistake the glitter of a stale café for the soul of man. It left an unpleasant impression of unmanliness. Chesterton is moved to laughter by 'the image of Wilde lolling like an elegant leviathan on a sofa, and saying between whiffs of a scented cigarette that martyrdom is martyrdom is some respects'; and healthy man that he is, he cannot endure Wilde's 'sensual way of speaking of dead substances, satin or marble or velvet, as if he were stroking a lot of dogs and cats.' We must also bear in mind, of course, that the root of the disease in some of these men was pathological. Beardsley, for example, was dying of consumption all his short life. But Thomas Hardy,

though he found life a tragedy, is—with his peasant-like face and figure, his firm hold on the soil, and his tough, wholesome, wind-hardened sentences—very much more of a man than these over-civilized neurotics. Essentially masculine, too, despite his maddening perversities, was another figure of the

nineties who has now won world-wide fame. In his reminiscences, which are largely concerned with these men of the nineties, Sir William Rothenstein says of Bernard Shaw: 'No step was lighter, eye fresher, nor tongue freer nor cleaner than Shaw's. No decadence was in him; he was a figure apart, brilliant, genial, a gallant foe and a staunch friend.'

In a sense they are rounded off with their period, these decadents of the nineties, but they have a lesson for later ages. The decadent, in the wide sense of the term, is always with us. His decadence may take the form, as it does with so many to-day, of sex obsession or the worship of ugliness. But always, in some shape or other, it is a distortion of values. Art is seen as more important than conduct, greater than life itself. Young men with strong aesthetic tastes are apt to be led astray, but many of them return to sanity. The type is to be found in every university; they complain to-day that Oxford has too many effeminate loungers. Rupert Brooke passed through this phase, and one may detect a reference to it in one of his war sonnets:

> Leave the sick hearts that honour could not move,
> And half-men, and their dirty songs and dreary,
> And all the little emptiness of love.

We see one aspect of decadence in some literary men's indifference towards or contempt for the statesman, or, as they would say, the politician. A leading American critic has said that it does not matter to him who governs whom, and that on the day on which was fought the greatest battle of modern times he unconcernedly composed an essay on aesthetics. A well-known English art critic cannot see that any issue of importance was involved in the War, and he seriously proposes that men of real artistic taste should be provided with a comfortable

income by the community. Here is the familiar disproportionate valuation of art. Tennyson dealt with the question years ago. The soul that built itself a lordly pleasure-house of art, thinking to find there complete satisfaction, became 'plagued with sore despair,' and in the end asked for 'a cottage in the vale, where I may mourn and pray.' Conduct is three parts of life.

SMELLS

MANY a man will sniff at the circumstantial report from London that a Smell Society has been formed. There is, he will say, something effeminate about the deliberate cultivation of the sense of smell. He objects to men using perfume. Maud's brother, you may remember, annoyed Maud's lover in this way—'his essences turned the live air sick.' There was once a New Zealand poet who came under the suspicion of his colleagues in a newspaper office because he brought flowers to his room. It is easy, however, to distinguish between perfumes out of place and the cultivation of the sense of smell. A man may loathe perfume used personally, and yet have a memory richly stored with the smells of the East, or be able to detect a single boronia in a garden.

The sense of smell is a primitive sense, and even civilized man is profoundly affected by it. It may sharpen his feeling of hunger, stimulate his sense of beauty, or set his memory racing. We all know the almost overpowering effect of a sudden rush of scent in a warm night in early summer; it calls up all the summers that have been, and brings back lost youth. Even a whiff from a hawthorn hedge will do this. Rudyard Kipling said almost the last word on

the subject when he wrote of the Australian soldier in South Africa who smelt the wattle as he rode into Lichtenberg:

> Smells are surer than sounds or sights
> To make your heart strings crack—
> They start those awful voices o' nights
> That whisper 'old man, come back.'
> That must be why the big things pass
> And the little things remain,
> Like the smell of wattle by Lichtenberg,
> Riding in, in the rain.

To this soldier the wattle was all Australia, all that he had found or missed. If someone could burn a bit of dead tea tree ten thousand miles from New Zealand, a New Zealander who smelt it would feel the same.

The truth is that men and women are profoundly interested in smells. Kipling once said that whenever a few travellers gathered together, one or other was sure to say: 'Do you remember that smell at such and such a place?' One whiff of camel, he went on to say, was all Arabia, or one might remember the rotten eggs of Hit on the Euphrates, where Noah got the pitch for the Ark, or drying fish in Burma. There were, he declared, only two elementary smells of universal appeal—burning fuel, which ranged from coal to cow-dung, and melting grease. 'I rank wood-smoke first, since it calls up more intimate and varied memories, over a wider geographical range, to a larger number of individuals, than any other agent

we know.' It is not necessary to leave home to experience such a stir of memory. A fire of weeds in the back garden will sometimes do the trick.

It is true that a large number of people have no personal association with wood-smoke, perhaps not even from inside fires. They are warmed by radiators, travel on cushioned wheels, and if they do meal out of doors, drink from thermos flasks. Kipling made these remarks before the War, but even then he referred to a 'generation wholly divorced from all known smells of land and sea and travel.' In great ships the old smell of the sea—the water itself, rubber, cooking, paint, rope, and perhaps a whiff of engines—has gone. I like that smell, but many people loathe it. And on land there has been an enormous change owing to the coming of the internal-combustion engine. Petrol and lubricating oil now provide the dominating smell of many streets.

The new society, however, is concerned with much more than the nostalgic or aromatic effect of smells. It seeks to refine the sense of smell and to cultivate it like the sense of hearing. It is trying to introduce new words for smells. At present there are very few. Chesterton wrote of the 'brilliant smell of water, the brave smell of a stone,' and some day we may use such terms freely. We may talk of day and night smells, cold and warm smells, red, white, and blue smells. To some people a sense of colour is associated with smell. On this basis what would one use to describe the mixed smells of a New

Zealand country store, with its cheese, tea, dungarees, boots, prints, manure, and ironmongery? To a New Zealander the smell of such a store should be as easily distinguishable from that of, say, an English shop, as the air of Brighton is from the air of the Highlands. Some have an imperfect sense of smell, but the sense can be cultivated. I know people who go into genuine raptures over boronia, but to me it is scentless. An Australian once told me that an Italian friend came into the garden where he was, sniffed, and said: 'No perfume.' (This may help us to understand the origin of the legend about the scentless flowers of Australia.) To my friend the garden was heavy with perfume. Perhaps after a while the newcomer was able to detect the scents of Australia.

The new society looks forward to smells being used in education and in courts of law. They might be a valuable aid to memory and an assistance in teaching geography. There is the striking example in the story of war by 'Ole-Luk-Oie,' in which a staff officer is helped to an understanding of his opponent's mind by smelling an apple. The smell brings back his school days, and he remembers what the enemy commander was like as a boy. Certainly geography and history lessons will be much more interesting if, in addition to maps and pictures, the teacher can produce the 'spicy garlic smells' of 'East of Suez,' the suggestion of mortality so characteristic of old cathedrals, or the hot, dry smell of a Canterbury nor'wester.

As to legal evidence, even more interesting possibilities are opened up. Hear Constable X: 'My suspicions of the accused were first aroused when he told me he had not come from A—— in Kent, where the crime was committed. I noticed a smell about him that was emphatically that of hops, showing that he had come from Kent.' Or introduce Sherlock Holmes to New Zealand: 'Why did he lie to me, Watson? He said he had been in Auckland only two days, but he has quite distinctly the Auckland odour which takes some weeks to acquire. Is there an Auckland odour? My dear Watson, it is quite distinctive, quite unlike that of other towns. This is a subject I have given some attention to, and I have written a monograph on it. I distinguish the smells of all the New Zealand towns, not only the four main centres, but provincial places as well. There is a marked difference between the dry ecclesiasticism of Christchurch and the warm, somewhat Rotarian exuberance of Auckland. When I was younger I once made the mistake of confusing Masterton with Waipukurau, but now it is quite an exact science. Moreover, you may have observed that our visitor told us that he bred Merino sheep. I am quite familiar with the smells of sheep breeds, and his is not Merino; it is Romney and Lincoln. So we have a double reason for being suspicious of our client.'

'Wonderful, Holmes!' I cried.

'Elementary, my dear Watson,' replied Holmes as he reached for the scent bottle.

FORGETTING

THE other evening I had an important letter to write between dinner and going out, and to post as I went. I wrote it, went out, and in the tram remembered I had left it behind. Fortunately the disaster was not irretrievable, for there was time when I returned home to slip out and post the letter in a pillar-box near by. In my pocket as I travelled in the tram was a book of essays by Robert Lynd, and opening it at random I came on a discussion called 'Forgetting,' and this, among other things, is what I read:

The commonest form of forgetfulness, I suppose, occurs in the matter of posting letters. So common is it that I am always reluctant to trust a departing visitor to post an important letter. So little do I rely on his memory that I put him on his oath before handing the letter to him. As for myself, any one who asks me to post a letter is a poor judge of character. Even if I carry the letter in my hand I am always past the first pillar-box before I remember that

I ought to have posted it. Weary of holding it in my hand, I then put it for safety into one of my pockets and forget all about it. After that, it has an unadventurous life

till a long chain of circumstances leads to a number of embarrassing questions being asked, and I am compelled to produce the evidence of my guilt from my pocket. This, it might be thought, must be due to a lack of interest in

other people's letters; but that cannot be the explanation, for I forget to post some even of the few letters that I myself remember to write.

This is so much my own weakness that I read the essay with special interest, and I wonder how many others have this trouble with letters. Frequently I take up a letter as I go out, with the intention of putting it in a box as I pass, and forget about it. Letters sometimes remain in the pocket for a day or two, to become crumpled and dog-eared; and such a letter is an offence. Like Mr Lynd I am reluctant to ask friends to post letters; it isn't fair to them. They may be as forgetful as I am, and think of the embarrassment they would feel if they did forget.

I read once a story—from real life I think—of a man who wrote proposing marriage to a woman, and receiving no answer, remained a bachelor, only to find, years later, that he had not posted the letter. I wonder if in the interval it ever struck him that the letter might not have reached the lady. Extraordinarily efficient as the Post Office is—more so than many people realize—the chance of a letter going astray cannot be entirely excluded, and at each end of the chain there is a human element outside the department. Should great issues be allowed to hang upon the fate of one letter?

So much for letters, which seem to be invested with a perversity of their own. Mr Lynd says he is no great delinquent in the leaving of things in trains and taxis, though he admits that he cannot keep

walking-sticks. He goes on to contend that it is the efficiency rather than the inefficiency of human memory that is striking. Reading lists of articles left behind by railway travellers, many people are astonished at the absent-mindedness of their fellows, but Mr Lynd doubts whether absent-mindedness is common. Man remembers many things, and goes on remembering them. 'How many men in all London forget a single item of their clothing when dressing in the morning? Not one in a hundred. Perhaps not one in ten thousand. How many of them forget to shut the front door when leaving the house? [A more important matter in England than in New Zealand.] Scarcely more.' I remarked the other day that relatively the number of holiday-makers who behave anti-socially was small, and the same could be said about travellers and their belongings. The percentage of people who leave things in trains must be trifling. The things left, however, get into the news, and are thus given a misleading importance. It is the same with divorce. A divorce, it has often been said, is news, but a happy marriage is not.

On one point, however, I should like to express a doubt. Mr Lynd says that very few men forget things in the daily routine. I wonder how many city men in a hundred go to work every day with their full pocket-equipment of money, matches, cigarettes, keys, tram ticket, pencil, and fountain-pen? This, of course, is where a wife comes in—or should come

in; but instead of saying, 'Have you pen, ink, and paper, darling?' she probably shoots her husband off to his work with injunctions not to forget the fish for dinner and to pick up Charlie's boots from the bootmaker. Forgetfulness of this kind, however, can be countered by forethought. There may be an excuse for the Australian in the back country who ran three miles holding his billy over a moving grass fire, and then found he had 'left the bloody tea behind,' but there isn't any for the organizer of a picnic who involves the party in such a disaster. I cannot feel any sympathy for a bridegroom who forgets the ring. Does a batsman go to the wicket without his bat?

Why do we find some things easier to remember than others? I can remember what Ranjitsinhji made in his first Test match, in 1896, and the date of Tennyson's death (I had an argument with another cricket friend once as to whether he—I mean Ranji—was out or not out), but frequently I forget what I did with my collar stud or my hat two minutes back. The explanation is, I suppose, that Ranji and Tennyson are fixed in my mind like stones in concrete, whereas collar studs and hats are hovering moths. Fundamentally the reason may be that I am really more interested in Ranji and Tennyson than in studs and hats. Mr Lynd raises the old question whether exceptional memory and first-rate intelligence go together. It is well known that boys and girls who are brilliant in examinations do not always come up

to expectations afterwards, and it is recognized that one of the problems confronting the examiner is to keep down the value of mere memory in the examination room. The man with the most wonderful memory I have known was an admirable critic, but had little originality or creative power. Macaulay is one of the most conspicuous examples of phenomenal memory, to which he owed much of his success, but, though he was a genius, he was not an original thinker. Mr Lynd thinks, however, that on the whole the great writers and great composers have been men with exceptional powers of memory. The poets he has known have had better memories than the stockbrokers. Better memories for what? Stockbrokers may have astonishing memories in their own line; I know one who has.

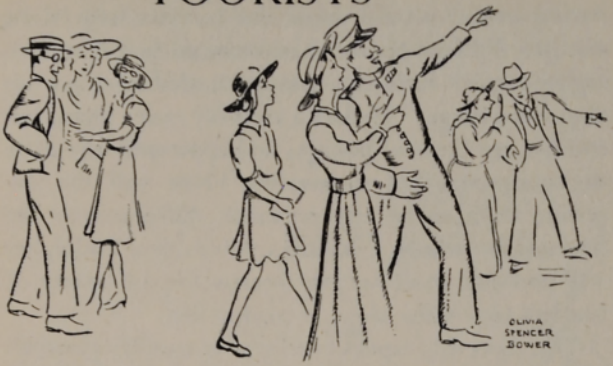
A good memory is something to be valued, and a man who starts out with one is to be envied. If he is wise he will cultivate it. He who never forgets a face has advanced some way towards success in life, and an accurate memory for facts saves one a deal of trouble. One cannot live and work always in reference libraries, and no system of indexing is an adequate substitute for a poor memory. So often the idea has to come to the mind before the reference system can be set in motion. Lawyers and journalists are apt to acquire a reputation for general knowledge that they do not really deserve; the explanation is that they know what to look for and where to find it. Many a readable newspaper interview is written

without the taking of a note; notebook and pencil, indeed, may dry up the source of information. The interviewer has been trained to remember. Accuracy, of course, is a jewel. I envy the man who can remember not only in substance but in detail what Gladstone said in 1878. I have been reading poetry all my life, and writing about it for a good many years, but I do not think I could repeat with complete confidence in my accuracy a single poem—not even *Not Understood*. Stay—not one? Yes, one:

How odd
Of God
To choose
The Jews.

Judging by the commonness of misquotation, I should say there were many like me.

TOURISTS

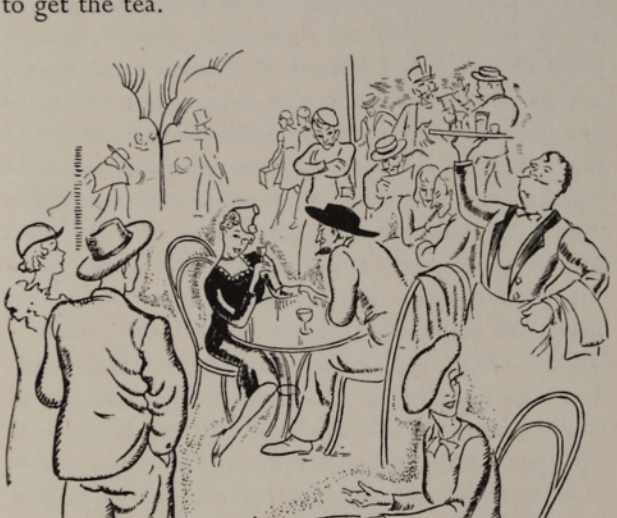


An entertaining sidelight was thrown on the tourist business of Paris when a Queen of the Apaches sued an agency for money due to her for performances in low haunts to which tourists are conducted. Organized tours round the Bohemia of Montmartre are a feature of 'tourism' in Paris. Visitors go in charabancs from one café or dance hall to another, and, when they return to Oskalooska or Taumarunui, tell tales—sometimes embroidered, no doubt—of the alluring wickedness they saw there. Some years ago, when the franc was down to a penny, there were demonstrations against this exploitation of Parisian naughtiness. This kind of sight-seeing, plus the flaunting of tourist wealth in the face of a very sick franc, was rather more than Parisians could stand. It has long been known that there is a good deal of humbug about these 'haunts of vice,' and this recent case is proof in point. The queen, who was really a

variety artist, would cover the tourists with abuse until an old man appeared, announced that it was his eighty-second birthday, and persuaded the lady to sing some songs. He had a birthday every night, but tourists are birds of passage, and apparently the little deception was not discovered. Nor will the exposure of it make any or much difference to the business as a whole. Apaches, Mimis, and Rodolphes will continue to disport themselves for the benefit of tourists who think they are seeing life.

The economic aspect of this little comedy is worth some study. As *The Times* remarks, the vandalism of previous generations towards relics of the past is now checked, and there is much realization of the cash value of local peculiarities in dress and habit. At the same time civilization tends to eliminate many local and racial peculiarities. The Chinese and Japanese, for example, discard their picturesque draperies and walk about in the ugly tube-like clothes of the West. It is sometimes necessary, therefore, to make special arrangements for preserving local colour. In certain places it has been found that if westernization goes too far these will be cut out of the itinerary of pleasure cruises, so a portion of the population is instructed to remain as it was. In parts of western America patches of the traditional Wild West are preserved for the entertainment of tourists. The novelists, of course, have never admitted that the Wild West has disappeared. The same sort of thing is going on in New Zealand. A

Maori guide may don a native mat to show a visitor round the sights, which she does in faultless English, but one presumes she removes it when she goes home to get the tea.



The tourist has long been a figure of fun, and always will be. The very word 'tourist' has come to have an uncomplimentary meaning. Many people associate it with loud-voiced and often inconsiderate travellers who rush from place to place, see everything, and take in nothing. 'Did we go to Rome,

Momma?' says *Punch's* American girl in London. 'Oh, yes, that was the place where we bought the lisle thread stockings.' *Punch* also depicted a Highland laird and his gillie looking at two kilted strangers in the distance. 'Who are those men, Donald, dressed like tourists?' In *Dodsworth* Mr Sinclair Lewis writes almost savagely of the people who travel year after year round and round the world. What benefit do they get out of it? he asks. It might be asked in reply what greater benefit they would get by staying at home. It is a truism that you get out of travel what you take to it, and stupid people will get little more out of travel than out of life generally. Yet there is always the possibility that contact with the wind of a strange world will shake a reef out of their sails. There are many who would prefer that this class should stay at home. It is complained that the imperfectly equipped tourist vulgarizes the world. He crowds resorts; induces his hosts to furnish him with sham antiques of all shapes and sizes ('Ye Olde Thisse and Thatte,' as Mr Thomas Burke remarks in *The English Inn*); imposes his own inferior habits and customs on other societies; and corrupts good manners. Over Paris he has cast his rubbers, and Stratford-on-Avon, where even the ash-trays are decorated with Shakespeare's features, has become his wash-pot. Superior people hate him and try to avoid him. They try to go further afield every year, looking for unfrequented places, but he pursues them with penetrating speech and eruptive clothes. The baffled ones console them-

selves by congregating and saying just what they think of him. They bask in the glow of moral and aesthetic superiority.

But such basking is dangerous. The superior person is often a tourist himself. Indeed, if one travels for pleasure one cannot help being a tourist and mixing with the crowd. The natural disposition is to think of oneself as different from others, as a traveller rather than a tripper or a tourist, just as the definition of a bounder is one who behaves differently from oneself. But to go to a famous place and complain that it is over-crowded is to invite the retort that you yourself are helping to make the crowd. The colonial who visits London must go to the Abbey and the Tower and other portions of the British heritage, and he will be fortunate indeed if he has these places to himself. The crowds who flock to such places are made up for the most part of persons who can go only at one time in the year, and many of them, like the colonial himself, are realizing a long-cherished dream. If you go to Paris you will wish to see Versailles and meditate on the irony of all its glories, but it is highly probable that you will encounter streams of tourists—like yourself. To demand that you shall mŏnopolize places famous for their beauty or historic interest is as selfish as Ruskin's objection to the building of railways through beautiful scenery. It is a pity, of course, that some of these people speak through their noses, throw banana skins about, or disport themselves

with jazzy gramophones, but tourists or trippers have a perfect right to be there; they are not all like this, and those that are may come under the influence of their surroundings.

In the *Cornhill* a writer has something to say for the tourist, who, he remarks, has no mouthpiece, no press, no delegate. He is in the hands of the tourist organizer, the manipulator. Yet, like the pilgrim, he is bound on a spiritual, not a material, mission. 'That is why too much luxury in travel kills the joy, and why those who set out on world tours in the spirit of the antique-hunter, for the sake of collecting the names of places they have been to, miss the mark.' This writer takes a hopeful view of the future of 'tourism.' 'The very facilities of transport and communications that appear to be stultifying his [the tourist's] intellect and hardihood are in fact lifting him up.' The tourist idea will one day 'disestablish the worship of Mammon,' but it will not grow rapidly until its votaries organize themselves and buy a controlling interest in the trade. How this it to be done, unfortunately, the writer does not say. We may, however, note his hope and his ideal. We may reasonably say also that on a balance the tourist traffic does make for better understanding between peoples. It is hardly possible for a million Americans to visit Europe without, however slightly, weakening the traditional American conviction of righteous aloofness and immeasurable superiority. It is said that the fact that Byrd made New Zealand his base

was to numbers of Americans the first intimation of New Zealand's separate existence. If New Zealand can induce a few thousand Americans to come here as tourists, this country may be discovered in detail. Certainly New Zealanders have no right to discourage Americans or any other people from visiting them as tourists. Reciprocity is a jewel. Why should we accept the Alps, the Tower, the Trossachs, Niagara, and the Grand Canyon as part of the world's heritage, and grumble when outsiders flock here to see Rotorua and Mount Cook?

THE SERVANT

A FRIEND sends me an old letter, written apparently about the middle of last century, in which one English housewife inquires of another about the character of a prospective servant. It were a shame to cut the letter down; here it is in full:

I will take it kindly of thee to give me the true character of Elizabeth Heyworth. She says she has been in thy service five months, and only left because the season for Buxton is over. Be so kind as to answer these few particulars. Is she honest, quite sober and not very dainty? Is she industrious? And please say in which department she was occupied in thy situation. Is she careful not to waste, nor injure good furniture, etc? Is she a good washer and ironer? Is she a good riser without calling at six in the morning? We generally should like her to go to bed at ten. Is she very civil, and not pert if found fault with? Has she any young man follows her? Has

she had practice in working in thy situation? If so, please say what sort of work. What wages had she? What place of worship did she attend? Is she inclined to gossip with others? Is her memory good? Does she well remember her orders? Is her health good? Please canst thou tell me the name and direction of the family she lived with in Manchester? And was she servant of all work there? And how long did she live there?

If in thy power to hand me these particulars I shall feel much obliged. Is she tidy in her dress and quite healthy? —not liable to headaches and painful or swollen legs? Excuse me being a little particular—I do not want to take one unsuitable; I wish a thorough servant of all work. Is she quickly back if sent an errand? Does she speak the truth? Is she a thorough duster and scourer and tin rubber, etc? Is she quick in dispatching her work and happy in doing it? We have spent much in new papers, varnishing and wish it not carelessly treated. Had she any bright stoves to clean?

I am aware we must not look for perfection—but some fault. It is pleasant to know in what she is faulty.

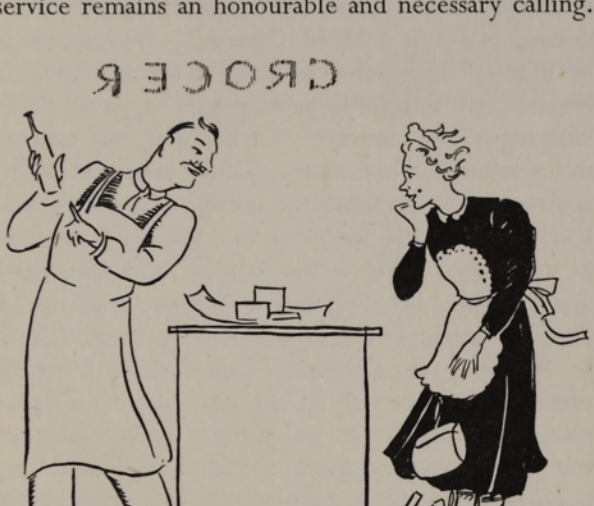
'Dainty' is used here in the sense of fastidious. I presume that when the lady says: 'It is pleasant to know in what she is faulty,' she means that it will save trouble on both sides. You will say that the person who wrote this human document was somewhat particular, but it may be doubted whether she was any more so than most of her class. In those days choosing servants was a more serious business than it is now. Home life was more important, families were larger, and more servants were kept. When there was so much material for servants

employers could afford to be particular. But questions demand to be asked. This servant was expected to be in bed by ten and up at six. How much free time was she allowed in the day? And, more important still, what was she paid? Some of you may remember that famous farce, *Ici on Parle Français*, in which J. L. Toole often played. The boarding-house 'slavey' in that company complained of receiving 'a measly six pounds a year and find me own tea and sugar.' You cannot get a servant now for that money, or anything like it, and the explanation does not lie only in the general rise in wages. There are so many more things that women and girls can do for a living—occupations with good or fairly good wages, regular hours, and a higher social status. The spread of education has made a great difference. The Victorian employer wants to know if Elizabeth Heyworth has any young man who 'follows her.' 'No followers allowed'—good old Victorian phrase! The girl who works in shop, office, or factory is not worried by employers' worry about 'followers.'

Many years ago a well-known Liberal journalist in England reported, as a good joke, that a servant had asked for references from a prospective employer. But why not? Elizabeth Heyworth might have asked several questions of or about the writer of this letter. Did she keep her servants long? When did the last two leave? Would they give references? What was the food like and what hours did she expect servants to work? What sort of a bedroom would be

provided? Was Mrs —— a nagger? Did she treat her servants with respect?

But when all this is said, and lots more, domestic service remains an honourable and necessary calling.

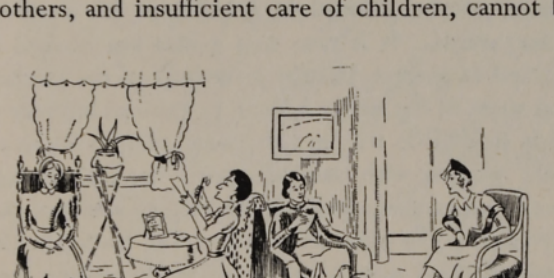


There is nothing about which it is so difficult to write without incurring the charge of snobbishness. Some people apparently object to domestic service altogether, and the logical result of their attitude would be that the King—like the two sovereigns in *The Gondoliers*—would light his own fire, the Prime

Minister would make his own bed, and the commander of an army would break off the direction of a critical battle to cook his own dinner. Why domestic service should be considered menial when nursing is not is a bit of a puzzle. Why should it be deemed honourable to nurse a broken leg in a hospital and derogatory to help an ailing mother by working in her kitchen? A mere man may venture the opinion that housework, judged purely as work, is about six times more interesting than feeding the same thing, all day and every day, through a machine in a factory. Who is the happier, a factory hand under a hard-driving, fault-finding foreman, or a domestic servant under a sympathetic mistress? There is, however, an accepted social division between masters and mistresses on the one side and servants on the other, on top of which there is often rudeness and lack of consideration. There is no better test of character than behaviour to servants. Even in this country, where the shortage of servants has become desperate, there are mistresses who manage to obtain and keep servants because they treat them well. Numbers of men and women have been happy in domestic service, probably happier than they would have been in any other job. There is a very great difference between service and servitude. After all, doesn't everybody serve somebody or something?

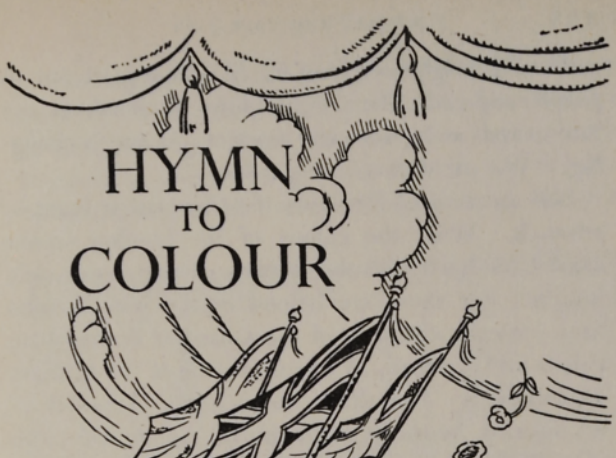
The difficulty about arranging domestic work is that it is needed at the beginning and the end of the day. The mistress wants someone to help with

breakfast and with the evening meal. The rich are doubly fortunate in that they can command more service than they really need, whereas the housewife who has to run a house on wages or a small salary cannot afford even one servant. What this lack means in broken health—physical and mental—among mothers, and insufficient care of children, cannot be



computed, but it may be imagined. The effects must be particularly hard in the country. This is a factor in the decline of the birth-rate. A particularly interesting piece of information that has recently come out of Russia is that shortage of domestic servants is being felt there. Just as in bourgeois societies, young people in Russia are attracted by factory life and, also just as in bourgeois societies, Russian wives are asking Stalin how he expects them to produce more children when they can't get help in the house.

The effect of shortage of servants on intellectual life and public activities has received less notice, but it is important. Trotsky, I believe (or one of his colleagues), wrote a criticism of the capitalist thesis that the existence of a leisured class is necessary for culture, but even he would ask that domestic chores should not be allowed to break into his work for Communism. It is true that genius has cooked its oatmeal in garrets, but the great bulk of the intellectual work of the world is done by persons left free or fairly free to do it. In this young country there are many women with unusual capacity for self-development, expression, and administration, who are tied day after day to their kitchens. The marvel is that some of them manage to do so much outside their housework, but the community is not getting anything like the best from this class.

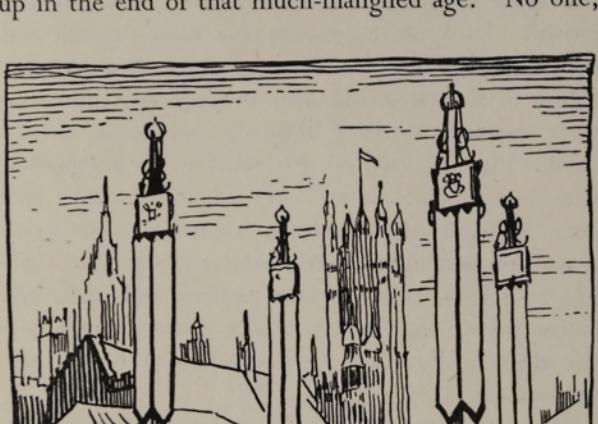


If you look along a certain street in New Zealand's capital you will see at the end of it a tall new building coloured pink. Framed in the street-end on a bright day it catches the eye more then than it does when you pass it. Its design is striking, but not so striking as the architect's deliberate choice of colour. The arrested beholder may think of that one line by which alone an English poet lives—'Some rose-red city half as old as time.' A generation ago—less than that—the building would have shown a plain stucco front as a matter of course. The capital's new railway station is warm with colour, and near by a new hotel is done in an unconventional light green. In its domestic architecture the city is showing more

and more brightness; we are blossoming, if not in purple and red, like the meadows in *Maud*, at any rate in reds and greens and oranges. Taste is changing. We are rediscovering colour.

Into the time of discovery the Coronation burst in triumph. What the colour of the London scenes must have been like we, at this distance, can only imagine, but those are helped in the process who have seen the changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace or Whitehall, or a musical ride at the Military Tournament. The climax came in the Abbey itself when dress, vestment and uniform, ribbon and cloth of gold, blazed in the marvellous setting of the Abbey's dim religious light, its immemorial history, its loveliness and mystery. The world has no sight comparable to it—this mixture of colour with architectural beauty and the history of Church and State. But all over the Empire we sang our hymn to colour that day. Troops marched and banners were hung out. 'Terrible as an army with banners'; might not we say also 'beautiful as an army with banners'? Perhaps it depends on the mood. I think we all felt better for Coronation week. We had expressed our loyalty to a living sovereign and to a mystical ideal, and we had shared a common emotion. But more than that; we had enjoyed colour. Wellington was something to remember that Wednesday, with its blue sky, the stabbing beauty of its hills and sea, and the bright gestures of its decorations. The city was steeped in colour.

The industrial revolution of nineteenth-century England buried colour under palls of smoke and heaps of midland slag. I am no violent rejecter of the Victorians, perhaps because I was born and brought up in the end of that much-maligned age. No one,



however, would dispute that in certain manifestations it was a hideous age, with a hideousness as depressing as anything in history. We still suffer from the legacy of that hideousness, and to the ends of the earth. Look, for instance, at man's dress. But Britain to-day is a much more colourful country than it was in the middle of last century. Later than that, when I was a boy, colour was frowned upon. Our

furniture was drab, and so were our clothes. Our houses were ugly or at best nondescript, and to paint them in bright colours would have been regarded as sinful. For a woman to wear red was looked on as not quite respectable. To-day, well, look at any crowd. Look at the stands at a tennis match and note the delightful patches of colour. Women wear colour as if a right and men are haltingly following their example, even if they do put some of the colour into the ugliest garments ever designed—plus-fours. Our homes are brighter, inside and out. We put bright colours on walls. We sport green and red doors. We paint roofs green. We live in yellow houses. Our gardens and parks are much gayer, and if we cannot grow flowers we buy them. We plant great splashes of bright red and orange.

This new appreciation we owe largely to the poet and the artist. In the Victorian age they revolted against the neglect and condemnation of colour. They told Mr Gradgrind that man did not live by facts alone. They went back, past the Puritanism that was partly responsible for Victorian drabness, to the childlike love of colour of the Middle Ages. As painters the Pre-Raphaelites left less of a mark than they hoped, but they influenced taste. Against the background of much-vaunted industrialism their pictures glowed like Crown regalia. William Morris, in Chesterton's phrase, brawled for art as some men brawl for beer. He wrote and painted in tapestry. In

his passion for colour he plunged his arms into dyeing vats. Even the ascetic Christina Rossetti let her love of colour run riot:

> Raise me a dais of silk and down;
> Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
> Carve it in doves and Pomegranates,
> And peacocks with a hundred eyes,
> Work it in gold and silver grapes,
> In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys!
> Because the birthday of my life
> Is come, my love is come to me.

The aesthetic school of Wilde and Whistler broke away from primary colours and used the intermediates that are satirized in *Patience*. The uniforms of the dragoons were too crude for the maidens' taste.

> DUKE. We didn't design our uniforms, but we don't see how they could be improved.
> JANE. No, you wouldn't. Still, there is a velvet, with a tender bloom like cold gravy, which, made Florentine fourteenth century, trimmed with Venetian leather and Spanish altar lace, and surmounted with something Japanese—it matters not what—would at last be early English!

Primary colours, however, are not to be denied. In the last generation they have come into their own again. There is a directness, a simplicity, about them, which no mixture can supply. Indeterminate colours would not have satisfied the Nicaraguan patriot in *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, who walked in London clad in a uniform of brilliant green, splashed with

silver facings, and added to it his country's colours by tearing a strip of yellow off a hoarding and soaking his handkerchief in his own blood.

Can you not understand the ancient sanctity of colours? The Church has her symbolic colours. And think of what colours mean to us—think of the position of one like myself, who can see nothing but these two colours, nothing but the red and the yellow. To me all shapes are equal, all common and noble things are in a democracy of combination. Wherever there is a field of marigolds and the red cloak of an old woman, there is Nicaragua. Wherever there is a field of poppies and a yellow patch of sand, there is Nicaragua. Wherever there is a lemon and a red sunset, there is my country. Wherever I see a red pillar-box and a yellow sunset, there my heart beats. Blood and a splash of mustard can be my heraldry. If there be yellow mud and red mud in the same ditch, it is better to me than white stars.

In England there is a body called the British Colour Council, and shortly before the Coronation it issued a treatise on the psychological significance of basic colours. Red, so says this publication, is the colour of fire and blood, and denotes action and enthusiasm—also danger and revolution. It might be added that it signifies both sin (see *The Scarlet Letter*) and redemption. Blue is said to have an intellectual and spiritual appeal. It represents truth and reflection—and, on its bad side, hardness and cruelty and lack of affection. You may have noticed that there is a type of hard blue eye. Yellow is the colour of splendour and radiance, or, on the opposite account, sickness

and separation. Orange combines the virtue of red and yellow; green combines the wisdom and peace of blue with the unity and eternity of yellow. Purple, combining red and blue, blends the physical with the spiritual.

This is the individuality of colour. The general relation of colour to life was treated by a great Victorian, George Meredith. In his splendid *Hymn to Colour* he says:

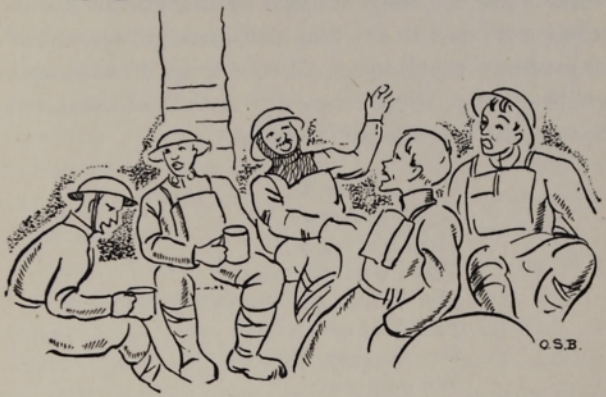
Look now where Colour, the soul's bridegroom, makes
The house of heaven splendid for the bride.
To him as leaps a fountain she awakes,
In knotting arms, yet boundless: him beside,
She holds the flower to heaven, and by his power
Brings heaven to the flower.

He gives her homeliness in desert air,
And sovereignty in spaciousness; he leads
Through widening chambers of surprise to where
Throbs rapture near an end that aye recedes,
Because his touch is infinite and lends
A yonder to all ends.

That is the way with the Victorians; when you think you have them, they can produce witnesses to the contrary. There was not a weakness or a vice in that age that was not denounced by their prophetic voices, which makes generalizing about the Victorians dangerous. The Victorian voice may have the last word. The householder who paints his front door a vivid green or spreads creepers with orange flowers over a bank in the garden may not

philosophize about bridegrooms and brides, but he is in the great tradition of colour-worship. Like the Pre-Raphaelites at one end of the scale, and the window-gardening slum-dweller at the other, he seeks beauty.

SOLDIERS' SONGS



We all know that in the Great War the British soldier did not sing heroic or patriotic songs. There was nothing in his repertoire to correspond to *The Watch on the Rhine* or *The Marseillaise*. He liked homely sentiment laid on pretty thickly—*The Long, Long Trail*, *Keep the Home Fires Burning*, and many a lesser composition. It is well known, too, that in his singing he took directions that mystified his enemies. He would try to sing *The Hymn of Hate* so that the Germans in the opposite trenches would hear him. Song books composed of popular songs of better varieties were thoughtfully provided for him, but whether he made much use of these I do not know. There was, however, a large class of song of which the civilian public, especially in countries remote

from the scene of war, knew little or nothing. These were the songs written by the soldiers themselves and fitted to any tune that came handy—sacred or profane—rough songs, obscene songs, ironic songs, grousing songs, doggerel most, if not all, of them, but bearing the clear stamp of reality.

Plum and apple,
Apple and plum,
Plum and apple,
There is always some.
The A.S.C. get strawberry jam
And lashings of rum.
But we poor blokes
We only get—
Apple and plum.

They are real folk-songs, these writings of anonymous soldiers, 'the songs of homeless men, evoked by exceptional and distressing circumstances; the songs of an itinerant community, continually altering within itself under the incidence of death and mutilation.' Two writers, both of whom served in the War, and one of whom, Mr Eric Partridge, is a colonial, have made a collection of these songs. They have confined themselves to songs invented by soldiers, some inherited from the old Regular Army, but all sung in the Great War. Such songs easily become lost, and these editors have done history a service by putting them on record.

In his admirable introduction, Mr Brophy says that plain speaking about war is often supposed to

have been introduced by the 1914–18 soldier. We are asked to believe that the martial spirit of old 'took no account of lice or the smell of corruption.' This, as Mr Brophy remarks, is hardly probable. He cites the foot-soldier Williams in *Henry V* as a forerunner of the sceptical trench realists of 1914–18. But we can go much further back than that. Centuries before the Christian era a Greek soldier-poet left a significant phrase for posterity—'plagued with lice.' *The Trojan Women* of Euripides is an entirely modern indictment of war; indeed, nothing written in our time is so poignant and terrible. It is impossible to believe that the soldiers of Xenophon's Ten Thousand, or of Hannibal's army, or of Caesar's army in Gaul and Britain, or of Wellington's divisions in the Peninsula, did not write rough songs about the tyrannies of non-commissioned officers, the filthy drudgery of war, and the caprice of death. The British soldiers who in 1914–18 'cheated hysteria with songs making fun of mud and lice and fear and weariness' were true to their national character; their forefathers 'had evolved the same ironic method of outwitting misfortune.' There are no heroics in this collection. There is satire on the military system, satire on superior officers, and satire on war and its heroics. There are panegyrics on civilian bliss, celebration of drink and other comforts, and an infusion of that nonsense and burlesque that is so typically English. Some of these songs, isolated, might give a foreigner a curious idea of English mentality.

Send out the Army and the Navy,
Send out the rank and file,
Send out the brave Territorials,
They 'll face the danger with a smile
(I don't think!),
Send out my mother,
Send out my sister and my brother,
But for Gawd's sake don't send me!

But neither this nor the more famous *I Want to Go Home* contained any trace of defeatism. A battalion that sang *The Old Barbed Wire* probably fought no worse for it afterwards. *The Old Barbed Wire* is notable for its irony. If you want to find the sergeant you will find him on the canteen floor, it says; if you want to find the quartermaster, he 's miles behind the line; if you want to find the colonel, he 's in the deep dugouts; but if you want to find the old battalion, 'they 're hanging on the old barbed wire.' By the way, officers below the colonel drew little satire on themselves. The sergeant, the sergeant-major, and the quartermaster sergeant were closer at hand, 'and all the rant and bluster in the world failed to conceal a single defect.'

This is not a book for general circulation. The editors have excluded the more outrageous of the songs, but they have been compelled, in the interest of that fidelity to life which is the basis of the collection, to print some containing words not used in polite society. Their comments on obscene speech

in the Army, however, are sane and reassuring. They say that deductions from obscene songs should be drawn with the greatest reserve. Many men refused to sing the worst versions, and 'it must be remembered that the English pay little attention to the meaning of words, and rarely use them with any precision . . . hence the spectacle of sober British matrons and innocent virgins singing *risqué* songs in their respectable drawing-rooms.' The obscenity so common in soldiers' speech was 'merely technical' because the words were used 'habitually, almost mechanically, as mere intensives.' Dean Inge says we should not take the Australian national adjective too seriously; often it merely indicates that a noun is to follow.

It is not possible, says Mr Brophy, to separate the experiences of the War into the wholly bad and the wholly good. Many men who have no reason to tolerate war feel that their participation in this war was valuable. But the qualities of experience which soldiers enjoyed were precisely what could be obtained apart from war—the simple life, the open air, the physical fitness, the co-operation towards an ethical end, the comradeship, and 'an enhanced awareness of the mystery and precariousness of life.' What properly belongs to war was abhorred by the ordinary soldier.

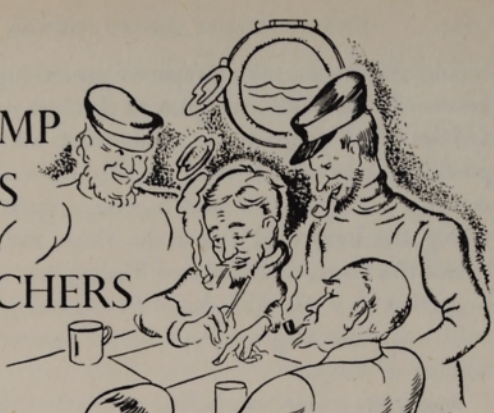
I cannot help ending with a reference to The Last Post, that most poignant and moving of bugle calls. Lines were fitted to all Army calls but this

one. Even the sunset Retreat was wedded to 'You won't go to heaven when you die, Mary Ann.' But

that most lovely and melancholy of calls, the noble death of each day's life, a sound moving about hither and thither, like a veiled figure making gestures both stately and tender, among the dim thoughts that we have about death the approaching extinguisher,

this, The Last Post—so described in C. E. Montague's *Disenchantment*—was never profaned with words.

TRAMP SHIPS AS TEACHERS



THE teaching of geography has been much widened and humanized since I went to school. We learned lists of countries, capitals, rivers, and mountain ranges, and something of the products of countries and ocean routes. It was all, however, obtained from books, with some little use of the map. No attempt was made to appeal to our imagination. In secondary schools, if my own was a guide, the subject was dropped early. I have a vivid recollection of my form being taken for geography by the science master. Even as a science master he was not believed to be particularly industrious; there was a wild legend that he marked term examination papers by weight. He was, however, highly popular. I don't suppose he gave our geography lessons a thought

before the hour. We prepared something out of a book—that is to say, we glanced through the pages—and he asked us questions about what we were supposed to have read. And all the while ships were coming and going in our harbour, some of them taking the long road round the Horn and out back round the Cape, and Rudyard Kipling was writing or preparing to write *McAndrew's Hymn*, and John Masefield was collecting the experience that went to the making of *Cargoes*.

Really geography can be one of the most fascinating of subjects in a school. In *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* Chesterton has written a prose poem about a grocer's shop. The ends of the world have helped to stock the shop. India is on the shelf behind the grocer, Africa is at his elbow. Has any teacher ever thought of taking a class into a grocer's shop and pointing out the sources of its variety of goods? It is an education, also, to wander round the waterfront of one of our main ports when overseas ships are in and look at the stuff that comes ashore—woolpacks from Calcutta, rails from England, fruit from America, sulphur from Galveston, phosphates from a Moroccan port, guano from some remote dot in the Pacific. It might be practicable to take a class round the waterfront; if they went they would learn a lot. Two prominent teachers have told me that the teaching of geography in this country is far from what it should be, and I can believe them. Geography is one of the foundations of that knowledge of the

world which must be developed if the world is to be saved from ruin. It calls for imagination in the teacher, and all kinds of ideas and gadgets can be brought into its service. But in the study of both history and geography the young are much better off than they were a generation or two ago. They have their relief maps, their special well-illustrated readers, and their school libraries. Pictures of historical scenes or of oversea countries hang before them. Perhaps they have a landscape map in their playground. Perhaps their school has 'adopted' a school in another country, and the two exchange letters. Perhaps the teacher of history takes his classes to historic spots and stages pageants.

The latest idea in the teaching of geography comes from the London County Council. That body is arranging for children in its schools to exchange letters with officers in tramp steamers in various parts of the world, and looks forward to having eight hundred ships on its books. An English periodical remarks that the idea is excellent; for one letter direct from a man on the spot, stamped with a strange stamp and carrying the tang of the sea, is always more interesting than an impersonal text-book. The range of the British mercantile service is as wide as the world. We are a maritime people, yet few of us understand at all fully what the merchant service does, the complexity of its trade, the number of out-of-the-way places it visits. We are inclined to think of the merchant service in terms of lines and

regular routes. The tramp is not a liner, and the word applied to her indicates wandering. I have just been reading *Sailor's Wisdom*, a collection of stories and essays by William McFee, a British-born author, now an American citizen, who has done for the engine room what Conrad did for the sailing ship. In the days before the War, says Mr McFee, the British tramp was the most ubiquitous craft that ever sailed the seas. Those were the days of coal, and she would take a cargo somewhere from a home port.

> She would go away for years, on 'time charter,' carrying coke from Norfolk, Va., to Havana, and bringing back sugar to New York. She would engage in the melancholy pastime of carrying coal from Calcutta to Bombay, or case oil from Philadelphia to Hongkong. She would fetch Argentine cattle to Genoa and take copper ore from Huelva in Spain to Elizabeth, N.J. She kept her flag and her British crew, and their wives kept house at home year after year with a loyalty and a spirit which is the heritage of no particular race or class, but shines most brilliantly in the annals of the shipping parishes of the maritime nations.

The coal trade is nothing like what it was, but there are still tramps. I have heard of an English cargo ship in the post-War period whose captain had not seen his home in England for three years. The log of such a ship would contain the names of many ports of which the average man has never heard, some of them without harbours, some of them hells of heat and backed, perhaps, by country that is an abomination of desolation. Officers of such craft could certainly

teach geography by letters to English school children. Some of their comments would be piquant, and one can easily imagine some writers putting a brake upon their reflections as they wrote. 'Virginibus puerisque,' one might hear an occasional correspondent murmur. And while the decline in the coal trade has affected the class of ship of which Mr McFee writes, the very substance that has ousted coal has brought into being another kind of tramping. There are oil ships that range the world from the Black Sea to New Zealand and may not see their home ports for years. Moreover, their stay in port is much shorter than that of the ordinary tramp. Their cargo is discharged in a few hours and off they go again, perhaps on a voyage of weeks, during which they may not sight a ship.

This brings me to the limitations of the London County Council's plan. 'There is a sense, however, in which the sailors themselves know very little geography,' says the periodical I have quoted above. 'They may be able to tell you the position of every port in the world, but apart from certain long-shore haunts they are apt to know little of the towns themselves and nothing of the hinterland.' That this is more or less true, a little reflection, even if one has not come into contact with sailors, will show. Years ago I met for a moment a deck hand on one of the direct steamers. He had sailed the seas for many years, but in no port that he touched had he been further inland than the nearest hotel bar. If you

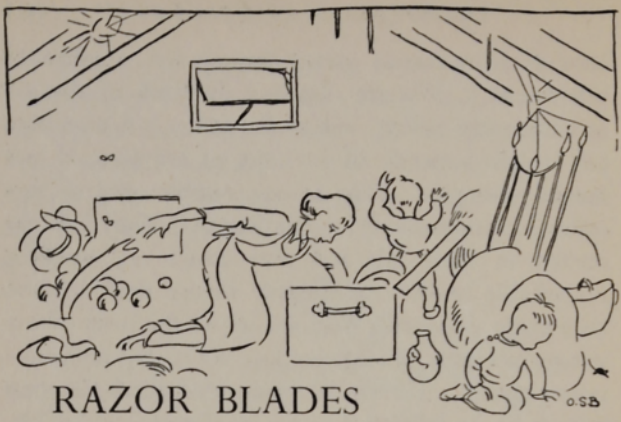
are inclined to criticize him, consider his lack of education, conditions of his calling, and, above all, his lack of time and money. Even the sailor of to-day, better educated, better accommodated, and better paid—what time has he to study the life of the ports he visits? Officers are in the same case.

They are busy most of the time they are in port. The work of the ship goes on and all departments have to be manned. In some ships there may be scarcely time to go ashore.

A sailor primarily is a man doing a job that requires constant vigilance. He is wrapped up in that job, and travel does not affect him nearly so much as one might imagine. Mr McFee writes of tramp skippers of the old days as men who 'viewed their life at sea

only as a means of saving money for a suburban retirement.' We are disposed to think of the sea as a romantic calling, but to the sailor it is a routine job which demands all or most of his physical and mental strength. That is one reason why so few sailors, comparatively, write books. They are absorbed in their job and they don't see anything remarkable in it. An English doctor took a berth on a cargo ship going East and wrote the story of the voyage in a book, *A Surgeon's Log*, which has become a minor classic. He was an outsider who had the good fortune to be admitted to the profession of the sea.

It is not only the children who will learn by this correspondence plan of the L.C.C. They will be able to teach officers of the mercantile marine a good deal about causes underlying political and commercial geography, and even about conditions in countries touched at by these ships, just as a colonial can sometimes tell a Londoner a good deal about London.



RAZOR BLADES

SEVERAL lines of thought are started by the complaint against Territorials at Arawa Park, Rotorua, that they left razor blades and tent pegs behind them. One is the complexity of modern life; a second is the thoughtlessness of so many people; a third is the problem of the disposal of rubbish. There is a sermon to be preached on the effects of this carelessness on the part of the military. Was it Carlyle who said that one could not throw a pebble without changing the centre of gravity of the universe? To throw away a razor blade may seem a harmless act, but if the place is a park used for games the consequences may be serious. The same is true of any place likely to be visited by people. The spot where you pitch your camp in the remotest wilds may be chosen by someone after you, and that someone, groping in the grass for something, may cut his fingers on your dis-

carded razor blades or broken glass. As for those folk who leave broken bottles about in frequented places, including beaches, they should be fined and in bad cases—such as the wanton breaking of bottles on the sand—they might well be sent to jail.

Complete disposal of rubbish, however, is not always very easy. Razor blades are one of the minor domestic problems of man. Though this is not an advertising column, I cannot help remarking that the safety razor is a boon and a blessing to the man who cannot keep an ordinary razor sharp. There are still numbers of men who stick to the old method. One of them has described to me shaving by it in an express when the train was full out. The attendant, he says, looked in, went pop-eyed, as Mr Wodehouse says, called on the Almighty, and fled. Wives, I should say, prefer the safety, for its blade is so useful in unpicking seams. A wife would hesitate to take her husband's 'ordinary' for such a job, but if he uses a safety, there is always a spare blade. Safety razors, indeed, may be said to promote communal life within the family. Young Bert, for example, might shrink from even asking his father for the loan of an old-fashioned razor, but he quite cheerfully calls out: 'I say, father, give us a razor blade, will you?' And father hands over his last new blade with nothing more, perhaps, than a muttered protest that these youngsters ought to buy things for themselves.

But disposing of razor blades—that is a different matter. There is a classic description of morning

shaving in *Babbitt*, and it includes a reference to this permanent domestic question. George F. Babbitt, you may remember—and if you haven't made his acquaintance you should do so—got out of bed in the first chapter reluctantly and in bad physical and mental shape. He had spent an evening the night before. As a result his up-to-date bathroom—'an altogether royal bathroom of porcelain and glazed tile and metal sleek as silver'—irritated him. The air was thick with the smell of tooth-paste; the bath-mat was wrinkled; the floor was wet; and the razor was dull. The scene has been enacted in countless bathrooms.

> He hunted through the medicine cabinet for a packet of new razor blades . . . and when he discovered the packet behind the round box of carbonate of soda, he thought ill of his wife for putting it there, and very well of himself for not saying 'damn.' But he did say it, immediately afterwards, when with wet and soap-slippery fingers he tried to remove the horrible little envelope and crisp clinging oiled paper from the new blade.
>
> Then there was the problem oft pondered, never solved, of what to do with the old blade, which might imperil the fingers of his young. As usual, he tossed it on top of the medicine cabinet, with a mental note that some day he must remove the fifty or sixty other blades that were also temporarily piled up there.

There it is; what are you to do with razor blades? They are not safe to leave about, especially where there are children. One is chary about dropping them into the rubbish bin. (I don't know what the rubbish collectors think about them.) If they are

buried in the garden they should be put down deep, for a blade in soil that you may be working with your bare hands can be a nasty thing, but deep digging is a nuisance. Many of us procrastinate, like Babbitt; the blades lie about forlornly for weeks and months,

turning up sometimes in odd places. Their untidiness annoys us, but we let it go on. Millions of blades, I believe, have been made from broken-up battleships; what is wanted is a process that will turn old blades into something useful.

Razor blades, however, are not so difficult as glass, which no rust destroys. By the way, what happens to all the old glass? It has been asked what happens to pins, but pins are corruptible. It is a

sobering thought that if all civilization in New Zealand were destroyed, the country went back to nature, and centuries hence it was repeopled, all that would remain of our life to instruct the new race about ourselves would be the remains of concrete structures and chinaware and glass. That, however, is something that concerns us much less than the accumulations of rubbish in our homes. Under many a house is a collection that the householder does not greatly care to look upon—old bookshelves, old bedsteads (is there anything uglier and more depressing than the dismantled parts of a chipped and rusty bedstead?), old garden tools, musty old books and papers, old vases (including perhaps the flamboyant rose-decorated one that was a wedding present from Aunt Emily), all interlarded, perhaps, with a few battered petrol tins. Periodically the householder and his wife determine to clear out the collection, but the task may daunt them. It is an unpleasant job—who will take all the stuff away? And perhaps the husband brings himself to the point of making the dive, but the wife says she is too busy to help him, and she really cannot trust him to do it alone. When the inevitable day comes, enforced, it may be, by death or a moving of house, it is possible that the cleaners-up will find some razor blades among the junk. In the country the position is worse than in the town. The townsman has his rubbish collection and his destructor, but the farmer has to do his own scavenging.

Private and public tidiness should act one upon the other. It is natural to suppose that a man or a woman who is tidy in the house will not throw paper away in the street or leave a picnic place sordid with litter, but this may be taking too much for granted. Public conscience is so often a sluggish thing. Are there not men and women of rigid honesty in every-day affairs who will practise a little mild deception on His Majesty's Customs? So if we see a man take out his last cigarette and throw the carton into the gutter it may not follow that he is a nuisance at home; it may be that he has not co-ordinated his private and public behaviour. To throw things away becomes a habit difficult to break, especially when there are no official receptacles for them.

I remember being so engrossed by the loveliness of an English valley through which I was travelling by train that I could not bring myself to throw a scrap of anything out of the window, with the result that I reached the end of the journey with pockets unpleasantly full of rubbish. The other day I heard a New Zealander who had been to Sweden recently comment on the tidiness and cleanliness of public places in that country. When the visitor mentioned difficulty with people who made litter in the streets, a Swedish girl stared at her. To the Swede the idea of civilized people behaving like this was strange. Some day it may be as strange to us.

G. K. C.

Let this humble tribute to a great and lovable man begin on a personal note. Mr Chesterton was good enough to say he would see me in his Clerkenwell office, where he edited *G. K.'s Weekly*. It was a shabby office. He was drinking tea. My immediate impression was of a man different from the current conception given to the world by the caricaturist. He was not nearly so stout as I had imagined, and he was fair. He was very tall, and though he had a suggestion of the bear in his appearance, he did not seem ungainly and was not markedly untidy. His manner was uniformly kindly and courteous. The great crusader did not dogmatize, did not raise his voice, and treated his obscure caller with deference.

Two things stand out from his conversation. He remarked that though he disagreed profoundly with ninety-five per cent of the *Morning Post's* politics, he read that leading organ of Conservatism because it was so well written, and he told me how the Father Brown stories came into being. He chanced to hear two undergraduates speak scornfully of the Catholic priesthood's knowledge of the world, and he remembered what a priest had told him (I think it was the priest who received him into the Church) of a particularly bad case of perversion. The idea then came to him of a priest-detective, a man who knew the world and the hearts of men and women.

I asked him to write for me a favourite passage from his own poems, and this is what he wrote, from *The Ballad of the White Horse*:

> Her face was like an open word
> When brave men speak and choose,
> The very colours of her coat
> Were better than good news.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton was many things. He was essayist, philosopher, historian, and novelist, wit and humorist; his one play *Magic* showed what he might have done had he gone on with drama; but primarily and always he was a poet. I remember quoting to a friend his description of Mexican place names as words that sound like laughter in hell, and my friend remarked that Chesterton wasn't a poet for nothing. His vivid imagination played upon every

subject he touched. He wrote the most amusing set of verses ever inspired by grocers:

> The righteous minds of innkeepers
> Induce them now and then
> To crack a bottle with a friend
> Or treat unmoneyed men,
> But who hath seen a grocer
> Treat housemaids to his teas
> Or crack a bottle of fish-sauce
> Or stand a man a cheese?

But in *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* he bursts into a prose poem about the romance of a grocer's shop. Chesterton said of Dickens that 'his fun is a form of poetry, and quite as personal and indefinite as poetry.' This is true also of Chesterton; he made poetry out of fun and out of everything. He was a great comic poet who linked the homely with the fantastic and changed over in a twinkling from farce to beauty and holiness. In *Wine and Water*:

> The cataract of the cliff of Heaven fell blinding off the brink
> As if it would wash the stars away as suds go down the sink,

and in *The Rolling English Road* we begin by going 'to Birmingham by way of Beachy Head,' and end by going 'to Paradise by way of Kensal Green.' The man who wrote the magnificent crusading battle music of *Lepanto* also wrote *The Donkey*:

> Fools! For I also had my hour,
> One far fierce hour and sweet:
> There was a shout about my ears,
> And palms before my feet.

He scarified F. E. Smith in that superbly witty rebuke to the absurd statement that the Welsh Disestablishment Bill had 'shocked the conscience of every Christian community in Europe':

Are they clinging to their crosses,
F. E. Smith,
Where the Breton boat-fleet tosses,
Are they, Smith?
Do they, fasting, trembling, bleeding,
Wait the news from this our city?
Groaning 'That 's the Second Reading!'
Hissing, 'There is still Committee!'
If the voice of Cecil falters,
If McKenna's point has pith,
Do they tremble for their altars?
Do they, Smith?

But he also wrote:

Cleanse us from ire of creed or class,
The anger of the idle kings;
Sow in our souls, like living grass,
The laughter of all lowly things.

It is significant that in one of his later Father Brown stories he makes people confuse a business man and a poet; it is the poet who is manly and rational, and the business man who is flamboyant and neurotic.

Chesterton wrote too much for his reputation. That was because he did not care for his reputation. He wrote what came into his head. He was always a crusading journalist as well as a literary man. He hated modern industrialism, some of the fruits of

Puritanism, intellectual superiority, and interference with liberty. Tired of talk with cultivated people in his club, he cried, 'Will someone take me to a pub?' One of the funniest of his poems describes the baby's lot in a crèche while the mother 'is happy in turning a crank that increases the balance at somebody's bank,' and therefore is 'free from the sinister task of attending to me.' But he loved many things, including the masses, and it is this combination of overflowing love and charity, righteous and humorous indignation, and amazing imagination and wit, that makes him so unique a figure in his time. Writing so much and at times so carelessly, he wrote a good deal that was second-rate, and made many mistakes. He overworked paradox. He made dangerous generalities. He over-romanticized the Middle Ages, and was just neither to politicians nor Jews. In his unashamed and passionate Little Englandism he was Kipling's antithesis. Kipling ignored the English slum to hymn the glories of Empire-building. Chesterton was one of those who thought that the loosely used label 'Imperialism' covered a multitude of sins, and nothing much but sins. If he had known more about the Empire (or Commonwealth, if you like) he would not have committed himself, before the World War, to the statement that Britain would as soon think of placing Australian soldiers against German as of comparing Australian sculpture with French.

Chesterton's opinions, however, aroused little re-

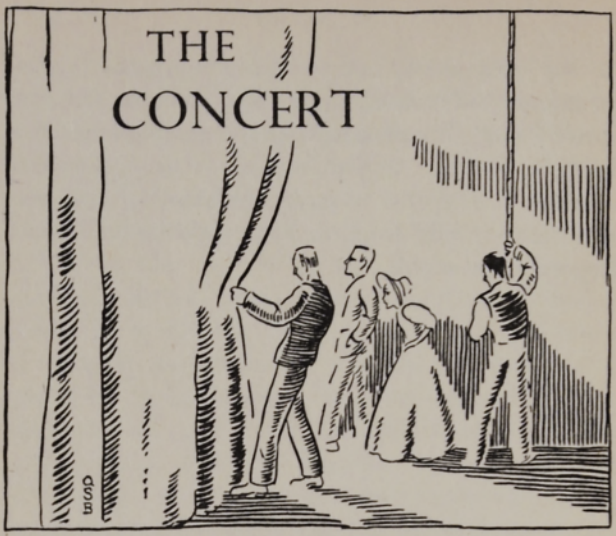
sentment in those who differed from him. He had none of the naked antagonism of Mr Shaw, or the arrogant hardness of Mr Hilaire Belloc. The man's love of humanity, his large charity, were so apparent. Beside his warmth Shaw was sometimes like an iceberg. Shaw, as Chesterton remarked years ago, is essentially a Puritan. Chesterton was an anti-Puritan, but at the same time a religious mystic. Yet Puritan and agnostic alike could appreciate and, indeed, love him. This quality of toleration helped to make him a great critic. The most profound mistake that can be made about criticism is to think of it as fault-finding. The first task of the critic is to appreciate. I have just read a typical revaluation of Tennyson that is quite absurd because it condemns him by a careful selection of his faults with little or no mention of his virtues. Where the arts were concerned Chesterton did not make this mistake. He bestowed praise bountifully where he thought it was deserved, and he overleapt obstacles of opinion. The atheistical republicanism of Swinburne, for example, must have been anathema to Chesterton, but he appreciated Swinburne the artist. I feel sure he must have liked much of Kipling.

Much of his criticism is sheer genius. He was under thirty when he wrote his *Browning*. It may be doubted if any other book throws so much light on that writer. It can be read with profit and delight year after year. Here was revealed for the first time in full measure Chesterton's extraordinary

insight and gift of arresting expression. No reader is likely to forget his remark that Browning hauled out the most abandoned creatures into the light and publicly accused them of virtue. Incidentally, no one who had read that wise and amazingly witty book should have been greatly surprised by the story unfolded in *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*. But the *Charles Dickens* is even greater, the foremost book of criticism in the last thirty years. It is not only a wonderful exposition of Dickens' genius, but a criticism of life itself. Here the critic is, in the highest sense, constructive and philosophical, yet the exposition is always as readable as a good story of adventure. It is said there are people who cannot read Dickens but enjoy Chesterton on Dickens. At any rate it never palls.

Chesterton's love and understanding of Dickens are significant. He was Dickensian himself, a great lover of humanity and the joy of life. He was a Dr Johnson who embraced the ancient faith with mystical devotion. He loved England passionately and sought to restore her to what he regarded as her ancient and greater glories. His chief message to his generation was a restatement of primary values. He believed in religion, but not in the religion that permits of conscienceless profit. Much of what is meant by progress he challenged boldly. For the sickness of an acquisitive society he prescribed religious faith, fraternity, charity, good humour, freedom, and simpler but more joyous living. 'The very colours

of her coat were better than good news.' Regeneration had to come from within, and the fact that society to-day is increasingly questioning the morality implicit in this acquisitiveness, is in substantial measure due to the evangel of this knight of the Holy Ghost, who laughed as he rode to battle and forgave as he struck.



Mrs Brown told him after tea, when he was settling down to a quiet hour with a book. There was going to be a concert and bazaar in aid of the school funds, and she had promised to help.

'Where do I came in?' he asked, without enthusiasm. It took a good deal to move him out in the evening. Almost his favourite passage in his set of Jane Austen was Mr John Knightley's opinion of evening visits. 'A man,' said Mr Knightley, 'must have a very good opinion of himself when he asks people to leave their own fireside and encounter such a day as this, for the sake of coming to see him. He must think himself a most agreeable fellow. I could do no such thing. . . . The folly of not allowing

people to be comfortable at home, and the folly of people not staying comfortably at home when they can!' He used to add that whereas Mr Knightley had a carriage, he (Brown) hadn't a car. Though—or rather because—he was fond of music, concerts in general annoyed him. You had, so he complained, no say in the choice of the programme, and you were liable to suffer such tortures as *Ten Little Tootsies*, or a child reciter.

Mrs Brown told him that all that was required of him was that he should go to the concert.

It was soon borne in on Brown, however, that there was more in it than that. Within a week the coming event began to cast an inexorable shadow. Talk of the concert flavoured every meal. More and more time came to be taken up with preparations. Dorothy, the second girl, was to play a duet with a school friend, and evening after evening a somewhat stolid interpretation of *Home to our Mountains* went in procession through the house. Margaret, the third girl, was to be a fairy in a tableau, and the rehearsing of the tableau, which mostly took place at the Browns', was the least encroachment on her time and energies, for she was so excited that she ate half-meals, forgot to do her hair, and let her lessons go. Eldred, the eldest girl, was the *ingénue* in a farce, the cast of which seemed to include quite a remarkable number of young men. Rehearsals of that, too, were generally held at the Browns'. The titular head of the home would retire to his study, to encounter, when-

ever he emerged, a houseful of more or less strange and sometimes indifferent guests, who stayed late after a substantial supper, and took liberties with his furniture and effects. At length even his study was commandeered. 'You won't mind, dear, just for to-night,' and of course he said he didn't mind; but the 'to-night' became several nights.

Then there was the dressmaking. Eldred had to have a dress made for her part, and there was the fairy costume for Margaret, and a new frock for Dorothy. Mrs Brown said she wouldn't have the face to ask the promoters of the concert for the cost of these things, but comforted Brown by saying that anyway, the children needed new clothes.

During the last week Brown saw his family as in a mist, through which they seemed to move in a series of hectic rushes. Meals were a scramble; dinner consisted sometimes of a cold and rather scraggy joint and potatoes with tea and bread and butter to follow. . . . 'So sorry, dear, but there was no time to make a pudding.' It was impossible for him to ask any one to sew a button on, so he used a safety-pin, and was thankful to have found one.

On the last two days there was a burst of cooking. Cakes and confectionery had to be made for the stalls at the bazaar. Brown was advised bluntly to have dinner in town, which he did, and got the best meal he had had for some time.

The concert was neither better nor worse than many other concerts. There was a great deal of

zeal, and everybody was prepared to make the best of things. Every item that could be was encored, and Brown, though he groaned inwardly, applauded with the rest. Two things interested him more than others. One was a conversation that he overheard outside the hall as he left:

'Well, how did you enjoy it?'

'Oh, so-so. One never enjoys these things much. They 're a duty. We have to raise the money somehow.'

'That 's so, and they only come occasionally.'

The other thing was the discovery that Mrs Brown was taking home two large cakes which she had bought.

'But I thought you made cakes yourself to sell?'

'Of course, but I thought I ought to buy some there.'

'Who made these cakes?'

'Mrs Robinson, I think.'

'Then perhaps Mrs Robinson bought your cakes?'

'She might have. Why?'

'Well it seems to me a curiously involved method of getting money for the school.'

Next day Brown met the secretary of the concert at lunch. The profit of the concert, thought the secretary, would be about twenty pounds. He also had a wife and family who had helped, and he calculated he was about five pounds out of pocket.

That night Brown had something to say to Mrs Brown. He said it with even more than usual

gentleness, for she was seriously knocked out, and talked of having to go away for a holiday. (Both

Margaret and Dorothy had been too tired to go to school that day.)

'Look,' he said, 'do you think it 's all worth while?

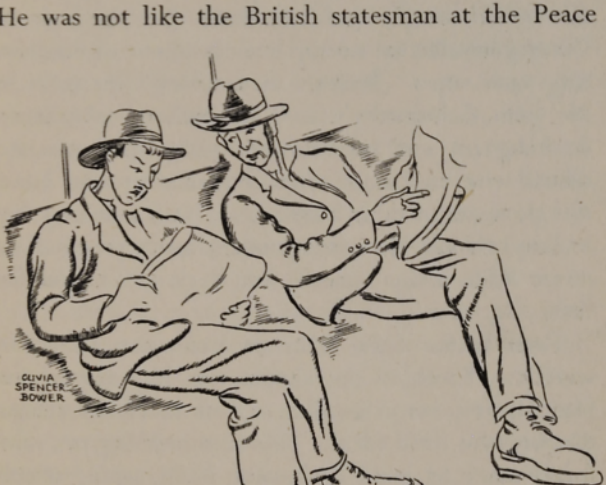
We have made twenty pounds by the concert. Our own out-of-pocket expenditure has been at least ten pounds, though since some of the stuff we have bought will be useful for other things, we cannot say exactly. Jones tells me he has spent five pounds. We are only two of all the people concerned. Half a dozen households have been disorganized for weeks, and men and women have strained their nerves and bodies and lived in increasing discomfort. Even then I doubt whether half those for whom all this entertainment was provided really enjoyed it. Now don't you think that next time it would be much more sensible just to pass the hat round and save all this bother? Even if the general public wouldn't subscribe freely, we who got up this concert could find the money by putting in about half of what this has cost us, and we would be spared all this worry and work. I would willingly give a fiver to avoid it. Of course you would miss the pleasure of buying and eating Mrs Robinson's cakes and she the pleasure of buying and eating yours, but——'

'Don't be silly,' said Mrs Brown.

SLIPS

Two young men in a tramcar one afternoon were attracted by the heading of the leading article, 'League Difficulties.' They began to read, until one said in disgust, 'I thought it was about football!' So let me warn you at the outset that this is not an article on those places in the cricket fields which require so firm a hand and so eagle an eye. It is inspired by the tragi-comic experience of Mr 'Jimmy' Thomas, ex-Secretary of State for the Dominions, who has seen his new book withdrawn from circulation because in more than one place he wrote 'New Zealand' instead of 'Newfoundland.' If the context had been trivial it would not have mattered much, but one reference was to the fact that the oldest British Dominion got into such a financial mess that it reverted to the status of a Crown colony. New Zealand was therefore libelled in Mr Thomas's reference, and in libel cases the law takes notice of intention only in mitigation of damages. Had the book been circulated—such is Britons' imperfect knowledge of their own Empire—quite a number of people would have believed that New Zealand was in a bad way, and its reputation would have suffered.

The joke is, of course, that Mr Thomas used to be Minister for the very territories he mixed up. It cannot be supposed that Mr Thomas did not know the difference between Newfoundland and New Zealand. He was not like the British statesman at the Peace



'LEAGUE DIFFICULTIES'

Conference who confused Silesia and Cilicia. It must have been the 'New' and the 'land' that tripped him up. Everybody does something similar at one time or another. We mix up names. A bright young thing called on a Mr Herdman Smith when he

was director of a school of art and addressed him as Mr Madder Brown. These are slips that pass in the night unnoticed save by the few. It is print that causes the trouble. The error is spread far and wide and the world laughs and condemns the carelessness. Every journalist or author lives in terror of committing such slips. Perhaps in a review you refer to Mr John Galsworthy's *Good Companions*; whereupon an indignant and very superior subscriber asks the editor why he cannot employ reviewers who know the elements of their business. The editor may feel inclined to ask his correspondent tartly whether he never made a slip himself, but he is too tactful for that.

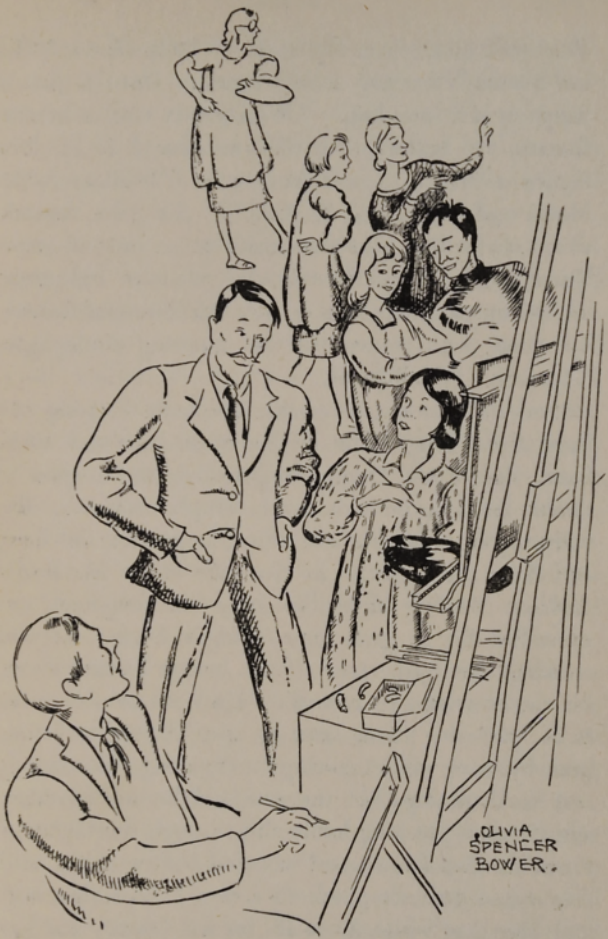
These tricks of the brain are a constant anxiety to writers. There is the simple slip like Haydn for Handel, or Johnson for Jonson, but there is a subtler danger—the fixed idea. This is something you take for granted in good faith, and build upon, which turns out to be wrong. Once your suspicions are aroused you are safe, for you investigate. A good illustration may be found in navigation. An experienced captain told me that one fine night he nearly ran a ship down because at first sight of her he jumped to the conclusion that she was a steamer on a certain course, whereas she was really a sailing ship on a different course. So the writer sometimes finds that a supposed fact on which he has relied is not a fact at all.

The matter for surprise in Mr Thomas's case is that

the error got so far as the completed book. Someone must have typed the manuscript, and leaving aside the question whether the author read the script before he sent it to the printer (as he should have done), somebody set it up in type, somebody read the proofs, and somebody revised those proofs. Every journalist knows, however, how amazingly mistakes can persist in proof. An article may be read carefully by two or three persons in proof and errors be overlooked which leap to the eye when it appears in print. Newspapers, of course, are prepared in far greater haste than books. The public are often sarcastic at newspapers' expense, but such critics have little or no idea of the conditions under which papers are produced. Late news items or articles have to be written, set, and corrected in a hurry; as the time for going to press approaches minutes and even seconds count. The wonder is not that there are so many mistakes, but that there are so few. The linotype, however, while it has made modern newspapers possible, has one serious defect. The smallest correction involves the resetting of the whole line, and in this process a worse mistake may be made. Naturally the new line is examined, but in a last-minute rush a new error may be overlooked. An editor under whom I served justifiably prided himself on his literary leaders on Saturdays. One week he opened his editorial with Danton's (I hope it really was Danton's) famous motto, 'De l'audace, de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace!'

When the proof came down he put in a comma. In the morning, readers of the paper were greeted with 'De p'audace, de f'audace . . . . ' The editor told us that when he saw it he felt sick, and we believed him. In reporting a literary lecture I wrote the name of Maeterlinck, and when I read the report in the paper that evening I found that the lecturer had referred to the writings of one 'Walter Hunch.' If you don't believe this story, I reply that you don't know how bad some journalists' handwriting can be. Try writing 'Maeterlinck' quickly in a sprawling hand and see what you get. Then you may feel sorrier for compositors and proof-readers. But a writer who sees his meaning so mutilated does feel his stomach turn over.

The humour of unintentional mistakes in print is extensive. The author of *Breaks*, an entertaining little volume published in England a few years ago, says that one of the first printed 'breaks' occurred in a Bible published in Charles I's time; someone left the word 'not' out of the seventh commandment. 'Breaks' may be divided roughly into misprints and innocently written expressions. '"I love you, too," she cried, and swaying towards him threw herself into his arms. His lips found and clung to her sweet tremendous mouth.' 'Mrs Thurston Gaylord and daughters are planning to tour. . . . They are taking a tent and cooking utensils and will vamp by the side of the road.' 'If your skin is not liable to be sensitive, rub the arms gently with pumice stone.



'MR MADDER BROWN'

This will take them right off.' 'Mrs David Miller has a new baby boy at her house. Dave is just as happy as if it was his.' Of misprints with a literary flavour, the best of all is the one quoted by Sir John Squire—'Mrs . . . will lecture on "William Butler Meats and the Garlic Revival."' Sir John remarks that a twist like this may make some sort of sense. Years ago he himself corrected printers' references to 'Mr Hotairio Bottomley' and 'Mr Edmund Goose.' To those who remember that amazing demagogue, 'Hotairio' is delightful.

Sometimes when an author has been working at a book for a long while he becomes stale and tired, hates the whole thing temporarily, and begins to doubt his judgment in even simple matters. Exhausted, he reads his last proof, hopes for the best, and fears the worst. In that fine story *The Bridge Builders*, Kipling describes how the engineer responsible for a great new Ganges bridge sat and watched the river rise. If the bridge carried away, his career would be ruined. 'He went over it in his head, plate by plate, span by span, brick by brick, pier by pier, remembering, comparing, estimating, and recalculating, lest there should be any mistake; and through the long hours and through the flights of formulae that danced and wheeled before him a cold fear would come to pinch his heart.' An author may feel like that while he waits for his book. He lies awake and goes over his facts. Did he check so-and-so? Is that quotation right? He thinks of obvious

blunders like that made by Mr Thomas, blunders that would wreck his reputation. If he is the width of the world away from his printers and has not seen proofs, his condition is worse. When he opens his precious book he is in a state of mingled ecstasy and terror.

It is highly probable, however, that he has been very well served by his publisher. Compared with the accuracies in books the inaccuracies—misprints and other mistakes—are extremely few. One might read regularly for a year and not notice one. Those that are noticed leap to the eye and are news, like disasters, crimes, and divorces. We should be impressed by the vast volume of print issued every year in which abstruse subjects are accurately dealt with, often in the most minute detail. Think of the labour involved in securing accurate presentation of the author's ideas in a large and erudite history, crammed with facts and citations.

The proof-reader, or the corrector of the press, as they call him in England, is an important person. On a newspaper or in a publisher's house his is an honourable and arduous calling. The proof-reader's attention must never relax. His primary duty is to compare the type with the manuscript; his larger duty is to note errors of every kind. He may question fact or style. Some publishing houses offer a generous service in this respect. They will verify your references and cast a friendly eye over your English. Out of the breadth of their knowledge

proof-readers may do authors many a good turn. It was bad luck for Mr Thomas that a proof-reader did not pause and say: 'Now I don't believe that 's right. I 've followed New Zealand finance—I 've a brother out there: I 'll query that.' Numbers of such mistakes are caught by readers in newspaper and publishing offices. The best 'breaks' never reach the public. Yet scant justice has been done to the proof-reader. In the many stories of journalism and authorship I have read I can recall few references to his necessary craft. Perhaps some of you remember the once popular *Queed*, by an American writer named Harrison. It contains an excellent scene where an ignorant and conceited young writer attacks a proof-reader and gets what he deserves.

The lot of the printer and his staff is in one very important respect much better than it used to be. Looking at facsimiles of Shakespeare's signature, have you ever considered what a task setting up his MSS. may have been? The printer has always grumbled about the state of copy given to him, and with much reason. A generation after Shakespeare a scholar-corrector referred to 'the meddlesome fool who is troubled with the itch of writing, a raw uncultured blunderer, amasses quantities of copy, seldom puts in punctuation, disfigures his manuscript with erasures, and makes the paper filthy. . . . Then when the critics cry out that his work is blankly uninspired, Meddler shows his teeth and catches at any means of defence: he snaps at the corrector and

accuses him.' Certainly printers, in Wellington's phrase, have been 'much exposed to authors.'

Now most manuscripts are typewritten, and on the mechanical side the printer's and corrector's tasks are much easier. There is still, however, the need for unceasing vigilance, which in printing and authorship, as in other walks of life, is the price of safety.

THE YOUNG RECITER

EVERY man is expected to think of his sins, but in moments of reflection, such as, for example, periods of wakefulness at the dead of night, memory recalls to him other things besides his sins—blunders and follies, wrong values and extravagances, excursions into emotion which could not be excused by the enthusiasm behind the act. One such memory with me is that I used to recite. Recollection of some of the agony I used to inflict upon others sweeps over me now and then in moments of quiet like a tide, and positively I sweat. I have a dim recollection of being put up at the dinner table when I was about six to recite Macaulay's *Lays*, and—well, the only thing I can do about it now is to ask the forgiveness of those of the stricken company who survive. Later on I was guilty of the same crime, and with no excuse this time, for I was a free agent. But I have had my punishment. For every recitation I have given in public or private I have had to listen to a score, and in so listening I have suffered indescribable torments. I have sat in a small drawing-room and listened to a most well-meaning young man recite a version of the *Sign of the Cross* story; my eyes were glued to a flower in the carpet, and I prayed that the earth might open and swallow up all of us. Yet sharp though it is,

such is not the ultimate agony. That comes when you have, in such a situation, an irresistible desire to laugh. To be invited out to a musical evening, and while you are listening to your hostess' daughter reciting a very serious piece of the old sentimental order, to be seized with laughter—there can be no social ordeal so dreadful.

Like the distinguished humorist whose book has led me to this subject, *The Young Reciter and Model Music Hall* by F. Anstey, I am not condemning all recitations. Mr Anstey generously acknowledges his debt of gratitude to 'such Masters in the Art as the late Clifford Harrison and others.' I am not sure whether Clifford Harrison ever visited New Zealand, but many of my readers will, like myself, have happy memories of delightful evenings with Charles Clarke, Mel. B. Spurr, and Leslie Harris. And Anstey reminds us—though in a passage coloured by irony—that recitation has noble chapters in its history. After defeating the Athenians in the greatest disaster in Athens' history, the Syracusans spared the prisoners who could recite Greek poetry, and you may read in Browning how a Greek girl from Rhodes spoke the whole of Euripides' *Alcestis* to the assembled city. Good prose and poetry well spoken is beautiful. But a large part of the art of recitation as practised, especially by amateurs, I protest to be a fraud and infliction, and I feel sure that by a considerable section of the public it is not enjoyed but only endured. Among my friends I know no one who

would not pay to be let off listening to the average concert or drawing-room item. Think of the infinitely large army of boys who have laid the *Lays* heavily upon thickly upholstered audiences, or *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, or Patrick Henry's *Give me Liberty or Give me Death*! Think of all the girls who have declared that curfew shall not ring to-night! Think of all the men who have beaten the favourite and made us weep for Lasca, or made the rafters ring with the virtues of *Gunga Din*! The spectacle of so much suffering is unmanning.

Yet, so it would appear, this generation is more fortunate than its fathers and grandfathers. No doubt because forms of entertainment have multiplied, there is less recitation. Musical evenings of the old kind are not so common, and musical evenings were seed-beds of recitation. Concerts with mixed programmes have been wellnigh driven out, and, I gather, the quality of recitations has improved. Anstey's book was issued originally in 1888 and 1890, when late Victorianism positively wallowed in sentiment. Indeed, it may be difficult to realize, in reading these extremely clever satires in forms of recitation then popular, that anything resembling such stuff could have gone down—until one reminds oneself that sentimentalism, though it assumes various forms, is immortal. Anstey's attack, which caused quite a stir in its day, and had a salutary effect, may seem like a strange animal to the younger generation, but in older people it will awake memories. It will

recall, for one thing, those old books of recitations in which a large variety of items was provided for the ambitious criminal. Here, in this welcome reprint, are burlesqued the clotted pathos, the flimsy dramatics, the reeking sentimental scent, of so many of the period's recitations. Burglar Bill, meaning to crack a wealthy crib while the family are dining, encounters a beauteous child in an upper story, and, instead of operating on the safe, opens for her the obstinate door of her doll's house, having first sunk upon the door mat 'with a deep and choking sob.' But of course one must read not only Anstey's verses, but his elaborate stage directions, in order to appreciate fully the force of the fun. Then there is *Juniper Jem*, an essay in the *Sporting Sensational*.

Yes (*aggressively, as if somebody had just implied that it wasn't*), 'steeplechasing is stirring sport—and the most exciting events of all——

Are at Purlingham Park, where the field is large, and the ditches deep, and the fences tall,

And I for one shall never forget—till my brain is blurred and my eyes are dim—(*Pass hand over brow and blink, with just a suggestion of pathos.*)

The day that Dot and Go One was steered by an infant hero—(*with a burst of candour*)—Juniper Jem!

From this we pass to the *Melodramatic Weird*, which begins:

The night-owl shrieked: a gibbous moon peered pallid o'er the yew;
The clammy tombstones each distilled a dank unwholesome dew.

And to the *Marine Emotional*, the *Bucolic Buttonholing*, and the *Naïvely Heart-Rending*, the last a piece which, with the aid of a piano accompaniment, is 'capable of rendering a drawing-room audience more acutely uncomfortable than any five ordinary recitations could possibly do.' Let us be thankful, O my brothers, that these things are not popular to-day, or at least are not so popular as they were. You may loathe the 'movies,' but they have helped to decimate the reciter.

It is an easy step from this to the music-hall burlesques that form the second part of this volume. That peculiar British institution has also been affected by changes in our amusement. Programmes in first-class London and provincial music-halls became very good—everything was the best of its kind—and there was in the Cockney humour of the halls, in general, redolent though it might have been of gin and onions and landladies and lodgers, something racily native of the soil. But how abysmally dull is the mass of old music-hall humour and sentiment read in the glamourless daylight of after years. Think of *Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay*. Think of the 'Great Vance,' who was the rage of the town, with his

> Slap bang, here we are again!
> Slap bang, here we are again!
> A jolly lot are we!

It is all as flat as yesterday's soda water. Can there ever have been anything more fatuous than the endless songs and jokes about 'mashers'? And do

you remember the buxom short-skirted 'young thing' who danced up and down the front of the stage and sang humorous or sentimental songs?

> I 'm a dynety little dysy of the dingle,
> So retiring and so timid and so coy,
> If you ask me why so long I have lived single
> I will tell you—'tis because I am so shoy.

This is Anstey's version of a type of item once popular.

Then there is *The Military Impersonator*, a truly wonderful burlesque of one of the worst inflictions that the vaudeville stage ever produced—all the shoddiness, all the vulgarity and flashiness, all the jingoism, served up with ridicule. I can see him clearly, as if it were yesterday, marching round the stage during the chorus and saluting the cymbalist in the orchestra as he closes the verse with a crash; then shouting that he is ordered to the front and drawing his sword and striking an attitude amid smoke and fire. What a footnote to social history is this book!

'We are not amused,' says the younger generation. 'If Victorianism was really like this it confirms our worst opinions.'

'Perhaps,' I reply from my arm-chair. 'So go off to your Hollywood version of life punctuated with jazz. Go and croon to your syncopating "honeys." I hope you will enjoy yourself. But if you have a minute to reflect, just consider what your grandchildren may think of the popular humour and sentiment of to-day.'

THE TROOPING SEASON

In the last month of the New Zealand summer the trooping season begins, but not with the tramp of service boots and the jingle of accoutrements. The trooper on the tide awaits a crowd of passengers bound for England, home, and beauty. Some are mature men going on business; some may be Englishmen or Scotsmen or Welshmen or Irishmen returning more or less disappointed to their native land; some are young men and women setting out to seek their fortunes in the Commonwealth's centre; but most are travelling for pleasure. They are 'going Home,' the home that is at the other end of the world from their own home. Custom, compounded of several factors, decrees that they shall leave in February or March or early in April. A January departure means arrival in February and that month in England is known to be unpleasant. The idea is to get there in the spring—the early spring by preference, so that one

may see the season unfold from the beginning in that miracle of birth which is not equalled in a country of lower latitudes and evergreen native flora. The New Zealander has been brought up on the English spring—'Now that April 's there,' and so on—and, as he reads English books, he is frequently transforming the seasons in his mind, like a man changing one currency into another. So the proper thing is to arrive in England in the spring and see its glories. Then comes the English summer, when you can go about comfortably and see things, and the Season is on in London. There 's the Derby and the Trooping of the Colour, and (for some) the Courts and garden parties at Buckingham Palace. In the autumn the traveller turns his face homewards, partly to avoid the English winter, and partly because his money has run out.

It would be interesting to take a shipload of people setting out some day early in March, note all their impressions of the Old Country as months pass, and follow up the effects on their after lives. Here are a couple of teachers who have saved up for their trip for years. It is doubtful if any of their fellow-passengers will get more pleasure than these two, or, possibly, more profit. They will do all sights and with knowledge; they won't need a guide to tell them the story of *Kenilworth* or to point out the associations of Tintagel. Possibly they will take a refresher course at Oxford, and the lecturers won't have any hearers more attentive. Here is a young university

student bound for Oxford or Cambridge or London. Much of the best talent of the country is leaving and perhaps for good. He may have a scholarship, but even a scholarship may not go far. He may have borrowed the money for the great adventure. Travellers with equal care for shillings and pence are one or two adventurers in the world of art and literature. They have a few pounds in their pockets, perhaps an introduction or two, and the courage and hope of youth. There are examples of great success to spur these young people on. Rutherford, Katherine Mansfield, and David Low are the three world figures New Zealand has produced, but there are many others whose careers are an example and an encouragement: Richard Maclaurin who started on a Waikato farm and became head of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (his biography has just appeared in America); Harold Williams, the 'Cheerful Giver' who made his mark as an authority on Russia and finally was foreign editor of *The Times*; G. J. Comrie, editor of the *Nautical Almanac*; Sir Harold Gillies, famous as a facial surgeon; Marie Ney, an ornament of the English stage; Ronald Syme, who carried off Greek and Latin prizes at Oxford and is now a don at Trinity; Dr Peter Buck, in whom runs the blood of Maori and European, now the Director of the Bishop Museum in Honolulu. They are to be found in every field. Some of these adventurers on board may run close to starvation, but the chances are for success. They lack much

of the cultural background of English youth, but they have a background of their own, and it is going to stand them in good stead in England. They have enterprise and initiative, and are unhampered by traditions of social distinctions or division of labour. They have been accustomed to doing for themselves, if necessary, whatever is the need of the moment. A New Zealand private soldier returned from the World War with autographs of every leader on the Allied side from Foch downwards. He got them apparently by the simple process of barging in politely. Perhaps, however, there are not many New Zealanders whose enterprise would take such an extreme form and it may be that the distinguished victims reflected how far this one had come.

The rest of the company is composed of all sorts and conditions. There are the rich, some of them a little blasé with much travel. About one or two of these it might be discovered that their grandparents were 'working' folk who came out to New Zealand in sailing ships, and bore uncomplainingly the hardship and monotony of a four months' voyage. Their descendants to-day may be critical of the liner's meals and cabins and reticent about the status of their grandparents. There are other travellers whose minds are still sensitive to impressions. To them the voyage is a dream come true; everything about the ship and the sea and the ports at which she calls is a delight. Perhaps when they wake at night and feel the creak, creak, creak of the ship as she moves

easily in the long swell, or in the early morning watch through the open port an incredibly blue sea come to glorious life under a tropic sun, they ask themselves if it can be really true. Ahead is the adventure of what they have learned to call 'Home' (and not all the Bernard Shaws will cure them of the habit), the land of their fathers, of which they have read and heard as long as they can remember, the spring and rallying place of the race.

What do these people see and how do they react? How many really get to know England? Most of these travellers do the round of sights—the Abbey, the Tower, Madame Tussaud's, the Albert Hall and the Caledonian Market, the picture galleries, Richmond and Lord's and Hampton Court; and in the provinces Stratford-on-Avon, Oxford, Clovelly and Dartmoor, Stonehenge, Canterbury, and Bath. It 's a rush; they can't help it. They have only a few months; they want to see all they can and there is no time to 'stand and stare.' Perhaps they see no more of England than an Englishman does of New Zealand who moves quickly along well-worn roads from the Waitomo Caves to the Te-Anau—Milford Walk. On such routes everything is made ready for the traveller; everybody has a set routine and is on his best behaviour. What should they know of England, or of New Zealand, who only guide-books know? Even if the wish is there, the time and the means may be lacking to explore off the beaten track—in England to see the slums and distressed areas, to roam about

the country without a fixed time-table, looking at things leisurely and closely, talking to strangers, or in New Zealand to visit farms or stay in suburban homes where the women often do all their own work.

Much of value is taken back by these schedule-keeping visitors, visions of beauty and ugliness, strength and weakness, but it is largely a surface view that they get. The conditions of the tour are against depth, and so is the equipment of some of the tourists. An understanding of every country, young or old, requires sympathetic knowledge of its history. You can't understand the present-day New Zealand without knowing something about relations with the Maoris and the establishment and growth of the special settlements. How much more is a study of origin and developments necessary for the appreciation of the riches England offers to kinsmen and strangers alike! It is a question, what is the best age for introduction to the Motherland. It is possible to go too young, but if too many years pass, the capacity for wonder, which alone is eternal youth, may have died down. On the other hand, maturity should bring the knowledge and judgment that lead to true understanding. Then one can people quiet countryside and roaring street with their past, see pageants in a mound and the stairs of heaven in a green sward. There are colonials who return and talk of little else but shopping and meals, just as there are travellers from older lands who bring back from storied cities

nothing much but grumbles about accommodation and language difficulties.

These visitors will find in England universal politeness and a kindly interest in a younger member of the family, but they will discover that this interest generally does not go very deep. And it goes at times with a still more disconcerting ignorance. The shock is good for the colonial; it gives him a truer sense of proportion about his own land. The people he meets are at the centre of things, watching the anguished drama of a world in every corner of which their country's interests are involved. If they think that Auckland is a suburb of Sydney, or that the All-Blacks are black-skinned, well, didn't a titled Englishwoman ask the American ambassador during the War what was the name of his President? And more recently when the Lord Chancellor was speaking at a luncheon in London, didn't an English M.P. inquire of an Indian visitor who the speaker was? The absence of mind in which the English are said to have acquired their Empire has been extended to its maintenance. However, there will be compensations. The colonial may meet men and women who know his country better then he does himself. Even abroad, where the colonial finds himself immeasurably more a stranger in a strange land, he may light upon such surprises. In a little shop in Rome a New Zealander happened to mention where she came from. The shopkeeper's response was astonishing. 'But why do you come so far when you have a country

of your own that is so lovely?' He had lived for a time in Wellington.

The visitor fits into the life in England fairly easily, but finds many things strange and some of them extremely depressing. Life, on the whole, is much more formal. You need introductions, you don't 'butt in.' Hospitality is warm, but more carefully ordered. One is much more conscious of divisions; the whole population seems to be drafted into pens. Overseas your neighbour is naturally an object of keen interest, and the two of you click easily. Here he may be as remote as the Alake of Abeokuta. The lengths of gardenless streets and unseparated houses are a shock, and perhaps the almost equally startling stretches of countryside intensify the contrast. Tipping he dislikes, and probably next to inevitable bother with luggage this puts the most serious damper on his holiday. Many an oversea visitor, staying in a country house for the first time, must suffer an agony of embarrassment. What the dickens does one give to all these servants? Nor has he ever before paid for a seat in a park. He dislikes, too, the custom of charging separately for butter and other 'trimmings' of meals; he is used, for the most part, to restaurants where they are thrown in generously. On the other hand, it is a pleasant surprise to find that he can get a drink or a cup of tea between the acts in a theatre. The deeper grounds of criticism are generally explored by the colonial who stays in England. He has time to give

more than a glance at slums, and study the nice and rigid gradations of the caste system. He meets, perhaps, some of the types of those who are willing to take everything from life and give little or nothing in return. His native land can produce its own specimens of these, but in England they live in walled gardens of special design. There are women who have never so much as made a cup of tea for themselves, and present to all argument for change a blank wall of inherited opinion. 'I cannot mix with my clerks,' writes a New Zealander in England, 'although they are just as good as I am.' In time the colonial comes to realize that the said clerks are happy on their side of the social barriers, and learns to be philosophical. Or he may grow into an uncompromising radical-socialist, who refuses to believe that acquiescence is the same as happiness.

It would be interesting to know how many colonials have been turned by their English experiences into hot-gospellers of socialism. Certain it is that many a letter is sent back raging against poverty and the indifference with which poverty seems to be regarded in some circles. If the colonial driving through the English countryside at its best murmurs to himself: 'Who would not die for such a land?' it is as likely that in exploring parts of the East End or the midlands he asks: 'Who would die for such mean streets?' Then there are examples of that frame of mind which has become almost proverbial overseas—'it was good enough for my father and it 's

good enough for me.' A New Zealand sheep-farmer pointed out to an English farmer an obvious way in which he could increase the return from his flock. The reply was that the farm had always been worked in that way and there was no need for change. The pace of English life is apt to seem slow; it is more polished, formal, and deliberative. What the visitor does not always see is the strong steady flow underneath the surface.

If, however, residence in England lays bare defects, it also reveals virtues. It is a commonplace that a nation should not be judged on early or fleeting impressions. How much of France does the Englishman know who runs over to Paris? But the truth of this commonplace is not widely realized. Colonials, especially the stay-at-homes, are apt to judge England by London, forgetting the country's vigorous and varied provincial life. How many visitors take the trouble to sound the depths of Lancashire's wealth and character? As years pass, the feelings of the critical colonial may soften. The blots remain but the light becomes brighter. He comes to understand better the baffling inconsistencies, paradoxes, and contrasts that make up England and the English. He realizes that the richest treasure of England is not in the comfortable landscape of the shires, or her wealth of pageantry or commerce, but her genius for government, the slowness to anger of her people, their steady patience and good humour, their kindliness, their love of freedom, their toleration, and their laughter.

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