in the treasure hunt. Private owners are in two groups, those who have collected their letters and those who have inherited them. Frequently the latter do not know what they have, and if they live in large country houses, which many of them do, they may not know where what

they may have may be.

The first replies I had to my initial advertisement were not encouraging. Then from the west of England came a reply which I could hardly believe was true, for the writer of it had the longlost letters from Walpole to Lady Ossory, the longest but one of all his correspondences which have survived and in some ways the most brilliant.

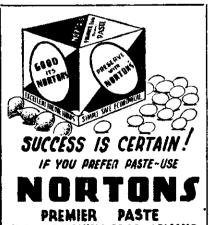
The last report of the letters to Lady Ossory was that they had been destroyed. by a madman in Ireland, but here they were in Somerset, all 400 of them, with 50 additional, unpublished letters discovered in the next year rolled up in a bit of carpet in one of the attics.

The letters from Lady Ossory to Walpole are still missing. On his death they were returned to her and passed from her to the heir of her first marriage, the fourth Duke of Grafton. Since then they have sunk without a trace.

This woman's portrait by Gains-borough hangs in the National Gallery of Gains-Victoria. It is just possible that her letters are also in Australia. Perhaps they are lying in some box in Launceston or Darwin or Fremantle, awaiting their appointed moment to reappear upon the stage. It would be indeed remarkable if there were not letters to and from Walpole in Australia, other than the one in

## "ILL-FAVOURED SYNONYM"

EVEN amid national crises, The Times does not leave the ramparts of the King's English unmanned. Recently The Times fired away at the word personnel, "this alien collective" from across the Channel. It doubted that "a more degrading, a more ill-favoured synonym for two or more members of the human race has . . . been coined.' People to whom it is applied, said The Times, "do not go, they proceed. They do not have, they are (or, more often are not) in possession of. They do not ask, they make application for. . . . They cannot eat, they only consume; they perform ablutions; instead of homes they have places of residence in which, instead of living, they are domiciled. They are not cattle, they are not ciphers, they certainly are not human beings; they are personnel.



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