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SOME POPULAR TITLES

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF J. S. BACH, Van Loon, 9/3 posted. A life of Bach for the person who wants common sense, sympathy, and a lively sense of personality, showing why Bach wrote the sort of music he did.

A BANNED BROADCAST AND OTHER ESSAYS, J. B. S. Haldane, 16/3 posted. 56 Essays by Britain's best known scientist, touching on diverse subjects and marked by the author's clear reasoning and stimulating outlook.

FOR THE REST OF OUR LIVES, Don Davin, 13/- posted. A finely-written novel of the 2nd Division by an outstanding N.Z. writer in England, evoking a real background to their epic story.

TOYS: THEIR DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION, J. Kay and C. T. White, 14/6 posted. Illustrated with many photographs and designs, this is a comprehensive description of the art of toymaking in the home and in the workshop.

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MODERN BOOKS

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"FRONT DOOR, PLEASE"

(Written for "The Listener" by GODFREY VILLIERS)

IT all began like this. My wife lost our one and only backdoor key while she was shopping in the city last week. When she told me of her loss, and that the door was locked, I was not at all dismayed. "I'll soon get another," I said. "I'll take the lock off, and get another key made in town." It didn't enter my head that the matter was really urgent, and that my wife would have to tramp backwards and forwards through the hall and front door with washing, vegetable scraps, tea leaves, ashes, and so forth until the back door could be opened again.

Early next morning (it was a Saturday, thank goodness, or I would have lost a day's pay) I began to work on the back door. The screws of the keyhole covers came out quite easily, even when turned by the special handyman's screwdriver I had bought at a department store. Then I pulled out the inside door handle. There was no doubt from the sound of something landing on the back porch that the outside portion was also out.

"Now," I said to myself, "I'll get to work on the lock." Pushing and probing, I stuck to the job with almost as much tenacity as the Commissioner of Taxes has shown sticking to me. But in the end I had to give up the battle. I just couldn't extract that lock.

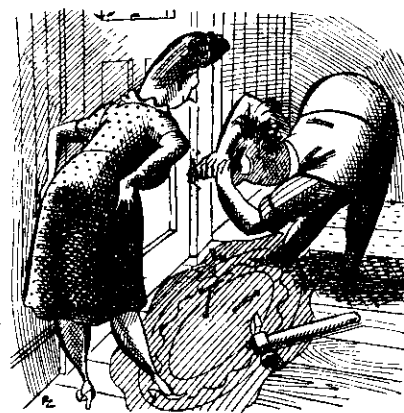
"It's time for a little thought," I decided. At last the whole dark mystery was revealed. The lock was a built-in one and the only way to get it out was to lift off the door itself.

But dare I proceed? I'd better be on the safe side, I concluded. So I spent a blissful 10 minutes searching through "The Tenant Shall Not" clauses of "Conditions of Tenancy under the Housing Act, 1919, and Amendments." They didn't say I couldn't take the door off, but they were very thorough with their bans against "keeping boarders," "driving nails," "allowing pictures to be hung otherwise than on picture brads provided by the tenant," and "keeping on the premises any rabbits, fowls, pigeons, or other livestock."

BUT to get back to the troublesome lock. I knocked out the three hinge pins with a nail and a hammer, and called to my wife to catch the door and stop the glass from breaking while I gave it a push from the outside. The hinges refused to budge and the door didn't move an inch. "Ah, my fine fellows, you just wait and see." I was getting annoyed with the hinges by this time. "This screwdriver will knock the stubbornness out of you." I pushed the "tempered steel" between the door and the hinges in order to lever the hinges back, and then applied a little pressure.

Only a quarter of an inch of the screwdriver was carried away, so there was no harm in my trying again. Another quarter of an inch of the screwdriver disappeared. But nothing had happened to those hinges. What was I to do but replace the pins, the door handles, the keyhole covers—and then think out another method of opening that door?

"See the overseer about a spare key this morning, dearest," I urged my wife as I dashed out of the house on Monday morning to catch the train for town. My wife did as I had suggested. "Go to the State Advances Corporation," he had told her. "They should be able to help you."



"I was getting annoyed by this time"

I WENT to the State Advances Corporation on Tuesday morning. The office girl was very helpful. "Go to Housing Construction. We haven't any spare keys here," she told me. "But where is Housing Construction?" I asked her. She thought for a moment. "Oh, there's a part of it in Bulldog Street and another part in the Bureaucratic Buildings."

I stepped out into the windy street and made my way to the nearer of the two offices mentioned by the helpful girl. A little search brought me to the right inquiry window. Again I told my tale. "Oh, you want the architects," the girl answered. "First turn to the left, then through the door and up the stairs." At last I was getting somewhere. A very efficient girl, that one.

First turn left, then through the door, and up the stairs I climbed. I felt rather pleased now that I had tracked down the men responsible for those built-in doors. When I had said my piece, one of the architects (a nice fellow) led me to the office door.

"Now what you do," he said, "is to take out the pins. So." And out came the pins. "Then," he went on, "you give the door a hefty push from the outside, and out it comes. So." And out that door did come; though fortunately for the architect's peace of mind, and for his pocket, too, there were several hands outstretched to stop it from crashing to the floor.

"But" (and I stressed the word "but"), "the difference between your door and mine is that yours wasn't closed when you took it out. You see, the protruding parts of the hinges prevent a locked door from being pushed out." He saw my point, and took counsel with his fellows.

"What kind of a lock is it?" one of them asked.

"It's a Shut-tite," another volunteered.

"Well, that's a pity," said the man who asked the question. "You see, the first 10,000 Shut-tite locks are different!"

My face fell. In fact, I was dismayed.

BUT the architect who had removed the door had further ideas. "You know you could get a locksmith out from (continued on next page)"