

## ★ WE WOULD BE PRIVATE

*In which a solitary sportsman makes a plea to solitary sportsmen to stop saying solitary sportsmen are the best sportsmen in case they attract so many more sportsmen to be solitary sportsmen that there won't be any sportsmen left and no solitude and no solitary sportsmen. With apologies to Peter Cheyney.*

**T**HERE'S been so much lip shot in this rag recently and of late about the sports racket that there is going to be general Sorrow and Lamentation before long if some guy with his eyes peeled doesn't say his piece quick and lively. Otherwise the Solitary Sportsmen who have been vocalising in these pages are going to find themselves in a Large Mess—to the extent, at least, that they won't be Solitary Sportsmen Any More.

Now take me. I'm a Solitary Sportsman though I'm not claiming to speak for Solitary Sportsmen in general. The real dyed-in-the-wool S.S. don't speak (or shout) for anyone but himself. Howsomever, consider for a moment what might happen if these hams who have been poking borax in the pants of the Great Unwashed manage to get their message over. Picture for yourselves three hundred thousand horse-players, wrassle-fans, bar-flies and other rodents dithering over *The Listener* sports page as if it were a

preview of next year's Melbourne Cup placings and what have you? If two and two still add up to a four-spot, you have three hundred thousand, etc., burning the tarmac in search of Solitude in capital letters. You have the R. and J.C.'s and the football unions and the fight-fest boys and the pool-room big-shots and the slate-club secretaries and you may also have the National Council of Women, the Mothers' League, and the Health and Beauty honeys all folding up their tents like the scarabs and folding up the securities market in the process. And you will have the football grounds growing spuds and the race tracks growing spuds, and the Town Halls as busy as the Parsee Towers of Silence because Pouli-spantsoff, the Peril of Petrograd, has taken a single ticket back home to Brooklyn and the other mat merchants have skinned off somewhere where Every Prospect Pleases and Solitude is kept in its proper place.

### Murphies in the Football Grounds

And if that was all it wouldn't be half bad, because, me, I will not get burned up if there are no mat-shows any more



"... Just like at Lyall Bay or Coney Island."

and in my personal opinion guys who make a great besezus about playing horses are very small potatoes and even negligible when you come to think of it and as for the Mothers' League and the Healthy Honeys they will be better employed chewing the fat with their ever-loving husbands instead of interfering with Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. And if they do start growing murphies in the football grounds you will not find me tying crape on the front-door knocker on account of the All Black-out because I am not a football scribe, and the thought of watching sixteen deadpans issuing out mudpacks to one another is not up my alley.

But me, I am not a deadpan like these bohunks, and as I am not a solid block of genuine elephant's molar from the neck up I perceive that if all these gaze-bos decide to crease themselves up the Income Tax Department is going to appear like the Evacuation of Dunkirk, only more so, and the Commissioner of Taxes is going to be seen perusing around the placement offices with a kisser as long as the lecture you got from your mother-in-law the time you handed your ever-loving wife that first razberry. But when I say that the Income Tax Department is going to fold up don't get too far ahead of yourselves ordering chocolate sodas all round, because before you can say "Name yours" there's going to be another Taxation Department and a flock of new taxes that'll make the original Hosts of Midian look like the stage army in the last act of "Macbeth" by W. Shakespeare, and you'll find it cheaper toting a string of glamour girls on Broadway.

### "The Beautiful Lonely Beach"

And that won't be all the flies in the saucepan. The punk-artist who was doing a big spiel a time back about turning cartwheels on the Beautiful Lonely Beach, beside the Sad Sea Waves, is going to find it difficult and perchance impossible to turn the change in his trouser pockets on said beach without getting a dot in the midriff or brisket from innumerable other heels busy following his blue-pencil advice, while the

toute ensemble is going to look like the annual outing of the Ancient and Antediluvian Order of Whirling Dervishes (Inc.).

But, as the travelling salesman said to Fanny, the Farmer's Daughter, you ain't seen nothin' yet. The Old Swimming Hole just won't be any more. It's going to be as solitary as the stage-door at a charity-show on Sunset Boulevard or Hutt Valley on a summer afternoon when it isn't raining and there's no wind and you won't be able to see the Long Green Grass that used to be for a phalanx of pink cadavers and there'll be spring-boards and tiles and cubicles and ice-cream sundaes and a band and instead of the whiff of stinkweed you remember there'll be a gust of sunburn oil and hamburgers and orange-peel and sweat from a million pores, just like at Lyall Bay or Coney Island or anywhere else where Solitude ain't and nothing at all like the Old Swimming Hole.

### The Old Fishing Hole

And what about the Old Fishing Hole? And boy, that gets me just where I live. There'll be a ring of guys round it so tight that you can't slip a safety-razor blade between them, and there'll be more of 'em on a raft in the middle all wanting to be Solitary and all gettin' steamed up because they're not getting what they want, and then somebody is going to bust someone else over the head with an empty because someone thinks someone else has swiped his bait-can and in two cracks of a coon's bones there is going to be a lot of general unpleasantness.

And everywhere that used to be Solitary is going to be the same, only more so; there won't be a blackberry left on the West Coast, and the tough guys from Haining Street and Freeman's Bay will be chivvying the chamois from precipice to precipice and back again, and if you have a yen for climbing the mountains it will be banana-skins and not ice you'll be slipping on.

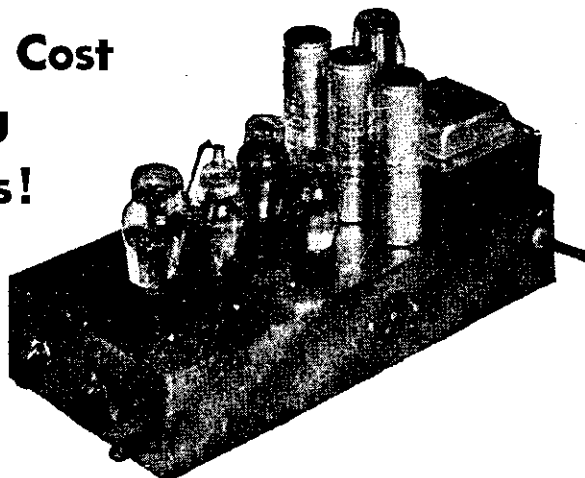
That's the toil and trouble, chaps and fellas, that you are going to hit if you talk big about Solitude and the Beauties of Nature and try to lead the spiritual Izzies out from their spiritual flesh-pots, and is it worth it? Well, I ask you!

—IRIDEUS

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