



"... The right of demanding to be hanged by a silken rope"

IF you were a debt collector and had a summons to serve on a Marquis, how would you make it out, giving due consideration to all of his titles and distinctions? And if you were giving a crayfish party on the occasion of your second son's twenty-first birthday, and a mixed bag of noblemen and diplomats turned up, who would take precedence at table, the younger son of a Viscount or the secretary of the Chilean Legation?

These are knotty problems, calculated to tax the ingenuity of the wildest debt collector and the most careful host, and

MARQUIS, DUKE, AND A' THAT

—2YA Does Some Research—

although diplomats and noblemen are regrettably scarce in this country, it is pleasant to think that anything can happen in these days of air travel. It is therefore all to the good that 2YA is launching a series of talks (the first scheduled for Sunday, September 28, at three in the afternoon) which should clear up any difficulties in the use of distinctions and titles.

Titles and Distinctions is actually the title of the series, with a sub-title *Who's Who and What's What*. Titles of nobility are not the only subject dealt with, later talks concerning themselves with awards of merit, university degrees and medals awarded for active service.

The talks take the form of a lively dialogue between two gentlemen, one an inquisitive dullard who hardly knows whether an Earl ranks above or below a Baron, and the other a gentleman whose name should be Burke and who is a mine of information concerning the English aristocracy.

Those Worthy Gentlemen—

Apparently noblemen are not at all well regulated or ordered, and all sorts of anomalies and oddities keep creeping in, a statement which is not to be taken as a reflection on those worthy gentle-

men who give large sums of money to certain objects and suddenly find themselves in the House of Lords. It is a fact, however, that not every Lord has the right to sit in the House of Lords; that not every Bishop is strictly entitled to be addressed as "My Lord"; that a man with a title can sit in the House of Commons provided he is not a Peer; that the Archbishop of Canterbury is Primate of All England, while the Archbishop of York is Primate of England; and that General Fitz-So-and-So may be respectably and legally married and yet his wife would continue to be known as Lady Someone-else if she were a Peeress in her own right, which might conceivably cause a good deal of embarrassment to everybody concerned.

Peers have been heard to claim that in view of the present rate of income tax it is hardly in order to describe them as members of a privileged class, but there is one privilege which is probably guarded jealously. If (by any unlikely chance) he is sentenced to death, a Peer has the right of demanding to be hanged by a silken rope.

Other Nice Points

In the more prosaic department of university degrees and military medals, there are many other nice points of privi-



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lege and precedence. Why, for instance, should a graduate be prouder of a B.A. (Oxon.) than of an M.A. anywhere else? This may recall the story about the young New Zealand lawyer who studied hard and made great sacrifices and finally won his LL.M. and set up in practice in a country town. Proudly he had LL.M. inscribed on his name plate, but clients were slow in arriving. Eventually he discovered why. "You go back to University and get your LL.B. like the other lawyer over the road, and you'll do a lot better young man," a farmer told him one day.

"FANCY YOUR KNOWING UNCLE HENRY!"

Written for "The Listener" by K.S.

ONCE I have met someone I really like, I find it is always best to get on to a Christian name basis right away. If I let it go until next time, a precedent has been established of saying "Mr. McGillicuddy," and it's the hardest thing in the world to change it and start saying "Mac" without embarrassment.

If the newcomer into my life is at all a decent sort of chap, and one that I am going to see a lot of, either through business necessity, or because I like him, there and then, without delay, I ask him his Christian name and say: "Righto, I'll call you Malcolm and you call me Bill." If I tell him my name at the same time he feels he is being taken into my confidence, and no matter who he is, that man will respond. Sometimes, but very rarely, it is embarrassing, but not half as awkward as going on with the "Mr." business for weeks, both of you knowing quite well that the pretence ought to be dropped, but neither having the courage to suggest it openly.

There is some sort of law involved here. Webb Miller mentioned it in his fascinating biography *I Found No Peace*. The law is this: if you show people you like them, they will like you. He proved it.

All A Little Lonely

The raw fact is that practically everyone in the world is a little lonely, and warms to a little kindness. We in New

Zealand are lucky to live in a community free from many of the encrusted inhibitions of the Old World, and can show kindly interest in strangers without being thought forward. Until the blitz blasted people into one another's laps, it was possible (as many New Zealanders like you found out) to live in London for 20 years and hardly speak to a soul.

Now I'm not really a very bumptious person, as you might have imagined from this. I live quietly in an average suburb, go to work, to church, to sport, and to the same pictures as everyone else. I'm quite the average sort that you pass in the streets every day, but the fact that I can "get away with" calling anybody by his Christian name is the illuminating point. The easy acceptance by everybody of my familiarity is the outward sign of our classlessness. About 95 per cent. of the folk in this Dominion are descended from the same stock, educated in the same schools, subjected to the same social influences in press, sport, religion, entertainment, and then inter-married and mixed up with travel and change of residence. (The other 5 per cent. are either the very rich or the down-and-outs.) This country is cut off from ready contact with neighbouring countries by, at the nearest, one thousand miles of ocean, and in most things, by many thousands more miles. Comparatively few newcomers arrive and very few leave.

So we grow up exactly like a large edition of Pitcairn Islanders, where everyone is related to everyone else. The people of Whangarei and Hastings and Wanganui and Timaru and Greymouth and Invercargill are all related in some way or other, and probably went there from Auckland or Dunedin in the first place. Only our innate shyness prevents us openly calling everyone we meet Brother James or Cousin Mary, but once somebody else says it, then we are not surprised but just follow suit.

Once you grasp these two facts—first, that everybody is a little lonely and when you show that you like him he is ready to like you, and, second, that the fellow just arrived from Hamilton or Oamaru is identically the same as you in background, and probably a distant cousin anyway, then, right away, you get on with him as a pal. Five minutes will produce a next-door neighbour who went to the same school, or "Fancy your knowing old Uncle Henry," and in ten minutes of casual questioning you will be staggered at the bonds of common interest that will be uncovered, and by that time to call him "Malcolm" is only the meanest courtesy. The only difference between you and me is that I started on the Malcolm and Bill business a little earlier.

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