

# SUCH AMUSING PEOPLE!

## Strange Doings at Heathcote

### Hall Chronicled For The

"Record" by

EDISON WATT

*(Who was reminded of them by the stranger case of two English visitors of title who have never seen a "talkie").*

THE visit to Wellington of Sir Theophilus and Lady Metcalfe, of that quite quaint old-world village of Winkworth in Surrey, should be a lesson to us, sir, an object-lesson that the backbone of old England is still solid bone.

You will recall that Sir Theophilus and his good lady admitted with some modesty to an Australian newspaper man that they had not yet found time to see a talkie, but they had met Shirley Temple on a park bench in Honolulu and thought her quite a nicely brought-up child.

Let THAT be an object-lesson to us, sir, that the ruling classes of Old England are still capable of seeing through the tinsel of false modern shadows and of getting down to the root of things in matters of character.

I have not yet had the pleasure of visiting that quaint old-world village of Winkworth in Surrey, but some day I hope, sir, I shall do myself well, sir, and stay for a month in the quaint old-world inn in that quaint old-world village.

There, perhaps, sir, I should find the same peace, the same sensation of solidity, the same conviction that I was among people who retained their perspective—as I experienced the time a char-a-banc, in which I was travelling, broke down at Heathcote-by-the-Weald in Norts. It was a sharp December day, sir, and I realised we were really in a corner of old, unspoiled England, when the robbers came to sit hopefully on the spare tyre of the char-a-banc.

We were, I admit, a moderately heterogeneous party—Miss West, who, I believe, has something to do with the cinema; a coloured gentleman, Mr. Louis or Lewis; a Swedish lady named Garbeau; a Mr. Crosby; and a German tourist, whose name I cannot quite remember but had something to do with hitting or striking. There was also a young New Zealander with us, and I believe he called himself G. Mirams, Esq.

Arriving unexpectedly for dinner, such a party might well have embarrassed any host, but Sir Jason Heathcote and his charming wife, Lady Gwyffid Heathcote—came of a long line of hosts and hostesses, being in fact descended from the original Heathcotes—who entertained King Canute and his retinue after an unfortunate difference of opinion with the North Sea. They received us with charming old-world courtesy among the suits of armour in the hall.

I shall long remember the consummate tact with which Sir Jason instructed the butler to serve Mr. Lewis below stairs and bent in courtly fashion over the hands of



*"Ay still want to be alone," she said in a cold and precise voice.*

Miss Garbeau and Miss West. Lady Heathcote was no less gracious. She led the ladies, chatting in her beautifully-modulated voice, to her bower—the only one left in Norts., and I heard her inquire from Miss West if she were related to the Wests of Wessex. Miss West replied—rather tactlessly, I thought—that she didn't, huh, remember anyone of that name round the old home-town, but her mother had travelled an awful lot when she was young.

The scene in the oak-panelled dining-room of Heathcote Hall that night was memorable. At the head of the table, Sir Jason conversed with Miss West and on his right Miss Garbeau. Lady Heathcote, simply gowned in antique brocade, laughed with a charming lilt at the witticisms of the German tourist and the young American.

"You must see my pictures later," said Sir Jason when a lull had fallen in the conversation, and the face of the young man from New Zealand brightened considerably. He asked

eagerly were they pre-releases, and Sir Jason apologised with a whimsical smile, for his ignorance of artists later than Reynolds.

Lady Heathcote was explaining to Mr. Crosby the juice of lemons was excellent for throat affections, when the German interrupted in a vulgarly violent tone that the Jews of nowhere was goot for noddings. For a moment there was a hiatus in the atmosphere of good cheer, but with the savoir faire of his caste, Sir Jason gently turned the conversation from such dangerous ground.

"Miss Garbeau and Miss West, my dear," he said, "tell me that they are connected with the films."

A delicate furrow clouded Lady Heathcote's brow. "The Films?" she queried. "Now, let me see . . . isn't there a family of that name in (Continued on page 39.)



*A serving maid in some distress.*